

The Oul' Orange and Green Songs from Republican and Loyalist Traditions in Ireland

A Troubles Archive Essay
Bobbie Hanvey



About the Author

Bobbie Hanvey is one of Ireland's leading photographers and a highly-respected writer, musician and broadcaster. Born in 1945 in Co. Fermanagh, he first started documenting the people and events of his hometown in his youth, using a camera and a tape recorder given to him by his father. He left school at fifteen, because he 'thought life was more exciting,' before taking a job as a psychiatric nurse at Downshire Hospital in Downpatrick. His book, *The Mental*, is based on his experiences as a psychiatric nurse. It was there that he taught himself photography and began recording patients as they sung traditional songs. He also travelled and recorded as a folk musician during the 1970s and 1980s.

Bobbie Hanvey continues to document life in Northern Ireland through his photography. He retired in 2014 from his long-running popular Downtown Radio show, 'The Ramblin' Man', after 36 years. He came to worldwide attention more recently when Boston College Libraries acquired 75,000 of his photographs, forming the Bobbie Hanvey Photographic Archive, which captures the people, places and events that have shaped Northern Ireland since the 1970s.

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In his authoritative and extremely well researched book *Irish Political Street Ballads and Rebel Songs, 1780-1900*, Georges Denis Zimmermann writes:

In most European countries, songs were inspired by political events, but few of them, if any, were retained by tradition Ireland is one of the countries where patriotic and political songs have been, for a long time, peculiarly popular, and perhaps influential These songs, which were within the reach of the virtually illiterate, were not only an expression of the singer's and the listener's feelings or opinions but also a form of propaganda (Zimmermann, 1966, Introduction).¹

Although not as numerous and well researched as Nationalist ballads, Orange songs, especially in the nineteenth century, enjoyed great popularity. Extensive collections of these songs were published in book form. Among the most celebrated of the collectors (who were also the book authors) were William Archer, the Reverand John Graham, Edward Harper, Abraham Hume, and two Downpatrick residents – William Johnston (from Ballykilbeg) and William Peake. Johnston's publications were numerous. They included the following: *The Boyne Book of Poetry and Song*, published in 1857 in Downpatrick (copy held in the National Library of Ireland, Dublin); *The Orange Melodist*, Kidd Publications, Belfast, 1877 (copy held in the National Library of Ireland, Dublin); *The Orange Minstrel: a selection of Songs and Ballads for the use of the Orangemen of Ireland*, published in Belfast in 1859 (copy held in the Linenhall Library, Belfast); *The Orange Songster: containing a choice collection of loyal, patriotic and constitutional songs*, published in Strabane in 1815 (copy held in the British Museum).

As with Orange collections, Nationalist song books flourished in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and book titles, as well as the content of the books, were aimed fairly and squarely at the heart-strings of the reader e.g. *A Wreath of Shamrocks*, by John Keegan Casey, published in Dublin in 1878; *The Fenian Songbook* by Charles Gavan Duffy, Irish Book Bureau Publishers, Dublin, 1942; *The God Save Ireland Songbook* by Patrick Galvin, Harding Publishers, Dublin, circa 1870; *The Sinn Fein Song Book* by Frank Stainforth Smith, J. J. Walsh Publishers, Dublin, circa 1918 (copies of all four books held in the National Library of Ireland, Dublin).

People from both traditions treasured their songbooks and they were passed down from generation to generation as carefully as handling a bomb or a butterfly. Then something happened that caused sales of the printed word to plummet. The gramophone, with its 78 rpm records brought to household attention, local singers like Richard Hayward, an Orangeman and entrepreneur, who travelled for a Belfast

confectionary company, managed the 'Picture House' in Crossmaglen, and made the first talking movie in Northern Ireland – *The Luck of the Irish*. He also recorded a vast number of Orange and Irish songs. In 1932, he made a movie on the erection of St Patrick's statue at Saul, near Downpatrick – *In the Footsteps of St Patrick*. In 1959, his best-selling album *The Orange Sash* was issued on Fontana (TFL 5069).

Richard, who had been making records since 1925, also wrote at least sixteen books on Ireland, many of which were illustrated with drawings by Raymond Piper. In the 1950s, Richard, together with Belfast fiddle player Sean Maguire, made a 10-inch LP record on Decca's *Beltona label* (EBL522). On this wonderful recording, Sean accompanies Richard on guitar, tin (penny) whistle and uilleann pipes (made by master craftsman Frank McFadden of Belfast). Sean also sings in one of the choruses. On one track, *The Bonny Bunch of Roses*, Richard accompanies himself on a seventeenth century Irish harp which he presented to the National Museum of Ireland. He writes in the sleeve notes:

It (the harp) bore an inscription in Irish which when translated read: 'May you never want a string whilst there's guts in an Englishman.'

The other giant of the music scene during the 1930s, 40s and 50s was a Belfast physician, Dr Greenfield. On his Orange and Gospel records and in stage appearances, he used the stage name of 'Sam Carson', but when singing Irish ballads, he used the more Irish-sounding names of 'Barney O'Leary', 'Shaun O'Grady', 'Dan Quinn', and 'Tim Kildare' – these names can be found on his 78 rpm records. As far as I am aware, Dr Greenfield was the only singer who recorded the Orange song *The Shankill Road Heroes* - a great song. His other songs, although funny, catchy and original have not been taken up by the next generation and one can only wonder why not. They include: *The Ball of Whirligig Magee Esquire; Muldoon the Solid Man; Swim, Sam, Swim; Maguire's Motor-bike; Casey's Wireless Set; No More Golfin' for Me;* and *I'm Workin' for McAdam and Co.* Being a doctor, he was not allowed to publicise his musical career, so he wore a hat for his publicity photographs - his concert posters showed a photograph of the back of his head with his trademark hat!

Anniversary of the Easter Rising

In 1966, the anniversary of the Easter Rising, many rebel records hit the market. One of the most comprehensive of these collections was a double LP boxed set: *The Irish Uprising 1916-1922* (CBS 32-B5-0001). This collection included songs by The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem; Kay Hart; Anne Byrne and Brendan O'Duill; Donal Donnelly reading *The Fool* by Padraic Pearse; Daniel Callahan reading Pearse's *Surrender Order 20th April 1916*; and a clip of an archived recording of a speech by De Valera.

1966 also saw the release on Ember Records of *Ireland's 32*, from Armagh man, Hugh Trainor (FA 2035). The collection included *Sean South of Garryowen; The Dying Rebel;* and *The Old Fenian Gun.* Sometimes the most interesting thing about an LP record is its sleeve notes - being one foot square meant that lots of information could be displayed and political points made. It seems to me that *Songs of Freedom*, featuring Theresa Duffy on Decca's *Beltona* Label (LBE37) released in 1960 must take the prize for diplomacy between these two warring islands. The sleeve reads:

It has been Ireland's unhappy lot to be the victim of oppression, domination or misunderstanding for several hundred years of her history, and these songs are the direct products of this protracted Time of Troubles.

I am tempted to ask the question 'What part of misunderstanding do you not understand?'

The 1960s gave us the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan and Peter Paul and Mary, and the people of Northern Ireland began to enjoy new-found wealth and sexual freedom. But they also bought Orange and Green records by the lorry-load and there was no scarcity of artists to choose from. It was as if the battle of the ballads had finally begun in earnest. Until the mid-sixties, when the two main studios, Outlet

and Emerald, got going, people here had to wait for the drip-feed of Orange and rebel sons from English record companies.

Although the longest running and most successful Irish recording company, Walton's in Dublin, with its legendary *Glenside* Label, catered for ultra-Irish tastes, it's Orange catalogue simply did not exist. When Walton's founder, Martin Walton, was interned in Ballykinler Army camp in the 1920s with other IRA men, the British Red Cross gave the 'volunteers' musical instruments to form an orchestra. This was known as the Ballykinler Orchestra and when the IRA prisoners were released, they gave all their instruments to Martin and this is how the Walton's Musical Instrument shop in Dublin came into existence, a shop that is still in business today.

In 1966, to mark the anniversary of the Easter Rising, the IRA demolished Nelson's pillar in Dublin. Within days of the explosion, Belfast man, Billy McBurney, had written the ballad *Up went Nelson*. It was immediately recorded by the *Go Lucky Four* on Mervyn Solomon's Emerald Label and was an outstanding success for the company. Emerald Records is now known as Emerald Music. Most of Emerald's Orange and Green recordings from the 1960s to the present day are available on compact disc – Information at www.Emeraldmusiconline.com

The 1970s

1971 brought with it the policy of 'internment without trial', which inspired the best-selling 'Rebel' record of all time. Written by Pat McGuigan of the *Barleycorn Folk Group*, it became even more sought-after when it was banned by *RTE*. Out of the hundreds of songs written about the Troubles, *The Men Behind the Wire* will go down in history as the song that concentrated the hearts and minds of the Nationalist population.

Billy McBurney, one of Ireland's most astute businessmen, promoted the Orange and Green traditions on his recording label *Outlet Records* without fear or favour. He was shot by Loyalists and his business was blown up twice by the Provisional IRA, but this did not deter Billy, who had the 'Business as Usual' sign up outside his premises before the dust from the explosions had settled. Billy's mother opened *The Premier Record Shop*, in Belfast's old Smithfield Square (Market) in the 1920s. They say that she made her money, not from the vast amount of records she sold, but from the small tins of gramophone needles that were a vital component of the technology of the time. The first singles from *Outlet Records*, released in the late 1960s, reflected Billy's decision to record and produce songs from both traditions (Orange and Green), a pattern that was to continue right through the decades until the company closed in 2004.

Outlet singles:

- Enniskillen Dragoons/ Come to the Bower (OUT 003)
- Take it down from the Mast Irish Traitors/ Dicey Reilly (OUT 004)
- Bold Orange Heroes of Comber/The Rifles (Ulster Rifles) (OUT 007)
- Ballymacarrett You're Orange and True/ Special Interview. The Prince William 1690 (OUT 010)
- Rifles of the IRA/ Reluctant Patriot (OUT 014)
- *Echoes of the 12th. Parts 1 & 2* (OUT 009)

Outlet LPs:

- The Blood stained Bandage, Ray McAreavey. Derry (5DB L511)
- Folk from the Mournes, The Sands Family (SOLP 1013)
- *Ulster Laugh-in*, Lelia Webster (BOL 4014)
- Best of Orange Songs (LP 7005)
- The Lid of my Granny's Bin (DBL 502)
- To the Field and Back, The Millar Memorial Flute Band, Belfast (LP 7000)
- On Boyne's Red Shore, Houl'Yer Whisht Folk Group (Outlet Archive OAS 3005, 1978). This was later released on CD, renamed as Historical Folksongs of Ulster, Houl'Yer Whisht Folk Group (OASCD 3005)

- Best of the Wolfhound, Derry (SDBL 506). The Wolfhound group was recognised as one of Ireland's leading folk groups. Songs on this album included Provie Lullaby; Provie Birdie, and Ireland United, Gaelic and Free. On the sleeve notes of this Wolfhound album, we read: 'Other records for your collection: Ireland's Fight for Freedom (SDBL 505); Irish Revolutionary Songs, Vol 1 (DUB 8001); Smash Internment a live recording smuggled out of Long Kesh (ROL 3002).'
- The Loyal, the Faithful, the True (Orange songs), sung by Willie Rodgers (Outlet Records, LP 7005, 1968) has, perhaps, the most attractive photograph on an Orange LP ever. This outstanding colour photograph, taken by Stanley Matchett, shows two fifers leading two Lambeg and side drummers at the start of a 12th July parade.

Some releases from Emerald Records:

- A top class Orange album came from *Emerald Records* in 1970 *The Twelfth of July,* by Bob Craig and the *Boys of Sandy Row* (GES 1039). This was a collection of lesser known but important Orange songs. *On the Goat* tells the mythical tale of the initiation ceremony into the Orange Order according to the song, every new member must ride around inside the Orange Hall on the back of a goat. Other tracks include *People of the Shankill Road; The Linfield Song; Port-y-down; I knew a Man; Our Flag; Finaghy; Soldier Boy of '88; Carson of the UVF; Picture on the Wall.* Many of these songs are re-released on a double CD set from Boyne Music *Ulster's Orange Anthems: The Best of Collection* (ULSTER 1690)
- Another *Emerald* release with a great colour cover was *The Orange Walk*, by the Diamond Accordion Band (GES 1009). This is a mixture of beautiful Orange and Gospel tunes and was one of the top selling records in 1969.
- Also from Emerald Records, a three album CD set of over 80 great Orange songs and tunes entitled *Ulster's Greatest Music Collection Vol. 1* (Boyne Music BILLY 1691 cd). The names of the three cds are as follows: Cd 1 *The Orange Walk To the Field and Back;* CD 2 *The 12th of July An Orange Celebration;* Cd 3 *No Surrender Orange True and Blue.*

The Troubles

The Troubles may have been an awful and dangerous time to live through, with every man and woman in the province believing that they could be shot dead at any moment. Unlike the 'peace process', the 'war' here created a vibrant economy where funeral undertakers, glaziers, builders and many others had work coming at them from every angle. One gospel album, released in 1982, by leading local singer Ben Forde, on *Pilgrim Records* (a London company) gave us a 'no holds barred', right in-your-face album title – *Songs from Bomb City* (PLM 486) – a title that probably paid off.

For over four decades, 'IRA' songs were mainly directed against the British Army, and one might wonder why the RUC, also hated by Republicans, escaped the wrath of the propaganda writers. I did find some anti-RUC songs on the LP *Songs of Irish Civil Rights*, by Owen McDonagh and the *Bogside Men* (Outlet BOL 4008). The songs on this record poked fun at the RUC by painting them as inadequate and stupid. I asked Sinn Fein spokesman, Danny Morrison, why the RUC seemed to have escaped the wrath of the balladeers. He told me that there were a number of reasons for this - the British Army replaced the RUC in 1969 and remained in the front line for many years; the British Army was involved in the Falls curfew in July 1970; in 1971, the British Army was instrumental in the round up of internees; and finally, the British Army was responsible for Bloody Sunday.

Perhaps the most public musical rejection of the RUC came when the annual invitation to the RUC band to play at graduation ceremonies at Queen's University was withdrawn in 1995, because of the growing student opposition to what was considered a sectarian and oppressive police force. Unionist politicians voiced anger at this decision, but the most unexpected support of the right of the band to play at Queen's came from two other musicians - recording artists Ann and Francie Brolly from Dungiven, Co Derry, who are Sinn Fein councillors. When I later asked Francie how his comrades in Sinn Fein reacted to his support for the band, he said 'We took a lot of stick for that one alright!' My thoughts on the incident

are in line with the views of many people that the love of music sometimes runs deeper or in parallel with the love of politics.

- Music by Anne and Francie Brolly: Albums by them include *Beautiful Ireland* (Homespun HRL 116, 1976); *Farewell to Derry* (Homespun HRL 138, 1977); *Ireland my Home*, which includes the *H-Block* Song, written by Francie Brolly in 1976 (Rego Records R38000); and *At the Rainbow's End* (Rego Records R63000). Rego Records is a New York based company: Address: 64 New Hyde Park Road, Garden City, New York 11530. Information at www.regorecords.com
- **RUC band:** The RUC band was a highly regarded band made up of full-time musicians. Their albums include the following: *The Royal Ulster Constabulary Band and Male Voice Choir in Concert* (LP record. Window-Win 104); *In Concert The Bands and Choirs of the Royal Ulster Constabulary* (Cassette SRT 8KC 1578); *Salute: The Band of the Royal Ulster Constabulary* (CD RUC-CD02); *The Royal Ulster Constabulary Male Voice Choir* (LP record Window Win 102).

Political sentiment

One of the finest pieces of Republican propaganda ever to be written was the song *The Patriot Game* written by Dominic Behan. He told the story of Fergal O'Hanlon who died alongside Sean South, during an IRA raid on Brookeborough RUC barracks in 1957. The song was both a recruiting sergeant and a fundraiser for an entire generation of Republicans. The first line of the second verse was the one that captured hearts and minds – and cheque books! 'My name is O'Hanlon, I'm just gone sixteen' It was forty years later when TG4 made a documentary on 'The Raid' that we learned that Fergal O'Hanlon was not sixteen when he died, but twenty one. Many people I spoke to after the broadcast were convinced that the TV station had got it wrong. They hadn't. But the power and lasting message of the song lives on. *The Patriot Game* was recorded by Liam Clancy (Vanguard Masters: VMD 79165 CD. 1965), by the Kingston Trio – *The Patriot Game* (Pickwick 33 LP), and many other artists.

I asked the chairman of the Northern Region of the Worker's Party, Dessie O'Hagan, what were Dominic Behan's political views, and if he had ever mentioned *The Patriot Game* to him. Dessie told me – 'Dominic was a loyal and dedicated supporter of the Worker's Party. He was a strong opponent of Nationalist and Loyalist terrorism and was always incensed that the Provos had stolen his song'. In 1984, during a concert held in Downpatrick to raise funds for the striking Ayrshire miners and their families, Dominic made his position clear on his reasons for writing the ballad. I recorded his words as he introduced the song:

I'm going to sing you a song that the Provisional Alliance think is one of their songs. I wrote it to attack everything that the Provisional Alliance stands for. It's a song called *The Patriot Game*.

Most of the many artists who have recorded this song have left out part of the most important verse. Dominic Behan always sang this verse and here it is.

This Ireland of mine has for long been half free Six Counties are under John Bull's monarchy² And still De Valera is greatly to blame For shirking his part in the Patriot Game

You can hear Dominic Behan on the LP *Easter Week and After* (Topic Records. 12T44. 1976). Tracks on this include: *Erin go Brath; It's a Grand Old Country; Barry's Column; The Boys of the County Cork; Johnston's Motor Car; Sean Tracy; Take it Down from the Mast; The Castle of Drumboe; The Merry Ploughboy; Sean South; The oul' Alarm Clock; The Patriot Game.*

Moving on to folk groups - the *Flying Column Folk Group* from Belfast first hit the Northern Ireland scene in the mid-1960s, with lead singer Eamon Largey. Their first album, recorded in 1970, *Folk Music Time in Ireland* (Emerald Gem GES 1035) included the following songs: *Henry Joy; The Dyin' Rebel; Tom Williams;*

James Connolly; and Banner Strand. Their talent and musical ability were miles ahead of the pack, and their album on Emerald Records in 1971, Four Green Fields, was for many years one of the most collectable albums in Irish musical history. It is now available on CD (Emerald Music, GEM MCLD 19381). The song Four Green Fields was written by Tommy Makem.

Three very original LPs were released in the first half of the 1970s by Belfast group *The Men of No Property*. These were published by *Resistance Records*, and the titles of the albums were: *England's Vietnam*; *Ballads from Behind the Barricades*; *The Fight Goes On* (RES 1001; RES 1002; RES 1003). Group members were Barney Mc Ilvogue, Brian Whoriskey, Irene Clarke, Sandra Kelly, John Fallon and Gordon McCaffrey. Songs from the albums include: *The Falls Road Taximan*: *England's Vietnam*; *Crossmaglen*; *Bloody Sunday*; *Hughes Bakery Van*; *The Bogside Doodlebug*; *Rubber Bullets*; *Ballymurphy*; *The Ballad of Rinty Monaghan*; *Farewell to Newry Courthouse*; *and Home Soldier Home*. If ever a song escaped the censor and stretched the boundaries of Nationalism, but never got one word of criticism from the usual quarters, it was *Rubber Bullets*. For the Ireland of the 1970s, this ballad was miles ahead of its time, and while it was a massive success in Republican areas, curiously no-one commented on its content. The chorus informs us:

Rubber bullets for the ladies catch them in the CS can Three inches wide, six inches long take it home to your oul' man It's an instrument of torture to break your legs in two It'll stop you feeling lonely, but leave you black and blue

For those who are interested, the artwork on the album covers released by *The Men of No Property* was also ahead of its time. *England's Vietnam* is now available on CD from Smithsonian Folkways (Catalogue number FW05409). Further information on the website www.folkways.si.edu

As the killing intensified, so did the sentiments in the songs. A new breed of ballad emerged either on cassette tape or on LP record, and more recently on compact disc. These songs celebrated the killings carried out and praised the expertise of the gunmen and of the bombers. *The South Armagh Sniper* and *One Shot Paddy,* sang the praises of the marksmanship of the Provisional IRA gunman who could kill a British soldier from a distance of one mile with his long-range rifle. A song was written about the three Provisional IRA volunteers Farrell, Savage and McCann, who were shot dead by the SAS in Gibraltar in 1987. A Loyalist version was also released - singing the praises of the SAS.

Republican songs

I asked Danny Morrison how important Republican songs were to the Provisional IRA campaign, and this is what he told me.³

Revolutionary songs – in our context, rebel songs – are fundamental to all struggles. Think, *The International* or *Sacco and Vanzetti*. The chorus becomes unity, solidarity, comradeship – inspirational, in fact.

Similarly, Irish rebel songs create, feed and endorse a sub-culture in opposition to the British, and, later, the Free State establishments. Such rousing songs put flesh and blood on rebellion and resistance in an oral tradition of lyrics and accompanying chords which flagrantly cross the line in legality.

As a child I heard songs such as *Kevin Barry* and *The Foggy Dew*, which were always associated with a much earlier period; Dominic Behan's *The Patriot Game* (about the '56-'62 border campaign); *Take It Down From The Mast* (directed at de Valera's Fianna Fail); or *Tom Williams*, again, like the fifties border campaign, associated with a time much closer to my own, when those involved and who had survived long terms of imprisonment were pointed out to you in the street as heroes.

The 'new wave' of songs, so to speak - *The Four Green Field* period - was inspired by the civil rights' campaign, the bitter experience of the nationalist community, and the growing IRA campaign (including escapes from prison), and really took off after internment and Bloody Sunday. Songs of this period include *The Men Behind The Wire, Come Out You Black 'n' Tans* and *The Ballad of Joe McCann* (associated with the Official IRA). Of course, there were other, middle-of-the-road, more restrained, or critical songs in response to the conflict, such as Phil Coulter's *The Town I Loved So Well* and Paul Brady's *The Island*, which diehard republicans sang uncomfortably.

The next major period of song-writing was inspired by the prison resistance and hunger strikes and must run into hundreds of songs from *The Ballad of Michael Gaughan* (1974) to Christy Moore's *The Armagh Women* and *The Time Has Come* (1982). A few years ago BBC and UTV were covering live the journey through the North of triumphant all-Ireland GAA football champions, Derry, as they brought the Sam Maguire Cup to the Maiden City. The fans were singing, *Back Home in Derry*, and few in television had a clue that the song was written by IRA Volunteer, Bobby Sands MP, such had a rebel song crossed into the mainstream.

Loyalist songs

The UVF and Red Hand Commando organisations all had their own ballads as did the UDA and the UFF. Loyalist legend and UVF leader, Gusty Spence, a man keen to maintain his own tradition, may have featured in one UVF recording. When I interviewed him, he didn't admit to or deny being on the recording. When I said that many people believed the voice in the introductory monologue to be his, he replied 'That's democracy'. This is the extract in question. It is from the CD *The Gunrunners 24th April 1914* (Shankhill Sounds). The monologue is spoken against a backing played by *The Platoon*.

Down through the travail of years, the Ulster Loyalists have stood with their backs to the wall. Even today, under attack from within, they show the same indomitable spirit as did their ancestors of so long ago. Foremost in the nature of the Ulsterman is his music with its strident message that they will not be slaves. What you are about to hear is but a part of those words and music which have gained the admiration and the envy of the world. The same old pulsating urgency that says: 'Where our songs are not being sung, we will sing them! Where our songs are challenged, we will sing them all the louder!' At all times and forever, we will be for them, proud, passionate, dedicated and defiant, stirring old memories, recalling the spirit, the spirit that will not admit defeat, the spirit of **No Surrender**.

UVF songs featured on *The Gunrunners* album are *Carson's Call; UVF Widow; Hero; Red Poppy Fields; Ulster Volunteers 1912.* Another UVF collection – *Echoes of the Somme*, with vocals by *The Platoon* includes the following songs: *From the Road to the Somme; Song of the Fallen; Armagh Brigade;* and *Night before the Battle* (Black Mountain Music cassette). One of the latest UVF recordings is called *90th Anniversary 1912-2002-UVF for God and Ulster: Celebrating 90 years of service*. The songs featured include *Bloody Road to the Somme; Gallant Clyde Valley; No Man's Land; Pte William McFadzean; Ulster 1912; YCV Brigade;* and *Memory of the Brave* (CD with no label).

In a recent interview with Andy Tyrie, I asked him what part Loyalist songs played in the UDA campaign (Interview on 29th Sept. 2009). He said:

All organisations have their songs and songbooks, including the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, football teams, girl guides and boy scouts. They all sing their songs on social occasions and they help promote their organisations.

Then, in a jocular mood, he continued:

Some politicians have their songs, but they don't sing them outside of Parliament. They're all

moaning songs. One of the politicians' favourite songs is Who's Sorry Now? and another is The Cryin' Game!

Sadie Myers

I first interviewed Belfast singer Sadie Myers in 1986. Early in her career, she was offered a long term recording and touring contract by Philip Solomon, but Sadie turned it down because, according to herself, 'I was a home bird'. Down through the years, she has released many independent recordings and one day when she was in the studio she was given a piece of paper and asked to sing two songs, which she did. They were *Heroes of the UVF* and *The Ballad of Andy Tyrie*. The result was released on a UDA album *Ulster has Awakened/ Quis separabit (the motto of the organisation)* by Black Mountain Music (UR 010). Here are some of the words of *The Ballad of Andy Tyrie*.

There's a man just down our street whose name's a legend For he has led his army all alone In case you do not know he's Andy Tyrie And we will back him up through right or wrong For the UDA is stronger now than ever At his command we'll rally to the fore For Andy Tyrie we think that you're the greatest You've proved that you're the biggest of them all

When I asked Andy, during our interview, how he felt about being immortalised in song, he admitted to being slightly embarrassed any time it was played, but he also said that he thinks Sadie Myers has a beautiful singing voice.

There are many other UDA songs on various albums – far too many to mention here. Some of the more famous are – *The Ballad of Michael Stone; UDA upon my Chest; Big John (McMichael); Men behind the Wire (Loyalist version); Orange Wings; Long Kesh; Simply the Best; Here lies a Soldier; Build a Wall along the Border; and William Prince of Orange.* These, and many more Loyalist ballads, are available through the website www.unionjackshop.com

I am sure that not many Orange tunes are included in catalogues of 'World Music', but there is one that is beautifully recorded and well worth having in your library. The CD/album is *Masters of the Harp*, from Arc Music (EUCD 1764). Have a listen to the wonderful interpretation of *King William's March* by French group *Triskell* and see if you like it.

Other important but rare recordings

- The Ludlows The Wind and the Sea (PYE NPL 18150 LP)
- Ireland Her Own. Paddy Tunney and Arthur Kearney (Topic 12T153)
- Irish Patriotic Songs. Austin Gaffney (Fontana. TFL 5192)
- It's the Irish in Me. The Halliard (SAGA SOC 1058)
- The Battle of Aughrim, by Richard Murphy. Read by Cyril Cusack, Cecil Day Lewis, Ted Hughes, Niall Toibin, and Margaret Robertson (Ceirnini Cladaig CCT7)
- Irish Capers. The Go Lucky Four (Emerald Mono MLD 23)
- Shall my Soul Pass Through Old Ireland? Various artists (Emerald GES 1041)
- Songs of Ireland. Cathie Harrop, Cathal McCann. Maeve Mulvanney, Heather Kaye and the Pines, Anna McGoldrick, The Freemen, The Blarney Folk, and The Flying Column (Emerald GES 1053. 1971)
- The Travelling People. The Johnstons (Marble Arch MAL808)
- Mary McGonigle and the Assaroe Ceili Band (Bardic/Waltons BAR 705)
- In 1965, The Spinners Folk Group from Manchester released their hit single *The Orange and the Green*. The album *The Spinners The Singing City –* is now very collectible (Philips 6382 002).

Tommy Sands

Throughout the confusion and mayhem of the troubled years, one voice has consistently offered the listener a different choice from that of the old Orange and Green. Tommy Sands, with his guitar and home-made songs, has travelled the world singing and recording, while the road he travelled at home was more difficult and lonely. This was the road where 'all the little children, they can play ...' In his song *All the Little Children* (taken from the album *Tommy Sands: Singing of the Times* (Spring Records, SCD 1015. 1985), he tells us

I don't suppose a man will stop his struggling when he's lying with his back upon the ground. It's only when everyone is standing That peace and justice can be found. Chorus: And we're singing of the time when the sun will always shine And armoured cars and tanks will fade away The people will be one and the fighting will be done And all the little children they can play

Tommy Sands grew up in a mixed community on the Ryan Road near Mayobridge in Co Down, where both Protestant and Catholic neighbours called in on their *ceilidh* with his parents, Mick and Bridie, and the rest of the Sands family. Tommy told me:

I grew up singing songs from the Nationalist/Republican tradition and fell asleep at night with the sound of a Fenian fiddle in one ear and the beat of the Orange Lambeg drum in the other, as the drummers practised for the 12th of July across the nearby fields. I also realised that 'we' (Catholics) were calling for a Free Ireland or 'Brits Out', but if that meant Protestant neighbours being pushed away, then it didn't make sense to me. I went on to sing in East Germany and met a lot of singers from the *Nueva Cancion* Movement (The 'new song' movement of Latin America). They sang songs about ordinary people trying to make a living and trying to get away from sectarianism and flags and things of that nature. That was in 1972, and it was then I made the decision that it made no sense to me to sing a song in a Catholic place that I couldn't sing in a Protestant place.

In 1974, Tommy wrote a song that looked at the political situation in Northern Ireland through the eyes of Protestant people. On hearing the song *They Sold us Down the River*, I brought the tape to the UDA Supreme Commander, Andy Tyrie and asked him to listen to it. He was so impressed by the song that he asked me to set up a meeting with Tommy. You have to remember that this was the 1970s, so we were all very nervous! I took a photograph of that meeting - of Tommy and his wife Catherine with Andy - and I just came across that photograph the other day. It reminded me of the time and of the song. You can find the song on the album *The Winds are Singing Freedom, The Sands Family* (Plane Records, Germany. S16 F600. 1975).

You promised that you'd stand by me from the very start And you told our sons and daughters to be loyal Now you have no further use for me You've gone and broke my heart And you sold us down the river in the end Chorus: You sold us down the river, You sold us down the river You sold us down the river in the end

In a recent interview with Tommy, he told me that during the summers of the early 1970s, when the wild roses bloomed in the hedges along the Ryan Road, people said 'No matter how bad the Troubles get, they won't change us because we are all friends'. But, they were wrong. As the years went by, many

things changed. Two friends (one a Catholic and one a Protestant), who were regular visitors at the music sessions in the Sands family home, were shot dead – the second in retaliation for the first. According to Tommy, this incident 'just summed up war anywhere – where ordinary people are dragged into different groups and made to believe they are different human beings'. The song written by Tommy about these two killings, *There were Roses*, is the most important song to be written about the Troubles. It is on the album *Tommy Sands: Singing of the Times* (Spring. SCD 1015. 1985). Seamus Heaney wrote on the cover of this album - 'You feel you can trust the singer as well as the song'. Here are some verses from *There were Roses*, which has been covered by many singers from all over the world.

It was on a Sunday morning, when the awful news came 'round Another killing has been done, just outside Newry town We knew that Alan danced up there, we knew he liked the band But when we heard that he was dead, we just could not understand We gathered at the graveside on that cold and rainy day And the Minister, he closed his eyes and he prayed for no revenge And all the ones who knew him from along the Ryan Road They bowed their heads and they said a prayer for the resting of his soul

Chorus: There were roses, roses
There were roses
And the tears of the people ran together

Well, fear it filled the countryside, there was fear in every home When the car of death came prowling 'round the lonely Ryan Road A Catholic would be killed tonight to even up the score Oh Christ, its young O'Malley that they've taken from the door Alan was my friend, he cried, he begged them with his fear But centuries of hatred have ears that cannot hear An eye for an eye was all that filled their mind And another eye for another eye 'til everyone is blind

Chorus: There were roses, roses

In 1998, during the talks leading up to the Belfast Agreement, Tommy felt that the politicians needed support from ordinary people, so along with his well travelled guitar, a gathering of Protestant and Catholic children, Lambeg drummers, and a group of fiddlers, he landed outside Parliament Buildings at Stormont. In Tommy's own words:

For many years, the political impasse seemed like two buses meeting on a narrow bridge, with the drivers not wanting to give way for fear of letting down their passengers. They could only move when the passengers approached the drivers and told them they could now reverse a little because they all wanted to go forward.

Tommy wrote the song *Carry On* for the occasion, because the talks seemed to be faltering. Politicians, including David Irvine, Billy Hutchinson, David Trimble, John Hume and Gerry Adams came out of the building to show Tommy their support and appreciation. Seamus Mallon later said that it was a defining moment in the peace process because the politicians inside the building felt that they could no longer hold back the future from these children and others like them.

On May 3rd 2009, Tommy had the honour of being the only Irish folksinger to be asked to sing in Madison Square Garden in New York at a concert to celebrate Pete Seeger's 90th birthday, along with Bruce Springsteen, Emmylou Harris, Joan Baez and many other important artists. The concert was recorded live and will be released on DVD - for information, see www.Tommysands.com

The Royal Irish Folk Group

Many regiments of the British Army have released LPs and CDs, mainly of marching regimental music, but I came across a CD some years ago that grabbed my attention. It is called *The Band, Bugles, Pipes and Drums of the Royal Irish Regiment: Last of the Great Whales* (SCOTDISC – CDITV672. 2001). On the sleeve notes we read:

The Royal Irish Regiment has a direct line back to Tiffin's Inniskillings, who were raised in Enniskillen in 1689. On the 1st July 1992, our two direct predecessors, the Royal Irish Rangers and the Ulster Defence Regiment merged to form the Royal Irish Regiment.

Tracks on this album include Soldier's Return; Crusader's March; Rustic Bridge; Highland Cathedral; Oft in the Stilly Night; Sprig of Shillelagh; Garryowen; and Lord of the Dance.

Unlike other regiments, the Royal Irish have one unique ingredient, a folk group called *The Blarney Boys*. Five of the eighteen tracks are filled with their quite considerable talent. 'Armed' with guitar, flute, pipes, bodhran and accordion, they belt out old standards such as *Star of the County Down; I'll tell me Ma; The Green Fields of France; She Moved through the Fair; So Many Lives;* and *Steal Away*. Another CD release from the Band of the Royal Irish, which also includes the folk group, is called *Erin Shore* (Bandleader Recordings. BNA 5165. 2000). When I played *The Blarney Boys* on my radio programme (*The Ramblin' Man*, on Downtown Radio), some of my listeners could hardly believe that a regiment in the British Army would promote a folk group. But, it appears that they have been doing just that!

In 1973, long before the Royal Irish Rangers amalgamated with the Ulster Defence Regiment, they released an LP containing eighteen tracks of superbly played and recorded music. The album is called *The Bands, Pipes and Drums of 1st and 2nd Battalions the Royal Irish Rangers -* 27th (Inniskilling) 83rd and 87th (SLCW1012. 1973). One of the tracks makes the album quite unique and something of a collector's item. The song, *The Men of the West*, used to be one of the most popular songs of the Republican movement, but is seldom recorded nowadays. It contains the words: 'When Ireland lay broken and bleeding, she called for the men of the west'. However, the Royal Irish Rangers only play the tune on this recording.

Other tracks include: *Uncle Nobby's Steamboat; I'll tell Me Ma; Irish Rover - Holy Ground; Rory O'More; St Patrick's Day; Garyowen; Off, Off said the Stranger; The South Down Militia; Killaloe* (The regimental march); *Faugh a Ballagh* (Irish for 'Clear the Way', the cry of the Royal Irish Fusiliers dating from the Battle of Barrosa in 1811); *Back to Donegal.* The sleeve notes explain – 'The tunes (on this record) are based on Irish folk songs passed down by ballad singers from a bygone age'. That seems about right to me. This album is one of the finest recordings of any army band that I have in my collection.

David Hammond – the story of a record

Not only was Belfast man David Hammond our greatest folk singer, but he was also Ireland's most authoritative voice on the history and origins of our folk songs. And more than that, he was a wonderful human being.

• One of the most difficult of David's albums to find these days was recorded in the mid-sixties, in the unbelievably short time of three hours. The owner of a New York based record company came to Belfast and hired the Outlet studios so that he could get David to record fourteen songs. He then wrote the cheque, boxed the master-tape and returned to the States. A year later, the LP arrived in the post and David was far from being overjoyed. The album, called *David Hammond Sings Songs of Ireland* had a colour photograph of a statue of Charles Stewart Parnell on the cover! This cover was obviously aimed at the Irish/American market, but there was not one rebel song in the collection (Request Records, New York. RLP8061)

The songs on this album are Master McGrath; The Verdant Braes of Screen; The Maid of Ballydoo; 'Tis Pretty to be in Ballinderry; The Banks of the Roses; Slieve Gallon Braes; The Rocks of Bawn; The Juice of the Barley; Blow the Candle out; Mary from Dungloe; Come all ye Tramps and Hawker lads; The Maid of Bunclody; The Granemore Hare; and, finally, the only Orange song that David Hammond ever recorded on an album, and a beautiful song it is - The Orange Lily-O. This is one of the rarest LPs of David's songs.

Other recordings by David Hammond are as follows:

- The Singer's House, with Donal Lunny (Mulligan. LUNA 336/ also on US label Greenhays GR702)
- *I am the Wee Falorie Man* (Tradition. TLP 1028)
- *Ulster's Flowery Vale* (BBC REC 28M). This is a recording of various artists, on which David sings two songs *The Lowlands of Holland;* and *The Blackbird of Mullaghmore*.
- *McGlynn's Fancy* with Artie McGlynn (Mint Records. JULEP 16 LP; This is also now available on CD from Emerald Music BERCDOLL). David sings two songs: *I wish my Love was a Red, Red Rose; The Hills above Drumquinn*.
- The last is perhaps the rarest recording of all. In 1977, I got David to sing at a folk evening in Downpatrick. I recorded the concert and still have the master-tape. It's in the Ulster Bank!

Irish American Singers

In 1989, I went to New York to record Eileen McNulty, of the legendary McNulty Family, known as the Royal Family of Irish music. Sadly, Eileen died in Milwaukee on the day she was due to meet me in New York. Paddy Noonan took me to her funeral in Hoboken, New Jersey a few days later. At the funeral breakfast in the nearby Portofino Restaurant, I interviewed and recorded all her family and friends and got the complete story on the whole family. I was also the only photographer in the world to photograph her funeral. She was buried under her married name of Grogan, so the news media never even noticed her passing. Some of the McNulty songs are: Boys from the Co Cork; A Toast to the 32 Countries; When you look in the Heart of a Shamrock; Queenstown Harbor; The Hills of Knocknashee; Along the Rocky Road to Dublin; Hills of Glenswilly; Irish Soldier Boy; The Foggy Dew; At the Close of an Irish Day; The Limerick Races. Some of their albums are:

- McNulty Family Entertains with Irish Songs (Copley DWL9 604. LP)
- A Night in Ireland with the McNulty Family, Vol. 2 (Copley DWL 9 611 LP)
- Irish Showboat: The McNulty Family (Coral CRL 57368 LP)

During my visit to New York, I also recorded Ruthie Morrisey, a major recording artist who sang on many Irish American albums. Ruthie had sung in Irish pubs in New York since the age of ten to help support her family. Here are some of her recordings.

- Ruthie Morrissey sings the Irish Soldier Boy and other Favorites (Avoca Records 33 AV 127 LP)
- *Irish Ballads*, sung by Ruthie Morrissey, accompanied by Mickey Carton's orchestra (Copley Records. DWL 9 603 LP).
- Ruthie Morrissey sings Traditional Irish Songs (Fiesta Records FLPS 1595).

Paddy Noonan

Paddy and his mother went to America in 1948 and his father followed them a year later. When Paddy bought his first accordion, he was greatly influenced by the playing of Jimmy Shand and of our very own Fred Hanna. Paddy and his band have been invited to play for many different audiences - including President John F. Kennedy and his entourage. He also played at a birthday party for Bobby Kennedy – his last before his assassination. Many of Paddy's records are still available from Rego Records. Information at: www.regorecords.com

Songs included on the following two records are On the One Road; Irish Soldier Boy; Wild Colonial Boy; Irish Soldier Laddie; Boys from the County Mayo; Orange and Green; Shores of America; It's a Grand Old Country; Irish Coffee Dance.

- Live Irish Party, with Mike/Jessie Owens and Charlie McGee, recorded at the Abbey Tavern in New York City (Tifton International TS80)
- Paddy Noonan: Irish Party, with Marie Frances and Michael O'Dea (Rego Irish R20 000 LP).

Another Irish American singer who also recorded on Rego Records, and is well worth hearing, is Mary O'Dowd. Mary was born in Phoenix, Arizona, but later moved to New York with her family, where her father owned a chain of pubs and restaurants. I enjoy listening to *At the Close of an Irish Day* (Rego R62 000). Songs include *When New York was Irish; The Town I Loved so Well; Ashtown Road; Paddy's Green Shamrock Shore; Back Home in Derry; Toast to the 32 Counties; The Dutchman.*

Other important recordings from the US

- Little Bits of Ireland: Songs that the Irish Love by Mickey and Mary Carton (DECCA DL 8186 LP).
- *Mickey and Mary Carton: The emigrant Irish Boy* (Irish Records Inc. Irish 35 003 LP).
- Vol. 3 and still more Irish songs of Freedom, sung by Willie Brady (Avoca 33 ST 152 LP).

And finally

Some people say that the peace process is unshakeable. Others believe it to be fragile. Then there are those who believe it is somewhere in between. In the meantime, the ballad makers are resting with pencils sharpened and ready. New Orange or Green songs may or may not be written, but if they are, look out for the CDs coming to a Sunday market near you!

Bobbie Hanvey

Oct 2009

¹ See new edition: G. D. Zimmermann (2002) Songs of Irish Rebellion, Dublin: Four Courts Press (Four Courts History Classics).

² Most singers substitute tyranny for monarchy)

³ This piece was written by Danny Morrison especially for this article, September 2009.