

FOLK SESSION – Howard Arms, Brampton

Bitter winds and treacherous roads kept some of our regular friends away, but the folk session at the Howard Arms on 16th January was still well-attended, with the theme ‘water’ giving rise to everything from philosophical reflection to raise-the-rafters chorus singing. A particular welcome to New Brunswick fiddle-player Brittany, joining us for the first time.

Brittany on fiddle and Adrian on melodeon were our instrumentalists for the evening. Adrian played the hornpipe *Portsmouth* (‘because it is a naval base’) and the reel *Mona’s Delight*. Brittany gave us *The Last March*, the strathspey *John MacColl’s Farewell* and the reel *Jock Wilson’s Ball*.

The sea was the backdrop for a lot of songs: *Ellen Vannen* (Sally) and *Threescore and Ten* (Angus) told the story of historical shipwrecks; *A Voice in the Wilderness* (Anne) commemorated a different kind of tragedy, the drowning of the Morecambe Bay cocklers. We heard about how hard life is for a sailor (*Go to sea no more* - Bill) and for a woman who loves a sailor (*Fear a Bhata* - Katy). On a more cheerful note, *Fiddler’s Green* (Phil) predicted a very maritime kind of heaven for deep-sea fishermen, Bill recited the tall tale of Noah and *The ‘ole in the Ark*, and Mary’s song told us the history of *The Black Pearl*.

Janet’s *The Water is Wide* and Phil’s *Annan Water* both lamented the way that rivers parted true lovers, sometimes fatally. Steph and Terry’s thoughtful song used *The Water* as a metaphor for life itself. Sam’s song of simple life asked *Give me fresh water* whereas Terry, less modest in his requirements, praised whisky as ‘a hell of a wonderful way to drink water’ (*Leave us our Glens*). Sally parodied *Lowlands Away* in what she described as a ‘tea shanty’ (groan!) and Adrian denounced *The very fat man who waters the workers’ beer*. Ruth entertained us with the true story of her *Rescue from the bathtub*.

Being British, *of course* we had to use the theme to make jokes about the weather. Sam’s song *Betty’s Wet Weekend* recalled the non-stop rain at the Queen’s jubilee regatta and Sally’s *New January Man* looked forward to equally non-stop rain throughout the year!

We next meet on Tuesday **20th February in The Howard Arms at 8.30pm**. The theme (finishing up our Aristotelian ‘four elements’) will be ‘air’ – wind, sky, breath...be creative! Be devious! **ALL WELCOME!**

FOLK SESSION – Howard Arms, Brampton

We completed our series of sessions on ‘the four elements’ with the theme of ‘air’ on 20th February in The Howard Arms. A warm welcome to Peter, joining us for the first time, and James, dropping in from Newcastle.

Dave on English small pipes, James on Northumbrian bagpipes, and Adrian on melodeon were our instrumentalists this Tuesday. As all three instruments are operated by air being pumped or blown through them, they *all* fitted in with the theme, no matter what tunes they played! We heard *The British Grenadiers* and *John Peel* from Adrian, *Valse a Cadet* from Dave, and from James *No luck about the house*, *Newmarket Races*, *Kissed her under the Coverlet* and *Skylark’s Ascension*.

Air, just air by itself, gets surprisingly few mentions in song. Sam found a reference to ‘air as still as the throttle on a funeral train’ in *My Mexican Home*; at *Rawtenstall Annual Fair* (Adrian) the fat woman was ‘blown up with gas and air’; the shipwrecked *Ellen Carter* (Phil) was pumped full of air to raise her from the seabed. Sally’s riddling poem *I’m thinking of something that I cannot see* was, of course, about air. Peter sang a regrettable ditty in praise of *The Rubber Lady* – because she is full of air!

Wind is air in motion, so we heard that *Cold Blows the Wind Tonight* (Eliza) and Ruth read to us about the origins of *The Helm Wind*, while Christine asked *What colour is the wind?* We learned about winds destructive (*Sir Patrick Spens* – Alan Jefferson); gentle (*Hills of Isle au Haut* – Steve); musical (*Come by the Hills* – Sally) and winds that make a good chorus (*Cambric Shirt* – Bill).

Another possible approach was ‘things that fly in the air’. Sam’s *Leaving on a jetplane* and Phil’s *Coming in on a wing and a prayer* both exploited the musical possibilities of flight, as did *White Swans and Black* (Steve).

We next meet on **Tuesday, 20th March at 8.30pm in The Howard Arms, Brampton**. The theme will be ‘spring’. **ALL WELCOME!**

FOLK SESSION – Howard Arms, Brampton

So we were a little optimistic in choosing ‘spring’ for our theme on 20th March, but after all no-one could have foreseen that we would be up to our fetlocks in snow for the first couple of weeks of the month!

Sam in *Greening Up* and Christine in *Spring, spring spring* both found songs that praised spring in the countryside for the arrival of sunshine, new life and growth. Several people found songs set in springtime: *The Road to Drumlemble* (Phil); *Bread and Fishes* (Steve); *Life is a River* (Christine) and *The Old Triangle* (Phil). Ruth’s *Lenten Carol* was seasonal as Lent falls in early spring. *When all men sing* (Adrian) and *January Man* (Sally) take us right through all the seasons, spring among them,

Some of the songs and poems were chosen because they mention things connected with spring: A *Blacksmith Courted Me* (Eliza) mentions primroses, as does *Where Primroses Grew* (Ruth). Alan recited Wordsworth’s *Daffodils*. Adrian sang *The Cotswold Shepherd* because of the references to lambs, Mary recited the romantic misadventures of *Harold the Frog* ‘because spring is the season when frogs get together’. Sam sang of ‘a little box all covered with blossoms white as snow’ (*In China or a woman’s heart*) because trees blossom in the spring.

Sally anticipated spring in *Fare thee well, cold winter* and Alan similarly celebrated the end of winter in *Freeborn Man*. Charlie Chomse found two unexpected links to the theme in songs about whaling: *Little Pot Stove* rejoices in the end of the long, dark Antarctic winter as the men return home, but *Bill the Whaler* tells the tragic fate of a ship and its crew trapped in the ice for six months until the spring released them.

Half the fun of a theme is ingenuity. Bed springs and car springs featured in, respectively, *All for me grog* (Adrian); *The Tailor fell through the bed* (Katy) and *O’Rafferty’s Motor Car* (Mary). Sally sang about spring water in *Where Ravens Feed*. Steve worked round by devious means to *Till there was you*, and Eliza by even more devious routes to *The Twa Brothers*.

We next meet on **17th April at 8.30pm on The Howard Arms, Brampton**. The theme will be ‘Animals and birds’. **ALL WELCOME!**

FOLK SESSION – Howard Arms, Brampton

On April's third Tuesday, an unlucky thirteen of us gathered in the Howard Arms for this month's folk session. Unlucky because the radiators weren't working, but that was rectified by heat generated by the lusty choruses that echoed off the rafters, (also the fan heaters thoughtfully provided by Stew). The theme was "animals", and this was one-hundred percent adhered to, with thirty-eight distinct species being mentioned across fur, feather, and piscine forms, in thirty-five songs, and one tune on the pipes.

By far the most popular were dogs, there were seven songs in all. Ruth's "*Ruswarp*", who stayed with his master after his fatal fall is commemorated at Garsdale Station on the S&C line. Charlie's rendering of "*Cappy*" the dog that came back from the dead; Bill's Doberman-Pincher in, "*That's When the Dustbin Man Came*", and Sam's "*Talking Dog*", were good examples of the genre. Surprisingly, we had only one whale, "*The Last Leviathan*", from Steve; A mythical wolf-like character, "*Reynardine*", Allan; Angus concentrated on fish, both in "*If Wishes were Fishes*", and he also mentioned the non-existent fish and chip shop in Walton on the bus journey from Hexham to Morpeth. We even had a dinosaur, the Pete Ryder song, "*Bishop Bell's Brontosaurus*", Phil.

After dogs, crows were the second most frequently represented, "*Crow on the Cradle*", Adrian; "*Twa Corbies*", Eliza; "*The Blackest Crow*", Christine. David managed to get the most animals into one song, in "*I Went to Market to Buy a Cock*". Adrian's brilliant performance of "*Susanna's a Funicle Man*" with appropriate porcine sound effects. He claims to have learned this at his father's knee, which lead David to comment that he learned songs from his grandmother's knee, made easier because she had the words tattooed on them. David also gave us a tune on the pipes "*Hold the Lass 'till I Run at Her*", which at first site seems unconnected with the theme, but then a suggestion was made that hedgehogs could be involved? Sam responded to a request for "*The Night Rider's Lament*", with its "hawk on the wing". Sally reported her inclusion as one of the "*Three Drunken Maidens*", dining on woodcock and pheasant.

We next meet on **15th May starting at 8.30pm at The Howard Arms, Brampton**. The theme will be 'Rogues and Vagabonds'. **ALL WELCOME!**

FOLK SESSION – Howard Arms, Brampton

Many thanks to those who made such a success of the session on 15th May, when we had a packed room and some of the most thundering chorus singing that has ever shaken the rafters of the Howard Arms. A particular welcome to Julian, Spud, Benji and Maddy of Steeleye Span, to Graham from Cotehill and Pete and Karen from Penrith, joining us for the first time.

The theme was ‘rogues and vagabonds’, with a definite preponderance of rogues. We had criminal rogues: highwaymen in *The Ballad of Tom Dam* (Christine) and *Whisky in the Jar* (Alan); thieves in *Maggie May* (Dave) and *I wish there were no prisons* (Adrian); a spiv in Ruth’s spoof *Ballad of Bethnal Green*; society’s imprisoned victims in *Billy Rose* (Sam). We had political rogues – contemporary in Sally’s *You knew we were coming*, eighteenth-century in Katy’s *Parcel of Rogues*. Stew’s *No-hopers, Jokers and Rogues* were social misfits more than anything else, and the drunken narrator of Graham’s parody of *Sound of Silence* was just plain anti-social!

Songs about sexual roguery would of course fill an evening in themselves. The ‘heroine’ of *Lyin’ Eyes* (Steve) was dishonest to both husband and lover; the pattern of seduction and desertion was treated in upbeat fashion in both Maddy’s *Bold English Navy* and Benji’s *Underneath her Apron*. Sally told a jokey story of complicated sexual chicanery in *Johnny be Fair*. Our instrumental performers for the evening, Adrian on melodeon and Karen and Pete on flute and guitar, played, respectively, *The Lollipop Man* and *The History Man*, both about rogues (for reasons that this polite website had better not mention).

Vagabonds, though fewer, were well-represented. The most ingenious treatment of the subject was Spud’s, who sang the Rolling Stones’ *Brown Sugar* because vagabonds are all rolling stones! Many songs, from Eliza’s *The Raggle-Taggle Gypsies* and Phil’s *Jolly Beggar* to Mary’s *Wild Rover* and Julian’s *Sloop John B*, were cheerful about an itinerant lifestyle, and even *Me and Bobbie McGee* (Angus) grieves for lost love, not the fact of being a wanderer. The pain and hardship of homelessness was brought home in *Tuppence on the Rope* (Dave) and *Ain’t got no Home* (Christine).

The Brampton folk session next meets on **19th June at 8.30pm in The Howard Arms..** The theme will be ‘rough and smooth’. Be as creative/devious as you like! **ALL WELCOME!**

FOLK SESSION – Howard Arms, Brampton

The rafters were raised in the upstairs room at The Howard during June's folk session. The theme, a rather tricky one, was "Rough and Smooth". Eliza was coaxed into admitting responsibility for proposing it last month. Some fairly abstruse interpretations were forthcoming from the gathering, which numbered twenty-one souls in total.

Adrian got the ball rolling with *B****y Orkney*, although it's hard to tell where the smooth bit was. This was followed by Mary's *Manchester Rambler*, with its rough heather bed. Ruth expressed optimism of emerging from the rough into the smooth as described in *Hope the Hermit*, while Eliza's *Raggle Taggle Gypsies* plotted a lady's progression from the smooth to the rough. Sam plotted the course of *The Solway Harvester*, as she left the smooth waters of Kirkcudbright Harbour, and perished in the rough Irish Sea. On a similar theme Sally's *Ellen Vannen* sang of an earlier tragedy in the same waters. *In my Liverpool Home* from Allan explained the mainly rough side of that city. Striving for fame and fortune fitted the bill rather well in Christine's *Fools Like you and I*, which won the prize for best theme convergence. Rough stones featured in Graham's, *The Tailor of the Dales*, Andy Hill's celebration of Pennine dry-stone wallers. Mark followed this with *The Swallow*, and I wonder how many people envisaged the bird flitting above those dry stone walls. David, on his small pipes, played *Equeille*, I'm not sure how this fitted with the theme, although my subsequent internet research revealed that a pharmaceutical product of this name could indeed assist some ladies to cope with the rough and the smooth. Charlie sang his song celebrating the diamond jubilee of The Bridge folk club in Newcastle (reputedly the second longest continuous running folk club in Britain).

Angus really got us going with a brilliant parody, *Nights in White Sacking*. Then, for the second month in a row, we were joined by three-sevenths of Steel Eye Span. Maddy sang *The Saucy Sailor*, a lesson in how a rough sailor can tempt a lady with some smooth talking, followed by Julian's *Bad to the Bones*, taking roughness to a higher level. Spud's *End of the Line* was justified on the more tenuous grounds of Roy Orbison's (one of the co-writers) smooth voice and it being rough to have an early death. Steve slowed the tempo with *Valley of Strathmore*, while Phil gave *Generations of Change* accompanied by his recently acquired banjo. Bill had us reeling with the story of Albert and the Vindaloo. Terry and Steph, in harmony, ended the night with Eric Bogle's *Glasgow Lullaby*.

We next meet on **17th July starting at 8.30pm at The Howard Arms, Brampton**. The theme will be 'Place Names – cities; towns; villages; hamlets; etc'. **ALL WELCOME!**

FOLK SESSION – Howard Arms, Brampton

A select group of folk musicians, gathered in the upstairs room of the Howard for the third Tuesday session, were wondering if we had enough repertoire between us to fill the night's theme. Little did we know that we would soon be outnumbered by a welcome flock of visiting folkies, celebrating a reunion of the Aberystwyth University Folk Club active in the seventies. Also, a welcome to Anne venturing here for the first time from Carlisle with her fiddle.

The theme for the evening was "Place Names". Usually I try to take a tally of the theme references, (despite our absent Katy insisting there are no prizes), but this time there were just too many to count. We had Springburn in Angus' *Doon in the Wee Room*, and Springhill, in Sally's *Springhill Nova Scotia*. Ambleside's the very best, in Graham's *Visions of Cumbria*, while Mary stayed in The Lakes with *The Bowness Ferry*, and still in the region, Alan's song about the building of the *Settle to Carlisle Railway*. Moving across country, Anne played the *Morpeth Rant*. Heading South, Bill had an interesting song about the dangers faced by the embryonic ordnance surveyors in *Ordnance at Burton*. Ruth was joined by everyone, hatless, on *Ilkley Moor*. Steve took us to *Caledonia*, and Sam and Phil crossed the Irish Sea to *Carrickfergus*, and *Dublin City in Rare Old Times*. Our favourite barman, Stew, pointed out that actually, there's *No Place Like Home*. Possibly to honour our new friends ex-Aberystwyth, Christine sang *The Carmarthen Oak*.

Of our visiting friends (who had no prior knowledge of the theme), Barry took us to the *City of New Orleans*, and Ray, *The Milwaukie Blues*. Ray also took us to the *Oakham Fox Hunt*. Mike was talking in a 'phone box in Finsbury Park. Betty, with a beautiful voice, all the way from China, borrowed Angus' guitar to give us a song in her own language, not sure whether it mentioned a place or not. Probably? All our visitors joined in with lusty chorus voices. The best rendition of the night goes to Paul with his poignant *Ghost of Old Imber*.

Irene and Frank played us out with *Working on the Railway* with all the instruments and voices in the room, joining in.

We next meet on **21st August starting at 8.30pm at The Howard Arms, Brampton**. The theme will be 'The Sun; The Moon; The Stars'. **ALL WELCOME!**

FOLK SESSION – Howard Arms, Brampton

The room was packed with both regulars and visitors on 21st August when we met to celebrate ‘sun, moon and stars’ in song, tune and verse. A warm welcome to Julie, Hillary, Geoff and Cath, visiting us from various corners of England, and to Les and Di, back from sabbatical after many months.

Eliza started us off with a magnificent chorus song, *Oak and Ash and Thorn* (mentions the sun), Maddy and Bill got us singing along with, respectively, *You are my sunshine* and *Country Life*. Some of the ‘sun’ songs were surprisingly dark (no pun intended): *The Hanged Man* (Dave); *The Sun is Burning* (Mary – about nuclear war); *The Summer before the War* (Les and Di).

We had a particularly good crop of songs about the moon. Alan Jefferson sang about the Apollo 11 landing (*Armstrong*), Sam used space metaphorically in *Linda goes to Mars*, and Phil asserted (a shade optimistically) that *The First Man on the Moon was a Cumbrian*. The moon seems to attract (relatively) modern songs, *Moondance* (Alan Clark); *Blue Moon* and *Moonlight Shadow* (both Julie and Hillary) and *Bad Moon Rising* (Sam). More traditional approaches included the nursery ballad *The Fox* (Dave) and the warlike *Rising of the Moon* (Bill). Instrumentalists found inspiration there – a bit tenuously in some cases. Les and Di on guitar and fiddle played *The Moving Moon* and *Pig Ankle Rag*, (because the pig was looking at the moon), while Dave on small pipes played *Lundgren* (because the moon reflects in this Swedish lake).

Geoff was born under a *Wandering Star*; Cath invoked the starry, starry night in *Vincent. Turn toward the Morning* (Katy) referred to the slow-swinging stars, Maddy addressed her *Shining Star* and Ruth raided a Sunday-School hymnbook for *If I were a beautiful twinkling star*.

Several clever-clogs managed to find songs with references to all three! Phil (on his new banjo) sang *The Old Man of the Sea*, with sun, moon, shooting stars and the Northern Lights into the bargain. Steve’s *Gentle Annie* and Miriam’s *The Old Man and his Wife* both mention sun, moon and stars in varying proportions, and Graham’s powerful rendering of the spiritual *Oh Sinnerman* called on the celestial bodies in vain.

We next meet on Tuesday, 18th September in The Howard Arms, Brampton at 8.30pm. The theme will be ‘drink’ (alcoholic or otherwise, but bonus points if anyone can find a song involving tea or coffee!)

FOLK SESSION – Howard Arms, Brampton

We gathered in the Howard Arms on 18th September to celebrate the theme of ‘drink’ in songs and tunes. Welcome back to Anne, visiting us from Barrow for the first time in many months.

Congratulations to the people who rose to last month’s challenge and found an amazing number of songs that mention tea and coffee! *They’ve got a lot of coffee in Brazil*, according to Ruth; Graham invited us to *Have a cup of tea*; Christine’s song *The Weekend* was nostalgic for the coffee bar culture of the sixties, and tea provides the introduction to the hero of *I’ll have a collier for my sweetheart* (Anne). References to tea crept into other, less temperate songs: *Charlie Mops* (Adrian) mentions tea but praises beer, while *Whitby Harbour* (Sally) celebrates the import of gin, rum and tea.

But hey! this is folk song we’re talking about, so there was bound to be lots of alcohol – in the music, at any rate. We heard a lot about the down side of drink. Maddy’s song *The Drunkard* pointed out the connection between alcohol and ruin, as did Kath and Geoff in *All for me Grog*. Stew (*Pour me another one*) and Graham (*I’m wrecked again*) reflected on life after a particularly bad bender. The young man in *Blue Cockade* (Steve) enlists while drunk. Bill’s parody *The Wild Drinker* took a humorous look (with much chorus singing and table-thumping) at habitual leglessness.

On a gentler note, Sam honoured us with the first ever performance of his own song *Drinking to forget*. *Peggy Gordon* (Phil), *Valley of Strathmore* (Steve) and *The Parting Glass* (Kath and Geoff), on the other hand, are about drinking to remember.

We also heard about drinking wine, brandy and sack (Eliza – *Will ye go tae Flanders*); rough cider and dark stout (Christine – *Rag rugs and mats*); whisky and buttermilk (Sally – *Whisky on a Sunday*) and punch (Katy -*Fathom the bowl*). And finally - no session about drinking would be complete without *John Barleycorn* and *The Barley Mow*, so thank you to Dave and Phil who ensured that both songs were included.

We next meet **on Tuesday, 16th October in The Howard Arms at 8.30pm**. The theme will be ‘treasure’, including precious metals, jewels ...or interpret it metaphorically if you prefer! ALL WELCOME!

FOLK SESSION – Howard Arms, Brampton

The theme was ‘treasure’, when we met in The Howard Arms on 16th October, to be interpreted as literally or metaphorically as we chose. Welcome back to Norman, visiting us after a long absence. He and Dave provided us with the evening’s instrumental music, Norman on mouth organ with *Pipe Major Donald McLean of Lewis and McLeod of Mull*, and Dave on English small pipes with the 13th Century French tune *Ductia*.

Congratulations to Kath, the only person who made the treasure = pirates link with the humorous poem *The Spanish Main*. A number of songs made reference to literal jewels and precious metals: *King Dunmail* (Alan Jefferson) mentions the golden crown of the last king of Cumbria; *The Galway Shawl* (Phil) talks about the ‘jewels and costly diamonds’ that the heroine *didn’t* wear, while Geoff and Kath’s heroine gave up her ‘golden rings and all her show’ to go with *The Raggle-Taggle Gypsies*. A jewellery box is the focus of the touching and tender *In China or a woman’s heart* (Sam). *When I was one-and-twenty* (Steve) refers to ‘pearls and rubies’ (also ‘crowns and pounds and guineas’... how many of us are old enough to remember those?)

Little Bridget Flynn (Kath) asserted roundly that the girl is the treasure and the dowry doesn’t matter. *Kate Dalrymple* (Katy) asserted, alas, just the opposite!

The baby in Ruth’s lullaby had *Golden Slumbers*; Phil’s *Old Man of the Sea* saw the silver Shannon and Fuji’s silver crown; in Christine’s *I wish it would rain* ‘love and memories sparkle like diamonds’. The ‘pearl-white moon’ illuminates *The Garten Mother’s Lullaby* (Eliza), although the real treasure there is the sleeping child.

Which brings us to metaphorical treasures – *Black Diamonds* (Phil), about coal; Angus sang *The Canny Shepherd Laddies o’ the Hill* ‘because they treasure their sheep’; Mary’s *Keep your hand on your ha’penny* was about -ahem- a treasure of a different kind. On a more serious note, Christine’s *Voyage* was in pursuit of the heart’s desire, and Steve’s new song *I’m missing you now* is a tribute to his late mother.

We next meet on **Tuesday, 20th November in The Howard Arms, Brampton at 8.30pm**. To mark the hundredth anniversary of Armistice Day, the theme will be ‘War’ (but not just the First World War). **ALL WELCOME!**

FOLK SESSION – Howard Arms, Brampton

In spite of cold rain and a windy night, we had a good turnout on 20th November. A particular welcome to Gerda and Sherry, joining us for the first time.

With the Armistice-related theme of 'war', it was not surprisingly a fairly sober and serious evening. Steph and Terry started us off with perhaps the darkest subject of all in *Dance me to the end of love* and *Rubenstein remembers*- both about the Concentration camps. Sam's *In the news* denounced atrocities committed during the first Gulf War, and *The House of Orange* (Angus) refused to continue historical hatreds. *The Crow on the Cradle* (Adrian) is Sydney Carter's grim comment on the Cold War.

The First World War was well-represented. Christine sang two songs straight from the Great War, *It's a long way to Tipperary* and *All the nice girls love a sailor*. Phil commemorated the shire horses that were requisitioned and killed as well as the men who died in *Home, Lads, Home*. Mary read us stories and poems on women's role, including *Shoulder to shoulder* (about women's football teams that kept the sport alive during the war). Both Charlie and Angus recalled the Irish troops that fought in the war in, respectively, *Salonika* and *Gallipoli*.

We also looked back to older conflicts. Gerda took us back to the Napoleonic wars with *Bonny Light Horseman*, as did Adrian with *The Death of Nelson*. Alan reminded us of the military disaster at Balaclava with *The Charge of the Light Brigade*. Ruth sang in praise of *The Minstrel Boy* (19th Century) and Gerda's *Bold Privateer* had a very 18th Century swagger.

But some lighter-hearted music did emerge: Sally with *Scottish Soldier* and Mary with *When Johnny comes marching home* lifted our spirits, and finally we all trooped downstairs and gathered round the piano, where Sherry played us the simply-titled *War Song*.

We next meet on **Tuesday 18th December at 8.30pm**. The theme will be 'open' -sing, play or recite whatever takes your fancy. **PLEASE NOTE!!!** The Howard Arms is changing ownership and we do not yet know for sure exactly where we will meet. Please watch out for further emails on this subject. We definitely won't be homeless!

FOLK SESSION – Howard Arms, Brampton

The Brampton folk session met on 15th December to make music and make merry. Welcome back to Frank, cheering us with his instrumental performances for the first time in several months.

The theme was 'open', meaning that people could play or sing or recite whatever took their fancy. Our instrumentalists for the evening were Frank and Adrian, both on diatonic accordion. Frank stuck to 'open' with *A trip to Barnard*; *Black and Grey*; and *Tombigbee Waltz*, whereas Adrian went for seasonal with a medley of *The Holly and the Ivy*; *Joy to the World* and *Sweet Bells*.

The seasonal theme was popular. Charlie gave a venerable song a new look when he sang *While Shepherds watched* to the tune of *The House of the Rising Sun*! Alan Jefferson and Anne were more traditional in their approach with *Good King Wenceslas* and *The Carnal and the Crane*. *The Carol of the Advent* and *Come, love, carolling* (Ruth and Katy respectively) were celebrations of the season of Advent rather than Christmas.

Sally read Longfellow's poem, *Christmas Bells*, making a poignant point about peace on earth. The songs *From a distance* (Angus) and *When a child is born* (Alan) take the same line – and reflect the same mingling of hope and discouragement.

Still seasonal, Phil's parody *Flying in on the wind in a sleigh* charted Father Christmas's vicissitudes; while Gerda on concertina **and** Terry on guitar joined forces in a beautiful musical setting of Frost's *Stopping by woods on a snowy evening*. Mary gave us a warning about the downside of festive food in her comic poem *Turkey dinners*. *Mrs Adlam's Angels* (Terry) just makes it -tenuously!- into the seasonal category.

Several people contributed songs to the 'open' theme – Christine sang the moving *What colour is the wind?*, and we heard love songs from Steve (*You shine on me*); Terry (*Raglan Road*); and Gerda (*The Sleepless Sailor*). We also enjoyed the comedy of *Never press nine* (Sam) and the satire of *As soon as this pub closes* (Angus).

We next meet on Tuesday, 15th January at 8.30pm. **PLEASE NOTE TEMPORARY CHANGE OF VENUE!!!** Because the Howard Arms will be closed in January we shall meet **IN ST MARTIN'S COTTAGE, BRAMPTON, BETWEEN ST MARTIN'S CHURCH AND THE ANTIQUE CENTRE**. **There is no bar so please bring your own drink (though there are tea and coffee-making facilities)**. The theme will be 'songs featuring personal names'.