

IAN ROBB
ROSE & CROWN

IAN ROBB ROSE & CROWN

FOLK-LEGACY
FSI-106



With Ian Bell, Alistair Brown, Grit Laskin, Anne Lederman and Shelley Posen.

I don't know who Ian Robb thinks he is. There was a time when he was content with just being one of the best singers of British traditional song around. He has a great voice. People who know say his concertina playing is hard to beat. Admittedly he's paid his dues—formative years at the Goat Inn in St. Alban's around such people as Ewan MacColl, Peggy Seeger, John Faulkner, Trevor Crozier, Frankie Armstrong, Tim Hart and Maddy Prior. It shows too. His reputation has been steadily growing on both sides of the Atlantic, with impressive record sales and a list of concert and festival appearances all across North America. You'd think he'd be satisfied with that lot, wouldn't you? Not him! Now it seems he wants to change the world. He's writing articles in folk music magazines pointing out things that need changing in folk music today, has been a director of the Canadian Folk Music Society, and he's taken to writing songs too!

I must admit they're very good, but to say the least, they're not very respectful. He is taking pot shots at some of our most cherished institutions like the royal family, Maggie Thatcher, and the Falklands war, and saying nasty things about the modernisation of pubs. Now, he may think he's a navel-gazing songwriter type but he can't fool me. I can tell that he grew up singing the old songs. All his new ones sound as though they've been around for a while—great tunes, and choruses that sound as if they've been pressed into shape by a thousand pub singalongs.

And listen to his concertina playing. Flawless. It makes you sick. Who would have thought that the tunes on this album would have sounded so well together? He can make the most unlikely combinations work.

All right, it worked this time. Even if this album has turned out to be the greatest thing since sliced bread, though, it's no excuse for being opinionated, breaking rules, and not taking advice. I think this record should have been called, "Rose and Crown and Golden Stag are Dead." Would he listen to me? Not a bit of it!

Talent isn't everything you know!

Alistair Brown

Side 1

The Jolly Grinder (<i>Trad.</i>)	2:46
Aftermath (<i>Trad.</i>)	6:32
Diana (<i>Ian Robb/ P.R.O. Canada</i>)	5:08
The Trees They Do Grow High (<i>Trad.</i>)	4:02
Song For The New Year (<i>Ian Robb/P.R.O Canada</i>)	5:20

Side 2

The Old Rose & Crown (<i>Ian Robb/P.R.O. Canada</i>)	5:36
The Iron Lady (<i>Ian Robb/P.R.O. Canada</i>)	5:04
The Female Rambling Sailor (<i>Trad.</i>)	4:31
Sherborne Waltz/Sweet Forget-me-not/Gaspe (<i>Trad.</i>)	5:51
Singer's Farewell (<i>Robb, Wesley, Denson/ P.R.O. Canada</i>)	3:06

Produced by Sandy Paton, Grit Laskin and Ian Robb.

Cover Photograph by Rosemary Brown.

Border and Title Calligraphy by Skye McDonald

Layout and Design by Walter Schwarz, Rosemary Brown and Ian Robb.

Anne Lederman and Ian Bell perform together as "Muddy York".

Thanks to Sandy for his discriminating ear and endless patience, to Caroline for making a recording session seem like a holiday, to Cheryl Fenner for some wonderful food and to Steve Lytle, Ian Thompson and Doug Creighton for the loan of instruments.

Special thanks to Alistair, Anne, Grit, Ian and Shelley for their ideas and collective sense of humour; to absent Friends (of Fiddlers' Green) for keeping me permanently on my toes; to Rosie who could make even Prince Charles photogenic, and to Val, for giving me love, encouragement and what little sanity I possess.

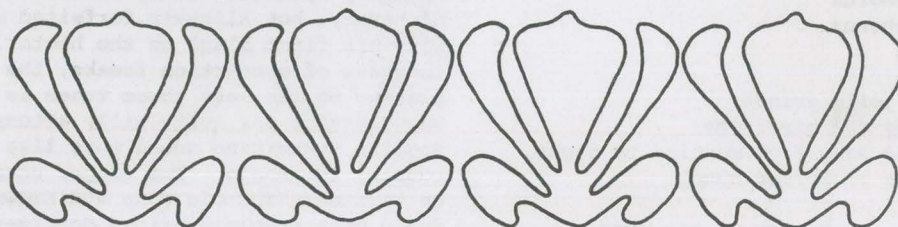
Ian Robb

For information and bookings, contact Ian Robb at (613) 722-0482

Copyright © © 1985 Folk-Legacy Records, Inc. Sharon, Connecticut 06069 All rights reserved

IAN ROBB

ROSE & CROWN



FSI-106

Copyright © © 1985
FOLK-LEGACY RECORDS, INC.
Sharon, Connecticut 06069
All Rights Reserved

THE SONGS

THE JOLLY GRINDER

Side 1, Band 1.

Learned from my good friend Louis Killen (see discography), who has always been an inspiration. Louis says this parody of "The Miller of Dee," set in the iron and steel industry of the English 1830's, was part of a general reaction to the advocates of temperance, who seemed to be determined to remove every small pleasure from a worker's existence. Paraphrase of the period: "Work is the curse of the drinking classes." May the Moral Majority take note.

Ian: concertina
Grit: guitar, chorus
Anne: fiddle, chorus
Shelley: chorus

*There was a jolly grinder
Once lived by the river Don;
He worked and sang from morning to night,
And sometimes he worked none.*

*But still the burden of his song
Forever used to be,
"Tis never worthwhile to work too long,
For it doesn't agree with me."*

*He seldom worked on Mondays,
Except near Christmas Day;
'Twas not the labour that he'd shun,
For 'twas easier far than play.*

*A pale teetotaller chanced to meet
Our grinder one fine day.
As he sat at the door with his pipe and
his glass,
He unto him did say,
"You destroy your health and you senses, too."
Says the grinder, "You're much too free!
Attend to your work, if you've owt to do,
And don't interfere with me!*

*"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 I 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!"*

THE AFTERMATH

Side 1, Band 2.

This is an exercise in fitting together tunes which weren't exactly made for each other. The tunes are "The Mathematician," by J. Scott-Skinner (who ought to have known better) — I learned this horror from Scottish fiddler and generally consummate musician, Brian McNeill; English country dance standard "Speed the Plough;" an approximation to the Sherborne Morris version of "The Cuckoo's Nest;" and, finally, an almost Spike Jones (or is it Milligan?) treatment of "Mon Reve," a tune originally in a sort-of-hornpipe tempo, and taught to me by Alistair Brown. I would normally apologise to my source for this sort of heresy, but Alistair forfeited my regrets with his first blast on the hooter. For the interest of concertina freaks, the style of playing on the last three tunes is my singularly unsuccessful and quite silly attempt to make the English concertina sound more like its country cousin, the Anglo. The deeper concertina sound on this and "The Old Rose and Crown" was produced by a treble-baritone double-reeded English concertina, made by Wheatstone and kindly lent to me by Ian Thompson.

Ian: concertina, double-reeded concertina
Grit: long-neck mandolin, unsolicited comment
Ian B.: guitar, button accordion ("Mon Reve"),
bass

Anne: piano
Alistair: button accordion ("Speed the Plough"),
various noise-makers
Shelley: various noise-makers

DIANA
Side 1, Band 3. ♪

One thing about emigration, it gives you a great opportunity to laugh objectively at the antics of your ex-countrymen and women! I think I'll be a Martian next.

Anne: piano
Ian B.: button accordion
Grit: tenor banjo
All: chorus

Our monarch's son, the Prince of Wales, a
lovely boy, they say,
Got wed last week in London town, all on
a summer's day.
With processions and with fanfares, a
regular to-do,
With all the royals from 'round the
world, and Dukes and Earls, too.
And as their carriage passed along,
amidst the shouts and cheers,
With "oohs" and "aahs" and "ain't she
lovely" ringing in their ears,
Our Queen she turned to Philip, with a
tear all in her eye,
And to her loving consort she reflected,
with a sigh:

She might have been a Catholic, a
Moslem or a Jew,
Red or black or yellow, or some other
dreadful hue,
But she's Protestant, she's English,
and her blood is royal blue;
She's a lady, she's perfection, she's
Diana.

Now, they say when Charlie brought her
home one afternoon, for tea,
His mum and dad were somewhat cool, well,
quite predictably,
For she weren't the first young debutante
had tried to trap his troth,
And most had been unsuitable, or Catholic,
or both;
But when they'd looked her in the mouth
and she'd cantered 'round the yard,
They soon began to think again — perhaps
they'd been too hard?
So they had her checked for scandal, im-
propriety and sin;
They found her neat, sweet and complete,
both outside and within.

Now, Lady Di, as she was known, soon played
to rave reviews.
The darling of the press was she, the
nation's hottest news;
There was pictures in the paper of her
riding on her bike;
They even showed some pictures that her
daddy didn't like.
Now, when Princess Anne got wind of this,
she took Di by the hand,
Said, "Darling, don't put up with this,
your privacy demand;
Be patient and be tactful, in the manner
of a toff,
But, if the bastards take no heed, just
tell them, 'Bugger off!'"

So, although she's scared of horses, thus
a less-than-perfect mate,
At thirty-two, Charles had to woo before
it got too late.
So, the royal quack examined and pronounced
her well-equipped;
"For bearing royal offspring, she is
adequately hipped."
She's beautiful, demure, she's graceful
and refined,
With teeth that shine like pearls and a
face that's hardly lined;
She's intelligent, well-spoken, and
extremely upper-class;
Yes, there's rather more to Lady Di than
just a pretty... face.

THE TREES THEY DO GROW HIGH
Side 1, Band 4.

A slightly hybridised version of a very
widely-sung ballad of arranged betrothal;
most of the text and tune comes from the
singing of the great Norfolk traditional
singer, Walter Pardon (see discography).
Thanks also to Peter Bellamy, from whom I
first heard it.

Ian: concertina
Ian B.: bass
Grit: guitar, chorus
Anne: fiddle

Oh, the trees they do grow high
And the leaves they do grow green;
And the day is long and past, my love,
That you and I have seen.
'Tis a cold winter's night
That you and I must bide alone,
For my bonny boy is young,
But he's growing.

Growing,
For my bonny boy is young,
But he's growing.

"Oh, Father, dear Father,
You've done to me much wrong,
For you've wed me to a lad
Who I fear is too young."
"Oh, Daughter, dear Daughter,
If you'll stay at home with me,
It's a lady you will be
While he's growing.

Growing,
It's a lady you will be
While he's growing.

"Oh, we'll send him off to college
For a year or maybe two;
And perhaps in that time, my love,
Into a man he'll grow.
I'll buy you white ribbons
To tie around his bonny waist,
So the ladies they will know
That he's married.

Married,
So the ladies they will know
That he's married."

Well, about the age of sixteen years,
He was a married man,
And at the age of seventeen,
The father of a son;
But at the age of eighteen years,
His grave it was a-growing green;
Cruel death had put an end
To his growing.

Growing,
Cruel death had put an end
To his growing.

"Oh, I'll make my love a shroud
Of the Holland, oh, so fine,
And every stitch I put in it,
The tears come trickling down;
And I'll mourn his fate
Until the day that I die,
But I'll watch o'er his child
While he's growing.

Growing,
Yes, I'll watch o'er his child
While he's growing.

SONG FOR THE NEW YEAR
(Ian Robb/P.R.O. Canada)
Side 1, Band 5.

This took several years to reach its present
form, and it is my hope that in committing it
to vinyl I can abort the write and rewrite
cycle, and do my bit to save our forests...
I guess it expresses fairly well my hopes
for my own kids.

Ian B.: button accordion, bass
Anne: fiddle
All: chorus

One evening so silent as I was out walking,
I spied an old woman sat down by a tree;
And as I drew nigh her, I could hear her
soft talking.
These wishes she made for the child on her
knee.

For the child on her knee,
For the child on her knee,
These wishes she made for the child
on her knee.

First, I'll wish that in peace you may
always be living,
Oh, never to kill at a sergeant's command;
For King and for country's no reason
for giving
Your life and your blood in some far
away land.

Some far away land...

May you be your own master; let no man
control you,
Whether tyrant of government, factory
or farm.
No matter the wages they'll pay to
console you,
To slavery's orders ne'er lift a strong arm.

Ne'er lift a strong arm...

Good health be your fortune, no gift can
excel it,
But guard it from those who would take
it away;
In mills, mines and factories they'll
force you to sell it;
For industry's profit most dearly you'll
pay.

Most dearly you'll pay...

And the last of my hopes is for friendship
and kindred,
For the love of companions is our
greatest need;
And though you may live to the age of
a hundred,
It's young you'll remain while friendships
succeed.

While friendships succeed...

So now, lads and lasses, come fill up
your glasses
And drink a good health to our children
so dear;
To peace free from classes, while history
it passes;
To friends and to loved ones, a happy
new year.

A happy new year...

THE OLD ROSE AND CROWN
(Ian Robb/P.R.O. Canada)
Side 2, Band 1.

A visit to my native London in the mid-seventies left me saddened by the changes brought about in some of my old watering-places, mostly at the hands of the larger brewing companies, and in the single-minded pursuit of profit. Thankfully, this trend has been somewhat reversed, though nothing can compensate a lonely old "regular" for the loss of his or her second home and community meeting place.

Ian: double-reeded concertina
All: chorus

Good friends, gather 'round and I'll tell
you a tale;
It's a story well-known to all lovers of
ale;
For the old English pub, once a man's
second home,
Has been decked out, by brewers, in
plastic and chrome.

Oh, what has become of the old Rose
and Crown,
The Ship, the King's Arms, and the
World Upside-Down?
For oak, brass and leather and a pint
of the best
Fade away like the sun as it sinks
in the west.

The old oaken bar where the pumps filled
your glass
Gives way to formica and tanks full of gas;
And the landlord behind, once a man of
good cheer,
Will just mumble the price as he hands
you your beer.

And where are the friends who would meet
for a jar
And a good game of darts in the old
public bar?
For the dartboard is gone; in its place
is a thing
Where you pull on a handle and lose
all your tin.

But the worst of it all's what they've
done to the beer,
For their shandies and lager will make you
feel queer.
For an arm and a leg they will fill up
your glass
With a half-and-half mixture of ullage*
and gas.

So, come all you good fellows that likes
to sup ale;
Let's hope for a happier end to my tale,
For there's nothing can fill a man's heart
with more cheer
Than to sit in a pub with a pint of good
beer.

*Ullage: waste or spillage

THE IRON LADY
(Ian Robb/P.R.O. Canada)
Side 2, Band 2.

This song says most of what I feel about
Mrs. Thatcher and the Falklands mess. It was
a blatant and cynical political manoeuvre
which ruined or wiped out countless lives and
achieved absolutely nothing. It was written
in response to a newspaper article which pointed
out that, at the time of the British re-invasion,
the fiscal cost of the war amounted to about
a million dollars per British Falklander. The
cost still rises.

Ian B.: button accordion, bass
Shelley: 5-string banjo
Grit: tenor banjo, chorus
Alistair: chorus

I'm an able-bodied seaman, one of Plymouth's
native sons;
Oh, the navy's been my life since I left
school.
Well, I joined to have a job; it was either
that or rob,
And I never thought I'd curse Britannia's
rule.
But I really hadn't bargained for you, dear
Maggie May,
Though I'd heard it said that war would
set us right,
And when the Argies did invade, I should
have known that you'd decide
That, to show you were a man, we'd have
to fight.

Oh, Maggie, Maggie May, you have sent
us far away
To fight upon the Falklands' cruel shore;
In the freezing southern ocean, we're
caught in the commotion
Of your useless bloody politician's war.

Well, it's true the Falkland Islanders had
 reason to complain,
 For no one likes to vanish in the night,
 And it's clear to any punter that the
 generals in their junta
 Just wanted an excuse to start a fight.
 Ah, but Maggie, just like them, you
 weren't too popular back home,
 And the thought of war just filled
 your heart with glee;
 "We will fight them on the beaches,"
 could be heard in all your speeches,
 And the whole damn navy had to go to sea.

As the fleet sailed out of Plymouth,
 they cheered us on our way,
 And the band played all those patriotic
 songs;
 And the girls we left to cry never thought
 to ask us why,
 And we said that we'd be back before too
 long.
 Oh, it's nice to hear the public is behind
 us, one and all;
 That they think the end will justify
 the means,
 And that until our flag is flying, it's
 okay to do some dying.
 Well, you can tell that, Maggie May, to
 the Marines!

Well, you've spent a thousand million on
 your stupid little war,
 Not to mention all those widows left
 to grieve;
 And I can't see why, instead, you don't
 give half a million quid
 To each Falklander, and ask them all
 to leave.
 For, while it's hard to leave the island
 where you were born and bred,
 And it's hard to say goodbye to all your
 friends,
 It's even harder still to die, lose an
 arm, a leg, an eye,
 When you know there are no winners in
 the end.

So, here I sit on board our frigate in
 chilly Falkland Sound,
 Dodging missiles, bombs and bullets by
 the ton,
 And if I get back to Blighty, I'll give
 thanks to the almighty,
 Whether Maggie's little war is lost
 or won.

And the next time I see Maggie or her
 little Tory crew
 Waving flags and spouting patriotic crap,
 I'll suggest that they embark, go to war
 just for a lark,
 And maybe die to keep the pink upon the map.

THE FEMALE RAMBLING SAILOR Side 2, Band 3.

Learned from the exquisite singing of
 Martyn Wyndham-Read (see discography), who,
 I believe, found it in Australia. I've always
 been a sucker for songs about spunky women,
 and this one's magnificent tune makes it
 irresistible. Martyn's version seemed to be
 missing a couple of lines, so I've taken the
 liberty of filling in the gap, in the third
 verse.

Anne: piano
 Ian B.: button accordion
 Ian: concertina

Come all you maids, both near and far,
 And listen to my ditty;
 'Twas near Gravesend there lived a maid,
 She was both neat and pretty.
 Her true love he was pressed away
 And drowned in some foreign sea,
 Which caused this fair maid for to say,
 "I'll be a rambling sailor."

With jacket blue and trousers white,
 Just like a sailor neat and tight,
 The sea it was the heart's delight
 Of the female rambling sailor.
 From stem to stern she freely goes;
 She braves all dangers, fears no foes,
 But soon you shall hear of the overthrow
 Of the female rambling sailor.

Though never did her courage fail,
 'Twas stormy seas and wintry gale
 O'er this fair maiden did prevail,
 This female rambling sailor.
 From stem to stern she freely went,
 Where oft-times she'd been many;
 Her hand did slip and down she fell;
 She calmly bade this world farewell.

When her lily-white breast in sight it came,
 It appeared to be a female's frame;
 Rebecca Young it was the name
 Of the female rambling sailor.
 May the willows wave around her grave
 And 'round the laurels planted,
 May the roses sweet grow at the feet
 Of the one who was undaunted.

So, come all you maids, both near and far,
 And listen to my story;
 Her body is anchored in the ground;
 Let's hope her soul's in glory.
 On the river Thames she's known real well;
 No sailor there could her excel;
 One tear let fall as a last farewell
 To the female rambling sailor.

SHERBORNE WALTZ/SWEET FORGET-ME-NOT/GASPE
 Side 2, Band 4.

There is a handful of sentimental songs in my repertoire which occasionally brings me under fire from those who would listen to a whole evening of "substantial" songs. I admit it: I'm a slop. This Newfoundland gem was brought to my attention by the grand St. John's singer Jim Payne, and I later plundered Shelley Posen's bottomless memory for the words. Neil Rosenberg, of Memorial University's Folklore Archive, says that the earliest recording of the song is in the MacEdward Leach collection, a 1950 rendition by Vince Ledwell, of Calvert, Nfld. (MUNFLA accession no. 78-54). It was later released on a 45rpm single by Eddie Coffey, in 1977, this being the first of a number of commercial recordings.

Anne: piano
 Ian B.: button-accordion
 Grit, Shelley, Alistair: chorus

Fancy brings a thought to me
 Of a flower that's bright and fair;
 Her grace and beauty both combine,
 No brighter jewel more rare.
 Just like a maiden that I knew
 Who shared my happy lot,
 Where we parted, when she whispered,
 "You'll forget me not."

She's graceful and she's charming
 Like the lilies in the pond;
 Time is gliding swiftly by,
 Of her I am so fond.
 The roses and the daisies
 Were blooming 'round the spot
 Where we parted, when she whispered,
 "You'll forget me not."

We met, I really don't know where,
 But still it's just the same,
 For love grows in the busy street
 As well as in the lane.
 I gently clasped her tiny hand,
 One glance at me she shot;
 She dropped her flower, I picked it up,
 'Twas a sweet forget-me-not.

At last there came that happy hour
 When something that I said
 Caused her heart to murmur "Yes"
 And shortly we were wed.
 There stands a house down in the lane,
 In a tiny garden spot
 There grows a flower, I know it well,
 'Tis a sweet forget-me-not.

SHERBORNE WALTZ & GASPE

Two lovely tunes learned from Duncan Bruce, an Englishman who lived in Ottawa for a while recently. Both are apparently known among country dance musicians in the Cotswolds, and the first is perhaps more familiar as a Morris dance, under the name "Orange in Bloom" or "Orange and Blue." Duncan told me that he learned "Gaspe" from an American visitor to England. I guess it only has a few hundred miles to go before it has gone full circle and is back in Gaspe, Quebec. No doubt it would be unrecognisable to the residents of that beautiful peninsula.

Ian: concertina
 Grit: Northumbrian pipes, long-neck mandolin
 Anne: piano
 Alistair: button accordion, false teeth.

SINGER'S FAREWELL
 (New words by Ian Robb/P.R.O. Canada)
 Side 2, Band 5.

Shelley Posen introduced Shape-Note singing to Ottawa a year or so ago, and the Charles Wesley hymn "Hallelujah" became an instant favourite. This somewhat heretical rewrite was sparked by the loss of a number of musical friends over the last couple of years; I'm sure they're having a good time, wherever. The arrangement is the work of one William Walker (c. 1837), with the alto part added in 1911 by S. M. Denson.

The Rose and Crown Chorus, with special guest Caroline Paton, under the direction of Dr. I. Sheldon Posen.

Farewell, old friend, it's time to go,
 You must be on your way.
 Do not let this parting grieve you so,
 Though dreary seems the day.

And I'll sing hallelujah,
 And you'll sing hallelujah,
 And we'll all sing hallelujah
 When we arrive at home.

No saint you were, while on this earth
You trod your path so wide,
For saints do seldom venture forth,
For fear they stray aside.

If God there be, some Pharisee
Of unforgiving ways,
Then look for Him, for you must seek
To brighten up His days.

And when at Peter's gate you stand,
With sins of flesh and wine,
One song the bribe, he'll take your hand
And lead you in to dine.

Though friends may join and friends may part,
Though friends be born and die,
Each song remains within the heart,
Each spirit ever nigh.

DISCOGRAPHY:

Martyn Wyndham-Read; *Harry the Hawker is Dead*;
Argo ZFB 82

Walter Pardon; *A Proper Sort*; Leader LED 2063

Louis Killen; *Gallant Lads are We*; Collector
Records 1932

OTHER RECORDS BY THE ROSE AND CROWN ARTISTS:

Margaret Christl and Ian Robb; *The Barley
Grain for Me*; Folk-Legacy FSC-62

Ian Robb and Hang the Piper; Folk-Legacy FSI-71

Grit Laskin; *Unmasked*; Fogarty's Cove FCM 003

The Friends of Fiddler's Green; *This Side of
the Ocean*; Fogarty's Cove FCM 005

Muddy York; *Scatter the Ashes*; Boot BOS 7244

Grit Laskin; *Lila's Jig*; Fogarty's Cove FCM 009