

## Vaughan Williams' Folk

# Vaughan Williams In East Anglia

Of the over 800 songs Vaughan Williams collected nationally, over 400 of them were in the Eastern Counties. In fact the first folk song that he collected was in the village of Ingrave in Essex, a song that was to prove "an epiphany" in his folk song collecting, leading him to recognise the importance of recording such folksongs for future use and the value of adapting and arranging them in his own compositions.

In early 1903 Vaughan Williams was delivering a series of lectures regarding "The History of Folk Song" in Brentwood, Essex. The local rector's wife, Georgina Heatley, was present and began communicating with Vaughan Williams, eventually inviting him to tea at the rectory in December that year. It was here that he met several parishioners, including Mr Charles Potiphar. The next day, 4th December 1903, Vaughan Williams went to his home and collected "Bushes and Briars" alongside 7 other songs, thus embarking on his folk song collecting journey.

Vaughan Williams collected folk songs throughout East Anglia over an 8 year period from December 1903 to December 1911. He often travelled by train and bicycle and generally concentrated on noting down the music transcriptions, often with only a limited number of words recorded.

Vaughan Williams collected over 120 songs in Essex with several visits between December 1903 and October 1904. In January 1905 he went to Norfolk, firstly visiting the village of Tilney All Saints and then the fishing community and workhouse in Kings Lynn and a flying day trip to Sheringham on the North Norfolk coast. 1906 saw a brief return visit to Herongate in Essex in February followed by a spate of collecting during August, whilst on holiday in Cambridgeshire. There he visited Little Shelford, Fen Ditton and Wilburton. He returned for a holiday in Cambridgeshire the following year with visits to Fowlmere, Royston, Bassingbourn and Cottenham and then returned to King's Lynn Union Workhouse on 1st September.

In April 1908 Vaughan Williams toured the Norfolk Broads collecting from singers in Acle, South Walsham, Ranworth, Horning, Rollesby & Hickling with a brief visit to Orwell in Cambridgeshire in June. By October 1910, the next time he collected songs in East Anglia, Vaughan Williams was working with fellow composer George Butterworth and visited Southwold and Reydon in Suffolk, including a visit to Filby on the Norfolk coast. Just before Christmas 1911 his last East Anglian collections were recorded in Norfolk at Gissing, Tibbenham, The Depwade Union Workhouse in Pulham and at Scole, near Diss, with a brief return to Southwold before returning home.