

THE  
SONG COLLECTORS  
COLLECTIVE

SCC Gathering 2016 - Program

26th November 10am - 4pm (registration 9.45am)  
St Mark's Church, Colvestone Crescent, Dalston, London E8 2LJ  
#SCCGathering2016

## SCHEDULE

	The Paterson Room	Main Hall
<b>9.45</b>	Registration	
<b>10.00</b>	Opening Talk	
<b>10.30</b>	Shzr Ee Tan: Who owns culture(s)?	Paul Wilson: Is Devon Singing?
<b>11.30</b>	Sarah Edwards: When I went Walkabout	Doc Rowe: Twenty-first century technology
<b>12.10</b>	Lucy Wright: Lessons from the Digital Folk	
<b>12.30</b>	Lunch Break	<b>The Vestry</b>
<b>13.30</b>	Angela Impey: From the struggle for citizenship to the fragmentation of justice	Hugh Lupton: Song-Speak
<b>14.30</b>	Introducing the Pathway Online Course with Dr Duncan Williams	
<b>15.00</b>	Panel Discussion: Song Collecting Here and Now	
<b>15.45</b>	Closing Words	

## ABSTRACTS

### **Hugh Lupton** – Song-Speak: A storyteller's approach to the ballads

It was the ballads that were the starting point in Hugh Lupton's storytelling career. In his late teens and early twenties he was obsessed by them. When he started telling stories they were always at the back of his mind. They have been a life-long guide, pointing towards a precision in language, and exploring the interface between the uttered and the sung word. They are the relics of a great native epic sung/spoken

tradition: Beowulf, Gawain and the Green Knight, The Four Branches of the Mabinogion, would all originally have been sung.

In the 1980s Hugh met and made friends with Duncan Williamson, the Scottish traveller storyteller and singer. Duncan embodied a tradition where the narrative of a song was always pushed to the foreground. The melody served the story. He became a mentor. More recently, in his collaborations with Chris Wood, Hugh has started to compose ballads himself, riffing on ancient motifs.

In this talk Hugh will speak about the ballad as narrative and will intersperse his reflections with some of his recordings of Duncan Williamson, and with ballads of his own, both traditional and self-written.

**Dr Angela Impey**, SOAS, University of London – From the struggle for citizenship to the fragmentation of justice: Reflections on the place of Dinka songs in South Sudan's Transitional Justice Process

South Sudan is the youngest country in Africa, having only achieved its independence in 2011 following half a century of almost continuous civil war with (the previously north) Sudan. Sadly, in 2013, the country was plunged back into local civil war, and much of the population is now implicated in what is effectively a longstanding power struggle between government elites.

This presentation will make a case for the role of Dinka ox-songs as individual public testimonies about war, peace and nation-building, and argue for the consideration of performance in the fashioning of a locally apposite transformative justice process. However, while ox-songs recount individual, clan or community memories within the context of local culturally legitimate expressive regimes in Dinka society, they equally reveal potentially incompatible rejoinders to truth and forgiveness across South Sudan's many ethnicities, pointing to the necessity for hybrid justice frameworks that accommodate localized truth-telling protocols and reparative outcomes.

**Doc Rowe** – Twenty-first century technology: The tools, tyranny and tributes

Archivist Doc Rowe will discuss the prospects and perils for oral traditions in the information age drawing on his extensive archive and experience documenting English traditions.

**Dr Shzr Ee Tan**, Royal Holloway, University of London – Who owns culture(s)?: Appropriation, self- exoticisation and creativity at work when folksong becomes a commodity

Can culture be owned - and if so, by whom? What can we claim on its behalf when it is il/legally sampled or appropriated with/out permission? (How) can entire communities be compensated, monetarily or otherwise, for cultural borrowing - if not for appropriation? Who has the right to appropriate culture? This talk tells the story of how the lives and folksong practices of individual singers and several villages in aboriginal Taiwan have changed over the past 20 years even as entire communities in Taiwan march into the digital age, following the landmark copyright lawsuit involving pop group Enigma's allegedly unauthorized sampling and appropriation of indigenous Amis song in 1993. More than 20 years on, ripple effects of the case continue to be felt.

**Paul Wilson**, Wren Music – Is Devon singing? A talk about folksong collectors and music educators

This is a talk where the idea of simply collecting songs collides creatively with that of educating and stimulating music work in communities. Paul will track his personal pathway from beginning systematic folk song collecting in 1973 in Devon and still continuing. He will reflect on the role and stance of the collector as evidenced by his own changes in perspective over the years - from early somewhat 'one-dimensional' work to a more socially engaged perspective developed through working with Marilyn Tucker. He will play beautiful recordings from Devon traditional singers, including songs from traveller families and will also sing a couple of live examples.

The whole talk will be given context by referring to more historical and traditional approaches that have influenced the area and the national perspective. For example, he will outline the work of Baring Gould and his influence alongside other early collectors. He will take an approach to Baring Gould and Cecil Sharp as a critical friend and discuss the huge influence books like Folk Songs For Schools has had on the currently collectable folk song repertoire.

**Sarah Edwards**, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew – When I went Walkabout: Collecting plant knowledge with the Songman

Ethnobotany can be defined as the study of the interaction between people and plants as mediated through culture. It includes understanding how different peoples categorise plants, and how plants are used in daily life. While the link between ethnobotany and song collecting may not at first seem obvious, there are a number of parallels. These include the shared roles in facilitating intergenerational transmission of traditional knowledge, whether herbal lore or songs, that may be disappearing due to major sociocultural changes. Paramount is respecting the traditional knowledge custodians, who often come from marginalised societies that may historically have faced exploitation by outsiders.

In this talk Sarah will draw on personal experiences working as an ethnobotanist in a remote Aboriginal community on Cape York, Australia. She will also discuss the ethical, moral and legal issues that ethnobotanists and song collectors both have to navigate.

**Dr Lucy Wright**, University of Sheffield – Lessons from the Digital Folk?

Contemporary folk arts practitioners make regular use of a range of social media networks and resources when learning and reinterpreting 'traditional' materials. Specialist interest groups on generic social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram function in conjunction with dedicated folk arts discussion boards, to enable folk participants to share information, ask questions and search informal archives, created cumulatively by contributors.

Many folk arts participants report little perceived conflict in the act of learning and sharing traditional tunes and songs online, frequently referencing digitally-mediated methods as well as face-to-face learning, undertaken at folk events or under the tutelage of a mentor. However, the folk movement is also strongly informed and underpinned by the concept of the oral tradition, and the discursive figure of the

'tradition bearer'—whose repertoire has been learned without the aid of commercial and print media—continues to be highly prized.

This presentation draws on findings from the Digital Folk project at the University of Sheffield, and explores how digital technologies have come to be increasingly implicated in folk collecting, also reflecting on the impact of this development upon transmission of musical knowledge within an historically archivist genre.

## EVENT DETAILS

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Saturday 26th November  
10am - 4.30pm (registration 9.45am)  
St Mark's Church, Colvestone Crescent, Dalston, London E8 2LJ

(Nearest stations Dalston Kingsland & Dalston Junction)

### LINKS

<http://songcollectors.org>  
<http://thenestcollective.co.uk/shows/song-collectors-collective/>  
@SongCollectors  
#SCCGathering2016

TICKETS £15 (£12.50 Students & Concessions)  
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/song-collectors-collective-gathering-2016-tickets-26946260992>

### LIVE BROADCAST

SOAS Radio 10am - 4pm  
<http://mixlr.com/soas-radio/>

## INFO

The **Song Collectors Collective** is a united community of collectors, editors, archivists, academics and enthusiasts all supporting and empowering each other to fulfil the aims of the group, to engage, record, share and empower oral performance traditions here in the UK and Ireland and beyond.

Our new online course in song collecting called **Pathway** is launching in 2017. This project will train participants in tasks including: researching, recording, indexing, editing, archiving and the online publishing of songs.

To get involved with the community, the archive, fieldwork or to register your interest in the Pathway project, email us on: [songcollectorscollective@gmail.com](mailto:songcollectorscollective@gmail.com)