

Volunteers Wanted

In 1902, in the Correspondence columns of our journal *Folklore*, [T. Fairman Ordish](#), the historian of London theatres, announced that:

The Council of the Folk-Lore Society have decided that it is desirable to bring together the scattered material bearing on [the Mummers' Play].

Ordish, who had been interested in the folk play for some time, planned to write a book on the subject, for publication by The Folklore Society.

He was successful in his search for material and large numbers of notes and texts came into the offices. Whilst Ordish did deliver two lectures on folk plays to the Society, and drafted a third, the planned book was never written. The material that Ordish collected, though representative of the Victorian era's "armchair scholarship," remains the largest collection of English folk play material assembled at that time and, consequently, it is of considerable historical and folkloristic importance.

The collection has remained with the Folklore Society Archives, which are stored at University College London Library's Special Collections.

For the last twenty years, there has been discussion on how the material in the collection can be preserved while also returning the information in it to the local communities who supplied it.

We now have a way forward.

The material is being digitally photographed so that it can be read on a computer screen. We would now like to transcribe it all in electronic format so that the texts can be searchable, and accessible to local libraries and individuals. We believe that this work could be done by volunteers, provided that the work is carefully checked.

So are you interested in volunteering to do a few pages of transcription? Or to check other volunteers' transcriptions?

If you are, please contact Andrew Bennett andrew.bennett20@ntlworld.com. All we need is for you to read the

original material either from a paper copy of the scanned material or, better, from the scanned images on screen on your computer, and then to transcribe the text into a word processing programme (preferably Microsoft Word) and return it to andrew.bennett20@ntlworld.com either as an e-mail attachment, or on a CD by post to:
Andrew Bennett, 28 Brownsville Road, Stockport SK4 4PF, UK.

If you cannot help, do you know any one else who might?