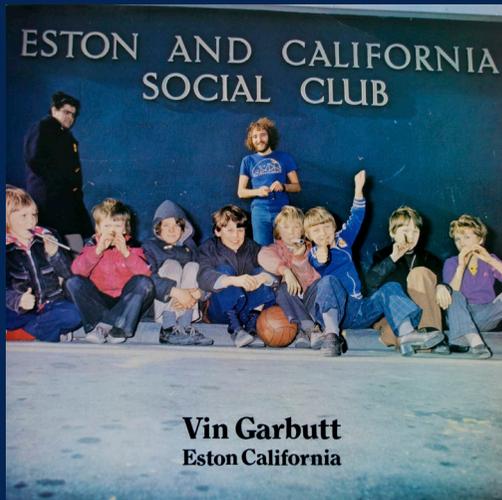


# ESTON AND CALIFORNIA SOCIAL CLUB





# Vin Garbutt

## Eston California

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First published by Topic 1977  
Recorded & Produced by Tony Engle in London 1977  
Photography by Dennis Weller

**Bantry Bay and Den Toppede Høne**

I start this record off with **Bantry Bay**, a nice little hornpipe with a couple of cheeky slides in it. I learnt it from an old recording of the legendary fiddler, Michael Coleman.

Paddy joins me on the second tune, **Den Toppede Høne**, a traditional Scandinavian piece which I learnt from the playing of traditional Danish folk group, Spillamans Lauget Tramp. It's usually played on a couple of fiddles but we've used tin whistles here 'cos fiddles make me lips sore.

**The Land of Three Rivers (John North)**

The ancient kingdom of Northumbria has a pretty rough time of it, what with one invasion after another. First the Romans, then the Vikings and the Picts and the Scots, not to mention the Norman Conquest; the Ship and the Poverina which are my local pubs in Eston and Normandy. Incidentally Normandy got its name from the Vikings i.e. village of the Norsemen. Anyway this song is about the character of the people who live where the Tyne, Wear and Tees meet the North's rolling sea.

**Gentle Annie**

When I left the chemical industry in 1969 to go on the road as a singer, I was given a great deal of encouragement by a fine singer of Australian songs. Martyn Wyndham Read ('dad' to his children) is the fella's name and this is one of the grand songs that he brought back to Britain for us. I think there's probably more than meets the eye with this one.

**The Belfast and The Japanese Hornpipes**

**The Belfast Hornpipe** (Paddy calls it the *Sweeps*) I first heard played by Mick Doonan of Hepburn (pronounced 'Hebben' as in 'I'm in .... when I hear you call') Me and Paddy have tried to do a bit of whistle weaving here.

John Bowe of London played the Japanese Hornpipe for me on his melodeon in virtuoso fashion and I couldn't resist working out a bit of harmony for it. John learnt this unusual tune from eighty-odd year old Johnny Doherty, a travelling Donegal fiddler and story teller.

**The Hartlepool Monkey**

This song was written in the early sixties by Tees-sider Alan Wilkinson, it's the true (?) story of how during the Napoleonic Wars, the people of Hartlepool tried and hanged a monkey as a French spy. Hartlepool is situated on the north side of the Tees Estuary on the South East corner of the old County of Durham but let me advise any stranger who is thinking of passing through not to mention the monkey in public and monkeys are advised not to pass through it at all.

**Tonto McGuire**

I had to laugh just trying to get into this one. It's an old tune named after one of the descendants of the half Irish Shoshone Indian chief, Sitting Doune who spent his life teaching the Swiss how to knock apples off people's heads with a bow and arrow. Rossini wrote this piece to commemorate the answer that the Lone Ranger gave Tonto when he was asked why he was carrying a dustbin (garbage can) on his back. The answer – 'to the dump, to the dump, to the dump, dump, dump etc.'

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### **The Ring of Iron**

The first local folk songs I ever heard were written by Graeme Miles (1.6093 km) of Middlesbrough and the **Ring of Iron** is probably his most popular. Written in 1962, it's a song about the ring of industry in the form of iron mines and steelworks that surround his home town, and the sanctuary of the even bigger ring of countryside that surrounds that. The title is often mistaken for a complaint, which is prevalent among Guinness drinkers.

By the way, they call Eston California Eston California because of the great iron rush in the 1820s.

### **Skibbereen**

**Skibbereen** is a song of emigration from the time of the great Irish famine of the 1840s when something like two thirds of the population of Ireland were forced to emigrate, mainly to the United States and Canada. Many an Irish family also found a new home in the working class districts of England where they found they had a lot in common with their new neighbours, especially poverty. My mother's parents brought this song with them when they moved to England in the 1890s. It's the story of a father answering his son on the question of why he left Ireland. The melody is not the one usually associated with Skibbereen.

### **Their Ulster Peace**

I started writing this song on my third trip to North America in 1976 after learning about the vast amounts of money raised, directly and indirectly, to buy arms for the various warring factions who kill people in Northern Ireland. Just before I left home I had been reading a newspaper report of an operation being carried out on a pregnant mother whose unborn baby had a bullet lodged in its spine. I finished the song in Denmark after a chat with some enlightened Danes.

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### **Tear the Calico and The Providence**

I can't remember where I picked these two tunes up but they're gooduns. Paddy joins me half way through.

### **The Waters of Tyne**

A song from the North East of England that was taught to many a schoolchild and never learnt 'cos what schoolkid wants to know about the sloppy goings on of a courting couple separated by a river? My sister Ellen refreshed my memory for this one. By the way, the phrase in the song 'to scull her' does not mean to put the loaf in.

Thanks to Paddy GS McEvoy for spontaneously joining me on his tin whistle, where he got that microphone from I'll never know, and thanks to the two Tonys for being so efficient (something I'm not used to) and for dissuading me from calling this album 'Sweet Wivelsfield.'

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