

THE FOLK SONGS OF BRITAIN

COLLECTED AND EDITED BY

PETER KENNEDY AND ALAN LOMAX

*Sailormen
and
Seruingmaids*

VOLUME SIX



CAEDMON RECORDS, INC.
NEW YORK

1. PADDY WEST

Timothy Walsh, Devonport, England
 BBC Sound Archive (Cyril Tawney) April 1960

The sea literature of the 19th century is larded with tales of shanghaied sailors and of corrupt quayside boarding-house-masters, who sent many a green hand to sea, swearing that they were experienced sailors. The most notorious of these boarding-house-keepers was Paddy West, a Liverpool Irishman, who had his fake seamen step across an old rope and solemnly walk around a cow's horn so that he could claim that they had "crossed the Line and rounded the Horn." A colleague of Paddy West rigged up a spar in his back-yard and had the lads hang on a rope along the garden wall after which he would claim they were fully-fledged topmen. Timothy Walsh, Devonport, England, here recounts the comic goings-on in Paddy's Liverpool factory where neophytes were turned into old salts overnight. Stanley Hugill's *Shanties from the Seven Seas*, p. 335, (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1961.)

Paddy West



1. (Omitted) Now, as I took a walk down Grand Street,
 I stepped into Paddy West's house,
 He gave me a feed of American hash,
 And he called it English scouse.
 He said: "Cheer up, me hearty,
 You just came in in time
 To put your name upon the book,
 As quickly as you can sign."
2. As I went in to Paddy West's house,
 The gale began to blow,
 He sent me up in the garret,
 The main-royal for to stow.
 No main-royal could I find,
 As I went up in the garret,
 So I slewed around to the window
 And I furl'd the window blind.

3. *Paddy's wife stood in the kitchen,
A bucket of water in her hand,
Paddy pipes all hands on deck,
All the stays'ls for to man,
Paddy's wife left go that bucket
And the water flew each way,
Saying: "Clew up your fore top-gant-sal's, boys,
Were taking in the sea (spray)."*
4. *If there's any other young man
That wishes to go to sea,
Let him step in to Paddy West's house,
He'll sign you right away.
He'll swear you are a sailor
From the hour that you were born.
If he'll ask you: "Were you ever at sea?"
Tell him: "Three times around Cape Horn!"*

CHORUS

*Put on your dungaree jacket
And give the boys a rest,
Think of the cold nor-wester
That we had in Paddy West!*

2. THE LIVERPOOL PACKET

Bill Barber (with chorus), Cadgwith Cove, Lizard, Cornwall, recorded by Peter Kennedy, November, 1956.

A chorus of Cornish fishermen in a seaside tavern at the western tip of Cornwall, and led by a member of the local lifeboat crew, launches this voyage through the sea-going ballads of Britain. The heroine of the first ballad is the famous clipper packet, the *Dreadnought*. She was built in 1853 and made many a fast passage between New York and Liverpool during her brief and brilliant career, before she went down off Cape Horn in 1869.

Competition between Great Britain and the United States for the control of the merchant marine business of the world was keen during the 19th century. American naval designers built ships that had the trimmer lines and carried more canvas than any vessels ever seen before. American officers drove their ships and men without fear or mercy. The American clipper broke all records and for several generations seriously challenged British control of the sea routes. The passenger packets, loaded with mail, businessmen, and immigrants were the swift work-horses of this period. Ship's discipline was maintained with pistol, sea boot, and belaying pin. The owners, in order to save money, paid low wages, fed the men slop, and recruited their crews from the riffraff of the waterfront. The mates swore that they could eat a rebellious sailor for breakfast, and the deckhands bragged that they were the toughest men of their time! Sails were raised, lowered, reefed, and furled to the profane commands of the mates and the equally violent shouts of the shantymen. Since all sail handling was to the tune of the shanties, one can say that the clippers were sped along on the wings of the wind and of song. And in the lee of the foc'sle, or at night on the afterdeck, or in the foggy confines of the crews quarters, the tough old salts sang ballads about the ships they loved and mastered.

Stan Hugill (1) opines that our present ballad comes from an old English naval ballad called, "*The Flash Frigate*" and agrees with Captain Whall that its original heroine was "*La Pique*," a flash packet of the Navy in her time. The song was popular aboard both British and American vessels, spread through the lumber camps of the American middlewest and was quoted in Rudyard Kipling's *CAPTAINS COURAGEOUS* as a Grand Banks fisherman's favorite.

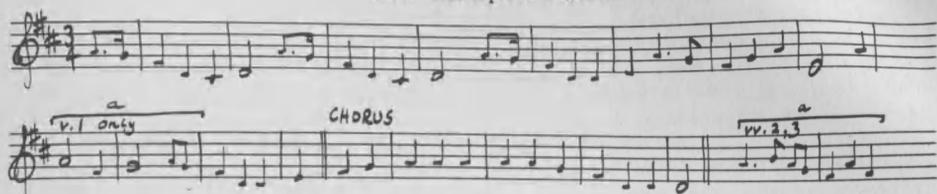
Hugill's *Shanties of the Seven Seas*, (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1961.)

Captain Whall in *Ships Sea Songs and Shanties*, (James Brown, Glasgow, 1912.)

Joanna Colcord's *Songs of American Sailormen*, (Norton, New York, 1938.)

Helen Creighton, Doreen Senior's *Traditional Songs from Nova Scotia*, (Ryerson Press, Toronto, 1950.)

The Liverpool Packet



1. *We were going to sea from the Waterloo Dock
And the boys and the girls on the pier-head did flock
To give us three cheers, with a hearty weigh-ho,
She's a Liverpool packet — O Lord, let her go.*
2. *Now a-ploughing our way down the wild Irish sea,
Our passengers happy, as happy can be,
And all the sailors say, as they walked to and fro, —
She's a Liverpool packet — O Lord, let her go.*
3. *Now we crossed o'er the Banks of Newfoundland,
Where the water's all shallow, and the bottoms all sand, —
Says: All the little fishes, that swim to and fro, —
She's a Liverpool packet — O Lord, let her go.*

Further verses (not on the record)

4. *And now we're a-waitin', in the River Mersey,
Waitin' for the tugboat to haul her to sea,
To haul us to sea, boys, where the stormy winds blow, —
She's a Liverpool packet — O Lord, let her go.*
5. *And now we're a-crossin' the Atlantic so wide,
Where the high-rolling billows crash down on her side,
Her sails set high and the stormy winds blow, —
She's a Liverpool packet — O Lord, let her go.*
6. *Here's to our ship and to all our ship's crew
And one for our captain and the officers, too,
Of all the flash packets, she's the fastest we know, —
She's a Liverpool packet — O Lord, let her go.*

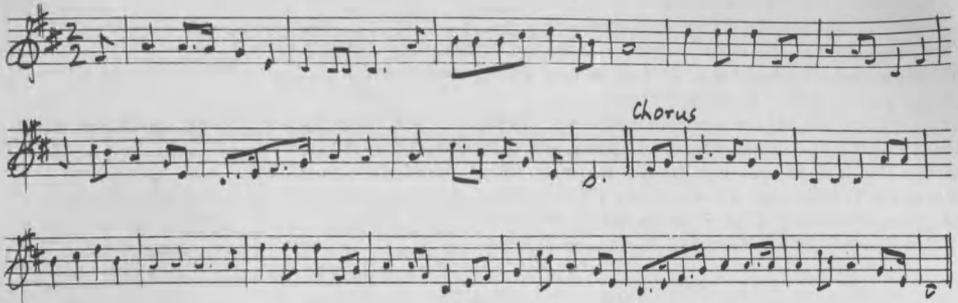
3. THE GREEN BANKS OF YARROW

Mrs. Maguire, Belfast, N. Ireland,
recorded by Sean O'Boyle.

The tradition of sea ballads stretches far back into the middle ages and probably beyond, as witnessed by this medieval narrative called *Bonnie Annie*, No. 2 in *Child*. The theme occurs frequently in British collections. The whole story (of which this version gives only a fragment at the end) concerns a merchant's daughter, seduced and left with child by a rich squire. She steals her father's gold, goes on shipboard to cross over to her lover, and, during a storm at sea is seized by birth pangs. The superstitious sailors look for the Jonah that has brought their vessel into danger and the girl, burdened by a sense of her own guilt, accepts the blame for the storm and asks to be thrown into the sea with her baby. The ship sails on and Bonnie Annie floats to the shore and is buried by her mourning lover.

Sailors have long believed that a dead body, a murderer, or an accused person aboard ship will imperil its passage. This idea occurs in three other well-known sea ballads, *Captain Glen* (Laws, p. 151), *The Cruel Ship's Carpenter* (Laws, p. 268), and *Robyn's Confession* (#57 in *Child*). In one older Scottish version, it is clear that this belief once was rooted in the fear of evil spirits and ghosts. The crew casts lots to find the Jonah:

Our Gallant Ship



1. *And up spake the captain of our gallant ship,
A goodly-speaking captain was he;
"I have a wife in Fishguard Town,
This night she'll be weeping for me,(3)
This night she'll be weeping for me."*
2. *And up spake the mate of our gallant ship,
A goodly-speaking mate was he;
He had a wife in Milford Town,
"This night shall be weeping for me."*
3. *And up spake (who shall we have now?) the bosun . . .
. . . Pembroke Town . . .*

And so it continues, through all the members of the crew, until eventually they reach the cook, and the cook was not a goodly-speaking man, according to the end of the story, because what the cook had to say was this:

4. *And up spake the cook of our gallant ship,
A badly-speaking cook was he;
He didn't care a damn for the kettle or the pan,
If she sank to the bottom of the sea(3),
If she sank to the bottom of the sea.*

*CHORUS: And the stormy wynd (do) blow (3),
In the winter we'll have snow (3),
And our gallant ship lying down to the breeze,
And the landlubbers lying down below (3),
And the landlubbers lying down below.*

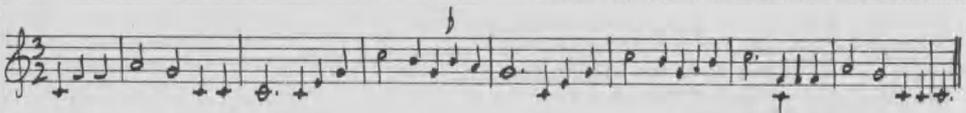
5. THE ALEHOUSE

Elizabeth Cronin, Cork, Eire
BBC Sound Archive (Seamus Ennis) Sept. 1952

Elizabeth Cronin, the apple-cheeked and artful lady of the ballads, here adds Gaelic *blas* to a lyric song popular among sailors, soldiers, cobblers and college students. Today, the best-known form of this song is *The Tavern in the Town*.

Vaughan-Williams' *The Penguin Book of English Folk Songs* (London, 1959.)

The Alehouse



1. *Last night being windy, I slept unsound,
I dreamed my true-love could not be found,
I searched those green fields, and mountains high
For the lad I love is a sailor boy.*
2. *O Johnny, Johnny, I love you well,
I love you better than my lips can tell,
I love you better than my lips can tell,
I'll forsake them all and I'd go with you.*
3. *There is an alehouse all in this town,
Where my love he goes in and out;
He takes his lassie upon his knee,
Right well you know that it vexes me.*
4. *The reason he takes her, I'll tell you why,
For she has got more gold than I;
But her gold may melt and her riches fly
And that she may be as poor as I.*
5. *I wished, I wished that I got my wish,
I wish my love was a little fish;
And I to be fishing, all on the brook,
I would catch my love with a line and hook.*
6. *I wish, I wish and I wish again,
I wish I was a maid again;
A maid I am and a maid I'll be,
Until apple grows on a laurel tree.*

6. ROSEMARY LANE

From Lerwick and the singing of Bruce Laurensen comes another variant of this ubiquitous and salty seduction ballad in which the male ballad singer pretends to see things from the point of view of the willing servant-maid. Baring-Gould and Cecil Sharp considered the tale too suggestive for their audience and either rewrote or suppressed it. Earlier, Chappell had come upon another form of the song on a black letter broadside in the Roxburgh Collection. The tune was old, appearing as "The Goddesses Playfords *Dancing Master* (1650) and "Quodlings Delight" in the Fitz-William *Virginal Book* (1608-1616 circa). Chappell's song was called "The Oak and the Ash" and has this roistering chorus:

*It's home, boys, home, it's home I long to be,
Home far away in my own couterie,
Where the oak and the ash and the bonnie ivy tree
Are all a-growing green in the North Counterie.*

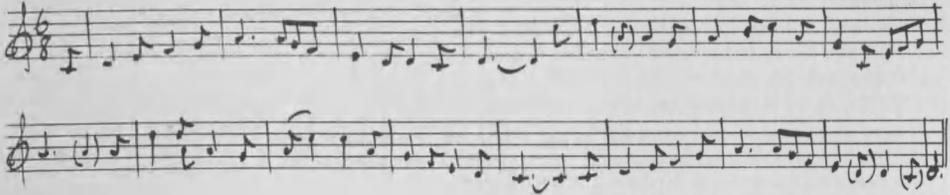
In this form, it became a sort of unofficial patriotic piece for all Englishmen. In its bawdy version, it usually occurs in England under the title of "Rosemary Lane," and begins:

*When first I went to service in Rosemary Lane
I gained the good will of my master and dame,
There came a young sailor to our house came by
And that was the beginning of my miser-ie.*

In 19th century London, Rosemary Lane was lined with fish and oyster stalls, second hand boot and bonnet shops, borrows for old scissors and metal articles, barrels of toys and china. It was away from the noise and bustle of the hawkers and barrowmen along Rosemary Lane that Maggie and her young sailor crept together off to bed.

Baring-Gould, *Songs of the West*, "The Blue Flame", (Methuen. London, 1895.)

Cecil Sharp, Manuscript, "Amble is a Fine Town."
Playford, *The Dancing Master*, "The Goddesses," (1650.)
Fitz-William Virginal Book, (1608-16 circa.)



1. *O and he called for a candle to light to go to bed,
And, likewise, a handkerchief to roll around his head,
For to roll round his head, as the sailors often do,
And said: "My pretty fair maid, would you go too?"*
2. *And Maggie was a young girl and thought there was no harm,
She lied there down beside him, for to keep his bosom warm;
In the middle of the night, when the sailor he grew bold,
He rolled in Maggie's apron five hundred pounds in gold.*
3. *And early the next morning, when Maggie's mother rose,
Saying: "Maggie, dearest Maggie, you have thrown yourself away,
You've thrown yourself away and have birthed a baby, too,—
She'll be passed for a young girl in a foreign counterie."*
4. *"O mother, dearest mother, I've done nothing wrong,
I've gold in my pocket and silver in my purse;
And when the baby's born, I will pay the nurse a fee
And her'll pass for a young girl in a foreign counterie.*
5. *"Then if it be a bonny girl, she'll stay at home with me,
And if it be's a boy, he will plough the dark blue sea;
He'll plough the dark blue seas, as his daddy has done before
And skip about the decks like a young sailor boy.*
6. (OMITTED) *"Then God bless the ocean that my love sails upon
And likewise the noble ship that carries him along;
I'll write my love a letter and I'll seal it with a ring
And I never will be happy till I see my love again."*

7. RATCLIFFE HIGHWAY

Jim Baldry, Woodbridge, Suffolk, England,
recorded by Peter Kennedy, July, 1956.

Jim Baldry, the singer, was born in Suffolk in 1881 and died there in 1958. His trade was painter and decorator, but he prided himself on his skill as a poacher and a singer of scandalous songs and ballads. He told us, "I learnt this one off my old dad who learnt it off a sailor." It is a tale of a sailor's adventure into the London of the old days, where fly crooks and cadgers of both sexes waited to prey on the green and unwary. The ballads narrator tells how he fooled them all and came away richer than he went in.

The scene of our hero's adventure was described by Henry Mayhew in *London Labour and the London Poor* (Griffen, London, 1861):

... There was very little beauty abroad that night, at least in the neighborhood of Ratcliff Highway. ... Yet I must acknowledge there was something pre-possessing about the countenances of the women, which is more than could be said for the men. It might have been a compound of resignation, indifference, and recklessness, through all of which phases of her career a prostitute must go; but there was a certain innate delicacy about those women, highly commendable to its possessors. It was not the artificial refinement of the West-End, nothing of the sort;

but genuine womanly feeling. They did not look as if they had come there for pleasure exactly, they appeared too business-like for that; but they did seem as if they would like, and intended, to unite the two, business and pleasure, and enjoy themselves as much as the circumstances would allow. . . .

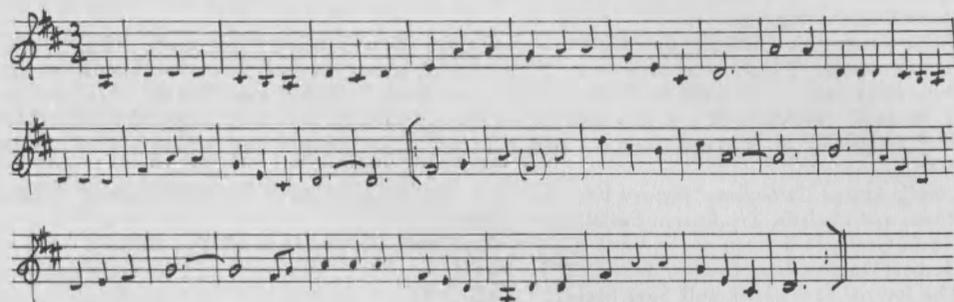
The faces of the sailores were vacant, stupid, and beery. I could not help thinking one man I saw at The Prussian Eagle a perfect Caliban in his way. There was an expression of owlsh cunning about his heavy-looking features that, uniting with the drunken leer sitting on his huge mouth, made him look but a 'very indifferent monster.

Vaughan-Williams, *Penguin Book of English Folk Songs* (London, 1959.)

British Museum, "Rolling Down the Wapping, (11661 dd 20 p. 20).

Alfred Williams, "Wassail", Harvey of Cricklade, Berks.

Ratcliffe Highway



1. As I was a-walking one morning in London,
I travelled up Ra'cliffe Highway,
I got boozing, fell into an alehouse,
I spent all that night and next day.
I'd a boxing young lass sit beside me,
I 'ad a few pounds I could spend,
So I called for a bottle of wine, changed a guinea,
She said: "Me brave boy, you're the sort."
2. Now the bottles rolled under the counter,
There was glasses for everyone,
When I asked for the change of my guinea,
She tipped me the verse of a song.
Now the verse of a song didn't suit me,
For I didn't want money to spairt (sport), —
"Come give me the change of that guinea
Or else I'll give you a broadside."
3. Now the bottles that stood on the counter
So brisk-ie, so nimble did fly,
This young damsel she flew in a passion,
Struck: Murder! O what shall I do?
Now her watch that hung on the fireplace,
It was the change of my guinea I knew,
I popped it into my pocket
And straight for the door I did fly.
4. Now the night being dark in my favour
To the waters I safely did creep,
I jumped into a boat bound for Devon,
Got safely aboard of my ship.

5. (OMITTED) Now, all you young men, take a warning, —
 If you travel up Ra'cliffe Highway,
 If, by chance, you should call at an alehouse,
 Beware of what money you change;
 For all them young damsels will highly delight you,
 If you have got money to sport, —
 If, by chance, you should tip them a guinea,
 You can go to hell for your change!

8. THE LOWLANDS OF HOLLAND

Paddy Tunney, Letterkenney, Donegal, Eire,
 recorded by Peter Kennedy, London, October, 1958.

Paddy Tunney performs in the highly ornamented style he has studiously acquired from the best Gaelic singers in the West, who use melodic embellishment to enhance and deepen the significance of ballad poetry. Here Tunney sings a lovely variant of one of the finest sea songs in the English language.

Child prints one form of this ballad as an appendix to "Bonny Bee Hom, (taken from Herd's *Scottish Songs*) with this note: "This ballad was composed at the beginning of the last (18th) century by a young widow in Galloway whose husband was drowned on a voyage to Holland. "Whether or not this account is true, this lament has been found and published very frequently in Scotland, Ireland, England, and in the Eastern part of the United States and Canada."

Child's Ballad Collection, "Bonny Bee Hom" (no. 92) Johnson, *Scots Musical Museum*, (1788).
 Ritson and Christie, *Traditional Ballad Airs*, (1876)

Gavin Greig, *Folk Songs of the North-East*, Art. 135 Joyce, *Ancient Irish Music*, (1905.)

Herbert Hughes, *Irish Country Songs*, vol. II, (1915).

The Journal of the Irish Folk Song Society, vol. II, (1905.)

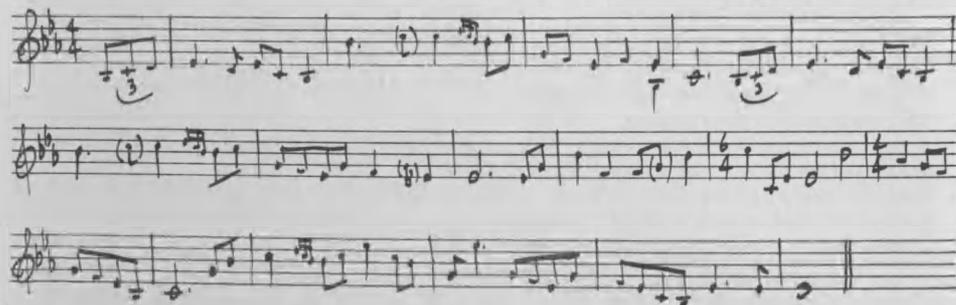
Journal Folk Song Society, no. 13, (1909.)

Versions collected in American

Josiah Combs, *Folk Songs du Midi des Etats-Unis*, (Paris, 1925.)

Roland Gray, *Songs and Ballads of the Main and Lumberjacks*, (Harvard University Press, 1924).

The Lowlands of Holland

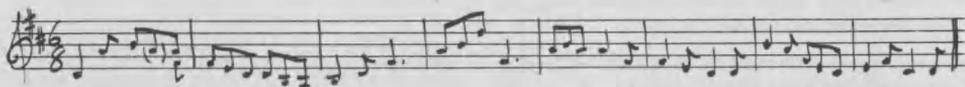


1. The night that I was married and lay in marriage bed,
 Up came the bold sea-captain and stood at my bed-head,
 Saying: "Rise, arise, new-wedded man, and come along with me
 To the Lowlands of Holland, for to face your enemy."

by water. Out of its dark archway and past its grim walls sailed galleys manned by brawny Scottish sea fighters, pulling at the oars to the tune of songs like this one, — songs that celebrated the doughty fighters aboard and their leaders.

This song is cast in leader-chorus form, as are the waulking songs from the west of Scotland, still performed in the Hebrides with a swing and coordination of ensemble foreign to anything else found in the British Isles. The question of the origins of this type remains doubtful until we heard tapes from the Faeroe Islands with singing in the same responsorial style. It seems likely now that the song style represented by 'Kismul's Galley' was brought to the west coast of Scotland by conquering raiders from Scandinavia. The performer here is Flora McNeil of the McNeils of Barra Castle, now dulcet-voiced telephone operator of the village. Songs of the Hebrides, Vol. I, p. 80, (Boosey, 1909.)

Kismul's Gallery



1. *Latha dhomh 's mi m Beinn a cheathaich*
(One day as I was on the misty hill)
Fal-il-lo, ro-hee-o
Harum-a-soch-a, ro-hee-o
2. *Gun deach bata Clann Nill seachad*
(Mac Neills Galley was passing)
3. (OMITTED) *Gun cheann cumaidh aig a astar*
(At great speed)
4. *Le da Mhac Iain ic a Phearsain*
(On board were two sons of John Mac Pherson)
5. (OMITTED) *Munachadh Mor a ceann a clachain*
(Big Mundo from the head(end) of the clachan)
6. *S 'Ruaraidh'og an toighne Maiseach*
(And fair young Roderick, the heir)
7. *S 'teach a duthaich mhic Ill 'eathain*
(Coming from the Land of the Mac Lean)
8. *S'teach gu Ciosmul an aigheir*
(To Kishmul of the mirth)
9. *Far am faighte chuirn ni gabhail*
(Where there will be songs and wine)
10. *Fion A'oidche ku latha*
(Night till day)

11. THE WHALE-FISHERY

Philip Hamon and Hilary Carree, Sark, Channel Islands,
recorded by Peter Kennedy, May, 1957.

This, the best-known of all whaling ballads, was equally popular in both American and English whaling fleets. The present revision comes from Sark in the Channel Islands that lie between England and France. The two Sark fishermen normally speak a dialect of the Norman French; hence the strange accent.

Percy Merrick, FSJ 3, p. 101, (1901).

seals. In the Shetlands, the folk believed in magical beings who lived in land beneath the deeps of the ocean and put on seal-skin for their ascent through the water. Once on shore, they put off their disguise and appeared as human-beings. Such a one was the Grey Silkie of Suleskerry who wooed and won a Shetland woman.

Here our ballad begins. A brief version of it appears as no. 113 in *Child* without a tune, but this is no match for the variant which old John Sinclair of Flotta in the Orkney Isles turned up with in January, 1934. He has since been visited by Swedish folklorists and recorded for the BBC. Bronson remarks that his tune is a variant of the air often associated with *Hind Horn*, another ballad of traffic between spirits and mortals. Sinclair (who learned the song from his mother), worked all his life as a seaman, and a farmer-fisherman until his retirement. He now lives in a cottage by the sea where Silkies perhaps may still appear.

Child, *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, No. 113.

Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, I, 86, (1852.)

Thomson's *People of the Sea*, (1954.)

The Grey Silkie



1. *In Norway's Land there lived a maid,
"Hush ba-loo-lilly," this maid began,
"I know not where my babe's father is,
Whether by land or sea does he travel in."*
2. *It happened on a certain day,
When this fair lady fell fast asleep
That in came a good grey silkie
And set him down at her bed feet,*
3. *Saying: "Awak', awak', my pretty fair maid,
For o how sound as thou dost sleep,
And I'll tell thee where thy babe's father is,
He's sitting close at they bed feet."*
4. *"I pray thee tell to me thy name,
O tell me where does thy dwelling be."
"My name is good Hill Marliner
And I earn my living oot o' the sea."*
5. *"I am a man upon the land,
I am a silkie in the sea,
And when I'm far from every strand,
My dwelling it's in Sule Sherry."*
6. *"Alas, alas, that's woeful fate,
That's weary fate that's been laid on me,
That a man should come from the West o' Hoy
To the Norway Lands to have a bairn wi' me."*
7. *"My dear, I'll wed thee with a ring,
With a ring, my dear, will I wed with thee."
"Thee may go to thee weddings with whom thou wilt
For I'm sure thou'll never will wed wi' me."*
8. (OMITTED) *"Though thou will nurse my little lone son
For seven long years upon thy knee
And at the end of seven long years
I'll come back and pay the nurse's fee."*
9. *She has nursed his little wee son
For seven long years upon her knees
And at the end of seven long years
He came back with gowd and white monie.*

10. (OMITTED) He says: "My dear, would thee wear a ring,
Wi' a ring, my dear, I wed wi' thee."
"Thou might go wed thee weddings with whom thy wilt,
For I'm sure thou'll never wed none wi' me."
11. (OMITTED) "But I'll put a gold chain round his neck
And a gay good gold chain it will be,
That if ever he comes to the Norway Lands,
Thou can ha'e a good guess on who's he?"
12. (OMITTED) "And thou will get a gunner good,
And a gae good gunner it was he,
On a May morning and he'll gang oot
And shoot the son and the grey silkie."
13. For she has got the gunner good,
And a gae good gunner it was he,
He gaed oot on a May morning
And he shot that son and the grey silkie.

SIDE TWO

1. WARLIKE SEAMEN

Bob and Ron Copper, Rottingdean, Sussex, England,
recorded by Peter Kennedy.

This ballad turns up again and again on the lips of English country singers. Cecil Sharpe recorded it at Minehead in Somerset, Baring-Gould in Bristol, and Richard Terry from a singing sailor. Sometimes known as "Liverpool Play", it was once a favorite at pub sing-songs in East Anglia. Harry Cox, a great balladeer from East Anglia, that flat and somewhat mysterious land to the east of London, ends his version as follows:

*So now we've taken this large French ship for Liverpool we bore,
We fired a shot to our sweethearts and the girls all on the shore,
We lowered down the French colours, let fly the red, white, and blue,
Success to the jolly old Dolphin and all the jovial crew.*

Here it is sung in the style of the glee singers, whom Thomas Hardy portrayed in *Under the Greenwood Tree*.

Baring Gould, *Songs of the West* (Revised Edition), "The Marigold".

Warlike Seamen

The musical score is arranged in two systems. The first system has two vocal staves (Bob and Ron) and a piano accompaniment staff. The second system continues the vocal and piano parts. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/2. The piano accompaniment features a simple harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving bass lines.

1. *Come all you warlike seamen that to the seas belong,
I'll tell you of a fight, my boys, on board The Nottingham;
It was of an Irish captain, his name was Somerville,
With courage bold did he control, he played his part so well.*
2. *'Twas on the 8th of June, my boys, when at Spithead we lay,
On board there came an order; our anchor for to weigh;
Bound for the coast of Ireland our order did run so,
For us to cruise and not refuse against a daring foe.*
3. *We had not sailed many lengths at sea before a ship we spied,
She being some lofty Frenchman, come a-bearing down so wide,
We hailed her off France, my boys, she asked from whence we came,
Our answer was "From Liverpool and London is our name."*
4. (OMITTED) *"O pray, are you some man-of-war, or pray what may you be?"
"O then," replied our captain, "And that you soon shall see;
Come strike your English colours or else you shall bring to;
Since you're so stout, you shall give out or else we will sink you."*
5. *The first broadside we gave to them, which made them for to wonder,
Their mainmast and their rigging came a-rattling down like thunder,
We drove them from their quarters, they could no longer stay,
Our guns did roar, we made so sure, we showed them British play.*
6. (OMITTED) *So now we've took that ship, my boys, Godspeed us fair wind
That we might sail to Plymouth town, if the Heavens prove so kind;
We'll drink a health unto our captain and all such warlike souls,
To him we'll drink, and never flinch, out of a flowing bowl.*

2. THE BOAT THAT BROUGHT ME

Thomas Moran, Mohill, Co. Leitrim, Eire,
BBC Sound Archive (Seamus Ennis).

This music hall account of a comedy-Irishman's adventure crossing the sea to England here turns up in the repertoire of Thomas Moran, one of the important ballad-rememberers of central Ireland.

The Boat That Brought Me

The musical score for 'The Boat That Brought Me' is written on five staves. It begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a time signature of 6/8. The melody is primarily composed of eighth and quarter notes, with some triplet patterns. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings like 'ad'. The piece concludes with a double bar line and a 'c' time signature change.

1. *They told me England was the place where everything was gay
Well, bedad, says I, if that's the case, sure, that's the place for me.
Me father was dying, me mother was crying,
St. Patsy O'Stor, kiss your mother once more,
For if you go 'way across the big sea,
You're sure to be drowned and you'll never be found,
The cod-fish and whale will dine on your tail,
What a beautiful dish you will make for the fish
On the boat that first brought me over.*

CHORUS: *So away I went to Dublin Town
Strange sights and things to see,
All the clothes that I had on
Was the old frieze coat that covered me;
The pipes set up a merry tune
And they lost their darling boy,
And me mother cried full bitterly
And so did Julie joy.*

2. *Well, I was not very far out on the sea,
When first there come thunder and then there come rain;
I wish in me heart I was home again,
The waves began rolling, the ship was a-holing,
And every blow to the devil we'd go.
There come in a big wave, knocked me out in the sea,
I was there in despair, saying a prayer,
When one come behind, more swift than the wynd,
And knocked me right in on the top of some men;
Says one: "For your jumping and Ill give you a thumping."
So he up with his stick and he gave me a lick
And he knocked me down flat on the broad of me back,
"Bring me home to me father, to me sisters and brothers,
And I'll swear on the Book that if I get home I'll never more roam,
On the boat that first brought me over."*

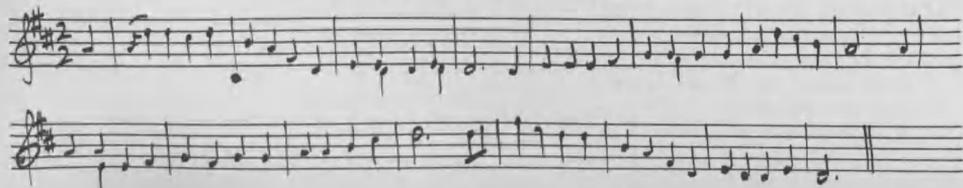
3. THE HANDSOME CABIN-BOY

Jeannie Robertson, Aberdeen, Scotland,
recorded by Alan Lomax, Nov., 1953.

The theme of the girl who dresses herself like a man to follow her lover to war or to sea runs through the balladry of the 18th and 19th century like a scarlet thread. This pleasing feminine fantasy here takes a frankly salacious turn. Whereas the girl's disguise is usually not exposed till the end of the song, here the crew soon learns that the captain and the pretty cabin-boy sport and play together. Concrete evidence of this violation of ship's discipline soon appeared "as the wind did swell our pretty belle." Soon enough there was a night on the Bay of Biscay when the doctor was called for, and the sailors could not sleep for the groaning of "the handsome cabin-boy." Next day, however, in the tolerant way that is truly British, all hands drank a bumper in honor of the cabin-boy who was "neither man nor maid." A further verse, which often appears as stanza three, is needed to explain the whole story:

*This maid being so very active, she done her duty well;
But mark what followed after the song itself shall tell;
The captain and the pretty maid did oftentimes sport and toy,
And he soon found out the secret of the handsome cabin-boy.*

The Handsome Cabin-Boy

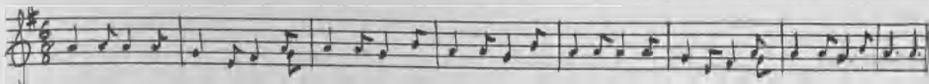


1. *It's of a pretty fair maid, I'll let you's understand,
She had a mind for rowing to some foreign land;
She dressed herself in sailor's clothes and holdly did appear,
Engaging with the captain, giving service for a year.*
2. (OMITTED) *She engaged with the captain, a cabin-boy to be;
For the wynd it being in favour and we soon set off to sea;
The lady to the captain said: "My love, I wish you joy."
So pleased she was engaged by him, the handsome cabin-boy.*
3. *For his cheeks appeared like roses and his sidelocks they did curl,
But oftentimes the sailors smiled and said he look-ed like a girl;
But by eating cabin-biscuits his colours did destroy,
And the wynd did swell our pretty belle, our handsome cabin-boy,*
4. *"O Doctor, dear Doctor," the cabin-boy did cry,—
The sailors swore with all their might that their cabin-boy would die;
But the doctor ran with all his might, he was smiling at the fun,
For to think a sailor lad would have a daughter or a son.*
5. *But when the sailors heard the joke they all begun to stare,
For the child belongs to none of us, how solemn they did swear,
"But the lady and the captain they have oft-times kissed and toyed
So we'll soon find out the secret of our handsome cabin-boy."*
6. (OMITTED) *So they all took up a bumper and they drunk success to trade,
It's twice unto this cabin-boy, she's neither man nor maid;
But if this war should rise again, our sailors to destroy,
In the ship some able-seaman sail our handsome cabin-boy.*
7. *It was through the Bay of Biscay our gallant ship did plough,
And that night the sailors they kicked up a blooming row,
They took their bundles from their hammocks and the rest they did destroy,
And it was all through the groaning of our handsome cabin-boy.*

4. THE UNST BOAT SONG

John Stickle, a cooper, a good fiddler in his time and a humorous man with a broad knowledge of Shetland dialect and old Shetland songs, was born in Unst in 1879 and died there 73 years later. Perhaps the most remarkable of his songs was this ancient boat song in the Norse language, whose leader—chorus structure indicates that it was once a song for rowing—perhaps on board Norse galleys. The song has been published in the *Shetland Folk Book*, vol. 2 (Shetland Times, Lerwick, 1951.), somewhat overcredited by William Ratter.

The UNST Boat Song



1. *Starka virna vestilie*
(Strong westerly weather)
Obadee-a, obadee-a
(O curses)
Starka virna vestilie
Obadee-a monye
(O curses, men)
2. *Stala, Stoita, Stonga, raera*
(Put in order shrouds, masts, yards)
T' what ta doo, da bunshka baera
(That the boat will carry sail)
T' what ta doo, da bunshka baera
A litera mae vee drengie
(I am pleased with that, boys)

3. *Saina papa wara*
 (Bless us, our father)
Obadee-a, obadee-a
Saina papa wara
Obadee-a monye

5. THE SMACKSMAN

Sam Larner, Winterton, Norfolk, England,
 BBC Sound Archive (Philip Donellan).

The British trawler fleet sailing out of ports along the coast of Scotland and England follows the codfish, the herring and the sole summer and winter, wherever they are to be found from the North Sea to the coast of Greenland. Theirs is a life of unending toil and unsung hardship. In the winter, the ropes and spars of their small vessels are crusted with ice and their decks are constantly awash with icy waves.

Here Sam Larner, a lusty veteran trawlerman, spins one of their ditties, a casually-put-together piece that nonetheless contains many a powerful line. We supply an extra verse, that Sam did not remember, from the singing of Walter Barnes, Brixham, Devon:

*Every night in winter, as regular as the clock,
 You put on your sou' wester, likewise your oilskin frock,
 And call all hands to capstan, lads and merrily heave away,
 For that's the cry in the middle of the night as well as in the day.*

The song may be related to a ballad called "On Board of the Kangaroo."

*Once I was a waterman and lived at home at ease,
 Now I am a mariner I plough the angry seas,
 I thought I'd like seafaring life so I bid my love adieu,
 And I sailed away from Milford Bay on board of the Kangaroo.*

The Smacksman

1. *Once I was a schoolboy and I stayed at home with ease,
 Now I am a smacksman and I plough the raging seas;
 I thought I'd like seafaring life, but very soon I found
 It was not all plain sailing, boys, when out on the fishing-ground.*
CHORUS: *Kyle away the trawl-warp, boys, let's heave on the trawl,
 When we get our fish on board, we'll have another haul;
 Straightway to the capstan and merrily heave around.
 That's the cry in the middle of the night: "Haul the trawl, boys, haul."*
2. *Now then we get our fish on board, we have them all to gut,
 We put them in baskets and down the ice-lugger put;
 We ice them and we size them, we ice them all quite well,
 We ice them and keep them safely, like an oyster in his shell.*

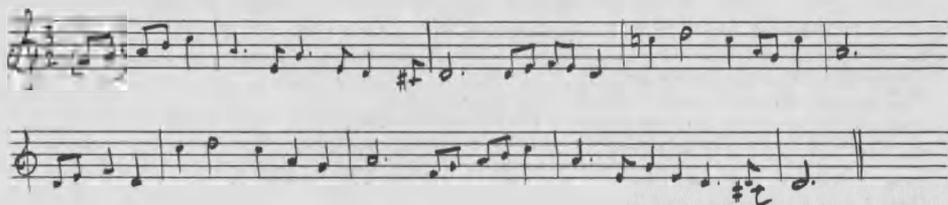
CHORUS

6. SWEET WILLIE

Lal Smith, Waterford, Eire,
BBC Sound Archive (Peter Kennedy and Sean O'Boyle) July 1952.

Variants of "Sweet Willie" have turned up in the lumberwoods of Canada and in the backwoods of the South as well as in broadsides and on the lips of English and Irish singers. Catnach called it "The Sailor Boy and his Faithful Mary" and in Christie's *Traditional Ballad Airs Vol. I*, it is called "The Sailing Trade." Frequently in versions sung by English and Irish Country Singers, the song becomes intermingled with "The Alehouse" (see side I — No. 5). Perhaps the most celebrated of all descendants of this romantic, 18th century broadside ballad is the Appalachian love song, "Black Is the Color of my True Love's Hair." Here it is sung by an Irish traveler, a descendant of the wandering tinker-troubadours of the backroads of Briton. She employs the white-voiced, embellished, glissando style practiced by these singers.

Sweet Willie



1. (OMITTED) *It was early, early on the month of Spring,
When my love, Willie, went to serve the king,
And the raging seas, as the wind blew high,
That's what parted me all from my sailor boy.*
2. *Father, father, build me a boat
And it's on the ocean with it I'll float,
I may watch those vessels as they'll roll by,
And I'll try for tidings of my sailor boy.*
3. *O I hadn't been sailing but a day or two,
When I met the captain of a jolly crew,
Saying: "Captain, Captain, come tell me true
Is my love, Willie, on board with you?"*
4. (OMITTED) *"O what colour clothes did your Willie wear?
Or what colour was your Willie's hair?"
"He wore a Scotch blue bonnet, it being trimmed all round,
And his gay curly locks they been hanging down."*
5. *"O I pray, fair maiden, don't make so bold,
As our ship it got wrecked on the deadly shore,
One of those green islands, as we've passed by,
There we've lost nine more and your sailor boy."*
6. *O she flung her hands, as she tore her hair,
She being like a maiden was deep in 'spair,
And she flung her small boat against the rocks
Saying: "What will I do, if my love is lost?"*
7. (OMITTED) *O then father, father, dig me my grave
Dig it long and narrow and deep to spare
And all at my head put a turtle dove
Let the wide world know that I died in love.*

7. THE CAMPANERO

Bill Cameron, St. Mary's, Scilly Isles,
recorded by Peter Kenndey, November 21st, 1956.

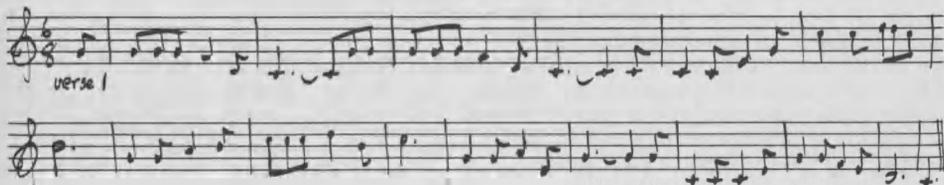
Oh this story I'd like to tell; about a voyage to Hell . . .

So begins one version of this 19th century ballad. Its lines are certainly not marred by a literary tone, but are all the more genuine for that. The piece roundly and roughly sets forth the point of view of the common seaman in a forthright style that must have delighted the fore-castle audience. Doerflinger, the American collector, writes that the "Campanero" was engaged in the Brazilian coffee trade. Stan Hugil, the sage of sea songs, states that this ballad was popular in Liverpool during the last days of sail.

Doerflinger, *Shantymen and Shantyboys* (Macmillan, New York, 1951).

Hugil, *Shanties from the Seven Seas* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 96;).

The Campanero



1. *The last time I was in Baltimore, it was just before the war,
I thought I'd take a trip to Rio Janeiro,
So on the following Saturday, we got underway,
I signed aboard the barque, "The Campanero"*
2. *Now the skipper says to the mate: "You've got ringworms in your bait
And dead-eyes in your cars o, I can find, o;
You're a lousy old son-of-a-bitch, you give everybody the itch,
You're not fit to be mate of the barque, "The Campanero."*
3. *Now the mate he was a rank 'un, he knocked the skipper down the cabin,—
"You don't think it's me you're going to fear o;
If I'm a lousy old son-of-a-bitch, you're more like a lousy swan
Than the skipper of the barque, "The Campanero."*

CHORUS (not sung on the record)

*So, between the cook and the pump, O they drove me off me chump
Till jumping overboard I soon came near, O
If you'll take a trip from me, if ever you go to sea
It's never aboard the barque, "The Campanero"*

(The rest of the verses omitted:)

4. *She had a shanghai'd crew, from hell to Timbuctoo,
And the bullies in six lingoes they did swear, o,
In the middle of the night, the boys would start to fight,
It was hell aboard the barque, "The Campanero"*
5. *In the rounding of Cape Stiff we had bit of a tiff
With the snisters of Tierra del Fuego,
It blew like hell all day, carried the tops'l clean away,
One hell of a ship, the barque, "The Campanero."*
6. *Then a dose of yellow-jack put the bullies on their back,
It even made the Old Man share his grog o,
A Jonah's bitch was she, not meant for you or me,
That ghashtly mastered barque, "The Campanero."*

7. *So come all you sailors bold, who sail around the world,
There's dangers great and small that you may fear o,
But, wherever you may go, there's one thing you must know—
It's never to join the barque, "The Campanero."*

8. ANDREW ROSS,

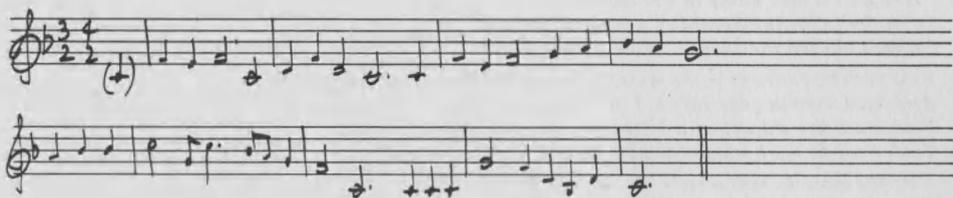
John and Ethel Findlater, Dounby, Orkney,
recorded by Peter Kennedy, July 12th, 1955.

It has been forgotten until very recently that a seaman lost all his civil rights the moment that his ship set sail. At sea the captain was absolute master of his men. He could beat, starve, imprison them as he saw fit. Any resistance was deemed mutinous behavior and the least unpleasant punishment in store for the mutineer was to be clapped in irons and fed on bread and water. Melville, Dana, Conrad and many another writer told blood-chilling tales of the sadistic and self-righteous Captain Blighs of the sea who deliberately set about the humiliation, slow torment, and annihilation of a crew member who happened to displease him. Even if a seaman brought his case to court, his stumbling, illiterate testimony could seldom prevail against the smooth defense of the captain and the owner's lawyer.

One of the most published ballads on this theme is "The Captain's Apprentice." Here is a lesser known piece which concerns the murder of an Orkney sailor by the sadistic Captain Roacher. This gentleman, one is pleased to note, was brought to justice and hanged.

Gavin Greig's Collection of Songs and Ballads in King's College Library, University of Aberdeen, Scotland (unpublished MS. No. LXI 56).

Andrew Ross



1. (OMITTED) *Come all ye seamen and give attention
And listen for awhile to me,
While I relate of dreadful murder
Which happened on the briny sea.*
2. *Andrew Ross, an Orkney sailor,
Whose sufferings now I will explain,
While on a voyage from Barbado
On board the vessel, "Martha Jane".*
3. *O think of what a cruel treatment
Without a friend to interpose,
They whipped and mangled, gagged and strangled
The Orkney sailor, Andrew Ross.*
4. *The mate and captain daily flogged him
With whips and ropes, I tell you true,
While on Andrew Ross's bleeding body,
Water mixed with salt they threw.*
5. (OMITTED) *For twenty days they thus ill used him;
O think, what sorrow, grief and shame
Was suffered by this gallant sailor
On board the vessel "Martha Jane".*

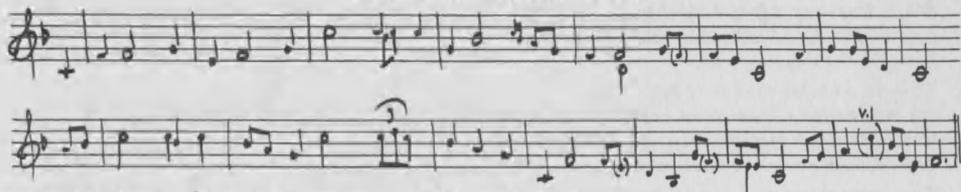
6. *The captain trained his dogs to bite him,
While Ross for mercy he did pray,
And on the deck his flesh in mouthfuls
Torn by the dogs they lay*
7. *Then in a water tank they put him,
For twelve long hours they kept him there,
While Ross for mercy he was pleading,
The captain swore none should go near.*
8. *The captain ordered him to swallow
A thing thereof I shall not name,
The sailors all grew sick with horror
On board the vessel "Martha Jane".*
9. *When nearly dead, they did release him
And on the deck they did him fling,
In the midst of pain and suffering—
"Let us be joyful," Ross did say*
10. *The captain swore he'd make him sorry,
He chained him with an iron bar;
Was not that a cruel treatment
For an honest British tar?*
11. *A timber hitch, the captain ordered
All on a rope, to be prepared
And Andrew Ross's bleeding body
Was then suspended in the air.*
12. *Justice, then, did overtake them;
Into Liverpool they came;
And there found guilty of the murder
Committed on the briny ocean.*
13. *O think of what was the captain's feelings
When both his mates they were released
To think that he alone should suffer
He could not for a while believe*
14. *O God, he cries, is there no mercy
Must my poor wife and children dear
Be hounded out by public scorn
It nearly drives me to despair*
15. *Soon after that, an hour arrived
Captain Roachers (?) had to die
To satisfy offended justice
And hangs on yonder gallows high*
16. *I hope his fate will be a warning
To all such tyrants who may suppose
Who would treat an Orkney sailor
As what was done to Andrew Ross*

9. THE BOLD PRINCESS ROYAL

Sung by Ned Adams, Hastings, Sussex, England,
recorded by Bob Copper, November 13th, 1954.

Perhaps the most stirring of 19th century sea ballads is this story of the encounter of *The Bold Princess Royal* with a pirate during a voyage across the Atlantic on her way to Newfoundland. It has been reported throughout the American and British fleets, in Canada, in the North-eastern United States, in East Anglia, Essex, Norfolk, Yorkshire and Sussex. Ned Adams learned it from an old fisherman when he went to sea as a boy in 1918. The Journals of the Folk Song Society—Vaughan Williams, Frank Kidson, W. P. Merrick, Peggy Seeger and Ewan MacColl, *The Singing Island* (Mills Music Ltd. London, 1960).

The Bold Princess Royal



1. *On the fourteenth of February, we sailed from the land
In the bold "Princess Royal", bound for Newfoundland;
We 'ad forty brave seamen for the ship's company
And boldly from the eastward to the westward bore we.*
2. *We 'ad not been a-sailing scarce days two or three,
When a man from our mast-head strange sails did he see;
He came bearing down on us for to see what we were
And under his mizzen, black colours he wore.*
3. *"O Lord," cried our captain, "What shall we do now?
Here comes a bold pirate for to rob us, I know."
"O no, cried the chief mate, That will not be so,
We'll shake out our reef, my boys, and away from him we'll go."*
4. *(OMITTED) At last this bold pirate he hove alongside
With a loud-speaking trumpet: "Whence come you?" he cried.
Our captain, standing aft, my boys, he answered them so—
"We've come from fair London town; we're bound for Cairo."*
5. *(OMITTED) "Come lay up your course-sails and heave your ship to,
For I have some letters for to end home by you."
"I will lay up my course-sails and I'll heave my ship to,
But that's home in harbour, boys, not alongside of you."*
6. *He chased us to the westward, all that livelong day,
And he chased us to the eastward but he couldn't get no way;
He fir-ed shots after us but none did prevail
And the bold "Princess Royal" soon showed him her tail.*
7. *(OMITTED) "O Lord," cried our Captain, "Now the pirate, he is gone,
Go down to your grog, my boys, go down everyone,
Go down to your grog, my boys, and be of good cheer,
For while we have sea-room, brave lads, never fear."*

10. THE BOATIE ROWS

Jessie Murray, Aberdeen, Scotland,
recorded by Alan Lomax, July, 1951.

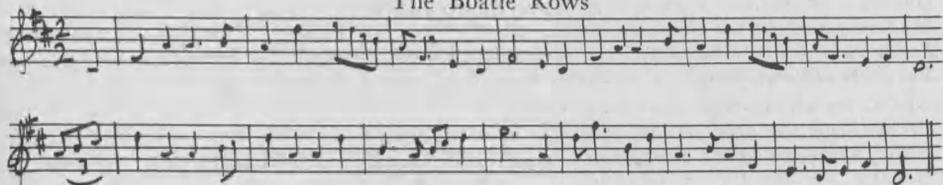
Patrick Buchan, in Mitchison's *Garland of Scotia* (1841), writes that this ballad was composed before the beginning of the 18th century and was called "The Fisher's Rant of Fittie." Later, one John Ewen, an Aberdeen jeweler, shortened and revised it for a Mr. Wilson who sang it on theatrical tours and started it on its long career of popularity in Scotland. I recorded it from the singing of Jesse Murray in the Northeast of Scotland in 1950. Jesse was born in the little fishing village of Portnockie in 1879 and in her youth sold fish from a basket in the streets of her hometown. She was still a spritely old lady with a fine memory and in good voice at the age of 71. As she sings this charming ditty, she makes you feel her sympathy and love for the Scots fisherman, who plowed the grey sea to feed their people.

Johnson, *Scots Musical Museum*, Vol. V (about 1796).

Moffat, *Minstrelsy of Scotland*, (1869)

Mitchison, *Garland of Scotia*, (1841).

The Boatie Rows



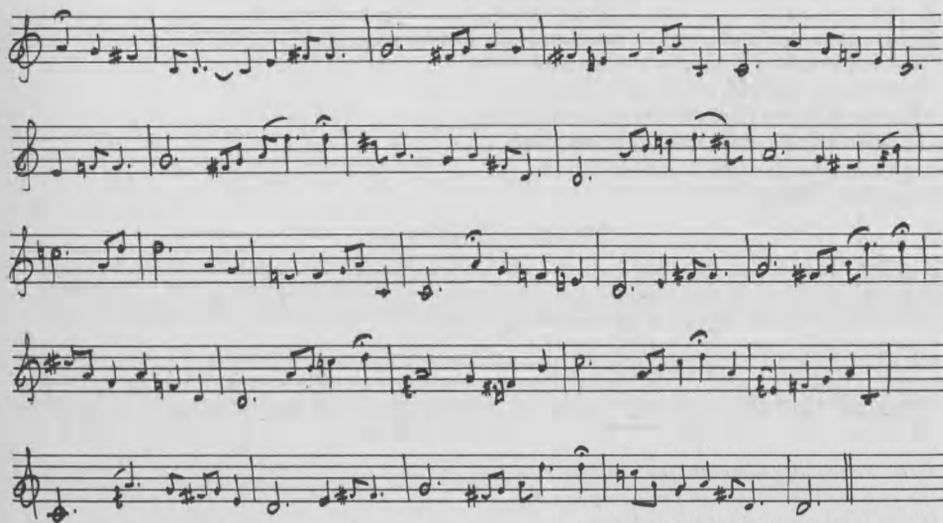
1. *Weel, may the boatie row an muckle may she speed,
Weel, may the boatie row that wins the bairnie's breid,
CHORUS: The boatie rows (2) the boatie rows fare-weel,
And muckle luck maintain the boat, the mackerel and the creel.*
2. *We shot our line in Largo Bay and fishes we got nine,
We had three to b'ile and three to fry and three to bait the line.*
3. *(OMITTED) O weel, may the boatie row that fills a heavy creel
And clads us a' frae head to feet and buys our porridge meat.*
4. *When Sandy, Jock and Janet, they are up and gotten clear,
They help to gar the boatie row and lighten our care.*

11. OUR SHIP IS READY

Robert Cinnamond, Belfast, North Ireland,
recorded by Sean O'Boyle.

Singing in the ancient, highly rubato parlando style of the Gaelic bard, Robert Cinnamond gives us a song, dating back at least a century, that was sung when a group of Irish immigrants were going aboard ship, bound for America. The piece was often followed by a dance called "Ireland's Long Farewell," which the people danced on the quayside before the immigrants said goodbye.

Our Ship Is Ready



1. *Our ship is ready to bear away,
Come, comrades, o'er the stormy sea,
Her snow-white wings they are unfurled
And soon she'll sail through the watery world;*

*Goodbye, my love, soul's brightest pearl,
My lovely dark-haired blue-eyed girl
For to leave you here my heart feels sore,
But if life remains, love, we'll meet once more.*

CHORUS: *Do not forget, love, do not grieve,
For the heart that's true, it will not deceive;
All my heart and hand I give to thee,
Goodbye, my love, I'll remember ye.*

2. (OMITTED) *Now I must bid a long adieu,
To away to one her beauty, too,
All that lovely thing surrounding you
Shall stay but I shall go away
To fair Dalgenny, likewise the glen,
The double waterfall and then
Unto that sweet vale where lovers meet,
There to discourse in accents sweet.*

12. NANCY OF YARMOUTH

Fred Ling, Blaxhall, Suffolk, England,
recorded by Peter Kennedy, February, 1958.

This record closes with a visit to a wonderful old snugery lost in the byways of East Anglia. Here on Saturday nights, a crew of tinkers, fishermen, smugglers, bargemen, and their lady friends gather to clink glasses and sing songs. Many a hairy ear in the room is adorned with a small gold ring. There is an atmosphere of grim poker-faced quiet in the room. The chairman, by contrast, is a breezy gentleman with a red, white, and blue ascot under his chin. He runs the evening like a town-meeting, rapping for order on the little bar with a beer mug, calling upon one hardbitten ancient after another to favor the company with a ditty. Thereupon, some old gaffer, with cap pulled down over his eyes, will rise and, staring up at the ceiling, rip out a ballad of twenty stanzas with the slow deliberation and thoroughness of a man breaking up stones on the highroad.

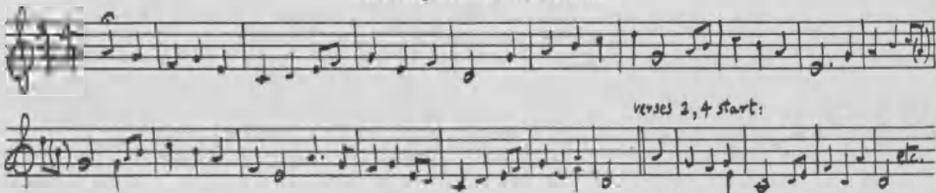
Fred Ling here gives us a ballad called "The Lovers' Jubilee", that first appeared in a book published at the end of the 17th or beginning of the 18th century. One of its dainty verses runs:

*We fought with a Spaniard, a galleon of pride;
With cutlass and pike, love, we climbed wup her side;
We fought as sea lions, the deck ran with blood,
But soon all was over, and victors we stood.*

Baring-Gould, *Songs of the West*.

FSJ11—p. 101 (1907).

Nancy of Yarmouth



1. *O 'tis Nancy of Yarmouth, she's my joy and delight,
It's of a kind letter, which I'm going to write,
It is to inform you what we undergo
All on the salt seas (boys) where the stormy wynds blow.*

CHORUS: THE LAST TWO LINES REPEATED.

2. *It happened one night after it grew dark
Our 'onourable brave captain, he shew us a mark,
The mark that he showed us, it appeared in the sky,
How 'e showed us, how 'e told us, that the storm was nearby.*

CHORUS

3. *It come rattling down like thunder and it tossed us about,
Caused many a bold seaman with hearts bold and stout
We stood shiverin' and shakin' through hope and despair,
One moment on the ocean and the next in the air.*

CHORUS

4. *A ship in distress is a most dismal sight,
Like an army of soldiers, a-going to fight,—
A soldier he can fight, me boys, by the sound of the his drum (gun),
Whilst the sailor he's committed to a watery dome (doom).*

CHORUS