

Cambric Shirt

trad. arr. Craig, Morgan, Robson

This riddle song of lovers setting impossible tasks is related to Child 2, The Elfin Knight. It was sung for the H.H. Flanders Collection by Belle Richards of Colebrook, New Hampshire, and features on a lovely album by Margaret MacArthur and Family of Vermont, *On The Mountains High*. We took a bit of a short cut, and learned it from the singing of Lori Fassman, who is a member of the thriving Folk Song Guild of Greater Boston.

Boney On The Isle Of St. Helena

trad. arr. Craig, Morgan, Robson

We are not quite sure how or where we learned this song, but were certainly inspired by Steve Turner's masterly version, which he found in the John Rylands library in Manchester. It may have originated as a Broadside, as the rather elaborate language suggests. Examples of it can be found in the Bodleian Library, and it also crops up in the USA (Frank and Anne Warner recorded Charles Tillett singing it in North Carolina in 1940). As far as we know, far from being inconsolable, Louisa refused to go into exile with Napoleon to Elba, let alone St. Helena, and even before he went to Elba, she is reported to have taken General Adam Adelbert Neipperg as a lover. By the time Napoleon died, Louisa had borne two children to other fathers.

The Lark In The Morning

trad. arr. Sarah Morgan

A charming though totally unrealistic picture of country life, with an irresistibly joyous tune and refrain. It was collected by the Hammond brothers from George Roper of Charlton St. Mary, Dorset, in 1905. The "pretty ploughboy" seems to have a lot going for him, leading us to wonder what life was like for the less attractive ploughboy ...

The Sandgate Lass On The Ropery Banks

Robert Nunn arr. Carolyn Robson/Andy Johnson

Carolyn comes from a farming background and in Northumberland, but recently she discovered that one of her great-grandfathers had worked on the ropery in Wallsend. So she chose this delightful song by Robert Nunn, the blind fiddler and singer who died in 1853 at the age of 45 years. Legend has it that he lost his sight falling off a roof. Though the Sandgate Lass's aspirations are not what we might consider attractive today, the song has immense charm nevertheless!

The Drowned Lovers

trad. arr. Craig, Morgan, Robson

George Gardiner collected this song (often known as The Constant Lovers) from James Lake of Dummer near Basingstoke. There are many other versions, including one made justly popular by the much lamented Sussex singer Ron Spicer. The song also became a bit of a musical hall favourite, with some of the words being altered for comic effect. Frank Purslow made an editorial decision to remove the few "comic amendments" from this version before including it in *The Wanton Seed* (EFDSS Publications).