



## News archive for 2006

### **TSF Meeting, Sheffield 25th November 2006**

The notes of our meeting at the University of Sheffield Music School on Saturday 25th November 2006 can now be found [here](#)

(5th Jan 2007)

### **Life and Times in Ireland, 2nd September 2006, Cecil Sharp House**

This meeting, organised by TSF, in association with the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, was a great success with interesting and enjoyable presentations from Tom Munnelly, John Moulden, Jim Carroll and Pat MacKenzie. Brief notes of the meeting can be seen [here](#)

(7th January 07)

### **Peter Kennedy**



The recent death of Peter Kennedy is the first of a founder member of the Traditional Song Forum and I feel it important that it should be recorded and an appreciation of his contribution given. There have been a number of obituaries and tributes to Peter and these have covered his life and work and have also highlighted some of the controversies associated with this complex man so I would like to record a few personal memories of someone who has influenced my course, as he has that of others, over the last thirty plus) years.

I first met Peter in the 1970s when we were both living and working in Devon. I knew a little of his work and had met some of his students from Dartington. At that time he ran the Cider Press Centre at Dartington where he had a shop selling folk books, records and great cider as well as his studio. He ran a folk club in the studio and I became a regular, meeting a number of other singers both locals and those passing through. I will always be grateful for the encouragement that he gave me and for the knowledge that he passed on. I became one of the small band of revival singers that Peter recorded and, though that recording now makes me wince to hear it, it was another valuable experience, helping me to understand more of the essence of performing songs and to refine my performance. At that time I also helped Peter with another project, the film 'Children of the Moor' produced by Peter and John Bartlett for Westward Television. I remember a very enjoyable day spent dodging showers in Lustleigh Orchard and recording songs, finally being driven by the rain to retreat to the village hall.

It was a coincidence that after Peter left Devon and moved to Gloucester that I should have followed him. I'd written to let him know that we were coming and was pleasantly surprised when I was moving in to be told by the departing owner that Peter had already been round to welcome us and had left a bottle of wine. The bottle was soon followed by Peter and Beryl and it was a delight to renew our acquaintance. Over the years we met several times and were involved in setting up 'Glosfolk', the successor to the local EFDSS organization, as well as TSF.

Peter was the subject of the first 'Noon Interview' at Cheltenham Folk Festival in 1997 and it was a chance for me to dig deeper into his personal history and learn more about his place in (and contribution to) the history of folk traditions. He came, of course, from a family who were at the epicentre of the folk revival but

whose roots were firmly set in the tradition through his great-grandfather, John Kennedy and his great-aunt, Marjorie Kennedy-Fraser. His father, Douglas, as well as his mother, Helen and her sister Maud Karpeles were key figures in Cecil Sharp's core team who, after his death, took on the leadership of the movement that Sharp created. Peter himself remembered seeing Sharp when he was very young. Others have recorded the detail of Peter's career and I am not going to repeat the catalogue here, save only to highlight a few key points.

Most people would consider his travels in the 1950s, collecting folk songs to be his major achievement. It was certainly one that he talked of with pride and with affection for the people he met and also with affection for the early portable tape recorders which made this work possible. These recordings made for the BBC and on his own account are a remarkable legacy. They are though, only a part of what he did for folk music, not just that of the British Isles but also that of other countries. He worked closely with Alan Lomax, for example, over many years. What is sometimes forgotten, though, is the excellence of Peter's musicianship and that was also a source of pride to him. It was an essential part of what he believed in - taking the music out to the people. This was a guiding principle that he emphasized in the early discussions about the formation of TSF and it influenced the aims of this organization. When he was awarded the Gold Badge of the EFDSS it seemed appropriate that the presentation took place at one of the events organised jointly by TSF and EFDSS

In recent years the majority of people who knew him and enjoyed his playing were ordinary people who came across him playing in their own spaces rather than in concert halls or folk clubs. Often this was with Ben Hall and Pete Hayward as 'The Hooleys' - a local band to Gloucester which, in many ways and in their attitudes to music, reflected the values of the tradition. I believe that it is this gift of sharing the music with others that Peter would want to be remembered for. Many people from around the planet have, in recent weeks, talked of help given willingly and of their pleasure in knowing him. Thank you, Peter.

Martin Graebe  
(13th Sept 06)

### **Halliwell Online**

Those of you who followed the recent correspondence on a query I placed on the Tradsong discussion group may recall that I promised to place a link to an e-text of Halliwell's 'Nursery Rhymes of England' here. The link is [http://presscom.co.uk/halli\\_1.html](http://presscom.co.uk/halli_1.html) and you will find there a wealth of stuff about and written by James Orchard Halliwell-Phillips, including two editions of the Nursery Rhymes book.

(11th Aug 06)

### **A Weak Link**

Talking of Nursery Rhymes, I will interject the most tenuous of links between the two adjacent items. When we were in Trinity College, Dublin last week we saw in that wonderful old library building an exhibition of children's books from the collection made by Paul (Mary) Pollard. These included two books of verse for children by Isaac Watts. This exhibition is open until October.

Apropos of which, following Lewis Jones' enthusiasm for visiting Watts' grave in Bunhill Fields Cemetery, Shan and I did so and spent a pleasant hour wandering in one of the most pleasant spots we have found in London. So here, with thanks to Lewis, is a photo of Watts' grave:



(11th Aug 06)

### **Doc Rowe**

Doc has asked me to let you all know that his website is now available at [www.docrowe.org.uk](http://www.docrowe.org.uk). It has a lot of interesting detail about his archive and his work. Doc also has a great new book out called 'May Day: The Coming of Spring' published by English Heritage.

(16th June 06)

### **Key Texts - progress**

I am, as I have said before, keen to build a library of key texts on this site. My next target is William Barrett's 'English Folk Songs' but I have had problems getting good image quality while maintaining a reasonable file size and download time. I have decided to try scanning the book again and see if I can do better - but this will take a little time to do. Meanwhile Ruairidh Greig has very kindly sent me a biographical article that he has written on Barrett that fills in some of the detail about this neglected pioneer of folk song collecting. [This article has now been superseded by an improved version, which you can find on the 'Articles page']

### **Meeting of TSF on 6th May**

The notes from the meeting of the Traditional Song Forum held at Cecil Sharp House on May 6th are now available and can be seen [here](#).

(16th June 06)

### **Key Texts - an important new feature of Tradsong.org**

We talked, at the November meeting, about building up the number of resources available on this site, particularly original texts related to folk songs and folk song research. The first of these are now available.

I am delighted that we are now able to bring you the first of these items. The first of these is the complete series of 'Collector' articles written by Frank Kidson for *The Choir* magazine. John Francmanis and Vic Gammon have assembled this collection and have kindly allowed us to publish the full set of articles on the

site. The articles cover a wide range of topics and make fascinating reading. We are very grateful to John and Vic for sharing them with us and for their hard work in finding and transcribing the original articles.

The second item is Miss Mason's Nursery Rhymes and Country Songs. This is an interesting collection of songs first published in 1877. Other documents will follow as the opportunity presents itself - next up will be William Barrett's 'English Folk Songs'. Any offers or suggestions for other material will be gratefully accepted.

You can find the files on the 'Key Texts' page - go [here](#)  
(Jan 06)

### **Classic English Folk Songs**

Malcolm Douglas has let me know that there is now a set of web pages devoted to corrections and additions to the recently published 'Classic English Folk Songs'. It can be found [here](#). Malcolm also reports that the second impression of the book, to be issued this year, will include as many corrections and additions as can reasonably be squeezed in as well as a few improvements to the layout.

(Jan 06)

### **Henry Burstow**

Malcolm has also told me about another of his enterprising pieces of work - a full transcription of Henry Burstow's 'Reminiscences of Horsham'. This can be found [here](#). If you do not know it you should have a browse through this interesting memoir, published in 1911 by a remarkable Sussex singer. As well as memories of the town and his interest in bell-ringing there is a chapter on 'Songs and Song Singing' that includes a list of the 400 songs that he knew.

(Jan 06)