



Meeting Notes Archive 1997-2004

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Notes from the meeting of 3rd July 2004 held at the Station Hotel, Sutton Coldfield

The meeting was chaired by Martin Graebe and was attended by 7 members (plus one guest) in the morning. The numbers increased considerably in the afternoon for the talk by Roy Palmer as a result of a very successful campaign by Lewis Jones. A number of apologies were received.

Members present:

David Atkinson, Greg Butler, Shan Cowan, Martin Graebe, Keith Holland, Lewis Jones, and Andrew King.

Apologies:

Frankie Armstrong, Elaine Bradtke, Jim Carroll, Ron and Jenny Day, Dave Eckersley, Ian Gustard, Ruairidh Greig, Peter Kennedy, Pat McKenzie, Toby Parker, Bob and Jaqueline Patten, Steve Roud, Doc Rowe, Ian Russell, Derek Schofield, Marilyn Tucker, Eddie Upton

INFORMAL REVIEW OF MEMBERS ACTIVITIES

The meeting opened, as usual, with an informal review of activities by members

Lewis Jones has recently completed an article for ED&S on poaching in song (will appear in the September issue). This has been done, in part as an exercise in modern research techniques, using commercially available databases to find historical information. In this case Lewis used the archive of The Times newspaper available on InfoTrac to find material that supported his argument. Access to these databases is often available through an academic library or a large public library.

Lewis is also engaged on preparing the hymns and songs of Isaac Watts for on-line publication as part of Project Gutenberg. (To see this work go [here](#)) His proposed book of songs collected by George Butterworth has been delayed. Lewis has now sold out of both of his books of songs by Lucy Broadwood and is working on re-publication in a new, improved format.

Peter Wood finally retires this month! His article on John Barleycorn was published in the last issue of the Journal and writing it taught him a lot. He has also written about the Farne Project and spent time looking at the material therein, which led to a short discussion about the many merits (and a few niggles) about the Project. His spare time is now to be spent playing music and doing 'shows' such as 'The Cruel Wars' and 'Sailors and their Doxies' which he did for the Lancaster Maritime Festival. He is looking for material related to Trafalgar in preparation for next year's 200th anniversary.

Peter described an interesting experience that John Gall had when dismantling an old house for reconstruction at the Beamish Museum. John found, underneath the lime-wash, a copy of a broadside ballad (The King's Royal Forester) pasted to the wall. This led to a discussion that was echoed in Roy Palmer's afternoon talk

David Atkinson is unashamedly sitting on his laurels after the completion of 'Folk Song – Tradition, Revival and Re-creation'. At least, he is sitting on them when he is not working on his next collaborative project which is led by Mike Yates and also involves Elaine Bradtke and Malcolm Taylor. This project is to publish a new book, similar to 'Still Growing', on Cecil Sharp's collecting activities in the Appalachians. This will contain about 50 songs. David noted that it appears that Sharp re-wrote a number of the tunes he collected

David mentioned a new book on Trafalgar that he has been assisting with. It is 'Trafalgar – The Biography of a Battle' by Roy Adkins (To be published by Little, Brown in October at £20 - details [here](#)). This led to a discussion of Trafalgar, Collingwood (who was a son of Morpeth) and Nelson. David will also be delivering a paper at the ballad conference on folk tale versions of 'The Maid Freed from the Gallows'

Andrew King brought more cheerful news from the National Sound Archive. He has been working on putting a number of the EFDSS cylinders onto the web. He also managed to get funding to list the material and to make corrections to existing indexing. He is also working on recordings by Vic Ellis of Singers from County Down – transferring them to CD-R Andrew also mentioned the JISC questionnaire recently circulated to a number of members. While it was not directly relevant to most members it was felt to have been an opportunity to demonstrate that there was a demand for ethnic music of the British Isles.

Andrew offered to do a presentation on the EFDSS sound recordings at the next meeting to be held in London.

Greg Butler talked about some of his recent performances and the work that had gone into them. Like others, he is working hard to pull together a show for the Trafalgar Celebrations - in his case 'Bold Nelson's Praise'. (See flyer [here](#)). Other work has included the 'Hertfordshire Garland' which is now available on CD and 'Tyrants of England'

Martin Graebe talked about progress with transcription of the Baring-Gould manuscripts. Nearly half of the songs have now been transcribed, though many need checking. A spur to progress has been

that Martin and Shan are now singing together regularly and the quest for repertoire has led to energetic plundering of the manuscripts for good songs. Martin has now completed the introduction for the first modern reprint of Baring-Gould's 'Iceland - It's Scenes and Sagas' to be published later this year by Signal Books. (see [here](#)). He also drew members attention to the fact that Dover Books had recently re-issued their 5 volume set of Child at a very reasonable price (currently £48.99 on Amazon.co.uk). At the request of the members present Martin and Shan sang one of the songs they had got from the Baring-Gould Ms - a version of 'Lavenders Green' where the text had been completed from the Roxborough Ballads. David Atkinson had helped in this by providing a copy of the original to check Baring-Gould's accuracy

TSF BUSINESS:

Future meetings:

Locations for future meetings were discussed. It was recognised that the Spring (November) and Autumn (March) meetings were usually well attended, whether in the North or London. The July event is less reliable but can be useful in taking TSF to other parts of Britain. It was felt therefore, that the main emphasis should be placed on the Spring and Autumn meetings and seek to arrange the Summer meeting in an area where there was a strong local core to provide an event that appealed to local interests as well as those of regulars. It was felt that we should seek to return to Newcastle when 'The Sage' was fully open. After discussion, it was agreed that we would try to arrange a meeting in the Sheffield area in November 2004 and in the London area for March 2004. We will ask for suggestions for the Summer meeting. We will then try to meet at 'The Sage' in Autumn 2005.

FORUM FOCUS - 'Some thoughts on Warwickshire Balladry' - Roy Palmer

Roy's excellent talk was based on research he has done for a forthcoming book on Warwickshire folklore and was illustrated by recordings of performances as well as by copies of ballads that he used to make a particular point. Roy includes Birmingham in Warwickshire (as do many of its older inhabitants) and it was a lively centre of broadside publishing. Between the early 18th century and the late 19th over fifty presses were in action. He described the relative ease with which a business selling ballads could be set up. In 1835, for example, a small Albion press suitable for single sheet ballads was bought by John Forth of Bridlington for £14.10s (with a 10% discount for prompt payment!). This was equivalent to about £400 today. The use of second-hand type explains the jumbled fonts we see in many ballads. The low entry cost was an opportunity for entrepreneurial men but gave a precarious living. He gave the example of Birmingham printer Theophilus Bloomer who sold his chapbooks at the back door and took in rags in part payment.

Roy gave a number of examples of local ballads and the context in which they were written. In many cases the authors can be identified and some went on to become popular across the rest of England. He described, for example, the ballad 'The Three Brothers' sung by Danny Brazil of Staverton. Roy says this is the only instance he knows of where the singer has a longer version than the original ballad (11 verses sung versus 9 in the printed ballad). Three young men (not brothers) were executed at Warwick on the 14th July, 1818 for robbing not Lord Granwhale but a Mr Greenway. The original ballad was issued by the Birmingham printer mentioned above, Theophilus Bloomer and called 'The Lamentation of W Warner, T Ward and T Williams.' Bloomer's ballad was updated to August to make it more current, suggesting that Bloomer saw the story in a newspaper and either wrote the ballad himself or had it written by one of the Birmingham hack writers like George Davis. Roy has also seen a copy of this ballad from a Cirencester printer but he believes, based on dates, that Bloomer was first. He also gave the example of Bloomer making use of the murder of Mary Ashford of Erdington in 1817 to produce 4 separate ballads following Mary from murder victim to ghost.

Another important figure was John Freeth who, in the middle of the 18th Century, wrote at least 400 ballads. He would sing these himself in his public house - bringing in customers and leading to second career as a ballad maker. He published his songs in books rather than as ballads, probably enabling him to make more profit.

Roy went on to give more details about the lives of a number of other Warwickshire ballad printers, a few of whom were able to make a considerable amount of money from their business. Roy has identified 1500 ballad sheets representing about 2000 song titles. The real number issued would have been considerably higher - at least twice as many and probably more. This represents an output of millions of individual sheets. The movement tailed off at the end of the 19th Century when the popular press emerged after the abolition of stamp duty.

Roy asked, during his talk, 'Can we sing the songs that celebrate the values of the past?' He certainly believes that we can and should - we may not approve of harpooning whales or of hunting but the songs describing those events are an important historical record and are often enjoyable to sing. He also explained the context in which Ballads were enjoyed by their readers. Hogarth illustrates a weaver with a ballad pinned up to his loom. He also instanced the recovery of a pair of cupboard doors from a pub in Pershore that had a number of ballads pasted to them. This is now in a local museum.

He talked about the Birmingham singer Cecilia Costello who was 'discovered' at the age of 68. She had been singing all her life but to family rather than in public. Her repertoire was split between the songs she learned from her Irish father and those learned from workmates and from the music hall. She was first recorded by Peter Kennedy in the 1950s and then by Slocum and Shaw. Roy played a recording made by Charles Parker of Cecilia singing when she was 're-discovered' in the 1970s and told some of her anecdotes. These recordings are in Birmingham city library but are not available for listening because the family regarded them as too frank for public consumption. Roy hopes that it may be possible, in the future, for an edited version to be produced. Roy's own recordings are available in the NSA. He finished with a recording of fiddler and singer Sam Bennet of Ilmington, near Stratford who was unique in that he was recorded, between 1908 and 1950, by Sharp, Grainger, Carpenter and Kennedy. He was a key figure in reviving the Morris in Ilmington. Sharp noted tunes from him but not songs - though Carpenter did record 28 of his songs.

The audience extended this enjoyable afternoon with a number of questions which gave Roy an opportunity to expand on a number of the points he made

THANKS

To Lewis Jones who made the arrangements for the day, at an excellent venue and including some very successful local publicity and to Roy Palmer for his outstanding talk

Martin Graebe

27th July 2004

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Notes from the meeting of 3rd April 2004 held at Cecil Sharp House

The meeting was chaired by Steve Roud and attended by 16 members.

Present:

David Atkinson, Elaine Bradtke, Richard Butterworth, Shan Cowan, Paul Cowdell, Jim Donohoe, George Frampton, Steve Gardham, Martin Graebe, Felicity Greenland, Keith Holland, Lewis Jones, Andrew King, Steve Roud, Doc Rowe, Malcolm Taylor

Apologies:

Frankie Armstrong, Greg Butler, Jim Carroll, Chris Foster, John Ledger, Pat McKenzie, Toby Parker, Ray Padgett, Bob and Jaqueline Patten, Peter Robson, Ian Russell, Derek Schofield, Marilyn Tucker, Eddie Upton, Paul Wilson, Yvette Staelens

Annual General Meeting

Chairman's Report:

Steve Roud reported that the Forum had continued to make steady progress. Though it had been necessary to cancel the July meeting the other two meetings in 2003 had been well attended and the 'Forum Focus' sessions had been extremely useful and interesting. He felt that the Forum was serving a useful function in its key roles of bringing researchers together to share their work and in providing a platform (in the 'Forum Focus' sessions) for presentation of some aspects of research in more detail. He felt that, on the basis of what had been achieved to date, the Forum would continue successfully into the future

Treasurer's Report:

Doc Rowe reported that the Forum had £274 in the bank at present. We had been fortunate, recently, in not having to pay significant rental costs for meeting rooms. Having rationalised the Membership year to start in January had also helped.

Election of Officers:

The officers: Steve Roud (Chairman), Doc Rowe (Treasurer) and Martin Graebe (Secretary) were all re-elected unopposed. The meeting thanked them for their past service and for their willingness to continue

Discussion of the future of the Forum

Steve Roud led a discussion on the future of TSF. He suggested that, while not all of the activities proposed over the years had been carried out, the main function of the Forum, bringing interested parties together for discussion, had been very successful and that there were clear benefits from the continued existence of TSF. The informality of these contacts is a big benefit.

Steve Gardham suggested that there is a lot of interest in Broadside ballads and a lot of material becoming more easily available. TSF should encourage and support the publication of manuscript collections on-line or as CD-Rom. The big collections do need to be done 'professionally' - they couldn't be done by TSF.

The recent introduction of the TSF discussion list on Yahoo by Johnny Adams has been very welcome. Anyone can join the list by e-mailing Johnny and requesting membership. It was asked whether we should give Johnny any further guidance. In response Steve said that he was sure this

was not necessary and that Johnny would successfully moderate the list, making adjustments to the protocols as necessary. He expressed his thanks to Johnny, on behalf of TSF, for his enterprise.

The issue of 'collections', One of the main reasons for the Forum being formed in the first place, was re-visited. While the work done by the British Library in the past is valued there is some concern that plans for the future are unclear. The meeting also showed empathy for Andrew King's natural concern about the work, given his past involvement and his undoubted expertise in the field. The Chairman asked Andrew to give some thought as to how the Forum could best support him and the future work of the NSA at the British Library and to make a proposal to the Forum.

The relationship of TSF to the EFDSS was discussed. It was agreed that it was not appropriate for TSF to become a research group within EFDSS or some similar position. It was felt to be important that the Forum retained its independence. It was agreed that the Forum would, however, consider a firmer link with the Society through affiliation. Felicity Greenland agreed to check what category of membership might be appropriate for the Forum and the matter will be discussed again at the next meeting.

The possibility of funding students of folk song to attend Forum meetings was suggested. Martin Graebe will contact Alistair Anderson and establish whether this would be helpful and practical.

The current status of the degree course in Traditional Music at Sheffield was raised and it was suggested that a future meeting at Sheffield might feature this.

It was also suggested that a future meeting might be devoted to the subject of indexing.

It was suggested that speakers at the 'Forum Focus' sessions should be asked to provide a synopsis of their talks where possible. Otherwise volunteers would be sought to produce a synopsis of a talk. Setting an excellent example, Jim Donohoe volunteered to produce a synopsis of the afternoon session on Copyright issues

Future Meetings:

After some discussion it was agreed that the next meeting would be held in Birmingham on 10th July (arranged by Lewis Jones). The following meeting will be either November 13th (first choice) or 6th and we are hoping to arrange a venue in the North-West(ish). This will be confirmed in the near future.

Informal Review of Members Activities

The meeting continued with a shorter than usual review of activities by members

Jim Donohoe has produced a CD-ROM of 'Favourite Scots Songs' by William Napier; a song-book published in 1790. The book contains 175 pages of songs popular at the end of the 18th Century and acceptable in the parlours of the gentry. Jim is offering the CD for sale at £5. Contact him for details.

Doc Rowe mentioned that a new video of Children's games 'John Kakanaka' would be available shortly. See extract from EFDSS press release [here](#) for details. He also drew members attention to the release of the double CD of Keith Summer's recordings issued by Musical Traditions titled 'The Hardy Sons of Dan' - details at <http://www.mustrad.org.uk/records.htm>

Malcolm Taylor advised that the Library are arranging a memorial concert for Bob Copper at Cecil Sharp House. Details to be available soon. He also reported that the library has been granted £15,000 for digitisation of the (BBC) sound recordings

FORUM FOCUS - 'If all the World Were Paper ...'

'The Vaughan Williams Memorial Library' - Malcolm Taylor and Richard Butterworth

The main focus of this session was to hear about the work going into the development of the 'Vaughan Williams Memorial Library Online'. The project that Richard Butterworth has been working on. Malcolm introduced the session and Richard, talking about some of the drivers to put information line that this project was a response to. An online presence is now a necessity for any major collection and one of its most important interfaces with the outside world.

Richard described the aim of the site as being the centre of a community and that a degree of interactivity was an essential part of building that community. The input of TSF members at this stage is very welcome and they are hoping to receive comments that will help in the design and in correcting errors. The database was demonstrated and a number of its features explained. When it is complete it will reference items in the major manuscript collections (Sharp, Vaughan Williams, Broadwood, Karpeles, Hammond et al) in the library and allow searching in a number of ways. The indexes will include mummings plays and there will be an associated discussion group.

It is hoped that the site will go live this summer but the expectation is that, once launched, it will continue to develop, change and improve.

'Copyright (Part 1) - Steve Roud

These notes were made by Jim Donohoe:

The discussion on Copyright (part 1) was led by Steve Roud, and it looked at the current state of play (what the law is, not what it should be).

Steve's main reference was a book aimed at librarians: Graham P. Cornish "Copyright interpreting..." ISBN 1-85604-344-4. This book gathers together and organises the law, which consists of a main act (1988), an amending legislation (1992) and a clutter of Statutory Instruments that have the effect of harmonising Copyright law over the European Union.

The first thing to note is that Copyright falls under criminal law, not civil law. The second thing to note is that copyright covers a spectrum of rights.

The right we are most familiar with is the right of the author. This is both a legal right and a moral right that extends to a date 70 years after the author's death. This asserts the author's ownership of the material contained in a work. Where a work normally takes several people to complete, e.g. a film, a program or a recording, one person (the producer) is identified as the author for purposes of copyright. Anonymous and pseudonymous works were not discussed.

Another familiar right is the publisher's right, which prohibits unauthorised copying for various periods: 25 years for printed material, 50 years for most other forms of publication. Not actually called the publisher's right, this form of copyright is merely called "the typographical arrangement of a work". An exception that allows copying of printed material is "fair usage", and a varying amount (usually up to 10%) of a book may be copied under this exception. There is no "fair usage" for sound materials.

Since 1988, performers who take part in a work also have rights, mainly to suppress the use of material, and there has been a lot of work going on at various archives to gain permission from the people recorded for use of the recordings. Most amateur recordings, including my own, don't have performers' permissions to go with them, and where and how they are recorded means that there will be tacit assumptions made as to their subsequent use. There is a cop-out that allows the publication of amateur recordings, i.e. that you have made every reasonable effort to identify the performers and obtain their permission for the publication.

An area we looked at was the copyright implications of unpublished materials, such as manuscripts and letters. It is important to note that copyright does not go with ownership. If the author's right still

exists, it is paramount, otherwise ownership allows you to deny anyone's right to copy what you own. But once a work has been published, people may make copies of those published copies, subject to any copyright that exists in those copies (25 or 50 years). Delaying the publication of unpublished materials, allows you to extend the life of the copyright (25 or 50 years after first publication, depending on the whether it is print or some form of recording).

Where both the author's and publisher's copyright have lapsed, anyone may make any use they like of a work. In this case, who makes the copy is vitally important, as they will own the author's right in the copy (yes, you can have author's rights in a copy). The conclusion is that where libraries employ outside resources to make copies for them, they should ensure that all rights in the copies are assigned back to them.

We didn't touch upon publications that are collections of other peoples' work, nor on second and subsequent editions of a work, nor on the use of traditional material contained in a work.

Part two of this discussion will be a feature of a TSF meeting in the near future.

THANKS

.... to Malcolm Taylor, Felicity Greenland and Richard Butterworth for welcoming us to 'The House' and for hosting a very enjoyable day. And to Jim Donohoe for the notes on Steve Roud's talk

Martin Graebe

May 2004

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Notes from the meeting of 15th November 2003 held at Gateshead Old Town Hall

The meeting was chaired by Steve Roud and was so well attended that we did not manage to collect everyone's name! A number of the visitors were students on the degree course in Folk and Traditional Music based at GOTH. We were also pleased to welcome a number of other visitors for the afternoon presentation.

Apologies:

Frankie Armstrong, Elaine Bradtke, Jim Carroll, Ron and Jenny Day, Dave Eckersley, Ian Gustard, Ruairidh Greig, Pat McKenzie, Toby Parker, Bob and Jaqueline Patten, Ian Russell, Derek Schofield, Marilyn Tucker

Informal Review Of Members Activies

The meeting opened, as is our custom, with an informal review of activities by members

Steve Gardham has continued with his study of the ballad collections, particularly Madden and the Bodleian collections. His work on 'Stowbrow' has continued and he has extended his work to include studies of 'The Effects of Love' (which he believes to have a factual basis in the drowning of a young

woman from Hull in 1812) and John of Hazelgreen. Publication of the collection of songs from Robin Hood's Bay is now near. He is also working on a number of other items for publication.

Paul Wilson talked about the work of Wren, the Devon based community arts organisation which he co-founded with Marilyn Tucker twenty years ago. Wren now employs nine people working on projects in the West Country and, increasingly, overseas. They have recently visited South Africa and Newfoundland and have projects lined up for next year in Newfoundland, Philadelphia and Labrador. Paul emphasised, though, that the West Country remains the core location for Wren's activities. He also talked about the success of Wren's young people's singing group 'Hocus' which has, this year, toured in Italy and Germany. They have just secured major funding for a project 'Young Sing Old' for which they will shortly be recruiting a musical director.

Doc Rowe reported that he continues to live in London while his archive has taken up residence in Sheffield. Unpacking progresses well. Doc has been working on a lot of recordings for people and has also been working on material for the celebration of Fred Jordan's life on 22nd Nov. He has been approached by George Withers and Jeff Wesley (separately) to record CDs for them.

Lewis Jones has continued to publish material on his web-site, increasingly using PDFs for publishing music. He is hoping that he will be able to facilitate the publication of Isaac Watts' material on 'Project Gutenberg'. You are encouraged to visit Ferret Publications on the web.

John Gall is on the staff of Beamish Museum and talked about his work on folk archives which include folk song but which include a much wider range of materials - many of them large inanimate objects. He described their storage facilities which are some of the most technically advanced in Europe. They have been working a lot with the FARNE project, making their song archives available. John reported that recent work on the rebuilding of a masonic temple had led him to think about studying the role of song in masonic life more closely. There was some discussion of this interesting idea.

Dave Eyre is another retired man who occupies much of his time by selling books on folk song (and who had exhibited a number of enticing items of interest to Forum members at the rear of the room). He described how he had discovered the existence of the Glen Rock Carolers Association in the USA. A group of Derbyshire emigrants started, in 1848, to sing the carols from their home county and their descendants have carried on an unbroken and well documented tradition ever since. The group are very proud of their tradition but had not been aware of the parallel interest in the carols in Derbyshire until Dave contacted them and they were very welcome visitors to the Sheffield Festival of Carols last year. For more information visit their website www.glenrockcarolers.com

Sandra Kerr Told us something of the degree course based at the centre in Gateshead Old Town Hall that has been developed by Newcastle University in association with Folkworks. Her particular interest is teaching singing. All their students sing, though even if they come to learn voice as their main instrument they are expected to learn a second instrument. The course is now in its third year and is well supported. Sandra is keen to help their students develop a sense of repertoire, production and of interpretation

Steve Roud has been working on updating his index as well as a number of books including 'Still Growing' in collaboration with a number of others as well as the recently published 'Penguin Guide to Superstitions'. His next project will be a Penguin book on Legends and then he plans to tackle Children's Folklore. The last study in this area was that by the Opies in the 1950s. They are hoping to do a major national survey to look what has happened in the intervening period and see how the distribution has changed.

Peter Wood has, so far, failed to retire but will do so next July. He has been enjoying researching songs and has an article on John Barleycorn in the next Folk Song Journal.

Gwilym Davies talked about the increasing use he is making of digital video recording for collecting songs. It seems to be a logical extension, adding pictures to high quality audio. He recently presented a workshop of Cotswold song in Dursley. This included contributions by Richard Chidlaw (who spoke

at the TSF meeting in September 2000) and Michael Gardner who sang some of his father's songs. He has also been helping a student (Ellen Taylor) with her dissertation on wassail traditions. He offered the advice that anyone looking at the 1901 census should make sure that they look at the images of the original documents as the indexes are very poor.

Martin Graebe has just completed a study of Baring-Gould's studies in folklore for his talk at the Baring-Gould Study Day in October. Work on Baring-Gould's singers in their location has also continued and has resulted in clarification of the lives of some of these men, particularly Sam Fone and James Parsons. The value of walking the area to find the detail was emphasised though good maps are a great help. (A particularly useful resource mentioned in this respect was www.oldmaps.co.uk but, unfortunately, this site has been closed since the meeting). Transcription of the songs in the manuscripts has continued, though there is still a long way to go before the exercise is completed!

Shan Cowan told members about her visit to Lancaster Public Library to look at J Fuller Maitland's papers which are held there. The collection contains more than 1000 items, nearly all of which are published books and songs. One of the most interesting items is a copy of English County Songs which has extra pages bound into it for his notes. The collection is presently being indexed and it is hoped that this index will appear on the web in the future. There are also some additional items, including manuscripts, from Fuller Maitland's collection still held in Preston.

Jack Campin described the work that he has been doing on social history through traditional music. His first venture was 'Embro, Embro – the hidden history of Edinburgh in its music'. He has found that the best way of producing large publications of tunes is to put them onto CD ROM and this is the format that he has used. His next venture is 'Aird's Airs' a collection of 1200 tunes from the six tunebooks printed by James Aird of Glasgow between 1778 and 1801. This collection is a good place to find tunes for broadsides and it is very basic in the sense that it has minimal ornamentation. Other work in progress includes a recorder book from 1870. Find out more on www.purr.demon.co.uk

Alistair Anderson talked about his work as Artistic Director of Folkworks and Joint Director of the degree course in folk music. He talked of the guiding principles of a music that is moving forward while looking back at the many thousands of man/woman hours that have gone into the creation of the music we know. It is important that, in moving forward, we do not deny the creativity of previous generations. The range of contexts may be wider but he believes that the differences are not as great as might be expected. It is important to be taking the music out to ordinary people as well as enthusiasts. While 'star qualities' may be ephemeral, celebrity can help to give validity to less regarded performers. He gave the example of the connection that was made by local people to Billy Pigg when the High Level Ranters talked about him as a 'star' performer.

Andrew King is still working with the BL Sound Archive, though he is no longer working on traditional music, though he did finish the Patten collection before he changed roles. He is now working on Classical music. He described some of the quality problems that have resulted from the use of external contractors to transfer material to digital formats. He recommended that TSF members make use of the Cadenza (British Library index) website - the more queries that are seen on folk music the more likely that the interest will be recognised. It was suggested that a future Forum might have a session on the preservation of old tapes.

FORUM FOCUS - 'Northern Lights'

'A Different Harvest' - Peter Wood

Peter's talk looked at the differences between the body of the material collected in the North versus the South of England. Having established a sample of 20 of the most popular English songs as a benchmark he looked at the various collections made in the North to establish the frequency with

which these songs occurred. He also noted other differences such as the greater importance of dialect material in the North. He also observed that northern songs were more likely to deal with real people and events.

'Recent work' - Mike Yates

Mike outlined his recent collecting work on song and story in the north. He played a number of examples of recordings of songs and stories collected from Duncan Williamson, Jock Anderson and others and talked about the circumstances in which they were collected. He talked about the pleasure he takes in the contact that collecting gives him with people and his delight in learning from the singers and storytellers what is important to them. He has now started work on an anthology of Northumbrian pipers

The FARNE Project Rachel Peacock and Johnny Handle

This session was introduced by Rachel Peacock who gave some of the background to the Folk Archive Resource North East (FARNE) which has been a two year project funded by the New Opportunities Fund which has been aimed at creating an Archive of Northumbrian Music on the Net. When it is launched early in 2004 it will give access to songs, tunes, sound recordings, photos and video - all fully searchable. You can find the archive on www.folknortheast.com and when complete there will be about 300 songs on the site. The Beamish Museum, through John Gall, has contributed a lot of photographic and other material.

Johnny Handle has been working on the project as a researcher and he gave a wonderful talk with musical illustrations about the songs that are in the collection. He pointed out that a high proportion of the songs have known authors and he gave a number of examples of the work of them including writers such as Ned Corvan who produced their own books of songs. It is hoped that, in the future, further money will be found to cover the post-war years and the revival, including memories of singers who have died in recent years

THANKS

To Alistair Anderson and Sandra Kerr for welcoming us to the GOTH Music Centre and for helping to ensure that the day was so interesting and enjoyable. Thanks also to Peter Wood, Mike Yates, Rachel Peacock and Johnny Handle for their contributions to the afternoon Focus session. And, of course, to Steve Gardham who coordinated the arrangements for the day.

Martin Graebe

20th December 2003

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Notes from the meeting of 29th March 03 held at University of Sheffield

The meeting was chaired by Steve Roud and was attended by 12 people

Present:

David Atkinson, Julia Bishop, Eddie Cass, Chris Coe, Shan Cowan, Paul Cowdell, Ron and Jenny Day, Gwilym Davies, George Frampton, Vic Gammon, Steve Gardham, Martin Graebe, Joanne Green, Keith Holland, Lewis Jones, Andrew King, Ray Padgett, Peter Robson, Steve Roud, Doc Rowe and Jonathan Stock

Apologies:

Frankie Armstrong, Elaine Bradtke, Paul Burgess, Greg Butler, Jim Carroll, Gwilym Davies, Dave Eckersley, George Frampton, Ruairidh Greig, John Ledger, Paul Marsh, Pat McKenzie, John Moulden, Bob and Jaqueline Patten, Carolyn Robson, Ian Russell, Derek Schofield, Andrew Smith, Janet Topp-Fargion, Yvette Staelens, Marilyn Tucker and Paul Wilson

INFORMAL REVIEW OF MEMBERS ACTIVITIES

The meeting opened, as usual, with an informal review of activities by members

Steve Gardham opened the batting by talking about the joys of retirement. He has invested in a number of new books. Now he is simultaneously reading and indexing. He is also discovering a number of rare 'Child' ballads on broadsides, such as Lord Thomas and Fair Margaret. All of these look to be taken straight from the tradition. He is preparing an article about this for English Dance and Song. He is also continuing his work on the Robins Hood Bay ballads and, particularly, looking at the origins of 'Stowbrow', which he believes he can link to a specific event in 1830.

Steve has noticed that in the Murray Collection there are some ballads which have the same title and the same stock number but with a different word set. The printer concerned is James Lindsay (pre 1850). The best explanation to date is that Lindsay was not organised enough to have a stock-book and so the ballad was reconstructed from available sources or from memory when a reprint was required. This may have included re-noting from an oral source. Any comments on this would be very welcome.

Lewis Jones emphasised that he was not retired and is, in fact, working harder than ever. He is using a piece of software called Sharp Eye to OCR text and then importing the text into music-ease. This led to a techie discussion in which Doc Rowe revealed that he has a programme called Midiscan which can recognise manuscript music. He agreed to provide copies to any TSF member who wants (Drop an e-mail to [Doc](#)),

Ron Day said that honesty is the best policy - he had started to research family singing but this has been put into abeyance at present. He and Jenny have been involved with the Sheffield Folk Chorale which is now developing a great repertoire of folk based choral music. Jenny is the archivist for the chorale, seeking out new material. The loudest applause came when they revealed that they had provided a lot of the muscle power for moving Doc's collection to Sheffield!

Martin Graebe has continued work with the Baring-Gould manuscripts, looking particularly at the correspondence between Baring-Gould and Lucy Broadwood. This has been a quiet time, apart from learning a number of new songs from the collection and constructing a new show for the Cheltenham Folk Festival with Frankie Armstrong, Chris Foster and Shan Cowan. This was achieved entirely by e-mail and without rehearsal - and it worked!. The 'quiet' period has made possible a bit of thinking about how to go forward and to review what has been done to date. This has served to illustrate that there is still an awful lot to do!

Andrew King reported that the Traditional Music in England project is coming to a close. He hopes to complete the work he has been doing on Bob and Jackie Patten's material before it finally ends. Once this project finishes there are only limited plans for work related to traditional Music. Andrew has been doing a programme of traditional music for Resonance Radio. Some of those present who had heard these said that they were very good. Doc Rowe made another astounding offer for paid-up members

only, which was to provide them with a copy of some of Resonance Radios recent output on CD. (Again, if you are interested, drop an e-mail to [Doc](#)).

Andrew has met with Malcolm Taylor to look at the possibility of doing work on the reel to reel tapes in the VWML. This is a big job and probably more than can be done with the funding available. Finally he described going to Epping and discovering a nest of singers in a pub there. He is planning to return and do some recording.

Vic Gammon is working on Cecil Sharp's educational work and is hoping to get collaboration in an article on dance. He is also planning to review the rise and fall of Sharp's reputation. He is giving a talk at the Highgate Festival in the summer. Vic mentioned the Frank Kidson Memorial Fund and asked nicely if anyone would like to donate. It was proposed, seconded and agreed by those present that, as well as the £5 notes being willingly thrown at Vic by individuals the Forum should make a contribution of £50 from its funds. Vic asked for contributions of elaborate funerals in ballads and contributed the memorable quote from Frank Kidson on Cecil Sharp's English Folk Song - Some Conclusions of which Kidson said; "conjectures are not conclusions". Ouch!

Vic is also contributing the introduction to the collection of Cecil Sharp songs to be published later in the year.)David Atkinson and Steve Roud are also involved together with Eddie Upton

David Atkinson is making a desperate attempt to do an index of the Carpenter collection. He is also putting a bibliography of his ballad research into a document that he hopes will be available shortly. He is working on revivals and is also assisting with the editing and publication of the papers from the 1998 Sheffield Conference

Eddie Cass is working on the Midgely Pace Egg Play. Though it has canonical status little has actually been done on it. He has interviewed an old man who was involved early on and has obtained a number of interesting details previously lost to history. He has also discovered an article in Boys Own Paper for 1938 which gives details about the play. He has also been working on the Folk Play web site. www.folkplay.info

Ray Padgett has given Steve Gardham copies of tapes from Sid and Olive Austin - interesting songs for which Steve has identified the original sheet music. Alastair Anderson brought some of his degree students down recently to work with local kids

Peter Wood has not quite retired. He has been researching John Barleycorn for some time and says he is now heartily sick of it, He gave a talk at last years National Festival. He is writing an article for the Journal but some of the more conjectural material may be used elsewhere. He has aspirations to become more involved in academic work on folk song. He is also doing shows and will be returning immediately to the task of writing a song for the Whitby festival.

Doc Rowe has absolutely no concept of what retirement would be like as he has never worked. He has been pre-occupied with moving his collection to Sheffield, with the help of Ron and Jenny Day, Mark Gibbons et al. He now has a carpet. His web site will be up in about three weeks. He has devoted quite a lot of time to the PEL issue and will be meeting Kim Howells next week, hoping to convince him that the legislation will have unpredictable effects on all sorts of traditional activities that are not immediately obvious. He has recently been editing the film 'Dance, England!' for the Smithsonian. He is still working and recording in the day centre in London. He has recently got a whole new group of memories by playing Bo Diddley and getting a new generation of 'old folk' to talk to him.

Steve Roud has finally finished the 'Penguin Book of Superstitions and hopes that it will be out for Halloween. He is also working on the aforementioned book on Cecil Sharp's songs, 'Still Growing'. This will be out in time for the Sharp Conference in August. Eddie Upton has chosen the tunes and the 'editorial group' have selected from the available texts and compiled singable versions of the songs. Doc is doing the pictures. Steve mentioned the British ballad discussion list and his ambition to

get it re-launched with a wider remit. He even hopes to get the music hall/parlour song fraternity involved

Keith Holland reported that Christopher Cawte has made a list of his work on May Garlands which can be consulted in the RVWML.

A number of members who were not present sent notes of their activities:

Gwilym Davies wrote:

"The main problem at present is that both my DAT recorder and my CAM recorder have gone on the blink at the same time and are irreparable. So I have 75 DAT tapes that I cannot listen to at present. It is ironic that I can read the works of Homer written millennia ago but can't hear tapes I made 2 years ago! Anyway, this raises the question of perishable media. Do I just go on and buy another DAT recorder, knowing that the technology is on its way out anyway but that I need it to listen to the tapes? If so, do I spend many hours transferring to CD? Nice idea, but so time-consuming. Do I go out and buy some other form of digital recorder such as minidisk or solid state? If so, how long is that technology going to be on the market? I gather that I can in fact get funding to get the copying done, but that I would have to link it to jump through hoops and link it to project(s), and to be frank at the moment I am trying to concentrate on performance. So I'm in a bit of a hiatus at present and would welcome views from TSF members."

This prompted one of our 'techie' discussions and led to some valuable information on recording onto CD-Rs. It transpires that, though these are considered the most stable medium, they have a finite life and that for some of the cheaper CD-Rs on the market this may be as little as 5 years. The recommended medium for archiving is Audio Gold disks which are not, unfortunately, made any more and the British Library may have bought up the whole UK stock for their own archiving. Audio Silver discs are a good alternative and are claimed to have a life of about 50 years before the recording starts to degrade. The first sign of trouble is usually tracking problems.

Another fascinating revelation is that it is damage to the label side of a disk that is more serious. Scratching causes loss of signal but, interestingly, the use of solvent based inks or labels with inappropriate adhesives can cause delamination. The BL are no longer labelling archive disks, relying on the disk code for identification.

Andrew Smith says:

I am very grateful to Steve Gardham for his help on my Father's recordings. I sent him a CD of about 30 unidentified 'odds and ends'. He's already given me useful pointers to quite a lot of them, and others he's published in 'Songs Under the Microscope'. Many thanks Steve.

In the same e-mail Andy mentioned that he had heard a recording of Liza Carthy singing 'The Willow Tree' - a song of his Father's that he has mentioned in these pages before. This sparked a memory in your Secretary's increasingly feeble brain and the realisation that I have been listening to Danny Stradling sing this song for a number of years. An indication that hearing a song does not mean that you will recognise it in print - an aspect of oral transmission that could possibly keep a postgraduate researcher in clover for some years. My apologies to Andy for having asked the question more than once on his behalf and for not realising that I was the one who could help!

George Frampton reports:

Since the November meeting, I have liaised with a former EFDSS organiser who revived the hooden horse custom at a society function in 1939, and who has forwarded me her papers on the subject.

I am also liaising with Paul Cowdell with some of his own research into musical tradition in Kent. He is looking at three singing families in Romney Marsh as outlined at the last meeting, together with memories of hop pickers in London's East End. I am also looking at the family of Jack Pierce from whom Charlie Bridger once learnt 'the Faithful Sailor Boy'. At the moment, I have reason to believe that Jack is still alive, but very elderly (otherwise 'Jack' was a nickname).

TSF BUSINESS:

i FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting will be held on July 5th 2003 in Gloucester (organised by Martin Graebe)

Unfortunately, and despite all we said, a meeting of the Journal Committee and the concert for Fred Jordan to be held in London mean that it is not feasible to hold our meeting in Northumberland on November 22nd This meeting will now take place on November 15th . Please erase this date which you pencilled in your diary and re-pencil accordingly.

ii SUPPORT FOR BRITISH LIBRARY

It was agreed by those present that we should, as noted at the July 2002 meeting, write to the BL supporting the TME project and offering, particularly, to assist with the production of a CD featuring material gathered during the project. If the samples are chosen from the collection of TSF members then the issues over permissions etc will be reduced considerably.

iii SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions become due in May - members present were invited to pay up immediately.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Forum was held before breaking for lunch.

The treasurer, Doc Rowe, reported that, because we had been fortunate in keeping the costs of arranging meetings down, due to the generosity of the EFDSS, Sheffield University and others that we have accumulated a balance of £258.95 (after taking out Secretarial expenses and the donation mentioned above to the Frank Kidson memorial).

It is felt that the current subscription period starting in May is confusing and it was proposed that we change the subscription year to be the calendar year. This was proposed, seconded and carried. The next subscription year, therefore, will run from January 2004.

The current officers all indicated that they would be willing to be re-elected to the same positions. Volunteers were sought to stand for any of the positions but no one wished to do so. The current officers were all, accordingly, proposed, seconded and elected and they remain, therefore:

Chair: Steve Roud

Treasurer: Doc Rowe

Secretary: Martin Graebe

FORUM FOCUS -

Chris Coe - The Usher's Well Project

Chris talked with great enthusiasm about the new project that she is engaged in. This involves her using her artistic, musical and theatrical skills in creating a presentation based on the ballad, 'The Wife of Usher's Well' which has long been a favourite of hers. She is working with a writer, Deb Middleton, Barry Callaghan and John Adams on video and Lucy Adams on dance. She described the development of the concept of the song and linking images that enrich the story. The product will be made available as a DVD.

Joanne Green - Football Chants

Joanne is a PhD student at the university and this talk was based on the work she is doing. She described football chants as an example of 'blasons populaires' - the chants which social groups use to express their identity and superiority to others. Football chants are a modern, living and changing form of these which makes their study so interesting. Joanne has been listening to chants across the leagues and at different levels. She divided football chants into those related to nicknames, integrative chants, divisive chants and anthems. Parodies are frequently used. Singing and chanting is integral to the occasion - indeed the absence of song may be commented on by the opposing side - in song of course. Fan sites on the Internet are now important to the transmission process with new chants often being published on these sites first.

Julia Bishop and David Atkinson - The Carpenter Collection

Julia, with David's assistance, presented the work they have been doing on the Carpenter collection and, particularly, showed the prototype of the web site that is the key output of their work. This is an electronic catalogue of the Carpenter collection. They described the development of the catalogue as well as giving us some background about James Madison Carpenter and his remarkable achievement over 6 years and 40,000 miles. Since the meeting the website has been made available and can be visited at www.hrionline.ac.uk/carpenter.

What is available at present is purely an index and it rapidly becomes obvious, when you look at the index, that this is a very large collection indeed. In a sense, though, it is a taste of what it is hoped will be available in the future, which will include song texts, photographs and sound recordings. Eventually it will form part of the 'American Memory' project.

THANKS

Thanks to Dr Jonathan Stock and the University of Sheffield Music Department for allowing us the use of their facilities and for providing the tea, coffee and biscuits in copious quantities. And to the speakers, Chris Coe, Joanne Green, Julia Bishop and David Atkinson for their excellent presentations.

Martin Graebe

8th May 2003

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Notes from the meeting of 30th November 2002 held at Cecil Sharp House, London

The meeting was chaired by Steve Roud and was attended by 12 people

Present:

David Atkinson, Shan Cowan, Paul Cowdell, Gwilym Davies, George Frampton, Steve Gardham, Martin Graebe, Felicity Greenland, Keith Holland, Peter Robson, Steve Roud and Andrew Smith

Apologies:

Frankie Armstrong, Elaine Bradtke, Greg Butler, Eddie Cass, Jim Carroll, Ron and Jenny Day, Dave

Eckersley, Ruairidh Greig, Peter Kennedy, Paul Marsh, Pat McKenzie, John Moulden, Toby Parker, Bob and Jaqueline Patten, Doc Rowe, Ian Russell, Derek Schofield, Sam and Ellie Simmons, Janet Topp-Fargion, Yvette Staelens, Marilyn Tucker, Eddie Upton, and Paul Wilson

INFORMAL REVIEW OF MEMBERS ACTIVITIES

The meeting opened, as usual, with an informal review of activities by members

Peter Robson has been studying aspects of Thomas Hardy's work, particularly cross-referencing the songs he refers to in his novels to information in the Hardy manuscripts. Among the interesting items he has found is a small collection of songs and fragments, not all of which he has been able to identify successfully. Steve Gardham suggested that if he passed them on to him they could be included in the 'Songs under the Microscope' feature in English Dance and Song. Peter has also looked at Hardy's Grandfather's songbook and at other Hardy Song manuscripts. These have not been looked at systematically in the past and there is a great deal of work that can yet be done.

Gwilym Davies reminded us of his CD of Hampshire songs called 'There's a clear Crystal Stream' which he revealed at the last meeting. Since then there have been a couple of enjoyable launch events for the CD. He also talked about attending Wiggy Smith's funeral

Martin Graebe reported that he has continued his study of Baring-Gould's song collecting on Dartmoor in preparation for the library lecture given at Cecil Sharp House on the occasion of the recent EFDSS Annual Gathering. A new study of Baring-Gould's activity in Cornwall had also been carried out in order that a new presentation could be delivered at the annual Baring-Gould Study Day in October. This study also included a review of Baring-Gould's relationship with George Gardiner when the latter was first starting collecting and visited Baring-Gould while collecting in Cornwall. In July a 12 day visit was made to Iceland, following the tracks of Baring-Gould's 1862 journey as a young man. This has clarified a number of aspects of that visit which will be the subject of a future publication. With the assistance of Shan Cowan work has continued on transcription of the songs in the Baring-Gould manuscripts. Over this year a lot of effort has gone into the repertoire of Sam Fone and it has been a particular pleasure to have met one of Fone's descendants and to have learnt a great deal more about Sam's life from him. Continued assistance from Chris Bearman has led to further understanding of biographical details of singers in Devon and Cornwall.

Keith Holland has been in correspondence with Christopher Cawt about his traditional material.

Steve Gardham is retiring from teaching shortly and will take the opportunity to do more research and publishing. He has now been right through the Bodleian and Madden ballad collections and is also working through the Pepys and Roxborough collections. Steve is also working with a manuscript record of the repertoire of a young woman from Robin Hood's Bay, hoping that it will be possible to publish it in the near future. He is also studying individual ballads such as 'Stalbrow' and developing the links to local history records, including gravestones. He is also looking at 'Jock of Hazelgreen' believing it to have a Yorkshire origin. Steve is keen to see a new book of ballads and suggest that a team could be assembled to produce a book that achieved what Child failed to do, rather than just regurgitating his work.

Paul Cowdell is interested in traditional song from Kent (his parents were from Romney Marsh. A discussion with a local shopkeeper who sold drums to a man who played in a trio at a local pub led to some learning about the local music 'economy'. He had also found an old people's reminiscence group who knew some songs. This led to a discussion about family gatherings and the suggestion that a lot of people may have recordings of family singing sessions that might be of interest. It was suggested that it might be interesting to collect such material, possibly by a national appeal.

Andrew Smith showed us a prototype CD, prepared with the help of Paul Marsh. Of songs and fragments recorded by his father that is intended for the family (though he is happy to make copies available to TSF members if they wish for it).

David Atkinson's new book 'The English Traditional Ballad - Theory, Method and Practise' is now published and we were pleased to be able to inspect a copy and to discuss it with him. He also reported that the Folk Music Journal would be published shortly. Work on the Carpenter collection is now drawing to a close. The catalogue will be available on the web at some point in the future (through the University of Sheffield) and it is hoped that a digital version of the collection will appear via the Library of Congress in due course. It is not, now, likely that the hoped-for 'critical edition' will be published. David is presently working on an article for the Journal on the textuality of traditional songs, working on the idea that traditional songs move between written and oral sources at different times. He is also working on editing the papers from the 1998 Sheffield Centenary Conference.

George Frampton finally finished his book and CD on the Millen family last year. Over the last two years he has been pursuing the Hooden Horse. Every time he thinks he has discovered them all another turns up

Steve Roud's work on a Dictionary of Superstitions is nearing completion. He is hoping to work on a book of songs next year. Earlier in the year he had an opportunity to visit the American Folklore society - there is a lot going on over there but they are also very aware of the good work being done in the UK.

A number of members who were not present sent notes of their activities:

Chris Coe wrote saying:

"I've just heard today that I've got a Solo Artist Research & Development grant from Yorkshire Arts to work on the Ballads & methods/style of performance. (Particularly with regard to me being a visual artist as part of my trade.) I`M SO EXCITED."

John Moulden wrote:

I'm still pursuing research into the printed ballad in Ireland and finding very interesting things which will see publication some day soonish.

Sam Simmons wrote to say

Could you announce please:

Somers Folklife new Directory out 2/12/02, mostly folk club/festival/performer stuff, but a folklife section too. will be copied to web in a week or two, on website

<http://www.somers-folklife.com>

Digital printing now enables us to expand as we can now do decent quality short print-runs. Therefore our FOLKLIFE STUDIES section will in future have free listings for non-members of Somers Folklife. TSF Members are welcome to send in under the following headings:

Folklife Researchers

Folklife Lecturers/Speakers

Folklife Archives (in specialist Folklife or general archives)

Folklife Museums (in specialist Folklife or general museums)

Libraries (in specialist Folklife or general libraries)

Folklife Studies: courses

Trad. (pre-1900) events & customs listings (participants only please, no 3rd-party listings).

If you are interested, please contact Sam.

Other points of discussion included the question of what TSF members should do with their collections when they die. While a slightly distasteful thought, it is an important consideration as we all get older. This question has been raised before Steve Roud repeated the advice that Forum members

might like to consider when drawing up their wills or otherwise making their wishes known. There are three possibilities that can be considered.

Bequeath it to the Vaughan-Williams Memorial Library. Before doing so it would be as well to check that the collection could be accommodated

The second possibility would be to give it to a local archive who could look after it

The third suggestion is that the collection could be given to a young person with an interest in folk song as a basis for learning and developing their interest (The example of Father Kenneth Loveless giving his collection to Kathryn Roberts was quoted)

TSF BUSINESS:

i MEETINGS

It was agreed in principle at the last meeting that it would be better to agree meetings for the year in advance. Accordingly the dates and locations for 2003 meetings have been agreed as follows:

March 29th 2003 - Sheffield (Steve Gardham)

July 5th 2003 - Gloucester (Martin Graebe)

November 22nd 2003 - Northumberland (Steve Gardham)

Please pencil these dates in your diary

ii ARCHIVES/RESOURCES

In addition to the list of 'targets' listed after the last meeting we identified some additional items that we would like to include. These were:

Missing manuscripts - there are a number of collectors for whom we do not know the location (if any) of their publications. Examples given included Joy Hyman, Doreen Senior, William Barrett and Charles Lolly.

Music Hall - list of sources

Book list

Some suggestions were also made of people who might be approached by the Secretary to ask them if they might contribute particular items.

iii EFDSS

It was agreed that, although we had been allowed the use of the facilities at Cecil Sharp House free of charge, that we would make a donation to the EFDSS as a gesture of thanks and support..

FORUM FOCUS - 'Song Resources on the Web'

Steve Roud led a session in which we shared our knowledge of useful resources on the web. This was a very interesting session at which all of us learned about some web-sites or were able to suggest possibilities to meet specific requests or needs. After this discussion there was time to look through some of these sites and for tutorials in using some of the less obvious ones.

The output from this session is attached as a [list of sites](#). All of these have been checked and are current at the time of writing. The list enables you to access the sites described via hyperlinks (blue clicky things!)

THANKS

Thanks to the EFDSS for allowing us the use of the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library for the day. Thanks also to Felicity Greenman for attending, for contributing to the discussion and for showing us (and even selling us!) various EFDSS publications.

Martin Graebe

1st January 2003

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Notes from the meeting of 13th July 2002 held in Gloucester

The meeting was chaired by Steve Roud and was attended by 16 people (some for part of the time)

Present:

Greg Butler, Paul Burgess, Shan Cowan, Gwilym Davies, Martin Graebe, Keith Holland, Lewis and Jane Jones, Peter Kennedy, Andrew King, Doc Rowe, Steve Roud, Sam and Ellie Simmons, Rod Stradling, Yvette Staelens

Apologies:

Frankie Armstrong, David Atkinson, Brian Ballinger, Julia Bishop, Elaine Bradtke, Jim Carroll, Dave Eckersley, Ruairidh Greig, Pat McKenzie, John Moulden, Toby Parker, Bob and Jaqueline Patten, Ian Russell, Derek Schofield, Janet Topp-Fargion, Paul Wilson and Marilyn Tucker and Eddie Upton.

INFORMAL REVIEW OF MEMBERS ACTIVITIES

The meeting opened, as is our custom, with an informal review of activities by members

Andrew King has been working (at the National Sound Archive) on Bob and Jackie Patten's collection. At the same time Claire Gilliam has been working on John Howson's collection. Work on Reg Hall's collection is still in progress but Roy Palmer's material (Mainly George Dunn and Cecilia Costello) has been completed apart from a recently discovered tape. At present the collections are only being copied and indexed. They are not being 'cleaned up' at present.

A discussion of a number of aspects of the NSA's work followed. As ever there is something of a struggle to find a balance between the work that needs to be done and the realities of budgetary constraints. There are no plans, at present, to issue any recordings on CD, though the Jubilee CD had been a success. It was suggested that we should write, as an organisation, to NSA offering our help to compile and issue a CD based on recordings by colleagues as a sampler of what is available in the archives.

Martin Graebe talked a little about his work on Baring-Gould, previewing his afternoon session. The work has, so far, fallen into three phases – Examining and indexing the material, Publishing it as microfiche (The Baring-Gould Heritage Project) and now (with Shan Cowan) 'mining' the manuscripts and transcribing the songs. This latter phase has been linked to particular themes – Dartmoor, Songs from women, Sam Fone etc. Eventually he hopes to get a chance to enjoy singing the songs!

Paul Burgess, likewise, previewed his afternoon talk about his work on Gloucestershire themes. He is hoping to publish a book of Gloucestershire tunes in September.

Doc Rowe explained the status of the move of his collection to Sheffield and the support he has received to make this possible. He described the new facilities which he is currently doing some internal building work on, and confirmed that, at present he had two years occupancy paid for. He is currently sorting out his photographic collection (40,000 negatives) using a computer-based system to speed up the work. He has also been involved in the PEL campaign, providing advice on the potential impact on traditional culture.

Greg Butler has recently found himself in the fortunate position of being able to get more out of his database than he has been putting in. His database is now in Microsoft Access and anyone who wants a copy should e-mail him. He has recently obtained a new microfiche reader/printer that also enables the scanned images to be saved as PDF files. He has maintained his interest in the Harkness ballad collection. Greg also talked about one of his recent projects, A Hertfordshire Garland, as an example of how to use traditional material to do a show based on local history themes.

Lewis Jones' booklet of songs from George Butterworth is now ready for publication. He is writing an article for publication on Sharp and Scatology. He is planning to do more work on his web-site, particularly aiming to get more songs on the site in PDF format. He has also been working on getting his paper from the 1998 Sheffield conference ready for publication.

Peter Kennedy has been working on a film project about Mummers around the world. He has also been looking at aspects of Kennedy family history after studying some recordings done by his Aunt Margaret. He also has a recording made by his father, which describes his life up until about 1935. His business with 'FolkTrax' has expanded considerably as a result of using the Internet and he is looking to take on someone to help with this business. He reminded us that his library in Gloucester is open to anyone who wants to make use of it. Though many of his recordings are now in the NSA, Peter reported that the bulk of his collection is not backed up in any way. Peter also reminisced a little more and told us how his work with Ludwig Koch on recording birdsong in the field had led to the formation of the BBC Natural History Unit in Bristol. He revealed that David Attenborough's first programme for the BBC was actually about Traditional Song and he revealed that it was him that first told George Martin about a remarkable pop group that he had heard of in Liverpool called the Quarrymen.

Gwilym Davies has been helping one of his fellow performers in researching music hall songs. He has also been re-examining the recordings that he made in Hampshire in the early '70s and this has led to the issue of a CD called 'There's a clear Crystal Stream' which is available from Gwilym. Most of his collection has now gone to the NSA. He has some more recent recordings, including video of Wiggy Smith and Ray Driscoll.

Keith Holland read out an interesting list of places where he had, in the past, recorded May Garlands in Buckinghamshire.

Rod Stradling (who dropped in for a brief visit) talked about the project he is engaged in on the recordings of the Brazil family which is funded by the Greenwich Traditional Music Co-operative. This is based on recordings by Gwilym Davies, Mike Yates and, it is hoped, Pete Sheppard. Rod has also offered to digitise Pete Sheppard's whole collection, possibly for inclusion in the proposed Gloucestershire Archive of Traditional Music and Song.

Steve Roud is working on yet another book!

TECHNOLOGY:

(A summary of technological matters used during the day which may be of help to members)

A question was asked, whether anyone had experience of using voice recognition software to transcribe songs. A number of people have tried and the consensus was that the software available at present cannot cope with noisy recordings or multiple voices (it generally needs to be trained to recognise a particular speaker).

Several of those present (Peter Kennedy, Paul Burgess and Martin Graebe) use Cool Edit Pro as their computer based studio software.

Greg Butler has the capability to scan complete books into PDF Files

TSF BUSINESS:

i Treasurer's report:

Doc reported that we currently have 29 paid-up members and that we have £237.08 in the bank, since there has not been a requirement to hire rooms recently and because the Secretary has not put in a claim for expenses for a while (blush!). It was confirmed that the subscription remains at £6 and that the subscription year runs from May to May each year. 2002 subs thus became due in May.

ii Meetings

Meeting venues were discussed and it was agreed that the principle of the meeting moving around the country remained a good one. It gave a chance for people to attend at least one meeting a year without having to travel too far. The idea of holding the meeting in a member's home was also a good idea since the numbers attending meetings only rarely exceeded those that could fit in a reasonable size living room.

The next meeting is planned to take place on Saturday 30th November in London.

The New Year meeting will be arranged in Birmingham (Lewis Jones)

ARCHIVES

The objective of the exercise is to produce a living document of traditional song (and music) resources in private hands that describes the content, size, location and availability for study of the material. Past work (particularly John Howson's document) gives an indication but no source of information is complete. It was suggested that we need to produce a questionnaire to be sent to known/suspected 'resources' to build a database of what is available and to publish it on the TSF web site. The choice of the word 'resources' is deliberate – we are seeking more than just archives.

There were a number of other suggestions about the provision of resources, including:

Traditional Song FAQs

Notes for guidance on the provision people should make for their collection on their death

Annotated bibliography of books on folk song (currently David Herron's list meets this need)

Recommended book list

A 'Brains Trust'

List of collectors (from all eras) with brief biography

List of traditional singers (from all eras) with brief biography

It was agreed that we would seek volunteers from within the forum to provide this information

FORUM FOCUS - 'Out of the West'

Paul Burgess: - 'In search of the Whistling Sewerman'

Paul talked about the background to his recent paper in the Folk Music Journal (Paul Burgess, 'The Mystery of the Whistling Sewermen: How Cecil Sharp Discovered Gloucestershire Morris Dancing', Folk Music Journal 8.2 (2002), 178–194) and his approach to the search for William Stagg. His theme was that of the search and the role that luck plays in that search. He also showed how he had to overcome uncertainties and inaccuracies in Cecil Sharp's documentation. His search also illustrated the importance of looking for patterns in the way people moved and grouped themselves together as a way to following the progress of individuals. This was a great detective story and illustrated well the difficulties that are encountered when following up on the lives of 'ordinary' people.

Martin Graebe - 'So Much Imperfection!'

Martin talked about the work that had been done since the rediscovery of the Baring-Gould manuscripts at Killerton House in 1992. At first the emphasis was on understanding and indexing the manuscripts. This led to the realisation that the Plymouth manuscripts had given a very imperfect view of Baring-Gould's achievement since they contained only 202 songs, representing his earliest collecting as opposed to the 703 entries in his Personal Fair Copy. This was because he never completed the work of transcribing his work for Plymouth Library. This means, for example, that one of the singers from whom he collected the most songs, Sam Fone, has only 8 songs in the Plymouth Ms whereas Baring-Gould actually collected over 100 songs from him.

The second stage of the work (with Wren Trust) was making the manuscripts available on microfiche and placing copies in key libraries, including the Vaughan-Williams Memorial Library, so that they can be examined by a much wider range of scholars. The material has also formed the basis for community work by Wren Trust in West Devon. The Baring-Gould Festival and Study Break also provides an opportunity for people to work in a concentrated way on the material in the manuscripts and on musical techniques in general.

The third stage has been about 'mining' the material to meet specific needs of various individuals and groups and dealing with enquiries. Apart from a study of Baring-Gould's visit to Iceland in 1865 most of the work has been related to Baring-Gould's relationship with the singers of Devon and Cornwall and the material he collected from them. Working with Chris Bearman a considerable amount of work has been done on confirming census details of the c150 singers from whom Baring-Gould collected. Photographs of some singers have been discovered. Location shots have been taken for comparison with contemporary photographs. Working with Shan Cowan we have transcribed all the songs that Baring-Gould obtained from women, either himself or through the female collectors who sent him material. We have also transcribed the 100+ songs that were collected from Sam Fone. Both of these projects will form the basis of publications planned for the next few months

Future work includes continuing work on the notebooks discovered since 1992, which are still largely unstudied (though they have now been indexed). Further study of Baring-Gould's links with other collectors, particularly Sharp, Kidson and Broadwood is also needed.

In summary, there is a considerable amount of work to do. The medium term plan remains that a new publication on Baring-Gould as a song collector will be produced when the work reaches a suitable point. In the mean-time it has been a great pleasure to sing some songs to folk audiences that have not been heard for over 100 years!

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Notes from the meeting of 9th Feb 2002 held at Sheffield University Music Department

The meeting started with the usual informal review of members' activities and projects, on this occasion chaired by Julia Bishop. Other members present were Andrew King, Paul and Liz Davenport, Ron and Jenny Day, Malcolm Douglas, Keith Holland, David Atkinson, Gwilym Davies, Steve Gardham, Ruairidh Greig, Dave Eckersley, Sylvia Needham and Ray Padgett. The meeting was also attended by Sheffield University music students, Carla Ribeiro, Mojgan Mirtaheri, Mohammad Azadehfar and B.C.Bartholomew, and their Lecturer in Musicology, our host, Jonathan Stock. James Merryweather of York whose interests were in early music also attended.

Activities and Projects

Gwilym Davies is working with Rod Stradling on Musical Traditions recordings of gypsy singers, notably the Brazil family.

Andrew King of the National Sound Archive is currently working on the collections of Keith Summers, Reg Hall, Mally Dow, Roy Palmer and John Howson. He was mainly at the meeting to record Steve Gardham's presentation in the afternoon. He posed the question, "How do we go about linking up the various widespread archives around the country?" This reminded me of one of our original aims which was to identify and catalogue all of the folk song / broadside collections in the country. This ought to be an important discussion point for the next meeting.

Dave Eckersley has been working on 'Boxing the Compass', the new edition of Roy Palmer's 'Oxford Book of Sea Songs'. Inspection copies of this paperback were passed round. There followed a discussion of which books he could consider for reprinting in new editions in the future. Suggestions to Dave please.

Sylvia Needham was there to represent Ryburn Three step and mentioned new posts and projects by Steve Harrison and Vic Gammon.

Roy Padgett mentioned performing the songs of local source singers such as Olive and Sid Austin, and also his recordings of Tom and Barbara Brown.

Paul Davenport, new editor of English Dance and Song, mentioned the latest developments on the EFDSS National Executive such as work on the Projects Committee.

Ron Day expressed his interest in all aspects of family group singing, both of source singers and of revival singers. He is also involved with other members of the South Riding Folk Network in bringing Doc Rowe and his collection to reside in Sheffield.

Malcolm Douglas, webmaster of the SRFN is working on a new edition of Purslow's 'Wanton Seed' in collaboration with the EFDSS.

Keith Holland, after studying and recording morris, May garlands and Jack-in-the-green, is moving on to recording May Songs.

Steve Gardham has taken on a renewed interest in his folk song collection (more later) and is currently investigating the Bodleian Broadside Ballads website for links with folk song.

David Atkinson and Julia Bishop updated the members on their work on the Carpenter Collection, which hopefully will result in publication in book format and on the net. David had just finished working on his first thousand pages, mainly songs, singing games and sea shanties. He has also just had published a book 'English Traditional Ballad Theory, Method and Practice' and is preparing a paper on 'Orality, Textuality and Tradition' for the next Ballad Conference. Julia talked about problems with copyright and tracing relatives of Carpenter's sources. She also has a longer-term project to write a biography of Carpenter, but is also currently studying how disabled children play in the playground.

Ruairidh Greig is working on the mss. of William Alexander Barrett and has traced some of his papers, sold after his death, to various libraries. He has also carried out research on William Delft, the writer of "Three Score and Ten".

TSF business was postponed as none of the officers of the Forum were present. Doc Rowe sent in the message that MANY OF US ARE BEHIND WITH SUBSCRIPTIONS. We perhaps need a more regulated system of reminders.

During the lunch break Dave Eyre of Sheffield set up a stall selling books on folklore and music.

The afternoon session started with a very well organised talk by Paul Davenport based on his MMus thesis for Sheffield University, on the Six Blind Fiddlers of Sheffield. Paul, accompanied by his trusty laptop and his research-hungry wife Liz, presented evidence to suggest that the blind musicians of Sheffield in the late 18th / early 19th centuries were very well organised and highly respected, even to the extent that they may have fulfilled the functions of a guild, each musician having a recognised circuit of performance in the city and all of them meeting up regularly in a central pub, the 'Q in the Corner'.

Steve Gardham finished off the afternoon with a presentation of recordings of source singers from his own collection, which was mostly made in East Yorkshire in the 60s and 70s. Steve recently donated his original tapes to The NSA and now has all of his collection on CD so each track was available at the touch of a button. Aply assisted by Ruairidh Greig who kindly agreed to work the CD player, he started his talk by playing and singing his own family songs and then worked his way through shanty singers from the days of sail to the many country singers in the East Riding of Yorkshire. Unfortunately he only got through about half of his intended programme, finishing with his latest find 'Hedon Road Gaol' a cracking version of the usual family of prison songs. It would appear that the only songs connected with Hull are about crime and prison!

Finally TSF thanks go to Paul for organising the day, but especially to Jonathan Stock of Sheffield University for allowing us to use the Music Department's facilities and generally looking after us during the day, providing refreshment and technical equipment in a very unobtrusive way.

Notes written by Steve Gardham

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Notes from the meeting of 12th May 2001 held at Cecil Sharp House, London

The meeting was chaired by Steve Roud and was attended by 10 people.

Present:

David Atkinson, Elaine Bradtke, Shan Cowan, Martin Graebe, Keith Holland, Lewis Jones, Andrew King, Steve Roud, Janet Topp-Fargion and Eddie Upton

Apologies:

Paul Cowdell, Gwilym Davies, Ron and Jenny Day, Dave Eckersley, George Frampton, Steve Gardham, John Moulden, Bob and Jaqueline Patten, Ian Russell, Paul Wilson and Marilyn Tucker.

INFORMAL REVIEW OF MEMBERS ACTIVITIES

The meeting opened with informal reports by those present of the work they have recently been engaged in and in a general exchange of related ideas. Key points from each of those exchanges were as follows:

Lewis Jones continues work on his book about George Butterworth. He is hoping that copy and artwork will be completed by September with the aim of publishing before Christmas. (Working title is 'Cupid and the Ploughboy'). He is also working on getting music onto his web-site as midi files.

Keith Holland has had a quiet time, but retains his interest May customs.

Elaine Bradtke talked, on behalf of the Vaughan-Williams Memorial Library about plans to consolidate the Libraries facilities within Cecil Sharp House. Planning for re-locating the library to the lower level of the house is now well developed and is to be the subject of a lottery bid in the near future. Elaine herself is working on an index for the Folklore Society as well as articles for publication

David Atkinson (like Elaine) is waiting for the Carpenter project to start in July when he will be part of the team led by Julia Bishop which will be producing an illustrative index of the Carpenter collection (Other members of the team are Tom McLean, Eddie Cass and Bob Walser). This project is seen as a first step towards the ultimate publication of the entire collection in some form. David recently attended the Ballad Conference in Budapest where the standard of papers given as well as the organisation, was very high. Ian Russell delivered a paper on fox-hunting songs. Next years conference will be in Belgium. David's work on his book about ballads continues apace.

Andrew King talked with enthusiasm about his work on transferring cylinders and 78 rpm discs from the BBC and Vaughan-Williams Library on CD. Later in the day we were able to hear some of these recordings which include transcriptions of Joseph Taylor at the correct speed as deduced from the information given by Grainger. All the EFDSS cylinders have now been transcribed and catalogued. They include some unexpected material, such as a selection of gaelic songs recorded by Lucy Broadwood, as well as set of Welsh language material from a presently unknown recordist. The English material is from a number of sources including Grainger, whose material is now fully documented. Interestingly, Cecil Sharp appears never to have made phonograph recordings on a first visit to his singers.

A particularly interesting find was a notebook by Vaughan-Williams (case 8F) which was discovered to contain a list of the recordings that he made, many of which are now missing. This notebook was also found to contain some loose sheets, one of which was in Butterworth's hand and was the m/s of the song 'Haste Away' which had previously been thought lost. Andrew has been appointed as a project worker (with Clare Gilliam) to the National Sound Archive, working on the post-war collection and transferring material onto CD and cataloguing it. His work at Cecil Sharp House will be continued by Tony Black.

Martin Graebe talked briefly about some of the work resulting from recent queries about the Baring-Gould collection and about the conclusions from his work on Baring-Gould's visit to Iceland as a young man.

Eddie Upton talked about his work with Folk South-West, a regional development agency, set up as a charity in 1992 and still funded by South-West Arts. They now have a staff of 5 people whose mission is promoting enjoyment, participation and creativity in folk music and dance in the South West. They have recently produced a resource pack for teachers called 'Singing Times' which is aimed at Key Stage 3. Their next big project is a series of events to celebrate the centenary of the collection of 'The Seeds of Love' in 2003. It is hoped that this will include an International Conference centred on Sharp's work.

Steve Roud is working on a book about Superstitions for Penguin and has a further project in the pipeline for another book for Penguin, this time on Children's Folklore. He is hoping that his song and broadside indices will be made available on the web next year.

Other news from members and general items were presented by the Chairman and Secretary and included the following:

The 8th volume of the Greig-Duncan collection is to be published shortly

Llanerch press is, sadly, ceasing trading. They are clearing their stocks and some of their books are on offer at attractive prices. Their last publication is Roy Palmer's collection 'Thomas Ford's Ballads' (A Collection of sheets published by Thomas Ford of Chesterfield in the 1830s). Roy has a few copies of this book for sale.

Dave Eckersley writes that Roy Palmer's book on Sea Songs (originally the 'Oxford book of Sea Songs') has just been re-published by David Herron Publishing under the title 'Boxing the Compass' and includes new material. Dave is also writing for a new BBC website connected to the Mike Harding show.

Gwilym Davies is continuing to correspond with Ed Cray in California about bawdy songs and would be interested to hear from anyone with collections of such material.

(Other news can be found in the newsletter and on the website)

TSF BUSINESS

i Publications

Progress towards publications by the Forum remains slow - though the interest remains strong. A number of possibilities were talked about and there is still a strong interest in producing a basic collection of folk songs like the Penguin book. How to make this happen eludes us. Another possibility discussed was the possibility of a simple introduction to folk song like the old Shire publication. Martin Graebe agreed to look into this possibility a little more deeply.

It was noted that there is now the possibility of lottery funding to support recordings or publications that would not otherwise be viable.

ii Membership

Subscriptions for 2001 (still only £6!!) are now due and should be sent to the Treasurer, Doc Rowe at 4 Vesage Court, Leather Lane, London, EC1 N 7RE.

iii Website

Martin Graebe reported that the website continues to attract a significant number of visitors and is reaching a number of people who we wouldn't otherwise come into contact with. A proposal to purchase a domain name for the Forum was talked about and agreed in principle.

iv Date of next meeting

Eddie Upton offered to host a meeting of TSF on Saturday 29th September to coincide with the Workshop weekend he is arranging in Somerset. This possibility will be discussed and confirmed shortly.

FORUM FOCUS - 'Collectively Speaking

Steve Roud initiated a discussion on the idea of a National Collection as envisaged at the first meeting of the Forum. This remains a key goal for the Forum and is supported by all the members, though we may all have a different vision of what it is. Ian Russell pointed out at that first meeting that a 'National Collection', did not have to be in one place and gave the example of the 'National Plant Collection' which is distributed over many gardens throughout Britain. The key is that people know what material is where and can get access to what they need. The Library of Congress on-line collection 'American Memory' is seen as a good model of what can be achieved. While the scope of the Traditional Song Forum includes all of the Countries of Great Britain it is felt that, in many respects, it is actually England that is the poor relation in respect of collections of its traditional song and, while we would support collections in Wales, Scotland and Ireland it is felt that, at present, England needs extra help.

Janet Topp-Fargion talked about the work of the NSA and, particularly, about the 2 year project alluded to above that Andrew King and Clare Gilliam have been recruited to work on. One of the main obstacles to making material from private collections available to a wider audience has been the issue of the rights of the original performers. Contacting over 7,000 singers or their relatives to obtain permission to disseminate the material is an impossible task. It was for this reason that the earlier project to make material for the archive available was postponed. For the present the priority is to get the material digitised - they have identified about 2000 hours of material. There is, however a project under way to construct an internal digitised music service (using an intranet)

In Janet's view, discussions about 'virtual archives' don't go far enough. What is to be done with the original material - particularly if a compression system like MP3 is used for 'publishing' the material.. Where are the digital masters to be stored? NSA have considered this as part of their disaster planning which also ensures that there are copies of material at a number of different locations.

Eddie Upton noted that most Artists and Collectors have a sense of mission and the 'rules' by which they work are driven by moral considerations rather than by law. Ethnomusicologists have more problems with some of these ideas than they do.

Eddie also reported that the EFDSS Library Advisory Committee has recently been disbanded. After some discussion it was agreed as a matter of principle that TSF is seen to actively support EFDSS and ensure through EFDSS that the Vaughan-Williams Memorial Library is supported and developed for the future.

It was also re-iterated that the VWML is seen as the place of choice for the deposition of manuscripts and books and that the NSA is the preferred place for depositing sound recordings. The idea of a collective of collectors who look after the interests of collectors who have died was discussed. Janet T-F agreed to establish whether there was any interest on the part of her colleagues in the British Library Music Manuscript department in folk-related material.

It was also agreed that we should seek formal approval from the Folk Arts Network for us to use the report by John Howson as a basis for an on-line guide to collections. This is seen as a valuable first step to creating a 'National Archive'

Thanks

Many thanks to Elaine Bradtke for organising the meeting and to the EFDSS for allowing us, once again, to use the facilities at Cecil Sharp House

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Notes of the meeting on Saturday 17 February 2001 at the Station Hotel, Sutton Coldfield

In the absence of the Secretary, Lewis Jones's wife, Jane EM Jones, took the Minutes.

Present: Steve Roud (Chair), Gwilym Davies, Chas Whiting, Andrew Smith, Eddie Cass, Chris Ryall, Steve Gardham, John Denny (Birmingham Traditional Folk Group), Sandra J. Robinson, Elaine Bradtke, Doc Rowe, Keith Holland, David Atkinson, Lewis Jones, Jane Jones, Andrew King, Sam Simmons, Eleanor Simmons, Dr. Graham Dick (Birmingham District Council).

Apologies: Janet Topp-Fargion, Martin Graebe, Julia Bishop, Marilyn Tucker, Paul Wilson, Paul Marsh, Frankie Armstrong, Bob Patten, Jackie Patten, Dave Eckersley, Peter Robson, Ruairidh Greig.

Apologies were also received from Pam Bishop, who was ill, and therefore unable to make her presentation on Charles Parker and the Charles Parker Archive in the afternoon session.

Morning Session

Most of the morning session was taken up with reports from members on their activities.

Steve Gardham reported that Ballads were being introduced into the schools at Year 7, to run through Years 8 and 9. This is Unit 5 of the New Syllabus Orders for Key Stage 3. There was some discussion about how we might encourage the use of traditional tunes to supplement the literary texts. Steve also asked for material for his "Songs Under the Microscope" feature in English Dance and Song. Steve is hoping to put together a collection of ballads from Robin Hood Bay.

John Denny told us about the Birmingham and West Midlands Folk Federation, which, among other things, was attempting to assemble material on the Midlands folk scene in the 1960s, 70s and 80s. The Federation also backs folk events in the area, and assures losses.

Eddie Cass expressed an interest in traditional drama, and told the group that a book on Lancashire Pace Egging will be published later this year. Eddie is actively collaborating with people in the USA and in Newfoundland. He also gave an update on Julia Bishop's attempts to fund research into the Carpenter Collection. Maddison Carpenter came from the USA to England from 1928 to 1935 and collected folk songs. This huge collection is now lodged at the Library of Congress, but it has not been edited or published. Although some of it is on microfilm, it is not indexed. Julia Bishop had applied to the Arts and Humanities Research Council for a large grant, but this application was not successful. She has now reapplied and funding has become available for smaller projects. Only Julia will be fully employed, but others will work on a part-time basis. There is an assumption that this work will be based in Sheffield, but it could go to Aberdeen.

Andrew Smith told us that due to his move he has been rather inactive lately. He did, however, bring some older songs formerly sung by his father (1909-1987) who had been a farm worker in the Ludlow area. He also played his father's favourite song, which is well known, "I slipped and cut my bum," which his father self-censored.

Charles Whiting apologised that he would not be able to stay for the afternoon session. He therefore gave us his reminiscences of Charles Parker, the Banner Theatre Group and the Birmingham Midlands Folk Song Centre in the morning session. He added that copies of local songs formerly owned by the Centre were now lodged in the Birmingham Central Reference Library.

Gwilym Davies has opened a web site on Gloucestershire songs. Gwilym himself likes bawdy songs, and has made a link with Eddie Grey in California via email. Gwilym has contributed a song to the TSF website, and is selling various items including a CD of songs from Wiggie Smith, a local gypsy.

Elaine Bradke is indexing press cuttings referring to Cecil Sharp. She is now up to the Spring of 1908. She also told the group that attempts are being made to re-master the old cylinders. However, there is disagreement amongst the experts on how this should be done.

Lewis Jones apologised that the room we had originally booked was unavailable, but at least the one that we had came free. He said he was sorry for the delay in producing the TSF's first published folk song book, featuring songs collected by George Butterworth, but he hoped to have this ready for publication later this year. He had already got the music set up, and the main task remaining was to write the Introduction. He added that there were a number of excellent songs collected jointly by Butterworth and Francis Jekyll. Concerning these, we were in communication with the Jekyll family, and it was possible that permission might be obtained to add them to the collection. Lewis had brought along a couple of sample songs. Of these, he added, the versions of "Cupid the Ploughboy" were particularly fine. It was also possible that we might obtain the permission of the Bodleian Library

to use historic woodcuts from their excellent Traditional Ballads website. Doc Rowe added that he had photographs that could be used. Andrew King reported that he has found Butterworth MSS in the Vaughan Williams collection. Lewis replied that at present the plan was to start with the songs that had been published in early copies of the Journal, since these were presumably those which Butterworth himself thought most worthy of consideration by a wider audience.

Sandra Robinson, who makes a large contribution to local folk music as a performer, felt that she had nothing to contribute to the discussion at present, as she was new to the group.

Keith Holland is interested in May songs and traditions. He has recently been particularly involved with collecting information about May garlands.

Dave Atkinson is working on a book of English traditional ballads. He is also contributing a 2,000-word article on the ballad for an Internet dictionary. He is now joint secretary of the International Ballad Commission, which will be meeting in Budapest in April.

Doc Rowe announced that he had been headhunted by the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama as an advisor and consultant. They also wanted him to establish a digital database of Scottish traditional music from all over the world, to be supported by an Archive of books, films, and audio and video resources. This will eventually be available to the public. He hopes that when the model is established, the same thing can be done for England. From the Chair, Steve Roud commented that the notion of a National Collection should be on the agenda for every meeting. It was agreed that we should officially ask the National Sound Archive what their position is on a National Collection.

A message was received from our absent Secretary, Martin Graebe. The web address is: <http://www.tradsong.freeseve.uk> Martin wants material. Could members let him know of any interesting websites.

The Chair, Steve Roud, raised some business matters. There is £170 in the bank. The next meeting would be in London, in May, with details to be arranged by the Secretary.

Afternoon Session

Focus on Charles Parker

Presentation by Doc Rowe

Charles Parker, maker of the Radio Ballads was, mentor, colleague and friend to Doc Rowe. Doc was able to give us a real insight into the nature of the man as well as telling us about the way his work developed.

Charles came from Bournemouth. After a time as a navel officer he studied at Cambridge before joining the BBC in the early 1950's. In those days there were ideas about how things should be done which seem very strange now and which Charles Parker wanted to move away from. When documentaries were made, the voice of the working class person from whom the information was gathered was not used for broadcast. Instead, a script was produced and then an actor would read it onto a 2 minutes 30 seconds 78 rpm record. This meant a loss of authenticity.

Some of the technical problems such as static crackle were improved in about 1955 when portable tape recorders were introduced. It was, however, still not considered appropriate to use the real voices of the working class. Charles Parker wanted to make everyday life present to his listeners. A contact with the documentary filmmaker Dennis Mitchell was something of a turning point in this. Mitchell was able to share technical know how with Parker. Encouraged by this, and by an American programme called "The Lonesome Train" which used scripted voices and folk music, Parker went on to make Christmas Around the Box in 1954. This used recordings collected all over the country and was transmitted on Christmas Day.

After the tragic death of the railwayman John Axon in the mid 1950's, Charles Parker and the singer Ewan McColl went to the railway yard in Stockport where Mr. Axon had been based and recorded the voices of his work mates. This became the first of the Radio Ballads. Doc played Ewan McColl singing "The Real Life Story of a Railwayman" as an illustration.

As the series developed Peggy Seeger was brought in to provide the music. Doc felt that this gave an American and jazz-like quality, but the key thing was that now ordinary people were speaking and the programmes had a narrative order.

Doc told us of the quality of metaphor that Parker had found in the way ordinary people expressed themselves. He gave the example "railways went through you like Blackpool went through rock." When he was working on "Song of the Road," about the construction of the M1, Parker was again impressed by the focus and richness of language used by people doing boring jobs.

Sam Lerner, who had started fishing under sail in 1892 and had ended up in diesel boats was a great inspiration. He talked about his life and sang songs. Sam was the basis for the programme about fishing which was broadcast in 1961 and which went on to win the Prix d'Italia.

Charles Parker wanted to give back to the people the passion that education destroys, and his thoughts on this were particularly influenced by the mining communities of the North East. They contributed to the "Big Hewer," the ballad about mining. He found that miners could talk with authority on any subject. He remained friends with some of the miners he had met, and they influenced his political views.

Charles also made programmes about teenagers and about travellers. He was instrumental in setting up the Banner Theatre Company, and worked with great energy until his sudden death on 8 December 1980.

The vast amount of material that Charles Parker collected is now in Birmingham Central Reference Library, and Trustees administer the Archive. The next meeting of the Trustees is at 6 p.m. on Friday 4 May 2001.

Many thanks to Lewis Jones for organising the meeting, to Doc Rowe for his excellent presentation and, particularly, to Jane Jones for taking the notes of the meeting so excellently

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Notes from the meeting of 9th September 2000 held at the Guildhall Arts Centre, Gloucester

The morning session was chaired by Doc Rowe, and that in the afternoon by Steve Roud. The meeting was attended by 19 people.

Present:

David Atkinson, Greg Butler, Richard Chidlaw, Gwilym Davies, Dave Eckersley, Martin Graebe, Keith Holland, Lewis Jones, Peter and Beryl Kennedy, Roy Palmer, Peter Robson, Steve Roud, Doc Rowe, Sam and Eleanor Simmons, Peter Singer, Andrew Smith and Maddy Taylor

Apologies:

Johnny Adams, Frankie Armstrong, Andrew Bathe, Julia Bishop, Georgina Boyes, Elaine Bradke, Roly Brown, Eddie Cass, Paul Cowdell, Vic Gammon, Flos Headford, Toby Parker, Bob and Jaqueline Patten, Peter Robson, Doc Rowe, Ian Russell, Derek Schofield, Mick Tems, Janet Topp-Fargion, Eddie Upton, Paul Wilson and Marilyn Tucker.

WELCOME etc.

The meeting was opened by Doc Rowe, who welcomed those attending and introduced Peter Kennedy who told us a little of the history of Gloucester's Guildhall Arts Centre, something of current folk activities in Gloucestershire and about the wonders of the three-hole pipe. In this amusing and wide ranging discourse we also touched, memorably, on Hobby Horses Peter had seen in his life - including the giant hobby Hedgehog!

INFORMAL REVIEW OF MEMBERS ACTIVITIES

The meeting continued, as has become our custom, with an informal report by those present of the work they have recently been in and in a general exchange of related ideas. Key points from each of those exchanges were as follows:

Dave Eckersley reported that he is negotiating the rights to re-print Bert Lloyd's 'English Folk Songs' as well as Roy Palmer's 'Oxford Book of Sea Songs'. He is also working on an introduction to folk song for the TSF web-site - a first draft was available at the meeting for scrutiny and comment.

Greg Butler has been working to transfer his database (which is an index to his own library and to major collections) onto Microsoft Access. He offered to make it available to anyone who wanted it. 'Strawhead' are currently working on a recording of 19th Century songs.

Lewis Jones has recently had an article on Lucy Broadwood's diaries published in Dance and Song (62 (3), autumn 2000). He is now working on an article on Francis Jeckyll. His first book based on the Broadwood collection has sold well and will shortly be available in a 2nd edition with much improved appearance. He is now working on a collection of songs from George Butterworth. His Ferret Publications web-site (

www.geocities.com/ferretpublications) is now in operation and includes examples of songs from the Broadwood collection in PDF format. This initiated a 'Teckie' discussion on aspects of web publishing that continued for a mercifully short time until we were saved by someone sensible in the audience suggesting that this could be dealt with on-line. Lewis accordingly agreed to put together an article on techniques for publishing songs and music on the Web that could serve as a basis for discussion. (This [article](#) is now on the TSF website - let battle commence!).

Andrew Smith continues his work with particular focus on his Father's songs. He is still seeking details on the song 'The Willow Tree' (see

[April edition of TSF newsletter](#)) which someone present at the January meeting said they had more on but who Andrew failed to identify and hasn't, therefore been able to contact.

Peter Singer was visiting after having heard about the Forum from Peter Kennedy. He is a poet and song-maker who has written over 6000 songs, many while living in Brazil. He has made home recordings of a number of these songs as well as a 16 hour recording of Russian folk tales

Roy Palmer reported that his seven grandchildren take up a lot of his time but that he has been working on a number of projects. An anthology of verse, prose and song about Beer will be published next Month (A Taste of Ale, Green Branch Press, Kencot Lodge, Kencot, Lechlade, Glos GL7 3QX, £6.95). An associated CD by Magpie Lane will be released in November. He has also been working on articles for the Dictionary of National Biography on Harry Cox and Bob Roberts and an article for 'New Grove' on Shanties. He is also writing a book on the Folklore of Radnorshire - Roy said that he always tries to get a chapter on Ballad and song into his folklore studies.

It was at this point (for reasons that your Secretary can't remember) that the discussion touched on the question of guidelines for the use of folk song by teachers and the need for a new document for this purpose. It was suggested that this might be a potential TSF project

Keith Holland is hoping shortly to travel to Essex to research May Songs, May Dolls and May Garlands.

David Atkinson recently attended the Ballad Conference in Bucharest. He is continuing his work on a book of ballads and is also working on a database of folk song research. He has also worked on the recent edition of Root and Branch. He is no longer working in the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library.

Peter Robson is working on his PhD thesis on Thomas Hardy. He wants to compare Hardy's song repertoire with the repertoires of singers collected by the Hammond Brothers. He is also studying the social context of folk song in Hardy's writing.

Sam Simmons talked about the work of Somers Folklife and their publications. Plans to relaunch the Journal are still on hold at present. He is now including a small section on TSF activity in Folk ! News.

Martin Graebe has been researching Sabine Baring-Gould's visit to Iceland in 1861 for a presentation to be made during the Baring-Gould Festival in October. He has also been responding to a number of requests for help from other researchers two examples being studies on 'The Streams of Lovely Nancy' and background to Baring-Gould's Folk Opera 'Red Spider'. He is also working on ballads in the Baring-Gould manuscripts, intending to publish a collection.

Doc Rowe now has his Archive in Bristol, his books in Sheffield and is living in London - this unusual geographical situation is making his life even more complex than usual. Apart from meeting the Queen he has also found time to produce a CD of Sheila Stewart.

Peter Kennedy has a new website (

www.folktrax.org) and has started to re-launch his cassettes on CD. These were originally produced for his students in Dartington though the scope of his catalogue has increased over the subsequent years. There are also a number of releases of Alan Lomax's material on Rounder. He also explained that the 'Institute of Traditional Arts' which is founded on the collections that he maintains is open for study by appointment.

Gwilym Davies has not had much spare time of late to look into the research side of folksong as much of his time has been taken up with performance (song and morris) and 'Gloucestershire Folk'. He has, however, been liaising with Rod Stradling to release a record of Gloucestershire Traveller

[Wiggy Smith](#) and family. Apart from that, he has been continuing to note songs from Ray Driscoll including an unusual version of 'Ye Mariners All'.

Marilyn Tucker reported by e-mail that Wtren Trust had completed the Voices 2000 project with the publication of a book of the songs produced for the event by John Kirkpatrick, Tim Laycock, Paul Wilson et al. Their next project is 'Singing Challenge' funded by the National Foundation for Youth Music, working in primary and secondary schools to get young people singing in traditional styles. The project will end with hundreds of children wassailing in the Orchard at Killerton House on January 20th. They are planning to release a CD of the carols recently re-discovered in Bratton Clovelly performed by the people of the village. Preparations for the Baring Gould Festival in October continue and the study break is booking up well.

TSF BUSINESS

i Publications

It was reported that EFDSS are interested in the possibility of supporting the publication of a 'basic' folk song book.

ii Membership

Subscriptions are trickling in to the Treasurer. A number of those present looked guilty and reached for their wallets.

The Secretary asked those present to check that the details in the address list and Members interest list were correct and to indicate if they wished to update the details of their interests. Could I extend that invitation to those who were not there - please review your 'interests statement' and let me have an updated version if you wish.

iii Date of next meeting

If we follow our usual pattern the next meeting is due to be held in the North at the end of January. We have not yet had any offers to organise the meeting and suggestions/volunteers would be very welcome. Please contact the Secretary as soon as possible.

FORUM FOCUS - 'Focus on Gloucestershire'

Roy Palmer - Broadside Ballads in Gloucestershire

Roy talked about the history of the broadside ballad in the County, illustrating his talk with copies of printed ballads and by singing some of them. He talked about the way in which distribution systems were developed and the links with sellers of newspapers and patent medicines. He exploded a few myths such as the idea that 'George Ridler's Oven' was a coded Royalist anthem and the notion that 'Humpty Dumpty' was a great engine used in the Royalist siege of the Parliamentary forces in Gloucester. He examined the output of printers such as Harwood of Tewkesbury and Willy of Cheltenham. In discussion afterwards a number of interesting points were raised about dating of ballads and other topics.

Richard Chidlaw - Collecting Wassail Songs and Carols in Gloucestershire

Richard gave a fascinating talk about collecting wassail songs and carols in Gloucestershire during the 1970s. The text of his talk, together with the songs used to illustrate the talk, will be appearing on the TSF web-site shortly. Discussion afterwards covered the issue of dealing with singers who know they are singing nonsense and how you deal with that when publishing. The consensus was that it is appropriate to make the changes to the song text provided that the change is noted and that the original version is available for comparison.

Gwilym Davies - Gypsy Songs of Gloucestershire

Gwilym's talk, illustrated by examples on tape and video, outlined his experiences in collecting songs from Gloucestershire Gypsies and, particularly from the Brazil and Smith families. The Musical Traditions CD of Wiggy Smith was available at the meeting for the first time and the video of Wiggy performing was enjoyed by all present

Thanks!

The Chairman thanked the speakers for giving up their time and for making such excellent contributions to what had been a very enjoyable day. Thanks were also given to Gloucester City Council (and, in particular, the Mayor of Gloucester, Terry Haines) for making the room in the Guildhall Arts Centre available. Thanks were also given to the Staff of the Guildhall Arts Centre and of the Café Bar for looking after us so well..

Martin Graebe

17th September 2000

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Please note - because the May meeting was a special event no newsletter was produced following it. Please refer to the 'Have I got news for you?' feature for May 2000. The next newsletter will be produced after the September meeting

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Notes from the meeting of 22nd January 2000 held at the Fat Cat, Sheffield

Present:

David Atkinson, Julia Bishop, Eddie Cass, Chou Chien-Er, Georgina Boyes, Paul and Liz Davenport, Ron and Jenny Day, Jim Donahoe, Dave Eckersley, Steve Gardham, Vic Gammon, Martin Graebe, Ruairidh Greig, Keith Holland, Lewis Jones, Ray Padgett, Bob and Jackie Patten, Steve Roud, Andrew Smith, Jonathan Stock, Marilyn Tucker, Paul Wilson.

Apologies:

Johnny Adams, Frankie Armstrong, Andrew Bathe, Elaine Bradke, Roly Brown, Paul Cowdell, Andrew King, Terry MacDonald, Peter Robson, Doc Rowe, Ian Russell, Jon Scaife, Mick Tems, Janet Topp-Fargion, Eddie Upton, and John Cowley, Paul Marsh,

1. INFORMAL REVIEW OF MEMBERS ACTIVITIES

The meeting started, as usual, with an informal review by those present of the work they have recently been in. Key points from each members were as follows:

Dave Eckersley has recently completed an article on Doc Rowe which was published in The Living Tradition. The article has generated a lot of interest and additional support for the Support Group. It is planned to republish the article in a number of local folk magazines. Dave is also working on the third update of his article on the web-site.

The Garland Encyclopaedia, containing Vic Gammon's article on the English Tradition has now been released. Vic has also contributed to a new book on 'Representations of Childhood Death'. His article on Napoleon in folk song has been published on the Musical Traditions web-site. His essays on brass bands have also been re-published. His project on Cecil Sharp is continuing.

Eddie Cass's work on mummers plays continues more or less to plan with some diversions. He hopes that his work on Peace Egg chapbooks will be out this year.

Paul Wilson talked about his work collecting in Devon and the links that had been formed with the community in Newfoundland. Paul has been elected to the board of 'Sound Sense', a national network for community music organisations where his role is to make a case for traditional music. He explained the opportunity that this presented for greater involvement of the folk movement in community programmes.

Marilyn Tucker spoke about recent work by Wren Trust. As a result of successful projects and grant applications the Trust has been able to take on extra staff so that they now have six employees working on community projects and on the Baring-Gould Festival. This year's Festival is now being planned and new ways of exploring and using songs from Baring-Gould's collection are being tried. As part of this Marilyn asked if anyone could help identify singers or experts in Icelandic song traditions.

Lewis Jones has continued his work on Francis Jeckyll and hopes to publish an article shortly. The 30 volumes of Lucy Broadwood's diaries will be going to the Surrey Record Office shortly and Lewis has been completing his initial studies of the diaries. He is developing a web-site and, so far, has included religious material such as the hymns of Isaac Watts. He asked whether any members had experience of putting high quality images of music with tunes onto the web - it appeared that PDF files are the best way to do this but the software to create them is expensive.

Keith Holland's ambition is to note May Garlands and record May songs in Essex. He is aware of five references to them but whether these relate to live traditions is not clear.

Paul Davenport edits South Riding Folk Network News and samples were made available. He has recently got information on Staffs, Lincs and Notts morris to add to his catalogue of 'Forgotten Morris'. Meanwhile he has become a student once more working for his M.Mus. with a study on vernacular music based on the 6 blind fiddlers of Sheffield.. He is also working with the Burnett manuscripts.

Liz Davenport is providing help and support to Paul in the above - particularly by reading through huge quantities of literature on the subject.

Andy Smith continues his research into the singing tradition within his own family. He is particularly interested in discovering who the 'Gentleman from London' was that collected from his grandfather. It is thought possible that it was George Butterworth but his quest has not been made easier by the fact that his grandfather's name was John Smith. He is also keen to get more information on the song 'The Willow Tree' sung by his grandfather and described as a 'sentimental ballad'.

Jonathan Stock explained that he was there as an interested observer and to help Julia Bishop with the afternoon presentation. His normal field of study is Chinese music.

Bob Patten is working on a project that reviews the Drayton Wassail 100 years after it was first recorded.. He is also researching William Thorn of Moretonhampstead, composer of psalms and whose papers list a number of the singing masters of Devon as well as giving useful data on the choirs.

Jackie Patten is planning to record two Devonshire singers over the next few months.

Ray Padgett talked about his own recordings of singers in the Barnsley area. He also reported that Bob Davis is planning to set up a folk archive at Barnsley College. He also mentioned that they were working on NVQs for folk festival stewarding

Jim Donohoe said he'd been having a quiet time reviewing and sorting his collection and re-building his energy levels.

An article written by Martin Graebe on Baring-Gould's associate, Frederick Bussell, appeared recently in English Dance and Song. He is now working once more on the Baring-Gould manuscripts, answering queries for other researchers as well as following up on specific songs.

Ruairidh Greig has continued with his work on Percy Grainger with particular reference to the way the collection is organised and the part played by the Elwes family. Hre is also seeking contextual material on Grainger's singers. Ruairidh is also searching for the lost manuscripts of William Alexander Barrett which went missing in the 1920s after being sold at auction.

Steve Gardham reported that the 'Songs under the Microscope' feature in English Dance and Song was in a much healthier state than when he took it on. He is hoping that some of his research will be published this year, including the Paper on Baring-Gould that he delivered at the 1998 Sheffield conference. He is also keen to see publication of a manuscript book from Robin Hood's Bay which records the repertoire (40 - 50 songs) of a 17 year old girl in 1877.

Julia Bishop has recently returned from the USA where she has been looking at the manuscripts of James Carpenter and meeting his descendants. An application has been made by a group of researchers and universities for funding to publish Carpenter's work both as hard copy and an internet edition. There is also a project to copy his recordings onto CD. A discussion about the relative merits of the web versus CD/DVD as a way of storing and disseminating information of this kind. The advice Julia has received is that recordings are subject to technology changes and that the Web is the best option now available for long-term storage. Julia has also discovered descendants of the amazing Belle Duncan.

David Atkinson is now working for the EFDSS on the Folk Directory and on the second issue of 'Root and Branch' (which will be looking at the folk movement in the 1950s). In his spare time he is still working on his book on ballads and other publications.

Steve Roud has, as ever, indexed. He is also organising a days symposium on May 20th on the work of collectors since the war as a way of improving our understanding of what they did. He is hoping to get Peter Kennedy, Reg Hall, Mike Yates and Doc Rowe to talk about their work.. It is proposed that this will be run as a TSF event, jointly with the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library. It was suggested that there could be a link between this event and the next issue of 'Root and Branch' mentioned above.

Georgina Boyes is reviewing some of the work done in her book and drawing a number of strands together, prompted by recent publications. She is also studying the life and work of Maud Karpele. As Georgina said 'There's more to that woman than meets the eye!'

Petr Robson was not able to attend but, in sending his apologies, pointed out that notes of the last meeting were not correct. His paper to the Hardy Society was on the Mummers' song in Return of the Native, not on Thomas Hardy and that his PhD is on Hardy and traditional culture, not specifically on music. His study of songs includes the notebook material - sorry Peter!

Janet Topp-Fargion was also unable to attend but reported that their application to the HLF for funding is being processed. She has not yet been able to do anything about the National Collection database.

Another non-attendee, Paul Cowdell was unable to be present because he was on active service, seeking out Molly dances in Kent

2. TSF ADMINISTRATION

i The Website

The current state of the website was discussed and it was felt by those present that, in most respects, the website was developing well. The need for continued input from members was emphasised and a number of those present offered contributions. One useful addition was the possibility of a 'beginners start here' feature to explain the basics of Traditional song. Dave Eckersley agreed to draft such a document for review by the membership, prior to inclusion on the web. The question of a discussion group was raised and several of those present felt that a list based system would be best. It was suggested that it would not be inappropriate to make use of the ballad list for general discussion about folk song while dealing with Forum business by e-mail.

ii Publications

Lewis Jones offered to publish his new collection of songs collected by Butterworth as the first publication under the TSF imprint. After discussion it was agreed that we would support this proposal, allowing Lewis to set up a separate account to fund the publication. The membership would be circulated to seek advance orders (and payment) to reduce the financial burden. After discussion it was agreed that the music would not have chords set to it.

A new publication committee was appointed including Lewis Jones, Paul Davenport, Georgina Boyes and Julia Bishop. It was reported by Dave Eckersley that the latest digital printing technology offered the prospect of cheaper short print runs, direct from electronic copy.

iii Membership

Subscriptions continue to dribble in as well as some new members (some recruited via the Web). There has also been a better (but not complete!) response to the Secretary's request for written permission to hold personal data on his computer and for personal details to be put on the Web.

iv Date of next meeting

It was agreed that the proposed meeting on song collection in the 50s at Cecil Sharp House on 20th May would be the next meeting of the Forum. The AGM would be held on that day, probably before the meeting proper started or during the lunch break. The meeting following that is provisionally set for September 2nd in Taunton (Organised by Bob and Jackie Patten. The Focus Session in the afternoon on that occasion will be West Country Music.

3 FORUM FOCUS - Tunes for songs

Julia Bishop led a very interesting session on the music of folk songs, starting by looking at the classification into modes favoured by 19th Century collectors. This led to a lively discussion with some insightful contributions from Jonathan Stock, whose perspective as an interested but uninvolved observer helped us to take a new view of the situation. It is hoped that a way can be found to capture the essence of the afternoons discussion and post it on the website at a later date.

And, finally, a big hand for.....

Jenny and Ron Day and the South Riding Folk Network for making the arrangements for the meeting and for an excellent session on the Friday evening.

Martin Graebe

23rd January 2000

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Notes from the meeting of 18th September 1999 held at the British Library

The meeting was chaired by Steve Roud. In the absence of the Secretary the meeting notes were taken by Marilyn Tucker

Present:

Doc Rowe, Elaine Bradke, James Berryman, David Atkinson, John Cowley, Paul Marsh, Keith Holland, Lewesi Jones, Peter Robson, George Frampton, Julia Bishop, Andrew Smith, Marilyn Tucker, Greg Butler, Janet Topp-Fargion, Steve Roud, Andrew King, Rod Stradling, Wilma McKinley

Apologies:

Jackie Patten, Eddie Upton, Dave Eckersley, Paul Davenport, Mick Tems, Johnny Adams, Ian Russell, Eddie Cass, Ray Padgett, Gwilym Davies, Steve Gardham, Paul Davenport, Malcolm Taylor, Ron Day and Martin Graebe

1. INFORMAL REVIEW OF MEMBERS ACTIVITIES

Gwilym Davies :

Working on CD of Wiggie Smith, work on Ashton-Under-Hill carols continues. Involved with various websites such as the Gloucestershire Folk Directory.

Janet Topp-Fargion

Talked about work of National Sound Archive especially the work done by Claire Gilliam. Janet outlined some of the collections now accessible and searchable on CADENSA at the NSA Topic archive: 1221 tapes, mainly masters of publications and unreleased items. Vulnerable tapes are part of the Acetate Tape Preservation Project, where all such tapes are digitised. Other collections include; Russell Wortley, Jim Carroll & Pat McKenzie, Ewan McColl & Peggy Seeger 250 tapes (mainly acetate so whole collection now copied.) Bert Lloyd Collection, Pat Shuldham Shaw, Ian Russell, Fred Hamer, bits of Gwilym Davies's collection have been digitised. The Mike Yates collection, project complete, highly used. Clare's contract is coming to an end, a small part of new contract will include collections. NSA application to Millennium Commission was transferred to Heritage Lottery Board as the project was not specifically linked to year 2000. The project will identify set of collections of UK material outside formal institutions, bring into NSA, digitise etc, interpretation projects & equipment also included in bid. Question about Cadenza Process is to search catalogue, find reference, make appointment for listening. Library has plan for mass digital system for non-print so NSA should benefit from this, the catalogue should be on Internet within the year. Question about other collection, especially Peter Kennedy and Charles Parker. NSA still in negotiation with PK over his collection. He has been loaned DAT equipment to record collection. Charles Parker Archive - looking to raise money to digitise and make accessible all non-BBC material, Copyright issues over BBC material. Question & discussion about School of Scottish Studies collection. Relationship needs to be clarified. Keith Holland asked if BSA would like his collection. Discussion about copyright. The material at NSA available for listening, NSA does not claim copyright. If anyone wants to publish any of the material permission must be got from the original copyright holder. NSA does make a charge for copying. The discussion about copyright led the meeting to suggest that someone form a group to prepare a simple guide to the basic ground rules, vis-à-vis performer & collectors rights etc.

Elaine Bradtke

Talked about the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library - Malcolm is doing lots of projects, The Alfred Williams collection at Swindon is being micro-filmed. The library now has email. Opening hours in EDS wrong, library is closed on Monday, and open 1st & 3rd Saturday in month. Discussion about EFDSS website, Elaine advised that this is outsourced.

Andrew King

Has been listening to May Bradley recordings, there is a difference between print-out and what is on

tape, will listen and catalogue eg variants. Is researching a song "The Knight Templar's Dream" - from an Orange Lodge songbook. Reported that the turn at the traditions club was very good, pointed out our lack of publicity, eg a flyer, to be available at such gatherings.

James Berryman

Not actually involved in research - looking for songs to sing.

David Atkinson

Attended Ballad Conference in Aberdeen, very good papers, and lots of Scot's singing. Stan Roberts led an interesting outing, involving stories etc about traveller's life. David has been made secretary of (something quite important but I stopped listening for a second or two). He is working for EFDSS on the 'Root & Branch' series, subscription basis. First one out Oct/Nov. CD & written material. David says it is important to support this as it is vital to the re-invention of EFDSS under Martin Frost. He is writing a book on ballads. Was asked if he could circulate list of papers from Ballad Commission. Yes will try.

John Cowley

Researching West Indian music in Britain. Has written CD notes for 'Rotts of Carnival' from Lomax collection. Is giving a talk at Cecil Sharp House. Sharp did collect some songs from black N American sources, eg Barbara Allen. Discussion about dance in West Indies, could be described as 'Creole' pre-abolition of slavery, many from 'religious' traditions. No documentation of what was brought over in 1950s.

Paul Marsh

Has worked with Neil Lanham, who was recording in Suffolk in mid 60s, becoming active again. CD out next week, 'Songs from the Butley Oyster', thinks it may be obtained through John Howson. Paul is still working on Harry Cox, has had 22 hours conversation with Myrtle Helsdon (nee Cox).

Rod Stradling

Has brought out new CD Cyril Poacher, cost £10.00, every song Cyril has recorded except Galway Bay and one other similar. Still to do Bob Hart. Has project in pipeline, double CD to be released in May 2000.

Keith Holland

Someone sent him information about 'Knees Up Mother Brown' described as a 'novelty dance of the 1930s'. Currently doing some work on mumming boys.

Lewis Jones

Has published stuff in EDS, including an article on Francis Jeckyll to be published next Easter. Still working on Lucy Broadwood (he has to do some work again since the collection was re-catalogued) Her diaries have been discovered includes a lot of : 'had breakfast of smoked kippers read the paper ... etc '. Discussion about who is publishing folk songs, Lewis will relinquish his logo if TSF want to publish.

Peter Robson

Writing a book on customs. Giving a paper on Thomas Hardy to the Hardy Society. Is doing PhD 'Thomas Hardy and the source of Traditional Music In Dorset' ref; the 54 songs in Hardy, excluding the stuff in notebooks.

George Frampton

Researching East Kent Christmas customs, Hooden Horse. Still getting stuff about treacle mines. Discussion about football chants - soon to be forgotten folk art form!

Julia Bishop

(interested in sports songs!) Reported that John Widdowson had been on the radio expressing concern about the future of the dept. Department now under 'English' not extra mural, funding is being secured for both Chair & Director - so things looking positive, thanks to everyone who wrote in support. Julia is doing research into Carpenter Collection, see Folk Song Journal. She has been over

to Boston, seen his diaries, has recorded families memories of him, seen the Kitteridge papers showing details of Carpenters training.

Andy Smith (has been on John Peel's Home Truths!)

Research about his own family. His father (1909-1987) learnt songs at school, in the fields and at the Tally Ho! at Boulden, probably learnt from some of the same source singers as Fred Jordan. In 1979 he recorded his father who would sing him a couple of verses then tell him to 'get the rest from a book'.

Marilyn Tucker

Wren Trust has secured European funding for the Baring-Gould Heritage Project, has appointed Chris Foster as co-ordinator for the project. Folk festival leaflet was distributed. Wren trust is also hosting a residency by Newfoundland musicians Anita Best, Jim Payne and Colin Carrigan, funded by Plymouth City Council through another Europe fund. Wren Trust's Millennium project is to get a 2000 Voice folk choirs together on 16th July at Plymouth Pavilions. Has lots more projects in pipeline, wants to investigate the setting up of a folk heritage centre with local authority.

Greg Butler

Database continues to grow, mentioned 'Preston Grasshoppers' song book. Songs of the Civil War extending to double CD. Researching John Harness 1812 - 1882.

Wilma McKinley

Runs club in Balham, from Selkirk where everyone sings! Would like to record border songs.

Doc Rowe

His collection is on the move again, the house in Bristol has not proved to be successful, and the stuff is going into storage, and we can all contribute £12 p.a. to its rental (Doc to supply contact)

2. MEMBERSHIP

Secretary to circulate membership list, everyone who hasn't paid to do so (some lost track of black spots).

3. WEBSITE

Martin Graebe has set up 'first steps' to website. Volunteer needed to become designer/manager. Everyone to visit website to see what it is there. (go to www.tradsong.freeseve.co.uk). No-one volunteered but we discussed the site anyway. Martin was to be congratulated on what he had done, and we thought of improvements, the main decision we made was that the site would have no music. useful additions could be Research aids, eg Indexes, Bibliography. Enthusiasms or work in progress Signpost page -where to find songs. Logo was seen as lower priority. All members to send stuff to contribute to existing pages Members need to send in updates to 'Members Interests' Doc Rowe is working on his own site, if he gets good at it, he'll contact Martin to do some of it!! Andy is doing some training and may feel confident later on to help.

Discussion about emailing list. Send stuff to rod@mustrad.org.uk putting TSF in subject box.

4. PUBLICATIONS

Steve Roud is working on Sussex singers, Mick Tams -Phil Tanner, Lewis Jones_ Ploughboys Glory. After some discussion the meeting agreed that our target should be to have the first draft of Sussex Songs ready by next meeting. We will aim for one publication per year.

Julia was to ask Ian Russell about the situation ref; Sheffield papers.

Clarification about RVW Study Guides - lack of money for publications, some projects in pipeline.

5. NATIONAL COLLECTION

The situation is that there are lots of collections throughout the country. We need to identify the collections and support existing institutions.

After some discussion it was decided that we would seek funding to commission someone to start a database using John Howson's report as a starting point. JTF to sound out National Folk Music Fund on behalf of TSF. Other resources; DR has directory of sound recording archives, Oral History Soc to produce directory of oral history. JC - there are Black Archives at Middlesex University.

5. AOB

The planned tour of the NSA was not allowed as readers have complained about party tours, but we were taken to see the doors to the collection - and very nice they were!

The chairman proposed a vote of thanks to Janet and the NSA for organising the meeting.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

In Sheffield either 22nd or 29th January - Julia to clarify/specify.

And a big hand for.....

Janet and Clare for hosting the meeting and for all the arrangements. Thanks are also due to Peta Webb and the Musical Traditions Club for the event held on the Friday evening which was enjoyed by several Forum members. Finally thanks to Marilyn Tucker for taking the meeting notes and typing them up as a draft

Marilyn Tucker/Martin Graebe

2nd Oct 1999

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Notes from the meeting of 22nd May 1999 held at the New Inn, Llantrisant

The meeting was chaired by Steve Roud. It was attended by 12 members of the forum and guests.

Apologies were received from David Atkinson, Elaine Bradtke, Julia Bishop, Georgina Boyes, Roly Brown, Eddie Cass, Paul Davenport, Dave Eckersley, Ruairidh Greig, Tom McKean, Pat McKenzie and Jim Carroll, John Moulden, Carolyn Robson, Peter Robson, Ian Russell, Jon Scaife, Marilyn Tucker and Eddie Upton. Doc Rowe was taken ill at the last moment and was not able to stray far from home.

General review

The meeting started, as has become our custom with an informal review by those present of the work they have recently been in. Key points from each members outline were as follows:

Gwilym Davies has joined Peter Kennedy on the committee of Gloucestershire Folk, the umbrella organisation for folk music in Gloucestershire. They are working on a number of projects, including publications. Gwilym has continued his studies of the carol tradition in Ashton under Hill (Warks) and has been in contact with local people, including the novelist Fred Archer about the carols. He is working with Rod Stradling on a CD of Wiggy Smith.

Lewis Jones has been searching for the work of Francis Jeckyll who collected in Sussex in the 1890s. He was a nephew of the famous gardener, Gertrude Jeckyll (he inherited her garden and demonstrated his priorities by allowing it to have become completely overgrown within two years. It was suggested that Lewis ties Godalming library since that is where Gertrude's papers are.

Peter Kennedy has been in New York looking after Alan Lomax's collection and while there attended the centenary celebrations in New York.

Jane John talked about the work of the Cowbridge Action Group who are working to create an international Cultural Centre in an old school.

Mick Tems reported that Mari Arts had now given up their Studio in the Model House and he was now running the organisation from his home address. Their presentation called 'A Gower Garland' to mark the 50th anniversary of Phil Tanner's death was taking shape, though it was more about the traditions of the area than about Phil himself. Some collecting of song and dance is being done - one of their targets is to obtain the original version of the Gower Reel. Mick also told us about the Wood family who step-dance to harps!

Paul Marsh has been working on the Mervyn Plunkett collection as well as assisting with the recent Bob Hart CD. His current project is a CD of Harry Cox. He also talked about Stan Seaman, a melodeon player from Buckler's Hard and about other experiences collecting in the New Forest.

Andrew King told us about his recent visit to Minehead

Andy Jackson passed round a copy of the Forest Tracks discography. They are looking at re-releasing some of the early material on CD

Steve Roud reported on the Broadside meeting held in February. He said that it is likely that the outcome will be a separate organisation running in parallel with the forum and with strong connections. Another meeting is planned for the autumn.

Cherri Graebe reported that The Village Music Project continues apace and that a quantity of material is now available through John Adam's web-site.

Keith Holland is still in search of the dance associated with 'Knees up Mother Brown' but has not yet been successful.

Martin Graebe reported that he had recently had an opportunity to go through the papers of Frederick Bussell, one of Baring-Gould's collecting companions. While no new songs had been uncovered the papers had thrown a lot of light on the character of the man and his later life as an academic.

The secretary read out a number of letters from members who could not be present and key points from these included:

Ian Russell has been appointed Director of the Elphinstone Institute at the University of Aberdeen (Congratulations Ian!). In his spare time he has completed a compilation CD of local carols with the Smithsonian Institute. He and Norma are keen to organise a second English Traditional singing weekend like that held in Eyam in November 1997. In order to do this he needs to find some partners who will be nearer to England than he expects to be by then. (If any Forum members would like to do this please contact Ian as soon as possible)

Doc Rowe has been working on a Sheila Stewart CD which should be available in August.

David Atkinson reported " The second edition of my Vaughan Williams Library folk song bibliography has been published recently. Other than that I haven't had much time for research activities, but my article "'Edward", Incest, and Intertextuality: Problems of Authority and Indeterminacy in the Traditional Ballad' has appeared in Southern Folklore, vol.55, no. 2."

Dave Eckersley provided material for the discussion on publishing and added "I've been writing articles for Tykes news and other folk mags and the last one focused on the legacy that we inherited from collectors in the C19th and what we will leave from the C20th. I would like to follow it up with an article on collecting now and the work being done on collections".

Elaine Bradtke is now the assistant librarian at the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library and would like everyone to note that "The phone number for the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library has changed. The old phone number (0171) 284-0523 is now a fax line only. The number to ring to actually speak to us is (0171) 485 2206. At the moment, the new phone system is still full of bugs, so bear with us. Please note, we are now closed on Mondays, and open on the first and third Saturdays of the month from 10:00 - 4:00."

Annual General Meeting

The Chairman, Steve Roud, in an informal presentation, summarised the achievements of the last year. This is the 6th meeting of the Forum and over the last two years a number of different people have made new contacts and exchanged information. The informal exchange of information with which the meetings are opened has been appreciated by attendees. As a 'talking shop' we have succeeded - talking and learning. In our more formal communication we have been less successful. The web-site facility has not had a high up-take and it has been a bit of a struggle to get Steve Gardham's 'Songs under the Microscope' feature going. Many people are disappointed that greater progress has not been made towards the vision of a National Archive set out by Ian Russell at the first meeting. With different people attending the meeting each time (the Secretary is the only person to have attended every meeting) it is difficult to make progress with this kind of action.

Steve feels that the most practical way to move forward on this is to create a database or directory of holdings. This was something that John Howson started and it might be possible to build on his work and create a 'virtual collection'.

Another aspect where we have talked a great deal but had not made progress was in publications, though there had been some very positive discussion at the last meeting.

It was agreed that we should review the aims of the Forum. These will be circulated with the notes of the meeting and individuals are requested to comment back to the secretary before the next meeting. At that meeting the aims will be reviewed and re-drafted.

The Chairman asked that the notes recorded his thanks to Martin Graebe for his work as secretary and for keeping the Forum together by acting as Chair in his absence. He also asked that our thanks to Dave Arthur for his support be recorded.

The accounts were reported on behalf of the treasurer, Doc Rowe and a copy is attached. As of May we had £108.64 in our account. After outstanding expenses this would leave a small surplus. It was agreed that the 1999 - 2000 subscription would be £6 per household and that all members should pay this as soon as possible.

All three of the Forum's officers (Steve Roud as Chair, Doc Rowe as Treasurer and Martin Graebe as Secretary) have said that they are willing to serve for a further year (though not necessarily beyond that) and were re-elected without opposition

Publications

It is assumed that any publications that the Forum produces will be for sale to members and to others through the Forum. It is not anticipated that we would aim for sales through bookshops.

Lewis Jones said that he gets his printing done through Birmingham University - typical cost is £183 for 150 copies which he then sells at £4.15. He allows trade (eg Hobgoblin) 30% commission. He offered to make this facility available if required. All that would be required would be camera ready copy.

If we had a constitution we could seek funding for publications.

It was noted that EFDSS are not currently publishing anything though this might happen in the future.

In summary it was felt that we are definitely committed to the idea of publications. We have lots of ideas about how to publish. We do not, at present, know what we are going to publish. Practical suggestions are needed. It is requested that members give this some thought and bring ideas to the next meeting. Even better, however, would be if people with ideas pass them on to the secretary before the next meeting so that we can construct some kind of paper beforehand to give focus to the discussion.

Use of Computers in folk song research

A brief discussion was held on the use of computers in folk song research. While none present claimed to be experts it was clear that there was a great deal of experience around the table. Much of the discussion centred on music publishing software and a number of different software packages were mentioned. It was felt that what was needed was for a small sub-group to draw up a fact sheet to share information. It was agreed that we would seek volunteers from among the membership to help with this activity.

Forum issues

The Chairman read out a letter received from Rod Stradling. Rod is not prepared to continue hosting the TSF pages on musical traditions any longer and has a number of criticisms of the way in which the Forum has failed to use the facility. The chairman expressed his thanks to Rod for his help to date and said that he understood the points Rod was making. After some discussion it was agreed that there was a need to maintain a web-site for the forum. It was decided that a new web-site would be created (by the secretary) as soon as possible to maintain our presence on the Web and that this would then be worked on by a sub-group to be recruited from the members.

The following items were identified as future 'deliverables' for the Forum:

The web-site

List of archives

Update of Dean-Smith

An introduction to Traditional Song

Next meeting

At an earlier meeting it had been suggested that the Autumn meeting of the Forum be brought forward and held at the Ballad Conference in Aberdeen in August. After discussion it was felt that this was unlikely to attract many members because of the distance and cost.

It was agreed, therefore, that the next meeting of the Forum will take place on 18th Sept 1999 at a London venue - probably Cecil Sharp House. It was agreed that we would try to establish whether any

of the local song-clubs were meeting on the Friday or Saturday nights so that members who wanted to could practise their art.

Last, but by no means least

Thank you to Mick Tems and Pat Smith for their kindness in arranging the meeting and the sessions on Friday and Saturday night.

Martin Graebe

6th June 1999

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Meeting of January 23rd 1999 held at the Junction Inn, Ripponden (Meeting No 5)

The meeting was chaired by Martin Graebe. It was attended by 22 members of the forum and guests.

Apologies were received from Elaine Bradtke, Julia Bishop, Claire Gilliam, Ruairidh Greig, Tom McKean, John Moulden, Carolyn Robson, Peter Robson, Steve Roud, Doc Rowe, Ian Russell and Malcolm Taylor, Marilyn Tucker.

General review

The informal review by those present of the work they were currently engaged in continues to be one of the most enjoyable and valued parts of the Forum's meeting. Key points from each members outline were as follows:

Gwilym Davies has been studying the carol tradition in Ashton under Hill (Warks). He has also been working with Gloucester Folk Museum working on ways of enlivening displays by the use of material he has collected.

Lewis Jones has been working on the Hammond tunes. He also mentioned two early song books that he is interested in seeing in print. The first is by M'Donald and the second a collection of Welsh songs from Maria Williams made in the 1830s. Mick Tems reported that this collection is available as a modern reprint from the National Library of Wales and that it is a 'fabulous collection'.

David Atkinson has been working on cataloguing Maud Karpeles papers. It has been established that part of her collection is in Newfoundland and it is available on microfiche. It is planned that a copy will be obtained for the VWML.

Rod Stradling reported that his double CD of Bob Hart had become available since he had last been at a forum meeting. He is in a position to produce CDs from peoples recordings if they wish. Musical Traditions continues to grow and develop. About half of the 'Voice of the People' series has now been reviewed and an interview with Reg Hall and Tony Engle will appear shortly. Rod's database of Topic recordings is now near completion. The database includes a complete track listing. He reported that his next target is Leader. Following some discussion it was suggested that the use of computers in folk song research would be an interesting item for a future agenda.

Paul Burgess has continued his work on Gloucestershire tunes.

Paul Davenport talked about the work of the South Riding Folk Network whose latest publication is the South Riding Song-book. Paul talked about some of the difficulties of access to public records of songs which sparked a series of horror stories from those present about problems with material known to exist but inaccessible in practice. This was a reminder that this was a topic raised at earlier meetings that needed resolution. It was agreed that this should be re-addressed at our next meeting.

Gregg Butler reported that his database continues to grow - it now contains about 100,000 records

Steve Gardham asked whether anyone was able to help him with material from Sam Cowell (Vic Gammon offered some material). Steve is also keen to start work on the master title index. He would like, at least, to get to a set of rules. He is talking to Steve Roud about this and will involve others. He did have a list of those who were interested which has, unfortunately, gone astray. If anyone was signed up or would like to help please contact Steve

Bob Davies was visiting the forum for the first time. He works at Barnsley College and is interested in introducing a module on traditional music to their 'Popular Music' degree course.

Ray Padgett has collected from Tom and Bertha Brown and from Ken Hinchcliffe and has some other interesting recordings

Derek Schofield reported that, following the success of 'A Century of Song' the EFDSS was preparing to launch another CD to celebrate the centenary of C# meeting William Kimber. Derek is completing a biographical article on Peter Kennedy

Andrew King shared his feelings about the unreliability of mini-disc players having sent four back for replacement. A number of people around the room looked suitably worried. He has recently recorded the Marshfield paper boys and Bob Copper's birthday party.

Dave Eckersley talked about the need for a publication that gave new singers an entry point - a modern equivalent of the Penguin Book of English Folk Songs.

Vic Gammon explained that his most recent publication had been on West Gallery music. Other work had included Child Death in British and American ballads, The National Curriculum and the ethnic in music, the entry on 'England' for the Garland encyclopaedia of music and work on Sharp as an educationalist

Chris Coe talked about her freelance work in education and community arts, using English cultural material. Her main interest is in ballads. She also talked about her interest in the tradition of 'Rag Trees'.

Paul Hudson is a musician and singer who had come along to listen and learn more about song.

Keith Holland is still pursuing 'Knees up Mother Brown' and was given some additional contacts by members of the Forum.

Martin Graebe reported that the microfiche edition of the Baring-Gould manuscripts was launched in November at an event held at Lewtrenchard Manor which had been enjoyable and well attended. A copy of the index to the fiches was available for inspection and is available for sale separately through Wren Trust. A book of tunes collected by Baring-Gould has been produced and a series of song-books is planned. A new CD of songs from the collection is also available Wren Trust, meanwhile, have started a project on carols from Bratton Clovelly

Doc Rowe sent his apologies and in the same e-mail an antidote which Martin Graebe read to the assembled multitude - causing extreme hilarity:

"We had a superb wassail last Sunday- 17th Jan. About 45 people turned up...with plenty of instruments and we wassailed the trees for about an hour.. finishing off with a rocket - since we couldn't get shotguns - well, too easily. The rocket (unfortunately) did not have [well more precisely I

didn't have...er..didn't bother to get] a tube to launch it SOooo.... instead of going up 50 ft ,,going bang and sending stars in all direction (this is what a £20 rocket does apparently)it sort of wobbled a bit ...took off at a Pete Coe head height (which, in fact is QUITE high) and zig-zigged towards the neighbours house about 50 feet away but ...er...horizontally. I've no idea what the neighbours saw/heard/feltbut it was pretty dramatic. from our side - the projectile exploded about three feet in front of their house(s)beeeeeeeeeoooooooooaaautiful multi coloured stars spread the width of six houses at a height of perhaps ten feet..... and all the car alarms in area went off at once. I am, of course, anticipating a bumper crop of apples this year!!!!"

Elaine Bradtke also sent her apologies and reported that her booklet "Truculent Rustics: Molly Dancing in East Anglia before 1940" is at the typesetters and due to be out in time for the Folklore Society's AGM.

During the discussion the emotive topic of what happens to a collection when either the work is finished or when the owner dies was raised. A number of examples were given and it was suggested that donation to the VWML was a recommended option. This led on to the topic of what happens to material de-acquisitioned from public libraries. Again Kent Libraries had set an interesting example by giving redundant material to VWML. It was suggested that a standard letter could be prepared giving suitable advice to librarians and which could be copied by individuals to pass on to their local library

The Village Music Project

John Adams and Chris Partington gave a presentation on the work of the Village Music Project. A summary of the project aims was circulated with the October mail-out. The objective of the project is to recover tunes (it was suggested that the term 'vernacular' might fit better than 'traditional') from endangered manuscripts or other sources and to make them available to anyone who is interested in them. The means that has been chosen is to convert the tunes to 'abc' format and to make them available via the Internet. There was some discussion on abc and its use. It is possible to read abc files directly into midi for those who are so equipped. Johnny also reported that it is possible to scan directly from paper to a midi file using 'Midiscan' (Mac users only). A copy of the most recent project newsletter is attached.

Mari Arts

The second extended presentation was given by Mick Tems on the work of Celfyddydau Mari Arts in South Wales. The organisation is an umbrella for traditional arts in a wide sense. The region is very cosmopolitan because of the large influx of labour in the last century and this blends with local traditions such as the Mari Lwyd where there are still 20 - 25 groups carrying out the tradition (most of them unaware of the others).

Mari Arts is currently engaged in three major projects:

Following up the work of Carpenter by seeking out descendants of the singers in Barry from whom he collected shanties. For example they found the daughter and grandson of Rhys Baldwin and were able to pass on recordings of her father singing

Secondly they have been making use of the work of J Glynn Davies on the Welsh clippers where the practice of crewing ships from families and a small area led to a wealth of harmony singing on board ship.

They are also working on a project to mark the 50th anniversary of Phil Tanner's death. A production called 'A Gower Garland' will lead to a production in which Phil Tanner will be a background character.

They are also running discovery sessions in which would-be musicians are given a chance to start. These are proving very popular and several participants are 'graduating' to session playing. Mick reported that there is no shortage of interesting project work to be done in South Wales.

Publications

In the absence of Steve Roud the discussion was kept short and will be carried forward. It was suggested by Rod Stradling that the need for a published discography was largely superseded by the discography on Musical Traditions.

There was a lot of interest in the process of small scale publishing following on from a discussion earlier in the day and Lewis Jones agreed to lead a session at the next meeting on the topic. It was hoped that members who had contributed to the earlier discussion (including Dave Eckersley and Paul Davenport) would be able to help expand on the topic. It is felt that this is an area where mutual support between forum members would be a real advantage.

Forum issues

It was suggested that when forum members are publishing something that they might include the statement: "(John Smith) is a member of the Traditional Song Forum". It was felt that this would be a valuable (and subtle) way of promoting the TSF

A number of members said that they would update their 'interests' and urged others to do so

The Treasurer reported (in absentia) that we currently have 49 paid-up forum members. The bank account has 123.05 in it at present which will cover the cost of the next two mailings. Subscriptions will be due in May

Steve Gardham reminded forum members that he would welcome queries for inclusion in the 'Songs under the microscope' feature in English Dance and Song.

Events

Details of the Broadside meeting which Steve Roud has organised at Cecil Sharp House on Feb 27th are enclosed with this mailing. There are also details of a major meeting to celebrate 100 years of the folk revival to be held in New York

Last, but by no means least

Thank you to Johnny Adams, Chris Coe and their colleagues and friends in Ryburn 3 Step for arranging venue, accommodation and two excellent and enjoyable sessions and to Brian and Sandra at the Junction Inn for their kind attention to us during the day.

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Meeting of September 19th 1998 held at Conway Hall, London (Meeting No 4)

The meeting was chaired by Martin Graebe. It was attended by 16 members of the forum.

Apologies were received from Frankie Armstrong, Greg Butler, John Gall, Steve Gardham, Peter Robson, Steve Roud, Bob and Jackie Patten, Julia Say, Derek Schofield and Malcolm Taylor.

General review

The meeting opened with an informal review by those present of the work they were currently engaged in. As with the similar session at the May meeting it was felt by those present to have been a valuable discussion. Key points from each members outline were as follows:

Lewis Jones continues his work on Lucy Broadwood, working from the manuscripts and aiming to publish the songs from her collection.

Gwilym Davies talked about his recent visit to the USA and about other aspects of his work which is described more fully in the attached letter.

Keith Holland has been researching 'Knees up Mother Brown' and is keen to find the original instructions for the dance which were published with the song (sung by Kate Carney) by Francis, Day and Hunter.

Andrew King presented a paper on 'Bitter Withy' at the Sheffield conference. He is hoping to get out and record singing around the London clubs

Ian Russell is seeking a publisher for the papers from the Sheffield Conference. He has also been involved with the organisation of the 3rd Festival of Village Carols and in preparing an exhibition on his work in this area. During the summer he has been recording George White and has also travelled to Wensleydale to record in West Witton.

Tom McKean has been producing a CD Rom of North Eastern traditions and in working on a books about Singers and how and why they sing. He has also been recording Elizabeth Stewart and working on a book of local Gaelic songs. Organisation of the 29th International Ballad Conference to be held next August in Aberdeen is now under way (abstracts required by March 1st).

Martin Frost has spent the last three months on a journey of discovery in the world of traditional song and dance and in working on a strategy to refocus the EFDSS for the future

David Atkinson has been talking with Steve Roud about the possibility of collaboration on a motif index which is recognised to be a big task.

Julia Bishop reported that the future of NATCECT is still in question. She is involved in courses on 'Women in the Tradition' and 'Introduction to folklore. She is continuing her work on the Carpenter collection, part of this work includes establishing the feasibility of putting the collection on CD Rom. She is also working on children's playground material

John Adams outlined the work done by Ryburn 3 Step and described the Village Music Project - an attempt to get as many dance tunes as possible onto an Internet database.

Paul Burgess has now got himself a minidisk recorder and will be taking it into the field to capture some of the background to his song and tune collection.

Elaine Bradtke is working with Malcolm Taylor in the Vaughan Williams Library to index the collection of Cecil Sharp's press cuttings.

Doc Rowe is still sorting things out following his move. He now has the capability to scan his negatives and to use them to create displays. He has been working in Scotland on a BBC production and has made another proposal to them for a major series for the Millennium. His hobby is sleeping.

Marilyn Tucker talked about the work Wren Trust have been doing on carols in Bratton Clovelly and the project called 'We'll gather Lyrics'. They are supporting Red Spider Company in staging local events based on the work of Sabine Baring-Gould which link with the Baring-Gould Heritage Project described below.

Martin Graebe reported that the microfiche edition of the Baring-Gould manuscripts would be launched in November. The fiches themselves were now ready and indexing of the manuscripts was

nearing completion. He had also written an introduction for a facsimile edition of Baring-Gould's 'A Garland of Country Song' to be published shortly by Llanerch press.

Folksong, Tradition and Revival, Sheffield, July 1998

Ian Russell reported that the conference had exceeded his expectations. He felt that everyone present had been very generous in participating and in exchanging information with colleagues. The local singers had been greatly appreciated and all the feedback had been positive. Others who attended confirmed that the event had been very enjoyable with an excellent mix of amateurs and academics and with a wide range of different academic channels as well as a number of different nationalities. There was a small degree of an obsession with Lloyd and McColl and a dearth of work on children's songs. Thanks were expressed to Ian and Norma Russell, Julia Bishop and their colleagues for the hard work that they had put into the organisation. The Chairman expressed the hope that he wouldn't have to wait another 100 years for an equally enjoyable occasion.

TSF and the EFDSS

Martin Frost, Chief executive of the EFDSS had kindly agreed to attend the meeting so that we could explore further the nature of the future relationship of the Forum with EFDSS, which had been discussed at a previous meeting. Martin outlined the strategy that EFDSS is taking for the future. He summarised relevant aspects of the strategy as follows:

Make the Vaughan Williams Library the focus of the Societies activity

Develop Cecil Sharp House as a regional venue for Folk in a more general sense

Look at a national level at how information and material held in the Library can be disseminated and how membership of the Society can be made more attractive and made to work for the members.

To work with TSF and other groups to achieve their strategic goals

Ian Russell suggested that EFDSS should adopt an eclectic approach and to open the Society out. It was also suggested that EFDSS would only succeed if it won the respect of other organisations and that this would most likely be a result of achieving the goals it had set itself. The thought of providing resources for education in traditional song was suggested.

It was agreed that there was no question of the TSF becoming 'just' a part of EFDSS and there were doubts about the idea of TSF having a formal position within EFDSS - it was noted that TSF members are already part of EFDSS (the great majority of those present were currently members). It was felt, though, that EFDSS could make use of TSF as an expert resource and to build background information for the benefit of the wider membership. Martin said that he felt it would be of great value for himself or one of his colleagues on the EFDSS Council to attend TSF meetings on a semi-official basis so that the link could be assured.

The Chairman thanked Martin Frost for attending and speaking and wished him and the Society success with their plans.

Publications

The Chairman outlined some ideas that Steve Roud had asked to be raised in his absence about publications. He suggested that, while each of these was a real possibility, they were also good examples of a type of activity that could be undertaken and would, perhaps, spark other ideas. The suggestions were:

To publish a facsimile reprint of 'Ethnic' magazine (produced with a spirit duplicator in the late 1950's and considered a valuable resource by many). Reg Hall, one of the original editors, had agreed in principle to write an introduction to put the publication into context.

To publish a discography of traditional songs

To publish a collection of songs held in the Westmoreland Record Office that had been collected in the 1930's

To produce a booklet on Sussex Songs - reprinting early articles and songs collected but not previously published. If this were successful it could then be repeated for other areas.

These ideas were discussed. The 'Ethnic' idea was liked, though it was suggested that many of the Forum members already had copies and that the variable quality of the publication would be a difficulty. It was felt, though, that by taking copies from a number of different sources a better result could be obtained. The idea of a discography was felt to be more difficult since it would run into problems of definitions etc. The value of the Westmoreland collection was felt to depend on whether there were tunes to go with the songs. The idea that was liked best was that of the booklet of Sussex Songs and it was agreed that the Editorial Board would give this their attention. Lewis Jones volunteered his services to the Board. Andrew King also offered his talents as an artist. Both of these offers were welcomed.

Current Fieldwork

It was reported that Chris Heppa had discovered a new singer in Norfolk. Gwilym Davies is still actively collecting in the West Country and believes that there is still 'a lot out there'. John Adams reported that he has a number of q " tapes recorded in Liverpool Folk Clubs in the 19060's. Doc Rowe said that he also had some similar tapes. It was agreed that recordings should be an agenda item for the next meeting

Forum issues

The on-line discussion group had been set up by Rod Stradling as agreed at the last meeting. So far there had not been a huge number of enquiries but it was agreed that this was a very valuable service.

In response to a query from Gwilym Davies it was suggested by Paul Burgess that the best point of entry to the TSF pages was via the Musical Traditions Home Page since Rod needed to be able to change the structure when necessary. Members should therefore, bookmark the MT Home Page rather than the TSF pages.

Due to an administrative slip between the Secretary and the Treasurer there were some paid-up members who were not receiving their mailings. It was intended that they would be sent back issues of the meeting papers etc. Martin and Doc apologised to them and to the Forum for the error.

As a result of this it was agreed that the Secretary (Martin Graebe) would, in future, act as the point of contact for membership and maintain the database of members addresses and subscription status.

As agreed at the last meeting the mail-out is now restricted to those who have paid their subscription to the Forum.

Steve Gardham has asked that members should contribute queries to him for the 'Songs under the microscope' feature in English Dance and Song.

Future meetings

The next meeting of the Forum will take place on 23rd January 1999 and, at the invitation of John Adams and Chris Coe, it will be held in Ripponden. Details of the venue will be provided nearer the time, as will travel and accommodation details. Some overnight accommodation will be available on the Friday nights by prior arrangement. There will be a 'Sing, Say and Play' Session on Friday and/or Saturday night

It has been suggested that the Autumn 1999 meeting of the Forum should be held in association with the Ballad Conference at Aberdeen next August. The suggestion was welcomed by those present and it was agreed that we should plan accordingly

Steve Roud is planning to hold the proposed workshop day on Broadsides in London on 27th Feb 1999

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Meeting of May 17th 1998 held at Montpelier House, Bristol (Meeting No 3)

The meeting was hosted by Doc Rowe and chaired by Martin Graebe. It was attended by 16 members of the forum.

General review

The meeting opened with an informal review by those present of the work they were currently engaged in. The review was agreed by those present to have been interesting and that it should be a regular feature of the Forum's meetings. Particular points emerging from this part of the discussion were:

Julia Bishop reported that there is some doubt about the future of NATCECT at the University of Sheffield. The study of folk traditions is viewed as a peripheral area and, as such, is at high risk in a time of cut-backs. Members expressed concern and sympathy and a number of suggestions were made. In particular it was suggested that the help of leading figures in folk music and politics should be sought. Particular names mentioned were those of Roy Bailey, David Blunkett and Chris Smith. It was also suggested that Julia should seek help from the South Riding Folk Network.

Janet Topp-Fargion reported that the work the National Sound Archive on folk music archives was continuing actively. The hurdles that they faced were, firstly, concerns about 'ownership' of recordings transferred between collections and, secondly, the feeling on the part of living collectors that passing their archives to the NSA implied that their work was finished. This led to some discussion.

Rod Stradling talked about the Folk Traditions website and about the TSF pages within the site

Pat Mckenzie and Jim Carroll reported that they will be issuing a CD of recordings by Walter Pardon later this year and that recordings by Sam Lerner and Harry Cox will be issued in the future.

It was pointed out that, in going round the room, no-one had actually talked about collecting work being carried out at the moment. It was suggested that, at a future meeting, we should establish who is actually collecting now and, perhaps, review this work.

Membership of the Forum

Doc Rowe reported, as treasurer, that we have 43 paid-up members of the Forum. He did express a slight concern about the expectations of some of those who had joined but it was agreed that these issues will be resolved as the Forum 'matures'.

To clear up any confusion over the membership it was agreed that to become a member of the forum a membership fee would be charged.

The current fee was agreed at be £5.00, the purpose of which was to cover postage for papers related to meetings of the Forum. This would become payable on May 1st each year. For 1998 the payment requested in January will cover membership until May 1st 1999.

The mail-out following this meeting will be the last that will be sent to the full list of those potentially interested generated for the first meeting. It was felt that, because we will have the papers repeated on the Internet site that we are not cutting ourselves off from these people.

Other Forum matters

It was agreed that we should restate that it is our aim to support people studying traditional song in any geography, recognising that, as individuals, members of the Forum may have more selective interests.

Some concern was expressed about the material that had appeared on the pages associated with the Forum in English Dance and Song. It was unclear which items were 'official communications' and which were the personal views of people who were members of the Forum.. It was agreed that Steve Gardham should speak to Dave Arthur to ensure that he was aware of material that was to appear on 'our' page and try to resolve any possible confusions before they appeared in print. This was not intended to amount to 'censorship', only to ensure clarity of message.

On-line discussion group

It was agreed that it would be valuable to set up an on-line discussion group for matters related to traditional song.

Rod Stradling agreed to set up a private mail circulation system for members of the Forum. messages could be circulated by means of this to all members so that queries can rapidly reach the group who might best be able to help.

It was recognised that not all members of the Forum had Internet access at home but it was felt that most people could now obtain access through local libraries and that potentially, a large proportion would be able to take advantage of this facility.

Progress towards the National Collection

It was agreed that the work by the National Sound Archive, in association with the Vaughan-Williams Library was the closest approach we currently had to achieving this aim, suggested by Ian Russell at the first meeting. Some concerns were expressed over issues of access and user friendliness for a resource housed in the British Library.

It was felt that an important early step would be to set up a directory of resources because there are a number of different collections of information already available or which could become so. Doc Rowe agreed to draft a proposal to give some shape to this idea for further development.

Publications

It was agreed that we should consider the possibility of producing booklets on topics related to Traditional Song. These would not be intended for sale through booksellers but through the Forum and other outlets such as the Vaughan Williams Library.

It was recognised that there is a need for a beginners book of traditional song that could become the equivalent of the Penguin Book of Folk Songs for the current generation.

It was agreed that an editorial board would be set up under the leadership of Steve Roud. Jacquie Patten volunteered to co-ordinate distribution. Elaine Bradtke volunteered to take on musical editorship. Paul Burgess and David Atkinson agreed to be members of the Board

Other matters

Steve Roud is proposing to organise a meeting on Broadsides, Chap Books and Street Literature in London this Autumn. After discussion it was agreed that we should attempt to link this to the next meeting of the Forum. (Note: in fact this has not proved possible and this meeting is now expected to take place in the spring)

It was agreed that the membership list would be updated and re-issued for the next meeting.

Rod Stradling said that he would like to update the register of members interests that appears on the Internet site. Members are requested to provide him with a brief summary - two sentences/50 words would be ideal.

Thanks!

Those attending expressed their warm thanks to Doc Rowe for extending his hospitality in his excellent new facilities and for ensuring that the weather was so excellent that we were able to enjoy his garden to the full.. The meeting concluded with an informal tour of Doc's collection and with so much social interaction (ok - chit-chat) that he must have wondered if we were ever going to go home.

Thanks Doc!

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Report on meeting held on 11th January 1998 at Sheffield

The second meeting of the Group was held at Sheffield on 11th 1998, courtesy of National Centre for English Cultural Tradition. The main purpose of the meeting was to agree the basic aims of the group, its name, and its structure. After a great deal of discussion, the name TRADITIONAL SONG FORUM was adopted, and the following draft statement was agreed (to be ratified/finalised at the Forum's next business meeting):

The Forum's aims are:

To encourage research into, and dissemination of, traditional song and traditional singing in all its forms

To provide channels of communication and mutual support between those interested in the field

To support and encourage those public repositories and private individuals who hold material relevant to the Forum's interests

To improve access to, and dissemination of, that material

To raise the profile of traditional song and traditional singing

The Forum recognises the inherent kinship of the song traditions of all the constituent countries and regions of Britain and Ireland and is therefore concerned with all of them, and also with those countries whose traditions have strong cultural links with them. The traditions of particular areas may need different or special treatment, and individual Forum members will have particular interests and focuses, but the overall Forum interest is geographically inclusive.

Similarly, the Forum's main focus of interest is in traditional song and traditional singing, but it recognises that this particular form of expression cannot be divorced from many others. We are thus also interested in related song fields such as broadsides, music hall and other popular vernacular song; allied categories such as storytelling, childrens games and rhymes, customs, belief, music and dance; and other related areas such as cultural studies, folk life, folklore, ethnomusicology, oral history and social history.

The Forum's common interest is in research and dissemination, which includes the gathering of primary material, its organisation and preservation, and the sharing of this information with other interested parties, by any appropriate means. As a group we make no restriction on the level or type of interest or purpose the end-user may have in the material, providing they undertake to adhere to at least basic scholarly standards of accuracy and fidelity to their 'source' and to respect the rights and wishes of those who have supplied the material, either as 'informants' or as collectors/researchers. This does not restrict the right of individual collectors/researchers to refuse access to, or use of, any of their material, to any person or group should they so wish.

[Keywords: Folk song, traditional song, ballad, folk music, traditional music, popular song, popular music, street literature, broadsides, chapbooks, carols, shanties, popular culture, cultural studies, cultural traditions, ethnomusicology, folk arts, storytelling, narrative, customs, folk dance, oral history, oral tradition, social history, childrens lore, singing games]

It was agreed that the organisational structure of the Forum should be as 'slim-line' as possible, but that the following minimum level of formality was necessary:

Three officers (with the first incumbents): Chair (Steve Roud), Secretary (Martin Graebe), Treasurer (Doc Rowe).

Membership is open to anyone who agrees with the Forums aims and who pays the current membership fee.

The initial membership fee is £5

Officers are elected annually by postal ballot of the whole paid-up membership.

Basic methods of regular communication were discussed, and identified as follows:

The Secretary will circulate discussion papers, reports, etc., by post, to all members who want the material in paper form

We will continue to use the web site kindly provided by Musical Traditions to 'publish' information about the Forum to members and the general public.

Dave Arthur, editor of English Dance & Song (the magazine of the English Folk Dance & Song Society) has offered us a regular one or two page slot in that publication - an offer which was gratefully accepted.

It was agreed that we should take care to ensure that this type of 'public face' publication does not become overburdened with the minutiae of Forum business but should be more concerned with presenting information on actual songs, traditions and singing. (Steve Gardham to co-ordinate/edit this material).

We must arrange for those who are not members of the EFDSS to receive photocopies of the relevant pages on a regular basis.

One focus of the meeting was concerned with the indexing of song material. It was emphasised that a high degree of co-ordination and co-operation is desirable in this area, and it was decided that:

We compile and circulate a register of indexes/catalogues already underway - including those on the Web. (Steve Roud to co-ordinate)

Those interested in the technicalities of classification/indexing to get together to discuss:

A common system of master titles

First steps towards identifying, classifying and listing plot themes and motifs. (Steve Gardham to co-ordinate)

We are aware that current indexing efforts are all text-based and that the music of songs cannot be ignored. The indexing of tunes is, however, potentially much more complex than dealing with words, and it was agreed we should investigate:

Is anyone else already successfully indexing traditional tunes?

Are there any general music index initiatives which could be adopted by us, or adapted to our needs? (Julia Bishop to co-ordinate)

A welcome report from Clare Gilliam of the National Sound Archive gave details of a decision to mount a National Lottery bid to set up a National Centre to preserve and make accessible Traditional Music of the British Isles.

Members of the Forum were urged to support the forthcoming conference: FOLKSONG: TRADITION AND REVIVAL to be held in Sheffield 10th-12th July 1998. The provisional programme is already looking very good, and the conference promises to be an excellent event. (Contact: Ian Russell)

Next Meeting:

The next Forum meeting will focus on identifying specific achievable targets or projects which the Forum can inaugurate or usefully support. To be held on Saturday 16th May at Montpelier House, 84 Richmond Road, Montpelier, Bristol B56 5ER (Tel 0117 942 0657), courtesy of Doc Rowe. It is essential that we know numbers in advance of this meeting, so please contact Doc by 16th April if you are planning to be there.

Anyone wishing to join the Forum should send £5 to Doc Rowe (cheques made payable to Traditional Song Forum).

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Report on Traditional Song Research/Collection Meeting 20th September 2007

This was the meeting that led to the formation of the Traditional Song Forum a few months later

On 20th September 1997, more than 50 interested people gathered in the basement of Cecil Sharp House, London, for a day-long meeting on the subject of traditional song research and collection.

The morning was set aside for a session giving each of the participants the opportunity to talk briefly about their work in progress and/or future projects and to share information about events, resources, and other concerns. Representatives of the National Sound Archive (NSA), Irish Traditional Music

Archive (ITMA), Vaughan Williams Memorial Library (VWML) and the National Centre for English Cultural Tradition (NATCECT) reported on developments at their institutions, and others who could not attend sent written statements on similar lines.

This information-sharing session was extremely successful. By its nature, collection and research is often a lonely pursuit and it was clear that there is a great need for further contact, at both formal and informal levels between individuals and institutions in the field.

The afternoon was devoted to a general discussion on the future of song research, admirably kick-started by a 15 minute presentation by Ian Russell entitled 'A Charter for the Study of Traditional Song in England in the 21st Century', which gave a clearly structured list of points for debate, and debate them we did.

One of the important concepts of Ian Russell's piece was the idea of a National Collection, by which was signified the combined resources, material, knowledge and experience of all those interested in the subject. By the term National Collection it was not intended to imply that this vast resource need necessarily be all in one physical place, but rather that it should have at least a conceptual existence to allow access to any part by anyone who requires it. In addition, the concept of a National resource should be the basis for increased recognition and funding at a national level.

It was clear that the participants in the afternoon discussion represented a cross-section of the variety of approaches to, and interest in, traditional song. Some present were just starting, although most had been in the field for some years, and some had virtually retired. Some were primarily interested in collection to provide material for performance, others for study. Most had an amateur interest, but some were professional librarians or archivists, while one or two were involved in producing CDs, tapes or other publications. The needs of people at all levels in the educational system were mentioned, from the schoolchild and school-teacher, through to the undergraduate and the PhD student. Concern was also voiced that not enough was being done to attract young people to the subject.

This wide range of approaches and interests is clearly one of the great strengths of the field, provided of course that each one involved respects and supports the work of the others. Internal divisions would be fatal. Indeed, one of the themes of the discussion centred on the need to make common cause with others to provide the strength of numbers necessary to influence those in a position to provide the resources needed for development. Those interested in ethnomusicology were cited as an obvious example, but also folklorists, oral historians, social historians and so on, could be included as potential allies.

Another recurrent theme was that technological changes are working in our favour and promise a number of opportunities for a field such as ours with a small and scattered audience. CD and cassette production and desk-top publication bring the possibility of short-run print and sound publications within reach of small groups, while the internet and other electronic methods provide a means for the dissemination of material and information without the need for large sums of money to be tied up in production costs and stockholding. The internet, in particular, also promises to provide long-distance access to material held in central collections. At present, this is still just a promise, but we should be actively planning ahead in these areas rather than simply waiting for developments to materialise.

Another point of discussion concerned the respective merits of a narrow or broad focus when discussing our subject. It was pointed out that a narrow focus, or 'tunnel vision' on traditional song could sometimes be most productive and easier to explain to those who hold the key to resources such as funding, whereas many present were keen to ensure that song was seen as part of a much wider traditional culture - each aspect of which needed support, documentation, and so on. This is a particularly important point if any sort of national centre were being planned.

Last but certainly not least, it was suggested that we have a duty to use our knowledge and resources to support and promote the viable continuance of traditional performance.

The consensus of the meeting was that some sort of 'organisation' was needed at two levels. The de facto group formed by those at the meeting (and any others interested enough to join) should continue to meet and communicate for mutual support and to act as a pressure or ginger group for the possible future development of the field of Traditional Song Studies. The degree of formality (or otherwise) in the composition of this group remains to be decided. In addition, we need an umbrella organisation to bring together the institutions already active in the field and to promote co-ordination, co-operation, and a possible concerted effort designed to give the subject a higher profile and a new level of support. The fact that these institutions are from a mixture of sectors - governmental (NSA, ITMA, Museum of Welsh Life), universities (NATCECT, School of Scottish Studies, Archive of Traditional Welsh Music at Bangor), and voluntary (EFDSS, Folklore Society) will certainly prove challenging.

A further problem remains to be settled, concerning the definition of the term 'national'. The meeting was acutely aware of the ambiguity of that word in the context of the geographical, political and cultural history of Britain and Ireland and as there was no one present from Scotland and Wales, it was decided to postpone discussion of this point to a future meeting. Again, the notion of a decentralised federation of institutions and individuals may be the answer.

Whether the group should work within and through these existing institutions or should preserve an independent stance was discussed, but also left unresolved for the present.

A summary of our immediate concerns is as follows:

- Improve our present network and try harder to disseminate information amongst ourselves and to any other interested parties. Space will be provided on the existing Musical Traditions Website for the electronic dissemination of information, while a parallel system for circulating paper copies will also be set up.
- Support what we have already - notably the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, the National Sound Archive in any way we can.
- Seek ways to act as a Pressure / Ginger group in support of Traditional Song research and collection.
- Start discussions designed to lead to some form of umbrella organisation to include all the institutions (and representatives of the individuals) interested in the subject in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.
- Hold further meetings, on general and specific topics, with the next general planning meeting being in Sheffield in January 1998.
- Agree a name for ourselves.

Steve Roud (Sept. 1997)

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