

FSC SONGBOOK

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2026 TRIAL SONGBOOK

Introduction

This is a trial copy of the future 2026 songbook. It contains some extra elements which people have asked for, removes some songs which aren't being sung much at the moment, and adds in a few newer songs that are loved to keep the balance. There are also only a few illustrations for now, and the final version will have different contents (inc. page numbers for songs)

The aim of this is to get feedback over the 2025 camping season so we can have a shiny new songbook for the 2026 season, complete with a glow-in-the-dark front cover which so many people asked for. So we're printing just a few of these to send out to camps.

We really want to hear your feedback so that we can make the 2026 songbook the best that it can be. There is a feedback form at the very back of the booklet, plus a link that takes you to our "2026 Trial Songbook" Survey! This survey will also be sent to all staff via email. Alongside this, there's a description of our process, the survey we did and many other things.

There are also new songs coming in a separate "I Feel a Song Coming On" booklet of new songs. The team running that are continuing to collect more songs from voices less heard in our current songbook - do drop them an email on songbook@fsc.org.uk.

We want to note that singing songs from cultures, struggles and perspectives across the world can be a sensitive thing - we ask that wherever possible we honour the songs and peoples of the songs by speaking about where they are from, understanding translations if we are singing in another language, and if a song is about more controversial subjects such as slavery, that staff try to bring context to these songs where possible.

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Contextualising our songbook

The Forest School Camps songbooks have always been a hodgepodge of musical traditions. Since the publication of the very first songbook in 1968, “modern” popular tunes have nestled between Caribbean work songs, gospel hymns hailing from the United States, and drinking songs from Ireland. The dominant genre of each songbook, however, has been music that could be described as “traditional English folk”. From the 1800s, scholars and enthusiasts set out to write down and preserve the songs that normal people were singing: songs that were often passed orally from singer to singer in the pub or the field or around the kitchen fire, where each new singer would mould the song a little bit to make it their own. The songs these folk song collectors found were used to create long indexes of lyrics and music, which continue to shape our understanding of which songs do and do not count as “traditional English folk”. This scholarship ensured the survival of many songs that may otherwise have been forgotten, but it has in some ways artificially shaped our imagination of what the English folk genre can sound like - we tend to imagine English folk music mainly in the language of the 19th century, full of pretty maids and bold sailors.

Britain is also home to distinct folk music traditions sung in the Scots, Gaelic, Cornish and Welsh languages. There is only one song in this songbook sung in any of these languages: ‘The Burning of Auchindoun’ which is sung in Scots. “English” and “British” shouldn’t be used interchangeably; the music we are discussing is the “English” folk genre, but the empire that moulded this tradition was “British” rather than “English”

Many of the songs we sing are as traditional and British as a mug of tea sweetened with a teaspoon of sugar: their constituent parts are not really traditionally British at all, but a product of the British Empire. For hundreds of years, the British state ruled over huge chunks of the globe, using extortion, exploitation, and violence to enrich itself at the expense of the rest of the world. Sugar was grown in the Caribbean by enslaved people who had been taken prisoner in Africa, forced to board boats and taken across the Atlantic to work on British plantations in Jamaica, Barbados or the Bahamas. Many enslaved Africans did not survive this terrible journey, known as the “middle passage”. Those that did were often subject to brutal treatment at the hands of their enslavers, yet still created a vibrant musical tradition that combined traditional West African music with Biblical stories and ballads originating in the British Isles - examples of this can be found in this songbook.

Like the British habit of drinking tea, many of the songs we now consider to be British were the product of interactions and exchanges between Britain and its colonial empire - some have even theorised that the call-and-response form of Sea Shanties was adopted from West African music sung by enslaved peoples in the Caribbean. Money from slavery and from the compensation the British government paid to slave owners on its abolition in 1833 was invested in railways, factories, and the large manor houses that dot the British countryside. While the law abolishing slavery was passed in 1833, most enslaved people were forced to serve terms of “apprenticeship” for 6 years, during which they continued to do forced and unpaid labour for their former enslavers. Through connections such as these, everyone in Britain continues to benefit from the system of slavery and its economic legacies.

Many of the techniques of violence and subjugation used by the British empire were first tested in Ireland, a country which contributes a large contingent of songs to the FSC songbook. For centuries, Irish people were pushed off their land by English and Scottish settlers, forced to farm poorer and poorer land. This process led to the Great Famine of 1845-52 in Ireland, during which time nearly half of the Irish population died or fled abroad.

These histories are not a reason to stop singing any of the songs in the songbook - if we tried to remove the legacies of the British Empire from modern British culture we would not be left with very much. It is our historical responsibility, however, to be conscious of these histories; to honour those whose songs we are singing; to hold on to an understanding that the culture in which many of these songs evolved was based financially upon subjugation of other cultures; and to treat with respect the cultures and peoples from whom so much of our music is drawn and influenced by. Regardless of their origins, these songs have become part of our musical canon, and FSC continues to incorporate songs from different contexts into our unique oral tradition. This new version of the songbook has been created with the goal of increasing our awareness of the interconnected and complex histories of our music. It seeks to accredit those who have made contributions to our organisation’s musical tradition, and highlight the diversity of origin of the songs we sing. Our hope is that by facing up to this history, we will be able to learn from it.

Context notes

For this songbook, we have attempted to provide an approximate date of origin for all songs, as well as crediting the song's author if possible. Dating traditional music is very difficult, and the dates listed in this book should be taken as a well-informed approximation rather than as absolute fact.

To make these guesses, we have done a lot of desktop research going back to primary sources and original sheet music, consulted experts in the field, and used the largest archive of printed folk music in the world, housed at the Bodleian Library in Oxford. Dates which are approximations are indicated by the circa sign - "c.", which is the Latin for "about". This date is often the first time we have printed documentation of a song which may of course be much older.

It is also worth noting that many songs which originated in a specific region are likely to be first recorded as a broadside printed in London; we have put regional attribution if available in the context notes and 'English' in the attribution.

We are aware that there are a number of potential issues with appropriation, where well-known folklorists collected, recorded, published and profited from songs from more marginalised communities. We have done our best to cite songs as traditional where we are confident in this. We welcome input from anyone who knows more.



Glossary

Ballad: A popular narrative song, often passed down orally. In the English tradition, it usually follows a form of rhymed (abcb) quatrains alternating four-stress and three-stress lines.

Broadside: A single sheet of inexpensive paper with a song printed on it. Broadside songs began to appear in the 1500s and 1600s, became a big industry in the 1700s and 1800s, and were popular in Britain until the 1900s. They could be sung or recited in public places, such as taverns, homes, and fairs, and sold in the streets by peddlers. They would normally not include melodies, but would sometimes suggest a well known tune that could be used. Many traditional folk songs and ballads derive from printed broadsides.

Bum/Hobo/Tramp: After the American Civil War ended in 1865 and until WWII in the 1940s thousands of homeless men hitched rides on railway freight cars, travelling in the hope of work and living a life of destitution and desperation. They were famously characterised as occupying three separate categories: "hobos worked and travelled, tramps just travelled, and bums did neither."

Chain gang: A group of convicts chained together to perform work outside of a prison. Following the end of the American Civil War and the abolition of slavery in the United States, African-American men continued to be exploited for their labour through the prison system. Black men would be arrested on spurious charges and forced to perform free labour for the state. In 1912, the National Committee on Prison Labor decried chain gangs as "the last vestige of the slave system," claiming that hundreds and possibly thousands of prisoners had lost their lives as a result of abuse and malnutrition. While chain gangs no longer exist, prison labour remains a multi-billion dollar business in the USA, with many charities arguing that the prison labour system constitutes a violation of the fundamental human rights of prisoners.

Gospel: A genre of Christian music which varies in style depending on cultural and social context, although it tends to be sung a capella. In the United States, gospel music has traditionally been associated with African-Americans living in the South, and continues to form the basis for church worship in black communities. Gospel has been a key influence in the development of many other musical genres, including blues, soul and pop music.

Sea shanty (Capstan/Halyard/Focsle): Sailors sung sea shanties to keep time with their labour as it was often more efficient to have everyone working at the same time. The shantyman would choose a suitable song for the type and length of task and would continue to make up verses if required for the job to be finished. There were a number of different types of sea shanty, including:

- **Capstan shanty:** A capstan is a rotating lever or windlass developed for use on sailing ships to multiply the pulling force of seamen when hauling ropes, cables, and hawsers. Capstan Shanties therefore tend to have lyrics which encourage pulling all at the same time, e.g. “Heave away” but do not necessarily need to be fast or even particularly rhythmical.
- **Halyard shanty:** Halyard shanties were sung to the raising and lowering of sails, or other long, heavy tasks which involved a pull and relax rhythm. “Blow the Man Down” is a good example of this. The shantyman would sing a line of a song, and the crew would respond in chorus hauling on the rope.
- **Focsle song:** While at rest, sailors often sung slower and sadder tunes. These songs are named after the “Focsle” or “Fore-castle” of the ship, where crewmates would drink, eat, and sing while off shift. Also referred to as “forebitters”

Spiritual: A religious song of hope traditionally sung by enslaved people in the US, and associated with black Christians of the southern US. Thought to derive from the combination of European hymns and musical elements originating in West Africa, which were preserved by enslaved people.

Trad: “Traditional” - generally used to mean that the authorship of a particular song is unknown, and/or that a song is in part the product of evolution through oral transmission.

Work song: A piece of music closely connected to a form of work, often to co-ordinate timing. Records of work songs are as old as historical records, and anthropological evidence suggests that most pre-industrial societies tend to have them. Many FSC work songs are linked to slavery in the Southern American states. Enslaved people brought the call-and-response tradition of West African singing to their work songs, and many prisoners forced to perform hard labour carried this tradition into the 1900s. There are also strong echoes of African American work songs in the sea shanty tradition (tall ship crews would often be notably multicultural).

THE SONGS THEMSELVES



Arise Songs

Arise Song 1

Rise, arise, arise
 Wake thee arise, life is calling thee
 Wake thee arise, ever watchful be
 Mother Life God, she is calling thee
 Mother Life God, she is greeting thee
 Rise, arise, arise

Trad. Zuni

Arise Song 1 originates from the Zuni, a native American people who have inhabited the area of the Zuni river valley in New Mexico, USA for at least 3-4,000 years, living by irrigated agriculture and livestock production. The song comes into the FSC tradition through the founder of the Woodcraft Movement, Ernest Thompson Seton.

Awake, Awake (Arise Song 2)

Awake, awake, the sun is on the hill
 The dew is on the grass and you are lying still
 Arise, arise for every shadow flies
 The morn is in the forests and the dew-washed skies

With the sun awake now
 Stir yourself and shake now
 Song in every break now
 Call you back to life
 Awake, awake, The sun is on the hill
 The dew is on the grass and you are lying still

Origin unknown

Ain't Gonna Study War No More

I'm gonna lay down my sword and shield
 Down by the riverside (x3)
 I'm gonna lay down my sword and shield
 Down by the riverside
 I ain't gonna study war no more

I ain't gonna study war no more (x3)
 Down by the riverside I'm gonna lay my burdens down
 I ain't gonna study war no more

I'm gonna walk with the Prince of Peace...

I'm gonna put on my long white robe...

I'm gonna lay down my nuclear bombs...

I'm gonna make up my own verses...

Trad. American, early 1800s

An African-American spiritual (see Glossary) sung by enslaved people as a work song, and therefore dating from before the American Civil War of the 1860s, the lines about “laying down swords” and “not studying war” reference Isaiah in the Old Testament. The song was later one of the anthems of the decades-long US Civil Rights Movement, the struggle by African Americans and their allies to end institutional racial discrimination and segregation in the US.

All Things Shall Perish

1 All things shall per - ish from un - der the sky

2 Mu - sic a - lone shall live mu - sic a - lone shall live

3 Mu - sic a - lone shall live ne - ver shall die

Music, requiring living creatures to perform it, is unlikely to survive the extinction of the human race, let alone the heat death of the universe

Anchored in Love

I've found a sweet haven of sunshine at last
 And Jesus abiding above
 His dear arms around me are lovingly cast
 And sweetly He tells of His love

The tempest is o'er
 (The danger, the tempest forever is o'er)
 I'm safe evermore
 (I'm anchored in hope, I have faith evermore)
 What gladness, what rapture is mine
 The danger is past
 (The water's receding, the danger is past)
 I'm anchored at last
 (I'm feeling so happy I'm anchored at last)
 I'm anchored in love divine

He saw me endangered and lovingly came
 To pilot my storm-beaten soul
 Sweet peace He has spoken and bless His dear name
 The billows no longer roll

His love shall control me through life and in death
 Completely I'll trust to the end
 I'll praise Him each hour and my last fleeting breath
 Shall sing of my soul's best friend

James Vaughn and James Rowe, USA, 1911

Popularised by the Carter Family in the 1920s. The Carter Family transformed country music from a cultural phenomenon popular with rural audiences to an art form beloved by mainstream America. A P Carter has been criticised for copyrighting traditional songs that he collected and not sharing the resulting royalties with his sources.

Angel Band

My latest sun is sinking fast
My race is nearly run
My strongest trials now are past
My triumph is begun

O come, angel band
Come and around me stand
O bear me away on your snow white wings
To my immortal home
O bear me away on your snow white wings
To my immortal home

O bear my longing heart to him
Who bled and died for me
Whose blood now cleanses from all sin
And gives me victory

I've almost gained my heavenly home
My spirit loudly sings
The Holy One before me comes
I hear the noise of wings

Jefferson Hascall & William Bradbury, USA, c.1860



Animal Fair

I went to the animal fair
 The birds and the beasts were there
 The big baboon by the light of the moon
 Was combing his auburn hair
 The monkey fell out of his bunk
 And slid down the elephant's trunk
 The elephant sneezed and fell on its knees
 And what became of the monkey (monkey, monkey...)?

Trad. American, c.1898

The Auld Triangle

A hungry feeling came o'er me stealing
 And the mice they were squealing in my prison cell

And the auld triangle went jingle jangle
 All along the banks of the Royal Canal

Oh to start the morning, the screw was bawling
 "Get up you bowsie and clean up your cell..."

Oh the lags were sleeping, Humpy Gussy was creeping
 As I lay there weeping for my girl Sal...

On a fine spring evening, the lag lay dreaming
 And the seagulls were wheeling high above the wall...

The day was dying and the wind was sighing
 As I lay crying in my prison cell...

Dick Shannon, Ireland, 1952

Based on Dublin's Mountjoy Prison, the "auld triangle" refers to a large metal triangle beaten daily to waken the inmates and signify other points in the prison's routine.

The Ballad of Lou Marsh

In the streets of New York City
 When the hour was getting late
 There were young men armed with knives and guns,
 Young men armed with hate
 And Lou Marsh stepped between them
 And died there in his tracks
 For one man is no army, when a city turns its back

And now the streets are empty, and now the streets are dark
 So keep an eye on shadows and never pass the park
 For the city is a jungle when the law is out of sight
 And death lurks in El-Barrio, with the orphans of the night

There were two gangs approaching
 In Spanish Harlem town
 The smell of blood was in the air
 The challenge was laid down
 He felt their blinding hatred
 As he tried to save their lives
 But they broke his peaceful body
 With their fists and staves and knives

Shall Lou Marsh lie forgotten
 In a cold and silent grave
 Or will his memory linger on
 In those he tried to save?
 And those of us who knew him
 Will now and then recall
 And shed a tear on poverty
 The tombstone of us all

Phil Ochs, USA, 1963

The Ballad of Lou Marsh was written in 1963 shortly after the murder of black social worker, Louis Marsh, by former gang members of the Untouchables, a street gang in East Harlem, New York. Louis attempted to help the kids in the gang escape violence by establishing a community centre where they could play pool or basketball. Older gang members were angered by this and Louis died in an ensuing fight.

Barley Mow

Here's good luck to the half gill,
Good luck to the Barley Mow (Oi!)
Jolly good luck to the half gill,
Good luck to the Barley Mow
Here's good luck to the half gill,
If it's good quality try a little drop more
Here's good luck, good luck to the Barley Mow

Gill pot...
Half pint...
Pint pot...
Half quart...
Quart pot....
Half gallon...
Gallon....
Half barrel...
Barrel...
Dray Horse...
Landlord...

Trad. English, c.1855



Big Rock Candy Mountains

On a summer's day, in the month of May
 A burly bum came hiking
 Down a shady lane with a sugar cane
 He was looking for his liking
 As he strolled along, he sang a song
 Of the land of milk and honey
 Where a bum can stay for many a day
 And he don't need any money

Oh the... buzzin' of the bees in the cigarette trees
 The soda-water fountains
 Where the lemonade springs, and the bluebird sings
 In the Big Rock Candy Mountains

In the Big Rock Candy Mountains
 You never wash your socks
 And little streams of alcohol
 Come trickling down the rocks
 There's a lake of stew and whisky too
 And you paddle around in a big canoe
 Where they hung the jerk who invented work
 In the Big Rock Candy Mountains

In the Big Rock Candy Mountains
 The cops have wooden legs
 The bulldogs all have rubber teeth
 And the hens lay soft-boiled eggs
 The farmers' trees are full of fruit, the barns are full of hay
 I want to go where there ain't no snow
 Where the rain don't fall and the wind don't blow
 In the Big Rock Candy Mountains

Harry McClintock, USA, 1928

Big Yellow Taxi

They paved paradise
And put up a parking lot
With a pink hotel, a boutique
And a swinging hot spot

Don't it always seem to go
That you don't know what you've got
Till it's gone
They paved paradise
And put up a parking lot

They took all the trees
Put 'em in a tree museum
And they charged the people
A dollar and a half just to see 'em

Hey farmer farmer
Put away that DDT now
Give me spots on my apples
But leave me the birds and the bees
Please!

Late last night
I heard the screen door slam
And a big yellow taxi
Took away my old man

Joni Mitchell, USA, c. 1967

DDT is a pesticide that was responsible for a major decline in the populations of fish-eating birds, such as the bald eagle, brown pelican, peregrine falcon, and osprey. At the time Joni Mitchell wrote this song, there was a public outcry about its environmental impacts. DDT is now banned for agricultural use worldwide. Big yellow taxis remain legal (as long as they're properly licensed).

Black Velvet Band

In a neat little town they called Belfast
Apprenticed to trade I was bound
And many an hour's sweet happiness
Have I spent in that neat little town
A bad misfortune came over me
Which caused me to stray from the land
Far away from my friends and relations
Betrayed by the Black Velvet Band

Her eyes they shone like diamonds
I thought her the queen of the land
And her hair it hung over her shoulder
Tied up with a black velvet band

I took a stroll down Broadway
Meaning not long for to stay
When who should I see but a pretty fair maid
Come tripping along the pathway
She was both fair and handsome
Her neck it was just like a swan's
And her hair it hung over her shoulder
Tied up with a black velvet band

I took a stroll with this pretty fair maid
And a gentleman passing us by
I knew she meant a doing for him
By the look in her roguish black eye
His watch she took from his pocket
And placed it right into me hand
And the very next thing that I said was
"Bad luck to the Black Velvet Band"

Before the judge and the jury
Next morning I had to appear
The judge he said to me: “Young man
Your case it is proven clear
I’ll give you seven years penal servitude
To be spent right away from the land
Far away from your friends and relations
Betrayed by the Black Velvet Band”

So come all you jolly young fellows
A warning take by me
When you are out on the town, me lads
Beware of the pretty colleens
They’ll treat you to strong drink, me boys
Till you are not able to stand
And the very next thing that you know is
You’ve landed in Van Diemen’s Land

Trad. Irish, c.1796

Black velvet bands were worn by mourning widows but also by ladies of the night to advertise their services. This was popular among both English and Irish sailors; and also in East Anglia in the 19th century where many Irish travelled to work draining the fens.

Blackleg Miner

It's in the evening, after dark
 The blackleg miner gangs to work
 In his moleskin pants and dirty shirt
 There goes the blackleg miner

So join the union while you may
 Don't wait till your dying day
 For that may not be far away
 You dirty blackleg miner

He takes his pick and down he goes
 To hew the coal that lies below
 There's not a woman in this town row
 Would look at a blackleg miner

For Delaval is a terrible place
 They rub wet clay in a blackleg's face
 Around the pits they run a foot race
 To catch the blackleg miner

And don't go near the Seghill mine
 Across the top they've stretched a line
 To catch the throat and break the spine
 Of the dirty blackleg miner

Well they take his pick and duds as well
 And they hurl them down the pit of hell
 So off you go and fare thee well
 You dirty blackleg miner

Trad. English, c.1844

"Blackleg" refers to a strike-breaker, someone hired by the owner of a mine or factory to work while union members were on strike for better pay or conditions. Blacklegs were often brought in from distant parts of the country to ensure they had no ties to the striking community. Coal mines were some of the most heavily unionised industries in the country, and this song represents the unflinching attitude towards strike-breakers held by mining communities. Seaton Delaval and Seghill are villages in Northumbria.

Blessed Motion

I believed in solid ground
 Until I saw the earth in motion,
 In the winds of steady change
 And in the ever-rolling ocean

All moves on in perfect, perfect motion
 All is change and ever-rolling ocean

All is moving, all is change,
 Though I once believed that there
 Might somehow be something firm beneath my feet, but
 All is motion, and all is well for solid ground is just a myth
 For those who never swim in it.
 All is moving in blessed change, o the world we know
 Will come and go and everything will rearrange, so
 Be the ground beneath that sky,
 Tumbling round the by and by.
 All is change, so am I. Lye lye lye, lye lye lye.

Annie Zylstra, USA, c. 2020



This song is partially inspired by a quote from Martin Prechtel after surviving the Guatemala earthquake of 1976, during which he witnessed the ground beneath him rising up and swallowing people and villages whole: “solid ground is a myth believed by people who live on the earth rather than in it.”

Blow the Man Down

Oh! Blow the man down, bullies, blow the man down!
 Way ay! Blow the man down!
 Oh! Blow the man down, bullies, blow him away
 Gimme me some time to blow the man down

As I was a-walking down Paradise Street
 Way ay! Blow the man down!
 A saucy young damsel I happened to meet
 Gimme me some time to blow the man down

I says to her “Polly, and how do you do?”
 Way ay! Blow the man down!
 She says, “None the better for seeing of you”
 Gimme me some time to blow the man down

Oh! We’ll blow the man up and we’ll blow the man down
 Way ay! Blow the man down!
 We’ll blow him away into Liverpool Town
 Gimme me some time to blow the man down

Trad. halyard shanty, c.1860

Dates from the end of the civil war, when the American and British navies were competing to build faster, bigger ships. A different shanty rhythm was needed to accompany work on the new style of rigging.

Blowin' in the Wind

How many roads must a man walk down
Before you call him a man?
How many seas must a white dove sail
Before she sleeps in the sand?
How many times must the cannonballs fly
Before they're forever banned?

The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind
The answer is blowin' in the wind

How many times can a man look up
Before he can see the sky?
How many ears must one man have
Before he can hear people cry?
How many deaths will it take till he knows
That too many people have died?

How many years can a mountain exist
Before it is washed to the sea?
How many years can some people exist
Before they're allowed to be free?
How many times can a man turn his head
Pretending that he just doesn't see?

Bob Dylan, USA, 1962

Bob Dylan cited the African-American spirituals "No more auction block" and "We shall overcome" as musical influences.

Bold Riley

Oh the rain it rains all day lo-ng
 Bold Riley-o Bold Ri-il-ey
 And the northern wind it blows so stro-ng
 Bold Riley-o has gone away

Goodbye my sweetheart, goodbye my dear-o
 Bold Riley-o, Bold Ri-il-ey
 Goodbye my darlin', goodbye my dear-o
 Bold Riley-o has gone away

The anchor's weighed and the rags we've all se-t
 Bold Riley-o Bold Ri-il-ey
 Them Liverpool judies we'll never forge-t
 Bold Riley-O has gone away

Well come on Mary, don't look gl-um
 Bold Riley-o, Bold Ri-il-ey
 Come White-stockin' Day you'll be drinkin' ru-m
 Bold Riley-O has gone away

We're outward bound for the Bengal Ba-y
 Bold Riley-o, Bold Ri-il-ey
 Get bending me lads, it's a hell-of-a-wa-y
 Bold Riley-O has gone away

Trad. halyard shanty, 1800s

'White Stocking Day' was the day each month when a sailor's female relatives dressed up in their best clothes to collect his half-pay or 'allotment'. However, not all sailors made provision for the women to collect this allotment, preferring to take a larger advance payment for themselves, and this problem inspired famous Liverpool feminist social campaigner and MP Eleanor Rathbone to demand a more equitable system of providing for sailors' and soldiers' dependants during the WW1, eventually culminating in her Family Allowances Act of 1945.

Bonny at Morn

The sheep's in the meadow and the kye's in the corn
 Thou's ower lang in thy bed, bonny at morn
 The sheep's in the meadow and the kye's in the corn
 Thou's ower lang in thy bed, bonny at morn

Canny at night, bonny at morn,
 Thou's ower long in thy bed, bonny at morn

The bird's in the nest and the trout is in the burn,
 Thou hinders thy mother at many a turn

We're all laid idle wi' keeping the bairn
 The lad winnot work and the lass winnot learn

Trad. English, c. 1800

'Thou's ower lang in thy bed' means 'You're staying in bed too long!' This traditional Northumbrian folk song contains several other North-Eastern English words: 'kye', meaning 'cow'; 'canny', meaning 'pleasant'; and 'bairn', meaning 'baby'.

Bread and Roses

As we go marching, marching, in the beauty of the day
 A million darkened kitchens, a thousand mill lofts grey
 Are touched with all the radiance, a sudden sun discloses
 For the people hear us singing, bread and roses, bread and roses

As we go marching, marching, we battle too, for men
 For they are women's children and our victory is their gain
 Our days shall not be sweated from birth until life closes
 Hearts starve as well as bodies, give us bread, but give us roses

As we go marching, marching, un-numbered women dead
 Go crying through our singing in their ancient call for bread
 Small art and love and beauty their trudging spirits knew
 Oh, it is bread we fight for, but we fight for roses, too


As we go marching, marching, the future hears our call
 For the rising of the women is the rising of us all
 No more the drudge, the idler, ten that toil where one reposes
 But a sharing of life's glories, bread and roses, bread and roses

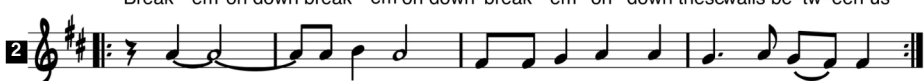
Helen Todd, Martha Coleman, James Oppenheim, USA, 1912

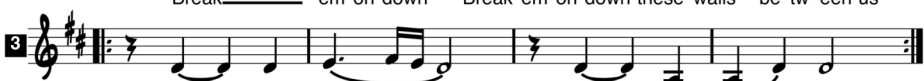
The 1912 Massachusetts textile workers strike kicked off after immigrant women's hours and pay were cut. They lived in terrible conditions: half of all children died before they reached the age of 6, and during the strike hungry children were sent to sympathetic families in other states. It defied the contemporary assumptions that immigrant, largely female and ethnically divided workers could not be organised: Mill owners were forced to settle the "Bread and Roses" strike by giving workers raises.

Break 'em On Down



1  Break 'em on down break 'em on down break 'em on down these walls be-tw-eeen us

2  Break _____ 'em on down Break 'em on down these walls be tw-eeen us

3  Break. these wa - lls Break. these wa - lls down

Bright Morning Star

Bright morning star a-rising
 Bright morning star a-rising
 Bright morning star a-rising
 Day is a-breaking in my soul

Oh where are our dear sisters?
 Oh where are our dear sisters?
 They have gone to heaven a-shouting
 Day is a-breaking in my soul

Oh where are our dear brothers?
 Oh where are our dear brothers?
 They are down in the valley a-praying
 Day is a-breaking in my soul

Oh where are our dear mothers?
 Oh where are our dear mothers?
 They have gone to heaven a-shouting
 Day is a-breaking in my soul

Oh where are our dear fathers?
 Oh where are our dear fathers?
 They are down in the valley a-praying
 Day is a-breaking in my soul

Bright morning star a-rising x 3
 Day is a-breaking in my soul



Trad. American

A traditional Appalachian spiritual originating from the Appalachian Mountains, notably collected in Harlan County, Kentucky by Alan Lomax in 1937

Bring Me Little Water Sylvie

Bring me little water Sylvie
Bring me little water now
Bring me little water Sylvie
Every little once in a while

Bring it in a bucket Sylvie
Bring it in a bucket now
Bring it in a bucket Sylvie
Every little once in a while

Sylvie come a runnin'
Bucket in her hand
I will bring a little water
Fast as I can

Bring me little water Sylvie
Bring me little water now
Bring me little water Sylvie
Every little once in a while

Can't you see me comin'?
Can't you see me now?
I will bring a little water
Every little once in a while
Every little once in a while

Bring Us in Hot Tea

Bring us in no rum, for that's a drink for sailors
But bring us in hot tea, for that will never fail us

So bring us in hot tea, hot tea
And bring us in hot tea
That's what the blessed ladies make
So bring us in hot tea

Bring us in no cider, for that will send us reeling
But bring us in hot tea, Earl Gray, Ceylon or Darjeeling

Bring us in no schnapps, for they are made with brandy
But bring us in hot tea, and a strainer would be handy

Bring us in no home brew; we're not inclined to risk it
But bring us in hot tea, oh, and all right, just one biscuit

Bring us in no gin, for that was mother's ruin
But bring us in hot tea, and put a lump or two in

Bring us in no white wine, for that don't cure no hot thirst
But bring us in hot tea, and be sure to warm the pot first

The Kipper Family, UK, c.1980

This is a parody of a much earlier song entitled "Bring us in good ale". The "Kipper Family" were a parody folk duo who toured with numbers such as "Arrest thee merry gentlemen" and "Bored of the Dance".

Broadside to Broadside

Keep your land you gentry of England, France and Spain
 For there's nothing like dominion of the water
 From the rocky coast of Kerry to the bloody Spanish Main
 It's the best thing you can ever teach your daughter

Broadside to broadside, two captains collide
 Queen of the spheres and queen of the tide
 Regalia and rebellion go sailing side by side
 Haul away, sister, haul away

Plunder men for treasure, and never heed their blows
 For there's nothing given freely to a woman
 Be generous to friendship and lavish to your foes
 Then pirate queens may share the seas in common

For blows will make you weary and marriage make a slave
 You'd be better on the sea like brave O'Malley
 And when that gallant vessel goes a rolling on the wave
 Be sure you're on the deck not in the galley

Nancy Kerr, UK, 2014

The Burning of Auchindoun

As I gaed doon by Fiddichside
 On a May mornin'
 I met wi' Willie Macintosh
 An 'oor before the dawnin'

“Turn again, turn again
 Turn again I beg ye
 If ye burn Auchindoun
 Huntly he will heid ye”

“Heid me or hang me
 It will never grieve me
 I will burn Auchindoun
 Although the life 'ud leave me”

As I gaed doon by Fiddichside
 On a May mornin'
 Auchindoun was in a bleeze
 An 'oor before the dawnin'

“Crawin', crawin'
 For a' yer crouse crawin'
 Ye've burnt yer crops an' tint yer wings
 An 'oor before the dawnin'

Trad. Scots, 1700

About the sacking of the castle of Auchindoun in Scotland in 1592. The attack on the castle is thought to have been an act of vengeance for the killing of the “bonnie” Earl of Murray.

By the Waters of Babylon

By the waters, the waters, of Babylon
 We lay down and wept, for thee Zion
 We remember, we remember, we remember thee Zion

Don McLean, USA, c.1960

A setting of Psalm 137

Campfire's Burning

Campfire's burning, campfire's burning
 Draw nearer, draw nearer
 In the gloaming, in the gloaming
 Come sing and be merry

Origin Unknown

Captain Don't You Know Me?

Captain, don't you know me, don't you know my name?
 Captain, don't you know me, don't you know my name?
 Well the name is the same whatever the game
 And the game's got the same old name
 You're the same old rascal stole my watch and chain
 And that's the name of the game

Origin Unknown

Careless Love

Love, oh love, oh careless love
Love, oh love, oh careless love
Love, oh love, oh careless love
Can't you see what careless love can do

Sorrow, sorrow to my heart...
That my true love and I must part

When my apron strings did bow...
You followed me through sleet and snow

Now my apron strings won't pin...
You pass my door and won't come in

Cried last night and the night before...
Gonna cry tonight and never no more

Love my mamma and my poppa too...
But I'd leave them both to go with you

How I wish that train would come...
And take me back to where I come from

Love, oh love, oh careless love...
Can't you see what careless love can do

Trad. American, 1800s

The narrator's apron strings will no longer "pin" because she is pregnant - other versions of the song include lyrics which make this more explicit. In the early 1800s, unplanned pregnancy would have been a disaster for the woman and child: for many the only choice would have been to give their child to a Foundling hospital and then attempt to regain respectability and work, or to go to a workhouse where infant mortality rates often exceeded 90%.

Chicken on a Raft

The skipper's in the ward room drinking gin
 (Hey ho, chicken on a raft)
 I don't mind knocking but I ain't going in
 (Hey ho, chicken on a raft)
 The Jimmy's laughing like a drain
 (Hey ho, chicken on a raft)
 Been looking in me comic cuts again
 (Hey ho, chicken on a raft)

Oh, chicken on a raft on a Monday morning
 Oh what a terrible sight to see
 Dabtow's for'ard and the dustman's aft
 Sitting here picking at a chicken on a raft
 Hey ho, chicken on a raft, Hi ho, chicken on a raft
 Hey ho, chicken on a raft, Hi ho, chicken on a raft

Well they gave me the middle and the forenoon too
 And now I'm pulling in a whaler's crew
 There's a seagull laughing overhead
 Hope to be floating in a feather bed

We kissed goodbye on the midnight bus
 But the driver had it in for us
 He drove us down to Malagar
 And we all got drunk in a Wimpy bar

Well I had a little house in Donny B
 And I shared it with a bumblebee
 Honey for tea and breakfast too
 But now I'm pulling on a whaling crew

Original by Cyril Tawney, UK, 1958

"Chicken on a raft" is a reference to the unpopular breakfast dish served on Royal Navy submarines, consisting of fried egg on fried bread. "Dustmen" = coal engine stokers; "dabtoes" = seamen.

Chickens

We had some chickens - no eggs would they lay
We had some chickens - no eggs would they lay
So I said honey, this sure ain't funny
We're losing money; no eggs would they lay

One day a rooster crept into our yard
And caught those chickens right off of their guard
They're laying eggs now just like they used to
Ever since that rooster crept into our yard

We had some moo-cows - no milk would they give
We had some moo-cows - no milk would they give
So, I said honey, this sure ain't funny
We're losing money; no milk would they give

One day a rooster (with a milking-stool) crept into our yard
And caught those moo-cows right off of their guard
They're giving egg nog instead of milk now
Ever since that rooster crept into our yard

We had some elephants - no tusks would they grow
We had some elephants - no tusks would they grow
So I said honey, this sure ain't funny
We're losing money; no tusks would they grow

One day a rooster (with a step-ladder) crept into our yard
And caught those elephants right off of their guard
They're laying eggs now of solid ivory
Ever since that rooster crept into our yard

We had a tractor - it just wouldn't go
We had a tractor - it just wouldn't go
So I said honey, this sure ain't funny
We're losing money; it just wouldn't go

One day a rooster (with a spanner) crept into our yard
And caught that tractor right off of its guard
Now it goes EGGsactly just like it used to
Ever since that rooster crept into our yard

We had some scientists - they just wouldn't work
We had some scientists - they just wouldn't work
So I said honey, this sure ain't funny
We're losing money; they just wouldn't work

One day a rooster (with a test-tube) crept into our yard
And caught those scientists right off of their guard
They're doing EGGsperiments just like they used to
Ever since that rooster crept into our yard

Boyce David, USA, 1968

Other verses can be created: here's ours. We had some campers - no songs would they sing.
One day a rooster (with a songbook) crept into our yard, and caught those campers right off of their guard. They're singing EGGsactly the same words as each other now!

Clementine

In a cavern, in a canyon
Excavating for a mine
Dwelt a miner, forty-niner
And his daughter Clementine

Oh my darling, Oh my darling,
Oh my darling Clementine
You are lost and gone forever
Dreadful sorry, Clementine

Light she was and like a fairy
And her shoes were number nine
Herring boxes without topses
Sandals were for Clementine

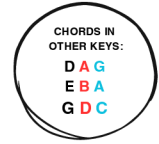
Drove she ducklings to the water
Every morning just at nine
Stubbed her toe against a splinter
Fell into the foaming brine

Ruby lips above the water
Blowing bubbles soft and fine
But alas! I was no swimmer
So I lost my Clementine

Percy Montrose, USA, 1884

A forty-niner was a miner in the North American gold rush of 1849. We return here to the original 1884 version.

Cockles and Mussels



In Dublin's fair city where the ^Cgirls are so pretty ^G

I first set my eyes on sweet Molly Malone ^C ^G

As she wheeled her wheelbarrow ^C

Through streets broad and narrow ^G

Crying ^C Cockles and ^F Mussels, ^C alive ^F alive ^G oh! ^C

^C Alive alive oh, alive ^G alive oh

^C Crying ^F Cockles and ^C Mussels, ^F alive ^C alive ^G oh! ^C

She was a fishmonger, but sure 'twas no wonder

For so were her father and mother before

And they each wheeled their barrow

Through streets broad and narrow

Crying Cockles and Mussels, alive alive oh!

She died of a fever and no one could save her

And that was the end of sweet Molly Malone

Now her ghost wheels her barrow

Through streets broad and narrow

Crying Cockles and Mussels, alive alive oh!

James Yorkston, Scotland, 1876

James Yorkston of Edinburgh was identified as the author of this eight years after it first appeared in print in Boston, Massachusetts in 1876. The same chorus appeared in a different song by Joseph Geoghegan of Lancashire also in 1876. So Yorkston (if he did write it) may either have based it on Geoghegan's, or vice versa, or they may both have been based on a pre-existing traditional street vendors' cry.

Come Follow

1  Come fol - ow fol - ow fol - ow fol - ow fol - ow fol - ow me

2  Whi-ther shall I foll-ow foll-ow foll-ow whi-ther shall I foll-ow? Foll-ow thee?

3  To the green-wood, to the green-wood, to the green-wood green wood tree

John Hilton, England, c.1652

Come Landlord Fill the Flowing Bowl

Here's to the man drinks water pure and goes to bed quite sober (x2)
Falls as the leaves do fall... (x3)
He'll die before October

Come Landlord fill the flowing bowl until it doth run over (x2)
For tonight we'll merry merry be... (x3)
Tomorrow we'll be sober

Here's to the man who drinks strong ale and goes to bed quite mellow
Lives as he ought to live...
And dies a jolly good fellow

Here's to the maid who steals a car and runs to tell her mother
She's a foolish foolish thing...
She'll never steal another

Here's to the maid who steals a car and moves to a new county
She'll get rich from stealing cars...
And soon be worth a bounty.

Original Trad. English, 1800s.

First printed in the 1800s, though possibly much older, Come Landlord shares similarities with a song transcribed by 1533 starting "How, Butler, how" .

Come To The Colours Tommy, Come



Come to the co-lours To-mmy come Come to the co lours Tommy come

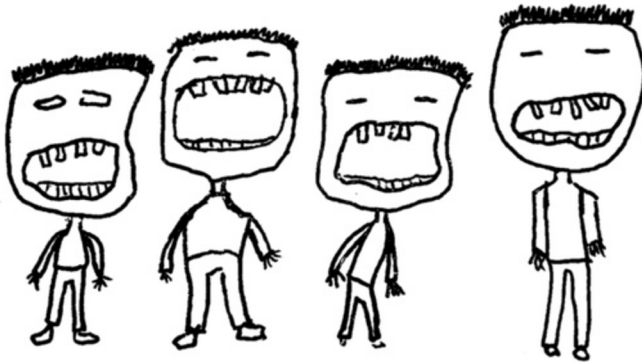


Stay with me stay with me don't go stay with me stay with me don't go



Don't want to leave you but I think I must go

Nico Brown, UK, 1987



FSC's Nico Brown wrote this about Tommy Atkins, the Unknown Soldier for a BBC production.

Country Life

I like to rise when the sun she rises
 Early in the morning
 And I like to hear them small birds singing
 Merrily upon their laylum
 And hurrah for the life of a country boy
 And to ramble in the new mown hay

In spring we sow, at the harvest mow
 And that is how the seasons round they go
 Oh but of all the times choose I may
 'Twould be rambling in the new mown hay

In summer when the sun is hot
 We sing, we dance, and we drink a lot
 We spend all night in sport and play
 And go rambling in the new mown hay

In autumn when the oak trees turn
 We gather all the wood that's fit to burn
 We cut and stash and stow away
 And go rambling in the new mown hay

In winter when the sky turns grey
 We hedge and we ditch our lives away
 But in the summer when the sun shines gay
 We go rambling in the new mown hay

Oh Nancy is my darling gay
 And she blooms like the flowers every day
 But I love her best in the month of May
 When we're rambling in the new mown hay

Trad English, 1800s

Laylum means a chorus or a group of birds singing, according to the Waterasons who popularised this song. Although based on a 19th century folk song this version is largely a product of evolution since the 1970s with verses being added by various singers and by FSC.

Cutty Wren

O Where are you going? says Milder to Malder
 O I cannot tell you, says Festel to Foes
 We're off to the woods, says John the Red Nose (x2)

O what will you do there? says Milder to Malder
 O we may not tell you, says Festel to Foes
 We'll hunt the Cutty Wren, says John the Red Nose (x2)

O how will you shoot her? says Milder to Malder
 O we may not tell you, says Festel to Foes
 With bows and with arrows, says John the Red Nose (x2)

O that will not do? says Milder to Malder
 O what will we do then, says Festel to Foes
 Big guns and big cannons, says John the Red Nose (x2)

With what will you cut her up? says Milder to Malder
 O I cannot tell you says Festel to Fose
 With knives and with forks, says John the Red Nose (x2)

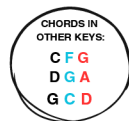
O that will not do? says Milder to Malder
 O what will do then, says Festel to Fose
 Big hatchets and cleavers, says John the Red Nose (x2)

O who'll have the spare ribs? says Milder to Malder
 O I cannot tell you says Festel to Fose
 We'll give them all to the poor, says John the Red Nose (x2)

Trad. English, 1300s-1700s

The meaning and date of origin are disputed. Some hold that this is an 18th century song which tells of a traditional Boxing Day practice of hunting and killing wrens. Others think it dates to the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, and the cutty (or small) wren is a reference to the child king Richard II.

Dark as a Dungeon



Come all you young fellows so brave and so fine
 And seek not your fortune way down in the mine
 It will form as a habit and seep in your soul
 Till the streams of your blood run as black as the coal

For it's dark as a dungeon and dank as the dew
 Where the dangers are double
 And the pleasures are few
 Where the rain never falls and the sun never shines
 It's as dark as a dungeon way down in the mine

There's many a man I have known in my day
 Who has lived just to labour his whole life away
 Like the fiend for his dope or the drunkard his wine
 A man will have lust for the lure of the mine

The morning, the evening, the middle of the day
 They're the same to the miner who labours away
 And the one who's not careful will never survive
 One fall of the slate and you're buried alive

I hope when I die and the ages shall roll
 That my body will blacken, and turn into coal
 As I look from the door of my heavenly home
 I'll pity the miner a slave to my bones

Deep Blue Sea

Deep blue sea, Willie, deep blue sea (x3)

It was Willie what got drowned in the deep blue sea

Dig his grave with a silver spade (x3)

It was Willie what got drowned in the deep blue sea

Sew his shroud with a silken thread (x3)

It was Willie what got drowned in the deep blue sea

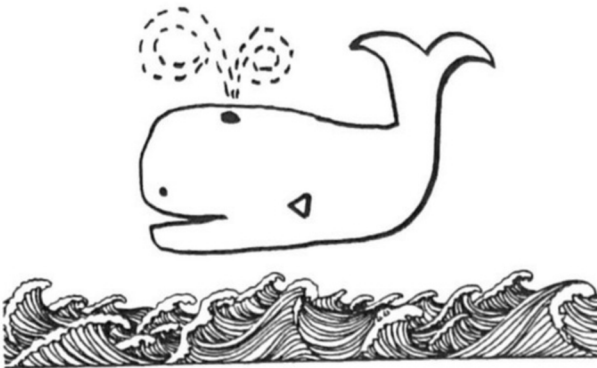
Lower him down on a golden chain (x3)

It was Willie what got drowned in the deep blue sea

Deep blue sea, Willie, deep blue sea (x3)

It was Willie what got drowned in the deep blue sea

Trad. American, 1800s



Recorded in the 1950s by Pete Seeger, who commented in the notes that 'Like many an American song, this seems to have been built out of a fragment of an old English ballad or sea song.' Folklorists have reflected that the tune sounds like it also has Caribbean influence.

Deportees

The crops are all in and the peaches are rotting
Oranges are piled in their creosote dumps
They're flying them back to the Mexican Border
To pay all their money to wade back again

Goodbye to my Juan, farewell Rosanita
Adios mis amigos, Jesus y Maria
You won't have a name when you ride the big airplane
All they will call you will be deportees

My father's own father he waded that river
Spent all the money he'd made in his life
My brothers and sisters are working your fruit trees
And they rode the truck till they laid down and died

The airplane caught fire over Los Gatos canyon
A fireball of lightning that shook all our hills
Who are these friends who are scattered like dry leaves?
Radio says they are "Just deportees"

Some of us are illegal and some are not wanted
Our work contract's out and we have to move on
Six hundred miles to the Mexico border
They chase us like outlaws, like rustlers, like thieves

We died in your hills, we died in your deserts
We died in your valleys and died on your plains
We died 'neath your trees, we died in your bushes
Both sides of the river, we died just the same

Is this the best way we can farm our great orchards?
Is this the best way we can pick our fresh fruit?
Employing cheap labour from over the border
Labour the radio calls deportees

Woody Guthrie, USA, 1948

After the Los Gatos plane crash of 1948, in which 32 people died, Guthrie was inspired to write this protest song by the fact that newspaper reports named the four white staff and crew, but referred to the 28 dead passengers merely as "deportees".

The Digger's Song (Stand Up Now)

You noble diggers all, stand up now, stand up now
 You noble diggers all, stand up now
 The waste land to maintain, seeing Cavaliers by name
 Your digging does disdain, and persons all defame
 Stand up now, diggers all

Your houses they pull down, stand up now, stand up now
 Your houses they pull down, stand up now
 Your houses they pull down to fright poor men in town
 But the gentry must come down and the poor shall wear the crown
 Stand up now, diggers all

With spades and hoes and ploughs, stand up now, stand up now
 With spades and hoes and ploughs, stand up now
 Your freedom to uphold, seeing Cavaliers are bold
 To kill you if they could, and rights from you to hold
 Stand up now, diggers all

The lawyers they conjoin, stand up now, stand up now
 The lawyers they conjoin, stand up now
 To arrest you they advise, such fury they devise
 The Devil in them lies and hath blinded both their eyes
 Stand up now, diggers all

To conquer them by love, come in now, come in now
 To conquer them by love, come in now
 To conquer them by love, as it does you behave
 For he is King Above, no power is like to love
 Glory here, diggers all

The Digger's Song (World Turned Upside Down)

In 1649 to St. George's Hill,
A ragged band they called the Diggers
Came to show the people's will
They defied the landlords, they defied the laws
They were the dispossessed reclaiming what was theirs

"We come in peace" they said, "to dig and sow
We come to work the land in common
And to make the waste lands grow
This earth divided, we will make whole
So it will be a common treasury for all"

"The sin of property, we do disdain
No man has any right to buy and sell
The earth for private gain
By theft and murder they took the land
Now everywhere the walls spring up at their command"

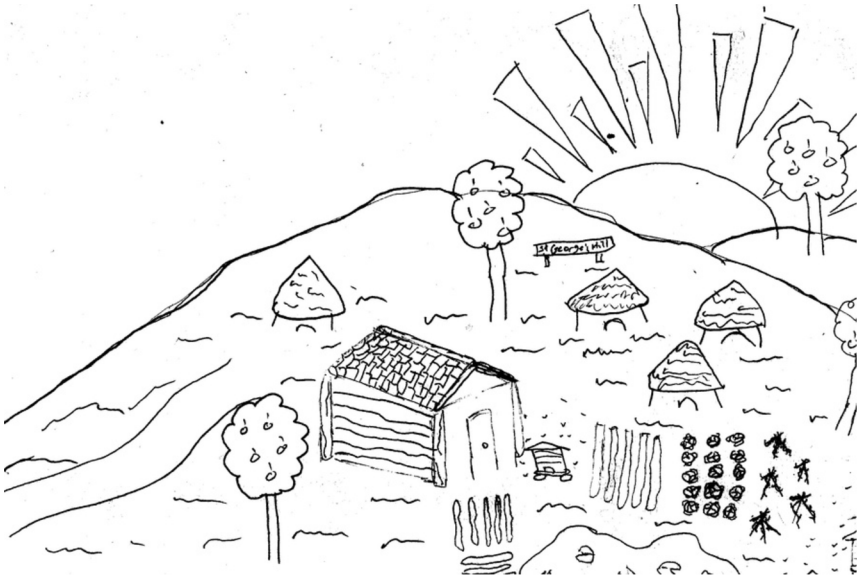
"They make the laws, to chain us well
The clergy dazzle us with heaven
Or they damn us into hell
We will not worship the god they serve
The god of greed who feeds the rich while poor folk starve"

"We work we eat together, we need no swords
We will not bow to the masters
Or pay rent to the lords
Yes we are free, though we are poor
You Diggers all, stand up for glory, stand up now"

From the men of property, the orders came
 They sent the hired men and troopers
 To wipe out the Diggers' claim
 Tear down their cottages, destroy their corn
 They were dispersed, but still the vision lingers on

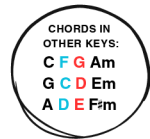
You poor take courage, you rich take care
 This earth was made a common treasury
 For everyone to share
 All things in common, all people one
 We come in peace; the orders came to cut them down

Leon Rosselson, UK, 1975



The Diggers, known at the time as the “True Levellers”, were a radical group active during the English Civil War, who occupied unused land and farmed it cooperatively. The Diggers were reacting against the enclosure of the common land, a process in which aristocrats seized and fenced off public land for their own private use, displacing people who had relied on the land to farm and rear livestock. Leon Rosselson’s song is not related to the much older Digger’s song, which some believe was written by Gerald Winstanley, the group’s leader.

Dirty Old Town



A **D**
I met my love by the gasworks wall

G **D**
Dreamed a dream by the old canal

G **D**
Kissed my girl by the factory wall

A **Bm**
Dirty old town, dirty old town

I heard the siren from the docks
Saw a train set the night on fire
Smelled the spring on the smoky air
Dirty old town, dirty old town

The clouds are drifting across the moon
Cats are prowling on their beat
Springs a girl in the street at night
Dirty old town, dirty old town

I'm going to take a good sharp axe
Shining steel tempered in the fire
We'll chop you down like an old dead tree
Dirty old town, dirty old town

Ewan McColl, UK, 1949

Reflecting on the UK's industrial heritage, this song was written about Salford in Lancashire: a major spinning and weaving factory town in the 18th and 19th centuries. By the time the song was written in 1949, Salford had already lost its traditional manufacturing industries leaving economic depression and social deprivation in its wake.

Dona Nobis Pacem

1 Do-na No-bis pa-cem pa-cem Do - h-a No - bis pa - cem

2 Do - na no - bis pa-cem Do-na no-bis pa - cem

Do - na no - b-is pa-cem Do-na no-bis pa - cem

This song is in Latin. The English translation is "Give us peace"

Donna Donna

On a wagon bound for market
 There's a calf with a mournful eye
 High above him there's a swallow
 Winging swiftly through the sky

Now the winds are laughing
 They laugh with all their might
 Laugh and laugh the whole day through
 And half the summer's night (singing softly)
 Donna, donna, donna, donna
 Donna, donna, donna, do
 Donna, donna, donna, donna
 Donna, donna, donna, do

“Stop complaining” said the farmer
 “Who asked you a calf to be?
 Why don't you have wings to fly with
 Like the swallow so proud and free?”

Calves are easily bound and slaughtered
 Never knowing the reason why
 But whoever treasures freedom
 Like the swallow must learn to fly

Aaron Zeitlin, 1940

Originally written in Yiddish, with “Donna, Donna” being a slight corruption of the phrase “Dana, dana”, a common refrain in Polish and Yiddish folk songs. The song uses the metaphor of a calf to lament the pogroms and genocide suffered by Jewish people in Central and Eastern Europe in the first half of the 20th century.

Down in the Valley

Down in the valley, the valley so low
Hang your head over, hear the winds blow
Hear the winds blow, love, hear the winds blow
Hang your head over, hear the winds blow

Roses love sunshine, violets love dew
Angels in heaven know I love you
Know I love you, love, know I love you
Angels in heaven, know I love you

If you don't love me, love who you please
Put your arms round me, give my heart ease
Give my heart ease, love, give my heart ease
Put your arms round me, give my heart ease

Build me a castle forty feet high
Where I can see her, as she rides by
As she rides by love, as she rides by
Where I can see her as she rides by

Write me a letter, send it by mail
Send it in care of the Birmingham Jail
Birmingham Jail, love, Birmingham Jail
Send it in care of the Birmingham Jail

Trad. American, c. 1909

Down Where the Drunkards Roll

• See the boys out walking, the boys they look so fine
Dressed up in green velvet, their silver buckles shine
Soon they'll be bleary-eyed under a keg of wine

Down where the drunkards roll
Down where the drunkards roll

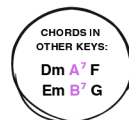
See that lover standing staring at the ground
He's looking for the real thing, lies were all he found
But you can get the real thing, it will only cost a pound

There goes a troubled woman, she dreams a troubled dream
She lives out on the highway, she keeps her money clean
Soon she'll be returning to the place where she's the queen

You can be a gambler who never drew a hand
You can be a sailor, never left dry land
You can be Lord Jesus, all the world will understand

Richard Thompson, UK, 1974

Drill Ye Tarriers Drill



Am

Every morning at seven o'clock

E7

There are twenty tarriers drilling at the rock

Am

And the boss come along and he said keep still

E7

And come down heavy on the cast-iron drill

Am

E7

Am

And drill ye tarriers drill

Am

E7

Am

And drill ye tarriers drill

C

For it's work all day for the sugar in yer tay

E7

Down behind the old railway

Am

E7

Am

And drill ye tarriers drill

E7

Am

E7

Am

And blast - and fire!

Our new foreman is Jimmy McCann

By God he is a blame mean man

One day a premature blast went off

And a mile in the air went big Jim Gough

When next pay day came around

Jim Gough a dollar short was found

When he asked "What for?" came this reply

"You were docked for the time you were up in the sky"

Our boss is a good man down to the ground

And he married a lady six feet round

She bakes good bread and she bakes it well

But she bakes it hard as the holes in hell

Thomas Casey, 1888

Many debates have taken place about how holes in hell can be hard. The original sheet music says "as hard as the hobs in hell", hobs being very hard cast-iron things upon which people cooked in the 1800s. However, from the song's first inclusion in the 1968 songbook FSC has sung "as the holes in hell"; we retain this version here. We note that in 1888 an unskilled labourer would earn \$1.59 for an approx 10-hour work day, implying that Jim Gough stayed aloft for about six hours.

Drunken Sailor

What shall we do with the drunken sailor
 What shall we do with the drunken sailor
 What shall we do with the drunken sailor
 Early in the morning

Hooray and up she rises
 Hooray and up she rises
 Hooray and up she rises
 Early in the morning

Throw him in the longboat 'til he's sober...

Shave his belly with a rusty razor...

Put him in the scuppers with a hose pipe on him...

Put him in the guardroom till he's sober...

That's what we'll do with the drunken sailor...

Trad. British sea shanty, c.1830s

Earth My Body

Earth my body, water my blood
 Air my breath and fire my spirit

Origin unknown, believed to be 1980s

Drunken Sailor is one of the best known sea shanties: endless possible verses, many styles, and it has been performed by hundreds of folk artists. Our printed version follows the classic format of making suggestions for how to sober or punish a drunken sailor: traditionally new verses would be shouted out ad-hoc by the singers.

The Eddystone Light

My father was the keeper of the Eddystone light
And he slept with a mermaid one fine night
And of that union there came three
A porgy and a porpoise and the other was me

Yo ho ho, the wind blows free
Oh for a life on the rolling sea

Late one night when I was a trimmin' of the glim
And singing a verse of the evening hymn
A voice from the starboard shouted "Ahoy"
And there was my mother, sitting on a buoy

"Oh what has become of my children three?"
My mother then she asked of me
"Oh, one was exhibited as a talking fish
The other was served on a chafing dish"

The phosphorus flashed in her seaweed hair
I looked again and my mother wasn't there
A voice came echoing out of the night
"To Hell with the keeper of the Eddystone Light!"

Trad. English, c.1860

The Lighthouse is located on the dangerous Eddystone Rocks off the coast of Cornwall, where there has been a lighthouse for over 300 years.

Erie Canal



Am
I got an old mule and her name is Sal
Am E7 Dm Am
Fifteen miles on the Erie Canal
Am Dm E7
She's a good worker and a good old pal
Am E7 Am
Fifteen years on the Erie Canal

C G
We've hauled some barges in our day
Am E7
Full of lumber and coal and hay
Am C Dm E7
And we know every inch of the way
Am E7 Am G
From Albany to Buffalo-o

C G
Low bridge, everybody down
C G C
Low bridge for we're coming to a town
C F
And you'll always know your neighbour
C F
You'll always know your pal
C F C G C
If you've ever navigated on the Erie Canal

We'd better get along on our way old gal
Fifteen miles on the Erie Canal
'Cause you bet your life I'd never part with Sal
Fifteen years on the Erie Canal
Get up there, mule, here comes a lock
We'll make Rome 'bout six o'clock
One more trip and back we go
Right back home to Buffalo

Thomas Allen, 1912

It has been claimed that Allen based this song on a pre-existing folk song sung by the workers on the Erie Canal, but the evidence is sketchy. Not to be confused with the Eerie Canal, which is where all the ghost barges hang out.

Fathom the Bowl

Come all you bold heroes lend an ear to my song
I will sing you the praise of good brandy and rum
If the clear crystal fountains o'er England shall roll

Bring me the punch ladle, I'll fathom the bowl
I'll fathom the bowl
I'll fathom the bowl
Bring me the punch ladle, I'll fathom the bowl

From France we do get brandy, from Jamaica comes rum
Sweet oranges and lemons from Portugal come
But stout and strong cider are England's control

My wife she do delight me as I sits at my ease
For she says as she likes and she does as she please
My wife she is a darling, she's a wild and free soul

My father he do lie in the depths of the sea
With no stone at his head but what matters for he?
If the clear crystal fountains o'er England shall roll

Original Trad. English, c.1891

The drink punch was brought to Britain by sailors returning home from British colonies in India. Punch became a favourite of the British aristocracy, who used expensive spices and alcohol to show off their wealth, and was often served in ostentatiously decorated silver bowls. Punch is thought by some to be the original cocktail. Rum was a byproduct of the vast sugar estates that were built in the British Caribbean, which until the 1830s employed enslaved people.

Few Days

Well I pitched my tent on this campground
 (Few days, few days)
 And I give old Satan another round
 (And I am going home)

I can't stay in these diggings
 Few days, few days
 Lord I can't stay in these diggings
 And I am going home

Although I like the diggings here
 I won't stay here another year

For years I've labored in cold ground
 And now, at last, I'm homeward bound

I'm going home to stay a while
 Before I go I'll plant a smile

These banking thieves I will not trust
 But with me take my little dust

My mother she has gone before
 I'll meet her there at glory's door

So I pitched my tent on this campground
 And I give old Satan another round

Trad. American, c. 1854

There are many versions of this song, including a sacred harp version and one about American liquor laws! This one is written from the perspective of a miner in the 1849 California Gold Rush.

Fiddler's Green

As I roved by the docks one evening so rare
To view the still water and take the salt air
I heard an old fisherman singing a song
"Oh take me away boys, me time it's not long"

"Dress me up in me oilskins and jumper
No more on the docks I'll be seen
Just tell me old shipmates I'm taking a trip mates
And I'll see you someday in Fiddlers Green"

Now Fiddlers Green is a place I've heard tell
Where fishermen go if they don't go to Hell
Where the weather is fair and the dolphins do play
And the cold coast of Greenland is far, far away

Now the sky's always clear and there's never a gale
And the fish jump on board with a swish of their tail
Where you lie at your leisure, there's no work to do
And the skipper's below making tea for the crew

Now when we're in dock and the long trip is through
There's pubs and there's parks and there's lasses there too
Where the girls are all pretty and the beer it flows free
And there's bottles of rum growing from every tree

No I don't need a harp nor a halo, not me
Just give me a breeze and a good rolling sea
And I'll play me old squeezebox as we sail along
With the wind in the rigging to sing me this song

John Connelly, 1966

The first printed reference to the concept of "Fiddler's Green" as a sailors' heaven was 1836.

Five Hundred Miles

If you miss the train I'm on
 You will know that I am gone
 You can hear the whistle blow a hundred miles
 A hundred miles, a hundred miles
 A hundred miles, a hundred miles
 You can hear the whistle blow a hundred miles

Lord I'm one, Lord I'm two
 Lord I'm three, Lord I'm four
 Lord I'm five hundred miles from my home
 Five hundred miles, five hundred miles
 Five hundred miles, five hundred miles
 Lord I'm five hundred miles from my home

Not a shirt on my back
 Not a penny to my name
 Lord I can't go home this a-way
 This-a-way (x4)
 Lord I can't go home this a-way

Hedy West, 1961

Follow the Drinking Gourd

When the sun comes back and the first quail calls
 Follow the drinking gourd
 The old man is a-waiting for to carry you to freedom
 Follow the drinking gourd, gourd, gourd, gourd

Follow the drinking gourd, follow the drinking gourd
 For the old man is a-waiting for to carry you to freedom
 Follow the drinking gourd

Now the river bank makes a mighty good road
 The dead trees will show you the way
 Left foot, peg foot, travelling on
 Follow the drinking gourd, gourd, gourd, gourd

The river ends between two hills
 Follow the drinking gourd
 There's another river on the other side
 Follow the drinking gourd, gourd, gourd, gourd

Where the little river meets the great big one
 Follow the drinking gourd
 There the old man is a-waiting for to carry you to freedom
 Follow the drinking gourd, gourd, gourd, gourd

Trad. American spiritual, 1800s

The drinking gourd is another name for the Plough constellation which points to the North Star and is an accurate marker to follow while travelling at night. The song tells the story of a sailor known as Peg-Leg Joe who helped enslaved people to escape and run north to freedom, following the waters of the Tombigbee and Ohio Rivers. He would teach this song to the to those escaping and show them the mark of his peg leg, which they could then follow.

Freedom Train

This old free-dom train has been a long_ time co-ming aint no
 bo - dy go - nna miss it now so jump on while it's ru-nning gi-mme that
 Fr - ee - dom gi-mme that Fr - ee - dom gi-mme that
 Free-dom free-dom Chk-a-cha chk-a-cha Free - dom free - dom Chk a cha chk-a cha

8 part alternative: Free - dom free - dom chk - a-cha chk - a-cha

Trad. American

Designed to be a 16 part progressive round, with groups dividing in two on each repetition. By the 6th repetition the “chk-a-chas” should become continuous.

For a more lodge-fire-friendly 8 part version sing the fourth line as:

“Freedom, freedom, freedom, freedom,., Chk-a-cha, chk-cha, chk-a-ch, chk-a-cha”

Of unknown origin but presumably refers to the “Freedom Train” which toured the United States 1947-1949 promoting “Americanism” in the aftermath of the Second World War. Significantly the train was officially “desegregated” by the Truman administration at a time when some southern states ‘segregated’ train passengers by designating specific seats for “whites” and specific seats for “blacks”.

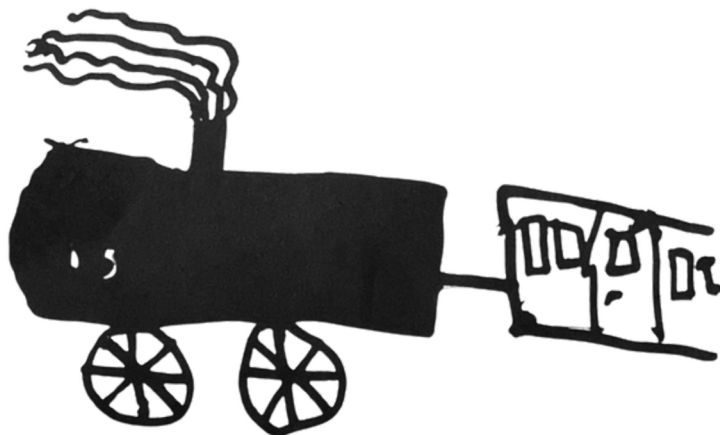
Freight Train

Freight train, freight train runs so fast
Freight train, freight train runs so fast
Please don't tell what train I'm on
So they won't know where I'm gone

When I die Lord bury me deep
Way down on old Chestnut Street
So I can hear old number nine
As she comes rolling by

When I am dead and in my grave
No more good times ere I crave
Put a stone at my head and feet
And tell them all that I'm gone to sleep

Elizabeth Cotten, 1910



Elizabeth 'Libba' Cotten wrote this classic song in approximately 1910 aged 14. As a black woman working in domestic service she had little time for music. Decades later she became a maid to the musical Seeger family, picked up her guitar again after 40 years and started releasing compositions and songs from her youth. The copyright to Freight Train was stolen from her by two male British folksingers, and eventually returned. Cotten has a significant legacy in US folk music.

Froggy Went A-Courtin'



^CFroggy went a courtin' and he did ride, a-hum ^F^C

^CFroggy went a courtin' and he did ride, a-hum, a-hum ^G

^CFroggy went a courtin' and he did ride ^{C'}

^FA sword and pistol by his side

^CA-hum, ^Fa-hum, ^Ga-hum, ^Ca-hum

Came up to Missie Mouse's door, a-hum...

Where he'd often been before...

"Missie Mouse are you within?" A-hum...

"Yes kind sir and please do come in..."

"Missie Mouse will you marry me?" A-hum...

"O no kind sir that never can be..."

"Without my Uncle Rat's consent, A-hum..."

I would not marry the President..."

Uncle Rat laughed till he split his sides, a-hum...

To think his niece would be a bride...

Where will the wedding breakfast be? A-hum...

Way down yonder in the hollow tree...

What will the wedding breakfast be? A-hum

Two red beans and a black-eyed pea...

So they all went swimming across the lake, a-hum...

And got swallowed up by a big black snake...

Trad. British, c.1549

While this version of the song is based on 20th century recordings made by singers in the USA, the first version appears in the Scots language in 1549 under the name "The Frog cam to the Myl dur". It may be an allegory for the marriage of the young Mary Queen of Scots "Missie Mouse" to the French Prince Louis "Froggy". Or, of course, it may not be.

Ghost of John

Have you heard of the ghost of John?
 Pale white bone with the flesh all gone
 Poo-oo-oo-oor old John
 Wouldn't it be chilly with no skin on?

Origin Unknown

Thermoreceptors are specialised nerve cells that detect temperature, primarily found in the skin. Without skin or flesh, John would not be able to sense temperature, and thus would not be chilly. However, he would probably have other problems.

Go Down You Blood Red Roses

Our boots and clothes is all in pawn
 Go down, you blood red roses, go down
 And it's flaming draughty 'round Cape Horn
 Go down, you blood red roses, go down

Oh, you pinks and posies
 Go down, you blood red roses, go down.

It's 'round Cape Horn we must go...
 Our clothes all stiff with ice and snow

My dear old mother wrote to me...
 Saying "Dearest son, come home from the sea"

It's growl you may but go you must...
 If you growl too hard, your head they'll bust

Just one more heave and that'll do...
 And we're the ones to see her through

Trad. English halyard shanty, c.1850

Gonna be an Engineer

When I was a little girl I wished I was a boy
 I tagged along behind the gang and wore my corduroys
 Everybody said I only did it to annoy
 But I was gonna be an engineer
 Mamma told me, "Can't you be a lady?
 Your duty is to make me the mother of a pearl
 Wait until you're older, dear, and maybe
 You'll be glad that you're a girl."

Then Jimmy come along and we set up a conjugation
 We were busy every night with love and recreation
 I spent the day at work so he could get his education
 Well, now he's an engineer!
 "You owe it to the kids to be a lady
 Dainty as a dishrag, faithful as a chow
 Stay at home, you got to mind the baby
 Remember you're a mother now!"

Oh, but now that times are harder and me Jimmy's got the sack
 I went down to Vickers, they were glad to have me back
 But I'm a third-class citizen, my wages tell me that
 And I'm a first-class engineer!
 The boss, he says, "We pay you as a lady
 You only got the job 'cause I can't afford a man
 With you, I keep the profits high as may be
 You're just a cheaper pair of hands."

Well, I listened to my mother and I joined a typing pool
 I listened to my lover and I put him through his school
 But if I listen to the boss, I'm just a bloody fool
 And an underpaid engineer
 I've been a sucker ever since I was a baby
 As a daughter, as a wife, as a mother, and a dear
 But I'll fight them as a woman, not a lady
 Fight them as an engineer!

Great American Railway

In eighteen hundred and eighty one
 The American Railway was begun (x2)
 The Great American Railway

Patsy - atsy - or - ee - ay (x3)
 The Great American Railway

I found myself with nothing to do...
 Just beside the Railway

The overseer accepted me...
 For work upon the Railway

My hands were tired and my feet were sore...
 From working on the Railway

I found myself more dead than alive...
 From working on the Railway

I trod on a bundle of dynamite sticks...
 Just beside the Railway

I found myself half way to heaven...
 Just above the Railway

I picked the lock of the Golden Gate...
 With a crowbar from the Railway

I found my wings and a harp divine...
 Overlooking the Railway

If you want any more you can sing it again...
 All about the Railway

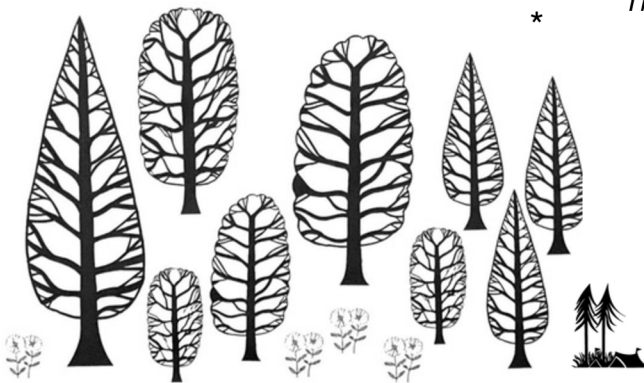
Trad. American, c.1900

The first rails of the US Transcontinental Railway were laid in January of 1863, but presumably it took them until 1881 to realise you can't start a song that way.

Green Grow the Rushes-O

I'll sing you one-o!
 Green grow the rushes-o
 What is your one-o?
 One is one and all alone
 And ever more shall be so

Two, two, the lily white boys clothéd all in green-o
 Three, three the rivals
 Four for the Gospel makers
 Five for the symbols at your door
 Six for the six proud walkers
 Seven for the seven stars in the sky
 Eight for the April rainers
 Nine for the nine bright shiners
 Ten for the Ten Commandments
 Eleven for the eleven that went to Heaven
 Twelve for the Twelve Apostles



Trad. English, 1800s

This song refers to an obscure mix of Christian theology, astrological formations, and other things that can only be guessed at

*Not rushes

Grey Funnel Line

Don't mind the rain or the rolling sea
The weary night never worries me
But the hardest time in a sailor's day
Is to watch the sun as it dies away
Here's one more day on the Grey Funnel Line

The finest ship that sails the sea
Is still a prison for the likes of me
But give me wings like Noah's dove
I'd fly up harbour to the girl I love
Here's one more day on the Grey Funnel Line

Oh Lord, if only dreams were real
I'd have my hands on that wooden wheel
And with all my heart I'd turn her round
And tell the boys that we're homeward bound
Here's one more day on the Grey Funnel Line

I'll pass the time like some machine
Until blue water turns to green
Then I'll dance on down that walk ashore
And sail the Grey Funnel Line no more
And sail the Grey Funnel Line no more

Cyril Tawney, 1959

"The Grey Funnel Line" was a nickname among sailors in the Royal Navy, whose ships had their masts painted a dull grey.

Hal and Tow

Take the scorn to wear a horn
 It was the crest when you were born
 Your father's father wore it
 And your father wore it too

Hal and Tow, jolly rumbelow
 We were up long before the day-oh
 To welcome in the summer, to welcome in the May-oh
 For summer is a coming in and winter's gone away-oh

What happened to the Spaniards
 That made so great a boast-oh
 Why they shall eat the feathered goose
 And we shall eat the roast-oh

Robin Hood and Little John
 Have all come to the Fair-oh
 And we will to the merry green wood
 To hunt the buck and hare-oh

God bless St Mary, Moses
 And all the poor and mite-oh
 And send us peace to England
 Send peace by day and night-oh

Trad. English, 1600s

A song with a much-disputed history, and many iterations over the years. The chorus was first recorded in the 1600s, and verses in the late 1800s. It is an old Cornish song which accompanied a dance intended to bring good fortune, good weather for crops and fertility for the livestock.

Halleluia I'm a Bum



^C
Oh the winter is gone and the springtime has come

So I'll pick up my bundle and go on the bum ^{G⁷}

^C
Halleluia, I'm a bum, Halleluia, bum again ^{G⁷}

^C ^F ^{G⁷} ^C
Halleluia, give us a handout to revive us again

Oh I went to a house and I asked for some bread
And the lady said Bum, Bum, the baker is dead

Oh why don't you work as other folk do?
How the Hell can I work when there's no work to do?

Oh why don't you pray for your daily bread?
Well, if that's all I did I would damn soon be dead

Oh I went to a house and I knocked on the door
The lady said Bum, Bum, you've been here before

Trad. American, c. 1890

A parody based on the Scottish hymn Halleluia Thine The Glory (revive us again) from c. 1863. The term "bum" meaning idle person probably derives from the German word "bummeln" - to go slowly / waste time. See Glossary for more details.

INTERACTIVE SONGBOOK! Draw a picture of your own bum here:

Hanging on the Old Barbed Wire

If you want to see the general, I know where he is
 I know where he is, I know where he is
 If you want to see the general, I know where he is
 He's pinning another medal on his chest
 I saw him, I saw him
 Pinning another medal on his chest (I saw him)
 Pinning another medal on his chest

If you want to see the colonel, I know where he is.
 He's sitting in comfort stuffing his bloody face

If you want to see the major...
 He's home again on seven days' leave...

If you want to see the sergeant...
 He's drinking all the company's rum...

If you want to see the corporal...
 He's drunk upon the dug-out floor...

If you want to see the private...
 He's hanging on the old barbed wire

Trad. British, c.1914

Appeared during World War 1, written by soldiers in the 'trenches'. On the 'western front' trenches were first dug as ditches to protect soldiers and evolved into a complex network of nearly 500 miles across Europe. Conditions were terrible: rats, rot, rising waters and mud. Thousands of young men on both sides died going 'over the top' to face enemy fire in an attempt to win enemy trenches, casualties were horrific. Contrary to the song's narrative and to most subsequent wars, officers' death rates in WW1 were higher than private soldiers: they were expected to lead from the front and their uniforms had distinctive features which enemy soldiers targeted.

Hard Times

Let us pause in life's pleasures and count its many tears
 While we all sup sorrow with the poor
 There's a song that will linger forever in our ears
 Oh hard times come again no more

'Tis the song, the sigh of the weary
 Hard times, hard times come again no more
 Many days you have lingered around my cabin door
 Oh hard times come again no more

While we seek mirth and beauty and music light and gay
 There are frail forms fainting at the door
 Though their voices are silent their pleading looks still say
 Oh hard times come again no more...

There's a pale drooping maiden who toils her life away
 With a worn heart whose better days are o'er
 Though her voice would be merry she's sighing all the day
 Oh hard times come again no more...

'Tis a sigh that is wafted across the troubled wave
 'Tis a wail that is heard upon the shore
 'Tis a dirge that is murmured around the lowly grave
 Oh hard times come again no more...

Stephen Foster, USA, 1854

Frequently sung during the American Civil War in the early 1860s as an expression of suffering and hardship. Foster said he based the tune on snatches of spirituals he had heard when his nurse had taken him to the local African-American church.

Hares on the Mountain

If all you young men were hares on the mountain (x2)
How many young girls would take guns and go hunting?

If the young men could sing like blackbirds and thrushes (x2)
How many young girls would go beating the bushes?

If all you young men were ducks in the water (x2)
How many young girls would dive in and swim after?

If all you young men were rushes a-growing (x2)
How many young girls would take scythes and go mowing?

But the young men are given to frisking and fooling,
Oh, the young men are given to frisking and fooling,
So I'll leave them alone and attend to my schooling

Trad. English, c.1900



Please return all scythes to the stores tent after use.

Harriet Tubman

One night I dreamed I was in slavery
'Bout 1850 was the time
Sorrow was the only sign
Nothing around to ease my mind
Out of the night appeared a lady
Leading a distant pilgrim band
First mate, she yelled pointing her hand
Make room on board for this young woman

Singing "Come on up, I got a lifeline
Come on up to this train of mine
Come on up, I got a lifeline
Come on up to this train of mine"
She said her name was Harriet Tubman
And she drove for the underground railroad

Hundreds of miles we travelled onward
Gathering slaves from town to town
Seeking every lost and found
Setting those free that once were bound
Somehow my heart was growing weaker
I fell by the waysides sinking sand
Firmly did this lady stand
She lifted me up and took my hand

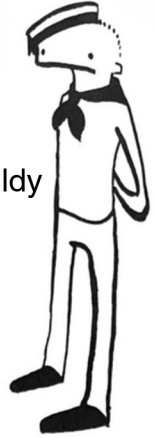
Walter Robinson, 1977

Harriet Tubman was a leader of the Underground Railroad, a secret network of safe houses that helped slaves escape to the north during the American Civil War. For most enslaved people, the only hope of freedom was escape.

Haul Away Joe

When I was a little lad or so my mother told me
 (Way haul away, we'll haul away Joe)
 That if I disrespected girls my lips would grow all mouldy
 (Way haul away, we'll haul away Joe)

Way haul away, we'll haul away together
 Way haul away, we'll haul away, Joe (x2)



King Louis was the king of France, before the revolution...
 And then he had his head cut off which spoiled his constitution

The cook is in the galley making duff so handy...
 The captain's in his cabin drinking wine and brandy...

You call yourself a second mate but you cannot tie a bowline...
 You cannot even stand up straight when the ship is a-rolling...

Saint Patrick was a gentleman, he came from decent people...
 He built a church in Dublin Town, and on it put a steeple....

Trad. sea shanty, 1800s

This is a 'short-haul' shanty, meaning it has a quick pace suitable for quick work. It was traditionally sung by sailors while they hauled the foresheet, the rope attached to the frontmost sail of a boat.

The Herring (Geordie Version)

What'll I do with my herring's head?
 Oh what'll you do with your herring's head?
 I make it into loaves of bread
 Herring's head - loaves of bread

And all manner of things
 Of all the fish that swim in the sea
 The herring is the fish for me
 Away the day, away the day
 My Hinnie oh

What'll I do with my herring's eyes?
 Oh what'll you do with your herring's eyes?
 I make them into puddings and pies
 Herring's eyes - puddings and pies
 Herring's head - loaves of bread
 Herring's tail - barrel of ale
 Herring's guts - pair of boots
 Herring's scales - ship with sails
 Herring's fins - needles and pins
 Herring's back - fishing smack
 Herring's gills - window sills

Oh what do you think of such a thing?
 Haven't I done well with my bonny herring?

Trad. English, c.1831

A drinking song particularly popular in the Northeast of England. Nicknamed "silver darlings" in parts of England, herring have played an important role in the economy of Northern Europe, acting both as a staple food and an important trade good. The cities of Copenhagen and Amsterdam were founded as herring fishing ports. All the things that the various bits of the herring could be made into is allegorical for the wealth created by the herring fishing industry.

Hesitation Blues

If the river was chocolate and I was a duck
I'd dive to the bottom and I'd never come up

Tell me how long have I got to wait?
Can I get you now, or must I... Hesitate?

I was born in Alabama, raised in Tennessee
If you don't like my peaches, keep your hands off my tree

I was born in England, schooled in France
If you want to know more best ask my parents

Well, rocks in the ocean, the fish in the sea
They know you mean the world to me

A nickle is a nickle, and a dime is a dime
I got a house full of kids, so we're never on time

I got the hesitation stockings, hesitation shoes
I really do believe I've got the hesitation blues

Trad. American, c.1916

Hey Ho, Anybody home?

Hey, ho, anybody home?
 Meat nor drink nor money have I none
 Still I will remain happy

Thomas Ravenscroft, c.1609

This 16th century song was a favourite of carollers who went from door to door at Christmas hoping for food and drink. It can be sung either in three or six parts as a round, and works as a round with Rose, Rose, Rose, Rose.

Hill an' Gully Rider

Hill an' gully rider
 Hill an' gully
 Hill an' gully rider
 Hill an' gully

With a low down bend down
 Hill an' gully

And then you better mind your tumble down
 Hill an' gully

If you tumble down you break your neck
 Hill an' gully

If you break your neck you go to Hell
 Hill an' gully

Trad. Jamaican Work Song, 1800s

This Jamaican song can be sung either as a round or as a call and response. The original version was sung in Jamaican Creole, a language created by enslaved people brought to Jamaica to work on British plantations. Millions of people from Africa were enslaved and taken to British colonies in the Americas; many died on the journey across the Atlantic, or were worked to death upon arrival.

Home Boys Home

Oh who wouldn't be a sailor boy a-sailing on the main?
 To gain the good will of his captain is to blame
 For he went ashore now one evening for to be
 And that was the beginning of the whole calamity

And it's home, boys, home
 Home I'd like to be
 Home for a while in me own country
 Where the oak and the ash and the bonny rowan tree
 Are all a-blooming freely in the north country

Now I asked her for a handkerchief to tie around me head
 And likewise for a candle for to light me up to bed
 She tended to me needs just as I like a maid to do
 So then I says to her, "why don't you jump in with me too?"

Oh she jumped into bed now taking no alarm
 Thinking a young sailor lad to her could do no harm
 I hugged her, I kissed her the whole night long
 Till she wished the short night had been seven years long

Oh well early next morning the sailor lad arose
 And into Mary's apron poured a pocket full of gold
 Saying "Take this my dear for the mischief I have done
 For tonight I fear I've left you with a daughter or a son."

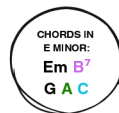
Well if the child likes history, then send them out to teach
 And if they like religion, then send them out to preach,
 If they like the open sea, then give them a jacket blue
 And send them up the rigging like their daddy used to do

Come listen all you fair maids take this advice from me
 Never let a sailor lad an inch above your knee
 For I trusted one and he beguiled me
 And he left me with a pair of twins to dandle on me knee

Trad. Irish / English, c.1900

Combines two much earlier tunes - "Rosemary Lane" and "The Oak and the Ash". This version was rewritten in 2024 by two Woodlings, Alanis and Lyra, to keep up with the times.

House of the Rising Sun



There is a house in New Orleans

They call the Rising Sun

It's been the ruin of many a poor girl

And God I know I'm one

My mother was a tailor
 She sewed my new blue jeans
 My father was a gamblin' man
 Down in New Orleans

Now the only thing a gambler needs
 Is a suitcase and a gun
 And the only time he's satisfied
 Is when he's dead and gone

Now Mother tell my sister
 Not to do what I have done
 Spend your life in sin and misery
 In the house of the Rising Sun

With one foot on the platform
 And the other foot on the train
 I'm going back to New Orleans
 To wear that ball and chain

I'm going back to New Orleans
 My race is almost run
 I'm going back to end my life
 In the house of the Rising Sun

Trad. American, c.1930

This version was collected in the USA but the song is considered by many to resemble "The Unfortunate Rake", an English song which dates from the 1500s. The Rising Sun is thought by some to be the name of a brothel, and others to be a prison, as the New Orleans Women's Prison featured a mural of a rising sun on its gate.

The Huntsman

The Huntsman blew loud on his horn, blew loud on his horn
 And all that he blew it was lost and gone, was lost and gone
 (Ta-ri-a sar sah, ti-ra-la-la)
 And all that he blew it was lost and gone

Shall all my blowings be just forlorn...
 Far better were I no huntsman born...

He cast his net the bush about...
 A nut brown damsel sprung quickly out...

Oh nut brown damsel escape me not...
 I have great big hounds that will fetch thee hot...

Thy great big hounds they will fetch me not...
 My high mighty leapings they know them not...

Thy high mighty leapings they know full well...
 They know that today death thee must fell...

Well if I die then I'll be dead...
 O bury me deep 'neath the roses red...

And under the lilies and roses red...
 I'll sleep for ever, in my last bed...

And on her grave three lilies grew...
 A squire rode by and would pluck the few...

O Squire forbear, let the lilies stand...
 They are for a fresh young huntsman's hand...

Origin Unknown, thought to be FSC

This song is thought to be unique to the FSC oral folk tradition. The verses appear to be a combination of two German poems written in 1776, both of which refer to an even older ballad called the "Nachtjaeger" ("Night Hunter"). It's the first song in the first FSC songbook of 1968.

I Am Weary (Let Me Rest)

Kiss me, Mother, kiss your daughter
Lay my head upon your breast
Throw your loving arms around me
I am weary, let me rest

Seems the light is swiftly fading
Pride or sins they do now show
I am standing by the river
Angels wait to take me home

Kiss me, Mother, kiss your daughter
See the pain upon my brow
While you'll soon be with the angels
Fate has doomed my future now

Through the years you've always loved me
And my life you've tried to save
But now I shall slumber sweetly
In a deep and lonely grave

Kiss me, Mother, kiss your darling
Lay my head upon your breast
Throw your loving arms around me
I am weary, let me rest
I am weary, let me rest

Pete Roberts, USA, c.1960

I Don't Want Your Millions Mister

I don't want your millions, Mister
I don't want your diamond ring
All I want is the right to live, Mister
Give me back my job again

I don't want your Rolls Royce, Mister
I don't want your pleasure yacht
All I want is food for my babies
Give to me my old job back

We worked to build this country, Mister
While you enjoyed a life of ease
You've stolen all that we built, Mister
Now our children starve and freeze

Think me dumb if you wish, Mister
Call me green or blue or red
This one thing I know for sure, Mister
My hungry children must be fed

Take the two opposing parties
No difference in them I can see
But with a Farmer Labor party
We could set the people free

Jim Garland, USA, 1941

I'll Fly Away

Some bright morning when this life is over
I'll fly away
To that home on God's celestial shore
I'll fly away

I'll fly away, O Glory
I'll fly away (In the morning)
When I die, Halleluia, by and by
I'll fly away
When the shadows of this life are gone...
Like a bird from these prison walls I'll fly...

Oh, how glad and happy when we meet...
No more cold iron shackles on my feet...

Just a few more weary days and then...
To a land where joys will never end...

Albert E. Brumley, USA, 1929

"I'll Fly Away" has been called the most recorded gospel (see Glossary) song of all time. It's common at worship and funerals in many Christian denominations.

Ilkley Moor baht 'at

Where has tha been since I saw thee, I saw thee?

On Ilkley Moor baht 'at!

Where has tha been since I saw thee? (x2)

On Ilkley Moor baht 'at! (Where's that?)

On Ilkley Moor baht 'at! (Up North!)

On Ilkley Moor baht 'at! (Where the ducks play football)

Tha's been a courting' Mary Jane...

Tha's gonna catch thy death of cold...

Then we shall have to bury thee...

Then worms'll come and eat thee up...

Then ducks'll come and eat up worms...

Then we shall come and eat up ducks...

Then we shall all have eaten thee...

The moral of the story goes...

Don't go without a hat!

Don't go without a hat!

Don't go without a hat!

Trad. English, c.1850

Traditionally sung in a Yorkshire dialect, with the title meaning "On Ilkley Moor without a hat". It is considered by some to be an unofficial anthem of the county of Yorkshire.

Irene

Irene, good night Irene
 Irene, good night
 Good night Irene, good night Irene
 I kiss you in my dreams

I asked your mother for you
 She told me you was too young
 I wish to the Lord I'd never seen your face
 I'm sorry you ever was born

Last Saturday night I got married
 Me an' my wife settled down
 Now me an' my wife are parted
 Gonna take me a stroll uptown

You caused me to weep, you caused me to mourn
 You caused me to leave my home
 But the very last words I heard her say
 Were, "Please sing me one more song"

Stop rambling and stop gambling
 Quit staying out late at night
 Go home to your wife and your family
 Sit down by the fireside bright

I love Irene, God knows I do
 I love her 'til the sea runs dry
 If Irene turns her back on me
 I'm gonna take morphine and die

Sometimes I live in the country
 Sometimes I live in the town
 Sometimes I have a great notion
 To jump in the river and drown

Huddie 'Lead Belly' Ledbetter, USA, c.1880

Written by Huddie Ledbetter, one of the most influential African-American folk artists of the 1930s, based upon the earlier song "Irene, Goodnight" by Gussie Lord Davis, the first African-American songwriter to become famous on Tin Pan Alley, a NYC street that housed many musical publishing houses.

Jamaican Farewell

Down the way where the nights are gay
 And the sun shines daily on the mountain top
 I took a trip on a sailing ship
 And when I reached Jamaica, I made a stop

But I'm sad to say, I'm on my way
 Won't be back for many a day
 My heart is down, my head is turning around
 I had to leave the one I love in Kingston Town

Sounds of laughter everywhere
 And the dancing girls swing to and fro
 I must declare that my heart is there
 Though I've been from Maine down to Mexico

Down at the market you can hear
 Ladies cry out as on their heads they bear
 Ackee, rice and salt fish are nice
 And the rum is fine any time of year

Irving Burgie, c.1950

This song is written in the form of a traditional Jamaican folk song, known as a "mento". Irving Burgie wrote "Jamaica Farewell" for Harry Belafonte's 1956 album 'Calypso'. Ackee and saltfish is the national dish of Jamaica.

Jean Harlow

Jean Harlow died the other day
 And these are the very last words I heard her say
 "Mama don't walk, mama talking (x3) New York"
 Zingalanga Zing-a-lang-a doo-doo-doo-doo (x3) New York

Huddie "Lead Belly" Ledbetter, c.1937

Jean Harlow was a famous Hollywood actress who died in 1937 at the age of 26. This round is adapted from the song Lead Belly wrote upon hearing of her death.

Jock Stewart



My name is Jock Stewart and I'm a canny young man
 And a rambling young fellow I've been
 So be easy and free when you're drinking with me
 I'm a man you don't meet every day

Come fill up your glasses of brandy or wine
 And whatever the cost I will pay
 So be easy and free when you're drinking with me
 I'm a man you don't meet every day

I've got acres of land, I have men at command
 And I've always a shilling to spare
 So be easy and free when you're drinking with me
 I'm a man you don't meet every day

I take out my dog and with him I do shoot
 All by the River Kildare
 So be easy and free when you're drinking with me
 I'm a man you don't meet every day

Trad. Scottish c.1880

This seems to have evolved in the Scottish traveller community through oral transmission) from a comedy music hall song called "A Man You Don't Meet Everyday"

John Ball

Who'll be the lady, who will be the lord
 When we are ruled by the love of one another
 Who'll be the lady, who will be the lord
 In the life that is coming in the morning

Sing John Ball and Johanna Ferrour
 Long live the day that is dawning
 And I'll crow like a cock, I'll carol like a lark
 For the life that is coming in the morning

Eve is the lady, Adam is the lord
 When we are ruled by the love of one another
 Eve is the lady, Adam is the lord
 In the life that is coming in the morning

All shall be ruled by fellowship I say
 All shall be ruled by the love of one another
 All shall be ruled by fellowship I say
 In the life that is coming in the morning

Labour and spin for fellowship I say
 Labour and spin for the love of one another
 Labour and spin for fellowship I say
 And the life that is coming in the morning

Sydney Carter, UK, 1981

John Ball was one of the seven leaders of the 1381 Peasants Revolt. His studies of the Bible led him to conclude that there was no basis for the feudal system of aristocracy and peasants - as all were equal in the garden of Eden. ("When Adam delved and Eve span, who was then the gentleman?"). Johanna Ferrour was one of the two female co-leaders, and her name is added to this edition with permission of the author in honour of the women who participated but were largely written out of the revolt's history.

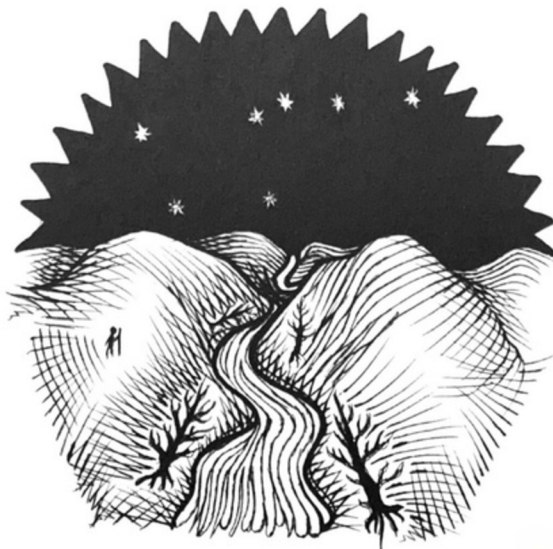
Johnny Boy Go Home

Johnny Boy go home, to the land you know
There's a warm fire burning, a place set at your table
Johnny Boy go home, far away from this place
Please remember the morning mist, feel the sun on your face

See the light shining, shining on the water's edge
Warm away the winter chill with the joy that you bring into my heart
See the light shining, shining on the water's edge
Warm away the winter chill with the joy that you bring into my heart

Johnny Boy go home, to the land you know
There's a future calling you, there's a future calling me
Johnny Boy go home, far away from this place
Please remember the morning mist, feel the sun on your face

Matthew Wood & Karen Simpson, UK, 2000



Written for a play called *Castles And Roses* by Karen Simpson (Action Transport Theatre Company) about a boy who finds himself with a canalboat family in the early 1900's. Now probably uniquely preserved on FSC.

Johnny I Hardly Knew Ya

While goin' the road to sweet Athy, hurroo, hurroo
 While goin' the road to sweet Athy, hurroo, hurroo
 While goin' the road to sweet Athy
 A stick in me hand and a tear in me eye
 A doleful damsel I heard cry,
 Johnny I hardly knew ye

With your drums and guns and drums and guns (x3)
 The enemy nearly slew ye
 Oh my darling dear, ye look so queer
 Johnny I hardly knew ye

Where are your eyes that looked so mild (x3)
 When my heart you so beguiled
 Why did ye skeddadle from me and the child,
 Johnny, I hardly knew ye

Where are your legs that used to run (x3)
 When you went for to carry a gun
 Indeed your dancing days are done,
 Johnny, I hardly knew ye

Ye haven't an arm, ye haven't a leg (x3)
 Ye're an armless, boneless, chickenless egg
 Ye'll have to put with a bowl out to beg
 Johnny I hardly knew ye

I'm happy for to see ye home (x3)
 All from the island of Sulloon
 So low in flesh, so high in bone
 Johnny I hardly knew ye

But sad it is to see you so (x3)
 And to think of you now as an object of woe
 Your Peggy will still keep you on as her beau
 Johnny I hardly knew ye

They're rolling out the guns again (x3)
 To fight the wars in France and Spain
 But they never will take our sons again
 Johnny I'm swearing to ye

Joseph Geoghegan, England, 1867



A parody of a 1863 patriotic song called "When Johnny comes marching home again" about the joyous reception of a returning war hero by the grateful residents of his home town. This version uses the same tune and structure to paint a different picture.

Jug of Punch

As I was sitting with jug and spoon
 One fine morning in the month of June
 A birdie sat on an ivy bunch
 And the song he sang was a jug of punch

Toora loora loo, Toora loora loo
 Toora loora loo, Toora loora loo
 A birdie sat on an ivy bunch
 And the song he sang was a jug of punch

What more diversion can a man desire
 Than to court a maid by an ale house fire?
 With Kerry Pippin to crack and crunch
 Aye, and on the table a jug of punch

The learned doctors with all their art
 Cannot cure depression that's on the heart
 Even gluttons forget their lunch
 When they're safe outside of a jug of punch

And when I'm dead and in my grave
 No costly tombstone will I crave
 Just lay me down in my native peat
 With a jug of punch at my head and feet

Trad. Irish, 1800s

A traditional Irish drinking song. Punch is often considered to come from the Hindi word "Panch" meaning 5, as it has five ingredients: alcohol, water, sugar, spices, and citrus.

The Keeper

The Keeper did a-shooting go
 And under his cloak he carries a bow
 All for to shoot at a merry little doe
 Among the leaves so green-o

Jackie Boy	Master
Sing ye well	Very Well
Hey down	Ho down
Derry, derry down.	Among the leaves so green-o
To my hey down down	To my ho down down
Hey down	Ho down
Derry, derry down.	Among the leaves so green-o

The first doe he shot at he missed
 The second doe he trimmed, he kissed
 The third doe went where nobody wist
 Among the leaves so green-o

The fourth doe she did cross the brook
 The keeper fetched her back with his crook
 Where she is now she may remain
 Among the leaves so green-o

The fifth doe she did cross the brook
 the keeper fetched her back with his crook
 Where she is now you may go and look
 Among the leaves so green-o

The sixth doe she ran over the plain
 But he with his hounds did turn her again
 It is there he did hunt in a merry, merry vein
 Among the leaves so green-o

Trad. English, c.1670

Originally called "The Huntsman's Delight", earlier versions contained lyrics which made the song's allegory of pursuing women more obvious.

Kilgary Mountain

As I was a going over Kilgary Mountain
 I met Captain Farrell and his money he was counting
 I drew forth my pistol and I rattled out my sabre
 Saying, "Stand and deliver for I am a bold deceiver"

Mush-a-rigum-a-durum-dar
 Whack fol di daddy-o
 Whack fol di daddy-o
 There's whisky in the jar

I counted out his money and it made a pretty penny
 So I put it in my pocket and I took it home to Jenny
 She promised in her heart that she never would deceive me
 But the Devil take that woman for she never could be easy

I went to Jenny's chamber for to take a little slumber
 I dreamt of gold and jewels and for sure it was no wonder
 But Jenny drew my charges and filled them up with water
 Then she fetched Captain Farrell just as fast as she could totter

'Twas early in the morning I was wakened from my napping
 I beheld a band of footman and the wily, handsome captain
 I reached for my pistols for to begin the slaughter
 But I could not discharge them for I couldn't fire the water

I reached for my sabre but I found I hadn't any
 And I knew I had been taken by my darling sporting Jenny
 And thus I did surrender, and a prisoner I was taken
 And by a gay deceiver then I was all forsaken

If anyone can help me its my brother in the army
 But I know not where he's stationed, be it Cork or in Killarney
 If only I could find him we'd go roving in Kilkenny
 And I know he'd treat me better than my darling sporting Jenny

Now some folks takes delight in their carriages a rolling
 And others takes delight in the hurley and the bowling
 But me I takes delight in the juice of the barley
 And courting pretty women in the morning bright and early

Trad. Irish, 1800s

An Irish song also known as "Whiskey In The Jar" - often sung in pubs and drinking holes as a toast to highwaymen, army defectors and "robbers of the rich to feed the poor". Some versions let our hero go free.

Kookaburra

Kookaburra sits on the old gum tree
 Merry merry king of the bush is he
 Laugh, Kookaburra, laugh, Kookaburra
 Gay your life must be

Marion Sinclair, Australia, 1932

The Larks They Sang Melodious

It was pleasant and delightful one midsummer's morn
 And the fields and the meadows were all covered in corn
 And the thrushes and songbirds sang on every green spray
 And the larks they sang melodious at the dawning of the day
 And the larks they sang melodious (x3)
 At the dawning of the day

A sailor and his true love were walking one day
 Says the sailor to his true love, "I am bound far away
 I am bound for the East Indies where the loud cannons roar
 I am bound to leave you, Nancy, you're the girl that I adore"
 "I am bound to leave you, Nancy..."

Then the ring from off her finger she instantly drew
 Saying, Take this dearest William and my heart it goes too
 And as they were embracing tears from her eyes fell
 Saying "May I go along with you?" "Oh no, my love, farewell"
 Saying "May I go along with you..."

Now the wind's in the rigging and the anchor's aweigh
 And the ship she will be sailing at the dawning of the day
 And the current is rising on a fast-flowing tide
 "And if ever I return again, I will make you my bride"
 "And if ever I return again..."

Seven long years had passed, and the ship's sailing home
 And the sailor is returning, to all he left long ago
 And he seeks out his dear Nancy, and there she does stand
 Saying "I am with my lady now.. She's the fairest in the land"
 Saying "I am with my lady now..."

Leave Her Johnny

I thought I heard the old man say
 (Leave her, Johnny, leave her)
 It's a long hard pull to the next pay day
 (And it's time for us to leave her)

Leave her, Johnny, leave her
 Oh, leave her, Johnny, leave her
 It's a long hard pull to the next pay day
 And it's time for us to leave her

The captain was bad but the mate was worse...
 He could blow you down with a sigh and a curse...

And a dollar a day is a Jack Shite's pay...
 When it's pump all night and work all day...

Now the rats are all gone and we the crew...
 Oh it's time by Christ that we went too...

Well it's pump or drown, the old man said...
 Or else by Christ we'll all be dead...

I thought I heard the old man say...
 Just one more pump and then belay...

Trad. sea shanty, 1800s

This shanty was sung by sailors as they pumped the ship dry for the final time once it was tied up in port. To sing it before the last day on board was tantamount to mutiny.

Leaving of Liverpool



^A Farewell to you ^D my own ^A true love

I'm going far away ^E

I am bound for California ^A

But I know that I'll return some day ^A

^E So fare thee well my own ^D true ^A love

And when I return united we will be ^E

It's not the ^A leaving of Liverpool that ^D grieves ^A me

But my darling when I think of thee ^E ^A

I have shipped on a Yankee sailing ship

Davy Crockett is her name

And Burgess is the Captain of her

And they say she's a floating shame

I have shipped with Burgess once before

And I think I know him well

If a man is a sailor he can get along

If he's not then he's sure in hell

Oh the sun is on the harbour, love

And I wish I could remain

For I know it will be some long time

Before I see you again

A Lesson Too Late for the Learning

It's a lesson too late for the learning
Made of sand, made of sand
In the wink of an eye my heart is turning
In your hand, in your hand

Are you going away with no word of farewell?
Will there be not a trace left behind?
I could have loved you better, didn't mean to be unkind
You know that was the last thing on my mind

As we walk all my thoughts are a-tumbling
Round and round, round and round
Underneath our feet the subway's rumbling
Underground, underground

As I lie in my bed in the morning
Without you, without you
Every song in my heart dies a-borning
Without you, without you

You have reasons a-plenty for going,
This I know, this I know
For the weeds have been steadily growing,
Please don't go, please don't go

Tom Paxton, 1964

Lie Lie Lie Lie

The musical score consists of three staves, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody is written in a simple, folk-like style. The lyrics are written below the notes.

1 Lie l' lie lie Lie l' lie lie Lie l' lie lie l' lie lie

2 Lie lie lie lie lie lie lie lie l' lie lie

3 Lie lie lie l' lie lie lie l' lie lie l' lie lie

Trad. Jewish Lament

An arrangement of a traditional Jewish folk tune done by Su Hart as part of a Holocaust Memorial project. During the holocaust, or shoah, millions of Jewish, Romani, Polish, and Russian people were systematically murdered by the German state. Laments similar to this one have been sung by Jewish people throughout history during times of grief and suffering.

Lowlands

I dreamed a dream the other night
 (Lowlands, lowlands away, my John)
 I dreamed a dream the other night
 (Lowlands away)

I dreamed my love came standing by
 Came standing close by my bedside

He's drowning in the lowlands sea
 And never more coming home to me

He's drowning in the lowlands low
 And never more shall I him know

He's lying in the windy lowlands
 He's lying in the windy lowlands

Trad. focsle song c.1870

Thought to be a fragment of a much older, and longer, ballad that has since been lost. The tune was preserved among sailors as a shanty, and was particularly popular among African-American sailors working out of the port of Mobile, Alabama.

Maids When You're Young

An old man came courting me, hey ding dorum da
 An old man came courting me, me being young
 An old man came courting me, fain would he marry me
 Maids when you're young never wed an old man

'Cause he's lost his fallorum fal diddle di-orum
 He's lost his fallorum fal diddle di-ay
 He's lost his fallorum he's got no ding dorum
 Oh maids when you're young never wed an old man

When we went to church (x3)...
 ... he left me in the lurch

When we went to bed (x3)
 ... he lay like he was dead

I threw me leg over him (x3)
 ... damn near did smother him

When he went to sleep (x3)
 ... out of bed I did leap
 Into the arms of a handsome young man

Trad. English, 1700s

Prior to the introduction of the welfare state during the early 1900s, marriage for working-class women was often a case of financial necessity first, romantic inclination second. Older men with accrued wealth were a pragmatic financial option for young women.

Mairi's Wedding

Step we gaily, on we go, heel for heel, and toe for toe
 Arm in arm and on we go, all for Mairi's wedding

Over hill-ways up and down
 Myrtle green and bracken brown
 Past the sheiling through the town
 All for sake of Mairi

Plenty herring, plenty meal
 Plenty peat to fill her creel
 Plenty bonny bairns as weel
 That's the toast for Mairi

Cheeks as bright as rowans are
 Brighter far than any star
 Fairest of them all by far
 Is my darling Mairi

Hugh Robertson, 1936



Originally written in Gaelic as a tribute to renowned Gaelic singer Mary C. MacNiven. These English lyrics were written by Sir Hugh Robertson with the consent of the original author two years later.

The Manchester Rambler

I've been over Snowdon, I've slept up on Crowdon
I've camped by the Wain Stones as well
I've sunbathed on Kinder, been burned to a cinder
And many more things I can tell
My rucksack has oft been me pillow
The heather has oft been my bed
And sooner than part from the mountains
I think I would rather be dead

I'm a rambler, I'm a rambler from Manchester way
I get all me pleasure the hard moorland way
I may be a wage slave on Monday
But I have my freedom on Sunday

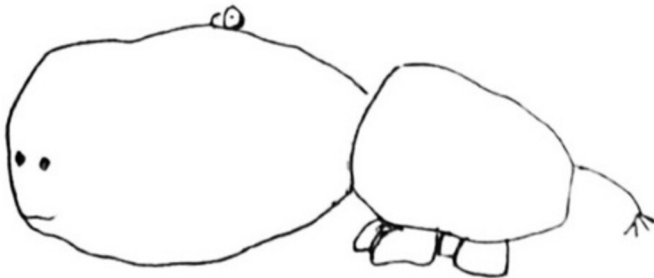
The day was just ending as I was descending
By Grimesbrook just by Upper Tor
When a voice cried, "Hey you!" in the way keepers do
He'd the worst face that ever I saw
The things that he said were unpleasant
In the teeth of his fury I said
"Sooner than part from the mountains
I think I would rather be dead"

He called me a louse and said, "Think of the grouse"
And I thought but I just couldn't see
How old Kinder Scout and the moors round about
Couldn't hold both the poor grouse and me
He said, "All this land is my master's"
At that I stood shaking my head
No man has the right to own mountains
No more than the wide ocean bed

I once loved a maid, a spot-welder by trade
 She was fair as the rowan in bloom
 And the blue of her eye matched the June moorland sky
 And I wooed her from April till June
 On the day that we should have been married
 We went for a ramble instead
 For sooner than part from the mountains
 I think I would rather be dead

So I walk where I will, over mountain and hill
 And I'll lie where the bracken is deep
 I belong to the mountains, the clear-running fountains
 Where the grey rocks rise rugged and steep
 I've seen the white hare in the gully
 And the curlew fly high overhead
 And sooner than part from the mountains
 I think I would rather be dead

Ewan McColl, 1932



He's a rambler...

Inspired by author Ewan McColl's participation in the Kinder mass trespass. This was a deliberate act of civil disobedience intended to secure free access to England's mountains and moorlands. The protest was to have a powerful long-term effect, leading to improved access to the countryside in the shape of national parks, long-distance footpaths starting with the Pennine Way, and various forms of the desired 'right to roam'.

Martin Said to His Man

Martin said to his man, “Fie, man, fie”

Martin said to his man, “Who’s the fool now?”

Martin said to his man, “Fill thou the cup and I the can”

Thou hast well drunken man

Who’s the fool now?

I saw the man in the moon, fie, man fie

I saw the man in the moon, who’s the fool now?

I saw the man in the moon, sliding down St Peter’s shoen

I saw the mouse chase the cat...

...and saw the cheese eat the rat

I saw the maid milk the bull...

...every stroke a bucketful

I saw the hare chase the hounds...

...forty miles above the ground

I saw the flea heave a tree...

...forty leagues across the sea

I saw the sheep shearing corn

...and saw the cuckold blow his horn

Trad. English, c.1560

One of the oldest songs we sing; Martin and his man are arguing as to which of them is more drunk. As they do, the song makes fun of the tellers of tall stories. Shoen is an old word for shoe, and sliding means to patch up an old shoe. The man in the moon is thought to refer to King Henry VIII, whose face was round and pale, and ‘St Peter’ is speculated to be a reference to the Pope.

Mary Don't You Weep



^C
If I could, I surely would

Stand on the rock where ^CMoses stood

^F
(Pharaoh's army got ^Cdrowned)

^G
(O Mary don't you ^Cweep)

^C ^F ^C ^G
O Mary don't you weep, don't you moan

^C
O Mary don't you weep, don't you moan

^F ^C
Pharaoh's army got drowned

^G ^C
O Mary don't you weep

Mary wore three links of chain
And on each link was Jesus' name

Mary wore three links of chain
And every one was Freedom's name

One of these nights, about twelve o'clock
This old world's going to reel and rock

Moses stood on the Red Sea shore
Shooting the water with a two-by-four

God gave Noah the rainbow sign
No more water but fire next time

The Lord told Moses what to do
To lead those Hebrew children through

Trad. American spiritual, Early 1800s

A song born in the anonymity of plantation slavery in the Southern United States, it references bible stories which offered the hope of freedom and the punishment of oppressors. The Mary whose tears are referred to is Mary of Bethany, sister of Lazarus, who Jesus raised from the dead: another miracle of hope.

May the Circle Be Unbroken

I was standing at my window
 On a cold and cloudy day
 When I saw a hearse come rolling
 Oh to carry my sweetheart away

May the circle be unbroken
 By and by, Lord, by and by
 There's a better home a-waiting
 In the sky, Lord, in the sky

Oh I told the undertaker
 "Undertaker, please drive slow
 'Cause this lady that you're holding
 Oh I hate to see her go."

I will follow close behind her
 Try to hold up and be brave
 But I could not hold my sorrow
 As they laid her in her grave

Ada Habershon & Charles Gabriel, 1907



Ada Ruth Habershon was a prolific Christian writer from Marylebone, London. She travelled to the USA on a teaching tour and she wrote the lyrics for more than one thousand hymns.

Mercedes-Benz

Oh Lord, won't you buy me a Mercedes-Benz?
My friends all drive Porsches, I must make amends
Worked hard all my lifetime, no help from my friends
Oh Lord, won't you buy a Mercedes-Benz?

O Lord, won't you buy me a colour TV?
Dialing for Dollars is trying to find me
I'll wait for delivery each day until three
O Lord, won't you buy me a colour TV?

Oh Lord, won't you buy me a night on the town?
I'm countin' on you, Lord, please don't let me down
Prove that you love me and buy the next round
Oh Lord, won't you buy me a night on the town?

Oh Lord, won't you buy a Mercedes-Benz?
My friends all drive Porsches I must make amends
Worked hard all my lifetime, no help from my friends
Oh Lord, won't you buy a Mercedes-Benz?

Janis Joplin, 1970

Janis Joplin was an iconic singer, songwriter and rock star who was once arrested for using "vulgar and indecent language" after yelling "Don't f*** with those people!" toward police officers doing crowd control during her performance.

Midnight Special

Well you wake up in the morning to the ding-dong ring
 Go marching to the table, see the same damn thing
 Knife and fork upon the table, nothing in my pan
 Say anything about it you're in trouble with the man

Let the Midnight special
 Shine its light on me
 Let the midnight special
 Shine its ever-loving light on me

Well yonder come Miss Rosy, how in the world d'you know?
 Well I knowed her by her apron and the dress she wore
 Umbrella on her shoulder, piece of paper in her hand
 She's gonna tell the gov'nor turn a-loose my man

Now jumping little Judy was a jumping queen
 And she's been jumping since she was sixteen
 Well she bring me little coffee, she bring me little tea
 She bring me damn near everything but the jailhouse key

If you ever go to Houston then you'd better walk right
 And you'd better not stagger and you'd better not fight
 For the sheriff will arrest you and carry you down
 You can bet your bottom dollar, you're penitentiary bound

Trad. American, c.1900

The Midnight Special was the train which pulled out of the Southern Pacific depot at Houston Texas sharp at midnight, headed for San Antonio, El Paso and San Francisco. Thirty miles along, it shone its "ever-loving light" through the barred windows of Texas State Prison Farm at Sugarland.

Mingulay Boat Song

What care we though white the Minch is
What care we for wind or weather
Let her go, boys! Every inch is
Weaving home, home to Mingulay

Heel yer ho, boys, let her go, boys
Bring her head round, now all together
Heel yer ho, boys, let her go, boys
Sailing home, home to Mingulay

Wives are waiting on the bank, or
Looking seaward from the heather
Pull her round, boys! And we'll anchor
Ere the sun set at Mingulay

Hugh S. Robertson, UK, c.1930

Mole in a Hole

I like the flowers and I like the trees
I like the woodlands and the bees
I like the Byrds on their LPs
And I'm a refugee

I wanna be a mole in a hole, digging low and slow
I wanna be a fly flying high in the sky
I wanna be a mole in a hole, digging low and slow
I wanna be a fly flying high in the sky

I had a friend as wise as Mr Wise Owl
He could count from one to ten, from A to Z
My friend he was so wise he got religion
That's why I'm alive today and he is dead

I had a friend who had a friend in Jesus
He used to read the good book every day
My friend he got so friendly with friend Jesus
Friend Jesus took my only friend away

My feet are smelly and my hair's a mess
My teeth are yellow and I've got bad breath
I may look great but I feel like death
And I'm a refugee



Mike Waterson, 1975

My Baby Cares for Only Me

My baby cares for (x3)
My baby cares for only me

My pretty baby I sigh for,
My pretty baby I'd die for,
Cos my baby don't love nobody but me,
And I'm so happy

Baby just, baby just, baby just cares for (x3)
Baby cares for only me

Everybody loves my baby (x2)

Origin Unknown

My Girl's a Corker

My girl's a corker, she's a New Yorker
I'd give her anything to keep her in style
She's got a pair of feet, just like two plates of meat
Yes sir, that how the money goes, Ta, ra, ra
Umpah, umpah, umpah-pah
Stick it up your jumpah-pah

She's got a pair of legs just like two whisky kegs

She's got a pair of hips just like two battleships

She's got a pair of arms just like two waving palms

She's got a pair of eyes just like two custard pies

She's got a shapely nose just like a garden hose

She's got a mop of hair just like a grizzly bear

She wears silk underwear, I wear my latest pair

John Stromberg, USA, c.1880

A bouncy music-hall song which has been used as a children's skipping tune and sung on both sides of the Atlantic. Some object to the song's misogynistic treatment of the female body, while others see it as a body-positive celebration of big, powerful women.

My Goose

1 Why does-n't my goose 2 Sing as well as thy goose?

3 When I paid for my goose 4 Twice as much as thine?

Origin Unknown

The cry of the snow goose is “a nasal, one-syllable honk”, while several calls together can sound much like a staff group trying to get something to happen.

My Grandfather's Clock

My Grandfather's clock was too large for the shelf
 So it stood ninety years on the floor
 It was taller by half than the old man himself
 Though it weighed not a pennyweight more
 It was bought on the morn of the day that he was born
 And was always his pleasure and pride
 But it stopped, short, never to go again
 When the old man died

Ninety years without slumbering, tick tock, tick tock
 His life's seconds numbering, tick tock, tick tock
 It stopped, short, never to go again
 When the old man died

In watching its pendulum swing to and fro
Many hours had he spent as a boy
And in childhood and manhood the clock seemed to know
And to share in his grief and his joy
For it struck twenty four as he entered in the door
With his blushing and beautiful bride
But it stopped, short, never to go again
When the old man died

My Grandfather said that of those he could hire
Not a servant more true could be found
For it wasted no time and had but one desire
At the end of each week to be wound
And it kept in its place, not a frown upon its face
And its hands never hung by its side
But it stopped, short, never to go again
When the old man died

It struck an alarm in the dead of the night
An alarm that for years had been dumb
And we knew that his spirit was poised for its flight
That the hour of departure had come
Still the clock kept strict time with a soft and muffled chime
As we silently stood by his side
But it stopped, short, never to go again
When the old man died

Henry Clay Work, c.1870

Written by Henry Clay Work the great abolitionist, unionist and prohibitionist from Connecticut. A mechanical genius and musical score typesetter, he was said to compose melodies straight onto the printing press.

My Husband's Got No Courage In Him

As I went out one May morning
 To view the fields and leaves a-springing
 I saw two maidens standing by
 And one of them her hands was wringing
 And all of their conversation went
 My husband's got no courage in him

Oh dear-o, Oh dear-o
 Me husband's got no courage in him!
 Oh dear-o

Me husband's admired wherever he goes
 And everyone looks well upon him
 With his handsome features and well-shaped leg
 But still he's got no courage in him

Me husband can dance and caper and sing
 And do anything that's fitting for him
 But he cannot do the thing I want
 Because he's got no courage in him

All sorts of victuals I did provide
 All sorts of meats that's fitting for him
 With oyster pie and rhubarb too
 But still he's got no courage in him

Every night when I goes to bed
 I lie and throw me leg right o'er him
 And my hand I clamp between his thighs
 But I can't put any courage in him

Seven long years I've made his bed
And every night I've lain beside him
But this morning I rose with me maidenhead
For still he's got no courage in him

I wish me husband he was dead
And in his grave I'd quickly lay him
And then I'd find another one
That's got a little courage in him

Trad. English, 1800s



Oysters are traditionally considered to be an aphrodisiac food. Rhubarb on the other hand was commonly used as a laxative in pre-modern Europe. Hopefully they were not being consumed at the same time. This song was often excluded from collections of folksong because its presentation of female sexual agency was considered inappropriate.

My Johnny Was a Shoemaker

My Johnny was a shoemaker
And dearly he loved me
My Johnny was a shoemaker
But now he's gone to sea
With pitch and tar to soil his hands
And to sail across the sea, stormy sea
And sail across the stormy sea

His jacket was a deep sky blue
And curly was his hair
His jacket was a deep sky blue
It was I do declare
For to reef the topsails up against the mast
And to sail across the sea, stormy sea
And sail across the stormy sea

Some day he'll be a captain bold
With a brave and gallant crew
Some day he'll be a captain bold
With a sword and spyglass too
And when he has his gallant captain's sword
He'll come home and marry me, marry me
He'll come home and marry me

Trad. British, 1800s

The Nightingale

As I was walking one morning in May
I heard a young couple so fondly did stray
And one was a fair maid as fair as can be
And the other was a soldier of the brave Grenadiers

And they kissed so sweet and comforting
As they clung to each other
They went arm in arm along the road like sister and brother
They went arm in arm along the road till they came to a spring
And they both sat down together love
To hear the nightingale sing

Then out from his knapsack he drew a fine fiddle
And he played her such merry tunes as you ever did hear
And he played her such merry tunes as the valley did ring
“Oh la”, cried the fair maid, “How the nightingales sing”

“I’m off to India for seven long years
Drinking wines and strong whiskies instead of strong beers
And if ever I return again it’ll be in the spring
And we’ll both sit down together love to hear the nightingale sing”

Oh, then says the fair maid, “Won’t you marry me?”
“Oh no”, says the soldier, “However could that be?
For I’ve my son and wife at home in my own country
And she is the fairest little maid as you ever did see”

Trad. English, c.1690

Nine Hundred Miles

I've been walking down this track, I've got tears in my eyes
Trying to read this letter from my home

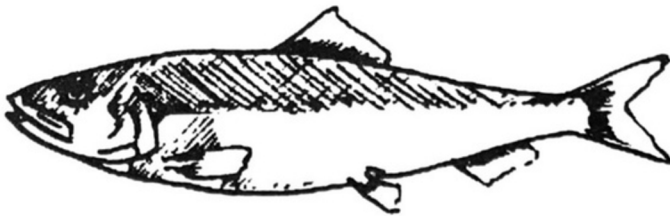
If this train runs me right I'll be home tomorrow night
I'm nine hundred miles from my home
And I hate to hear that lonesome whistle blow

Now this train that I'm on is a hundred coaches long
Hear that whistle blow a hundred miles

I've pawned you my watch and I've pawned you my chain
Pawned you my diamond golden ring

If my mama tells me so I can't railroad no more
I'll sidetrack my engine, go on home

Trad. American, late 1800s



No Man's Land

Well how do you do, Private William McBride
Do you mind if I sit here down by your grave side
And rest for a while in the warm summer sun?
I've been walking all day and I'm damn nearly done
And I see by your gravestone you were only nineteen
When you joined the glorious fallen in nineteen-sixteen
Well I hope you died quick and I hope you died clean
Or Willie McBride, was it slow and obscene?

Did they beat the drum slowly, did they play the fife lowly?
Did the rifles fire o'er you as they lowered you down?
Did the bugles sound the Last Post in chorus?
Did the pipes play the Flowers o' the Forest?

And did you leave a wife or a sweetheart behind
In some loyal heart is your memory enshrined?
And though you died back there in nineteen-sixteen
To that faithful heart are you forever nineteen?
Or are you a stranger without even a name
Forever enclosed behind some glass pane
In an old photograph torn and tattered and stained
And fading to yellow in a brown leather frame?

But the sun shining now on these green fields of France
The warm wind blows gently and the red poppies dance
The trenches have all vanished under the plough
No gas, no barbed wire, no guns firing now
But here in this graveyard it's still no man's land
The countless white crosses in mute witness stand
To man's blind indifference to his fellow man
And a whole generation who were butchered and damned

And I can't help but wonder now, Willie McBride
 Do all those who lie know why they died?
 Did you really believe them when they told you the cause?
 Did you really believe that this war would end wars?
 The suffering, the sorrow, the glory, the shame
 The killing, the dying, it was all done in vain
 For Willie McBride it all happened again
 And again and again and again and again

Eric Bogle, UK, 1976

Old Ab'ram Brown

1 Old A - brah'm brown is dead and gone you'll
 2 ne - ver see him more He
 3 used to wear a long brown coat that
 4 butt - oned down be - fore Old

The musical notation consists of four staves, each beginning with a square box containing a number (1, 2, 3, 4). Each staff is in treble clef and contains a melody line with lyrics underneath. The first staff includes a repeat sign at the beginning. The lyrics are: 'Old A - brah'm brown is dead and gone you'll', 'ne - ver see him more He', 'used to wear a long brown coat that', and 'butt - oned down be - fore Old'. The melody is simple and folk-like, using quarter and eighth notes.

Trad. English

The Old Dun Cow

Some pals and I in a public house
Were playing dominoes last night
When all of a sudden in the potman rushed
With a face just like a kite
“What’s up?” says Brown, “Have you seen a ghost?
Have you seen your Aunt Maria?”
“Aunt Maria be blowed”, says he
“The bloomin’ pub’s on fire”

“What’s that?” says Brown, “What a bit of luck”
“What a bit of luck”, shouts he
“Down in the cellar with a fire on top
We’ll have a good ol’ spree”
So we all went down with good ol’ Brown
And beer we couldn’t miss
And we hadn’t been ten minutes there
Before we were like this

Oh, there was Brown, upside down
Knocking back the whiskey on the floor
“Booze! Booze!” the firemen cried
As they came a-knocking at the door
“Don’t let ‘em in till it’s all mopped up”
Someone shouted, “MacIntyre!”
And we all got blue-blind paralytic drunk
When the Old Dun Cow caught fire

Old Johnson rushed to the port wine tub
And gave it just a few hard knocks
He started taking off his pantaloons
Likewise his shoes and socks
“Hold on!” says Snoops, “If you wanna wash yer feet
There’s a tub of four ale here
Don’t dip your trotters in the port wine tub
When we’ve still got some old stale beer”

Just then there came such an awful crash
Half the bloomin’ roof gave way
We was run with the firemen’s hose
But still we were all gay
We got some sacks and some old tin tacks
And bunged ourselves inside
And we got drinking good old scotch
‘Til we was bleary eyed

Harry Wincott, 1893

This was a popular English music hall song before 1900. It was illegal to yell “Fire!” in a public building, so the word “MacIntyre” was used instead - the audience would all join in and shout it together.

Old Joe Clark

I used to live on the mountain top, but now I live in the town,
Staying at a boarding house and courting Betsy Brown

Fare thee well Old Joe Clark, Fare thee well I'm gone
Fare thee well Old Joe Clark and goodbye Betsy Brown

Old Joe had a yellow cat, could neither sing nor pray,
She took a bath in a buttermilk jug, and washed her sins away

Old Joe Clark he had a mule, his name was Morgan Brown,
And every tooth in that mule's head was sixteen inches round

Old Joe Clark he had a house, full fifteen stories high,
And every story in that house was filled with chicken pie

I wish I was a sugar-tree, standing in the middle of town
And every time my sweetheart passed, I'd shake some sugar down

If I had a sweetheart, I'd sit them on the shelf
And every time they smiled at me, I'd get up there myself

Trad. American, c.1900

Old Mother Lee

There was an old woman called Old Mother Lee
(Old Mother Lee, Old Mother Lee)

There was an old woman called Old Mother Lee

Down by the walnut tree
Down by the sea
Where the walnuts grow
I lost my love, I dare not go

She held a baby in her arms...

She had a penknife long and sharp...

She stabbed the baby in the heart...

The county police came riding by...

The magistrate said she must die...

They hanged her from the walnut tree...

And that was the end of Old Mother Lee...

Trad. English, 1800s

This nursery rhyme once sung by schoolchildren in Liverpool is thought to be a light-hearted retelling of an old English ballad titled "The Cruel Mother". In the original, it is the ghost of the murdered child who kills the mother.

One More Pull

It's been a long time since you've seen her
Could have been three years or more
Will she be waiting when we dock, boy
Or like others, will she be gone?

And it's one more pull boys, that will do boys
Soon we'll draw alongside
Hoist her upwards, swing her inboard
For the journey's nearly done

Well you're looking mighty fine, boy
All dressed in your number ones
You've scrounged a new blade from the purser
To scrape that bum-fluff from off your chin

And we'll make fast those bow and stern lines
As you scuttle down the gangway
If she's waiting there, just kiss her
Turn around, give us a smile.

For we too will go ashore soon
Get drunk in the clubs and bars,
Stagger homeward, pockets empty
Like so many nights before.

For a man may have a wife, boy
And a man may take a mistress
But a sailor has his ship, boy
And his mistress it is the sea

Pace Egging Song

Here's one, two, three jolly lads all in one mind
 We are come a pace egging and I hope you'll prove kind
 And I hope you'll prove kind with your eggs and strong beer
 For we'll come no more nigh you until the next year

And the first to come in is Lord Nelson you'll see
 With a bunch of blue ribbons tied round by his knee
 And a star on his breast that like silver doth shine
 And I hope he remembers it's pace egging time

And the next to come in, it is Lord Collingwood
 And he fought with Lord Nelson till he shed his blood
 And he's come from the sea, Old England to view
 And he's come a pace-egging with all of his crew

And the last to come in is old Toss Pot you'll see
 He's a valiant old man and in every degree
 He's a valiant old man and he wears a pig tail
 And his only delight is a-drinking mulled ale

Come ladies and gentlemen, sit by the fire
 Put your hands in your pockets and give us our desire
 Put your hands in your pockets and treat us all right
 If you give nowt we'll take nowt, farewell and goodnight

Trad. English, 1800s

Pace-Egging was an Easter tradition in many parts of the country. It was similar to trick or treating, but instead of sweets people would ask for eggs, and instead of tricks they would perform plays.

The Parting Glass

Of all the money that e'er I had
 I've spent it in good company
 And all the harm that e'er I've done
 Alas it was to none but me
 And all I've done for want of wit
 To memory now I can't recall
 So fill to me the parting glass
 Good night and joy be with you all

Of all the comrades that e'er I had
 They are sorry for my going away
 And all the sweethearts that e'er I had
 They would wish me one more day to stay
 But since it falls unto my lot
 That I should go and you should not
 I'll gently rise and I'll softly call
 Good night and joy be with you all

Trad. Scottish, c.1664



The "parting glass", or "stirrup cup", was the final hospitality offered to a departing guest: once they had mounted their horse, they were presented a final drink to fortify them for their travels. Prior to Auld Lang Syne, this was the most popular parting song. We return here to the original two verses from the 1664 broadside.

The Pole Tax Song



C Am
 It's so very taxing, my tent is collapsing
 F G
 I found myself one pole too short
 C Am
 So I phoned up the council, they said "Hey you scoundrel
 F G
 We're going to take you to court"
 C A7 D7 G
 North Pole, South Pole, flag pole, bean pole
 C A7
 But there's one pole you can axe
 D7 G C G7
 It's the p... p... p... p... p... pole tax

There's been infiltration
 In this organisation
 The taxmen are dressed as camp chiefs
 Hogg'll ogle your tent
 And you know what is meant
 He's really just one more pole thief

I'm cheesed off with camping
 My spirits are dampening
 My tent without poles is sod all
 I want bricks and mortar
 And hot running water
 So I'll go and install at Rushall

Poor Old Horse

A poor old man came a-riding by
 (And we say so! And we hope so)
 Says I, "Old man, your horse will die"
 (Oh, poor old horse!)

And if he dies we'll tan his hide
 But if he lives we'll ride him again

For a month a rotten life we've led
 While you've lain in your feather bed

But now that month is up, you jerk
 Get up, you swine, and look for work

Get up, you swine, and look for graft
 While we lays on, and yanks you aft

And after work and sore abuse
 We'll salt you down for sailor's use

He's as dead as a nail in the lamproom door
 And he won't come hazing us no more

We'll hoist him up to the main yardarm
 And drop him down to the bottom of the sea

We'll sink him down with a long, long roll
 Where the sharks'll have his body, and the Devil his soul

Trad. British sea shanty, 1800s



This song originates in the custom of creating a dead horse from sail and dumping it overboard at the one month anniversary of a voyage and celebration of first pay-day. This custom had its origins in the hobby horse, an English village tradition involving men dressing as horses on May Day and dying and being revived - a survival of ancient pagan fertility rites and the importance of the horse-cult. There is an older land variant of Poor Old Horse, which has been mixed with the shanty over the years.

Prickle-eye Bush

Oh, the prickle-eye bush
 That breaks my heart so sore
 If I ever get out of this prickle-eye bush
 I'll never get in it any more

Hangman, stay your hand, O stay it for a while
 For I think I see my (father) coming over yonder stile

“(Father) have you brought me gold, or silver to see me free
 To save my body from the cold, cold ground
 And my neck from the gallows tree?”

“No, I have not brought you gold, or silver to see you free
 To save your body from the cold, cold ground
 And your neck from the gallows tree”

(Repeat verses for: Mother, Brother, Sister)

Hangman stay your hand, O stay it for a while
 For I think I see my true love coming over yonder stile

True love, have you brought me gold, or silver to set me free
 To save my body from the cold, cold ground
 And my neck from the gallows tree?

Yes, I have brought you gold, and silver to set you free
 To save your body from the cold, cold ground
 And your neck from the gallows tree

Trad. English, c.1770

One of the oldest and most interesting of ballads: mediaeval versions exist from the Baltics, Scandinavia, and Central Europe and the narrative closely resembles the ancient Greek tale of Alcestis. In many versions the story tells of a young woman captured by pirates or brigands and her father, mother, brother, sister refuse to pay ransom, but her lover sets her free. In earlier forms of the ballad, the girl is condemned to hanging due to losing an item of gold, like a ball or a key, that represents her honour which is restored by her lover.

Princess Pat

Oh, the Princess Pat... Lived in a tree...
She sailed across... The seven seas...
She sailed across... The channel too...
And she took with her... A Ricky Bamboo...

A Ricky Bamboo... Now what is that?..
It's something made... By the Princess Pat...
It's red and gold... And purple too...
That's why it's called... A Ricky Bamboo...

Now Captain Jack... Had a mighty fine crew...
He sailed across... The Channel too...
But his ship sank... And yours will too...
If you don't take... A Ricky Bamboo...

Oh, the Princess Pat... Saved Captain Jack...
She dived right in... And pulled him back...
She saved his life... And his crew too...
All because she took... A Ricky Bamboo...

The Canadian Girl Scouts

This song parodies a marching song sung by Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, whose regimental flag is crimson silk with gold trim. The flag is called the 'Ric-a-Dam-Doo', said to be a corruption of the Gaelic for 'cloth of your mother' in recognition of the fact that Princess Patricia (a granddaughter of Queen Victoria, and Colonel-in-Chief of the regiment) made the original herself.

Process Man

A process man am I and I'm telling you no lie
 I've worked and breathed among the fumes that trail across the sky
 There's thunder all around me and poison in the air
 There's a lousy smell that smacks of hell and dust all in my hair

And it's go, boys, go
 They'll time your every breath
 And every day you're in this place
 You're two days nearer death
 But you go

I've worked among the spinners, breathed in the oily smoke
 I've shovelled up the gypsum and it nigh on makes you choke
 I've been knee-deep in cyanide, got sick with caustic burn
 Been working rough, I've seen enough to make your stomach turn

There's overtime, there's bonuses - opportunities galore
 The young ones like the money and they all come back for more
 But soon you're knocking on, looking older than you should
 For every bob made on the job you pay in flesh and blood

Come all you young people and a warning hear me say
 Don't work for Hooker Chemical on the shores of the Elliot Bay
 Don't take the pay and promises, don't bet your youth so strong
 Don't end up like me at 33, no one to sing your song

Ron Angel, UK, 1964

Process Man tells of the appalling conditions that Teessiders endured whilst working at ICI and emphasises the process worker's awareness of the long-term effects of a working environment polluted by excessive noise, dust, noxious fumes etc. It remains relevant for many workers around the world today. FSC's final verse is a more recent addition and references Hooker Chemical, a US company that became notorious for environmental negligence in 1977 when residents near its chemical waste site reported extraordinarily high incidences of leukemia, birth defects, and other injuries.

Queenie

There's a burlesque theatre where the gang all go
 To see Queenie, the star of the burlesque show
 But the highlight of the evening is when on the stage she trips
 And the band plays the polka while she strips

“Take ‘em off, take ‘em off!”

Cry the boys at the back

“Take ‘em off, take ‘em off!”

Be your natural self”

But Queenie is a lady and it's only pantomime

So she stops..... but only just in time

There's another side of Queenie that the boys don't see
 She dreams of a cottage surrounded by trees
 But the payment of the mortgage takes an awful lot of chips
 So the band plays the polka while she strips

Some day, Queenie will fall
 Queenie, pride of them all
 Some day, church bells will chime...
 But only just in time!

Johnny Mercer, USA, 1942

Queenie was written in 1942 as “The Strip Polka” and was originally partially censored on the radio. It was popular with WW2 troops and has been in and out of the FSC songbook since its 1968 inception. We have here reverted the first line to Johnny Mercer's original lyric, which both reflects burlesque as an art form and allows the possibility of people who aren't boys attending to enjoy Queenie's show. Please feed back on this in our survey (see final page).

Red River Valley

From this valley they say you are going
We will miss your bright eyes and sweet smile
For they say you are taking the sunshine
That has brightened our pathways awhile

Come and sit by my side if you love me
Do not hasten to bid me adieu
Just remember the Red River Valley
And the cowboy who loved you so true

Do you think of the valley you're leaving
Oh how lonely, how lonesome 'twill be
Do you think of the fond hearts you're grieving
And the pain you are causing to me

I've been thinking a long time, my darling
Of the sweet words you never would say
Now alas for my fond heart is breaking
For they say you are going away

They will bury me where you have wandered
On the hills where the daffodils grow
When you're gone from the Red River Valley
For I can't live without you, I know

Trad. American, c.1870

Rickety Ticky Tin

About a maid I'll sing a song
Sing rickety tickety tin
About a maid I'll sing a song
Who did not have her family long
Not only did she do them wrong
She did every one of them in, them in
She did every one of them in

Her mother she could never stand
Sing rickety tickety tin
Her mother she could never stand
And so a cyanide soup she planned
The mother died with a spoon in her hand
And her face in a hideous grin, a grin
Her face in a hideous grin

She weighed her brother down with stones
Sing rickety tickety tin
She weighed her brother down with stones
And sent him down to Davy Jones
All they ever found were some bones
And occasional pieces of skin, of skin
And occasional pieces of skin

One morning in a fit of pique
Sing rickety tickety tin
One morning in a fit of pique
She drowned her father in the creek
The water tasted bad for a week
And we had to make do with gin, with gin
We had to make do with gin

She set her sister's hair on fire
 Sing rickety tickety tin
 She set her sister's hair on fire
 And as the smoke and flames rose higher
 She danced around the funeral pyre
 Playing a violin, 'olin
 Playing a violin

One day when she had nothing to do
 Sing rickety tickety tin
 One day when she had nothing to do
 She chopped her baby brother in two
 And served him up as an Irish stew
 And invited the neighbours in, 'bours in
 And invited the neighbours in

And when at last the police came by
 Sing rickety tickety tin
 And when at last the police came by
 Her little pranks she did not deny
 To do so she would have had to lie
 And lying she knew was a sin, a sin
 And lying she knew was a sin

My tragic tale I won't prolong
 Sing rickety tickety tin
 My tragic tale I won't prolong
 And if you do not enjoy my song
 You've yourselves to blame if it's too long
 You should never have let me begin, begin
 You should never have let me begin

Tom Lehrer, USA, 1953

Tom Lehrer (a 1950's satirist) decided to create a song that had all the ingredients of a folk song: murder, jealousy, senseless crime and a nonsense fol-di-rol-like refrain. He named it "The Irish Ballad (Rickety Tickety Tin)."

Rocking My Babies to Sleep

I'm a charlady's son, and I'm just thirty one
 And me wife's ten years younger than me
 And I don't like to roam, 'cos I likes to stay home
 But me wife she goes out on a spree

And she leaves me behind, the babies to mind
 And the house in a good order to keep
 But with the fire burning bright, I could sit half the night
 Rocking me babies to sleep

And it's lady, lady, hush-a-bye baby
 Mammy'll be coming back by and by
 But with the fire burning bright I could sit half the night
 Rocking me babies to sleep

Well last Saturday night I went out for a stroll
 After rocking me babies to sleep
 When at the bottom of our street, well who do you think I met
 But me wife with a soldier six feet

Well she sobbed and she sighed and she damned nearly died
 She say, "Lad I've been thinking of thee"
 But with the fire burning bright, I could sit half the night
 Rocking me babies to sleep

Trad. Irish, c.1830

Possibly a satirical lullaby sung to the baby Jesus by his father Joseph. A charlady (or charwoman) was a part-time (rather than live-in) domestic servant. Their work was irregular, precarious and low-paid.

Rose, Rose

Rose rose rose rose Shall I ev - er see thee wed?
 Aye marr-y that thou wilt An thou but stay

Rosemary Lane

When I was in service in the Rosemary Lane
 I won the goodwill of my master of the day
 'Til a sailor came there, one night to lay
 And that was the beginning of my misery

He called for a candle to light him to bed
 And likewise a silk handkerchief to tie up his head
 To tie up his head, as sailors will do
 And then said, "My pretty Polly, will you come too?"

Now this maid being young and foolish she thought it no harm
 For to lie into bed to keep herself warm
 And what was done there I will never disclose
 But I wish that short night had been seven long years

Next morning the sailor so early arose
 And into my apron three guineas did throw
 Saying, "This I will give, and more I will do
 If you'll be my Polly wherever I'll go"

Now if it's a boy he shall fight for the King
 And if it's a girl she will wear a gold ring
 She will wear a gold ring and a dress all aflame
 And remember my service in Rosemary Lane

When I was in service in the Rosemary Lane
 I won the goodwill of my master of the day
 'Til a sailor came there, one night to lay
 And that was the beginning of my misery

Trad. English, 1600s

This is one of two songs that "Home, Boys, Home" is based on, but told from the woman's perspective. Many folk song collectors thought the lyrics too scandalous for print. The 'dress all aflame' may reference sumptuary laws and the myth that sex workers had to wear the colour red (sometimes recorded as yellow) to identify themselves. However, where there were such requirements they varied greatly by country and region and the only record of similar laws in London and Bristol mentions striped hoods rather than red clothing

Sally Free and Easy

Sally free and easy, that should be her name
Sally free and easy, that should be her name
Took a sailor's loving for a nursery game

All the loving that she gave to me, was not made of stone
All the loving that she gave to me, was not made of stone
It was sweet and hollow like the honeycomb

Think I'll wait till sunset, see the ensign down
Think I'll wait till sunset, see the ensign down
Then I'll take the tideway to my burying ground

Sally free and easy, that should be her name
Sally free and easy, that should be her name
When my body's landed, hope she dies of shame

Cyril Tawney, UK, 1958

Sam Hall

Oh me name it is Sam Hall chimney sweep, chimney sweep
 Oh me name it is Sam Hall chimney sweep
 Oh me name it is Sam Hall and I've robbed both great and small
 And me neck will pay for all, when I die, when I die
 And me neck will pay for all, when I die

I have twenty pounds in store, not one more...
 I have twenty pounds in store and I'll rob for twenty more
 For the rich must help the poor, so must I...

Oh they took me to Cootehill in a cart...
 Oh they took me to Cootehill where I stopped to make my will
 Saying the best of friends must part, so must I...

Up the ladder I did grope that's no joke...
 Up the ladder I did grope and the hangman pulled the rope
 And ne'er a word I spoke, tumbling down...

Oh my name it was Sam Hall chimney sweep...
 Oh my name it was Sam Hall and I robbed both great and small
 And my neck it paid for all when I died...

Trad. English, c.1719

Prior to around 1850 the protagonist was called "Jack Hall", after a thief who was hanged at Tyburn (not Cootehill) in 1707. Jack Hall's parents sold him as a chimney sweep for one guinea.

San Francisco Bay Blues

Got the blues when my baby left me by the San Francisco Bay
Ocean liner, she's gone so far away
Didn't mean to treat her so bad
She was the best girl that I ever had
Said goodbye, made me cry
Want to lay down and die
Ain't got a nickel, I ain't got a lousy dime
If she don't come back I think I'm going to lose my mind
If she ever come back to stay, it'll be another brand new day
Walking with my baby down by the San Francisco Bay

Sitting down on my back step wond'ring which way to go
Girl that I'm crazy 'bout
She don't want me no more
Think I'll take a freight train 'cause I'm feeling blue
Ride all the way to the end of the line thinking only of you
Meanwhile in another city, just about to go insane
Thought I heard my baby, the way she used to call my name
If she ever come back to stay, it'll be another brand new day
Walking with my baby down by the San Francisco Bay

Jesse Fuller, USA, 1954

Santianna

Santianna gained the day

(Away, Santianna)

Santianna gained the day

(All along the plains of Mexico)

Heave her up and away we'll go

Away, Santianna

Heave her up and away we'll go

All along the plains of Mexico

He gained the day at Monterrey

And General Taylor ran away

Santianna fought for fame

And Santianna made his name

Santianna fought for gold

He fought for the young and he fought for the old

Santianna lost his leg

Now he fights with a wooden peg

Santianna's dead and gone

And Santianna's day is done

Trad. English sea shanty, 1800s

This sea shanty tells of the Mexican-American war of 1847, during which many British sailors deserted their ships to fight on the side of the Mexicans. In actuality, the Mexican General Antonio Lopez de Santa Ana was defeated by the American General Taylor, but the British sailors chose to remember a different version of history.

Saving For Breakfast

I have eaten all the plums that were in the icebox (x2)
Which you were probably (probably) saving for breakfast (x2)
Forgive me, forgive me, they were so delicious so sweet and so fine (x2)

I have eaten all the porridge that was in the haybox,
which you were probably saving for breakfast...

I have eaten all the cake in the catering tent,
which you were probably saving for birthday tea...

I have sung all the songs which were in the songbook,
which you were probably saving for campfire...

William Carlos Williams (1962), Zoe Wang (1999)

Zoe Wang wrote this song (otherwise known as 'The Plum Song') sometime in the late 1990s. The lyrics are from the poem 'This Is Just To Say' by William Carlos Williams. FSC has called it "Saving for Breakfast" and it was first sung on South Cornwall.

Scarborough Fair

Are you going to Scarborough Fair?
Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme
Remember me to one who lives there
She once was a true love of mine

Tell her to make me a cambric shirt
Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme
Without no seam or needlework
Then she'll be a true love of mine

Tell her to find me an acre of land
Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme
Between the salt water and the sea strand
Then she'll be a true love of mine

Tell her to plough it with one ram's horn
Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme
And sow it all over with one peppercorn
Then she'll be a true love of mine

Tell her to reap it with a sickle of leather
Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme
And gather it all in a bunch of heather
Then she'll be a true love of mine

Trad. English, c.1670

Scarborough Fair is an example of a traditional riddling song, which played an important part in courtship and coming of age rituals in pre-modern England. This song is based on an earlier ballad, titled "The Elfin Knight".

See the Little Engines

Early in the morning
 Down upon the railway
 See the little engines all in a row
 Along comes a man
 And he pulls a little handle
 Chhh Chhh, Woop Woop, Off we go!

Paul Mills and Slim Gaillard, USA, 1948

Shallow Brown

And it's goodbye, Juliana
 (Shallow, oh Shallow Brown)
 And it's farewell, Juliana
 (Shallow, oh Shallow Brown)

I am bound for to leave you
 Oh, I am bound for to leave you

And it's get my things in order
 For the packet rides tomorrow

And it's Shallow in the morning
 Just as the day is dawning

And it's goodbye, Juliana
 And it's farewell, Juliana

Trad. Caribbean, 1800s

Popular with sailors in the Caribbean, and perhaps comes from an even older song sung by enslaved people. In some versions, an enslaved man named 'Shallow Brown' is sold to an American ship. Some believe "Shallow" to be a corruption of the indigenous Carib word "Challo", which refers to someone of mixed ethnic heritage, there is no clear record either way.

Shawneetown

Well some rows up, but we floats down
Way down the Ohio to Shawneetown

And it's hard on the beach oar, she moves too slow
Way down to Shawneetown on the Ohio

Now the current's got her, and we'll take up the slack
We'll float her down to Shawneetown
And we'll bushwack her back

Whisky's in the jar, boys, the wheat is in the sack
We'll trade 'em down to Shawneetown
And we'll bring the rock salt back

I've got a friend in Louisville and one in New Orleans
When I get to Shawneetown gonna see my Indian queen

Water's mighty warm, boys, the air is cold and dank
And that cursed fog it gets so thick you cannot see the bank

Well some rows up, but we floats down
Way down the Ohio to Shawneetown

Dillon Bustin, USA, c.1970



The Shawnee - Šaawanwaki - are an indigenous American group who were dispossessed from their original homeland in the North-Eastern woodlands of the United States and forced to move Westwards. Shawneetown was one of their settlements on the Ohio river. "Indian" is thought by some to be an insulting name for indigenous American peoples, but many organisations and individuals prefer the term "American Indian" to "Native American", including the AIM (American Indian Movement).

Shenandoah

Oh Shenandoah, I long to hear you

(Away, you rolling river)

Oh Shenandoah, I long to see you

(Away, we're bound away, 'cross the wide Missouri)

Oh Shenandoah, I love your daughter...

I love the music of your waters...

Oh Shenandoah, I took a notion...

To sail across the stormy ocean...

'Tis seven long years since last I saw you...

'Tis seven long years the love I've borne you...

Oh Shenandoah, my native valley...

Beside your streams I'd like to dally...

Oh Shenandoah, I'm bound to leave you...

Oh Shenandoah, I'll not deceive you...

I went away, forsook my lover...

I went away, and took another...

Trad. American, 1800s

The original version of this song referred to a romance between the protagonist and the daughter of Skenandoah, chief of the Oneida - onyota'aka - one of the five constituent nations of the Haudenosaunee (or Iroquois) confederacy. Since then it has transformed to be about the river in the Appalachian mountains which bears his name.

Shoals of Herring

Oh, it was a fine and a pleasant day
Out of Yarmouth Harbour I was faring
As a cabin boy on a sailing lugger
For to go and hunt the shoals of herring

Oh the work was hard, and the hours were long
And the treatment, sure it took some bearing
There was little kindness, and the kicks were many
As we hunted for the shoals of herring

Oh, we've fished the Swarth and the Broken Bank
I was cook and I'd a quarter sharing
And I used to sleep standing on me feet
And I'd dream about the shoals of herring

Oh we left the home grounds in the month of June
And for Canny Shields we soon was faring
With a hundred cran of the silver darlings
That we'd taken from the shoals of herring

Now you're up on deck, you're a fisherman
You can swear, and show a manly bearing
Take your turn on watch with the other fellows
While you're searching for the shoals of herring

In the stormy seas and the living gales
Just to earn your daily bread you're daring
From the Dover Straits to the Faroe Islands
While you're following the shoals of herring

Oh, I earned my keep and I paid my way
And I earned the gear that I was wearing
Sailed a million miles, caught ten million fishes
We were sailing after shoals of herring

Sinner Man

Oh sinner man, where you gonna run to? (x3)

(All on that day)

Run to the sun, sun won't you hide me? (x3)

(All on that day)

No sinner man, sun'll be a freezing (x3)

(All on that day)

Run to the moon, moon won't you hide me?

No sinner man, moon'll be a bleeding

Run to the rock, rock won't you hide me?

No sinner man, rock'll be a melting

Run to the sea, sea won't you hide me?

No sinner man, sea'll be a boiling

Run to the Lord, Lord won't you hide me?

No sinner man, you should be a prayin'

Run to the Devil, Devil won't you hide me?

Yes sinner man, come on in and howdy

Trad. American spiritual, 1800s

An African American spiritual inspired by the book of Exodus, which tells the story of a sinner who tries to hide from God on Judgment Day but ultimately can't escape God's wrath.

Sing If You're Glad to Be Gay



Am
 The British police are the best in the world
 Dm E7
 I don't believe one of those stories I've heard
 Am
 About them raiding our clubs for no reason at all
 Dm E7
 Lining the customers up by the wall
 Dm
 Pulling out people, knocking them down
 E7
 Resisting arrest as they're kicked on the ground
 Dm
 Raiding our houses, calling us queer
 E7 Am
 I don't believe that sort of thing happens here

Am Dm
 Sing if you're glad to be gay
 G C E7
 Sing if you're happy that way, Hey!
 Am Dm
 Sing if you're glad to be gay
 C E7 Am
 Sing if you're happy that way

And don't try to kid us that if you're discreet
 You're perfectly safe as you walk down the street
 You don't have to mince or to make bitchy remarks
 To get beaten unconscious and left in the dark
 I had a friend who was gentle and short
 He was lonely one evening, he went for a walk
 Queerbashers caught him and kicked in his teeth
 He was only hospitalised for a week

And sit back and watch as they close down our clubs
Arrest us for meeting and raid all our pubs
Make sure your boyfriend's at least twenty one
So only your friends and your brothers get done
Lie to your workmates, lie to your folks
Put down the queens, tell anti-queer jokes
Gay Lib's ridiculous, join their laughter
Those fellas are legal now... what more are they after?

Tom Robinson, UK, 1978



Until 1967, male homosexuality had been illegal in the UK and men were prosecuted and often imprisoned. It was still illegal in Scotland and Northern Ireland in 1978 when this song was released. The age of consent remained higher than the age of heterosexual consent until 2000. Lesbianism has never been banned in UK law; the Lords decided in 1920 that the “great public danger” of publicising the idea to women outweighed the benefits of banning it.

Sixteen Tons

I was born one morning when the sun didn't shine
 Picked up my shovel and I walked to the mine
 I loaded sixteen tons of number nine coal
 And the store boss said, "God bless my soul"

You load sixteen tons and what do you get?
 Another day older and deeper in debt
 St Peter don't you call me, 'cause I can't go
 I owe my soul to the company store

Now some people say a man is made out of mud
 But a poor man's made out of muscle and blood
 Muscle and blood, and skin and bone
 A mind that's weak and a back that's strong

I was born one morning in the drizzling rain
 Fighting and trouble are my middle name
 I was raised in the cane brake by an old mother lion
 Can't get a high tone woman make me walk the line

Now if you see me coming better step aside
 A lot of men didn't and a lot of men died
 One fist of iron and the other of steel
 If the right one don't get you then the left one will

You load sixteen tons and what do you get?
 Another day older and deeper in debt
 St Peter don't you call me, 'cause I can't go
 I owe my soul to the company store

Merle Travis, USA, 1946

"Sixteen tons" refers to a practice of initiating new miners. In the mid-1920s, a miner tended to haul eight to ten tons per day, whereas for new miners, other miners would slack off so the new miner could 'make sixteen' on his very first day. The line "I owe my soul to the company store" refers to the truck system and debt bondage. Workers were not paid cash; rather they were paid with goods sold at the company store. This made it impossible for workers to store up cash savings. A straw boss was a member of a work gang that supervised other workers.

Skye Boat Song

Speed bonnie boat, like a bird on the wing
Onward the sailors cry
Carry the lad that's born to be king
Over the sea to Skye

Loud the winds howl, loud the waves roar
Thunderclaps rend the air
Baffled, our foes stand by the shore
Follow they will not dare

Many's the lad fought on that day
Well the claymore could wield
When the night came silently lay
Dead on Culloden's field

Though the waves leap, soft shall he sleep
Ocean's a royal bed
Rocked in the deep, Flora will keep
Watch by your weary head

Burned are our homes, exile and death
Scattered the loyal men
Yet e'er the sword cool in the sheath
Charlie will come again

Harold Boulton, England, 1884

This tells of how Bonny Prince Charlie escaped from his enemies in the winter of 1745-6 by putting out to sea with Flora MacDonald and a few devoted Highland boatmen in a rising storm - his pursuers were too afraid to follow.

Sloop John B

We come on the sloop John B
 My grandfather and me
 'Round Nassau town we did roam
 Drinkin' all night, got into a fi-i-ight
 I feel so break up, I want to go home

So hoist up the John B sails
 See how the main sail sets
 Send for the Captain ashore, let me go home
 Please let me alone, I want to go ho-o-ome
 I feel so break up, I want to go home

The first mate, oh, he got drunk
 He broke up the people's trunk
 Constable had to come and take him away
 Sheriff Johnstone please let me alo-o-one
 I feel so break up, I want to go home

The cook he got the fits
 Ate up all of my grits
 Then he went and ate up all of my corn
 O let me go home, please let me go ho-o-ome
 This is the worst trip I've ever been on

Trad. Bahamian, c.1903

First published by EW Prouty, a Massachusetts-based orchestra leader and violinist whose band provided music for hotels including two in Nassau. It's probable that he arranged an existing melody.

South Australia

In South Australia I was born
 (Heave away, haul away)
 In South Australia 'round Cape Horn
 (We're bound for South Australia)

Haul away, you rolling kings
 Heave away, haul away
 Haul away, oh hear me sing
 We're bound for South Australia

As I walked out one morning fair...
 'Twas there I met Miss Nancy Blair...

I rolled her up, I rolled her down...
 I rolled her round and round the town...

There ain't but one thing grieves my mind...
 To leave Miss Nancy Blair behind...

And as we wallop around Cape Horn...
 You'll wish to God you'd never been born...

Now here I am in a foreign land...
 With a bottle of whisky in me hand...

Port Adelaide is a fine old town...
 There's plenty of rum to go around...

Trad. sea shanty, 1800s

This capstan shanty (see glossary) is now one of the most popular sea shanties in the folk record. As with all shanties, many versions and verses exist.

Stanley and Dora

Stanley and Dora was lovers
They met down the Tottenham Court Road
A whoopin' it up at the Palais
Where the ice cream fountains flowed
He was her man, a Lonny Donegan fan

Now Dora worked at the Dominion
The best usherette in the flicks
She sold Stan a ticket for one and nine
Wot did oughta cost four and six
He left his cosh in his mackintosh

Well Dora was swiftly promoted
To the circle she rose in a dream
When who should she see but young Stanley
Wiv the chick wot sold ice-cream
He'd chucked her up for a Walls' Ice Cup

But justice came soon to poor Dora
For Stan and his Walls' ice cream
They both was killed in the rush for the exit
When they played God Save the Queen
God save our Stan, the only one wot can

Ron Gould, UK, 1950s

Star of the County Down

Near Banbridge Town in the County Down
One morning last July
From a breen green came a sweet colleen
And she smiled as she passed me by
She looked so sweet from her two bare feet
To the sheen of her nut brown hair
Such a coaxing elf, sure I shook myself
For to see I was really there

From Bantry Bay up to Derry Quay
And from Galway to Dublin Town
No maid I've seen like the brown colleen
That I met in the County Down

As she onward sped, sure I scratched my head
And I looked with a feeling rare
And I says, says I, to a passer-by
"Who's the maid with the nut-brown hair?"
He smiled at me and he says, says he
"That's the gem of Ireland's crown
Young Rosie McCann from the banks of the Bann
She's the star of the County Down"

At the harvest fair she'll be surely there
And I'll dress in my Sunday clothes
With my shoes shone bright and my hat cocked right
For a smile from my nut-brown rose
No pipe I'll smoke, no horse I'll yoke
Till my plough turns a rust-coloured brown
Till a smiling bride by my own fireside
Sits the star of the County Down

Stealin'

Put your arms around me like a circle round the sun
 You know I love you Mama, like your easy rider done

You don't believe I love you, look what a fool I've been
 You don't believe I'm sinking, look what a hole I'm in
 'Cause I'm stealin, stealin, pretty mama don't you tell on me
 Cause I'm a-stealin back to my same old used to be

The woman I love, she's my size and height
 She's a married woman, so you know she treats me right

The woman I love, she's so far away
 But the woman I hate, why I see her every day

Come a little closer honey to my breast
 And tell me that I am the one you really love the best
 And you don't have to worry 'bout any of the rest
 'Cause everything's gonna be fine



Trad. American, c.1928

First recorded by the Memphis "jug band", so-called because they used home-made items (spoons, bones, stovepipes and jugs) to create music - an accomplished jug player could have a two octave range blowing into a jug as a wind instrument.

Streets of London

C G
 Have you seen the old man
 Am Em
 In the closed down market
 F C Dm G
 Kicking up the papers with his worn out shoes?
 C G
 In his eyes you see no pride
 Am Em
 Arms held loosely by his side
 F C G C
 Yesterday's papers telling yesterday's news
 F C C G/B Am
 So how can you tell me you're lonely
 D G G7
 And say for you the sun don't shine?
 C G
 Let me take you by the hand
 Am Em
 And lead you through the streets of London
 F C G C
 I'll show you something to make you change your mind

Have you seen the old girl
 Who walks the streets of London
 Dirt in her hair and her clothes in rags
 She's no time for talking
 She just keeps right on walking
 Carrying her home in two carrier bags

In the all-night café
 At a quarter past eleven
 Same old man sitting there on his own
 Looking at the world
 Over the rim of his tea cup
 Each tea lasts an hour
 Then he wanders home alone

Have you seen the old man
 Outside the Seaman's Mission
 Memory fading with the medal ribbons that he wears
 In our winter city,
 The rain shows little pity
 For one more forgotten hero
 In a world that doesn't care

Ralph McTell, UK, 1974

Highlighting the deep problems of the forgotten, homeless, and elderly members of society, McTell's song was actually inspired by individuals in Paris which he visited hitchhiking and busking. His original plan was to call it "Streets of Paris", but the issues highlighted are universal and it ended up as "Streets of London."

Sweet Chariot

Swing low, sweet chariot
 Coming for to carry me home
 Swing low, sweet chariot
 Coming for to carry me home

I looked over Jordan and what did I see?
 Coming for to carry me home
 A band of angels coming after me
 Coming for to carry me home

If you get to Heaven before I do
 Coming for to carry me home
 Tell all my friends I'm comin' there too
 Coming for to carry me home

Wallace Willis and Minerva Willis, USA, 1860s

Wallace Willis and his daughter Minerva were enslaved people who were freed after the American Civil War and who wrote a number of well-known spiritual songs . Sweet Chariot reminds the singers that glory awaits in Heaven, using the old testament account of the Prophet Elijah's chariot which ascended to Heaven. Due to the song's origins, its status as rugby anthem has been controversial.

Take This Hammer

Take this hammer, carry it to the Captain (x3)

You can tell him I'm gone, Lord, you can tell him I'm gone

If he asks you was I running...

You can tell him I was flying Lord, you can tell him I was flying

If he asks you was I laughing...

You can tell him I was crying Lord, you can tell him I was crying

I don't want no cold iron shackles...

'Cause they hurts my feet Lord, 'cause they hurts my feet

I don't want no cornbread and molasses...

'Cause they hurts my pride Lord, 'cause they hurts my pride

Swing this hammer, it looks like silver...

But it feels like lead Lord, it feels like lead

Trad. American Work Song, c.1870

Following the abolition of slavery in the United States, many African-American prisoners were forced to perform unpaid labour in mines, railroads, or breaking rocks on the side of roads. Today, forced labour in US prisons continues to be a human rights abuse that disproportionately affects people of colour/black Americans. These 'chain gangs' sang rhythmic songs, known as 'Work Songs' (see glossary) to punctuate their labour, many of which related to escape from prison. Take this Hammer is a typical example of this genre. Cornbread and Molasses (a byproduct of sugar refining) were standard rations for prisoners in the Southern United States, and also comprised a large part of the diet of enslaved people.

Tall Trees

Tall trees, warm fire

Strong wind, deep water

I can feel it in my body

I can feel it in my bones

Origin Unknown

This Train is Bound for Glory

This train is bound for glory, this train (x2)
This train is bound for glory
Don't carry nothing but the righteous and the holy
This train is bound for glory, this train

This train don't carry no gamblers...
No hypocrites, no midnight rambles...

This train don't carry no rustlers...
Sidestreet walkers, two bit hustlers...

This train done carried my mother...
Father, sister and my brother...

This train goes down the tracks...
And once on board you don't come back...

Trad. American Gospel, c.1920

Thousands or More

The time passes over more cheerful and gay
 Since we've learnt a new act to drive sorrows away
 Sorrows away, sorrows away, sorrows away-ay-ay
 Since we've learnt a new act to drive sorrows away

Bright Phoebe awakes so high up in the sky
 With her red, rosy cheeks and her sparkaling eye
 Sparkaling eye, sparkaling eye, sparkaling eye
 With her red, rosy cheeks and her sparkaling eye

If you ask for my credit you'll find I have none
 With my bottle and friend you will find me at home
 Find me at home, find me at home, find me at ho-me
 With my bottle and friend you will find me at home

Although I'm not rich and although I'm not poor
 I'm as happy as those that's got thousands or more
 Thousands or more, thousands or more, thousands or more
 I'm as happy as those that's got thousands or more

Trad. English, c.1850



Phoebe was an ancient Greek Titan, grandmother of the god Apollo and goddess Artemis and the name has historically been used poetically to refer to the moon.

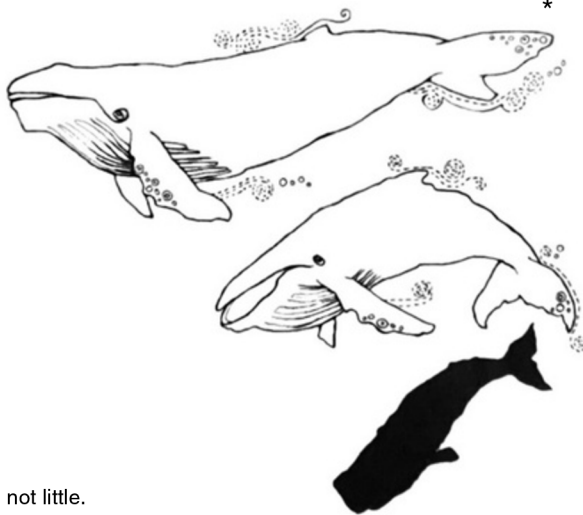
Three Little Birds

"Don't worry about a thing
'Cause every little thing is gonna be alright"
Singing, "Don't worry about a thing
'Cause every little thing is gonna be alright!"

Rise up this morning, smiled with the rising sun
Three little birds pitch by my doorstep
Singing sweet songs of melodies pure and true
Saying, "This is my message to you-ou-ou"

Singing, "Don't worry about a thing
'Cause every little thing is gonna be alright"
Singing, "Don't worry about a thing
'Cause every little thing is gonna be alright!"

Bob Marley and the Wailers, Jamaica, 1977,



*Not birds. Also not little.

Tickle Me Pink

Tickle me pink, I'm rosy as a flushed red appleskin
Except I've never been as sweet
I rolled around the orchard
And found myself too awkward
And tickle me green I'm too naive

Pray for the people inside your head
For they won't be there when you're dead
Muffled out and pushed back down
Pushed back to the leafy ground

Time is too early, my hair it isn't curly
I wish I was home and tucked away
When nothing goes right
And the future's dark as night
What we need is a sunny, sunny day
Don't know where I can buy myself a brand new pair of ears
Don't know where I can buy a heart
The one I've got is shoddy I need a brand new body
And then I can have a brand new start

Monsters in the valley and shootings in the alley
And people fall flat at every turn
There is no straight and narrow
Offload your wheelbarrow
And pick up your sticks and twigs to burn

Johnny Flynn, UK, 2008

Tower of Strength

1 I am a tower of strength with - in and with out I am a tower of strength with in - I am a
I let

2 All bur dens fall - from my shoul- ders all an- xi- e- ties slip - from - my mind I let

3 Ev-ery shack- le be loose - I - I let ev-ery shack- le be loose I let
I am a

Kath McMillan & Ineke Veerkamp, Australia, c.1985

Trees

Trees bend your branches down
Listen very closely you can hear the sound of
Roots, spreading deep below...
When the wind blows, where do the leaves go

Rose Music, UK, 2012

Tshotsholosa

Tshotsholosa, kwesontaba, stimela siphuma South Africa
Tshotsholosa, kwesontaba, stimela siphuma South Africa
Wena uyabaleka, kwesontaba, stimela siphuma South Africa
Wena uyabaleka, kwesontaba, stimela siphuma South Africa

Trad. Zulu/Ndebele Work Song, c.1900

English Translation:

Steam away over the hills, steam away you train from South Africa.
You are fast-moving through hills, steam away you train from South Africa

Apartheid was a system of racial segregation that was enforced in South Africa by the country's white minority. Black, Indian and mixed race South Africans were deprived of their freedom and civil rights until the abolition of the apartheid system in the 1990s. This song was sung by African migrant workers travelling from Zimbabwe (at the time under the control of the unrecognized apartheid state of Rhodesia) to work in the mines of apartheid South Africa. It became an iconic song in the international anti-Apartheid movement.

Under the Lilacs

She... sat... under the lilacs and played her guitar
Played her guitar, played her guitar
She sat under the lilacs and played her guitar
Played her guitar-ha-ha-ha

He sat down beside her and smoked his cigar..

He said that he loved her, but oh, how he lied...

She said she believed him, but oh, how she sighed...

They were to be married, but somehow she died...

He went to her funeral but just for the ride...

He sat on her tombstone and laughed till he cried...

The tombstone fell on him and squish-squash, he died...

The parson was passing and popped him inside...

She went to Heaven and flip-flap she flied...

He went to t'other place and frizzled and fried...

The devils they ate him with pitchforks and knives...

The moral of this story is don't smoke cigars...

Pete Seeger, USA, 1961

Up Above My Head

Up above my head, I can feel it in the air
 Up above my head, I can feel it in the air
 And I really do believe
 They're making music up there

Trad. American Gospel, c.1941

Likely influenced by a spiritual called "Over My Head" dating from the 1800s, this is a traditional call and response gospel song (see glossary). It has been named as one of the 100 songs every American should know.

Wade in the water

Wade in the water, wade in the water (x3)
 God's gonna trouble the water

Wade in the water
 Wade in the water, children
 Wade in the water
 God's gonna trouble the water

Sometimes I feel like a motherless child (x3)
 A long, long way from home

I wanna die easy when I die (x2)
 Shout salvation when I rise
 I wanna die easy when I die (x2)

Trad. American spiritual, 1800s

Wade in the water is a spiritual (see glossary). The instruction to 'Wade in the water' is thought by some to be a coded message to aid those trying to escape enslavement; by wading in rivers or streams the scent of someone escaping enslavement could not be picked up by the dogs of their pursuers.

Wagon Wheel



C
 Heading down south to the land of the pines
 Am F G
 I'm thumbing my way into North Caroline
 C G F
 Staring up the road I pray to God I see headlights
 C G
 I made it down the coast in seventeen hours
 Am F
 Picking me a bouquet of dogwood flowers
 C G F
 And I'm hoping for Raleigh I can see my baby tonight

So rock me mama like a wagon wheel
 Rock me mama any way you feel
 Hey mama rock me
 Rock me mama like the wind and the rain
 Rock me mama like a south bound train,
 Hey mama rock me

Running from the cold up in New England
 I was born to be a fiddler in an old time string band
 My baby plays a guitar, I pick a banjo now
 Oh, the north country winters keep a getting me now
 I lost my money playing poker so I had to up and leave
 But I ain't going back to living that old life no more

Walkin' to the south out of Roanoke
 I caught a trucker out of Philly, had a nice long toke
 But he's heading west from the Cumberland gap to Johnson City, Tennessee
 And I gotta get a move on before the sun
 I hear my baby calling my name and I know that she's the only one
 And if I die in Raleigh, at least I will die free

Bob Dylan & Ketch Secor, USA, 1973

The Cumberland Gap is about a 4 hour drive from Roanoke, and Raleigh is about a 3 hour drive in the opposite direction. Therefore if they go over to the Cumberland Gap (TN), now they're about a 6 hour drive from Raleigh, so we fear they might not get back in time. Also dogwoods are trees and their flowers are blossoms with short stems so you couldn't really pick a bouquet with them, it'd be an arrangement at best.

The Water

All that I have is a river
 The river is always my home
 Lord, take me away
 For I just cannot stay
 Or I'll sink in my skin and my bones

The water sustains me without even trying
 The water can't drown me, I'm done
 With my dying

Please help me build a small boat
 One that'll ride on the flow
 Where the river runs deep
 And the larger fish creep
 I'm glad of what keeps me afloat.

Now deeper the water I sail
 And faster the current I'm in
 That each night brings the stars
 And the song in my heart
 Is a tune for the journeyman's tale

Now the land that I knew is a dream
 And the line on the distance grows faint
 So wide is my river, the horizon a sliver
 The artist has run out of paint
 Where the blue of the sea meets the sky
 And the big yellow sun leads me home
 I'm everywhere now, the way is a vow
 To the wind of each breath by and by

The Water Is Wide

The water is wide, I cannot get o'er
 And neither have I wings to fly
 Give me a boat that will carry two
 And both shall row, my love and I

Oh down in the meadows, the other day
 A-gathering flowers both fine and gay
 A-gathering flowers both red and blue
 I little thought what love can do

I put my hand into one soft bush
 Thinking the sweetest flower to find
 I pricked my finger right to the bone
 And left the sweetest flower alone

I leaned my back up against some oak
 Thinking that he was a trust-y tree
 But first he bended and then he broke
 And so did my false love to me

A ship there is and she sails the sea
 She's loaded deep as deep can be
 But not so deep as the love I'm in
 I know not if I can sink or swim

Oh love is handsome and love is fine
 And love's a jewel while it is new
 But when it is old, it groweth cold
 And fades away like morning dew

Trad English, c.1724

Way Over Yonder in the Minor Key



G C
 I lived in a place called Okfuskee
 G
 And I had a little girl in a holler tree
 C
 I said, "little girl, it's plain to see
 G
 Ain't nobody that can sing like me
 D Em
 Ain't nobody that can sing like me"
 G C
 She said "it's hard for me to see
 G
 How one little boy got so ugly
 C
 Yes, my little girly, that might be
 G
 But there ain't nobody that can sing like me
 D Em
 Ain't nobody that can sing like me"

C G
 Way over yonder in the minor key
 D G
 Way over yonder in the minor key
 D Em
 There ain't nobody that can sing like me

We walked down by the buckeye creek
 To see the frog eat the goggle eye bee
 To hear that west wind whistle to the east
 There ain't nobody that can sing like me
 Ain't nobody that can sing like me
 Oh my little girly will you let me see
 Way over yonder where the wind blows free
 Nobody can see in our holler tree
 And there ain't nobody that can sing like me
 Ain't nobody that can sing like me

We walked down by the buckeye creek
To see the frog eat the goggle eye bee
To hear that west wind whistle to the east
There ain't nobody that can sing like me
Ain't nobody that can sing like me

Oh my little girly will you let me see
Way over yonder where the wind blows free
Nobody can see in our holler tree
And there ain't nobody that can sing like me
Ain't nobody that can sing like me

Way over yonder in the minor key...

Her mama cut a switch from a cherry tree
And laid it on to she and me
It stung much worse than a hive of bees
But there ain't nobody that can sing like me
Ain't nobody that can sing like me

Now I have walked a long long ways
And I still look back to my tanglewood days
I've led lots of girls since then to stray
Saying, ain't nobody that can sing like me
Ain't nobody that can sing like me

Way over yonder in the minor key...

Woody Guthrie, USA, 1946

We sing Woody Guthrie's lyrics to a tune written and popularised by British folk singer Billy Bragg.

We All Fly Like Eagles

We all fly like eagles
 Flying so high
 Circling around the universe
 On wings of pure light
 Ooh itchi chi-oh oh-i-oh

Origin Unknown

What Will We Do

What will we do when we'll have no money
 All true lovers, what will we do then
 Only hawk through the town for a hungry crown
 And we'll yodel it over again

What will I do if I'd marry a tinker
 All true lovers, what will we do then
 Only sell a tin can and walk on with my man
 And we'll yodel it over again

What will we do if we marry a soldier
 All true lovers, what will we do then
 Only handle his gun and we'll fight for the fun
 And we'll yodel it over again

What will we do if we have a young daughter
 All true lovers, what would we do then
 Only take her in hand and walk on with my man
 And we'll yodel it over again

Trad. Irish, 1900s

This version was recorded from Mary Delaney, an Irish traveller, in the 1970s. It bears a strong resemblance to an earlier song by Irish singer Elizabeth Cronin called "What Would You Do If You Married A Soldier?"

When I'm Gone

I've got my ticket for the long way 'round
Two bottle whiskey for the way
And I sure would like some sweet company
And I'm leaving tomorrow, what'd you say?

When I'm gone, when I'm gone
You're gonna miss me when I'm gone
You're gonna miss me by my hair
You're gonna miss me everywhere, oh
You're gonna miss me when I'm gone

When I'm gone, when I'm gone
You're gonna miss me when I'm gone
You're gonna miss me by my walk
You're gonna miss me by my talk, oh
You're gonna miss me when I'm gone

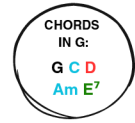
I've got my ticket for the long way 'round
The one with the prettiest of views
It's got mountains, it's got rivers
It's got sights to give you shivers
But it sure would be prettier with you

When I'm gone, when I'm gone
You're gonna miss me when I'm gone
You're gonna miss me by my walk
You're gonna miss me by my talk, oh
You're gonna miss me when I'm gone

Original Carter Family, USA, 1931

Originally recorded by the Carter Family, but this updated 'Pitch Perfect' version is by Lulu and the Lampshades

Whisky on a Sunday



He sits at the corner of Beggars Bush
 Astride of an old packing case
 And the dolls at the end of the plank were dancing
 As he crooned with a smile on his face
 Da da da da, come day go day
 Wish in me heart it was Sunday
 La la la drinking buttermilk all the week
 But it's whisky on a Sunday

His tired old hands have a wooden beam
 And the puppets they dance up and down
 A far better show than you ever will see
 In the fanciest theatre in town

In 1902 old Seth Davy died
 His song was heard no more
 The three dancing dolls in the dustbin were thrown
 And the plank went to mend the back door

On some stormy night if you're passing that way
 And the winds blowing up from the sea
 You will still hear the sound of old Seth Davey
 As he croons to his dancing girls three

Glyn Hughes, UK, c.1950

The original song contained idioms specific to Liverpool, where it is set. Seth Davy was a Jamaican performer who used to perform outside the Bevington Bush Hotel, which has evolved into "beggar's bush" in this version.

Whistling Gypsy Rover

The gypsy rover came over the hill
 Down through the valley so shady
 He whistled and he sang till the green woods rang
 And he won the heart of a lady

Ah de doo, ah de doo dah day
 Ah de doo, ah de day-o
 And he whistled and he sang till the green woods rang
 And he won the heart of a lady

She left her father's castle great
 Left her own fond lover
 Left her servants and her state
 To follow the gypsy rover

Her father saddled his fastest steed
 And searched his valleys all over
 Seeking his daughter at great speed
 And the whistling gypsy rover

At last he came to the castle gate
 Along the river shady
 And there was music and there was wine
 For the gypsy and his lady

He is no gypsy, my father, she said
 But Lord of these lands all over
 And I will stay till my dying day
 With my whistling gypsy rover

Leo Maguire, Ireland, c.1950

This song is similar to a number of older ballads which tell of the encounters between noble women and itinerant traveller men, most of which involve the woman leaving her unhappy marriage to live happily with the traveller. Stories of GRT (Gypsy, Roma & Traveller) people as seducers and kidnappers have created a stereotype that has been used as an excuse to persecute these people, from the false kidnapping of Elizabeth Canning in the 1750s to the 'Blond Angel' case in the 2010s.

White Cockade

It's true my love's enlisted and he wears the white cockade
 He is a handsome young man, likewise a roving blade
 He is a handsome young man, most right to serve the King
 Oh my very (Oh my very), Oh my very (Oh my very)
 Heart is breaking all for the loss of him

As I walked out this morning, as I rambled over yon moss
 I had no thought of 'listing, till a soldier did me cross
 He kindly did invite me to take a flowing bowl
 He advanced...
 Me the money, two guineas and a crown

My love is tall and handsome and comely for to see
 But by a sad misfortune a soldier now is he
 May the man that first enlisted him not prosper night or day
 How I wish that...
 He might perish all in the foaming spray

O may he never prosper and may he never thrive
 In all he puts his hand upon as long as he's alive
 May the very ground he treads upon the grass refuse to grow
 Since he has been the...
 Only cause of my sorrow, grief and woe

Then he's taken out his handkerchief to wipe the flowing eye
 Wipe up, wipe up them flowing tears likewise those mournful sighs
 And be you of good courage love till I return again
 You and I, love...
 Will be married when I return again

Trad. English, 1700s

Particularly popular in the mining districts of the North of England. A cockade is a coloured rosette that would be worn by soldiers to distinguish sides in battle. Throughout history, it has been common practice for recruiting officers to travel the country and forcibly enlist men to serve in the army or the navy, for example the "press gangs" of the 1700 and 1800s, employed by the Royal Navy to gather sailors. A common myth was that the press gangs would enlist men by tricking them into accepting a coin, for example by paying for their drink, or by getting them drunk enough to 'voluntarily' sign a contract.

Wild Mountain Thyme

The summertime has come
And the trees are sweetly blooming
And the wild mountain thyme
Grows around the blooming heather
Will ye go, lassie, go?

And we'll all go together
To pull wild mountain thyme
All around the blooming heather
Will ye go, lassie, go?

I will build my love a bower
By yon clear crystal fountain
And on it I will plant
All the flowers of the mountain

And if my true love she won't come
I will surely find another
To pull wild mountain thyme
All around the blooming heather

I will build my love a shelter
On yon high mountain green
And my love shall be fairest
That the summer sun has seen

And we'll all go together
To pull wild mountain thyme
All around the blooming heather
Will ye go, lassie, go?

Wild Rover



I've been a wild rover for many a year

And I've spent all my money on whisky and beer

And now I'm returning with gold in great store

And I never will play the wild rover no more

And it's no, nay, never

No nay never no more

Will I play the wild rover

No never no more

I went into an ale-house I used to frequent

And I told the landlady my money was spent

I asked her for credit, she answered me

“Nay, Such a custom as yours I can get any day”

I drew from my pocket ten sovereigns bright

And the landlady's eyes opened wide with delight

She said “I have whisky, and wines of the best

And the words that I spoke then were only in jest”

I'll have none of your whisky nor fine Spanish wines
 For your words show you plainly as no friend of mine
 There's others most willing will open the door
 To a man coming home from a far distant shore

I'll go home to my parents, confess what I've done
 And ask them to pardon their prodigal son
 And if they will do so, as oft times before
 Then I never will play the wild rover no more

Trad. British, c.1680

Recorded by the Dubliners so often assumed to be Irish, but the earliest Broadside version from the 1600s is credited to English writer Thomas Lanfiere. In true folksong style, the song changed significantly by the time it was collected in 1959 from fisherman Sam Larner by Ewan Maccoll and Peggy Seeger. The version we sing comes from a tune collected from a Canadian soldier in 1919 and heard on the radio by Gateshead singer Lou Killen. Lou adapted the melody, combined it with Larner's words and taught it to Luke Kelly of the Dubliners. Folksongs often travel meandering paths.

Winter Calls a Clear Horizon

1 
 Win - ter calls a clear ho - ri - z - on

2 
 Like the sea calls to the shore

3 
 Like the sun calls to the de - se - rt

4 
 Like the love calls to the heart

Jan Harmon, USA, 1985

Woad

What's the use of wearing braces
 Hats and spats and boots with laces?
 All the things you buy in places
 Down the Brompton Road
 What's the use of shirts of cotton
 Studs that always get forgotten?
 These affairs are simply rotten
 Better far is woad

Woad's the stuff to show men
 Woad to scare your foemen
 Boil it to a brilliant blue
 And rub it on your back and your abdomen
 Ancient Britain never hit on
 Anything as good as woad to fit on
 Neck or knees or where you sit on
 Tailors you be blowed

Romans came across the channel
 All wrapped up in tin and flannel
 Half a pint of woad per man'll
 Clothe us more than these
 Saxons you can waste your stitches
 Building beds for bugs in breeches
 We have woad to clothe us which is
 Not a nest for fleas

Romans keep your armours
 Saxons your pyjamas
 Hairy coats were meant for goats
 Gorillas, yaks, retriever dogs and llamas
 Tramp up Snowdon, with your woad on
 Never mind if you get rained or blowed on
 Never want a button sewed on
 Go it, Ancient B's

Work Song

Breaking rocks out here on the chain gang
 Breaking rocks and serving my time
 Breaking rocks out here on the chain gang
 Cause I been convicted of crime

Hold it steady right there while I hit it
 Well I reckon that ought to get it
 I've been working, working
 But I still got so terribly far to go

I committed crime Lord of needing
 Crime of being hungry and poor
 I left the grocery store man breathing
 When he caught me robbing his store

I heard the judge say "Five years labour
 On the chain-gang you're gonna go"
 I heard the judge say "Five years labour"
 I heard my old man scream "Lordy, no!"

Gonna see my sweet honey baby
 Gonna break this chain off the rock
 Gonna lay down somewhere shady
 Lord it sure is hot in the sun

Oscar Brown Jr & Nat Adderley, USA, 1960

Inspired by Nat Adderley's childhood experience of seeing a group of men on a chain gang (see glossary) whilst they paved the street in front of his home.

Worried Man

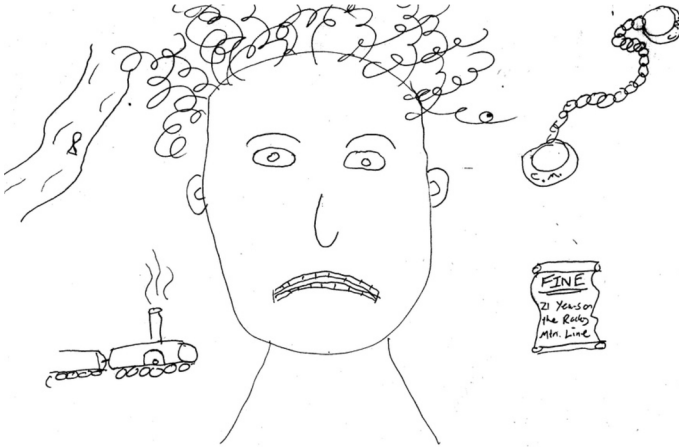
It takes a worried man to sing a worried song (x3)
I'm worried now but I won't be worried long

I swam across the river and laid me down to sleep...
When I woke, there were shackles on my feet

Shackles on my feet and twenty one links of chain...
And every one initialled with my name
I asked the judge, "What's gonna be my fine?"...
"Twenty-one years on the Rocky Mountain Line"

The train I ride is twenty-one coaches long...
I'm worried now, but I won't be worried long

Trad. American, c.1920



Likely to have originated with African-American singers, it was first recorded in 1920 by the Carter Family, having learned it orally from an unknown informant. The narrative is of a man imprisoned on a chain gang (see glossary) and indentured into forced labour; and the first verse implies his crime might have just been 'vagrancy' - i.e. unemployment and homelessness.

Yellow Roses

I lay on my back with the sun in my eyes
Soon I shall know what no living man knows
All of my life's been a fight against lies
Death brings the truth, now it's my turn to know

Send my mother a lock of my hair
Send my father the watch that he gave me
Tell my brother to follow me if he dare
Tell them I'm lost now, and no-one can save me
Remember, remember, send my love little yellow roses

My father taught me that we all are equal
Whatever colour, religion or land
Told me to fight for the things I believed in
This I have done, with a gun in my hand

I met my love in a garden of roses
She pricked her finger; how sharp the thorn grows
We made a promise that 'til death did part us
We'd never look on that wild yellow rose

Trevor Peacock, UK, 1962

The history of this song was only recently unearthed by someone researching for FSC. Writer Trevor Peacock originally wrote it for TV and said "I hadn't heard the song for half a century until your letter arrived" The arrangement is by John Barry, famous for composing for James Bond films and it's been in FSC since the first songbook of 1968. More recently it has been brought back into the wider English folk canon, having been preserved for decades by generations of FSC campers.

You're The Very Devil (Alcohol)

Started drinking, all around town
 Went to a club to put a few more down
 Feeling bad, drunk and sad
 This is going to be the last drink that I'll ever have

Alcohol, Alcohol. Alcohol, Alcohol
 You're the very devil. Get away from me

I got in with a crowd, we got in a car
 I went to a party, I played a guitar
 I never played well, it must have been hell
 Made a fool of myself, of that I can tell

I fell in the door, I fell on the street
 I fell on the floor, I fell in a heap
 I blundered on home, battered and blown
 Swore to the Lord to leave it alone

Next thing I knew, I was back home in bed
 My papa was there, he was holding my head
 My mama was there, in her nightclothes
 Holding a bucket right under my nose

Early next day, I was all in a fuzz
 Feeling ashamed, I started to curse
 All the money I'd earned, I'd been out and burned
 It's a lesson I feel I never seem to learn

Tom Goddard, UK, 1980s

This was heard by an FSC staff member from a singer at Cecil Sharp House, London in the early 1990s. We believe that the singer was called Tom Goddard and that he also wrote the song. No other records of song or singer have been identified and so, like The Huntsman and Yellow Roses, this song appears to have only been preserved within the FSC Glee tradition.

NEW ELEMENTS

(Suggested by the lodge)



Country dancing: singalong songs**Pat-a-cake Polka**

Heel and toe, heel and toe, gallop, gallop, gallop, gallop (x2)
 Right right right, left left left, both both both, knees knees knees
 And swing

I want to be near you

First couple separate, go out around the ring
 You pass your partner going out, you pass them coming in
 You bow to your corner, promenade your own, singing
 I want to be near you, you're the one the one for me,
 I want to be near you, you're the one for me

Oh honey, oh

You all join hands and you circle the ring
 Stop where you are give your partner a swing
 Swing your partner behind you
 Swing your own if they can come look and find you
 Turn by the left with the corner you know
 Do-si-do your own
 Now you all promenade with the new friend you've made
 Singing oh honey oh honey oh

3. Ducking for Oysters

Two couples in a set facing each other, red to right of their blue partner.
Sets in a long line or (ideally) a big circle with top couples facing clockwise

1. RHS for 8 beats | 2. LHS for 8 beats | 3. CL for 8 beats | 4. CR for 8 beats
 5. Sets stay holding hands. BC forms a arch, TC under for 4, back for 4
 6. Top Couple forms a arch, Bottom Couple under for 4, back for 4
 7. "Rock & Roll" TC go under BC arch, turn back-to-back, lift partner's arm over heads, pull BC through. Once BC are through TC arch (!!NOT BEFORE!!) they turn back to back and arms over heads
 8. BC forms arch, TC under, let go hands with BC and progress to next couple to form new set
- If in long lines the furthest couple runs round to the top of the line to form new set

Four couples in a set
4 Blues facing 4 Reds

4. Virginia Reel

1. Lines forward for 4 beats, lines back for 4 beats | 2. Lines forward for 4 beats, lines back for 4 beats
3. Turn partner right | 4. Turn partner left | 5. Turn partner two hands | 6. Do Si Do 7. Ones gallop down
8. Ones gallop back | 9&10&11&12 Ones strip the willow (right arm to partner, left down the line)
- 13&14. Ones gallop to top & lead cast | 15&16. Ones form arch, others lead through

Ultimate hitlist (1/2)

This was suggested in the lodge survey - a page with lists of different songs. Let us know if you have any amendments.

Lodge Fire Bangers

- . Home Boys Home
- . Larks They Sang Melodious
- . Kilgary Mountain
- . Rickety Tickety Tin
- . Big Rock Candy Mountains
- . Stealin'
- . Black Leg Miner
- . Midnight Special
- . Old Joe Clark
- . South Australia
- . Harriet Tubman
- . Haul Away Joe
- . Sinner Man
- . Wagon Wheel

Pixie Choice

- . Monkey dance
- . Animal Fair
- . Frogs go Tralalala
- . Little Rabbit Foo-Foo
- . Pirate Song
- . 5 Little Ducks
- . My Bonnie Lies
- . Alice the Camel
- . Shake my Sillies Out
- . Twinkle, Twinkle
- . Row, Row, Row Your Boat

Songs about colour

- . Yellow Roses
- . Red River Valley
- . Deep Blue Sea
- . White Cockade
- . Black Velvet Band
- . Old Abram Brown
- . Under the Lilacs

Pop songs

- . Working 9-5
- . Hit Me Baby One More Time
- . Teenage Dirtbag
- . You're Way Too Beautiful Girl
- . The Way You Are
- . Bridge Over Troubled Water
- . Don't Stop Me Now
- . Bohemian Rhapsody
- . Bare Necessities
- . Anything by Abba

Call and response

- . Princess Pat
- . Oh You'll Never Go To Heaven
- . Everywhere We Go
- . Tall Trees
- . Up Above My Head

Ultimate hitlist (2/2)**Rainy Day**

- Rattlin' bog
- Sloop John B
- Singing in the Rain
- Penguin Jamboree
- Green grow the rushes o

Name Game (give opt out)

- Little White Pony
- Telephone Song
- Hotter than Hot

For people who don't think they can sing

- Great American Railway
- Old Dun Cow
- Process Man
- Worried Man Blues
- Hesitation Blues
- Fish and Chips and Vinegar
- Hallelujah I'm a Bum

Walking with wet children

- My Baby Cares For
- Everywhere We Go
- Jean Harlow
- I am a Tower of Strength
- I Saw A Bird

Oldest Songs we sing

- Martin Said to his Man
- Froggy Went A-Courting
- Prickleeye Bush
- Rattling Bog
- Hal and Tow
- Wild Rover
- Rosemary Lane

Your suggestions here!

Colourchord

Colourchord is a simple way to sing three part harmony. Harmony is when people sing different notes and they sound nice together.

Colourchord came out of FSC during the lockdown period and we've simplified it here, with five songs in the songbook. It works as a vertical activity for all ages, or as a small group of at least three.

There are three 'teams': blue, red, and black. Blue and red sing two notes each, the black team sing the tune, it combines to harmony.

- **Blue** team sing their starting note, unless there's a blue line above a word when they go up one step of the major scale for that word.
- **Red** team sing their starting note, unless there's a red line below a word when they go down one step of the major scale for that word.
- **Black** team just sing the tune.

The **Red** team starts on Note 1 i.e. the note of the key the song is in.

The **Blue** team starts on Note 5 (four notes above the keynote.)

The **Black** team starts singing the tune.

You can find the starting notes using the little dots in the first verse of the text - the note of the melody in the word immediately after the blue/black dot is the starting note for blue team, the note of the melody in the word immediately after the red/black dot is the starting note for red team. Or you can work them out using the table below.

People naturally sing the correct 'up or down' notes for red and blue.

Song name	A key for campfire singing (needs instrument)					Word of start note		
	Key of song	Red team		Blue team		Black team (tune)	Red team start note	Blue team start note
		Start note	Red note	Start note	Blue note			
Bold Riley	A	A	↓G#	E	↑F#	E	Rain	Oh
Down Where the Drunkards Roll	C	C	↓B	G	↑A	C	See	Eyed
Sloop John B	D	D	↓C#	A	↑B	A	Night	Town
Thousands or More	D	D	↓C#	A	↑B	A	Time	Learnt
Water is Wide	E	E	↓D#	B	↑C#	B	Water	Boat

If you get the hang of this you can also add in a fourth team. Start on Note 3 and go up to Note 4 on blue, and down to Note 2 on red.

Ideas for leading Glee on camp

Facilitating glee is largely about listening to the lodge, both kids and adults. Try and keep in mind if people can see each other across the circle, and whose bedtimes may be coming up. Take note of song suggestions as they come up, and try to create balance between different groups' suggestions and the energy of the moment.

- Once everyone is ready for the next song, announce it clearly and loudly with a page number. Make sure you give children enough time to find the song
- Sound the start note and first bit of the tune whilst waiting for people to find the song in the songbook
- Check in with kids / staff who are bringing suggestions if they also want to help lead or pitch a particular song. This can bring a nice variety to the fire. Let people know if their song is coming next so you can see if it's still a good time for them!
- Mix up lodge fire seating to sit in clans
- Repeat the final chorus if it's going well - a circular hand gesture is a good way of indicating this
- Teach a lesser-known song from the songbook at rally or at start of staff cuppa
- Ask staff for requests at campfire as well as kids!
- If you're an experienced leader, ask for other staff to volunteer to lead glee for a lodge fire and support them in doing so

An important note on pitch:

Generally on camp we sing in unison, i.e. women and children sing the exact same note, and men sing the same note but an octave below. The average women's voice is slightly less than an octave above the average male voice, so to pitch something which works for everyone, women might feel it's a bit too high, men might feel it's a bit too low, and hopefully it's just right for kids.

Some extra pages to write stuff in



Some extra pages to write stuff in



Some extra pages to write stuff in



FURTHER DETAILS ABOUT THIS EDITION OF THE SONGBOOK



The “2026 Trial Songbook” Process

In putting together this red “2026 Trial songbook”, we’ve adopted a completely new “radically transparent” way of working on a songbook, throwing involvement in the process open to any adult from the lodge who wanted to join the “FSC Glee and our Songs” WhatsApp group and surveying all adults by email (225 responses!) to get a temperature check of where the organisation is. In person sessions have been held in 2024 on summer camps, plus Stores, Regional Gleees, Postcamps and Autumn Glee Camp. We know no process is perfect, but between the initial Conscious Songbook work, and the 2024 revamp work we have made space for a large number and variety of people to get involved.

Much of the work has been standard edits to the songbook - working out what isn’t sung any more, making proofing changes etc. But part of the work has been around updating the songbook to make more people feel welcome on FSC, building on work started by the Conscious Songbook team back in 2020. We know that a number of campers are uncomfortable with some of the lyrics and songs we sing as they may contain overtones of or outright misogyny, racism, and ableism. There is also a lack of representation, especially of people deserving of equity. We are a long way behind many others in the folk scene in addressing these issues, especially given we are a children’s organisation.

We also recognise that FSC’s folk legacy is extremely important and valuable. We are unique as such a large organisation in preserving the folk legacy and constantly handing it down to new children. There is a long and varied history in folk of changing lyrics but we recognise the tension between preserving songs and updating them for the modern world. Some people believe that updating the songs will lead to them being sung less, others believe it will lead to them being sung more - and no one really knows until we try. It’s a sensitive subject, and we would like you to be reassured that a large number of people have put a huge amount of work and consideration into this topic.

In all we have done, we have tried to be guided by FSC values.

FSC and our values

FSC is a children's educational charity. As such, one of our aims is to create a songbook that 'aligns with our values', to more accurately represent us as an organisation to the children who camp with us. But what are those values?

Our values are collected on the staff section of our website, under 'FSC's agreed best practices, procedures and policies'. Below are some that we have found particularly helpful in guiding our discussions; perhaps you'll find similar inspiration in browsing them for yourself.

"None of us has a monopoly on correct thinking, however strongly felt our views may be, nor how experienced we are."

"The children are at the centre of our activities."

"On our camps, we teach children to live with concern and care for themselves, other people, and the environment."

"Forest School Camps commits to promoting dignity and respect for all. Not only to preventing discrimination within our organisation, but also to being actively inclusive."

Some songs that deal with difficult topics do further these aims by asking children to put themselves in the shoes of people with different life experiences. However, not all songs lend themselves well to thoughtful discussion, for example because they might treat complex topics as a throwaway punchline.

We have also considered how frequently, and with what framing, various themes occur in the songbook. Individual songs containing misogyny, substance abuse, or Jesus may be fine on their own. But if there's a huge number of them, then the songbook as a whole may not convey an accurate impression of our organisation to our young campers and their parents.

Songbook journeys since 2020

2020 - A 'Conscious Songbook' crew came together to ask 'why are we still singing songs that don't align with our organisation's values, and how can we change this?' We began having conversations online over zoom (during the pandemic!).

2021 - Different working groups were created, and smaller crews developed some amazing work on these themes, feeding back into main meetings; research and context, new songs, regional glee, EDI.

2022 - After many online meetings, org4 updates, all staff emails, glee camp workshops and letters to camps - there are new songs learned, contentious songs identified, and context and research gathered.

2023 - Regular meetings and working groups slowed, but there is a sense that these conversations are now happening on camps, at glees, and in our wider organisation. New songs are being brought in and .. was that verse there before?!

2024 - Conscious Songbook & Virtual Campfire crews discussed creating a new printed songbook and ensuring it echoed the work the CS team had done.

A separate group is formed on WhatsApp called "FSC Glee and our songs" focused on revamping the songbook for 2025/2026. Other people join from across the lodge to get involved.

As survey is sent out to the wider lodge asking about which songs are sung, which songs aren't sung, and canvassing opinion on the specific lyrical changes being made. More than 200 people reply.

The decision is taken to also create a mini-booklet of new songs to go into the songbook. It's called IFASCO "I Feel A Song Coming On".

And alongside this, the Conscious Songbook team continue their work of broadening involvement from the lodge and getting new perspectives. The Conscious Songbook team are reaching out to the different parts of the lodge who might not have fed in to this process and want to. Please get in touch via songbook@fsc.org.uk if you'd like to be involved (not on WhatsApp).

Songbook survey write-up (1/2)

It was the best of surveys, it was the worst of surveys. It is a “great idea to make amendments to songs which reflect the values of our times”. It is a “humourless purging of our folk history”. It “gives me hope about returning to FSC in the future”. It is “unlikely to make anyone feel more welcome”. We have done something “absolutely invaluable for the organisation and everyone in it”. We should “stop it and address something which actually matters in the world”. In short, there are a lot of varied opinions on our work so far!

We’re really pleased with the response rate and the engagement especially as we’ve never done anything like this before - 225 staff completed the survey overall and we had a ton of comments. As always, the comments and analysis from the Lodge survey are available for staff - see details on back page.

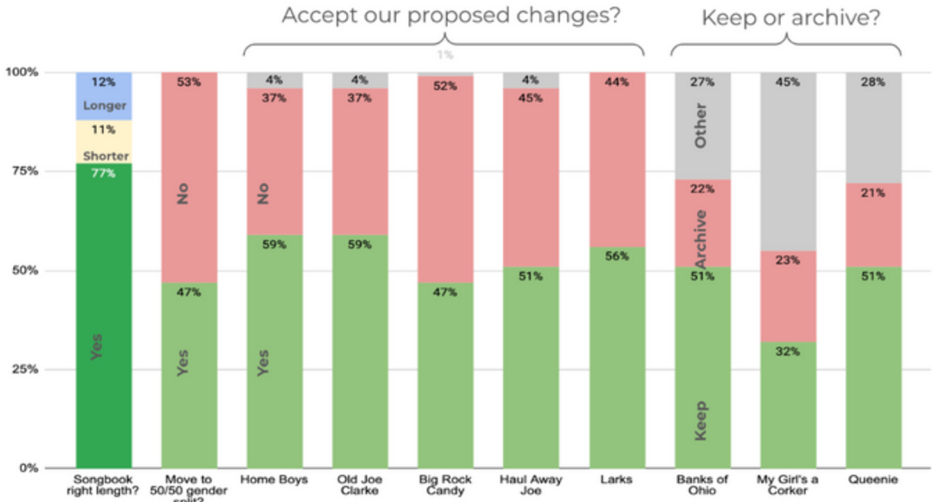
We’ve read all of the 10,000 words of comments and have onboarded a lot of the feedback, but it’s not as simple as it might sound - the lodge has a huge variety of viewpoints.

Our first key conclusion is that there’s a broad mandate for change: 83% of the 60 comments expressing a point of view were positive; 17% negative. This is especially positive as people are generally much more likely to respond to surveys when they disagree with something. And across both surveys women and minorities (of all types) were most enthusiastic about change, although it is worth noting that a number of young male staff are uncomfortable with singing misogynistic lyrics alongside teenage girls in their care.

Our second key conclusion is that there’s a huge demand for more context in the songbook - and we have worked hard to deliver this to a high standard in this draft.

Songbook survey write-up (2/2)

Here's the output for our numeric questions below (n= 225).



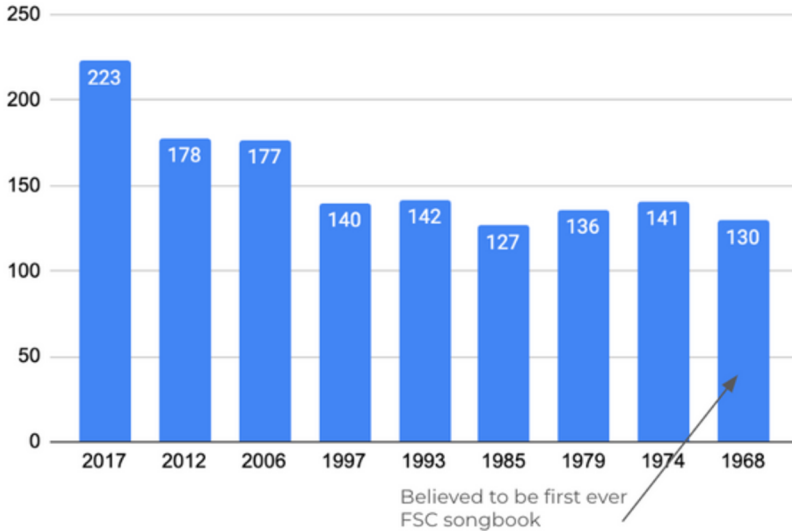
We have adopted the lodge perspective where it was clear.

On the gender ratio question, it was very close and in the comments a number of people said that they wanted to see progress but felt that 50/50 might be too ambitious for the next songbook.

This current version of the songbook is now up to a massive 15% of female songwriters and 85% male, from 9% female and 91% male in the 2017. This ratio will probably further improve when new songs are added in, but we are indeed unlikely to reach any kind of gender parity by 2026.

Some more songbook charts and facts (1/2)

Songbooks: number of songs

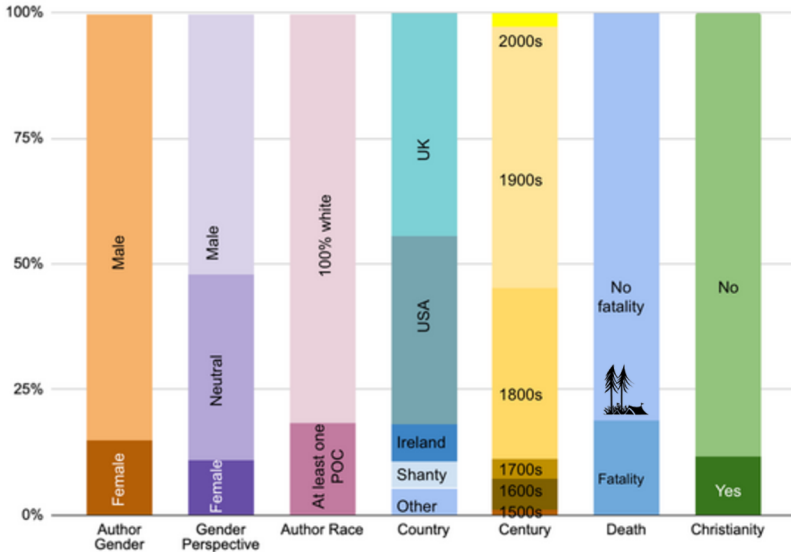


2017 songbook facts on gender ratios

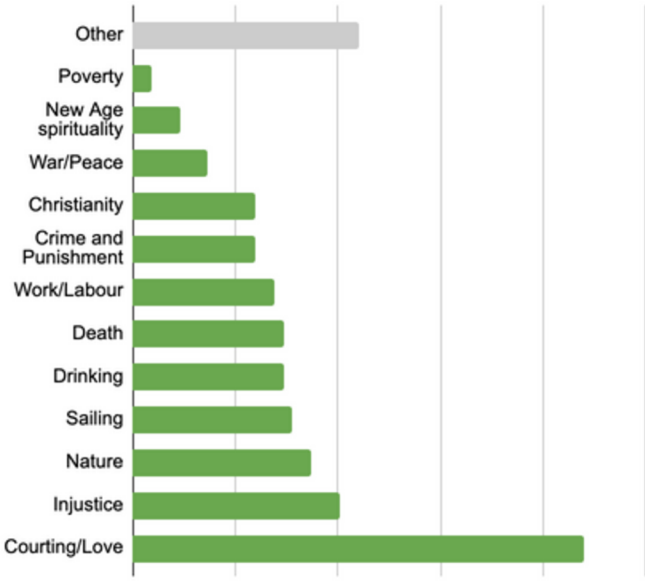
- 287 mentions of man/men vs 25 mentions of woman/women
- 2 songs solo authored & attributed by a non-FSC woman (Freight Train, Gonna be an Engineer) vs 40 by men
- 85-90% of songs where gender is clear written from a male perspective or about male protagonist
- 5 songs written by men from a female perspective (Harriet Tubman, I am Weary, Mrs McGrath, Rickety Ticky Tin, Maids When You're Young) is more than 4 total solo female authors

Some more songbook charts and facts (2/2)

2026 trial songbook by song category



2026 trial songbook by song theme (one song, one theme)



Analysis: Emily Kerr, Sophie Meekings, Llew Gore

Notes: excludes new "IFASCO" songs, and all charts exclude "unknown" songs

Decisions we made as a 'songbook revamp' collective

Our principles for making changes:

- Keep changes as minimal as possible: be parsimonious even with tweaks
- Keep same type of syllables or sound where at all possible; sentences should scan the same
- Try to return to original or older verses where there are alternatives available (e.g. in sea shanties and other improv songs) rather than making them up
- Don't make changes unless there's problematic lyrics (or it's copy-editing), we want to keep the FSC-isms
- Note: copy-editing and proofing changes have not been recorded

Our process for making changes was to discuss them on the WhatsApp group, and then vote. Where we had 70-80%+ of voters in favour of something, we took it forward. There are around 50 people on the WAG, some very involved, some less so, and some people drifted in and out of the discussions. It's worth noting again that not everyone agrees with all of the changes.

If you would like to know more, please go to the back page of this songbook and see how you can access all the information and work we have done, including a full track changes document for all the songs we've changed from the 2017. We also invite you to visit the songbook archive we created on www.lee.org.uk where you can see this is a process which has occurred multiple times in FSC's history.

Song	Decisions taken	Rationale
Alcohol	Change name of song to "You're the very devil"	Reduce impact of first song being alcohol-related
Angels (all night, all day)	Remove one of the 3 angel songs at the start of the book, this was voted least popular by working group	Lodge survey raised concern from a couple of people about 3 angel songs at the start of the book
Banana Boat Song	Remove song	Address concerns raised by many individuals online and offline about racism
Banks of the Ohio	Keep but contextualise the song	Lodge survey decision
Barley Mow	Revert to old version, reduce number of verses	Better known Reduce length for accessibility
Big Rock Candy Mountains	Keep the same	Lodge survey decision
Chicken on a raft	Edits to verses	Remove sexism/misogyny
Clementine	Change to original 1884 version	Reduce length for accessibility, remove misogyny
Come Landlord	Edits to verses	Remove sexism/misogyny
Deportees	Remove optional verse	Improve accessibility
Diggers song (TWTU)	Edit to verse	Small change for gender neutrality
Diggers Song 2	Reduce number of verses	Reduce length for accessibility
Don't Get Married Girls	Reduce number of verses	Reduce length for accessibility
Drunken Sailor	Remove verse	Remove sexism/misogyny
Drill Ye Tarriers Drill	Revert to previous songbook version	Keep 'FSCism'
Fathom the bowl	Replace verse with optional verse	Remove sexism/misogyny
Five Hundred Miles	Change to folk heroine Hedy West's original	Increase female authorship Reduce length for accessibility
Go Down You Blood Red Roses	Revert to the 1980s-1990s FSC songbook version	Remove sexism/misogyny
Gonna be an Engineer	Correct errors in current text, update to number of verses	Current text has errors, have re-done truncated original
Great American Railway	Remove optional extra chorus	Not well known, confusing to have two chorus options
<u>Hallelujah</u> I'm a Bum	Edit to verse (men >> folk)	Small change for improved gender neutrality
Haul Away Joe	Remove first verse, replace other verses	Remove homophobia Remove sexism/misogyny
Hesitation Blues	Replace verses	Remove sexism/misogyny
Home Boys Home	Include woodling-authored changes to last verse Issue of sex work and young woman's agency flagged for future lodge discussion	Reduce sexism/misogyny; incorporate a child-led approach to re-writing our songbook.
Ilkley Moor	Replace with non-dialect verses	Improve accessibility

Song	Decisions taken	Rationale
John Ball	Edit to chorus	Increase female representation
John Kanakanaka	Remove song	Address racism due to racist slur in name of song
Jamaica Farewell	Add context, edits to verses	Remove sexism/misogyny Respecting cultural accuracy outweighed desire to keep 'FSCism'
Jug of Punch	Edit to verse	Remove ableism
Kilgary Mountain	Edit to verse	Remove sexism/misogyny
Larks They Sang Melodious	Include additional verse	Increase female agency Lodge survey decision
Manchester Rambler	Edits to chorus and verse	Small change for gender neutrality Increase female agency
Midnight Special	Keep as it is	Working group decision
My Baby Cares for Only Me	Add in missing part	Correction
My Girl's a Corker	Keep in the songbook	Lodge survey decision
Old Dun Cow	Keep as it is	Keep 'FSCism'
Old Joe Clark	Edits to verses Replace verses	Small change for gender neutrality Remove sexism/misogyny
Parting Glass	Remove verse	Remove male gaze
Poor Old Horse	Edit to verse Remove verse	Address racism Reduce length for accessibility
Process Man	Edit to verse	Small change for gender neutrality
Queenie	Keep as it is	Lodge survey decision
Seven Drunken Nights	Revert to previous songbook version	Remove sexism/misogyny, but song later removed due to lack of popularity
Shallow Brown	Keep but contextualise the song	Fact-checking addressed concerns
Shenandoah	Replace verses	Remove male gaze Address racism
Shawneetown	Edit to verse Otherwise keep as it is	Remove sexism/misogyny Lack of consensus for further change
Sixteen Tons	Keep as it is	Fact-checking addressed concerns

Song	Decisions taken	Rationale
Snow Sniffin' Lament	Remove song	Casual treatment / mockery of addiction
Shoals of Herring	Remove verse	Improve accessibility
South Australia	Edit to verse	Remove sexism/misogyny
Sante Anno	Reduce number of verses	Reduce length for accessibility
Sing If You're Glad to be Gay	Remove verse	Reduce length for accessibility
Stone Cold Dead in the Marketplace	Remove song	Flagged in relation to concerns about people singing the song in a mocking accent. Removed due to low knowledge/popularity
This Land is your Land	Reduce number of verses	Reduce length for accessibility
This Train is Bound for Glory	Reduce number of verses	Reduce length for accessibility
Unicorn	Remove song	Flagged in relation to length Removed due to low knowledge/popularity
When I'm Gone	Change of version	Better known
White Cockade	No change	Lack of consensus for proposed change
Yellow Bird	Remove song	Flagged in relation to colonialism Removed due to low knowledge/popularity
Yellow Roses	Edit to verse	Small change for gender neutrality

Songs being archived (1/3)

We ran a lodge survey which 200 people responded to with which songs they felt were sung a lot currently on camp and those which weren't. This is a huge number of respondents and is therefore statistically robust (we also conducted an in-person session of around 30 people on Postcamps; similar list). We have removed these songs to make space for some of the new ones you will hopefully enjoy singing. This follows a long tradition of doing the same thing on FSC: indeed around 1/4 of the songs churned each songbook edition in the early days of the printed songbook. We point you to our digitally archived songbooks on www.lee.org.uk if you would like to know more, as well as our shared folder with all the information in it (see back page).

Some people told us they thought that we should give a second chance to songs that aren't widely known but are well loved among those who have heard them. In response to this feedback, we have listed 10 'loved but little known' songs in the "I Feel A Song Coming On" new songs booklet so everyone has a chance to hear them and vote for them to be included in the final 2026 songbook.

If your favourite song is on this list don't worry - songs have left FSC songbooks only to return again before, and if you want to make sure it gets back into a future songbook you just have to make sure you teach it to lots of people.

Songs being archived (2/3)

- Angels (All Night, All Day)
- Banana Boat Song
- Botany Bay
- Children Go Where I Send
- Crow on the Cradle
- Diamonds In The Rough
- Dido Bendigo
- Don't Get Married Girls
- Handsome John Brown
- Hippopotamus
- John Kanaka
- Lady and the Crocodile
- Life Is Butter
- Logger Lover
- Lord of the Dance
- Milwaukee Truckin' Blues
- Moccasin Mile
- Moondance
- Poor Boy
- River O Joe
- Road to Isles
- Seven Drunken Nights
- Snow Sniffing Lament
- Song for Seth
- Stone Cold Dead in the Marketplace

- Strangest Dream
- Sweet Roseanne
- There is a Tavern
- This Land is your Land
- Unicorn
- Yellow Bird

10 songs moved to the
"IFASCO" booklet for a second
chance

- All on the Shore
- As I Roved Out
- Before I Met You
- Calling On
- Come From the Heart
- Death Come Knocking
- Let the Bulgine Run
- Mrs McGrath
- Up The Ladder
- When You Were Born

Songs being archived (3/3)

A note on songs which people have told us they perceive to be racist or colonially problematic. Banana Boat Song, Stone Cold Dead In Marketplace, and Yellow Bird were all raised by several members of the lodge as being problematic, especially Banana Boat Song. As they were also unpopular in the mini-survey we did with around 30 people, and no one had ever wanted to record them for Virtual Campfire, we decided to archive them.

However, in the lodge survey, whilst there were comments supporting this, there were also a couple opposing this decision and explaining why the songs were not problematic. We were not attempting to judge, merely to reflect the views of the lodge, but we probably should have included them as part of the lodge-wide survey.

So in the interests of having a very clear lodge-wide decision on this matter, we are asking about them in the survey (linked at the back of the book), and we would welcome your vote. We invite you to briefly look at the history of the songs online.

A note on ‘Angels’. We had a number of comments in the Lodge survey about the fact that there are too many songs all in the same place in the songbook about angels. The working group voted which one to archive for this edition; we are now asking you, the lodge, to give your vote.

Other notes for this version of the songbook

Virtual Campfire: FSC has a website where you can find recordings made around the campfire of most of our songs, and now also a digital archive of our old songbooks. Available on www.glee.org.uk

Guitar chords: In response to a lot of discussions around readability, we have decided to cut down the number of guitar chords in the printed copy of the book but increase the overall number of songs with chords available by adding them to a digital version of the songbook. This will be available on glee.org.uk. Guitarists can then copy these chords into their own songbooks.

We have also added colours to the chords and provided a couple of suggestions for different keys to play them in (by matching the colours to the chords in the main text).

Typesetting: we have set in Helvetica. For accessibility reasons, we have removed italics (other than in attributions) and chosen a sans serif font. We have also added grey lines and indentations to assist with reading choruses and chosen red / blue as the colour combination most likely to be visible to those with colourblindness. If you have any additional accessibility comments please reach out.

Rounds: We have included sheet music for selected rounds, as it's sometimes helpful to make sure that everyone sings the right notes so the different melody lines work together in harmony (unlike in many standard songs, where it doesn't matter if people drift a bit).

Country Dancing: We have included a couple of pages of very simple Country Dancing sheet music as an experiment to see if this might encourage more use of live music for accompanying country dance on camp, plus three 'sing and dance to the words' songs which have previously featured in earlier versions of the FSC songbook. The thinking is that this can be used to give everyone the same simplified repertoire of Country Dances which can be augmented by the more complete CD and songbook.

FSC logos: this songbook contains 10 copies of the FSC logo. See if you can find them all.

Credits

For the full 2026 reprint, we will follow FSC standard procedure with no credits. However, given this 'trial version' is to get comments from the lodge, we wanted to show who has been involved and what they've done, so you can reach out to them if you want to know more. Once again, we highlight that no one person agrees with all the changes we are making - we have all had to compromise. The order of names in each section is random.

Process management, typesetting: Emily Kerr

Edits to songbook and proofing: Tim Pizey, Lucy Balogh, Hannah Kessler, Alice Husband, Sophie Meekings, Roary Skaista, Jon Boden, Adam Price, Rose Music, Piete Brooks, Sam Lee, Emily Kerr, Clem Marshall, Caitlin Russell, Polly Spencer-Vellacott, Vanessa Balogh, Felix Jenkins, Evie Malin, Pip Richards, Huw Taylor

Context, attribution, glossary, essay: Clem Marshall, Emily Kerr, Jon Boden (with thanks to earlier work by Jan Allain, Adrian Matthews, Sam Lee)

Lyric rewrites: Hannah Kessler, Rose Music, Jon Boden, Llewe Gore, Roary Skaista, Adam Price, Clem Marshall

Illustrations sourcing: Caitlin Russell

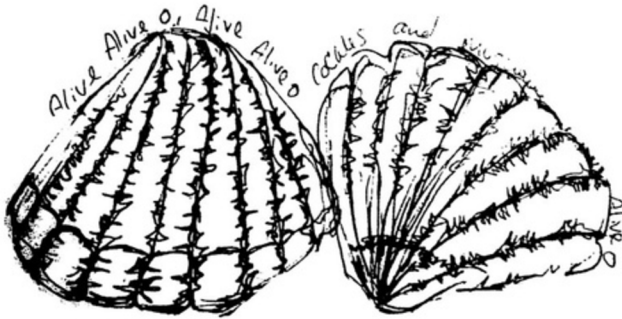
Scores & Colourchord: Jon Boden

Songbook analysis & charts: Sophie Meekings, Emily Kerr

Other current and historic contributions (including but not limited to prior Conscious Songbook work): Anna Stewart, Adrian Matthews, Rose Music, Fred Vellacott, Lucy Jaffe, Josh Solnick, Ed Stevens, Zoe Wang, Jamie Risner, Josie Grant-Pyett, Jan Allain, Mark Bloch, Josie Gritten, Abrisham Ahmadzadeh, Guils Bianchini, Sophie Mautner-Hudson, Pam Henderson, Bess Spencer Vellacott, Josh Hanson, Joe Martin, Greg Sanders, Tom Bevan

FEEDBACK

HOW TO FIND OUT MORE



Feedback request (1/2)

We have created a “2026 Trial songbook” survey so that individuals can feed in to the 2026 reprint. Please find it linked on the back page. Additional questions in the online version.

Please also complete the below with other members of your camp or glee group if you want to, and take a photo and email to songbook@fsc.org.uk.

Q1. Overall, how do you feel about the changes we have made?

Q2. Do you have any comments on any of the specific songs or context to add to them?

Q3. Are there any new features to this songbook you particularly like or particularly dislike? Do you have any proposed additions or changes?

Q4. If you're responding on behalf of a camp or regional glee group, which one?

Feedback request (2/2)

Q5. What is a favourite FSC song that you're singing at the moment?

Q6. What experiences have you had on camp where singing played a key role, and what did the experience of singing bring?

Q7. Do you know of a new song that brings in unheard perspectives and is easily sung around a campfire, that you'd like to be added to our songbook?

How to find out more

We have linked here to a folder with a lot of further information on the process and the data we have used. Click here to find:

- Data & comments from the surveys
- Track-changes document of all the changes we've made
- 15 songs with more detailed context essays
- Minutes of the meetings
- Summary in slides of the whole process
- All the old Conscious Songbook work
- Loads of nice pretty charts
- Lots of other things we've worked on



<https://www.fsc.org.uk/r/songbook-survey>

Songbook Survey



https://www.fsc.org.uk/r/glee_resources

Folder with more info

**FSC-registered email address
required for access to folder**

