

# Singing the Child Ballads

Rosaleen Gregory

These four Child ballads are all found in Volume V of *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*.

We're on the home stretch, although there will be a few extra variants and new ballads I've learned since all this began back in Spring 2005 (enough for two more issues anyway). After that...we could always do non-Child ballads...

As for this batch...

## Child #274: "Our Goodman"

Guitar accompaniment.

Not my all-time favourite, but I guess everyone has to have some version of this ubiquitous ballad. I picked my text from *Scottish Ballads*, edited by Emily Lyle, Barnes & Noble Inc., 1994.

It really is quite funny (I think) and goes remarkably well with the tune and chords of another version, "A Little Before me Time", found in *Songs of England, Ireland and Scotland (A Bonnie Bunch of Roses)*, Dan Milner and Paul Kaplan, Oak Publications, 1983.

The *Scottish Ballads* version is Child's version A, from Herd's MSS.

## Child #279: "The Jolly Beggar"

Guitar accompaniment.

My version comes from Stephen Sedley's *The Seeds of Love* (Essex Music Limited, in association with the English Folk Dance and Song Society, 1967), where

it is called "The Beggar Man". Child mentions it in his Appendix to "The Jolly Beggar" and calls it "The Gaberlunzie-Man", "printed in the first volume of (Allan) Ramsay's *Tea-Table Miscellany*, 1724".

Stephen Sedley's composite text is collated from Ramsay, Child and oral versions collected by Greig and Ord. I learned it quite recently when I decided to find a few more cheerful ballads to balance the usual run of gloom and doom...

## Child #286: "The Sweet Trinity" ("The Golden Vanity")

Guitar accompaniment.

Another (fine) old chestnut that it's hard to avoid. I've known my version since at least 1959 when I found it in the *Burl Ives Songbook*, Ballantine Books, 1953. Here it is introduced as "an early ballad first printed as 'Sir Walter Raleigh Sailing in the Lowlands.'" In verse 6 I've changed the "port side" to the "starboard side" because it scans a lot better!

## Child #293: "John of Hazelgreen"

*A cappella*.

My version is an Irish one found in *A Bonnie Bunch of Roses*, where its source is said to be Daithi Sproule, after the Donegal singer Packie Manus Byrne. The original ballad is, however, Scottish. Another song with a happy ending, and a beautiful tune.

## Our Goodman

Hame came our goodman,  
And hame came he,  
And there he saw a saddle-horse  
Where nae horse should be.

"What's this now, goodwife?  
What's this I see?"

How came this horse here,  
Without the leave of me?"

*Recitative*. "A horse?" quoth she.  
"Ay, a horse," quoth he.

"Shame fa your cuckold face,  
Ill mat ye see!

'Tis naething but a broad sow,<sup>1</sup>  
My minnie sent to me".

"A broad sow?" quoth he.  
"Ay, a sow," quoth she.

"Far hae I ridden,  
And farther hae I gane,  
But a saddle on a sow's back  
I never did see nane".

Hame came our goodman,  
And hame came he;  
He spy'd a pair of jack-boots,  
Where nae boots should be.

“What’s this now, goodwife?  
What’s this I see?  
How came these boots here,  
Without the leave of me?”

“Boots?” quoth she.  
“Ay, boots,” quoth he.

“Shame fa your cuckold face,  
And ill mat ye see!  
It’s but a pair of water-stoups,<sup>2</sup>  
My minnie sent to me.”

“Water-stoups?” quoth he.  
“Ay, water-stoups,” quoth she.

“Far hae I ridden,  
And farther hae I gane,  
But silver spurs on water-stoups  
I never did see nane.”

Hame came our goodman,  
And hame came he,  
And he saw a sword,  
Where a sword shouldna be.

“What’s this now, goodwife?  
What’s this I see?  
How came this sword here,  
Without the leave of me?”

“A sword?” quoth she.  
“Ay, a sword,” quoth he.

“Shame fa your cuckold face,  
Ill mat ye see!  
It’s but a porridge-spurtle,<sup>3</sup>  
My minnie sent to me.”

“A spurtle?” quoth he.  
“Ay, a spurtle,” quoth she.

“Far hae I ridden,  
And farther hae I gane,  
But silver-handled spurtles

I never did see nane.”

Hame came our goodman,  
And hame came he;  
There he spy'd a powderd wig,  
Where nae wig should be.

“What’s this now, goodwife?  
What’s this I see?  
How came this wig here,  
Without the leave of me?”

“A wig?” quoth she.  
“Ay, a wig,” quoth he.

“Shame fa your cuckold face,  
And ill mat ye see!  
'Tis naething but a clocken-hen,<sup>4</sup>  
My minnie sent to me.”

“Clocken-hen?” quoth he.  
“Ay, clocken- hen,” quoth she.

“Far hae I ridden,  
And farther hae I gane,  
But powder on a clocken- hen  
I never did see nane.”

Hame came our goodman,  
And hame came he,  
And there he saw a muckle coat,  
Where nae coat should be.

“What’s this now, goodwife?  
What’s this I see?  
How came this coat here,  
Without the leave of me?”

“A coat?” quoth she.  
“Ay, a coat,” quoth he.

“Shame fa your cuckold face,  
Ill mat ye see!  
It’s but a pair of blankets,  
My minnie sent to me.”

“Far hae I ridden,  
And farther hae I gane,  
But buttons upon blankets  
I never did see nane.”

Ben<sup>5</sup> went our goodman,

And ben went he,  
And there he spy'd a sturdy man,  
Where nae man should be.

“What’s this now, goodwife?  
What’s this I see?  
How came this man here,  
Without the leave of me?”

“A man?” quoth she.  
“Ay, a man,” quoth he.

“Poor blind body,  
And blinder may ye be!  
It’s naething but a milking-maid,  
My mither sent to me.”

“A maid?” quoth he.  
“Ay, a maid,” quoth she.

“Far hae I ridden,  
And farther hae I gane,  
But lang-bearded maidens  
I never did see nane.”

## Notes

1. A sow with a litter
2. Water-jugs
3. A stick for stirring porridge
4. A sitting hen
5. To the inner room

# Our Goodman



LISTEN

[www.canfolkmusic.ca/songs/issue42\\_3/Our\\_Goodman.mp3](http://www.canfolkmusic.ca/songs/issue42_3/Our_Goodman.mp3)

Anon

Voice

Hame\_\_ came our good - man, And\_\_ hame\_\_ came he, And then he saw a

sad - dle horse, Where nae horse should be. "What's this now, good - wife? What's

this I\_\_ see?"\_\_ How Came this horse here? With - out the\_\_ leave\_\_ of

me?" "Shame fa\_\_ your cuck - old face,\_\_ I'll\_\_ mat ye see! T'is nae - thing but a

broad\_\_ sow, Me min-nie sent\_\_ to me." "Far\_\_ hae\_\_ I\_\_ rid - den,\_\_ And

far - er hae I gane, But a sad dle on a sow's back I nev er did\_\_ see nane."

# The Beggar Man (The Jolly Beggar)



[www.canfolkmusic.ca/songs/issue42\\_3/The\\_Beggarman.mp3](http://www.canfolkmusic.ca/songs/issue42_3/The_Beggarman.mp3)

Anon

Voice

A \_ beg - gar \_ man came o'er yon lea, With man-y good e'ens and good  
 days to me, Saying good-wife for your char - i - ty, Will you lodge a beggar man?  
 Will you lodge a beg - gar man?

A beggar man came o'er yon lea  
 With many good e'ens and good days to me  
 Saying "Goodwife, for your charity  
 Will you lodge a beggar man?  
 Lassie, to my tow roo ray.

The night was cold, the carl was wet  
 And down ayont the ingle he sat  
 The daughter's shoulders he 'gan to clap  
 And cadgily ranted and sang  
 "Lassie, to my tow roo ray."

'And O," quoth he, "If you were as black  
 As e'er the crown of my daddy's hat  
 'Tis I should lay thee by my back  
 And away with me thou should gang,  
 Lassie, to my tow roo ray".

"And O," quoth she, "if I were as white  
 As e'er the snow lay on the dyke  
 I'd clothe me braw and lady-like  
 And away with thee I'd gang,  
 Lassie, to my tow roo ray".

"O lassie, lassie you're far too young  
 And you haven't the cant of the begging  
 tongue  
 You haven't the cant of the begging tongue  
 And with me you cannot gang,  
 Lassie, to my tow roo ray".

"I'll bow my back and crook my knee  
 And draw a black clout on my eye  
 And for a beggar they'll take me

And we shall be merry and sing,  
 Lassie, to my tow roo ray."

Between the two they made a plot  
 To rise an hour before the cock  
 And wilily they slipped the lock  
 And through the fields they ran,  
 Lassie, to my tow roo ray.

Up in the morn the old wife rose  
 And leisurely put on her clothes  
 Then to the servant's bed she goes  
 To ask for the silly poor man,  
 Lassie, to my tow roo ray.

She went to the bed where the beggar lay  
 The straw was cold and he was away  
 She clapped her hands, crying "Well-a-day!  
 For some of our gear'll be gone!"  
 Lassie, to my tow roo ray.

Some ran to the coffers and some to the chests  
 But nought was stolen that could be missed  
 She danced her lane, cried "Praise be blessed!  
 I've lodged an honest man!"  
 Lassie, to my tow roo ray.

"Since nothing's away that we can learn  
 The kye are to milk and the milk's to churn  
 Go but the house, lass, and waken the bairn  
 And bid her come quickly ben."  
 Lassie, to my tow roo ray.

The servant went where the daughter lay

The sheets were cold and she was away  
 And fast to the good wife she did say  
 "She's away with the beggar man!"  
 Lassie, to my tow roo ray.

Some rode on horse, some ran on foot  
 The wife was mad and out of her wit  
 She could not gang nor yet could she sit  
 And aye she cursed and she banned.  
 Lassie, to my tow roo ray.

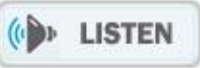
When years had passed some two or three  
 The same old beggar came o'er the lea  
 Says, "Goodwife, for your charity,

Will you lodge a beggarman?"  
 Lassie, to my tow roo ray.

"A beggar I'll ne'er lodge again  
 For I never had a daughter but ane  
 And away with a beggar she has gane  
 And I cannot tell where nor when".  
 Lassie, to my tow roo ray.

"O yonder she's coming o'er yon lea  
 With many a fine tale to tell to thee  
 And she's got a baby on her knee  
 And another one in her womb".  
 Lassie, to my tow roo ray.

## The Golden Vanity



[www.canfolkmusic.ca/songs/issue42\\_3/The\\_Golden\\_Vanity.mp3](http://www.canfolkmusic.ca/songs/issue42_3/The_Golden_Vanity.mp3)

Anon

Voice

There was a ship that sail-ed all on the Low-land sea, And the  
 name of our ship was The Gold-en Van-i-ty, And we feared she would be tak-en by the  
 Spanish en-e-my, As she sail-ed in the Lowland, Lowland, Low, As she sail-ed in the Low-land  
 sea.

There was a ship that sailed all on the Lowland sea,  
 And the name of our ship was the Golden Vanity,  
 And we feared she would be taken by the Spanish enemy  
 As she sailed in the Lowland, Lowland, Low, as she sailed in the Lowland sea.

Then up stepped our cabin boy, and boldly out spoke he,  
 And he said to our captain, "What would you give to me,  
 If I would swim alongside of the Spanish enemy,  
 And sink her in the Lowland, Lowland, Low, and sink her in the Lowland sea?"

"Oh, I would give you silver, and I would give you gold,

And my own fairest daughter your bonny bride shall be,  
If you will swim alongside of the Spanish enemy,  
And sink her in the Lowland, Lowland, Low, and sink her in the Lowland sea.”

Then the boy he made him ready and overboard sprang he,  
And he swam alongside of the Spanish enemy,  
And with his brace and auger in her side he bored holes three,  
And he sunk her in the Lowland, Lowland, Low, he sank her in the Lowland sea.

Then quickly he swam back to the cheering of the crew,  
But the captain would not heed him, for his promise he did rue,  
And he scorned his poor entreatings when loudly he did sue,  
And he left him in the Lowland, Lowland, Low, and he left him in the Lowland sea.

Then quickly he swam round unto the starboard side,  
And up unto his messmates full bitterly he cried,  
“Oh, messmates, draw me up, for I’m drifting with the tide,  
And I’m sinking in the Lowland, Lowland, Low, and I’m sinking in the Lowland sea.”

Then his messmates drew him up, but on the deck he died,  
And they stitched him in his hammock which was so fair and wide,  
And they lowered him overboard and he drifted with the tide,  
And he sank in the Lowland, Lowland, Low, and he sank in the Lowland sea.

## **Johnny of Hazelgreen**

One night as I rode o’er the vale, the moon was shining clear,  
I overheard a fair young maid lamenting for her dear.  
And she did cry as I passed by and painful to me it seemed,  
For she was letting the tears roll down for Johnny of Hazelgreen.

“What troubles you, my darling girl, or what caused you to roam?  
Are your mother and father dead, or have you got no home?”  
“My parents they are both alive and plainly to be seen,  
But I have lost my darling boy called Johnny of Hazelgreen”.

“What kind of man is your Hazelgreen? He is one I do not know.  
Well, he must be a fine young man for you to love him so.”  
“Well, his arms are long and his shoulders broad, he is comely to be seen  
And his hair is rolled in chains of gold; he’s my Johnny of Hazelgreen.”

“Dry up your tears, my darling girl, and come along with me.  
I’ll have you wed to my own brave son, I never had one, but he.  
For you could be a bride,” I said, “to any lord or king.”  
“I would rather be a bride,” said she, “to Johnny of Hazelgreen.”

So she’s got on her milk-white steed and I’ve got on my bay,  
And we’ve rode along through the moonlit night and part of the following day.  
And when we got up to the gate, the bells began to ring,  
And who stepped out but that brave young lad called Johnny of Hazelgreen.

“You are welcome home, dear father,” he said, “you are welcome home to me,  
For you have brought my own dear girl that I thought I’d never more see.”

And the smile upon her gentle face was as sweet as grass is green.  
I hope she enjoys her married life with young Johnny of Hazelgreen.

## Johnny of Hazelgreen



[www.canfolkmusic.ca/songs/issue42\\_3/Johnny\\_of\\_Hazelgreen.mp3](http://www.canfolkmusic.ca/songs/issue42_3/Johnny_of_Hazelgreen.mp3)

Anon

Voice

One night as I \_\_\_\_\_ rode o'er \_\_\_\_\_ the vale, the moon was \_\_\_\_\_  
 shin - ing \_\_\_\_\_ clear, \_\_\_\_\_ I o - ver - heard \_\_\_\_\_ a \_\_\_\_\_ fair \_\_\_\_\_ young  
 maid la - ment - ing \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ her dear, \_\_\_\_\_ And she did cry \_\_\_\_\_ as  
 I passed \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ and pain - ful to me it \_\_\_\_\_ seemed, \_\_\_\_\_ For \_\_\_\_\_ she \_\_\_\_\_ was  
 let - ting the tears roll \_\_\_\_\_ down for \_\_\_\_\_ John - ny \_\_\_\_\_ of Ha - zel - green \_\_\_\_\_

Chords: D, G, D, G, A7, D, G, D, A7, Bm, A7, G, D, A7, D, G, D, A7, D

## Treasures from Our Archives

### Twenty Years Ago

*Bulletin* 22.2-4 was published in December 1988; I'll conveniently defer writing about it to next issue.

### Fifteen Years Ago

*Bulletin* 27.3 (September 1993). This was the last of the "newsletter-style" issues. It featured Robert Rodriguez's article "The Devil at the Dance" (with French version by André Gareau), and a directory of Yukon folk contacts. For the EthnoFolk Letters

column, we treated the world to Judith Cohen's actual handwriting; the radio column, Over the Waves, and the magazine column, The Centrefold, both showed up as well. There was just one review, of the CD *Six Mile Bridge*, by the group of the same name. Songs "The King William's Town Brides" by Jim Dauncey and "Oran Bhancùbhar (Song of Vancouver)" and some "housekeeping" features completed the issue.