

Remembrance of Dr Eddie Cass

By Professor Michael J. Preston (University of Colorado)

Read at the American Folklore Society annual meeting, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 5 November 2014

Eddie Cass died on September 17, 2014.

I met Eddie Cass when traveling with Paul Smith. Paul had arranged for us to spend the night with Eddie at his home in Manchester, England. Folklorists are hospitable.

Eddie became a folklorist late in life. Early on he worked in the coal mines, as he was fond of saying, and then spent a career working for the Royal Bank of Scotland. After retirement, he earned a Ph.D. with research focused on “The Cotton Factory Times.”

Eddie loved Manchester, its greater metropolitan area, and Lancashire. Eddie will always be remembered for *The Lancashire Pace-Egging Play: A Social History* (2001) and *The Pace-Egg Plays of the Calder Valley* (2004).

Eddie, Smith, and I published *The English Mumming Play: An Introductory Bibliography* in 2000. I got to know Eddie well after the publication of his own first book. I had never had seen the pace-egg plays during the Easter season, and Eddie invited me to stay with him and go the rounds. Characteristically, Eddie had scheduled what we were to see. He knew the performers, and so we saw them perform, and we ate and drank with them afterwards. Eddie also sold his book to those who did not know of that Folklore Society publication. Eddie was always businesslike.

Eddie, Smith, and I also published “The Pace Egg Book: An Anglo-Irish Chapbook Connection Discovered” in *Folklore* in 2003. Smith and I had been collecting chapbooks containing traditional plays even before we met in 1974, and a volume on the Peace Egg chapbooks, many published in Manchester, remains yet unfinished. Eddie helped us explain an odd chapbook published in Manchester with a distinctly Irish text but woodcuts from many Peace Egg chapbooks. Collaboration with Eddie was pleasant. He was a good fit for President of the Folklore Society.

In his last years, Eddie edited the folk-plays in the James Madison Carpenter collection of traditional song and drama—he called it “Carping”—and his work is essentially complete. It should be published without delay. That will be a tribute to James Carpenter who collected the plays as well as to the man who late in life became a serious folklorist.