



One Saturday evening in 1953, **Alan Lomax** and **Peter Kennedy**, with tape-machine in tow, visited **The Ship Inn**, a pastoral public house situated in the village of Blaxhall, Suffolk, East Anglia. The Ship was by that time already well-known for its vigorous afternoon sessions of folk-singing and step-dancing, which had been going strong since at least the early days of the century.

Under the stern direction of chairman Wicketts Richardson — who calls the crowd to order and announces the singers — “the old boys” performed ballads (“The Three Jolly Sportsmen”), topical pieces (“The Bonny Bunch of Roses”), bawdy numbers (“The Nutting Girl”), and step-danced to tunes pumped out on the melodeon, while the publicans, Mr. and Mrs. Hewitt, kept the pint glasses filled.

“**Singing at the Ship Inn: Alan Lomax's 1953 Blaxhall Recordings**” is a lively, rollicking, and slightly boozy portrait of a treasured English singing tradition, still honored today at the Ship Inn.

(In 1955, Kennedy and Lomax returned to Blaxhall, where they made a short film, called “Here’s A Health to the Barley Mow” and featuring many of the same singers on “Singing At the Ship.” It can be viewed online via the East Anglian Film Archive.)

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