

## Singing the Child Ballads

In this column Rosaleen Gregory continues her journey through the Child ballads in her own repertoire, and calls for readers' submissions of alternative versions that they sing, or of other ballads in the Child canon that she does not perform. This time we cover Child Nos. 16-21.

**Rosaleen writes:**

### ***Sheath and Knife, # 16***

The text I sing is Child's version A, which was reprinted from William Motherwell, ed., *Minstrelsy Ancient and Modern* (Glasgow: John Wylie, 1827). The ballad was noted by Motherwell in February 1825 from an informant named Mrs. King, who lived in the parish of Kilbarchan. The tune is from James Johnson, ed., *The Scots Musical Museum, Consisting of Six Hundred Scots Songs*, 2 Vols. (Edinburgh: James Johnson, 1787-1803). This melody originally went with Child's version C text, which was reprinted from Johnson's *Museum*. I sing the ballad unaccompanied.

### ***Hind Horn, # 17***

My singing version, with guitar, of this and of the two following ballads comes from *Songs of England, Ireland and Scotland: A Bonnie Bunch of Roses*, edited by Dan Milner and Paul Kaplan (N.Y.: Oak Publications, 1983). Milner and Kaplan provided the guitar chords, but they took their texts and tunes from earlier publications. The text of "Hind Horn" that they provided is a

composite, said to be collected from "various sources". The tune is from Alexander Keith's selection from Gavin Greig's collecting, *Last Leaves of the Traditional Ballads and Ballad Airs* (Aberdeen: The Buchan Club, 1925).

### ***The Cruel Mother, # 20***

My version is called "Down by the Greenwood Sidey", and is mainly that noted by Robert and Henry Hammond from Mrs. Case, at Sydling St. Nicholas, Dorset, in September 1907. The Hammonds collected two other versions of "The Cruel Mother" in Dorset in 1907: one from Mrs. Russell at Upwey in February, and the other from Mrs. Bowring at Cerne Abbas in September. Milner and Kaplan appear to have collated the text from these three (and perhaps other) sources, and they took the tune from that printed by Henry Hammond in the *Journal of the Folk-Song Society*, 3: 11 (1907).

### ***The Maid and the Palmer, # 21***

The version I sing is Irish. It is called "The Well Below the Valley", and was apparently recorded by Tom Munnelly from the singing of John Reilly, a traveler who died tragically in 1966, in Boyle, Co. Roscommon. Milner and Kaplan's version of the tune, adapted from that in Bronson's *The Singing Tradition of Child's Popular Ballads*, is, believe it or not, a simplified transcription of what John Reilly actually sang. I have changed the key because the original one was too high.



### **Sheath and Knife**

[www.canfolkmusic.ca/songs/issue39\\_3/Sheath\\_and\\_Knife.mp3](http://www.canfolkmusic.ca/songs/issue39_3/Sheath_and_Knife.mp3)

Motherwell/Johnson

It is talked the world all ov.....er, The  
broom blooms bon - nie and say it is fair, That the king's dochter goes with  
child to her brither, And we'll he'er gang doon to the broom ony mair.

It is talked the world all over,  
The broom blooms bonnie and says it is fair,  
That the king's dochter goes with child to her brither,  
And we'll never gang doon to the broom ony mair.

He's taen his sister doon to her father's deer park.  
The broom blooms bonnie, etc.  
Wi' his yew-tree bow and arrows fast slung to his back,  
And she'll never gang doon, etc.

"Now when that ye hear me gie a loud cry,  
The broom blooms, etc.  
Shoot frae thy bow an arrow and there let me lye,  
And we'll never gang doon, etc."

"And when that ye see I am lying dead,  
The broom blooms, etc.  
Then ye'll put me in a grave, wi' a turf at my head,  
And I'll never gang doon, etc."

Now when he heard her gie a loud cry,  
The broom blooms, etc.  
His silver arrow frae his bow he suddenly let fly,  
Now they'll never gang doon, etc.

He has made a grave that was lang and was deep,  
The broom blooms, etc.  
And he has buried his sister, wi' her babe at her feet,  
And they'll never gang doon, etc.

And when he came to his father's court hall,  
The broom blooms, etc.  
There was music and minstrels and dancing and all,  
But they'll never gang doon, etc.

"O, Willie, O Willie, what makes thee in pain?"  
The broom blooms, etc.  
"I have lost a sheath and knife that I'll never see again,  
For we'll never gang doon, etc."

"There are ships of your father's sailing on the sea,  
The broom blooms, etc.  
That will bring as good a sheath and a knife unto thee,  
But ye'll never gang doon, etc."

"There are ships of my father's sailing on the sea,  
The broom blooms, etc.  
But sic a sheath and a knife they can never bring to me,  
Now we'll never gang doon, etc."

## Hind Horn



LISTEN

[www.canfolkmusic.ca/songs/issue39\\_3/Hind\\_Horn.mp3](http://www.canfolkmusic.ca/songs/issue39_3/Hind_Horn.mp3)

G. Greig/A. Keith

The musical score is written for a single melodic line in G major, 4/4 time. It consists of four staves of music. The lyrics are written below the notes. Chords are indicated above the staff: G, Emin, D, Emin, G, Emin, D, Emin, G, Emin, D, Emin.

Near Ed-in-burgh town was a young child born,  
With a high loo low and a high loo land, His  
name was cal-led..... young Hind Horn, And the birk and the  
broom blooms bon-nie-o.

Near Edinburgh town was a young child born,  
With a high loo low and a high loo land,  
His name was called young Hind Horn,  
And the birk and the broom blooms bonnie-o.

Seven years he served the King,  
With a high loo low, etc.,  
All for the sake of his daughter Jean,  
And the birk and the broom, etc.

The King an angry man was he,  
And he sent young Hind Horn to the sea.

She's given him a golden ring,  
With seven diamonds set therein.

When this ring grows pale and wan,  
You may know by it my love is gone.

One day he looked his ring upon,  
And knew she loved another man.

He's left the sea and come to land,  
And there he's met an old beggar man.

"What news, what news doth thee betide?  
"No news but the Princess Jean's a bride."

"Will you give to me thy begging tweed,  
And I'll give to you my riding steed?"

The beggar he was bound for to ride,  
And Hind Horn he was bound for the bride.

When he came to the King's own gate,  
He sought a drink for Hind Horn's sake.

He drank the wine and dropped in the ring,  
And bade them take it to the Princess Jean.

"Got you this ring by sea or land,  
Or got you this from a dead man's hand?"

"Not from sea and not from land,  
But I got it from thy milk-white hand."

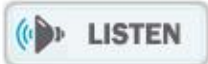
"I'll cast off my gown of brown,  
And I'll follow you from town to town."

"And I'll cast off my dress of red,  
And I'll follow you and beg my bread."

"You needn't cast off your gown of brown,  
For I'll make you the lady of many a town."

"You needn't cast off your dress of red,  
For I'll maintain you with wine and bread."

The bridegroom had the bride first wed,  
But young Hind Horn took her first to bed.



## Down by the Greenwood Sidey (Cruel Mother)

Mrs. Case/Henry & Robert Hammond  
Emin Bmin Emin

Emin

There was a la - dy lived in York,

G D Emin D

All a - lone - y, a - lone - y, She fell in love with her

C Bmin Emin Bmin Emin

fa - ther's clerk, Down by the green wood side - y

There was a lady lived in York,  
All aloney, aloney,  
She fell in love with her father's clerk,  
Down by the greenwood sidey.

He courted her a year and a day,  
All aloney, etc.  
And then he did that girl betray,  
Down by, etc.

She leaned her back against a thorn,  
And there she had two pretty babes born.

She had a penknife long and sharp,  
She peirced those tender babies' hearts.

She washed the knife clean in the flood,  
She turned the river all to blood.

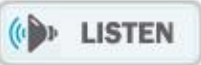
She buried them under a marble stone,  
And then she turned her face toward home.

As she came by her father's hall,  
She saw two pretty babes playing at ball.

"Oh babes! Oh babes! If you were mine,  
I'd dress you up in silks so fine."

"Oh mother! Oh mother! We once were thine,  
You did not prove to us so kind.

"Seven years, seven years you shall burn in Hell,  
Seven years and you won't see heaven until."



# The Well Below the Valley

John Reilly/Tom Munnelly

Amin

[verses 1-3, 5, 9 & 13] A gen - tle - man was pass - ing by, He

Emin G Amin Emin

asked for a drink as he was dry, At the well be - low the

Amin Amin

val - ley O. [refrain] Green grows the li - ty O.

D

Right a - mong the bush es O.

Amin

[verse 4] She swore by grass and swore by corn, That

Emin G Amin

her true love was nev - er born, "I say, fair maid - en you

Emin Amin Emin Amin

are for - sworn, At the well be - low the val - ley O.

Amin

[verses 6-8, 10-12 & 14-15] Two of them by your fa - ther dear, At the

Emin Amin

well be - low the val - ley O.

Amin

[verse 16] I'll be sev - en years a ring - in' the bell, But the

Emin G

Lord a - bove may save my soul from port - in in Hell, At the

Amin Emin Amin

well be - low the val - ley O.

A gentleman was passing by,  
He asked for a drink as he was dry,  
At the well below the valley O,  
Green grows the lily O,  
Right among the bushes O.

“My cup it is in overflow  
And if I do stoop I may fall in,  
At the well below the valley O.”  
Green grows etc.

“Well if your true love was passing by,  
You’d fill him a drink if he got dry,  
At the well below the valley O.”  
Green grows, etc.

She swore by grass and swore by corn  
That her true love was never born.  
“I say, fair maiden, you are forsworn  
At the well below the valley O.”  
Green grows, etc.

“Well if you’re a man of that noble fame  
You’ll tell to me the father o’ them,  
At the well below the valley O.”  
Green grows, etc.

“Two o’ them by your father dear,  
At the well below the valley O.”  
Green grows, etc.

“Two more o’ them came by your uncle Dan,  
At the well below the valley O.”  
Green grows, etc.

“Another one by your brother John,  
At the well below the valley O.”  
Green grows, etc.

“Well if you’re a main of the noble fame,  
You’ll tell to me what happened then,  
At the well below the valley O.”  
Green grows, etc.

“There was two o’ them buried by the kitchen fire,  
At the well below the valley O.”  
Green grows, etc.

“Two more o’ them buried by the stable door,  
At the well below the valley O.”  
Green grows, etc.

“The other was buried by the well,  
At the well below the valley O.”  
Green grows, etc.

“Well if you’re a man of the noble fame  
You’ll tell to me what will happen myself,  
At the well below the valley O.”  
Green grows, etc.

“You’ll be seven long years a-ringin’ a bell  
At the well below the valley O.”  
Green grows, etc.

“You’ll be seven more a-portin’ in Hell,  
At the well below the valley O.”  
Green grows, etc.

“I’ll be seven long years a-ringin’ the bell,  
But the Lord above might save my soul  
From portin’ in Hell,  
At the well below the valley O.”  
Green grows, etc.

