

A photograph of two women singing together in a choir. They are positioned in the foreground, with their hands clasped near their mouths as if singing. The woman on the left has dark, curly hair and is wearing a white, textured top. The woman on the right has light brown, curly hair, wears glasses, and is adorned with several gold rings and bracelets. They are both looking towards the left of the frame. The background is slightly out of focus, showing a window with a blue and green patterned glass pane.

**Old Songs &
Bothy Ballads**

For Friendship and for Harmony

Many of the finest traditional singers in the country gather in May each year for the Fife Traditional Singing Festival - a weekend of concerts and workshops held near Collesie in the rural heart the ancient kingdom of Fife.

Singers on this CD recorded in May 2005 are **Joe Aitken** from Kirriemuir, **Stanley Robertson** ballad singer and storyteller from Aberdeen, **Louis Killen** from Tyneside and one of the foremost singers of the folk revival, **Norman Kennedy** ballad singer and weaver originally from Aberdeen and now living in Vermont, **Chris Miles** from Kirkcaldy, **John Malcolm** from Forfar and, lastly, three more of Scotland's finest traditional singers - **Jock Duncan** from Pitlochry, **Elizabeth Stewart** from Mintlaw and **Sheila Stewart** from Blairgowrie.

1: THE HAIRST O RETTIE • **Joe Aitken**

One of the greatest of the serious bothy ballads.

I hae seen the Hairst o Rettie, aye an twa three on the throne,
I've heard for sax or seiven weeks the hairsters girn an groan;
But wi a covie Willie Rae a monthie an a day,
Sends aa the jolly hairster singin blithely doun the brae.
[on the throne - farms of that ilk

2: WHEN I WIS NEW BUT SWEET SIXTEEN • **Stanley Robertson**

Widely known in Scottish tradition today and a favourite song in Stanley's family.

When I wis new but sweet sixteen,
In beauty all in blooming O,
Oh little, little did I think,
At nineteen I'd be greetin O.

3: THE BUTCHER BOY • **Elizabeth Stewart**

Elizabeth has a particularly complete version of this ballad with elements of the story often absent elsewhere.

Oh ma parents they gaed tae me good learning,
Good learnin they gaed tae me;
They sent me tae a butcher shop,
A butcher boy tae be.

4: YTHANSIDE • **Jock Duncan**

Jock understands this popular north east song to have been composed by John Gordon of Mansfield around 1830.

As I cam in by Ythanside,
Whaur swifly flows the rolling tide,

A fair young maid passed by ma side,
She looked at me and smiled.
She was a maid of beauty bricht,
That ever trod the Braes o Gight,
I could hae spent a leelang nicht,
Wi her on Ythanside.

5: BOLD PRINCESS ROYAL • **Louis Killen**

Perhaps the best known of all the pirate ballads - on both sides of the Atlantic.

On the fourteenth of February we sailed from the land,
On the bold Princess Royal bound for Newfoundland;
We had forty brave seamen in the ship's company,
And it's boldlye from the eastward to the westward sailed we.

6: I AM WEARIN AWA JOHN • **Chris Miles**

A version of this old song may have given Lady Nairne the inspiration to write her verses *The Land o the Leal* in 1798.

I am wearin awa John,
I am wearin awa John,
I'm wearin awa tae the land o the leal,
Sae be kind tae your nainsel John O.

7: UP A WILD AND LONELY GLEN • **Stanley Robertson**

A song that is still widely found in the living tradition - often with very beautiful modal tunes as here.

It's up a wild and lonely glen,
Shaded by many a fearful mountain,
'Twas far fae the busy haunts o men,
The first day that I gaed oot a-huntin.

8: BINNORIE • **Norman Kennedy**

Binnorie or the Twa Sisters is one of the oldest of the classic Scots ballads - and still widely known.

There wis twa sisters bade in a booyer,
Binnorie O, Binnorie,
There cam a knight tae be their wooer,
By the bonnie mill dams o Binnorie.

9: BOGIE'S BONNIE BELLE • **Joe Aitken**

Most traditional singers in the North East have a version of this - sung to a variety of rather beautiful tunes.

Ae Witsuntide at Huntly toon, 'twas there I did agree,
Wi auld Bogieside the fairmer a saxmonth for tae fee;

Auld Bogie wis a surly carle and this I knew fu well,
But he had a lovely dochter and her name wis Isabelle.

10: FERRETIN • John Malcolm

Written by retired police officer Norman Burns of Elgin.
I never thocht I'd see the day that Hillie's Jock wis mairrit,
For the only love he seemed tae hae wis poachin wi a ferret;
But ye'll never ken when rabbitin will lose a loon's attention,
And he starts tae tak an interest in - the things ye mauna
mention.

11: THE CRUEL MOTHER • Elizabeth Stewart

Elizabeth's version of this horrific infanticide ballad is from her family tradition - first recorded by American folklorist Kenneth Goldstein from Elizabeth's aunt Lucy Stewart of Fetterangus in the 1950s.

It's Logan's woods and Logan's braes,
Whaur I helped ma bonnie lassie on wi her claes;
First her hose then and her sheen,
She gaen me the slip when I wis deen.

12: GUISE O TOUGH • Jock Duncan

One of the most popular and widely known of the older bothy ballads.

As I gaed up tae Alford for tae get a fee,
I met in wi Jimmy Broom, wi him I did agree.
Come a hi, come a doo, hi come a day,
Hi come a diddle come a dandy O.

13: WHEN FORTUNE TURNS THE WHEEL • Louis Killen

A song whose popularity may have been helped by its inclusion in John Ord's Bothy Songs and Ballads of 1930.

Come fill the cup, let's drink about, this night we'll merry be,
For friendship and for harmony, likewise my comrades three;
Tae meet yince mair some ither night my secret joy reveal,
For I now maun stray so far away til fortune turns the wheel.

14: THE LAKES OF SHILLIN • Sheila Stewart

A tragic Irish ballad and a favourite of Sheila's sister Cathy and probably based on an incident from around 1800.

It been a fine summer's morning when Willie Leonard arose,
And straight to his comrade's bed window did go;
Saying, "Arise up Willie and let nobody know,
'Tis a fine summer's morning and a-bathing we'll go".

15: ELLON FEEING MARKET • Joe Aitken

A comic bothy song where a young man goes to the feeing market to find work.

Come aa ye jolly plooman lads that wark amon the grun,
Come listen tae ma story if ye want tae hae some fun;
I'm nae sae young as I used tae be, some say I've had ma
fling,
But I feel jst like a ten year aul when I begin tae sing.

16: YOWIE WI THE CROOKIT HORN • Elizabeth Stewart

An old song lamenting the loss of a pet sheep with a crooked horn stolen away by a young rogue.

Ma yowie wi the crookit horn,
Ma yowie wi the crookit horn;
A siccan a yowie ne'er wis born,
She's taen fae me and taen awa.

17: THE CASTLEGATE • Norman Kennedy

An ever popular song of a young ploughboy who goes to town on a spree and falls into a scrape with a young woman.

As I cam ower the Castlegate,
I met a fair young lass;
And she gaed me a wink wi the tail o her ee,
As I cam walkin past.
Ricky doo dum day, doo dum day,
Ricky dicky doo dum day.

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Full song texts and biographies are at:

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Old Songs & Bothy Ballads

☞ **For Friendship and for Harmony** ☞

- 1: Joe Ait ken ☞ The Hairst o Rettie 3:37
- 2: Stanley Robert son ☞ When I Wis New But Sweet Sixteen 1:44
- 3: Elizabeth Stewart ☞ The Butcher Boy 6:30
- 4: Jock Duncan ☞ Ythanside 3:13
- 5: Louis Kill en ☞ Bold Princess Royal 3:49
- 6: Chris Miles ☞ I am Wearin Awa John 4:36
- 7: Stanley Robert son ☞ Up a Wild and Lonely Glen 4:02
- 8: Norman Kennedy ☞ Binnorie 7:39
- 9: Joe Ait ken ☞ Bogie's Bonnie Belle 3:56
- 10: John Malcolm ☞ Ferretin' 2:41
- 11: Elizabeth Stewart ☞ The Cruel Mother 7:21
- 12: Jock Duncan ☞ Guise o Tough 3:47
- 13: Louis Kill en ☞ When Fortune Turns the Wheel 2:31
- 14: Sheila St ewart ☞ The Lakes o Shillin 3:34
- 15: Joe Ait ken ☞ Ellon Feeing Market 3:05
- 16: Elizabeth St ewart ☞ Yowie wi the Crookit Horn 3:54
- 17: Norman Kennedy ☞ The Castlegate 3:30

Total Time 70:03

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