

As already mentioned, the publications include listings of recommended records under a “Folk Songs” heading. However, few records listed would be described as ‘folk’ today, even many of those recorded under the auspices of the EFDSS (English Folk Dance and Song Society). For the most part, the recordings are orchestral arrangements by the likes of Percy Grainger, Cecil Sharp and Ralph Vaughan Williams, or voice and piano arrangements featuring such classical luminaries as Kathleen Ferrier, Peter Pears and Benjamin Britten. Certainly, reviews of vocal performances tend to be in terms of classical performance characteristics. As Jones (2009, p. 8) says of post-war ‘folk’ records:

[Although] Owen Brannigan, Richard Lewis and Kathleen Ferrier [made] popular and accomplished recordings of British folk song, [these] were not quite the real thing. Real folk song did not have stirring orchestral arrangements conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent and they were not sung in wonderfully-modulated tones, complete with massed choirs to join in with the remaining rumbustious bits, [whilst] the in-strict-tempo stranglehold of orchestrated country dance music [such as by the HMV label’s Folk Dance Orchestra] continued the false, if highly popular, pre-war idea of folk music being predominantly something to accompany organised dance...

Indeed, Sackville-West and Shawe-Taylor (1953, p. 114) are not particularly kind about much of the available repertoire:

The Scots are no purists in regard to their folk songs. The record catalogues groan under a host of entries which, when heard, only rise infinitesimally above the run of commercial music by the merit of their tunes; the arrangements are in the worst tradition of Victorian church music. And yet, since every new catalogue (Parlophone’s especially) contains such mawkish items in profusion, we must infer that Ye Hielands and Ye Lawlands (and Ye London Scottish too) are happy in their listening.

By the time the revised edition of *The Record Guide* was published, they were confirmed in their suggestion that many were happy in their listening based on the fact that, “...the annual deletions leave this section barely touched...” (Ibid., 1955, p. 275.)

| Publication | Year | Records considered |
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| <i>The Record Guide</i> | 1951 | All UK 78s and LPs available up to the end of 1950, plus late arrivals. Some Supraphon and L'Oiseau-Lyre imports. |
| <i>The Record Year</i> | 1952 | All UK 78s issued between January 1951 and May/June 1952 inclusive, plus late arrivals. All LPs currently available. Some Supraphon and L'Oiseau-Lyre imports. |
| <i>The Record Year 2</i> | 1953 | All UK 78s, 7" SPs and MPs issued between mid-1952 and June/July-1953, plus late arrivals. All LPs currently available. No imports. |
| <i>The Record Guide (2e.)</i> | 1955 | All formats (78s, LPs, 7" SPs, 7" EPs and pre-recorded tapes) available in the UK as at late 1954. Some Supraphon imports. |
| <i>The Record Guide Supplement</i> | 1956 | All formats (as above) issued in the UK from late-1954 to mid-1955. Some Supraphon imports. |

Table I. Descriptions of records, formats and time-span considered in *The Record Guide* and each supplementary volume.