THE NEW BRITON
GAZETTE
Contemporary British Songs Written and Sung by
Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger
Folkways Records FW 8732
Cover design by Ronald Clyne
Ballad of the Carpenter
Ballad of Springhill
The Lag's Song
The Lifeboat Mona
The Trafford Road Ballad
The Fireman's Not For Me
Come Fill Up Your Glass
The Crooked Cross
There's Better Things For You
Brother, Won't You Join in the Line
Space Girl's Song
Come All You Gallant Colliers
Come My Little Son
Fitter's Song
Exile's Song
The New Briton Gazette

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EWAN MacCOLL

Ewan MacColl is that rare combination of traditional and revival singer at one and the same time. Born in Auchterarder, Perthshire, Scotland on January 25, 1915 (on Bobby Burns' birthday), MacColl learned most of his songs from his father and other members of his family, as well as from Scottish and English neighbors of childhood days. "My old man was the best singer I ever heard," he says. Unlike so many traditional singers whose music was kept alive in relatively isolated rural areas, the MacColl family was a product of the industrial age. His father was an iron-moulder who worked at his trade irregularly as a result of being blacklisted for trade union organizing activities. His mother, from whom he also learned many songs worked on and off as a charwoman in all the industrial cities of England and Scotland as the MacColls moved from town to town trying to escape the penalties of the father's trade union activities. One writer has called him the "Folksinger of the Industrial Age." During the 1930's, MacColl found himself in the burgeoning British workers' theater movement. His natural political inclinations, together with an instinctive flair for drama and song led him to the "agit-prop" performing groups of the depression era whose stage was more often a street before a factory gate or a union meeting hall than a formal theater. In the years since then, he has become the leading presenter of folk songs on British radio and television, either writing or appearing in more than 50 different BBC programs. Song-writer, recording and concert artist (he has toured throughout Europe and Canada), Ewan MacColl is a towering figure in the world of folk music.

PEGGY SEEGER

The trip which brings Peggy Seeger to Newport marks her first visit to the United States since 1957. Dark-haired, pretty Peggy Seeger, daughter of folk musicologists Charles and Ruth Crawford Seeger, has spent the last three years traveling throughout Europe and Asia while maintaining residence in England. At the World Youth Festival in Moscow in 1957, together with Guy Carawan, Peggy Seeger was the voice of American folk song. For the past few years she has collaborated closely with Ewan MacColl, sharing joint concert programs and accompanying the great Scottish, folksinger on concerts and recordings.

RECORDINGS

FOLKWAYS
American Folk Songs for Christmas (FC 7051)
Animal Songs for Children (FC 7051)
The Seeger Family (PA 2005)
Folk Songs of Counting and Complaint (PA 2049)

Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger
appeared at the 2nd Annual Newport Folk Festival at Newport, Rhode Island, in the summer of 1960. These biographical notes are reprinted from the official program of the 1960 Newport Folk Festival.
SIDE I, Band 1:  COME FILL UP YOUR GLASSES

Tune: Traditional
Text: Peggy Seeger

Come fill up your glasses with whiskey and beer
And drink a full glass to a happy new year,
To our sisters and brothers, and may they live long,
So lift up your glasses and join in this song.

CHORUS:
So we'll fill up our glasses and drink once again
To peace on this earth and good will among men.

Long life to the miners the whole word around
Who spend all their days in a hole underground,
Whose road is a tunnel, whose day is the night,
Out of darkness and danger they bring power and light.

(CHORUS)

Our thanks to the fishermen and safe may they toil
And also to the farmer who turns up the soil,
To the ploughmen and shepherds and all men of worth
Whose joy is to harvest the fruits of the earth.

(CHORUS)

Here's to drivers and firemen and the rest of the team
Who keep the stock rolling by diesel and stream,
To the cleaners and smelters who work night and day
And the track-laying gangs on the permanent way.

(CHORUS)

A toast to the casual labouring man
Who lives where his work is, who works where he can,
To the builders and smiths and the masons' guild
May your wages keep rising, lads, over the years.

(CHORUS)

To writers and artists, then, let's drink a health,
To the people whose hopes and whose dreams are our wealth,
Whose tools are but canvas, or paper and pen,
Whose harvest is the future and the progress of men.

(CHORUS)

Let the men drink a health to their sweethearts and wives,
And the ladies, being willing, will greet them likewise,
May your children be many, your troubles be few,
May you treasure the day you made one out of two.

(CHORUS)

Let's drink to our children and let us prepare
A world where they'll live free from sorrow and care,
A world where goodwill among men is the law,
A world without fall-out, a world without war.

(CHORUS)

His father he apprenticed him a carpenter to be
To plane and drill and work with skill in the town of Galilee,
Yes, the town of Galilee.

He became a roving journeyman and he wandered far and wide,
And he saw how wealth and poverty lived always side by side.
Yes, always side by side.

He said, "Come all you working men, you farmers and weavers, too.
If you will only organize, the world belongs to you,
Yes, the world belongs to you."

So the fishermen sent two delegates and the farmers and weavers, too
And they formed a working committee of twelve to see the struggle through.
Yes, to see the struggle through.

When the rich men heard what the carpenter had done,
To the Roman troops they ran,
Saying "Put this rebel, Jesus, down, he's a menace
to god and man,
Yes, a menace to god and man."

The commander of the occupying troops, he laughed and then he said,
"There's a cross to spare on Calvary Hill, by the weekend he'll be dead."
Yes, by the weekend, he'll be dead."

Jesus walked among the poor for the poor were his own kind,
And they wouldn't let the cope set near enough to take him from behind.
Yes, to take him from behind.

So they hired a man of the traitor's trade and a stoop-pigeon was he
And he sold his brother to the butcher's men for a fistful of silver money,
A fistful of money.

When Jesus lay in the prisoner's cell, they beat him and offered him tribes
To desert the cause of his own hear folk and work for the rich men's tribe,
Yes, to work for the rich men's tribe.

The sweat stood out upon his brow and the blood was in his eye,
And they nailed his body to the Roman cross and they laughed as they watched him die.
Yes, they laughed as they watched him die.

Two thousand years have passed and gone, and many a hero too,
But the dream of this poor carpenter at last it is coming true.
Yes, at last it is coming true.

SIDE I, Band 2: BALLAD OF THE CARPENTER

(Word and music by Ewan MacColl.)

Written in 1953, this ballad soon became popular in the London folk-song clubs and in 1957, was featured in the B.B.C. Christmas round-up of Great Britain. In Castleton, Derbyshire, where there is a long tradition of carol-singing among the sheep-farmers and limestone quarrymen, the song has already become part of local life.

Jesus was a working man, a hero you shall hear
Born in the slums of Bethlehem at the turning of the year,
Yes, the turning of the year.

When Jesus was a little lad the streets rang with his name
For he argued with the aldermen and he put 'em all to shame,
Yes, he put them all to shame.

His father he apprenticed him a carpenter to be
To plane and drill and work with skill in the town of Galilee,
Yes, the town of Galilee.

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And he saw how wealth and poverty lived always side by side.
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But the dream of this poor carpenter at last it is coming true.
Yes, at last it is coming true.

SIDE I, Band 3: THE BALLAD OF SPRINGHILL

(Word by Peggy Seeger and Ewan MacColl,
Music by Peggy Seeger.)

The pit disaster at Springhill, Nova Scotia, in 1958, made an enormous impression on people in Britain. The dramatic newscasts made by CBC Halif Hot were carried regularly on British TV and, at the same time, ballads and songs dealt with the disaster began to appear in the folk-song clubs. The ballad included in this album is now a firm favourite with British audiences and created a big impression in Canada when the authors introduced it there during a recent tour.

In the town of Springhill, Nova Scotia,
Down in the dark of the Cumberland Mine
There's blood on the coal and the miners lie
In the roads that never saw sun nor sky.
In the town of Springhill, you don't sleep easy
Often the earth will tremble and roll
When the earth is restless, miners die,
Bone and blood is the price of coal.

In the town of Springhill, Nova Scotia,
Late in the year of fifty-eight,
Day still comes and the sun still shines,
But it's dark as the grave in the Cumberland mine.

(Chorus)
Five lay drowned in the cabin there,
Two were washed up on the shore.
Eight men died when the boat capsized
And the eighth is lost forevermore.

(Chorus)
Remember December, fifty-nine,
The howling winds and the driving rain,
The men who leave the land behind
And the men who'll never see land again.

(Chorus)

SIDE I, Band 5: TRAFORD ROAD BALLAD

(Word and music by Pevy Seeger.)

Traford Road runs through the heart of dockland in Salford, one of Britain's bleakest cities. The above song was written in 1946 for landscape with chimneys a play dealing with life in Salford.

I've never been out of Salford town,
The place where I was born,
Except when I was in the ranks
And wore a uniform.
But I'd sooner never travel
If the only way to see
The world is through the battlesights
Of a Mark IV-303.

I have a little baby
He's the apple of my eye,
When I think about his future,
My thoughts take wing and fly.
What kind of future can there be
With planes and tanks and guns,
With flying high and dropping bombs
On other people's sons?

I'd like to see the whole wide world
North, south, east and west,
I'd like to travel everywhere
With the girl that I love best.
But I'll stay beside the Irwell
All my life before I'll stand
In some foreign country
With a bayonet in me hand.

I work each day upon the docks
And see the ships come in
And no one asks to see the color
Of a sailor's skin,
Side by side they are working men
From Norway, China, Greece,
Why can't the statesmen do the same
And let us live in peace?

SIDE I, Band 6: THE FIREMAN'S NOT FOR ME

Written for Isla Cameron in 1950 and featured in the BBC radio series of Ballads and Blues in that year.

Come all you young maidens, take a warning from me.
Shun all engine firemen and their company
He'll tell you he loves you and all kinds of lies,
But the one that he loves is the train that he drives.

I once loved a fireman and he said he loved me.
He took me a-walking into the country,
He hugged me and kissed me and gazed in my eyes,
And said, 'You're as nice as the eight-forty-five!'

He said, 'My dear Molly, just say you'll be mine;
Just give me the signal and let's clear the line,
My fires they are burning and the steam it is high,
If you don't take the brakes off I think I will die.'

I gave him this answer, saying, 'Don't be so free,'
For no loco fireman shall ever have me,
He'll take all your love and then, when you're in need,
He races away at the top of his speed.
A sailor comes home when his voyage is done,
A soldier gets weary of following the drum,
A collier will cleave to his loved one for life,
But a fireman's one love is the engine, his wife!

SIDE I, Band 7: WHEN I WAS A YOUNG LAD

When I was a young lad sometimes I'd wonder,
What happened to time when it passed.
Then one day I found out that time just
Lends in Prison, and there it is held fast.

When I was a young man used to go courting
And dream of the moon and the stars.
The moon is a shining, the dreams they are all
Broken,
On these hard iron bars.

Look out of the window over the roof there,
And over the wall, see the sky.
Just one flying leap and you could make your
Getaway,
If only you could fly.

The prison is sleeping the night watch is keeping,
Its watch over 700 men.
And behind every cell door a sleeping like he is
Like he is dreaming
Oh to be free again.

Got time on my hands, I've got time on my shoulders
Plenty of time on my mind
There's no summer or winter, when once you land
Inside here
Just that old prison grind.

SIDE II, Band 1: THE CROOKED CROSS

(Words and music by Peggy Seeger.)

The sudden crop of swastikas on synagogues and
cemeteries in Germany and other parts of Europe,
produced this song.

Did you see (did you see)
The butcher's sign (have you seen)
The killer's medal (have you seen)
The crooked cross (have you seen)
On that cross (have you seen)
Millions died (have you seen)
When the world (have you seen)
Was crucified (have you seen)

Did you see (did you see)
On the wall (did you see)
Of your city (did you see)
Crooked crosses (did you see)
People suffered (did you see)
People starved (did you see)
From their graves (did you see)
That cross is carved (did you see)

Did you hear (did you hear)
Hitler yelling (did you hear)
Hitler ranting (did you hear)
Hitler screaming (did you hear)
Don't want no Jews (did you hear)
In this land (did you hear)
Strike 'em down (did you hear)
On every hand (did you hear)

Were you there? (did you hear)
In the camps (did you hear)
Ten million (did you hear)
Were murdered there (did you hear)
No mercy (did you hear)
Did they see (did you hear)
Only death (did you hear)
Could set them free (did you hear)

I remember (I remember)
London blazing (I remember)
Paris conquered (I remember)
Warsaw shattered (I remember)
Children dying (I remember)
Smoke and flames (I remember)
Bombs exploding (I remember)
Fascist planes (I remember)

Did you see? (did you see)
Nazi marching (did you see)
Nazi bragging (did you see)
Nazi killing (did you see)
Nazi running (did you see)
In retreat (did you see)
Nazi crawling (did you see)
In defeat (did you see)

Were you there? (were you there)
In the camps (were you there)
Ten million (were you there)
Murdered there (were you there)
Did you care (were you there)
Did you agree (were you there)
When they set (were you there)
The killers free (were you there)

They are free (they are free)
Nazi soldiers (they are free)
Nazi statesmen (they are free)
In Germany (there are free)

Free to work among us still
Free to poison, lie and kill
Free to finish Hitler's plans.
Stop them now, while you can, while you can.

SIDE II, Band 2: THERE'S BETTER THINGS FOR YOU

(Words by Peggy Seeger. Melody, the gospel song
There's better things.)

Written in 1956 as a marching song for the first
Aldermaston march against the H bomb.

Kind friends, I want to warn you
Because I love us all,
No doubt you read your papers,
But the half can never be told.
Politicians they try and fool you
And get you to agree
To blow this world to glory
And end humanity.

CHORUS:
But there's better things to do
Than blow this world in two;
You could live into your old age
And your kids'll be normal too.
There's better things for you
That all on earth must do:
Gotta pledge your feet on the road to peace
And see your journey through.
Now some folks think that danger
Can't reach this peaceful shore,
They must see planes and soldiers
Before they call it war.
Kind friends, I will remind you,
The atom's very small,
It'll blow you all to glory
And you can't see it at all.

(Chorus)

Now some folks they are holy,
In the Bible it is told
That judgement comes tomorrow
So today pray for your soul.
But that is not sufficient
Tomorrow is today.
They'll blow you all to glory
While you just sit and pray.

(Chorus)

Side II, Band 3: Brother, won't you join in the line?

Words: Ewan MacColl
Tune: American trad.

Chorus:
Brother, won't you join in the line? (2)
Want to keep on breathing? Then join us in the line,
Brother, won't you join in the line? (2)
Come and save the world, man, you're only just in time.

Want to hear them songbirds singing,
Want to see the sun as well,
We don't want no fusion bomb
To blow us all to - Hallelujah!
We don't want our bodies
Scattered all around.
We'd rather go on living
With both feet upon the ground.

(Chorus)

They say they've got a clean bomb,
Where the fallout doesn't fall,
But to me, the best bomb is the bomb
That isn't there at all,
You ask for decent houses
And they give you bombs instead,
And a six-foot hole to house you in
And a medal when you're dead.

(Chorus)

The government is telling,
They're working night and day
At planning your destruction
In a scientific way.
They ask for you to trust them
And let them have their head,
And you'll find you have no problems
But you'll also find you're dead.

(Chorus)

Side II, Band 4: Space Girl's Song

(Words by Peggy Seeger and Ewan MacColl. Melody,
American Negro song, Ghost Soldier.)

Written in 1956 and now well known throughout the
London folk-songs clubs.

My mama told me I should never venture into space,
But I did, I did, I did;
She said a Terran girl could trust the Martian race,
But I did, I did, I did.
A rocket pilot asked me to go on a voyage to go
And I was so romantic that I couldn't say no
That he was just a servo-robot, how was I to know?
So I did, I did, I did.

My papa warned me never trust a space engineer
But I did, I did, I did;
She said free-fall and super-drive would surely cost me dear.
And they did, they did, they did.
I've been as far in hyper-space as anybody can,
I've traveled through the time-warp on the psychoplane,
They say a gal must travel far to find her
superman
So I did, I did, I did.

They warned me not to go around among the asteroids,
But I did, I did, I did;
They said I'd make those class-three mutants
dreadfully annoyed,
And I did, I did, I did.
They said that Saturn was too hot and Venus not much fun,
And bug-eyed monsters tended to be just a trifle dumb,
They said I'd need a blaster and a needle-freezer gun,
And I did, I did, I did.

Scene from the Aldermaston Peace March. Photo by Henry Grant
They said to find a man out there and try to settle down,  
So I did, I did, I did;  
They said my kids might grow up one-eyed, green or  
bald or round,  
And they did, they did, they did.  
My cosmic husband died of mumps a hundred years ago,  
My daughter’s in the Milky Way a-tracking down a beam,  
And I’m so old and doddering I’ve nothing for to show  
What I did, I did, I did.

SIDE II, Band 5: COME ALL YOU GALLANT COLLIERS  
(Acts by Ewan MacColl. Melody, Morrissey and the  
Russian Sailor.)

Written in January 1960 for Tyne-Tees Television Co.,  
documentary film on coal, Burning Light.

Now, come all you gallant colliers, wherever you may be  
Whether you work the Rhondda or in the North Country  
All you who tunnel in the rock and dirt to earn your pay  
They say your time is almost done and that coal has had its day.

We’ve tunneled under mountains and beneath the salt- 
sea waves,  
The slag heaps marked our victories, the rock-falls marked our graves.  
We lay in sealed off galleries and listened for  
rescue teams,  
And we scrambled at the coal-face in the lousy two- 
foot seams.

But the age of coal is ending and the new age needs new skill,  
With the fuel cell and atomic, there’s another world to build,  
And the men who built the old world, their kind will  
build the new,  
For a world’s not built by power alone but by men like  
me and you.

SIDE II, Band 6: COME, MEE LITTLE SON  
(Acts by Ewan MacColl. Melody, Come all ye tramps  
and hawkers.)

In 1959 Britain’s first motor highway, the M 1, was  
completed. Some ten thousand workers, the majority of  
whom came from Ireland and North East Scotland,  
were employed on the job. Nearly all of them had  
been driven from their homes by unemployment. The  
project was the subject of a BBC radio-documentary,  
Song of a Road, of which this song is part.

Come, me little son, and I will tell you what we’ll do,  
Undress yourself and get into bed and a tale I’ll tell  
you,  
It’s about your daddy, he’s a man you seldom see,  
He’s had to roam far away from home, away from you  
and me.  
But remember, lad, he’s still your dad, though  
working far away  
In the cold and heat, eighty hours a week, on  
England’s motorway.

When you fall and hurt yourself and get up feeling  
bad,  
It isn’t any use to go a running for your dad,  
For the only time since you were born he’s had to  
stay with you,  
He was out of a job and we hadn’t a bob, he was  
signing on the broo.  
Remember, lad, he is still your dad, and he really  
earns his pay,  
Working day and night upon the site of England’s  
motorway.

To buy your shoes your daddy built a length of railway  
track  
He built a hydro-dam to buy the clothes upon your  
back.

This motor-highway buys the food but the wages soon  
are spent,  
And though we have to live apart, it helps to pay  
the rent.

But remember, lad, he is still your dad and he’s  
toiling every day.  
But there’s food to be had and it’s thanks to your  
dad on England’s motorway.

Sure, we need your daddy here and sure it would be  
fine.  
To have him working nearer home and to see him all  
the time,  
But beggars can’t be choosers and we have to bear  
our load,  
For we need the money your daddy earns a-working on  
the road.

So remember, lad, he is still your dad and he’ll  
soon be here to stay  
For a week or two with me and you when he’s built  
the motorway.

SIDE II, Band 7: THE FITTER’S SONG  
(Acts by Ewan MacColl. Melody, The Castlerigh River.)

Among the hundred or so workers who were recorded  
during the building of the M 1, was James Hunter,  
a heavy tractor fitter from Newcastle on Tyne.  
Hunter, a quietly spoken giant, in his early  
forties had, prior to the war, worked in a garage.  
But...it was a rusty old life”, he said, and he  
had itchy feet. So, in his own words, he had  
“followed the big stuff...coal grabbing in the  
open-cast mines in India, tearing the guts out of  
hills in Rhodesia...then Australia, up in the  
Northern territory in the Uranium mines, then  
scraping out the dam on the Snowy River...”  
It was on the information supplied by him that the  
Fitter’s Song was based. Written 1959 for song  
OF A ROAD.

I am a roving rumbler, a fitter to me trade,  
I can fix you anything, a cow-shaft to a spade,  
I can fix a dozy gearbox, or mend a broken tread,  
De-cogue a Leyland engine while I’m steakin on me  
head.  
So, shift, boys, shift, do the job and  
draw your pay.

When this job is finished I’ll be moving  
on me way,  
I’ll clean me tools and wrap ‘em in a pair of  
ol’y jeans  
You’ll always find me working where you  
find the big machines.

I’ve worked in far-off places since I left the  
Coaly Tyne  
I work among the heavy’s and I wear a roving sign,  
I keep the tractors on the job a-turning up the  
soil,  
And I’ve followed my nose across the world by the  
smell of diesel oil.

So, shift, boys, shift, do the job and  
draw your pay.

When this job is finished I’ll be moving  
on me way,  
You’ll find me where the tractors are, on  
rails and hydro-schemes,  
Playing and lousy nursemaid to a pack of  
big machines.

SIDE II, Band 8: EKILE’S SONG  

The genuine ‘pincher kiddie’ as the old style foot- 
loose navvy is called has almost disappeared. His  
place has been taken by the mechanical-shovel  
driver, the ‘cat’ and Bulldozer operator. However,  
like the early canal and railway builders, the  
modern ‘muckshifers’ are, for the most part, men  
forced to leave home as a result of economic  
pressure. In Hub 16 of the workers’ hostel at Newton  
Pagnall on the motorway, 26 workers were recorded.  
Of this number, 19 were ex-fishermen from N.I.  
Scotland and from Kilkeen in Northern Ireland.
Their ages ranged from 16 years to 60 years. Almost all of them were bitter in their denunciation of a system which forces them to leave their families. The above song was based on recordings made by James Graham of Kilkeel and Andrew and Duncan Jappie of Buckie, Aberdeenshire. Written in 1959 for Song of a Road.

Just a note, for time is short, dear, Hard the work and long the day But my heart is with you, Mary, Though I’m many a mile away.

Kiss the children for me, Mary, Do not let them pine or grieve, Tell them how I am working for them, Why our home I had to leave.

Building dams, airfields and factories, Moving concrete by the lorry, I’ll be with you in October, When I’m finished on the road.

**Other Interesting Recordings**

**In the Folkways Catalogue**

**12"—33 1/3 rpm LP**

**F9205 BALLADS RELIQUES.** Early English ballads from the Child and Percy collections, sung in traditional style by Horace Nyce, incl. Thrice Ravens, Sir Patrick Spence, Queen’s Marriage, over 15 others.

**F9210 FOLK BALLADS OF THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING WORLD.** 15 traditional American-Australian ballads sung by Paul Clayton, incl. Lass of Loch Royal, Derby River, Lillibrooke, Bonnie Boy, etc.

**F9219 AMERICAN BALLADS.** sung by Pete Seeger. Folk songs favorites, incl. Jimmy Crack Corn, Down in the Valley, Frankie and Johnny, Old Smokey, etc.


**FC504 FALSE TRUE LOVERS.** Traditional English folk songs sung by Shirley Collins, incl. Unquiet Grave, Fugly Dew, Scarborough Fair, etc. Edited by Alan Lomax. "A folk artist of major quality."—San Francisco Chronicle.

**FM400 SONGS OF ARAN.** Recorded by Sidney Robertson Cowell, sung in Gaelic by authentic singers from Isles of Aran, incl. Come to the Fair, Song of Tea, Keening, Lallabie, etc.

**FW505 THE SINGING STREETS.** Childhood memories of Scotland and Ireland by Ewan MacColl and Domhnic Bhean, incl. singing games, election ditties, counting rhymes, etc. A fascinating document. "One of the year’s best."—N.Y. Times.

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