

Notes

The Newsletter of Readifolk

Issue 2

Reading's folk song
and music club

Spring 2009

Wassail!

**Welcome
to another Readifolk
newsletter**

Thanks...

...for all the nice comments and good wishes that we received about the first issue of Notes. It made us feel all warm inside, and as a result we've put together a second issue, so brace yourselves.

Rumblings from the Roots

We've settled in to our new venue at RISC and everyone seems pleased with the move. Those cold nights in the back room at The Queen's Arms are thankfully now a fading memory. There have been good attendances for some great performers. Coming up in the next few months we have more splendid acts including Bob Fox, Maggie Boyle & Gary Boyle, Trio Threlfall and Jeremy Taylor; and don't forget our ever-popular Singers and Theme Nights where everyone is welcome to perform or just listen – see the full programme of events on the back page. For a preview of any of the performers do look up their web sites, which can be found on the programme. We now have the capacity for a much larger audience so bring your friends and spread the word.

English Folk Dance & Song Society

Readifolk is now an affiliated member of the English Folk Dance and Song Society. For nearly a century the EFDSS has been preserving and promoting our folk heritage. It aims to promote the best of the folk arts through a range of media including dance, music, song, film, exhibition, publications and library collections.

The EFDSS is the custodian of the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library which is housed in the society's headquarters at Cecil Sharp House in Regents Park Road, London. The VWML is recognised as England's national repository for folk arts materials, photographs and artefacts documenting folk arts from around the world.

Our membership of the EFDSS:-

- Provides Readifolk with regular updates of folk related events at Cecil Sharp House and elsewhere.
- Entitles us to free access of the Library.
- Provides Public Liability Insurance covering all our weekly Club nights.

See you soon

Una & Colin



Musician Holding Bagpipes; Artist Unknown; 1632

Instruments of Joy

Taking a look at the instruments of the folk idiom.
This issue:

The Piano Accordion

Anne Edwards, accordionist with 3-2-1, who feature regularly at Readifolk, tells us everything we didn't know we didn't know...

Oscar Wilde once said “A gentleman is someone who can play the accordion, but doesn’t”. Well, Oscar, much as I admire you, I'm afraid I have to disagree with you on this one! I do realise that accordion music isn't necessarily everyone's cup of tea, but the accordion has been around for over 150 years, so it has definitely stood the test of time. Not only that, but it is a wonderfully versatile and exciting instrument, adapting itself to many different genres of music.

Many believe that the accordion had its origins in Austria and Germany in the early 19th century and it is thought that the first person to design an instrument resembling today's piano accordion was

Jacques Bouton, in Paris in 1852. In 1863 Paolo Soprani opened the first piano accordion factory in Castelfidardo in Italy and to this day Castelfidardo is known as the main centre for accordion manufacture in

Italy. Many well known brands, such as Pignini, Vignoni, Fantini and Excelsior originate in this town. Hohner in Germany, already known for their harmonicas, also began making piano accordions around this time, and Hohner is still one of the better known German manufacturers today.

Piano accordions really started to become popular in 1910 when Guido and Pietro Deiro introduced them to American audiences, and around this time there was a growing enthusiasm for the tango, which gave accordions a great boost. In Britain, accordion clubs started opening around the country and before the outbreak of the second world war accordion bands were very popular. However, in the years after the war popular music began to change – skiffle arrived, as did rock 'n roll, and this signalled the decline in interest in the piano accordion. There was a revival in the 60s, 70s and 80s,

with the arrival of accordion festivals, and the accordion developed a growing role in folk music. There are many excellent accordionists who play folk music these days: Paul Hutchinson, Karen Tweed, Sam Pirt and Becky Price, to name but a few. With the advent of free bass instruments (where the bass keyboard has individual bass notes instead of a range of notes and chords as in the Stradella bass system), the piano accordion is also now respected as a serious classical instrument, due in no small way to the efforts of Professor Owen Murray. Music students can now study the accordion at musical establishments such as The Royal Academy of Music in London.

Anyway, that's the end of the history lesson. I'm sure you can't wait to know how a piano accordion works! Put simply, there is a piano keyboard, which generally has up to 47 keys, a bass keyboard of usually up to 120 buttons, and the bellows,

which controls the flow of air over the reeds inside, producing the notes and controlling the volume. Accordions usually have a range of couplers, which vary depending on how many voices (i.e. banks of reeds) the instrument has. Switching couplers varies the mood or the tone of the music. Amongst folk musicians the instrument of choice tends to have 34 treble keys, 72 bass buttons and 3 voices.

Finally, if you are now so enthused that you would like to find out a lot more about the accordion and other free reed instruments, the three volumes called “An A to Z of the Accordion” by Rob Howard are compulsory and fascinating reading. Thank you, Rob, for being my main source of information for this article. Thanks also to the amazing accordionist, Romano Viazzani, for his input to this article and making sure I got my facts right!



Guest Night Reviews

**Were you there? Tell us what you think.
If you weren't, this is what you missed.**

We may not have room to review every guest night, but if there was one which you particularly liked, why not write about it?

Cherrington & Ward



The evening got off to an alarming start, when our guests performers arrived at the venue, only to discovered that Paul Cherrington had left his guitar behind. No such problems for Pamela Ward, who had remembered to bring her fine voice with her. In the end, it made not the slightest difference, as there were guitars aplenty in the room, and our MC, Malcolm Smith, offered the use of his beloved Lowden.

Paul, it turns out, is a master of unconventional open tunings. It seemed that every song was played in its own tuning, which lent a dextrous economy to his fingering on the fretboard. To someone who struggles to make any sense at all of the guitar (me), this was fascinating to watch, but also somewhat baffling.

Pamela's singing complemented that guitar work in a beguiling, understated way. We were lulled by it and charmed by it. It was a fine accompaniment to a pint of beer.

Songs, many of them original, covered subjects such as the terrible tragedies of the Aberfan disaster of the 60s, and a wartime shipping accident from a generation earlier, when the Queen Mary, being used as a troop carrier, collided with its escort ship, sinking it. The tragedy was exacerbated because the Queen Mary was ordered not to stop and help the drowning. Pam's father was one of the few who survived. Folk music has this profound ability to comment upon tragedy in a pretty

being shocked and moved by the words we sing. There were also fine songs about the traditions of Sheffield steel-making (Pamela's home town) and Whitsuntide rites, as well as several blues covers.

Another Sunday evening well spent.

Billy Shears

Martyn Wyndham-Read and Iris Bishop

I've got this theory: contrary to what some people think, folk music is not backward-looking. In fact, quite the opposite - in order for a song to last for years, decades or even centuries, it has to keep being renewed and made relevant to the present age. I put my theory to Martyn Wyndham-Read during the interval of his recent visit to us, and it must be said that he seemed a lot less impressed by it than I was. I had in mind the likes of Jon Boden, who is at the forefront of modern folk music. They are vastly different in style, but it seems to me that Boden has a certain dynamic, a certain tension to his vocal delivery that is a direct descendant from the likes of Martyn Wyndham-Read, who in turn pays homage to people a generation or two earlier, especially the likes of his friend and mentor A.L Lloyd.

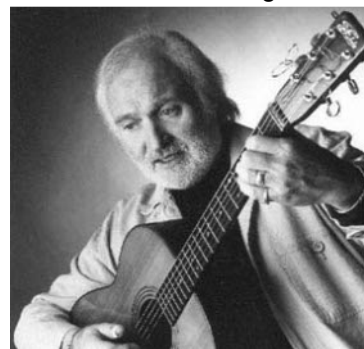
But Martyn has his own theory; 'It's important that people just keep writing new songs' he said.

So much for theories; we had an evening of old songs renewed and new songs that draw from traditions. Interspersed were stories of his life and his world. Having a bad case of wanderlust from a young age, he grew up in Sussex before going to live in Italy as soon as he left school. Then to Australia, where he spent many years working on sheep stations. Currently he lives in France, and somewhere along the way he stopped off at America. But it is Australia that has had the greatest

chorus song that we're happy to join in with, while

influence on his songs. There he grew to love the songs of stockman and bush worker, which led to a continuing passion for folk songs.

He is a raconteur beyond compare, bringing old songs to life with a story, drawing poignant parallels between the trials of past lives and the injustices of today, and alluding to a timeless sentiment in a new song. All this was delivered with a glow in his eyes that told us he was still sincere about what he was doing.



The pairing of Martyn with Iris Bishop on accordion and concertina is one of rare quality; she is a superb accompanist, and clearly they have been working together for many years; it is no surprise that she is to be found on most of his CDs, as well as accompanying him on many of his tour dates. In fact, come to think of it, the only possible criticism of the evening is that she didn't come to the fore to play one or two tunes of her own.

A Readifolk guest evening is always worth £5, but this was quite possibly the best value for money that you are ever likely to get for that fiver.

Stewart

Na Mara

February 8th and another fantastic evening at the great RISC venue in London Street. Na Mara gave us an amazing evening mixing musical dexterity on the mandolin and guitar with superb vocals; the set included songs ranging from traditional British ballads to Breton and Quebecois influenced arrangements.

The evening started with Paul McNamara's poignant song Solo Por Tres Meses inspired by the story of Roberto Garcia's father who was sent as a child refugee from Bilbao during the Spanish Civil War and arrived in Southampton to be met by

the 'Sally Army'; Rob demonstrated his guitar finesse with a flamenco accompaniment.



Other songs took us to Breton Sea shanties and epic French stories of babies killed and eaten by owls!

We marvelled at the finger-picking on guitars (Lowden and Taylor), at the musicality of mandolin and mandola playing and at the haunting tunes from Quebec (reminding us of the Boite à Chanson in Montreal – the equivalent of "Readifolk"?), and tapped our feet to a Nick Jones song. Paul McNamara's haunting voice took us across a range of folk sources from Ireland, Spain, France and Quebec.

If you didn't manage to make this great evening you can visit Na-Mara's website: www.na-mara.com. I'm sure you will want to see them next time they come to Readifolk!

Clare

Steve Donnelly

I did wonder whether "Steve Donnelly" was a name to conjure with; but, having got no further than

"Eleven-ton Dilys", and realising that I'd somehow got involved, crossword-style, on the long walk back from Steve's gig on the 15th Feb., I gave that up as a bad job.

Not that there wasn't a touch of magic in his performance, though. We had a good mixture of those three staples of a balanced folk night - traditional material, self-penned songs, and a good dose of those half-remembered perennials which say something slightly different in the hands of every performer (Tom Paxton, Donovan, Ralph McTell, etc.). Steve painted a wonderful image of Eddie, who "sings from the heart of old England", beautifully capturing what it is that is so enthralling about folk singing, the way it breaks down the gap that exists in most music between performer and audience, because everyone is committed to the song.

And Steve has a sure touch with melody ('Keeping The Old Songs Alive' sounds as if it has been alive almost as long as the old songs themselves) and a subtle voice which reminds me of John Denver - not the insipid voice of 'Take Me Home Country Roads', but the rather more intriguing voice of songs like 'Potter's Wheel'. Anyhow, that's by the by (Janet's introduction of Steve, via BBC broadcaster Peter White and a dog longing to exist had to be heard to be believed, and justifies my own bit of digression!). I'm particularly grateful for Steve's

So, from one (somewhat shaky) guitarist to another (altogether sleeker); thanks, Steve, and come back soon!

Allan



Issy & David Emeney with Kate Riaz

With melodeon, guitar, bouzouki and concertina Issy and David Emeney gave us a delightful evening of songs and tunes enhanced by the 'cello playing of Kate Riaz. The 'cello, increasingly appearing on the folk club scene, added a warm depth to the sound of the more traditional instruments.

From the opening 'Rare Turpin' to the closing set we were entertained with a variety of music from tales of lost love and lives saved to rural pursuits and wartime heroism.

Much of the material was written by Issy. There was the poignant 'Loch Goil' telling of two lovers who parted because of a lack of communication; the tale of a sailor and his bride, one song from each point of view; the story of Ann Green who survived the gallows; and many more.

The words 'delicate' and 'melodeon' aren't usually found in the same sentence, but Issy's playing put them there.

David's singing about John Simpson Kirkpatrick, donkey man turned Gallipoli hero, touched everyone. He even produced, dare I say it, some tasteful bodhran playing!

encore, which allowed me to indulge my own Art Garfunkel falsetto on Paul Simon's 'The Boxer' (all sotto voce, you understand!).



You can help...

Fancy writing something for the newsletter?

How about an article on an instrument you play? Or maybe you could transcribe a favourite song or two, giving us some background and history.

But we could also do with a few photographs of guest nights, too, and we'll always need people who can review the performances with fresh insight.

And folk-related general interest articles, news items, or other editorial could all help to enhance the Readifolk experience.

We'd also like to make a few paper copies of this newsletter available. This requires use of an A3 colour printer. If you have access to one and could donate some copies, we'd like to hear from you.

Whatever ideas you have we'd like to hear more, so contact Stewart - I'm often at guest nights, or you can email me - stewart@readifolk.org.uk

This was an evening containing much original material, but holding to the folk tradition of stories well sung in a manner to which we could all relate, tuning in to emotions held in common.

Issy, David and Kate developed a rapport with the audience through their obvious enjoyment in what they were doing. Let's hope that more of you are there when they come again.

Doug Brown was MC, and we had the usual quality contributions from Doug, Gary Edwards, Bob Watson and Sara Daniels.

Pam

Andy Clarke



Q: What's the difference between a Brummie and a Jumbo jet?

A: A Jumbo jet stops whining when it gets to Malaga.

A brief sample of the humour that peppered newcomer Andy Clark's set on 8th March.

Andy hails from the west country and songs from his native region formed the core of our evening. There were songs about sailors, hares, ploughs, poachers – the full gamut of west country folk-life. Andy introduced his songs with humour and a clear respect for their origins. I for one was enlightened to hear of the symbolism of flowers and plants in traditional songs (this occasioned by one of Andy's introductory digressions – on the laurel).

He provided a highly eclectic programme, bringing together several songs from the Sabine Baring-Gould collection, as well as material from Australia (H Lawson) and the odd contemporary number ("Over the Hill", on a rather un-contemporary theme – the Book of Genesis...).

Andy maintained a good rapport with the audience, kicking off with a hearty sing-along chorus ("Follow the Plough") and retaining our goodwill with humour – and a bit of communal whistling! He provided a variety of emotional tone – from the

poignant "Andy's Gone With Cattle", or the Brummie coalminer's "When I Go", to the high-energy "Limbo".

Instrument fetishists were impressed with Andy's two guitars and bouzouki. The latter was a shining, deep-bodied offering from luthier Joe Foley of Dublin that projected wonderfully, with melody notes cutting through to sparkle above the base notes. His guitars featured a David Oddy (famous as the man who provides the instruments for Show of Hands) and a Phil Messer (handmade in Totnes to Andy's own specification in 2008 and featuring only European woods). He did full justice to these splendid instruments, making effortless use of the full length of the fretboard. His guitar picking was percussive, yet richly melodic, with an impressive range of accompaniment style.

All in all, a highly impressive first encounter with this well-established musician. Could he impress more? Since all his material was very much the product of his own research and interests, it was largely unfamiliar to (most of) us. I sometimes think that it's good to sprinkle a programme with a few well-known numbers.

But then, I mustn't whine.

Danny

Jez Lowe

We first saw Jez as part of the four-piece band Hendon Banks in a folk club on Tyneside in 1976. Ever since that first performance we have followed Jez's career with a great deal of interest and pleasure. Over the years we have seen Jez perform in many permutations with different partners and as a member of a group. However, it is as a solo artist that we prefer him.

Jez's appearance at Readifolk on 22 March was very much what we

would expect. A fine performance in which his thirty-five years experience was shown to the full. It was a very relaxed, almost intimate show. His introductions were spoken in his rather quiet voice. There was a lot of gentle humour and some biting comments. In this respect the introductions are rather like Jez's songs.

Jez is one of the few English songwriters who has enough of his own material to fill an evening. We started with Jez on the working man. Will of the People, The Famous Working Man and They're Taking On Men (from the New Radio Ballads) all express different takes on the situation of the working classes in the North East. Other songs give a take on different aspects of personal relationships. Another Man's Wife, for example, is about a lover's fear of the woman's husband and London Danny is about a husband's fear of his wife's susceptibility to a former boyfriend's sophistication.

The evening was not all old songs. Jez has been involved with a project to write about Charles Darwin. From this we had a song about a native who was brought to England to be "civilized." He was then returned to his homeland. Another new song, Bare Knuckle, reflects the current recession and expressed the desire of the people to fight back against adversity.

It was a thoroughly enjoyable evening. The supporting artists were good and Jez was on top form.

Anne & Steve



Contact us:

Una for bookings and coming events

una@readifolk.org.uk

Colin for publicity, coming events and the mailing list

colin@readifolk.org.uk

Our guest-night MC is Malcolm

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Stewart about the newsletter

stewart@readifolk.org.uk

Julian about the website

julian@readifolk.org.uk

Folk Online

A Guide to Internet Radio

Since this newsletter mostly reaches its reader

via the internet, it's not unreasonable to assume that you may have an internet connection of some sort. In that case, folk music is just a click away. Lots of it.

Most people will know that the BBC output can be heard online, and so can local radio, and other output. But there are also tens of thousands of internet radio stations from every corner of the globe on so-called audio streams. A stream is the internet's version of a radio broadcast. Many of these stations play music on continuous, automated playback, or they loop pre-recorded programmes, and much of it is produced by enthusiasts on a shoestring budget. Every genre you can think of is catered for, so if you want to explore some, here is my quick guide to internet radio:

1. The easy way:- If you are reading this on your computer, try clicking on one of the 'Stream' links below (or type it in to your browser). This should open a page in your browser with a 'Listen' link. If your browser is reasonably up to date, clicking on that should open an embedded player in your browser. Failing that, visit the station's website for other ways to listen.

2. The less easy way:-

Manually enter a 'Stream' URL directly into your preferred media player (look through your

player's menus for an entry that says something like 'Open location...' or 'Add stream...' and enter the URL there). The advantage of doing this is that your player should provide a means of saving the station link (maybe as a playlist or in a media library) to make it easy to play it again. You could even make a playlist with several stations on it for easy selection.

3. The long way:- Visit a radio portal: www.shoutcast.com is one, and there are others, if you care to search for them. Typically, a portal hosts thousands of radio stations of every conceivable genre. You can spend hours trawling through no end of dross trying to find the good stuff. It'll be 3am before you know it.

4. The easiest way:- You can listen to internet radio without involving your computer at all, but you'll need a stand-alone internet radio receiver. This gets its signal from your wireless broadband connection (you'll need one of these, too). It automatically finds the radio stations, and you don't have to deal with portals or wrestle with URLs and media players.

Listed here, in no particular order, are several stations, with all the details you need to listen to them. This is not an exhaustive list - there are hundreds of stations that claim to play folk music, from all corners of the globe. I tried some, and the ones I felt most interesting are here. Many of these stations have no presenters in the way we are familiar with on terrestrial broadcasts (this is not necessarily a bad thing); the music is automatically selected by a remote computer from a collection held on its hard drive. The choice of music kept on this server is what defines the station's character. Your media player will display who is singing what. Some streams are at a fairly low bitrate, meaning the sound quality is not perfect.

60 North. Music and talk from Shetland, hence the name (Shetland is 60 degrees north). This is aimed squarely at tourists, and both the stream and the website reflects this. But the music is often excellent, even if the chatty cultural interludes get a bit repetitive.
Website: <http://www.visitshetland.com>
Stream: <http://87.106.94.9:8000>

Folk Alley. From America, some of the folk music has strong Country leanings, but there is also much contemporary and traditional UK folk music. They were even publicising the Cheltenham Folk Festival when I was listening. There is also an interesting website, which includes an extensive archive of previously broadcast interviews with, for example, Janis Ian, Peggy Seeger, Fairport Convention and many others.
Website: <http://www.folkalley.com>
Stream: <http://66.225.205.8:80>

Folk Radio UK. My personal recommendation. This is evidently a one-man show, with a shoestring budget, but with fine results. I often have it playing when I'm at my 'puter. There are two streams, one for Celtic/British folk music, and one for Contemporary/Roots/Eclectic music. Both are good, but the Celtic/British stream is probably more what we would look for in a traditional folk station, and it covers this very well - you will hear old faves, but also make delightful new discoveries. On the website there are extensive CD reviews, several performance videos, an interesting little forum and more.
Website: <http://www.folkradio.co.uk>
Celtic/British stream: <http://s1.webradioworld.net:8046>
Contemporary/Roots/Eclectic stream: <http://208.85.242.184:8146>

Livelieland. I suspect this is mostly aimed at tourists. I found two streams; Channel 1 for traditional Irish music and Channel 2 for contemporary stuff, though when I looked, Channel 2 got no mention or link on the website. Both channels are fairly lo-fi, but apparently they are experimenting with higher quality types of streams. From the website you can even stream TV.
Website: <http://www.liveireland.com>
Channel 1 stream: <http://91.121.1.11:8080>
Channel 2 stream: <http://208.53.131.29:8480>

Folkland Radio. German station with a website in German, but the output of the stream is distinctly Celtic. No presenters, so no real language barrier.
Website: <http://www.mcpitten.de>
Stream: <http://91.121.11.196:15040>

Witchwood Radio. The Strawbs, and that's all. Well, they produced some pretty songs in their heyday (ignoring the awful Part Of The Union), gave Sandy Denny and Rick Wakeman a leg up, and are now touring again. I like 'em, but a whole radio station of them..?

Website:

<http://www.witchwoodradio.co.uk>

Stream: <http://212.72.165.18:9596>

Wholewheat Radio - Radio for Grownups (it says here). Coming from Alaska, and an offshoot of Wikipedia, apparently. Says its output is 'Independent Singer-Songwriters, Folk, Blues, Jazz'.

Website: <http://wholewheatradio.org>

Stream:

<http://wholewheatradio.org:8000>

Campfire Radio. Simon & Garfunkle, John Denver, Johnny Cash, Peter Paul & Mary, etc at fairly lo-fi quality. All together, now...

Website: <http://campfireradio.net>

Stream: <http://67.212.165.162:8118>

Grassy Hill Radio. Some of these titles are getting ridiculously twee, don't you think? This one is based in Connecticut, and claims to be 'the Internet's finest all-music folk/acoustic stream', but alas has pretty lo-fi output.

Website: <http://radio.grassyhill.org>

Stream: <http://72.13.82.10:22524>

Dylan Radio. Just Dylan, including editions of his famous Theme Time Radio Hour. Lo-fi, but could become a cult.

Website: <http://www.dylanradio.com>

Stream: <http://68.90.68.227:8000>

Bungalow Bill

A Song Worth Singing

Scarborough Fair and The Elfin Knight

During Andy Clarke's recent guest spot, he sang a version of Scarborough Fair which was unfamiliar to us. The song has a long history, and the version we are most familiar with today can be traced back to a Scottish ballad called The Elfin Knight, with origins in the 17th century. It is this ballad which Martin Carthy taught to Paul Simon in the early 60s, which was subsequently recorded by Simon and Garfunkel as Scarborough Fair/Canticle. It is probably the most well known version of it today. Simon combined it with an original composition called The Side Of A Hill, arranged in counterpoint to make a supposed canticle. Carthy is said to have harboured some discontent that Simon claimed credit as the composer of the whole piece, without acknowledging its traditional roots.

As ever with a good folk song, there are an enormous number of variations, both lyrically and melodically - FJ Child collected over 20 versions in the 19th century, and other collectors had over 50. It continues to inspire contemporary interpretations, for example, Bob Dylan's Girl from the North Country draws heavily from it; The Stone Roses' anti-monarchist statement Elizabeth My Dear is clearly based on the melody, and there are other examples which obviously refer to it.

The character of the elfin knight may have his genesis in an earlier song called Lady Isabel and the Elf-Knight. In some versions of The Elfin Knight, he asks that a maiden complete a variety of impossible tasks (eg. making a shirt without any seams, or ploughing a field with a ram's horn) in order that she become his lover. Other variations have these tasks as her means of escaping abduction by him. There are some variations which have the maiden asking the knight to complete such tasks, too. But as the song evolves, he becomes absent from it, and in the modern Scarborough Fair, sometimes arranged as a duet, the words seem more of a lament of lost love, and the impossibility of regaining it, or the difficulties of an impossible love affair, rather than of abduction.

The song has come in for much scrutiny and analysis by musicologists. Early versions of the song had the line "My plaid shall not be blawn awe" in verse one, with the next having "The wind hath blawn my plaid awe" which some reckon to be

an allusion to the maiden's lost virginity, and with possible reference to the elfin knight having many lovers with "He blows it east, he blows it west/ He blows it where he liketh best".

Early versions of the song had no reference at all to Scarborough Fair, and the refrain "Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme" didn't figure in it until the early 1800s. The herbs in question may be referring to a magic love potion, or (some say) a herbal contraception, or maybe to the belief that herbs can symbolise certain virtues, for example: parsley for quelling bitterness; sage for strength; rosemary for faithfulness, love and remembrance; and thyme for courage. Thus they imply an emotional context for the song. Compare this with Ophelia's tragic speech in Shakespeare's Hamlet, just before she drowns herself, where she says "There's rosemary, that's for remembrance... And there is pansies, that's for thoughts... There's fennel for you, and columbines" etc.

Scarborough Fair was a major trading event, much larger than any other fair, and lasting for 45 days. From the 13th century until its demise in 1788, it attracted traders from all over Europe, so the question "Are you going to Scarborough Fair?" may have been quite common amongst costermongers, travellers, and other itinerant traders. The song is sometimes sung with a question in line one - "Oh, where are you going? To Scarborough Fair", or "Have you been to..." A version of the song is set at Whittington Fair, another refers to Lynn, as well as elsewhere, but there is no clear explanation as to what particular relevance these places have to the song's content.

The version below dates from the late 19th century. It is significantly different to more familiar modern versions - the melody that we know today can be heard only in a formative state, and some of the verses, while tying in with earlier versions of The Elfin Knight, may be unfamiliar. Instead of parsley, we have savoury - a herb with a reputation as an aphrodisiac. Note how the first few verses speak of the 'lass' in the third person ("And tell *her*..."), but the second half of the song is in second person ("O, will *you*..."), and it seems the woman is singing the later verses.

Stewart



- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. O, where are you going? To Scarborough fair,
Savoury sage rosemary and thyme;
Remember me to a lass who lives there,
For once she was a true love of mine. | 5. O, will you find me an acre of land,
Savoury sage rosemary and thyme,
Between the sea foam, the sea sand,
Or never be a true lover of mine. |
| 2. And tell her to make me a cambric shirt,
Savoury sage rosemary and thyme,
Without any seam or needlework,
And then she shall be a true love of mine. | 6. O, will you plough it with a ram's horn,
Savoury sage rosemary and thyme,
And sow it all over with one peppercorn,
Or never be a true lover of mine. |
| 3. And tell her to wash it in yonder dry well,
Savoury sage rosemary and thyme,
Where no water sprung, nor a drop of rain fell,
And then she shall be a true love of mine. | 7. O, will you reap it with a sickle of leather,
Savoury sage rosemary and thyme,
And tie it all up with a peacock's feather,
Or never be a true lover of mine. |
| 4. Tell her to dry it on yonder thorn,
Savoury sage rosemary and thyme,
Which never bore blossom since Adam was born,
And then she shall be a true love of mine. | 8. And when you have done and finished your work,
Savoury sage rosemary and thyme,
You may come to me for your cambric shirt,
And then you shall be a true lover of mine. |

READIFOLK



READING'S FOLK SONG & MUSIC CLUB

Every Sunday 8:30 -11:00 p.m

Reading International Solidarity Centre (RISC),

35-39 London Street, Reading RG1 4PS

PROGRAMME APRIL - JUNE 2009

<u>5 April</u>	TICH FRIER (www.zen53519.zen.co.uk)	<i>A great entertainer with a powerful singing voice, a sharp wit, a wide knowledge of traditional song with fine guitar accompaniment.</i>
<u>12 April</u>	SINGERS NIGHT	<i>Time for a DIY night again. You can do it!</i>
<u>19 April</u>	BOB FOX (www.bobfoxmusic.com)	<i>Renowned singer and guitarist especially of traditional songs from the North East.</i>
<u>26 April</u>	THE TINDALL FAMILY (www.paula-and-stuart-tindall.co.uk)	<i>Parents Paula and Stuart with daughters Sarah and Kathryn are The Tindalls. The combination of voices and instruments is truly magical with a repertoire ranging from Joni Mitchell to Bob Dylan.</i>

<u>3 May</u>	THEME 'FOR PETE'S SAKE, SING'	<i>Today is Pete Seeger's 90th birthday. Let's celebrate the occasion with appropriate songs.</i>
<u>10 May</u>	MAGGIE BOYLE & GARY BOYLE (www.skinnymalinksmusic.co.uk/artists/sketch.html)	<i>Maggie is a traditional singer of ballads old and new, continuing the tradition of music and storytelling passed on from her Irish roots. Her songs are enhanced by the excellent guitar playing of Gary Boyle (no relation!)</i>
<u>17 May</u>	TRIO THRELFALL (www.triothrelfall.net)	<i>Jane and Amanda Threlfall, accompanied by Roger Edwards on concertina, fiddle and guitar bring a fresh revitalised feel to traditional English song.</i>
<u>24 May</u>	CLUB CLOSED	<i>It's Bank Holiday weekend so it's Festival time. Business as usual next week.</i>
<u>31 May</u>	JEREMY TAYLOR (www.jeremytaylor.info)	<i>Super songwriter, poet and humorist. Teller of truths stranger, and funnier, than fiction. Banned from South Africa for ridiculing apartheid!</i>

<u>7 June</u>	THEME 'GOING WITH THE FLOW'	<i>Another 'watery' theme. Interpret this as you wish.</i>
<u>14 June</u>	NOTTS ALLIANCE (www.flaxfield.demon.co.uk)	<i>Unaccompanied harmony group with material from the folk tradition and thereabouts, and a reputation for tight and inventive harmony singing.</i>
<u>21 June</u>	SINGERS NIGHT	<i>Another opportunity for you to show us what you can do.</i>
<u>28 June</u>	SOIREE (www.soireemusic.co.uk)	<i>Hector Gilchrist, Sue Graves, and Steve Poole are a fine combination delivering beautiful songs lifted still further by lilting harmonies and liquid guitars.</i>

Admission: £5 guest nights, £1 Singers & Theme nights

More information from our web site www.readifolk.org.uk

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