

BROADSIDE BALLADS (LONDON: 1600-1700)

SUNG BY EWAN MACCOLL

With accompaniments by: Peggy Seeger, guitar, banjo and autoharp
Alf Edwards, English concertina, ocarina and tabor
Alfie Kahn, piccolo, flute and tin whistle

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FW 3043



BROADSIDE BALLADS (LONDON: 1600-1700) / FOLKWAYS FW 3043

SIDE I

- Band 1: ROOM FOR COMPANY
(piccolo and tabor)
- Band 2: PITY'S LAMENTATION
(guitar and flute)
- Band 3: THERE'S NOTHING TO BE HAD WITHOUT MONEY
(concertina, flute and guitar)
- Band 4: THE MIDWIFE'S GHOST
(autoharp)

SIDE II

- Band 1: A MERRY PROGRESS TO LONDON
(unaccompanied)
- Band 2: LONDON'S LOTTERY
(guitar and flute)
- Band 3: LONDON MOURNING IN ASHES
(concertina)
- Band 4: KING LEAR AND HIS THREE DAUGHTERS
(flute, concertina and guitar)

BROADSIDE BALLADS (LONDON: 1600-1700)

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

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sung by EWAN MacCOLL

Notes by EWAN MacCOLL



BROADSIDE BALLADS

The term 'Broadside Ballad' is here used to designate any song -- narrative or otherwise - which made its first appearance on the penny or half-penny sheets.

The songs which make up these two albums do not, for the most part, have much in common with the Traditional Ballads.

Professor Child has characterized the broadsides as "veritable dunghills", and for three hundred years contemptuous literary men have castigated the authors of these 'vile ballads'; and yet even the most awkward of their verses has its occasional flash of humour, its sudden, brief flicker of light, making the dead past live again for a moment. If our view of the past, occasioned by these momentary illuminations, is sometimes an oblique one, then it is none the less interesting on that account.

The broadsides flourished from 1500-1700, that is until the first cheap books began to make their appearance. By the beginning of the 18th century, the black-letter ballads had virtually disappeared. The white-letter productions, however, persisted until the mid-nineteenth century, and indeed, even today it is not unusual for one to be accosted in the

London streets by a 'soft touch man' who in return for a shilling will slip you an envelope containing a miniature photostat copy of a ballad dealing with the 'Loss of the Royal Sovereign' in World War II, or with the 'Sinking of the Scharnhorst'.

In the days before TV, radio and newspapers, the broadsides helped both to mould and reflect public opinion; their authors acted as political commentators, journalists, comic-strip writers, P.R. men for both parties, and for all those ambitious place-seekers who could afford to hire a pen.

That they were popular with the masses, no one can doubt; that they were unpopular with the establishment is born out by successive acts of legislation against 'pipers, fiddlers and minstrels' and by the many repressive laws directed against them both in England and Scotland.

In 1574 (in Scotland) they were again branded with the opprobrious title of vagabonds and threatened with severe penalties; and the regent Morton induced the Privy Council to issue an edict that "nane tak upon hand to emprint or sell whatsoever book, ballet, or other werk" without its being examined and licenced under pain of death and confiscation of goods.

In August 1579, two poets of Edinburgh, (William Turnbull, Schoolmaster and William Scot, notar, "baith weel belovit of the common people for their common offices") were hanged for writing a satirical ballad against the Earl of Morton, and in October of the same year, the Estates passed an act against beggars and "sic as make themselves fules and are bards... minstrels, sangsters, and tale-tellers, not avowed in special service by some of the lords of parliament or great burghs."

Seventy-five years later, Captain Bentham was appointed provost-marshal to the revolutionary army in England, with power to seize upon all ballad-singers, and five years after that date there were no more entries of ballads at Stationers' Hall.

The heat was still on a century later and in July 1763, we are told that "yesterday evening two women were sent to Bridewell by Lord Bute's order, for singing political ballads before his lordship's door in South Audley Street".

Even in the mid-nineteenth century the attacks on the ballad-mongers continued, though by this time the fraternity was somewhat reduced in size; yet it was still sufficiently large for the owners of factories and workshops like the Vulcan foundry of Newton-Le-Willows, Cheshire to deem it necessary to issue the following warning on a cast-iron notice board: TAKE NOTICE. PRIVATE PROPERTY. We do hereby caution all HAWKERS, RAG AND BONE DEALERS, BALLAD SINGERS & From trespassing on these premises. Any person or persons of the above description found hereon after this notice will be prosecuted with the utmost rigor of the LAW. VULCAN FOUNDRY MAY 1st. 1835.

They have departed now; it is no longer necessary for the authorities to brand "bardis and ballet-singers" on the cheek and scourge them through the streets. The descendents of Elderton, Deloney, Johnson, Munday and Martin Parker now work for the establishment, as the hired men of television, radio, the press and Tin Pan Alley; they have learned how to write without offending anybody or anything, except, occasionally, one's sense of the ridiculous.

The Accompaniments

The broadsides were, for the most part, sung on the streets and in the taverns of Britain's cities. If they had accompaniments at all, these would probably have been of a most rudimentary nature. To have presented them in these albums with the sophisticated virginals and lute would have been as incongruous as arranging the St. Louis Blues for the serpent and three Alpine horns. It is much more likely that instruments such as the pipe and tabor and fiddle were used. For this present recording we have made no attempt to provide "authentic" accompaniment. We have used instead the concertina, the guitar, the ocarina, flute, piccolo, tin whistle, autoharp, tabor and, for two songs, the banjo; all of them instruments which have been widely used by street singers of our own time.

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FLIGHT OF THE TOWNSPEOPLE INTO THE COUNTRY TO ESCAPE FROM THE PLAGUE, A.D. 1630
"A Looking-glass for Town and Country;" broadside in the collection of the Society of Antiquaries.



SIDE I, Band 1: ROOM FOR COMPANY

Imprinted at London for E. W.

The ballad was registered by John Trundle under the title of "Rome for Company in Bartholomew Faire" on October 22, 1614, the year in which Ben Jonson's hilarious play, "Bartholomew Fair", was first presented to London theatre-goers. The earliest printed version of the melody is in Playford's "Musick's Recreation on the LYRA VIOL" (1652).

Seven of the twenty-one verses are given here.

Source: The Pepys Ballads

Roome for Company, heere comes good fellows,
Roome for Company in Bartholmew Faire.
Coblers and Broome-men, Jailors and Looome-men:
Roome for Company in Bartholmew Faire.
Botchers and Taylors, Shipwrights and Saylor's,
Roome for Company, well may they fare.

Roome for Company, heere comes good fellows,
Roome for Company in Bartholmew Faire.
Paviors, Bricklayers, Potters and Brickmakers,
Room for Company in Bartholmew Faire.
Pinners and Pewterers, Plommars and
Frewterers,
Roome for Company, well may they fare.

Roome for Company, heere comes good fellows,
Roome for Company in Bartholmew Faire.
Pointers and Hosiers, Salemen and Clothiers,
Roome for Company in Bartholmew Faire.
Horse coursers, Carryers: Blacksmithes
and Farryers,
Roome for Company, well may they fare.

Roome for Company, heere comes good fellows,
Roome for Company in Bartholmew Faire.
Collyers and Carvers, Barbers and Weavers,
Roome for Company in Bartholmew Faire.
Sargiants and Yeomen, Farmers and
Ploughmen:
Roome for Company, well may they fare.

Roome for Company, here comes good fellows,
Roome for Company in Bartholmew Faire.

Belfounders, Felmongers, Bellowsmenders,
Woodmongers,
Roome for Company in Bartholmew Faire.
Pumpmakers, Glassemakers, Chamber-
laines and Matmakers
Roome for Company, well may they fare.

Roome for Company, heere comes good Fellowes,
Roome for Company in Bartholmew Faire.
Collermakers, Needlemakers, Buttonmakers,
Fiddlemakers,
Roome for Company in Bartholmew Faire.
Fletchers and Bowyers, Drawers and
Sawyers:
Roome for Company, well may they fare.

Roome for Company, heere comes good Fellowes,
Roome for Company in Bartholmew Faire.
Cutpurses and Cheaters, and Bawdy-house-doore
keepers:
Roome for Company in Bartholmew Faire.
Punkes, I and Panders, and Casheer'd
Commanders:
Roome for Company ill may they fare,

Roome for Company, heere comes good Fellowes,
Roome for Company in Bartholmew Faire.





"VELVET BREECHES AND CLOTH BREECHES."

SIDE I, Band 2: PITY'S LAMENTATION

Printed at London for I. W.

Rollins places the date of composition of this ballad as 1615-16 and surmises that the fourth stanza refers to the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury (1613). The rising cost of living brought about by economic changes in the reign of James the First inspired a number of ballads lamenting the passing of "the good old days". The most notable of these pieces was Martin Parker's well-known ballad 'Time's Alteration.' The tune is "Packington's Pound" and is to be found in Queen Elizabeth's VIRGINAL BOOK. Seven of the fifteen verses are given here.

Source: The Pepys Ballads

Well worth Predecessors, and Fathers by name,
That lived in England long times a goe:
Whose wondrous deedes were done for their fame,
Which now heer in England breedeth our woe:

Then Pitty did rest, in every mans breast:
And Cruelty had no place to make his nest
Oh happy England that lived in that state,
When Pitty was Porter at every mans gate.

But Pitty (alack) tis quite fled and gone,
True friendship and love is banisht away:
Plaine dealing now walketh mourning alone,
And no man relieves him by night nor by day:

No Pitty we see in any degree,
But fraud and deceit and wild butchery.
Oh happy England that lived in that state,
When Pitty was Porter at every mans gate.

Now under a colour of kindnesse and love,
In Purges and Potions such cunning is knowne,
A man unsuspected a murder may prove.
But God wil have mischiefe and villanie showne.
Tho God for a time, may winke at a crime,
Yet he can discover when sins in the prime.
Be happy Oh England to live in that state,
Let Pitty be Porter still at they gate.

Good house keeping now is quite laid aside,
No Butler stands ready to doe an almes deed,
And all to maintaine fond fashions of pride,
A thousand good fellowes do stand in great need,
Most faire to the eye are houses built high
Onely for pleasure of them that passe by.
But Oh happy England to live in that state,
Let Pitty be Porter still at they gate.

Whole Farmes are consumed in pride for the back,
In Shoo-strings and Garters of silver or gold:

Which well might suffice to feed them that lack.
And keepe the poore widdow from hunger and cold.
But hardnesse of heart, hath so plaid his part,
That Pitty now weepeth to heare of our smart,
Oh happy England that liv'd in that state,
Let Pitty be Porter still at thy gate.

Yea happy was England before it did know
Such pride in apparrell as many doe weare:
In warme Russet clothing our Gallants did goe,
And Kersies were garments for Ladies most faire:
Then mallice and spight did live with no wight
True love and friendship, was each mans delight.
Oh happy England that lived in that state,
When Pitty was Porter at every mans gate.

A bushell of wheat for sixe pence was sold,
An Oxe for a Marke fat from the stall:
A score of fat Lambes for an Angell was told,
With heart and good will in payment with all:
And then at each doore, sate feasting the poore:
And like to that time will never come more.
Oh happy England that lived in that State,
When Pitty was Porter at every mans gate.



SIDE I, Band 3: THERE'S NOTHING TO BE HAD
WITHOUT MONEY

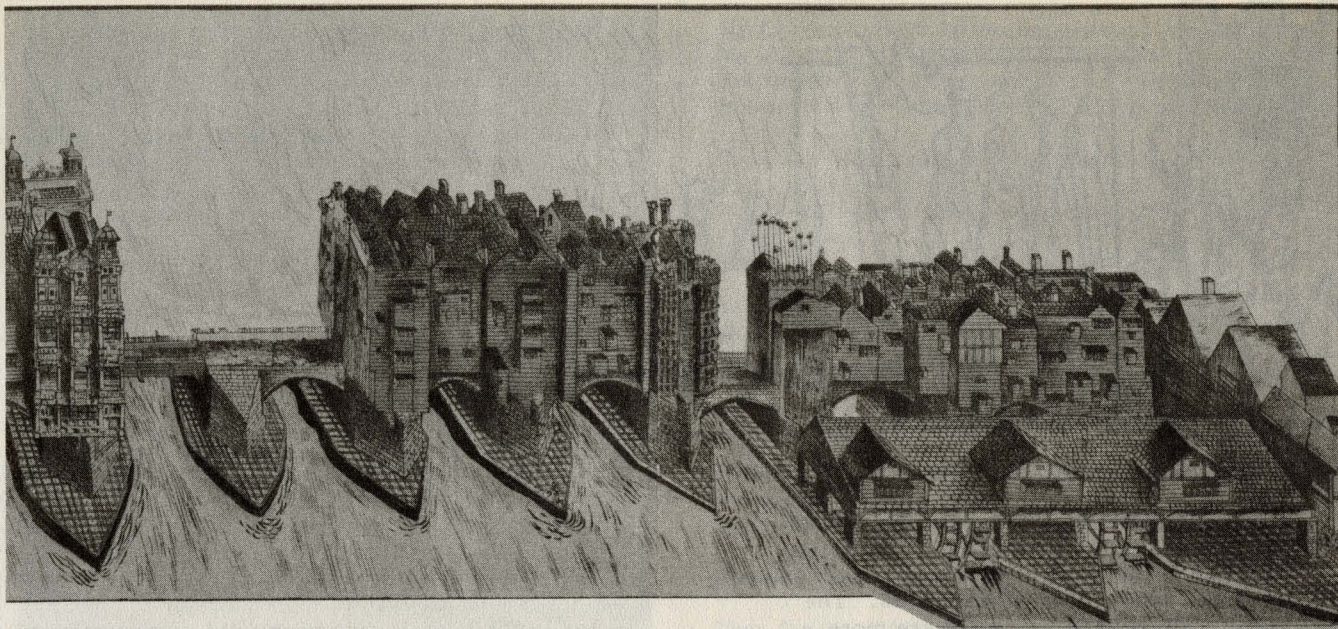
Printed at London for H(enry) G(osson).

The tune, known as "Stingo" and as "Oil of Barley" has been used for a large variety of ballads, most of which have for their theme the value of money. Nine of the fifteen stanzas are given here.

Source: Evans Old Ballads

You gallants and you swaggering blades,
Give ear unto my ditty,
I am a boon companion known
In country, town, or city,
I always loved to wear good clothes,
And ever scorned to take blows,
I am belov'd of all me know,
But God a mercy penny.

My father was a man well known,
That us'd to hoard up money,
His bags of gold, he said, to him,
More sweeter were than honey,
But I, his son, will let it fly
In tavern or ordinary,
I am beloved in company,
But God a mercy penny.



All parts of London I have tried,
Where merchant's wares are plenty,
The Royal Exchange, and fair Cheapside,
With speeches fine and dainty,
They bring me in for to behold
Their shops of silver and of gold,
There might I choose what wares I would,
But God a mercy penny.

For my contentment once a day
I walk for recreation,
Through Paul's, Ludgate, and Fleet-Street gay,
To raise an elevation;
Sometimes my humour is to range
To Temple, Strand, and New Exchange,
To see their fashions rare and strange,
But God a mercy penny.

The famous abbey I have seen,
And have the pictures viewed
Of many a noble king and queen,
Which are by death subdued.
And having seen the sights most rare,
The watermen fully ready were,
Me o'er the river Thames to bear,
But God a mercy penny.

Bear Garden, when I do frequent,
Or the Globe on the Bank-side,
They afford to me most rare content,
As I full oft have tried:
The best pastime that they can make,
They instantly will undertake,
For my delight and pleasure sake,
But God a mercy penny.

In every place whereas I come,
Both I and my sweet Penny
Got entertainment in the same,
And got the love of many,
Both tapsters, cooks, and vintners fine,
With other jovial friends of mine,
Will pledge my health in beer or wine,
But God a mercy Penny.

Yet will I never niggard be,
While I remain in earth,
But spend my money frolickly
In friendship, love, and mirth;

I'll drink my beer, I'll pay my score,
And eke dispense some of my store,
And to the needy and the poor,
I'll freely give my penny.

Thus to conclude as I began
I wholly am inclined,
Wishing that each true hearted man,
A faithful friend may find:
You that my verses stay to hear,
Draw money for to buy me beer,
The price of it is not too dear,
'T will cost you but a penny.





SIDE I, Band 4: THE MIDWIFE'S GHOST

London, Printed for T. Vere at the sign of the Angel in Guiltspur Street.

Probable date of composition, 1680. The events described in the ballad are more fully reported in Nathaniel Thompson's newspaper 'The True Domestick Intelligence, or News Both from City and Country', No. 74 March 16-19, 1780. The tune is "Queen Dido", or "Troy Town". A ballad entitled 'The Wanderynge Prince (of Troy)' was entered on the Registers of the Stationers' Company in 1564-5. Eight of the fifteen stanzas are given here.

Source: The Pepys Ballads

Who appeared to several People in the House where she formerly lived in Rotten-Row in Holbourn, London, who were all afraid to speak unto her; but she growing very Impetuous, on the 16th of this Instant March, 1680, declarred her mind to the Maid of the said House, who with an Unanimous Spirit adhered to her, and afterwards told it to her Mistris, how that if they took up two Tiles by the Fire-side, they should find the Bones of Bastard-Children that the said Midwife had 15 years ago Murthered, and that she desired that her Kinswoman Mary should see them decently Buried; which accordingly they did and found it as the Maid had said. The Bones are to be seen at the Cheshire-Cheese in the said place at this very time, for the satisfaction of those that believes not this Relation.

To speak of Murthers that have been committed in our Sphear of late;
There's none like these I shall declare, my monstrous hand, and cruel Fate:
Being acted by a Midwife fell, which in Scroop-Court of late did dwell.

Mistris Atkins she there was call'd, of Reputation good alway;
Till Death did send his piercing Dart, and told her that he could not stay:
But she must to the Stigion Lake, for murthering Babes for Parents sake.

The House whereas this Midwife liv'd, hath very much disturbed been,
With apparitions very strange, the like whereof hath not been seen:
Sometimes resembling of her shape, at other times Hells mouth to gape.

She finding none that would Reply, importunate at last did grow;
O'th 16th. of this Instant March, unto the Maid reveal'd her Woe:
Who then was by her Mistris sent, to fetch Night-cloaths Incontinent.

Pray Virgin stay, then quoth the ghost for I to you will do no harm,
And tell Mary whom I love the most, that I hereby, her now do charm,
Two Tiles by'th fire up to take, a Board also, and then to make

A Burial of what she did find, in decent and most handsome sort;
And let the World to know my Crime, and that I am most sorry for't:
Desiring Midwives to take heed, how they dispose their Bastard-breed.

The Maid at first astonish'd was, at this which she her self did hear:
And to her Mistris did impart, the same that now I do declare:
Concerning of the Murthers strange, and did not seem at all to change.

Most people they are apt of late, to condemn (most) strange things as lyes,
To'th Cheshire-Cheese you may repair, for this they will you satisfice:
Having the Childrens Bones to show, in Holbourn if you do it know.



COMPOUNDING A BALSAM.
Broadside in the Collection of the Society of Antiquaries.



THE BELLMAN OF LONDON, 1616.



SIDE II, Band 1: A MERRY PROGRESS TO LONDON

Imprinted at London for I. White.

Rollins places the date of composition about 1620. The theme of the country squireen being gulled in the big brutal city was a favourite one both with 17th century ballad writers and with their more respectable brothers, the dramatists. In the comedies of Ben Jonson, the theme recurs constantly, generally accompanied by the tobacco symbol. Tobacco was introduced into England by Ralph Lane, the first governor of Virginia, and made fashionable by Sir Walter Raleigh. The tune, 'Riding to Romford', is given in Chappell's POPULAR MUSIC OF THE OLDEN TIME under the title of "Cupid's Courtesy."

Ten of the eighteen stanzas are given here.

Source: The Pepys Ballads

A merry Progresse to London to see Fashions, by a young Country Gallant, that had more Money than Witte.

My Mother to Heaven is gone, ten Pounds she gave mee;
Now never a Penny's left, as God shall have mee:
Yet still my heart is free, I live at liberty,
And keepe good company, taking Tobacco.

Old Woman, fare thou well, thanks for thy kindnesse,
My Plough and Cart are gone, with my good Geldings:
I have no foote of Land, nor one Groat at command:
Which way then shall I stand to a pipe of Tobacco?

My Purse will chincke no more, my Pocket's empty:
I am turnd out of doore: farewell good Company.
Friendship now slender growes, Poverty parteth those
That for Drinke sell their Cloathes and for Tobacco.

My Cloake is layde to pawne, with my old Dagger:
My state is quite orethrowne, how shall I swagger?
Yet Ile doe what I can, and be no Coward then,
But provee my selfe a man, at a pipe of Tobacco.

Upon a proper Nagge daintely paced;
To London first I came, all with Gold laced:
Then with my Puncke each day, Road I to see
a Play;
There went my Gold away, taking Tobacco.

Then tracing the gallant Streets of London City,
A Damsell mee kindly greets, courtious and witty:
Shee like a singing Larke, ledd mee into the darke,
Where I soone payd a Marke for a Pipe of Tobacco.

Pickthatch and Clarken-well, made me so merry,
Untill my Purse at last, began to grow weary:
Yellow-starcht bonny Kate, with her fine nimble pate,
Coosond mee of my plate, with a pipe of Tobacco.

Then for Good-fellowship, to Garden-ally,
I hied mee to search for Daughters of folly:
There I found roaring Boyes, with their faire Female joyes:
And the Divell making toyes to take Tobacco.

Then straight to Westminster made I adventer,
To finde Good fellows (who) will'd mee to enter,
Where I felt such a smoake, as might the Divell choake,
There went away my Cloake, with the smoake of Tobacco.

Now farewell Good-fellowship, London I leave thee:
Never more whilst I live, shall they deceive mee,
Every Streete, every Lane, holds mee in disdaine,
London hath wrought my bane, so farewell Tobacco.



SIDE II, Band 2: LONDON'S LOTTERY

Imprinted at London by W.W. for Henry Robards, and are to be sold at his shop neere to S. Botulphes Church without Aldergate, 1612.

The novel method of raising money mentioned in this ballad had for its objective the establishment of a colony in Virginia. The winner of the first prize in the lottery was one Thomas Sharplisse, a London tailor. "Foure thousande crownes in fayre plate, was sent to his house in very stately manner".



"Henry Roberts registered 'London's Lottery' on July 30, 1612 - a date, curiously enough, ten days after the lottery had ended." (Rollins).

The Pepys broadside directs that the ballad be sung to the tune of "The Lusty Gallant". Six of the twenty-one verses are given here.

With an encouragement to the furtherance thereof, for the good of Virginia, and the benifite of this our native Countrie; wishing good fortune to all that venture in the same.

London, live thou famous long,
Thou bearest a gallant minde:
Plenty, peace and pleasures store,
In thee we dayly finde.
The Merchants of Virginia now,
Hath nobly tooke in hand,
The bravest golden Lottery,
That ere was in this Land.

It is to plant a Kingdome sure,
Where savadge people dwell:
God will favour Christians still,
And like the purpose well.
Take courage then with willingnesse,
Let hands and hearts agree:
A braver enterprize then this,
I thinke can never bee.

You London Merchants sending forth
Your fortunes to the sea,
Heere may you purchase Golden worth,
And Countries love this way.
It pleaseth God, contentes the King,
In venturing thus your store:
To plant that Land in government,
Which never was before.

The Merchants of the Easterne partes,
Heere shewes both love and care;
And ventures Gold with Joyfull heartes,
And thereof makes no spare.
Our gallant London Companies,
And Halles of high renowne,
Into Virgianias Lottery,
Sendes freely many a Crowne.

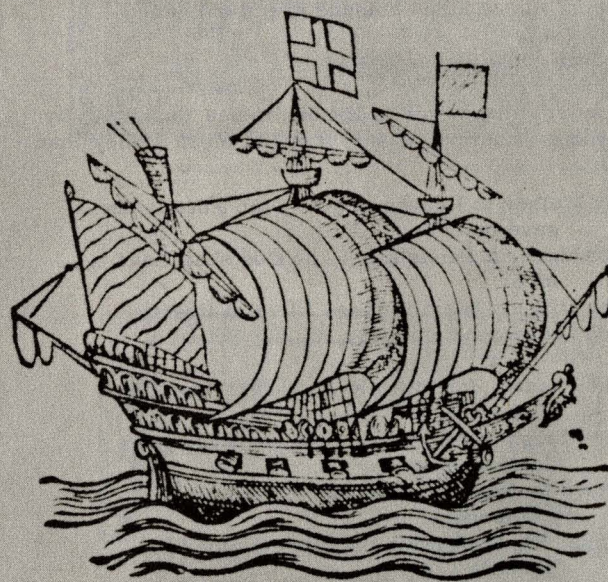
For good intent all this is done,
And no man wrongd therein:
Then happy fortune be his dole,
The greatest Prize can win:
And happy fortune be their guides,
That nobly thus maintaines
The planting of this New-found Land,
With cares, with cost, and paines.

Who knowes not England once was like
A wild and savage place,
Till government and use of men,
That wildnesse did deface:
And so Virginia may in time,
Be made like England now;
Where long-loud peace and plenty both,
Sits smiling on her brow.

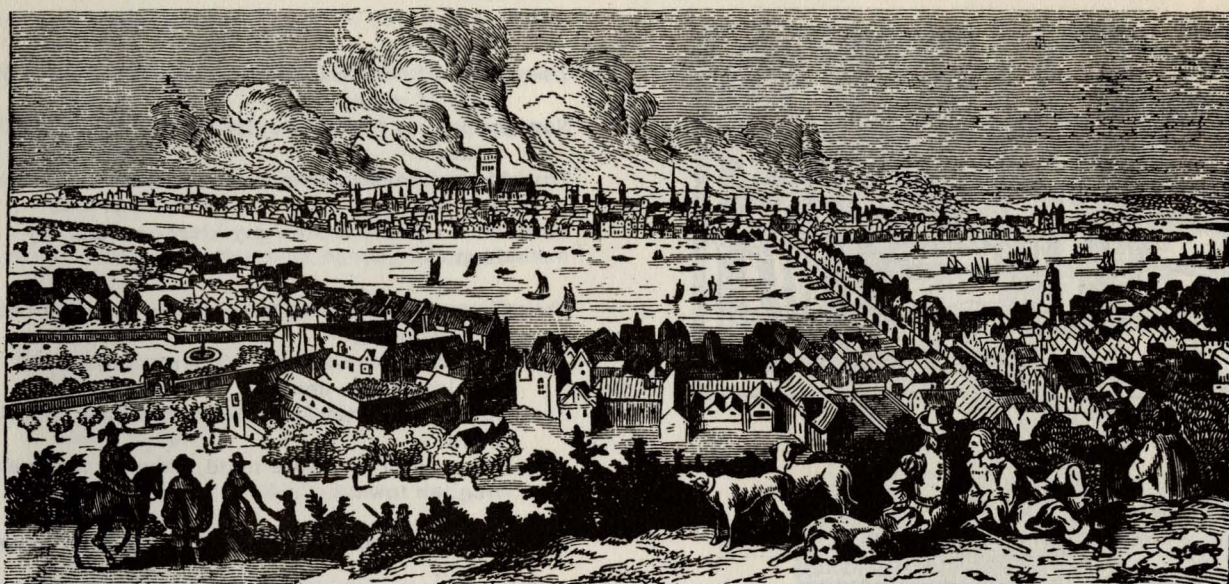
NOVA BRITANNIA. OFFERING MOST

Excellent fruites by Planting in
VIRGINIA.

Exciting all such as be well affected
to further the same.



LONDON
Printed for SAMUEL MACHAM, and are to be sold at
his Shop in Pauls Church-yard, at the
Signe of the Bul-head.
1609.



SIDE II, Band 3: LONDON MOURNING IN ASHES

London, Printed for E. Crowch, for F. Coles,
T. Vere and J. Wright.

Two-thirds of the City of London was destroyed by 'the great fire' of 1666. The Dutch, the French and the Catholics were all, in their turn, accused of being the incendiaries, while the more sober citizens inclined to the view that the fire was assigned from the Almighty, that worse was yet to come unless the populace abandoned its sinful ways. The melody is contained in a manuscript volume of virginal music, transcribed by Sir John Hawkins, where it has the title of "In Sad and Ashy Weeds". Seven of the sixteen stanzas are given here.

This is to give notice, That His Majesty hath declared his positive resolution not to heal any more after the end of this present April until Michaelmas next: And this is published to the end that all Persons concerned may take notice thereof, and not receive a disappointment.

London, April 22.

NOTICE RELATING TO THE PLAGUE.
"The Intelligencer," April 24, 1665.

Lamentable Narrative lively expressing the Ruine of that Royal City by fire which began in Pudding-lane on September the second, 1666, at one of the clock in the morning being Sunday, and continuing until Thursday night following, being the sixth day, with the great care the King, and the Duke of York took in their own Persons, day and night to quench it.

Of Fire, Fire, Fire I sing, that have more cause
to cry,
In the Great Chamber of the King, (a City mounted
High;)
Old London that hath stood in State above six
hundred years,
In six days space, Woe and alas! is burn'd and
drown'd in tears.

The second of September in the middle time of night,
In Pudding-lane it did begin, to burn and blaze out
right;

Where all that gaz'd, were so amaz'd, at such a
furious flame,
They knew not how, or what to do that might expel
the same.

It swallow'd Fishstreet hil, and straight it lick'd
up Lombard-street,
Down Canon-street in blazing State it flew with
flaming feet;
Down to the Thames whose shrinking streams, began
to ebb away.
As thinking that the power of Fate had brought the
latter day.

With hands and feet, in every street, they pack up
Goods and fly,
Pitch, Tarr, and Oyl, increase the spoyle old
Fishstreet 'gins to frye;
The fire doth range, up to the Change, and every
King commands,
But in despite, of all its might, the stout old
Founder stands.

At Temple Church and Holborn-bridge, and Pye-
corner 'tis stench'd,
The Water did the Fire besiege, at Aldersgate it
quench'd;
At Criplegate (Though very late) and eke at Coleman-
street,
At Basing-hall the Fire did fall, we all were joy'd
to see't.

Although the Fire be fully quench'd yet if our sins
remain,
And that in them we still are drench'd, the Fire
will rage again;
Or what is worse, a heavier Curse, in Famine will
appear:
Where shall we tread, when want of Bread, and Hunger
draweth near.

If this do not reform our lives, a worse thing will
succeed,
Our kindred, children, and our wives, will dye for
want of Bread;
When Famine comes, 'tis not our Drums, our Ships
our Horse or Foot,
That can defend, but if we mend, we never shall come
to't.



SIDE II, Band 4: KING LEAR AND HIS THREE DAUGHTERS

From an ancient copy in "The Golden Garland", bl, let, intituled 'A Lamentable Song of the Death of King Leir and his Three Daughters'.

The first 4to edition of Shakespeare's play is dated 1608. That the theme was a popular one is borne out by the fact that a play dealing with King Lear was entered in the Stationers' Register as early as 1594. The tune 'Flying Fame' has had a large number of texts written to it. Fifteen of the twenty-three stanzas are given here.

Source: Percy's Reliques

King Leir once ruled this land with princely
power and peace;
And had all things with hearts content that might
his joys increase.
Amongst those things that nature gave, three
daughters fair had he,
So princely seeming beautiful, as fairer could
not be.

So on a time it pleas'd the king a question thus
to move,
Which of his daughters to his grace could shew
the dearest love:
To whome the eldest thus began, "Dear father,
mind," quoth she,
"Before your face, to do you good, my blood
shall rener'd be;

"And for your sake, my bleeding heart shall here
be cut in twain,
Ere that I see your reverend age the smallest
grief sustain."
"And so will I," the second said, "Dear father,
for your sake,
The worst of all extremeties I'll gently undertake."

"My love," quoth young Cordelia then, "which to
your grace I owe,
Shall be the duty of a child, and that is all I'll
show."
"And wilt thou shew no more," quoth he, that doth
thy duty bind?
I well perceive thy love is small, when as no more
I find.

"Henceforth I banish thee my court, thou art no
child of mine;
Nor any part of this my realm by favour shall be
thine.
Thy elder sisters loves are more than well I can
demand,
To whom I equally bestow my kingdome and my
land."

Thus flattering speeches won renown by these two
sisters here;
The third had causeless banishment, yet was
her love more dear.
For poor Cordelia patiently went wandring up and
down
Uphelp'd, unpity'd, gentle maid, through many an
English town:

Untill at last in famous France she gentler fortunes
found;
Though poor and bare, yet she was deem'd the
fairest on the ground.
Her father king Leir this while with his two
daughters staid:
Forgetful of their promis'd loves, full soon the same
decay'd.

And living in queen Ragan's court, the eldest of the
twain,
She took from him his chiefest means, and most
of all his train.
For whereas twenty men were wont to wait with
bended knee:
She gave allowance but to ten, and after scarce
to three.

"Am I rewarded thus," quoth he, "in giving all I
have
Unto my children, and to beg for what I lately
gave?
I'll go unto my Gonorell: my second child, I know,
Will be more kind and pitiful, and will relieve my
woe."

Full fast he hies then to her court, where when
she heard his moan,
Return'd him answer, That she grieved that all
his means were gone.
But no way could relieve his wants; yet if that he
would stay
Within her kitchen he should have what scullions
gave away.

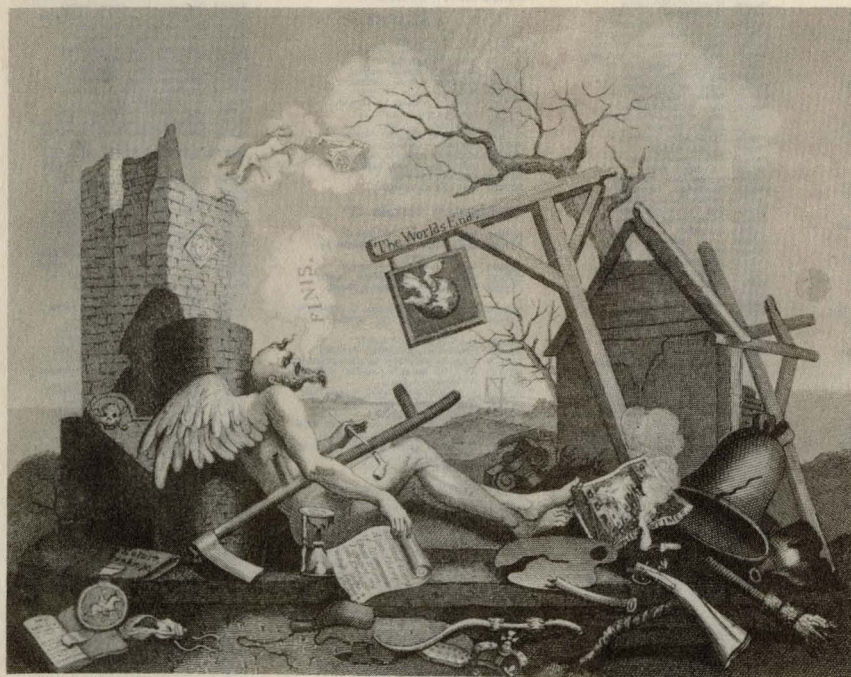
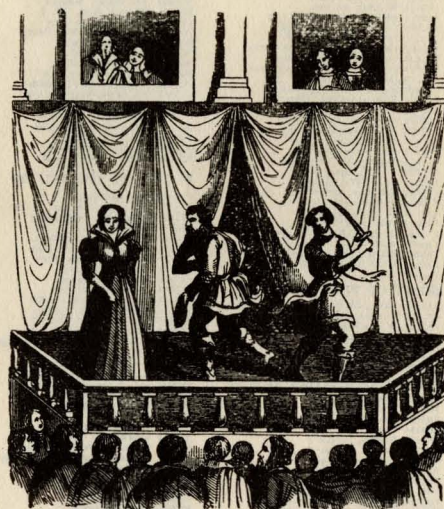
And calling to remembrance then his youngest
daughter's words,
That said the duty of a child was all that love affords:
But doubting to repair to her, whom he had banish'd
so,
Grew frantick mad, for in his mind he bore the
wounds of woe.

Even thus possest with discontents, he passed o're
to France
In hopes from fair Cordelia there, to find some
gentler chance.
Most virtuous dame! Which when she heard of
this her father's grief,
As duty bound, she quickly sent him comfort and
relief.

And by a train of noble peers, in brave and gallant
sort,
She gave in charge he should be brought to Aganippus'
court;
Whose royal king, with noble mind so freely gave
consent,
To muster up his knights at arms, to fame and
courage bent.

And so to England came with speed, to repossesse
king Leir,
And drive his daughters from their thrones by his
Cordelia dear.
Where she, true-hearted noble queen, was in the
battel slain:
Yet he, good king, in his old days, possesst his
crown again.

But when he heard Cordelia's death, who died in-
deed for love
Of her dear father, in whose cause she did this
battle move;
He swooning fell upon her breast, from whence he
never parted:
But on her bosom left his life, that was so truly
hearted.



Production Director Moses Asch

EWAN MacCOLL

Ewan MacColl is that rare combination of traditional and revival singer at one and the same time. Born in Auchterarder, Perthshire, Scotland on January 25, 1915 (on Bobby Burns' birthday), MacColl learned most of his songs from his father and other members of his family, as well as from Scottish and English neighbors of childhood days. "My old man was the best singer I ever heard," he says. Unlike so many traditional singers whose music was kept alive in relatively isolated rural areas, the MacColl family was a product of the industrial age. His father was an iron-moulder who worked at his trade irregularly as a result of being blacklisted for trade union organizing activities. His mother, from whom he also learned many songs worked on and off as a charwoman in all the industrial cities of England and Scotland as the MacColls moved from town to town trying to escape the penalties of the father's trade union activities. One writer has called him the "Folksinger of the Industrial Age." During the 1930's, MacColl found himself in the burgeoning British workers' theater movement. His natural political inclinations, together with an instinctive flair for drama and song led him to the "agit-prop" performing groups of the depression era whose stage was more often a street before a factory gate or a union meeting hall than a formal theater. In the years since then, he has become the leading presenter of folk songs on British radio and television, either writing or appearing in more than 50 different BBC programs. Song-writer, recording and concert artist (he has toured throughout Europe and Canada), Ewan MacColl is a towering figure in the world of folk music.

