



English
Folk
DANCE & SONG SOCIETY

Vaughan Williams
Memorial Library

TSF
Traditional Song Forum



Collectomania!

Folk song collectors and their worlds

Joint conference of the Vaughan Williams

Memorial Library and the Traditional Song Forum

Saturday 20 & Sunday 21 July 2024

Cecil Sharp House, London NW1 7AY

Supported by the Elphinstone Institute, the Irish Traditional Music Archive, and the Welsh Folk Song Society

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Recording and photographs

The conference organisers may take photographs during the conference for publicity purposes.

Please let us know if you do not wish to be photographed.

The conference will be videoed and the recording will be available to consult in the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library in perpetuity. It will also be retained on a private, passworded link and made available to all ticket bookers for a month after the conference. This will enable people to revisit presentations.

It is possible we may wish to make small sections of the day available on the library website or on VWML/ EFDSS social media in the future, with the permission of speakers. If you do not wish to appear in such videos, please make yourself known to one of the library staff.

Refreshments

Refreshments will be available throughout the day in Kennedy Hall. Lunch is provided downstairs in Trefusis. Catering is by Pink Food.

Sharp's Singers exhibition

We have a photograph exhibition on the stairs and in the lift corridors of the building, celebrating the singers who sang to Cecil Sharp. The photographs, which are all from the VWML collections, are accompanied by biographical information and QR codes which link to media on our catalogue. Please feel free to browse while you are here.

SOCIAL MEDIA

We encourage you to post about the conference on your social media accounts, using the hashtag **#Collectomania**.

If you are on Instagram, please tag the VWML (and follow us if you are not already!): **@thevwml**

PROGRAMME: SATURDAY

9.30	Registration, tea and coffee
9.55	WELCOME
10.00	SESSION 1 - KEYNOTE 1 Brian Peters 'Not to bury Sharp, but to crucify him': A critical appraisal of the academic assault on England's foremost folk song collector'
11.00	Coffee break
11.30	SESSION 2: Analysis Caroline Macafee Weighing the catch: Quantitative analysis of singers and song transmission David Atkinson What actually is there in the collections? Sociology of texts: Phenomenology of reception Paul Mansfield / Hugh Miller Context and interaction: Issues in writing about historical song collecting
13.00	Lunch
14.00	SESSION 3: Later Collectors Carol Davies Gwilym Davies: A modern approach to folk music collecting Chris Greencorn 'Genuine, but better variants known elsewhere': Helen Creighton's folk song collecting in Nova Scotia Julia Bishop 'A wrestler with sounds': James Madison Carpenter and collecting with the Dictaphone in Britain, 1928-35
15.30	Coffee break
16.00 -17.30	SESSION 4: Welsh Collectors Rhidian Griffiths Observers of Welsh traditional song Elen Wyn Keen The champion of collectors and his Canorion. E. Wyn James Welsh folk songs in Aberystwyth, London and Paris

PROGRAMME: SUNDAY

9.30	Registration, tea and coffee
9.55	WELCOME
10.00	SESSION 5 - KEYNOTE 2 Martin Graebe Sabine Baring-Gould: 100 years on
11.00	Coffee break
11.30	SESSION 6: Female Collectors Peter Snape Anne Geddes Gilchrist: Folk song collector and scholar Angela Fogg Seven sons, 800 children's games and more. The life and collecting of Alice Gomme.
13.00	Lunch
14.00	SESSION 7: Lesser-known collectors Malcolm Barr-Hamilton W. Percy Merrick (1868-1955): Pioneering blind folk song collector Lynn Noel Joanna Colcord: A sailor's life, a collector's legacy
15.00	Coffee break
15.30	SESSION 8: From the Irish Sea Catherine Ann Cullen 'They Call Me Jack of All Trades': Four multi-tasking ballad collectors born in nineteenth-century Ireland, and how their several occupations and experiences coloured their interest in gathering songs Áine Heneghan 'The man who saved a feast of music from the famine years': James Goodman as a collector of Irish traditional music Stephen Miller 'Your last proposal about music hunting sounds charming. We must think it over': W.H. Gill and J.F. Gill as Manx folk song collectors
17.00	FINAL REMARKS

ABSTRACTS AND BIOGRAPHIES

David Atkinson

What actually is there in the collections? Sociology of texts: Phenomenology of reception

As is well known, the folk song collectors have been vilified for reasons such as their perceived class and gender affiliations, as well as supposed editorial interventions. Such criticisms may or may not be justified in individual cases, but once the ground is conceded there arises the intractable problem that, on the one hand, the collector could never be a fly on the wall of an idealized, unmediated folk song context, inaccessible to the external observer, while on the other hand, our very understanding and appreciation of folk songs remains entirely dependent on the work of the collectors. Here, two approaches derived from work in aesthetics and textual criticism – variously described as the ontology of artworks and the sociology of texts – are sketched in with the intention of suggesting ways of understanding the phenomenology of folk song collections that would mean it is not inevitable that we should fall into despair over the inaccessibility of past contexts.

David Atkinson has published widely on ballads and street literature, and has co-edited and contributed to several volumes of essays for The Ballad Partners. He is the Editor of Folk Music Journal and Honorary Research Fellow at the Elphinstone Institute.

Malcolm Barr-Hamilton

W. Percy Merrick (1868-1955): Pioneering blind folk song collector

Little is known or has been written about W. Percy Merrick, yet he was an early and active member of the Folk Song Society and the first member to have a number of the Folk Song Society Journal devoted exclusively to songs from their own collections. He collaborated with both Ralph Vaughan Williams and Cecil Sharp. The vast majority of his songs, he collected from a single singer, Henry Hills of Lodsworth, in Sussex, but he collected from other singers also, including some blind, like himself.

This paper will examine his background and life, his relationship with the singer Hills. It will analyse the body of songs he collected and examine their significance at the time he collected them and to the folk revival since.

Malcolm Barr-Hamilton has worked as an archivist for 45 years, mostly in the local government sector. Born and raised in Sussex, he became interested in folk music as a teenager and on moving to London in the late 1970s became a morris dancer and Anglo concertina player. Since becoming Archivist for the English Folk Dance and Song Society in 2018 his enthusiasm for folk song and dance, though never extinguished, has been thoroughly revitalised.

Julia Bishop

‘A wrestler with sounds’: James Madison Carpenter and collecting with the Dictaphone in Britain, 1928-35

James Madison Carpenter (1888-1983) was a Harvard-trained scholar who collected songs and ballads, primarily in Britain in the period 1928-35. Equipped with a Dictaphone cylinder and portable typewriter, he gathered some 2000 songs, as well as folk plays, dance tunes and various other items. Although Carpenter worked intensively on the collection on his return to the US, his hopes for publication were never realized and he eventually sold it to the Library of Congress. It has since been digitized and is now available online via the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library (<https://www.vwml.org/archives-catalogue/JMC>; see also the Carpenter Collection Online Catalogue, <http://www.dhi.ac.uk/carpenter>).

Carpenter was the first among collectors of folk song in Britain to make extensive use of a recording device, and his collection contains some 35 hours of recordings, and various texts and tune notations of the songs. Carpenter was also the first collector in Britain with an academic background in folk literature as well as one of the few people collecting songs here in the inter-war period.

Re-visiting and extending earlier research into Carpenter's collecting (see *Folk Music Journal* 1998 special issue), this paper focuses particularly on his approach to the tunes of the songs in his collection and their performance. It will explore what motivated his use of the Dictaphone and, drawing on examples from the collection, its implications for his collecting and transcription techniques. We will also consider clues as to the influence of earlier collectors on his approach, concluding with a preliminary assessment of the impact that all these considerations have had on the legacy of his collection today.

Julia Bishop is a folklorist with dual specialisms in traditional song and children's folklore. She is an honorary research fellow at the Elphinstone Institute at the University of Aberdeen and a part-time research associate in the School of Education at the University of Sheffield. Julia's research includes local songmaking in Newfoundland, media influences in children's play, and historical and comparative study of traditional song and singing, with a particular interest in performance style and musical transmission. She edited the music for The New Penguin Book of English Folk Songs (Roud and Bishop 2012) and continues to work on completing a long-term project, undertaken with colleagues, of publishing an edition of the J. M. Carpenter Collection.

Catherine Ann Cullen

“They Call Me Jack of All Trades”: Four multi-tasking ballad collectors born in nineteenth-century Ireland, and how their several occupations and experiences coloured their interest in gathering songs

This paper will explore the many-faceted lives of four song collectors born in Ireland between the years of 1820 and 1892: John Davis White, publisher, librarian, failed grocer, local historian and newspaper man in Tipperary, (1820–93), Patrick Weston (P.W.) Joyce (1827-1914) educationalist, historian, linguist and translator, from rural Limerick; and two Dublin-born collectors: PJ McCall (1861-1919), songwriter, publican, local historian, musician and city councillor, and Colm Ó Lochlainn (1892-1972), printer, typographer, publisher, Gaelic scholar, and uilleann piper.

Without these four men, the number of Irish broadside ballads that has survived would be considerably smaller. McCall's thirteen scrapbooks of ballads and cuttings about songs are held the National Library of Ireland and copied at the Irish Traditional Music Archive; Joyce's broadside ballad scrapbooks are held at Dublin City Libraries and digitised at the ITMA; Ó Lochlainn's collection, many of them uncut broadsheets, is at Special Collections in University College Dublin and has been digitised there, and the J.D. White or Cashel Ballads Collection is held at and digitised by Trinity College Dublin.

Although none of the four wrote in detail about their song-collecting, this paper will bring together the scattered remnants of such writings that exist, and compare and contrast them.

Catherine Ann Cullen is an Irish Research Council Postdoctoral Fellow with University College Dublin and Poetry Ireland, writing a monograph on the lost street poets and tenement balladeers of nineteenth century Dublin. She was the inaugural Poet in Residence at Poetry Ireland 2019-2022, for which she won Ireland's Business to Arts Award for Best Use of Creativity in the Community. She is an award-winning poet, children's writer and songwriter, and author of seven books, most recently 'The Song of Brigid's Cloak' (2022), and a broadsheet, '11 x 11 for Number 11: Poems for Poetry Ireland' (2023). Her new and selected poems, 'The Other Now', was published by Dedalus Press in 2016.

Her research is published in 'The Companion to Traditional Irish Music' (3rd Edition, Cork University Press, 2024, ed. Fintan Vallely), by The Ballad Partners in London, and by the Irish Traditional Music Archive. Among honours she has received are the Patrick and Katherine Kavanagh Fellowship 2018/19 and the Francis Ledwidge Poetry Award (twice). This year her work was shortlisted for both the Moth International Poetry Prize and the Strokestown Poetry Prize. Catherine Ann holds a PhD from Middlesex University and an M. Phil from Trinity College Dublin.

Carol Davies

Gwilym Davies: A modern approach to folk music collecting

The late Gwilym Davies was one of the most prolific song collectors of recent years. His collecting interests ranged through Hampshire, Gloucestershire, Devon, the USA and gypsies. His widow, Carol, will talk about his thoughts and views on the practicalities and method of collecting, many of which were set out in his book 'Catch it, Bottle It and Paint It Green', touching on the performance, context and locality of the music, Gwilym's views on 20th century attitudes to collecting and his ideas that music making has a feeling of common ownership and is not just another genre in the music industry. Most of his large collection is to be made available on the British Library website and his Gloucestershire material is on the glostrad.com website for which he was a driving force.

Following a degree in modern languages Carol Davies concentrated her interest in folk music on the traditional music of Gloucestershire. Together with her late song collector husband, Gwilym, she has been a trustee and project manager of the National Lottery-funded project which resulted in the setting up of the glostrad.com website, a wonderful source for the traditional songs and music of Gloucestershire. She has been a member of various folk groups including Puzzlejug and the Green Willow Band, recording and releasing folk albums and currently leads the Shepherd's Crook Folk Choir. She has been lead musician for a morris side in Cyprus and now for the Happenstance Border Morris side. She is also interested in medieval and early Tudor music and sings and plays portative organ in the Waytes and Measures early music group. She was awarded the EFDSS gold badge last year for services to folk music.

Angela Fogg

Seven sons, 800 children's games and more. The life and collecting of Alice Gomme.

Alice Gomme lived the life of an Victorian lady in a comfortable middle class family. But beyond the kitchen and the cradle her achievements included collecting and analysing over 800 children's musical games, publishing several books, being a founder and active member of The Folklore Society from 1878 to her death at the age of 85 in 1938, promoting children's education and researching ancient cake recipes and other areas of folklore. She was married to an eminent politician and folklorist as well as mother to seven sons. An original and remarkable woman.

Angela Fogg is a pianist, piano and Kodály musicianship teacher and children's choral director in several schools. She studied music at Middlesex Polytechnic and piano with Carola Grindea. Her postgrad at training was at Trinity Laban on The Teaching Musician MA. She has performed at numerous venues as accompanist and soloist and recently as a member of The Moonshine Sisters singing, playing ukulele and mountain dulcimer and exploring material from pre 1950's Americana. Angela's first contact with folksong was through singing at school and learning the recorder where the tuition books of the day relied on folk melodies. She also enjoyed musical games in the school playground and was always searching for new ones. Today her teaching of Kodály musicianship maintains this connection to folk song and children's games, using these to teach children about music and their musical heritage. In recent times she has become evermore interested in the women who collected many of these songs. Whilst there are many names their stories are often not celebrated. Angela is also the Secretary for the Education Planning Board of the British Kodály Academy, a trustee for the European Piano Teachers Association and an Honary Local Representative for The Independent Society of Musicians.

Sabine Baring-Gould: One hundred years on

Sabine Baring-Gould, Parson, Squire, Novelist, Travel writer, Antiquary, Folk song collector, and more, died on the 2nd of January 1924, a few days short of his 90th birthday. In this presentation, Martin Graebe will examine how this remarkable man, the first of the large-scale folk song collectors, has been portrayed since his death and consider the value of the legacy that he has left us.

*Martin Graebe is a researcher and writer about traditional song and song collectors. His book about the antiquarian and folk song collector Sabine Baring-Gould, published in 2017, won the Katharine Briggs Prize of the Folklore Society, and the W G Hoskins Prize of the Devon History Society. His most recent book *The Forgotten Songs of the Upper Thames*, about the song collection made by Alfred Williams, was launched in October 2021 and was a runner-up in the 2022 Katharine Briggs Prize. He has given talks on Baring-Gould, and on other aspects of traditional folk song, to audiences around the world. He and his wife, Shan, perform traditional songs together in harmony.*



Sabine Baring-Gould, (1824-1924), VWML archives

Chris Greencorn

‘Genuine, but better variants known elsewhere’: Helen Creighton’s folk song collecting in Nova Scotia

This paper explores the work of Nova Scotian folk song collector and folklorist, Helen Creighton (1899–1989), in light of the conference themes. Actively engaged in fieldwork from the 1920s to the 1960s, and the author of numerous collections well into the 1980s, Creighton is one of, if not the best-known folklorist in Canada. Her work, the preponderance of which was conducted within 100 miles of her home near Nova Scotia’s capital city, Halifax, speaks to the connections between folk song collecting in Britain and in Canada – a contradictory influence that was pervasive but localized; profound, but often implicit; and later, largely jettisoned. The title quotation, drawn from correspondence Creighton had with the English Folk Dance and Song Society on the nature of the songs she collected in Nova Scotia, signals the place of Creighton’s work in a transatlantic exchange of folk materials, albeit one which would eventually bring her closer to American folklorists than to British. Drawing from my own research on the raced and gendered aspects of Creighton’s fieldwork on and construction of a Nova Scotian folk culture, I outline an account of this fundamental tie to Britain that is also appropriately specific about the colonial

contexts in which it was applied.

Chris Greencorn is a PhD candidate in the Department of History at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario. His research interests lie at the juncture of social & cultural history, ethnomusicology, and folklore studies. His dissertation examines the work of women folk culture collectors in 20th-century Canada, and in particular their constructions of "folk" and "traditional" music among settler, immigrant, and Indigenous peoples in the period leading up to Canada's official multiculturalism policy. Prior to doctoral studies, Chris was the Artistic Director of the Stan Rogers Folk Festival in Canso, Nova Scotia, and currently he sits on the board of Folk Music Ontario.

Rhidian Griffiths

Observers of Welsh traditional song

Traditional songs collected in Wales during the early years of the twentieth century were published in the Journal of the Welsh Folk-Song Society, which first appeared in 1909. The Journal's editor, J. Lloyd Williams, would send examples of these songs to collectors outside Wales for comment, among them prominent members of the Folk-Song Society such as Frank Kidson, Lucy Broadwood, and Annie Gilchrist. Their comments were included as notes to the published songs. The presentation will discuss how critics such as these reacted to the songs sent to them and how they drew comparisons not only with English examples but also with songs from other Celtic countries. This comparative element in the collecting and study of traditional music, evidently significant in these early years, is one that is sometimes overlooked.

Rhidian Griffiths is the Treasurer and Membership Secretary of Cymdeithas Alawon Gwerin Cymru, the Welsh Folk-Song Society. He is interested in the history of collecting and publishing traditional music in Wales, and has published and given presentations on various aspects of Welsh traditional music.

Áine Heneghan

'The man who saved a feast of music from the famine years': James Goodman as a collector of Irish traditional music

The collection of Irish traditional music compiled by James Goodman (1828–1896) in southwest Ireland is, arguably, the most celebrated of its kind. That it is accorded almost sacred status—as the cited headline from *The Irish Times* attests—is due in part to the success of the two-volume *Tunes of the Munster Pipers* (ed. Hugh and Lisa Shields) and the ensuing commercial recordings, while the recent discovery of further manuscript books has served to reinvigorate the enthusiastic reception. Instead of recycling the usual narratives, this paper offers a cold-eyed reappraisal of Goodman and his collection by examining the surviving documentary materials—six volumes in Trinity College Dublin, plus a single volume in University College Cork. I begin by considering what constitutes a collector, a role to which Goodman is not only admitted, but accorded preeminent status in Breandán Breathnach's pantheon of collectors. To test this reading, I juxtapose Goodman's reception history with evidence from the sources. I show how the volumes interface, proposing a revised chronology, and call attention to specifics in the manuscripts, including notational errors, unattributed copying, and a substantial correction likely made following an exchange with another (elder, prominent) collector. I highlight, moreover, Goodman's conscious presentation of his work—altering dates, changing title pages, and rewriting the preface—and argue that the image cultivated both by Goodman and his proponents needs to be tempered to arrive at a more rational, less hyperbolic assessment of his contribution to the vibrant culture of collecting in mid-nineteenth-century Ireland.

*Áine Heneghan (Ph.D., Trinity College Dublin) is Associate Professor of Music Theory at the University of Michigan. She is a specialist in the music and writings of the Second Viennese School, an area on which she has published widely. Having played the Irish harp in the past, she is now pursuing research on Irish traditional music. Her essay "'Da mihi manum': An Irish Arcanum" (*Trends in**

World Music Analysis; Routledge, 2022) charts an analytical history of the popular Irish tune ‘Tabhair dom do lámh’: beginning with the lute tablature in a seventeenth-century Scottish music manuscript, it explores how and why the tune changed—or did not change—over time. Her current research on Irish music focuses on nineteenth-century manuscript collections.

E. Wyn James

Welsh folk songs in Aberystwyth, London and Paris

The Welsh Folk-Song Society was established in 1906, the fruit in part of a resurgence of Welsh national identity and the emergence of a new Welsh middle class in the late nineteenth century, which was embodied in the person of the young David Lloyd George, who would become the British prime minister during the First World War. Many of the most active among the Society’s early collectors were female, and several of them had strong connections with both the university town of Aberystwyth in mid-Wales and the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist church on Charing Cross Road, London. Some of them also spent periods in Paris during the first two decades of the twentieth century. A case in point is that of Annie Hughes Griffiths (1873–1942), who led a deputation to America 100 years ago, in 1924, to present a peace petition signed by almost 400,000 Welsh women, calling on the women of the United States to urge their government to join the League of Nations. Annie Hughes Griffiths was active in folk-song circles in Aberystwyth, and then in London after she married the minister of the Charing Cross Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church in October 1916. Significantly, two of the witnesses named on that marriage certificate were Mary Davies and Ruth Herbert Lewis, two of the most prominent figures in the Welsh Folk-Song Society, both of whom attended the Welsh church on Charing Cross Road.

Annie Hughes Griffiths and Ruth Herbert Lewis visited Paris in March 1911 in the company of a quartet of undergraduate students from Aberystwyth who performed traditional Welsh songs at concerts there. This was by no means the only example of Welsh folk-singers and folk-song collectors visiting Paris in the early twentieth century, sometimes for extended periods. This paper will explore those visits and networks and their significance.

Professor Emeritus E. Wyn James was until his retirement a Professor in the School of Welsh at Cardiff University and co-Director of the University’s Centre for Welsh American Studies. He is an authority on Welsh literature and culture from the 16th century onward. Professor James is a Fellow of the Learned Society of Wales, of the Welsh Hymn Society, and of the International Ballad Commission. In 2012 he was a Fulbright Scholar and Visiting Fellow at Harvard University. He was Organiser of the 38th International Ballad Conference, held in Cardiff in 2008 and is the current Chair of the Welsh Folk-Song Society.

Elen Wyn Keen

J. Lloyd Williams: The champion of collectors and his Canorion.

A performance of a new choral arrangement of ‘Tra Bo Dau’ (Wherever hearts are true) during [at] a public ceremony at the University College of North Wales, Bangor in 1905, was a watershed moment in the life of Professor J. Lloyd Williams (1854-1945) and the history of the Welsh folk song movement in Wales. Lloyd Williams, in his role as part-time Music Director had already arranged several well-known Welsh melodies for his students at the University but this was the first time that he had arranged a tune drawn from the oral tradition. This led to the formation of the ‘Canorion’, the society established by Lloyd Williams along with his Irish Principal, Sir Harry Reichel, for the purpose of collecting, studying and performing indigenous Welsh melodies.

This paper aims to examine J. Lloyd Williams’ unique and invaluable contribution as a folk song collector and music director and explore the far-reaching impact of the ‘Canorion’, their achievements, their collecting methodology and the difficulties they encountered in Wales at the turn of the 20th century.

Elen Wyn Keen has recently received her PhD from the School of Arts, Culture and Language, Bangor University for her research into the far-reaching contributions Dr. John Lloyd Williams (1854-1945) made to the folk song movement in Wales. Articles based on her

research are published in *Canu Gwerin (The Welsh Folk Song Society Journal)* and the *Welsh Music History Journal* and she coordinated and taught undergraduate modules in the field of *Welsh Music at Bangor University* between 2017- 2021. She is now working for the *Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol* and as a part-time piano tutor and accompanist.

Caroline Macafee

Weighing the catch: Quantitative analysis of singers and song transmission

My research aimed to find ways of assembling and analysing the often fragmentary and incomplete information about singers and where they learned their songs in two major collections, The Greig-Duncan Folk Song Collection and the School of Scottish Studies Archives (omitting Gaelic material). I used simple quantitative methods to group the hundreds of contributors and their sources by characteristics such as sex, decade of birth, whether or not they were Travellers, and whether they had learned songs from family and other personal sources. I used some rules of thumb, mainly referring to family relationships, to estimate decade of birth where this was not known. I was thus able to assemble sufficient data to make comparisons amongst groups and between the two collections, and to observe changes over time.

Caroline Macafee is a retired academic and lexicographer, author of numerous publications on the Scots language, including 'Traditional Dialect in the Modern World' (based on her PhD thesis about Glasgow dialect), 'A History of Scots to 1700' (book-length introduction, online at the 'Dictionary of the Scots Language'), and an analysis of the question results on Scots from the 2011 Census. She was also one of the editors of 'The Scots Thesaurus', and editor of 'A Concise Ulster Dictionary'. She worked on *Tobar an Dualchais/Kist o Riches*, a project to digitise the sound archives of the School of Scottish Studies, and this was the impetus for her book 'Scots Folk Singers and their Sources'.

Paul Mansfield and Hugh Miller

Context and interaction: Issues in writing about historical song collecting

This presentation aims to promote reflection on and discussion of some of the problems in writing the history of the collecting phenomenon. It highlights the interaction between collector and singer as a means of understanding how collecting works.

Writing about the activities of the past involves striking balances such as that between generalisation and variety of detail. In the case of song collecting, judging the role of historical context in the narrative might be challenging. Arguably, the main danger here lies in emphasising context to the point where it acts as a dominant force, over-determining and homogenising the collecting phenomenon.

A focus on the interaction of song collectors and source singers may help to identify how collecting works at a micro level, balancing the emphasis on historical context with ideas of local context. An interactive approach acknowledges individual agency, including the source singer's active role, an aspect that might be neglected because of limitations in the evidence. The approach encompasses issues of power and value while recognising that these aspects manifest themselves in diverse ways across a range of relationships.

Paul Mansfield is an independent researcher, principally engaged with the history and contemporary characteristics of the English folk scene. With a professional background in adult social care and an academic hinterland spanning history, applied social science and ethnomusicology, Paul frequently works collaboratively across different disciplines. His most recent day job was teaching social work at the University of Derby.

Hugh Miller has been involved in traditional music, one way or another, since the early 60s, and was involved, in a small way, in Topic Record's 'Music from Sliabh Luachra' project in the 1970s. He spent nearly forty years teaching psychology at Nottingham Trent University and is now interested in understanding the social process of collecting. He's also developing his storytelling in preparation for the time when he can't sing any more.

‘Your last proposal about music hunting sounds charming. We must think it over’: W.H. Gill and J.F. Gill as Manx folk song collectors

“Your last proposal about music hunting sounds charming. We must think it over.” So wrote W.H. Gill who held a post at the General Post Office in London to his brother living in the Isle of Man, John Frederick, on 24 February 1895. The Gill brothers were not the only collectors active in the 1890s in the Island, but unlike A.W. Moore and Dr John Clague they left behind a considerable collection of personal papers.

These consist of (i) a bound transcript of one hundred and one tunes collected in the field by W.H. Gill, accompanied by his brother, in 1895 and 1898; (ii) forty-eight letters between the brothers, dating between 1894 to 1898, concerning the editing and production of Manx National Songs (1896) and (less so) Manx National Music (1898), together with a number of enclosures; (iii) fourteen letters from Dr John Clague, their collaborator; (iv) thirteen letters to Deemster J.F. Gill from various correspondents, who formed his circle of helpers in the search for singers; (v) various field and interview notes, song texts from helpers, and similar material to this passed on by Clague.

Rather than concentrate on what they collected the emphasis here will be on how they collected drawing on the letters to J.F. Gill from his circle of helpers and the field and interview notes.

Stephen Miller previously held a post at the Austrian Academy of Sciences and taught at the University of Vienna. Research interests include the folklore and folk song of the Isle of Man, the Manx Language Revival, the Scottish folklorists the Rev. Walter Gregor and William George Black, and the historiography of the Folk-Lore Society. Current research is on Edward Lovett and Henry Burstow. Website: www.chiollaghbooks.com

Lynn Noel

Joanna Colcord: A sailor’s life, a collector’s legacy

Joanna Carver Colcord (March 18, 1882 – April 8, 1960) stands alone among maritime collectors not only as a woman in a largely masculine field, but as a lifelong sailor with extensive firsthand knowledge of global maritime heritage during the last decades of the Age of Sail. Colcord’s seminal collection ‘Roll and Go: Songs of American Sailormen’ was deeply influenced by her seafaring life. She was born in the South Pacific to a captain from Searsport, Maine and attended high school by correspondence in Hong Kong before earning a degree in social work. This presentation explores Colcord’s remarkable global childhood and its influence on her as a noted author of sea music collections still widely consulted today. Learn more at www.joannacolcord.com.

Lynn Noel is a professional heritage interpreter, folk performer, and independent scholar in geography, history, and folklore. She has received awards from the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Natural Resources Council of America (NRCA) and the Country Dance and Song Society as a CDSS Local Hero. A former research fellow of the Institute of Arctic Studies at Dartmouth College, Lynn founded Digital Heritage Consulting to bring traditional song and heritage arts online to create digital community, with projects like the Mermaid’s Tavern online folk club and DIY Digital life coaching for artists and nonprofits seeking to adopt digital tools.

Lynn is based in Waltham, MA and has performed at maritime festivals in New England, the Great Lakes, the Pacific Northwest, California, the UK, the Netherlands, and the Baltic. Her clear, powerful voice is well suited to “real head-back-and-let-fly sea chanteys” (Mystic Seaport) and she offers a suite of special programs on women and the sea at crosscurrents.lynnnoel.com. Lynn is also a regional arts organizer as Program Chair of the New England Folk Festival and the founder of the Boston Area Chantey and Maritime Sing and of the Northeast regional maritime music network and events calendar www.nechanteysings.com.

Lynn’s undergraduate and graduate work in geography and women’s studies prepared her well to explore and appreciate the personal and professional life of Colcord as a social scientist and world traveler. She owns a well-loved first edition of ‘Roll and go: Songs of American sailormen’ and can at least hum a few bars of the bulk of the Colcord collections.

'Not to bury Sharp, but to crucify him': A critical appraisal of the academic assault on England's foremost folk song collector

For several decades after his death in 1924, Cecil Sharp's disciples cemented his reputation as the pre-eminent authority on English folk song, and nurtured an unquestioning acceptance of the value of his work. A revisionist and deeply critical view of Sharp and his ideas emerged during the 1980s, led in the UK by David Harker's influential book 'Fakesong', and in the USA by a succession of writers on the cultural history of Appalachia. Over the last few years the attacks have grown fiercer, culminating in the recent book 'The Folk' by Ross Cole, which claims that Sharp's ideology was essentially fascist. Modern scholars of folk song recognise the shortcomings of Sharp's theories, but all acknowledge the great importance of his contribution. Unfortunately, however, the iconoclastic view has gained ascendancy in some sections of academia. In this presentation I will provide a corrective to arguments that often prove under scrutiny to be poorly researched, agenda-driven and fallacious, resulting in serious misrepresentations of Sharp's concepts, his politics, and his character. I will draw on the wealth of primary sources that are available in Sharp's archive, but which are often inadequately explored.

Brian Peters is the author of an expanding body of published research, including a thorough appraisal of Cecil Sharp's Appalachian expeditions, as well as articles on folk song origins, the collecting work of Maud Karpeles, radical songs in 19th century Lancashire and the 1960s folk song revival. He is also a regular lecturer for the Traditional Song Forum, and a reviewer for the Folk Music Journal. In his professional career he has been a performer and educator in the field of traditional song for over thirty years, playing concerts and tutoring classes in the UK, North America, Canada and Australia, including a presentation on Sharp in Appalachia at the Library of Congress, USA.



Cecil Sharp (1859-1924), VWML archives

Anne Geddes Gilchrist: Folk song scholar and collector

Anne Gilchrist was a significant figure in the folk music collecting world, initially enjoying some success as a collector before becoming much more involved in the comparative study of song. She was the inspiration behind the direction taken by the editorial board of the JFSS (and later the JEDSS) to do just that. Her articles were of significance and she gained respect as a collector and scholar of folk song.

She was first and foremost an enthusiast and in my paper I will provide a holistic overview of her song collecting and scholarly contribution with reference to those in her world at the time namely Baring-Gould, Sharp, Kidson and Broadwood. I will recognise her skills in archaeology and music and the national recognition this brought her whilst not losing sight that she was the only collector that focussed on collecting material in the North West of England.

Peter Snape is a life-long Lancastrian, rather like Anne Geddes Gilchrist. His interest in her song collecting began when searching for the long lost folk songs of Lancashire. This inevitably grew into a much wider research project and a number of the songs she collected have now been recorded by the Gilchrist Collective who also celebrate her life and legacy in the folk music show 'Most Truly Yours, Aunt Anne'. Now retired from a career in the further education sector, Peter keeps busy researching traditional song with reference to the North West of England and his presentation at the Conference will be a first for him, and quite possibly Anne herself.

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