



## English Folk Dance and Song Society

### ARCHIVIST – 3 days a week

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The English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS) is offering an exciting opportunity for a committed archives and records management professional to join the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library as Archivist.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The English Folk Dance and Song Society is the national development organisation for the folk arts of England, championing folk dance, music and song at the heart of England's rich and diverse cultural landscape.

EFDSS is a multi-faceted charity. It is an organiser of and catalyst for education and training activities throughout England; a creative development agency; an advocate on behalf of the folk arts; a membership society (c.2,500 members); the custodian of the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library (VWML); and it runs Cecil Sharp House (CSH), England's folk arts centre in London. The organisation is based at Cecil Sharp House, a Grade II listed building purpose built in the 1930s.

EFDSS programmes around 50 professional music performances at Cecil Sharp House a year featuring folk and traditional music from across the world, from established to early career artists. It runs a year-round programme of courses, classes, lectures and conferences for adult, youth and family courses and classes, delivering nearly 300 events primarily at CSH but also at other venues across England.

The English Folk Dance and Song Society is a National Portfolio Organisation of Arts Council England until March 2026 providing grant income of 20% of our annual income. The majority of income is generated through hires of rehearsal spaces and meetings room at CSH with membership subscriptions and donations accounting for 12% of income. Both are key areas for development.

The organisation has a board of trustees/directors and is operationally led by a Chief Executive and Artistic Director and six Heads of Departments – Library, Education, Marketing & Communications, Business Development & Operations (full-time posts), and Philanthropy and Finance (part-time posts).

## **Our Mission Statement**

Our purpose is to **champion folk dance and music at the heart of England's rich and diverse cultural landscape.**

Our mission is to:

**Welcome everyone** – we embody an inclusive culture, and we want everyone to be able to enjoy folk dance and music.

**Take the lead** – we drive change, we motivate and develop new generations of artists, practitioners and audiences, and build networks and partnerships.

**Connect passions** – we spark curiosity and creative possibilities by providing opportunities for learning, studying and exploring folk.

**Treasure folk** – we preserve, present and promote folk arts and their rich resources.

Our vision is that people in England have the opportunity to connect with and enjoy folk.

We believe in being inclusive, progressive, collaborative, creative and principled in everything we do.

## **Notable achievements since 2010**

- An expanding Artists' Development Programme of bursaries, residencies and commissions: supporting the creativity and career development of folk artists, improving the diversity of artists working in folk, and introducing folk to artists working in other genres.
- Establishing and running the National Youth Folk Ensemble (recognised as a Department of Education National Youth Music Organisation in 2023), London Youth Folk Ensemble and a national youth folk arts programme.
- Designated status for the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (2011).
- Continuing development of the largest online digital collection of the folk arts, alongside a regular programme of lectures and conferences.
- Introduction and expansion of an award-winning Resource Bank of educational materials and other sector support initiatives including a crowd-sourced dance calendar.
- Pioneering programme for young people and adults with disabilities: Inclusive Folk and Folk Beyond.
- Annual programmes of training events for practitioners and educators – delivered online, at Cecil Sharp House and at venues across England.
- Access improvements to Cecil Sharp House, alongside upgrades to public areas.
- Implementation of a market-leading CRM and box office system, Spektrix.
- Awards include: Music Teacher Best Digital Resource 2016; Folk Alliance International Lifetime Achievement Award 2016; Mayor of Camden's Unsung Music Hero Award 2011; Excellent Award for Music Libraries from IAML 2010.

## **The Vaughan Williams Memorial Library**

The VWML was founded with the opening of Cecil Sharp House in 1930. Originally called the Cecil Sharp Library, it housed Sharp's collection of approximately 1,000 books, which he bequeathed the English Folk Dance Society. The library was renamed in honour of the composer, song collector and President of the English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS), Ralph Vaughan Williams, who died in 1958.

The amalgamation of English Folk Dance Society and the Folk-Song Society in the early 1930s, plus the subsequent bequests, donations and purchases since that time, saw the library grow considerably over the years, most notably with the addition of other media, including sound, moving image, pictorial and manuscript collections of many of the most eminent folklorists and collectors of the twentieth century. Today, VWML is a multi-media library and archive, and achieved the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council's designated status in 2011 in recognition of its status as England's principal folk arts collection.

The VWML is staffed by the Library and Archives Director (full-time), two Librarians (one full-time and one 0.4) and the Archivist. We also take on volunteers from time to time.

In 2007, through the endeavours of the VWML, EFDSS was awarded £154k from the Heritage Lottery Fund to develop a pilot programme to digitise some of its collections and deliver an accompanying outreach programme in primary schools and the wider community in London, Hampshire and Lancashire – *Take 6*. The success of *Take 6* led to the development of *The Full English* (2012-14), which saw a further 12 collections of English folk material including manuscripts, notebooks, correspondence and photographs containing dance, song, music, mummers' plays and other customs and traditions collected in the first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century, hosted online. This project received national and specialist media coverage for the digital archive, the accompanying national learning programme and the associated *The Full English* band and CD (developed from an EFDSS commission). More recently, the EFDSS in partnership with the Elphinstone Institute at Aberdeen University, has received AHRC funding for the project Carpenter Folk Online. This has seen the digitised collection of James Madison Carpenter (a Harvard scholar collecting in Britain between 1929 and 1935) added to the VWML's digital archive. These collections, along with our extensive specialist indexes and the Roud folk song and broadside indexes, make the VWML's site the largest freely accessible online digital archive and database of English folk material in the world.

In 2024 the VWML launched a new website, incorporating a new system for the archive catalogues and indexes. The new interface was provided by Epexio, and replaced the bespoke system created in 2012-14, which was no longer viable. This major project has enabled the addition of several new archive collections, and we aim to upload many more over the coming months. Work continues with Epexio to further customise elements of the system such as the Song Subject Index and interactive map.

In December 2024 we raised money through The Big Give campaign to catalogue two major archival collections. In 2025 we aim to recruit a temporary project cataloguer to work on this, and the incumbent Archivist will have some responsibility for supervising their work.

The VWML is at the heart of EFDSS, and its collections provide the stimulus for much of what we do as well as being *the* source of information and inspiration for artists from all art-forms and genres, historians, folklorists, TV and Radio programme makers, professionals and amateurs. Over the coming years we will be continuing with our active digitisation programme, expanding to include audio-visual material for addition to the collection and website. As we develop and grow, the need to maintain these digital collections under a robust digital preservation strategy becomes ever more pressing.

## **Job Description and Person Specification**

<b>Responsible to:</b>	Library and Archives Director
<b>Responsible for:</b>	Volunteers
<b>Close lateral relationship with:</b>	Two librarians
<b>Based at:</b>	Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regent's Park Road London NW1 7AY

### **Summary**

Under the supervision of the Library and Archives Director, to contribute to the development, maintenance and efficient operation of the library and archives service in collaboration with the library team. The role will specifically focus on the cataloguing and preservation of archival collections.

### **Key responsibilities:**

- Catalogue archival collections to current professional standards.
- Contribute to the development of the archival web-based catalogue.
- Monitor and implement measures to ensure the preservation of archival collections, e.g. storage, security, environmental conditions, packaging, and pest control.
- Assist in the selection of items for conservation.

### **Other responsibilities:**

- Contribute to the continued development of library and archives policies, procedures and practices.
- Assist in the creation of digital surrogates of selected material for access and preservation purposes.
- Supervise archives volunteers and placements in consultation with the Library and Archives Director.
- Assist with archival enquiries from membership, EFDSS staff, the general public, and donors, in person, by phone and by email.
- Assist with exhibitions of archival material.
- Assist with VWML events such as the annual two-day conference and Library Lectures.
- Be an ambassador for the Society and the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library.
- Continue personal and professional development.
- Carry out any other duties that may be reasonably requested.

*This job description is designed to reflect the duties currently incorporated in this post. The Library and Archives Director and Chief Executive may amend these in light of changes in the VWML.*

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

### Essential experience

- Professional qualification in archives and records management or equivalent.
- Sound knowledge of current professional standards and best practice including archive descriptive standards.
- Practical experience of archival software and strong IT skills.
- Experience of cataloguing archival collections.
- Experience working with a wide range of media and formats.
- Experience of collection care and the handling of rare materials.
- Ability to lift and carry boxes.
- An enthusiasm for the folk arts.

### Desirable experience

- Experience of managing digital assets, including creation, development, organisation, and maintenance.
- Experience of managing volunteers or leading a team.
- Knowledge of the folk arts, music and the social history of Britain.
- Ability to read music.

### Qualities

- Ability to work unsupervised.
- Able to prioritise to complete tasks and hit targets within a set timescale.
- Enthusiastic, self-motivated with an adaptable approach to work.
- Excellent attention to detail, organised and orderly working methods.
- Good team-worker, assisting with tasks and helping others as necessary.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills.
- Excellent interpersonal skills.
- Flexibility, if it were on occasion necessary to change days worked.

## Conditions of Employment

Salary:	£19,924.20 pro rata (£33,207 FT)
Hours:	21 hours per week, excluding lunch breaks. Usual working hours are 9.30am – 5.30pm. There is some flexibility over which days the post-holder wishes to work.
Holidays:	15 days per annum (pro rata of 25 days full time entitlement) plus statutory public and bank holidays (pro-rata).
Pension:	Employer/employee contributory pension scheme.
Probation:	The post carries a six-month probationary period.

Weekend and evening working may be required from time to time. Over-time is not paid, but time-off-lieu (TOIL) is given by prior arrangement with line manager.

**Flexible working:** EFDSS is committed to promoting flexible working to facilitate effective and efficient working and enable employees to achieve a better home / work life balance. All employees can apply for flexible hours and home working, where appropriate for the role. All applications are carefully considered.

**Other benefits:** Interest-free season ticket loan, cycle to work scheme, childcare voucher scheme, discount on meals and drinks in the CSH café, complimentary tickets to many EFDSS events.

**Positive Action for a Diverse Workforce:**

At the English Folk Dance and Song Society we strive to be an Equal Opportunities employer and to ensure that no person is unfairly discriminated against in our recruitment and selection policies and procedures. We are committed to diversifying our workforce to better represent society and we follow guidance on positive action in recruitment from the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Equality Act 2010.

- We particularly welcome applicants for this role from ethnic minority backgrounds, and those who are disabled, as these are under-represented in our organisation and the wider folk music workforce.
- All disabled applicants who fulfil the Person Specification and Qualities criteria for this role, will be called for an interview. Please make clear in your personal statement if you consider yourself disabled. (You may find it helpful to refer to this definition [www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010](http://www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010).)

Please see our [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion webpage](#) to learn more about our commitments and actions towards diversifying our work and staff.

## How to apply

Please email a completed application form to [recruitment@efdss.org](mailto:recruitment@efdss.org) together with the [Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form](#). The latter form is for monitoring the effectiveness of our recruitment in attracting a wide demographic of candidates and will not form part of your application. Please use 'Archivist' in the subject line.

The closing date for completed applications is **10am, Monday 17 March**.

Interviews will be held at Cecil Sharp House in week commencing 24 March 2025 (requests for a remote interview via Zoom will be considered).