



- 1 ALL AROUND THE KITCHEN (banjo)
- 2 COME ALONG JOHN (banjo)
- 3 BILLY BARLOW (banjo, guitar, autoharp)\*
- 4 OLD AUNT KATE (banjo)
- 5 LITTLE BIRD (banjo, guitar)
- 6 LULA GAL (banjo)
- 7 RISSOLTY ROSSOLTY (banjo)\*
- 8 THE DERBY RAM (banjo, guitar)\*

\*sung by Peggy, Penny and Barbara  
Sleeve design: Gloria Leader

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Peggy Seeger - and her younger sisters Barbara (20) and Penny (13) - were brought up in Washington D.C. during the time when their parents, two professional musicians, were discovering for themselves the lively traditions of Anglo-American folksong which seemed to have existed since the earliest colonisation. The children heard practically every song that came into the house, on records made by folklorists in all parts of the country, from printed collections and from the actual voices of singers. In the preparation of her compilation of folk songs for children, their mother not only used her children as a trying ground in playtime and bedtime singing, but also as assistance in the editorial work like music copying and transcribing, typing, reinforcement-licking for loose-leaf note books, and so forth. The instrumental techniques were acquired in their 'teens on their own initiative. Peggy plays guitar and five string banjo, Penny plays guitar and Barbara plays autoharp - a barred zither.

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#### SUMMARY OF WORDS OF SONGS INCLUDED:

##### ALL AROUND THE KITCHEN

All around the kitchen cock-a-doodle doodle doo,  
Now stop right still.  
Put your hands on your hips.  
Let your right foot slip.

- And wink your eye,  
And wiggle your ears,  
And stick out your tongue.  
Cross your fingers.

- And stand up straight.  
Now sit on the ground,  
And move yourself around.  
Put your hands on the floor,  
And move a little more.

Moo like a cow.  
Now creep like a cat,  
Or squeak like a rat,  
Or hop like a flea.

Put you hand on your hip.  
Let your right foot slip.  
Do it like this.  
Do it like that.

- And stamp your feet,  
And knock your knees,  
And clap your hands,  
And wiggle your toes.  
Walk like a king  
All around the kitchen cock-a-doodle doodle doo.

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**COME ALONG JOHN**

Come along John and hush your talking,  
All join hands and lets go walking  
Come along John with your paper collar on.

Come along Betsy with your red hat on.  
Come along Bert with your big smile on.  
Come along Shirley with your yellow hair combed.  
Come along Anne with your shoes undone.  
Come along Caroline, walk on your toes.  
Come along John with your shirt tail out.

**BILLY BARLOW**

Let's go hunting said Risky Rob,  
Let's go hunting said Robin to Bob,  
Let's go hunting said Daniel to Joe,  
Let's go hunting said Billy Barlow.

What shall we hunt?  
Let's hunt a rat.

How shall we hunt him?  
Borrow a cannon

How shall we haul him?  
Borrow a train

How shall we divide him?

I'll take shoulder said Risky Rob,  
I'll take ham said Robin to Bob,  
I'll take sides said Daniel to Joe,  
Tail bone mine said Billy Barlow.

How shall we cook him?

- I'll fry shoulder said Risky Rob  
- I'll broil ham said Robin to Bob,  
I'll bake side said Daniel to Joe,  
Tail bone raw said Billy Barlow.

**OLD AUNT KATE**

Old Aunt Kate, she baked a cake,  
She baked it on the garden gate.  
She sift the meal and give me the dust.  
She bake the bread and give me the crust  
She eat the meat and give me the skin,  
And that's the way she took me in.

**LITTLE BIRD**

Little bird, little bird go through my window,  
And buy molasses candy.  
Go through my window my sugar lump,  
and buy molasses candy.

**LULA GAL**

Lula gal, Lula gal,  
Tie your shoe boy, tie your shoe.  
A jawbone walk, a jawbone talk,  
A jawbone eat with a knife and fork,  
I left my jawbone on the corner of the fence,  
And I have not seen my jawbone since.

Lula gal, Lula gal,  
Comb your hair boy, comb your hair.

**RISSOLTY ROSSOLTY**

I married me a wife in the month of June,  
 Rissolty rossolty now now now.  
 I carried her home on a silver spoon,  
 Rissolty rossolty hey bombosselty  
 Nicklety nacklety, rusticle quality,  
 Willaby Wallaby now now now.

She combed her hair but once a year  
 And with every rake she gave a tear.  
 She swept the room but once a year  
 She swore her broomstick cost her dear.  
 She churned the butter in dad's old boot  
 And for a dash she used her foot.  
 The butter turned out a grisly grey  
 The cheese grew legs and ran away.  
 The butter and cheese is on the shelf  
 If you want any more, you can sing it yourself.

**THE DERBY RAM**

As I went to Derby, twas on a market day,  
 I spied the biggest ram, sir, that ever fed upon hay.  
 It's a lie, it's a lie, a lie, a lie, a lie.

And then we fell asleep, sir, and so asleep were we,  
 That when we awoke, sir, we were far away out on the sea.

This wonderful old ram, sir, was playful as a kid,  
 He swallowed the captain's spy-glass along with the bosun's fid

One morning on the poop, sir, before eight bells was rung,  
 He borrowed the captain's sextant, and took a shot at the sun.

One night was wet and rough, sir, the wind was blowing keen,  
 He borrowed my suit of oilskins and took my trick at the wheel

The man who killed this ram, sir, he feared for his life,  
 He had to send to London, to get him a longer knife.

The people in this room, sir, are handsome, brave and strong,  
 the finest group of singers that ever sang a song.  
 It's a lie, it's a lie, a lie, a lie, a lie.

**COME ALONG JOHN**

Notes on the songs by PEGGY SEEGER (Topic 7T18)

In the American folksong tradition, it is the rare song that is not enjoyed by child and adult alike, whether it is a long tragic ballad, a tall tale, a courting or nonsense song. Children often ask for something "real", something "serious" - *John Henry* and *Barbara Allen* are favourites - and grown-ups are not only entertained by *Billy Barlow* and *Rissolty Rossolty*. The distance between music preferences of age groups has been vastly over-emphasised; too often children's taste is prescribed for them by adults and they are given only what they "ought to have". Their capacities for drama and imagination are not cultivated sufficiently and they are given harmless nursery rhymes which often as not veil reality or sidetrack their participation in life as they see it around them. Where folk song is an integral part of social life, the children are initiated at an early age into the community life: that is to say, they assume while yet young their roles as members of that community and are not encouraged (or allowed) to dwell overlong in childhood. Considerable part of their education is accomplished through folk song and oral tradition, for a folk music is, above all else, "a summary of the way of life of a culture community, the attitudes and feelings of those who comprise it towards life and death, work and play, love, courtship and marriage, heath and hearth, children and animals, prosperity and adversity - a veritable code of individual and social behaviour."

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In our family, none of we children were ever abnormally haunted by visions of the lamb with the bees and butterflies pecking out its eyes in the song *Black Sheep*, The insects were just going about their business; to be sure, we felt deeply the pathos, but felt no morbidity or horror at the fate of the lamb. Adults too often overlook this ability of children to integrate right and wrong (concepts often overdefined in the adult world and hence over-applied to natural phenomena), to important events in nature's terms (i.e. "maybe the butterflies were hungry") instead of man's (i.e. "what a horrible thing, to pick a lamb's eyes out"). In the same vein, the jawbone is simply and factually a musical-percussion instrument and a very effective one at that. It is sung of and used in folk song with a humour stripped entirely of sinister implication.

Even as the folk song is versatile in its appeal to a varied audience, so can it apply at any time of the year and to the most diversified of activities. In our household, Christmas songs were sung all year round; tragic ballads became lullabies at bed-time; commands in *Lula Gal* were invented during dressing, tooth-brushing, cleaning house, walking to school, and so forth - in every facet of a day's passing. One particular song was always sung, played, whistled or hummed when bedtime was drawing near; a reminder far superior to nagging or verbal suggestion. These additions to a child's life not only enrich his view of his own life and stimulate his imagination, but also make everyday duties easier,

Do not hesitate to improvise on the songs, for that is how they came to their present stage of development. They may have to be changed a little for every singer, for every situation in which they are used, but this can only make them richer and more meaningful.

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### **ALL AROUND THE KITCHEN**

An Alabama singing game in which the children march or skip singing "All around the kitchen cock-a-doodle-doodle-doo". Then they stand still in a ring as indicated while the player in the centre "makes a motion" which he or she designates either in words or in action ("now do it like this"), after which the marching and skipping is resumed.

### **COME ALONG JOHN**

An Oklahoma play-party song, this may be played as follows with a number of children: one player begins walking or skipping along as soon as the verse is sung about him. Gradually, as each child's name is sung with words appropriate to his attire, mannerisms, way of walking, and so forth, a line of walkers and skippers is formed until everyone is included. In one section of the country, this song is said to have been sung as a corn husking song; with the refrain: "Shock along, John, shock along."

### **BILLY BARLOW**

It is possible that there is some connection between the hunting of the rat and the hunting of the wren on St. Stephen's Day, an ancient British custom. The wren had once been in folk tales, a siren that was believed to bewitch sailors into the sea, As a defensive measure, the siren had transformed herself into a wren and the symbolism of the hunting, killing and burying of the bird are self-explanatory. In America both the song of the wren and of the rat, its humorous derivative, exists as separate entities.

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### **OLD AUNT KATE**

This fragment is an elaboration of *Juba* an African fast-dancing song about an ancient ghost. Although *Old Aunt Kate* has expanded the range of the melody of *Juba* and given the song plantation words, it is clearly Afro-American in its conception and expression.

### **LITTLE BIRD, LITTLE BIRD, GO THROUGH MY WINDOW**

A singing game from South Carolina. Other bird names, jaybird, bluebird, may be used.

### **LULA GAL**

A negro action and dance song into which small comments and commands were sung. The jawbone, usually that of a horse, ox or mule, was a musical-percussion instrument popular in the south and throughout the Caribbean. The teeth were left in and it was shaken to make them rattle, or a key or other piece of metal was drawn over them, producing a rasping sound. This instrument, plus the beating of the bones, the blowing of a comb and paper, and banjo picking, formed the core of the Negro plantation orchestra.

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### **RISSOLTY, ROSSOLTY**

This song is an American variant of the Scots *Wee Cooper O' Fife*, In the latter, however, the wife refuses, out of haughtiness, to carry out her household duties and is subsequently punished by her husband, whereas in the former she proves willing but incompetent and the household gets out of control, The plot is then left dangling and the listener must solve the domestic problem for himself.

### **THE DERBY RAM**

This is a seagoing version of the widely spread British ballad of the same name. Most of the other variants are found on land.

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