

The Ominibus Oak, Ash & Thorn Songbook

Comprising

The Drink-Along Songbook
God Bless The human Elbow
It's Not Yet Day (or "Time, Gentlemen!")



The Omnibus Oak Ash & Thorn Songbook

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The Oak Ash & Thorn Drink Along Songbook
By Dale Hill, Doug Olsen and Tom Wagner
was originally published in 1975.

God Bless the Human Elbow
By Dale Hill, Doug Olsen and Tom Wagner
was originally published in 1979.

It's Not Yet Day or 'Time, Gentlemen!'
By Tom Wagner, Dave Swan and Doug Olsen
is a new publication 2010.

Oak Ash & Thorn are
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Forward to the Combined Songbooks

"If I ever suggest we do another of these <qualified> things, shoot me quietly and make sure my mother gets her sherry glasses back."

--Dale Hill, ex cathedra ad homonym

The year was 1979, some time in the Fall. It was around 3 AM and we had spent most of that afternoon and all of the evening laboriously cutting and pasting and annotating the second OAT songbook: *God Bless the Human Elbow*. We'd run through two or three printings of our original compilation--*The Oak Ash & Thorn Drink-Along Songbook*--in as many years. Sales were far from slipping, but we'd also just discovered single-malt scotch on our first UK tour, so we were looking desperately for new sources of income to support our explorations in that rich but expensive vein of inspiration. We'd rejected the idea of doing a new cover page and just moving things around a bit as being too unrealistic as well as too cynical. "They're smarter than we are, you know," Doug reminded us of you, our audience.

It's now 2010, the start of a brand new century, and we're no smarter. Nor it appears are our steadfast fans. We're all still coming together to sing many of the old tunes and a whole raft of new ones, with a new generation of friends and singers--many of whom acquired the OAT habit at their parent's knees ("no dear, that's *lemonade* in their tankards. Foamy, frothy *lemonade*"). In response to a rising tide of requests for both a book containing our new material and replacement copies of our past issues, we've girded our loins and strapped on our laptops to bring you this combined issue. No more laborious typing, snipping and pasting, no siree. No more paper cuts and lurching around with scissors and accidentally taking a long swig from the rubber cement jar. We'll mouse and browse our way to publication. Not forgetting of course to get together around the table with the decanter and argue about which tunes to include and laugh at one another's choices in liquor and lyrics. Some things will just never be done online with any real satisfaction...

Using time-tested print technology the complete OAT publications database can now be held in just one hand. (No need to put down your beer.) It's taken far, far longer that it should, but here at last are three—count 'em three—songbooks in one. We are pleased to offer a new selection of old and new old songs organized as a third chapter, following the earlier songbook-chapters. In addition, we've added indexes of both titles and first lines to help you find your favorite choruses. We hope they continue bring you as much fun and contentment as they and you have brought us through the years.

In the OAT Songbook tradition, this preface would not be complete without a list of folks to thank for their inspiration and support. The list just keeps on growing as the years wheel by. If your own name isn't entered, it probably should be. Feel free to pencil it in on the line(s) provided.

Many thanks:

- To Amy, Scott, Peg, Ellen, and Sharon for vast contributions to the earlier incarnations of Oak Ash & Thorn, as well as to the first two songbooks.
- To John Roberts and Tony Barrand, who provided us with a taped compendium of sterling traditional tunes that we've mined shamelessly through the years.
- To the Copper Family, who are in so many ways the Founders of the Feast.
- To The Freight and Salvage Coffee House, our home from home, for their support of us and of traditional music for as long as any of us can remember.

- To all those who have cheerfully tended the Paraphernalia Table for lo these many years.
- [Your name here]
- [Your dog, cat, budgie, partner, child, or congressman's name here]
- [The name of the guy-on-the-barstool-next-to-you-who-just-stood-you-a-round here]

Three other people must be acknowledged here, but to merely say “Thank you” to them is ridiculously inadequate. Dale Hill was a co-founder of Oak Ash & Thorn, and co-authored the two songbooks reprinted here. Much of our attitude and style, and a good chunk of our repertoire, came from him. (He’s in Maine now, thoroughly satisfied with life, and sends greetings to all who have asked after him.) Pam Swan was able, avid and inspiring as our manager for most of this century, and was instrumental in whipping the *Old Enough To Drink* CD out the door. Mitchell Sandler sang with us for many years, and though his tour of duty with OAT happened to fall between songbooks, his arrangements and recordings are a legacy and a blessing.

We’re increasingly aware of how very special is this shared experience of singing together with you, our audiences and friends. Over the years every one of you has touched us by your presence, your enthusiasm, and your appreciation. Your continuing support keeps reminding us that voices raised in common song are among the best blessings of being human.

To all of you who love the tunes old and new, and keep showing up to sing them with us, *Was hael!** Without you, we'd just be loud and in the way.

Tom, Dave & Doug

*Old High Nordic Gibberish for “Be Well”, “Be Whole”, “Live Long and Prosper”, “Keep on the Sunny Side”, “Keep your <member of choice> Up!”, “Have another knish...a nice piece fish...”, “The next round is on Me!”, etc.

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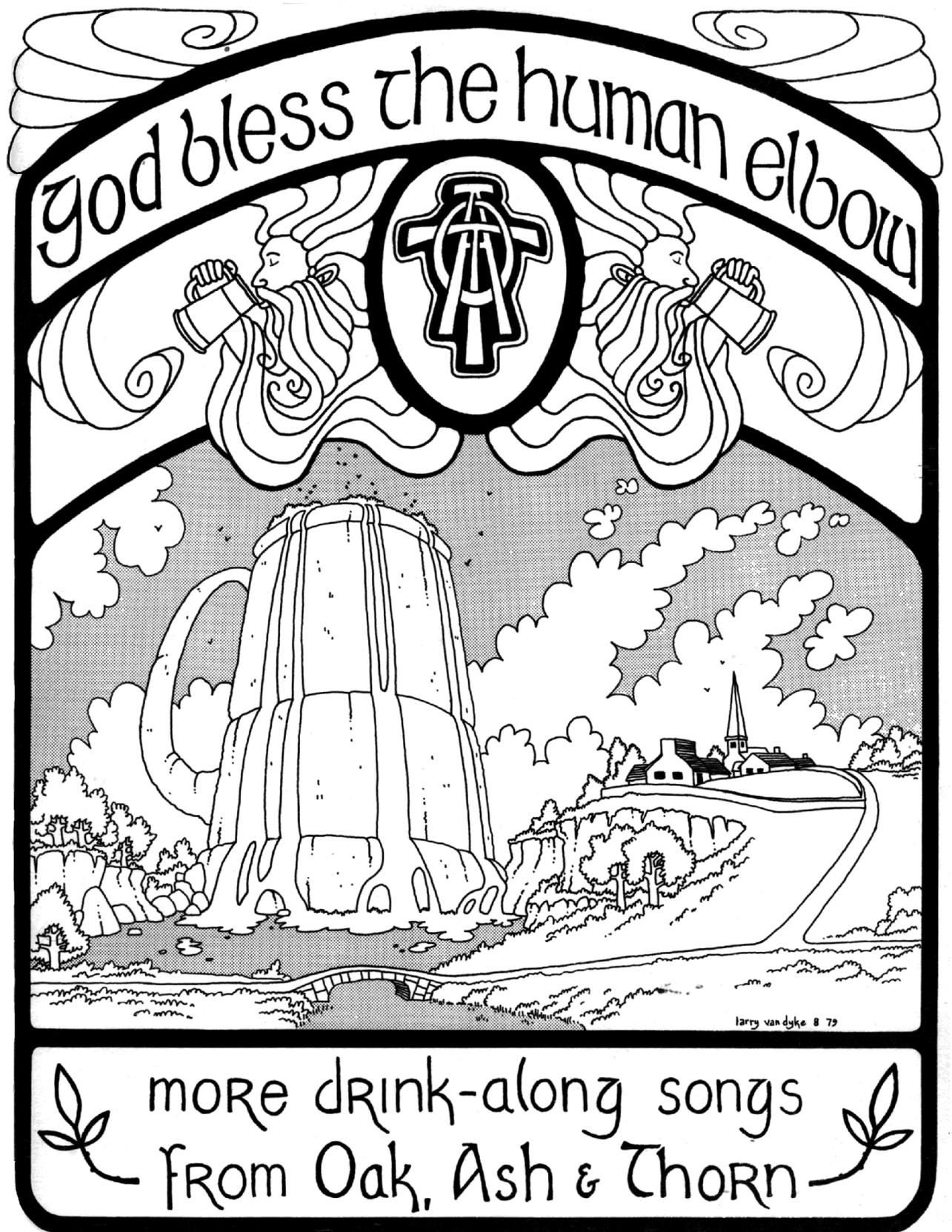
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GOD BLESS THE HUMAN ELBOW

God— bless the hu-man el-bow, God bless it where it
bends: If it bent too long we'd be dry I fear, If it
bent too short we'd be drink-ing in our ear! So God
bless it where it bends.

The musical score is written on four staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and folk-like, with lyrics written below the notes. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are: "God— bless the hu-man el-bow, God bless it where it bends: If it bent too long we'd be dry I fear, If it bent too short we'd be drink-ing in our ear! So God bless it where it bends." The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes, with some rests. The final staff ends with a double bar line.

MORE DRINK~ALONG SONGS

from **OAK, ASH & THORN**

Compiled by

Dale Hill ~ Doug Olsen ~ Tom Wagner

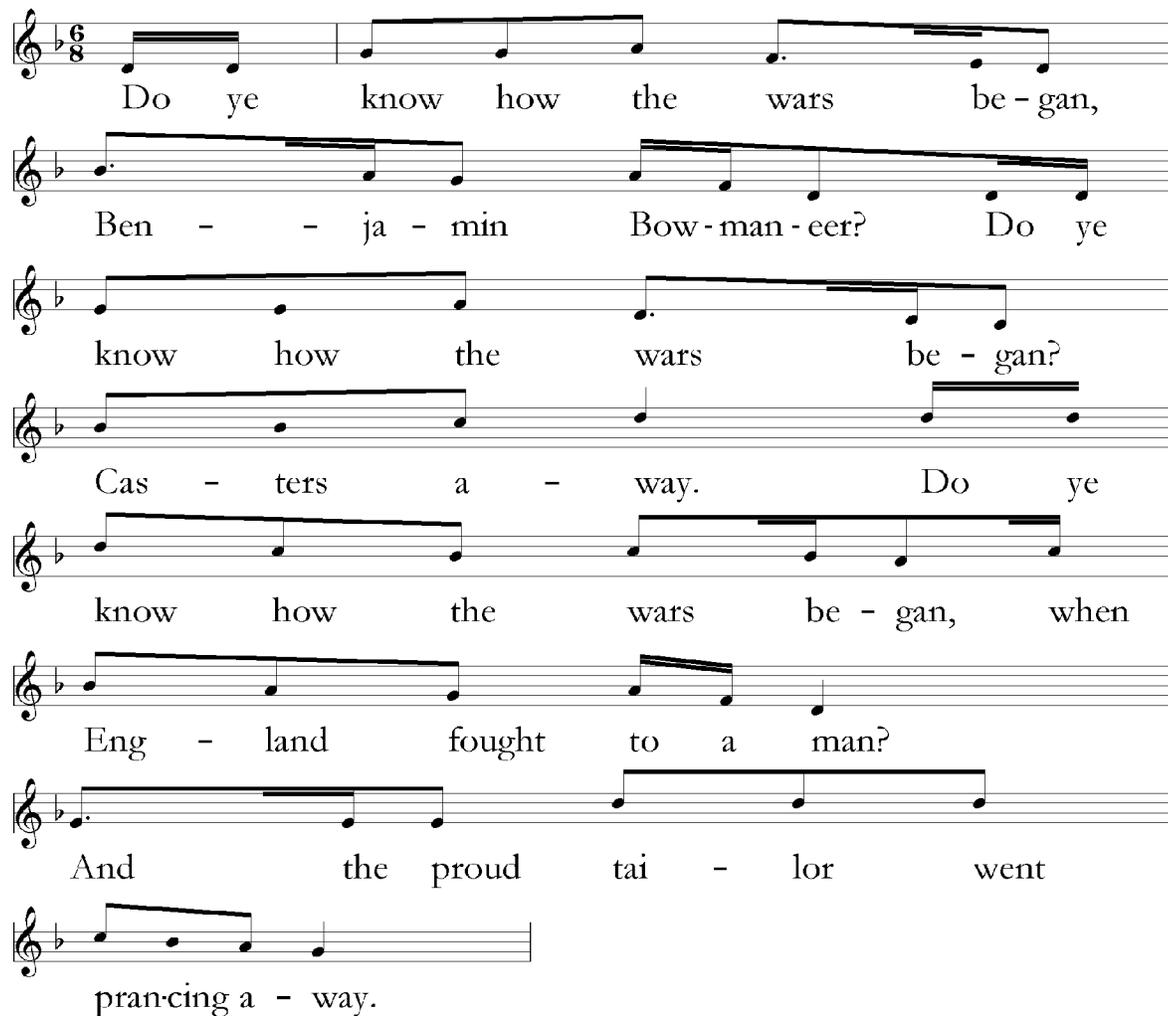
Cover Art by Larry van Dyke

Music Manuscript by Dolly Dixon~Payne

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Benjamin Bowmaneer

Traditional



Do ye know how the wars be - gan,
Ben - - ja - min Bow - man - eer? Do ye
know how the wars be - gan?
Cas - ters a - way. Do ye
know how the wars be - gan, when
Eng - land fought to a man?
And the proud tai - lor went
pran - cing a - way.



Benjamin Bowmaneer (continued)

1) Do you know how the wars began, Benjamin
Bowmaneer?

Do you know how the wars began, castors away?
Do you know how the wars began,
When England fought to a man?
And the proud tailor went prancing away.

2) Of his shear board he made a horse, Benjamin
Bowmaneer.

Of his shear board he made a horse, castors away
Of his shear board he made a horse,
All for him to ride across.
And the proud tailor went prancing away.

3) Of his scissors he made bridle bits, Benjamin
Bowmaneer.

Of his scissors he made bridle bits, castors away
Of his scissors he made bridle bits
To keep the horse all in his wits.
And the proud tailor went prancing away.

4) And as he rode o'er the lea, Benjamin
Bowmaneer.

And as he rode o'er the lea, castors away
And as he rode o'er the lea
He spied a flea all on his knee.
And the proud tailor went prancing away.

5) Of his needle he made a spear, Benjamin
Bowmaneer.

Of his needle he made a spear, castors away.
Of his needle he made a spear,
And prick'd the flea all in its ear.
And the proud tailor went prancing away.

6) Of his thimble he made a bell, Benjamin
Bowmaneer.

Of his thimble he made a bell, castors away.
Of his thimble he made a bell,
To toll the flea's funeral knell.
And the proud tailor went prancing away.

7) And that's how the wars began, Benjamin
Bowmaneer.

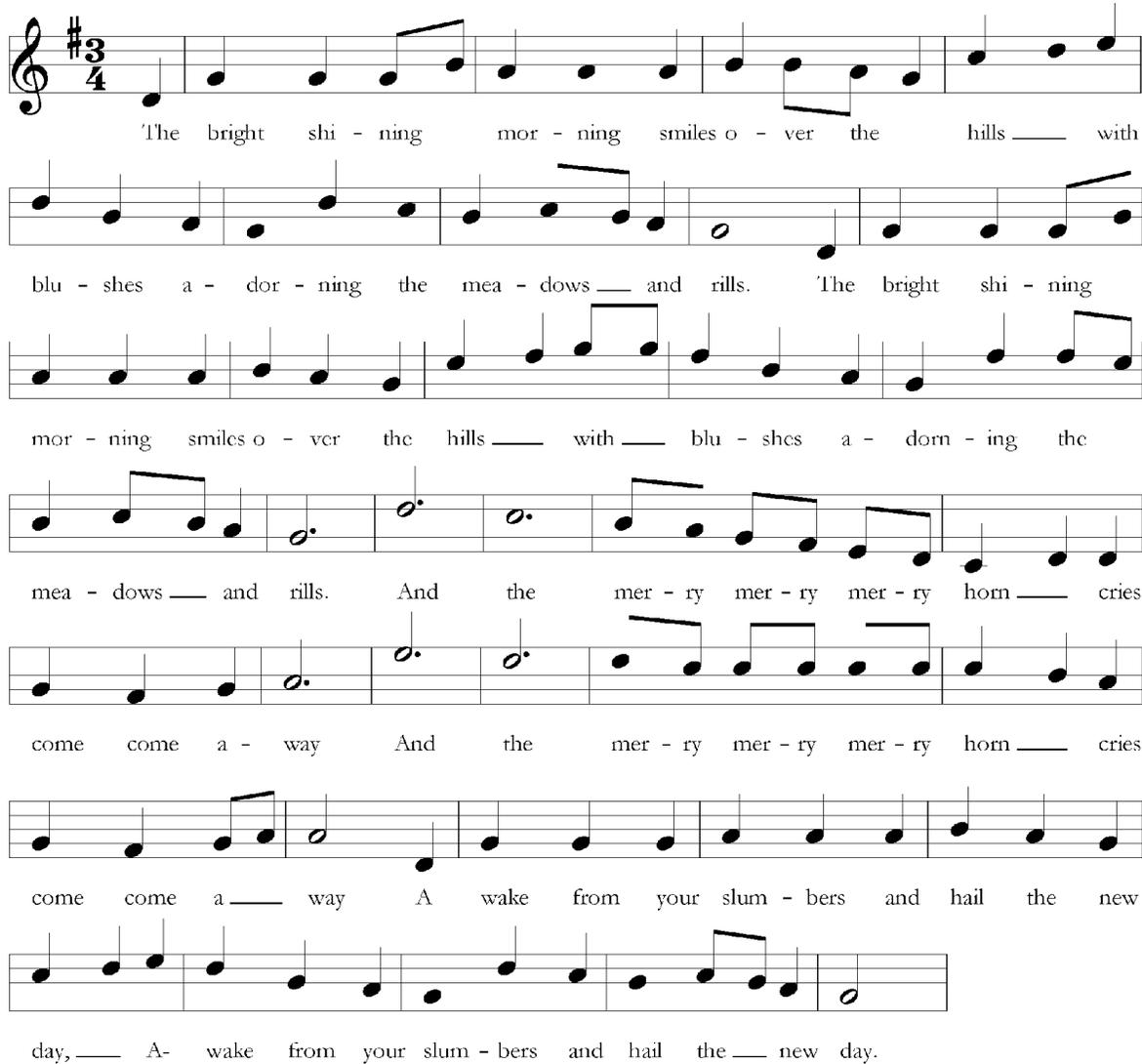
And that's how the wars began, castors away.
And that's how the wars began,
When England fought to a man.
And the proud tailor went prancing away.

Published in the Penguin Book of English Folk Song, recently re-issued as "Classic English Folk Songs." From this treasure-trove of arcane knowledge, we learn that the song dates back at least to 1807.



The Bright Shining Morning

Traditional



The bright shi - ning mor - ning smiles o - ver the hills ___ with
 blu - shes a - dor - ning the mea - dows ___ and rills. The bright shi - ning
 mor - ning smiles o - ver the hills ___ with ___ blu - shes a - dor - ning the
 mea - dows ___ and rills. And the mer - ry mer - ry mer - ry horn ___ cries
 come come a - way And the mer - ry mer - ry mer - ry horn ___ cries
 come come a ___ way A wake from your slum - bers and hail the new
 day, ___ A - wake from your slum - bers and hail the ___ new day.

1) The bright shining morning smiles over the hills
 With blushes adorning the meadows and rills.
(repeat)

Chorus:

And the merry, merry, merry horn
 Cries come, come away.
 And the merry, merry, merry horn
 Cries come, come away.
 Awake from your slumbers and hail the new day.
 Awake from your slumbers and hail the new day.

2) The horses all saddled, they dance on the ground,
 And they lift up their heads at the bay of the hound.

3) And over the hilltops the huntsman's hallo,
 Comes echoing down to the valley below.

4) The fox runs before us, he seems for to fly
 And he pants to the chorus of the hunt in full cry.

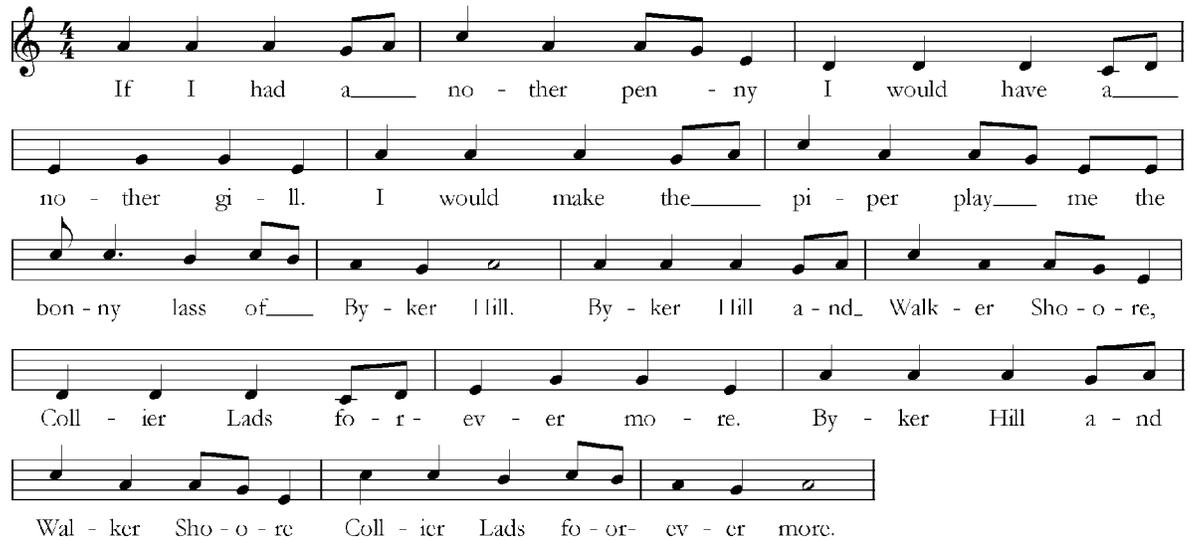
5) When our day's work is ended, we all do retire,
 And we pull off our boots by the light of the fire.

6) Come, fill up your glasses, let the toast go around.
 We'll drink to all hunters, where ever they're found.

The second and third verses were composed one Ren Faire afternoon by Doug and Alice, just because. Also, it's an excuse to repeat this lovely, chorus.

Byker Hill

Traditional



If I had a no - ther pen - ny I would have a
no - ther gi - ll. I would make the pi - per play me the
bon - ny lass of By - ker Hill. By - ker Hill a - nd_ Walk - er Sho - o - re,
Coll - ier Lads fo - r - ev - er mo - re. By - ker Hill a - nd
Wal - ker Sho - o - re Coll - ier Lads fo - or - ev - er more.

1) If I had another penny,
I would have another gill.
I would make the piper play me
the *Bonny Lass of Byker Hill*.

Chorus:
Byker Hill and Walker Shore,
collier lads forever more.
Byker Hill and Walker Shore,
collier lads forever more

2) When first I come down to the dirt,
I had no trousers, no pit shirt.
Now I've gotten two or three,
Walker Pit's done well by me.

3) The Pitman and the Creelman Trim,
they drink bumbo made from gin,
When to dance they do begin,
to the tune of *Elsie Marley*.

4) Gentle Jenny she's behind the barn,
with a pint of ale underneath her arm.
A pint of ale underneath her arm,
and she feeds it to the Baby.

5) Geordie Tarleton he had a pig,
he hit it with a shovel and it danced a jig,
All the way to Walker Shore
to the tune of *Elsie Marley*.

Repeat the first verse and chorus.



Songs of coal miners are frequently rather rough-and-tumble, much like the miners themselves (The Tale of the Doncaster Seven, of whom there were only six, comes to mind, but we will spare you). This one is so nearly perfect, it would be easy to suspect it of being a modern composition, but in fact it was published in 1812.

Contentment

Traditional



Why should we of our lot complain, or grieve at our distress?
 Some think if they could riches gain, 'twould be true happiness.
 But alas in vain is all their strife, Wealth can not life's
 cares allay. So-o while we're here with our friends so dear We'll
 drive dull care away. **Chorus:** A-way, a-way, a-way, a-way.
 We will drive dull care away. So-o while we're here with our
 friends so dear we'll drive dull care away.

1) Why should we of our lot complain,
 or grieve at our distress?
 Some think if they could riches gain,
 'twould be true happiness.
 But alas in vain is all their strife,
 Wealth will not life's cares allay,
 So while we're here with our friends so dear,
 we'll drive dull care away.

Chorus:

Away, away, away away.
 We will drive dull care away.
 So while we're here with our friends so dear,
 We'll drive dull care away.

2) Why should the rich despise the poor?
 Why should the poor repine?
 When we shall all in a few short years,
 in equal friendship join.
 We are all the same, we have all one name.
 We are all made of one clay.
 So while we're here &c...

3) The only circumstance in life that I could ever find,
 To conquer care or temper strife is a contented mind.
 Life at its best is a worthy jest,
 like a balmy summer's day,
 So while we're here &c...

4) So let us make the best of life, nor render it a curse,
 But take it as you would a wife,
 for better or for worse.
 When time and age come creeping on,
 do not grieve for parted ways
 But while we're here &c...

Doug reworked these words slightly from the recording by Dave Webber and Anni Fentiman. The song has much Shape-Note in its ancestry, but many of the Stern and Dour characteristics of that tradition have been left behind.

