

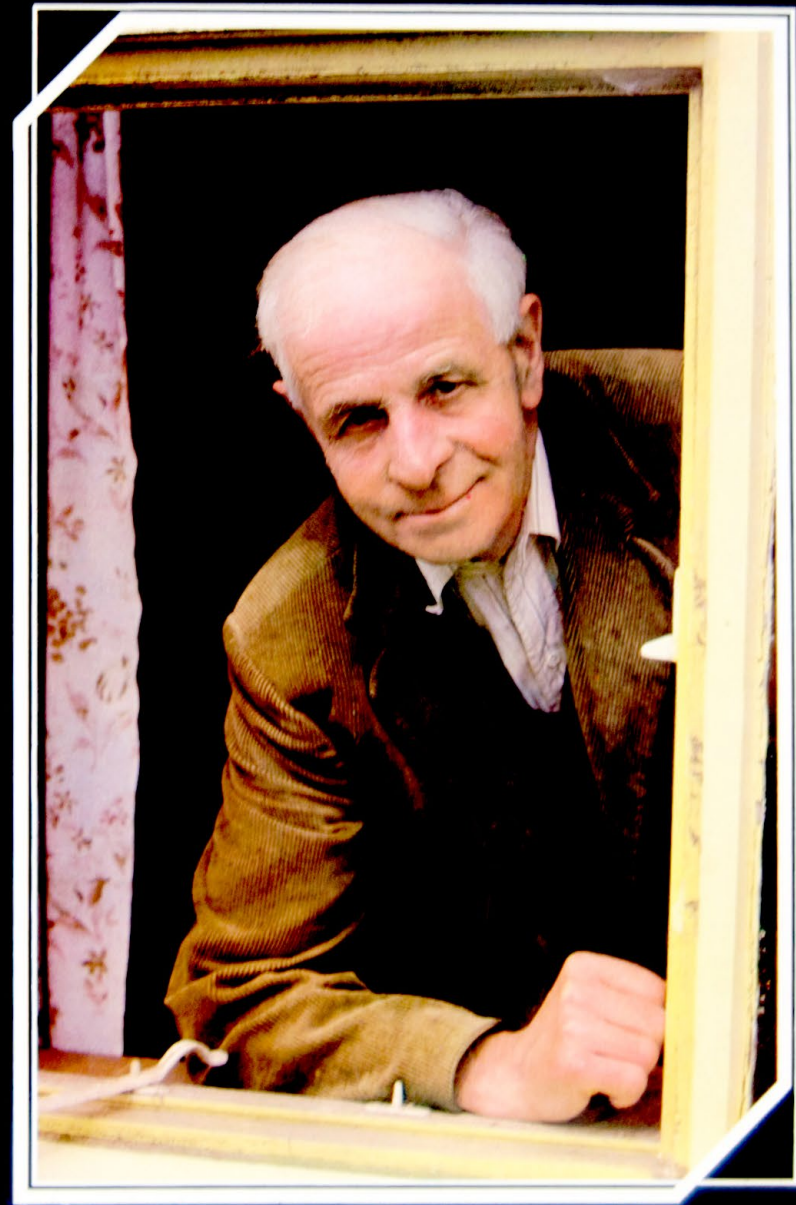
# A COUNTRY LIFE

WALTER PARDON

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Recorded by Mike Yates  
Produced by Mike Yates and Tony Engle  
Sleeve notes by A L Lloyd and Mike Yates  
Photography and notes by Mike Yates



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## A COUNTRY LIFE

### Recording Walter Pardon

*Gimingham, Trimmingham, Knapton and Trunch, Southrepps and Northrepps lay all in a bunch.*

For some reason it was always raining, the wind always blowing inland from the direction of Mundesley and Bacton, always leaving the taste of salt on my lips. Knapton lies a few miles from the small Norfolk town of North Walsham in a rich farming area of wheat and barley fields, of potato and sugar beet plots divided by small woods and copses; a land where red brick farm buildings break the skyline. From Knapton the fields dip gently down to the sea. The weather cock on the church tower must be visible from miles around. Walter Pardon's cottage stands to the side of the North Walsham road. He was born there on March 4th 1914 and has been a carpenter since 1928 when he began work in the nearby village of Paston. His uncle, Billy Gee (born 1863), shared the cottage and it was from Billy that Walter learnt most of his songs.

*I keep in my memory the love of the past,  
with me 'tis bright as of old.  
For deep in my heart it was planted to last;  
In absence it never grows cold.*

“He'd either sing them at night, here by the fire, or else, if it was raining and he couldn't work, we'd sit in the toolshed singing to one another. You see that big drum hanging up there... that was from the Knapton Drum and Fife Band. Uncle Billy played the fiddle with them. We didn't sing much in the pubs. Uncle Billy had done, in his youth. He picked up some songs in the 'Mitre Tavern' in North Walsham. But not me. I only sang at home.

“Uncle Billy told me that his father used to play the clarinet in the Church Band and that he had the words and music of the songs printed on sheets - broadsides you call 'em - but I never saw them, not that I can remember. Like you say, a lot of the songs are Irish. Peggy Bawn, The Bonny Bunch of Roses, and I think that when they built the North Walsham to Dilham canal in 1812-1827, that's when those songs came in around here, brought here by the Irish navvies.”

Most of the songs on this record come from Uncle Billy Gee. **Raggle Taggle Gypsies, Peggy Bawn, One Cold Morning in December, The Devil and the Farmer's Wife, An Old Man's Advice, A Country Life, Cupid the Ploughboy, Jack Hall, I Wish, I Wish, and Broomfield Hill. The Hungry Army** was also sung by Uncle Billy, although Walter's text has been augmented from a published copy. Similarly **The Dandy Man** was also sung by Uncle Tom Gee and Walter has again used a printed text to complete what was, for him, an incomplete song. The other song on the record, **The Bold Princess Royal**, was learnt from John Fish, an old gamekeeper from Trunch, when Walter was about 14 years old.

“The family sang it, but it was just like The Old Miser, same tune see, so I never bothered until I heard John Fish, and he taught it to me. No one else sang it that way - not round here, anyway.

“Seamus Ennis came by here in the 50s looking for music for the radio, but he missed me, 'cause nobody outside the family knew that I had the songs. I didn't know that any body was interested in 'em ... didn't even know that there was a festival in Norwich, the local reports didn't mention it. But then I got to thinking, sitting here by myself, and trying to remember 'em. It was years since I'd sung some of 'em. A Ship to Old England, The Dark-Eyed Sailor; there were some verses I just couldn't remember. Then Roger Dixon, who's related to me, gave me a tape recorder and I sang some of

them on to the tape. I reckon it took all winter to get them down, 'bout twenty of 'em. Roger gave the tape to Peter Bellamy and that was how I got known. A lot more songs come back to me since then."

The recordings heard on this record were made as part of a project to document and study Walter Pardon's complete repertoire - a project which, I am happy to say, has been enthusiastically welcomed by Walter Pardon himself. Usually Walter and myself have spent some time talking about his life and songs before beginning to record the songs in question. It seems to me that he has often become so absorbed in the memories surrounding these songs that when he begins to sing his voice takes on an added quality and intensity. It is almost as though past and present become merged into one.

Further details of Walter's life can be found in "Folk Review" Vol. 3, No. 10 (August, 1974) and "Folk News" Vol. 1, No.3 (August, 1977), whilst other songs can be heard on Walter's two previous albums, *A Proper Sort* and *Our Side of the Baulk*.

### **Raggle Taggle Gypsies** (Child 200)

It is almost certain that the ballad of *The Gypsy Laddie* is of Scots origin, with some commentators suggesting that it may contain remnants of the Celtic belief of fairy abduction. English 19th century broadsides usually include the line that the gypsies "Cast their *glamer* over her" with the added note that *glamer* means "a charm or spell". The ballad is still highly popular in Britain and North America and several fine recordings are available. See especially the versions by Harry Cox of Norfolk, Jeannie Robertson of Aberdeen and Paddy Doran of Belfast, Frank Proffit of North Carolina, O.J. Abbott of Canada and Robert Campbell, also of Canada.

- 1 Three gypsies came round to my door,  
Downstairs ran my lady-o.  
One sang high and one sang low  
And one sang bonny, bonny biscay-o.
- 2 Then she took off her silken gown  
And dressed in hose of leather-o.  
The dirty rags around my door,  
She's gone with the raggle-taggle-gypsies-o.
- 3 Was late at night my lord returned  
Enquiring for his lady-o.  
The servants one and all replied:  
"She's gone with the raggle-taggle-gypsies-o."
- 4 "Go harness up my milk white steed,  
Go fetch me my pony-o.  
And I will ride to seek my bride  
Who's gone with the raggle-taggle-gypsies-o."
- 5 He rode high and he rode low,  
He rode through the woods and copses too.

---

Until he came to a wide open field,  
There he espied his lady-o.

6 “Why did you leave your new-wedded lord,  
Your house and lands and money-o?  
To go and seek a roving life  
'Long with the raggle-taggle~gypsies-o.”

7 “What care I for my new-wedded lord,  
My house and lands and money-o?  
For I will seek a roving life  
Along with the raggle-taggle-gypsies-o.”

8 “Last night you slept in a goose feather bed  
With the sheets turned down so bravely-o.  
Tonight you'll sleep in the cold open fields  
Along with the raggle-taggle-gypsies-o.”

9 “What care I for a goose feather bed  
With the sheets turned down so bravely-o?  
For I will seek a roving life  
Along with the raggle-taggle-gypsies-o.”

### **Peggy Bawn**

The song *Peggy Bawn* was probably first printed in a Belfast Chapbook that bears the date 1764, although no printer's imprint is shown. In 1788 William Shield included it in his opera *Marian*.

The song later appeared in several Irish collections and Colm O'Lochlainn notes that it was “once very popular in Northern Ireland and among the Irish in Scotland.” Several English broadside printers also included the song among their wares - usually calling it *Peggy Band*. When I asked Walter why he used the spelling “Bawn” (rather than, say, “Bann”) he told me that, during the war, a visiting Irishman had spelt it thus when he had queried the point with him.

1 As I rambled over Highland hills,  
to a farmer's house I came.  
The night being dark and something wet,  
I ventured in the same;  
Where I was kindly treated and a pretty girl I spied,  
Who asked me if I had a wife, but marriage I denied.

2 I courted her all that long eve,  
until near the dawn next day.  
When frankly unto me she said,  
“Straight along with you I'll go,  
For Ireland is a fine country and you to the Scots are kin,  
So I will go along with you, my fortune to begin.”

3 The day-break being nearly come,  
I into the house was ta'en.  
When the good man kindly asked  
me if would wed his daughter Jane.  
“One hundred pounds I will give to you,  
beside, a piece of land.”  
But scarcely had he spoke the words,  
when I thought of Peggy Bawn.

4 “Your offer, sir, is very good, and I thank you too,” said I;  
“But I cannot be your son-in-law and  
I'll tell you the reason why:  
My business calleth me in haste,  
I am the King's messenger bound.  
I cannot be your son-in-law until I've seen  
the Irish ground.”

5 Oh, Peggy Bawn thou art my jewel  
and thy heart lies in my breast.  
Although we at a distance are,  
still I will love thee the best.  
Although we at a distance are,

---

and the seas between us roar,  
Yet I'll be constant Peggy Bawn, and adieu for ever more.

### **The Bold Princess Royal** (Laws K29)

Few sea songs can be so popular with folk-singers as this stirring tale. Of the song, Patrick O'Shaughnessy has written, "It is believed to originate from the time of the American War of Independence (1776) or shortly before," although the earliest text known to me is that printed by James Catnach c. 1820. Walter's text, with its ABBC verse pattern throughout, appears to be unique, although some Victorian broadsides - those by Such of London & Harkness of Preston, for example - include the pattern in the final verse. Other versions can be heard on record sung by Ned Adams of Sussex, Bob Copper of Sussex, Bob Hart of Suffolk and Sam Larner of Norfolk.

- 1 On the fourteenth day of February  
we sailed from the land  
We had forty bright seamen for our ship's company (X2)  
And so boldly from the eastward to the  
westward went we.
- 2 We had not been sailing far, in hours two or three  
When a full-rigged pirate ship to us did appear (X2)  
And when she espied us towards us did steer.
- 3 At length the bold pirate upon us drew nigh  
She came bearing down upon us to see  
what we were (X2)  
And under her mizzen black colours she wore.
- 4 Through his loud-speaking trumpet  
the Captain did hail,  
He shouted, 'Whence come ye? and whither ye go?' (X2)  
We have come from fair London and we're bound for Cairo

- 5 Then he shouted out orders for us to heave to  
'Oh Lord', cried our Captain,  
'What shall we do now?'' (X2)  
When a shot from her big guns roared over our prow.
- 6 To fight or surrender then surely we'll die  
'No, no', cried our chief mate, 'we will not do so (X2)  
We will take out our reef boys and from her we'll go'.
- 7 So we took out our reef boys and westward went we  
And though the bold pirate crowded on all sail (X2)  
The bold Princess Royal soon showed them her tail.
- 8 Up spoke our bold Captain, 'Outsailed them have we.  
Go down to your grog boys and be of good cheer (X2)  
While we have such seamen we never need fear.

### **One Cold Morning in December**

Several songs deal with the adventures, or should it be misadventures, of country youths in the cities. Scotland especially has several such pieces. Unlike our present song, however, the countryman usually gains the upper hand. Although I have been unable to trace **One Cold Morning in December** to a specific source I have found a parody **Never Ask the Reason Why** in "The London Favourite" (c.1875) a collection of songs made famous by Welford Vawn, "Author, Comic Artist and Dancer, only pupil of the Great Maclagan". Vawn's song is as follows:-

- 1 It was cold December, O well I do remember,  
I fell in love with such a charming girl,  
Her eyes they were so tender, her waist it was so slender,  
Her hair it hung around her tied in curls.  
*Chorus:*  
She said, come, come along old boy,  
And don't be so bashful and shy;

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Well, she was such a beauty, I thought it was my duty,  
So I went, and never asked the reason why.

- 2 I treated her to wine and brandy till  
    she fell in with a dandy,  
Of oysters they had just seven score.  
They had prateys half-a-dozen - said she, it is my cousin,  
And I know he will stand a half-a-dozen more.
- 3 This dandy come up to me,  
    and by the nose he pulled me;  
He said, Spooney, I come, what is the time of day?  
I began to mutter, so he knocked me in the gutter,  
And with the lady fair he walked away.
- 4 I lay there till next morning, and just as day was dawning  
Some bobbies came to the spot where I did lay;  
They picked me from the gutter, and laid me on a shutter,  
And to the station-house they carried me away.
- 5 Before the beaks next morning for  
    drink I was brought in;  
My wife was there with little John Mill;  
Was fined in shillings forty,  
    but they found my money sported,  
So they sent me seven days upon the mill.

*I Spooney = "a weak-minded and foolish person," according to "A Dictionary of Modern Slang, Cant and Vulgar Words" (1859).*

The following short poem would also seem to parody the song. It has been variously attributed to both Benjamin H. Burt and Aimor A. Dickson:-

---

One evening in October,  
When I was far from sober,  
And dragging home a load with manly pride,  
My feet began to stutter  
So I laid down in the gutter  
And a pig came up and parked right by my side.  
Then I warbled, "It's fair weather  
When good fellows get together",  
Till a lady by was heard to say:  
"You can tell a man who boozes  
By the company he chooses."  
Then the pig got up and slowly walked away.

Walter Pardon appears to be the only singer from whom this song has so far been collected.

- 1 One cold morning in December,  
    I've reason to remember,  
I fell in love with such a charming girl.  
Her eyes were bright and tender.  
    Her form was tall and slender,  
Her hair it hung around her head in curls.  
Chorus:  
And she said, "Come, come along old boy,  
And don't look so bashful and shy".  
She really was a beauty. I thought it was my duty,  
So I paid and never asked the reason why.
- 2 Along the streets together, regardless of the weather,  
She took me to a house that stood quite near.  
She closed the door behind me. To me she said so kindly,  
"It's warmer in the bed, love, than down here."
- 3 Into bed quite early, her hair so nice and curly,  
Beside me there upon the pillow lay.  
Her arms they clasped me tightly,

to me she said so brightly:  
 “You are the nicest boy I’ve seen today.”

- 4 Before next dawn was breaking,  
 my head was sore and aching  
 She said, “Dear I would love a jeweled ring.  
 Now there’s no need for worry,  
 there is no need for flurry,  
 We’ll turn this cold December into spring.”

- 5 ‘Twas early next morning, without any warning,  
 A man inside the bedroom did appear.  
 Before I’d time to holler, he grabbed me by the collar,  
 And quickly then he dragged me down the stair.

Final chorus:  
 And he said, “Come, come along old boy,  
 You’ve had your fun and now’s the time to fly.  
 When I began to mutter, he rolled me in the gutter.  
 I’d payed and never asked the reason why.

#### **The Devil and the Farmer’s Wife** (Child 278)

Walter regards *The Devil and the Farmer’s Wife* as little more than a humorous song, although his text - similar to that printed as *The Sussex Farmer* by John Pitts in the early 1800s – tells basically the same story as one recorded in a 6th century Hindu collection “The Panchatantra”. Perhaps at one time the farmer had made a pact with the Devil - a promise of help in exchange for a member of his family? - and there is certainly more to the song than is first apparent. Some singers have a whistled refrain - possibly as a charm against mentioning ‘Old Nick’ by name.

Other recorded versions can be heard sung by Ted Ashlaw of New York State, by Thomas Moran of Co. Leitrim, and Nimrod Workman.

- 1 It’s of an old farmer as I’ve heard tell  
 Had a wicked old wife and he wished her in Hell.  
 Chorus:  
 With me titty-fa-lol, wack fol-the-fol, X 2  
 Titty-fol-laddle-dy, Titty-fol-lol.
- 2 The Devil he came to the old man at plough  
 Saying, “I want your wife and I’ll take her now.”
- 3 “Oh, take my old woman with all my heart.  
 I hope you and she never will part.”
- 4 He shoved the old woman into a sack  
 And away he went with her slung on his back.
- 5 He tipped her out when he came to Hell’s gate  
 Saying, “Here’s an old woman who’ll make me a mate.”
- 6 And all the young imps they raised up a din,  
 “Oh, take her away, she’ll do us all in.”
- 7 He shoved the old woman into a sack  
 And to the old farmer he took her straight back.
- 8 So ends the story and you’ll all agree  
 That women are worse than men ever could be.

#### **An Old Man’s Advice**

In 1872 Joseph Arch (1826-1919) founded the first agricultural workers’ union, The Warwickshire Agricultural Labourers’ Union (later the National Agricultural Labourers’ Union), which lasted until the year 1896. Union activity was strong in Norfolk - Arch, in fact, became Liberal M.P. for N.W. Norfolk in 1885 - and in 1906 George Edwards, a Norfolk man, founded the Eastern Counties Agricultural Labourers’ and Small Holders’ Union, the

forerunner of the National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers. In 1922 Edwards published his autobiography, "From Crow-Scaring to Westminster", and Walter believes that **An Old Man's Advice** is based on Edwards' life; the chorus line "The work's begun, never to stop again" referring to the Union that Edwards founded in 1906. Several local people, including Walter, remember Edwards speaking in the district from the back of a farm wagon, and the photograph of him that is used in this booklet was provided by Walter himself.

- 1 My grandfather worked when he was very young  
And his parents felt grieved that he should.  
To be forced in the fields to scare away crows  
To earn himself a bit of food.  
The days they were long and his wages were but small,  
And to do his best he always tried.  
But times are better for us all  
Since the old man died.

Chorus:

For the union is started, unite, unite.  
Cheer up faint-hearted, unite, unite.  
The work's begun, never to stop again,  
Since the old man died.

- 2 My grandfather said in the noontide of life  
Poverty was a grief and a curse.  
For it brought to his home sorrow, discord and strife,  
And kept him poor with empty purse.  
So he took a bold stand and joined the union band,  
To help his fellow men he tried.  
A union man he vow'd he'd stand  
'Til the day he died

- 3 My grandfather's dead. As we gathered round his bed  
These last words to us he did say.  
"Don't let your union drop, nor the education stop,  
Or else you will soon rue the day.  
Get united to a man, for it is your only plan;  
Make the union your care and your pride.  
Help on reforming every way you can."  
Then the old man died.

See: National Agricultural Labourers' and Rural Workers' Union Song Book (Norwich c 1916)

### Uncle Walter's Tune

A melodeon tune that Uncle Walter Gee would play at Christmas time for step-dancers in Knapton. The A-part of the tune would seem to be related to the tune *Buffalo Girls* which, according to Samuel Bayard (see "Hill Country Tunes: Instrumental Folk Music of Southwestern Pennsylvania," Philadelphia, 1944), probably originated in Germany before being taken to America.

### A Country Life

**A Country Life**, or *Eggs For Your Breakfast in the Morning* to use its alternative title, was written by the Victorian music-hall singer Harry Linn, who, together with J.W. Rowley and E. Cunningham, made it into something of a hit in the 1870s. The words appeared in several song books of the period, including "March's Music Club", printed by Richard March & Co., London, and "Pearson's New Series Song Book", number 85, printed by Thomas Pearson of Manchester. Copies of these publications – which each contain about fifty songs and were issued monthly for 1d – survive in the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library in London.



- 1 I love to roam through the bright green fields,  
I love to live on the farm.  
I love to take a stroll where the primroses grow,  
For the country life's a charm.  
I love to wander through the old farm yard,  
Round by the old hay stacks,  
And listen to the cackle of the chickens and the chucks,  
While the pretty little ducks quack quack.

## Chorus:

Quack, quack, quack, go the pretty little ducks.  
The hens chuck, chuck, gives you warning.  
When the old cock crows, then everybody knows,  
There's eggs for your breakfast in the morning.

- 2 I love to gaze on the ripe yellow corn,  
I love to roll on the grass.  
I love to take a ramble through the new mown hay  
With a pretty little country lass.  
I love to wander by the old mill stream  
And catch every breeze that blows;  
And see the lambs as they gamble in the fields  
In the morning when the old cock crows.
- 3 I love to live on the little white farm,  
With ivy twining round the door.  
I love to hear the lark when it soars on high  
And listen to the old bulls roar.  
I love to hear the milkmaid's song;  
The humming of the busy little bee.  
You can have your cities, you can have your towns,  
But a country life for me.

**Cupid the Ploughboy** (Laws 07)

**Cupid the Ploughboy** was one of the songs that Timothy Connor, an American prisoner of war, copied into his

notebook in Forton Prison, Portsmouth on June 5th 1778 - almost 200 years ago to the day when Walter recorded the song. (See "A Sailor's Song Bag" edited by George Carey, Amhurst, 1976). The song appeared on early 19th century broadsides by Catnach and Pitts of London and Forth of Pocklington and was collected in the early years of the present century by the Hammonds in Dorset, by George Butterworth in Yorkshire and by Ralph Vaughan Williams in Sussex. North American sets have been found in Newfoundland by Elizabeth Greenleaf and in the Ozark Mountains by Vance Randolph. Although there is no direct evidence to link the song with earlier pieces, the image of Cupid, "with his arrows sharp and keen", did feature in several 17th century broadsides with titles such as "Cupid's Court of Equity", "Cupid's Courtesie" and "Cupid's Victory Over the Virgins' Hearts, or, Love in its Colours".

- 1 As I walked out one May morning,  
when may was all in bloom,  
I walked into some meadows gay  
to take the sweet perfume.  
I walked into some flowery fields,  
I turned my head awry,  
There I saw Cupid the ploughboy,  
there I saw Cupid the ploughboy,  
That did my heart beguile.
- 2 As Cupid was a-ploughing those furrows deep and low,  
Breaking those clods to pieces, some barley for to sow.  
And as he was a-ploughing, these words I heard him say:  
"No life is like a ploughboy, no life is like a ploughboy,  
In the pleasant month of May."
- 3 A worthy rich young gentleman a-courting to me came.  
Because I would not marry him my  
parents did me blame.

Adieu young man for ever and for ever adieu,  
It's Cupid the pretty ploughboy,  
    it's Cupid the pretty ploughboy,  
Who has caused my heart to rue.

- 4 Should I write him a letter, my tale to him unfold?  
Perhaps he will take it scornful  
    and think it is full hold. (? bold)  
I wish he would take it kindly and return my heart again.  
It's Cupid the pretty ploughboy,  
    it's Cupid the pretty ploughboy,  
With his arrows sharp and keen.
- 5 The ploughboy heard this lady in sorrow and complain,  
Said he, "My darling jewel, I'll ease you of your pain.  
If you would wed a ploughboy, forever I'll prove true.  
For you my heart has wounded,  
    for you my heart has wounded,  
And I'll have none but you."
- 6 The lady very soon gave consent to be his lawful bride.  
They went into the village church  
    and there the knot was tied.  
And now they live in plenty, they have gold in store.  
The ploughboy and his lady, the ploughboy and his lady,  
Each other do adore.

### The Dandy Man

In John Camden Hotten's "Dictionary of Modern Slang, Cant and Vulgar Words" (London, 1859) we find that the word "dandy" was first used c. 1816-20 to denote "a fop, or fashionable nondescript" and that "Dandies wore stays, studied femininity, and tried to undo their manhood. Lord Petersham headed them." Both Cecil Sharp and George Gardiner noted the song, in Devon and Hampshire respectively, and Walter's text, partially remembered from

the singing of his Uncle Tom Gee, has been completed from the Gardiner version printed in Frank Purslow's book "The Wanton Seed" (London, 1968). At least one broadside printer, William Fordyce of Newcastle, printed a parody entitled "The Dandy Wife" with the chorus:

So pray young men, take my advice, and mark it as a rule,  
That if you want a tidy wife, beware of a boarding school.

Walter once told me that Uncle Tom, who had a penchant for risqué songs such as *Cock-a-doodle do*, *The Bush of Australia*, *The Cunning Cobbler* and **The Dandy Man**, would have got on well with Sam Lerner - that other Norfolk singer who delighted in such pieces.

- 1 When I was twenty years of age a-courting I did go,  
All with a dandy barber's clerk,  
    he filled my heart with woe.  
I never cease to rue the day when I became his wife.  
He can't do right by day nor night, 'tis true upon my life.

Chorus:

Young women all take my advice and mark what I do say,  
If ever you wed a dandy man, you'll ever rue the day.

- 2 And when he goes to bed at night,  
    like an elephant he lays,  
He never takes his britches off,  
    he sleeps in women's stays.  
His mouth is like a turnpike gate,  
    his nose a yard and a half,  
And if you saw his dandy legs I'm  
    sure they'd make you laugh.

- 3 It was upon last Christmas Day, as true as I'm a sinner,  
And as he stayed at home that day,

- 
- he swore he'd cook the dinner  
 He took out all the plums and flour,  
 mixed them in his hat  
 And in the pot, upon the lot,  
 the rogue he boiled some fat.
- 4 It was last Sunday morning, all by his own desire;  
 My leghorn bonnet and my cap he took to light the fire.  
 He took the tea things off the shelf  
 to clean off all the dirt,  
 He washed them in the chamber pot  
 and wiped them on his shirt
- 5 One day when I was very ill he went to buy a fowl,  
 He bought a pair, I don't know where,  
 a magpie and an owl.  
 He put them in the pot to boil, tied in a dirty cloth,  
 He boiled the lot, all feathers and guts,  
 and called it famous broth
- 6 As we were walking up the street,  
 twas arm in arm together.  
 It very first began to snow, he said,  
 "What rainy weather."  
 And if he saw 'a hackney coach he'd swear it was a gig.  
 He cannot tell, I do declare, a donkey from a pig.
- 7 Now you may talk of dandy wives, but tell me if you can,  
 Where there's a dandy woman who  
 can match a dandy man?  
 He's a dirty rogue and a lazy fool and how I bless the day,  
 If they would send my dandy man  
 straight off to Botany Bay.

**Jack Hall** (Laws LS)

Of **John Hall**, Frank Kidson, the pioneer of folksong study,  
 had this to say:-

"Jack Hall was a chimney sweep, executed for burglary in 1701. He had been sold when a child to a chimney sweeper for a guinea and was quite a young man when Tyburn claimed him."

In the 1840s a music hall singer, G.W. Ross, revised the song, changing the name to *Sam Hall* in the process, so that at least two versions of the song exist today. Walter's tune has also done service with such songs as *William Kidd*, *The Praties They Grow Small*, *Aikendrum* and the hymn *Wonderous Love*. Another version of **Jack Hall**, sung by Jack Endacott of Chagford, Devon, can be heard on the record *Fair Game and Foul*.

- 1 My name it is Jack Hall, chimney sweep, chimney sweep,  
 My name it is Jack Hall, chimney sweep.  
 My name it is Jack Hall and I've robbed  
 both great and small,  
 And my neck shall pay for all, when I die, when I die,  
 And my neck shall pay for all, when I die.
- 2 All on the King's Highway, night and day, night and day,  
 All on the King's Highway, night and day.  
 All on the King's Highway I've robbed  
 lords and ladies gay  
 And my neck shall pay for all, when I die, when I die,  
 And my neck shall pay for all, when I die.
- 3 I've one hundred pounds in store,  
 that's no joke, that's no joke,  
 I've one hundred pounds in store, that's no joke.  
 I've one hundred pounds in store and I'll rob for

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hundreds more  
And my neck shall pay for all, when I die, when I die,  
And my neck shall pay for all, when I die.

- 4 At the trial they told me, you shall die, you shall die,  
At the trial they told me, you shall die.  
And they flung me into gaol where  
I'll drink no more strong ale  
And my neck shall pay for all, when I die, when I die,  
And my neck shall pay for all, when I die.

- 5 They drove me up Tyburn Hill, in a cart, in a cart,  
They drove me up Tyburn Hill, in a cart.  
They drove me up Tyburn Hill,  
that's where I made my will,  
The best of friends must part, fare you well, fare you well,  
The best of friends must part, fare you well.

- 6 Up the ladder I did grope, that's no joke, that's no joke,  
Up the ladder I did grope, that's no joke.  
Up the ladder I did grope and the  
hangman fixed the rope,  
But never a word said I, coming down, coming down,  
But never a word said I, coming down.

### **I Wish, I Wish**

Most commentators appear to have linked **I Wish, I Wish** with the song *Died for Love* or else have noted that it simply comprises a number of so-called "floating" verses. I would suggest, however, that this is partly incorrect. At least two other English singers had almost identical texts to Walter's, so that it seems to me that there may, at one time, have been a printed broadside version of the song, which is the indirect source of not only Walter's song but also of the similar versions sung by Ben Baxter of Norfolk (BBC recording) and Cecilia Costello of Birmingham (BBC recording).

- 1 I wish, I wish, but 'tis in vain.  
I wish I were a maid again.  
A maid again I'll never be  
'Till the apple grow on the orange tree.

- 2 Oh when my apron strings tied low  
He'd follow me through frost and snow.  
But now my apron's to my chin  
He passes by and says nothing.

- 3 Oh grief, oh grief, I'll tell you why,  
That girl has got more gold than I.  
More gold than I and wealth and fame  
But she'll become like me again.

- 4 I wish, I wish, my child were born,  
And seated on her father's knee;  
And I was in the churchyard laid  
With a green, green grass growing over me.

Similar texts have also been recorded in North America and Dillard Chandler of North Carolina sings a particularly fine version on the record *High Atmosphere*. One possible contender could be based on the song *The Effects of Love - A New Song* which was issued by an anonymous broadside printer in the 18th century:

- 1 O! Love is hot, and Love is cold,  
And love is dearer than any gold;  
And love is dearer than any thing,  
Unto my grave it will me bring.

- 2 O when my apron it hung low,  
He followed me thro' frost and snow;  
But now I am with-child by him,  
He passes by and says nothing.

3 I wish that I had ne'er been born,  
Since love has proved my downfall;  
He takes a stranger on his knee,  
And is this not a grief to me.

4 I wish that my dear babe was born,  
And dandled on its daddy's knee,  
And I in the cold grave did lie,  
And the green grass grew over me.

5 Ye Christmas winds when will ye blow;  
And blow the green leaves off the tree,  
O, gentle Death, when will you call,  
For of my life I am quite weary.

6 Unloose those chains love, and set me free  
And let me at liberty;  
For was you hear [sic] instead of me,  
I'd unloose you love, and set you free.

#### **Broomfield Hill** (Child 43)

1 Tell me, broom wizard, tell me,  
Teach me what to do,  
To make my husband love me:  
Tell me, broom wizard, do!

So begins an obscure 13th century English folk poem. The magical properties of the broom plant - its flowers were supposed to have a narcotic perfume - have been known throughout Europe for centuries; and Professor Child gives examples from as far apart as Norway and Italy, Iceland and Germany. In longer versions of the tale, following the wager, the maid consults a witch who imparts her knowledge of the broom flower, thus allowing the girl to win the tryst - an element that is missing in the few sets that have been collected recently. Other versions may be heard sung by Cyril Poacher of Suffolk and by the late "Pop" Maynard of Sussex.

1 It's of a young squire who rode out one day,  
By chance his lady love did meet.  
Was down in the lane that led to Broomfield Hill  
With these words his lady he did greet:

2 "A-wager, a-wager, with you pretty maid,  
My one hundred pounds to your ten;  
That a maid you shall go, into yonder green broom,  
But a maid you shall never return."

3 "A-wager, a-wager, with you kind sir,  
Your one hundred pounds to my ten;  
That a maid I shall go into yonder green broom,  
And a maid I shall boldly return."

4 And when she arrived down in yonder green broom,  
She found her lover fast asleep,  
Dressed in fine silken hose, with a new suit of clothes,  
And a bunch of green broom at his feet.

5 Then nine times did she go to the soles of his feet,  
Nine times to the crown of his head;  
And nine times she kissed his cherry red lips  
As he lay on his green mossy bed.

6 Then she took a gold ring from off of her hand,  
And placed it on his right thumb;  
And that was to let her true love know  
That his lady had been there and gone.

7 Then nine times did she go to the crown of his head,  
Nine times to the soles of his feet;  
And nine times she kissed his cherry red lips  
As he lay on the ground fast asleep.

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- 8 And when he awoke from out of his sleep,  
 'Twas then that he counted the cost.  
 For he knew that his true love had been there and gone  
 And he thought of the wager he had lost.
- 9 He called three times for his horse and his man,  
 The horse that he bought so dear;  
 Saying, "Why didn't you wake me out of my sleep,  
 When my lady my true-love was here?"
- 10 "Oh master I called unto you three times,  
 And three times I blew on my horn;  
 But I could not wake you from out of your sleep,  
 'Till your lady, your true-love, had gone."
- 11 Farewell and adieu to her loved one in gloom.  
 Farewell to the birds on Broomfield Hill.  
 A maid she did go into yonder green broom  
 And a maid she remains for ever still.

### The Hungry Army

Walter recalls Uncle Billy singing this, but until he saw the words printed in Roy Palmer's book "The Rambling Soldier" (London, 1977) had been unable to remember the complete song. As Roy Palmer points out, the reference to the town of Balarat, in Victoria, possibly dates the song to the 1854 rebellion at Eureka Stockade which was suppressed by the military. The song was published on a broadside by William Fortey of Seven Dials, London c. 1860 and only a handful of collected sets exists. Both Lucy Broadwood and Tony Wales found versions in Sussex and Paul Brewster noted a solitary American set in Posey County, Indiana, in the 1930s ("Southern Folklore Quarterly" Vol. 4, No. 4 (1940) p. 179). Although the words to the song might be somewhat obscure the same cannot be said for the tune which is known throughout Britain under any number of names. Stephen

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Baldwin, the Gloucestershire fiddler, called it *Cabbages and Onions*, whilst William Kimber of Headington titled it *Hilly-Go, Filly-Go, All the Way*. Other names are *Phillebelulah*, *King of the Cannibal Isles*, *Double-dee-doubt*, *Double-lead-out* and *Cumberland Reel*. The Geordie poet Tommy Armstrong used the tune for his song *The Ghost that Haunted Barney* and in America it became attached to The Handcart Song, the "official national anthem of the Mormons".

- 1 When I was young and in my prime  
 I thought I'd go and join the line,  
 And as a soldier cut a shine  
 In the glorious hungry army.

Chorus:

Sound the bugle, blow the horn,  
 Fight for glory night and morn.  
 Hungry soldiers ragged and torn  
 Just returned from the army.

- 2 The sergeant says, "You're just the chap"  
 And placed a knapsack on my back.  
 They sent me off to Balarat  
 To fight in the hungry army.
- 3 They sent us out to drill one day,  
 The wind was rather strong that way  
 In fact it blew the lot away,  
 The glorious hungry army.
- 4 I've got a medal here you see  
 The workhouse presented to me,  
 For hanging on a rotten tree  
 When the wind blew away the army.

- 5 They cut my hair with a knife and fork,  
They curled it with a cabbage stalk;  
They fed me up on cabbage broth  
To fight in the hungry army.
- 6 They dished it out of an old tin can,  
A teaspoon full for every man.  
I got so fat I couldn't stand  
To fight in the hungry army.
- 7 They sent me out to drill recruits.  
They kicked me with the hobnailed boots  
Oh, take away those awful brutes  
From the glorious hungry army.
- 8 And now my friends I must be off  
I think I smell the mutton broth.  
Here comes General Howl and Scoff,  
Late of the hungry army.

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**Walter Pardon**  
**An appreciation**

For my money, the Norfolk carpenter Walter Pardon is about the best traditional singer on the go in England. Not just because he has an unusually large repertory (of 150-odd songs so far noted from him at least half are good traditional pieces – the rest, as usual, are music hall compositions, parlour ballads, old-time hits) but because of the way he presents the songs, with a fine feeling for the sense of the words, a deep musicality, and the delicate balance of style between the solid traditional & the personal fanciful that is the mark of the true folk singer.

Though, when it comes to that, what is a true folk singer? Traditional singers are of many sorts: some are performers, showmen who like to act out their songs a bit to involve an audience; others prefer an impersonal presentation that leaves the song to speak for itself (Cecil Sharp had a bias toward that kind); others still, especially in traditions falling into decay, become excessively tricky or alternatively are impassive merely because they're not much involved in the songs they sing. Between these poles are many degrees. In Walter's case, the surface of the presentation is relatively uneventful but a lot is going on underneath, & the whole thing rings true as a bell.

Walter was never a pub singer. His place is among the private presenters, alongside Joseph Taylor & Harry Cox, rather than with the great extroverts such as George Maynard & Sam Larner. It was only later in life that he appeared in the folk song clubs and then more or less by chance. His style has been developed away from an audience, in the cottage kitchen or in his toolshed on rainy days. In consequence, his singing is thoughtful rather than showy. Perhaps he has always regarded the songs, especially those deepest in

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musical folklore, more as personal bits of cultural baggage than as entertainment for others. In fact, the ‘performers’ disturb him – I remember that when Walter was in America in 1976, as a member of the British team of folk musicians taking part in the Bicentenary celebrations, he was appalled by the ballad performances of Nimrod Workman (a fine old singer who likes to act his songs out line by line) & even Almeda Riddle’s habit of keeping time by the turning of her hand worried him.

We have few singers – perhaps none – with such a clear memory for song words & such a fine regard for tune shapes as Walter. I don’t know that he is much bothered about “authenticity” – the folklorists got to him too late for that! But he knows what’s what about a song & he can distinguish neatly between folk products & commercial compositions. He should do; after all, he’s a cultivated chap & a discerning reader (you should hear him on the respective merits of Thomas Hardy & Kipling!) who walks around with a headful of folk songs not so much because he regards them as bits of heritage, but for a far better reason – because he likes the stuff. His voice is still young, and he can handle any sort of song with finesse – big ballads, broadside romances, Victorian tearjerkers, even bawdy bits. He’s a pleasure to know, a joy to listen to. Bravo, Walter, the pick of the bunch.

A L Lloyd





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