

ED MILLER  
Border Background  
*Songs of Scotland,  
Old and New*



FOLK-LEGACY RECORDS, INC. FSS-115





## ED MILLER

### Border Background

#### Songs of Scotland, Old and New

#### INTRODUCTION

To some it may seem strange that a man from Edinburgh, Scotland, who lives in Austin, Texas, should make a record for a company in the Connecticut Berkshires — but for a singer who is as likely to appear at a folk festival in Kerrville as one in Auchtermuchty or to be heard singing songs by anyone from Bill Neely to Hamish Henderson, nothing is unusual.

Ed doesn't come from a family with a tradition of singing; he is a product of the 1960's Scottish folk revival — progressing from sessions in Edinburgh pubs to the Edinburgh University Folksong Society and to appearances in folk clubs throughout central Scotland.

In 1968 he came to the U. S. "for a year or so" to do graduate work in Geography and later in Folklore at the University of Texas in Austin. Other than a three year stay in Amsterdam in the late 1970's and frequent visits to Scotland, Austin has remained his home base ever since. Over the years he has been a student, a University teacher, the host of a folk music show on an NPR radio station, a housepainter, and even a tour guide for American groups visiting Scotland. The one constant, however, has been his singing, with regular gigs in Austin and tours throughout the rest of the U. S. to perform everywhere from folk clubs and festivals to Highland Games.

Despite his fascination with the incredible wealth of singer/songwriters in Austin (such as Butch Hancock, Townes van Zandt and Guy Clark) and to whose songs his rich voice is well suited, he has continued to look to Scotland for most of his repertoire and has thereby maintained a unique niche in the vigorous and varied Austin music scene. A fine singer of traditional Scots songs, he is even more attracted to the "new folksongs" of the folk revival by such writers as Adam McNaughtan, Jack Foley, John Watt and Matt Armour who are continuing the tradition with songs about contemporary subjects and concerns.

Ed says that his choice of songs is also influenced by "hearing a good song, sung well, by a singer I like" — and these would include Archie Fisher, Jimmy Hutchison, Jim Reid and Al O'Donnell, to name but a few. He also admits that he has "learnt much more about my country since leaving it," so perhaps his singing is as much a way of maintaining his Scots identity as it is a way of delighting folksong audiences in both his native and his adopted countries.

Folk-Legacy is certainly delighted to have the opportunity to introduce this excellent singer to an even wider audience than that which he has already developed in the United States.

Sandy Paton  
Sharon, Connecticut  
September, 1989

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This record has been a long time coming and I owe thanks to too many people to name them all. However, special thanks are due: to Bill and Dorothy Eddy and Eileen Condon for introducing me to the Patons of Folk-Legacy.

To all the friends and amigos in Edinburgh and Austin, and places in between, who have provided hospitality, support, friendship and love over the years to this traveller.

To the singers, old and young, of the Scottish folk festivals and clubs from whom I have learned.

To Rich Brotherton and Pipo Hernandez, my musical compadres of late who continue to be an inspiration; especially to Rich for his patience, perseverance and musical brilliance in producing and playing on much of this record.

To Nora *por todo*.

This record is dedicated to the memory of Eddie Miller (1908-1988) to whom I owe my Border background.

Ed Miller  
Austin, Texas



Photo by Kathy McCarty

Rich Brotherton and Ed Miller

#### SIDE 1:

- |   |      |
|---|------|
| 1. The Wark o' the Weavers ( <i>traditional</i> )                   | 3:28 |
| 2. Thomas of Winesbury ( <i>traditional</i> )                       | 3:55 |
| 3. Ballad of the School Leaver ( <i>Ken Thomson</i> )               | 1:34 |
| 4. The Shipyard Apprentice ( <i>Archie Fisher; Bobby Campbell</i> ) | 3:48 |
| 5. Edinburgh Town ( <i>Ken Thomson</i> )                            | 2:05 |
| 6. Broom o' the Cowdenknowes ( <i>traditional</i> )                 | 3:55 |
| 7. Crooked Jack ( <i>Dominic Behan</i> )                            | 4:12 |
| 8. Freedom Come All Ye ( <i>Hamish Henderson</i> )                  | 2:26 |

#### SIDE 2:

- |   |      |
|---|------|
| 1. Generations of Change ( <i>Matt Armour</i> )                                 | 4:34 |
| 2. Bottle o' the Best ( <i>Jack Foley</i> )                                     | 2:53 |
| 3. Ferry Me Over ( <i>Andy Stewart</i> )  | 4:47 |
| 4. Port o' Leith Pubs/The Old Pubs ( <i>Hugh McDougall/<br/>Johnny Handle</i> ) | 2:26 |
| 5. Capernaum ( <i>Lewis Spence; Ed Miller</i> )                                 | 2:27 |
| 6. At Home With the Exiles ( <i>Ed Miller</i> )                                 | 4:03 |
| 7. Big Yellow Moon Over Texas ( <i>Bill Neely</i> )                             | 3:13 |

#### THE PERFORMERS

ED MILLER (Scotland): vocals, guitar, whistling  
RICH BROTHERTON (Georgia): harmony vocals, guitar, mandolin, bass, cuatro, harmonium

with:

PIPO HERNANDEZ (Canary Islands): charango on "The Old Pubs"  
ISLA ROSS (Canada): fiddle on "Crooked Jack"  
DAN FOSTER (Texas): flute on "Crooked Jack"  
KEN LEICHTE (Zimbabwe/Scotland): bagpipes on "Freedom Come All Ye"  
CHAMP HOOD (North Carolina): fiddle on "Big Yellow Moon Over Texas"  
JAVIER CHAPERO (Peru): violin on "Ferry Me Over" and "Broom of the Cowdenknowes"  
CATHY BROTHERTON (Iowa): harmonium on "Thomas of Winesbury"  
SERGE LAINE (France): accordion on "Ferry Me Over" and "The Wark o' the Weavers"

All of the performers live in Austin, Texas.

Original tapes engineered in Sharon, Connecticut, by Sandy Paton.

Additional vocals and instrumentation engineered and mixed in Austin, Texas, by Spot and Rich Brotherton.

Produced in Austin, Texas, by Rich Brotherton.

Cover photograph by Nora Mullarkey.

Design by Walter Schwarz/Graphics Unlimited, Sharon, Connecticut, 06069.

Write for a complete catalog of records, cassettes and CD's available from Folk-Legacy Records.



**ED MILLER**  
**Border Background**  
*Songs of Scotland,  
Old and New*

FSS-115



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ED MILLER  
Border Background  
Songs of Scotland  
Old and New



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**ED MILLER**  
**"Border Background"**  
(Songs of Scotland, Old and New)

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## THE SONGS

### THE WARK O' THE WEAVERS (*traditional*)

Side 1, Band 1.

If you've ever lived through a Scottish winter (or summer, for that matter), you'll appreciate the necessity of warm clothing. This song boasts of the vital importance of weavers, as without their product no one could survive.

This song first appeared in Ford's *Vagabond Songs*, credited to David Shaw of Forfar, and is probably of early 19th century vintage.

I first heard it from Robin Hall and Jimmie McGregor, sometime in the distant past.

*Oh, we're a' met together here tae sit an' tae crack  
Wi' oor glasses in oor hands an' oor claes upon oor back.  
There's no' a trade amang them a' could neither mend nor mak'  
If it wisnae for the wark o' the weavers.*

*If it wisnae for the weavers, what would they do?  
They widnae hae claes made o' woo'.  
They widnae hae a coat, na, neither black nor blue,  
If it wisnae for the wark o' the weavers.*

*Aye, there's some folks independent o' ither tradesmen's wark,  
For women need nae barber an' dykers need nae clerk,  
But there's no ain o' them could neither mend nor mak'  
If it wisnae for the wark o' the weavers.*

*And oor sodjers and oor sailors, man, we mak' them a' sae bold,  
But gin they had nae claes, man, they couldnae fight for cold.  
The high an' low, the rich an' poor, a' body young an' old,  
They a' need the wark o' the weavers.*

*And there's smiths an' there's wrights an' there's mason chiels  
an' a'  
There's doctors an' there's ministers an' them that live by law,  
And a' oor freends oot ower the sea in South Americay.  
They a' need the wark o' the weavers.*

*Aye, the weavin' is as guid as ever yet can fail,  
As long as we need claith tae keep each ither hale.  
So, let us a' be meery wi' a bicker o' guid ale.  
We'll drink a health tae the weavers.*

crack - good conversation  
claes - clothes  
woo' - wool  
dykers - stone wall builders  
gin - if, when



## THOMAS OF WINESBURY (traditional)

Side 1, Band 2.

Number 100 in the Child collection, this ballad is more commonly known as "Willie o' Winsbury." I first heard this variant from Barbara Dickson around 1970, and it appears to be a shortened version of "Lord Thomas of Winesberrie," which appeared in Kinloch's *Ancient Scottish Ballads*. Like most of my repertoire, it has experienced changes over the years since I first learned it.

The song is of 16th century origins, from the pre-reformation period when the sons of the Scots nobility were often sent to France for their education — Thomas, apparently, was a quick learner! Some ballad scholars believe the hero to be the future King James V of Scotland, who did, indeed, marry a daughter of Francis I of France.

*Oh, there once was a time when the bold King of France  
Went a-hunting for nine months or more;  
And his daughter's fallen in love wi' Thomas of Winesbury,  
Fae Scotland newly come o'er.*

*"Oh, dochter, dochter, oh, dochter," cries the King,  
"What gars ye look sae wan?  
Oh, ye've either been sick, sae very, very sick,  
Or else ye hae lain wi' a man."*

*"Oh, it wisnae a man, a man o' might,  
"Nor was it a man o' main;  
"Oh, it was Sir Thomas of Winesbury,  
"And for him I would suffer pain."*

*And it's when this bonnie laddie was brought before the King,  
His clothes were of the silk,  
And his fine yellow hair hung doon like gold,  
And his skin it wis like tae the milk.*

*"Oh, dochter, dochter, oh dochter," says the King,  
"Of guilt ye may be free;  
"For if I were a maid as I am a man,  
"Then my bed-fellow he would be.*

*"So, it's will ye marry my dochter Janet,  
"By the strength o' your right hand?  
"Oh, it's will ye marry my dochter Janet,  
"An' be heir tae a' my land?"*

*"Oh, it's yes, I will marry your dochter Janet,  
"But I'll not have your land;  
"For she will be a Queen as I am a King,  
"When we come tae far Scotland."*

dochter - daughter  
gars - makes



## **BALLAD OF THE SCHOOL LEAVER (Ken Thomson)**

Side 1, Band 3.

Written around 1970 by Ken Thomson of Edinburgh, one of the original editors of the *Sandy Bell's Broadsheet* and a journalist by profession. Long known as one of the quiet men of the Scottish folk scene, big Kenny is, in fact, an excellent songwriter and raconteur. I'm flattered that he has given me this and other songs over the years.

Set to the same tune as Adam McNaughtan's nostalgic, evocative urban song, "Where is the Glasgow?," this is a straightforward lament about the lack of opportunity facing school-leavers in Thatcherite Britain.

*Oh, where are the jobs that could always be found  
In the newspaper columns? I was told they'd abound,  
And the only conditions wis ye had tae be keen.  
But the Job Centre jobs are the only I've seen.*

*An' ye have tae be eighteen before they'll gie ye a start.*

*And where's the employment they promised tae me?  
If I took my O-levels, good prospects there'd be.  
But now I've left school, well, they don't give a damn.  
Is this why I sat a' those bloody exams?*

*Still there's aye job creation an' fillin' in holes.*

*And where's the career like ma dad's still got now?  
I'd like tae get started, but I just don't know how.  
A trade like a printer would gie me some hope,  
But I'll have tae kowtow an' go serve in a shop.*

*An' ma mither aye says that I'm good wi' ma hands.*

*And where is the future in pickin' up dole?  
It's bad for yer mind, but it's worse for yer soul.  
They say that in twelve months, a difference we' ll see.  
But right now, I ask ye, what good's that tae me?*

*Have ye heard o' a job for a bright, willin' lad?*

gie - give  
gie ye a start - hire you  
aye - always  
kowtow - give in  
dole - unemployment benefits



**THE SHIPYARD APPRENTICE** (Archie Fisher; Bobby Campbell)

Side 1, Band 4.

A song written in the early 1960's by Archie Fisher, with a melody by Bobby Campbell, and which I first learned from Rod Sinclair, an old friend from University days in Edinburgh now resident in Denmark.

It's a song of a 1940's and 50's childhood in a very different environment from that which I knew in the east of Scotland in that it is from the industrial, shipbuilding area of Clydeside in Glasgow, an area that suffered German bombing attacks during the Second World War and has since been an area of fluctuating employment, industrial decline and vehement opposition to Conservative government policies.

*I was born in the shadow of a Fairfield's crane,  
And the blast from a freighter's horn  
Was the very first sound that I ever heard  
On the morning I was born.  
As I lay and I listened to those shipyard sounds  
Coming out of the unknown,  
I was lulled to sleep by the mother tongue  
That was to be my own.*

*And before I grew to one year old,  
I heard the siren's scream  
As a city under the blackout  
Watched the wandering searchlight beam.  
Then one morning I arose  
To my first day of peace,  
But I learned that the battle to stay alive  
Was never going to cease.*

*And I lay and I listened to my father's tales  
Of the days that he once knew  
Where you worked all day for a pittance of a pay  
Or you joined the Parish queue.  
And times grew harder, day by day,  
Along the riverside.  
It's ofttimes I've heard my mother say  
It was tears that made the Clyde.*

*And I sat in the schoolroom from nine to four  
And dreamed of the world outside  
Where the riveters and the platers  
Watch their ships slip to the Clyde.  
And the builder places stone on stone  
And watches his labours grow;  
The time will come for me to be  
In the world I long to know.*



*And come that day when they set me free,  
 I'll be living like a man,  
 Wi' my first day's wages in my pooch  
 In the shadow o' the cran.  
 And the oil and grease will stain my skin,  
 Forever on my hands,  
 Just a living sight for all to see  
 That I've become a man.*

*For I've spent my time behind shipyard gates  
 And I've ofttimes bore my lot,  
 And if anyone tries to mess me about,  
 Well, I'll fight like my father fought.*

Fairfields - large shipbuilding company on Clydeside  
 Parish - unemployment, welfare  
 pooch - pocket

**EDINBURGH TOWN** (*Ken Thomson*)  
 Side 1, Band 5.

Another song by Ken Thomson of Edinburgh. He's a couple of years older than I, but I can still identify with many aspects of this nostalgic song of post World War II childhood in Edinburgh. Certainly I still remember ration books, Saturday morning minors' clubs at the cinemas, tramcars, Newhaven fishwives and football in the park; but Tommy Walker was before my time and played for the "other" Edinburgh team.

This song is sung to the tune of "The Flowers of Edinburgh."

*When I was just a lad an' things werenae quite sae bad  
 As the life I have tae suffer now that I'm a man,  
 Wi' ma sannies on ma feet, well, the tramcars in the street  
 Didn't knock ye doon when ye a' played at kick-the-can.  
 An' there was sweets on ration and the height o' passion  
 Was to kiss wee Betty Mackie or wee Iza Broon,  
 For their knickers were dark blue, which was a very common hue  
 When I was just a laddie there in Edinburgh toon.*

*And it never seemed to rain and the summers, in the main,  
 Seemed much warmer than the summers that we have today,  
 An' there wasnae atom bombs, an' the Portobello proms  
 Drew the trippers through fae Glasgow just to spend the day.  
 Wi' their pitch-an'-tossin' an' their candy flossin',  
 They'd be back tae the charry that they'd left at noon,  
 An' before they'd had a few, they's be oot tae see the zoo,  
 An' they'd leave wi' high impressions o' oor Edinburgh toon.*



*And I know there was a war, but ma grannie's jeely jaur's  
 Would get us tae the pictures on a Saturday.  
 Twa Stooges on the screen and an ice-cream in between,  
 Then we'd hop across the range wi' cowboy Cassidy.  
 An' Newhaven wifies wi' their box an' knives  
 Would sell ye a plate o' mussels when ye climbed the toon,  
 And on Sunday in the park we'd play fitba' till it's dark  
 And pretend we're Tommy Walker there in Edinburgh toon.*

*Ah, but now I'm gettin' old an' the truth it must be told:  
 I don't know what they're daein' noo tae Scotia's pride.  
 Old buildings seem tae die, an' the new ones scrape the sky  
 An' it doesnae seem the same place where I used tae bide.  
 But forget ma mumpin', for it still has somethin'  
 That you could never find by goin' tae the moon.  
 So I'll put aside ma ills by the castle and the hills,  
 And I'll content masel' that I'm a lad fae Edinburgh toon.*

sannies - gym shoes

kick-the-can - children's street game

Portobello - seaside suburb of Edinburgh

pitch-an' -toss - simple gambling game with coins

jeely jaur's - jam jars, sometimes used in post-war times in place of cash, for example:  
 to get into Saturday matinees for children

Tommy Walker - famous footballer in 40's and 50's with Edinburgh's team "Heart of  
 Midlothian"

fitba - football (soccer)

## **THE BROOM O' THE COWDENKNOWES** (*traditional*)

Side 1, Band 6.

This has always been one of my favorite songs, ever since I first heard it sung by Archie Fisher, years ago — so long ago, in fact, that the words of his version and mine have deviated considerably. Such is the oral tradition.

Cowdenknowes was a farm in the hills near Earlston, a small market and woolen mill town about halfway between Edinburgh and the English border; and broom is a bushy plant that covers the hillsides with its yellow blooms in early summer.

For centuries, sheep grazing has been the main land use in the Scottish Border hills, providing wool for mill towns along the Tweed and other rivers. This song is basically a lament by a shepherd who has fallen for the landowner's daughter; but, as she is from a higher class, he is forced to leave, rather than fulfill his love.

*Oh, blythe was I each morn tae see  
 My lass come o'er the hill.  
 She skipped the burn an' she ran tae me;  
 I welcomed her wi' guid will.*

*Oh, the broom, oh, the bonnie, bonnie broom,  
 The broom o' the Cowdenknowes,  
 Fain would I be in my ain countrie,  
 Herdin' her faither's yows.*



*We neither wanted sheep nor lambs  
While the flock near was lain.  
I herded in those sheep every night;  
She cheered me a' the day.*

*So hard fate that I should banished be,  
Tae gang withoot thee an' tae mourn,  
Because I lo'ed the bonniest lass  
That ever yet was born.*

*So, adieu, ye border hills, adieu;  
Farewell oor pleasures there.  
Tae wander by your side once again  
Is all I crave or care.*

blythe - happy  
burn - stream  
bonnie - lovely  
ain - own  
yows - sheep, ewes  
gang - go

**CROOKED JACK** (*Dominic Behan*)  
Side 1, Band 7.

For centuries, Irishmen have crossed the sea to Scotland and England in search of work. In recent decades, they have continued to provide muscle on building sites throughout Britain, particularly on large projects ranging from the London Underground to hydro-electric schemes in Scotland. Indeed, one dam project north of Glasgow employed so many Irish laborers it was nicknamed "The Mickey Dam."

"Crooked Jack" laments and warns against the sweat-and-blood role that Irish workers have suffered under sometimes cruel and prejudiced foremen.

The song is by the late Dominic Behan, who was very much a Dubliner, although he taught in Glasgow. Never a shy man, Behan was a major figure in the Irish and British folk revival with his records of Dublin street songs and Irish rebel songs. His best-known songs include "The Patriot Game" and "The Foggy Dew."

I first heard this song from another Dubliner, Al O'Donnell, one of my favorite singers anywhere.

*Come Irish men, both young and bold,  
With adventure in your soul;  
There are better ways to spend your days  
Than workin' down a hole.*

*For I was tall and true, all of six-foot two,  
Till they broke me across the back.  
By a name I'm known, 'tis not my own,  
For they call me "Crooked Jack."*



*And I curse the day I went away  
To work on those hydro dams.  
All our sweat and tears, our hopes and fears,  
Bound up in shutterin' jams.*

*And the ganger's blue-eyed boy was I;  
"Big Jack" could do no wrong.  
But the reason simply was because  
I could work hard hours and long.*

*For I've seen men old before their time,  
Their faces worn and grey,  
But I never dreamt that I, myself,  
Would soon be the self-same way.*

*And they say that honest toil is good  
For the body and the soul,  
But I tell ye, boys, don't waste yer days  
A-toilin' down a hole.*

#### **FREEDOM COME ALL YE (Hamish Henderson)**

Side 1, Band 8.

Poet, folklorist, songwriter, orator, storyteller, drinker and dreamer, Hamish Henderson has for decades been the seminal figure of the Scots Folk Revival. Renowned in academic circles as a long-time researcher for the Edinburgh University School of Scottish Studies, he is also loved and respected everywhere from the revival festivals to the homes and Traveller tents of the folk from whom he has collected songs and stories. To see big Hamish, arms raised, leading his own songs at a festival session, is a joy to anyone who loves to see any gap between folklorists and the Folk effectively eliminated.

This song takes off from a speech by one-time Prime Minister Harold McMillan in which he stated that there was a wind of change blowing through the continent of Africa. Henderson, whose politics are far to the left of McMillan's, widens the phrase into an inspiring plea for racial equality, international socialism and an end to war and colonialism. As in his other best songs, such as "The John MacLean March" or "The Banks of Sicily," he demonstrates his ability to write a song that is both uniquely Scottish and international.

Politically, the Scottish folk revival movement has long been associated with leftist, nationalist and anti-war sentiments, so it is no surprise that this song has become its anthem.

*Roch the wind on a clear day's dawin',  
Blaws the clouds heelstergowdie ower the bay.  
But there's mair nor a roch wind blawin'  
Through the great glen o' the world today.*

*It's a thocht that would gar oor rottans,  
A' the rogues that gang gallus fresh and gay,  
Tak' the road and seek ither loanin's  
For their ill ploys tae sport and play.*



*Nae mair will oor bonnie callants  
March tae war when oor braggarts crowsely craw,  
Nor wee weans frae pitheid or clachan  
Mourn the ships sailin' doon the Broomielaw.*

*An' broken families in lands we've harriet  
Will curse Scotland the brave nae mair, nae mair.  
Black and white, ain til ither merriet,  
Will mak' the vile barracks o' their maisters bare.*

*So come all ye at home wi' freedom,  
Never heed what the hoodies croak for doom.  
In yer hoose a' the bairns o' Adam  
Can find breid, barley bree and painted room.*

*And when MacLean meets wi' his freends in Springburn,  
A' the roses and geans will turn tae bloom;  
And a black boy frae yont Nyanga  
Dings the fell gallows o' the burghers doon.*

roch - strong, wild  
dawin' - dawning  
heelstergowdie - head over heels  
mair - more  
gar - make  
rottans - rats  
thocht - thought  
gang - go  
gallus - cocky  
loanin's - places, lodgings  
callants - young men  
crowsely craw - boastfully crow  
weans - children  
pitheid - coalmine  
clachan - highland village  
Broomielaw - harbor area on River Clyde in Glasgow  
hoodies - hooded crows (symbols of death)  
bairns - children, babies  
MacLean - John MacLean, World War I international socialist  
Springburn - Glasgow neighborhood  
geans - cherry trees  
yont - yonder  
ding - beat, knock down  
barley bree - whisky



## GENERATIONS OF CHANGE (Matt Armour)

Side 2, Band I.

Scotland in four verses — a great contemporary song by the prolific Fife-born songwriter Matt Armour. He looks first at the past, represented by his ploughman father who hired on at various farms in the local area of southeast Fife. That way of life is largely gone, just as the fishing industry of the Fife coastal towns has declined.

Writing in the 1970's, Armour goes on to look at the then boom industry, North Sea oil, and finishes off by wondering what the future will bring for the youngest generation.

I first heard it from Artie Trezise and Cilla Fisher.

*Oh, my father was a plooman fae a wee farm near Caiplie;  
He worked on the land a' the days o' his life.*

*By the time he made second, he aye said he reckoned  
He'd ploughed near on half o' the East Neuk o' Fife.*

*He fee'd on at Randerston, Crawhill and Clappington,  
Carnbo and Carnbee and Kilrennie Mill.*

*At Kingsbarns he married, at Boarhills he's buried,  
But, man, had he lived, he'd be ploughin' on still.*

*Ah, but those days were his days, those ways were his ways,  
Tae follow the plough while his back was still strong.  
But those days are past and the time come at last  
For the weakness of age to give way to the young.*

*Well, I wisnae for plooin', tae the sea I wis goin'  
To follow the fish and the fisherman's ways.*

*In rain, hail and sunshine, I've watched the long run line,  
Nae man mair contented his whole workin' day.*

*I've long-lined the Flodden ground, Dutch and the Dogger Bank,  
Pulled the great fish from the deep Devil's Hole.*

*I've side-trawled off Shetland, the Faeroes and Iceland  
In weather much worse than a body could thole.*

*But those days were my days, those ways were my ways,  
Tae follow the fish while my back was still strong.  
But those days are past and the time come at last  
For the weakness of age to give way to the young.*

*Now my sons they have grown and away they have flown  
To search for black oil in the dark northern sea.*

*Like oilmen they walk and like Texans they talk;*

*Aye, there's no' much in common 'tween my sons and me.*

*They've rough-rigged on Josephine, Forties and Ninian,  
Claymore and the Dunlin, the Fisher and Auk.*

*They've made fortunes for sure, for in one trip ashore  
They spend more than I earned in a whole season's work.*

*Ah, but this day is their day, this way is their way,  
Tae ride the rough rigs while their backs are still strong.  
But their day will pass and the time come at last  
For the weakness of age to make way for the young.*



*But now my grandsons are growin', tae school soon be goin',  
 And the long days of summer they'll spend here wi' me.  
 We'll walk through the old ways, talk of the old days,  
 Of the corn and codfish, the land and the sea.  
 We'll walk through the fields that my father once tilled,  
 Talk tae the old men who once sailed wi' me.  
 Man, it's been awfy good, I've shown them all I could  
 O' their past and their present, what their future might be.  
 For tomorrow is their day. What will be their way?  
 What will they make o' the land, sea and sky?  
 Man, I've seen awfy change, but it still seems so strange  
 Tae look at my world through a young laddie's eyes.*

second - No. 2 ploughman on a farm with several ploughmen  
 fee'd on - hired out to  
 fae - from

Randerston, Crawhill, Carnbo, Carnbee, Kilrennie Mill, Clappington - all farms or villages in  
 the East Neuk o' Fife.

thole - put up with  
 Josephine, Claymore, Dunlin, Fisher, Auk, Forties, Ninian - all oil platforms in the North Sea

### **BOTTLE O' THE BEST** (Jack Foley) Side 2, Band 2.

A song in praise of single malt Scotch whisky, written after years of fieldwork by Jack Foley of Hamilton. Jack is a journalist in Glasgow with a major Scottish newspaper and was for several years editor of *The Broadsheet*, the information source for folk music in Scotland. He is a man of many passions, including Scottish Nationalism, mountain-climbing, good women, good singing sessions and good whisky, and is a renowned and feisty character 'round the clubs and festivals of the Scottish folk revival.

This song, set to an Irish tune, illustrates clearly his skill as a wordmonger. *Slainthe*, Jack, for writing this one.

*When your time of work is done and ye've earned yersel' some fun,  
 In the pub ye start tae sup, ye're drinkin', clinkin' every cup.  
 And the pint pots you're perusin', an' ye're boozin' till ye're  
 snoozin'  
 And you're losin' a' yer senses tae the drink.  
 But when a' these folk sae prim are swiggin' swill up tae  
 the brim,  
 Nips o' gin and numbered Pimms wi' sugar rubbed aroon the rim,  
 Let them drink until they drop, for the sly, besotted Scot,  
 He'll be breakin' oot a bottle o' the best.*



*Aye, tae hell wi' a' the rest, give me a bottle o' the best.  
The amber bead I'll down wi' speed; it's no' bad taste or waste,  
just greed.*

*And a whisky still I'll kill, I'll drink my fill and if I spill  
a gill,*

*You know I will, I'll lick it off the floor.*

*I'll not touch Teachers, Grants or Haig, gie me Bowmore or  
Laphroaig,*

*Glenfarclas in a glass, well, ye can throw the top away,*

*For there's no use tae pretend that ye'll need the top again*

*When ye've broken oot a bottle o' the best.*

*And the English like their ale warm and flat, straight out the pail.*

*They aye slitter wi' their bitter; it would slaughter Jack the Ripper.*

*And they sip their cider rough, they huff and puff and sniff and  
snuff,*

*And as if that's no' enough, they start tae sing*

*When Jones' Ale was New or John Barleycorn's fine brew,*

*Fathom the Bowl, the Barley Mow, Bring Us a Barrel, just a few.*

*But their songs are far surpassed by the tinkle in the glass*

*When ye've broken oot a bottle o' the best.*

*And the Irish, wi' their Pride o' Erin, think they can deride*

*Oor golden watter wi' their patter when they're oot on the batter.*

*Sixteen hundred pints o' stout, a drinkin' bout without a doubt,*

*And if they've no' got the gout, they start tae dance.*

*Father O'Flynn and Larry O'Gaff, Biddy the Bowlwife, for a laugh,*

*The Young May Moon, the Garry Owen, the Blackbird drives them daft.*

*But their jigs have no appeal tae a Scot who likes tae reel*

*When he's broken oot a bottle o' the best.*

*Aye, a bottle o' the best, that's what it is, nae idle jest,*

*Nae Mickey Finn, nae rotgut gin, nae bathtub wine that tastes like Vim.*

*Have no fear, it's not like beer; malt whisky's strong and bright  
and clear,*

*And it's also bloody dear, but what the hell.*

*And it belts ye in the belly like a heavyweight Lochgelly,*

*A glow begins tae grow, six in a row turns ye tae jelly.*

*Then ye dream, perchance tae sleep, but ye fall down in a heap,*

*For ye've broken oot a bottle o' the best.*

nips - shots

Teachers, Grants, Haig - blended Scotch whiskies

Bowmore, Laphroaig, Glenfarclas - single malt Scotch whiskies

patter - verbal ability

batter - spree

Lochgelly - a thick leather strap used until recently by Scottish teachers to beat discipline into their pupils. Named after the town where it was made.



**FERRY ME OVER** (*Andy Stewart*)  
Side 2, Band 3.

One of the many excellent traditional-sounding songs written by Andy M. Stewart, singer, banjoist and song-introducer with the Scots group Silly Wizard. My apologies to him if the words here are not the same as his, but such is the combined result of the oral tradition and bad hearing.

I loved and identified with this song the first time I heard Andy sing it at the Edinburgh Festival in 1985. It definitely catches the ironic exile experience of learning more about your own country and origins by leaving them. Unlike in most Scots and Irish songs, however, the hero of this one returns to his homeland to ingest his foreign experience by sharing it with his fellow countrymen.

*I was forced tae wander  
Because that I was poor,  
But to leave the hills of Caledonia  
Was more than I could endure.  
And while that I was travellin',  
A thought came to my mind:  
That I had never known her beauty  
Till she was far behind.*

*Ferry me over, ferry me there;  
Tae leave the hills of Caledonia  
Is more than the heart can bear.*

*And lost in the mists of days gone by  
Were the friends and homes I'd known;  
Foreign winds cried "Caledonia,  
Time ye were goin' home."  
So I will find a tall ship  
And set it face to the foam,  
And I will sail for Caledonia,  
For Caledonia's my home.*

*Ferry me over...*

*And by some friend or neighbour's side,  
As the fires of love burn bright,  
In songs and stories I'll share my adventures  
Till the mornin' light.  
And if some young man should ask me  
To stay or whiles to roam,  
Well, I'd bid him to range the wide world all over,  
The better to know his own home.*

*Ferry me over...*



**THE PORT O' LEITH PUBS/THE OLD PUBS** (*Hugh McDougall/Johnny Handle*)  
Side 2, Band 4.

The opening poem, by Edinburgh poet and oil rig worker Hugh McDougall, laments the yuppiefication of the Shore pubs in the port of Leith. Over the past three decades, this industrial working-class community has experienced the effects of urban renewal. Recently, even the harbour bars once frequented by seamen and locals have been turned into wine bars and fancy eateries to attract visitors and respectable Edinburgh people who previously wouldn't have dared venture into the Shore area. My thanks to Hughie for giving me this and other poems.

The message of "The Old Pubs" is familiar to anyone who has seen his or her favourite drinking spot tarted up in the name of improvement. The song is by Johnny Handle, a Geordie singer and entertainer from Newcastle whom I first heard with the High Level Ranters at the St. Andrews Folk Club in the mid 1960's.

Ship chandlers, panhandlers, skippers tae spare,  
Whalermen blowin' their Salvesen share,  
Merchantmen hame on rough-buckets and tubs,  
Gaither nae mair in Port o' Leith pubs.

Noo deckheids are ceilings and bulkheids are wa's,  
The Crowsnest collapsed when the fleet shot the crow.  
So now it's a place where the landlubber lubs;  
The doldrums becalmed the old Port o' Leith Pubs.

Smooth property pirates have plundered the Shore,  
Building bijous and bistros and winebars galore.  
Old Barnacle Bill has been given a scrub  
And anchors hauled up in the Port o' Leith pubs.

New tradewinds blaw fresh wi' boutiques and bazaars  
And yachtin' marinas for spare-time Jack Tars;  
And rulin' the waves now are nuclear subs  
That should've been scrapped afore Port o' Leith pubs.

*When I was young a pub was a pub  
With mahogany tables and a sawdust floor,  
Nothing fancy but plain enough,  
But they don't build pubs like that no more.*

*They're pullin' them down, the old pubs,  
Around the town, the old pubs,  
And plastic's a' the go.*

*And the landlord kept his cellar well,  
With a pint both heavy and strong.  
It was a place to share your troubles, lad,  
A place for a bloody good song.*



*If a' the broken herts o' thee,  
 Embro, Embro,  
 If a' the broken herts o' thee  
 Were heapit in a howe,  
 There would be neither land nor sea,  
 Embro, Embro,  
 There would be neither land nor sea,  
 But yon red brae and thou.*

*If a' the tears that thou has grat,  
 Embro, Embro,  
 If a' the tears that thou has grat  
 Were shed intae the sea,  
 Whaur would ye find an Ararat,  
 Embro, Embro,  
 Whaur would ye find an Ararat  
 Fae that fell flood tae flee?*

Embro - Edinburgh

Tron - part of old Edinburgh where public executions were carried out  
 ca' - drive

kirks - churches

shog - shake

birks - birch trees

Roslin - town south of Edinburgh

heapit - heaped

howe - pile, hill

brae - hill, slope

grat - cried

## **AT HOME WITH THE EXILES (Ed Miller)**

Side 2, Band 6.

A song for all the international exiles that have made Austin their home and enriched my life with their humour, friendship and music; for Marcelo, Pipo, Bill Eddy, Huanchi, Malachy, Mary Clancy and Mick, to name but a few; for the players of Armadillos, International and Anejos — the friends and amigos of the soccer fields of Austin; for anyone who is pulled by both old and new roots.

The chorus is inspired by a short poem I once heard from Norman McCaig.

*Across the Atlantic I did fly;  
 Left old Scotland, I know not why.  
 Never thought that I'd say goodbye;  
 Didn't plan to be an exile.  
 Landed in Amerikay  
 For just a year or so to stay,  
 But I'm still livin' here today,  
 Happy among the exiles.*



*And weddings, funerals, births an' all,  
The old pubs they were best.  
Good times, bad times, war or peace,  
The old pubs stood the test.*

*But now I'm old and things have changed;  
The streets are flattened down  
And the people in the pubs have gone like mist  
Out to the edge of town.*

Salvesen - Leith-based whaling company  
wa' s - walls  
shot the crow - went away for good

**CAPERNAUM** (*Lewis Spence; Ed Miller*)  
Side 2, Band 5.

Raking through poetry journals for thesis material on the images of Edinburgh and Glasgow in literature and song, I came across this stark poem written in the 1930's by Lewis Spence. A contemporary of Hugh MacDiarmid, Spence was an important figure in the Scots literary renaissance.

As there is a dearth of songs about Edinburgh compared to the large number turned out by Glasgow songwriters about their city, I put this poem to music. It focuses on the bloody history of Edinburgh and the equally harsh moral and religious attitudes of its Calvinist past. Spence's condemnation of Edinburgh is compared to the denouncement of Capernaum by Jesus (Matthew 11:23):

"And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths... I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the Day of Judgement than for you."

*If a' the blood shed at thy Tron,  
    Embros, Embros,  
If a' the blood shed at thy Tron  
    Were sped intae a river,  
It would ca' the mills o' Bonnington,  
    Embros, Embros,  
It would ca' the mills o' Bonnington  
    For ever and ever.*

*If a' the psalms sung in thy kirks  
    Embros, Embros,  
If a' the psalms sung in thy kirks  
    Were gaithered in a wind,  
It would shog the tops o' Roslin birks,  
    Embros, Embros,  
It would shog the tops o' Roslin birks  
    Till time was oot o' mind.*



*My only homeland is six foot high;  
For its independence I will die.  
No matter where my feet may fly,  
I'll be at home with the exiles.*

*Between two places your self can get torn:  
The place where you live and the place where you were born.  
For one you knew and one seems foreign  
When first you become an exile.*

*So many trips, then, I've made back  
To enjoy the music and the crack,  
But each time my bags I've repacked  
And gone on home to the exiles.*

*Un amigo from the Andes high,  
A zamba or a kena can bring a tear to his eye,  
But his team, and his wife, and his son who'll grow high  
Will keep him happy as an exile.*

*And a fiddler mannie fae Aberdeen  
Makes his living on an IBM machine,  
But he never forgot the bothies where he'd been  
Before he became an exile.*

*There's good things here, there's good things there,  
Love, food and music everywhere,  
And there's always friends with these things to share,  
If you enjoy your role as an exile.*

*For narrow national pride is for a mind that's small.  
I'm only too happy to have these friends all  
And find the true meaning of "international."  
Everyone's an exile!*

crack - good company, conversation and humour

zamba - Argentinian rhythm

kena - Andean flute

bothies - where unmarried farm labourers lived on northeast Scottish farms before modernization

## **BIG YELLOW MOON OVER TEXAS (Bill Neely)**

Side 2, Band 7.

Of the many country-blues compositions by Bill Neely, this unashamedly nostalgic song is my favourite.

Born in McKinney, Texas, Bill picked cotton on blackland farms before taking to the road in the Depression years, hoboing through "all 48 states." In the 1940's, he married and settled in Austin, and over the years developed a unique brand of country-blues guitar playing influenced by a variety of styles from Mance Lipscomb to Jimmie Rodgers. The major event of Bill's youth appears to have been his meeting with Jimmie Rodgers before a performance in McKinney, when the "Blue Yodeler" taught him a C-chord on his guitar.



Since then, Neely has been a devoted disciple of Rodger's music, learning the Singing Brakeman's entire repertoire and writing many of his songs in similar style and theme. "Big Yellow Moon," then, is on a par with such songs as "Miss the Mississippi and You" or "Blue Yodel No. 1," in that it expresses a travelling man yearning nostalgically for some distant, idealized, southern home.

I got to know Bill and his songs in the early and mid-1970's when he had a regular spot at the now-legendary Split Rail in Austin. Chris Strachwitz recorded him for Arhoolie Records in 1973, and "Big Yellow Moon" also appears on the LP of Channel 4's (U.K.) country music documentary, "Down Home".

*There's a big yellow moon over Texas  
And it shines down for you and for me.  
I'm comin' home, no more will I roam,  
And there's a big yellow moon over Texas.*

*I'm gonna catch me a long, lonesome freight train  
And listen to them drivers roar.  
I'm comin' home to you; I know you've been true,  
Just a-waitin' for me to come on home.*

*I dreamt I was back home in Texas,  
'Neath the gold and the silvery sun,  
And the sky so big and blue, just like your eyes are, too.  
There's a big yellow moon over Texas.*

*I can see the cactus blossom  
In my home town where I used to stay,  
And the pretty bluebonnets bloomin'  
In that big state so far, far away.*

*. . . And there's a big yellow moon over Texas.*



Since then, Neely has been a devoted disciple of Rodgers' music, learning the singing  
Berkman's earlier repertoire and writing many of his songs in similar style and theme. His  
"Yellow Moon", then, is as a part with such songs as "Miss the Mississippi and You" or  
"The Yellow Moon". It is a love song, a love song that is written in a very simple, direct  
style, identified, southern homes.  
I got to know Bill and his songs in the early and mid-1970's when he did a regular  
tour at the now-defunct Ball in Austin. Chris Smither recorded him for Atlantic  
Records in 1973, and "Big Yellow Moon" also appears on the LP of Channel 5 (UK).  
Country music magazine, "Country Music".

There's a big yellow moon over Texas  
And it shines down on you and for me  
I want to be with you every night  
And there's a big yellow moon over Texas

The night that I was born, I was born  
And from that day on, I was born  
The night that I was born, I was born  
And from that day on, I was born

I dreamt I was born in Texas  
And the night that I was born  
And the night that I was born  
And the night that I was born

I dreamt I was born in Texas  
And the night that I was born  
And the night that I was born  
And the night that I was born

There's a big yellow moon over Texas