



Gold Badge Citation: Pete and Sue Coe

To catalogue Pete and Sue's achievements in full would take a thesis so here, we can only give a flavour of what they have put into the folk scene.

Susan Thomas from the Welsh Valleys enjoyed folk music in her university days and after a long absence from the scene found her way back to the South Wales folk clubs, Sidmouth festival and the world of traditional folk music and dance. It was at Sidmouth in 1985 that she met Pete Coe and ultimately moved to Yorkshire, swapping one green valley for another – the start of long and fruitful partnerships.

To start Pete's story we have to go back to his college days in Cheltenham where he organised the college folk club and sang as one of the residents at the club organised by The Songwainers. Guests such as The Stewarts of Blair, the McPeake Family, Tim Lyons, Ray Fisher and many more, stimulated his interest in traditional music. After qualifying it was up to Birmingham where he helped run the folk song club with, amongst others, Chris Coe with whom he formed a duo. Their first album *Open the Door and Let Us In* – was recorded by Bill Leader at Cecil Sharp House.

The following years saw them enter into a hectic professional schedule which included the album *Out of Season, Out of Rhyme* in 1976, tours, radio shows and in 1978, albums with both The New Victory Band, and Bandoggs with Tony Rose and Nic Jones. A move to Yorkshire saw the establishment of a strong folk community in the Ryburn Valley.

It was into this folk community that Sue was to be catapulted when she moved up to be with Pete in 1985. Her initial task was sound mixing person for Red Shift, the band Pete put together as a vehicle for songs of social comment. The purchase of 103, Oldham Rd with its shop space provided a base for a new project, initially (and rather dryly) called The Ryburn Valley Community Music Project, the thing we now call Ryburn 3 Step – a project conceived by Pete. Sue provided much of the huge administrative effort that underpinned the project, applying for funding, preparing reports and attending meetings.

Needing to make her own creative stamp amongst existing artists she started Appalachian dancing. With coaching from top American dancer Ira Bernstein she not only became a dancer but also a dance teacher.

The later formation of a Longsword side gave opportunity for research, development and the inclusion of a junior side provided a link to local schools.

Pete, as well as developing a wide range of traditional songs for performance, has had an illustrious song writing career with many songs covered by other artists. Such is his skill that 'Joseph Baker' is still to be found on YouTube described as a traditional ballad, due to its mis- representation in an influential song book. His collecting of a single verse of *Marching Down to Rochester* with its *Waltzing Matilda* tune, and its subsequent expansion to a full song has made him the focus of attention by various researchers in search of the roots of the famous Australian song. He's also done the odd bit of field recording including a traveler family, the Leggs, in Devon, early on there was Caleb Walker of Manley Morris and in the north, fiddler Willy Taylor.

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More recently Pete has kept himself busy with a project using the Frank Kidson Collection – with Alice Jones, and also teaching at Huddersfield University where he has been assisting the next generation of folk musicians to find their vocal and instrumental feet. His seasonal Long Company mummings will no doubt be hitting the streets in the New Year, not that anybody knows anything about them – who they are or where they come from. There's also a new CD in preparation.

And of course Sue's still busy. Ravenscliffe Special Needs school contacted Sue re using traditional social dance for wheel chair users. The partnership has been wondrous. Sue has designed and restructured dances and methods of training mobile students to act as Pushers – now called Buddies. The waiting list to train as a Buddy is long and the inclusion of the wheelchair dances teams has enriched the atmosphere of the school as a whole and given extra confidence to the students.

Sue and Julia have presented their important development work to the EFDSS Education Strategy and the interest from schools is encouraging. As ever, inclusion is at the forefront of the work and our special, traditional music and dance gives us the means - show us how.

Singer, dancer, innovators, composer, amateurs, educators, administrators, the list goes on.

Citation prepared and delivered by Jonny Adams and Chris Coe as an integrated piece. Edited by Jonny Adams for inclusion in EDS magazine.

Biographies of citation readers:

*Chris Coe and Johnny Adams, long standing contributors to the folk scene, are along with Pete and Sue, founder members of **Ryburn 3 Step**. As Pete's former spouse, Chris worked with him as a duo and as part of **Bandoggs** (with Nic Jones and Tony Rose), and **Elliott and Coe** (with Derek and Dorothy Elliott). Johnny and Chris were both with Pete in **The New Victory Band** and **Red Shift** and have worked closely with both Pete and Sue on many music and dance projects in recent years.*