

THE MURDERED SWEETHEART BALLADS:
A DISCURSIVE CATALOGUE & BIBLIOGRAPHY

THE MARIA MARTEN CASE

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This document and my ‘discursive’ bibliographies on other murdered sweetheart ballads are available on academia.edu, but access seems increasingly complex, and the fact that there is more than one broadside ballad about Maria Marten seems not to have gained much of a foothold in discussion. I am accordingly grateful to *Musical Traditions* for facilitating this supplementary mediation. The exercise has also resulted in some updating of the material and the mending of broken links.

CONTENTS

Introduction to the Events and the Songs	2.
“The Murder of Maria Marten” (“Come all you thoughtless young men”)	16.
“The Suffolk Tragedy” (“Young lovers all, I pray draw near”)	30
Seven Broadside (with no afterlife in singing tradition)	38.

INTRODUCTION TO THE EVENTS AND THE SONGS

The Maria Marten case prompted the composition of *at least nine* quite distinct broadside ballads, many of them in multiple editions and printings, two of which ballads have subsequently been recorded from performance tradition. This Introduction will review the case and offer a schematic survey of the ballads. This project is emphatically not a quest for the historical facts concerning a given case, or the agglomeration of bibliographical information for its own sake, but to establish the basis for exploring how a particular medium, the broadside ballad (and its derivative performance tradition), handles narrative material, in terms of both form and content.

The Events

This is one of the cases where we can be quite certain the ballads are ultimately based on real events. Maria Marten, the daughter of a mole-catcher living in Polstead, Suffolk, was murdered by her lover, William Corder, a local land-owner, on 18 May 1827. It was the culmination of a crisis in their relationship probably provoked by the birth, death, and surreptitious burial of their child, a matter which was the subject of local rumour that might prompt a judicial inquiry. This was neither her first sexual liaison nor her first illegitimate child. With the purpose of travelling to Ipswich and marrying they agreed to meet up in a barn on Corder's estate (later notorious as the 'Red Barn'), Maria wearing male clothing to avoid detection by Corder's family, who were opposed to the match. She was not seen alive again. In the ensuing months Corder maintained the pretence that they had indeed married, and that Maria was living in Ipswich, but for one reason or another was unable either to visit or to write. In September Corder sold his property in Polstead and left, and by November was living in London, married to another woman. The anxiety of the Marten family grew through the winter, and in the following spring her stepmother claimed that she was haunted by dreams that Maria was buried in the red barn. At her behest on 19 April 1828 her father and a neighbour dug up the floor of the barn, and discovered a partly decomposed body – its identity recognized by her clothes (she had evidently changed back into female clothing).

The next day an inquest was opened at Polstead, but adjourned pending the arrest of Corder as the obvious suspect. Corder was located and arrested in London on 21 April and presented before a local magistrate, who sent him under guard to Polstead, where the inquest was reopened and on 25 April returned a verdict of unlawful killing by Corder, following which he was incarcerated in Bury St Edmund's Gaol to await trial.

At the beginning of the next assizes, on 4 August 1828, the grand jury returned a true bill against Corder, and his trial opened on Thursday 7 August. He pleaded not guilty, and in his address to the court claimed that after he had left Maria alone in the barn following a heated argument she had shot herself with a pistol he had brought along for the journey. On Friday 8 August the trial jury nonetheless returned a guilty verdict, and Corder was condemned to death. He was duly hanged before a large crowd outside the Bury gaol on Monday 11 August, but in the two days that had elapsed since the trial had been induced by the governor of the gaol to make a full confession, in which he admitted that in the heat of the

argument in the barn there had been a scuffle, during which he drew his pistol and shot Maria. Subsequently, having fetched a pickaxe and a spade, he dug a hole, buried the body, and made his escape.

Studies of the Case and its Aftermath

Curtis, J. *An Authentic and Faithful History ...*

-- see under sources

McCormick, Donald. [aka Deacon] *The Red Barn Mystery*. London: Long, 1967.

-- well known but speculative

McCorristine, Shane. *William Corder and the Red Barn Murder: Journeys of the Criminal Body*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014

-- main topic is the treatment of Corder's corpse and its cultural resonances, but ch. 1 (p. 6 onwards) has a clear review of the case and there are appendices with select historical documents (and transcripts of several ballads)

Steele, Erin Rebecca Bone. "Murder and Melodrama: The Red Barn Story on Stage". MA Dissertation, University of Maryland, 2008.

<http://drum.lib.umd.edu/bitstream/1903/8231/1/umi-umd-5439.pdf>

-- on three melodramas based on the case, but ch. 1, "Atrocious Murder in Suffolk" is a useful historical account quoting from several contemporary judicial and journalistic sources not easy of access.

-- includes several items of evidence on journalistic procedures (like having transcripts of proceedings handed out from the courtroom at regular intervals for dispatch to publisher).

Wikipedia. "Red Barn Murder". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Barn_Murder

-- good coverage with many references

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The Sources

From the moment the body was discovered the case was the object of intense public attention and was comprehensively reported in the press, both local and national. At this time, before the rise of the cheap, mass-circulation newspaper, sensationalist news reporting was still the province of the broadside ballad itself, and regular newspapers tended to be dull but informative, in the case of criminal matters given to quoting judicial and other documents verbatim. Local and London papers had reporters, some skilled at shorthand, at the arrest, the inquest, the trial, and the execution, as a result of which our information is very full. In the following months and years several books on the trial, some largely compendia of existing documents and reports, were published. Some of the more ephemeral publications on the case

were collected in anthologies or pasted into scrapbooks by particularly obsessed members of the public.

Catalogue of Sources

-- far from comprehensive: the quest is specifically for early material that might have been used by the ballad authors. A particular strand of the earliest reporting (noted in passing below) specified May 19 as the day of Maria's disappearances, and is therefore likely to be the source of the ballads which share this error. The alternative spellings Marten and Martin may also be indicative (it remains uncertain which is 'correct').

PRIMARY JOURNALISTIC REPORTS

-- this list omits reports in local newspapers, which are unlikely to have provided sources for the balladeers; however there is an indirect relationship in that some London publications reproduce a report, "Atrocious Murder of a Young Woman in Suffolk – Singular Discovery of the Body from a Dream – And Apprehension of the Murderer at Ealing, Middlesex" from the *Suffolk Herald*, 22 April 1828 (source of the inaccurate dating of the event to 19 May).

-- this could usefully be revised by someone with access to Cengage sources.

DISCOVERY TO ARREST

The Times, 22 April 1828 ("on Tuesday evening...")

repr. in

The Sunday Times, Sunday 27 April 1828, p. 3

"Most Horrible Murder (Equal in Enormity to Weare's)"

Great Newspapers Reprinted, No. 12, Special Issue, *Sunday Times 150th Anniversary*, ed. B. Lake (London: Peter Way, 1972).

The Morning Chronicle, 24 April 1828: "Horrible Murder"

19th Century British Library Newspapers (Gale: Cengage Learning)

-- cites *Suffolk Herald* as source; specifies 19th May for departure

The Sunday Times, Sunday 27 April 1828, p. 3:

"Another Account"

Great Newspapers Reprinted, No. 12, Special Issue, *Sunday Times 150th Anniversary*, ed. B. Lake (London: Peter Way, 1972).

Sunday Times Digital Archive (Gale: Cengage Learning)

-- derives from *Suffolk Chronicle*; specifies 19th May for departure

John Bull, 27 April, 1828: "Horrid Murder"

<http://www.stedmundsburychronicle.co.uk/rbdiscov.htm>

= transcript with link to photograph of original

-- reprints "MOST HORRIBLE MURDER (EQUAL IN ENORMITY TO WEARE'S)" from *Sunday Times* of the same date.

-- i.e. describing discovery and arrest and reconstructing antecedent events.

John Bull, 27 April, 1828: "Latest News"

<http://www.stedmundsburychronicle.co.uk/rbdiscov.htm>

= transcript with link to photograph of original

-- doubtless also derivative -- and muddled; despite the date, the item ends with the jury bringing its verdict (i.e. in August: two cuttings evidently conglomerated).

TRIAL AND EXECUTION

The Times Monday 4 August 1828

-- reporting arrival of Assize judges

The Times 8 August 1828

"Trial of William Corder for the Murder of Maria Marten"

-- reporting first day of trial, 7 August

-- includes an "abstract" of the indictment

-- includes narrative by Chief Prosecutor of relationship between William Corder and Maria Marten up to their departure for the Red Barn.

The Times 9 August 1828

-- reporting more on first day of trial

witnesses for the defence

Demeanour of the Prisoner

The Times 9 August 1828

"The Trial, and Conviction of William Corder"

-- reporting conviction & sentence 8 August

-- includes Corder's own narrative of the death (claims it was suicide)

The Sunday Times. 10 August, 1828, "Trial of William Corder" and "Additional Particulars"

-- reproduces verbatim all the material from *The Times* of 8-9 August, with additional items.

The Times 11 August 1828

The Times 16 August 1828.

The Sunday Times. 17 August, 1828,

"Polstead Murder"; "Execution &c."

-- Corder's behaviour after trial; the execution; dissection of body; forensic evidence;

replies to Corder's advertizement for a female companion. CONFESSIO

PROSE BROADSIDES

What might be termed the second wave of reporting took the form of broadside prose accounts derivative (or directly copied) from the newspapers, often by the same printers who issued the broadside ballads – therefore even better qualified as potential sources for the latter. See particularly the Catnach sequence below.

Execution of W. Corder, for the Murder of Maria Marten at Polstead, Suffolk.

Pitts printer, 6, Great St. Andrew Street, 7 Dials.

Harvard University. Harvard Law School Library. Dying Speeches and Bloody Murders: Crime Broadside, No. 69.

<http://pds.lib.harvard.edu/pds/view/4787716?n=69>

- large woodcut depicting a man hanging on a scaffold surrounded by a large crowd, followed by two columns of prose.
- actually a summary of the trial, concluding with the verdict, followed by a few lines on the execution.

Most Horrible Murder, Rivalling in cold-blooded atrocity that of Mr. Weare.

Printed at Birt's wholesale and retail Song and Ballad Warehouse, 10, Great St. Andrew Street, Seven Dials, London.

Harvard University. Harvard Law School Library. Dying Speeches and Bloody Murders: Crime Broad-sides, No. 153

<http://pds.lib.harvard.edu/pds/view/4787716?n=153>

- no illustrations
- two columns of prose narrating events up to and including apprehension of Corder and his being sent to Suffolk.
- related to account in *Sunday Times* of 27 August, but gets the date of murder right as 18 May.

Of particular interest is the chronological sequence of accounts published by the printer Catnach, the last two of which each contain a (different) ballad on the case. Such prose and song hybrids (the latter often headed 'Copy of Verses'), were not at all unusual, and interestingly the prose and verse accounts, formulated to different protocols, can sometimes offer discrepant narrative details within a few inches of each other. Several of the Maria Marten ballads made their first (and often last) appearance in this manner.

[Catnach 1 – Discovery Phase]

Atrocious Murder of a Young Woman in Suffolk. Singular Discovery of the Body from a Dream.

Printed by J. Catnach, 2, Monmouth Court, 7 Dials.

woodcut of farm buildings with legend, "The Red Barn. The scene of the murder, and where the body of Maria Marten was found concealed".

- prose account, deriving from *Sunday Times* of 27 April (or anterior account in *Times*)
- no original prints?

Charles Hindley. *The Life and Times of James Catnach*. London, 1878; repr. Detroit, 1968, pp. 180-82.

<http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc2.ark:/13960/t48p66d2c;view=1up;seq=201>

- see p. 179 for discussion, including dating

[Catnach 2 – Discovery Phase]

Atrocious Murder of a Young Woman in Suffolk. Singular Discovery of the Body from a Dream. Apprehension of the Murderer at Ealing, Middlesex.

Printed by J. Catnach, 2, Monmouth Court, 7 Dials.

woodcut with legend, "Likeness of William Corder".

- prose account, probably 23 April, 1828
- no original prints?

Charles Hindley. *The Life and Times of James Catnach*. London, 1878; repr. Detroit, 1968, pp. 183-85.

<http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc2.ark:/13960/t48p66d2c;view=1up;seq=205>

- ... see p. 182 for discussion

[Catnach 3 – Trial and Execution Phase]

Confession and Execution of William Corder, The Murderer of Maria Marten.

Printed by J. Catnach, 2 and 3, Monmouth Court. -- Cards, &c., Printed Cheap.

-- prose account

-- together with: "The Murder of Maria Marten. By W. Corder"

[probably 11 August 1828]

-- no original prints?

Charles Hindley. *Curiosities of Street Literature*. London: Reeves & Turner, 1871, p. 189

<https://archive.org/details/curiositiesofstr00hinduoft>

cf. "Introduction", p. i:

"The present street literature printers and publishers are Mr. W.S. Fortey (Catnach's successor) ... [two others specified] ... From whose "establishments" upwards of two thousand street "papers" and "ballads" have been obtained, and from which – together with a private collection – we have made our selection to form "the curiosities of street literature".

-- but also clear (top of p. i) the texts have been set up anew by the printer (original woodcuts used for the pictures); notes that Catnach never kept his texts "standing in forme".

Charles Hindley. *The Life and Times of James Catnach*. London, 1878; repr. Detroit, 1968, p. 187 (facsimile).

<http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc2.ark:/13960/t48p66d2c;view=1up;seq=205>

-- Hindley reports (p. 186) that sales were estimated at 1,166,000, and that the "Lamentable Verses" were written by Catnach himself. He claims he supplies (on p. 187) "a facsimile copy ... reproduced on the opposite page, by the Litho-Zincographic Process"

-- it's not a photographic reproduction, as all the other images in the book are in the same distinct font.

[Catnach 4 – Trial and Execution Phase]

Execution and Confession of W. Corder, For the Murder of Mary Martin [sic] in the Red Barn.

Printed by J. Catnach, 2, Monmouth Court, 7 Dials –Sold by Bennet, Brighton.

Harvard University. Harvard Law School Library. Dying Speeches and Bloody Murders: Crime Broad-sides, No. 273.

<http://pds.lib.harvard.edu/pds/view/4787716?n=273>

-- specifies date as 1828

-- five woodcuts in all:

top row:

"Maria Martin [sic] appearing to her Mother in a Dream"

[uncaptioned: execution in front of crowd outside gaol]

"The Body of Maria Found in the Red Barn"

bottom row:

"Maria Martin's first Visit in the Red Barn"

-- idyllic outdoor scene by moonlight

"Maria Marten's last Visit (in Man's Clothes) to the Red Barn, with a View of Polstead"

-- both manifestly recycled.

-- between them five columns of text, comprising:

- # an untitled account of the trial, concluded with a brief note on the execution.
- # “Particulars. Relating to the Murder”
 - brief narrative followed by full text of Corder’s “Confession”
- # “A Copy of Verses”
 - first line, “Young lovers all I pray attend”.

COMPENDIA

A third stage of the early journalistic aftermath was the publication of compendia of the early newspaper reports, together with other material, in the form of both pamphlets and chapbooks. I am happy to acknowledge the assistance of Nathan Dorn, Rare Book Curator, Collection Services Division, Law Library of Congress, in chasing down and accessing these items.

DUTTON

A correct report of the trial of William Corder at Bury St. Edmund's before the Chief Baron Alexander on Thursday, August 7, 1828, and following day, charged with the murder of Maria Marten at Polstead, Suffolk. Bury St. Edmunds: T.D. Dutton, 1828
Library of Congress KD372.C66 C6655 1828: <http://lccn.loc.gov/43049736>

The Trial of William Corder at Bury St. Edmund's Before the Lord Chief Baron Alexander, on the 7th and 8th of August 1828, for the Murder of Maria Marten; Together with Some Account of Their Lives, Containing a Narration of the Numerous Atrocities Committed by Corder, and Other Interesting Particulars Hitherto Unpublished. Bury St. Edmund's: T. D. Dutton, 1828.

The trial of William Corder at Bury St. Edmund's before the Lord Chief Baron Alexander on the 7th and 8th of August, 1828 for the murder of Maria Marten : together with some account of their lives, containing a narration of the numerous atrocities committed by Corder and other interesting particulars hitherto unpublished : to which is appended his subsequent conduct and execution.

Bury St. Edmund's: T. D. Dutton, [1828].

Library of Congress KD372.C665 C6655 1828: <http://lccn.loc.gov/44016043>

-- see also Knight & Lacey

SMEETON & DAVIDSON

The Red Barn Tragedy! An Authentic Narrative of the Atrocious Murder of Maria Marten: Giving Full Particulars of the Miraculous Discovery of the Body in the Red Barn, Polstead: And Also the Trial of William Corder, for the Said Murder, at Bury on Thursday and Friday, August 7 & 8, 1828, Before Mr. Baron Alexander, with an Account of his Execution.

3rd ed. Southwark: G. Smeeton and G.H. Davidson, [1828].

Library of Congress KD372.C66 R43 1828: <http://lccn.loc.gov/40022984>

KNIGHT & LACEY

The Trial of William Corder, at the Assizes, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, August 7th and

8th, 1828, for the Murder of Maria Marten in the Red Barn at Polstead: Including the Matrimonial Advertisement, and Many Other Curious and Important Particulars, down to the Execution, Obtained Exclusively by the Editor.

London: Knight and Lacey, 1828.

The trial of William Corder at Bury St. Edmund's before the Lord Chief Baron Alexander on the 7th and 8th of August, 1828 for the murder of Maria Marten in the red barn at Polstead : including the matrimonial advertisement and many other curious and important particulars, down to his execution, obtained exclusively by the editor.

London: Knight and Lacey, 1828.

Library of Congress KD372.C665 C665 1828: <http://lccn.loc.gov/29017624>

Repr. (of 3rd edn., also 1828 [same title] from copy in Harvard Law School Library) in series The Making of Modern Law. Trials, 1600 – 1926. London: Gale, n.d.

-- despite claims to the contrary, this is at least to some degree derivative from the major newspapers.

-- one of these is the same as:

Trial of William Corder for the Murder of Maria Marten

(“No event, of a domestic occurrence ...”)

awkwardly appended to a work from the same publishers:

Huish, Robert. *The Red Barn: A Tale Founded on Fact*. London: Knight & Lacey, 1828

http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=xn_EtARo2LsC&pg=RA1-PA4&lpg=RA1-PA4&dq=%22Maria++Marten,+a+fine+young+woman%22&source=bl&ots=nogkiTtMKC&sig=YqWt6vVHvshoYUzLb_WfeBXAxIQ&hl=da&sa=X&ei=SS6yT76uMdP64QTKvZmTDg&sqi=2&ved=0CEAQ6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q=%22Maria%20%20Marten%2C%20a%20fine%20young%20woman%22&f=false

http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=xn_EtARo2LsC&pg=RA1-PA4&lpg=RA1-PA4&dq=%22Maria++Marten,+a+fine+young+woman%22&source=bl&ots=nogkiTtMKC&sig=YqWt6vVHvshoYUzLb_WfeBXAxIQ&hl=da&sa=X&ei=SS6yT76uMdP64QTKvZmTDg&sqi=2&ved=0CEAQ6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q=%22Maria%20%20Marten%2C%20a%20fine%20young%20woman%22&f=false

between pp. 618 and 689.

-- dates murder to 17th (!) of May

Technically belonging here, but a very special case is the book published by a journalist who followed the case with exceptional vigour, as reflected in the title:

Curtis, J.

*An Authentic and Faithful History of the Mysterious Murder of Maria Marten, With a Full Development of all the Extraordinary Circumstances which led to the Discovery of her Body in The Red Barn; to which is added, the **Trial of William Corder, taken at large in short hand specially for this Work**, with an Account of his Execution, Dissection, &c., and many Interesting Particulars relative to the Village of Polstead and its Vicinity; The prison Correspondence of Corder, and Fifty-Three Letters, in Answer to the Advertisement for a Wife. The Whole compiled and Arranged with upwards of Three Hundred Explanatory Notes, By J. Curtis, and embellished with many highly Interesting Engravings.* London: Published by John Kelly, Paternoster-Row, 1828.

<<Library of Congress KD372.C665 C665 1828: <http://lccn.loc.gov/29017623>

-- notoriously, the local museum, Moyses Hall, at Bury St Edmunds, exhibits a copy of this work bound in skin taken from Corder's body during his dissection. See

<http://www.stedmundsburychronicle.co.uk/rbexhib.htm>

My thanks to colleague Henrik Lassen for access to the copy (which seemed to be in the original binding) in his extensive collection of nineteenth century popular print.

-- the “taken ... in shorthand” is more generally, relevant, as Curtis was the reporter on the spot for *The Times*.

INFORMATION RELEVANT TO PROCESS OF DOCUMENTATION

Preface, p. v.

Author resided in Polstead 15 days prior to the trial to collect information on the case and those involved, and even longer in Bury “in order to give a *verbatim* account of the judicial proceedings”.

pp. 23-4

reports a lengthy discussion between Coroner and journalists present at Inquest (late April) on whether they should be allowed to take notes during the proceedings; despite their assertions this was normal practice, the Coroner prohibited it.

p. 109

For the trial, “tickets of admission” had been issued to “reporters to the newspapers, and persons there for literary purposes”. [but they had difficulty getting in because of the crowds].

INFORMATION RELEVANT TO THE NARRATIVE

pp. 10-13

evidence of Marten family before Inquest, 20 April.

-- incl. stepmother’s report of her dreams of body buried in Red Barn

-- first public evidence of dreams

pp. 364-5 discussion of why the dream was not introduced by either side in the trial; notes in passing it was invoked before the Grand Jury [not covered by Curtis’s main account].

p. 365 n* Curtis reports many conversations with Mrs. Marten about her dreams; maintained her story consistently.

pp. 40-50

“Biographical Sketch of Maria Marten”

-- doubtless based on extensive fieldwork

born in 1801 to Thomas and Grace Marten

mother dies when she is 10.

pp.43-4 seduced by Thomas Corder (William’s elder brother)

-- repudiated by Corder; had his child, which died at early age.

pp. 44-45 seduced by a local gentleman

-- would not marry her, but took care of his child

pp. 48-49 seduced by William Corder

-- child born at Sudbury; brought home; died; buried clandestinely.

-- public would have been aware of these by virtue of father, Thomas Marten’s testimony before Inquest (p. 11):

“I am the father of the late Maria Marten, who has had three illegitimate children, the last of which was by William Corder”.

p. 49 Curtis: “Depraved as she was, to a blamable extent, she was neither profligate nor abandoned. ... she was unflexibly honest in her conduct towards those upon whose protection and promises she relied.”

pp. 120-130 narrative of salient events by Chief Prosecutor (Mr. Andrews, “Counsel for the Crown”) at trial (could be usefully juxtaposed with ballad)

pp. 206-214 narrative of salient events in Corder’s address to Jury at trial (ditto)

-- claimed (p. 198) to be “verbatim”, as read by Corder from a quarto copy-book.

-- notes (p. 224) that it was in his own handwriting, and was probably of his own composition.

-- in contrast to “Confession” (q.v.) claims that Maria, having stolen one of Corder’s pistols, shot herself when, after a row, he left her at the Red Barn.

p. 285 Corder's "Confession" (a "verbatim copy") as written down by John Orridge, the Prison Governor, and signed by Corder.
-- also appears on Catnach 3.

THE COLLECTORS

Much of this printed material was extremely ephemeral, and some of it survives thanks only to the obsessive interest of readers who collected accounts of the case, and bound them into a volume or cut and pasted them into a scrapbook. Two in particular, encountered unexpectedly in faraway places, have provided useful, in many instances unique, material.

Washington. Library of Congress. Rare Books – Law Library No. 29017623

Catalogue permalink: <https://lccn.loc.gov/29017623>

This is a copy of J. Curtis, *An authentic and faithful history of the mysterious murder of Maria Marten* (1828), as above, with which have been bound six other printed items directly related to the case or its aftermath, all explicitly or probably from 1828, one of them the *The Trial of William Corder, at the Assizes* published by Knight and Lacey, also listed above.

In addition there are 21 numbered sheets (= 42 pages) with newspaper cuttings, generally in chronological order, from the period between the discovery and the trial, and somewhat beyond. None are identified as to source, although some are recognizably related to items listed above

New York. New York Public Library. Arents Collection. Call. No. Arents BIP (Curtis, J. Authentic) AL 01-355.

**[*An authentic and faithful history of the mysterious murder : a scrapbook*].
comp. Thomas Cauley Newby.**

Catalogue Entry:

<http://catalog.nypl.org/record=b15129684~S1>

"Collection of newspaper cuttings, contemporary water-color drawings, pencil sketches, colored woodcuts, portraits, poetical broadsides, confessions and broadsides, of the trial and execution of William Corder, relating to the murder of Maria Marten in the Red Barn at Polstead.

Collection compiled by T.C. Newby, for a possible work on the murder.

A.L.S. from Newby bound in (leaf 183).*

* this is Thomas Cautley Newby, London publisher, 1797/8 – 1882.

-- the leaf with his letter is reproduced at NYPD Digital Gallery:

http://digitalgallery.nypl.org/nypldigital/id?ps_arm_026

-- this is a scrapbook into which a substantial miscellany of early printed materials on the Maria Marten case have been affixed, carefully cut and pasted to fit the ruled pages (where possible in two columns).

All the verses and illustrations mentioned by the NYPL Catalogue belong within individual publications. (the colouring of illustrations evidently undertaken subsequently to printing)

The Catalogue title (and its brackets) is explained by the fact that the material begins with extracts from Curtis, J. *An Authentic and Faithful History of the Mysterious Murder of Maria Marten* (q.v. above).

- the printed accounts thus preserved include four **sets of verses** on the case, of which three do not seem to have survived elsewhere:
 - first line: “A horrid deed has come to light”
 - first line: “A deed of murder, dark and dread”
 - first line “Come all you thoughtless wild young men”
- the fourth has been encountered elsewhere (Harvard Law Library),
 - first line: “Young lovers all I pray attend”
 - see separate section for details

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The Songs

The broadside ballads on the case are of no historical value for reconstructing the historical events: they are manifestly based second hand on other reports, typically the regular newspapers, the relationship occasionally revealed by shared factual errors, not to mention close verbal similarities. They are part of a vast outpouring of popular cultural production, from ornaments to melodramas, taking commercial advantage of a sensational case, but of interest also from formal, ultimately aesthetic, dimensions. In particular, they are given, in various ways, to selecting and shaping the accessible material to suit the broadside format, the song idiom, and existing paradigms for successful popular narrative, not least that of the “murdered sweetheart”

Of the nine ballads on the case so far identified, some were published in the regular broadside format of the period (a single sheet with the text of the song on one side; sometimes two songs in separate columns), but some featured in more complex productions, most often a large format sheet containing other, prose, material on the case (usually together with the woodcut illustrations common at the top of broadside ballads). In such instances, there is a tendency for the song to be headed merely “Copy of Verses”, complicating the necessary business of how to refer to the song concerned – this will be indicated where relevant in the catalogue to follow. The catalogue supplies other information concerning individual ballads, such as whether they made it into performance tradition. One of the broadsides was clearly written between the arrest and the trial; the rest immediately after the verdict, some purporting to reflect the mind of Corder between verdict and execution.

Studies of the Songs

-- most studies are specifically and exclusively of “The Murder of Maria Marten” (“Come all you thoughtless young men”) as this was for long the only song known on the case (although performance versions of “The Suffolk Tragedy” were sometimes taken as radical revisions), and such studies will be listed in the document on that ballad.

The only major exception is:

Pettitt, Tom. “Mediating Maria Marten: Comparative and Contextual Studies of the Red Barn Ballads”

Street Ballads in Nineteenth-Century Britain, Ireland, and North America: The Interface between Print and Oral Traditions. Ed. David Atkinson and Steve Roud. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2014, pp. 219-243.

<https://books.google.dk/books?id=Grm6BAAQBAJ&pg=PA34&dq=Street+Ballads+in+Nineteenth-Century+Britain&hl=en&sa=X&ei=UsSOVMnlPMH-ywPGh4GIDQ&ved=0CCEQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false>

-- lacks sporadic pages

-- on the basis of the six songs known at the time of writing.

Catalogue of Songs

-- Roud nos. are as specified in the Roud Broadside Index, Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, <http://www.vwml.org/search/search-roud-indexes>

-- while ballads are normally referred to by their titles, because of the number on this case entitled simply "Copy of Verses" the first lines have here been emphasized to facilitate cross-reference.

The following songs are each be accorded a separate section in what follows:

The Murder of Maria Marten

aka ... *Martin*

first line: **"Come all you thoughtless young men"**

Roud Index no. 215

-- published both separately as a broadside ballad (several printers) and on a news-sheet with other material.

-- recorded extensively from performance tradition in England in course of 20th century

The Suffolk Tragedy, or the Red Barn Murder

aka *The Red Barn Murder of Maria Marten*

first line: **"Young lovers all I pray draw near and listen unto me"**

Roud Index no. 18814

-- broadside ballad (three printers)

-- recorded from performance tradition in England and New South Wales (two singers each).

The following songs are treated together in a single section:

A Copy of Verses

first line: **"Young lovers all I pray attend"**

Roud Index no. V481

-- on a news sheet with other material entitled *Execution and Confession of W. Corder, For the Murder of Mary Martin [sic] in the Red Barn*, and other printings with variant titles

A Copy of Verses

first line: **"A deed of Murder dark and dread"**

no Roud Index no.

-- on a news sheet with other material entitled *Particulars of the Trial and Execution of William Corder Who was Executed at Bury St Edmunds, on Monday, August 11, 1828, for the Wilful Murder of Maria Marten*.

Copy of Verses

-- first line: **"A horrid deed has come to light"**

no Roud Index no.

- in a chapbook (or on a very large news-sheet) with other material entitled *MURDER of a Young Woman in Suffolk singular discovery of the Body and Apprehension of the Murderer from a Dream at Ealing* (sic: the title has been disarranged in cutting and pasting the text into a scrapbook)
- the narrative goes only as far as the arrest, so the ballad could have been one of those complained of as prejudicing the trial by naming Corder as the culprit (see below).
- three lines from a stanza of this song have been introduced into a version of "The Suffolk Tragedy" recorded from an Australian singer

A Copy of Verses written by William Corder whilst under sentence of death in the condemned cell, for the murder of Maria Marten.

first line: **"Come all you thoughtless wild young men"**

no Roud Index no.

- broadside ballad (one printer)
- 6 stanzas have been taken, slightly revised, from *A Copy of Verses* ("Young lovers all I pray attend")

A Copy of Verses, on the Execution of Wm. Corder, for the Murder of Maria Marten, in the Red Barn, Polstead

first line: **"Hark! 'tis the dreary midnight bell"**

Roud index no. V482

- broadside ballad (two printers)

The Red Barn Tragedy

first line: **"Come all you young lovers, I pray you attend"**

Roud Index no. 483

- broadside ballad (one printer)
- probably written in Scotland

William Corder

first line: **"Good people I pray draw near"**

Roud Index no. V484

- broadside ballad (one printer)

ooo

-- this list is unlikely to be exhaustive; previously unknown songs emerge from time to time, and there are references in documentary or scholarly sources that do not quite fit the known songs:

Last Dying Speech and Full Confession of William Corder

-- may have contained prose accounts only.

Mayhew, Henry. *London Labour and the London Poor*. 1851. 2nd ed. 4 vols. 1861-62; repr. London: Frank Cass, 1967, vol. I, *The London Street-Folk*, p. 223.

My informant, who had been upwards of 20 years in the running paper line, told me that he commenced his career with the "Last Dying Speech and Full

Confession of William Corder". ... "I worked that there," he said, "down in the very town (at Bury) where he was executed".

Trial of William Corder for the Murder of Maria Marten at Polstead in Suffolk.

Pitts Broadside (ref. by Shepard)

(Polstead Fair Ballads)

J. Curtis. *An Authentic and Faithful History of the Mysterious Murder of Maria Marten*. London: Thomas Kelly, 1828, pp. 70-71.

Polstead's annual "cherry fair" was held on 16-17 July 1828, and because of the notoriety of the case, crowds were greater than usual. They were entertained by dramatic shows re-enacting the crime and: "there were ballad-singers with songs connected with the Polstead murder, where the name of Corder was unfairly introduced, considering that at the time he was awaiting his trial." Curtis, who was reporting for *The Times*, states (p. xiii) that he was in Polstead at the time of the fair.

-- as noted above, one of the known ballads "*Copy of Verses* "A horrid deed has come to light") is qualified as one such, but there may have been others.

ooo

A DISCURSIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY AND CATALOGUE OF MURDERED SWEETHEART
BALLADS
THE MARIA MARTEN CASE

“THE MURDER OF MARIA MARTEN”
(“COME ALL YOU THOUGHTLESS YOUNG MEN”)

Roud Index no 215

Of all the ballads prompted by the Maria Marten case (see INTRODUCTION) “The Murder of Maria Marten” was by far the most successful in terms of market penetration, based on the number of issues of the broadside, the number of printers involved (and their locations), and the number of times the ballad was recorded from derivative performance tradition.

STUDIES

Andersen, Flemming G., & Thomas Pettitt.

"'The Murder of Maria Marten': The Birth of a Ballad?"

Narrative Folksong: New Directions. Essays in Appreciation of W. Edson Richmond.
Ed. Carol L. Edwards & Kathleen E.B. Manley. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press,
1985, pp.132-78.

-- on how the song changes (it becomes more like a traditional ballad) in performance tradition

Pettitt, Tom.

“Mediating Maria Marten: Comparative and Contextual Studies of the Red Barn Ballads”
Street Ballads in Nineteenth-Century Britain, Ireland, and North America: The Interface between Print and Oral Traditions. Ed. David Atkinson and Steve Roud.
Aldershot: Ashgate, 2014, pp. 219-243, passim, plus Appendix 2 (pp. 241-2): “The Murder of Maria Marten”: Survey of Oral Versions”.

BROADSIDES

The song’s first printing was technically not as a broadside ballad, but part of a miscellany of material on a broadside news-sheet, the *Confession and Execution of William Corder, The Murderer of Maria Marten*, published by London printer James Catnach, the third in a sequence (see INTRODUCTION) which otherwise recycled material from the regular press, in this case a lengthy prose account of Corder’s execution and a transcript of his final confession to the Governor of Bury St Edmund’s gaol. It seems not to have survived independently, but as a facsimile in two books about the Catnach press by Charles Hindley (see annotations below). In one of these, *The Life and Times of James Catnach* (1878, p. 186) Hindley offers the much quoted estimate that Catnach’s sales of this ballad (presumably in this and other formats) passed 1,000,000 copies, together with the suggestion that the verses were written by Catnach himself.

Catnach also printed this song on a broadside independently of the news sheet, and among many other printings are five from other London printers, plus five from the provinces

and issues with no specification of printer. These all have the same number of stanzas in the same order, variation therefore being within individual stanzas, indeed overwhelmingly within individual lines.

In its original, broadside, form, although it is printed in various formats, the song effectively comprises sixteen quatrains, qualifying as traditional “ballad” quatrains in terms of stress (4.3.4.3.) and (rhyme abcb):

1. Come all you thoughtless young men,
a warning take by me,
And think upon my unhappy fate
to be hanged upon a tree;

With the exception of the two stanzas devoted to the murder (7) and the burial of the body (8), which are in the third person (7.3. “He murdered her all in the barn”), the ballad is expressed in the voice of the murderous lover. This would normally be construed as a ‘last goodnight’ between condemnation and execution but here, unusually, the perpetrator is explicitly (in the last stanza) speaking from the gallows after he has been “hang'd upon the tree”.

The ballad has a strong narrative line, with only three stanzas of narrative packaging encompassing the first stanza (*the incipt*) and the last two stanzas (*the explicit*) devoted to expressions of regret, warning and valediction. There is a particularly effective transition between the Crime and Aftermath (which are given roughly equal attention) deploying the apparition of the girl’s spirit to her mother and the latter’s dreams about the location of the corpse. This is one of the Murdered Sweetheart Ballads where the judicial aftermath automatically effects a shift in focus from the girl to the murderous lover (reflected in the opening and closing appeals to “young men”), but here the victim remains a factor through these apparitions, the actual discovery of the body, the exhibition of “her jaw bone” (13.3) at the trial, and the grief of her parents (rather than his) during the proceedings.

In relation to the received judicial-journalistic narrative this ballad belongs to the branch which correctly specifies the date of Maria’s disappearance as 18 April, but otherwise takes some liberties, doubtless with a view to sales, or to achieve conformity with the established Murdered Sweetheart paradigm (which amounts to the same thing). Most blatantly, contradicting the published confession, it has Corder deliberately take a pickaxe and spade to the barn and dig a grave *before* Maria arrives – the Murdered Sweetheart scenario requiring a pre-mediated killing. Some purple patches are to be expected in sensationalist news reporting (“Her bleeding mangled body he buried” – she had been shot with a pistol) but there is misleading pathos in designating the dreaming step-mother as the one “who suckled her at her breast” (and the actual appearance of Maria seems itself to be an addition).

PERFORMANCE TRADITION

This ballad (one stanza or more) has been recorded from eleven English singers, both during the early burst of recording associated with Cecil Sharp and the English Folk Song Society and more recently more or less under the auspices of the post-war Folk Revival. This activity

also encompassed folk music enthusiasts who recorded melodies without texts, identifying a further ten singers who had this song in their repertoire. The altogether score or so of singers display a distinct geographical bias towards East Anglia and adjacent counties, which may reflect the local interest of the case – although Ralph Vaughan Williams found that even seventy years after the event there was a sensitivity about singing the song in the immediate vicinity of Polstead.¹

While the singers vary considerably in their treatment of the broadside text (which also reflects, of course, cumulative changes introduced by all the singers in a particular chain of transmission), distinct trends are nonetheless discernible. In purely quantitative terms, while there can occasionally be considerable variation at the level of the verse line, none of these versions introduces any new stanzas; and, with very few exceptions, such stanzas of the original as are retained remain in the original order. The major achievement of the ‘folk muse’ displayed here is the art of subtraction, deployed – deliberately or subconsciously – with various – qualitative -- consequences.

Some versions seem to attempt a full reproduction of the broadside, in relation to which they are imperfect, in omitting some stanzas. The same is true only more so of what are manifestly fragments consisting of just one or a few stanzas. But caution is advisable, as notions of completeness among traditional singers may have differed from those of bookish scholars; and a three-stanza version (such as we have for this song) may be a viable rendition of its narrative or dramatic core. Equally interesting in qualitative terms are more or less abbreviated versions which seem to reflect the selection of just those stanzas most essential for achieving a coherent narrative, including its dramatic confrontations. Combined, as sometimes happens, with the substitution of original lines with formulas from song tradition, and the generation of verbal repetitions to reinforce conceptual links between narrative moments, a given version can modulate into an alternative, vernacular aesthetic closer to that of the classic ballads of song tradition.

ooo

BROADSIDES: CATALOGUE

-- arranged by printer

CATNACH

-- placed first as probably the first printer of this ballad.

“The Murder of Maria Marten. By W. Corder”

in news sheet *Confession and Execution of William Corder, the Murderer of Maria Marten* .

[= [Catnach prose 3 in INTRODUCTION](#)]

London: Catnach.

-- this is presumably the ballad’s first appearance:

-- no copy of original survives?

¹ Ursula Vaughan Williams, personal communication, 20 January 1982.

Charles Hindley. *Curiosities of Street Literature*. London: Reeves & Turner, 1871, p. 189

<https://archive.org/details/curiositiesofstr00hinduoft>

cf. "Introduction", p. i:

"The present street literature printers and publishers are Mr. W.S. Fortey (Catnach's successor) ... [two other specified] ... From whose "establishments" upwards of two thousand street "papers" and "ballads" have been obtained, and from which – together with a private collection – we have made our selection to form "the curiosities of street literature".

-- but also clear (top of p. i) the texts have been set up anew by the printer (original woodcuts used for the pictures); notes that Catnach never kept his texts "standing in forme".

Charles Hindley. *The Life and Times of James Catnach*. London, 1878; repr. Detroit, 1968, p. 187 (facsimile).

<http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc2.ark:/13960/t48p66d2c;view=1up;seq=205>

-- see pp. 185-86 for discussion and ascription of song to Catnach himself
-- Hindley reports (p. 186) that sales were estimated at 1,166,000, and that the "Lamentable Verses" were written by Catnach himself. He claims he supplies (on p. 187) "a facsimile copy ... reproduced on the opposite page, by the Litho-Zincographic Process"

-- it's not a photographic reproduction, as all the other images in the book are in the same distinct font.

pr. *The Common Muse*.

Ed. V. de Sola Pinto & A.E. Rodway. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965, No. 88.

pr. Neuberger, Victor E. *Popular Literature: A History and Guide*.

Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977, p. 138.

"Maria Martin" [sic]

Catnach *Catalogue*

J. Catnach *A Catalogue of Songs and Song Books Published by James Catnach 1832: A Facsimile Reprint with Indexes and Examples*. Ed. Stephen Roud & Paul Smith. West Stockwith: January Books, 1985, p. 6, col. b

or:

Shepard, Leslie. *The History of Street Literature*. Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1973, p. 221

CATNACH & OTHERS

"Murder of M. Marten, by W. Corder" together with "Wilt thou say Farewell Love"

London, J. Catnach ... Sold by Bennett, Brighton.

-- distinct from Henson issue with these two songs

-- the woodcut at the top of "Wilt thou say farewell love" (a couple walking down an avenue past a church) remains stable; but there are variations in the woodcut at the head of "Murder of M. Marten":

Cambridge. CUL. Madden Collection (London printers 4) [VWML mfilm No. 77], # 207

-- obscure woodcut of tumbril on way to gallows through crowd

Harvard University. Harvard Law School Library. Dying Speeches and Bloody Murders: Crime Broadside, No. 154

<http://pds.lib.harvard.edu/pds/view/4787716?n=154>. consulted 25.05.2012.

<<not in Roud Index

-- single column on narrow sheet (presumably a slip)

= same as above but separated from adjoining song

-- at top same obscure woodcut of a confused scene with a crowd around a tumbril and a gallows

British Library. Baring-Gould Broadside Collection (BL. L.R. 271.a.2). Vol. 8, no. 68
-- woodcut of domestic or dame-school scene with adults and children (who are learning to read?)

Shepard, Leslie. *The History of Street Literature*. Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1973, p. 195, facs.

-- no indication of derivation, prob. above (same woodcut)

OTHER PRINTERS

BIRT OF LONDON

"Murder of Maria Martin" [sic]

London: **Birt**

T. Birt's *Catalogue of Songs* (No. 1a) No. 234

<<cited Roud index

DISLEY OF LONDON

Murder of M. Marten by W. Corder together with "The Cruel Miller"

London: **Disley**, Printer, 57, High-Street, St. Giles, London.

1860-83.

-- a possibly unique instance of the two most widespread murdered sweetheart ballads on one broadsheet

Oxford: Bodleian Library. Firth c.17(110)

<http://ballads.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/view/sheet/12380>

Cambridge. CUL. Madden Collection (London printers 8) [VWML mfilm no. 150], # 150

London. BL. Crampton Collection, Vol. 8, No. 550.

London. BL. Crampton Collection, Vol. 8, No. 547.

FORTEY OF LONDON

“The Murder of Maria Marten by W. Corder”

London: **Fortey**

-- together with “Annie o’ the Banks o’ Dee”

W.S. Fortey's Ballad Catalogue, Col. 6.

Cambridge. CUL. Madden Collection (London Printers 5) [VWML mfilm No. 78], #854.

HARKNESS OF PRESTON

“The Murder of Maria Marten by W. Corder”

Preston: **Harkness**, No. 300

together with “Roy’s Wife of Aldivalloch”

Cambridge. CUL. Madden Collection 18 (Country Printers 3) [VWML mfilm No. 85] # 836.

HENSON OF NORTHAMPTON

“**Murder of M. Marten, by W. Corder**”

together with "Wilt thou say farewell love"

G. Henson, Lower end of Bridge Street, Northampton

woodcut of cottage in rural setting

-- distinct from Catnach/Bennett issues with these two songs

Oxford: Bodleian Library. Firth b.25(379)

<http://ballads.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/view/sheet/8776>

HODGES OF LONDON

“Murder of Maria Marten, by William Corder”

together with "Villikins and his Dinah".

London: E. **Hodges**, Printer, ... 26 Grafton Street, Soho.

Sheffield. University of Sheffield Library. Charles Harding Firth Collection, C.60.

Glasgow. Mitchell Library. Frank Kidson Folio Collection of Broad-sides, Vol. 1, p. 79.

pr. Wilgus, D.K. "A Tension of Essences in Murdered-Sweetheart Ballads". *The Ballad Image*. Ed. J. Porter. Los Angeles, 1983, pp. 246-47.

St Edmundsbury. Moyses Hall Museum.

repr. *Blyth Voices. Folk song collected in Southwold by Ralph Vaughan Williams in 1910*. Ed. Katie Howson. Stowmarket: East Anglian Traditional Music Trust, 2008, p. 40 (illegible photograph; 41-42 transcript accompanying tune recorded from a folk singer (Martha Cable, from whom words were not recorded)).

Private Ownership (p.t. Barry McKay, Rare Books).

-- the following are probably the same printing with the second song (right column excised)

Oxford: Bodleian Library. Harding B 14(239)
<http://ballads.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/view/sheet/7574>

Cambridge. CUL. Madden Collection (London printers 5) [VWML mfilm No. 78], # 259

JACKSON & SON OF BIRMINGHAM

"Murder of Maria Marten by William Corder"

together with "Sheffield Park"

Birmingham: **Jackson & Son** (late J. Russell).

no woodcut for this song.

Kent State University Library. Borowitz Crime Ephemera: Criminal Broad-sides of 19th-Century England. Lindeman Inventory No. 87A.

SUCH OF LANDON

"Murder of Maria Marten by W. Corder, at the Red Barn May 18th, 1824" [sic].

together with: "Barney Buntline to Billy Bowline; or a Sailor's consolation in a Storm".

London:- Printed and Sold by H. **Such**, No. 102.

-- woodcut of cottage by a canal (common to all copies consulted so far)

Such catalogue No. 102

<<cited Roud Index

London. Vaughan Williams Memorial Library. Broadwood Ballad Sheet Collection, p. 117B.

online at <http://www.vwml.org/record/RoudBS/B18424>

pr. *FSJ*. 7 (1905), 122-23.

Sheffield. Sheffield UL. Hewins MSS No 531A.

London. British Library. Baring-Gould Broadside Collection (BL L.R.271.a.2), vol. 5, No. 51

UNIDENTIFIED PRINTERS

“Murder of M. Marten by W. Corder”

no printer or date specified

single column

woodcut of prisoner sitting alone in cell at barred window

Oxford: Bodleian Library. Firth c.17(111)

<http://ballads.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/view/sheet/12603>

Oxford: Bodleian Library. Harding B 12(198)

<http://ballads.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/view/sheet/12604>.

“The Murder of Maria Marten by W.Corder”

no indication of printer, place or date

Edinburgh. National Library of Scotland. shelfmark L.C.Fol.70(71b)

slip

no woodcut

repr. and transcr. *The World on the Street*,

<https://digital.nls.uk/broadsides/broadside.cfm/id/15013/criteria/Maria%20Marten>

COPIES NOT IDENTIFIED

“The Murder of Maria Marten”

Manchester. Manchester Central Library. Language and Literature Library. Broadside Ballads BRQ f821.04.B2 P20 vol. 2, p. 311.

ooo

PERFORMANCE TRADITION: CATALOGUE

-- versions are identified by singer (the title is as likely that assigned by the collector, and not registered here)

WITH TEXT (at least one stanza)

-- there are many citations of the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library's "Full English" online archive: <http://www.vwml.org/search/search-full-english> which has photographic reproductions of all the collectors' transcriptions in its holdings, and many others.

John East

(Dunmow Union, Essex)

Collected Cecil Sharp, 14 September, 1912.

FOUR STANZAS ONLY (followed by "etc. etc.")

Cambridge. Clare College. Cecil Sharp Manuscript Collection. 2798.

Vaughan Williams Memorial Library; original document:

<https://www.vwml.org/record/CJS2/10/2798>

pr. *Cecil Sharp's Collection of English Folk Songs*. Ed. Maud Karpeles. London:

OUP, 1974, No. 69B

ONE STANZA ONLY

William (alias Robert) Feast

"The Red Barn Floor" (N.B.)

(Ely Union)

Collected by Cecil Sharp, 11 September, 1911.

Cambridge. Clare College. Cecil Sharp Manuscript Collection

2211 (text, attrib. "William Feast") & 2659 (tune, attrib. "Robert Feast").

London. Vaughan Williams Memorial Library; original document:

<https://www.vwml.org/record/CJS2/9/2211>

pr. *Cecil Sharp's Collection of English Folk Songs*. Ed. Maud Karpeles. London:

OUP, 1974, No. 69A.

George Hall

(Hooton Roberts, Yorkshire; learnt song in Huntingdonshire)

Collected R.A. Gatty, 1907.

Birmingham. Birmingham Reference Library, MS. 661164 (A.A. Gatty MS Collection)

Everyman's Book of English Country Songs. Ed. Roy Palmer. London: Dent, 1979, No. 61 (pp. 115-116, & cf. notes p. 246).

Billy List

(Brundish, Suffolk)

recorded by Keith Summers ca 1971-77.

VT154CD *Good Hearted Fellows. Traditional Folk Songs, Music Hall Songs and Tunes from Suffolk*. 2007

publisher's description:

<http://www.veteran.co.uk/VT154CD.htm>

'Traditions folk songs, music hall songs and tunes from Suffolk'

recorded 1971 - 1977 by Keith Summers

During the 1970s Keith Summers trailed the highways and byways of Suffolk, meeting and recording local singers and musicians who all had one thing in common, their songs and tunes had been handed down to them by their families and communities. When Keith died in 2004 he left a huge legacy of recordings of traditional music-making.

-- includes transcription of words by Dan Quinn

http://www.veteran.co.uk/vt154cd_words.htm

-- corresponds to sts. 2-5, 11-12, 15-16 of broadside

-- interesting variations (some oral)

Joseph Taylor

(Saxby-All-Saints, Lincolnshire)

Collected by Percy Grainger and Lucy Broadwood on several occasions in 1905 & 1906, incl. phonograph recording recordings.

3 September 1905

Saxby

Percy Grainger (??? see below*)

Percy Grainger Manuscript Collection (PG/1/68)

<https://www.vwml.org/record/PG/1/68>

THREE STANZAS

* there is a note in the bottom right corner of the page saying "words of foregoing 4 ... taken down by Geoffrey Casey-Elwes, Saxby, 3.9.05".

-- recorded (but not necessarily sung) out of order:

"If you'll meet me at the red barn ..." annotated (1)

"With heart so light ..." annotated (3)

"I straight went home" annotated (2)

-- singing in this order would give a logical narrative, but the murder would now come before the digging of the grave (less melodramatic)

-- but there is a note in right margin:

"words go on about her mother dreaming the facts of case & folk go to red barn floor & find body"

-- "to red barn floor" is evidently a quotation from performance (other performance versions have it) – so this is not about how "the words go on" in the broadside, and Taylor may therefore have known more than three three stanza 'core' version with which he is credited

-- the music on the attached sheet is headed "Maria Martin and the red barn floor"

7 March 1906

Saxby

Lucy Broadwood

VWML. Lucy Broadwood MS Collection LEB/2/65/1

<https://www.vwml.org/record/LEB/2/65/1>

TUNE ONLY

7 March 1906

Saxby

Lucy Broadwood

VWML. Lucy Broadwood MS Collection LEB/2/64/1 – [distinct from prec.](#)

<https://www.vwml.org/record/LEB/2/64/1>

ONE STANZA (with musical annotation)

Taylor's usual no.1, **but indicates a variation in words between performances:**

If you'll go down to <meet me at> the Red Barn,
as sure as I have life
I will take you to Ipswich Town
and there make you my wife

7 May 1906

at Brigg (Festival) – Catalogue says Saxby

Broadwood & Grainger

VWML. Lucy Broadwood MS Collection LEB/2/1/3

<https://www.vwml.org/record/LEB/2/1/3>

TUNE ONLY

following is same item:

VWML. Lucy Broadwood MS Collection LEB/5/458/3

<https://www.vwml.org/record/LEB/5/458/3>

as is following:

Percy Grainger MS Collection PG/19/1/3

<https://www.vwml.org/record/PG/19/1/3>

3 September 1905 / 7 May 1906 / 28 July 1906

Composite

Percy Grainger Manuscript Collection PG/5/97

<https://www.vwml.org/record/PG/5/97>

THREE STANZAS (in conventional order, digs grave first) with music all through annotated with list of recordings:

noted by Percy Grainger 3.9.05

noted by ... Broadwood & ... Grainger 7.5.06

Phonographed 28.7.06 & noted by Percy Grainger

July 1908

(another) Phonograph recording by Percy Grainger, with a view to issuing phonograph cylinder of Taylor's songs.

THREE STANZAS

English Traditional Folk-Songs. Gramophone Company G.C. 3-2971(a), 1908.
(Matrix No. 8756e)

Reissued on

Unto Brigg Fair. Joseph Taylor and Other Traditional Lincolnshire Singers Recorded in 1908 by Percy Grainger. L.P. Leader LEA 4050 mono, 1972, side A, track 10.

<https://mainlynorfolk.info/joseph.taylor/records/untobriggfair.html>

a description of the collection, with link to transcription of this song.

-- for detailed information on Taylor and his encounter with Grainger see

Tony Rees, "Joseph Taylor", <https://mainlynorfolk.info/joseph.taylor/>.

George Tompsett

Cuckfield, Sussex

collected Mervyn Plunkett, April 1958

Plunkett Coll (Sussex texts Typescript)

Sydney Turkentine

("Now all you gay and thoughtless men")

(Bulmer Tye, Suffolk)

Collected Neil Lanham, mid 1960's

issued Helions Bumpstead Gramophone Company,

N[eil]L[anham]CD 01, *Songs from the Singing Tradition of the People of Lavenham and its surrounding area*. No. 1 in "Voice of Suffolk" series.

<http://www.traditionsofsuffolk.com/index.php?menu=Traditional Music and Song>

Neil Lanham, "The Legend of Maria Marten and the Oral Tradition". MS. essay:

Sydney Turkentine at Bulmer Tye, he sang this ballad for me. He said that he had learned it as a little boy when he laid in bed listening to his father singing in the early hours of the morning in the kitchen of the house as he was preparing himself for work.

Mr. J. Whitby

"The Red Barn"

(Tilney All Saints, Norfolk)

Collected Vaughan Williams, 8 January, 1905.

TWO STANZAS ONLY

-- despite title this is "Murder of Maria Marten"

London. Vaughan Williams Memorial Library. Vaughan Williams MSS., vol. 3, pp. 128-29.

pr. *FSJ*. 7 (1905), 118.

ooo

unidentified singer

Collected Maud Karpeles[?] 1920

ONE STANZA ONLY

London. Vaughan Williams Memorial Library. Sharp MSS., 4811, "sent me by Miss [?]Karpeles".

unidentified singer

The Red Barn Floor

(Clun, Shropshire)

-- may be T. Beardsley (Roud Index)

Typescript supplied by T. Beardsley, 16 June 1958

London. Vaughan Williams Memorial Library. LIB/COLL/MPS 50 (31), folder 12, p. 34.

unidentified singer

unknown location (Thames Valley)

“Come all you brisk young fellows ...”

[replaces “Ipswich” with “Chiswick”, Middlesex]

Collected by Alfred Williams (1914-1916)

Wiltshire & Swindon Record Office

2598/36 Packet 5 - Miscellaneous: Williams, A: MS collection No Mi 628.

full text transcribed: Wiltshire Community History

<http://history.wiltshire.gov.uk/community/getfolk.php?id=379>

photographic reproduction of document at VWML:

<https://www.vwml.org/record/AW/5/114>

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GHOST TEXTS

Maria Martini

Frances Repetto (written down)

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pr. Munch, Peter A. "Traditional Songs of Tristan da Cunha". *JAF*. 74 (1961), 216-29, at pp. 221-22.

-- actually a version of "The Berkshire Tragedy" in the Irish, "Wexford Girl" sub-tradition.

-- Roud has it correctly as no. 263

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TUNE/FIRST LINE OR REFERENCE ONLY

-- these are significant only for demonstrated the regional diffusion of the ballad, and have not been pursued with the same alacrity as recordings with words.

London. Vaughan Williams Memorial Library. **George Butterworth Collection**

GB/7a/19 **Mrs. Keble**, aka CableShadingfield, Suffolk, October 1910.

pr. Howson, Katie, ed. *Blyth Voices: Folk songs Collected in Southwold by Ralph Vaughan Williams in 1910* Norwich?: East Anglian Traditional Music Trust, 2003; repr. 2008, pp. 41-42.

-- the words have been supplied from the Hodges Broadside (this song + Villikins).

-- notes on p. 42 incorrectly speak of Freda Palmer as having sung this song.

GB/7a/18 **Jim Wharton**, Stanton St. John, Oxfordshire, May 1907

London. Vaughan Williams Memorial Library. **George B. Gardiner MS**

Charles Bull. Longdown, Marchwood, Hampshire, June 1907.

London. Vaughan Williams Memorial Library. **Vaughan Williams MSS.**

vol. 1, p. 106. **Mr. Flack**. Foulmere, Cambridgeshire, 10 August 1907

- title, "The Red Barn"
- vol. 1, p. 254. **Mr. Burrage.** Capel, Surrey, April & August, 1908.
 vol. 1, p. 435. **Harry Malyon.** Fen Ditton, Cambridgeshire, 27 August 1906.
 vol. 2, p. 274. **Mr. & Mrs. Verrall.** Horsham, Sussex, 8 October, 1904.
 -- repr. *FSJ.* 7 (1905), 118.
 -- title, "The Red Barn"
- vol. 3, p. 74. **Mr. Booker.** Kingsfold, Surrey. 23 December, 1904.
 -- repr. *FSJ.* 2.7 (1905), p. 119.
- vol. 3, p. 398. **Harry Malyon.** Fen Ditton, Cambridgeshire. 27 August, 1906.
 4to I, p. 44. **Mr. Christopher Jay.** Acle, Norfolk. 18 April, 1908.

London. Vaughan Williams Memorial Library. **Broadwood MSS.**

- p. 249. Collected by Ella Bull from the singing of **Charlotte Few**
 (family servant).
 Cottenham, Cambridgeshire, ca 1904.
 cf. Humphreys, Mary. Sleeve Notes to *Fenlandia*.
http://www.wildgoose.co.uk/SleeveNotes.asp?PRODUCT_ID=126
 for the collecting situation (doesn't include this song).
 TUNE ONLY
 Lucy Broadwood's typescript notes quote "Miss Bull" to the effect
 that "its proper words may be a ballad about 'The red barn' -- 'He
 murdered her in the red barn, and laid her body low' is all I know of
 it" and refer to "Murder of Maria Martin [sic] etc. at the Red Barn'
 1824 [sic] Such ballad sheet". (this is my transcript?)
 <<not in Roud

London. Vaughan Williams Memorial Library. **Clive Carey MS.**

- Ex104. **Mrs. Yeldham & Mrs. Challis** (sisters) . Thaxted, Essex. 1911.

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A DISCURSIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY AND CATALOGUE OF MURDERED SWEETHEART
BALLADS
THE MARIA MARTEN CASE

“THE SUFFOLK TRAGEDY”
(“YOUNG LOVERS ALL, I PRAY DRAW NEAR”)

Roud Index no. 18814

This is the only other ballad on the Maria Marten case to have been recovered from performance tradition, although in terms of market penetration it comes a very distant second to “The Murder of Maria Marten”, with only three broadsides printings, and recordings from just four singers. It is unmatched, however, in geographical reach, two of those singers being natives of New South Wales (the other two from southern England). There is also a good chronological spread, one of the singers recorded in 1906, the others encountered recently enough for their performances to be accessible as sound recordings.

STUDIES

This song has only recently been distinguished from “The Murder of Maria Marten”, so studies are limited, but the two following trace pretty well its whole development:

Pettitt, Tom.

“Written Composition and (Mem)oral Decomposition: The Case of ‘The Suffolk Tragedy’”.
Oral Tradition. 24.2 (2009): 429-454, esp. pp. 434ff.
online at <http://journal.oraltradition.org/issues/24ii/pettitt>
-- traces narrative from newspaper accounts via the broadside to one of the English singers (Freda Palmer)

Pettitt, Tom.

“Text and Memory in the ‘Oral’ Transmission of a Crime and Execution Ballad: ‘The Suffolk Tragedy’ in England and Australia.”
Oral Tradition. 28.1 (2013): 5-34.
online at <http://journal.oraltradition.org/issues/28i/pettitt>
-- continues exploration to second English singer and includes detailed analysis of the Australian versions

As the full texts of both of these studies are freely accessible online, this introduction can be relatively brief.

BROADSIDES

The broadside incorrectly dates the departure of Maria to 19 May, in this following *Sunday Times*, 27 April, "Most Horrible Murder": "Another Account", with which there are a number of verbal parallels; the direct source however was probably Catnach's near-verbatim reprint of "Another Account" as "Atrocious Murder of a Young Woman in Suffolk", which shares with the ballad a couple of variant phrases which are not in the *Sunday Times*.

The three broadside versions have the same stanzas in the same order, with very little textual discrepancy. In its broadside form the song comprises 24 ‘ballad’ quatrains, that is in common measure (4.3.4.3. stresses per line) and rhyming abcb.

Two quatrains are devoted to urging “young lovers all” to draw near and listen to a tragedy of unheard of cruelty, balanced at the end not by warnings to the audience but by the judge’s moral admonitions to Corder as he sentences him. The intervening 20 stanzas are an efficient rendition of the narrative, segueing deftly at st. 11 between the Crime section, when Maria disappears into the barn, never to be seen again ... until her mother’s dream, which instigates the Aftermath, roughly equally distributed between the Discovery (of the body in the barn) and the ensuing judicial procedures.

Entirely in the third person, in its handling of the received narrative the ballad is characterized by one striking omission -- we are never told what happened, effectively between stanza 11 line 2 and line 3, in the red barn – and by one striking addition – the totally fictional dialogue (sts. 5-6) in which Maria urges Corder to marry her as she is pregnant (which she wasn’t) and her “time draws near”. This is clearly under the influence of the by now (and since the 17th century) established paradigm for the Murdered Sweetheart ballad, that the murder is prompted by the girl’s pregnancy and her insistence the lover marry her.

It is striking that although attention inevitably focusses on Corder towards the end, this ballad, like “The Murder of Maria Marten” which was also successful in penetrating performance tradition, gives strong emphasis to the victim, and to Maria’s relationship with her mother. Much is made, when the body is discovered, of its identification by means of Maria’s clothes, and right at the start, unusually for this genre where the men normally do the wooing, Maria is said to have chosen Corder from among the many admirers attracted by her beauty. The mother, inevitably, is a strong presence when she dreams about the location of the corpse and urges her husband to dig up the barn floor, but uniquely, she is involved in the scene preceding Maria’s disappearance, when she asks her daughter (st. 8) why she is dressed in male attire, and Maria explains her plans about meeting Corder in the red barn and eloping to Ipswich to get married (st. 9-10).

BROADSIDES: CATALOGUE

The Suffolk Tragedy or The Red Barn Murder

no printer or place indicated

woodcut, sideways across top, of man in coat and military cap

-- this woodcut is clearly derived (in a degenerate condition) from the “representation of William Corder” illustrating the second Catnach newsheet.

the lines of the text have been shortened (by using abbreviations etc.) to fit the format (narrow column).

Oxford. Bodleian Library Johnson Ballads 2889

<https://www.vwml.org/record/AW/5/114>

-- not a good copy: a fold in the paper makes several lines difficult to decipher.

The Suffolk Tragedy, Or, The Red Barn Murder

Chesterfield. Thomas Ford [1830's]
no woodcut

Thomas Ford's Ballads. Derby. Derby City Libraries: Local Studies Library. Accession no. 60374, # 121.

-- a better copy than the above

Pr. *Thomas Fords's [sic] ballads: a facsimile reprint of a collection of ballads first published as broadsheets by Thomas Ford of Chesterfield*. Ed. Roy Palmer. Felinfach: Llanerch, 2001, p. ?? (not seen)

The Red Barn Murder of Maria Marten

Nottingham: Plant, No. 43.

Cambridge: CUL. Madden Collection 20 (Country Printers 5) [VWML mfilm No. 87]
116.

PERFORMANCE TRADITION

The four versions of the song from performance tradition display (in their smaller numbers) the same range of treatments of the original noted for "The Murder of Maria Marten" (except for the manifest fragment). One English singer (George Digweed) and one Australian (Sally Sloane) perform very short versions, respectively five and three stanzas) which have some claim to preserve the absolute core of the narrative. The version cultivated by the Bobbin family in New South Wales is best characterized as an attempt (with limited success) to preserve the original, while that sung by Freda Palmer (Oxfordshire) reflects rather the traditionalizing processes of performance tradition.

Pursuit of the Bobbin family version, which was ultimately revealed to encompass an imperfect text in a damaged family songbook, and attempts to reconstruct it, in writing and two performances, by a member of a later generation, was feasible only thanks to the industry of Rob Willis in collecting the material and his generosity in making it available, and the efficiency and courtesy of the staff at the National Library of Australia as curators of the sound recordings.

As with "The Murder of Maria Marten", performance tradition seems particularly uninterested in the judicial aftermath (which also helps to redress the balance between murdered sweetheart and murderous lover).

PERFORMANCE TRADITION: CATALOGUE

-- there are two cases in which a song catalogued (at VWML) as "Murder of Maria Marten", but of which only the tune was recorded (q.v., both Vaughan Williams), has been entitled, "The Red Barn". These might feasibly have been "The Suffolk Tragedy", which was sung to the same tune, entitled "The Red Barn Murder" on one of the broadsides, and known by this title in Australia; but there are also instances in England of "The Red Barn" being used for a song which (as we have the words) was clearly "The Murder of Maria Marten".

ENGLAND

George Digweed

(Micheldelver, Hampshire)

Maria Marten ("Maria Martin went to the red barn")

Collected G.B. Gardiner, 1906.

FIVE STANZAS ONLY

(with some redistribution of material between stanzas)

-- there has been some verbal contamination from another song in Digweed's repertoire.

London. Vaughan Williams Memorial Library. Gardiner MSS. H214.

VWML. Full English website <https://www.vwml.org/record/GG/1/5/214>

-- photographic image of original document (typescript)

repr. *A Little Music*. Ed. A. Hutchings. London: Island Press, 1976, p. 24.

-- this is a note following the text and tune of "The Murder of Maria Marten" as sung by Shirley Collins (which was based on Joseph Taylor's tune and words, the latter massively supplemented by "a contemporary broadsheet"):

"I recently came across the following words, collected by Dr. George B. Gardiner from a Hampshire man, George Digweed. Surprisingly, they bear little resemblance to any part of the original broadside ...".

-- not surprisingly, since it is a different song ...

Freda Palmer

(Witney, Oxfordshire)

For Freda Palmer and her song repertoire (which she mostly has from an aunt), see *Freda Palmer. Leafyfield Lass*. MT CD 375-6, 2018.

The accompanying booklet includes an extensive Introduction from several of those who recorded her songs, and is available online at:

<http://www.mtrecords.co.uk/index2.htm>.

10 stanzas

"Recorded by Mike Yates in the singer's home in Whitney, Oxfordshire, 15 October 1972"

sts. 2-10

When Sheepshearing's Done. Countryside Songs from Southern England. LP Topic 12T254. 1975.

superseded by:

O'er his Grave the Grass Grew Green: Tragic Ballads. CD. Topic Records TSCD653 (1998). *The Voice of the People*. Ed. Reg Hall. Vol. 3, item 12.

-- accompanying booklet is source for date and place of recording above

-- omits st. 1, q.v. immediately below

st. 1

Yates, Mike. "VotP Song Notes: A companion guide to the Ballads, Songs and Tunes that comprise ... *The Voice of the People*". Musical Traditions Internet Magazine, <http://mustrad.org.uk/vop/notes34.htm>.

-- supplies Freda Palmer's first stanza, "In eighteen hundred and twenty seven ...", omitted from the CD (and the LP) "for technical reasons"

-- the singer clearly had a problem with the start of the song: the last stanza performed (10) comes before all the others in the original broadside text (but Roud 1978, q.v. starts with same stanza as Yates 1972)

McCormick, Fred.

Review of *Voice of the People*, vol. 3, *O'er his grave the grass grew green: Tragic Ballads*, Topic TSCD 653. *Musical Traditions Internet Magazine*, 1999. http://www.mustrad.org.uk/reviews/r_index.htm:

“The 'corrupting' processes of oral tradition have wrought changes to many other ballads on this disc. Between creation and collection strange things have happened to Freda Palmer's *Maria Marten* ...”
-- clearly thinks it's derived from “The Murder of Maria Marten”, as does Mike Yates, q.v. supra, who specifies it as a variant of “Roud 215”

Recorded Mike Yates, 1974

Freda Palmer. Leafyfield Lass. MT CD 375-6, 2018, track 2-22.

accompanying booklet with full texts online at:

<http://www.mtrecords.co.uk/index2.htm>.

-- this booklet is the source for the statement above on the date of recording. The words however are identical to those of the preceding recording specified as recorded in 1972, except that the first stanza, “In eighteen hundred and twenty seven ...” is now included (and it does have some weaknesses: the first line is spoken rather than sung, the second sung quite shakily). I am not confident that these are different recordings.

The transcription in the booklet has a couple of inaccuracies: the girl was intending to go to ‘Islip’, not ‘Ruislip’, and when discovered her body was ‘mangelèd’, not ‘lying dead’.

On this occasion the recording usefully continues with a discussion on the circumstances in which Freda Palmer learnt the song from her aunt; equally interesting from the perspective of transmission is her immediate remark on finishing the song: “That’s all I know of that; whether there should be more ...” The song is correctly identified as Roud 18814, but the remarks seem at times to concern rather Roud 215.

Recorded Steve Roud, 26 Feb 1978

Steve Roud Collection

words as in above (personal communication)

AUSTRALIA

Sally Sloane

Lithgow, New South Wales

“The Red Barn” (“Oh mother dear I'm going to the red barn”)

-- Sally Sloane is reported to have had many of her songs, via her mother, from her maternal grandmother, who before emigrating in 1838 lived in Belfast, Northern Ireland. <http://simplyaustralia.net/article-v1-sloane.html>

-- Sally Sloane was a traditional singer and musician celebrated in Australian folk circles; John Meredith collected over 100 songs and tunes from her

collected (audio recording) John Meredith, March 1957

Sally Sloane and Bill Scott interviewed by John Meredith for John Meredith folklore field recordings, 1953-1961. 16-17 March 1957.

National Library of Australia. Bib ID 3361661
<http://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Record/3361661>
THREE STANZAS

collected Warren Fahey, May 1976.

Australian Folklore Unit. curated Warren Fahey. <http://www.warrenfahey.com.au/sally-sloane/>

THREE STANZAS (differing only in minute details from Meredith recording)
but followed by recorded remarks to the effect she once knew other parts of the song (some lines quoted verbatim)

Bobbin Family Tradition

Bobbin family of Eden, New South Wales

A direct ancestor, born in Norfolk in 1815, settled in this area of N.S.W. in 1849.

see David Smith & Ian Harvey, "Descendants of Jeffrey (Geoffrey) Bobbin", *Monaro Pioneers: Jeffrey Bobbin*, Fourth Generation, #30, viii, "Caroline Maud Bobbin".

updated May 31, 2012. <http://www.monaropioneers.com/nimmitabel/pioneers/bobbin-j.htm>.

this is basis of following genealogy:

The Bobbin Family

-- singers of "Suffolk Tragedy" in red, and as referred to by Caroline (Carrie) Bobbin/Milliner

Jeffrey Bobbin

born 1815 in Burnham Market, Norfolk, came to NSW in 1849

together with son:

James A. Bobbin

born 1834 in Burnham Market, Norfolk.

His son

Henry H.T. Bobbin

born in 1856 in 1885 married Ellen Summerell.

Their thirteen children included:

#1. Annie (1885 – 1960) aka "**Aunt Annie**"

in 1902 m. Mark Walter

[not clear why Carrie calls her "Annie Borman"]

#2. Lancelot Leighton (1887-1932)

in 1918 married Lily Palmer (1902-1957) aka "**Aunt Lil**"

#4. **Henry Bobbin** (1890 – 1951) in 1915 m. Hannah Alice Ayling.

Their 10 children included:

Caroline ('**Carrie**') Maud Bobbin (1926 – 2006)

in 1945 married Roy **Milliner**.

-- Carrie Milliner is the singer interviewed in what follows; having previously been recorded by Rob Willis she was now engaged in the recovery of family songs of which her memory was imperfect, in which a significant resource was:

"Aunt Lil's Songbook"

-- written down before 1957 (decease of Lily Palmer)

-- current whereabouts of full MS. unknown (presumably destroyed)

4 pages, incl. 3 with text of "Maria Marten" excised by Aunt Lil's daughter 1994-5 and sent to Carrie Milliner (née Caroline Bobbin) in connection with her reconstruction of the song for Rob Willis.

photocopy of these taken in 1995 by Rob Willis in connection with recording session (see below)

Carrie Milliner's (Caroline Bobbin's) textual reconstruction 1995

-- on basis of Aunt Lil's Songbook (see above) and own memory (of having heard it sung by aunts Annie and Lil)

MS photocopied by Rob Willis

-- pretty chaotic attempt to reconstruct the very imperfect Aunt Annie MS text into a viable song:

-- in a few instances lacunae in the songbook are supplied by formulations close to the broadside.

-- Carrie has added three lines from a quite different song, the "Copy of Verses" ("A horrid deed has come to light") from *Murder of a Young Woman in Suffolk* (NYPD Scrapbook), q.v., other songs on Maria Marten Case

-- there is a discrepancy between rhyme scheme and melody almost throughout, the melodic stanzas typically combining ll. 3-4 and ll. 1-2 of two verbal stanzas.

Carrie Milliner: 2 performances

Willis, Rob, & John Harpley, recorders.

"Carrie Milliner sings and discusses her life" [sound recording].

Recorded 26 April, 1995 in Eden, N.S.W.

National Library of Australia Bib ID 1975021

Call number: ORAL TRC 3388/3

Rob Willis folklore collection

<http://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Record/1975021?lookfor=Carrie%20Milliner&offset=2&max=8>

Summary:

1. Singing: The Maria Martin song (learnt from Aunt Annie) = 1st performance

2. Conversation: -- how the original song came from Auntie Lil's song book

7. The Maria Martin song. = 2nd performance

also registered at:

http://www.worldcat.org/title/folkloric-recording-carrie-milliner-sings-and-discusses-her-life/oclc/222754138&referer=brief_results

-- recording now accessible online: <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-205802004/listen>

-- performances marred by problems with stanzaic structure; audible expletives after each attempt.

Studies and information:

Roweth, Chloë & Jason. "Sleepers: The Songs of Carrie Milliner & the Bobbin Family"
Chloë & Jason Roweth: Original, Traditional and Contemporary Australian Music. 2000.

<http://www.rowethmusic.com.au/Site/Sleepers.html>

-- link broken; now at:

https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/c5370a_28ad6eb0d168411e8f078923b80b9e81.pdf

-- sleeve notes to CD of performances by Chloë and Jason Roweth *et al.* Includes list of songs with lyrics (as sung on CD), but not including Maria Marten song.

-- includes extensive information on Carrie Bobbin, her family and their songs.

Roweth, Chloë & Jason. "Carrie Milliner – 1926-2005"

Between the Lines – Issue Fifteen

Chloë & Jason Roweth: Original, Traditional and Contemporary Australian Music, 2006a.

http://www.rowethmusic.com.au/Site/BTL_Fifteen.html

-- link broken

-- obituary with extensive account of Carrie's life and singing (illustrated); includes a lengthy contribution from Rob Willis.

Roweth, Chloë & Jason. "Maria Marten – The Murder in the Red Barn and the found ballad". 2006b

Chloë & Jason Roweth: Between the Lines: Issue Sixteen.

http://www.rowethmusic.com.au/Site/BTL_Sixteen.html

reproduced at

Chloë & Jason Roweth: Original, Traditional and Contemporary Australian Music:

www.rowethmusic.com.au/Site/Maria_Marten.html

-- both links broken

[following a note on the Sally Sloane version]

... in the early nineties, Rob Willis interviewed Carrie Milliner (nee Bobbin, 1926 – 2005). She had some fascinating memories of the story. ... the Bobbins lived at 'The Nullica', in the bush outside of Eden. Carrie along with two of her siblings, Nance and Phoebe, took great delight in reciting for Rob a melodrama based on the red barn story that they had learned from old 78s as kids. ... [Tod Slaughter & Company]

... The story wasn't new to them though. For generations the Bobbin family had sung a version of the song that had also been sung by Sally Sloane to John Meredith.

Unfortunately the song was all but lost... Carrie finally tracked down her Auntie Annie's [sic: Aunt Lil's] hand-written songbook and with difficulty was able to decipher quite a lot of text. Interestingly the tune was the same as both Sally Sloane's version and also the same as another jealousy ballad that had been sung by the same side of Carrie's family – her Uncle Leaton's 'Rambling Bachelors'. Despite Carrie's best song collecting efforts however the text was scrambled and incomplete.

-- these articles may be available elsewhere

-- much of the content is deployed in my article on the Australian versions of this ballad

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A DISCURSIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY AND CATALOGUE OF MURDERED SWEETHEART BALLADS

THE MARIA MARTEN CASE

SEVEN BROADSIDES

To date, nine different songs on the Maria Marten case (1827-28) have been identified, all appearing initially as broadside ballads. For a detailed comparative analysis of the six ballads marked * see my “Mediating Maria Marten: Comparative and Contextual Studies of the Red Barn Ballads”. *Street Ballads in Nineteenth-Century Britain, Ireland, and North America: The Interface between Print and Oral Traditions*. Ed. David Atkinson and Steve Roud. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2014, pp. 219-243.

Two of them, subsequently also recorded from performance tradition, have been covered in separate sections above:

*“The Murder of Maria Marten”. first line: **“Come all you thoughtless young men”**

Roud Index no. 215

*“The Suffolk Tragedy, or the Red Barn Murder” aka “The Red Barn Murder of Maria Marten”. first line: **“Young lovers all I pray draw near and listen unto me”**

Roud Index no. 18814

-- the remaining seven broadsides on the case are conglomerated here, and this section completes the sequence on the Maria Marten case.

ooo

* “A Copy of Verses”

first line: **“Young lovers all I pray attend”**

Roud Index no. V481

Slow-moving, circumstantial account, half as long again (26 ballad quatrains) as Catnach’s other song on the case, “The Murder of Maria Marten”, with which it has a number of lines and formulations in common. Somewhat obsessive with regard to detail, for example explaining that Corder buried with her the female clothes she had planned to change into (and which were dug up with the body) having gone to the barn in male attire. Also spends some time on the period between the disappearance and the discovery of the body, when Corder was keeping up the pretence Maria was still alive, but deals very briefly with the judicial aftermath. Also unusual in referring to the birth and death of the illegitimate child.

“A Copy of Verses” in:

Execution and Confession of W. Corder, For the Murder of Mary Martin [sic] in the Red Barn.

Printed by J. Catnach, 2, Monmouth Court, 7 Dials –Sold by Bennet, Brighton.
single sheet, 5 illustrations

three along the top of the sheet comprise

“Maria Martin appearing to her Mother in a Dream”,

an uncaptioned depiction of an execution outside a gaol,

and “The Body of Maria Found in the Red Barn”.

all probably created for this publication
Along the bottom appear
“Maria Martin’s first Visit in the Red Barn”
and “Maria Marten’s last Visit (in Man’s Clothes) to the Red Barn,
with a View of Polstead”,
both manifestly recycled from earlier publications.
several columns of derivative journalistic prose, including “Confession”, as well
as this song

Harvard University. Harvard Law School Library. Dying Speeches and
Bloody Murders: Crime Broadside, No. 273.
<http://pds.lib.harvard.edu/pds/view/4787716?n=273>

“A Copy of Verses” in:
*Execution of William Corder For the Murder of Mary Martin [sic] in the Red
Barn.*
Printed by J. Catnach, 2, Monmouth Court, 7 Dials –Sold by Bennet, Brighton.
single sheet; same 5 illustrations as above
several columns of journalistic prose as well as song, but not all same material as
in preceding issue, and in different layout (although hard to reconstruct because of
the copying and pasting).
text of song identical to above, including a missing letter at the end of a line.

scrapbook: [*An authentic and faithful history of the mysterious murder : a
scrapbook*]. comp. Thomas Cauley Newby.
New York. New York Public Library. Arents Collection. Call. No. Arents
BIP (Curtis, J. Authentic) AL 01-355. pp. 153ff., songs at pp. 155-156.

[untitled] in:
The Suffolk Tragedy [sic], or The Horrors of the Red Barn
Catnach, 2, Monmouth Court, 7 Dials
-- no connection with the “Suffolk Tragedy” song on the case
large woodcut of prisoner in tumbrel on way to gallows (where there a man
hanging) surrounded by a lively crowd.
-- two wide columns, the song, reset in relation to the above, at the bottom of the
second column, preceded by 1½ columns of journalistic prose,

St. Bride Printing Library Broadside Collection (London) S750

ooo

* “A Copy of Verses, on the Execution of Wm. Corder, for the Murder of Maria Marten, in
the Red Barn, Polstead”
first line: **"Hark! 'tis the dreary midnight bell"**
Roud index no. V482

-- a slightly confusing instance in that the song is entitled “A Copy of Verses ...” even
though it is alone on the broadside with no prose material or general title (as would
normally be the case). On the other hand it has to share the sheet with a very large
“Likeness of Wm. Corder Taken the Day he was Committed”.

Of the song's 14 ballad quatrains the first four conform to the lugubrious opening line with Corder's ruminations on the horror of the situation and the heinousness of the crime, while the last three comprise admonitions and moralisings on the case, now in the third person to which the ballad modulated at the start of the narrative. The latter, unusually, is in journalistic as opposed to chronological order, starting with the discovery of the body and moving on through apprehension, trial and execution. Thus the focus is emphatically on the murderous lover, and the murder is not narrated, but both it and Maria are powerfully invoked at the trial with the display of "her heart, her scull, and ribs" (7.3).

"Copy of Verses on the Execution of William Corder for the Murder of Maria Marten"

London: Pitts

Cambridge. CUL. Madden Collection (London Printers 3) [VWML mfilm No. 76], # 2.

"A Copy of Verses, on the execution of Wm. Corder, For the Murder of Maria Marten, In the Red Barn, Polstead".

together with "A Copy of Verses, On the Dreadful Murder of G. Ansell, Committed by George Partridge".

no indication of date or printer

Oxford. Bodleian Library. Johnson Ballads 2416
<http://ballads.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/view/sheet/24675>

ooo

* "The Red Barn Tragedy"

first line: "**Come all you young lovers, I pray you attend**"

Roud Index no. V483

This ballad may be the most distant, in place and so perhaps in time, from the original events. Printed by James Lindsay, Glasgow, its inaccurate location of the events "in fair Norfolkshire" and its characterization of Maria Marten as a "charming young lassie" (the phrase is also used of the woman Corder later married) suggest it may indeed have been composed in Scotland.

Its fifteen quatrains (in long measure, stresses 4.4.4.4. and rhyming aabb) offer a prolix, humdrum, third person versification of the crime narrative packaged between a one stanza "Come all ye" narrator's incipit and a concluding warning to avoid such crime. The ballad follows the received narrative in including the birth and death of the illegitimate child, and is unusual in quite omitting the mother's dream.

"The Red Barn Tragedy"

Sold by James Lindsay, Printer and wholesale stationer, &c., 9 King street, (off Trongate,) Glasgow.
1851-1910.

white letter; printed together with "General Monro" (the latter headed by an indistinguishable woodcut)

J. Lindsay's Catalogue: slip songs No. 72 (Roud)

Oxford. Bodleian Library. 2806 c.13(96)

[h http://ballads.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/view/sheet/1531](http://ballads.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/view/sheet/1531)

-- the reproduction now displays properly.

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* "William Corder"

first line: **"Good people I pray draw near"**

Roud Index no. V484

Comprises 10 quatrains in long measure (4.4.4.4.) and rhyming aabb, and offers a fairly straightforward account of the crime and its judicial aftermath with two features worthy of note in relation to the received narrative. Contrary to the evidence, but in accordance with the Murdered Sweetheart paradigm, Maria is pregnant at the time of the crime, and it is explicitly this that prompts Corder to kill her. Also an addition (if more plausible) is the assertion that Corder was tormented by her image, which prevented sleep – familiar from the sub-form of the Murdered Sweetheart ballads where the aftermath is personal rather than judicial. This could also be transferred from the mother's dreams, which are not mentioned here. The song follows Corder's confession in having him dig the grave *after* the killing.

The narrative is in Corder's voice, including the opening call for attention and the warning to others to avoid his fate (an orientation confirmed by this ballad's – unique – failure to mention the name of his victim, 'a female dear'). It is followed, unusually, by a stanza of third person moralizing against such "Murder most cruel, and most foul" (*Hamlet*, I.v.31).

"Wm. Conder" [sic]

originally printed together with "Life's like a ship", which has imprint of G. Thompson, Liverpool.

primitive woodcut of a standing, grimacing devil with dragon's wings

-- Bodleian web catalogue assigns this to G. Thompson of Liverpool, and dates it improbably as between 1789 and 1820 (the trial was in 1828).

Oxford. Bodleian Library. 2806 c.17(470)

<http://ballads.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/view/sheet/3367>

"Wm. Corder"

-- manifestly a reprint of the above, correcting the title and a miss-spelling ("Govern" for "Goveren" at 9.3); but retains the inverted "d" in "declared" at 1.4.

Oxford. Bodleian Library. 2806 c.17(471)

<http://ballads.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/view/sheet/30405>

ooo

A Copy of Verses

first line: **“A deed of Murder dark and dread”**

no Roud Index no.

This short song is of 8 ‘ballad’ quatrains (4.3.4.3.; abcb) and offers a somewhat perfunctory account of both crime and judicial aftermath, sticking fairly close to the court proceedings by including the bastard child and its death and Corder’s assertion Maria killed herself, while omitting the mother’s dreams. In declaring his sword the vital evidence, it seems unaware of Corder’s confession that he short her (although this is included among the prose material in one edition of the news-sheet).

Particulars of the Trial and Execution of William Corder Who was Executed at Bury St Edmunds, on Monday, August 11, 1828, for the Wilful Murder of Maria Marten.

Printed at BIRT’s wholesale and Ballad Warehouse, 10, Great St Andrews Street, Seven Dials, London. – County Orders punctually attended to.

[*An authentic and faithful history of the mysterious murder : a scrapbook*].
comp. Thomas Cauley Newby.

New York. New York Public Library. Arents Collection. Call. No. Arents BIP (Curtis, J. Authentic) AL 01-355, pp. 141r ff., at p. 144r.

The original publication, whose format (large sheet or chapbook) is hard to ascertain, has been cut up and its parts distributed over several pages, as follows:

141v: two illustrations:

Apparition of Maria appearing to her mother
The Father discovering the Body in the Barn

142r prose account:

The Trial of William Corder for the Wilful Murder of Maria Marten, at the Red Barn, at Polstead, on the 18th of May, 1827, came on Thursday. ...

143r cont.

143v blank

144r EXECUTION

At day break crowds of persons ...
woodcut of hanging
“Copy of Verses”

Particulars of the Trial and Execution of Wm. Corder, & Confession Who was Executed ...

-- evidently a new edition of the preceding item, with “Confession” added. in the NYPL scrapbook (pasted in sideways) at pp. 147r to 148r, with the “Copy of Verses” at p. 148r. The latter has no significant variations (at most a comma here or there).

ooo

Copy of Verses

-- first line: **“A horrid deed has come to light”**

no Roud Index no.

-- this is the third song on the case for which Catnach was the original / only printer.

Of the eight ballad quatrains comprising the ballad, the first is devoted to how awful the matter is, the last two to noting the horror of the discovery of the body, cursing the murderer, and hoping that justice will be done. As this suggests, the ballad was written before the trial, and in naming Corder as the culprit qualifies as one of the ballads sung and sold at Polstead Fair which prejudiced the case against him. The five remaining stanzas provide a perfunctory account of events up to the discovery of the body, including the mother's dreams. In comparing the events to another notorious case ('Weare') of the time, the verses (st. 1) follow the prose material in the publication (on which see further below)

Three lines from a stanza of this song have been introduced into a version of "The Suffolk Tragedy" recorded from an Australian singer (see separate document).

published in:

MURDER of a Young Woman in Suffolk singular discovery of the Body and Apprehension of the Murderer from a Dream at Ealing.

J. Catnach, 2, Monmouth Court, 7 Dials

-- sic: the order has been rearranged in cutting and pasting, and the title should clearly read ... *Singular Discovery of the Body from a Dream. Apprehension of the Murderer at Ealing.*

This is almost identical to the title of the second of the prose news-sheets put out by this same printer (dealt with in Introduction to Maria Marten Case):

Atrocious Murder of a Young Woman in Suffolk. Singular Discovery of the Body from a Dream. Apprehension of the Murderer at Ealing, Middlesex.

-- and the prose material accompanying "A horrid deed has come to light" is at least in part derived from the Catnach news-sheets.

[*An authentic and faithful history of the mysterious murder : a scrapbook*].
comp. Thomas Cauley Newby.

New York. New York Public Library. Arents Collection. Call. No. Arents BIP (Curtis, J. Authentic) AL 01-355, pp. 130r ff., at p. 133r.

This pamphlet's material is distributed within the scrapbook as follows

130r title

130v blank

131r illustration of discovery (no caption)

131v blank

132r prose account, in two columns:

col. 1:

A Murder rivaling in cold blooded atrocity that of Weare, has been brought to light, at Polstead, in this county ...

col. 2:

when he apprehended the prisoner at Ealing, he asked him if he had not found ...

132v illustration of burial (no caption)

133r prose account continues:

col. 1:

80 sovereigns in a private draw ...

col. 2:

of what was going on.
“Copy of Verses”

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A Copy of Verses written by William Corder whilst under sentence of death in the condemned cell, for the murder of Maria Marten.

first line: **“Come all you thoughtless wild young men”**

no Roud Index no.

This is another ballad for which the title “Copy of Verses” also applies to the publication as a whole, which contains no other material. Its only known printer had a bookshop in Bury St Edmunds, where the trial and execution of Corder took place, and the advertisement in the title for another publication (see below) suggests the ballad may reflect local commercial opportunism – it may be in the same spirit that six of its stanzas have been plagiarised from a London ballad, Catnach’s “Young lovers all I pray attend” (the direction of the indebtedness is suggested by the way this ballad corrects the date of the murder to 18 May from Catnach’s erroneous 19 May, inherited from his journalistic sources). And while it is not unique for the title to claim that Corder wrote the verses, the emphasis that he penned them in the nearby Bury Gaol may reflect this local connection. This constructed context fits the text, in that the whole is in the voice of Corder (which also required the modulation of the plagiarized stanzas from third person narrative to first), and of its 18 ballad quatrains, the last five are devoted his mental anguish after the verdict, and at the beginning, after the usual ‘come all ye’, three stanzas are devoted to Corder’s life before his involvement with Maria Marten.

A Copy of Verses written by William Corder whilst under sentence of death in the condemned cell, for the murder of Maria Marten.

-- this is the only content of the sheet

Printed by J. Robinson, Bookseller, Book binder and Stationer, Traverse, Bury, where may be had Dutton’s and Newbury’s edition of the Trial of William Corder.

[*An authentic and faithful history of the mysterious murder : a scrapbook*].

comp. Thomas Cauley Newby.

New York. New York Public Library. Arents Collection. Call. No. Arents BIP (Curtis, J. Authentic) AL 01-355, p. 158v.

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