BOTHY BALLADS OF SCOTLAND
sung by EWAN MACCOLL,
accompanied by PEGGY SEEGER
on concertina and five-string banjo;
and on ocarina by ALF EDWARDS

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FW 8759
BOTHY BALLADS OF SCOTLAND

SIDE I
Band 1: THE KEACH IN THE CREEEL (Child #281)
Band 2: I'M A ROVER
Band 3: THE SCRANKY BLACK FARMER
Band 4: THE BAND OF SHEARERS
Band 5: JOCK HAWK'S ADVENTURES IN GLASGOW
Band 6: THE BREWER LADDIE
Band 7: THE WIND BLEW THE BONNIE LASSIE'S PLAIDIE AWA'
Band 8: THE MONYMUSK LADS
Band 9: THE MUCKIN' O' GEORDIE'S BYRE

SIDE II
Band 1: BOGIE'S BONNY BELLE
Band 2: LAMACHREE AND MEGRUM
Band 3: THE ROAD AND THE MILES TO DUNDEE
Band 4: THE LOTHIAN HAIRST
Band 5: IT HAPPENED ON A DAY
Band 6: I'M A WORKING CHAP
Band 7: JOHNNY SANGSTER
Band 8: DRUMELGIE
Band 9: SHE WAS A RUM ONE

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Introduction

In Northeast Scotland it was the practice, until fairly recent years, for male farm workers to be accommodated in buildings separate from the farmhouse proper. Such buildings were known as bothies.

Ploughmen and other farm servants sold their services to a farmer on a seasonal basis, the transaction generally being arranged at a seasonal "feeling market", or hiring fair.

In the days before radio, television and cheap transport brought urban civilisation into every farm kitchen, farm servants had, of necessity to provide their own forms of amusement and expression. Since the area where such conditions prevailed was one which was extremely rich in traditional songs and ballads, it was natural that the bothies should continue the tradition of song and music-making.

The gradual mechanisation of agricultural processes which began in the mid-19th century did, of course, tend to limit the thematic area of the bothy songs. The introduction, for example, of the reaping machine and the mechanical shearer made sharing and harvest songs things of the past, while the Education Act of 1872 practically abolished herding, which until this time had been largely a children's occupation. The end of the herding practice meant that no new herding songs were created and that those already in existence tended to be forgotten.

The mechanisation of ploughing, however, was a much more gradual development than, say, the mechanisation of harvesting tools for, by the end of the 19th century almost all the large farms of Northeast Scotland were equipped with reaping machines and mechanical binders. It is true that after 1850 the plough horse was, in some places, replaced by the steam tractor and after 1900 the motor tractor made its appearance - but the change was gradual. Horses were not only an important factor in farming economy but, in addition, the possession of a good team of plough horses conferred a great deal of social prestige on their owner. The men who drove, fed and looked after the horses, that is, the ploughmen, were considered to be the aristocrats of the Scots agricultural scene and there was a good deal of competitive striving amongst them when it came to exhibiting prowess and skill with a plough and a team.

Something of the nature of a primitive secret society of ploughmen had been in existence from at least the third quarter of the 18th-century and with initiation ceremonies, passwords and special handclamps the society played an important part in controlling entry into the craft and in maintaining a high level of skill.

The period which followed the first World War saw the mechanisation of agriculture tremendously accelerated and by the 1930s there were only a handful of farms where the bothy system still operated. The second World War completed the process and today the ploughmen's "grip and word" are things of the past. The horses have been superseded by the tractor and the ploughmen by the mechanic.

The only real record we have of this ancient craft is the bothy songs for in them the ploughman reigns as undisputed hero. In the introduction to Bothy Songs and Ballads of Aberdeen, Banff and Moray Angus and the Mearns, John Ord writes: "Bothy song is just another word for folksong." This is altogether too wide a definition. That they are folksongs is true, but they are folksongs which have originated in the bothies and which deal exclusively with the lives and experiences of those farm servants, particularly the ploughmen, who were part of the bothy system. They are a special group of folksongs in the way the sea shanties and forebidders are a special group.

A great many other types of songs were sung in the bothies and farm kitchens: traditional ballads, whaing songs, broadsides and old country songs, but these are, so to speak, folksongs by adoption. In the mouths of bothy singers they were often transformed and invested with the stylistic characteristics of the true bothy song.

If the hero of the bothy ballads is the ploughman then the villan is the farmer who employs him, or the foreman who carries out the farmers instructions. It is the farmer who pays poor wages and provides the ploughman with a monotonous diet. If the farmer, or the foreman (as the case may be) drives him to work outdoors in all kinds of weather, it is the farmer who is responsible for all the discomforts which the ploughman suffers in the course of his work. It is the farmer, or the farmer's wife who prevents free intercourse between men and women farm servants and, because of all these the ploughman to be his inferior, prohibits social contact between ploughmen and members of his own family.

Finally, and this is the worst crime of all, it is the farmer who starves the plough horses and thus strikes directly at the ploughman's professional status.

In spite of all this, however, the bothy ballads cannot be described as "protest songs". They reflect a social attitude but it is an apolitical one. The ploughman may complain about poor food and sick horses but he accepts these things as his lot. When he is cheated out of his wages or his economic rights are attacked, he does not strike or resort to political action, he merely waits for his feeling to express and finds a new employer. Again, when thwarted in the pursuit of sexual fulfillment he does not insist on his human rights, but resorts to stratagems.

He does, however, manage to revenge himself upon his employer by caricaturing him and exposing his faults, by controlling him and by striking his daughter's affections. These victories are, for the most part, possible only in the fantasy world of the songs.

The preoccupation with traditional balladry has created its own form of snobbery. Collectors of folksongs and folk song anthropologists have tended to be rather patronising about the bothy songs. In fact, our native collectors have, on the whole, treated them with the same disdain with which American folklorists and musicologists have treated hillbilly music.

And yet, the fact remains that, along with the sea shanties, the bothy ballads constitute the most important body of folksongs to be created in the 19th-century.

- Ewan MacColl

SIDE I

1. THE KNOCK IN THE CREEK.

The first printed version of this ballad did not appear until early in the nineteenth century although the theme has been part of European literature since the Middle Ages. Professor Child concludes his notes on the ballad with a peculiarly pron statement: "No one looks for decorum in pieces of this description but a passage in this ballad, which need not be particularised, is brutal and shameless almost beyond description."
These are harsh words for a scholar whose stock-in-trade was stories dealing with mayhem in all its forms and it is difficult to imagine what prompted them. It is, of course, possible that Child was shocked by the use of the word 'beauch' on which considerable play is made in the song. Used as a noun the word denotes bustle or cluster, when used as a verb, however, it can mean 'lift' or 'hoist' or alternatively it can mean to void excrement. The ballad is widespread throughout N.E. Scotland and was a favourite in the bothies where it was generally known as The Wee Toon Clerk.

Learned from the singing of Jimmy MacBeth of Elgin.

Band 2:  I'M A ROVER.

This night-visit song is almost certainly related to The Grey Cock (The Lover's Ghost), a ballad in which a girl is visited by the ghost of her dead lover. As A. E. Lloyd has observed: "Generally the song is found either with the bedroom-window theme or the cockcrow theme but not the two together. In this version the bedroom-window theme is clearly established and what remains of the cock-crow theme has lost its supernatural significance."

From the singing of James Grant of Aberdour, Fife.

Band 3: THE BOOSKY BLACK PARDER.

Until recently it was common for East- Anglian countrymen to spend part of the year working on the land and part working on the sea as herring-fishermen. In N.E. Scotland, however, this was never the practice, the two communities always being sharply divided. Consequently it is unusual to find in the boothy singer's repertoire a song in which the seaman's attitude to farm-work is expressed.

From the singing of James Grant of Aberdour, Fife.

Band 4: THE BAND OF SHEARERS.

This song was the work of Robert Hogg (a nephew of James Hogg, the Patrick Shepherds) who was born at Stoab in Peebles, in 1799. In Ord's introduction to Boothy Songs and Ballads there is an interesting note concerning shearers: "The shearing was mostly done by women. The value of a day's work was calculated by the number of thraves cut. A thrave consisted of two stools of twelve sheaves each. To cut seven or eight sheaves was considered a good day's work for a shearer. After the introduction of the scythe (1810), the best men cut the corn, the women gathered it into sheaves, and made the bands, while younger men, as a rule, bound and stooked the sheaves. The band-master could claim a kiss from the gatherer for each band whose knot slipped in the binding."

From the singing of James Grant of Aberdour, Fife.

Band 5: JOCK HAWK'S ADVENTURE IN GARMON.

The basic bothy theme of the farm-servant exploited by the rich farmer is, in this ballad, altered slightly to become the farm-servant exploited by city-slickers. The general bothy pattern, however, remains unchanged and, as usual, no element of self-pity is allowed to interfere with the humour.

Band 6: THE BREWER LADDIE.

The forsaken and jilted heroes (and heroines) of the bothy ballads rarely die for love. Instead, they meet misfortune head on and, with a good deal of sound sense, start looking around for another sweetheart. It has been suggested that The Brewer Laddie is a boothy adaptation of an older song and this may well be the case.

Learned from my father and collected with versions in Ord's Boothy Songs and Ballads and Kidson's Traditional Tunes.

Band 7: THE WIND BLOW THE BOONIE LADDER'S PILLIES AWAY.

In a note given to a text of this song in Robert Ford's 'Vagabond Ballads' it is stated: 'My friend, Mr. D. Kippen of Crieff has it that the song was composed by an Irishman who lived in Crieff near to the Cross in the early years of the present century who was known by the name of Blind Bob.' In most printed versions only a single refrain is given but country singers prefer to vary the chorus.

From the singing of Hughie Graham of Dalloway.

Band 8: THE MOUNDING LAND.

This song was a popular theme with the boothy singers and in this song the story is embellished with some rather sharp comment on the class structure. Learned from print: Ord's Boothy Songs and Ballads.

Band 9: THE MACKIN' O' GEORGIE'S BYRE.

This epic of domestic upheaval owes its title to a much older song (Scot. Musical Museum, No. 56) and its tune has been adapted from a Gaelic melody. It is one of the few bothy ballads which have gained currency outside the bothy areas.

From the singing of Jimmy MacBeth of Elgin.

SIDE II

Band 1: BOOGIE'S BONNY BELLE.

It is not often that the heroes of the bothy songs are allowed to expose their passion, their anger or their resentment, the direct expression of such feelings being either avoided entirely or burlesqued. Irony, satire and elegiac humor are the usual weapons of the boothy singer and when, as in Boogie's Bonny Belle, he abandons them in favour of the frontal assault, the effect is startling.

From the singing of Jimmy Gray of Midlothian, Fife.

Band 2: LARCHBIRD AND MEGGIN.

The bothy ballads generally fall into a fairly simple structural pattern, consisting of four-line stanzas (A-B-A-B rhyming system) often followed by a chorus. The song given here is unique in that it makes use of a form more common to the traditional ballad - that is, a four-line stanza in which the 2nd and 4th lines are refrains. The similarity to the traditional ballad form is further strengthened by a homonymic use of place names, almost amounting to incremental repetition and through the use of a strongly hypnotic melody.

Learned from print: Miscellaneous of the Fyxmor Club of Edinburgh.

Band 3: THE ROAD AND THE MILES TO DUNDEE.

This singularly innocent song is deservedly popular throughout the whole of Scotland. It is one of those pieces which belongs to that part of a social gathering when drink and good fellow- ship demand the sonorous pleasant feelings of nostalgia which such a song can create.

From the singing of Rob Donald of Gardenstown, Fife.

Band 4: THE LOTHIAN NIGHT.

There is interesting reference to this song in Ord's introduction to Boothy Songs and Ballads: "Years of half a century ago for harvest contractors to visit the Lothians during the summer and undertake to cut, gather and stock grain crops at an arranged price per acre. The contractor, or master as he was called by the workers, engaged a foreman, who was held responsible by the contractor for carrying out the various contracts. The foreman was, every case, to act like 'Logan' in the song and to see that the male reapers visiting their female co-workers at their bothies terminated their visits at a given hour."

Learned from print: Miscellaneous of the Fyxmor Club of Edinburgh.

Band 5: IT HAPPENED ON A DAY.

In The Brewer Laddie the jilted lover shrugs his shoulders and leaves and finds himself a new sweetheart. In this song it is the girl who is jilted but she too shows that she is capable of coping with the situation.

From James Grant of Aberdour, Fife.

Band 6: I'M A WORKING CHAP.

It is only rarely that the bothy ballads essay a direct sociological comment and when the attempt is made the result is not usually a happy one. The Working Chap is reminiscent of
the style found in the writings of 'the Fustian philosophers' who helped to pioneer the British socialist movement. "The pair needle woman... on the wa'," mentioned in the second verse, is a reference to the once ubiquitous daguerreotype inspired by Thomas Hood's Song of a Shirt.

Learned from print: Ord's Bothy Songs and Ballads.

Band 7: JOHNNY JANGSTER.

According to Gavin Greig who collected the first printed version of this fine song, Johnny Jangster was the work of William Scott who was born in Petterangus in the parish of Old Deer, Aberdeenshire in 1775. Scott who began life as a herd ladie subsequently moved to Aberdeen where he was apprenticed to a tailor. Later, he worked, for a time, in London and after visiting America returned to Old Deer where he spent the remainder of his life.

Learned from print: Miscellanea of the Rymour Club, Edinburgh.

Band 8: DRUMBELGIE.

In spite of being a local song, that is, a song describing a particular set of conditions in a particular place, Drumbelgie has achieved wide popularity throughout the world of Eastern Scotland and if farm-servants can be said to have a national anthem then this is it.

Learned from Jimmie MacBeth of Elgin.

Band 9: SHE WAS A KIN' ONE.

"That's a gey rauch (rough) sang" commented Rob Donald the Geanie shepherd after hearing it for the first time, "but" he went on, "it gets richt tas the ha'rit o' the matter." And he was right.

From Jeannie Robertson of Aberdeen.

THE KAUCH IN THE CREEL.

O, a fair young maid went up the street some fresh fish for to buy And a bonnie clerk's fall'n in love wit' her and followed her by and by,

CHORUS:
Ricky doo dun da, doo dun da, Ricky doo dun da.

"O whaur live ye, my bonnie lass, I pray ye tell to me! And though the night were never sae mairk I would try and win in to thee."

"My faither he aye looks the door And my mother he always keeps the key; And though the night were never sae mairk, ye couldn win in to thee."

Now the clerk he had a true brother And a wily wight was he, And he has made a lang ladder wit' thirty steps and three. He has made a pin but and a creel, a creel but and a pin

And he has gone to the chimley-top To let'n the bonnie clerk in.

Now, the old wife she lay wide awake though late, late was the hour, "I'll lay my life," quo' the silly old wife, "There's a man in our dochter's bower."

The old man he got out o' the bed to see gin the thing was true, She's tak'en the bonnie clerk in her arms and covered him over wi' blue.

"What are ye dazing, my ain dochter, what are ye dazing, my doot?" I'm praying on the muckle book for my silly old marmie and you."

"Pray on, pray on, my ain dochter, and see that ye dze it richt, For atween you and your sauld mither I hanna since gotten my rest."

"O, wife, O wife, ye silly old wife, an ill deith may ye de, She's gotten the muckle book in her arms and she's praying for you and me."

The old wife she lay wide awake, no' another word was said, "I'll lay my life," said the silly old wife, "There's a man in our dochter's bed."

"Get up, get up, my old guid man, and see if the thing be true." Get up yourself, ye silly old wife, I'll no be fashed wi' you."

"Get up yourself, ye silly old wife and say the deil tak' ye! For atween you and your ain dochter, I hanna since blinkit an a'c."

The old wife she got over the bed to see gin the thing be true, But she slippit her foot and fell into the creel and up the tow he drew.

The man that was at the chimley top, finding the creel was fu', He wrappit the rope his shouther round and up the tow he drew.

"O help me noo, my guid man, O help me noo, my doo, For he that ye wished me wi' this night, I fear he's gotten me noo."

"O gin he has got ye, I wish he may haud ye, I wish he may haud ye fast, For atween you and your ain dochter, I hanna since gotten my rest."

O, hey the blue and the bonnie bonnie blue, and I wish the blue right well, And for lila old wife that wakes at night, may she get a guild kauch in the creel!

GLOSSARY:

whaur where
nicht night
mirk dark
win in get in
vicht vich
creel basket
gone gone
dochter daughter
daesing doing
muckle book Bible
ain own
atween betweent
right right
hanna since hanna since
deith death
dee die
anther another
guid good
fashed fashed
deil devil
gin gin
tow tow
fu' fu'
noo now
houd hold
lila every
keach lift

I'M A ROVER.

I'm a rover and seldom sober, I'm a rover of high degree, It's when I'm drinking I'm always thinking How to gain my love's company.

"There's ne'er a night I'm going to ramble There's ne'er a night I'm going to roam, There's ne'er a night I'm going to ramble Into the arms of my own true love."

Though the night be as dark as dungeon, Not a star to be seen above, I will be guided without a stumble Into the arms of my own true love.

He stepped up to her bedroom window, Kneeling gently upon a stone, He whispered through her bedroom window, "Darling dear, do you lie alone?"

She raised her head on her snow-white pillow, Wi' her arms around her breast, Says, "Who's that at my bedroom window Disturbir me at my long night's rest?"

Says I, "True love, it's thy true lover, Open the door and let him in, For I am come on a long journey More than near drenched to the skin."

She opened the door with the greatest pleasure, She opened the door and let him in: They both shook hands and embraced each other Till the morning they lay as they lay.

The cocks were crowing, the birds were whistling, The burns they ran free above the braes, But remember, lass, I'm a ploughman ladde And the farmer I must obey.

Noo, my love, I must go and leave thee To climb the hills they are far above, But I will climb them, the greatest pleasure Sin' I been i' the airm o' my love."
Glossary.

burns — small streams
above — above
brae — hillside
since — since
arms — arms

The Scanky Black Farmer

At the tap o' the Garloch in the lands of Leith-ball,
A scanky black farmer in Earlsfield
did dwell;
W' him I engaged a servant to be,
Which makes me lament I went far frae the sea.

I engaged w' this farmer to drive cart and ploo;
Hard fortune convent an ill-fated crew.
I ane of the number which causes me rue.
That e'er I attempted the country to view.

It's early in the morn' we raise to the yoke,
The storm and the tempest can ne'er make us stop,
While the wind it does beat and the rain it does pour,
And ay you black farmer on us he does grow.

But the time is expiring and the day it will come,
To various countries we all must go home;
Bonnie Jeanie must travel, bonnie Bawbie also,
Back to the beyond o' Montgomery must go.

So farewell, Rhynie, and adieu to you, Clatt,
For I have been w' you baith early and late.
Baith early and late, baith empty and fou,
So farewell, Rhynie, 'I'll bid you adieu.

So farewell, Bawbie and adieu to you all,
Likewise to the farmer that lives at Leith-ball;
For to serve this black farmer I'm sure it's no sport,
So I will be going to my bonnie seaport.

Glossary.
tap — top.
scranky — lean.
frae — from.
ploo — plough.
y — always.
beyond — beyond.
baith — both.
fou — full.

Jock Hume's Adventures in Glasgow

To Glasgow toon I went as nicht to spend my penny fee,
And a bonnie lass she gied consent to bear me company.

Chorus:
Tum a hi, tum a doo, tum a hi tum day,
Tum a hi, tum a doo, tum a hi tum day.
She kept I was a ploughman chiel,
A stranger to the toon,
She said: "That needs hinder ye to jog it up and doon."
She took off her petticoat and I took off my kirt,
And we sweated at the jibbie as we ploughed the muckle park.

We walked up Jamaica Street and doon the Broomielaw,
Where organ lads were playing and fiddlers ane or two.
We went into a tavern and I ca' d for some gin,
And a' the folk about the place, they smiled as we ca' d in.
We had been in half an hour when in ca' d half a score
O' sailor lads and queans ane braw
You never saw before.
They drank the salt, they drank the gin,
They drank it a' richt free,
And ither ane aye drank success to the bonnie wee lass and me.

The night it passed w' mirth and sang till day was drawing near,
And then the sailors' factor cried:
"All hands on deck appear!"
The lasses gied a parting kiss, the lads they said goodbye,
The hindmost ane as he went oot said: "Jock, ye've a' to pay."
They took my watch, they took my chain, my spuelah and my knife,
I wonder that they didn't tak' my little spunk o' life.

I can't into this world a bairn sae naked and sae bare,
I can't oot the same frae Glesca and
I'll never gang oot mair.

Glossary.

Glesca — Glasgow
as — one
nicht — night
kent — knew
chiel — chiel
toon — town
doon — down
sark — shirt
Broomielaw — district of Glasgow
twa — two
cal'd — caller
sang — song
factor — foreman
oot — out
spuelah — tobacco pouch
spunk — bit
baile — child
frae — from
mair — more.

The Brewer Ladie

In Perth there lived a bonnie lad,
A brewer to his trade, O;
And he has courted Peggy hoy, a young and handsome maid, O.

Chorus:
Wi' a fal dal diddle um a di dum doo
Wi' a fal dal diddle um a di doo.

Oh, he courted her for seven lang years a' for to gain her favour,
But there ca' a lad oot O
Edinburgh toon who a' the world knew was to have her.

"It's wi' ye gey amang a' me,
And will ye be my honey?
It's wi' ye gey amang a' me,
And leave your brewer ladie?"

"Oh, I will gey amang a' you,
And amang a' you I'll ride O;
I'll gey a' ye to the ends o' the earth, tho' I'm spoke to the brewer lad, O."
The brewer he can' hame at e'en,
E-spiring for his honey.
Her father he made this reply:
"She's no' been here since Monday."

Oh, wasna that an unco ploy, woudna anyone been offended?
To court wi' a lad for seven years and leave him at the end o'!

Oh, be it so and let her go, for it shall never grieve me,
I'm a lad that's free, as you can see,
And a sm' thing will relieve me.

There's as guld fish into the sea as ever yet was taken;
I'll cast my net the try again for I'm only since forsaken.
She's rambled up, she's rambled down, she's rambled through Kirkcaldy, and mony's the time she's rued the day she jilted her brewer ladie. He's taken his course and she's back, the country he has lied, 0, and he's left nae sark upon her back, nor blanket on her bed, 0.

The brewer lad set up in Perth and there he brews strong ale, 0, and he has courted another lassie and ta'en her tae his bed, 0.

Ye lovers a', where'er ye be, just let this be a warning, and never slight your ain true love, for fear ye get a warm anse.

Glossary

can  came  can't
out  oot  na
of  or  no
*  town  brav
who  who  fine
ang  along  wi's
hame  home  won't
'a'en  evening  one
a'-spiring  asking  have
unco  uncivil  have
play  game  have
am  small  have
gild  good  have
once  many  have
mony  gone  have
sark  shirt  have
anther  another  have
'a'en  taken  or
ain  own  or
vaur  worse  or
ane  one  or

The lassie she began to swell about the waist, and Rab was blamed for the whole o' it a'. And the wind blew the bonnie lassie's plaidie awa'. The wind blows east and the wind blows west, the wind blew the bonnie lassie's plaidie awa'.

The lassie said your butcher-beef is ower tough to chew, and the wind blew the bonnie lassie's plaidie awa'.

Then in came the auld wife, the lassie to accuse, the ministers and elders began to abuse. The butcher lad for tryin' to mak' yin into twa, and the wind blew the bonnie lassie's plaidie awa'.

The wind blows east and the wind blows west, the wind blew the bonnie lassie's plaidie awa'.

The lassie said your butcher-beef is ower tough to chew, and the wind blew the bonnie lassie's plaidie awa'.

The lassie she was sent for to come there herself. She looked at the butcher lad, and Rab was blamed for the whole o' it a'. And the wind blew the bonnie lassie's plaidie awa'.

The wind blows east and the wind blows west, the wind blew the bonnie lassie's plaidie awa'. "We baith fell to admirin' for the beef it was sweet to smell, and 'twas then that the wind blew my plaidie awa'."

Rab looked at the lassie and he gied a wee smile, "Ye ken, bonnie lassie, I winnus you beguile, the minister's here and he'll mak' aye o' us twa. That'll pay for the plaidie that the wind blew awa'."

The wind blows east and the wind blows west, and Rab was blamed for the whole o' it a'. And the wind blew the bonnie lassie's plaidie awa'.

The wind blows east and the wind blows west, and Rab was blamed for the whole o' it a'. And the wind blew the bonnie lassie's plaidie awa'.

Two-three months after the plaidie it was lost, and it couldnae be found; the lassie and the butcher lad were lyin' on the ground. "O, what will I tell to the old folks awa'? For I cannae say the wind blew my plaidie awa'."

The wind blows east and the wind blows west, the wind blew the bonnie lassie's plaidie awa'. He's gi'en to her good measure o' the beef and baines and a', and the wind blew the bonnie lassie's plaidie awa'.

Glossary

can  came  can't
dow  down  down
gie  gave  gave
doon  doon  done
fa  fall  fall
saw  saw  saw
awa  at all  all
can  can't  can't
bones  bones  bones
'a'  o'  of
ovre  too  too
chew  chew  chew
auld  old  old
yn  one  one
twn  two  two

The Monymusk Lad

As I cam' in by Monymusk and down by Aldford's daile, a sad misfortune happened to me, and I think me nae shace to tell.

Chorus:
Falt ti doo a riddle doo
Falt ti doole a doe.

As I gaed in by Monymusk, the moon was shining clear, and I held on to Lethendale to see my Maggie dear.

I did gang when I did think that a' was asleep' sound; but plague upon you auld wife, for she can' a'kin' down.

Sae canny she alipped the lock and set the door a'gin; then crawled upon her hands and knees to see what it could be.

Then to the bells wi' a' her might, sae loud she made them ring, till faith, I thocht about my lugs the biggin she would bring.

And when she saw I wadna slip, she ran to the gudman. Says: "There's a lad into the house an' that I winna stan'!"

"For it is a most disgraceful thing, it was provoke a saunt, to see a' the servant girls wi' lads when the gentle ansae maun want."

"Providence has acted wrang sic pleasures for to gie to any servant lad or lass just 'erin' for a fee."

The auld man he cam' ben himsel' an' he pushed bin his head, and faith I thocht it was a ghost just risen frae the deid.

He's duddy drawers upon his legs, he'd on a cap o' white, 'An' he'd a face as lang's my leg and in his hand a light.

He's ta'en my by the shouthers bra' an' pushd' me out o' doors; thinks I, my auld lad, I'll come back when sleepin' gars ye screech.

Glossary

down  down  down
mae  no  no
slekin'  creeping  creeping
slekin'  creeping  creeping
as  airt  airt
will  wi'  wi'
THE MUCKIN’ O’ GEORDIE’S BYRE

In a lea-rig aul’ croft ayont the hill
Just roon the neuk free Sprottie’s mill
Tryin’ a his life the time to kill
Lived Geordie MacIntyre.
He had a wife as swair’s hissel’;
A dochter as black as Auld Nick is in hell—
There was plenty o’ fun awa’ at his mill.
At the muckin’ o’ Geordie’s byre.

CHORUS:
Whaur the graip was tint, the besom was deen
The barns it wads row its leen,
And siccan a sother there’s never was seen
As the muckin’ o’ Geordie’s byre.

The dochter had to strae an’ neep,
The auld wife sorted to wipe the greep,
When Geordie fell skilte on a rotten neep
At the muckin’ o’ Geordie’s byre.
Ben the greep cam’ Geordie’s soo
And she stood up ahint the coo,
The coo kickit out an’ o’ whita staw
At the muckin’ o’ Geordie’s byre.

The auld wife she was bonnie doon—
The coo was kickit on the croon.
An’ showed her head i’ the wiglis goon.
An’ then ben thro’ Geordie’s byre.
The dochter cam’ thro’ the barn door.
An’ seen her mother, let out a roar,
To the midden she ran an’ fell over the barn
At the muckin’ o’ Geordie’s byre.

The barn he leapt the midden dyke.
An’ over the rigs wi’ Geordie’s tyke
They baith fell intill a bumblebee’s byke
At the muckin’ o’ Geordie’s byre.
The cooks an’ hens began to crow.
When biddy astride the coo they saw,
The postie’s shitey ran awa’.
At the muckin’ o’ Geordie’s byre.

A hunder’ years has passed an’ mair
Where Sprottie’s was, the hill is bare,
The croft’s awa’, see ye’ll see nae mair
The muckin’ o’ Geordie’s byre.

BOGGY’S BONNIE BELLE

I gae up tae Huntley toon the purpose for to see
To Bog Heid o’ Karney there I did agree,
To drive his two best horses that’s a task that I could do
To drive his two best horses in the harrow and the plooe.

He had a lovely daughter and her name was Isabel
She was neat, complete and handsome and sure I loved her well.
Doun by the banks o’ Karney it was on the grassy green
Doun by the banks of Karney before that we were seen.

Doun by the banks o’ Karney it was aon a river side,
Doun by the banks o’ Karney we watched the small fish glide.
And six long months had gone and past,
This maiden she grew pale
And six long months had gone and past and forth she had to tell.

And nine long months had gone and past
And she brought forth a son
It was then that I was sent for to see if it could be done.
I promised I would marry here, but me, that wouldna dee,
For ye’re nae match for Isabel and she’s nae match for thee.

So I put my young son in my arms and joy to him I’ll bring
And maybe he’ll be as dear to me as the girlee I adore.
And if he be as dear to me as the girlee I adore
We’ll roam and roam and roam again
As we used to do before.

If Bogey gets a better match, O Bogey he can tell
It was me that took the maidsheild o’ Boggy’s bonnie Belle,
She’s married to a tinsmith and bides in Huntley toon
Selling pots and pans and ladies till
All the country round.

GLOSSARY
To fee to hire oneself to a farmer
Bog Heid o’ Karney the name of a farm and
Consequently of a farmer
Fit what.

THAT TIME AND MEGGIE

When first I gae to sair the front,
Thamachee and Meggum,
It was to Auchterreed and I went, Auld grey Megrum.
The auld gude wife smokes in the neuk,
A-orden’ in’ at the thr wescher cook.
The nest I gae to Middelthirtid,
A better’s nae aboon the yird.
I gae once to Middlethirck,
There I got meat to make me fat.
I there got buttered breid and cheese,
And oll to keep my shewn in grease.
I took a burn at Yokie’s hill,
The toucest place I er gae till,
A burn to bash and hail the loones,
There’s nae his like in Buchan’s bounds.

GLOSSARY
sair fremt serve stranger, not blood relations
skeent went
neuk chimney corner
threwither disorderly, careless
neist next
aboos around
yird earth
ance once
mak’ make
sheen shoes
teuchter toughest, most tedious
geed till went
hurb to a term of contempt for a short, thick-set person
to ill treat, abuse
hail to beat, batter about
loons men
boun’s bounds

THE ROAD AND THE MILES TO DUNDEE

The winter was bowing o’er moor and o’er mountain
And wild was the surge of the dark rolling sea;
When I set about daybreak a bonnie young lassie
Who asked me the road and the miles to Dundee.

Says I, "My young lassie, I cannot well tell you
The road and the distance I cannot well gie;
But gin ye permit me to gang a wee bit,  
I will show ye the road and the miles to Dundee."

She fairly consented and gied me her aim,  
Nae a word did I spier what the laddie micht be,  
She appeared like an angel in feature and form,  
As she walked by my side on the road to Dundee.

At length wi' the Howe o' St. Martin's behind us,  
And the spires o' the toon in full view we could see,  
She said, "Gentle sir, I can never forget ye  
For showing me so far on the road to Dundee."

"This ring and this purse take, to prove I am grateful,  
And some simple token I trust you'll give me,  
And in times to come I'll the laddie remember  
That showed me the road and the miles to Dundee."

I took a gold pin from the scraf in my bosom,  
And said, "Take this in remembrance o' me."

Then bravely I kissed the sweet lips o' this lassie,  
Then parted from her on the road to Dundee.

Then here's to the lassie, I ne'er can forget her,  
And every young laddie that's listening to me,  
And never be sae swerv to convey a young lassie  
Though it's only to show her the road to Dundee.

Glossary:

Weel  
Well.

Gin  
If.

Speir  
Ask.

Sweir  
Reluctant.

The Lothian Ha'rsay

On August Twalt frae Aberdeen, we sailed in the Prince,  
And safe arrived on Sheffiel's shore, the harvest to commence.

For six lang weeks the country room  
From toon to toon we went,  
We took richt weel wi' the Lothian chiel, and many aye richt weel content.

Our gaffer, Willie Methieson, frae Deeside he came,  
Our foremost came frae that same place, and Logan was his name.

We followed Logan on the point,  
And saw weel's he laid it doon,  
And saw mishie as he led oor squad, ower mony's the thruster's croon.

My mate and me we had nae chance for Logan's watchful eye,  
My mate and me we had nae chance,  
For Logan was sae sly.

He cleared the borthy every night  
Before he went to sleep.

And not sae much as ane did leave,  
But strict his rules did keep.

Farewell, Mackenzie, Reid and Rose,  
And the rest o' the merry crew,  
There's Chalmers, Shepherd, Logan,  
Jock, and the royal steward too.

It's I myself, a Hielan lad and wish  
Me better cheer  
Than a Lothian lass and a weel-made bed,  
And a nicht as lang's a year.

Come fill our glass and drink it  
While our boat shall start,  
And may we safely reach the shore,  
And all in friendship part.

Glossary:

Twalt  
Twelfth.

Weel  
Weel.

Ower  
Over.

Thistle  
Thistle.

It happened on a day  
It happened on a day in the merry month of May  
I gied out to meet my bonny lad, he promised to come this way.  
I gied out to meet my bonny lad, he promised to come this way,  
But my bonny laddie never yet come by me.

Oh, what have I said, love, Oh what have I done?  
And what objections to me have ye found?  
Or have ye gane courtin' another pretty maid?  
Is that the reason bonnie laddie ye ganged by me?

Ah, nothing have you said, love, or nothing have ye done,  
For no objections to have I found.  
But I have gane a-courtin' another pretty maid  
That's the reason, bonnie lassie, I gae by ye.

Ye micht hae courted six, or ye micht hae courted seven,  
Ye micht hae courted eight nine, or ten or eleven  
Ye micht hae courted dozen over again,  
And been kinder to yourauld lass for all that.

The hills they are high and the leaves they are green  
Many were the happy nights you and I have seen;  
But there's another lassie dancing in my old sheen,  
That's the reason, bonnie laddie, ye ganged by me.

She thinks she's done me muckle ill  
But she's far mista'en  
She is only but dancin' in my old sheen,  
And if she likes to please herself, it's she can dance them done,  
And so, neatly, bonnie laddies, I gae by ye.

The hills they are high, but the leaves are nae rotten.  
Tho', I be forsaken I'm nae heartbroken,  
I can court another lad and you'll soon be forgotten  
And so neatly, bonnie laddie, I'll gae by ye.

Glossary:

oot  
Out.

gae, gane  
Gone.

micht  
Might.

dissens  
Dosen.

auld  
Old.

shoon  
Shoe.

muckle  
much.

gang  
go.

The Working Chap

I'm a workin' chap, as you may see,  
you'll find an honest lad in me,  
I'm neither saucy, mean nor proud,  
or ever tak's the thing too rude.

I never gang abune my means,  
or seek assistance frae my frien's  
But day and night thro' thick and thin,  
I'm workin' life out to keep life in.

Chorus:

Nae matter, frien's, wha'er befa',  
the puir folks they maun work a'ra',  
Thro' frost and snaw and rain and wind,  
they're workin' life out to keep life in.

The puir needle-woman that we saw in reality and on the we  
A picture sorrowful to see, I'm sure wi' ye you'll a' agree.  
Her pay's scarce able to feed a mouse,  
Far less to keep her sel' and house.  
She's naked, hungry, pale and thin,  
workin' life out to keep life in.

Chorus:

Don't ca' a man a drunken scot because he wears a ragged coat,  
It's better far, mind, don't forget,  
so rin in rags than rin in debt.  
He may look seedy, very true, but  
still his creditors are few  
And he toddles on, devoid of sin,  
workin' life out to keep life in.

Chorus:

But maybe, frien's, I've stayed ower laNg, but I hope I have said nothing wrong.  
I only merely want to show the way  
the puir folk has to go.  
Just look at a man wi' a houseful o' bairns, to rear them up it tak's a' he earns,  
Wi' a willin' heart and a coat gay thin,  he's workin' life out to keep life in.

Glossary:

saw  
snow.

ava'  
Anyway.

maun  
Must.

puir  
Poor.

wi'  
With.

a'  
All.

can'  
Call.

rin  
Run.

over  
Too.

bairns  
Children.

guy  
Very.

Johnny Daughter

O' sae the seasons o' the year when we maun work the sairnest,  
The harvest is the only time and yet  
it is the rarest,  
We rise as seen the mornin' light,  
nae craters can be blither,  
We buckle on our finger-stings and  
follow out the scyther.
CHORUS:
For you, Johnnie, you, Johnnie,
You, Johnnie Gauze,
I'll trim the gawl o' my sheaf
For ye're the gallant bandarter.

A mornin' piece to line oor check,
Be fore that we gae fadora;
Wi' clouts o' blue tobacco reek we
Then set out in order.
The sheaves are risin' thick and
Fast and Johnnie he maun bind
Then, the busy group, for fear they stick,
Can scarcely look behind them.

(Chorus)
I'll plie ye bands that wins o'er,
I'll plie them well and threw them.
I'm sure they wins tine the grip,
However weel ye draw them.
I'll lay my leg oot ove the sheaf
And draw the band as handy,
Wi' ilka stree as straight's a rush
And that'll be the dandy.

(Chorus)
If e'er it chance to be my lot
to get a gallant bandarter,
I'll gar him wear a gentle coat
And bring him good in handfu's,
But Johnnie he can please himsell;
I wadna wish him blingest,
Sae affter he hae brewed his ale,
He can sit down and drink it.

(Chorus)
A dainty cowie in the byre,
For butter and for cheese;
A grumplie feelin' in the sty wead
Keep the hooch in greasees;
A bonnie ewe in the bucht wead
Help to crese the ladle
And we'll get ruffs o' cowie woon
Wad help to theek the credle.

(Chorus)
GLOSsARY:
'o'  all
a'  must
smoon  hardest
light  light
creater  creatures
ocr  our
finger-stools  finger stools
oot  out
gawl  end
bandarter  a binder of sheaves
forder  forward
cloos  clouds
reek  smoke
wina  won't
throw  throw
tine  loose
hoover  however
well  well
ilka  every
stree  straw
streech's  straight as
rush  rush
sair  make
sae  cold
wada  wouldn't
blanket  weaving
cowie  cow
byre  barn
grumplie  pig
house  house
buchet  sheep or cattle fold
creesh  to grease
cannie  handy
wev  wool
theek  line
raips  ropes
quests  fecket
yawn  going
snow  snow
sawn  fell
wadze  wouldn't
carrin  carling
sae  small
aff  often
siddlair  whip
aines  fine or handsome
sav  away
veety  vet
a'  all
unseevil  uncivil

SHE WAS A RUN ONE
As I walked out one fair moon night,
One fair moon night in winter,
It was there I spied a pretty fair maid.

(Chorus)
She was a run one, fol tee toodle
I do aye,
But a bonny one, fol tee toodle
I doo.

She walked up and she walked down
And I walked close beside her,
And I asked to her the reason why
That she could not step no wider.

(Chorus)
Go away, go away, you foolish young man
And stop such foolish talking,
It little becomes young men, she said
To pick up young woman's walking.

(Chorus)
O I'm a doctor to my trade,
My friends they call me rare
If you'll tell me where your trouble lies,
I'll fix it neat and fair.

(Chorus)
My trouble lies between my thighs
And there it is abiding,
It tickles me both night and day
And it keeps me free my strilding.

(Chorus)
He laid her down upon a bank
And he provided the plaister,
She rose up unto her feet,
Says, I hope you'll never end it.

(Chorus)
She gied to me my winter's bairn,
Likewise my winter's firein',
Far better than that she gied to me
Was a stable for my stallion.

GLOSSARY:
farmer  faermer
who's  wha's
ken  known
baith  both
rackie  big
toon  town
sair  strict
caldest  coldests
blows  blows
comb  comb
oatmeal  oatmeal
& water  & water

given our pints
a tie
mill
work
shirt
six
plow
two
turnips
even
straw

pick up  to accost, or
to actcept, or
to criticise
nicht  night
fran  from
doon  down
plaister  remedy, medicament
gied  gave