

Down The Long Road

Bob Davenport

*Jim Bainbridge, Lucy Farr, Frances Geraghty, Johnny Gorman,
Paul Gross, Reg Hall, The Leeds Band, Jimmy Power, The Rakes,
Tommy Sheridan, Webb's Wonders*

- 1 **Navy Boots** (*acc. Band*)
- 2 **Down The Long Road**
- 3 **The Rambling Man**
- 4 **Barn Dance Selection - Louis James' Quadrille**
/The Dancing Dustman - Webb's Wonders
- 5 **When I Was Single**
- 6 **I'm a Poor Unhappy Married Man**
- 7 **When There Isn't a Girl About/Peggy Wood**
Looking For a Partner jig selection - The Leeds Band
- 8 **Wild Wild Whiskey**
- 9 **Whiskey in the jar**
- 10 **Reels The Steam Packet/The Sligo Maid - Band**
- 11 **Herbert Smith's Polka - Webb's Wonders**
- 12 **One Day While in the North Country**
- 13 **A-Begging I Will Go**
- 14 **The Wealthy Squire**
- 15 **By Tyne's Bonny Banks**
- 16 **Once I Had an Old Hen**
- 17 **Polka Medley Jenny Lind/JB Milne/
The Girl with the Blue Dress On - The Leeds Band**
- 18 **Bogie's Bonnie Belle**
- 19 **Irish Molly Barn Dance**
- 20 **a Toast**
b **The Blarney Stone** (*acc. Band*)

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Recorded and Produced by Tony Engle, London, April / May 1975



The Singer

Bob Davenport has one of the most distinctive styles and one of the widest repertoires of any singer performing in the folk clubs, yet he has never made a solo LP. He has been asked to do so in the past, but has preferred to record with bands such as The Rakes, Marsden Rattlers and the Boldon Banjos to convey his experience of, and respect for, the tradition in its social setting.

The band most associated with Bob Davenport is The Rakes, who have been together now for many years with the same original line-up - Michael Plunkett and Paul Gross, fiddles, and Reg Hall, melodeon. Bob and The Rakes first met in Camden Town, northwest London, at a time when Camden Town was famous for the Irish music being played in pubs such as The Laurel Tree, Camden Stores and The Bedford Arms. Most parts of London have Irish communities and Irish music in the pubs, including the East End. Paddy and Win Geraghty have great parties in their terraced house just off the Mile End Road. It was at one of these parties that Jimmy Power, Lucy Farr, Johnny Gorman, Tom Sheridan, Frances Geraghty plus The Rakes, provided the music. Bob was there and asked these musicians, whom he had known for many years, to be on this LP. Frances Geraghty, Paddy and Win's daughter, was taught the flute by Johnny Gorman. Johnny Gorman is the nephew of the late Michael Gorman, the great fiddle player from Co. Sligo. It is fitting that a member of this talented family should be represented here, for Michael Gorman was an influence on both Bob and The Rakes. When he played at The Bedford Arms, musicians such as Jimmy Power, Andy O'Boyle, Bobby Casey, Paddy Breen, Seamus Ennis and many more travelled from all over London to play in his company.

It was at The Bedford that Bob first sang in public and Michael Gorman greatly encouraged him. When Margaret Barry and Bob sang **The Blarney Stone** together, people said you need not ask where The Bedford was for **The Blarney Stone** could be heard all over Camden Town. On this LP Bob is pleased to have other musicians that he respects and with whom he has sung at folk clubs, concerts and festivals. Webb's Wonders, The Leeds Band and Jim Bainbridge often play for dancing, but are equally at home playing for the locals in the public bar. It is impossible in the short amount of time the musicians have on this LP to convey the depth of both their individual and collective talent. However, if at any time you are in their company you will be able to enjoy a dance, a sing-song and hear some very fine traditional music.

Jean Oglesby & Jane Winder

The Music

The family who lived above my mother and me in Queen Street, Gateshead, Co. Durham, were from Ireland. My mother, who was a widow, had a radio bought out of the compensation awarded her when my father was killed in an accident. It was quite a powerful set and so whenever Radio Athlone's Ceilidh Hour was on Mr and Mrs Airedale would knock down, we would turn the volume up and away they would go into half-sets across the thin council house floor. Some years later, when I went into the pubs in Camden Town to have a drink and a crack at the end of the week, the music being played in the bar was Radio Athlone live. An idea of the music and the atmosphere of a London pub comes over on the LP *Paddy in The Smoke* on Topic TSCD603. It was a great honour for me to be asked by Michael Gorman to sing at The Bedford and to be accompanied by him and the other musicians associated with that pub.

The Blarney Stone I learned from Margaret Barry. **Navy Boots** I first heard sung by Paddy Breen. **Wealthy Squire** and **Whiskey in the Jar** I learnt from Seamus Ennis, for me the finest Irish piper, though another great piper, Willy Clancy, could be heard in Camden Town at that time, so you can get an idea of the standard of the Irish music in that district of northwest London. The standard continues to be as high and the musicians on this LP are some of those that maintain that standard. My thanks to Jimmy Power, Lucy Farr, Johnny Gorman, Tom Sheridan, Frances Geraghty, Michael Plunkett, Paul Gross and Reg Hall, not only for playing on this LP, but also for giving me such great music and good company over the years.

Besides enjoying the accompaniment of The Rakes for many years and being strongly influenced by their approach to traditional music I have also been lucky in knowing and working with so many musicians in other parts of the country. So I would like to thank Webb's Wonders, The Leeds Band and Jim Bainbridge, one of the original members of the Marsden Rattlers, for playing on this LP.

Regarding the songs on this record, I should prefer to write down the names of the people they bring to mind rather than go into the printed sources. In some cases I have learned the song wholly or partly from them or been influenced by their way of singing it to me. Margaret Barry, Paddy Breen and Seamus Ennis I have already mentioned. The Stewarts of Blair sing **Rambling Man** though I use a different tune - **The Bandy-legged Mule; I'm a Poor Unhappy Married Man** I got from Willy Scott and Tommy Bonner. **Wild Wild Whiskey** I wrote; but I think of Buddy Guy the blues singer and the goodtime we had together at the 1967 Mariposa Festival in Canada. **Tyne's Bonny Banks** comes from a 78 of Frank Quinn and I have changed it a bit. Frank was originally from Co. Longford but emigrated to the United States where he made quite a few records. Mention of 78s brings Reg Hall and Bill Leader to mind and they certainly opened my ears to the amount of traditional material that was issued on disc in the old days. **Once I Had An Old Hen** - Francis Shergold of the Bampton Morris sings a version of this. **Bogie's Bonnie Belle** I learnt from Davie Stewart, for me one of the finest singers from the North East of Scotland.

As to the tunes, both **Irish Molly Barn Dance** and **The Dancing Dustman** come from Regal 78s made by the outstanding traditional button accordeon playing **Wyper Brothers**; the former tune from Dan, the second from Peter. **The Sligo Maid** has long been associated with Michael Gorman. Both **Herbert Smith's Polka** and **Louis James' Quadrille** are named after their sources - both fiddlers, one from Norfolk and the other from New Orleans. **J B Milne** came indirectly from the fine Northumberland mouth-organ player Billy Atkinson, whilst **Looking for a Partner** can be associated with Jimmy Shand. Jenny Lind occurs over and over again in the tradition but this version probably owes most to Scan Tester, the Sussex concertina player and Walter Bulwer, a fiddle player from Shipdam in Norfolk.

Bob Davenport

The Leeds Band are
Martin Clarke melodeon
Don Mackay melodeon
Jackie Wright mandolin banjo
Jim Wright banjo

The Rakes are
Reg Hall melodeon
Michael Plunkett fiddle
Paul Gross fiddle

Webb's Wonders are
Tony Engle anglo-concertina
Peta Webb fiddle
Alan Ward cello
Ken Lees banjo

Lucy Farr, Paul Gross and **Jimmy Power** play fiddle
Frances Geraghty and **Johnny Gorman** play flute
Tommy Sheridan plays uilleann pipes
Reg Hall plays piano with the band
and also with **Jim Bainbridge** melodeon

The Jim Bainbridge track was recorded by Seamus Ewens and is included by permission of Bill Leader - Leadersound.



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