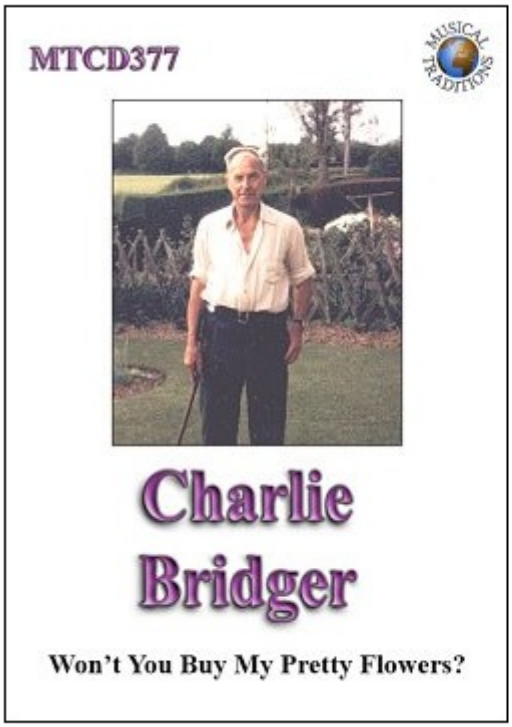
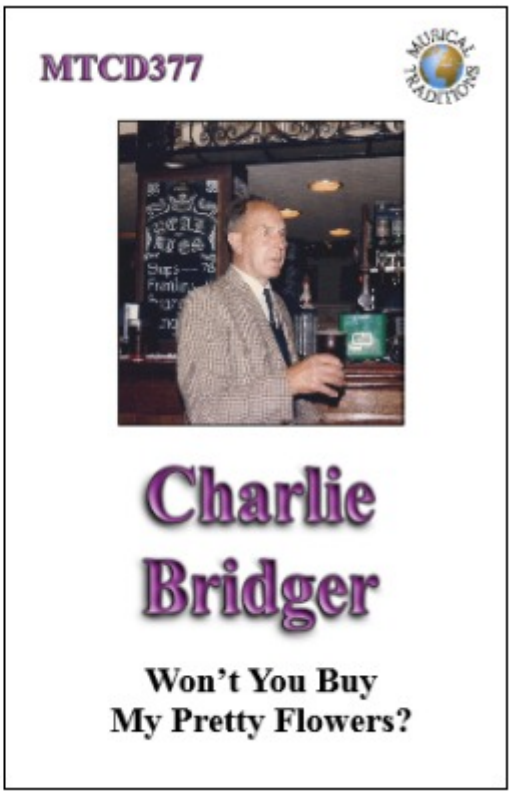
# Charlie Bridger

## *Won't You Buy My Pretty Flowers?*

## MTCD377




| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | *Three Maidens a-Milking Did Go* | 3:00 |
| 2 | *I'll Take you Home Again, Kathleen* | 3:39 |
| 3 | *Won't you Buy my Pretty Flowers?* | 3:06 |
| 4 | *Where is my Wandering Boy Tonight?* | 2:01 |
| 5 | *Three Cheers for the Red, White and Blue* | 2:49 |
| 6 | *The Folkestone Murder* | 5:23 |
| 7 | *When You and I were Young, Maggie* | 3:06 |
| 8 | *The Mistletoe Bough* | 3:29 |
| 9 | *The Birds Upon the Tree* | 2:17 |
| 10 | *Wait 'til the Clouds Roll by, Jenny* | 2:50 |
| 11 | *Playing on the Old Banjo* | 2:47 |
| 12 | *O Who Will o'er the Downs so free?* | 2:27 |
| 13 | *The Veteran* | 2:44 |
| 14 | *In the Spring Time* | 0:45 |
| 15 | *Old Farmer Giles* | 2:36 |
| 16 | *A Boy's Best Friend is His Mother* | 2:47 |
| 17 | *The Brave Ploughboy* | 0:56 |
| 18 | *Little by Little, and Bit by Bit* | 2:41 |
| 19 | *The Gypsy's Warning* | 3:33 |
| 20 | *Your Own True Sailor Boy* | 3:33 |
| 21 | *The Zulu War* | 4:42 |
| 22 | *That Old Fashioned Mother of Mine* | 2:32 |
| 23 | *The Ship that Never Returned* | 3:00 |
| 24 | *Good Old Jeff* | 1:53 |
| 25 | *That's How you get Served when You're Old* | 3:42 |
| 26 | *The Jolly Waggoner* | 4:18 |
| 27 | *Trafalgar Bay* | 1:17 |
| 28 | *Jenny Lind Polka* | 1:26 |
| | **Total:** | **80:00** |

**Charlie Bridger 9.7.13 - ?.11.88**

Andy Turner writes:

I first became interested in folk music as a 15 year old, after seeing Steeleye Span on Top of the Pops. Soon I was, as a friend puts it, 'hoovering up' all the folk I could find. In this I was fortunate to have access to the resources of my local public library. There was just a handful of printed folk song collections, but several racks of LP records. I don't know if the librarian responsible for the music collection had an interest in folk, or if they were just ordering at random from the Topic, Trailer and Transatlantic catalogues. Either way, they introduced me not only to most of the key figures in the 1970s folk revival, but to a wide range of traditional performers, including Harry Cox, Jeannie Robertson, Walter Pardon and George Maynard. Hungry to learn new songs, at first I regarded these people very much as 'source singers', but over time I came to recognise and appreciate them as performers in their own right.

Based on the books and records I had access to, it seemed that most traditional English singers came from Sussex, the West country, East Anglia, Shropshire, Bedfordshire… but never my own home county of Kent. However I was given a copy of Maud Karpeles' *The Crystal Spring* as an eighteenth birthday present, and was delighted to find that it contained a song collected from a Mr James Beale, in the nearby village of Warehorne. I'd come to know Warehorne quite well. It's a small village about 7 miles from Ashford, where I'd been born and brought up. Thirty years earlier, my Mum had had her first teaching job in the Warehorne village school. More recently, I'd been introduced to the delights of country dancing in the village hall and, along with several of my friends, was now a regular at the Oyster Ceilidh Band dances which took place there every couple of months or so. The village also hosted a folk club, pub sessions, and various other musical events. To come across a song collected close to home, in a place I knew, was quite exciting, and I began to wonder what other songs might have been collected locally.

It was probably another couple of years before I did anything to pursue this line of enquiry, but on my first visit to the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library my main aim was to see what else had been collected from James Beale, or from singers elsewhere in Kent. It would be a different story today, thanks to further research (I'm thinking particularly of Francis Collinson's Kentish collection) and the improved search facilities afforded by computerised records. At the time, having to rely on various card catalogues, Malcolm Taylor wasn't able to provide me with a tremendous amount of material. But still, I came home very happy, with printed copies of fourteen songs collected by Cecil Sharp in Warehorne and neighbouring villages in 1908 and 1911, and having listened to BBC recordings made in the 1950s by Peter Kennedy, of Albert Beale and Charlie Scamp.

Most of the 1908 crop of songs noted by Sharp came from the 72 year old James Beale, whose *Baffled Knight / Stroll Away the Morning Dew* was the one I'd found in *The Crystal Spring*. From my visit to the VWML I had ascertained, I think, that Alice Harding (or Harden), from whom Sharp had noted a couple of carols in 1911, was James Beale's daughter, and the Albert Beale recorded by Peter Kennedy in Kenardington (the next village along) was his son. In the summer of 1982, having finished my time at university, I found myself working for a year living and working back in Ashford. I determined to see if I could track down any members of the Beale family still living in the area and, who knows, maybe I'd discover that the family singing tradition had survived.

I was working in Ashford public library and it was a simple task one lunchtime to scan the Kenardington electoral roll looking for Beales. I soon found a Mr C Beale living at 22 The Wish, Kenardington, and wrote him a letter explaining my interest. A few days later I had a phone call back from Mr Charles Beale saying that, yes, he was Albert Beale's son, and inviting me to visit him that Sunday afternoon. Over the course of several visits Charles Beale provided me with a great deal of useful information about his family history, and his father's music-making. Disappointingly, none of his generation had carried the singing forward. Nevertheless, when asked if he could think of any of his contemporaries outside the family who might know some of the old songs, he immediately suggested someone with whom he'd been at primary school, Charlie Bridger. Whilst no longer in regular contact with him, Charles was pretty sure that Charlie was still living at Stone-in-Oxney, another small village, about four miles away. Again, it didn't take long to locate Charlie Bridger at an address in The Street, Stone-in-Oxney, in the electoral register. Again a letter was dispatched. And again, I received a phone call in return - from a call box, as the Bridgers didn't have a house phone - inviting me to pay them a visit.

My first visit to Stone-in-Oxney must have been one evening in early April 1983 and, as on many subsequent occasions, I was made very welcome by Charlie and his wife Lily. Not wishing to seem too pushy, I didn't take my bulky tape recorder with me, but I needn't have worried - Charlie was only too keen to have his songs recorded for posterity, and in fact had written out the words of eight songs in neat copperplate handwriting, on sheets of foolscap. These were:

Three Maidens a-Milking did go
The Zulu War
That's how you get served when you're old
Little by little, and bit by bit
The Birds upon the Tree
The Folkestone Murder
The Veteran
A Boy's best friend is his mother

I arranged to make a return visit, this time with a tape recorder. I went back on 15th April 1983, accompanied by my friend Adrian Russell, who shared my enthusiasm for traditional singing and who, like Charlie, had family connections with the village of Woodchurch.

Over the course of the evening I recorded just over 2 hours of singing and conversation. I knew that I really ought to keep the tape rolling the whole time, but Charlie insisted I was "wasting tape", and as he was more assertive than my 22 year-old self, I felt obliged to press the Pause button from time to time - and, as is apparent from some of the tracks here, was occasionally slightly late in starting to record again.

Charlie began by singing the eight songs which he had previously written out for me - with one other inserted in the sequence, namely *The Ship that never returned* ("That's one of my favourites that one"). Over the course of about 3 hours, and a few bottles of Guinness, Charlie sang 29 songs, and played one dance tune on his clarinet. Although he kept his handwritten lyric sheets to hand, for the most part these were an unnecessary prompt and he sang from memory. About a third of the total - and certainly the last 9 songs on my tape - were sung reading the words from various printed song books and song sheets.

The full list, in order, was as follows:

*1. Three Maidens a-Milking Did Go*
*2. The Zulu War*
*3. That's how you get served when you're old*
*4. Little by little, and bit by bit*
*5. The Ship that never returned*
*6. The Birds Upon the Tree*
*7. The Folkestone Murder*
*8. The Veteran*
*9. A Boy's best friend is his mother*
*10. Where is my wandering boy tonight?*
*11. The Farmer's Boy*
*12. The Jolly Waggoner*
*13. Buttercup Joe*

*14. Old Farmer Giles*
*15. Silver Moon*
*16. The Brave Ploughboy*
*17. One bitter night in winter (Faithful Sailor)*
*18. When you and I were young, Maggie*
*19. The Death of Nelson*
*20. Wait till the clouds roll by (v 1 and 2)*
*21. The Gipsy's Warning*
*22. Wait till the clouds roll by (verse 3)*
*23. Jenny Lind (on clarinet)*
*24. The Mistletoe Bough*
*25. Won't you buy my pretty Flowers*
*26. Old fashioned Mother of mine*
*27. Playing on the old banjo*
*28. O who will o'er the Downs so free?*
*29. Three cheers for the Red, White and Blue*
*30. I'll take you home again, Kathleen*
*31. Good Old Jeff*

I made many more visits down to Stone-in-Oxney, but never recorded Charlie singing again. However, about a year later, on another trip to the VWML, Malcolm Taylor introduced me to Mike Yates. I was very aware that my recording kit was well below par, so suggested that, if Charlie were agreeable, Mike should come down to Kent and make some decent recordings. A visit was quickly arranged, and in a fairly short recording session in April 1984, Mike recorded half a dozen of Charlie's songs. These have subsequently appeared on releases by Musical Traditions and Veteran.

Charlie and Lily were both regulars at The Crown, a pub which was, in more than one sense, at the centre of the village. Over the next few years I organised the occasional session in the pub. Charlie very much enjoyed hearing others sing and play tunes, and when he sang, he absolutely revelled in being the centre of attention. And, of course, I was keen for Charlie to be heard by others with an interest in traditional song. John Heydon invited Charlie to perform at the 1985 National Folk Music Festival at Sutton Bonington - indeed Charlie's name was on the advance publicity - but in the event ill health after an angina attack meant that he was unable to make the journey. He did make it to the English Country Music Weekend which was held at Frittenden in Kent, in the summer of 1986, and sang in a concert in the village hall on the Sunday afternoon.

I moved away from Kent in 1987, and saw Charlie just once after that. On a visit in July 1988, with my wife-to-be Carol, I recorded 45 minutes of conversation about his life and involvement with music. Charlie's health had been in decline for some years, and I was sad, but not surprised, to hear of his death later that year, in November 1988. I was rather touched to be left Charlie's collection of song books and sheet music (the *News-Chronicle Song Book*, *Francis & Day's Community Song Albums* and others of a similar nature) in his will.

I stayed in touch with Lily Bridger after Charlie's death, via Christmas cards and the odd letter, but did not see her again. However, not long after I moved away from Kent, George Frampton moved into the county and set about researching its customs and vernacular music-making practices. I put him in touch with Lily, and in July 1993 George interviewed her, plus Harry Bush the landlord of The Crown, and another regular in the pub, Len Hamilton. George also corresponded by letter with Charles Beale, and was assiduous in his researches in the County Council's Centre for Kentish Studies at Maidstone. Some of the fruits of George's research appeared at the time as articles in the local history magazine *Bygone Kent*. In preparing this CD, George has generously shared all of his notes with me, for which I am extremely grateful, as he was able to uncover a great deal of information which had passed me by while Charlie was alive.

Charlie was born Charles Albert Bridger on 9th July 1913, at Kenardington. His father, also Charles, had been born at Selling, Kent in 1883. In the 1891 census Charles senior, aged 8, was the second oldest of six siblings living at Warehorne with his father Thomas Reuben Bridger (1860-1939) and mother Annie (1861-1915, née Dorman). At the time of the 1911 Census he was still living with his parents in Kenardington, as a 28 year old General Labourer, but in September of that year he married Gertrude Mabel Bailey (born 1884) in St Mary's Church, Kenardington.

The family had lived in the Kenardington / Warehorne area for some decades at this point. Thomas's father John Bridger had been born at nearby Woodchurch c.1830 but was living in Kenardington by the time of the 1841 Census: John and his older brother Henry were born out of wedlock, but their mother Mary (1803-1883) had married Warehorne man John Baker (1806-1881) in 1832. The Bridger menfolk seem mostly to have worked as agricultural labourers. This description is applied to John, Thomas and Charles, although in the 1901 Census Thomas Bridger is recorded as 'Roadman Ord Agric Labourer', and as 'Road Foreman Disct Council' in 1911. As we shall see, Charlie's employment history did not stray very far from this path.

Charlie attended Warehorne Primary School, leaving at the age of fourteen to start work on the same Kenardington farm where his father worked:

> I've done all sorts of jobs. Went to work on a farm, in 1927, I was lucky to have a job at 10 shillings a week. That was the year after the General Strike and there was hardly any work about. It was worse than what it is now. There was ... a bloke (from Woodchurch) named Harry Dorman? Well he was a master bricklayer, and he was out of work and he was getting 11 shillings a week on the dole, and he'd got a family of four to feed. Lived in a council house at six and sixpence a week rent. And I got a job - he used to cut hair, at threepence a time - he said "You're better off than I am", he said - and I was too. I had a shilling a week pocket money and … she fed me and clothed me ... I worked at Place Farm, Kenardington, for a bloke named Tom Pearson, I was there for eight years (i.e. around 1933) and then I left and I went stone-breaking on the road. I broke the last lot of stone that came out the quarry for two shillings a cubic yard - that's a bit of stone, a cube of stone like that. A yard wide, a yard wide, and a yard high that way, for two shillings. Break it up into little bits like that - two inches. That's what they used to put on the roads.
>
> Just a little stone-hammer, a sledgehammer or a stone-hammer; proper stone-hammer, I still got 'em out in the lodge there now. Goggles - you had to wear goggles. No glass in 'em, 'cos no compensation if you had glass in 'em, they'd splinter you see. Just gauze. You had a little four pound sledgehammer to break bloody great lumps of rock up into that square and perhaps that thick. You wouldn't think a little hammer would break stone like that, but it did. That's the jar that done it. I broke one yard the first day I went - after that I got the hang of it then. I earnt more at that than I did - I averaged out forty-two shillings a week at that - and farm wages were thirty shillings a week. And I averaged out to forty-two shillings. That's how I first saw her (indicating Lily). She used to go biking up by, and (you) never used to see many people. I used to think: Cocky little bugger, don't say ... and I used to say “Good afternoon, miss”, and she never used to answer!

When George Frampton interviewed Lily Bridger she confirmed that, although she would see Charlie stone-breaking, she didn't speak to him at that point. They first met properly at a musical event in the village hall. In a letter to George she wrote:

> Funnily enough it was through him playing Hand bells and singing Country songs that I met him. My Mother organised a social evening and asked a man from Appledore to bring his team of Hand Bell ringers. Charlie was one of them. He also sang some of his songs.

One of those songs must have been *Buttercup Joe*. After singing it for me in 1983 Charlie said “That's for her benefit! (indicating Lily) That's how I met her through singing that”.

Lily - maiden name Gill - was born on Romney Marsh in 1912, and moved to Stone in 1920. She and Charlie were married in October 1938, and lived in the village for the rest of their life together. When the Second World War broke out Charlie tried to enlist with the Royal Air Force, but - according to Lily - was rejected for want of a Grammar School education. Besides, as an agricultural worker he was valuable on the Home Front. During the war years Charlie worked at a market garden, Asparagus Estates. George Frampton writes:

> Despite its name, Lily Bridger recalls that one of Charlie's more back-breaking jobs was to dig up parsnips in the grip of midwinter using a pick axe to break up the frozen ground. When not working, he served with the Home Guard, and only managed to see Lily at weekends. Their house was hit by a flying bomb whilst she was pregnant with their only child Christopher. Lily's sister at Appledore also had a bomb land ten yards from her front door.

After the war, Charlie did odd jobs, such as cutting out hay to build haystacks for Clarks of Lenham. In one stack, he found a nest of bees, which he smoked out at night-time 'whilst the bees were asleep'. He started work as a part-time gardener at Stone-in-Oxney in 1950, and when a new owner of the house concerned moved in, he extended Charlie's duties to include full-time work on his farm on Romney Marsh, from harvesting to sheep-shearing. During the last eleven years of his working life, he was employed with the Southern Water Authority, maintaining the banks of the Royal Military Canal.

For pretty much the whole of his life Charlie played in wind and brass bands. A photograph taken in the early 1920s shows Charlie, aged about 9, sitting cross-legged in uniform, holding his clarinet, at the front of the Tenterden Town Band. His father and grandfather were members of the same band, and are also in the photograph.

An earlier photograph again shows both Thomas and Charles Bridger senior, this time rather less formally attired, with fellow members of the Woodchurch Brass Band (all of the musicians in the photograph were manual labourers, and as Charlie put it "Old hobnailed boots, and bowler 'ats. Well they couldn't afford any other clothes"). The Bridgers did not live in Woodchurch, and on practice night walked the 3 miles or more over the fields from Kenardington, and then home again at the end of the evening.

The Woodchurch band appears to have been in existence by 1868 at the latest, and there was a long tradition of music-making in the Bridger family:

> My great grandfather … I never did know my great grandfather Bridger, he was a flute player, used to play in the old church orchestra (presumably St Mary's Church, Kenardington). They reckoned if he heard a piece of music once, he knew it. How true it was I don't know. I can't vouch for it 'cos, I say, I never knew him. That's what other people …
>
> My grandfather he bought a clarinet when he was 15 years old. And that was in 1879. And it cost him five pounds. And that was a lot of money. That was more than five weeks' wages - he never had a pound a week wages then. He had about twelve and six a week then … lucky if he got that. And yet, they used to pay for these things. Course they used to smoke as well, most of 'em. I know my father said, when they was kids he lived at Warehorne and the old parson there, they used to send him down all their used tea. To make tea with, after they'd finished with it. Yeah that's right.

While his grandfather learned to play by ear first, only later learning to read music, Charlie's father learned from a printed tutor or gamut:

> He taught himself to play the clarinet 'cos he had that gamut … Well it was a picture of a clarinet with all the keys on it and all the holes and all the different notes you can play, see. Called a gamut.
>
> My father taught me. He actually wrote me out a C scale for a start, then a G scale. I had to learn all that and then … I had an old flute tutor … and I had to learn the rest off that. Myself.
>
> My father started learning her (Charlie's sister) to play on the clarinet ... I started learning on the flute. But she never got on very well with it so my father put me on the clarinet and took me off the flute. One of the first bits of music I actually played was the William Tell *Galopede*.

Charlie remembered that the band would always go out busking on Boxing Day. Woodchurch man Reg Pellett (1893-1986) in his 'Some Old Memories of Woodchurch' wrote that:

> For about two weeks around Christmas, they (the band) used to play at the outlying farms, and then on Boxing Day play in the village ... The bandsmen got plenty of drinks given them, and they would let us (boys) have a sip out of their glasses. The band used to play on the Green on goal running nights and there were always quite a lot of people there.

He also tells of the reaction of a landlord at the Bonny Cravat in Woodchurch who, in his first Christmas season, found himself expected to provide largesse to the glee singers, bell ringers, and then the band: "First, there was the ringers, and then there was the singers, and then there was the bloody band! How many more?"

A great deal of alcohol could be consumed by the bandsmen over the Christmas period. One of Charlie's stories concerned a particularly boozy Boxing Day engagement at Henhurst, one of the big houses in the area:

> Went up Old Tommy Webb's. He promised us a pound, if we went up there. So we went up there and we was up there I don't know how many hours. And we had all the beer we wanted - I got four quart bottles in my pocket! When I come away they was pouring it on the flower beds and everything else. We never did have the pound …

One of the guests staying at the house - no doubt also somewhat the worse for drink - offered to take the drummer and his bass drum in his motor car. However they ended up in the ditch:

> The Woodchurch Band never went out any more after that!

That would have been around 1934. Certainly, according to Lily Bridger, both the Tenterden and Woodchurch bands had finished by the time she met Charlie in the late 1930s. After the War, however, he played with the Rye and Peasmarsh brass bands; then some time later joined the Cranbrook band. He played with them until ill health forced him to retire in 1984. Having stopped playing, Charlie gave away all of his instruments.

Charlie's early involvement with the Woodchurch Band introduced him to some of the songs which would later feature in his repertoire. Band members would retire to the pub after rehearsals and, although Charlie was officially too young to go in the pub, a quiet corner was found for him to sit in, and thus he heard any songs sung by the older men. In particular, Frank Samson (1870-1956) sang *Won't You Buy my Pretty Flowers*? and would play it on his tenor horn as he walked home through the cornfields. Or he'd play *The Mistletoe Bough* - a piece which is remembered as having been in the band's repertoire - on his way home. "Oh dear, he's drunk again!" was apparently his wife's reaction on hearing Frank's approach.

The sources of Charlie's other songs also tended to be a lot older than him. When I asked him if there were any other singers he knew of from his own generation, he replied “No - there's no singing much at all”.

Lily commented "Actually, you mixed with older people."

Charlie:

I did? Well, I used to go drinking with my uncle Harold and old Jesse Goodsall and old Jack Goodsall.

Lily:

Well, that's the thing you see, people ten years older than you ... mostly gone. I mean, a lot of 'em you mixed with, got those old songs from, they were a lot older than you.

Which Charlie couldn't really argue with, although - always liking to have the last word - he countered with "You didn't know who I mixed with!"

Over in Sussex, Bob and Ron Copper - roughly the same age as Charlie - found that their contemporaries were at best indifferent to the old family songs. It's quite likely that the same applied in rural Kent. Or it could simply be that Charlie felt at home with the older generation, and found that he shared their musical taste.

He learned several songs including *The Birds upon the Tree*, *The Ship that never returned* and *The Zulu War* from his great-uncle 'Nip' Bayley. 'Nip' worked in an oast, and Charlie would help him out at night:

That's right, he was the old hop-drier. He couldn't see very well; I used to go and level his hops for him, 'cause he couldn't … the old driers they had a chalk mark - red charcoal mark - round the roundel, you know, so if they had so many bags of hops, or so many pokes of hops, they knew that should come up to that certain mark, see, and he couldn't see that old mark (?) was dark, I remember an old storm lantern hanging up for a light in there. And I used to help the old boy with his hop-drying, of a night … that was Kenardington … on the corner; not the square ones, the single one right on the corner. High House Farm.

When asked if he was well known locally as a singer, Charlie replied:

No, he was known for singing The Birds upon the trees, that was all. He used to like a sing-song though, you know. Oh no, he was only known in Woodchurch really for his song The Birds upon the trees, that's what they always used to associate him with, for his singing. My old grandfather used to say "Come on Nip"; he used to get his cornet out, my old grandfather; old Nip used to sing, and he used to play. In the pub, this was.

Adrian Russell, whose parents hailed from Woodchurch, had exchanged a number of letters with the previously mentioned Reg Pellett between 1979 and 1981. Reg wrote out the words of a small number of songs which he remembered having been sung in Woodchurch in his youth. These included *The Dying Soldier*, *The Faithful Sailor Boy* and *The Birds upon the tree*. Of the latter, Reg said it used to be sung by a man called George Bayley, aka 'Old Nip', and “they did pull his leg over it”. 'Nip' was described by Reg Pellett as a “good all-round farm-hand, hop dryer, hedger and ditcher”, who once claimed that if he “could put his foot on two daisies, he could get a job”.

Charlie's statement that 'Nip' was only known for singing *The Birds upon the tree* is somewhat contradicted by the fact that he learned at least two other songs from him. Also:

There was another one he used to sing, but I never got that one off him. I only remember the chorus, and that was "Stick to your mother, Tom", and that was a nice one. But I never got that off him.

When I recorded Charlie singing *Three cheers for the red, white and blue* he said “Old Nip's brother used to sing that. Arthur Bayley.” A search of Ancestry.co.uk suggests that the brothers concerned might be Arthur Richard Bayley (1889-1976) and Edward George Bayley (1870-1937), whose surnames are spelled “Bailey” in some sources, and “Bayley” in others.

Another of Charlie's sources was Billy King, who taught him *Three Maidens a-Milking did go*:

I learnt that off an old man, old Billy King. I gave him a pint of beer. And you got it for nothing - 4d, that was a lot of money then. He taught me The Folkestone Murder too.
Where did he live? Well, he originally came from Woodchurch. A Woodchurch man. Don't think there's any Kings there now. He was only a little old short bloke.

When I interviewed Charlie in 1988 I asked him where he used to go to sing, and that led on to discussion of his involvement in other musical activities:

They used to have these smoking concerts at the old pub every so often, and you had to sing a song, say a recitation or stand a gallon of beer … yeah, if you didn't sing a song or say a recitation, you had to buy a gallon of beer. Well, you used to have a beery evening, you know, they called it a smoking concert, and, I know one old man, he only knew one song, well if you can call it a song, he used to sing:

I had a wheelbarrow and the front wheel went round
I had a wheelbarrow and the front wheel went round
I had a wheelbarrow and the front wheel was narrow
I had a wheelbarrow and the front wheel went round

And that used to get him out of buying a gallon of beer you see. That's all it was, that's all there was to it. It used to save him buying a gallon of beer though. And I mean, all these old boys, they had their own song, you know, and they didn't half use to get wild if somebody got up and sang their blinking song, 'cos they hadn't got another one, a lot of 'em. They used to say, well that's old so-and-so's song you know. I mean, they used to get really wild if you sang their song, 'cos they hadn't got another one.

*AT: So was that in the pubs in Woodchurch?*

In the pubs. Anywhere round the country, round about here, they used to have 'em. That was a regular old thing in the pub. Same sort of thing as a dart match really. 'Cos there wasn't the dart matches about, not that time like there is now. It was just a way of getting a few customers.

*AT: Was it all men?*

Oh, all men in the smoking concerts. Women didn't use to go in the pubs, not in them days, only in private really.

*AT: In smoking concerts, were there people of your age? Or were they older?*

A lot of 'em was older - old men, 70, 80, something like that some of 'em, real old men. Weren't no age limit.

*AT: I wondered whether they were mainly older people, or people of your generation who were learning the songs?*

They didn't used to go to learn the songs, they used to go to sing and get some free beer if somebody couldn't sing one.

*AT: When did that die out?*

Oh in the twenties, late twenties. I never known a smoking concert since the war. They gradually died out when people started going dancing, and playing darts, then more.

*Lily: They got more of these village halls - billiards and things like that.*

The wireless came too, and that stopped them going to the pub a lot of 'em when they had the radio. You see, never had the radio much until after the First World War, hardly anybody did until the twenties. I know old Beaney at Appledore, the old banker, he had a wireless set, and he was inviting everybody to go and listen to it. You had to have earphones, you know. I know we walked all the way from Kenardington over to Appledore just to listen to this bloody radio set! You had to have whatever there was on; you had about five minutes listening to it and then somebody else had a listen. Only got two sets of earphones. But people was happier then than what they are now. Made your own entertainment. Used to have village concerts, and everybody used to do some - well, I say everybody - most people, anybody that had got a bit of talent used to do something. I know my old father and me, we played - I got a little old Eb clarinet then and he'd got a Bb - and we played couple of tunes out of one of the old Woodchurch Band books, at one of them concerts.

*AT: What about dances?*

Used to have what we called a tanner hop - sixpence. You had about couple of hours' dancing, 8 till 10. And you paid your sixpence, and that's where you sort of learnt your dances.

*AT: Who played for those?*

Oh, you'd have a local band, local orchestra mixed up. I used to play in one. I used to know a lot, nearly all the old dance tunes at one time, 'cos you could buy what they called an album. You paid so much a year, well we used to have Campbell Nellie's (Campbell Connelly's), Lawrence Wright's, Keith Prowse and one other - we used to pay for albums every year, and they used to send you all the hits they had. Mind you, you had to chuck half of it out 'cos it weren't no good. You usually got one good one amongst it, see, and that was all the rage then. You used to get all the old things, all the latest things then - oh, Francis Day and Hunter, that's one we used to - that was one of the most popular ones. I don't know what you used to pay, about 5 or 6 bob a year, something like that, and they used to send you all this music for a complete band, like. Course then you'd get a piano, couple or three violins, Eb saxophone, drums. You'd get five or six different parts, you know, the complete lot.

*AT: Would there be someone who would be the band leader, and ask other people to play in his band?*

Oh yeah, he'd ask you, if he knew anybody who could play the fiddle, or anything like that, flute - we got up a little orchestra, we used to play classical stuff for a start, with a couple of flutes, and my father and me on clarinets, and about three or four fiddles, and he was on the piano. Alex Stutchbury he was on the drums. That's, well he's dead now, that's Stutchbury's the coal people. He was a good flautist and drummer too.

Old Sid Harry from Hamstreet he used to play flute, and old Billy Knowle he was a fiddle player. Used to practise Sunday afternoons. Then it gradually got - used to pay - well I never paid sixpence a week 'cos I hadn't left school when I started - but they paid sixpence a week, and it gradually fell through, you know, someone dropped out. It got down so that we just had the dance band in the end, five of us.

*AT: How often did you go out playing for dances?*

Once a fortnight. Then they thought they'd do better have it once a week and charge a shilling. It dropped off then.

*Lily: That Warehorne?*

Yeah. Dropped off when you put the price up and that, and tried to get it every week. They lost money actually, putting the price up. Used to get hell of a lot of people there, tanner hops, sixpence a week. About two, two and a half hours. Used to go to the pub, down the Woolpack and get half a bucket of coal. Old Wally 'Orton from Hamstreet he got up on the billiard table and started taking his clothes off … They were playing billiards and all at the old tanner hops, all at the same time. They didn't stop playing 'cos, see, it was the Red Triangle Club, you paid so much a year, to belong to it. It was open every night except Sunday nights. I forget what the subscription was - wasn't a lot really.

*AT: Were there many people had squeezeboxes?*

Well a lot of the old people used to have an old accordion, old melodeon. Used to go round Good Friday, some of 'em, busking for money. A fiddle, old Bob Swift from Brenzett, old Bill Ferris from Warehorne and old Fred 'Amer was playing a triangle. And old Bob Swift he was a good fiddler, Old Bill Bruce was good on the accordion too. A lot of these old boys had a melodeon. Never seen many concertinas. I had three German concertinas, one of 'em was a good one, Hohner think it was. My concertinas, I got 'em out of the World Wide Club for a pound, that's all they were. Old Williams', pay a shilling a week for twenty weeks, you had to get twenty people, you had something every week, see. I had three concertinas out of it, and two pairs of shoes once I had. I used to wait till I'd paid all of my - I used to have mine last, so I'd paid for it 'fore I'd got it. I had three good old concertinas; I had a Lachenal too.

It seems that the concertinas were just thrown away once they went out of tune or were beyond a simple repair - "I chucked the old Lachenal in the dustbin in the end". I recall hearing a similar story from Charles Beale, whose father Albert sometimes used to play a concertina to accompany his singing.

Most of these reminiscences date back to before the Second World War. But while the smoking concerts and village hops might have died out, Charlie was still active in whatever was going on in Stone, taking part in village hall socials, for instance, and playing clarinet with the Bonfire Band. He learned *The Village Pump* specifically so that he could sing it at a Women's Institute social, having heard Bob Arnold sing it, in the character of Tom Forrest, on the Archers. He wrote off to the BBC to get the words, and for the event itself built his own pump, with silver paper cascading out of the tap when he pumped away at the handle.

And, of course, he was a regular at The Crown, playing darts and dominoes, and sometimes singing a song - songs such as *I'll take you home Kathleen*, *The Farmer's Boy*, *Buttercup Joe*, and one which I never heard him sing, *Pretty Polly Perkins of Paddington Green*. As Lily said, Charlie never really discriminated between different types of songs - "if he took a fancy to it, he'd learn it".

**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 form other sources where we have

them, are shown italicised.

**1 - Three Maidens a-Milking Did Go** - Roud 290

Three maidens a-milking did go x 2
And the wind it blew high and the wind it blew low
And it threw their milking pails to and fro
Repeat last two lines.

Now the first that they met was a man
A man who they very well knew.
And they kindly asked of him "Young man, have you any skill
For to catch me a small bird or two?"
Repeat last two lines.

"Oh yes I have very good skill x 2
If you come along with me under yonder shady tree
I will catch you a small bird or two.
Repeat last two lines.

So across the green meadows they went x 2
And he tapped at the bush and the bird it flew in
Just above her lily-white knee
Repeat last two lines.

Here's a health to the bird in the bush
Here's a health to the blackbird and thrush.
For two birds of one feather,
they will always flock together
Let the people say little or much.
Repeat last two lines.

Here's a health to Victoria, our Queen x 2
For we'll drink down the sun,
and we'll tarry down the moon
And we'll drink 'til the sun doth rise again.
Repeat last two lines.

This song, sometimes titled *The Bird in the Bush*, is quite unusual in that - if Roud's 85 instances are an accurate representation - it seems never to have spread outside its native England in the oral tradition. This is doubly strange, since its first appearance is in a Scottish book, Thomas Lyle, *Ancient Ballads and Songs* (1827) p.144.

Other versions available on CD: Caroline Hughes (MTCD365-6); Charlie Bridger (VTC4CD); Fred Hewett (TSCD660).

**2 - I'll Take you Home again, Kathleen** - Roud 12907

I'll take you home again Kathleen
Across the ocean wild and wide
To where your heart has ever been
Since first you were my bonny bride.
The roses all have left your cheek
I watched them fade away and die
Your voice is sad whene'er you speak
And fear stood in your loving eye.

*Chorus*:
Oh I will take you back Kathleen
To where your heart will feel no pain
And when the fields are fresh and green
I will take you to your home again.

I know you love me, Kathleen dear,
Your heart was ever fond and true.
I always feel when you are near
That life holds nothing dear but you.
The smiles that once you gave to me
I scarcely ever see them now,
Though many, many times I see
A darkening shadow on thy brow

Chorus.

To that dear land beyond the sea
My Kathleen shall again return.
And when thy old friends welcome thee
Thy loving heart will cease to yearn.
Where lush, the little silver stream
Beside your mother's humble cot
And the brightest rays of sunshine gleam
There all your grief will be forgot.

Chorus.

Written by Thomas P Westendorf in 1875. Despite its popularity on the halls and in the parlours of England, this song was not much taken up by the oral tradition. Of the 35 Roud instances, only 7 are of sound recordings, and that by Bob Hart (MTCD301-2) seems to be the only one available on CD. And, despite the Irish tone of its text, there are no Irish entries.

**3 - Won't you Buy my Pretty Flowers** - Roud 12906

Underneath the gaslight's glitter
Stands a little fragile girl,
Heedless of night wind bitter,
As they round about her whirl.
While the hundreds pass unheeding
In the evening's waning hours,
Still she cries with tearful pleading
"Won't you buy my pretty flowers?"
There are many sad and weary
In this pleasant world of ours
Crying every night so dreary,
"Won't you buy my pretty flowers?"

Ever coming, ever going,
Men and women hurry by,
Heedless of the teardrops gleaming
In her sad and whistful eye.
How her little heart was dying
In the cold and dreary hours
Only listen to her crying
"Won't you buy my weary flowers?"
There are many sad and dreary
In this pleasant world of ours
Crying every night so dreary,
"Won't you buy my pretty flowers?"

Not a loving word to cheer her.
From the passers by is heard;
Not a friend to linger near her,
With a heart by pity stirred.
Onward goes, the pride of fashion,
Seeking pleasure's pleasant bowers;
None to hear with kind compassion,
"Won't you buy my pretty flowers."
There are many sad and weary
In this pleasant world of ours
Crying every night so dreary,
"Won't you buy my pretty flowers?"

"Old Frank Samson used to sing that one. He used to play in the old Woodchurch Band, he used to play tenor horn, and he used to play that on the way home through the fields."

The song was composed by A W French and G W Persley, about whom little appears to be known, and was published in 1876. It proved to be very popular in music halls on both sides of the Atlantic and was performed by more than one Minstrel troupe.

It entered the repertoire of many rural singers including Henry Burstow, and was still to be found in the repertoire of English singers such as Mrs Amy Ford of Low Ham in Somerset in the 1970s. The song was also still to be found in late twentieth century publications such as a collection of *Parlour Ballads* edited by Michael Turner in 1972, or on Bob Hart's CDs (MTCD301-2).

**4 - Where is my Wandering Boy Tonight?** - Roud 9823

Where is my wandering boy tonight
The boy of my love and care
The boy who was once my joy and light
The child of my love and prayer.

*Chorus*:
Oh, Where is my boy tonight
Oh, Where is my boy tonight
My heart o'erflows, for I love him he knows
Oh where is my boy tonight.

Once he was pure as morning dew
As he knelt at his mother's knee
Eye was so bright, no heart more true
And none was so sweet as he.

Chorus.

*Oh could I see you now my boy*
*As fair as in olden time*
*When prattle and smile made home a joy*
*And life was a merry chime.*

Go for my wandering boy tonight
Go search for him where you will
But bring him to me with all his blight
And tell him I love him still.

Chorus.

"My old mother used to sing that one, I learnt that off her."

Seemingly an American song with words and music by Rev Robert Lowry, 1877. The only British sound recording was of Don Elm, of Grimsby, made by Ruairidh Greig in 1970.

**5 - Three Cheers for the Red, White and Blue** - Roud 23522

Britannia, the pride of the ocean,
The home of the brave and the free,
The shrine of the sailor's devotion,
No land can compare unto thee.
Thy mandates make heroes assemble,
With Victoria's bright laws in view,
Thy banners make tyranny tremble,
When borne by the Red, White and Blue.

*Chorus*:
Three cheers for the Red, White and Blue,
Three cheers for the Red, White and Blue,
Thy banners make tyranny tremble,
When borne by the Red, White and Blue.

When war spread its wide desolation,
And threaten'd our land to deform,
The ark of freedom's foundation,
Britannia rode safely through the storm:
With her garlands of vict'ry around her,
When so nobly she bore her brave crew,
See her flag floating proudly before her,
The boast of the Red, White and Blue.

Chorus.

Now the grog, boys, the grog, boys, bring hither
And fill to that truth, to the brim
May the memory of Nelson ne'er wither
Nor the star of his glory grow dim.
May the French from the English ne'er sever
But both to their Colours prove true.
The Army and Navy for ever
Three cheers for the Red, White and Blue,

Chorus.

*Britannia, the pride of the ocean,*
*And so of a truth shall she be.*
*While true in her loyal devotion,*
*To all that is noble and free:*
*The fire that glows in her story,*
*Still burns in the hearts of her sons,*
*And her flag shall still lead her to glory,*
*When duty shall march with her guns.*

"Old Nip's brother used to sing that. Arthur Bayley."

Actually titled *Britannia the Pride of the Ocean* and written by Thomas A'Becket in 1750, and appeared in numerous broadsides and books, from which the final italicised verse comes. It is seen as the 'source' of the American anthem, *Columbia, Gem of the Ocean*, first published in 1843.

Roud has 54 entries, all but one refer to printed sources; that one being a sound recording of Amy Ford of Low Ham, Somerset, made by Bob & Jacqueline Patten in 1974 - so this seems to be only the second time it has been found in the oral tradition.

**6 - The Folkestone Murder** - Roud 897

All people pay attention and listen to my song.
I'll tell you of a murder, it won't detain you long.
It was near the town of Folkestone,
this shocking deed was done.
Maria and sweet Caroline were murdered
by Switzerland John.

He went unto their father's house at
nine o'clock one night,
And little did poor Caroline think he owed her any spite.
"Will you take a walk, dear Caroline,
along with me?" cried he
And she agreed to accompany him to
Shoreham cliff next day.

Her mother said "Dear daughter,
you'd better stay at home,
For I do not think that it's safe for you
to go with that man alone
You had better take your sister, along with you to run".
"Dear mother, I've no objection.
Dear sister, you may come".

So early in the morning, before the break of day,
Maria and sweet Caroline from Dover they did stray.
But before they reached at Folkestone,
the villain he drew his knife.
Maria and sweet Caroline, he took away their life.

Down on the ground the sisters fell
just in their blooming youth,
"For mercy" cried the innocents,
their eyes were filled with tears.
He plunged the dagger in their breasts,
their lovely breasts so deep.
He robbed them of their own sweet life and

left them there to sleep.

He kissed their pale lips as they lay on the ground.
He took their capes from off their backs
and on him they were found.
He said "Farewell, sweet Caroline,
your blood my hands has stained,
No more on earth shall I see you but
in heaven we'll meet again".
At seven o'clock next morning, the bodies they were found
In a lonely spot near Folkestone,
lay bleeding on the ground.
And if you go unto that spot, these letters you will find
Cut deeply into the soft green turf – Maria and Caroline.

When the prisoner he was taken,
his own life he tried to take,
But he was taken to Maidstone jail
and there condemned to die.
He said "Farewell to all my friends
in this world I'm left alone.
I'm doomed to die for murder far from my native home.

"Hark the solemn bell is tolling,
for the scaffold I must prepare.
I hope that in heaven my soul may rest
and meet Maria there.
Now all young men take warning
and beware of this fate of mine,
And all young women think of Maria and lovely Caroline.

The song tells of an actual murder, of sisters Caroline (19) and Maria Back (17), by Dedia Redanies, a private in the British Swiss Legion based at Shorncliffe Barracks near Folkestone. Redanies was tried for murder and hanged at Maidstone gaol, January 1857.

For details of the murder, see http://www.planetslade.com/broadside-ballads-foreigners-downfall.html. That site contains the text of *The Foreigner's Downfall*, another contemporary ballad written about the murder, and which does not appear to have been preserved in oral tradition.

Charlie learned this from Billy King. "That was another pint of beer I bought him. They used to sing - it's a terrible long drawn out thing - they used to sing the last verse as a chorus, you know … Lily! (ironically) I say, you like that one. She used to moan! ... Morbid one".

Charlie's version is very close to that sung by George Spicer (brought up at Little Chart, about a dozen miles away from Charlie's childhood home) and the textually shorter version collected by Francis Collinson from William Crampton (born c1875) at Smarden (again about 12 miles from where Charlie was born). Collinson also collected a short version with a similar tune from John & Ted Lancefield (one-time gardener to Noel Coward) at Aldington (about 7 miles away).

Rarely encountered outside south-eastern England, this song has but 44 Roud entries - although 27 of these are sound recordings. Few have appeared in CD format: George Spicer (MTCD309-0 and TSCD673); Danny Brazil (MTCD305-7); Tom Willett (MTCD361-2); Caroline Hughes (MTCD365-6).

### **7 - When You and I were Young, Maggie** - Roud 3782

I have wandered to today to the hills, Maggie
To watch the scene below
The creaking of creaking old mill, Maggie
As we used to, long, long ago
The green grass is gone from the hill, Maggie
Where first the daisies sprung
The creaking old mill is still, Maggie
Since you and I were young.

*Chorus*:
And now we are aged and grey Maggie
And the trial of life nearly done
Let us sing of the days that are gone Maggie
When you and I were young.

The city so silent and lone, Maggie,
The young and the gay and the best,
In polished white mansions of stone, Maggie
Have each found a place of rest.
It's built where the birds used to play, Maggie
And join in the songs that were sung;
For we sang as gay as they, Maggie,
When you and I were young.

Chorus.

They say I am feeble with age, Maggie
My steps are less sprightly than then.
My face is a well written page, Maggie
That time alone with a pen.
They say we are aged and grey, Maggie
As sprays by the white breakers flung
But to me, you're as fair as you were, Maggie
When you and I were young.

Chorus.

An American song with words by George W Johnson, and music by J A Butterfield. Roud has only 54 entries, which seems a shame for such a lovely song which was so very well known when we were singing round the pubs in southern England in the late-Sixties

### **8 - The Mistletoe Bough** - Roud 2336

The mistletoe hung on the castle wall,
The holly branch shone on the old oak hall.
The baron's retainers were blithe and gay,
And keeping their Christmas holy day.
And the baron beheld, with a fatherl's pride,
The beautiful child, young Lovel's bride.
While she with her bright eyes seemed to be
The star of the goodly company.
Oh the mistletoe bough, oh the mistletoe bough.

"I'm weary of dancing now", she cried,
"Here tarry a moment, I'll hide, I'll hide.
And Lovel, be sure thou art first to trace
The clue to my secret hiding place."
Away she ran, and her friends began
Each corner to search and each nook to scan.
And young Lovel cried "Oh where dost thou hide?
I'm lonely without thee, my own dear bride."
Oh the mistletoe bough, oh the mistletoe bough.

They sought her that night, they sought her next day;
They sought her in vain, when a week passed away.
In the highest, the lowest, the loneliest spot,
Young Lovel sought vainly, but found her not.
Long years flew by and their grief at last
Was told as a sorrowful tale long past.
And when Lovel appeared, the children cried,
"See the old man weeps for his fairy bride."
Oh the mistletoe bough, oh the mistletoe bough.

At length an old chest that had long lain hid
Was found in the castle; they raised the lid.
A skeleton form lay mouldering there,
And the bridal wreath of that lady fair.

Oh sad was her fate; in sportive jest
She hid from her lord in the old oak chest.
It closed with a spring and the bridal bloom
Lay withering there in a living tomb.
Oh the mistletoe bough, oh the mistletoe bough.

Written by Thomas Haynes Bayly (1797-1839), who also wrote the words of *Home Sweet Home*. This has been extremely popular throughout southern England and the USA and appears in a number of popular song books. It relates well to the novels of Sir Walter Scott and the general Gothic Novel movement. Roud has 153 versions, almost all from printed sources, with only 26 recorded examples, almost all from England. One must assume that the element of pastiche in the song (trying hard to seem much older than it actually is) meant that the earlier English collectors ignored it (for they surely must have encountered it), since it appears only in a Thomas Hardy manuscript and in Henry Burstow's book listing his own songs - and much else - *Reminiscences of Horsham* (1911).

Other versions on CD: Walter Pardon (MTCD305-6); George Townshend (MTCD304-5); Freda Palmer (MTCD375-6) and Will Noble (Village Carols VC 009).

**9 - The Birds Upon the Tree** - Roud 1863

Oh, I am a happy fellow; my name is Tommy Bell
I don't care for your billiards nor game of bagatelle.
A-rambling in the country; the country life for me,
And listen to the little birds all singing on the tree.

*Chorus*:
Oh, the birds upon the trees, oh, the bird upon the tree.
Oh what a pretty sight it is, the little ones to see.
You talk about your music, the sweetest song to me,
Is the warbling of the little birds a-singing on the tree.

Oh, I often lose me temper; it puts me in a rage,
To see a little dicky bird imprisoned in a cage.
So I burst the bars asunder and set the prisoner free,
And hear the song of liberty while singing on the tree.

Oh, there's little Maud the miller's maid
who is to be me bride
We often take a ramble through the meadows side by side.
And when we settle down in life our cottage it will be,
Where we can hear the little birds a-singing on the tree.

Charlie learned the song from Nip Bayley, who worked as a hop-drier at Kenardington, Kent. "He was known for singing *The Birds Upon the Trees*, that was all. He used to like a sing-song though, you know. Oh no, he was only known in Woodchurch really for his song *The Birds Upon the Trees*, that's what they always used to associate him with, for his singing. My old grandfather used to say "Come on Nip"; he used to get his cornet out, my old grandfather; old Nip used to sing, and he used to play. In the pub, this was." (Charlie Bridger, interviewed by Andy Turner 15/04/1983)

Written by the American W C Robey and first published in New York in 1882. Percy Grainger noted a version of the song in 1905 from the great Lincolnshire singer Joseph Taylor. However, Roud has but six instances, detailing just three singers. A version called *The Birds*, from Tom Brodie, of Rockliffe, Wreay, Cumberland can be heard on *Pass the Jug Around* (Reynard Records RR 002, reissued on VT142CD).

**10 - Wait 'til the Clouds Roll By, Jenny** - Roud 9088

Jenny, my own true loved one,
I'm going far from thee,
Out on the bounding billows,
Out on the dark blue sea.
How I shall miss you, my darling,
There when the storm is raging high;
Jenny, my own true loved one,
Wait till the clouds roll by.

*Chorus*:
Wait till the clouds roll by, Jenny,
Wait till the clouds roll by;
Jenny, my own true loved one,
Wait till the clouds roll by.

Jenny, when far from thee, love,
And I'm on the ocean deep,
Will you then dream of me, love?
Will you your promise keep?
And I will come to you, darling?
Take courage; never sigh;
Gladness will follow sorrow,
Wait till the clouds roll by.

Chorus.

Jenny, I' will keep your image
Within my heart so true;
Each thought of mine forever
Still, love, shall be of you.
Dry, then, your tear-drops, my darling,
Soon will the night of sorrow fly;
Cheer up, and don't be lonely,
Wait till the clouds roll by.

Chorus.

While the published version states "words by J T Wood, music by H J Fulmer", Dan Worrall has provided evidence that this song was in fact written by Irish singer and concertina player Tom Maguire. Recorded by American old-time singer / banjo-player Uncle Dave Macon in 1938. It seems (from Roud's 21 entries) to have rarely been found in the UK, the only sound recording entry being Hamish Henderson's recording of Annie Forbes, in Caithness, in 1968.

**11 - Playing on the Old Banjo** - Roud 31136

*Darkies lead a happy life,*
Playing on the old banjo,
Yah, yoh, playing on the old banjo
Free from trouble, free from strife,
Playing on the old banjo,
Yah, yoh, playing on the old banjo
Toe and heel it to the old familiar sound
While the Darkies dance around
Sixteen ounces to the pound
'Til they laughing tumble flat upon the ground
All around, on the ground, in the morning.

There I sees old father Joe,
Oh Father, do,
Playing on the old banjo
Yah, yoh, playing on the old banjo
And I know that they laugh at me,
Playing on the old banjo.
Yah, yoh, playing on the old banjo
Toe and heel it to the old familiar sound
While the Darkies dance around
Sixteen ounces to the pound
'Til they laughing tumble flat upon the ground
All around, on the ground, in the morning.

Up he jumped and off I go,
Playing on the old banjo
Yah, yoh, playing on the old banjo

You bet he no catch me though,
Playing on the old banjo.
Yah, yoh, playing on the old banjo
Toe and heel it to the old familiar sound
While the Darkies dance around
Sixteen ounces to the pound
'Til they laughing tumble flat upon the ground
All around, on the ground, in the morning.

Me, I'm almost done - not quite
Playing on the old banjo
Yah, yoh, playing on the old banjo
So must bid you all goodnight,
Playing on the old banjo.
Yah, yoh, playing on the old banjo
Toe and heel it to the old familiar sound
While the Darkies dance around
Sixteen ounces to the pound
'Til they laughing tumble flat upon the ground
All around, on the ground, in the morning.

"I used to sing that at concerts, in a glee party I was in. Another one I used to sing was *Steal Away* ... Another one, *Good Old Jeff*, that was a popular song …"

Written as De Ole Banjo by Alfred Scott Gatty in 1893. It was published in Gatty's Plantation Songs and recorded by an English Minstrel group The Zono Minstrels on Zonophone X-49448 in 1913. The Yo Ya Yo Strike the Old Banjo song sung by the Christy Minstrels was a different song.

**12 - O Who will o'er the Downs so Free?** (Locks and Bolts) - Roud 406, Laws M13

Oh who will o'er the downs so free?
Oh who will with me ride?
Oh who will up and follow me
To win a bloomin' bride?
Her father he has locked the door
Her mother keeps the key
But neither door nor bolt shall part
My own true love from me
But neither door nor bolt shall part
My own true love from me.

I saw her bower at twilight grey
'Twas guarded safe and sure
I saw her bower at break of day
'Twas guarded then no more
The varlets they were all asleep
And none was here to see
The greetings fair that passes there
Between my love and me
The greetings fair that passes there
Between my love and me

I promised her to come at night
With comrades brave and true
Our gallant band with sword in hand
To break the prison through.
I promised her to come at night,
She's waiting now for me;
And ere the dawn of morning light
I'll set my true love free
And ere the dawn of morning light
I'll set my true love free.

Written by Robert Lucas Pearsall (1795 - 1856). It was recorded in England at least once on a 78 in the 1930s. It was also recorded by Gwilym Davies from Bill Train, of Teignmouth, Devon, in 1976. Steve Roud writes: *Who will o'er the Downs* is interesting because its language is much more literary than the traditional versions, but is clearly the 'same' song. There's something to be investigated there.

**13 - The Veteran - Roud 24926**

'Twas on a Sabbath morn, the bells were chimed for church
The young and gay were gathering around a rustic porch.
There came an aged man, in a soldier's garb was he,
And looking round, he smiling said "Do you remember me?"

The veteran had forgot, his friends were changed and gone,
The manly forms around him there,
as children he had known.
He pointed to the spot where his dwelling used to be,
And gazing on the group, he cried
"You now remember me."

Alas, none knew him there; he pointed to a stone,
Whereon a name he breathed was traced;
a name to them unknown.
And then the old man wept;
"I am friendless now" cried he.
"Where once I had many a friend in youth,
not one remembers me."

The old man's heart seemed broke.
Said he "Is this my home?
I hoped with friends to end my days;
alas that hope has flown."
He clasped the moss grown tomb,
"Thou art welcome, Death." cried he.
Forgotten now by all on earth, "Oh God, remember me!"

Appears to be another by Thomas Haynes Bayly - it's in *Songs and Ballads*, Grave and Gay, p52. There were several broadside printings, dating back to the mid-nineteenth century, but the only named singers amongst Roud's 36 entries are members of the Copper Family.

**14 - In the Spring Time - Roud 31144**

In the Spring time, happy Spring time,
When the pretty flowers grow.
Comes a stranger, from a far land
Where there is no cold or snow.
And he sings gaily every day,
Every day, every day.
As he flies o'er the woods and sings
Or sits upon the bough.
Cuckoo, cuckoo.

Like *The Jolly Waggoner* Charlie learned this at school. A new one to Roud - so a new number.

**15 - Old Farmer Giles - Roud 1744**

I come from the country, my name it is Giles
I travelled a hundred and twenty odd miles
For a soft sort of farmer chap I have been took
But I tell you I baint such a fool as I look
Rye tooralye tooralye tooralyay
To see all the sights I have come a long way,
And it's cost me from one to two shillings a day
Rye tooralye tooralye tooralyay

I seen Nelson's Column one day from the Strand,
A chap standing by I said, "Isn't that grand?"
Said I, "I can beat that, thy pardon I begs,
For down in my farm I've a pig with five legs."
Rye toodle, rye toodle, rye toodle rye tay,

"Why dang it, you can't beat that, Master," I say?
'Cause 'ee can't get five hams off one pig every day."
Rye toodle, rye toodle, rye toodle rye tay.

The War Office blunders make everyone gape
They say it be all on account of red tape
When our yeomen go fighting I makes bold to say
The least they can do is to give them their pay
Rye toodle, rye toodle, rye toodle rye tay,
Just give me a chance with my sheep shears I say
And then it will cut all the red tape away
Rye toodle, rye toodle, rye toodle rye tay.

I went to the theatre in Leicester Square,
And I'm very pleased that my Missis weren't there.
For I seen lots of ladies all dressed up in tights,
But my Missis don't like me to look at such sights.
Rye toodle, rye toodle, rye toodle rye tay,
I'd go every night, if I had my own way,
For one on 'em winked at me as much as to say,
Rye toodle, rye toodle, rye toodle rye tay.

Not a well-known song, just 30 Roud entries - obviously needing a certain sort of performer to do it justice - so we find Cyril Phillips, George Fradley, Bob Arnold, etc, amongst the 23 listed singers. Harry Upton has one verse and a chorus on MTCD371

### 16 - A Boy's Best Friend is his Mother - Roud 1756

Whilst plodding on the way, the toilsome road of life;
How few the friends that daily there we meet.
Not many will stand by in trouble and in strife,
With counsel and affection ever sweet.
But there is one whose smile will ever on us beam
Whose love is dearer far than any other,
And wherever you may turn, this lesson you will learn;
A boy's best friend is his Mother.

*Chorus*:
Then cherish her with care and smooth her silver hair;
For when she's gone, you'll never find another.
And wherever you may turn, this lesson you will learn;
A boy's best friend is his Mother.

Her fond and gentle face, not long may greet us here,
So cheer her with our kindness and our love.
Remember, at her knee, in childhood bright and dear,
We heard her voice like angels from above.
Though after years may bring their gladness or their woe,
Her love is dearer far than any other
And wherever you may turn, this lesson you will learn;
A boy's best friend is his Mother.
Chorus.

Words by Harry Miller, music by J P Skelly, copyright 1883. Amongst Roud's 32 entries, the earliest entry relates to an 1893 American manuscript, suggesting that this may be an American song - although the UK instances of its appearance in the oral tradition are all earlier than their North American counterparts.

### 17 - The Brave Ploughboy - Roud 1205

Come all you jolly ploughboys and listen to my lays
And join with me in chorus, and sing the ploughboy's praise
My song is of the ploughboy's fame
And it's unto you I'll relate the same
He whistles, sings, and drives his team
Does the brave ploughing boy.

The corn is now a-growing, and seedtime it is o'er
The farmer he does welcome us and opes the cellar door
With cake and ale we have our fill
Because we've done our work so well
There is none here can excel the skill
Of the brave ploughing boy.

A rare song, with only 18 Roud entries, and all the named singers are members of the Copper Family. The only other CD recording is by Bob and Jim Copper (TSCD534).

### 18 - Little by Little, and Bit by Bit - Roud 10674

For fish I went fishing one summer's day,
When a man came along and to me did say:
"Can't you see that notice, it's plain and clear.
These waters are private, you can't fish here."
Little by little and bit by bit,
I said, "I'm not fishing, though here I sit.
I'm only just drowning my worm in it."
Little by little and bit by bit.

When I was a policeman, some years ago,
I tackled some burglars, my pluck to show.
They pinched me, they punched me,
They pinched my change,
They then sat me down on the kitchen range.
Little by little and bit by bit,
Those bars got red hot just where I did sit.
But I got three big stripes on my … arm for it.
Little by little and bit by bit.

My wife through my pockets goes every night,
So I thought I would stop her little game alright.
I took my money to bed with me,
And in my shirt sewed my LSD.
Little by little and bit by bit,
In the morning I woke and and I had a great fit.
For in the wife's nightgown I'd fastened it,
Little by little and bit by bit.
My wife doesn't sleep very well, and so
I sing her to sleep with the lights turned low.
There's only one song that brings her repose,
So I sing it to her 'til to sleep she goes.
Little by little and bit by bit,
I came home one night and what do you think?
I found she was teaching the lodger it.
Little by little and bit by bit.

We're unable to say who wrote this Music Hall piece, although it was recorded in 1908 by the Music Hall singer Sam Mayo (1875-1938) on Jumbo 199. The only other sighting seems to be from the singer Bob Mills of Winchester, who sang it to Paul Marsh c.1979.

### 19 - The Gypsy's Warning - Roud 1764

"Do not trust him, gentle lady,
Though his voice be soft and sweet.
Heed him not who kneels beside thee,
Softly pleading at thy feet.
Now thy life is in its morning,
Cloud not this, thy happy lot.
Listen to the Gypsy's warning,
Gentle lady trust him not.
Listen to the Gypsy's warning,
Gentle lady trust him not."

"Lady, once there lived a maiden,
Young and pure and, like thee, fair.
Yet he wooed, and wooed and won her,
Filled her heart with woe and care.
Then he heeded not her weeping,

He cared not her life to save.
So she perished, now she's sleeping
In the cold and silent grave.
So she ..."

"Lady, turn not from me, coldly
For I've only told the truth.
From his stern and withering sorrow,
Lady, I would shield thy youth.
I would shield thee from all danger,
Shield thee from the tempter's snare.
Lady, shun the dark eyed stranger,
I have warned thee, now beware.
Lady, shun ..."

"Take thy gold, I do not want it.
Lady, I have prayed for this;
For the hour that I might foil him,
And rob him of expected bliss.
I see thou art filled with wonder
At my looks so fierce and wild.
Lady, in the churchyard, yonder
Sleeps the Gypsy's only child.
Lady in ..."

A surprisingly well-known song, with 136 Roud entries, though only 14 of these are from outside the US, so one may be fairly sure it's an American composition. Although 81 of them are books and songsters, only one gives the information 'written by Henry A Gourd', so this may be debatable. The earliest reference I can find is to a music sheet printed by Holmes of New York in 1864.

Thirty-two sound recordings exist, most being from N America, with only six from Britain. Bob Hart (MTCD301-2) George Townshend (MTCD304-5), Walter Pardon (MTCD305-6) and Fred Jordan (VTD148CD) are the only British singers to have the song on CD, though, unsurprisingly, Henry Burstow in Sussex knew it.

### 20 - Your Own True Sailor Boy - Roud 376

One bitter night in winter
When the snow lay on the ground
A sailor boy stood on the quay
His ship was outward bound
His sweetheart standing by his side
Shed many a bitter tear
And as he pressed her to his breast
He whispered in her ear

*Chorus*
Oh, fare thee well my own true love
This parting gives me pain
You are my hope, my guiding star
'Til I return again.
My thoughts shall be of you, my love
When storms are raging high
So fare thee well, remember me
Your own true sailor boy.

Without a gale, the ship set sail,
He bid his love goodbye.
She watched the ship 'til out of sight;
A tear bedimned her eye.
She prayed to Him in heaven above
To guide him on his way.
His last and loving words that night;
Re-echoed o'er the bay.

Chorus

But, sad to say, the ship returned
Without her sailor boy.
He died whilst on some voyage home;
The flag was half-mast high.
And when his comrades came on shore,
They told her he was dead;
A letter he had sent to her,
The last line sadly said -
Farewell, farewell, my own true love
Alas, we'll meet no more.
I soon shall be from storm and sea
On that eternal shore.
I hope to meet you in that land,
That land beyond the sky,
Where you shall ne'er be parted from
Your own true sailor boy.

Again, this is very similar to the versions from George Spicer and William Crampton. Charlie had sung me just the first verse and chorus when I first visited him, so in the meantime I had written out the other verses for him from George Spicer's version, and was then able to record him singing the whole song.

> You see they vary a little bit, 'cos people, they get some of the words, they don't get 'em all, you see, and that's why they vary from place to place ...
>
> "One bitter night in winter when the snow lay on the ground, A sailor boy stood on the quay …" then all the other words are the same as I know, it's just the first line's different ...
>
> This is a nice song really. Sing it to you, if you like ... Old Bill Knight at Woodchurch, he used to sing it, and I know two other blokes that used to sing it. Old Bill Knight and old Jack Pearce, he used to sing it.

*The Faithful Sailor Boy* was written by the American, George W Persley, towards the end of the 19th century. Few songs have achieved such widespread popularity among country singers and their audiences. It turned up again and again in pub sing-songs throughout Britain, even through into the 1990s. There are 121 other examples in Roud, 69 of which are sound recordings (though few seem to have been published) all with much the same title. Gavin Greig has it as *The Sailor Boy's Farewell* in FSNE where he refers to the song as being 'Very popular in Aberdeenshire in the early years of this century' and we have heard it sung in both Donegal and Cork in the last few years. Two versions have been found in the North Carolina mountains, while other sets have been reported from as far away as Australia and Tristan da Cunha.
Other recordings on CD: Cyril Poacher (MTCD303); Walter Pardon (MTCD305-6); Daisy Chapman (MTCD308); Percy Webb (MTCD356-7); George Attrill (MTCD372); Freda Palmer (MTCD375-6); Fred Jordan (VTD148CD); and Charlie Carver and Stan Steggles (VTCD8CD).

### 21 - The Zulu War - Roud 5362

How I love to tell the story, which I've often told before,
How we fought for death or glory at the blessed Zulu war.
Side by side we fought like demons
to keep the enemy at bay.
Until Jack received a bullet wound,
which made the fellow say

*Chorus*:
"Oh give my love to Nancy, the girl that I adore.
Tell her that she'll never see her sailor any more.
Say I fell in battle while fighting with those blacks,
Every inch a sailor beneath the Union Jack."

At first I thought that he was jesting,
knowing he liked a bit of fun,
Until I saw that he was resting on the barrel of his gun.

Then I knew that he was badly wounded
or he never would give way,
When, shaking hands, he said "Old comrade,
the best of friends must part some day."

Chorus.

"Take this ring from off my finger
and this locket from my neck,
For I have but little time to linger,
so I hope you'll not forget.
And should you ever reach old England,
which you may perhaps some day,
Give these relics to my mother,
and my orders please obey."

Chorus.

I said "I'll not forget to tell her
of these words you may be sure."
For it did grieve me much severely to see
the fellow lay a-rothering in his gore.
The look he gave me when we parted,
I'll remember to this day,
And when for camp that day we started,
I fancied I could hear him say.

Chorus.

Mike Yates writes: Although the Zulu Wars lasted for the period 1838-1888, this song is actually only concerned with the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879. Early that year the wife of Sihayo, a Zulu chief, fled with her lover into British territory. Sihayo's sons crossed the frontier into Natal and killed her. The British, perceiving the growth of Zulu power as a threat to their imperial ambitions, used this as an excuse to invade Zululand on 11th January, 1879. The British force, under Lieutenant-General Frederic Thesiger, Lord Chelmsford, set out to defeat the Zulu chief Cetshwayo and his 29,000 strong army, but things didn't exactly go according to plan when, on 22nd January, the main Zulu army led by Ntshingwayo kaMahole and Mavumengwana kaNdlela finished off the British central column at Isandhlwana, killing some 1,500 British soldiers. It was, almost certainly, the greatest victory ever won by Africans against Europeans in sub-Saharan Africa. An attempt that night to capture the central column's depot at Rork's Drift was beaten off by a handful of British soldiers and, after the right column fought through an elaborate ambush at Nyezane, Chelmsford wisely decided to retire to Natal. There was some fighting in March, 1879, but it was not until May that Chelmsford launched his second invasion. On 4th July the Zulu army was routed at Ulundi and resistance ended when Cetshwayo was captured on 1 September. The song The Zulu Wars was issued shortly after these events by the Edinburgh broadside printer Sanderson.

When I first heard Charlie sing this song, in 1984, I was at a loss to explain why a sailor should have been involved in the campaign. However, it turns out that, after the British defeat at Isandlwana, a Naval Brigade was formed from crewmen of HMS Shah and HMS Boadicea and that the Brigade helped defend the British square at the Battle of Gingindlovu (2nd April, 1879) and was present at the relief of Echowe, on the following day.

Greig-Duncan has one Scottish example of this song, but Charlie Bridger appears to be the only English person to have been recorded singing it.

### 22 - Old Fashioned Mother of Mine - Roud 23549

There are colleens with eyes just a clear as the skies
There are colleens the world thinks are handsome or wise
But deep in my heart there's a sweet memory
Of someone who still holds attraction for me.

Just an old fashioned lady with old fashioned ways
And a smile that says welcome to you.
An old fashioned bedside where she kneels and prays
When the toil of the long day is through.
Though she wears no fine clothes, or no rich silken hose
Still it's something that nakes her divine.
For the angels above taught the way how to love
To that old fashioned mother of mine.

There are girls that I know that says men have a glow
It's the one by the colleen said they worship so
But there is a jewel that I worship more
It's set in the heart of the one I adore.

Just an old fashioned lady with old fashioned ways
And a smile that says welcome to you.
An old fashioned bedside where she kneels and prays
When the toil of the long day is through.
Though she wears no fine clothes, or no rich silken hose
Still it's something that nakes her divine.
For the angels above taught the way how to love
To that old fashioned mother of mine.

Words and Music by Australians Worton David and Horatio Nicholls, published 1919. Rarely taken up by the oral tradition; indeed only members of the Copper Family seem to have sung it in the UK.

### 23 - The Ship that Never Returned - Roud 775 Laws D27

On a summer day when the waves were rippled
By the softest, gentlest breeze.
Did a ship set sail with a cargo laden
For a port beyond the seas.

There were fond farewells, there were loving signals,
When her form was yet discerned.
Though they knew it not, for the solemn parting
For the ship he never returned.

Did she ever return, no, she never returned,
And her fate is still unlearned.
And from that day to this they've been watching and waiting
For the ship that never returned.

Said a pale faced boy to his aged mother,
"I must cross that wild, wide sea.
For there, perhaps, in a foreign country
There is health and wealth for me."

So the dream of hope and the lack of danger
For her son, the mother's heart yearned.
So she sent him off with a smile and a blessing
In the ship that never returned.

Did she ever return, no, she never returned,
And her fate is still unlearned.
And from that day to this they've been watching and waiting
For the ship that never returned.
"Only one more trip," said a gallant sailor
As he kissed his fond young wife.
"Only one more bag of that golden treasure
And we'll settle down for life."

"We will spend our days in a cozy cottage
And enjoy the wealth we've earned."
But she never dreampt that her love would perish
In the ship that never returned

Did she ever return, no, she never returned,
And her fate is still unlearned.
And from that day to this they've been watching and waiting
For the ship that never returned.

"That's one of my favourites, that one." Charlie learned it from Nip Bayley.

Written by Henry Clay Work (who also wrote *My Grandfather's Clock*). It later formed the basis of *The Wreck of the Old '97* and later still as *The MTA Song*.

A remarkably popular song with 145 Roud entries, although the majority of these are from N America. The 33 English ones range from Sussex to Yorkshire and, of the 42 sound recordings, it would appear that only Freda Palmer (MTCD375-6), Harry Upton (MTCD371) and Fred Jordan (VTD148CD) can be found on a British CD.

### 24 - Good Old Jeff - Roud 1740

'Twas just a year ago, today, that I remember well.
I sat down by poor Nelly's side and a story she did tell.
'Twas about a poor old darkey Jeff,
that lived for many a year
And now he's dead and in his grave,
no trouble does he fear.

*Chorus*:
For good old Jeff has gone to rest
We know that he is free.
Disturb him not, but let him rest
Way down in Tennessee.

She took my arm, we walked along, into an open field
And then she paused, to breathe a while,
then to his grave did steal.
She sat down by that little mound
and softly whispered there
"Come to me, Father, 'tis thy child,"
and gently dropped a tear.

Chorus

*But since that day, how things have changed,*
*Poor Nelly that was my bride*
*Is laid beneath the cold grey sod, down by her father's side*
*We planted there upon the grave that weeping willow tree*
*We bathed its roots with many a tear*
*so that it might shelter me.*

Last verse, in italics, is from Harry Upton. *Good Old Jeff* was composed, words and music, in 1853 by the American G W H Griffin (1829-1879) and popularised by the Christie Minstrels. It hardly needs saying that, today, such pieces are rather out of fashion, although, according to Harry, the song was quite popular during his youth and his father was often asked to sing it in public. There are broadside texts by Disley and Such (both of London), Charles Saunderson (Edinburgh), Harkness (Preston) and Thomas Pearson (Manchester), and Fortey (also from London) included the words in at least two songsters, *The Nigger Melodist* and *The Aquarium Songster*.

Other recordings: Harry Upton (MTCD371); Gordon Syrett (Suffolk - VTCD8); The Millen Family (Kent - OPEN CD003).

### 25 - That's How you get Served when you're Old - Roud 12893

One day in the street, I chanced for to meet
An old friend I'd not seen for years.
To me he seemed sad, but to meet me was glad
And his eyes, as he spoke, filled with tears.
I said "John, be brief, what's the cause of your grief?
To me, your misfortunes unfold."
He said "In poor me, a sample you'll see
Of how you get served when you're old."

*Chorus*:
Each day, growing older, you get the cold shoulder
By the youngsters, thrust out in the cold.
And they jeeringly say that I'm in the way;
That's how you get served when you're old."

When young, I was praised, and my wages were raised
No work then I ever would shirk,
And the Master did then point me out to the men
As the one who best stuck to his work.
I began as a lad, and a hard place I had
Which I held for some forty-five years
I then did my best to keep up with the rest
But now I must starve, it appears.

Chorus

By the young Master I'm told I'm growing too old
No more work for me can he find.
I can no longer stay, but for young ones make way;
Oh how can he be so unkind?
There's my wife, poor old soul, she's near seventy-three
How to keep her from want I don't know
To beg I'll intrude, to steal be pursued
And off to the prison I'd go.
Chorus

To ask for relief, it adds to my grief
We must go in the "House" I am told.
Part husband and wife, to be paupers for life
That's how you get served when you're old.

Chorus

In a songbook printed by Richard March & Co, London, between 1877 and 1884, we find: 'written and composed and sung by John Read'. Sound recordings by Walter Pardon and Harry Adams exist, but have never been published. David Whitfield sang it on The Good Old Songs, Decca DFE 6601 in 1960 ... so Charlie could have heard it there.

### 26 - The Jolly Waggoner - Roud 1088

When first I went a-waggoning, a-waggoning did go
I filled my parents' hearts with grief,
with sorrow, care and woe.
And many are the hardships that I have since gone through
Sing whoa, me lads, sing whoa,
Drive on, me lads, ye ho,
Who would not lead the stirring life
we jolly waggoners do?
Sing whoa, me lads, sing whoa,
Drive on, me lads, ye ho,
Who would not lead the stirring life
we jolly waggoners do?

Upon a cold and stormy night when wetted to the skin;
I bore it with a contented heart until we reached the inn
And then we sat about the fire with landlord and his kin
Sing whoa, me lads, sing whoa,
Drive on, me lads, ye ho,
Who would not lead the stirring life
we jolly waggoners do?
*Repeat last three lines.*

Now summer is a-coming on; what pleasures shall we see,
The merry finches twittering on every greenwood tree,
The blackbird and the thrushes too are whistling merrily
Sing whoa, me lads, sing whoa,

Drive on, me lads, ye ho,
Who would not lead the stirring life
we jolly waggoners do?
*Repeat last three lines.*

When Michaelmas is coming on what pleasure we shall find
We'll make the gulls to fly my boys
like chaff before the wind
And every lad will home return to wife and children kind
Sing whoa, me lads, sing whoa,
Drive on, me lads, ye ho,
Who would not lead the stirring life
we jolly waggoners do?
*Repeat last three lines.*

Charlie learned this at school, possibly from *English Folk-Songs For Schools* by Baring Gould and Sharp, published by Curwen in 1907. Baring-Gould collected a number of versions of the song in the West Country. This tune, although in Baring-Gould's MSS, would appear to have been collected by his collaborator H Fleetwood Sheppard in 1890, from James Parsons of Lewdown in Devon.

Despite a respectable 134 Roud entries, there are only 21 sound recordings listed, of which only that by Walter Pardon (TSCD514) is available on CD.

**27 - Trafalgar Bay (The Death of Nelson) - Roud 3549**

It was in Trafalgar Bay,
We saw the Frenchman lay,
Each heart was bounding then.
We scorn'ed the foreign yoke,
For our ships were British oak,
And hearts of oak our men;
Our Nelson marked them on the wave,
Three cheers our gallant seamen gave,
For naught, ??? duty
And of ??? beauty.
Along the line this signal ran;
It's "England expects that every man
This day will do his duty.
This day will do his duty."

Just one verse of a four or five verse broadside usually titled *The Death of Nelson*, with 109 Roud entries - although only five of them refer to collections from the oral tradition; the rest are printed sources of one sort or another. One of the five is from shepherd Michael Blann, of Upper Beeding, Sussex, mentioned only in a book reference, before the time of tape recorders. The other four are sound recordings, from: Cliff Kay (Eckington, Derbys); George Spicer (Selsfield, Sussex); James Goodchild (Bishopstoke, Hants); and James 'Brick' Harber (Pease Pottage, Sussex). None are available on CD.

**28 - Jenny Lind Polka**

Andy writes: As far as I recall, this was the only tune I ever heard Charlie play on clarinet. He didn't have a name for the tune, and I didn't quiz him as to where he'd learned it. I suspect that I took my concertina with me when I first visited Charlie, and played my (standard D/G) version of *Jenny Lind*, only to be told that I'd missed a bit out. So, now I had my tape recorder, I asked him to hum the tune so I could learn all three parts, and was quite surprised when Charlie got out his clarinet to play it.

He seems to be playing in A on the tape, which is hardly a key you'd choose to play in on a Bb clarinet - more likely it was a Bb clarinet that had slipped down a semitone and/or the cassette tape is playing slightly flat.

**Credits:**

Firstly, to **George Frampton** who, having read of my search for recordings of traditional performers for future MT Records publications, wrote giving details of three such sources - one of which was Andy Turner. As I knew Andy personally, I approached him first.

It appears that **Andy Turner** was the first to encounter Charlie Bridger in 1983, and then returned a couple of weeks later and recorded the 28 tracks found on this CD, plus two more that there weren't room for here. Then Mike Yates and Andy went together to record him the following year, 1984.

There is a problem that Mike's recordings (using different/superior equipment) sound radically different to Andy's. To have a CD where all the tracks sound similar would be, I think, better (or easier to listen to) than one where a few of them sound radically different ... even if they are superior, technically. If I made the CD of all Andy's recordings, I could also claim 'all never before published', so that's what I have done. Mike Yates has agreed that this is the best option. His recordings of Charlie Bridger singing *The Birds Upon the Tree* and *Little by Little* can be found on *The Birds Upon the Tree* (MTCD333), while *Three Maidens a-Milking did Go* is on *Down in the Fields* (VTC4CD), and *The Zulu War* and *The Folkestone Murder* are on *It was on a Market Day*, Vol 1 & 2 (VTC7CD and VTC6CD).

Plus, Andy has written the text of this booklet and provided the photos - so this really is *his* project.

In addition, my thanks to:

**Mike Yates** - for additions to the Song Notes.

**Adrian Keefe** - for noise reduction on Andy Turner's original 1980s cassette recordings.

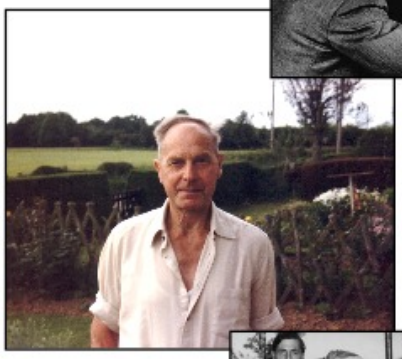
**Steve Roud** - for providing me with copies of his wonderful *Folksong* and *Broadside Indexes*, without which few of my Song Notes would ever exist.

**Danny Stradling** - for her exemplary song transcriptions and proof-reading, the subject of much praise from numerous reviewers down the years.

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

A Musical Traditions Records production


*Left*: Charlie at a session, and (below) playing dominoes in The Crown.



*Left*: Charlie in his garden, and (below) with tenor horn and prizewinner's cup, with the Rye Brass Band.



*Right*: Charlie's Dad (left) tenor horn, in the Woodchurch Band.

*Left*: Charlie (centre), clarinet, with the Stone Band on Bonfire Night.

*Right*: Cranbrook Brass Band, with Charlie on tenor horn.

*Left*: Tenterden Town Band c1922.