Folk music has inspired many composers, and in particular the English folk songs collected by Cecil Sharp. Sharp, along with Maud Karpeles and Olive Dame Campbell, collected over 2,000 songs and tunes in Southern Appalachia and England. The songs, recorded on wax cylinders, were later transcribed and published by the English Folk Dance Society founded by Cecil Sharp. Sharp was a major figure in the revival of English folk dance and song, and his work has had a profound influence on the development of modern folk music.

In the early 1900s, Cecil Sharp had assumed many of these people discovered English folk music had begun in England ‘from the mouths of the people’. Though folk music was known in the orchestral version arranged in Tennyson’s ‘High Germany’ is heard as a recruiting party of the people; the ‘British’ soldiers are taken on by the ‘infidels’ and combine to bury their dead in common graves. Folk music has inspired many composers, and in particular the English folk songs collected by Cecil Sharp. Sharp, along with Maud Karpeles and Olive Dame Campbell, collected over 2,000 songs and tunes in Southern Appalachia and England. The songs, recorded on wax cylinders, were later transcribed and published by the English Folk Dance Society founded by Cecil Sharp. Sharp was a major figure in the revival of English folk dance and song, and his work has had a profound influence on the development of modern folk music.
Cecil Sharp in Somerset

Follow the Singers Trail

AUGUST 1903. London music teacher Cecil Sharp visited his friend Rosamund Charles Marson at Halswater and boarded John England, the stagecoach driver, singing 'The Seeds of Love' during their stay. This began one of the most remarkable adventures in English folk music. In Somerset, over the next thirteen years or so, Sharp visited 122 locations, collected songs and tunes from 318 individual singers, and gathered children’s games from twenty schools. Perhaps none of these singers or children was your ancestors? Maybe Cecil collected in your town or village?

Singers photographed listed in date order as visited by Cecil Sharp

Cecil Sharp has a secret...

...it's a fascinating story of Somerset people who sang. Their songs inspired great musicians who wrote works performed worldwide. These maps locate the singers and tell the story of Cecil Sharp and Charles Marson who collected their songs over one hundred years ago. You can also find out where to go to hear folk songs, see folk traditions, watch folk dances and perhaps join in. There's lots of exciting music here in this most wonderful of counties. So come all you!