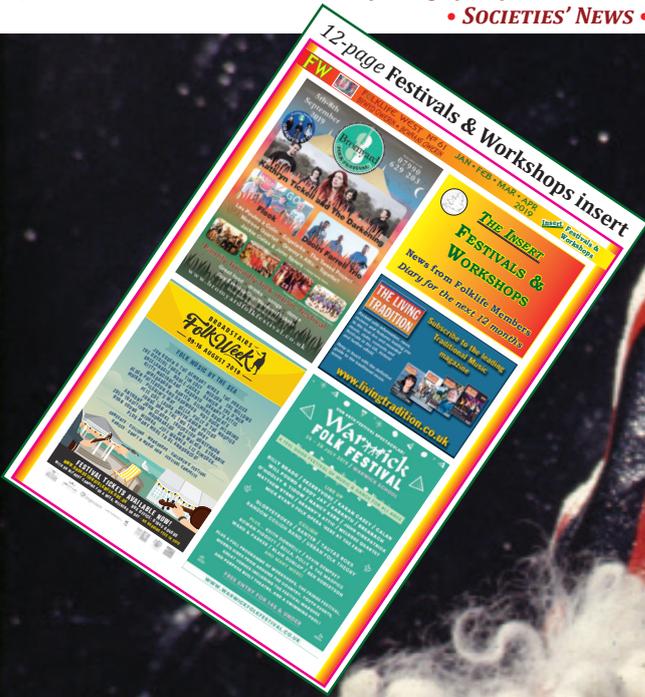




• *The Sailor's Dream*, Roy & Lesley Adkins • *Machynlleth, Welsh trad. tune*, Helen Adam • *Travels in Donegal, with the song Pat O'Donnell*, John Waltham • *Wild, Wild Berry, sung by Ray Driscoll*, Gwilym Davies • *Welsh Traditional Instruments: The Pibgorn*, Meurig Williams • **SOCIETIES' NEWS • FOLKLIFE LISTINGS • SEASONAL CELEBRATIONS DIARY**

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Padstow: May Day
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May 2019

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Folklife Traditions ♦ Traddodiadau Bymyd Gwerin

FW's FOLKLIFE TRADITIONS PAGES

Our aims include stimulating a wider interest in folk studies & folk culture: the FT pages

- Article: 'The Sailor's Dream' by Roy & Lesley Adkins p41-42
- Tune & notes: 'Machynlleth', Welsh trad. tune, by Helen Adam p43-44
- Article: Travels in Donegal; including song 'Pat O'Donnell'.
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- Article: 'Welsh Traditional Instruments: The Pibgorn',
by Meurig Williams p48 (the back cover)

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- **ONLINE DIRECTORY www.folklife-traditions.uk - print summary**
- ◆ List 7, **FOLKLIFE SOCIETIES** online only, for this issue
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a list & photos, mostly by Doc Rowe p47

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We are regularly indebted to regular contributors **Doc Rowe** for his list & pictures; to **Roy & Lesley Adkins, Brian Bull, Charles Menteith, Gwilym Davies, Meurig Williams, & Ian Pittaway**, for songs, tunes, articles, & notes; and to others, from time to time, as listed in FT. We welcome **Helen Adam** from this issue.

And we remember the late **Roy Palmer**, a generous contributor for over 30 years, from August 1983 in *FW's* predecessor, the *Somers' Broadsheet*.

FT header artwork: © our logo, **Chris Beaumont**; and morris dancers © **Annie Jones**; from *The Roots Of Welsh Border Morris* (Dave Jones)



The Sailor's Dream by Roy & Lesley Adkins

On 21st October 1805, John Franklin, a young midshipman, sailed into the Battle of Trafalgar on board HMS *Bellerophon*. He was the signals midshipman, one of only a handful of men stationed on the poop deck to come out of the battle unwounded, although it left him slightly deaf for the rest of his life. Born at Spilsby in Lincolnshire, Franklin had joined the Royal Navy in 1800, sailing on board HMS *Polyphemus*. A few months later, this ship was part of Nelson's fleet at the Battle of Copenhagen, after which Franklin was discharged to take up a commission as midshipman on board HMS *Investigator*. His uncle, Captain Matthew Flinders, commanded the *Investigator* and was leaving on a voyage to Australia to chart the coastline of this newly discovered continent, known then as New Holland.



Sir John Franklin

Flinders and his crew sailed right round Australia, exploring and surveying as they went. They suffered terribly from scurvy and their ship became increasingly unseaworthy, so the expedition was cut short. The *Investigator* was abandoned at Sydney, and the crew set out for England on board HMS *Porpoise*, which was wrecked almost straightaway on a reef. The crew was stranded on a sandbank for six weeks, and Franklin finally reached home in a merchant vessel nearly a year after leaving Sydney. Now aged 18, he joined the *Bellerophon* in September 1804, took part in Trafalgar a year later, transferred to HMS *Bedford* in October 1807 and was promoted to lieutenant the following year. His final battle was during the campaign against New Orleans in the United States in 1814, when he was wounded.

The end of the Napoleonic Wars meant the end of many naval careers, but the Secretary of the Admiralty, John Barrow, proposed that the Royal Navy should begin Arctic exploration, specifically to find a north-west passage by which ships could sail between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. Franklin was given command of a small brig, HMS *Trent*, which sailed with one of the first navy expeditions in 1818, but got no further than the pack ice north-west of Spitzbergen. He set sail again in 1819 on the Hudson Bay Company's supply ship *Prince of Wales*, which proved disastrous because over half the exploration party died.

After returning to London in 1822, Franklin was promoted to post-captain and became a Fellow of the Royal Society. Another expedition, from 1825 to 1827, was more successful, and he was knighted, but the navy's Arctic exploration came to an end. During the Greek War of Independence, he was given command of the frigate *Rainbow* and then from 1837 to 1843 he was Lieutenant-Governor of Van Diemen's Land.

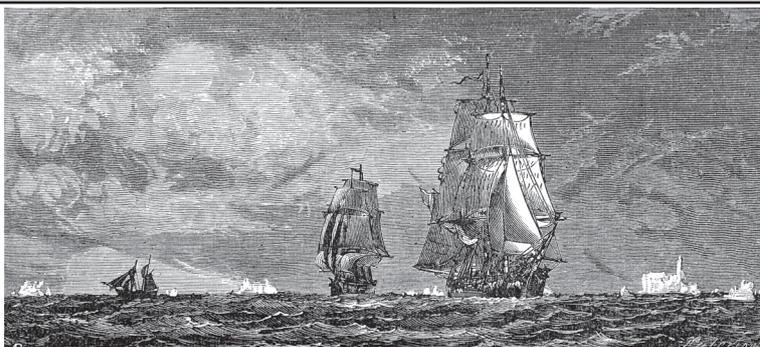
Returning to England in 1844, Franklin found that Arctic exploration had resumed and part of a north-west passage had been mapped. He was chosen to lead an expedition to find the final stretch to link the two oceans, for which he was given two modified steamships, the *Erebus* and *Terror*. The crews were specially selected, and they had the latest technological backup, including new methods of food preservation. This was the best-prepared Arctic expedition so far, with enough supplies for three years.

These early steam-powered ships retained their masts and sails and used them whenever possible, so *Erebus* and *Terror* are often portrayed in full sail. On 19th May 1845, the vessels sailed down the Thames at the start of their journey and on 26th July were met by whalers in Baffin Bay, between Baffin Island and Greenland. They were never seen again. By 1847 Franklin's wife, Lady Jane Franklin, and relatives of crew members began to press for a search to be mounted. Over the next 20 years, around 30 such expeditions took place, from which disparate pieces of evidence were pieced together, giving hints though no firm proof of what had occurred. In 1854 John Rae, Commander of the Hudson Bay Company's Arctic Expedition, sent a letter to the Secretary of the Admiralty summarising their own findings. Published in many newspapers, it caused a sensation by claiming that the starving crews had resorted to cannibalism. According to information given to Rae by various Inuit people, about 30 bodies of crew members were located:

'Some of the bodies had been buried (probably those of the first victims of famine), some were in a tent or tents, others under the boat which had been turned over to form a shelter, and several lay scattered about in different directions ... From the mutilated state of many of the corpses and the contents of the kettles, it is evident that our wretched countrymen had been driven to the last resource - cannibalism - as a means of prolonging existence.' (1)



The Sailor's Dream by Roy & Lesley Adkins



Lady Jane Franklin
from a portrait
painted in 1816



Erebus and Terror

Rae also listed items that had been purchased from the Inuit, which included cutlery inscribed with the names of the crew, as well as '1 round silver plate, engraved "Sir John Franklin, K.C.B."' This failed to satisfy everyone, so the search for Franklin's expedition continued, particularly at the instigation of Lady Franklin.

Several ballads about the Franklin expedition were composed and sold at this time. Most quickly faded from popularity, but one that survived was variously called 'The Sailor's Dream' and 'Lady Franklin's Lament' (Roud No. 487). The ballad was published as a broadside in the early 1850s, before John Rae had reported his findings to the Admiralty, but it remained popular even after later expeditions found fresh evidence about Franklin and his men. In 1878, Joseph Faulkner published this version in *Eighteen Months on a Greenland Whaler*:

The Sailor's Dream

*'Twas homeward bound one night on the deep,
Slung in my hammock fast asleep,
I had a dream, which I thought was true,
Concerning Franklin and his bold crew.*

*'Twas as we neared the English shore,
I heard a lady sadly deplore;
She wept aloud, and seemed to say,
"Alas my husband is long away!"*

*'Twas seven long years since that ship of fame,
First bore my husband across the main,
With hearts undaunted, and courage stout
To seek a nor' western passage out;*

*To seek a passage round the North Pole
With one hundred seamen brave and bold;
With hearts undaunted and courage true,
'Tis what no man on earth can do.*

*There's Captain Osborne of Scarborough town,
Brave Parry and Winslow of high renown,
There's Captain Ross, and many more,
In vain they cruised round the Arctic shore.*

*They sailed East, and they sailed West,
Off Greenland's coast where they thought best;
'Mid hardships and dangers they vainly strove,
On mountains of ice their ships were hove.*

*In Baffin's bay where the whale-fish blows,
Is the fate of Franklin - no one knows.
Ten thousand pounds would I freely give,
To learn that my husband still did live.*

*And to bring him back to a land of life,
Where once again I would be his wife,...
I would give all the wealth I ere shall have,
But I think, alas, he has found a grave.*

*A voice within that I cannot control,
Is assurance to me of his peace of soul;
Oh, Arctic seas, what you have sealed,
At the judgment-day will be revealed!" (2)*

Today, versions of this song, often with some verses left out and others altered, are still sung under titles such as 'Lady Franklin's Lament', 'Lord Franklin' or simply 'Franklin'.

Official searches were eventually abandoned, but Lady Franklin commissioned a final private search expedition led by Leopold McClintock, and his party found more bodies and relics. They also found a message dated 28th May 1847 stating that all was well, but in the margin a much more desperate message had been added:

April 25 1848, - H.M. ships Terror and Erebus were deserted on the 22nd April, 5 leagues N.N.W. of this, having been beset since 12 September, 1846. The officers and crews, consisting of 105 souls, under the command of Captain F.R.M. Crozier, landed here in lat. 68 deg. 37 min. 43 sec. N, long. 98 deg. 41 min. W. Sir John Franklin died on the 11th June, 1847; and the total loss by deaths in the expedition has been to this date 9 officers and 15 men.

(Signed) F.R.M. CROZIER, Captain and Senior Officer.

(Signed) JAMES FITZJAMES, Captain H.M.S. Erebus. - and start (on) to-morrow, 26th, for Back's River. (3)

The crews of the *Erebus* and *Terror* all perished, but in 2014 the wreck of the *Erebus* was discovered, and in 2016 the wreck of the *Terror* was also located. The Canadian Government plans to investigate them further. The body of Sir John Franklin has never been found, and it is strange to think that this man who fought at the Battle of Trafalgar, and who would have had lifelong fame for that alone, is still remembered in a popular folk song for his final, tragic, Arctic expedition.

References

- 1 *Morning Post* 23rd October 1854, p. 4
- 2 Joseph P. Faulkner 1878 *Eighteen Months on a Greenland Whaler* (New York), pp. 73-4
- 3 *Leicester Journal* 30th October 1859, p. 6

Roy and Lesley Adkins © 2019

Roy and Lesley Adkins are authors of books on naval and social history, including *Jack Tar* and *Trafalgar*. Their latest book, *Gibraltar: The Greatest Siege in British History*, is now published in paperback by Abacus (ISBN 9780349142395). See www.adkinshistory.com.





Tunelines

... from this issue in *FolkLife West's FOLKLIFE TRADITIONS PAGES*

We are delighted to announce that West Wales fiddler and composer Helen Adam will be sending in **Welsh tunes** for *FW*, based on her latest project, www.tunelines.com

This is an **interactive site**, in which you click on a map, and it shows you the tune or tunes that is named after the place you've clicked on. And you can hear or download the tune as dots. Take a look! Helen will be featuring a different Welsh place each time, with the tune, and countermelody and harmony, and talking about it a little.



Machynlleth

Welsh Traditional. Arr. Helen Adam

Violin

Violin

Vln.

Vln.

Vln.

Vln.

Vln.

Vln.

Machynlleth

Welcome to the first of a series of articles based on my website Tunelines. (www.tunelines.com). I've made an interactive map of the UK so you can click on a place and find a tune or tunes that are named after that place. It is a fun way to discover more folk tunes, as well as learn some geography maybe. I've mostly done tunes in Wales so far, as that is where I am living, but you will see that there are tunes popping up in other parts now. Please send me in any you would like included. I am writing melodic accompaniments to all the tunes (second parts for duet playing) which is why they are going up quite slowly. I hope you enjoy playing these arrangements.

This edition's tune is **Machynlleth**. This lovely Welsh tune is popular among musicians both to accompany dances and as a session tune, and is widely played in pubs and tune clubs around the whole of Wales. The tune should not be played too fast, the two beats in a bar should be very steady. The music needs enough air to breathe and to allow any dancers to keep their dignity whilst executing neat footwork. This does allow us musicians more time to fit all those fiddly semiquavers in neatly, especially in the second section!

It is unusual among Welsh traditional dance music in being in four parts. Two and three part tunes are much more common.

We welcome researched songs and tunes, and details of local traditions, for these 'FOLKLIFE TRADITIONS' pages.

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Travels in Donegal *by John Waltham*

Sam suggested I might put down a few notes on my travels in Donegal, but what (you ask) is a Dorset farmer doing spending so much time over there?

Well, in the final analysis, you can blame Packie Manus Byrne. I got to know Packie a bit back in either '68 or '69 – can't remember exactly – at a time when the Yetties were in the ascendancy, and Sidmouth had become the new Jerusalem. The Yets used to make a habit of luring people to stop for a night in Dorset on their way down to Sidmouth, and this (apparently) elderly Irishman was one of them. Like everyone else, I got on well with Packie, and would bump into him occasionally over the next decade or two.

Eventually, I came up in front of him and others when I entered the singing competition at Sidmouth in about '87. All I wanted was some constructive criticism of my singing from people who knew what they were talking about (and I got it!),

but I also won the competition, much to my surprise. Packie took charge of the financial part of the prize (I was allowed to keep the tankard) and off we went on a pub crawl prior to the evening concert in which I was supposed to sing – that was the third part of the prize. It was during this tour of Sidmouth that Packie told me he was retiring to his native Donegal, and that I and my family would be very welcome to visit, any time.

Now, a week or two earlier we'd been over to Clare for Willie Week, the Willie Clancy Summer School in Miltown Malbay, and I'd gone to a talk on singing in a part of North Donegal known as **Inishowen**, given by Jimmy McBride. The talk was illustrated by excerpts from videos of singing sessions that Jimmy had made, and the atmosphere of fun and enjoyment was palpable. I got talking to Jimmy afterwards – he's become a great friend over the last 30 years – and he too had issued an invitation. So Donegal's hooks were firmly embedded in me, and the next year we abandoned Clare for Donegal, never to return to the mid West of Ireland.

In fact, my first visit was that first winter, when I hopped on my faithful pre-war Vincent motorcycle and set off with a cassette recorder for Inishowen in the middle of February. There were still border crossings then, and it was a job to convince English soldiers that the reason for my sub-zero journey on a fifty year old machine was to listen to a lot of old people singing a load of old songs. It was immensely worthwhile. There was a generation of singers, then in their late 70s upwards, who had a dazzling repertoire of old songs, including literally dozens of Child ballads, which they would happily sing in their houses or in sessions convened by Jimmy for the purpose. I came home with about a dozen hours of tape and, more importantly, with a lot of new friends, some of whom I was to stay with on future visits. The following summer established a pattern which was to last for many years, where we went

to South West Donegal for a family holiday, but always incorporated a visit to Inishowen for a night or two with Jimmy and his wonderful wife Moira and a session or two, often in peoples' houses – the very best sort of night. Over the years the tapes mounted up, and eventually Brian Doyle of the Irish Traditional Music Archive took about 80 of my 90 minute tapes and transposed them onto discs for the Archive, kindly making me a copy of each. The great majority of these are of singing, but there was also a bit of music in Inishowen, and I was fortunate to hear a few tunes from the then 97 year old Pat Mulhern, as well as from his pupil Dinny McLaughlin, and his pupil Liz Doherty, as well as from the truly exceptional Clonmany fiddler, Seamus Grant, a quietly spoken pure gentleman with a wealth of music. Eventually a number of the singers were persuaded to take their songs outside their home area – some may remember the visit of Dan McGonigle and Maggie MacGee to the National, while other singers visited Dublin clubs and other Irish festivals. A number have attended my own Dorset singing weekends and Drax as guests.

But the most important legacy that Inishowen's left me is some of the finest friends any man could wish for and, although the singing isn't quite what it was when I first went – I got there just in time for that – I still go back at every opportunity to visit what I can only term my family there. We go to weddings, and funerals, and return visits from them are always a treat. And the memories that come welling up as the songs are sung often cause a smile or conjure up a long gone face. I've even got 20 minutes of the late Jimmy Grant describing recipes and methods for the making of poitin, which may or may not have coloured my own activities...

In South West Donegal, things were different. For one thing, I didn't expect that I'd still be visiting Packie nearly 30 years after his "retirement". But by his 98th birthday party he'd had enough, and said so; a few months later he was gone, and I'd lost a wonderful friend. He made songs for lots of people, especially some of the younger local

Machynlleth, from previous page

Generally when writing melodic accompaniments, I am trying to create a new line that could be played on its own and make musical sense, but that also fits together closely with the main melody, rather like two pieces of a jigsaw puzzle slotting together. In this tune, I wrote a slower melody to fit under the busy A part and then brought in some syncopation in the B part, as added interest under the broken chords of the main tune. A straighter accompaniment in the C part gives the dotted rhythms of the original melody something to bounce against, and then the D part has each instrument taking turns with the quick runs until they settle down together till the end.

I think it is nice when playing tunes in two parts to play just the melody first, so you hear and understand the original tune, and then when you bring in the second part it really adds something different and you can enjoy hearing the interplay between the parts.

There is some anecdotal evidence that Welsh musicians from the 12th centuries onwards and up until the 19th centuries were extemporising in this way, i.e. by adding counter melodies to an original tune rather than simply improvising around the harmony. This style of playing lends itself well to a group of melody instruments who can then play together without the need for harmony re-enforcing instruments such as basses, boxes or guitars. It also means the actual chords used can be quite ambiguous. I do feel a lot of Welsh tunes sound better played this way, as they can become a bit 'stodgy' if pinned down too much with chording, especially of the 1, 4 and 5 sort. There is a lot also to be said for approaching many of them modally at times, which is something we will look at in another edition.

With this particular tune, once you have enjoyed it as written, in the major, try switching to the minor (G harmonic minor) by changing all the Bs and Es in the melody into flats but keep playing the F sharps.

If you are playing with a harmonic accompanying instrument that creates chords you will need to change the G major and C major chords into G and C minors but keep all the others as they are. It then sounds rather like a Klezmer (East European Jewish) tune, and in fact with my band Fiddlebox, we have played this as part of a Welsh/Klezmer set, a blend we call 'Klezreig'. (Klezmer/ Cymreig=Welsh in Welsh.)

Machynlleth itself is a small market town in Powys, Mid Wales, in the Dyfi valley. It was the seat of Owain Glyndŵr's parliament in 1404 and as such has been called 'the Ancient Capital of Wales.' The Centre for Alternative Technology is nearby which has brought new influences into the town, which is a friendly and culturally active little place surrounded by very beautiful countryside.

Helen Adam © 2019

helenadamfiddle@gmail.com

Helen Adam is a freelance fiddle/violin player, singer, performer and composer living in beautiful West Wales. A prolific composer and songwriter, my current project is a collection of duets to introduce more of the lesser known Welsh dance tunes to a wider audience. Also performing with George Whitfield as the **Fiddlebox** duo (George, accordion and vocals, and Helen, violin and vocals), a unique sound blending our varying influences and styles, including Klezmer, Rock, Classical, Celtic folk, Welsh dance music and song, Blues, Bluegrass, www.fiddlebox.net



☛ See also WALES NEWS PAGES this issue, and our ONLINE DIRECTORY, www.folklife-directory.uk/wales.html



Travels in Donegal by John Waltham

female singers, and really helped a lot of them on. He also made me a few excellent songs, a couple of which I've had the privilege of helping to put into the local tradition. The first of these was *The Hills of Inishowen*, which Packie composed for me to sing up there in an attempt to convince the local singers that I'd collected a song none of them knew from some singer they'd never heard of. It worked (although I had to tell them the truth), and that song's part of the furniture up there now, and has spread as far as Australia! Another one, composed as a memorial to the great South West Donegal fiddler and itinerant tinsmith John Doherty, has found a lasting home in that part of the world. In fact, I never get away without singing *The Donegal Traveller*, and a number of usually non-singing fiddle players join in. The last line of that one is at the bottom of Packie's own gravestone, carved by his great nephew, and seems very apt – "*The Donegal Traveller's no more*".

There were quite a few singers to be found in South West Donegal, but you had to hunt more diligently to find them. Top of my list would be Francie Byrne of Coguish, near Carrick, a fine singer with a red notebook which he'd show me in the house. It contained upwards of seventy songs, some written out and others torn out of periodicals like *Ireland's Own*, any one of which he would sing at the drop of a hat. He gathered his sheep wearing an old Garda uniform that his brother, who was in the Gardai, had given him! Then there was Bernard Boyle from Meenaneary, a softly spoken singer with some wonderful songs as *Gaeilge*, although he generally sang in English for choice, and Philomena McCole of Ardara, one of the most talkative people I ever met, but she gave me a great version of the local classic *Pat O'Donnell*, a true story based around the Phoenix Park murders of the early 1880s. It's got a great air, and was well worth the conversational wait! I also remember Sean McAoigh (McHugh), a stubborn and irascible old man living in an old house near Doochary with corrugated iron covering the holes in the thatch, and an earth floor. A turf fire kept one end of the small house half

Pat O'Donnell

My name is Pat O'Donnell, I belong to Donegal,
I own I am a deadly foe to traitors one and all.
For the shooting of James Carey I was tried in London town,
Now high upon the gallows tree my life I must lay down.

I sailed upon the ship Melrose in August eighty three
'Twas on the voyage unto Cape Town he was made known to me
And when I met James Carey we had angry words and blows,
This villain he tried to take my life on board the ship Melrose

I stood a while in my own defence to fight before I died
When out of my pocket a pistol I drew and at him I let fly,
I fired another round at him till a bullet pierced his heart.
I fired another volley me boys before I did depart.

As he lay bleeding on the ground in the cabin where he lay,
Carey's wife and son came down and unto me did say
"O'Donnell, you've shot my heart's delight, this crime you cannot deny"
"Oh yes I did, in my own defence, kind madam" I did reply.

I recorded this song from Philomena McCole of Ardara, Co Donegal in 1992. She came from a family who all sang, and she had a considerable repertoire. The song revolves around the notorious Phoenix Park murders of May 1882, when a Fenian group known as the Invincibles shot and killed Lord Frederick Cavendish, the newly appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland, and his permanent Under Secretary, Thomas Henry Burke. After some months, James Carey, a leader of the Invincibles, was arrested and turned Queen's evidence, thus securing the trial and execution of three of his accomplices. To protect Carey, he was given a new identity and a passage to South Africa. During the voyage out there, the traitor was recognised by Donegal man Pat O'Donnell, who killed Carey and was subsequently returned to England where the ultimate punishment was duly administered. He's immortalised in more than one song in his native county.

John Waltham © 2019

John is a Dorset-born singer, song collector and organiser of Trooper Song Sessions, Dorset Song Weekends and occasional one-off events, as well as guesting at a few Scots and Irish festivals. He's also our Correspondent for North Dorset & South Somerset

warm as he sang. He'd abbreviate the songs in Irish to start with, until I asked him why he kept leaving verses out. He said he wanted to get rid of me! But afterwards he went back over what he'd sung and gave me the full versions; a few months later he was dead.

There've been lots of others over the years, but nowadays Donegal's becoming more like a lot of the rest of Ireland, where the singing's country and western and the old songs are almost entirely out of favour.

Not so with the music of the area, which is predominantly fiddle based, although there are a few accordionists and whistle players. The Donegal fiddle tradition is astonishingly rich and vibrant, with a very Scots feel to it. In the western half of the county it was heavily influenced by John Doherty's playing – he only died in 1980 – and he in turn was a big fan of Scott Skinner; hence the Scots flavour. Further East and North things are a bit different, but still very distinctive, and still with a Caledonian feel. Years ago we went to a concert in Glenties featuring a very fine Shetland fiddler, as well as the locally based maestro Vincie Campbell. But the first act of the night was in some ways the most impressive. Billed as the "*West Donegal Youth Fiddle Orchestra*", it consisted of around 75 fiddle players, all under the age of 14, and all competent players able to competently play a substantial sample of the local traditional repertoire. As a demonstration of a strong local tradition it remains unsurpassed in my experience.

So over the years I've been brainwashed into a love of Donegal fiddle music, as well as the singing and the local folklore. Given the wonderful people I've met there, the breathtaking scenery, the magical deserted beaches, excellent fishing (and seafood) and the relaxed and old-fashioned sense of community that still exists, is it any wonder that 20 years ago we bought an old cottage to do up and let out when we're not there, and return to it whenever we can?

The captain had me handcuffed and in strong irons bound
To hand me over a prisoner when we should reach Cape Town
They brought me back to London town, my trial there to stand,
And the witness sworn against me was Carey's wife and son.

I was tried for wilful murder and guilty found at last.
The jury said he's guilty and the judge my sentence passed,
The jury said "he's guilty" and the judge made this reply,
"November on the 23rd, O'Donnell you shall die"

Oh I wish I was a free man and might live for another year.
All traitors and informers I would make them quake with fear,
St Patrick banished the serpents from our holy Irish ground,
And so would I with informers like the hare before the hound.

Farewell to dear old Donegal, the place where I was born,
And likewise to the United States, where I'll never be seen nor scorned.
Farewell to dear old Ireland, your woods and valleys so green,
It's never no more on sweet Erin's shore, Pat O'Donnell, you will be seen.



Folklife news

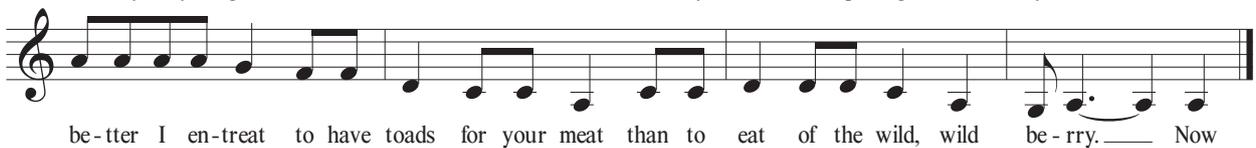
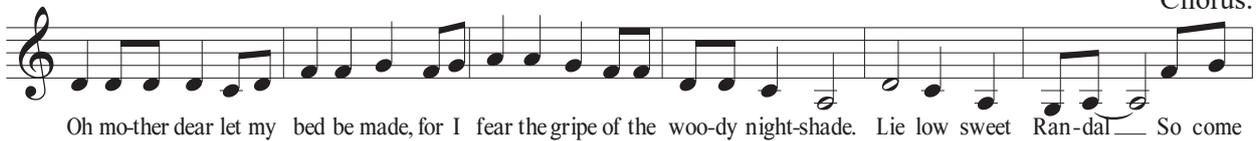
★ **The Traditional Song Forum (TSF) @**, national organisation dedicated to the promotion, performance & publication of traditional folk song in the UK. Latest details on www.tradsong.org
All enquiries to @ **Martin Graebe** (TSF Secretary), martin.graebe@btinternet.com

★ **The Folklore Society @**, www.folklore-society.com Wed 29 May, 10am–4pm, free. **Newer Researchers' Day**. Folklore Research: The Page and Beyond. A one-day workshop for Early Career Researchers, Post-Graduates, and Independent Researchers. See website.



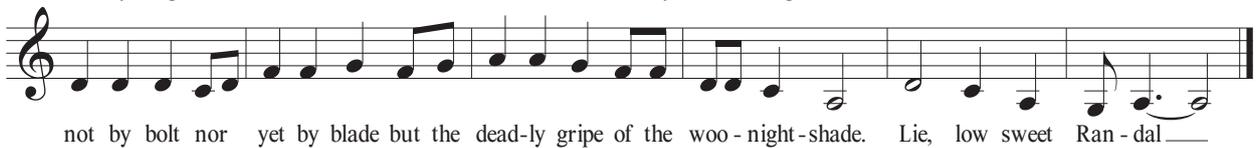
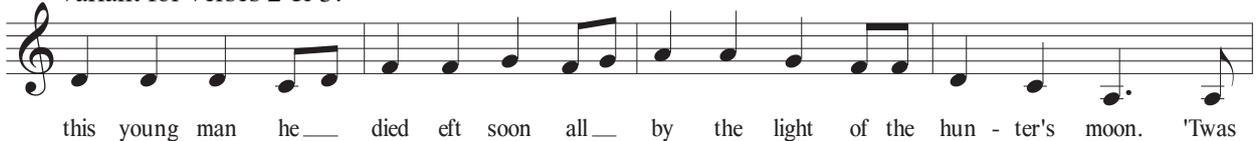
Wild, Wild Berry, sung by Ray Driscoll from Gwilym Davies

Verse 1



Chorus:

Variant for verses 2 & 3:



1. Young man came from hunting faint and weary.
"What does ail my lord, my dearie?"
"Oh mother dear, let my bed be made
For I fear the gripe of the woody nightshade."
Lie low, sweet Randal,

Chorus:
So come all you young men that do eat full well
And they that sup right merry
'Tis far better, I entreat to have toads for your meat
Than to eat of the wild, wild berry.

2. Now this young men he died eft soon
All by the light of the hunter's moon.
'Twas not by bolt nor yet by blade
But the deadly gripe of the woody nightshade.
Lie low, sweet Randal

3. This lord's false love they hanged her high
For her deeds were the cause of the love to die
And in her hair they entwined a braid
Of the leaves and berries of the woody nightshade.
Lie low, sweet Randal.

This curious song was sung to me many times by Ray Driscoll, who learnt it from a farm worker in Shropshire. It seems to be a reworking of the Lord Randal ballad, but no other version of "Wild, Wild Berry" has come to light.

Gwilym Davies © 2019



Folklife news

Folk 21 ®

Folk21 has evolved as an organisation to support and encourage the development of the UK folk scene.

Folk 21 West Midlands

At the annual meeting of the representatives of folk organisations in the West Midlands who are affiliated to Folk 21, discussion took place about raising the profile of folk music. It was agreed to set up a **Folk 21 West Midlands Facebook page** to promote the activities that take place. If you are involved with the organisation of a folk club or venue that books folk artists then you can become affiliated to Folk 21 and benefit from this initiative. Please email colingrantham@gmail.com for further details.



Information was also given about the finding of the **'Young Performers and Folk Clubs'** survey carried out by EFDSS, following significant discussion with Folk 21. One of the key findings indicated that lots of young performers would like to be involved with the organization of folk clubs. The organisers of folk clubs in the area have agreed to involve young people in the organisation of their clubs. Please contact Colin Grantham, on the above email address, if you know of any people under the age of 30 who would be interested in being involved in this initiative.

There is no membership fee required to participate in Folk21, so if you would like to join us, then become member of the **Folk21 Facebook group**, and contribute to the discussions, or start a thread about a topic of your own. ® Colin Grantham, colingrantham@gmail.com

**recordings announced**

- For your **Publicity** for **appropriate books** and for **CDs of collected songs**, please see www.folklife-traditions.uk ⇒ **"Contributions"** page
The editors don't review 'Folk' CDs, so please don't send them! (members can send in their own CD news)

MTCDS16

**A Distant Land to Roam**

Anglo-American songs and tunes from Texas to Maine

MUSICAL TRADITIONS®**A Distant Land to Roam: Anglo-American Songs and Tunes from Texas to Maine**

MTCDS16. 25 tracks, 78 minutes, £12.

Among these 25 songs and tunes that have gone across the seas, a distant land to roam, you will find some very recognisable versions. Bradley Kincaid sings *The*

Two Sisters and *Fair Ellender* and *Lord Thomas*, Bob Cranford sings *Babes in the Wood*, Bascom Lamar Lunsford sings *The Derby Ram*, and Emry Arthur sings *Jack Hall*.

Perhaps less easily recognisable are: The Stanley Brothers - *Poison in a Glass of Wine*; Frank Jenkins' *Pilot Mountaineers - Go and Leave Me if You Wish It*, Gid Tanner & His Skillet-Lickers - *Soldier, Soldier, Will You Marry Me*; Louisiana Lou - *The Oxford Girl*; Hattie and Ernest Stoneman - *When Shall We get Married, John?* And downright extraordinarily, you'll hear The Southern Melody Boys with their *Little Ball of Yarn* and Blind Boy Fuller with *Our Goodman* or *Seven Nights Drunk*.

Now available from MT Records' **website**, £12.

Rod Stradling®

- **Musical Traditions Records - Facebook**
- **Musical Traditions Records**, with on-line credit/debit card purchasing at: www.mtrecords.co.uk
- **Musical Traditions Internet Magazine** at: www.mustrad.org.uk
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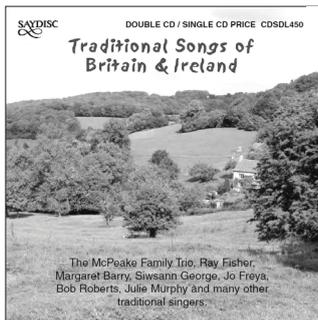
Saydisc®

Saydisc continue their re-issue programme of themed compilation double CDs with a single CD price tag. Following **"Traditional Dances of Britain and Ireland"** (Saydisc CDSDL449, see *January FW*), just out is a double album

"Traditional Songs of Britain and Ireland" (Saydisc CDSDL450) again featuring a wealth of top performers, this time including The McPeake Family Trio, Ray Fisher, Margaret Barry, Siwansann George, Jo Freya, Bob Roberts, Julie Murphy and many more.

Earlier folk-oriented releases were *"The Funny Side of Saydisc"* (Saydisc CDSDL444), *"Harps, Dulcimers & Hurdy Gurdies"* (Saydisc CDSDL446), *"Awake & Join the Cheerful Choir"* (Saydisc CDSDL442) and *"World's Away"* (Saydisc CDSDL440).

See www.saydisc.com for full details. **Gef Lucena®**

**LIST 9: SEASONAL LOCAL CELEBRATIONS.**

a list compiled by **DOC ROWE ©** plus a few ****contributors as named**
MAY, & WHIT & ASCENSIONTIDE (Ascensiontide is 40 days after Easter)

Well Dressing	various	Derbyshire	Ascensiontide - Sept
May-Pole Raising	Barwick In Elmet	Yorks	Whit/May
Padstow May Day	Padstow	Cornwall	1st May
Minehead Hobby Horse	Minehead	Somerset	1st-3rd May
Jack In The Green	Hastings	Sussex	May Bank Holiday wk'end
Well Dressing	Malvern	Worcs	May BH weekend **Eds
Randwick Cheese-Rolling	Randwick	Glos	1st Sun in May
Randwick Wap	Randwick	Glos	Sat after Cheese-rolling **Audrey Smith
Knutsford Royal May Day	Knutsford	Cheshire	First Saturday in May
Ickwell Green May Day	Ickwell	Beds	Saturday / Monday
Helston Flora Dance	Helston	Cornwall	8th May
Abbotsbury Garland Day	Abbotsbury	Dorset	13th May
Etwell Well Dressing	Etwell	Derbys	2nd week in May
May Festival	Hayes Common	Kent	2nd Saturday in May
Dunting The Freeholder	Newbiggin by the Sea	Northumberland	Wed near 18th May
Cyclists Memorial Service	Meriden	West Midlands	Sun near to 21st May
Mayor Day/Hot Pennies	Rye	E. Sussex	23rd May
Blessing The Sea	Hastings	E. Sussex	End of May
Castleton Gala Day	Castleton	Derbys	29th May
Grovely Rights	Wishford Magna	Wilts	29th May
Founders Day	Chelsea Royal Hospital	London	29th May
Arbor Tree	Aston on Clun	Salops	29th May
Bampton Morris Dancing	Bampton	Oxon	Spring Bank Holiday
Headington Quarry Morris	Headington	Oxon	Spring Bank Holiday
Hunting The Earl Of Rone	Combe Martin	N Devon	Spring Bank Holiday
Cheese Rolling	Cooper's Hill, Birdlip	Glos	Spring Bank Holiday
Maypole Raising	Barwick-in-Elmet	W. Yorks	Spring BH every 3 yrs 2020
Dicing For Moids Money	Guildford	Surrey	Mid-May [was late Jan]
Dovers Games	Chipping Campden	Glos	Friday after Bank Holiday
Scuttlebrook Wake	Chipping Campden	Glos	Sat. after Bank Holiday
Planting the Penny Hedge	Whitby	Yorks	Ascension Eve
Beating The Bounds	Tower Of London	London	Ascension Day ev.3yrs 2020
Bisley Well Dressing	Bisley	Glos	Ascension Day **Audrey Smith
Wicken Love Feast	Wicken	Northants	Ascension Day
Well Dressing	Tissington	Derbys	Ascension Day
St Mary Redcliffe Rush Sunday	St Mary Redcliffe	Bristol	Whit Sunday
Bread & Cheese Throwing	St Briavels	Glos	Whit Sunday
Dicing For Bibles	St Ives	Cambs	Whit Sunday

JUNE

Thaxted Morris Festival	Thaxted	Essex	June / July
Blessing the Boats	Whitby	N. Yorks	June
Appleby Fair	Appleby	Cumbria	2nd week June
Border Riding	Hawick	Borders	Fri after 2nd Mon in June
Gŵyl Ifan: Codi'r Pawl Haf / St John's Day Festival: Raising the Summer Pole	Caerdydd / Cardiff	Mehefin / June **Eds	
Election of Mayor of Ock Street Abingdon	Berks	Saturday near 19th June	
Selkirk Ridings	Selkirk	Borders	Third week in month
Midsummer Fires	various	Cornwall	23rd June
Youlgreave Well Dressing	Youlgreave	Derbys	Saturday near 24th June
Tideswell Well Dressing	Tideswell	Derbys	Saturday near 24th June
Winstler Wakes	Winstler	Derbys	Sat following Sun after 24 Jun
Cakes And Ale Ceremony	Bury St Edmunds	Suffolk	Last Thursday in June
Rushbearing	Warcup	Cumbria	28th June
Walking Day	Warrington	Cheshire	Friday near 30th June

JULY

Horse Fair	Seamer	Yorks	July
Kilburn Feast - Mock Mayor & Mayoress	Kilburn	Yorks	July
Rushbearing	Gt. Musgrave & Ambleside	Cumbria	1st Saturday in July
Grand Wardmote of Woodmen of Arden	Meridan	Warks	July/August
Orange Parades	various	N. Ireland	12th July
Vintners Street Sweeping to St James Garlickhythe church	London	2nd Wed July	
Holsworthy Pretty Maids	Holsworthy	Devon	2nd Wednesday in July
John Knill Ceremony	St Ives	Cornwall	25 July (every 5 yrs) 2021
Honiton Fair	Honiton	Devon	Tu. before Wed. after 19th July
Italian Festival	Clerkenwell	London	3rd Sunday in July
Swan Upping	The Thames	various	Usually third week in July
Doggets Coat and Badge Race	London Bridge to Chelsea	London	Late July

AUGUST

Gooseberry Contest	Egton Bridge	N. Yorks	First Tuesday in August
Rose Queen Ceremony	Little Beck	N. Yorks	First Tuesday in August
Feast of St Wilfrid	Ripon	N. Yorks	First Saturday in August
Knighthood of Old Green	Southampton	Hants	1st full week in August
Rushbearing	Grasmere	Cumbria	Saturday near 5th August
The Burry Man	South Queensferry	Lothian	2nd Friday in August
Burning The Bartle	West Witton	Yorks	Saturday near 24th August
Notting Hill Carnival	Notting Hill	London	Bank Holiday Sat to Mon
Football in the river Bourton-on-the-Water	Glos	Bank Holiday Mon **Bill Pullen	
Eyam Plague Sunday	Eyam	Derbys	Last Sunday in August

© **DOC ROWE**, for more details, and for photos, see www.docrowe.org.uk

...and that's it, folks! 60 pages! Thanks for your news, next deadline 19 July for FW 1 Sept.

We have our biggest-ever (60 page) magazine ... and have run out of space, for **List 7, Folklife Societies; List 8: Folklife Studies & Institutions;** and for photos for **List 9** (next column). **As ever, all online in our dedicated Folklife Traditions website, www.folklife-traditions.uk**

Welsh traditional instruments: the pibgorn (plural: pibgyrn)



left: Emyr Davies with pibgorn collection at The Museum of National History at St Fagans

above: Primitive pibgorn made from cane

right: Pibgyrn at The Museum of National History at St Fagans



The first in a series of articles
by Meurig Williams
on Welsh traditional instruments:
the harp, the crwth, and the pibgorn

The pibgorn (plural: pibgyrn) by Meurig Williams

You may in younger years have placed two hands together, held a blade of grass between your two thumbs and blown through the gap to produce a loud screech: if not, you should try it! This trick was no doubt discovered millennia ago by those people whose living depended on herding sheep, goats or cattle, and evolved over time into the family of reed instruments that we know today, formed by adding a tube with holes which can be closed by the fingers to control the pitch of a vibrating reed as the illustration shows.

Biblical references and folk tales such as the Pied Piper tell us how herdsmen would use the instrument to play their own tune which the animals would recognise and follow to new and greener pastures. Across Europe, the music captured the emotions of the human listeners as well as the animals and found its way into our daily lives. The laws of Hywel Dda (codified 940–50) specify that every master employing a *pencerdd* (chief musician) should give him the necessary harp, crwth and pibgorn. However the instrument was not described in writing until about 1775. There is some iconographic evidence in church windows and carvings from the 14th and 15th centuries.

The **pibgorn** (pipe-horn or hornpipe) developed, and continued to be played in Wales until the beginning of the 19th century, by which time it long gone from the rest of Britain. As well as being an instrument in its own right, it constituted the chanter which plays the melody in the *Pibgod* (Welsh bagpipe), as opposed to the drone, based on a single vibrating reed, as are the clarinet and saxophone family; the chanter of the Scottish bagpipe which uses a double reed, as do the oboe, cor anglais and bassoon. They are all loud instruments.

In all probability, the pibgorn was primarily an open air instrument, according to Robert Griffiths, author of *Llyfr Cerdd Dannau*. Another common name for it was *pib y bugail* (shepherd's pipe), and it seems that it was popular amongst farmworkers in particular. Clwydfardd (David Griffith) states that his father had told him "that playing the Pibgorn was a common thing in those days (the end of the 18th century) in the South and that farmers' servant men were in the habit of carrying them with them when driving cattle to the fairs." But it is fair to assume that the pibgorn was used also for dancing – fast tunes can be played on it: its piercing sound is an obvious advantage in the open air.

The **Museum of National History at St Fagans** has three lovely and different examples of Welsh pibgyrn which have survived from the 18th century to the present day; they are kept in a case, shown in the illustration. These three examples show us the basic components of these pibgyrn:

- a round-ended tapering mouthpiece into which the mouth fits to form a seal made from a hollowed-out cow's horn
- the reed in its saddle which fits inside the mouthpiece onto the end of the body
- the main body which consists of the a pipe with six holes on the top along the length, covered by the fingers and one at the reed end on the bottom covered by the thumb
- the hollowed-out cow's horn which fits onto the end of the body, forming a bell to amplify the sound.

Emyr Davies, keeper of furniture, takes a particular interest in the pibgorn, as well as the other traditional Welsh instruments: the crwth and the harp, and delights in showing the collection, sharing the understanding he has gained from researching into these instruments.

It seems that the Welsh gypsies were the last people to play the pibgorn in Wales. In her book, *Cwpwrdd Nansi*, Nansi Richards describes a *neithior* (a wedding party) in Llanyblodwel in the Tanat Valley where the gypsies played pibgyrn, around the mid 19th century. They also continued to play the triple harp through to the 20th century to maintain an unbroken folk harp tradition to the present day.

A renewed effort was made at the end of the twentieth century to give the pibgorn a new lease of life. Two or three instrument makers have a permanent waiting list and as a result the number of players is constantly growing. People who play the pibgorn say that the fingering is fairly straightforward to anyone who is familiar with a whistle or even a recorder. The instrument is slightly challenging to play well: it is temperamental and needs to be 'warmed up' in advance to be in tune, especially if it is to play with other instruments. Reflecting on the cowhorns used in its construction, players describe it as 'a bit of a cow to play!'

You can find out more about the pibgorn from the following sources:

www.pibgorn.co.uk is the website of **Gavin Morgan**, an enthusiastic Welsh folk piper who has studied the St Fagans collection and now uses modern methods to manufacture pibgyrn using wood and plastics

www.pibgyrn.com is the website of **Gerard Kilbride**, also a piper but better known as a Welsh folk fiddler and violin maker. His site which has excellent detailed images provides detailed constructional information for making a pibgorn from elder, passing on the fruit of his studies of the three pibgyrn in the St Fagans collection.

www.clera.org is the website of **Clera**, the Welsh traditional instruments society which promotes the playing of Welsh traditional music. The website carries information on the three traditional instruments: crwth, harp and pibgorn but places more emphasis on the playing our music on more recent traditional instruments including fiddle, flute, whistle, guitar and others, as well as on the harp and pibgorn. **

www.trac.cymru is the development body for the folk arts in Wales.

Meurig Williams © 2019

Meurig (the diphthong eu in Welsh is pronounced 'eye' in English) is Chair of Clera.

** see article about Clera in *FT60*. Clera supports **tune clubs** for learning the music, and sessions for playing it across Wales, through our **www.sesiwn.com** website (*sesiwn*: Welsh for session), this site provides a **calendar and directory of sessions & tune clubs**, and a link to **www.alawoncymru.com**, our **tunes website**, with downloadable scores & sound files for a large collection of Welsh tunes arranged in sets, uploaded monthly with an archive going back to 2012.

• A summary of **sessions and tune clubs** is also printed in our **Wales News pages**, this issue, and online at **www.folklife-directory.uk/wales.html**

