

Roy  
Harris



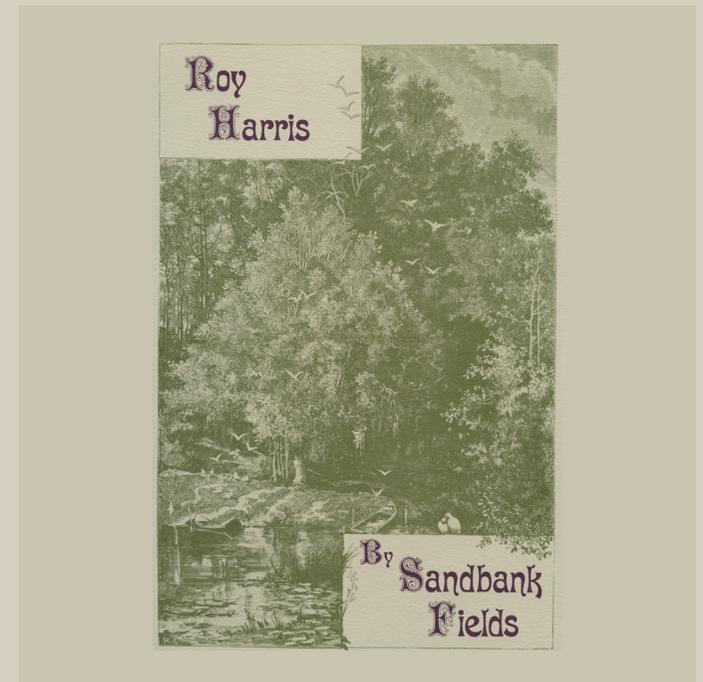
By  
Sandbank  
Fields

# ROY HARRIS

## By Sandbank Fields

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Produced by Tony Engle  
Notes by Roy Harris  
Sleeve design by Tony Russell



### *The Musicians*

**Roger Watson** plays English concertina on track 4, track 7, track 12, melodeon on track 1

**Helen Watson** plays harmonium on track 1, track 12

**John Adams** plays trombone on track 1, fiddle on track 4

**Sue Adams** plays triangle on track 1

**Neil Harris** plays dulcimer on track 9

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Folk revival songs I could call these, for I learned every one of them in the world of folk clubs. They are selections from the stage repertoire I use as a professional singer. I can't truly call myself a 'folk singer'. I was already in my 20s before I heard any such songs, neither does my style or status accord with what I consider a folk singer to be. I'd say 'folk song singer' is a better description. My style, I suppose, is what folk revival people consider to be a 'traditional' one although that's debatable too. A L Lloyd once described revival folkies as 'visitors to our tradition'. I include myself in that group and it's a visit I am delighted to have made. It would be a lesser life now without music such as this. To gain my songs I have used printed collections, recordings, the memories of old people, and the gifts of many other revival singers, famous and obscure. Shameless plundering, but I plead that I in turn pass songs to other people! The source for the songs on this record are:

#### **As I Was Going to Banbury**

From Gil Harper, a virtual founder of the folk scene in Nottingham.

#### **The Knight and the Shepherd's Daughter**

Percy Grainger collected this on his 1906 phonograph expedition into Lincolnshire. His singer was William Roberts of Burringham on Trent. I got it from A L (Bert) Lloyd, a champion song giver.

#### **The Baker of Colebrook**

From long-time colleague, Colin Cater. I don't know his source but the **1967 Journal of the EFDSS** carries a version of the song collected by George Gardiner in Hampshire in 1917.

#### **The 23rd of March**

**The Penguin Book of English Folk Songs** calls this *The Whale Catchers*, collected from Henry Hills of Lodsworth, Sussex, by Percy Merrick in 1900. I got it from the book in 1959.

#### **Go from My Window**

The situation is this. A woman has invited her lover for a visit. Bad weather brings her husband home early. The lover is at the window, the woman is in the kitchen with her baby. She pretends to sing the song to the baby, really she is warning the lover, but he's slow to cotton on. It's a common enough song but I can't recall how it came to me. I do know that I added the 'fare ye well' bit purely for effect!

#### **Think on This (When You Smoke Tobacco)**

A homily of enormous length called *Smoking Sanctified* was the source for this. By the time I got it, from Jim Peden of Liverpool, it was worn down to more singable proportions. Jim, a raving enthusiast for songs, Everton FC and steam railways, was leader of the Calton 3, a pioneer Liverpool folk group.

#### **The Dockyard Gate**

From Sam Larner. Listen to recordings of Sam and you'll learn what it is to identify with a song. Sam timed every word he sang and the result was joyous. He's dead now, but his records are there to teach us. I got this from a Larner recording with a few extra words from A L Lloyd.

#### **The Lady of Carlisle**

Hearing the American ballad singer Dillard Chandler sparked my interest in this song. His version was too American for me to sing without parody, but Bert Lloyd gave me one from Suffolk. Actually it's from Velvet Brightwell of Leiston, father of Jumbo Brightwell, a noted singer.

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### Robin Hood and Little John

A number of Robin Hood songs have the same story - meeting, challenging and being beaten by a stranger, calling up the gang and enlisting the doughty one as a recruit. A neat reversal of the old saying 'if you can't beat 'em, join 'em!' The changing of the name adds a bit to the story here. Words from Ritson's Robin Hood, tune from me, and a recording debut on dulcimer by my son, Neil. Welcome, son!

### Sandbank Fields

Well known and well liked in tradition but not sung overmuch by revival singers. I like the heroine's independent spirit, and her wit. She sets things right in her own way. A very up-to-date lady. The song is known as *Basket of Eggs* in the **The Penguin Book of English Folk Songs**, collected by Ralph Vaughan Williams from the celebrated Horsham singer Henry Burstow in 1903.

### The Spithead Sailor

appeared years ago in Eric Winter's magazine, **Sing** - I got it from there - but before that it was on a garland of the late 1700s called **Tibbie Fowler**. It doesn't relate strictly to events at the mutiny at Spithead but portrays the mood of the men who stood for their rights at that momentous occasion. In **Tibbie Fowler** and in **Sing** it was called *Honest Jack Tar* but I always think of it as the Spithead sailor's song, so that's its title to me.

### The Unhappy Parting

Otherwise called *The Sailor's Farewell* or *Our Captain Cried 'All Hands'*. Anne Cockburn of Nottingham found these words for me. They we're set to the tune of *Cupid's Courtesy* but I prefer to sing them to a variant of *Brave Wolfe*, a North American tune I think.

Roy Harris

In the course of singing these songs over the years I've probably altered them hugely from the way they came to me but I hope my informants won't think them too much harmed. My thanks to them all anyway. However, dear listener, don't run away with the idea that I spend my time singing nothing but songs such as these. After all, I have always loved singing and sung all the songs that were available to me. So, off-duty at least, these songs mix with the songs of Crosby, Jolson, Paul Robeson and Hank Williams, to name only four of my favourite singers. The real gift that the folk revival has given me is the knowledge of these traditional songs so that they can share a place in my affections with the radio songs I had known for years. I hope you will enjoy the songs here; if you want to learn any to sing yourself - go ahead! To Muckram Wakes, Alan Bailey, Tony and Neil - thanks, mates!



