

Five Songs by In the Creel

David Lowe: voice, mandolin, concertina, guitar

Tara Bomham: voice

David Donaldson: pennywhistles, melodica, recorder, rainstick

1998–2004

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Recorded at Hominid Studio, 4408 W. 15th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V6R 3B2, Canada by David Donaldson (whistler4[at]mac.com)

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1. Joe the Carrier Lad 3:31 (trad.): Before the invention of the truck, goods were transported by a carrier or carter, who drove a horse and cart. This traditional song is about a man who is happy in his work. The lively tune perfectly supports the joyful, confident words of the carrier lad. Joe, the Carrier Lad is associated with the traditional singer, George Townshend (1882-1967), from the Lewes area of Sussex. As a boy he worked on a farm with horses and carts. David Lowe's great-grandfather was a carter, so he feels particularly connected to this song. David grew up listening to engaging stories about this ancestor who was passionate about his horses, a man who lost everything when he refused to trade in those horses for the 'infernal' combustion engine. We thank Jiggery Pokery for introducing us to this wonderful song.

2. The Boatie Rows 2:42 (trad.): According to Archie Fisher, the song Boatie Rows comes from the coast of Fife in Scotland. The lyrics are in a lowland Scots dialect similar to that of Robbie Burns, who knew a version of the song credited to John Ewen. The last line of the chorus contains the words, In the Creel, which we selected to be name of our group. A creel is a basket that holds fish, and we saw in that a metaphor for what we and others who love folk music do; that is, 'catch' songs, put them in our repertoire and then later, 'pull them out' and share them around.

3. Norland Wind 4:46 (Jim Reid and Violet Jacob): In 1915 the Angus poet, Violet

Jacob, wrote the poem, *The Wild Geese*.*

It is written from the point of view of a Scot who is living in England and longing for home. He is asking the wind from the North to bring news of his homeland.

The poem gets its name from the last verse, which contains these evocative lines:

And far abune the Angus straths I saw the wild geese flee
A lang, lang skein o' beatin' wings wi' their heids towards the sea

The words were set to music by the Angus singer and songmaker, Jim Reid. In the 1970s, he was a member of *The Taysiders*, and later became known as the driving force behind the 1980s group *The Foundry Bar Band*. He called the song *Norland Wind*, but it is also still referred to, on occasion, as *The Wild Geese*.

4. Higher Germany 3:30 (trad.): This traditional English song is a broadside ballad that was reprinted in the 1780 publication *A Collection of Choice Garlands*. Broadside were single pages, often decorated with woodcuts and sold cheaply on the street, which contained the words to popular songs. This performance is by *In the Creel*. As *Higher (or High) Germany* begins, we find a soldier setting off on a great adventure with his fiancé. However, the last verse brings us abruptly to the reality of war, suggesting a protest song. The story comes from an era when soldiers would be cared for between battles by their wives and other camp followers. *Higher Germany* is most likely set in the *Seven Year's War* (1756-1763), when Britain, in an alliance with Prussia and some small German States, fought against a coalition of France, Russia, Sweden and Saxony. The war was also fought in French and British colonies around the world, one result being that France was forced out of North America and India.

5. The Bonny Light Horseman 4:31 (trad.): The *Bonny Light Horseman* is a tragic tale of the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815), a variant of a Broadside Ballad that first appeared in the 1790s. A light horseman was a lightly armed cavalry officer with a fast horse who must have cut a dashing figure. The beautiful, haunting tune could stand alone as a tale of love and loss. And the song reminds us of the human costs of war.

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