



SONG RESOURCES ON THE WEB

COMPILED BY MARTIN GRAEBE



TRADITIONAL SONG FORUM

SONG RESOURCES ON THE WEB

The first version of this list was developed at the 'Forum Focus' session at the TSF meeting of 30th November 2002 entitled 'Song Resources on the Web'. The reason for compiling it was to give people who want to find out more about folk songs some places to visit and to learn. In this latest revision I have, again, reviewed all the existing links and added some new ones that people have told me about, or that I have come across in my travels round 'The Net'. I did, in fact, find that a number of important sites had changed their locations, or had added new features.

This is a list of places to go to look for texts of songs and for other things useful to the researcher into the background of folk song. It does not, with a few important exceptions, give links to individual recordings, books or articles. Neither does it, though again there are a couple of exceptions, point towards commercial sites. It has been compiled from an Anglo-centric viewpoint but there are many links to sites in other countries that have resources of interest to English speaking folk song enthusiasts and researchers.

Inclusion on this list is not a guarantee of quality (though I've left out the the ones that were more than half-way bad – and there were a few!), nor is it a guarantee that a site will still be there tomorrow. If you come across any broken links please let me know – particularly if you know where a site has moved to. I do not claim this list is comprehensive – but it is an excellent sample of the sites that are available to explore traditional song and its cousins. And if you know of any sites that you think should be included, please let me know and I'll add them.

Martin Graebe

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The most useful site of them all! www.efdss.org

The English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS) website, and particularly, that part of it devoted to the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library (VWML) has grown in size, content and quality to such an extent in recent years that it has become of unparalleled value for researchers interested in English traditional song. There are now many featured items on the site including:

- VWML online – a searchable database of the collections of Cecil Sharp, Lucy Broadwood, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Percy Grainger, George Gardiner, Francis Collinson, George Butterworth, Maud Karpeles and Henry and Robert Hammond
- Cecil Sharp's photographs – within the Sharp collection there is a library of images of the singers from whom he collected songs
- The Roud Index – Steve Rouds's immensely valuable listing of references to songs that have been collected and where they can be found - and it is still growing
- The 'Take Six' project – images of the manuscript collection of six leading collectors: George Gardiner, Janet Blunt, Henry Hammond, George Butterworth, Anne Gilchrist and Francis Collinson. Sabine Baring-Gould's manuscripts have recently been added to this site and the 'Full English' project, which has just received Heritage Lottery funding will add further manuscript collections to this list including Cecil Sharp, Lucy Broadwood, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Frank Kidson, Percy Grainger, and others
- Cecil Sharp's Diaries – were added to the site to celebrate the 150th anniversary of his birth. Transcripts by Chris Bearman have recently been added.
- Study Guides – including the *English Folk Song Bibliography* (2006), a listing of the most significant books about folk songs from the C19th onwards. Also the *English Folk Song Discography* (2003), a listing of significant source recordings of folk singers and their songs
- And, of course, lots more

BROADSIDE BALLADS:

There are now many sites which have collections of broadside ballads, some of them with images of the original ballads, some with facsimile texts that may be easier to read.

<http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/ballads>

Bodleian Library Broadside Ballads. – An amazing site. Search for broadside ballads and, if they are there, view them as images in their original state. Includes basic information about dates and publishers. One of the most useful sites on the web!

<http://mh.cla.umn.edu/pitts.html>

Pitts Broad­sides – 13 from a collection of 216 in the University of Minnesota library, presented as plain vanilla transcribed texts.

<http://mh.cla.umn.edu/catnach.html>

Catnach ballads – an index of the 80 (on forty sheets) from a volume held by the University of Minnesota Library. Of these 27 have been transcribed in full as plain texts.

<http://speccoll.library.kent.edu/music/ballads/streetballads.html>

Street Ballads of Victorian England – listing of a collection of 175 broadsides in the library at Kent State University, Ohio. A few of the ballads have been scanned and can be viewed as images of the original broadside.

<http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/ballads/>

'**Sixteenth Century Ballads** - A work in progress' – this is a subset of the web-site of the Society of Creative Anachronism (www.sca.org) produced by Greg Lindahl. It is well worth exploring all the levels of this site. There is an enormous amount of interest here.

<http://www.nls.uk/broadsides/index.html>

The Word on the Street – The National Library of Scotland's collection of images of 911 broadsides, browseable by subject or title. Images can be viewed as original print, pdf or transcription.

<http://special.lib.gla.ac.uk/teach/ballads/index.html>

Glasgow Broadside Ballads (**The Murray Collection**) – Put together by the University of Glasgow Library as part of its 'Special Collections' web site. This is a nice looking site and has been improved since first launched. The ballads are presented as thumbnails that you can click to view a good image of the original printed sheet. You can also click through to another website of the same name to see additional materials, including contemporary illustrations, performances of some of the songs by modern singers and a lot of background material on the broadside ballad.

<http://www.sc.edu/library/spcoll/britlit/cbooks/cbook.html>

The Scottish Chapbook Project – really a site in preparation and does not contain chapbooks as such. Describes a joint project with Glasgow University that will catalogue about 1800 Scottish Chapbooks from various collections (including Murray). Has a useful description of what Chapbooks are for reference.

<http://www.middlebury.edu/academics/lib/libcollections/collections/special/flanders>

Helen Hartness **Flanders** Ballad Collection – Though it is rather strangely arranged and access to the images is quirky, this is a great collection of images of broadside ballads and other items from the Middlebury College Library collection bequeathed to them by Helen Hartness Flanders who collected songs in Vermont. The link opens the page that describes the collection. To view the images click on the ‘digital collections’ tab and go to ‘Helen Hartness Flanders Ballad Collection’.

<http://www.crstudio.org/streetprint/index.php>

Streetprint: Revolution and Romanticism – another collection of broadside ballads and printed songs from Canada – technically satisfying, well designed, and worth exploring.

TRADITIONAL SONGS AND SINGERS

<http://folkopedia.efdss.org/Song>

Folkopedia – this site is steadily growing as more people contribute to it This link takes you to the song pages, with information about songs, singers, collectors and a load of other stuff.

<http://www.yorkshirefolksong.net/>

The **Yorkshire Garland** – a fine regional collection of 128 songs from Yorkshire as texts and as sound files. There are also, as you would expect from any project involving Steve Gardham, excellent notes on the provenance of the songs.

<http://crixa.com/muse/songnet>

Australian Folksongs – The work of Mark Gregory and described as – ‘songs and music together with information for a good selection of Australian songs’. Midi sound files play through Quicktime (or whatever your system uses).

<http://www.folknortheast.com/>

Folk Archive Resource North East (**FARNE**) – A nice collection of material from the North-East of England, with songs and a great deal besides. Searchable, listenable and with pictures.

<http://www.informatik.uni-hamburg.de/~zierke/joseph.taylor/>

Joseph Taylor - Another site originally started by Garry Gillard and now moved to a new home. Contains a lot of interesting information about one of the most famous of all folk singers.

<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/community/folksongsintro.php>

Wiltshire folk songs – this collection on the Wiltshire Libraries site gives texts for a number of the songs collected in Wiltshire by Alfred Williams and others. Williams didn’t record the

tunes that he heard the songs sung to but some of the other collectors, such as George Gardiner and Geoffrey Hill, did, and for those songs the tunes are given. There is also a section on folk plays and a calendar of folk customs

<http://www.chivalry.com/cantaria/index.html>

Cantaria - a collection of 'Bardic' songs forming part of the Chivalry Music community of independent artists from Missouri. A collection of songs (mainly Celtic) with MP3s.

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amhome.html>

American Memory - another Library of Congress site containing a number of separate song resources (go to the Performing Arts header). Once you are there it will take a little effort to find your way through - but it is worth the effort to hear some great recordings (main tip - the songs are accessed through the links in the header bar). There is a fine collection of 19th Century song sheets.

<http://www.csufresno.edu/folklore/BalladIndexTOC.html>

The Ballad Index. A reference work whose definition of ballad stretches fairly widely but which contains a lot of useful data.

SONG COLLECTORS:

<http://www.sbgsongs.org>

Sabine **Baring-Gould**: Songs of the West – My own site, with background information on Baring-Gould and his song collection, including a number of songs.

<http://www.devontradition.org/>

Talking of Baring-Gould, keep an eye on the **Devon Tradition** pages for news of work to digitise the Baring-Gould manuscript collection (due to be on-line at the end of 2010 and of the Paul Wilson collection of recordings made around Dartmoor in the 1970s.

<http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/carpenter/>

The **James Madison Carpenter** collection – The online index to this important collection, made in Britain during the 1920s and 1930s. A huge piece of work but does not (yet!) contain any song texts or recordings.

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/nsarm/virtual/creighton/>

The **Helen Creighton** Collection – a slightly disappointing website where it is not easy to find where stuff is. There is, though, some useful background information and an index to the songs that Creighton collected.

<http://maxhunter.missouristate.edu/>

The **Max Hunter** Folk Song Collection - Another fine collection of songs from the Ozarks, recorded between 1956 and 1976. 1594 songs for you to listen to including a separate section on Child ballads. The playback is directly on the page – no messing about with Quicktime.

<http://web.lyon.edu/wolfcollection/ozarks.htm>

The **John Quincy Wolf** Collection – A wonderful resource at Lyon College, Arkansas, based on the work of John Quincy Wolf who collected songs in the Ozarks in the 1940s. There is a great list of songs for which texts can be viewed. For many it is also possible to listen to the original singers - Including the wonderful Almeda Riddle. This is a top-notch site.

POPULAR SONG

<http://levysheetmusic.mse.jhu.edu>

The **Lester S Levy Collection** – a large collection (29,000 images) of American sheet music from 1780 to 1980 at the Johns Hopkins University. A nicely designed site with clickable images of the whole of the piece.

<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/sheetmusic/>

Historic **American Sheet Music** - another sheet music collection, this time at Duke University. Contains 1800 American broadsides and song sheets from the 19th Century. These can be searched, but not browsed – which makes it less useful than it could be.

<http://www.nla.gov.au/music/>

A collection of **19th Century sheet music from Australia**. Many of the songs are actually transnational so can be a useful source in searches related to the UK.

<http://www.musicallcds.com>

Windyridge CDs site – actually a catalogue of CDs for sale of music hall and variety performers but also includes useful background, pictures and biographies of music hall performers.

<http://www.monologues.co.uk>

Make em laugh – not song but I had to put it in anyway. A nice collection of monologues put together by Paul Wilkinson. Includes classics performed by Marriot Edgar, Stanley Holloway, Billy Bennett and others.

GUIDES:

<http://www.englishfolkinfo.org.uk/folkmus.html>

Martin Nail's guide to folk clubs, musicians and everything in the UK - a very useful reference.

<http://www.folk-network.com/directory/links.html>

SRFN Directory – compiled by the sadly missed Malcolm Douglas for the South Riding Folk Network. This page is devoted to internet resources and includes a number that I have missed.

ORGANISATIONS:

<http://lcweb.loc.gov/folklife>

American Folklife Centre – Part of the Library of Congress website and an important source of information about recordings of American culture.

<http://www.itma.ie>

Irish Traditional Music Association (ITMA) web site. Explains the work of the Association and describes its collections and how to gain access to them.

<http://blpc.bl.uk>

The **British Library** public catalogue - search for publications and find out about other services. This is an awfully big website and it is, frankly, very hard to find anything! You might be interested to know about the [British Library Sound Archive](#), which holds a number of collections made by 20th Century collectors. My favourite items, though, are the wax cylinders that actually belong to EFDSS and every time I spend 20 minutes looking for them I vow that this time I will bookmark them – so here is a link to them: [EFDSS Wax Cylinders in BLSA](#)

<http://www.tradsong.org>

Traditional Song Forum – an informal organisation for those interested in finding out more about folk song. This list was a product of one of their meetings.

ENTHUSIASTS SITES:

<http://mudcat.org>

The Digital Tradition - hard to classify, since it has grown so far beyond Dick and Susan Greenhaus' original vision for a digital collection of songs. The database is a very useful resource and the associated discussion group is, at its best, a great way to get information.

<http://ingeb.org/folksong.html>

German and international songs - part of Frank Petersohn's amazing site. Contains a mix of songs, some folkier than others. Also midi files of many of the tunes. Worth exploring on a rainy day.

<http://www.thecopperfamily.com>

The Copper Family – originally compiled by Gary Gillard, now run by the family themselves. News, merchandise and transcriptions of several of their songs.

<http://www.stolaf.edu/people/hend/songs/BawdyBroadsides.html>

Bawdy Broadsides – Stewart Hendrickson, a folk enthusiast from Seattle, has put together a small collection of bawdy broadsides as well as a few fiddle tunes.

<http://www.lukehistory.com/resources/ballads.html>

Blackletter Ballads - A resource designed for C17th re-enactment enthusiasts, this section gives as part of the background a small collection of C17th black letter ballads.

<http://www.contemplator.com/folk.html>

The Contemplator (Lesley Nelson-Burns) has assembled this collection of folk music of England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales and America. Nice design and midis that play as you view (not so keen on that personally) or can be downloaded. Songs in various categories (Sea, War, America etc.) as well as some useful links. Another place for a rainy day!

<http://songbook1.tripod.com>

Songs collected by **Donagh McDonagh** - Niall McDonagh's compilation of the texts over 300 Irish songs from his fathers collection as sent in to him as a result of his programme 'Ireland is Singing' on Radio Eirann. No tunes are given and the sources are not well documented but the site is indexed and there are some unusual variants here.

<http://www.csufresno.edu/folklore/Olson/>

The late **Bruce Olsen**'s web site - his motto quoted at the end of the index page is 'keep at it, muddling through always works'. Well, this site is a glorious idiosyncratic muddle with a lot of good stuff on ballads and folk song touched by wisdom.

ON-LINE MAGAZINES:

<http://www.mustrad.org.uk>

Musical Traditions – Rod Stradling's magnum opus. Now contains 250 articles on folk-related topics.

"OTHER":

<http://www.afolksongaday.com/>

Folk Song a Day – Jon Boden's remarkable project, performing a new song every day and putting it on-line here with notes. Brilliant idea from this innovative musician.

<http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/ravenscroft/>

The Music of Thomas Ravenscroft – Another great piece of work by Greg Lindahl who has put together a site dedicated to Thomas Ravenscroft with facsimiles of Pammelia, Deuteromelia, Melismata and a great deal besides. A very useful reference for early music. Also a number of other links to explore.

<http://www.cyberhymnal.org>

NetHymnal - (formerly the Cyberhymnal) a collection of popular hymns listed alphabetically and searchable. Midis playable for each hymn. Includes biographical details for the writer/composer.

<http://www.folkplay.info/index.htm>

Folk Play Research Home Page - A wonderful collection of material about traditional plays from the Traditional Drama Research Group. The site includes about 230 play texts as well as images, 2500 links to relevant sites and lots more laid out in an exemplary fashion. A very active and well maintained site.

<http://www.copac.ac.uk>

COPAC – The National, Academic, and Specialist Library Catalogue is a search engine for the online catalogues of many of the largest university research libraries in the UK and Ireland plus the British Library. The article you are looking for may be among the 36 million records they have on this site.

<http://www.familysearch.org>

Family history – free site operated by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints with family history, family tree, and genealogy records and resources from around the World. Searchable on-line version of the 1881 census as well as other useful material for tracking down singers

<http://freecen.rootsweb.com/index.html>

UK Census On-line - patchy coverage of the UK 1891 Census. If you are lucky the transcription will cover the area you are looking for (Devon and Cornwall are quite well covered) but this is being done by volunteers and is very much work in progress. It is also hard to navigate successfully.

BOOKS ON LINE:

There are a number of sites where it is possible to read and download the full texts of major folk song collections. Three of them are:

<http://www.archive.org>

The Internet Archive – probably the second most useful site for folk research on the Internet. The site contains a large number of scanned books, including most of the major folk song collections from the 19th and early 20th Century. These can be read online or downloaded in pdf or other formats. There are also a number of other folk related recordings and videos as well as archived websites. Scans on this site that have been made by Google are often incomplete and erratic.

<http://www.gutenberg.org>

Project Gutenberg – transcriptions of books (which are well done), rather than images of texts. There are not so many books on this site, but it is definitely worth a look.

<http://books.google.com/>

Google Books – It is hard to love this site with its ‘snippet views’, ‘no previews’ and partial texts – just occasionally it redeems itself, but it is an awful site. Google could definitely do better, but show no sign of wanting to do so. And working out which books you can actually open on the site is very difficult. There! I’ve got it off my chest. But some people seem to like it so I will leave it on the list.



Published for the Traditional Song Forum by Greenjack Publications, 100, Cheltenham Road, Gloucester, GL2 0LX

e-mail: martin.graebe@btinternet.com

Phone: 01452 523861

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