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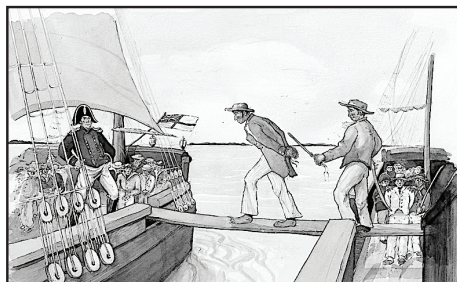


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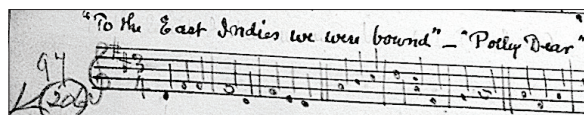


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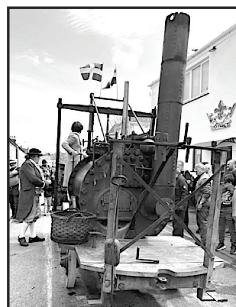
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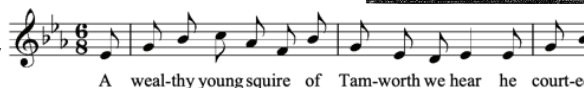


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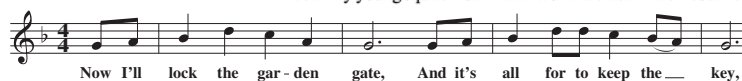
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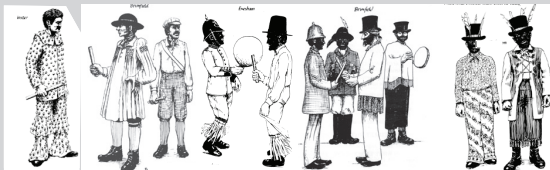
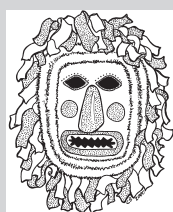
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I heard them saying yester-morning *Ta-la-ring-ting-ring-ta-la-ring-to*
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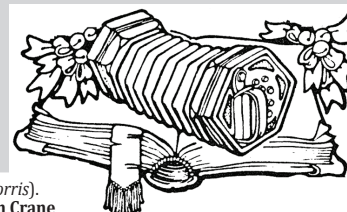
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There were three Ravens: a song of sublime love, by Ian Pittaway

This is an edited version of a more detailed article at <https://earlymusicmuse.com/there-were-three-ravens/> where you can also hear a performance of *There were three Ravens* as published by Thomas Ravenscroft.

~ ~ ~

The earliest surviving record of *There were three Ravens* is in *Melismata*, a book of songs compiled by Thomas Ravenscroft, published in 1611. The story told in the song is that a knight lay dead in a field; three ravens were prevented from preying on his body by his faithful hounds and hawks guarding him; his pregnant lover found his body, carried him and buried him; then she died from the strain. Within this simple tale is a centuries-old tradition of profound symbolism and meaning.

Each stanza is a rhyming couplet in a solo voice, punctuated by “Downe a downe” non-lexical vocables (nonsense syllables) sung in 4 polyphonic voices. We will explore each couplet in turn.

There were three Ravens sat on a tree, they were as blacke as they might be

Bestiaries were mid to late medieval compendiums of beasts which took their information from authorities, being other Christian writings, often several centuries before, mixed in with references to Greek and Roman mythology and teachings from *The Bible*. The purpose of a bestiary was not primarily to understand animals naturalistically, but to understand God’s purpose for humanity. Every animal is an allegory, a moral message from God about how we should lead our lives, a sign exhorting Christian righteousness or a warning against sin. Bestiaries remained popular in the renaissance period, with several prints in circulation.

It is therefore not anachronistic to cite a mid-13th century English bestiary, MS Bodley 764, for the symbolism of the ravens, hounds, hawks and doe in the song. Translated from Latin to English, MS Bodley 764 states that the raven “pecks the eyes out of corpses before attacking the rest of the body ... The raven is the blackness of sin or unfaithfulness”. The Christian moral that follows is that just as the raven first pecks out the eyes, destroying physical sight, so the devil first removes the ability to judge correctly, destroying moral or spiritual sight, leaving the mind open to attack.



A raven is about to peck out the eyes of a dead man (English bestiary, Ms. W.102, folio 77v, c. 1300, Walters Art Museum, Baltimore).

The association of the raven with blackness and death continued in the same vein centuries later in the works of Thomas Ravenscroft’s contemporaries, William Shakespeare, Edmund Spenser, and John Dowland.

The one of them said to his mate, Where shall we our breakefast take?

Ravens are the largest of the corvids, a category of 135 species of bird which includes crows, rooks, magpies and jackdaws. The size of a raven is impressive, 60–68 cm long, with a 120–150 cm wingspan. They use their powerful beak to tear carrion, the largest part of their diet. They also hunt small live prey and eat insects, grains and berries.

“Where shall we our breakefast take?”, asks one raven to his mate, who replies ...

Downe in yonder greene field, There lies a Knight slain under his shield

... meaning they see an opportunity to eat the dead knight as carrion. The observation of the bestiaries that ravens peck out eyes is true. Their prey is not only carrion, the already dead, but newborn lambs and calves, and farm animals in confined spaces which therefore cannot escape predation. It is easy to see why ravens have been associated with sin, suffering, death, the devil and hell.

Three symbolic colours run through the song. The first was the ravens “as blacke as they might be”, symbolic of sin and death. In this couplet we have the second: the ravens spy the knight “Downe in yonder greene field”. In medieval and renaissance art, green was the colour of fertility and life, which contrasts with the deathly black ravens, and a reminder of the shortness of life, that the season of green turns to grey, which is surely the case here.

In the “greene field”, the knight is “slain under his shield”. In Elizabethan England, the title of knight – which had to be bestowed by a monarch or military leader, and could not be inherited – was a general title of honour, no longer specific to military service. Being a knight was culturally inseparable from being a Christian and having Christian values, the Just Man, armed with his Christian virtues and the shield of faith.

His hounds they lie downe at his feete, So well they can their Master keepe,

The longest entry in MS Bodley 764 is for dogs. “There is no creature cleverer than the dog: they have more understanding than any other beast. They also know their name and love their master. Dogs are of various kinds: some track wild beasts in the forests,



A dog refuses to leave the body of his murdered master, in Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 6838B, folio 12v, produced in northern France in the 13th century.

others guard flocks of sheep from the attacks of wolves, other guard the houses and wealth of their master, lest they are robbed at night by thieves, and will lay down their lives for their master.”

The next part of the description of dogs in the bestiary reflects the story of *Ravens*. “They go willingly to hunt with him and will guard his dead body, never leaving it. In short, their nature is such that they cannot live without human company.”



The three hungry ravens could not use the knight's body as carrion, could not peck out his eyes and tear his flesh, because his faithful hounds guarded his body. In the bestiaries, and in *Ravens*, dogs are a man's best friend, symbolising the Christian virtues of faithfulness and steadfastness.

His hawks they flie so eagerly There's no fowle dare him come nie

In MS Bodley 764, hawks also symbolise Christian virtues: "The hawk is the image of the holy man, who seizes the Kingdom of God ... However intelligent one of the elect may be, the Holy Spirit will stretch out his wings by inspiring his thoughts, and he will cast off his old raiment to take flight by virtue of his new feathers ... they lose their old feathers and put on new ones, just as a monk, once he is confined to the cloister, will put off his previous vices and adorn himself with the clothing of a new man."

Taken literally, the knight, with his hounds and hawks for hunting, had the accoutrements of the nobility; and the hounds protected his body from predation on the ground, the hawks from predation from the air; that is, from the ravens. On the symbolic level, together they are metaphors for the Christian virtues of faithfulness and self-discipline, on guard against the ravens which symbolise unfaithfulness, sin, suffering, and the devil.

Down there comes a fallow Doe As great with yong as she might goe

The fallow doe is as symbolic as the hounds and hawks. But whereas the hounds really are dogs and the hawks really are birds, the fallow doe is not a deer, but a woman. The likening of a sexually appealing woman to a doe has a long history. The first part of the book of *Proverbs* (1:1–22:16) in the Christian *Old Testament*, the Jewish *Tenakh*, states that it was written by King Solomon. If this is correct, it can be dated to 970–931 BC. In *Proverbs* chapter 5, Solomon the father gives advice to his sons to keep away from adulterous women, to choose the faithful woman who is a "loving doe, a graceful fawn, may her breasts satisfy you always, may you be captivated by her love forever" (5:19). The metaphor of the doe as an attractive woman, and of the forester or keeper hunting the doe as sexual pursuit, penetrating her with his arrow, was well-established in the poetry of the renaissance and baroque periods.

She lift up his bloody hed And kist his wounds that were so red

The wording that the woman "kist his wounds that were so red" is a very *particular* detail which has two associations: of the colour red, and of kissing wounds. Red was the symbolic colour of power and authority in some contexts, and in others, as here, the colour of passion and sacrifice, particularly relating to the wounds of Christ or a saint.

It is now clear that the nature of the relationship between the woman and the knight is that of lovers. The tenderness and intimacy she shows him in death, lifting up his head, kissing his wounds, indicates that she was the knight's fallow doe, and that the child she carries is his.

The kissing of wounds is, on the literal level, a heart-breaking detail that shows her attachment, devotion and care. On the symbolic level it takes us, like the colour symbolism and the animal symbolism, back to Christian theology. Catherine of Siena (1347–80) had visions of receiving Christ's wounds and heart from him. She was canonised in 1461, and her story was depicted in religious art of the 16th and 17th century, contemporaneous with *Ravens*, showing her kissing the wounds of Christ.



Print from an engraving by Flemish artist Pieter de Jode I, 1597.
British Museum item number 1974.0720.21.
© The Trustees of the British Museum. (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

Does this mean that the knight in some way represents Christ? Yes: *Ravens* is an extension of a story template that was ubiquitous since the 12th century, that of the self-sacrificing lover-knight as a metaphor for Christ. One rendering of the story is in the *Ancrene Riwe* or *Ancrene Wisse* – meaning *Rule* or *Guide for Anchoresses* – written c. 1225–40 in Herefordshire for the spiritual instruction of nuns who had chosen a life of religious seclusion. In this version, a lady in a castle was surrounded by enemies. The knight tried to woo her, but she rejected him. Nonetheless, he rode out on his horse to joust for her freedom and was killed. His body acted as a shield to protect her, analogous to Christ's self-sacrifice on the cross.

She got him up upon her backe, And carried him to earthen lake,

The song takes the medieval tradition of Christ the lover-knight one stage further: not only was the woman he died for grateful for his sacrifice, she showed it by honouring his dead body, removing it from the field. She mirrors the knight's sacrifice with her own gargantuan effort, faithfulness, physical endurance, and love.

She carried him to an earthen lake, which is not a term in geography. In English of the 14th to the 16th century, lake (lak, lace, lac, laik, lacke, lack) had more than one meaning: either an expanse of water, equivalent to the modern word lake; or a pit, shaft, or hole, figuratively a grave or burial chamber, which is the clear meaning here: she carried him to his earthen grave, she buried him in the ground.



There were three Ravens: a song of sublime love, by Ian Pittaway

**She buried him before the prime,
She was dead her self ere even-song time**

The immense exertion of carrying a corpse continued as the pregnant woman single-handedly buried her lover's body. The point is that the enormity of her effort was in equal proportion to the enormity of her love, the exertion of which ultimately resulted in her own death from the strain and exhaustion, leading to the point of the story in the next and final couplet.

Christian symbolism has been foundational throughout the song and, in this couplet, the passing of time is marked by the hours of the liturgy. "She buried him before the prime", Prime being the First Hour of prayers, said at sunrise, the first hour of daylight. "She was dead her self ere even-song time", even-song being the singing of *Psalms* and ecclesiastical chant near the hour of twilight. In other words, it took the length of a day, the hours of daylight, for the pregnant woman to die from the exertion and heartbreak of carrying and burying her love. She repaid his ultimate sacrifice for love with her own. And that is the meaning of the final couplet:

**God send every gentleman
such haukes, such hounds and such a Leman**

A leman (lemman, lemon, lemmon, lemmande, lefmon) is a male or female lover, either betrothed, or more specifically a wife. The word was in use in Middle English from c. 1225, and the word or variants of it survived into the 19th century, as we see, for example, in the broadside ballad published between 1814 and 1844, *Sweet Lemminy*, which entered the oral song tradition with variants of the word, *Lemeney*, *Lemony* or *Lemady*, and continued to be sung into the 20th century.



The Three Ravens, painted in 1885 by English artist Edward Frederick Brewtnall, beautifully captures every character in the story: the ravens on a tree, the dead knight, his hounds, his hawks, and his leman.

In summary, the ravens represent "the blackness of sin or unfaithfulness" (MS Bodley 764). They wished to predate on the dead body of a knight, who represents Christian sacrifice: he has been faithful to his lady by defending her, and has been slain by so doing. He lay in a green field, symbol of the shortness of life. His body was guarded by his hounds, symbolising the Christian virtues of faithfulness and steadfastness, and his hawks, symbols of holy self-discipline and shedding of past sins. The woman he died for was a fallow doe, meaning a fertile and attractive woman, his leman, his wife, and she was pregnant with their child. She kissed the wounds on his head, their redness a symbol of his Christ-like self-sacrifice, her kissing them a symbol of her saintliness. She repaid the depth of his love with the depth of her own, not leaving his body for carrion-feeders, but she carried and buried his body though heavily pregnant. As a result of the physical strain and emotional heartbreak, she died by the end of the day, repaying his self-sacrifice with her own.

The final couplet is a wish for everyone who is faithful to the ultimate degree, who gives their life for another as Christ did, to be rewarded in kind with the faithfulness of such exemplars as the knight's hawks, hounds, and leman. Given the cultural context of the song, this is expressed in Christian terms: the passion of Christ is imitated by the knight, and the knight's sacrifice is imitated by his leman. Surely this message of selfless protection of those we love is one that anyone of any background can appreciate. This is sublime love.

sub·lime (sə-blīm') *adj.*

1. Characterised by nobility; majestic.
2. a. Of high spiritual, moral, or intellectual worth.
b. Not to be excelled; supreme.
3. Inspiring awe; impressive.
4. *Archaic* Raised aloft; set high.

Ian Pittaway © July 2026

Early Music Muse: musings on medieval, renaissance and traditional music, <https://earlymusicmuse.com>, is a site written by Ian Pittaway, singer and player of medieval, renaissance and early baroque music on period instruments – harp, lute, bray harp, cittern, gittern, citole, etc. – and traditional/folk music on modern guitars in various tunings.

Editor's note: readers may be interested in some other corvid-related articles, available to download free from www.folklife.uk/ftj-67-73:

- **The Twa Corbies**, by Roy & Lesley Adkins, *FTJ* 70, 2022 May, p8-9.
- In response: Gloucestershire versions (GlosTrad site), **The Three (or Two) Crows**, by Charles Menteith, *FTJ* 71, 2022 Sep., p10-11.
- And in response to that, a West Sussex version, **Two Black Crows**, by Colin Andrews, *FTJ* 72, 2023 Jan, p2.



Baring-Gould's People. 4 – The Uglow Sisters, by Martin Graebe

In a postscript to a letter to the ballad editor, Francis Child, in June 1892, Sabine Baring-Gould wrote:

'Last Xmas at our choir supper and dance two strapping farmer's daughters stood up and sang right through 'the Squire of Tamworth' to my great satisfaction.'

The two young women were Louisa and Elizabeth Hamley, the teenage daughters of Richard and Margaret Hamley, the tenants of Downhouse Farm, part of the Baring-Gould estate and located on the hill just above his home, Lew House, in Lewtrenchard.

'The Squire of Tamworth', (Roud 141, more often known as 'The Golden Glove') tells of a nobleman's daughter who is betrothed to a wealthy young squire but throws him over on the wedding day because she has taken a fancy to a young farmer. She employs the strategy of losing a golden glove which she ensures that the young farmer finds so that he can win her hand. This romantic fantasy would have had great appeal to young women whose horizons did not stretch far beyond the farmyard.

Baring-Gould already had 'The Squire of Tamworth' in his collection as it had been noted down for him by Mary Bussell, the sister of Baring-Gould's collaborator, Frederick Bussell, in April 1891. The singer in that case was Margaret Hamley, so this was, clearly, a family song. The version in the manuscripts is probably a composite of several versions that Baring-Gould heard, but Margaret Hamley's tune is a good one and I have given the song in full below. It also creates an opportunity to look at the whirligig life of tenant farmers in Devon and Cornwall in Baring-Gould's time, and the twists and turns in the lives of the Uglow sisters who are at the heart of the story.

It was not until 14th of July in 1892 that Baring-Gould and Frederick Bussell visited Downhouse Farm and collected two songs from the sisters, a 'May Song' (Roud 23221) and 'As Dolly was Milking her Cow' (Roud 1285, more usually called 'Bonny Hodge'). Elizabeth was then aged 19 and Louisa 16.

In September of the following year fellow collector, Lucy Broadwood, came to Lew House to stay for a few days. She was entertained by Baring-Gould's wife and daughters but also spent time in earnest conversation with the man himself and examining his manuscripts. They also rode out in his carriage together for a collecting trip but, on 7 September, she wandered up the hill on her own to visit Elizabeth and Louisa Hamley. She heard two new songs from them, 'Nothing Else to Do' (Roud 1265), and 'Green Gravel' (Roud 1368). She did not record the words of the songs, but she sent copies of the tunes to Baring-Gould, and they appear in his 'Personal Copy' manuscript as well as in her own papers.

Broadwood left Lew Trenchard a couple of days later to spend time with relatives in Bude, but she returned on 20th September and, on the 21st, Baring-Gould drove her over to Carley Farm, near Lifton, where she met Mary Fletcher, who was Margaret Hamley's older sister. It is probable that Margaret had mentioned her when Broadwood had visited Downhouse Farm a few days earlier. Mary sang two songs to Broadwood and Baring-Gould, 'Damon and Phyllis' (Roud 23201) and 'Oh What's the Matter Now' (Roud 7757). Both are Arcadian ballads, probably originating from the pleasure gardens of Georgian times, rather than the sort of folk song that they were seeking, but Baring-Gould still included them in his manuscript.

The sisters were born Mary Jane and Margaret Ann Uglow, and their family were steeped in farming life. They were both born in Cornwall but moved across the border to Devon and, in 1851, The two sisters are living with their parents at Lower Carley Farm. Mary was then 21 years old and Margaret 15.

In 1860 Margaret Uglow married Richard Hamley, whose father farmed at Becklake, which was next door to Carley. In the following year he is shown in the census as the farmer of Becklake's 40 acres, while his father is farming at Fernhill, a 150 acre farm lying immediately north of Becklake. Richard and Margaret now have their first child, William, aged 7 months.

Richard Hamley was a tenant farmer, a class of people who moved between different farms as circumstances and opportunities dictated. Looking at his life and that of the other farming families among Baring-Gould's singers, it is clear that they often moved to another farm after only a few years. While the census might show them at a different farm after ten years, it could be that they had moved more than once in that period. This is the case with Richard Hamley. He was farming at Becklake in 1861, shortly after his marriage to Margaret Uglow. He is not to be found in the 1871 census and Becklake is untenanted. Margaret is staying at her parent's house with four children. William (10) and Mary Jane (7) had been born in Lifton parish, but Ernest (4) and Edwin (2) were recorded as having been born in Lezant, Cornwall, though later census returns locate Edwin to Lifton. This suggests that Richard may have been farming in Cornwall around 1869.



Baring-Gould's People. 4 – The Uglow Sisters, by Martin Graebe, *continued*

In 1881 the family was at Riscoombe, another farm in Lifton parish and they now had two more daughters, Louisa and Elizabeth. Then, in 1891, we find Richard and Margaret at Downhouse Farm on Baring-Gould's estate. The oldest son, William, is helping his father on the farm and only the two youngest girls are left at home. In 1901 Richard has moved on yet again and is farming Blaxton Farm at Tamerton Foliot, not far from Plymouth. They have left William, now aged 40 with a wife and two children, as the Farm Bailiff at Downhouse. Richard and Margaret's daughter, Elizabeth, was living with them at Blaxton. She was now married to John Hill and has two children. John is not living at Blaxton at the time of the census and, ten years later, we find him as the farmer at Pallastreet Farm near Bradstone. This was where Richard died in 1908 and where Margaret lived until her own death in 1911.

The other Uglow sister, Mary, lived at home, looking after her parents and siblings until, in 1866, at the age of 40, she married John Fletcher, a widowed farmer with four adult children. Fletcher was another tenant farmer at Cookworthy, a 200 acre farm a few miles to the east of Carley but still in Lifton parish. He later farmed the much smaller East Rixon Farm, just 13 acres, where he died in 1883. Mary's father, William, had died in 1872, leaving Carley to his oldest surviving son, Wymond Cory Uglow. Mary moved back to Carley following John Fletcher's death. Unfortunately her brother was not a good farmer and ran up such debts that all the contents of the farm and its stock were sold by the Official Receiver and the farm changed hands after more than 30 years in the care of the Uglow family. Mary moved into a cottage in Launceston where she died in 1905.

It is worth mentioning, briefly, that another difficulty in working out stories like this one is that the names of the places have changed, sometimes more than once, over the last three centuries. Becklake was also given as Backlake and Beckalake in official documents. The late 18th century Ordnance Survey map identifies Backlake, Upper Correy and Lower Correy as being next to each other. But in mid 19th century maps the site of Backlake becomes Upper Carley. Upper and Lower Carley then change places in a later map. In current maps Carley is shown as a single entity.

I have given the information above because it demonstrates the mobility of tenant farmers and their families in the late Nineteenth Century. Farming in Devon was different in many respects to that in other parts of the country and, it should be said, often the methods were those of the farmer's ancestors. It has been reported that Baring-Gould encouraged good farming practice, but the second half of the Nineteenth Century was a difficult time for farming and his estate brought in little income. Owning land did not guarantee an income – and it was often a liability. Luckily his books brought in a useful additional income, as there was little reward for being a vicar.

James Dixon, in his *Ancient Poems, Ballads, and Songs of the Peasantry of England* (1846), said of 'The Golden Glove':

'A very popular ballad and sung in every part of England. It is traditionally reported to be founded on an incident which occurred in the reign of Elizabeth. It has been published in the broadside form from the commencement of the 18th century but is no doubt much older.'

Its appeal extended to the USA, and it was one of the songs recorded by the American prisoner of war, Timothy Connor, as having been sung in Forton Prison, Gosport, when he was there in 1777-78. In all versions the lady is so taken with the idea of becoming a farmer's wife that overlooks the fact that her hero claims to have picked up the glove 'flowered with gold' himself rather than having been given it by a stranger. One hopes that the reality of farm life will not overtake her too soon.

Martin Graebe © July 2026

We are very grateful that Martin has offered us a series of articles on Baring-Gould's People.

Martin is an independent researcher, writer, and singer, who has studied and written about various aspects of traditional song. In particular, he has extensively researched Sabine Baring-Gould, and more recently Alfred Williams. He gives talks on traditional folk song, performs traditional songs together in harmony with his wife Shan, has written "Jack in the Green" and other fine songs, runs a monthly singing session, and was Secretary of the Traditional Song Forum, <https://tradsong.org/>

Folklife news: societies & organisations; researchers; publications. ➤ More news from p9



PEDLARS PACK  A discussion list for people interested in street literature and cheap print of the past (broadside, chapbooks, songsters, prints, etc) in Britain and beyond.

The whole point of the group is to facilitate communication, so don't be shy about telling us of books, articles, projects, events, that you are involved in – we won't think you're showing off. And if people would like to introduce themselves with a brief (yes, brief) statement of their interests, it would be a good way to start the ball rolling.

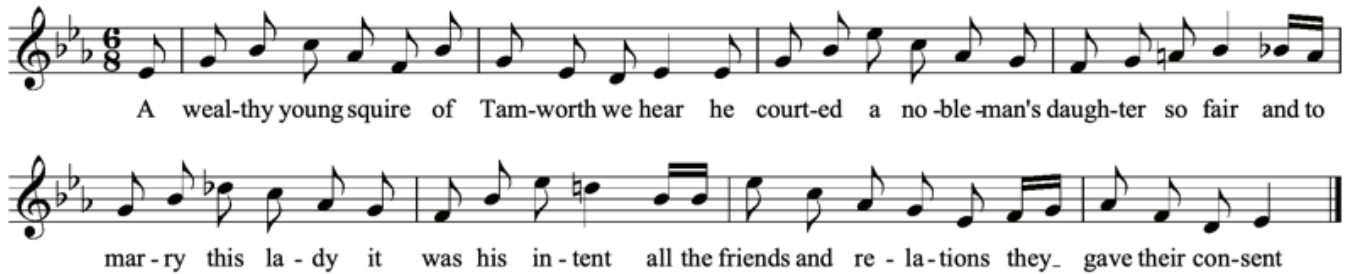
One thing to mention is that we will be coming at our core interest (cheap print) from different angles. The impetus for the group comes from those of interested in song (broadside ballads) and related content, but many who have joined through the SHARP list, in particular, will be from book history, printing history, bibliography, literacy, and various other fields.. This is exactly what we want because we need each other to get to grips with a fascinating, but often slippery subject. Please be patient and tolerant of other peoples' obsessions.

To join, email pedlars-pack+subscribe@groups.io Steve Roud



Baring-Gould's People. 4 – The Uglow Sisters, by Martin Graebe, continued

The Squire of Tamworth



A wealthy young squire of Tamworth, we hear
He courted a nobleman's daughter so fair
And to marry this lady, it was his intent
All the friends & relations they gave their consent.

The time was appointed for her wedding day
A young farmer was chosen to give her away
But soon as the farmer this lady did see
He loved her but thought of his lowly degree.

She refused the squire, & nothing she said
But instead of being married she took to her bed
The thought of the farmer so ran in her mind
She resolved some fashion to get him she'd find.

Coat, waistcoat, & breeches she quickly put on
And a hunting she went with her dog & her gun
She hunted all round where this farmer did dwell
Because in her heart she did love him so well.

She oftentimes fired, & yet nothing she killed
At length the young farmer came into the field
And for that to win him it was her intent
With dog & with gun, then to meet him she went.

I thought you'd have been at the wedding, she cried
To attend on the squire, & to give him his bride
O no, said the farmer, if the truth I must tell,
I'll not give her away, for I love her too well.

Suppose that the lady should grant you her love
You know that the squire your rival will prove
Why then, said the farmer, a good sword in hand
By my honour I'll win her when she gives command.

It pleased the lady to find him so bold
She gave him a glove that was flowered with gold
She told it she found it as she came along
As she was a hunting with her dog & her gun.

The lady went home with a heart full of love
And gave out a notice she'd lost a gold glove
And said, "Who shall find it, & bring it to me
Whosoever he is, he my husband shall be.

The farmer was pleased at hearing the news
With a heart full of joy to the lady he goes
"Sweet honoured lady, I've picked up your glove
And I hope you'll be pleased to grant me your love.

Already 'tis granted, & I'll be your bride
I love the sweet breath of a farmer, she cried
I'll be mistress of my dairy, sit milking my cow
With my merry young farmer whistling at the plough.

Now when they were married she told him the fun
How she went a hunting with dog & with gun
And now that I've got you fast caught in my snare
I'll hold you for ever, I vow & declare.

Taken down from Margaret Hamley, Down House, Lew Trenchard by Mary Bussell, April 1891. From the Baring-Gould Personal Copy Manuscript, Volume 2, page 149.

**Publications
& recordings**

- Publicity for appropriate books/publications and for recordings of collected songs: up to 200 words + cover ~ please see www.folklife.uk/ftj-contribute
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Gef Lucena

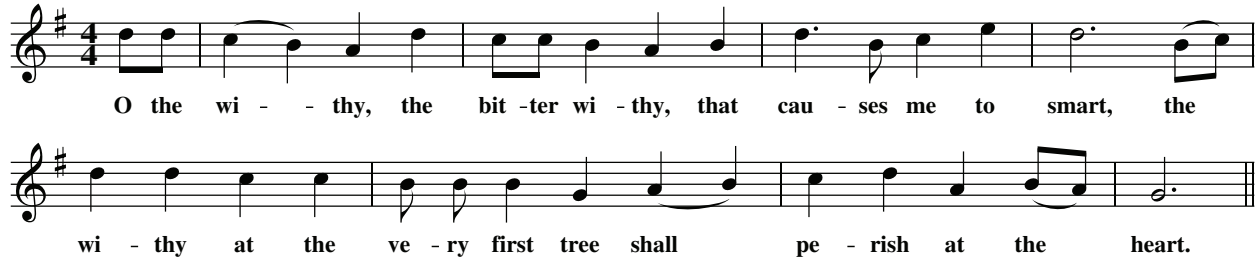




Folklife West Journal
Nº. 2, December 2008

Originally published in *Nº 2, p3*. That article was print-only ~ so was not included in our online **Folklife Traditions Journal Archive** (free PDF downloads) at <https://folklife.uk/journal> (original used 'TTC Bookman BT' typeface; now using 'Bookman Old Style' as the nearest we have).

The Wither Tree Carol, a version from Evesham, by Charles Menteith



On 9 April 1909 Cecil Sharp noted the above verse from John Hands, aged 64, at Snowhill. He also noted a set of words, adding: "From the Evesham Journal as supplied from Mr. George Gibbs. Last verse sung by Mr. Hands of Snowhill."

The following was published on 4 April 1908 in the Evesham Journal, and can now be found at Evesham Public Library in Evesham Notes and Queries, Vol 1, Barnard EAB, Evesham (1911) "Being a selected collection of original contributions to the antiquarian column of the Evesham Journal during the period July, 1906 to July, 1908":

Mr. and Mrs. George Gibbs, of Bengeworth, have made many enquires concerning this Carol, with the result that they have obtained a version of it as sung at Evesham more than forty years ago. The version is as follows:-

As it fell out on a bright holiday,
Small hail from the sky did fall.
Our saviour asked his mother dear
If he may go and play at ball.

"At ball! At ball! my own dear Son!
It is time that you were gone,
And don't let me hear of any doings
At night when you come home."

So up Lincull and down Lincull,
Our sweetest Saviour ran,
And there he met three rich young lords:
"Good morning to you all!"

"Good morn! Good morn! Good morn!" said they.
"Good morning!" then said He.
"Which of you three rich young men
Will play at ball with me?"

"We are all lords' and ladies' sons,
Born in our bower and hall;
And Thou art nothing but a poor maid's child,
Born in an ox's stall."

"If you are all lords' and ladies' sons,
Born in your bower and hall,
I will make you believe in your latter end,
I'm an angel above you all."

So He made Him a bridge with the beams of the sun,
And o'er the water crossed He;
These rich young lords followed after Him,
And drowned they were, all three.

Then up Lincull and down Lincull,
These young lords' mothers ran,
Saying, "Mary mild, fetch home your child,
For ours he has drowned all."

So Mary mild fetched home her child,
And laid Him across her knee;
With a handful of green withy twigs
She gave Him slashes three.

"Oh! withy, Oh! withy, Oh! bitter withy,
Thou has caused Me to smart.
And the withy shall be the very first tree
That shall perish at the heart."

Clearly Mr. Hands sang this text to his tune.

Roy Palmer, *Songs of the Midlands* (1972), quotes this text, with the tune collected, also by C. Sharp, from Thomas Taylor of Ross-on-Wye.

M. and J. Raven, *Folk Lore and Songs of the Black Country and the West Midlands* (1966), print these words with the comment: "This version of the Wither Carol comes from Evesham in Shropshire." [*Evesham is actually in Worcestershire*].

The origin of the story is said to be in the apocryphal gospels—those which were not accepted as genuine by the early Church.

Charles Menteith © December 2008, July 2026

As for the origins of the song, Charles discussed this in some detail, and with other examples. in FTJ 74, 2023, Nov.



Folklife West Journal
Nº. 3, June 2009

Originally published in Nº 3, p3. That article was print-only ~ so was not included in our online **Folklife Traditions Journal Archive** (free PDF downloads) at <https://folklife.uk/journal> (original used 'ITC Bookman BT' typeface; now using 'Bookman Old Style' as the nearest we have).

The Suicide Arms, by Charles Menteith

Tune: Johnny's so Long at the Fair (Oh, dear, what can the Matter be?)



Now it's Oh, Dear, What can the mat -ter be? Trou -bles are bre -wing a - way down in Bat -ter -sea

Four -ty five cop -pers got laid out last Sa -tur -day, Down at the Su -i -cide Arms. They were

tied up in bun -dles and thrown in the wa -ter, They weigh -ted 'em down _ with great sacks of mor -tar, I'm

tel -ling you this is the live -li - est quar -ter, that you e - ver saw in your life.

Chorus (sing first, as well as after each verse):

Now it's oh, dear, what can the matter be?
Troubles a'brewing away down in Battersea.
Forty-five coppers got laid out last Saturday,
Down at the Suicide Arms.

1. They were tied up in bundles and thrown in the water,
They weighted 'em down with great sacks of mortar.
I'm telling you this is the liveliest quarter
That you ever saw in your life
Chorus

2. Now they sent an inspector, but he didn't get far,
They battered his head in with a blooming great crowbar,
And stuck to his tunic a dirty great show-card
To say how he'd gone to his rest.
Chorus

3. Now the missus came out as the pubs were a'closing,
And, being a woman, she must stick her nose in.
So they broke all the bottles containing the sloe-gin,
That she'd bought at the Suicide Arms.
Chorus

4. Now when she came in, she said "Bill put your hat on,
You know I'm a lady and I'll not be sat on."
So Muggins goes out there to take all those chaps on
That she'd met at the Suicide Arms.
Chorus

5. Now they blacked both my eyes and they hit me with
coshes,
They took me on a stretcher way down to St. Thomas's.
All I was fed on was cow-juice and poultices.
Wish I was single again.
Chorus

6. There's a moral to this story, that I'd like to point out.
If you see any trouble, then keep your big nose out.
'Cos as soon as you stop one, your bleeding light goes
out,
Down at the Suicide Arms.
Chorus

I've known and sung this song since about 1960, having picked it up by hearing it sung by the Oxford Morris. But I forget who used to sing it. Gwilym Davies reckoned it's a "rare song".

Charles Menteith © June 2009, July 2026

Folklife news: societies & organisations; researchers; publications. ✪ *More news from p17.*

ACCESS FOLK

Access Folk is a University of Sheffield-based project led by folk singer and scholar Prof. Fay Hield that explores ways of increasing and diversifying participation in folk singing in England.

For more information, visit our website <https://accessfolk.sites.sheffield.ac.uk/activities/action-research>



The Seeds of Love, Two versions in GlosTrad, by Veronica Lowe

The Seeds of Love sung by William "Daddy" Shepherd, Winchcombe

1. I sowed the seeds of love right ear - - ly in the spring

I sowed the seeds of love right ear - - ly in the spring

In Ap - ril, May and June like - wise, When small birds they do sing

When small birds they do sing

2. The gardener standing by, I asked him to choose for me. (repeat)
He chos-ed the violet, the lily and the pink,
And those flowers I refused all three. (repeat)
3. The violet I did not like, because it fades too soon (repeat)
But the lily and the pink I gave them the wink
And I vowed I would stay till June (repeat)
4. For in June there's the red rose bud, and that is the flower for me (repeat)
I have oft times picking at the red rosy bud
And gained but the willow tree (repeat)
5. The willow tree won't twain, and the willow tree won't twine, (repeat)
For no more did the fair and elusive young maid
That once stole this heart of mine. (repeat)

Source: William "Daddy" Shepherd, Winchcombe workhouse. Collected by Percy Grainger, 4th April 1908.

Notes: Mr Shepherd's text was incomplete, so the words have been supplemented from another Gloucestershire version.

© Gloucestershire Traditions

The Seeds of Love

GlosTrad has two versions collected by Cecil Sharp: Henry Thomas, Chipping Sodbury, 1907 and William 'Daddy' Shepherd, Winchcombe, 1908.

The Seeds of Love was the song that started Cecil Sharp's involvement in song collecting.

He noted the song in August 1903 from John England, who was parish sexton and choir member at Hambridge in Somerset. John was also gardener to Sharp's friend, the curate, Rev. Charles Latimer. That version found its way three years later into *English Folk Songs for Schools* which Sharp edited with Sabine Baring-Gould.

There are, according to Steve Roud, hundreds of versions, which is not surprising, as well as numerous claims for its origins. It was definitely in circulation by the first quarter of the nineteenth century, and must have been a very popular song of its day. When we consider that there was at that time no mass media, and songs were circulated only either orally or on cheap broadsides which mainly provided only words, it is not surprising that such dispersal meant the melodies and combination of words were endlessly variable, though still with the same recognisable subject matter. It was the folk process at its best.

I have deliberately focused on the tunes of the variants we have in our collection. Both versions here vary significantly from the



The Seeds of Love (Spring of Thyme) sung by Henry Thomas, Chipping Sodbury

Now I'll lock the gar - den gate, And it's all for to keep the key, Till some
young man come with his flatt' - - ring tongue, And
(a)
stole my heart a - - way And stole my heart a - - way.
Variant:
(a)

We sowed the seed of love.
For then it do blossom in the spring.
There is April, May and likewise June
And the small birds they all did sing,
And the small birds they all did sing.

The gardener standing by,
I asked him to choose for me.
He chos-ed the violet, the lily and the pink,
And those flowers I refused all three,
And those flowers I refused all three.

The violet I did not like,
Because it faded so soon,
But the lily and the pink I fairly overlooked
And I vowed I would stay till June,
And I vowed I would stay till June.

Well, June brought forth the rose
And that is the flower for me,
For I've oft times plucked at the red and rosy bud
Till I gain-ed the willow tree,
Till I gain-ed the willow tree.

The willow tree won't twine
And the willow tree won't twain,
For no more did the fair and elusive young maid
That once stole this heart of mine.
That once stole this heart of mine.

Source: Henry Thomas (76) at Chipping Sodbury. Collected by Cecil Sharp 3 April 1907.

Notes: Tune and first verse from Henry Thomas. Remainder from Ernie Payne, Hawkesbury Upton.

© Gloucestershire Traditions

Hambridge one. And these too were collected by Sharp, who tended to focus more on the melodies than the words. As a singer, I rather prefer Henry Thomas's tune. It has a lovely lilt and is quite an ear-worm, though his first verse is a very different start. This edit also has a subtitle, '*Sprig of Thyme*', which is actually a different song and the connections and differences form a moot point with the folk scholars. Ours is full of flowers where the other song references mainly herbs. As a keen botanist that confusion irritates me, but I may be wrong.

You can find more information and details of the origins on **The Seeds Of Love** song page at GlosTrad.com. The whole site is currently undergoing a major and rather expensive rebuild to keep it compatible with constant tech advances. It is the only way we can ensure that our intangible heritage is preserved and available for years to come. Any donation however small on your visit will be very much appreciated.

Veronica Lowe © July 2026

Gloucestershire Traditions - GlosTrad - is the one-stop website for songs and tunes collected in Gloucestershire.

See <http://glosrad.com/> The website is free to all to explore, but it needs upkeep (hosting, IT support). You can help by donating via Paypal - there is a link on the Home page glosrad.com if you scroll down.

Gloucestershire Traditions was set up by Carol Davies, the late Gwilym Davies, Stephen Gale, Charles Menteith, & Veronica Lowe.

☺ Thanks to Veronica, who has kindly volunteered to send us contributions from the The GlosTrad archives.



Camborne's Trevithick Day, by Lamorna Spry



left:
**Portrait of
Richard Trevithick
by John Linnell 1816**
(Courtesy: Science
Museum, London)

right:
**"Puffing Devil" painting
in a window in
Fore Street**
(Photo: Lamorna Spry)



For the past 40 years or more the town of Camborne has celebrated "Trevithick Day" with a festival of steam and a wide variety of Cornish traditions such as music and dancing. The festival is normally held on the Saturday closest to the 23rd April, the date of Richard Trevithick's death and it is a wonderful sight to see scores of wonderful steam engines drive through the streets of Camborne, all commemorating their hero.

Trevithick was a Cornish inventor and mining engineer who developed the world's first high pressure steam engine and his "Puffing Devil" was the first steam-powered passenger road locomotive, successfully demonstrated on Christmas Eve 1801 in Camborne. It carried six passengers up Fore Street and Camborne Hill to Beacon Village and marked a breakthrough in high-pressure steam technology. Known locally as "Captain Dick's Puffer", it used a horizontal cylinder with high-pressure steam that was a hugely important innovation at the time.

A popular folk song, "Camborne Hill", regularly sung in Cornwall, celebrates the achievement:

Camborne Hill

Gawn' up Camberne 'ill, comin' down.
Gawn' up Camberne 'ill, comin' down.
The 'osses stood still, the wheels went aroun',
Gawn' up Camberne 'ill, comin' down.

White stockans, white stockans, she wore,
White stockans, white stockans, she wore,
White stockans she wore, the same as before,
Gawn' up Camberne 'ill, comin' down.

I knawed 'er ol' feether, old friend,
I knawed 'er ol' feether, old friend.
I knawed 'er old man, 'ee blowed in the band,
Gawn' up Camberne 'ill, comin' down.

I 'ad her, I 'ad her, I did.
I 'ad her, I 'ad her, I did.
I 'ad her I did, it cost me a quid,
Gawn' up Camberne 'ill, comin' down.

Oh please have a baby by me,
Oh please have a baby by me.
I'm young and I'm strong, won't take very long,
Gawn' up Camberne 'ill, comin' down.

We 'eaved on more coal for more steam,
We 'eaved on more coal for more steam.
The steam 'it the beam, the wheels went aroun',
Gawn' up Camberne 'ill, comin' down.

Gawn' up Camberne 'ill, comin' down.
Gawn' up Camberne 'ill, comin' down.
The 'osses stood still, the wheels went aroun',
Gawn' up Camberne 'ill, comin' down.

An' we pushed the damper in an' we pulled the damper out,
An' the smoke went up the chimney just the same.
An' we pushed the damper in an' we pulled the damper out
An' the smoke went up the chimney just the same.
An' the smoke went up the chimney,
An' the smoke went up the chimney,
An' the smoke went up the chimney,
An' the smoke went up the chimney just the same.

The second verse refers to white stockings and some believe these were the protective leggings worn by the early steam engine drivers. Because these early steam engines were hot and dirty, drivers wore pale-coloured protective gear or "stockans" over their trousers to shield them from the heat and soot. However, others believe that the second and third verses were mocking Lady de Dunstanville (nee Harriet Lemon). Harriet was the second wife of Francis Basset, the 1st Baron de Dunstanville of Tehidy Park in Cornwall and it is suggested that despite her newly acquired aristocratic title, she either didn't know that she should be wearing lace stockings, or that she could only afford the more common white stockings. According to folklore she also had a promiscuous reputation! However, as she was actually the daughter of Sir William Lemon, the 1st Baron of Carclew, she would have surely been well aware about the importance of wearing the correct stockings!

Today, the song is very popular at Cornish gatherings, festivals, and rugby matches worldwide.

Returning to Richard Trevithick; he was born in 1771 in the mining heartlands between Redruth and Camborne and despite his many outstanding inventions he died in poverty in Dartford, Kent in 1833 and is buried in the churchyard there. However, such was his importance as a scientist and engineer that a stained glass window, in memory of him, was presented to Westminster



Abbey by the President of the Institute of Civil Engineers in 1888. The window depicts St Michael, flanked by two angels playing musical instruments and figures of nine Cornish saints - Piran, Petroc, Pinnock, and Germanus, Julian with Cyriacus, Constantin, Nonna and Geraint. The head of St Piran appears to be a portrait of Trevithick himself and the figure carries the flag of St Piran (a white cross on a black background). At the base are figures of four angels who carry scrolls on which are outline drawings of some of Trevithick's great inventions; the tramroad locomotive, the Cornish pumping engine, the steam dredger and the railway locomotive.



In 2001, a replica of the Puffing Devil was built by the Trevithick Society and is generally showcased in Camborne on Trevithick Day, leading a vast array of steam engines up Fore Street and Camborne Hill. At one point there is a sharp left hand bend and it is quite scary to be in close proximity if any driver doesn't turn the wheel quickly enough!



above: A steam engine tackling the bend
(Photo: Camborne Town Council)

left: Replica of Puffing Devil (Photo: Lamorna Spry)



above: Cornish pipes and drums
(Photo: Camborne Town Council)

right: Fore Street, Camborne, 2026
(Photo: Camborne Town Council)

A plethora of musicians, dancers and school children make it a wonderful day to experience Cornish culture, and this year the weather was beautiful which encouraged thousands of people to turn out to celebrate their hero.



The following message in a window on Fore Street seemed to sum up the strong sense of local attachment and pride for their own Richard Trevithick. (Photo: Lamorna Spry)



Lamorna Spry © July 2026

Lamorna is a fiddle player, singer, and Kesskrifer ~ Kernow, Bewnans Gwerin / Correspondent ~ Cornwall for Folklife West magazine

Meur Ras y'n yeth Kernewek = Thank You in the Cornish language



Of Folk and Fishing — Part 1 of 2: The Tunes, by Keith Gregson

❖ TITLES UNDERLINED are illustrated on the next page.

A couple of years ago, one of my adult sons gave me a birthday present of a voucher to be spent at a second-hand book seller's in North Tyneside. This enabled me to purchase a copy of a rare book which has fascinated me for some time. The book's title is The Newcastle Fishers' Garlands - A Collection of Right Merrie Garlands For North Country Anglers – Joseph Crawhall (ed) 'and continued to this present year' – Newcastle-On-Tyne: George Rutland, 22 Blackett Street 1864. According to the fly leaf, there were only fifty copies 'printed on large paper'. Just over 300 pages long, the book covers poems and songs written between 1820 and 1864 and, as the title suggests, devoted to fishing in the far north of England (with reference to the eastern counties of Durham and Northumberland rather than the western counties of Cumberland and Westmorland). In its appeal, there was a special leaning to those who fished in Northumberland's Coquet – some 20 to 30 miles from the Scottish border as the crow flies.

In general, there was a song or poem each year although in a handful of years there were two contributions. The indications are that many of the songs/poems had been printed initially in the same format as the street ballads of the day – mostly with woodcuts as headers (Crawhall himself was well known for woodcuts). There had also been earlier compendiums. The compositions cover the period between the post war street ballads and the growth of the popular Tyneside Music Halls, with songs such as the Blaydon Races and Cushie Butterfield coming to life during the final years covered by Crawhall's book. As both 'traditional' tunes and words have fascinated me since I started researching in the 1970s, I propose to deal with them in separate articles.

My two areas of interest some fifty years ago were Robert Anderson, the Cumberland Bard (1770 -1833) and Ned Corvan – the 'Tyneside' entertainer (c1830– 65). I still have copious notes and a reasonable memory when it comes to tunes that were around the English side of the Anglo/Scottish borders during the period covered by the fishing book. There are 49 songs in the book altogether (not counting poems) with 38 of them set to the tunes of songs known to the authors and, presumably, many of those who purchased the book. As was common with composers of 'ballads' across this period, words were set to the tunes of songs already in existence. There are only a further 11 songs in the book where no tune is suggested.

As might be expected, the vast majority of the tunes used can be traced back north of the border to Scotland and particularly to songs written or reworked by Robert Burns. The tunes of two songs were used on more than one occasion by the authors of the fishing ballad – There's Nae Luck About the House (1831 and 1838 and Tak' Your Auld Cloak About Ye (1832, 1839 and 1860). The first of these tunes was used quite extensively by the early north east balladeers. Gateshead songwriter Thomas Wilson turned to it in 1831 for his The Washing Day, a ditty which has been sung across the ages. A little later Newcastle's Bobby Nunn used it as a basis for his ode to St Nicholas Church. The other Scottish tunes in the Garlands are:

1821 The Miller of Dron – classic Scottish Strathspey
1826 Oh, whistle, an I'll come to you, my lad – credited to Burns
1833 The Ploughman - Burns
1834 Ye banks and braes
1835 The lea rig
1836 Jessie, the flower o' Dunblane
1842 Fie! Gar Rub Her Owre wi' Strae
1842 (Autumn number) The Bonnie Grey-eyed morn
1844 The women are a' gane wud - anti-Jacobite Scottish song
1845 Corn rigs are bonnie – used in Tyneside street ballads
1846 Had I the wyte - Burns
1847 the birks of Aberfeldy

1848 Down the burn, Davie
1849 There's three guid fellows - Burns
1856 Happy friendship - Burns
1857 The howes of Glenorchie – used in Northumberland
1860 Tak your auld cloak about you
1861 When the kye come hame
1863 The mill the mill o - Burns adaptation

Fie! Gar Rub Her Owre wi' Strae was popular with Anderson, the Cumberland Bard, who used it on at least five occasions. It is thought that Anderson's roots went northwards to Scotland and east to Northumberland and, from his writings, it is suggested that he learned many of the tunes he used at ancestral knees. Whatever the case, such Cumbrian links to Scotland are understandable. Burns' later days were spent in and round both sides of the border and John Woodcock Graves chose a Scottish tune as the original basis for his anthemic John Peel. Auld Lang Syne (1824), Good-Night and Joy be wi' you a (1825) and Bob and Joan (1828) had their tunes used by writers on Tyneside and in Cumberland across the period in question.

The remaining tunes make for a very eclectic mix. About half of them seem to have had English roots. These are:

1830 Auld Sir Simon the King
1843 John, Come Kiss me (1843) - a well-researched tune with suggested links back to the 16th century and William Byrd
1853 Come Live with me - which appears in a number of 18th century collections
1858 Billy Taylor - a Music Hall parody from the early 19th century
1840 Derry Down – a version of many tunes used with this chorus
1859 Pack, clouds, away – tune set to a poem by 17th century Lincolnshire Poet Heywood
1864 The general toast – Here's to the maiden - from Sheridan's School for Scandal

Two songs had tunes strongly associated with the north east: 1822 Canny Newcassel - associated with Thomas Thompson
1841 My Love is Newly Listed – described in the book as a Northumbrian air, and known also as The White Cockade (but not to be confused with dance tune of the same name). This may well have been picked up on the streets of Newcastle by one of the authors of the fishing songs.

With the arrival of the Music Halls of Ridley, Corvan and Wilson, tunes recognised as Irish came into vogue as the basis for composition. In the Garlands there were only two:

1823 They may rail at this life – Thomas Moore – old Irish tune
1829 Boyne Water - old set - possibly Scottish via Ireland

As noted above the reliance of the fishing songs on Scottish tunes is hardly surprising considering the proximity of the River Coquet to the Scottish border. However, as will be seen in the next article, many of the authors of the songs had strong Tyneside connections, so it is worth noting that by the 1860s, the songwriters round the Tyne had turned to Ireland and the southern (and in some cases American), music halls for their tunes.

Keith Gregson © March 2026

Keith is a Sunderland singer, writer, and historian.

Next issue: Nov. 1st, deadline Oct. 1st



above: *The Newcastle Fishers' Garlands - A Collection of Right Merrie Garlands For North Country Anglers - Joseph Crawhall (ed) 'and continued to this present year'*

below: *Tak' Your Auld Cloak About Ye*

top right: *Derry Down*

bottom right: *My Love is Newly Listed*

92 The Fisher's Invitation, &c.

"TAK' YOUR AULD CLOAK ABOUT YE."

Moderato.



140

A Day by the Side, &c.

"DERRY DOWN."

Gracefully.



The Auld Fisher's Last Wish. 145

"MY LOVE IS NEWLY LISTED."

(NORTHUMBRIAN AIR.)

Affettuoso.





No Bread and No Roses. ~ By Rosie Upton

A history associated with the song Bread and Roses



The words of Bread and Roses were written as a poem in 1911 by the American poet James Oppenheim (1882 – 1932) who was said to have been inspired by the Women's Rights Movement in USA and banners carried by women textile workers during the pivotal Lawrence, Massachusetts garment workers strike. Sometimes referred to as 'the bread and roses strike' but there is an anomaly, the poem was written in 1911 whereas the strike took place in 1912! The inspiration for Oppenheim's poem has also been attributed to Chicago Women Trade Unionists and to the socialist union organiser and feminist Rose Schneiderman.

The Massachusetts garment workers were claiming a fair wage and dignified working conditions. It is said, though the evidence is slim, that they carried banners proclaiming 'We want bread, but we want roses too' or as we might say today, they wanted work life balance.

There is a connection to the weavers, spinners and others involved in the West Country woollen industry from the mid-19th century onwards who were facing destitution. Their plight resulted in part from relocation of the industry to Yorkshire combined with a failure of the West Country clothiers to embrace

changes in fashion followed by the insolvency of several local banks. Life for the West Country working class in the woollen industry was a constant struggle. Wages were low and the work arduous with most families living in poverty and facing starvation. The closure of mills and promises of a better life in USA proved irresistible to many as it did later when the mill workers of Yorkshire and Lancashire faced similar problems. Did you ever wonder what happened after they emigrated? Sadly, history has a way of repeating itself.

The majority of workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts by the early part of the 20th century were immigrant women and children. Most from Europe and many from Ireland and the UK who were promised better working conditions than those they had at home. The reality was that the conditions were no better and they worked long hours for little recompense. Half those employed by the American Woollen Company in its four mills were girls aged between 14 and 18. The death rate was high particularly amongst children with one study showing that 36 out of 100 workers died before they were 25. Few immigrant workers belonged to a union but that changed with the strike. Many of these lived in cramped and unsanitary tenement housing, often provided by the mill owners at high rent taken out of their wages, leaving barely enough to feed or clothe themselves. New machinery had resulted in increased productivity with bigger profits for the bosses together with a greater use of unskilled labour, which gave them the ability to lay off skilled workers and cut pay.

Initially a group of Polish women went on strike in 1912 over reduced pay, these were quickly joined by other workers, and the number on strike eventually rose to 25,000 from almost every mill in the city. Even more surprising is that these workers, from 51 different countries, mostly European, spoke more than a dozen different languages and many spoke very little or no English. Yet they were determined to speak in unison to secure their rights.

Demanding a 15% pay increase for a 54-hour working week plus overtime at double the normal hourly rate and elimination of bonus payments which rewarded only the few persuaded to work even longer hours.

The Industrial Workers of the World (The Wobblies), who already had members from several different ethnic groups especially Italian workers in Lawrence, assisted in coordinating and publicising the strike. This brought it to the attention of the international media.

There was mass picketing, a stand-off between the strikers and the militia, and some violence alleged on both sides with many arrested. There were cries of intimidation. Certainly, the response from the police and militia was excessive resulting in mothers and children being hit with clubs and dragged into detention. One of the striking women was shot dead. The police arrested International Workers of the World organiser Joseph Ettor and Italian socialist, writer and poet Arturo Giovannitti and charged them as accessories to murder though they were later acquitted.

The strike resulted in a national outcry and was settled two months after it began with improved terms and conditions for the women. The mill owners were later exonerated and the hard-won improvements to terms and conditions eroded over time.

Several tunes have been written to accompany Bread and Roses but the best known is probably the tune by singer, songwriter and political activist Mimi Farina (1945 – 2001) who was the sister of Joan Baez. This is the tune adopted by many community choirs in the UK.

It is claimed by some that the red rose became the symbol of socialism and social democracy after this strike. Certainly, the red flag and red rose have been the emblems of worker's movements over several centuries but there are many theories how this came about. The red flag was prominent during both the French Revolution in the 19th century and the Russian Revolution at the beginning of the 20th century. It is thought to have been used well before this date, possibly to symbolize the shedding of blood for a cause. Red rosettes were worn by the provisional government of the Paris Commune.

There are well document instances when the red rose was worn on lapels to pay tribute to those massacred or killed in socialist uprisings. The red flag and more recently the red rose have been used as the symbols of the Labour Party in Britain, socialist



No Bread and No Roses. ~ By Rosie Upton, continued from previous page

parties across the world and many organisations fighting for workers rights. Unfortunate, given the rise of Trump that the colour red in USA politics represents the Republican Party!

The red rose is a symbol of love and desire across the world from Greek mythology to the present day and is a passionate symbol of devotion in ancient folk songs and ballads throughout Europe. Albeit sometimes misplaced because as history teaches us "it's not all roses".

Rosie Upton © March 2026

Rosie has appeared at Chippenham Folk Festival, Trowbridge Festival, West Somerset Folk Festival, and Stonehaven Festival in Scotland. She has led singing workshops at festivals and for trade unions. **Contact rosieupton@icloud.com**



Folklife news: societies & organisations; researchers; publications



THE FOLKLORE SOCIETY [F] 50 Fitzroy Street, London W1T 5BT, 0203 915 3034.

A learned society devoted to the study of traditional culture in all its forms.

Our Library and Archives are at University College London Library and Special Collections, and publicly available for consultation. Many of our books can be loaned by FLS members.

Forthcoming Folklore Society Online Talks: tickets are £6 (£4 for FLS members with the Promo Code) via Eventbrite

- Tues 23 June, 19:00 - 20:30: 'Green' myths, legends and folk tales, by Rosalind Kerven
 - Tues 7 July, 19:00 - 20:30: Dragons and their Hoards, by Jeremy Harte
 - Tues 21 July, 19:00 - 20:30: Historic Building Mythbusting – Uncovering Folklore, History & Archaeology, by James Wright
- Check the website for more online talks after the above dates.*

20th FLS

Trade in Legend and Tradition

Legendary Weekend

A two-day conference to be held on

Saturday 5th and Sunday 6th

September 2026

at Tuckers Hall in Exeter, EX4 3AN

Join us for Trade in Legend and Tradition: the 20th Legendary Weekend of The Folklore Society

- 5 - 6 September, Tuckers Hall (*home of the Guild of Tuckers, Weavers and Shearmen*), Fore Street, Exeter EX4 3AN.

Whether you're into fairs or fairy gold, merchant gilds or markets, make us an offer. Contributions are welcome on the lore of trade, commerce or business: from smugglers to street cries and the South Sea Bubble, from murdered pedlars to plague stones, it's all grist to the mill. Anyone can join us – folklorists, entrepreneurs, economic historians, storytellers, captains of industry and jacks of all trades. The conference fee is £70. If you would like to attend, please contact the organisers, Jeremy Harte and Sophia Kingshill: jrmharte@gmail.com and skingshill@gmail.com at The Folklore Society, 50 Fitzroy Street, London W1T 5BT.

Call For Papers / Join us for When Loud Rumour Speaks': Informal communication in the modern online world

15 October, 09:30 - 17:00, Royal Anthropological Institute, 50 Fitzroy Street, London, W1T 5BT, and online via Zoom

'Folklore and Anthropology in Conversation'

The 10th Folklore Society – Royal Anthropological Institute Joint Seminar

For more details, & for details of tickets, see www.folklore-society.com

THE ARCHIVIST.

On 13th June, a film about **DOC ROWE**, directed by Rob Curry & Tim Pleste, was premiered at Sheffield DocFest. The festival wrote:

"David "Doc" Rowe has spent decades documenting Britain's vibrant folk traditions. Now, with time running short, he faces a race to preserve his legacy.

Rowe has devoted his life to documenting customs, songs and celebrations that few others thought worthy of attention, building an extraordinary archive along the way. As personal challenges mount and the collection's future grows uncertain, the urgency of his mission sharpens. With remarkable access, we get close to Rowe as he pushes forward, idiosyncratic and unflappable, navigating the fragile line between preserving memory and letting go. The Archivist is a story about one person's determination to celebrate the living traditions that connect us to where we come from and who we are, whatever the cost.

Our thanks, as ever, to Doc for his **Seasonal Local Celebrations** listings on the back page.



'The Ballad Partners'

The not-for-profit folk publishing company was founded in 2018.

The three most recently published titles are:

- **Anne Geddes Gilchrist**, by **Peter Snape**
- **As I Walked Out Outlandish Knights**, by **Martin Graebe**
- **The Folk-Song Society 1898 - 1932: A History**, by **Arthur Knevett**

Other books published include:

- *Collectomania! Revisiting the Song Collectors*
- *Outlandish Knights*
- *Father Christmas and the Deck of Cards: Further Adventures in Cheap Print*
- *'Jinny the Witch' and other Song Folk*
- *Cecil Sharp and the Quest for Folk Song and Dance: a New Biography*
- *Vaughan Williams and Folk: 150th Anniversary Essays*

- *Thirsty Work and Other Legacies of Folk Song*
- *A Notorious Chaunter in B Flat*
- *Old Songs, New Discoveries*
- *The Forgotten Songs of the Upper Thames*
- *Printers, Pedlars, Sailors, Nuns: Aspects of Street Literature*
- *Street Literature and the Circulation of Songs*

The Ballad Partners is a cooperative venture, founded with investment from interested individuals and utilising the invaluable professional expertise of experienced editors David Atkinson and Steve Roud. Under their guidance conference proceedings and other material on folk song, music, dance, custom and related subjects are published, always with the aims of helping raise awareness and encouraging the study of the folk arts through books that are both very readable affordable.

Watch this space – or keep an eye on **The Ballad Partners** website for more news & book sales: www.theballadpartners.co.uk **Sue Allan**



Press Gangs on the Tyne — Part 1 of 2, by Jim Mageean



IMPRESSMENT, "THE PRESS" OR THE "PRESS GANG", is a type of conscription of people into a military force, especially a naval force, via intimidation and physical coercion. The large size of the British Royal Navy in the Age of Sail meant impressment was most commonly associated with Great Britain and Ireland. It was used by the Royal Navy in wartime, beginning in 1664 and during the 18th and early 19th centuries as a means of crewing warships, although legal sanction for the practice can be traced back to the time of Edward I (1239-1307). The Royal Navy impressed many merchant sailors, as well as some sailors from other nations, mostly European and American. People liable to impressment were *"eligible men of seafaring habits between the ages of 15 and 55 years"*. Non-seamen were sometimes impressed as well, tales abound of men being dragged from their marriage beds. Seamen were not covered by Magna Carta and *"failure to allow oneself to be pressed"* was punishable by hanging, although the punishment became less severe over time.

The Magna Carta of 1215, while a foundational document for liberty, had little direct impact on the practice of press gangs. While the principles of Magna Carta eventually influenced legal protections against arbitrary seizure and imprisonment, the impact on press gangs was limited. The practice started as far back as the 13th Century, and was encouraged in Elizabethan times as a way to clear the streets of ever-rising numbers of unemployed. In 1553, Queen Elizabeth I passed *"an Act touching politick considerations for the maintenance of the Navy"* which defined more clearly the liability of sailors who may be forced to serve in the Navy and with the introduction of the Vagabonds Act of 1597 men of disrepute (vagrants) found themselves drafted into service.

In 1703, an act of Parliament passed limiting the impressment of boys under 18 years to those who were not apprenticed. The Act of 1705 was part of a larger series of acts that aimed to address the issue of manning the Royal Navy during times of conflict. A further act of Parliament in 1740 raised the maximum age to 55 and no foreigners could be forced into

the Navy. However, these restrictions were withdrawn by an act in 1779. From 1740, landsmen were legally exempt from impressment, but this was on occasion ignored in wartime unless the person seized was an apprentice or a "gentleman".

British courts heard cases and considered the legality of impressment at the end of the 18th Century, but ruled that it was legal if done in a regulated way, overseen by an officer holding a king's commission and with a warrant of impressment from the British Admiralty. A warrant of the time read:

"We do hereby empower and direct you to impress, or cause to be impressed, so many seamen, seafaring men and persons whose occupation and calling are to work in vessels and boats upon rivers, as shall be necessary to man His Majesty's Ships under your command or any other of His Majesty's Ships, giving unto each man so impressed One Shilling for Prest money."

('Press' is a corruption of 'prest', meaning a loan or advance, when the victim was deemed to have signed a contract by the act of taking the King's Shilling).

The last law was passed in 1835 reaffirmed the power of the Press, but limited the length of service of a pressed man to five years, and added the provision that a man could not be pressed twice.

Press gangs on the Tyne were a real concern, particularly in North Shields, due to its large seafaring population. These groups would forcibly recruit men into the Royal Navy, and Tyneside, with its strong seafaring tradition, was a target for their raids. In Newcastle, Captain Bover, the Regulating Officer of the Port, was the most feared man in town. Only keelmen who did a vital job transporting coal down river were excepted. Captain John Bover R.N. (1714–1782) was the Regulating Captain of the Impress Service on Tyneside for 24 years during three wartime emergencies between 1758–1782, and the press gangs he managed were responsible for the recruitment of thousands of regional seamen.

Despite the widespread opposition, litigation and violence impressment provoked, Bover was widely admired in civil society for his efficiency and humanity. He was known for overseeing this barbaric task with tact and discretion, eventually being honoured with a public funeral and interment in St. Nicholas' Cathedral, Newcastle. Captain Bover is commemorated by a plaque in the Cathedral. The fine words praising him were, however, penned by his son George.

By contrast he was a figure of fear in the eyes of regional seamen and his activities denounced for their cruelty and injustice. The song 'Captain Bover' can be found in John Stokoe's book **Songs and Ballads of Northern England**, Walter Scott Ltd, London and Newcastle upon Tyne, 1893. Stokoe noted "This beautiful fragment was picked up by Mr Thomas Doubleday from a woman singing it in the streets. All attempts to recover more of it have been fruitless".



Jim Mageean is a folk singer from the North East of England specialising in Sea Songs and Shanties from the Great Days of Sail. He is internationally renowned for his powerful singing and has performed all over the world.

Jim is the author of three books (each with a CD) written during lockdown in 2020: **Heave Away** 'heaving' (i.e. pushing) shanties; **Haul Away**, 'hauling' (i.e. pulling) shanties; and **Sail Away** 'forebitters' (i.e. leisure songs) sailors sang.

The books are £10 each + £2 UK postage (so £32 for the set), email shanty_jim@hotmail.com for details.





- *Whaur hae ye been, my canny hinny?*
- *The press gang came to Willie, While he was all alone*
- *Here's the Tender comin', Pressing all the men*
- *O the lousy cutter, they've ta'en my laddie frae me*



Press Gangs on the Tyne — Part 1 of 2, by Jim Mageean

*Whaur hae ye been, my canny hinny?
Whaur hae ye been, my winsome man?
Whaur hae ye been, my canny hinny?
Whaur hae ye been, my winsome man?
I've been tae the nor'ard, cruisin' back and for'ard,
I've been tae the nor'ard, cruisin' sair and lang.
I've been tae the nor'ard, cruisin' back and for'ard,
But I daur not gang ashore for fear of Bover and his gang.*

Merchant seamen ashore from their ships (and usually conspicuous by their clothing, rolling stride, tattoos and generally weathered appearance) were however another matter. Anyone with seafaring experience encountered in the street would first be asked to volunteer for service. If the potential recruit refused, he was often plied with alcohol or simply seized.

*The press gang came to Willie,
While he was all alone;
He bravely fought for liberty,
But there was three to one.
The blood it flowed in torrents,
He said "O pray kill me, I'd rather die for Mary's sake
Than I'd put out to sea."*

North and South Shields were regular victims of Press Gang raids, which were once a common occurrence on the North East coast. Tyneside suffered badly from the Press Gangs because of its large community of seamen and its reputation for experienced mariners engaged in the region's coal and whaling trades.

North Shields was particularly prone to Press Gang raids and in 1796, 250 mechanics and seamen were pressed into service here during a single raid in which the town was cordoned off by troops turned out from the garrison at Tynemouth. One of the naval vessels involved in Press Gang raids such as this was 'The Peggy', remembered in the name of Peggy's Hole near the North Shields Fish Quay. Only London supplied more men for the Royal Navy than the towns of North and South Shields, Newcastle and Sunderland. The Tyneside folk song 'Here's the Tender Coming' recalls the inherent fear of press gang raids:

*Here's the Tender comin',
Pressing all the men;
Oh dear hinny, what shall we dee then:
Here's the tender comin',
Off at Shields Bar
Here's the tender comin',
Full of men o' war.
They will ship yer foreign, that is what it means
Here's the tender comin', full of Red Marines.
So hide me canny Geordie, hide yorsel' away,*

*Wait until the frigate makes for Druridge Bay,
If they tyek yer Geordie, whe's te' win wor breed ?
Me and little Jacky would better off be deed.*

Families used their local knowledge and resourcefulness to hide men from the press gangs, such as hiding them in peat stacks or using pre-arranged signs to alert them to the presence of a press gang. Men pursued by the press gang employed cunning and skill to evade capture, sometimes feigning injury to avoid being taken. Local communities often rallied to protect their men, sometimes resorting to violence

to resist the press gang. In one instance, sailors in Shields, armed with weapons, attempted to seize a tender to rescue pressed men, though they were ultimately unsuccessful. Another incident involved sailors beating up a press gang officer.

Accounts in the 'Newcastle Courant from 1793 give a vivid picture of such incidents:

'Monday the sailors at Shields, to the amount of 500, assembled in a riotous manner, armed with swords, pistols, and other weapons, and made an attempt to seize the Eleanor tender, in order to rescue the pressed men on board which was resisted successfully by the efforts of the officers at this port. The seamen, next day, tried to come to Newcastle, but hearing that a strong military force was ready to resist them, they wisely abandoned their rash determination and went home, after having beaten up George Forster, one of the press-gang, with the utmost cruelty, at Howden pans.'

"On Tuesday last, the sailors of this port chased the press-gang from North Shields, with the highest marks of contempt; - with their jackets reversed. They were escorted by a numerous mob to Chirton-Bar, and who, on parting, gave them three cheers, but vowing that, should they ever attempt to enter Shields, they should be torn limb from limb. The next day their favourite, Captain Rothe, met and addressed them, and from his assurance and the manner in which it was received, we have great reason to hope that all disquietude with the gallant tars will be removed."

Midshipman George Vernon Jackson (aged 16, who was in charge of the press gang) said: "I think we captured 70 fine young fellows. When the ship was on the point of leaving, it was a sad sight; for boat-loads of women - wives, mothers, sisters, came alongside to say goodbye to their captured relatives. I have often felt ashamed."

*O the lousy cutter they've ta'en my laddie frae me
They pressed him far away foreign wi' Nelson ayont the
salt sea
They always come in the night they never come in the day
They always come in the night and steal the laddies away*

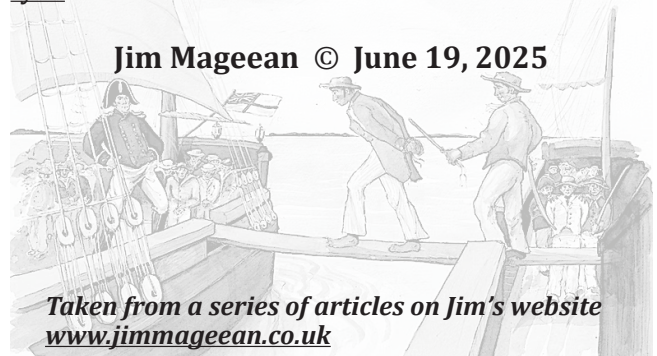
The Northumbrian Minstrelsy - Bruce & Stokoe (1882)

PART 2 IN NEXT ISSUE,

or read on

www.jimageean.co.uk/post/press-gangs-on-the-tyne

Jim Mageean © June 19, 2025



*Taken from a series of articles on Jim's website
www.jimageean.co.uk*



The Seven Wonders (Y Saith Rhyfeddod), sung by Gwyn Jones, by Mick Tams

From the Mick Tams Archive (Tams 198), with note:
Collected in 1972 from Gwyn Jones, a Swansea Valley
farmhand, in the Gwyn Arms, Upper Swansea Valley.
For the tune: see recording details in notes following.

I heard them saying yester-morning
Ta-la-ring-ting-ring-ta-la-ring-to
A ship of lead the sea was sailing
Ta-la-ring-ting-ring-ta-la-ring-to
Ships of wood went to the bottom
Ta-la-ring-ting-ring-ta-la-ring-to
And that's the first of the seven wonders
Ta-la-ring-ting-ring-ta-la-ring-to

I heard them saying that the partridge
Upon the shore she in style was playing
She was making little sandballs
And that's the second of the seven wonders

I heard them saying that the sickle
Up in the fields it was busy reaping
And the yield it was growing daily
And that's the third of the seven wonders.

I heard them saying that the piglet
Upon the cart he was loading bracken
And the load it was trimming neatly
And that's the fourth of the seven wonders.

I heard them saying that the barn owl
At Llangollen was learning reading
He was making goodly progress
And that's the fifth of the Seven Wonders.

I heard them saying that the pigeon
Along the road she an inn was keeping
With her tot all the drink was tasting
And that's the sixth of the seven wonders.

And I heard them saying that a swallow
Upon the sea she was busy shoeing
With golden hammer and silver anvil
And that's the seven of the seven wonders.

The Mick Tams Archive, & Folklife

Mick is a singer, musician, and collector. Some of his archive is on <http://www.folk.wales/archives.html>: *Traditional drama from Wales*, and *Songs, customs and dances from Gower*.

There are about 400 Word documents, held on Mick and Olly's computers. As a precaution, Olly has copied them to Folklife.

So whilst we've no expertise in the archive field, we've a back-up copy for the benefit of more experienced archivists.

Songs were collected by Mick (a professional Journalist) using shorthand, but he had no recording equipment, so no music written down; he remembers the tunes and sings them. Mick has recorded some of the songs.

As to the future of the collection: suggestions welcome!

See www.folklife.uk/mick-tams-archive for more details.

Includes some detailed notes as a Word document to download <https://www.folklife.uk/mt-contents-list>:

The Mick Tams Archive: Contents list ~ Word documents

<https://www.folklife.uk/mt-ftj>: The Mick Tams Archive in Folklife
A few examples as published in the Folklife Traditions Journal.

I collected 'The Seven Wonders' from Gwyn Jones, a local farmhand, at the Gwyn Arms pub at the Upper Swansea Valley in 1972. 'The Seven Wonders' could be traced back to an old Welsh song, 'Y Saith Rhyfeddod'. I was still living in the Swansea Valley village of Ynysmeudwy at that time, and I was a member of the Valley Folk Club in Pontardawe. The club had booked June Tabor, and she heard me singing 'The Seven Wonders'. June stayed the night in our house; in the morning, she said: "That's a lovely song – can we record it?" I said Yes – and sure enough, 'The Seven Wonders' was recorded in the debut album of The Silly Sisters – June Tabor and Maddy Prior. However, June and Maddy altered some of the words in my original song. The sleeve notes said that the song was collected by Mick Tams "from the Welsh Alps"!

After The Silly Sisters' debut album was released, a number of artists wanted to sing 'The Seven Wonders' – Roy Harris included it in his programme, and Pete Coe wrote 'The Seven Warnings', his take on the original song. Our band, Swansea Jack, named our debut album The Seven Wonders, which the Breton label ArFolk released.

Mick Tams © July 2026

Mick Tams is a singer, musician, and collector.

Some of his archive is at <http://www.folk.wales/archives.html>. Mick is a founder of the long-running Llantrisant Folk Club; our all-Wales correspondent for Folklife West, and recently created The FolkWales Listings, an instantaneous all-Wales showcase of folk events on www.folk.wales/updates/the-folkwales-listings

NOTES (from Sam)

Mick additionally noted on Mudcat: 'The Seven Wonders is a 19th century translation of the song Y Saith Rhyfeddod, which comes from the Bala region of North Wales, collected by the Welsh Folk Song Society early in the 20th century. It falls into the same class of song as Martin Said To His Man and The Derby Ram ... wild boasts, impossible achievements etc.

The words I heard sung were very close to a printed version, translated by Ieuan Ddu (the bardic name of the 19th century writer John Thomas).'

Mick was a founder member of Swansea Jack. After some



memorable tours in Brittany (including the Brest Festival) and an album named *The Seven Wonders* (the stunning traditional Welsh song collected by Mick), Swansea Jack and Mick and Pat Smith (who had just joined the group) came to a parting of the ways, and Mick and Pat formed Calennig.

Tune: the original words in the text here were recorded by Swansea Jack, on their 1978 album. The album is no longer available, but you can listen to a copy on the internet on YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4N-MmuSNus

For the original Welsh-language song, *Y Saith Rhyfeddod*, and detailed notes (in Welsh & English) on the Welsh original, see *Canu'r Cymru* (Kinney & Evans), publ. Welsh Folk Song Society.

See also notes in *Welsh Traditional Music* by Phyllis Kinney, p145, publ. University of Wales Press.



Folklife Traditions Journal, "stimulating a wider interest in folk studies & cultural traditions", which includes languages. So, we've page headings in Manx for Isle of Man articles, likewise in Cornish for Cornwall articles, and in Welsh for Wales.

Tunes from the Isle Of Man:

Three Tunes recorded from Thomas Kermode by Dr John Clague, by Stephen Miller

"Tra va omal any ghailley beg as deragh?"
 95
 Tom Kermode Bradda

When I was young and in my prime.
 96
 Tom Kermode Bradda

"To the East Indies we were bound" - "Polly Dear"
 97
 Tom Kermode Bradda

Stephen Miller, RBV © July 2026

A dedicated researcher into Manx folklore, folksong, and folk dance, plus the figures and collectors involved with the Celtic revival, Stephen's extremely impressive work in Manx and Celtic Studies are shared freely online, in print and in person, and freely available to others on his **Chiollagh Books** website, <http://chiollaghbooks.com>

RBV: winner of the annual Reih Bleeaney Vanannan award 2020, see <https://culturevannin.im>

Comments from musicians on these Manx tunes would be most welcome.

Folklife news: societies & organisations; researchers; publications



THE CORNISH NATIONAL MUSIC ARCHIVE

... is a fantastic resource for anyone wanting to hear and play traditional tunes and songs from Cornwall.

It can be accessed on YouTube,

www.youtube.com/channel/UC-FQd0apFJSPoE6AAwt2vaw,

although a new website is currently being built,

https://cornishnationalmusicarchive.co.uk.

There is a vast library of performances from Tea Treats to pipe music, including music that goes back to medieval days such as the Rescorla Snail Creep. Snail Creeps were popular in the clay country and involved a procession of people walking behind a variety of instruments, eventually forming a close spiral. One is still performed every year in July at the Rescorla Festival.

Lamorna Spry , Kernow/Cornwall: Kesskrifer/
Correspondent for *Folklife West*

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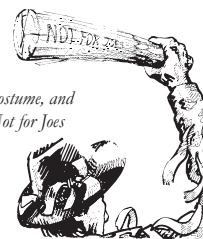
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BACS: 'Folklife West T/A Folklife', 09-01-55, account 18675181. Card donations: please see foot of all pages on folklife.uk



Folklife news: societies & organisations; researchers; publications



ENGLISH FOLK SONG & DANCE SOCIETY, EFDSS [F]

We champion the folk arts at the heart of England's rich and diverse cultural landscape. We deliver programmes of learning and participation and artist development: through our arts venue, Cecil Sharp House; through our library and archive, the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library; online and at a range of venues across England, and sometimes beyond. This includes workshops. For details, please see website.

Folk England - Next Steps The Board has decided to have a single name and unified brand: Folk England will be used as the name for the English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS) – as well as for the building (Cecil Sharp House/CSH) and the library (the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library/VWML).

Office: 020 7485 2206. www.efdss.org

Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regent's Park Road, London NW1 7AY.

ENGLISH DANCE & SONG, EDS magazine:

www.efdss.org/efdss-join-us/english-dance-and-song

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS MEMORIAL LIBRARY, VWML [F]

The Vaughan Williams Memorial Library (VWML) is the library and archive of the English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS), based at its home, Cecil Sharp House in London. It is England's national folk music and dance archive, an essential resource for anybody interested in the folk arts. Founded in 1930 as the Cecil Sharp Library to house Cecil Sharp's personal book collection, it is now a multimedia library of distinction, containing books, periodicals, sound recordings, moving images, photographs, artefacts and archival materials.

It is a comprehensive collection containing the largest number of folk-related manuscripts in England, providing invaluable insight into folk history and regional variation.

Opening hours: Tuesday–Friday from 10am to 5pm. 1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month from 10.30am to 4pm.

Contact Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regent's Park Road, London NW1 7AY. library@efdss.org, vwml.org
Instagram @thevwml. 020 7485 2206 ext.229 / 020 7241 8959



TRAC CYMRU

The folk development organisation for Wales.

Trac works to promote our traditional music, dance and song at home and beyond, funded by the Arts Council of Wales and the Welsh Government.

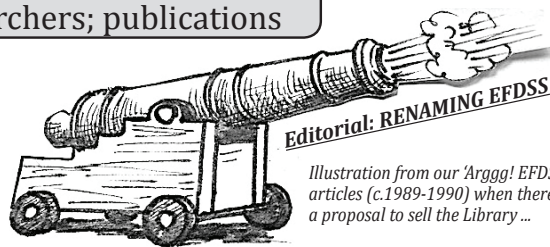
Free online resources on <https://www.trac.cymru/resources>: Tunes, Instruments, Dance, Songs, History and Folklore, Formal Education, Welsh Language, and Directory. Songs include *A Collection of Welsh Folk Songs* with the help of *Arfon Gwilym*, one of our major tradition bearers: videos, soundfiles, dots, & words.

To keep up to date with our work and all things Welsh folk arts: connect with us on social media and subscribe to our newsletter, see <https://www.trac.cymru/whatson>



Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu yn Saesneg
/ We welcome correspondence in English or Welsh.

Trac Cymru, Music Traditions Wales. trac@trac-cymru.org
or <https://www.trac.cymru>



Further to EFDSS 'Folk England - Next Steps' (left-hand column) ...

Steve Roud [F] subsequently emailed us:

A few of us have been discussing the possibility of calling for an Extraordinary General Meeting to require that the EFDSS board gain the consent of the membership for the proposed name changes for CSH and VWML. The motion to be considered at an EGM would be:

— "That any change to, or removal of, the names of the Society headquarters (currently 'Cecil Sharp House') and/or the Library and Archives (currently 'Vaughan Williams Memorial Library and Archive') can only be made with the explicit approval of a majority of Society members in a vote at a General Meeting of the Society. We need 50 signatories (current members of the EFDSS only) to trigger an EGM." Steve Roud.

The EGM was going ahead on 2nd June as we go to press. Some of those who contacted EFDSS were invited by EFDSS to a meeting before the EGM. Any further news will be in our occasional emailed Updates, see <https://folklife.uk/updates>

Ralph Vaughan Williams fund-raised to build **Cecil Sharp House**, and fund-raised for the Library which after his death was named after him. I can understand 'EFDSS' may need a name change, but to lose the names of these two who gave us so much ... Are Oxford Universities planning to rebrand the Bodleian any time soon? I think not ... Sam.



IN THE ROUD

In the Roud - A Folk Song Podcast is produced by **Matt Quinn** and looks at folk songs (with the help of historians, folklorists and singers) from both an historical and modern perspective. History guests so far include Steve Roud, Vic Gammon and Sandra Kerr; singer guests so far include Jon Boden, Maddy Prior and Emily Portman.

In the Roud is available wherever you listen to podcasts (Apple, Amazon, Youtube, Castbox, Pocket Casts etc).

Some links available at: <https://linktr.ee/intheroud>

✳ More from Matt in Updates & the next (November) issue



THE TRADITIONAL SONG FORUM (TSF) [F]

A national organisation dedicated to the promotion, performance and publication of traditional folk song in the UK.

TSF organises successful talks on Zoom, these are very popular, attracting international visitors, limited to 100 places; so if interested, see www.tradsong.org sooner rather than later. These typically have 3 speakers, plus occasional single-speaker sessions. Videos of all the TSF Online meetings are available on the TSF YouTube channel – <https://youtu.be/ty-Or2wGhkQ> Next is Sep 26 Online Meeting 82 - date TBA.

The annual Roy Palmer Lecture, 27 August, 12 noon, at Whitby Folk Week, will be given by **Katie Howson** – "A Dove Among a Flock of Old Crows: Women Traditional Musicians in England".

TSF Autumn conference, 10 October, on "Traditional Folk Song in the North of England", at Leeds Central Library. Frank Kidson (1855-1926) was a key player in the explosion of interest in traditional song and music in late Victorian and Edwardian England; his pioneering book *Traditional Tunes* (1891) was one of the three founding works of what became the first Folk Song Revival. As well as collecting songs in the field, he amassed a huge collection of printed and manuscript material, and his knowledge of the history of traditional and popular tunes was unrivalled, and always available to others through the Folk-Song Society and other organisations. He was one of the few researchers who concentrated on the northern counties, and was particularly associated with his hometown of Leeds, so it is most fitting that this meeting, which commemorates the centenary of his death, and celebrates his legacy, is organised jointly by TSF and Leeds Libraries, and also celebrates of the 400th anniversary of Leeds as a city. <https://leedsinspired.co.uk/blog/leeds-400>

The TSF website is a gateway to a number of useful resources for those interested in researching or performing traditional folk songs. There is a newsletter to sign up to. Latest details on www.tradsong.org

Richard Spencer (TSF Secretary) [F]

All enquiries to Richard at towerofsark@gmail.com

**Next issue: November 1st, deadline
October 1st, contact sam@folklife.uk**



Folklife, publishers
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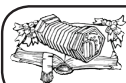
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The **Folklife Members' online Directory** [no dates!]
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Contributions, Subscriptions, Adverts

We seek to raise awareness of relevant Societies, Institutions, Researchers, Publications, in print and online.

Contributions: we welcome your learned articles & other appropriate material for interested readers (see online "Articles Index" for all our articles), but note we're not a peer-reviewed journal. Please contact us before submitting: sam@folklife.uk

- Songs, tunes, dances, & stories collected ⁽¹⁾
- Information from relevant Societies, Institutions, Researchers ⁽²⁾
- Announcing relevant publications and recordings ⁽²⁾
- Seasonal Local Celebrations, based on Doc Rowe's listings, additions welcome
- Conferences, Exhibitions, and Talks

⁽¹⁾ Researched articles about a collected song or tune, word limits: we receive articles which are anything from just a song and a few lines or up to 500 words; other articles are often 1000 - 1500, our maximum is 2500.

⁽²⁾ News: researchers, books announced, conferences, but not "folk" news (such as clubs, artists, festivals, albums) - see **Folklife West** instead.

For more details, please go to www.folklife.uk/ftj-contribute

UPDATES www.folklife.uk/updates news and **Directory**.
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Seasonal Local Celebrations are on ~ www.folklife.uk/seasonal

All listings & photos © Doc Rowe, unless stated otherwise.

We are very grateful to Doc, for generously providing detailed listings and photos.

Additional info from ‡Chris Ridley, ‡Bill Pullen, Tom‡ & Barbara Brown @, ‡Audrey Smith, Gary Heywood-Everett, and the Editors.

We welcome more listings, also further details, contact details, photos, **subject to consent of the event's organisers** - some may not want publicity.

For links to websites, see Doc's website:

www.docrowe.org.uk

Dates believed to be correct, but some weekday dates seem to be changing towards weekends.

Detailed reports - and photos - are welcomed.

The Burry Man,
South Queensferry,
Lothian
2nd Fri. in Aug.



Pearlies Harvest Festival, 2nd Sun in Oct., ©
2012 Carole Jolly (Pearly Queen of Crystal Palace), & Secretary of the LPKQ Society [‡]



The Doc Rowe Collection
Support Group has been set up
to support the Archive of Doc's
unique collection.
See: www.docrowe.org.uk

JULY

Horse Fair	Seamer	Yorks	July
Kilburn Feast - Mock Mayor & Mayoress	Kilburn	Yorks	July
Rushbearing	Gt. Musgrave & Ambleside	Cumbria	1st Saturday in July
Grand Wardmote of Woodmen of Arden	Meridan	Warks	July/August
Orange Parades	various	N. Ireland	12th July
Vintners Street Sweeping to St James Garlickhythe church	London		2nd Wed July
Holsworthy Pretty Maids	Holsworthy	Devon	2nd Wednesday in July
John Knill Ceremony	St Ives	Cornwall	25 July (every 5 yrs). Next 2026
Honiton Fair	Honiton	Devon	Tu. before Wed. after 19th Jul
Italian Festival	Clerkenwell	London	3rd Sunday in July
Swan Upping	The Thames	various	Usually 3rd week in July
Doggets Coat and Badge Race	London Bridge to Chelsea	London	Late July
Eisteddfod Genedlaethol (National Eisteddfod)	Llantw	Pembs	1-8 Aug 2026 ² ² varies every year

AUGUST

Gooseberry Contest	Egton Bridge	N. Yorks	1st Tuesday in August
Rose Queen Ceremony	Little Beck	N. Yorks	1st Tuesday in August
Feast of St Wilfrid	Ripon	N. Yorks	1st Saturday in August
Knighthood of Old Green	Southampton	Hants	1st full week in August
Rushbearing	Grasmere	Cumbria	Saturday near 5th August
The Burry Man	South Queensferry	Lothian	2nd Friday in August
Burning The Bartle	West Witton	Yorks	Saturday near 24th August
Coracle Race	Cilgerran	Pembs	Mid-Aug, date tba * Eds
Notting Hill Carnival	Notting Hill	London	Bank Holiday Sat to Mon
Football in the river	Bourton-on-the-Water	Glos	Bank Holiday Mon * Bill Pullen †
Eyam Plague Sunday	Eyam	Derbys	Last Sunday in August

SEPTEMBER

St Giles Fair	Oxford	Oxford	Mon+Tue of 1st full week in Sept
Abbots Bromley Horn Dance	Abbots Bromley	Staffs	Mon after 1st Sun after 4th Sept
Sheriff's Ride	Lichfield	Staffs	Saturday nr 8th Sept.
Widcombe Fair	Widcombe	Devon	2nd Tuesday in September
Church Clipping	Painswick	Glos	Sunday nearest 19th Sept
Bluecoat March	City of London	London	21st September or near
LPQS [‡] Costermongers Harvest Festival Parade Service	London		Last Sun Sept

OCTOBER [‡] London Pearly Kings & Queens Society [§] Original Pearly Kings & Queens Association

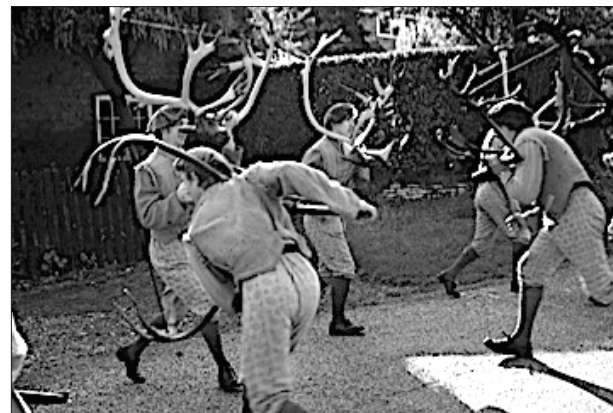
Nottingham Goose Fair	Nottingham	Notts	Last 3 days of 1st week in Oct
Billingsgate Harvest Festival	Billingsgate	London	1st Sunday in October
Pearlies Harvest Festival [§]	St Martins in the Field	London	1st Sunday in October
Bellringers' Feast	Twyford, nr Winchester	Hants	7th October
Pearlies Harvest Festival [‡]	St Paul's Church, Covent Garden	London	2nd Sun in Oct [LPKG]
Goosy Vair	Tavistock	Devon	2nd Wednesday in Oct
Court Leet	Clifton, York	N. York	October
Bampton Pony Fair	Bampton	Exmoor	Last Thursday in October
Punkie Night	Hinton St George	Somerset	Last Thursday in October
Quit Rents Ceremony	Royal Courts of Justice	London	Late October
Antrobus Soulcakers	Antrobus	Cheshire	31st October and on
Trick Or Treat	various	UK	31st October

Football in the river Bourton-on-the-Water Glos Bank Holiday Mon

A note from the late Bill Pullen:

For over 100 years, on [what is now] August Bank Holiday Monday, Bourton-on-the-Water, Glos., had "Football In The River (Windrush)" - not mass participation but organised by Bourton Rovers Football Club (1st play 2nds or 2 mixed teams), to benefit themselves and local charities; it is run alongside a Fete on the Green and draws huge crowds. ~ **Bill Pullen**

See: <https://bourtonroversfootball.com/football-in-the-river>



Abbots Bromley Horn Dance, Staffs.
Mon after 1st Sun after 4th Sept

★ **NEXT DEADLINE:**
1 October,
for November Journal

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All events subject to change, please check first.