



SONG RESOURCES ON THE WEB

5TH EDITION

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TRADITIONAL SONG FORUM

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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 sites that would help them in their quest. In this, the 5th edition of the document, I have, again, checked all the existing links and added some new ones. Several important sites have changed (not all for the better) or disappeared since the last edition.

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 – this is not a folkish Tripadvisor. Neither is inclusion a guarantee that a site will still be there tomorrow. Nor do I claim that this list is comprehensive – but it is an extensive sample of the sites that are available to explore traditional song and its cousins. If you come across any broken links please tell me, particularly if you know where a site has moved to. And if you know of any sites that you think should be included, please let me know.

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

The Vaughan Williams Memorial Library (VWML) website has been in a constant state of development since it was launched as a separate entity by the English Folk Dance and Song Society in 2013. The main feature of the library's digital archive is the collection of manuscripts from nineteen folk song collectors who worked in England: the outcome of the 'Full English' project. Since its launch the site has been under constant development and this process is still on-going as additional material and new features are added. The site is of unparalleled value for researchers interested in English traditional song. Other features of the site now include:

- Full search (in several ways) of the manuscript collection. A growing number of the songs now have transcriptions of the tunes (which can be played as midi files) and the texts.
- Cecil Sharp's Appalachian Diaries – were added to the site to celebrate the 150th anniversary of his birth. Transcripts by Chris Bearman have recently been added.
- Cecil Sharp's photographs and diaries – images of the singers from whom he collected songs
- The Roud Index – Steve Roud's immensely valuable listing of references to songs that have been collected and where they can be found - and it is still growing
- Study Guides – including the *English Folk Song Bibliography* (2006), a listing of the most significant books about folk songs from the Nineteenth Century 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://ballads.bodleian.ox.ac.uk>

Broadside Ballads Online (Bodleian Library) – A great site has now got even better. Search among their 30,000 broadside ballads and, if they are there, view them as images. One of the improvements is that you can now search by Roud number. Includes basic information about dates and publishers. One of the most useful resources on the web!

<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. It would be nice if there were more, but none have been added since the last edition of this list.

<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. I

Though it is not beautifully designed or user friendly, it is well worth exploring all the levels of this site. There is an enormous amount of interest here.

<http://digital.nls.uk/broadsides/>

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**) – A small collection, put together by the University of Glasgow Library as part of its 'Special Collections' web site. The ballads are presented as thumbnails that you can click to view a good image of the original printed sheet.

<http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/>

English Broadside Ballad Archive (University of California, Santa Barbara) – This collection contains more than 7,000 ballads that are beautifully presented as facsimiles and transcriptions. I have said in every previous edition of this document that I wish I understood this site better and, after many years of looking, I still can't find a way to use it effectively. If you know what you are searching for, then you stand a chance of finding it, if it is there. But there is no way of browsing the collection. Immensely frustrating! There has to be a better way.

<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 broadside the images go to 'Flanders Ballad Collection'. You can also listen to some of the recordings she made by clicking on 'Flanders online archive' and then on 'sound recordings'.

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

Streetprint: Revolution and Romanticism – A collection of broadside ballads and printed songs from Canada – slightly odd, in an attractive kind of way, but worth exploring.

TRADITIONAL SONGS AND SINGERS

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

Folkopedia – this site has not achieved all that was hoped for it. Entries are still being made by some die-hard enthusiasts, and there is a lot of useful information here. But it is very patchy. This link takes you to the song pages, with information about songs, singers, collectors and a load of other stuff.

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

Tobar an Dualchais – Kist o Riches. – a wonderful site containing over 34,000 oral recordings made in Scotland. An amazing site and a remarkable record of the wealth on song in Scotland.

<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://crix.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 collection of material from the North-East of England, with songs and a great deal besides. Searchable, listenable and with pictures – but click-heavy and slow to navigate.

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

Wiltshire folk songs – The work of Chris Wildridge, this collection on the Wiltshire Libraries site gives texts and other information about 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. Though Williams’s songs is on the Full English’ site, there is additional information here.

<http://www.loc.gov/>

Library of Congress - The Library of Congress website has a number of song resources. Unfortunately, they have changed the site and it is much harder to find things than it was in the last edition of this list. They have lots of recordings and sheet music and the folklife section is very good. One thing I will point you towards is the collection related to [Alan Lomax's time in Britain 1950 – 58](#). Otherwise, seek and you will (eventually) find.

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

The Ballad Index. Lists sources and other information on ballads – though the definition of ballad stretches widely, making it a very useful reference.

<http://tinyurl.com/legacy-of-lincolnshire>

Legacy of Lincolnshire Songs – a nice site from Lincolnshire County Council focusing on folk song in the county – particularly Percy Grainger.

<http://tinyurl.com/bluegrass-ballads>

The lyrics section of the **Bluegrass Messengers** website has an outstanding section on Child Ballads which merits exploration. This is work in progress and two further sections of ballads from other sources is sketched in and ready for them to start work.

SONG COLLECTORS:

<http://www.sbgssongs.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.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 still(!) does not contain any song texts or recordings.

<https://novascotia.ca/archives/creighton/>

The **Helen Creighton** Collection –An excellent presentation of the work of Helen Creighton in Nova Scotia which includes background information, photographs and sound recordings.

<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.

<http://www.folktrax-archive.org/>

Peter Kennedy's folktrax website, archived as it was left when he was died. Though it is not possible to buy recordings from this site, the information here is of great value in understanding his collection.

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/>

This collection of **sheet music from Australia** has changed considerable since the last edition of this list. I-Pad users can get a free app with the sheet music on, otherwise, you can search for items in the Library catalogue. Many of the songs are actually transnational so this can be a useful source in searches related to the UK.

<http://www.musichallcds.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>

Song Lyrics – originally this site was just a nice collection of monologues, but it now has a separate section which includes more than 2600 music hall and variety lyrics – great stuff!

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.

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. This site has expanded considerably in the last year with some wonderful digital resources – pictures, sound and print. Allow time for a long visit!

<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 would spend 20 minutes looking for so last year I bookmarked them – so here is that link: 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 17th Century re-enactment enthusiasts, this section gives as part of the background a small collection of 17th Century 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 father's 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 more than 300 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://www.freecen.org.uk/>

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://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.

<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://www.archive.org>

The Internet Archive – probably the second most useful site for folk research on the Internet. Contains a large number of scanned books, including most of the major folk song collections from the 19th and early 20th Century. Scans on this site are generally of a high standard though some that have been made by Google are often incomplete and erratic. The online reader is excellent and has a very good search facility with a clever visual indicator ribbon. A text only version is available but the OCR transcriptions tend to be poor. Books can be downloaded in pdf, Kindle or other formats to read off-line. There are also a number of other folk related recordings and videos as well as archived websites. I visit this site most days when I’m doing research – brilliant!

http://imslp.org/wiki/Main_Page

IMSLP Petrucci Music Library – is a source for all sorts of music texts. Several folk collections here as well as a few issues of the Journal of the Folk Song Society.



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