THE FOLK SONGS OF BRITAIN

COLLECTED AND EDITED BY

PETER KENNEDY AND ALAN LOMAX

VOLUME III

"JACK OF ALL TRADES"

CAEDMON RECORDS, INC.
NEW YORK

Introduction – JACK OF ALL TRADES

In the charnel churchyard a churl is hard to know, or a knight from a knave there; know this in your heart...

from *Piers Plowman*, Wm. Langland, circa 1365.

The blunt, egalitarian spirit that animates this early British masterpiece lived on in the great tradition of English letters. Chaucer and Shakespeare recorded the ways and the pungent speech of the common people of their times; the writers of the romantic period turned to country life for their inspiration; the great novelists of the 19th century put ploughmen, poachers and weavers in the center of the stage. If a democratic vision has so strongly shaped the British literary tradition, it has been far more characteristic of her folk poetry. The early carols portray the Holy Family as commoners and Jesus as a naughty lad who often deserved a switching. The plough plays and ceremonials which marked the folk calendar never ceased to voice the sturdy independence of the English yeoman.

We needs must confess that your calling is the best
And to give you the uppermost hand,
So no more we won't delay, but pray both night and day,
To bless the honest husbandman ...

The ancient ballads, which the folk singers kept in remembrance, were often those which concerned the lives of rebels or of unfortunate lovers, themes which could be stripped of their courtly trappings. And when the ballad composers of the 17th to 19th century began to write for popular consumption, the common man and maid became their main protagonists. Perhaps the favorite theme of this period was romantic love – dairymaids defying rich squires, merchants' daughters running away with sailors, Jack and Jill remaining true in spite of time and distance. Scores of such ballads crossed the Atlantic and became the favorite songs of the frontiersmen. They will be dealt with in other volumes of this series.

But another and nearly as important breed of the folk-popular tradition never transplanted itself in America – the ballads of British trades and occupations. Here Americans went on to sing about their own experiences as lumberjacks and cowboys, while British balladeers dealt with the joys and sorrows of ploughboys, fishermen, tinkers, tailors and the like. If one compares the two bodies of occupational ballads – British and American – the British tradition seems, on the whole, more full of contentment, pride, and of pagan, sometimes bawdy pleasure. As a broadside printed in 1624 has it...

The taylor sewes, the smith he blowes,
The tinker beats his pan,
The pewterer rank, cries tinke-a-tanke-tanke,
The Apothecary rat-a-tan-tan;
The carter whips, the beggar slips,
The beadle lives by his blowes,
Yet whores will be whores at honest men's doors,
Despite the beadle's nose.

Ploughmen and tinkers alike could always find complaisant maids and willing wives. If there was no tavern handy, the Southern English farmer was expected to hand round daily and generous rations of cider or ale to his haymakers. The farm-laborer of Southern England, particularly, appears to have seen his life through a pleasant, beery haze.

The ballads of the North East of Scotland often sound a sterner note. There the farm-laborer hired himself by the year to the farmer; and, if his employer was tight-fisted and stingy, he lived on thin gruel, tightened his belt, and kept his mouth shut, for he could be dismissed at any time without his wages. The many ballads composed by Scots ploughmen paint the stark hardship of their lives in the "bothies" or farm dormitories. In fact, most British occupational songs, when they become critical, are considerably more "class-conscious" than their American equivalents. The British folk singer had no doubts about where he stood in the social system.

It is a pity there are so few good field recordings of the folk ballads of British industrial workers, so that we could have included more of these songs to balance out this collection. The industrial ballads struck hard, as in this example from the lead-miners of Middleton . . .

Four pence a day, me lads, and verra hard to work,
And never a pleasant leuk frae a gruffy lookin' Turk,
His heart it may fail and his conscience may give way,
Then he'll raise up our wages to nine pence a day.

Yet even the gentler, rural, occupational songs here presented, make a powerful impression. These tradesmen and workers have no doubt about their importance and the dignity of their jobs. They are self-respecting folk with a mind to knuckle under to no man. Many of their songs have been taken from broadsides and from music hall singers, but even the tritest and most sentimental of them are aglow with sincerity, with affection and with pride in their jobs.

Note: It was not possible in every case to include all stanzas of a selection. Those omitted from the record appear in roman type face in the text.

VOLUME III, SIDE A.

1. THE JOVIAL TRADESMEN, sung by Bob and Ron Copper, Rottingdean, Sussex, England; recorded by Peter Kennedy.

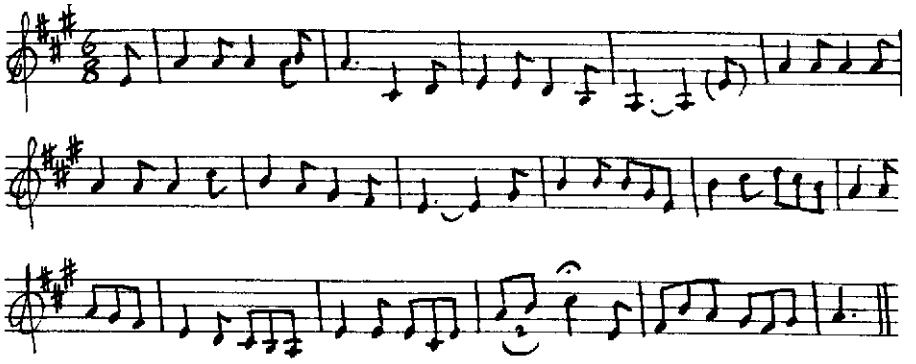
Like so many British occupational songs, this is an invitation to drink. An early collection calls it, "A new, merry, melody, shewing the power, the strength, the operation and the virtue that remains in good ale, which is accounted the mother of drink in England." First printed in October, 1594, **The Jovial Tradesmen** appeared in a number of popular songsters during the next three centuries and it continues to turn up among folk singers.

The Copper family – publicans, jovial fellows and good drinkers all – continue the glee-song tradition of Southern England. So as to cue the company for the choruses, the Coppers dwell on the first phase and then swing into lively 6/8 meter. For those who want to prolong the song, we offer the following rhymes from other versions . . .

Dyer** set himself down by the **fire;
Hatter,** no man could be **fatter;
Soldier,** with a firelock over his **shoulder.

References: Also known as: **When Jones's Ale Was New** or **The Jovial Tinker.** Chappell, Wm.: *Popular Music of Olden Time,* London, 1855-59, pp. 187-9; R. Ford: *Vagabond Songs and Ballads,* London, 1901; Robt. Bell; *Songs of the Peasantry,* London, 1857, (words only); S. Baring-Gould: *A Garland of Country Song;* A. Williams: *Folk Songs of the Upper Thames,* London, 1923 (text from Wiltshire); *Journal of the Folk Song Society* (FSJ): London, 1899-, No. 9, p. 234 (Lancashire Pace-eggers); FSJ, 21, p. 12 (Surrey); D'Urfey, T.: *Pills to Purge Melancholy,* London, 1719, Vol. V, p. 61.

THE JOVIAL TRADESMEN



1) *Come all you honest labouring men that work hard all the day,*
And join with me at The Barley Mow to pass an hour away.
Where we can sing and drink and be merry
And drive away all our cares and worries,
When Jones's ale was new, my boys,
When Jones's ale was new.

2) *The first to come in was the ploughman, with sweat all on his brow,*
Up with the lark at the break of day he guides his speedy plough;
He drives his team, how they do toil
O'er hill and valley to turn the soil.

3) *The next to come in was the blacksmith, his brawny arms all bare,*
And with his pint of Jones's ale he has no fear or care;
Throughout the day his hammer he's swingin',
He sings when he hears his anvil ringin'

4) The next to come in was the scytheman so cheerful and so brown,
And with the rhythm of his scythe the corn he does mow down.
He works, he mows, he sweats and blows
And he leaves his swathes laying all in rows.

5) *The next to come in was the tinker and he was no small beer drinker,*
And he was no small beer drinker to join the jovial crew.
He told the old woman he'd mend her old kettle,
O Lord how his hammer and tongs did rattle.

6) Now here's to Jones our landlord, a jovial man is he,
Likewise his wife, a buxom lass, who joins in harmony.
We wish them happiness and good will,
While our pots and glasses they do fill.

2. THE ROVING JOURNEYMAN, sung by Paddy Doran, a tinker of Belfast, Northern Ireland; recorded by Peter Kennedy and Sean O'Boyle.

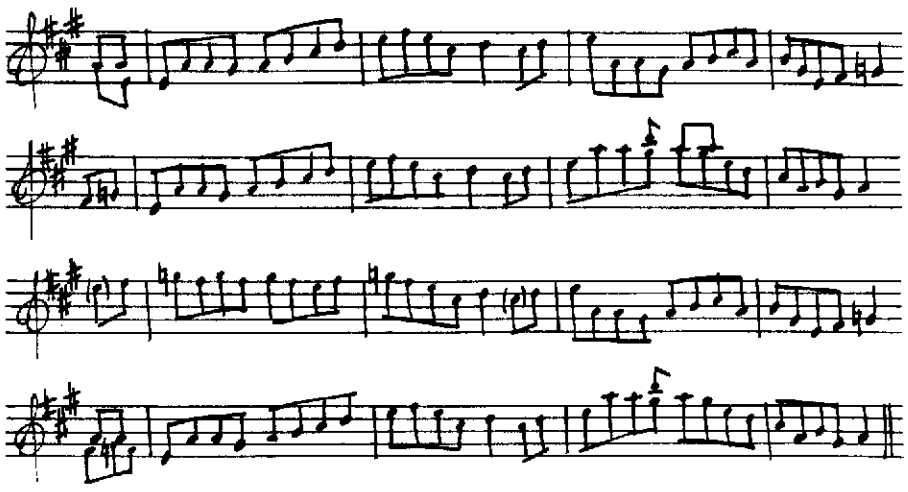
The trade of tinsmith, or tinker, traditionally belonged to the gypsies. Today in Britain, there are many tinkers clearly not of gypsy blood, who follow the gypsy pattern, roving in gaily-painted caravans, stopping where night finds them in a field and living as they can.

In Ireland the tinkers speak a separate, secret language called **gammon,** sing in a distinctive style and have their own songs, of which this apparently is one.

References: Apparently a blend of two songs, **The Roving Journeyman** and **The Little Beggarman** (or **Oul' Rigadoo),** Sam Henry Broadside Collection, 9, No. 751. Tune much used as an instrumental reel and hornpipe and known in

Ireland as the Gaelic song **The Red-Haired Boy.** Related to that of the Scots ballad **Gilderoy.** Cecil Sharp noted seven versions (unpublished manuscripts); also Gardiner unpublished manuscript.

THE ROVING JOURNEYMAN



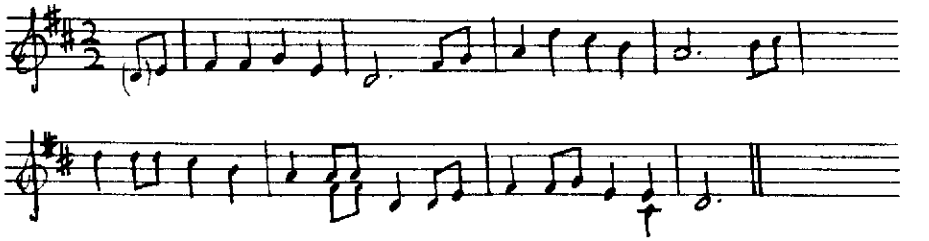
1) *O there was a little beggarman that goes from town to town,*
And wherever he gets a job of work he's willing to sit down;
With his bundle on his shoulder, his stick was in his hand,
And it's round the country I'd go with my roving journey-man.
From the County Carlow, the girls jump for joy,
Said one unto the other "Now here comes a travelling boy,"
And they wanted me to marry her and took me by the hand,
She went home and told her mother did she loves a journey-man.
(DIDDLING.)

3. THE CANDLELIGHT FISHERMAN, sung by Phil Hammond (with melodeon), Morston, Norfolk, England; recorded by Peter Kennedy.

The Hammonds came over with the Danish invasion in the Middle Ages and have dwelt in Norfolk ever since, equally at home on land or at sea. Phil Hammond – a jack-of-all-trades out-of-doors – cultivated a rich Norfolk folk dialect and learned his songs in the precise style of the area. Here he rumbles out the ironic song of the fisherman who works when it suits him. "In the morning he put the candle out the window. If the flame blow out, there's too much wind for him to go fishing, and if it don't blow out, there ain't wind enough, so he go back to bed again." This fisherman's quip is also popular among Cornishmen.

The tune is reminiscent of the nursery rhyme "Cockadoodle-Doo," see *English Folk Songs for Schools*, Baring-Gould, London, 1906.

THE CANDLELIGHT FISHERMAN



1) *O my dad was a fisherman bold*
And he lived till he grew old,
For he opens the pane and he pops out the flame,
Just to see how the wind do blow.

2) *And often he say to me,*
You'd be wise before you go,
Do you open the pane and pop out the flame,
Just to see how the wind do blow.

3) *When the north wind rough did blow,*
Then I lay right snug below,
But I opened the pane and I pop out the flame,
Just to see how the wind do blow.

4) *When the wind come out of the east,*
You'll be looking for sleet and snow,
But I open the pane and pops out the flame,
Just to see how the wind do blow.

5) *When the wind back into the west,*
That'll come a rough in at best,
But I open the pane and pops out the flame,
Just to see how the wind do blow.

6) *When the south wind soft did blow,*
It's then I loved to go,
And I opened the pane and pop out the flame,
Just to see how the wind do blow.

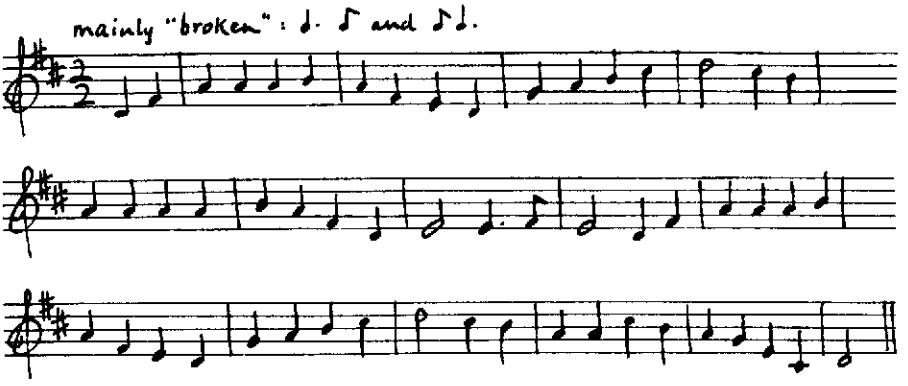
7) *And my poor wife say to me,*
We shall starve if you don't go,
So I open the pane and I pops out the flame,
Just to see how the wind do blow.

8) *Now all you fishermen bold,*
If you'd live 'till you grow old,
Do you open the pane and pop out the flame,
Just to see how the wind do blow.

4. THE CANNY SHEPHERD LADDIE, sung by Jimmy White, Yetlington, Northumberland, England; recorded by Peter Kennedy.

The hill country in the North of England along the Roman wall is a land of shepherds, who still work and sing somewhat in the traditional manner of their forefathers. They speak a thick dialect closely related to Scots and have a rich store of dances, ballads and songs, such as this one. The shepherd sang as he was shearing a sheep, and the click of the shears and the baaing of sheep can be heard in the background.

THE CANNIE SHEPHERD LADDIE (White)



1) *Now there's songs about your sodgers and your sailors by the score,*
And of tinkers and of tailors and of other men galore;
But I'll sing ye a wee bit ditty that ye've never heard before,
O' the canny shepherd laddies o' the hills.

2) *They climb oot among the heather ere it's turned the break o' day,*
Through the bent among the moss hags and the bogs they wend their way,
When they see a sheep that's mark-ed or a tip that's slipped away,
That's the canny shepherd laddies o' the hills.

5. THE DAIRY MAID, played on the tin-whistle by John Maguire, Belfast, Northern Ireland; recorded by Peter Kennedy and Sean O'Boyle.

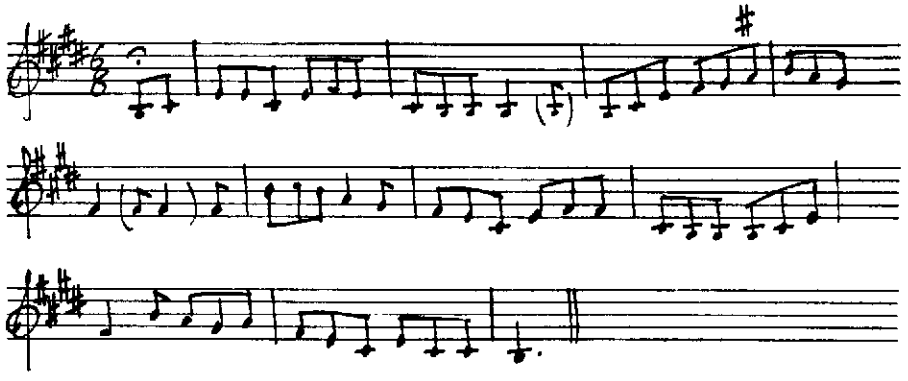
From County Cavan comes this well-known Irish reel, which celebrates the charms of the dairy maid.

6. GREEN BROOMS, sung by Sean McDonagh, Glinsk, Connemara, Ireland; recorded by Alan Lomax.

It may be that this is another song of the traveling people, for they peddle hand-made brooms from door to door and see themselves as Don Juans among the women they meet in country cottages. At any rate, the song is all *double entendre,* but delicately done. It has been seldom printed. (See Sam Henry, No. 147; Reeves, *The Everlasting Circle,* London, 1950; *A Guide to English Folk Song Collections,* Mgt. Dean-Smith, London, 1954.

The singer, born and brought up in the great Gaelic tradition of Connemara, sings in the traditional, high-voiced manner of the come-all-ye singer and varies his melody beautifully from stanza to stanza.

GREEN BROOMS (McDonagh)



1) There was a man and he lived in the east
And his trade it was cutting down brooms, green brooms;
He had a son, his name it was John
And he stayed in bed until noonday, noon,
And he stayed in bed until noon.

2) The father arose and up to John goes
And swore he would burn his room, gay room,
If he didn't rise and sharpen his knives
And go down to the wood to cut brooms, green brooms
And go down to the wood to cut brooms

3) So Johnny went on down through the green wood
'Till he came to a castle of fame, fame, fame;
He spied a maid and stood at the gate
Crying: Fair maid, do you want any brooms, green brooms?
Crying: Fair maid, do you want any brooms?

4) This lady being up in her window so high,
She spied this young man so terribly neat, neat, neat;
She said to her maid; Go down to the gate
And call in this young man with his brooms, green brooms,
And call in this young man with his brooms.

5) So Johnny went into this castle so great
And entered this lady's room, gay room;
She gave him a chair and bade him sit down
Crying: You're welcome, young man, with your brooms, green brooms,
You are welcome young man with your brooms,

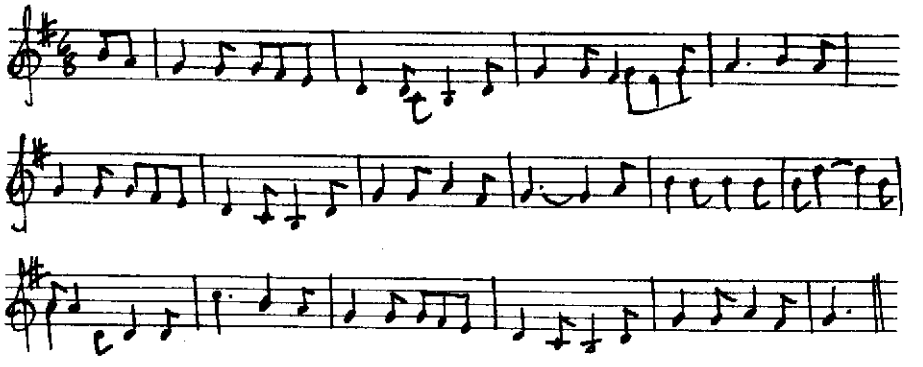
6) They sent for the priest and married they were
All in this lady's room, gay room;
So, boys, will we drink, or what do you think?
There is nothing like cutting down brooms, green brooms,
There is nothing like cutting down brooms.

7. GRUEL, sung by Jimmie MacBeath, Elgin, Moray, Scotland; recorded by Alan Lomax.

Weavers often sang at their looms in the old days of hand-weaving, and, as one of the earliest professions to be industrialized, were the subject of many songs and ballads, **The Foggy Dew** being the best-known example. (See also **Jug of Punch,** No. 8, this side). Often these songs present weavers as bawdy, carefree, roving blades, but here Jimmie MacBeath – the famous tramp singer of the North of Scotland – paints a portrait of an old fellow, worn-out at the loom and so set in his habits that he thinks of his porridge before he does the charms of his new bride.

The tune is the same as the well-known **Lincolnshire** (or **Northamptonshire) Poacher.**

GRUEL (MacBeath)



1) *There was a weaver o' the north*
And O but he was cruel;
The very first nicht that he got wed,
He sat and grat for gruel.
He widna went his gruel,
He widna went his gruel,
The very first nicht that he got wed,
He sat and grat for gruel.

2) *There is nae a pot in a' the hoose*
That I can mak' your gruel,
O the washing pot it'll dae wi' me,
For I mun hae ma gruel,
For I mun hae ma gruel,
I canna went my gruel,
O the washing pot it'll dae wi' me,
For I mun hae ma gruel.

3) *There is nae a spoon in a' the hoose*
That ye can sup your gruel,
O the gairden spade it'll dae wi' me,
For I mun hae ma gruel,
For I mun hae ma gruel,
I canna went ma gruel,
The gairden spade it'll dae wi' me
For I mun hae ma gruel.

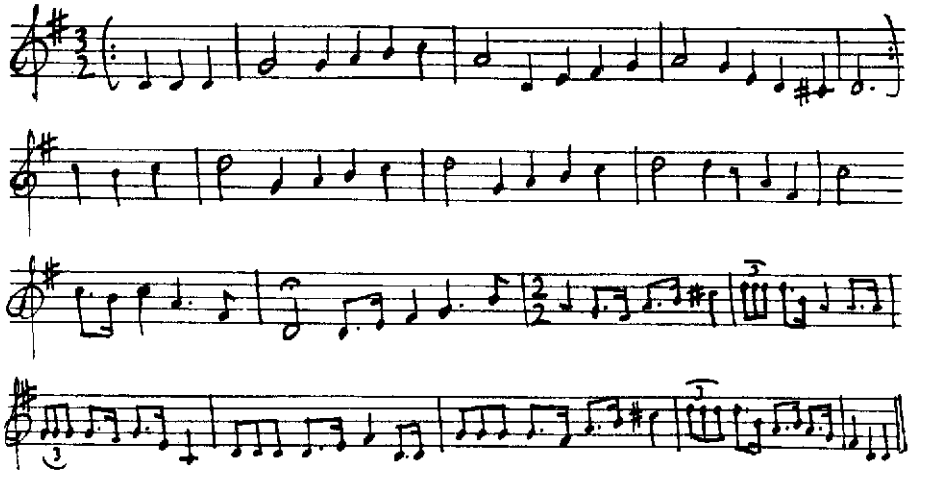
4) *She gaed ben the hoose for cakes and wine,*
She brocht them on a' tool;
O gae awa, gae awa, with your fol-de-rols,
For I mun hae ma gruel,
For I mun hae ma gruel,
I canna went ma gruel,
O gae awa, gae awa, with your fol-de-rols,
For I mun hae ma gruel.

5) *Come all young lasses take my advice*
And never marry a weaver;
The very first nicht that he got wed,
He sat and grat for gruel,
He widna went his gruel,
He widna went his gruel,
O the very first nicht that he got wed,
He sat and he grat for gruel.

8. THE JUG OF PUNCH, sung by Edward Quinn, Castlecaulfield, County Tyrone, Northern Ireland; recorded by Peter Kennedy and Sean O'Boyle.

The singer – a seventy-one-year-old farmer of rural Northern Ireland – learned this superb drinking song from his father sixty years ago. It may belong to the folk culture of the Scots linen weavers, who formed a part of the colony planted in Northern Ireland by the English in the seventeenth century. Certainly it appears to be the matrix from which A. P. Graves derived his better known version (See Graves, *Irish Folk Song Book,* Fisher-Unwin, 1894; Sam Henry No. 490: as sung in Buckstone's drama, "The Green Bushes", in 1840).

THE JUG OF PUNCH (Quinn)



1. *It being on the twenty-third of June, -O, (2)*
   As I sat weaving all on my loom,
   I heard a thrush singing on yon bush
   And the song she sung was a jug of punch,
   Ladderly fol the dee
   Ladderly fol the dee deedle eedle dum
   Dithery idle dum dithery idle deedle dum
   Dithery idle dum dithery idle deedle dum
   Dithery idle deedle eedle dum dum dee.

2. *What more pleasure could a boy desire*
   Than to sit him down – O, beside the fire,
   And in his hand – O, a jug of punch,
   Aye, and on his knee – O, a tidy wench.

3. What more hardships could a boy desire
   Than sate him down – O, behind the door
   And in his hand – O, no jug of punch
   Aye, and on his knee – O, no tidy wench.

4. When I am dead, all my drinking's over,
   I'll drink one glass and I'll drink no more,
   For fear I mightn't get it on that day,
   I will drink it now and I'll drink away.

5. *When I am dead and left in my mould*
   At my head and feet place a flowing bowl,
   And every young man that passes by,
   He can have a drink and remember I.

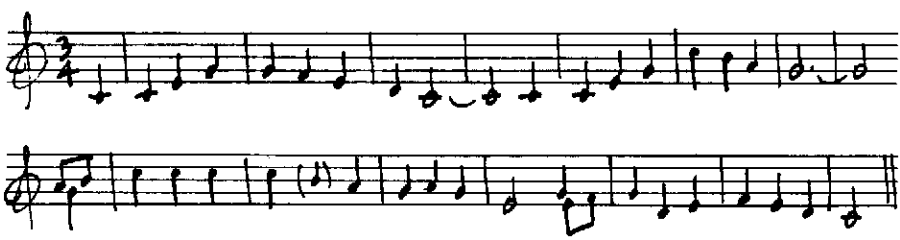
9. THE GRESFORD DISASTER, sung by Mrs. A. Cosgrave, Newtongrange, Scotland; recorded by Alan Lomax.

The industrial revolution produced a rich body of oral traditions among the workers, which has been shamefully neglected by most folklore scholars because it did not conform to their preconceived models. In recent years, however, Ewan McColl and A.L. Lloyd have turned up a large number of fine folk songs, traditional among the working class, which bear witness to the fact that British folk poets did not cease making ballads when they left the country for the factory and mine.

Some groups of English workers have continued to create professional songs into our own time, notably the miners. It is still a custom in Durham, for instance, when a man is killed in a pit accident, for a ballad to be written, printed on a broadside and sold, the profits going to his widow. The ballad of the Gresford Disaster, which took the lives of 265 men in the Scots coal fields in 1934, is sung by miners as far away as Nova Scotia. Mrs. Cosgrave – who comes from a long line of braw Scots miners and whose menfolks work in the pits today – sings this song with the angry intensity of a woman who never knows on what day she will hear the disaster whistle coming from the pit.

See page 80, A.L. Lloyd's *Come All Ye Bold Miners,* Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1952.

THE GRESFORD DISASTER



1) *Ye've heard of the Gresford Disaster,*
Of the terrible price that was paid,
Two hundred and forty-two colliers were lost,
And three men of a rescue brigade.

2) It occured in the month of September,
At three in the morning, the pit
Was racked by a violent explosion,
In a Dennis where gas lay so thick.

3) Now the gas in the Dennis' deep section
Was heaped there like snow in a drift.
And many a man had to leave the coal-face,
Before he had worked out his shift.

4) *Now a fortnight before the explosion*
To the shot-firer Tomlinson cried,
"If you fire that shot, we'll be all blown to hell!"
And no one can say that he lied.

5) *Now the fireman's reports they are missing,*
The records of forty-two days.
The colliery manager had them destroyed,
To cover his criminal ways.

6) *Down there in the dark they are lying,*
They died for nine shillings a day,
They have worked out their shift and now they must lie
In the darkness until judgement day.

7) *Now the Lord Mayor of London's collecting*
To help out our children and wives;
The owners have sent some white lilies
To pay for the poor colliers' lives.

8) *Farewell all our dear wives and children,*
Farewell all our comrades as well;
Don't send your sons down the dark dreary pit,
They'll be doomed like the sinners in hell.

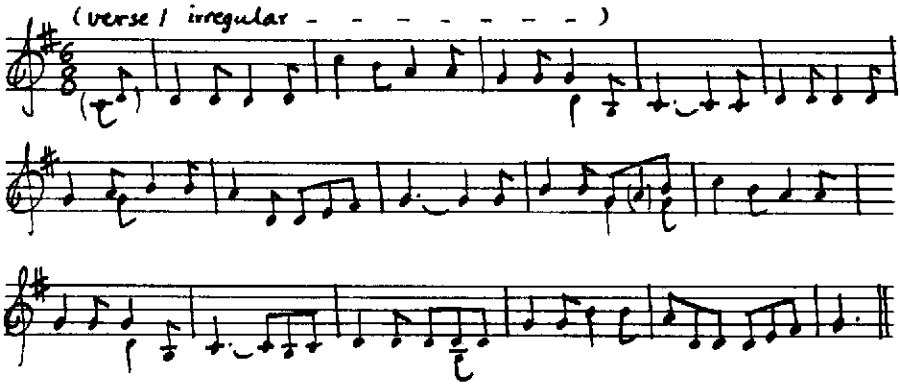
10. THE JOLLY MILLER, sung by John Strachan, Fyvie, Aberdeenshire, Scotland; recorded by Alan Lomax and Hamish Henderson.

John Strachan farms rich acres in Aberdeenshire. He sets a fine table and welcomes his guests with a bottle of whiskey and as many ballads as they can listen to. His boyhood, as assistant to his farmer father, was spent in savoring the pleasures and the songs of the bothy life (see **Rhynie,** Side B, No. 6). Although he is a member of the upper class in his area, his speech, and especially his singing style, are pure folk Aberdeenshire.

Here he sings a Scots folk version of the well-known English literary piece **The Miller of Dee,** which is probably based on the older broadside ballad **The Jolly Miller,** where a miller swaps quips with "Old King Hal."

References: Williams: ibid; (Cecil Sharp 2 versions unpublished). Cf, **The Buchan Miller** on Side B: Track 1. Chappell: *National English Airs and Popular Music of the Olden Time,* London, 1833, pp. 666-8 – **The Budgeon Is A Delicate Trade.)**

THE JOLLY MILLER (Strachan)



1) *I am a jolly miller came frae the mill o' Shalott*
And if you do not know me, my name is Willie Sprott;
I play upon the bagpipes with mickle, mirth and glee
And I care for nobody, no not I, and nobody cares for me.

2) *First when I come here aboot, I'd too much for to do*
Wi' grinding corn and shearing grass, both late and early, too,
But now the harvest's over and I maun mi' my lee
And I care for nobody, no not I, and nobody cares for me.

3) Wi' carrying heavy burdens my back's inclined to bu',
Wi' carrying heavy burdens my back's near broke in two,
But nature has formed the eemost slip for a pinch of the snecian bree,
And I care for nobody, no not I, and nobody cares for me.

4) *My mill's got new machinery, it's somewhat strange to me,*
It's of a new construction as ever me eyes did see,
Gin I o' twa o' three roonds o' her and a pinch of the broon drappee
I'd care for nobody, no not I, and nobody 'd care for me.

5) *I'm engaged wi' Doctor Ramsey, he's laird o'a'ur land*
And when that he does call on me I am at his command,
Some people say he's quarrelsome, but he never quarrels me,
So I care for nobody, no not I, and nobody cares for me.

11. THE IRISH WASHERWOMAN, played on the fiddle by John Doherty, a pedlar of Donegal, Ireland; recorded by Peter Kennedy and Sean O'Boyle.

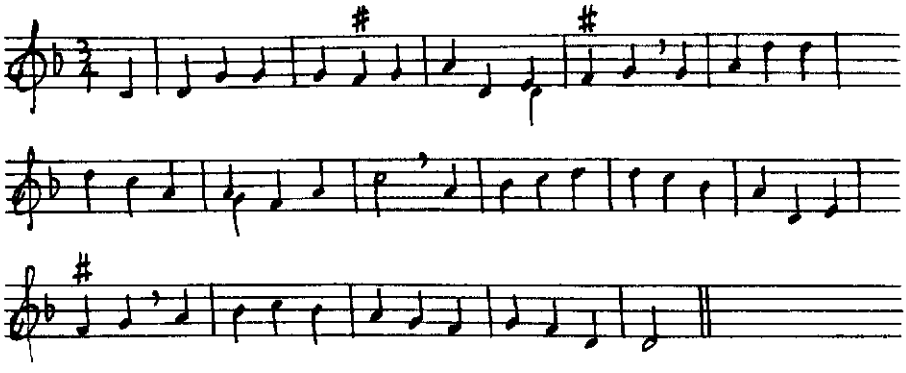
It would be hard to say whether John Doherty, the fifty-two-year-old pedlar, is a finer fiddler than his brother Mike, also a traveler and heard on Volume I, Side B, No. 5. Their forefathers are said to have been fiddlers to the princes of Donegal and their father was a famous Donegal fiddler as well as a horse dealer and horse doctor. John remembers how strict his father was in his musical training and how, a few moments before his death at the age of ninety, he stood up on his bed, took his fiddle and showed his sons how a reel should be played. Those who have heard the standard, thumped-out version of this best-known of all Irish jig tunes will be surprised and delighted to hear the lyrical treatment that the great John Doherty gives it here.

12. FAREWELL TO WHISKY, sung by Jessie Murray, Portnockie, Buchan, Scotland; recorded by Alan Lomax.

Family life in the industrial slums was constantly threatened by the habitual drunkeness of both wives and husbands who sought solace from the grinding poverty of their lives in the gin mill. Such were the conditions that produced the present song, a popular street ballad in Scotland in the 1860's and '70's, and a pathetic and genuine appeal for temperance from the heart of the people.

References: Also known as **Oh Johnnie, My Man.** Ord: *Bothy Songs and Ballads,* Paisley, 1930, p. 367 (text and tune); Ford, ibid (words only).

FAREWELL TO WHISKY



1) I'll gang to the aleboose and look for my Jimmy,
The day is far spent and the night's comin' on,
You're sittin' there drinkin' and leave me lamentin',
So rise up, my Jimmy, and come awa' hame,

2) *Nae mind o' the bairnies that are at hame greetin',*
Nae meal in the barrow to fill their wee weims,
You're sittin' there drinkin' and leave me lamentin',
So rise up, my Jimmy, and come awa' hame.

3) *Wha's that at the door that is speakin' so kindly*
It's the voice of my wifie called Jeannie by name,
You're sittin' there drinkin-and leave me lamentin',
So rise up, my Jimmy, and come awa' hame.

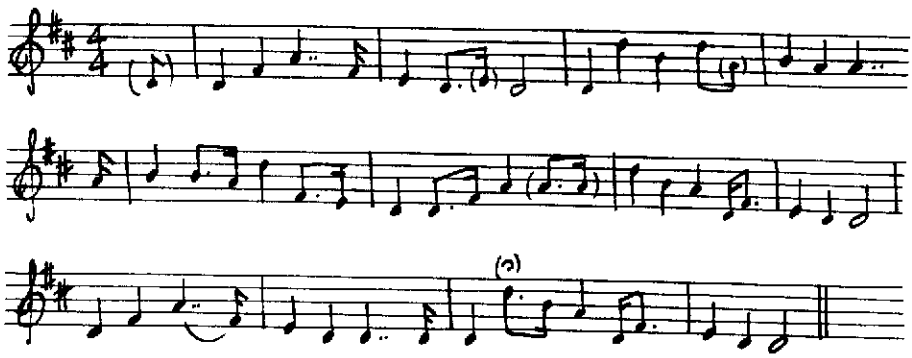
4) *Farewell to the whisky that mak's me so brisky,*
Farewell to the aleboose I'll visit nae mair,
Sin Jeannie is waitin', her pair hairt is breakin',
So fare thee well, aleboose, and I'll awa' hame.

13. THE ROVING PLOUGHBOY, sung by John McDonald (with melodeon), Elgin, Moray, Scotland; recorded by Peter Kennedy.

John McDonald – gamekeeper and molecatcher on a large estate – learned his songs from tinkers, farm servants and shepherds. He recalls that in his younger days the flocks of sheep, moving north to summer pastures, "stretched down the road as far as I could see." The shepherds, who often stayed overnight with his family, taught him their ballads. Today John McDonald heads up a folk song group with Jimmie MacBeath and his two sons, that tours the north of Scotland.

His song uses the poetic formulas and the tune of **The Gypsy Laddie** (see Volume IV, Side A, No. 8-B of this set) but it is also related to **The Collier Laddie,** to the famous love song of the bothies, **Mormond Braes,** and to **The Brewer Laddie.** In such songs as these the girls choose workingmen over all other suitors.

THE ROVING PLOUGHBOY (McDonald)



1) *Saddle tae me my auld grey mare,*
Come saddle tae me my pony-O,
And I will tak' the road and I'll go far away
After the roving ploughboy-O.
Ploughboy-O, ploughboy-O,
I'll follow the roving ploughboy-O.

2) *Last night I lay on a fine feather bed*
Sheets and blankets sae cosy-O,
This night I maun lie in a cold barn shed,
Wrapped in the arms o' my ploughboy-O.

3) *A champion ploughman, my Geordie-O*
Cups and medals and prizes-O,
On bonny Deveronside there are none to compare
With my jolly roving ploughboy-O.

4) *Sae fare ye well to old Huntley toon,*
Fare thee well, Drumdelgie-O,
For noo I'm on the road and I'm go'n' far awa'
After the roving ploughboy-O.

VOLUME III, SIDE B.

1. THE BUCHAN MILLER, sung by John McDonald (with melodeon), Elgin Moray, Scotland; recorded by Peter Kennedy.

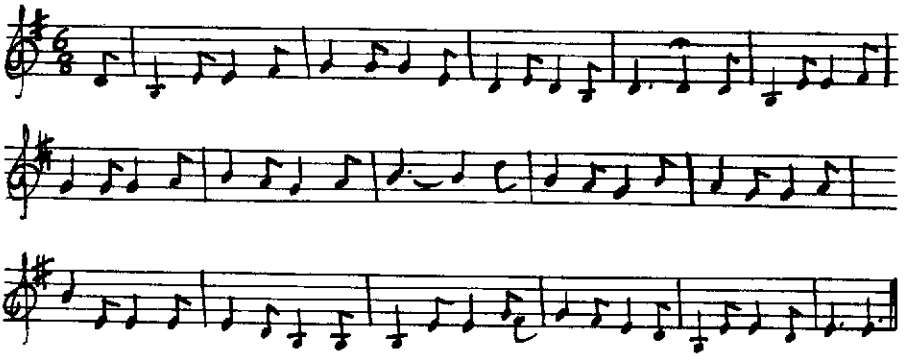
The miller with his grinding stones has long been an erotic figure in European folklore. He is celebrated in songs in French, Italian and Spanish, and Chaucer makes him the comic hero of "The Reeve's Tale." In *The Idiom of the People,* James Reeves gives us one verse in which all the symbols are gathered together:

Then he got up the mill to grind
And left her down the stones to mind,
Then an easy up and down, –
She scarce could tell when her corn was ground.

Many listeners will recognize this tune, which is related to **Johnny Comes Marching Home, Paddy Works on the Railroad, The Jolly Miller** (see Side A, No. 10) and many others.

References: Another bothy version of **The Jolly Miller** (see Side A, No. 10), which appears in English collections as **The Miller of Dee** (see Side A, No. 10).

THE BUCHAN MILLER (McDonald)



1) I am a miller to my trade
And that fu' well you ken-O,
I am a miller to my trade
And that fu' well you know,
I am a miller to my trade
And mony's the bag o' meal I've made
And courted mony a bonnie maid
Among the bags o' meal-O.

2) *It's merrily gangs the wheels aroond*
That grinds the pase and corn O,
It's merrily gangs the wheels aroond
That makes the stanes to go,
O it's merrily gangs the wheels aroond,
And when the corn's ripe and soond,
I'll be the happiest man aroond
Among the bags o' meal-O.

3) *It happened on a wintry night,*
I start to leave the lane-O,
It happened on a wintry night,
My lassie she passed by,
Aye, an' gently stepping o'er the limbs
She heard the millies clattering din
And softly said: May I come in
And shelter from the rain-O?

4) *Says I: My lass, you're welcome here,*
Come in and dry your clathes-O,
Said I: My lass, you're welcome here
Come in and dry your clathes,
Said I: My lass, you're welcome here
Now here's some news that I would spare,
If you'll consent to be my dear
Among the bags o' meal-O.

5) *That night she named the wedding day*
Among the bags o' meal-O,
That night she named the wedding day,
O that fu' well I know
And tho' the weddings by lang syne
And now we hae two bairnies fine
And some o' them are sometimes playing
Among the bags o' meal-O.

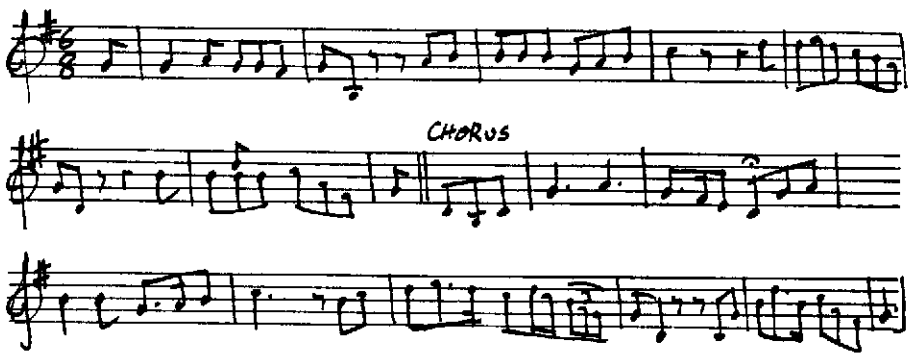
2. FAGAN THE COBBLER, sung by "Wickets" Richardson (with chorus), The Ship Inn, Blaxhall, Woodbridge, Suffolk, England; recorded by Peter Kennedy.

The star performer in the Saturday night sing-songs which take place in that marvelous country pub, The Ship Inn at Blaxhall, Suffolk, is Alfie Richardson. He always stops the show when he sings this ballad, putting an imaginary shoe on his knee, pretending to sew and hammer while the whole room joins in the chorus.

The cobbler's awl figures in many songs as a phallic symbol, and these implications are an obvious undercurrent of the present, rather bawdy, performance.

References: Reeves: ibid, p. 73 contains two similar songs (words only) from the Gardiner MS collected in Hampshire. Other cobbler songs, see **The Cunning Cobbler** and **The Long Peggin' Awl** (Songs of Seduction).

FAGAN THE COBBLER (Richardson)



A Drinker: And we have much pleasure in calling on our Chairman to oblige with just a little small ditty And we must have the best of order, please.

Wickets: "Well now, ladies and gentlemen, I have sung this song before the Queen, before the King, and in various other public houses – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4; 1 – 1 – 1."

1) *My name it is Fagan the cobbler,*
And I been at it now hall me life
To earn one honest shilling
To take home to my darling young wife. (While I sing)
Twine, twine, twine, twiddle, twine
With me twine, twine, twiddle all day,
To me whack fol the riddle all the laddy
To me whack fol the riddle all day.

2) *My wife she started drinking*
And she's drinking her pints by the score
O I know she's a-spending all my money
Down at old Blaxhall Ship.

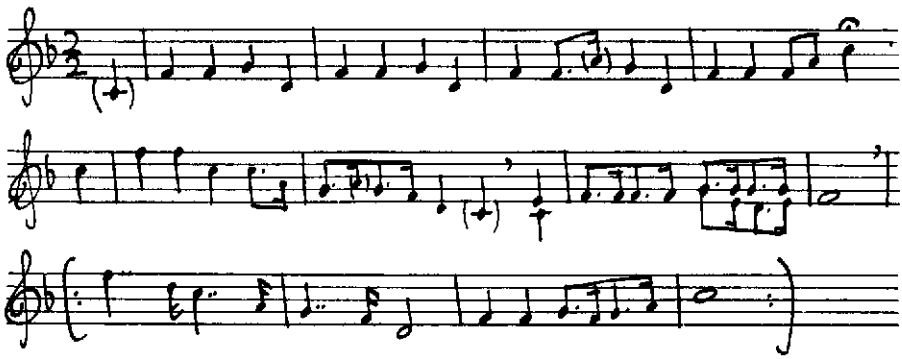
3) My wife she's turned teetotaller
And she swears she won't mop any more,
For now she's a-saving all my money
She's putting it by in galore.

"Good old Alf."

3. THE OULD PIPER, sung by Frank McPeake (with Uillean bagpipes), Belfast, Northern Ireland; recorded by Peter Kennedy.

Frank McPeake, who shocks some and delights others by singing with his Irish pipes, learned this song from the late Carl Hardebeck. Hardebeck was a blind German musician of some accomplishment, who lived in Belfast for some time and collected and published a folio of folk songs. It is possible that Hardebeck composed this tune as a take-off on the piper or as a demonstration of the pentatonic scale.

THE OULD PIPER (McPeake)



1) *There was an old piper, old and hoary*
He lived in the town of Ballyboree(n)
Well this old piper he played before Moses
And this was all the tune that he could play.
N-y-a.....

2) *Well this old piper, old and hoary,*
That lived in the town of Ballyboree(n)
He died one day and he went down below
And this was all the tune that he could play.

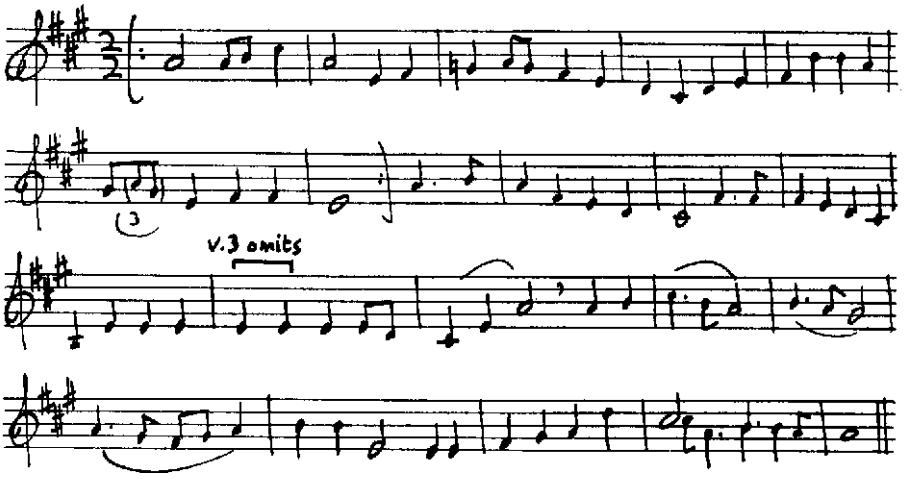
3) *When the devil saw this old man,*
He said; "Put him down in the frying pan,
For this is another old piper I vow;
Put him down with the rest for to play."

4. SWEEP, CHIMNEY SWEEP, sung by Bob and Ron Copper, Rottingdean, Northern Brighton, Sussex, England; recorded by Peter Kennedy.

The streets of old England once echoed to the cries of vendors and craftsmen. As late as this summer, a gypsy stopped work in the B.B.C. as she passed the Central Office hawking her rosemary in song. The roots of this somewhat selfconscious, but charming, song go far back. The first verse

occurs in Catnach's *The Cries of London* (1815 c.) and Baring-Gould *(Songs of the West,* London, 1889) feels that it may be based on the street cry of the French chimney sweeps. **Guide,** ibid, under **The Chimney Sweep.**

SWEEP CHIMNEY SWEEP (Copper)



1) *Sweep, chim-nie sweep*
Is the common cry I keep] 3
If you can but rightly understand me,]
With my brush, broom and my rake, (3)
See what clean-lie work I make
With my hoe, hoe, hoe, and my hoe
And it's sweep, chim-nie sweep for me.

2) Girls came unto the door,
I looked as black as any Moor,
I am as constant and true as the day,
Although my face is black,
I can give as good a smack,
And there's no-one, no-one, no-one, ther's no-one,
And there's no-one shall call me on high.

3) *Girls came unto the door,*
I looked as black as any Moor—
Go and fetch me some beer that I might swallow,
I can climb up to the top
Without a ladder or a rope,
And it's there you, there you, there you, and there you
And it's there you will hear me hullo.

4) *Now here do I stand*
With my hoe all in my hand,
Like a soldier that's on the senterie.
I will work for a better sort
And kindly thank them for it,
I will work, work, work, and I'll work
And I'll work for none but genterie.

5. THE MASON'S APRON, played on two fiddles by Agnes and Bridie Whyte, Loughrea, County Galway, Ireland; recorded by Alan Lomax.

There are a number of songs which indicate that the masons once traveled about looking for work and charmed the girls on their way:

I wouldn't marry a sailor that sails on the sea,
Nor yet would I a ploughboy that whistles o'er the lea.
But I will marry a mason, for he's a bonny lad,
And I'll wash the mason's apron and think it no degrade.

A Scots bawdy ballad further indicates that the leather apron of the masons brought forth very pleasant associations in a young woman's mind:

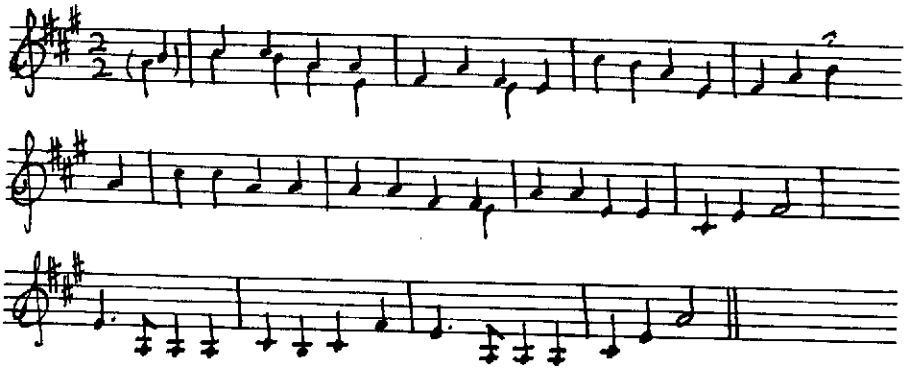
One evening they walked out the road thegither (together)
And wandered till daylight was almost gone,
They sat them down on a bank together,
And he kissed his lassie wi' his apron on.

Indeed, bonnie laddie, I'll be plain and tell ye,
My heart and affections from others are gone.
You'll be welcome to wed me and then to bed me,
And kiss me aye wi' your apron on.

6. RHYNIE, sung by John Strachan (with chorus), Fyvie, Aberdeenshire, Scotland; recorded by Alan Lomax and Hamish Henderson.

During the last one hundred years, when ballad singing was on a decline in Great Britain, it found a refuge among the farm laborers of Aberdeenshire. These men lived in crude dormitories called "bothies." There, on some evenings, the milk maids would slip out for a visit to dance, to sing and sometimes to make love. Mostly, however, the men led lonely bachelor lives and they passed time in singing and in composing songs about the hardships of their lives. The present ballad tells of a rich farmer's son who quarrelled with his father, lost his inheritance and took work as a laborer at the farm of Bogend in Rhynie, Strathbogie. Here he sets down his opinion of the place (see Ord, ibid, p. 286). The tune has been used as a setting for the better-known **Barnyards of Delgaty.**

RHYNIE (Strachan)



1) *At Rhynie I sheared my first hearst,*
Near to the foot o' Bennachie;
My maister was richt ill to fit,
But laith was I to lose my fee.
Lilten lowren lowren adee,
Lilten lowren lowren ee.

2) *Rhynie's work it's hell to work,*
And Rhynie's wages is but sma'
And Rhynie's laws are double strict
And that does grieve me worst of a'.

3) *Rhynie's it's a cauld clay hole,*
It's far frae like my faither's toon;
And Rhynie's it's a hungry place
It doesna suit a lowland loon.

4) *But sair I've wrocht and sair I've focht,*
And I hae won my penny fee;
And I'll gang back the gate I come,
And a better bairnie I will be.

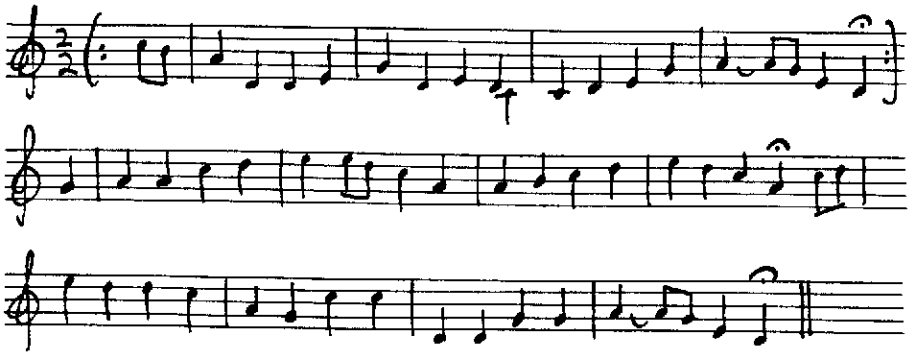
7. THE TAILOR BY TRADE, sung by Joe Tunney, Beleek, County Fermanagh, Northern Ireland; recorded by Peter Kennedy.

This comic portrait of the little tailor bullied by a drunken wife is certainly of recent origin and is of the type much favored by singers in small touring companies of entertainers.

References: Also entitled: **The Wearing Of The Breeches.** Reeves: *Idiom of the People* (version from Cecil Sharp MS collected in Somerset). The tune is an Anglo-Irish jig tune called **Tenpenny Bit,** much used for this type of

song. See also **Lord Rendal** (Vol. III, Side A: No. 6 c); **As I Roved Out** (Vol. I, Side A: No. 1); and **By The River Of Gems** (Vol. I, Side A: No. 10) this series.

THE TAILOR BY TRADE (Tunney)



1) Come all young men, where'er you be,
And listen to my lamentation,
I courted a girl of beauty rare
And I loved her beyond admiration;
Soon in time she became my wife,
It wasn't for love it was for riches,
And then at times it caused great strife
To see which of us would wear the britches.

2) O Paddy Keane, it is my name,
My height it is five foot eleven,
And my wife she is not so big
She only measures four foot seven;
How often we do fight and bawl
With nothing going but rogues and witches,
Her head comes often to the wall
But still she swears she'll wear the britches.

3) *I am a tailor to my trade,*
At cutting out I am quite handy,
And all the money that I earn
She lives it out on tay and brandy;
The hedges I have nearly stripped,
I've left them short of rods and switches,
Her hide with blows I have left black,
But still she swears she'll wear the britches.

4) *One morning at the tay and eggs,*
Contented sitting by the fire,
She threw the taypot at my legs

She made me lape and then retire;
How often I do sigh and moan
I may go hobbling on me critches
I wish I'd broke me collarbone,
The day I let her wear my britches.

5) *So now young men where'er you be*
Ne'er marry a maid if she's enchanting
For if you do when she is young
With the young men she'll be gallanting;
Now my advice to any young man
Is to marry for love and work for riches
If you can't get a girl with a civil tongue
That'll give you l'ave to wear your britches.

8. THE WEE WEAVER, played on the fiddle by John Doherty, a pedlar of Donegal, Ireland; recorded by Peter Kennedy and Sean O'Boyle.

John Doherty, strolling pedlar and one of the king fiddlers of Ireland, tells the following story before he plays this haunting tune: "There was once a weaver and he was a very careful kind of a man and he wanted to save up and be very careful. And nearby there was an old cobbler living, and he was a very careful kind of a man, too, and wanted to save everything. So one night he came to the weaver for advice about how to save, and the weaver began to sing this air, and the name he called it was **The Wee Weaver.** So anyhow, the weaver it seems, he became so sad listening to the air that he had to forsake his loom for that night. He couldn't go back to his work."

Perhaps the poor, little weaver had in mind the Scots-Irish song that runs:

I am a wee weaver confined to my loom;
My love she is fairer than the red rose in June;
She is loved by all young men and does grieve me;
My heart's in the bosom of lovely Mary.

9. JIM THE CARTER LAD, sung by Jack Goodfellow, Rennington, Northumberland, England; recorded by Peter Kennedy.

A century or so ago, when this music hall ditty was popular, few people in the rural areas of Southern England ever went far from their villages in their entire lives. A journey to London was an epic adventure to be remembered always. In this immobile world, the wagoner was a romantic figure, envied by men and sighed over by young women, as the many songs celebrating the carefree life of the wagoner attest:

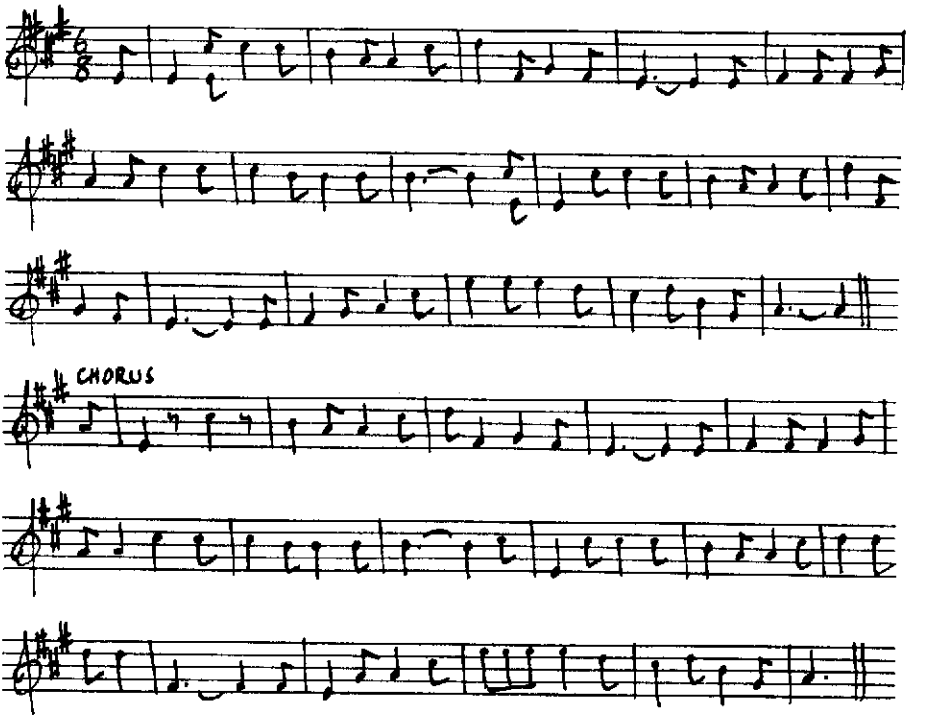
It is a dark and stormy night
And I'm wet to the skin,
But I'll bear it with contentment
Till I get to the inn,
Where I shall get good liquor
And the landlord and his friends.
Sing wo, my lads, sing wo!
Drive on, my lads, I-ho!
Who would not lead the life
Of a jolly waggoner!

With the coming of the railroad, all this was to change, and in 1835 the rural ballad maker was singing:

Along the country roads, alas,
But waggoners few are seen,
The world is topsy turvy turned
And all things go by steam.
And all the past is passed away
Like to a moving dream.

References: Gavin Greig: *Folk Songs of the North-East,* Peterhead, 1914, Art. 94; Sam Henry, No. 171 (Co. Derry).

JIM THE CARTER LAD (Goodfellow)



1) *Me name is Jim the carter*
A jolly cock am I;
I always am contented
Be the weather wet or dry;
I crack me fingers at the snow
And whistle at the rain
And I've braved the storm for many a day
And can do so again.

CHORUS:

So it's crack, crack goes me whip
I whistle and I sing;
I sit upon me wagon
I'm as happy as a king;
Me horse is always willing
And for me I'm never sad;
There's none can lead a jollier life
Nor Jim the carter lad.

2) *It's my father was a carrier*
Many years 'ere I was born;
He used to rise at daybreak
And go his round each morn;
He'd often take me with him
Especially in the Spring,
When I loved to sit upon the cart
And hear me father sing,

3) *It's now the girls all smile on me,*
As I go driving past;
The horse is such a beauty,
As we jog along so fast;
We've travelled many weary miles
But happy days we've had,
And there's none can use a horse more kind
Nor Jim the carter lad.

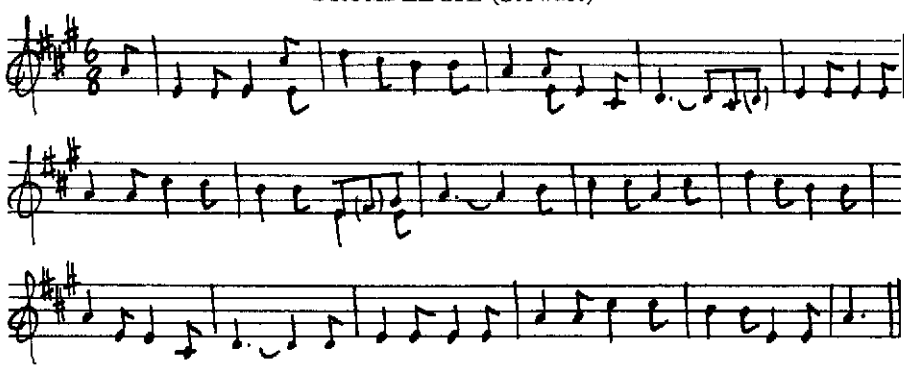
4) Now, friends, I bid you all adieu,
'Tis time I was away;
I know my horse will weary,
If I much longer stay;
To see your smiling faces here
It makes me feel quite glad,
And I know you'll grant your kind applause
To Jim the carter lad.

10. DRUMDELGIE, sung by Davie Stewart (with accordion), Dundee, Angus, Scotland; recorded by Alan Lomax.

Davie Stewart, the strolling, accordion-playing troubador of Dundee, here sings (in a mixture of Dundee slang and tinkers' cant) one of the most popular of the bothy ballads of Northeast Scotland. Like so many worker ballads in both Great Britain and America, it attempts to do no more than give an account of the daily life of the laboring man. In Scotland this was uncompromisingly hard. The men assembled each year at hiring fairs, where the local farmers came and looked them over like so many animals and contracted with them for a year's work. If they displeased their masters and did not conform to the severe regimen of the farm, they might be dismissed after several months without a penny to show for their labor. A man thus kept his mouth shut until he was clear of the farm, and then expressed his sentiments as does this singer in his final stanza.

References: Ord: ibid, p. 209; another use of **The Jolly Miller** tune.

DRUMDELGIE (Stewart)



1) *There's a fairm toon up in Carnie,*
It's kenned baith far and wide, *(known)*
It's ca'ed the Hash o' Drumdelgie
On bonny Deveronside,
Five o'clock we early rise
And hurry doon the stair,
To get wor horses corn and fed
And likewise straicht their hair.

2) *Half an hour to the stable*
To the kitchie we all go,
To get started tae our breakfast
It's generally brose; *(thin gruel)*
We hardly get time to finish
And gi'en wor pints o' tie *(tea)*
When the grieve he cries: Hallo, me lads,
You'll be nae langer nigh.

3) *At sax o'clock the mull's put on* *(mill)*
To gi'e us a' straicht wark,
An' twal' o' us to wark at her, *(twelve)*
Till ye could wring oor sark. *(shirt)*
At acht o'clock the mull's ta'en off,
We hurry doon the mair,
To get some quarter through the fan
Till daylight doth appear.

4) *The cloods begin to gently lift*
The sky begin to clear,
The grieve he cries: Oh ho, me lads
You'll be no langer here.
O sax o' ye'll gang to the ploo'
Sax to ca' the neeps *(turnips)*
And the outhens they'll be after thee
When they get on their feet.

5) *At puttin' on the harness*
An' dra'in' oot the yook,
The drift dang on sae very thick *(snow)*
That we were like to choke;
The drift dang on sae very thick
The ploo', she wid na go,
Twas then the cairtin' did commence
Amang the frost an' snow.

6) *Drumdelgie keeps a Sunday squile,*
He thinks it is but richt
To teach the young and innocent
The way for tae dae recht;
But fare ye well, Drumdelgie toon,
I'll bud ye a' adieu,
An' I'll leave ye as I found ye
A maist uncivil crew.

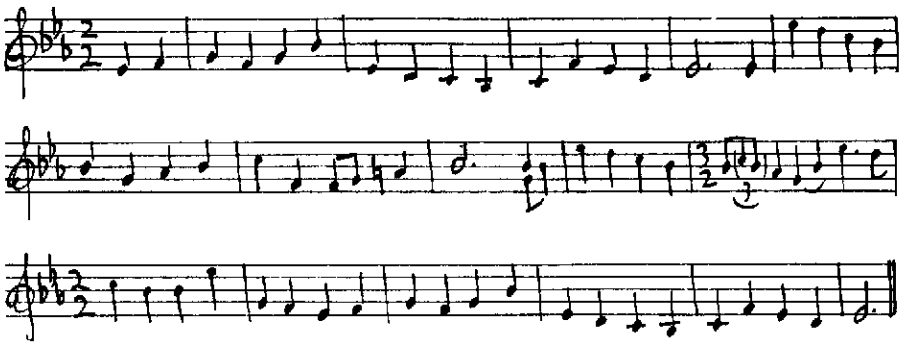
11. THE MERRY HAYMAKERS, sung by Bob and Ron Copper, Rottingdean, Northern Brighton, Sussex, England; recorded by Peter Kennedy.

Certainly no class of people in the West suffered more from oppression, injustice and poverty than the rural workers of England during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Their common lands were enclosed and they were forced to go into the mills and mines, or else to become day laborers. Their cottages were often mere hovels of clay, and their diet was wretched. Their sporadic attempts to revolt or even to express their indignation were put down with savage violence. Yet, although they learned to doff the cap and bend the knee, they never lost their pride in their work and their deep love of the

land that they had made fertile. Unable to speak out directly in songs of protest, they instead sang ballads such as this one, which celebrated their own accomplishments. Thus, in effect, they asserted that they were the true lords of the land by virtue of their labor on it.

References: Durfey: ibid; Bell: ibid (words only); Williams: ibid (words only; Baring-Gould: *Songs of the West* ("I was constrained to re-write the song"); Baring-Gould: *English Folk Songs for Schools* (re-written).

THE MERRY HAYMAKERS (Coppers)



1) *'Twas in the pleasant month of May*
In the springtime of the year,
And down by yonder meadow
There runs a river clear,
See how the little fishes,
How they do sport and play,
Causing many a lad and many a lass
To go there a-making hay.

2) *Then in comes that scytheman*
That meadow to mow down,
With his old leathered bottle
And the ale that runs so brown,
There's many a stout and a labouring man
Goes there his skill to try,
He works, he mows, he sweats, he blows
And the grass cuts very dry.

3) *Then in comes both Tom and Dick*
With their pitchforks and their rakes,
And likewise Black-eyed Susan,
The hay all for to make;
There's a sweet, sweet, sweet and a jug, jug, jug,
How the harmless birds do sing
From the morning to the evening
As we were haymaking.

4) *It was just at one evening*
As the sun was a-going down,
We saw the jolly piper come
A-strolling through the town;
There he pulled out his tapering pipes
And he made the valleys ring,
So we all put down our rakes and forks
And we left off haymaking.

5) *We call-ed for a dance*
And we tripp-ed it along,
We danced all round the hay-cocks
Till the rising of the sun,
When the sun did shine such a glorious light
And the harmless birds did sing,
Each lad he took his lass in hand
And went back to his haymaking,

12. I'LL MEND YOUR POTS AND KETTLES, played on the Uillean bagpipes by Seamus Ennis, Dublin, Ireland; recorded by Alan Lomax.

Even today in Britain, the wandering tinkers are prime carriers of folk tunes and ballads. A century or so ago the traveling folk must have made music wherever they moved. A tune may well have announced the arrival of a roving tinsmith in some country village. For some housewives, the tune must have had a double meaning, if one can believe the number of bawdy ballads involving tinkers. Here it is played on the Uillean pipes, a seventeenth century invention of the Irish and the most elaborate bagpipes played in Europe. Blown by small elbow bellows, the Uillean pipes have the two-octave chanter (melody pipe), three drones (tenor, middle and bass) at intervals of an octave and tuned to the keynote of the set, and three regulators (pipes fitted with brass keys) that provide simple second and fifth harmonies.