



*The
Moon Shone
Bright*

*The
Broadside
from Grimsby*

*Songs & Ballads
collected in Lincolnshire*

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Songs and Ballads collected in Lincolnshire

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14. The Banks of Sweet Dundee



John Conolly, Tom Smith,
Bill Meek, Brian Dawson, Mike Lee
(Guitars, accordion, melodeon, banjo, fiddle,
dulcimer, mandolin, whistle and voices)

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The Broadside are the resident group and main organisers of Grimsby Folk Song Club. They prefer to remain as semi-professionals since all are well established in jobs. They have been heard at most of the major festivals, have appeared on TV and radio and have made three previous LPs. They form a ceilidh band and are much in demand for dances.

Apart from their own songs, they sing and play a wide variety of material, and over the past three years have concentrated on adding to their repertoire as many as possible of the songs of their native Lincolnshire. Instrumentally, their aim is to create a background suitable to the type of song, and to establish a blend of instruments and voice which allows the words to be clearly heard and appreciated.

Lincolnshire Folk Songs

The collecting of traditional songs in Lincolnshire began seriously in 1905 when a folk-singing competition was organised as part of the North Lincolnshire Music Festival at Brigg. Frank Kidson was the judge and Percy Grainger, the young Australian composer and pianist, and Lucy Broadwood were there noting down the tunes.

The following year Grainger was back in the area with an Edison-Bell phonograph to start collecting in scientific earnest. He was the first collector in Britain to use a mechanical recording apparatus. He hectographed his notations of the many songs he obtained in 1905 and 1906 (he phonographed a lot more in 1908 and very few of them have yet been transcribed from his wax cylinders). His published findings concerning the scales and ornaments employed by traditional singers - findings which are supported by his recordings (preserved by the Percy Grainger Library Society at his former home at White Plains, New York) - caused some consternation amongst the high priests of the Folk-Song Society.

Nine of the songs here were collected by Grainger in 1905 and 1906. Other collectors have been active in Lincolnshire in more recent times, albeit on a smaller scale. In 1957 the great lady of Lincolnshire folklore, Ethel Rudkin, assembled several singers at her home at Willoughton where they were tape-recorded by Stanley Ellis of the School of English, Leeds University. *The Broadside* sing five of the songs obtained on that occasion.

The Songs

Seventeen come Sunday, from Fred Atkinson of Redbourne, 1905. A fine sturdy Dorian tune to one of the most widely-known sets of words. When Grainger published the song in 1912 he had to omit the seventh stanza.

Lincolnshire Wedding Song

The collectors of Grainger's time disregarded songs of music-hall origin. Such songs, nevertheless, had become part of the repertoire of many rural singers and so subject to some extent to the processes of oral transmission and alteration that had moulded songs of longer pedigree. The 'Wedding Song' is one of those later productions. Its singer, William Hooker Hill of Tetford, said in 1957: "This is one we'd sing at weddings. I've sung it at several. It's an owd un." A more usual title is *Don't Forget the Cradle*.

The Bold Grenadier, from the singing of Luther (Luke) Stanley of Barrow-on-Humber. It is often called *The Soldier and the Lady*. Freud would have been interested in its symbolism. Luke's tune is a member of the *Polly Oliver* Family. John Conolly sings it here in the ornamented style of Joseph Taylor.

The Gardener and the Ploughman, from George Leaning of Barton-on-Humber, 1906. More usually known as *The Painful (or Faithful) Plough*. One of a class of songs proclaiming the value of the farm worker. The tune is a relative of Benjamin Britten's Suffolk pub tune to *The Foggy Dew*.

Free and Easy, from Bryan Cooper of Barrow-on-Humber, 1906. A rare song. Both words and tune have an eighteenth-century flavour. There is a version in W. Henderson's *Victorian Street Ballads*.

The Outlandish Knight, also from Luke Stanley, 1957. An ancient and widespread ballad. Most singers with any repertoire had a version. B.H. Bronson gives 149 sets. A.L. Lloyd states that 250 versions have been collected in Germany, 80 in Poland, 60-odd from France and French Canada, and about 50 from Hungary, etc. Professor Child draws attention to the ballad's affinity with the Bluebeard story. Luke's tune belongs to the vast 'Villikins and his Dinah' family.

Caistor Fair (or Old John Wallace), from Robert Brader. A nonsense song concerning the incompetence of one Farmer Brown. There are several references to Lincolnshire localities and the words are undoubtedly a local production. Tune and chorus are relatives of those of *Richard of Taunton Dene*.

Dicky Turpin, from Mr. Dean Robinson of Scawby Brook, 1906. Mr. Robinson sang it in a mixed mode. Turpin was a villainous butcher of Whitechapel who increased his profits by rustling sheep and eventually turned highwayman. He was hanged at York in 1739 for stealing horses in Lincolnshire. The famous ride to York was not his at all, but was accomplished much earlier by another highwayman named Nevison. Turpin has been romanticised as a hero in a novel, W.H. Ainsworth's *Rookwood*, and in several ballads.

Lisbon. A ballad of the Napoleonic Wars and concerning a would-be-transvestite heroine, from the singing of Mr. Deene of Hibaldstow, 1905. The tune is a mixolydian relative of the well-known one to *The Lincolnshire Poacher*.

The American Stranger, from George Wray of Barton-on-Humber, 1906. An uncommon song, though it appeared on broadsides issued by Such. It is thought to have originated shortly before the American War of Independence. George Wray's text has been augmented by Bill Meek. The tune is found also in association with *Bristol City*.

Maria Marten, from Joseph Taylor, 1905. A once-popular Catnach ballad concerning the murder by William Corder of Maria Marten in the Red Barn. Corder's hanging at Bury St. Edmunds on 11th August, 1828 was witnessed by a crowd of 7,000. The museum there contains some gruesome relics. Joseph Taylor's version of the ballad was fragmentary and his tune really only half of one - the second half of *Dives and Lazarus*.

The Poacher, from the singing of Joseph Leaning of Barton-on-Humber, 1906. Broadside copies issued in the north of England during the first part of the nineteenth century were commonly entitled *The Poacher's Fate*. The song has rarely been collected from oral tradition. It reflects some of the bitterness of the long poaching-war that followed the wholesale land-enclosures of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Creeping Jane, a horse-racing song from Joseph Taylor of Saxby-All-Saints, the finest English traditional singer ever recorded. With this song he won first prize in the 1905 Brigg Festival. He had learnt it around 1840 from an old woman in Binbrook.

The Banks of Sweet Dundee, also from Robert Brader of Thimbleby, 1957. A common nineteenth century ballad. Grainger collected several sets in Lincolnshire. The heroine shows the same resourcefulness as the young lady in the much older tale of *The Outlandish Knight*.

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The Moon
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