

**THE CUCKOO'S NOTE
SONGBOOK**

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Whisht! is a group of traditional singers who live in County Wexford, Ireland. United by a love of songs and singing they are driven by a desire to share their passion with a wider audience. They are: Darina Gleeson, Paddy Berry, Helen Kirwan, Paul O'Reilly, Elaine Gleeson and Niall Wall.

The Cuckoo's Note CD by **Whisht!** was recorded in 2007, at Liam Clancy Studios, An Rinn, County Waterford. Engineered and mastered by Kevin Evans, the album was funded by the **Arts Council Deis Scheme**.

For more information about Whisht! see www.whisht.info

The Cuckoo's Note CD available online at www.scallta.com

EDWARD ON LOUGH ERNE SHORE

The sun was setting behind yon mountain
The dew was falling upon a (the) lea
And I was seated beside a fountain;
A feathered songster sang upon a tree.
With love and longing, his notes were sounding,
Made me reminded of days of yore,
When in a bower I picked a flower
And remembered Edward on Lough Erne Shore.

A crop of sorrow my heart is reaping,
My rose is faded and my hopes decayed,
For in the night time when all are sleeping
Alone I am weeping till the break of day.
Delight has fled me and grief has wed me,
Why did you leave me, my love, a stór?
But love compelled him and banished Edward
And left me lonely on Lough Erne Shore.

The cuckoo's note on the air is sounding
With song so pleasing to greet the ear,
And every note were a bliss abounding
Within the valley if he were here.
Each step I take by the winding river
Where we have wandered in days of yore
Reminds me of Edward, my only lover
And makes me lonely on Lough Erne Shore.

Oh could I move like a wind o'er the ocean
I would send a sigh over the distant deep.
Or could I move like a bird in motion
By my Edward's side I would ever keep.
I'd gently soothe him, with words amuse him,
My love (fate) I'd prove him and he'd sigh no more
For seven years they would soon pass over
And we'd both live happy on Lough Erne Shore.

[This song is from County Fermanagh, from the Upper Lough Erne area. It is thought that the Edward in this song had been banished to Van Diemen's Land for seven years. – Darina Gleeson]

THE MAID FROM BALLYGOW

Three cheers me boys for Bannow's banks, 'tis the place that I love best
And likewise you fair Ballygow I'm now bound for the West,
As I went down to Cullenstown to bid my friends farewell
'Twas there I spied the prettiest girl that e'er your eyes beheld.

As I went down to Cullenstown, it was in the month of May,
I roamed for recreation and to watch the ladies gay,
'Twas there I spied a pretty maid and she standing on a brow,
Her beauty bright did me delight that day in Ballygow.

I said my fair young girl I pray you to me tell,
Is it on Bannow's lonely banks your parents they do dwell,
Or if you are a stranger here today I wish to know,
For the killing glances of your eyes have proved my overthrow.

Oh no, it's not on Bannow's banks my parents they do dwell,
Nor either in Duncormick or yet in Gibberwell,
For I came here from sweet Kilmore kind sir you know it now,
I'm here today a servant, said the maid from Ballygow.

Well since you are a servant here you must come along with me
For I do wish with all my heart that you will marry me,
No more I'll roam from Bannow's banks where the tides do ebb and flow,
Or cross the stormy ocean where the wintery winds do blow.

Although I am a servant here your offer I decline,
For you'll sail the stormy ocean and you'll waver with the wind,
And when you meet with pretty maids to them you'll swear and vow,
And then you'll leave them there to mourn, said the maid from Ballygow.

So fare thee well sweet Bannow's banks where dwells that comely maid,
Where often I had courted her down in yon fragrant shade,
I pressed her to my bosom and I kissed her burning brow,
But now I'm on the ocean wild and she's in Ballygow.

[This ballad is from Ballygow, Carrig on Bannow, Co. Wexford. Said to have been written by Dan Gallagher who lived in the area for a while in the early 1900's. Always popular in South Wexford. The maid was Nellie Keating from Kilmore. I learned the song in the 1960's from the singing of Jack Busher, Kilmore. – Paddy Berry]

THE IRISH PEASANT GIRL

She lived beside the Anner at the foot of Slievenamon
A gentle Irish peasant girl with mild eyes like the dawn
Her lips were dewy rosebuds her teeth were pearls rare
And a snowdrift 'neath a beechen bow, her neck and nut brown hair.

How pleasant was to meet her on a Sunday when the bell
Was filling with its mellow tones lone wood and grassy dell
And when at eve young maidens, strayed the Anner bank along
The widow's brown haired daughter was the loveliest of the throng.

Oh! brave, brave, Irish girls we well may call you brave
Sure the least of all your perils is the stormy ocean wave
When you leave your quiet valleys and cross the Atlantic foam
To hoard your hard won earnings for the helpless ones at home.

Write word to my dear mother say we'll meet with God above
And tell my little brothers I send them all my love
May the angels ever guard them is their dying sister's prayer
And folded in the letter was a braid of nut brown hair.

Ah! cold and well nigh callous this weary heart has grown
For thy hapless faith dear Ireland and for sorrows of my own
Yet, a tear my eye will moisten when by Anner's bank I stray
For the lily of the mountain foot that withered far away.

[This ballad was composed by Charles Joseph Kickham (1828-1882), an Irish patriot, novelist and poet. It is also known as 'She Lived Beside the Anner'. I learned this song from my father, the late Art Sinnott, one of his personal favorites, and also one of mine.]

Kickham was born and educated at Mullinahone, Co. Tipperary. At thirteen he was involved in a gunpowder accident which permanently injured his sight and hearing. Soon after he founded the Mullinahone Young Ireland Confederate Club. Kickham contributed articles to James Stephens' The Irish People at this time and later became that paper's editor in which capacity he was arrested in 1865 for writing 'treasonous' articles. Kickham, nearly blind and almost completely deaf, was tried and sentenced to fourteen years penal servitude. He was imprisoned in Portland and Woking prisons where he wrote his first novel Sally Kavanagh (1869).

Kickham was released in 1870 due to ill-health. He lived in Blackrock, County Dublin where he continued to write poetry and novels. His Knocknagow; or The Homes of Tipperary (1879) was a phenomenal success, making Kickham the most popular Irish novelist of the 19th century. Kickham's funeral procession was one of the largest ever witnessed in Ireland when he died in 1882 with over 150,000 mourners in attendance.

– Helen Kirwan]

THE WATERFORD BOYS

For fun and diversion we have come together,
I tell you from Waterford hither we came.
We crossed the deep ocean in dark stormy weather,
Our hearts they were light and our pockets the same.
Sad at leaving old Ireland we're once more on dry land
When at the roadside a tavern I spied.
And as I was melting, my pockets I felt;
For the price of a drink I was mortally dry.

To the tavern I rolled and the landlord he strolled in,
'Good morrow,' said he, and said I, 'If you please –
Will you get me a bed and then bring me some bread,
And a bottle of porter and a small piece of cheese.'
My bread and cheese ended I then condescended
To take my repose so I bade him goodnight.
When under the clothes I was trying to doze,
I first dipped me toes and then blew out the light.

Now I wasn't long sleeping when I heard something creeping
And gnawing and chawing around the bedpost.
My breath I suspended but the noise never ended,
Says I, 'you have damnable claws for a ghost.'
For to make myself 'aisy and being very lazy,
My head once more I stuck out from the clothes.
Yerra japers what's that, but a thundering jack rat
Took one leap from the floor, jumped right up to me nose.

Well I reached for my hobnail and made me a bobtail,
And wrestled with rats till the clear light of day.
Then the landlord came in and says he with a grin,
'For your supper and bed you've five shillings to pay.'
'Five shillings for what? Now don't be disgracin' –
Yourself as a rogue', says I, 'If you please –
While I can't get to sleep you've the devil's own cheek
To charge me five shillings for dry bread and cheese.'

Oh the landlord went rearing and leaping and tearing,
He jumped out the window and kicked in the door.
When he could get no farther he cried, 'Mile murder!
These rats they are eating me up by the score.
They sleep in me stable, they ate from me table,
They wrestle me dogs and they kill all me cats.'
'Faith then,' says I, 'oh give me those five shillings,
And I'll tell you a way to get rid of the rats.'

As he handed the silver, 'I will then,' said he,
'For my life is a wreck and my nights are a curse.
My wife has long left me, my children neglect me,
My grassy green fields have all turned to furze.'
'Ah, ya miser,' says I, 'just invite them to supper,
And dry bread and cheese lay before them for sure.
Never mind if they're willing but charge them five shillings,
And never again will the rat cross your floor.'

[This ballad was originally composed by Harry Clifton (1832-1872), a London music-hall writer and performer, and was published in broadsheet form. Recorded by Paddy Tunney on 'A Wild Bees' Nest' (1965), it later appeared in 'The Mercier Book of Old Irish Street Ballads' (1989). The lyrics have been altered over the years, as often happens with traditional songs, perhaps to accommodate the singer or to enhance the storyline. The bulk of this version comes from the singing of Tim Dennehy – though in this rendition I too have made a couple of subtle changes. – Paul O'Reilly]

A SPAILPÍN, A RÚIN

A spailpín, a rúin, dé bheatha-sa chúgainn,
Nó cá mbainis an fómhar chómh luath seo;
Dá mbeadh fhios agam fhéin cá rabhais inné,
Ba ró ghairid liom do bhéal a phógadh.
O, a chaille bhuí chrón, níor mhilis liom do phóg,
Is ní ghlacfainn céad bó mar spré leat,
Mar go mbfhearr liom-sa póg ó chailín beag óg
Ná a bhfuil agat ar bórd an tsléibhe amuigh.

A spailpín, a stór, fan socair go fóill
Nó go bhfaighead-sa mo chaip 's mo chlóca,
Mo bhróga sál bata, is búclaí an fhaisean,
Is go deimhin duit go mbogfad an ród leat,
Shúileoinn leat go Caiscal is go Cluain Geal Meala
Go Carraig na Siúire, thar m'eolas
Is go brách 'n fhaid a mhaitfinn ní fhillfinn abhaile
Is nach cuma, cé bhainfidh an t-eorna.

A bhuachaillí crua, gearraígh go luath,
Is cuirigh úr gcúram le chéile,
Go mbainfimid dúiseacht as bodaigh an phúdair
Is go ndeacamíd ár ndúthaigh fhéinig
Sé chloisim iad a rá, ná seasóm an lá
Ag na bodaigh atá lán de phónairí,
's ní acu siúd ata ach ag Rí Geal na nGrást
Is go dtuga Dia slán ón bhfómhar sinn.

THE PLAINS OF WATERLOO

It was on a summer's morning, as I went a walking,
All down by the banks of some clear flowing stream.
I met a young maiden making sad lamentation,
And I drew myself in ambush for to hear her sad complain.
Through the woods she marched along, made the valleys to ring,
While the small feathered songsters around her head they flew.
Crying, "the war 'tis all over and peace is returning,
But my Willie's not returning from the Plains of Waterloo".

I approached this fair maiden and said, "my fond creature,
May I enquire as to what's your true love's name.
For I have been in battle, I've heard loud cannons rattle,
And by his description well I think I know the same".
"Willie Reilly's my love's name, he's a hero of great fame,
Although he's gone and left me in sorrow now 'tis true.
But no man will me enjoy but my own loving boy,
Even though he's not returning from the Plains of Waterloo".

"If Willie Reilly's your love's name then he's a hero of great fame,
He and I have been in battle throughout many's a long campaign.
Through Italy and Russia, through Germany and Prussia,
He was my loyal comrade in France and in Spain.
But alas there at length, by the French, we were surrounded,
And like heroes of old we did them subdue.
We fought for three days 'til at last we defeated him,
That bould Napoleon Boney, on the Plains of Waterloo."

"On the eighteenth of June, it being ending the battle,
Leaving manys a gallant hero in sorrow to complain.
Where the drums they do beat and the loud cannons rattle,
'Twas by a Frenchman's bullet that your Willie he was slain.
As I drew near to the spot he lay a bleeding,
I scarcely had time for to bid him adieu.
As he lay there a-dying these words he kept repeating,
Fare thee well my lovely Annie, you are far from Waterloo".

When this fair maid she heard all his sad declaration,
Her red and rosy cheeks they grew pale and woeful wan.
And when he heard the sound of her sad lamentation,
He drew her in his arms, crying, "I'm your loving one".
"See here is the ring that between us was broken,
In the midst of all danger it reminded me of you".
Now this fine young couple they are re-united,
No more will Willie battle on the Plains of Waterloo.

[I first heard this song in the 1980's from a Frank Harte LP and immediately fell in love with it. In the sleeve notes Harte claims that, although sung widely in England and Canada (in a collection and credited to a Mrs Ó Malley), the song is of Irish origin: "the song must be Irish in origin, the air is a version of the older song 'The Blackbird', which was the allegorical name for the Young Pretender Prince Charles Edward Stewart, and the story is very similar to the song sung by Margaret Barry 'The Mantle So Green', where the woman says to her hero (Willie O'Reilly and not Willie Smith as in the Canadian version): 'To the woods I will wander to shun all men's view, For the lad I love fell in famed Waterloo', or when he reveals that he is indeed her true love: 'Now peace is proclaimed and the truth I declare, Here is your love token the gold ring I wear'. There is also a reference to the song in Sam Henry's Collection Volume 2, where only the first verse is included. – Niall Wall]

THE AULD GREY MAN

My parents they abandoned me and on them I do frown
For they wed me to an auld grey man for the sake of his money and ground
Had they wed me to a glamour boy without any money at all
Sure he'd take me in his arms and he'd roll me from the wall!

When I go to fairs and markets I see all of me glammers there
When I look upon me auld grey man sure he fills me with despair.
He fills me with despair me boys and I'll tell you the reason why –
For he has two hanging eyebrows and likewise a jealous eye.

Aragh hould yer tongue now Sally love 'til I go to the town
And I'll buy you a nice wee petticoat and a lovely wee muslin gown
And of all the ladies at the fair you'll outshine them all by far
And I'll buy you a lovely wee lap dog to follow your jaunty car.

To hell with yer lovely wee lap dog, likewise your muslin gown
For I'd rather have me glamour boy without one penny at all –
Sure he'd take me in his arms and he'd roll me from the wall!

Well now the auld grey man is dead and he has left to me
Full fifty pounds in solid gold, isn't that the handsome fee,
His farm, riches and free land to me has left them all
So now I can marry me glamour boy and he'll roll me from the wall!

But it wasn't long after the honeymoon, me glamour began to jar,
He killed my little lap dog and he smashed me jaunty car,
Me taypot and me china delf, he smashed and he broke them all
Ah God know I have suffered sorely for me rolling from the wall.

[Robin Morton's book 'Folksongs of Ulster' (1970) states that: 'the rooms in farm cottages are so small that the bed is pushed against one wall. The wife traditionally slept on the inside.' – Darina Gleeson]

THE NIGGLERS FROM BALLYVALOO

From Humphrey Curran's the boys went a hunting
With scuts of moustaches not long started budding
Of fanciful pipes, they had briar, clay and wooden
And they all lived aroundabout Ballyvaloo
A game crowd of fellows hittin' off for Blacktwater
The distance being only three miles and a quarter
And before they'd come back sure they'd nab someone's daughter
They were known by the Nigglers of Ballyvaloo

Jimmy Murphy, George Miley and bould Tommie Golden
Two Maloney's and Howlin set out leisurely strolling
Jack Cush's old mare ass was very near foaling
When she saw the bold Nigglers from Ballyvaloo
Coming down by Kate Connelly's the rain was fast pouring
The children at Roche's were bawling and roaring
Old Billy Hyde's pig sure he was loudly snoring
And he dreamt he saw Nigglers from Ballyvaloo

They walked along down the road left, right and centre
And each man off Shipley's old block took a splinter
Now they knocked at Keoghney's and quickly did enter
Saying we're the bould Nigglers from Ballyvaloo
Miss Walsh danced with Tobin, Miss Tobin with Miley
Dan Murphy stepped shyly around Maggie Reilly
And brave Kitty Owney she winked rather slyly
At nice Billy Leary from Ballyvaloo

They walked to the bridge and they all talked together
What wasn't of crops and what wasn't of weather
They eyed up the girls they'd like roll in the heather
Before going homewards to Ballyvaloo
Bridgie Butler ran at them with her long handled beezom (besom)
Crying damn you guard Doherty why don't you seize them
For they made the girls scream by the way they did squeeze them
And were threatening to take them to Ballyvaloo

The night in Blackwater came to a quick ending
But the bridges they burned there were not beyond mending
They had stories go leir and sure some were heart rending
They would shorten the winter round Ballyvaloo
'Twas the sight of the beezom (besom) that made them fainthearted
And from Blackwater Bridge they all quickly departed
And it wasn't very long till they were back where they started
At Humphrey's Curran's in Ballyvaloo

[Written by Pierce Lacey, Ballina, Blackwater. Co. Wexford in the early 1930's. It was common for young men to meet at the crossroads at Ballyvaloo in those days dreaming up schemes and things and in this case deciding on a whim to visit the nearby village of Blackwater to chat up the women and the like. Bridgie Butler from the village chased them away with her Beezom (sweeping brush). I'm sure it was only a temporary distraction. – Paddy Berry]

CARROLL BÁN

'Twas in the town of Wexford they sentenced him to die,
'Twas in the town of Wexford they built his gallows high,
There one summer morning while beamed the gentle dawn,
Upon that cursed gallows they hung my Carroll Bán.

O he was true and loyal, O he was young and brave (fair),
Only nineteen summers shone on his golden hair;
When his gallant brothers had taken pike in hand,
Where the green flag streamed the fairest, he stood for native land.

I saw him cross the heather with his bold company,
From the rising hillside he waved his hand to me;
Then on my wild heart settled a load of woe and pain,
Mo bhrón it's throbbing told me we'd never meet again.

They fought the Saxon foemen by Slaney's glancing wave,
But brutal strength o'er-powered the gallant and the brave;
And in the fight that followed, that day of misery,
Sore wounded he was taken my Carroll Bán, mo chroí.

O fhior ghear (fear gear) that ever I saw that dreadful sight,
His locks all damply hanging his cheeks so deathly white.
What wonder if my ringlets would change from dark to grey,
Or if the blessed hand of God had taken my life away.

'Twas in the town of Wexford they sentenced him to die,
'Twas in the town of Wexford they built his gallows high,
With head erect and manly and a look of scornful pride,
For Ireland's faith and freedom, my true love nobly died.

The meadow path is lonely, and the hearth is cold and dim,
And the silent churchyard blossom blooms softly over him;
And my heart is ever yearning for the calm rest coming on,
When its weary pulse lies sleeping beside my Carroll Bán.

[Carroll Bán' was written by John Keegan Casey (1846-70), an Irish Patriot, under the pen name 'Leo'. I first heard this song as a very young child and fell in love with it straight away. It was also recited in a slightly different version by the late Peter O'Brien, Monamolin. I had picked up the air but was given the words by a family friend, Mr Bob Kehoe, Galbally, Enniscorthy in 1980 – I have been singing it ever since. I dedicate it to him and his family, in memory and recognition of all the happy times I spent there through the years.]

The song concerns the 1798 Wexford Rebellion, one of the many uprisings in which the Irish fought against the oppression and injustice inflicted upon them by their more powerful English neighbors. Casey wrote many popular songs including 'The Rising of the Moon' and 'Maire My Girl.' He died at the age of twenty-three as a result of imprisonment for his involvement in the Fenian Brotherhood.]

THE BLOOMING FLOWER OF GRANGE

It was in the blooming summer time, when fields and meadows are in their prime
To take the air I was inclined and carelessly did range
Where primrose pale and violets blue, and daisies o're the meadows grew
My onward course I did pursue, till I arrived in Grange.

It was there I spied a neat abode, a sunny cottage by the road,
Wherein a damsel sat and sowed, whose beauty would change:
Man's darkest sorrow into bliss, had he a moment to caress,
And through life's journey to possess, the Blooming Flower of Grange.

Her eyes they glittered like the stars, that we call Mercury and Mars,
Or those bright comets from afar, in their celestial reign
Heaven above was a glorious sight, and the moon shone down its beaming light
For to illumine this beauty bright, the Blooming Flower of Grange.

Her amber locks, in ringlets thick, flowed freely round her soft white neck,
And the rose that bloomed upon her cheek, no winter wind could change.
In sudden raptures of delight, I then approached this beauty bright,
And my heart was stopped at the first sight of the Blooming Flower of Grange.

I said my blooming flower fair, if you affection with me share,
I solemnly now do declare, your state I wish to change.
While life shall animate thy breast, I'll love respect and I'll do my best,
For to keep your gentle mind at rest, my Blooming Flower of Grange.

Kind sir, she said, your offer's good, and I would embrace it if I could,
Although I feel my parents would, our union disarrange.
Though eighteen summers I have seen, a lover yet I have not been,
Therefore I cannot be your queen, said the Blooming Flower of Grange.

'Tis sad my love for to say farewell, and the pain I feel no tongue can tell,
Those heavy thoughts I can't dispel that through my bosom reign.
All for the want of free consent, I'm doomed in exile to repent,
And all through life I will lament, for the day I came to Grange.

Young man, she said, your worries subdue, for since I find you really true,
Forever the same I'll be to you, through life I'll never change,
And though I failed to get consent, still to be yours is my intent,
And you have no cause for to lament, said the Blooming Flower of Grange.

A thousand thanks my hearts delight, my sorrow you have put to flight,
Forever I'll bless this glorious night that brought this happy change.
So come prepare and be my bride, near Wexford town I do reside,
Where the nuptial knot it will be tied, to the Blooming Flower of Grange.

[I learned this ballad from Paddy Berry. Paddy recorded this version on 'Sing Again Paddy' (2005), and he also published an earlier version in his wonderful collection 'Wexford Ballads' (1982). In that collection, Paddy states that the published version was "as sung by the late Jim Casey, Danescastle, Carrig-on-Bannow in 1977".]

SLIABH NA MBAN

Is oth liom fhéinig bualadh an lae úd
Do dhul ar Ghaeil bhocht is na céadta slád;
Mar tá na meirligh ag déanamh géim dín
's a rá nách aon ní leo píc na sleá.
Níor tháinig ár Major I dtús an lae chógainn
's ní rabhamar fhéin ann I gcóir ná i gceart
Ach mar a sheolfaí aoireacht bó dtín aonach
Ar thaobh na gréine de Shliabh na mBan.

Mo léan léir ar an ndream gan éifeacht
Nár fhan le héirim istoíche stad
Go mbeadh dúiche Déise is iarthar Eireann
Ag trial le chéile, ón dtír aneas
Go mbeadh a gcampaí déanta le fórsaí tréana
Bheadh cúnamh Dé linn 's an saol ar fad
's ní chlaofidh meirligh de mhuintir Neill sin
Is bhuafaí réim linn ar Shliabh na mBan.

[This ballad laments the fate of the United Irishmen who were defeated by British troops at Sliabh na mBan on July 23rd 1798. The song has been attributed to the poet Mícheál Óg Ó Longáin (1766-1837). Sliabh na mBan (the mountain of the women, anglicized as 'Slievenamon') is in County Tipperary. – Elaine Gleeson]

COME WITH ME OVER THE MOUNTAIN

'Twas night and the moon was just seen in the sky
When I first took the notion to marry,
I put on my hat and I ran with such haste
That you'd know I was bent in a hurry.
I came to her door and I rattled the pin
I lifted the latch and I boldly walked in
On seeing my sweetheart I bid her good e'en
Saying you'll come with me over the mountain.

What nonsense is this you've got into your head
Or what notion is this you have taken,
'Tis twelve by the clock and they're all gone to bed
So speak low or my father will waken.
I've courted a year and I think that will do
And I've made up my mind to have no one but you
And if you refuse me sweet maiden adieu
I must go alone over the mountain.

But if from my father and mother I go
They never will think of me longer
And the neighbours around them will not be slow
To say that I could do no wronger.
Sweet girl you're wasting the sweet hours away
I care not a fig what the whole world will say
For you will be mine by the dawn of the day
If you come with me over the mountain.

She looked at me then with a tear in her eye
And saw that my mind was still steady
She rubbed out the tear she was going to cry
In God's name my dear do get ready
Just wait for a moment 'till I get my shoes
And my heart jumped for joy when I heard the glad news
She lifted the latch saying I hope you'll excuse
My simplicity over the mountain.

By this time the moon had gone down in the West,
And the morning star clearly was shining
As we two pursued on our journey in haste
To be joined at the Alter in Hymen.
In peace and contentment we spent that long day
And the anger of parents it soon wore away
But I'll never forget it to this very day,
The trip we took over the mountain.

[Written by Hugh McWilliams, Glenavy, Co. Antrim, about the year 1830. Much travelled and well known. This version is similar to that sung by the popular Wexford town singer of the 1950's and 60's Nellie Walsh. It was also my father's party piece from whom I learned it. – Paddy Berry]

LITTLE JIMMY MURPHY

'Twas down in Camolin, where the great row was making
And poor little Jimmy Murphy was the first to be taken.

Chorus

We are far from the last route
From the east to Downpatrick.
Where lies poor little Jimmy Murphy
On the sweet green mossy banks
Killymallin, killymajoan, whisky frisky, dourdle doo,
Rank a dourdle die doh, ding dourdle eye oh.

We gathered our pikes and flintlocks and green branches
And soon for old Wexford we all were advancing.

Chorus

We marched through New Ross, Vinegar Hill and through Gorey
And the North Cork Militia couldn't deny us the glory.

Chorus

We marched through the towns and we marched through the city
With our hands tied behind our backs and our ladies cried pity.

Chorus

Now Jimmy Murphy was hanged not for sheep staylin'(stealing)
But for courtin' a pretty girl and her name was Kate Whaylen (Whelan).

Chorus

[The first version of this song I heard contained only verses 1, 4 & 5, (verses 2 & 3 are recent additions by Luke Cheevers). It was always believed to be a 1798 song as indicated by "the great row" (a reference commonly used in song for the Rebellion) in verse 1 and Kate Whelan (Kathleen Ní Houlihan) in verse 5. I heard a version of the song from an elderly visitor from the USA some years ago, and I believe it is also known in Canada. The arrangement of the song was perfected during dinner in a restaurant in An Rinn, Co. Waterford, a cause of some amusement for the other patrons, and some alarm for the restaurant staff. – Niall Wall]

THE COLD HAND OF GREED

(Composed by Helen Kirwan)

Back in the last century 1845, a blight gripped this land
Countless thousands they died,
And those who fled from the stench and the gloom
Sailed ships that became their own floating tombs.

Proud parents who once held their babes on their knee
Oh! what pain must have filled their poor hearts for to see
Their small ones all perish and return to their God
Their humble belongings thrown out on the sod.

One by one as they bowed to their God one last time
Their sentence was death but like him they'd no crime
Imprisoned in hunger and pure deprivation
They died from their wounds by the sword of starvation.

While in far off barns across oceans wide
Grain mountains piled high while it's reapers they died
The seeds that had grown in the heart of the homeland
Now gleamed in a glass in a foreigner's hand.

For four weary years the potato crop failed
Mother Earth tried her best but she labored in vain
Her blight stricken body lay barren and craved
The need to be rid of too many graves.

This once hapless land is now fertile and strong
And our fitting tribute to those that are gone
Is that now we feed nations and tend to the need
Of those who are scourged by The Cold Hand of Greed.

[I wrote this song in November 1996. At the time I was involved in the John Player Tops in my local village of Ferns, Co. Wexford. The producer, Mr John Hanrahan, New Ross, Co. Wexford, had the vision to include a scene from the Famine. This inspired me to write this song. I sang it during the performance, and we went on to win an award. – Helen Kirwan]