

Releasing the Leaves

Songbook



Ninebarrow

Releasing the Leaves

All images © Ninebarrow 2015 except

Pages 4, 18, 19, 21, 25 and 30 © Greg Funnell www.gregfunnell.com

Cover Art © Sarah Whitley 2015

Songbook





Hello!

As we were recording the last album, we wrestled with a bit of a problem. So many of our songs come hand-in-hand with the stories we tell on stage; this is something we're really passionate about when we perform live. We wanted to have some way of sharing the stories behind the songs with our listeners. A good old fashioned inlay would have been nice, but we had so many pages – it wasn't really feasible! So...we decided to make a free, online songbook for people to download. We thought we'd include our stories, lyrics and also some photos from the parts of the country that have inspired so much of our music.

Having produced one book, we thought it'd be great to do the same for our second album. We really hope you enjoy learning a bit about where songs came from.

Thanks for listening!

Jon & Jay

The Pinner

'To the chapel she goes...' | St. Aldem's Chapel, Worth Matravers

Hour after hour
The Pinner sits in her room
With her one tallow candle
She works in the gloom
She works with an aching
Even spring can't dispel
The best in the county
All but one she will sell

*Each day she runs
At the setting of the sun
With a hope in her heart
As the shadows grow long
To the chapel she goes
Past the fields and the barn
And she offers the stone
The best of her charms*

Day after day
She takes brass wire and bone
Coiling and honing
She works on alone
She works with a fever
As the seasons they spin
Each day she's hoping
For that one perfect pin

Year after year
The Pinner grows old
Failing eyesight and fingers
Her pins go unsold
Her pins go unsold
And they fill up that room
Filling bottles and boxes
As the copper turns blue



There's a shelf in our house that's absolutely crammed with books on Dorset folklore. We discovered a lovely bit of history relating to a place that's been a feature of many good coastal walks over the years: St Aldem's Chapel, near Worth Matravers, right on the South Coast. It's an exquisite little chapel which dates right back to the thirteenth century. The book tells of how women would place trinkets, particularly pins, in the central pillar of the chapel whilst wishing for their heart's desire. Sure enough – the next time we visited the chapel – there in the pillar, we saw the flashes of copper, where old pins were slowly oxidising. We just thought it was a lovely image – and 'The Pinner' is about a woman who toils her whole life to make the perfect pin. She believes that if she can produce one that is completely flawless, her heart's desire will be granted.



For a Time

'But look how the roots break through these stones' | Tyncham Village

As I walked late down Tyneham way
I met a man grown old and grey
His house was scarred and tumbledown
We stopped to talk about his town
For a time

We'd given first our only sons
To foreign fields and distant guns
Then gave the very land you see
Assured that it would only be
For a time

So we took our belongings and our skills
And we were scattered through these hills
Trusted those men that we thought wise
And carried on believing lies
For a time

But look how the roots
break through these stones
How through these houses grass has grown
How wind and rain move through the halls
How shell and bullet mark the walls


Then he led me to the dragon's teeth
And to the bay that lay beneath
And as the blood-red sunset burned
He shared the sum of all he'd learned

He said make the best of better days
Forever man himself betrays
For lies and empty guarantees
I played my part to keep you free
For a time...

Tyneham Village can be found nestling in a secluded valley, not far from Lulworth on the South coast of Dorset. During the Second World War it was commandeered by the Ministry of Defence to be used for the D-Day preparations. The villagers were moved out of Tyneham and scattered to various dwellings around the Isle of Purbeck. While they were willing to do their duty and their part for the war effort, they were told that when the war was over, they would be able to return to their homes.


They were never allowed back.

To this day, the village is still owned by the MoD and is now part of the Lulworth firing ranges. The song is a fictional encounter between a visitor to the village and one of the old residents. As he explains the story of the abandoned village, the old man reminds the visitor to appreciate the freedom that was bought by the sacrifices of so many. Given humanity's propensity for making the same mistakes again and again – he leaves the visitor with the rather gloomy thought that we should all make the best of the peace time, fragile as it is.



Lord Exmouth

'I'll have you join The Victory' | HMS Victory, Portsmouth Historic Dockyard

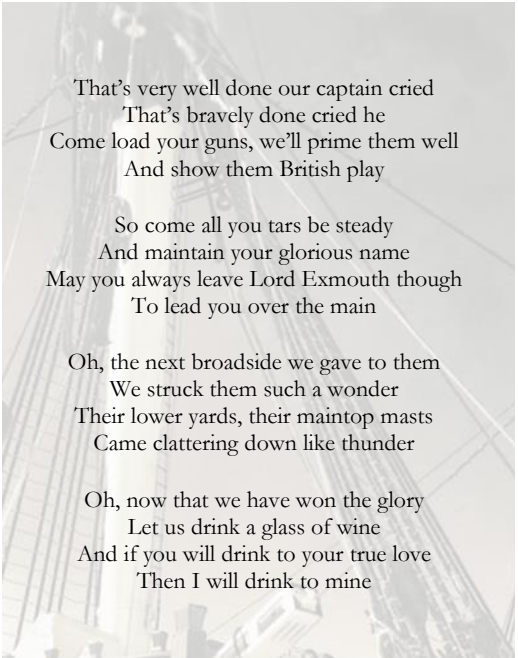


Come all you British men of war
That love your native land!
I'll have you join *The Victory*
Lord Exmouth gives command

Lord Exmouth does his rights maintain
As you shall quickly see
We fought like many lions bold
To set old England free

So come all you British tars
And maintain your glorious name
May you always leave Lord Exmouth though
To lead you over the main

Oh, the first broadside we gave to them
We took 'em by surprise
We shot away their ensign staff
And down their colours lie

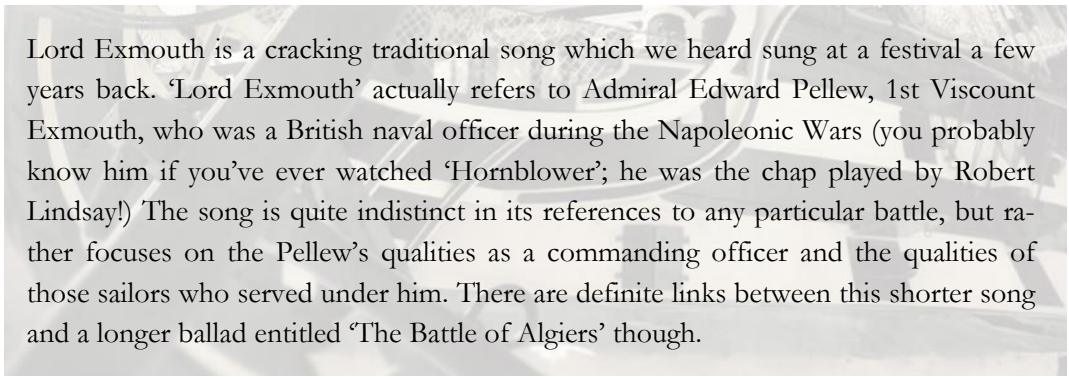


That's very well done our captain cried
That's bravely done cried he
Come load your guns, we'll prime them well
And show them British play

So come all you tars be steady
And maintain your glorious name
May you always leave Lord Exmouth though
To lead you over the main

Oh, the next broadside we gave to them
We struck them such a wonder
Their lower yards, their maintop masts
Came clattering down like thunder

Oh, now that we have won the glory
Let us drink a glass of wine
And if you will drink to your true love
Then I will drink to mine



Lord Exmouth is a cracking traditional song which we heard sung at a festival a few years back. 'Lord Exmouth' actually refers to Admiral Edward Pellew, 1st Viscount Exmouth, who was a British naval officer during the Napoleonic Wars (you probably know him if you've ever watched 'Hornblower'; he was the chap played by Robert Lindsay!) The song is quite indistinct in its references to any particular battle, but rather focuses on the Pellew's qualities as a commanding officer and the qualities of those sailors who served under him. There are definite links between this shorter song and a longer ballad entitled 'The Battle of Algiers' though.

'Up to the Ridge and beyond the crest...' | South Dorset Ridgeway



S. Dorset
Ridgeway
'EAST'

SY
RIDGEWAY

To the Stones

Follow me child, we're walking out west
Up to The Ridge and beyond the crest
Where the thistles grow thick
and the autumn breeze sings its duet
with the lark above on the wing

Follow me child, where the sun rises slow
And bathes the rich fields in the dawn's early glow
The trees not yet cleared, ruddy leaves on display
And we'll visit our kin at the breaking of day

To the stones...

Follow me child, with your back to the tide
Where the wet grass grows green
and the red kestrel flies
That's where we place our unchanging bones
supported,
encircled,
protected by stones

To the stones...

Follow me child, to that long barrow mound
Sitting high on 'The Ridgeway,
the jewel in its crown
If you're ever in need you'll not be alone
There's power
and wisdom
Held there in the stones

To the stones...

We have a fantastic organisation called 'Dorset Artsreach' in our neck of the woods who bring the arts to many rural locations around the county. They are part of a project called 'The Land of Bone and Stone', designed to raise awareness of the rich archaeological heritage of the South Dorset Ridgeway. We were commissioned to write a series of songs that help to raise public awareness of this amazing ceremonial landscape.

'To the Stones' was inspired by a Neolithic long barrow called 'The Grey Mare and Her Colts', on the Ridgeway just above Abbotsbury. It tells of a family taking their child up to this important monument for the first time. Not simply a house for the dead - it's introduced to the child as an integral part of the community, where they will be able to find spiritual strength and support throughout their lives.

'Roses and lillies...' | Daffa-down-dillies were not in season at time of printing

FOLK SONGS
OF
THE UPPER THAMES

Weave Her a Garland

How sweet are the flowers the grow by the fountain
How sweet are the cowslips that spangle the grove
More sweet it is the breeze that blows over the mountain
But none are so sweet as the charms of my love

*I'll weave her a garland
A fresh blooming garland of roses and lilies
And daff-a-down-dillies
I'll weave her a garland
A fresh blooming garland
A garland I'll give to the one I adore*

The blackbirds and thrushes they rise in the morning
How softly they play their sweet notes by the grove
I'll own it is pleasing,
Delightful and charming
To ease the fond sighs of the one that I love

It was down in the vale my sweetheart was walking
How happy I'd be to stand by her again
If she should prove false,
Give her heart to another,
For me to sing pleasure it would be in vain!

'Folk Songs from the Upper Thames' is a fantastic book of songs collected by Alfred Williams and contains, in his words, a 'permanent record of the language and activities' in and around the area in which Williams lived. This song stood out for us as, unlike much of our material, no one died, no children were stolen, lovers weren't separated and no castles were besieged! It's altogether a rather sweet song and we thought it'd be great to take on a song we've actually never heard anyone else sing. As Williams didn't collect tunes, we wrote our own for this particular song.



'Give to your belly, boys, beer enough, whether it be new or old' | Dorset County Museum, Dorchester

Back & Sides



I would sooner be a beggar than a king
And I'll tell you the reason why
A king cannot swagger
or walk like a beggar
Or be half as happy as I

*Let your back & sides go bare me boys
Feet and your hands go cold
But give to your belly, boys
Beer enough
Whether it be new or old*

Oh, I've a sixpence in my pocket lads
And I worked very hard for that
Oh there ain't no Turk
that's gonna make me work
When the beggin' is as good as that

Sometimes we call at a nobleman's hall
To beg for bread and beer
Sometimes we are lame
Sometimes we are blind
Sometimes too deaf to hear

Sometimes we lie like hogs in a sty
Frost and snow on the ground
Sometimes eat a crust
that's rolled in the dust
And by thankful for what we've found!



A great song that we first heard sung by the fantastic James Findlay. It extols the virtues of begging and filling your belly with good ale. The ale part certainly struck a chord with us!







Our mate Cecil H. Wonkebeak | The Banks Arms, Studland

Three Ravens



There were three ravens on a tree
A-down, a-down, a-derry-down

There were three ravens on a tree
Hey-ho

And the middlemost raven said to me
There lies a dead man by yon' tree
A-down, a-down, a-derry-down
Hey-ho

There comes a lady full of woe
A-down, a-down, a-derry-down
There comes a lady full of woe
Hey-ho

There comes a lady full of woe
Riding as fast as she can go
A-down, a-down, a-derry-down
Hey-ho

Who's this that's killed my own true love?
A-down, a-down, a-derry-down
Who's this that's killed my own true love?
Hey-ho

I hope in Heaven he'll never rest
Nor e'er enjoy that blessed place!
A-down, a-down, a-derry-down
Hey-ho

There were three ravens on a tree
A-down, a-down, a-derry-down
There were three ravens on a tree
Hey-ho

There were three ravens on a tree
They were as black as black might be
A-down, a-down, a-derry-down
Hey-ho



We'd heard versions of 'Twa Corbies' sung at our local folk clubs, but it was a Ewan Maccoll version of the song on 'The English and Scottish Popular Ballads: Vol 1 – Child Ballads' which really grabbed our attention. Maccoll's haunting rendition of Child Ballad 26 really inspired us to try harmonising with it – and if we're honest – we love a good, dark song and this really fits the bill quite nicely.



'A cold wind's been blowing, releasing the leaves' | Knightshayes Court Gardens, Devon

Blood on the hillside

*One brings sorrow, two bring joy
Three a girl and four a boy
Five bring want and six bring gold
Seven bring secrets not to be told*

There's mist in the valley
obscuring the trees
A cold wind's been blowing
releasing the leaves
A chill in the air
autumn's fate has been sealed
Seven crown in the branches –
murder concealed

One brings sorrow, two bring joy...

There's blood on the hillside
beneath the slate sky
Those carrion birds
stand silent nearby
Don't stray too near to that circle of stones
There's death on the air
by that pile of fresh bones

One brings sorrow, two bring joy...

Someone said seven figures last night
were lit by the flames of a flickering light
Singing songs through the air
in a tongue thought long lost
Now all that remains
is a corpse in the frost

One brings sorrow, two bring joy...

All of the original songs on this album have been inspired by Dorset in some form or another – and this one came straight out of the Purbeck Hills.

We were out walking on a bleak, autumn day when we came across a particularly windswept hawthorn – in which, we saw a veritable ‘murder’ of crows; seven to be exact. We had the old nursery rhyme ‘one for sorrow’ bouncing around heads and we got to thinking about what that ‘secret never to be told’ might actually be. Murder seemed like the natural thing on a day like that! As we slowly made our way to the pub (all good walks should end this way in our book!) the story of the song came together:

A body found by local villagers sits below a tree filled with seven crows. As the sun rises above the hillside, rumours of witches in the night spread and the seven crows, still unmoving in the branches, are quickly viewed with suspicion with seven women of the village missing. Shape-changing witches? Well the villagers think so...



Silent Prayer

'To that tree that you love, green and silver above' | Abbotsbury

I will return, brave and bold,
Bringing stories and gold

And I will build you that home
From good hard wood and stone

*But this dipping prow
Small hope allows
On these wretched waves!
With sloping mast
We're driven fast
Through bitter air*

In silent prayer

And I will buy you a gown
Stitched with flowers around

And I will ask for your hand
In the chapel we'll stand

But this dipping prow...

And in the forest's cool shade
Well walk up to that glade
To that tree that you love
Green and silver above

But this dipping prow...



There was a song called 'Knightwood' on our last album – inspired by the harvesting of mature oak trees for ship building in the New Forest during the 17th century. It was written from the point of view of a girl who mourns the loss of the trees as much she does the absence of her lover, who sails upon one of the ships built of New Forest oak.

Silent Prayer is, if you like, the 'brother' song to that; it's written from the sailor's perspective. As the sea unleashes its very worst on his ship, he silently lists the things he hopes to give his lover, should he be returned safely to Hampshire, prayers answered.

Coming Home



Chorus

home

C#m

Bsus

You

Dark winter nights are so long
Being patient and strong

*Coming home, coming home
You'll always be coming home to me
You'll always be coming home to me
Coming home*

Words crossing oceans and shores
Trying hard to reassure
So many nights still to last
Until we share our future and our pasts
When you're home

I feel the black nights in which you freeze
Fighting for your life against the seas
Trying to be brave and face your fears
Against mountainous seas and passing years
Until you're home

They tell me you were true and brave
Words of worthwhile feats
and men you've saved
When all I wanted was your fears
To hold you in your weakness,
through your tears
And to be home

*Coming home, coming home
You'll always be coming home to me
You'll always be coming home to me*

To meet again.

Probably the biggest single reason Ninebarrow exists is because of Jon's dad, Bob Whitley. A well respected folk singer and song-writer in Dorset, he's been a massive influence on us – not just because of his impact on Jon's musical upbringing! He has also given us a huge amount of advice and guidance over the last three years. For a long time we've wanted to do a version of one of his songs – and we thought 'Coming Home' would fit perfectly on the album.

It's one song from a series that Bob's written called: '*Circumnavigation – We Sail to Prove the Earth is Round*'. They tell the story of Magellan's voyage in 1519 to find the strait between the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans, as seen through the eyes of a sailor and his wife, who is left at home. Having set out with five ships and 260 men, by 1522 there were only 18 men left alive on one surviving ship. 'Coming Home' covers the journey through the eyes of the woman, who even in her anger and frustration, believes that she will be reunited with her love – in this life or the next.

A wide-angle photograph of a harbor at sunset. The sky is filled with large, dark clouds that are illuminated from below by the setting sun, creating a dramatic orange and yellow glow. The sun is positioned low on the horizon, partially obscured by the clouds. The water in the foreground is calm, reflecting the colors of the sky and the silhouettes of the boats. In the middle ground, numerous small boats are anchored in the harbor. The background shows a dark silhouette of a shoreline with some buildings and trees.

'For a cloudy morning brings in a sunny day' | Brownsea Island, Poole Harbour

Dark Eyed Sailor

As I walked out one evening fair
It being the summer time, to take the air
I spied a sailor and a lady gay
And I stood to listen
To hear what they would say

He said 'Fair lady why do you roam?
For the day is spent and the night is on.'
She heaved a sigh as the tears did roll
'For my dark eyed sailor,
So young and stout and bold.'

'Tis seven long years since he left this land
A right he took from his lily white hand
One half of the ring is still here with me
But the other's rolling
At the bottom of the sea.'

He said 'You may drive him out of your mind
Some other young man you will surely find
Love turns aside and cold does grow
Like a winter's morning
The hills are white with snow.'

She said 'I never would forsake my dear
Although we're parted this many a year
Genteel he was a rake like you
To induce a maiden
And slight the jacket blue.'

One half of the ring did young William show
She ran distracted in grief and woe
Crying 'William, William I have gold in store
For my dark eyed sailor
Has proved his honour long!'

There is a cottage by yonder lea
This couple's married and does agree
So maids be loyal when your love's at sea
For a cloudy morning
Brings in a sunny day



There are many versions of this broken-token ballad to be heard, but it was Olivia Chaney's which really inspired us to start singing it. There's a bit of a mini-narrative running through 'Silent Prayer', 'Coming Home' and this song. Separation forced on a relationship through a long voyage at sea, first from the perspective of a sailor and then from that of a sailor's wife, gives the impression that both distant couples may never see one another again. Happy endings seem to arise fairly infrequently in English folk music(!) – and we saw a good opportunity to provide one here.

Thanks



And that was that! We feel immensely proud of what we've managed to cobble together. There are a few people that we really need to thank for the part they played in putting this album together.

Lee Cuff, thanks for lending us your talents once again, and for going with us when our arrangements took your cello to the point of snapping! You are awesome and we look forward to working with you well in to the future. (No, that's not a threat!) Similarly, **Joe Limburn**, it was a real pleasure getting to know you and to have your beautiful bass on a couple of tracks. We get the feeling you don't know you good you are... you *seriously* rock. **Luke Selby**, we weren't entirely sure if you would say "yes" to playing for us—Ninebarrow's not known for being super-funky—but your beats at the end of For a Time take it to the place we always wanted it to go. Thank you *so* much.

Thank you **Bob Whitley (Dad)** for letting us record Coming Home. You've written so many amazing songs and we're so glad we've finally worked one out to share around! And while we're on the subject of Coming Home, we recorded it on the beautiful grand piano at St Peter's Church, Poole. Many thanks to Father Michael for your kind offer to let us use the church—well in to the night!

Thanks, too, **Sarah Whitley (Big Sis)** for creating yet another work of art to go with our music. We know you are as busy as you are talented and we can't tell you much we appreciate you taking the time to do this again.

Thank you **Mark Tucker** for mastering our album—and for your time and patience with all the to-ing and fro-ing. You've taken our recordings to the next level and it's been fantastic working with you. Thanks, too, to **Jim Soars** for taking on the PR for our music and getting the word out there!

On a slightly different note, we've had a brilliant year playing at various folk clubs and festivals around the country. We've enjoyed the welcome and the hospitality of many new friends on our tours (small as they were) and we look forward to seeing you again.

And, lastly, thank you for listening! Whether it's to the album or at a gig, we really appreciate your support.

