

OLD SONGS & BOTHY BALLADS



• • • • Nick-knack on the Waa • • • •

SONG BOOK

The recordings on this CD were made in May 2007 during a highlight of the year for Scotland's traditional song enthusiasts - the Traditional Singing Weekend at Collesie in Fife.

Guest singers for the weekend included here are **Gordeanna McCulloch** from Glasgow who was first inspired to sing the ballads after hearing Jeannie Robertson in the 1960s; **Gordon Easton**, singer, fiddle player and raconteur from Tyrie in Aberdeenshire; **Elizabeth Stewart** from Mintlaw, many of whose songs came to her from her family the Fetterangus Stewarts; the world renowned singer and storyteller **Duncan Williamson** of Ladybank (who sadly passed away in November 2007) and **Ron Bissett** of Falkland, well-known in Fife for his repertoire of both ballads.

Many other singers took part in the weekend events and the CD captures some of these performances: retired farmer **Hector Riddell** from Banchory, butcher **Alex Clarke** from Dundee, **Jock Duncan** the great ballad singer from Pitlochry, **Vic Gammon**, folklorist, singer and Senior Lecturer in Folk and Traditional Music at the University of Newcastle, **Chris Miles** and **Aileen Carr** both members of **Palaver**, the Fife based song group, **Peter Shephard**, singer, folk song collector and an organiser of the weekend, **Steve Black**, a doctor from Arnforth in Lancashire and **Pete Coe**, folk singer and folk song enthusiast from Ripponden in Yorkshire.

1: THE WEE TOUN CLERK • Gordeanna McCullough

This old ballad is still to be found in the repertoire of Scottish traditional singers and was a favourite in the bothies. Gordeanna has had the song since her early days with The Clutha. The first printed version did not appear until early in the nineteenth century although the theme has been part of European literature since the middle ages and is included in Francis J Child's *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* as The Keach in the Creel (Child 281).

As Maisy she gaed up the street,
The white fish for tae buy;
The wee toun clerk he heard of it,
An he's followed her on the fly.

Ellie ellie ridum, didum daddie,
Ellie ellie ridum dee;
O ellie ellie ridum, didum daddie
Fal the ral the diddle I dee.

Says he, "I'm bound for Glesga toun,
And it's hoping ye'll gyang wi me;
I'll meet ye the nicht by the licht o the moon,
An syne we'll mairrit be."

Says she, "Ma faither locks the door,
An ma mither keeps the key;
An gin there were e'er sae willin a lass,
I couldna win oot tae ye."

But says he, "I'll mak a ladder lang,
An a creel o basketry;
An wi a rope fae the chimley top,
I'll lower the creel tae ye."

Noo the auld wife couldna sleep that nicht,
Though late it was the oor;
"I'll lay ma life," quo the silly auld wife,
"There's a man in oor dochter's bower."

Sae the auld wife she gaed oot o the bed,
Tae speir for her ain sel;
But fit a lark when she trippit on the rope,
And intae the creel she fell.

Noo the wee toun clerk at the chimley top,
When he fund that the creel wis fu;
He's wrapped the rope his elbow roun,
And fast the tow he drew.

He's heist her up an he's drapped her doun,
An he's let the creel doun fa;
Till ilka rib in the auld wife's back,
Played nick-knock on the waa.

Played nick-knock, nick-knock on the waa,
An it served the job richt weel
May ilka silly speirin auldwife,
Be rockit in the same auld creel.

2: BESIDE HER FAITHER'S COTTAGE • Alex Clarke

A song from the great Scots entertainer, Harry Lauder.

1: Beside her faither's cottage at the bottom o the glen,
I left ma bonnie lassie there in tears,
Oh she nearly broke her heart when I said we had tae pairt,
An I wad be awa for several years;
But she dried her tears away when I told her of the day
That I'd come back again and make her mine;
She said, "When you cross the sea, John, will you think
of me?"
I said I would, an singin aa the time:
Her cheeks are like the bloomin rose, her neck 'tis like
the swan,
And her face it is the sweetest face I've ever gazed
upon,
And I'll row her in the heather yet as share as ma name's
John,
When I get back again tae bonnie Scotland.

2: I hugged her tae ma bosom and I kissed her on the
neck,
I told her I could eat her without salt,
Oh she says, "I like your style, you've fairly gone your mile,
I said, "I ken, but that's tae me's nae fault;
For I'm a lad that likes tae cuddle and canoo a bonnie lass,
And a lad that cannae dae it's no the thing;
She said, "Fine I ken that John, and I'll miss you while
ye're gone."
Said, "So will I," but singin aa the time:
Her cheeks are like the bloomin rose, her neck 'tis like
the swan,
And her face it is the sweetest face I've ever gazed
upon,
And I'll row her in the heather yet as share as ma name's
John,
When I get back again tae bonnie Scotland.

3: FEE'D TAE THE DRUM • Gordon Easton

Composed by Frank Henry brought up in the Cabrach
between Huntly and Aberdeen. A young man goes to
the feeing market to look for a new job and agrees to a
contract but gets more than he bargained for.

At ae Mairtnmas term, the grieve fae the Drum,
Tappit me on the shoulder and speired gin I'd come,
Tae watch his first pair for a winter half year,
Wi a big cleekit horse and ringle-eed meer.

There wis plenty o tools an the best o a squad,
And we wis never pitten oot fen the weather was bad;
There wis a prize takken bull and great thumpers o kye,
An a bonnie young quine in the kitchie forbye.

So we newsed o the horse an the knowte an the ploo,
An he held on the drink till I gey near got fu;
Syne aifter a half dozen glasses o rum,
Like a gowke, I feed hame tae be foreman at Drum.

Och, I'll never forget the first nicht at the Drum,
An losh, I wish I never had come;
There wis hardly a bowster tae hae had up ma heid,
An the snores o the loon would hae waukened the deid.

Noo the baillie wis big, he'd a bed till himsel,
An it wis jist as weel 'cos his feet had a smell;
Like a press full o cheese, oh my, sic a hum,
There wis millions o fleas in the chaumer at Drum.

Syne the meer wis a kicker an files she ran aff,
An the horse wis a stiff 's an auld man wi a staff;
But losh, ye shoulda heard foo the gaffer could bum,
That day he fee'd me tae come hame tae the Drum.

Syne the milk it wis blue an the porridge wis thin,
Like a coard in a battle aye ready tae rin,
An the breid wis sae tough and the scones were sae raw,
Man, it took near a yokin wir breakfast tae chaw.

An Babbie the skiffy, she wis brosie an big,
She'd a glaik in her ee an I'll sweir she'd a lug;
Her face an her hands were as black as a lum,
Nae winner the lads widna fee tae the Drum.

Och, I'll never forget the first nicht at the Drum,
An losh, I wish I never had come;
The greive wis a twister, his wife nae half-come,
Och, I'll aye rue the day I fee'd hame tae the Drum.

4: THE GALLANT FORTY TWA • Elizabeth Stewart

This beautiful traditional song from Elizabeth's family repertoire. The 'forty-twa' is the 42nd Highland Regiment, more commonly known as the Black Watch. It was established in 'to be constant guard for securing the peace in the Highlands' and 'to watch upon the braes'. The name comes from the dark tartans it's members wear, which was originally to distinguish them from regular troops who wore red uniforms. Several other traditional songs include the broken token motif but few pack such feeling of loss as this. There is, of course, a much better known and more recent song with the same title that was published by The Poet's Box in Dundee in the 1880s.

Oh it's six weeks come Sunday since ma laddie's went
awa,
He's awa tae join the regiment o the gallant Forty Twa.

Chorus:

Oh broken herted I may wander for the loss o ma true
lover,
He's awa tae join the regiment o the gallant Forty Twa.

I haed only one sixpence and I broke it into twa,
An I gaed ma love the half o't afore he went awa.

I will set at my windae and I'll spin at ma wheel,
An I'll think about ma laddie and the times we haed sae
weel.

5: I MUST AWAY • Duncan Williamson

The lover returns from the dead but is doomed to return to the nether world before dawn. The song may be considered as a version of the Grey Cock (Child 248).

Oh it's seven long years since my true love left me,
It is seven long years since he went to sea;
But another seven I shall wait his pleasure,
Till he comes home and he marries me.

Now I lie in my bed and I often wonder,
I lie in my bed and I often pray;
I pray to my dearest God in heaven,
Will he send my true love back home to me.

Now who is that there that is at my window,
Who's keeping me out of my night's rest?
It is not my father, it is not my mother,
Who is keeping me out of my night's rest.

He said, "Open your door love and let me in love,
Will you open the door love, will you let me in?
For I am cold love and I am weary,
And I am wet to the very skin."

So she opened her door with the greatest of pleasure,
She opened the door and she brought him in;
Saying, "If you're my young man, you've changed your
colour,
You're not like the young man I used to know."

So they sat talking and went walking,
Until the small cock he began to crow;
He said, "I must away dear, I can stay no longer,
For it's a far away I have tae go."

She said, "Willie dear love, O please don't leave me,
O Willie dear don't go back to sea;
O Willie dear love, O please don't leave me,
O Willie won't you stay with me?"

He said, "I must away dear, I can stay no longer,
And it's a far away I have tae go;
And when I am gone love, please pray no longer,
For never more can I come home to you."

6: THE MOSS O BURRELDALE • Hector Riddell

Composed by George Morris of Oldmeldrum around 1930. Geordie and his brother in law Willie Kemp were responsible for composing many of the later bothy ballads or cornkisters and their recordings of the songs issued as 78s and easily available printed song booklets ensured their wide popularity.

Hiv ye ever seen a tinker's camp upon a simmer's night,
On a night afore a market, fan aa things gaun richt,
Fan aa the tramps an hawkers they come fae hill an dale,
Tae gaiter in the gloamin on the Moss o Burreldale.

Chorus :
The ale wis only tuppence, an a tanner bocht a gill,
A besom or a tilly pan or a shelt ye aye could sell,
An we aa forgot oor troubles ower a forty o sma ale,
When we gathered in the gloamin on the Moss o' Bur-
reldale.

Jock Stewart he wid hae a fecht an took his jacket aff,
Bit Squeakin Annie saddled him, we aa got sic a laugh.
She ran ower amang the tilly-pans, for a wee fite iron pail,
An she skeppit him like a swarm o bees on the Moss o
Burreldale.

Noo little Jimmy Docherty, a horseman great wis he,
He jumpit on a sheltie's back, some tricks to let us see;
Bit a callant shoved some prickly whins aneath the sheltie's
tail.

Heid first he shot in a mossy pot ower the Moss o Bur-
reldale.

By this time Stewart had got the pail torn aff his achin heid,
An he kickit up an awfu soun, enough tae wauk the deid,
Fan Annie roared, "Come on Macduff, tho I should get
the jail!
Pit them up, ma mannie, ye're nae feart at Annie, the Rose
o Burreldale."

Bit Annie wis nae langer heard for muckle Jock MacQueen,
He startit tunin up the pipes he bocht in Aiberdeen;
He blew sae hard, the skin wis thin, the bag began tae
swell,
An awa flew Jock wi his sheepskin pyoke ower the Moss
o Burreldale.

Noo the dogs they startit barkin, an the cuddy roared,
"Hee-haw!"
The tramps and hawkers aa turned roun and sic a sicht
they saw;
'Twis Docherty as black's Auld Nick, the bairns let oot a
yell,
So we shoodered oor packs an aa made tracks fae the
Moss o Burreldale.

Bit noo the spring cairt's oot o date, the sheltie it's ower
slow,
The tramps and hawkers noo-a-days hae langer roads
tae go;

For ye aa maun hae a motor car, ye wint oor goods tae sell,
Bit I'll never forget the nights we met on the Moss o
Burreldale.

Chorus :
Fan ale wis only tuppence, an a tanner bocht a gill,
A besom or a tilly pan or a shelt ye aye could sell,
An we aa forgot oor troubles ower a forty o sma ale,
When we gathered in the gloamin on the Moss o Bur-
reldale.

7: I'M A PEER ROVIN LASSIE • Gordeanna McCullough

A fine tune and the repeat chorus lines of When I look
tae yon high hills make this a great song for audience
participation.

I'm a peer rovin lassie an my fortune's been bad,
Since I fell in love wi a young sailor lad;
I wis courted sae early by night and by day,
And the lad I loe dearly lies a distance frae me.

Chorus:
When I look tae yon high hills an ma laddie's na there,
When I look tae yon high hills it maks ma hairt sair;
When I look tae yon high hills an a tear blins ma ee,
And the lad I loe dearly lies a distance frae me.

My friends and relations, they've aa joined in one,
Tae pairt me and my true love, they've done aa they can;
Tae pairt me and my true love, they've done aa they know,
But the lad I loe dearly, he will love me more so.

Then a bunch o blue ribbons tae ma love I'll prepare,
And through the lang summer I'll gie him tae wear;
And when he comes back again I'll crown him wi joy,
And I'll kiss the sweet lips o my young sailor boy.

8: THE BUREAU • Alex Clarke

The Bureau (the Unemployment Assistance Board) was set up in the 1930s to administer means tested family benefits. The lads are “on the Bureau” when one job after another goes wrong.

We're the lads fae the tap o the hill,
We never worked, never will,
We're on the Bureau;
We're the lads fae Mid Craigie,
Whar there's work ye'll no see me,
We're on the Bureau;
We got a job at Walker's at the spinnin,
We sang that sang Oor Maggie had a Bairn,
Oh the gaffer didna like that sang,
We werena in the job verra lang,
Spinnin bye, bye.

We're the lads fae the tap o the hill,
We never worked, never will,
We're on the Bureau;
We're the lads fae Mid Kirk Style,
If we saw work we'd run for a mile,
We're on the Bureau;
We got a job in the boatyaird at the stagin,
Wisna lang before we had the gaffer ragin,
For we stood on a plank that wisna there,
An we went flyin through the air,
Boatyaird bye, bye.

We're the lads fae the tap o the hill,
Never worked, never will,
We're on the Bureau;
We're the lads fae the Gelly Burn,
If we see work we'll dae about turn,
We're on the Bureau;
We got a job wi Johnny Lang the bookie,
Collectin lines at the corner o St Rookie
We gien oot to much sub,
Spent the rest in Rosie's pub,
Bookie bye, bye.

We're the lads fae the tap o the hill,
Never worked, never will,

We're on the Bureau;
We're the lads fae Norrie's Pend,
Never worked, don't intend,
We're on the Bureau;
We went doon ae Friday for oor money,
The cash clerk says, “Now lads ye think ye're funny,
You've run oot o stamps ye see,
Now ye're on the UAB,
Bureau bye, bye.”

A Royal Commission on Unemployment was set up in 1930 at a time of considerable poverty and high unemployment. This led to the 1934 Unemployment Assistance Board (the UAB referred to in the last verse) that was set up to administer household means tested benefits - and later abolished during the war in 1941.

9: THE MUCKIN O GEORDIE'S BYRE • Gordon Easton

A corknister by the great George Morris. He and his brother in law Willie Kemp vied to outdo each other in writing the comic corknisters and this is one of Gordon's favourites and one that he feels captures the comedy of what could have been a true event.

At a relic aul craft upon the hill,
Jist roun the neuk fae Sprottie's mill,
Tryin aa his life the time tae kil,
Wis Geordie MacIntyre.
No he had a wife a sweir's himsel,
An a dother as black's auld Nick himsel,
An there wis some fun, haud awa the smell,
At the muckin o Geordie's byre.

Chorus:
When the graip wis tint, the besom wis deen,
The barra widna row its leen,
An siccan a soss, there (or it) never wis seen,
At the muckin o Geordie's byre.

Noo the dother, she had tae strae an neep,
An the auld wife started tae swipe the greep,
An Geordie fell sklite on a rotten neep,
At the muckin o Geordie's byre.
Seen ben the greep cam Geordie's soo,

An she stood up ahint the coo,
The coo kickit oot, an, 'oh fit a stew!'
At the muckin o Geordies byre.

For the aul wife she was booin doon,
The soo got kickit on the croon,
She shoved her heid in the wifie's goon,
An ben through Geordie's byre.
The dother cam thro the barn door,
On hearin her mother let oot a roar,
Tae the midden she ran an fell ower the boar,
At the muckin o Geordie's byre.

Noo the boar he lap the midden dyke,
An ower the rigs wi Geordie's tyke,
They baith ran full o a bumbee's byke,
At the muckin o Geordie's byre.
The cocks an hens began tae craw,
Fen Betty astride the soo they saw,
The postie's shelly ran awa,
At the muckin o Geordie's byre.

Noo a hunner year hae passed an mair,
Whaur Spottie's wis, the hill is bare,
The craft's awa so ye'll see nae mair,
O the muckin o Geordie's byre.
His folks aa deid an awa lang syne,
In case his memory we should tyne,
Fussle this tune tae keep ye in mair,
O the muckin o Geordie's byre.

When the graip wis tint, the besom wis deen,
The barra widna row its leen,
An the soo an aul Betty has never been seen,
Since the muckin o Geordie's byre.

Glossary:

muckin=cleaning; croft/ craft = small farmstead; jine=join; kill = overcome with weariness; sweir = lazy; auld Nick=the Devil; tint = lost; besom = broom; deen = done; barra = barrow; widna row its leen = would not hold its load; siccan = such; soss = dirty wet mess; strae = straw; neep = turnips; swiipe = sweep; greep/ gripe = gutter in the byre; fell sklyte = fall heavily; ben = through; soo =

sow/ female pig; booin doon = bending down; goon = gown, dress; midden = dung heap; rigs = strip of arable land; tyke = dog; bumbee's byke = beehive; lang syne = long since; tyne = lose

10: THE TWA BROTHERS • Elizabeth Stewart

One of the classic big ballads - two boys are in a playful fight and one kills the other. The ballad still survives, as here, in the living tradition, although Francis J Child thought it was extinct in Scotland when he published his *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* in 1882 (Child 49).

O two two pretty boys they were gaun tae the school,
An they were comin home;
Said the biggest boy to the littlest boy,
"O can you throw a stone,
O can you throw a stone."

"O I can neither throw a stone,
And it's little can I play at the ball;
But if you go down to the merry greenwood,
I will try you a wrestling fall,
I will try you a wrestling fall."

So they went down to this merry greenwood,
To try a wrestling fall;
There brother John took out his little penknife,
And stabbed William to the ground,
And stabbed William to the ground.

"O you'll tak off your white linen shirt,
And you'll tear it fae gore to gore;
An you'll a-wrap it roun the wood,
Till the blood will come no more,
An the blood will come no more."

So he took off his white linen shirt,
And he tore it fae gore tae gore;
And he a-wrapped it roun the wood,
But the blood came ten times more,
But the blood came ten times more.

"It's what will your dear father think,
This night when you don't go home?"
"Tell him I'll go to a London school,
And like a good boy I'll come home,
And like a good boy I'll come home."

"It's what will your dear stepmither say
This night when you don't go home?"
"Tell her the last prayer she prayed for me,
That I would ne'er come home,
That I would ne'er come home."

11: BOGIE'S BONNIE BELLE • HECTOR Riddell

A famous song based on an event that took place in Aberdeenshire in the 1880s.

Ae market day in Huntly toun, 'twas was there I did agree,
Wi Bogieside the fairmer, a saxmonth for tae fee;
For Bogie was a surly carle and I did know that well,
But Bogie had a dother braw and her name it was Belle.

Noo Belle she wis the bonniest lass in aa the countryside,
And very soon I lost ma hert tae the belle o Bogieside;
An daffing on a summer's nicht I'd wander wi ma dear,
Tae see the trouties lowpin on Bogie's water clear.

Though weel I kent I wisnae match for Bogie's Bonnie Belle,
When e'er she turned her ee on me she fairly cast a spell;
I tried in vain tae keep awa fen it cam tae eventide,
But in a dream I'd wander till we met on Bogieside.

'Twas jist afore the term time aul Bogie cam tae me,
And said, wi face as black as nicht, "It's you I wint tae see;
If what is true my dother says, we can nae langer agree,
It's doun the road ye'll gang without a penny o your fee."

Says I, "Ma man ye're fairly richt," an I hung my heid in shame,
"Bit I will marry Belle the morn and gie tae her my name."
He cursed and swore and in his rage he said that rather he
Would see his daughter lying deid than married untae me.

Though I was but a plooman chiel, I thoct he wis some sair,
Though hard it wis tae pairt wi Belle, I didna say nae mair;
But I packed ma kist and I left the toun, dear Belle I didna see,
I wis that mad I never socht the wages due tae me.

Bit noo a tinker she has wed, his nickname Souder John,
She hawks his pans and rousers aroun by Foggyloan;
They say aul Bogie rues the day that he did rave and yell,
Ah wee! 'twas me first won the hert o Bogie's Bonnie Belle.

12: THE FARMYARD GATE • JOCK DUNCAN

A song that Jock remembers as a song that his New Deer neighbour John Strachan used as a finale piece in his concert party that Jock was part of for a few years in the late 1930s.

Oh that farmyard gate,
Johnny was there both early and late,
Whistlin an singin, "Are ye coming out Kate?"
Down by the farmyard gate.

Johnny Green he used to wait for his girl,
Down at the farmyard gate
With his hair all set in a nice little curl
Down at the farmyard gate.
He sat on the gate and cried, "Cuckoo!
Are you coming out darling? Do love, do,
For my toes is cold and ma nose is blue,
Down at the farmyard gate."

Oh that farmyard gate,
Johnny was there both early and late,
Whistlin an singin, "Are ye coming out Kate?"
Down by the farmyard gate.

Katie would come out and they both would sing,
Down at the farmyard gate,
Then they would talk like a silly thing,
Down at the farmyard gate.
They would sit there for hours and whisper low,
And then hold hands and say, "Ho, ho!"
And the old old gate it would creak and groan,
Down at the farmyard gate.

Now Katie's young brother, he took some tar,
Down tae the farmyard gate,
And he sprayed it all over the topmost bar,
Down at the farmyard gate.
Now Johnny sat there and he said, "My Duck,"
And Katie sat there and says, "Chuck, chuck,"
And they both sat there for they both had stuck,
Down at the farmyard gate.

Oh that farmyard gate,
Johnny was there both early and late,
Whistlin an singin, "Are ye coming out Kate?"
Down at the farmyard gate.

Now this young lovers never speak as they hurry by,
Down at the farmyard gate,
If ye go there ye'll find the reason why,
Down at the farmyard gate.
There are some flounces if you are not blind,
And pieces of cloth ye will also find,
From parts of them both - well, oh never mind!
But it's there at the farmyard gate.

Oh that farmyard gate,
Johnny was there both early and late,
Whistlin an singin, "Are ye coming out Kate?"
Down by the farmyard gate.

13: THE WINTER IT IS PAST • Vic Gammon

A song that is still popular in Ireland and has also been collected from tradition in Newfoundland. The song certainly dates back to the mid 1700s and was quite common on 19th century broadsheets usually under the title 'Cold Winter'. The song was known to Robert Burns (1759-1796) who published his own version in The Scots Musical Museum in 1788. The races on the plain of Kildare were a great gathering-place for people from all over Ireland. Vic got the song from the Lucy Broadwood manuscript, the source being AJ Hipkins of London.

Now the winter's gone and past, pleasant summer's come
at last,

And the small birds sing on every green tree;
Oh it's many's the heart is glad, oh but my poor heart is
sad,
Since my true love's gone absent from me.

Oh I would not think it strange the whole wide world for
to range,
In the hope all for to find my heart's delight;
Though here in Cupid's chains oh I am obliged to remain,
And in sorrow for to spend my whole life.

I will dress meself in black, put a fringe around my neck,
And gold rings on every finger I shall wear;
Then it's straight way I'll repair to the County of Kildare,
And some tidings I'll have of my dear.

For my love is like the sun in the pleasant month of June,
That do always prove constant and true;
But 'tis hers is like the moon that do wander up and down,
And in every new month it is new.

All you that are in love and cannot it remove,
Well I pity the pain that you endure;
For experience makes me know that your heart is full of
woe,
It's a woe that no mortal can bear.

14: IT'S AA YIN TAE ME • Ron Bissett 3.29

A little comic song that seems to have been quite well known in Fife and Tayside.

It's aa yin tae me whether I mairry noo or no,
Whether I mairry or I tarry or I bide a weaver O.

Ma faither gien's a horse, ma mither gien's a coo,
Ma sister gien's a boar an ma brother gien's a soo;
So it's aa yin tae me whether I mairry noo or no,
Whether I mairry or I tarry or I bide a weaver O.

I'll get wark fae the horse, mulk fae the coo,
Ham fae the boar an piggies fae the soo;
So it's aa yin tae me whether I mairry noo or no,
Whether I mairry or I tarry or I bide a weaver O.

Ma faither gien's a cock, ma mither gien's a hen,
Ma sister gien's a robin, ma brother gien's a wren;
So it's aa yin tae me whether I mairry noo or no,
Whether I mairry or I tarry or I bide a weaver O.

I'll get crawin fae the cock, eggies fae the hen,
Whistlin fae the robin, chirpin fae the wren;
So it's aa yin tae me whether I mairry noo or no,
Whether I mairry or I tarry or I bide a weaver O.

Ma faither gien's a cat, ma mither gien's a moose,
Ma sister gien's a flech an ma brother gien's a louse;
So it's aa yin tae me whether I mairry noo or no,
Whether I mairry or I tarry or I bide a weaver O.

I'll get fun fae the cat, chasin at the moose,
Clawin at the flech an scratchin at the louse;
So it's aa yin tae me whether I mairry noo or no,
Whether I mairry or I tarry or I bide a weaver O.

15: PARTING SONG • Chris Miles, Aileen Carr & Gordeanna McCullough

A song composed by Dave Webber in 1993 in memory of a good friend John Purdy of Torquay.

Soon the morning sun will rise and dawn will bathe the sky,
There's time for just this parting song before we say
goodbye;
So sing together one and all and raise a glass of wine,
Here's hoping we shall meet again along the road of time.

We've shared our stories, yours and mine, we've shared
our hopes and fears,
In memories of distant youth, we've both rolled back the
years;
So sing together one and all and raise a glass of wine,
Here's hoping we shall meet again along the road of time.

The ever-turning fateful wheel must cause our ways to part,
And bringing untold mysteries, another day will start;
So sing together one and all and raise a glass of wine,
Here's hoping we shall meet again along the road of time.

So from endings come beginnings, from the old shall come
the new.

With hope for tomorrow, we'll see the parting through;
So sing together one and all and raise a glass of wine,
Here's hoping we shall meet again along the road of time.

16: Robin Hood and the Pedlar • Peter Shephard

A rare ballad (#132 in FJ Child's collection) that has, never-the-less, been found in the living tradition both in England and in Scotland in the last decades. This version is from the singing of Denny Smith a Romany traveller from Gloucester and recorded by Pete from Denny in the Tabard Bar, North Street, Gloucester in April 1966. This is one of a large cycle of Robin Hood ballads that excited enormous public interest after they were first compiled together from early broadsheets and manuscript collections and published in two small 8vo volumes by Joseph Ritson in 1795.

O its off of a pedlar and a pedlar bold,
Some fine pedlar he seemed for to be;
He had a pack all at his back,
And away went whistling right over the lea.

Now the first two men that he met,
Two quarrelsome men they seemed for to be,
There was one of them called Bold Robin Hood,
And the other callèd Little John so free.

"Now what brings you there all in your pack?" cried Little John,

"Come tell to me right speedilee."
"I have three yards of the gay green cloth,
And silken bowstrings by two and three."

"Now if you have three yards of the gay green cloth,
And silken bowstrings by two and three;
Then by my life," cried Little John,
"It's your pack and all shall go along with me."

"Oh no, oh no," said the pedlar bold,
Oh no, oh no, that never could be;
For there's never a man from fair Nottingham town,
Could take one half of my pack from me."

Then the pedlar he set down his pack,
He lowered it right a-past his knee,
Saying, "If you can make me fly three yards from this,
Then my pack and all shall go along with thee."

Then Little John, oh, he drew his sword,
And the pedlar by his pack did stand;
They fought until they both did sweat,
When Little John cried, "Pedlar, you're too good a man."
They fought until they both did sweat,
When Little John cried, "Pedlar, oh you're too good a man."

Then Bold Robin Hood he drew his sword,
And the pedlar by his pack did stand;
They fought until the blood did run,
When Bold Robin Hood said, "Pedlar, you're too good a man."

"Now what is your name?" cried Bold Robin Hood,
"Come tell to me right speedilee."
"Oh no, oh no," said the pedlar bold,
"But it's your name you will tell unto me."

"[Oh the one of us is called Bold Robin Hood,
And the other's callèd Little John so free."
"Then by my life," said the pedlar bold,
"It's my name I will tell unto thee.]"

"Now my name is Bill Scarlet from a foreign part,
From a many's a long mile beyond the sea;
For killing a man on my own father's land,
My own native country I was forced to flee."

"Now if your name is Bill Scarlet from a foreign part,
From a many's a long mile beyond the sea;
Then it's you and I's two sister's sons;
And what nigh first cousins, oh could we be?"

Then they sheathed their swords with friendly words,
And at the joke they laughed quite free;
They went in an alehouse that was close by,
And they cracked bottles by two and three;
They went in an alehouse that was close by,
And they drank bottles by two and three.

17: NANCY'S WHISKY • Steve Black

A Kintyre song learned from Willie Scott who picked it up
from Willie Mitchell of Campbeltown during the 1968
Blairgowrie Festival.

I'm a weaver that follows weaving,
I'm a young and rovin blade;
To buy meself a new suit of clothing,
To Stewarton me way I made.

And as I come round by Stewarton corner,
Nancy's Whisky I chanced to spy;
Thinks I tae meself, I'll go in and taste her,
For 'tis seven long years now I've been dry.

Oh the more I tasted, the more I liked it,
The more I liked it, I tasted more;
Yes, the more I tasted, the more I liked it,
Till all my senses were gone ashore.

When I woke up the next morning,
I found meself in a stranger's bed;
I tried to rise but I was not able,
For Nancy's whisky held down my head.

I called for the landlady,
And I asked her what the reckoning be,
"The reckoning be full thirty shillings,
Come pay me quickly, be on your way."

I put me hand into ma pocket,
And all I had, I laid it doon;
And when I'd paid my thirty shillings,
All I'd left was a poor half-croon.

And as I went oot and around the corner,
A bonnie lassie I chanced to spy;
And on her I paid my two white shillings,
Till all was left, a crooked boy.

So I'll go back and I'll start ma weaving,
And ma shuttle, I'll mak fly;
And curses be on Nancy's whisky,
For Nancy's whisky has ruined I.

18: CATCH ME IF YOU CAN • Pete Coe

In 1978 Pete Coe recorded the 60-year-old Sophie Legg, a romany traveller of Bodmin in Cornwall, for Veteran Records on her only album, *Catch Me If You Can*: songs from the Cornish travellers, with her sisters Charlotte and Betsy Renals (then 78 and 77 respectively). It included her favourite song *Down By the Old Riverside* and others from the repertoire that had become a staple diet of the folk-club movement, including *Jim the Carter Lad* and this song *Catch Me If You Can*.

It was early, early all in the Spring,
Down in those meadows all so green;
There a pretty maiden I chanced to meet,
And I asked her if she would walk with me.

I asked if she would walk with me,
Down in those meadows oh so green;
I'd show her flowers and pretty things,
And I'd show what she had never seen.

Now it's this young couple they were strolling along,
He sang to her some sweet pretty songs;
He sang to her some sweet pretty songs,
And soon he gained her favour.

"Now that you've had your will of me,
You have stolen away my sweet liberty;
You have stolen away my sweet liberty,
Won't you please tell me your name sir?"

"My name is catch me that's if you can,
I'll marry you when I return;
I'll marry you when I return,
But I'm going over the ocean."

Well three long months were gone and past,
And six long months he never returned;
And nine long months were come at last,
But the child has got no father.

I'll search this wide world all round and round,
And I'll find that young man that's if I can;
I'll find that young man that's if I can,
If I catch him at his leisure.

"My name is catch me that's if you can,
I'll marry you when I return;
I'll marry you when I return,
But I'm going over the ocean."

Recorded live at the Fife Traditional Singing Weekend
May 2008.

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