

Sam Larner

Cruising Round Yarmouth

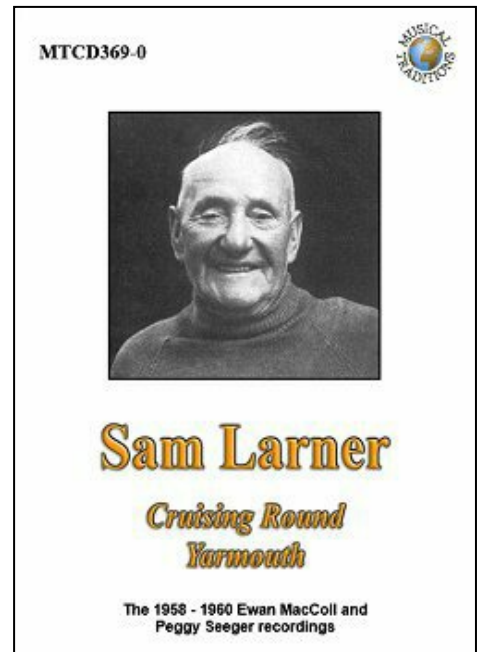
(MTCD369-0)

CD One

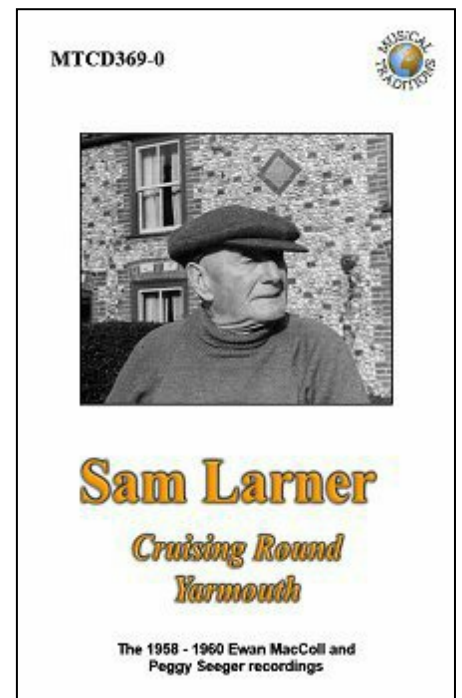
1	<i>The Ghost Ship</i>	4:09
2	<i>When I Went a-Fishing</i>	0:22
3	<i>Maids When Youre Young</i>	2:36
4	<i>Before Daylight in the Morning</i>	1:19
5	<i>Rhymes and Sea Lore</i>	4:15
6	<i>The Maids of Australia</i>	3:53
7	<i>A Reckless Young Fellow</i>	0:43
8	<i>The Girls Around Cape Horn</i>	1:57
9	<i>The Wild Rover</i>	2:35
10	<i>The Oyster Girl</i>	1:40
11	<i>As I Lay a-Musing</i>	1:15
12	<i>A Sailor's Alphabet</i>	3:33
13	<i>Duckfoot Sue</i>	0:45
14	<i>Clear Away the Morning Dew</i>	2:22
15	<i>Sing to the Oak</i>	2:20
16	<i>No Sir, No Sir</i>	4:14
17	<i>Old Bob Ridley-O</i>	1:45
18	<i>When I was Single</i>	0:22
19	<i>The Golden Fenadier</i>	2:42
20	<i>The Wild and Wicked Youth</i>	1:07
21	<i>Now Is the Time for Fishing & talk</i>	2:36
22	<i>I Wish, I Wish</i>	1:54
23	<i>The Dockyard Gate</i>	1:45
24	<i>Green Broom</i>	2:11
25	<i>The Dolphin</i>	2:54
26	<i>The Old Miser</i>	1:09
27	<i>The Skipper and his Boy</i>	0:45
28	<i>Blackberry Fold</i>	3:12
29	<i>The Wreck of the Lifeboat</i>	0:21
30	<i>Outlandish Knight</i>	3:15
31	<i>The Tanyard side</i>	2:13
32	<i>Will Watch</i>	4:04
33	<i>Talk</i>	3:51
Total:		74:20

CD Two

1	<i>The Bold Princess Royal</i>	4:02
2	<i>The Captain's Whiskers</i>	0:24
3	<i>The Bonny Bunch of Roses</i>	2:27
4	<i>King William & talk</i>	1:16
5	<i>Happy and Delightful</i>	3:39
6	<i>The Chesapeake and Shannon</i>	0:40
7	<i>Coil Away the Trawl Warp</i>	1:58
8	<i>The Jolly Young Coachman</i>	2:34
9	<i>The Loss of the Ramillies</i>	1:30
10	<i>She Said she was a Virgin</i>	1:10
11	<i>Game of All Fours</i>	3:36
12	<i>The Wonderful Crocodile</i>	0:49
13	<i>Donnelly and Cooper</i>	2:22
14	<i>Cruising Round Yarmouth</i>	2:18
15	<i>Barbara Allan</i>	4:56
16	<i>Barney and Kitty</i>	2:00
17	<i>Green Grow the Laurels</i>	0:27
18	<i>The London Steamer</i>	2:45
19	<i>The Bold Young Fisherman</i>	1:44
20	<i>Windy Old Weather & talk</i>	2:51
21	<i>The Haymakers' Courtship</i>	1:47
22	<i>Henry Martin</i>	3:26
23	<i>Just as the Tide was Flowing</i>	2:06
24	<i>The Dogger Bank</i>	2:10
25	<i>Over There in Ireland</i>	3:06
26	<i>The Dark-Eyed Sailor</i>	2:54
27	<i>Butter and Cheese</i>	3:15
28	<i>Napoleon's Dream</i>	3:17
29	<i>Spurn Point</i>	0:37
30	<i>The Barley Straw</i>	1:04
31	<i>Bold General Wolfe</i>	1:22
32	<i>The White Squall</i>	0:34
33	<i>Scarborough Fair Town</i>	4:00
34	<i>Final talk</i>	1:02
Total:		74:25



CD case cover



CD booklet cover

In last year's Christmas message, I wrote: 'it is *just* possible that we may be able to match 2013's four publications by the end of the year ...'

And - just in time for that Christmas present - I'm very pleased to announce the publication of **Sam Larner: *Cruising Round Yarmouth*** (MTCD369-0) - a double CD of all the recordings Ewan MacColl, Peggy Seeger and Charles Parker made of Sam Larner in 1958-60.

The more-or-less complete recorded repertoire of this wonderful Norfolk singer is here - 65 songs and fragments, plus four spoken passages, give a great impression of Sam's life and times.

But, most of all, it's the startling quality of his singing which is so impressive.

Rod Stradling - Winter 2014

Sam Lerner 1878 - 1965

Winterton in Norfolk has a long history as a sea-faring and fishing village; a once close-knit community where the great majority of the male population was involved in the fishing industry. Samuel James Lerner was born in the village in 1878, one of nine children. Many families had been in the village for generations, most notably Greens, Georges, Goffins, Hayletts and Larners. All were interrelated and all had singers amongst them, and so Sam grew up in a community where traditional singing didn't just happen but was very commonplace.

Inevitably perhaps, upon leaving school at twelve, he went to sea, there being little choice in the matter, as he commented amongst these recordings: "Why for me and my brothers that was either sea or gaol, and that for my sisters that was service or gaol" and "I left school when I was twelve year old; felt right a big man. Yes, I did; and went to sign on to go to sea in the office. When I got home my mother said to me, "How'd you get on, boy?" I said, "I've signed on; we're goin' to sea tomorrow. "Cabin boy in a little boat called *The Young John*; 1892 ... little sailing boat about forty ton. Y'know, there was a dread; there's no good people saying they don't have their dread, 'cause they do when they first go to sea. You have that feeling; you never went light-hearted when the tug got hold on yer and pulled you out the piers; when she began to lift, you began to think about mother at home then."

Life at sea was hard enough, but for the cook or cabin boy it was especially so: "The poor little boy's always at everyone's call. They were rough old boys, bor. Rough; y'know; they were rough at you. My Uncle Jimmy; he used to flog me and he'd cry after he'd done it. When you're comin' in the harbour you felt pleased, heart up; but when you're goin' out to sea again, out the harbour, you're on the knucklebones of your arse!" Some of the old fishermen "didn't care for nothing; cruel old men. You weren't allowed to speak," and if you were sleepy they would "chuck a bucket of water on you to wake you up."

Although some trips were 'home fishing', meaning that the fishermen would return the same day, more often than not the trips would take them away for weeks at a time, sailing round the British Isles from Shetland to Cornwall, following the migration of the herring. This did mean a good opportunity for a young Sam to see places other than his home village: "When we went to Shields I was lookin' on deck and seeing the Shields pier; I could see them a-comin'! Oh, that fared funny goin' into Shields pier. Strange, and excited to see different spheres of life; you see, I'd never been away from home before. We went to South Shields that night; I was with a lot of these other boys. I forget what theatre we went; I tell you what was on: *The Wages of Sin*. In the last act the hero came in and he shot them, he shot them in the last act."

A fisherman's life was undoubtedly a hazardous one, subject to the vagaries of the sea, and Winterton lies on a notoriously dangerous stretch of coast. "Cause when you're in a gale of wind and those big 'uns come roarin' at you, you can't get out on 'em. You can't get away out on 'em; you got to face it. You know there's death there if one of them gets you." In Winterton the churchyard of Holy Trinity is littered with the graves of sailors and inside there is a particular Fishermen's Corner, established by the Rev Clarence Porter. He himself later drowned while attempting to save a choirboy.

Sam's first eight years as a fisherman were in sailing boats, moving up through the positions in the crew as he got older: "I done eight year in sailing boats and then we were fully qualified then; we could do anything there was to do about sailing boats. Knots, splice, mend the nets, set the riggin' in, serve a riggin'. The more you sailed a boat and done things about a boat, the more enlightenment you've got. There's suffin' human about a sailing boat; how they answer. And they talk to them. They talk to a ship just as they'd talk to a human being." It was the change to steam drifters in 1899 which brought about a period of modernisation and prosperity to the industry. "But as regards work, that was like heaven when we got into the drifters, the steam drifters; absolutely like heaven. I went in the *Lottie*. That was the first steam drifter I went in, in October 1899, and that was the first start of the good fishings. I've seen they'll walk across Yarmouth harbour jammed right full up, right chock-a-block boats, right full up. Herring; en't nowhere to put the herring on the quay. That's when the drifters first came; that's when that was good."

Sam lived in Winterton all his life. He met his wife Dorcas (née Eastick), who hailed from Great Cressingham, near Watton, when she was in service at the rectory in Winterton. As with many fishermen's wives, she was understandably less than enthusiastic about her husband's long absences and the dangers inherent in his job: "She didn't like me a-going away to sea. She said that made her feel miserable and the wind blow, you know, and the wind a-roaring down the chimbley; ah, they lay awake and thinkin' about you at sea." Sam also had similar feelings: "There's the old girl a-waitin' for you. Oh, used to count the days. That was like getting fresh married again when you'd been away about ten or a dozen weeks. Reunited again and just as strong as ever. Well, you know; you were hungry!"

The herring fishing boom up to the outbreak of the First World War went into decline in the years after the war and the industry went into a serious depression in the years after 1930. Like his father George before him, Sam's health was adversely affected by the toils of a fishing life over many decades and in 1933, at the age of fifty five, he was forced to give it up. In time of general depression work was not easy to come by, but he did find employment as a road-mender, "breaking stones, just like a convict, Bor!" and later planting trees and with various other land-based jobs.

Sam was naturally exposed to the singing of his family and community from an early age. He first sang in public at the age of nine, singing for pennies to coach parties passing through the village. Of *Bold Princess Royal* (Roud 528) he commented, "I knew that song when I went to school" and of learning a song, "I used to pick it up like lightning." Sam certainly learned a good deal of his repertoire from his father George (born in 1847) and his uncle James Sutton (born in 1858),

both fishermen. Talking of *Butter and Cheese and All* (Roud 510), a popular song in the village, he mentioned, "That's my old Dad's song. My father. I knew it; I heard him sing it when I was a little boy. Used to sing all them songs, my old father did. Yeah, old 'Bredler' they used to call him; Bredler Lerner. Big man, about fifteen or sixteen stone. Oh, and he could do the step dance." Of *The Rambling Young Blade* (Roud 490) he remarked, "My Uncle Jimmy used to sing that when I was cook along of him at sea. That's about nigh on seventy year ago, and he used to sing that on deck." James Sutton, better known as 'Old Larpin' apparently due to his prominent ears ('Loping Lugs') was visited by the composer E J Moeran in July 1915. Moeran collected five songs from him: *The Pressgang* (Roud 662), *The Bold Richard* (Roud 1351), *The Farmer's Son* (Roud 1061), *The Wreck of the Royal Charter* (Roud 3227) and *The Captain's Apprentice* (Roud 835), several of these being published in the *Journal of the Folk Song Society* 7 in 1922. Sam certainly learned many songs from his uncle, and claimed so on several occasions, but it is interesting that none of the five collected appear in Sam's recorded repertoire.

Sam's brother-in-law Bob Green (born in 1882) was another singing fisherman and regular crew member with Sam, who is particularly remembered for his renditions of *The Wild Rover* (Roud 1173). His sons Bob (1908-99) and Dick (born in 1909) were also singers. Bob sang locally popular songs such as *The Maid of Australia* (Roud 1872), *The Barley Straw* (Roud 19112), *Cruising Round Yarmouth* (Roud 2432), *Henry Martin* (Roud 104), *The Smacksman* (Roud 1783), *Sailor's Alphabet* (Roud 21100), *Dogger Bank* (Roud 18836), *Now is the Time for Fishing* (Roud 1789), *Clear away the Morning Dew* (Roud 11) and *Happy and Delightful* (Roud 660) as well as *The Tanyard Side* (Roud 1021) - all of which are in Sam's recorded repertoire - as well as comic songs such as *The Hobnail Boots My Father Wore* (Roud 16705) and *Paddy McGinty's Goat* (Roud 18235) and the broadside *The White Squall* (Roud 13623). Dick Green had three hand-written songs which had been in the family for years: *The White Squall*, *Cape Horn* (Roud 4706) and *The Chesapeake and the Shannon* (Roud 1583). The last two have been recorded from Sam. It would seem that there was quite a common currency of songs in the Lerner-Green family, as is to be expected.

Other Winterton fishermen singers were Jack 'Starchy' George (1888-1975), who has been remembered as a good singer who sang, amongst other songs, *Jack Johnson and Herring on the Griddle-O*, the latter being a communal performance, as men would dance as if flames were rearing up; and Walter 'Tuddy' Rudd (1905-82) and Johnny Goffin (born in 1909). Of these two, the former was recorded singing *Clear away the Morning Dew*, *The Dolphin* (Roud 690), *An Old Man Came Courting Me* (Roud 210), *Butter and Cheese and All*, *Maid of Australia* and *The Wild Rover* - all also recorded by Sam - as well as *A-Roving* (Roud 649), *The Englishman* (Roud 13248), *Farmer's Boy* (Roud 408), *You Stick to the Boats Lads* (Roud 13624), *Beautiful Picture in a Golden Frame* (Roud 13625), *New York Girls* (Roud 486), *Johnny's Gone down to Hilo* (Roud 650) and *Spanish Ladies* (Roud 687).

Songs collected from Johnny Goffin are *A Ship called Comrade (Cape Horn)*, *Happy and Delightful* and *Bold Princess Royal* - once again in Sam's recorded repertoire - as well as *Song that Reached my Heart* (Roud 3721), *Sweet Selina (Ball of Yarn)* (Roud 1404) and *Johnny Come Home from Sea* (Roud 13644). It would seem fair to suggest from this that there was a common currency of a great many songs in the Winterton fishing community, with these examples being effectively across a couple of generations. Certainly Sam was prominent among them, due to personality and extensive repertoire, as he seemed to be aware, with comments like, "When I was twenty, thirty, I could raise this roof!"

Singing amongst the fishermen seems to have been common enough whilst at sea, to relieve the boredom whilst on watch. Jack George is certainly remembered for having done so and Sam related: "You'd hear chaps singing on deck with the watch, when they're on watch of nights. You could hear them on deck singing. Sing to pass the time away when you're on deck. When you stood in the wheelhouse, if you didn't sing a little song you'd be a-meditatin' about something, thinking about home, boy, yes; used to sing a little song. And break the monotony, you see. And that took all your thoughts away from everything, all troubles."

As well as at sea, there were many opportunities for singing in the many ports visited as part of a fishing voyage. Sam sang at fishermen's concerts in various ports along the coast from Shetland to Cornwall. With an extensive repertoire of traditional ballads, sentimental and comic pieces and, most of all, songs connected with the sea and fishing, all performed in a vigorous, exuberant style, it is easy to imagine him being the centre of any such event. Of one competition, talking of *Old Bob Ridley-O* (Roud 743), Sam recalled, "Now, I got the first prize for that down at Lerwick. There was a singing competition; in 1907. There was a singing competition in the town hall at Lerwick; all among the fishermen though. And the Lerwick ladies, they had to judge; and the gentlemen, to judge the singin'. And I got the most encore of the whole lot for that song. They won't let me sit down; I had to sing them another song. That was in 1907. These people all know it about here; I aren't tellin' stories. And I got the first prize."

Back home, the fishermen would adjourn to the village's two pubs, *The Fisherman's Return* and *The Three Mariners* for lengthy bouts of drinking and singing. Complete respect was always given to singers, otherwise it could result in violence. As well as the singing, another part of the evening's entertainment was step dancing. Sam is remembered as a good exponent of this, like his father George. He would often step dance on a table, awash with spilt beer. Unusually, there was no resident musician to play for the dancing; it would be performed to singing and diddling. Sam remembered: "I could do the *Old Bob Ridley-O*; that was a song and a dance. I han't got the wind to do it now." Whilst singing the song, he pauses half way through to comment "and then they all step." This suggests something of a communal performance, perhaps in a similar way to Jack George's *Herring on the Griddle-O*. Sam generally seems to have accompanied himself step dancing by diddling tunes such as *The Sailor's Hornpipe*.

In the early 1960s, writer and broadcaster John Seymour described a visit to the Larners, in company with fiddler Alan Waller: "The Larners live in a little semi-

detached cottage not far from the sea, and we all sat round the small kitchen while Alan played the fiddle and Sam sang, and Mrs Lamer looked on and beamed. And Sam could hardly restrain himself from jumping up and step dancing. In fact he failed to restrain himself once or twice, and he is over eighty. He kept challenging Alan as to whether he knew this jig or that step tune and was absolutely delighted when he found that Alan knew them all."

Sam first came to public notice when Philip Donnellan, a radio producer for BBC Birmingham, happened to meet him in a pub in 1956. Donnellan was making radio documentaries about working people in Britain and Sam was exactly the sort of person he was looking for to provide him with material. He recorded about twenty five songs and some speech from him in 1957 and 1958, almost certainly in *The Fisherman's Return* pub in Winterton, possibly because Dorcas was known to disapprove somewhat of Sam's more bawdy repertoire.

Donnellan put the recordings to good use in a series of radio productions. The first was *Coast and Country: the Wash*: the programme in which Sam was involved was broadcast on 4 October 1957. Nothing further has come to light about this apart from the fact that Sam was paid £1.1.0 (a guinea). The next was *Down to the Sea*, recorded on 15th February 1959. From what information there is about Donnellan's broadcasts, he seems to have used the recordings made before, interspersing with comments, but this one may have been a live performance as a BBC docket sent to Sam reveals that there was a rehearsal earlier in the day in a large house known as *Thatchers* in the nearby village of Happisburgh. The fee for this one of £8.8.0 (eight guineas) also suggests a live performance. Once again, the content hasn't come to light, but a clue might be found in the fact that there are seven songs listed in pencil at the bottom of one of the previously mentioned song sheets, in a fairly unlettered hand, which is believed to be Sam's. The family suggestion is that he wrote them down for a radio broadcast. The songs, as given, are: 1) *Princess Royal*, 2) *A Sailor Gay*, 3) *Napoleon's Dream*, 4) *Said the Sailor*, 5) *Dolphin*, 6) *White Squall* and 7) *London Steamer*.

A further series of broadcasts have survived intact, four programmes entitled *Sweet Lives and Lawless Billows*. These were broadcast c.1960 on the Midland Home Service and comprise recordings Donnellan made of Sam's songs and speech, with commentary about the content and themes of them, the entire programme in each case being devoted to him. The sound recordings made by Donnellan were then deposited in the BBC archives, from where Topic Records have released some on LP and CD.

Philip Donnellan's interest in Sam was quickly passed on to Ewan MacColl, Peggy Seeger and Charles Parker, who were then busily engaged in the first of their Radio Ballads. They first visited him in 1958, recording his songs and anecdotes about his life and, over a period of time, after editing the material, were left in MacColl's words with "almost thirty hours of magnificent talk and three hours of songs, ballads, stories and miscellaneous rhymes" from this "octogenarian, ex-herring fisherman from Winterton, Norfolk. What a wonderful person he was! Short, compact, grizzled, wall-eyed and slightly deaf, but still full of the wonder of life. His one good eye still sparkled at the sight of a pretty girl." Much material from Sam was included in the resultant award-winning Radio Ballad *Singing the Fishing*, which was broadcast on 16th August 1960, to great acclaim.

This undoubtedly brought Sam's songs and performances to much wider appreciation, as did an appearance at the *Ballads and Blues Club* in London in 1959 where, having been introduced by Ewan MacColl, Sam "sat and sang and talked to the several hundred young people, who hung on his every word and gesture as though he had been Ulysses newly returned from Troy to Ithaca. He never forgot it." Sam seems to have been impressed with his reception, commenting, "They liked them old songs, they did."

Also, in 1960, thirteen of Sam's songs were included in Peggy Seeger and Ewan MacColl's book *The Singing Island*. These were: *Maid of Australia*, *Clear Away the Morning Dew*, *Maids When you're Young*, *The Wild Rover*, *Henry Martin*, *Cruising Round Yarmouth*, *Bold Princess Royal*, *The Dolphin*, *The Dogger Bank*, *The London Steamer*, *The Ghost Ship* (Roud 15), *Jack Tar* (Roud 919) and *Butter and Cheese and All*. A copy of the book was presented to Sam with the words inscribed: "Sam: a book in which your songs are "not written wrong". Many thanks for your songs and your friendship. Peggy and Ewan. 1960."

This exposure to the world at large reached a peak with the release of the record *Now is the Time for Fishing* on Folkways Records in 1961, the first full length LP of an English traditional singer. Using a selection of the MacColl/Seeger recordings, it featured nineteen tracks of Sam singing and talking about his life and the fishing industry, effectively interspersing the anecdotes amongst the songs to create a vivid picture of the man and his music.

In 1962, Charles Parker filmed both Sam Lerner and Catfield singer Harry Cox for BBC Birmingham, singing and talking about their lives, for a programme entitled *The Singer and the Song*. As well as snatches of old popular and comic songs, Sam sang *Now is the Time for Fishing*, *Clear Away the Morning Dew* and *The Wild Rover*. It was broadcast on BBC Midlands in 1964 and was to be the last public exposure of Sam's music during his lifetime. This grand old man of traditional song died on September 11th 1965.

In June 2008, the Great Yarmouth and District Archaeological Society erected a blue plaque on the wall of the cottage where Sam and Dorcas had lived all their married lives, describing him succinctly as "Fisherman and Folk Singer".

All of Sam's speech quoted in the notes is from excerpts from the sound recordings made by Philip Donnellan and Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger, as mentioned in the text. The extract from John Seymour comes from a reel-to-reel recording of the broadcast, originally in the possession of Alan Waller. It is unmarked but probably one of the *Voyages of Jenny III* series from the early 1960s. The quotes from Ewan

MacColl are taken from his autobiography *Journeyman* (London; Sidgwick and Jackson, 1990).

Sam Lerner's Legacy

With the two LPs of Sam's singing released in 1961 and 1974, he became an influential figure after his death on the folk revival scene of the late 1960s and 1970s. In particular his songs were taken up by the professional performer Peter Bellamy and also by a good many other local stalwarts of the Norwich and Norfolk folk scene, particularly Peter Coleman.

And yet the Donnellan and MacColl/Seeger recordings seem to have been the only ones made of Sam. Unlike the equally influential Norfolk singer Harry Cox, who also had two LPs released across the same time period, he wasn't visited by amateur enthusiasts wishing to make home recordings. Harry Cox was visited by a whole host of tape-recorder carrying aficionados wishing to record his speech, tunes and songs in the late 1960s and right up until his death in 1971. An enormous amount of home recordings were made of Harry, some of which are still coming to light, but there are none of Sam Lerner. The obvious reason for this seems to be that he died before the rush of enthusiasm took place and, perhaps, before the easy availability of suitable amateur recording equipment. Had he lived another half a dozen years, I have no doubt that he would have been visited by a great many wishing to record him themselves. So, in contrast to both Harry Cox and the other very influential singer Walter Pardon - who was also visited and recorded by a large amount of people over a number of years - Sam's musical legacy rests solely with the efforts of two professional groups.

Unlike Harry Cox too, we have no recordings of Sam's contemporaries with which to place him in the context of his singing community, aside from those of his nephew Bob Green and the other fishermen Johnny Goffin and Walter Rudd, all of whom were a generation younger than Sam. These men were recorded in 1966 by Neil Lanham and a decade later by Jim Carroll and Pat Mackenzie. As has already been discussed, there is a great deal of similarity in repertoire and in versions of songs, but to what extent these younger men learned their songs from Sam Lerner, or from other singers, is impossible to judge with any accuracy. Certainly Johnny Goffin's father Roger is remembered as a singer, and with *Cruising Round Yarmouth* as a favourite song, but he wasn't a fisherman; he worked as gamekeeper on Lord Leicester's estate in Holkham. Likewise, Walter Rudd told Neil Lanham that he got *Maids When You're Young*, *Never Wed an Old Man* from a fish-hawker in the village known as 'Lame Jimma'. It is probably fair to state that Sam stood out from his contemporaries because of the extent of his repertoire, in the same way that Harry Cox did.

Sam and Dorcas had no children; the family singing tradition was carried on by their nephews Bob and Dick Green, who may well have learned their songs as much from their father Bob Green as from their uncle Sam. James Sutton's grandson Ronnie Haylett could remember parts of songs, and had vivid memories of them being sung, but never became a singer himself; as he mentioned: "Sam, he said to me one day - my father's name is Jack - "Boy Jack," he said, "why don't you go up and sing like your grandfather? Your grandfather Larpin. Your grandfather larnt me a lot of these songs what I sing." I say, "I can't sing, old chap." "You can. You've just gotta stand up and get goin' Why don't you come up and sing, boy?" (The reference to 'Boy Jack' is the once-common practice locally of referring to somebody by their father's name, or nickname, preceded by 'Boy'.) There was certainly much singing in the extended Winterton family of which Sam Lerner was part; his legacy has endured because of the serendipitous meeting with Philip Donnellan and the subsequent realisation that here was something that was definitely worth preserving. The ultimate fruits of that discovery comprise the material on this CD set.

Many thanks are due to Steve Matthews and John Halliday for their help in providing information about Sam Lerner, and also to Jackie Page and other members of Sam Lerner's family, including Edna and the late Ronnie Haylett.

Chris Holderness - Winter 2014

The Recordings:

Roud Numbers quoted are from the databases, *The Folk Song Index* and *The Broadside Index*, continually updated, compiled by Steve Roud. Currently containing more than 440,000 records between them, they are described by him as "extensive, but not yet exhaustive". Copies are held at: The Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, London (also available on-line); Taisce Ceoil Dúchais Éireann, Dublin; and the School of Scottish Studies, Edinburgh. They can also be purchased direct from Steve at Southwood, Maresfield Court, High Street, Maresfield, East Sussex, TN22 2EH, UK. Recording dates are shown in the sequence day/month/year.

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

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

Omitted words, lines or verses are shown in italics, where appropriate, if we have them. In previous CD sets we have usually included some tracks of songs which had been recorded more than once, in order to show the singer's different 'takes' on the song. We have not been able to do that here because of the process that Ewan MacColl used to make the recordings. It would seem that he spent a lot of time chatting with Sam Lerner, and recording it, during the course of which a number of complete songs emerged, and were recorded, and a great many more

were mentioned, with maybe a verse or a few lines remembered. He then went back over the conversations, attempting to get further complete songs, when Sam had had an opportunity to remember them completely. If that failed, he would return to these songs once or twice more, in the hope of more complete recordings. He rarely seems to have made any subsequent recordings of songs that had already been sung and recorded in full.

Accordingly, what we have found amongst the almost 150 recordings in the MacColl/Seeger Archive are some 30 'complete' songs, with very few 'alternative takes', and maybe another 15 'more or less complete' ones. The remainder of the recordings consist of nothing but conversations, or very incomplete songs with a great deal of "Now, how does it go after that" and "I used to be able to sing that years ago" comments scattered throughout.

So these two CDs contain 67 tracks; all the complete and 'more or less complete' songs, all the appropriately edited fragments, and a few pieces of conversation which, together pretty-well fill the 160 minutes of available space.

There are a few places on these CDs where the sound quality isn't as good as it might be - clicks and jerks in the tape speed - that we were unable to remove completely. This is because we used the digitised copies of the MacColl/Seeger collection from the British Library for these CDs, and so it wasn't possible to access the original tape recordings.

CD 1:

1 - 1 **The Ghost Ship** (Roud 15, Laws P36A/B)

Now the Queen she wants sailors
to sail on the sea,
Which made pretty Polly's stout heart to bleed,
Saying "William, dear William,
don't you go to sea.
Remember the vows that you made unto me."

Now it was early next morning before it was day,
He went to his Polly, these words he did say,
Saying: "Polly, pretty Polly,
you must come along with me,
Before we are married, my friends for to see."

He led her through groves
and through valleys so deep,
Which made pretty Polly to sigh and to weep,
Saying: "William, dear William,
you've led me astray,
On purpose my innocent life to betray."

"Oh, yes, dearest Polly, 'tis true all thou hast said,
For all this long night I've
your grave,"
And the grave being open
and the spade standing by,
Which made pretty Polly to weep and to say.

"Oh, pardon, dear William, my innocent life,
I never will regret for to be your dear wife;
I'll travel the country over, all for to set you free,
Remember the vows that you made unto me."

"No pardon, no pardon, no pardon I'll give."
And with that he drew out a long-daggered knife;
He stabbed her to the heart
'til the blood did then flow,
And into the grave her fair body did throw.

Now he buried her securely
in Upwall quite sound,
Not thinking this body would ever be found;
He then went on board for a sailor to go,
Not thinking this murder would ever out-throw.

Now 'twas early one morning before it was day,
Our captain came up and these words he did say:
"Our ship she's in mourning and cannot sail on,
There's a murder on board
which has lately been done."

Now up jumped a sailor, "Indeed it's not me!"
Then up jumped another, the same he did say;
Then up jumped bold William,
to stamp and to swear,
"Indeed it's not me, sir, I vow and declare."

Now he hastened to the fore-castle with speed,
And he met his pretty Polly
which made his heart bleed;
She ripped him, she stripped him,
she tore him in three,
Because he had murdered her baby and she.

Spoken: That's *The Ghost Song*.

This is one of the big ballads that Child ignored, with 442 Roud examples, including 99 sound recordings, the vast majority being from North America. England has 68 sightings, from Devon to Yorkshire, with Harry Cox being the only other Norfolk singer named. It seems to be little-known in Scotland or Ireland. 338 of the total entries relate to printed sources.

Sam Larner seems to have been unique in calling it *The Ghost Ship*; more popular titles have been *The Cruel Ship's Carpenter*, *Pretty Polly*, or *The Gosport Tragedy*.

Other versions available on CD: both Weenie and Danny Brazil (MTCD345-7); Wiggy, Denny and Biggun Smith (MTCD307); George Dunn (MTCD317-8); Francis Gillum and Alva Greene (MTCD342); Harry Cox (TSCD667); Dock Boggs (County COCD3523); Estil C Ball (Rounder CD1701); Bill Cornett and Lee Sexton (Smithsonian-Folkways SFCD40077); Jack Wallin (SF CD 40013).

1 - 2 **When I Went a-Fishing** (Roud 24874)

When I went a-fishing, the wind began to blow,
Round goes the capstan, fire down below.
Up jumped a herring, up jumped a sprat.
Up jumped another one with a white straw hat.
Laughter.

This is a new entry in the Roud *Index* - so I don't know anything about it.

1 - 3 **Maids, When You're Young, Never Wed an Old Man** (Roud 210)

An old man once courted me,
Hi ding doo-rum down.
An old man once courted me,
Hi doo-rum down
An old man once courted me;
Fain would he marry me.
Maids, when you're young,
Never wed an old man.

Chorus:
For they've got no fal-loo-ral,
Fal lid-dle fal-loo-ral,
They've got no fal-loo-ral,
Fal lid-dle all day;
They've got no fa-loo-ral,
They've lost their ding doo-rum,
So maids, when you're young,
Never wed an old man.

Now when we went to church,
Hi ding doorum down,
When we went to church,
Hi doorum down;
When we went to church,
He left me in the lurch.
Maids, when you're young,
Never wed an old man.

Chorus

Now when we went to bed,
Hi ding doorum down,
When we went to bed,
Hi doorum down;
When we went to bed,
He neither done nor said.
Maids, when you're young,
Never wed an old man.

Chorus

Now when he went to sleep,
Hi ding doorum down,
When he went to sleep,
Hi doorum down;
When he went to sleep,
Out of bed I did creep
Into the arms of
A jolly young man.

Chorus:
And I found his fal-looral,
Fal liddle fal-looral,
I found his fal-looral
Fal liddle all day;
I found his fal-loo-ral
And he got my ding doorum,
So, maids, when you're young
Never wed an old man.

With only 83 Roud entries - mostly from books and manuscripts - this song obviously wasn't as popular in the tradition as it is in the revival ... thanks, no doubt, to recordings by Jeannie Robertson and both Belle and Sheila Stewart. It also appears to have been far more popular in England (with 26 named singers) than in Scotland (with only 9), and there are very few Irish or North American entries.

Oddly, it has only 3 broadside entries.

Other versions available on CD: Danny Brazil (MTCD345-7); Jeannie Robertson (TSCD651); Walter 'Toady' Rudd (NLCD6); Ria Johnson (NLCD5).

1 - 4 Before the Daylight in the Morning (Roud 5714)

... I wish I got killed on the banks of the Nile
Just before the daylight in the morning.

Now, when I come home from work,
It make me so wild,
There's a mound of blue stockings
Or a nasty young child,
I wish I got killed on the banks of the Nile
Just before the daylight in the morning.

Now, she'd a beard on her lip,
Like a wandering Jew,
Not a tooth in her head
That was round, all but two,
A smock she had on
Was neither black, white nor blue,
For it had never been wet with the washing.

Now, to kindle a fire,
It is my first job.
And (*if I fail*) to do it
I get a smack on the gob.
A hit, or a kick, or a smack on the gob,
I surely would get from my darling.

Spoken: He used to sing that ... old man, old Larpin Smith ...

We think that Sam mis-spoke here, and should have said Larpin Sutton; we can't imagine there were two 'Larpins' in the area, and remember that he was of a considerable age when recorded. Chris Holderness doesn't know of anyone called Smith who sang locally, and so believes it was simply a mistake.

And the song is a strange one, too - never before found in the UK - Roud has just two entries, one from the US and one from Canada.

1 - 5 Rhymes and Sea Lore

Pakefield for poverty, Lowestoft for poor;
Gorleston for pretty girls, Yarmouth for whores.
Caister for water dogs, California for pluck;
Damn and beggar old Winterton, how black she do look!

Then there's another one:

First the Dudgeon, then the Spurn,
Flamborough Head next comes on turn.
Scarborough Castle standing high,
Whitby rocks lay northerly.
Sunderland lay in a bight,
Canny old Shields afore dark that night.

Then there's another one. This is a Cornish one:

As I to the mizzen backstays clung,
I saw three lights and loud I sung.
West, three points north Saint Agnes bore,
The long ships bearing nor-west by nor'.
The Lizard lights I do design,
I wait your pleasures to resign.

They used to tell these aboard the boat, all these different rhymes. Well then, you being a boy, you used to pick 'em up and you could say 'em after. You learnt them, you see. That's how that was done. Purpose to help navigation. That was true. What was another one? There'd be ...

When in danger or in doubt,
Always keep a sharp lookout;
If you haven't got room to turn,
Ease her, stop her or go astern.

If on your starboard red appear,
It is your duty to keep clear;
To act or say or judge as proper,
Ease her, back her, or stop her.

The sun go down beneath the black,
A westerly wind you will expect to get;
When the sun go down as clear as a bell,
An easterly wind you can foretell.

When clouds are gathering thick and fast,
Keep a good lookout for sails and mast;
But if they slowly onward crawl,
Shoot your nets, lines, trawls and all.

Quick rise, after low,
Indicate a stronger blow;
Long foretold, long last,
Short notice, soon past.

Gimingham, Trimmingham, Knapton and Trunch,
Southrepps and Northrepps lay all in a bunch.

You can box the compass, can't you?

North. Nor' by east, nor-nor east,
nor-east by nor'.
North east. North east by east.
South nor-east, east by north.
East. East by south, east south east,
South east by east.
South east. South east by south, south south east,
South by east.
South. South by west, south south west,
Sou-west by west.
Sou-west. Sou-west by west, west sou-west,
West by south.
West. West by north, west nor-west,
Nor-west by west.
Nor-west. Nor-west by north, west nor-west,
Nor, nor-west. North.

Experience teach knowledge; that's how we done and learnt and work up. 'Cause we'd go from a cook and work up to a skipper and mate. They're rhymes that people don't hear now.

Oh dear, O dear, O Lor, O Lor,
Of that fishing of '84.

1884, that was the worst fishing that was ever known in Yarmouth. There's so many herring caught that they couldn't get a price. They couldn't sell 'em. So many herring. And, our fishermen came home; when they came home that Christmas time, they got up a rhyme and then they went round, the old fishermen went round; two on them carried the banner, and they went round and sung:

A penny towards the pot, my boys,
A penny towards the pot;
A steever will not break you
For the cases you have got.
A steever; just a small coin, y' see. A steever. A penny towards the pot, my boys. They were round that after, to get drink. 'Cause they hadn't enough to get a pint of beer with, they made up. 'Cause they were always used to havin' a real old booze up every Christmas time.

1 - 6 The Maid of Australia (Roud 1872)

One day as I strayed
Near these Airoland banks,
Where the maids of Australia
They play their wild pranks,
Beneath the green shade
Where I sit myself down,
Viewing the scenery that chanted around
In the forest of happy Australia
In the forest of happy Australia,
Where the maidens are handsome and gay.

As I sat viewing that beautiful scene,
The birds they sung gaily
And the trees they look green;
A pretty fair damsel before me appeared,
To the banks of the river
She quickly drew near,
She was a daughter of happy Australia,
She was a daughter of happy Australia,
Where the maidens are handsome and gay.

Now, she strippéd stark naked
Before me she stood,
Just as naked as Venus
That rose from the flood;
She blushed with confusion
And smiling, said she:
"These are the clothes which nature gave me,
On the day I was born in Australia,
On the day I was born in Australia,
Where the maidens are handsome and gay."

Now, she plunged in the stream
Without fear or dread,
Her delicate limbs
She extended and spread,
The hair hung in ringlets,
Her 'you know' was black.
"You see, sir, you see how float on my back,
In the streams of my happy Australia,
In the streams of my happy Australia,
Where the maidens are handsome and gay."

Now, being tired of swimming,
She swam to the brink;
"Your assistance, kind sir,
I'm afraid I shall sink."
Like lightning I flew
And gave her my hand,
Her feet they did slip,
She fell back on the sand,
Then I entered the bush of Australia,
Then I entered the bush of Australia,
Where the maidens are handsome and gay.

Now, we kissed and we cuddled
To the highest of glee,
The fairest of Australia
My eyes they did see;
Long time on her bosom
My face I did hide
"Til the sun in the west
It began to decline,
Then I left this fair maid of Australia,
Then I left this fair maid of Australia,
Where the maidens are handsome and gay.

Although Roud lists 33 examples of this fine song, Harry Cox and Walter Pardon account for 20 of them, and almost all the others are also from Norfolk.

Other recordings available on CD: Harry Cox (TSCD512D); Walter Pardon (TSCD514); Bob Green (Helions Bumpstead NLCD 6).

1 - 7 **The Reckless Young Fellow** (Roud 829)

I once was a reckless young feller,
I never took care of my life.
I sailed the salt seas all over,
And every port, a fresh wife.
I wish the wars were all over,
And I safe ashore on the Main
God bless me for ever and ever,
If I ever go whoring again. *Laughs.*

Spoken: I've been a naughty boy in my time - little bit naughty - but no harm, no harm.

Popular with Victorian broadside printers - Walter Pardon's set is close to the printed versions - though not frequently collected, apparently. Roud has 56 entries - almost all from southern England - but names only a dozen singers.

Other recordings available on CD: Caroline Hughes (MTCD365-6); Mary Ann Haynes (MTCD320); Walter Pardon (TSCD514).

1 - 8 **The Girls Around Cape Horn** (Roud 4706)

*'Tis of the ship called Conway,
A ship of noted fame,
She lay in Plymouth harbour,
You might have heard of her name.
She's waiting there for orders
To take her far from home,
And then we go proceedings
Around the North Cape Horn.*

Spoken: Ha'ye heard that one? I don't think I know all that. I'll see how that go ...

*Now as we were a-lying
All off that beautiful town,
And setting of new rigging
And bending of new sails,
With hearts as light as feathers
We hove our anchors home,
Proceeding on our voyage
A-rounding of the Horn.*

*Now like some man-of-war's men
We all stood in a row,
Blue trousers and white jumpers
As white as driven snow,
..... the sailors in white jackets,
They stood all in a row.
From ship to ship they cheered us
As we went sailing on,
Proceeding on our voyage
Around the North Cape Horn.*

*Now as we were got sailing
And now we are round the Horn my boys
Five night and four days,
We sighted Valparaiso
And anchored in the bay.
The Spanish girls came off to us,
I solemnly declare;
They're far before your English girls,
With their nobby heads of hair.*

*They like a British sailor,
Because he is true blue,
And when you have no money,
Some they will give to you.
They are far before your English girls,
Who on you will impose,
For when your money it is all spent,
They'll pawn and sell your clothes.
They are not like your English girls,
No ... Descends into chaos.*

*So farewell to Valparaiso,
Farewell now for a while,
Farewell to yonder green mountain,
Farewell to yonder green isle.
And when our ship she do pay off
We'll sit and sing them a song,
And bless those little Spanish girls
We left around Cape Horn.*

The italicised verses are from a handwritten copy in the Green/Larner family records. Not a terribly well-known song, with only 28 Roud entries, though these range from Lancashire to Hampshire, with a few from Ireland and the USA. John Goffin, also from Winterton, sings it on Helions Bumpstead NLCD 6.

I was wondering what relationship this song has with *The Gallant Frigate Amphitrite*, only to find that that song isn't really traditional at all. Apparently Ann Gilchrist collected this present song, titled *Rounding the Horn*, in 1907 from W Bolton, Southport, Lancs, with just four verses. Mr Bolton subsequently 'remembered' better versions of the ones he'd sung her, and made up a couple more. Who can tell where he got his first line from - the *Amphitrite* wasn't even a frigate, it was a convict transport! In 1960, Bert Lloyd recorded one of his 'improved' versions - titled *The Gallant Frigate Amphitrite* - for the LP of songs from the *Penguin Book*, and it was this one that was taken up by the revival.

1 - 9 **The Wild Rover** (Roud 1173)

I've been a wild rover for many long year,
I've spent all my money on wine, ale and beer,
Now to give up all roving, put my money in store.
And ne'er will I play the wild rover no more.

Chorus:
Nay, no never, never no more.
Ne'er will I play the wild rover no more.

I went into an alehouse where I used to frequent,
And told the landlady my money was all spent:
I called for a pint but she says to me: "Nay!
Such customer as you I can meet every day."

Chorus
I put my hand in my pocket, drew handfuls of gold,
And on the round table it glittered and rolled;
"Now here's my best brandies, my whiskey and all."
"Begone, landlady, I'll have none at all."

Chorus

I'll go home to my parents, tell them what I've done
And ask to give pardon to a prodigal son;
And if they forgive me which they've done times before
Then ne'er will I play the wild rover no more.

Chorus

I'd always thought of this as a Irish song but, if Roud's 131 instances paint a representative picture, this seems not to be the case. Most are from England, then comes Scotland, then North America, then Australia, with Ireland last with just two entries. Most of the instances are of book and broadside publications, with only 18 sound recordings, of which only four have ever been published, and none of these have ever been available on CD.

1 - 10 **The Oyster Girl** (Roud 875, Laws Q13)

Chorus:
"Oh, oysters, oysters, oh oysters" said she,
"I have the finest oysters that ever you did see.
I will sell them to you with a one, two and three
I pray, do you want any oysters?"

A nice little lady stepped up to the ground,
I took her in the parlour to bargain for me crown
I bargained for my oysters, and then we had a spree,
Oh, she left me with a basket of oysters.

Chorus

"Oh, Landlord, oh Landlord, oh Landlady,
Have you seen that pretty girl
that came along with me?"

She have pickéd my pockets
and stole all my money,
And she's left me with a basket of oysters.

Chorus

Spoken: Can you read it?

According to Gavin Greig (who noted no fewer than 13 versions of this song) 'It is a lively ditty and very popular. The sum stolen from the gentleman varies in different copies from five hundred to ten thousand pounds.' The song appears to have been first printed in a Stirling chapbook of eight texts called *A New Patriotic Song*, by M Randall, c.1794-1812, under the title *The Eating of Oysters*. Roud shows 98 entries, mostly from England (Essex to Northumberland) and Scotland, including 24 sound recordings.

Other recordings available on CD: Caroline Hughes (MTCD365-6); Chris Willett (MTCD361-2); Mary Ann Haynes (MTCD320); George Dunn (MTCD317-8); Phil Tanner (VT145CD).

1 - 11 **As I Lay a-Musing** (Roud 672)

As I laid a-musing on my bed one night
I dreaméd of my own heart's delight
I was so perplexed, I could take no rest
For love it did go so
And away to my true love I did go.

I went to my love's window by frame(?)
And so loudly did I call her by name
Polly arose, to the window goes
Unto him she whisperéd low
"Hark how the stormy winds do blow."

Spoken: She said that so her father thought she was looking out of the window, but she was not. That's a good song if I knew it

This seems to be a fragment of *One Night as I Lay on My Bed*, a song found some 15 times in central southern England, and nowhere else. There was one sound recording from Bill House of Beaminster, Dorset, but it's not available on CD.

1 - 12 **A Sailor's Alphabet** (Roud 21100)

A stand for Anchor we carry on our bow
B stand for Bowsprit to bowl her along.
C for the Capstan which we heave around, and
D for our Duty, to which we are bound.

Chorus:
Merry, cheerily, so merrily are we,
No mortal on earth like a sailor at sea.
Heave away haul away, hi-do-a-down,
Give a sailor his grog and there's nothing go wrong.

E stand for Ensign, we fly at our Main,
F stand for Fo'castle, belong to the man.
G stand for Galley, that Cook, he belong, and
H for our Halliards, so long and so strong.

Chorus:
I stand for Iron to which we are bound,
J stand for Jolly-boat, so safe and so sound.
K stand for Keelson, the keel which is from, and
L are the Lanyards so long and so strong.

Chorus:

M stand for Mainmast so long and so strong,
N stand for Northpoint which never point wrong
O stand for Owners that boats they belong, and
P stand for Pumps - we all jog on.

Chorus:

Q stand for Quadrant which we take the sun,
R stand for Rudder the keel it ship on.
S stand for Standpost the rudder ship on, and
T for the Topsails, to pull her along.

Chorus:

U stand for Union, to which we do fly,
V stand for Venus, which we now pass by.
W for Wheel, in which we take time,
And the other three letters, they won't come in rhyme.

Chorus:

Roud's 66 entries are about equally divided between England and North America, with only two from Scotland and none from Ireland. Of the 34 sound recordings, all the Norfolk instances are from Winterton, but it's been heard all over England, from Co Durham to Cornwall.

Other versions available on CD: Johnny Doughty (MTCD311-2); Harold Smy (VTC5CD); Percy Webb (NLCD3); Clifford Jenkins (Saydisc CD-SDL 405).

1 - 13 **Duckfoot Sue** (Roud 9553)

Diddles nonsense

A beautiful heel she had,
She'd a mouth like a tortoise-shell crab,
She'd an India-rubber lip
Like a rudder on a ship
And I tell you she was mad.

So now I'll sing to you
About old Duckfoot Sue,
She's chief engineer in the wild beast show
Out in the backyard view
Her beauty was all she had,
She'd a mouth like a tortoise-shell crab,
She'd an India-rubber lip
Like a rudder on a ship
And I tell you she was mad.

This is a part of a song called Duck-Foot Sue, written by Harry Bennet in 1884, and sung by G W Hunter. It was also sung, later, by George Foster (1864-1946), who may have recorded it. Another published recording of this song was made by the BBC at Eastbridge Eel's Foot in 1938 or '39, when Harry 'Crutter' Cook sang it. This recording has resurfaced on the Veteran VT140CD and it appears that the song had some East Anglian popularity, as both Keith Summers [from Jimmy Knights (MTCD339-0)] and Neil Lanham recorded it there, and Ginette Dunn cites it as being in Ruby Ling's repertoire. The song has also been reported in the US, Canada and Australia.

'Crutter' Cook's version may be more complete than this present one, but it's not a great deal more intelligible!

*Come listen for a while and I will tell to you
It's about a girl I love and they call her Duck foot Sue
She's gentle and divine long waisted in her feet
Her heels stuck out behind like an 18 carat beet*

Chorus:

*So now I'll sing to you about my love so true
She was chief engineer in the white shirt laundry
Out in the back yard view
Her beauty was all she had
She had a mouth like a soft shell crab
She'd an India rubber lip like a rudder of a ship
And I tell you she was bad.*

Chorus

*She was not very fat nor was she very thin
For she looked when she was dressed
Like a straw in a barrel of gin
I took her to a hall, the 'Fat Man's Social Club'
It took me half a quid for to stuff her out with grub*

Chorus

*For she was a funny old guy
She had a double barrel squint in her eye
She'd a number 10 feet they would cover up the street
She'd a mouth like a crack in a pie
She had a cheerfully cemetery laugh
She had a head like an excellent calf
She's a iron-clad gun, clipper built brig
All on a main top gaff.
Chorus*

*Her face was the colour of a ham
She had knees like a Japanese fan
She could talk for an hour at 40 horse power
And a voice like a catamaran.
Her hair was an indigo blue
She could walk like a Kangaroo
You ought to see her tussle
with a patent leather bustle
She could whistle like a steam boat too.*

Chorus

1 - 14 **Clear Away the Morning Dew** (Roud 11, Child 112)

As I walked out one morning gay,
To see what I could shoot,
I there espied a pretty fair maid
Come tripping by the road ...

Chorus:

So all hail the dewy morning

Blow on the winds high-O
Clear away the morning dew,
How sweet the winds do blow.

We both jogged on together
'Til we come to some locks of hay,
She said "Young man, there is a place
Where you and I can lay ..." Chorus

I put my arms around her waist
And I tried to throw her down;
She said "Young man, the dewy grass
Will crumple my silk gown ..." Chorus

She said
"You can come to my Mamma's house;
There you can lay me down.
Take away my maidenhead,
Likewise a thousand pounds ..." Chorus

I took her to her Mother's house
And she quickly locked me out.
She said "Young man, I'm a maid within;
And you're a fool without! ..." Chorus

Spoken: Oh, yes - we liked the girls. I did! I allus loved a young woman - allus.

This song tells a perennially popular story, so we should not be surprised to find that Child cites 1608 as its first known publication, or that many of its broadside versions are titled *The Baffled Knight*. Nor that it sports 158 Roud entries - the most recent having been collected in 1976.

What is slightly surprising is that it seems to have fallen out of favour in the oral tradition in the mid-Seventies, despite huge popularity in the revival at precisely that time. So there are only 19 sound recordings listed, of which only those by Emily Bishop (TSCD673T); William Rew (Rounder CD 1778) and Alfred Edgell (EFDSS CD 002) appear to be available on CD.

1 - 15 **Sing to the Oak** (Roud 1281)

Oh, sing to the oak, the brave old oak
That stand in the greenwood long.
Here's health and renown
to its broad green crown
And its fifty arms so long.
And the fear and the frown,
when the sun went down,
And the fire in the west fades out.
*And he showeth his might on a wild midnight
When the storms though his branches shout.*

*In the days of old, when the spring with cold
Had brightened his branches grey,
Through the grass at his feet
crept maidens sweet,
They gather the dew of may.
And on that day, to the rebec gay
They frolicked with lovesome swains;
The dead they are gone, in the churchyard laid,
But the tree still flourish on.
So sing to the oak, the brave old oak
That stands in its pride alone.
But still flourish he, a hale green tree,
O'er a hundred years ago.*

'Twas the good old times
when Christmas chimes
What a merry, merry sound you'd hear.
Well the Squire's wide hall
and the cottages small
They ring out Old English cheer.
But gold had its sway, you must obey,
What a ruthless King is he
He never did send, his ancient friend,
(He never shall send our ancient friend)
To be tossed on the stormy sea.
So sing to the oak, the brave old oak
That stand in its pride alone.
But still flourish he, a hale green tree,
But a thousand years ago *(are gone)*.

Spoken: That's *The Old Oak*. My father; that's another one, used to sing. Old song, *The Old Oak*.

A song that, despite having 110 Roud entries, has only been collected from two other singers - Thomas Larkin (Berks) and W Hemming (Hants) - and was said to be in the repertoire of Henry Burstow (Sussex); 90 of these entries refer to broadsides. A songster, *Laurie's Gems*, in Frank Kidson's collection indicates that it was written by W Chorley, with music by Loder, and it is from this that I've inserted lines (in italics) to fill out and clarify Sam's remembered version.

1 - 16 **No Sir, No Sir** (Roud 146)

In London city there dwelt a maiden
And her name I do not know
I courted her, all for her beauty
But she would always answer "No.
No Sir, no Sir, no Sir, no Sir."
For she would always answer "No Sir, no."

Her husband was a Spanish captain
Seven long years he'd been away
And the last time that he left her
He bade her always to say no.
"No, Sir"

"Madam may I walk your garden,
Walk and talk as lovers do,
And Madam would you think it rudely
If I plucked a rose and pinned on you?"
"No, Sir"

"Madam may I tie your garter
Just one inch above your knee,
And if my hand it should slip higher
Would you think it rude of me?"
"No, Sir"

"Madam, why not strip stark naked
Go to bed as lovers do
And Madam would you think it rudely
If I undressed and came with you?"
"No, Sir"

Now we are in bed together
Gazing on each other's charms,
"Would your own husband please you better
As I (if he) lay all in your arms?"
"No, Sir"

"Madam arise, draw back those curtains
The morning cock is crowing high.
Madam arise draw back those curtains
Open your arms and let me fly."
"No, Sir"

This is quite a well-known song, with 128 Roud entries, roughly shared between England and North America; only one example each seems to have been collected in Ireland and Scotland. It must have remained popular into the recent past as there are 37 sound recordings listed, though very few have ever been published.

Other recordings available on CD: Bernie Cherry (MTCD359); and there are two slightly different versions of the song, called *Ripest Apples*, sung by Joe Jones (MTCD320), and *Twenty Eighteen*, sung by George Townshend (MTCD304-5).

1 - 17 **Old Bob Ridley-O** (Roud 753)

Oh white folks all, I'll sing you a ditty
I'm just from home, and that's no pity
To praise myself it is a shame
For young Bob Ridley is my name

Chorus:
And I'm a young Bob Ridley-o
And a young Bob Ridley-o
And a young Bob Ridley-eio
And a young Bob Ridley-o
Diddles: *The Sailor's Hornpipe*.

Now I'm just arriving from the mountains,
How many miles I didn't count them
I'm just come here, from the old plantation,
I'm just come here, me education.

Chorus
Spoken: Then they all step.

Now oh the first time that I got a licking
It was in the fields of cotton picking.
By jove it made me dance
And it made my eyeballs quiver
By golly it made my pockets jingle.

Chorus

Spoken: I used to sing and dance to that. The first prize I took at Lerwick was singing that. Yes song and dance, Old Bob Ridley.

It's a little surprising that Sam always calls this *Old Bob Ridley*, yet always sings *Young Bob Ridley*. What's not surprising is that it's an American song, or that, amongst Roud's 33 entries, Sam's is almost the only English one. Gavin Greig heard in in Scotland, and Mary Ann Carolan sang it in Ireland, and can be heard doing so on *The Voice of the People* TSCD657. It appeared in an early-19th century broadside, yet various sources name three different composers.

1 - 18 **When I was Single** (Roud 654)

Oh, when I was single, I wore a black shawl,
Now I am married, I get bugger all.
Still I love her, can't deny her,
I'll go with her wherever she go.
Spoken: That's all I know of that, like.

A song that I thought was far better-known than its 29 Roud entries would suggest. Margaret Barry sang it on a Folkways LP in the '60s, as did Bob Roberts on a Topic one in the mid-'70s - so that could explain it.

Other recordings available on CD: Caroline Hughes (MTCD365-6); Johnny Doughty (VTC6CD).

1 - 19 **The Golden Fenidier** (Roud 122, Child 286)

There once sailed a ship
from the North 'Merikee,
The name she went by was
The Golden Fenidier,
She was then overtaken by
a Turkish pirate ship,
And he sank her in the lowlands,
Lowlands, lowlands
And he sank her in the lowlands low.

Now the first one on deck
was the little cabin boy,
Saying "Captain, what'll you give me
if the ship I do destroy?"
"I will give to you my silver
and my daughter for your bride,
If you sink her in the lowlands,
Lowlands, lowlands"
And he sank her in the lowlands low.

He then jumped overboard
with an auger in his hand,
He swam right around that Turkish pirate ship,
And he bore a hole through
and he let the water in,
And he sank her in the lowlands,
Lowlands, lowlands
And he sank her in the lowlands low.

He then swam back to his own Fenidier,
Saying "Captain, pick me up,
I am drifting in despair."
Saying "Captain, pick me up,
I am drifting in despair."
I am drifting in the lowlands,
Lowlands, lowlands
I am drifting in the lowlands low."
He then swam round the starboard
part the ship,
Saying "Shipmates, pick me up,
I am sinking in despair."
Saying "Shipmates, pick me up,
I am sinking in despair."
I am sinking in the low ..."
Spoken: That's how that go.

Look how that go(?),

They pulled him o'er the side
and they laid him on the deck there,
And he gasped, and he died in despair.
And they wrapped him in a hammock
that was just about his size,
And they laid him in the lowlands,
Lowlands, lowlands
And they lowered him in the lowlands low.
Spoken: Now look about there, look.

This is obviously a fairly complete version of *The Golden Vanity*, which was a far more popular song than I'd ever realised, with some 503 Roud entries - admittedly, more than half of these relate to books, and another quarter to broadside and other printed publications - still, 124 sound recordings isn't bad!

It may seem surprising that such a slim story should have such wide popular appeal, but it appears amongst both the Pepys and Roxburghe ballads, and has remained popular from the late-17th century right up to Mike Yates' 2001 collection from Duncan Williamson. Maybe the very singable refrain has helped - and the fact that we all learned it at primary school?

1 - 20 **The Wild and Wicked Youth** (Roud 490, Laws L12)

At seventeen I took a wife
I loved her as dearly as I loved my life;
And to maintain her all fine and gay,
A-robbing I went, on the King's highway.
Repeats last two lines.

I robbed kings I do declare,
I robbed Lord Guerstan(?) in Leicester Square.
I closed the shutters, bid them goodnight,
And I carried gold home to my heart's delight.

Spoken: Now I don't know no more o' that one - Uncle Jimmy used to sing that.

Just two verses of a sometimes much longer song which was popular from Yorkshire to Somerset, and in the USA, but far less so in Scotland, Ireland and Canada. Roud has 231 examples; mainly books and broadsides, with dates ranging from 1803 to 2007, and including 53 sound recordings. There have been quite a few female singers of this most masculine song, and many of the big names have sung it; Harry Cox, the Brightwells, Gordon Hall, Walter Pardon, Robert Cinnamond, O J Abbott, the Carter Family ...

Other recordings on CD: Bob Scarce (Helions Bumpstead NLCD 10); Walter Pardon (TSCD514); Jumbo Brightwell (TSCD653); Fred Ling (TSCD676D).

1 - 21 **Now is the Time for Fishing** (Roud 1789)

Now is the time for fishing,
If you mean to have a try,
Get your tackle ready;
It's no use to keep them dry.
Shoot your nets out on the briney,
And haul them in again,
And you'll get a funny shimmer
In the morning.

Used to! Well, "that's a poor shimmer"; that mean a multitude; a good lot, y'know. A shimmer. A big shimmer or a little shimmer. We call that a shimmer o'herring.

Now there's an old; my uncle, he used to be tar boat out of Yarmouth for years. His name was Wilks Larnar. Wilks. That's a nickname; Billy Larnar. They used to call him Wilks. Wilks Larnar. That was a nickname and he used to be tar boat out of Yarmouth for years. He live in this parish, but they're dead now years, you know, and that's the song he always used to sing when he was at sea. *Now is the Time for Fishing*. (Laughs) That's a good old ditty. Oh, the different days; oh, you wouldn't think the difference.

Now I bin down and we used to have to get up mornings, six o'clock, to catch the half past six train at Hemsby to go to Yarmouth. 'Cause there was no buses then y'see. We had a little tear; my poor old mother used to cry when I was about thirteen; I had to go. Poor little hands pullin' down on these great old ropes. I seen blisters all on hands. I cried, "I want to go to my mother." I cried like that, y'know. Little boy. Well, you aren't very big when you're thirteen, are you? And that's how we used to have to rough it. We had to get up there, walk to Hemsby, get out Angel Station, then walk right down there to the fish wharf, right down from Beech Station, down to the wharf. And that was another mile. And we didn't pay any heed to it. But they wouldn't do it now. What? They want a bike to go to school with, they what live in the parish now. We used to walk to Yarmouth, and we used to walk to Yarmouth, 'cause there was more money; there was less money about than there was now when I was a-talkin' about.

EM: Sam, you wouldn't want thirteen year old boys today to do what you had to, would you?

Then, well they had to do it.

EM: But you wouldn't want?

No, I wouldn't. I wouldn't if I had any.

Another song seemingly unique to Sam.

1 - 22 **I Wish I Wish** (Roud 495)

Oh, I wish, I wish, but it's all in vain,
I wish I was a maid again.
But a maid again I never shall be,
'Til apples, they grow on an orange tree.

Now there is a hale-house in this town,
Where my love go and sit himself down.
He takes some other girl on his knee,
And don't you think it's a grief to me?

A grief to me, I'll tell you for why;
That girl, she's got more gold than I,
But her gold will waste, her beauty will fade,
Poor girl, she'll become like me, in the shade.

Now, when I was young and in my prime,
My Love would follow me at any time.
But now my apron strings won't meet,
He'll pass me by and will not speak.
And now my apron strings won't meet,
He'll pass me by and will not speak.

I wish, I wish my baby was born,
And sitting on his Dadda's knee.
And I, poor girl, dead and gone,
And the green grass growing over me.

It's rather surprising that this song, made up of some of the most common floating verses in the canon, should have only 41 Roud entries, and that almost all the named singers are very well known. Most come from England and Scotland, with just a handful from Ireland and North America.

Although seemingly a distinct song in its own right, *I Wish, I Wish* comprises a number of verses that can also be found in a group of songs which include *Since Love Has Brought me to Despair* (Roud 60, Laws P25) and *In Sheffield Park* (Roud 860).

Other recordings available on CD: Cecilia Costello (MTCD363-4); Lizzie Higgins (MTCD337-8); George Dunn (MTCD317-8); Walter Pardon (MTCD305-6); Jeannie Robertson (Rounder 1720).

1 - 23 **The Dockyard Gate** (Roud 1739)

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

Now, a last farewell of our true loves,
She then began to cry.
She took her handkerchief from her breast
To wipe her weeping eye.
Saying "My love is going to sea,
How hard it is my case;
But there's plenty more all on the shore
And another one shall take his place" - *laughs*.
"Now go you down to the dockyard gate
And wait 'til I come out;
For this very day we'll spend his half-pay
And we'll drink both ale and stout."

Now, the day being spent with sweet content,
And his half-pay was no more.
"Never mind, my love" she then did cry,
"My husband is working hard for more.
Perhaps it is his watch on deck,
All shivering in the cold.
Or perhaps it is his watch below,
Our joys we (he) can't behold." - *laughs*.

Roud's 15 examples of this little-known song come from right across England, from Lancashire to Sussex, and although it's appeared in several books it seems never to have had a broadside publication. Perhaps this accounts for why it's not better-known? This will be its only CD release.

1 - 24 **Green Broom** (Roud 379)

Oh there was an old man
And he lived in the wood
And his trade was selling of brooms
He had one son and his name it was John
And he laid a-bed 'til it was noon, bright noon
And he laid a-bed 'til it was noon.
In come the old man
And upstairs he went
And he swore he'd fire the room
If John didn't arise
And sharpen his knives
And away to the wood to cut brooms,
green brooms
And away to the wood to cut brooms.

Now John he arose
And he put on his clothes
And away to the wood to cut brooms
He'd bind them all round
And carried them through the town,
Crying "Maids do you want any brooms,
green brooms,"
Crying "Maids do you want any brooms?"

Now a lady so high
From her window did spy
Young Johnny a-selling of brooms.
"Now if you'll forsake the trade
And do what I persuade
And marry a maiden in bloom,
green bloom
And marry a maiden in bloom."

Now Jack gave consent
And to church they went
And he married that maiden in bloom.

Now I vow and protest
There's not one in the west
Can equal the lad that sell brooms,
green brooms
Can equal the lad that sell brooms.

I hadn't thought this song was well-enough known to account for 118 Roud entries, but it's found all over England, from Yorkshire to Devon, and with a fair number of Irish and Scottish examples as well. Nineteen sound recordings are known, though few seem ever to have been published, and only that by Gordon Hall (VTC4CD) is on CD.

1 - 25 **The Dolphin** (Roud 690)

Our ship she laid in harbour,
In Liverpool docks and more,
Awaiting for fresh orders
Her anchor for to weigh;
Bound down to the coast of Africa,
Our orders did run so:
We're going to sink and destroy, my boys,
No matter where we go.

We had not been sailing
Scarce fifty leagues or more,
When we espied a lofty ship
And down on us he bore;
He hailed us in French colours,
He asked us where and whence we came.
"We just come down from Liverpool town
And *The Dolphin* is our name."

"Are you a man of war, sir?
Pray tell me what you be."
"I am no man of war, sir,
But a pirate ship you see.
Come heave up your fore and main yards
And let your ship come to,
Our tackles are overhauled
and our boats are all lowered,
Or else we will sink you."

Now our Captain stood on the quarterdeck,
He was brave and fearless too.
"It's three to one against us,"
He cried out to his crew;
"If it hadn't have been for my younger brother,
This battle would never been tried.
Let every man stand true to his guns
And we'll give to them a broadside."

Now broadside to broadside
Which caused all hands to wonder,
To see that French lofty's mast
Come rattling down like thunder;
We shot them from our quarterdeck
'Til they could no longer stay,
Our guns being smart and we played a fine part
And we gave them Liverpool play.

Now this large French ship was taken
And in Liverpool docks was moored,
We fired shots to our sweethearts
With the nice little girls on shore;
We lowered down the French colours,
And we hoisted the red, white and blue,
We'll drink success to *The Dolphin*
And all her jovial crew.

Spoken: How's that one? That's another one.

I can't think of a song, supposedly about a real event, which goes by so many titles - *The French Privateer*, *The London Man o' War*, *The Irish Captain*, *Lord Exmouth*, *Warlike Seamen*, *Summerswell* ... the list goes on and on. Moreover, the date given in the song's usual first line "On the 14th day of June, my boys, in Liverpool where we lay" seems to be different in practically every version!

So maybe this song isn't about a real event - any number of Royal Navy ships were named *Dolphin*; one laid down in 1751 was reportedly the ninth of that name. Whether this song is actually based on the exploits of a particular *Dolphin* is unclear. Nonetheless, it was pretty popular, with 67 Roud entries, and found in most southern counties of England, with a scattering in Scotland, Ireland and the USA. Yet despite 19 sound recordings, only that by the Copper family (TSCD534) remains available on CD.

1 - 26 **The Old Miser** (Roud 3913)

There was of an old miser in London did dwell;
He had but one daughter, such a beautiful girl.
And when this old miser, he was out of the way,
She was courted by a sailor, by night and by day.

Now, when this old miser he heard of the news,
Straightaway to a captain,
straightaway he did go.

Saying "Captain, dear captain, I've bad news to tell,
I've got a young sailor for a transport to sell -

Spoken: That's what he was saying about being on Van Dieman's Land(?)

This song is almost certainly of broadside origin (almost half of Roud's 31 entries); the theme of the rich man who has his daughter's humble suitor pressed to sea is one of the commonest of 18th century song subjects.

Despite being a good story, set to a gorgeous tune in most cases, it was not much taken-up by traditional singers, although the 13 named in Roud are spread right across the southern half of England. There is also one American sighting, and one from Tristan da Cunha.

Other versions available on CD: Chris Willett (MTCD361-2); Mary Ann Haynes (MTCD320);

1 - 27 **The Skipper and his Boy** (Roud 2680)

So merrily over the waves so high,
We ride together, my Father and I;
We ride together, my Father and I.

Now, the storm it went tossed
and returned on the shore,
It tossed them around and they
never spoke more.
The boy's handkerchief laid on the sand;
Which she'd tied round his neck,
with a parting hand.

A song of which little is really known. Roud has 31 entries, but the four sound recordings, of the complete song, are all by Walter Pardon, the 20 broadside references all look very similar, and there's one in Alfred Williams' *MS* index. The only other 'real' evidence of it in the tradition is Sharp's 1906 collection of it from Captain Vickery of Minehead, Somerset - and it's said that Jim Copper sang it.

Other versions available on CD: Walter Pardon (MTCD305-6).

1 - 28 **Betsy the Milkmaid** (Blackberry Fold) (Roud 559, Laws O10)

The Squire and his sister, we sat in the hall
As we were got singing and talking to all
As we were got singing each other a song
Pretty Betsy the milkmaid came tripping on.

"Do you want any milk, Squire?"
pretty Betsy did say.
"Oh no, pretty Polly," these words he did say,
"For it is your fair body which I do adore,
Such body as yours I never saw 'fore."

"Now hold your tongue, Squire,
and let me go free.
Don't play your games on my poverty.
For there's many a rich lady
more fitted for you
Than I, a poor milkmaid
brought up by a cow."

Now with a long jingle, and that I've been told
With a long jingle, these words to her he told
"Now Betsy, pretty Betsy, let me have my will
And that of course, I will prove to you still
But the first time you desire me
in this open field,
The first time I'll force you,
I'll force you to yield."

"Now hold your tongue, Squire,
and let me go free.
Don't play your games on my poverty,
For I'll stick to my virtue as well as my life."
And out of her bosom drew
a long dagger knife.

Now with this long weapon
she pierced him right through
And home to her master like lightning she flew
Saying "Master, oh Master"
with a tear in her eye,
"I've wounded the Squire,
and I'm afraid he will die."

Now the Squire was sent for
and he was brought home,
And likewise the doctor to heal up his wound.
And likewise little Betsy,
so brave and so fair ...

Spoken: She nursed him with all her care

Spoken: I don't know any more. It come in like this ...

It's best to be honest if ever so poor
He made her his lady instead of a whore.

Spoken: Now that's nice song
EM: It's very old song, *The Blackberry Fold*.

A popular ballad with 98 Roud entries, almost all from England, and ranging from an early-1800s broadside to Sam Lee's sound recording of Freda Black in 2012. There have been 34 sound recordings, though these only account for 7 named singers.

Other recordings on CD: Caroline Hughes (MTCD365-6); Danny Brazil (MTCD345-7); George Spicer (MTCD311-2); Phoebe Smith (TSCD672D); Harry Cox (TSCD512D).

1 - 29 **The Wreck of the Life-Boat** (Roud 13632)

In an old fashioned cottage
that stands on the cliff,
A woman is sitting alone.
Sewing with fingers so nervous and stiff,
Her cheeks were as cold as a stone.
*The lantern that's lit in the window,
Gleams on the waters below;
She's thinking, thinking,
Of that night eighteen months ago:*

Chorus:
*The lifeboat went out in the wind,
Leaving a lassie behind,
Thinking of Jack, wishing him back,
Praying for those on the foam.
But Jack, with the best of the band
Was wrecked within sight of land.
Never will she her sailor see
Or give him a welcome home.*

The broadside I've seen has three more verses in much the same vein.

1 - 30 **The Outlandish Knight** (Roud 21, Child 4)

A rich man from the north lands came,
He came a-viewing me,
He promised he'd take me to the north lands,
And there he'd marry me, there he would marry me
He promised he'd take me to the north lands,
And there he'd marry me

"Now go and fetch me some of your Father's gold
And some of your Mother's fee,
Two of the best nags from out the stable,
Where there stood thirty and three."
Repeats last two lines.

Now, she mounted on a milky-white steed,
And he on the iron-grey,
They rode 'til they come to the sea side,
Three hours before it was day.
Repeats last two lines.

"Pull off, pull off, your silken gown,
And deliver unto me,
For six pretty maids have I drowned here;
And the seventh then you will be."
Repeats last two lines.

Now, if I've to take off my clothes,
Pray turn your back on me,
For it isn't fit for a rogue like you
A naked woman to see.
Repeats last two lines.

Now, when he turned her (his) back on her;
She plunged him in the sea.
He cried "Oh help me, help my dear
I'm sinking beneath the sea."
"Lay there, lay there, you wicked man;
Lay there, instead of me.
For six pretty maidens have you drowned here;
But the seventh have drowned thee."

And, she mounted on her milky-white steed,
And leading the iron-grey,
She rode 'til she came to her own Father's hall,
Three hours before it was day.
Repeats last two lines.

Another of the big ballads, with 754 Roud entries (almost half of which are from North America) though only 103 of them are sound recordings, the others all being

related to printed sources - particularly books, of which there are 416 listed, the earliest British one being Herd, 1776, although there's a German broadside dated 1550.

As *The Outlandish Knight*, not to mention *Lady Isobel and the Elf Knight* and a host of other titles, this ballad is exceptionally well-known all over the Anglophone world. It certainly seems to have caught the imagination of traditional singers, many versions having appeared throughout England and Scotland (as *May Colvin*), though it seems not to have been much sung in Ireland, though I should mention that Cornelius 'Corny' McDaid of Bunrana, Co Donegal, sang a very full and splendid version as *False Lover John*.

Other versions available on CD: Sarah Porter (MTCD309-0); Jumbo Brightwell (MTCD339-0); Bill Smith (MTCD351); Kevin Mitchell (MTCD315-6); Bill Cassidy (MTCD325-6); Fred Jordan (TSCD600); Gordon Hall (VT115CD); Mary Ann Haynes (TSCD661); Lena Bourne Fish (Appleseed APRCD1035); Arthur 'Hockey' Feltwell (VT150CD).

1 - 31 **The Tanyard Side** (Roud 1021, Laws M28)

Oh, I am a rambling hero,
My life have been ensnared,
'Twas in the town of Boltenblass(?)
There lived a maiden fair.
She was fairer than Diana, bright,
And she's free from earthly pride,
And she labour daily for her bread
Down by the tanyard side.

Now her hair it hung in ringlets,
Down her snowy neck.
Her two brown dazzling eyes
They made her come a wreck.
Her teeth they were of ivy white,
And she's free from earthly pride,
And she'll make a man become her slave
Down by the tanyard side.

Now, six long months we courted,
'Til at length we did agree,
To acquaint our parents
And then we'd married be.
It was then her cruel father,
Did prove to me unkind,
And it made me sail across the sea
To leave my love behind.

"Farewell, my aged parents,
To you I bid adieu.
I am crossing the wide ocean
All for the sake of you.
And if ever I return again,
That girl I'll make my bride,
And I'll roll her in my arms all night
Down by the tanyard side."

This looks and sounds like an Irish song, yet Roud has only 7 instances from Ireland amongst 51 entries - most of which are from England, with a dozen or so from North America. There are 15 sound recordings listed, only two of which are on CD: the wonderful Phoebe Smith (TSCD661) and Tom & Chris Willett (MTCD361-2).

1 - 32 **Will Watch** (Roud 1617)

One morn when the wind
From the northward blew keenly,
When sullen roared
The big waves on the main,
A famed smuggler, Will Watch,
Kissed his Susan serenely
Took helm, and to sea
Boldly steered out again.
Will had promised his Sue
That this trip, if well ended,
Should coil up his ropes,
And he'd anchor on shore;
When his pockets were lined,
Why his life should be ended,
The laws he had broke
He would never break more.

His sea-boat was trim
Made her port, took her loading,
Then Will stood to sea,
Reached the offing, and cried,
"This night, if I've luck,
Furls the sails of my trading.
In dock I can lay -
Serve a friend or two besides."
We lay to 'til night
Came on darksome and dreary,

To crowd every sail
Then he piped up all hands;
But a signal soon spied -
'Twas a prospect uncheerly,
'Twas a signal that warned him
To beat from the land.

"The Philistians are out",
Cries Will, "we'll take no heed on't,
Attacked, who's the man
That will flinch from his gun?
Should my head be blown off
I shall ne'er feel the need on't,
We'll fight while we can;
When we can't, boys, we'll run."
Through the haze of the night
A bright flash now appearing,
"Oh ho!" cried Will Watch,
"The Philistians bear down.
Bear a hand, my tight lads,
Ere we think about sheering.
Our broadside poured in;
Should we swim, boys, or drown?"

"But should I be poppéd off,
You, my mates left behind me,
Pay regard of my last words,
See 'em kindly obeyed.
Let no stone mark the spot,
And, my friends, do you mind me,
Near the beach with this grave
Where Will Watch should be laid."
Poor Will's yarn was spun up -
For a bullet next minute
Laid him low on the deck
And he never rose more.
The crew fought the brig
While a shot remained in him,
Then sheered, and Will's hulk
To his Susan they bore.

In the dead of the night
His last wish was complied with,
To few known his grave
And to few known his end;
He was borne to the earth
By the crew that he died with;
He'd the tears of his Susan,
The prayers of his men.
Near his grave dash the billow,
That wild low last billow,
Yon ash struck with lightning
That marked his cold bed.
Will Watch, the bold smuggler,
That famed lawless fellow -
Once feared, now forgot -
Sleep in peace with the dead.

This splendid piece was written, not by Dibdin - as might have been expected - but by Thomas Cory in 1806, and the wonderful tune by John Davy. This sounds very like that used by Harry Cox for *The Squire and the Gypsy*.

Given that Sam was in his eighties when this was recorded, it seems quite extraordinary that his text scarcely differs, beyond a handful of unimportant words, from the published original.

1 - 33 **Talk**

The village, fishermen; out of this village. When we left school that was sea or gaol, or else we had to go right straight to sea. Yes, sea or gaol. That was starvation but want; you'd have to go there. And I went little boy, cabin; cabin boy in a little boat called the Young John; 1892. Sailin' boat, little sailing boats they were; they're about forty tons, forty ton. They were small; ten men a crew. Around the cabin you couldn't turn yourself about in it. We used to go all around the British Isles. We entered the sailing boats; we used to go down as far as Shields and fish home; Scarborough, Whitby, all around them; finish up autumn voyage up Yarmouth.

EM: Now, Winterton is a village of how many people? A thousand?

About eight hundred that time, about eight hundred.

EM: 350 were fishermen?

That's right. That they were. Well, practically three hundred.

EM: Did many of them own their own boats?

The later part of the time there was as many boats; a lot more than what there is out of Yarmouth altogether now. There was about, I reckon about fourteen or fifteen owners, only they were registered out of Yarmouth, you see. They weren't registered from Winterton. They were registered from Yarmouth, Port of Yarmouth, you see. They were the owners here what lived in this parish, you see. What bin fishin'. Work themselves up and got money and bought a ship. Fourteen. Fourteen, yes.

EM: That's still not very many, is it?

There in't a boat in here; there in't an owner in this village now at all. They're all done.

EM: But even so, this meant that most of the fishermen working out of Winterton were crewing, not owning boats?

That's right. Crewing; yes, yes.

EM: But did they run the system we found they had in Scotland of having a share in the nets?

No, no. We went in nine / seven when I first went to sea. The owner got nine shares and the crew got seven. After all the expenses were paid, and the money what was left, the owner took nine shares of that and the crew took seven. That's how they worked it then. And we used to work day and night. Now, when we were in the sailin' boats, used to go on the North Sea, perhaps we were gone a fortnight, down the North Sea after herring.

Now then, we had four tubs of water and just a biscuit locker, full of biscuits; you never washed your face. And we used to come home, we used to come home as black as ace of spades. And people wouldn't trouble nor trade with us when we come home from Yarmouth. No, they won't trouble; not with those dirty fishermen. They literally thought we couldn't have water enough to wash ourselves; we rinse ourselves with salt water but you couldn't use no water 'cause you'd want that for drinking purpose. And you used to cook in salt water. Yes, you used to cook the meat and duff and that, all in salt water. And that's all we had to use, and sometimes we'd come offshore to food, off the North Sea, and the finish up used to be flour and water; made pancakes and have a little treacle along with them; that's all we had when we come home on the ship. That's how that used to be. Now that's like heaven to 'em now.

Eighteen nights in and out the harbour a-herring every day out of Yarmouth 'til we were all knocked up. I went home; I was single then. My poor old mother washed me; I didn't know she washed me, I was that dead tired. They worked us 'til we very nigh dropped; well, we set and got a little bit of food what had chance to get, went home to sleep as a-getting' on it. And that's how they used to work us them days. Then Mr MacColl say with the work, but I'm sure they couldn't have worked harder than I have done. I'm sure on it.

CD 2:

2 - 1 The Bold *Princess Royal* (Roud 528, Laws K29)

On the fifteenth of February
We sailed from the land,
In the bold *Princess Royal*,
Bound for Newfoundland;
We had forty bright seamen
For our ship's company,
When bold from the east, boys,
To the westward steered we.

Now we had not been sailing
Scarce days two or three,
When a man from our masthead,
Strange sails he did see;
He come bearing down on us,
For to see what we were,
And under his mizzen,
Black colours she wore.

"Good Lord!" cried our captain,
"What shall we do now?
Here comes a bold pirate
To rob us, I know."
"Oh, no," cried our chief mate,
"It ne'er shall be so,
We will shake out our reefs, boys,
And from her we'll go."

Now this bold pirate,
He hove alongside,
With a loud-speaking trumpet,
"Whence came you?" he cried.
Our captain being up, my boys,
And he answered him so:
"We come from fair London
And we're bound to Caru."

"Come heave up your courses
And bring your ship to.
I have a long letter
To send home by you."
"I shall not heave my courses
Nor I'll bring my ship to,
But it will be in some harbour,
Not alongside of you."

Now he chased us to wind'ard
For all that long day,
He fired shots after us
But none made no way;
He fired shots after us,
But none could prevail,

For the bold *Princess Royal*
Soon showed them her tail.

"Good Lord!" cried our captain,
"Now the pirate is gone;
Go ye down to your grog, boys,
Go down every one;
Go ye down to your grog, boys,
And be of good cheer,
Whilst the bold *Prince* has sea-room,
Brave boys never fear."

An extremely well-known song, at least in England - 113 of Roud's 212 instances are from here, though there are a dozen or so each from eastern USA and Canada. And almost all the English entries are from counties with a sea coast - the great majority being from Suffolk and Norfolk. It has also remained popular until recent times; Roud shows 54 sound recordings.

Since the words 'Bold Princess Royal' occur so frequently in the song it's unsurprising that this is almost always the title used - until it crosses the sea, that is. In Ireland and the US a whole host of alternative titles have been adopted, many of which centre on the pirate, rather than the *Princess* and her crew. What is peculiar about a sea song from areas where sea voyages are readily understood is that a voyage from London to Newfoundland, sailing 'from the eastward to the westward' should so frequently cite Cairo at its destination. Sam has 'Caru' (which I can't find on any map), whilst some others give Callao, a small seaport town in Virginia; neither of which seem terribly likely.

Also available on CD by: Bob Hart (MTCD301-2); Harry Cox (TSCD706); Walter Pardon (TSCD514); Velvet Brightwell (VT140CD); Bob Roberts (Saydisc CD-SDL 405); Ned Adams (TSCD673); Jamie Taylor (Greentrax CDTRAX 9001); John Goffin (Neil Lanham NLCD 6) and Cis Ellis (NLCD 3).

2 - 2 The Captain with his Whiskers (Roud 2735)

... his whiskers took a sly glance on me.
Took a sly glance on me,
Took a sly glance on me,
Oh the Captain with his whiskers took a sly glance on me.

Spoken: laughs ... My mother and father used to sing that.

If this is the chorus to *As They Marched Through the Town*, it was an American music-hall song, written by Haynes Bayly and Sidney Nelson in 1869. Roud lists 39 instances, and only that collected by Fred Hamer from a Mr Hill, of Tetford, Lincs, in 1967, is not a North American entry. If it isn't that song - then I have no idea!

2 - 3 The Bonny Bunch of Roses-O (Roud 664, Laws J5)

By the dangers of the ocean
One morning in the month of June
When the sweetest warblers
Oh their charming notes did sing.
There I beheld a female
Full of sorrow, grief and woe
Conversing with young Bonaparte
Concerning the bonny bunch of roses-o

"Now I'll raise a terrible army
And through tremendous dangers go
And in spite of all the universe
I'll win the bonny bunch of roses-o
And throughout all the universe
I'll win the bonny bunch of roses-o"

"Now, Son, don't talk so venturesome
For England is the heart of oak
Its unity shall ne'er be broke
For there's England, Ireland, Scotland
Their unity shall ne'er be broke.

"Son, look at your father
In St Helena his body lay low
And soon you'll follow after
So beware of the bonny bunch of roses-o."

Now he took ten hundred thousand men,
Likewise dukes to join his throng
He was so well provided
He'd enough to sweep the world along.
And when he came near Moscow
Overwhelmed by driven snow
And all Moscow was a-blazing
And he lost the bonny bunch of roses-o.

Another big ballad (with 310 Roud entries), though obviously of fairly recent origin - i.e. after 1832, since it concerns Napoleon II, and mentions his death - though its central character is clearly his father Bonaparte.

Napoleon Bonaparte was unquestionably a hero - or potential liberator - to sections of the English working classes. This may be attributed to the social and economic

conditions of the time; Combination Acts, Transportation, inhuman floggings, the Peterloo massacre ... everything in fact that Shelley had in his sights when he wrote *The Mask of Anarchy*.

The times were extremely oppressive: ideals of freedom and democracy for the lower orders were anathema to the ruling class; and aspirations of liberty and equality had filtered down to the lower orders from a then undemocratised emergent bourgeoisie. Revolutions never happen in vacuums, and the conditions which gave rise to the French and American Revolutions, and indeed the abortive Irish one, were at work all over Europe. Also, the success of the first two was fed into the consciousness of oppressed peoples everywhere.

It is likely that many Napoleonic songs are Irish in origin, yet we now know that this one was written by an English broadside printer's hack, George Brown, who also wrote *The Grand Conversation* ... and that Ireland has but 22 Roud entries compared with 108 for England. In this context it's worth remembering that the working poor of both Ireland and England suffered very similar oppressions, for much the same reasons, from much the same people ... and sometimes from **exactly** the same people!

If Napoleon provided the basis for many broadside ballads, none has survived so well as this supposed conversation between Marie Louise of Austria, Bonaparte's second wife and her son Napoleon II (1811-1832). Following Bonaparte's abdication in 1814, the Allies refused to recognise Napoleon II, who was left alone in Vienna. Like his father before him, the young Napoleon's dreams of power were dashed - in his case, by an early death from tuberculosis.

The melody, basically the same as the one Cyril Poacher used to sing, derives from the Irish slow air, *An Beinsin Luachra* (The Little Bunch of Rushes), which is the tune George Brown suggested should be used.

Other recordings on CD: Walter Pardon (MTCD305-6); Cyril Poacher (MTCD303); Bill Porter (MTCD309-0); Fred Jordan (VTD148CD); Phil Tanner (VT145CD); Noah Gillette (TSCD673); George Ling (VT154CD); Harry Cox (Snatch'd from Oblivion SFO 005).

2 - 4 King William (The King and the Keeper) (Roud 853)

I neither want your treasure,
Nor your forty-five shilling.
For I'll take you to William,
To William, our King.

Spoken: Well now, I'll tell you, that's about King William. He went to seem one of them poachers to his gamekeeper. He rubbed up as an old poacher now, and he tested his gamekeeper. So he was about to bribe him, he was going to bribe his gamekeeper, this king was. Well he didn't know that was a king, he said to this here gentleman, he said "I neither want your treasures, nor your forty five shillings, I'll take you to William, to William our king" and that was the king all the time. And, oh, that was a lovely song; the old man used to sing that. How did that use to go?

Sung:
I neither want your treasure,
I neither want your treasure,
Nor your forty-five shilling.
I'll take you to William,
To William, our King.

Spoken: That's how that song used to go. I can recollect men singing that. Who is going to pick those old songs up?

This appears to be half a verse of *King William and the Keeper*, it first appeared on a long 1676 broadside. The King disguises himself as a poacher. He's caught by the keepers, who tell him no one may hunt this ground without leave of King William. He attempts to bribe the keepers, but they refuse (and beat him, in some versions). He reveals himself and praises their loyalty.

Following the return of William III from his Irish campaigns, London balladmongers would appear to have been fully employed in creating an acceptable popular image for this 'saturnine' monarch. Old tales and ballads were refurbished with William represented as a roistering updated Prince Hal, consorting with sailors, farmers, shepherds and foresters. Few such songs seem to have survived in tradition, and one wonders how many merged with the songs allegedly about James V of Scotland? Incidentally, there is little evidence that William III had any such 'popular' tastes.

Sam seems to enjoy it hugely, so it's a shame he couldn't remember more of it - because it's very rare in the oral tradition. Roud names only five other singers, and the only other sound recording is of Joe Jones (or Saunders) who sings a 3-verse fragment on MTCD320.

2 - 5 Happy and Delightful (Roud 660, Laws O30)

Why, was happy and delightful
On one mid-summer's morn,
When the green fields and meadows
They were buried with corn.
And the blackbird and thrushes
Sang on every green tree,
And the larks, they sang melodeous
At the dawn of the day.
Chorus: repeats penultimate line twice
followed by last two lines.

Said the sailor to his true love
"I'm bound far away.
I am bound to the East Indies,
Where the loud cannons roar.
I am bound to the East Indies,
Where the loud cannons roar.
And I'm going to leave my Nancy,
She's the girl I adore. Chorus.

Said the sailor, to his true love
"I can no longer stay.
For our tops'ls they are hoisted,
And our anchor is weighed.
Our big ship lays waiting
For the next flowing tide,
And if ever I return again,
I will make you my bride. Chorus.

Now a ring from her finger
She instantly drew,
Saying "Take this, dearest William,
And my heart will go, too."
And whilst I was embracing her,
Tears from her eyes fell
Saying "May I go along with you?"
"Oh no, my Love, farewell." Chorus

This song may be of fairly recent origin, since almost half of the known examples are sound recordings, and there are few broadside printings. On the other hand, there's an older and widely printed broadside *Jimmy and his True Love*, which might well be an earlier version - or it may just be a song with universal appeal and a good chorus that people still enjoy singing. Of the 89 instances in Roud, almost all are from the south west of England or East Anglia - though Gavin Greig collected a dozen examples in Scotland in the early years of last century.

Other versions available on CD: George Townshend (MTCD304-5); Cyril Poacher (MTCD303); Tommy Morrissey (VTC9CD); Harry Cox (Rounder CD 1839); Arthur Smith (TSCD 676D); William Miller (Snatch'd from Oblivion SFO 005).

2 - 6 The Chesapeake and the Shannon (Roud 963, Laws J22)

Oh the Chesapeake laid in harbour,
A frigate stout and fine.
Five hundred and forty men on board,
And her guns were forty-nine.
So we freshened all our memory
A-leaving of the shore,
A-leaving of those Falmouth girls,
That grieved our hearts full sore.

Spoken: That's all I can sing of that ...

Steve Gardham writes: I think there are three different types of this ballad, and this one is quite rare in British oral tradition, although we have one on MTCD311-2 sung by Jack Goodban, which appears to be the only other recording. There's also a version in the Alfred Williams Collection and Lawson prints it. Sam's second verse seems to have no connection with his first. There follows a complete version of the ballad from a handwritten copy in the Green/Larner family records.

*'Tis of the Shannon frigate,
In the fine month of May,
She lay watching for the American,
Off Boston Lights she lay.
The Chesapeake lay in harbour,
A frigate stout and fine,
Four hundred and fifty men on board
And her guns were forty nine.*

*Bold Captain Brooke commanded us,
A channel sea we ride,
A challenge sent to the American
To bring her out to fight.
Our captain said, "My heroes,
'Tis not for enmity,
But tis to prove to all the world
That we rule o'er the sea."*

*The challenge was accepted,
The American came down,
And not a finer frigate boys
Belonged to our British crown.
We brought her into action
On a true and British plan,
We fired a shot within hail of her
And then the fight began.*

*'Twas broadside to broadside,
Our cannons they did roar,
Like thunder resounded,
Re-echoed from the shore.
This dreadful fight it lasted
Three quarters of an hour,*

*Then our enemy's ship drove right alongside
And her yards were locked in ours.*

*Our captain stepped to the side
To see how we did lie,
Then he beheld our enemy's men
All from their guns did fly.
"All hands for boarding now" he cried,
"The victory is sure.
Take courage now is time my lads
And the prize we will secure."*

*Like lions then we rushed on board,
Fighting man to man,
Although they outnumbered us
They could not us withstand.
They fought with desperation,
Disorder and dismay,
And in about ten minutes time
We forced them to give way.*

*Their captain and lieutenant
And seventy of their crew
Were killed in that sharp action
And hundreds wounded too.
Their captain was taken to Halifax
And he was buried there,
And the remainder of his crew,
His chief mourners there.*

*Now come all true British hearts
And never be afraid,
But roll a keg of grog onboard
And drink success to trade.
And likewise to bold Captain Brooks
And all his jovial crew,
Who beat the bold American
And brought their courage low.*

The Capture of USS *Chesapeake*, or the Battle of Boston Harbour, was fought on 1 June 1813, between the frigates HMS *Shannon* and USS *Chesapeake*, as part of the War of 1812 between the United States and the United Kingdom. The *Chesapeake* was captured in a brief but intense action in which over 80 men were killed. This was the only frigate action of the war in which there was no preponderance of force on either side.

Despite there being 46 Roud entries, almost all are from printed sources - and none appear to be from the USA! Checking out the other versions of the story that Steve mentions only adds another 30 entries to the mix - and few of them are American, either.

2 - 7 **Coil Away the Trawl-Warp** (The Smacksman) (Roud 1788)

Coil away the trawl-warp, boys,
Let's heave on the trawl.
When we get our fish onboard
We'll have another haul.
Straightway to the capstan
And merrily heave around
And that's the cry in the middle of the night
"Haul the trawl, boys, haul."

Once I was a schoolboy;
I stayed at home with ease,
Now I am a smacksman
And I plough the raging seas,
I thought I'd like seafaring life
But very soon I found,
It was not all plain sailing, boys,
When out on the fishing ground.

Chorus:
Coil away the trawl-warp, boys ...

Now when we get our fish onboard
We have them all to gut;
We put them in baskets
And down the ice-locker put.
We ice them all right safely
And then wash them all quite well,
Keep them from all chafe, my boys,
Like an oyster in his shell.

Chorus:
Coil away the trawl-warp, boys ...

A song known almost exclusively in the south-eastern coastal areas of England, with one version from Yorkshire. Despite a respectable 25 Roud entries, these only account for 13 named singers of the song, and of the 17 sound recordings, only those by Johnny Doughty (VTC5CD); Dinks Cooper (VT154CD); Joe Spicer (TSCD673) and Tom Brown (Saydisc CD-SDL 405) appear to be available on CD.

2 - 8 **The Jolly Young Coachman** (Roud 862)

I once was a jolly young coachman,
But my wages I tried to advance;
I once took a trip up to London
And then I went over to France.
I've learned all sorts of driving,
I'll drive them in the fashion so gay.
If there's any young lady want riding,
I'll ride her the new-fashioned way.

The first one I met was a young lady;
She was dressed in her finest, so gay.
She had a nice little white pony,
And like(wise?) a neat carriage.
"Three guineas a week I will pay you,
And I'll dress you the finest, so gay.
But remember, young man, if I hire you,
You must ride me the new-fashioned way."
Righ fal-the-ral-ural-I-ady
Righ fal-the-ral-ural-I-day
"Remember, young man, if I hire you,
You must ride me the new-fashioned way."

She took me down in her cellar
And she gave me the liquor so quick
We hadn't been long in the cellar,
When she wanted to look at my whip.
She took it, she mauled it all over,
And laying it down with a smile,
She said "To look at your whip, Sir,
I think you can drive me a while."

Righ fal-the-ral-ural-I-ady
Righ fal-the-ral-ural-I-day
"I think to look at your whip, Sir,
I think you can drive me a while."

Three times I entered her coach-box,
And the wheel went spinning around,
One sudden crack of the whip, Sir,
She lost the main stay of her gay (gown).
Righ fal-the-ral-ural-I-ady
Righ fal-the-ral-ural-I-day
One sudden crack of the whip, Sir,
She lost the main stay of her gay

Spoken: Now that ... I knew that when I was a little boy, when I first went to sea, they would sing that in sail

There are several other rude 'coachman' songs in the canon - and this is no better and no worse. I don't see why it should particularly appeal to Gypsies, but the only named singers amongst Roud's 13 entries are Tom Willett, Jnr (Forest Tracks FT2CD KS1), Chris Willett and Jasper Smith.

2 - 9 **The Loss of the Ramillies** (Roud 523, Laws K1)

It was all on a certain day,
When the Ramillie, for her anchor weighed.
'Twas on the middle of the night
that the gale came on,
And she broke from her moorings, away she run.

Spoken: She broke from her moorings, you see, they had to set the sails

Sung:..... sailed away
With her close-reefed topsails so neatly spread,
Thinking we should weather the Old Ram Head.

Overboard, overboard, some they were tossed,
Some were drowned and some got lost.
There were some in one place, some in another
And the watch down below, were all smothered.

Spoken: That's where she tried to come round that Head. Beaten round. She broke the anchors. She were brought up, you see, in the Sound, she were brought up in there and she had to come out on it, you see. Because she broke the anchors. No that was offshore, you see, and they couldn't ...

Sung:
With her close-reefed topsails so neatly spread,
Thinking we could weather the Old Ram

Spoken: They went ashore on on Ram Head, y'see

The battle of Ramillies was one of Marlborough's great victories (1706), and several ships were named after it, from this ship to an early twentieth century dreadnought. This *Ramillies* had a peculiar history; it actually predates the battle bearing its name! In 1664, the *Royal Katherine* was built, an 84-gun ship. It was 'rebuilt' in 1702 and was renamed after the battle of Ramillies. (She would be rebuilt again in 1749.) Half a century after the rebuilding and renaming, having been part of the fleet which failed to save Mallorca, the *Ramillies* was wrecked off Bolt Head on her

way to Plymouth. There are thought to have been 725 men aboard at the time, of whom only 26 survived.

In the hands of Jumbo Brightwell this is a wonderful song, with a splendid tune. Sam has the tune - but, sadly, not too many of the words.

Other recordings available on CD: Walter Pardon (TSCD514); Jumbo Brightwell (TSCD662); Elijah Bell (Snatch'd from Oblivion SFO 005).

2 -10 She Said She Was a Virgin (Roud 4792)

She said she was a virgin,
Only nineteen years old.
A virgin, yes a virgin,
Only nineteen years old.

Spoken: When they went to bed
She unscrewed her left leg,
And on the carpet it rolled.
Hysterical laughter.

Spoken: He went to bed with her, that got married to him, and she had wooden leg when she ... *dissolves into more laughter.*

Another of those 'spare parts' songs - like the parodies of *After the Ball* and *Among my Souvenirs* - that seemed to delight the oral tradition; Roud has 9 sound recordings out of some 30 sightings, though none seem to be available on CD. The Gordon Woods version from Suffolk has 5 verses.

2 - 11 All Fours (Roud 232)

As I walk'd out on one midsummer's morning
It happened to be on a sunshiney day
'Twas there I espied a pretty fair damsel
As she was got walking all on the highway.
'Twas there I espied a pretty fair damsel
As she was got walking all on the highway.

I stepp-ed up to her and bid her good morning
Saying "Where are you going
so early this morn?"
She said "Kind Sir, I'm going to Lisburne,
In that little town wherein I was born."

Said I "Pretty fair maid, and may I go with you,
And may I accept of your sweet company?"
She said "Kind Sir, you are heartily welcome
You're heartily welcome to walk with me."

Now we had not been walking
scarcely half an hour
Before acquainted, acquainted came we.
She said "Kind Sir, come sit you down by me
And there I will play you a sweet civil game."
She said "Kind Sir, come sit down beside me
And there I will play you a sweet civil game."

Spoken: And he said to her ...

Said I "Pretty fair maid I'm not given to gaming,
But still for all that I am willing to learn.
Now the game that we play
it shall be as all fours
And that I can beat you three to your one."
The game that we play shall be as all fours
And that I can beat you three to your one."

Now she cut the cards,
it was my turn to deal 'em,
I dealt her all trumps, I alone had poor jack.
And she had the ace,
and the deuce for to follow,
Which are the very best cards in the pack.
And she had the ace,
and the deuce for to follow,
Which are the very best cards in the pack.
Now she led off her ace,
and she stole poor jack from me
Which made her both high, low,
jack and the game.
She said "Kind Sir, I've freely beat you,
Unless you can play the game over again
She said "Kind Sir, I've freely beat you,
Unless you can play the game over again

Now I put on my hat and
I bid her 'good morning'
Although she was high, low,
jack and the game.
She said "Kind Sir, call this way tomorrow
And we'll play the game over and over again."

Spoken: She like it, di'n't she? En't that put together lovely?
EM: That's a lovely song.

SL: How they put them together years ago!

On the surface we are dealing with card play, and Hoyle's *Rules of Games* (1955) indeed lists *All Fours*. In her edition of *Cecil Sharp's Collection of English Folk Songs* (1974), Maud Karpeles places in the section devoted to sports and pastimes *The Game of Cards*, a version of the song Hoyle noted in 1908. Yet this is a transparently erotic piece which had to wait until 1960 to appear in respectable print, in James Reeves's anthology of English traditional verse, *The Everlasting Circle*. That it was well known a century earlier is attested by the broadside issued by Henry Disley of London, a political adaptation or parody dealing with Garibaldi's struggle for Italian unity under the title of *The Game of All Fours*. At much the same time, the catalogue of the Manchester ballad printer, T Pearson, included the original *Game of All Fours*, twinned with *The Steam Loom Weaver*.

A fairly widely collected song, found only in the southern half of England, with 58 Roud entries, the most northerly being from Staffordshire and Norfolk. It seems to be very popular amongst Travellers and George Dunn, Charlie Wills and Sam Lerner are about the only Gorgios amongst the singers named. Vic Legg informs us that *All Fours* is still played in a number of pubs in the china-clay areas near St Austell in Cornwall; indeed, they have a League - for the card game, that is.

Other recordings on CD: Phoebe Smith (MTCD356-7); Tom Willett (MTCD361-2); Hiram Brazil (MTCD345-7); Caroline Hughes (MTCD365-6); George Dunn (MTCD317-8); Sarah Porter (MTCD309-10); Levi Smith (TSCD 661).

2 - 12 The Wonderful Crocodile (Roud 886)

Wrecked I was all on Peru
Not many of us on the shore.
And I was off to take a trip,
The wonders to explore.

Chorus:
Whack-fol-lure-a-lure-a-lido,
Whack-fol-lure-al-day.
Whack-fol-lure-a-lido,
Whack-fol-lure-al-day.

I had to climb a very large tree,
Before I could gain my victim,
So I jumped right down the crocodile's throat
And that's the way I licked him.

Chorus:

Although this nonsense song has only 8 English entries taken from the oral tradition amongst Roud's total of 88, it does boast 66 book and broadside publications, the earliest being from 1819.

2 - 13 Donnelly and Cooper (Roud 2147)

Come all you true bred Irishmen
Wherever you may be
I pray you pay attention
And listen unto me
It is as true a story
That ever you did hear
Of Donnelly and Cooper
Who fought upon Kildare.

'Twas on the third of June, my boys,
The challenge was sent o'er
The challenge was accepted
These two nobles did prepare
To meet bold Captain Curry
On the Curragh of Kildare
The Englishmen bet ten to one
That day against poor Dan.
Such odds as these could ne'er dismay
The blood of an Irishman.

Now these two champions they stripped off,
Into the ring they went.
They were fully determined
Each other's blood to spill
From six to nine they parried the time
'Til Cooper knocked him down.
The Englishmen they gave three cheers
Crying "The battle is all in vain."

Long life to bold Miss Kelly,
She's recorded on the plain,
She boldly stepped into the ring
Saying "Dan, my boy, what do you mean?"
Saying "Dan, my boy, what do you mean,
My Irish son?" said she.
"My whole estate this day I've bet
On you, brave Donnelly."

Then Donnelly rose up again
And met him with great might.
To stagnate those nobles,

They continued in their fight
They ... continued
'Til exertion seemed so frail
He then received a temple blow
Which hurled him o'er the reins.

Long life to old Miss - (spoken) No!

Here's a song with 74 Roud entries that I'd never heard of - unsurprising, I suppose, since it's only been collected once in England; by Mike Yates, from Jasper Smith - and none of the 6 sound recordings have ever been published. It's a mid-19th century piece, and the great majority of instances relate to broadside publications.

2 - 14 Cruising Round Yarmouth (Roud 2432)

As I was got walking one morning in May,
I met a fair damsel these words she did say:
"I'm a fast going clipper, and that you can see,
I'm ready for cuttering to my own country's free.

Chorus:
Singing fal the ral laddy, right fal the ral day,
Fal the ral laddy right fal the ral day.

Which country she came from
I can't tell you which,
But by her appearance I thought she was Dutch;
Her flags flew in colours,
her mastheads were low,
She was round at the quarters
and bluff at the bow.

Chorus
Now I gave her my hawser, I took her in tow,
Yard arms to yard arms together we'd go.
She lowered her tops'l, t'gans'ls and all,
Her lilywhite hand on my (reef-tackle) fall.
Chorus

And now my fair women, it's time to give o'er,
For in her snug parlour she soon had me moored;
She opened her hatches with plenty of room
Right into her cabin I shoved my jib-boom

Chorus

Spoken: EM: Do you know any more?
SL: Yeah, shall I sing it?

"And now my fair women it's time to give o'er,
Betwixt wind and water
you've land me on shore.
My shotbag is empty, my powders are all spent,
And my old ... is choked at the vent."
(*I can't fire a shot for it's choked at the vent*)"

Chorus

*Here's luck to the girl with the black curly locks,
Here's luck to the girl who run Jack on the rocks;
Here's luck to the doctor who eased all his pain;
He's squared his mainyards, he's a-cruisin' again.*

Spoken: I've sung that in front of women. They used to craze me, the women, to sing that.

This song seems to be the almost exclusive property of Harry Cox, whose first line "While cruising round Yarmouth one day for a spree" has given the song its title. Roud has only 15 entries, all from England except for a couple of Doerflinger collections in the USA. Cox's song is the only one available on CD - Saydisc CD-SDL 405.

2 - 15 Barbry Allen (Roud 54, Child 84)

In Reading town *where* I was born
A fair maid there was dwelling
I picked her out to be my wife
And her name was Barbry Allen
Spoken: Ha' ye heard that?
I picked her out to be my wife
And her name was Barbry Allen.

"Twas in the pleasant month of May
When green leaves they were springing
A young man on his death-bed lay
For the sake of Barbry Allen.
He sent for her a servant maid
To the place that she was dwelling
"I pray thee come and see my master
If your name be Barbry Allen."

So slowly, slowly she walked on,

So slowly she got to him
And when she got to his bedside
She said "Young man, you're dying."

"I can see death pale you in your face
Your joys are all flown from you
And I can't save you from the grave
So fare you well, dear Johnny."

*Now as she walked through the fields next day
She heard the church bells ringing
And as they rang they seemed to say
"Hard-hearted Barbry Allen."*

Now as she walked through the town next day
She met a corpse a-coming
"You little hearts, come set him down,
That I may gaze upon him."

Now the more she looked
the more she laughed
'Til the people cried in sorrow,
The more she looked the more she laughed
'Til her joys were turned to sorrow.

Now this young man died on one night
And she died on the morrow
And on his grave planted a red rose bush
And on her a briar.

They grew 'til they grew to the steeple top
'Til they couldn't grow any higher
And there they tied a true love's knot
The red rose and the briar.

Spoken: How's that?
EM: Oh, beautiful song. I've not heard that version before, Sam.
SL: Didn't you? That's how we sing it. I knew that when I was a young lad.
EM: Where did you learn that?
SL: Oh, I don't know - people singing on it. Old folks, oh yes. I was a twelve year old at sea in a boat; I learnt them old songs. Used to hear the men; used to see it all the time, y'see. Well, little boys, you pick up; I used to pick it up like lightning, y'know. And that got into your mind and that never did get out of your mind, n'more. Then after you got a little older and comin' to use the pub, then you could get to sing the old songs. And some of the other old fishermen'd come along and they'd give you one and you'd pick them up, and that's how we got our songs goin', y'see. And that's how that was done that time of day.

It's not surprising that MacColl should say "I've not heard that version before, Sam", since this is a rare version I've only ever heard once before - from Jim Wilson of Sussex, on MTCD309-0. It has what I feel is the better version of the story, and the unusual 'you little hearts' line.

It is the most widely-known ballad I've yet encountered in Steve Roud's *Song Index*, with an astonishing 1,218 instances (including 318 sound recordings) listed there. Needless to say, it's found everywhere English is spoken - though Australia boasts only one version in the Index - and, very unusually, there's even one from Wales ... although it comes from Phil Tanner in that 'little England', the Gower Peninsula.

Lots of great versions can be found on CD these days, including: Caroline Hughes (MTCD365-6); Cecilia Costello (MTCD363-4); Sarah Makem (MTCD353-5); Bob Hart (MTCD301-2); Wiggy Smith (MTCD307); Bill Smith (MTCD351); Jim Wilson (MTCD309-0); Patsy Flynn (MTCD329-0); Stanley Hicks (MTCD501-2); both Debbie & Pennie Davies and Danny Brazil (MTCD345-7); Andy Cash (MTCD325-6); Phoebe Smith (VT136CD); Jane Turriff (Springthyme SPRCD1038) and a compilation of a verse or two each from Fred Jordan, Jessie Murray, Charlie Wills, May Bennell, Thomas Moran and Phil Tanner on *Classic Ballads II* (Rounder CD1775). Joe Heaney also sings it brilliantly on the MT/Topic/CIC double CD *The Road from Connemara* (TSCD518D).

2 - 16 Barney and Kitty (Roud 992, Laws O21)

'Twas a cold winter's night
And the tempest was snarling
The snow-covered cabin
And kitchen and sty,
When young Barney flew over
The hills to his darling,
And tapped at the window
Where his Kitty did lie.

"Ara, cushla," says he
"Are you sleeping or awaking?
'Tis a cold bitter night
And my coat it is thin.
For the snow is a-brewing
The frost it is a-baking
Oh Kitty mavourneen
Won't you let me in?"
"Ara, Barney," says Kate
As she spoke through the window

*"How could you be taking us
Out of our bed?
For to come at this time
It's a sin and a shame, too,
Is it whiskey, not love,
Has come into your head?"*

Now Barney you ...
Considering the time
And there's no-one within.
Oh what have a poor girl
But her name to defend her?
No Barney avourneen
I won't let you in."
No Barney avourneen,
Avourneen, avourneen,
No Barney avourneen,
I won't let you in."

"Now I'll go to my home
Though the winter winds may face me
I will whistle them off
For I'm happy within
For the words of my Kitty
They will comfort and bless me!
No, Barney avourneen,
I won't let you in.

Spoken: That's one of my mother's songs, that is. Now what do you think of that? She used to sing that when we were little children.

Better known as *When Barney Flew Over the Hills (to his Darling)* or *Barnie and Katie*, this night-visiting song seems to have been most popular in the Maritime region of eastern USA and Canada. It was printed by Glasgow Poet's Box in 1873 as 'Barney Avourneen', but Roud has no Scottish examples amongst the 22 entries.

Three English instances, by Mrs Stanley (Somerset, 1908), Henry Day (Hants, 1906) and Thomas Stark (Lincs, 1906), appear in Roud, and that sung by Annie Jane Kelly (MTCD353-5) is the only Irish entry. Sam's version has an almost identical text to Annie Jane's - whence comes the italicised third verse - but a completely different tune.

2 - 17 Green Grow the Laurels (Roud 279)

.....
He took down a probe(?) and he told her to go,

And not to deceive him,
of course, you must know.

Green grow the laurels, so does the rose
Sorry was I when I parted with you.
And if ever I return again, my joys I'll renew,
I'll change your green laurels
for the violets so blue.

The laurel has always occupied an important place in folklore: as a symbol of peace or victory; as a cure for various ailments, including rheumatism, and even to induce poetic inspiration. In some parts of the world it was used to bring about forgetfulness and the Pennsylvania Indians were said to have used it to commit suicide. In Europe, it was best known as a love charm, to cement a relationship or, when burned, to bring back an errant lover. In England, it was believed that if a pair of lovers pluck a laurel twig and break it in half, each keeping a piece, they will remain lovers. The laurel verse often turns up in traditional songs as a 'floater' verse, indicating unrequited or lost love.

Roud has 173 entries, about one third of which are sound recordings. There are lots of book publications but few broadsides.

Other versions available on CD: Caroline Hughes (MTCD365-6); Danny Brazil (MTCD345-7); Mary Delaney (MTCD325-6); Daisy Chapman (MTCD308); Louie Fuller (TSCD665); Jeff Wesley (VTC6CD).

2 - 18 The London Steamer (Roud 17760)

Oh, the London steamer sailed away,
When all on board and each heart was gay,
When all on board and each heart was gay,
And the London steamer sailed away.

All right we were through the Channel Downs,
We arrivèd safely at Plymouth Sound;
And then we not far did go, when the
Tempest howled and the wind did blow.

'Twas in the Bay of Biscay, the sea run high,
Danger and death was approaching nigh;
None could their sufferings
none could prevail (reveal)
What these poor souls on board did feel.

Captain Martin around did look,

With a terrible crash our t'gallant mast broke;
We worked like Britons with all our might,
To save that vessel on that dreadful night.
Three-hundred-and-seventy dear souls afloat,
In the height of the gale, nineteen took a boat;
Out of the whole but nineteen were saved,
Three-hundred-and-fifty met a watery grave.

Spoken: That's nice, in't it? Now that's a true song. Now, that's as true, that song. Now, there was an old gentleman lived here, Mr Shields. Abel Shields. He was one of the survivors out of that nineteen. Years ago; Mr Shields he was called. Abel Shields. He had a brother, nephew lived here. He's dead, the old gentleman. We've got some of the; one or two of the grandchildren here now in the village.

Roud has only three instances of this song - being the two 1958 sound recordings of Sam Lerner by Philip Donnellan and MacColl/Seeger, and the subsequent publication in their book, *The Singing Island* - so it would appear to be unique to Sam.

2 - 19 The Bold Young Fisherman (Roud 291, Laws O24)

"Good morning to you fisherman
How came you fishing here?"
*"I came to court you my fair maid
All on the waters clear.
All on the waters clear
I came to court you my fair maid
All on the waters clear."*

Down on her bended knees she fell,
And loud for mercy cried
"For calling you a fisherman
Come rowing by the tide."

Spoken: That's an old one.

*Come rowing by the tide
"For calling you a fisherman
Come rowing by the tide."*

Now she took him to her father's hall
And there they'd married be
And she would have that nice young man
To row her on the sea
To row her on the sea
And she would have that nice young man
To row her on the sea.

A surprisingly popular song with 158 Roud entries, almost all of which come from the southern half of England. Although there are 23 sound recordings, only those by the Copper family (TSCD673T), Harry Cox (TSCD512D and 651), Walter Pardon (TSCD514) and Alice Webb (MTCD345-7) are available on CD.

2 - 20 Windy Old Weather (Haisboro Light Song) (Roud 472)

Then up jumped the herring,
he's the king of the sea
He said to the Skipper "Look under your lee."

Chorus:
Windy old weather, boys,
squally old weather, boys,
When the wind blow, we'll all go together.

Then up get the garnet, with pricks on his back,
He jumped out on the foredeck
to hook on the jib tack, singing.

Chorus

Then up get the cod fish,
with his great old head,
He said to the deckie,
"Get a cast of lead," singing.

Chorus

Then up get the haddock, so sharp and so shy,
He said to the deckie,
"Hook on the lee guy."

Chorus

Then up get the roker, he's sharp and so rough,
He said to the cook, "You are burning the duff,
See after it, you bugger, see after it, you bugger,
When the wind blow, we'll all go together."

Then up jumped the sprat,
he's the smallest of them all,
He said to the Skipper

"Haul, haul the main trawl."

Chorus

Laughs. That's what we used to sing; little boys used to sing that; we went to school. Course, we were all connected with the fishing, our fathers and our forefathers. That was bred in us to be fishermen. Course, we were brought up the hard way, we were. There's no mistake about it. We see more Sundays than Sunday dinners when I was a little boy. That we did. Well, for me and my brothers that was either sea or gaol and that for my sisters that was service or gaol. I started to go to sea in 1892 and the luggers I went in were *Young John*, *John Frederick*, *Gemini*, *Thalia*, *Snowdrop*, *Snowflake* and the *Breadwinner*. They're the ones; yes.

It seems that Sam told Philip Donnellan that this was called the Haisboro' Light Song, which has the first verse "As we were fishing off Haisboro' Light, hauling and trawling all through the night", but he never actually sang that verse ... though it was sung by Harry Cox and Bob Roberts. Mike Yates said that Sam Lamer called this Up Jumped the Herring, whilst American singers prefer the title The Boston Come All Ye. Early broadside printers, such as John Pitts, called it The Fish's Lamentation - A New Song, although later printers, including Armstrong of Liverpool and Morren of Edinburgh, called it The King of the Sea.

Whatever - it's been heard in southern England and East Anglia, plus a dozen or so examples in the USA and Canada. Roud's 67 entries are mainly from books and sound recordings, with very few broadside publications.

Other recordings on CD: Harry Cox (Rounder CD 1839); Johnny Doughty (VTC5CD); Bob Roberts (Saydisc CD-SDL 405); Tom Brown (TSCD662).

2 - 21 **The Haymakers' Courtship** (Roud 153)

It was in the merry month of May
In the springtime of the year
It was down by yonder meadows
There runs a river clear
Look at those little fishes
See how they sport and play
Make many a lad and many a lass
Go there for to make hay.

Now in comes the jolly scythesman
The hay for to mow down
With his good old leather'n bottle
And the beer that is the brown.
There's many a stout labouring man
Go there their skills to try
For they cut, they mow, they lace, they glow,
And the grass cuts very dry.

In come the jolly scythesman
With a pitchfork and a rake
And likewise black-eyed Susan
The hay all for to make.
There's a long jogjog, and sweet jog
And the nightingale did sing
From the morning 'til the evening
We went a-haymaking.
Now the day being almost over
And night was coming on
We laid among the cocks of hay
'Til rising of the sun
And the larks did sing most gloriously
And each harmless bird did sing
Then each lad he took his lassie
And they went a-haymaking.

Spoken: That's a little ditty.

And so it is! A pretty-well exclusively English song, with 49 Roud entries from all along the south coast - except for Sam in Norfolk. Levi Smith (TSCD661) and the Copper family (TSCD 534) seem to be the only singers with a CD representation.

2 - 22 **The Lofty Tall Ship** (Henry Martin) (Roud 104, Child 167 / 250)

As we were got sailing five cold frosty nights,
Five cold frosty nights and four days,
It was there we espied a lofty tall ship,
She came bearing down on us brave boys.

"Where are you a-going, you lofty tall ship?
How dare you to venture so nigh?
For I have turned robbing all on the salt sea,
To maintain my two brothers and I.

Now come heave up your courses
and let go of your mainsheets,
And let her come under your lee;
And I will take from you your rich
merchants', good merchants' goods,
And I'll point your bow guns to the sea.

I shall not heave up my courses

nor let go of my mainsheets,
Nor I let her come under my lee;
Nor you shan't take from me my rich
merchants', good merchants' goods,
Nor you'll point my bow guns to the sea.

Now broadside to broadside
these two vessels did lay,
They were fighting four hours or more;
'Til at length Hen-ery Martin
gave her a broadside
And she sank and she never rose more.

Sad news I've to tell you, sad news I've to tell,
Bad news I'm a-going to tell,
Of a lofty tall ship lost on the salt sea
And the most of her mariners drowned.

The first known printed version of this ballad dates from the early 17th century and consisted of 82 verses describing the exploits of Sir Andrew Barton and his two brothers, Robert and John. Barton was a privateer who carried a 'letter of marque' issued by James IV, king of Scotland, giving him the right to arrest and seize Portuguese ships. He is alleged, however, to have exceeded his licence, engaging more generally in piracy. On 2 August 1511, he was killed, and his ship *The Lion* captured, after a fierce battle with Sir Edward Howard and his brother Thomas Howard, 3rd Duke of Norfolk, who were acting on the authority of the English king Henry VIII. Over the years, through oral tradition, the song had been significantly shortened and the name of the protagonist changed from Andrew Barton to Henry Martin.

Roud has 247 entries for this ballad - mostly from England (107) and the USA (67). Since almost all versions place the three brothers in Scotland, it's astonishing to find only two Roud entries from that country. It has turned up in widely separated locations in the USA, and was most popular in the Maritime states of North America.

Other versions available on CD: Danny Brazil (MTCD345-7); Phil Tanner (TSCD652 & VT145CD); Bob Green (NLCD6).

2 - 23 **Just as the Tide was Flowing** (Roud 1105)

.... sailor ? one day,
Down by the rolling river,
There he espied a pretty fair maid,
He was that loving lover
Her eyes were bright, and her hair was brown
And her hair in ringlets a-hanging down
Her brow was fair without a frown
Just as the tide was flowing.

I bowed and made my obeise to her,
"Where out(?) you are so early?"
"Oh, a jolly sailor I love so well,
Will you walk with me, dearly?"
We carelessly along did stray,
A-viewing of the fishes gay,
Ah larks they sang without delay,
Just as the tide was flowing.

Now being weary, we both sat down,
Beneath the trees with the branches round,
And what was done will never be found,
Just as the tide was flowing.

Now she gave me twenty pounds in store,
Saying "Meet me when you want some more,
For a jolly sailor I adore,
Just as the tide was flowing."

Now off to the public house he go,
With the little ladies and the brandy
so,
Show me the man that won't do so,
Just as the tide was flowing ... *Laughs*.

were flowing

A song published on a broadside before 1839, and known only in southern England (except for 3 Canadian examples) according to Roud, who lists 73 instances, including 21 named singers. I like Sam's knowing "Show me the man that won't do so," in the final verse - not a line I've heard before.

Other recordings available on CD: Harry Cox (TSCD662) and Jim & Mrs Sampson (Helions Bumpstead NLCD 6).

2 - 24 **The Dogger Bank** (Roud 18836)

Sailing over the Dogger Bank,
Wasn't it a treat?
The wind a-blowing 'bout east nor' east,
So we had to give her sheet;
You ought to see us rally,
The wind a-blowing free
A passage from the Dogger Bank
To great Grimsby.

Chorus:

So watch her, twig her,
The proper ju-ber-jus,
Give her sheet, let her rip,
We're the boys to put her through,
You ought to see us rally,
The wind a-blowing free,
A passage from the Dogger Bank
To great Grimsby.

Now our captain he's a shangaroosh,
He likes a drop of good ale,
Our mate he is a road stone inspector,
He been seen in many a jail;
Our third hand he's a bushranger,
He come on deck and leave(?) the mail
(*He come from the African Isle;*)
And you give a look at our old cook,
He is so hoppity wild.

Chorus

Now we are the boys to make a noise
When we come home from sea,
We get right drunk, we roll on the floor
And cause a jubilee;
We get right drunk and full of beer,
We roll all over the floor,
And when our rent it is all spent,
We'll go to sea for more.

Alternative chorus:

So watch her and twig her,
Then pipe her as she goes,
High heels, painted toes,
Jinny is all the go;
She is one of the flash girls,
Can't she cut a shine?
She can do the double shuffle
On the Knickerbocker Line.

Spoken: How's that one? That's an old song y'know. When I was a little boy we used to sing the chorus, picked it up as you went along, you picked them up, and that's how you get 'em.

Given the frequency in which the port of Grimsby pops up in the accounts of East Anglian fishermen's lives, it's not surprising that this fine little song's 8 Roud entries come predominantly from these two areas. It has also been found in Sussex, Lincolnshire and Yorkshire - and there is one Devonport entry.

2 - 25 **Over There in Ireland** (Roud 24873)

Oh I have just left old Australia,
Not many miles away,
I could not make my fortune,
So I would no longer stay.
And I travelled my passage back again
No longer for to roam,
For I come back at the devil of a crack,
To me own dear native home.

Chorus:

Over (t)here in Ireland,
Down by Cashel(?), o'er the sea
Where the boys and girls go dancing
On the village green.
Where the old whiskey jug go round,
Pipes they begin to play,
When all my heart is firmly bound
To Old Ireland, far away.

Now, oh for a few more years I've been away
I've always thought of home,
I said, if I made my fortune
I would no longer roam.
For what's the use of your money
When friends you have to part,
There's nothing half so dear to me
As a good old Irish heart.

Chorus

Now you may talk about your foreign lands,
And riches in galore,
There's nothing half so dear to me
As good old Erin's shore.
Where the boys and the girls are frisky
That is the place for me,
You can go to Australia,
But I would rather be ...

Chorus.

Spoken: How's that one?

This is a new entry in the Roud *Index* - so I don't know anything about it, except that the chorus has a fine and interesting tune.

2 - 26 **The Dark-Eyed Sailor** (Roud 265, Laws N35)

'Twas of a comely young maiden, fair,
She was walking out for to view the air.
Oh, she met her sailor, all on his way,
So she paid attention, so she paid attention,
To hear what he did say.

Said William "Lady, why roam alone?
For the nights are coming and the days are done.
Love turn aside, and soon grow cold,
Like a wintry morning,
Like a wintry morning,
All the earth is wrapped in snow."

"Now 'tis three long years since he left the land
He took a gold ring from off my hand.
And with loving words he gave to me,
Whilst he - then she said - whilst - cos she thought he was drowned
Whilst the other lay rolling,
Whilst the other lay rolling,
At the bottom of the sea."

Said William "Lady, drive him from your mind,
Some other man you will find in
Some other man you ... eh, she said
She drew a dagger and then replied,
"For me dark-eyed sailor,
"For me dark-eyed sailor,
I'd either live or die.

Now with this ring did young William show,
She seemed distracted with all her woe.
"Welcome, dear William, to lands of gold,
For 'tis my dark-eyed sailor,
'Tis my dark-eyed sailor,
So manly, true and bold.
Now, down in ... down in the

Spoken: I ought to have it - I used to sing it and on ...

A well-known and well-loved song right across the Anglophone world, with 347 Roud entries, ranging from an 1820s' English printing to a 1989 sound recording in Ireland.

It's one of a number of modern ballads on the theme of *Hind Horn*, with parted lovers, a broken token, the man's return in disguise, the woman's fidelity tested, ending in a gentle Victorian triumph. Catnach published the song on a broadside c.1830 and every example that has since turned up relates to that printed set. The tune is slightly older - Vaughan Williams includes it in one of his *Folk Song Suites* - and its sophisticated 'doubling' of the first half of the final phrase shows the influence of the stage, the kind of thing that the folk might adopt, but wouldn't invent

Also available on CD by: Bob Hart (MTCD301-2); Percy Webb (MTCD356-7); Caroline Hughes (MTCD365-6); Fred Jordan (TSCD652); Walter Pardon (TSCD514); Phil Tanner (VT145CD); Jack Clark (VT140CD); Sydney Scott (Green-trax CDTRAX 9021).

2 - 27 **Butter and Cheese and All** (Roud 510)

Oh now you've called on me to sing,
I'll see what I can do,
And when that I have finished it,
I'll call upon one of you,
And now you've called on me to sing,
I'll see what I can do,
And when that I have finished it,
I'll call upon one of you,
I'll call upon one of you.

Now the first time I went a-courting,
I'll tell you the reason why,
It was to a jolly old cook
Who my wants she did supply,
She fed me off the best roast beef
And plenty of mince pies,
And when that I was hungry,
She would my wants supply,
She would my wants supply

One night I went to see her,
She invited me to tea,
She said: "The missus and master's out,
We'll have a jolly spree."
I went into the parlour,
My own true love to please,
And into one pocket she rammed some butter
And into the other some cheese

And into the other some cheese.

Now after supper was over
And I could eat no more,
Oh Lord! at my surprise
When a rap came at the door;
And then for a hiding place, my boys,
For that I did not know,
Then up the chimney I did go
As black as any old crow,
As black as any old crow.

Now the fire it being rather warm,
It began to scorch my knees,
And then to melt my butter,
Likewise to toast my cheese;
For every drop dropped in the fire,
A mighty blaze was there,
The master swore in his old heart,
The devil himself was there,
The devil himself was there.

Now up the top the master went
To drive Old Harry out,
He began to pour cold water down
Which put me to a rout;
And down the chimney I did come
And into the streets did crawl,
I was obliged to ramble as fast as I could
With my butter and cheese and all,
With my butter and cheese and all.

Now some they said it was Old Nick,
For him you very well know,
And some they said 'twas the devil himself,
For I was as black as a crow;
The dogs did bark, the children screamed,
Out flew the old women and all,
Spoken: You know what they are, don't ya?
And then they began to blubber it out:
"He've got butter and cheese and all!
He've got butter and cheese and all!"

A song sung almost exclusively in England, with but a handful from North America amongst Roud's 61 entries. Despite 11 sound recordings in Roud, the only one available on CD is that by Leslie Johnson on TSCD673T

2 - 28 **Napoleon's Dream** (Roud 1538)

One night, sad and languid, I went to my bed,
I'd scarcely declined on my pillow.
When a vision, surprising, came into my head,
I thought I was crossing the billow.
I dremt, as my vessel dashed over the deep,
I beheld a huge rock standing scraggy and steep,
That rock where the widows
were once known to weep;
O'er the grave of that once famed Napoleon.

Now I dremt, as my vessel drew near to the land,
I beheld, clad in green, a bold figure,
With a trumpet of fame he held in his hand,
On his brow there was valour and vigour.
"A stranger" cried he, "do'st thou venture to me,
To the land of thy sires - Old England -
where they boast they are free?"
Now, a story, a true story I'll tell unto thee,
Concerning that once famed Napoleon."

"Now remember the years we're immortally told
I crossed the good Alps, famed in story.
For the legions of France
were the sons of my pride,
I led them to honour and glory.
'Twas on the plains of Marengo,
where I tyranny uphurled,
My banner, the eagle, was ever unfurled;
To the standard of freedom all over the world,
'Tis a signal of fame!" cried Napoleon.

"Now, as a soldier, I've borne
both the heat and the cold,
I've marched to the trump and the cymbal.
By the dark deeds of tragedy I have been sold,
Though mortals before me did tremble.
Rulers and princes, their stations demean,
Like scorpions they spat out
their venomous spleen
But as liberty all over the world shall be seen."
As I awoke from my dreams, cried Napoleon.

Spoken: Napoleon's Dream. Now, that's right, look: By the dark deeds of tragedy I

have been sold, while mortals before me did tremble - that's right! That's all in the history, en't it? Now that's an old 'un. You can put that in your pipe and tell them they en't heard that on the wireless - I don't - have you heard it like that?
EM: I've never heard that before.

A splendid performance, even if it doesn't make a great deal of sense! With 137 Roud entries, this looks like a fairly popular ballad - but almost all relate to printed sources (mostly broadsides) and there are only 13 named singers, all of whom come from either England or the USA. Few of the 7 sound recordings have been released, and only that by Gordon Hall (Country Branch CBCD095) is on CD.

2 - 29 **Spurn Point** (The Wreck of the Industry) (Roud 599)

*All on Spurn Point a vessel lay,
All on Spurn Point, ay! all the day,
We launched the lifeboat true and brave,
Expecting every soul to save.
"I don't want no assistance" our Captain cried,
"My ship, she come off by the next tide."*

Now at twelve o'clock
in the middle of that night,
A light was seen on Spurn Point.
We launched our lifeboat and manned her free,
"Man our brave boys, be of Liberty!"

This is a rare song; Broadwood and Fuller Maitland published a similarly short fragment in *English County Songs*, 1893. Roud has only 21 references, naming just 5 singers, all from Norfolk, Lincolnshire and Lancashire. But there has been one other sound recording - Percy Grainger recorded George Wray singing it in Brigg, Lincs, in 1908.

2 - 30 **The Barley Straw** (Roud 19112 or 118, Child 279)

Jack being so notably(?) nimble
He jumped and barred the door,
So she slept all night in the Tinker's arms
All over the barley straw.

"And now you've had your will on me,
Pray tell me what's your name?
And as your occupation;
From where and whence you came?"
"My name is Jack the Rover,
My name is Davy Shaw,
And if ever I travel this way again,
I'll think of the barley straw."

"Now, since I've had my will on you,
Pray tell no, not the worse"
He pulled out; put a hand in,
And pulled out a heavily purse.
"Here's fifty bright guineas
To pay for the nurse's fee,
And if ever I travel this way again,
True Love, I will marry thee."

This seems to be pretty-much the same story as the *Gaberlunzie Man*, *Clinkin' o'er the Lea*, *Jolly Beggarman*, etc, which was supposedly written about (even, some traditions would have it, by) King James V of Scotland - which would date it at around 1525 ... quite an old song, then! But this is the English version of the story, and has been sung by Harry Cox, Shepherd Haden, Bob Green, Freda Black and several members of the Smith and Brazil families of Gloucestershire.

The Smith and Haden versions are extremely unusual as English songs in that they name the beggar as 'Davy Faa'. Might he have some connection with that Faa who, in 1540, obtained from James V of Scotland a decree granting Gypsies various rights and privileges? Sam uses 'Davy Shaw', as do most other English singers.

Other versions available on CD: Biggun Smith and Denny Smith (MTCD307); Harry Cox (Snatch'd from Oblivion SFO 005); Bob Green (Helions Bumpstead NLCD 6).

2 - 31 **Bold General Wolfe** (Roud 624)

General Wolfe, to his men did say
"Come, come my lads, come and follow me,
To yonder mountain that stand so high;
All for your honour, all for your honour,
All for your King and count-ery."

Now, the very first shot that they fired on us
Wounded our general, right through the breast.
They wound our general,
right through the breast.
"Fight you on more boldly,

fight you on more boldly,
Time I've got breath, I will give command."

Spoken: Is that the one you mean?

EM: Can you remember any more?
No, I can't remember all of that.

One of several songs on Wolfe, it was common on 19th century broadsides, from about the 1830s. Roud has 137 instances, almost all English, from Notts to Devon, though mostly from Suffolk or Sussex. The Copper family, Pop Maynard and Shepherd Hayden all sang it. It has also been noted in Canada, but not in the USA, Scotland or Ireland.

Other versions available on CD: Bob Hart (MTCD301-2); Cyril Poacher (MTCD303); Alec Bloomfield (MTCD339-0); Jim Copper (TSCD534); Bob Scarce (TSCD676D);

2 - 32 The White Squall (Roud 13623)

*The sea was bright and the barque rode well;
The breeze bore the tones of the Vespers bell.
'Twas a gallant barque, with crew as brave,
That e'er launched on the heaving wave;
That e'er launched on the heaving wave;
For she shone in the light of declining day.
Each sail was set and each heart was gay.
Repeat last two lines and then the second half of the last line)*

*As we neared the land wherein beauty smiles,
The sunny shores of the Grecian Isles;
No thought of home, but that welcome dear
That soon should greet each wanderer's ear.
For in fancy I join in the social throng
The festive dance and the joyous song ...*

*Now a white cloud ride in a fine sky.
What means that wild despairing cry?
A cry for loved ones left at home,
A cry for help, where no help can come.
For a white squall rise from the surging wave
Our barque he engulfed in an ocean grave.
In an ocean grave.*

The italicised verses are from a handwritten copy in the Green/Larner family records. It is a song which appears only in broadsides, except for two early-20th century collections by Carpenter and Blunt, and Jim Carroll and Pat Mackenzie recorded it from Bob Green (also of Winterton) in 1976.

2 - 33 Scarborough Fair Town (Roud 185, Laws K18)

In Scarborough fair town
a young damsel did dwell,
She loved a young sailor, she loved him full well.

When they were about to marry,
it was this young man's lot:
Instead of a married life a watery grave he got.

Now as we were got sailing
through Robin Hood's Bay,
The wind came down all on us,
and dismal was the day.
The wind came down all on us,
and the seas like lions roared,
Which tossed these poor sailors
all on the lee shore.

Now as they were got swimming,
yes, swimming for their lives,

Some of them had sweethearts
and some of them had wives.
But, as this poor young man, it was to be his lot;
Instead of a-marrying her a watery grave he got.

Now as soon as this fair maid
these tidings did hear
She toré off her ringlets, she toré off her hair,
Crying, "Come, all you cruel billows,
come toss my love on shore,
So that I may behold his
sweet features once more."

Now, as she was got walking
down by the sea side
She met a young sailor, washed up all by the tide,
And soon as she saw him,
she immediately did stand,
For she knew it was her own true love
by the marks on his right hand.

"And now that I have found this

my love I do adore,
I'll kiss him, I'll embrace him,
ten thousand times o'er,
I'll be happy and contented,
I'll lay down by his side."
And the very next day morning,
this pretty fair maid died.

Now in Scarborough fair town
this young couple do lay,
And written on their tombstone, in full memory,
"Come, all you loyal lovers,
this way as you pass by,
Think of the unfortunate couple
who now here do lay."

Spoken: Now I knew that - I heard that - when I was a little bitty boy they used to sing that about here ...

A well-known song in both England and Scotland, but it doesn't appear to have crossed the sea to Ireland. Almost all versions mention Scarborough (or Stowbrow) as the setting of the tragedy. The 89 Roud instances comprise mainly book publication and sound recordings, with comparatively few broadside printings dating from the mid-19th century - so it may be of fairly recent origin, referring to a real event.

Other recordings on CD: Jumbo Brightwell (MTCD339-0); Bernie Cherry (MTCD359); Frank Verrill (TSCD 662); Harry Cox (TSCD 512D); Harold Smy (VTC5CD).

2 - 34 Final speech.

Yes, we used to have a rare old, good old time. We used to get in the old pub, and we used to have a song, a drink and a four-handed reel - *diddles*: the tune of *The Sailors' Hornpipe*. There we'd go, whoop ha, ha. That's all there was for our enjoyment.

Here's to the world, as round as a wheel,
We all the sting of Death must feel.
But if life was a thing that money would buy,
The rich would live and the poor would die.
But God, in his goodness, has ordained it so,
That the rich and the poor, all together must go.
Big bees fly high, little bees gather the honey,
The poor man work hard ...
And the rich man pocket the money!

Jack Tar on Shore (Roud 919, Laws K39)

For listeners expecting to find Sam's *Jack Tar on Shore* somewhere on these CDs, please note. In 1960, Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger wrote a book, *The Singing Island*, containing 13 of Sam Larner's songs. One of these was *Jack Tar on Shore*, which they cited as having been collected from Sam, by them, in 1958. However, there's no recording of this song amongst the 140+ songs in the MacColl/Seeger Archive, nor can I find it mentioned elsewhere on the Net. However, they did record Harry Cox singing this song, at around this time, and the words in *The Singing Island* do look a lot like Harry's - so a simple mistaken attribution, perhaps?

Martin Carthy on hearing Sam Larner:

Martin saw Sam Larner perform only once, when Sam was about 80, but it made a lasting impression on him, as he recalls:

I think the year was 1959, when I was seventeen. A friend had been booked by the writer and folk singer Ewan MacColl to sing at the *Ballads and Blues* in a long since demolished pub close to the Metropolitan Theatre, Edgware Road in order to provide "something of a contrast" to a man described by my friend as "Some old bloke with no teeth". My friend's performance was as lousy as his judgement and Ewan turned to presenting his favourite English singer. My knowledge of traditional English singing was just about nil. Of songs I knew a little; most of which came from Sharp's *Folk Songs for Schools*. My idea of English music started with the Elizabethan church music of Orlando Gibbons and his contemporaries and continued from there. Beautiful stuff, but quite distinct as I soon saw when Sam Larner stood up and sang.

His impact was immediate and electrifying (and something of a contrast, indeed). This was a man in command and utterly accustomed to performing. He pointed at his audience, he teased them, he pulled words out of the air. Ewan in turn teased information and stories out of him, laying out a banquet of this man who he so admired. The performance of *O No John*, which I thought I knew, was riveting and at the same time instructive of how to have fun with an audience. After a couple of verses he turned to Ewan and, looking very serious, asked "Am I to go on?" provoking raucous giggles from the audience. The straight face never cracked once as he asked the same question three or four more times before the end of the song.

Apart from one other song - which I also had thought I knew - this is the only song I remember from the evening, but I took away an impression of someone absolutely at home with what he was doing, for whom every song was personal - and imbued with a passion which sent me home walking on air. The other song which I remember was the final song of the night, which I still think of as a masterstroke of

programming by Ewan. The song was Sam's way with the Henry Martin story *Lofty Tall Ship*. What I heard back then as a terminally weird tune with apparently endless variations (in every single verse) was as exotic as anything I had ever heard and left my head spinning. Later I understood that that evening truly was a personal watershed, but immediately I knew that I had been privileged to have been in the presence of genuine greatness.

Discography

Folkways FW03507 LP: *Now is the Time for Fishing* (1961); reissued on Topic TSCD511

Topic 12T244 LP: *A Garland for Sam* (1974)

Folktrax Ftx139 cassette: *Sailin' Over the Dogger Bank* (1975)

Argo DA 142 LP: *Singing the Fishing* (1966); reissued on Topic TSCD803

A selection of Philip Donnellan's recordings are available on the following Topic CDs:

Topic TSCD652: *My Ship Shall Sail the Ocean (In Scarborough Town)*

Topic TSCD655: *Come all my Lads that Follow the Plough (The Pleasant Month of May)*

Topic TSCD662: *We've Received Orders to Sail (The Sailor's Alphabet and The Lofty Tall Ship)*

Topic TSCD673T: *Good People, Take Warning (The London Steamer and Pretty Polly)*

Helions Bumpstead NLCD6: *East Coast Fishermen*. Includes recordings of other Winterton singers Walter Rudd, Bob Green and Johnny Goffin.

Credits:

First and foremost, thanks to Peggy Seeger for making available the recordings she and Ewan MacColl made of Sam Lerner in the 1958 to 1960 period. Without Peggy's willing assistance, these CDs would never have been published.

This is not the first time Peggy has been of assistance to MT Records - all the recordings on Caroline Hughes: *Sheep-Crook and Black Dog* (MTCD365-6), several of the recordings on George Dunn: *Chainmaker* (MTCD317-8) and all those on Joe Heaney: *the road from Connemara* (TSCD518D), and the whole Joe Heaney interview which made up much of the MT057 article, were also kindly made available by her.

Secondly, Chris Holderness has my heartfelt thanks for his account of Sam Lerner's life and times, for detailed assistance with song transcriptions, for most of the photos, and lots of help and advice.

I must also thank Janet Topp Fargion and Andrea Zarza at the National Sound Archive at the British Library, who have been extremely helpful with this project. The recordings we have used are mastered from digital copies made at the British Library where the archival recordings are housed as part of the Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger Collection. Thanks also to:

- Jackie Page, of the present generation of the Lerner family - for giving us permission to use the NSA recordings.
- John Halliday - for more of the photos.
- Martin Carthy - for his account of his encounter with Sam Lerner.
- Danny Stradling - for checking the MacColl/Seeger song transcriptions from their book *The Singing Island*, transcribing the others, and proof reading.
- Steve Roud - for providing MT with a copy of his *Folk Song Index*, whence came some of the historical information on the songs. Also for help with finding songs and allocating Roud numbers to new entrants to the *Index*.

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

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Left: Sam and Dorcas.



Centre right: The Fisherman's Return, Winterton.

Opposite page: Left top and left centre: Bob Green.

Bottom left: Sail drifters.

Bottom right:

