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Sacred and Secular: Identity, Style, and Performance in Two Singing Traditions from the Pennines

Ian Russell

Abstract

Although English folksong scholarship led the field in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and helped to shape the modern conception of folk music, its voice in international research has largely disappeared. Arguably the narrow time-locked definition of folk song expounded by Cecil Sharp and largely adopted by his contemporaries, which was subsequently reiterated with ideological fervour by his followers, contributed to this decline. I would suggest that the mindset engendered by his key position statements precluded a dynamic inclusive understanding of vernacular English musical traditions and their subsequent development.

In this paper I aim to compare two singing traditions which Sharp chose to exclude from his rubric; these traditions have not merely continued but flourished throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. Through the discussion, which focuses on their contemporary practice, the tensions of their differing world views will be explored as a contribution towards an understanding of the complexity of English musical identity.¹

1. Introduction

Two examples of singing traditions that stand out as particularly relevant to an understanding of the richness, diversity, and resilience of vernacular English musical culture are those of Christmas carol singing and the singing of hunting songs, as currently (2003) practised in the southern Pennine hills of north central England (see Fig. 1). I use the term "tradition" to describe a process of connecting a selected past with the present (Eyerman and Jamison 1998:26-31; Russell 2001:228), a symbolic rather than a natural relationship (Handler and Linnekin 1984:276), that is powered by a spiritual/emotional drive in the individual participant (McDonald 1997:54-55; Atkinson 2002:26-31). For reasons that are not entirely obvious, both traditions have been largely overlooked or ignored by folk music scholarship in the twentieth century, which generally followed the pioneering lead of Cecil Sharp (Sharp 1907:

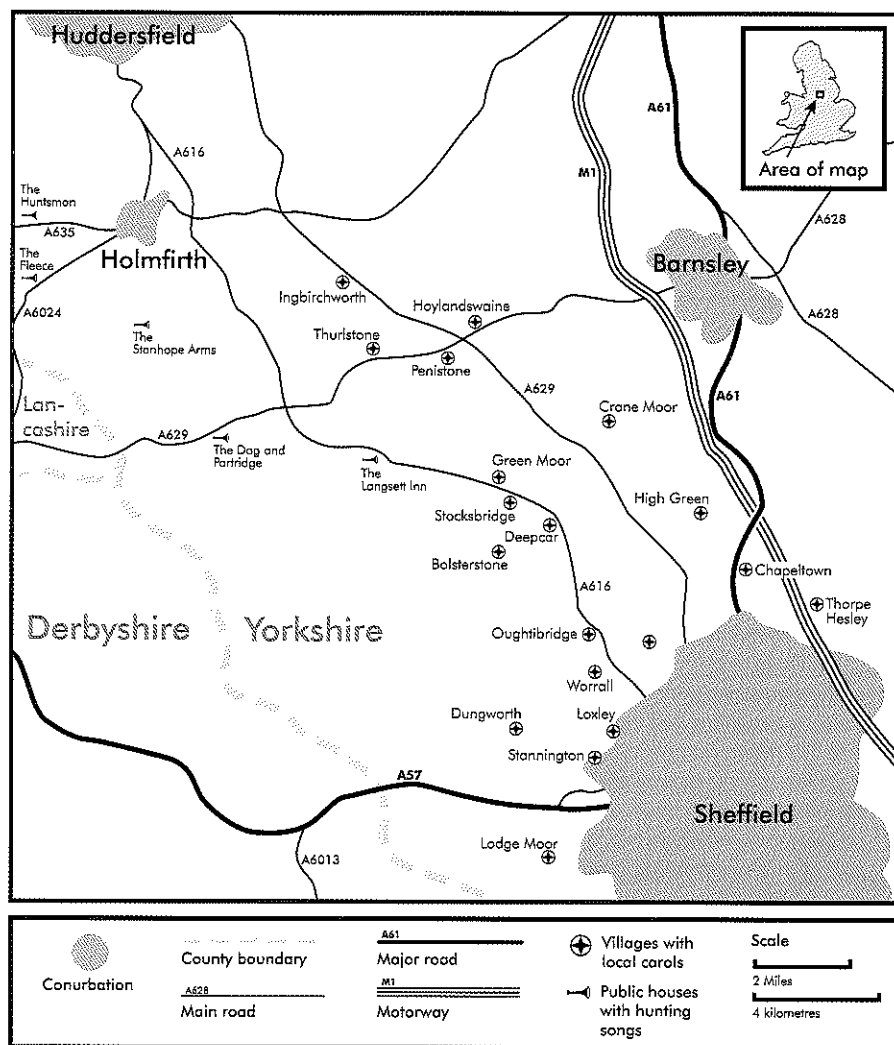


Fig. 1. The Location of Carol Singing and Hunt Singing Traditions in the Southern Pennines.

his conception of folk song, the former was an extraordinary achievement,³ whereas the latter should be seen as a product of his time.⁴ However, we cannot afford to be complacent about his legacy, particularly the way in which his “conclusions” have been carried forward by later scholars, have served to blinker and restrain English-based folksong research, and have influenced the post-1950 Folk Song Revival (Boyes 1993:94-113, 196-241; Gammon 2003:16; Livingston 1999:66, 81). I refer

particularly to approaches that, on the one hand, seek to identify and isolate a putative artistic form, “folk song,” and, on the other hand, to elevate certain parts of the “folk song” repertoire, on the strength of that flawed definition, for example, by aesthetic criteria such as “modal” melodies or antiquity (Sharp 1907:1-4, 16-31, 54-72, 124-126; Lloyd 1967:16-17; Karpeles 1973:3, 31-38).

It is my contention that this selective approach has served English folk music scholarship poorly and has helped to constrain it as a pursuit for the social/music historian, ballad scholar, or dilettante. The successful rise of the British Forum for Ethnomusicology,⁵ with its emphasis on contemporary ethnography and fieldwork, can be equated to the marginalisation of folksong scholarship in England since 1970, as evidenced by the dearth of research into contemporary song tradition,⁶ and the paucity of researchers working in the field with tenure at a British university. There are historical reasons for this lack of recognition: in the conceptualisation of academic disciplines in the late nineteenth century the study of folk music failed to gain acceptance. Consequently this has led to a lack of credibility for research in the field.

This analysis differs from that of Roger Renwick, a ballad scholar, who takes a North American viewpoint in which he sees the marginalisation of Anglo-American folksong scholarship by academia to be a consequence of researchers’ attempts to apply inappropriate social and linguistic theories:

One prominent reason for this lack of success is, I think, a common weakness in the particular style of theory borrowing and the deductive brand of reasoning that follows: such studies tend to be totalitarian rather than selective or integrative. Folklorists too often force their data into the preformed molds of the borrowed theory rather than, as in the ideal of deduction, looking for data that would falsify the theory’s major premises. Such practices I call “hypertheorizing” when the act of theorizing rather than the illuminating of some body of data becomes the investigation’s chief rationale. (Renwick 2001:xiii)

Citing English examples, Renwick is calling for a return to core interests centred around the song itself, and especially its text, as an artistic form (Renwick 2001:xiv; Boyes 1993, Harker 1985, Palmer 1996). By looking, with fresh eyes, at the legacy of collections of folk songs, he urges fellow scholars to seek to revitalise the subject from within, an approach that compliments the strategy advocated here.

2. Background and Methodology

My own approach is focused on observing and recording the activity of singing in traditional contexts. As such I am prioritising oral tradition, but not exclusively; as well as the transmission of songs, I am also deeply interested in their performance and practice. It is the how, why, when, and where, as well as the who and the what that concerns me. In short, my methodology requires that I base my research on contemporaneous fieldwork in order to understand the synchronic as well as the diachronic perspectives (Russell 2001). Much of what has been undertaken in the name of

folksong scholarship deals exclusively with the past, as if the present had little of value to offer, and, in a sense, this too is part of Sharp's legacy, and is tied up with the notion of rescue fieldwork (Sharp 1907:119).⁷ Whereas it is a virtue to consider and recognise the merits and shortcomings of our pioneer song collectors and their findings, to do so to the exclusion of ongoing tradition would seem imbalanced. I would argue that the singing activities which are under our noses have been and continue to be disregarded in favour of the rare, the extraordinary, and the exotic.⁸ This goes some way to explain the attitude Sharp held towards local carolling and hunting song traditions. Of hunting songs, Sharp wrote:

Songs in praise of sport and hunting are not apparently, held in high estimation by the folk... The hunting songs, that are usually sung in the country districts, are either very poor folk-songs, or not folk-songs at all. The majority of them are the production of eighteenth century musicians, and they are more often sung by farmers than by peasants. (Sharp 1907:98)

He was scarcely less charitable when it came to carolling:

In some parts of England, especially in the West, almost every hamlet had, and in some cases still has, its own carols, which were highly prized and jealously guarded from appropriation by neighbouring villages. But these, so far as my personal experience goes, were always "composed" carols, often harmonised, and obviously the productions of 17th and 18th century village musicians, possessing no great musical or literary value. Like all folk-products, the genuine traditional carols were not confined to any one locality, but were widely distributed. (Sharp 1907:100-101)

It should also be added that Sharp, like Vaughan Williams and others, saw group singing, singing in parts or harmony, to be non-traditional; moreover, the idea of a song being of local and/or known composition or relating to recent events was one with which he and his contemporaries were distinctly ill at ease (Sharp 1911:xii).⁹ They preferred their folk songs to be monodic, monophonic, anonymous, and "timeless." This neat compartmentalisation, together with their quest for purity and simplicity suited their pencil and paper transcription methods. Sharp wrote to a colleague: "I believe so sincerely in the innate beauty and purity of folk-music that I am sure that it cannot really be contaminated, that it must and will always do good wherever it finds a resting place" (Fox Strangways 1933:91).

3. Two Singing Traditions

For over three decades I have been observing and researching two vigorous ongoing manifestations of song traditions in the southern Pennines—the one sacred and seasonal, the other secular and associated with a field sport—seemingly distinct but, in fact, with much in common, besides their location. In this respect I have had the benefit of being able to monitor their development over a generation, an opportunity not afforded to Cecil Sharp. It would not be an exaggeration to describe both traditions as

flourishing and vigorous, with numerous supporters across the age spectrum. To emphasise this point, all of the examples given below have been recorded since 1990.

Set on the eastern watershed of the southern Pennines, the countryside is characterised by high moorland (above 500 metres), small upland farms (15-40 hectares), steep-sided valleys with fast flowing streams, some of which have been dammed to provide reservoirs for the nearby towns and cities, and erstwhile industrial villages, some of which border or have been absorbed into the conurbation of Sheffield. The former industries practised in these villages, from the eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries, were connected with the woollen trade in the north around Holmfirth and with the metal trades and mineral or coal extraction further south.

In terms of identity, the communities to the north and west tend to have stronger social links with other communities in upland northern England, especially the Lake District, the Yorkshire Dales and the North York Moors, than they do with their close neighbours from the nearby population centres of Huddersfield, Barnsley, and Sheffield. Even the carollers from Stannington and Ecclesfield, which lie within Sheffield's boundaries, see themselves as villagers rather than city dwellers, and look towards the Pennines as their recreational, spiritual and cultural home. Nowhere is this sense of "highland" identity more significant than among the hunting fraternities to the south of Huddersfield. There are three packs in the Holme and Colne Valleys that hunt foxes or hares on foot, and like the Fell Packs of the Lake District, their members are largely from working-class backgrounds, unlike the mounted packs found elsewhere in England. They are the Holme Valley Beagles Hunt, the Pennine Fox Hunt, and the Colne Valley Beagles Hunt (Russell 2003:266-267).

The hunting and the carolling communities put a high value on their respective song traditions, which they perceive as a link to the past, both in terms of place and people. This rootedness can be seen in localisations, which manifest themselves throughout the two repertoires. Besides "The Holmfirth Anthem," there are other carols named after local places such as "Tinwood," "Spout Cottage," and "Shaw Lane." Similarly hunting songs are strewn with topological references—"Mount Scar," "Bank Hall," "Denby Dale"—and noteworthy persons—"Squire Frith," "Doctor Mac," "Joe Bowman," etc. Moreover, conversations at singing occasions often revolve around anecdotes concerning former well-known singers or upholders of the tradition.

Ostensibly the core meaning of the two song repertoires might be expected to distinguish the two traditions—the one recounting and celebrating the birth of Christ with exhortations to worship and "Praise God", the other recounting and celebrating a day's hunting with exhortations to drink a toast to its continued success—but, in fact, both repertoires are eclectic and songs, melodies, and words that capture the mood and conviviality of the occasion are to be found in each. Hence the hunt sings near Holmfirth regularly conclude with a solo and chorus rendition of "Abroad for Pleasure" (also known as "The Holmfirth Anthem" or "Pratty Flowers"), just as several carol sessions to the North West of Sheffield count it as a carol and sing it en-

Original pitch and range

Abroad for Pleasure Black Bull, Ecclesfield, 3 December 1999

In Chorus $\text{♩} = 88$

A - broad for plea - sure as I was a - walk - ing, it

was one sum - mer sum - mer's eve - ning clear, A -

broad for plea - sure as I was a - walk - ing, it

was one sum - mer sum - mer's eve - ning clear, 'Twas

there I be - held a most beau - ti - ful dam - sel la -

-ment - ing for her shep - herd dear, La -

-ment - ing for her shep - herd dear, The

2. The dearest evening that e'er I beheld was
Ever, evermore with the lass I adore;
The dearest evening that e'er I beheld was
Ever, evermore with the lass I adore;
'Wilt thou go fight yon French and Spaniards?
Wilt thou leave me thus, my dear,
Wilt thou leave me thus, my dear?

3. No more to yon green banks will I take thee
With pleasure for to rest thyself and view the lands;
No more to yon green banks will I take thee
With pleasure for to rest thyself and view the lands;
But I will take thee to yon green gardens
Where those pratty flowers grow,
Where those pratty, pratty flowers grow.

Note: The melody is also sung by female voices an octave above. The first line is unclear as people are not aware that the carol has started. By bar 4 everyone has joined in. At several points in the performance, notably from bar 17 of the last verse, additional harmonies are sung, especially in the tenor. The last two lines of the third verse are repeated.

Fig. 2a. "Abroad for Pleasure" as sung by Will Noble at the Huntsman, Holmfirth, 29 December 2000.

Original pitch and range

Abroad for Pleasure Will Noble and chorus, the Huntsman, Holmfirth, 29 December 2000

Solo $\text{♩} = 76\pm$

A - broad for plea - sure as I was a - walk - ing, it

was one sum - mer sum - mer's eve - ning clear, A -

broad for plea - sure as I was a - walk - ing, it

was one sum - mer sum - mer's eve - ning clear, 'Twas

there I be - held a most beau - ti - ful dam - sel la -

-ment - ing for her shep - herd dear, La -

-ment - ing for her shep - herd dear, 'Twas

there I be - held a most beau - ti - ful dam - sel la -

-ment - ing for her shep - herd dear, La -

-ment - ing for her shep - herd dear, The

2. The dearest evening that e'er I beheld was
Ever, ever, ever with the lass I adore;
The dearest evening that e'er I beheld was
Ever, ever, ever with the lass I adore;
'Wilt thou go fight yon French and Spaniards
Wilt thou leave me thus, my dear,
Wilt thou leave me thus, my dear.
'Wilt thou go fight yon French and Spaniards
Wilt thou leave me thus, my dear,
Wilt thou leave me thus, my dear.

3. No more to yon green banks will I take thee
With pleasure for to rest thyself and view the lands;
No more to yon green banks will I take thee.
With pleasure for to rest thyself and view the lands;
But I will take thee to yon green gardens,
Where those pratty flowers grow,
Where those pratty, pratty flowers grow.
But I will take thee to yon green gardens,
Where those pratty flowers grow,
Where those pratty, pratty flowers grow.

Note: The singer starts immediately the applause from the previous song subsides, without any introduction. In verse 1 bar 5 a few singers join in. This is frowned upon by senior singers, one of whom emphatically shouts out at the end of bar 16 (), 'One singer!'. This re-establishes the distinction between solo and chorus sections. Although there is no sense of a second part (bass), as the song progresses harmonisation is added, especially in the last chorus. No female voices are audible. The last chorus is sung quietly the first time and repeated 'molte voce' with the note at bar 32:2 altered to g' (sustained), followed by F# as a passing note.*

Fig. 2b. "Abroad for Pleasure" as sung at the Black Bull, Ecclesfield, 3 December 1999.

semble as an integral part of their tradition.¹⁰ Clearly it has as little to do with hunting as it has with the Nativity (see Fig. 2).

Beside the solo and response nature of the recordings found in the more northerly venues, there is much of relevance to note from their performance. Thus both exhibit:

- a) male voice domination
- b) declamatory/molto voce style
- c) a position in the repertoire—often near or at the end of a session denoting the song's function as a "goodnight" or "parting" song.

Moreover, in some venues the same soloist sings "Abroad for Pleasure" for the carol singing, as well as at the hunt socials (e.g. Barry Bridgewater at the Fountain Inn, Ingbirchworth). In one carolling venue a hunting song (or at least a song with a chorus about hunting) has joined the main repertoire—this is "The Christmas Goose," as sung by Will Noble at the Royal Hotel Dungworth.

Verse 1—Solo

It was at an inn in Manchester, the Cornstalks was the sign,
A famous public where commercials used to sleep and dine;
One Christmas time a traveller, so long had been his use,
Called to spend his holidays and choose his Christmas goose.

Chorus

All around the greenwood so earlye in the morn
The merry merry huntsman blows his silver bugle horn.¹¹

Another song that has moved from the carol repertoire to the hunt repertoire is "Swaledale" or "The Song of the Swale," which is similarly unrelated to both themes being a song in praise of a place, a river valley in North Yorkshire.

Verse 1—Solo

I'll sing you a song of a place that I love,
A place where I always would dwell,
And, if you will kindly lend me an ear,
I'll sing of its beauties as well.

Chorus

In that beautiful dale, home of the Swale,
How well do I love thee, how well do I love thee,
Beautiful dale, home of the Swale,
Beautiful, beautiful dale.¹²

The presence in the repertoires of such thematically unrelated songs can be understood in terms of their local popularity and the importance of the occasion as the dominant focus for traditional singing in their respective communities. If such songs were not sung on these occasions, perhaps they would not be sung at all. Thus a favourite harvest hymn, "Ho, Reapers in the Whited Harvest" (Sankey no. 753), formerly sung in Nonconformist chapels to the west of Sheffield, has for the last twenty years enjoyed a new lease of life as a regular part of the Christmas carol repertoire at Dungworth and elsewhere in the locality.

4. Context

If conviviality is in the nature of the performance, then the shared context for this—the pub—is hugely significant. Fieldworkers and song collectors such as Sabine Baring-Gould, Alfred Williams, and more recently Peter Kennedy and Ginette Dunn, have noted the importance of the pub as a centre of performance in English song tradition (Dickinson 1970:129; Kirk-Smith 1997:152; Williams 1923:20; Kennedy 1975:593-594; Dunn 1980:47-56). This "national" institution has a pedigree that dates back to before Chaucer (1343-c.1400), is often referred to by Shakespeare, and has never left the English psyche since (Hackwood 1909:39-48, 171-179, 260-262). As a meeting place, social club, recreational centre, drinking house, and "home from home," the English pub has occupied a unique position vis-a-vis vernacular tradition. It is not difficult to understand the links with the hunt socials following a day's sport and such relationships have been documented since the eighteenth century (Buck 1775), but it is much harder to account for the link with carol singing.

The alienation of local carolling from the official places of worship in England during the first part of the nineteenth century, in the name of religious reform, has been documented elsewhere (Gammon 1981; Russell 1987:31-40). At this time the so called "local" carols were sung as part of a wider tradition of psalmody in English parish churches, variously termed West Gallery, Gallery, or Georgian psalmody tradition by scholars. Many of the tunes were composed in parts for voices and instruments by members of the artisan class, tradesmen and craftsmen, in towns and villages, and characteristically featured fuguing passages inspired by the music of Handel, Bach, and others.¹³ Such tunes circulated widely in oral tradition, in music manuscripts, and in locally printed collections, and were taken around the country by itinerant singing teachers and preachers, many of whom were Nonconformists. However, under the guise of church reform, promoted by the Oxford Movement (1833—c.1889), such exuberant and melismatic tunes were considered inappropriate for worship. The choirs and bands (known as "quires") who performed them were largely disbanded during the forty years following 1820. Nevertheless the tunes and in particular their settings to Christmas carols proved to be so popular that they were performed by members of the disbanded "quires" as itinerant carol singing groups, which at Christmas toured virtually every English village and hamlet in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as well as among Nonconformist communities. In south Yorkshire, by the end of the nineteenth century, the "local" carols had also become an important part of the singing tradition of public houses and this popularity has been sustained throughout the twentieth century (Russell 1997 and 1999:1-27).

The reasons for the receptiveness of pubs to carolling depend on both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. In the first place the public house in many communities in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was the main venue for secular singing, especially for harmony groups or glee clubs, who sang in parts (Johnson 1979). A famous glee club that met in Tideswell in the Derbyshire Peak in the 1820s, led by Samuel "Singer" Slack, was noted for its rendition of "Hail Smiling Morn,"¹⁴ which

became absorbed into the local carol repertoire before the First World War. The carols, like the glees, were performed ensemble, but also incorporated accompaniment, and encouraged string and woodwind instrumental virtuosity, especially in the symphonies, the musical interludes between the verses. In many communities, the singers and instrumentalists, who participated and excelled in one aspect of vernacular music-making often did so in another, as Thomas Hardy fictionalised in his novel, based on the communities of his native Stinsford and Puddletown in Dorset, *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872). Whereas the partaking of alcoholic beverage may have been a barrier to some members of Nonconformist sects, in the south Pennines there is little evidence of any conflict of ideologies since the mid-nineteenth century. In fact, the traditional industries of agriculture, the iron and steel trades, and coal mining, all encouraged beer drinking either explicitly or implicitly.¹⁵

It should be noted that the First World War and the consequent loss of life proved to be hugely significant in terms of the continuation of vernacular culture in England. Thus, in many communities outside south Yorkshire, the localised carol singing, along with many other examples of customary tradition, could no longer be sustained. Before the Second World War, the strongest barrier in pubs was to the presence of women. When Norma Russell and I first sang carols in the pubs in the late 1960s, we were told that a woman might be referred to as "a pudding stirrer" (someone who stayed at home to prepare a Sunday lunch), or a "pudding spoiler" (a woman who did not, but preferred to sing in the pubs). The early 1970s saw pub alterations on a hitherto unforeseen scale. Apart from bringing toilets within the main building, the main purpose of such renovations was to remove interior walls, destroying small rooms of individual character, in order to create larger drinking areas. Whereas, before these changes, singing could flourish among small groups of 10-15 participants, alongside other pub activities, by virtue of the individual areas, the new large pub lounges were inhospitable to informal and formal singing sessions. This has since resulted in "honeypotting": singers frequenting a fewer number of pubs where, because of the attitude of the licensee, the unaltered internal layout of the public rooms, and the regular clientele, traditional singing is welcomed. In the intervening years, pub-goers have become more comfortable with open spaces and a number of singing occasions have re-established themselves in erstwhile sterile environments.

The popularity of such sessions, particularly in the main carol singing pubs has not diminished. These occur in the period between Armistice Day (11 November) and New Year, depending on local custom. The start can be seen to follow shortly after the former holiday period of "Hallowtide" (31 October- 6 November), when a local guising custom connected with "soul cakes" ("kaking") was practised, and after the bonfire and fireworks celebrations of Guy Fawkes Night (5 November). The singing in the Royal Hotel, Dungworth, and the Blue Ball, Worrall, both accompanied by an electronic organ, takes place on Sunday lunchtimes between 12.00 and 2.00 pm, whereas the singing at the Travellers Rest, Oughtibridge, takes place on Saturday evening and is accompanied by piano. The two main unaccompanied sessions are on Sunday lunchtime at the Fountain Inn, Ingbirchworth, and on Thursday

evening at the Black Bull, Ecclesfield (see Fig. 1). Approximately a further 20 pubs in south Yorkshire have carol singing on a less regular basis with smaller but equally enthusiastic followings.

The following description is that of a typical session. At the Blue Ball at Worrall (Christmas 2002), people start to arrive, some individually, others in small groups of family and friends, from about 11.30 a.m., about a half hour before the session is due to start. If the pub is still closed, they happily form a queue at the door. The motivation for arriving early is to secure a seat in the "games room," which normally accommodates darts and pool players, but is set aside for carol singing on the Sunday lunchtimes in the season. Only about twenty are able to find a seat, while the rest, up to forty, stand in a throng in the middle, often through choice. The room is literally filled to capacity with the overspill standing in the corridor. Approximately half the participants live within a five mile radius of the pub, a quarter travel from the larger Sheffield region, and a final quarter from further afield. The gender bias is male, about 4 to 1, and the age range varies from twenty to eighty year olds, with more than half in the forty to sixty-five year old bracket. As to occupational backgrounds, there is an even spread between, manual and skilled workers, tradespeople and professionals. Membership of the group is strictly *ad hoc*, that is whoever is there on the day.

On arrival the carollers greet acquaintances with open enthusiasm, some of whom they have not seen since the previous Christmas. Everyone either goes to the bar to buy a drink, normally draught beer, or has one bought for them. The conversation is often very animated, redolent with humour, good-natured banter, and a feeling of expectation. About five minutes before the start, the organist arrives, switches on the instrument, checks the settings, and exchanges news with close neighbours. She then sets up her sheets of music for the carols (computer-generated manuscripts) in the order that loosely follows the tradition (some for starting, some for finishing, and the others in between). As there are more carols in the repertoire than there is time to sing them, she tries to ensure that all the carols are sung at some point during the season.

At about noon the accompanist plays through a verse of "Merry Christmas" as an introduction and then everyone joins in to sing the carol, a formula which is followed for each of the carols. The carols are not announced but the introduction allows people who do not instantly recognise the tune to ask more knowledgeable neighbours. Usually everyone in the bar sings and there are no spectators or non-participants, nor is talking tolerated during the singing. The carols are pitched to suit the range of most voices (g, -d'), and most sing the tune in the appropriate octave. Up to a third sing another part, primarily the bass, although one or two sing a tenor part. There is no prescription as to the exact form the part takes, as most singers have learnt it by ear from older singers; this results in a consensual flow with minor variations. Similarly there is no expectation or obligation for the part singers to sit or stand together, though some do, or for them to stick to their part for every carol and every section within it. In fact, singers move between the parts, such is the informality of the session.

At the end of each carol, conversations resume without applause, except when a solo has been sung, of which there are normally about two or three, almost always by the same performers as of right. At about 2.00 p.m. the organist plays the last carol, once again "Merry Christmas," thereby framing the session. About twenty-two carols have been sung. She packs away her music, chats to well-wishers, and takes her leave. Sometimes she is given a spontaneous round of applause and a verse of "For She's a Jolly Good Fellow" is sung. As she is leaving a group of enthusiastic carollers continue the momentum by "striking up" unaccompanied one or two favourite carols that have been omitted. At this stage "good order" is no longer tenable and people chat freely. Within twenty minutes or so, most of the carollers have left, although the pub remains open for other customers.

The occasions for singing hunting songs may not be quite so numerous but the season is longer, lasting from autumn to spring. The two most active hunts, the Penine Fox Hunt and the Holme Valley Beagles Hunt, have social evenings once or twice a year which feature singing, they also host singing competitions, and the Penine hosts monthly get-togethers for informal singing. These are almost always held in pubs, the three most favoured in the last five years are the Stanhope Arms at Dunford Bridge, the Fleece Inn at Holme village, and the Huntsman approximately three miles west of Holmfirth, but they have also met in other venues including the Dog and Partridge near Flouch and the Langsett Inn at Langsett (see Fig. 1). From the map it can be seen that the areas for hunt and carol singing are essentially contiguous, rather than overlapping.

There is, however, an overlap of participants. If we examine the leading performers at two of the carolling sessions we find that the one at the Fountain Inn, Ingbirchworth, is led by a well-known singer of hunting songs, Barry Bridgewater, and that one of the soloists at the Royal Hotel, Dungworth, Will Noble, is also a leading member of the singing circle at hunt socials.¹⁶ Other leading singers at hunting social evenings, such as Andrew Rogers, also feature prominently at carol singing sessions. Thirty years ago this was not true to the same extent and few singers in either tradition were familiar with each other's singing practices. However, the cross-over between the two traditions is not a recent phenomenon. For example the Huntsman of the Stannington Beagles (defunct since 1914) W. [Willis] Womack, who sang at the Hare and Hounds in Stannington in the mid-nineteenth century, is believed to have written the tunes of three carols of local provenance—"Back Lane" and "Egypt"—and with fellow huntsman "Rose," the tune of the carol, known as "Tinwood."¹⁷

5. Beer and Singing

The centrality of beer consumption to singing and the male dominated culture that surrounds it, can be identified in different ways. In some carol sessions the whole company co-operate in the beer drinking culture. For instance, people at the bar order drinks for singers across the room. Because of difficulties with access, drinks are

passed overhead by carollers to the recipients, and musical calls are performed for empty glasses to be returned to the bar (a parody sung to the chorus of the well-known hymn tune "Cwm Rhondda").¹⁸

Pass your glasses, pass your glasses,
Pass your glasses to the bar! (to the bar!)
Pass your glasses to the bar!

Fill them up again, fill them up again,
Fill them up with decent ale! (with decent ale!)
Fill them up with decent ale!

Such acts are redolent with good humour and repartee between fellow carollers and with the licensee, such that a third chorus is sometimes added by a few of the singers for comic irony:

That's impossible, that's impossible,
That's impossible to do.
That's impossible to do.

Carols with lines suggestive of drinking are held on to and sung with great fervour. At the end of "Jacob's Well," singers stress "Come drink and thirst no more" and in one venue repeat it several times. In "Tinwood," "But now and then a cluster of pleasant grapes we found," is sung with gusto, while the conclusion of certain carols such as "Hail Smiling Morn" at the Fountain Inn, Ingbirchworth, is saluted with raised glasses and followed by the call "Sup!" (i.e., everyone drink). In the villages of Worrall, Oughtibridge, and Dungworth, where accompaniment is provided by organ or piano, the playing of the symphony between the verses of the carols signals an opportunity for singers to take a drink of beer.

Whereas the drinking culture that surrounds the carol singing tradition has been overlaid and now operates implicitly, the association of hunting and hunting songs with alcoholic imbibing is explicit. The most common form of expression is an appeal to the assembled company to drink and be merry after the day's hunting (see Fig. 3):

With a bottle and friend this evening we'll spend
And crown the brave sports of the day.¹⁹
("The Echoing Horn," Holme Valley Beagles 1990: no. 12)

No pleasure like hunting to pass the long day,
We'll cover the hills and the dales,
At night for our supper, we'll dance and we'll caper,
All over a jug of brown ale, me brave boys,
Me brave boys, me brave boys, me brave boys,
All over a jug of brown ale.²⁰
("The Hounds are Out," Holme Valley Beagles 1990: no. 3)

Original pitch and range

The Hounds Are Out

Charlie Woodcock, Stanhope Arms, Dunford Bridge, 26 November 1997

$\text{♩} = 168 \pm$

8 The hounds are out and the morn - ing shines clear, To the fields and the woods now pro -

8 -vide; How can you, how will you lie snor - ing in bed? While

13 Chorus

8 we all on horse-back do ride, me brave boys, Me brave boys, me brave boys, me brave

19 slows

8 boys, While we all on horse - back do ride.

2. Come brush up me bo-ots and saddle me mare
Without any further delay;
For the cry of the hounds and the sight of a hare
We'll drive all dull cares far away, me brave boys,
Me brave boys, me brave boys, me brave boys,
We'll drive all dull care far away.
3. See yonder, the huntsman, he starts a poor puss,
We have her all in our full view;
We will never forsake her till we overtake her,
So eagerly let us pursue, me brave boys,
Me brave boys, me brave boys, me brave boys,
So eagerly let us pursue.
4. No pleasure like hunting to pass the long day,
We'll cover the hills and the dales,
At night for our supper we'll dance and we'll caper
All over a jug of brown ale, me brave boys,
Me brave boys, me brave boys, me brave boys,
All over a jug of brown ale.
5. I have not got over my yesternight's cup,
So heavy it lays on my head,
And the wife says to me, 'Ta-ra-ra-ra-ree,
Come cuddle me up in my bed,' me brave boys,
Me brave boys, me brave boys, me brave boys,
'Come cuddle me up in my bed.'

Note: The song is performed without a formal introduction. It is so well known that it is often sung throughout in chorus. The choruses are sung in unison with great gusto. The suggestive phrase, 'Ta-ra-ra-ra-ree' causes amusement. The applause at the end is interrupted by the striking of another song, 'The Castle Hill Anthem' ('And the larks sang so melodious'), which is sung in chorus. The two songs are often performed consecutively without a break.

Fig. 3. "The Hounds Are Out" as sung by Charlie Woodcock at the Stanhope Arms, Dunford Bridge, 26 November 1997.

In several songs a toast is made that is both universal and inclusive—to all who share a common interest in field sports—as well as localised and particular—to the named hunt or noted huntsman:

Here's a health to all hunters from city and town,
Likewise the brave sportsmen that's round about Holme.
("On a Fine Hunting Morn," Holme Valley Beagles 1990: no. 7)

Here's health to all hunters wherever they be,
To all honest sportsmen of every degree,
With a full flowing bowl, we'll drink a health all,
To that brave and true sportsman, Squire Frith of Bank Hall.²¹
("Squire Frith of Bank Hall," Holme Valley Beagles 1990: no. 11)

Now since you have bold Reynard killed,
Away to the Stanhope and dine;
And put my foot in a full bumper,
And drink your Lord's health in red wine.
("Some Gentlemen Take Great Delight," Holme Valley Beagles 1990: no. 25)

In "The Scent Was Good" patriotic sentiments become bound up with the toast and the general exuberance (Holme Valley Beagles 1990: no. 5):

Now if our host permits a toast, we'll have each sportsman here
His glass to fill with a right good will and follow with a cheer;
For each man ought to drink to sport in glasses three times three,
That long may last the huntsman's blast in England's land so free.
That long may last the huntsman's blast in England's land so free.²²

In fact, many participants identify very strongly with the last line seeing it in a contemporary context, as a clarion call to campaign against the proposed imposition of a ban on hunting with dogs that has been looming for the past five years (Russell 2002a:130). In "The Mardale Hunt," the toast to good health is accompanied by the singing of two songs, each of which encapsulate essential values to which the singers subscribe—good fellowship and an unswerving devotion to hunting (Holme Valley Beagles 1990: no. 22):

With "Auld Lang Syne" and "Old John Peel,"
With foaming glass and nimble heel,
We'll drink to all a health and weal,
Away, my lads, away!

The gendered nature of the sport of hunting gives rise to mixed messages, such that the toast in "The Morning is Charming" carries a caveat (Holme Valley Beagles 1990: no. 10):

Here's a health to all hunters and long be their lives.
May they never be crossed by their sweethearts or wives.²³

Returning to "The Hounds Are Out," there is a breath of reality; the consequence of heavy drinking, a hangover, and the demands of the marital bed are clearly stated (Holme Valley Beagles 1990: no. 3):

I have not got over my yesternight's cup
So heavy it lays on my head;
And the wife says to me: "Ta ra ra ree!
Come cuddle me up in my bed, me brave boys,
Me brave boys, me brave boys, me brave boys,
Come cuddle me up in my bed."²⁴

It should be added that in one song, "Bright Rosy Morning," the drinking ethic is supplanted by a call for amatory success and sexual prowess (Holme Valley Beagles 1990: no. 1):

Now the day's well spent over with joy and delight
And brings to each lover fresh charms for the night,
Crying, "Let us, let us, let us, let us be merry whilst we may;
Let love crown the night as sweet sports crown the day."²⁵

6. Common Features

It is obvious that most of the songs in the hunting repertoire take the form of solo and chorus in unison, as distinct from the carols, which are generally sung ensemble, in parts, with harmony. Moreover, the hunting choruses are performed more freely and exuberantly. Hence notes are sustained longer at the end of key phrases, and there are often "whoops" and "halloos" or even a blast from a hunting horn to give emphatic approval to particular sentiments. One example, where exuberance was taken to the extreme, is a rendition of "The Six Fell Packs," sung by Diane Barker at the Fleece Inn, Holme, 18 February 1998 (see Fig. 4).

Original pitch and range

The Six Fell Packs Diane Barker, Fleece Inn, Holme, 18 February 1998

Verse 5: We next come to one who to hunt-ing was born, He's the fourth gen-er-a-tion to car-ry the horn; An-tho-ny Chap-man's his name, as I hard-ly need say, And those Con-i-ston hounds love his

Chorus slows

WHOOP! hark a-way! Tal-ly ho! tal-ly ho, tal-ly

ho! Hark for-rad, good hounds, tal-ly ho!

slower

Note: Diane Barker is an experienced singer from the Lake District and the daughter of a famous huntsman from the Ullswater Hunt, Anthony Barker. The men rise to her performance and sing wildly and excitedly. The "whoop" is shouted out at bar 8, as the male singers anticipate the chorus. At bar 11 the pause is sustained almost indefinitely and longer than most of the singers' lungs have breath - almost eight times the value notated.

Fig. 4. "The Six Fell Packs" (Verse 5) as sung by Diane Barker at the Fleece Inn, Holme, 18 February 1998.

Mount Moriah Travellers Rest, Oughtibridge 5 December 1998

Treble $\text{♩} = 120$

Bass

Piano

1. "Glo-ry to God," the an-gels sing, "Glad ti-dings, lo, I bring, Glad ti-dings, lo, I bring! In Da-vid's ci-tiy lies a babe, And Je-sus is the child, And Je-sus is the babe, And Je-sus is the child, And Je-sus is the child, In

Treble

Bass

Piano

child, And Je - - sus is the child.

Da-vid's ci - ty lies a babe and Je-sus is And Je - - sus is the child.

Symphony

Piano

2. Glory to God, let man reply,
For Christ the Lord is come,
For Christ the Lord is come;
Behold him in a stable lie,
A stable is His room,
A stable is His room,
A stable is His room.

3. Glory to God, let all the earth
Join in the heavenly song,
Join in the heavenly song,
And praise Him for our Saviour's birth
In every land and tongue,
In every land and tongue,
In every land and tongue.

Note: Sung at pitch. The pianist, Sue Heritage, plays from a score (computer-set). The introductory verse is played at a faster tempo (156 approx.), as are the symphonies between the verses (144 approx.). Male (dominant) and female voices sing the treble led by Roy Needham; male voices only sing the bass. All sing 'molto voce,' most noticeably in bars 18-20. The section from verse 3 bar 9 is repeated twice at the end; a *ritardando* only occurs at the end of the last repeat.

Fig. 5. "Mount Moriah" as sung at the Travellers Rest, Oughtibridge, 5 December 1998, led by Roy Needham, piano accompanist Sue Heritage.

There are examples of exuberance in carol singing, most notably in "The Christmas Tree," a solo performed by a leading singer with a chorus of shouts of "Ho ho!" (Russell 1999), and in "Mount Moriah," of which the last section of the final verse

may be repeated up to four times, dependent on the mood of the carollers and the organist (see Fig. 5). However, excessive behaviour is generally frowned upon.

That singers from hunting and carolling traditions can and do move so easily between the two is suggestive that their respective "soundscapes" or sound ideals are very similar, even congruent (Shelemay 2001: frontispiece). Listening to recordings from the two, it is difficult to separate them, except on the basis of repertoire, and even then (as noted above) there are overlaps. The lyrics too contain common features such as the use of rhetoric. An example is found in the carol "Good News" (Russell 1994:12-15) and the hunting song "Squire Frith of Bank Hall" (Holme Valley Tradition 1990: no. 11):

Hark! Hark! what news those angels bring!
Glad tidings of a new-born King.

Hark! Hark! brother sportsmen, how melodious the sound,
How the valleys re-echo our merry mouthed hounds.

7. Performance

A clearer understanding of the distinction between the two traditions can be achieved by: looking at the relative performances and their contexts; relating these to the ethos of the traditions; and considering the insights they provide into their respective world views. In the first instance, in contrast to hunt sings, most carol sessions do not have an introducer or MC. Instead they rely on an individual whose function is integral to the performance of the carol, a "striker" to start the carol at an appropriate pitch, as at the Black Bull, Ecclesfield, or an accompanist to play an introduction to prompt recognition of the chosen carol, as cited above at the Blue Ball, Worrall. It is usual for the singer at a hunt sing to be introduced with banter, praise, or even hyperbole. When Clive Mitchell introduced Brian Thorp, 29 December 2002, at the Huntsman, Holmfirth, taking over from Nigel Hinchcliffe, he did so as follows:

Being as how our MC has knocked off for the evening, I'd like to be the MC to introduce this next artiste. I've seen him consume vast amounts of Guinness. I've been following his career very closely, with a bucket and shovel. Yes! it's, from "Dingle Dell," Mr Brian Thorp! [cheers and whistling]

In fact, the soloist is often physically elevated above the rest of the company by being required to perform from the front of a room facing the audience or on a formal stage. By contrast, carollers consider themselves to be on an equal footing with their fellow participants, even to the point that they sing facing in different directions around a room, as they would be if they were merely socialising around a table or at a bar (see Fig. 6).

The carol singing sessions have a demotic consensual ethos, in which control is not obvious. Participants join in at many different levels; at the one extreme, knowing every word off by heart and being able to sing a part, other than the tune, with



Fig. 6. Carol singers at the Black Bull, Ecclesfield, December 1994.
Photograph by Don McPhee, *The Guardian*.



Fig. 7. Carol singers at the Royal Hotel, Dungworth, 15 November 1998,
led by Neil Henderson (on right, next to organ) organ accompanist, Sue Heritage.
Photograph by Sharon Doorbar.

great accomplishment; at the other, simply following the tune singers standing or sitting around them with the support of a worksheet or locally produced carol book. It would be misleading to suggest that in such sessions a hierarchy does not exist because it does, although it may take the observer a little while to recognise it. For example, at the Royal Hotel, Dungworth, the senior carollers cluster around the organ (see Fig. 7), whereas at the Black Bull, Ecclesfield, the part of the room where the "striker" sits is referred to as "the top table." Of course, should a session be deflected by a wayward individual, it is the senior carollers who step in and reassert the norms of behaviour.

Although calls for "order please," "best of order," "singer on his feet," "this time, please," as well as discreet shushing are heard in both contexts, "good order" (as the quality of the focus on or attention to the singing is termed), is sometimes harder to achieve in the hunt sings than in the carolling sessions. The reasons for this are complex and may depend on a number of factors. For instance, the audience at the hunt sing may not have all come with the same agenda, that is to listen to, and join in with the songs. Some renditions at these occasions are listened to with avid enjoyment; whereas others may attract varying degrees of indifference. This may, of course, be accounted for in terms of the skill of the performer, the appropriateness of the chosen song, or the singer's standing within the group. Predictably the performer-centred nature of such sessions lays itself open to the vagaries of the audience, as well as relying heavily on the skills of the MC to attract and sustain the interest of his/her audience.

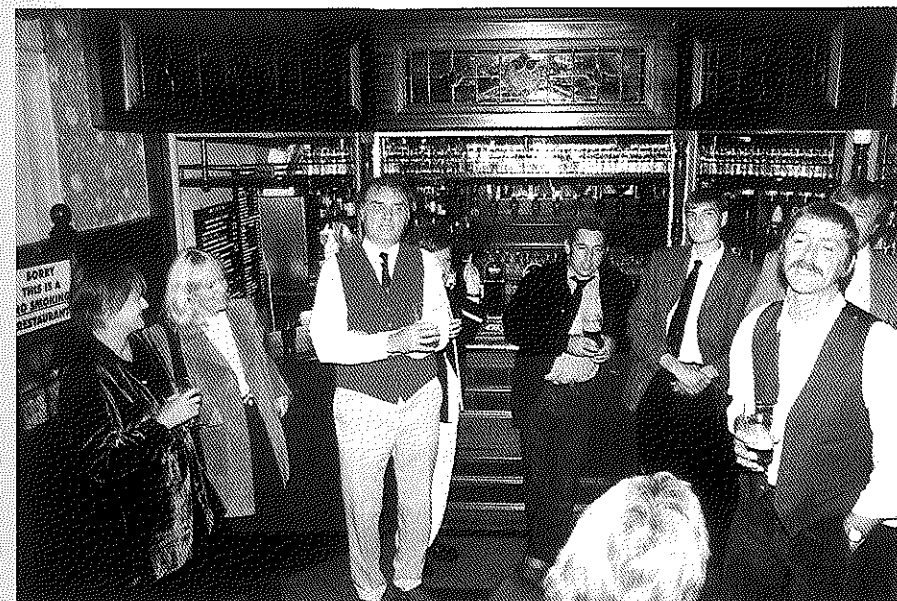


Fig. 8. Singers from the Pennine Concert Party entertain at the 1998 Labour Party Conference in Blackpool. Photograph by John R. Haigh.

The hunters and supporters of hunting in the southern Pennines perceive their way of life to be under imminent threat and I have written elsewhere about the way the singers have responded to this by actively using their tradition to promote their pro-hunting stance, for example, by singing at rallies of the Countryside Alliance and by organising singing at the Labour Party conferences (see Fig. 8) (Russell 2002b). Such political awareness and activity is understandably absent from the carollers, though the recent change to the licensing laws, particularly with reference to live music in pubs, has resulted in members of the carolling community campaigning to ensure that the new legislation does not adversely affect their tradition.²⁶

8. Changing Perceptions and World View

In the mid-1970s the two traditions were both featured on LPs in the classic series of recordings released on Leader Sound by Bill Leader, *A People's Carol* (1974) and *A Fine Hunting Day* (Holme Valley Beagles 1975). Among the main audience for these recordings were singers, musicians and enthusiasts within the folk music movement²⁷—both recordings were greeted with equal surprise and enthusiasm. The subsequent relationship of the two traditions vis-à-vis folk enthusiasts and the wider cultural media is revealing.

The performance of sacred Christian songs, while drinking alcohol in a pub has attracted very little criticism; quite the reverse, it has been held up by the media and praised for its singularity, secularity, and seasonal cheeriness. Three typical headlines from national newspapers read:

"Roar, Choirs of Angels: Stephen McClarence visits the pub carollers of Dungworth and goes home at closing time with his ears ringing" (*The Times*, 25 November 2000, p. 10)

"Raising Voices, and Glasses, in Cheer: In the pubs of Sheffield, British carolers still sing the songs of yore, by Sue Stiles" (*New York Times*, 19 December 1993, p. 20)

"Helle Glocken, dunkles Bier: Nach der Morgenandacht ins 'Black Bull.' In Nord-england singen Männer und Frauen zu Weihnachten im Pub," von Christoph Wagner (*Wochenpost*, 22 December 1993, p. 22)²⁸

Several recordings, as well as radio and TV programmes, have been made of it, and workshops given at folk festivals to initiate the unfamiliar into its ways.²⁹ There have also been a number of festivals held exclusively to celebrate the tradition; and a music society founded that specifically includes this type of sacred singing within its brief—the West Gallery Music Association.³⁰

In stark contrast, the neighbouring tradition of singing songs which celebrate a "blood sport," in the context of a pub, has been largely marginalised and isolated by the folk music movement. Two examples will serve to illustrate this point. Will Noble and John Cocking, well-known singers from the hunting song tradition, have regularly performed at folk festivals in the UK since the 1980s, but they consciously

avoid singing hunting songs in these situations, such that they have learnt a number of songs from other sources to fill the void in their repertoires.³¹ Their undoubted popularity among folk audiences contrasts with other equally fine singers from the same tradition (e.g. Barry Bridgewater and Andrew Rogers), who have not extended or modified their repertoires in the face of such censure.³² For the past seven years Mark Davies, the Joint-Master of the Pennine Foxhounds Hunt, has led a concert party of over 20 singers from the local hunts. They regularly receive invitations to perform from various rural groups around England and Ireland, especially those who are sympathetic to field sports, but, despite extensive and appropriate canvassing, the group has yet to receive an invitation from a folk festival or a folk club. Mark expresses some surprise at this situation, as his own musical background is closely connected to the folk music movement, having played concertina in the 1970s and 1980s for the Manley Morris Dancers.³³

From the above discussion it might be presumed that hunting songs are not valued outside their own community, whereas pub carols are. Certainly the cause of animal cruelty, as promulgated by the anti-blood sports pressure groups, is in the ascendancy and the folk music movement can be seen as mirroring this larger societal concern. From this point of view, for a festival or folk club to encourage a singing group that includes in its repertoire songs that glorify hunting would be seen as politically insensitive. One reason given to me by a folk festival organiser for not inviting the Pennine Concert Party, or a similar group was that it might jeopardise their capability to attract arts funding, which for Mark is a difficult argument to counter.

In some respects the local carolling tradition can also be seen as a strictly minority interest, marginalised by the music establishment and by arts funders despite its acceptance by parts of the folk music movement. It has been estimated that between 2000 and 5000 people in south Yorkshire take part in the singing of the local carols.³⁴ This may be marginally more than watch Yorkshire Cricket Club, but it is still a tiny proportion of the population of the region, which exceeds a million (less than 0.5 %). It is a proverbialism among carollers that most people in Sheffield are unaware of the tradition, which is to be found on their doorstep. A special carol festival held in the Cutlers' Hall in Sheffield in 2000 to mark the Millennium attracted 600 enthusiasts, but failed to attract any Lottery Funding, despite a supportive endorsement by a Member of Parliament.³⁵ Although the *New Oxford Book of Carols* included a few items from the local Christmas carol repertoire (15 tunes out of 300), these were drawn from nineteenth-century manuscripts and publications, rather than from ongoing practice or contemporary tradition. Some reviews in art music publications of CDs and collections of "village" carols have displayed hostility, prejudice, and a lack of understanding:

As I said to the editor, I'm not sure whether listening to recordings of drunken singers is a particularly musical experience, so I only recommend the tapes to students of performance practice (after all, who would want to listen in the cold light of day to any ensemble bawling after several pints...).

Early Music Review, no. 14, October 1995:6.

Generally speaking the carolling tradition may receive a better press than that of hunting songs, but both are still relatively minority interests, whose vigour and success depends on the enthusiasm and efforts of a small number of members.

9. Conclusion

In 1907 Sharp wrote effusively and idealistically about the potential of English folk song to unite, through education, a country divided by class and capitalist society, and bring it back in touch with its rural past (Sharp 1907:134-141). As others have noted this manifestation of romantic nationalism, the power of folk song to heal a fractured society, assumed a moral and spiritual dimension (Harker 1982; Boyes 1993:69-70; Sykes 1993:482-483; Gammon 2003:11-13).³⁶ A century later traditional song can still matter and carry passions, though its impact is as likely to be contentious and divisive as unifying and uplifting. Two examples that have hit the headlines are the singing of a sectarian "folk song," "The Sash My Father Wore," by a Scottish QC in 1999, Donald Findlay, who was consequently forced to resign from his position as Deputy Chairman of Glasgow Rangers Football Club;³⁷ and the report that the singing of "Waltzing Matilda," a bush ballad, at games played by the Australian team during the 2003 Rugby Union World Cup is to be banned by the governing body, the International Rugby Board, on the basis that it is not a national anthem nor is it "deemed to be of cultural significance, such as New Zealand's *haka* and similar war dances by Pacific nations."³⁸ The identity of a group or a nation can easily become bound up with the performance of a certain song, emblematic of their cultural tradition, but such instances of controversy represent the tip of the iceberg in terms of singing activity. In this paper it has been my intention to demonstrate, through two examples, that in England, as elsewhere, there are communities outside the mainstream musical worlds variously termed popular, folk, and art that do care deeply about their singing traditions, but they do so in their own musical spheres that rarely touch or impact upon wider cultural or social movements.

Notes

- 1 An earlier version of this paper was given at the conference, "English Folk Song: Cecil Sharp in Context", Dillington House, Somerset, 20-23 August 2003, jointly organised by the English Folk Dance and Song Society and Folk South West.
- 2 Among the commentators that followed Cecil Sharp's lead in this respect are Lloyd (1967), Howes (1969), and Karpeles (1973); Kennedy (1975) includes just 5 hunting songs out of a total of 360, but no "local" carols. For carols, see also Dearmer (1928), where there is no reference to the tradition, and Routley (1958), where a few "local" tunes are referenced, but only in a nineteenth-century context. However, there are a few exceptions. There is a synopsis of hunting songs in Palmer (1988:186-189). In a discussion of songs of local composition, Ren-

- wick cites hunting songs; see Renwick (1980:119-121). There are also the present author's publications on Christmas carolling, see, for example, Russell (1984, 1987, and 1997).
- 3 Cecil Sharp is credited with recording over 4,900 songs and tunes. His manuscripts are housed in the Archive of Clare College, University of Cambridge, with copies in the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library (English Folk Dance and Song Society), London. See Heaney (2002), Roud, Upton, and Taylor (2003), and Atkinson (2003).
- 4 For an ongoing debate on Sharp's conception of folk song, see Harker (1982), Boyes (1993:66-70), Bearman (2002), and Gammon (2003).
- 5 Founded in 1947 as the International Folk Music Council by Maud Karpeles and others, it changed its name to the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM) in 1981. The UK Chapter of the ICTM changed its name to the British Forum for Ethnomusicology (BFE) in 1995 to avoid confusion with the parent body. The BFE publishes an annual journal—*The British Journal of Ethnomusicology* (1992-2003), *Ethnomusicology Forum* (2004-)—and organises an annual conference.
- 6 *Folk Music Journal*, the principle UK journal in the field, provides evidence for this statement. From 1970 to 1979 only five articles out of forty-one focused on research into contemporary English song tradition. For the period 1980-2000, the count is even lower, just three out of eighty-two.
- 7 Once again the evidence is in *Folk Music Journal*. From 1970 to 2000 out of a total of 123 articles, sixty-six articles were devoted to folksong scholarship and fifty-eight of these were set in a historical frame.
- 8 An exception to this trend, from an anthropological standpoint, is Finnegan (1989).
- 9 For example, in a note appended to Gilchrist (1910:64), Vaughan Williams expressed regret that the singers of Castleton in Derbyshire had "the habit of adding "basses" to their carol-tunes," thereby "emending" the traditional character.
- 10 Version A was recorded at the Black Bull, Ecclesfield, 3 December 2000. The "striker" is Ike Baxter. Version B was recorded at the Huntsman near Holmfirth, 29 December 2000. Will Noble is the soloist.
- 11 First verse and chorus of "The Christmas Goose" recorded at the Royal Hotel, Dungworth, 19 December 1999. See Noble (1992).
- 12 Recorded at the Stanhope Arms, Dunford Bridge, 26 November 1997, sung by Andrew Rogers. I first recorded "Swaledale" sung by Bernard Broadhead in the early 1970s at the Sportsman, Lodge Moor. His brother Albert sang it at the Royal Hotel, Dungworth, in the 1980s and early 1990s, as part of the Christmas repertoire. It has since been sung there by Billy Mills.
- 13 See, for example, Russell (1994).
- 14 "Hail Smiling Morn" was composed by Reginal Spofforth of Southwell, Nottinghamshire (1770-1827) and published in *A Set of Six Glees* (1810), no. 6.
- 15 This statement is based on my fieldwork for my PhD (Russell 1977) and largely refers to the period before 1950. Farmers often kept a barrel of beer for their own refreshment and that of their workers. In the steel trades, manufacturing and grinding, a "pot boy" would be employed to fetch beer for the workers. Colliery villages, such as Thorpe Hesley, were noted for the high number of beer retail outlets they supported—pubs, clubs, and off-licences.

- 16 Barry Bridgewater is featured on Holme Valley Beagles Hunt (1975). For recordings of Will Noble and Barry Bridgewater, see Holme Valley Tradition (1984) and Holme Valley Beagles Hunt (1991).
- 17 For transcriptions of these three carols, see Russell (1994:16-19, 29-31, 36-38).
- 18 See for example, the recording at the Royal Hotel, Dungworth, 19 December 1999. "Cwm Rhondda" was written by J. Hughes (1873-1932), see *The Methodist Hymn-Book with Tunes*, London: Methodist Conference, 1933, no. 615.
- 19 Brindon Addy, recorded at the Huntsman, Holmfirth, 29 December 2002.
- 20 Charlie Woodcock, recorded at the Stanhope Arms, Dunford Bridge, 26 November 1997.
- 21 John Cocking, Holme Valley Beagles 1991.
- 22 Brian and Haydn Thorp, recorded at the Stanhope Arms, Dunford Bridge, 26 November 1997.
- 23 John Haigh, Holme Valley Beagles 1991.
- 24 Charlie Woodcock, recorded at the Stanhope Arms, Dunford Bridge, 26 November 1997.
- 25 The company, Holme Valley Beagles 1991.
- 26 The Licensing Act 2003 received Royal Assent and became law in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland on 10 July 2003.
- 27 I use the word "movement" in preference to "revival," as a more accurate description of what was a culturally transforming social phenomenon (Eyerman and Jamison 1998:6-25).
- 28 "Bright bells, dark beer: After the morning sermon into the 'Black Bull.' In Northern England men and women sing in the pub at Christmas."
- 29 See Village Carols publications at <www.wgma.org.uk/Orgs/VC>. Two examples of television programmes that featured the carolling tradition are: *Chasing Rainbows: Pass It On*, UK Channel 4, 28 September 1986; and *A Song for the Time*, Granada Television, 21 December 1977. Examples of radio programmes include *A People's Carol*, BBC Radio 4, 25 December 1983 and 1984; *The Pub Carols*, BBC Radio 4, 25 December 2002. Workshops were held at Whitby Folk Week in 1997, 1998, and 2003, and at Sidmouth International Folk Festival in 1998, 1999, and 2000.
- 30 See <www.wgma.org.uk/> and <www.wgma.org.uk/Orgs/VC>.
- 31 On the Veteran Tapes recording of Will Noble 1992, there is only one song that alludes to hunting, "The Christmas Goose," but as stated earlier, the allusion is in the chorus only and not in the narrative of the song, which is about a sexual liaison between a commercial traveller and a chambermaid. Veteran market their products to participants in and devotees of the folk movement.
- 32 Barry Bridgewater is featured on Holme Valley Beagles (1975 and 1991), as well as Holme Valley Tradition (1984).
- 33 Interview 30 June 2000.
- 34 This estimate is based on my fieldwork since 1969 and rooted in a survey I conducted of pubs where carols were sung (Russell 1973).
- 35 See "Awards for All: Lottery Grants for Local Groups," www.awardsforall.org.uk/England.
- 36 Vaughan Williams espoused similar ideals. See Vaughan Williams (1987:39).

- 37 See Gillian Harris, *The Times*, 1 June 1999; <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/476302.stm>. See also Cooper (2001).
- 38 AFP Reuters, Thursday 28 August 2003, 4.35 pm, see <http://asia.news.yahoo.com/030828/afp/030828083522top.html>

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Ordering Performance, Leading People: Structuring an English Folk Music Session

Jonathan P. J. Stock

Abstract

English musicians speak of sessions as events of an essentially egalitarian character. While expertise is celebrated within the English tradition, sessions are viewed ideally as meeting places for the like-minded, not sites for musical domination or personal display. This case study of instrumental music making at the Wednesday night sessions of the Red House public house, Sheffield, draws perspectives from the ethnomusicological literature on leadership in performance. After introducing the repertory and performance style of sessions, the article gives an ethnographic account of the interplay of musical authority on several levels: deference is made to particular individuals; shared experience (among regular players) of the session's customary framework provides further order; and players' musical decisions direct yet further interactions. A well ordered performance is finally a multi-level experience that turns as much on matters of musical prestige, authority and expertise as the publicly stated notions of fellowship and equality.

1. Introduction: Ordering Performance

In the present-day English tradition, music events that occur at pubs and folk festivals are known as sessions.¹ Those at pubs generally occur regularly, perhaps weekly, fortnightly or monthly, with the prior agreement of the landlord and possibly through the organisation of a folk music club. Some sessions focus on songs, others on instrumental music (known as tunes), and many flexibly alternate the two following choices made by those present. Instrumental sessions, the subject of this paper, are seen by their participants as both musically diverse and socially egalitarian. At the Red House pub in Sheffield, for instance, Welsh, Scottish, Irish, French, Spanish and other tunes are played alongside English ones and a few classical tunes as well. Meanwhile, new tunes and new versions of established tunes are regularly introduced by long-standing and visiting musicians alike. Some English musicians emphasise this breadth through comparison to Irish instrumental sessions, which are