

The *Notes and Queries*
Folklore Column,
1849-1947:

Subject Indexes

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By

Stephen Miller

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INTRODUCTION

It was William J. Thoms (1803–85) who in a letter to the *Athenæum* in 1846 coined the word “folk-lore,” and went on to establish a column in that journal for contributions to this newly-titled field.¹ That column, however, failed.² It was Thoms who as the founder and first editor of *Notes and Queries* opened a similar column there. That one, this time, thrived and it far outlasted him, establishing his reputation as Jonathan Roper has recently written:

The establishment of the *Notes and Queries* folklore corpus should be considered as one of Thoms’ foremost achievements, whose significance is heightened by the absence of any national folklore archive in England (unlike most of the other countries in northern Europe). It is a major source for English folklore studies, and, in some cases, the only firm point of departure.³

That said, we do not have a clear idea of what is contained in this corpus of English folklore and vernacular culture given that still lacking is an overall index to its contents.

“THE WANT OF GOOD INDEXES”

In 1878, the year of its foundation, the Folk-Lore Society (of which Thoms was its first Director) reported that:

The want of good indexes to some of our folk-lore books has long been felt, and it is suggested that the publication of such indexes should be undertaken by the Society. Mr James Britten, F.L.S. is in hopes of being able to undertake the Index to the folk-lore columns in *Notes and Queries*. The Council will be glad to receive further help in this direction.⁴

¹ For the first letter dated 22 August 1846, see (Merton 1846a) The response of the *Athenæum* that same issue is (The Athenæum 1846). His second letter to the *Athenæum* dated 29 August 1846 is (Merton 1846b).

² (Miller 2011)

³ (Roper 2007, 210)

⁴ (Folk-Lore Society 1878, 251)

The next year, 1879, the First Annual Report had Britten's projected index as being "in active preparation,"⁵ mentioning later that year "Mr James Britten, F.L.S. is carrying out his intention of indexing the Folk-Lore contributions to *Notes and Queries*, and the Rev. Charles Swainson has kindly promised to assist in the work."⁶ "In course of early preparation," was its status for 1880,⁷ and mentioned again so in the Annual Report for that year.⁸ By the end of the year, Britten was promising more than just an index to *N&Q*, adding to his plate an "Index of the Names of British Spirits, Ghosts, Boggarts, Fairies, &c.," as well as those to "British Popular Games," "Popular Names of Days in Britain," and, finally, "Popular Nomenclature of Diseases."⁹

Given the number of titles and work involved it is not surprising that these various indexes are listed only as "in preparation" in 1881,¹⁰ though by the date of the Fourth Annual Report in 1882, just the "Index to the Folk-Lore in 'Notes and Queries'" was seemingly promised to the Society by Britten.¹¹ It is mentioned again in 1883,¹² after which date it is dropped from the Society's programme of publications. In any case, even if it had appeared it would only have provided coverage of *N&Q* to the date of the index's publication and would have necessarily called for subsequent updates and at some date a regular consolidation if it was to be of any use at all.

The next mention of an index being prepared comes much later with A.R. Wright in his Presidential Address for 1928 to the Society. When mentioning the need for an overall general bibliography of folklore, he commented that "[i]t is specially wanted for *Notes and Queries*, and this was actually undertaken by a member."¹³ No further detail is provided and the reference in the footnote is to an earlier planned general bibliography from the Society's annual report for 1899, rather than the *N&Q* index. Regardless of this, the manuscript never saw the light of day. Since then no other effort to provide an index to *N&Q* appears to have been planned, or if so, completed and published.

⁵ (Folk-Lore Society 1879a, 7)

⁶ (Folk-Lore Society 1879b, 230)

⁷ (Folk-Lore Society 1880a, 149)

⁸ (Folk-Lore Society 1880c, 3–4)

⁹ (Folk-Lore Society 1880b, 303)

¹⁰ (Folk-Lore Society 1881, 204)

¹¹ (Folk-Lore Society 1882, 196)

¹² (Folk-Lore Society 1883, 404)

¹³ (Wright 1928, 29)

NOTES AND QUERIES (1849–)

Thoms as seen was the founder and first editor of *Notes and Queries*, and its scope is shown by its subsidiary title, *A Medium of Inter-Communication for Literary Men, Artists, Antiquaries, Genealogists, etc.*¹⁴ It was launched in 1849, with the first issue dated 3 November of that year, Thoms waiting (as Roper has noted) until issue No. 14 (2 February 1850), when the journal could be seen to be successful, to announce under “Notices to Correspondents” that there would henceforth be a folklore column in *N&Q*.¹⁵ The next issue, No. 15 (9 February 1850), contained the first “Folk Lore” column, which was made up of a single contribution, “Metrical Charms,” submitted by Thoms himself.¹⁶ While he may well have been cautious in starting the column, he was also somewhat ungenerous as the first Folklore Column in *N&Q* should have as rights started with the query from “Pwcca” in No. 11 (12 January 1850), about the *Mari Lwyd*.¹⁷ On another point, it is as “Folk Lore” that the column is consistently headed throughout the years, and never as “Folk-Lore,” despite Thoms’s compound coinage and editorship for that matter.¹⁸

N&Q appeared on a weekly basis and issues were gathered together into volumes and then into series. Volume one gathered together Numbers 1 to 30 (issues published between 3 November 1849 and 25 May 1850), while volume two consisted of Nos. 31–61, covering the issues for 1 June–28 December 1850. Thereafter, publication was reckoned on an annual calendar basis, with two six-monthly volumes per year, covering the months January–June & July–December respectively, and with twelve volumes making up a series. After a series completion, a General Index was published the following year, save the one for the 15th Series, which appeared later in 1955.

N&Q was not established it must be said for the failing Folklore Column in the *Athenæum* to be somehow given a second chance or another life as it was launched whilst that column was still nominally running. *N&Q* was a title whose columns were open to all and to any topic though there were to be favourites as such as the General Index to the First

¹⁴ For Thoms’ own account of the early days of *N&Q*, see (Thoms 1876d, a, b, c, 1877a, b, c).

¹⁵ (Unsigned [but William J. Thoms] 1850)

¹⁶ (Thoms 1850)

¹⁷ (Pseud [signed as “Pwcca”] 1850)

¹⁸ As Emrich points out, *N&Q* employed the unhyphenated form of “Folk Lore” to title both the Column and the Classified Heading in the General Index but reverted to the hyphenated form in the indexes themselves (Emrich 1946, 365 fn. 30).

Series shows with its list of Classified Headings—Anonymous Works; Books, notices of new; Coins; Documents, inedited; Epigrams; Epitaphs; Folk Lore; Inscriptions; Juneus; Photography; Popiana; Proverbs; Quotations; Reprints Suggested; Shakespeare; Songs and Ballads. What was distinctive, however, was that the folklore contributions were gathered together in the body of the journal under a formal heading, which was the case even after Thoms gave up the editorship in 1872. The column outlasted his death in 1885, as did *N&Q* itself which is still in publication, but the Folklore Column ended its days in 1942, with its ending unremarked.

THE NOTES AND QUERIES PHENOMENON

What Thoms could never have foreseen was the establishment of similar columns in newspapers, a number often later appearing in book form, or journals focused on a particular English county. There appears at present to be no bibliographical overview or simple checklist for that matter of this particular genre of publication. A simple search on Library Hub Discover throws up some thirty-six print titles alone. As ever, it is a moot point as to how much material on folklore and vernacular culture appears there, but with the digitisation of newspapers through the British Newspaper Archive initiative and the (haphazard) appearance of such journals in the Internet Archive there is a secondary corpus of sorts now becoming available for research, an unintended but welcome consequence of Thoms having established *N&Q* in the first place.

NOTES AND QUERIES: THE GENERAL INDEXES

The Folklore Column spanned some fifteen series of *N&Q* and thereby that same number of General Indexes. Duncan Emrich in 1946 was the first to consider some of the issues that arise with the indexes, first with the column itself and then its indexing. As he remarked, “Thoms frequently placed communications properly belonging under ‘Folk Lore’ in the general queries section of the paper.”¹⁹ That said, the Folklore Column did not appear in each and every issue of *N&Q*, there was never that amount of material to hand, and at times simple editorial needs for space to be filled caused material to appear when and where for that matter it did. Often, this appears to have happened in some cases when the contributions were not in a short form but rather sufficient in length to run over a page or more and so appear as standalone contributions. When working with

¹⁹ (Emrich 1946, 367). Strictly speaking under the “Notes” heading though some do appear under “Queries.”

N&Q one always notices items of interest that do not make it into the index.²⁰

Turning to the indexing of the Folklore Column, Emrich pointed out:

[...] no conscious effort was made to work out a general classification with divisions and subdivisions. While readers understood that communications on folk “cures” belonged under “folk-lore,” there was no lesser subdivision, and the cures themselves were not even grouped in the indexes. “Wart incantation,” for example, appears under “wart” and not under “incantation” or “cure,” while “Dock-tree, a cure for boils,” appears under “Dock-tree” and not under “boils” or “cure.”²¹

Whilst this is so, Emrich it might be said is looking at the index through the wrong end of the (folkloric) telescope—the Folklore Column was just one of the number of Classified Headings used to mark off entries in the General Indexes. Despite the tie-up between Thoms and the very term itself, the Folklore column was never going to be indexed further with the depth that Emrich perhaps sought, which he did, however, acknowledge:

That this should have been the case is wholly natural considering the fact that Thoms was working in a new field with a great mass of fresh and relatively unknown material pouring into the column. Since the matter of classification has not been resolved in the United States after more than fifty years of work in the field, we are hardly in a position to throw stones at *Notes & Queries* of the last century.²²

He went on to pay a fitting tribute to Thoms, “[t]he wonder is that Thoms’s feeling for the field was as exact as it was. He had an accurate sense for what was folklore and what was not, and never strayed over the line to include journalistic material of the type which is presently plaguing the field.”²³

“THAT IT IS A PERFECT INDEX, WE WILL NOT INSIST”

While the Preface to the General Index for the First Series of *N&Q* is unsigned, it was authored by Thoms.²⁴ Whilst each volume had been issued with an Index, “[a] search through our separate Indexes has become

²⁰ A personal favourite is the query over the enormous plum pudding boiled up for the Paignton Fair in Exeter in 1809, see (Coleman 1853).

²¹ (Emrich 1946, 367)

²² (Emrich 1946, 367)

²³ (Emrich 1946, 367)

²⁴ (Unsigned [but William J. Thoms] 1856b)

a work of time and trouble,”²⁵ and so it was decided to issue a separate Series Index, “to make the literary riches accumulated during the first six years of our existence permanently and easily available, by the publication of a complete Index.”²⁶ And of this “complete Index”:

That Index is now before them. It is not a mere throwing together of the twelve separate Indexes which have already been published. It is a new and enlarged Index, based upon its predecessors. That it is a perfect Index, we will not insist, for who ever saw an Index which might be so described? but how complete it is, a glance will show, and further investigation will confirm.²⁷

The index was compiled by James Yeowell, Thoms adding, “[t]he great care and attention which he has bestowed upon its compilation can scarcely be imagined by those who have not attempted some such work.”²⁸ Emrich started that “further investigation” with the comments he made already described above. Others can be made and are the familiar issues with any index, firstly, the granularity of the index itself, namely how many—or how few—keywords are allocated to each contribution to the Folklore Column. And then, as the second issue, those very keywords themselves. At the end of the day, each Series Index was produced for the contemporary reader and not to meet the demands for an age yet to come.

NOTES AND QUERIES AND THE THREAD

Why was the Folklore Column a success in *N&Q* and not in the *Athenæum*? In the latter, Thoms had presided over the column with the air of a pedant scholar, adding footnotes to contributions, placing his own comments at the end, using them to hector correspondents, and being selective with the contributions sent in. This manner of his was to be dropped from *N&Q*, and in any case he now had the journal itself to edit and little time for anything else.

“To our readers therefore who are seeking for Truth, we repeat ‘When found make a Note of;’ and we must add, ‘till then make a Query,’” were his words,²⁹ and the structure of *N&Q* reflected this, where contributions were grouped under the simple but effective headings of Notes, Queries, and Replies. Miscellanies and Miscellaneous were thrown in for good measure from time to time. This structure set off the most important

²⁵ (Unsigned [but William J. Thoms] 1856b, iii)

²⁶ (Unsigned [but William J. Thoms] 1856b, iii)

²⁷ (Unsigned [but William J. Thoms] 1856b, iii–iv)

²⁸ (Unsigned [but William J. Thoms] 1856b, iv)

²⁹ (Unsigned [but William J. Thoms] 1856a, 3a)

feature and innovation of *N&Q*, namely the thread, by which a chain of answers was set up to an initial query, and where each answer contained the references as to where to find previous contributions on the same topic.³⁰ This had the effect of keeping a topic in front of readers and creating the sense that no matter how short or limited one's own response was, nevertheless, it was one more stone on the cairn. This has a curious knock-on effect when working with the index. A simple query in 1877, about the word *kex*, a dialect name for a plant species, appearing in one of Tennyson's poems, brought forth seven replies, all grouped together in the same issue of *N&Q* as part of the thread and thereby appearing in the index as one entry. So one never knows if an entry in the index points to a single contribution, or to multiple replies as part of a thread. As a consequence, the Folklore Column has greater depth and thereby riches than imagined at first sight.

“TO KNOW WHAT ENGLAND COULD CONTRIBUTE”

In a letter to Jacob Grimm in 1848, to inform him of the folklore column in the *Athenaeum*, Thoms wrote that “You as the head of that branch of literature—the european head ought to know what England could contribute to your Deutsche Mythologie.”³¹ Advertised several years later in *N&Q* in 1850 as forthcoming was *The Folk-Lore of England*, authored by Thoms and to be issued in two volumes.³² This never appeared. Nevertheless, it is thanks to Thoms and to the Folklore Column in *N&Q* that we can come “to know what England could contribute” to a vernacular English version of the Grimm's own *Deutsche Mythologie*.

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³⁰ Not surprisingly, parallels between electronic equivalents such as early Internet newsgroups, mailing lists, and (earlier) bulletin boards with *N&Q* have been noted. See (Leary 2000).

³¹ Letter from W.J. Thoms to Jacob Grimm, 1 May 1848. University Library, Special Collections, Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland. [Formerly held by the one-time Preussischen Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, later the Staatsbibliothek Berlin.] Edited with commentary in (Miller 2014).

³² The subject of (Roper 2007, 210).

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WILLIAM J. THOMS

LETTERS TO THE *ATHENÆUM* (1846)

(1)

Folk-Lore

August 12.

[862c] Your pages have so often given evidence of the interest which you take in what we in England designate as Popular Antiquities, or Popular Literature (though by-the-bye it is more a Lore than a Literature, and would be most aptly described by a good Saxon compound, Folk-Lore,—*the Lore of the People*)—that I am not without hopes of enlisting your aid in garnering the few ears which are remaining, scattered over that [863a] field from which our forefathers might have gathered a goodly crop.

No one who has made the manners, customs, observances, superstitions, ballads, proverbs, &c., of the olden time his study, but must have arrived at two conclusions:—the first, how much that is curious and interesting in these matters is now entirely lost—the second, how much may yet be rescued by timely exertion. What Hone endeavoured to do in his ‘Every-Day Book,’ &c., the *Athenæum*, by its wider circulation, may accomplish ten times more effectually—gather together the infinite number of minute facts, illustrative of the subject I have mentioned, which are scattered over the memories of its thousands of readers, and preserve them in its pages, until some James Grimm shall arise who shall do for the Mythology of the British Islands the good service which that profound antiquary and philologist has accomplished for the Mythology of Germany. The present century has scarcely produced a more remarkable book, imperfect as its learned author confesses it to be, than the second edition of the ‘*Deutsche Mythologie*.’ and, what is it?—a mass of minute facts, many of which, when separately considered, appear trifling and insignificant,—but, when taken in connexion with the system into which his master-mind has woven them, assume a value that he who first recorded them never dreamed of attributing to them.

How many such facts would one word from you evoke, from the north and from the south—from John o’ Groats’ to the Land’s End! How many

readers would be glad to show their gratitude for the novelties which you, from week to week, communicate to them, by forwarding to you some record of old Time—some recollection of a now neglected custom—some fading legend, local tradition, or fragmentary ballad!

Nor would such communications be of service to the English antiquary alone. The connexion between the FOLK-LORE of England (remember I claim the honour of introducing the epithet Folk-Lore, as Disraeli does of introducing Father-Land, into the literature of this country) and that of Germany is so intimate that such communications will probably serve to enrich some future edition of Grimm's Mythology.

Let me give you an instance of this connexion.—In one of the chapters of Grimm, he treats very fully of the parts which the Cuckoo plays in Popular Mythology—of the prophetic character with which it has been invested by the voice of the people; and gives many instances of the practice of deriving predictions from the number of times which its song is heard. He also records a popular notion, “that the Cuckoo never sings till he has thrice eaten his fill of cherries.” Now, I have lately been informed of a custom which formerly obtained among children in Yorkshire, that illustrates the fact of a connexion between the Cuckoo and the Cherry,—and that, too, in their prophetic attributes. A friend has communicated to me that children in Yorkshire were formerly (and may be still) accustomed to sing round a cherry-tree the following invocation:—

“Cuckoo, Cherry-tree,
Come down and tell me
How many years I have to live.”

Each child then shook the tree,—and the number of cherries which fell betokened the years of its future life. The Nursery Rhyme which I have quoted, is, I am aware, well known. But the manner in which it was applied is not recorded by Hone, Brand, or Ellis:—and is one of those facts, which, trifling in themselves, become of importance when they form links in a great chain—one of those facts which a word from the *Athenæum* would gather in abundance for the use of future inquirers into that interesting branch of literary antiquities,—our Folk-Lore.

AMBROSE MERTON.

P.S.—It is only honest that I should tell you I have long been contemplating a work upon our ‘*Folk-Lore*’ (under *that title*, mind Messrs. A, B, and C,—so do not try to forestall me);—and I am personally interested in the success of the experiment which I have, in this letter, albeit imperfectly, urged you to undertake.

Ambrose Merton, [*pseud.* William J. Thoms], “Folk-Lore,” *The Athenæum*, No. 982 (22 August 1846), 862c–63a.

THE ATHENÆUM'S RESPONSE

[863a] We have taken some time to weigh the suggestion of our correspondent—desirous to satisfy ourselves [863b] that any good of the kind which he proposes could be effected in such space as we are able to spare from the many other demands upon our columns; and having before our eyes the fear of that shower of trivial communication which a notice in conformity with his suggestion is too likely to bring. We have finally decided that, if our antiquarian correspondents be earnest and well-informed, and subject their communications to the condition of having something worthy to communicate, we may—now that the several antiquarian societies have brought their meetings, for the season, to a close—at once add to the amusement of a large body of our readers and be the means of effecting some valuable salvage for the future historian of old customs and feelings, within a compass that shall make no unreasonable encroachment upon our columns. With these views, however, we must announce to our future contributors under the above head, that their communications will be subjected to a careful sifting—both as regards value, authenticity, and novelty; and that they will save both themselves and us much unnecessary trouble if they will refrain from offering any facts or speculations which do not at once *need* recording and deserve it. Brevity will be always a recommendation—where there are others; and great length in any article will, of necessity, exclude it, even where its merits would recommend. The cases will be very rare in which an article should exceed a couple of our columns,—and the exception can be only when the article itself will bear dividing without injury. But notices much shorter will always be more welcome;—and, in fact, extent will be, on all occasions, an important element in our estimate of the admissibility of a communication. We will hint, also, to our correspondents, that we should, in each case, prefer receiving (though we do not make it absolute as a rule,) the confidential communication of the writer's real name and address.

(2)

Folk-Lore

Bartholomew Tide.

[886c] I do not know that I can better show my gratitude for the insertion in last Saturday's *Athenæum* of my letter inviting you to receive, and your country readers to furnish, communications on the subject of our "Folk-Lore," than by indicating to "intending" correspondents some points connected with our Popular Mythology and Observances, respecting which new facts and existing traditions might prove of considerable value.

I would observe, in the first place that, as the Fairy Mythology of England, as preserved to us in the writings of Shakespeare (its best and most beautiful expositor), exhibits a striking intermixture of Celtic and Teutonic elements, all local traditions respecting that mystic race,—whether

Of elves, of hills, brooks, standing lakes, or groves,—

will be useful in developing the influence which such elements respectively exercised upon this poetical branch of our Popular Mythology. And as I agree with Mr Keightley—no mean authority on such a subject—in opinion "that the belief in Fairies is by no means extinct in England,—and that in districts, if there be any such, where steam-engines, cotton mills, mail coaches, * and similar exorcists have not yet penetrated, numerous legends might be collected,"—I am not without hope of seeing many "a roundel and fairy song" rescued from destruction through the agency of the *Athenæum*.

Can no Devonshire correspondent furnish new and untold stories of his native Pixies? Are there no records of a fairy pipe-manufactory to be gathered at Swin-borne, in Worcestershire?—In the mining and mountainous districts of Derbyshire are all "such antique fables and fairy toys" entirely extinct?—If so, is not the neighbourhood of Haddon, or of Hardwicke, or of both, still visited by the coach drawn by headless steeds, driven by a coachman as headless as themselves?—Does not such an equipage still haunt the mansion of Parsloes, in Essex?—and could not some correspondent from that county furnish you with stories of the inhabitants of Coggeshall, to prove them very rivals of the Wise Men of Gotham?—Is the Barguest no longer seen in Yorkshire?—Is "howdening" altogether obsolete in Kent—and, if so, when was this last trace of a heathen rite performed?—Are the legends of Tregeagle no longer current in Cornwall?—These are all subjects not undeserving attention: and it should be remembered that legends and traditions which are considered trifling, in the localities to which they more immediately relate, assume an interest in the eyes of strangers to whom they are not familiar—and an

importance when placed in apposition with cognate materials, by the light which they receive and furnish from such juxtaposition.

There is another matter, too, on which local information is much to be desired while it is still attainable. I mean the “Feasts” which are still annually celebrated in the more remote parts of the country; many of which are, doubtless, of very considerable antiquity—even as old as the days of Heathenism. This is a branch of our Popular Antiquities which—to use a happy phrase of Horace Walpole’s—has not been tapped in England; one which can now be thoroughly and properly investigated only by ascertaining, in each case, the following particulars, among others:—the day on which [887a] the Feast is held; the peculiar observances by which it is accompanied, and—which will serve, in some measure, to illustrate the history of the climate in this country, and (strange combination!) the progress of social improvement—the peculiar dishes which are usually introduced on such festivals.

I ought to apologise for thus occupying so much of your space: but, as you have kindly consented, at my request, to open your pages to contributions on the subject of our ‘Folk-Lore,’ I thought it might be of advantage to point out to correspondents some matters respecting which communications would be both valuable and acceptable.

Ambrose Merton.

* This was written, by Mr Keightley, in 1828; but now, what Chaucer said of the “elves” may almost be applied to the mails—“But now can no man see non *mails* mo.” [Thomas Keightley, *The Fairy Mythology*, 2 vols (London: W.H. Ainsworth, 1828)]

Ambrose Merton, [*pseud.* William J. Thoms], “Folk-Lore,” *The Athenæum*, No. 983 (29 August 1846): 886c–87a.

Notes and Queries (1850)

Notices to Correspondents

FOLK LORE. *We have received several letters, begging us to open our columns to the reception of articles and notes on our fast-fading FOLK LORE, and reminding us what good service The Athenæum did when it consented to receive communications on that interesting subject. We acknowledge with gratitude—for the point is one very interesting to us—the readiness with which The Athenæum listened to the suggestions of a Correspondent, and what benefits resulted to that interesting branch of Archaeological study, when that influential journal consented to devote a portion of its valuable space to the reception of such notices. We at once, therefore, accede to the suggestions of our Correspondent; and, following the example of our widely circulated contemporary, take this opportunity of assuring our now numerous readers that any contributions illustrative of The Folk Lore of England, the Manners, Customs, Observances, Superstitions, Ballads, Proverbs, &c. of the Olden Time, will always find welcome admission to our pages. We think, too, we may venture to promise that such communications shall be illustrated, when they admit of it, from the writings of the continental antiquaries.*

Unsigned [but William J. Thoms], “Notices to Correspondents,” *Notes & Queries* (1st ser.) Vol. I, No. 14 (2 February 1850), 223b.

THE *NOTES AND QUERIES* INDEXES



The General Index to the First Series introduced what it referred to as Classified Articles (“[...] in the general alphabet are included, for reasons too obvious to require explanation, the following classified headings [...]”). Included were FOLKLORE, PROVERBS, SONGS AND BALLADS, and these were present in the General Indexes for Series 1–14, with the last two only making it into Series 15. While FOLKLORE had been formally dropped, entries did appear in the index under that heading. RIMES also appeared as a Classified Heading for Series 11–13.

Besides the Folklore Column in *N&Q*, material of interest to folklorists and others interested in vernacular culture is also to be found in the General Indexes under such other headings as Nursery Rhymes, Phrases, Rhymes, and Riddles, and for dialectologists there are entries under Dialects and Provincialisms to consider. Even then, this does not exhaust the material available as there are supplementary or extra entries that appear before or after the entries listed under a stand out heading (whether as a Classified Heading or not).

As ever, any index can only be as good as the headwords, but here it must be stressed they are the ones as they appeared in the General Indexes to *N&Q* Series 1–15 and published between 1856 and 1955.

EDITORIAL METHOD

The indexes presented here are more than simple concatenations of the entries from the General Indexes as they have divided here when called for into a number of separate subject indexes. As regards the keywords themselves they have been edited where needed to allow related material to be pulled together under a common keyword, and on occasion rewritten for better ordering, or simplified. They have also been placed and grouped together as subentries where appropriate. Given the sheer number of entries to be dealt with, there will be a certain number of strays that have been missed. Song titles have of necessity been regularised, as have titles elsewhere where called for. Caution is needed when using the title index in SONGS AND BALLADS, as well as other indexes where titles are mentioned, as

this does not always lead to full texts if that is what is being sought. At times the reference leads to just a mention in passing of the song or ballad in question.

The various spellings of folk-lore and folk lore have been edited to read throughout as folklore. Following the old adage that Scotch can only be applied to eggs, mist, and whisky, Scottish has been substituted as an adjective. Magyar is now the more familiar Hungarian, and modern spellings are used for Bedaween, Corean, Baskish, Roumanian, Servian, Soudanese, and Thibet (Bedouin, Korean, Basque, Romanian, Serbian, Sudanese, and Tibet). Similarly, Hindoo is spelt as Hindu, Voodooism as Voodooism, Moroccan is used instead of Moorish, Sri Lankan replaces Ceylonese and Singhalese, and Indian is used for Indo-Mahomedan and Muslim for Mussulman. A number of ethnic labels have been edited for cultural sensitivity, so Eskimo appears as Inuit, Gypsy as Roma, Hottentot as Khosian, Lapp as Sámi, and Negro as African American. As regards the n-word, it appears once in the title of a proverb and is represented as n*.

Drawn together here as a result of this exercise are the entries for the following nine overall topics: (1) Dialects, (2) Folklore, (3) Nursery Rhymes, (4) Phrases, (5) Proverbs, (6) Provincialisms, (7) Rhymes, (8) Riddles, (9) Songs and Ballads. On a final point, no entries have been omitted, however miscellaneous or minor they may seem now.

THE SUBJECT INDEXES

1. FOLKLORE

Entries under **Folklore** (Series 1 to 15) with other entries drawn from the General Index (Series 1–15, save 2). Supplementary material incorporated into the index where appropriate (headwords marked with *) and other indexes (unmarked). Included here is “Christmas Rhymers in Ulster” from Series 11, and “Field names indicative of local legend” (Series 5). Chapbooks as a headword brings together entries drawn from the General Index under Chapbooks (Series 2, 5–7, 10) and Chapbook literature (Series 4). The **FOLKLORE** index (Series 1–15) has 5,052 entries brought together here under 1,169 headwords.

2. NURSERY RHYMES

Entries under **Nursery Rimes** (Series 9 & 10), **Rimes** (Series 11 & 13), **Rhymes** (Series 14); other entries drawn from the General Index (Series 2–

9, 11, 15). Titles merged with those in the Rhymes index. General *cum* miscellaneous references only indexed here as a result.

3. PHRASES

Entries under **Phrases** (Series 15 only).

4. PROVERBS

Entries under **Proverbs and Phrases** (Series 1–14), **Proverbs** (Series 15); other entries drawn from the General Index (Series 1–15). Two indexes: (1) titles and (2) general *cum* miscellaneous (including subjects and supplementary entries).

5. RHYMES

Entries under **Rimes** (Series 14); other entries drawn from the General Index (Series 1–15). Three indexes: (1) titles (with those from **Nursery Rhymes** merged in), (2) topics, and (3) general *cum* miscellaneous.

6. RIDDLES

Entries under **Riddles** (Series 10 & 14); other entries drawn from the General Index (Series 2 to 15) (save 1 (irrelevant), 4 & 5, 14). Two indexes: (1) titles and (2) general *cum* miscellaneous.

7. SONGS AND BALLADS

Entries under **Songs and Ballads** (Series 1–15) with supplementary material from Series 1–15 (save 3 & 5). Six indexes: (1) titles, (2) topics, (3) geographical, (4) general *cum* miscellaneous (these four all relate to the British Isles); with the remainder of the entries as (5) foreign titles and (6) general *cum* miscellaneous (non-British).

8. PROVINCIALISMS

Entries under that heading from the General Index (Series 1, 2, 5, 6, 10, 12). **Polperro Provincialisms** (Series 1) replaces the general references to the material in the index; added too are **Devonshire Provincialisms** (Series 7).

9. DIALECT(S)

Entries under those headings from the General Index (Series 1–5, 7–9, 10 & 11, 13 & 14). Two indexes: (1) English & Scottish counties and (2) general *cum* miscellaneous.

OVERVIEW

The number of references in each index is as follows: **Folklore** (5,450), **Nursery Rhymes** (61), **Phrases** (557), **Proverbs** (677), **Rhymes** (514), **Riddles** (109), **Songs and Ballads** (4,623), **Provincialisms** (74), and **Dialects** (103), making a grand total of **12,168** references. As regards titles, **Songs and Ballads** (1,722), **Phrases** (342), **Proverbs** (23), **Rhymes** (183), and **Riddles** (28).



NOTES AND QUERIES

FOLKLORE

Aberdeenshire, 3s ii 483.

Abbot's Ann (Hampshire), 5s vi 86; 5s vi 235.

Adam's apple, 12s i 245.

Adders and their power, 2s v 209; adders' fat a cure for deafness, 11s iii 69; 11s iii 117; 11s iii 171; adder stone, 4s ix 155.

Aeroplane flights and charms, 13s cliii 380.

African American, 5s i 296; 5s iv 463; 6s iv 534; 6s viii 346; 7s ix 68; 7s ix 178.

Agricultural, 6s ii 265.

Ague charms and cures, 1s ii 130; 1s ii 259; 1s iv 53; 1s iv 251; 1s v 413; 1s vi 5; 1s ix 242; 2s i 386; 2s i 523; 2s ii 326; 2s x 184; 2s x 364; 2s xii 492; 3s ii 343; 4s vii 443; 4s vii 483; 4s viii 17; 4s viii 133; 4s xi 500; 4s xii 469; 5s i 204; 5s i 287; 5s i 505; 6s vi 6; 6s x 18; 7s xii 65; 7s xii 354.

Alabaster powder used medicinally, 11s vi 129; 11s vi 175; 11s vi 234; 4s x 409; 4s x 495; 4s x 525; 4s viii 506.

All Hallow E'en, 3s i 223; 4s i 361; 4s i 496; 10s xi 6.

All Souls' Day, 4s ii 553; 8s iv 359; at Salerno, 13s cliii 351; 13s cliii 388.

Almond tree, 8s iv 809; 8s vi 97; 8s vi 157; 8s vi 219; 8s vi 292; 8s vii 172.

Amber, 12s vi 271; 12s vi 297; 12s vi 318; 12s vi 339; 12s vii 58; 12s vii 318.

American, 2s xii 303; 4s vii 91; 4s vii 92; 5s xii 166; 6s i 16; 6s i 75; 6s i 234; 6s vi 266; 6s vi 414; 6s vi 476; 6s vii 317; 6s vii 357; 6s viii 144.

Amethyst supposed to repel intoxication, 13s clii 264.

Amulets, 11s xi 187; 11s xi 256; 11s xi 439; 11s xii 37.

Anatolian, 3s ii 123; 3s viii 106; 3s x 469; 3s xi 454.

Angel of Death, 5s iii 204.

Angelica, 12s iii 51; 12s iii 259; 12s iii 312; 12s iii 372.

Angels adored by the Arabs, 3s xi 180.

Angelsey, 4s ix 255.

Animals in people's insides, 9s vii 222; 9s vii 332; 9s vii 390; 9s xii 414; 9s xii 471; in India, 9s vii 225.

Animals their own physicians, 13s cxlvi 433; 13s cxlvii 249.

Anodyne medicines, 15s clxxvi 228.

Anserine wisdom, 3s xii 478.

Anstwick tales, Yorkshire, 4s viii 504.

Anvil cure for fever, 11s iv 448.

Apples, 6s iv 55; 6s iv 67; christened on St James's Day, 2s i 386; on St Swithin's Day, 5s xii 46; Dorset names for, 10s ix 314; apple tree, 4s viii 322; 4s x 183; 4s x 236;

- 4s x 525; 6s vii 447; 6s vii 496; 6s viii 157; 6s ix 258; 9s ix 169; 9s ix 314; blossom, 9s xi 506; 9s xii 133; flowering in autumn, 11s ii 149; 11s ii 199; offerings, 1s iv 309; 1s v 148; peel, 15s clxxvi 333; 15s clxxvi 376; 15s clxxvii 51; 15s clxxvii 86.
- April, 6s v 327; 6s v 417; April Fool, 5s v 265.
- Arabian, 6s i 311.
- Argyleshire, 4s viii 499.
- Armenian, 4s ii 221; 4s ii 343.
- Arrow (golden), 8s ii 166; 8s ii 375.
- Ascension Day, 7s ii 166; 7s ii 232; 7s ii 355.
- Ash tree, 9s xii 405; and horse shoes, 5s vii 368; 5s ix 65; 5s ix 226; kissed to cure toothache, 8s i 46; leaf, 3s ix 48; sap, 1s iv 380; split, 7s iii 318.
- Ash Wednesday, 2s iv 25.
- Ash winds, 5s v 363; 5s v 456.
- Ashen faggot, 1s iv 309; 4s viii 547; 4s xii 461.
- Asia Minor, 7s xi 64.
- Asiago, 12s ii 48; 12s ii 134.
- Asian, 6s x 466; 7s x 446.
- Asses hypnotized, 10s ii 506; milk and crabb's claws, 2s iv 91.
- Aston Hall (Warwickshire), 4s x 408.
- Astronomy (French pastoral), 10s vii 104.
- Aurora borealis, 6s vii 125; 6s vii 415; 6s viii 133; 6s ix 52; 15s clxxv 113.
- Australian, 6s iii 325; aboriginal, 3s viii 324; 3s ix 528.
- Author and avenger of evil, 9s ix 222; 9s ix 229; 9s x 35; 9s xi 35; 9s xi 455; 9s xii 14; 9s xii 96.
- Azores, 7s vii 106; 7s vii 297.
- Babies, 5s iii 324; bairn's, or child's, piece, 3s iv 82; 5s ii 512; 5s iii 20; first presents, 4s ix 53; 4s ix 135; hair and nails, 2s xii 500; and kittens, 11s ii 509; 11s iii 18; nails bit to prevent thieving, 3s viii 146; tooth, 5s x 165; 5s x 254.
- Bacon (a cure for a cow after calving), 5s vi 337.
- Baconian, 2s iii 343.
- Badgers, 13s cxlix 236.
- Banagher sand (County Londonderry), 8s v 486; 8s vi 113; 8s vi 313.
- Bank notes sprinkled with dragon's blood, 7s ix 424.
- Banns of marriage, 2s i 202; 2s i 280.
- Baptism, 1s ii 197; 3s xii 184; 3s xii 293; 3s xii 403; 4s x 413; 4s x 477; 4s xi 341; 7s v 46; 7s v 133; 7s vi 75; 7s x 185; 7s x 207; 7s x 236; 7s xi 16; 7s xi 94; 7s xi 266; 7s xi 355; 8s iv 429; 8s ix 5; order of boy and girl, 5s iii 424; 5s vi 323; 5s vi 463; 5s vii 257.
- Barbreck's bone, 2s iv 251.
- Bargee leechdoms, 4s xi 274; 4s xi 350; 4s xi 495.

- Barnaby bright, 2s vii 35.
 Barnacles and birds, 12s iii 67.
 Basque, 10s vi 507; 10s vii 73.
 Bastard and his wrist, 7s vi 87; 7s vi 170.
 “Bat Bearaway,” 10s vii 168; 10s vii 258; 10s viii 15.
 Bats and hair cutting, 12s vi 280; and rats (Japanese belief), 13s cli 9.
 Bavarian, 5s x 146.
 Bay, its symbolism, 4s x 312; bay leaves at funerals, 1s ii 196.
 Bayeux, 3s viii 145.
 Beads, blue (in modern folklore), 14s clx 206; 14s clx 248; 14s clx 304; 14s clxi 141.
 Bean feasts, 2s v 209; seeding, 4s i 361; white, 3s i 482.
 Beaver and python, 9s iv 24.
 Bed making, 8s ii 189; 8s ii 272; 8s ii 373; turned on Friday, 7s iv 246; two, 7s x 146.
 Bedfordshire, 7s ix 505.
 Bedouin, 8s iv 246.
 Bees, 1s ii 165; 1s ii 356; 1s iv 436; 1s v 148; 1s v 437; 1s x 321; 1s xii 38; 1s xii 200; 1s xii 488; 6s ii 165; 6s ii 224; 6s iii 407; 6s iii 517; 6s iv 357; 6s iv 374; 6s iv 396; 6s iv 416; 6s iv 496; 6s ix 146; 6s xii 145; 7s x 126; 7s x 177; 7s x 185; 7s x 234; 7s x 312; 8s vii 46; 8s vii 157; 8s x 475; 9s iii 286; 9s iii 418; 10s ii 26; 10s viii 329; 10s ix 433; 13s cxlix 192; 13s cxlix 247; 13s cxlix 283; 13s cxlix 393; 13s clv 80; 13s clv 124; 14s clvii 51; 14s clvii 85; 14s clviii 104; 14s clxvii 210; 14s clxvii 249; 15s clxxvii 8; bees dislike dissensions, 2s xii 492; in China, 10s x 285; in rural France, 4s i 550; informed of a death, 1s iv 270; 1s iv 291; 1s iv 308; 1s vi 288; 1s vi 480; 2s viii 242; informed of their master’s death, 4s iv 23; 4s iv 225; 4s iv 285; 4s iv 521; invited to funerals, 1s iv 309; leaving after a death, 4s x 408; 4s x 524; 4s xi 213; not sold, 1s ix 446; put in mourning, 4s xii 366; swarming, 3s vi 493; 11s iii 406; 11s iii 478; and visitors, 5s vi 462; waking them at a death, 11s vii 388; and wasps, their stings a cure for rheumatism, 13s cxlvi 343.
 Beetles, 6s v 386.
 Belgian, 11s i 187.
 Bellows placed on the chair or table, 5s x 494.
 Bells, 7s ii 66; 7s ii 158; 14s clix 15; 14s clix 170; 14s clix 176; and the grave, 5s ii 84; legends of bells, 14s clviii 388; 14s clviii 444; 14s clx 391; of Bosham, 11s iv 286; rung to avert a storm (French), 13s cxlviii 236; rung over a corpse, 1s v 364.
 Bengalese, 7s ix 145; 7s ix 197.
 Berkshire, 2s ix 380.
 Bernaise (France), 4s xii 366.
 Bible divination, 1s iv 148; bible and key, 1s ii 5; 1s ii 19; 5s xi 45; 6s vii 189; 6s vii 495; 6s viii 130; 9s x 520; 5s x 74; bible folklore from sermon (1657), 11s xii 299; and salt, 12s ii 390; 12s ii 478; 12s iii 18.

Bibliography, 11s iii 7; 11s iii 175.

Bibliography of Folk-lore for the Years 1925 and 1926, 14s clxi 74.

Bicker-rade, 2s iv 144.

Biddenham Maids (Bedfordshire), 2s ii 404; 4s vi 494.

Birch, 11s i 146; 15s clxxvii 248.

Birds, 6s x 492; 6s xi 58; 6s xi 177; 6s xi 297; 6s xii 489; 7s i 66; birdcage falling, 10s vii 105; claw, 10s vi 366; 10s vi 518; eggs, 8s iv 87; eggs burnt, 4s vi 322; eggs unlucky to keep, 4s iv 144; 4s v 370; 4s v 516; nightingales, yellowhammers, and peacocks, 12s ii 190; omens, 1s ii 439; 2s iv 486; of ill omen, 4s xii 327; 4s xii 394; 5s i 38; 5s i 138; 5s i 236; 5s i 298; phosphorescent belief in, 11s xii 213; 11s xii 306; as religious symbols, 6s iii 163; 6s iii 276; song, 3s viii 325; of the Soufrière; 9s xi 404.

Birdscaring, 10s i 340.

Birth of children, presents of neighbours, 1s i 349; birth mark (unfortunate), 7s xi 425; parsley beds and gooseberry bushes, 12s iv 219; 12s iv 256; at midnight, 13s cliii 154; 13s cliii 211; 13s cliii 231; rhyme, 3s ii 342.

Bite of an adder, 4s iv 330; 4s iv 507.

Biter bit, 6s iv 407; 6s iv 544.

“Black bettle,” 14s clxviii 460.

Black cat, 10s v 40; cow, 13s cxlvii 47; 13s cxlvii 236; dogs, Gabriel hounds, 11s v 185; 11s v 296; 11s v 415.

Black Northern Lights, 4s viii 506.

Black Ox (Scottish), 14s clxvii 331; 14s clxvii 376; 14s clxviii 67.

Black wool a cure for deafness, 11s xi 247; 11s xi 328.

Blackberries, 7s xii 306; 7s xii 376.

Blackbird’s days, 5s vi 323; poisoning their young, 7s iv 148; 7s iv 191; singing before Christmas, 4s vii 186.

Blackthorn winter, 5s iii 254; 5s iii 477; 5s v 266.

Bleeding at the nose, 1s ii 36; bleeding, charm to stop, 7s iv 18. 7s iv 56; 7s iv 67.

Blessing or crossing oneself, 4s x 164; 4s x 233; 4s x 361.

Blindness (birds causing), 14s clxii 280; 14s clxii 321.

Blinds pulled down in house of death, 13s clvi 353; 13s clvi 431; 14s clvii 34.

Blood baths, 8s x 272; 8s x 341; 8s x 381.

Blood marks (permanent), 5s xi 403.

Boggarts and Feorin, 4s iv 508.

Bohemian, 2s ix 381. 9s xii 382. 11s ii 485; 11s iii 37.

Bonfires, 8s v 308; 8s v 432; 8s v 472; on the Eve of St John, 3s xii 42.

Boots, dead man’s buried, 7s viii 485; on the table unlucky, 6s ix 66; 6s ix 137.

Borrowed days, 4s x 266; 4s x 448; 4s x 523; 5s v 266; 5s v 335; 5s v 527; 5s vi 18; 9s xii 23; 9s xii 351.

Bowing to a black man, 7s iv 348.

- Boys born in May cruel, 12s iv 133; 12s iv 172; 12s iv 257; 12s v 25; in petticoats, 11s vii 493; 11s viii 58; 13s clvi 372.
- Brain leechdom, 4s xii 3.
- Brains of a rabbit, 6s xi 306.
- Bramble, 13s clii 244; 13s cliii 301.
- Brazilian, 6s ii 45.
- Bread and salt, 5s ix 48; 5s ix 66; 5s ix 138; 5s ix 299; 5s ix 477; 5s x 37; 5s x 216; 5s x 278; 5s x 398.
- Breakages (triple), 8s i 77.
- Breaking the spell, 4s xi 341.
- Breaking up (Netherlands), 2s x 185.
- Breton, 4s xii 464; 6s viii 226; 6s viii 246.
- Bride carried over the threshold, 11s vi 191; 11s vi 232; 11s vi 314; looking in a glass, 2s xii 490; bridal garter, 13s cxlvi 113; 13s cxlvi 163; cake cut with a sword, 4s x 312; 4s x 389; 4s x 459; stones (holed), 11s iv 227; 11s iv 463; 11s iv 533.
- Bridges, 1s viii 382.
- “Brig o’ dread,” 9s iii 487.
- Brittany, 9s xi 444; 10s viii 409; 10s ix 17.
- Broad beans in leap year, 5s vii 64.
- Broom bought in May, 4s viii 47; green, child whipped with, 6s vi 326; hung over a door, 1s i 363; 1s i 384; 1s ii 226.
- Buddha (figure in the human eye and neck), 12s i 245.
- Building customs, 9s i 72; 9s i 170; 9s ii 131; 10s i 407; 10s i 515.
- Bull baiting, 12s ii 447.
- Burglar, 11s i 129; 11s i 296.
- Burial, 2s vii 313; 5s vi 144; 7s xi 305; 8s ii 386; 11s v 70; burying face downwards, 11s xii 118; 11s xii 164; iron nails driven into skull, 11s xii 181; 11s xii 306; 11s xii 389; 11s xii 409; 11s xii 490; on north side of a church, 13s cxlviii 224; 13s cxlviii 264; 13s cxlviii 282; 13s cxlviii 319; 13s cxlviii 394; 13s cxlviii 448; 13s cl 88; of still born children, 1s v 77; in walls of buildings, 10s ix 75.
- Burn and scald cures, 1s iv 500; 1s vi 480; 8s iii 144.
- Burning the bush, 1s v 437.
- Burnt sacrifice, 9s viii 80; 9s viii 151; 9s viii 470.
- Bute (Scotland), 2s vi 522.
- Butter charm, 8s xii 387; 9s i 36; butter making and the tides, 13s clii 425.
- Buttercup, 5s v 364; 5s v 454.
- Butterfly, 6s vii 306; 6s vii 474; prognostication, 7s x 106; 7s x 219; three, 8s iv 165.
- Buttering cats’ feet, 2s v 209.
- Buttoning the coat awry, 6s i 42.

Cage des sorciers, 4s x 82.

Caird, 5s iii 465; 5s iv 35.

Cake bread, 8s v 128; 8s v 212; 8s v 515; 8s vi 74; 8s vi 454.

Calendar (Latin verses on superstitions), 12s ii 71; 12s ii 117.

Callow pit, 1s xii 487.

Candles, 4s i 51; and death, 9s ix 96; lit (held by the dying), 6s xi 207; 6s xi 334; presented as token of sympathy, 5s ix 207; and thieves', 8s x 71; 8s x 445; 8s xi 268; 8s xi 397; 8s xi 458; 8s xii 74; 8s xii 274; 9s i 52; three, 10s vi 508; 10s vii 54.

Candlemas Day, 4s i 243; 4s iv 509; 4s x 82; 8s v 449; 8s vi 15; 10s xi 324; east wind, 1s v 462; gills, 5s i 508; 5s iii 274; proverbs, 1s xi 238; 1s xi 334; 1s xi 421; snow, 4s xi 275; sun shining on, 6s v 106; 6s v 155.

Candlemas Eve and Day, 5s vii 66; Candlemas Eve wind, 2s v 391.

Card table, 4s xi 44.

Cardiganshire, 5s viii 28; 5s viii 97.

Caterpillars, 7s i 150; poisonous, 5s vi 462; 5s vii 53; 5s vii 237; and whooping cough, 9s xii 126.

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