



An Góilín Traditional Singing Club

**The Tom Crean
Memorial Singing Session Song Book**

Friday May 2nd 2014 - Club na Muinteorí, Cearnóg Parnell



Tom Crean (1941-2013)



Contents

Tom Crean - Traditional Singer – An appreciation by Jerry O'Reilly

Redwood – A poem for Tom Crean by Francis Devine

Press Gang Selection

- Adieu Sweet Lovely Nancy
- The Banks of Claudy
- Two Young Brethern
- General Taylor
- Bells of Rhmney
- Spenser the Rover
- Chase the Buffaloe
- Thugamar Féin an Samhradh Linn
- Hal-an Tow
- Blow the Man Down
- The Banks of the Sweet Primroses
- The Cutty Wren

Tom Crean's Góilín Favorites

- Apprentice's Song
- No More Fish No Fishermen
- One Half-Crown
- See the Smoking Bowl Before Us
- Rambling Irishman
- The Banks of Doon
- Is There for Honest Poverty
- Loves old Sweet Song
- Were Only Over Here for Exploration
- Weary Whaling Grounds
- Biddy Mulligan – The Pride of the Coome



Tom Crean

1941-2013

The death of Góilín stalwart Tom Crean on September 7th last year has left a palpable void in the club. He could always be depended on the tap into whatever “theme” developed on the club night and come up with an apt contribution.

I first met Tom in O’Donohues pub in Merrion Row around 1963 or ’64. At that time he was working in “The Gas” and had a fund of stories about the various characters who worked there and the customers they served. At that time we were big into “the ballads” and listening to John Kelly, Joe Ryan, Joe Heaney, Seamus Ennis and “007” Sean O Conaire who frequented the front part of the pub at weekends. The young bucks, Andy Irvine, Johnny Moynihan, The McKenna’s, and Hughie McCormick, Ted Furey and Tommy Barton the street busker stayed in the “back lounge.

Games of football on Sunday afternoons, initially in Dartmouth Square and later in Fairview Park were part of the scene in those days with Tom an uncompromising defender and the nemeses of Andy Irvine who Johnny Moynihan christened “Agony” Irvine because of his rolling around on the ground after being tackled. The hiring of cars for trips to fleadheanna ceoil and holidays to West Clare with six people in the car were highlights I remember very well.

A kind of fame came with the formation of The Press Gang, an eclectic bunch who, in their then current manifestation (not the first), surprised all by singing songs heard first from the Copper and Waterson families (this would have been between 1967 and 1970). The Press Gang went through

more than one team-sheet but, at that time, worked clubs and other venues all over Dublin (Trinity College Ball one unlikely venue) with a line-up comprised of Tom, Niall Fennell (who also played the French horn - sometimes, indeed, in Slattery's), Dave Smyth, a photographer at The Rotunda hospital and possessed of a brilliantly wicked wit, and the talented Sean Corcoran - who got things done, often - it seemed - in spite of himself, especially in his home county of Louth, where he was responsible for bringing Mary Anne Carolan to popular notice. We very irreverently christened their repertoire "family favourites"!

Arguably, the most substantial contribution to Irish music that Tom was involved in was the setting up of the Tradition Club. This venerable institution, like The Press Gang, went through transformations from time to time, taking its cue from predecessors, but, as the sixties drove through into the seventies, achieved a fairly permanent shape. Kevin Conneff, not, at that time, with The Chieftains, became a prominent part of the organisation and was most obviously a key figure with his own singing and with his command of Irish that smoothed the path of Irish-speaking visitors and helped to pave the way too for exploration of Irish culture throughout the country. Guest lists read like the proverbial Who's Who. Seamus Ennis, Solus Lillis, Eddie Butcher, John Reilly, Mary Bergin, Joe Holmes and Len Graham, Festy Conlon, Paddy Keenan and Matt Molloy solo, Sean Keane, John Kelly and his sons, John junior and James - a little later, Bobby Casey, Mairéad Ni Mhaonaigh and Frankie Kennedy, Triona Ni Dhomhnaill ..and on and on and on and with many more not here mentioned. The Tradition Club brought singers and musicians to Dublin from all over Ireland, paying them a decent wage for time lost at their respective places of employment: an unheard of proposition all round at the time. It was a major, long-lasting venture, sadly brought to a close some twenty-odd years on. Let us not forget those behind the scenes who worked so hard - including Mag Creaan at the door and the genial Paddy Slattery himself.

The point about the Tradition Club is that it went further than anybody before as the way in which it exposed singers and musicians at the club suggests and was crucial to the setting-up of the Willie Clancy Memorial Week, offering financial aid for a start. It was a stated intention, too, for the club to subsidise young musicians and singers at such events. I believe this to be very much result of Tom's life-long adherence to socialist principles and his rise from his position as a gas-fitter - riding to work on his bike - through the ranks of various unions to the heights of being a Branch Secretary of the Federated Workers Union of Ireland (later SIPTU), a post that made severe demands on the man and his family but to which Tom was dedicated - and was a successful and respected practitioner in negotiations and in encouraging general welfare. Tom's mode of negotiation was always the seeking of a solution whereby both sides could come out of a dispute with dignity and a little something to show for their efforts.

When his illness was diagnosed as terminal it was impressive to see the way he handled it and continued to live life to the full even to attending the club on the Friday before he passed away a little over 24 hours later. Frank Harte, Tommy Munnelly and himself are surely enjoying a singing session somewhere with Tom saying "somebody should sing-----" whatever song he thought would enhance the session. I consider myself to be privileged to have known him and to have called him my friend.

Jerry O'Reilly

Redwood Francis Devine (2013)

for Tom Crean

Retort and blast, pipe threader, flarer and blow lamp,
sulphuric moustaches of coke trimmer and oily fitter,
New Union Gas Company men, led by Adolphus Shields,
Big Jim and Peter Larkin, Plunkett Kelly, Monty then Crean.

It was a deep well he threw his one half crown in
and its echo was as loud as any: tough and shrewd,
he brooked no messing from foe or friend, grasped awkward
realities, cleverly refracting suggested solutions round corners.

There were other springs he took great draughts from:
Rottingdean and Humberside, Greenland floe and crashing Capes,
raw-boned shellbacks working walrus tusk by pitching storm lamp,
jackaroos skinning kangaroos, chorusing canny comradeship.

Ennis, Potts and Kelly, Darach Ó Catháin agus Nioclás Tóibín,
delivered their traditions to Capel Street, an open university
for generations of Dubliners, himself the quiet don, spotting
the bright student, knowing when to offer the soft word.

He was comrade and friend, unknowing mentor and unaffected
leader, a hard man in a scrap who somehow knew every gap
between rock and hard place, accumulating a wide, silent respect,
expressed in the firmest of grips, grinning delight in his company.

Solid, dependable nestor, he was elected foreman of every jury,
chaired every gathering yet licked the envelopes, knocked
the un-answering doors, was beacon in the smogs of despair,
holding to a New Jerusalem in the darkest of dark nights.

At platform and table, session and sing around, a long
shadow will cast from a missing redwood, a dwarfing giant
which never sought to block light or deny seed or sapling
serving as protective, transparent canopy allowing us all grow.

Adolphus Shields was a pioneer socialist and Dublin Organiser for the National Union of Gasworkers & General Labourers in the 1880s. His sons Arthur and Will, respectively, fought in the ICA in 1916 and won an Oscar as Barry Fitzgerald.



The Press Gang

A Press Gang line up (l to r) including Tom Crean, Pat Sheridan, Sean Corcoran and Dave Smyth. The group were resident for many years in the late 60's and 70's at The Tradition Club at Slattery's of Capel Street, Dublin where Tom Cream was a prime mover. (Niall Fennell was one of the original Press gang line-up and Greg O'Handlon later stood in as replacement for Sean Corcoran)

Press Gang Songs *'Anyone hearing the Pressgang for the first time will be struck primarily by the solidity of the music. The harmonies are fitted together like finely honed and polished layers of warm stone, so that the songs come out clean and perfectly balanced, like good pieces of architecture.'* John Banville

Adieu Sweet Lovely Nancy

Here's adieu sweet lovely Nancy, ten thousand times adieu.
I am going o'er the ocean love to seek for something new.
Come change a ring with me dear girl, come change a ring with me,
That it might be a token of true love, when I am on the sea.

When I am on the sea dear girl and you know not where I am
Kind letters I will write to you from every foreign land
The secrets of your heart dear girl are the best of my goodwill
And let my body be where it might, my heart is with you still.

There's a heavy storm arising see how it gathers around

While we poor souls on the ocean wide are fighting for the crown
Our officer's commanding us and him we must obey
Expecting every moment for to be cast away.

There are tinkers, tailors and shoemakers a snoring in their sleep
While we poor boys on the ocean wide are ploughing through the deep
There's nothing to protect us love, nor keep us from the cold
On the ocean wide where we must bide like jolly sailors bold.

And when the wars are over and there's peace on every shore
We'll return to our wives and families and the girls we do adore
We'll call for liquor merrily and we'll spend our money free
And when our money it is all gone we will boldly go to sea.

The Banks of Claudy

It was on a summer's morning all in the month
of May
Down by yon flowery gardens I carelessly did
stray
I overheard a fair maid in sorrow did complain
All for her absent lover who plowed the raging
main

I boldly stepped up to her and gived her a
surprise
I knew she did not know me, for I being in
disguise
I said, "My charming creature, my heart and
joy's delight
How far do you mean to wander this dark and
dreary night?"

"Kind sir, the way to Claudy, if you will please
to show
Oh take pity on a fair maid that knows not
where to go
I am on the search of a faithless young man
and Johnny is his name
And all on the Banks of Claudy I am told he
does remain"

"This is the Banks of Claudy, fair maid, where
on you stand
But don't depend on Johnny for he's a false
young man
Oh don't depend on Johnny, for he'll not meet
you here
But tarry with me in yon greenwoods, no
danger need you fear

"Oh if Johnny, he was here this night, he'd
keep me from all harm
But he's in the field of battle all in his uniform
Since he's in the field of battle, his foes he
does defy
Like a ruling king of honor, he fought in the
war of Troy"

"It is six long weeks and better since Johnny
left the shore
He is crossing the wide ocean where the
foaming billows roar
Since he's crossing the wide ocean for honour
and for fame
But this I heard, the ship was wrecked on the
fatal coast of Spain"

Oh it's when she heard the dreadful news, she
flew into despair
With a wringing of her fingers and the taring
of her hair
Saying, "If Johnny, he is drowned, no man on
earth I'll take
But through lonesome groves and valleys I'll
wander for his sake"

Oh it's when he saw her loyalty, no longer
could he stand
He flew into her arms saying, "Betsy, I'm the
man"
Saying, "Betsy, I'm the young man, the cause
of all your pain
But since we've met on Claudy's banks, we
shall never part again"

Two Brethern

(Copper Family, Sussex)

Come all jolly ploughmen and help me to sing
I will sing in the praise of you all
If a man he don't labor, how can he get bread?
I will sing and make merry withal

It was of two young brethren, two young brethren
born
It was of two young brethren born
One he was a shepherd and a tender of sheep
The other a planter of corn

We will rile it, we will toil it through mud and
through clay
We will plough it up deeper and low
Then after comes the seedsman, his corn for to sow
And the harrows to rake it in rows

There is April, there is May, there is June and July
What a pleasure it is for to see the corn grow
In August we will reap it, we will cut, sheathe and
bind it
And go down with our scythes for to mow

And after we have reaped it of every sheaf
And gathered up every ear
With a drop of good beer, boys, and our hearts full
of cheer
We will wish them another good year

Our barns they are full, our fields they are cleared
Good health to our master and friends
We will make no more to do, but we will plough
and we'll sow
And provide for the very next year

General Taylor

Well General Taylor gained the day
Walk him along, John, carry him along
Well General Taylor he gained the day
Carry him to his bury'n ground

Tell me way, hey, you stormy
Walk him along, John, carry him along
Tel me way, hey, you stormy
Carry him to his bury'n ground

We'll dig his grave with a silver spade
Walk him along, John, carry him along
His shroud of the finest silk will be made
Carry him to his bury'n ground

Tell me way, hey, you stormy
Walk him along, John, carry him along
Tel me way, hey, you stormy
Carry him to his bury'n ground

We'll lower him down on a golden chain
Walk him along, John, carry him along
On every inch we'll carve his name
Carry him to his bury'n ground

Tell me way, hey, you stormy
Walk him along, John, carry him along
Tel me way, hey, you stormy
Carry him to his bury'n ground

Well General Taylor he's all the go
Walk him along, John, carry him along
He's gone where the stormy winds won't blow
Carry him to his bury'n ground

Tell me way, hey, you stormy
Walk him along, John, carry him along
Tel me way, hey, you stormy
Carry him to his bury'n ground

Well a point of run for every man
Walk him along, John, carry him along
And a bloody great big barrel for shanty man
Carry him to his bury'n ground

Tell me way, hey, you stormy
Walk him along, John, carry him along
Tel me way, hey, you stormy
Carry him to his bury'n ground

Tell me way, hey, you stormy
Walk him along, John, carry him along

Tel me way, hey, you stormy
Carry him to his bury'n ground

Well General Taylor is dead and he's gone
Walk him along, John, carry him along
Well General Taylor he's longed and gone
Carry him to his bury'n ground

Tell me way, hey, you stormy
Walk him along, John, carry him along
Tel me way, hey, you stormy
Carry him to his bury'n ground

Bells of Rhymney - Idris Davies

from *Gwalia Deserta* (1938)

Oh what can you give me?
Say the sad bells of Rhymney.

Is there hope for the future?
Cry the brown bells of Merthyr.

Who made the mine owner?
Say the black bells of Rhondda.

And who robbed the miner?
Cry the grim bells of Blaina.

They will plunder willy-nilly,
Say the bells of Caerphilly.

They have fangs, they have teeth!
Shout the loud bells of Neath.

To the south things are sullen,
Say the pink bells of Brecon.

Even God is uneasy,
Say the moist bells of Swansea.

Put the vandals in court!
Cry the bells of Newport.

All would be well if-if-if –
Say the green bells of Cardiff.

Why so worried, sisters, why?
Sing the silver bells of Wye.

Spencer the Rover - John Martyn

This tune was composed by Spencer the Rover
As valiant a man as ever left home
And he had been much reduced
Which caused great confusion
And that was the reason he started to roam

In Yorkshire near Rotherham, he had been on
the ramble
Weary of traveling, he sat down to rest
By the foot of yon' mountain
Lays a clear flowing fountain
With bread and cold water he himself did
refresh

With the night fast approaching, to the woods
he resorted
With woodbine and ivy his bed for to make
But he dreamt about sighing
Lamenting and crying
Go home to your family and rambling forsake

'Twas the fifth day of November, I've reason to
remember
When first he arrived home to his family and
friends
And they did stand so astounded
Surprised and dumbfounded
To see such a stranger once more in their sight

And his children come around him with their
prittle prattling stories
With their prittle prattling stories to drive care
away
And he's as happy as those
As have thousands of riches
Contented he'll remain and not ramble away

This tune was composed by Spencer the Rover
As valiant a man as ever left home
And he had been much reduced
And caused great confusion
And that was the reason he started to roam

Chase the Buffaloe

Come all you young fellows
That have a mind to range,
Into some foreign country
Your station for to change,
Into some foreign country
Away from home to go,

We lay down on the banks
Of the pleasant Ohio,
We'll wander through the wild woods
And we'll chase the buffalo.
We'll chase the buffalo
We'll wander through the wild woods
And chase the buffalo.

There are fishes in the river
That is fitting for our use,
And high and lofty sugar-canes
That yield us pleasant juice,
And all sorts of game, my boys,
Besides the buck and doe,

We lay down on the banks
Of the pleasant Ohio,
We'll wander through the wild woods
And we'll chase the buffalo.
We'll chase the buffalo
We'll wander through the wild woods
And chase the buffalo.

Come all you young maidens,
Come spin us up some yarn,
To make us some new clothing
To keep ourselves full warm,
For you can card and spin, my girls,
And we can reap and mow,

We lay down on the banks
Of the pleasant Ohio,
We'll wander through the wild woods
And we'll chase the buffalo.
We'll chase the buffalo
We'll wander through the wild woods
And chase the buffalo.

Supposing these wild Indians
By chance should come us near,
We will unite together
Our hearts all free from care,
We will march down into the town, my boys,
And give the fatal blow,

Thugamar Féin an Samhradh Linn

Thugamar féin an samhradh linn
Thugamar féin an samhradh linn
Samhradh buí ó luí na gréine
Thugamar féin an samhradh linn

Samhradh samhradh bainne na ngamhna
Thugamar féin an samhradh linn
Samhradh duilliúir thugamar an chraobh linn
Thugamar féin an samhradh linn

Bábóg na Bealtaine, maighdean an tSamhraidh
Suas gach cnoc is síos gach gleann
Cailíní maiseacha bán-gheala gléasta
Thugamar féin an samhradh linn

Thugamar féin an samhradh linn
Thugamar féin an samhradh linn
Samhradh buí o luí na gréine
Thugamar féin an samhradh linn

Hal-an Tow

Robin Hood and Little John both are gone to
the fair oh;
And we will to the greenwood go to see what
they do there oh;
And for to chase the buck and doe, oh;
And to chase the buck and doe ,with hal-an
tow, sing merry oh,
with hal-an tow sing merry, oh.

We were up as soon as day for to fetch the
summer home. oh
the summer and the May, oh, for summer is a-
come, oh;
and winter is a-gone, oh, and summer is a-
come, oh,
and winter is a-gone, oh, with halan tow sing
merry, oh,
with halan tow, sing merry, oh.

Those Frenchmen they make such a boast,
they shall eat the grey goose feather, oh,
and we will eat up all the roast in every land
where'er we go:
and we will eat up all the roast: sing halan tow,
sing merry, oh,
and we will eat up all the roast: sing halan tow,

sing merry, oh,
with halan tow, sing merry, oh.

Saint George next shall be our song, Saint
George he was a knight, oh,
of all the kings in Christendom King Georgie
is the right, oh.
In every land that e'er we go, sing halan tow
and George, oh,
in every land that e'er we go, sing halan tow
and George, oh,
sing halan tow and Georgie, oh.

Bless Aunt Mary with power and might; God
send us peace in Merry England.
pray send us peace both day and night, for
evermore in merry England oh
Pray send us peace both day and night: with
halan tow, sing merry, oh,
Pray send us peace both day and night: with
halan tow, sing merry, oh,
with halan tow, sing merry, oh.

Halan = Calends, the first day of the month
Tow = Garland

Blow the Man Down

Come all ye young fellows that follow the sea
To me weigh hey blow the man down
And pray pay attention and listen to me
Give me some time to blow the man down

I'm a deep water sailor just in from Hong
Kong
To me weigh hey blow the man down
If you'll give me some rum I'll sing you a song
Give me some time to blow the man down

T'was on a Black Baller I first spent my time
To me weigh hey blow the man down
And on that Black Baller I wasted my prime
Give me some time to blow the man down

T'is when a Black Baller's preparing for sea
To me weigh hey blow the man down
You'd split your sides laughing at the sights
that you see
Give me some time to blow the man down

With the tinkers and tailors and soldiers and all
To me weigh hey blow the man down
That ship for prime seamen onboard a Black
Ball

Give me some time to blow the man down

Tis when a Black Baller is clear of the land
To me weigh hey blow the man down
Our boatswain then gives us the word of
command

Give me some time to blow the man down

Lay aft is the cry to the break of the poop
To me weigh hey blow the man down
Or I'll help you along with the toe of my boot
Give me some time to blow the man down

Tis larboard and starboard on the deck you
will sprawl
To me weigh hey blow the man down
For Kicking Jack Williams commands the
Black Ball
Give me some time to blow the man down

Aye first it's a fist and then it's a pall
To me weigh hey blow the man down
When you ship as a sailor aboard the Black
Ball
Give me some time to blow the man down

Blow the man down bullies, blow the man
down
Give me some time to blow the man down

The Banks of the Sweet Primroses

As I walked out one midsummer morning,
To view the fields and to take the air,
Down by the banks of the sweet prim-e-roses,
There I beheld a most lovely fair.

Three long steps I stepp-ed up to her,
Not knowing her as she passed by,
I stepped up to her, thinking to view her,
She appeared to me like some virtuous bride.

I said, Fair maid, where are you going,
And what's the occasion for all your grief ?
I'll make you as happy as any Lady,
If you will grant me one small relief.

Stand off stand off you are deceitful,
You are a false deceitful man `tis plain.
'Tis you that's the cause of my grief and
sorrow
To give me comfort is all in vain.

I'll take me down to some lonesome valley,
Where no man on Earth there shall me find,
Where the pretty little small birds do change their
voices,
And every moment blows blusterous wind.

Come all young men that go a-courting,
Pray pay attention to what I say.
There is many a dark and a cloudy morning
Turns out to be a sun-shiny day.

The Cutty Wren

Oh where are you going said Milder to Moulder
Oh we may not tell you said Festel to Fose
We're off to the woods said John the Red Nose
We're off to the woods said John the Red Nose.

And what will you do there said Milder to Moulder
We'll shoot the Cutty wren said John the Red Nose.
And how will you shoot us said Milder to Moulder
With bows and with arrows said John the Red
Nose.

Oh that will not do said Milder to Moulder
Oh what will you do then said Festel to Fose
Great guns & great cannon said John the Red Nose.
Great guns & great cannon said John the Red Nose.

And how will you fetch her said Milder to Moulder
Oh we may not tell you said Festel to Fose
On four strong men's shoulders said John the Red
Nose.
On four strong men's shoulders said John the Red
Nose.

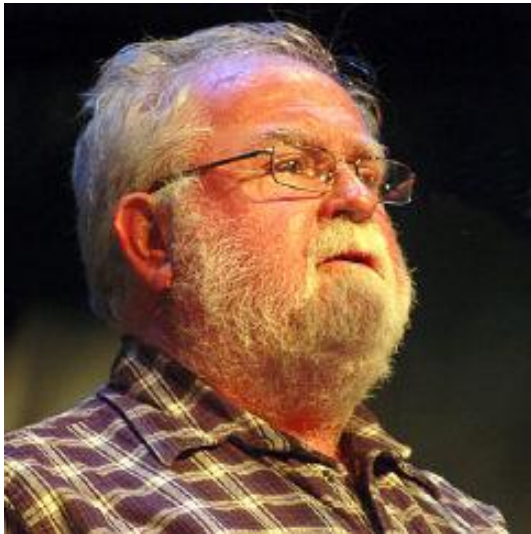
Ah that will not do said Milder to Moulder
Oh what will do then said Festel to Fose
Great carts and great wagons said John the Red
Nose.
Great carts and great wagons said John the Red
Nose.

Oh how will you cut her up said Milder to Moulder
With knives and with forks said John the Red Nose.
Oh that will not do said Milder to Moulder
Great hatchets and cleavers said John the Red
Nose.

Oh how will you boil her said Milder to Moulder
In pots and in kettles said John the Red Nose
O that will not do said Milder to Moulder
Great pans and large cauldrons said John the Red
Nose.

Oh who'll get the spare ribs said Milder to Moulder
We'll give 'em all to the poor said John the Red
Nose.

Favourite Songs Performed at An Góilín by Tom Crean



Apprentice's song – Ian Campbell

Come on, lad, and bring your tool bag
Keep your eyes peeled, use your head
Check your footprints, spanners, chisels
From now on they'll earn your bread
Keep your eye on the older fitters
They're the boys who know their stuff
One day you will do their job
If you're smart and keen enough

Come on, lads, and take your place
Among the men who serve your trade
Scalers, cokers, valvesmen, stokers
This is where the gas is made
Keep your eye on the old fairweather
Gauge your gas, you're on the town
Turn it out bang on four-fifty
Or you'll let the housewife down

Come on, mate, and mind your setting
B-range is the one to watch
Number three is due for scaling
See she don't get too much ash
Mind your eye with that red hot poker
Read your heat and see it's right
Leave your range in decent order
For the lads on shift tonight

No More Fish, No Fishermen Sheldon Posen

Out along the harbour reach
Boats stand dried up on the beach
Ghost-like in the early dawn
Empty, now the fish are gone.

What will become of people now?
Try to build a life somehow
Hard, hard times are back again
No more fish, no fishermen.

No more shoppers in the stores
Since the fish plant closed its doors
Men who walked a trawler's decks
Now line up for welfare cheques.

There's big "For Sale" signs everywhere
Pockets empty, cupboards bare
See it on the news at ten
No more fish, no fishermen.

Once from Ship Cove to Cape Race
Port aux Basques to Harbour Grace
Newfoundlanders fished for cod
Owing merchants, trusting God.

They filled their dories twice a day
They fished their poor sweet lives away
They could not imagine then
No more fish, no fishermen.

Back before the Second War
We could catch our fish inshore
Boats were small and gear was rough
We caught fish, but left enough.

And now there's no more fish because
The trawler fleets took all there was
We could see it coming then
No more fish, no fishermen.

Farewell now to stage and flake
Get out for the children's sake
Leave all friends and kin behind
Take whatever job you find.

There's some that say things aren't so black
They say the fish will all come back
Who'll be here to catch them then?
No more fish, no fishermen.

One Half Crown

Oh I took Miss McGinty unto a fancy ball;
For ticket I paid two and six, I thought that
was all
But when she shouted "Supper!" you might
have knocked me down;
For all the money in the world I had was only
half a crown.

Now the girl had a wonderful appetite for this
what she ate:
An oyster raw, a lobster claw, a turkey leg and
breast,
Ham and tongue for a girl so young; such a
cargo she put down;
I fell on the floor when she asked for more; I'd
just the one half crown.

To me it was a settler, I was but a silly lad,
When she said she would like to have a drink
as her appetite was bad
And underneath her overcoat, she must have
had a tank
Or a second handed brewery for this is what
she drank.

A bottle of Bass and a good stiff glass of
brandy to begin
And she drunk a lot o' whiskey hot and a dose
of rum and gin
Guinness's stout she poured about, a hogshead
halfway down
I fell on the floor when she asked for more, I'd
just the one half crown.

Hey the people stared and the waiter glared to
see her shift such stuff
When she says "Ochone, oh take me home, I
think I've had enough."
I reached the waiter my half crown, says "I'll
be owing you the rest"
When he altered the size of my two eyes and
jumped upon my chest.

He gave me a kick in the small of the back and
he shook me into fits
He tore my clothes and broke my nose,
smashed me up in bits
I was hammered and licked and bruised and
kicked and chased all round the town
I was all swelled up like a poisoned pup and I
lost my good half crown.

See! The Smoking Bowl Before Us

Written by Robert Burns in 1875

See! the smoking bowl before us
Mark our jovial ragged ring!
Round and round take up the chorus
And in raptures let us sing

Chorus

A fig for those who are law protected!
Liberty's a glorious feast!
Courts for cowards were erected
Churches built to please the priest

What is title? what is treasure?
What is reputation's care?
If we lead a life of pleasure
'Tis no matter how or where!
A fig, etc.

With the ready trick and fable
Round we wander all the day
And at night, in barn or stable
Hug our doxies on the hay
A fig, etc.

Does the train-attended carriage
Through the country lighter rove?
Does the sober bed of marriage
Witness brighter scenes of love?
A fig, etc.

Life is all a variorum
We regard not how it goes
Let them cant about decorum
Who have characters to lose!
A fig, etc.

Here's to budgets, bags, and wallets!
Here's to all the wandering train!
Here's our ragged brats and callets!
One and all cry out - Amen!
A fig etc.

Rambling Irishman

I am a rambling Irishman
In Ulster I was born in.
And many's the happy hour I spent
On the banks of sweet Loch Erne
But to live poor I could not endure
Like others of my station.
For Amerikay I sailed away
And left this Irish nation.

chorus: Right tan tin-a-na, tan tin-a-na,
Right tan tin-a-noor in , a nandy

The day before I went away,
I spent it with my darling.
From three o'clock in the afternoon
Till the break of day next morning
But when that we were going to part
We linked in each other's arms.
You may be sure and very sure
It wounded both our charms.

The very first night I slept on board
I dreamt about my Nancy
I dreamt I held her in my arms
And well she pleased my fancy
But when I woke up from my dreams
And found my bosom empty
You may be sure and very sure
That I lay discontented

And when we reached the other side
We were both stout and healthy
We dropped the anchor in the bay
Going down to Philadelphia
So let every lass drink to her lad
Blue jacket and white trousers
And let every lad drink to his lass
Blue petticoat and white flounces

Chorus twice

The Banks o' Doon Robert Burns. 1759–1796

Ye banks and braes o' bonie Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair?
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae fu' o' care!
Thou'll break my heart, thou warbling bird,
That wantons thro' the flowering thorn!
Thou minds me o' departing joys
Departed never to return..

Aft hae I rov'd by bonie Doon,
To see the rose and woodbine twine;

And ilka bird sang o' it's love
And fondly sae did I o' mine.
Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose
Fu' sweet upon its thorny tree;
But my fause luvver staw my rose-
But ah! he left the thorn wi' me.

Is There for Honest Poverty

Robert Burns. 1759–1796

Is there for honest poverty
That hangs his head, an' a' that
The coward slave, we pass him by
We dare be poor for a' that
For a' that, an' a' that
The rank is but the guinea's stamp
The man's the gowd for a' that

What though on hamely fare we dine
Wear hoddin grey, an' a' that
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine
A man's a man, for a' that
For a' that, an' a' that
Their tinsel show an' a' that
The honest man, though e'er sae poor
Is king o' men for a' that

Ye see yon birkie ca'd a lord
Wha struts an' stares an' a' that
Tho' hundreds worship at his word
He's but a coof for a' that
For a' that, an' a' that
The man o' independent mind
He looks an' laughs at a' that

A prince can mak' a belted knight
A marquise, duke, an' a' that
But an honest man's aboon his might
Gude faith, he maunna fa' that
For a' that an' a' that
Their dignities an' a' that
The pith o' sense an' pride o' worth
Are higher rank than a' that

Then let us pray that come it may
(as come it will for a' that)
That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth
Shall bear the gree an' a' that
For a' that an' a' that
It's coming yet for a' that
That man to man, the world o'er
Shall brithers be for a' that



Loves Old Sweet Song

words by G. Clifton Bingham - alluded to in James Joyce's *Ulysses*

Once in the dear dead days beyond recall
When on the world the mists began to fall
Out of the dreams that rose in happy throng
Low to our hearts love sung an old sweet song
And in the dusk where fell the firelight gleam
Softly it wove itself into our dream

Just a song at twilight, when the lights are low
And the flickering shadows softly come and go
Though the heart be weary sad the day and long
Still to us at twilight comes love's old song
Comes love's own sweet song

Even today we hear love's song of yore
Deep in our hearts it dwells forevermore
Footsteps may falter, weary grow the way
Still we can hear it at the close of day
So till the end, when life's dim shadows fall
Love will be found the sweetest song of all

Just a song at twilight, when the lights are low
And the flickering shadows softly come & go
Though the heart be weary sad the day & long
Still to us at twilight comes love's old song
Comes love's own sweet song

We're Only Here For Exploration

Paul Lenihan

Back home I courted Biddy O'Neil, the pride
of Ballinasloe
I had the Irish toothache, but Biddy answered
no
'The man I let', said Biddy, 'must have a bit of
go
And I hear they're payin' well for exploration'

Chorus
It's the spirit of adventure and the longing for
to roam
That makes so many Irishmen to leave their
native home
Some say it's for the want of work that we are
on the roam
Sure, we're only over here for exploration

I went upon safari and I came to Camden
Town
I share a room for 30 bob where I lay me body
down
With 7 other Irish gentlemen searching for
renown
And the landlord cries, 'Hurrah for
exploration'

There's explorers here from other lands
arriving every day
Smoked Irishmen from Trinidad and Paddies
from Bombay
They're all true sons of Erin for I've often
heard it say (sic)
That they're only over here for exploration

If you think that Ireland's short of work, you'd
better change your mind
We have vacancies for clergymen and barmen
all the time
We have Japanese and Germans, they're
workin' overtime
Singin', Irelande, Mother Irelande, uber alles

And in school they taught us history, the
English they were cruel
We never let them get on top for freedom was
our rule
And here's to De Valera, the man who saw us
through
And left Paddy to get on with exploration

The Weary Whaling Grounds

If I had the wings of a gull, me boys,
I would spread 'em and fly home.
I'd leave old Greenland's icy grounds
For of right whales there is none.

And the weather's rough and the winds do
blow
And there's little comfort her.
I'd sooner be snug in a Deptford pub,
A-drinkin' of strong beer.

Oh, a man must be mad or want money bad
To venture catchin' whales.
For we may be drowned when the fish turns
around
Or our head be smashed by his tail.

Though the work seems grand to the young
green hand,
And his heart is high when he goes,
In a very short burst he'd as soon hear a curse
As the cry of: "There she blows!"

"All hands on deck now, for God's sake,
Move briskly if you can."
And he stumbles on deck, so dizzy and sick;
For his life he don't give a damn.

And high overhead the great flukes spread,
And the mate gives the whale the iron,
And soon the blood in a purple flood
From the spout-hole comes a-flying!

Well, these trials we bear for night four year,
Till the flying jib points for home.
We're supposed for our toil to get a bonus of
the oil,
And an equal share of the bone.

But we go to the agent to settle for the trip,
And we've find we've cause to repent.
For we've slaved away four years of our life
And earned about three pound ten.

Biddy Mulligan - The Pride of the Coombe

by W.S. North for the Gaiety Theatre
Pantomime *Taladoin* in 1889

I'm a buxom fine widow, I live in a spot
In Dublin, they call it the Coombe.
Me shops & me stalls are laid out on the street,
And me palace consists of one room.
I sell apples and oranges, nuts and sweet peas,
Bananas and sugar stick sweet.
On a Saturday night I sell second-hand clothes,
From the floor of me stall in the street.

Chorus: You may travel from Clare to the
county Kildare
From Francis Street back to the Coombe;
But where would you see a fine widow like
me?
Biddy Mulligan the pride of the Coombe, me
boys,
Biddy Mulligan the pride of the Coombe.

I sell fish on a Friday, spread out on a board;
The finest you'll find in the sea.
But the best is my herrings, fine Dublin Bay
herrings,
There's herrings for dinner and tea.
I have a son, Mick, he's great on the flute,
He plays in the Longford Street band;
It would do your heart good for to see him
march out
On a Sunday for Dollymount Strand.

In the park, on a Sunday, I make quite a dash;
The neighbors look on in surprise.
With my Aberdeen shawlie thrown over my
head,
I dazzle the sight of their eyes.
At Patrick Street corner, for sixty-four years,
I've stood, and no one can deny
That while I stood there, nobody could dare
To say black was the white of my eye

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