CDSS Sings—See, See, the Cape's in View

by Natty Smith

Many of the songs and dances we learn at folk music events have their roots in the British Isles. One of the notable English traditions that has made a home here in North America is morris dancing. Both traditional and newly-choreographed dances are taught and performed all over the continent by morris teams and teachers at dance workshops—often at CDSS dance weeks over the summer! In addition to the thriving dance form, the morris community keeps alive a strong social singing community. This is where I learn and sing most of my songs.

It is thrilling to share songs with a new community. This past July I helped organize a "Great Morris Exchange" between North America's Maple Morris and England's Morris Offspring.* In addition to practicing the dancing for our show Rootbound, we spent every evening singing all the songs we knew. Unsurprisingly, we knew a lot of the same songs. But the folk process had done its work, and there were exciting differences in all the songs we sang.

One song I enjoyed singing with the folks from Morris Offspring was the Cornish drinking song "See, See, the Cape's in View." In this case, a lot of them knew the same version, because I learned it from the singing of Englishman Jon Boden, on his blog A Folk Song A Day, who, in turn, learned it from Paul Davenport of Sheffield. This is a good song for a pub or crowded room, with its liquor-heavy lyrics and long sustained notes ripe with harmonious potential. I find it may not be the best opener for a raucous social sing, but perfect once people's attentions have been grabbed. Be careful what pitch you start on! The song has quite a wide range, so figure out just how high you can sing on the line "...see, see, the Cape's in view...". And be sure you mean what you say when you sing:

"...for it's he who may not merry merry be shall never taste of iov..."

WEB EXTRA: Hear Jon Boden singing on our website, http://www.cdss.org/cdss-news.html, or go directly to his blog, http://www.afolksongaday.com/2012/11/15/see-see-the-capes-in-view/.

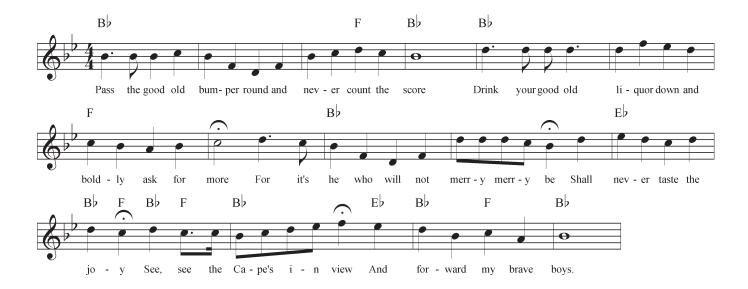


Natty Smith has been singing and dancing in the New England folk music community for his entire life. He can usually be heard singing after morris dancing or while sailing off the Maine coast. "CDSS Sings," which debuted in the last issue, is a column devoted to song and led by Natty and fellow singers Lorraine Lee Hammond and Jesse Pearlman Karlsberg.

* To learn more about Rootbound, see Maple Morris's webpage, http://www.maplemorris.com/. Or read Natty's blog of July 8, http://blog.cdss.org/?p=5045, and audience member Lily Kruskal's blog of August 13, http://blog.cdss.org/?p=5372.

See, See, the Cape's in View

Traditional



Pass the good old bumper round and never count the score Drink your good old liquor down and boldly ask for more For it's he who will not merry merry be Shall never taste the joy See, see the Cape's in view And forward my brave boys.

There's one more thing I'll ask of you before you count the score Give to me the one I love and the key to the cellar door For it's he who will not merry merry be Shall never taste the joy See, see the Cape's in view And forward my brave boys.

Once more unto her Majesty and let the jugs go round Confusion to her enemies wherever they are found For it's he who will not merry merry be Shall never taste the joy See, see the Cape's in view And forward my brave boys.



Tune notation by Peter Barnes