



English  
**Folk**  
DANCE & SONG SOCIETY

Vaughan Williams  
Memorial Library

# BROADSIDE DAY

**Saturday 17 February 2024**  
**Cecil Sharp House**  
2 Regent's Park Road, London NW1



THE FEMALE SAILOR

She served as cook and stevedore in the Adelaide war

# PROGRAMME

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| 9.30am  | <i>Registration</i>   |
| 9.45am  | <i>Welcome</i>  |
| 10.00am | <b>Stephen Fowler</b> — Teaching printmaking and popular print  |
| 10.30am | <b>Juan Gomis</b> — Pliegos de cordel, or Spanish chapbooks   |
| 11.00am | <i>Tea</i>  |
| 11.30am | <b>David Stoker</b> — The Marshall family as publishers of ‘old ballads’ and ‘common songs’                       |
| 12noon  | <b>Martin Graebe</b> — Cards spiritualised: A look into Roud V922   |
| 12.30pm | <b>Marie Hanzelková and Jiří Dufka</b> — The True story of Deck of Cards hit                                      |
| 1.00pm  | <i>Lunch</i>  |
| 2.00pm  | <b>Abi Kingsnorth</b> — The Power of love: Gender nonconformity in broadside ballads                              |
| 2.30pm  | <b>Alex Lyons</b> — Father Christmas the dissident? How Father Christmas developed through cheap print            |
| 3pm     | <b>David Hopkin</b> — The religious broadside singer in France and the Low Countries                              |
| 3.30pm  | <i>Tea</i>  |
| 4.00pm  | <b>Siobhán McElduff</b> — ‘Like a countenance from Mars compounded’: When a goddess routine becomes a god routine |
| 4.30pm  | <b>Simon Rennie</b> — Ten per cent ballads and the ‘Shodeocracy’: Violence and humour                             |
| 5.00pm  | <i>Farewell</i>   |

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**Stephen Fowler**

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## TEACHING PRINTMAKING AND POPULAR PRINT

For the last 5 years I have integrated street literature and printmaking within the teaching of the 1st year print and illustration module at the University of Worcester. The marriage is a fruitful one, students are introduced (via lectures and practical workshops) to the joy of both broadsides and chapbooks from around the world. They learn that eye catching headlines, and ‘fake news’ are nothing new, that sensational ‘click-bate’ pictures have a long history in publishing. Graphic ‘memes’ have also been recontextualised in the past, telling a completely different story to its original intention. Even Spanish broadsides could be a spiritual doorway, a means to pray and send devotional gifts to Catholic saints.

Inspired by contemporary bizarre or/and pun riddled newspaper headlines, students printed large silkscreen and linocut Broad­sides, utilizing both text and image, to illustrate newspaper covers such as ‘Mermaid Found in Local Spa’ and ‘Gnomes Return to Destroy Village’. Later in the module they are briefed to design, illustrate and print an edition of either chapbooks or broadsides telling a ‘Worcester Story’ from the past or present day, be they the city’s famous sons and daughters (Edward Elgar, Philip Henry Goose) mysteries (Who Put Witch Elm, Worcester Werewolf), inventions and industries (Worcestershire Sauce, gloves). They used an array of processes including silkscreen, rubber stamp and collagraph to create their limited edition prints. I am to teach my students an appreciation and understanding of the history and relevance of popular print, printmaking skills and how to communicate and engage an audience via the inspiration of these two important subjects.

*Stephen Fowler was born in Bristol and grew up in Cornwall, before leaving to study at Harrow School of Art, and Central Saint Martins in London. In 2021 Fowler graduated from UWE’s Multi-Disciplinary Printmaking MA, and received the Rebecca Smith Memorial Award in recognition for his practice based research into Tetra Pak Collagraph, Kitchen Sink Litho and Rubber Stamping. Fowler has exhibited internationally at Tate Modern, Minnesota Centre for Book Arts, and White Columns New York. He is a senior lecturer in illustration at the University of Worcester and teaches printmaking at San Francisco Centre for the Book, Spike Print Studio, KKV Grafik, Bath Spa University, and Centre for Print Research – University of the West of England.*

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**Juan Gomis**

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## PLIEGOS DE CORDEL, OR SPANISH CHAPBOOKS

This paper aims to explore the main characteristics of the so called ‘literatura de cordel’, Spanish street literature developed since the arrival of the printing press to the Iberian Peninsula. The analysis will focus on the different subgenres composing this heterogeneous popular corpus, its continuities and changes along the centuries, and the contrasts and similarities with English broadside ballads and chapbooks.

*Juan Gomis is professor at the University of Valencia. His research focuses on popular print culture in Early Modern Europe. He has studied one of the most spread popular genres in Spain, the so-called ‘Literatura de Cordel’, from multiple perspectives: cultural representations (religious, political, gender), material aspects of the printings (the ‘pliegos sueltos’), production and dissemination, and usages and readers. He has also made significant contributions in order to understand this phenomenon from a transnational, European perspective.*

## CARDS SPIRITUALISED: A LOOK INTO ROUD V922

In my modest collection of broadsides, I have a copy of ‘The Perpetual Almanack’ (Roud V922) published by Catnach. I knew that this narrative item was the basis of the 1959 recording, ‘The Deck of Cards’, by Wink Martindale, but I wanted to know more about how it made its way to him, where it came from, and where else it had got to. In this presentation I will share my (rather surprising) discoveries.

*Martin Graebe is an independent researcher and writer about traditional song and song collectors. His book about the antiquarian and folk song collector Sabine Baring-Gould, published in 2017, won the Katharine Briggs Prize of the Folklore Society, and the W G Hoskins Prize of the Devon History Society. His recent book is ‘The Forgotten Songs of the Upper Thames’ (2021) is about the song collection made by Alfred Williams in the Upper Thames Valley and was a runner-up for the Katharine Briggs Prize in 2022. He has given talks on aspects of traditional folk song, to a wide range of audiences around the world. He and his wife, Shan, perform traditional songs together in harmony.*

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**Marie Hanzelková and Jiří Dufka**

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## TRUE STORY OF DECK OF CARDS HIT

In 1948 a country singer T. Texas Tyler recorded ‘The Deck of Cards’, a spoken word hit which tells the story of a World War II soldier who is dealing cards in a church and for which he is brought to the marshall to be punished. However, he defends himself and proves that the cards serve as his prayer book, Bible and calendar.

This hit has received many other revivals, for example in connection with the Vietnam War, and judging by the response on YouTube, it still seems to be finding an audience. The well-known song Deck of Cards began to be spread in the Czech territories since the 1970s, when a successful cover version made it famous. Its popularity is evidenced by the fact that the song has spread to the scout songbooks and that it has received several parodies.

Nevertheless, if we try to look for the roots of this hit, we find that it was originally a chapbook (the earliest version is documented from the second half of the 18th century from Wales) and that there can be found numerous language variants of the chapbook from the first half of the 19th century in French, English, Swedish, Danish, German, Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Icelandic – and even Czech.

In this paper we will present the story of the text about the soldier and the cards in a global and local context. In the local aspect we will focus on the preserved Czech and German versions of the chapbook and analyse them in terms of structure, content (e.g. religious motifs), form and materiality. Special attention will be paid to the reception of the chapbook up to the present, including false identification of the story with a ‘real’ character and parodies. Deck of Cards chapbook we see as a typical example of intercultural exchange and a proof of ‘incompleteness’ of popular literature (FISKE), for which openness to further re-readings and re-interpretations is typical.

*Marie Hanzelková is Assistant Professor in the Department of Czech Literature, Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University, Czech Republic, [phil.muni.cz/en/about-us/faculty-staff/13963-marie-hanzelkova](http://phil.muni.cz/en/about-us/faculty-staff/13963-marie-hanzelkova). Hanzelková has published several articles about Czech hymn books from the sixteenth century and Czech pilgrimage broadside ballads (e.g., ‘Turning’ of Czech Pilgrimage Broadside Ballads’ [2021]; ‘Broadside Ballads and Religious Pilgrimage Songs: The Virgin Mary of Vranov’ [2022]). She has co-edited the large collection of essays, ‘Czech Broadside Ballads as Text, Art, and Song in Popular Culture, c. 1600–1900’ [2022] and edited a special issue of scholarly journal ‘Bohemica litteraria, Czech broadside ballads in the international context’ [2023]. [marie.hanzelkova@phil.muni.cz](mailto:marie.hanzelkova@phil.muni.cz).*

*Jiří Dufka is Head of Manuscripts and Early Printed Books Department at the Moravian Library in Brno ([mzk.cz/en/study-rooms/manuscripts-and-early-printed-books](http://mzk.cz/en/study-rooms/manuscripts-and-early-printed-books)). Dufka has published papers on the history of printshops and on the materiality, collecting and cataloguing of old printings (e.g. ‘Broadside Ballads as Artefacts’ [2022]) and edited a monograph (in Czech): ‘Czech Chapbooks: Font, Illustration, Décor’. [jiri.dufka@mzk.cz](mailto:jiri.dufka@mzk.cz).*

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**David Hopkin**

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## THE RELIGIOUS BROADSIDE SINGER IN FRANCE AND THE LOW COUNTRIES

At last year's Broadside Day, colleagues from Prague gave a presentation about Czech broadsides. It seemed that the audience was quite surprised that the content of Czech broadsides was predominantly religious. However, religious broadsides made up a very substantial proportion of the repertoire in other Catholic countries, even in the nineteenth century. In France and the Catholic low countries, religious singers formed a distinct subset within the overall array of street characters, with their own calendar of fairs and pilgrimages to attend. Although pedlars could shift from religious to secular themes depending on season and market, as a rule they tended to specialise, because each had their own, distinctive accoutrements and public persona. Religious singers travelled with a box displaying a saint, or a canvas roll narrating a religious story; in addition to song texts they sold holy images, medals, rosaries and other religious trinkets that gained in spiritual power because of their proximity to that saint or story. The songs spread by such singers were an important contribution to popular religion. They helped establish popular pilgrimages, folk saints and miracle narratives which were at best tolerated, and sometimes actively condemned, by the ecclesiastical authorities. As I will show, some songs did indeed border on heresy.

*David Hopkin is Professor of European Social History at the University of Oxford. He is also the current President of the Folklore Society.*

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**Abi Kingsnorth**

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## THE POWER OF LOVE: GENDER NONCONFORMITY IN BROADSIDE BALLADS

Typically, studies of ballads have examined gender as two distinct categories, often focusing on the punishment of women who overstep gender boundaries. Topics include violence against insubordinate wives, persecution of so-called witches, and condemning wretches and prostitutes. Though important cases, these works reinforce the idea of two separate spheres of activity for men and women emerging at this time. This oversimplifies the boundaries of gender developing in the early modern era and fails to show any grey area between these two categories, which many men and women lived and worked in. A recent ballad study from Mazzola suggests instead that ballads 'serve the public by exposing the blind spot of normative perception' (Mazzola, 2023, 91).

Romance is the most common theme in broadside ballads and can help tell us a great deal about gender relations in the early modern period. So far, this project has uncovered about 40 romantically themed ballads where gender norms are broken and are not only met with violence and persecution, but a kind of acceptance. This paper will focus on just a few of these ballads, such as 'The Famous Flower of Serving-Men', and 'The Wandring Virgin', which sympathise with and/or celebrate female transgressors.

Additionally, there is a similar number of ballads, such as 'Advice to Batchelors', that address the proper conduct for women and reinforce gender norms. Although these ballads highlight how women's nonconformity is destructive, they indicate ways that women could hold power over their husbands and agency over their lives outside of their homes. This paper will therefore evaluate a few of these prescriptive ballads alongside the romantic examples to demonstrate that gender roles may not have been as strict as previously imagined, thus, helping to develop a more comprehensive discussion about gender in the early modern period.

*Abi Kingsnorth is a Ph.D. candidate in early modern and digital history at Canterbury Christ Church University. Their current research focuses on British broadside ballads, using traditional source analysis alongside digital approaches to investigate social patterns and attitudes toward gender nonconformity in early modern society.*

## FATHER CHRISTMAS THE DISSIDENT? HOW FATHER CHRISTMAS DEVELOPED THROUGH CHEAP PRINT

The breakdown of censorship and explosion in publishing at the start of the Civil War is well known, but the story of how this free flow of literature allowed the existing sparse allegorical character of Father Christmas to be fleshed out into a fully formed figure is less well known. As is the fact that he was developed as a political figure and used to criticise the Christmas ban of the 1640s and 50s. Pamphlets and broadsheets could be hugely powerful in stirring dissent. Father Christmas, or Old Christmas, as he was usually known, was used in pamphlets and broadside ballads to appeal to a popular audience. The author responsible for the politicisation of Old Christmas, John Taylor, the ‘water-poet’, was highly skilled at presenting Royalist arguments in this way. Other authors added to that body of work, forming a loose canon of work. Puritans demonised Christmas, representing it as simultaneously pagan, catholic, perverse and delinquent, so Royalist writers walked a tightrope to redefine the representation of Christmas as anti-puritan and anti-Catholic. And as a supporter of moderate festivities, but not of moral decline; associating him heavily with the giving of alms and the relief of the poor. Today we know Father Christmas as a jolly, patrician figure, but he should be presented in his many earlier forms as well; a wily dissident, a subversive radical, an explicit Royalist, a proto-anti-capitalist, a vulnerable and neglected gentleman, and a controversial outlaw.

*Alex Lyons is an MRes student at Birkbeck College. Her research focusses on popular and festive cultures during the War of the Three Kingdoms and Interregnum period, specifically looking at the development of Father Christmas and what it can tell us about politics, religion and customs of people in that period. Alex is devoted to spreading the message that Father Christmas is not Santa Claus and that he is not based on St Nicholas, Odin, Saturn or the Green Man. alyons04@student.bbk.ac.uk.*

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**Siobhán McElduff**

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## ‘LIKE A COUNTENANCE FROM MARS COMPOUNDED’: WHEN A GODDESS ROUTINE BECOMES A GOD ROUTINE

The ‘goddess routine’ is a (relatively) familiar feature of many Irish ballads of the 18th and 19th centuries; derived ultimately from the native Irish *aisling*, it involves a male narrator wooing or praising his beloved by comparing her to an extensive array of Greek and Roman goddesses and heroines (sometimes of quite remarkable obscurity). Less well-known are those ballads where a female narrator praises her beloved by comparing him to a range of classical figures from Apollo to Hercules, as in ‘Boughil na groug a Dhowna’ / ‘The Boy with the Brown Hair’ and ‘The Banks of Claudy’. This paper will discuss this adaptation of the goddess routine as well as female responses in goddess routines, and what they can tell us about the transformation of the *aisling* in English language and macaronic Irish ballads, gender expectations, and the female narrative voice in Irish ballads.

*Siobhán McElduff is an Associate Professor of Classics at the University of British Columbia, and currently an M. Phil student in Digital Humanities at Trinity College, Dublin. She is the author of ‘Roman Theories of Translation’, editor of Translation and a translator of Cicero for Penguin Classics. She is currently finishing a monograph on cheap literature, classical reception and the labouring classes of Ireland, Scotland, and England in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries.*

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**Simon Rennie**

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## TEN PER CENT BALLADS AND THE ‘SHODEOCRACY’: VIOLENCE AND HUMOUR

On September 15th 1853 the Preston Masters’ Association gave one month’s notice before beginning a lockout of striking operatives from the cotton mills they owned. As noted at the time, this retaliation was an exercise in mastery, but its political function was to break the spirit of workers who had been striking for an increase of ten percent in their wages. This article is based on ‘ten per cent’ ballads contained in scrapbooks held in Lancashire Archives which represent an important literary context to the Preston Lockouts of 1853–54. These songs, composed largely by striking workers and sung at strike meetings, were unfiltered and unedited texts printed on broadsheets and sold for a penny each to support increasingly impoverished textile workers. They contained a remarkable mixture of broad humour and violent threat, often directed at named mill owners. Unsurprisingly, Preston magistrates banned the singing of the ballads on the streets of the town. This paper will examine the use of humour to offset the violent threats. It will also consider the extent to which the violence contained in the songs served a cathartic social function, as suggested in relation to their precursor 1840s Chartist songs by Brian Maidment in ‘The Poorhouse Fugitives’ (1987).

*Simon Rennie is Associate Professor of Victorian Poetry at the University of Exeter. He is the author of many works on working-class nineteenth-century poetry and was the Principal Investigator on the team which created the Poetry of the Lancashire Cotton Famine 1861-65 database. His collaboration with the traditional music group Faustus culminated in the Cotton Lords EP, and he is currently developing a project with Saul Rose to engage a range of musicians in setting Victorian local newspaper poetry.*

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**David Stoker**

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## THE MARSHALL FAMILY AS PUBLISHERS OF ‘OLD BALLADS’ AND ‘COMMON SONGS’

Richard Marshall and later his son John (successors to Dicey & Co.), are known as the publishers of chapbook histories, popular prints and children’s books during the last third of the 18th century. However, they also continued publishing new editions of the ‘old ballads’ formerly produced by the Diceys and Richard Marshall introduced a new chapbook format of ‘collections’ (often referred to as ‘songsters’) to the Dicey-Marshall catalogue of 1764. John Marshall was responsible for producing large numbers of slip songs between 1780 and 1800, many survivors of which are recorded on ESTC and the Bodleian Ballads, although his name is only found on a handful of them. The speaker has developed a technique for analysing the shape, orientation, location and content of the woodcuts used on late 18th century slip songs which has enabled him to identify more than 500 of them which come from Marshall’s press.

*David Stoker is a retired academic who has studied the Dicey-Marshall publishing enterprise over the last decade.*

# LIBRARY LECTURES, SPRING 2024

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## **SHAPING AND CONTROLLING TRADITION: CHARLES VILLIERS STANFORD'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PRESERVATION AND REWORKING OF FOLK MELODIES**

BY ADÈLE COMMINS

Tuesday 12 March ↻7.30pm ↻online, via Zoom

Irish-born composer Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924) was selected as one of the vice-presidents of the English Folk Song Society in 1898. He was interested in folk music and, while some criticised Stanford for not collecting folk melodies in the field, as an editor of several collectors he demonstrated an understanding of the characteristics of the repertoire. Prior to the founding of the Folk-Song Society, Stanford had published three collections of Irish folk melodies. Although Cecil Sharp disagreed with Stanford's selection of material, *The National Song Book* was an important work in the education of young people in England.

In the centenary of his death, this paper highlights the use of folk melodies in Stanford's compositions and his contribution to debates on folk music in education at the turn of the twentieth century.

*Musicologist Dr Adèle Commins is Head of Department of Creative Arts, Media and Music at Dundalk Institute of Technology. Her main research interests lie in nineteenth and twentieth century English and Irish music.*

## **SEEING MUSIC: GEORGE SCHARF AND THE STREET MUSICIANS OF LONDON**

BY NIGEL TALLIS

Tuesday 16 April ↻7.30pm ↻online, via Zoom

George Scharf (1788–1860) was a Bavarian artist displaced by the Napoleonic Wars. After service in the British army he finally settled in London. As an outsider, and a keen observer of the ordinary, he noted and sketched daily life in all its aspects, including that which British artists might have thought mundane or undeserving of comment. Scharf sketched the musicians, the dancers – and their audiences – even noting information on what was sung and the broadside songs on sale. Crucially, these are working, eye-witness sketches – not finished or published artwork adapted or re-worked to be more commercial and to suit popular taste.

This talk will look at Scharf's work – to show both the music and dance he depicts in Georgian London's streets, and also the way it has helped to reveal the likely pre-modern origins of the May Day figure of 'Jack-in-the-Green' and other traditional beasts of English folk culture.

*Nigel Tallis is a curator, historian and archaeologist, and a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. He has published widely in archaeology and social history, curated a number of international exhibitions, and is an advisor on historical subjects for TV and film.*

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