

# Beyond the St Marylebone Workhouse: songs of London life gone by



A music resource for schools and SEN settings by  
Hazel Askew

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## **The English Folk Dance and Song Society**

The English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS) is the national development organisation for folk music, dance and related arts, based at Cecil Sharp House, a dedicated folk arts centre and music venue, in Camden, North London.

EFDSS creates and delivers creative learning projects for children, young people, adults and families at Cecil Sharp House, across London and around the country; often in partnership with other organisations. Learning programmes draw on the diverse and vibrant traditional folk arts of Britain and beyond, focusing on song, music, dance and related art forms such as storytelling, drama, and arts and crafts. [www.efdss.org/education](http://www.efdss.org/education)

## **Vaughan Williams Memorial Library**

Cecil Sharp House is also home to EFDSS's Vaughan Williams Memorial Library (VWML), England's national folk music and dance archive, which provides free online access to over 200,000 searchable folk manuscripts and other materials. [www.vwml.org/](http://www.vwml.org/)

This resource was made in collaboration with St Marylebone Parish Church with support from The National Lottery Heritage Fund as part of the St Marylebone Changing Lives project.

Produced by the English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS), 2021

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## About this resource

This resource introduces learners to some of the folk songs and oral traditions that would have been found in a city in the 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, using St Marylebone in London as a case study. By looking at the vernacular music of an area, we can not only learn a lot about the different people and communities that lived there, but it can also challenge us to ask questions about our lives and communities today.

The resource is designed to support learning from Key Stages 1-5, and includes activities for Special Educational Needs (SEN) and community settings. We've suggested the most suitable Key Stage for each song, but many of them can be used and adapted for different age groups and settings.

It reflects many of the different types of folk song that could be found in a city, from printed broadsides, sea shanties, nursery songs, streets cries, songs from the local workhouse, and songs about London collected from other places.

There are four key study areas that structure the resource: Pleasure Gardens, City Streets, Poverty & the Workhouse, and Migration & Travel. For each of these sections there are a range of songs and suggested tasks, which include musical tasks, as well as tasks related to other areas of the curriculum, such as English, Art & Design, Geography and History. Each study area also begins with an introduction that provides information on the history and social context to the music. At the end of the resource there is an appendix of suggested links for further study on some of the issues covered in the resource.

The songs are primarily arranged for unison singing, with some additional vocal or instrumental harmonies, accompaniment chords, as well as suggestions for performance, composition and song re-writing. There are vocal and instrumental sound files to accompany this resource pack. These can be accessed via the EFDSS Resource Bank [www.efdss.org/resourcebank](http://www.efdss.org/resourcebank).

Throughout the resource there is reference to the Roud Folk Song Index, which gives every folk song a unique number so you can easily find different versions of the same song. You can do this through the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library website, which contains a comprehensive online database of over 200,000 references to traditional songs found in both published and unpublished sources in the English language. You will see references to the 'Roud number' next to the songs. For more information visit [www.vwml.org](http://www.vwml.org).

**Important note:** this resource contains hyperlinks to digitised versions of original manuscripts and other archival material in the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library's online archive. Please be aware that these historical materials may contain content considered offensive by modern standards. Teachers are advised to check these links before sharing with students as materials may need contextualising.

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## Study Area 1: Pleasure Gardens

A Pleasure Garden was a public garden designed for recreation and entertainment. The idea dates back as far as Roman times, but they became popular in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, mainly in the London area. This time period saw the growth of an urban middle class and rising incomes, which resulted in the rise of paid-for entertainments. The sites would often include concert halls, bandstands, rides, zoos as well as places to eat, drink and dance. The gardens would be laid out formally with impressive landscaping and waterways running throughout them. There were also dedicated buildings for eating and performances, showcasing the latest architecture as well as paintings by famous artists such as William Hogarth, making them the first public art galleries in Britain. Pleasure gardens were a fashionable place to see the rich and wealthy but they also had a disreputable side. The most famous pleasure gardens were Ranelagh Gardens in Chelsea (the most exclusive), followed by Vauxhall Gardens, then Cuper's Gardens (in what is now Waterloo), the Royal Surrey Gardens (near Elephant & Castle), and Marylebone Gardens.



An engraving by Francis Jukes after a watercolour by Thomas Rowlandson, of a concert in Vauxhall Gardens in 1732.

Marylebone Gardens was created in the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century, when St Marylebone was a village on the outskirts of London. It was located in the grounds of an old manor house, near to St Marylebone Parish Church and stretched from Marylebone High Street to Harley Street. At the centre was an oval bowling green, surrounded by gravel walks, lawns and a high brick wall lined with fruit trees. It was officially recognised as a concert and entertainment venue in 1738-9, and halls and an organ were installed.



“A view of the Orchestra with the Band of Music, the Grand Walk &c in Marylebone Gardens”, circa 1770 – an engraving made after a drawing by J. Donowell - 1845

Although not as prestigious as Ranelagh and Vauxhall Gardens, many famous composers had works performed there, including George Frideric Handel and James Hook. The gardens were also famous for their regular firework displays and other entertainments such as gambling, cock-fighting, bull-baiting and boxing (with both male and female contestants). It was also rumoured that highwayman Dick Turpin visited in the 1720s. The gardens eventually closed and were built over in 1778.

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## Variety

### *KS2 A joyful song personifying variety entertainment*

*This song is from a broadside printed in St Marylebone (see page 14 for more information on broadsides). There are versions of this song dating back to at least 1785. It introduces 'Variety', a character personifying variety entertainment, which usually consisted of different types of act, such as singing, dancing and comedy. Here you can use it as a basis for creating your own performance.*

### **Task suggestions**

- Learn the first verse of the song by ear using a call and response method, then sing through the rest of the words from the sheet, using the glossary to discuss any new words
- Once you've learnt the song, why not give out verses as solos and invite the whole class to join in on the last lines?
- Why not try creating some actions and movements for different verses? The class could be divided up into small groups to create actions for their verse
- Art task – can you draw a picture of what Variety would look like as a person?
- History task – learn about pleasure gardens and the entertainment that took place there – did anything similar exist in your local area? What do you think is the equivalent place to go for entertainment today?
- Language/Literature task – this song takes the idea of a variety performance and makes it into a person. This is called personification. Can you think of any other examples of personification? Could you take another form of entertainment and personify it?
- Songwriting task – write a new song which personifies a different form of entertainment
- Performance task - can you put together a class or even whole school variety performance, incorporating lots of different entertainments? You could also look at some historical playbills and design a poster for your own performance

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## Variety

1. Ask you who is singing here  
Who so blithe can thus appear  
I'm the child of joy and glee  
And my name's Variety

2. Never have I a clouded face  
Swift I change from place to place  
Ever wandering, ever free  
And my name's Variety

3. Like a bird that skims the air  
Here and there and everywhere  
Sip my pleasure like a bee  
Nothing's like Variety

4. Love's sweet passion warms my breast  
Roving love but breaks the rest  
One good heart's enough for me  
Though my name's Variety

5. Crowded scenes and lonely grove  
All by turns I can approve  
Follow, follow, follow me  
Friend of life, Variety

### ***Glossary***

- Blithe – happy and carefree
- Glee – great delight
- Swift - quickly
- Roving – constantly moving or wandering



## Variety

Roud number: V26873

Words printed for and sold by J Pitts, 14, Great Saint Andrew Street, Seven Dials and Jennings Upper Marylebone Street, between 1802 and 1819. Tune by Hazel Askew.

<http://ballads.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/view/edition/1305>



D                      A                      A                      D

Ask you who is sing-ing here,      Who so blithe can thus ap-pear,

D                      G                      A                      D

I'm the child of joy and glee,      And my name's va - ri - e - ty.

---

## The Farmyard

### *KS1 A fun song with opportunity for actions*

*This song is a beautiful old variant of 'Old Macdonald had a Farm'. Versions of it were collected in the USA and Australia, as well as in the UK, and this version was collected from Eliza Gardey in the St Marylebone workhouse. In the past, St Marylebone would have been a much more rural place with many farms and fields. This song has plenty of opportunity to make sound effects and actions for the animals in each verse.*

### **Task suggestions**

- Try learning the first verse by ear, using a call and response method, and then just change the animals for the remaining verses.
- Try making sound effects and/or actions for each of the animals mentioned in the song
- Learn about farms as a class. What do farms do? Why do they have animals there? What animals might we find there? What kinds of day-to-day jobs might a farmer have to do? Are there any in your local area, or would there have been in the past? St Marylebone and many areas that are now part of cities would have been rural in previous centuries.
- Songwriting task - can you think of any other farmyard animals you could add in to make extra verses? What sound would those animals make?
- Is there a farm local to you that you can visit as a class?
- Art task – try drawing some farmyard animals
- This song was collected in a city (London), but talks about the countryside. Why might people in a city sing about the countryside? Learn about how St Marylebone was once a rural place (see page 14 for more information).

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## The Farmyard

1. Up was I on my father's farm on a Mayday morning early  
Feeding of my father's **cows** on a Mayday morning early  
With a **moo, moo** here and a **moo, moo** there  
Here a **moo**, there a **moo**, here a pretty **moo**  
Six pretty maids come and go along with me  
To the merry green fields of the farmyard
2. Up was I on my father's farm on a Mayday morning early  
Feeding of my father's **pigs** on a Mayday morning early  
With a **grunt, grunt** here and a **grunt, grunt** there  
Here a **grunt**, there a **grunt**, here a pretty **grunt**  
Six pretty maids come and go along with me  
To the merry green fields of the farmyard
3. Up was I on my father's farm on a Mayday morning early  
Feeding of my father's **goats** on a Mayday morning early  
With a **nan, nan** here and a **nan, nan** there  
Here a **nan**, there a **nan**, here a pretty **nan**  
Six pretty maids come and go along with me  
To the merry green fields of the farmyard
4. Up was I on my father's farm on a Mayday morning early  
Feeding of my father's **sheep** on a Mayday morning early  
With a **baa, baa** here and a **baa, baa** there  
Here a **baa**, there a **baa**, here a pretty **baa**,  
Six pretty maids come and go along with me  
To the merry green fields of the farmyard

## The Farmyard

Roud number: 745

Collected from the singing of Eliza Gardey by Cecil Sharp at St Marylebone Workhouse on  
22<sup>nd</sup> October 1908

<https://www.vwml.org/record/CJS2/10/1984>



F C B $\flat$  C  
Up was I on my fa - ther's farm on a May - day morn - ing

4 F F C B $\flat$  C  
ear - ly, Feed - ing of my fath - er's cows on a May - day morn - ing

8 F F C  
ear - ly, With a moo, moo here and a moo, moo there,

11 B $\flat$  F C F  
Here a moo, there a moo, Here a pret - ty moo, Six pret - ty maids come and

14 C B $\flat$  C F  
go a - long with me, To the mer - ry green fields of the farm - yard.

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## Study Area 2: City Streets

At the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, St Marylebone was a small village surrounded by fields, and a mile away from the boundaries of London at the time. Looking around, you would have seen a few houses, farms, cow sheds, flowing streams and green fields. Later, teahouses and taverns (pubs) made the place attractive for visitors from London, as well as the Marylebone Gardens (see page 6).

Alongside picturesque greenery, St Marylebone had a rougher side. The outskirts of London were where highwaymen and footpads (highwaymen who didn't ride horses), roamed, and St Marylebone was one of the worst areas for robberies. Famous instances of this include Dick Turpin's raid on a farm in St Marylebone in 1735, and on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1763, a man named Richard Watson was robbed and murdered whilst working at a St Marylebone turnpike (a toll gate).

A common sound on the streets of London and other cities streets between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries would have been ballad sellers, or balladeers. These were people selling printed sheets known as broadsides (there are a couple reproduced in this resource). The broadsides would contain news stories, rhymes and song lyrics, which the ballad seller would sometimes sing to passers by. We know there were at least two broadside printers in St Marylebone in the 19<sup>th</sup> century: Jennings of Upper Marylebone Street and Robinson of Crawford Street.

Another familiar sound on city streets of the past would have been the calls of street sellers advertising their wares. These are often referred to as 'street cries'.

The practice dates back at least as far as medieval times, but became particularly popular in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. These sellers would be selling many items including flowers, brooms, logs, fish, pies, clothes, pets – pretty much anything you needed! We know their calls were a common sound in St Marylebone as some folk song collectors transcribed them and we still have their manuscripts today. Street cries largely died out in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, (although they can still occasionally be heard in some markets today).

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## Street Cries

### *SEN + Community A collection of short lyrical calls from street sellers*

*The sound of street sellers singing short lyrical cries to sell their wares, was a distinctive feature of city life in the past. Here we have gathered a selection of these melodic calls from the St Marylebone area and created some activity suggestions for SEN settings, as well as some tasks and an arrangement for using the cries in community music making.*

### **Task suggestions – SEN**

- Work through one cry at a time and find an object for each call to correspond to it.
- Encourage a sensory exploration of each object. What does it feel like? What does it smell like? What sound can it make when you touch it? What does it look like?
- Talk about how the objects would have been sold on the streets and sellers would make up a song for each object.
- Talk about what people would need these objects for. Logs for an open fire to keep you warm before there was central heating, lavender to make you and your house smell nice (there were lots more nasty smells in the past!), a broom to tidy your house with before vacuum cleaners, and a goldfish to have as a pet.
- Sing the cry to the class and teach it to them using a call and response method. All other reactions and interactions with the cries are welcome and can be used in further tasks.
- You can also record the calls using a recording device such as a BIGmack button recorder or a tablet, and let students play the calls back using their devices.
- Can you make an action or movement for the cry? This could vary for different children.

- 
- Can you make a sound for each object? This could be a vocalisation, using a percussive instrument or other instrument, or a sound created by interacting with the object.
  - Can you put all these cries together with their actions and sounds, and make your own city soundscape? Try having groups doing each cry from a different part of the room, along with a collection of the corresponding objects.
  - Can you make some new cries? Work with the class to select some new objects and create calls for them using the voice, an instrument or a movement.

### ***Task suggestions – Community setting***

- Learn about street cries and how the streets of cities would once have been full of the sounds of sellers advertising their wares. Has anyone ever heard a street cry in a market today?
- Split into groups and give each a cry to learn. Teach it through call and response. Encourage the group to add actions, percussion or other instruments to the cries if they wish.
- Create a soundscape of these cries, with each group in a different part of the room. Take turns in ‘conducting’ the soundscape, where someone can use hand signals to increase or decrease the volume of the whole group or any individual cries. Enjoy hearing the changes in the soundscape.
- Street cries have often inspired and been incorporated into artistic works. Watch the ‘Who Will Buy’ scene from the musical ‘Oliver’ and discuss how the street cries are used.
- You can make your own musical performance of these street cries using the score on pages 17 and 18. Learn this as a group and create a performance, (note that in order to fit together musically the cries in this arrangement have been adapted slightly from the originals to fit 3/4 time and overlap well).
- Can you create some new street cries for new objects you could sell? You could then use it to create a full city soundscape of today, plus any other city sounds you can represent in the room using voice, percussion or other instruments (perhaps the sounds of trains, buses, car horns, birds, the wind, the rain, snatches of conversation).

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## Street Cries – Individual cries

### Goldfish

Collected by Juliet Williams from Battersea in July 1912

<https://www.vwml.org/record/LEB/3/57/1>



### Logs

Collected by Lucy Broadwood from Nottingham Place off Marylebone Road on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 1918

<https://www.vwml.org/record/LEB/3/21/1>

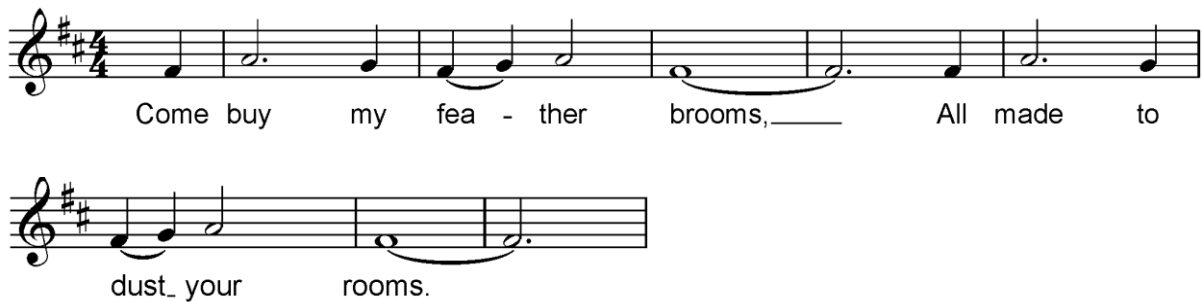




## Feather Brooms

Collected by Lucy Broadwood from Westminster in May 1918

<https://www.vwml.org/record/LEB/3/46/3>



Come buy my fea - ther brooms, All made to  
dust\_ your rooms.

## Lavender Cry

Collected by Frederick Keel in St Marylebone in 1899


<https://www.vwml.org/record/RoudFS/S151845>



Will you buy\_ my sweet la-ven-der, My sweet scen-ted la-ven-der? Oh\_  
buy\_ my sweet la- ven-der, Six-teen bran-ches a pe-nny.

## Street Cries

Arranged by Hazel Askew



Fish a-live, Gold fish, Gold fish, Fish a-live, Gold fish, Gold  
Fish a-live, Gold fish, Gold fish, Fish a-live, Gold fish, Gold fish, Fish a-live, Gold

8



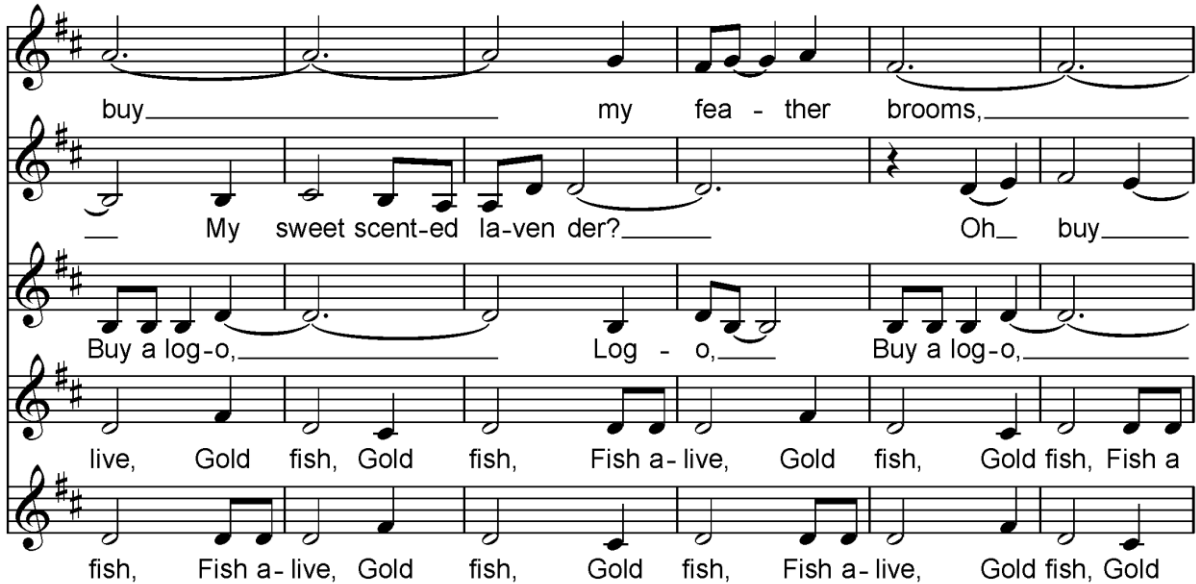
Buy a log-o, \_\_\_\_\_ Log - o, \_\_\_\_\_ Buy a log-o, \_\_\_\_\_  
fish, Fish a-live, Gold fish, Gold fish, Fish a-live, Gold fish, Gold fish, Fish a  
fish, Gold fish, Fish a-live, Gold fish, Gold fish, Fish a-live, Gold fish, Gold

15



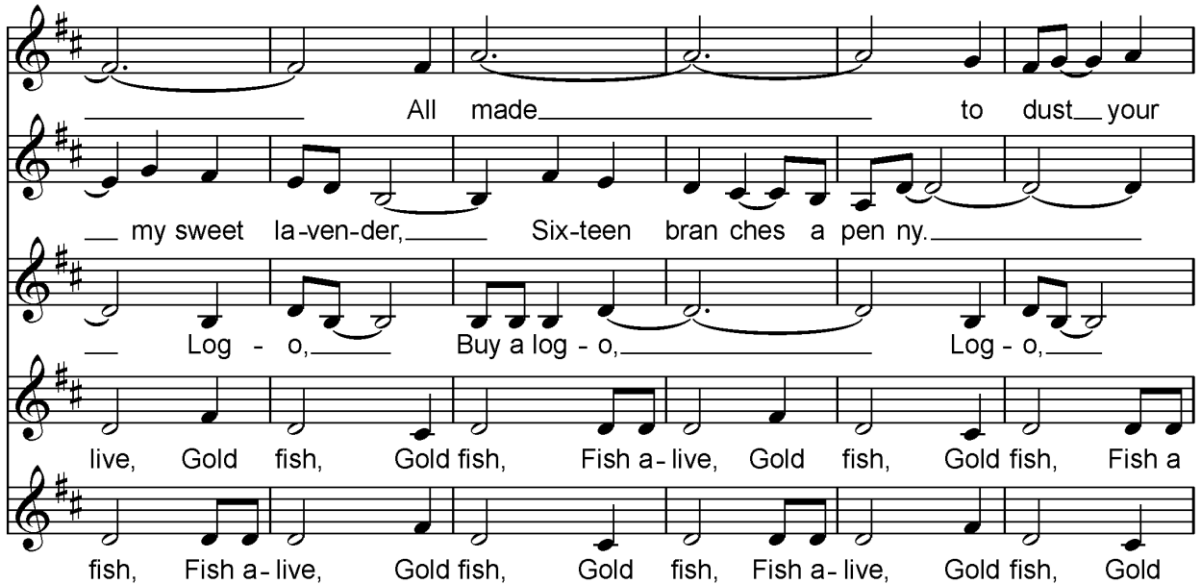
Come  
Will you buy \_\_\_\_\_ my sweet lav-en der? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Log - o, \_\_\_\_\_ Buy a log - o, \_\_\_\_\_ Log - o, \_\_\_\_\_  
live, Gold fish, Gold fish, Fish a-live, Gold fish, Gold fish, Fish a-  
fish, Fish a-live, Gold fish, Gold fish, Fish a-live, Gold fish, Gold

21



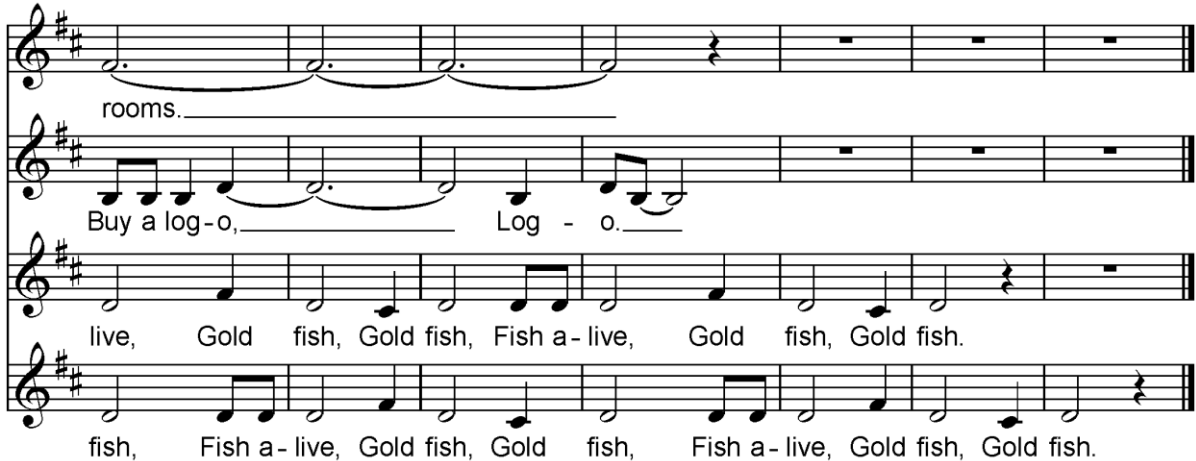
buy my fea - ther brooms,  
My sweet scent-ed la-ven der? Oh buy  
Buy a log-o, Log - o, Buy a log-o,  
live, Gold fish, Gold fish, Fish a-live, Gold fish, Gold fish, Fish a  
fish, Fish a-live, Gold fish, Gold fish, Fish a-live, Gold fish, Gold

27



All made to dust your  
my sweet la-ven-der, Six-teen bran ches a pen ny.  
Log - o, Buy a log - o, Log - o,  
live, Gold fish, Gold fish, Fish a-live, Gold fish, Gold fish, Fish a  
fish, Fish a-live, Gold fish, Gold fish, Fish a-live, Gold fish, Gold

33



rooms.  
Buy a log-o, Log - o,  
live, Gold fish, Gold fish, Fish a-live, Gold fish, Gold fish.  
fish, Fish a-live, Gold fish, Gold fish, Fish a-live, Gold fish, Gold fish.

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## Bold Turpin

*KS3 A short song telling the story of Turpin's encounter with his friend  
Tom King*

*This song was collected from the singing of William Norton in the St Marylebone Workhouse and he heard it at an amateur music hall in Bell Street, off Edgware Road. It is actually part of a longer medley of ditties and spoken word about Dick Turpin, which was sold as a printed broadside. The full medley mentions lots of recognisable places in London and the real Dick Turpin was said to have been a visitor to the Marylebone Gardens in the 1720s. The refrain of the song uses nonsense vocables, which is fairly common in English language folk songs.*

### **Task suggestions**

- Try learning the first of this song by ear, which is how folk songs were traditionally passed on. Call and response is a good way to do this. As the song is two verses long see if you can learn the second verse in the same way.
- Instrumental task - if you have any instrumentalists in the class, see if they can accompany the song using the chords. These could begin as drones and you could experiment with adding an offbeat feel.
- Performance task - Once you have learnt the main song, take a look at the broadside of the longer medley which can be found here on the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library Archive: <https://www.vwml.org/record/FK/18/268/1> - can you perform a version of this? Writing a tune for some sections and performing the rest as spoken word?
- Listening task - this song was also collected from a singer called Johnny Doughty in Camber Sands, Sussex in 1976. His performance was recorded and you can hear it via the link below. Listen to it as a class and discuss his performance and what he says after. Could you include this source recording in a performance based around Bold Turpin?  
<https://www.vwml.org/record/RoudFS/S232918>
- History task – learn about the real Dick Turpin and the various stories about his life

- Discussion area – Dick Turpin is usually remembered as a highwayman, but was also a poacher, a horse thief, a burglar and a murderer. What would the modern day equivalent of his crimes be? Despite his actions, his story has been romanticised and he is often depicted in a fairly favourable light - discuss why certain historical characters might be remembered more affectionately than their actions would suggest. How might someone who committed similar crimes be depicted today?

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## Bold Turpin

1. As bold Turpin rode down one fine day,  
A prize to discover  
He fell in with a well dressed gentleman  
And demanded him to deliver  
'Your money I want, so fetch out your blunt  
For I'll put this through your liver'  
With my little pop gun, and overcome  
***Whack fol the diddle all the di do***
  
2. The horseman bowed and laughed aloud  
And cried 'You are mistaken!  
What don't you know a Toby-man  
From an old chaw bacon?  
You'll think it's no sin to collar my tin  
But in that you are mistaken'  
With your little pop gun, and overcome,  
***Whack fol the diddle all the di do***

### ***Glossary***

- Old chaw bacon - slang for an unsophisticated rustic person
- Toby man - a highway man
- Whack fol the diddle all the di-do - a nonsense refrain with meaningless vocables, not uncommon in British folk songs and a way of singing a bit of melody without words

## Bold Turpin

Roud number: 8094

Collected from the singing of William Norton by Cecil Sharp at St Marylebone Workhouse on October 10th 1908

<https://www.vwml.org/record/CJS2/10/1964>



As\_ bold Tur-pin rode down one fine day, A prize to dis -

4 co - ver, He\_ fell in with a well dressed gen - tle - man, And de -

7 man-ded him to de - li-ver, 'Your mon-ey I want so fetch our your blunt, For I'll

11 put this through your li - ver, With my lit - tle pop gun,

14 And o - ver-come', Whack fol the did-dle all the di - do.

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## Selvay

### *KS3 The story of a woman who cross-dresses to test the integrity of her lover*

*This is a version of the well-loved folk song 'Sylvie', which is sometimes known as Sovay or Selvay. It tells the story of a woman who tests the integrity of her lover by dressing as a highwayman and trying to steal the ring he has for her. There were hundreds of versions of this song collected across the UK and the USA and this one was sung by a woman called Mrs Perdue from Shepperton, Surrey. Here we've included some suggested ideas for musical arrangement, as well as how the song can open up discussions on gender and women's rights.*

#### **Task suggestions**

- Try learning a verse or two of this song by ear, which is how folk songs were traditionally passed on. Call and response is a good way to do this. Then read the following verses from the sheet.
- Instrumental task - if you have any instrumentalists in the class, see if they can accompany the song using the chords. In their most basic form these could be drones, but an extension would be to support the 6/8 jig feel by emphasising the 1,3,4 and 6.
- History task – women in the UK had a lot less rights in the past than they do now. Throughout most of history, when a woman married she would become the property of her husband and lose the right to own her own possessions. Until fairly recently it was considered normal for a wife to be under the control of her husband and abuses that are illegal outside marriage (such as rape) were not criminal within a marriage until 1991. Learn about women's rights and how they have changed in the last few hundred years and how those changes came about.
- Discussion area – using what you have learnt about women's right in the history task as context, what do you think about Selvay's actions in the song? Do you think the lengths she has gone to in order to test out her lover are too extreme, or justifiable given the huge impact marriage had on a woman's freedom?



- 
- Discussion area - UK law has improved its provision on women's rights, but women still face many inequalities today, although they may not seem as obvious as the ones they faced the past. Discuss these inequalities and the classes' experiences of them. In what way do these inequalities and others have negative impacts on all genders?
  - Art/Textiles task – in the song, Selvay's outfit both gives her power and makes her feel powerful. What outfits have power today? Can you design an outfit that makes you feel powerful? Can you make an item of clothing that makes you feel powerful?

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## Selvay

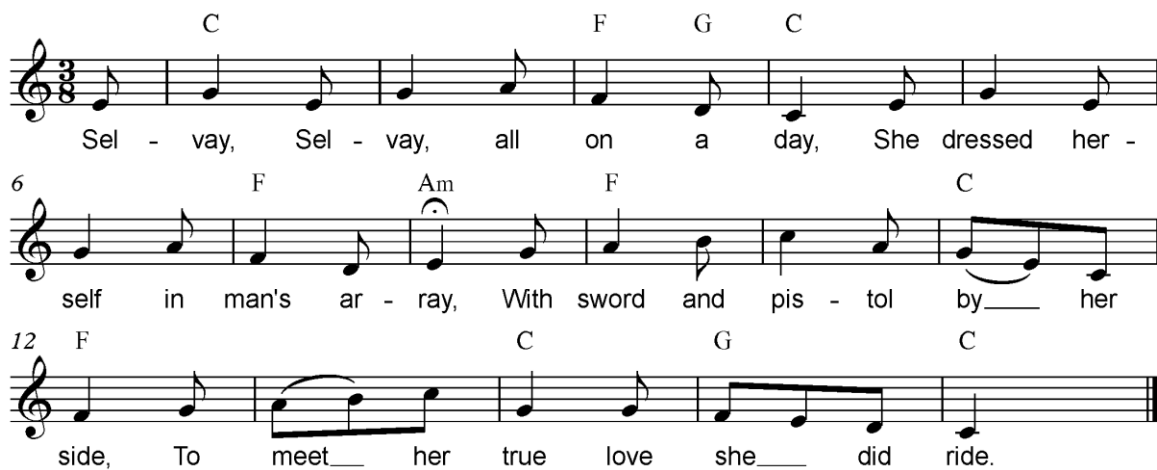
1. Selvay, Selvay, all on a day  
She dressed herself in man's array  
With sword and pistol by her side  
To meet her true love she did ride
  
2. She met her lover on the plain  
And gently bade him for to stand  
'Stand and deliver!' she did cry  
'Or else this moment you shall die'.
  
3. And when she'd robbed him of his store,  
'Stay, stay,' says she, 'there's one thing more,  
A diamond ring I see you have  
Deliver it now, your life to save'
  
4. 'My diamond ring is a pledge I have  
My life I'll lose, but it I'll save'  
She was tender hearted as a dove  
She rode away and left her love.
  
5. One day these lovers they were seen  
Whilst walking in the garden green  
He spied his watch hang by her clothes  
Which made him blush like any rose
  
6. 'What blush you at, you silly thing!  
I thought to have got your diamond ring  
It was me who robbed you on the plain  
So take your gold and watch again
  
7. 'What I did it for - it was to know  
Whether you was true or no  
But now I bear a contented mind  
My heart and all it shall be thine'

## Selvay

Roud number: 7

Collected from the singing of Mrs Perdue by Percy W. Merrick on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1905

<https://www.vwml.org/record/LEB/5/325>



C F G C

Sel - vay, Sel - vay, all on a day, She dressed her -

6 F Am F C

self in man's ar - ray, With sword and pis - tol by her

12 F C G C

side, To meet her true love she did ride.

---

## Study Area 3: Poverty & the Workhouse

A workhouse was an institution that housed and gave work to people who were too poor to support themselves. In 1601, parishes were made legally responsible for looking after their poor members and the first known reference to a workhouse was in 1631. However, after the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, a series of poor harvests and new technology replacing agricultural workers, the system became unsustainable.

The New Poor Law of 1834 attempted to discourage able-bodied people from seeking poor relief and as a deterrent, made workhouses tough places to be. Women, men, children and older or disabled people were housed separately and food was basic and unappetising, such as watery porridge called gruel, or bread and cheese. The work they were given was hard, such as stone breaking and picking apart old ropes called 'oakum', which were often used to seal the lining of ships, or to make matting or bandaging. People were called 'inmates' like in a prison (although they were technically allowed to leave when they wished), and they had to wear an uncomfortable uniform. The elderly or disabled were allowed very few visitors and children would only see their parents once a week.

Towards the end of the 1800s conditions improved a little and they increasingly became a refuge for elderly or sick people. In 1930, workhouses were formally abolished but they continued as public health institutions. The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the development and growth of the welfare state in the UK, which gave us the NHS, and measures to improve education, employment and social security. However despite this, there are still over 14 million people in poverty today in the UK (Feb 2020), but it looks very different to how it did in the days of the workhouse.

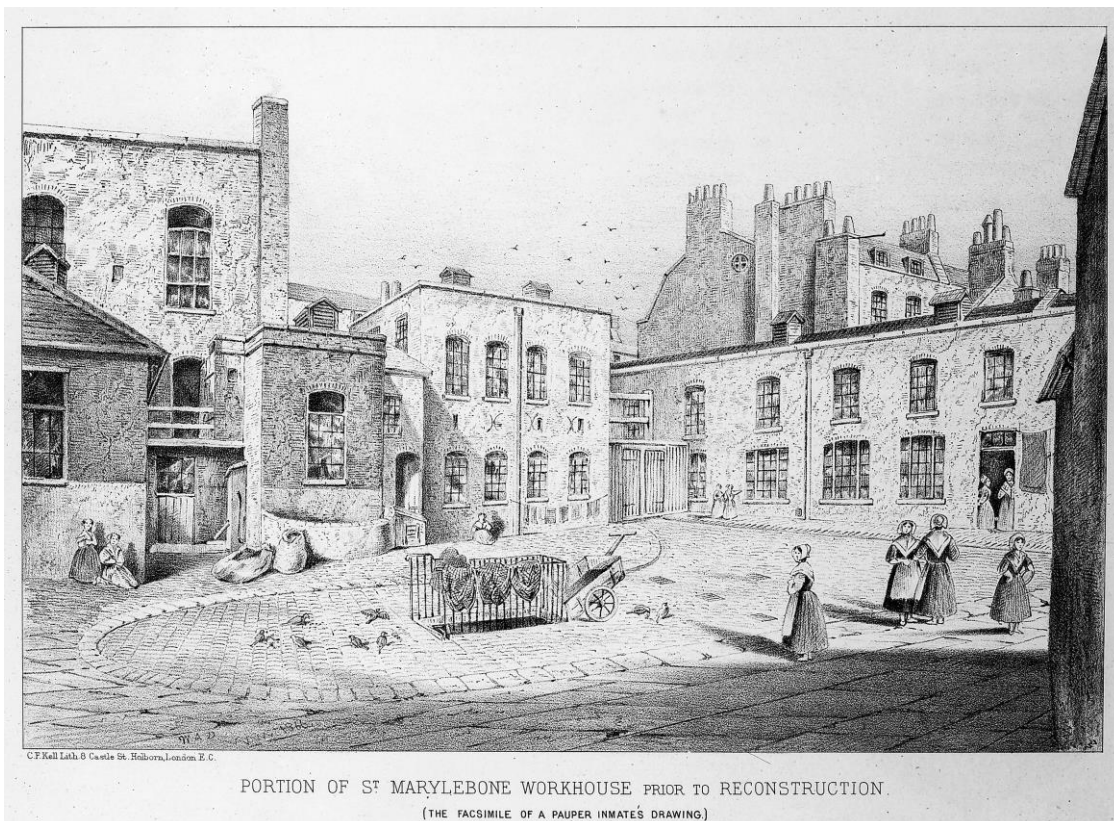
### St Marylebone Workhouse

The first workhouse in St Marylebone was opened in 1730, first in a rented building, and then later, in 1752, a new permanent building was opened. It stood at the southern end of what is now Luxborough Street and initially housed 40 inmates. By 1772 it had outgrown its site and was housing 220 people. A new workhouse was built on land on the north side of Paddington Street, which had two storeys, a chapel, and was designed to accommodate up to 1000 inmates. The old site was used as an infirmary until a larger one was built on the new site in 1792. However, from 1793, war with France increased poverty and by 1797 the workhouse was full, with 1168 people housed there.

As well as adults, the workhouse also took in abandoned children and babies known as 'foundlings'. In 1815 a baby was left on the doorstep with the following note attached:

I am little Kitty, my parents are poor  
I crave your pity, now I am left at your door  
I do not despair but a hope I do cherish  
I shall be taken care of, as I am left to the parish

The workhouse buildings were gradually expanded in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with an enlarged infirmary and the addition of a boy's school and new dormitories for women and men. Numbers continued to rise and this led to a cut in wages for staff and a worsening of conditions. In 1867 a series of major building works began again, including a new dispensary on East Street, the frontage of which is the only surviving workhouse building today. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, more five storey blocks were added, taking the capacity to just under 2000 inmates.



"Part of St Marylebone Workhouse prior to reconstruction" Credit [Wellcome Collection](#). [Attribution 4.0 International \(CC BY 4.0\)](#) via Wikimedia Commons

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The workhouse housed Belgian refugees from 1914-15 and was used as a military detention barracks from 1918-21. After 1930, the workhouse became the St Marylebone Institution and housed mainly the elderly and disabled. During the Second World War, some of the blocks were used as a recreation centre for civil defence workers, and after the war as a transit centre for displaced persons from the continent. The workhouse formally closed on 6<sup>th</sup> January 1965 and most of the buildings were demolished and replaced by flats and part of the London Polytechnic.

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## The Workhouse Door

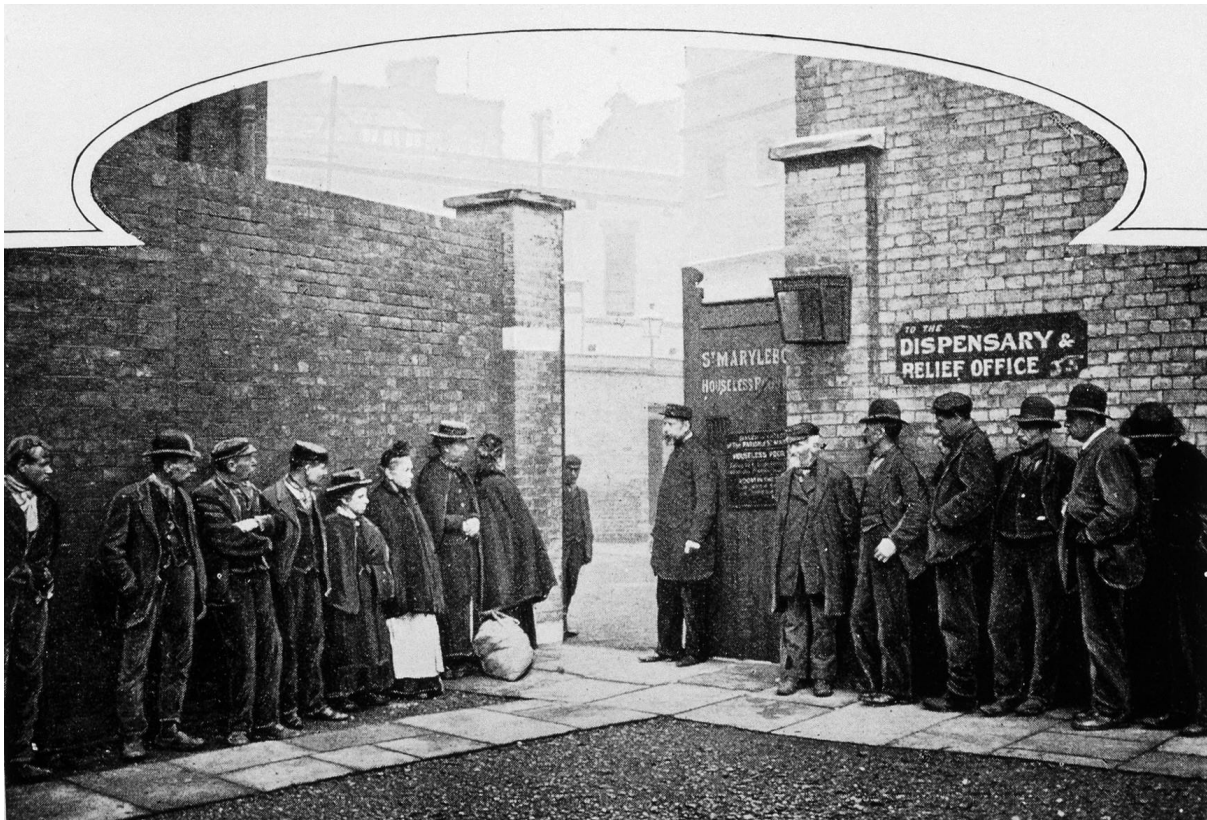
### *KS3 A song about people in a workhouse*

*This song is an onlooker's account of the people they've seen entering a workhouse. It comes from a printed broadside and was apparently 'written, composed and sung with great success' by a Mr T. Metcalf. It can be used to create a full musical arrangement as well as to learn about poverty and workhouses.*

### **Task suggestions**

- Try learning a verse, or some lines of this song by ear to help memorise the tune. Call and response is a good way to do this.
- Instrumental task - if you have any instrumentalists in the class, see if they can accompany the song using the chords. These could begin as drones and you could experiment with adding an offbeat feel.
- Divide the class into small groups and get them to perform a verse of the song each.
- Discussion area – how does this song make you feel?
- History task – look at the information on pages 29 - 31 about workhouses. Were there any workhouses in your area? Is there a surviving building you could visit?
- Discussion area – using what you have learnt about workhouses, discuss what poverty looks like today.
- Writing task – write a diary entry or a letter from one of the characters in the song from inside the workhouse, describing either their life in the workhouse or before they entered. This could include meeting the main speaker in the song outside the workhouse door.
- Literature task – a workhouse is depicted memorably in Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* – could you read this book as a class, or some excerpts from it, and discuss the portrayal of the workhouse? Can you find any other depictions of workhouses in literature?

- Art/history task – learn about the costume of the time the song was set and draw one of the characters from the song.



“People queuing at St. Marylebone workhouse circa 1900”. Credit: [Wellcome Collection](#). Attribution [4.0 International \(CC BY 4.0\)](#) via Wikimedia Commons



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## The Workhouse Door

1. One day as I walked through the streets, not knowing where to go  
My eyes fell on a little boy, close to the workhouse door  
He was crying so I went to him and scarcely could he speak  
And I thought that every moment his little heart would break  
He said his mother she was dead, His father could not work  
No shoes he had upon his feet, Nor had he got a shirt  
So I took him to the governor and he thanked me o'er and o'er  
And many strange sights I saw beside the workhouse door  
***Beside the workhouse door, beside the workhouse door***  
***Many strange sights I saw beside the workhouse door***
2. The next I saw was a woman, for relief she'd come to look  
Two children she had in her arms wrapped in a ragged cloak  
And she turned around as though she knew not which way to go in  
My heart it bled to see her in the state that she was in  
She said she'd lost her husband, he'd been killed upon the line  
And now she had to beg her bread or else to starve and pine  
As the tears were rolling down her cheeks I thought, God help the poor  
She turned and went in as I stood beside the workhouse door  
***Beside the workhouse door, beside the workhouse door***  
***She turned and went in as I stood beside the workhouse door***
3. The next I saw was an old man who could scarcely crawl or stand  
And he looked to me as though his time was very close at hand  
He asked me 'could I spare a coin?' I gave him all I had  
And he thanked me many times for it, he seemed so very glad  
He said he'd been a soldier, fought for country and his queen  
But now the times were very hard, he brighter days had seen  
He had served full twenty years and now was old and almost wore  
It was a disgrace to see him stand beside the workhouse door  
***Beside the workhouse door, beside the workhouse door***  
***It was a disgrace to see him stand beside the workhouse door***
4. The last sight that I saw, was much worse than all the rest  
A poor old woman shivering with cold and in distress  
She asked me would I be so kind to show her the way in  
And as I saw her care-worn face my heart beat fast within  
She said she'd brought a family up of children numbering nine

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But now they'd all deserted her and left her for to pine  
And sooner than she'd beg from her own, she'd perish on the floor  
It was a shame she'd end her days inside the workhouse door  
***Inside the workhouse door, inside the workhouse door***  
***It was a shame she'd end her days inside the workhouse door***

## The Workhouse Door

Roud number: V6948

Printed on a broadside of unknown origin. Originally sung and composed by T. Metcalf.

<https://www.vwml.org/record/FK/17/149/2>

Cm Gm Cm

One day as I walked through the streets not knowing where to go, My

5 Gm Fm

eyes fell on a little boy close to the workhouse door, He was crying so I

10 Cm Fm Gm Fm

went to him and scarcely could he speak, And I thought that every

14 Cm Fm Gm Cm

moment his little heart would break, He said his mother

18 Gm Cm

she was dead, His father could not work, No shoes had he upon

22 Gm Fm

his feet, Nor had he got a shirt, So I took him to the

26 Cm Fm Gm Fm

governor and he thanked me o'er and o'er, And many strange

30 Cm Fm Gm Cm Fm

sights I saw beside the workhouse door, Beside the workhouse

34 Eb Bb Fm

door, Beside the workhouse door, Many strange

38 Cm Fm Gm Cm

sights I saw beside the workhouse door.

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## London Lights

*KS4/Community - A chorus song about a woman who is left homeless after having a child outside marriage*

*This song tells the story of a woman who has had a child outside marriage and as a result is rejected by her family and left homeless. It probably originated in the music halls before entering the oral singing tradition, and almost all the surviving versions come from traditional Scottish singers. The version here is based on the one sung by Lizzie Higgins, was from a well respected singing family of settled travellers in Aberdeenshire. It can be sung both solo and with two harmony lines, and as a way to learn about homelessness and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.*

### **Task suggestions**

- To start, try learning the chorus by ear, which is how folk songs were traditionally passed on. Call and response is a good way to do this. Then sing the remaining verses from the sheet.
- Instrumental task - if you have any instrumentalists in the class, see if they can accompany the song using the chords. In their most basic form these could be drones, but an extension would be support the slow 6/8 feel by emphasising the 1,3,4 and 6.
- Try singing or playing the high and low harmony lines on page 41. Note the variation in the chords in this version.
- Listening exercise – listen to Lizzie Higgins source recording, and compare to two contemporary interpretations by Maz O'Connor and Hazel Askew with Songs of Separation. Compare and contrast them, using these starting points:
  - Vocal delivery and ornamentation
  - Speed
  - Accompaniment and instrumentation
  - Harmony
  - Overall feel/ interpretation

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Lizzie Higgins's version:

<https://www.vwml.org/record/RoudFS/S305118>

Maz O'Connor's version:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZuD5830hTA>

Hazel Askew with Songs of Separation's version:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q\\_3bDjzYFno](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q_3bDjzYFno)

- Discussion area – the woman in this song is rejected from society and made homeless as she has had a child outside marriage. The stigma of giving birth outside marriage is still prevalent in many places and traces of that attitude can still be found even where it is not. Discuss this area in relation to the historical attitudes shown in the song and related attitudes today.
- Discussion area – this song depicts a historical example of a woman's homelessness and the reasons why. According to Crisis, the amount of people sleeping rough in England has increased approximately 132% between 2010-20 (their data comes from a combination of street counts and estimates but they acknowledge that the real figures are likely to be higher): <https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/homelessness-knowledge-hub/homelessness-monitor/>. Discuss possible reasons for this increase and learn about strategies and support that has been effective in the past in reducing the amount of people without a home.
- Discussion area – Lizzie Higgins was part of a Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community. Learn about the travelling way of life, culture and music and the challenges and racism they often face.

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## London Lights

1. See how that young man learned to love me  
And he taught me to do the same  
But now he's went away and left my  
And on my brow there's written shame

*Chorus:*

*See how those London Lights are gleaming  
Through the frost and falling snow  
Sleep on, sleep on my blue-eyed treasure  
Your mother's got nowhere to go*

2. It was those two blye eyes that (en)ticed me  
(En)ticed me from my happy home  
Although he ran away and left me  
He is the father of my child

*Chorus*

3. See how my sisters they despise me  
And my brothers do the same  
For father says he will not own me  
And my mother hangs her head in shame

*Chorus*

4. Although my clothes are going ragged  
Still they'll keep my baby warm  
Sleep on, sleep on my blue eyed treasure  
Your father won't be very long

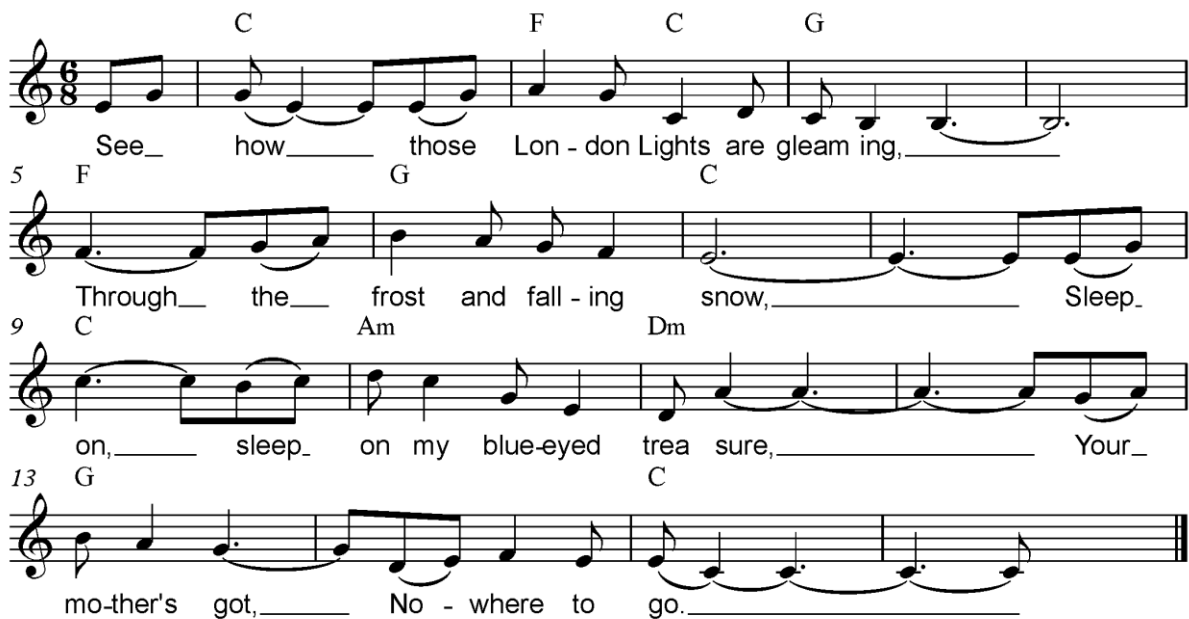
*Chorus*

## London Lights

Roud number: 18815

Based on the version collected from the singing of Lizzie Higgins by Rod Stradling on 11<sup>th</sup> March 1970.

<https://www.vwml.org/record/RoudFS/S305118>



C F C G

See\_ how\_ those Lon - don Lights are gleam ing,

5 F G C

Through\_ the\_ frost and fall - ing snow, Sleep\_

9 C Am Dm

on, sleep\_ on my blue-eyed trea sure, Your\_

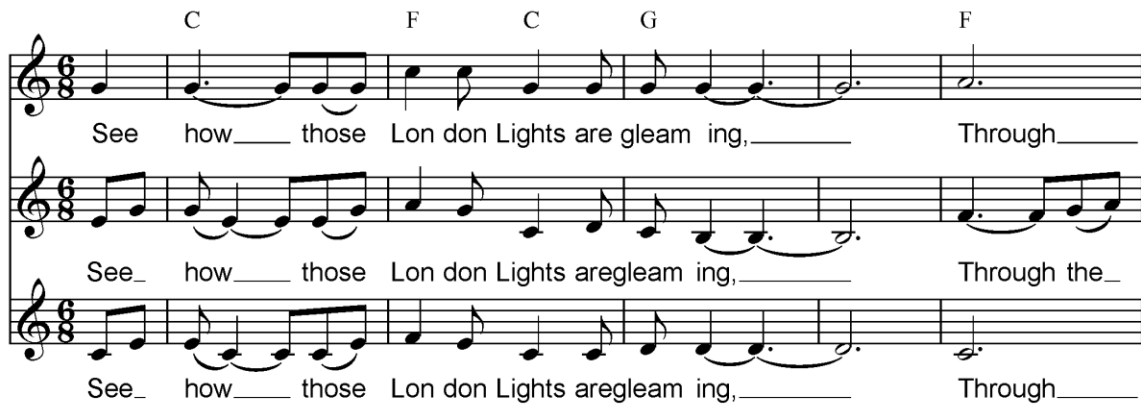
13 G C

mo-ther's got, No - where to go.

## London Lights

Arranged by Hazel Askew

C F C G F



See how those London Lights are gleaming, Through

See how those London Lights are gleaming, Through the

See how those London Lights are gleaming, Through

6 G C C C7/Bb



Sleep on,

frost and fall-ing snow, Sleep on, sleep on my blue-eyed

and fall - ing snow, Sleep on, sleep on my blue-eyed

11 Dm/A Fm6/G# G C



treasure Your mother's got, No-where to go.

treasure, Your mother's got, No-where to go.

treasure, Your mother's got, No-where to go.



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## The Women Flogger's Lament of Marylebone Workhouse!

*KS5 A challenging song that helps us to analyse history and how stories can be told*

*This song is based on real historical events that took place at St Marylebone Workhouse in 1856. Three young women were flogged by members of the workhouse staff and a four month investigation followed which regularly made national news. The song is a parody from the point of view of Mr Ryan, one of the perpetrators. Here it can be used as a way to learn about historical events, question why we sing songs and how the stories of difficult events can be told.*

### The Historical Context

In the summer of 1856, three young women at the St Marylebone Workhouse (Mary Ann Sullivan, Sophia Howard and Elizabeth Edmonds) were flogged, dragged by their hair and badly beaten by the master, Mr Ryan and two porters, Matthew Green and Charles Brown. An investigation was launched by the Poor Law Board in the form of weekly meetings, which lasted for four months. During this time the three women were called to make their testimonies, as well as various people who had witnessed the events and a woman employed by the Marylebone Police Court who inspected the women's injuries.

The trial became notorious and its progress was regularly featured in newspapers across the country between August and November 1856. The Poor Law Board asked the guardians of the parish of St Marylebone to call Mr Ryan to resign. However, the parish refused, saying that they had reprimanded him and that was sufficient. The investigation continued and mostly concerned whether or not the Poor Law Board had the power to force the parish to call for Mr Ryan's resignation. The workhouse tried to argue that physical force had been necessary, as the women had been using bad language about the master whilst out in the yard, and 'moral force' had failed. They attempted to justify the violence used by citing common classist attitudes that the girls were lazy, and that local people were annoyed at having to pay for their care (as it was law at the time that parishioners paid a local tax for the poor). Eventually, the workhouse guardians were forced to accept Mr Ryan's resignation after the threat of being taken to the Court of Queen's Bench. Charles Brown left the workhouse to work at another one, which had been agreed by the Poor Law Board before the scandal broke. Matthew Green was dismissed in the

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same time period for a separate event where he and his wife had verbally attacked a young lady who often made charitable visits to the workhouse at the door. The length of the trial and the details of the events exposed how badly people were being treated in the workhouse, and how prejudices were being used to justify violence and maltreatment.

The ballad comes from a printed broadside (see page 14 for more information on broadsides) and was probably a response to the unfolding of the story in the newspapers. It is a parody from the point of view of Mr Ryan and the tune used was a well-known nursery rhyme that was often used for parodies. You can find an image of the broadside here: <http://ballads.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/view/edition/7290>

### ***Task suggestions***

- Try singing through the song, then read through the historical context before looking back at the song again
- Instrumental task - if you have any instrumentalists in the class, see if they can accompany the song using the chords.
- Discuss the classes' initial responses to the song, before and after learning about the history of it. This song is intended as a parody – how does it read today? Do you think parody is an effective way to deal with this kind of event?
- History task – find out more about what happened by looking at this full account of part of the trial <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3078464/3078468> You could also try and piece together the complete story using articles from the online British Newspaper Archive. Can you turn this into a detective task and work out what happened?
- Discussion area - folk songs often cover a wide range of topics, some of them very difficult. Discuss the idea of singing about difficult events, should some never be sung about? What ways can we speak about something difficult in a tone that is respectful, challenges us and doesn't sensationalise trauma? Think about the perspective a song is from, the melody and arrangement as well as the context and set up of a performance.
- Listen to Karine Polwart's song 'Half a Mile' from her Traces album. It is a response to the murder of 11 year old girl Susan Maxwell in 1982 in the Scottish

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border town of Cornhill upon Tweed. Analyse the lyrics and how they deal with such a difficult event. Karine herself says she's only ever performed this song once, and wrote to Susan's parents to ask permission before recording it. You can find the song on Karine's website here:

<https://karinepolwart.com/track/900218/half-a-mile>

- Composition task – can you write a new song about the events at St Marylebone workhouse from a different perspective? Trying using a different melody, either by composing a new one or using one from one of the other songs in this resource.

---

## **The Women Flogger's Lament of Marylebone Workhouse!**

Oh dear here's a shocking disaster  
My name it is Ryan, a poor workhouse master  
I've now got discharged and my sentence is passed, sirs  
Because I went flogging the girls  
The two flogging porters and me are crushed down, sirs  
One he is Green and the other is Brown, sirs  
We wouldn't have it happened for five hundred pounds, sirs,  
Flogging the dear little girls

Chorus:

*Oh were shall we wander, or where shall we roam, sirs,  
We walk through the streets folks won't let us alone, sirs  
Kicked out the workhouse in Marylebone, sirs  
For flogging the sweet little girls*

Oh dear what a fuss and bother  
From one end of Marylebone to the other  
They tell me I'm worse than the old woman flogger  
Who jumped into Barclay's grains  
Kindness and sympathy friends is a jewel  
But caning, and whipping, and flogging is cruel  
I wish I'd been smothered in boiling hot gruel  
Before I went flogging the girls

When down the new road a-going, by jingo  
Up came five old women and gave me some lingo  
Knocked me right bang into the Yorkshire stingo  
For flogging the poor little girls  
With a bundle of matches we're going a singing  
Or else through a large donkey's collar a grinning  
Our misfortune has happened through flogging the women  
And caning the poor little girls

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With a pack on my back I will tramp it to Dover  
And live upon blackberries, nettles and clover  
We can't go for soldiers the war is over  
And we must not go flogging the girls  
As I went along High Street and Spring Street just now, sirs  
With the boys and the girls I got into a row, sirs  
The tail of my shirt they pulled out of my trousers  
Don't you wish you were flogging the girls

Now my Marylebone friends I've formed an idea  
With the Brown and the Green for to quickly sheer  
And like in that place what they call the Crimea  
And go flogging hedgehogs and cats  
Some say that they'd hang us and pretty well hurt us  
Some say they'd smother us, other they'd burk us  
They've kicked me right out of Marylebone workhouse  
For nothing but flogging the girls

Chorus:

*The old women say we the rogue will be shaving  
Old Ryan the pauper the parish is blaming  
We'll make him remember the day he went caning  
And flogging the poor little girls*

### **Glossary**

- By jingo – an exclamation of surprise
- Stingo – strong beer

## The Women Flogger's Lament of Marylebone Workhouse!

Roud number: V8945

From an undated broadside sheet, printed by Skinner in Westminster

<http://ballads.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/view/edition/7290>

C F



Oh dear here's a shock ing dis - as - ter, My name it is Ry - on a

4 G C



poor work-house ma ster, I've now got dis-charged and my sent tence is pa-ssed, Be -

7 F G C C



cause I went flog-ging the girls, \_\_\_\_\_ The two flog-ging por- ters and

10 F G



me are crushed down, \_ sirs, One he is green and the othe- er is brown, sirs, We

13 C F G



would' nt have it hap-pened for five hun-dred pounds, sirs, Flog-ging the dear lit - tle

16 C C Em



girls, \_\_\_\_\_ Oh \_\_\_\_\_ where shall we wan-der or where shall we roam, sirs, As we

19 F G C



walk through the streets folks won't let us a- lone, \_ sirs, Kicked out the work- house in

22 Em F G C



Ma - ry - le - bone, sirs, For flog - ging the sweet lit - tle girls.

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## Study Area 4: Migration & Travel

For as far back as we know, people from different parts of the world have settled in the UK and made it their home. Often, people would gravitate towards cities when moving to a new country, as these were the places where there was more work, trade, housing and general opportunities. London's diversity is a notable example of this, and St Marylebone is a good case study of how different groups of people end up moving into, and out of, an area.

At the start of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Manor House in St Marylebone was being used as a French school for Huguenots (French protestants), many of whom fled to the UK to escape persecution in France in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. By 1709, we know there was also a French church just off the high street. Towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the French Revolution brought a new wave of refugees to Britain, this time mainly Catholics and royalists, many of whom settled in the fashionable, up-and-coming district of South Marylebone.

There has always been an ebb and flow of people moving between Britain and Ireland, but this increased greatly when a huge number of Irish people fled to Britain during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The Great Irish Famine of the 1840s saw repeated failures of potato crops, which resulted in mass migration, and is estimated to have caused over one million deaths. Many Irish people settled in London, and Calmel Buildings in St Marylebone was one of the key areas they lived in. The buildings were very overcrowded and it became a dangerous area to live in. In 1831 it was recorded that 26 houses had a total population of over a thousand people in them. We know there was still an Irish population in the area at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as folk song collector Cecil Sharp gathered folk songs from some of them when he visited the workhouse.

We know from historical records that a group of young women from the St Marylebone Workhouse emigrated to Van Dieman's Land (modern day Tasmania) under a voluntary emigration scheme. They sailed from Gravesend, accompanied by some workhouse staff in a ship called the Renown. They landed in Sydney, Australia, in October 1832, and were eventually placed in 'respectable' servants positions. We also know that there were sailors living in St Marylebone who would have spent much of their life away at sea. When Cecil Sharp visited the workhouse to collect songs, he met some men who had sailing careers and shanties to share. The conditions working at sea were often extremely tough, but they would have travelled to many different places in the world along the way.

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## The Black Ball Line

### *KS2 A rhythmic sea shanty with refrains*

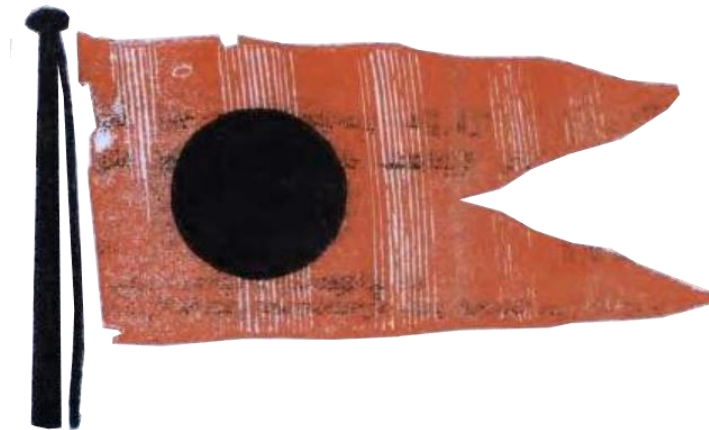
Charles Robbins was a sailor who spent 33 years of his life at sea, and this song was collected from him in the St Marylebone Workhouse when he was 65. The Black Ball Line was a fleet of ships (called 'packets'), that sailed between Liverpool and New York from 1817 to 1878. It was primarily known as a passenger line, but the ships also transported cotton, wool, mail and other cargo. This song is a sea shanty, a song that sailors would sing whilst working on a ship. It is rhythmic with chorus lines and a fun song to sing in a group. (See the EFDSS resource 'A Sailor's Life' for an in depth exploration of sea songs - [www.efdss.org/learning/55-resources/learning-resources/4578-a-sailors-life](http://www.efdss.org/learning/55-resources/learning-resources/4578-a-sailors-life) ).

### **Task suggestions**

- Learn the first verse of the song by ear using a call and response method, then sing through the rest of the lyrics from the sheet, using the glossary to discuss any new words.
- Traditionally, the verses would be sung by a solo singer (or singers) called 'shanty men', and lines 2 and 4 were refrains sung by everyone. Ask for volunteers to lead the verses and invite the whole class to sing along on the refrain lines.
- Learn about sea shanties. The rhythm of these songs is very important as they were meant to be sung whilst doing physical work. Discuss why singing might help you when working on a ship.
- Musical task - try stamping or adding some percussion on beats 1 and 3, to keep the rhythm of the song strong. Could you add some other rhythms over the top, using body percussion or more percussive instruments?
- Writing task – imagine what it would be like to be working on a ship at sea. Take 2 minutes to write down words and phrases to describe how it might feel and share these as a task



- Songwriting task – use the words and phrases generated in the writing task to write some new verses to the song.
- Art/ writing task – if you could sail somewhere in the world, where would it be and why? The Black Ball Line’s flag was red with a black ball in the middle (see below). Invent your own shipping line and design your own flag for it.



The Black Ball Line’s Flag. [Kolmkolm, Liverpool Black Ball Line banner, CC BY-SA 4.0](#)  
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0> via Wikimedia Commons

- Songwriting task – is there an activity in your life that you think doing whilst singing would help? Write your own song to the tune of the Black Ball Line to sing whilst doing this activity
- Geography task – learn about the Black Ball Line and other packets’ sailing routes, as well as the places they stopped off at and why.
- History task – one of the cargo items the Black Ball Line often transported was cotton. The cotton industry heavily relied on the labour of enslaved people. Learn about slavery and British involvement in it. Even though freedom from slavery is now an internationally recognised human right, many people are still trafficked and forced to work in unbearable conditions, often to produce goods and commodities for us. What can we do to help prevent people suffering to make our everyday items?

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## The Black Ball Line

1. O the Black Ball Line, I served my time  
*Haul away, Haul away O*  
O the Black Ball Line, I served my time  
*Then hurrah for the Black Ball Line*
2. We sailed away from Liverpool Bay
3. We sailed away for Mawhill Bay
4. And we loaded cotton for the homeward bound
5. And when we arrived at Liverpool Docks
6. We ran our lines unto the pier
7. We sang around the same old song
8. Now the skipper said 'that will do, my boys'

### ***Glossary***

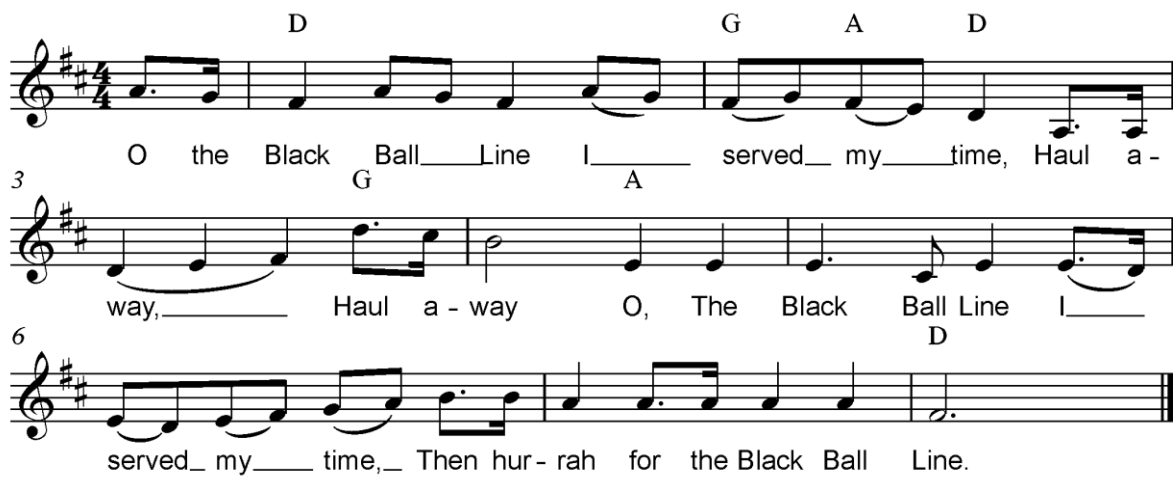
- Haul – to drag with effort or force
- Mawhill Bay – this is probably a misheard location, possibly Mobile Bay in Alabama
- Skipper – the captain of the ship

## The Black Ball Line

Roud number: 2623

Collected from the singing of Charles Robbins by Cecil Sharp at St Marylebone Workhouse on 24<sup>th</sup> October 1908.

<https://www.vwml.org/record/RoudFS/S334727>



D G A D

O the Black Ball Line I served my time, Haul a -

3 G A

way, Haul a - way O, The Black Ball Line I

6 D

served my time, Then hur - rah for the Black Ball Line.

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## Erin, Sad Erin

### *KS4/5 A lament for Ireland in times of trouble*

*This song is from the perspective of an Irish person who laments times of loss and struggle in Ireland and wishes to emigrate to the USA. It seems to date from the first half of the 1800s, but this version was collected in the St Marylebone Workhouse from the singing of John Murphy, who was born in Tipperary in around 1840. It has a beautiful melody with opportunities to create harmonies, as well as learn about Irish history in the 1800s.*

### **Task suggestions**

- Learn the first verse of the song by ear using a call and response method, then sing through the rest of the lyrics from the sheet.
- Instrumental task – try using the suggested chords to create an accompaniment to the song. Experiment with drones and rhythm in these chords, and notice how they affect the feel and interpretation of the song.
- Harmonisation task – use the chords and melody to create a harmony line for the song. This could either be sung or played on an instrument. Once you have done this, put together an arrangement of the whole song which includes it.
- History task – Ireland faced many difficulties in the 1800s. Learn about Irish history in this period starting from the Act of Union that created the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in 1800, up to the Anglo Irish Treaty of 1921. Include areas such as the famines of Ireland and tensions between: Britain and Ireland, landlords and rural workers, and Catholics and Protestants.
- Literature/ Language task – analyse the song lyrics and the language used. In particular, use what you've learnt in the history task to break down the use of metaphor and make your own reading of the song's meaning.
- Discussion area - are there stories of migration in the local community you could learn about?

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- Discussion area – there are many reasons why people move away from the country of their birth. Learn about some of these reasons and discuss them as a group. There is much evidence that over the coming decades we will see increasing numbers of people displaced by the climate crisis. Learn about the projections for this and what could be done to manage and prepare for it.
  - Songwriting task – use the tune of *Erin, Sad Erin* to write your own song about migration. It could be inspired by something you've heard in one of the discussion areas or by another source.

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## Erin, Sad Erin

1. O Erin, Sad Erin, it grieves me to ponder  
The wrongs of thy injured isle  
Thy sons many thousands deploring do wander  
On shores far away in exile  
O give me the power to cross o'er the main  
America might yield me some comfort from pain  
For I'm only lamenting whilst here I remain  
For the joys I shall never see no more
  
2. With wonder I gazed at that lofty high mountain  
As in grandeur it rose o'er it's lord  
With sorrow I beheld my own garden yielding  
The choicest of fruits for his board  
O where is my father's low cottage of clay  
Where I have spent many a long happy day  
But alas has his lordship contrived it away  
It's gone I shall never see it more
  
3. As the sloe and the berry hung ripe on the bushes  
I have gathered them off without harm  
And I went to the fields for to view the green bushes  
Preparing for winter's cold storms  
I have sat by the fire on a cold winter's night  
Along with my friends telling tales of delight  
Those days gave me pleasure and I could invite  
But they're gone I shall never see them more

### ***Glossary***

- Ponder – to think about something carefully
- Thy - your
- Deploring – strong disapproving
- Yield - provide
- Lamenting – an expression of grief or regret
- Sloe – fruit from a blackthorn

## Erin, Sad Erin

Roud number: 1629

Collected from the singing of John Murphy by Cecil Sharp at St Marylebone Workhouse on  
10th October 1908,

<https://www.vwml.org/record/CJS2/10/1961>



1. O E - rin, Sad E - rin, it grieves me to pon - der, The wrongs of thy  
6 G C F C F

in - jured isle, Thy sons ma - ny thou - sands de - plor - ing do wan - der on  
12 C G C Gm F C

shores far a - way in ex - ile, O give me the power to cross o'er the  
18 Gm C G C F

main A - me - ri - ca might yield me some com - fort from pain, For I'm on - ly  
24 C F C G C

la - ment - ing whilst here I re - main, For the joys I shall ne - ver see no more.

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## **Appendix for further reading**

(links active in June 2021)

### ***Pleasure Gardens***

- [www.ucl.ac.uk/bartlett/architecture/sites/bartlett/files/chapter03\\_marylebone\\_gardens.pdf](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/bartlett/architecture/sites/bartlett/files/chapter03_marylebone_gardens.pdf)

### ***Street Cries***

- [www.soundsurvey.org.uk/index.php/history/street\\_cries](http://www.soundsurvey.org.uk/index.php/history/street_cries)
- [www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/nov/24/lost-cries-of-london-liberty-vagabonds-street-theatre](http://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/nov/24/lost-cries-of-london-liberty-vagabonds-street-theatre)

### ***Dick Turpin***

- [www.thehistorypress.co.uk/articles/the-myth-of-highwayman-dick-turpin-outlives-the-facts/](http://www.thehistorypress.co.uk/articles/the-myth-of-highwayman-dick-turpin-outlives-the-facts/)
- [www.historyofyork.org.uk/themes/georgian/dick-turpin](http://www.historyofyork.org.uk/themes/georgian/dick-turpin)

### ***History of Women's Rights***

- [www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/equality-its-about-time-timeline-of-womens-rights-1866-2016](http://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/equality-its-about-time-timeline-of-womens-rights-1866-2016)

### ***Workhouses***

- [www.workhouses.org.uk](http://www.workhouses.org.uk)
- [www.workhouses.org.uk/StMarylebone/](http://www.workhouses.org.uk/StMarylebone/)

### ***Homelessness***

- <https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/homelessness-knowledge-hub/homelessness-monitor/>



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***British Newspaper Archive (for St Marylebone Workhouse flogging reports)***

- [www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk)

***Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities***

- <https://travellermovement.org.uk/>
- [www.londongypsiesandtravellers.org.uk/](http://www.londongypsiesandtravellers.org.uk/)

***Ireland in the 1800s***

- <https://www.britannica.com/place/Ireland/Social-economic-and-cultural-life-in-the-17th-and-18th-centuries>

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## Hazel Askew



Hazel Askew is a London-based singer, musician and workshop leader. She has worked as a performer on the folk scene for many years, most notably with BBC Radio 2 Folk Award nominated vocal trio Lady Maisery and traditional English folk duo The Askew Sisters, with whom she won Best Female Singer at the 2011 Spiral Earth Awards. She was also part of 10 piece female supergroup Songs of Separation who recently won Best Album at the 2017 BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards. Hazel is a committed folk educator and often leads projects for the English Folk Dance and Song Society's adult, youth and schools' programmes. She has also led workshops and courses for organisations including BBC Proms, Barbican Creative Learning, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, Folkworks, Soundpost Music, Aldeburgh Young Musicians, Dartington Summer School, Benslow Music, Morley College and various festivals around the country.

## Resource Bank

**Inspire learning with folk**

Explore free online materials for using English traditional folk song, music, dance, drama and other arts in your teaching and leading.



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