

BOB COPPER

In 1897 Mrs. Kate Lees visited Rottingdean in Sussex and collected songs from two brothers, James and Thomas Copper, and it was largely as a result of her great enthusiasm about her meeting with them that the formation of the English Folk Song Society came about the following year and a paper that she wrote and some of the songs were published in the Society's first ever journal in 1899.

James Copper was the grandfather of Bob who, together with his cousin Ron, who died earlier this year, has kept alive the Copper Family songs by means of broadcasts on radio, television, records and personal appearances at folk song clubs and other folk events. Most important of all, Bob's children, John and Jill, have inherited the family songs as no doubt will their children.

Their performances and enthusiasm for the songs has inspired many well known singers, for example Cyril Tawney, Louis Killen and The Young Tradition, to sing these songs as well as ^{INSPIRING} hundreds of lesser known singers throughout the country.

Bob has always taken the initiative with the family singing and on every possible occasion takes the trouble to give a full and interesting background to their songs and this role culminated in a superb book ^A "Song for Every Season" published in 1971, which gives a complete history of the Copper family and a privileged insight into life in Rottingdean in the days of his forbears. Thus this book very cleverly puts into context the Copper family songs which are all set down in the book with words and music and the whole publication is complemented by a set of four L.P.'s of the family singing their songs.

Bob has also contributed considerably to the preservation of folk song by his work as a collector and since the first book, has written two further books, one about his life in Hampshire and experiences as a collector and the other covering his early childhood in Rottingdean.

In a way the Copper family as a whole deserve recognition for the trouble they have taken to keep alive their songs and their family's

singing tradition but as Ron is now dead and Bob's children, Jill and John, are still young and in view of the outstanding work that Bob has done for folk song, I would like to recommend that he receive the Society's Gold Badge.

Dave Kirk

STAN HUGILL

Stan Hugill is a man who has made a very rare, indeed a unique contribution to the life of folk-songs and lore of the sea. He has done this not only by singing, or as he would have it, shantying the songs - originally on board a large working sailing ship - but more latterly at clubs, festivals and on Radio and TV. Added to this grass-roots involvement is his considerable research and scholarship as seen in his books.

The first of these SHANTIES FROM THE SEVEN SEAS (1961), put flesh and blood onto the bones of songs given to us by the earlier collectors. With his word and pen drawings he stripped away the romantic "Jolly Jack Tar" image of old time sailors and really showed us the rough life of the hardcases, shellbacks and "bum and stiff from every quarter," with its toughness and loneliness. All of this allows us to get a real feel for the songs and shanties left to us from an important era in our nation's song life.

Stan was born appropriately on the edge of the sea, in Hoylake (Wirral) Coastguard Station, 71 years ago, so the sea was his chosen natural career. He sailed and shantied on the last British commercial working sailing ship THE GARTHPOOL until she was wrecked in a storm in the early 30s off the coast of Africa. As young Stan was at the helm at the time of the wreck you can imagine the story he survived to tell. In fact his stories of the sea from his own experiences and research listened to over a quiet drink are spell-binding in the best folk tradition.

Obviously after the loss of THE GARTHPOOL Stan shipped in more conventional ships all over the world. This was halted by his capture by the Germans in Indonesia during World Ar II. As a prisoner of war his talents for stage work and painting were appreciated in the camp. After release Stan picked up where he had left off, sailing and working his way round every part of the globe. Here his talent for foreign languages unconsciously helped him gather the bulk of his material for his second book SAILOR TOWN (1966). This book dealt with the sailor on shore and added to our particular knowledge of the famous characters who frequent his songs and the equally famous "welfare centres" the sailors visited for solace and comfort of every kind in all the ports in the world.

The books records and appearances at clubs, festivals on radio and TV really flowed when he settled as instructor in Seamanship at the Outward Bound School, Aberdovey. Settled being the word for here he met and married his lovely Bron, then followed their two lads Martin and Philip, who now display a fair instrumental and vocal talent in the folk field with and without the old man.

At the school, of course, he passed on to the young his vast knowledge of the sea. Not just the practicalities of sailing but also the folk-lore and language as well. In this way he has helped tremendously in maintaining the oral tradition. Eventually Stan became the Curator of the school's Maritime Museum up to his retirement.

Gold Medal Award could have been given to Stan Hugill in recognition of all that he has done to maintain and expand our interest in the songs and lore of the sea up to his retirement. However, when Stan retired the avalanche really began to run. First there came a book of Shanties for Schools, then as a 70th Birthday treat he was invited by the Americans to join them in a Bi-Centennial Festival of the Sea, which culminated with Stan shantying one of the big square-rigged, tall ships all the way from Bermuda to New York for the 4th July celebrations. This feat combined with his already considerable reputation in academic and folk-lore circles was enough to make Stan somewhat of a Bi-Centennial Superstar in America. Over the years in fact many leading American folk-lorists and anthropologists, including Wm Doerflinger, have visited him and he regularly corresponds with such luminaries as Gershon Legman and Ken Goldstein. In fact his books are required reading for the guides at the famous Mystic Seaport Maritime Museum in New England.

At present an illustrated, full colour, glossy coffee table type book of shanties and stories is being launched around the world in several languages. He also has ready and awaiting a publisher, a massive Encyclopaedia of the Sea. Recently he has once again taken up his palette to produce some vivid paintings of the old time sailors life.

So Stan is without doubt, a special person and his unique contribution to our knowledge of sea songs and folk-lore of the sea is staggering from one person. We must thank him for this and promise to help him disseminate it to all who enjoy the sea as he does. I am sure those of you present will find that after Stan's initial embarrassment at this flowery citation he will stand before you, hitch up his belt and say "I remember when" and what you will hear after that will be Stan Hugill still at his life's work.