

# Singing in the Streets

**Scottish Children's Songs**



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## CHAINIE TIG

### FROM HERE AND THERE

Alan Lomax's 1951 gleanings of children's lore were gathered in a crowded city, a sparsely populated island, a suburban street in Aberdeen, a school playground in Edinburgh, a vigorous singing class in South Uist, and in quiet conversations with people not yet famous.

Early in his visit to Scotland, Lomax had the good fortune to encounter the remarkable and gifted collector of children's lore, James T. Ritchie, whose books and films give an unparalleled view of the richness of Edinburgh children's games, songs, and play activities in the 1950s. Ritchie led one of his principal informants, sweet-voiced Peggy MacGillivray, through the complexities of skipping game and song. Lomax's subsequent visit to record Ritchie's Norton Park pupils reprising their singing role in Ritchie's film *The Singing Street* provides a neat comparison between MacGillivray's singing style in an interview context and singing with her peers in the natural open-air habitat of the songs.

Later in his visit, Lomax recorded a group of Aberdeen children under the leadership of 10-year old Jack Mearns, who 50 years later provided a fascinating account of Lomax in action and reconstructed who performed what.

We have included a number of English rhymes on this CD, in part because Lomax recorded very few children's songs in England in 1951, and in part because of the high quality of the material from singer Ewan MacColl. His upbringing in a Scots family living in Salford, England, gave him a wonderful command of Scots adult song, yet the

childlore he recorded here for Lomax was almost all English.

Alan Lomax's continuing interest in children's game songs led to the creation of a wonderful CD (Rounder CD 1716) and a book on children's game and pass-play songs in the eastern Caribbean, *Brown Girl in the Ring: An Anthology of Song Games from the Eastern Caribbean*, written with J. D. Elder and Bess Lomax Hawes (1997).

### CONTINUOUS RE-CREATION

These recordings are not nursery rhymes — rhymes or songs taught by adults to children. Rather they are the folklore of children themselves, first heard from their pre-teen elders, learned along with their peers aged seven to ten, and abandoned when puberty struck. Some of these children's songs travel the globe in multiple guises. Others droop and wither before they can be collected and preserved. Those that survive adapt to local languages and conditions, and versions multiply like those of the Child ballads made and preserved by adults.<sup>1</sup> The children's songs are created and re-created as they are adapted, glued together, or chopped into fragments. They drop their tunes and become rhymes, other tunes are then applied to them. Sense becomes nonsense and is rewritten to become sense again.

They function to develop language, memory and physical co-ordination. Children utilize many of them to accompany physical play activity: group or individual selection for games ("counting out" and elimination), group game songs, for use with a ball, and for skipping, hand-clapping, elastic ropes, and so forth. Others are used for performance and include

wordplay and parody verses, or narrative ballads of more than one stanza, often featuring surreal humor.

In general, the girls learn and use the play songs, and the boys sing the songs about football and violence and earth, bawdy songs and rhymes. Some performance songs and ballads are performed in common by girls and boys. Many songs of all types exist in both bawdy and “polite” versions (see “Aunty Mary Had a Canary”), but few bawdy songs were offered to Lomax: children tend to protect tender adult ears.

Variants of songs and rhymes blossom like flowers in a meadow, but children and adults tend to have strong views about which text is the “correct” one, the associated activities, and where the songs originated. “The Wind Blows High” is considered to be Irish because the folk group the Dubliners recorded an Irish version; “Johnny Todd” is stated to be from Liverpool because the tune was used for a TV police drama series set in that city; the Newcastle version of “When The Boat Comes In” is claimed as the original and definitive text. Yet there are old, distinctively Scots versions of all three songs.

### THE SCOTTISH WOOLBAG

Scottish children’s lore has attracted much attention from interested adults, and many fine collections have been published. Robert Chambers was the trailblazer in 1826. The end of the nineteenth century brought a flood of them — a survey of Golspie in Sutherland in 1897, *Games and Diversions of Argyleshire* in 1901, Robert Ford’s general account in 1903. Early in the twentieth century, Gavin Greig and the Rev. James Duncan gathered songs from all ages in Northeast Scotland, while in Edinburgh the

Rymour Club swept up gems and dross. Alan Lomax credited William Montgomerie for his help during the 1951 trip. In 1947, Montgomerie and his wife Norah had published the first of several assemblages of *Scottish Nursery Rhymes*, collected from oral and printed sources. At the same time, the most productive collector of Scottish children’s lore, James T. Ritchie, was beginning to uncover and report a wonderful harvest within a single Edinburgh school.

Later, Scottish material is strongly in evidence in the series of seminal books by Iona and Peter Opie, who wrote that “Scottish children seem to be in a happy position. They know most of the English child’s rhymes . . . and they also have their own *hameley clinky* rarely known to children outside Scotland.” After quoting some examples, the Opies report: “Pluckings like these from the Scottish woolbag of oral song seem to be as numerous as they were in the eighteenth century.”<sup>2</sup>

### HOW MANY SONGS?

Here is a small number-crunching exercise to illustrate variety and change in the repertoire. Of the 50 Scottish and 20 English children’s songs and rhymes on this CD, only 10 overlap with the 130 or so that Gavin Greig and Rev. James Duncan<sup>3</sup> collected in Northeast Scotland in the early twentieth century. In the 1960s and ‘70s, the teacher Ian Davison collected<sup>4</sup> over 500 distinct songs, rhymes, and ballad fragments from Glasgow schoolchildren and found versions of 15 of the items on this CD. (Although versions of nine items included here were found both by Greig-Duncan and Davison, the texts in each collection vary radically.) Finally, of the 18 items from the streets of Salford in the early 1920s recalled

here by Ewan MacColl, only two were also collected by Lomax in Scotland.

### TWO TO SING

Some of the songs heard on this disc are always associated with particular tunes, but many draw on a limited supply of floating tunes that are amended as they are applied to and shuffled for texts. They include march and dance tunes, music hall tunes, and the tunes of popular songs. Mostly only the first strain of a melody is employed, sometimes only the first line.

A few tunes that are applied to numerous children’s texts have a long Scots pedigree. The internationally known tune for “London Bridge” derives from one part of the nine-part “Gabhaidh Sinn An Rath Mor” (“We Will Take the High Road”) bagpipe march that in the fifteenth century belonged to Clan MacIntyre of Cruachan. The march was appropriated by the Stewarts of Appin, who played it in battle. This eventually led to it being called the “Sherramuir March,” a Scots text about the 1715 Battle of Sheriffmuir. “The Merry Matanzie,” more widely known as “The Mulberry Bush” or “Nancy Dawson,” appears in the Scottish Skene manuscript of around 1620.

### IN PERFORMANCE

We are fortunate that these recordings include not just lyrics, tunes, and descriptions of how the songs and rhymes were used, but also a variety of performance styles. Alan Lomax noted in a 1951 BBC radio broadcast<sup>5</sup> how the singing styles of five- to seven-year olds differed from those of older children. In his spoken introduction to “The Wind, the Wind,”

he said:

*Sometimes these rhymes sound very simple and monotonous, but that is because they were never meant to be sung indoors. When the children take them into the street and the complex rhythms of play begin, then one can hear a subtle and refined musical art at work, which is as old as humanity. Listen to these Aberdeen children at their skipping with the rope smacking the pavement.*

This is not folklore in action, overheard by the tape recorder. All performances are mediated by selection, and most are in some sense rehearsed. They include solo and small group performances physically placed for optimum recording quality, a professional adult presentation, a group that had already been selected and recorded for a film, and a tightly rehearsed choir. Although singing and the sounds of the movements associated with game activities can be heard, the singers are not the players. The presence of children in action in an outdoor setting changes performance style, as can be seen from the example of Peggy MacGillivray, who in the context of an interview gives melodic performances but who also participates in vigorous and at times joyous outdoor group performances.

### IN MEMORY

The listener’s response to this album will in part be guided by individual memories of childhood and child lore — a lore that we’ve all had a share in. Childhood memories were also important in identifying the original performers on this CD, which led to much media interest and to reunions of participants in Aberdeen and Edinburgh.

## IN SEQUENCE

The songs and rhymes on tracks 1–7 provide an introduction to the range of material that Lomax recorded. The remaining tracks are grouped according to function, as described by the informants or by James T. Ritchie (although, as the notes indicate, a song used for a game by one informant might be used to swing ropes by another informant and as an amusement rhyme by a third). Tracks 8–22 are game songs, virtually all of which are widely known and have been documented in wonderful detail in *The Singing Game* by Peter and Iona Opie and in *Brown Girl in the Ring*. Tracks 23–26 are songs and rhymes for ball bouncing; Tracks 27–33 are songs for skipping; and tracks 34–38 are rhymes used for choosing who was on which “side” or was “it.” Tracks 39–43 are narrative songs and ballads with a story and more than one verse that were often used for “guising” — going from door to door at Hallowe’en in costume (or disguise) and performing for cash, sweets, or fruit. The final tracks, 44–56, are amusement songs, utilizing word play, fun, surreal humor, parody, and naming, shaming, and proclaiming individuals.

## INFORMANTS

The informants include urban children in Edinburgh, suburban children in Aberdeen, island speakers of Gaelic, a major collector of Scottish children’s song, and adult recollections from two pillars of the British folk song revival.

### **Cedar Place Children, Aberdeen**

When Alan Lomax visited Cedar Place, a mile north of Aberdeen City center, to record the well-known sweet-voiced bothy ballad<sup>6</sup> singers John Mearns and his wife, Alice, he also recorded their son Jackie

Mearns (age 10 at the time) and a group of his young friends who lived and played together in the street — Pat and Jennifer Cushnie; Jim and Willie Hunter; Jack and Kathleen Mearns; Norma and Tom Watt; and Arthur, Christopher, and Gwen Ronald, who “lived round the corner.” Jack Mearns has vivid memories of the day:<sup>7</sup>

*Alan was unaccompanied on his visit to my parents’ flat in Cedar Place, a quiet cul-de-sac in Aberdeen. The children were recorded in the street outside my home and my parents were recorded within our home. . . . When Alan was trying to record us singing and skipping, someone always tripped on the rope. Alan then arranged for two children to “Caw the Ropey” [turn the rope] while the remainder sang. . . . I saw that he had a guitar in his campervan. After all the recording was over, and in response to my constant pleading, my father eventually asked Alan if he would be willing to play for us. Alan immediately agreed and retrieved his guitar. He sat down on the piano stool and started singing an up-tempo American country song. While he was singing he stamped loudly on the floor with his foot. My brother and I were mortified because, as we stayed in an upstairs flat, we were never allowed to make a noise with our feet. My father always reminded us that “It was Mrs Brown’s roof.” Our horror quickly changed to sheer delight to see that Alan was being allowed to do what we children were forbidden to do.*

### **Garrynamonie schoolchildren, South Uist**

Garrynamonie, now spelled Gearraidh Na Monadh, is a mile from the south coast of the Outer Hebridean island of South Uist,<sup>8</sup> birthplace of the Jacobite heroine Flora Macdonald. The school<sup>9</sup> was demolished in the late 1990s, but the schoolhouse is

still in use. The confident “choir” singing of the children, and their strong Gaelic accents, lead to an initial suspicion that their four songs in standard English were taught to them in school, but closer listening identifies the unclear and illogical textual variations that are a hallmark of oral learning from child to child. One of the singers, Annie McInnes nee MacLellan, explained that the songs were “action songs that must have been brought into the islands during the war, when a lot of young people came in. We were Gaelic speakers, and we probably didn’t know what we were singing.” Kate MacPhee taught the choir and was an inspirational teacher, “A lovely person; she wrote plays in Gaelic.”

Three 1951 pupils at the school have been contacted, and none has a recollection of Lomax’s visit. The school might seem isolated and distant to city dwellers, but Lomax would have been one among many visitors brought by Calum MacLean, whose brother was the poet Sorley MacLean.

### **Hamish Henderson (1919–2002)**

The Perthshire-born, Edinburgh-based Hamish Henderson, who was a collector of song and story, a discoverer of many key tradition bearers, a poet, songwriter, and towering figure in the Scottish folk revival was Alan Lomax’s guide and companion in Edinburgh and on his collecting trips in Northeast Scotland. Lomax wrote to Henderson that:

*I’ve been traveling the roads of the world, hitting the high places and low places, the rough and the smooth, for about twenty years, recording folksongs and ballads from all sorts of people, but I have never had such kind and warm-hearted treatment from anywhere as from the people of Scotland.<sup>10</sup>*

### **Ewan MacColl (1915–1989)**

Arguably the most influential figure of the British folk revival, Ewan MacColl (born Jimmie Miller in Salford, near Manchester) was a singer, songwriter, playwright, co-creator of the BBC Radio Ballads, and a collector. Alan Lomax recorded MacColl singing Scots ballads, Gaelic songs learned phonetically, and much else. MacColl recounted his experiences recording for Lomax in his autobiography, *Journeyman*.<sup>11</sup>

According to MacColl, it was the girls who “taught us [younger children] to sing . . . scores of the kind of rhymes and songs used in skipping games.” There are contradictory accounts as to whether or not MacColl introduced Alan Lomax to Hamish Henderson.

### **Peggie MacGillivray, pupil at Norton Park School, Edinburgh**

Edinburgh-born Margaret Hunter MacGillivray, now Margaret Currie, was 15 years old on July 12, 1951, when Alan Lomax recorded her. A wonderful informant and performer, she is melodic and confident in performance and articulate and clear in her accounts of how the songs were used.

### **Norton Park schoolchildren, Edinburgh**

Included on this disc are some of the songs (with the same texts and tunes) heard in the film *The Singing Street*, in all probability sung by substantially the same group of girls. James T. Ritchie noted that the female singers for the film were Peggy MacGillivray, Audrey Fraser, Harriet Sandison, Joan Grant, Hazel Agnew, Marjorie Lock, and Laura Gardner. (Boys

called Williamson, Smith, Peffers, and Stewart also sang for the film but were not recorded by Lomax.) However, the names of Christine Halloway, Mary Gray, and Emma Thomson are employed in the songs and perhaps they participated. All the singers on this disc are female aged 12–15 years and were recorded on an unknown date in 1951.

The Norton Park School lay on the border between the city of Edinburgh and its port of Leith, next to the Easter Road football ground, home of the Hibernian Football Club. The building is considered of “architectural worth,” and has been converted for use by community groups. These songs would not have been learned at Norton Park, but at nearby primary schools, such as Ferrier St., which the informants attended between the ages of 5–11.

#### **Dr James T. R. Ritchie (1908–98)**

The major collector of the songs, games, and stories of Edinburgh schoolchildren, Dr. James “Docky” Ritchie was a much-loved and respected teacher and gifted communicator. His film, *The Singing Street*, with its astonishingly evocative 1951 scenes of Edinburgh children at play, was made with a group of colleagues, the Norton Park Group, a few months before Lomax interviewed him. The famous documentary filmmaker John Grierson called it “the best amateur film I ever saw.”<sup>12</sup> Ritchie also produced several highly acclaimed radio programs and two books, which have been republished recently by Mercat Press.

#### **Unidentified English child**

Two short items (tracks 36 and 58) were recorded in the midst of a number of songs from Ewan MacColl.

The child is not his eldest son, Hamish, who was a few months old in 1951. Is this the son of a colleague in Theatre Workshop?

**NOTE:** In the following song notes, the initials OSG indicate the Opies’ reference number in *The Singing Game* and BGITR refers to games also found in the Eastern Caribbean and documented in *Brown Girl in the Ring*.<sup>13</sup>

#### **1. LONDON BRIDGE**

*Sung by Garrynamonie schoolchildren.*

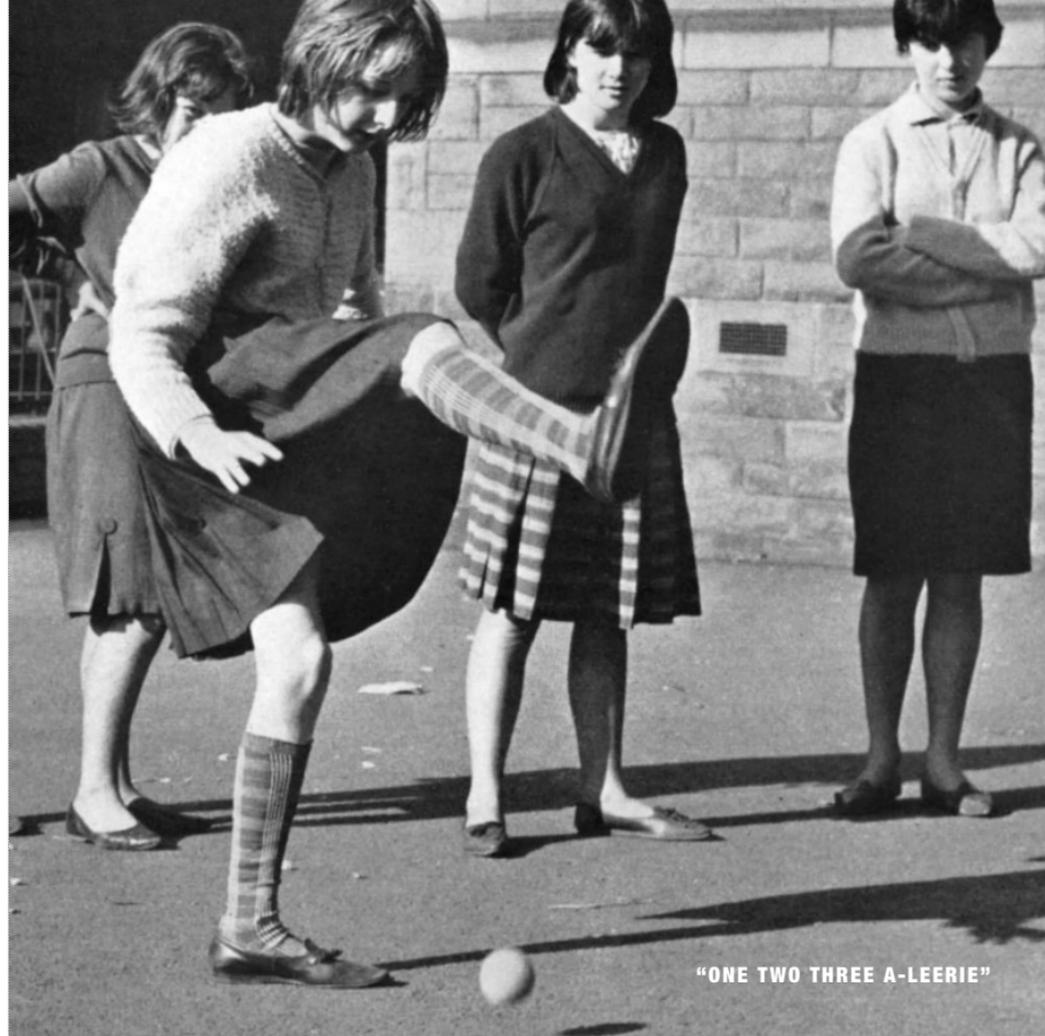
The monotone sequence after the internationally known lines of this game song<sup>14</sup> may be distinctively Scottish. A clue to what game actions were called “nupper” and “dupper” is contained in a 1951 version from Forfar, where after “supper” comes “nip her, grip her, carry her away.” As noted above, the tune is derived from an ancient Scottish bagpipe march. OSG 8, BGITR.

*London Bridge is falling down,  
Falling down, falling down.  
London Bridge is falling down,  
My fair lady.  
Tea time, dinner time,  
Supper time, nupper time,  
Dupper time, catch.*

#### **2. MY GIRL’S A CORKER**

*Sung by Cedar Place children.*

This lengthy performance song in a polka-style rhythm was taught within uniformed groups — Guides and Scouts. James T. Ritchie says it was used



“ONE TWO THREE A-LEERIE”

for skipping and dancing. It is based on an American popular song from the 1890s.<sup>15</sup> OSG 123.

*My girl's a coker, she's a New Yorker,  
I do most anything to keep her in store.  
She's got a head of hair, just like a grizzly bear,  
That's where all my money goes.*

*Roompa roompa roompa pa,  
Roompa pa, roompa pa.  
Roompa roompa roompa pa,  
Roompa pa, roompa roompa pa.*

*My girl's a coker, she's a New Yorker,  
I do most anything to keep her in store.  
She's got a pair of eyes, just like two custard pies,  
That's where all my money goes.*

*My girl's a coker, she's a New Yorker,  
I do most anything to keep her in store.  
She's got a great big nose, just like a farmer's nose,  
That's where all my money goes.  
My girl's a coker, she's a New Yorker,  
I do most anything to keep her in store.  
She's got a pair of hips, just like two battleships,  
That's where all my money goes.*

### 3. I'VE A SWEETHEART IN AMERICA

*Sung by Norton Park schoolchildren.*

This widely known song is used here for skipping. James T. Ritchie points out that the tune is derived from “What a Friend We Have in Jesus.”

*I've a sweetheart in America,  
I've another in Dundee — eye-ee, eye-ee,*

*I've another in Australia,  
And that's the one that's going to marry me — eye-ee,  
eye-ee.*

*First, he took me to America,  
Second, he took me to Dundee — eye-ee, eye-ee,  
Third, he ran away and left me,  
With three babies sittin on my knee — eye-ee, eye-ee.*

*One was sittin on the table,  
The other was sittin on my knee — eye-ee, eye-ee,  
The other was standin by the door side,  
Singin, “Daddy, will ye no come back tae me — eye-ee,  
eye-ee?”*

### 4. THERE ARE HUNDREDS OF THESE

(Interview)

*Spoken by Peggy MacGillivray and James T. Ritchie.*

**James T. Ritchie:** *Well, I got started because — eh, one day I had a class. I'm supposed to be a science teacher, you see, and if you teach certain girls science, you find it's very difficult, and they're not interested in in scientific explanations of why a blanket keeps you warm. They know it keeps you warm. They don't want to know anything about the conductivity of the air. So I says to them, “Well, tell me, what are you interested in?” Because I couldn't get their interest aroused. And — eh, of course, no answer. Then I says, “What do you do?” No answer. “What do you do during the holidays?” “We play.” “Where?” “In the street.” “What at?” And then they began to tell me about their games, you see. You see, there's so many of — of — there's these rhymes, they — they skip, you see, or they have a, a ball — they play with a ball or — or, there's — there's hundreds of counting out rhymes, you know, like (Recites):*

*Eetle otte, eetle otte black bottle,  
Eetle otte out. [you know]  
Shining on the mantel-piece,  
Like a silver thrupenny piece,  
Eetle otte black bottle,  
Eetle otte out.*

*You see. There are hundreds of these. Isn't there, Peggy?  
Do you know any one?*

**Peggy MacGillivray:** *Well, eh, the one that's most popular in Ferrier Street [the primary school she attended] is the one about Mabel the Horse.*

**Ritchie:** *Right — oh, that's a good one.*

**Peggy MacGillivray:**  
*Three white horses in a stable,  
Pick one out and call it Mabel.  
If it's Mabel, set the table.  
Three white horses in a stable.*

### 5. THE NIGHT WAS DARK

*Sung by Norton Park schoolchildren.*

There is no obvious source for this ballad, which here is used for skipping but which was also useful for Halloween guising (and probably sung lugubriously then) — the vigor of this version clashes with the depressing text. The tune is derived from the first part of a brass band march. Should “shed” not be “red”? Davison has “Holding up the Union Jack.”

*The night was dark, the war was over.  
The battlefield was shed with blood.  
And there I spied a wounded soldier,*

*Lying dying as he said:*

*“God bless my home in dear old Scotland,  
God bless my wife and only child.  
And tell the people that I'm dying,  
For I've won the Union Jack.  
That's that!”*

### 6. HARRY LAUDER AND MUSSOLINI ARE DEAD

*Sung by Jennifer and Pat Cushnie.*

There is a plethora of such single verse songs as these. The first one commemorates Harry Lauder (the celebrated Scots comedian and singer; 1870–1950). The tune is the Scots pipe tune, “The Barren Rocks of Aden.” Lomax commented about the Mussolini song, “The kids have a rare gift for summing up the essentials of history, as in this caustic epitaph to a man who caused so much grief.” In a later version Mussolini became Vaseline (a patent medicine rub), and the last line became the remarkable “There's only room for Elvis and his wee banjo.”

*Harry Lauder shaved his father,  
Wi a rusty razor.  
The razor broke and cut his throat,  
And that was Harry Lauder.*

*Now the war is over, Mussolini's dead.  
He wants to go to Heaven with a crown upon his head.  
The Lord says, “No. He's got to stay below.  
All dressed up and nowhere to go.”*

## 7. AS I WENT DOWN TO WINDSOR

*Sung by Ewan MacColl.*

The misfortunes or misdeeds of royalty feature often in British children's song, as do rude words in disguise. This tune is very widely used and, as "My Old Man's a Dustman," was a popular hit for the skiffle king Lonnie Donegan.

**Spoken:** *And the — uh, people in high places were not exempt from — uh, the mockery of our songs. (Sings):*

*As I went down to Windsor, on a visit to the king,  
The soldier there on sentry said 'e couldn't be seen.  
But I looked through the window, an' I got a  
terrible shock,  
For I saw Mrs. Langtry sitting on his knee,  
Scratching his bantam —  
Cock a doodle doo, it's nothing to do with you,  
Dickery dock, I know what,  
Cock a doodle doo.*

## 8. CHINESE GOVERNMENT (Interview)

*Sung by Peggy MacGillivray. Interview with Peggy MacGillivray, James T. Ritchie, and Alan Lomax.*

A lyric likely to cause vague unease in modern, more racially cautious breasts. OSG 93.

**Peggy MacGillivray:**

*Chinese government,  
Black man's daughter,  
Tra la la la la la la.  
The wind blows high from the sky,  
And out comes Jeannie with the big black eye.*

Alan Lomax: *And what's the name of that?*

Peggy MacGillivray: "Chinese government."

Lomax: *How do you play it?*

MacGillivray: *Well, everybody stands in a line and one person is "out." And she runs back and forward singing the words. And when she says — whoever it is — whatever name — that person comes out and runs round her as she's going backward and forward. And it goes on like that, until everybody is "out" in the circle running back right round this girl. And then she starts singing — she keeps on doing it and sings somebody's name and they drop out and form the line again. And then it just goes on and on, and she chooses one and that person takes her place.*

Lomax: *And — eh, what's your interpretation of this game, uh, Professor?*

James Ritchie: *Eh, I don't know what interpretation I would have. Eh, certain people whom you might call — eh, psychoquacks would say that it is probably — eh, Scotland's subconscious feeling of guilt towards colonial peoples. (Laughter.<sup>16</sup> Sings):*

*Tra la la la la la la.  
The wind blows high and from the sky,  
And out pops Jessie with a big black eye.*

**Spoken:** *The lassie pops out and goes round. And then they sing — they both sing it — another girl comes round, and this one's always going up and down like that — without the trail. And then, of course, they — it unwinds itself and they all go back. And I don't mind tellin you, some of the lassies, I've heard them say, "My belly's sair." [My stomach's sore.] Isn't that right? They're so tired. It's very tiring isn't it, Peggy? (Laughs)*

## 9. THE WIND, THE WIND (four versions)

- Sung by Peggy MacGillivray.*
- Sung by Norton Park Schoolchildren.*
- Sung by the Cedar Place children.*
- Sung by the Cedar Place children.*

A version performed by the Irish folk group The Dubliners under the title "I'll Tell My Maw" became commercially popular in Britain in the 1960s, but this courting game song was popular with children in Britain and the USA over 100 years ago. The Norton Park school children's version (b.) includes a second game part, with instructions on actions to the tune "The Merry Matanzie." James T. Ritchie derived the title of his second book, *Golden City*, from this song. The name is a biblical reference. In more than one Scottish town, an area where Roman Catholic residents predominated was termed the Golden City. OSG 22.

**a. Peggy MacGillivray:**

*The wind, the wind, the wind blows high,  
The snow comes falling from the sky,  
Margaret Thomson says she'll die  
For the want of the Golden City.*

*She is handsome, she is pretty,  
She is the girl of the Golden City,  
She is handsome, one two three,  
Come and tell me who shall be.*

**b. Norton Park schoolchildren:**

*The wind, the wind, the wind blows high,  
The snow comes falling from the sky.  
Christine Halloway says she'll die  
For the want of the Golden City.*

*She is handsome, she is pretty,  
She is the girl of the Golden City.  
She is handsome, one two three,  
Come and tell me who shall be.*

**Spoken:** *One. Two. Three.  
Alan Hartley!*

**Sung:**

*A is his first name, his first name, his first name,  
A is his first name — ee-eye-o, sir.  
Etc. as above: H is his second name. // Alan Hartley is his name. // Now's the time to hide your face. // Now's the time to show your face. // Now's the time to choose the one.*

**c. Cedar Place children:**

*The wind, the wind, the wind blows high.  
The rain comes dashing from the sky.  
[Suzie and] Norma, she must die  
For her lover's in the golden sky.  
She is handsome, she is pretty,  
She is the girl of the golden city.  
She has lovers, one, two, three.  
Pray and tell [me / now] who they be.*

**d. Cedar Place children:**

*The wind, the wind, the wind blows high.  
The rain comes dashing from the sky.  
[Suzie and] Norma, she must die  
For her lover's in the golden sky.<sup>17</sup>  
She is handsome, she is pretty,  
She is the girl of the golden city.  
She has lovers, one, two, three.  
Pray and tell [me / now] who they be.*

**10. POOR MARY SAT A-WEEPING**

(two versions)

- a. *Sung by Ewan MacColl.*  
b. *Sung by Garrynamonie schoolchildren.*

This is a friendship game. Sometimes the circle cheers up the sad lover, sometimes there is a tragic series of deaths — husband, baby, and Mary herself. In the second version, sung by the Garrynamonie schoolchildren, two popular game songs are sandwiched together, as signaled by the change in tune and meter. The first tune is very close to Ewan MacColl's from 400 miles and 30 years away. "Poor Mary" is a friendship game (OSG 80), "On the Carpet" is a mating game (OSG 19, BGITR).

- a. **Ewan MacColl (spoken):** *And the little girls had numerous songs for accompanying their games, songs like "Poor Mary Sat a-Weeping."* (Sings:)

*Poor Mary sat a-weepin, a-weepin, a-weepin.  
Poor Mary sat a-weepin  
On a bright summer's day.*

*Oh, Mary, what you weepin for,  
On a bright summer's day?  
I'm weepin for me lover,  
On a bright summer's day.*

- b. **Garrynamonie schoolchildren:**

*Mary lies a-weepin, a-weepin, a-weepin,  
Mary lies a-weepin on [sighs] summer day.*

*On the [grass go] she shall be,<sup>18</sup>  
Till the grass grows on the field,  
Stand up stand up, [polly veelly veep]*

*And show me the girl and the [next two asleep].<sup>19</sup>*

*How do you marry? I'd marry for joy.  
First [to / two] a girl, and the next [to / two] a boy.*

**11. HERE'S A POOR WIDOW**

*Sung by Norton Park schoolchildren.*

James T. Ritchie explains that first "the girls dance round the 'widow' in the centre, who picks her 'sweetheart.' The two kiss, and the sweetheart becomes the new widow. The tune is "The Merry Matanzie." OSG 40.

*Here's a poor widow, she's left alone,  
She has no one to marry upon.  
Come choose to the east,  
Come choose to the west.  
Come choose to the one that you love best.*

*Now they are married we wish them joy,  
Every year a girl and boy.  
Loving each other like sister and brother,  
And playing the game of kiss-together.*

**12. LITTLE SALLY WALKER**

*Sung by Cedar Place children.*

Jack Mearns describes this as "a game where we sat in a circle and 'Sally Walker' walked round the outside of the circle 'crying' into a hankie which she dropped behind someone who then had to chase her round the circle. If she reached the chaser's place first, the chaser then became 'Sally Walker.'" OSG 34, BGITR.

*Little Sally Walker, sitting in the sun,  
Crying and weeping for a young man.*

*Sad Sally Walker, wipe away your tears,  
Choose to the east, and choose to the west,  
And choose to the very one that you love best.*

### 13. ON THE MOUNTAIN

*Sung by Norton Park schoolchildren.*

A game and skipping song. The first stanza is very widely sung and quoted. OSG 36.

*On the mountain stands a lady,  
Who she is I cannot tell.  
All she wants is gold and silver,  
All she wants is a nice young man.*

*So call in my Andrew dear,  
Andrew dear, Andrew dear,  
So call in my Andrew dear,  
Andrew dear.*

### 14. ALL THE BOYS IN LONDON

*Sung by Cedar Place children.*

Usually a courting song, here used as a song for skipping that suddenly transmutes into the play song “The Big Ship Sails.” OSG 21 and 6.

*All the boys in London lead a happy life,  
Except for Ann, she hasn't got a lad.  
Oh, a lad she will have and a-hunting we will go,  
Along with [Fran / Frannie], ee-ay oh.*

*Oh, he kisses her, he cuddles her, sits her on his knee,  
And says, “Dear Ann, do you love me?”*

*“Oh, I love you and you love me  
On the nineteenth of December.”*

*Oh, the captain says, “This'll never never do.  
Never never do, never, never do.”  
Oh, the captain says, “This'll never never do.”  
On the nineteenth of December.*

### 15. THE BIG SHIP SAILS

*Sung by Garrynamonie schoolchildren.*

Another Garrynamonie song with the hallmarks of oral learning and the preservation of text that must have been puzzling to the singers. ‘Says to’ is usually ‘sails through’, ‘ninings’ is ‘nineteenth’. Eventually the text would have been remade into sense by some young editor.<sup>20</sup> OSG 6.

*The big ship says to the Illey Alley oh,  
Illey Alley oh, Illey Alley oh,  
The big ship says to the Illey Alley Oh,  
On the ninings of September.<sup>21</sup>  
The captain says that you'll never, never do,  
Never, never do, never, never do.  
The captain says that you'll never, never do,  
On the ninings of September.*

### 16. IN AND OUT THE WINDOWS

*Sung by Garrynamonie schoolchildren.*

A slow, 3/4-time tune for a circle game song that usually employs a bouncy 4/4 rhythm. OSG 96, BGITR.

*In and out the windows, in and out the windows,  
In and out the windows, as we 'ave done before.*

*Etc., as above: Stand and face your lover // Kneel  
down beside 'er. // Follow her to London. // Shaking  
hands in London. // I'll tell the bobby.<sup>22</sup> [policeman]*

### 17. UP AGAINST THE WALL

*Sung by Norton Park schoolchildren.*

A courtship line game. In British ballads about Napoleon, “bonny bunch of roses” is a poetic term for Great Britain. OSG 91.

*Up against the wall for the London Ball,  
The London Ball, the London Ball.  
Up against the wall for the London Ball,  
For the bonny bunch of roses.*

*Mother, mother may I go,  
May I go, may I go,  
Mother, mother may I go,  
To the bonny bunch of roses.*

*Etc., as above: Yes, my darling, you may go. // She  
buckled up her skirt and away she went. // She met  
her lover on the way.<sup>23</sup> // She shook her head and said  
good bye.*

### 18. I PAULA TAY, PAULA TASKA

(two versions) / Interview

a. *Sung by Norton Park schoolchildren.*

b. *Sung by Peggy MacGillivray. Interview with  
James T. Ritchie and Peggy MacGillivray.*

The Opies identify a pre-World War I chant ancestor of “I Paula Tay” but say that, as a song, it has “only been noticed at Norton Park School . . . first as a skipping rhyme . . . and then as a rhumba,” and

shows “the persistence of scraps of rhythmic utterance.”<sup>24</sup> Lomax commented, “Even in staid old Edinburgh, where the children play on cobbled streets between walls of red brick and grey stone, the old dances live on, very often influenced by things heard on the radio and in the movies.”<sup>25</sup> OSG 126.

*I paula tay, paula taska,  
Paula tay, paula toe.  
I paula tay, paula taska,  
Paula tay, paula toe.*

*O alla tinka, to do the rhumba,  
O alla tinka, do the  
Rhumba — umba umba umba-ay.*

*James T. Ritchie: What kind of game is this, Peggy?  
Peggy MacGillivray: It's a circle game with one girl in  
the middle and everybody dances round singing.  
And when it comes to “O alla tinka,” she must do the  
rhumba to that bit.  
Ritchie: Ay, um uh, well, will you [...] it then?  
MacGillivray: Or a copy of the rhumba. (Sings:)*

*I paula tay, paula taska,  
Paula tay, paula toe.  
I paula tay, paula taska,  
Paula tay, paula toe.*

*O alla tinka, to do the rhumba,  
O alla tinka do the —  
Rhumba — umba, umba, umba, ay.*

### 19. **HERE COMES A BLUEBIRD**

*Sung by Norton Park schoolchildren.*

James T. Ritchie describes this circle game in which the “bluebird” weaves in and out of raised linked hands, selects a partner, and dances with her. The varying speeds of the two parts neatly indicate the two-part action of the game. **OSG 97, BGITR.**

*Here comes a bluebird through my window,  
Here comes a bluebird through my door.  
Here comes a bluebird through my window.  
Hi diddle i um dum dee.*

*Take a little hop and dance with your partner,  
Take a little hop and dance with me.  
Take a little hop and dance with your partner.  
Hi diddle i um dum dee. (Song repeats.)*

### 20. **MY FATHER BOUGHT THE LITTLE COAT**

*Sung by Peggy MacGillivray.*

Although here this is a self-contained song, in Monymusk in 1906 these verses were used to introduce the “Bonny Bunch of Roses” song.<sup>26</sup> **OSG 91.**  
*My faither bought the little coat,  
The little coat, the little coat,  
My faither bought the little coat,  
And Alice stole the linin.*

*Ha ha ha, ye neednae rin,  
Ye neednae rin, ye neednae rin,  
Ha ha ha, ye neednae rin,  
Ye'll get yer licks the mornin.*

### 21. **A TISKET A TASKET**

*Sung by Ewan MacColl.*

This children’s game song became a pop — or, rather, swing band — hit when recorded by Ella Fitzgerald with the Chick Webb Orchestra in the late 1930s. An astonishing number of U.S. children’s game songs got the swing treatment around this time.

**Spoken:** *And the little girls used this song for almost any counting game. (Sings:)*

*A tisket, a tasket, a little yellow basket,  
I wrote a letter to my love and on the way I dropped it.*

*A tisket, a tasket, a little yellow basket,  
One of you ‘as picked it up and put it in your pocket.*

**Spoken:** *It wasn’t you, it wasn’t you, an it wasn’t you.  
It was YOU!*

### 22. **IN AND OUT THE DUSTY BLUEBELLS**

*Sung by Norton Park schoolchildren.*

This is a vigorous ring game. In the film *The Singing Street* “dusting bluebells” is sung. **OSG 98.**

*In and out the dusty bluebells,  
In and out the dusty bluebells,  
In and out the dusty bluebells,  
I am your master.*

*Tipper ipper rapper on your shoulder,  
Tipper ipper rapper on your shoulder,  
Tipper ipper rapper on your shoulder,  
I am your master. (Song repeats.)*

### 23. **HE’S A NAVVY**

*Sung by Ewan MacColl.*

A melodic number song which, as always, demonstrates the shortage of available rhymes for seven. Surely there was an initial verse for one o’clock? A *navvy* is a construction worker, originally a navigator, working in a squad to make the new canals across Britain 200 years ago. The canal navvies were often a source of fear, as they were seen as rough gangs suddenly invading rural communities.

**Spoken:** *And sometimes the boys would use this song for a ball game. (Sings:)*

*As I rose up one mornin, just before two,  
There ah saw a navvy, tying up his shoe.*

*He’s a navvy, ha ha ha,  
He’s a navvy, hee hee hee.  
He’s a navvy, I can see.*

*As I rose up one mornin, just before three,  
There ah saw a navvy, drinkin of my tea. (Chorus)*

*As I rose up one morning, just before four,  
There ah saw a navvy, knockin on my door. (Chorus)*

*As I rose up one morning, just before five,  
There ah saw a navvy, take a runnin dive. (Chorus)*

*As I rose up one morning, just before six,  
There I saw a navvy, burnin up my sticks. (Chorus)*

*As I rose up one morning, just before seven,  
There I saw a navvy, flyin up to heaven. (Chorus)*

### 24. **MOTHER, MOTHER, I AM ILL**

*Sung by Norton Park schoolchildren.*

Double “ballie” chant — the girl has two balls in play, bounced against the wall. A sequential song, the sequence is brought back neatly to its medical beginning.

*Mother, mother, I am ill,  
Send for the doctor up the hill.*

*Up the hill is far too far,  
Then we’ll buy a motor car.*

*A motor car is far too dear,  
Then we’ll buy a pint of beer.*

*A pint of beer is far too strong,  
Then we’ll buy a treacle scone.  
A treacle scone is far too tough,  
Then we’ll buy a box of snuff.*

*A box of snuff will make you sneeze,  
Then we’ll buy a pound of cheese.*

*A pound of cheese will make you sick,  
Send for the doctor — quick, quick, quick.*

### 25. **PK PENNY PACKET / MRS MOPP / CHICKA TONY**

*Chanted by Cedar Place children.*

These are three ball-bouncing songs. Jack Mearns recalls that “P K” was performed with a ball on a string or inside a nylon stocking, the ball being bounced over and under the body and against the

wall. PK was a popular brand of chewing gum. Mrs. Mopp was a character in a 1940s BBC comedy radio show. “Chicka Tony” is derived from “Yankee Doodle,” whose tune is much utilized by children. According to James J. Fuld, its complex history is such that “a book is waiting to be written” about it.

#### PK PENNY PACKET

*PK penny packet.  
First you chew it, then you crack it,  
Then you stick it on your jacket.  
PK penny packet.*

#### MRS. MOPP

*Mrs. Mopp had a shop,  
All she sold was candy and rock.  
Candy and rock, canny and [...],  
Let it drop.*

#### CHICKA TONY

*Chicka Tony went to London,  
Just to ride a pony.  
He stuck a feather in its hat  
And called it macaroni.*

#### 26. ONE, TWO, THREE, ALAIRY (two versions)

- a. *Sung by Ewan MacColl.*  
b. *Sung by Cedar Place children.*

This song has a remarkable pedigree. The Scottish ball-bouncing version is often “one, two, three, aleerie, four, five, six, aleerie, seven, eight, nine, aleerie, ten, aleerie over ball.” At each “aleerie,” the leg is crooked and the ball bounced under it. Although “aleerie” appears in no modern dictionaries, in the 1370 English poem *Piers Plowman*, the

sturdy beggars at the town gate hold their legs “aleery,” or crooked, so they will appear to be disabled. A favorite “entertainment” verse has a concealed rude word: “Sitting on her bumbaleerie.” Although John Means had told his fellow Cedar Park children to sing the polite “basket chairie” version, some sang “bumbaleerie” on the recording. “Chocolate babies” was a popular candy. Other versions interpolate contemporary characters, for example, “One, two, three, aleerie / I saw Wallace Beery / Sitting on his bumbaleerie / Kissing Shirley Temple.”

a. **Ewan MacColl (spoken):** *And the little girls would play a a game which consisted of bouncing a ball and cocking one's leg over it, to this tune (sings):*

*One, two, three, alairy,  
Four, five, six, alairy,  
Seven, eight, nine, alairy,  
Ten — alairy, catch the ball.*

b. **Cedar Place children:**

*One, two, three, aleerie,  
I spy Bella Peerie,  
Sitting on her basket chairie / bumbaleerie  
Eating chocolate babies.*

#### 27. EEVY IVY OVER / Interview

*Sung by Peggy MacGillivray.  
Interview with James T. Ritchie and  
Peggy MacGillivray.*

“Charlie Chaplin went to France” was a widespread ball-bouncing and skipping chant. The two preceding lines are less usual. “Dummy, dummy shells” is puzzling — children in Fife in 1981 sang about two



PLAYING IN THE STREET

flowers, “Bluebells, cockle shells”. In the final lines, “do big burley-o,” “birl” means to whirl around.

**James T. Ritchie:** *What is “Eevy Ivy Over,” Peggy? How do you do that again?*

**Peggy MacGillivray:** *Well, it starts with the swing of the rope we call “waves.” And — um, then half-way through, it goes properly right round and you skip to that.*

**Ritchie:** *Skip to that.*

**MacGillivray:** *Uh-huh.*

**Ritchie:** *Eh, well, can — w — will you sing it, then? Let’s hear you. “Bluebells, dummy-dummy shells —”*

**MacGillivray (sings):**

*Bluebells, dummy-dummy shells.*

*Eevy, ivy, over.*

*Charlie Chaplin went to France,  
To teach the ladies how to dance.  
First the heel and then the toe,  
Then you do big burley-o,  
Big burley-o.*

**Ritchie (spoken):** *That’s it all.*

## 28. ALL THE WAY TO LONDON TOWN / Interview

*Performed by Peggy MacGillivray.*

*Interview with James T. Ritchie and Alan Lomax.*

A remarkably skillful skipping sequence, demonstrated in the film *The Singing Street*.

**James T. Ritchie:** *“Up and Down, Up and Down,” you know that?*

**Peggy MacGillivray (chanted):**

*Up and down, up and down,  
All the way to London town.*

*Swish-swosh, swish-swosh,*

*All the way to King’s Cross.*

*Heel toe, heel toe,*

*All the —*

*No, that’s —*

**Ritchie:** *Leg swing, leg swing —*

**MacGillivray:**

*Leg swing, leg swing,*

*All the way to Berlin.*

*Heel toe, heel toe,*

*All the way to Je-rich-o.*

**Ritchie (spoken):** *You see, at the end of every line, it’s a bumps, and, of course, at “Jer-ich-o” there’s a bumps.*

**Alan Lomax:** *“Je-rich-o-o-o.”<sup>28</sup> “Porridges”?*

**MacGillivray:** *“Porridgy.” If you skip awfully — they have the rope going awfully fast and you must keep skipping in the rope — see how long you can keep it. They usually do — um, a game to that — eh. What is it, now? Well, you can do ever so many things and — like, there’s — eh, “open shut, open shut.” That’s for your eyes. That’s if you come to “open” — well, you can skip with your eyes open. If you stop at “shut” — well, you skip with your eyes shut. Slow, for that. And then there’s “high, low, medium.” That’s for waves. They have the rope just going up half-way. That’s for waves. If you stop at “low,” well, you can have low waves; “medium,” you have medium waves; and “high,” you must jump high waves. And then there’s — eh. Oh, well, there’s all sorts of things you do for that one.*

**Lomax:** *But “porridgy” means — has to do with it*

*being hot? Isn’t it difficult, or something like that?*

**MacGillivray:** *Well, I think it should be hot. It goes awfully fast.*

## 29. QUEEN ELIZABETH LOST HER SHOE

*Chanted by Norton Park schoolchildren.*

This rhyme is for skipping. The date of the twentieth of June may be the skipper’s birthday. Which Queen Elizabeth is this? Not the current British queen; the singers performed the song before her accession.

*Queen Elizabeth lost her shoe,*

*Down at the battle of Waterloo,*

*And [she found it] in the month of*

*January, February, March, April, May, June.*

*One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten,*

*Eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, seven-*

*teen, eighteen, nineteen, twenty.*

## 30. IT HAS TO COME OUT QUITE UNCONSCIOUSLY (Interview)

*Spoken by James T. Ritchie, Peggy MacGillivray, and Alan Lomax*

**James T. Ritchie:** *And if you ask, if you ask a child — eh, “Do you know this or that?” they, they don’t remember. It has to come out quite unconsciously. And that, that’s how we — we found the girls were, were skipping that “bumps” skipping.” Now “bumps” means this — that the rope passes twice and the girl’s feet are up in the air. And when we made this film, you know, she actually is in the air. You know, you talk about — eh, what’s the name of that great ballet dancer? [Unidentified voice: Nijinsky.] Nijinsky’s walking in the air. Well, we actually — she’s in the air. Eh, what is*

*that one, Peggy?*

**Alan Lomax:** *Well, you go up to four times if you’re good, don’t you, Peggy?*

**Ritchie:** *Ay, but Peggy can —*

**Peggy MacGillivray:** *You can do more than four.*

**Ritchie:** *Can you?*

**MacGillivray:** *Well, they can’t keep up very long, but I’ve seen them up to about seven or eight.*

**Ritchie:** *Eh?*

## 31. DOWN IN THE VALLEY

a. *Sung by Peggy MacGillivray.*

b. *Sung by the Norton Park schoolchildren.*

A courting game or for skipping with French Ropes. Here there are iced cakes for afternoon tea, and an urban taxicab for transport. In older versions the bride makes a dumpling, cuts it into slices, and offers them to the company to taste. OSG 20.

**Peggy MacGillivray:**

*Down in the valley where the green grass grows,  
Where Mary Gray, she grows like a rose,  
She grows, she grows, she grows so sweet,  
That she calls for her lover at the end of the street.*

*Sweetheart, sweetheart, will you marry me?  
Yes, love, yes, love, half past three.  
Ice cakes, spice cakes, all for tea,  
And we’ll have a wedding at half past three.*

*Pump, pump, here comes the taxi-cab,  
Pump, pump, here comes the taxi-cab,  
Pump, pump, here comes the taxi-cab,  
Ready for the wedding at half-past three.*

### Norton Park schoolchildren:

*Down in the valley where the green grass grows,  
Where [Emma Thomson], she grows like a rose.  
She grows, she grows, she grows so sweet,  
That she calls for her lover at the end of the street.*

*Sweetheart, sweetheart, will you marry me?  
Yes, love, yes, love, half past three.  
Ice cakes, spice cakes, all for tea,  
And we'll have a wedding at half past three.*

*Pump, pump, here comes the taxi-cab,  
Pump, pump, here comes the taxi-cab,  
Pump, pump, here comes the taxi-cab,  
Pump, pump, here comes the taxi-cab,  
Ready for the wedding at half past three.*

### 32. THERE'S USUALLY AN ARGUMENT WHICH ONE'S WHICH (Interview)

*Spoken by Peggy MacGillivray and Alan Lomax.*

Peggy is describing different rope-skipping games.

**Peggy MacGillivray:** *French. The German. And the Dutch. And oh, there's lots and lots of them. They do — they — some people give different names for ones. There's usually an argument which one's which.*

**Alan Lomax:** *Well, now, what do you — how would you describe this French game? Give me all the details.*

**MacGillivray:** *Well, it's two ropes — you hold one in each hand. There's two people, one each end. You hold these two ropes, and then one turns round. When the one's coming down, the other's coming up over the top. It's rather hard to describe, but um, that's it.*

**Lomax:** *And what about the Dutch?*

**MacGillivray:** *Oh, that's the opposite: it's out the way*

*instead of in.*

**Lomax:** *And the German?*

**MacGillivray:** *One rope along the ground and the other rope comin over it. And the person mustn't jump on the rope on the ground, they must keep goin over, back and forward over the rope and still jumpin through this rope that's coming over.*

**Lomax:** *And then there are all sorts of different ways of doing each one of those, I guess.*

**MacGillivray:** *Uh-huh.*

**Lomax:** *Well, how do you learn the game? Do you — when you're a little girl, do you stand by and watch and watch and beg to get taken in, is that what happens?*

**MacGillivray:** *That's it.*

**Lomax:** *And then you get pushed around pretty hard if you miss, don't you? Do you remember what the — when you began to play these games yourself?*

**MacGillivray:** *No.*

### 33. JELLY ON THE PLATE

*Chanted by Cedar Place children.*

John Mearns described this game as “skipping with actions — wiggling, kicking, turning 180 degrees round, etc.” Lomax introduced this chant on radio by saying, “I set up my mike in the streets of Aberdeen, and found the children were singing about their favorite dessert.”<sup>30</sup>

*Jelly on the plate, jelly on the plate,  
Wiggle waggle, wiggle waggle,  
Jelly on the plate.*

*Sausage on the pan, sausage on the pan,  
Turn them over, turn them over,  
Sausage on the pan.*

*Baby on the floor, baby on the floor,  
Pick [him / it] up, pick [him / it] up,  
Baby on the floor.*

*Ghostie in the house, ghostie in the house,  
Kick him out, kick him out,  
Ghostie in the house.*

*Apples on the tree, apples on the tree,  
[Pick / Pull] them off; [pick / pull] them off;  
Apples on the tree.*

### 34. COWBOY JOE / IPPETTY SIPITTY

*Chanted by Kathleen Mearns and Jack Mearns.*

“Cowboy Joe,” chanted by Kathleen Mearns, was used for skipping. Perhaps it was a reference to the popular song “Ragtime Cowboy Joe”. Jack Mearns described “Ippitty Sippity” as “an elimination rhyme involving the touching of lips and fists.” The words seem, in part, to have to do with drinking from a cup.

#### COWBOY JOE

**Kathleen Mearns:**

*Cowboy Joe from Mexico.*

*[She stands] them up, sticks them up,*

*Cowboy Joe.*

#### IPPITTY SOOPITTY

**Jack Mearns:**

*Ippitty soopitty,*

*Ippitty sap.*

*Ippitty soopitty,*

*Cunella cunapp.*

*Cunellow up, cunellow down,*

*Cunellow into Chinatown.*

### 35. MY MOTHER / MY LITTLE HOUSE

*Chanted by Cedar Place children.*

“My Mother” was “an elimination rhyme.” “My Little House” possibly included illustrative finger manipulations.

#### MY MOTHER

*My mother and your mother*

*Were hanging out some clo'es.*

*My mother gave your mother*

*A dunt [blow] on the nose.*

*What colour was her blood?*

*Red.*

*R – E – D stands for RED*

*And O – U – T spells OUT.*

*My mother and your mother*

*Were hanging out some clo'es.*

*My mother gave your mother*

*A dunt on the nose.*

*And what colour was her blood?*

*Blue.<sup>31</sup>*

#### MY LITTLE HOUSE

*My little house, my little house,*

*Has an upstairs, a downstairs,*

*My little house.*

**36. EETLE OTTLE, BLACK BOTTLE**

(two versions)

- a. *Chanted by Cedar Place child.*
- b. *Chanted by Norton Park schoolchild.*

Versions of an elimination rhyme widely used in Scotland.<sup>32</sup>

**a. Cedar Place child:**

*Eetle ottle, black bottle,  
Eetle ottle out.  
Take our black dishcloth  
And wipe it all out.*

**b. Norton Park schoolchild:**

*Eetle ottle, black bottle,  
Eetle ottle out.  
Shining on the mantelpiece,  
Like a silver thrupenny piece.<sup>33</sup>  
Eetle ottle, black bottle,  
Eetle ottle out.*

**37. FLIP FLOP***Chanted by Ewan MacColl.*

**Spoken:** *And when the boys were choosing sides for any game, they would — uh, all swing their arms to a kind of rhythmic chant. And those who finished with their palms upwards would be counted out, until finally, uh the numbers were reduced to one person whose palms were facing down.<sup>34</sup> And this is how they did it (chants):*

*Flip, flap, flow bang.  
Flip, flap, flow bang.  
Flip, flap, flow bang.*

**38. ONE TWO THREE FOUR FIVE***Sung by an unidentified English child.*

Widely known. See the *Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes*, No. 388. Despite the singer's exclamation at the end, the verse seems to be complete.

*Uh — One two three four five,  
Once I caught a fish alive,  
Six seven eight nine ten,  
Then I let it go again.*

*Why did you let it go?  
Cause it bit my finger so.  
Which finger did it bite?  
This little finger on my right.*

**Spoken:** *Oh, I'd missed out a verse, daddy.*

**39. MY NAME IS SWEET JENNY** (two versions)

- a. *Sung by Norton Park schoolchildren.*
- b. *Sung by Peggy MacGillivray.*

A sweet song indeed, two surviving verses of the original fifteen, composed by Thomas Scot of Falkirk at the end of the eighteenth century, and still widely popular with a first line "Queen Mary, Queen Mary, my age is sixteen."

**a. Norton Park schoolchildren:**

*My name is sweet Jenny, my age is sixteen,  
My father's a farmer in yonder green.  
He's plenty o' money to dress me in silk,  
And nae bonnie laddie'll tak me awa.*

*I rose in the morning, I looked in the glass,  
I said to myself, "What a handsome young lass."*

*My hands by my side, and I gave a haw-haw,  
And nae bonnie laddie'll tak me awa.*

**b Peggy MacGillivray:**

*My name is sweet [Jemmy], my age is sixteen,  
My father's a farmer in yonder green.  
He's plenty o money to dress me in silk,  
And nae bonnie laddie'll tak me a walk.*

*I rose in the morning, I looked in the glass  
I said to myself, "What a handsome young lass."  
My hands by my side, and I gave a haw-haw,  
For nae bonnie laddie'll tak me awa.*

**40. I'M A LITTLE ORPHAN GIRL** (two versions)

a. *Sung by Peggy MacGillivray.*

b. *Sung by Norton Park schoolchildren.*

Used as a lyric ballad and for German Ropes. A tear-jerker, sure to catch "guising" pennies. In his BBC radio program in November 1957, Lomax commented that this song reflected "a child's view of the tragedies which shape the ballads of their parents. . . A modern version of a medieval custom — the new springing out of the old — new songs are forever spilling out of this ever-flowing fountain of children's fantasy." Lomax had some difficulty transcribing this lyric. In his notes for the Scotland volume of the *World Library* series [Rounder CD 1743], he renders the line about Bread as, "And goes right in my bed!"

**Peggy MacGillivray:**

*I'm a little orphan girl,  
My mother she is dead.  
My father is a drunkard  
And won't buy me my bread.*

*I sit upon the window sill  
To hear the organ play,  
And think of my dear mother,  
Who's dead and far away.*

*Ding-dong, my castle bell,  
Farewell to my mother.  
Bury me in the old churchyard  
Beside my eldest brother.<sup>35</sup>*

*My coffin shall be white,  
Six little angels by my side,  
Two to sing and two to play  
And two to carry my soul away.*

**b. Norton Park schoolchildren:**

*I'm a little orphan girl,  
My mother she is dead.  
My father is a drunkard  
And won't buy me my bread.*

*I sit upon the window sill  
To hear the organ play,  
And think of my dear mother,  
Who's dead and far away.*

*Ding-dong, my castle bell,  
Farewell to my mother.  
Bury me in the old churchyard  
Beside my eldest brother.*

*My coffin shall be white,  
Six little angels by my side,  
Two to sing and two to [pray, play]  
And two to carry my soul away.*

**41. BROKEN HEARTED, I WANDER**

(two versions)

a. *Sung by Norton Park schoolchildren.*

b. *Sung by Peggy MacGillivray.*

A fragment of the sad Irish ballad of the Napoleonic period, "The Bonny Light Horseman,"<sup>36</sup> with a nonsense rhythmic game tag. In 1910 "Broken Hearted" was in use in Edinburgh as a game song.<sup>37</sup>

**a. Norton Park schoolchildren:**

*Broken hearted, I wander,  
At the loss of my lover.  
He's a jolly jolly soldier  
And to battle he must go.*

*He wrote me a letter  
In the month of November,  
And he told me not to worry,  
As he was coming home.*

**Chanted:** *Sweet home, marrow bone, / Treacle scone,  
ice-cream cone, /  
Uncle John.*

**b. Peggy MacGillivray:**

*Broken hearted I wander  
At the loss of my beloved,  
He's a jolly, jolly soldier,  
And to battle he must go.*

*He wrote me a letter,  
In the month of November,  
And he told me not to worry,  
As he was coming home.*

**Chanted:** *Sweet home, marrow bone, / Treacle scone,*

*ice-cream cone, / Uncle John.*

**42. THE BONNY SAILOR BOY** (two versions) / Interview

a. *Sung by Norton Park Schoolchildren.*

b. *Sung and spoken by Peggy MacGillivray.*

The first part of this tune is based on that employed for the childrens' song "Three Craws Sat Upon a Wa." The second part feels more "popular" or "music hall" than traditional Scots. Although in this version the lyric is trite, Greig-Duncan gives four versions that are richer in tune and text.<sup>38</sup> Peggy MacGillivray uses more syncopated phrasing in her solo version. The last line has a fine example of avoiding the obvious and sensible rhyme, in this case "Man."

**a. Norton Park Schoolchildren:**

*I once had a boy, a bonny sailor boy,  
A boy you could call your own.  
He ran away and left me, I dinnie ken where, [don't know]  
But he left me to wander all alone.*

*One day, as I walked by the river side,  
Somebody caught my eye.  
It was that boy, the bonny sailor boy,  
Wi another young girl by his side.*

*He gave me a look of his bonny blue eyes,  
And a wave of his lily-white hand.  
I passed right by, and I never cast an eye,  
For I hate to be jilted by a boy, by a boy.*

**b. Peggy MacGillivray:**

*I once had a boy, a bonny sailor boy,*

*A boy you could call your own.  
He ran away and left me, ah dinna ken where,  
But he left me to wander all alone.*

*One day as I walked by the river-side  
Somebody caught my eye.  
It was that boy, that bonny sailor boy,  
Wi another young girl by his side.*

*He gave me a look of his bonny blue eyes,  
And a shake of his lily-white hand.  
But I walked right by and I never cast an eye,  
For I hate to be jilted by a boy, by a boy.*  
**Alan Lomax (spoken):** *What's that for, Peggy? What kind of a game? Is that for skipping ropes, too?*  
*Peggy MacGillivray: I think that's for — I think that one's for skipping.*

- 43. WHEN I WAS SINGLE** (two versions)  
a. *Sung by Peggy MacGillivray.*  
b. *Sung by Norton Park schoolchildren.*

This song became popular among adult Scottish folksingers in 1960s. This version omits a verse used in the film *The Singing Street*, “When I was single I used to go and dance, / Now I am married I canny get the chance.” Adult folksingers preferred “When I was single I used to comb my hair, / Now I’m married I huvny the time tae spare.” The march-tempo tune sounds like a strain from a quadrille.

a. **Peggy MacGillivray:**  
*When I was single, I used a powder puff,  
Now I am merriet, I cannae get the stuff.  
Oh, it's a life, a weary, weary life,  
It's better to be single than to be a merriet wife.*

*One shouts, “Mammy, gie me a piece and jam.”  
The other shouts, “Daddy, put me in the pram.”  
Oh, it's a life, a weary, weary life,  
It's better to be single than to be a merriet wife.*

*One shouts, “Mammy, put me to ma bed.”  
The other shouts, “Daddy, scratch ma wooden leg.”  
Oh, it's a life, a weary, weary life,  
It's better to be single than to be a merriet wife.*

b. **Norton Park Schoolchildren:**  
*When I was single, I used a powder puff,  
Now that I'm married, ah cannie get the stuff.  
Oh, it's a life, a weary weary life.  
It's better to be single than to be a married wife.*

*One shouts, “Mammy, give me a piece and jam.”  
The other shouts, “Daddy, put me in ma pram.”  
Oh, it's a life, a weary weary life.  
It's better to be single than to be a married wife.*

*One shouts, “Mammy, put me to ma bed.”  
The other shouts, “Daddy, scratch ma wooden leg.”  
Oh, it's a life, a weary weary life.  
It's better to be single than to be a married wife.*

- 44. AN ANGEL SAID TO ME**  
*Sung by Pat Cushnie and Cedar Place children.*

Not a parody, but a comic verse to accompany skipping, sung to the tune of a then-popular sickly sweet ballad, “Down in the Glen.” Lomax commented, “These Aberdeen types had [a] rhyme about food — drink, rather — that got to an American, still unaccustomed to drinking tea . . . Down in the front row there you can hear the five-year-olds quavering

along just on the edge of the tune. Actually, children up to seven have quite a different way of singing the games from the older kids — much more sense of the dramatic.”<sup>39</sup>

*An angel said to me,  
“Would you like a cup of tea?”  
I said, “No, no, I like cocoa  
Better than tea.”*

- 45. ALL THAT SHIVERS / CANAAN'S SHORE / THE BURNING DECK**  
*Sung by Ewan MacColl.*

The first item is based on the proverb “All that glistens is not gold,” the third on Mrs. Heman’s much parodied dramatic poem, “Casabianca.”

**Spoken:** *And a fat boy would be greeted with (sings):*

*All that shivers is not jelly.  
Take for instance Freddy's belly,  
For it shivers like a fish, in the middle of a dish,  
All that shivers is not jelly.*

**Spoken:** *We also had a number of hymns. The most popular of which was a song — uh, that the children in our street learned from the Salvation Army workers, and it went (sings):*

*We're off for Canaan's shore,  
We're off for Canaan's shore,  
We're off for a trip on the allelujah ship,  
And we're never coming back any more.*

**Spoken:** *And of course there were numerous rhymes.*

*Parodies like:*

*The boy stood on the burning deck,  
Selling peas a penny a peck,  
Did he wash his dirty neck?  
Did he heck.*

- 46. THE WORLD MUST BE COMING TO AN END**  
*Sung by Peggy MacGillivray.*

Another neat and amusing “guising ballad” which, in a version not gleaned from James T. Ritchie’s work, became popular among Scots adult folksingers. This version omits a first verse given by Ritchie in *The Singing Street*: “I merried me a wife, / And she’s the plague o my life.” The verse links this ballad with a group of complaining husband songs.

*I sent her for butter, oh, aye, oh, aye,  
I sent her for butter, oh, aye, oh, aye,  
I sent her for butter,  
And she fell in the gutter,  
Oh, the world must be comin to an end, oh, aye.*

*I sent her for cheese, oh, aye, oh, aye,  
I sent her for cheese, oh, aye, oh, aye,  
I sent her for cheese,  
And she fell and skint her knees,  
Oh, the world must be comin to an end, oh, aye.*

*I sent her for bread, oh, aye, oh, aye,  
I sent her for bread, oh, aye, oh, aye,  
I sent her for bread,  
And she fell down dead,  
Oh, the world must be comin to an end, oh, aye.*

*I bought her a coffin, oh, aye, oh, aye,  
I bought her a coffin, oh, aye, oh, aye,  
I bought her a coffin,  
And she fell through the bottom,  
Oh, the world must be comin to an end, oh, aye.*

*I buried her in dirt, oh, aye, oh, aye,  
I buried her in dirt, oh, aye, oh, aye,  
I buried her in dirt,  
And she jumped oot her shirt,  
Oh, the world must be comin to an end, oh, aye.*

#### 47. ROBERT BURNS

*Sung by Cedar Place children.*

“Possibly a ball game” — Jack Mearns. The tune is *The Merry Matanzie*. The last line is sometimes, “Hop on the bus and dodge the fare.”

*Robert Burns was born in Ayr,  
Now he stands in Union Square.  
If you want to see him there,  
Just hop in the bus and pay your fare.*

#### 48. PUT HIM IN THE BATHTUB

*Sung by Cedar Place children.*

“A skipping song” — Jack Mearns. Another conflation of different song elements: “I know a teddy bear,” “Lulu had a baby,” and the mysterious “Lady with the alligator purse,” who here has a more prosaic “big fat purse.”

*I know a teddy bear, his name is Jim.  
I put him in a bathtub to see if he could swim.  
He drank all the water, he ate all the soap,*

*I had to get the doctor before he would choke.*

*In came the doctor, in came the nurse,  
In came the lady with the big fat purse.  
Out went the doctor, out went the nurse,  
Out went the lady with the big fat purse.*

#### 49. I'M GOIN AWA IN THE TRAIN

*Sung by Jennifer Cushman.*

The tune is “Orange and Blue.” The hero is usually “Kiltie Johnny,” which indicates he is a soldier in a kilted Scottish regiment.

*I'm goin awa in the train,  
And you're nae comin wi me.  
Ah've got a lad o my ain  
His name is Kilter Johnnie.*

*He wears a tartan kilt,  
He wears it in a fashion.  
And every time he turns round,  
I canna stop fae [from] laughin.*

#### 50. PADDY KNIGHT

*Sung by Ewan MacColl.*

More boyhood fascination with violence.

*Once knew a man, his name was Paddy Knight,  
'E challenged a navy out fer ti fight,  
'E it 'im on the jaw and 'e nearly broke it.  
Didn't know the navy had a hammer in 'is pocket.*

*And 'e it Paddy Knight and 'e fell,  
And now ah'm sad to tell,*

*He's either in Heaven or — Patrick Croft,  
And ah don't give a bugger which it is.<sup>40</sup>*

#### 51. WHEN I WAS YOUNG

*Sung by Ewan MacColl.*

This song gained popularity in the 1960s folk song revival in an Irish version sung by Dominic Behan, brother of playwright Brendan.

**Spoken:** *And we also had a number of songs about soldiers. One of them was a song about joining the British Army (sings):*

*When I was young, ah used to be  
As fine a man as ever you'd see.  
The Prince of Wales, he said to me,  
Come and join the British Army.*

*Toora loora loora loo,  
Me curses on the Labour Broo,  
That took me darling boy from you  
To join the British Army.*

*Toora loora loora loo,  
They're looking for monkeys up in the zoo,  
But if ah had a face like you,  
I'd join the British Army.*

#### 52. CHAIRLIE / THE COTTON SPINNERS / THE FORTY-SECOND

*Sung by Hamish Henderson.*

Much of this account of relationships between songs is drawn directly from Robert Ford's 1903 book.<sup>41</sup> However, Ford says the “42<sup>nd</sup>” verses are much older

and were sung “at an earlier period” than the Crimean War. Many variants of this song have since been collected. Other accounts of the 1848 “Rising” say the city was held for one night only, and it is more likely that the “Cotton Spinners” song originated from the 1837 Glasgow cotton spinners strike, after which five union officials were sentenced to transportation and sent to the prison hulk ships at Woolwich.

*Wha wouldnae fecht for Chairlie?  
Wha wouldnae draw the sword?  
Wha wouldnae up and rally  
At the royal prince's word?*

**Spoken:** *That's the earlier song, the Jacobite song. But of course when the people began to organize, in the — in the first part of the nineteenth century, they took — uh, the older tunes and they began to compose new words to them. And in 1848, the movement of the People's Charter was very strong in Scotland, and it was chiefly strong around Glasgow, and in Paisley, and — uh, a lot of the industrial areas around there, and also among the miners in Lanarkshire. And the version that's most familiar to the working class in Scotland is “Saw'd Ye the Cotton Spinners,” which describes the march of the cotton spinners into Glasgow to take part in the rising — a rising incidentally which kept the city in the hands of the people for three days (sings):*

*Saw'd ye the cotton spinners,  
Saw'd ye them gaun awa?  
Saw'd ye the cotton spinners,  
Marchin doon the Broomielaw.<sup>42</sup>*

*Some o them had shoes and stockins,*

*Some o them had nane ava.  
Some of them had shoes and stockins,  
Marchin doon the Broomielaw.  
(Song repeats.)*

**Spoken:** *A little later in the nineteenth century, at the time of the Boer War — uh, new words were put on this same tune, when the Forty-Second Regiment, which is the Black Watch, the Royal Highland Regiment, was being sent out to South Africa to take part in the war, and out of that period come these words (sings):*

*Wha saw the Forty-Second,  
Wha saw them gaun awa?  
Wha saw the Forty-Second  
Sailin doon the Broomielaw.*

*Some o them had tartan trousers,  
Some o them had nane ava.  
Some of them had tartan trousers,  
Sailin doon the Broomielaw.*

### 53. **GEESE, DUCKS, STONES, FIRES AND RAIN**

*Sung by Ewan MacColl.*

The first is very well known, from when a goose was the preferred Christmas dish. The tune for “Awky Duck” is “Cuckoo,” which was used to introduce many Laurel and Hardy movies.

**Spoken:** *And after November the kids would go from door to door collect — uh, collecting for some kind of Christmas treat with (sings):*

*Christmas is coming, the goose is getting fat,*

*Please put a penny in the old man's 'at.  
If you haven't got a penny, a hapenny will do,  
If you haven't got a hapenny, God bless you.  
Spoken: And a person who passed, walking with a limp would be greeted by (sings):*

*Awky duck, awky duck,  
Broke me leg an I can't get up.  
Awky duck, awky duck,  
Broke me leg an I can't get up.*

**Spoken:** *And when the sanbone man came round, the man who collected rags and bones, he would be greeted with (sings):*

*White stones, brown stone,  
Here's the man for rags and bones.  
White stones, brown stone,  
Here's the man for rags and bones.*

**Spoken:** *At the sound of a fire engine, we'd sing (sings):  
Ting a ling, the fire alarm, tell the street to flee.  
Tell the engine for to stop at number twenty-three.  
Fetch a bucket of water, that's what we require,  
This end of the town is tumblin down,  
Our chimney's caught on fire.*

**Spoken:** *And on a rainy day, of course (sings):  
Rain, rain, go away,  
Come again another day,  
Come on mother's washing day.*

### 54. **AUNTY MARY HAD A CANARY / WEE O'HARA**

*Sung by Hamish Henderson.*

“Aunty Mary” seems to have originated during the South African Boer War (1899–1902), sung to a favorite pipe-march tune, “The Cock of the North.” This text is given by Ramsay. On the transcription of the School of Scottish Studies tape is the note, “We used to sing, in Glasgow: ‘Aunty Mary had a canary, / Up the leg o her drawers. / It didnae come doon / Till the month o June, / And won the Victoria Cross.’”

Over forty differing versions of this latter bawdy version have been identified.<sup>44</sup> Henderson follows it with “Wee O’Hara,” another popular song, to the tune of a military march, “The British Grenadiers.”

*Oh Aunty Mary had a canary,  
Whistled the Cock o the North.  
He whistled for oors, [hours]  
An frightened the Boers, [frightened]  
They aa fell intae the Forth. [Firth of Forth]*

*B for Boer, K for Krudger [Kruger, Boer leader],  
J for General French.*

*Oh the British were up at the tap of the hill  
The Boers were doon in the trench. (Verse repeats)*

*As I cam doon through Glasgae toon,  
I met wi wee O'Hara.  
I gied him a lick o my Dundee rock [candy],  
An he gied me a hurl in his barra [ride in his barrow  
(go cart)].*

*An oh, the bonny wee barra's mine,  
It disnae belong tae wee O'Hara.  
The fly [sly] wee bloke, he stuck [kept] tae my rock,  
Sae ahim for stickin tae his barra. (Repeats)*

### 55. **THE DONKEY / THE CROFT / THE POLICEMAN**

*Sung by Ewan MacColl.*

Three more “squibs”. small pieces of wordplay. These challenge authority through the threat of a “rude” word or violence.

**Spoken:** *And, there were rounds, endless songs which went on like this. (sings):*

*The higher up the mountain, the greener grows the grass,  
The more the donkey wags its tail, the more it shows its —  
Higher up the mountain, the greener grows the grass,  
The more the donkey wags its tail, the more it shows its — (Etc.)*

**Spoken:** *In our street the — the policeman was looked upon as the enemy of the children, and they had many songs about him. Songs like (sings):*

*On the Croft, on the Croft,  
Where we played pitch and toss,<sup>45</sup>  
And the copper come and chased us away.  
So I got a piece of lead, and I 'it 'im on the 'ead,  
And the sly little beggar run away.*

**Spoken:** *And if a policeman was passing, and he was far enough away to make it possible to sing the song with safety, we'd sing (sings):*

If you want to know the time, ask a policeman.  
He will tell you very sharp, with a smack across your —  
ask a policeman.

**56. OH DEAR, WHAT CAN THE MATTER BE?**  
*Sung by an unidentified English child.*

A bawdy song with many verses, belloyed by rugby football teams after a match.

*Oh, dear, what can the matter be?  
Two old ladies got locked in the lavatory.  
They were there from Monday till Saturday,  
Nobody knew they was there.*

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**UNPUBLISHED**

Ian Davison's card index is now in the possession of Ewan McVicar.

**RADIO SCRIPTS**

- BBC Home Service  
*A programme of Scots ballads and folk songs collected in Scotland*. Recorded on August 13, 1951.
- Folksong from the Lowlands: A Ballad-Hunter Looks at Britain* (an eight-part series). Program 5, transmitted November 29, 1957.

**RECORDINGS**

- Brown Girl in the Ring. Caribbean Voyage*. Rounder CD 1716, 1997.
- World Library of Folk and Primitive Music: Scotland Volume 3*. Rounder CD 1743, 1998.

**FILM**

*Films from the Golden City*, four short films made by The Norton Park Group [Ritchie, McIsaac, Townsend, and Geissler], including *The Singing Street*. Available from The Museum of Childhood, High Street, Edinburgh.

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**FOOTNOTES**

- <sup>1</sup> Ballads identified and codified by scholar Francis J. Child in his five-volume *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (1882–1898).
- <sup>2</sup> *Lore and Language of Schoolchildren*, pp. 26, 28.
- <sup>3</sup> Published in Volume 8 of the Greig-Duncan Folk Song

Collection, 2002.

- <sup>4</sup> Unpublished, held as a card index.
- <sup>5</sup> BBC Radio broadcast, recorded August 13, 1951.
- <sup>6</sup> Bothy ballads are about the work and life of farms and farmers in Northeast Scotland.
- <sup>7</sup> Names, description of the visit, and notes about the use of the songs all come from letters from Jack Mearns to Ewan McVicar in 2002.
- <sup>8</sup> "I slipped away home (after a South Uist ceilidh) through morning mists which reached out of the lochs like soft white hands past the loch where the swans were like stars on the dark water . . . . In daylight, South Uist is somewhat bleak; green mountains along the eastern shore — but along the Atlantic beach a narrow machair with scattered crofts — the thatched cottages of rough hewn stone indistinguishable in the distance from the stones of the plain. The people are poor but there's no nicer folk on earth. They remind you how to live, how to be human." —Alan Lomax, BBC Radio broadcast, recorded on August 13, 1951.
- <sup>9</sup> E. G. Rea's *A School in South Uist*, a vivid account of this school 100 years ago, has recently been republished.
- <sup>10</sup> Letter (dated September 20, 1951, to Hamish Henderson) printed in *The Armstrong Nose*.
- <sup>11</sup> *Journeyman*, p. 50. Pages 60–65 give a fine detailed account of street games and activities in Salford.
- <sup>12</sup> Quoted by John Heyes in the introduction to the 1999 edition of *Golden City*.
- <sup>13</sup> See also the Rounder CD 1716, *Brown Girl in the Ring*.
- <sup>14</sup> *Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes*, No. 306.
- <sup>15</sup> The Opies say "My Girl's a Corker" was written by Jerome and Queen in 1895. Other sources state that "My Best Girl's a Corker" was composed in the 1890s by John "Honey" Stromberg.
- There is a pause or tape edit here.
- <sup>17</sup> There seem to be proportionately more references to dead lovers in the songs on this CD than in other collections. Does

this relate to the date of collection, just six years after the end of World War II?

<sup>18</sup> Usually “On the carpet she shall kneel.”

<sup>19</sup> Often “Stand up, stand up, on your feet, / And show me the girl you love, so sweet.”

<sup>20</sup> In rural Argyllshire in 1900, a Glasgow city song was remade so that the puzzling instruction to “take a tramcar to the cross” became “take a trumpet to the cross.”

<sup>21</sup> Usually “sails through the Illy Alley oh” and “the nineteenth.”

<sup>22</sup> “I’ll tell the bobby” seems an inessential addition, and has a separate life in Dundee — “Eh’ll tell the boabby if ye lay a hand on me.”

<sup>23</sup> In *The Singing Street*, the verse “He gave her a kiss and a one-two-three” is sung next.

<sup>24</sup> *The Singing Game*, p. 428.

<sup>25</sup> *A Ballad-Hunter Looks at Britain*, program 5.

<sup>26</sup> “My Father Bought Me a New Topcoat” (No. 1614), *Greig-Duncan*, vol. 8.

<sup>27</sup> You need not try to escape, you’ll get your punishment tomorrow.

<sup>28</sup> Lomax has paused the recording, or removed a section for use in a broadcast or recording. He now queries a term Peggy has used. He returns to this later.

<sup>29</sup> Perhaps less “unconsciously” than associated so strongly with an activity outside the classroom that it is difficult to recall in the class setting, although it can be recalled spontaneously.

<sup>30</sup> BBC Radio broadcast, recorded on August, 13, 1951.

<sup>31</sup> Young Christopher Ronald brings the game to an unexpected impasse.

<sup>32</sup> See *Lore and Language*, pp. 33–34.

<sup>33</sup> The smallest silver coin.

<sup>34</sup> For a related activity, see *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren*, p. 195.

<sup>35</sup> Perhaps this should be “Farewell to my brother” and “Beside my dearest mother.”

<sup>36</sup> Recorded by the Irish group Planxty on their album *After the Break*.

<sup>37</sup> See Rymour Club 1906–11, vol 1 p148.

<sup>38</sup> Greig-Duncan Vol 6, Song 1141.

<sup>39</sup> BBC Radio broadcast, recorded on August 13, 1951.

<sup>40</sup> An apparent coy avoidance of the word “Hell” turns into other fundamental language.

<sup>41</sup> *Children’s Rhymes, Games Songs and Stories*, p. 32.

<sup>42</sup> Quayside in central Glasgow for seagoing boats.

<sup>43</sup> *Nicht at Eenie*, 1932.

<sup>44</sup> By Ewan McVicar.

<sup>45</sup> A group gambling game in which tossed coins are matched.

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Every effort has been made to make these historic recordings sound as good as they did when they were made in the field.

All transfers were made from the original source materials using the Prism 24-bit A to D converters and the Prism 24-bit Noise Shaping System.

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