Irish Traveller Folktales and Songs

The Cassidys 1967

Johnny and Joanna Cassidy with their son Bill, on his wedding day, Saggart Co. Dublin1967.

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During the autumn of 1967 I returned to Dublin, searching for a way forward to expand my photographing and tape recording of the Travellers that I had begun two years earlier. I had started recording them as an extension of my photography. The tape recorder itself took the role of a passport to legitimize my questions, help me interview people and also add a certain importance to the conversation. My intention was to fuse the sound with the photographs as a two-sided expression of one culture, but it soon took on a life of its own.

Due in part, perhaps, to increasing local restrictions on camping beside the roads, the Travellers then were leaving the countryside in great numbers and moving to the outskirts of the cities. I happened then to fall in the path of good luck.

On a wasteland of derelict fields in Ballyfermot, with little else but a scattering of electric pylons by the canal, was a row of about forty recently erected concrete huts (tigeens). This, I think, was the initial gesture of Dublin Corporation to settle Travellers, and for reasons better known to the Corporation they had named it Labre Park – St. Labre is the patron saint of beggars. I tentatively approached the first hut and was welcomed in by a man named Johnny Keenan, a musician and antique dealer. Along with his wife Mary and their five children,

they were ‘just stopping there temporarily,’ though the family still remains there today, thirty-eight years later.

‘You might get an old story for the tape from Johnny Cassidy, across the way,’ he told me. We arranged another visit to hear him and his sons playing the pipes, whistle, and banjo. I started to make my way over towards a makeshift hut of scrap metal, boards, and anything else that came to hand where Johnny Cassidy and his family lived. But, before I got there I was sidetracked by the talking and shouting of a half-dozen excited children who led me instead to the doorway of Kitty Flynn – a singer, and the married daughter of Johnny Cassidy. With some prompting from the children and myself, Kitty began a ballad. Her song *Lovely Willie* ran down through me like a blade, not so much from the words themselves but the manner and style of her singing.

Kitty was strikingly beautiful and quite small, with delicate features and long blond hair. She was about twenty-two at the time, with four children, and married to big Miley Flynn.

After another song, I went back across with her to her father’s hut. Johnny was there with his wife Joanna and about four or five of their children. They too were all blonde and good-looking.

Johnny, perhaps to offset his lack of height, had a kind of wild energy, and the hoarsest voice I ever heard on a man. With a brimming enthusiasm, he launched into one tale after another. I tried to keep the tape from running out and to quiet the growing gathering of children and others from shrieking excitement and wonder at his story. He said he hadn’t told the stories for a long time, but his memory didn’t falter. On and on he went, night after night, often in his bed – which he nearly levitated off in his own excitement. He told me long and complicated tales like *The Grey Headed Norrisey’s Skull*, *The Hen Woman’s Daughter*, and *The Soldier Seeking Lenity For His Regiment*.

There was an urgency about Johnny to tell me his stories, as if he anticipated that his recollections were the end of a tradition. Where did they come from? I asked. His father, he told me, used to go around to the big houses in Wexford working on the farms, and in the evening he would tell his stories to the farmers around the fire while Johnny sat between his father’s legs and listened and remembered.

The whole Cassidy family were gifted with the knowledge of such tales and songs. To perform them so beautifully and uniquely, in their own particular style, with memories that rarely if ever hesitated, was a remarkable achievement and possibly a benefit of their illiteracy.

Johnny’s hoarse voice can be difficult to understand without reading a transcription, but it’s not essential to follow his words as much as the gist and spirit of his telling a story. His voice rises up to the pitch of a protesting old woman and a moment later goes down to the bottom of the world like the invocation of a shaman.

Kitty's voice is delicate, yet it has a striving desire and a heartfelt timbre which makes a counterpoint to her father's. From his galloping repetitions in *Hearts, Livers, and Lights and All*, followed by the drama of Kitty's murder ballad, *Along the North Strand*, then through his lightning verbal feat reciting *The Old Hag's Death*, from the trickery in *Gilbert the Robber* to the lovelorn tragedy of her song in *Lovely Willie* – is it any wonder that I am still stunned?

Thus I continued an intense involvement with recording the music, singing, and folk tales of a rare and wonderful group of people. Many have died since, their legacy unfortunately gone with them like smoke except for the recordings I was privileged to make. What they preserved for innumerable generations may have been the principal traditions in music and storytelling of the Irish Travellers. In these songs and tales are the essence and seeds of an ancient culture.

Alen MacWeeney
March, 2002

Johnny Cassidy dancing at the wedding reception of his son Bill and Kathleen Connors, wearing Kathleen's mother's hat.

HEARTS, LIVERS AND LIGHTS AND ALL (JOHNNY CASSIDY)

There was a widow woman one time lived outside of Wexford, and she had this fool of a boy – he was as big as seven. But she felt sick anyhow and she wasn't able to go out.

'Ah,' says she, 'if I had a good son that'd go to Wexford,' says she, 'and get me a bit of meat,' says she, 'for to make a sup of soup, I'd be alright.'

'Oh, mother,' says he, 'I'll go to Wexford for you. But what sort of meat would you want?'

'Well, a liver,' says she, 'and a light.'[1]

'I'll never think of it, mother,' says he.

'Well, the way you won't forget it,' says she, 'keep saying "hearts, livers and lights and all" and you won't forget it.'

Off he started anyhow, in for Wexford.

'Hearts-livers-and-lights-and-all. Hearts-livers-and-lights-and-all. Hearts-livers-and-lights-and-all. Hearts-livers-and-lights-and-all.'

But it was in the corn season[2] anyhow, and he was passing this public house, Paddy Breen's of the Durr [?]. And, this man, he was out all night drawing corn with a horse and car, but begod, didn't his stomach get sick – a bit of a cork went again[3] his breath – and he was outside retching up out of his stomach. And the big fool looked up in his face:

1 'Light' is a dialect word for the lung of an animal, in this context to be used for making soup, along with the liver and heart.

2 i.e., harvest-time.

3 'against'

'Hearts-livers-and-lights-and-all. Hearts-livers-and-lights-and-all. Hearts-livers....'

'Go away!' says he [the man]. 'God to eternity blast you!' says he. 'Are you praying,' says he, 'for my heart, livers, and lights,' says he, 'to come up?'

'Well, *what'll* I say?' says he [the fool].

'Say, "They're down",' says he, '"and that they may never come up!"'

'They're-down-that-they-may-never-come-up. They're-down-that-they-may-never-come-up. They're-down-that-they-may-never-come-up. They're-down-that-they-may-never-come-up'...until he went to where there was a man sowing an acre with potatoes [?]. He looked over the ditch at him anyhow:

'They're-down-that-they-may-never-come-up. They're-down-that-they-may-never-come-up. They're-down-that-they-may-never-come-up.'

'If I could...get out to you,' says the man, says he, 'I'd put you where you'd never come up!'

'Well, *what'll* I say?' says he.

'Say,' says he, '"they're putting thousands of them in the ground this year, and they'll put ten thousand next year with the help of God".'

'They're-putting-thousands-of-them-in-the-ground-this-year-and-they'll-put-ten-thousand-next-year-with-the-help-of-God. They're-putting-thousands-of-them-in-the-ground-this-year-and-they'll-put-ten-thousand-next-year-with-the-help-of-God,' until he went to the graveyard at Rathaspick. And there was a funeral in it. He looked in over the graveyard wall:

‘They’re-putting-thousands-of-them-in-the-ground-this-year-and-they’ll-put-ten-thousand-next-year-with-the-help-of-God. They’re-putting-thousands-of-them-in-the-ground-this-year-and-they’ll-put-ten-thousand-next-year-with-the-help-of-God.’

‘If I was out,’ says one of the men belonging to the corpse, ‘if I was out,’ says he, ‘I’d put you,’ says he, ‘in the ground!’

‘What’ll I say?’ says he.

‘Say, “The Lord have mercy,”’ says he, ‘“on their soul”.’

‘The-Lord-have-mercy-on-their-soul. The-Lord-have-mercy-on-their-soul. The-Lord-have-mercy-on-their-soul.’

But he was still running away, and he went to where there were a man hanging a dog and bitch [that were] after killing a sheep:

‘The-Lord-have-mercy-on-their-soul. The-Lord-have-mercy-on-their-soul. The-Lord-have-mercy-on-their-soul.’

‘Ah, you dirty ignorant bugger!’ says the man, says he. ‘What are you saying? “The Lord have mercy,”’ says he, ‘“on a dog and a bitch!”’

‘What’ll I say, sir?’ says he.

‘Say, “They’re a dog and a bitch tied together”.’

‘A-dog-and-a-bitch-tied-together. A-dog-and-a-bitch-tied-together. A-dog-and-a-bitch-tied-together. A-dog-and-a-bitch-tied-together.’

But he was still going for Wexford anyway, and he met this boy and girl walking out the road. The two of them was linking one another. He looked up in their face anyhow:

‘A-dog-and-a-bitch-tied-together. A-dog-and-a-bitch-tied-together. A-dog-and-a-bitch-tied-together.’

The man made a box at him[4] anyway.

‘What’ll I say?’ says he to him.

‘Ah, say,’ says he, ‘“I wish yous the greatest of joy together”.’

‘I-wish-yous-the-greatest-of-joy-together. I-wish-yous-the-greatest-of-joy-together. I-wish-yous-the-greatest-of-joy-together,’ until he went to where there were a poor man, where there were two bullocks after being sunk in a marble hole.[5] And he got out one and he couldn’t get out the other. Well, he looked in at the poor man, and the poor man was down as far as the bullock:

‘I-wish-yous-the-greatest-of-joy-together. I-wish-yous-the-greatest-of-joy-together. I wish-yous-the-greatest-of-joy-together.’

‘Oh, God,’ says he, ‘if I could...get out near you,’ says the man, says he, ‘I’d wish you the greatest of joy together!’

‘What’ll I say!’ says he.

‘Say, “There’s one of them out now”,’ says he, ‘“and the other’ll be out by and by with the help of God”.’

But he forgot the ‘hearts, livers, and lights and all’ and he turned home.

‘There’s-one-of-them-out-now-and-the-other’ll-be-out-by-and-by-with-the-help-of-God. There’s-one-of-them-out-now-and-the-other’ll-be-out-by-

4 ‘tried to hit him’

5 Probably a marl hole or pit, supplying limestone soil for various uses.

and-by-with-the-help-of-God.'

And he was coming back by Freynes of the Mountain [?] again, another pub, and there was a row after happening with two men, and one fellow put the eye out of another fellow with a bottle, and he was bleeding to death. And he looked up in his face:

'One-of-them-is-out-now-and-the-other'll-be-out-by-and-by-with-the-help-of-God. One-of-them-is-out-now-and-the-other'll-be-out-by-and-by-with-the-help-of-God.'

The man hit him himself with a box.[6]

'What'll I say?' says he to him.

'Go home,' says he, 'and never speak a word,' says he. 'Well, go home,' says he, 'never speak a word,' says he, 'while you're alive.'

Home he went. Never could – no one ever could get a word out of him until the day he died!

So put down the kettle and make the tea,
and if you live happily, I may.[7]

6 'The man hit him.'

7 A common formulaic ending for a story.

ALONG THE NORTH STRAND (KITTY CASSIDY)

Oh, a pretty young boy come from the North Strand,
He came a-wooing to me.
He promised he'd bring me down by the North Strand
And there he'd marry me.

'Oh, get some of your mother's fee for me
And more of your Daddy's gold.
And two of the best horses he have in the stable
Where there are thirty-three.'

Now she got some of her mother's fee
And more of her Daddy's gold.
And two of the best horses he had in the stable
Where there were thirty-three.

Oh, she got up on her milk-white steed
And he on dapple-grey.
They rode along unto the North Strand
Was three long hours before day.

'Oh, get down, get down, pretty Polly,' he said,
'Get down and get down to me.
Tis six little girls that I drownded here
And you are the seventh shall be.'

‘Oh, your silks and your satins, you must take them off
And deliver them up unto me.
I think they’re too rich and too grand,’ says he,
‘To roll in the bright rocky waves.’

‘Oh, my silks and my satins, I must take them off,
Please turn your back to me,
I think you’re too big of a ruffian,’ says she,
‘To see a naked woman like me.’

He turned his back on for the North Strand
To watch all the waves a-going by.
She gripped him around the middle so high
And flung him right into the deep.

Oh, he swum high and he swum low
Till he swum to the seashore.
‘Put out, oh, your hand, pretty Polly,’ he said
‘And sentence [?] I’ll make you my bride.’

‘Oh, stop where you are, my cruel-hearted lad,
Stop where you are,’ says she.
‘ ‘Tis six little girls that you drownded there
And you are the seventh shall be.’

Oh, she got up on her milk-white steed
And she leaded her apple-grey.
She rode along to her father’s hall door
Was three long hours before day.

‘For the parrot is up in the window so high,
I’m a-feared he’ll come down upon me.
Hold your tongue, hold your tongue, pretty Polly,’ she said,
‘Don’t tell any tales upon me,
For I’ll have your cage of the glitter and gold
And your door of the best ivory.’

‘Who’s that? Who’s that?’ the father did cry,
‘That’s plattering[1] so long before day?’
‘It’s no laughing matter,’ the parrot did say,
‘It’s no laughing matter for me.’

‘For the cats they are up in the window so high,
I’m a-feared they’ll come down upon me.’
‘Please turn your tail, pretty Polly,’ she said,
‘Return your tales upon me.
For I’ll have your cage of the glitter and gold
And your door of the best ivory.’

1 ‘Prattling’ in some other versions.

DICK DAGLEN THE COBBLER (JOHNNY CASSIDY)

Oh, my name is Dick Daglen, the cobbler,
I served my full time out in Kent.
Some call me an old fornicator
Which gives me great cause to complain.

'When I got you first, I really thought 'twas a robin with a red breast I got. Faith and it wasn't, 'twas a willy water wagtail I took.'

'Swith me haw-ba-ba-balda-daladidy
Haw-ba-ba-balda-dalee
With me haw-ba-ba-balda-dalady
The hammer and lapstone[1] for me.

'When you got me first, I was a well-reared little girl. There were always three full dishes on my Da's table.'

'There were. I was looking at them. Two of them empty, and nothing at all in the other one.'

'Swith me haw-ba-ba-balda-daladidy
Haw-ba-ba-balda-dalee
With me haw-ba-ba-balda-dalady
The hammer and lapstone for me.

'Well, I don't know what way a woman's tongue is held in her mouth. I could give some idea of a man's. For the minute my woman's tongue hits her upper lip, it goes click-clack, click-clack till I'm fairly bothered with her. If I hit her with a lash, she'll run out in the street and she'll roar:

"Peelers, Peelers, Peelers! Look at the lump this old shoemaker's after putting on my foot for the last!"

They've got so used to her now, they don't mind her. And it's eight o'clock and I must have those soled again nine.'[2]

'Swith me haw-ba-ba-balda-daladidy
Ba-ba-balda-dalee
With me haw-ba-ba-balda-dalady
The hammer and lapstone for me.

That's the end of it now.

1 A stone used in shoemaking.

2 'by nine o'clock'

THE BLACKSMITH (JOHNNY CASSIDY)

This old blacksmith, he had himself and his wife and his sister, living alone. But this man rode down to him this day, on a horse's back, and he goes into him.

'Smith,' he says, 'would you put a set of shoes on this mare for me?'

'I would, sir,' he says, 'but I don't know how. I have an old mare myself,' he says, 'and I can't shoe her.'

'Would you give me a lend of the fire,' he [the man] says, 'and I'll shoe her myself?'

'I would, sir,' says he, 'and...I'd like to see you doing it.'

He brought in this mare in the forge and he cut the four legs off of her[1], and he put them into the fire. And he put down a bit of coal, and he blew, and after a few minutes he took out those legs and put them on the mare. The mare walked out with a new set of shoes on her.

'Begod,' says he, 'I'll shoe my mare too.'

The old man went out and he brought in this old mare, that he had for ploughing the half-acre, with a couple of lumps on her ear [?]. She never had a shoe on her. He brought her in, into the forge, cut the legs off her. He put them in the fire. Well, when he went to go look for the legs, he had nothing to get. The bones had burned and all.

1 The form 'off of' is common in the English of Ireland.

'Oh, I'm done,' says he, 'I'm finished.'

He dragged the old mare he had out on the half-acre, between himself and the two old women – they dragged her out on the half-acre.

'I'm done,' says he.

He got the old mare done away with.

Begod, that day week, this man come down again on another horse, and two old women on the horse's back.

'Hello, blacksmith!' he says.

'Hello, sir,' he says.

'Blacksmith,' he says, 'would you make a young girl,' says he, 'out of those two women for me?'

'Oh, sir,' says he, 'how could I do that? Sure, I have two old women myself within,' he says. 'and if I could make a young woman out of them I'd make them.'

'Would you give me a lend of the fire,' he says, 'and I'll do it myself?'

'I will,' he says, 'I'd like to see you doing it.'

Begod, the old man gave him a lend of the fire, and he took the two old women off of the horse's back, put them on the hob, fixed up all the coal around them and blew like blazes, and after about twenty minutes he pulled out the grandest, young girl he'd ever seen, out of the fire.

'By God,' says the old man, says he, 'it's great.'

The old blacksmith thought he'd never have him gone, of course, till he'd get the young girl. Begod, he went in when the man went, caught the old

wife and the old sister – they made an awful fight – to come out. But he pulled them out. He tied them on the hob, put down a lot of coal around them. He blew like blue blazes. But begod, when he...went to go look for them, he had nothing to get. But he sees two good, big, old jaw teeth belonging to the poor old wife.

'Aw,' says he, 'that's the last of you. You're finished.'

Now, of course, afraid he'd be taken and in trouble and everything else, he run away wild. He went further than you or I could tell. But begod, he goes on and he met this man, on this road. Says he [the stranger]:

'Where are you going to?'

'Musha, sir,'[2] says he, 'I don't know where I'm going.'

'You looks like a man,' he says, 'that's in trouble.'

'I am in trouble, sir,' says he to him.

He told him, anyhow, what happened him, his complaint.

'Well,' says he [the stranger], 'if you meet one man for bad luck, you could meet another for good luck.' Says he, 'I'll tell you now,' says he, 'where myself and you,' says he, 'would make a good bit of money, if you come with me.'

'God, and I would go with you, sir,' says he, 'if I could make money. I'd be too delighted, because I'm in a bad way.'

2 'Indeed, sir'

'Well, now,' says he [the stranger], 'there's an advertisement made,' says he. 'There's a gentleman to be cured,' says he, 'in such a place, outside of London. And there's three hundred pound,' he says, 'to be got for curing him. And I can cure him.'

'You can cure him?' says he.

'I can,' says he, 'but,' he says, 'you'll be the doctor,' says he, 'and I'll be the servant. But,' says he, 'don't go,' says he, 'without me. I'll have to cure him,'[3] he says, 'but you be the…I'll be the servant,' says he, 'and you be the doctor, and you'll get payed.'

'Oh, right sir,' he says to him.

'Now,' says he, 'we're going into London,' says he, 'tonight, and we'll stop in London, and we'll go tomorrow,' says he, 'to cure this man.'

In they goes into London, anyway, and they got this hotel, and stopped in it. On they goes the next day, of course, on to...where this man was to be cured. They rung the bell and friends and everyone was seeing the man, waiting for his death.

'What is your business here?'

'Well, my business, sir,' he [the blacksmith] says, 'is to…[?]. Does this man,' says he, 'want to be cured,' says he, 'or don't he? Ain't there three hundred pound,' says he, 'for the doctor,' says he, 'that'll cure him?'

'Oh, yes,' says he [the man in the house], 'but he can't be cured.'

3 i.e., the stranger will be the one to actually perform the cure, but he will be acting the part of assistant to the 'doctor'.

‘Oh, yes,’ says he [the blacksmith], ‘he can be cured. We can cure him.’

‘Well, if you can cure him,’ says he, ‘you’ve three hundred pound to get.’

‘Oh, well, we can cure him, sir,’ says he.

‘Right!’ he says.

‘Now,’ he [the blacksmith] says, ‘sir,’ says he, ‘I wants the nobility out. I also, sir,’ says he, ‘wants a pot of boiling water on the table, on the…fire, and a carving knife, and no-one to be in the house, sir,’ says he, ‘only myself and the servant.’

Everyone was put out, the door was locked. Himself and the ‘servant’, pot of boiling water on the fire, carving knife on the table – he [the stranger] went up and he cut the head off of the gentleman. Put it in the pot. He boiled it for a couple of minutes. He took up the head with the knife, went up and put it on the gentleman. The gentleman was the same as he never had a pain or an ache! Never was better in his life.

‘Is the gentleman alright?’

‘Yes,’ says he.

Opened the door. Alright. He shook hands with every one of them. Tip…couldn’t be beat.

‘Better,’ says he, ‘nor ever I was.’

The ‘doctor’ got a hundred pound more. He got four hundred pound, for curing the gentleman.

Now, they goes into the same hotel again. Now, he [the stranger] says to him:

‘Give me half the money now,’ he says. ‘You keep two hundred and I’ll keep two hundred more.’

‘I won’t’ says he [the blacksmith], ‘give you a penny!’

‘Ah,’ says he, ‘give me half it!’

‘No,’ he says, ‘I won’t give you a penny.’

‘Ah, well, you should give me half it,’ says he, ‘we’d have two hundred pound a piece.’

‘I won’t,’ he says, ‘I’ll keep the four hundred.’

‘Alright,’ he says to him.

Now, there was a ring come to the same hotel where they were stopping, that there was a lady to be cured with the same complaint, in another district. But your man [the stranger] was gone, of course, away from him, and the blacksmith was there – the ‘doctor’, he was supposed to be the doctor. He got the ring.

‘Is such a doctor there?’

‘Yes.’

‘Well, there’s a lady to be cured in such a place and there’s four hundred pound to be gave for the doctor that’ll cure her.’

‘I’ll go,’ says he, ‘tomorrow, and cure her.’

On he goes. He hired a side car the next morning, there was no motor cars. He hired a side car and went on to the gentleman’s place. Up to the house.

‘Oh, are you the doctor?’

‘Yes, I’m the doctor.’

Well, everyone saluted him. All the old gentlemen and ladies saluted him and gave him all entertainments.

‘I wants now,’ says he, ‘a pot of boiling water,’ says he, ‘on the fire. Also,’ says he, ‘a carving knife on the table. I wants also,’ says he, ‘a pot of boiling water on the fire, and all hands,’ says he, ‘be cleared of the house,’ says he, ‘until I cure the lady.’

‘Twas done so. The pot of boiling water was on the fire, the carving knife was left on the table. Everyone was cleared out of the house, the door was locked. He went up and he cut the head off of the lady and he put it in the pot. He started blowing away at the fire and stirring up the coal, but when he went to look for the head, he could get nothing only bones and broth.

‘I’m done!’ says he. ‘I’m finished!’

Of course, when the nobility knew ‘twas a big delay:

‘Is she any better yet, doctor?’

‘Yes, she’ll be alright now in a minute.’

He goes searching the pot again, and he could get nothing. Worse ‘twas getting!

‘Oh,’ says he, ‘I’m finished. It’s come for my day. The mare,’ says he, ‘was bad enough, and my old sister,’ says he, ‘and my wife,’ says he, ‘was worse, but this comes,’ says he, ‘for my death altogether. I’m going to be shot now,’ says he, ‘and gibbeted, over this, over doing away with the lady,’ says he, ‘…[?] time to come. I’m finished.’

‘Now, is she…the lady alright yet, doctor?’

‘No. She’ll be alright now in a minute.’ *(Laughter from the listeners).*

Of course, after about three hours, your man...they were going to drive in the door,[4] and your man [the stranger] appeared in to him.[5]

‘Well,’ says he, ‘how are you getting on?’

‘Ah, I’m beat,’ says he to him. ‘I am beat. I’m going to be hung. I’ll be either hung,’ says he, ‘or gibbeted.’

‘No,’ says he, ‘give me the knife.’

He caught the knife and stuck it – done that with the pot, and caught the head and put it on the lady and she was as sound as a bell.

‘I’ll meet you,’ says he, ‘below at the avenue gate.’

‘Now,’ he says, ‘the lady is alright. Open the door.’

Go on out of that, man, there was so much entertainment for the ‘doctor’. He got a hundred pound more than his limit,[6] he got five hundred pound for curing the lady, the great, special ‘doctor’.

‘Yes,’ says he. ‘That’s a cure,’ says he, ‘that was left to me,’ says he, ‘for my generation.’

‘Oh, you’re a terrible great doctor entirely!’

‘Well,’ says he, ‘that cure was left,’ says he, ‘for my generation, and it follies[7] the generations, and,’ says he, ‘ ‘twill be in the generation,’ says he, ‘while I’m alive.’

4 ‘break the door down’
5 i.e., apparently by supernatural means.
6 ‘what he was due’
7 ‘follows’

Down he goes to the avenue gate, and he met your man [the stranger].

'Well,' he says to him, 'now,' says he, 'you have eight hundred pound. You got four hundred pound…you have nine hundred pound,' he says. 'You got four hundred pound,' says he 'yesterday. You got five hundred pound,' says he, 'today. Will you give me half of it now?'

'No,' says he [the blacksmith], 'I'll give you it all! Take it all,' he says, 'and let me go,' says he, 'to the way I was the whole time.[8] Let me go united,' he says, 'take it all. I was…I was done,' says he 'only for you. There's the nine hundred pound,' says he, 'for you.'

'No,' he [the stranger] says. 'When you offered me that now,'[9] he says, 'I don't want it. I won't take it. When you meet a man,' he says, 'for bad luck, you meet another man for good luck.' He says, 'I'm the man that made you cut the legs off of your old mare. I'm the man,' he says, 'that come with the horse with the two old women, that made you burn your old wife,' says he, 'and your old sister. Now,' he says, 'I trained you,' says he, 'and you're a good man now,' says he, 'better than what you were that time. Go home now,' he says. 'Would you know your way home?'

'Oh, I would,' he says.

'Well, your wife and your sister,' says he, 'is at home,' says he, 'at the fire. Your old mare,' says he, 'is at home,' says he, 'grazing in the garden,' says he, 'as usual. And when you meet one man,' says he, 'for bad luck, you'll meet him for good luck. Now,' says he, 'mind yourself,' says he, 'now. You've nine hundred pound!'

And put down the kettle and make the tea,
and if you live happily, I may.[10]

8 'before'

9 'Because you offered me that'

10 A common formulaic ending for a story.

LOVELY WILLIE (KITTY CASSIDY)

Now, one evening, all in my rambles, on my way to a ball,
I spied my true lover, he was proud, all neat and tall.
He was neat, tall and handsome, able in every degree [?]
Which makes the heart in my own bosom do lie bleeding for thee.

'There's a tree all in my father's garden, lovely Willie,' says she,
'Where there's lords, dukes and earls, they're all waiting there for me.
When they're all asleep, love, and all gone for to rest,
I will go to you, lovely Willie, you're the lad I love best.'

Oh well, myself and my true lover went out walking one day,
When my father he did spy us, and those words now he did say,
With his sharp sword and dagger, 'I will pierce your lover through,'
And the innocent blood from my love, Willie, he drew.

'Now, then father, lovely father, if that be your will,
I'll go to strange countries, strange places for to see
Where I won't know no-one, nor no-one will know me.'

Now, the grave it was ready, oh, and lovely Willie gone down,
When the clergies was sent for to pray for my love's soul.
May the Lord God may be with you in the ground where you do lie.
Wouldn't I sit down and I'd cry for my own darling fine boy.

GILBERT THE ROBBER (JOHNNY CASSIDY)

Well, there was a widow woman one time and she had one son, and his name was Gilbert. And the father, and he dying, he left it to his wish, for to let the boy go to school till he'd be twenty-one, and give him any trade he wished for. Now, the very night before he was twenty-one years of age, this poor man come to the door, and he asked for a night's lodging.

'Well, sir,' says she, 'you'll have to wait till the boy come home. I'm only a lone widow woman'.

When the boy come home:

'Ah well, will you stop, mother,' says he.

The old man got over the fire[1] and started telling them stories all night.

'Ma'm,' says he, 'in the morning, would you let the boy come with me, ma'm,' says he, 'and I'll give – I'll learn him his trade?'

'Sir,' says she, 'what sort of a trade,' says she, 'will you learn him?'

'A robber, ma'm,' he says.

'Oh no, no, no, sir,' she says. 'I wouldn't like my child,' says she, 'to be a robber.'

'Well, my father and mother,' says he [Gilbert], 'left it to my wish,[2] when I'd come to twenty-one years of age, to take any trade I like, and I'm going to go,' says he, 'to be a robber.'

1 'sat close to the fire'

2 Rain on the roof can be heard at this point in the recording.

Now, she couldn't go again[3] the son, over what the father said, on his will. The son went with the old man, for a year and a day. But a-coming for the year and a day was up, that[4] this boy was a better robber nor this man that trained him. Back he come, back to Mrs. Gilbert again.

'Ah, son,' says she, 'I thought I'd never see you back again.'

'Well, you did, mother,' says he.

'How did you get on?'

'Alright, mother,' says he, 'I got on alright, thanks be to God.'

Now, of course, the boy got the mother, talking to the mother.

'Now, mother,' says he, 'he's going back to you again in the morning,' says he, 'to let me go again for another year and a day. But just say you won't part with me,' says he, 'no more, and I won't go again you, mother,' says he. 'I have my trade off now. Well, he'll keep offering you money,' says he, 'until he'll offer you a thousand pound, but say,' says he 'that you won't let me go for nine thousand. And I'll say,' says he, 'that I won't break your word, that I'll stay with you.'

Now, the next morning come.

'Well, now, Mrs. Gilbert,' he says, ''tis now is the only time your son is any good to me. I'm after learning him his trade,' he says, 'and he's able to help me now,' says he, 'he's better than myself. And I'd be very thankful to you, Mrs. Gilbert,' says he, 'if you let your son come with me for another year and a day.'

'I wouldn't let him go no more, sir,' she says, 'out of my sight.'

'Well, I'll tell you, Mrs. Gilbert,' says he. 'I'll give you eight hundred pounds, for lending him,' says he, 'for the year and a day again. And he'll be as sound as a bell,' says he, 'when I'll bring him back again.'

'I wouldn't let him go,' says she, 'for nine thousand – no more.'

'Alright, sir,' says he [Gilbert], 'I won't break my mother's word. I'll stay with her.'

'Alright, Gilbert,' says he, 'good morning. But I'm sorry,' says he, 'for leaving you.'

'Well, we'll meet again, sir,' says he.

Now, of course, Gilbert had a good deal of money, and he didn't work or didn't go to any bother, and kept spending this money, himself and his mother, until he begin to run short.

'Mother,' says he, 'the money won't hold out, and there's no use to getting a trade,' says he, 'if you don't carry it out. I'm going to rob,' says he, 'from the neighbours around me.'

'Ah, son,' says she. Says she, 'you wouldn't disgrace all belonging to you.'

'Ah, I won't be disgracing no-one, mother,' says he, 'they won't know.'

'Why wouldn't they,' she says, 'know?'

'No, mother,' says he, 'there won't be anyone able to make me out!'[5]

3 'against'

4 'the result was that'

5 'able to recognise me'

Now, he goes on anyhow to one man that had two fat pigs, waiting to sell them to pay the rent. Gilbert stole those two pigs. And sold them. He goes on to another man, that had a fat bullock. He stole him and sold him. He goes on to another man that had three sheep, for to pay the rent, and he stole them and sold them.

Now, the landlord come for the rent, to this man that had the two fat pigs.

'Sir,' says he, 'you must excuse me. I was fattening two pigs, sir,' says he, 'for the last three months, for to pay the rent. And they were stole.'

He goes on to the man that the bullock was stole on.

'Well, sir,' says he, 'I was fattening a bullock, for to pay you the rent, and the bullock was stole.'

He goes on to this other man that the sheep was stole on. 'Well, sir,' says he, 'I had three sheep, waiting,' says he, 'to sell them to pay you the rent. And they were stole.'

'Well, it must be the one man,' says the lord, says he, 'doing it all. How are we going to make out,' says he, 'who done it? We'll go down,' says the lord, says he, 'to such a witch, and she'll tell us.'

They goes down to this witch. Says he:

'There's such a man,' says he, 'two pigs are after being stole from him, that he had,' says he, 'to pay the rent, to sell to pay the rent. There's another man,' says he, 'a fat bullock is after being stole on him, that he had,' says he, 'to sell to pay me the rent. There's another man,' says he, 'had three fat sheep, to sell,' says he, 'to pay me the rent, that were stole on him. Have you any idea, ma'm,' says he, 'of who stole them?'

'Well, all I could do, sir,' says she, 'only give a guess, and I think I wouldn't be wrong. The Widow Gilbert,' says she, 'have a son, and he was missing,' says she, 'for a year and a day. And since he come back,' says she, 'them are missed.[6] And I'd say,' says she, 'he could be the man. I'd say nobody else.'

The lord went up to him.

'Well, Mr. Gilbert,' says he.

'Hello, your honour,' says he.

'I'm accusing you, Mr. Gilbert,' says he, 'with robbery.'

'Me, sir?' says he.

'Yes, you!' says he. 'There's a fat bullock,' says he, 'after being stole on one man. There's two fat pigs,' says he, 'stole on another. There's three sheep,' says he, 'stole on another, that they had to sell,' says he, 'to pay me the rent. You're the only man,' says he, 'that took them. You're gone,' says he, 'missing,' says he, 'for a year and a day. And them...them weren't missed,' says he, 'till you come back. You took them!' says he. 'And if you're not able to prove yourself,' says he, 'an upright robber,' says he, 'then I can prove,' says he, 'that you're the best robber,' says he, 'that ever,' says he, 'started,' says he, 'to rob. You'll have to prove it,' says he, 'to me, and if not,' says he, 'I'm going to shoot you.'

‘Tough enough,’ says Gilbert.

‘Now,’ says he, ‘you have to come down tonight,’ says he, ‘and steal,’ says he, ‘that ring,’ says he, ‘off of my finger.[7] If not,’ says he, ‘I’ll shoot you. If you don’t take that ring tonight,’ says he, ‘I’ll shoot you in the morning.’

‘Tough one,’ says Gilbert.

‘Now,’ Gilbert said, loitering around all the evening, ‘mother,’ says he, ‘it’s a hard one I have to do.’

‘Ah, you’re going to be shot now,’ she says.

‘I may not, mother,’ says he.

Down he goes anyhow, about half-past-one in the night, and he let in all those cattle,[8] in around the hall door.

‘Oh, there’s all the cattle,’ says the lady, ‘in at the hall door. And they’ll break up all the flowers, all the flower-pots. They will,’ she said.

‘I’ll have to get up,’ he says, ‘and turn them out.’

The lord got up now to turn out the cattle. He took off the ring off of his finger.

‘Hold that,’ says he, ‘in case Gilbert might be outside,’ says he, ‘and he might take it,’ says he, ‘during my time being out after the cattle.’

While he was out after the cattle, Gilbert slipped in in his shirt, and got in the bed alongside of the old woman. And:

‘Give me the ring now,’ calling her by her name.

7 The form ‘off of’ is common in the English of Ireland.

8 i.e., cattle which belonged to the lord.

She gave him back the...ring. Gilbert put on the ring.

‘There’s the cattle,’ says he, ‘out again.’

Gilbert got out, made it his business to get out, and put on his clothes and got home with the ring.

When the old gentleman had out all the cattle, he comes back in. When he warmed up, anyhow:

‘Now ma’m,’ says he, ‘give me the ring.’

‘Didn’t I give it to you,’ says she, ‘a while ago?’

‘You what?’ says he.

‘Didn’t I give it to you a while ago?’

‘Ah musha,[9] good man Gilbert!’ says he. ‘You took it! That’s one night cleared for you,’ he says.

Went up to Gilbert in the morning.

‘Well, Gilbert,’ says he, ‘along with taking the ring last night,’ says he, ‘you slept with my wife the length[10] I was out.’

‘Well, I had to do it, sir,’ says he. ‘You were going to shoot me,’ says he, ‘if I didn’t take the ring, and I had no other way, sir,’ says he, ‘of doing it.’

‘Give me back my ring,’ says he.

‘Here it is, sir,’ he says.

‘Well, you have to steal my...the sheets,’ says he, ‘tonight, from under and over myself and the wife. If not,’ says he, ‘I’ll shoot you in the morning.’

9 ‘Ah, indeed’

10 ‘while’

‘That’s tougher again,’ says Gilbert. ‘I’m sure,’ says he, ‘I’m going to be shot this time.’

He told the mother.

‘Ah, you’re done this time,’ she says. ‘He’s going to shoot you this time.’

‘Ah no, mother,’ says he, ‘there’s a chance for me yet.’

Now, there was an old woman at the lodge, and she used to go down for barum[11] with a barum can in the night time. He goes up to this old woman, Gilbert.

‘Ma’m,’ says he, ‘would you ever do me a turn?’

‘I would, Gilbert,’ she says, ‘if I could.’

‘I’ll pay you well, ma’m,’ says he. ‘Would you give me a lend of your clothes tonight, ma’m?’ says he. ‘And give me a lend,’ says he, ‘of the barum can and also,’ says he, ‘the net that goes on your face. I have to steal the sheets,’ says he, ‘tonight, from under and over,’ says he, ‘the lady and gentleman below. If not,’ says he, ‘I’m going to be shot in the morning. And didn’t I take the ring,’ says he, ‘last night.’

‘It’s a hard one, Gilbert,’ says she.

‘Well, that’s the only chance I have, ma’m,’ he says.

Down Gilbert goes anyway, but ‘twas a wet night. Gilbert goes down, in the appearance of the old woman. And when he was clean-shaved, he was the very same as the old lady when he had on the clothes, the whole lot. Sat down, spoke like the old lady and they gave him all sorts of entertainments. Started to spill rain.

‘Oh ma’m,’ she [one of the daughters of the house] says, ‘you won’t get home tonight, you’ll be drownded.’

‘What am I going to do?’ says this ‘old lady’, says she, ‘I’ll have to get back.’

‘No,’ says the girl, says she, ‘you can sleep with myself and Polly tonight, and you can go up early in the morning.’

Now, of course, that was into Gilbert’s barrow, that’s all he could do.[12]

‘Well, fill the barum can, ma’m,’ says he...calling the lady by her name. ‘Fill the…barum can,’ says he, ‘into where I won’t waken yous in the morning and I going.’[13]

The girls filled the can full of barum. Gilbert went to bed with the two girls. Of course, he couldn’t stir or move.

Now, in the middle of the night, Gilbert got up, and he rose the sheet from under the old gentleman, and he fired up a can of barum up between his two legs. Went back to bed again with the two ladies.

‘Oh,’ says he [the gentleman], ‘you dirty old thing,’ says he, ‘you’re after destroying the bed. You’re after committing yourself. You’re after destroying the bed.’

11 Possibly ‘bran’; with thanks for their help here to the women at the Cultural Heritage Project at Pavee Point.

12 i.e., Gilbert had no option but to stay in the house, which suited his plans.

13 ‘when I am going’; this form of speech reflects Irish language usage.

‘Whisht,’[14] she says, ‘whisht, and the old midwife,’ says she, ‘in the house. Whisht.’

The ladies got up, one of the young ladies.

‘Daddy,’ says she, ‘say nothing. And the lady in the house. I’ll get two new sheets,’ she says, ‘down from the pantry. Say nothing,’ she says. ‘Make no noise, while the strange woman,’ she says, ‘is in the house, for her first time.’

Took down the two sheets, rolled them up, put them in the pantry, put two new ones under them and over them. When Gilbert got all hands asleep, Gilbert got up, put on the suit of clothes on him, got up and got the two sheets, and away with him, up home. Went up to the old woman first, and gave her her clothes. He went from that back up home to his mother.

‘Well, Gilbert,’ says she, ‘how did you get on?’

‘Oh, I got them, mother,’ says he.

‘You got them?’ she says.

‘Aw, I did.’

‘Ah, Gilbert,’ says she, ‘it was great work.’

‘Well, ma’m,’ says he, ‘mother,’ says he, ‘sure, a trade is no good,’ says he, ‘if you don’t be able to carry it out.’

Up the gentleman come in the morning.

‘Well, Gilbert,’ he says, ‘you slept with my old wife,’ says he, ‘e’er last night.[15] You slept with my two daughters,’ says he, ‘last night.’

‘Well, I had to do it, sir,’ says he, ‘for to save my life. What could I do?’

‘Well, you’ll have to...you’ll have to steal myself,’ says he, ‘tonight. And if not,’ says he, ‘I’ll shoot you in the morning.’

‘Tougher again, sir,’ says he. ‘Oh, I’m beat this time.’

‘Well, now,’ says he, ‘if you don’t steal myself tonight,’ says he, ‘I’m going to shoot you,’ says he, ‘tomorrow morning.’

‘Alright, sir,’ says he. ‘All I can do is try.’

Now, of course, Gilbert kept loitering around all the evening, and kept his eye to the gentleman. Wherever the gentleman would go, he kept his eye on him, but the gentleman didn’t see him. Now, the gentleman was as bad trying to hide himself from Gilbert. And he goes out to this castle, out in the demense, a lone castle to itself. Got in in the castle.[16]

Gilbert goes home, and he got a great big herd’s sack, and he dressed himself up in the appearance of a saint. Comes on down by the castle, and he used to say:

‘Any poor sinners wants to get up to Heaven now...till morning – now’s their time. Any poor sinners wants to get up to…Heaven till morning – now is their time.’

The old gentleman opened the door.

‘I am one sinner,’ says he, ‘who wants to get up to Heaven till morning.’

‘Come on,’ says Gilbert.

14 ‘Be quiet’

15 ‘the night before last’

16 The double use of ‘in’ reflects Irish language usage.

Gilbert put him in the bag. Gilbert never stopped going over hedges and ditches until he landed home, and the gentleman on his back.

He beckoned at the mother not to speak. He tied him up on the pot crook, and put down a lot of fresh coal and started blowing. When the gentleman…when the bag started scorching, the gentleman says:

'Oh,' says he, 'I'm burning.'

'That's the fire of Purgatory,' says he, Gilbert, 'you're going through.'

'Oh,' says he, 'I'm burning.'

'No, it's only the fire of Purgatory you're going through.'

But he was scorching….

'Oh, Gilbert,' says he, 'Tis you are in it!'[17]

'Did you not know,' says Gilbert, says he, 'till now?'

'Ah, Gilbert, Gilbert,' says he, 'let me out,' says he, 'and let me home. And I'll give you my youngest daughter in marriage,' says he, 'and half the place. You're the best robber,' says he, 'that I ever seen, and I ever will see again. You're after doing,' says he, 'anything I told you, and you're after robbing myself,' says he, 'completely. Gilbert,' says he, 'will you let me go,' says he, 'from the fire, and don't burn me, and I'll give you my youngest daughter in marriage,' says he, 'and half the place.'

'Sign your name to it,' says Gilbert, says he, 'afore[18] I let you out.'

He had to sign his name to it, afore Gilbert let him out of the bag.

'Now,' says Gilbert, says he, 'come on home.'

Gilbert had his redress, his whole finger prints.

'That'll do, now,' says Gilbert, says he, 'that's all I want.'

Well, Gilbert went down to him in the morning.

'Now,' says Gilbert, says he, 'you can't go back on your word.'

'No, Gilbert,' says he, 'I can't. I signed my name,' says he, 'saying I'd give you my youngest daughter in marriage,' says he, 'and half the place. And that,' says he, 'I have to do. That you are the best robber,' says he, 'that I ever seen. Anything I ever asked you,' says he, 'you done it.'

So Gilbert got married to the youngest daughter, he had half the place,
put down the kettle and made the tea,
and if you live happily, I may.[19]

17 'It's you!'

18 'before'

19 A common formulaic ending for a story.

THE OLD HAG'S DEATH (JOHNNY CASSIDY)

E're last night[1] I received the letter of an old hag's death.

Every tear fell from the bottom of my heart would turn a mill.

I run at the rate of eighteen mile a minute, while I was sitting down to rest myself.

I met John Javis, the coachman, driving fourteen dead donkeys under an empty steamcoach, two old women and they roasting bugs and apples and throwing them to one another.

I asked them:

'Did you hear tell of the shower of old hag's [?] death?'

'No, but if ye go up to John Mangan's he'll tell you all about it.'

'Where does he live?'

'He lives up a long wide narrow street. It's a great big tall square house standing only by itself.'

When I went up, 'twas a great big tall square house standing only by itself, with fifteen or sixteen cabins by the side of it.

When I went up, his two sons was thrashing tobacco into peas.

One of the peas leapt out through a stone wall, had killed a dead dog was barking at a pock-marked cat.

I put my hand in his mouth and I turned him inside out.

I was followed by two eye-glass pensioners, had lost heads, legs, bodies and arms and all in the Battle of Waterloo.

I run till I stepped over a stone wall.
So easy I might, the stone wall was only the length of a cabbage leaf.
The cabbage leaf was only the length from St. Patrick's Day to America.
Cattie Patrick, she was the cleanest cook that ever was known.
She could scour scaws through her middle finger, my lord.
She lay in the day till the ditch broke on her.
A little bark come out and dogged at her.
She took out her tail and cut his knife across.

1 'the night before last'

MY RIFLE, PONY AND ME (ANDY CASSIDY)

The sun is sinking in the west,
The cattle go down to the stream,
The redwing settles in the nest,
It's time for a cowboy to dream.

Purple light in the canyon,
That's where I long to be
With my three good companions,
Just my rifle, pony and me.

No more towns[1] to be ropin',
No more strays will I see,
Around the bend she'll be waiting
For my rifle, pony and me.

Whippoorwill in the willow
Sings a sweet melody,
Riding through o'er the willow,
Just my rifle, pony and me.

No more towns to be ropin',
No more strays will I see,
Around the bend she'll be waiting
For my rifle, my pony and me.

1 'Cows' in the published text.

THE FOUR BROTHERS (JOHNNY CASSIDY)

Well, this was a big farmer and he had four sons, and he was broken down, drinking. But he says to those four sons:

'Now, sons,' says he, 'I have nothing,' he says, 'only the place. And 'twould be no use of giving it to you,' he says, 'to any of yous, because,' says he, 'you'd have nothing along with it. But what yous'll do,' says he, 'is let the four of yous go seek your fortune for a year and a day. And I'll give you the place,' says he, 'to the best-off man,' says he, 'after the year and a day.'

So those four brothers went on, farther than you or I could tell.[1] But one of them took to the County Tipperary, the other one to the County Waterford, the other one to the County Kilkenny, the other one to the County Carlow.

But now, at the end of the year and a day, this boy was leaving Carlow, and the man says to him:

'Well, now,' says he, 'you're going home today,' says he, 'you have your yearly's pay.'

'Yes, sir,' says he.

'Which would you rather,' says he [the man], 'be the best fortune-teller in the world, or your seventeen pound?'

'I'd rather be the best fortune-teller, sir,' says he, 'in the world.'

'Alright,' says he, 'you're the best fortune-teller in the world.'

1 A formulaic expression, common among storytellers.

Now the other boy was leaving the County Kilkenny, and this man says to him:

'Well, you're going home today,' says he to him.

'I am, sir,' says he to him.

'Well, which would you rather, the seventeen pound now,' says he, 'or be the best marksman,' says he, 'that ever caught a gun in his hand?'

'I'd rather be the best marksman, sir,' says he, 'ever caught a gun in his hand.'

'Alright,' says he. 'You're the best marksman,' says he, 'ever caught a gun.'

The other chap was leaving the County Waterford, and the same thing. Your man asked him:

'Which would you rather be, the best robber,' says he, 'that ever,' says he, 'went out,' says he, 'on two feet, or your seventeen pound?'

'I'd rather be the best robber, sir,' says he. 'I wouldn't be long getting it back!'

'Well, you're the best robber,' says he. 'You'd take the milk out of a man's tea,' says he, 'and go back for the sugar.'

'Right!' says he.

The other boy was leaving the County Tipperary and your man asked him:

'Which would you rather now,' says he, 'to be the best Tinker,' says he, 'that ever caught an iron in his hand – there's nothing,' says he, 'that you

won't do – or your seventeen pound?'

'I'd rather be the best Tinker,' says he.

'You're the best Tinker,' he says, 'that ever caught an iron in his hand. There's nothing,' says he, 'that'll stop you,' says he, 'that you won't do.'

'Alright, sir,' says he to him.

But anyway, the four brothers met at the crossroads afore[2] they went home, as usual.

'How much have you?' says this brother.

'Oh, I have nothing,' says he [another brother], 'but I'm the best marksman,' says he, 'that ever caught a gun. And there's the gun.'

'Alright,' says he. 'What have you?' says he to him.

'Oh, I'm the best robber,' says he, 'that ever,' says he, 'went out.'

The same thing to the other boy.

'I've no money either,' says he, 'but I'm the best Tinker,' says he, 'that ever cotch[3] an iron in his hand.'

'What have you?' says he to him [the last brother].

Says he, 'I have nothing,' says he, 'but I'm the best fortune-teller,' says he, 'that ever told a fortune.'

Up he goes. The four of them went up along to the father.

'Well, sons,' says he, 'how did ye get the year and a day?'

'Alright, father.'

'How much have you?' says he to the eldest boy.

'I have nothing, father,' says he, 'but I'm the best marksman,' says he, '[to] ever catch a gun.'

'Well, go wherever you'll get something to shoot,' says he [the father]. 'What have you?' says he to the second eldest boy.

'I'm the best robber, sir,' says he…, 'father,' says he, 'that ever lived.'

'Ah, you're no good to me either,' says he. 'What have you?' says he to the other fellow.

'I'm the best fortune-teller, sir,' says he, 'father,' says he, 'in Ireland.'

'You're no good either,' says he, 'to me. What have you?' says he to the other boy.

'Well, father,' says he, 'I have no money either. I have…no money no more than any of them, but I have another trade,' says he, 'as well as them.'

'What trade,' says he, 'have you?'

'I'm the best tinsmith,' says he, 'that ever caught an iron.'

'Alright,' says he, 'go until you get some job.'

But the four poor chaps went off again, and they went farther than you or I could tell. But the night was falling on them and they went into this wood and lit a big fire…got hungry and weak and cold and everything.

'Well,' says this marksman, says he, 'that's wonderful now,' says he,

2 'before'

3 'caught'

‘we don’t know whether we have the trade off,’[4] says he, ‘or no!’

‘Well,’ says he, ‘if I’m the best fortune-teller in the world,’ says the fortune-teller, ‘there’s a nest,’ says he, ‘in the fork of that tree, and there’s an egg in it,’ says he. ‘And if you’re the best robber in the world,’ says he to the robber, ‘you’ll go up and take it out of it,’ says he, ‘and bring it down without breaking it.’

He done it. The egg was above. He went up and brought down the egg.

‘Now,’ says he to the marksman, ‘if you’re the best marksman,’ says he, ‘that ever caught a gun, you’ll blow the top off of[5] that egg,’ says he, ‘at fifty yards without breaking the egg.’

He done it.

‘Now,’ says he to the Tinker, ‘if you’re the best Tinker,’ says he, ‘that ever caught an iron, you’ll solder back that egg,’ says he, ‘the same as you’ll never think ‘twas broke.’

He done it.

‘Yes,’ says he, ‘we have our trade off. We’re four good tradesmen.’

They both[6] fell asleep at the fire.

But in the morning, says the fortune-teller, says he:

‘I’m after dreaming, and,’ says he, ‘this fortune,’ says he, ‘is true. There’s a gentleman,’ says he, ‘in such a place and his daughter,’ says he, ‘he had only one, only daughter, and she was took from him,’ says he, ‘seven year ago, stole. And he didn’t see her with seven years,’[7] says he, ‘and I know where she is. And there’s seven hundred pound,’ says he, ‘to be got,’ says he, ‘for bringing her back, [to] anyone can get her.’

‘We’ll go,’ says the robber, says he. ‘Do you know where it is?’

‘I do,’ says he.

On they goes, farther than you or I could tell, until they got to this gentleman’s house. Up they goes to the hall door. Gentleman come out.

‘Sir,’ says he [one of the brothers], ‘haven’t you a daughter,’ says he, ‘missing,’ says he, ‘with seven year?’

‘I have,’ says he. ‘How did you know that?’

‘I’m a fortune-teller, sir,’ says he. ‘I can tell fortunes. Haven’t you seven hundred pound reward,’ says he, ‘for anyone,’ says he, ‘would bring her back safe to you?’

‘Yes,’ says he, ‘and the man that’ll bring her back safe,’ says he, ‘instead of giving him seven hundred pound,’ says he, ‘I’ll give him the whole place,’ says he, ‘and marriage along with her, if he’ll even let me see my daughter,’ says he, ‘again.’

‘Well, yes, sir,’ says he [the fortune-teller]. ‘We’re going, sir,’ says he, ‘tomorrow, to where she is. Myself and my three brothers, and we’ll bring her back. She’s on such an island,’ says he, ‘with such a giant. It’s an enchanted island. And,’ says he, ‘once[8] every seven years,’ says he, ‘they be asleep,’[9]

4 ‘we don’t know whether or not we know our trade’

5 The form ‘off of’ is common in the English of Ireland.

6 Presumably ‘all’.

7 ‘for the past seven years’

8 ‘once’

9 Use of the continuous present is common in the English of Ireland.

says he, ‘for a week. And tomorrow,’ says he, ‘is the day of sleep, and she’ll be asleep tomorrow,’ says he, ‘and so will the giant. And they’ll be in this garden,’ says he, ‘and there’s joy-bells on the gate,’ says he. ‘And my brother,’ says he, ‘he’s supposed to be the best robber,’ says he, ‘in the world. He’ll have to leap in that gate,’ says he, ‘and cut the sheet,’ says he, ‘from under her and over her, and leap out over that gate,’ says he, ‘with the lady in his arms again. And if he ring the bell,’ says he, ‘or tip the gate, we’re devoured,’ says he, ‘with the giant. But we’ll bring her back safe to you, sir,’ says he.

‘Well, I hope,’ says he, ‘you do.’

The next morning down they go to this island. Got in this boat, and swum across to this island with this boat, sailed over. Went on to the garden, where the giant and the lady was asleep.

‘Now,’ says the fortune-teller to the robber, ‘if you’re the best robber,’ says he, ‘in the world, you can leap that gate,’ says he, ‘and cut the sheet,’ says he, ‘from under her and over her, and don’t waken the giant, and leap over that again,’ says he, ‘without tipping it.’

‘And I’ll keep the gun on you,’ says the marksman, ‘and I’ll blow the head off of him,’ says he, ‘if he waken or stir.’

The robber leaped the gate clean and clever,[10] cut the sheets from under her and over her, leaped out over the gate again, and never rung the bell. Down to the boat. She never woke until she was halfways in the channel, going back.

‘Ah, men, men,’ she says. ‘I know,’ says she, ‘yous are coming to bring me back,’ says she, ‘to my father’s place, and I’m delighted with yous. But we’ll never reach home,’ she says. ‘He’ll waken,’ she says, ‘and he’ll miss me gone. He’ll drown yous three,’ she says, ‘and he’ll sink the boat, but he’ll bring me back safe.’

‘He won’t,’ he says. Says the marksman, says he, ‘I’m the best marksman that ever cotch a gun. Would there be any chance,’ says he, ‘for him?’[11]

‘There is,’ she says, ‘one chance. There’s a little mark,’ says she, ‘that you could hardly discern, in his forehead. And if you could fire,’ says she, ‘and get him there,’ says she, ‘right in the centre of that mark, he was finished. But no other way,’ says she. ‘You wouldn’t kill him,’ says she, ‘with a hundred shots,’ says she, ‘if you didn’t get him there.’

Now they were only a long ways out on the channel.

‘Here, he’s coming,’ she says, ‘in the appearance of this cloud now,’ says she, ‘that’s coming. Here he is. Make sure now,’ she says to the marksman, ‘it’s for the sake of yous three,’ she says, ‘you...men,’ says she. ‘He’s going to drown you,’ she says, ‘and he’s going to bring back me, safe.’

‘Well, if I hit him there,’ says he, ‘if I fire,’ says he, ‘and hit him there,’ says he, ‘are you sure,’ says he, ‘ ‘tis alright?’

10 An idiomatic expression.

11 i.e., any chance of killing him.

‘Oh, yes,’ she says, ‘that’s his life.’

He took steady aim and fired, and got him. But he let him too much over the boat, and and he falling,[12] he fell on the boat, and cracked the boat, and the boat started leaking.

‘We’re done!’ she says, ‘we’ll never get back. The boat is leaking too hard. But he is finished,’ she says.

‘Well, if I’m the best Tinker,’ he says, ‘that ever cotch an iron, we’ll be safe.’

He put the iron in the fire in the boat, and soldered up the boat again, as quick as usual, again.

‘Sail on!’ says he. ‘Everything is right.’

Sailed on and drew from the island, brought the lady up home.

An advertisement went out, big, little and small, for a big dance and a nobility for the lady being brought back after seven year. Those four brothers brought her back, safe. Now, of course, she was to marry whichever of the four that she’d think was the best man that saved her.

‘Well, now, daughter,’ says he [the father], ‘which of those men,’ says he, ‘would you rather have?’

‘Well, father,’ says she, ‘I likes the four of them. The four of them,’ says she, ‘played their selves,’ says she. ‘The marksman,’ she says, ‘we’d have been all drownded,’ she says, ‘they’d be drownded,’ she says, ‘only for the marksman. I’d be brought back again,’ says she, ‘safe, and a hundred men,’ says she, ‘wouldn’t clear me, wouldn’t get me out of it.’

‘Yes,’ says he, ‘marry the marksman!’

‘Well, what about,’ says she, ‘the fortune-teller?’ says she. ‘There’s no-one would ever know where I was,’ says she, ‘only for the fortune-teller.’

‘No-one!’ he [the father] says. ‘He’s the best man. Marry him!’

‘No,’ she says, ‘what about the robber,’ says she, ‘that leaped in,’ says she, ‘and cut the sheets from under me and over me, and I asleep?’ she says. ‘And leaped out over the gate,’ says she, ‘again, and me in his arms. And there were joy-bells on the gate,’ says she, ‘that’d be heard,’ says she, ‘for seven mile, and he never tipped them. Nor I never woke,’ says she, ‘till I was halfways on the channel.’

‘That’s the best man,’ he says. ‘Marry him!’

‘No, father,’ she says. ‘We were all drownded,’ she says, ‘only for the Tinker. When he [the marksman] fired at the giant,’ says she, ‘and shot him, he fell on the boat,’ she says, ‘and cracked it, and the boat was leaking so hard,’ says she, ‘we’d have never reached home. She was sinking. The Tinker,’ she says, ‘put the iron in the fire and he soldered up the boat,’ says she, ‘as good as usual again, and brought us home safe. I’ll marry the Tinker!’ she says.

12 ‘and when he was falling’. The use of ‘and’ in the sense of ‘when’ reflects Irish language usage.

DICKIE MILBURN (JOHNNY CASSIDY)

Well, there was a man one time and he was a harmless[1] man and his name was Dickie Milburn. And this woman he was married to, she'd as lief any man[2] as Dickie. But now, anyhow, there used a minister call to see this woman, back and forward, and poor Dickie didn't know a ha'p'orth about it. But says he [the minister]:

'How would we get a week together,' says he, '[and] to put Dickie away?'

'Well, I'll tell you what we'll do now,' she says. 'I'll let on to be sick,' says she, 'tonight, and Dickie'll do anything that ever lies in my power, when I tell him. And I'll tell him,' says she, 'that I wants a bottle of the World's Well water to cure me. And I can't be cured,' says she, 'otherways.'

So she did. When poor Dickie come home from work, you'd think there were a sack of fleas on her back, moaning and groaning.

'Oh, God bless us and save us,' says Dickie, 'what's wrong with you?'

'Ah, I'm dying, Dickie,' says she.

'Ah, God help me,' says he.

'Dickie,' says she, 'if you were another man, you could cure me?'

'Well, there's no other man,' says Dickie, 'is a loyaler man than me. Anything any man can do, I'll do it.'

'Well, Dickie,' says she, 'if you're a loyal man, you'll go to Athlone,' says she, 'in the centre of Ireland for a bottle of the World's Well water for me.'

'Well,' says he, 'I never heard tell of Athlone, or the World's Well,' says he, 'no more than Athlone.'

'Well, there you are now, Dickie,' says she. 'Well, if you're a loyal man, you'll go.'

'Well, if you give me till morning,' says he, 'I'll go.'

She kept moaning and groaning all night, anyway, but poor Dickie got up in the morning. Started off for Athlone, to get a bottle of the World's Well water.

But now, Dickie was gone farther nor you or I could tell.[3] But, of course, 'twas in the horse-and-cart time of the brewery, and this brewery man was coming along, and he wondered to see Dickie so far away from home.

'Musha,'[4] says he, 'would it be Dickie Milburn I have! And is it out of your mind, or where are you going?'

'Ah, no,' says he, 'I'm not out of my mind, but,' says he, 'my wife,' says he, 'got very sick last night, and I thought she was dying,' says he, 'and I have to go to Athlone,' says he, 'in the centre of Ireland, for a bottle of the World's Well water to cure her.'

'Musha, Dickie,' says he, 'you're a harmless man. I know the bottle of water,' says he, 'your wife wants! Come back with me,' says he, 'and I'll make you a clever man,' says he, 'for the time to come.'

Now, anyhow, Dickie went back with him. He gave him a few drinks and Dickie went back with him.

1 'innocent'

2 'she'd be as happy with any man'

3 A formulaic expression, common among storytellers.

4 'Well'

‘I believe you,’ says Dickie.

Back along.

‘Now, Dickie!’

Before they were near the house, he put Dickie down in a big sack and tied the mouth of it.

‘Now, Dickie,’ says he, ‘don’t budge,’ says he, ‘whatever you’ll do. And then,’ says he, ‘you’ll get the whole detail.’

‘Alright,’ says Dickie.

Now, the brewery man was passing the house and the clergyman ran out and he says:

‘Oh, brewery man,’ says he, ‘we wants three dozen of stout and three dozen of ale.’

‘Alright, sir,’ says he.

Got the stout and the ale and brought it in.

‘Now, brewery man,’ says he, ‘you’ll have to have a drink along with us.’

‘I will, sir,’ says he, ‘but I have a parcel going,’ says he, ‘to such a gentleman, and I’d be a-feared ‘twould be stolen off of[5] the car, sir, so I’ll have to bring it in,’ going out and catching Dickie, sack and all, and bringing him in and putting him standing up inside the door.

Now, of course, the three of them kept drinking away until they were hearty.

5 The form ‘off of’ is common in the English of Ireland.

‘Musha, brewery man,’ says he [the clergyman], ‘would you sing a song?’

‘Well, I never sung a song, sir,’ says he, ‘till I heard one sung first.’

‘Well, it wouldn’t become a man like me to sing a song,’ says he, ‘till I’d hear one sung first.’

‘Well,’ says she, ‘I’ll take your part. I’ll sing.’

‘Alright, ma’m,’ says he.

Oh then, Dickie Milburn, you’re gone from home
For a bottle of water, down to Athlone,
And I’ll be with the minister till you come home,
And we’re over a bottle of ale, more ale,
We’re all ‘round a bottle of ale.

‘Now,’ says he, ‘I’ll give yous my verse.’

Ah then, Dickie Milburn, ‘tis little you think,
I ate of your meat and I’ll drink of your drink.
If I have life, I’ll be with your wife
And it’s over a bottle of ale, more ale,
All ‘round a bottle of ale.’

The brewery man walked over and he thought the sack was falling and he cut the mouth of the sack.

‘Now,’ says he, ‘I’ll give yous my verse.’

Ah then, Dickie Milburn, you are very near,
Out of your knapsack now quickly appear.
If you feel slack, I'm here at your back
And we're over a bottle of ale, more ale,
We're all 'round a bottle of ale.

Dickie leapt out and he gripped a blackthorn stick.
'Now,' says Dickie, 'I'll give yous my verse.'

Ah then, set yous all merry, genteel in a row,
Some of your secrets as well I do know,
Ah, but I'll put a hump on the minister before that he'll go
And we're over a bottle of ale, more ale,
We're all 'round a bottle of ale!

Andy Cassidy with his family, Labre Park, Dublin 1967.

NOTES

1 HEARTS, LIVERS AND LIGHTS AND ALL

A wide variety of such tales are catalogued in S.Ó Súilleabháin and R.Th.Christiansen, *The Types of the Irish Folktale* (Helsinki 1967), under nos.1696 ('What should I have said/done?') through 1700 ('I don't know'), as given in A.Aarne and S.Thompson's index,*The Types of the Folktale* (Helsinki 1973 ed.) *D.O.*

2 ALONG THE NORTH STRAND

This song is no.21 in Roud's on-going *Folksong and Broadside Index* (published on CD and available at Roud@Supanet.com). This index is proving to be the most widely used among students of English language folksong today. The song is no. 4 in Francis James Child's collection of early ballads, *The English and Scottish Ballads* (5 vols, Boston and New York, 1882-1898; reprint, New York, 1956 and 1965). Also known as 'The Outlandish Knight', 'The Parrot Song' and 'Six Kings Daughters', this classic ballad is still popular with Travelling and settled singers alike. It is one of the most popular of the classic ballads in oral tradition. Scores of articles have appeared in the academic press and there are at least two books dealing exclusively with it: Iivar Kemppinen, *The Ballad of 'Lady Isabel and the False Knight'* (Helsinki 1954), and Holger Olof Nygard, *The Ballad of Heer Halewijn* (Knoxville 1958). The great ballad scholar, Francis James Child, devotes a longer introduction to this than any other ballad in his canon, some thirty-two large pages of Olympian scholarship. Steve Roud quotes no less than 604 versions in his Index. *T.M.*

3 DICK DAGLEN THE COBBLER

This song is no.872 in Roud's Index (see note to 'Along the North Strand'), and had great popularity throughout Ireland, Britain and North America. Its most popular form in the Irish repertoire today, 'Dick Darby', was disseminated by the Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem in the early 1960s. Makem learned it from a neighbour of his in Keady, Co. Armagh, who told him it came from Scotland. The great West Cork singer, Elizabeth Cronin (1879-1956), called her version 'Bold Hewson the Cobbler' and indeed the song seems to have originated as a political satire on John Hewson, one of the judges who sentenced Charles I to death. The one-eyed Hewson had been a cobbler earlier in life. The recited section of 'Dick Daglen' here is most likely to be a personal (rather than traditional) addition by the singer. *T.M.*

4 THE BLACKSMITH

This is a version of an international tale sometimes entitled 'Christ and the Smith', which is known all over Europe and which is also found in areas of European influence in the New World. It has a literary history stretching back to at least the 16th century, and is probably based on elements older still. It has been recorded many times from storytellers in Ireland. The mysterious stranger is not identified as Christ in many Irish versions of the story, including this one, but the stranger's supernatural nature becomes evident as the tale unfolds. The true nature of the stranger is also suggested by the somewhat moral tone of the story, warning as it does against greed and avarice. See tale-type no.753, 'Christ and the Smith', in A.Aarne and S.Thompson, *The Types of the Folktale* (Helsinki 1973 ed.), and in S.Ó Súilleabháin and R.Th.Christiansen, *The Types of the Irish Folktale* (Helsinki 1967). See also C.Marstrander, 'Deux contes irlandais', in *Miscellany presented to Kuno Meyer*, ed. O.Bergin and C.Marstrander, (Halle 1912), 371-486. *B.F.*

5 LOVELY WILLIE

This song is listed as M 35 in Laws' catalogue (G. Malcolm Laws, Jr., *American Balladry from British Broadsides*, Philadelphia 1957), and as no.1913 in Roud's Index (see note to 'Along the North Strand'). The song has been found in Ireland mainly among Ulster singers, with odd exceptions like a version collected in Kerry in 1938 by the Irish Folklore Commission. It turns up in several collections in North America and was particularly favoured by Canadian singers. If it existed in England, Scotland or Wales it has left no trace. The ballad tells a simple story of a young suitor slain by his true-love's father who thinks him socially beneath his daughter. In ballad norms it is unusual in that no version visits retribution on the father, although he is sometimes upbraided by his daughter. *T.M.*

6 GILBERT THE ROBBER

This is a fine version of a tale once told all over Europe and far beyond. It has been recorded in the oral tradition of India and China, as well as in the Americas. It first appeared in print

during the Renaissance period and, as an oral tale, is probably much older than that. The story was particularly popular all over Ireland, where well over 600 versions of it have been recorded from oral tradition. Seán Ó Súilleabháin describes it as the 'best-known of all' tales of this type told in Ireland (*Storytelling in Irish Tradition*, Cork 1973, 23). See tale-type no.1525, 'The Master Thief', in A.Aarne and S.Thompson, *The Types of the Folktale* (Helsinki 1973 ed.), and in S.Ó Súilleabháin and R.Th.Christiansen, *The Types of the Irish Folktale* (Helsinki 1967). Stith Thompson deals with the story in some detail in *The Folktale* (New York 1946), 174-75. Cf. also H.Halpert and J.D.A.Widdowson, *Folktales of Newfoundland* (New York and London 1996), vol.2, 800-811. *B.F.*

7 THE OLD HAG'S DEATH

Commonly called 'The Hap'orth of Lies', there are many texts of this little celebration of the ridiculous in the MS collection of the Department of Irish Folklore, University College Dublin; another version of it, 'The Song of Lies', is included in *Puck of the Droms. The Lives and Literature of the Irish Tinkers* (University of California Press, 1985), 152.

A similar theme is found in the Irish-language 'Amhrán na mBréag'. Here, the singer often gives as 'authority' or basis of the text that a man was challenged to compose a song without a grain of truth in it on pain of death. Versions in Irish are in *Irisleabhar na Gaedhilge* 12 (1902), 171, and *An Lóchrann* (June-August 1911), 5. Music and translation of another version are included in the *Journal of the Irish Folk-Song Society* 20 (1923). Ann Gilchrist treats the subject in 'The Song of Marvels (or Lies)', in the *Journal of the Folk-Song Society* 5, 20, 277-96. Closely related are the 'Tales of Lying', AT nos.1875-1965 (A.Aarne and S.Thompson, *The Types of the Folktale*, Helsinki 1973 ed.; cf. S.Ó Súilleabháin and R.Th.Christiansen, *The Types of the Irish Folktale*, Helsinki 1967). The most recent scholarly treatment of this song theme is Liam Ó Dochartaigh, 'An tAmhrán Bréagach – Iarsma ón Meánaois', in *Foinn agus Fonnadóirí. Léachtaí Cholm Cille* vol. 29 (Maynooth, 1999), 109-137. *T.M. and D.O.*

8 MY RIFLE, PONY AND ME

This song is a modern one which had a certain popularity in Ireland in the late 1950s and 1960s. It was sung as a duet by Dean Martin and Ricky Nelson and featured in the 1959 Howard Hawks' film 'Rio Bravo' (Warner Bros.) It was written by Dimitri Tiomkin and Paul Francis Webster, who also wrote 'Ballad of the Alamo' and 'Rio Grande', as well as the soundtrack for the films 'Giant' and 'The Guns of Navarone'. Tiomkin, a Russian composer who had a successful career in Hollywood, also wrote the music to 'High Noon'. 'My rifle, pony and me' as sung here differs slightly from the published version, presumably because the singer learned it by ear. It is easy to see how the song might appeal to Travellers, given its subject-matter and theme. *T.M. and B.F.*

9 THE FOUR BROTHERS

As recorded from the storyteller, this story forms the first part of a composite tale, the second part of which consists of the story of Rhampsinitus, the skilful thief. See A.Aarne and S.Thompson, *The Types of the Folktale* (Helsinki 1973 ed.), tale-type no.653, 'The Four Skilful Brothers'. For other Irish versions of both these types as well as other composite versions including them see S.Ó Súilleabháin and R.Th.Christiansen, *The Types of the Irish Folktale* (Helsinki 1967). *D.O.*

10 DICKIE MILBURN

This song is no.1321 in Roud's Index (see note to 'Along the North Strand'). 'Dick Daglen', 'The Song of Lies', 'The Hen-woman's daughter' and 'Dickie Milburn' all utilize a prose section combined with verse. Of these, 'Dickie Milburn' is the most developed example of the form, which is know as *cante fable*. As a tale, AT 1360C (A.Aarne and S.Thompson, *The Types of the Folktale*, Helsinki 1973 ed., 'Old Hildebrand'; cf. S.Ó Súilleabháin and R.Th.Christiansen, *The Types of the Irish Folktale*, Helsinki 1967), this piece has had a venerable existence and has been recorded all over Europe and beyond. In various forms it has appeared on British broadsheets since the eighteenth century. Klaus Roth prints a photograph of an early nineteenth-century broadsheet text in his *Ehbruchschwanke in Liedform* (Munich 1978), 499, and quotes two other English texts (pp.399-400). For other published texts, see H.Halpert and J.D.A.Widdowson, *Folktales of Newfoundland* (New York and London 1996), vol.2, 694-734. *T.M.*

Kitty Cassidy being recorded by Alen MacWeeney following the funeral of her aunt in a pub in Gores Bridge, Co. Wexford. *photograph by Miley Flynn*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Making this CD would not have been possible without the generosity, commitment and expertise of many people whom the producers warmly thank:
Bairbre Ní Fhloinn (B.F.), Department of Irish Folklore, University College Dublin, for her essential contribution of transcribing the stories and songs of the Cassidys with sensitivity and care, making annotations of the texts and writing an insightful commentary; her colleagues at the Department of Irish Folklore, Tom Munnelly (T.M.) and Dáithí Ó hÓgáin (D.O.), for their notes on the stories and songs, and Ríonach uí Ógáin; Glen Cumiskey of the Irish Traditional Music Archive for his dedication and enthusiasm engineering the CD: the women at the Cultural Heritage Project at Pavee Point: Kathleen Stokes, Winnie Kerrigan, Kay Lawrence, Jacqueline Power, Mary McCann and Ruth Swanton: and Brendan O'Caolain for his unwavering attention in bringing the CD to completion.

But, most of all, we thank the Cassidy family for giving so generously their songs and stories. To them and to the memory of Johnny Cassidy we dedicate this CD. *AMW*

Some of the material in this collection was previously published in Artelia Court's *Puck of the Droms: The Lives and Literature of the Irish Tinkers* (University of California Press, 1985).

Recordings and photographs by Alen MacWeeney © Ireland1967.
Produced for Pavee Point by Alen MacWeeney 2002.
Special thanks to Ivo Waldburger for art direction and design.

People have always told stories and sung songs, and always will. The sung and spoken narratives in this collection are international, all of them travellers in their own way, as Johnny Cassidy and his family were. Their tales and songs represent a vibrant oral tradition stretching back hundreds, and possibly thousands, of years. Near relations to this type of material can be found in the earliest literary collections of antiquity, throughout the classical period, right up into the Middle Ages and beyond. The stories and motifs found here span a vast distance in space as well as time, reaching across continents and oceans with apparent ease, from Ireland to India to the New World. As times change, so too do the stories, assuming new attire and a different guise.

Stories and songs of this kind are not usually taught in schools and rarely find their way into any official curriculum. Often, they are looked down upon, and sometimes they are treated with downright hostility. No wonder Travellers liked them.

The language Johnny uses in his stories is rich and colourful and full of expression, as we might expect from a skilled teller of tales. His daughter, Kitty, sings two of the songs on this CD, and exhibits a fine traditional style. Johnny's son, Andy, sings one song in this collection, different in many ways to the others, as proof of the fact that nothing stands still in a living tradition, Traveller that it is.

Bairbre Ni Fhloinn