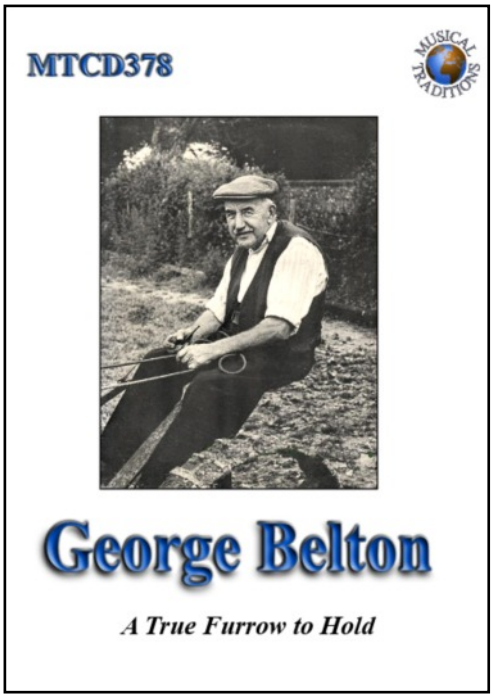
George Belton

A True Furrow to Hold

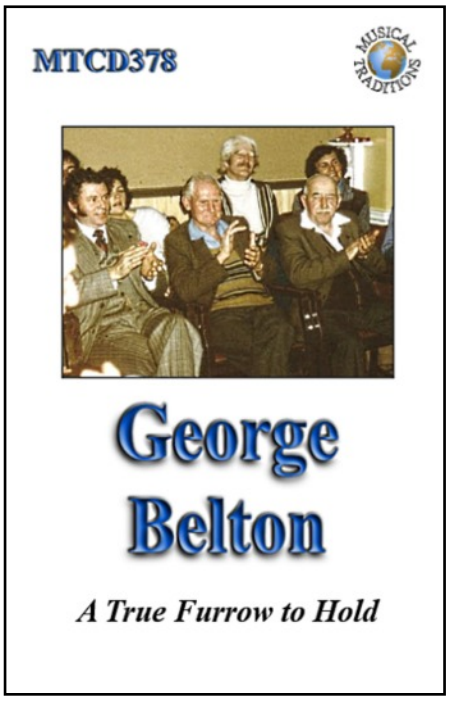
(MTCD378)

Track list:

1	*Jim the Carter Lad*	3:19
2	*Interview*	2:46
3	*The Lad In The Scots Brigade*	4:46
4	*The Constant Farmer's Son*	4:50
5	*I am a Donkey Driver*	1:49
6	*The Bold Fisherman*	3:43
7	*The Dark Eyed Sailor*	3:58
8	*When the Fields are White with Daisies*	2:48
9	*Green Broom*	2:14
10	*The Little Shirt Mother my Made For Me*	1:56
11	*The Sailor Cut Down in His Prime*	2:26
12	*If Those Lips Could Only Speak*	3:45
13	*All Jolly Fellows that Follow the Plough*	3:00
14	*Barbara Allen*	5:21
15	*Little Footprints in the Snow*	2:25
16	*My Old Man*	1:47
17	*Never No More for Me*	2:28
18	*The Banks of Sweet Primroses*	2:16
19	*The Rest of the Day is Your Own*	3:46
20	*The Soldier's Prayer*	1:56
21	*The Sussex Toast*	2:32
22	*The Old Rustic Bridge*	4:15
23	*The Roving Navvy Man*	1:37
24	*Has Anybody Seen my Tiddler*	1:45
25	*A Birthday Song*	3:20
26	*The Volunteer Organist*	3:19
27	*Time Gentlemen Please & Toast*	3:07
	Total:	**81:05**



CD case cover



CD booklet cover

Firstly I should say that this lovely CD owes its very existence to Mike Yates.

I was at his house taking back some CDs, and we were chatting of other matters over a cup of coffee, when he said that he was surprised that I'd not done a CD of George Belton, as the Roud Index seemed to have quite a lot of songs from him listed.

When I got home, I had a look - and it seemed that there were, indeed, about 30 of George's songs in evidence, from several sources. I got in contact with those of them for whom I had contact details, and Jim Ward and Vic Smith sent me virtually everything that appears on this CD and in its booklet.

Rod Stradling - Spring 2020

George Belton 1898 - 1980

Introduction:

George Belton was born in Oxted, Surrey in 1898, the youngest of five. He followed his father into farming and worked on farms in Surrey and Sussex, mainly with horses, throughout his life. The second half of his life was spent on farms around Chichester and he lived in retirement at Birdham.

He had a sizeable repertoire of songs which were mainly learned from his parents and other members of his family, but others that he had 'picked up along the way'. Traditional songs were the central part of his repertoire, but he also sang Victorian sentimental parlour ballads and Music Hall songs. He delivered his songs in a straightforward way with a voice that had a pleasant rasping edge to it. His comic songs often came with an endearing chuckle.

It was whilst working (and singing) on a farm at Madehurst that his employer heard him singing at harvest time and suggested he might like to go along to a local folk club. He was taken, in 1960, by the farmer's daughter to the first folk club in Sussex, the *Song Swappers Club* at Horsham. This was possibly the only time that George has confessed to having 'butterflies':

"I went up those stairs wondering what this folk singing was all about. Then I heard Harry Mousdell singing *I Wish I Were Single Again* and I thought 'Oh, if it's that type of song then I'm all right'"

In the opinion of many people, George has been 'all right' ever since. Not surprising when you think that George had been singing for fun for seventy odd years. In the beginning it was taking his turn in family sing-arounds, or in the harvest fields when the work was done and everyone was relaxing after a long hard day in the sun.

In spite of his initial trepidation, he quickly took to folk clubs and became a popular figure at clubs throughout Sussex and beyond. He was a regular guest at the National Folk Festival in his later years.

George had a prodigious memory for songs and sometimes hearing a different version of a song at club or festival would help him to recall versions of songs that had lain dormant in his memory for decades.

Maybe the secret of George's success is an upbringing by parents who set a high standard - his Dad would say "Don't tell me that's near enough, 'Tain't near enough unless it's right." These standards led George to be Champion Ploughman in the Guildford Districts for three years. He was the centre of a happy family, and who can think of George without seeing Millie too. Intensely loyal, and with her own indomitable brand of humour; I have often heard Millie's voice bravely backing George in an unfamiliar chorus, and she is always ready with honest praise or criticism.

Her recent illness prevented them sharing what was to them a very important date: the presentation of Life Membership to *The Hole in the Wall* in recognition of their long service to the club, and many will treasure the memory of George rising to give his own special toast to his wife -

Good Health to one and all the rest
And to the one that I love best.
She's not here to take a part,
I'll drink her health with all me heart.
I'll drink her health in water,
I'll drink her health in wine,
I'll drink good health to you all
With your true loves -
And jolly good health to mine.

Mary Aitchison - *Plum Ready*

George Belton - in his own words:

Family:

All the family used to get together at Christmas - lots of relations - all the cousins - men - women - old and young - we always used to have a big party then. My old mother used to make a lot of home-made wine and one year when I wasn't man enough to do much, only a boy like, she had one of those big five gallon jars filled up with elderberry wine and all the men there were trying to lift it up and hold it steady enough to drink from. It was a rare bit of fun to see them because, of course, it was heavy and I can tell you there were quite a few of them had it right down their shirts! We usually used to have a bit of beef or pork to eat because chicken was a high 'delishishy' and so were jellies and fruit. Of course, there wasn't any television or wireless, and in the evening we played games - shove ha'penny - darts - cards - 'Thirty-one' played for matches - everyone joining in.

'Sing, say or pay' - that used to be old Dad's favourite game at all our parties. He'd get us all sitting round in a ring. "Sing, Say or Pay" he would say, and as you were called on, you either had to sing a song, tell a story or pay a forfeit. After your turn you could call on who you liked - and they in turn could call on another or back to you. Sometimes it could keep going between two of you, back and forth for quite a long time. You would try and pick on someone who didn't know what to do - just for devilment like - to try to make them pay a forfeit. I think that's where I learned my songs from - learning as many as I could so as not to be caught out - to be on the safe side you had to know something to do one way or another - or else pay for it like!

In those days beer was only about 2d a pint so the forfeit was a penny or something like that and it all used to go into the kitty and probably, before the evening was out, somebody would be sent down to the pub to get some more beer.

One night they sent me and my brother - he was a little bit older than me, about eighteen months. The local was a couple of miles from our place and we had to carry a crate of beer (four quart bottles). On the way back our road led up a huge great hill and going up we got thirsty and tapped one of the bottles and arrived back with only three. We expected to get in the wrong for that but they just had a blooming good laugh and said they'd-a probably done the same - and maybe more than one bottle!

For carters, winter was a time for indoor work - all the implements like binders, mowing machines, horse rakes and all that sort of thing were put in the big barn when you finished with them in the summer - left just as they came out of the fields. Well, if it were very wet you went up to the barn and took the machinery to pieces, cleaned all the parts and replaced any broken ones, and generally got them ready for the next year. In between, you filled in with a spot of hedging and ditching or carted food to the cattle - whatever the weather, there was always plenty to do.

Youth:

When I was a young'n we were kept pretty busy. One job was 'wooding' for the copper on wash-day; if we got a chance to see any boughs down we would go and collect them whenever we got the opportunity. We'd get them even if they were big enough to saw up for logs - well it saved a bit of coal.

Another thing me and my brother used to do when I was going to school was go flint-pickin' (as they called it) at weekends. We had a big 'box' with just the four sides like, no top, no bottom, and you had to fill this box up for 'a quarter of a yard'. Once it was full you lifted your box up (it had a handle at either end of it) and this left the lump of stones lying in a heap on the ground. Then they could be collected for something to put on the roads in those days. We used to get a shilling a cartload, "a shilling a yard" they called it and that meant that four times you had to fill that box for a shilling. We used to do quite a lot of that, sometimes after school as well as at weekends. I think that the Council used to buy the stones off of the farmer - I don't rightly know but I don't think he got much for them. The contractor would come and collect them off of the fields with horses and carts and later you might see people (generally old ones) with a sort of wire frame on their faces to protect their eyes - sitting by the side of the roads and breaking the stones into a suitable size. That used to be a pretty good old contract because it's very stony in some places on the Surrey hills and the more stones there were, well the better for us!

Sometimes the old chaps that were ploughing would hit a big stone and they'd pick him up and throw him in the hedge like. Then we boys would have a look round the hedge and find a big one - say about as much as we could lift - and we'd pick it up and chuck it into the "box" to fill the middle up a bit. Another thing we used to do (and I remember that we were told off for not filling the box - well we filled it alright - and this was the trick of it), we would look to see a big clod of dirt the "box" being four-square with no bottom) and we'd put this over the top of the clod and give it a couple of good hard bangs down into the ground so then the "box" was already half full! Only thing was that when you went to pull it up you sometimes found it was stuck hard in the ground. Well we boys used to wangle if we could like but I seem to remember that we got found out a little bit at the finish because the collector would say, "This won't do, it ain't full" but we stuck out that it was, though maybe not with stones!

Odd times I kept what I earned, but, if I was at it all day like in my holidays, well then, our Mother would have the money and give us some for ourselves - I mean about sixpence in those days was worth about ten bob now.

Thistle-dodging was another good job - that was cutting off the thistles in the corn. You'd go out and walk the fields with one of those little weeding spikes - like a very narrow Dutch hoe so that you couldn't cut off a lot of corn - just cut the thistle and let him lay where he fell.

Sometimes we had a job Gharlick pulling - that was one of my first jobs. Some people call it "Charlick", some "Kilk", and some call it "Ketlock". I don't know what the real name is, *I* think it's Charlock. It used to grow in the green stuff - it's no good for anything that I know - grows yellow, very like Mustard to look at but it's just a weed - they used to pull it out so that it didn't seed and smother the other crops.

Sometimes, we might get given a hook and told to go out and trim the thistles off out of a field or any little jobs like that. I've done rook scaring by shouting and frightening them away or they'd give us a wooden rattle to swing around and keep the birds off the corn.

Another job was to mind the young stock when they might be put in a field where maybe the hedges weren't good but where there was something growing that the farmer wanted ate off, so we had to keep them from wandering. Young heifers can be playful and the worst times were Monday mornings for they'd have been shut in, and fed in the yard all Sunday, and as soon as they were let out - up would go their tails, and away they'd go, wherever they thought, and we'd have to round them up!

We had another little job: collecting acorns for the pigs - we used to get a shilling a bushel for them. If there were any oak trees near to the school then we were allowed to collect them at playtime - and go farther afield after school.

You were allowed off of school at Haying or Harvest if you were really needed and I had some time off when I was older in order to drive the horse and wagon to and from the stacks to the fields. They weren't so particular about school attendance then, as long as you told your teacher what you were doing.

Looking back, it was a busy life; there were usually some little jobs for everyone.

Harvest Suppers:

Although I have spent most of my life working on the land, I never went to a Harvest Supper until a few years back when I was invited to sing at one at Lavant - and a good evening it was too.

I remember my father going to them but I think it used to be a pretty beery turn-out and, of course, boys wasn't allowed to go, not young boys like; and by the time I got old enough, well, the custom seemed to drop off in our district around the time of the first World War. I know they used to have a rare old sing-song and that sort of thing and there's one song I've tried many times to remember - I know my Dad used to sing it but I can never remember rightly the way it used to be. It started like this:

Here's a health unto the Master,
The finder of the feast;

... then it went from the Master to the Missus; then to the maid and from one to the other right down like and the chorus used to go:

Drink round my boys
Drink round,
See you do not spill.
For if you do,
You shall drink two,
For 'tis your Master's will (or Missus's
or maid's etc.)

It's quite a good song but I can only recollect those few lines. Of course, when you think back to these old songs, well one person used to sing them one way and somebody else would sing them a bit different like - more or less the same songs but different tunes - so you remember odd bits and pieces of them. Talking of Harvest time, I remember the first place where I started work up the other side of Merstham - on that farm they always tried to get the harvest finished on the day before the Merstham Fair. Somewhen in September that was, and if we got the harvest done, then we could take a half day off to go to the Fair. Holidays were extra precious then because we only got the odd day at Christmas and Good Friday, and you can't stick a horse in a stable and go away and forget him like you can a tractor!

That year we all worked until midnight to get the job finished and went home tired and satisfied but the next morning when the milkman drove his horse and cart up the lane past the field, what should he see but two shocks left in the corner under the tree. We must have missed them in the dark. So he nipped across quick like and loaded them up in his cart along side the churns and saved our day at the Fair!

Although we boys didn't get to the Harvest Suppers we managed to get a bit of fun. When I was about fourteen I had the job of driving a horse and cart around the farm carrying the stone jars of beer from one field to another. My Dad would often reward me with a quick sup and unbeknown to him, so did the stack builders! Well, it was a hot afternoon and after a while I hit on the idea of helping myself between fields. The jars were heavy, but I found that by standing below the tailboard and reaching up I was able to tilt the jar over far enough and by the end of the day Dad could see that it was the horse that was in charge of me and he soon made it quite clear to the others (and me) that in future he was the one to dish out my share of the beer, and remembering my head the next day, that was probably a good idea!

Carol Singing:

I always remember when I went Carol Singing (I suppose I was about ten.). I think there were six of us altogether went singing. We started off with cottages and that sort of thing and done fairly well as we were going round. Eventually, we came to an old farmhouse (I think he was a Scottish farmer - I suppose the Scots don't think of Christmas as Christmas) - they hold the New Year don't they? Anyway, we went to this house and stood outside and sung two or three carols - nobody come so we went and knocked the door. The maid come to the door "Oh, Mr So-and-So's down the stables" she said "if you want to see him". So one of the lads went down to the stable. They had the two doors on the stable like they usually do - the top one was open so he looked over the door - "Happy Christmas to you, Sir" and this ol' farmer he says, "Get down off there you wi' yer ol gabble" he says. "Don't want you 'ere" - and the boy came back again. Now me being a little bit of a cheeky one (I always was, always will be) I said "I'll go down and see if I can get on". So I goes down to the door and looks over the top "Happy Christmas to you, Sir." Get down offen there wi'yer ***** owl gabble" he says, Or I'll give my old whip round yer!" - So I went back and the third one was going down and he just got in to make a start and the old farmer comes out the stable with a hunting crop. With that we bolted and got out on the road and we stood there and sauced him a bit - give him a tidy bit of cheek - eventually finished up with him chasing us down the road with his whip but he didn't do nothing else with it.

Anyway we packed up there then, and we went on further and sung at one or two more cottages - some opened the windows, some opened the doors and some just listened inside and so on, and we eventually come to another farm and we started singing the carols. As soon as ever we started singing open come the door directly. Well they let us sing one carol, then, before we done any more they says "Cone on inside". We went and they took us indoors all in there together and got us to sing a couple of carols and gave us all a hot drink each and a biscuit We stopped and sung four or five carols I s'pose all together and when we had finished they gave us a shilling each - 'course that was a lot of money in those days - I mean there was six of us - and six shilling - I mean that was quite a big pick-up for us, like. So with that we thanked them very much and away we went on to other houses but I think we finished up with somewhere about a pound between, or summat like, for the six of us, time we'd been all around. It shows the difference in people with regard to Christmas, don't it? I mean some have the right spirit and some have the wrong one.

Horses:

When I was a boy the horses were well trained; the ploughboy drove the horses while the carter held the plough and I reckon the horses knew as much what they were doing as what the boy did - more in some cases I think. You'd tell the horse where to come round and he'd come round on his own - you also had a bloomin' great nine foot whip - not to hit them with just to steer them and those horses knew from just a flick or a twist of the whip where you wanted them to go or what you wanted them to do. That's the way they used to be driven - you'd never think of taking hold of them. If you went to take hold of a horse to take him somewhere you'd be asked "Your horse gone blind all at once?" The carters would shout that directly you took hold of him.

When you went out anywhere, there was no traffic much on the roads to get you bothered like, but as the traffic came on so you had to put reins and things on horses to make them act quicker but of course in those days life was a lot slower. We used to take the wheat to the mills or maybe fetch something from the station with a horse and wagon; well when you were empty the boy used to drive while the carter sat up on the front of the wagon, and when you were loaded then the boy sat up on the wagon and the carter drove. You always drove from the ground and walking alongside the horses by the front horse. You carried your whip on your

shoulder and if you wanted the front horse to come over you would touch him lightly with the whip on the other side; with the hind horse (the one in the wagon) you twiddled the whip and when you stuck the whip straight up in the air it meant "Move on faster" and if you wanted him to go backwards, then you'd shake the whip at him - you did occasionally say "Whoa", but most of it was done with the whip.

Once I went into Redhill with my father to take a load of corn to the mill - I ain't very big now but I warn't so big then. I was a little old nipper like and I had three bloomin' great big horses, and coming down through Redhill they were all playing about y'know, full of beans and having a jump and a kick - well under control but playful. We got to the Town Hall and pulled across the side of the road and stopped. My father had to go down the road to a shop so he left me standing there with horses. 'Course I stood there with the whip on my shoulder, and as Dad went across, a policeman stood in the square. He walked up to Dad and he said, "Do you think that's safe, Carter, to leave that little boy with those horses like that, seeing as how they came into town?" The old man says, "Yes, that's safe enough - them horses won't move all the time he keeps that whip still, in fact you can't move 'em if he keeps it still." ... you couldn't neither! Soon as Dad came back I handed him the whip and he stuck it up in the air and they horses was up in arms directly and away again. It all used to be done with the whip, never any reins and you might have four horses, one in front of the other with never a rein on them - just on traces.

The horses we had were Shires or Clydesdales, some round eighteen hands (six feet high). I used to have to stand on a box to clean them because they were a pretty good width too, and when I went to polish them up for a show I couldn't reach far enough over the top to put on any pressure and make them shine, so I used to stand on the box, give them a brush down, then hold on to the horse's back and kick the box along a bit, and I always managed to make a good job of it.

I well remember a pair of horses I worked at Holmbush Farm, Faygate. One of these was a small Shire-type horse known as "Punch". When I got there I found that his reputation was such that no one wanted to take him out of the stable. He was a bit of trouble at first and used to like to play up but I worked him a little and sort of quietened him down until I got him so that the wife or my boy could lead him.

Now Punch had some funny ways; if you knew what to do with him then he was all right. For instance, if you had hold of his head and wanted to stop him, well he would just keep going. The trick was to leave go and to shout "Whoa!" Then he would stop and stand quietly; but take hold of his head and away he would go.

This habit of Punch led to some funny happenings. One day we were carting hay and taking turn about with the horses and it came to the turn of the Manager to take a load from field to stack with Punch in the shafts. His troubles started when he came to go out of the field; he planned to stop at the gate to see if the road was clear but Punch, who could feel the hand at his head, had other ideas and got going! Luckily the road was clear. (Did I say that it was the main road between Crawley and Horsham only not so busy like then). He managed to turn the horse up the lane to the haystack where he started to shout WHOA! WHOA! Unfortunately, he was still hanging on to the horse's head, and to Punch that was a sure signal to keep going fast! At last the manager let go, whereupon Punch stopped. "Put him back in the stable, he's not safe!" I had to do a chuckle.

There was the time when, because a horse was ill, I had to take over a new horse and let the young carter take Punch to the forest for poles. I thought it as well to give him a bit of advice: "Look, when you get there and are going to load, make sure that you look around and map out your road, 'cos once you touch your horse's head there won't be much time!" Knowing Punch, I said this to keep him from trouble amongst the tree stubs.

However, the young chap must have forgot; he loaded up, took hold of the horse's head, and the next thing he knew they were away in the midst of the standing stuff and it took three hours to get them out - and we had to unload the cart to do it.

There was the time that a rather unpopular man was struggling to back Punch and a load of hay into the shed. I remember it was a Saturday; nearly dinner time.

"Shall I put it in?" I asked the Boss. He stared at the man and the horse for a while before answering.

"Well no, reckon as how he thinks he's a carter; let him get on with it!" and of course, he managed it in the end.

One day, my young son Maurice had the job of taking the horse to be shoed by the blacksmith at Faygate; well they got him fitted up alright but coming home Punch got to feeling a bit skittish like and arrived back a good half hour before the boy.

Punch was quite a character but if you understood him, he was as good as anything, and a friendly animal.

Our house was alongside the stables and he had an endearing habit of knocking the door for Millie, who (although we were rationed at that time) would always find him a piece of bread or an apple. His partner-in-crime, so to speak - was a young horse called "Princey" but I'll tell you about him next time.

Retirement:

Most of you will be aware that our regular feature is the work of our own George Belton, and it occurred to us that some new readers might like a little more background information. George retired the first time about five years ago, this after a lifetime of working with horses on farms in Sussex and Surrey - a job his father did before him.
In this time he became a Champion Ploughman and cleared the board of trophies, he won the Guildford District Cup three times which meant, as he says, "that they had to go and buy another one!"

At the age of sixty (and I suspect somewhat to his own surprise) he started to sing in public and he has been in demand ever since, and has made an LP *All Jolly Fellows* (EFDSS LP 1008) and may be heard most Fridays at the New Inn (Chichester Folk Club) where he is one of the resident singers.

Imagine therefore my surprise to be greeted by George with the words "I'm retiring!"

"Not from singing?"

"No, from my other work." He has been doing a couple of hours gardening each week for David Dimbleby but now the family is leaving and the new people want a gardener who will work longer hours.

"Well, I don't want none of that - besides, I get so many engagements now that I'm too busy to work" says George with a twinkle in his eye.

True, his singing engagements continue to fill his diary and the next few months include a Sussex Singers Night at Peacehaven (Coppersongs) on 3rd October; and the Springfield, Brighton on 15th November. He will miss Loughborough this year - he has a prior engagement at Fittleworth on the 14th, and he is taking part in an Olde Tyme Music Hall at Southbourne on Sept. 28 (George, in a bowler hat is a sight for sore eyes.)

On l8th October he is at Cecil Sharp House - "another-arrive-home-at-two-thirty-affair" he says with a chuckle. He and Millie live in a little white bungalow at the end of a council estate and it is a source of amusement that they frequently arrive home when the rest of the street is asleep!

Last month he celebrated his 76th birthday by going to the Marsh Green Sing-around where he sang his *Birthday Song*, "A birthday comes but once a year to everyone's delight", and I asked: "What about past birthdays, George?"

"Can't say as how I remember them much - seemed much the same as any other day. People have things better now - we never had a family holiday - maybe one might get the odd night or weekend staying with an Aunt or something but mostly we spent our holidays working alongside our Dads.

I did go to the sea once - in fact that's the only time that I remember seeing the sea when I was young. It was a choir outing and we went down to Folkestone on the train. But we weren't unhappy because what you don't have you never miss".

Well, Spencer the Rover finally settled down in a cottage with roses and woodbine growing all around the door but George isn't content with just roses. His front garden is a profusion of colour and scent, while the vegetables at the back stand up as straight as the furrows he ploughed in the past.

On my last visit he came in from digging his potatoes, looking as bright as a button - he enjoys people and greets each day with an eager anticipation as to what it may bring. Now he lives close to the sea which obviously suits he and his Millie very well.

George Belton retiring! Don't make me laugh! He's one of the happiest, and still one of the busiest people I know.

Mary Aitchison.

The Songs:

Roud numbers quoted are from the databases, *The Folk Song Index* and *The Broadside Index*, continually updated, compiled by Steve Roud. Currently containing over half a million records between them, relating to over 31,000 separate songs, they are described by him as "extensive, but not yet exhaustive". Copies are held at: The Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, London; Taisce Ceol Duchais Eireann, Dublin; and The School of Scottish Studies, Edinburgh. The Folk Song Index is also accessible on-line at:http://library.efdss.org They can also be purchased direct from Steve at: 38 King Street, Somersham, Cambs PE28 3EJ, UK. E-mail: sroud@btinternet.com

Child numbers, where quoted, refer to entries in *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* by Francis James Child, Boston, 1882-98. Laws numbers, where quoted, refer to entries in *American Balladry from British Broadsides* by G Malcolm Laws Jr, Philadelphia, 1957.

In the following Song Notes, all Musical Traditions Records' CDs are referred to only by their Catalogue Numbers (i.e. MTCDxxx), as are all Topic Records' CDs (i.e. TSCDxxx) and Veteran CDs (i.e. VTxxx). The names of all other CD publishers are given in full.

Missing lines or verses, taken from other sources where we have them, are shown italicised.

1. **Jim the Carter Lad** (Roud 1080)
Recorded by Tony Wales, Horsham Festival 1961

Oh my name is Jim the carter lad, a jolly cock am I.
I always am contented, be the weather wet or dry.
I snap my fingers at the snow, and whistle at the rain.
I've braved the storms for many a day and can do it again.

Chorus:
Crack, crack, goes my whip, I whistle and I sing.
I sit upon my wagon I'm as happy as a king.
My horse is always willing, as for me I'm never sad,
For none can lead a jollier life than Jim the carter lad?

My father was a carrier, many years ere I was born
He used to rise at daybreak and do his rounds each morn
He'd sometimes take I with him, especially in the spring.
And I'd love to sit upon the cart and hear my father sing.

Ch:

The girls they always smile at I, as I go riding past.
My horse is such a beauty as she jogs along so fast.
She's travelled many weary miles and happy hours have had.
There's none can lead a jollier life than Jim the carter lad.

Ch:

Now it's time to wish you all goodnight, it's time I was away
My horse will only weary if I much longer stay
To see your smiling faces, it makes me feel quite glad
Now I hope you all will drink with me to Jim the carter lad

Ch:

Like *All Jolly Fellows That Follow the Plough* (track 13), this is another popular song among English country singers right up to 2013. We know of 133 instances, mostly English, but including 8 from Scotland, one from Ireland and 5 having crossed the water to America. It is very well-known around Sussex, having been recorded from: George Townshend (MTCD304-5); Cyril Phillips (MTCD309-0); George Spicer, and Jim Swain. Also Ted Cobbin (MTCD339-0).

It would seem that it was one of George's favourites since I had six different recordings of it, from different venues, to select from. Obviously, the text would have considerable resonance for George, who worked on farms in Surrey and Sussex, mainly with horses, throughout his life, and whose father was a carter.

It was written by music-hall singer Harry Linn, who wrote other songs - such as *Eggs for Your Breakfast in the Morning*, which Walter Pardon used to sing and, using the pseudonym Alexander Crawford, *The Stoutest Man in the Forty-Twa.*

2. **Interview**
Recorded by Vic Smith, BBC Radio Sussex studio, 4.11.71

3. **The Lad In The Scots Brigade** (*The Banks of the Clyde*, Roud 1784)
Recorded by Vic Smith, BBC Radio Sussex studio, 4.11.71

On the banks of the Clyde stood a lad and a lassie,
The lad's name was Geordie, the lass's was Jean.
She threw her arms round him and cried "Do not leave me",
For Geordie was going to fight for his Queen.

She gave him a lock of her bright auburn tresses,
He kissed her and pressed her once more to his heart,
'Til his eyes spoke the words that his lips would not utter.
Together they weep, and they kiss, and they part.

Chorus:
Over the burning plains of Egypt,,
Under the scorching sun,
He thought of the stories he'd have to tell
His love when the fight was won.
He treasured with care that dear lock of hair,
For his own darling Jeannie he prayed,
But his prayer was in vain
For she'll ne'er see again
Her lad in the Scots brigade

Though an ocean divided the lad from the lassie
And Geordie was sent far away on the foam;
His roof was the sky, and his bed was the desert
His heart with his Jeannie was always at home.

On the morning that dawned on that vain day of battle
Found Geordie enacting a true hero's part
'Til an enemy's bullet brought with it his ...
And buried that that dear lock of hair in his heart.

Ch:
On the banks of the Clyde stood a heart-broken mother,
They told her of how the great victory was won.
But the glory to England to her was no comfort,
The glory to her meant the loss of her son.

But Jeannie is with her to comfort and cheer her
Together they weep and together they pray
And Jeannie her daughter will be while she's living
For the sake of the laddie that died far away

Ch:

This song, which, in Alf Wildman's versions is simply *A Young Sailor Cut Down* (Roud 2), with a localising first verse, is actually a separate one in its own right. And it's surprisingly well-known, with 69 *Index* entries, mainly from England and Canada.

It was written by J F Mitchell in 1887. There are even four other CD versions available: Alf Wildman (MTCD356-7); Billy Rash (VT150CD); Geoff Ling (12TS 292); and Viv Legg (VT153CD)

4. **The Constant Farmer's Son** (Roud 675)
Recorded by Tony Wales 1961

It's of a merchant's daughter,
In London Town did dwell,
She was modest, fair, and handsome,
And her parents loved her well.
She was admired by lords and squires,
And all their hopes were won
There was but one, a farmer's son,
There was but one, a farmer's son,
Young Mary's heart could gain.

Long time young William courted her,
They fixed the wedding day,
And her parents they both gave consent
But her brothers they did say
"There lives a lord
Who pledged his word,
And him you shall not shun,
We'll first betray, and then we'll slay,
We'll first betray, and then we'll slay,
The constant farmer's son."

There came a fair not far from town,
Her brothers went straight way
And they asked young William's company,
With them to spend the day.
But mark returning home again
They saw their race was run,
And with a stake the life did take
And with a stake the life did take
Of the constant farmer's son.

Those villains on returning home
"Oh sister" they did say
"Pray think no more of your false love
But let him go his way.
It's true to tell in love he fell
And with some other one,
Likewise we come to tell the same
Of the constant farmer's son."

Young Mary on her pillow lay,
She had a dreadful dream,
She dreamt she saw his body laid
Down by the crystal stream.
Young Mary rose, put on her clothes,
To seek her love she run,
When dead and cold, she did behold,
When dead and cold, she did behold,
Her constant farmer's son.

The salt tear stood upon her cheek
All mingled with his gore
She ??? in vain to ease her pain
And kissed him ten times o'er
She gathered green leaves from the trees,
To keep him from the sun,
One night and day she passed away,
With her constant farmer's son.

When hunger it came creeping on,
Poor girl wept with woe,
To try to find his murderers,
She straightway home did go.
Crying "Parents dear, you soon shall hear,
A dreadful deed's been done,
In yonder vale, lays dead and pale,
In yonder vale, lays dead and pale,
My constant farmer's son."

Those villains they soon owned their guilt
And for the same did die.
Young Mary fair in sad despair
She never ceased to cry.
Her parents they did pass away
Their loss of life was run
Young Mary cried, in sorrow died
Young Mary cried, in sorrow died
For her constant farmer's son.

The plot of *The Constant Farmer's Son* was used in the 14th century by Boccaccio in *The Decameron* and later made the subject of poems: by Nuremberg poet Hans Sachs in the 16th century; and, in the early 19th century, by John Keats in his *Isabella and the Pot of Basil*. Despite its ancestry, it was not included in Child's monumental ballad books.

Based on an older song, *The Bramble Briar* or *Bruton Town*, which has been described as 'probably the song with the longest history in the English tradition', it owes its continued popularity to its appearance on nineteenth century broadsides. A version from Hertfordshire in 1914 gives it as 'Lord Burling's (or *Burlington's*) *Sister* or *The Murdered Serving Man*.

A fairly well-known song with 157 instances in Roud's *Index*, it was found all over the southern half of England, from people like Henry Burstow (Sussex), Shepherd Hayden (Oxon), Eliza Small (Somerset), Billy Jordan (Lincs) and many other less well-known singers, though George appears to be the only Englishman to have been recorded singing it.

Other recordings: Josie Connors (MTCD235-6); Tom Lenihan (MTCD331-2); James McDermott (MTCD329-0).

5. **I am a Donkey Driver** (*Jerusalem Cuckoo*, Roud 1147)
Recorded by Tony Wales 1961

Now I'm a donkey driver, I'm the best one on the line
And there's no other donkey that can come up to mine
I've travelled all over England and other countries, too
But no donkey on the line can beat Jerusalem Cuckoo

Chorus:
(Then) shout, boys, hoorah, for troubles they are but few
There's no donkey on the line can beat Jerusalem Cuckoo

I took my donkey to Brighton for a week at the grand seaside
A nice young lady come up to me to have a tuppenny ride
They started off quite easily 'til the German band struck up
And then the donkey tossed the lady off and turned her the wrong way up

Ch:

I thought my donkey good enough to run in any race
So I took him to the Derby and found for him a place
The signal gave for starting and away the horses flew
But the first one past the winning post was Jerusalem Cuckoo

Ch:

Now as long as I get my beer to and donkey gets his hay
But for fear that I should lose him or he should kick the pail
I'll make myself an oilskin coat of old Jerusalem's tail

Ch:

This song, which gets its name from Cockney rhyming slang - Jerusalem artichoke - moke (another word for a donkey), was printed sometime around 1870 by the broadside printer T Pearson of 4 & 6, Chadderton Street, Oldham Road, Manchester. According to the sheet the song was sung by the Scottish Music Hall performer Harry Linn, who also wrote other popular songs - see notes to *Jim the Carter's Lad*, track 1.

Unsurprisingly, given how young it is, it has only 36 Roud entries, virtually all English, and including 11 recent broadside publications.

Other recordings: Tom Willett (MTCD 361-2); Harry Upton (MTCD371); Charley Pitman (VTC9CD).

6. **The Bold Fisherman** (Roud 291, Laws O24)
Recorded by Tony Wales 1961

As I walked out one May morning
Down by the riverside
There I espied a fisherman,
A-rowing on the tide.
A-rowing on the tide.
There I espied a fisherman,
A-rowing on the tide.

"Good morning to you bold fisherman
How came you fishing here?"
"I'm fishing here for your sweet sake,
All on this river clear
All on this river clear.
"I'm fishing here for your sweet sake,
All on this river clear."

'Twas then he rowed his boat ashore
And tied it to a stake
And walked up to this lady fair
Her lily white hands o take
Her lily white hands o take
And walked up to this lady fair
Her lily white hands to take

He then took off his morning gown
And laid it on the ground
'Twas then she saw three chains of gold
Around his neck was bound
Around his neck was bound
'Twas then she saw three chains of gold
Around his neck was bound.

Then she fell on her bended knee
"Your pardon, Sir," she cried
"For calling you a fisherman
A-rowing on the tide
A-rowing on the tide
For calling you a fisherman
A-rowing on the tide."

"Rise up, rise up, my lady fair
And don't down daunted be,
For not one word that you have said
Has the least offended me
Has the least offended me
For not one word that you have said
Has the least offended me."

"I'll take you to my father's house
And we will married be
And you shall have your fisherman
To row you on the sea
To row you on the sea
And you shall have your fisherman
To row you on the sea."

A song which, it would appear, has never made it outside its English home, despite having 171 Roud entries, almost all of which come from the southern half of the country, and the great majority of which refer to printed sources. Earlier suggestions that the Fisherman might represent Jesus have now been refuted.

Other recordings: Sam Larner (MTCD369-0); Alice Webb (MTCD345-7); Copper Family (TSCD673T); Harry Cox (TSCD512D and 651); Walter Pardon (TSCD514).

7. **The Dark Eyed Sailor** (Roud 265)
Recorded by Tony Wales, Horsham Festival Boys Club 29.7.61

It's of a comely young lady fair
Was walking out for to take the air,
She met a sailor all on her way,
And I paid attention,
And I paid attention
To hear what he did say.

Said William "Lady, why roam alone?
The night is coming and the day's near gone."
She said, while tears from her eyes did fall,
"It's me dark-eyed sailor,
It's me dark-eyed sailor
That provèd my downfall."

"It's ten long years since he left the land,
He took a gold ring from off my hand.
We broke the token; here's a part with me,
But the other's rolling,
But the other's rolling
At the bottom of the sea."

"But still", said Phoebe, "I'll never disdain
A tarry sailor, but treat the same
So drink his health, here's a piece of coin
But me dark eyed sailor
But me dark eyed sailor
Still claims this heart of mine."

Said William "Lady, drive him off your mind,
Some other sailor, as good, you'll find.
Love turns aside, and soon cold doth grow,
Like a winter's morning,
Like a winter's morning,
When the land is covered with snow."

These words did Phoebe's fond heart inflame.
She said "On me you shall play no game."
She drew a dagger and then did cry,
"For me dark-eyed sailor,
For me dark-eyed sailor,
I've lived and I'll die."

Then half the ring did young William show.
She seemed distracted, with joy and woe.
"Oh, welcome, William, I've land and gold
For me dark-eyed sailor,
For me dark-eyed sailor,
So manly, true and bold."

Then in a cottage down by the sea,
They've joined in wedlock and well agree.
So maids be true while your love's away,
For a cloudy morning,
For a cloudy morning
Turns out a sunshine day.

A well-known and well-loved song right across the Anglophone world, with 417 Roud entries, ranging from a late-18th century English printing to a 1989 sound recording in Ireland. Surprisingly, almost one third of the entries refer to sound recordings, indicating that it remained popular in the oral tradition until quite recently. Clearly, it is actually a 'broken token' song, but is happily free of most of the clichés they usually employ.

It's one of a number of modern ballads on the theme of *Hind Horn*, with parted lovers, a broken token, the man's return in disguise, the woman's fidelity tested, ending in a gentle Victorian triumph. Catnach published the song on a broadside c.1830 and every example that has since turned up relates to that printed set. The tune is slightly older - Vaughan Williams includes it in one of his *Folk Song Suites* - and its sophisticated 'doublet-ting' of the first half of the final phrase shows the influence of the stage, the kind of thing that the folk might adopt, but wouldn't invent. George's version is satisfyingly complete, and includes the fairly rare 'dagger' verse. Also available on CD by: Sam Larner (MTCD369-0); Bob Hart (MTCD301-2); Percy Webb (MTCD356-7); Caroline Hughes (MTCD365-6); Fred Jordan (TSCD652); Walter Pardon (TSCD514); Phil Tanner (VT145CD); Jack Clark (VT140CD); Sydney Scott (Greentrax CDTRAX 9021).

8. **When the Fields are White with Daisies** (Roud 13633)
Recorded by Vic Smith

Fade in ... harbour and the ship was going out
On a voyage to a port beyond the sea
I watched the blue clad sailor as he said his last farewell
To a lassie who loved him most tenderly.
I saw the teardrops falling
As the last goodbye was said
'Twas the sorrow of a parting almost yearn?
And I heard the sailor promise to the lassie now in tears
"When the fields are white with daisies I'll return"

Chorus:
"When the fields are white with daisies
And the roses bloom again.
Let the love laying in your heart more brightly burn
For I love you Sweetheart onl,y, so remember when you're lonely,
When the fields are white with daisies I'll return"

Once again the sun shines brightly
And the world is white with bloom
And the girl whose heart is breaking with its pain
For the news she heard that morning, the ship which sailed away
Would be anchored safe in harbour ne'er again.

Then alone she's sadly weeping
For the one she mourns as dead
When a voice beside her whispered "Molly dear,
God has spared me for the keeping of the promise once I made
When the fields are white with daisies I'll return"

Ch:

Written and composed by C Denison & W A Pratt - 1900. Performed by Florrie Forde (1876-1940) although George appears to have an entirely different text.

Printed in Chas. Sanderson's *Favourite Songs in Country Districts*. Ginette Dunn mentions it in her book *The Fellowship of Song* as being sung by Alice Messenger and Ruby Ling, and Bob Hart had it in his

repertoire, but is not known to have recorded it. This recording by George Belton will be its only appearance on CD.

9. **Green Broom** (Roud 379)
Recorded by Tony Wales 1961

There was a broom maker
Who lived in the west
Whose trade it was cutting of broom
He had a lazy boy Jack for his son, son, son
Who would lay in the bed until noon, noon, noon
He'd lay in the bed until noon.

Now the old man arose
And to Johnny he goes
And he swore he would fire the room.
If Jack did not rise and go sharpen his knives
And away to the copse to cut broom, green broom
And away to the copse to cut broom.

Now Johnny arose and put on his clothes
Straightway to the castle of fame.
He knocked at the gate as loud as could be,
"Pretty maids do you want any broom, green broom,
Pretty maids do you want any broom?"

When a lady so high by chance did Jack spy
Going over with his bundle of broom.
She called to her maid and thus to her said,
"Go and stop that young man with his broom, green broom,
"Go and stop that young man with his broom,

So Jack travelled on without fear or doubt
'Til he came to the fair lady's room
When she said "Young man, will you give up your trade
And marry a lady in bloom, full bloom
And marry a lady in bloom?"

So joking said Jack "I could if I liked,
But I dare not to presume, presume
But I dare not to presume."
But compliments kind soon changed Johnny's mind
And they both went to bed in one room, room, room
And they both went to bed in one room

I hadn't thought this song was well-enough known to account for 144 Roud entries, but it's found all over England, from Yorkshire to Devon, and with a fair number of Irish and Scottish examples as well. Thirty-one sound recordings are known, though few seem ever to have been published, and only those by Sam Larner (MTCD369-0) and Gordon Hall (VTC4CD) are available on CD.

10. **The Little Shirt my Mother Made for Me** (Roud 10437)
Recorded by Jim Ward, The Lewes Arms, 11.9.71

I never shall forget the day when I was born
It was on a cold and frosty winter's morn.
The doctor said I was chubby chap
And then he laid me in the nurse's lap.
Oh, they washed me all over I remember
And then they powdered me so carefully, you see
And then they laid me in the cradle by the fender
In the little shirt my Mother made for me

Oh, the first day I wore my knickerbocks
They seemed so funny after wearing frocks
I looked a little picture, so they say,
But when they sent me out to run and play
Oh, I didn't like the trousers I was wearing
So in the street I pulled them off, you see,
And then I started off so bold and daring
In the little shirt my Mother made for me

Last year when I was on my holidays
Down beside the sea I thought I'd gaze.
The water looked so fresh, I thought I'd go
And have a dip but, in a minute, oh
All the girls on the beach at me were staring
People taking snapshots, I could see
'Twas a good job for me that I was wearing
The little shirt my Mother made for me

Rather surprisingly, there are 35 Roud entries for this song, written by the English music-hall composer, Harry Wincott (d.1909) but seemingly as popular in N America as in England: Charlie Craver 'Arkansas Charlie' on 3 October, 1928 (Vo5270); Bradley Kincaid's 1933 recording has been reissued and is available on the 4 CD set *Bradley Kincaid - a man and his guitar* (JSP77158A-D). The earliest recording was by Tom Woottwell (1865-1941) in England, in 1907.

Other recordings: Freda Palmer (MTCD375-6); Bill Smith (MTCD351); Bob Mills (Forest Tracks FTC 6025).

11. **The Sailor Cut Down in His Prime** (Roud 2)
Recorded by Tony Wales 1961

As I was out walking, down by the Royal Albion
Cold was the morning and wet was the day
When who should I meet with, but one of my shipmates
All wrapped in a blanket, and colder than clay.

Chorus:
Take him to the churchyard, fire three volleys o'er him
We'll play the death march as we carry him along
Take him to the churchyard, fire three volleys o'er him
It was the young sailor cut down in his prime

Round at the street corner you'll see two girls standing
They say to each other as they carry him along
"There goes a young sailor whose money we squandered,
There goes the young sailor cut down in his prime."

Ch:

On the top of the tombstone you'll see these words written
All you young fellows take warning by me
And never go courting flash girls in no city
For courting flash girls was the ruin of me.

Ch:

When Frank Kidson printed a version of this song, which he called *The Unfortunate Lad* in volume 1 of the *Folk Song Society's Journal,* he added this note, 'The Unfortunate Lad is a ballad that will scarcely bare reprinting in its entirety'. Kidson believed *The Unfortunate Lad* to be an English version of the Irish song *The Unfortunate Rake* in which a young man is dying from venereal disease. Henry Parker Such printed *The Unfortunate Lad* in the 1850s, possibly using an 18th century song *The Buck's Elegy* as a basis, and the following verse, which mentions some then common forms of medicinal remedy for venereal disease, was no doubt considered offensive by Kidson:

Had she but told me when she disordered me
Had she but told me of it in time.
I might have got salts and pills of white mercury
But now I'm cut down in the height of my prime.

Such's sheet is further explicit in placing the young man outside London's Lock Hospital which offered treatment for such diseases.

Versions of this ballad have spread throughout the English speaking world. These include the black American song *St James Infirmary* and the cowboy song *Tom Sherman's Barroom* (*The Dying Cowboy*) sometimes called *The Streets of Laredo.*

12. **If Those Lips Could Only Speak** (Roud 5307)
Recorded by Jim Ward, The Lewes Arms, 11.9.71

He stood in a beautiful mansion
Surrounded by riches untold
He stood there and gazed at the picture
That hung in a frame of gold
'Twas the picture of a lady
So beautiful, young and fair
With those beautiful life-like features
He murmured in sad despair

Chorus:
If those lips could only speak
And those eyes could only see,
If those beautiful golden tresses
Were there in reality
Could I only take your hand

As I did when you took my name
But it's only a beautiful picture
In a beautiful golden frame.

He sat down and gazed at the picture,
Then slumbered, forgetting all pain,
And then, once again, in fancy
She stood by his side again.
His lips they softly murmured
The name of his once sweet bride
With his eyes fixed on that picture
He awoke from his dream and cried

Ch:

With all his great powers and his riches
He knows he can never replace
One thing in the mansion that's absent
His wife's tender, smiling face.
Each time he sees that picture,
The same words he'd always say
"All my wealth I would freely forfeit
And toil for you night and day."

Ch:

Written by Will Godwin and Chas Ridgewell in 1905, and found on the lips of almost everyone in the pubs of England in the '60s and '70s, this song has just 11 Roud entries, presumably because it's not a 'folk song', and so was not collected. There are only four sound recordings, of which only that by Gordon Syrett (VTCD8 CD) has ever been published.

13. **We're all Jolly Fellows that Follow the Plough** (Roud 346)
Recorded by Tony Wales 1961

It was early one morning, the break of day,
And the cocks are a-crowing, the farmer did say,
"Come arise, my good fellows arise with good will
For your horses want something their bellies to fill"

Then when four o'clock comes, boys, and up we will rise,
And into our stable, we merrily reply.
With rubbing and scrubbing our horses down well,
We're all jolly fellows that follow the plough.

Then when six o'clock comes, boys, at breakfast we meet,
With the pork, beef and bread, boys, we heartily eat.
With a piece in our pockets, I'll swear and I'll vow,
We're all jolly fellows that follow the plough.

Then when seven o'clock comes, boys, and out we will go
And harness our horses, then away we will go
And trip o'er the plain, boys, more merrily and bold
To see which of us a straight furrow can hold.

Then out comes our Master and thus he did say,
"What have you been doing, boys, all this ere long day?
"You've not ploughed an acre this long summer's day.
You've not ploughed an acre, I'll swear and I'll vow
And you're all idle fellows that follow the plough."

I stepped right up to him and made this reply,
"We've all ploughed an acre, you tell a damn lie
We have all ploughed an acre, I'll swear and I'll vow
And we're all jolly fellows that follow the plough."

He turned himself round and he laughed at the joke
"It's past four o'clock, boys; it's time to unyoke.
Go home and unharness and rub them down well,
And I'll give you a jug of my bonny brown ale".

So come all you fine fellows, where'er you may be,
Pray take this advice, this advice take from me;
Go ne'er fear your masters, but swear and he vow,
You're all jolly fellows that follow the plough.

A popular song with 251 Roud entries, of which about a third are from printed sources, but the remainder are almost all from England, from Yorkshire to Cornwall, along with just 7 from Scotland.

It may be of quite late composition, and it has certainly survived well into the era of sound recording - almost all country singers had it in their repertoire and there are 74 sound recordings, almost all from central and southern England. Most versions stick pretty close to Catnatch's broadside text, first printed around 1820.
Other available CD versions include: Ralph Noble (MTCD406-7); Nelson Ridley (MTVD254); Bill Smith (MTCD351); May Bradley (MTCD349); Bob Hart (MTCD301-2); George Townshend (MTCD304-5); Jeff Wesley (Veteran VTC4CD); and Fred Jordan (Topic TSCD655).

14. **Barbara Allen** (Roud 54)
Recorded by Tony Wales 1961

It was in the merry month of May,
When flowers were all a-blooming,
A young man on his death-bed lay
For the love of Barbara Allen, Allen,
For the love of Barbara Sllen.

He sent his fellow servant man
To the place where she was dwelling,
He said, "You must come to my master's house
If your name is Barbara Allen, Allen,
If your name is Barbara Allen,"

So quickly she put on her hat
And quickly she descended
And as she drew by his bedside,
She said "Young man, you're dying, dying
She said "Young man, you're dying."

"Oh don't say so when a kiss from you,
When a kiss from you will save me."
"A kiss from me you never shall have
If your cruel heart is a-breaking, breaking
If your cruel heart is a-breaking."

"Remember it was but the other day,
You were at the ale house drinking,
You offered a glass to all around,
But not to Barbara Allen, Allen
But not to Barbara Allen,"

"Look down, look down by my bedside,
You'll see a bowl there standing;
It's filled with blood that I shed for love
For the love of Barbara Allen, Allen,
For the love of Barbara Allen."

"Look up, look up by my bedside
You'll see a gold watch hanging;
Give that gold watch and that gold chain
To 'ard-'earted Barbara Allen, Allen,
To 'ard-'earted Barbara Allen,"

Oh, as she walked along the road
She heard the church bells tolling
And as they tolled they seemed to say
" 'ard-'earted Barbara Allen, Allen,
'ard-'earted Barbara Allen,"

"Oh, Mother, Mother, make my shroud,
Make it both long and narrow
For my true lover has died today,
And I must die tomorrow, morrow
And I must die tomorrow"

They both were buried in the same churchyard,
They were both buried close together,
And out of him there grew a rose
And out of her sweet briar, briar
And out of her sweet briar

They grew, they grew to the church steeple top
'Til they could grow no higher,
And there entwined in a true lover's knot
For all true lovers to admire, mire,
For all true lovers to admire.

This is the most widely-known ballad I've yet encountered in Steve Roud's *Folksong Index*, with an astonishing 1,439 instances (including 429 sound recordings) listed there. Needless to say, it's found everywhere English is spoken - though Australia boasts only one version in the Index - and, very unusually, there's even one from Wales ... although it comes from Phil

Tanner in that 'little England', the Gower Peninsula. And, I should add, George's is an unusually complete version.
The story, which *everyone* used to know, is simple enough: a young man is dying for the unrequited love of her. She refuses to save him, and so he dies. She, realising her guilt and cruelty, dies the following day ... and that's it. But that's not nearly enough for a Ballad, and so almost every version comes replete with padding, rarely with much narrative or literary weight. But Gypsies and Travellers seem rather fond of:

Look down, look down, at my bed foot;
it's there you'll see them hanging.
Bloody shirt and bloody sheets
I've sweat for Barbara Allen.

Less dramatic is a couplet I've always liked:

'Twas him that died on one good day, 'twas she died on the morrow.
'Twas he that died for love, and she that died for sorrow.

But many versions also have a 2-verse finale, that appears to have floated in from *Lord Lovell* or a couple of other ballads that feature it:

She was buried in the old church yard, and he was laid beside her.
Out of her grew a red, red rose, and out of him, sweet briar.
They grew and they grew up the old church wall, 'til they could grow no higher.
And there they formed a true-lovers' knot - and the rose embraced the briar'.

What better ending for a good story - emotional release and some decent poetry?

Lots of great versions can be found on CD these days, including: Sam Larner (MTCD369-0); Caroline Hughes (MTCD365-6); Cecilia Costello (MTCD363-4); Sarah Makem (MTCD353-5); Bob Hart (MTCD301-2), Wiggy Smith (MTCD307); Bill Smith (MTCD351); Jim Wilson (MTCD309-0); Patsy Flynn (MTCD329-0); Stanley Hicks (MTCD501-2); both Debbie & Pennie Davies and Danny Brazil (MTCD345-7); Andy Cash (MTCD325-6); Phoebe Smith (VT136CD); Jane Turriff (Springthyme SPRCD1038) and a compilation of a verse or two each from Fred Jordan, Jessie Murray, Charlie Wills, May Bennell, Thomas Moran and Phil Tanner on *Classic Ballads II* (Rounder CD1775). Joe Heaney also sings it brilliantly on the MT/Topic/CIC double CD *The Road from Connemara* (TSCD518D).

15. **I Traced Her Little Footprints in the Snow** (Roud 2660)
Recorded by Keith Summers 1960s

I called to see the girl I love one winter's afternoon,
They said she'd gone out walking for to meet me very soon,
They said she'd strolled away, but could not tell me where,
So I started off to find her in the snow.

Chorus;
I traced the little footprints in the snow, don't you know,
I traced her little footprints in the snow
I bless the winter's day when Nellie lost her way
I traced her little footprints in the snow.

I traced her little footprints there outside her cottage door
I traced her down a country lane and traced her to the moor
I thought she'd lost her way, she stood in blank dismay,
Not knowing where to go to in the snow.

Ch:

Oh, I saw her and she saw me as we were walking home,
She promised never more without me she would roam.
I'm happy now for ever for she became my wife
Whose footprints I saw plainly in the snow.

Ch:

Not a very popular song in England (6 Roud examples) - unsurprising, as it's an American song. Apart from George, only Walter Pardon and Frank Hinchliffe are known to have sung it here.

One of the classic Bill Monroe songs of all time. Despite the fact that Bill claimed authorship under the pseudonym Rupert Jones, the song was much older. Bill learned it in the early 1930s when he was at the National Barn Dance in Chicago. But the author of this English music hall song was one Harry Wright who composed it in about 1880 under the title 'Footmarks in the Snow'.

16. **My Old Man** (*Our Goodman / Seven Nights Drunk*, Roud 114)
Recorded by Tony Wales, Horsham Festival Boys Club 29.7.61

Now my old man come home last night,
Come home last night did he.
Straightway into the stable
And a strange horse there he see
"Whose horse is this? Whose horse is that?
Whosever can it be?"
"Oh don't you know it's a milking cow
That Grandma sent to me?"
"Miles have I travelled, ten thousand miles or more
But a milking cow with harness on
I never have seen before."

My old man come home last night
Come home last night did he
Straightway into the boot room
A strange pair of boot he see
"Whose boots are these? Whose boots are they?
Whose ever can they be?"
"Oh don't you know they're milking pails
That Grandma sent to me?"
"Miles have I travelled, ten thousand miles or more
But milking pails with laces in
I never have seen before."

My old man come home last night
Come home last night did he
Straightway into the parlour
And a strange face there he see.
"Whose face is this? Whose face is that?
Whose ever can it be?"
"Oh don't you know it's a baby's face
That Grandma sent to me?"
"Miles have I travelled, ten thousand miles or more
But a baby's face with whiskers on
I never have seen before."

A popular song - 453 Roud entries - exactly half of which come from the USA; most of the rest are from England. Versions of this well-known ballad are found all over Europe. The story seems simple enough. A man returns home to find another man's horse, dog, boots etc, where his own should be. There follows a formulaic exchange between the man and his wife, who explains that her husband's eyes are deceiving him, and the story usually ends without rancour, revenge or remorse. It's a bit of a joke, to be sung in the pub on a Saturday night, although George Spicer's version ends with the spoken comment, "I stayed home Saturday night!" And yet, there seems to be something unsaid. A L Lloyd, quoting the Hungarian folklorist Lajos Vargyas, mentions a possible connection between this ballad and one from Hungary, *Barcsai* (which has parallel versions in the Balkans, France and Spain). Here a couple are caught in an adulterous act by a returning husband, who promptly kills both his rival and his wife. There are even Mongol versions of *Barcsai*, so who can say where the story really came from?

Other recordings: Fred Welfare (MTCD372); Alice Francombe (MTCD331); George Spicer (TSCD663); Blind Boy Fuller (MTCD516); Mabs Hall (VT115CD); Harry Cox (Norfolk), Mary O'Connors (Belfast) & Colm Keane (Galway) - Rounder CD 1776. Dr David Rosenbaum (Indiana) - Dust-to-Digital DTD 08. Vern Smelser (Indiana) - Dust-to-Digital DTD 12. Mainer Family (North Carolina) - Rounder CD 1701. Blind Lemon Jefferson (Texas) - JSP 7706D.

17. **Never No More for Me** (*The Countryman's Holiday*, Roud 22772)
Recorded by Jim Ward, The Wheatsheaf, Marsh Green, 20.6.74

I've heard such a lot of the wondrous seaside;
I made up me mind I'd go down by the tide.
I started away with a few bob to spend
And went to the station to book to Southend.
But never no more for me,
I put down a sovereign, you see.
They said 'change at Tilbury' and straight I did swear,
When I get to Tilbury, me change isn't there,
So never no more for me.

We gets to Southend and goes up a side street
Then pops in a cook-shop for something to eat
They charged five and six for a small piece of cheese
A strip of linoleum, a spud and some peas
So never no more for me

The cheese came and jumped on my knee
The meat was so small they brought out on a tray
A draught from the door came nd blew it away
So never no more for me

I saw married couples, there spending weekends
All bathing together as if they were friends;
One damsel I saw was so bony and lean
She'd scraped all the paint off the bathing machine.
But never no more for me
My wife she weighs twenty stone three.
She frightened the fish when she bobbed up and down,
And nearly got summonsed for flooding the town,
So never no more for me.

The lodgings we got was ten miles from the shore
With a kind of a loft on the very top floor
The bedstead was one of them crazy concerns
To sleep on the feather we took it in turns.
But never no more for me
I've said my goodbye to the sea.
I jumped in the train and the kids they did roar
They laughed 'cos me whiskers got shut in the door
So never no more for me.

Astonishingly, a Keith Summers recording of George Belton singing this song is the *only* entry in Roud's *Folksong Index*. The song was recorded by Ben Lawes on Edison Bell's 'Winner' label no. 2139 in 1912, probably the same year as publication. Other recordings were made by Harry Rodgers and Harry Fay (as Ben Ashton). The second verse on these early recordings is not used by George.

18. **The Banks of Sweet Primroses** (Roud 586)
Recorded by Tony Wales 1961

As I walked out one midsummer's morning
A-viewing the meadows and to take the air,
Down by the banks of sweet primaroses
There I beheld a most lovely fair.

With three long steps I stepped up to her
Not knowing her as she passed me by,
I stepped up to her, thinking to view her;
She appeared to me like some virtuous bride.

I said, "Fair maid, where are you going?
Or what's the reason for all your grief?
I can make you as happy as any lady
If you will grant me one small relief."

"Stand off, stand off, you are deceitful,
You are deceitful, young man, 'tis plain.
It's you that's caused my poor heart for to wander,
And to give me comfort it's all in vain."

I'll take thee down to some lonesome valley
Where no man on earth there can e'er me tell,
Where the pretty birds have all changed their voices
And every moment their notes do swell.

So come all you young men that go a-courting
Pray give attention to what I say.
For there's is many a dark and a cloudy morning
Turns out to be a sunshiny day.

Despite having 271 Roud entries, this lovely song seems almost unknown outside England - just two Canadian, one Australian, two Scottish and one Welsh entries. There are 64 sound recordings listed, from Devon to Yorkshire, with Sussex being the most numerous county. It was widely printed on broadsides and in books.

Other versions available on CD: Bob Copper (MTCD374); Caroline Hughes (MTCD365-6); Nelson Ridley (MTCD254); Bob Hart (MTCD301-2); Pop Maynard (MTCD401-2); Rebecca Penfold (TSCD672D); The Copper Family (TSCD534 and TSCD600); Fred Jordan (EFDSS CD 002); Phil Tanner (TSCD651 and Rounder CD1741); Ray Driscoll (Artesion CD 703); Harry Green (VT135CD).

19. **The Rest of the Day is Your Own** (Roud 1485)
Recorded by Keith Summers 1960s

One day when I was out of work
A job I went to seek
To be a farmer's boy.
At last I found an easy job
At half a crown a week,
To be a farmer's boy.
The farmer said "I think I got
The very job for you
Your duties will be light and this
Is all you'll have to do ...

Rise at three, every morn
Milk the cow with the crumpled horn
Feed the pig, clean the sty
Teach the pigeons the way to fly
Plough the field, mow the hay
Help the cocks and hens to lay
Sow the seeds, tend the crops
Chase the flies from the turnip tops
Clean the knives, black the shoes
Dust the kitchen and sweep the flues
Help the Wife, wash the pots
Grow the cabbages and car-rots
Make the beds, dust the coal,
Tune the gramophone
Then, if there's no more work to do
The rest of the day is your own."

I scratched me head and thought it would
Be absolutely prime
To be a farmer's boy.
The farmer said "Of course, you'll have
To do some overtime
When you're a farmer's boy."
"The duties I have given you,
You'll be quickly through
So I've been thinking of a few more
Things that you can do ...

Skim the milk, make the cheese
Chop the meat for the sausage-ees
Bath the kids, mend their clothes
Use your dial to scare the crows
In the milk, put the chalk
Shave the knuckles of pickled pork
Shoe the horse, rake the coal,
Take the cat for his midnight stroll
Cook the food, scrub the stairs
Teach the parrot to say his prayers
Roast the joint, bake the bread,
Shake the feathers up in the bed
When the Wife's got the gout
Rub her funny bone
And if there's no more work to do
The rest of the day is your own
I thought it seemed a shame to take
The money, you can bet,
To be a farmer's boy
And so I wrote me duties down
In case I should forget
I was a farmer's boy
It took all night to write them down
I didn't go to bed
But somehow I've got all mixed up
And this is how it read ...

Rise at three, every morn
Milk the hen with the crumpled horn
Scrub the Wife every day
Teach the nanny-goat how to lay
Shave the cat, ??? the cheese
Fix the sights on the sausage-ees
Bath the pigs, break the pots
Boil the kids with a few car-rots
Boots and shoes, black with chalk
Shave the ears on the pickled pork ...
All the rest I've forgot
Somehow it has flown
But I got the sack this morning so -
The rest of my life is my own.

Apart from sightings in Yorkshire and Northants, this song seems to be almost unique to Sussex, and to one singer at that, Cyril Phillips

(MTCD309-0), and aside from Cyril and George Belton, there are only two other named singers among Roud's 12 entries. Cyril considered this "the oldest song in my repertoire ... a song about a boy working on a farm. A man named Kemp Scott used to sing it at the village smoking concerts in the twenties. He was a good entertainer and I remember him from Eastbourne."

Of course, it's not old at all - as usually seems to be the case when a singer says something of this sort. It was written in 1915 by David & Long, and sung on the halls and recorded by Jack Lane - which is probably where Kemp Scott heard it ... Jack Lane recorded this song on Regal-G7032 in 1915, but only two verses. Cyril's and George's versions are almost exactly the same as the sheet-music. The other side of Jack's record is *Oh, Dear, What Can the Matter Be?*

20. **The Soldier's Prayer** (*A Soldier and a Sailor* / *The Topman and the Afterguard*, Roud 350)
Recorded by Tony Wales 1961

A soldier and a sailor were a-walking one day
Said the soldier to the sailor "I've a mind for to pray".
Said the sailor to the soldier "You pray away, then
And all that you pray for I'll answer amen"

"Now the first thing we'll pray is lots of good beer,
That we may have plenty to give us good cheer,
And for each pint we now have, may we have ten
And we'll always be happy".Said the sailor "Amen".

"The next thing we'll pray for is lots of good baccy,
That we may have plenty to make us both happy,
And for each pipe we now have, may we have ten,
And we'll always be happy"Said the sailor "Amen".

"The next thing we'll pray for will be for our wives
That we may live happy the rest of our lives,
And for each kiss we now have, may we have ten.
And we'll always be happy"Said the sailor "Amen".

"The next thing we'll pray for will be when we die
That we may be carried unto the blue sky,
And when you and I will we meet up in heaven
With our wives, beer and bacay."Said the sailor "Amen".

An unusual variant of *The Topman and the Afterguard*, of which George could unfortunately remember no more - it's the well-known soldier-sailor dialogue song. Roy Palmer collected a forces' version from a Mr Mays in nearby Warwickshire just a year before recording George Dunn. Roud has 78 examples, and almost half of these are sound recordings - although, sadly, only three are available on CD: George Dunn (MTCD317-8); Walter Pardon (VTC5CD); Harry Cox (Rounder CD 1839).

Cecil Sharp had a version originally learned from a singer born in 1779, and believed that the song derived from *The Mare and Foal*, (*Sharp,* ed. M Karpeles (1974), no.276).

21. **The Sussex Toast** (*Good Companions*, Roud 885)
Recorded by Jim Ward, The Wheatsheaf, Marsh Green, 20.6.74

I have drank one and I will drink two
There's sits one who drank as much as you
For he's been and done as the rest have done
Him and his good companions

I have drank two and I will drink three
There's sits one who drank as much as me
For he's been and done as the rest have done
Him and his good companions

I have drank three and I will drink four
There sits one who'll drink double me score
For he's been and done as the rest have done
Him and his good companions

I have drank four and I will drink five
There sits one who'll drink with anybody alive
For he's been and done as the rest have done
Him and his good companions

I have drank five and I will drink six
There sits one in a very good fix
For she's been and done as the rest have done
Her and his good companions

I have drank six and I will drink seven
There sits one thinks she going up to heaven
For she's been and done as the rest have done
Her and her good companions

I have drank seven and I will drink eight
There stands one who'll drink double his weight
For he's been and done as the rest have done
Him and his good companions

I have drank eight and I will drink nine
Here sits one who'll drink you all out of time
For he's been and done as the rest have done
Him and his good companions

I have drank nine and I will drink ten
And now I think it's my time to drink again
For I've been and done as the rest have done
Me and me good companions

A pretty rare song with just 8 entries in Roud - 5 of which refer to George Belton! The other named singers are Dicky Lashbrook (Devon) and George Noble (Herefordshire). It would seem that it was one of George's favorites since I had five different recordings of it from different venues to select from.

22. **The Old Rustic Bridge by the Mill** (Roud 3792)
Recorded by Vic Smith 1970s

I'm thinking tonight of the old rustic bridge
That bends o'er the murmuring stream.
'Twas there Maggie dear, with our hearts full of cheer,
We met 'neath the moon's gentle gleam.
'Twas there I first met you, the light in your eyes,
Awoke in my heart a sweet thrill.
It's now far away, still my thoughts fondly stray,
To the old rustic bridge by the mill.

Chorus:
Beneath it the streams gently ripple,
Around it the birds loved to trill
It's now far away still my thoughts fondly stray
To the old rustic bridge by the mill.

How often, dear Maggie, as years passed away,
And we plighted lovers became;
We travelled the path to the mill day by day,
The smiles of each other to gain.
But one day we parted in pain and regret,
Our vows then we could not fulfill;
Oh, may we soon meet and our fond love repeat,
By the old rustic bridge by the mill.

Ch:

I keep in my mem'ry the love of the past,
With me 'tis as bright as of old;
For deep in my heart it was planted to last,
In absence it never grows cold.
I think of you darling, when lonely at night,
And when all is peaceful and still;
My heart wanders back in a dream of delight,
To the old rustic bridge by the mill.

Ch:

Another music hall tear-jerker that everyone used to know, back in the day, written by American J P Skelly in 1881. Once again, not the sort of thing many collectors would be interested in - thus only 25 entries in Roud's Index. There are ten sound recordings, but none appear to have been published.

We recorded it from Scan Tester of Horsted Keynes in 1966/7, and Harry Cox, Walter Pardon, Frank Hinchliffe and Charlie Clissold knew it. George Townshend (MTCD304-5) has the only other CD publication.

23. **The Roving Navvy Man** (Roud 360)
Recorded by Tony Wales 1961

I am a roving navvy man
I tramp from town to town
And when I get a job of work
I'm willing to set down
With me pack all on me shoulder,
And shovel all in me hand,
And around the country I will go
As a roving navvy man.

And when I come to London Town
The girls all jumped for joy;
One said unto another one,
"Here comes a navvy boy."
One held to me a bottle
And the other proposed a dram,
And the toast went round the table
"Here's good health to the navvy man."

I'd scarcely been in London Town
One night or two or three
When one of the publican's daughters,
She fell in love with me.
She took me to her father's house
And held me by the hand
And then she told her mother
That she loved a navvy man.

"Be off with thee, thou silly maid
And do not speak no more.
How can you love a navvy man
You've never seen before?"
"Oh dearest dearest mother
I'll do the best I can,
And around the country I will go
With me roving navvy man."

At first glance, this looks like a fairly well known song with 140 Roud entries, but half are from written sources, and the remainder from England, with a good number of Scottish, Irish, Canadian and American examples listed as well. It's more usually known as *The Roving Journeyman*, and probably reflects the large number of Irishmen employed in Britain helping to build the canals and railways - Navigators, or Navvies. They passed a huge number of Irish songs into the English country singers' repertoires, and took many English ones back home with them upon their return.

Roud shows 42 sound recordings, of which: Angela Brazil (MTCD345-7); Tom Willett (MTCD361-2); Danny Brazil (MTCD345-7); Mary Doran (TSCD 677T) are available on CD.

24. **Has Anybody Seen My Tiddler** (Roud 13330)
Recorded by Keith Summers 1960s

Now I've been a-fishing with the boys today,
In a little pond that's down our way.
I stood like so, and soon, you know,
I caught a little tiddler with a nice soft roe.
Oh, how he wiggled in me jam jar,
Tears in his eyes of blue,
But now I'm unhappy 'cos I've lost him,
So excuse me asking you ...

Has anybody seen my tiddler?
Tiddle-iddle-iddle-iddle-iddler?
I caught a little fish with a cotton and a pin;
Oh, how I laughed when I dragged him in.
But going home, oh dear-o,
That rude boy, Dickie Diddler,
He poked his finger in me galley-pot.
And he pinched my tiddler!
Soon another tiddler come and took my hook;
Young Dickie Diddler gave an envious look.
I said "Ah!" And he said "Yah!"
And tried to kick the bottom out of my jam jar.
I said "I'm gonna to tell your father"
He said "I don't care if you do."
And now he's bin and broke me jam jar,
And he's pinched my tidder, too.

Has anybody seen my tiddler?
Tiddle-iddle-iddle-iddle-iddler?
I caught a little fish with a cotton and a pin;
Oh how I laughed when I dragged him in.
But going home, oh dear-o,
That rude boy, Dickie Diddler,
He poked his finger in me galley-pot.
And he pinched my tiddler!

Written in 1910 by Carter and Mills, and sung on the Halls by Millie Payne. Beyond Jack Tarling in Suffolk, George is the only person known to have sung this song in the oral tradition.

25. **A Birthday Song** (*Strolling Round the Town*, Roud 13322)
Recorded by Jim Ward, The Wheatsheaf, Marsh Green, 20.6.74

Now a birthday comes but once a year
And it's everyone's delight
To keep it up, to keep it up
'Twas just the same, boys,
Yesterday with me
'Twas my birthday, y' know
And how the wine did flow
We all got so jolly and full of devilment
We left our darling wives at home
And arm in arm we went

Chorus:
Strolling round the town,
Knocking the people down,
Having a rare old time? you bet,
Tasting every kind of wet
And greeting all the girls,
We didn't care a sou,
A rare old, fair old rickety rackety roo.

We started drinking champagne
But the money wouldn't last
The forty bob I started with
Was withering up fast
And just as I counting up
Two charming ladies passed
They called me Charlie
Which ain't me proper name
Still I gave a wink,
Shouted "Have a drink"
They both said "Yes" and soon full up they got
We made them both as bad as us
And all the blooming lot went

Ch:

When we awoke this morning
We were leaning against the wall
To keep it up, to keep it up
Surrounded by a dozen police
Who came on duty's call
And as they shouted 'move on please',
We couldn't move at all.
From every station round about the town
An omnibus was fetched
And on it we were stretched.
Before our nibs next morning we were sent
They fined forty bob a piece
And just because we went

Ch:

Not a well-known song - Roud has only two entries, Cyril Poacher in Suffolk, and Jesse Neal in King's Stanley, Gloucestershire. Al Sealey told me that an informally organised 'pub circuit' of music hall gigs operated in East Anglia right up to the early 1930s, where second-string semi-pro performers would put on shows of their own songs, together with the popular hits. This might help to explain the large number of good, though not widely known, music-hall type songs still to be found in the area.

Cyril Poacher's daughter, Ursula Hixson, said: "My grandad Lewis Poacher lived with us for 12 years. He didn't sing much except on his birthday - he would sing *Strolling Round the Town* up at the Ship" - just as George Belton did!

A song of this title was written by Harry Castling, 1893, and sung by Charles Deane on the Halls. I fear I can't tell you any more about it - or where Lewis Poacher learned it - though the East Anglian music-hall pub

circuit, mentioned above, might be a likely contender. Where George Belton learned it is equally unknown.

Other recordings: Cyril Poacher (MTCD303).

26. **The Volunteer Organist** (Roud 5378)
Recorded by Vic Smith, BBC Radio Sussex studio, 4.11.71

A preacher in a village church
One Sunday morning said
"Our organist is ill today;
Will someone play instead?"
An anxious look crept o'er the face
Of every person there,
As eagerly they watched to see
Who'd fill that vacant chair.
An old man staggered up the aisle,
Whose clothes were old and torn
How strange a drunkard seemed to be
In church on Sunday morn
But as he touched the organ keys,
Without a single word;
The melody that followed
Was the sweetest ever heard.

Chorus:
The scene was one I'll ne'er forget
As long as I may live
And just to see it o'er again,
All earthly wealth I'd give
The congregation all amazed,
The preacher old and grey,
The organ and the oganist
Who volunteered to play.

Each eye shed tears within that church,
The strongest men grew pale.
The organist, in melody,
Had told his own life's tale.
And when the service ended
Not a soul had left their seat
Except the poor old organist,
Who started for the street.
Along the aisle and out the door
He slowly walked away
The preacher rose and softly said
"Good brethren, let us pray."

Ch:

Written by W B Gray (words) and Henry Lamb (music) in 1863, and sung on the halls by its lyricist, who worked under the name of William Glenroy. It would appear from Roud that this song was little taken-up by the tradition, since there are only 42 entries and a number of these are duplicates (from books, collections and recordings). All the earlier entries, in the 1920s, are from Canada and the USA. In England it's been found mainly in Suffolk; John Howson heard it from Charlie Hancy in Bungay and Ginette Dunn found four singers in Snape and Blaxhall who knew it - and I have a feeling that Bob Hart did as well. Few examples are noted from outside this area - and George Spicer's version was the only other one collected in the entire South East before this George Belton recording came to light. However, I'm pretty sure I've heard it from a number of other singers over the years ... Alf Wildman and Albert Shaw come to mind ... and Keith Chandler tells me that he has recordings - made at festivals - of Stanley Marsden (Yorkshire) and Freda Palmer (Oxon) singing it.

Other recordings: George Spicer (MTCD309-0); Fred Jordan (VTD 148CD); Charlie Hancy (VTC7CD).

27. **Time Gentlemen Please** & **Toast** (Roud 31537)
Recorded by Jim Ward, The Wheatsheaf, Marsh Green, 20.6.74

Now you all know what it is to get
A drop too much at night
And while strolling home you'll wonder if
Your wife will know you're tight
But come on, boys,
Let's have one more,
Let's toss to see who pays
And as we enter at the door
The barman loudly says

Chorus:
It's time, gentlemen please, Gents
Time, gentlemen please
Mind the stepthere, goodnight
Go along, you're alright
But it's time, gentlemen please

My chums who used to tell to me
And kid that I could fight
And like a mug I took it in
But them, they were not right
I once went boxing for a cup,
I thought I'd win no doubt
But scarcely had I put 'em up
When something made me shout
Time, gentlemen please
Time, gentlemen please
How could I but weep
I had something to keep
He landed me one that put me to sleep
Oh, look at me boko,
Oh, see how it bleeds
So give him the cup and I'll pack it up
For it's time, gentlemen please

Some time ago I went away
A holiday I sought
When I come back my chums all said
"What makes your hair so short?"
It's time, gentlemen please
Time, gentlemen please
For I do declare I sit down in a chair
They got out their scissors and cut off me hair
It's past parliament time, gents,
With them being so handy with ease
They cut off my curls, all my beautiful curls,
For doing 'time gentlemen please'.

Another song on this CD for which Steve Roud has had to allocate a new number - so we know nothing about it, except that it is familiar to both of us!

Credits:

Firstly I should say that this lovely CD owes its very existence to **Mike Yates**. I was at his house taking back some CDs, and we were chatting of other matters over a cup of coffee, when he said that he was surprised that I'd not done a CD of George Belton, as the Roud Index seemed to have quite a lot of songs from him listed. When I got home, I had a look - and it seemed that there were, indeed, about 30 of George's songs in evidence, from several sources. I got in contact with those of them for whom I had contact details, and Jim Ward and Vic Smith sent me virtually everything that appears on this CD and in its booklet. As follows:

Vic Smith - who, as well as supplying a substantial number of his own recordings, also supplied several articles on George Belton, and transcripts of his conversations with Mary Aitchison, editor of the *Plum Heavy* magazine, which ran (quarterly) from 1972 - 1974, where they were originally published. These make up most of the booklet's biographical section.
Jim Ward - who, as well as a substantial number of his own recordings, supplied many made by the late **Tony Wales**.

Sean Goddard - who bought Tony Wales' recordings and got Jim Ward to digitise them - and gave us permission to use them here.

The late **Keith Summers** - who seems to have made many more recordings of country singers, beyond his well-known collections in Suffolk and Fermanagh, than I had realised.

None of them have ever asked for any reward beyond the knowledge that the singers and players they recorded are available to the small audience which values them, and a free copy of the resulting CDs. Much the same applies to all the other collectors with whom I've worked down the years. Without them, these CDs would never have existed ... and it goes without saying that without the assistance of countless other collaborators over the years, few of our 110+ CD and CD-ROM publications would have ever been possible.

I should also thank **Steve Roud**, for providing me with copies of his

wonderful *Folk Song* and *Broadside Indexes*, without which many of my Song Notes would certainly never exist.

Neither should anyone forget **Danny Stradling**'s exemplary song transcriptions and proof-reading, the subject of much praise from numerous reviewers down the years.

Booklet: song notes, editing, DTP, printing
CD: formatting, production
by Rod Stradling

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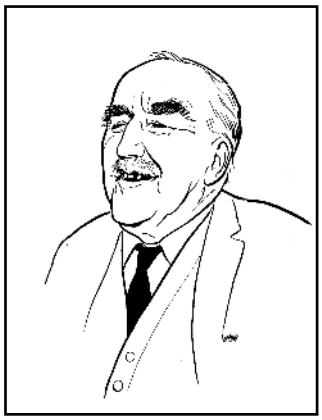
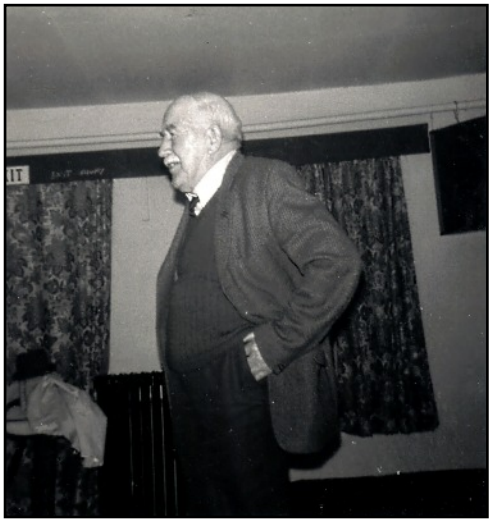
Cover picture from EFDSS LP

George in his garden, from Clive Bennett's book *Sussex Folk*.



George Belton line drawing in Plum Heavy, artist unknown.



George Belton singing at the Coppersongs folk club in Peacehaven in November 1971 photo by Vic Smith

Bob Lewis, Bob Blake and George Belton at Lewes Arms folk club, Lewes early 1970s - photo