



**sing
yonder** vol. 5

simple contemporary settings for songs 41-50 in the Roud Index

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Compiled, written and designed by Karl Sinfield

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introduction

To my great pleasure and relief, sales of Sing Yonder have once again been sufficient to bring you volume 5. First of all, thank you to those who have donated and bought copies. It is much appreciated. I wish as a token of my gratitude, I could offer you a book full of jubilant happiness and celebration. However, ninety percent of the ballads given in this book, I'm sorry to say, represent a range of terrible outcomes for women, the other ten percent involves a woman so violently in the grip of love that she kills her lover and then starts hurling threats at a talking bird. Fates for the ninety percent include drowning, burning, abandonment with child, forced marriage, and a military-style obstacle course involving traversing deep rivers while pregnant*.

And then, in the midst of researching these tales of sadness and misfortune, a terrible contemporary tragedy occurred at the heart of the folk music world, with the unexpected passing of Paul Sartin. I had met Paul a few months earlier as he was recommended to me as someone who could help with transcribing the Sing Yonder audio guides into music notation. He agreed, fully understanding the assignment to bring to life notation that's not necessarily a perfect reflection of my imperfect singing, but to consider factors such as simplicity and usability, as well as correctly interpreting the notes I should have been singing, as opposed to the ones I actually was. He was patient and gracious, and was very kind and encouraging when I sent him some books as a thank you. At the beginning of September I asked him to think about whether he had time to transcribe the songs for Volume 2. On Tuesday 13th September 2022, we exchanged a number of messages in which he explained how busy he was with the forthcoming Faustus and Bellowhead tours, and all the other pies he had his musical fingers in, but he was keen to get on with it in November and December, and we started plotting how we might meet up at some point when he reached the light at the end of his busy tunnel. And then it was Wednesday, and I was confronted with the painful fact that we would never meet, and with every account of his life and each touching tribute, that sense of sorrow only increased. And while shocking me to the core, I know it can't be the faintest shadow of the loss felt by those he had inspired, nurtured, loved and entertained for all of his woefully insufficient 51 years. I'm sure it will be scant consolation, but I'd like to dedicate this book to Paul and all those who had worked with him and loved him as fans, and most of all his family and close friends.

Karl Sinfield, October 2022.

* In most circumstances, such distressing material should be prefaced by an explicit trigger warning. However, I think if you have made it to volume 5 of this series, you should know what you're in for by now.

a note on the settings

My process to arrive at each arrangement was first to listen to every version I could find, although in some cases these were thin on the ground, or totally absent. However, generally this is much easier these days thanks to streaming platforms*, and sometimes I found more than 40 versions of each song at my fingertips. There might be the basis of something in there I can use, or at least over the course of a few listens, something might work almost untouched, something might need a bit of tweaking to fit, or if nothing else, just the general feeling of the song will lead me to a new version.

Of course, a huge help in the listening odyssey I have been on is the tireless work of Reinhard Zierke and his Mainly Norfolk site, which provides a great resource for finding tunes when the names vary (I have listed some of the alternative names underneath each song title to save you some time if you want to search for them yourself), and the site also includes a plethora of illuminating sleeve notes.

I have also suggested a few tracks for further listening. These might be related to the setting in some way, or a contrast, or just something I think is interesting. I have tried to straddle both new and old sources. But do go out and find your own favourites, they are all good, even the bad ones.

Finally, this project has also hugely increased my knowledge and appreciation of these old stories (which is the main reason I started in the first place), and those singers that have carried them for us all for generations. I have included a list of some of the sources (there are lots more in earlier volumes if you want a fuller reading list) that have helped me on this journey at the end of the book.

recordings

This book is aimed at people with basic skills, so I have made some very rough homemade "guide recordings" to accompany this book, and these can be found, along with the book in PDF format, at the website singyonder.co.uk. DISCLAIMER: It should be apparent that I'm no great singer, and my guitar skills are conspicuously average. Thus, I am the perfect test bed for these simple tunes - if I can play them, anyone can. And if I can play them in a way that's vaguely tolerable, I'm sure you will make them sound amazing.

I have used simple open chords for each setting in this book (plus alternates are given), to make everything playable for people of all skill levels. Where I have used a capo in the recording to make the song work for my vocal range, or to give easier access to embellishments, that will be noted on the song page.

* My current favourite platform is Bandcamp, it is currently the fairest way to support musicians, and traditional folk artists, especially the younger ones, are well represented there. This will no doubt change at some point as the world of commerce continues to pitch and turn in unpredictable directions, but it's what we have for now.

ROUD 41

Sir Patrick Spens

AKA: Patrick Spence, Sir Andro Wood, Skipper Patrick, Patrick Spenser

Summary:

On the orders of the king, a princess is to be transported across the treacherous Northern sea by whomever is the greatest sailor in the land. This is purportedly Sir Patrick Spens, who is not optimistic*, and rightly so, as the ship sinks during a raging storm and all are lost.

Setting notes:

First appearing in the 17th century, this popular Scottish seafaring tragedy initially found no favour in the English and Irish traditions, and only sparingly across the Atlantic. As to the events in the song, scratching the surface finds the usual murky contested waterways of story lineage. There were a number of ships carrying the nobility lost between Scandinavia and Scotland in the preceding times, but no-one can quite agree to which this ballad might refer; through time it may have been associated with several similar stories** involving intermarriage between the ruling classes of the north. Either way, it's a simple tale poetically told***, and this straightforward and relatively uncontroversial story gained considerable popularity from the post-war folk revival and onwards, giving us a wealth of contemporary versions to enjoy. Most commonly the tune takes the form of two strains taking alternate verses - I have used this here with a simplified version of the most commonly found tune, and an abridged and anglicised version of the words from William Scott's 1803 "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border" - a version that is itself an admitted amalgam of others.

Suggested further listening:

"Sir Patrick Spens", Nic Jones, *Ballads and Songs*

"Sir Patrick Spens", James Yorkston, *Hoopoe*

"Sir Patrick Spens", Assembly Lane, *Northbound*

"Sir Patrick Spens", Buffy Sainte-Marie, *Little Wheel Spin and Spin*

* In one version there is a verse where Sir Patrick is openly stunned to be asked to captain such an onerous voyage, stating "I was never a good seaman, nor ever intend to be", opening up the intriguing possibility that the King was deliberately misled for nefarious reasons.

** The most commonly cited event involves Margaret, daughter of Alexander II, King of Scotland, who sailed to marry King Eric of Norway in 1281, but on the return trip the ship sank and many drowned. Then nine years later, Alexander's granddaughter, Margaret, Maid of Norway, died of illness on her return journey to Scotland.

*** For example, the poetic image of the floating feather beds. This is often associated with luxury, but was also practical: feather mattresses were popular at sea; due to their buoyancy they could be used as basic life rafts.

ROUD 41: SIR PATRICK SPENS

A G
The king sits in Dunfermline town,
D A
Drinkin' the blood red wine
A G
'O where will I get a steely skipper,
D A
To sail this ship o' mine?'
A G
Then up and spoke an elder knight,
D A
Sat at the king's right knee,
A G
'Sir Patrick Spens is the best sailor,
D A
That ever sailed the sea.'

Alternate chords:

D	C
G	D
D	C
G	D
D	C
G	D
D	C
G	D

Our king has written a bold letter, / And sealed it with his hand,
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spens, / Who was walking on the strand.
'To Norway, to Norway, / To Norway over the foam;
The king's daughter of Norway, / It's you must bring her home.'

The first line that Sir Patrick read, / So loud, so loud laughed he;
The next line that Sir Patrick read, / The tear blinded his eye.
'O who is this has done this deed, / And told the king of me,
To send us out this time of year / To sail upon the sea?

'Make ready, O, my merry men all, / Our good ship sails the morn,'
'O sail not now, my master dear, / For we fear a deadly storm.'
They had not sailed a league, a league, / A league but barely three,
When the sky grew dark, and the wind blew loud, / And wildly grew the sea.

O loath, o loath were our good Scots lords, / To wet their cork-heeled shoes
But long before the play was played, / They wet their hats all through.
And many was the feather bed, / That floated on the foam;
And many was the good lord's son, / That never more came home!

The ladies wrung their fingers white, / The maidens tore their hair,
All for the sake of their true loves, / For them they'll see no more!
It's forty miles from Aberdeen, / And fifty fathoms deep,
And there lies good Sir Patrick Spens, / With the six lords at his feet!

ROUD 42

Fair Annie

AKA: Wha Will Bake, The Sister's Husband, The King's Daughter

Summary:

Lord Thomas tells his stolen lover (and mother of his many children) Annie that he is planning to bring a new (and more wealthy) bride home, for whom Annie should be a maid. Annie is obviously distraught, but reluctantly complies, only to discover this new bride is her sister. The bride gives her sister her riches, and returns home unwed.

Setting notes:

Way back in the 12th century, French poet Marie de France penned "Le Fresne", a tale about twin sisters separated at birth and ultimately accidentally betrothed to the same man. Looking at the details of the story, it's easy to see how a line can be drawn from this to the ballad Fair Annie, and Francis Child did exactly this, and emphatically so, although later scholars are more circumspect. Very similar ballads appear in Scandinavia - the Swedish "Skön Anna" and the Danish "Skjön Anna" - which as usual might indicate a common earlier source such as "Le Fresne" - or might not. Either way this is a moving tale showing what a grim transactional process marriage and child-bearing was, especially among the aspirational elite. The beautifully plaintive two-verse tune conjured up by Peter Bellamy (one of the finest in traditional song, in my opinion) from a number of historical sources keenly communicates the heartbreak of being told you are not good enough, despite all the sacrifices you have made, and at the same time, the new hope provided by the twist ending*. Bellamy's interpretation is already economical compared to some of the 30+ verse epics provided by Child, but it still needed some light abridgement, so I removed a few verses concerning Annie's fashion choices while awaiting her lord's return.

Suggested further listening:

"Fair Annie", Peter Bellamy, *Fair Annie & Peter Bellamy*

"Fair Annie", Piers Cawley, *Isolation Sessions #3*

"Fair Annie", Meg Baird and Mary Lattimore, *Ghost Forests*

"Fair Annie", Peggy Seeger, *Blood and Roses vol. 1*

"Fair Annie", Steve Tilston and Maggie Boyle, *All Under the Sun*

"Fair Annie", Elle Osborne [*YouTube*]

"The High Priestess & The Hierophant", Burd Ellen, *A Tarot of the Green Wood*

* As with many of these tales, the "happy" ending conveniently exculpates the grotesque actions of the husband, the only (dubious) price paid being his failure to get his rich bride's maidenhead.

ROUD 42: FAIR ANNIE

A D G D A
 "Comb back your hair, Fair Annie," he said,
 D G D
 "Comb it back into your crown.
 G D Bm G
 For you must live a maiden's life
 D G D
 When I bring my new bride home."
 D G D A
 "Oh, how can I look maiden-like
 D G D
 When maiden I am none?
 G D Bm G
 For six fair sons have I had by you
 D G A
 And a seventh coming on?"

Alternate chords:

D G C G D
 G C G
 C G Em C
 G C G
 G C G D
 G C G
 C G Em C
 G C D

"Oh, you will bake my bread," he said, / "And you will keep my home.
 And you will welcome my lady gay / When I bring my bridal home."
 On the door he's hung a silken towel, / Pinned by a silver pin,
 That Fair Annie she might wipe her eyes / As she went out and in.

Now, six months gone and nine comin' on / she thought the time o'er-long.
 So she's taken a spyglass all in her hand / And up to the tower she has run.
 She has look-ed east, she has look-ed west, / She has looked all under the sun,
 And who should she see but Lord Thomas / All a-bringin' of his bridal home.

So it's, "Welcome home, Lord Thomas," she said, / "And you're welcome unto me.
 And welcome, welcome, your merry men all / That you've brought across the sea."
 And she's served them with the best of the wine, / She's served them all round.
 But she's drunk water from the well / For to keep her spirits down.

And she's wait-ed upon them all the day, / And she thought the time o'er long.
 Then she's taken her flute all in her hand / And up to her bower she has run.
 She has fluted east, she has fluted west, / She has fluted loud and shrill.
 She wished that her sons were seven greyhounds / And her a wolf on the hill.

Then, "Come downstairs," the new bride said, / "Oh, come down the stairs to me.
 And tell me the name of your father dear, / And I'll tell mine to thee."
 "Well, King Douglas it was my father's name / And Queen Chatten was my mother;
 And Sweet Mary, she was my sister dear / And Prince Henry was my brother."

"If King Douglas it is your father's name / And Queen Chatten is your mother,
 Then I'm sure that I'm your sister dear / As Prince Henry, he is your brother.
 And I have seven ships out on the sea / They are loaded to the brim.
 And six of them will I give to you / And one more to carry me home.
 Yes, six of them will I give to you / When we've had Lord Thomas burned!"

ROUD 43

Child Waters

AKA: Fair Ellen, Fair Margaret, Burd Ellen, Lord William and Lady Margaret

Summary:

A pregnant woman is told she will be returning to her apparently uncaring lover's homeland, disguised and treated as a male servant. After a harrowing journey during which she is made to undergo a number of gruelling trials, she dines with the footmen. Child Waters orders her to feed his horses, which she does, giving birth while doing so. When discovered by Waters, he relents and announces they shall be married.

Setting notes:

A ballad notable for the sheer depth of its banal cruelty*, it might seem far fetched to the modern listener, but not so when you realise the paucity of options for pregnant women in those benighted times, and the overwhelming, unassailable power of wealthy patriarchs to do as they wish with women that had the misfortune to fall under their control. Similar though often less harrowing stories have been found in Sweden** and Denmark. It has not been commonly collected nor performed, and has only historically be found in Scotland, apart from a tiny fragment titled "The Little Page Boy" found in the Ozarks (of which one verse seems to be taken from the almost entirely extinct Gil Brenton, Roud 22) and a more complete version found in North Carolina in 1952. This is a heavily abridged version of that sung by Frankie Armstrong in 1997, based on the singing of Alexander Robb of New Deer, Aberdeenshire, collected by Gavin Greig in 1908. I felt the tune might benefit from a little more resolution in the final line, so the repeat is my addition.

Suggested further listening:

"Child Waters", Frankie Armstrong, *Till the Grass O'ergrew the Corn*

"Fair Margaret", Katherine Campbell, *The Songs of Amelie and Jane Harris*

"Fair Ellen", Ewan MacColl, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads: Vol. 3*

"Child Waters", Peggy Seeger, *Blood and Roses: Vol. 1*

"Child Waters", Judy Cook, *Far From the Lowlands*

* Influential ballad collector Francis Child described this story as "charming". This helpfully illustrates one reason that his contribution to folk music has come into question in more recent times.

** For example, the Swedish ballad "Liten Kerstin Stalldräng", in which a woman disguises herself as a stable boy and then sleeps with the lord and becomes pregnant and they ultimately marry. While this is overall slightly less problematic in terms of domestic abuse, it still raises a few awkward questions.

ROUD 43: CHILD WATERS

Em D
Child Waters in his stable stood,
Em D
Stroking his milk-white steed;
Em D
When to him come a fairest woman
Em D Em D Em
That ever wore woman's weeds. / That ever wore woman's weeds.

Alternate chords:

Am G
Am G
Am G
Am G Am G Am

"And it is with one child of yours / I feel stir in my side.
My gown of green is now too straight; / Before, it was too wide."

"But tomorrow, Ellen, I must ride / Into the north country.
And you will run low by my side, / My foot-page for to be."

And all next day Child Waters rode, / She's run low beside,
Until they came on the one waters, / The waters called the Clyde.

And the very next step Burd Ellen stepped, / The waters come to her waist;
The babe between her two full sides / For cold began to quake.

"Lie still, lie still, my own dear babe! / You cause your mother rue;
Your father who rides on high horseback / Cares little for we two."

And he has taken the narrow ford, / She has taken the wide;
But long before he's reached the middle / She was sitting on the other side.

And when he's reached the other bank, / She's come on to his side,
"Oh where'll be now our resting place / That we this night may bide?"

"Oh see you not yon castle, Ellen, / With red gold shines the gates?
There is a lady living there, / To be my worldly mate."

When bells were rung, songs were sung, / And all were bound to eat,
Burd Ellen at the low table / With the footmen she was set.

"Rise up, rise up, my bonny boy, / Fetch my horse oats and hay!"
"Oh that I will, my master," she says, / "As fast as e'er I may."

She's took the hay beneath her arm, / The oats into her hand,
And she's away to the great stable / As fast as e'er she can.

She sat her back against the wall / And gripped till it was done;
And there between his great steed's feet / Burd Ellen's brought forth her son.

"Peace now, Burd Ellen," Child Waters says, / Be of good cheer I pray,
Your bridal and his christening both / Will be all on one day!"



ROUD 44

Fair Janet

AKA: Liv'd Ance Twa Luvers In Yon Dale, Sweet Willie, Love Willie, Young Janet, William and Annet, Fair Janet and Young James

Summary:

Fair Janet, pregnant with sweet humble Willie's child, is betrothed by her ambitious father to a rich French lord. Janet and Willie attempt to elope, but Janet gives birth to a baby boy, which is taken to Willie's mother for adoption. Janet is then carted off to wed the Gallic nobleman, and engages in some high spirited dancing*, in order to prove to the wedding party she hasn't just given birth. This turns out to be too much for her physical frame to bear, and she dies. Willie perishes in grief**.

Setting notes:

This, I'm afraid to say, is yet another example of a ballad that shows how pregnant women were used as pawns in the cynical wealth-seeking games of powerful men. It is also one that has proved steadfastly unpopular, with only three official contemporary recordings that I can find, all of which, while excellent would be too complex and nuanced in this context. The eight versions found in Child's ballad collection, all written down in Scotland between 1769 and the mid 19th century, are all not only too long to be included here, but also in some way or another incomplete or otherwise unsatisfying***. Rather than try and abridge something already lacking, I decided to take the bare bones of the story, and a handful of the more useful verses, and weave a hybridised old/new song around this sparse skeleton, with a new refrain.

Suggested further listening:

"Fair Janet", Peggy Seeger, *Blood and Roses: Vol. 2*

"Fair Janet", Corinne Male, *To Tell the Story Truly*

"Fair Janet and Young James", Jack Rutter, *Gold of Scar and Shale*

* In the considerably more brutal Swedish and German versions, the dancing is explicitly commanded to test whether Janet had just given birth, culminating in yet more shockingly violent humiliation and murder.

** A couple of the versions utilise a coda involving the rose and the briar growing from their graves and intertwining, a common trope found most famously in Barbara Allen (Roud 54), but also a number of others including, later in this very book, Lord Lovel (Roud 48), which some think might be the source of this idea, which it may well be, or, if you read as far as the footnotes on page 20, you might disagree.

*** "This ballad has had the misfortune in common with many others, of being much mutilated by reciters" wrote John Finlay of this ballad in his 1808 book "Scottish Historical and Romantic Ballads", before presenting his own mutilated version. And now, with apologies to Mr Finlay, here's mine.

ROUD 44: FAIR JANET

D G
Janet dearest daughter you must marry a French lord
D G
I know you love sweet William but that we can't afford
D G
Father dearest father your wish shall never be
D G A G
Oh I'll never leave sweet William and sail across the sea

She ran into her chamber where William waited on the bed
She said we must away tonight, my father wants me wed
I won't know another love like the love I have for thee
Oh I'll never leave sweet William and sail across the sea

He mounted her upon a steed, he chose a steed of grey;
He had her on to good greenwood before that it was day.
Then they stopped to take a rest beneath the greenwood tree;
Oh I'll never leave sweet William and sail across the sea

Oh William there's a pain, a pain so sharp inside
William, leave me here to rest, come back in just a while
He did and found his lady lighter, with his son upon her knee.
Oh I'll never leave sweet William and sail across the sea

Oh Willie take our child to live with your dear mother
For I cannot care for him, the pain has drawn me under
Take me home and lie me in my bower quietly
Oh I'll never leave sweet William and sail across the sea

Her father came into her bower and cast his eyes around
You must away to your wedding for your lord awaits your hand
Prepare the bride and place her up upon my finest steed
Oh I'll never leave sweet William and sail across the sea

When she came into the hall, they gave her a brooch and ring,
And when she came to meet her lord, they had a fair wedding.
When dinner it was past and done, and dancing started free,
Oh I'll never leave sweet William and sail across the sea

She had not turned her through the dance, Through the dance but thrice,
When she fell down at William's feet, and up did never rise.
She took her bracelet from her arm, to give to her baby
Oh I'll never leave sweet William and sail across the sea

William took his coffer key, and gave it to his man:
'Go home, and tell my mother dear, my horse he has me slain;
I'll lay here with my sweet bride unto eternity
So she'll never leave sweet William and sail across the sea

Alternate chords:

A		D
	A	D
A		D
	A	D
A	D	E D

ROUD 45

Bonnie Susie Cleland

AKA: Lady Maisry, Lady Maisery, Lady Margaret, Lady Margrie, Sweet Maisry

Summary:

A Scottish woman falls in love with an English lord, which is an unacceptable state of affairs for her apparently violently nationalistic* family, resulting in her being executed, normally by burning**, in what today we would call an honour killing. That's the end of the tale in short settings like this one, but the more complete story has the lord arriving too late to save her, and in some versions enacting revenge, in others dying of sadness.

Setting notes:

In some circles this song is better known as the long and gruesome ballad Lady Maisry***, first collected in Scotland in 1827. The Bonnie Susie Cleland variation given here appeared as an addition in later editions of Motherwell's collection of Scottish ballads "Minstrelsy: Ancient and Modern". The story remains the same, but this later (and much shorter) version omits many of the harrowing details, and adds the haunting if rather blunt-ended internal refrain****. I chose the version here for its concision (fuller versions of the story can be found under the Lady Maisry title) and the melody, so beautifully sung by Maureen Jelks, is based on the tune published by Motherwell.

Suggested further listening:

"Bonnie Susie Cleland", Maureen Jelks, *First Time Ever*

"Bonnie Susie Cleland", Concerto Caledonia, *Revenge of the Folksingers*

"Susie Cleland", June Tabor, *Freedom and Rain*

"Bonnie Susie Cleland", Bella Hardy, *Night Visiting*

"Lady Maisry", Lady Maisery, *Mayday*

"Lady Maisry", Lucy Pringle & Chris Wright, *The Speaking Heart*

* I hesitate to use the word "refreshing" under the circumstances, but it is certainly unusual to find a matrimonial tragedy based on a mismatch of nationality rather than social or economic class.

** The choice of burning as a punishment immediately makes one think of the sentence for witchcraft, leading some commentators to wonder if there is a supernatural element to this story. However there are also apocryphal stories of women in Scotland being burned at the stake for consorting with English soldiers in the aftermath of General Monck's siege of Dundee in 1651, which would seem to be a more likely inspiration.

*** The name Maisry/Maisery is common in traditional song. See also Roud 46 over the page. Also, see also: the excellent trio Lady Maisery, who, to confuse matters further, recorded their own version of Lady Maisry in 2013.

**** Some modern tellings, e.g. June Tabor's fine and upbeat version replace 'burnt' with 'married' - which is an option if you want to put it on your set list for a children's party or wedding reception.

ROUD 45: BONNIE SUSIE CLELAND

C Am
There lived a lady in Scotland,
G Am F
(Refrain) Say hey my love and oh my joy;
C Am
There lived a lady in Scotland,
F G
(Refrain) Who dearly loved me;
F Am
There lived a lady in Scotland,
F Am G F
And she's fallen in love with an Englishman,
C F Am G F
(Refrain) And bonnie Susie Cleland, to be burnt in Dundee.

Alternate chords:

G Em
D Em C
G Em
C D
C Em
C Em D C
G C Em D C

The father unto the daughter came...
Saying will you forsake that Englishman, And bonnie...

If you'll not that Englishman forsake...
O I will burn you at a stake, And bonnie...

I will not that Englishman forsake...
Though you should burn me at a stake. And bonnie...

O where'll I get a pretty little boy...
Who'll carry tidings to my joy, And bonnie...

Here am I a pretty little boy...
Who will carry tidings to thy joy, And bonnie...

Give to him this right hand glove...
Tell him to get another love. And bonnie...

Give to him this little penknife...
Tell him to get another wife, And bonnie...

Give to him this gay gold ring...
Tell him I'm going to my burning. And bonnie...

Her father he came up the stake...
Her brother be the fire did make.
And bonnie Susie Cleland was burnt in Dundee.



ROUD 46

Lord Ingram and Chiel Wyet

AKA: Child Vyet, Earl Laudale, Chiel Vyet, Auld Ingram

Summary:

Lord Ingram and Chiel Wyet are related (as brothers, or uncle and nephew, depending on the version), but both love the same woman, Lady Maisry. However Maisry only loves Wyet, so much so that they have secretly conceived a child together. Ingram approaches Maisry's father to seek her hand. The father agrees, presumably swayed by the lord's greater social standing. On the wedding night, when the truth is revealed, Ingram and Wyet kill each other, and Maisry subsequently goes mad with grief.

Setting notes:

Despite the female protagonist having the same name*, and the vaguely similar familial status/tragedy themes, I can find no connection between this and the previous ballad**. Francis Child has them together in his collection (65 and 66), but makes no connection between the two in his text. Whether the two evolved as variations on a theme, or the names within similar ballads were confused during transmission, we shall never know. Francis Child found only five versions of this ballad, and it did not travel to the US or Canada. Bertrand Bronson, the tireless detective of tunes associated with traditional ballads, found two, neither of which he gave much credence to, as their meter did not match any published version of the words. Possibly as a result of this, there are no contemporary performances to draw upon. However, the popular medieval Danish fratricide ballad *Ebbe Skammelsøn* is regarded as an equivalent, and does have an associated tune, and it's from this I have drawn inspiration, and added a repeat as an homage to the Danish version's refrain. The words are mostly taken from Peter Buchan's 1826 collection "Ancient Ballads and Songs of the North of Scotland", abbreviated and anglicised, with a few minor amendments for sense and scansion. I took the final verse from Motherwell's 1827 "Minstrely: Ancient and Modern".

Suggested further listening:

"Ebbe Skammelsøn", Birgitte Grimstad, *Da Jeg Var Pige*

* See also Roud 198: William and Lady Maisry - also known as William and Lady Marjorie. The most likely explanation is that these are names in the Maisie/Mairead/Marsaili family which while not so commonplace today, were all extremely prevalent variations on 'Margaret' - itself a very common appellation in ballad-world.

** A relief. These two tragedies befalling one person would be a bit much, even by folk ballad standards.

ROUD 46: LORD INGRAM

Am G F
Lord Ingram and Chiel Wyet
Am Em Am
Were both born in one bower;
G F
They fell in love with one lady,
Am Em Am
Their honour was but poor.
Em Am G Am
They fell in love with one lady, their honour was but poor

Alternate chords:

Em	D	C	
Em	Bm	Em	
	D	C	
Em	Bm	Em	
Bm	Em	D	Em

2. Lord Ingram wooed Lady Maisry / With leave of all her kin;
And every one gave full consent, / But she said no to him.
3. Lord Ingram courted Lady Maisry / In the garden among the flowers;
Chiel Wyet courted Lady Maisry / Among her halls and bowers.
4. Her father turned Ingram about, / A solemn oath swore he,
Saying, she shall be the bride this night, / And you bridegroom shall be.
5. Sweetly played the merry organs, / Into the wedding hall;
But still stood Lady Maisry, / And let the tears down pour.
6. When they had eaten and well drunken, / And all men bound for bed,
Lord Ingram and Lady Maisry / In a chamber they were laid.
7. He laid his hand upon her breast, / And thus pronounced he:
'There is a child within your sides, / Who may the father be?
8. 'Who ever be your child's father, / You will father it on me;
The fairest castle of Snowdon / Your morning gift shall be.'
9. 'Who ever be my child's father, / I'll never keep it on thee;
For better love I my child's father / Nor ever I'll love thee.'
10. Next morning in her father came, / Well belted with a brand;
Then up it starts him Lord Ingram, / He was an angry man.
11. 'Oh alas! my daughter dear, / What's this I hear of thee?
I thought you were a good woman / As in the north country.'
12. 'O hold your tongue, my father dear, / And let your sorrows be;
I never liked Lord Ingram, / You know that you forced me.'
13. Then in came him Chiel Wyet, / Well belted with a brand;
Then up it raise him Lord Ingram, / He was an angry man.
14. 'Get up, Get up, now Lord Ingram, / Rise up immediately,
That you and I the quarrel try, / Who gains the victory.'
15. Then up it starts Chiel Wyet, / Shook back his yellow hair;
The first one stroke Chiel Wyet drew, / He wounded Ingram sore.
16. Then up it starts Lord Ingram, / Shed back his coal-black hair
The first one stroke Lord Ingram drew, / Chiel Wyet needed no more.
17. There was no pity for those two lords, / When they were lying dead;
But all was for Lady Maisery, / In that bower she went mad.



ROUD 47

Young Hunting

AKA: Love Henry, Earl Richard, The Proud Girl, False Lady

Summary:

A woman invites her lover into bed, but he declines, explaining that he has a wife that he much prefers back home in Scotland. Not taking this news well, she stabs him, then briefly tries to heal his wound, but ultimately lets him die and tips his body into a nearby well. Later, while reflecting on his demise, she is admonished by a small bird*, which she proceeds to threaten with a violent death.

Setting notes:

Another ballad that while initially popular in Scotland, had almost died out by the 20th century in the British Isles. It was kept alive in the US, presumably by early settlers carrying it with them across prairies and plains in the 17th century, and the ballad spread widely in the state of Virginia (collector Arthur Kyle Davis assembled 12 versions there and published them in his 1929 and 1950 collections), and from there travelled to North Carolina, Kentucky, the Ozarks and eventually the southwestern states. It gained a new lease of life during the post war folk revival, and contemporary settings occupy three broad strands: the English "Earl Richard" versions, the Scottish "Young Hunting", and the American "Love Henry" (although as usual there is plenty of cross-pollination). The words given here were one of six versions collected by Cecil Sharp from the Southern Appalachian mountains in August 1916, this one being sung by Mrs. Jane Gentry in Hot Springs, North Carolina. The tune was collected in Co. Roscommon, Ireland, in 1974 (although it's clearly related to many older US versions of the melody), and I have received it (and bludgeoned it into a simple form) via Brian Peters.

Suggested further listening:

"Young Hunting", Brian Peters, *Ballads (Various Artists)*

"Earl Richard", Tim Hart and Maddy Prior, *Heydays*

"Henry Lee", Dick Justice, *Vintage Folk, Vol. 2*

"Earl Richard", Spiers and Boden, *Through and Through*

* The story bears comparison with Roud 21 - The Outlandish Knight, where a woman also kills a man and has a subsequent discussion with a bird, although both events have quite different circumstances. While sometimes jarringly surreal, the idea of a judgemental talking bird is not uncommon in folklore, echoing lingering pagan beliefs about human souls entering animals to become moral arbiters of the tale in hand. It might also be worth mentioning (recognising the cross pollination of stories across Northern Europe) that in the 17th century the Dutch word for bird, "vogelen" was a vulgar euphemism for sex, a fact which is gleefully seized upon by scholars of renaissance art. You'll never look at an old painting of a pheasant the same way again.

ROUD 48

Lord Lovel

AKA: Lord Lovat, Lord Levett, Lord Lovely, Milk White Steed, Lord Duneagle

Summary:

An adventurer goes to sea, leaving his wife, broken-hearted, behind. After roving for some time, a premonition comes to him in a dream that she has died. He heads home to find it to be true, then dies in grief. In death they are reunited in that most romantic of horticultural ballad tropes, the intertwined rose and briar growing from their graves*.

Setting notes:

Seemingly something of a Frankenstein's ballad (ie. bolted together from the component parts of other songs), in some quarters this is not well regarded due to its uncomplicated storyline. Unaccountably furious tune collector Bertrand Bronson calls it "too too insipid" and grumpily ascribes its popularity to its catchy melody. I think it's also possible to imagine a short song consisting of familiar elements being easily transmitted orally, while also giving latitude to performers to add emotion of their own; that certainly seems to be the case with some notably powerful early source recordings by Jeannie Robertson, Lizzie Higgins, and Jean Ritchie. Its spread from its first appearance in Northumbria in the 18th century was initially modest, until a very popular 1846 London broadside brought it mass appeal all around Britain** and the US***. This is a lightly abridged version of the words as sung by Peter Bellamy, which are closely related to the aforementioned broadside. The tune comes from the haunting 1960 recording of Jean Ritchie - she learned it from her uncle Jason, and it's a version of the most prevalent melody found in the US.

Suggested further listening:

"Lord Lovel", Jean Ritchie, *Folk Mornings*

"Lord Lovel", Jon Rennard, *The Parting Glass*

"Lord Lovell", Mary Humphries & Anahata, *English Folk Field Recordings Vol. 2*

"Lord Lovel", Alan Lomax, *Texas Folk Songs*

"Lord Lovat", Lizzie Higgins, *Up and Awa' Wi' the Laverock*

* Some believe this ballad to be the original source of this idea. However, way back in 8AD, Ovid told the story of a kind elderly couple, Baucis and Philemon, who in death became entwined oak and linden trees.

** Later Scottish versions change the protagonist to "Lord Lovat" - an actual title in the Peerage of Scotland, formed in 1458. A good example of how ballads often become connected to historical characters and events in a post hoc fashion, reinventing the story for greater relevance and popularity.

*** Harold Thompson in his 1939 "Body, Boots and Britches" describes Lord Lovel as "a ballad so popular that in some parts of the US collectors are said to groan when they hear the name".

ROUD 48: LORD LEVEL

D G D
Lord Level he stood at his own castle gate
A
Combing his milk-white steed,
D Bm G
And by came Lady Nancy Belle
D G Bm
To bid Lord Level Godspeed, Godspeed.
A D
To bid Lord Level Godspeed.

Alternate chords:

G	C	G
	D	
G	Em	C
G	C	Em
D	G	

“And where are you going, Lord Level?”, she said,
“And where are you going?”, said she.
“I’m leaving, my Lady Nancy Belle,
Strange countries for to see, to see,” x2

“How long you’ll be gone Lord Level?”, she said,
“How long you’ll be gone?”, said she.
“In a year or two, or three at the most,
I’ll return to my Lady Nancy, Nancy,” x2

But he’d not been gone for a year and a day,
Strange countries for to see,
When a sudden thought it came into his mind,
He’d return to his Lady Nancy, Nancy, x2

So he rode and he rode on his milk-white steed
Until he came to London Town;
And there he heard them church bells ring
And the people in mourning around, around, x2

“Ah! who is dead?”, Lord Level he cried,
“Ah! who is dead?”, said he.
“Well, a lady is dead,” an old woman said,
“And they call her the Lady Nancy, Nancy,” x2

Now Lady Nancy, she died as it might be today,
And Lord Level died as tomorrow.
Lady Nancy died of a broken heart,
Lord Level he died from sorrow, from sorrow, x2

And they buried Lady Nancy in the higher chancel,
They buried Lord Level the lower,
And out of her bosom there grew a red rose,
And out of Lord Level sweet briar, sweet briar, x2

Yes they grew and they grew to the top of the church
Until they could not grow no higher.
And it’s there they entwined in a true lover’s knot
For true lovers all to admire, admire, x2

ROUD 49

Lord Gregory

AKA: The Lass of Roch Royal, Lass of Aughrim, Fair Annie of Lochroyan

Summary:

A young woman, pregnant (or sometimes with a baby in her arms) to wealthy Lord Gregory, turns up at his castle to plead for him to take her in. Gregory we later learn is (allegedly) asleep when she arrives, and in a slightly farcical turn of events, his mother* hides behind the door and pretends to be her son, and harshly sends her away. When Gregory wakes up he rushes to find her**, but sadly he discovers her drowned body in the river.

Setting notes:

A multi-purpose ballad that has been transmitted whole, and also as some of its constituent parts. Most famously, the North American "Who's Going to Shoe My Pretty Little Foot" variant, a slight, popular ditty that seems to have taken the corresponding verse*** of the ballad, and little else. Another mutable aspect of the ballad is the place name, that is variously Aughrim, Ogram, Rochroyan, and others. Also the woman at the door is often a poor shivering waif, but in earlier Scottish versions she is a woman of means who has built her own fine boat in order to catch up with Gregory. You could easily imagine how a singer or poet might change the protagonist to elicit more pathos for their song. Widely known in its early life, the ballad has blossomed in popularity throughout the recorded era; there are a host of early versions collected from Britain, Ireland and the US, and that popularity continues today. I took this tune from golden-voiced pub landlord Ollie Conway from Co. Clare, and the concise words are from Scottish singer Jock McEvoy, as collected by Hamish Henderson in 1965.

Suggested further listening:

"Lord Gregory", Shirley Collins, *Folk Routes, New Routes*

"Fair Annie of Lochroyan", Burd Ellen, *Silver Came*

"Lord Gregory", Sam Lee and Friends, *The Fade in Time*

* Sometimes it's his father, and sometimes the door-opener is not clearly referenced and we must imagine the poor woman having this heart-broken dialogue with herself, outside a castle, ravaged by the wind and rain.

** One would hope his intention was to bring her home and give her the comfortable life she and her child deserved, but this is ballad-world, so I wouldn't be too certain.

*** It's an example of a "floating verse" - part of a song that is translocated from one ballad to another, either mistakenly or deliberately added for dramatic effect. This particular one appears in about a dozen different ballads. But it didn't float as far as the version printed here.

Alternate chords:

D	G	C	G
	D	C	G

ROUD 49: Lord Gregory

G C F C
"Go back from these windows, and likewise this hall,
Lest dapping in the sea, you should find your downfall."

"I am a king's daughter, and I come from Cappelquin
In search of Lord Gregory, and I can't find him.

"The rain beats on my yellow locks, and the dew wets me still;
My babe is cold in my arms; Lord Gregory, let me in."

"Lord Gregory is not here, and henceforth can't be seen;
He has gone to bonnie Scotland to bring home his new queen."

"Oh remember, Lord Gregory, on that night in Cappelquin
When we both changed pocket-handkerchiefs, and that against my will.

For yours was pure linen, love, and mine but coarse cloth;
Yours cost a guinea, love, and mine cost one groat."

"Go back from these windows, and likewise this hall,
Lest dapping in the sea, you should find your downfall."

"Do ye remember, Lord Gregory, on that night in my father's hall,
When you stole away my fond heart, and that was worst of all?"

"Go back from these windows, and likewise this hall,
Lest dapping in the sea, you should find your downfall."

"A curse on you, father, and my curse has been sworn
For I dreamt the Maid of Arran came rapping at my door."

"Oh, lie down, you foolish one; oh lie down and sleep,
For 'tis long ago my weary locks were wetting in the deep."

"Oh, saddle me my black horse, the brown and the bay;
Go, saddle me the best horse in my stable this day.

"If I range over valleys, and over mountains wild,
Till I find the Maid of Arran, and I'll lie down by her side."

ROUD 50

Sweet William's Ghost

AKA: Lady Margaret and Sweet William, Sweet William and May Margaret, Lady Margaret, Willie's Ghost, There Cam' a Ghost, Young William, My Willie-0

Summary:

Like Proud Lady Margaret* (Roud 37), this is what is known in the trade as a revenant ballad - basically, a ghost has something** to say to the living. In this case, William returns from the dead to plead his living lover Margaret for his commitment of marriage to be rescinded, so he can rest peacefully in his grave. She is initially sceptical, but is eventually persuaded to release him. She follows the spirit of William to his graveside and begs to join him, but when informed there's no room for her, she either wishes him good rest, or dies of grief herself.

Setting notes:

Since it features the common ballad names William and Margaret, and the fact there are other ballads*** that share very similar titles, some of the musical and lyrical lineage of this song has been garbled with the passage time. Scottish poet Allan Ramsay was the first to publish it in his important 1724 collection of Scottish songs quaintly titled "The Tea-Table Miscellany". The folklore surrounding this ballad is discussed at length by Lowry Charles Wimberley in his 1928 book "Folklore in the English and Scottish Ballads", covering subjects including burial traditions, concepts of heaven and hell, hair-combing, ghost motivation and behaviour, colours and sounds, and methods of enchantment, as well as comparisons to popular non-Anglosphere ballads, such as the Danish "Fæstemanden i Graven" (The Betrothed in the Grave). The version given here is learned from the magical 1975 Paddy Tunney recording, titled "Lady Margaret".

Suggested further listening:

"Lady Margaret", Paddy Tunney, *The Mountain Streams Where the Moorcocks Crow*

"Sweet William's Ghost", Alasdair Roberts & Völvur, *The Old Fabled River*

"Lady Margaret", Green Ribbons, *Green Ribbons*

"Lady Margaret", Dave Webber & Anni Fentiman, *Away from it All*

"Sweet William's Ghost", Fay Hield, *Wrackline*

"Sweet William's Ghost", Dean Gitter, *Ghost Ballads*

* Due to some common elements, it is believed a bit of blending might have gone on between the two ballads.

** Normally this is something bad, but mercifully in this case it's just a relatively polite request, and one that is ultimately granted, albeit with the high chance of a grief-induced death for the requestee.

*** Possibly the most commonly confused being Fair Margaret and Sweet William (Roud 253)

ROUD 50: SWEET WILLIAM'S GHOST

Dm C Dm
Lady Margaret she lay on her fine feather bed,
A
The midnight hour drew nigh,
Dm C Gm
When the ghostly form came to her room,
Dm Am Dm C Dm Am Dm
And to her it did appear, appear, and to her it did appear.

Alternate chords:

Am G Am
E
Am G Dm
Am Em Am G Am Em Am

“Are you my father, the king?” she said, / “Are you my brother John?
Or are you my true love William,” she said / “Coming home from Scotland along.”

“I’m not your father, the king,” he said, / “Nor am I your brother John,
But I am your sweetheart William,” he said, / “Coming home from Scotland along,

“Oh Margaret, Lady Margaret,” he said, / “For love or charity,
Will you give me back the plighted troth / That once, love, I gave thee?”

“I’ll not give you back your plighted troth / Or any such a thing,
Until you bring me to my father’s hall / Where oft-times we have been.”

And he took her then to her own father’s hall, / And as they entered in
The gates flew open of their own free will / For to let young William in.

“Oh Margaret, Lady Margaret,” he said, / “For love or charity,
Will you give me back the treasure trove / That once, love, I gave thee?”

“I’ll not give you back your treasure trove / Or any such a thing,
Until you bring me to my own father’s hall / And marry me with a ring”

He took her then to yon high churchyard, / And as they entered in
The gates flew open of their own sweet will / For to let young William in

“Oh Margaret, Lady Margaret,” he said, / “For love or charity,
Will you give me back the plighted troth / That once, love, I gave thee.”

Then out of her pocket she drew a cross / And she laid it on his breast,
Saying, “Here is back your plighted troth / In Heaven may your soul find rest.”

“Oh the winds do blow and the moorcock crow / And it’s nearly breaking day,
And it’s time that the living should part from the dead, / So now I must away.”

More info and the audio files that accompany this book can be found at

singyonder.co.uk*

Some things that helped me and/or you might enjoy, in addition to those found in Volumes 1-4**:

Books:

"The Book of British Ballads", S C Hall

"The Popular Ballad", Francis B Gummere

"The Tea Table Miscellany: or, a collection of Scots songs", Allan Ramsay

"English and Scottish Ballads", Helen Sargent and George Kittredge (Ed)

"Popular Ballads of the Olden Time", Frank Sidgwick

"The Penguin Book of Ballads", Geoffrey Grigson

"Metamorphoses", Ovid

Online:

hms.scot - The Historical Music of Scotland

The Tradfolk.co Discord server

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Written and designed by Karl Sinfield

www.sindesign.co.uk

karl@sinfield.org

* If you are from the future and found a rare hard copy version at the back of a dusty loft, and none of the links or email addresses work, it's possible I have either died, or otherwise departed from the internet to live in a log cabin somewhere. Either way, don't try and find me, go and learn some folk songs instead.

** You can find the full list of references at <http://singyonder.co.uk/references>

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