

Introduction

This is the first of a series of books from Ferret Publications. It contains folk songs from two sources. The first is Songs of the Peasantry of the Weald of Surrey and Sussex arranged by GA Dusart and published privately and anonymously by John Broadwood in 1843. The title of the present book is adapted from song number 5 in this 1843 collection, "A Sweet Country Life." The second source is Sussex Songs: Popular Songs of Sussex arranged by HF Birch Reynardson. This volume of sheet music is undated. It was catalogued by the British Library in 1890, but Lucy Broadwood, John Broadwood's niece, tells us that it was published in 1889.¹ It contains all 16 songs in the 1843 collection, together with 9 songs and 1 dance tune collected later by Lucy Broadwood.

For details of the life and significance of the Rev. John Broadwood (1798-1864) of Lyne in Sussex we are indebted to Stanley Godman, whose findings are freely drawn on here.²

There are a number of testimonies to the importance of Broadwood's collection of 1843. It was, in Margaret Dean Smith's view, "the first... to be made of folksong airs for their own sake." Vaughan Williams' opinion was that Broadwood "is to be honoured in the annals of English folk-song." In 1943, Frank Howes wrote an article in the Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society to "celebrate the centenary of scientific method applied editorially to the oral tradition of English folk-song."³

Broadwood's collection has been highly regarded because, unlike other editors, he meticulously recorded what he actually heard. According to the title page of his book the "old English songs" that it contained were presented "as now sung by the peasantry of the Weald of Surrey and Sussex." They had been "collected by one who has learnt them by hearing them sung every Christmas from early childhood by the country people who go about to the neighbouring houses singing, or 'wassailing' as it is called, at that season." Broadwood added that "the airs are set to music exactly as they are now sung, to rescue them from oblivion and to afford a specimen of genuine old English melody." As for the words, they were "given in their original rough state with an occasional slight alteration to render the sense intelligible."

It was this accurate transcription of the songs that caused Lucy Broadwood to describe her uncle's book as "the first serious collection of English traditional songs that we possess." She continued: "I am told that my uncle had a wonderfully accurate musical ear and voice, and wonderful obstinacy. This latter quality stood him in good stead when

fighting with... (Dusart).. , who undertook to harmonize his collection, but who raised lamentable cries at the flat sevenths and other monstrous intervals which Mr. Broadwood sang, or blew persistently with his flute. 'Musically,' said my uncle, 'they may be quite wrong, but the tunes shall be printed as they were sung to me, and as I sing them to you.'"⁴ A fellow member of the Sussex Archaeological Society testified in 1849 that Broadwood "had the airs set to music exactly as they are now sung, with the true feeling of an archaeologist."

An interesting gloss on this was provided by Frank Howes in the article cited above. Howes gave a musical analysis of the modal nature of the tunes. He was particularly interested in 'The Privateer' (number 7) which he cited as "an instance of a Near Eastern scale." Howes also noted "peculiarities" which "at first struck me as suspicious, and I wondered whether for all his flute-blasting the vicar had got his way with the organist." Howes conclusion, however, was that the seeming inconsistencies were "peculiarities of time and place," and that 'The Privateer' was "a testimony to Mr. Broadwood's insistence on oral transcription."

Copies of Broadwood's original publication are now extremely rare. The British Library and Brighton Public Library each have a one, and there is a third among the collection of Lucy Broadwood's papers in the Surrey Record Office.⁵ A photocopy is held at the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library at Cecil Sharp House.

The 1889 collection was the first publication of Lucy Etheldred Broadwood (1858-1929), a major figure in the folk song revival around the turn of the last century. According to Ralph Vaughan Williams, Lucy Broadwood "inherited her love of folk-song from her uncle."⁶ His 1843 collection, she testified, "led me very early in life into a new and wonderful country in the world of music."⁷ In 1898, Lucy Broadwood was one of the 110 founder members of the Folk Song Society, of which she later became secretary, journal editor and, in the 1920's, president. In 1893 she published, with JA Fuller-Maitland, an influential collection entitled English County Songs. In 1908 there followed English Traditional Songs and Carols, for which she wrote the accompaniments herself. According to one of her obituarists "scarcely a number of the Journal (of the Folk Song Society) has appeared without some valuable contribution from her hand, and many have been almost entirely her own from beginning to end."⁸

Herbert Frederick Birch Reynardson was Lucy Broadwood's cousin.⁹ He is one of the forgotten characters of the first folk music revival. There is no evidence of any previous research into him, and no reference to him in the Biographical Catalogue

at the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library. This is the justification for giving him a fuller treatment here than either John or Lucy Broadwood, even though they were both more important figures.

The records at the General Register Office tell us that Reynardson was born on 6 January 1856 at Adwell, Oxfordshire. His father, Henry, was a barrister, and the maiden name of his mother, Eleanor Dorothea, had been Partridge. He died at Rudge Hill House, Edge, near Stroud, Gloucestershire, on 10 January 1939, aged 83. His wife, Marian L. Birch Reynardson, was older than him. She died in 1936 aged 85.

Reynardson was described on his death certificate as being "of independent means." His estate was valued at just over £50,547.¹⁰ Previously he seems to have worked for the British Museum.¹¹ From 1927 to 1931 the Journal of the Folk Song Society recorded Reynardson in its annual listings of members as living at his Stroud address. After the merger with the Folk Dance Society, however, he appears to have become inactive, and there was no obituary for him in the Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society.

As well as arranging Sussex Songs, Birch Reynardson also composed a number of other songs and piano pieces. These can be found in the British Library Music Collection and among Lucy Broadwood's papers at the Surrey Record Office. Also at the Surrey Record Office is an amusing letter in which Reynardson described his attempts to call on Lucy Broadwood in the face of problems on the Underground. "If I had walked," he concluded, "or even hopped on one leg, I should have got to you much quicker."¹² In addition, there are photographs, including one of Lucy Broadwood with Reynardson's wife, Marian, taken by Herbert at Brighton¹³, and another of Herbert himself, seated at a piano.¹⁴ By 1930, according to his wife, Reynardson was seeking the services of a masseur in France for "aches and pains" in his hips and back.¹⁵

Reynardson's musicianship appears to have been somewhat amateurish. In a letter to Lucy Broadwood dated 3 June 1891 he apologised for a number of consecutive octaves in his piano settings of Sussex Songs, concerning which a "learned German" had taken him to task in a review. "I am very much annoyed that I should have done anything so perfectly idiotic" he wrote.¹⁶

In the Preface to Sussex Songs Reynardson affirmed that Lucy Broadwood, like her uncle before her, had transcribed her collection accurately: "The songs, both words and music, were faithfully written down exactly as they were sung by country people in the Weald of Sussex." This was a guiding principle of Lucy Broadwood throughout her life. The preface to English

County Songs (1893), for example, states that, with one minor exception, "the words have been left absolutely unaltered, and the melodies have in no instance been tampered with."

It would take too much space to try to relate these songs to their variants. For an example of what can be done, however, see Lucy Broadwood's article of 1923, in which she compares some strikingly beautiful versions of 'Rosebuds in June', including the one collected by her uncle (number 4 below).¹⁷

1. Journal of the Folk Song Society 27 (December 1923): 81.
2. Stanley Godman, "John Broadwood: New Light on the Folk-Song Pioneer," the Monthly Musical Record (May-June 1957): 105-8; Stanley Godman, "John Broadwood, the Earliest English Folksong Collector," West Sussex Gazette (30 January 1964). Copies of both articles are available in the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library at Cecil Sharp House.
3. Frank Howes, "A Centenary," Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society 4, no.4 (1943): 157-60.
4. Lucy E. Broadwood, "On the Collecting of English Folk-Song," Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association 31 (March 1905): 89-109. The quotation is from p. 97. For more details see loc. cit. in note 1 above.
5. Surrey Record Office, County Hall, Kingston upon Thames, 2185/LEB/4/8. This copy has a number of annotations on it by Lucy Broadwood.
6. Journal of the English Folk Dance Society 2nd ser. 3 (1930): 61.
7. Lucy Broadwood, loc. cit. in note 4 above.
8. Walter Ford, "Obituary: Lucy Etheldred Broadwood," Journal of the Folk Song Society 33 (December 1929): 168-9.
9. Margaret Dean-Smith (ed.), "Letters to Lucy Broadwood: A Selection from the Broadwood Papers at Cecil Sharp House," The Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song society 9, no.5 (December 1964): 233-268 at p. 235.
10. Calendar of All Grants of Probate and Letters of Administration made in the Probate Registries of the High Court of Justice in England... (etc.) ... His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1939.

11. Margaret Dean Smith, The Broadwood Collection: Report, Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, MPS9.
12. Surrey Record Office, 2185/LEB/1/76.
13. Surrey Record Office, 2185/LEB/9133.
14. Surrey Record Office, 2185/LEB/9136.
15. Surrey Record Office, 218/BMB/4/70(7) DW.
16. Surrey Record Office, 2185/LEB/1/17a-b.
17. "Songs of Country Life and Work", Journal of the Folk Song Society 27 (December 1923): 76-82.