

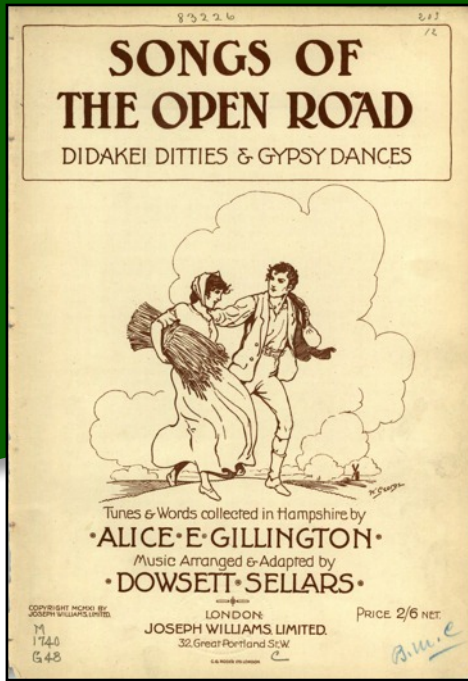
The Hither Side of the Hedge

The Hither Side of the Hedge tells the story of Alice Gillington (1863-1934), a respectable clergyman's daughter who defied convention by purchasing a caravan from Gypsy friends she had met in Sholing, living in it with her brother John in the village of Thorney Hill in the New Forest from 1910 until the early 1920s. These years are chronicled through prolific correspondence between Alice and the secretary of the Gypsy Lore Society, Robert Scott Macfie, archived in the Special Collections at the University of Liverpool Library.



In 2011 the musicians of Jigfoot came together with dancers Jo and Simon Harmer to revive and re-invigorate the step dancing of the southern counties. Alice's book *Songs of the Open Road* - songs, music and dance descriptions collected from Gypsies around Southampton and the New Forest and published in 1911 - proved to be a source of interesting material. As a result the group has taught step dance in many settings including folk festivals, education and community groups.

Further research into the life of Alice Gillington revealed an interesting story which, illustrated by her correspondence, stories and poems together with the collected material, formed the basis of our performance piece *The Hither Side Of The Hedge*.



We have been fortunate that Gypsy historian, genealogist and step-dancer Janet Keet-Black, Peter Ingram, an authority on all things Romany, and Val Shipley have generously shared with the group their knowledge of dancing, Gypsy culture and the families with whom Alice Gillington became friends.

Gillington, A.E., 1911. Songs of the Open Road: Didakei Ditties & Gypsy Dances.
<http://hdl.handle.net/1802/19735>

Yates, M. and Roud, S., 2006. Alice E. Gillington: Dweller on the roughs.
<http://www.forest-tracks.co.uk/hampshirevoices/pages/alicegillington.html>

The Hither Side of the Hedge video trailer <https://youtu.be/gW27ljAwK1Y>

The group are available for workshops and presentations. For further information please contact:

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