

100 Years of the Folk Revival

The Club will be producing a unique international conference celebrating *100 Years of the Folk Revival* on the last weekend of March, 1999. This event will be part of our 2nd annual Education Festival. So in addition to the conference, there will be a wide range of classes in singing, instruments, and a variety of workshops in aspects of various traditions. Watch next month's Newsletter for much more detail on the offerings at the Education Festival.

The "100 Years" dating is from two events: First, the founding of the English Folk Song Society in 1898 and the publication of its first journal. This first edition contained songs collected in Sussex, England by Kate Lee from Bob Copper's grandfather and great-uncle. Bob Copper and the Coppers of the next generation will be presenting at the conference and singing at the Friday concert. Second, the famous "Boxing Day Incident" of 1899 where Cecil Sharp stumbled on to the Headington Quarry Morris Dancers. This got Sharp involved in collecting and disseminating the traditional songs and dances that the educated classes did not know they had. Sharp was the first major collector of folk songs and dances, primarily in Britain but also in the U.S. where he collected in 1916 and 1918. He was the first President of the EFDSS, and is responsible for the founding of our original parent organization, CDSS, as well. The modern folk revival has its roots in this period. So the 1998-99 year seems to be the time to look back, look at where we are, and look forward.

CDSS will be cooperating fully in the production of the event, and Director Brad Foster will be presenting a talk and calling for the gala Saturday dance. The North American Folk Alliance will also be cooperating and supporting the event, and Country Dance, New York (CD*NY) will be handling the Saturday dance.

Other speakers at the conference will include our own Jack Langstaff, who was at Pinewoods back in the mid-1930's, started Folk Music Week in 1956 and was instrumental in the founding of the Club in 1965. Jack, along with Peter Kennedy and Pete Seeger, is among our most important living links to the first generation of the revival. Interestingly there is a wonderful connection to be remade here. Jack and Bob Copper both sang on the program at Cecil Sharp House in 1958, celebrating the 60th Jubilee of the English Folk Song Society. They will meet again, for the first time since, for the 100th anniversary at this conference. Jack also has a copy of the first journal of the Folk Song Society with the songs collected from Bob's forbears. Jack's father collected all the volumes of the Folk Song Society Journal. He has as well Sharp's own copy of the first edition of the English Folk Songs. Both will be on display at the conference.

Phyllis Barney, Director of the North American Folk Alliance, will speak. Tony Barrand will speak on Morris and Sword Dancing in North America, and he and John Roberts will participate in the Friday night concert. Peter Kennedy, one of the most famous folk song and dance collectors in the world will be present. Son of Sharp's successor, Douglas Kennedy, and nephew of the great collector Maud Karpeles, Peter was at Pinewoods before it was Pinewoods. We expect Malcolm Taylor, librarian at Cecil Sharp House to participate, also Roy Harris, one of the fixtures of the English song revival over the last 40 years, and many others to be confirmed over the next few weeks.

There will be talks, including music and film, on every aspect of the revival and its interaction with the living traditions in song and dance, a festival concert Friday night and a gala dance Saturday night. Local Morris and Sword teams will perform, and there will be the chance for interaction with people centrally involved in the preserving and continuing of the traditional forms from Britain, Canada and

the U.S. The conference will begin with a keynote address, speaker to be announced, Friday afternoon at 4:00, and continue through Sunday afternoon. The classes and workshops for the festival will be throughout the day Saturday and Sunday. It should be a truly memorable event, so mark your calendars.

Proposals for talks are welcome from others. Information on proposing a paper can be obtained from Jerry Epstein at the address below. Full details on registering for the conference or for any of the classes and workshops will be available soon, and a full program and registration form should be in the January Newsletter. For further information, contact: *Jerry Epstein, 34-13 87th Street, Jackson Heights, NY 11372, Phone: (Home & Fax) (718) 429-3437. E-Mail: jerepst@worldnet.att.net*