

# EDWARD II

PRESENTS



**MANCHESTER'S  
IMPROVING DAILY**





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IMPROVING  
DAILY**

**EDWARD H**





## INTRODUCTION

# THE MANCHESTER'S IMPROVING DAILY PROJECT.

Manchester is widely acknowledged as the first truly industrial city, and alongside this world changing heritage the region is steeped in a history of social and political movement that developed alongside the cotton mills and heavy industry. In contrast to urban Manchester, it is the rural morris tradition that has provided a rich source for Edward II on previous recordings, but this project has shown that whilst Manchester does not have a strong modern-day association with folk song and dance tunes, there are still songs to be sung and tunes to be played; we just need to dig a little deeper. Alongside some research into the areas, characters and themes that feature in the ballads, the Manchester's Improving Daily project is bringing these Mancunian stories back to life and up to date, with gigs, recordings and a series of events to help promote and interpret the Manchester Ballads to a wider audience.



The Manchester's Improving Daily project is adding another dimension to these songs, with modern interpretations of the Manchester Ballads performed by Edward II, and in the accompanying 'pop-up' gigs we have played these new interpretations alongside traditional versions performed by artists such as Mark Dowding and Jennifer Reid. Please look out for their work on social media, and in venues around town.

The project website can be found at —  
**[edwardthesecond.co.uk](http://edwardthesecond.co.uk)**



The penny broadsides that are included in the collection known as The Manchester Ballads were taken from various archives, and this work is the result of research undertaken by Roy Palmer and Harry Boardman in 1980, as a logical extension of their previous research into ballads in general and the Mancunian collections in particular. The Edward II project is named 'Manchester's Improving Daily' after the ninth ballad in this collection. Work on the project started in earnest in February 2015, with band rehearsals and research meetings.

The Manchester Ballads reflect the pivotal events that span centuries of industrial and political change.

The songs often reflect the troubled times workers endured, from the civic strife of 'Peterloo' and 'Kersal Moor' to the more optimistic, celebratory stories behind 'Victoria Bridge on a Saturday Night' and 'Manchester's Improving Daily'. Many of the Manchester Ballads date from the seminal period in Mancunian history when Engels and Marx lived and worked in Manchester, and there is a well known table next to a window in Chethams Library where the influential writers are known to have worked — the same library that held many of the broadsides in its collections.

In his introduction to Engels Condition of the Working Classes in England, David McLellan notes that Engels' "personal observation was supported by reading masses of papers, statistical reports, and pamphlets" (McLellan 1993: xiii).

Engels lived around Angel Meadow (McLellan 1993), which is just a few minutes walk from the Swan Street area of New Cross, a major loci of broadside production at the time. Many of the pubs in the area lay claim that Marx and Engels were visitors, and they probably heard the broadside tradition being sung in pubs and markets around Shudehill.

“It is intriguing to think Engels' work was perhaps informed in part by reading some of the penny broadside ballads, perhaps even some of those included in The Manchester Ballads.”

On the Manchester's Improving Daily CD, you will also hear four tracks by Jennifer Reid, the Broadside Balladress who has joined Edward II at many of the recent events. Contrast the two performances of Victoria Bridge on a Saturday Night that are included — Jennifer sings in a 'plainsong' style, very much in the tradition that would be heard in and around the mills, markets and pubs of industrial era Manchester, whilst Edward II have reworked the ballads into modern day rock-steady classics.



# BROADSIDE BALLADS



## A BRIEF HISTORY

Penny Broadside Ballads are printed versions of popular song that were distributed in pubs, markets and streets around the towns and cities of England for hundreds of years.

**“The Ballad originated in collective work-songs. People working together at some rhythmic activity... frequently sang both to keep in time in their work and to lighten the burden”**  
(Palmer 1980: 9)

The national archive of Broadside Ballads exists across disparate collections that have been held across the UK, often for hundreds of years, by libraries, universities and other institutions. Comprising of songs that were often collected by just a few individuals who, with immense foresight, took the time to visit local singers and also collected paper copies of the penny broadsheets printed regionally. These institutions have acquired and stored a social resource that, when considered as a national

collection, unwittingly forms a wealth of cultural and historical knowledge, as represented by the places, stories and characters within the Ballads.

By repeatedly using well-known tunes, the songs could reach a wider audience. This also meant that publishers could pay ‘hack writers’ to add new words to existing music, saving money on the production costs as composers were rarely employed. The earliest song in *The Manchester Ballads* collection dates from 1785, the latest 1882, although within the wider national collection of broadside ballads there are printed versions of songs that date back to 1550, and many are thought to be derived from folk songs passed down through the oral tradition for many years before they were ever printed. The earliest surviving collection of Ballads dates from 1556, and is called “A handful of Pleasant Delights”.

The ephemeral nature of penny broadsides was not a problem when they were printed — they were, in many respects, a disposable item. However, this means that they have only survived in libraries and archive collections. The EFDSS is based at Cecil Sharpe House in Camden, and is in many ways at the heart of all things folk in England. The Full English archive is a project to digitise and make accessible many of the traditional ballads, songs and tunes that have been the basis of English folk music for centuries. The Full English project also features a coalition of musicians most of whom, at some point, have been involved with Band on the Wall, based in Manchester's Northern quarter and involved with the project from the outset. The archive is essential reading for anyone interested in Broadside Ballads, as well as the wider collection of English folk song. [efdss.org/efdss-the-full-english](http://efdss.org/efdss-the-full-english)





# THE MANCHESTER BALLADS

The Manchester Ballads is a collection of thirty five broadside ballads dating from the time of the industrial revolution. Collected by two local historians and folk music enthusiasts, and published with financial help from the education offices at Manchester City Council, The Manchester Ballads was produced in a handsome hardback card case, and is in the form of a folio collection of loose-leaf facsimile prints of the original penny broadsheets. There is accompanying text with many of the ballads, giving the biography of the song and, where necessary, a glossary of dialect terms. There are tunes suggested to allow the ballads to be sung communally in pubs and at home, and whilst penny broadsides were produced in the hundreds, many were written to be sung to well known tunes. The impoverished audience would, with few exceptions, have no ability to read music (Boardman and Boardman 1973) and many would also be totally illiterate, only learning the songs through the oral tradition of singing in pubs, at markets and in local homes.

The Manchester Ballads are, in essence, a snapshot of Mancunian life in the industrial era. However, they are a snapshot from a very selective source, and the themes, events, places and characters that are outlined within the lyrics of the ballads should be seen in the context not only of their chance survival, but also of the reasons for publication.





# THE PENNY BROADSIDE PRINTER

**— political activist, press baron,  
social worker or pragmatic  
businessman?**

As this project has developed, the role of the Broadside printers has become an intriguing aspect of the story behind the Manchester Ballads. By coincidence — or perhaps in a reflection of the continuous influence that some urban areas seem to retain over many generations — the hub of broadside printing seems to have been around the Swan Street/New Cross/Tib Street area, which is currently home to Band on the Wall in Manchester's artistic Northern Quarter. The Bodleian Library has an extensive collection of Ballads, and several local printers feature regularly, all based around the Swan Street/Oldham Street junction.

Image —  
New Cross Manchester 1800s



Companies such as Pearson's, Swindells and Bebbington seem to have been particularly active, with others such as Wrigley and Andrews also featuring repeatedly. Pearsons are probably the pre-eminent printer of Mancunian broadsides, although little is currently known about the motives of the owner. Whilst there was obviously a commercial imperative behind the industry, the political content of many ballads suggests a higher reason in some cases. The potential to attract attention from the authorities for producing broadsides relating to the activities of local political activists does not seem to have prevented the printer. It may be one reason that many ballads have the printers names removed, scribbled out or missing altogether — although this is also thought to be a way of illegally reprinting ballads originally published by a competitor, and selling them without permission.



# BALLADS AS SOCIAL MEDIA

The Manchester Ballads represent an early form of social media — and during this project, they have been referred to on more than one occasion as the nineteenth century version of Twitter! Whilst this may be stretching the point a little, in many respects printing, singing and listening to broadsides was the only cheap, quick and widespread method to disseminate news. Opinion and social comment were possible without the permission of powerful (London-based) newspaper publishers, and outside the control of any editorial power. The freedom to discuss events and express opinion is a vital part of the social identity of Mancunian working class society, as recorded across the centuries in novels, songs and academic literature, by writers as diverse as Elisabeth Gaskell (Mary Barton), Ewan McColl (Dirty Old Town, The Manchester Rambler) and Morrissey (Manchester — so much to answer for, Strangeways here we come).

A ballad such as Peterloo has an obvious subject matter, and it undoubtedly adds to the understanding of this pivotal event — but just as official versions of events are ‘spun’ by politicians and media outlets today, we should remember that the ballad writers often seem to have their own agenda and reasons for publication. Nevertheless, the ballads can support and add to our understanding of Mancunian life in an era before newspapers were commonplace, and before literacy was widespread in the working classes.

Many of the songs that make up the The Manchester Ballads collection survived through luck or chance (Boardman and Boardman 1974), and in many cases penny broadsides are archived only as a result of being overlooked in the forgotten corners of a long-established library. At the time of writing, they were never given a second thought by the established publishing houses, or in formal literary circles. Discussing the Victorian publishers neglect of vernacular and provincial song, Vicinus highlights a particular booksellers reluctance to stock broadsides, explaining that “Gregson and his contemporaries did not consider weaving songs and dialect poems literature.” (Vicinus 1973: 740). The fact we have so many surviving examples is down to circumstance, not planning.

Like Twitter, Facebook and other social media today, these penny broadsides were, in many respects, intended to be disposable, ephemeral messages. However, when these glimpses of the past do survive, we can use them. From the stories contained within these historical sources, we can confirm that in most respects, it is true to say that ‘Manchester’s Improving Daily’.



## Victoria Bridge on a Saturday Night

Whoever may travel o'er Manchester gravel,  
Will see many things to astonish his sight,  
But none he must notice wherever his aunt is,  
Victoria Bridge on a Saturday Night.  
Such rousing and rousing such jibber and pushing,  
It looks as though Babel had settled through apes,  
Or, Old Nick, to good use, had took his shoace on,  
Victoria Bridge on a Saturday Night.

### CHORUS.

Harrooh what a botchaz, this, that, and the other,  
All jumbled together,—a comical sight !  
My oath, I declare on't is just like a fair one,  
Victoria Bridge on a Saturday Night !

If troubled with pithle, there are doctors with physio  
With lozenges, boluses, poppy's and pills,  
With ointment for drawing, with honey for drawing,  
Would blister your cheeks, till you're red in the gills,  
There's snuff for your noses, and salve for your toes,  
With poultry and pigs, pickled pork, and polios,  
With pokers, and fandyrs, and Newspaper vendors,  
And Streeter black puddings a penny a piece,

There's cab drivers calling, and fish women hawling,  
Their cod-fab, and haddock, fresh fi under and fluke  
With dory, and dab fish, and anchovies, and oak-fab,  
And beautiful salmon, just caught—with a hook,  
Their's lots of di-parity, folks craving for charity,  
Howling away, you would drop with surries,  
And some you will find are so desperate bilid,  
Sure they can't see as all till the open their eyes.

There's walking-sticks makers, and handkerchief takers  
There are gense by the dozen and turkeys in flocks,  
There's plus men and porters and cow-basels and trotters  
And lucifer matches a halfpenny a box,  
There's oranges and apples and paper mad' chappols,  
There's old weather prophets and new Almanacks,  
With hare skins and rabbits and lots of bad habbits,  
And roasted potatoes as meanly as wax,

If you are fond of inditing there's paper for writing,  
And fine patent pencils—without any lead,  
And plenty of fellows with good umbrellas  
That wont keep the rain or sught else from your head,  
So busy the trade is that young ladies,  
Will snub in the crowd, and some you will find,  
So rough in their travels they drop off their bustles,  
And come out as flat as a flounder behind,

There's prime treacle tiffy and new patent coffee,  
And sleepers that go at the devil's own rate,  
There's sweet sugar candy with spanish-juce brandy,  
And fine pickled muscles a penny a plate,  
In season there's cherries black currents and berries,  
Plenty of balderdash promises and plums,  
With brick-dust, and bristles, and childrens wistles,  
And rods when they're naughty to tickle their bums,

Then some in their prances pop in the Mechanies,  
Far famed Institution, and up stairs they trot,  
Where those fond of thir trid is, may pick up their rifles  
And kill the bull's eye for a penny a shot,  
Now the truth is, have told what are here to be sold,  
Such hawling and quozing as bothers me quite;  
Both of good things and bad, there are lots to be had,  
At Victoria Bridge on a Saturday Night.

## VICTORIA BRIDGE ON A SATURDAY NIGHT

The version of Victoria Bridge found in the Manchester Ballad collection outlines a bustling area that is alive with trade, drinking, revelry and general mayhem — summing up the scene in an evocative description of a Mancunian ‘Babel’:

**“Both good things and bad, there are lots to be had, at Victoria Bridge on a Saturday Night.”**

The current Victoria Bridge is located at one of the earliest known locations used to cross the River Irwell. Although Manchester and Salford did not exist at the time, it is almost

certain that the occupants of the Roman settlement at nearby Castlefield will have used the location as a crossing point, and it is the origin of the name ‘Salford’, which is derived from the Old English Sealhford, meaning a ford by the willows (willow trees).

The earliest known structure dates from the mediaeval period, and was known as Salford Old Bridge.

This bridge was considered to be monumental when it was built in the 1300's, but by the 19th century, it was too narrow and was replaced with the current structure. The Manchester Guardian declared the new bridge “an ornament to the towns which it unites”, and a “highly creditable public work to the parties to whom the management of its erection has been entrusted”.

Just down the hill from the site of Chethams, Victoria Bridge now links Salford and Manchester by road, but in the industrial era, it was also the location of a thriving street market, and the Ballad describes all manner of goods for sale in the bustling atmosphere of Victoria Bridge on a Saturday Night. In the 1980 collection, there is mention of a story that when the latest Victoria Bridge to be built was opened by Queen Victoria, a local newspaper reporter deliberately misprinted the word ‘passed’, substituting the ‘a’ for an ‘i’, when submitting copy to The Times, reporting that “Queen Victoria passed over the bridge and duly declared it open”. Perhaps this is an example of the lack of deference that Mancunians have for authority in general, often reflected in the bawdy humour that can be seen throughout the ballads.



## MR SADLERS BALLOON

Although in the main this Ballad is an account of a newsworthy local event, there are hints at more serious thoughts, with a veiled warning that the French may well invade by air the next time there is a war, which given the Anglo French history at the time, seemed a certainty.

“Should war again break out as  
it is not a doubt, With some it  
may happen soon; The French all  
invade us, their troops all parade us,  
Brought o’er in the Air Balloon.

Balloon Street is a name familiar to most Mancunians, being for many years the location of the headquarters of the Co-operative Movement. Although the new NOMA development, just outside the Angel pub, is now the main headquarters, Balloon Street and its surrounding buildings are still very much associated with the Manchester-based Co-Op. However, in 1785 the area was a well-to-do residential area, alongside Chethams and just outside the central Market area of Shudehill.



Accounts of the two ascents in air balloons show that these events were big news at the time — the Montgolfier Brothers had invented flying air balloons just two years earlier in 1783, so Manchester was (once again, and not for the last time) at the forefront of transport technology. Although a well known and respected figure at the time of his innovative balloon flights, James Sadler is largely unknown today.

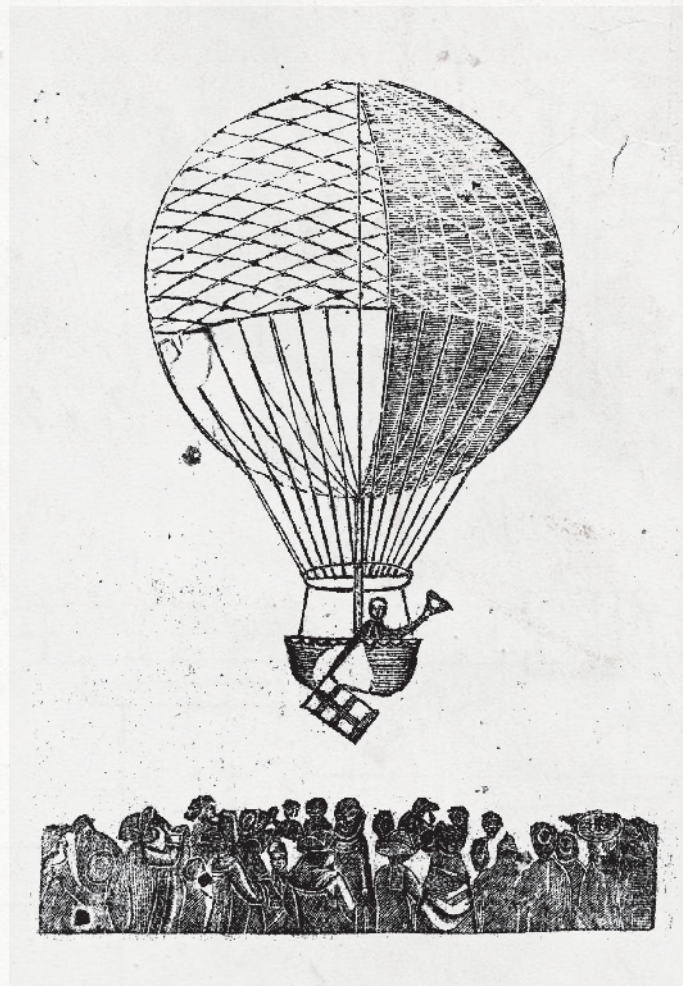
This may be due to the lack of his own written accounts, and it may also be partly down to class prejudice: he was a pastry chef in a successful family business, and was not formally educated. In fact, despite being a resident of Oxford and — in later life — accomplished scientist, the town and the university largely ignored him and the academics of Oxford apparently looked down on him, with little acknowledgement of his achievements. Obituaries for Sadler were published in most of the national press, and yet the university’s own newspaper wrote a short, almost dismissive account, stating that “Mr James Sadler, elder brother of Mr Sadler of Rose Hill, Oxford, has died.”



Mr Sadler made two Balloon flights from Manchester in May 1785. The first of which was from a field behind a 'gentleman's garden' on the site of modern day Balloon Street, named in his honour. On this flight he was accompanied by a cat and landed near Bury. On his second journey he travelled alone and having risen to around 13,000ft. Mr Sadler travelled 50 miles before landing near Leeds. He was injured, having crashed and being dragged for 2 miles or more by the balloon, which eventually threw him clear before taking off again.

The Ballad sums up the heroic tale of the balloon flights with a distinctly patriotic twist, taking the opportunity to have a pop at the French and also outline the dismissive feelings of some to the new technology:

O then reply'd Pat, but I can't  
believe that, Its the tale of some  
humbugging loon:  
So I say botheration to  
the frog-eating nation, Success to  
the Air Balloon,





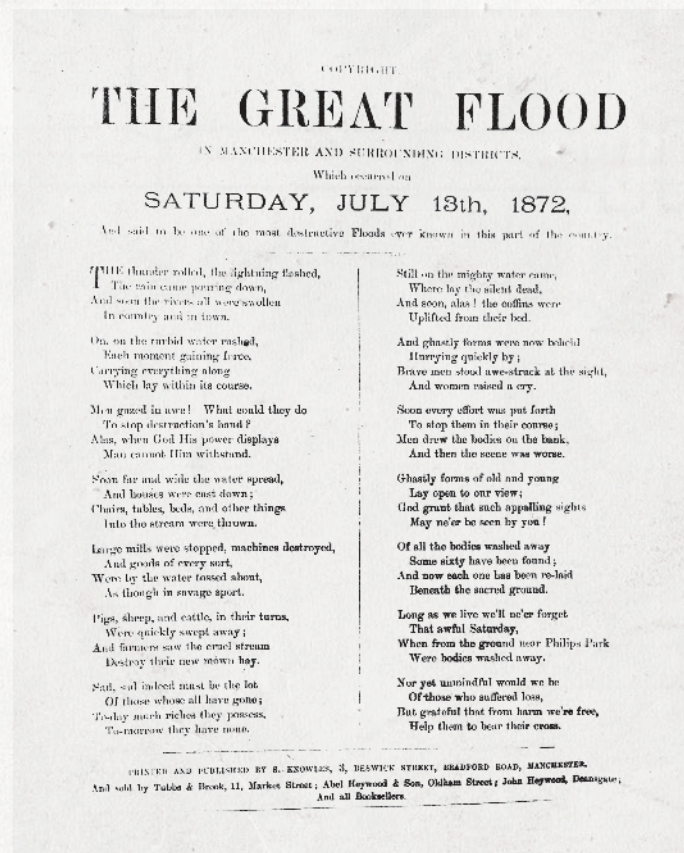
# THE GREAT FLOOD

The Great Flood is another example of the Penny Ballad as a combination of newspaper, social media and historical record. The Ballad records an event that shocked many people in Manchester, and it became a notorious and contested news story, with differing accounts of the severity and extent of the flood.

Even today, with camera phones, rolling news and live reporting via twitter and facebook, events are often misreported, exaggerated and sensationalised — it is nature of such events is that people talk up the drama.

The Great Flood is a song that dramatises the flooding to some degree — with several verses describing events in emotive and sensational language. The flood waters overwhelmed much of central Manchester so most people will have seen the damage caused, if not the coffins and corpses that washed out of the ground and were, understandably, the most sensational aspect of many accounts. For the working class Mancunians who knew about the Flood but did not see the most grisly aspects of the aftermath for themselves, The Great Flood will have been an engaging and no doubt popular song to listen to in the local pubs and markets in the months following the Flood.

The unusually high water levels impacted on much of the country, with a period of prolonged and heavy rain across much of Europe during 1872. The extent of damage varied across the country, although many towns suffered structural damage, not all saw graveyards washed away, and this no doubt added to the drama and legend around the Mancunian flooding.



Archived reports from the Manchester Evening News detail many different versions of eyewitness accounts of the Great Flood, although the basic facts are known.



## FROM THE M.E.N.

1872.

Shortly before 12 o'clock noon on Saturday 15th July the waters of the Medlock began to rise, and reached its greatest height about 3pm, when it was found to be over 21ft, in many places, above its ordinary level. The saddest calamity was the result. The City Cemetery, established by the Corporation of Manchester, runs east and west from Bradford Road, where is the principal entrance, and has for its south boundary the River Medlock, which separates the cemetery from Philip's Park. The two were united by several bridges. The visitor arriving by Bradford Road enters the Protestant portion of the cemetery, at the furthest, or east or west end of which the Calico Printing Works of Messrs Wood & Wright, the Bank Bridge Works, hide the further, or Roman Catholic portion

of the cemetery. Crossing the road, it is seen that the Medlock, where it bounds the 1W burying place, inclines to the south, from the east boundary wall of the cemetery, until reaching the promontory where there is a weir, it makes a sudden bend to the north.

The flood water in the Medlock at 12.50 on Saturday refused to follow the channel inclining to the south, and overflowed its banks, running in almost a straight line to the weir. At this time the river was about 12ft above its usual level.

The descending water and the returned water from the weir eddied here in such a manner as to destroy these graves. The coffins were lifted, broken by being dashed against the weir, and the released bodies, in all stages of decay, were carried down the stream.

Some of them floated down through Manchester into the Irwell, and thence into the Mersey — as many as 19 being counted by an observer at Knott Mill. Others floated to Ancoats Bridge, Pin Mill Brow, where they were stayed among other debris." M.E.N. 1872.

There is a BBC Radio 4 programme currently available via iplayer that discusses the Manchester Flood, and for anyone interested in learning more, it is on the BBC Making History Archive, which can be found via google, or accessed directly at [http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/history/making\\_history/making\\_history\\_archive.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/history/making_history/making_history_archive.shtml)

Like many of the Manchester Ballads, there is a message within the song that no matter how harsh life was for Mancunians, there is always something to be thankful for :

"Sad, sad indeed  
must be the lot, Of  
those whose all have  
gone; To-day much  
riches they possess,  
To-morrow they  
have none."

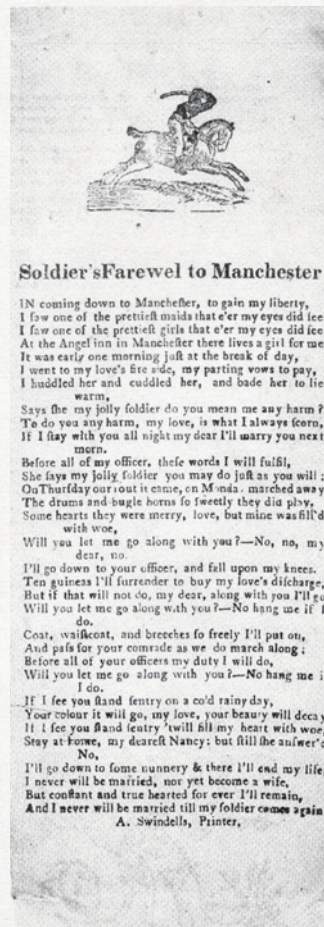


## A SOLDIERS FAREWELL

Most of the buildings from the industrial era have been lost to gentrification, development and demolition, but where they remain they provide evocative indicators of the way social identities were played out. Domestic housing was usually cramped, damp and with few, if any, creature comforts. As a result, many people socialised in communal buildings and in public spaces. This was often done via the demarcation of clear — and often clearly labelled — social spaces such as markets and licensed premises. The Angel, on the edges of Manchester's thriving Northern Quarter, is a perfect example. Today, the pub stands in the middle of the area dominated by the new 'Noma' development by the Co-operative group, with apartments and plush office blocks now surrounding the pub.

When the Angel Inn mentioned in this ballad was opening, it appears that Swindells Printers were commissioned to print a partially re-written version of a much older song as a form of advertising for the opening (Reid 2015). The message within the ballad is clear — The Angel Inn is the place to meet the prettiest girls in Manchester. The rest of the song is a variant on a common theme, with a girl vowing to wait in chastity for the return of her true love.

The period covered by The Manchester Ballads is set in an evocative, dramatic cityscape that features in a lot of art, and is therefore familiar to the modern Mancunian despite the gentrification and post industrial cleanliness of modern Manchester.



In addition to the visual record embedded in images, the arts in general can give insights into the changing social identities of a region.

Seen through the eyes of twenty first century Britain, the protagonists in these artistic depictions live in a different world, and yet they are often walking the same streets, using the same buildings and doing the same jobs. Recent excavations in the city centre have revealed remains of the conditions Lowry depicted in his evocative images of Mancunian life. Archaeological work at sites in Birley fields, Angel Meadow, Danzig Street and Salford Crescent have all revealed the remains of the slum housing that blighted the lives of workers during the industrial revolution.



## PETERLOO

The growing urban discontent that led to the infamous meeting in 1819, like other occasions of civil unrest covered in the Manchester Ballads, grew out of a combination of circumstances that, seen in hindsight, were almost bound to end in conflict.

On the 16th August 1819, the area around St Peters Square in Manchester was the site of a peaceful protest that ended in bloody confrontation with the authorities. Quickly dubbed 'Peterloo', the name is a satirical comment on what was seen as the cowardly actions of the soldiers and yeoman who attacked unarmed civilians. By using the term Peterloo, protesters and social commentators were mocking the troops with a name redolent of the famous battle at Waterloo, where the bravery of men was taken for granted, and a matter of national pride. Peterloo, in contrast, was seen by most as a matter of national shame. The speakers platform had banners arranged that read

**“REFORM, UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE,  
EQUAL REPRESENTATION  
and LOVE”**

however, events on the day prove just how hard the fight was for the working classes in industrial Manchester and Salford.



The French Revolution of 1789 was still in the minds of many radicals in England, and the word of various activists added to the unease that many workers felt under the increasingly dominant and often abusive grip of the factory owners. Thomas Paine's rhetoric was typical, and captured hearts and minds across the working classes.

Harsh working conditions combined with wage deflation — Lancashire weavers saw a typical weeks wage drop from 15 shillings for a six day week in 1803 down to 4 shilling sixpence by 1818.

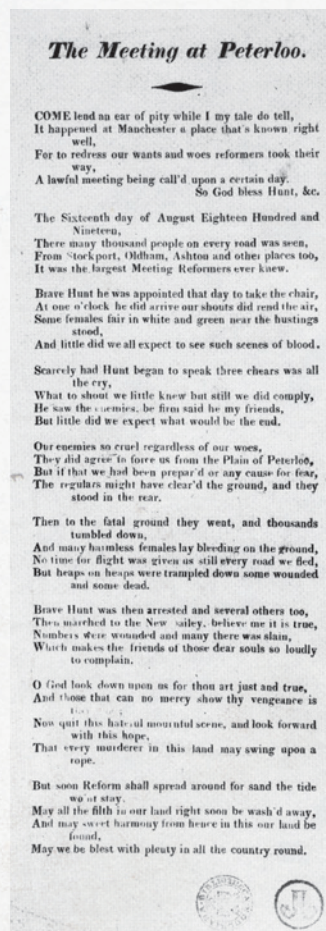


Before Peterloo, Lancashire (which then included most of modern Greater Manchester) was represented by just two MP's, and voting restricted to male landowners with freehold land. Voting was done by public declaration. Unrest was growing, and the British authorities, a very conservative, aristocratic establishment, reacted by introducing increasing restrictions on the few civil liberties that did exist; the suspension of Habeas Corpus the Treasonable Practises act and the Seditious Meetings Act were all attempts to stifle growing public unrest.

In Manchester, radicals organised a "great assembly" with local activists Johnson and Wroe, of the Manchester Observer, inviting renowned orator Henry Hunt to chair a meeting. Following a peaceful series of speeches, events took a turn for the worse when magistrates panicked, and ordered a force of around 1400 men to disperse the crowd.

The events were witnessed by many who objected not only to the violence metered out by the state, but also to the subsequent attempts to blame the confrontation on the civilians. One such witness was local businessman John Taylor, who having witnessed the events and the aftermath, set up the Manchester Guardian in response. Although he was in Italy at the time of the massacre, Percy Bysshe Shelley was appalled by the accounts he heard, writing his epic poem *The Masque of Anarchy*, which reflected the growing public outrage at events, and into which Shelley said he poured "the torrent of my indignation."

The troops involved included 600 Hussars, 400 men of the Cheshire cavalry and 400 special constables, who were massed behind the local yeomanry as they intervened to arrested the speakers.



The local and amateur nature of the militia is thought to have provoked some of the violence, with old scores being settled (on both sides) and grudges between old opponents coming to the fore. A local Yeoman is reported to have shouted "There's Saxton... run him through!"

Although reports vary, between 700 and 1000 men are said to have been injured, with an estimated 18 killed outright. By 2pm, the area is said to have been littered with bodies, the crowd of over 50,000 having fled the scene. The speakers were arrested and charged, along with journalists who reported the events. Despite the violence, the deaths and the subsequent outcry, the Hussars and Magistrates were cleared of any wrongdoing on the day by an official enquiry, and they even received messages of congratulation from the Prince Regent.

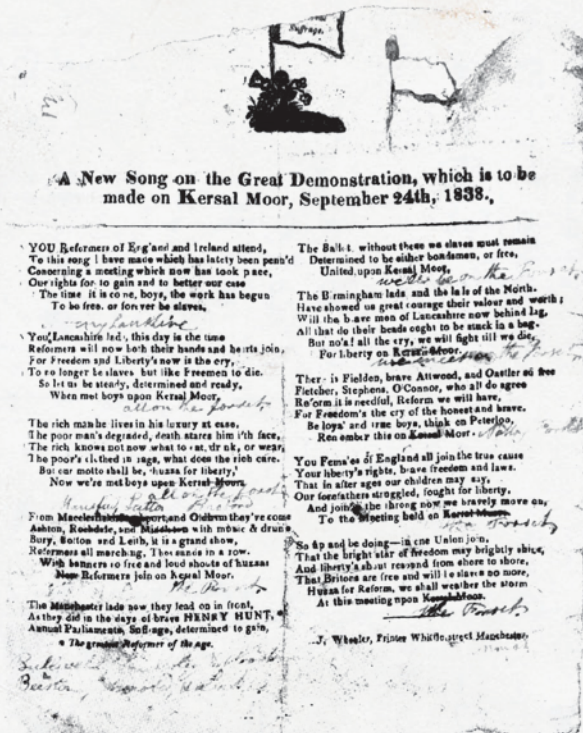


# KERSAL MOOR

This ballad is all about an area of Salford known as Kersal Moor, which was the site of two rallies held by the Chartist Movement in the 1830's. Kersal Moor is now a suburb of Salford and Greater Manchester, with just a few areas of the green open spaces remaining compared to the wide open spaces that dominated in the eighteenth and early nineteenth. These spaces, and the relative proximity to the Salford/Manchester border around Victoria Bridge (the subject of another of the Manchester Ballads) made Kersal Moor a popular meeting point for unionists, reformers and Chartists, and also served as a 'muster point' for local agitators who held protest marches, often meeting up with other contingents from around the region.

The full title of the Song that Edward II have called Kersal Moor is "A New Song on the Great Demonstration which is to be made on Kersal Moor, September 24th 1838", and like many broadside ballads, the song is part propaganda, part narrative and part rallying call.

**"The rich man he lives in his luxury at ease  
The poor mans degraded, death stares in his face  
The rich knows not what to eat, drink or wear,  
The poor's clothed in rags, what does the rich care,  
But our motto shall be 'huzza for liberty',  
Now we're met boys, up on Kersal Moor"**



The Chartist meeting at Kersal Moor was one of many events around Manchester that occurred in the wake of the Peterloo Massacre — another event covered in the Manchester Ballads. Feelings ran high for decades, and the concerns over welfare, housing and inequality are issues that have, in many respects, still not been addressed almost 200 years later.



## The images clearly show the scale of industrialisation over a few decades in the 19th century —

and although this development has continued into the 21st century, there are still some wide open spaces to be found at Kersal Moor.

The history of this area is covered in greater detail in a fascinating book 'A Celebration of Kersal Moor' by local historian Alice Searle. We were very pleased to have welcomed Alice as our special guest recently at a Band on the Wall gig, as Alice is a supporter of the Manchester's Improving Daily project, and is now a convert to rock steady roots fusion!

Images —

Top: View from Kersal Moor towards Manchester by Thomas Pether

Bottom: Manchester from Kersal Moor by William Wyld





## DIRTY OLD TOWN

Edward II have also recorded a version of Dirty Old Town, a song familiar to many, with the narrative of hard times living in Salford recalled by local socialist firebrand Ewan McColl. The lilting melody belies the harsh reality of life in the industrial north. Whilst this song is modern in comparison to the Manchester Ballads, it sits perfectly alongside the other songs as like the social and personal histories that are featured in the Manchester Ballads, it paints a vivid picture of life in the past. Many of the places featured in the older songs are still familiar today, yet the events are from another time. The living conditions and privations that the early Mancunians had to endure are beyond our understanding in many ways, and yet there is much in common with McColl's laterday ballad. Decades later, whilst most of the dirt may have gone, the relationship between the city and the people remains.

## THE INSTRUMENTALS

No Edward II album is complete without an instrumental or two, and we have used some of the themes and musical motifs found in the ballads as the basis for our instrumental versions of several of the Manchester Ballads. 'The Execution of Allen, Gould and Larkin', 'Ragbag' and 'An Amusing and Interesting Dialogue' are interpreted on this CD as rock-steady dance tunes in true E2 style, but in the tradition of the Penny Broadside writers, we have taken melodies and motifs from the ballad tradition as the basis for our arrangements.

Whilst arranging the music for this project, E2 saxophonist and keyboard player Gavin has identified one particular refrain that can be heard throughout the collection — with variants appearing here in 'Peterloo', 'Victoria Bridge' and 'An Amusing and Interesting Dialogue'. The re-use and adaptation of a specific refrain — sometimes even an entire tune — is very much in the ballad tradition, and as part of the ongoing research behind the project, we are currently looking for the earliest use of this particular motif — keep an eye on the website for ongoing news about this and other developments as they occur — and if any of our musically minded listeners have ideas or suggestions about this, please contact us via social media.

Finally, we have included Love Vigilantes, our take on the 1985 classic by iconic Manchester legends, New Order. Aside from being a great tune, it is all the more appropriate as during their early days as Joy Division, the group played several key gigs at Band on the Wall, unknowingly performing their modern tales of Mancunian life right in the heart of the historic centre of ballad production.



## FROM AVALON TO ANCOATS

**The research into the historical context of these songs has been carried out by David Jennings, a local Research Archaeologist with an interest in Industrial era Manchester (and folk music).**

“Twenty years ago I had a memorable Glastonbury Festival. 1995 was a vintage year for the festival and the weather was amazing — dust, rather than the infamous mud, was the only problem. I saw many bands play that weekend, and Edward II is one of those that has continued to delight and surprise over the years. The Avalon Stage, a place many consider to be the spiritual heart of the festival, was home to Edward II that year and whilst the finer details are lost in a blur of cider and time, I know that a good night was had by all. Twenty years later, and Edward II are back with this project — a collection of reworked industrial-era northern songs, and I am a research archaeologist with an interest in industrial era Manchester.

In 2010, I crossed paths with Gavin and Tee from Edward II at Band on the Wall, the iconic Manchester venue that is, in many respects, the Manchester home to E2. The local nature and uniquely Mancunian origins of the songs that feature in this project cropped up in conversation whilst talking to Gavin about the plans that Edward II were making, following a chance conversation with Tim Chatterton — the musician and Band on the Wall education officer who gave Gavin a copy of *The Manchester Ballads*. Although Tim had no way of knowing on that day that his passing conversation

with Gavin would lead to the Manchester’s Improving Daily project, it was the simple loan of an interesting, out-of-print book that was to trigger a sequence of events shedding new light on a largely forgotten part of Mancunian history.

The chance to dig into the history of these songs was an opportunity not to be missed, and I was keen to be involved. The physical excavation of industrial era buildings is ongoing around Manchester, and will no doubt continue as development and gentrification renews and replaces buildings around the city, but alongside the investigation of these tangible remains, there is the opportunity to use material from the creative industries past and present to help interpret and evaluate the cultural identity of people who lived in a version of Manchester that is strangely familiar and yet, at the same time, largely unrecognisable today.

From my perspective as a researcher, in addition to the merits of the project itself, this is a perfect example of how a funded arts venue like Band on the Wall can promote, enrich and preserve the cultural heritage of the wider community, bringing together artists, academics, performers and audiences. Thankfully, the Arts Council and The Heritage Lottery Fund also recognised the merits of the project, and backed the production of various ‘pop-up’ events at places around Manchester that feature in the ballads, along with the recording of the songs that are featured on this album.”

*David Jennings, 2015.*



# EDWARD II THE HISTORY

One of Manchester's lesser known musical exports, Edward II was originally signed to Cooking Vinyl (UK) and Rhythm Safari (US) in the eighties and nineties. Cited by the Guinness Book of Records as 'one of the bands who would be in the running for the title busiest band on the planet' they worked across the world at many international roots festivals and venues.

During the mid eighties Edward the Second emerged from traditional dance sessions at the Victory Club in Cheltenham, where musicians with backgrounds from folk to post punk art rock, were exploring different approaches to the traditional repertoire.

Rather than combine with their natural punk rock sensitivity, the loose collective (which included members of The Mekons, the Three Johns and Elvis Costello's band alongside emerging masters of the English folk revival) decided that a more natural connection would be with the reggae music of Jamaica. This came from the rationale that the two music forms were harmonically very similar, were both clearly folk music and because of the two nations sea-faring heritage. There was also no doubt at the time of the slow and steady impact the West Indian communities, brought to the UK as part of the Windrush migration, was starting to have on British urban culture, and the early Edward II pioneers were heavily involved in the emerging anti-fascist Rock Against Racism movement.

Eventually the collective's centre of gravity moved with John Gill (bass player, producer and assistant engineer on Never Mind the Bollocks) to Manchester, where he soon developed connections with the reggae musicians surrounding Moss Side and specifically the Rastafarian organisation, The Twelve Tribes of Israel. From this fertile ground (and after John Gill's departure) the long standing line-up, familiar to those that followed the band throughout the nineties, was formed.

Featuring the bass and drums of Alton Zebby and T Gad (known for their performances with The Naturalites and 12 Tribes of Israel band), the brass of Gavin Sharp, John Hart and Neil Yates, the well established guitar work of Jon Moore, the virtuosic melodeon of Simon Care and the final addition of Glen Latouche on the vocals, the band began to

## The Musicians —

Jon Moore (Guitars)  
John Hart (Guitar, Trombone)  
Simon Care (Melodeon)  
Tee Carthy (Bass, Vocals)  
David Henry (Drums)  
Elston McKenzie (Guitar, Vocals)  
Glen Latouche (Vocals)  
Gavin Sharp  
(Sax, Keys, Windsynth, Whistle)

## Guests —

The Manchester Session Strings  
Jote Osahn (Violin)  
Susie Gibbon (Violin)  
Greg Morton (Cello)  
Ian Jones (Percussion)  
Sally Cook  
(Vocals on Soldier's Farewell)  
Jennifer Reid (Broadside Balladress)

## Recordings —

Tim Thomas  
(Engineered, mixed and produced by  
Tim Thomas at Blueprint Studios)  
Tee Carthy (Musical Director)  
Gavin Sharp  
(Arranger, Executive Producer)

## The Book —

Written and compiled  
by David Jennings  
Design by Pin ([pin-stud.io](http://pin-stud.io))



work the global roots festival scene. Releasing critically acclaimed album's along the way, including *Wicked Men*, produced by Cooking Vinyl and Big Chill founder, Pete Lawrence, which was licensed in the US by Hilton Rosenthal's (executive producer on the Paul Simon, *Graceland* album) Rhythm Safari label, which led to extensive US touring.

As the band worked through the decade, they increasingly began to take more control of their own destiny and in many ways were DIY pioneers; financing and producing their own releases, negotiating their own licensing and distribution deals and managing their own affairs. In the second half of the decade, a British Council officer happened across the band and, after an initial trial in Budapest, started to send them to perform and run workshops at their offices throughout the world, including Brazil, India, Bangladesh, Egypt, Pakistan and many others.

As the new millennium approached and Alton Zebby confirmed his intention to take the exodus to Ethiopia, the band finally decided to split at the end of 1999. After doing a few reunion gigs after 2009, the band have come back together, inspired by the discovery of the repertoire known as the Manchester Broadsides and the history and stories which lie behind the songs. Produced in Manchester throughout the industrial revolution, this material tells of hardship, politics, social justice and good times as experienced in the nineteenth century.

Often a way of spreading news, promoting events, places or businesses or spreading a political or social message, these songs were designed to have a short shelf life and as such were printed on cheap paper and distributed at the markets around what is now the northern quarter of the city.

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For more stories behind the songs, hi-resolution scans, chord charts and lyric sheets of the broadsides featured on this CD, go to [edwardthesecond.co.uk](http://edwardthesecond.co.uk) and click on the Manchester's Improving Daily link.

Manchester's Improving Daily project  
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**BAND ON  
THE WALL**





1. *Patience Kershaw (excerpt Jennifer Reid)*
2. **Manchester's Improving Daily**
3. **Ragbag**
4. **Dirty Old Town**
5. *A Sprig of Time (excerpt Jennifer Reid)*
6. **Soldier's Farewell to Manchester**
7. **Love Vigilantes**
8. **The Great Flood**
9. *Jone O Grinfield (excerpt Jennifer Reid)*
10. **Peterloo**
11. **A New Song on the Great Demonstration  
which is to be made on Kersal Moor,  
September 24th 1838.**
12. *Victoria Bridge on a Saturday Night (Jennifer Reid)*
13. **Victoria Bridge on a Saturday Night**
14. **Mr Sadler's Balloon**
15. **An Amusing and Interesting Dialogue**
16. **The Execution of Allen, Gould and Larkin**

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