

F R E E W H E E L I N G • N O W

**JIM REID &
JOHN HUBAND**



1: HEY DONALD

A gem of a song composed by the author of Dundee's famous *Jute Mill Song* - Mary Brooksbank. Mary often told how she was inspired to write this song after hearing a young tinker boy playing the pipes at her door.

*As I cam ower Strathmartine Braes,
Wha dae ye think I seen,
But a brisk young piper laddie,
Cam a-linkin ower the green.*

linkin - skipping

2: WHAR THE DICHTY RINS

Set to music by Jim, this was written as a poem by Dundee poet James Lowe. Nowadays, walking up the banks of the Dichty burn at the back of Dundee, you would be excused for doubting the words of the song - with the old mattress, the shopping trolley and the spare tyre scattered in the places that were once *'the beauty spots whar the Dichty rins'*.

*Whar the Dichty rins by yon fairy dell,
Whar the rowan tree hings abin the well,
Tho there's nae cascades nae falls nor roarin
linns,
Yet there's beauty spots whar the Dichty rins.*

abin - above, linn - waterfall

3: QUEER FOWK

Often called *The Queer Fowk in the Shaws*, this old song describes a young man's trip to Pollockshaws near Glasgow when it was obviously less populated

that in the present day. The saying '*Queer fowk in the Shaws*' refers to the Polish immigrants who came to the area as weavers in the early 1800s.

*I thocht until masel ae day
I'd like tae see a race,
For mony ither lads like me
hae been tae sic a place;
So up I got, I washed masel,
put on ma Sunday braws,
And wi a stick intae ma hand
I started for the Shaws.*

4: CRUACHAN BEN

A mountain beside the Pass of Brander on the road to Oban. Originally written in Gaelic by Patrick MacIntyre, the song laments the loss of land by the MacIntyres when the families were cleared from their houses and land to make way for the deer.

*MacIntyres were the clan,
That your slopes and glens frequented,
Now there's nane o them left there,
And fu sair I do lament it.*

5: O GIN I WERE A BARON'S HEIR

One of the most beautiful of the old Scots love songs - and a favourite of Jim's for many years. The tune is by William Holder (1765-1832).

*O gin I were a Baron's heir,
And could I braid wi gems your hair,
And mak ye braw as ye are fair,
Lassie wad ye loe me?*

6: THE GREAT STORM IS OVER

Jim learned this song from its composer, the American singer Bob Franke who he met in the summer of 1988 when they were both taking part in the Pinewood's Camp summer school run by the Country Dance and Song Society of America at Plymouth, Massachusetts. As Jim recalls, '*Bob sang a lot of songs which really impressed me - but to be in a big crowd with everybody belting out this chorus was just magic.*'

*Alleluia, the great storm is over,
Lift up your wings and fly.*

7: MUSIC ON HIS MIND

Jim lived for many years in Letham, a small village in Angus. Wull Bruce, one of the old timers in Letham loved to sing and for many years has been a great entertainer in the 'local' but than had a stroke. Says Jim, '*I wrote the song as a tribute to Wull - he still gives it aa he's got - a man I admire.*'

*I remember well the time when Wull was quite
a singer,
On Saturday you'd see him doon at the village
inn.
He enjoyed a conversation and a whisky wi the
lads,
But you would see his face licht up when he was
asked to sing,
And there was music on his mind and music in
his heart and soul.*

8: BACK IN SCOTLAND

A song of the exiled Scot. Jim was inspired to write this after meeting Americans of Scottish descent in Minnesota on the shores of Lake Superior - and discovering the intensity of feeling they had towards their 'homeland'.

*When I was young my grandad used to take me
on his knee,
And tell me of his homeland so far across the
sea,
He made me promise to return to his wee croft
some day,
'You'll never have true peace of mind until you
do,' he'd say.*

9: THE BALAENA

One of the finest and best known whaling songs celebrating an important era in Dundee's history. Jim first heard the song from the English folk singer and retired submariner Cyril Tawney at a party after he had appeared at the Dundee Folk Club in the early 1960s. The host, Dr Denovan, who was organiser of the Club, gave Jim an old copy of *The Courier* with the song printed in it - and *The Balaena* has been a favourite ever since. With this rollicking chorus, the whalermen of the 1850s would surely join the chorus and '*challenge all both large and small fae Dundee to Saint John.*'

*Oh the wind is on the quarter and the engine's
working free,
There's no another whaler a-sailing fae Dundee,*

*Can beat the old Balaena, oh ye needn't try
her on,
For we'll challenge all both large and small fae
Dundee to Saint John.*

10: AN T-EILEAN MUILEACH

Jim and John have both been to Mull many times over the years and the island and its people hold a very special place in both their hearts. The song which tells of an emigrant's love for the island was written in the mid 1800s by Dugald MacPhail. Jim has adapted some of the verses and sings the chorus in its original Gaelic.

*An t-eilean Muilleach an t-eilean aghmhor,
An t-eilean grianach mun iath an saile,
Eilean buad-mhor nam fuar bheann arda,
Nan coiltean uaine snan cluaintean fasail.*

Translation:

*The Isle of Mull is of isles the fairest,
Of ocean gems 'tis the first and fairest,
Green grassy island of sparkling fountains,
Of waving woods and high towering mountains.*

11: THE LASSIE O THE MORNING

Almost unusual and beautiful song written by journalist, hill-climber and singer Jack Foley. Jim believes it to be one of the finest and most evocative songs ever written - bringing together the joy and pain of first love with an undying love of the Scottish hills.

*Oh once I thocht the daybreak sun
wis brichter than the sun,*

*As it roused the glen and shook the earth
and nestled every gean,
But it faded in the warmth
o the brichtest sight I've seen,
The bonnie, bonnie lassie o the morning.*

gean - wild cherry

12: THE MOOTHIE MAN

John is not just a wizard of the buttons and the keys. Now he has turned his hand to poetry too! Jim refused to accept the ditty as an insult to one of his favourite instruments - and instead put a fine tune to it.

*When in my youth tae tell the truth
a music man I'd be,
Nae fiddle braw, nae heudrum haw,
wad ever dae for me,
Nae saxophone, nae slide trombone
nor onything sae couth,
The moothie's there for ony air
and aa ye need's yer mooth.*

13: OH DEAR ME

Of all the poems and songs that are associated with Mary Brooksbank, *The Jute Mill Song* is probably the best known. Based on a single traditional verse which she adapted as the chorus, she managed to capture a lot more about life than just the hardships of the jute mill lassies. As Jim says, *'two lines of Mary's song say more than many a politician can say in a lifetime - but I'll leave you to guess which two I mean!'*

*Oh dear me the mills gaein fast,
And the pair wee shifters canna get nae rest,*

*Shiftn bobbins coorse and fine,
They fairly mak ye wark for your ten and nine.*

Ten and nine - the weekly wage of the mill lassies at the turn of the century - ten shillings and nine pence.

14: SCATTERED

Adapted from a poem given to Jim by a well-known piper Angus McLeod as written by his grannie Eliza Duthie who had a family of ten and lived to see them scatter from Angus to all parts of the world. She had it published in the Peoples Journal in 1890.

*Now chill and lonely is the hearth,
That aince did ring wi glee,
And empty chairs sit roond the hoose,
Whar bairnies used tae be.*

15: THERE'S NO INDISPENSABLE MAN

When Jim's uncle John Driscoll, who originally came from Cork, died he left behind a bundle of poems he had written. Jim liked this one and wrote a tune to it. Jim later learned that the American singer Jim Reeves had the same poem framed and hanging in his house. Says Jim, *'My uncle surely didn't write this one - or else he was more famous than I realised!'*

*Sometimes when you're feeling important,
Sometimes when your ego's in bloom.*

16: THE AULD BEECH TREE

A true tale of the practicalities of country life. Jim wrote this after the gales of 1988 brought down a majestic old tree he knew well.

*In a field by the pond an auld
beech tree stood,
And each day as we walked up the track,
We aye stopped tae gaze
at its beautiful form,
Never passed it wi'oot glancing back.*

17: FREEWHEELING NOW

A song Jim wrote shortly before recording the album - and a song that quickly won widespread popularity. Says Jim, *'That's me - or am I kidding myself?'*

*I'm getting ower the hill it seems,
Tho ma hert it still feels young,
But to say when half a hunders here,
Your flings should aa be flung.
But I've some flungs I've yet tae fling,
Before I end ma days,
So I don't want tae hear ye say,
That old 'ye're past it' phrase.*

Chorus:

*Freewheelin now, freewheelin now,
It's easier every day,
Just tak it slow whene'er ye go,
Freewheelin doon the brae.*

half a hunder - fifty years

More at: www.springthyme.co.uk/1030

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Musicians:

Jim Reid sings on all tracks and plays
guitar, mouthorgan & concertina

John Huband plays
accordion & Roland U-220

Jim Sutherland adds percussion
on tracks 1, 6, 9 & 17

Gus Millar plays snare drum
on tracks 4, 8 & 15

and kettle drum on tracks 1, 3, 12 & 14

Produced by **Peter Shephard** • Engineered by **Peter Haigh**

Recorded at **Pier House**, Edinburgh in July & August 1990

Sleeve notes by **Jim Reid** & **Peter Shephard**

Photography by **Pete Boardman** • Design by **John Haxby**

Thanks to all who contributed to this album, to **Jim Sutherland** and **Gus Millar** for their percussive talents, and in particular to **Jack Foley** for his fine song *The Lassie o the Morning* and **Angus McLeod** for his grannie's song *Scattered*.



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