

DAN THE BULLDOG REBORN!



On Saturday 26th July 2025 a new statue of Dan the Bulldog was unveiled by His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant Edward Harley CBE. It sits on the banks of the River Wye in Bishop's Meadow and features regularly in our guided walks of the city.



Hereford Guild of Mayor's Guides is proud to have made this possible by obtaining grant funding from Hereford City Council, Herefordshire Community Foundation and The Elmley Foundation, as well as contributing a significant sum from our own resources.



The new sculpture was carved by Saul Sheldon in the Stonemason's Yard at Hereford Cathedral, just a few metres from where Dan once lived, and replaces the original Dan sculpture installed in 2002. Carved in wood, the original had become damaged and rotten over time, due to weather and flooding.



Dan, the original bulldog, was a cherished companion of George Robertson Sinclair, the former organist of Hereford Cathedral. In 1898, on a walk along the River Wye with his great friend Sir Edward Elgar, Dan tumbled into the water — an event that left a lasting impression. Elgar's famous Enigma Variations feature 14 movements, each inspired by a different friend. The 11th variation was dedicated to 'GRS', but was really about Dan, vividly capturing his fall, his energetic swim upstream, and his triumphant bark upon climbing out.

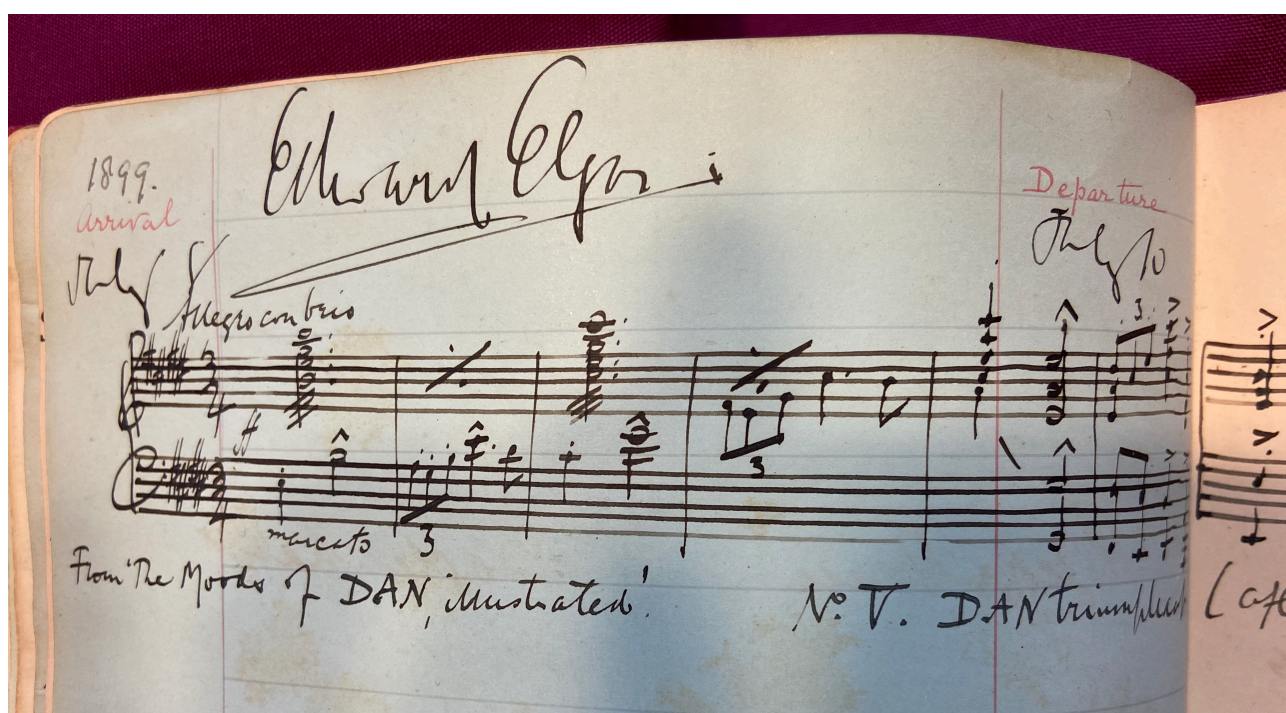


Image by kind permission Hereford Cathedral Library

Elgar wrote many small musical cameos he called “The Moods of Dan Illustrated” and entered them in Sinclair’s Visitors Book at 20, Church Street. These feature in many of his other major works. The Visitors Book can be viewed by appointment in the Cathedral Library.

The unveiling of the new statue appropriately took place on the first Saturday of the Three Choirs Festival in Hereford. Elgar was involved with the Festival from an early age, and some of his major works were premiered there.



From Left to Right: Councillor Kevin Tillet, Mayor Daniel Powell, High Sheriff Helen Bowden, Guild Head Guide Joy Roderick, Guild Publicity Officer Angela Eaton, Mrs Victoria Harley, Lord Lieutenant Edward Harley, Jesse Norman MP, Bishop Richard Jackson, Herefordshire Council Chair Roger Phillips



Hereford Guild of Mayor's Guides and the winning children

As part of the project, the Guild of Mayor's Guides engaged with Herefordshire Primary schools by holding a competition for the children to make a drawing or painting of Dan, creating a local heritage learning opportunity. There were 540 entries from 17 schools. Some of the winning children attended the ceremony, and afterwards received their prizes from the Mayor of Hereford at a reception at the Town Hall.



Here are the winning entries: 1st, 2nd and 3rd in three age groups plus an Overall Best Entry.



RECEPTION AND YEARS

1 AND 2 GROUP

JOZEF

Third Prize

WILLOW

Second Prize





LUCA

First Prize

YEARS 3 AND 4 GROUP



ALFRED

Third Prize

MARTHA

Second Prize



TED

First Prize

OTTO

Third Prize



ELLIE GRACE

Second Prize

VANESSA

First Prize



OVERALL BEST ENTRY

PHILIP



Dan has become a well-loved riverside resident, and we are delighted that he can continue to charm locals and visitors alike, for many years to come.

