

Boshamengro

English Gypsy Musicians

MTCD373

Boshamengro

Traditional music recorded from Romany fiddlers and other musicians
in Southern England 1910 - 2006

Harry Lee (fiddle), Vanslow Smith (fiddle and melodeon), Lemmy Brazil (melodeon)
Walter Aldridge (harmonica), Jasper and Levi Smith (harmonica and tambourine)
and others

The role of Romany musicians in the traditional music of southern England

While there is little evidence of the role which Romany fiddlers played in the life of their own communities in the 19th century beyond their frequent appearances at Romany weddings, there is ample documentation of the role which Romany fiddlers played in the 19th and early 20th centuries in the musical life of non-Romany communities - at fairs and on feast days, in dancing booths¹, and locally for various forms of Morris Dancing², as well as in the promotion and circulation of new tunes and dances.

The latter process was described to Ralph Vaughan Williams at Tilney St Lawrence in Norfolk on 7th January 1905 by fiddler Stephen Poll (1835 - 1910), who played four 'country dances' for him.³ The young composer noted:

He used to learn them at [King's] Lynn Fair, when a new dance was danced he used to learn it by dancing in it - then later he would ask for the same again and then knew the tune and the dance and could start at the top. He used the fiddle for dances - the old country dances used to have more money in them because each couple as they got to the top would give him a penny.⁴

For all their rose-tinted ink, the 19th century 'gypsiologists' made some interesting observations about Romany musicians and their relationship with a settled clientele. Writing in 1875, Bath Smart and Henry Crofton both describe the Romany musician in his element and make a rare appraisal of a Romany fiddler's skill:

The Gypsy is always foremost among the 'feast-finding minstrels' which attend our English fairs and country wakes. He is to be seen in his glory at a 'kelopen' or frolic, when the mirth grows fast and furious, as with flashing eyes and excited mien he flourishes his fiddle-bow and plays the music which keeps in time the flying feet of the dancers. The Gypsy girls are not averse to air their accomplishments on these occasions, and exhibit the same lightness of toe and natural grace which are said to distinguish their continental sisters. Highly favoured is the village swain who has a 'dark lady' from the tents for his partner in the dance ...

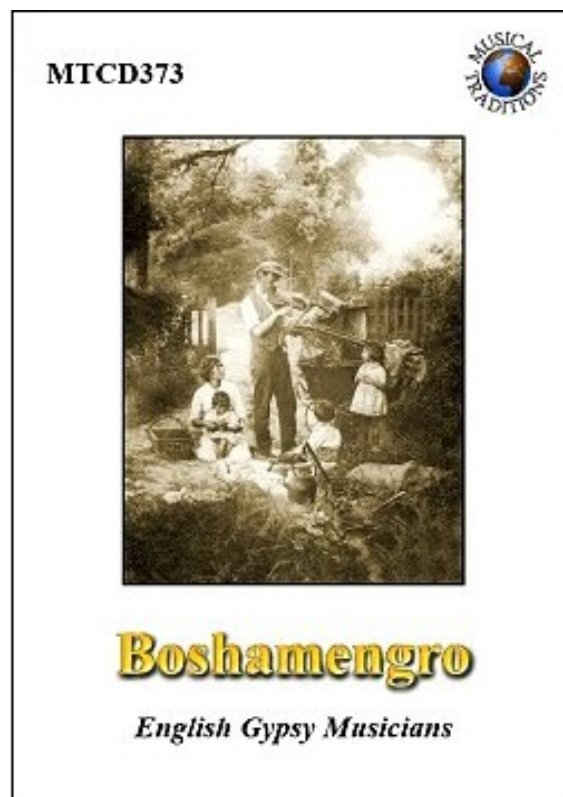
With our English Gypsies the favourite instruments are the tambourines and the 'boshomengri' or fiddles, especially the latter, and we know several good executants on the strings. One of the most gifted and renowned violinists among the Gypsies, in recent times was a man named Horsery Gray, who died some years ago. We have been told by a Romani chal that when Horsery had heard a tune he could play it off straightway, putting in such 'variations, grace-notes, shakes and runs', that none of his confreres could compare with him. He played entirely by ear, and not from notes. The gaujos sent for him from long distances to hear his hornpipes.⁵

The reference to his death suggests that 'Horsery' Gray was in all likelihood Oseri Gray (born at Horningsea, Cambridgeshire, in 1777, and dying at Aylsham, Norfolk, in 1855), whom the 1841 Census describes as a 'musician', rather than his son of the same name (also born at Horningsea, in 1803, who died at Docking, Norfolk, in 1882) whom the 1851 and 1881 Censuses respectively describe as a 'travelling musician' and 'musician'. The unusual Christian name - recorded in a multitude of different spellings - seems to have been peculiar to his branch of the Gray family.

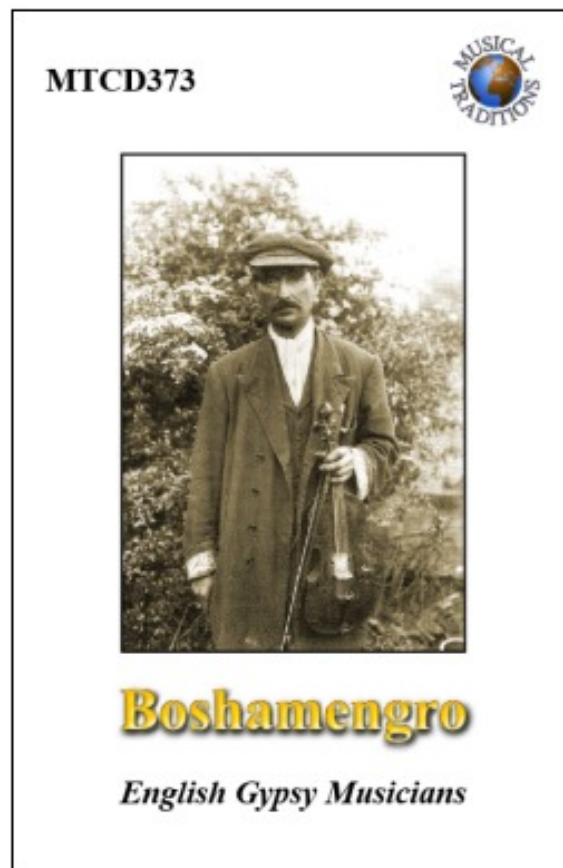
At Thaxted in north-west Essex the Gypsy fiddler Moses Shaw (1797 - 1881), was long remembered for playing at local fairs:

A certain Mr Patient of Great Easton, now deceased, used to play the fiddle at the Rose and Crown for many old country dances, the most popular being Double Chain sides and Cross Hands. The former of these dances is sometimes called Moses Shaw after an old Gypsy, who was a favourite dancer and accompanist at the local fairs.⁶

The two dances referred to by the Rev Chambers (the first of them more often as *Double Change Sides*) were also known just over the border in Cambridgeshire, where they had also been used by Morris dancers - also known locally as *Molly dancers*. Researching the subject in 1948, Russell Wortley was told by Joseph Kester, who had danced with the Hardwick Molly dancers in the 1870s and 1880s:



CD case cover



CD booklet cover

*The Gypsy musicians were the best players - knew all the tunes. One of the Shaws ... used to play for their Molly Dances on Plough Monday. The Gypsy musicians had to be paid. They were very smartly dressed - worsted cord breeches - black velvet waistcoat, and jacket.*⁷

And at Madingley he was told by a Mr Wakefield that there the fiddler was usually Larry Shaw, who "lived outside the village":

*Larry Shaw actually taught the Madingley men new dances as they were introduced ... 'Soldiers Joy', 'Double Change Sides', 'Wilixie's [sic] Reel' and 'Figure Eight.'*⁸

The Larry Shaw in question was probably Moses Shaw's cousin, who - like Moses himself - came from a family of musicians, and died in 1898 at the age of 82, having been described as a 'musician' in every Census for the village of Aspenden, near Buntingford (in eastern Hertfordshire), between 1861 and 1891.

In fact, many travellers made a living, and sometimes a good one, from their musical skills. Writing in about 1861 the antiquary George Maynard of Whittlesford in Cambridgeshire referred, in a note-book held by Cambridgeshire Archives, to another Moses Shaw, the father of the Moses Shaw remembered at Thaxted:

*... his professed occupation was seive (sic) making and Rat Catching, but he preferred "playing upon the violin" at feasts and fairs; this latter being more lucrative; and our own annual feast - the 11th of June, at the time he lived was not considered complete without his able display of his abilities upon the violin, that universal accompaniment for the lads and lasses of the dancing booth. And I have no doubt that himself and his tribe, managed to make a very lucrative calling when these festivals where more countenanced than they are now.*⁹

In 1869 a contributor to *Notes and Queries*, quoting 'an old Shepherd', of Stanstead Abbots, again in eastern Hertfordshire, confirms the reputation enjoyed by the Shaws:

*That a Shaw, man or woman, should not be able to play the fiddle, is unheard of. At all village merry-makings the fiddler was always a member of the family.*¹⁰

An interesting account of similar circumstances - or rather their renunciation for religious reasons - was given to a correspondent of the *Christian Mission Magazine* in 1873 by Cornelius Smith (1831 - 1922), the father of the once celebrated evangelist Rodney Smith, who (Cornelius) at the time was living in a large encampment on part of what were then the Essex marshes known as Cherry Island, in West Ham:

*A few days ago we paid a visit to this encampment, and gave our readers a story or two as we received them from their lips: GIVING A FIDDLE TO THE DEVIL: "That I did, really," said a brother gipsy. "When I gave God my heart I gave the fiddle to the devil, and I have not played it since. When I was in my sins I had used to go to village wakes and fairs and play it while many a young couple danced down along the broad way".*¹¹

Cornelius Smith's stamping grounds had been in Epping Forest, eastern Hertfordshire and Cambridge-shire and he was also brother-in-law to Rodney Shaw, whom the 1881 Census describes as a 'Fiddler', and who was the son of John Shaw, whom the 1871 Census similarly describes as a 'Gipsy fiddler', and was himself the brother-in-law of the Moses Shaw remembered at Thaxted.

On 17th January 1846 the *Cambridge Independent Press* printed a report which also linked fiddlers from the Smith and Shaw families, on this occasion following a not entirely harmonious encounter between them when the two sets of Molly dancers which had enlisted their services visited the same public house in the town:

*Plough Monday. ... The town for the time seemed all alive, fiddles were scraped in every street, the dancers capered most vigorously and ploughs rattled over our pavements with much apparent lightness ... One little circumstance, however, occurred during the day which gave rise to an introduction of some of the holiday folks to the magistrates on Tuesday morning. It appears that two dancing parties met together in one public house for refreshment, and a trial of rivalry sprang up between two gipsy fiddlers, of the rival clans of the Smiths and the Shaws, and the latter broke Smith's fiddle about his head, and for which he sought recompense. "I'll tell ye what it is", said Shaw to the bench, "he played so infernally out of tune, which he knows I can't abear, that I gi'es him a knobber, and I'll pay for it".*¹²

We can give a name to at least one other fiddler among the Smiths who was active in and around Cambridge at that time, while at the same time revealing the role of the 19th century Gypsy fiddler in a new light: on 27th May 1843 the *Cambridge Chronicle and Journal* refers to one 'John Smith, gipsy fiddler', in connection with electioneering for the Cambridge Borough Election.

The interplay between Gypsy fiddlers and non-Gypsy musicians - and the lead role played by the former in the transaction - is evident even earlier. In the 1820s John Clare the poet (1793 - 1864) himself played the fiddle and sought out travellers near his home in Helpstone (then in Northamptonshire, now spelt Helpston) to play with and learn from:

*At these feasts and merry makings I got acquainted with the gipseys and often assos[i]ated with them at their camps to learn the fiddle of which I was very fond. The first acquaintance I made was with the Boswells Crew as they were called a popular tribe well known about here and famous for fiddl[i]ers and fortunetellers ... I used to spend my Sundays & summer evenings among them learning to play the fiddle in their manner by the ear and joining in their pastimes.*¹³

*As soon as I got here the Smiths gang of gipseys came and & encamp[ed] near the town & as I began to be a desent scraper we had a desent round of merriment for a fortnight sometimes going to dance or drink at the camp & at other times at the public house.*¹⁴

In his journal he is more specific:

*Friday 3 June 1825: ... got the tune of Highland Mary from Wisdom Smith, a gipsy, & pricked another sweet tune without name as he fiddled it.*¹⁵

John Clare left two tune books, the first dated 1818, containing a mixture of 225 tunes, the majority of which show every sign of having been copied from printed sources. One of them, however, contains a small number of untitled 'Hornpipes' whose namelessness - and departure from printed versions - may point to his Gypsy friends as his source: these include untitled versions of the tunes known more familiarly as the *Swansea Hornpipe*, and *Salt Fish and Dumplings/Shepherd's Hornpipe*. The same may be true of tunes with misspelt titles, such as *Bacon's Hornpipe* (*Miss/Mrs. Baker's Hornpipe*), and *Shooter's Hornpipe* (*Shuter's Hornpipe*), which were named respectively after the 18th century stage performers Mary Baker (fl.c.1750 - c.1770) and Ned Shuter (d.1776), whom David Garrick considered to be 'the greatest comic genius I have ever known'.¹⁶ Interestingly enough *Miss Baker's Hornpipe* - or at least part of it - survived into the 20th century, again at Thaxted, where the opera-singer Clive Carey collected a tune from the fiddler and erstwhile travelling showman Alfred Bishop (1861 -1944) in 1911 under the title of *Gipsy's Hornpipe*, which comprised the first part of *Flowers of Edinburgh* and the second of *Miss Baker's Hornpipe*.¹⁷

This interaction between Gypsy and other musicians is equally apparent in the lives of some of the most celebrated 20th century non-Gypsy traditional musicians in southern England. The Forest of Dean fiddler Stephen Baldwin (1873 - 1955) recorded many tunes for Peter Kennedy and Russell Wortley in 1952 and 1954 respectively, including one he identified simply as *Tite Smith's Hornpipe*, named after a local Romany of that name who, like Stephen Baldwin himself, also played for Morris dancing in and around the Forest for Dean, and one Baldwin called simply the *Gypsy's Hornpipe*.¹⁸ Stephen Baldwin also recalled an occasion when he was engaged by Romanies to play at a wedding - a reversal of the customary roles of the Romany fiddler and non-Romany dancers:

He had one experience which must have been rather out of the ordinary for a village musician. It was about the year 1910 when, having a pint at the local inn, a gypsy came up to him and said: "Mr Baldwin, come up to our house and play the fiddle. We've got a wedding on Saturday".

At first he did not much care for the idea, but was eventually persuaded to go. He arrived at about three in the afternoon. The 'house' turned out to be a tent and the dancing floor the grass. For a seat he had a tree stump. But everyone was full of fun and happiness which put him in the right mood for playing. As soon as bow touched strings the gipsy blood was stirred and they were dancing with great vigour.

"I never saw so much food and drink", he said. "There was meat and cheese, beer, and whisky, all in huge quantities. ... I played nothing but hornpipes. The sweat simply rolled off them. They never seemed to get tired. ... it was about two in the morning when I left. But I enjoyed it all

up to the mark and one of the things which stayed in my memory was the lovely smell of the smoke from the embers of the glowing fire. For the evening they gave me five shillings".¹⁹

The boot does, however, more often seem to have been on the other foot, and long after the more formal settings of the dancing booth, the displays of Morris Dancing and feast day hops had become little more than a memory. Romany fiddlers could be found in village pubs and alehouses providing music for the impromptu sessions of step-dancing and the like which were once ubiquitous in both town and country. As well as collecting many tunes from the Somerset fiddler and peripatetic scissor-grinder Henry Cave and his father Tom, Cecil Sharp enthusiastically observed Henry in action one Saturday night - 14th September 1907 - at the *George Inn* in Nettlebridge:

*The young bloods of the villages round rolled up in scores. The tap room was full but by squashing they managed to clear a space for the dancing. And such dancing! Jigs by the score, broom dances, 4-handed reels and country dances. I never saw such light free & loose ankles in all my life. My old scissor grinding fiddler with a grin all over his face was up in the corner and fiddling for all he was worth.*²⁰

Sharp had persuaded Florence Kettlewell, with whom he was lodging while searching out fiddlers in the neighbourhood, to 'motor over', and she in turn recorded:

*About 1910 [sic] I drove one evening to Nettlebridge to see Korfie dance in his own sitting ... The fiddler, Cave, by name, was perched up in a corner. The room was full of men who faced each other in long rows and as soon as the music struck up began to step dance. They advanced and retired and walked round, and then footed it briskly. When a man was tired he sat down and another took his place, and thus it went on till closing time. The landlord told me that whenever Korfie was in the neighbourhood, men would flock from far and near for a dance.*²¹

With the exception of the step-dancing or tap-dancing at which, of course, they have always excelled, surprisingly little is known of dancing among Romanies themselves. An account of a visit to a Romany family given in an article entitled '*In a Romani Tent*', which appeared in a London newspaper, *The Globe*, on November 19th, 1907, quotes a 'grey-haired horse-dealer' on the subject:

*I have heard my father say that when he was a boy, as many as fifty true-bred Romanies sometimes camped together on a heath or common, and when Fenella Lee married a Boswell over a hundred Gypsies danced to the wedding fiddling.*²²

There is no indication of the kind of dancing which was involved. Such accounts of dancing as do exist always struggle to convey any real idea of something which is obviously exotic to the observer; Marjory Mack, for example, describes - albeit poetically - the dancing of the 'willowy fantastic' 17-year old Rachel Smith, the younger sister of Minty, Levi and Jasper and cousin of Harry Lee's wife Sarah Ann, as follows:

*Rachel has amber-brown eyes and a mass of thick, almost blue-black hair that just clears her shoulder tops as she moves in the dance which is her passion. She dances it alone, or with the two little Stockings' girls in a triangle outside my kitchen door - the Cockadilly, they call it, and the music that they chant shrilly and hoarsely as they dance is the music of the Cock o' the North. To look at, it is the queerest blend of all the dances of East and West which perhaps never met harmoniously save in the didekais.*²³

The most detailed and possibly most important contribution to the subject was made by the 'gypsyologist' Alice E. Gillington in her *Songs of the Open Road: Didekai ditties & gypsy dances*.²⁴ In her introduction to this collection of songs and dances from 'Hampshire and the New Forest', she writes:

The Gypsy Lees were the chief musicians in the old days. Noah Lee and his three brothers George, Jim and Sacki, played all round the country., at the corners of cross roads, up at "the big houses of the high ones," as the gypsies say, and from one inn to another, with their fiddles, triangles, drums and tambourines.

At the present day, the accordion has taken the place of the fiddle among Forest dwellers, but after the day's labour in strawberry-field or hop-field is over, you may see a gypsy dancing in the hay-field, swinging and swaying and circling, to the tune "Bonnets so blue," or a tauni rakli [young girl] from the tents among the Green Bushes, the forest hollies, dancing a step dance in the twilight or the firelight to "Pop goes the Weasel," or two Romani juvals [women] walking round each other, skirt in one hand and tambourine shaken in the other to the prelude of a country jig.

The eight tunes which Alice Gillington published have been reproduced and examined in detail elsewhere.²⁵ In the present context, however, it is should be mentioned that the (in some ways extraordinary) tune she publishes for the '*Country Jig*' [sub-titled *Step-Dance*] bears some resemblance to the *Manchester Hornpipe*, the dance being described thus: *A couple stand face to face and walk round each other bending low to ground and holding skirt, then dance face to face, some distance apart* (see also previous quotation).

Most of the musicians featured on this CD were recorded in the second half of the twentieth century. While it should always be remembered that they were playing for an audience for whom their repertoires were of current interest, those repertoires do contain many items which date back to what was in essence a previous era, and include dance music (for step-dancing and country dancing) and music hall songs which were already popular before they were born.

Footnotes:

1: See Keith Chandler: *19th Century Musicians nos. 5, 6 & 7 - Dancing Booth Musicians*. *Musical Traditions* Article MT078 (27 July 2001) at http://www.mustrad.org.uk/articles/d_booth1.htm.

2: For Morris Dancing in the South Midlands see Chandler, Keith: '*Probably the most widely known Gypsy for many a mile around*'. *The life and musical activity of Thomas Boswell, also known as Thomas 'Gypsy' Lewis, (1838-1910)*, in *Folk Music Journal* vol. 10, no.1 (2011); for Morris Dancing in the Forest of Dean see Philip Heath-Coleman: '*Boshamengro*' - *Josiah 'Tite' Smith of Coleford, Gloucestershire*, in *Romany Routes* vol.10 no.8 (September 2012); and for Morris Dancing (*Molly Dancing*) in Essex and Cambridgeshire see Philip Heath-Coleman: '*Boshamengro II - Moses Shaw*', in *Romany Routes* vol.11 no.6. (March 2014). The repertoires and stamping grounds of the brothers John and James Lock(e) suggest a possible association with Morris Dancers in the Welsh Borders, while the family background of Bill Scarrott, who played the fiddle for their successors at Pershore, known as the '*Not for Joes*', also suggests an origin in the traveller community.

3: Ralph Vaughan Williams MSS RVW2/3/52 - 55: the original notations may be viewed on line at <http://www.vwml.org.uk/record/RVW2/3/52> - 55; Stephen Poll died in 1910 at the age of 75: the tunes were *Trip to the Cottage*, *Gypsies in the Wood* (a two-part version of the *Russian Cavalry*), *Low-backed Car* (which is a variant of the *Nutting Girl* tune in 6/8), and *Ladies' Triumph*.

4: Ralph Vaughan Williams MSS RVW2/3/51: the original may be viewed on line at <http://www.vwml.org.uk/record/RVW2/3/51>

5: Smart, Bath Charles and Crofton, Henry Thomas: *The dialect of the English Gypsies*, 2nd ed. (London: Asher and Co., 1875) p.297. '*Kelopen*' is a Romany and Anglo-Romany (modern academics prefer the spellings *Romani* and *Angloromani*) word for - amongst other things - 'dance' (the noun), deriving from '*kel*', meaning 'to dance' or 'to play (a musical instrument)' etc., which survives in the Anglo-Romany phrase '*kel the bosh*' ('play the fiddle'). Smart and Crofton also gloss the original Romany phrase *kel o boshomengri* in the same way. Both *boshomengri* (which Smart and Crofton gloss *piper, fiddler, fiddle, music*) and *boshamengro* (which they gloss as both *fiddle* and *fiddler*) literally mean *music-maker*. In Anglo-Romany *boshamengri* has been shortened to the still current *bosh*, a simplex which originally meant '*to play a musical instrument*'. Gaujo, less academically spelt Gorgio, and in either case pronounced gauja, is the usual Anglo-Romany term (and loan-word in standard English) for non-Romany, while Romani chal means Romany man.

6: Chambers, Rev George: *Folk Traditions at Thaxted*, in *The Country Town* (September 1911); see also: Heath-Coleman, Philip: *Boshamengro II - Moses Shaw* op cit.

7: Russell Wortley MSS, University of Sheffield, quoted in Frampton, George: '*More honoured in the breach than the observance*': *Molly Dancing and other Plough Monday Customs in Cambridgeshire* (Author, Marden, Kent, 1991).

8: Quoted in Frampton, 1991 op cit.

9: Cambridgeshire Archives: R58/5; see also Heath-Coleman, Philip: *Boshamengro II - Moses Shaw* 2014 op cit.; it should be noted that the term *sieve* was applied to the wickerwork baskets which - for example - market porters once carried on their heads.

10: Cussans, John E, 'Gipsies', Notes & Queries 4th series III, March 169, p.462.

11: Anon: *An afternoon with the gipsies*, in *The Christian Mission Magazine* (September 1873) pp. 140-141; quoted in Lee, Terence: *The Lee family tree; Vol.1: The Lee and Smith Gipsies* (MSS, 1992) p.56.

12: Quoted in: *More Gypsies Hawkers & Other Travellers in the English south Midlands & including East Anglia, The Home Counties & The South East. By Popular Demand a further anthology of references from local newspapers, 1759-1923*. Extracted and compiled by Keith Chandler (Romany and Traveller Family History Society, 2007).

13: Peterborough MS A25 p.11; quoted in Deacon, John: *John Clare and the folk tradition*, London: Sinclair Brown Ltd. (1983), where the 225 tunes Clare 'pricked' in his tune books - including some of the duplicates - are also reproduced.

14: Peterborough MS B7 p.88: quoted *ibid*.

15: Northamptonshire MS 15 p. 87; quoted *ibid*.

16: Peterborough MS 13, transcribed *ibid*., where the tunes referred to are respectively numbered 174, 169, 111, 109. Two other tunes which might be worth mentioning here, the first for its unusual melodicism and the other for its unusual name, are 182 "A hornpipe", and 237 *Novey Gallows* (a version of *Stony Steps*)

17: Clive Carey's original MSS notation of Alfred Bishop's *Gipsy's Hornpipe* may be viewed on line at <http://www.vwml.org/record/CC/1/552>. Interestingly enough, the first part of Alfred Bishop's tune - a version of the first strain of the *Flowers of Edinburgh* - bears a strong resemblance to that of John Clare's *Flowers of Edinborough* (sic) - Northampton MS 13, no.138.

18: See Heath-Coleman, Philip: "Here's one you'll like I think", *Musical Traditions* Article MT160 (25 July 2005) (viewable on line at <http://www.mustrad.org.uk/articles/baldwin.htm>) and *Musical Traditions* CD MTCD334 *Stephen Baldwin: "Here's one you'll like I think"*, for a detailed transcription of *Tite Smith's Hornpipe* see Heath-Coleman, Philip: "Here's one you'll like": *Stephen Baldwin - English Fiddler*, in *Fiddle On* no.18, Autumn/Winter 2005 (pp.116-19, 24-25); and for 'Tite' Smith himself see Heath-Coleman Philip, 'Boshamengro' - *Josiah 'Tite' Smith of Coleford, Gloucestershire* in *Romany Routes* vol.10 no.8 (September 2012). While the Baldwins were sometimes referred to as 'pikeys', there is no evidence that they were actually Romanies (though the name is found among Romanies in the area).

19: Albino, H(arry) H(urbutt), *A traditional fiddler and his reminiscences in Gloucestershire Countryside* no.6 (January-March 1948), pp.107 - 109, 124.

20: For Tom and Henry Cave and transcriptions of some of their tunes see Heath-Coleman, Philip: *Scissors grinder and 'first-rate fiddler': the life and tunes of Henry Cave of Midsomer Norton, and his father Tom in Folk Music Journal*, vol.10, no.2 (2012) pp.181 - 205. [Reprinted as a monograph with transcriptions of additional tunes and addenda, Radstock Museum, 2013]. The notations which Sharp made of Henry and Tom Cave's tunes in 1907 are held by Clare College, Cambridge, (CJS2/10/1362-1364, 1477-1495, 1508); copies held by the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library can be viewed on line at <http://www.vwml.org/record/CJS2/10/1362> etc. It should be noted that in the passage quoted, Sharp probably used the word 'jig' to refer to solo, and in this context specifically to step-dancing, by analogy of his own experience of Morris Dancing in Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire.

21: Kettlewell, FB: *'Trinkum-Trinkums' of fifty years*; (Taunton, 1927), pp.61 - 62. 'Korfie' was Mrs Kettlewell's transcription of the local pronunciation of 'Coffee', the nickname of Alfred Parfitt (1879 - 1970). The book's title seems to be a version of the old phrase *trinkum trankums*, derived from 'trinkets'.

22: Crofton, Henry Thomas [sometime Vice-President of the Gypsy Lore Society]: *Affairs of Egypt 1907* ('extracted from the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*').

23: Mack (1942) *op cit.*, pp.49-50.

24: Gillington, Alice E.: *Songs of the Open Road: Didekai ditties & gypsy dances*. London, 1911.

25: See Yates, Mike and Roud, Steve: *Alice E. Gillington: Dwelling on the roughs* in *Folk Music Journal*, Vol. 9, Issue 1, 2006. Also accessible on line at: <http://www.forest-tracks.co.uk/hampshirevoices/pages/alicegillington.html>

Henry 'Fiddleplayer' Lee (1891 - 1967)

Harry Lee is the only Romany fiddler in England to have left a recorded body of traditional dance music of any size to posterity. The recordings presented here were made in 1962 and are all the more remarkable for having been made in their natural environment: his own choice of tunes played in the company of his family seated round the fire at a favourite stopping place. His fluent and authoritative playing - marked by quite sublime control - affords a valuable perspective on the often neglected contribution which Romany musicians, and in particular fiddlers, long made to the practice, diffusion and enjoyment of traditional music in the English countryside.

On Sunday 7 October 1962 Henry Lee - as he is generally remembered by his family and other travellers - was encamped at a favourite stopping place on Marden Plain, near Paddock Wood in Kent, as was his wont at hopping time, as much, apparently, for the occasion as for the work. With him in two unassuming caravans were members of his extended family, including grandchildren and his father-in-law Albert 'Bullbred'¹ Smith: some of them at least are said to have travelled from Essex for the season. Returning home at closing time that Sunday afternoon, the men had settled down around the fire with a cup of tea, and Harry may already have taken out his fiddle to entertain the assembled company.

As the nickname of 'Fiddleplayer', by which he is still remembered, suggests, Harry Lee was not just any old fiddler but *the* fiddler to those who knew him. He is also said to have had a fiddle of his own when many Romany fiddlers - *boshamengros*² as they were known in Anglo-Romany - didn't.³ In fact, successive generations of his family recall that that was how he earned his living - 'busk(er)ing' as they called it. They also recalled him playing for the entertainment of fellow travellers when the day was done:

"Of a night my uncle, Henry was his name, he used to get his old fiddle out and we'd have a song and a tap dance. I mean, the Travellers never had nothing else for entertainment, it's something to be remembered".⁴

Harry's grandson, the singer Ambrose Cooper, remembered:

"We used to travel around, travel all over the country, Essex, Kent, Surrey. We travelled with horses and wagons, My dear old grandad used to play the violin, 'cos he used to get his living with it, he used to go busking. They'd get a fire up and get a bit of board to tap dance on and he'd play the fiddle - all jigs and reels on the fiddle. That was their entertainment".⁵

These two sets of recollections are formulaic enough to suggest that fiddlers like Harry Lee and the environment in which they practised their art were already on their way to becoming the stuff of myth. The reference to busking was accurate enough, though. Vanslow Smith, who is also featured on this CD, remembers how, when he was young in the 1930s, while he and his family were encamped at the well-known stopping place of High Tilt:

"We had a young man come to stay at camp at this time. He only had one possession with him and that was his violin. He used to walk into a town or village and start busking - we know it as monging. His name was Henry Lee. He had no desire to become rich or famous and only needed enough each day which he easily earned".⁶

At this point it should be pointed out that *busking* was as likely to refer to the practice of putting the hat round in public houses and similar - on a commercial scale - as to playing optimistically on a street corner, while the terms tap-dancing and step-dancing were often used indiscriminately (although some would make a distinction) for the stepping which such 'jigs and reels' would frequently accompany.⁷

It was in search of Romany musicians that the collector Ken Stubbs and fiddler Steve Pennells had visited nearby Horsmonden⁸ that same Sunday, accompanied by Paul Carter who was there on behalf of Topic Records at Ken Stubbs's invitation to record any music they found. On another day they might have run into the singers and musicians Minty, Jasper and Levi Smith, cousins of Harry's wife Sarah Ann - usually known as Sary Ann - or possibly Minty's husband, the fiddler Frank Smith.

The travellers would usually be in the area for a month or so around the Horse Fair which was held at Horsmonden on the second Sunday in September, to coincide with the hopping season. On the occasion in question Ken and Steve had failed to find any musicians at Horsmonden, but another traveller suggested that they should visit Harry Lee, who was encamped nearby, and persuaded his teenaged son to show them the way.

And so we find ourselves back on Marden Plain, where the three visitors and their guide were apparently welcomed and treated to tune after tune - some 16 of them - by Harry Lee. They had come prepared, and recorded his performance for posterity. Steve Pennells recalls visiting Horsmonden again the following year with Ken Stubbs and finding Harry playing ('different') step-dancing tunes in one of the pubs, but on that occasion the noise in the pub was unfortunately not conducive to recording him.

Although recordings of the odd tune by other *boshamengros* have survived, Harry Lee is the only one to have been recorded playing a significant number or wide selection of tunes. At the time his name would not have been familiar to enthusiasts for traditional fiddling, despite the fact that he had long been celebrated among travellers beyond the confines of his own family, and had, with Sarah Ann and their children, been a popular subject for professional photographers between the two World Wars.

In 1974 three of the tunes which Harry recorded (the *Breakdown* - a version of a tune otherwise known variously as the *Lass on the Strand* or the *Belfast Hornpipe*), the *Flowers of Edinburgh*, and an air which Ken Stubbs identified as *You'll have no mother to guide you*, were released by Topic on the ground-breaking compilation *Boscastle Breakdown: Southern English Country Music*.⁹ *Boscastle Breakdown* was dismissed by many people in the folk-music establishment of the day because it did not bolster conventional ideas about traditional music in England, although it did kindle a spark of interest amongst a small group of musicians who saw behind the scratchy recordings, the 'untraditional' repertoire and the age of the performers. Some of the musicians on *Boscastle Breakdown* - Scan Tester for example - have since achieved celebrity among subsequent generations of musicians, but no real further interest was shown in Harry Lee. It was almost as though he had come from another dimension and returned there, despite the fact that he and his wife did their shopping in Paddock Wood every Saturday.¹⁰

In fact, Harry Lee was the latest of a dynasty of musical Lees who had been active in Kent in the 19th and early 20th centuries. His own grandfather and namesake Henry Lee, who had been christened at Strood, near Rochester on 19 March 1815, the son of Ambrose Lee, a 'tramp' and his wife Elizabeth, was described as a 'musician' (living in a 'gipsy (*sic*) van' in Maidstone Road, Chatham) in the 1851 Census, as he was also when his son Charles was christened at Chatham on 29 August that year. He had a number of sons, of whom two - John (born at Cuxton on 31 January 1847) and Walter (christened at Chatham on 15 March 1853) - are also described as 'musicians' in the 1871 and 1881 censuses and the 1891 and 1901 censuses respectively. The names Zachariah and Major both occur in this branch of the Lees (Henry, Harry's grandfather, had a brother by the name of Zachariah and a son called Major), and given the familial preferences for certain Christian names which prevailed among travelling families it is highly likely that Major Lee (born 1816), a 'musician' and his brother Zachariah (born 1808), also a 'musician', who hailed from Cambridgeshire, and were both transported to Australia, were also related.¹¹ Family tradition records that one or more of Harry's brothers played the fiddle, too.

Harry Lee was himself the son of another of Henry's sons, Albert, who was christened at Chatham on 27 April 1856 and married Eliza Ripley at Strood in 1887. Harry's own birth was recorded at Gravesend in 1891, where over the years the Lees had been associated with both Northfleet and Milton. Since his grandfather's time the family had travelled mainly in north Kent, and Albert Lee and his family, including the young 'Henry' could be found 'in a caravan back of Balmoral Road' (Gillingham) in 1901 and in a two-room cottage on Slickett's Hill, Chatham in 1911 (travellers would often take permanent accommodation during the winter months), in which year the Census also described Henry, his father and his two elder brothers as 'pedlar hawkers'.

It is also worth noting that those preferences for Christian names amongst his forbears also suggest that the world-famous guitarist Albert Lee may ultimately have been a scion of the same or a closely-related branch of the Lee family through his father David Lee, who himself played the fiddle.¹²

As I have already indicated, Harry married into another prominent family of musical travellers: his wife Sarah Ann's cousins Jasper and Levi Smith can be heard playing the mouth organ and tambourine respectively on this CD, and their brother-in-law, Frank Smith, features (as to a lesser extent do his wife Minty and brother-in-law Jasper) among Marjorie Mack's memories of life at Gincox Farm, near Oxted, Surrey, in the mid-1930s, which she recounts in her book *Hannaboys Farm* (1942), where she also provides a notation of his rendition of *The Croppy Boy* played as an air:

A photograph of Frank Smith playing the fiddle with his brother Bill 'Mousey' Smith on tambourine, taken by Dave Nuttall on 17 February 1968 at the Working Men's Club in Edenbridge (where the two brothers were living on a Romany site) can be found in Hall 1990 (page 25). Jasper and Levi's younger sister Rachel apparently thought of them (and, presumably, their

'big sister' Minty) as Coopers "'cos my mother [Eliza Cooper] wasn't married [to Derby Smith] when she had them".¹³ One of Sarah Ann's uncles - her father's brother Billy 'the Pro' (so-called because of his performances on the London stage) - is still remembered as 'the best dancer around', an accolade which was subsequently inherited by his son Walter.¹⁴

Harry Lee died in 1967 at the age of 76, his death was being registered at Maidstone which covered Marden.

The photographs:

I have already referred to the popularity of Harry Lee and his family as subjects for professional photographers. In the early 1930s an unidentified photographer took a sequence of photographs (three have come to light) of Harry and Sarah Ann and their first three children Will (born 1921), Louie and Lovey (Lavinia, born 1924) and Loui[s]e (born 1927), one of which was published with an article about Romanies at Epsom which appeared in *Women's Life* on 8 June 1934.¹⁵ A second, which was evidently taken only moments before or after on the same occasion, is reproduced in the centre pages.

Another photograph of the same family group, which was apparently taken on a different occasion (Harry's family believe it was taken in 1929) and at a different location, survives in the form of a magic lantern slide, apparently derived from a photograph taken by 'Dr Habberton Lulham of Hurstpierpoint, 'Photographer of Romanies' (see CD cover).¹⁶

A photograph of a man holding a fiddle, taken by Fred Shaw of the Romany Lore Society and labelled *Harry Lee, Epsom Downs, 1 June 1930* (i.e. during Derby week), is evidently of the same man, though he looks somewhat older (see booklet cover).¹⁷

Apart from the Shaw photograph, which is almost entirely lacking in artifice, the photographs in question reveal considerable compositional skill on the part of the photographer. And while a rose-tinted lens was obviously being used, the photographers exquisitely achieve the photographers' purpose.

Harry Lee: the recordings : "*Jigs and reels*"

Traditional music of any kind - including hornpipes and step-dances - was long referred to as 'jigs and reels' by travellers and settled folk alike, and that, as we have seen, was how Harry's grandson Ambrose Cooper described the tunes played by Harry Lee which are offered here.

Three of Harry's tunes appeared in the Topic LP *Boscastle Breakdown: Southern English Country Music* (Topic LP TSDL240): *The Breakdown* and *The Flowers of Edinburgh* (both of which also appeared on the Topic CD *My Father's the King of the Romanies* [TSCD661]) and an *Unidentified tune*, which Ken Stubbs identified - possibly following Harry Lee himself - as *You'll Have no Mother to Guide You*. All three tunes also appear on the present CD.

Ken Stubbs produced an (apparently incomplete) list of the tunes he recorded from Harry Lee as follows:

Irish Hornpipe
The Rakes of Kildare
Gary Owen
Brighton Camp
Killiekranky
You'll have no mother to guide you
The Robert E Lee
Sailor's Hornpipe
Step over the Waves
Let's all sing like the birdies do
Clog Dance
Irish Washerwoman
The Rakes of Kildare
The Tenpenny Bit

... noting that *The Flowers of Edinburgh* was 'accidentally erased from my tape'. The list also omits the tune which appeared as '*The Breakdown*' on *Boscastle Breakdown* and elsewhere, and is, at least in its first part, a version of the *Lass on the Strand/Belfast Hornpipe*. The reference to a second version of the *Rakes of Kildare* (no. 14 on the list) should, in fact, be a reference to '*The Breakdown*'.

This repertoire is very similar to the repertoire of non-Romany 'traditional' musicians in England in the 20th century - and is quite limited in comparison with the repertoire which appears in the many surviving tune books of 19th century yeoman and artisan fiddlers. Similar repertoires

survived among communities where older 'country' and couple dances survived into the late 19th and early 20th centuries in Cambridgeshire, Essex and Norfolk, for example.¹⁸ Those dances were generally 'modular' in construction, like the small number of country dances to mainly familiar tunes which Cecil Sharp collected and published in Volume 1 of his *Country Dance Book*.

Several of the tunes here will be familiar to many people reading this (though in a variety of combinations of course), and the selection has much in common with the repertoires of non-Romany traditional musicians throughout the first three-quarters of the 20th century. But although some of Harry's tunes had been about for a hundred years or more, they would not have survived without some enduring point of reference for their immediate audience and their audience at large once the old 'country' dances had become a thing of the past.

Footnotes:

1. Other spellings are available - I myself have seen 'Baldbread'.
2. 19th century gypsologists frequently offer 'fiddleplayer' as an English rendition of the Anglo-Romany term '*boshmengro*', rather than the standard English term '*fiddler*', and it's possible that '*fiddleplayer*' was once the English term preferred by travellers themselves.
3. In Suffolk fiddler Fred Whiting recalled a fiddle being kept behind the bar for fiddlers at Henley Cross Keys; on the other hand his mate fiddler Harkie Nesling bought a fiddle from the Romany fiddler Billy Harris in about 1906 (see MT article 017 - <http://www.mustrad.org.uk/ssp/singsay4.htm>)
4. Minnie Ripley, quoted in Evans (2004), [p.36].
5. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aKqFKMvp3qo&feature=youtu.be>
6. See: Romany Rye Cove [i.e. Vanslow Smith] *Mi Zee of Kolliko: My own memories*, Romany and Traveller Family History Society, 2001; p.12; Vanslow Smith describes High Tilt as being in or near Sevenoaks, but the name actually seems only to refer to a farm at Sissinghurst].
7. I myself remember Geoff Ling calling for '*Jigs and Reels*' at Blaxhall Ship, when hornpipes or similar were required for step-dancing, and also in Suffolk Cyril Barber would generally refer to what he did as 'tap-dancing' rather than 'step-dancing'.
8. Pronounced '*Horzman-DEN*'.
9. Topic Records 12T240 (digital download TSDL240. 2010); the first two tunes were subsequently re-released on the Topic CD *My father's the king of the Romanies* TSCD661 (1998), Track 14.
10. Family tradition - personal communication.
11. See *Romany Routes*, vol. 5 no. 6, (March 2002) p.298.
12. Watts, Derek, *Country Boy: A Biography of Albert Lee*, 2008.
13. (Mack 1942, p. 49); Harry Lee's wife Sarah Ann is also referred to by subsequent generations of the family as variously *Smith* or *Cooper*, though in her case the reason is less immediately obvious.
14. As related by Billy the Pro's great-grandson Riley Smith - himself no mean dancer - at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OTclrg5g97g>, where he makes a distinction between the 'tap-dancing' handed down within his immediate family (danced on the toes) and step-dancing (heel-and-toe).
15. Liverpool Archives 5/4/4 p89.
16. See '*Hidden Photographs of a hidden people*' (WRVS Heritage Plus, 2010; *Hidden_Photographs_of_a_Hidden_People* accessible in its entirety on line at: <http://www.memorywall.org.uk/documents/pdf>
17. University of Liverpool, Special Collections and Archives, Fred Shaw Photographs: <http://scaarch.liv.ac.uk/ead/html/gb141smgcschaw-p5.shtml>
a n d
<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/library/sca/collections/Romany/images/P244.jpg> (thumbnail); the photograph is also reproduced as Fig. 34 in Kale, John, *Romany Life in Britain: Past and Present* (published privately, 2010), where it is erroneously dated 1938.
18. See Papworth, Cyril, '*Polka Round: Cambridgeshire Feast Dances*' (1964); Heath-Coleman, Philip, '*Boshmengro II: Moses Shaw*' in '*Romany Routes*' vol.11 no.6 (March 2014); Helsdon, Alan, '*Hawk and Harnser*'

(2005).

Vanslow Smith

(1924 -2013)

Vanslow Smith - who was inevitably known as *Van* to his family and friends - was born in Lewes, Sussex, in 1924, to Mark Smith (b. c.1885), who hailed from Angmering, and Rose, *née* Johnson (b. c.1886), from Alford, just over the border in Surrey. Amongst other things his father was a sometime leather-worker and totter turned carrier who had invested in an Army-surplus lorry - an old field ambulance - after the 1st World War, but never learnt to drive, and Vanslow's brother was left to take the wheel. His father subsequently commissioned a high-specification *vardo* - a Romany waggon - from a specialist builder in Hereford by the name of Cox, and the family would spend their summers travelling in the traditional way, picking fruit and meeting up with other travellers on the road, while one of Vanslow's brothers stayed behind to run the business. Vanslow eventually settled at Leeds in Kent, marrying his wife Margaret (*née* Malkin) there in 1944. He was a manager at a farm near Maidstone for many years, before going to work for a fork-lift company. When his wife died he went to live with his son, 'Vanny', at Headcorn, where he himself died in 2013.

It was during those summers on the road that Vanslow Smith learnt to play the fiddle and melodeon and picked up the tunes which are presented here. He is said to have played his father's fiddle, and recalled meeting Harry Lee on the road in the 1930s (see above). In his own words:

"In the 1930 era I was a mere lad and along with all the family was travelling on the road and enjoying the freedom which we are unfortunately unable to enjoy today.

Some of our activities was making our own music and entertainment, in the evening or whenever we could get together after our various chores had been seen to. We all helped in producing something that could be sold or bartered the next day to earn a living, but we did find time to play our instruments and sing and plan the next day's activities. There were nine in our family plus Father and Mother and so we made a little group. We always had something to play on, only in an amateurish way, but nevertheless entertaining to us.

We played the rena, the bosh, the sronfakement and the mooiepedana. All these were light to carry and we had to consider this for obvious reasons. Father and mother were very active so we used to get a board about the size of a table top and place it on the ground in front of the fire and this was used to dance on by both Mother and Father. Their dancing was step-dancing which was practised by all the Romanies at that time".¹

The *bosh*, of course, is the Anglo Romany word for fiddle. Vanslow said the *rena* was the accordion, but he was in all likelihood referring - like many country musicians - to the melodeon. The *mooiepedana* may have been Vanslow's own loan-translation of English mouth-organ, *mooie* (other spellings are available) being the Romany word for mouth. *Sronfakement* was a reference to the banjo, which he described as being made of pigskin, and that is what Vanslow's word means, in what seems to be a mixture of *Shelta* (where *sron* borrowed from Irish means 'nose' - or in this case 'snout') and Anglo-Romany (where *fake* means 'to make').

Later in life Vanslow would join his elder brother George (1905 - 1989) at the weekend for a sing-song and some music. Both men were accomplished musicians on the fiddle, melodeon, mouth organ and banjo, and their expertise on the latter in particular - both played a five-string pigskin Vega *Whyte Laydie* - is remembered by family and friends, though some of them would say George excelled him on that instrument

Vanslow Smith was a quiet unassuming man who did not like playing to an audience, although he was keen on gadgetry and could often be seen at small events celebrating Romany heritage with his hollow bodied electric fiddle and portable amplifier, and/or his melodeon - a Hohner Pokerwork. The recordings here - on which a small but appreciative audience is evident - were made by Gwilym Davies (who is one of the musicians who can be heard playing along with Vanslow on these recordings) at one such event held on 14 June 2006 at Oakmeads Community College, Burgess Hill, Sussex.

Vanslow Smith was a sophisticated musician whose measured fiddle-playing is marked - like that of Harry Lee - by extraordinary control, while his melodeon-playing is notable for his use of accidentals.

His recorded repertoire, on both fiddle and melodeon, is similar to that of other traditional musicians in the 20th century - including Harry Lee - being made up of old hornpipes and similar tunes for step-dancing, and music-hall and popular songs. One of the tunes he plays here he shares with the

recorded repertoire of Harry Lee: the *Strand* or *Belfast Hornpipe*, or rather the first part, which Vanslow combined with the first part of *Woodland Flowers* when he played it on the fiddle, and with the second part of the *Bristol Hornpipe* when he played it on the melodeon, while Harry Lee's second part is either one of his own devising, or a wayward variant on the original second part, or both. Vanslow also plays what sounds like the standard second part of the *Bristol Hornpipe*, a tune which was once known to most gypsy musicians - including Lemmy Brazil - as well as to settled musicians, although both groups (with the exception of Romany Henry Cave in Somerset, from whom Cecil Sharp collected more or less the published version) would usually play a more elaborate, less arpeggiated, second part. And like Lemmy Brazil, Vanslow Smith also played part of a once-universal hornpipe which is nowadays usually referred to as the *Four-hand Reel*, after the stepping dance for four people in a line who traced a figure-of-eight.

Some of the popular and music-hall tunes he played, whether on the fiddle or the melodeon - *Daisy, Daisy*; *She was one of the Early Birds*; *Oh! Mr. Porter*; *I belong to Glasgow* - will be familiar to most readers, while other once popular songs and tunes like *Oh, Joe, the Boat is Going Over*, *Underneath her Apron* and *Woodland Flowers* were known to most traditional musicians in Eastern England (for example) in the 20th century.

Vanslow Smith may have been, to quote Keith Chandler, a "man of few words" in person, but he wrote extensively about his life, including a short biography entitled *Mi zee of kolliko* (My own memories) under the pen-name *Romany Rai Cove*.

Lemmy Brazil (1890 - 1983).

It was by no means just the men in the traveller community who made music. In fact, if you ask anyone interested in traditional music to name a Romany musician, the name of Lemmy Brazil is likely to be among the first offered. Lemmy (Lementina) Brazil (pronounced *Brazzle*) was one of the fifteen children of William Brazil, who was born in Devon, and Priscilla Webb, who was born in Cornwall. The family lived in London for a while, and then travelled in southern England, Lemmy being born "outside Southampton in Devonshire" on 1 March 1890, after which the family spent some 27 years travelling in Ireland before settling in Gloucestershire just after the First World War. Lemmy told Paul Burgess:

"I've been to every town in Ireland. We used to stop for a week, sometimes two, then move on. Over there we used to go down the pub, have a sing, get drunk and sing down the road on the way home. They don't do that round here (i.e. in Gloucestershire). They don't know how to enjoy themselves".

In Ireland Lemmy would play for step-dancing - which she called 'tap dancing': not the modern form of 'Irish' dancing which has come to resemble the can-can, but the highly-competitive stepping on a square board which the Irish call *sean nós* ('old-style') and was once familiar in almost every pub in England. She would be given a big coat to wear, and as she played people would throw money into her lap. In Gloucestershire the family plied a variety of trades, Lemmy herself having a second-hand shop in Westgate Street in Gloucester.

Lemmy Brazil was recorded by enthusiasts on a number of occasions in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. She also sang a number of old songs, and was also recorded playing a number of tunes - many of them 'stepping tunes' - on an old single-row melodeon. The recordings here were made by Gwilym Davis in 1977 and 1981 (when Lemmy was 91!). Like other members of her family she had also once played the mouth-organ and the fiddle (she described an older sister in Wales as a fine fiddle player), and some of her tunes - such as the once ubiquitous *Bristol Hornpipe*, which she referred to as "*the Irish hornpipe*" - have the character of fiddle tunes. It would be interesting if she did pick up her version of the *Bristol Hornpipe* up in Ireland, as the tune is largely unknown there (although Francis O'Neill published the standard version as the *Clover Hornpipe* in his *Dance Music of Ireland* in 1907), but was familiar to many, if not most, of the older musicians in England.

Lemmy died in 1983, but in 2007 *Musical Traditions* released a three-CD set of the Brazil family singing and playing, which includes some of the tunes here recorded by Peter Shephard. The notes to that CD (whence most of the information here derives) can be found at <http://musttrad.org.uk/articles/brazils.htm>.

Those notes include accounts by Peter Shephard, Gwilym Davies, Paul Burgess and Mike Yates of their meetings with Lemmy and other members of her family.

The name Brazil is an interesting one. It is generally pronounced "Brazzle", though Lemmy's niece Angela seems to have pronounced it like the name of the country in South America (which it has nothing to do with, of course).

Most sources give it an Irish - and specifically Wexford - origin, in the form *Ó Breasail*.

Jasper, Levi and Derby Smith

Jasper and Levi Smith were the (first) cousins of Harry Lee's wife Sarah (Sarey) Ann Smith: along with their elder sister Minty, they and Mike Yates' recordings of their singing - and the tracks included here - are featured on MT CD MTDL620 *Here's Luck to a Man ...* and Topic CDs TSCD 661 *My father's the king of the gypsies* and TSCL304 *The Travelling Songster*, where further details can be found. Minty, Jasper and Levi were born in 1911, 1916 and 1921 respectively, and after the death of their mother, Eliza Cooper, they were brought up by their father, travelling through Surrey and Kent in search of agricultural work in the traditional way. At 16 Minty conventionally eloped with the fiddler Joe Smith, and equally conventionally they returned to travel with her family. According to Levi, their father, Derby Smith, could play 'all the old jigs' on a flute cut from the hedgerow, and would often play the mouth organ or Jew's harp in the pub in return for a drink. Derby Smith is Jasper's son. When they were children Levi and Jasper would black-up in pyjama trousers like stage minstrels for coppers, with Levi singing, tuning or playing the tambourine and Jasper teaching himself to play the mouth organ - 'Well, I kept blowing and blowing till it come to me - then I was away!'

Derby Smith is Jasper's son.

Joe Dozer Smith

Joe 'Dozer' Smith was recorded by Gwilym Davies in October 1976 in his trailer near Beaconsfield (Buckinghamshire),

Mary Biddle

Gwilym Davies recorded Mary Biddle (whose family hailed from the Midlands) in her trailer at Stow Fair on 22 October 1992.

Walter Aldridge

Walter Aldridge was recorded by Peter Kennedy at Leedstown, near Hayle in Cornwall, on 22nd November 1956. Then aged 55 or 56, he played a small selection of popular step-dancing tunes on the mouth-organ.

The Aldridges were closely associated with such other Cornish travelling families as the Burrs (Walter having married Mary Ann Burr at Gwinear on 27th April 1931), the Richards and the Crockers, and he was related by marriage to both Orchards and Coopers. When he was young his family had travelled mainly in Kent, Surrey and Sussex, but his father had brought the family down to Cornwall, where he (Walter's father) and his wife had bought a home once he grew too old to travel. Walter Aldridge himself died in 1990.

Walter Aldridge learnt to play the mouth organ when he was 'a nipper', and recalled playing for step-dancing in the pubs 'for a bit of sport'.

John Locke (1872 - 1947)

Until the early twentieth century evidence of Romany musicians and their repertoires can only be viewed through the eyes of the non-Romany musicians and dancers they came into contact with, or in the reports of other observers.¹ Before the First World War, however, Cecil Sharp was introduced to a number of Romany fiddlers from whom he noted down a substantial body of music. Unlike the much larger number of songs he collected both in Somerset and the Appalachians, Sharp never published the fiddle music he collected systematically, although he famously published some of it out of context: Herefordshire Gypsy John Locke's *Staffordshire Hornpipe* (possibly known also or alternatively as the *Herefordshire Hornpipe* - either way a version of a tune once more usually known, appropriately enough, as the *Gipsy's Hornpipe*²) and *Sheepskins* (a version of a tune more commonly known as *Not for Joe*) being published in conjunction with a sword dance from Flamborough in Yorkshire and his *Boyne Water* and another tune he also called *Sheepskins* (this one a version of the widespread *Hunt[ing] the Squirrel*) in conjunction with a sword dance from Sleights in the same county.

John Locke³ was born at Hanley Child(e), near Tenbury in Worcestershire, where he was christened on 7 September 1872, and died at Ivington, near Leominster, in 1947. He and his brother James (1862 - 1927), who was christened Isajiah and known to his family as 'Pollen', were among Sharp's main Romany sources for instrumental music.⁴ The brothers Locke came from a family of fiddlers, and John Locke is said to have acquired some of his tunes from their father Ezekiel, who (as John Locke himself told Cecil

Sharp) played the fiddle left-handed, some from their uncle Noah, and a few from *Gorgios*. John was apparently thought of as the best fiddler among the brothers Locke, though another brother, Enoch - known as *Winkles* - was also remembered as 'the best of all Gypsy fiddlers'.⁵ One branch of the family was long remembered in western Shropshire as 'fine violinists' who held 'musical evenings around the camp fires'. After their evening meal they would 'sit around the fire, merrily playing their mouth organs and fiddles and singing'. Known as the *Gentlemen Gypsies* they would sometimes don top hats and play at villagers' doors.⁶

A review of a lecture by Cecil Sharp on 31st May 1910, which appeared in the *Morning Post* the next day, quotes him - with reference to John Locke - as follows:

On another occasion in Herefordshire a celebrated Gypsy fiddler, standing over 6 ft. in his stockings, was induced to play a variety of country dance tunes in a country pub. As evidence that the passion for the old style of dancing still lives in the country it is only necessary to watch the rise and fall of the dancing emotion among the frequenters of the hostelry, indicated by the twitching of their shoulders, the movements of their feet, and finally, by one among them, bolder than the rest, doing a double shuffle on the polished stone set apart for that purpose in the centre of the bar-parlour floor. Finally, the fiddler himself sought the floor and danced vigorously and long, but with marvellous rhythm, as he played.⁷

Sharp had been introduced to John and James Locke by Ella Mary Leather, who was moved some 17 years later to recall their ability to play in perfect and unforced union:

At Pembridge [Herefordshire] Fair, in May 1908, I first met John Lock[e], the fiddler, and his brother. They played in a room for me at the Queen's Arms, and the curious thing was that though there was no fixed order of the tunes the brother [James] joined in on [John] Lock[e]'s first note without a word. (They played by ear only of course).⁸

As well as having previously notated some of John Locke's tunes, Ella Mary Leather also made wax cylinder recordings of his playing, some of which Cecil Sharp transcribed.⁹ One such discovered in the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, in a box labelled '... / Dance Tunes / played by Locke', with '... / Locke / Hornpipes' inscribed on the base, was once thought to have been one of those recorded by Mrs Leather. Recent research by Andrew King, however, suggests that both the *Hornpipe* and the song which precedes it on the wax cylinder were, in fact, recorded by Ralph Vaughan Williams in Herefordshire in August 1910, which would explain why no notation by either Mrs Leather or Cecil Sharp has survived. It is that recording which is included here - a version of the *Bristol Hornpipe*, which was once among the most popular stepping tunes among country musicians and travellers alike, but - to quote myself - seldom by that or indeed by any other name.¹⁰

Footnotes:

1. Reg Hall uniquely recorded a non-Gypsy musician's perspective on Gypsy musicians - and in particular fiddlers - in and around Ashdown Forest in Sussex before the 1st World War from the now celebrated concertina player Scan Tester (1887-1972), himself an erstwhile fiddler; see Hall, Reg: *I never played to many posh dances*, Musical Traditions Supplement no.2, Musical Traditions (1990) pp. 25-26.

2. Published as such in *Köhlers Violin Repository* in c.1885 (Vol.1, p.95), but in circulation much earlier: Lincolnshire fiddler Thomas Sands included it in a MSS dated as early as 12 March 1812, as did John Moore (of Wellington in Shropshire) in his MSS of 1830, which can be seen on line at <http://www.vwml.org.uk/record/Moore3/4495/p8>; the Rev Luke Donnellan (1878 - 1952) also found a version in County Louth, published in: *Oriel Songs and Dances*, in *Journal of the Co. Louth Archaeological Society* vol.II, No.2 (1909), no.29. A version with a simplified second strain similar to that played by John Locke appears entitled *Music Box Hornpipe* in the MS of Thomas D. Llewellyn of Aberdare, Glamorgan, held by the National Museum of Wales (NLW 337D p.59 - reproduced in Robin Huw Bowen's *Tro Llaw*: NLW, 1987, no. 99 p.64). A similar simplified version evidently survived among country musicians and dancers in Norfolk, where Joan Roe collected a untitled version from 'Mr. Burrows of Garboldisham' (which she annotated 'Long Dance?') See Helsdon, Alan: *Hawk & Harnser*, 2nd edn. Quanting 2005; p.51].

3. The name is frequently found as Lock in records and elsewhere, and is also so spelt by some branches of the family.

4. See Davies, Jennifer: *Tales of the Old Gypsies* (David and Charles, 1999), p.69.

5. *Llanfair-Waterdine: a parish remembered* (2nd ed., 1998)

6. The notations which Sharp made of the Lock(e) brothers' tunes in 1909 and 1912 - and his transcriptions of those collected by Ella Mary Leather - are held by Clare College, Cambridge, (CJS2/10/2413-2422, 2426, 2788-2793); copies held by the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library can be viewed on line at <http://www.vwml.org/record/CJS2/10/2413> etc. John Messenger's (transposed) notations of the tunes which Sharp collected from John Locke can be found on line at <http://www.tradartsupport.org.uk/tunes2014/Leominster%20Tunes.pdf>. A notation by Ralph Vaughan Williams of a version of the other tune which John Locke described to Cecil Sharp as 'Sheepskins' (actually a version of 'Not for Joe') is the second item on a page in his MSS headed 'Herefordshire phonograph 1910' (original at BL/BM ADD MS 54189 f.164), which can be viewed on line at <http://www.vwml.org/record/RVW2/1/80>. Although the notation differs in some minor details from Sharp's, they are close enough to suggest that both were based on the same 'phonographic' recording.

7. For an account of the Lock(e)s see Schofield, Derek, *The fiddle tunes of John Lock in English Dance and Song*, vol.68, no.4 (Winter 2006), pp. 10 -11. John Messenger has identified the pub as the *White Horse* (now closed) in Leominster - see Messenger, John: *Cecil Sharp in Herefordshire, Christmas 1909 in English Dance and Song*, vol.72, no.1 (Spring 2010) pp.18-19.

8. Leather, Ella Mary: *Collecting Folk Melodies from Gypsies in Herefordshire*, in *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, 3rd series, 4 (1925), pp.59-64; see also Jones, Lavender, *The Gentlemen Locks*, English Dance and Song, vol.26 no.4 (1964) pp.84-85. It is interesting to note that Cecil Sharp collected only one tune which John and James Lock(e) had in common - *Hunt the Squirrel* (which John referred to as *Sheepskins* and James as *Three Jolly Sheepskins*), and the two versions would seem to be quite incompatible!

9. The notations which Ella Mary Leather made of John Locke's tunes in 1908 can be viewed on line at <http://www.vwml.org/record/EML1/86-98>. See also King, Andrew: *Resources in the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library: The Ella Mary Leather Manuscript Collection in Folk Music Journal* vol. no.5 (2010), pp.749-12.

10. VWML shelf-mark C37/1590; Andrew King has now located a transcription of the song which precedes the hornpipe on the wax cylinder, among a small selection of rough transcripts of phonographs made by Vaughan Williams himself in BL MSS Vol.1, MS bk 7, p.315; the song is a version of *Died of Love*, there entitled *There is an Alehouse*, which was formerly attributed to an unknown male singer, but is now known to have been recorded by Vaughan Williams from a 'Mr Jones' in Herefordshire in October 1909. For my identification of the hornpipe see Heath-Coleman, Philip: *Name that tune: Waifs and Strays of English Melody*, in particular *The Bristol Hornpipe: outing John Locke's polka*, in *Musical Traditions* Article MT 251 (13 July 2010) at <http://www.mustrand.org.uk/articles/waifs.htm>.

Tuning:

'Tuning' is the name which travellers gave to the mouth music which the Irish refer to as 'diddling'. Joe 'Dozer' Smith and Mary Biddle (b. 1923) were both recorded by Gwilym Davies - Joe Smith in October 1976 in his trailer near Beaconsfield (Buckinghamshire), and Mary Biddle (whose family hailed from the Midlands) in her trailer at Stow Fair on 22 October 1992.

The Recordings:

These recordings are all old - some very old - and not of the highest technical quality. That said, we are certain that no purchaser of this CD will have ever heard more than a few of the tracks before - many are published here for the first time. We believe that the importance of the recordings far outweighs anything lacking in the quality department.

The CD:

Harry Lee:

These first two tracks were originally published in this form in 1998 and so benefit from modern noise reduction methods on the original tapes - which now seem to have been lost.

1. **Flowers of Edinburgh:** Harry Lee's is a distinctively traveller version, repeating as it does - optionally in his case - the first four bars of the second part, in this case following a version of the standard vernacular first part - rather similar to that played by his wife's cousin Jasper Smith (see below)

- heavily disguised by its somewhat wayward modality. It and the *Sailor's Hornpipe* were perennial favourites among step-dancers everywhere, and *Brighton Camp* (more familiar as the *Girl I Left Behind Me*), *Garryowen* and the *Irish Washerwoman* have all long been popular with marching bands.

2. The **Breakdown** consists of the first part of the hornpipe known variously as the *Lass on the Strand*, the *Strand Hornpipe* or the *Belfast Hornpipe*. This tune has two second parts - the one which is usually found in Ireland, and an Anglo-Scottish one, which appears untitled in the 1st volume of *Kerr's Merry Melodies*, was recorded commercially by Alexander Prince (probably from that source). Harry Lee's wayward second strain could derive from either, or neither.

The next 12 tracks are from a tape held by the British Library - a copy of the Paul Carter recordings - with modern noise reduction software applied.

3. **Let's all Sing like the Birdies Do** - a child can be heard on Ken Stubbs' tape calling for this tune by that name - is, of course, the familiar music-hall song *She was One of the Early Birds*.

4. **Irish Hornpipe**. Harry Lee's *Irish Hornpipe* seems to be a version of a tune known elsewhere as the *West End Hornpipe*, which survived in tradition on both sides of the Irish Sea, its popularity and longevity possibly bolstered by its inclusion in Honeyman's *Strathspey Reel and Hornpipe Tutor* of 1898: in Northumberland Peter Kennedy recorded a version from fiddler Jim Rutherford in 1954.² Harry's tune has also been associated with the *Liverpool Hornpipe* and the *First of May*. Lemmy Brazil also referred to her version of the *Bristol Hornpipe* as the *Irish Hornpipe*, and the appellation may represent a personal association rather than its immediate or (imagined) ultimate origin. Harry's second part is a fusion of the original second and first parts which would have presented no problem at all to a Romany - or for that matter any other - step-dancer.

5. The waltz **Over the Waves** was first published as *Sobre Las Ondas* in 1888, and was long a favourite with country musicians, its popularity no doubt reinforced when Mario Lanza used the same tune for *The Loveliest Night of the Year* in 1951.

Given the importance of their rhythmic qualities it is perhaps inevitable that hornpipes should have been most susceptible to melodic modification in, or at the hands of, the individual fiddler;

6. Harry's **Clog Dance** bears a name which was once used in published collections to identify stepping tunes with pronounced dotting and - if this example is anything to go by - a slower pace than the standard hornpipe. Harry also seems to employ different bowing patterns here - favouring cross-bowing (slurring on to the beat and across bar boundaries - each slur generally taking in just two quavers, either straightforwardly in the manner which Honeyman called *Newcastle* style, but sometimes slurring each pair of quavers for a couple of bars in succession), whereas in his hornpipes (if we can include all his faster stepping tunes under that blanket term) he favours the pattern which American fiddlers call the *Nashville shuffle* - slurring the first two quavers in each set of four quavers.³

7. **Killikrankie**: This, of course, is a name of Scottish origin associated with the Battle of Killiecrankie, and individually with the (victorious) Highland Jacobite faction and the Lowland Williamite faction respectively. Paul Roberts has suggested that Harry Lee's 'weird and wonderful piece' might represent 'the fragments of Pibroch variations' on the Jacobite tune ('several generations, several hundred miles, and a big culture shift away').⁴

8. **Robert E Lee**. The tune of a song which has been universally popular since it was written in 1912. An early recording by Al Jolson doubtless boosted its popularity outside the USA. The lyrics relate, of course to a riverboat of that name rather than to the Confederate general. Sligo fiddler Jim Morrison recorded a rollicking version with a band.

9. **Sailor's Hornpipe**: First appearing in print in the latter part of the 18th century, this tune is known more formally as the *College Hornpipe*, and was once the default tune for step-dancing; indeed, another alternative name of *Jack's the lad* gave the name of *Jack the ladding* to the practice of step-dancing itself in parts of England. Another copy of Ken Stubbs tape refers to Harry's version as the *Monkey Hornpipe* (see also note to Track 43). Scan Tester, whom Ken also recorded, referred to his combination of parts of this tune and the *Bristol Hornpipe* in the same way, which may have prompted the same identification here.

10. **You'll Have No Mother To Guide You**. This was the name - possibly provided by Harry Lee - which Ken Stubbs used for this singular piece: it would seem to be a line from a song.

11. **Garryowen**. Another popular country-dance tune and march, named after a notorious pleasure garden on the outskirts of Limerick. Its rhythm has ensured its ubiquitous use as a military march, and it has the dubious

distinction of having been used by both the US 7th Cavalry under Custer and the Light Brigade in the Crimea.

12. **Rakes of Kildare/Paddy in London**. The first time through Harry Lee couples the first part of the *Rakes of Kildare* with the second part of *Paddy in London*, both jigs which frequently appeared on 78s in the first half of the 20th century, *Rakes of Kildare* being particularly popular with Scottish Musicians like Jimmy Shand and Will Starr. Interestingly enough, he coupled the standard second part of the *Rakes of Kildare* with the first part of the *Tenpenny Bit* (see note to Track 17). The second time through he substitutes a less familiar second part. While this mix-and-match approach was fairly common among both travelling and settled musicians when it came to their choice of hornpipes for step-dancing, it is much rarer in the case of jigs, possibly because they had to meet the expectations of their dancing clientele.

13. **Garryowen 2**. Another performance of the same tune.

14. **Brighton Camp**. Also known as the *Girl I left behind me*, this tune has been recorded under either - or both - names since the late 18th/early 19th century. It has been associated with the *Rose tree (in full bearing)*, which in turn has been associated with *Lea Rigs*. As great a likeness also seems to exist to the tune of the Scots song *Jock of Hazeldean*.

The next three recordings are from the Ken Stubbs tape and are included because they don't appear on the BL tape, or are of alternative performances, though the recordings are of a much poorer technical quality.

15. **Irish Washerwoman**. Long both a popular country-dance tune and march, it has been published under this name throughout the British Isles since the end of the 18th century. It may have its origins in an earlier tune called the *Country Courtship*, and was once attached to a song called *Corporal Casey*, under which name it is also sometimes found in print and manuscript tunebook.

16. **Brighton Camp**. See 14 above.

17. **The unknown first tune** and the **Tenpenny Bit** are Irish jigs (the latter being frequently known as the *Three Little Drummers* in Ireland), the popularity of the latter being acknowledged and probably advanced by its inclusion in the first volume of *Kerr's Merry Melodies* (c.1870). Harry Lee's *Tenpenny Bit* actually combines the familiar first part of that tune with a variant of the usual second part of the *Rakes of Kildare* (see note on Track 12). In the second part of both these tunes Harry effectively slips the shackles of conventional eight-bar phrasing.

Footnotes:

1. *Good humour for the rest of the night: Traditional dance music in Northumberland and Cumberland*, Topic CD TSCD 673, track 40; the Limerick-born fiddler Martin Mulvihill recorded it as [Tom] Dillane's Hornpipe (*Traditional Irish fiddling from County Limerick*, Green Linnet LP SIF 1010 (1978, track A6:2)

2. Mack (1942), pp. 49-50

3. This pattern is frequently found with tunes of this type in 19th century printed collections and MS fiddlers' tune-books in England and Scotland, where the second two quavers after a slurred pair are often superscribed with a dot, indicating that they should be played *staccato*. In fact, Harry Lee's phrasing suggests that the second quaver of the second (staccato) pair of quavers is actually an upbeat ("anacrusis / acciaccatura") for the ensuing phrase.

4. See Paul Roberts' comprehensive examinations of these tunes on line at <http://www.village-music-project.org.uk/>

Vanslow Smith:

18. **Polka medley** - melodeon: Vanslow starts with *Oh, Joe the Boat is Going Over*, originally a song-tune, which almost every 20th century traditional musician in East Anglia played, following it with another song-tune, *Putting on the Style*.

19. **Underneath her Apron / Oh, Mr Porter** - fiddle: a medley of two popular songs.

20. **Lass on the Strand / Bristol Hornpipe** - melodeon: the first part of the *Lass on the Strand* (also known as the *Strand Hornpipe* and the *Belfast Hornpipe*), which Vanslow also played on the fiddle, veers close to that of the *Bristol Hornpipe*, which may explain how it came to attract the second part of the latter tune. (See also note on Track 2) Unlike most traditional English - Romany and non-Romany - musicians, Vanslow played more or less the standard printed version of the second part (of the *Bristol Hornpipe*).

21. **Lass on the Strand / Woodland Flowers** - fiddle: (See note on Track 2). Like Harry Lee (and Harry Cox) Vanslow Smith seems to have disre-

garded the second part, in his case in favour of the first part of *Woodland Flowers*.

22. **Swiss Waltz** - melodeon: a waltz which was originally composed for the accordion.

23. **Polka medley** - This features a number of phrases which are reminiscent of familiar tunes (*The Rose Tree*, *The Nutting Girl* / *The Angus Polka*) but soon evolve into something quite different and the similarity may well just be coincidence.

24. **Medley** - melodeon: a mixture of *Underneath her Apron*, the *Belfast/Strand Hornpipe* and *Woodland Flowers*, all of which Vanslow also played in varying combinations on the fiddle.

25. **Waltz medley** - fiddle: *She was a Sweet little Dickie Bird* / *Daisy, Daisy* / *I Belong to Glasgow* / *I'll be Your Sweetheart Tonight* - a medley of old favourites - all once staples of pub sing-songs which, until recently, would have been familiar to just about everyone.

26. **Waltz** - fiddle: a version of the popular song *Charmaine*, first published in 1927, and recorded many times since with considerable success.

27. **Boys of Bluehill** - fiddle: a tune which is still popular among travellers for stepping, Vanslow Smith played the standard first part, but an unusual and rather jazzy second part which may be of his own devising (which he breaks off, saying "I played it wrong"). In Ireland it usually known as the *Boys of Bluehill*, and was published as *Beaux of Oakhill* in Kerr's 2nd collection of *Merry Melodies* (c.1875). It has been recorded occasionally by traditional musicians in England and Scotland since the 2nd World War and may owe its extraordinary modern currency to the radio or commercial recordings - or both.

Footnotes:

1. Romany Rye Cove [i.e. Vanslow Smith] *Mi Zee of Kolliko: My own memories*, RTFHS, 2001; p.3.]

2. op.cit.

Lemmy Brazil:

28. **God Killed the Devil O**: This is a version of the Scottish strathspey, *Money Musk* (or, originally, *Sir Archibald Grant of Money Musk's Reel/Strathspey*). According to the *Fiddler's Companion* the tune was originally composed as a reel by Nathaniel Dow in 1776 (possibly using existing melodies), and published as a strathspey by Niel Gow in 1799. The tune is frequently found in fiddler's tunebooks in England and remained popular among country musicians into the 20th century. Stephen Baldwin played a similar variant, which he referred to as a 'Highland Fling', which is how he, Lemmy Brazil, and musicians in some parts of Ireland played it. Lemmy's name for the tune comes from a piece of mnemonic doggerel which she attached to it.

29. **Harvest Home**: This tune is found in more or less its modern form in the 19th century Curtin manuscript in Ireland (the Sliabh Luachra region) under the name of *The English Hornpipe*, and O'Neill published it as *Higgins' Hornpipe* (presumably after its source). It is also found, with a slightly different ending, in English manuscript tune books from the first half of the 19th century, including John Moore (Shropshire), Lionel Winship and William Lister (both Northumbria). Appearances in later printed editions - *Craig's Empire Collection of Hornpipes* (c. 1910) and *Köhler's Violin Repository* (c. 1885 - where it is published as the *Ruby Hornpipe*) - have the version which is still current, and foreshadow its popularity with traditional musicians in the 20th century. Its history must in some way be tied up with that of the *Cliff Hornpipe* (which Lemmy's rendition of *Harvest Homes* sometimes veers - perhaps significantly - in the direction of) and the *Railway Hornpipe*, the three tunes featuring an almost identical second strain: some manuscript tune books contain versions of more than one of the three tunes.

30. **Smile A While**: A tune with West Indian associations which is used for both a semi-religious song for children and a chant favoured by fans of Huddersfield Town FC, while Lemmy's '*Good Luck Jig*' is a version of *The Wind that Shakes the Barley*, which is a favourite for step-dancing in this form among travellers - who more commonly refer to as *Step it Away* (see tracks 37 and 39).

31. **'Tap Dance' / Irish Hornpipe**: 'Tap-dancing' has always served as an alternative name for step-dancing (and formerly vice versa): Lemmy's *Tap-dance* seems to bear some resemblance to the Irish reel the *Silver Spear* (which in turn show some likeness to the *Threepenny Bit* and the *New-mown Meadow*). Be that as it may, closer relations of Lemmy's version turn up in New South Wales, where versions were played by, among others, Alf Cosgrove and Charlie Bennet, as well as elsewhere in England:

Stephen Baldwin, Percy Brown and Scan Tester all played tunes which seem to be related.

Lemmy's *Irish Hornpipe* is a spirited version of the tune most commonly known as the *Bristol Hornpipe*, one of the tunes most frequently collected from traditional musicians - Romany and Gorgio - in England during the 20th century, though seldom by that, or indeed any other name. In modern times it has almost always been associated with step-dancing, but early 19th century publications associated it with a set dance. Although O'Neill published it as the *Clover Hornpipe* Lemmy's name may be nothing more than a way of distinguishing this hornpipe from others she knew - including the *English Hornpipe*, as she referred to the *Manchester Hornpipe*.

32. **Irish Jig**: The first few bars of Lemmy's 'Irish jig' coincide with those of the Scots tune the *Hills of Glenorchy*, after which it follows its own course. In Yorkshire Peter Kennedy noted a version of *Hills of Glenorchy* from fiddler Billy Pennock, whose father Neswell had played for Cecil Sharp.

In Northumberland, Cumberland and the Scottish borders it is played as a waltz or air and known variously - according to which local song it is associated with - as the *Wild Hills of Wannie's*, or *Copshawholme Fair*. O'Neill published the tunes as the *Jolly Corkonian*, though nowadays Irish musicians are equally likely to know it as *Over the Hills*.

33. **Medley: Manchester Hornpipe / Chase me Charlie / The Singer was Irish / The Cambells are Coming**: The *Manchester* or *Yarmouth Hornpipe* was one of the foremost tunes for step-dancing in England in 20th century (and probably before), Lemmy's rendition straddles the middle ground between the widespread 'vernacular' version which distils the essence of the rhythm which made it so popular in that context and classic 'as published' versions. She referred to it as the '*English Hornpipe*', which may merely be a device to distinguish it from her '*Irish Hornpipe*' (see Track 31).

Chase me Charlie is, of course, otherwise known as the *Cock of the North*, whose popularity throughout the British Isles seems to be a 20th century phenomenon.

The Singer was Irish: my attempts to trace a source for this or its words have not as yet yielded anything, so if anyone reading this can help please do so!

The Campbells are Coming needs no introduction, and was recorded from traditional musicians throughout the British Isles, in Australia and the USA

34. **God Killed the Devil O**: Not the only tune which Lemmy knew by this name (see Track 28), she initially seems to confuse (or possibly alternate) the opening bars with those of the common '*Four-hand reel*' tune (which she also knew), before a different strain establishes itself for the remainder of the performance. The tune, though not immediately recognizable, has the feel of a reel about it.

35. **Medley: 'Irish' Cloud Reel / 'Irish Hornpipe' / 'Four-hand reel' / 'Irish Jig'**: Lemmy's '*Irish Cloud Reel*' is a version of the Scottish reel *Miss McLeod*, which was also at one time familiar to many traditional English and Irish fiddlers.

As we have seen the '*Irish Hornpipe*' is a version of the *Bristol Hornpipe* (see Track 31), which was almost her 'default' tune.

The *Four-hand Reel* tune was once known to almost every traditional musician in England, a four-hand reel being a dance for four involving 'reeling' (dancing in a figure of 8) and stepping.

For her '*Irish Jig*' see Track 32.

36. **'Irish' (Bristol) Hornpipe**: See note on Track 32.

Jasper and Levi Smith

37. **Cock of the North / The Cambells are Coming / Garryowen / Cock o' the North; Flowers of Edinburgh (tuning) Step it away / Flowers of Edinburgh** [rec. Mike Yates, Epsom, Surrey 26 April 1975].

Step it Away, a version of the *Wind that Shakes the Barley*, was a particular favourite with travellers for 'tuning'; see also Track 39. The other tunes are universal favourites among traditional musicians, and were part of the core repertoire of Romany and other musicians in the 20th century.

Jasper and Derby Smith

38. **Whistling Rufus (tuning) / Brighton Camp**. *Whistling Rufus* was written by the Americans W Murdock Lind (lyrics) and Kerry Mill (music) in 1899. It was frequently recorded on both sides of the Atlantic, banjo-player Vess L Ossman's version being particularly successful. *The Girl I left behind me* has attracted a number of ditties over the years which display varying degrees of propriety.

Joe Dozer Smith

39. Joe's two tunes are the ***Drunken Piper***, a popular Scottish pipe march which was also recorded by Jimmy Shand in 1950, and ***Step it away***, a piece of doggerel, generally featuring similar sentiments, and popular for tuning among travellers throughout Southern England. The latter tune is a version of *The Wind that Shakes the Barley*, most familiar for its Irish associations, but possibly having its origins in Nathaniel Gow's *Fairy Dance*.

Mary Biddle

40. ***Little beggarman*** (tuning). Otherwise known as the 'Red-haired boy' (and other similar names): a universally popular and much-recorded hornpipe which is also found widely as a song tune. Close relations include the *First of May* and *Gilderoy*.

Walter Aldridge:

41. ***Cornish Breakdown***: The *Manchester (or Yarmouth) Hornpipe* was once among the most popular hornpipes for step-dancing among travellers and settled folk alike. Walter Aldridge plays just the first strain, and was quite definite when talking to Peter Kennedy that 'that's all the tune there is in that one'.

'Hornpipe': Walter Aldridge likewise played only the first strain of the *Bristol Hornpipe*, a tune which once vied with the Manchester Hornpipe in popularity. His single strain is similar to Tommy Orchard's *Ladies Hornpipe* and Bob Cann's *Schottische Hornpipe*, both just over the border in Devon. Intriguingly, a very similar version to that of Walter Aldridge was recorded (as the 'B' music) by Oscar Woods in Suffolk.

The Cock of the North is, of course, still known everywhere and has many associations, but its use for a simple step-dance in jig time (6/8) was once common.

John Locke:

42. ***Hornpipe***. This recording - a version of the *Bristol Hornpipe*, one of the tunes most frequently collected from traditional musicians in England during the 20th century, though seldom by that, or indeed any other name - is preserved on a wax cylinder in the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library in London. Travellers in particular - though not only or invariably - seem to have departed from the original arpeggiated B music and come up with the more interesting strain played here by John Locke and elsewhere on this CD by Lemmy Brazil - see note to Track 31. (For further details see *Name that tune*, MT Article no. 251. [<http://mustrad.org.uk/articles/waifs.htm>])

Stephen Baldwin:

43. **'Tite' Smith's Hornpipe**. Josiah 'Tite' Smith was a Romany fiddler from Coleford in the Forest of Dean who died in tragic circumstances on 6th December 1897 at the age of 56. (see Boshamengros, MT Article 309, at <http://www.mustrad.org.uk/articles/boshamen.htm>). The tune bearing his name - recorded by Forest of Dean fiddler Stephen Baldwin (see text above) in 1954 - is a version of a once widespread tune which was also recorded by Irish-American piper Patsy Touhey as *Taylor's Hornpipe* and in New South Wales by fiddler Joe Cashmere as the *Sydney Flash*. The only name it is recorded under more than once - and then only twice (in Wales and Northumberland) - is the *Monkey Hornpipe*, which may suggest a link with the dance of that name. (For further details see Ceol Rince na mBreathnach, MT Article no. 272, at http://mustrad.org.uk/articles/h_colemn.htm).

Fred Whiting:

44. ***Billy Harris's Hornpipe***. Billy Harris was a Romany fiddler from Essex who settled at Charsfield in Suffolk, which was the home of another fiddler, Fred 'Pip' Whiting, who plays one of his tunes here (see Boshamengros, MT Article 309, at <http://www.mustrad.org.uk/articles/boshamen.htm>). Billy Harris was long remembered as a musician locally, in particular in association with step-dancing. Of his grandson, Alger Harris, Fred Whiting observed: "I played for him in Charsfield Horseshoes ... and by crikey he could hop!"

Fred Whiting said: "I've never seen a Gypsy fiddler who doesn't know this hornpipe, and I've never seen one yet who knows the name of it". Most people now would probably regard it as a schottische, and in fact it would seem to derive (ultimately) from the once popular *Winter's Night Schottische*, which might explain Fred Whiting's apparent familiarity with the tune.

45. ***Will the Waggoner***. According to Fred Whiting, who plays it here, this is an 'English gypsy's hornpipe called Will the Waggoner' - possibly another nod in the direction of Billy Harris. As a whole, the tune seems to honour its form above its melodic content, although there seem to be occasional

glimpses of - remote - resemblances to vernacular versions of the Wonder Hornpipe (Stephen Baldwin, Dolly Curtis, Harry Smith), which arose, after all, by honouring their form above their melodic content.

The Credits:

Firstly, sincere thanks to Phil Heath-Coleman, whose project idea this was, and who has done all the research required, and has written the whole of this booklet

We are also indebted to the members of Harry Lee's and Vanslow Smith's families, who were keen to see their music enjoyed more widely, for the invaluable information they provided about their life, family and music. And to Sharon Heppell and Jeremy Harte of the Romany Traveller Family History Society for giving so freely of their knowledge.

To Janet Topp Fargion and, particularly, to Andrea Zarza, at the British Library, where the Reg Hall and Peter Kennedy Archive originals are housed, for providing the digitised recordings of Harry Lee and Walter Aldridge.

To Steve Pennells, Keith Chandler and Reg Hall for their invaluable assistance and enthusiasm; to Gwilym Davies for the Lemmy Brazil recordings, and for introducing us to the music of Vanslow Smith, Joe Dozer Smith and Mary Biddle, and making his recordings available. And, posthumously, to Paul Carter who, as far as we can tell, actually made the first 15 of the Harry Lee recordings.

Booklet: editing, DTP, printing

CD: formatting, production
by Rod Stradling

CD: sound restoration on the Harry Lee recordings by Adrian Keefe

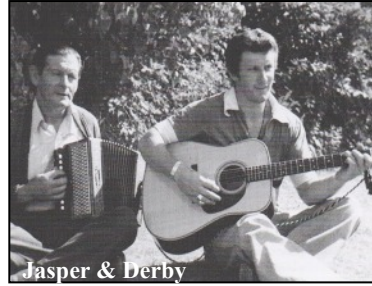
A Musical Traditions Records
Production ©2017



Harry Lee



Vanslow Smith



Jasper & Derby



Vanslow Smith



Lemmie Brazil



Levi Smith



Harry Lee and



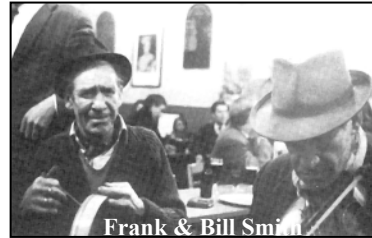
Harry Lee and family



Vanslow Smith



John Locke



Frank & Bill Smith



Vanslow Smith



John Locke