

# OLD SONGS & BOTHY BALLADS



• • • **There's Bound to Be a Row** • • • •

**M**any of the finest traditional singers in the country gather in May each year for the Fife Traditional Singing Festival - a weekend of concerts and workshops held near Colleslie in the rural heart the ancient kingdom of Fife.

Singers on this CD recorded in May 2009 are **Bob Lewis** from Sussex - renowned for his fine style and extensive repertoire of songs from southern England, singer and fiddle player **Jo Miller** from Stirling, local singers **Chris Miles** from Kirkcaldy and **Jimmy Hutchison** originally from Skye and now living in Newburgh, the great northeast ballad singer **Jock Duncan** from Pitlochry, **Henry Douglas** from Hawick - renowned for his repertoire of border common riding songs and **Jim Taylor** from Aberdeenshire.

1: SLEEPY TOON IN THE MORNING • **Jim Taylor** 2.51

Come aa ye lads that follow the ploo,  
A story true I'll tell tae you,  
O some o the ongyangs we gyang through,  
At Sleepytoon in the mornin.

A classic cornkister by George Morris of Oldmeldrum.

2: ROBIN HOOD AND THE TANNER • **Bob Lewis** 3.55

It's of a bold tanner in fair Devonshire,  
His name it was Arthur O Brann;  
There wasn't a man in all Devonshire,  
Could make this bold Arthur to stand.

Robin Hood meets a stranger, they fight, the stranger wins and is praised for his prowess and asked to join the outlaw band.

3: MY AULD SHEEN • **Chris Miles** 4.37

When I saw my bonnie love tae the kirk go,  
Wi bridegroom and maidens they made a fine show,  
And I follaed her on wi a hert fu o woe,  
She's gaen tae be wad tae another.

A version of *I Aince Loed a Lass or The False Bride*. In this case the false love is compared to a pair of discarded old shoes.

4: ERIN GO BRAGH • **Jimmy Hutchison** 3.02

Oh ma name's Duncan Campbell fae the shire o Argyll,  
I've travelled this country for mony's the mile;  
I've travelled through England through Ireland an aa,  
And the name that I go by is Erin go Bragh.

A Highlander is mistaken for an Irish immigrant and mistreated by an Edinburgh policeman of the mid 1800s.

5: LADY JEAN • **Jo Miller** 6.11

The king's young dochter was sittin at her windae,  
Sewin a fine silken seam;  
She's lookit out o her braw bower windae,  
And she saw the leaves growin green my love.

This powerful and rather beautiful ballad (Child 52) has only rarely been collected - perhaps because of its theme of rape and incest.

6: THERE'S BOUND TO BE A ROW • **Henry Douglas** 3.07

I'm a poor unhappy married man, I've such an awfa wife,  
Tae please her I dae aa I can, but still she plagues me all day;  
If I do everything that's right, she'll find a fault somehow,  
And if I just stay out all night there's bound to be a row.

A song from the Scottish music hall era that Henry Douglas picked up from border shepherd Willie Scott.

7: RIGS O RYE • **Jim Taylor** 3.25

'Twas in the month of sweet July,  
Before the sun had pierced the sky,  
'Twas in between twa rigs o rye,  
I heard twa lovers talking.

This beautiful love song has long been popular, with thirty-five versions in the Greig-Duncan collection.

8: THE OXEN PLOUGHING • **Bob Lewis** 4.23

Come along little ploughboy it's awoken in the morn,  
The cock upon the dunghill is a-blowing of his horn;  
The sun above the spinney his golden face does show,  
Therefore hasten to the linny of the oxen to the plough.

With my hump along, jump along, here drives ma lad along,  
Purty, Sparkle, Berry, Goodluck, Speedwell, Cherry,  
We are the lads that can follow the plough,  
Oh we are the lads that can follow the plough.

A west country song in praise of ploughing with oxen.

9: THE FALSE LOVER WON BACK • **Jimmy Hutchison** 4.39

The sun it shines ower yonder hill,  
And low in yonder dell;  
The place where me and my love bide,  
The sun it never gangs doun, bonnie love.

When a young man leaves his sweetheart she follows from town to town and persuades him to return.

10: THE BATTLE O HARLAW • **Jock Duncan** 4.52

As I cam in by Dunideer,  
An doon by Netherha,  
I saw fifty thoosan Hielanmen,  
Aa marchin tae Harlaw.

O a dirrum a doo a daddie O a dirrum a doo a day.

The battle at Harlaw in Aberdeenshire fought in 1411 between Highlander and Lowlander was a disaster for both sides.

11: WHISTLE O'ER THE LAVE O'T • **Jo Miller** 2.11

My mither sent me tae the sea, for tae gaither mussels three;  
A sailor lad fell in wi me, an whistle o'er the lave o't.  
Ma mither sent me tae the well, better she had gaen hersel;  
The bottom o the daffock fell, so whistle o'er the lave o't.

A medley of three mouth music songs from Shetland.

12: SPREAD THE GREEN BRANCHES • **Bob Lewis** 3.36

O spread the green branches, O whilst I am young,  
So well did I like my love so sweetlye she sung;  
Was ever a man in such happy estate,  
As me with my Flora, fair Flora so brave.

An old, rare and rather beautiful song that Bob learned from an old neighbour of his mother's in Heyshott, West Sussex.

13: THE LOTHIAN HAIRST • **Jimmy Hutchison** 3.32

On August twelfth frae Aberdeen we sailit on the Prince,  
And landed safe in Stafford's fields oor harvest tae commence.

From the days of the hand reaping when squads of men travelled south from Aberdeen to follow the ripening crop north.

14: SIR PATRICK SPENS • **Jock Duncan** 5.09

The king sits in Dunfermline Toun,  
Drinkin his bleed reid wine;  
Spierin, "Far will I get a skeely skipper,  
That'll sail the saut seas fine?"

The ballad may derive from an actual event when the Scottish Queen Margaret, Maid of Norway was sent for in 1290.

15: MILL O TIFTIE'S ANNIE • **Chris Miles** 4.36

At Mill o Tifty lived a man,  
In the neighbourhood o Fyvie;

And he had a lovely daughter fair,  
And they caad her bonnie Annie.

The miller's daughter falls for Lord Fyvie's handsome trumpeter but her father does not approve and disaster follows.

16: BANDY'S ROUP • **Jim Taylor** 4.24

Aul Bandy he wis roupin oot, his fairmin days were deen,  
He bocht a wee bit hoosie in the toun o Aiberdeen;  
Noo aa his stock and imlements were aa gaun up for sale,  
He'd even sell the moosetrap an the aul slop pail.

Retirement often brings a sad day for a farmer - the need to sell up, calling in the auctioneer for a displenishing sale or roup.

17: THE DROWNED LOVERS • **Bob Lewis** 3.52

As I walk'd out down by the sea shore,  
Where the wind and the waves and the billows did roar;  
There I heard a strange voice make a terrible sound,  
Was the wind and the waves and the echoes all round.

Crying, "Oh, oh my love has gone he's the youth I adore,  
He's gone and I never shall see him no more."

A maid is overheard lamenting for her lover lost at sea. Turning down an offer of marriage she throws herself into the ocean.

18: THE PARTING GLASS • **Jo Miller** 3.15

Come friends and companions come join me in rhyme,  
And lift up your voices in chorus wi mine;  
Lift up your voices all grief to refrain,  
For we may or might never all meet here again.

A fine song to sing when a gathering of friends comes to the end of the day - or when a ceilidh draws to a close.

**COVER PICTURE:** Arthur Watson gives credit to Jimmy McBeath - source singer for many great old songs including the title song on this CD and on Jimmy's 1978 Topic album. The full size model of Jimmy was made by Penicuik artist Jan Miller.

**CREDITS:** Thanks to all the singers who have given free use of their recordings to the East of Scotland Traditional Song Group. Recorded by Tom Spiers. Design & transcriptions by Peter Shephard. All songs traditional arranged by the singer except where noted.

Full song texts are at [www.springthyme.co.uk/ah08](http://www.springthyme.co.uk/ah08)

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