

Harry Upton

Why Can't it Always be Saturday?

MTCD371

Harry Upton: *Why Can't it Always be Saturday?*

Introduction

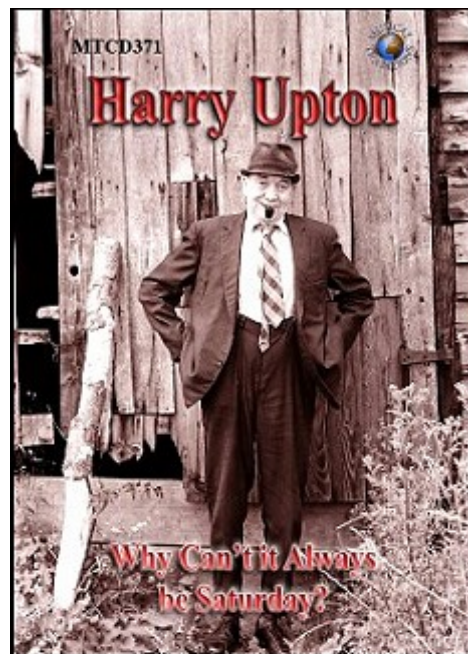
During the period 1974-78 I spent a considerable time visiting the Sussex village of Balcombe. Nowadays Balcombe has become synonymous with an Anti-Fracking movement which is trying to protect this beautiful part of England. But, in the '70s, the term fracking was unknown to most of us and so far as I was concerned Balcombe was simply the village where the remarkable singer Harry Upton lived. I had been told about Harry by Ken Stubbs, another song collector who was then living in Edenbridge, a few miles south of my then home in Biggin Hill. At the time I was recording songs from another Sussex singer, George Spicer, and so I decided to call on Harry one afternoon, following a recording session with George. I remember Harry coming to the door, where we chatted for a few moments, but it was apparent that Harry had no wish to sing to me. So, every time I visited George Spicer, I would call on Harry and we would chat on his doorstep. One day, after about six months of meetings, I was invited into the house. We talked about songs, but Harry still refused to sing. Maybe two or three visits later, as I was being shown out of the house, Harry began to sing. I rushed back to my car, got out a notebook, and wrote down the words to as much of the song as I could remember. On my next visit Harry let me record that one song, but no more! And that was how we progressed, one song at a time recording on each subsequent visit. In the end Harry agreed to sing a couple of songs at a time and so I managed, eventually, to get some twenty-odd songs down on tape.

I should mention that, although I never saw George Spicer and Harry Upton singing together, they had clearly heard each other in the past and I suspect that there was some rivalry between them - over who was the best singer, that sort of thing - and they would both ask me what songs I had recorded from the other, at the same time claiming to have no real interest in the matter!

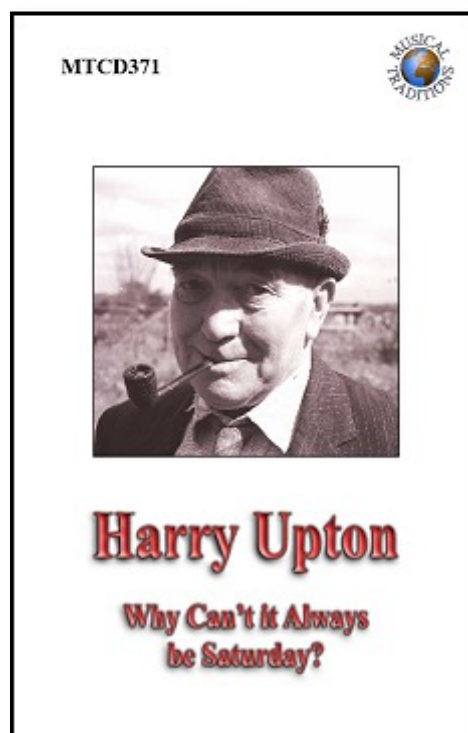
I was not, of course, the first person to collect songs from Harry Upton. Ken Stubbs had noted versions of *Canadee-i-o* and *The Wreck of the Northfleet* and had printed them in his 1970 book *The Life of a Man* published by the EFDSS. In 1963 Peter Kennedy, then working for the EFDSS, turned up unexpectedly and recorded the same two songs. He asked Harry to sign a one-page contract and then left, never to contact Harry again! (This was a story that I was to hear so many times!) Mervyn Plunket, another collector who was then living in Sussex not far from Balcombe, also visited Harry, though I am not sure when this would have been. He did however note at least three songs from Harry, *As I Was Taking My Evening's Walk*, *The Indian Lass* and *Sprig of Thyme*. I have also been told elsewhere that Mervyn copied the words of *The Wreck of the Northfleet* from a manuscript text that Harry owned.

Some of Harry's songs that I recorded appeared on a couple of Topic anthology LPs, *Sussex Harvest - A Collection of Traditional Songs from Sussex* (Topic 12T258) and *Green Grow the Laurels - Country Singers from the South* (Topic 12TS285), but there was no album devoted just to Harry and his songs. And, I suspect that this upset Harry because he knew that Topic had already issued a solo album of George Spicer. In 1978 I was asked to write about Harry for the magazine *Traditional Music*. I mentioned this to Tony Engle of Topic Records and Tony suggested that they issue a limited edition LP of Harry's other songs to accompany the article. This was *Why Can't it Always be Saturday?* (Topic SP 104) and some 250 copies were pressed. This latter album soon sold out.

I remember explaining to Harry that only a small number of albums would be issued. I told him that the album was a tribute to him and his singing and that it was not being issued to make money. And Harry seemed quite happy to accept this. Unfortunately, once the album came out, Topic received a letter from Harry's son, who I had never met, saying that the family expected to be paid a large sum of money. Clearly the son believed that the record was going to sell tens of thousands of copies and, like pop singers, they would reap a large reward from these sales. I rushed back down to Balcombe and tried to sort things out, but I suspect that Harry's son did not believe me and I am sorry to say that the son's intransigence meant that I was unable to record Harry again. What started out as a tribute to Harry sadly ended up as a millstone around my neck. Shortly afterwards I left Biggin Hill and moved to the East End of London. I was recently divorced, had no car and very little money, and travel down to Sussex was then out of the question.



CD case cover



CD booklet cover

Recently a reader of the on-line magazine, *Musical Traditions*, suggested that the Harry Upton article be reprinted on-line. Rod Stradling, MT's editor, agreed, but, remembering the *Why Can't it Always be Saturday?* album, he suggested to me that perhaps we could combine the two into a new re-issue CD. In the end we agreed to do this, but decided that we should, in fact, include all of the recordings that I had made of Harry. This meant that some songs, which were currently available elsewhere, on Topic and MT CDs, would be duplicated. Nevertheless, we felt that it would now be a good idea to have all of Harry's recordings available in one place. However, we ran out of space and so two songs, *The Banks of the Sweet Dundee* and *Buttercup Joe*, have been omitted from the CD. It is hoped that these two tracks will appear on a future Musical Traditions CD.

Rod suggested that I should partly rewrite the article, *Harry Upton: A singer and his repertoire*, bringing it up-to-date. But, as I reread it, I felt that I wanted to leave it just as it was, and this is what we have done. The article was printed at a time when Harry was still alive and so he is referred to in the present tense. I am also leaving the comments on some of his songs as they were then written, but additional notes have been added, and these will be found following the song transcriptions in this booklet.

Mike Yates - Wiltshire, 2015

Harry Upton: A singer and his repertoire

The Setting

Balcombe village lies in a fold of the Sussex Downs, just to the east of the B2036, and about 20 miles north of Brighton. Fifty years ago it must have been little more than a hamlet: a cluster of cottages set around the parish church and the 17th century *Half Moon* pub. Except for the parson and the pub's landlord all of Balcombe's inhabitants must have gained their living directly or indirectly from the surrounding farm fields.

Today most of the original cottages house antique traders. Those that remain as homes now cost so much that few locals can afford to live there. Harry Upton lives with his son in a post-war council flat on the edge of the village and it has been there, in a room cluttered with the collectanea of a rural lifetime: Victorian watercolours of local scenes, hunting trophies, ornately framed family portraits, pottery statues that once belonged to his parents, that I tried to get some idea of what it must have been like for Harry to be not just a farm worker, but also a respected - and well-known - singer in the community.

Harry was born in the year 1900 in Hove. His father, Frank Upton, was a shepherd from West Blatchington - then simply a collection of farm cottages that have now been swallowed up by the Brighton conurbation. Frank must have been born c.1865 and, to Harry's knowledge, had been a shepherd on the South Downs all his life. Harry's mother Emma Upton, née Williams, came originally from London.

By the time he was 13, Harry had left school and was working as his father's shepherd boy. He worked with his father for about five years and then left to become a carter, working with horses on the Dyke Hills, beyond Brighton. Harry worked with horses until his marriage in 1927 when he moved to Balcombe to work as a tractor driver at Bowdors Farm, a job that was to last for 40 years. Although officially retired, Harry spent a further seven years rearing calves on the Balcombe Estate until he finally retired in 1975.

The Singer

"I didn't have to try to learn songs to begin with. When I was still at school my father would have to get up very early in the morning to look after the sheep, so he went to bed very early ... seven o'clock some nights ... he'd be in bed then ... and he used to sing himself to sleep. Lying in bed ... singing for an hour or more ... and there was nothing else goin' on. We didn't have a radio or anything like that. So that's how I had my first songs."

"Dad sang *The Royal Albion*, *Seaweed*, *Bonny blue Handkerchief*, *Wreck of the Northfleet*, *Canadee-I-O*, *Dockyard Gate*, *Female Drummer*, *Life of a Man*, *Man that's done Wrong*, things like that. My mother's favourite song was *Good old Jeff* and she sang *Wayward Town*, *Freckless Girl*, *If I was a Blackbird and Arundel Town* (*Poison in a Glass of Wine*). Most of my songs came from my parents' cept one or two. I learnt *The Thrashing Machine* when I was about 16 ... some blokes in a sheepshearing gang sang it. *Why can't it always be Saturday?* I heard that in Balcombe ... 1930, or some time round then."

"The first song that Dad taught me ... line by line that is ... was *The Northfleet* right there on the Downs right over the Channel where it happened. It was real you see ... a real song. Well, we'd have suppers ... shearing suppers, hunt suppers, things like that, and everyone knew that Dad could sing, so they'd expect him to sing there ... once the food was

eaten. I was about 14 when I sang with him ... *The Ship that never returned*, things like that, and then there were other shepherds who sang. I remember the Coppers ... them that's on the radio. You'd get a lot like that ... high and low parts at once."

"Saturday nights we'd go into Brighton to the Music Hall, Mum and Dad and me, and they'd always have someone there, outside, selling the words to the songs that were being sung inside. So we'd buy them ... penny a sheet they cost."

"I like a song that tells a story ... true songs, things like that. If I don't know a song all the way through then I don't sing it. Why should I? People don't want to hear bits of songs do they? Well - they didn't"

The above comments are some of the things that Harry has told me over the last five years or so. To be fair to Harry I should say that he has often expressed bewilderment at my interest in his songs and singing. There appears to be little public singing in Balcombe these days. Today Harry only sings in the local working men's club, and then only on rare occasions, so that he appears to view his singing - and the field of public singing - as something that has now ended. He has not, to my knowledge, sung in a folk club or at a folk festival.

Although Harry had previously given a few songs to Ken Stubbs, it took about three years of occasional visits - having been introduced to him by Ken - before he agreed to record any songs for me, and it was obvious that he would only sing those songs that he knew well. It has only been in the last year that he has allowed me to record songs that he considers to be incomplete.

Because of this unwillingness to record fragments it is difficult to say precisely which songs represent his active repertoire and which songs represent his passive repertoire - songs remembered as a result of my interest and questioning. To date I have recorded or heard from Harry the songs listed in Appendix I at the end of this article.

At the age of 78 Harry is still a good singer with a fine ear for pitch and timing. He will often repeat the final line or two of a verse "so that the listeners can join in", a fact which confirms that he has been used to singing in public and that his audience was receptive and willing to join in with the singing.

Elsewhere I have described Harry Upton as being a craftsman singer - one who has deliberately worked at his art. Even today he "thinks out" his songs before singing them, and the more I hear him sing, the greater is my belief that factors such as pitch, strength of vocal intonation, variation and ornamentation are the result of conscious effort, and not simply factors dependent on chance or luck.

The Repertoire

The collector should take down all songs that are the exclusive property of the folk, whether they be traditional or modern, of the Child type or not ... the modern folk-song (I use the word boldly) may one day perhaps have the interest for the future student which the traditional song now enjoys. Besides ... it offers a partial solution for the origin of the traditional song.

Josiah H Combs (1925)

Harry Upton's known repertoire can be divided into three distinct types. Firstly three songs that stem from the early part of the 18th century. Chappel (1859) assigns *O Good Ale* to the reign of Queen Anne, whilst *A Shepherd of the Downs* was printed in the 1724 edition of Alan Ramsay's *Tea Table Miscellany* under the title *The Shepherd Adonis*. *When Adam was First Created* is almost certainly from this period and, in Harry's case, is sung to a tune which Bach included in his *Peasant Cantata*.

The remaining songs can be divided into those of 19th century broadside origin and those from the late 19th century/early 20th century music hall tradition. "He is very unusual for his particular generation of singers in that he has all his songs quite systematically numbered and written out in a little note-book"

Joy Hyman (describing the Thaxted singer Clifford Yelham)

Despite Joy Hyman's comment - made in 1968 - Harry, in common with a number of other Sussex (and non-Sussex) singers that I know, has a number of songs in manuscript form: in his case texts written by his parents. Sadly it was only possible for Ken Stubbs and myself to rescue eleven such songs, many others, according to Harry, having been lost over the years. The songs in manuscript are:

Beauty and Wealth
Break the News to Mother

Canadee-I-O

The Freckless Young Girl (this should presumably read 'feckless')
I Want to See the Dear Old Home Again
The Indian Lass
Kitty Grey
Let no Man steal your Time (sic)
O good Ale thou art my Darling
Poor in Health
Seaweed
The Wreck of the North-fleet

It will be seen that Harry knows all these songs unlike, say, Harry Cox of Norfolk who also had songs in manuscript, but did not sing any of those songs himself. (See *Folk Music Journal*, vol. 2 no.4, pp.319-320 for a discussion of Harry Cox's collection of manuscript and printed songs.)

Harry Upton also owned a collection of Broadside - now in the possession of Ken Stubbs - most of which he bought in Brighton newspaper shops prior to 1915. They are all the work of the south London printer Henry Parker Such (1808-1886) and his family, who continued in business until about 1927. Three sheets, possibly bought by Harry's father, can be dated 1869-1886 whilst the remainder date from the period 1886-1917. Again some of Harry's sheets have been lost with time. I have been able to list 174 songs from these sheets (see Appendix II) and whilst Harry now sings only three of these songs - a small percentage indeed - it is of interest to note that such 'classic' folksongs as *Barbara Allen*, *The Banks of Sweet Prim-eroses*, *The Bonny Bunch of Roses*, *Hey John Barleycorn* (actually written by John J Brockley who also wrote *The Scarlet and the Blue*), *The Isle of France* and *The Dark Eyed Sailor* etc. were on sale in Brighton as late as only 60 years ago; or, put another way, within living memory.

Finally, it has been suggested that Harry may have got the song *I am a Donkey-Driver* (included on *Sussex Harvest*, see below) from a 78 rpm record by the American-Irish performer Murty Rabbit (sic) in the 1930s. However, the song existed in Sussex before this time and there are a couple of Sussex versions of it in the Clive Carey MSS collection made prior to the Great War. This seems to be the more likely background to Harry's version.

Afterword

Transcriptions of two of Harry's songs, *Canadee-I-O* and *The Wreck of the Northfleet* are included in Ken Stubbs' book *The Life of a Man* (1970). Recordings of these two songs are available on the Topic LP *Sussex Harvest* (12T258) together with *The Freckless Young Girl* and *Poison in a Glass of Wine*. A further five songs *The Rich Lady Gay*, *I am a Donkey Driver*, *The Banks of the Sweet Dundee*, *A Single Life* and *A Woman's Work is Never Done* are on a second Topic LP *Green grow the Laurels* (12TS285).

Since compiling these two LPs it has occurred to me that folklorists of the future may obtain a distorted idea of Harry's total repertoire from the songs included on them. Accordingly, I have prepared a solo LP *Why can't it always be Saturday?* which is an attempt to present a far wider cross-section of song types - not just the 'star' folksong items - that exist in the repertoire of singers like Harry.

Folksongs such as *The Life of a Man*, *The Female Drummer*, *The Dockyard Gate*, *Bonny Blue Handkerchief*, *The Royal Albion* and *In Wayward Town* should be well-known to most enthusiasts. It can be argued that the inclusion of these songs on yet another record is rather a waste of time. However I would counter this by saying that, in order to gain an accurate picture of a song's popularity and spread, it is necessary to consider as many collected versions as possible. Similar versions of the same song from different singers do tend to confirm the fact that a song was universally popular in a single textual and melodic form. Also, to give only one example, Harry's tune for *The Dockyard Gate* was new to me until I recently heard a Suffolk singer use it for the song *The Bald-Headed End of the Broom*.

The Little Cabin Boy, sadly only a fragment, should not be confused with the better-known song *The Handsome Cabin Boy*. In a version noted in 1959 by Ken Stubbs from the singing of Jim 'Brick' Harbour of Pease Pottage, Sussex, Polly, 'a beautiful bride', falls in love with William 'the little cabin boy'. Polly pleads in vain with William's captain to allow William to remain on shore. The ship is lost and William perishes along with the rest of the crew. Polly then returns home to die and:

*Then so soon as a funeral put out
And everything so neatly prepar'd;*

*There was six jolly sailors, all dressed well in blue
To carry this fair body down.*

Whilst obviously of broadside origin, I have so far been unable to trace the respective sheet. However *The Thrashing Machine* appeared on at least two sheets in the 1840s and '50s. William Walker of Durham issued a sheet only a few years after the introduction of the machine and John Harkness of Preston reprinted the song a few years later. Listeners are advised to compare Harry's version with the one I recorded from George Spicer of nearby West Hoathly (Topic 12T252). The two versions show quite marked differences. I would also suggest that listeners try to hear the 1920s version of *Buttercup Joe* by Albert Richardson of Burwash, Sussex - he recorded two 78s for British Zonophone *Buttercup Joe/The Old Sow* and *Sarie/To be a Farmer's Boy* - and compare this with Harry's later version. *I Come from the Country*, like *Buttercup Joe*, exists in many forms in southern England. Although Harry tells me that he first heard it many years ago I find the reference to 'ladies' tights' slightly odd as I had always thought them to be a modern innovation.

Three songs on Harry's LP are of American origin. The Ozark collector Vance Randolph attributed *In a Cottage by the Sea* to C A White and states that it was first printed, in Boston, in 1868. Like many American songs it appeared in several British songsters including *Jack's American Musical Box*, the cover of which is shown on the pictures pages of this booklet. A version of the song appears in volume 2 of Brown's *North Carolina Folklore* (pp.347-8) and Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger found that Caroline Hughes had appended a verse onto one of her composite songs. *The Ship that Never Returned* is also to be found in volume 2 of *North Carolina Folklore* (p.507) and is by Henry Clay Work who copyrighted the song in 1865. *Good Old Jeff* was printed on several British broadsides. The popularity of the abolitionist cause can be seen when one considers that the one shilling 1852 edition of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* sold 25,000 copies in England in 15 months at a time when about ten other English publishers were also selling it in the 1/6 to 12/- price range. *Good Old Jeff* was the favourite song of Harry's mother.

The remaining three songs on the album have a music hall feel about them, although *I'm a Man that's Done Wrong* appeared in collections by Baring-Gould and Lucy Broadwood. Several American and Australian collectors have noted the song and I have recorded a further three versions in Oxfordshire and Sussex. *Seaweed* was written by the music hall comedian Fred Earle, the son of Joseph Tabrar, and was later sung by Alf Gordon on an early Zonophone 78 record (X42331) which is listed in Zonophone's 1908 catalogue. Harry's father wrote the words out for Harry and his line "I knew it was going to be dry" in verse one makes more sense than "I knew it was going to be fine" which Harry sings here. Keith Summers tells me that *Seaweed* is well known in Suffolk as also is *Why Can't it Always be Saturday?* I am sorry to say that I have been unable to trace anything about this latter song.

Appendix I

Songs recorded or heard from Harry Upton

Banks of the Sweet Dundee
Blind Factory Girl
Bonny Blue Handkerchief
Break the News to Mother
Buttercup Joe
Cottage by the Sea
Canadee-I-O
Female Drummer
Freckless Young Girl
Good Old Jeff
I am a Donkey Driver
I Come from the Country
I Want to See the Old Home Again
If I Were a Blackbird
I'm a Man that's done Wrong to my Parents
In Wayward Town
Indian Lass
Just Before the Battle Mother
Kitty Gray
Kitty Wells
Let no Man Steal your Time
Little Cabin Boy
Little Joe
Little Old Log Cabin in the Lane
Mid Camp Fires Gleaming
Miner's Dream of Home
O good Ale thou art my Darling
Old Rustic Bridge by the Mill
Poison in a Glass of Wine
Poor in Health, Beauty and Wealth
Rest of the Day's Your Own
Rich Lady Gay
Ring Down the Curtain
Royal Albion

Seaweed
She's a Little Ray of Sunshine
Shepherd of the Downs
Ship that Never Returned
A Single Life
Ten Little Fingers, Ten Little Toes
Thrashing Machine
Two Bretheren
What is the Life of a Man?
When Adam was First Created
When Dresses are Short and Bonnets Small
Why Can't it Always be Saturday?
A Woman's Work is Never Done
Wreck of the Northfleet

Appendix II

Song Titles found on Broadsheets once owned by Harry Upton

All jolly Fellows that follow the Plough
Anchor's weighed
Annie Laurie
Annie Lisle
Auld Lang Syne
Auld Robin Gray
Baby mine
The Banks of sweet Primroses
Barney O'Shea
Barney's Love Letter
Barbara Allen
The Bay of Biscay
Be kind to your Dog
Be sure to call as you pass by
Beautiful Dreamer
Beautiful Isle of the Sea
Belle Mahone
The Blind Boy
A Boy's best Friend is his Mother
Boy's Birthday
The Boys of Kilkenny
Caroline and her young Sailor bold
Charming Judy Callaghan
Cherry ripe
Come back to Ireland
Cruiskeen Lawn
De Lip hung down
Dear Friends of old
The dear little Shamrock
The Death of Nelson
Deck my Brow with Flowers
The Deeds of Napoleon
Don't run down the Irish
Down by the Riverside I stray
Dream of Napoleon (Napoleon's Dream)
The Drunkard's Daughter
The Emblem of Ireland
Endearing young Charms
Ever of thee
Fair Phoebe and her dark-ey'd Sailor (The dark Eyed Sailor)
The Fairy Boy
Farewell to the Mountains
The Farmer's Boy
Fifty Years ago
The Gypsy's Warning
Give an honest Irish Lad a Chance
Give me a Grip of your Hand
Good-bye at the Door
Good News from Home
Good old Jeff
The good Rhine Wine
Hearts of Oak
Heights of Balaclava
Home once more
Home sweet Home
I will stand by my Friend
I'll deck my Brow with Flowers
The Irish Emigrant
Irish Molloy O
Irish Wax-Work Show
The Irishman's Toast
The Isle of France
The Ivy green
Jenny Jones
John Barleycorn (Hey, John Barleycorn)
John Mat one

Just before the Battle Mother
Kate Kearney
Kathleen O'More
Killarney
Kiss me quick Kitty Wells
Land of my Birth
Larry O'Brien
Lass of Peaty's Mill
The Lass of Richmond Hill
The last Rose of Summer
Little Annie Rooney
Love's golden Dream
Little green Leaf in our Bible
The little Hero (The Stowaway from Liverpool)
Little Jim the Carter Lad
Little Maggie May
Live in my Heart and pay no Rent
Lowland Jenny
Maid of Athens
The Man you don't see every day
Many happy Returns of the Day
Marble Halls
Mary of Argyle
Meet me by Moonlight alone
The Meeting of the Waters
The Men of merry, merry England
Miner's Dream of Home
The Minstrel Boy
Minute Gun at Sea
Mistletoe Bough
Molly Astore
Molly Darling
Mother kiss me ere I die
A Mother's Love
Moon behind the Hill
Mona
Muldoon, the solid Man
The Mulligan Guards
My Heart's with my Norah
My old Friend John
My pretty Jane
My rattling Mare and I
Napoleon's Farewell to Paris
The old Arm Chair
Old Dog Tray
The old Folks at Home
Old King Cole
Old Log Cabin down the Lane
Old rustic Bridge by the Mill
Only a Pansy Blossom
The Orphan Boy
Our Wedding March
Pat Maguire
Pat Murphy
Picture with its Frame turned to the Wall
Please give me a Penny, Sir
The Poachers (Northamptonshire Poachers)
Poor little Joe
Poor old Jim the Jockey
The Rat Catcher's Daughter
The rattling Boys of Paddy's Land
Red, White and Blue
Remember I'm his Mother
Rich and rare were the Gems
Roast Beef of old England
The Rose of Allandale
The Rose of Tralee
Safely follow him
Sally in our Alley
The Scotch Brigade (On the Banks of the Clyde stood a Lad and a Lass-
ie)
Ship that never returned
Silver Bells of Memory
Silver Moonlight
Winds are blowing
Simon the Cellarer
The Slave Ship
The Soldier's Tear
The Sons of Fingal
Still I love thee
Sweet chiming Bells
Scenes that are brightest
Take back those Gems you gave me
Teddy O'Neal
There's a Flower that's blooming

There's a letter in the Candle
Tom Bowling
True as the Stars that are shining
Uncle Ned
Village Blacksmith
Violet from Mother's Grave
Wait till the Clouds roll by
We never miss a Mother till she's gone
What can you expect for your Money?
What will you do Love?
When you and I were young, Maggie
Where the Bee sucks
Who's that calling so sweet?
Why did she leave him? - because he was poor
Will you love me when I'm old?
Willie we have missed you
Wilt thou be my Bride, Kathleen?
Woodman spare that Tree
Wreck of the Lifeboat
Write me a letter from Home
You never miss the Water till the Well runs dry
You'll remember me
Young Napoleon, or The Bunch of Roses (Bonny Bunch of Roses O)

The collection also included a 'catchpenny' sheet - *The New Intended Acts of Parliament*.

The Recordings

Roud Numbers quoted are from the databases, *The Folk Song Index* and *The Broadside Index*, continually updated, compiled by Steve Roud. Currently containing more than 452,000 records between them, they are described by him as "extensive, but not yet exhaustive". Copies are held at: The Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, London; Taisce Ceoil Dúchais Éireann, Dublin; and the School of Scottish Studies, Edinburgh. They can also be purchased direct from Steve at Southwood, Maresfield Court, High Street, Maresfield, East Sussex, TN22 2EH, UK. Recording dates are shown in the sequence day/month/year.

Child numbers, where quoted, refer to entries in *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* by Francis James Child, Boston, 1882-98. Laws numbers, where quoted, refer to entries in *American Balladry from British Broad-sides* by G Malcolm Laws Jr, Philadelphia, 1957.

In the following Song Notes, all Musical Traditions Records' CDs are referred to only by their Catalogue Numbers (i.e. MTCdxxx), as are all Topic Records' CDs (i.e. TSCDxxx) and Veteran CDs (i.e. VTxxxCD). The names of all other CD publishers are given in full.

Omitted words, lines or verses are shown in italics, where appropriate, if we have them.

The Songs

1. The Female Drummer (Roud 226)

When I was a little maid,
 the age about sixteen
 I gave my service up for to
 go and serve the Queen
 I 'listed in the army like any other man
 And very soon they learnt me
 how to play upon the band
 Repeats last two lines.

They showed to me my quarters
 they showed to me my bed
 To sleep beside my comrades
 I never felt afraid
 When pulling off my red coat
 which causes me to smile
 To think myself a soldier
 and a maiden all the while

They dragged me up to London
 for to keep guard at the Tower
 And I had not been there 'bove
 four and twenty hours
 'Til a young girl fell in love with me
 I told her I was a maid
 She straightway to my officer
 the secret she betrayed
 My officer he came to me to ask if it was true

I said, "Kind sir, I told to her
 the same she told to you"
 Then pulling off my red coat
 which causes me to smile
 To think myself a soldier
 and a maiden all the while

Farewell to you my officer
 you have been good to me
 Farewell to you my comrades
 and you again I'll see
 And if you fall in battle and you'll want
 any help or maid
 I'll put on my hat and feather
 and I'll beat the drum again

Many traditional singers have known this song. According to the Scots collector Gavin Greig it was "well known in Aberdeenshire" and English versions have turned up all over the place. The words appeared on a large number of mid-Victorian broadsides and, according to A L Lloyd, it appeared on a sheet from 1790, a copy of which can be found in the Bodleian Library. However, Steve Roud traces the earliest text to a sheet, dated c.1810, which was printed by Evans of London and which can be seen in the Madden Collection at Cambridge University Library. This later date is of interest, because a Mary Anne Talbot, one of many 'female soldiers' produced her autobiography, titled *Life and Surprising Adventures of Mary Anne Talbot in the name of John Taylor, related by herself* in 1809. Evans' *Female Drummer* sheet could have been based on this biography or, more likely; it could have been produced to cater for the interest in such soldiers that the book had produced.

Other recordings: Bill 'Dodger' Brabbing (Suffolk - MTCd339-0); Harry Cox (Norfolk - TSCD512D); Mary Anne Haynes (Sussex - TSCD661).

2. If I Were a Blackbird (Roud 387)

I am a poor girlie, my misfortune is sad
 For months I've been a-courting
 a young sailor lad
 I courted him truly by moonlight and day
 And now on a transport he's gone far away

Chorus:

I wish I were a blackbird and could
 whistle and sing
 I'd follow the vessel my truelove sailed in
 Upon the top rigging I would
 then build my nest
 And lay all night long on his lily-white breast

My truelove is handsome in every degree
 His parents despise him
 because he loves me
 But let them despise him
 they can say what they will
 While there's breath in my body
 I'll love my lad still

He promised to take me to
 the bonny bright fair
 With a bunch of blue ribbon to tie up my hair
 But if ever I should meet him
 I would crown him with joy
 And kiss those fond lips of
 my young sailor boy

I wish I were a scholar and could
 handle my pen
 There's one private letter to him I would send
 I'd tell him my troubles, my grief and my woes
 And then straight forward to him I would go

Undoubtedly one of the best-known and frequently encountered songs in the folk repertoire.

A number of singers have commented that their versions of this song predate the popular versions recorded in 1939 and 1950 by Delia Murphy and Ronnie Ronalde. And I think that Harry Upton's version, learnt from his father, also predates the 1939 recording. There is no mention of 'Donnybrook Fair' - found in the recorded versions - and the tune that Harry sings has a number of slight differences from the recorded tunes. In general we may say that most collected sets are textually similar, which suggests a broadside origin, although it appears that no such broadside has yet been traced.

Other recordings: May Bradley (Shropshire - MTCD349); Mary Ann Haynes (Sussex - MTCD320); Cyril Poacher (Suffolk - MTCD303); Bob Hart (Suffolk - MTCD301-2); Walter Pardon (Norfolk - MTCD305-6); Harry Brazil (Gloucestershire - MTCD345-7); Albert 'Diddy' Cook (Suffolk - VT140CD & TSCD665); Carolyn Hughes (Dorset - MTCD365-6 & MTCD254); Sheila Hughes (Dorset - MTCD254); Blanche Wood (Scotland - Rounder CD 1786).

3. The Dockyard Gates (Roud 1739)

And away she ran to her fancy man
These words to him did say
"My husband he is homeward bound
And tomorrow it's his half-pay day"

And if you'll wait at the dockyard gates
Until I do come round
This very, very day we'll sweat* his half-pay
And drink both ale and stout

Spoken: That's me father's song, yes.

*sweat - meaning to deprive, can be dated back to the 1780s.

The Edwardian collectors Anne Gilchrist, George Gardiner and Frank Kidson found versions of this song. Kidson said that it was, 'one of a type of song which is produced even today, on shipboard. It is here that real sailors' songs are invented and occasionally passed on to the shore people, where a generation or two of singers form them into folk songs pure and simple.' In fact, the song was printed as *Plymouth Sound* by the south London printer Henry Parker Such. The Reverend Sabine Baring-Gould printed a song under this title, with his own new words, saying that he had based it on a 'coarse and undesirable' broadside which had been published by Keys of Devonport. I have not seen this broadside text, so cannot say if the Keys version is actually a version of *The Dockyard Gate*, though I am sure that coarser versions of it have existed over the years - and far fuller ones like this:

*Come list you seamen unto me,
While these few lines to you I'll write,
Just to let you know how the game goes on
When you are out of sight.
Just to let you know how the lads on shore,
They go sporting with your wives,
While you are out on the raging seas,
All a'venturing of your sweet lives.*

*For it's when your ship is outward bound
And ready for to sail.
"May the heavens above protect my Love,
With a sweet and a pleasant gale,
And keep him clear from all the shore
And never more return,
Until his pockets is lined with gold,
And then he's welcome home".*

*"A last farewell to my true love",
Then she begins for to cry,
She takes her handkerchief from her breast,
For to wipe her weeping eye.
Saying "My love is gone to sea,
Oh, how hard it is my case,
But there's plenty more, all on the shore,
And another one will take his place".*

*"So go you down to the dockyard gate,
And you wait 'til I come out,
This very day, we'll spend his half-pay,
And we'll drink both ale and stout".*

*Well the day being spent in sweet content,
And his half-pay being no more,
"Never mind, my Love", she then do cry,
"My husband, he's working hard for more.
And perhaps he's at his watch on deck,
All a'shivering with the cold,
Or perhaps it is his watch below,
Our joys he can't behold".*

*And when your ship is home again,
Brought up in Plymouth Sound,
She hears the gun, "My husband's come,
To him I must go down".
She runs unto her neighbour's house,*

*"Oh, one thing of you I crave,
Lend me your gown, for mine's in pawn,
It's the only one I have".*

*Then she goes down to the dockyard gate
And she struggles to get in,
So loudly to her husband calls,
And runs and kisses him.
Saying "How happy we shall be,
Now that you are safe on shore,
You'll sit at home with me my love,
And go to sea no more.*

*So now you know 'bout the lads on shore,
And the constancy of wives,
While you are out on the raging seas,
All a'venturing of your sweet lives.*

Other recordings: Sam Lerner (Norfolk - MTCD369-0).

4. A Woman's Work is Never Done (Roud 1717)

I'm a poor hard-working female
ever since I've been a wife
If you listen I would tell to you my woes
For there's plenty more the same,
so I'll tell you jolly plain
Just what the married woman undergoes
It's very nice at first, you have no babes to nurse
The days and nights so happy they seem
But when the kiddies come, you can
reckon you are done
That's when a woman's trouble it begins

Chorus:
Washing and scrubbing and
mending up the clothes
All the kiddies with their shirts out they will run
I've already buried five and I have ten more alive
So I find a woman's work is never done

Each morning there's the kiddies to
wash and bundle off to school
And two or three are kicking up a row
While the oldest gets a-playing,
the silly little fool
And lets the baby fall upon the ground
We've lately breeched young Tommy,
he's often in distress
And holding up his trousers, in he runs
For there's a job to do, 'cause he's
been and made a mess
So I find a woman's work is never done

If you go up the street, five minutes for a treat
You're bound to take the young 'uns out as well
For you have no time to stop,
just to have a little drop
'Cause the old-man might come home,
you cannot tell
If he comes home and finds you out
he's bound to rave and shout
Or "Where the dickens * is your mother gone?"

So you never ought to roam but to
always be at home
So I find a woman's work is never done

A Womans Work is never done
Here is a Song for Maids to sing,
Both in the Winter and the Spring;
It is such a pretty conceited thing,
Which will much pleasure to them bring.
Maids may sit still, go, or run,
But a Womans work is never done.

**dickens* - a euphemism for the devil.

This opening verse, taken from a blackletter broadside in the Roxburghe collection (printed for John Andrews, at the White Lion in Pye-Corner in 1629), forms part of a forerunner to the song which Harry sings here. Over the years there have been a number of songs which use the phrase 'A

woman's work is never done' and Harry's song, obviously from the Music Halls, is only one of many such pieces. Others include *A Woman Never Knows When Her Day's Work's Done* (Roud 2690), which was printed on broadsides by both Such and Fortey in London, Pearson in Manchester and Walker in Durham, *A Woman's Work is Never Over* which was 'Written by Mr C Fry, Author of 'The Orphan Boy's Prayer,' 'A Good Wife's Love,' 'A Good Wife is a Treasure,' &c. &c.', and *A Woman's Work is Never Done* (Roud 2340), a version of which was collected in Berkshire in 1907 by Cecil Sharp. The text of the song *A Woman Never Knows When Her Day's Work's Done* can be found in an on-line Musical Traditions article, *Wonderfully Curious*, (MT article 231).

However, I am unable to trace Harry's song to any specific singer or composer, although his tune bears more than a passing resemblance to that used for the Minstrel song *The Little Old Log Cabin in the Lane*, which was composed by Will S Hayes in 1871. Jim Carroll and Pat Mackenzie recorded a similar song from Walter Pardon (Norfolk) in 1988.

5. Bonny Blue Handkerchief (Roud 378)

As I was a-walking one morning in May
A beautiful young damsel came tripling my way
With her cheeks red as roses as beautiful she sung
With her bonny blue handkerchief tied under her chin

This bonny blue handkerchief my love gave to me
He promised me the colour would never false be

And to him I'll prove true as the colour that's in
With my bonny blue handkerchief tied under my chin

How so far are thou going? As I
took her round the waist
I'm going to my work, sir, all in a great haste
For to work in yon factory
where the cotton they spin
With my bonny blue handkerchief tied under my chin

A once popular song, it was included in a chapbook, *The Highland Songster*, that was issued by John Pitts of Seven Dials, London, c.1819-1844, and reprinted by later London printers, including, Catnach, Disley, Hodges and Such. There were also sheets from R. Evans of Chester, W.Wright of Birmingham and Bebbington of Manchester. In 1979 Roy Palmer took Harry Upton's tune and three verses and, adding some extra verses from a Fortey broadside, published the song in his book *Everyman's Book of English Country Songs*. The broadside texts are all quite similar:

*As I was a-walking one morning in May,
A bonny young lassie came tripping that way.
With cheeks red as roses, she cheerful did sing
With a bonny blue handkerchief tied under her chin.*

*"Where so fast?" said I, and
caught her round the waist.
"I am going to my work, sir,"
she said in great haste,*

*"To work in yon factory where cotton I spin,
With my bonny blue handkerchief tied under my chin."*

*"Why wear you that handkerchief
tied round your head?"*

*"It's my country fashion, kind sir," she said,
"And you know that the fashion I like to be in,
With my bonny blue handkerchief under my chin."*

*"Why wear you the colour that grows in yon vale?"
"Because it's true blue, sir; that never will fail.
Like the sailor's blue jacket that fights for the Queen
Is my bonny blue handkerchief under my chin."*

*When to kiss her sweet lips he was going to begin,
"O stop, sir," said she, "while I tell you one thing:
He that kisses these lips must first show a gold ring
To this bonny blue handkerchief under my chin."*

*With gold and with silver I tried all in vain.
She smiled in my face and with scornful disdain
Cried, "Your gold and your silver
not one kiss shall win
From the bonny blue handkerchief under my chin.*

"This bonny blue handkerchief my love he gave me,

*And told me that colour would never false be;
So to him I'll prove true as the colour that's in
This bonny blue handkerchief under my chin."*

*When he found her so loyal, he could not forbear.
He flew to her arms and he called her his dear.
"My own dearest jewel, here is the gold ring,
To that bonny blue handkerchief tied under your chin."*

*To church then they went and were married with speed.
Now this loving couple live happy indeed.
When their day's work is over, how happy they sing
Of her bonny blue handkerchief under her chin.*

In folklore the colour blue often signifies loyalty and this is what is implied here. The song is also of interest because it shows a transitional stage in folksongs, one where a country maid (milkmaid or haymaker, for example) has been replaced by a girl who now works in one of the recently created industrial occupations, in this case a cotton spinner in a factory; although the format and sentiment of the song has not changed.

The Irish song collector Sam Henry collected a couple of versions, which can be found in his monumental *Songs of the People* (1990).

6. The Life of a Man (Roud 848)

As I was a-walking one morning at ease
Viewing those leaves as they hung on the tree
They were all in full motion, they all seemed to be
And those that were withered, they fell from the tree

Chorus:
What is the life of a man any more than a leaf?
A man has his seasons and so do a leaf
We're all in this wide world, we are not here to stay
Like a leaf we shall wither and soon fade away

Did you not see the leaves but a short time ago?
They were all in full motion, appearing to grow
The frost came upon them and withered them all
And down came the rain and down they did fall

You go down yonder churchyard,
the names there you'll see
Who have fallen from this world like a leaf from a tree
What when age and affliction upon us all
Like a leaf we shall wither and down we shall fall

The following lines, from a blackletter broadside of c.1570, are typical of a period when the Church controlled all things moral. If you lived a good life on earth, then you would go to Heaven. If not, then the doors of Hell were beckoning:

*Young Men, remember! Delights are but vain,
And after sweet pleasure comes sorrow and pain.*

Writing about this period, Tessa Watts says, 'The *memento mori* ballads were based on the assumption ... that ordinary people could turn the objects of daily life into visual allegories for death and the world beyond.' (Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550 - 1640. Cambridge, 1991. p.138.) Plants, especially flowers, were extremely popular in this respect.

*The life of a man it is but a span,
It's like a morning flower;
We're here today, tomorrow we're gone,
We're dead all in one hour.*

(from *The Moon Shines Bright* collected by Cecil Sharp from Mrs Gentie Phillips of Birmingham. 26.9.1910).

It was the Greek poet Homer, however, who first compared man's death to the fall of the leaf. 'As leaves on trees, such is the life of man', and several blackletter broadsides are based on this idea. Our present song, however, probably began life in the early 1800s when it was printed, as *The Fall of the Leaf*, by a handful of northern broadside printers, including Sanderson (Edinburgh), Ross and Walker (both of Newcastle), Stewart (Carlisle), Dalton (York) and Harkness (Preston).

Other Recordings: George Townshend (Sussex - MTCD304); Harry Holman (Sussex - MTCD309-10); Archer Goode (Gloucestershire - MTCD331); Jeff Wesley (Northamptonshire - VTC7CD).

7. The Royal Albion (Roud 2)

As I strolled out, down by the Royal Albion
Dark was the morning and cold was the day
And who should I spy, was one of my old shipmates
He was wrapped in a blanket, much colder than clay
Repeats last two lines.

He asked for a candle to light him to bed with
Likewise a blanket to wrap round his head
For his head was an-aching, his poor heart a- breaking
For he was a young sailor cut down in his prime

And at the top of a street I saw two girls standing
One to the other these words they did say

Here comes a young fellow
whose money we have squandered,
Here comes a young sailor cut down in his prime

His poor aged father and his tender mother
Oft times had told him about his past life
Along with those flash girls all out in the city
'Long with those flash girls was his own heart's delight

And now he's dead and lies in his coffin
Six jolly sailor boys stands there by his side
And in each of their hands take a bunch of white roses
So they shall not smell him as they pass by

We'll carry him to the church and we'll
beat the drum o'er him
We'll play the dead march as we carries him along
Carry him to the churchyard and
fire three volleys over him
For he is a young sailor cut down in his prime

At the top of his tombstone you will
see these words printed
Come all you young fellows take a-warning by me
Don't flirt with those flash girls all out in the city
But stay you at home and keep good company

When Frank Kidson printed a version of this song, which he called *The Unfortunate Lad* in volume 1 of the *Folk Song Society's Journal* he added this note, 'The Unfortunate Lad is a ballad that will scarcely bare reprinting in its entirety'. Kidson believed *The Unfortunate Lad* to be an English version of the Irish song *The Unfortunate Rake* in which a young man is dying from venereal disease. Henry Parker Such printed *The Unfortunate Lad* in the 1850s, possibly using an 18th century song *The Buck's Elegy* as a basis, and the following verse, which mentions some then common forms of medicinal remedy for venereal disease, was no doubt considered offensive by Kidson:

*Had she but told me when she disordered me
Had she but told me of it in time.
I might have got salts and pills of white mercury
But now I'm cut down in the height of my prime.*

Such's sheet is further explicit in placing the young man outside London's Lock Hospital which offered treatment for such diseases.

Versions of this ballad have spread throughout the English speaking world. These include the black American song *St James Infirmary* and the cowboy *Tom Sherman's Barroom (The Dying Cowboy)* sometimes called *The Streets of Laredo*.

Other Recordings: Bob Hart (Suffolk - MTCD301-2); Harry Holman (Sussex - MTCD309-10); Bill Ellson (Kent - MTCD320); Harry Brazil (Gloucestershire - MTCD345-7); Bill Smith (Shropshire - MTCD351); Hobart Stallard (Kentucky - MTCD503-4); Sarah Makem (Co Armagh - MTCD353-5); Fred Whiting (Suffolk - VTC7CD); Fred Jordan (Shropshire - VTD148CD); Almeda Riddle & Doc Watson sing two American versions on the CD *A New World, Root & Branch* CD 1); Texas Gladden (Virginia - Rounder CD 1800 and CD 1500); Moses 'Clear Rock' Platt (Texas - Rounder CD 1821); Vera Smelser (Indiana - Folk Legacy CD-125); James 'Ironhead' Baker (Texas - Rounder CD 1821); Bessie Gordon (Wisconsin - On a CD which accompanies J P Leary's book *Folksongs of Another America*, University of Wisconsin Press/Dust-to-Digital, 2015).

8. Canadee-I-O (Roud 309)

It was of a fair and pretty maid
She was in her tender care.
She dearly loved a sailor

'Twas true, she loved him well.
And how to get to sea with him
She did not likewise know.
But she longed to see that seaport town
Called Canadee-i-o.
Repeat last 4 lines.

She bargained with a young sailor
All for a piece of gold.
And straight-way he led her
All down into the hold
Saying, "I will dress you up in sailors' clothes
Your collar shall be blue
And you will see that seaport town
Called Canadee-i-o"

Now when the sailors heard of this
They fell into a rage
And all the whole ship's company
Were willing to engage
"We'll tie her hands and feet, my boys
And overboard we'll throw
She never will see that seaport town
Called Canadee-i-o"

Now when the Captain heard of this
He, too, fell in a rage
Saying, "If you drown this fair maid
All hang-ed you will be
I will dress her up in sailor's clothes
Her collar shall be blue
And she will see that seaport town
Called Canadee-i-o"
She had not been in Can-er-der
Scarcely but half a year
She married this brave Captain
Who called her his dear
She's dressed in silks and satins now
She cuts a gall-i-ant show
She's the finest Captain's lady
In Canadee-i-o

Now come all you fair and pretty maids
Wherever you may be
I would have you to follow your true love
When he goes out to sea
If the sailor's they prove false to you
The Captain he'll prove true
You can see the honour that I have gained
By wearing of the blue

Spoken: That's the blue.

Canadee-i-o is something of a hybrid folksong, combining, as it does, two separate motifs; namely the girl who follows her true love abroad, and the myth of the shipboard Jonah. As in many broadsides, however, there is a happy ending.

According to Frank Kidson, *Canadee-I-O* is a song which first appeared during the 18th century. In form, it is related to the Scots song *Caledonia* - versions of which were collected by Gavin Greig - although exactly which song came first is one of those 'chicken and egg' questions that so frequently beset folk music studies.

Harry Upton recalled singing this song in a Balcombe pub in 1940, and remained puzzled as to how a visiting Canadian soldier could join in a song which he believed to be known only to himself and his father. It could be argued that the Canadian might have more reasonably asked the question, since Harry appears to be the only traditional English singer to have been recorded singing the song.

9. The Feckless Young Girl (Roud 1734)

As I was a-taking my evening's walk
I met a young maiden, to her I talked
The question I asked her, was she going home?
"For I think it's a pity you should go alone"
Repeats last two lines.

I asked her if she'd come to the alehouse close by
The answer she gave me was, "No, not I"
"And if you'll come with me, we will not long stay
We'll both drink together and then walk away"
Her true love being coming the very next day,

In the hales of humours that ever you'd see.
And as soon as he saw her,
saying, "How do you do?
"For I'm none of the better for seeing of you."

"Do you think I'm a fool or a natural outright
And who were you with at the alehouse last night?"
"Well, if you're offended at nothing at all
Go back where you come, for your love is but small"

"As you found your way in,
you can find your way out
And as for your coming I didn't care about
So give me my freedom and I will be gone
So I wish you goodnight, love,
and a pleasant walk home"

Versions of *Taking an Evening Walk*, as most collectors have named this song, have previously been found in Sussex by Clive Carey, in the Thames Valley by Alfred Williams and in Surrey by Frederick Keel. The latter version was printed in volume VI of the *Journal of the Folk Song Society* (1918) with the note that 'both song and air appear to be Irish in origin'. Harry's tune is very similar to a fiddle tune that I heard in Virginia, titled *The Widow on the Train*. I would guess, with such a title, that this was a song from the late 19th/early 20th century. Harry always used to call this *The Freckless Young Girl*, and that was the title that we used when Topic issued the song on the album *Sussex Harvest* (12T258), in 1975. However, after much thought, I have decided to drop the 'r'. I don't know whether Harry would have approved!

10. The Wreck of the Northfleet (Roud 1174)

Come listen all you feeling people
With dreadful news I do relate
An emigrant ship, which was the Northfleet
At last has met a wreck-ed fate

An emigrant ship, bound for Australia
Laid anchored off at Dundipness (Dungeness?)
Bound for Australia was this vessel
To bid farewell, with fond caress

Chorus:

God help the orphans and the widows
And comfort them, where they may be
May God above us all preserve us
From the dangers of the sea

A foreign steamer so it happen
Fast-sailing with the Channel tide
Came down upon this anchored vessel
And crashed within her timber sides

Away it went, this cruel steamer
Did not stop to see what wreck it made
'Mid human cries of shame and pity
Nor stopped to lend them helping aid

Who can describe the fight and terro'
Aboard a sinking ship at sea?
The women screamed and strong men trembled
It was a sight of misery

"Launch out the boats", the Captain shouted
"The women first. Stand back the men"
They heeded not, but manly rush-ed
Threatening the boats to overwhelm

The Captain he could see the danger
Although he tried to 'void the rush
"I'll shoot the first that disobeys me"
Some reckless ones at last did rush

The Captain fired, his shot was fatal
And one poor wretch laid lifeless there
The men stood back upon the vessel
And looked around in sad despair

Now when this vessel was fast sinking
An' each one longed to save his life
This gall-i-ant Captain stood a'bracing

His new and lately married wife

"Oh let me die, with you my husband"
"Oh no, dear wife, that cannot be"
"Take care of her," he told his boatsmen
"While your poor Captain's drowned at sea"

An emigrant ship bound for Australia
Scarce ninety souls were saved from drowning
God help their children and their wives

Now many an eye there will be weeping
An aching heart both far and near
A silent prayer for those departed
And shed for them a feeling tear

During the night of January 22nd 1873 the sailing ship *Northfleet* was anchored in the English Channel, ready to sail to Australia. On board were some 379 persons, mostly railway workers, en route to build the Tasmanian railway. The vessel was also carrying a cargo of railway iron. At 10.30pm the Spanish steamship *Murillo* struck the *Northfleet* amidships at water level and within fifteen minutes 320 of the *Northfleet's* passengers were dead, including Captain Knowles who, revolver in hand, had tried to prevent his crew from panicking. Although it was a calm clear night the *Murillo* did not stop, and it was not until September 22nd that the ship was arrested by the Admiralty who subsequently confiscated the vessel.

Harry Upton learnt the song forty years after the event, in 1914, when he acted as a tarboy for his father, a shepherd who worked on the South Downs overlooking the Channel. Johnny Doughty also had a version of this song, although sung to a different tune, which he had learnt as a boy from Brighton fishermen. Johnny's version appeared on the album *Round Rye Bay for More* (12TS324, issued 1977).

11. I am a Donkey Driver (Roud 1147)

I am a donkey driver, I'm the best one on the line
There is no other donkey driver
that can come up to mine
I travelled all over England and other countries, too
But no donkey on the line can beat
Jerusalem Cuckoo

Chorus:

(Then) shout, boys, arise,
for troubles they are but few
But ne'er a donkey on the line can beat
Jerusalem Cuckoo

I took my donkey to Brighton for a week
at The Grand Hussar
And there a fat lady came up to me;
she wanted a tuppenny ride
She started off quite easily till
the German band struck up
Then the donkey threw the lady off
and turned her the wrong way up

I thought my donkey was good enough to go into a race
I took him to the Derby and there I found a place
The signal was given for starting
and away me donkey flew
And the first one at the winning post it was
Jerusalem Cuckoo

I'm always contented; not an angry word I say
As long as I gets a drop of beer,
me donkey gets his hay
And if he kicks the bucket, I'll tell you what I'll do
I'll have a sealskin jacket made out of my Cuckoo

M.Y. These song sheets ... where did you get them ... when did you get them?

H.U. Where did I get 'em? Well my old daddy used to sing 'em and ... them days us boys used to go to Brighton Hippodrome, Middle Street, and they used to sell the old song papers outside ... halfpenny a piece ... and we used to buy 'em and we used to learn the songs ... They was always sung on the Brighton Hippodrome them days.

This song, which gets its name from Cockney rhyming slang - Jerusalem artichoke - moke (another word for a donkey), was printed sometime around 1870 by the broadside printer T Pearson of 4 and 6, Chadderton Street, Oldham Road, Manchester. According to the sheet the song was sung by the Scottish Music Hall performer Harry Linn, who also wrote songs - such

as *Eggs for Your Breakfast in the Morning*, which Walter Pardon used to sing, *Jim the Carter's Lad*, a song often found in the repertoire of country singers, and, using the pseudonym Alexander Crawford, *The Stoutest Man in the Forty-Twa*. This is the broadside text:

Jerusalem Cuckoo

*I am a donkey driver. I'm the best that's in the line.
There's no donkey on the road
that can come up to mine.
Talk about Kafusalem and other donkeys too,
No donkey on the road can beat
Jerusalem Cuckoo.*

*Chorus:
Shout, boys, Hurrah! My troubles they are few.
No donkey on the road can beat
Jerusalem Cuckoo.*

*My donkey 'tis a beauty, his colour rather pale.
His ears are long and graceful
with a beautiful curly tail.
You have only got to whistle
and he knows what he's to do.
A stunning ear for music has Jerusalem Cuckoo.*

*One day I took my donkey
across to Brighton sand.
A lady she got on his back as they
passed a German band.
The donkey he got frightened.
The lady off he threw,
While loud above the band was heard
the voice of my Cuckoo.*

*I thought my donkey smart enough to run in any race.
I took him to the Derby, and backed him for a place.
The signal it was given and off the horses flew.
First horse at the latter end was Jerusalem Cuckoo.*

*I always am contented. Not a cross word do I say.
I always get a bit of meat and the donkey gives the bray.
And if he kicks the bucket, I'll tell you what I'll do:
I'll lay me down and die beside Jerusalem Cuckoo.*

For some reason, possibly because the song mentions the town of Brighton, the song appears to have survived best in Sussex, where Clive Carey found it at the beginning of the 20th century.

Other Recordings: Tom Willett (Kent - MTC361-2); Murty Rabbett and Dan Sullivan (a 1920s recording reissued on Ballinasloe Fair, Traditional Crossroads CD4284); Charlie Pitman & Tommy Morrissey (Cornwall - Veteran cassette VT122). The Sussex singer George Belton also recorded the song, but on a long out-of-print EFDSS LP All Jolly Fellows.

12. A Single Life (Roud 952)

*A lady born at Bethlehem fate *
To a Greenwich town for a pleasure came
On a brisk young sailor she did behold
He was neatly trimmed with carriage bold
Repeats last two lines.*

*She stood and viewed his lovely eyes
And unto him she made reply
"Young man," she said, "You have no wife
Why do you lead a single life?"*

*He said, "Fair lady, I'll tell you why
The reason why I lead a single life
If I had a wife and family
P'raps all their wants I could not supply"*

*"Besides all this, there is one thing more
I love to roam where loud cannons roar
And if any mischance should be
I'll leave none behind to mourn for me"*

*She took her coach and she rode away
And married was on that very day
He took her down to the weald of Kent
And there they lived in full content*

Now you have servants all at your call

*Likewise a mayor in a Town Hall
Marryin' a rich lady for your wife
Far better than a single life*

* The broadside text begins 'A lady born of birth and fame'.

A Single Life is something of a rarity today. Clive Carey previously found it in Sussex and the Hammond Brothers had a solitary text from Henry Marsh in Dorchester. John Ashton, a Victorian antiquary, reprinted a broadside text in his book *Real Sailor Songs* (1891) whilst an earlier set can be found in an Edinburgh chapbook of 1824, which is now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

13. The Ship that Never Returned (Roud 775)

*On one bright summer's morning
as the waves were rippling
In a soft and sighing sea
A ship set sail with a precious burden
To a port beyond the sea*

*There were fond farewells and loving signals
From the hearts that still do yearn
And she sent him forth with a mother's blessing
On the ship that never returned*

*No, she never returned, no, she never returned,
And her fate is still unlearned.
And from that day to this
we've been watching, waiting
For the ship that never returned.*

*Said a pale faced boy to his loving mother,
"Let me cross that wild, wide sea
For they tell me that in a foreign country
There is health and wealth for me."*

*So his mother listened with fond affection
Though her heart still for him still yearned
And she sent him forth with her mother's blessing
On the ship that never returned*

*No, she never returned, no, she never returned
And her fate is still unlearned
And from that day to this
we've been watching, waiting
For the ship that never returned*

*"Only one more trip," said this gall-i-ant captain
As he kissed his fond young wife
"Only one more bag of that golden treasure
Then we'll settle down for life"*

*"Yes, we'll leave this place for a little cottage
And enjoy the wealth we earned."
But she never thought that her love would perish
On the ship that never returned*

*No, she ever returned, no, she never returned
And her fate is still unlearned
And from that day to this
we've been watching, waiting
For the ship that never returned.*

Spoken: I sung that in the sheep shear(ing) barn at Barnet Blatchington ... our boss give us ... we give him an hunting crop ... and we had a party up there. My dad had cut two, three sheep ... hang (hung?) up and we had a good feed. I can't say what year it was ... about 1919 or 1920 ... and I sung that song up there.*

* I am not sure if Harry says "Barnet Blessington" or "Barnet Blatchington". At one time Harry lived with his family in Blatchington, now a part of Hove, and this may be what he is saying, although I cannot trace the "Barnet" part of the name.

Written by the American songwriter Henry Clay Work ("Work might be his name, but it is not his inclination", according to his in-laws!) who also wrote such pieces as *The Abolitionist*, *The Year of Jubilo*, *Marching Through Georgia* and *Grandfather's Clock*. It dates from 1865 and has been heard on the lips of many British and Irish singers.

In 1903 the tune was used for the American train wreck song *Wreck of the Old 97* which was recorded by Vernon Dalhart. Since then, many other songs have been composed using the same tune.

Other recordings: Fred Jordan (Shropshire - VTD148CD).

14. In Wayward Town (Roud 564) / The Little Cabin Boy (Roud 1168)

In Wayward Town there lived a maid
So beautiful, young and fair
'Til a young man came and courted her
And drew her in a snare
Repeats last line.

This young man promised he'd marry the girl
But he proved to be a false young man
He took her to a large hotel
And the night they slept within

The morning came, the stars shone bright
The moon shone bright and clear
This young man arose, a-putting on his clothes
Said "Farewell, my love, farewell"

"That's not the promise you made to me
Oh, down by the river side
You promised that you'd marry, marry me
And make me your own true bride"

"Do you think I could marry a girl like you
So easily led astray
You'd better go back, to your dear old mother's side
And tell her the reason why"

"Do you think I'll go back to my dear old mother's side
And show her my disgrace
I'd rather go and drown myself
In a lonely and quiet place"

He took her by her lily-white hand
He kissed both cheeks and chin
He led her to the riverside
And he gently pushed her in

Away she goes, away she goes
She's floating away with the tide
Instead of having that watery grave
She ought to been me own true bride

Now I must go to a far-off land
Another bride to find
Where no-one knows the deed I've done
This dreadful and awful crime

Now come you young ladies, a warning take
Never you get led astray
If any young man entices you
Let your answer be always nay

M.Y. Tell me first about your father... when he used to sing at home.

H.U. He used to go to bed about seven o'clock of a night time in the winter time and he used to sing himself to sleep. That's where we learnt the old songs from them days. There wasn't a song that he didn't know them days ... he could sing anything really ...

There was six jolly sailors, all dressed well in blue,
To carry this fair body down.

I suppose he's learnt off his old father ... like I learnt off him.

Wayward Town

Some songs, which were printed extensively by broadside printers, have failed to turn up on the lips of folksingers. Others, like *Wayward Town* (or *The Lily-White Hand* to use a better-known title) are just the opposite; seldom printed, but often encountered. As *The Gentleman's Meeting* it was included in a Glasgow chapbook printed c. 1818 by R Hutchison, who then worked at No10, Saltmarket. Hutchison's title is strange, when one considers how the man has treated the young girl! Or is there an intended irony in the title? Most collectors have come across the song at some time or other - often from Gypsy singers who seem to be especially fond of it. They're also quite fond of combining it with *The Oxford Girl*, to carry on the story after the girl is murdered and, sometimes, to see the murderer brought to justice.

Most of Roud's examples are from England, but it has been found in most lands where English is spoken. Paddy Tunney, Win Ryan and Mary and

Paddy Doran were all recorded singing it in Ireland; Ord, Greig and MacQueen heard it in Scotland; while Cecil Sharp also noted a couple of sets in the Appalachian Mountains of North Carolina and Kentucky, in 1916-17.

Other Recordings: Sarah Porter (Sussex - MTCD309-10); George Spicer (Sussex - MTCD311-2); Danny, Harry and Lemmie Brazil and Doris Davies (Gloucestershire - MTCD345-7); May Bradley (Shropshire - MTDC349); Jack Smith (Surrey - MTCD356-7); Caroline and William Hughes (Dorset - MTCD365-6); Mary Lozier (Kentucky - MTCD505-6); Nimrod Workman (West Virginia - MTCD512); Harry Cox (Norfolk - TSCD512D); Paddy Doran (Ireland - TSCD677T); Ron Spicer (Sussex - VT131CD); Fred Jordan (Shropshire - VTD148CD).

The Little Cabin Boy

These couple of lines come from a song called *The Little Cabin Boy*, a version of which was collected in Sussex from the singer Jim 'Brick' Harber by Ken Stubbs, who included it in his book *The Life of a Man* (1970). Norman Cazden, an American collector, also noted a set from the singer George Edwards, which he included in two books, *Abelard Folk Song Book pt. 2* (1958) and *Folk Songs of the Catskills* (1982).

15. In a Cottage by the Sea (Roud 4327)

It's just a year ago today, love
When I became your wedded wife
We left a mansion for a cottage
To dwell down by the riverside
It was there you said, I should be happy
But no happiness I see
For tonight I am a widow
All alone down by the sea

Chorus:

Yes, all alone, yes all alone
By the seaside he left me
And no other bride I'll be
For tonight I am a widow
All alone down by the sea
He lost his life upon the ocean
The news it nearly drove me wild
My heart is left with sad emotion
And all that's left me is my child
With silent nights, I sit and ponder
With my babe all on my knee
For tonight I am a widow
All alone down by the sea

In my cottage by the seaside
I can see my mansion home
I can see the hills and valleys
Where, with him, I used to roam
But the last time that I met him
Oh how happy were we then
For tonight I am a widow
All alone down by the sea

And his poor and aged mother
How she would, yes, weep for me
And my dear and loving father
How he would shed tears for me
And my dear and loving brother
How he would, yes, pine for me
If he only knew his sister
Was a widow by the sea

Spoken: That's the four verses ...

Apparently written by an American, C A White, in 1868. Fiddlin' John Carson recorded *All Alone by the Seaside* (reissued on Document DOCD 8016) in 1925. Carson's song shares a common chorus with Harry's song, but has different verses. However, another old-timey singer called Irene Sanders did record a version of White's song, she called it *The Widow in The Cottage by the Sea*, for Champion Records in 1933 (Ch S-16719, 45056). This recording has not, to my knowledge, been reissued. American song collectors have turned up versions of the song in various American States, including Alabama, Missouri, North Carolina (several sets) and Tennessee.

16. Seaweed (Roud 1742)

Last summertime I went away to Dover by the sea
I thought I'd like to bring a bunch of

seaweed home with me
It tells you everything, just what you want to know
Tells you if it's going to rain, or if it's going to snow

With me seaweed in me hand, I got into the train
And all the pubs were closed when I came out again
I thought I would have a drink, at first I thought I'd try
And as soon as I touched my seaweed

I knew it was going to be fine. (x2)
The other night I had a fright, right in the dead of night
The missus said, "Wake up you fool the house is all alight"
I quickly tumbled out of bed, though I could hardly stand
The seaweed hung upon the wall
and I grabbed it in my hand

I scrambled on the roof, though I forgot me clothes
The fireman down below was squirting with his hose
He hit me where I stood, right on me parapet
And as soon as I touched me seaweed,
I knew it was going to be wet (x2)

Two lovers once were strolling
down a quiet country lane
The man was William Honest
and the girl was Mary Jane
They walked and talked and walked
and talked about their future life
When William said, I shall be glad
when darling you're my wife

He kissed her ruby lips and smiled on her with pride
Tomorrow we'll be wed and then you will be mine
And as soon as I touched my seaweed
I knew it was going to be fine (x2)

Spoken: That's all I know...

Seaweed was written by the Music Hall performer Fred Earle (1877-1915) and copyrighted in 1905. Obviously popular, versions have turned up all over the place, including Gloucestershire, Somerset, Suffolk and Yorkshire. In Harry's version the final word at the end of verse 2 should probably read "dry", rather than "fine".

Other recordings: Emma Vickers (Lancashire - VTC10CD).

17. **Good Old Jeff** (Roud 1740)

It's just a year ago today that I remember well
I sat down by poor Nelly's side and a story she did tell
'Twas about a good old darkey Jeff,
who lived for many a year
And now he's dead and in his grave,
no trouble does he fear

Chorus:
For its good old Jeff had gone to rest
We know that he is free
Disturb him not, but let him rest
Way down in Tennessee
We walked along, took hold of arms
until an open space

'Twas there we stopped to breathe a while,
then to his grave did steal
We sat down by that little mound
and softly whispered there
"Come to me, it is thy child,"
then gently dropped a tear

But since that day, how things have changed,
poor Nelly that was my bride
Is laid beneath the cold grey sod,
down by her father's side
We planted there upon the grave
that weeping willow tree
We bathed its roots with many a tear
so that it might shelter me

Good Old Jeff was composed, words and music, in 1853 by the American G W H Griffin (1829-1879) and popularised by the Christie Minstrels. It needs hardly saying that, today, such sentiment pieces are rather out of fashion, although, according to Harry, the song was quite popular during his youth and his father was often asked to sing it in public. There are broadside texts by Disley and Such (both of London), Charles Saunderson (Edinburgh), Harkness (Preston) and Thomas Pearson (Manchester), and

Fortey (also from London) included the words in at least two songsters, *The Nigger Melodist* and *The Aquarium Songster*.

Other recordings: The Millen Family (Kent - OPEN CD003); Gordon Syrett (Suffolk - VTCD8).

18. **The Thrashing Machine** (Roud 1491) / **I Come from the Country** (Roud 1744)

There was a young farmer I know'd him quite well
He employed a land girl her name was sweet Nell
Sweet Nelly, my darling, she was only sixteen
And he showed her the works of his thrashing machine
Repeats last two lines.

The barn doors was open they both went inside
He pulled off his harness "Prepare for a ride"
He opened his throttle, went off with full steam
And he showed her the works of his thrashing machine

Three months had gone by and they're both doing well
Poor Nelly's belly began to swell
And under her apron you can plainly see
The wonderful works of his thrashing machine

Nine months had gone by and they went for an op
Poor Nelly's belly went down with a flop
And now in the cradle you can plainly see
The wonderful works of his thrashing machine
"You randy old farmer" the magistrate said
"You worked this poor girl till she was
very nearly dead

Your hay is not cut and your corn is still green
But you'll have to pay for your thrashing machine"

M.Y. Isn't there another tune, another song that you know to that tune?

H.U. Yes ...

I come from the country my name it is Giles
I travelled a hundred and forty odd miles
So what sort of farmer (chap?) I have been took
I can tell you I bin't such a fool as I look

Chorus:
Right tooral ri day, right tooral ri day
Right tooral ri tarara, right tooral ri day

H.U. My old daddy used to sing that one

M.Y. Did he have a verse about going to London?

H.U. London? Yes.

M.Y. How did that go? Do you remember?

And there was some ladies all dressed up in tights
And me missus she wouldn't let me look at the sights

A lot of songs are sung to the tune of Villikins and Dinah and I would often ask singers whether or not they knew any words to the tune. In Harry's case there were at least two such songs, *The Thrashing Machine* and *I Come from the Country*. (For anyone wanting to hear the tune being actually used for Villikins and Dinah, I would suggest Freda Palmer's version on VTC7CD.)

The Thrashing Machine

This song is named after the mechanical threshing machines which first came into service in the 1830's and the song originally dates from shortly after this time. The words were printed on a number of broadsides and sets have been collected from singers all over England and Ireland

Other recordings: Dougie Scott (Scottish Borders/Northumberland - Kylie CD102); Annie O'Neil (Belfast - Rounder CD 1178); George Spicer (Sussex - Veteran VTC4CD).

I Come from the Country

I Come from the Country, sometimes known as *Joe Muggins*, belongs to a group of songs which deal with so-called 'country bumpkins'. It may well be that such pieces originated on the urban Music Hall stage, though they later passed into the repertoire of country singers. Ken Langsbury's tale *How do you Spell Yokel?* (MTCD348) belongs to the same tradition.

Collected versions of *I Come from the Country* have been found by both Mervyn Plunkett and Tony Wales in Sussex, Fred Hamer in Shropshire and Peter Duddridge in Gloucestershire.

Other recordings: Bill Smith (Shropshire - MTCD351).

19. **I'm a Man That's Done Wrong** (Roud 1386)

I'm a man in great sorrow and trouble
I was once light-hearted and gay
Not a coin in this world could I borrow
Since my own home I'd stolen away
I once robbed my father and mother
They then turned me out of the door
To beg, starve or die, in the gutter to lie
Never enter my dwelling no more.

Chorus:

I'm a man that's done wrong to my parents
And daily I wander about
To earn a small mite for me shelter at night
God help me, for now I'm cast out

I had a sister, she married a squire
She never thinks to speak to me
Because in this world she's much higher
She rides in her carriage so free
But the girl I once loved so dearly
She's dying broken-hearted, they say
And now on her bed she is lying, near dead
And now for cast-outs she prays

My father will say when he meets me
"You beggar, you are still at large
But whatever you do, don't come near me
Or heavens I'll give you in charge"
My mother, she's broken-hearted
To meet me she oft times do try
She'll give me a crown with her head hanging down
And tears falling fast from of her eyes

Now come all you kind friends take a warning
To what I have just said to you
And I hope by my dress you won't scorn me
For you never know what you'll come to
I'll try and be honest and upright
And do all the best that I can
I'll try all I know to get on in this world
And prove to my friends I'm a man

Lucy Broadwood and J A Fuller Maitland included a version of this in their book *English County Songs* (1893), while the Reverend Sabine Baring-Gould included it in his *English Minstrelsy 8* (1898). Obviously a once-popular song, versions have been collected in Dorset, Kent, Oxfordshire, Somerset, Sussex and Yorkshire, as well as in Australia and North America. Broadwood and Fuller Maitland saw a connection between the tune and one used by J Markordt in his ballad opera of *Tom Thumb* (1781). They also noted that the air had been found in versions of several other songs, including *Rosin the Beau*, *Wrap Me Up in My Old Stable Jacket*, *The Old Farmer*, *The Gallant Hussar*, *Adam and Eve* and *The Green Mossy Banks of the Lea*.

Other versions: May Bradley (Shropshire - MTCD349); Wally Fuller (Sussex - TSCD672D).

20. **Poison in a Glass of Wine** (Roud 218, Laws P30)

In Arundel Town it was reported
A young damsel there did dwell
And by a servant man was courting
He loved her exceedingly well

A dance there was on a summer's evening
This young damsel there did go
And her true lover he followed after
Thinking to prove her overthrow

He saw her dancing with some other
Which caused his jealousy to run in his mind
And to destroy his own true lover
He gave her some poison in a glass of wine

As soon as she drank it, the sooner she altered

"Take me home, now," cried she
"That glass of wine that you have just gave to me
Makes me as ill, as ill as can be"

"I have been drinking some of the same, love
That makes me as ill, as ill as can be
We'll both lie down and die together
And quite forsake all jealousy"

Now come all young men and fair young maidens
Never let jealousy run in your mind
Never destroy your own true lover
By giving them poison in a glass of wine

Although well-known as a traditional song in England and Scotland - where it goes under such titles as *Jealousy*, *Oxford City*, *Down the Green Groves*, *The Watery Grave* or *Young Maria* - this is a song which has been especially popular with Gypsy singers. A L Lloyd once suggested that it was a watered-down version of the Child ballad *The Banks of Green Willow*, though others have not accepted this idea. Many versions seem to be based on a text issued on a broadside by John Pitts in the early 1800s and subsequently reissued by both Catnach and Such of London and Livesey of Manchester. A version that I collected from the singer Freda Palmer was sung to a tune which Ralph Vaughan Williams once heard used for the song *A Bold Young Farmer*. Vaughan Williams then used that tune as part of his ballet for orchestra *Old King Cole*.

The song has also turned up occasionally in America and the Stanley Brothers recorded it a couple of times in the 1950s.

Other recordings: George Spicer (Sussex) and Freda Palmer (Oxfordshire - MTCD311-2); Louie Saunders (Surrey) and Pop Maynard (Sussex - MTCD309-10); The Brazil Family (Gloucestershire - MTCD345-7); May Bradley (Shropshire - MTCD349); Caroline Hughes (Dorset - MTCD365-6); Garrett & Norah Arwood (North Carolina - MTCD503-4); Mary Lozier (Kentucky - MTCD505-6); Nimrod Workman (West Virginia - MTCD512); Roscoe Holcomb (Kentucky - Smithsonian Folkways SF CD 40077); Fred Jordan (Shropshire - VTD148CD); Harry Cox (Norfolk - TSCD512D); Sheila Stewart (Perthshire - TSCD515); Joseph Taylor (Lincolnshire - TSCD653); Celia Hughes (Dorset - TSCD672D); Mary Doran (Belfast - TSCD673T).

21. **The Rich Lady Gay** (Roud 1714)

It was of a rich lady she had gold in store
She was loved by the rich and was good to the poor
As she was a-riding in the plough fields one day
Upon a young ploughboy she fixed her bright eye

"I've a letter for someone but I know not for who
You're the likely young fellow; I think it's for you"
"I've a letter for someone but I know not for who
You're the likely young fellow; I think it's for you"

He took it and he read it and unto her he did say
"I think you're mistaken, my rich lady gay
It must be for some other much higher renown
But not for a young fellow that follows the plough"

As he was a-ploughing his furrow deep and low
Breaking clods to pieces for some barley to sow
She rode up to the young man and unto him she did say
"How are you this morning, pray tell me I pray"

"I've been raping (reaping?) and scraping
all the days of my life
And I think you're too good for a poor man's wife"
"I've been raping (reaping?) and scraping
all the days of my life
And I think you're too good for a poor man's wife"

"Do you think you could love me?" this lady did say
"Do you think you could love me, a bride for to be?"
"Oh yes I could love you all the days of my life"
So the lady consented to be his young wife

Now to church they then went, was married the next day
With the ploughboy so trim and this lady so gay
Now into open house keeping the rest of her life
For she loves this young plough boy as dear as her life

Surprisingly, only one other version of *The Rich Lady Gay* appears to have been collected - by Mervyn Plunkett in the late Fifties, from Ernest Glew, of North Bersted, also in Sussex. Presumably there must once have been a

broadside, although none has yet been seen by collectors or researchers. The song is, however, clearly related to another piece *Cupid the Ploughboy* which at one time was well-known throughout southern England.

Other recordings: For *Cupid the Ploughboy* see Walter Pardon (Norfolk - MTCD305-6).

22. Why Can't It Always Be Saturday? (Roud 1741)

There's one day in each week that all men loves best
 One day they fancy far more than the rest
 I've no need to tell you I can see you've all guessed
 The day I allude to is Saturday

There's football for those who's fond of the sport
 On that day the good things for Sunday are bought
 Man finds his wife loves him far more than she ought
 Just one day a week and that's Saturday

Chorus:

So why can't it always be Saturday?
 Why can't it always be pay-day?
 Oh, how happy we'd all be then
 Wouldn't it suit all us working men?
 If it was always Saturday
 Wouldn't it be all gay?
 We'd have money to spend, money to lend
 If Saturday came every day

Just fancy a man who is fond of his beer
 Gets one day's relief from an autumn year
 He makes it the rule to get full up to here
 Just one day a week and that's Saturday

If he gets run in he has nothing to say
 On Monday gets off from his work half a day
 He 'peers at the Court and the fine there to pay
 But he do's just the same thing next Saturday

There are certain places we shouldn't want to call
 Where the three brass balls hangs on the wall
 In fact there'd be no need for pawn-shops at all
 If every day was Saturday

No one would be rich, no one would be poor
 We'd have no occasion to run up a score
 We've plenty of pubs; we should want a few more
 If every day was Saturday
 And such things as poverty we need not know
 So all sing this chorus, wherever you go

Harry is Roud's only known traditional singer of a song from the Victorian/Edwardian Music Hall. It was sung there by J W Rickaby and composed by Tom Moy and Robert Hargreaves.

Credits:

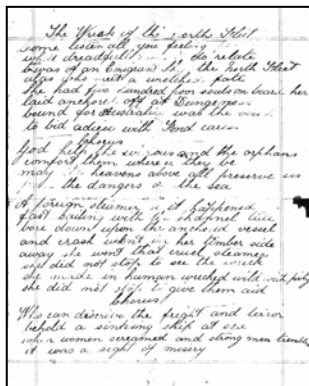
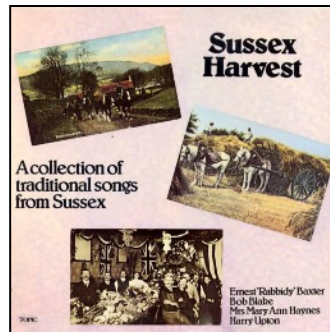
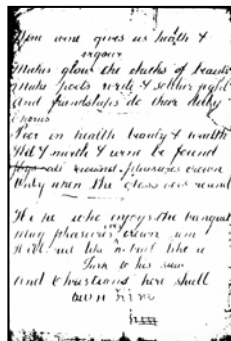
Firstly, of course, thanks to **Mike Yates** - for persuading Harry to sing for the recordings, for the text, song notes and transcriptions in this booklet, and for all the photos.

Also to:

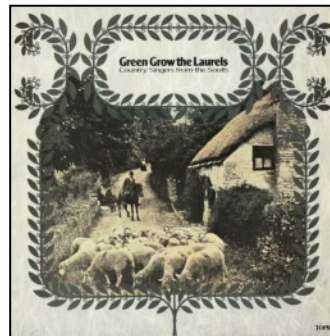
- Danny Stradling - for proof reading.
- Steve Roud - for providing MT with a copy of his *Folk Song Index*, whence came some of the historical information on the songs.

Booklet: editing, DTP, printing
CDs: editing, production
 by Rod Stradling

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Harry's copy of *Health and Beauty*

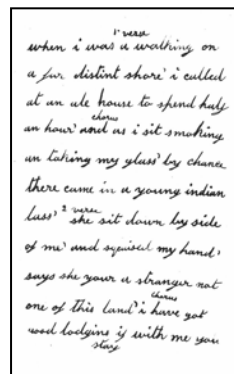


Harry's copy of *The Wreck of the Northfleet*

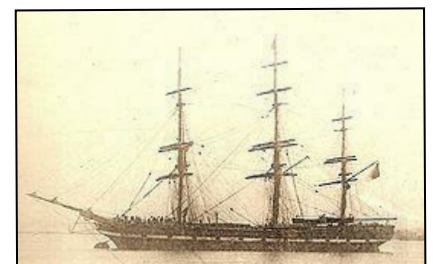
Photos of Harry by Mike



Harry (left) at work in the 1920s



Left above: Covers of the two Topic LPs which



The Northfleet