

A photograph of three men in front of a stone building. The man on the left is seated in a green metal chair, wearing a red, white, and blue plaid shirt and glasses, holding a black and silver accordion. The man in the center is standing, wearing a red zip-up jacket over a blue shirt and blue jeans, holding a violin. The man on the right is seated, wearing a dark blue sweater and glasses, holding a long metal pipe. The background is a rustic stone wall with a window.

SHEPHEARD
SPIERS
& WATSON

Over the High Hills

1: THE AULD BEGGARMAN - ARTHUR

A beggar is given shelter for the night but before daybreak he and the daughter of the house steal away together.

An auld beggarman cam ower the lea,
Wi many's a fine tale tae tell tae me;
"O guidwife for your charity,
Wad ye lodge a beggarman?"
Liddle el ti tow row ray.

2: JOHNNIE GALLACHER - TOM

This song was collected from Jessie MacDonald of Macduff in 1966 by Peter Hall. Jessie was a traveller, born in the mid 1870s and learned most of her songs before 1900.

As I was a-walkin by Ugie one day,
I met Sergeant Kelly by chance on my way;
Says he, "Johnnie Gallacher, you're a handsome young man,
Wid ye come doon tae Ugie wi me for a dram?
Wi me for a dram, wi me for a dram,
Wid ye come doon tae Ugie wi me for a dram?"

3: JIMMY DRUMMOND - PETE

A song in Scots traveller cant. A man is caught stealing gannies (chickens) and is sentenced to kerstardee (jail) leaving his mort (wife) and kenchens (children) to fend for themselves.

O ma name it is young Jimmy Drummond,
I travelled fae Campbeltown;
And last night I layed in a granzie, (granzie - barn)
Ma mort an ma kenchens free.

4: ROBIN HOOD AND THE PEDLAR - ARTHUR

A rare ballad (#132 in FJ Child's collection) that has, nevertheless, been found in the living tradition both in England and in Scotland in the last decades. This version is from the singing of Willie Robertson recorded by Hamish Henderson in Aberdeen in the 1950s.

A pedlar busk and a pedlar thrum,
A pedlar he linked ower the lea;
There he spied two troublesome men,
Two troublesome men they proved tae be.

5: BARBARA ALLEN - TOM

Learnt by Tom from a recording made by Peter Hall in the early 1960s of John Stewart, a settled traveller in Aberdeen.

It fell aboot the Martinmas Time,
Fan the green leaves they were faain;
That young John Graeme, fae the north countrie,
Fell in love wi Barbara Allan,
Fell in love wi Barbara Allan.

6: FAN DIEMEN'S LAND - PETE

From the early 1800s until the abolition of penal transportation in 1853 many thousands of men and women and even children were banished by transportation.

Come aa ye jolly poacher boys that ramble void of care,
That do go out on a moonlit night with your gun, your dog, your snare;
The harmless hare and pheasant you have at your command,
Never thinking on your last career upon Fan Dyman's Land.

7: ROVIN EYE/ CASTLEGATE - ARTHUR

A young ploughboy goes to town on a spree and falls into a scrape with a young woman. There are Dundee versions, but here the song is claimed by Aberdeen's Castlegate and the nearby Peacock's Close - a place of ill-repute till recent times.

As I gaed ower the Castlegate,
I met in wi a bonnie wee lass;
She looked at me fae the tail o her ee,
As I gaed walkin past.
Wi ma rovin eye, Right fol laddie,
Right fol laddie, Toura lye.

8: THE BANKS O AIRDRIE - TOM

Tom heard this sung by Jeannie Robertson. The robber's name - Bubblin Jockie - is presumably related to the name Baby Lon in the Perthshire version published by Motherwell in 1827.

Three bonnie sisters gaed oot for a walk,
Eechan aye sae bonnie O,
They've met wi a robber on the road,
By the bonnie banks o Airdrie O.

9: THE PLOOMAN'S DUE - PETE

This Fife bothy ballad tells of a day in the life of the ploughmen in the Spring of the year as they are called out by the foreman to work their horses on the land.

Cauld winter now is over an Spring is come again,
The cauld winds o Mairch month has driven awa the
rain;
Has driven awa the dreary rain likewise the frost an snaw,
An the foreman in the mornin has ordered oot tae saw.

10: JOHN BARLEYCORN - ARTHUR

The character of John Barleycorn in the song represents the spirit of the harvest, and of the alcohol made from it.

There came three men oot fae the west,
Three men baith great and high;
And they hae sworn a solemn oath,
That John Barleycorn should die.

Chorus:

Oh! Oh! John Barley, Oh! John Barleycorn,
It wad break the heart o a dying man,
Tae hear John Barley moan.

11: EARL RICHARD - TOM

Tom has this version of Young Hunting (Child 68) from Motherwell's *Minstrelsy* of 1868. The ballad is well known in North American tradition, usually with the title Loving Henry, but there the supernatural element is usually lost.

Earl Richard is a-huntin gaen,
As fast as he could ride;
A huntin-horn hung round his neck,
And a shairp sword by his side.

12: BONNIE GEORGE CAMPBELL - PETE

This old song may be a fragment of a longer ballad - the story line is bare and leaves much unstated. This version is largely from traveller singer Duncan Williamson of Ladybank.

High upon heilands and low upon Tay,
Bonnie George Campbell rade oot on a day;
Saddled and bridled and mounted gaed he,
Hame cam his good horse but never cam he.

13: WILLIE'S LYKE WAKE - ARTHUR

The hero who feigns death to draw a timid maiden is a common ballad theme. This version is from Peter Buchan's *Ballads of the North of Scotland* of 1828.

"Willie ma son, why look ye sae sad?"
As the sun shines over the valley
"I lie sairly sick for the love o a maid."
Among the blue flowers and the yellow

14: THE BONNIE WEE LASSIE - TOM

A song that Tom remembers from Jeannie Robertson's repertoire - but set to a different tune. A young man meets in with a young woman who says she is "the lassie that never said no!"

Well I've cam tae a cross faar I met a wee lass,
Says, I, "Ma wee lass are ye willin tae go?"
She says, "Sir I will, for the share o a gill,
For it's I'm the wee lassie that niver said no."

15: NIGHT VISITING SONG - PETE

A woman is woken in the night by her lover's knock at the window. He is but the ghost of her lover and must depart before sunrise to return to the other world.

Although the night be as dark as dungeon,
No a star to be seen above;
It's over the high hills I'll roam with pleasure,
Into the arums of my true love.

Music: Pete Shephard: Hohner 3-row Corona II in A/D/G, Castagnari melodeons in D/G and C/F. Tom Spiers: Milne fiddle in standard tuning, Marshall fiddle in various open tunings. Arthur Watson: Whistles by Generation (D and C), Susato (D and Bb) and Overton (low F).

Credits: Recorded by Tom Spiers. Design & transcriptions by Peter Shephard. Photographs by Lena Shephard - rear photo at the Portsoy Traditional Boat Festival August 2011. All songs are from traditional sources and are arranged by Shephard, Spiers & Watson and published Flash Company Music. Song notes and texts are at www.springthyme.co.uk/1043/

SHEPHEARD, SPIERS & WATSON

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