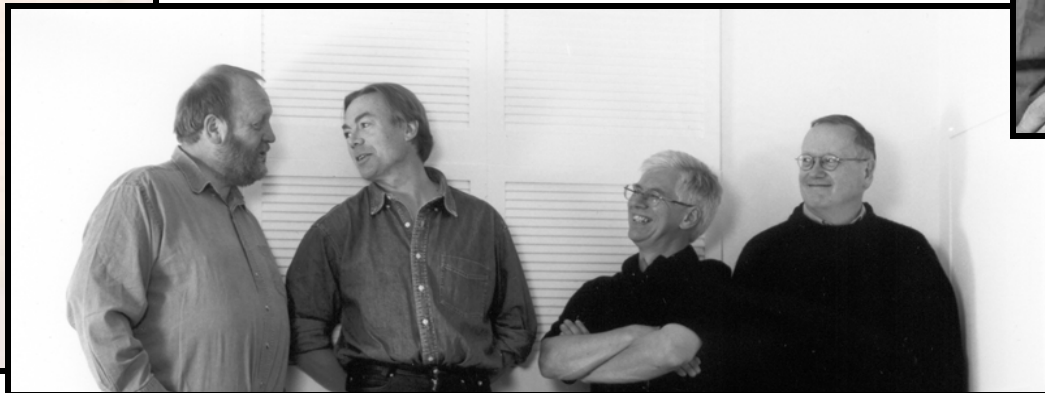
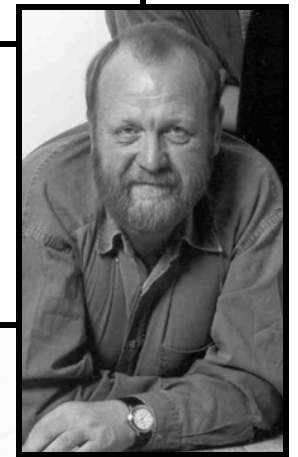




# Sid Long

14th April 1953 - 18th January 2005

"The only measure of your words and your deeds  
Is the love you leave behind when you're done."



# Sid's Early Life



Sid was born in Morpeth, Northumberland on April 14<sup>th</sup> 1953. Elfreda his mother had just been to see the King and I and so music was a very early influence. His father is Sidney Herbert Long and he has a sister, Joyce, who is 5 years his senior.

He was brought up in Ashington, in a house owned by the NCB, where his father worked as a colliery blacksmith. As a toddler it was apparent he could easily hold a tune, and it was said for a time that he was better at this than talking, but not for long.

At the Wansbeck primary school his teachers, Miss Joice and Miss Hughes, recognised his talent as a singer and musician and encouraged him to perform.

Sid passed his 11 plus exam and moved to Ashington Grammar School, where he excelled academically and developed his musical skills. He performed in choirs and carol concerts as a solo singer and also sang in Gilbert and Sullivan productions.

In his later years he was obviously proud of this and



Sid and sister Joyce with Mum and Dad, aged about 6 months



Sid with his cousins - is this the first sign of musical ability?



Aged 8



would sing extracts enthusiastically – usually about being a Model of a Modern Major General.

Sid was also a keen sportsman and although not excelling at any of them he would play and watch – particularly cricket and football. He was of course a keen supporter of Newcastle United, being taken at an early age to St James Park.



He first went there to watch Ashington Football club play in the Northumberland Cup Final. His second visit was when he was 12 years old, when he accompanied Joyce and George (his brother-in-law) to see Newcastle play Leeds United. The ground was full, with about 54,000 people there and Sid didn't complain even though a rough lad stood on his foot for some time.

As his teens progressed Sid's interest in folk music developed and, probably as an underage participant, he attended folk nights at the 'Cellar' club in Ashington.

When he left for University at the age of 18, his interest in the folk scene was firmly established and he brought home some awful records.



Concentrating hard at school, aged 8



With an undergraduate drama group at Loughborough



# Life in Loughborough

The move to Loughborough in 1971 was a significant turning point in Sid's life. In Loughborough and Nottingham he found some thriving, popular folk clubs, among them the Nottingham Traditional Music Club. This club obviously touched a chord with him for he stayed closely involved with the club until it finally closed in 1989.

Despite his academic excellence at school the work at university didn't appeal to him, and he left in his second year. It was at this point that he decided to train for work with Trading Standards and studied at Weston super Mare with a group of people who stayed in touch throughout their careers.

When his training was complete he came back to Loughborough and worked as a Trading Standards officer with Leicestershire. Although Loughborough became his home and the East Midlands folk scene his stamping ground, he never lost his affection for the North East and Newcastle United and returned regularly for family occasions.

NTMC and Notts Alliance by Stephen Bailey

I moved to Nottingham in 1972 to take a job at the University. I had started singing in folk clubs while I was a student and had been told about Nottingham Traditional Music Club, one of the strongest clubs in the country, founded by Roy Harris. I went along for a while but then got busy with other things. I went back in 1977, got to sing and was fairly



"I used to be a Morris Dancer, but I'm better now"

Sid in full flight at a ring meeting in Nottingham



quickly invited to join the team of residents. There had in the mean time been some changes in the line up, the others being (as I can remember) Terry Paling, Ian Stewart, Gren Morris and Sid.

Whoever were the residents at NTMC at any one time would from time to time do bookings under the name Notts Alliance. The first line up did a number of recordings, including *The Cheerful Orm*. This carried on with successive line ups, with a mixture of instrumentals and accompanied and unaccompanied songs, mostly traditional. Sid sang and played guitar and occasionally banjo. We would run the club every Friday night starting at 7.45. Sid took over as organiser from Terry. There were many great nights, but also increasing problems with successive venues and just with being in the city centre on a Friday night. Audiences dwindled and we closed in 1989.

The four residents at the end of the club's time were Sid, myself, Chris Orme and Phil Hardcastle. Ian Smith and Dave Bissitt had left the area not long before. So the four of us were the line up for the last 15 years or so. We also decided early on to concentrate on unaccompanied harmony singing, and over the years built up a pretty wide repertoire of traditional and modern songs, appeared at a range of clubs and festivals, and recorded two CDs, *Out of the Darkness* and *Nothing Spoken*.

The four of us would try to practise once a week, and managed to do this through much of the year. Practices would be a mixture of conversations about life and the universe (with an emphasis on the ridiculous), running through existing songs in the repertoire and working on new ones. The exchange of abuse was a regular feature but I cannot remember



Notts Alliance : L to R  
Phil Hardcastle, Sid, Chris Orme, Stephen Bailey



Sid with Hannah and Matt Fraser

a seriously cross word in all that time. The format was reasonably standard with Chris and Phil singing the tune, me providing a top line and Sid singing bass, but there were some songs with four part harmonies. We would work out the harmonies by trial and error rather than any skill in musical theory. We all brought songs for consideration and would proceed by consensus. We did have a standing joke that if it came to a vote, it was one vote each, except that Sid had three votes and the casting vote. But we never had to put it to the test.

Sid was very much the public face of the group. He brought his great professionalism as a Folk Festival MC to bear at Notts Alliance bookings in constructing running orders and introducing the songs. The success of the group's performances owes much to his wit and insight in presentation.

There were of course many other aspects of Sid's life inside and outside the folk scene. He was a member of other shorter lived groups (Red Star Delivery (whom I regret I never saw) and Sherwood Rise). He remained a very fine solo singer and guitarist beyond the NTMC days, visiting a wide range of clubs in the East Midlands and Yorkshire on a regular basis. He had serious expertise in Honiton pottery and was a regular competition bridge player. He had wide interests in film and the theatre, and would travel to London regularly for plays and exhibitions.

Sid made friends wherever he went. He could be forthright in his opinions but he was an acute observer and was always an interesting and stimulating companion. Losing him so young will leave a gap in many people's lives.



Practising at Sidmouth



A Honiton jug,  
part of Sid's extensive  
collection of this  
pottery



# Sid was ....

Festival MC

Crossword fiend

Honiton pottery expert

Theatre goer

Clog dancer

Musician

Ian Dury fan

Cricket player

Morris dancer

Walker

Bridge player

Film enthusiast

Raconteur

Street theatre performer

Blondie fan

Ace present giver

Union Rep

(Old) Labour party activist

Occasional gourmet

A man who loved a 'jaunt'

Trading Standards Officer



With Red Star Delivery— the policeman song

Above all he was a wonderful friend and companion: enthusiastic, intelligent, entertaining and loyal. This booklet has been put together by his family and friends as a tribute and a reminder of how he touched our lives.

