

Lyrics and tunings for the songs on the 'Traces' CD

The Bold 'Princess Royal'

On the 14th of February we sailed from the land,
on the bold Princess Royal, bound for Newfoundland.
With forty brave seamen in our ship's company.
From the eastwards to the westwards and so sailed we.

And on the 18th of February so fair blew the sky.
When a man from our masthead a sail he did spy.
It come bearing down upon us just to see what we were
and under its mizzen peak black colours it wore.

Well "Good lord!" cries our captain "what shall we do now?
For here comes a bold pirate to rob us I know."
"Oh no" cries our chief mate, "that never shall be so.
For we will shake out our reef my boys and from her we will go."

Well in time this bold pirate, he hove alongside.
Through a loud speaking trumpet "Whence come you?" he cried.
Our captain being aft me boys he answered him so.
"We are come from fair London and are bound for Callyo."

"Then back your main topsail and heave your ship to
because I've got some letters I want to send home with you."
"Alright I'll back my main topsail and I'll heave my ship to.
But it'll be in some harbour, not alongside of you."

Well they chased us to the windward. They chased us all that day.
They chased us to the windward but they could not make way.
And so they fired shots after us but none could prevail.
And the Bold Princess Royal soon showed them her tail.

Oh "Thank God!" cries our captain, "now the pirates are gone.
Go you down to your grog boys, go down everyone.
Go you down to your grog me boys and be of a good cheer.
For while we've got sea room brave boys never fear.
Go you down to your grog me boys and be of a good cheer.
For while we've got sea room brave boys never fear."

Arthur McBride

Well I once knew a fellow named Arthur McBride
and his pleasure was walking down by the seaside.
Walking and talking and viewing the tide
and the weather was pleasant and charming.

So gay and so gallant we went on our tramp
'til we met Sergeant Harper and Corporal Cramp
and the bonny little drummer boy who roused up the camp
with his rowdy dow dow in the morning.

"Good day me fine fellows" the sergeant he cried.
"And the same to you Sergeant" my mate he replied.
Then no more was said and we made to pass by
and continue our walk in the morning.

"I say my fine fellows if you would enlist,
ten guineas in gold I would slap in your fist
and a crown in the bargain to kick up the dust
and drink the king's health in the morning."

"Oh no my dear Sergeant we are not for sale.
Though we're fond of our country your bribe's no avail.
Though we're fond of our country we are not for sale.
We are the boys of the morning."

"And if we were such fools as to take your advance,
it's right bloody slender would be our poor chance.
For the king wouldn't scruple to send us to France
and get us all killed in the morning."

"And you needn't go bragging about your fine pay,
as you go a-drilling and marching away,
for all that you get is a shilling a day
and that isn't much in the morning."

"Well if you would insult me, without any word,
I swear by my king, I would draw my broadsword
and run through your bodies as strength me affords.
Then you would breathe out the morning.

We beat that little drummer boy as flat as a shoe
and we made a football of his rowdy dow do.
The corporal and sergeant we knocked out for two
Yes we were the boys in that morning.

And as for the weapons that hung by their side,
well we flung them as far as we could in the tide
and "The devil go with you" said Arthur McBride,
"for spoiling our walk in the morning."

When a man's in love

When a man's in love he feels no cold, like me not long ago.
Like a hero bold, to see his girl, he'll plough through frost and snow.
The moon she gently shed her light along my dreary way.
Until I came to that sweet spot where all my treasure lay.

I knocked at my love's window saying "My dear are you within."
And softly she undid the latch and slyly I slipped in.
Her hand was soft and her breath was sweet, her tongue did gently glide.
I stole a kiss, it was no miss and I asked her to be my bride.

"And take me to your chamber love. Take me to your bed.
Take me to your chamber love, to rest my weary head."
"To take you to my chamber love, my parents they won't agree,
but sit you down by yon bright fire and I will sit close by thee."

"Many's the time I've courted you against your father's will,
but you never once said that you would be my bride, so now my dear sit still.
Tonight I am going to cross the sea to far Columbia's shore
and you will never, never see your youthful lover more."

"And many's the dark and stormy night I came to visit you.
Whether tossed about by cold winter winds or wet by the morning dew.
Tonight our courtship is at an end, between my love and me.
So fare the well my favourite girl, a long farewell to thee."

"And are you going to leave me now, pray what can I do?
I would break through every bond of love to go along with you.
Perhaps my parents won't forget, but maybe they will forgive.
For from this hour I am resolved along with you to live."

Jack Barleycorn

Jack Barleycorn was an Indian weed
and the farmer he lived close by.
He made a vow and a solemn vow,
Jack Barleycorn should die.
Aye poor boy, Jack Barleycorn should die.

They let him lay for a shower of rain.
A shower of rain did fall.
Jack Barleycorn jumped out of the ground
and he so surprised them all.
Aye poor boy, he so surprised them all.

And they let him lay 'til the mid-summer,
to wrangle out tall and thin.
And then Jack Barleycorn grew a long beard
and he so became a man.
Aye poor boy, he so became a man.

They hired men with scythes all in,
to cut him at his ease.
And this they served Jack Barleycorn.
They cut him below his knees.
Aye poor boy, they cut him below his knees.

And they drove him up and down the field.
They thought it would do him no harm.
And then they took Jack Barleycorn
and put him into a barn.
Aye poor boy, they put him into a barn.

And they hired men with cudgels too
and they laid him upon a stone.
Swish swosh the cudgels flew
and the flesh flew from his bones.
Aye poor boy, the flesh flew from his bones.

And then they put him into a sack
and they tied it up with a string.
But the miller he served him worst of the lot,
for he ground him between two stones.
Aye poor boy, he ground him between two stones.

And then they put him into a kiln
and they thought about roasting him there.
But Jack Barleycorn jumped out of the tub
and he soon became strong beer.
Aye poor boy, he soon became strong beer.

You can put wine into a glass
and you can put cider into a can.
But old Jack Barleycorn in a brown jug
'll prove out the strongest one.
Aye poor boy, he'll prove out the strongest one.

So let anybody be strong as they will.
As I've oft' told you before,
if you take too much of Jack Barleycorn
he'll put you onto the floor.
Aye poor boy, he'll put you onto the floor

The Flower of Serving Men

My father built me a shady bower
and he covered it over with shamrock flowers.
The finest bower I ever did see,
my aged father he built for me.

My father married me to a noble knight
and my mother she owed to me a dreadful spite.
She sent nine robbers all in one night,
to rob my bower and to slay my knight.

How could she have done me a bigger harm
than to murder my babies all in my arms.
Left nothing at all for to wrap them in,
but the bloody sheets that my love died in.

All alone, all alone then I will wash them.
All alone, all alone I will bury them.
Cut off my hair and I'll change my name
from fair Eleanor to sweet William.

I'll saddle my horse and away I will ride,
until I come to where some king do reside.
To one of his servants give a gay gold ring
to carry a message to the king.

"Do you want any cook or groom
and do you want e'er a stableman.
Do you want a man servant in your hall,
to wait on nobles when they do call."

"Well we don't want any cook or groom
and we don't want e'er a stableman.
But we wants a man servant in our hall,
to wait on nobles when they do call."

Well it's not long after it happened so,
that the young king and his nobles did a hunting go.
Left no one at all but a gay old man,
to keep company with sweet William.

When she thought she was all alone,
she took out her fiddle and she played a fine tune.
"Once my love was a rich and noble knight
and me myself was a lady bright."

Well it's not long after the king come home.
"What news, what news, Oh me gay old man"
"Good news, good news, Oh my lord" said he.
"Your serving man is a gay lady."

"Well go and fetch me down then a pair of stays,
That I might lace up her slender waist.
Go fetch me down that gay gown of green,
that I might dress her up just like my queen."

"Oh no, Oh no, Oh my lord" said she
"Pay me my wages and I will go free.
For I never heard tell of a stranger thing
as a serving man to become a queen."

Barney's Epic Homer

When Barney was at school they said he'd never make the grade.
He was living in a kipper coloured dream.
Barney ought to learn to concentrate his teachers used to say,
as he drifted in the bottom bottom stream.
 Barney was waster, got no bits of paper.
 Ended up attending a machine,
 turning little piggies into plastic packaged sausages,
 to sell in the heliport canteen.

Barney seemed to lack ambition, didn't hear tomorrow call,
didn't want the overtime for extra pay.
He just left his limbs to labour as he donned his uniform
and his mind was floating freely far away.
 Press turn screw lift, early shift and late shift.
 Always the same routine.
 Turning little piggies into plastic packaged sausages,
 to sell in the heliport canteen.

It was on one summer's evening Barney crossed from work to home
with a tube of twisted metal that he'd found
and he stuck it in the garden like a broken totem pole
and he planted piles of pebbles all around.
 "That boy's no use, must have a screw loose,
 Thinks his bit of metal's gonna grow."
 Barney felt the silence in his head begin to melt
 and in his heart a spark of laughter seemed to glow.

Barney's game became a passion. All the free time that he had,
he was in the garden marking out a space.

Piecing things together with devotion in his hands
and a sweet seraphic smile on his face.

Mother says "You can't, No!" Father says "You can't, No!

Littering our little bit of lawn.

What are we going to do with him? Why can't he be normal?

He's been trouble since the day that he was born."

And every day he brought home something. He was nicking things from work.

Picking up what other people threw away.

Cans and kettles, boots and bottles,

All the refuse of the earth he assembled in a giant junk display.

Copper wire, car tyres, plastic pots and broken mops,

Worn out wheels and one old water tank.

What a silly game to play, what a waste of effort .

He'd do better if he went and robbed a bank.

Now look at Barney's weird contraption, high on iron girder legs,
reaching steel and tin can feelers to the sky.

As it wobbles in the breezes its belisha beacon heads

seem to nod and wink at all the passers by.

Every day he'd do a bit.

Every day it grew a bit, sprouting like a jungle in the rain.

And the neighbours watched in horror as his multi coloured monster

escaped from his loony bin brain.

But Barney's work began to waiver. He was failing his machine.

The foreman said he wasn't giving of his best.

And so the job enrichment expert analysed his working speed

and devised a scheme to give him added zest.

It was press turn screw lift, press turn screw lift, early shift and late shift.

Always the same routine,

but turning twice as many piggies into plastic packaged sausages

to sell in the heliport canteen.

And Barney's folly neighed the neighbours was disfiguring the street,
and there was baying from the purity crusade.

And the careful ants informed him that the bye laws had been breached,

while the blow flies buzzed round every move he made.

Watch out Barney! Special Branch are after you.

Got you fully photographed and filed.

Officialdom is closing in. Oblivious of everything,

Barney builds as happy as a child.

Well it was on one winter's morning, Barney worked the early shift,
when inspectors came with agents of the law.

They dismantled Barney's monster. Dumped it on the council tip.

Left the garden neat and tidy as before.

Home comes Barney, can't believe his eyes to see space

where his creation once held sway.

Shadows seem to fall on him, silence seems to swallow him.

Frightened Barney turns and runs away.

Now they say that Barney scavenges the scrap heaps of the town.
Doesn't answer to his name and no one knows
why he wants to throw his life away just wandering around,
making crazy patterns everywhere he goes.

And still it's press turn screw lift, early shift and late shift, always the same routine,
turning little piggies into plastic packaged sausages
to sell in the heliport canteen.

And it's press turn screw lift, press turn screw lift, early shift and late shift,
other hands are working his machine
and turning twice as many piggies into plastic packaged sausages
to sell in the heliport canteen and no one knows,
why he wants to throw his life away, just wandering around,
making crazy patterns everywhere he goes.

The Coast of Peru

Come all you young fellows that's bound after sperm.
Come all you bold seamen that has rounded the Horn.
Our Captain have told us and we hope he say true,
that there's plenty of sperm whale on the coast of Peru.

Well we weathered the Horn and we are now off of Peru
and we're all of one mind to endeavour to do.
Our boats they're all ready and the masthead is all manned.
Our rigging rove light my boys and the signal's all planned.

Well 'twas early one morning, we heard the brave shout.
As the man in the lookout cries out "There she spout."
"Where away" says our Captain "and where do she lay?"
"Two points to our lee bow, scarce a mile away."

"Well it's call up all hands my boys and be of a good cheer.
Put your tubs in your boats and have your bowlines all clear.
Sway up on them ropes. Now jump in my brave crew.
Lower away now and after her. Try the best you can do."

Well the waist boat run down and of course got the start.
"Lay on" says the harpooner "for I am hell for the long dart.
Now bend on them oars boys and make your boat fly,
But one thing we dread of, keep clear of his eye."

Well the first iron struck and the whale he went down,
but as he come up again our Captain he bent on.
And the next harpoon struck and the line sped away,
but one thing that whale done, he give us fair play.

Well he raced and he sounded and he twist and he spin,
but we fought him alongside and we got our lance in,
which caused him to vomit and the blood for to spout
and in ten minutes time my boys he'd rolled both fins out.

And then we hauled him alongside with many a shout
and we soon cut him and begun to try out.
Now the blubber is rendered and likewise stowed down
and it's better to us my boys than five hundred pound.

And now we're bound into Tumbez in our manly power.
Where a man buys a whore house for a barrel of flour.
And we will spend all our money on them Spanish girls ashore
and when it's all gone my boys, we'll go whaling for more...and more.

The Fowler

Come all you young fellows that follows the gun.
I would have you come home by the light of the sun.
For young Jimmy was a fowler who went fowling all alone
and he shot his own true love, by mistake, for a swan.

And then it's home come young Jimmy with his dog and his gun.
Crying "Uncle dear Uncle do you know what I have done?
Oh cursed be that gun smith who has made me my gun,
for I've been and shot my true love. I mistook her for a swan."

Then out come his uncle with his locks hanging grey.
Saying "Jimmy, dear Jimmy don't you run away.
Don't you leave your own country until your trial it comes on,
for you never will be hanged for the shooting of a swan."

All the girls in this country they're all pleased you know.
Just to see pretty Polly down a-lying so low.
You could stand them all on a mountain. You could put them all in a row
and her beauty would shine among them just like a fountain of snow.

Then the trial it come on and pretty Polly did appear,
saying "Uncle, dear Uncle let young Jimmy go clear.
With my apron thrown over me, he mistook me for swan
and he shot his own true love. It was Polly his own.
With my apron thrown over me, he mistook me for a swan
and he shot his own true love. It was Polly his own."

The Ranter

It's of a sly ranting parson, for preaching he lived in great fame.
In the town of Roper did dwell, though I dare not to mention his name.
Likewise a jolly young farmer, a neighbour living close by.
Soon on the wife of the farmer the Ranter he cast a quick eye.

While the farmer was minding his business and rose with the lark in the morning,
the Ranter was forming a plan to crown the young farmer with thorns.
And he off to the farmers did go, to pray the good of his soul.
But when you have heard of the joke, I'll warrant you'll say it was droll.

The Ranter if you had but seen you would think he was free from all evil.
As pure as snow driven without, within was as black as the devil.
One day when the farmer was out he said "I will have my desire."
And straight to the house he did go and he sat himself down by the fire.

He said "My good woman I'm told that your husband won't be home tonight.
I value not silver or gold if I could but enjoy my delight."
Then she replied with a smile "My husband is gone for a week."
And little the Ranter did think how she meant to play him a trick.

When all things were silent at night, she whispered these words in his ear.
"The best bed it stands in the parlour and you must go to it my dear.
When you are safe up to bed my dear, I will come with all speed."
"All right" said the Ranter "make haste" and so was the bargain agreed.

The Ranter got into bed and he lay there as snug as you please.
And the lady went into the garden and fetched back a fine hive of bees.
She carried them into the parlour and put'em down slap on the floor.
So nimbly then she ran out and on him she locked the door.

And the bees began buzzing about and the Ranter he jumped on the floor.
So sweetly he capered and danced as they stung him behind and before.
And then he got out of the window, since no other way could he find.
His clothes he n'er stopped for to take, but was glad for to leave them behind.

All smarting and sore with the stings, he ran home to his wife in his shirt.
Such a figure of fun for to see, all besmeared with mud and with dirt.
And the farmer come home the next morning and after the truth had been told
in one of the Ranter's side pockets found thirty bright guineas in gold.

And the Ranter got into disgrace and the farmer he laughed at the joke,
to think how the Ranter would look without trousers, waistcoat or cloak.
The Ranter he frets and he pines, all for the loss of his money.
The farmer though he lost his bees, thinks he is well paid for his honey.

The Flying Cloud

My name is William Hollander as you shall understand
I was born in the county of Waterford in Erin's lovely land.
When I was sixteen years of age, a beauty upon me shone
and I was my parents pride and joy, I being their only son.

My father bound me to a trade in Waterford's fair town.
He bound me to a butcher there by the name of Billy Brown.
And I wore the bloody apron for three long years or more,
until I shipped on board the Ocean Queen, belonging to Tremore.

When we arrived at Bermuda's Isle I met with Captain Moore,
the commander of the Flying Cloud from out of Baltimore.
And he asked me if I'd sail with him on a slaving voyage to go,
to the balmy shores of Africa where the sugar cane do grow.

All went well 'til we arrived off Africa's burning shores.
Where five hundred of those poor slaves from their native homes we tore.
We chained them up together and we forced them down below,
where scarce eighteen inches to a man was all they had to show.

And then the plague and the fever came on board and took half of them away
We dragged their bodies up on deck and we flung them in the seas.
You know I thought it might have been better for the rest of them if they had died as well,
not to wear the chains nor to feel the lash in Cuba for ever more.

Well it is now our money is all gone and we must sail again.
Captain Moore come up on deck and he said unto us men
"There is gold and silver to be had if with me you'll remain.
We will hoist the pirate flag aloft and go scour the Spanish Main."

All agreed but three young men, so we put them on the shore.
Two of them were Boston boys and the third came from Baltimore.
Now I wish to God I'd joined those men, when they were set on shore,
but I chose a wild and a reckless life, serving under Captain Moore.

Well we robbed and we plundered many's the ship down on the Spanish Main.
Causing many's the widow and orphan in sorrow to remain.
But to the crews we showed no quarter. We gave them a watery grave.
For the saying of our Captain is that dead men tell no tails.

Pursued we were by many's the ship, by frigate and liner too.
Until at length a man o' war the Dungeness hove in view.
We fought 'til Captain Moore was slain and twenty of our men.
But then a chain shot tore our main mast down and we were forced to surrender then.

So it is now in Newgate Gaol I lie, bound down in iron chains,
for robbing and a plundering ships down on the Spanish Main.
The judge he found us guilty. Now I am condemned to die.
Young men a warning by me take and lead not such a life as I.

So it's fare thee well to Waterford and the girls that I adored.
I'll never kiss your ruby lips nor squeeze your hands no more.
For it is drinking and bad company that have made a wretch of me.
Young men a warning by me take and shun all piracy.

Flying High, Flying Free

The red sun is sinking and the sky is on fire.
Swallows line up on the telegraph wire.
I think they've decided it's time to be gone.
For the days are now shrinking. The summer's moved on.

Chorus

Swallow, swallow I wish I could follow you,
over the deserts, the mountains, the seas.
South to the colours and sunshine of Africa.
Flying high, flying free.

Swallow I don't understand how you know
how far you will fly to and which way you will go.
Resting at night time and flying by day,
with no map or compass to show you the way.

And I wish you could stay here the whole winter through,
just as the robins and chaffinches do.
But I know that you can't for when frost grips the year,
the insects you feed on will all disappear.

Chorus

Butterfly, dragonfly, salmon and seal,
whale and reindeer, cuckoo and eel,
each of them doing the migration dance
and I'd do it too if they'd give me the chance.

Clock in the kitchen and clock in the hall,
clock on the mantle piece and clock on the wall,
tocking and ticking me off when I'm late,
but no clock to tell me it's time to migrate.

Chorus

And I'll miss your forked tails as you swoop through the air.
Your nests will be empty that you built with such care.
But I know you'll return as you have done before
and your nests will be filled with your young ones once more.

So when winter departs with his mantle of snow
and the plum tree's in blossom and the days start to grow.
When the summer sun rises and the sky is on fire.
I will see you again on that telegraph wire.

Chorus

Raggle Taggle Gypsies

Three gypsies stood at the castle gate.
They sang so high and they sang so low.
And the lady sits in her chamber late
and her heart it melted away as snow.

They sang so sweet and they sang so clear
that fast her tears began to flow.
And then she's laid aside her silken gown
to go with the raggle taggle gypsies.

And then she's took off her high heeled shoes,
made of Spanish leather
and around her shoulders a blanket she threw,
to go with the raggle taggle gypsies.

It was late that night when her lord come home
enquiring for his lady.
Then the servant girl gave this reply,
"Oh, she's gone with the raggle taggle gypsies."

"Then saddle to me my milk white steed.
Bridle me my pony,
that I may ride to seek my bride
who's gone with the raggle taggle gypsies."

Then he's rode high and he's rode low.
He rode through woods and copses,
until he came to the far green fields.
Oh and there he spied his lady.

"What makes you leave your houses and land?
What makes you leave your money?
What makes you leave your new wedded lord?
To go with the raggle taggle gypsies."

“Oh what care I for houses and land ?
What care I for money?
What care I for my new wedded lord?
I'll go with the raggle taggle gypsies.”

“Oh but last night you slept in a goose feather bed
with the sheets turned down so bravely.
Now tonight you will lie in the cold open fields,
all along with the raggle taggle gypsies.”

“But what care I for a goose feather bed
with the sheets turned down so bravely,
for tonight I will lie in the wide open fields
along with the raggle taggle gypsies.”