

Sleeve Notes & Lyrics

All arrangements copyright J & R Arrowsmith 2010/2012.

Disclaimer: Jess makes no promises that she sings the words exactly the same every time! Repeated lines, choruses etc. have only been written out once. If you find obvious errors please let Jess know at jess@arrowsmithmusic.co.uk

1. Hanged I Shall Be (lyrics: trad, tune: J. & R. Arrowsmith)

There are countless versions of this blood-thirsty ballad, which first appeared in broadside form as "The Berkshire tragedy or, The Wittam Miller " in the late 18th century. This set of lyrics owes much to The Albion Country Band's 1973 adaptation, which in turn is a variant of the words collected by E. J. Moeran from a Norfolk man in 1921 and published in Roy Palmer's "Everyman's Book of English Country Songs". The tune, however, is a brand new one. The story itself wouldn't be out of place on the front cover of the Daily Mail, a sad reminder that senseless violence is no modern invention.

When I was bound apprentice, I was bound unto a mill,
I served my master truly for seven long years and more,
Until I took up courting with a girl with a rolling eye,
I told that girl I'd marry her, if she would be my bride.

I asked her if she'd take a walk through the fields and meadows gay
And there we told the tales of love and fixed our wedding day,
As we were a-walking and talking of the things that grew around
I took a stick all out of the hedge and I knocked that pretty maid down.

Down on her bended knee she fell and loud for mercy cried,
"Oh come spare the life of an innocent girl for I'm not fit to die"
But I took her by her curly locks and I dragged her on the ground
Until I came to the riverside that ran near Ekefield town
That ran so long in distance, that ran so deep and wide,
And there I plunged that pretty fair maid who should have been my bride.

When I got back to my father's house about ten o'clock that night
My mother she jumped out of bed, all for to light the light
She asked me and she questioned me what stained my hands and clothes
But the answer I gave back to her I've been bleeding at my nose
No rest no rest all that long night, No rest could I find
For the sparks of fire and brimstone all round my head did shine.

And it was about two days after, that pretty fair maid was found,
A floating down the riverside, not far from Ekefield town,
The judges and the jurymen on me they did agree,
For the murdering of that pretty fair maid so hanged I should be.

2. I'm Going to Speke / Battle Swing (J. Scurfield / J.C. & F. Guichen)

A pair of storming jigs - the first written by sadly missed fiddler Joe Scurfield of the Old Rope String Band, the second by Breton brothers Jean-Charles and Fred Guichen who recorded it with their band Ar Re Yaouank (and no, we can't pronounce that either).

3. The Smuggler (trad)

There are not many songs about smuggling - one can only presume that sitting in the pub singing "We are three jolly smugglers all in a row" was likely to lead to a visit from the Excise men. However, this song was published in "A Sailor's Garland" selected and edited by John Masefield (2nd edition 1908) with suggested "Air: White Cockade" and its origins beyond that are unknown. Jess preferred to put the words to the traditional dance tune "Gilderoy". A bit of geography and history - Slapton is a small village just south west of Dartmouth in Devon. To 'run the tubs' was to unload the small barrels (tubs) of contraband liquor and transport them away from the coast.

My love he is a smuggler, he sails upon the sea,
I wish I was a smuggler for to sail along with he,
For to sail upon the sea, for the brandy and the wine,
And to run the tubs at Slapton when the moon do shine.

For Hollands is a fine drink for them that feel the cold,
And brandy is a better drink for them that's getting old,
There are lights upon the clifftop when the boats are homeward bound,
And we run the tubs at Slapton when the word goes round.

The King he is a fine man in his bright red coat,
But I do love my smuggler in his little fishing boat,
For he runs the Mallin's Lace and he spends his money free,
And I wish I were a smuggler for to sail along with he.

For the channel is his kingdom from England down to France,
And he leads the revenue cutters, a very merry dance,
And when he comes ashore he confounds the Excise men,
And he leaves his boat safe moored and comes to me again.

4. The Death of Queen Jane (lyrics: trad, tune: J. Arrowsmith)

Jane Seymour was the third wife of Henry VIII and died 12 days after the birth of her only child, Edward VI, in October 1537. Henry remained single for two years after her death, and she is the only one of his six wives that he was eventually buried with. Versions of the ballad (Child #170) appear as early as 1612. Most, including this one, imply that she gave birth by caesarian section although this is not believed to be historically accurate.

Queen Jane lay in labour, full nine days and more,
Til her women grew tired, and could no longer there.

"Good women, good women, will you do one thing for me?
That's to open my right side, and find my baby."

"Oh no", cried the women "that never can be.
We will send for King Henry, and hear what he may say."

King Henry was sent for, King Henry did come,
Crying, "What e'er ails you my lady? Your eyes they look so dim."

"King Henry, King Henry, will you do one thing for me?
That's to open my right side, and find my baby."

"Oh no", cried King Henry "that never will do.
If I lose the flower of England, I will lose the branch too."

There was fiddling, aye, and dancing, on the day the babe was born,
But poor Queen Jane, beloved, lay cold as a stone.

5. Hare's Maggot (trad)

A beautiful tune that we've been playing together for years – Hare's (or Hair's) Maggot comes from John Playford's "The Dancing Master" 11th edition (1701).

6. The Single Girl's Lament (J. Arrowsmith)

Jess wrote this as a means of expressing sympathy and support to those of her friends who are single and would rather not be. Its message is somewhere along the lines of "Chin up, girls, keep looking..."

When I was a young girl with my sister I did play,
We'd dress in fancy dresses and act out my wedding day,
Now I have many a pretty frock and ribbons in my hair,
I dance at all the dances, and the lads all call me fair.

My dad calls me his darling but no young man's said that yet,
My mother says my time will come just when I least expect,
But I'm growing tired of waiting and I can't think what to do,
For all my friends have young men, and I just want one too.

A young man came a-courting but my sister caught his eye,
And soon they fell in love and they'll be married by and by,
I love my sister dearly, I'd never wish her ill,
But I still don't have a young man, and I fear I never will.

Young men they can be fickle, young men can be unkind,
Young men can be unthinking and can't understand my mind,
But surely in the whole world, oh somewhere there must be
A young man I think is lovely, who will think the same of me.

So come all you young women, though single you remain,
Though dreary days and lonely nights do bring us all much pain,
Keep smiling and keep dancing, come join me in my song,
Oh bring us all a young man, and please don't wait too long!

7. Smuggler's Song (lyrics: Rudyard Kipling, tune: Peter Bellamy)

Another song about smugglers, this time written by Rudyard Kipling. Jess learnt this at school. We first released it on our album of nursery songs, rhymes and lullabies "Off We Go!", released in November 2010, but wanted to expose it to a wider audience, not least for the scrumptious Cor Anglais part from Jo Maher.

*If you wake at midnight and hear a horses feet,
Don't go drawing back the blinds or looking in the street,
If you ask no questions, you won't be told no lies,
So watch the wall me darling while the Gentlemen go by.*

*Five and twenty ponies trotting through the dark,
Brandy for the parson, baccy for the clerk,
Laces for a lady, letters for a spy,
Watch the wall me darling while the Gentlemen go by.*

*Running round the wood lump if you should chance to find,
Little barrels roped and tarred all full of brandy wine,
Don't you shout to come and look or use them for your play,
Put the brush wood back again and they'll be gone next day.*

*If you meet King George's men, dresses in blue and red
You be careful what you say and mindful what is said,
If they call you pretty maid and chuck you 'neath the chin,
Don't you tell where no-one is nor yet where no-one's been.*

*If you do as you've been told, likely there's a chance,
You'll be given a dainty doll, all the way from France,
With a cap of Valenciennes, and a velvet hood,
A present from the Gentlemen, along o' being good.*

*Five and twenty ponies trotting through the dark,
Brandy for the parson, baccy for the clerk,
If you ask no questions, you won't be told no lies,
So watch the wall me darling while the Gentlemen go by.*

8. Barham Down / Jack Come Sell Your Fiddle (trad)

Barham Down is another Playford tune, this time a three two hornpipe from the 12th edition (1703) and unceremoniously pinched by Richard from Sam Sweeney from whom he learnt it down the pub (2010). We've put it with a song about a man being told to sell his fiddle... and refusing! This is an amalgamation of words from J. O. Halliwell's "The Nursery Rhymes of England" with bits borrowed from R. Burns' "Rattling Roaring Willie", put together to the tune of "Sir Simon the King" by Gav Davenport with a bit of input from Jess and initially recorded on Crucible's second album "Crux".

Jack come sell your fiddle, come sell your fiddle so fine,
Jack come sell your fiddle and buy a pint of wine.

Jack come sell your fiddle and buy your wife a gown;
No I'll not sell my fiddle for any's the wife in town.

Jack come sell your fiddle if ever you mean to thrive;
No I'll not sell my fiddle for any's the man alive

Jack come sell your fiddle; My fiddle and I shan't part,
Come sell your fiddle so fine; I love it with all my heart,
Jack come sell your fiddle; I'd rather sell my head,
Come sell your fiddle so fine; I may as well be dead.

If I should sell my fiddle, the world would think me mad,
For many's the joyful time my fiddle and I have had.

9. Morning Star / Flowers of Edinburgh (trad)

A pair of traditional Cotswold morris tunes. This version of Morning Star has a lovely alternative B music. It is followed here by Flowers of Edinburgh, a great tune for the most tiring dance in the Cotswold tradition.

10. The Ballad of Charlie David (Sheldon Currie)

Jess learnt this beautiful but heartbreakingly sad song from the singing of Mary Read from Toronto. The song was written by Currie in 1964 and later adapted by him into the short story "The Glace Bay Miners' Museum" which in turn formed the basis of British-Canadian film "Margaret's Museum" (1995). Currie had no intention of romanticising the life of a Cape Breton miner and stated "Glace Bay ...[is] synonymous with black lung, dreary company houses and teenage widows".

My brother was a miner, his name was Charlie Dave,
He spent his young life laughing, and digging out his grave.

Oh Charlie David he was big, and Charlie Dave was strong,
And Charlie Dave was two feet wide, and almost six feet long.

When Charlie David was sixteen, he learnt to chew and spit,
He went one day with Grandpa, and went to work in the pit.

When Charlie David was sixteen, he met his Maggie June,
On day shift weeks they met at eight, on back shift weeks at noon.

When Charlie David was sixteen, he said to June "Let's wed",
Maggie June was so surprised, she fell right out of bed.

When Charlie David was sixteen, June had a little boy,
Maggie June was not surprised, and Charlie jumped for joy.

When Charlie David was sixteen, the roof fell on his head,
His laughing mouth was filled with clay, now Charlie David is dead.

11. Jack Lay Back (J. Arrowsmith)

There are a whole host of traditional stories about Jack, of which Jack and the Beanstalk is probably the best known. Jack is usually either lazy or stupid and yet by good luck or low cunning manages to gain the upper hand. In Jess's story, the eponymous hero is bright enough to realise that he needn't over exert himself in order to get what he wants. The tune is also a variation on a traditional theme, owing a great deal to "Oats and Beans and Barley Grow".

There were three brothers, all on a day
Jimmy and Johnny and Jack were they
Jimmy was quick, and John was keen,
But Jack was the laziest man I've seen,
 Oh Jack lay back,
 Jimmy be nimble and John be quick
 Oh Jack lay back.

Now all three brothers were poor as they come,
They hadn't a penny, not even one,
So off they went one market day,
To make their fortune, so said they.

As they were a-walking along the road,
They met a man with a heavy load,
And his daughter beside him a-carrying her share,
And the sun it shone down on her long yellow hair.

"Kind Sirs", said the man "I've a shilling for you,
If you'll help me and my daughter too,
For I've goods I must sell at the market today,
And already the morning is wasting away."

Now Jimmy was keen and John was fast,
They took up the loads, all down to the last,
Then off they went, with the man, at a run,
And Jack was too slow to get even a one.

So Jack and the girl, they strolled along,
He lazily smiled and he sang her a song,
And although it was noon before they reached the fair,
Her heart was Jack's about half way there.

So Jimmy and Johnny in all their haste,
They missed a trick that Jack didn't waste,
For they each got a shilling but that was all,
Jim and John got the money, but Jack got the girl.

12. Mr Collins' No. 1 & Mr Collins' No. 2 (J. Arrowsmith)

These tunes were written to fit a new Cotswold morris dance in the style of Black Joak from the village of Ilmington, Warwickshire. They are named in memory of shanty singer Johnny Collins, at whose memorial concert we were honoured to play in January 2010.

13. Where the Bee Sucks (lyrics: W. Shakespeare, tune: T. Arne)

Although it is not actually traditional, Jess learnt this in the most traditional of manners, at her mother's knee. At least three generations of her family have used this as a lullaby, and we recorded this version initially for "Off We Go!". The song is from Shakespeare's "The Tempest", set to music by Thomas Arne, a leading British theatre composer of the 18th century best known for writing "Rule, Britannia!".

Where the bee sucks there suck I, on a cowslip bell I lie
There I couch, when owls do cry, when owls do cry, when owls do cry
On a bat's back I do fly,
After summer, merrily, merrily, after summer, merrily
Merrily, merrily, shall I live now,
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough,
Merrily, merrily, shall I live now,
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough,
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.