

Myra and Red Abbott on Alan Lomax's radio show

Myra: Yes, we went to Ballads and Blues and we used to hear Bert Lloyd, and Alexis Korner, and I suppose that was a good basis. We only went to listen. I knew that I could sing, but I didn't know anything about folk music.

Red: At the same time Myra, there was a superb weekly programme on BBC radio, on folk.

Sue: Oh, what was that?

Myra: Which one was that?

Red: I've forgotten the title of it, but it was the first of the Folk on Two sort of things, you know.

Sue: They originally had one called Folk on Friday, but I think that was a bit later, I didn't think that was in the fifties.

Red: This was in the fifties.

Myra: I don't remember it.

Red: Well, I can clearly remember it. And the American– the archivist– the American archivist.

Myra: Oh, you know! He discovered Shirley Collins. What's his name?

Red: Well, he linked with Bert Lloyd and he went round the country with his recording machine, country singers, you know.

Myra: Alan Lomax!

Red: That's right. Now, this programme was heavily based on Alan Lomax's findings, so it was at that time. And that was powerful stuff.

Myra: But again, it was American– Sonny Terry, Brownie McGhee...

Red: No, no, this was the origin of the English revival of traditional folk. I'm sure, as far as the population was concerned, I'm not saying nothing happened before that, [Ewan] MacColl and Bert Lloyd had been grinding away for a long time, no doubt, but this made it available to the population at large, and it grew from there.

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