Seven Songs of Harvest
For Key Stages 1 and 2

By Bob Kenward
The Full English

The Full English was a unique nationwide project unlocking hidden treasures of England’s cultural heritage by making over 58,000 original source documents from 12 major folk collectors available to the world via a ground-breaking nationwide digital archive and learning project. The project was led by the English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS), funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and in partnership with other cultural partners across England.

The Full English digital archive (www.vwml.org) continues to provide access to thousands of records detailing traditional folk songs, music, dances, customs and traditions that were collected from across the country. Some of these are known widely, others have lain dormant in notebooks and files within archives for decades.

The Full English learning programme worked across the country in 19 different schools including primary, secondary and special educational needs settings. It also worked with a range of cultural partners across England, organising community, family and adult learning events.

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Seven Songs Of Harvest
For Key Stage 1 and 2

Harvest /haːvɪst/
noun: the process or period of gathering in crops

1. Introduction
2. There’s A Nice Field Of Turnips Over There
3. The Farmer’s Boy
4. Oats And Beans And Barley
5. The Green Grass
6. John Barleycorn
7. The Hundred Haymakers
8. Jim The Carter Lad
**Introduction**

Harvest has long been celebrated in song across the world – and still is. It is an occasion for celebration across the world. Wherever people settled, the routine of preparing the ground, sowing, tending, gathering and storing crops was a matter of life or death. Communities have traditionally produced enough food for themselves, and as technology and society has developed, gradually farming has become commercial. Food and crops are produced for sale to others rather than simply to feed local communities.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, British farm labourers in the countryside worked long hours to produce the crops that were sold in the towns. Landowners rented their acres to tenant farmers, who had to pay rent and the *tithe* before they could pay their workers. Often the labourers lived in *tied* cottages, homes which went with their work. If they were not able to pay their rent, they lost their home too. In England a poor harvest could mean starvation and homelessness for
families in rural villages. They were forced onto the *Poor Rate*, or separated and sent to the *workhouses*.

Many characters appear in folk songs, including farmers. The farmer who often appears in song was someone to look up to. He could sack a labourer at any time. He himself had to please the merchant by producing enough food at the right time for it to command a good price. The landowners were often quite distant. They had owned the land ‘time out of mind’: in other words, no-one could remember when it wasn’t theirs. As long as their rent came in, they took little interest in the day-to-day activities on the farm.

By Victorian times farming had come a long way from the simple scattering of seeds or planting of root crops. It was known that it was a good idea to plant different crops in rotation, year by year, and to rest fields fallow. Knowledge of this kind might have been written down, but in ages when few working people were able to read, much must have been passed on year on year by word of mouth. Thomas Tusser of Essex wrote *500 Points Of Husbandrie* in the 16th Century in verse, to make it easier to remember.

The songs in this brief collection are drawn from The Full English digital archive and serve as a reminder of harvest and its place in the farming year. They too make the traditional ways of the countryside easy to remember, even if that way of life is now some distance from our own. How many of us know how to wield a scythe or work a plough?
Notes For Teachers

The Full English digital archive presents accurate transcriptions of lyrics noted down by collectors of folk music, song and dance - precisely as the singers sang them. It is important that these words are preserved historically. However it may be that here and there a word has changed usage (or has another connotation) which you may wish to avoid with your children. It is for you to judge, for example, whether you change one word of the first line of ‘Jim The Carter Lad’ to, say, ‘chap’: much will depend upon your children’s appreciation of language...

It may also be that some songs benefit from selective editing of verses. Again, the full lyrics are given here, as well as references to the archive where the song appears in different forms from other parts of the country.

Tunes are accurate, but may have been transposed into more accessible keys. It is usual for the first verse of the song to be given and for slight changes in rhythm to be necessary to fit the later verses or chorus to the melody. The most important thing is to shape the tune to preserve the natural rhythm of the words and not to force the words to fit the tune. Choices have to be made in interpretation of the source material: here the midi files reflect the best approximation available, to assist with aural transmission.

Most of all these are songs to be sung with gusto, to celebrate the harvest and a good year in store.
That's a Nice Field of Turnips Over There

In the Harry Albino collection
www.vwml.org/record/HHA/33/12

Roud Number: 23053
Trad.arr. Bob Kenward

\[ \text{That's a nice little farm over there} \quad \text{A lovely little farm over there} \]

\[ \text{That's a nice little farm} \quad \text{A lovely little farm} \]

\[ \text{That's a nice field of turnips over there} \ldots \text{etc.} \]

\[ \ldots \text{little pony} \ldots \]

\[ \ldots \text{good crop of corn} \ldots \]

\[ \ldots \text{good bunch of pigs} \ldots \]

\[ \ldots \text{good flock of sheep} \ldots \]

etc.

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Teaching Notes: That's a Nice Field of Turnips Over There

Sung to a familiar tune which is used for many sets of lyrics. This happens quite often in folk song. Words to songs often appeared on *Broadside sheets* which were sold in the street, but without the tunes. A well-known melody might be suggested which would fit, but the notation rarely featured.

Gradually as the tunes passed about they became altered as singers added new notes or maybe didn’t quite remember what they’d heard. Tunes were not precious: you might hear a ballad about a threshing machine or a tragic tale of death by cold poison to the same melody.

Singers adapted their songs to their audiences. They would change place-names or adapt names and key items in songs if they thought it would be more likely to earn a few more pence.

**Memory-joggers for class activities**

- What single dramatic action could accompany each verse? Which will involve the whole class or perhaps specific groups?

- Group synchronisation/ noises on or off?

- How many of each animal should there be? Would there be more at different times of year? What other animals could there be?

- What would you feel if you were a turnip? How would your day be?
  Where do turnips grow?
• What is missing? What else could be added?

• How big is this farm? Where is the local market?

• What would happen if you put all of these things in a field together?

• There are several ‘boasting’ songs in the folk traditions e.g. The Derby Ram, which boasts of an enormous sheep (eagles roost at the top of it, whilst its feet cover an acre of land each). Are there things to boast about in this farm?
That's a Nice Field of Turnips Over There

Collected by G Hill within the Harry Albino collection

www.vwml.org/record/HHA/33/12

Roud Number: 23053

That’s a nice little farm over there
A lovely little farm over there
That’s a nice little farm
A lovely little farm
That’s a nice little farm over there

That’s a nice field of turnips over there.... etc.

...... little pony.....

...... good crop of corn......

...... good bunch of pigs.....

...... good flock of sheep....

etc.
To Be A Farmer's Boy

Tune collected by Clive Carey: www.vwml.org/record/CC/1/382
Words collected by Lucy Broadwood: www.vwml.org/record/LEB/5/52/2

The sun went down beyond yon hill, across the dreary moor
Weary and lame a boy there came up to a farmer's door
Can you tell me if any there be that will give me employ:
To reap and sow, to plough and mow, to be a farmer's boy, to be a farmer's boy

My father's dead and mother's left with her five children small
And what is worse for mother still I'm the eldest of them all
Though little I be I fear no work if you will me employ
To reap and sow, to plough and mow, to be a farmer's boy, to be a farmer's boy

The daughter said “Pray try the lad, no farther let him seek”
“Oh yes, dear Doll” the farmer cried, while a tear stole down his cheek
“For those who'll work 'tis hard to want or wander for employ
To reap and sow, to plough and mow, to be a farmer's boy, to be a farmer's boy”

In course of time he grew a man and the poor old farmer died
He left the lad the farm he had and the daughter for his bride
The boy that was, now farmer is, he smiles and thinks with joy
That lucky day he came that way to be a farmer's boy, to be a farmer's boy
Teaching Notes: The Farmer's Boy

Not a dry eye in the house - but all comes good in the end. Audiences would be used to the idea of early death in the family, and there was little provision for widows and orphans. Country children were expected to go to work as soon as they were able, rather than go to school. Little children would be given jobs such as bird-scaring, picking hops from the bine or looking after sheep, which helped them to learn the ways of the farm.

The farmer in this song needs a lad about the place as he becomes less able to do the hard work himself. It seems that he didn’t have a son. He could not, in many parts of the country, pass his lands or his tenancy on to his daughter, but, if she married, her husband could take over. When this song was first heard, this was just the way the world was. Luckily it seems that they were well matched. A stirring example to inspire all young people: work hard and you’ll get the keys to the farm.

There are many different versions of this song. This version uses a tune from the Clive Carey collection, and words from the Lucy Broadwood collection.

Memory-joggers for class activities

- How old do you think the boy was? What choices did he have?

- What happened to his mother and her other children?

- What kind of job would he have started on? How much would he have been paid?
• How could he gain the farmer’s trust?

• What were the daughter’s choices?

• How would she have made her way in life if he hadn’t come along?

• What kind of farm do you think it was? Why?

• What kind of harvest would they depend on?

• What would you say to a strange boy looking for work who turned up at your door?

• Who do you think would sing/listen to this song?
The Farmer’s Boy

Tune collected by Clive Carey: www.vwml.org/record/CC/1/382
Words collected by Lucy Broadwood: www.vwml.org/record/LEB/5/52/2
Roud Number: 408

The sun went down beyond yon hill, across the dreary moor
Weary and lame a boy there came up to a farmer’s door
Can you tell me if any there be that will give me employ:
To reap and sow, to plough and mow, to be a farmer’s boy,
To be a farmer’s boy

My father’s dead and mother’s left with her five children small
And what is worse for mother still I’m the eldest of them all
Though little I be I fear no work if you will me employ
To reap and sow, to plough and mow, to be a farmer’s boy,
To be a farmer’s boy

The daughter said “Pray try the lad, no farther let him seek”
“Oh yes, dear Doll” the farmer cried, while a tear stole down his cheek
“For those who’ll work ‘tis hard to want or wander for employ
To reap and sow, to plough and mow, to be a farmer’s boy,
To be a farmer’s boy”

In course of time he grew a man and the poor old farmer died
He left the lad the farm he had and the daughter for his bride
The boy that was, now farmer is, he smiles and thinks with joy
That lucky day he came that way to be a farmer’s boy
To be a farmer’s boy
Oats and Beans and Barley Grow

Collected from Daisy Wesley by Cecil Sharp, Aug 1909, Spaxton, Somerset
www.vwml.org/record/CJS2/10/2243

Roud Number: 1380
Traditional:

\[ \text{music notation} \]

Oats and beans and barley grow
As you and I and anyone know
As you and I and anyone know
Oats and beans and barley grow

Waiting for a partner
Waiting for a partner
Open the way and take one in
Waiting for a partner

Thus the farmer sows his seed
Thus he stands and takes his ease
Stamps his foot and claps his hands
And turns him round to view the land

Now you’re married you must obey
You must be true to all you say
You must be very kind and good
And help each other to chop the wood

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Teaching Notes:

Oats and Beans and Barley Grow

A children’s game that introduces three strands of traditional country life: crops, the farmer and the search for a suitable husband or wife.

Some crops use the soil up, and take their strength from nature or the manure the labourers spread every year after ploughing. Other crops put back goodness into the ground, and if they are planted in rotation keep the farm in good health. Often a field might lie fallow one year in four, growing clover.

The farmer in this song might be managing his workers by stamping his foot and clapping his hands. They had to be respectful, however they were treated, as there were always more workers who could be taken on in their place.

With so much hard work to be done in the days before washing machines and central heating, it was a good idea to marry well. Chopping firewood was a daily task, if you wanted to cook or stay warm. Finding someone who shared tasks cheerfully was a good idea.
Memory joggers for class activities

- Why would you grow different crops in the fields?
- What would happen if you didn’t?
- What are the uses of oats and barley - what other cereals might you grow?
- Which other farm jobs might have to be done every day?
- If you were the farmer, how would you talk to your workers? What might you need them to do?
- If you were a farm labourer, how would you like the farmer to talk to you?
- If you lived in a farm cottage, what would you have to do every day?
- How is it different today?
- For music teachers: good early practice at scales and working out a harmony a third above
Oats and Beans and Barley Grow

Collected from Daisy Wesley by Cecil Sharp, Aug 1909, Spaxton, Somerset

Roud Number: 1380

Oats and beans and barley grow
As you and I and anyone know
As you and I and anyone know
Oats and beans and barley grow

Waiting for a partner
Waiting for a partner
Open the way and take one in
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Thus he stands and takes his ease
Stamps his foot and claps his hands
And turns him round to view the land

Now you’re married you must obey
You must be true to all you say
You must be very kind and good
And help each other to chop the wood
The Green Grass

Collected from Moses Mansfield by Clive Carey and Iolo Williams
30 Sept 1912, Haslemere, Surrey
www.vwml.org/record/CC/1/235

Roud Number: 169
Trad. arr: Bob Kenward

The sun is gone down and the sky it looks red
And down on my pillow where I lays my head
I lift up my eyes for to see those stars shine
And thoughts of my true love still runs in my mind

Now harvest is over and winter's come on
We'll jump in the barn, boys, and thresh out some corn
Our flails we will handle and so boldly will swing
Till the very next meeting that's now coming on

The sap is gone up and the trees they will flaw
We'll branch them all round, boys, and clap in the saw
We'll saw them asunder and tumble them down
And there we will flow them all on the cold ground

There's a boy to his whip and a man to his plough
We will plough up the ground, boys, and throw in our corn
Here's a health to our master and ladies all round
Here's a health to the jolly ploughman that ploughs up the ground

Our scythe we will handle and boldly will swing
Till the very next meeting that's now coming on
We'll cut down our grass, boys, and carry it away
We'll first call it green grass and then call it hay

Now haying is over and harvest draws near
We will send to the alehouse to brew some strong beer
We'll cut down the corn, boys, and roll it along
We'll take it to the barn, boys, to keep it from harm

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Teaching Notes: The Green Grass

Harvest takes many forms: wood for buildings, carts and fuel; hay for the animals, corn for bread and for sale; all these have their place in the farming calendar. Green Grass begins in the dormant season, moves through summer, through threshing time into ploughing and sowing. It shows that for the countryman the bringing in of one harvest is followed by the planting of the next.

The countryman cuts trees when the sap is dormant, as the wood is easier to saw. To ‘clap in the saw’ is possibly to secure the wood for a sawpit, or to clamp it to on a bench. ‘Flow’ is in the manuscript, ‘tow’ would make sense.

Haymaking comes at mid-summer, as the grass needs to be out in the sun for drying. Scything is hot and thirsty work. Probably the stooks of corn, once they have been collected, ‘roll’ along the farm tracks in a cart.

Weak beer was usually provided for the labourers. It was safer to drink than water as it had been boiled. Threshing out of the grain by flail was very tiring work. This song harks back to the days before threshing machines took over. By 1912 the flail was long obsolete, so the song illustrates how the old ways were remembered.

The manuscript text has been arranged here to suit, and the last verse has been reassembled. You can see the original online.
Memory joggers for class activities

- Which jobs on the farm are done in winter/ spring/ summer/ autumn? Are some seasons busier than others? Are workers needed all year round? What skills are needed?

- Which other jobs might grown ups have to do on the farm? Which jobs could be given to children?

- How long can you act out scything/ thrashing by hand before you start to ache?

- What tools would you use? How would you make them/ keep them in good order?

- If you were going to act out each verse to make the story, which actions would you choose?

- How many labourers are needed to cut an acre of hay? How long would it take?
The Green Grass

Collected from Moses Mansfield by Clive Carey and Iolo Williams
30 Sept 1912, Haslemere, Surrey
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We'll take it to the barn, boys, to keep it from harm

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We will plough up the ground, boys, and throw in our corn
Here's a health to our master and ladies all round
Here's a health to the jolly ploughman that ploughs up the ground
John Barleycorn

Collected from William Walton by Janet Blunt,
Aug 1916, Adderbury, Oxfordshire
www.vwml.org/record/JHB/7/5

Roud Number: 2141
Trad. arr. Bob Kenward

John Barleycorn is a hero bold, as any in the land.
His name is good; His fame has stood, And will for ages stand. The whole wide world respects him now, No matter friend or foe; Who e'er they be that makes too free, He's sure to lay them low!

Hey John Barleycorn
Ho John Barleycorn
Old and young thy praise is sung

John Barleycorn
Now see him in his pride of growth
His robes are rich and green
His head is speared with goodly beard
Fit knight to save a queen
And when the reaping time comes round
And John is stricken down
He yields his blood for England's good
And Englishmen's renown

The lord in courtly castle and
The squire in stately hall
The great of name, of birth and fame
On John for succour call
He bids the troubled heart rejoice
Gives warmth to natures cold
Makes weak men strong and old ones young
And all men brave and bold

Then shout for old John Barleycorn
Nor heed the luscious vine
I've not the mind much charm to find
In potent draughts of wine
Give me my native nut brown ale
All other drinks I scorn
True English cheer is English beer
Our own John Barleycorn

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Teaching Notes: John Barleycorn

Most cultures have a celebration of harvest home, wherever they are in the world. The future is secure, at least for another year. Singing and dancing were features of harvest supper across England. Even as the nut-brown ale is being passed around, there is a lesson to be remembered.

Year by year John Barleycorn springs up again, matures and becomes a whiskered old man. So the generations pass, in a natural progression. His spirit lives on, however, for he brings joy and happiness even after his fall. The song suggests that all walks of life enjoyed his company, rich and poor... though the first verse carries its own warning as to what might happen to those who celebrate too freely. Some things never change - the songs tell us so.

In The Full English digital archive are alternative words to this tune - all favouring English ale rather than port or wine from the Continent. Of course, it was always a good idea to support your own team. There are many more songs in which Barleycorn’s life is celebrated.

Memory joggers for class activities

- How else could you quickly portray a natural life cycle?
- Which other ingredients do you need to make nut-brown ale?
- Where would you get them from?
- How would you celebrate harvest home - what else might you eat or drink?
- What kind of dance would be best for this sort of occasion?
- What are squires? Where do they sit in the local hierarchy?

- Who brewed the ale, and where would they keep it?

- Where would the celebration be held? Who would be there? Who would not be there?
John Barleycorn

Collected from William Walton by Janet Blunt,
Aug 1916, Adderbury, Oxfordshire
www.vwml.org/record/JHB/7/5

Roud Number 2141

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As any in the land
For ages good his fame has stood
And will for ages stand
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No matter friend or foe
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Hey John Barleycorn
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John Barleycorn

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His robes are rich and green
His head is speared with goodly beard
Fit knight to save a queen
And when the reaping time comes round
And John is stricken down
He yields his blood for England’s good
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The lord in courtly castle and
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The great of name, of birth and fame
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Gives warmth to natures cold
Makes weak men strong and old ones young
And all men brave and bold

Then shout for old John Barleycorn
Nor heed the luscious vine
I’ve not the mind much charm to find
In potent draughts of wine
Give me my native nut brown ale
All other drinks I scorn
True English cheer is English beer
Our own John Barleycorn
The Hundred Haymakers

Collected from Priscilla Wyatt-Edgell by Sabine Baring Gould
13 August 1920, Cowley Bridge, Devon
www.vwml.org/record/SBG/1/3/552

Roud Number: 143
Trad. arr. Bob Kenward

My one man, my two men
Shall mow my field together
My three men, my four men
Shall carry it out of the meadow

My seven men, my eight men
Shall mow my field together
My seven men, my eight men
Shall carry it out of the meadow

My one, my two, my three, my four
We won't have more
We'll mow my hay
And flit 'un away
And carry it out of the meadow

My eight, my seven, my six, my five,
My four, my three, my two, my one
We won't have more etc....
My nine men, my ten men .... etc
My ten, my nine, my eight.......my one....etc

My fifth man, my sixth man
Shall mow my field together
My six men, my five men
Shall carry it out of the meadow

My eleven men, my twelve men....
My twelve, eleven, my ten..... my one... etc

My six, my five, my four, my three,
my two, my one
We won't have more
We'll mow my hay
And flit 'un away
And carry it out of the meadow

Continue up to 20 but double up like verse 1:
My 13/14/15/16 then My 17/18/19/20
Then by 10s:
My 30/40/50/60 then My 70/80/90/100
The last line in reverse is:
My 100/90/80/70/60/50/40/30/20/19/18/17/16/15/14/13/12/
11/ My 10/My 9/My 8/My 7/My 6/My 5/My 4/My 3/My 2/
My 1 man ... we won't have more...

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Teaching Notes:

The Hundred Haymakers

When harvest came everyone went into the fields to help. Hay had to be cut and laid out to dry quickly. A few days’ sunny weather made all the difference between good fodder and wet stacks which were liable to rot. Without fodder the farm’s animals, the livestock and most importantly the horses and oxen might have a very lean winter.

Haymakers looked after the whole process of hay making. A team might consist of 3 of the strongest men scything, 3 turning the hay, 3 carting the hay, and others building the hay stacks. If there were 100 haymakers there would probably be 10 scythers who might conceivable cut 10 acres (a reasonable sized field) – but probably less.

Counting forwards and backwards in your head was very important. Money was measured in pounds, shillings and pence, though for most labourers’ children it was halfpennies or farthings. Most of the work on the farm depended on measurements of one kind or another: you needed to know how many chains made a furlong. Tally sticks were used when harvest came. A notch showed that you had filled a basket with hops, for example. Children had to learn quickly how much they were owed.

You will notice that the singer did not always follow the number pattern in quite the same way, which keeps everyone on their toes!
Memory joggers for class activities

- If it takes one man 30 minutes to cut all the hay from a single furrow a chain long…. etc.

- Is it quicker to have a small gang or to do things alone? Why?

- How much water or small beer would you need if every reaper drank a pint every two hours?

- How would you get it to the fields?

- How would you keep your scythe sharp?

- What is hay? How do you grow it?

- Why is a pitchfork called a pitchfork? How do you use it, and what do you use it for?

- Would you use horses or oxen on a farm? Why?

Photo: Hay Wagon, Rachel Elliott/Museum of Lincolnshire Life
The Hundred Haymakers

Collected from Priscilla Wyatt-Edgell by Sabine Baring Gould
13 August 1920, Cowley Bridge, Devon
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Roud Number: 143

My one man, my two men
Shall mow my field together
My three men, my four men
Shall carry it out of the meadow

My one, my two, my three, my four
We won’t have more
We’ll mow my hay
And flit ‘un away
And carry it out of the meadow

My fifth man, my sixth man
Shall mow my field together
My six men, my five men
Shall carry it out of the meadow

My six, my five, my four, my three, my two, my one
We won’t have more
We’ll mow my hay
And flit ‘un away
And carry it out of the meadow

[Continued overleaf]
My seven men, my eight men
Shall mow my field together
My seven men, my eight men
Shall carry it out of the meadow

My eight, my seven, my six, my five, my four, my three, my two, my one
We won’t have more etc....
My nine men, my ten men .... etc
My ten, my nine, my eight.......my one....etc

My eleven men, my twelve men....
My twelve, eleven, my ten..... My one...etc

Continue up to 20 but double up like verse 1:
My 13/14/15/16  then  My 17/18/19/20

Then by 10s:
My 30/40/50/60  then  My 70/80/90/100

The last line in reverse is:
My 100/90/80/70/60/50/40/30/20/19/18/17/16/15/14/13/12/11
My 10/My 9/My 8/My 7/My 6/My 5/My 4/My 3/My 2
My 1 man ... we won’t have more...
Jim The Carter Lad

Words: Collected from Arthur Hawkins by Alfred Williams, Ablington, Gloucestershire
www.vwml.org/record/HHA16/1
Tune: taken from a popular version sung by Ron Spicer and Bob Lewis in Sussex

Roud Number: 1080
Trad. Arr. Bob Kenward

My name is Jim the car-ter a jol-ly cock am I I al-ways am con-
ten-ted be the wea-ther wet or dry I snap my fing-ers at the snow and
whis-tle at the rain I've braved the snow for ma-ny a day and can do so a gain
Crack crack goes the whip I whis-tle and I sing As I sit up-on my wag-gon I'm as
hap-py as a King My horse is al-ways will-ing and me I'm nev-er
sad There's none can lead a jol-li-er life than Jim the car-ter lad
Teaching Notes: Jim The Carter Lad

The Carter was vital to carry everything into and out of the farm, as without him the harvest would not get to market, and no money would be made. His horse-drawn cart would bump along the country roads, and even a few miles might take most of the day because the ruts and mud were hard to drive through. Out of harvest season he might only make one trip a week. Everything the farm needed from town would have to be loaded on and brought back whatever the weather. Most carts had no protection from the weather, and it was a tough life. There was plenty of time to think and to view the changing seasons, though, unlike the way that we rush past the hedges and fields today. The carter would have heard larks singing, watched the hedgerows grow green and breathed in all the scents of the open countryside. But he could never take his mind off the reins... horses have minds of their own.

The verses and chorus of Jim The Carter Lad seem to have been popular enough to have spread quite widely without much alteration. The tune can vary: the most common version in the South of England is used here, from the singing of Ron Spicer, as Alfred Williams seems only to have collected words. The underlying sound seems to be that of hooves, so the 4:4 tune has been used here rather than the jig-time version in 6:8 which can be found in The Full English digital archive. The third verse is sometimes left out, and often the singer begins with the chorus to encourage his or her audience to sing along. This is a song where often adjustments to the rhythm of the notes are necessary to make the words fit - for example a crochet in verse 1 can be two quavers in a subsequent verse - however, the melody remains broadly the same.
Memory joggers for class activities

- What could you load on a cart? How would you keep it from falling off?
- How would you carry grain/vegetables/fruit/straw/chickens to market? Would all of them go?
- What would you need to bring in to the village/farm on the return journey?
- How much could a horse pull? What would you feed it on? Where would you get it from?
- Is it best to use big wheels or small wheels on a cart? How would you steer it?
- What can you hear if you stand still outside for 5 minutes?
- Who does this job today? What do they use?
- How could you make this a modern song changing as few words as possible?
- How would you make a song memorable?
- For music teachers: arpeggios aplenty, chord-making and harmony...

Photo: Carts, Rachel Elliott/Museum of Lincolnshire Life
Jim The Carter Lad

Collected from Arthur Hawkins by Alfred Williams
Ablington, Gloucestershire
www.vwml.org/record/HHA16/1

Roud Number: 1080

My name is Jim the Carter, a jolly cock am I
I always am contented, be the weather wet or dry
I snap my fingers at the snow and whistle at the rain
I’ve braved the snow for many a day and can do so again:

    Crack, crack goes my whip, I whistle and I sing
    As I sit upon my waggon, I’m as happy as a King
    My horse is always willing, and me, I’m never sad
    There’s none can lead a jollier life than Jim the Carter Lad

My father was a carrier, many years ere I was born
He used to rise at daybreak, and go his rounds each morn
He would often take me with him, especially in the spring
And I loved to sit upon the cart, and hear my father sing:

I never think of politics or anything so great
I care not for their high-bred talk about the church and state
I act aright to man and man, and that’s what makes me glad
You’ll find there beats an honest heart in Jim the Carter Lad:

The girls they all smile on me as I go riding past
My horse is such a beauty and he jogs along so fast
We’ve travelled many a weary mile, and happy times we’ve had
For none could treat a horse so kind as Jim the Carter Lad:

So now I’ll bid you all goodnight, ‘twas time I was away
I know my horse will weary if I much longer stay
To see your smiling faces, it makes my heart feel glad
So I hope you’ll give your kind applause to Jim the Carter Lad
Bob Kenward

Alongside a career in Primary Education, Bob has maintained a lifetime interest in English traditional music. He has developed folk song within the changing curriculum over many years, always emphasizing the pleasure of singing for its own sake. Bob is a singer and a songwriter, resident of the Tonbridge Folk Club and runs the popular Woodshed session during Broadstairs Folk Week.

Bob’s Teaching Notes for the Sing London national Singing Histories project are still available free online at:


These offer justification and a topic web for teachers interested in persuading school managers and parents that English traditional music forms a vital part of a balanced multicultural education.

Bob sees The Full English as an important step forward in bringing the melodies and lyrics of our shared heritage to fresh voices and new generations.
Unlocking hidden treasures of England's cultural heritage
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