

TSF Newcastle Meeting, Saturday March 6th 2010

Morning Session

Steve Gardham in the Chair. There were 27 members and visitors. Apologies were received from Sue Allan, Elaine Bradtke, Ron and Jenny Day, Gwilym Davis, Katie Howson, Lewis Jones, Bob and Jackie Patten, Mike Persey, Peter Robson, Andy Rouse, Malcolm Taylor, Mike Tristram, and Peta Webb

TSF Business

- The secretary had investigated the possibility of a meeting in Dublin, and it was looking like the weekend of November 12th-14th with a Friday evening session at the An Goilin club. The meeting itself would occupy the Saturday and there was a possibility of some sightseeing on Sunday morning.
- The possibility of a summer meeting in London was discussed, but a date was difficult with members attending various festivals. The secretary would see how much support there would be from the London area, with a suggested date of June 12th
- Steve Roud suggested that the subject of the recent London meeting, namely broadsides and chapbooks, could be repeated outside the capital, and Newcastle would be ideal. Members agreed generally with this.

Members' Reports

Martin and Shan Graebe

Martin's book on Sabine Baring-Gould is progressing slowly. Wren Music had obtained Heritage Lottery funding to digitise the Baring Gould mss as part of the Devon Tradition project, which would also include digitising Paul Wilson's collection of sound recordings of Devon songs, and an education project based on the materials. The Baring-Gould manuscripts would be presented online in a similar manner to the Take 6 initiative, these things being on track for completion this time next year. They had recently come across a Baring Gould diary which documented his Yorkshire collecting; and Martin had also been looking at Gustav Holst's musical piece based on *Songs of the West*.

Steve Roud

His book on children's folklore was about to be delivered to the publisher; VWML intends to expand the Take 6 project to other collectors, which would include Kidson, and maybe Sharp; Penguin books have decided, after years of rejection, to issue a new version of *English Folk Songs*, including putting it instantly into their "Classic" range - members commented on the inevitable confusion of this with the recent *Classic English Folk Songs*. The evening classes at Cecil Sharp House are going well, and perhaps they should be repeated elsewhere in the country. We had originally agreed to make a financial contribution to EFDSS to help cover the cost of the course. After discussion **The meeting agreed to make a donation of £250 to this end.** Steve also reported that Mike Heaney was working to improve the Bodleian broadside website.

Vic Gammon

He referred to the Penguin books issue from Steve Roud by suggesting maybe there could be a Volume 2; he had an article on the history of *Old McDonald had a farm*, which would be in the next issue of FMJ; he had nearly finished a paper with Emily Portman on 5/4 timing in English folk songs; he had written notes for a re-release of A L Lloyd's ballad recordings on Fellside Records; had a long-term project on street ballad singers. He was yet another member about to retire.

Susan Tilley

Had not done much since her M. Litt dissertation finished last year.

Eileen Richardson

Had been very active in researching Wearside songs, particularly broadsides in the Sunderland archives, and in performing them at local folk clubs.

Anne Lamb, Sonja Meier, Joyce Dickinson, Ian Fraser and Austin Dunphy

Local singers were attending out of interest

Dave Eyre

Continuing with his weekly community radio programme in Sheffield. He commented that apart from *Folk On Two* all folk programmes were on local radio. He thought the "treasure chest" of folk music had its lid only slightly ajar, and should be fully opened.

Malcolm Smith

Interested in music and evolution, and more widely was professionally engaged in researching cultural variation. *Tam Lin* and *Lord Randal* were two current subjects of interest.

Mike Sutton

Was engaged in a funding bid to study migration and diaspora, such as the Scots and Irish in England, but also the English in North America. There is a very active social network of English descendants who celebrate St George's Day more vigorously than we do. Anglophilia.

Nathan Armstrong Helen Edwards, Anne McClary and Rachel Hayes

Four students from the Newcastle Folk Degree course.

Derek Schofield

Editor of *English Dance and Song*, who gave us some previews of upcoming articles, especially the 150th anniversary of Sharp's birth next November, and in 2011 the anniversary of EDS; the delayed book on Bert Lloyd would be out soon; the *Marrowbones* series had been delayed by the death of Malcolm Douglas, though Steve Gardham, among others, is working to complete the publication

Pete Wood

Had been resting since the launch of his *Elliotts* book, but had recently produced an article on Tyneside songs, the subject of his talk later today, and had published an article on the Mustrad site entitled "John Barleycorn revisited", which looked at how

the development of the song over 250 years is analagous to species evolution. Other than that, he continues to sing and play music a lot. With the Keelers he had participated on an upcoming BBC4 programme on Sea Songs.

Steve Gardham

Pointed out the spate of recent excellent articles on the Mustrad site; he continued with the work of agreeing a master title for all songs with the same Roud number; Yorkshire Garland, the website, had finished its Phase 2, having now 130 songs, had taken the material into schools, and was looking for funding for Phase 3; was looking at the difficult area of 18th century broadsides and chapbooks with Steve Roud; was editing *The Wanton Seed*, one of the *Marrowbones* series, which was nearly done and was looking for recordings of the songs by source singers; his material on Child ballads on the *Folkopedia* site was aimed to be deliberately controversial, and members were encouraged to become involved.

Paul and Liz Davenport

Current interests were the famous blind singers of Sheffield; ceremonial dances; a Sheffield ballad club, Paul pointed out many modern parallels of some of the more notorious event in the Child ballads; a project on “Songs my father never sung”; and the Gatty mss, a Hooton Roberts vicar who had recorded stuff for Vaughan Williams. Paul also suggested we hold a meeting in Bruges, since we shared many song tunes with the Flemish.

Bryan Henderson

Birtley Folk Club, coming up to its 50th anniversary, was a place where “the talking stops and the singing starts”; the new banner for Cotia pit, with Jack Elliott and Jock Purdon on it, was paraded annually at Durham gala.

Doreen Henderson

The club was a “mini-Sage” in that it encouraged people to sing who hadn’t previously done so; she was interested particularly in political parodies (*Coming Round the Mountain* was apparently political), and she regarded herself as “too political to be academic”!

Bob Askew

Continues to be very involved with Hampshire folk songs, and in the centenary year of George Gardiner’ death had recently given many talks round the county; his research had recently concentrated on Preston Candover, and then moved on to Petersfield; Paul Marsh had recently done a show illustrating all aspects of village life; a lot of non folk people were showing an interest; and he passed round copies of the Hampshire “Folk Map”.

Johnny Handle

Had just entered the building, and was his normal self!

Afternoon Session “Folk Music Research in the North of England”

Chaired by Vic Gammon, who introduced the speakers.

Malcolm Smith

A senior lecturer in the Department of Anthropology at Durham University, he is interested in both biological and cultural aspects of evolution and has had a lifelong interest in English traditional song. His talk was entitled “Doubly Darwinian: the First English Folk Song Revival”.

Peter Wood

A retired academic biologist, singer and instrumentalist whose talk asked the question of why the Tyneside area had so many local songs compared with other parts of the country.

Susan Tilley

Susan has a background in human resources, has had a long term interest in traditional song, and recently completed an MLitt at Newcastle University. The talk, “Women in Tyneside Song” was based on that research.

Stewart Hardy

An eminent fiddle player who, among many professional commitments, teaches on the BMus in Folk and Traditional Music at Newcastle University. His talk looked at the tremendous variation in versions of traditional tunes.

Paid up members of TSF can obtain a recording of the talks in MP3 format for a nominal charge. Details will be on the website, which will also have the slides used by the speakers. Or contact the Secretary.

A highly successful and absorbing day was completed with the usual singaround which most people stayed for.

Thanks to Vic Gammon and his Newcastle University colleagues for organising the day, to Sheila Gammon for providing refreshments, to all the speakers, who put so much work into their excellent presentations and to the members and others who contributed to the discussion throughout the day.

Pete Wood
8th March 2010