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TRANS PENNINE
Songs of Lancashire and
Yorkshire

Harry Boardman
Dave Hillery

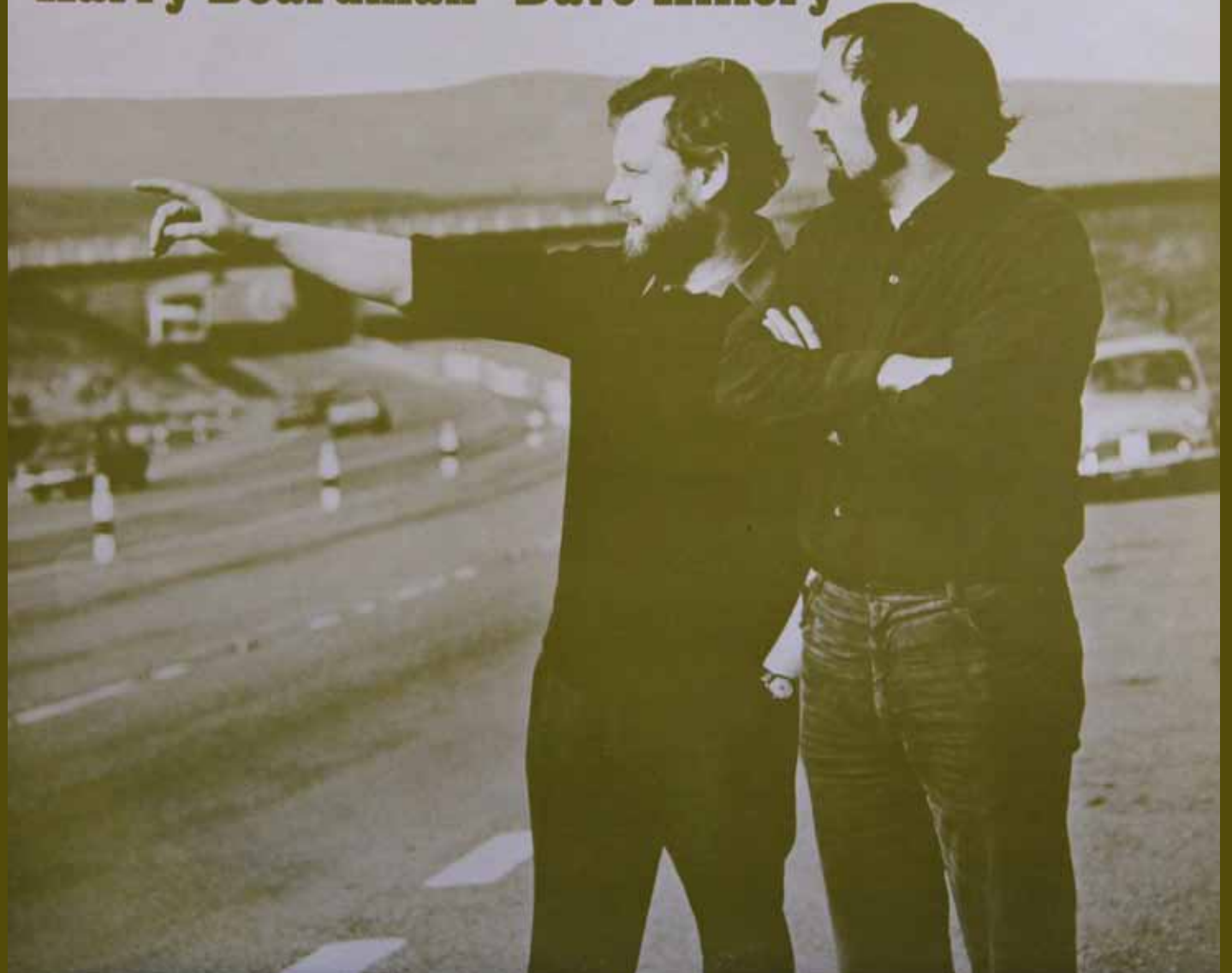
Popular Song and Verse from
Lancashire and Yorkshire

TRANS PENNINE

Songs of Lancashire and Yorkshire

TOPIC

Harry Boardman Dave Hillery



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1. **Scarborough Sands** *Dave acc. Gerry, concertina and Anthony, banjo*
2. **I'll have a Collier for my Sweetheart** *Harry acc. himself concertina*
3. **Forty Miles** *Dave acc. Gerry, whistle and Anthony, banjo*
4. **Tommy Stroo's Ghost** *recitation by Harry*
5. **Cowd Stringy Pie** *Dave acc. Gerry, concertina and Anthony, mandolin*
6. **Tha's Welcome, Little Bonny Brid** *Harry acc. himself concertina*
7. **Nellie o' Bob's o't' Crowtrees** *Dave acc. himself guitar, Gerry, whistle and Anthony, Northumbrian pipes*
8. **Weaver's Song** *Harry acc. himself banjo and Lesley, mandolin*
9. **Happy Sam** *Dave acc. himself concertina and Gerry, concertina*
10. **The Manchester Canal** *Harry acc. himself banjo, Bob, fiddle and Lesley, tenor-banjo*
11. **Instrumental Dance-Tunes T-auld Wife of Coverdill/Lass O' Dallogil/My Love, My Love** *Gerry, concertina, Anthony tenor-banjo and Bob, fiddle*
12. **The Cockfight** *Harry acc. himself banjo, Bob, fiddle and Lesley, mandolin*
13. **Haley Paley** *Dave acc. Gerry, ocarina and Anthony, banjo*
14. **With Henry Hunt We'll Go** *Harry acc. Bob, fiddle and Lesley, drum*
15. **The Ensilver Song** *Dave acc. Gerry, concertina*

Harry Boardman *banjo and concertina*

Dave Hillery *guitar and concertina*

Bob Diehl *fiddle*

Lesley Boardman *mandolin, drum and tenor-banjo*

Gerry Murphy *whistle, concertina and ocarina*

Anthony Robb *banjo, mandolin and Northumbrian pipes*

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Harry Boardman was born in Failsworth near Oldham in 1930. His parents and grandparents worked in cotton, or coal, or engineering, Harry, in fact, started his own working life in an engineering workshop. He has been deeply involved in the folk song revival since the early fifties, singing mainly traditional songs and ballads. But in the last seven or eight years, he has concentrated more and more on the 'industrial' songs of Lancashire. *Trans-Pennine* will be the fourth Topic album on which he has appeared singing Lancashire songs.

These days, Harry regularly lectures on Lancashire traditions and has researched and sung the songs for several radio and television documentaries on industrial subjects.

Harry's wife, Lesley, (who plays banjo and mandolin on this album) is also deeply involved with the history of Lancashire.

Dave Hillery was born seventh of the nine children of a labouring man, in the small cathedral and garrison city of Ripon in Yorkshire, in 1934. He has spent most of his adult life working in the large industrial towns of North of England and has been associated with Harry Boardman for the past ten years, developing his interest in Yorkshire regional material. Dave lives in a cottage in the Pennines, with his wife Peggy (a native of Dublin) and their two small children Gronia and Richard.

Canny Fettle

Bob Diehl, Gerry Murphy and Anthony Robb, graduates of Manchester and Salford Universities, are all members of a group known as Canny Fettle.

*Shake a bridle o'er a Yorkshireman's grave,
He'll get up an' steal t'horse*

*The best thing to come out o' Lancashire wur a
Yorkshireman*

Such quotations reflect the good humoured rivalry which still exists between the two northern counties of Lancashire and Yorkshire, supposedly dating from the 'Wars of the Roses'. But that struggle for power had little to do with ordinary people. It was a physical barrier rather than a political one which divided the counties through the centuries. The Pennines, a range of hills lying between Lancashire and Yorkshire, had been almost impassable in winter until comparatively recent times, when the building of trans-Pennine railways and canals made travel and communication more possible.

On both sides of the southern Pennines are the same sweeping, treeless moors, with towns and villages fashioned out of local stone and factory chimneys dominating the horizon. The area proved suitable for the cotton and wool industries for which the two

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counties are famous. These industries resulted in the disfigurement of some of the loveliest valleys due to the hasty erection of mills and the pollution of mountain streams. Economic and social conditions were similar for the working people of both counties, who were exploited by the masters and fought long, hard struggles for higher wages and better living conditions. The movements for social reform; the Luddites, Chartists and the Labour and Trade Union Movements were strong on both sides of the Pennines.

When the overcrowded cities and noisy industries of S.E. Lancs and the W. Riding are left behind, each county shows rich and diverse scenery, such as the Forest of Bowland, the Yorkshire Dales and Coniston Water. Each county has its agricultural plains, large seaports and holiday resorts. Both have Roman capitals, castles, abbeys and stately homes. Lancashire and Yorkshire are both noted for their choirs and brass bands, cricket and football teams, cakes and puddings; and each county clings tenaciously to its dialect and regional customs.

These two counties, lying close together yet separated as are few English counties, have recently been joined by the trans-Pennine Motorway, which had to be forged through the hills by 700 men. This will ultimately extend from Liverpool to Hull, and it

should provide better economic opportunities for the many towns on both sides of the Pennines which are still suffering the after-effects of the Industrial Revolution.

Although most of the songs in this album represent well the character of their respective counties, there has been no attempt to create a definitive programme – they are simply the personal choice of two men from either side of the ‘backbone of England’.

Scarborough Sands

Some years ago Dave Hillery came across ‘Scarborough Sands’ in Holroyd’s Collection of Yorkshire Ballads (1892). He adapted this tune to the words and sang it regularly around the York area. Astonishingly (or perhaps predictably) the song has since cropped up all over the place with the tune described as traditional and Scarborough replaced by Bamburgh, Salisbury Plain and even Liverpool.

I’ll Have a Collier for my Sweetheart

Wherever this song originated, it seems to have flourished almost exclusively in the Lancashire colliery areas. There is a set of words in *Come All Ye Bold Miners* (L & W 1952 – edited by A. L. Lloyd), which was supplied by William Oliver of Widnes

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and a fragmentary version was also communicated to A. L. Lloyd by a miner, originally from Platt Bridge near Wigan. The text here was learned by Harry Boardman from his mother, Mary, who, in fact, learned it from her mother. The reference to factory lads 'get nowt but brass' obviously referred to cotton factory lads. The young lassies of Failsworth near Oldham, however, seem to have found it more amusing to substitute this with 'Ferranti's lads'. It may be worth noting that Harry's father was a Ferranti lad – before he retired.

Forty Miles

In the days when journeymen tramped from town to town seeking work, the problem of accommodation at the end of their regulation 40 miles in a day was a constant worry. Undoubtedly many of these men harboured the kind of fantasies contained in this song collected in Leeds by Frank Kidson. Kidson's *Traditional Tunes* prints two more Yorkshire versions of this song.

Tommy Stroo's Ghost

Comic recitation has been as popular in Lancashire as anywhere in Britain, particularly since the middle of the nineteenth century. It is true to say that until quite recently there was never a 'do' without someone giving his party piece, in his own inimitable

way! There is no standard mode of performance in Lancashire; some recitations are done deadpan, whilst others are, to say the least 'hammed'. *Tommy Stroo's Ghost* was written by the dialect poet John Charles Twist.

Cowd Stringy Pie

This kind of 'hungry farmer' song with its strong note of criticism was more familiar in the Scottish bothies than the English acres. Nevertheless, this one is very characteristic, depicting as it does the easily recognisable regional stereotype of the mean, horse-dealing slave-driving Yorkshire boss. Kidson, in a note on *I'Ansons Racehorse* (EFDSS journal No.9, 1906) refers to the fact that '*Stringy Pie*' was attached to the same tune but gives no words. Both words and tune of this present version were collected by Dave Hillery from Mrs Ada Cade of York in 1965.

Tha's Welcome, Little Bonny Brid

The piece was written by Samuel Laycock during the 'Cotton Panic' (Cotton Famine 1862-1864). The blockade of the Southern American States by Lincoln's navy meant that the importation of cotton into Lancashire was drastically reduced and eventually, almost ceased. This brought about the most widespread unemployment that Lancashire had ever experienced and although some historians

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have said that Lancashire operatives were brought to 'near starvation', there is no doubt that actual death by starvation was not unknown. Against this background, Laycock wrote of an 'unplanned' but not unwanted child, born into a family already far from small and with little food to sustain it. Laycock's wife was, in fact, pregnant when he wrote *Bonny Brid* (Bird), but the boy he obviously anticipated turned out to be a girl. *Bonny Brid* has remained a firm favourite in Lancashire to this day. It is probably true to say that if anyone knows only two Lancashire dialect pieces, one of them is bound to be *Welcome, Bonny Brid*. The tune here was adapted by Harry Boardman.

Nellie o' Bob's o't Crowtrees

Appearing in *The Original Clock Almanack* of 1896 John Hartley's frankly sentimental *Nellie O' Bobs* has since found its way into a number of Yorkshire anthologies. The Almanack, like many of its contemporaries, contained a curious mixture of humour, sentimentality, militancy for social reform and a real fervour for the philosophy of working class self-help. Dave Hillery made the tune.

The Weaver's Song

It must be admitted that many regional songs and poems would sound far too 'literary' by today's

standards were they not in dialect. 'Common speech' almost always has the effect of making poetry sound less contrived. John Trafford Clegg, who wrote *The Weaver's Song* was himself a weaver and obviously intended the piece to have something of the rhythmic quality of a power-loom. The tune used here is an adaptation of one by Dave Hillery for a Yorkshire song *The Pannier Man*.

Happy Sam (or the Multitude who Labour)

Formerly a weaver, John Hartley was the most prolific and perhaps the most versatile of all Yorkshire dialect writers and edited the *Original Illuminated Clock Almanack*, from 1867 until his death in 1915. Although the almanack regularly achieved sales of over 70,000 copies, Hartley did not share in its prosperity and died a pauper. *Happy Sam* appeared in the Almanack's 1909 Edition. Dave Hillery set the tune to it.

The Manchester Canal

The Manchester Ship Canal, opened in 1894, was of tremendous economic importance, both to Lancashire and the country as a whole, changing as it did one of the world's greatest commercial and trading centres from a land-locked city to an important inland seaport. Before work on the Canal was started, tremendous controversy raged between

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those who saw it as a great leap forward and those who anticipated it being the fiasco of the century. Many songs were printed in support of one side or the other and it is interesting to note that shilling shares in the Canal Company were sold to the public from door to door. The navvies working on the Canal were also expected to contribute a penny a day for hot water to brew their tea and a penny towards the building of the Canal. One navvy was heard to remark 'What wi' tea wayter an' sea wayter, we'll 'ave nowt left'. *The Manchester Canal* comes from an undated printed sheet and was supplied by Paul Graney of Manchester. The notion of describing a mere canal voyage in terms of the dangers of the deep has been very popular in times past, to judge by the number of versions on the go, one of the best known of which is *The Calibar*.

T'auld Wife of Coverdill

This tune appears in Sharp's *Sword Dances of Northern England* Book III as a tune for the Ampleforth Sword Dance. It was collected by the Rev. John Tinkler from an old sword dance in Yorkshire in 1869.

Lass O' Dallogil

Lass O'Dallogil and variants of it, collected from George Tremain of North Skelton-in-Cleveland, were

used for the Boosbeck Long Sword Dance and the North Skelton Sword Dance. This version appears in *Three More Dances of the Yorkshire Dales* L. M. Douglas.

My Love, My Love

The Moston Rush-Cart morris tune *My Love, My Love*, is taken from *Miss A. S. Gilchrist's Manuscript Collection* and was noted and sent to her by Mr. Smith Williamson, handmaster of Moston, Manchester, in 1907, and was played as a morris dance at the Rush-Cart Ceremony at Moston – *Folk Song and Dance*, Kidson and Neal.

The Cockfight (The Bonny Grey)

In *The Manchester Racing Calendar* (1760-1800), rules were quoted for 'Matching and Fighting of Cocks' which were said to date from the reign of Charles II. Obviously a well established national sport. The 'original' of this ballad seems to have celebrated a well known match in the time of the 12th Earl of Derby (died 1834), who supported the Prescott lads as opposed to the Liverpool lads. A version of this is printed from a broadside in Harland and Wilkinson's *Ballads and Songs of Lancashire* (1865), and another version, from Casterton, just north of the Lancashire-Westmoreland border, is in *The Penguin Book of English Folk Songs*. The set of

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words we use was supplied to A. L. Lloyd by James Hamilton of Hunslet (1951) and is printed in *Come All Ye Bold Miners* (Lawrence and Wishart 1952.)

Haley Paley

Around Christmas time in Ripon children sang this song from door to door as recently as the 1940s and its pathetic sentiments were intended to wring money as well as tears from every householder. Early on New Year's Day the people in the big houses invited children over the threshold and *Haley Paley* was followed by the Lucky Birding chant:-

*Lucky bu'd lucky bu'd chuck chuck chuck
Master and missis it's time to get up
If you don't get up you'll have no luck
Lucky bu'd, lucky bu'd chuck chuck chuck*

Words and tune remembered by Mrs. Lilian Hillery of Ripon.

With Henry Hunt we'll Go

The great radical meeting at St. Peter's Field in Manchester on the 16th August, 1819, has become part of the City's 'folk' history. Weavers, spinners, and hatters from all over the towns around Manchester, converged on what is now St. Peter's Square, to demand what would now be regarded as basic human

rights. The City Magistrates instructed the Yeoman Cavalry to disperse the meeting. This they did, with excessive zeal, to the extent that the meeting became popularly known as the 'Peterloo Massacre' (The time was not long after Waterloo). The two main characters in the ballad are Henry Hunt, a radical leader who would probably be recognised as a 'left' demagogue these days, and Joseph Nadine, who could roughly be described as the Police Chief of that time. Regarding the ballad itself, it was thought that only a fragment existed, but in 1969, the 150th anniversary of Peterloo, when Harry Boardman was providing the songs for a TV programme on the Massacre, the historian Joyce Marlow came across a fuller parallel version entitled *Along with Hunt we'll Go*. So we are indebted to Miss Marlow for this version.

The Ensilver Song

Once sung all over rural Yorkshire, marriage-songs were used for 'Singing 'em happy' at weddings. With Ensilver money distributed by the bridegroom the men of the village adjourned to an inn and sang catch-songs, each man taking his turn with a verse. Versions of marriage-songs are to be found in Richard Blakeborough's *Wit, Character, Folk lore and Customs of the North Riding of Yorkshire* and in *Wensleydale* by Pontefract and Hartley. The unusual tune used here is published in *Music of the Yorkshire Dales* by J.

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Sutcliffe Smith.

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Introduction by Lesley Boardman

Notes on Songs by Harry Boardman and Dave Hillery

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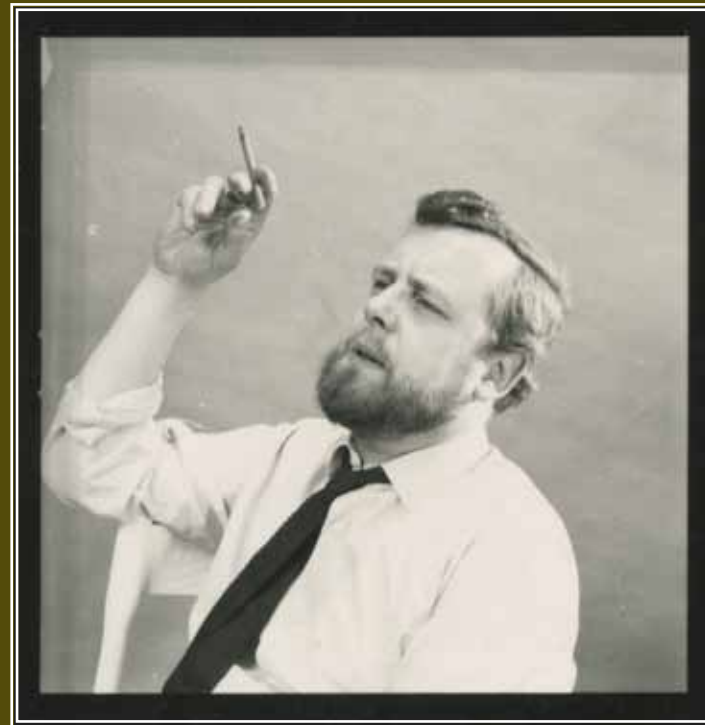
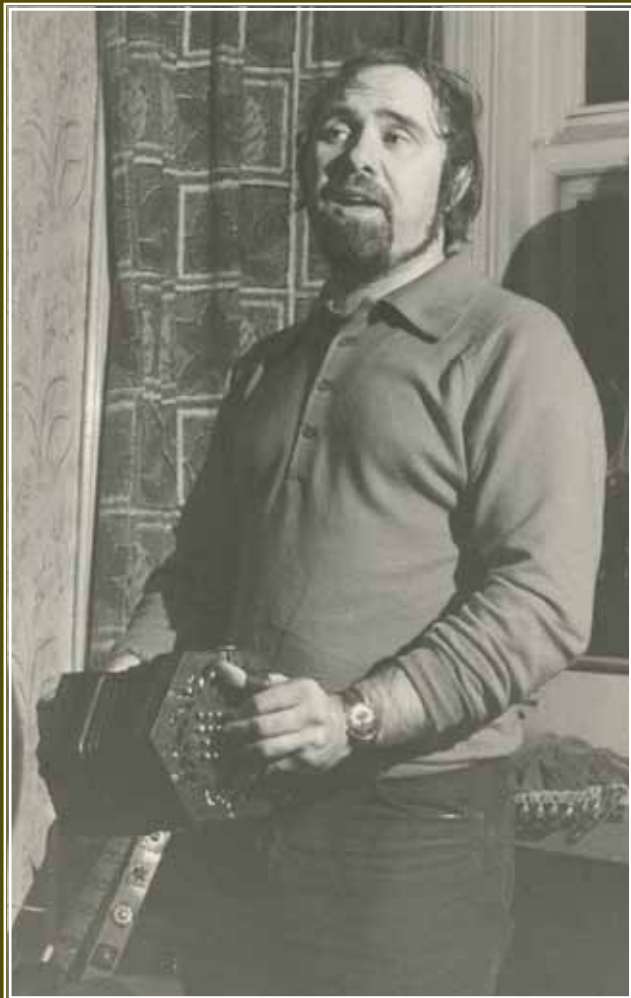
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