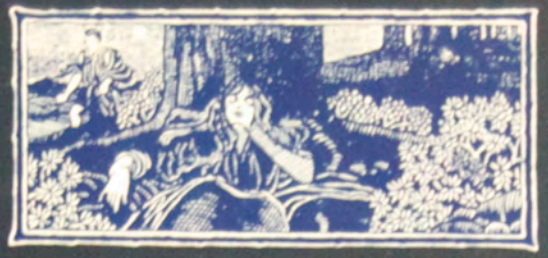
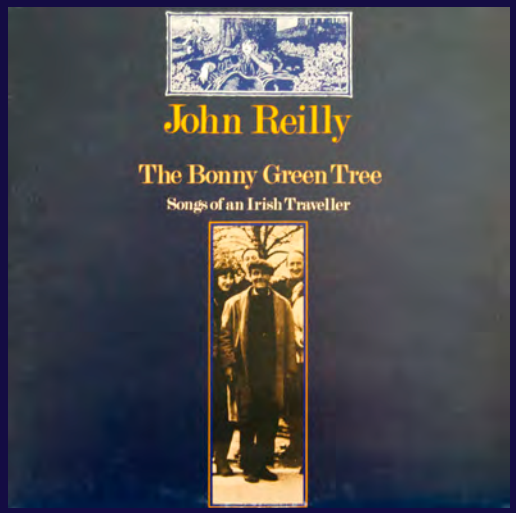


John Reilly

The Bonny Green Tree

Songs of an Irish Traveller



John Reilly
The Bonny Green Tree
Songs of an Irish Traveller

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1 **Adieu Unto All True Lovers**
2 **The Raggle Taggle Gypsy**
3 **The Well Below the Valley**
4 **Tippin' It Up to Nancy**
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Recorded by Tom Munnelly
Produced by Tom Munnelly, Roly Brown and Tony Engle
Notes by Tom Munnelly
Design by Tony Engle

A biography of John Reilly must necessarily be brief. His life was short and in the few years I was honoured to know him he was always reluctant to speak about himself. So the little I learned I picked up as flotsam floating on the sea of a hundred conversations. John's reluctance to talk of himself came not from the mistrust of outsiders which one sometimes finds among the travelling community, but from a genuine self-effacement which amounted almost to timidity. John was a shy man, but behind that shyness was a man who was a magnificent tradition-bearer, who was entirely willing to share his treasure with all who were even remotely interested in examining it.

'Jacko' was the name by which travellers usually referred to John, and it was into a travelling family he was born at Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim around 1926. As travelling families go, John's family was not excessively large, eleven in all, his parents, seven sisters and a single brother, Martin. Both John's mother and father were singers and among his earliest memories are playing and sitting at the camp fire while his parents sang the night through. In such circumstances he absorbed all sorts of songs from music hall pieces to classic ballads. John remembered with great affection the singing of his father and when I asked where he had learned the ballad Lord Baker he told me "Me poor father would always sing Lord Baker, it was his most favourite song when he'd be drunk." As I have said in FMJ (p.15) it is on such a plane that we may seek the key to the survival of so many of the 'big' ballads among travelling folk. These butterflies still flourish far from academic formaldehyde and display cases, and are valued by the traveller for the very reason that gave them birth; they are damn fine entertainment! With his family and parents John travelled the roads of Leitrim. Sligo and Roscommon keeping in the reasonably limited and well defined circuit which each travelling family traditionally follows. As usual with travellers' children until recently, the opportunity of attending school was so remote as to be hardly worth considering so John's university was that of the mountain and river and road, where he learned how to snare rabbits, tickle trout, sweep chimneys and do various odd jobs. He would also call to farms to try to make a few shillings at haymaking or harvesting, but at this he was often unlucky if there was a surfeit of labour in the area in which he was searching. Farming folk will not usually hire travellers if they can find an alternative. They are not to be singled out, however, for this mistrust, for it is shared by practically all settled communities who still view those who choose a nomadic life with suspicion, and perhaps a little envy.

So it is only as a second choice that traveller labour is taken on by hiring farmers and then, naturally, the burliest and fittest will be the first chosen. As John Reilly was both diminutive and frail looking, this important source of income was seldom offered to him.

Sometime, either during or after the war, the family moved beyond their usual circuit and headed into the North of Ireland. By this time John was skilled in the art of the tinsmith so the move was perhaps a matter of practical economics, as the raw materials for the practice of the trade were more accessible in the Six Counties than in the Republic during this period. Though John could thatch, sweep chimneys and, in fact, was willing to turn his hand to anything, if you asked him what work gave him most personal satisfaction his answer would be immediate: "The tin, I love workin' with the tin." In many homes around the North Midlands you can still come across buckets, candlesticks, billycans and other items made by John which are still in use, a testimony to his craftmanship and relics of the art of that fast vanishing breed: the genuine tinker.

Most of John's time in the North was spent in or around Belfast. He was reasonably content there, but hankered after the region he knew as a child and grew up in. So around 1953 he returned to Carrick-on-Shannon and resumed his old life

style. Carrick-on-Shannon was then, and still is, a favourite place of congregation for travellers and an important step on the travel circuit of many families.
Possibly because of John's comparative frailty his travelling decreased greatly and when he moved to Boyle, Co. Roscommon in 1962 it stopped almost entirely except for a brief sojourn when he camped in the village of Gurteen, Co. Sligo. His home for most of this period in Boyle was a derelict house on Green Street, and here he tried to survive as best he could.
The Sixties may have been a time of affluence for many and even saw some manifestation of concern for the travellers when, in 1963, the Government published its Report of the Committee on Itinerancy. So shocked were the general public at the appalling conditions which were the lot of the travellers that there was a general outcry at the time in all Irish newspapers. As with all such public hullabaloos, it eventually faded away, but it left behind it a residue of social awareness which saw the birth of the Itinerant Settlement Committee, a committee group formed to aid, educate and protect the rights of the travelling community. But the light of the lamps lit in the Irish cities may take a long time to spread through rural states of mind and in the meantime John and scores like him continued to exist at a level far below the poverty line.
In spite of his undoubted ability as a craftsman and his willingness to work, work was not to be found. As we have seen even at harvest time he was seldom hired, as his slight build made him a less conspicuous choice than his better built colleagues. It was a vicious circle, for the less he worked, the less he ate; the less he ate, the frailer he became, the more frail he looked the less work he got. Catch 22! The situation was aggravated by the spread of cheap enamelware and the introduction of plastic goods which rang the death-knell for the tinsmith and in a decade made practically obsolete a trade which had evolved over hundreds of years.

Apart from the occasional chimney to be swept and the odd bucket to be sold, John's income was restricted to the couple of pounds he received on the dole. His diet consisted almost solely of tea and bread supplemented occasionally by a few eggs or the odd meal given to him by a few decent souls in Boyle.

The effects of this mode of life were already beginning to manifest themselves on John when I brought him up to Dublin to spend a short holiday with me. This was in 1967, a couple of years after I met him. By this stage John could not face regular meals, he had already lost the habit of eating. John repeatedly told me that this brief stay in Dublin was one of the happiest periods in his life. The highlight of his holiday was when he sang at The Tradition Club in Capel Street. It was a matter of total amazement to him that an entire pub full of people would ignore their pints and devote their whole attention to his songs.

Unfortunately there was no other club in Dublin at that time where the floor would be given to genuine traditional singers. A memorable rebuttal came from the president of a university folk song club when I suggested booking John: "We don't go in for unaccompanied songs, we're more interested in folk singers!" This was paralleled by the comments of an official of the national traditional music organisation, Comhaltas Cheoltóiri Eireann, on hearing John: "He is not a traditional singer, he does not sing in the sean nós manner!" This genius still adjudicates singing competitions at national level.

To try and interest anyone in the songs of an unknown traveller was, at that time, an exercise in beating your head against a wall and though it was obvious that the documentation of John's full repertoire was extremely important, my job then (shift work in a knitting factory) and very slender financial resources kept weekends in Boyle and access to recording equipment to a minimum.

A change of luck came in 1969 when D.K. Wilgus, professor of folksong in the University of California Los Angeles, came to Ireland. When told of John and his songs he immediately appreciated their value and that same weekend he and I set off for Boyle to record him. We met John walking the Main Street of Boyle with a few newly-made buckets in his hand and as usual John was more than willing to oblige. So the recording equipment was set up in the back room of Grehan's pub and John sang to his heart's content. Between Saturday night and Sunday morning John sang about 36 songs and ballads. And this in spite of the fact that he was suffering from a heavy cold at the time which resulted in a racking cough on much of the recording.

Though John would have sung even more at the time it was thought better not to overtax him. So we promised to return the following month when John's cold had cleared up, and so we parted. The next time we called, John was not to be found around the town. All his usual haunts were tried but no one had seen him for a couple of days. Pounding on his door in Green Street got no response so went around to the back of the house and climbed in through the glassless window. In a freezing cold room I found John on his bed beneath a mound of old overcoats, he was obviously very ill. His cold had turned to pneumonia. Immediately we brought John to a doctor who diagnosed his condition and John was then taken to the hospital in Roscommon.

It was with some relief that I was informed that John had been discharged the next Thursday. So when the week-end came around again we went to Boyle to see how he was. On arriving we found to our horror that John had collapsed in the street and been taken into the hospital in Boyle. He lay in his bed in a coma and did not recognise us when we called.

The following Friday I rang the hospital to discover that John Reilly had been buried the day before. He was 44. So we lost one of God's gentry, for John Reilly was indeed a gentleman. Shy but social, fond of his pint but not addicted to it. A man who did not read or write but who was one of the most learned men to grace the roads of Ireland. John Reilly now lies with his mother in an un-marked grave in the cemetery of Ballaghadereen. But he has here a memorial more fitting than stone. The songs he loved and which were part of the very fabric of his existence still live on, and even if posthumously, they are now reaching a larger audience than ever before. Wherever he may be, John would appreciate that.

The songs of the Irish travellers still remain largely undocumented for two reasons. First, the efforts of collectors in this country have been mainly concentrated on the Gaelic speaking performers, and it is a long time since the travelling community have been au fait with that language. The second reason is the social discrimination which exists between the settled folk and 'tinkers'. As l write (August 1977) the residents of a County Council estate in Galway are barricading the roads in Bohermore and refusing to let three travelling families take possession of houses legally granted to them by the council. It is a story which has been and will be repeated over and over again in this "Christian" country of ours.

The work of Hamish Henderson of the School of Scottish Studies has been the greatest single inspiration towards the practical collecting in this field. His work with the Scots travellers has been so magnificent that it is nowadays impossible to envisage the songlore of Scotland in terms which do not give pride of place to tinker singers.

In England collectors such as Peter Kennedy, Ewan MacColl, have never ignored the tinker singer and the work of Mike Yates and latterly Jim and Pat Carroll are evidence that much of the songlore of the traveller in Britain will be saved for posterity. Would that the same could be said for Ireland.

The songs which appear on this album are a fair cross section of the songs which may be found in the repertoire of Irish travellers: classic ballads, pieces from the broadsheet

press, lyric love songs and 'home made' songs. (Naturally pop songs are also found in their repertoire but are not here represented.)

John's style of singing is definitely that which is generally associated with travellers but not quite as declamatory as is usual. (For some more comments on Irish travellers' style see MFMJ pp 6-10). He was one of the easiest singers imaginable to work with for he never needed persuading but was always willing to sing immediately on being asked.

Adieu Unto All True Lovers (Child 245)

1 For here's adieu unto all true lovers
And to my true lover where e'er she'll be
This very night I mean to be with her
Though she is a-many a long mile away.

2 If the night was dark and as dark as dungeon
And no daylight love for to appear
Sayin' I'll be guided without a stumble
Into the arrums of you, my dear.

3 Oh when he came to his own love's cottage
He kneeled down gently all on a stone
Through a pane o' glass he had whispered slowly
"I say true love are you all alone?"

4 "Who's that, who's that at-a my bedroom window
Disturbing me from my long night's rest?"
"Oh I say lover do not discover
Open the door, love, and let me in
I say true lover do not discover,
Besides I'm wet love unto the skin."

5 Oh she rose up off her soft pillow
Opened the door and let her love in
Where they both caught hands and they kissed each other
A welcome night it did soon begin.

6 They still kep' hands an' they embraced each other
Until the long night was at an end
Sayin' "Willie, Willie where is your flushes
Where is the flushes you had years ago?"
Sayin' "Molly Ban, sure clod clay has changed 'em
The ragin' seas between me an' you."

7 They still kep' hands and they embraced each other
Until the cocks began to crow
And then shook hands an' he cried an' parted
"To the burnin' temples love I have to go"

2/2 Actually .... dark as a dunghill
2/3 .... torappear
5/4 .... A welcome rightly
6/1 & 7/1 'breached' for 'embraced'

Dr. Hugh Shields suggests that 'The Grey Cock' was in its earliest form a dawn song related to the Alba of the medieval troubadours. In this form it carried no supernatural elements for the hero and heroine of the narrative were entirely human. The subsequent mutation of some versions of the ballad into revenant form came with its acquisition of verses from supernatural ballads, notably *Sweet William's Ghost* (SBS).

That the returned lover in this version is back from the grave is evident enough but it is also interesting to record that on asking John to explain the 'burning temples' referred to in the final verse he said: "I suppose he was a soul from purgatory and he had to return to it."

The Raggle Taggle Gypsy (Child 200)

1 There was three of the gypsies came to our hall door,
They came brave an' bol-del-o.
But there's one sung high and the other sung low
And the lady sung "The Raggle-Taggle Gypsy-o."

2 It was upstairs, downstairs, the lady ran.
She took off her silk so fine, and put on a dress of leather-o
And it was the cry all around our door,
"She's away with the Raggle-Taggle Gypsy-o."

3 It was late last night when the Lord came in,
Inquirin' for his lady-o.
And the servin' girls took from hand to hand
"She's away with the Raggle-Taggle Gypsy-o."

4 You come saddle for me my milk-white steed,
My bay one is not speedy-o
And sure I will ride, and I'll seek my bride
That's away with the Raggle-Taggle Gypsy-o.

5 O, for he rode east and he rode west,
Half the south and the east also
Until he rode to the wide open field.
It was there he spied, was his darling-o.

6 Sayin' "Are you forseekin' your house or land?
Are you forseekin' your money-o?
Are you forseekin' your own wedded Lord?
An' you're goin' with the Raggle-Taggle Gypsy-o."

7 "What do I care for my house or land?
Neither for my money-o.
Or what do I care for my own wedded Lord?
I am goin' with my Raggle-Taggle Gypsy-o."

8 "It was ere last you'd a goose-feather bed,
with the sheets pulled down so combley-o
But tonight you'll lie in the cold open field,
All along with the Raggle-Taggle Gypsy-o."

9 "What do I care for my goose-feather bed,
With the sheets pulled down so combley-o?
But tonight I'll lie on a cold barren floor
All along with my Raggle-Taggle Gypsy-o."

10 Sayin', "You rode high when I rode low
You rode woods and valleys-o
But I'd rather get a kiss of the yalla gypsy's lips
O than all Lor' Cash's of money-o."

This ballad is well known but infrequently noted in Ireland, and the task of fixing its Irish provenance is made difficult by the ubiquity of a recent re-write by Leo Maguire known as The Whistling Gypsy. This latter has been so popular on radio over the years that those informants who used to sing the older forms of the ballad, now tend to confuse it with the modern remake.

John, as well as singing The Raggle Taggle Gypsy also sang another version: The Dark Eyed Gypsy which he thought of as a separate song. Just as Frank Proffitt's aunt made a distinction between Gypsy David and The Gyps of David.
Text and tune are transcribed in MCL.

The Well Below the Valley (Child 21)

1 For a gentleman was passin' by
He axed a drink as he got dry
At the well below the valley O
Green grows the lily O
Right among the bushes O.

2 My cup it is in overflow
An' if I do stoop I may fall in
At the well etc.

3 Well if your true love was passin' by
You'd fill him a drink if he got dry
At the well etc.

4 (She swore by grass and swore by corn
That her true love was never born
I say fair maiden you're sworin' wrong
At the well etc.)

5 Well if you're a man of noble fame
You'll tell to me the father o' them
At the well etc.

6 (Two of them by your father dear
At the well etc.)

7 Two of them came by your uncle Dan
At the well etc.

8 Another one by your brother John

9 Well if you're a man of the noble fame
You'll tell to me what happened them
At the well etc.

10 There was two o' them buried by the kitchen fire
At the well etc.

11 Two more o' them buried by the stable door
At the well etc.

12 The other was buried by the well
At the well etc.

13 Well if you're a man of a noble 'steem
You'll tell to me what'll happen mysel'

14 You'll be seven year o-ringin' a bell
At the well etc.

15 You'll be seven more a-portin' in Hell
At the well etc.

16 I'll be seven year o-ringin' a bell
But the Lord above may save my soul
From portin' in Hell
At the well below the valley O
Green grows the lily O
Right among the bushes O

In his headnote to John Stickle's singing of Child No. 19, *King Orpheo*, Professor Bronson marvels at the survival of this "whisper from the Middle Ages . . . by what frail means, against what odds". Hardly less remarkable is the survival of *The Maid and The Palmer* as Child called it, a century and a half after it had last been reported, albeit in very fragmentary form, by Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe who obtained it from no less an informant than Sir Walter Scott.

This ballad, popular in European tradition, tells the story of Jesus and the Samaritan Woman. Christ, who appears as a palmer or pilgrim, is refused a drink by a woman whom he meets at a well. He reveals himself by enumerating the woman's sins .

It is worth remembering that in Biblical times and, I believe, even today, vessels for drawing water in parts of the Holy Land were the property of individuals and families who brought them to the well each time they went. As many of

these wells are extremely deep it is possible to die of thirst on the brink of a water supply. Thus the consternation at being refused the use of a bucket or cup to a traveller who was without the means of drawing water himself.

In America a song *Jesus Met The Woman At The Well* is found in the repertoire of Gospel singers. Though the source of inspiration is obviously the same, the Gospel song must be considered as being a separate entity to our ballad, which Bronson describes as "a spectacular find" (BTT Vol. IV, p XIV)

The most complete text preserved is that which John sang for Prof. D.K. Wilgus, his wife Ebby and me in 1969. The verses which appear in brackets are stanzas which John does not sing on this, earlier, recording. They are given here for the sake of completeness and Professor Bronson's very painstaking transcription is included with his permission. Transcriptions of other performances may be found in MCL and MCL 1.

Tippin' It Up to Nancy (Laws Q2)

1 There was a woman in our town,
A woman you all know well
She really loved 'er husband
An' another man twice as well.

CHORUS: *after each verse*
With me right finnigo neario
Tip finnigo war
With me right finnigo neario
Tippin' it up to Nancy.

2 For she went to the chemist shop
Some remedies for to buy:
"Is there anything in the chemist shop
Would put an old man blind?"

3 For he gave three marrowbones
For him to suck them all
Before he had the last one sucked
He couldn't see at all.

4 "For in this world I cannot be
Or in this world I cannot see
I'd rather go an' drown meself."
"Come one al' I'll show you the way."

5 For she brought him to the river
She brought him to the brim
But sly enough of Martin
It's her he did shove in.

6 For she swum through the river
She swum unto the brim
"Martin, dear Martin, don't leave me behind!"
"Go along out (of) that you silly old fool
You know poor Martin is blind."

7 For now I've nine in family
An' none of them my own
But I wish to the Lord that every man
Would come an' claim his own.

Generally referred to as *Marrowbones* this song is found in one form or other in almost any spot where you can hear folksong in the English language. The theme itself is international and is directly related to *The Outlandish Knight* whose far-flung popularity and thematic dissemination is discussed with bewildering thoroughness by Child in the introduction to *Lady Isobel and the Elf-Knight*, number 4 in his collection.

Lord Baker (Child 53)

1 There was a lord who lived in this place
He bein' a lord of a high renown,
For he left his foot upon a ship board
And swore strange countries that he'd go find.

2 For he travelled east and he travelled west
(And half the south and the east also)
Until he'rived into Turkey land
There he was taken and bound in prison
Until his life it was quite wearee.

3 Oh a Turkey bold had one only daughter,
As fair a lady as your eyes could see,
For she stole the keys of her dado's harbour
And swore Lord Baker that she'd set free.

4 Saying, "you have houses and you have living
And all Northumber belongs to thee
What would you give to that fair young lady?
It is out of trouble would set you free?"

5 Saying "I have houses and I have living
And all Northumber belongs to me;
I would them all to that fair young lady
It is out of trouble would set me free."

6 For she brought him down to her dado's harbour
And filled for him was the ship of fame.
And at every toast that she did drink round him
"I wish Lord Baker that you were mine."

7 For they've made a vow and for seven year,
And seven more for to keep it strong
Saying "if you don't wed with no other fair maid
I'm sure I'll wed with no other man."

8 Oh seven year it was past and over
And seven more it was rolling on,
When she bundled up all her gold and clothing
And swore Lord Baker that she'd go find.

9 For she travelled east and she travelled west
Until she came to the palace of fame,
"Who is that, who's that," replies the porter
"that knocks so gently and can't get in?"

10 "Is this Lord Baker's house," replies the lady,
"or is his lordship himself within?"
This is Lord Baker's palace", replies the porter,
But this very day took a new bride in."

11 "Will you tell him send me a cut of his wedding cake
And a glass of his wine, it being ere so strong,
And to remember that fair young lady
Who did release him in Turkey land?"

12 In goes, in goes, was the young bold porter
And kneel down gently on his right knee.
"Rise up, rise up, it's my young bold porter,
What news, what news have you got for me?

13 Saying, "I have news of a greatest person
As fair a lady as my eyes could see
She's at the gate waiting for your charitee."

14 "She wears a gold ring on every finger
And on the middle one where she wears three
And she has more gold hung around her middle
Then'd buy Lord Thumber and family.

15 She told you send her a cut of your wedding cake
And a glass of your wine, ere being ere so strong
And to remember that fair young lady
Who did release you in Turkey land."

16 For he caught the sword just by the middle
And he cut the wedding cake in pieces three,
Down comes, down comes, was the young bride's mother,
"Oh, what will I do for my daughter dear?"

17 "I owned your daughter is none discover,
And none the better is she to me.
Your daughter came with one pack of gold
I'll revert her home, love, with thirty-three."

13/2 or: 'great expression'
17/1 & 2 i.e. the marriage has not been consummated.

According to the Icelandic *Sturlunga Saga*, one Thorgils Skardi was visitiing Hrafnagill in 1258. His host offered him a choice of diversions - ballad-dancing or saga reading. He chose the latter when he heard that the *Saga of Thomas á Becket* was available.

The survival of this ballad relating a legend attached to Gilbert Becket, Thomas's father, as one of the most popular ballads in the English speaking world is due in no small measure to another literary medium: the broadsheet.
John learned Lord Baker from his father, and though neither he nor John were literate it is not unlikely that the retention of this ballad among travellers was assisted by the fact that broadsheet selling was an occupation much favoured by Irish travellers until as recently as the nineteen fifties.
By verse 6 of this recording John has settled into a tune which resembles *Anach Chuain*. The melodic form of the opening stanzas is very fluid and demonstrates John's ability to keep the tune malleable until he finds a comfortable fit.
A transcription of this recording appears in BFM (pp 136-9) as a representative of its genre. Alan Bruford wrote of it in Scottish Studies (Vol. 16 p 184) " . . . it is a remarkable performance, and given that only one Anglo-Irish song could be included, it would be hard to find a more interesting one."

Old Caravee

1 For my name it is Sean Mac Namaro
And a sweet County Down man am I
In the search of a wife I lay travellin'
Round the main streets of old Caravee.

2 'Twas the first one I met was Red Danny
Great welcome he had it for me
He a brought me down to Racromin (?)
And the best of good whiskey for me.

3 'Twas the first he drew down about dealin'
And the next he drew down about me
He invited me out to his wagon
And the best of good comfort for me.

4 'Twas the first I threw me eye on was Julia
For a hawker she would make for me
She'd be drivin' my piebald and wagon
Round the main street of old Caravee.

5 'Twas the first month me an' Julia lived happy
And the second we could not agree
And the third one she wore that old trousers
And she used the black bottle on me.

6 Oh, whenever you want to get buckled
Inquire for old Caravee
It is there you'll get a wife same as I did
Round the main streets of old Caravee.

3/ 1 & 2 'drew down': discussed
5/3 ..... wore the old trousers
6/1 'buckled': married

I have not heard this song from any other source and it is possible that whatever currency it has may be limited to travellers. Should this be the case it is probable that 'Caravee'

is a corruption of Cahirmee in County Cork. The annual horse fair held there is one of the three great fairs at which travellers congregate: the others being Ballinasloe, Co. Galway and Puck Fair which is held in Killorglin, Co. Kerry.

The Bonny Green Tree

1 Oh for I went out walkin' of a grand summer's mornin'
Down by the green bushes I chanced for to stray
It was there I beheld with a comely-ah fair maiden
All under the shade of her bonny green tree.

2 For I stepped up to her it was to en-view her
"I say, pretty fair maid, will you marry me?
I will make you my wife an' a lady forever
If you shelter me under your bonny green tree."

3 For they both fell asleep into each others arrums
They both fell asleep, and as plain as you'd see
They-ah both fell asleep into each others arrums
All under the shade of her bonny green tree.

4 When she had wokened she had no one beside 'er
When she had wokened she had no one to see
When she had wokened she had no one to guide 'er
Only herself and her bonny green tree.

5 Sayin' here is a warnin' to all pretty fair maids
And here is a warnin', you'll take it by me
Always forsake the first flower in the garden
Or (he'll) leave you behind, just like my love left me.

5 A broadsheet, ca. 1790 "The Shady Green Tree" concludes:
Come all pretty maidens now take warning
Never trust a man in any degree
For when they've enjoyed the fruits of your garden
Then they will leave you, as he has done me. (quoted in SS)

Folk songs have been discovered in some peculiar places, but surely nowhere more curious than the version of this song which was discovered inscribed on a 19th century Scottish brick! An account of the brick and several other versions of the song is given by Hamish Henderson in S S.

Although one of Hamish's informants, Mrs. Margaret Stewart, a Banff tinker,was emphatic that "the bonny green tree" of the song was located in Macduff, it is of course, a symbol of virginity. This factor is more explicit in John's version than most.

Sam Henry publishes a version from Co. Antrim (SOP No.794) Colm O'Lochlainn patched up a fragmentary Wicklow version in MISB, No.10. Herbert Hughes and Joseph Campbell bowdlerize
it into hardly recognisable form in SOU.
This recording of John's singing has been transcribed and appears in MCL.

Once There lived a Captain

1 Once there lived a captain
Who was borne out-ah for sea
An' before that he got married
He was sent far away.

2 Oh, but when that he returned
To 'er father he did go
"Is your daughter inside, sir?
Can I see her once more?"

3 "For my daughter is not here, sir
She left us here last night
She is gone to some a-nunnery."
Was the old man's reply.

4 He went on a-to this nunnery
An' 'e knocked all at the door
Out comes the (R)everand Mother
An' she tearin' go leor.

5 Sayin', "Your true love is not here, sir
She is left us here last night,
She is gone to some asylum
Where she's fractured in mind."

6 "Let me in", a-sez the Captain
"Let me in", the Captain cried
"Let me in until I see her
An' I'll die by her side."

7 For he stood at her left side
An' his sharp sword 'e drew
He stood to great attention
An' 'e pierced 'is heart through.

8 Oh sad it was the partin'
An' hard it was the dooms
To see two loyal lovers
Lyin' dead on the floor.

9 Oh but green grows the laurel
And soft it falls the dew
Sayin' "Sorry am I, true lover
For ever partin' from you."

3/4 actually: 'Was the old man replied'
4/4 go leor: Irish 'in plenty', English 'galore'
7/2 actually 'sherp-eh'
8/4 Seán Ó Conaire sings 'Lying dead in that room'. He also has the final two stanzas in reverse order to John's singing which makes somewhat better narrative sense.

The motif of the suitor who, on gaining admittance to the side of his recently deceased true-love, there ends his own life is not uncommon in broadsheet balladry for such a tragic theme would undoubtedly have great popular appeal. An interesting occurrence of this motif appears in *Lord Abore* and Mary Flynn a version of *Prince Robert* which like The Well Below the Valley is a Child ballad (No. 87) extant only, if tenaciously, in the Irish singing tradition.

Once There Lived a Captain is also something of a rarity for the only other traditional performance of the song which I have heard is that of Seán Ó Conaire of Rosmue, Co. Galway. Kevin Conniff, a fine Dublin revivalist singer, now with the Chieftains, has long had it in his repertoire, his source being Seán Ó Conaire.

Peter Heany

1 For my name is Peter Heany and the same I can't deny
An' many a cold an' stormy day, oh, we had in days gone by
From one house to another with my budget on my back
From one county to another sure I have drove my ass and sack.

2 From Carrick and to Leitrim town - it was on the king's highway
A party of tramp tinkers I had met along my way
There was a cailin among them all, oh, the pride of the tinker class,
And l axed her would she marry me and help me drive my ass.

3 "Oh no kind sir", she answered me "it's that question I'll refuse"
Saying "How can I get married, I have neither shawl or shoes?
Or if my father hears your talk it's your bones he'll surely crush
He's well known among the tinkers, he's McDonagh
The Fightin' Thrush!"

4 In the streets of Ballyfarnon was our second place to meet
Insultin' decent people an' walkin' on their feet.

5 Oh for I was takend a prisoner an' thrown into the barrack cell
A special court was held on me an' the find was very small
And I rummaged all my pockets not a cent could find at all
And before I'd go to jail my grandmother pawned her shawl.

6 Oh for now I'm livin' in Carrick town, oh, like any a gentleman
My wife is known through this country, oh, that she's
called Lady Ann
My sons they are like bank clerks as proudest of the day
And where would get the equals of Patrick or P.J.?

4 Sometimes John would sing the line: 'My voice got high, but my talk got low' between the two lines given here.
2/1 & 6/1 Carrick = Carrick-On-Shannon
5/2 find = fine
6/3 as proudest = the proudest

The Heanys were a travelling family well known on the roads of Leitrim, Roscommon and Longford. They were as renowned for their uproarious life style as they were for their longevity. This is one of a number of songs about Peter and Willie Heany, the authorship attributed to the brothers themselves. Peter died just a few years ago in London but has many relatives still on Irish roads as indeed has 'The Fightin' Thrush' McDonagh.
John usually sang Peter Heany to the air of *The Rocks of Bawn*. But it was not unusual for him to sing the same song to a variant of its usual tune or a different tune altogether, in fact he would sing any song to whatever tune was on the tip of his tongue. Sometimes this meant he would sing several consecutive songs to the same air. The tune in this case is reminiscent of *The Dawning of the Day*.

What Put the Blood? (Child 13)

1 Oh, what put the blood on your right shoulder?
An' son come tell it unto me, to me.
An' son come tell it unto me.

2 Oh, that is the blood of a hare, Mama,
An' who may pardon me, me
An' you may pardon me.

3 Sayin', that is the blood of your youngest bretheren,
An' son come tell it unto me, to me
An' son come tell it unto me.

4 What a-kem between you an' your youngest bretheren?
Son come tell it unto me, to me,
An' son come tell it unto me.

5 It wall from the cuttin' of a hazel rod
That never will grow a tree, a tree
Oh, that will never grow a tree.

6 Sayin', what will you do with your lovin' wife?
An' son come tell it unto me, to me,
An' son come tell it unto me.

7 She will leave her foot upon a shipboard
An' she'll sail all along with me, with me,
She'll sail all along with me.

8 Sayin' what will you do with your two grand children?
Son come tell it unto me, to me,
An' son come tell it unto me.

9 I'll give one to my daddy an' the other to my mammy
An' they'll keep them company
An' they'll keep them company.

10 Sayin' what will you do with your lovin' house?
An' son come tell it unto me, to me,
An' son come tell it unto me.

11 I will leave it there for the birds of the air
To mourn an' sing for me, for me,
For to mourn an' sing for me.

12 Sayin' what will you do with your two race horses?
An' son come tell it unto me, to me,
An' son come tell it unto me.

13 I will take the bridles off their heads
An' they'll race no more for me, for me.
An' they'll race no more for me.

14 Sayin' what will you do with your two greyhounds?
An' son come tell it unto me, to me,
An' son come tell it unto me.

15 I will take the straps off their two necks
An' they'll hunt no more for me, for me,
An' they'll hunt no more for me.

This is one of the favourite ballads with Irish travellers, and also it would seem with their Scottish counterparts. In spite of its popularity it has not been reported very frequently in this country.
A version learned from an Irish traveller is sung by Paddy Tunney. So much has been written on this ballad that any remarks made here would be superfluous, but for a very thorough
examination of its Scandinavian dissemination from Britain see ATS.
A transcription of John's singing of this ballad appears in MCL.

Rozzin Box

1 For I rung at the kitchen an' I tumbled in the bell,
"ls there anybody here that could let a tinker in?"
Chorus
With me rozzin box, an' itchy pole, his hammer, his knife and spoon
And his nipper tipper handstick and the soId'rin iron tool.

2 For he saudered in the kitchen, an' he saudered in the hall;
He saudered in the tap room among the ladies all.

3 There was an oul' woman in the corner an' her age was eighty-four
"For honour-of-great-goodness could you sauder up my bones?"

4 For the tinker he was nasty, an' was lookin' for a swap
When up steps a country chap, took his daughter in a truck.

5 For the tinker got a whistle and he blew it loud an' shrill
When forty carts of tinkers they came galloping down the hill

6 If you are an honest woman, as I took you for to be,
Take two buckets in your arm and a baby belongin' to me.

Double entendre songs which relate the bawdy exploits of journeymen tinkers are known from at least the seventeenth century and survive in many forms (e.g. Tom Moran's singing of *The Jolly Tinker*). One aspect which most of them share is the description of sexual matters in terms relating to the craft and tools of the tinsmith. The rozzin (resin) box, itchy pole (file?), handstick (hand anvil or stake) etc. are all basics in the tinker's budget.
The whistle-blowing motif is usually used in balladry for a hero of apparently humble birth to reveal himself as a lord or such when servants and noblemen respond to the summons. In keeping with the song the response is here very different!
Text and tune are transcribed in MFMJ.

The Braes of Strawblane (Laws H 10)

1 For the old town of Tralee one evenin' in June
Through the woodbine, mound daisies an' meadows in bloom
I espied a wee lassie at the end of a lane
An' she breachin' her linen by the braes of Strawblane.

2 For I stepped up unto her an' I made my address:
"Are you breachin' your linen my charmin' wee lass.
For twelve months an' better since I had deep in my mind
Oh, that we would get married, love, if you were inclined."

3 "Well to marry, to marry kind sir I'm too young
An' besides all ye young men has a platterin' fine tongue
Sayin' my Daddy an' Mammy, oh, quite angry would be
That's if I would go marry a rover like thee."

4 You consent my wee lassie and do not say no
Sayin' you don't know the pain love, oh, that I undergo
For the clouds they look weary, I'm afraid we'll have rain
Oh, but I'll go my way love, round the braes of Strawblane."

5 "Consented, consented it is all of the time
Since the last words you have spoken I have now changed my mind
The clouds they look weary I'm afraid we'll have rain
Oh but I'll court some other round the braes of Strawblane."

1/2 woodbine and daisies
1/4 & 2/2 bleachin'
3/2 flatterin'

A song whose provenance is widely but thinly spread. It has been noted in Nova Scotia and Maud Karpeles recorded it in Newfoundland under the title *The Bleaches So Green*. She comments that she knows of no other version of the song, but suggest an Irish origin. (FNF)

G. Malcolm Laws includes it in his index of 'Native American Balladry' as *The Chippewa Girl*. He quotes Earl C. Beck: "Several lumberjacks from the Saginaw valley know this song . . . it grew up where the Chippewa Indians dwelt and was sung in the shanties of the upper part of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan." (SML & LNA)
Because of its reference to the bleaching of linen I would not be surprised if this song is sung in the northern counties though I have, as yet, not recovered it in that region. However, I heard it sung by a group of travellers in Blairgowrie, Perthshire in 1967. They called it *The Braes of Strathblane* as does Kidson (KTT and Ord (OBS))

One Morning I Rambled from Glasgow

1 One morning I rambled from Glasgow
Where the weather was calm and serene
And just as I crossed the Boyne water
I went into a green and sat down.

2 There was hundreds of people around me
And them all seems like strangers to me
Till an old man a-steppin' up to me
And those was the words he did say:

3 "It is thirty-two years since last harvest
When I first saw this green isle before
But one evenin' comin' home from the market
Where I met with a crowd of Jewmen
And them all shoutin' Croppy Lie Down'.

4 I seemed for to pass no great notice
And the leader of them told me stand:
"Come shoot him, come shoot him, he's a rover
And beside he's a United Man."

5 Now a sergeant rappeared for to shoot me
Oh though he's reprivin' his pal
'Twas the sword that I snapped from t'oul drummer
I directly took off his right hand.

6 'Twas the sword that I snapped from the drummer
It was then I had quick let him know
'Twas the head from the shoulders I swep' off
And that with the very next blow.

7 For we fought left an' right without mercy
Till my brothers arm was broke with a gun
For we fought left an' right without mercy
Oh sayin' 'Bernie, my boy, we are done'.

8 Jumpin' into a grove that was near us
Sayin' 'Bernie my boy, we will run'
Where we walked hand to hand an' together
We were scarcely a mile down the town

9 Where we knocked at a door that soon opened
An' was in a grand parlour sat
Sayin' "I'm glad that you acted so bravely
As your fathers an' I did before
For to pull down John Bull's thirsty tyrants
That a-ramble round Erin's green shore."

1/3 usually 'CIyde's water'
3/4 In some versions 'with some cursed Orangemen' which makes better sense.
4/3 . . . he's a Roman (Catholic)
4/4 The United Irishmen were a 19th century nationalistic organization.
5/2 Mrs. McDonagh, a traveller, who knew John, sings "And while he was primin' his pall" and states that his "pal" was his gun.
5/3 With the . . .

That this song has appeared in print is certain, but I cannot now bring to mind exactly where I saw it.
There are quite a number of songs in this vein describing the conflict of Catholic seasonal workers from Ireland with non-Catholics in Scotland and elsewhere.
This is another song which seems to have a greater occurrence among travelling folk than the settled community.
This recording and that of the song which follows were made (in Grehan's pub) in a situation which was far from ideal, with a machine which left a lot to be desired.

The Pride of Cloonkeen

1 You come on my wee laddies an' listen to me
And when you'll heard it I'm sure you'll agree
It is all about a wee lass who's lit to be seen
And her name it was Mary, the pride of Cloonkeen.

2 'Twas the first time I met her in the sweet month o' June
The flowers in the bushes were neatly in bloom
The fields and the meadows a mantle of green
Oh they could not compare with the pride of Cloonkeen.

3 For we walked an' we talked till the sun starts to set
It's then we have parted an' glad how we met
I view her goin' from me, I though it a dream
Oh no, that was really the pride of Cloonkeen.

4 For I travelled the country from shore to shore
From the green hills of Antrim to the town of Tramore
But in all my travels no one have I seen
That could rival the beauty (of) the pride of Cloonkeen.

Recorded in 1966 at the same session as the previous song. Though the song-type is commonplace enough I have not come across The Pride of Cloonkeen elsewhere. There are six Cloonkeens listed in the index Names of Townslands and Towns of Ireland. All of them are in County Galway.

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