



Gallant Lads Are We

SONGS OF THE BRITISH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

SUNG BY LOUIS KILLEN

Gallant Lads Are We

SONGS OF THE BRITISH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

SUNG BY LOUIS KILLEN

This is what the critics say about Louis Killen: *New York Times*—"a master of the traditional English ballad...a master in fact, of almost any kind of fine singing." *The Melody Maker* (London)—"a giant of the British folk music revival." *Folk Scene Magazine* (Los Angeles)—"a singer of grace and genius."

In his huge repertoire of traditional English ballads and folk songs, Killen includes scores of songs about the lives and times of coal miners, textile workers, sailors, railroaders and other laborers and craftsmen. When COLLECTOR RECORDS decided to add an album of British industrial folk songs to its catalogue, there was never any question that the singer for the job was Louis Killen.

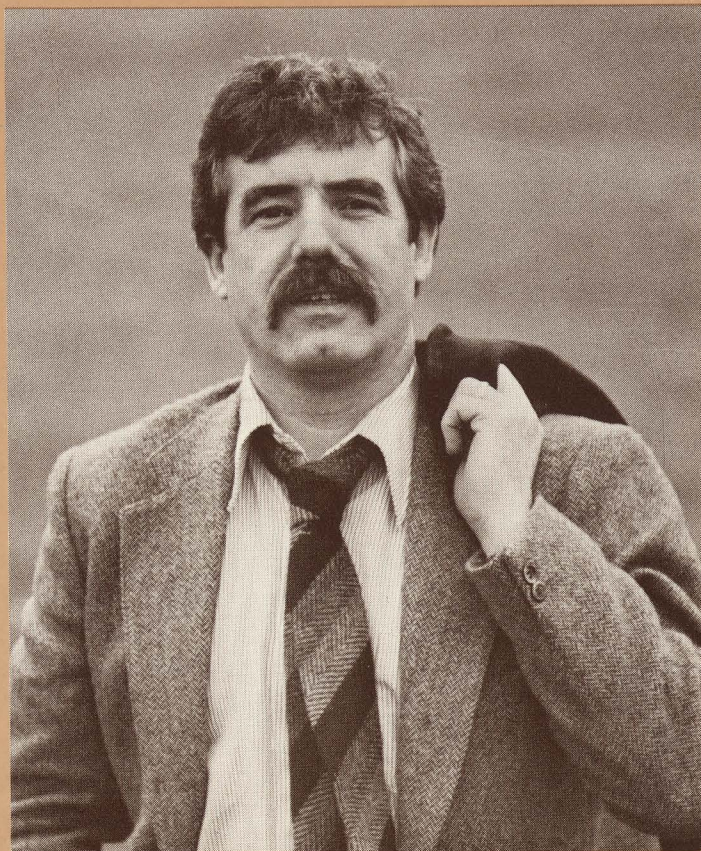
Killen was born in Gateshead-on-Tyne in northeastern England into a family that looked upon singing as its main entertainment. In the 1950's and '60's he played a leading role in the British folk revival and in 1961 he made the performance of folk music a full-time career.

Killen has lived in the United States since 1967 (currently in Massachusetts, near Boston) where he has had a major impact on the traditional music scene. He has performed in hundreds of festivals, coffee houses, colleges, and folksong clubs in the U.S., Great Britain & Canada, as well as at Carnegie and Avery Fisher Halls in New York and Royal Festival and Royal Albert Halls in London.

Although Louis Killen is a master of the English concertina, he decided to do all the songs on this record unaccompanied, just the way workers sang them in the olden days. On this album Killen's voice is his musical instrument and a delightful one it is.

"Louis Killen brings to life scenes from the past, through song, story, and ballad. He is a teller of tales, large and small, spoken or sung, which reflect the lives and views, real or imaginary, of ordinary men and women, be they farm or factory worker, sailor or sinner, loved or lost. He is a presenter of the common people's view of history, as portrayed in their tales and music."

Margaret Osika



(The following is an excerpt from the essay by Norman Willis, Deputy General Secretary of the British Trades Union Congress, which is in the booklet accompanying this record. The booklet also contains the lyrics of all the songs sung by Louis Killen on this record.)

This collection of industrial folk songs, movingly interpreted by Louis Killen, reaches back into the roots of 19th century industrial Britain. Many of these songs constitute a damning indictment of what happens when uncontrolled and uncontested self-interest is allowed to dehumanize a whole society.

In the early days of the industrial revolution few workers were able to read, but they could express their needs and hopes in songs. Even when unions were illegal during the 19th century, songs helped to sustain and communicate the indignation against the squalor.

What glows through this collection of songs is the spirit, which despite the background of industrial inhumanity, sparked the establishment of the British trade union movement. The tradition of fighting against social deprivation and for decent living standards is part of the trade union movement. That challenge is still with us today.

Robert Frost wrote of "promises to keep, and miles to go before we sleep." The history of trades unionism has shown that putting your promises into songs helps you to keep them.

SIDE ONE

1. **THE COALOWNER AND THE PITMAN'S WIFE**—A humorous look at strike attitudes showing how removed the owners were from the workers. Class differences were so great that many thought the miners must, by their very blackness of skin, be in league with the devil. (2:32)
2. **THE BANKS OF THE DEE**—From the days when coal-owners could manipulate the men's wages through their agreements with the unions. Anyone earning above the county average was clear proof that the wage rates were too high!!! (2:38)
3. **THE RECRUITED COLLIER**—Not so much a song about industry but more a verbal picture of part of a mining community and the effect one person going to the wars has on those left behind. (2:35)
4. **PIT BOOTS**—A piece of bawdiness often found attributed to other trades, too. (1:46)
5. **THE FACTORY GIRL**—Working class girls were often the prey of the idle sons of the rich, though most songs of this type follow the "rags to riches" dream. The girl here, has a much better grasp of reality. (4:04)
6. **AA CUD HEW**—(I COULD HEW)—Ed Pickford's moving song of a man whose health, but not his spirit, has been ruined by "black lung", pneumoconiosis, caused by inhalation of the coal dust. (2:34)

SIDE TWO

1. **THE DALESMAN'S LITANY**—A countryman's view of working in Yorkshire's manufacturing towns. The Dales are the valleys running through the hill-country north of the Yorkshire industrial region. (3:04)
2. **CHARLES DOCHERTY**—An unusual song about an industrial accident where the dead man is explaining his reasons for dodging around the safety regulations—to keep the production line moving. (2:30)
3. **THE JOLLY GRINDER**—A nice blend of anti-work and anti-temperance in this parody of "The Miller of Dee". (2:20)
4. **PADDY WORKS ON THE RAILWAY**—Two distinctly British versions of the well-known song collected in the engine sheds of Manchester, Birkenhead, and Hellefield, and collated by Ewan MacColl. (2:35)
5. **IN THE SIDINGS**—Cyril Tawney wrote this song from the viewpoint of a rural stationmaster, who loses his job because a government policy change closes down his line. Being in his late 50's, the chances of finding a new trade are almost nil. (2:47)
6. **THE FOUR LOOM WEAVER**—Becket Whitehead's version of an older, lengthier song, "The Poor Cotton Wayver", with the song pared down to fit later and perhaps harder times. (2:44)
7. **THE CROPPER LADS**—A song in praise of the frame-breakers in the Yorkshire woolen mills of the 1820/30's. "Croppers" cropped the knap off the newly woven cloth with shears weighing up to 40 lbs. When the owners brought in mechanical shears the men took a very "direct action" against losing their jobs. (1:45)

These notes on the songs are by Louis Killen.
Second voice harmonies are by Louis Killen.

GALLANT LADS ARE WE is one of a series of COLLECTOR albums in the area of industrial folklore and folksong. Previous discs include songs of textile workers, coal miners, railroaders, Wobblies, lumberjacks, sailors and steelworkers. Write for free brochure.

Jacket design by DOROTHY FALL. Album cover photo, from the Library of Congress collection. Thanks for assistance in the production of this album go to Norman Willis, Peter Carr, Archie Green and Margaret Osika. Norman Rowland was the sound engineer. Produced by Joe Glazer and Louis Killen. Photograph on back cover by Gerret Warner.

COLLECTOR RECORDS 1932
STEREOPHONIC

© Copyright 1980



COLLECTOR RECORDS



1604 Arbor View Rd., Silver Spring, MD 20902

COLLECTOR RECORDS 1932



Gallant Lads Are We

SONGS OF THE BRITISH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

SUNG BY LOUIS KILLEN



he creation of a democratic and independent trades union movement, many millions strong, with almost every union in the country within one national centre, has been a great achievement of British workers. It has also become, inevitably, a prime target for attack by opponents who seek to portray the unions as the cause of industrial weaknesses and the enemy of individual freedom.

This collection of industrial folk songs, movingly interpreted by Louis Killen, reaches back into the roots of 19th century industrial Britain. It demonstrates just how little freedom there was for ordinary people before the growth of the trade union movement. This lack of freedom in early industrial Britain is a fact of direct, current significance to industries, firms, and indeed whole countries across the world, where the lack of democratic, free and effective trades unionism continues to allow industrial, commercial and political tyranny to flourish.

Many of the songs on this album constitute a damning indictment of what happens when uncontrolled and uncontested self-interest is allowed to dehumanize a whole society. In the last century, Britain did indeed become the "workshop of the world" but the gains of industrial progress were too often submerged in the poverty and disease caused by social deprivation. The songs, "The Four Loom Weaver" and "The Cropper Lads" describe the misery faced by the weavers, and their retaliatory threat to use "Big Enoch" (the great hammer) to smash the machines that had been so callously introduced.

Open terror was experienced by workers, naked against the unrestrained power of employers who were able and willing to use their economic power to exploit, starve, victimize and evict. ("The Factory Girl" is almost a parable of the immorality of exploitation, although "The Jolly Grinder" and

"Pit Boots" show that popular ballads covered the whole range of morality.) The lesson was soon realized by British workers, that only by combining in free trade

unions could they defend and extend living standards and human rights. That message also went abroad, in the hearts and in the songs of the emigrants, just as the Irish labourers had brought their songs to England when they came to build the canals and railways (see "Paddy Works on the Railway").

The indignation at harsh treatment was never far below the surface. Workers might not have been schooled in high mathematics, but they could add up their experience of exploitation and learn the lesson. Few were able to read, but they could feel and express their needs and hopes in songs which, as literacy developed painfully, were reprinted in broadsheets. Even when unions were illegal during the early 19th century, songs helped to sustain and communicate the indignation against the squalor. The brave, bold and doomed creation of the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union in the 1830's lived on in song and story. The great Durham coal strike of 1844, one of the seeds of national organization amongst miners, produced one of the best, most confident, and plain funniest, industrial songs ever. "The Coal Owner and the Pitman's Wife" has been sung by thousands of us since, with great gusto and pleasure, but the commercial savagery of the times is portrayed with more obvious anger in "The Banks of the Dee".

As the century ended, the more insular craft unions were followed by the establishment of the unions of unskilled workers. Everywhere, in each new trade and industry, rudimentary trade union organization was slowly established — sometimes to be smashed and reborn again in decades later, often, to live on tenuously. All have their fruits in the modern British trade union movement.

Slowly, but rapidly at times, the unions came to recognize that if they were to represent and defend their members, they would have to widen their objectives, change the laws to protect ordinary people and build a more caring society.

No one record can illuminate all of this, but what glows through this

collection of songs is the spirit, which despite the background of industrial inhumanity, sparked the establishment of the British trade union movement. The tradition, that of fighting against social deprivation, that of fighting for decent living standards, is part of the trade union. That challenge is still with us today. (It is exemplified by the song "In the Sidings" which shows how modern railway closures can affect railway workers; it could be paralleled by a song about the effect on rural communities, too.) How are we to achieve the industrial and technological progress we strive for whilst preserving and improving the concept of personal freedom, and the sense of community caring that we all need in order to develop our potential as individuals?

One thing is sure: To win, we have to use power, arguments, statistics, economics, social and technological analysis, plus all the techniques of modern communication. But we also have to feel our way forward. British industrial songs, early in the 19th century, often looked back too romantically to the older rural society which looked more golden in retrospect than it ever was. (Witness "The Dalesman's Litany", whilst "The Recruited Collier" reports the attraction of the "glamour" of army life, as against the restriction and grinding labour of the mines.) However, they soon began to look forward to what could be.

A vision of a better future enables us all to walk taller than we would otherwise dare; to be better than we might otherwise attempt — and we have to keep working for that vision or we shall fall back.

As the American union song puts it: "Freedom, freedom is a hard won thing . . . and every generation's got to win it again."

Robert Frost wrote of "promises to keep, and miles to go before we sleep. And miles to go before we sleep." The history of trades unionism has shown that putting your promises into songs helps you to keep them.

That's why Folk songs have always been the "poetry plus" of ordinary people.

The Coal Owner and The Pitman's Wife

Probably written by a Shotton Moor collier, William Hornsby, during the 1844 Durham Coal Miners' Strike. This battle was more than an incident or a protest — it reflected the first national organization of miners. For humour and confidence, it probably has no rival as the sort of song that "wears a smile but shows strong teeth". (A phrase of A. L. Lloyd, one of the great, great men of British folk songs, particularly, industrial folk songs.)

A dialogue I'll tell you as true as m'life,
Between a coalowner and a poor pitman's wife,
As she went a-walking all on the highway
She met a coalowner and this she did say,

CHORUS: Derry down, down, down, derry down.

"Good morning, Lord Firedamp," this woman she cried,
I'll do you no harm, sir, so don't be afraid,
But if you'd been where I've been the most of m'life,
Well, you wouldn't turn pale at a poor pitman's wife."

"Then where do you come from?" the owner he cried,
"I come from hell," the poor woman replied.
"Well, if you come from hell, then come tell me right plain,
Just how you contrived to get out again."

"The way I got out, sir, the truth I will tell,
They're turning the poor folk all out of hell,
And this to make way for the rich, wicked race,
For there is a great number of them in that place."

"And the coalowners are the next on command
To arrive in hell as I understand,
For I hear the old Devil say, as I came out,
The coalowners all had received their rout."

"If you be a coalowner, sir, take my advice,
Agree with your men and give them a fair price,
For if and you don't, then I know very well,
You'll be in great danger of going to hell."

"Good woman," cried the owner, "I must bid you farewell,
You give me a dismal account about hell;
And if this all is true, that you say unto me,
I'll be off like a whippet, with m' poor men agreed."

Banks of The Dee

This song reflects the agony of those who, in Joe Glazer's song, are "too old to work and too young to die". It describes the distress of the "collier's second childhood" when the old miners were put back on the heaps, picking slate with the young lads.

Last Saturday night by the banks of the Dee,
I met an old man, in distress I could see.
I sat down beside him and to me he did say,
I can't get employment for my hair, it's turned grey.

I am an old miner, aged fifty and six.
If I could get lots, why I'd raffle my picks;
I'd raffle them, I'd sell them, I'd hoy them away,
For I can't get employment — my hair it's turned grey.

When I was a young lad I was just like the rest.
Each day in the pits I'd do my very best.
If I got a good cavil I'd be hewing all day,
Now at fifty and six my hair has turned grey.

Last Wednesday night to the reckoning I went,
To the colliery offices I went straight forenenst;
I'd got my pay packet, I was walking away
When they gave me my notice, 'cause my hair it's turned grey.

Now all you young fellows, it's you that's to blame.
If you got good places you'd do just the same;
If you got a good price, man, you'd hew it away,
But you're bound to regret it when your hair it turns grey.

For I am an old miner, aged fifty and six.
If I could get lots, why, I'd raffle my picks;
I'd raffle them, I'd sell them, I'd hoy them away,
For I can't get employment 'cause my hair it's turned grey.

GLOSSARY: *hoy* — throw; *lots* — bids;
cavil — place of work;
forenenst — immediate.

The Recruited Collier

A moving song from around the start of the nineteenth century. The call of the so-called glamour and "freedom" of the army life must have attracted — and killed — many a young miner. Includes a line that should make us think again and again — "when Jimmy talks about the wars, it's worse than death to hear him".

What's the matter with you, m'lass and where's your dashing Jimmy?
The soldier lads have ta'en him up and he's gone far, far from me.
Last pay day he went into town, and them red-coated fellows
Enticed him in and made him drunk — he'd have better gone to the gallows.

The very sight of his cockade it set us all acrying,
And me! I nearly fainted twice, I thought that I was dying.
My father would have paid the smart and run for the golden guinea,
But the sergeant swore he'd kissed the book, so now they've got young Jimmy.

When Jimmy talks about the wars it's worse than death to hear him,
I must go out and hide my tears because I can't bear him.
But aye, he jibes and cracks his jokes, and bids me not forsake him;
A brigadier, or a grenadier, he says they're sure to make him.

As I walked o'er the stubble fields below it runs the seam.
I thought of Jimmy hewing there but it was all a dream.
He hewed the very coals we burn and, as the fire I'm lighting,
To think the lumps was in his hand, well it sets my heart to beating.

So break my heart and then it's o'er; aye, break my heart my dearie,
And I'll lie in the cold, cold grave for of single life I'm weary.

Pit Boots

The universal theme of "maidens beware!" — a robust song, versions of which have been collected about different trades and from areas as far apart as Shetland and Somerset in the British Isles.

A-digging and a-picking as I was one day,
To thoughts of me true love my mind did fondly stray.
The shift being over and the night coming on,
Well, away I ran with m' pit boots on.

I ran to my love's window crying "are you in bed?"
As soon as she heard me she lifted up her head;
She lifted up her head crying, "Is that John?"
"Oh! Indeed it's me with m' pit boots on."

She opened the door and invited me in,
"Draw up to the fire love, and dry your skin."
The bedroom door being open and the blankets being turned down,
I jumps into bed with m' pit boots on.

We tossed and we tumbled until the break of day
'Til, thinking on the hours that we had passed away,
My love she sat up crying, "What have I done?"
The baby will be born with its pit boots on."

I chastised my love for talking so wild,
"You foolish young girl, you will never have a child,
For all that we done, it were only done in fun."
But away I run with m' pit boots on.

So, come all you young maidens a warning take from me,
And never trust a collier, so handsome and so free,
For his hands do run wild, and his heart does run young,
So keep clear of them fellows with their pit boots on.

The Factory Girl

One of many Northern Ireland versions of a song in which the young, idle rich try to romantically exploit the working girl — but here the factory girl says "No!". From the period of the use of water power for spinning, pre-steam.

As I went a-walking one fine summer's morning,
The birds on the bushes so sweetly did sing.
The lads and the lasses together were sporting
Going down to yon factory their work to begin.

I spied one among them was fairer than any,
Her skin like the lily that grows in the dell,
Her cheeks like the red rose that grows in yon valley,
And she's my one only hard-working sweet factory girl.

I stepped up unto her, it was for to view her,
When on me she cast a proud look of disdain.
Stand off me, stand off me, and do not insult me,
For although I'm a poor girl I think it no shame.

I don't mean to harm you nor yet, love, to scorn you,
But grant me one favour, pray where do you dwell?
I am a poor orphan without home or relations
And besides I'm a hard-working factory girl.

I have lands, I have houses adorned with ivy,
I have gold in my pocket, and silver as well,
And if you'll go with me a lady I'll make you,
So try and say yes, my dear factory girl.

Now love and sensation rules many a nation,
To many a lady perhaps you'll do well.
My friends and my comrades would all frown upon it,
For I'm only a hard-working factory girl.

It's true I did love her but now she won't have me,
And all for her sake I must wander a while
Over high hills and valleys where no one shall know me,
Far away from the sound of the sweet factory bell.

AA Cud Hew (I Could Hew)

A modern song by Ed Pickford, about the deadly pneumoconiosis (black lung) disease caused by coal dust. "No more this pit will I see . . . but I'll carry it round inside of me."

When I was young and in my prime,
Ee, aye, I could hew.
I was hewing all the time;
Now my hewing days are through, through.
Now my hewing days are through.

Down at the face the coal did flee;
Ee, aye, I could hew.
Now that dust it's killing me,
And my hewing days are through, through,
And my hewing days are through.

I've lain on my back and shovelled coal,
Ee, aye, I could hew.
And my eyes did smart in the dust filled hole.
But my hewing days are through, through,
But my hewing days are through.

I've worked with marrers, and they were men,
Ee, aye, I could hew.
They were men, and sons of men,
But their hewing days are through, through,
But their hewing days are through.

No more this pit will I see,
Ee, aye, I could hew.
But I'll carry it round inside of me
Now my hewing days are through, through,
Now my hewing days are through.

GLOSSARY: *Flee* — fly; *marrer* — workmate.

The Dalesman's Litany

In the nineteenth century, industrialization attracted or forced many workers into vast new towns where social provisions were disastrously inadequate — " 'twas the same as being in hell". A confused and contradictory song, but the choices were like that. (A dalesman is a man from the rural hill country to the north of industrial Yorkshire.)

It's hard when folks can't find their work where they've been bred and born.
When I was young I always thought I'd bide among fruits and corn.
But I've been forced to work in towns, so here's my litany,
From Hull, and Halifax, and hell, good Lord deliver me.

When I was courting Mary Jane the old Squire he said one day,
"I've no room here for wedded folks; choose whether to wed or stay."
Well, I couldn't give the lass that I loved, so to town we had to flee.
From Hull, and Halifax, and hell, good Lord deliver me.

I've worked in Leeds and Huddersfield, and addled honest brass.
At Bradford, Keighley, Rotherham, I've kept m' bairns and m' lass.
I've travelled all three Ridings round, and once I went to sea.
From forges, mills, and sailing ships, good Lord deliver me.

I've walked at night through Sheffield lanes — 'twas the same as being in hell,
Where furnaces thrust out tongues of fire and roared like the wind on the fell.
And I've shovelled coals in Barnsley pits, with muck up to m' knee.
From Sheffield, Barnsley, Rotherham, good Lord deliver me.

I've seen fog creep across Leeds brig as thick as Bastille soup;
I've lived where folks were stowed away like rabbits in a coop;
And I've seen snow float down Bradford Beck as black as ebony —
From Hunslet, Holbeck, Wibsey slack, good Lord deliver me.

Well, now our children are all fled, to the country we've come back.
There's forty miles of heathery moor 'twixt us and the coal pit's slack.
And as I sit by the fire at night, well, I laugh and shout with glee —
From Hull, and Halifax, and hell, the good Lord delivered me.

GLOSSARY: *Addled honest brass* — made good honest money; *bairns* — children; *Ridings* — the three geographical areas of the county of Yorkshire. *Old English meaning 'a third'; brig* — bridge; *slack* — waste heap; *Beck* — stream or small river.

Charles Docherty

Period unknown, this song describes an actual accident and its outcome for a Rotherham iron worker. He got no compensation, having been held to have caused the accident, despite the inadequacies of the equipment. The problem remains a real one to this day.

Oh, my name is Charles Docherty and Rotherham's my town.
You'll see work from my steel mill the whole world around.
To enjoy such hard labour I'd hardly pretend.
On a day in September I met my cruel end.

That day in the steel mill the ingot-bloom stuck.
I had to crawl under in the heat and the muck.
But the cause of the stoppage I just couldn't see,
So I lit some oil waste to throw light on the scene.

Now the waste it flared up in a shower of flame,
And the oil on my overalls it flared up the same.
Oh save me, my workmates, I'll perish indeed

Unless you come help me at the best of your speed.

At the inquest they blamed me for lighting that waste.

They said I could have avoided those perils I faced.

But the hand-lamp being awkward and to move the work on
I laid down my life, my boys, and met my fatal doom.

Now your civilisation is built upon steel,
It's found in each nation, in girder and wheel.
As you ride across rivers and sail in the sea,
Spare a thought, say a prayer, for the steelmen like me.

The Jolly Grinder

The use of the word "teetotaller" dates this ballad of a Sheffield iron worker as being after 1830. Drink was a controversial subject in the 19th century Labour movement. Some saw it as a disease and destroyer, an attitude lampooned with the slogan "work is the enemy of the drinking classes."

There was a jolly grinder once lived by the River Don,
He worked and sang from morn til night, and sometimes he worked none.

CHORUS:

But still the burden of his song for ever used to be:

'Tis never worthwhile to work too long if it doesn't agree with me!

He seldom on a Monday worked except near Christmas Day.

It wasn't the labour that he'd shun for 'twas easier far than play.

CHORUS: (above)

A pale teetotaller chanced to meet our grinder one fine day

As he sat at the door with his pipe and his glass and thus to our friend did say:

You destroy your health and senses too. Says the grinder, You're much too free.

Attend to your work, if you've ought to do, and don't interfere with me.

CHORUS: (above)

There's many like you go sneaking around persuading beer drinkers to turn.

'Tis easier far on our failings to spout than by labour your living to earn.

I work when I like and play when I can and I envy no man I see,

Such chaps as you won't alter my plan for I know what agrees with me.

CHORUS: (above)

Paddy Works on The Railway

Different from the perhaps better known U.S. ballad, it tells how the Irish labourers built the railways and transformed British economic and social history with muscle and shovel.

In Eighteen hundred and forty-one,
My corduroy britches I put on,
My corduroy britches I put on
To work upon the railway, the railway,

I'm weary of the railway — poor Paddy works on the railway.

In eighteen hundred and forty-two
From Hartlepool I moved to Crewe

And found m'self a job to do

Working on the railway.

CHORUS on 2nd, 3rd, 5th and 6th verses.

I was wearing corduroy britches, digging ditches,

Pulling switches, dodging the hitches,
I was working on the railway.

In eighteen hundred and forty-three

I broke my shovel across my knee

And went to work for the company

Of the Leeds and Selby Railway.

In eighteen hundred and forty-four

I landed on the Liverpool shore;

My belly was empty, my hands were sore

From working on the railway, the railway,

I'm weary of the railway — poor Paddy works on the railway.

In eighteen hundred and forty-five

When Dan O'Connell, he was alive;

Dan O'Connell he was alive

And working on the railway. (Chorus: He was wearing, etc.)

In eighteen hundred and forty-six

I changed my trade from carrying bricks,

I changed my trade from carrying bricks

To working on the railway

In eighteen hundred and forty-seven

Poor Paddy was thinking of going to heaven.

Poor Paddy was thinking of going to heaven

To work upon the railway, the railway,

I'm weary of the railway — poor Paddy works on the railway.

In The Sidings

Written by Cyril Tawney in the 1960's, at the time of the massive closures of many railway lines, this is a song about the problems of workers, especially the ones who are aging, made redundant by company (or in this case, government) policy. The accountants' decisions, however, hit rural mobility and life as well as jobs.

By Cyril Tawney: copyright Gwyneth Music Ltd.

The pin-stripe boys have had their say,

A line must go if it doesn't pay.

But I'm too old to move away,

I'm in the sidings now.

I've worked this line for many a day,

I can name any driver a mile away,

But that's no use when your hair turns grey,

I'm in the sidings now.

Well, now I know how a wagon feels

When the grass comes creeping round its wheels,
And its timbers turn to a woodworm's meals,

I'm in the sidings now.

So I'll give my whistle one more blow,

Then I'll change my pole for a garden hoe,

My bogie fires are burning low,

I'm in the sidings now.

Good business men have often said,

Always trim your costs if you're in the red,

Well, come shake hands with an overhead,

I'm in the sidings now.

If your money tree will bear no fruit,

Never blame the man who tends the root,

But take your knife to the tender shoot,

I'm in the sidings now.

The Four Loom Weaver

Becket Whitehead's version of an older, lengthier song, "The Poor Cotton Weaver," with the song pared down to fit later and perhaps harder times.

I'm a four loom weaver, as many a man knows.
I've nowt to eat and I've worn out m' clothes.

M' clogs are all broken, and stockings I've none.

Thee'd hardly gi's tuppence for all I've gotten on.

Old Billy O' Bent, he were telling us long

We mayn't had better times if I'd nobbut held m' tongue.

Well, I held m' tongue til I near lost m' breath,
And I feel in m' heart that I'll soon clem to death.

I'm a four loom weaver, as many a man knows.

I've nowt to eat and I've worn out m' clothes.

Old Billy were right, but he ne'er were

clemmed,

He ne'er picked o'er in his life.

We held out for six weeks, thought each day were the last.

We tarried and shifted til we were quite fast.

We lived upon nettles while nettles were good.

And Waterloo Porridge were best to us (as) food.

Our Margaret declares, if hoo'd clothes to put on,

Hoo'd go up t' London and see the great man.

And if things didn' alter when there hoo'd been

Hoo' swears hoo'd fight til there blood up to th' e'en.

I'm a four loom weaver as many a man knows.

I've nowt to eat and I've worn out m' clothes.

Stockings I've none, nor looms to weave on,

I've woven m'sen to far end.

GLOSSARY: gi's — give me; nobbut — nothing but; clem (clemmed) — starve; nowt — nothing; Waterloo Porridge — a thin gruel; hoo ('d) — she (would); th' e'en — the eyes; m'sen — myself.

The Cropper Lads

"Great Enoch", the huge hammer used to wreck machinery in the years after 1815, was an industrial symbol of open warfare "with hatchet, pike and gun" as men fought to preserve their livelihood in a brutal industrial revolution. (Croppers were workers who sheared the nap off the newly woven wool with huge shears.)

Come, Cropper lads of high renown,
Who like to drink strong ale that's brown,
And strike each haughty tyrant down,
With hatchet, pike, and gun.

CHORUS:

O, the Cropper lads for me,

Gallant lads they be,

With lusty stroke the shear frames broke,

The Cropper lads for me.

What though the "specials" still advance,

And troopers nightly round us prance,

Us Cropper lads still lead the dance,

With Hatchet, pike, and gun.

And when at night when all is still,

And the moon is hid behind yon hill,
Us Cropper lads will do our will,
With hatchet, pike, and gun.

Great Enoch still shall lead our van,
Stop him who dare, stop him who can.
Step forward every gallant man,
With hatchet, pike, and gun.

GLOSSARY: *Specials* — the local militia; *Great Enoch* — the name given to the hammer which was used to break the frames.

This booklet accompanies the record album GALLANT LADS ARE WE — Folk Songs of the British Revolution, sung by Louis Killen. It is one of a series in the area of industrial folklore and folksong published by COLLECTOR RECORDS. Previous discs include songs of the textile workers, coal miners, railroaders, Wobblies, lumberjacks, sailors and steelworkers. Write for free brochure.

The essay in this booklet, as well as the notes on each song, were written by Norman Willis, Deputy General Secretary of the British Trades Union Congress.



1604 Arbor View Road
Silver Spring, Md. 20902

