

# The Rose of Britain's Isle

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### **The Rose of Britain's Isle/Glorishears**

Serving boy gets the merchant's daughter. A favourite theme among domestics, who were great buyers of broadsides. Originally set in Lancashire, this song was issued by several northern broadside printers, notably George Walker of Durham and Harkness of Preston. It didn't survive well in England, but flourishes vigorously in Newfoundland, from whence this version comes. To compensate for its being a 're-importation', a morris tune from Field Town, Oxfordshire, has been tagged on.

### **Up in the North**

This moral tale of the awful consequences of taking the wrong decision in courtship was collected in Oxfordshire in 1969 by John Baldwin.

### **Hunsden House/Whimbleton House**

Two country dance tunes surviving from the seventeenth century, because they're good tunes, but also because they were perpetuated in print in some editions of the popular tune-book, Playford's *English Dancing Master*, that ran to eighteen editions from 1650 onwards.

### **Queen of the May**

Early in the twentieth century, this song was current all over England. Frank Kidson collected it in Yorkshire, Alfred Williams found it at Brize Norton, Oxfordshire, and Cecil Sharp met it so often in the West Country that finally he said: 'The words are so well known that it is not necessary to print them.'

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### **Old Man Jones**

Written by Bill Caddick about a tramp who wanders around the shopping centre in Wolverhampton with two beautifully kept dogs at his side.

### **Not for Joe/Three-Handed Reel/Not for Joe/Much Wenlock Jig**

Four morris dance tunes from the Welsh border area, complete with a fragment of song from one of the dances.

### **Weyhill Fair**

The fair at Weyhill, near Andover, Hants, has been held continuously for at least eight hundred years. In the eighteenth century it was one of the greatest horse fairs in the country, and Daniel Defoe wrote about it. Only the words of the ballad survived, so Roy Palmer fitted to them the tune of a comparable Yorkshire song, *Sledburn Fair*.

### **The Milkmaid's Song**

The major part of this song (the tune and some of the words) comes from Mrs. Leather's *Folklore of Herefordshire*, the rest from *Folk Songs and Ballads of the Brazil family of Gloucestershire* by Pete Sheppard.

### **The Rising Sun/The Crown**

From: 'An Extraordinary Collection of Pleasant and Merry Humours never before Published, Containing Hornpipes, Jiggs, North Country Frisks, Morris's bagpipe, hornpipes and Rounds, with Several Additional fancies added fit for all those that play publick. London. Printed for and sold by Daniel Wright, Musical Instrument Seller, next Dore to the Sun Tavern near Brook Street, Holbourne.' c.1715.

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### **Sweet Swansea**

Collected by Fred Hamer from the excellent Shropshire singer, May Bradley. Two of the gypsy families who travelled the Welsh borders were the Smiths and Bradleys; they were always fighting and still have occasional scraps in Ludlow where both families have settled and, strangely enough, constantly intermarry. May Bradley says the song was written by her 'double great grandfather', a Smith, whilst in gaol for trespassing with his caravan.

### **The White Joak/The Yellow Joak**

From an 18th century collection of tunes published by John Walsh, 'Musick Printer and Instrument Maker to His Majesty'. This contained the Black, White, Red, Brown and Yellow Joaks, of which the Black variety has survived in a great many forms among traditional musicians. Like the Adderbury morris dance, these Joaks have a six-bar phrase followed by one of ten bars.

### **The Lady and the Soldier**

An Appalachian version of a ballad once so admired in England that a seventeenth century set of it was printed as 'The Master-piece of Love Songs'. The London broadside printing firm of Henry Such did good business with it during the nineteenth century, and it was a favourite of one of the great old singers, Henry Hills, of Lodsworth, Sussex, who said: 'just take up a stone and rattle it on the handle of the plough and sing ... and the horses would go along as pretty and as well as possible.' For some reason, it has rarely been found in England during the twentieth century, but American versions, only slightly different from the Such broadside, abound.

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### **Fireside Polka/Down Sides and Up the Middle**

A tune by Sue followed by a polka from Devonshire.

To ask a Scotsman to write about two English musicians playing English dance music and singing English country songs might sound a trifle incongruous. However, coming from an area where box players are thick on the ground, I feel a natural affinity for the music of John Kirkpatrick and Sue Harris.

I saw John for the first time in the summer of 1971 at Falmouth Folk Festival, singing and playing the Anglo Concertina and Button Accordion. On coming to Scotland in April 1972 for a week's singing, John brought with him his wife, Sue, from Coventry. Sue, by then, had joined him, singing and playing oboe to form a blend of English music which had never been heard in Scotland before.

On a hilarious trip to Irvine, on the West coast of Scotland, with the late Davy Stewart, Aberdeenshire accordionist and singer supreme, Davy said, "These two are the best pair I have ever seen" - no mean accolade from one of the doyens of Scottish Traditional Music. Davy's army of friends and relations all over Britain will vouch for the fact that he did not scatter remarks like this freely.

Their introduction to folk music in England originally emanated from the dancing side and this has always shown in their music, The fine singing of Sue Harris and the skill she employs in her oboe playing form a perfect complement to John's instrumentation.

These two young people are bringing a life and zest to English dance music and song in the tradition of the English country players. The dissection and discussion of folk music has its place, but to enjoy playing and to play for the enjoyment of others must surely transcend all other factors. John and Sue are doing this today.

### **John Watt**

*Chairman, Traditional Music & Song Association of Scotland.*



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