

The High Level Ranters

Ranting Lads

Alistair Anderson *English concertina, vocal*

Tom Gilfellon *vocal, guitar, cittern*

Johnny Handle *vocal, accordion, piano, Northumbrian pipes*

Colin Ross *fiddle, Hardanger fiddle, Northumbrian pipes,*

whistle, gew-gaw, vocal

- 1 **Jigs: Fairly Shot of Her/A Wife of My Own**
Colin *fiddle/pipes*, Alistair *concertina*, Tom *cittern*, Johnny *accordion*
- 2 **Dance to Yer Daddy**
Johnny *vocal/accordion*, Colin *gew-gaw/Hardanger fiddle*,
Alistair *concertina*, Tom *guitar*
- 3 **The Lass Doon on the Quay**
Tom *vocal*, Johnny *chorus/piano*, Colin *fiddle*
- 4 **The Kielder Hunt**
Johnny *vocal*, Tom, Colin, Alistair *chorus*
- 5 **Hornpipes: Alston Flower Show/Jane of Biddlestone**
Colin *fiddle*, Alistair *concertina*, Johnny *accordion*, Tom *guitar*
- 6 **Fortune Turns the Wheel**
Tom *vocal*, Colin *pipes/fiddle*, Alistair *concertina*, Johnny *accordion*
- 7 **Fenwick of Bywell**
Johnny *pipes*, Colin *pipes*, Alistair *concertina*, Tom *cittern*
- 8 **Elsie Marley/Hoop Her and Gird Her**
Johnny *vocal/accordion*, Colin *fiddle/chorus*,
Tom *guitar/cittern/chorus*, Alistair *concertina*
- 9 **Captain Bover/Here's the Tender Comin'/Success to the Fleet**
Tom *vocal*, Colin *fiddle/pipes*, Alistair *concertina*,
Johnny *accordion/chorus*
- 10 **Proudlock's Hornpipe/ The Hesleyside Reel**
Colin *pipes*, Johnny *accordion*, Alistair *concertina*, Tom *guitar*
- 11 **Stanley Market**
Tom *vocal*, Johnny *piano/chorus*, Colin *whistle*, Alistair *concertina*
- 12 **Hornpipes: The Marquis of Waterford/Bottle Bank/The Hawk**
Colin *fiddle*, Alistair *concertina*, Johnny *accordion*, Tom *guitar*

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Recorded in Stanley and Newcastle, December 1975 and March-April 1976.

Recorded and produced by Tony Engle.

Notes by The High Level Ranters.

Sleeve design by Tony Engle.

Front sleeve: reproduction of painting by W. B. Scott,

"Wallington - Industry on The Tyne" by courtesy of The National Trust.



The High Level Ranters are among the liveliest folk music groups in these Islands. They are a foursome - Alistair Anderson, Tom Gilfellon, Johnny Handle, Colin Ross - but their great instrumental versatility makes it seem that they number many more than four. The instruments they handle include Northumbrian small pipes, fiddle (both the conventional kind and the sort with sympathetic strings, called the "Hardanger fiddle", popular in Norway), concertina, accordion, piano, guitar, cittern (a flat-backed lute much in vogue in Tudor England), tin whistle and gew-gaw (jew's harp). The solo singers are Tom Gilfellon and Johnny Handle, men of renown. An important feature of their work is their eager, fruitful search through old fiddlers' and pipers' tune books and early printed collections looking for local music to add to their already vast repertory. Of course it stands them in good stead, as purveyors of some of the most dashing instrumental music on the go, that they have the marvellous tradition of north-eastern dance melody to draw on. The High Level Ranters sound good on record. They sound even better live, especially on their home ground, The Folk Song and Ballad club at The Bridge Hotel, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

A. L. Lloyd

The Tunes

Fairly Shot of Her/A Wife of My Own

Fairly shot of her, fairly shot of her
Buried me wife and danced on top of her

This fine spirited jig found its way from the manuscript collection of Robert Bewick (son of Thomas Bewick the engraver) to the "Northumbrian Minstrelsy" (1882) and from there to us. **A Wife of My Own** is another jig but in 9/8 time. This version is from the manuscript of William Vickers, a Northumbrian fiddler of the late 18th century.

Alston Flower Show/Jane of Biddlestone

We play two versions of **Alston Flower Show**. The first we have from Joe Hutton who learnt it from the Bewcastle fiddlers: the second is from Billy Pigg. We follow these with one of Billy's own tunes.

Fenwick of Bywell

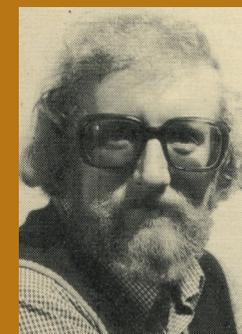
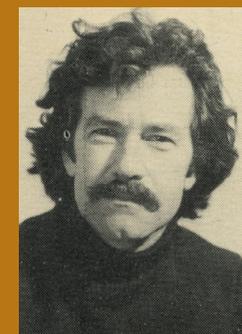
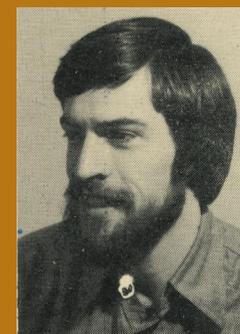
In older collections this tune is known as *Newmarket Races* and is based on an older tune, probably Scottish, called *Johnny Cock up Thy Beaver*. This version has three main themes and three variations.

Hoop Her and Gird Her

An old Northumbrian jig rather similar to **Elsie Marley**. This version is from Kohler's "Violin Repository".

Success to the Fleet

Another tune from the fascinating manuscript of William Vickers.



The Songs

Dance to Yer Daddy

Words and tune from the fourth volume of Catcheside Warrington's "*Tyneside Songs*" (1927). Learnt at school; still a very popular song in the area. This is a version of the instrumental which we recorded on our earlier Topic LP *Northumberland For Ever* in 1968.

The Lass Doon on the Quay

A music hall song which we have not yet found in print. It appears to be widely known in the North-East in fragmentary form. The version here is from the singing of James Boyles of Sunderland.

The Kielder Hunt

Words from "*Wanny Blossoms*", a collection of Northumbrian poems by William Armstrong, published in the late 19th century. Tune from the singing of Willie Scott, the Border shepherd. The fox in this song must have a close relationship to other 'giant' folk animals like the Boilhope Tup and the Derby Ram, as the country covered in the hunt is an enormous area. Kielder is a town in the North Tyne Valley, some 50 miles north-west of Newcastle, which has changed its environment from fells to forest since the song was written, and is soon to change again owing to the flooding of the Valley.

Fortune Turns the Wheel

A Scottish drinking song learnt from the singing of Louis Killen, who collected it from Alan Rogerson, in 1959. Alan is a shepherd who lives in the Wooler area of Northumberland. The song appears in print in Gavin Greig's Scottish collection, "*Folk-Song of the North-East*" (1907-11, reprinted 1963).

Elsie Marley

Words from Bell's "*Rhymes of Northern Bards*" (1812). Tune from "*The Northumbrian Minstrelsy*" (1882). Elsie Marley was the wife of an innkeeper at The Swan Inn, Picktree, in County Durham. The song seems to have been written in the early 18th century after she had her pockets picked of 20 guineas whilst in Newcastle, paying bills and visiting the fair. By all accounts she seems to have been a very convivial and popular host.

Here's the Tender Comin'

A press gang song which appears in both "*The Northumbrian Minstrelsy*" and Terry's "*Salt Sea Ballads*" (1931).

Captain Bover

This song is about a notorious press gang captain who was regarded locally with considerable dread. He gained the approval of the local authorities, however, and was given the honour of a burial in St. Nicholas Cathedral, Newcastle in 1782.

Stanley Market

This is a Tommy Armstrong song written around the turn of the 19th century, giving a graphic picture of the local market day. The tune is the well known **Fiery Clock Fyce**. A variant of this song is sung in Northumberland about Bedlington Market.



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