



Brook

The SHUTTLE
AND CAGE

Industrial Folk-Ballads

Edited by Ewan MacColl



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AND CAGE**

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PRICE : 2s. 0d.

WORKERS' MUSIC ASSOCIATION

Preface

There are no nightingales in these songs, no flowers - and the sun is rarely mentioned; their themes are work, poverty, hunger and exploitation. They should be sung to the accompaniment of pneumatic drills and swinging hammers, they should be bawled above the hum of turbines and the clatter of looms for they are songs of toil, anthems of the industrial age.

Few of these songs have ever appeared in print before, for they were not made with an eye to quick sales - or to catch the song-plugger's ear but to relieve the intolerable daily grind.

If you have spent your life striving desperately to make ends meet; if you have worked yourself to a standstill and still been unable to feed the kids properly, then you will know why these songs were made. If you have worked in a hot pit, wearing nothing but your boots and felt that the air you were breathing was liquid fire, then you will know why these songs were made. If you have crouched day after day in a twelve-inch seam of coal with four inches of water in it, and hacked with a small pick until every muscle in your body shrieked in protest - then you will know why these songs were made.

The folklore of the industrial worker is still a largely unexplored field and this collection represents no more than a mere scratching at the surface. A comprehensive survey of our industrial folk-song requires the full collaboration of the Trade Union movement. Such a survey would, undoubtedly, enrich our traditional music.

EWAN MacCOLL.

March 1954.

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(* With grateful acknowledgments to Messrs. Lawrence
& Wisbart, London, publishers of 'Come all ye bold miners')

The four loom weaver

CHORUS Dm Am Dm

I'm a four loom weaver as many a one knows. I've
 nowt to eat and I've worn out me clothes. Me clogs are both
 broken and stockings I've none. Tha'd scarce gieme tuppence for
 a' I've gotten on. Owd Billy o't Bent he kept
 telling me long, We might have better times if I'd nobbut howd me
 tongue. Well I've howden me tongue till I near lost me breath, And I
 feel in my heart that I'll soon clem to death.

CHORUS

I'm a four loom weaver as many a one knows;
 I've nowt to eat and I've worn out me clothes.
 Owd Billy's awreet, he ne'er were clemmed,
 And he ne'er picked o'er in his life.

VERSE 2.

We held on for six weeks, thought each day were the last,
 We've tarried and shifted till now we're quite fast;
 We lived upon nettles while nettles were good,
 And Waterloo porridge were t'best o' us food.

VERSE 3.

Our Margaret declares if hoo'd clothes to put on,
 Hoo'd go up to London to see the great mon,
 And if things didna alter when there hoo had been,
 Hoo swears hoo would fight wi' blood up t'th'een.

CHORUS.

I'm a four loom weaver as many a one knows,
 I've nowt to eat and I've worn out me clothes.
 Clogs we ha' none nor no looms to weave on,
 And I've woven myself to t'far end.

I like to be there

D G D

I like to be there when the en-gine starts
 ear-ly in the morn-ing; I like to sit me down at
 break-fast time, Just when the en-gine's roar-ing; And I
 like to see the piecers as on the floor they lay, Then hur-
 rah for the life in the fac-to-ry While we're
 wait-ing for the judg-ment day.....

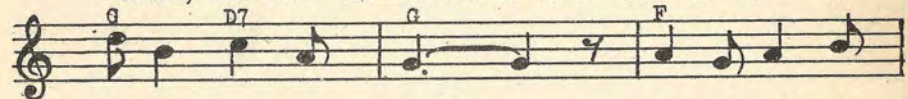
Fourpence a day



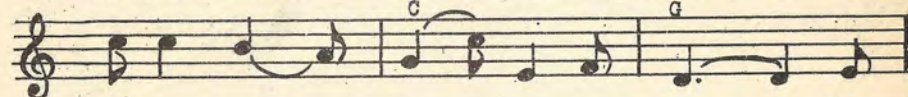
1. The ore is wait-ing in the tubs, the snow's upon the
2. It's ear-ly in the morn - ing, we rise at five o-



fell;..... Can-ny folk are sleeping yet but
clock, And the lit-tle slaves come to the door to



lead is reet to sell..... Come, me lit-tle
knock, knock, knock..... Come, me lit-tle



wash-er lad, come, let's a - way, We're
wash-er lad, come, let's a - way, It's



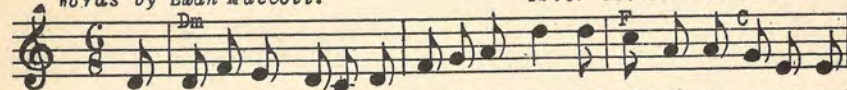
bound down to slav-'ry for four-pence a day.....
very hard to work for four-pence a day.....

3. My father was a miner and lived down in the town;
'Twas hard work and poverty that always kept him down.
He aimed for me to go to school but brass he couldn't pay,
So I had to go to the washing rake for fourpence a day.
4. My mother rises out of bed with tears on her cheeks,
Puts my wallet on my shoulders which has to serve a week.
It often fills her great big heart when she unto me does say,
"I never thought thou would have worked for fourpence a day."
5. Fourpence a day, me lad, and very hard to work
And never a pleasant look from a gruffy looking Turk.
His conscience it may fail and his heart it may give way,
Then he'll raise us our wages to ninepence a day.

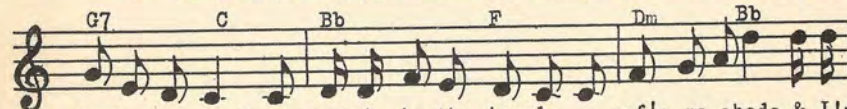
I'm champion at keeping 'em rolling

Words by Ewan MacColl.

Tune: The Limerick Rake.



I am an old timer, I travel the road; I sit on me wagon and



lumber me load; my hotel is the jungle, a caf's me abode & I'm



well-known to Blondie & Ma-ry. My liquor is diesel-oil



laced with strong tea, The old highway-code was my first ABC. & I



cut my eyeteeth on an old A. E. C., And I'm



cham-pion at keep-ing 'em roll - ing.

2. I've sat in my cabin and broiled in the sun,
Been snowed up on Shap on the Manchester run;
I've crawled through the fog with my twentytwo tons
Of fish that was stinking like blazes.
From London to Glasgow, to the Newcastle Quay,
From Liverpool, Preston and Bristol city,
The polones on the road give the thumb-sign to me
For I'm champion at keeping 'em rolling.
3. You may sing of your soldiers and sailors so bold
But there's many and many a hero untold
Who sits at the wheel in the heat and the cold,
Day after day without sleeping.
So watch out for cops and slow down at the bends,
Check all your gauges and watch your big-ends,
And zig with your lights when you pass an old friend,-
You'll be champion at keeping 'em rolling.

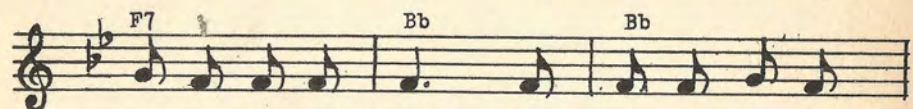
Moses of the Mail



It was a dark and stormy night, The snow was falling



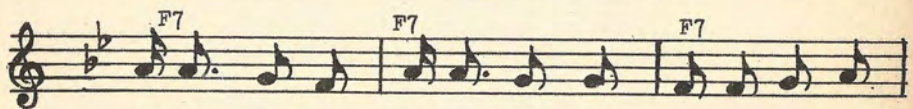
fast..... I stood on Thorpebridge Junction Where the



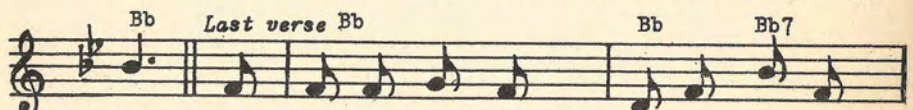
reck-less Mo-ses passed.... His hair was wild-ly



wav - ing As thro' the air he sped; He'd



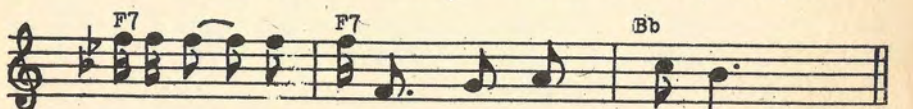
nev-er had such do-ings since he started at the



shed. "But when I'm dead and laid to rest, Place



on my grave sweet ro-ses!" These were, I'm told, the



8 ve-ry last path-e-tic words of Mo - ses.

2. The signals all at Newton Heath,
The shed was close at hand;
He sent his mate for some more oil
And a couple of bags of sand.
At Moston's dreary cutting
The struggle was extreme -
Both front tenders failed to work
And the engine wouldn't steam.
3. On passing Hopwood cabin,
He heard the engine groan
And, reaching for the tallow-pot,
He broke his collarbone.
When Castleton appeared in view
He shook his weary head
And, stepping over to his mate,
This is what he said:
4. "I've worked upon the L. and Y.
For forty years or more,
But such a wretched night as this
I've never had before."
At Hebden Bridge they stopped the train
Some wagons to re-load,
And Moses shouted to his mate,
"We're off the blooming road!"
5. Up came old Moses, stick in hand,
His head hung down with grief;
He viewed the scene contemptuously
And then wired for relief.
"Pray don't lay violent hands on me!"
Poor Valentine did exclaim:
"I know you've done your very best -
I know you're not to blame."
6. The flowers may bud and bloom in Spring
And memories fade away,
But they will not forget that night
Until their dying day.
"But when I'm dead and laid to rest,
Place on my grave sweet roses."
These were, I'm told, the very last
Pathetic words of Moses.

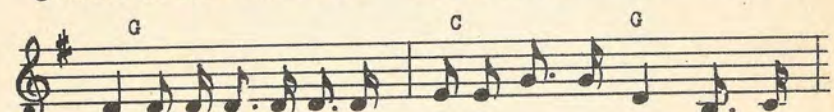
The wark o' the weavers



We're a' met thegither here to sit and to crack, Wi' oor'



glasses in oor hands & oor wark upon oor back; And there's



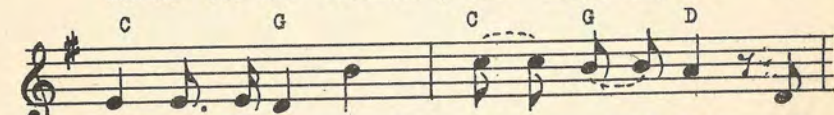
no trade among them a' can either mend or mak' If it



was-na for the wark o' the weav - ers. If it



was-na for the weav-ers, what would they do? We



would-na ha' cleith made o' oor woo', We



wouldna ha' a coat, neither black nor blue, Gin it



10 was-na for the wark o' the weav - ers.

2. The hireman chiels they mock us and crack aye about's,
They say that we are thin-faced, bleached-like cloots;
But yet for a' their mockery they canna dae wi'oot's,
Na! They canna want the wark o' the weavers.
3. There's oor wrichts and oor slaters and glaziers and a',
Oor doctors and oor ministers and them that live by law,
And oor friends in Sooth Ameriky, though them we never saw,
But we ken they wear the wark o' the weavers.
4. There's oor sailors and oor sodgers, we ken they're a' bauld,
But if they hadna claes, faith, they couldna fecht for cauld;
The high and low, the rich and puir, a'body young and auld -
They winna want the wark o' the weavers.
5. There's fold that's independent o' ither tradesmen's wark,
The women need nae barbers and dykers need nae clerk;
But none o' them can dae wi'oot a coat or a sark,
Na! They canna want the wark o' the weavers.
6. The weaving is a trade that never can fail,
As lang's we need ae cloot to keep anither hale;
So let us aye be merry ower a bicker o' guid ale,
And drink tae the health o' the weavers.

The Gresford disaster



1. You've heard of the Gresford dis - aster, The
2. It oc-curred in the month of Sept - em-ber, At



ter-ri-ble price that was paid; Two hundred & forty - two
three in the morning that pit.... Was racked by a violent ex-



colliers were lost & three men of the rescue bri - gade.
plasion.... In the Den-nis where dust lay so thick.....

3. The gas in the Dennis deep section
Was packed like snow in a drift,
And many a man had to leave the coal-face
Before he had worked out his shift.
4. A fortnight before the explosion
To the shot-firer Tomlinson cried:
"If you fire that shot we'll be all blown to hell!"
And no one can say that he lied.
5. The fireman's reports they are missing,
The records of fortytwo days;
The colliery manager had them destroyed
To cover his criminal ways.
6. Down there in the dark they are lying,
They died for nine shillings a day;
They've worked out their shift & it's now they must lie
In the darkness until Judgment Day.
7. The Lord Mayor of London'scollecting
To help both the children and wives;
The owners have sent some white lilies
To pay for the colliers' lives.
8. Farewell our dear wives and our children,
Farewell our dear comrades as well;
Don't send your sons in the dark dreary mine,
They'll be damned like the sinners in hell.

Heroes, British heroes

We sing of those soldiers and sailors,
..... The deeds they have done on the foam;..... But
what of the lads that work in the mine? Little of
them do we know.... They are he-roes, Brit-ish

he-roes,.... Hearts that are true and brave;..Risking their
lives for children and wives Down in the black-ened
cave.... Toiling for mere ex - ist-ence... Where the
sun does never shine,..... Heav'n pro - tect those
col-lier lads That work down in the mine.....

2. The gallant deeds of these heroes
Are deeds that no one can tell,
At Pretoria Pit and Whitehaven too,
Many a brave collier fell.
3. With scarcely a moment's warning
A cry it runs through the air,
Like wildfire it spreads - the pit is on fire,
With four hundred souls working there.
4. Alas, there's no hope for those miners,
No more can the rescuers do;
They die just like true British heroes,
For home, wife and children too.

The Durham Strike

Em EM Em C

In our Dur-ham County I am sor-ry for to

G G C G Em C

say, That hun-ger & star-vation is in - creasing ev-'ry

Em G C G Em

day. For the want of food and coals we know not what to

C Bm Em C G C G

do, But with your kind as-sistance we will see the battle thro'.

2. I need not state the reason why we've been brought se low;
The masters have behaved unkind, which everyone will know,
Because we won't lie doon and let them tret us as they like,
To punish us they've stopped the pits and caused the present strike.
3. The pulley wheels have ceased to move which went so swift aroond,
The horses and the ponies, too, all brought from underground.
Our work is taken from us and they care not if we die,
For they can eat the best of food and drink the best when dry.
4. The miner and his wife, too, each mornin have to roam,
To seek for bread to feed the hungry little ones at home.
The flour barrel is empty now, their true and faithful friend,
Which makes the thousands wish today the strike was at an end.
5. Well, let them stand or let them lie or do whatever they choose,-
To give them thorteen and a half ve ever shall refuse!
They're always willin to receive but not inclined to give,
And very soon they won't allow a workin man to live.
6. The miners of Northumberland we shall for ever praise,
For being so kind in helpin us these tyrannisin days.
We thank the other counties, too, that have been doin the same,
For every man who hears this song will know we're not to blame.

The collier's rant

Dm Am Gm A Dm

As me and me marrer was go-ing to work, We met wi' the

Am G A Dm Am

de-vil, it was in the dark; I un wi' me pick, it

Gm A Dm Bb A Dm

was in the neet, I knocked off his horns, likewise his clubfeet.

Dm Bb F Am Dm Bb

Follow the horses, Johnny, me lad-die, Follow the horses,

Am Dm Dm Bb F Am A7

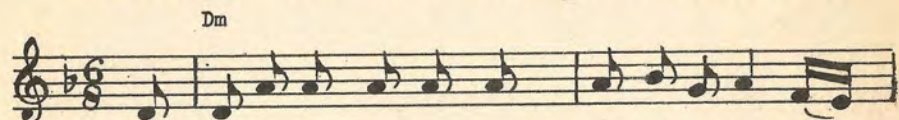
Johnny, lad, 0! Follow the horses, Johnny, me laddie, 0

Dm Gm A Dm

follow them through, me John-ny lad, 0!

2. O marrer, O marrer, and what do you think?
I've broken me bottle and spilt all me drink;
I've lost all me tools among the great stones,-
Draw me to the shaft, lad, it's time to go home. (CHORUS)
3. As me and me marrer was loading the tram,
The light it went out and me marrer went wrong;
How you would ha' laughed to see the fine game:-
Old Nick took me marrer and I took the tram. (CHORUS)
4. So here is me horses and here is me tram,
Two horns full o' grease will make her to gan;
There is me marrer all stretched on the ground;
You can tear up his shirt for his mining's all done. (CHORUS)

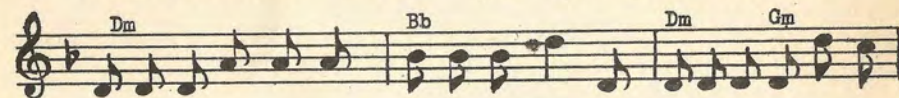
The coal owner & the pitman's wife



A dialogue I'll tell you as true as my life, Be-



tween a coalowner and a poor pit-man's wife: As



she was a-trav'ling all on the highway, She met a coalowner and

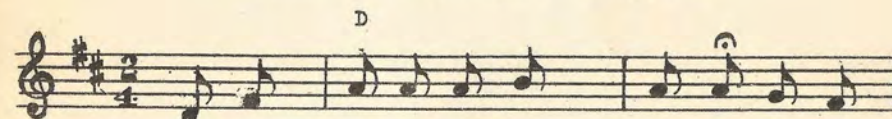


this she did say: "Derry down, down, down, der-ry down."

2. Good morning, Lord Firedamp, this woman she said,
I'll do you no harm, sir, so don't be afraid.
If you'd been where I've been the mest of my life,
You wouldn't turn pale at a poor pitman's wife.
Derry down, down, down, derry down.
3. Then where do you come from? the owner he cries.
I come from hell, the woman replies.
If you come from hell, then come tell me right plain
How you contrived to get out again.
Derry down, down, down, derry down.
4. Aye, the way I got out the truth I will tell:
They're turning the poor folks all out of hell.
This to make room for the rich wicked race,
For there is a great number of them in that place.
Derry down, down, down, derry down.
5. And the coal-owners' selves is the next on command
To arrive into hell, as I understand,
For I heard the old Devil say, as I came out,
The coal-owners all had received their rout.
Derry down, down, down, derry down.

6. Then how does the old Devil behave in that place?
Oh, sir, he is cruel to the rich wicked race;
He is far more uncrueller than you can suppose,
Even like a mad bull with a ring through his nose.
Derry down, down, down, derry down.
7. Good woman, says he, I must bid you farewell,
You give me a dismal account about hell.
If this be all true that you say unto me,
I'll be home like a whippet and with my poor men agree.
Derry down, down, down, derry down.
8. If you be a coal-owner, sir, take my advice,
Agree with your men and give them a full price,
For and if you do not, I know very well,
You'll be in great danger of going to hell.
Derry down, down, down, derry down.

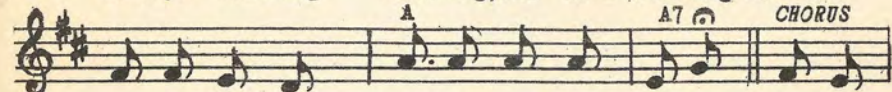
Cosher Bailey's engine



Cosh-er Bai-ley had an en-gine, It was



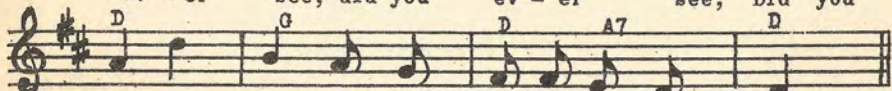
al-ways want-ing mend-ing, And ac-cord-ing to her



pow-er She could do four mile an hour... Did you



ev-er see, did you ev-er see, Did you



ev-er see such a fun-ny thing be-fore?

2. On the night run up from Gower
She went twenty mile an hour,
As she whistled through the station,
Man, she frightened half the nation. (CHO)
3. Coshier bought her second-hand,
And he paint her up so grand,
When the driver went to oil her,
Man, she nearly bust her boiler. (CHO)
4. Coshier Bailey's sister Lena,
She was living up in Blaina,
She could knit or darn our stockings,
But her cooking, it was shocking. (CHO)
5. Coshier Bailey went to Oxford
For to pass matriculation,
But he saw a pretty barmaid
And he never left the station. (CHO)
6. Oh, the sight it was heart-rending,
Coshier drove his little engine,
And he got stuck in the tunnel,
And went up the blooming funnel. (CHO)
7. Yes, Coshier Bailey he did die,
And they put him in a coffin.
But, alas, they heard some knocking -
Coshier Bailey only joking. (CHO)
8. Well, the Devil wouldn't have him,
But he gave him sticks and patches,
For to set up on his own
On the top of Barford Hatches. (CHO)

(Coshier Bailey was a Monmouth ironmaster, who built the Taff Vale railway along the Aberdare Valley in 1846. According to Legend he drove the first train along the railway himself and got stuck in a tunnel - a situation which gave rise to a number of ribald verses, some of which got attached to the song. Bailey died in 1872. The song about him is sung to the melody of the Welsh folk-song "The Black Pig". It has scores of verses, some on the rough side. This version is a brief selection of stanzas suitable for respectable company. The song is a great favourite at football matches in the Rhondda and some versions contain a number of football verses. The motif of the Devil allowing the master to set up a hell of his own (usually a foundry or a mine) is a familiar one in industrial folklore. A.L. Lloyd)

The iron horse

Gm

1. Come, hie-land-men, come, low-land-men, and
2. Then, first and fore-most, near the door there

ev-'ry man on earth, man, And I'll tell you how
was a wee bit wick-et, It was there they garred me

I got on a - tween Dun-dee and Perth, man. I
pay my tide and they gied me a tick-et; I

gaed up-on an i-ron road, a rail they did it
went a-wa' up through the hoose, sat doon up - on a

ca', man, An' rug-get be an i-ron horse, an
kist, man, To tak' a look o' a' I saw on the

aw - fu' beast to draw, man.
great big i - ron beast. man.

3. There was houses in a long straight row a-standing upon wheels, man,
And them, the chieils that fed the horse, were black as a pair o' deils, man;
And the ne'er a thing they gied the brute but only coals to eat, man,
He was the queerest beast that e'er I saw, for he had wheels for feet, man!
4. The beast it roared and off we gaed through water, earth and stanes, man,
We ran at sic' a fearfu' rate, I thocht we'd break oor banes, man;
Till bye and bye we stoppit at a place ca'd something Gowrie,
But ne'er a word had I to say but only sit and glower aye.
5. Then after that we crossed the Tay and landed into Perth, man.
I vow it was the queerest place I ever saw on earth, man;
For the houses and the iron horse were far abune the land, man,
But how they got them up the stairs I canna understand, man.
6. But noo I'm safely landed and my feet are on the sod, man,
When I gang to Dundee again, I'll tak' anither road, man.
Though I should tramp upon my feet till I'm no' fit to stand, man,
Catch me again when I'm ta'en in wi' a chap wi' a yellow band, man.

Poor Paddy works on the railway

In Eighteenthundred & for-ty-one Me cord'roy breeches
I put on, Me cord-roy breech-es I put on To
work up-on the rail-way, the rail-way. I'm
wear-y of the rail-way,- Poor pad-dy works on the
rail-way.

4. In Eighteenthundred and fortyfour
I landed on the Liverpool shore;
Me belly was empty, me hands were sore
With working on the railway, the railway.
I'm weary of the railway,
Poor Paddy works on the railway.
7. In Eighteenthundred and fortyseven
Poor Paddy was thinking of going to heaven,
Poor Paddy was thinking of going to heaven
And working on the railway, the railway.
I'm weary of the railway,
Poor Paddy works on the railway.

(Two variants of this tune are given and it is the habit of our present British folksingers to combine them as here presented)

Poor Paddy works on the railway

2. In Eighteenthundred & farty -two From Hart-le-pool I
moved to Crewe And found myself a job to do A-
work-ing on the rail-way. I was wear-ing
cord-u-roy breeches, Digging ditches, Dodging hitches,
pull-ing switches. I was working on the rail-way...

CHORUS

3. In Eighteenthundred and fortythree
I broke me shovel across me knee
And went to work for the company
On the Leeds and Selby Railway. (CHORUS)

5. In Eighteenthundred and fortyfive,
When Daniel O'Connel he was alive,
When Daniel O'Connel he was alive
And working on the railway. (CHORUS)

6. In Eighteenthundred and fortysix
I changed me trade from carrying bricks,
I changed me trade from carrying bricks
To work upon the railway. (CHORUS)

Cannily, cannily

Gm F Bb

(1) Can-ni - ly, can-ni - ly, bon-nie la'l
 (2) Seun he'll be gan thro' the shed for his

bairn-i - kie, Div'nt tha cry, my la'l
 en-gine..... Soon he'll be driv-ing his

pet..... Whisht at thy greetin', Yor
 train thro' the night. Work-ing for pen-nies for

dad-dy is sleep-in', It's not time to
 you, my la'l treea-sure, So

(2) haad thy noise,
 (3) knaa he's the

Dm Gm

wa-ken him yet.....

Bb Cm G

hin-nie, yor dad - dy sleeps light.
 king of the North East-ern line.

- When tha art grown tha shalt have tha own engine,
 The biggest that ever was seen on the line,
 And aall o'vor neighbours will point to my Johnnie
 And knaa he's the king of the North Eastern line.
- Cannily, cannily (as for Verse 1).

To the weavers gin ye go

F#m A7 D Bm

My heart was ance as blythe and free As
 sim-mer days were lang, But a bon-nie west - lin

E7 A D A7 D A9 CHORUS

weav-er lad Has gart me change my sang. To the

A A F#m

weav-ers gin ye go, fair maids, To the weavers gin ye

A7 Bm F#m Bm G

go, I rede ye richt, gang ne'er at nicht, To the

Bm F#m Bm

weav-ers gin ye go.

- My mither sent me to the toun To warp a plaiden wab;
 But the weary, weary warpin' o't Has gart me sigh and sab.
- I sat beside my warpin'-wheel And aye I ca'd it roun',
 But every shock and every knock My heart it gaed a stoun.
- A bonnie westlin weaver lad Sat working at the loom;
 He took my heart as wi' a net In every knot and thrum.
- The moon was sinking in the west Wi' visage pale and wan,
 As my bonnie westlin weaver lad Conveyed me through the glen.
- But what was said or what was done,
 Shame fa' me gin I tell!
 But, oh, I fear the kintra soon
 Will ken as weel's mysel'.

The collier's bonnie lassie

The col-lier has a daughter, She's black but O, she's
 bon-nie; A laird he was that loved her; Rich both in
 lands and mon-ey. I'm o - ver young to
 wed the laird & ower black to be a la-dy, But I will
 hae a col-lier lad The col-our o' my dad-die.

2. The collier has a daughter,
 I vow she's wondrous pretty;
 The collier has a daughter,
 She's black but, O, she's witty!
 He shawed her gowd in gowpins,
 But she answered him fu' ready:
 The lad I love works underground,
 The colour o' my daddie.

The best little doorboy

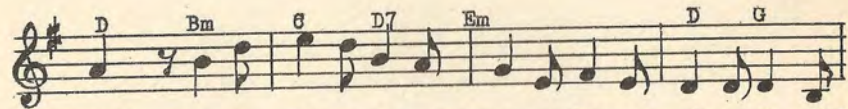
1. The work-men in the Rhon-dda are won-dér-ful
 boys, They get to their work with - out a - ny
 noise; They say thro' the Rhondda you nev-er will
 see A mer - ri-er lot than in Tip - pe - ra -
 ry. Too - ra - loo, ... too-ra - lay, The
 best lit-tle door-boy that's un-der Jim Grey.

2. Old William, the lampman, and Dan with his horse,
 And Daniel, the sawyer, is always so cross.
 They say, &c.
- 3: Two girls from Treorchy pull out a full tram,
 They've holes in their stockings, they don't care a damn!
 They say, &c.
4. O talk about hauling - it's nothing but fun,
 To do her on the level as well as the run,
 To hook her and sprag her and holler "Gee-way!"
 I'm the best little doorboy that's under Jim Grey.

Hot asphalt



Good evening, all me jolly lads, I'm glad to see you



well; If you gather all a-round me, boys, a story I will



tell. For I've got a sit-u - a - tion and, be - gor-ra and be-



gob! I can whisper I've a weekly wage of nine - teen



bob. It's a twelvemonths come October since I left my native



home, After helping in Kil-larney, boys, to cut the harvest



down; But now I wear a jersey and a-round me waist a



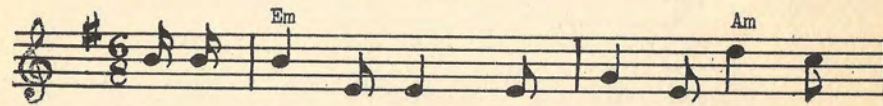
belt. I'm the gaffer of the squad that makes the hot as-phalt.

2. The other night a copper comes
 And says to me, "McGuire,
 Would you kindly let me light me pipe
 Down at your boiler fire?"
 He planked himself right straight in front
 With hobnails up till late.
 "Here!" says I, "Me decent man, you'd better
 Go and mind your beat."
 He turned and yelled, "I'm down on you,
 I'm up to all your pranks,
 And I know you for a traitor
 In the Tipperary ranks."
 Boys, I hit him straight from the shoulder
 And I give him such a welt
 That I knocked him in the boiler
 Full of hot asphalt.

3. We quickly pulled him out again
 And threw him in the tub,
 And with soap and warm water
 We began to rub and scrub;
 But, the Devil!, the thing had tarred him
 And it turned as hard as stone,
 And with every other rub
 You could hear that copper groan.
 "I'm thinking", says O'Reilly,
 "That he's looking like Owld Nick,
 And, burn me! if I'm not inclined
 To clean him with me pick!"
 Says I, "It would be easier
 To boil him till he melts,
 And stir him nice and easy
 In the hot asphalt.

4. You may talk about your soldier boys,
 Your sailors and the rest,
 Your shoemakers and your tailors -
 But we please the ladies best.
 Surely the only ones who know the way
 The flinty hearts to melt
 Are the boys around the boiler
 Stirring hot asphalt.
 With the rubbing and the scrubbing,
 Sure I caught me death of cold,
 And for scientific purposes
 Me body it was sold;
 In the Kelvingrove Museum, boys,
 I'm hanging by the belt
 As a monument to the Irish
 Stirring hot asphalt.

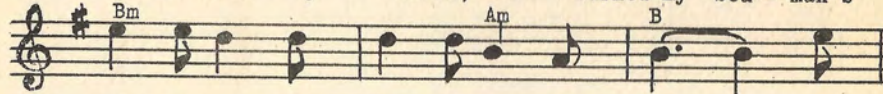
The Firefighters' Song



It was back in Nine - teen - twen - ty - two When



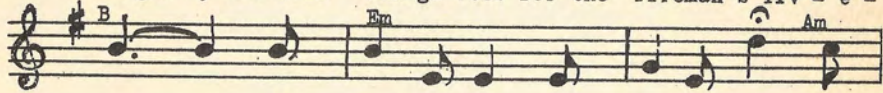
I was twen - ty - three, I turned my sea - man's



pa - pers in, said fare-well to the sea; I



changed my old blue dun-ga-rees for the fireman's liv - e -



ry, _____ 0 cursed be the day, my boys, I



lost my lib - er - ty.....

2. Each day I rose before the dawn
And did the daily chores;
I swept and scoured and polish the brass
And scrubbed out miles of floors;
I worked at the pumps and drilled and drilled
And climbed the ladder so high,
And when there wasn't a job to do
They kept me standing by.
3. The work was hard, the hours were long
And measly was the pay;
I became a slave to a lousy bell
That rang by night and day;
It slaughtered many a sleep for me
With its horrible, raucous cries,
And sent me slithering down the pole
With the sleep still in my eyes.

4. I've fought more fires than I can count,
I've fought 'em early and late,
I've breathed more smoke than the devil in hell,
More steam than a boilerman's mate;
My hands have been frozen to the branch
When the night was cold and chill,
And many's the time I've slowly fried
Like bacon on the grill.

5. I fought the fires in the London blitz
When the bombs came fast and free,
I've put my branch on many a house
And blazing factory;
I've fought the smoke and the poison fumes
To keep the flames at bay, -
But now I'm in the Union
And fight for better pay.

6. All honour to Jim Bradley
And the lads of wide renown,
Who fought our early battles
And who would not be put down!
There's still a pinch in the old top boot
As everyone will allow,
But things are getting better, boys,
We've got the Union now!

The fireman's not for me

The musical score is written on five staves in 3/4 time. It includes handwritten annotations such as circled chord symbols (A, E7, Fm, Am, E) and some scribbled-out notes. The lyrics are: "Come, all you young maidens, take warning from me Shun all engine firemen and their company; He'll tell you he loves you and all kinds of lies, But the one that he loves is the train that he drives."

loves is the train that he drives.

2. I once loved a fireman and he said he loved me;
He took me a-walking into the country;
He hugged me and kissed me and gazed in my eyes,
And said, "You're as nice as the eight-fortyfive!"
3. He said, "My dear Molly, just say you'll be mine;
Just give me the signal and let's clear the line.
My fires they are burning and the steam it is high -
If you don't take the brakes off I think I will die."
4. I gave him this answer, saying, "Don't make so free!"
For no loco fireman shall ever have me!
He'll take all your love and then, when you're in need,
He races away at the top of his speed.
5. A sailor comes home when his voyage is done,
A soldier gets weary of following the drum,
A collier will cleave to his loved one for life -
But a fireman's one love is the engine, his wife!

WORKERS' MUSIC ASSOCIATION LTD

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The Workers' Music Association was founded in 1936 to co-ordinate the musical activities of working-class organisations and to provide for this purpose the necessary musical material and professional resources. It is a co-operative organisation, its members framing its policy and sharing what benefits their combined efforts bring them.

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