

Where's that tune?

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Discusses features of indexes to collections of traditional music, considering specific difficulties that may be encountered by indexers and users.

An interest in English traditional music led me to look at some of the types of indexes which appear in collections of traditional music. I also considered the problems which might be encountered by indexers and users of such works. Most of the books discussed here (a random selection from my own collection) are modestly produced or self published, and mainly written, edited and published by one person. I would guess that the indexes are also produced by the authors, although in recent years specialist music publishers have emerged. My comments are not intended as criticism of the authors, who are generally dedicated musicians devoting their time and often their own money to the promotion of traditional music.

Although there are older manuscript collections of tunes—one famous example being the manuscript books of Thomas Hardy's father and grandfather in Dorchester—most publishing of English traditional music dates from the latter part of the nineteenth century. Before then the tunes were in common currency and generally learned by ear by those who played them—the common people—and were probably beneath the notice of the more 'educated' classes. However, this changed when collectors such as Cecil Sharp realized that the English musical tradition was on the point of extinction and started recording the songs, music and dances.

The early collectors tended to concentrate on the songs rather than the singers, a trend which has been reversed in recent years. Individual singers and musicians now receive more attention since collectors have come to recognise that the context and performance of a song are as important as the basic notation.

The key signatures most frequently encountered in English traditional music are: (a) 2/2, 2/4, 4/4; (b) 3/4 and (c) 6/8 and 9/8. Time signatures in (a) are more popularly known as reels, marches, rants, polkas and hornpipes. Hornpipes are now always in 4/4 time although until the seventeenth century they were generally in 3/2 time. They can have either a dotted or undotted rhythm; the dotted rhythm is typical of North-East England, while undotted hornpipes are popular in the West Country. The 3/4 time signature is the waltz and the 6/8 and 9/8 time signatures are both

jigs, with the latter commonly referred to as a slip jig—very common in Irish music.

As the tunes are a legacy of an old tradition, there are often slightly different versions of the same tune with the same or different names in different parts of the country. Some tunes may not be 'traditional' in the accepted sense since they are written by a known person, for example by James Hill of Tyneside in the nineteenth century or by Bob Cann from Dartmoor until his death in 1990; and, of course, people are still writing their own tunes today or borrowing them from more commercial music sources. Since they are written in the traditional idiom they are soon part of the main body of work.

Many of the more recent published collections of tunes include introductory text, bibliographies, discographies, photographs and drawings, but the indexes invariably deal with titles of tunes only. There seem to be two main reasons for this: the books are often produced on a small budget, and they are aimed at *musicians* who generally just want to find a specific tune. This leaves the text and other matter such as photographs unindexed.

Special features of indexes to traditional music

Indexes of tunes have other features which set them aside from other types of index:

1. There is usually only one locator per entry
2. There is no need for any method of distinguishing between major and minor references
3. There are normally no cross-references—alternative titles appear in a separate entry with a locator.

Specific difficulties which may be encountered include the following.

Names and filing order

Only one element from a title is indexed. This may cause difficulties with the names in tunes such as 'Sir Roger de Coverley' or 'Miss Ward's reel', which usually appear under the letters S and M respectively.

In most cases the filing order is letter by letter—most of the indexes seem to have been completed

without reference to the British Standards! Sometimes the index is in page order rather than alphabetical order so that it is as easy to skim through the book as use the index. Definite and indefinite articles are sometimes included in the filing order. I spent some time looking for a tune, 'A trip to Highgate', in *One thousand English country dance tunes*¹ and eventually found it in the 'A's along with 'A trip to Paris', 'A trip to the cottage' and 'A trip to the Jubilee'. (This can often happen when an author uses a sorting function in their word-processing package, but probably not in this case as the work was published in 1984.)

Alternative titles

Alternative titles of tunes are dealt with in various ways. In *The Dorchester hornpipe*² (a collection of tunes from the MS books of Thomas Hardy, his father and his grandfather), alternative titles appear only under the first named, e.g. *Jacob* or *Enrico*—there is no separate entry for *Enrico*. However, in *The musical heritage of Thomas Hardy*,³ another collection of Hardy tunes, these two tunes are indexed under each name. In *The Penguin book of Christmas carols*⁴ reference is made in the index of composers, arrangers and sources to alternative titles which appear only in the notes, not on the page in question. For example, the reference to 'The ploughboy's dream' sends you to the music for 'O little town of Bethlehem' and gives a separate reference to a note where the alternative title, 'Forest green', appears.

More recent alternative names may not be included—for example, 'The twenty-ninth of May' in *Fifty old English folk dance airs for solo descant recorder*⁵ turns out to be the same tune as the hymn, 'All things bright and beautiful'. Tunes without names are fairly rare since most tunes pick up one or more names in the course of time. In *The lads like beer: the fiddle music of James Hill*⁶ two unnamed hornpipes appear as No. 8 and No. 9 hornpipes at the end of the index rather than at the beginning, the usual position for numerals.

Non-music material

Introductory material, notes, photographs and other items are often not indexed. The index for *The second Penguin book of Christmas carols*⁷ does not include the introduction and notes which form a substantial section of the book—24 pages out of 150). The index of *The lads like beer*...⁶ deals with tunes only—a pity, as there is an interesting eight-page introductory section discussing James Hill's life and times. Extracts from Thomas Hardy's poetry and prose are not indexed in the two books previously mentioned; however, these are very short, almost decorative features.

Multiple indexes

Multiple indexes are not usually a feature of these types of works, although *The Penguin book of*

*Christmas carols*⁴ has three indexes: carols and first lines; authors and translators; and composers, arrangers and sources. It might have been preferable for the second and third to be combined, as it would be logical to have authors and translators in the same index as composers and arrangers. In the *Second Penguin book of Christmas carols*⁷ the number of indexes has been reduced to two: titles, first lines and choruses; and authors, collectors, compilers, composers and arrangers. *One thousand English country dance tunes*¹ is made up of ten sections ranging from a facsimile reprint of John Playford's 'The English dancing master' to 'Some tunes from the editor's notebook'. There are five indexes: a general index and separate indexes to facsimiles of *The English dancing master* and *The beggar's opera* and to the morris, sword dance and ceremonial tunes sections. The main problem is that if you do not know what sort of tune you are looking for you have to check each index.

Indexes may also be divided according to the time signature of the tunes, with separate sequences for jigs, hornpipes, etc. This format seems to be particularly favoured when there is no contents page.

Names of singers and performers

Names of singers and other informants are often not included in the index. In *The Penguin book of English folk songs*⁸ the name of the singer is noted against the song but is not indexed. Until recently the names of those from whom the songs were collected were not always recorded, but nowadays collectors are more particular about crediting their informants. *The Morpeth rant*⁹ refers to tunes 'arranged by', 'played by' and 'composed by' various people whose names are not included in the index. For some reason, names of musicians associated with traditional music in the North East seem to have survived better than those from other areas, e.g. Billy Pigg, Ned Pearson and others.

John Kirkpatrick is always careful to attribute tunes in his *Opus Pocus*¹⁰ with the original musician taking top billing over the collector in the 'Running order' (contents section) at the beginning, e.g. 'JOHN LOCKE collected by Cecil Sharp'. However, the index simply lists tunes so the names of musicians appear only when their name is that of the tune.

This was not an exhaustive investigation of indexes in this genre, but some common features seem to have emerged: it can be difficult tracing a tune unless you know the exact title; you may need to look through several indexes; and anyone searching for the name of the person from whom a tune was collected will probably need to look through the whole work.

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References

1. Raven, M. (ed.). *One thousand English country dance tunes*. Stafford: Michael Raven, 1984.
2. Brocklebank, J. (ed.). *The Dorchester hornpipe: thirty-four country dance tunes from the manuscript music books of Thomas Hardy I, Thomas Hardy II and Thomas Hardy III*. Dorchester: Dorset County Museum, 1977.
3. Trim, R. et al. *The musical heritage of Thomas Hardy*, vol. 1. Blyth: Dragonfly Music, 1990.
4. Poston, E. (ed.). *The Penguin book of Christmas carols*. Penguin, 1965.
5. Hunt, E. H. *Fifty old English country dance airs for solo descant recorder*. Schott & Co., 1939.
6. Dixon, G. *The lads like beer: the fiddle music of James Hill*. Pathhead: Random Publications, 1987.
7. Poston, E. (ed.). *The second Penguin book of Christmas carols*. Penguin, 1970.
8. Vaughan Williams, R. and Lloyd, A. L. (ed.). *The Penguin book of English folk songs*. Penguin, 1959.
9. Seattle, M. (ed.). *The Morpeth rant: a grand selection of Northumbrian and related music*. Blyth: Dragonfly Music, 1990.
10. Kirkpatrick, J. and Harris, S. *Opus Pocus: the John Kirkpatrick and Sue Harris tune book*. Blyth: Dragonfly Music, 1988.

Miseducation

Library education in the United States and Canada: development and current trends (1993) by H. A. Peiris is published by Chansa Publishers, Ottawa, who deserve no credit for it. The text is reproduced from what appears to be copy prepared on an electric typewriter. But much more reprehensible is the abysmal indexing. Even where there is only a single page reference (e.g. under H. W. Wilson Foundation), there is a cross-reference (from Wilson Foundation) instead of a duplicate entry. And personal names are entered under *first* names (Charles Williamson under 'C', Raymond C. Davis under 'R', etc.; with an occasional extra quirk, as when Donald Davis, by the mere addition of a comma, becomes 'Donald, Davis')! Perhaps to give him pre-eminence, the famous librarian Melvil Dewey appears in proper style under 'D'—albeit with a cross-reference from Melvil. But whether that is enough to stop him turning in his grave, I doubt. If this is the cutting edge of information science, the sooner we get out our clay tablets and styluses the better.

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A discordant index

Essays in musical analysis by Donald Tovey was published in six serious-seeming volumes from the Oxford University Press, 1935–9. The final volume includes supplementary essays on several composers, glossary, and index.

Assuming the (uncredited) index to be the work of the author, it would seem that, exhausted by his labours, he took the task of indexing as an opportunity for relaxation and merry-making in print. The index is 18 pages long, relating to all six volumes, and shows signs of straining to entertain, but thereby becoming a sadly ineffective finding aid. Consider the following selection of its entries, quoted verbatim and as punctuated (forenames are rarely given in this index):

Ablative Absolute, *see* Passacaglia.

Agelast Philosophy, untenability of, *see* Edwards.

Agnostic, *see* Dachshund.

Appendicitis, *see* Cadenza. [There is no entry for Cadenza.]

Beaver as lace-maker, *see* Continuo.

Bernard, St., *see* Pope.

'Bo!', Haydn's Lion says, v. 139.

Brahms, [no forename. 12 lines of undifferentiated page numbers followed by nearly a column of subheadings with page numbers, but no reference to hedgehogs]

Bruckner, [11 lines with no reference to agnosticism, dachshunds or the Pope]

Continuo, i. 155–6, v. 34, vi. 157.

Critics, *see* Experts.

Dachshund, *see* Bernard.

Edwards, i. 149 *et passim*.

Elephant, *see* Haydn.

Experts, *see* Critics.

Grocer, *see* Hindemith.

Haydn, Joseph, [an entry more than a column long.

3 inches down comes 'not an elephant', v. 137]

Hedgehog, *see* Brahms.

Hindemith, Paul, iv. 172–6, vi. 148, 150, 163; and

sugar, iv. 174. *Works*: . . .

Loch Ness, *see* Wagner and the Paris Opera.

Monster, *see* Loch Ness.

Passacaglia, i. 115.

Pope, *see* Bruckner.

Sand, *see* Sugar.

Sugar, *see* Grocer.

Wagner, Richard, [9 lines of page numbers; more than half a column of subheadings with page numbers, no reference to the Paris Opera]

Wagner, Siegfried, iv. 128–9.

Wagnerian Leit-motiv, i. 39, ii. 81, iii. 153, 203, iv. 54, 70; and the Paris Opera, vi. 112.

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