

2.2 The Lark / An Awhesyth

Sources

Archival (Manuscript / Sound)

Wren Trust, Okehampton, Sabine Baring Gould Rough Copy manuscript:

Fiche 3 Vol 3 p32

Fiche 5 Vol 5 p37

Fiche12 Vol 10 p3

Wren Trust, Okehampton, Sabine Baring Gould Personal Copy manuscript,

Vol 2, Fiche 10 page 258 Song no 255

Wren Trust, Okehampton, Baring Gould Fair Copy manuscript,

fiche 14, p447 song no 196 (CXLVI).

Publications (Book / Album)

Gordon Hitchcock. *Folk Songs of the West Country*, (Newton Abbot: David & Charles : Keith Prowse Music Publishing Co., 1974), pp.70 – 73.

Merv Davey , *Hengan, (Redruth, Dyllansow Truran, Redruth, 1983) p 25,*

words in English with Cornish translation (Merv Davey).

Frances Bennet, et al Editors. *Racca 2: Cornish Tunes for Cornish Sessions*, (Calstock, Racca Project, 1997), no. 81.

Observation

As “An Awhesyth” Old’s tune has become a popular session and dance tune noted from oral tradition in 1997 for the Racca project (see Appendix 1.5) and again in 2007 as part of Cornish Session tunes project.

Notes

- *Wren Trust, Sabine Baring Gould Rough Copy & Personal Copy Manuscripts* – collected by Baring Gould and Frank W Bussel from Samuel Gilbert, St Mawgan 1891, J Old – St Eval and R Hand St Breock. Baring Gould also notes a tune from Kidson’s Traditional English Tunes p 45 and a further tune from John Dingle on 12/9/05

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- The Lark is not included in Baring Goulds Songs and Ballads of the West 1892 or Songs of the West 1905 Edited by Cecil Sharp. A large number of variations of words and different tunes are known through Britain and Ireland. Eg:
 - William Alexander Barrett in *English Folk-Songs* (London, Novello,1895) p46.
 - Frank Kidson collected a version called the Pretty Ploughboy from Yorkshire *Traditional Tunes; a Collection of Ballad Airs, Chiefly Obtained in Yorkshire and the South of Scotland; Together with Their Appropriate Words from Boadsides and from Oral Tradition.* (Cleveland, Bell & Howell, 1891)
 - Ralph Vaughan Williams, *Folk Songs from the Eastern Counties* (1908) pp.19-20 also. *The Jolly Ploughboy : Sussex Folk-Song,* (London, Novello & Co,1908).
 - There are broadside versions in the British Museum.

- Baring Gould collected three distinct melodies for this song as a result of his contact with the Gilbert family of the Falcon Inn at St Mawgan and a large number different melodies are associated with these lyrics elsewhere in Britain and Ireland.

- Gordon Hitchcock. *Folk Songs of the West Country.* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles : Keith Prowse Music Publishing Co., 1974) pp70 - 72 : includes same words with two versions of the tune provided by Sam Gilbert and By J Old (although he ascribes both to Gilbert). Hitchcock makes clear that he has altered / arranged some of the songs and tunes. One of the tunes he provides is clearly based on Old's version but there are some changes. The melody recorded for the session tune project in 2007 shows still further changes to the melody from Hitchcock's version. These are shown in the music scores below. The variations incurred as Old's tune was transmitted via Baring Gould to Hitchcock and the Cornish folk revival provide a good example of the folk process together with the acquisition of a Cornish name – An Awhesyth (The Lark).

Lyrics

Hitchcock / J Old

1. As I was a walking one morning in may
 I heard a young damsel them words did she say,
 Of all the calling whatever they may be,
 No life is like the ploughboy in the merry month of may

2. The' lark in the morning awakes from her nest,
 And' mounts the white air with the dew on her breast,
 Oh the' lark and the plough-boy together can sing,
 And return to her nest in the evening. . .

3. One morning she mounted so high, oh, so high.
 And' looked around her. and at the dark sky,
 In the' morning she was singing and thus was her lay,
 There is ' no life like the plough-boy's in the sweet month of May.

4. When his' day's work is over that he hath to do,
 o I then to a fair or a wake will he go,
 And I there he will whistle and there he will sing,
 And' then to his fair love a ribbon will he bring.

5. Good I luck to the plough-boys wherever they be,
 They will I take a sweet maiden to sit on the knee,
 They'll drink the brown beer, they will whistle and sing,
 Oh the' plough-bay's more happy than noble or king.

Ballads Catalogue: Harding B 11(2060) Bodlian Library:

J. O. Bebbington. Printer, 26, Goulden-street, Oldham
Road, Manchester, and sold by John Beaumont, 176,
York-street, Leeds.*

As I was walking one morning in May,
I heard a pretty damsel those words for to say,
Of all the callings, whatever they may be,
No life like a plough boy all in the month of May.

The lark in the morning rises from her nest,
And mounts in the air with the dew around her breast,
Like the pretty plough-boy she'll whistle and sing,
And at night she'll return to her nest back again.

When his day's work is done that he's for to do,
Perhaps to some country wake he will go ;
There with his sweet-heart he'll dance and he'll sing,
And then he'll return with his lass back again.

And as they return from the wake in the town,
The meadows being mown and the grass cut down,
We chanced to tumble all on the new mown hay—
It's kiss me now or never, the maiden did say.

When twenty weeks were over and past
Her mamma ask'd her the reason why she so thickened
in the waist.
It was the pretty plough boy, the damsel did say,
That caused me to tumble on the new mown hay.

Come all you pretty maidens wherever you be,
You may trust a plough-boy to any degree ;
They're used so much to plowing, their seed for to sow,
That all who employ them are sure to find it grow.

So good luck to the plough boys, wherever they be,
That will take a pretty lass to sit on their knee,
And with a jug of beer they will whistle and sing,
And a plough-boy is as happy as a prince or a king.

Music Score

Note the variation in melody between Old's original > session tune project 2007. To listen to the variations click on the midi links in the appendices listed in the contents page.

Old's (St Eval) tune: Wren Trust, Sabine Baring Gould Rough Copy manuscript, Fiche no3, Vol 3, page 32.



J Old's (St Eval) Tune: Wren Trust, Sabine Baring Gould Personal Copy manuscript, Vol 2, Fiche 10 page 258 Song no 255



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Hitchcock's Version attributed to Gilbert but actually that of J Old



Version of Old's tune collected for session tune project 2007



Sam Gilberts (St Mawgan) Tune taken down by FW Bussel: Wren Trust, Sabine Baring Gould Personal Copy manuscript , Vol 2, Fiche 10 page 258 Song no



Robert Hand's (St Breock) Tune: Wren Trust, Sabine Baring Gould Personal Copy manuscript,t Vol 2, Fiche 10 page 258 Song no 255

