



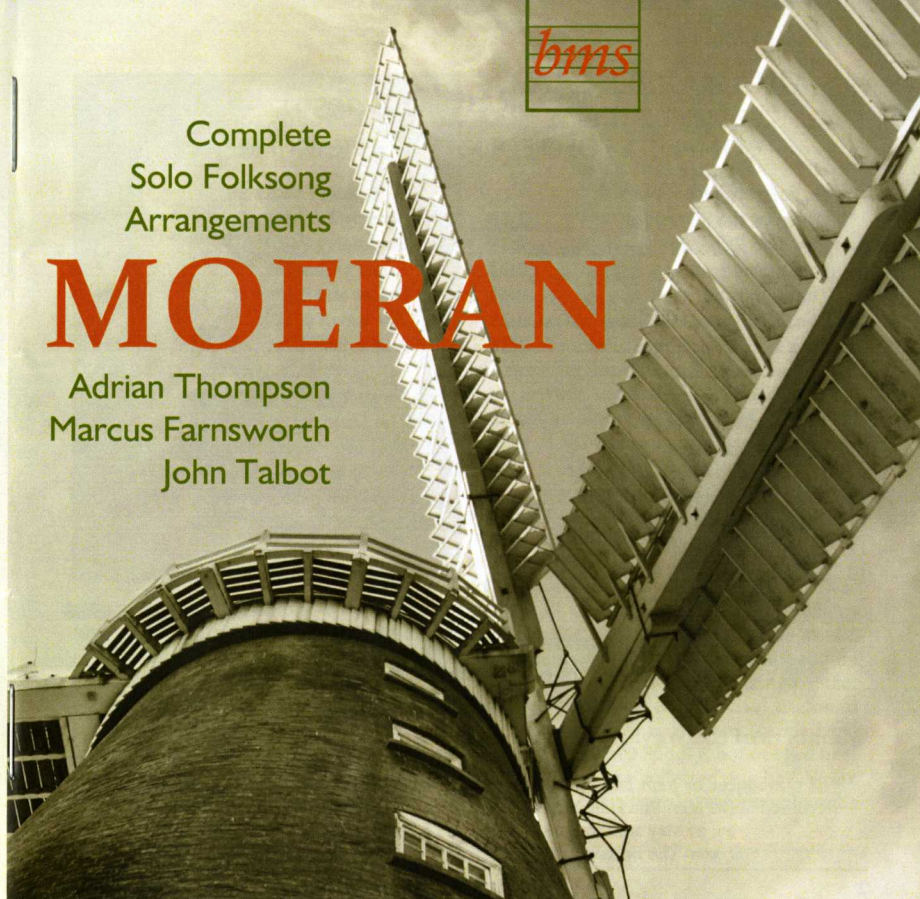
*Kenmare, County Kerry*

*bms*

Complete  
Solo Folksong  
Arrangements

# MOERAN

Adrian Thompson  
Marcus Farnsworth  
John Talbot



## E.J. MOERAN (1894-1950)

### COMPLETE SOLO FOLKSONG ARRANGEMENTS

Six Folksongs from Norfolk		Six Suffolk Folksongs			
1	Down by the Riverside†	2:58	14	Nutting Time†	3:09
2	The Bold Richard†	2:38	15	Blackberry Fold†	3:21
3	Lonely Waters†	2:27	16	Cupid's Garden†	2:14
4	The Pressgang†	2:14	17	Father and Daughter‡	3:36
5	The Shooting of His Dear†	3:25	18	The Isle of Cloy‡	4:11
6	The Oxford Sporting Blade†	1:36	19	A Seaman's Life†	1:10
Songs from County Kerry					
7	The North Sea Ground†	2:36	20	The Dawning of the Day‡	3:19
8	High Germany†	2:04	21	My Love Passed Me By‡	2:41
9	The Sailor and Young Nancy†*	3:07	22	The Murder of Father Hanratty‡	3:15
10	The Little Milkmaid†	2:09	23	The Roving Dingle Boy‡	1:59
11	The Jolly Carter†*	2:32	24	The Lost Lover‡	2:09
12	Parson and Clerk†	2:06	25	The Tinker's Daughter‡	1:32
13	Gaol Song†*	2:07	26	Kitty, I am in Love with You‡	0:53

TOTAL TIME 65:38

**Adrian Thompson tenor†**

**Marcus Farnsworth baritone†**

**John Talbot piano**

**Members of the Weybridge Male Voice Choir\* (Conductor: Christine Best)**

Produced by John Talbot. Engineered by Paul Arden-Taylor, Dinmore Records.  
Recorded in the Menuhin Hall, Yehudi Menuhin School, Stoke d'Abernon, Cobham, Surrey:

20, 27 May 2010 (baritone songs) and 6 October 2010 (tenor songs).

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## E.J. MOERAN AND FOLKSONG

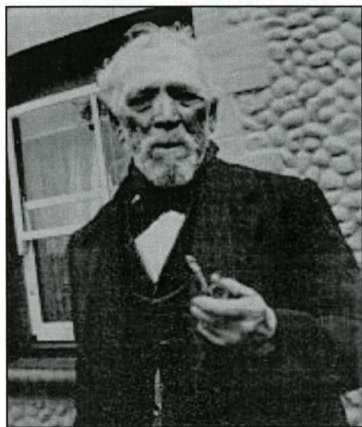
### Roy Palmer

#### I Collector

Jack Moeran's initial discovery of English folksong, as a young man on the threshold of a composing career, must have undoubtedly felt to him like a revelation - something of a 'Eureka!' moment - and it exercised a strong influence on his life and music thereafter. After leaving Uppingham School, where he had begun composing, he went to the Royal College of Music in 1913, at the age of almost nineteen. The following spring, finding St Paul's Cathedral packed out for a performance of a Bach Passion, he opted instead for the Queen's Hall, and paid 'a somewhat grudging shilling'<sup>1</sup> for a concert of contemporary British music. Moeran was

attracted enough to sample further performances, one of which was of a Vaughan Williams *Norfolk Rhapsody*, based on the composer's own traditional song collecting. The music, which seemed 'to breathe the very spirit of the English countryside', not only inspired him next day to buy Cecil Sharp's *Folk Songs from Somerset*,<sup>2</sup> but to set about making contact with the tradition for himself. He did so a few days later in his father's church at Bacton in Norfolk, by approaching a senior member of the choir. This was William Mayes, head waggoner at a local farm, who declined to sing a secular song on a Sunday, but obliged next day with 'The Dark-eyed Sailor'. 'This was actually the first song I 'collected' as a boy', wrote Moeran,<sup>3</sup> thus giving the lie to the fanciful suggestion that as a boarder at Uppingham he had toured the town in search of songs.

Moeran looked back with some embarrassment on his first foray into collecting: 'Unfortunately my pre-war efforts were made when I was very young and inexperienced, and were entirely the outcome of calling, notebook in hand, at the cottages of anybody I could think of round about the age of eighty'. His technique may partly have accounted for a meagre harvest and the conclusion that 'in Bacton and the immediate district there seemed to be a very few songs left'. He took little time to conclude that 'the old songs were fast dying out, and the singers with them',<sup>4</sup> before war supervened. Moeran, a keen motorcyclist, enlisted as a despatch rider in the Norfolk Regiment, then was commissioned as a second lieutenant in June 1915. In the following month, probably during embarkation leave before being posted to France, he noted five songs from James Sutton (known as 'Old Larpin') from Winterton, some twelve miles down the coast from Bacton.<sup>5</sup> Of these, 'The Bold Richard' and 'The Pressgang' later appeared in Moeran's *Six Folk Songs from Norfolk*.<sup>6</sup>



In May 1917, at Bullecourt in Northern France, Moeran was wounded and spent the remainder of the war away from the front – mainly in Ireland. On his discharge from the army in January 1919, he resumed his musical activities and, in 1920, returned to the RCM to study composition with John Ireland. In the late summer of the following year, during a visit to east Norfolk, he received an urgent request from Arthur Batchelor, a folksong enthusiast and friend of Cecil Sharp, to go to the village of Sutton, which is just off the present A148 road, about a mile from the North Sea. It turned out that he had happened to hear an old road-mender singing softly to himself as he was breaking stones. 'Thus I met the late Bob Miller, known for miles around the country as 'Jolt'', wrote Moeran. 'Bob admitted that he knew a few

'old uns', but he insisted that he had not really been singing, but just 'a-tuning over' to himself. However, he was only willing to sing to me under proper conditions and suggested my spending the evening with him in the Catfield White Hart or the Windmill at Sutton'.<sup>7</sup> It is gratifying that Miller, evidently a fine singer, stood on his dignity. When he sang - in fact at the Windmill - his demeanour was something of an eye-opener for Moeran:

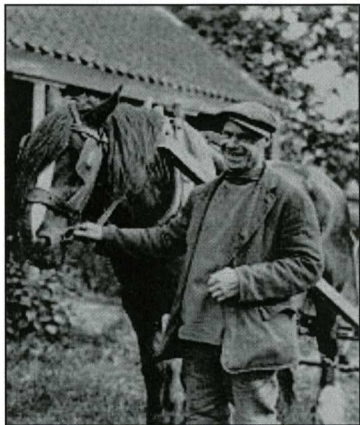
Old Jolt clearly loved conviviality, and was always at his best in company. In fact, he was incapable of remembering anything at all *à deux*. He required the atmosphere of a room full of kindred souls who would listen with appreciation, and he expected his full share of applause. At the same time he was a keen listener when somebody else held the floor in song or story. Anything in the way of interruption and he would wither the offender with the glance of an autocrat. He gave me many very interesting songs, some of which were hitherto unpublished.<sup>8</sup>

The nine songs Moeran noted from Miller on this and subsequent occasions may well have been only a small part of his repertoire. Six of them were published in the *Journal of the Folk-Song Society* and two, 'Lonely Waters' and 'The Oxford Sporting Blade', in *Six Folk Songs from Norfolk*.<sup>9</sup>

The convivial evening at the Windmill was followed by others which convinced Moeran that 'the art of folk singing, in this corner of Norfolk at any rate, was still flourishing'.<sup>10</sup> Miller's technique certainly impressed him: 'Jolt was one who liked a tune with a wide tessitura. Also, he was fond of the drop of a major sixth; it occurred frequently in his songs'.<sup>11</sup> However, an even finer performer was in the offing. Moeran wrote in 1936:

About the third occasion on which I was present at one of these gatherings, Jolt greeted me with an introduction: 'Here's Harry: he've come over from Hickling purpose to sing to you tonight'. Thus it was that I first met Harry Cox, still in his prime today, and probably unique in England as a folk-singer, presenting his songs with true artistry in a style which has almost disappeared. The Coxes have been musicians and singers for generations, and Harry has such a prodigious

memory that, apart from his large repertoire of songs handed down through the family, he is capable of hearing, on no more than three or four separate occasions, a song of a dozen or more verses, and remembering it permanently.<sup>12</sup>



Starting at the age of twelve-and-a-half, Harry Cox (1885-1971) spent the whole of his working life as a farm worker, within a few miles of his birthplace – Barton Turf, near Norwich – save for naval service during the First World War. His grandfather, also a farm worker, was in addition a dancer, entertainer and 'singer of old songs'. Harry's father Bob, who spent some time at sea, had a considerable fund of songs himself. Exaggerating a little, perhaps, he told Moeran that he used to join the Yarmouth trawlers every year for six weeks and would sing two songs each night in the forecastle without repeating himself.<sup>13</sup> In a further demonstration of a traditional singer's respect for his art, he declined to sing for Moeran: 'All I could get from him was that he had taught all his songs to his son, Harry, and that if I wanted to take them down I could do

so from that source. I think he regarded himself as a maestro whose day was done, and he did not wish to sully his reputation as an artist by singing with a cracked voice in his old age'.<sup>14</sup> He died in 1929.

From the age of four, Harry heard his father singing in pubs, and he made his own debut, aged about eleven, in the Union Tavern, Smallburgh. At the same time he started to learn to play the fiddle, and later added melodeon and tin whistle. As an adult he regularly played and sang at the Windmill Inn in Sutton. Having met him there, Moeran took to bringing friends such as John Goss, Augustus John and Philip Heseltine (Peter Warlock) to

hear him. It is surprising that Moeran, notwithstanding his admiration for Harry Cox, noted between 1921 and 1927, and often incompletely, only ten songs from a repertoire of 140.<sup>15</sup> He may of course have taken down others and mislaid his notes. He was clearly cavalier with his field collection, of which manuscripts survive for only a score of tunes and a solitary text, out of a total of 69 songs.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, Moeran's esteem for Cox was demonstrated in 1934 when he organised a visit to London for him, met him at the station, and took him to the Decca studio where he sang 'Down by the Riverside' and 'The Pretty Ploughboy' for a record which was distributed to members of the English Folk Dance and Song Society.<sup>17</sup>

On Moeran's method of collecting it is worthwhile to consider Heseltine's observation, written in 1924:

He collects these songs from no antiquarian, historical, or psychological motives, but because he loves them and the people who sing them. It is of no more interest to him whether a tune is referable to this, that, or the other mode, or whether a variant of its words is to be found on some old broadside, than it is to the singers themselves. For him, as for them, the song itself is the thing – a thing lived, a piece of the communal life of the country; and indeed, it is a much more heartening experience to sit in a good country pub and hear fine tunes trolled by the company over their pots of beer than to attend many a concert in the West End of London.<sup>18</sup>

The approach had disadvantages. In East Norfolk public houses at that time women do not seem to have featured as singers. Certainly, Moeran did not find one. In the general hubbub he must have found it difficult on occasion to catch the words of a song or details of a singer. Once, in a pub near Southwold, he was infuriated by a 'wretched fellow at the piano [who] would insist on trying to accompany the singer. Being totally without a modal feeling in his bones he not only put the singers off their stroke but forced them to alter their tune to suit his abominable machinations'.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, 'Norfolk men like an audience; also they still like singing against one another to see who can sing the better song'.<sup>20</sup>

While in East Anglia Moeran found it 'difficult to collect folk songs privately', with singers opting to meet the following Saturday in a public house. During his visits to Ireland, however, singers preferred 'to come up to the country house where I have my *piéd à terre* and do it *à deux*'.<sup>21</sup> From the early 1930s Moeran spent more and more time in Ireland, particularly in County Kerry, where he noted songs at Cahersiveen, Sneem and Kenmare. Arnold Bax, who knew Moeran from 1919 when he was still in uniform, remarked that 'Jack's predilection for the Irish (or rather Kerry) scene must have been wholly instinctive and emotional', and that 'he knew and loved the Kerry people and understood unerringly how to get on with them. His friendly and unpretentiously straightforward manner was precisely the same whether he was in the company of a brewery peer, an hotel boots, a priest, an out-at-elbows tramp, or even a drink-sodden and bellicose tinker at Puck Fair in Killorglin'.<sup>22</sup>

Moeran's documentation of his Irish song collecting is even more sparse than his English, though it seems that, but for his death, he would have contributed some examples to the journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society.<sup>23</sup> He published arrangements of seven songs from 'a much larger collection I noted in Co. Kerry at odd times during a period roughly between 1934 and 1948', adding this important comment: 'The verse-by-verse variants in some of the tunes are exactly as I heard from the singers themselves on a number of occasions'.<sup>24</sup> Moeran made a fascinating point about the connection in song between East Anglia and Southwest Ireland:

...The Yarmouth trawlers used to fish frequently in Irish waters. In bad weather, the crews would go ashore and meet the local people in the kitchens of Cahersiveen. Then they would spend a convivial evening singing songs and telling stories. In this way songs would change hands without being written down, for these singers for the most part had extraordinarily retentive memories...Two East Anglian songs in particular are very well-known and popular in Co. Kerry: 'O father, father, build me a boat' and 'The black velvet band'. And vice versa: there is a version of 'The green mossy banks of the Lea' which is to be heard in the neighbourhood of Great Yarmouth, which has become slightly more exciting rhythmically, and has definitely assumed the

Dorian mode which, in Eire, is not noticeably present. Another song that crops up in Co. Kerry is 'The Raggle Taggle Gipsies O', a very obviously English song, as the Squire comes into it. (There have never been squires in Ireland).<sup>25</sup>

For Moeran, one of the attractions of Ireland must have been its living tradition of dance, instrumental music and song. In England, as he wrote in 1936, 'it seems likely that the spontaneous singing of old songs when men meet together on Saturday nights no longer exists, save in districts where there is a considerable sprinkling of those who have followed the herring'.<sup>26</sup> However, he returned to Norfolk in December 1945 to record for the BBC Harry Cox's versions of 'The Bold Princess Royal' and 'Just as the Tide was A-flowing'.<sup>27</sup> This may have paved the way for the subsequent expedition of which Moeran wrote in 1948:

Last autumn I was asked by the British Broadcasting Corporation to make investigations in East Anglia with a view to obtaining authentic recordings of traditional singers. I visited my old haunts in East Norfolk, and to my delight and surprise, I found that not only were many of my old friends living, hale and hearty, but that they were still having sing-songs on their own in local pubs. Also, fresh singers had turned up in the district, men who had retired from the sea, and in particular a retired wherryman from the Broads whom I had not met before, and who proved to be excellent.<sup>28</sup>

Two weeks after this trip Moeran returned with recording van, sound engineers and producer Maurice Brown, for sessions at the Windmill in Sutton on 27 October 1947 and at the Eel's Foot, Eastbridge in Suffolk, three days later. Within a further week, on 7 November, the programme, *East Anglia Sings*, was broadcast. Moeran introduced three Suffolk singers: Jumbo Brightwell, Fred Ginger and Jack Clark; and six from Norfolk: John 'Charger' Salmons (the retired wherryman mentioned above), Charlie Chettleborough, Walter Gales, William Miller (the son of 'Jolt'), Elijah Bell and Harry Cox (who contributed four songs, in contrast with one apiece from all the others).<sup>29</sup> For English traditional singers to appear on the radio was extremely rare, if not unprecedented. From its inception in 1942 the long-running and well-loved programme *Country Magazine* broadcast a folksong every

fortnight. Yet the producer, Francis Dillon, believed that 'the proper style of singing the folksong has gone beyond hope of revival. Only a few men in Britain still have it, and if the ordinary listener heard them sing, he or she would not be impressed, although it might give the more intelligent pause to know that almost any of the leading composers in Britain would gladly sit on the floor of Harry Cox's woodshed for as long as he cared to sing to them'. As a result, 'the singing we entrust to the finest vocalists we can find who can be relied upon to get the words over clearly without loss of vocal quality. We need only instance Robert Irwin and Martin Boddey.'<sup>30</sup>

Moeran's approach was entirely different, and it accorded with subsequent best practice. He was not only unpatronising to singers, but accepted them as conscious artists. He frequently expressed admiration for their technique, and he characterised Harry Cox as 'that prince of singers'.<sup>31</sup> Moeran's collecting, in two English counties and one Irish, of just under seventy songs, compared with the 800 of Vaughan Williams in sixteen counties in England, is not large. Yet both composers were profoundly influenced by their exposure to traditional song: both published collections of folk tunes and arranged a number of them; and both incorporated folk themes into original works, thus absorbing something of the idiom and atmosphere of traditional folk music in their own compositions.

## II Composer

Moeran's first volume of folksong arrangements for voice and piano, *Six Folk Songs from Norfolk* (1924), included settings of songs sung to Moeran by four local men: Harry Cox from Potter Heigham, Walter Gales and Robert Miller from Sutton, and James Sutton from Winterton. The publication received high praise from his friend, Philip Heseltine:

Three are quite perfect specimens of the English tradition in its purest and most beautiful form. These are 'Down by the Riverside', one of the most natural 5/4 tunes imaginable (incidentally 5/4 is quite a favourite measure in Norfolk, and any suspicion of its being a possible distortion of triple or quadruple time is dispelled by the decisive thump with which mugs come down on the table or boots on the floor to mark the rhythm); 'The Shooting of his Dear', which is an excellent example of Moeran's characteristically free but always appropriate

methods of harmonization; and 'Lonely Waters', which he has treated in a more extended manner in a very attractive little piece for small orchestra.<sup>32</sup>

The latter orchestral piece, which was not in fact performed until January 1932, has alternative endings: a cor anglais solo with the tune of 'Lonely Waters', or a singer with a verse of the song:

*So I'll go down to some lonely waters,  
Go down where no one they shall me find,  
Where the pretty little small birds do change their voices,  
And every moment blows blustering wild.*

Moeran's sequel to his Norfolk volume was *Six Suffolk Folk-Songs* (1932), for which the source singers were George Hill of Earl Stonham and Oliver Waspe of Coddendam, whom he met in 1921 and 1931 respectively. Apart from a small number of individually published folksong settings which were mainly arranged around the same time as those in the Norfolk volume, and all of which are included in the present recording, he published no more larger collections until *Songs from County Kerry* (1950), which appeared in the last year of his life. In all, Moeran made (known) solo settings of twenty-five folksongs, drawn all save one from his own collecting.<sup>33</sup> In addition, he employed considerable use of traditional tunes elsewhere in his music e.g. in the piano piece *Stalham River* (1921). The well-known and beautiful tune 'The Star of the County Down', which was a favourite also of Vaughan Williams, features both in the Cello Concerto (1945) and in the String Quartet in E flat (published in 1956). Both English and Irish influences are evident in the Symphony in G Minor (first performed in 1938), on which Moeran worked between 1926 and 1937. The latter's second movement, of which Moeran said the 'material was conceived around the sand dunes and marshes of East Norfolk', was based on 'The Shooting of his Dear', as sung by Walter Gales and Harry Cox.<sup>34</sup>

In addition to the impact of the folk tunes themselves, a whole folksong ethos affected Moeran and suffused his music. Bax wrote of the 'unworldly Western-Irish lights that seemed to glimmer down the pages of that same symphony [i.e. the G minor], the second

movement of the Violin Concerto, the piano piece *The Lake Island...*witness too the delicately distilled suggestions of native folk-idiom heard in these works'.<sup>35</sup> While the composition of the Violin Concerto mentioned by Bax was in progress, Moeran wrote from Kerry on Whitsunday 1939 to May Harrison, for whom it was intended:

I am going out to farm kitchens and out of door Ceilidhs (they have dancing platforms on the crossroads here outside every parish – Irish dancing only of course) – and soaking myself in traditional fiddling with its queer but natural embellishments and ornamentations. This time of year the whole countryside is on the dance round here. In the second movement I am planning to work some of this idiom into concerto form. I may tell you some of these people have a terrific technique.<sup>36</sup>

Of the same concerto, Aloys Fleischmann wrote that:

[Moeran] used to say himself that the first movement was inspired by the calm of Kenmare Bay in the fine weather, the last by a period of autumnal colour and beauty along the Kenmare River. The Rondo was originally conceived as a burlesque on traditional fiddling heard in the kitchen of 'Dinne Islands' (half-ways between Sneem and Kenmare) and later incorporated into the concerto. In this one may hear snatches of the rhythm of jig, reel, hornpipe and ponderous waltz.<sup>37</sup>

Moeran's friend Fleischmann is in no doubt of the influence of folksong, 'even on his instrumental style ... in the eminently singable melodic line, the breeziness and gusto of his rhythms, the modal inflections, and above all, the directness of his utterance'. He continues, and concludes:

If his orbit is not as wide as that of Vaughan Williams, he is seldom vague or circumlocutory, having much of the pithy realism of folk speech. Certain elements of this idiom have indeed tended to harden into mannerisms, for instance the rushing pentatonic passage-work which so often crops up

unexpectedly, and even irrelevantly, in his instrumental *allegros*. But especially in his broad tunes, such as the second subjects of his symphonic movements, folk elements can burgeon into a wealth of lyrical beauty. These tunes can seem unmistakably Irish in their inspiration, as for example the moving tune of the middle section of his second *Rhapsody*; yet this work was conceived and written in Norfolk long before he had made Kenmare his second home. It is true that the folk music of these islands may at times be difficult to distinguish, but the composer himself used to point out that in Norfolk he heard characteristically Irish tunes, and again, Norfolk tunes in Kerry, brought in each case by visiting fisherfolk from one country to another. Just as the sea-coasts of East Anglia and Kerry were a constant source of inspiration to him, so too did the folk music of each county contribute its share to the texture of his music.<sup>38</sup>



## Notes

- 1 Moeran (1936), 31. Moeran says elsewhere (1946) that the concert was 'one winter's evening'.
- 2 Sharp (1904-1909).
- 3 Moeran (1946), unpaginated.
- 4 Moeran (1936), 31.
- 5 Moeran (1922): 'The *Bold Richard*', 1; 'The Captain's Apprentice', 4-5; 'The *Royal Charter*', 6-7; 'The Pressgang', 11-12; and 'The Farmer's Son', 12-13.
- 6 Moeran (1924), nos 2 and 4 respectively.
- 7 op. cit. Note 3. In fact, the singing pub at Catfield was the 'Crown'; and the 'White Hart' was at Repps, across the river from Potter Heigham. I owe this information to Chris Heppa.
- 8 Op. cit. Note 3.
- 9 Moeran (1922): 'The British Man o' War', 9-10; 'High Germany', 10-11; 'The Bold Poachers', 15-16. Moeran (1931): 'All Frolicking I'll Give Over', 262-63; 'I wish I was in Dublin Town', 263-64; 'The Drunkard', 276. Moeran (1924): no.3, 'Lonely Waters'; no.4, 'The Oxford Sporting Blade', no.4.
- 10 Op. cit. Note 3.
- 11 Ibid. For examples of falls of a major sixth in Miller's songs, see 'The British Man o' War', 'I wish I was in Dublin Town' and 'The Drunkard'.
- 12 Op. cit. Note 3.
- 13 Moeran (1948), 153.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Moeran (1922): 'The Captain's Apprentice', 4-5; 'In Burnham Town', 8-9; 'Down by the Riverside', 21-22. Moeran (1931): 'The Pretty Ploughboy', 268-69; 'The Soldier and Sailor', 270; 'London Town', 272-73; 'The Barley and the Rye', 273-74; 'The Robber', 277-78; 'The Whalecatchers', 279. Moeran (1924): no.5, 'The Shooting of his Dear'.
- 16 The Victorian College of the Arts (Melbourne, Australia) has Moeran's manuscripts of four pages (VCA33) of tunes from Norfolk and Suffolk, and three pages (VCA40) of the text of what became 'The Death of Father Hanratty' (*Songs of County Kerry*, no.3). There are also manuscripts at the British Library and in private hands.

- 17 78 rpm record, Decca OC 87/88 (1934). 'Down by the Riverside' is listed as 'The Bold Fisherman'.
- 18 Heseltine (1924), 172.
- 19 Moeran (1948), 153.
- 20 Moeran (1948), 152-53.
- 21 Moeran (1948), 152.
- 22 Bax (1951), 127.
- 23 Moeran (1948), 154, note by the editor.
- 24 Note in Moeran (1994), vol. 2, p. 69. The seven *Songs from County Kerry* are included in the same volume.
- 25 Moeran (1948), 154.
- 26 Moeran (1936), 32.
- 27 BBC Archive nos 1732 and 1731 respectively. These can be heard as tracks 4 and 22 on *We've received orders to sail*, Topics Records CD, TSCD662 (1998).
- 28 Moeran (1948), 152.
- 29 The entire 51-minute broadcast can be heard on the CD *East Anglia Sings*, Snatch'd from Oblivion Records SFO005 (nd), which is available from Musical Traditions Records. The Suffolk recordings, supplemented by others, are on the CD *Good Order! Traditional Singing & Music from the Eel's Foot*, Veteran VT140CD (2000).
- 30 Dillon [1949], p. 139.
- 31 Moeran, speaking in the 1947 broadcast.
- 32 Heseltine (1924), 173.
- 33 The exception is 'Gaul Song', collected in Dorset by H.E.D. Hammond in 1908.
- 34 Burn (1987). 'The Shooting of his Dear' was also arranged as no.5 of *Six Folk Songs from Norfolk*.
- 35 Bax (1951), 126.
- 36 Foreman (1990), 6.
- 37 Fleischmann (1951), 65.
- 38 Ibid., 61-62.



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- Aloys Fleischmann, 'The Music of E.J. Moeran', *Envoy: A Dublin Review*, 4/16 (1951), 60-66.
- Lewis Foreman, Insert to Chandos Records CD *E.J. Moeran: Violin Concerto, Lonely Waters, Whythorne's Shadow*, CHAN 8807 (1990).
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Cecil Sharp, *Folk Songs from Somerset*, vols 4-5 (Simpkin Marshall 1908-09).

## Acknowledgements

I owe thanks to Chris Heppa, John Moulden, the late Tom Munnely and Rod Stradling.

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Photographs from the *Norfolk Annual 1936*:

The late Bob Miller of Sutton, page 4

Mr Harry Cox of Catfield, page 6

A Sing Song at Ingham, page 13

Illustration, page 24:

View of Kenmare River from Moeran's burial place in Kenmare cemetery.

Photograph by Ernest Kirschner.

*The North Sea Ground* is a setting of the poem of the same name by Cicely Fox Smith (1882-1954). The poem, first published without attribution in the 24 March 1915 edition of the magazine *Punch*, appeared later in a number of Great War and maritime poetry anthologies with the poet's name included as C. Fox Smith. E.J. Moeran's manuscript is dated 4 April 1915, so it is probable that he took his text directly from the magazine.

The circumstances surrounding Moeran's composing of a setting of these words is unknown but there is clearly a connection with the Oxford and Cambridge Musical Club. Moeran had been a member of the Club since late 1912 and frequently participated in its fortnightly musical soirées. It is likely that he also attended evenings when he was not performing and probably made use of the Club's dining and social facilities. Between 1914 and 1940, the Club leased 6, Bedford Square – a very large, Georgian house near to Marylebone Station in west London – which provided members with exceptional services, including, with its several bedrooms, residential possibilities. Over the years, the Club acquired a substantial library of music books, scores and manuscripts by composing members.

The programmes of the regular Thursday evening recitals between 1915 and 1929 do not record *The North Sea Ground* as having been performed. Nonetheless, the manuscript of the song, in Moeran's hand, was discovered in the residue of the library when the Club was obliged to vacate its storage facilities in the Senate House of the University of London in the year 2000. Mr Gordon Cumming, a former secretary of the O&CMC, purchased this residual library in an attempt to prevent it from being further disbursed, and found the manuscript lying forgotten in one of the boxes. Eventually, the manuscript was placed on permanent loan in the Rare Books and Music Department of the British Library.

The song is not a true folksong, as it is without doubt an original composition by Moeran. Extensive searches of folksong melody databases and archives have not revealed a tune that is sufficiently similar to that of Moeran's setting to enable it to be categorised as an arrangement. However, the melody and form are certainly in the style of a folksong and Moeran's piano accompaniment clearly foreshadows some of his later folksong arrangements. The setting is also reminiscent of Victorian salon songs and ballads. It is

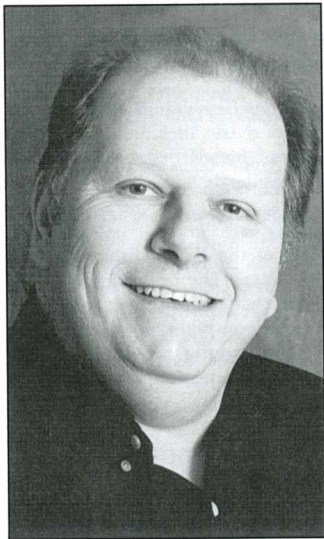
likely that Moeran's familiarity with this genre derived from hearing his mother play and sing some of this repertoire during his childhood.

Moeran was twenty years old in April 1915 and the word-setting betrays inexperience of the form. He had by this time composed quite a wide range of music, including some songs. However, as a result of his later ruthless self-criticism, most of this was destroyed. Thus the survival of this manuscript is fortuitous and adds considerably to the very scanty information about Moeran's early works.

The text of the poem refers to the use of the trawlers of the British fishing fleet as minesweepers during the early years of the First World War. The poem describes the dangers faced by the fishermen and the dedication to duty that enabled them to perform this vital work for the country. Although Moeran captures the youthful exuberance and the '*laughing in the face of death*' attitude of many of the young lads on the trawlers, his naivety in communicating the entire sense of the text is shown by his omission of an important (fifth) stanza.

Together with the piano pieces *Dance and Fields at Harvest* and the *Four Songs from 'A Shropshire Lad'* of 1916, *The North Sea Ground* (recorded here for the first time) represents the only known extant work from Moeran's juvenile period of composition and provides a fascinating glimpse into the early evolution of what would become his unique style.

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**Tenor Adrian Thompson** trained at The Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where he is now a Professor. His operatic credits include the title role in Britten's *Peter Grimes*, Monostatos in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, and Valzacchi in Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier* (ROH); the Prologue in Britten's *The Turn of the Screw* (Grand Théâtre de Genève); Erik in Wagner's *Der Fliegende Holländer* (Opera Zuid); the title role in Janacek's *The Diary of One who Disappeared* (Aix-en-Provence Festival); Zivny in Janacek's *Osud* (Garsington); Mr Upfold in Britten's *Albert Herring*, and Monsieur Triquet in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* (Glyndebourne); and the Great Convict in Janacek's *From the House of the Dead* (Palermo).

His performance in contemporary music includes such works as Lutoslawski's *Paroles Tisséés* and Judith Weir's *A Night at the Chinese Opera*. Highlights of his concert appearances include Janacek's *Glagolitic Mass* (Hallé Orchestra), Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* (Czech Philharmonic Orchestra), Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Haydn's *The Seasons*, Verdi's *Requiem*, Bach's *St John* and *St Matthew Passions*, Handel's *Messiah*, and Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*.

Forthcoming roles and engagements include First Jew in Strauss's *Salomé* (ROH), Elgar's *The Kingdom* (Three Choirs Festival), Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* (Ex Cathedra), Mao in Adams's *Nixon in China* (Toronto), Esslinger in Wagner's *Die Meistersinger* (Glyndebourne), and Mime in Wagner's *Siegfried* (Nationale Reïsoera).

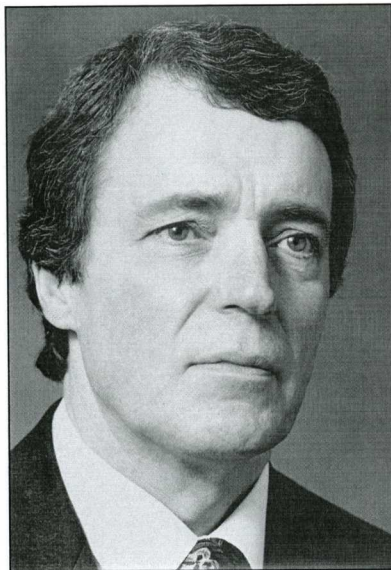
An experienced recitalist, Adrian Thompson has appeared throughout the United Kingdom and Europe. His discography includes Vaughan Williams's *The Pilgrim's Progress* for Chandos, *The Eternal Gospel* for Hyperion, Warlock's *The Curlew* for Collins Classics, Schubert's *Die Schöne Müllerin* for Pickwick, and Moeran's *Complete Solo Songs* (with Geraldine McGreevy, Roderick Williams and John Talbot) for Chandos.

**Baritone Marcus Farnsworth** was awarded first prize in the 2009 Wigmore Hall International Song Competition. He has also been awarded the 2010 Pavarotti Prize; first prize in the 2009 Chelsea Schubert Competition; the Sir Thomas Armstrong Prize; the Elena Gerhardt Lieder Prize; and the Major van Someren-Godfrey Prize for English Song.

He is currently studying with Glenville Hargreaves and Audrey Hyland on the opera course at the Royal Academy of Music, where he has performed, among other roles, Sid in Britten's *Albert Herring*, Oreste in Cavalli's *Giasone*, Guglielmo in Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, Adonis in Blow's *Venus and Adonis*, Aeneas in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, Dandini in Rossini's *La Cenerentola*, and the Narrator in Britten's *Paul Bunyan*. He is generously supported in his studies by the Josephine Baker Trust, and the Countess of Munster Musical Trust.

Current and future plans include performances of Bach's *St John Passion*, with the Academy of Ancient Music, and the *St Matthew Passion*, with Ex Cathedra in Birmingham Symphony Hall; Britten's song cycle *Tit for Tat*, with Malcolm Martineau, and his *Canticles*, with Julius Drake and Mark Padmore – both as part of the Wigmore Hall Britten Festival in 2012; two recitals as part of Julius Drake's Schumann Week at Middle Temple in London; a recital at the National Portrait Gallery with Simon Lepper; and further recitals with Iain Burnside and James Baillieu. He has appeared in recital at St John's Smith Square as a member of Graham Johnson's Young Songmakers' Almanac; in a joint recital with Sarah Connolly at the Oxford Lieder Festival; as a soloist with Matthew Halls and The King's Consort at the Wigmore Hall; and in *Messiah* in the Royal Albert Hall with Sir David Willcocks.





Born in Sydney, Australia, pianist **John Talbot** completed his studies at the University of Queensland and the Queensland Conservatorium of Music and, while still a student, performed piano concertos by Bartók and Ravel with the Queensland and Melbourne Symphony Orchestras. He undertook further musical study in the United Kingdom, where he now lives, as the first recipient of the Robert Dalley-Scarlett Memorial Scholarship. Since his student days in Australia he has been much involved with the music of British composers of the early twentieth century, and has since performed this repertoire in partnership with such well-known concert artists as baritones John Carol Case and Brian Rayner Cook, violinists Ann Hooley, Yfrah Neaman and Donald Scotts, clarinetists Philip Michel and David Sheppard, and cellists Jo Cole and Timothy Hugh.

Much involved with the music of E.J. Moeran over more than three decades, John Talbot has prepared and edited for Thames Publishing (now Music Sales) a thirteen-volume Centenary

Edition of Moeran's vocal, keyboard and choral music, now in its second edition. He was Artistic Adviser to the 1994 Tudeley Festival, which celebrated the centenary of Moeran's birth; and for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation he has recorded Moeran's complete solo piano music. His commercial discography includes, for the Chandos label, Moeran's Violin Sonata, (with violinist Donald Scotts) and his *Complete Solo Songs* (with singers Geraldine McGreevy, Adrian Thompson and Roderick Williams); and, for the British Music Society, a recital with cellist Jo Cole of *English Cello Sonatas* (John Foulds, Ernest Walker and York Bowen), and *October Roses*, a collection of solo songs by Brian Blyth Daubney, with singers Anna Dennis and William Berger. He is a Steinway Artist.

## THE BRITISH MUSIC SOCIETY

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The aim of the British Music Society is to encourage and renew international enthusiasm for much British music of the last 150 years or so which often appears these days to be undeservedly neglected. The Society endeavours to achieve this aim through the dissemination of recordings and printed publications issued under its own imprint, and the promotion of lecture-recitals and live concert performances for which the Society acts as sponsor.

The Society's recordings, listed in a Catalogue of Recordings, are produced on three labels: the **BMS** main label and its subsidiary **BMS Historic** label, both available for general sale as well as to members (the latter at discounted rates); and the secondary **Environs** label, normally made available only to members. Recordings of piano music of Lennox Berkeley and John McCabe have both received *Gramophone* Critics' Choice awards, as has the BMS Historic release of Noel Mewton-Wood's famed performances of piano concertos by Bliss, Stravinsky and Shostakovich. The BMS recordings programme is now supported by funds received from the Michael Hurd Bequest.

The BMS publishes annually one Journal (*British Music*) and four Newsletters (*News*), which are distributed free to members. It also publishes Monographs and other occasional books - listed in a Catalogue of Publications - which members may purchase at discounted rates.

The Society's principal live-music activity has been its biennial BMS Awards competition, open to young musicians studying at one of the eight major British music colleges. Other occasional concerts and musical events are also held.

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