

Chapter 4: The collectors and folk revivalists

The end of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century saw the collection and study of folk song and dance traditions shift from the mindset of antiquarianism and nostalgia to that of the revivalist. From a broader perspective of Cornish Studies the distinction between antiquarian and revivalists can be a fine one but for oral folk tradition there is a clear difference between the passive collector and the active revivalist who collected expressly for the purpose of preserving the tradition and in doing so impacted upon the process of transmission. Livingston¹ defines a (music) revival as a “social movement with an overt cultural and political agenda which strives to restore, or reconstruct, a musical system perceived as disappearing”. Gammon² Harker³ and Boyes⁴ argue that the folk songs collected by revivalists such as Cecil Sharp and Gardiner were used to construct, and express, middle class Edwardian ideals of Englishness. Roper and Morgan⁵ argue that the folk revivals in Scotland and Wales respectively were also a construction born out of a nationalist ideology. There was a parallel Celto-Cornish revival during the same period represented by the formation of the Cowethas Kelto-Kernuak,⁶ which impacted on the way that folk tradition was collected, constructed and mediated in Cornwall. This is considered in detail in Chapter 6 where it is argued that this folk revival followed a significantly different trajectory.

Harker and Boyes represent the revisionist movement of the 1980s which challenged the validity of the way in which the early revivalists collected and mediated their material. They saw these collectors as drawn from an educated and powerful elite who had very clear ideas on what comprised culture and had no compunction in dismissing aspects and material that did not fit their ideology. Ritual dances such as Morris were seen as a predominantly male domain despite evidence to the contrary,⁷ regional dialects and vernacular language were largely ignored and it was maintained that their best informants would be those people unsullied by contact with the wider world through travel or literacy.⁸ Harker and Boyes both refer to Gramsci’s theories of cultural hegemony and argue that a very narrow version of what constituted folk tradition was promoted in the interests of the cultural elite.

Onderdonk⁹ questions this perception of the early collectors, showing for example that whilst Vaughan Williams, a close associate of Sharp, had a reputation for pre-occupation with modality in the music he selected for publication and arrangement this was not necessarily the case with the music he recorded as part of his collection.

Bearman undertook a very detailed deconstruction of the revisionist movement in his doctoral thesis,¹⁰ which made the case that Sharp in particular was as much a product of his time, as the revisionists were of theirs. He showed that Sharp was meticulous in the detail of what he recorded and argues that such mediation as he undertook resulted from the pragmatism needed in order to promote what he saw as a valuable cultural heritage. Overtly vernacular songs would not have been accepted by Edwardian society and the only practical medium if songs were to be performed was that of sheet music arranged for the voice parts and piano popular at parlour concerts.

This polarity of views provides a useful perspective from which to consider the way in which the collector / revivalists selected and mediated the material they collected in Cornwall and the reflective and reflexive impact this had on the process of oral folk tradition.

This chapter examines the role of five major British folk song collectors who have undertaken significant work in Cornwall. The first three were part of the early revivalist movement: Sabine Baring-Gould made a number of expeditions to Cornwall between 1889 and 1891; George B Gardiner collected 27 songs on a tour of Cornwall in 1904; and Cecil J Sharp visited Cornwall once in 1913 and twice in 1914. The fourth collector, James Madison Carpenter, followed the footsteps of the early revivalists visiting Cornwall on at least two occasions between 1929 and 1934. The last to be considered is Peter Kennedy who visited Padstow in 1951, recorded a number of songs during the Christmas of 1956 but continued to work with local singers to produce the Cornish section of *Folk Songs of Britain and Ireland* in 1975.¹¹

Sabine Baring-Gould (1834 – 1924)

Baring-Gould was an established popular author and his folk song collections were widely available in a series of publications that remain easily accessible today. His biographer and grandson, Bickford H C Dickinson, paints a picture of a man driven by strong political and moral convictions, a sense of duty as parson and squire and an almost endless stream of enthusiasms.¹² As a cleric, Baring Gould was a tractarian but passionate about what he saw as the evolution of the Church of England into a modern religion that nevertheless respected the aesthetics of the past. He was fascinated with the early archaeology of Dartmoor and Cornwall together with the folklore and legends of that had grown up around them in the local communities. He was familiar with the culture of the “singing men” who entertained with their songs and stories from his

childhood days on Dartmoor. It was a chance conversation in 1888 with friends who lamented the loss of these songs that triggered his particular enthusiasm for folk music.¹³ Within a short space of time, he had enlisted the help and musical expertise of F. W. Bussell (of Brasenose College, Oxford) and Rev H. Fleetwood Sheppard (an authority on sacred music). This task was to all intents and purposes completed within 3 years and culminated in the publication of four volumes under the title *Songs and Ballads of the West*.¹⁴ Baring-Gould then pursued other interests but continued to add notes and draw from this work for the rest of his life.

Baring-Gould's use of what we would now call oral testimony is indicated by the sub title of his collection: *A Collection Made From The Mouths Of The People*. Certainly, for the purposes of this study there is an element of oral history in his work and it is important therefore to understand what he brought to the interviewer / interviewee relationship and how this affected the text. The image created by Dickinson helps to set the scene here:

Bussell, Sheppard and Sabine would occasionally set out all together, and a strange trio they must have made: the tall hawk-faced Sabine, Sheppard, the gentle old musician, and Bussell, the little Oxford dandy. They would stay at wayside taverns and lonely moorland inns, entertaining such old men as could hobble so far and noting down their songs.¹⁵

It is sometimes assumed that as parson and squire, Baring-Gould saw his old singers as his friends but not his equals. It is difficult to argue that there was not a power relationship in favour of the three gentlemen described here against the old singers who provided them with the material they sought, but Baring-Gould's attitude towards class was a complex one. He combined an almost feudal paternalism with advanced political views and insisted that the social aloofness of the landed gentry was a modern trait not characteristic of manorial families who took their duties and responsibilities seriously in previous centuries.¹⁶ He saw education as a liberating tool and started his working life as a teacher in poor areas in defiance of his family's wishes. It was whilst holding just such a position met and married his wife who was a mill worker. It is likely that this action was a product of his single mindedness rather than a political statement but it helps to show that he was likely to have established a comfortable relationship with the people from whom he collected songs and gained their confidence.

For all he may have established effective relationships with his sources Baring-Gould's single mindedness introduced a narrow focus to the oral text he collected. He visited the Falcon Inn at St Mawgan on several occasions and collected a number of songs from the Gilbert family who were landlords for several generations.¹⁷ Martin Graebe shows that this was an extended family with a network of singing contacts.¹⁸ They had realised an interest in these songs well before Baring-Gould's time and continuing with this interest, sent four songs to Cecil Sharp in 1904. The author Charles Lee who spent a year in St Mawgan in 1903 researching and seeking inspiration for his novel, *Dorinda's Birthday*, also knew them. His diary records the rich musical life of the community and one of the events he witnessed was the serpentine dance of St Mawgan Feast.¹⁹ This was clearly a significant folk dance event for the village but was not noted or commented upon by Baring-Gould although he certainly demonstrated an interest in dance on other occasions. Baring-Gould included dances with his family concert party performance of the songs he collected. He was also instrumental in introducing Cecil Sharp to a version of *The Triumph* performed by local dancers. Dance was simply not on Baring-Gould's agenda during his most active period of folk song collecting.

Baring-Gould's aesthetic interests also informed and influenced his selectivity. He felt the treasures of the past were something to be preserved for contemporary appreciation, a practical example of this being his devotion to the task of restoring the architectural artefacts of his church in Lew Trenchard and in so doing to provide an aesthetically rich place of worship. These values also informed his folk song collection both in terms of what he was looking for and how he mediated it. The preface to *Folk Songs And Ballads Of The West* helps us to understand what these values were:

Wherever Celtic blood flows, there it carries with it a love of music and musical creativeness. Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Brittany, have their national melodies. It seemed to me incredible that the West of England—the old Kingdom of Damnonia—Devon and Cornwall, where the Celtic element is so strong, should be void of Folk-Music. When I was a boy I was wont to ride round and on Dartmoor, and put I up at little village taverns. There—should I be [there] on a payday—I was sure to hear one or two men sing, and sing on hour after hour, one song following another with little intermission. But then I paid no particular attention to these songs. In 1888

it occurred to me that it would be well to make a collection—at all events to examine into the literary and musical value of these songs, and their melodies.....

..... Through local papers I appealed to the public in the West for traditional songs and airs I also knew of one (singer) in my own neighbourhood. James Parsons, From him I procured about five-and-twenty ballads and songs, some of a very early and archaic character, certainly not later than the reign of Henry VII., which he had acquired from his father.²⁰

He clearly shares the 19th century romanticist notion of a by-gone age with a rich musical culture and for purposes of his folk song project; this age was that of the Celts of the West. He felt that the melodies he collected in the west were quite different to those found further east and explains this in terms of the Celtic past:

Directly the Exe is crossed we come into a different musical deposit. I do not say different in kind, for music was the same every where in certain epochs, and where certain instruments were in use. For instance, a harp tune was of the same character in Ireland, in Wales, in Cornwall, in Scotland, and in France; and a bagpipe tune or a hornpipe tune had the same character everywhere. But what I find is that songs and ballads sung to their traditional melodies in Somersetshire, in Sussex, in Yorkshire, and Northumberland, are sung to quite independent airs on Dartmoor and in Cornwall. How is this ? Because the same process went on in the West as in Scotland.

The Celtic tongue retrograded and finally expired in Cornwall. Then English ballads and songs found their way into Cornwall, as they found their way into Scotland and Ireland, and were set to already familiar melodies thenceforth dissociated from their no longer understood words.²¹

Unlike previous folk song collectors such as Francis Child, he placed greater emphasis on the melodies than the words and preferred oral sources to printed or archive texts. The detailed recording of the lyrics he provides within the 600 or so items in his manuscript collection suggests that he was methodical in his recording even if he was subsequently less scrupulous with mediation.²²

The sheer volume and breadth of Baring-Gould's other writing shows him to be both creative and to have a feel for popular presentation. His creative approach when publishing folk songs was criticised by Cecil Sharp who complained that he even forgot when he had been creative with material, claiming it to be as originally collected. Dickinson points out that such criticism is unfair and ironic in that Sharp himself frequently elected to change or be selective when publishing material he had collected.²³ The problem of bowdlerisation is intrinsic to folk song studies and the issue of altering text perceived as original and authentic has been a matter for much debate historically. The discussion in chapter two shows that this is nevertheless change in response to the influence of the prevailing social climate and part of the process of folk tradition.

The late nineteenth century was a period when there was considerable interest in and attention paid to Cornish dialect as we have seen above. Baring-Gould sometimes uses dialect when quoting from his sources in both his field notes and also in his *Reminiscences*²⁴ but dialect rarely appears in published lyrics of the songs he collected. This may be a reflection on the perception he had of the audience for whom he was recording and the eventual readership. If this was the case then it was not so for other authors such as Sandys and Thomas Quiller-Couch who clearly saw a market for dialect publications. It may simply be that Baring-Gould did not expect his audience to wish, or be able, to sing in dialect. There would also have been the practical difficulty of transcribing dialect pronunciation and Baring-Gould acknowledged that he was unreliable with dialect words, in spite of or perhaps because of his multilingualism²⁵. The one song he collected and published in Cornish (or for that matter Dartmoor) dialect was *Uncle Pengerric* and this was largely reconstructed.²⁶

Baring Gould collected some 75 songs in Cornwall from 37 sources; he also collected a number of songs from people living in Devon who had learned their songs as children in Cornwall. Much of his activity focussed on East Cornwall in easy travelling distance from his home on Dartmoor although he visited St Mawgan on a number of occasions and received a number of songs via correspondence with people in Bodmin and further west. The database shows that some of the songs noted by Baring-Gould remained within the domain of oral tradition to be noted again by Carpenter in 1931 and Kennedy in the 1950s. In addition to the various editions of *Songs of the West* and *Garlands*, Baring Gould's collection contributed reflexively to

oral tradition in Cornwall through publications aimed at a Cornish / Celtic audience. The first of these was Henry Jenner's contribution of 12 songs to the *National Songs Of The Celtic Countries*²⁷, 10 of which were provided for him by Baring-Gould. In 1960 Inglis Gundry used a songs from Baring Gould in *Canow Kernow*²⁸ and in 1983 songs and tunes from the Faircopy mss then held in Plymouth Library were included in *Hengan*.²⁹ The *Racca Project*³⁰ of 1995 / 97 recorded tunes currently in circulation that were known to Baring- Gould but it is not possible to identify which of these had remained within oral tradition from the time of his collection 1888- 1891 and how many had returned to this domain as a result of the above publications. Whilst the ballads he collected continued to provide material for singers operating within folk music as a genre throughout the twentieth century, few of the songs survived within oral tradition located within the original community setting. For example, the *Ring Of Bells* public house in St Issey lies within the same geographic area as that of the Gilbert family of St Mawgan and the singers they introduced to Baring Gould. It hosts regular informal local singing sessions but few of his songs are now sung in this setting.³¹

Cecil Sharp (1859–1924)

Like Baring-Gould, Cecil Sharp did not develop an interest in Folk Song and Dance until later in life but for him it became a consuming passion, which he pursued for the rest of his life, ultimately in the professional role of educator, editor and publisher. His background was urban and middle class but not particularly moneyed. In his early adult life he tried out various career possibilities in Australia. He was largely a self-taught musician but on his return to Britain in 1892 he took up a post of music master at a prep school (mostly for Eton), which gave him the freedom to pursue other interests including folk music.³² Sharp was politically aware and a social reformer with sympathies that lay initially with the Liberals and later with Labour. He was not, however, sympathetic to women's suffrage and this did impact upon his mediation of folk tradition and resulted in difficult relationships with other folk activists, such as Mary Neal, who saw working women's involvement in folk dance as emancipatory.³³ His biographer, and erstwhile personal assistant, Maude Karpeles, suggested that this opposition was more to do with the violence associated with women's suffrage than ideology.³⁴ She was, however, writing some forty years after his death at a time when Sharps attitude towards women and Morris dancing was coming under close scrutiny by the revisionists discussed above and there may be a defensive element here.

Cecil Sharp's main collection period in Britain was between 1903 and 1914 but he also collected songs and dances from the Appalachians in the United States between 1917 and 1918. He visited Baring-Gould in the Christmas of 1903 / 04 and this was the beginning of collaborative work between them in republishing *Songs and Ballads of the West*³⁵ and also *English Folk Songs*³⁶ aimed at Schools. This also marked the start of a campaigning period when Cecil Sharp endeavoured to gain recognition for English folk songs as a discrete entity and a "National Treasure" which culminated in the publication of *English Folk Song: Some Conclusions* in 1907.³⁷ The two men appeared to have collaborated well and *English Folk Song: Some Conclusions* is dedicated to Baring-Gould but Sharp does seem to have ridden rough shod over suggestions of Celtic influences in the West in notes on the songs. For example, under Baring-Gould's editorship it was suggested that the tune to *Lord Arscot of Tetcott* had origins in Wales whereas Sharp, based upon the same information, construed English origins. In later life Baring-Gould also expressed regret that Sharp had used new arrangements of his own for some of the songs rather than the arrangements made by Rev Shepherd. He felt that Shepherd's arrangements were more sympathetic to the original tunes sung to him.³⁸

Throughout the pages of his biography, Maude Karpeles is slightly defensive of Sharp. It is clear that whilst he was a charismatic figure and instrumental in gaining wider recognition for British folk music he was also fairly rigid in his views. He was dismissive of people who thought there might be different explanations for the origin of folk phenomena or that folk song and dance might be performed in a different way to that perceived as correct by Sharp. His charisma was such that he became the definitive voice of English folk song and dance tradition with critics and competition being assigned to the wilderness. He took control of the Folk Song Society, which had originally adopted a wider world view interest in the subject and reframed this as the English Folk Song Society. This may have been a reflection of Edwardian times and a reaction to an increasing public awareness that the British/English Empire was not necessarily a permanent fixture. There was increasing concern about Americanisation on the one hand and fears of cultural domination on the part of Germany on the other. Sharp's nationalism marks him out as a man of his time and Hobsbawm et al show us that the engineering of tradition to legitimise a culture of nationalism was far from unique to England.³⁹

What is remarkable about Sharp is that he remained unchallenged and largely uncriticised until his work came under the scrutiny of revisionists such as Harker, Gammon and Boyes. This might reflect the limited academic interest afforded to Folklore and Folk music and the low public profile between the wars. In *English Folk Song - Some Conclusions*⁴⁰ Sharp developed Gummere's ideas on the communal origins of balladry⁴¹ to establish the principles of *continuity*, *variation* and *selection* as the basis for defining a folk song and this remained a persuasive definition for much of the twentieth century. More than forty years after the publication of *Some Conclusions*, Maude Karpeles was able to take his ideas to the International Folk Music Society Conference in Sao Paulo where they were used as the basis for an internationally agreed definition of Folk Music.⁴² Sharp's model of the folk process has evolved to embrace more contemporary ideas about the nature of memory as a process informed by both individual and community experience. Sharp's insistence on respect for the performer / informant and the importance of the collector / collectee relationship also resonates well with the principles of Oral History proposed by practitioners such as Portelli. Where Cecil Sharp comes in for criticism by revisionists is the extent to which he failed to put his methodology into practice. Scrutiny of his informants in Somerset, for example, showed that far from being unlettered and isolated many of his informants were well travelled and literate (Harker 1982).⁴³

Sharp's manuscript collection has 63 records from Cornwall representing 44 distinct folk phenomena, comprising a mixture of ballads, community songs, carols, and sea shanties together with 4 dances.⁴⁴ As early as 1904 he was sent 4 songs by the Gilbert family of St Mawgan, discussed above. In 1912 he was sent 4 songs by Tom Miners from Camborne who was one of his contacts when he visited Helston, Camborne and Redruth in 1913 where he collected 35 songs and dances. Tom Miners together with another of Sharp's singers, Jim Thomas, went on to publish articles of their own in the *Folk Song Journal* as well as the *Old Cornwall Society Magazine* and it is a moot point as whether they should be seen as what Sharp described as his singers or collector / researchers in their own right.⁴⁵ He visited Padstow and Camborne on 31st April / 1st May 1914 and made notes on the May Day song and the dance performed by the Obby Oss and Teazer. He visited Camborne again in July of that year where he collected a further 18 songs, some from the people he had met the previous year. This data suggests that Sharp was targeting the better-known folk customs of Helston and Padstow but also taking advantage of the contact with Tom Miners to collect material in Camborne and Redruth. It comes at the end of his main collecting

period in Britain and it is likely that he assumed that between his own work and that of Baring-Gould in the West there was little new to be collected in Cornwall. This is borne out by some of his comments on Gardiner's collecting discussed below. In fact Baring-Gould had never ventured as far west as Camborne and Sharps interest was clearly raised to some extent in that he made a further visit, unconnected with the Padstow or Helston customs, in July 1914 further following up the contacts he had made the previous year through Tom Miners.

As far as dances are concerned, he appears to have been entirely focussed on the Helston Furry and the dance of the Oss and Teazer at Padstow and not interested in dance activity elsewhere. From his manuscript notes, coming across the Grampound and St Austell Furry dances was the result of a chance meeting. This is intriguing as we can be reasonably confident that there was Guize dancing and mummers activity around at this time together with step dancing and also the serpent dances of the Tea Treats.⁴⁶ The answer may lie in the discursivity created by Sharp around folk dance culture. He was by now focussing on what he saw as the male domain of ritual dance⁴⁷ which would have discouraged him from seeing the mixed sex Furry dances as anything other than a form of social dance. Indeed he is quite dismissive of the dance used to round off the Helston Furry at the Corn Exchange prior to the First World War: "The dance through the streets lasted till one o'clock when the procession re-entered the Corn Exchange, danced once or twice round the hall and stopped in longways formation. The leading couple then began a country dance of the ordinary kind although the top couples were evidently unused to this form of dancing."⁴⁸

Boyes⁴⁹ discusses the construction of a model of folk tradition by Sharp and his followers that excluded the artefacts of an industrial working class such as clog dancing, the cakewalk and music hall songs in preference for what was perceived as the racially pure cultural artefacts of the rural peasantry. This being the case Sharp is unlikely to have expressed interest in or followed up any reference made to the kind of dances described by Hunt, Bottrell, and Courtney. He is also likely to have been unimpressed by the dances of the Tea Treats as their association with Fife and Drum or Brass bands would have marked them off as contaminated by modern society. The Furry dance, however, is probably the archetypal example of reflexivity in that Sharp ensured its inclusion in the Schools folk dance curriculum but as the only dance from Cornwall included there was an implication that this was all there was.

This goes some way to explain the otherwise rather strange festival programmes adopted by the Cornwall Folk Dance Society (formed in 1920s by Lady Mary Trefusis) for their festivals. The posters for the festival held in Penzance in the early 1920s and Launceston in 1929, for example lists Morris dances and Sword dances but no scoot dances from Cornwall and a variety of country-dances but only the Helston Furry Dance from Cornwall.⁵⁰

George Gardiner (1852 – 1910)

Unlike Sharp or Baring-Gould, Gardiner was a professional academic, albeit in the classics rather than Folklore or Folk music but in 1903 seems to have applied his skills to “undertake a systematic study of the folk songs of Europe learning typical examples of French, German, Russian, Swedish, Finnish, Hungarian and even Bohemian and Slovenian songs.”⁵¹ Encouraged by another Folk song collector and enthusiast, Henry Hammond, he developed an interest in similar research nearer home. In 1905 he piloted this by collecting songs from Cornwall and presumably knew that this was an area that had not been covered by Cecil Sharp. Gardiner enlisted the help of two musicians Rev E Quintrell of Helston and C Stanley Parsonson of Launceston for his collecting in Cornwall. Although travelling further into Cornwall than Baring-Gould he still only collected 5 songs from the West, the remaining 21 were all from North Cornwall, 15 of them from Launceston, an area which Baring-Gould had been very active in fifteen years previously..

Gardiner demonstrates a more reflective and possibly objective approach to folk song collection than that of some of his contemporaries. Having collected his material, he then seems to have submitted examples to both Baring-Gould and Sharp together with the Secretary of the Folk Song Society, Lucy Broadwood, for advice and feedback, which they duly provided.⁵² Baring-Gould and Sharp seem comfortable but clear in their role as experts making comments like “ I have had several versions of ringers songs; one from Egloshayle and much like this”⁵³ and “ End of tune like *We won't go home till morning*”.⁵⁴ On the advice of Broadwood, Gardiner went on to focus his activity in Hampshire, Dorset and the Home Counties eventually collecting in the region of 1,460 songs placing him at the top end of the league of British folk song collectors. Relatively little of Gardiners collection was published, 45 songs were included in an article in the *Folk Song Society Journal* in 1909⁵⁵ and a further 16 were included in the third edition of *Folk Songs of England* edited by Sharp in the same year. Pursloe⁵⁶ shows that Gardiner was professional and scholarly in his recording, noting words whether or not

they made sense to him and refrained from bowdlerisation. Although reasonably able musically he nevertheless used trained musicians to transcribe tunes where possible.

Gardiner's objectivity did not transfer to the publishers of his material, however, all of which was mediated by Sharp and fellow revivalist and composer Vaughan Williams. For example, in the 1909 edition of *Folk Songs of England* five of the songs were furnished with new texts and a bias was made towards the inclusion of songs in a Dorian mode probably due to Vaughan Williams' perception of this to be a particularly English trait.⁵⁷ Neither of these included his songs from Cornwall but one Cornish tune seized upon by the English Folk Song establishment was that collected by Quintrell from a Mr J Boaden of Cury near Helston and forwarded to Gardiner in May 1905. No title or text was collected with the tune but the discussion in an article in the *Folk Song Journal* of 1905⁵⁸ came to the conclusion that as the words of *Maid In Bedlam/ I love My Love* fitted this tune so well this must be an alternative melody for the words and the title of the song. This approach provides a good example of the attitudes and mindset of the revivalist movement of the time. Despite Baring-Gould's observations about the distinctive melodies of the West and the transient nature of the relationship between tune and words made some fifteen years before there seems to have been an absolute conviction that because the tune fitted the words of *I Love My Love* then this was the source of the tune. Furthermore, because the melody was in a Dorian mode then it fitted their construction of what was authentically English. As "I Love My Love", Boaden's melody was incorporated into musical arrangements by Holst that were presented as archetypically English.⁵⁹

It was perhaps inevitable that later Cornish revivalists would see this as appropriation and cultural strip mining.⁶⁰ The Cornish provenance of *I Love My Love* was not lost on Inglis Gundry, however, who published it along with 3 other songs from Gardiner's collection in *Canow Kernow*⁶¹ in 1966. In 1975 Tony Snell followed this by writing words in Cornish for the tune and giving it the title *Ryb An Avon* by which it is popularly recognised in Cornwall today.⁶²

James Madison Carpenter (1888 – 1984)

Bishop⁶³ shows the ironic juxtaposition of Dr James Madison Carpenter's folk song and custom collecting expedition to Britain between 1929 and 1935 with Maude Karpeles collecting work in Newfoundland during the same period. Karpeles represented a continuation of Sharp's discursivity with respect to folk song and dance

and shared with her revivalist peers the opinion that the folk song in its original context had died out in Britain as a result of industrialisation and modernisation. The expedition to Newfoundland was an attempt to locate folk songs amongst communities that had been left unchanged by modernisation and had remained true to the “innocent peasant” of Sharp’s model of folk tradition. Carpenter, conversely, had already visited Ireland in the course of researching for his Doctorate, found it a rich source of material and persuaded the Harvard University Authorities to fund an extensive project in Britain to study British / American folk song links.

Carpenter was a Harvard-trained scholar from the school of folk song research introduced by Professor F J Child⁶⁴ and represented by published collections between 1857 and 1885 which became known as the *Child Ballads*. Carpenter’s tutor and mentor was Professor George Lyman Kittredge and literally successor to Child. This provided for a formidable analytical and academic background compared to activists within the British folk revival like Sharp but it was entirely written text and manuscript-based. It was studied as a form of vernacular literature, music was not taken into consideration and there was no element of oral testimony involved. For all his analytical academic background Carpenter was embarking on new territory for Harvard and not only because he included the music with the lyrics. His use of a portable wax cylinder *Dictaphone* and close attention to the text of the performer also marks him out as an early oral historian. Carpenter never published his work nor did he fully transcribe all his recordings. In 1972 his collection, which took the form of his own written and typed notes, newspaper cuttings, photographs and wax cylinder recordings, was purchased for the Library of Congress.⁶⁵

Whilst the use of a recording machine introduced an element of objectivity to the text and music being recorded, Carpenter was still bringing much to the interviewer / interviewee relationship that would influence and mediate the material he collected. He is unlikely to have cut quite the same educated British Middle Class image of Sharp and Gardiner, he slept rough in his car for much of the time and his contacts were often driven by concern for his health to offer food and somewhere to sleep. He also seems to have found that his American nationality was an advantage in building up contacts and relationships with his sources.⁶⁶ His manuscript notes suggest a fairly pedantic approach when collecting material from people. It is evident that he would record the sound and then back this up by asking for constant repetition until he had transcribed the words using a portable typewriter.⁶⁷

Carpenter's papers show that he visited Cornwall at least twice during his research work in Britain between 1929 and 1934. His visit to West Penwith in the winter of 1931 /1932 was apparently for health reasons, to recover from pneumonia he had contracted whilst touring the North in an open topped car. Records are not complete but it seems likely that this is when he collected much of his Cornish material. Altogether he recorded approximately 44 items of folk phenomena from Cornwall, mostly from Penzance and Camborne areas but also from Padstow and Cadgewith. Carpenter seems to have located his sources partly by chance and partly by tracking down people or families known to Baring Gould and Sharp some twenty to forty years previously. In the case of Cornwall he contacted one of Sharps singers, Sydney Veale from Camborne and possibly the family of James Thomas another singer now deceased. He also made contact with Tom Miners who had sent songs to Sharp and had articles published in *The Folk Song Journal*.⁶⁸ Miners by this time was involved with the Old Cornwall Societies and the formative Cornish Gorsedh and it is likely that he put Carpenter in touch with W D Watson from whom he recorded 11 items some of which were in the Cornish language. Carpenter recorded three songs from Tom Miners himself and also seems to have had some contact with Morton Nance who supplied him with information from his own family regarding the *Padstow Mummers Play*.⁶⁹ It can be seen that, for all the objectivity of Carpenter may have exercised in his recording, there might have been some bias towards the Celto – Cornish revivalists in his location of sources.

As Carpenter's work was never published there is a sense in which it was never mediated or interpreted in the way that Baring-Gould's or Sharp's material was. His collection has not been readily available within the public domain and does not appear to have informed the reflection of practitioners or have had a reflexive influence on the way songs and customs have evolved. There is, however, an interesting history around the St Day Carol which might be seen as reflexive. There is a received understanding without any provenance that the carol was originally in Cornish and subsequently translated into English, from whence it became part of the canon of British carols. Watson provided a translation of the carol in the *Old Cornwall Society Journal* in 1926⁷⁰ and evidently sung this for Carpenter to record. Carpenter notes this as "Sans Day Trelys Gans W D Watson" which has been taken by subsequent archivists to mean the title was Sans Day Trelys Gans and that it was collected from Watson rather than

translated by him (trelys gans = translated by). This may have contributed to the belief in the Cornish Language origins of the *St Day Carol*.

Peter Kennedy (1922 – 2006)

Carpenters invisibility is reflected in an additional verse to the *Cadgewith Anthem* which came into circulation circa 2005 and fails to recognise his wax cylinder recording of the song in 1931:

This Song was collected by the great Peter Kennedy
On an old tape recorder in 1956
Reel to reel, not cassette,
Reel to reel, not cassette
For Cassettes weren't invented in 1956 ⁷¹

It also hints at Peter Kennedy's reputation for quite extensive reel to reel recording of traditional material.

Peter Kennedy was the son of Douglas Kennedy, Director of the English Folk Song and Dance Society for 37 years following Cecil Sharp's death in 1924.⁷² He was also the nephew of Maude Karpeles, Sharps biographer so his relationship with the folk revivalists was almost dynastic. In his autobiographical notes, he describes training initially as an architect with a view to using these skills in theatre set design.⁷³ On leaving the RAF after the War, however he joined his parents in working for the English Folk Song and Dance Society. In 1952 he successfully petitioned the BBC to undertake a more systematic approach to folk music and was taken on himself as researcher for the BBC Radio programme *As I Roved Out*, which ran from 1953 to 1958. This period also saw the development of his own interests in recording folk phenomena and culminated in the publication of *Folksongs of Ireland and Britain*⁷⁴ in 1975 together with a cassette tape series under the *Folktrax* label edited and re-mastered from his original reel to reel tapes.

Kennedy's approach to folk song collecting was influenced by the technology available to him and the developing media industry around record production. He set up a company called *Folktrax and Soundpost Publications* to facilitate publication of this material but seems to have encountered some criticism with respect to his attitude towards apparent personal ownership of the material rather than lodging it with the

English Folk Song and Dance Society. Stradling⁷⁵, for example, suggests that he sidestepped copyright issues by dubbing his own accompaniments on to field recordings and *bought* the right to material he collected from singers with “insultingly small payments”. Kennedy was clearly aware of these criticisms and made the following comments on his Folktrax web site:

Folktrax protected the rights of performers, and other collectors and benefitted them by protection and from royalties from broadcasting and publication, at the same time making their inheritance more widely available to students and research bodies. Although such traditions recorded in location may not have a commercial interest, they form an archive of oral history with considerable educational value.⁷⁶

This criticism, however, has a resonance with the criticism of Sharp who also made a career out of the material he collected some fifty years previously and had difficulty in obtaining dances from some groups due to their concerns about loss of ownership and mistreatment of the material. What this discussion does do, however, is draw attention to the tension between copyright and commercial interest on the one hand and the notion of public ownership on the other. It may be that the commercial environment where income can be generated by recorded material as well as live performance is a factor that encourages the development of folk music as a genre of popular music as well as an oral tradition.

Kennedy’s first collecting expedition to Cornwall was 1950 when he made a documentary film of the Padstow May Day Festivities with Alan Lomax.⁷⁷ His main collecting period in Cornwall was during the early winter of 1956 but he seems to have maintained contact with people like Charlie Bate of Padstow who acted as guide for the 1950 documentary, provided him with some songs in 1957 and probably introduced him to the Biddick family of Boscastle. As well as interviewing individuals Kennedy made a number of recordings of groups in settings where they normally performed, for example the Truro Wassailers at the Heron Inn in Malpas and the fishermen singing in a Cadgewith pub. Altogether he recorded 35 songs in Cornwall mostly from the west and particularly from Cadgewith where he recorded 11 songs and Redruth where he recorded 7 songs from the Skinners Bottom Glee Singers.

For all his folk pedigree, Kennedy's mindset was very different from his early twentieth century predecessors. Gone was the pre-occupation with English nationality and the rural idyll. In the introduction to *Folk Songs of Britain and Ireland* he explains his reason for ignoring regional and national boundaries.⁷⁸ Rather than geographic boundaries, he perceived natural boundaries between the type of song, between love songs, working songs, etc and also the cultural communities that sang certain songs for example travellers and gypsies. Kennedy's mediation by taxonomy also extended to the compilations he made with his cassette albums and it is interesting that even here Cornwall remains reasonably intact as a distinct identity. There are fourteen albums with material collected in Cornwall, some from his original work in 1956 / 57 together with more recent material as it became available. Titles include *Boscastle Bow Wow – Pub Session at the Nap* (i.e. Napoleon Inn Boscastle), *Way down to Lamorna – Songs Of Scilly And Cornwall* and *Camborne Hill, Songs and Customs From Cornwall*.⁷⁹

It is his interest in the Celtic speaking communities, however, which is particularly relevant to Cornish studies. As well as songs in the three Gaelic languages and Welsh he includes a section on Cornwall with 12 songs translated into Cornish in *Folk Songs of Britain and Ireland*. He collaborated with Inglis Gundry in the publication of *Canow Kernow*⁸⁰ and published 2 cassette tapes of songs recorded in Cornish by Dick Gendall. These projects had the reflexive effect of making songs in Cornish more widely available and there is a sense here in which Kennedy's work dovetails in to the activities of the Celto-Cornish revivalists.

Conclusion

These five collectors provide a valuable and unique snapshot of oral folk tradition in Cornwall at approximately twenty-year intervals between Baring-Gould's first collecting forays in 1888 and the publication of Kennedy's *Folk Songs of Great Britain and Ireland* in 1975. The material collected by individuals arguably falls comfortably within the Gramscian definition of folk song suggested by Portelli ie: from a source located outside the culture of the ruling elites and based on oral transmission.⁸¹ These collectors however, comprise of a country squire and parson, an urban English nationalist, two professionally trained academics and a folk music professional with an English Folk Song and Dance Society establishment pedigree. Together they might be seen as a good cross section of the ruling cultural elite and unlikely to attach the same meaning or significance to the material they collected as the original performers in Cornwall.

The material they collected reflects their opportunities, interests and influences but there are large gaps in geography, social location and context so their work cannot be seen as a definitive description of activity within folk tradition in Cornwall. They brought a variety of different skills, technology and mindsets to the task and used the material they collected in very different ways. The early collectors rarely ventured into the world of the performer and his or her material, preferring to record phenomena in a controlled environment away from its original location. This shows a bias of interest towards the narratives and melodies associated with ballads where greater emphasis is laid on the individual performance than context or location. In contrast to this Kennedy had both the technology to record in situ and the desire to participate which encouraged him to enter into the world of the performance in its original location.

Sharp may have been interested in dances elsewhere but in Cornwall his focus was limited to the already well documented Padstow and Helston May traditions. Unlike Carpenter and Kennedy, the earlier collectors paid very little attention to the Cornish language, Cornish dialect nor the customs and dances documented by folklorists like Courtney. The collections of Carpenter and Kennedy, however, do show the influence of another group of people who played and continue to play a key role in the process oral folk tradition, the Celto – Cornish Revivalists.

Notes

- ¹ Tamara E Livingstone, "Music Revivals: Towards a General Theory." *Ethnomusicology* 43 (No1 Winter 1999), p.66.
- ² Victor, A.F. Gammon, 'Popular Music in Rural Society Sussex 1815 – 1914', (Unpublished Doctoral thesis, University of Sussex, 1985), p.178
- ³ Dave Harker, *Fakesong, The Manufacture of British "Folksong" 1700 to the present day.* (Milton Keynes, Open University Press, 1985).
- ⁴ Georgina Boyes, *The imagined village: culture, ideology, and the English folk revival,* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1993), p.77.
- ⁵ Trevor Roper, The invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland, in *The Invention Of Tradition*, ed. Eric, R, Hobsbawm, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press1983), pp. 15 -27. Also Prys Morgan, "From Death to a View: The Hunt for the Welsh Past in the Romantic Period" in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric, R, Hobsbawm, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press1983), pp. 43 -49.
- ⁶ Amy Hale, "Genesis of the Celto Cornish Revival, L.C.Duncombe-Jewell and the Cowethas Kelto-Kernuak" in *Cornish Studies Five*, ed. Philip Payton, (Exeter, Exeter University Press, 1997), pp. 100 -111.
- ⁸ Dave Harker, "May Cecil Sharp Be Praised?" *History Workshop*(14): 1982. p. 56.
- ⁹ Julian Onderdonk, "Vaughan Williams and the Modes." *Folk Music Journal* 7(5) 1999: 609-626.
- ¹⁰ Chris J Bearman, "The English folk music movement 1889-1914", (Unpublished PhD thesis Hull University BL: DXN053461, 2001).
- ¹¹ Peter Kennedy, ed. *Folksongs of Britain and Ireland*, (London, Cassell, 1975).
- ¹² Holland Cohan Bickford Dickinson,. *Sabine Baring-Gould: Squarson, Writer and Folklorist, 1834-1924.* (Newton Abbot, David & Charles, 1970), pp.117 and 123.
- ¹³ H,C, Bickford Dickenson *Sabine Baring-Gould*, p. 125.
- ¹⁴ Sabine Baring Gould, Henry Fleetwood Shepherd. *Songs and Ballads of the West: A Collection Made from the Mouths of the People* (London, Methuen & Co, 1891).
- ¹⁵ H.C. Bickford Dickenson *Sabine Baring Gould*, p. 129.
- ¹⁶ H C Bickford Dickinson *Sabine Baring Gould*, pp. 89 – 110.
- ¹⁷ Sabine Baring Gould, S., Henry Fleetwood Sheppard. *A Garland of Country Song; English Folk Songs with Their Traditional Melodies.* (London: Methuen, 1895), p. vii.
- ¹⁸ Martin Greabe. "The Folk Next Door - Sabine Baring-Gould and Cornwall." Baring Gould Study Day: Wren Trust, Okehampton, 2002, p. 7.

-
- ¹⁹ Ken C. Philips, *Charles Lee: The Cornish Journal of Charles Lee 1892 – 1908*, (Tabb House, Padstow 1995), p.98.
- ²⁰ Sabine Baring-Gould, Henry Fleetwood Shepherd. *Songs and Ballads of the West: A Collection Made from the Mouths of the People* (London: Methuen & Co, 1891), p.vi.
- ²² Wren Trust, Okehampton Baring-Gould, S. (1888 - 1906). *Songs Of The West: Baring-Gould Heritage Project*, Baring-Gould Manuscripts, Micro- Fiche Collection
- ²³ Dickinson *Sabine Baring Gould*, p. 135.
- ²⁴ Sabine Baring Gould, *Further Reminiscences* 2 vols.(London: John Lane The Bodley Head Ltd, 1925), for example p.201.
- ²⁵ Dickinson, *Sabine Baring Gould* , p.145.
- ²⁶ This is a dialect ballad originally published with music by William Forfar circa 1860, collected from oral tradition by Baring Gould in 1894, and published by him with revised words and a different tune in 1905, see appendix 2.5.
- ²⁷ Alfred Percival Graves, *The Celtic song book: being representative folk songs of the six Celtic Nations*, (London, E. Benn.1928).
- ²⁸ Inglis Gundry, *Canow Kernow: Songs and Dances from Cornwall*. (St. Ives, Federation of Old Cornwall Societies, 1966).
- ²⁹ Merv Davey, *Hengan, Traditional Songs Tunes And Broadside Ballads From Cornwall* , (Dyllansow Truran, Redruth, 1983).
- ³⁰ Frances Bennet, Hilary Coleman, Nick Crowhurst, Merv Davey, Rosie Fierek, eds. *Racca 2: Cornish Tunes for Cornish Sessions*, (Calstock, Racca Project, 1997).
- ³¹ This session was included in participant observation see Appendix 3. The participatory action research project: Kanow Tavern – Cornish Pub songs see Appendix 4.3 only identified one of Bating Gould’s songs: The Nightingale.
- ³² Maude Karpeles, *Cecil Sharp*. (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1967), pp. 12 – 15.
- ³³ Georgina Boyes, *The imagined village : culture, ideology, and the English folk revival*. (Manchester / New York Manchester University Press, 1993), p.107.
- ³⁴ Karpeles, *Cecil Sharp*, p. 20.
- ³⁵ Sabine Baring-Gould, and Cecil James Sharp. *Songs of the West*, (London, Methuen, 1905).
- ³⁶ Sabine Baring Gould, Cecil James Sharp. *English Folk-Songs for Schools*. (London: Curwen, 1900s -Date not provided on first publication, circa 1905).
- ³⁷ Cecil J Sharp, *English Folk-Song: Some Conclusions*. (London, Simpkin & Co , Novello &co. London, 1907).
- ³⁸ Bickford Dickinson, *Sabine Baring Gould*, p.129.

-
- ³⁹ Eric Hobsbawm, et al *The invention of tradition*. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983).
- ⁴⁰ Cecil J Sharp, *English Folk-Song: Some Conclusions*. (London. Novello and Co 1907), p. 10.
- ⁴¹ Francis Barton Gummere, *The beginnings of poetry*. (New York; London, Macmillan & Co, 1901).
- ⁴² Maude Karpeles, "Definition of Folk Music." *Journal of the International Folk Music Council* 7 (1955). pp.6-7.
- ⁴³ Harker, *May Cecil Sharp Be Praised*, p.57.
- ⁴⁴ Cecil J. Sharp, Transcription of notebook, Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, Cecil Sharp House, London.
- ⁴⁵ James E Thomas, et al. "Cornish Carols." *Journal of the Folk-Song Society* 8.33 (1929): pp 111-24. Also James E Thomas, et al. "Sea Shanties." *Journal of the Folk-Song Society* 8.32 (1928), pp. 96-100: Tom Miners, The Mummings Play *Old Cornwall Society Magazine Oct 1928, Vol.1, no. 8.* p.4.
- ⁴⁶ Merv Davey, Alison Davey, and Jowdy Davey. *Scot Dances, Troys, Furrys and Tea Treats: The Cornish Dance Tradition*. (London: Francis Boutle & Co, 2009). See also appendix 4.3 Rescorla Project.
- ⁴⁷ Georgina Boyes, *The Imagined Village*, p. 85.
- ⁴⁸ Sharp. *Folk dance notes* vol.3, p.104.
- ⁴⁹ Georgina Boyes, *The Imagined Village*, pp. 66 to 77.
- ⁵⁰ Henry Jenner, Ms box Courtney Library, Royal Institute of Cornwall, copies of posters and notifications of meetings relating to the Cornish Folk Dance society.
- ⁵¹ Frank Purslow, "The George Gardiner Folk Song Collection." *Folk Music Journal* 1(3): 129-157. 1967 p 130 quoting a letter to the Hampshire Chronicle 1906, presumably in support of his collecting activities in the area.
- ⁵² George B Gardiner Manuscripts, Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, Cecil Sharp House, Regents Park Road, London.
- ⁵³ Sabine Baring Gould: hand written note added to *The St Dominic Ringers*, George B Gardiner Manuscripts.
- ⁵⁴ Cecil Sharp, hand written note added to *Personal Song / Compliments Returned* George B Gardiner manuscripts.
- ⁵⁵ George B Gardiner et al. "Songs Collected By George B Gardiner", *Journal of the Folk Song Society*, Vol 3. No 13 June 1909. pages 249 – 317 Published by The English Folk Song Society, London, 1909.

-
- ⁵⁶ Frank Purslow "The George Gardiner Folk Song Collection", pp. 135 -136.
- ⁵⁷ Frank Purslow, "The George Gardiner Folk Song Collection", pp. 136 -137.
- ⁵⁸ Lucy Broadwood, Maid of Bedlam, *Journal of the Folk Song Society Vol 2 1905 – 1906 no 7*, p. 93.
- ⁵⁹ Gustav Holst, Second Suite in F for Military Band (op.28, No2), Movement 2, "Song without words- I'll love my Love" composed (London, Boosey & Hawkes, 1984) , composed 1911.
- ⁶⁰ Paul Holmes, discussion with author 14th October 2007 (Lowender Peran Festival). "I love my love" was part of his singing repertoire and when introducing the song he explained that it was an example of English appropriation of Cornish material.
- ⁶¹ Inglis Gundry, *Canow Kernow*, (St Ives, Federation of Old Cornwall Societies, 1966)
- ⁶² For example it is included in Racca 2 (Calstock, Racca Project, 1997), see appendix 3.
- ⁶³ Julia C Bishop, "Dr Carpenter from the Harvard College in America': An Introduction to James Madison Carpenter and His Collection". *Folk Music Journal* 7.4 (1998), pp. 402-20.
- ⁶⁴ Francis James Child,. *English and Scottish Ballads*. (Boston; Cincinnati: Little, Brown and Co. / Moore Wiltach, Keys and Co. 1857).
Francis James Child,. *English and Scottish Ballads*. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1885).
- ⁶⁵ Library of Congress, "*The James Madison Carpenter Collection*". Washington DC, 1996. (June 1996): Summary and Catalogue. The American Folklife Center. 17th Aug 2009.
- ⁶⁶ Julia Bishop, "Dr Carpenter From the Harvard College in America", p. 407.
- ⁶⁷ Library of Congress. "*The James Madison Carpenter Collection*".
<<http://www.loc.gov/folklife/guides/carpenter.html>>.
- ⁶⁸ James E Thomas, Tom Miners, T., et al. "*Cornish Carols*." *Journal of the Folk-Song Society* 8.33 (1929), p.111-24.
- ⁶⁹ Library of Congress, Archive of Folk Culture, The James Madison Carpenter Collection ,index 10565-10582: *Padstow Version of the St George or Mummers Play*. Carpenter Collected the play when he visited Cornwall 1933/1934 and notes correspondence with Robert Morton Nance whose father could remember being scared by the dragon in the play as a child, circa 1845.
- ⁷⁰ W.D.Watson, Sans Day Carol . *Old Cornwall April 1926*. (St Ives, Federation of Old Cornwall Societies, 1926), p. 30.

- ⁷¹ See Appendix 4.3: Participatory Action Research, Pub Song Project.
- ⁷² Derek Schofield, "Peter Kennedy" Obituary. *Guardian* 19th June 2006.
- ⁷³ Peter Kennedy, "Folktrax". 2005. http://www.folktrax-archive.org/menus/history_about.htm . Accessed 8th August 2009.
- ⁷⁴ Peter Kennedy, ed. *Folksongs of Britain and Ireland*. (London, Cassell, 1975).
- ⁷⁵ Rod Stradling, "Peter Kennedy an Appraisal". 2006. Mustrad. <<http://www.mustrad.org.uk/enth53.htm>>. Accessed 8th August 2009
- ⁷⁶ Peter Kennedy, Folktrax 2005 <http://www.folktrax-archive.org/menus/history_about.htm>.
- ⁷⁷ Sabina Magliocco, John Bishop. *Oss Tales*. (Berkely, Media-Generation, 2007). DVD / DVDrom format. Includes original footage from 1951 documentary Oss Oss Wee Oss Dir Peter Kennedy and Alan Lomax in 1951.
- ⁷⁸ Peter Kennedy, ed. *Folksongs of Britain and Ireland*.,
- ⁷⁹ Folktrax Catalogue numbers FTX 096, FTX217, FTX 010. Out of print. Copyright held by Topic Records.
- ⁸⁰ Inglis Gundry, *Canow Kernow*.
- ⁸¹ Alessandro Portelli, *The death of Luigi Trastulli, and other stories : form and meaning in oral history*. (Albany, N.Y., State University of New York Press,1990), p.161.

Blank Page

