

The Reaper

Alfred Williams/John Alderslade

The words to this song come from Alfred Williams Songs of the Upper Thames and this lovely tune is by John Alderslade. Dave searched for this song for years having heard only a snippet. Our thanks to Chris Skinner of Sussex for finally getting us on track and for advising us that the Dew Bell is probably a buttercup and Honey Leaf a Lousewort!

Wild, Wild Berries

Traditional

We learned this from the singing of Ray Driscoll, who in turn learned it from an itinerant farm worker called Harry Civil. This is a very succinct version of Lord Randal.

Guard your Man Weel

Johnny Handle

Johnny Handle wrote this song from the point of view of the poor miner's wives who had to wait at home, always in fear of an accident that might just take the life of their husband and father of their children, a very real risk in the mining communities of days gone by.

Ford o' Kabul River

Rudyard Kipling/Peter Bellamy

This is another brilliant Peter Bellamy setting of a Kipling poem. This refers to an incident in the mid 19th century when hundreds of soldiers drowned attempting to cross the Kabul River in Afghanistan when Kipling was no more than a boy. This event stuck in Kipling's memory and later he wrote this piece.

Scatter Your Crumbs

Alfred Crowquill/Harry Langston

Alfred Crowquill 1804-1872 was a caricaturist and founder member of Punch magazine. Harry Langston put this lovely simple tune to these equally gentle words. A few words can often say so much.

Still & Silent Ocean

Peter Bellamy

Peter Bellamy wrote this as part of his ballad opera The Transports. Based on the true story of Henry Cabell and Susannah Holmes in the latter end of the 18th century. Two young people are sentenced to be transported to Australia for petty crimes, before they go, they fall in love and have a child but they are to be separated. With the aid of public opinion and intervention by Lord Sydney and others they are finally reunited and they travel to Australia as a family, and go on to start a successful dynasty. This song celebrates their reunion and their hopes for better fortunes in this new land.

Flowers of the Town

Cecil Day Lewis/Roy Harris

Roy Harris tells us that he was leaving a folk club many years ago when someone handed him these words. He didn't know where they came from but he thought they were very like the Flowers of the Forest so he put a similar tune to them. Flowers of the Forest as we know it today was actually written by Jean Elliot in the 18th century based on a traditional song that only survived as a fragment. The words to this song were actually written by C Day Lewis but seem to follow the tradition of making a new song from those ancient remnants.

Last Trip Home

Davy Steele/John McCusker

Dave had a lifelong love of heavy horses, Archie Fisher pointed Dave at this wonderful song by Davy Steele some years ago. Not being Scottish made the word "Muckle" hard to sound convincing so I changed it to Mighty (sorry!).

Lonesome Dove

Traditional

Anni learned this song from the Kossoy Sisters from the USA. Irene and Ellen are the source for so many wonderful songs. We understand this version comes from Kentucky. Variants of this turn up all over the place, in all sorts of different songs.

The New Road

John Beavis

We have Danny Spooner to thank for this song, written by a friend of his in Australia, John Beavis. A wonderful synopsis of the Gospels.

'Arry, 'Arry

le Brunn

A song from the great days of the Music Hall.

Ullswater Pack

Traditional

A lot of great songs are concerning practises we do not completely endorse in modern times. This is a rousing Fox Hunting song from the Lakes, where they hunt on foot!

Fisher Lad of Whitby

Trad/Anni Fentiman

This comes from Roy Palmer's collection Boxing the Compass. Peter Wood brought it to our attention and Anni put this tune to it.

Whittingham Fair

Traditional

Anni first heard this song on an LP by the wonderful singer Owen Brannigan, famous for his opera but well known in the North East for his renditions of dialect songs. One of the many variants of Scarborough Fair. Great last verse!

Bring out the Banners

John Warner/John Goss

John Warner wrote this song to sing at an exhibition of Union Banners at Trades Hall in Sydney in September 1997 around the time of the Australian maritime workers' dispute. The union movement has a tradition of using hymn tunes as a vehicle for songs of struggle as the tunes were often well-known and, as in this case, powerful musically, and ideal for the function. The first verse was John's response to seeing a late 19th century photo of an 8-hour day march in which a locomotive, apparently under steam, led a procession of railway union workers.

OUR THANKS, as always go firstly to Martin

Atkinson, our engineer, who has guided us

through the process of recording and who

contributes so much to our production process.

Our chorus of Johnny Collins, Ian Giles, Sue Brown and Lorraine Irving were fantastic, having to work far harder than they should have had to due to time constraints, but they remained 100% behind us and the results we think surpass all our hopes. We will be forever in their debt! All first class performers in their own right, the end results made us wonder if we should cut the lead lines.