FSB-19

"English Shepherd and Farming Songs"

sung by

BOB and RON COPPER

FOLK-LEGACY RECORDS, INC. SHARON, CONNECTICUT

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Recorded by Peter Kennedy
Introductory notes by Bob Copper

The Copper family have lived for over three hundred years in and around the village of Rottingdean which, when we were lads, was still a tiny village tucked away quietly in a fold of the South Downs on the Sussex sea-board. Up until the early years of the present century our village was in the very heart of the Southdown sheep country. My father, Jim, and his brother, John, both started their working lives, as had their father before them, as shepherd boys on those wind-swept hills overlooking the English Channel. These old songs were, to them, symbolic of a way of life that was fast slipping away and seemed to inspire a certain sense of permanence in a rapidly changing world. They cannot be said to belong to Rottingdean any more than any folk song can be attributed to any particular area, but they are the versions as sung in the village.

These are the songs of the open Down where the Channel wind brings the tang of the sea to mingle with the scent of gorse. They belong to the shearing barn or the lambing fold built high with fuzz-bush against the early March winds. They know no accompaniment but the call of the seagull, the song of the lark, or the wavering cry of the newborn in search of its dam. Up to fifty years ago they were familiar in nearly every cottage, but now, alas, there are scarcely any villagers who could sing one song right through. But in years gone by on Saturday nights in the tap-room of the Black Horse in the High Street or the Plough up by the pond, with the atmosphere heavy with shag tobacco smoke and a pot in each man's hand, the walls would fairly shake with sound as a well-known chorus was roared out for sometimes, it seemed, the hundredth time. It always struck me that the company, having found a tune to their liking, were loathe to leave it and would repeat the chorus over and over again with undiminished enthusiasm until such time as "Order" was called for the next singer. In this manner the work-wearing hours of the week were forgotten and the cheery faces and shining eyes were proof enough that relaxation such as this was ample fortification against the week's work ahead. No paid entertainers were required in those days. Apart from the undeniable pleasure of having a good sing, it was a well established principle that you never paid anyone else to do a job you could do for yourself.

So a tradition coming down to us from the quiet mists of eighteenth century rural England (and maybe even before) lives on into the brash, noisy world of today. How much longer it will continue is, of course, impossible to say, but many years ago Ron and I made a vow that we would never be the weak links in the long chain of "singing Coppers." *from the introduction by Bob Copper*

Side 1:

SPORTSMEN AROUSE
THE LARK IN THE MORNING
THE HARD TIMES OF OLD ENGLAND
SPENCER THE ROVER
THE SPRING GLEE
GOOD ALE
THE BABES IN THE WOOD
CUPID'S GARDEN

Side 2:

THE TWO BRETHREN
THE MONTH OF MAY
THE HONEST LABOURER
BIRDS IN THE SPRING
THE SHEPHERD OF THE DOWNS
THE THRESHING SONG
DAME DURDEN
THE SEASON ROUND

(The cover: l to r—Bob, Ron's father, Ron, Bob's father)

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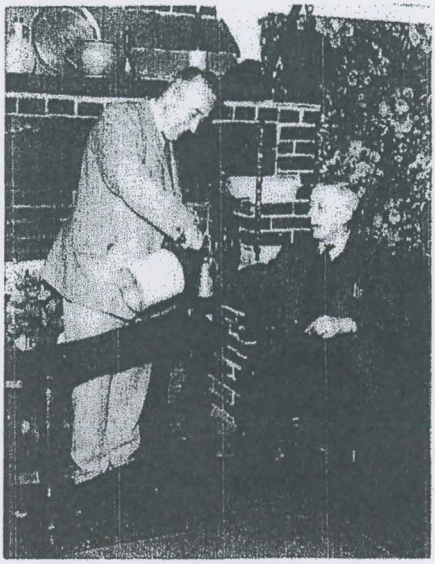

Recorded by Peter Kennedy

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FOLK-LEGACY RECORDS, INC.

HUNTINGTON, VERMONT

TRADITIONAL SONGS FROM ROTTINGDEAN

by Bob Copper

It is difficult to say when the story of these songs began; we can only say that it is still going on and at least two members of the Copper family, Ron and I, still retain and cherish and sing them whenever a suitable opportunity arises. We know also where the story took place and in order to fully appreciate the songs I think it is necessary to know at least something of the background from which they spring and to have some sort of mind-picture of the type of men who sang them.

The family have lived for over three hundred years in and around the village of Rottingdean, which, when we were lads, was still a tiny village tucked away quietly in a fold of the South Downs on the Sussex seaboard. The Parish records in the little flint church, hard by the pond, bear entries of baptisms, marriages, and burials in our family from the year 1611, From 1745, when George Copper and his wife, Martha, recorded the baptism of a son, the line is unbroken right down to the children of the present generation. My cousin, Ron, is still living in Rottingdean; he is, in fact, the landlord of the Queen Victoria Inn, in the High Street.

Up until the early years of the present century, our village was in the very heart of the Southdown sheep country, the home of the breed that earned world-wide renown for the sweetness and succulence of its small jointed lambs. Until 1928, 3,000 acres were farmed from Rottingdean, including 2,000 undulating acres of sweet downland turf which contributed so largely to the success of our local breed. After that date, the dwindling fortunes of Home Agriculture forced the men of the village to shake the soil of Sussex downs from their boots and seek elsewhere for a livelihood. It was a wrench from which many of them never really recovered. My father, Jim, and his brother, John, had both started their working lives, as had their fathers before them, as shepherd boys at the age of 11 years on those wind-swept hills overlooking the English Channel. When, in later years, they saw the grass growing rank from neglect and, far worse, watched the ever encroaching tide of new houses and bungalows creeping further and further back into the downland, you can imagine how they felt. The taking over of rich agricultural lands for the purpose of building homes for the dwellers of overcrowded towns had begun. And this strip of Sussex, within fifty miles of London and having the advantage of running along the Channel coast, suffered more than most places. I remember one evening as Dad and I stood at the back of the

village looking down the valley which seemed to be breaking out in a sporadic rash of red brick bungalows, he turned to me and said, "I don't know what your ol' Grand-daddy would say, boy, if he could see this lot. Houses, 'ouses, 'ouses. Y'know that makes me prostrate with dismal."

Other changes were taking place, too. The first tractor, a "Titan", had made its appearance on the farm and, although no one knew it at the time, had sealed the fate of the nine four-horse teams stabled in the ancient flint buildings in the shadow of the church. The days of the enormous dung-hill in the middle of the farm yard, upon which three or four dozen fat hens thrived, were numbered. The bridles and the harness, studded and decorated with fancy brasses, were destined, by way of the antique shops, to decorate imitation ingle-nooks and week-end cottages.

These changes, after so many centuries, were resented by all of the "old school", many of whom had known nothing more than the contentment of walking the home acres in the same footsteps and fashions of their forefathers. They had plowed their hills with oxen, they had broadcast their seed by hand, reaped their crops with scythes and, finally, had threshed out the grain with wooden flails in much the same manner as their Saxon and medieval ancestors. To many of them, these old songs were amongst the few things in their lives that remained unchanged. It was an unforgettable experience for me, as a small boy, to watch Grand-dad, his brother, Tom, my Dad and Uncle John sitting round the cottage fire on a winter's evening, singing, with the lead singers, or "trebles" (Great-Uncle Tom and Uncle John) on one side and the bass (Grand-dad and Dad) on the other. There they would sit and sing a whole evening away with a mug or two of ale and a thousand memories lighting their faces with simple and sincere enjoyment.

When I first remember Grand-dad, he had not long since handed over his job of Farm Bailliff to Dad. He was a man much revered in the village and his forthright manner, his loud bass voice and complement of status symbols — from large watch and chain to amber and meerchaum cigar-holder — commanded just the right amount of respect and affection from his fellow villagers. He wore a fringe of white whiskers beneath his chin, known locally as a "Chiswick beard", which, by way of side-boards, met up with his fine head of snowy-white hair. He had had very little schooling and had taught himself to read and write. Nevertheless, all the Farm Books wages, stock and cattle records, acreages and yields — were kept meticulously up to date. His younger brother, Tom, was, to a certain extent, a younger version, bearing a distinct resemblance to his older brother, but with a much lighter voi and, perhaps, a more whimsical character.

But of all times in the year, of course, Christmas was the season when all members of the family congregated at Grand-dad's home at Rottingdean. That little cottage would fairly bulge with aunties, uncles, and cousins that we only saw at Christmas-time. On Christmas morning, Ron and I had to take the gigantic turkey and a great round of beef down to the village bake-house to be cooked. It was all far too large to be put into the cottage oven. We used to carry it on a home-made wooden affair about six feet long which resembled a stretcher and, walking slowly down the High Street with our load draped in white linen sheets, we must have presented a somewhat grussome and disconcerting sight. At dinner time, everyone seemed to be flocking round Grand-dad who, as hub of the family, was in a grand, benevolent and expansive mood, smoking a cigar in his favourite holder and sporting a fancy waistcoat — the one with the cat's-eyes buttons. Everyone was talking, hardly anyone listening, and there was a rich smell of Christmas pudding, cigar smoke and wine, all of which added up to that warm, cheerful, friendly atmosphere I have always associated with the "spirit of Christmas".

After dinner, the older folk would doze in front to the fire, but we used to go for a walk to try to work up an appetite for tea. It was important to have plenty of room for a good tea because every mince pie we ate was supposed to ensure a happy month in the coming year. But with the best will in the world after such a dinner, twelve would be beyond the capacity of even the most enthusiastic. I have managed seven or eight, which would take me through July or August, but by that time my trouser buttons would be so tight that, reluctantly, I had to leave the rest of the year to look after itself.

About seven in the evening, grouped in a wide circle round the fire, we would all settle down to start singing. Only carols and Christmas hymns were allowed up until midnight. After that — when it was officially Boxing Day — the rest of the extensive repertoire came into its own. Towards 1 A.M. the ladies started to lay the supper — and what a supper! There was a great round of cold underdone roast beef, a ham and a vast cold rabbit pie covered with golden crust, laced with a flank of bacon and the best part of a dozen hard-boiled eggs all set in a rich, thick jelly. During supper, we always sang "The Babes in the Wood" and, when everyone had a full plate set in front of them, Grand-dad would strike up, "Oh, don't you remember..." and we would all join in, interspersing singing with eating and vice-versa, ingeniously maintaining a steady continuity of both. It was really a work of art and only came after years of practice, this singing in relays. I can see Grand-dad now, finishing a line of the song with a piece of rabbit pie poised on his fork, handing over the song to Uncle Tom and

consuming the mouthful of pie before taking up the tune again two lines later, and so on until the song and most of the supper was over. By this time some of us younger ones were practically crying into our supper plates from grief over the story. This custom went on for years and was continued long after the old man's death.

These old songs, then, were symbolic of a way of life that was fast slipping away and seemed to inspire a certain sense of permanence in a rapidly changing world. They cannot be said to belong to Rottingdean any more than any folk song can be attributed to any particular area (this with very few exceptions — "The Derby Ram," etc.), but they are the versions as sung in the village. These are the songs of the open Down where the Channel wind brings the tang of the sea to mingle with the scent of the gorse. They belong to the shearing barn or the lambing fold built high with fuzz-bush against the early March winds. They know no accompaniment but the call of the seagull, the song of the lark, or the wavering cry of the newborn in search of its dam. They are at home with the sighing of the wind in the hawthorn or the distant thunder of surf on the shore.

But if you take one and plunge it into a bewildering world of microphones and mixers, crochets and quavers and "beats to the bar", then something dies inside it. It is like the poor butterfly whose dusty ghost, pinned to a white card in a museum showcase, bears little resemblance to the elusive flash of glory that fluttered around the buddleia bush.

Up to fifty years ago, they were familiar in nearly every cottage, but now, alas, there are scarcely any villager who could sing one song right through. But in years gone by, on Saturday nights in the tap-room of the Black Horse in the High Street ot the Plough up by the pond, with the atmosphere heavy with shag tobacco smoke and a pot in each man's hand, the walls would fairly shake with sound as a well-known chorus was roared out for sometimes, it seemed, the hundredth time. It always struck me that the company in general, having found a tune to their liking, were loath to leave it and would repeat the chorus, or such as they knew of it, over and over again with undiminishing enthusiasm until such time as "Order" was called for the next singer. This was the signal for an expectant silence to fall on the room and the performer was always afforded the utmost attention until we were all invited ("All together, now") to join in the chorus. In this manner the work-wearing hours of the week were forgotten — the knife edged "north-easter" seemed a long way from that near stifling room to the shepherd who spent his working day on the lonely down — and the cheery faces and shining eyes were proof enough that relaxation such as this was ample fortification against the week's work ahead. No paid entertainers were

required in those days. Apart from the undeniable pleasure of having a good sing, it was a well established principle that you never paid anyone else to do a job you could do for yourself.

On my earliest visits to the public houses (clandestine visits, of course, for they were probably far too early in life for my spiritual welfare), The Black Horse was the favourite place for a song. After all, this was the inn that old Tommy Copper had kept on his retirement from being farm carter (NOTE: The Plough as stated in the Folk Song Journal) and I suppose the tradition just lived on. Across one of the beams in the low ceiling were slung the set of hand-bells which had been rung by the team, headed by old Tom, at the big houses in the village green at Christmas time when the Mummer's play was also performed and the old carols sung. This, in Dad's words, "faded out about 1900". There, having made sure from Ernie Tellick, the landlord, that Dad was not there and it was all clear for me to go in, I would slip discreetly into the corner of the bar. All the old company would be there, many of them old mates of Grand-dad. Wonderful old characters, some of them, with complexions tanned to match the shining mahogany counter and beards or sidewhiskers bleached by the sun and wind to the colour of the froth that topped the pots and tankards that seemed never far from their lips. Sometimes, having been spotted, I would be called upon for a song. "Come on, young Copper, let's have 'Spencer, the Rover'." Although I knew the tunes well enough, I sometimes found that I did not know the words to all the verses. If this happened, there was one easy way of learning. I had only to start singing the song at home, sometime during the week, and Dad was bound to join in and supply the missing lines, so on the next Saturday I would be able to sing the song right through. It was well worth the effort, for the old saying "every song a drink" was also a custom and many a rewarding pint have I had at the end of a song. I remember old Ralph Cheal, a pal of Grand-dad's, who once filled my adolescent head with pride by saying, "Well done, mairt (mate); ol' Jimmy Copper will never be dead all the time you're alive." At the end of a song, quite often the company in general would sing,

A jolly good song and jolly well sung,
Jolly good company, everyone;
If you can beat it you're welcome to try,
But always remember the singer is dry.

Give the old bounder some beer —
He's had some, he's had some.
Then give the old bounder some more.

Half a pint of Burton won't hurt'n, I'm certain,
O, half a pint of Burton won't hurt'n, I'm sure.

S - U - P

Many of the songs, through being the favourite of a particular singer, would become known as "his song" and no one else would dream of singing it unless the recognized singer was not in the present company. A singer's repertoire, therefore, was like a little window into his character, for he accumulated his songs by the method of natural selection. In this manner, a man's songs — sweet or sad, gallant or gay — would give some indication of the man himself.

New songs were learnt orally from singers in neighboring villages when on visits for sheep shearing, farm sales or the like. Uncle John has told me how on some occasions he has captured the tune and a couple of verses of a song on a first visit and has had to wait sometimes months before the next meeting with the singer in order to garner the complete version. But then, a good song was always worth waiting for.

There is no telling which is really the oldest song nor exactly when the family first started singing them. But at least we have some of them written by Grand-dad in his own inimitable spelling. At the foot of one of them, "The Shepherd of the Downs", he wrote, "My grandfathers used to sing this song." His grandfather, John Copper, was born in Rottingdean in 1793.

It was Grand-dad and his brother, Tom, of whom Miss Kate Lee wrote in the No. 1 Journal of the English Folk Song Society in 1899. Quote:

> "I shall never forget the delight of hearing the two Mr. Coppers, who gave me the songs, and who are now members of the Society. Mr. William (James) is a foreman of a farm and his brother is the landlord of the Plough Inn (Black Horse), a very small public house. They were so proud of their Sussex songs, and sang them with an enthusiasm grand to hear, and when I questioned them as to how many they thought they could sing, they said they thought 'half a hundred'. You had only to start either of them on the subject of the song and they commenced at once. 'Oh, Mr. Copper, can you sing me a love song, a sea song, or a plough song?' It did not matter what it was, they looked at each other significantly, and with perfectly grave faces off they would go. Mr. Thomas Copper's voice was as flexible as a bird's. He always sang the under part of the song like

a sort of obbligato, impossible, at first hearing, to put down. I hope to show you the beautiful variety of these songs which, by the way, I only collected in November last ...".

They were made honorary members for their contributions of songs in 1899. Many years later, in 1952, Dad, Uncle John, his son, Ron, and I shared a similar Honour when we appeared at the Folk Song and Dance Festival at the Albert Hall, London. At the Diamond Jubilee of the Folk Song Society in 1958, Ron and I went to the Cecil Sharp House in London, the Headquarters of the Society, and were privileged to be in such distinguished company as Dr. Ralph Vaughan Williams, Percy Grainger, and many others. The cake baked to commemorate this historic occasion, which was cut by Dr. Vaughan Williams, bore an inscription in icing which included the opening bars of "Claudy Banks", which was reputedly the first song collected in behalf of the Society and can be said to have played an important part in the formation of it.

So a tradition coming down to us from the quiet mists of eighteenth century rural England (and maybe even before) lives on into the brash, noisy, electronic world of today. How much longer it will continue is, of course, impossible to say. But many years ago, Ron and I made a vow that we would never be the weak links in the long chain of "singing Coppers". We are happy to think that, in some small measure, we have been lucky enough to be able to fulfill that promise.

A BRIEF NOTE REGARDING THE SONGS ON THIS RECORD — The following songs have not previously been collected: "The Two Brethren", "The Month of May", "The Shepherd of the Downs", "The Threshing Song", "Sportsmen Arouse", "The Hard Times of Old England" and "Good Ale". "The Honest Labourer" is a version of "The Nobleman and the Thresher" which has been collected in eight English counties and was extensively printed on broadsides. "The Lark in the Morning" was also widely distributed and appeared on broadsides as "The Plowman's Glory". Only one other version of the following songs has been found, always in Southern England: "The Spring Glee", "Dame Durden", "Birds in the Spring" and "Babes in the Wood", although the latter has been widely reported in America and appears to be a fragment of a much longer ballad of broadside origin. Four versions of "Cupid's Garden" have been collected in the North, South, East and West of England. Several Yorkshire versions of "Spencer, the Rover" have been found, as well as versions from the West Country and East Anglia. Three other versions of "The Season Round" have been reported, all in Southern England.

A NOTE ON THE SINGING STYLE OF THE COPPERS: This type of

two-part harmonizing, as one can learn from what Bob says about his own family, goes back several generations and may well go back several centuries. Although much of the harmony might at first sound similar to church choir or glee club, there is much in the style which could be an example of primitive folk polyphony survival. Their practice is to give a "hovering effect" in passage from one main note to another, the main notes themselves very often being in unison. Their style is not confined to their own family as I have heard other family pairs, not only in the region of the South Downs, but also in the Thames Valley area.

Peter Kennedy

THE SONGS

Side I; Band 1. SPORTSMEN AROUSE

Sportsmen arouse, the morning is clear,
The larks are singing all in the air.
Go and tell your sweet lover the hounds are out.
Saddle your horses, their saddles prepare;
We'll away to some cover to seek for some hare.

We searched the woods, the groves all round;
The trial being over, the game is found.
Then off she springs, through brake she flies.
Follow, follow the musical horn,
Sing follow, hark forward, the innocent hare.

Our huntsman blows his joyful sound,
Tallyho, my boys, all over the Downs.
From the woods to the valleys, see how she creeps.
Follow, follow the musical horn,
Sing follow, hark forward, the innocent hare.

All along the green turf she pants for breath;
Our huntsman he shouts out for death.
Relope, relope, retiring hare.
Follow, follow the musical horn,
Sing follow, hark forward, the innocent hare.

This hare has led us a noble run.
Success to sportsmen everyone.
Such a chase she has led us, four hours or more.
Wine and beer we'll drink without fear;
We'll drink a success to the innocent hare.

Side I; Band 2. THE LARK IN THE MORNING

The lark in the morning she arises from her nest
And she ascends all in the air with the dew upon her breast,
And with the pretty ploughboy she'll whistle and she'll sing,
And at night she'll return to her own nest again.

When his day's work is over, oh, what then will he do?
Perhaps then into some country wake he'll go
And with his pretty sweetheart, he'll dance and he'll sing
And at night he'll return with his love back again.

And as they returned from the wake unto the town
The meadows they are mowed and the grass it is cut down;
The nightingale she whistles upon the hawthorn spray
And the moon it is a-shining upon the new-mown hay.

Good luck unto the ploughboys wherever they may be.
They will take a winsome lass for to sit upon their knee,
And with a jug of beer, boys, they'll whistle and they'll sing,
And the ploughboy is as happy as a prince or a king.

Side I; Band 3. THE HARD TIMES OF OLD ENGLAND

Come all brother tradesmen that travel along;
Oh, pray come and tell me where the trade is all gone.
Long time I have travelled and cannot find none,
And it's, "Oh, the hard times of Old England,
In Old England very hard times."

Provisions you buy at the shop, it is true,
But, if you've no money, there's none there for you.
So, what's a poor man and his family to do?
And it's, "Oh, the hard times..." etc.

If you go to a shop and you ask for a job,
They will answer you there with a shake and a nod;
So, that's enough to make a man turn out and rob.
And it's, "Oh, the hard times..." etc.

You will see the poor tradesman a-walking the street
From morning till night, for employment to seek,
And scarcely they've got any shoes to their feet.
And it's, "Oh, the hard times..." etc.

Our soldiers and sailors have just come from war;
Been fighting for their Queen and their country, 'tis sure.
Come home to be starved, better stayed where they were.
And it's, "Oh, the hard times..." etc.

And now to conclude and to finish my song,
Let us hope that these hard times they will not last long;
I hope soon to have occasion to alter my song.
And it's, "Oh, the hard times..." etc.

Side I; Band 4. SPENCER, THE ROVER

These words were composed by Spencer, the rover,
Who travelled Great Britain and most parts of Wales;
He had been so reduced, which caused great confusion,
And that was the reason he went on the roam.

In Yorkshire, near Rotherham, he had been on his rambles;
Being weary of travelling, he sat down to rest.
At the foot of yonder mountain there runs a clear fountain;
With bread and cold water, he himself did refresh.

It tasted more sweeter than the gold he had wasted,
More sweeter than honey and gave more content.
But the thoughts of his babies, lamenting their father,
Brought tears in their eyes, which made him lament.

The night fast approaching, to the woods he resorted,
With woodbine and ivy his bed for to make.

There he dreamt about sighing, lamenting and
crying:
Go home to your family and rambling forsake.

On the fifth of November, I've a reason to re-
member,
When first he arrived home to his family and
wife;
They stood so surprised, when first he arrived,
To behold such a stranger once more in their
sight.

His children came around him with their prittle-
prattling stories,
With their prittle-prattling stories to drive
care away.
Now they are united, like birds of one feather,
Like bees in one hive, contented they'll be.

So, now he is a-living in his cottage, contented
With woodbine and roses growing all around the
door.
He's as happy as those who have thousands of ric
Contented he'll stay and go a-rambling no more.

Side I; Band 5. THE SPRING GLEE

When Spring comes on, the birds do sing,
The lambs do skip and the bells do ring,
While we enjoy their glorious charm,
So noble and so gay.
The primrose blooms
And the cowslip, too.
The violets in their sweet retire,
The roses shining through the briar,
And the daffa-down dillys which we admire
Will die and fade away.

Young men and maidens will be seen
On mountains high and meadows green;
They will talk of love and sport and play
While these young lambs do skip away.
At night, they'll homeward wend their way
When evening stars appear.
The primrose blooms
And the cowslip, too.
The violets in their sweet retire,
The roses shining through the briar,
And the daffa-down dillys which we admire
Will die and fade away.

The dairymaid to milking goes,
Her blooming cheeks as red as a rose.
She carries her pail all on her arm,
So cheerful and so gay.
She milks, she sings,
And the valleys ring.
The small birds on the branches there
Sit listening to this lovely fair;
She is her master's trust and care,
She is the ploughman's joy.
The primrose blooms
And the cowslips, too.
The violets in their sweet retire,
The roses shining through the briar,
And the daffa-down dillys which we admire
Will die and fade away.

Side I; Band 6. GOOD ALE

It is of good ale to you I'll sing
And to good ale I'll always cling.
I like my mug filled to the brim
And I'll drink all you'd like to bring.
O, good ale, thou art my darling;
Thou art my joy, both night and morning.

It is you that helps me with my work
And from a task I'll never shirk
While I can get a good home brew,
And better than one pint, I like two.
O, good ale, etc.

I love you in the early morn,
I love you in daylight, dark, or dawn.
And when I'm weary, worn, or spent,
I'll turn the tap and ease the vent.
O, good ale, etc.

It is you that makes my friends my foes;
It is you that makes me wear old clothes.
But, since you come so near my nose,
It's up you comes and down you goes.
O, good ale, etc.

And if all my friends from Adam's race
Was to meet me here all in this place,
I could part from all without one fear
Before I'd part from my good beer.
O, good ale, etc.

And if my wife should me despise,
How soon I'd give her two black eyes;
But if she loved me as I love thee,
What a happy couple we should be.
O, good ale, etc.

You have caused me debts that I've often swore
I never would drink strong ale any more.
But you, for all that, I'll forgive
And I'll drink strong ale as long as I live.
O, good ale, etc.

Side I; Band 7. THE BABES IN THE WOOD

O, don't you remember, a long time ago,
Those two little babes, their names I don't know
They strayed away one bright summer's day;
Those two little babes got lost on their way.
Pretty babes in the wood,
Pretty babes in the wood;
O, don't you remember
Those babes in the wood?

Now the day being gone and the night coming on,
Those two little babies sat under a stone.
They sobbed and they sighed and they sat there and cried;
Those two little babes they laid down and died.
Pretty babes in the wood, etc.

Now the robins so red, how swiftly they sped;
They put out their wide wings and over them spread.
And all the day long on the branches they thronged;
They sweetly did whistle and this was their song.
Pretty babes in the wood, etc.

Side I; Band 8. CUPID'S GARDEN

'Twas down in Cupid's Garden I wandered for to view
The sweet and lovely flowers that in the garden grew,
And one it was sweet Jasamin, the lily, pink and rose;
They are the finest flowers that in the garden grow.

I had not been in the garden but scarcely half
an hour,
When I beheld two maidens, sat under a shady
bower,
And one it was sweet Nancy, so beautiful and
fair,
The other was a virgin and did the laurels wear.

I boldly stepped up to them and unto them did
say,
"Are you engaged to any young man, come tell to
me, I pray?"
"No, I'm not engaged to any young man, I solemnly
declare;
I mean to stay a virgin and still the laurels
wear."

So, hand in hand together, this loving couple
went;
To view the secrets of her heart was the sailor's
full intent,
Or whether she would slight him while he to the
wars did go.
Her answer was, "Not I, my love, for I love a
sailor bold."

It's down in Portsmouth Harbour, there's a ship
lies waiting there;
Tomorrow to the seas I'll go, let the wind blow
high or fair.
And, if I should live to return again, how happy
I should be
With you, my love, my own true love, sitting
smiling on my knee.

(NOTE: The title refers, ambiguously, to "Cuper's
Garden", which was a Thameside pleasure garden
like the better known Ranelagh.)

Side II; Band 1. THE TWO BRETHREN

Come all jolly ploughmen and help me to sing;
I will sing in the praise of you all.
If a man he don't labour, how can he get bread?
I will sing and make merry withal.

It was of two young brethren, two young brethren
born,
It was of two young brethren born;
One he was a shepherd and a tender of sheep,
The other a planter of corn.

We will rile it, we will toil it through mud and
through clay;
We will plough it up deeper and low.
Then, after, comes the seedsman his corn for
to sow
And the harrows to rake it in rows.

There is April, there is May, there is June and
July;
What a pleasure it is for to see the corn grow.
In August we will reap it, we will cut, sheaf,
and bind it,
And go down with our scythes for to mow.

And, after we have reaped it of every sheaf
And gathered up every ear,
With a drop of good beer, boys, and our hearts
full of cheer,
We will wish them another good year.

Our barns they are full, our fields they are
cleared;
Good health to our master and friends.
We will make no more to do, but we will plough
and we'll sow
And provide for the very next year.

Side II; Band 2. THE MONTH OF MAY

'Twas in the pleasant month of May,
In the springtime of the year,
And down in yonder meadow
There runs a river clear.
See how the little fishes,
How they do sport and play;
Causes many a lad and many a lass
To go there a-making hay.

Then in comes that scythesman,
That meadow to mow down,
With his old leathered bottle
And the ale that runs so brown.
There's many a stout and a labouring man
Goes there his skill to try;
He works, he mows, he sweats, he blows,
And the grass cuts very dry.

Then in comes both Tom and Dick
With their pitchforks and their rakes,
And likewise black-eyed Susan
The hay all for to make.

There's a sweet, sweet, sweet and a jug, jug, jug;
How the harmless birds do sing
From the morning to the evening
As we're a-haymaking.

It was just at one evening
As the sun was a-going down,
We saw the jolly piper
Come a-strolling through the town.
There he pulled out his tapering pipes
And he made the valleys ring;
So we all put down our rakes and forks
And we left off haymaking.

We called for a dance
And we tripped it along;
We danced all round the haycocks
Till the rising of the sun.
When the sun did shine such a glorious light,
How the harmless birds did sing;
Each lad he took his lass in hand
And went back to his haymaking.

Side II; Band 3. THE HONEST LABOURER

It was of an honest labourer,
As I've heard people say,
He goes out in the morning
And he works hard all the day.
And he's got seven children
And most of them are small;
He has nothing but hard labour
To maintain them all.

A gentlemen, one evening,
Walking out to take the air,
He met with this poor labouring man
And solemnly declared,
"I think you are that thrasherman."
"Yes sir," said he, "that's true."
"How do you get your living
Just as well as you do?"

"Sometimes I do reap
And sometimes I do mow
And other times to hedging
And to ditching I do go;
There is nothing comes amiss to me
From the harrow to the plough.
That's how I get my living —
By the sweat of my brow.

"When I go home at night
Just as tired as I be,
I take my youngest child
And I dance him on my knee.
The others come around me
With their prittle-prattling toys,
And that's the only comfort
A working man enjoys.

"My wife and I are willing,
And we both join in one yoke;
We live like two turtle doves
And not one word provoke,
Although the times are very hard
And we are very poor.
We can scarcely keep the raving wolf
Away from the door."

"Well done, you honest labourer,
You speak well of your wife.
I hope you will live happy
All the days of your life.
Here's forty acres of good land
Which I will give to thee,
Which will help to maintain your wife
And little family.

Side II; Band 4. BIRDS IN THE SPRING

One May morning I chanced for to roam,
And strolled through the fields by the side of
the grove.
It was there I did hear the harmless birds sing
And you never heard so sweet as the birds in the
Spring.

At the end of the grove I sat myself down
And the song of the nightingale echoed all round
Their song was so charming, their notes were so
clear,
No music, no songster can with them compare.

All you that come here, the small birds to hear,
I'll have you pay attention, so pray all draw
near.
And, when you're growing old, you will have
this to say,
That you never heard so sweet as the birds
on the spray.

Side II; Band 5. THE SHEPHERD OF THE DOWNS

A shepherd of the Downs, being weary of his port,
Retired to the hills where he used to resort.
In want of refreshment, he laid himself down;
He wanted no riches (n)or wealth from the Crown.

He drank of the cold brook, he ate of the tree;
Himself he did enjoy, from all sorrow was free.
He valued no girl, be she ever so fair;
No pride or ambition, he valued no care.

As he was a-walking one evening so clear,
A heavenly sweet voice sounded soft in his ear.
He stood like a post, not one step could he move;
He knew not what ailed him, but thought it was
love.

He beheld a young damsel, a fair modest maid;
She had something amiss and disguised in her
face.
Disguised in her face, she unto him did say,
"How now, master shepherd, how come you this way?"

The shepherd he replied and modestly said,
"I never was surprised before at a maid.
When first you beheld me, from sorrow I was free,
But now you have stolen my poor heart away."

He took her by the hand and this he did say,
"We will get married, pretty Betsy, today."
So to church they did go and were married, we
hear,
And now he'll enjoy pretty Betsy, his dear.

Side II; Band 6. THE THRESHING SONG

It's all very well to have a machine
To thrash your wheat and barley clean;
To thrash it and whim it, all fit for sale,
And take it to market brisk and well.

Singing tumble dum deary, flair up Mary,
Make her old table shine.

The man who made her, he made her so well,
He made each cog and wheel to tell;
While the big wheel hums, the little 'un hums,
And the feeder sits above the drum.

Singing tumble dum deary, etc.

There's Old Father Howard the sheaves to put,
While Old Mother Howard she does make up.
And Mary she sits and feeds all day
And Johnny he carries the straw away.

Singing tumble dum deary, etc.

At seven o'clock we do begin,
And we usually stop about nine or ten
To have our beer and to oil her up,
Then off we go till one o'clock.

Singing tumble dum deary, etc.

Then, after a bite and a drink all round,
The driver climbs to his box again
And, with his long whip and a shout of "All righ
He drives then round till five at night.

Singing tumble dum deary, etc.

Side II; Band 7. DAME DURDEN

Dame Durden kept five servant maids
To carry the milking pail;
She also kept five labouring men
To use the spade and flail.
'Twas Moll and Bet, and Doll and Kit,
And Dolly to drag her tail;
It was Tom and Dick, and Joe and Jack,
And Humphrey with his flail.
And Joe kissed Dolly, and Jack kissed Kitty
And Humphrey with his flail;
And Kitty she was the charming girl
To carry her milking pail.

Dame Durden in the morning so soon
She did begin to call;
To rouse her servants, maids and men,
She did begin to bawl.
'Twas Moll and Bet, etc.

'Twas on the morn of Valentine
When birds began to tweet,
Dame Durden and her maids and men
They all together meet.
'Twas moll and Bet, etc.

Side II; Band 8. THE SEASON ROUND

NOTE: This song used to be followed by a Toast to the Plough: "Success to the bright plough-share, and may

it never rust." Verse nine is, of course, a recent addition by the Copper family. Other versions have been collected in Southern England and published under the title of "The Seasons of the Year."

The sun has gone down and the sky it looks red,
Down on my soft pillow where I lay my head.
When I open my eyes for to see the stars shine,
Then the thoughts of my true love run into my mind.

The sap has gone down and the leaves they do fall.
"To hedging and ditching!" our farmers they'll call.
We will trim up their hedges, we will cut down their wood;
And the farmers they'll all say, "Our faggots run good."

Now hedging being over, then sawing draws near.
We will send for the sawyer, the woods for to clear.
And after he has sawed them and tumbled them down,
Then there he will floor them all on the cold ground.

When sawing is over, then seed-time comes round.
See our teams, they are all ready preparing the ground.
Then the man with his seed-lip he'll scatter the corn,
Then the harrows they will bury, to keep it from harm.

Now seed-time being over, then haying draws near.
With our scythe, rake, and pitch-fork, those meadows to clear,
We will cut down their grass, boys, and carry it away;
We will furn (?) it to the green grass and then call it hay.

When haying is over, then harvest draws near.
We will send to our brewer to brew us strong beer.
And in brewing strong beer, we will cut down their corn;
We will take it to the barn, boys, to keep it from harm.

Now harvest being over, bad weather comes on;
We will send for the thrasher to thrash out the corn.
His hand-staff he'll handle, his swinger he'll swing;
Till the very next harvest we'll all meet again.

Now since we have brought this so cheerfully round,
We will send for the jolly ploughman to plough up the ground.
See the boy with his whip and the man to his plough;
Here's a health to the jolly ploughman that ploughs up the ground.

Now things they do change as the time passes on;
I'm afraid I'll have occasion to alter my song.
You'll see a boy with a tractor a-going like hel
Whatever farming is coming to, there's no tongue can tell.

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