

Oskar Cox Jensen

Christ Church

Napoleon and  
British Popular Song,  
1797-1822

D.Phil. History

Short Abstract  
Napoleon and British Popular Song, 1797-1822  
Oskar Cox Jensen, Christ Church  
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Trinity term 2013

Existing studies of popular culture and popular politics in the long eighteenth century over-favour either the 'culture' or the 'politics'. This thesis contributes to debates on the making of both national and class identity in Britain via intensive analysis of popular song culture, in the context of the Napoleonic Wars. Portrayals of Napoleon himself are used to shape the thesis' source material and the forms of discussion. It argues for the necessity of sympathetic, informed contextualisation of political issues within contemporary cultural processes: that an understanding of the composition/production and performance/consumption of song is a prerequisite of determining songs' relevance and reception. In so doing, it uncovers a nuanced array of attitudes towards both Napoleon and British patriotism, of unsuspected breadth, assertiveness, and idiosyncrasy.

The thesis is divided into two stages of argument. Part I consists of a close and contextualised reading of songs as literary and musical objects. Chapter One, after close historiographical engagement that moves to a focus on Colley's *Britons* and revisionist arguments about British society, discusses those songs originating after Waterloo. Chapter Two considers songs from 1797-1805. Chapter Three considers songs from 1806-15.

Part II builds upon the themes and conclusions of Part I by situating these songs within a lived context. Chapter Four looks at the role of songwriters and printers; Chapter Five at singers; Chapter Six at audiences and reception. Chapter Seven elaborates the overall argument in a synoptic case study of Newcastle.

The conclusion is followed by an appendix, listing the songs most pertinent to the thesis, giving additional bibliographical information. A hard copy (USB) of recordings of a representative selection of these songs is also included. These appendices reinforce the thesis' methodology: to consider songs, not as passive evidence of expression, but as active, dynamic objects.

Long Abstract  
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Existing studies of popular culture and popular politics in the long eighteenth century over-favour either the 'culture' or the 'politics'. This thesis contributes to debates on the making of both national and class identity in Britain via intensive analysis of popular song culture, in the context of the Napoleonic Wars. Portrayals of Napoleon himself are used to shape the thesis' source material and the forms of discussion. It argues for the necessity of sympathetic, informed contextualisation of political issues within contemporary cultural processes: that an understanding of the composition/production and performance/consumption of song is a prerequisite of determining songs' relevance and reception. In so doing, it uncovers a nuanced array of attitudes towards both Napoleon and British patriotism, of unsuspected breadth, assertiveness, and idiosyncrasy.

The thesis is notionally divided into two parts. 'Part I: Songs' consists of a close and contextualised reading of songs as literary and musical objects. The major interpretative arguments of the thesis stem from this engagement. Chapter One begins by establishing the thesis' rationale, situating the argument within the historiography of late-Georgian Britain and the French Revolution. Thompson, Colley, and Semmel are identified as representing three key areas of discourse. It is argued that interdisciplinary approaches, between political and social history on the one hand, and cultural fields (history, musicology, literature) on the other, have largely been found wanting due to an imbalance of engagement with the two areas. The model of Colley's *Britons* is further critiqued, understanding national identity as less unified, and less oppositional to a French Other, than has recently been claimed.

Technical aspects of song culture, and social terminology, are then discussed. Attention is drawn to the different components that comprise a song. The thesis is given a framework and direction by the problematising of an article by Gammon, in which he highlights an apparent discrepancy between a positive post-Waterloo Napoleonic song tradition, and the extreme negativity of wartime broadsides. The validity of the enquiry is tested by close reading of British songs on Napoleon originating subsequent to his exile to St Helena. These are divided into sub-categories: those dealing with socio-economics, the Reform movement, Irish independence, or apolitical subjects. It is shown that the popular British Napoleonic legend after 1815 was not contingent upon post-war circumstances. Its roots must therefore be found in discourse contemporary to the Napoleonic Wars.

Chapter Two thus moves to a close reading of songs from 1797-1805. Rather than take a chronological approach, it begins by addressing the dominant issue of the period, engaging with existing scholarship on the years 1803-5, when a loyalist broadside campaign was motivated by fear of invasion. Critical examination of these songs exposes a nuanced and heterodox set of possible readings, complicating traditional assumptions about the period. This consists of practical aspects of composition, musicianship and authorship, as well as textual analysis. Next, non-loyalist songs are examined: Irish rebel songs, English songs of the Egyptian campaign, and songs heralding the Peace of Amiens. Conditional patriotism, satire, and subaltern perspectives are shown to have fitted more easily into the song form than most loyalist propaganda. Two micro-case studies conclude the chapter. The first considers the Dibdin songwriting family; the second, the song culture of the volunteers. Both endorse broader findings: songs of this period related to the Wars were by no means uniformly xenophobic and loyalist. Though songs of this nature predominate in the topical genre, they were exceptional within wider song traditions.

Chapter Three extends this analysis to 1806-15. Its more naturally chronological approach does not preclude critical, thematic engagement with cultural and political developments within the song corpus. Once more, it begins with loyalist efforts, from 1806-11, as writers searched for promising topical material. From 1810, a comic, domestic strain of songs that unwittingly fed into later portrayals of Napoleon as an everyman anti-hero is identified. This strain, treating Napoleon as a (hapless) father and husband, carried over into later topical songs, rather than giving way to songs on the retreat from Moscow. Two sides of the Peninsular War are then examined: soldiers' songs and songs of victory, and the growing body of anti-war song from the home front. Songs of Napoleon's first exile, and then songs of Waterloo, bring the chronology full circle to those of Chapter One. The evidence of each body of song contributes to the accumulating, broader argument: that popular song as a forum of political discussion had its own rules and conventions that loyalists were unable to master. These songs articulate an array of attitudes that, whilst often political, are rarely partisan: neither loyalists, nor organised radicals, could successfully co-opt the medium.

'Part II: Song' argues that, to take these arguments still further and discriminate confidently between songs in terms of reception, it is necessary to contextualise them with practicalities of creation and performance. Having close-read 'songs' and established a series of significant leads, the thesis thus turns to 'song' as a cultural process.

Chapter Four begins to add human agency to this process by considering the role of songs' creators: writers and printers. Individual songwriters are discussed, and the act of writing, both musically and lyrically. This section draws heavily on theory derived from both musicology and folklore studies, and formulates the concept of 'appropriateness' as key to understanding the effect of these songs. Printers are then examined, and the geographical implications stressed. The emphasis placed by historians of print culture on

the central role of the printer is deemed excessive in this context, though their attention to the role of piracy is instructive. The model formulated is relatively regional and disreputable, as opposed to metropolitan and respectable. The chapter ends in remarking upon printers' dependence upon singers.

Chapter Five, therefore, focuses upon the ballad singer as the central agent in song culture. As with the previous chapter, the figure is considered first, and the act second. Singers' statuses and reputations are examined, in part through representations in literature and visual sources. Fictional portrayals of singers are contrasted with moral-reformist discourse, establishing the singer as a contentious element in society, both beguiling and subversive. Comparisons with Homer are contextualised in the light of the Wars. These external depictions are combined with analysis of individual singers' politics, actions, and modes of life. The ballad singer is shown to have been essentially idiosyncratic and unorthodox. The performative act of singing is then examined musically, materially and spatially, and the importance of repertoires considered. This illuminates issues of control and impact. The analysis engages with both social history and cultural geography. In concluding, the chapter re-endorses the agency of the singer and the centrality of performance to the shaping of songs.

Chapter Six pursues these arguments of appropriateness and impact in analysing the reception of songs by popular audiences. Traditional, quantitative measures of reception are rejected as misleading and insensitive to an ephemeral context. Direct accounts of reception are examined, and considered in terms of self-construction and the history of sentiment. Individual and collective responses are contrasted. A distinction is made between internalised and externalised responses, the latter often being manifested in direct action on the part of audiences. The attempts of authorities to control both space and time are investigated, as pertaining to the audience experience, drawing especially upon the

scholarship of Nicholas Rogers. Reception is then considered beyond the performative moment: what was the significance of a song's afterlife? These afterlives demonstrate significant autonomy and agency on the part of audiences. The relative impact of short-lived, topical songs, and durable, abstracted compositions is then examined. This feeds into broader understandings of 'news' as a phenomenon.

Chapter Seven is a synoptic case study of song culture in Newcastle upon Tyne (referred to hereafter as 'Newcastle') across the period. The choice of city is justified, following a tradition of similar studies, with reference to its political character, the abundance of source material on its popular song culture, and its cultural, especially print-cultural, importance to the northern half of Britain. A contemporary street-map serves to anchor the individuals and places discussed in a comprehensible topography, emphasising the spatial links within local song culture. A chronology of relevant local events contextualises discourse on Napoleon and the Wars within a Northumbrian milieu. Networks of individual writers, printers, performers and audiences are constructed, and songs read in the light of these networks and their preoccupations. This allows a fine degree of discernment when attempting to judge the impact of various songs. Comparisons with other cities are drawn where appropriate. This close focus reveals an operational song culture that exemplifies the thesis' wider findings: subversive, ironic, resistant to external influence, and preoccupied with a local and regional, rather than a national, register of discourse. It is shown that, rather than inculcating widespread loyalism and patriotism, the activities of volunteer forces and propagandists stimulated scepticism and dissent, articulated in song as the most receptive and natural form for popular and especially counter-cultural expression. Though Newcastle is not taken as representative of all British urban centres, the themes that emerge correlate strongly with the preceding chapters. These serve as a corrective to a generation of historiography (in itself revisionist) that has

favoured a loyalist and above all a metropolitan reading of wartime popular politics and culture.

The conclusion highlights these findings, relating them to several perceptive recent works, proposing a similar study of the next fifty years to establish whether the changing circumstances of Victorian song culture were more receptive to the influence of moral and political authorities. It demonstrates that the initially-puzzling Napoleonic legend is satisfactorily explained by the thesis: war-time song culture was inherently receptive to sympathetic renderings of Napoleon, and less suitable for xenophobic propaganda. This was not a discourse born of oppositional, organised radicalism, but a tradition of commentary and lower-class expression rooted in pre-Enlightenment popular culture. In answering a specific political question, the thesis is also shown to have furthered historical appreciation of song as a form.

The appendix collates information on 382 songs of especial relevance to the thesis: title, tune, writer, date, form of publication, Roud number, and my preferred source of consultation. In many cases, not all of this data is available. For the same reason, there is no geographical criterion – incomplete records for other data fields do not prejudice reading of the extant data, but tying songs to known locations, in ignorance of others, would be misleading. This database allows the reader ease of access to basic information without cluttering the main text of the thesis, and in itself constitutes a useful resource for further study.

This appendix is supplemented by a hard copy (USB) of a set of recordings. These are reconstructions of a representative selection of songs in the thesis with known tunes. As far as possible, the instruments, arrangements, production and interpretation are in accordance with contemporary popular practice, though it has not proven practical to employ a wide range of regional, dialect singers.

## Acknowledgements

My thanks to staff at the Bodleian Library, Cambridge University Library, Newcastle University Library, Nottingham University Library, British Library, Huntington Library, London Metropolitan Archives, National Archives, Tyne and Wear Archives, and West Sussex Record Office, for their assistance. Especial thanks to the British Museum for permitting the replication of images from their collection in this thesis. I am indebted to the indefatigable spirit and keen wits of my two supervisors, Mark Philp and Kathryn Gleadle. In addition, I benefited at various times from the wisdom and suggestions of David Atkinson, Guy Beiner, Giles Bergel, Mike Broers, Mary-Ann Constantine, Patricia Corfield, Oliver Cox, John Gardner, Bob Harris, Tim Hitchcock, David Hopkin, Jo Innes, David Kennerley, Ian Newman, Mike Pickering, Gerald Porter, Sigrid Rieuwerts and Andy Rouse. Emma Whipday proofread; Freyja Cox Jensen provided experience, violin, and the requisite cynicism; both sang.

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## List of Abbreviations and Conventions

BM	British Museum
Bod.	Bodleian Library Broadside Ballads ( <a href="http://ballads.bodleian.ox.ac.uk">ballads.bodleian.ox.ac.uk</a> )
FARNE	Folk Archive Resource North East ( <a href="http://www.folknortheast.com">www.folknortheast.com</a> )
Madden	Madden Ballads, Cambridge University Library
Newcastle	Newcastle upon Tyne
ODNB	Oxford Dictionary of National Biography ( <a href="http://www.oxforddnb.com">www.oxforddnb.com</a> )
OED	Oxford English Dictionary ( <a href="http://www.oed.com">www.oed.com</a> )
POB	The Proceedings of the Old Bailey, 1674-1913 ( <a href="http://www.oldbaileyonline.org">www.oldbaileyonline.org</a> )

Quotation: All quotations retain their original spelling and grammar. [*sic.*] is employed only within quotations of otherwise standard, accurate English. Where the dialect of a lyric provides a barrier to comprehension, a gloss or paraphrase is given on the relevant line, within square brackets.

Song references: Songs are named, and a writer given where known, in the text or footnote. Further bibliographical information is truncated to an appendix number. Consultation of the appendix will provide my preferred source for any given song, in addition to supplementary details (where known) such as tune, form of contemporary publication, and Roud number.

An underlined song title indicates a recorded version in the appendix's supplement.

Unless stated otherwise, place of publication is presumed to be London, in both footnotes and bibliography.

## Part I: Songs

## Chapter One

### The Songs I: After the War

This is not a thesis about Napoleon. Rather, it poses a question about the representation of Napoleon in popular song, the answering of which sheds light upon broader historiographical questions. How far was popular culture in this period a means of self-expression and self-definition on the part of a nascent working class, and how far a means of exerting socio-political control on the part of a loyalist and moralising elite? Is the judgement of Linda Colley's *Britons*, which regards this period as a cornerstone in the creation of a united British identity, a fair one?<sup>1</sup> What were the outcomes of the grand experiment at the heart of this thesis: that of conducting popular politics through the medium of popular song?

This thesis seeks to answer these questions via analysis of the extant record of British popular song related to Napoleon, and reconstruction of how those songs were produced, performed, and received. This opening chapter will frame the thesis' structure by posing a question derived from Vic Gammon: how to explain the discrepancy between war-time (negative) and post-war (popular) British songs on Napoleon. To that end, an analysis of songs from after 1815 is undertaken that affirms the positive nature of post-war song. Hence the end date of the thesis: '1822' is a symbolic year, signifying the period after Napoleon's death in 1821. Songs originating as late as the Victorian era are in fact incorporated into this analysis, but we are not concerned with the posthumous period for its own sake. Further enquiry into this post-war period suggests that answers are to be found in the first half of the equation: was wartime opinion of Napoleon so unremittingly negative? This constitutes the period largely under discussion, 1797-1815: 1797 rather

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<sup>1</sup> L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*, Revised edn (Yale, 2009).

than 1793, because 1797 was the first year in which Napoleon rose to any degree of cultural or political notice in Britain.

Before this analysis of songs may be attempted, it is necessary to situate this work within existing historiography. Specifically, this discussion will move to close engagement with ideas of the wartime British nation, in a revision of Colley's account of a Britain united against a French 'Other' that comes closer to Thompson's conception of a dissident working class. It begins, however, rather more broadly.

The period of the Napoleonic, as opposed to Revolutionary, Wars, constitutes something of a lost period for cultural, social, and political historians. Two brief episodes – the invasion scares of 1803-5 and the Luddite risings of 1812 – have received great attention. Yet there can be no comparison with the wealth of scholarship on the 1790s. Equally, much work exists on the period after Waterloo, interested in popular reformist movements and, ultimately, Chartism. It is the earlier period of the 1790s that does more to inform this thesis; a historiography that has undergone several fruitful revisionary periods.

E.P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* wrested the field away from economic theorists by historicised focus upon the cultural existence of its subjects.<sup>2</sup> His successors have effectively divided this socio-political ground. One group has concentrated upon leisure, custom and habits.<sup>3</sup> The other has centred on organised political activity, often manifested culturally, and generally analysed as text.<sup>4</sup> Hugh Cunningham moved from the former to the latter in the space of the year.<sup>5</sup> Very few scholars have kept

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<sup>2</sup> E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, Revised edn (1991).

<sup>3</sup> E.g. J.M. Golby & A.W. Purdue, *The Civilisation of the Crowd: Popular Culture in England, 1750-1900* (1984), or E. Griffin, 'Popular Culture in Industrialising England', *Historical Journal*, 45 (2002), pp.619-35, idem, *England's Revelry: A History of Popular Sports and Pastimes, 1660-1830* (Oxford, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> E.g. K. Gilmartin, 'Popular Radicalism and the Public Sphere', *Studies in Romanticism*, 33, no.4 (1994), pp.549-57, idem, "'Study to Be Quiet": Hannah More and the Invention of Conservative Culture in Britain', *ELH*, 70, no. 2 (2003), pp.493-540, & idem, *Writing Against Revolution: Literary Conservatism in Britain, 1792-1832* (Cambridge, 2007), or P. Harling, 'Leigh Hunt's *Examiner* and the Language of Patriotism', *English Historical Review*, 111, no.444 (1996), pp.1159-1181.

<sup>5</sup> H. Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution, c.1780-c.1880* (1980), idem, 'The Language of Patriotism, 1750-1914', *History Workshop* 12 (1981), pp.8-33.

these areas united. Among them are Ian Dyck, Nicholas Rogers, and James Epstein.<sup>6</sup> Rogers' use of traditional festival to inform his reading of popular politics is especially pertinent to the aims of this thesis. John Barrell has identified a slightly different schism, yet his call to arms applies equally to the division above:

Historians of this period... have characteristically tended to describe its political history without much reference to the ramifications of political conflict beyond the area that can be thought of as "directly" political, in the wider culture or in daily life. Historians of literature and art, on the other hand, have increasingly focused their attention on the politics of culture in the period, but... have frequently been content to rely on each other's ready-made and very broad-brush accounts [of politics]... A multidisciplinary approach... is the only approach which can attempt to suggest the extent to which the whole life of a nation was believed to have been penetrated by political suspicions and restructured by political conflict.<sup>7</sup>

Barrell privileges the agency of 'political conflict', which many have understood as a conflict between loyalists and radicals. This binary, though always relevant, proves less culturally useful in the period 1797-1815 than in the earlier 1790s. Yet the methodology is good. This thesis seeks to reconcile the two areas in its approach. Its initial focus is informed by work on the contested language of patriotism, exemplified by Cunningham's bold contentions in comparing anti-invasion broadsides with the writings of William Frend.<sup>8</sup> This close reading is enriched by attention to the creative, performative, and reflective dimensions of song. The most important literature in this latter area comes, not from historicised studies such as Roy Palmer's seminal *The Sound of History*, but from more specialised areas of musicology and folklore.<sup>9</sup> Much of the most interesting work has appeared in recent years, in particular Katy Barclay's reading of authorship, Marcello Sorce Keller's analysis of the ideology of music, and Michael Bywater's adept amateur

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<sup>6</sup> C. I. Dyck, *William Cobbett and Rural Popular Culture* (Cambridge, 1992), A. Howkins & C. I. Dyck, "The Time's Alteration": Popular Ballads, Rural Radicalism and William Cobbett', *History Workshop* 23 (1987), pp.20-38; N. Rogers, *Crowds, Culture, and Politics in Georgian Britain* (Oxford, 1998), idem, 'Crowds and Political Festival in Georgian England', in T. Harris (ed.), *The Politics of the Excluded, c.1500-1850* (Basingstoke, 2001), pp.233-64; J.A. Epstein, *Radical Expression: Political Language, Ritual, and Symbol in England, 1790-1850* (Oxford, 1994), idem, *In Practice: Studies in the Language and Culture of Popular Politics in Modern Britain* (Stanford, 2003).

<sup>7</sup> J. Barrell, *The Spirit of Despotism: Invasions of Privacy in the 1790s* (Oxford, 2006), p.15.

<sup>8</sup> Cunningham, 'The Language of Patriotism', pp.8-15.

<sup>9</sup> R. Palmer, *The Sound of History: Songs and Social Comment* (Oxford, 1988).

theorisation of busking, derived from contemporary fieldwork.<sup>10</sup> In stressing the importance of performance to the construction of selfhood by the singer, Barclay raises theoretical issues that inform discussions of singing in Chapter Five. Keller is acutely sensitive to the role of listening and music as a signifier of identity, matters crucial to considerations of audience in Chapter Six. Bywater's interest in liminality and the control of space and time, though his subject is the twenty-first century, are especially relevant to this period, as seen throughout Part II. Robert Darnton's *Poetry and the Police* also breaks new methodological ground by including links to recordings of the songs discussed – an excellent innovation only hampered by anachronistic arrangement and production.<sup>11</sup>

This focus on enacted song culture has produced several excellent social historical studies in areas as disparate as Renaissance Florence, and, more pertinently, nineteenth-century Ireland, yet none of these have contributed significantly to dialogue between cultural and *political* history.<sup>12</sup> Numerous articles have restated the significance of performance to a song's meaning; of the need to unite music, social space, and politics. Worthy sentiments – yet these articles are rarely followed by actual research.<sup>13</sup> In fact, the most perceptive study of how the idiosyncrasies and conventions of performance can alter or subvert political meaning takes as its subject the stage, rather than song.<sup>14</sup> In our

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<sup>10</sup> K. Barclay, 'Composing the Self: Gender, Subjectivity and Scottish Balladry', *Cultural and Social History*, 7, no.3 (2010), pp.337-53; M. Sorce Keller, 'Why is Music So Ideological, and Why Do Totalitarian States Take It So Seriously? A Personal View from History and the Social Sciences', *Journal of Musicological Research*, 26, no.2-3 (2007), pp.91-122; M. Bywater, 'Performing Spaces: Street Music and Public Territory', *Twentieth-Century Music*, 3, no.1 (2007), pp.97-120.

<sup>11</sup> R. Darnton, *Poetry and the Police: Communication Networks in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (2010).

<sup>12</sup> R. Salzberg & M. Rospoche, 'Street Singers in Italian Renaissance Urban Culture and Communication', *Cultural and Social History*, 9, no.1 (2012), pp.9-26; C. Neilands, 'Irish Broadside Ballads: Performers and Performances', *Folk Music Journal*, 6, no.2 (1991), pp.209-22, B. Ó Madagáin, 'Functions of Irish Song in the Nineteenth Century', *Béalóideas*, 53 (1985), pp.130-216.

<sup>13</sup> Often these are reviews or introductions, e.g. P. Connell & N. Leask (eds.), *Romanticism and Popular Culture in Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge, 2009), pp.18, 29, or M.S.C. Smith, 'Review Article: The French Revolution, British Cultural Politics, and Recent Scholarship across the Disciplines', *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, 63, no. 3 (2000), pp.407-28. One full-length article that fails to deliver is K. Bowan & P.A. Pickering, "'Songs for the Millions": Chartist Music and Popular Aural Tradition', *Labour History Review*, 74, no.1 (2009), pp.44-63.

<sup>14</sup> H.M. Burke, 'The Revolutionary Prelude: The Dublin Stage in the Late 1770s and Early 1780s', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 22, no.3 (1998), pp.7-18.

specific context, this sensitivity is rare. Michael Davis approaches it when discussing the songs of Spence and his contemporaries, in an excellent article that otherwise consolidates, rather than builds upon, our previous understanding of song at this time: ‘Songs like this were deliberately didactic. Their lyrics intended to be politically instructive, but often they must have been virtually impossible to sing.’<sup>15</sup> Perhaps historians are averse to making what can come across as a subjective value-judgement. Yet these judgements are valid, when informed by an appreciation of the historicised values of the song form.

Two historians in particular loom over this thesis: Thompson and Colley. Palmer credits the former for his positive attitude to song in *The Making of the English Working Class*: ‘ballads... are woven into the narrative. They are accepted as historical material, a matter of fact, which is refreshing by comparison with the attitude of many others, before and since.’<sup>16</sup> Thompson is perhaps not as naïve as he is painted: it would be rash to accept popular songs *en masse* as unfiltered evidence of working-class opinion. Yet it is fair to say that song is not a strong point of Thompson’s thesis. Singers are alluded to variously (and inconsistently) as government mouthpieces, as one among many disreputable features of fairs, and as facilitators of Luddite, satirical, and radical discourse, bringing the printed word to the illiterate: generally in these instances, they are passive mediums.<sup>17</sup> Songs are treated as reflective rather than active objects – for example, of celebration of Trafalgar and the British tar.<sup>18</sup> Thompson’s influence in this thesis is not to do with song, but rather the discourse he has generated about class, politics, and the use of cultural forms by workers to resist authority: culture as both subaltern social signifier and as subject to

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<sup>15</sup> M.T. Davis, “‘An Evening of Pleasure Rather than Business’: Songs, Subversion and Radical Sub-Culture in the 1790s”, *Journal for the Study of British Cultures*, 12, no.2 (2005), p.119.

<sup>16</sup> Palmer, *The Sound of History*, p.8.

<sup>17</sup> Thompson, *The Making*, pp.145; 444; 611, 616, 782, 787-8.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.497, 663-4.

authoritarian attempts at control and repression. As he summarises it himself, ‘The process of social discipline was not uncontested.’<sup>19</sup>

Colley makes little use of song in *Britons* in relation to the Napoleonic period besides superficial reference to ‘The Pitman’s Revenge Against Buonaparte’, a more complex song than she credits it, as expressing a desire for violence for its own sake.<sup>20</sup> This is accompanied by a single sentence: ‘The cult of heroic endeavour and aggressive maleness that was so pronounced in patrician art and literature at this time, was just as prominent in popular ballads and songs.’<sup>21</sup> The fascinating (and accurate) implication here, of a connection between elite and popular cultural forms, is not teased out further. Nor does she make any further use of the role of song as an instrument of propaganda in her narrative of the unification of the Isles under a loyalist-nationalist banner. Colley too is of greater interest in a broader socio-political sense. Revisionism of her argument has come so far that it is easy to forget that on first publication, she was attacked in *The Times* for her radicalism, undermining the immutable truth of Britishness by charting its artificial, historically-contingent creation.<sup>22</sup> This thesis questions Colley’s verdict, not the process she describes, arguing against the successful inculcation of a loyalist identity. It is understood that, in revising an earlier generation of largely socialist historiography, Colley *et al.* undertook essential, insightful work called for by Thompson himself.<sup>23</sup> Yet the pendulum has swung too far: rather than complicating a too-radical discourse, Colley has superimposed another that is too loyalist.

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p.443.

<sup>20</sup> Colley, *Britons*, pp.310-11. The song is by George Cameron, Appendix no.273.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p.309.

<sup>22</sup> M. Johnson, ‘Muffling inclusiveness: some notes towards an archaeology of the British’, in S. Lawrence (ed.), *Archaeologies of the British: Explorations of identity in Great Britain and its colonies 1600-1945* (2003), p.21.

<sup>23</sup> Thompson, *The Making*, p.917.

Matthew Johnson, who reminds us of Colley's initial reception, does so in a geographical revision which borrows Collini's useful term 'muffling inclusiveness'.<sup>24</sup> The term is shorthand for the subsuming of regional and national identities to a south-eastern English identity. 'Muffling' has long been a failing of scholarship in this area. Thompson makes a clear and specific apology for the geographical limitations of his research and is conscientious in keeping England, not Britain, in mind.<sup>25</sup> Whether national borders were the correct place to draw his line is another matter. Colley, it shall be seen, seeks to exclude Ireland from her 'Britain'.<sup>26</sup> Many others have failed to address the issue, writing 'Britain', 'Britons' and 'British', yet drawing almost exclusively on London sources – a muffling that I set out, not to avoid, but to counter.<sup>27</sup> The third author with a claim to special relevance is explicit in this tendency: Stuart Semmel, in *Napoleon and the British*.<sup>28</sup>

Metropolitan London publications... overshadow provincial ones in these pages (as they did, of course, in the general printed corpus). Though one key theme of this book is national identity, I do not propose to tease out national or regional variations in conceptions of Napoleon. I am struck by the similarities and continuities, not the differences, between productions of different geographical origins... The separate question of Ireland lies beyond the boundaries of this study.<sup>29</sup>

This approach is sound, on the basis of the material he discusses. The statement is however contradicted in every particular – London predominance, homogeneity, the separateness of Ireland – in the evidence pertaining to popular song, as will become increasingly clear as this thesis develops. Though Semmel's is an excellent work, the preoccupations and the findings of that work and this are entirely dissimilar.

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<sup>24</sup> Johnson, 'Muffling Inclusiveness', p.18.

<sup>25</sup> Thompson, *The Making*, pp.12-13.

<sup>26</sup> Colley, *Britons*, p.8.

<sup>27</sup> Esp. below, pp.25-6, Chapter Seven, *passim*, O. Cox Jensen, 'The Travels of John Magee: Tracing the geographies of Britain's itinerant print-sellers, 1789-1815', *Journal of Cultural and Social History*, 11, no.1 (2014) (forthcoming).

<sup>28</sup> S. Semmel, *Napoleon and the British* (Yale, 2004).

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p.7.

As far as Semmel deals with popular song, it is in relation to the broadside campaign of 1803-5, and in that light, his work is discussed in Chapter Two.<sup>30</sup> A further three paragraphs discuss post-1815 songs, but merely conclude that they are ‘surprisingly positive’.<sup>31</sup> It is noted that ‘One remarkable verse reiterated the array of heroic British names so often invoked in the broadsides of 1803 – but now added Napoleon to their ranks’.<sup>32</sup> Yet he draws no conclusions from this about the relationship between the two bodies of song. His claim that the thousands of earlier loyalist productions are ‘evidence of what the British people were being told about Napoleon and France – and what loyalists feared the British people might be thinking’ is by contrast a typically nuanced appreciation of the complexities of propaganda and mentality, which helps to shape my investigation into both the motives behind songs’ production, and ways of accessing how they were received.<sup>33</sup> His general observation that ‘Napoleon served as a lens through which to scrutinize Britain’s own identity, government, and history’ is especially pertinent to that context.<sup>34</sup> But it is also symptomatic of his interest in an overtly partisan, politicised debate carried out in a bourgeois public sphere, rather than on the streets and in the fairs and public houses of this thesis, which will ultimately conclude that conscious political ideology was largely inimical to popular song.

This is only partially a thesis about class. Class, Thompson posits, is a relationship, not a thing.<sup>35</sup> The thesis is permeated by that relationship, yet seeks to demonstrate that the operation of popular culture was not entirely subordinated to that relationship. It is shown that attempts to subvert the song culture of the masses from above were largely failures, whilst that culture continued to revitalise itself from below. These processes may be read,

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., pp.43-4.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p.227.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p.228.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p.44.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p.2.

<sup>35</sup> Thompson, *The Making*, pp.8-10.

after Thompson, within a narrative of working-class self-creation: the rejection of imposed values in favour of its own. Yet other factors are also at play: the fruitful creative dialogue between the composition of popular song and polite verse; the low social origins of some loyalist writers; the magpie tendencies of popular taste, as keen to assimilate the music of the polite stage, as that of the street. This thesis is highly relevant to the development of working-class identity, but is not limited to a partisan scope: the fierce autonomy of popular song culture was capable of resisting all politics, not just the politics of authority.

This is not a thesis about religion. Only secular music is examined, although the influence of church music, the pulpit, and a religious education is briefly considered, as is the role of Dissent. This is a thesis firstly about songs, and then about song. ‘Song’ as a form with its own values and conventions, central to which is the understanding that songs are musical objects whose affective meanings are determined in their performance – that live in the air and ear, not simply on the page. Historians have learned how to discuss art. Roy Porter’s 1986 dictum in the *London Review of Books*, that we must ‘analyse... prints not just as “evidence but as “art”, with its own conventions’, should equally be applied to song.<sup>36</sup> Popular song in this period constituted a mix of oral and print-based traditions in ongoing dialogue, rejuvenated by new writing from within, and by more elite productions either introduced or appropriated from above: the theatre, the pleasure garden, and the pens of moral and political activists. The print record was facilitated by ephemeral printers who produced large, cheap, single-sided ‘broadsides’, priced at a halfpenny and consisting of either one or two songs, or garlands, chapbooks and songbooks of between three and twenty-odd songs, selling for up to sixpence but offering greater value per song. These printers operated from small towns as well as major cities, and indulged in a healthy degree of piracy. Songs were distributed, performed, and sold (or, if subsidised, given

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<sup>36</sup> R. Porter, cited by J. Brewer in D. Bindman, *The Shadow of the Guillotine: Britain and the French Revolution* (1989), p.9.

*gratis*) primarily by ballad singers: disreputable and wildly varied figures that form the subject of Chapter Five. Singers were largely peripatetic, either travelling the country or working a provincial circuit from an urban hub. No ballad singer would sing topical political songs alone: song culture consisted of rich and varied repertoires, and popular audiences were as accustomed as polite audiences to performances that spanned a range of genres.

I begin, it is true, with an analysis of lyrics rather than with the mechanics of this culture, though accompanied by an appreciation of tune and circumstance. This initial ‘reading’ is within most historians’ comfort zone, my own included. It is a crucial exercise, because the greater part of songwriting in this period, and the greater intention to convey meaning, lay in the lyrics. It is valuable and original as long as we consider potential readings, rather than absolutes. It is the subsequent situating of these songs within their performative environment that allows us to evaluate which meanings obtained for contemporary audiences. Hence the sequencing of two broadly distinct halves of this thesis: there is no profit in proceeding to the performance without a keen appreciation of the songs that were performed. A song’s life-cycle begins without a context, only a tune and a lyric. It is a private object. Dissemination, performance, reception: these elements are necessarily later stages in a song’s development. When we move to the latter, then theoretical considerations will benefit from always having a song or scenario in mind from the earlier chapters. The accumulation and examination of this body of song and its internal relations – 382 songs, representative of a far larger number, form the thesis’ primary source base – is in itself a rewarding exercise, and it is imagined that Part I will be of particular interest to ballad scholars and folklorists, as well as historians and musicologists.

Structurally, the thesis proceeds from songs to song, as described in the abstracts, above. It is situated within the political debates catalysed by Thompson and Colley, but engages unreservedly with the lived conditions of popular song culture, extending its relevance beyond – and beneath – popular politics. Its ostensible subject, Napoleon, was a political figure introduced into a cultural sphere. To understand that process, it is essential to engage with the full ramifications of the latter, cultural context, rather than viewing cultural processes exclusively through the prism of the political discourse of the 1790s and 1800s. I formulate my specific exploration in response to a problem posed by Gammon: the disparity between post-war songs favourable to Napoleon, and a hostile war-time body of songs.<sup>37</sup> Yet in so doing, I hope to suggest one way of surmounting a difficulty identified by Mark Philp:

While the loyalty of the common people has been studied by their participation in local riots, rites, rituals, monarchical pageants, and volunteer movements, and, at a distance, in the analysis of their reasons for contentment... there is little work (probably because it is so difficult to do) on the private and sub-cultural worlds which lay behind loyalist performances.<sup>38</sup>

This thesis aims to constitute work of that kind, by scrutinising the act of performance, partisan or otherwise, to establish the effect of song upon individuals and communities. Before turning to the specifics of song, it is necessary further to situate this study within the historiographical context of those individuals and communities, establishing what is meant by plebeian British society, and how it was politically constituted in this particular period. This engagement with debates on the ‘nation’ is an essential precondition of understanding the issues at stake in the songs that will be discussed.

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<sup>37</sup> Below, p.34.

<sup>38</sup> M. Philp, ‘Vulgar Conservatism’, *English Historical Review*, 110, no.435 (1995), p.65.

## **Britain: Society and Nationalism**

In seeking to understand the complexities of popular song culture in Britain, it is unhelpful to begin with a ‘conventional’ view of British mass society, identity, and the effect of the Wars thereon. More than any other modern historian, it is Colley who – in seeking to elucidate ‘those forces and crises that contributed towards the forging of a workmanlike British nation and national ideology’ – has perpetuated the old notion that ‘Time and time again, war with France brought Britons... into confrontation with an obviously hostile Other and encouraged them to define themselves collectively against it’, identifying the Napoleonic conflict as the key moment in this homogenising process.<sup>39</sup>

The nuances of Colley’s argument are absent from previous generations of scholarship. The dangers of reading actual unity into the evidence of an overwhelming number of broadsides and pamphlets are best illustrated by the introduction to *The Warning Drum*, published – significantly – in 1944. Its authors allude to ‘a complete unity such as no other nation has ever attained’ as peculiarly English (note: not British), manifested in such episodes as the defeat of the General Strike of 1926.<sup>40</sup> It apparently did not occur to them that the millions of striking workers were themselves part of the nation, and thus hardly united with the strike’s breakers. Such thinking permeates their editing of hundreds of loyalist broadsides.

A generation earlier, Henry Morse Stephens trod a fine line between what may be read as either ingenuousness or arch scepticism:

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<sup>39</sup> Colley, *Britons*, pp.xiv, 6.

<sup>40</sup> F.J. Klingberg & S.B. Hustvedt (eds.), *The Warning Drum: The British Home Front Faces Napoleon* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1944), p.1.

First in Britain arose a burst of national patriotism under the threat of invasion from the camp at Boulogne; the navy became the national service; Nelson became the national hero; national volunteers were raised and drilled for national defence; Tom Dibdin wrote his sea-songs; and Wordsworth in a series of splendid sonnets expressed the fullness of the national idea. From the divided country of the War of American Independence, from the unwilling opponent of republican France, governed by Pitt's coercion acts, with an army recruited from the jails and the poor-houses and a mutinous navy manned by the press-gang, arose a united and patriotic nation.<sup>41</sup>

The final sentence is susceptible to an ironic interpretation: intentionally or not, Stephens presents this unification through war as improbable and unprecedented. Colley uncomplicates his implausible reading, locating the Napoleonic era at the heart of a longer story, which she excuses thus from teleology: 'the growing traction of ideas of Britain and of British identity was in part evidenced by some of the very arguments and tensions that this process provoked.'<sup>42</sup> Her thesis has not gone unchallenged since the first publication of *Britons* in 1992; among many others, J.E. Cookson, Robin Eagles and Jennifer Mori have sought to revise or counter its central argument by emphasising the importance of tensions within this ideology, stressing the failings of the volunteer movement and the strength of oppositional voices.<sup>43</sup> Katrina Navickas especially has complicated the picture of a united nation, in terms of geography as much as ideology.<sup>44</sup> Yet still the fundamentals of *Britons* affect our assumptions about this period and these people. It is impossible to approach popular culture during the Wars without first complicating two central tenets of this supposed genesis of British nationalism: Otherness, and unity.

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<sup>41</sup> H. Morse Stephens, 'Nationality and History', *American Historical Review*, 21, no.2 (1916) p.230.

<sup>42</sup> Colley, *Britons*, p.xv.

<sup>43</sup> J.E. Cookson, *The British Armed Nation, 1793-1815* (Oxford, 1997), R. Eagles, *Francophilia in English Society, 1748-1815* (2000), J. Mori, 'Languages of Loyalism: Patriotism, Nationhood and the State in the 1790s', *English Historical Review*, 118, no.475 (2003), pp.33-58.

<sup>44</sup> E.g. K. Navickas, *Loyalism and Radicalism in Lancashire, 1798-1815* (Oxford, 2009).

## **Otherness**

Before questioning the utility of Otherness as a concept, we must decide who the Other was. In *Britons*, it is Catholic and French.<sup>45</sup> This definition is clear, simple, uncomplicated: the precise opposite of the reality of Britain's conflicts during the Wars. Admittedly, the primary enemy was of course France, and the majority of the French were Catholic. Yet the Revolutionary conflict became, after Amiens, a war against Napoleon rather than against France. The French were repeatedly characterised as a people tyrannised by the Corsican usurper; war was waged to restore the Bourbon monarch to his rightful throne. The rhetoric of the second Restoration and the Waterloo campaign in particular stressed this end, with striking parallels to the recent war waged, not against Iraq, but on its behalf, to topple the tyrant Saddam Hussein. Loyalist uses of Napoleon fundamentally complicated definition of the Other.

Some things did not change. Britain's secondary enemies for the majority of the Wars were as they had been for several centuries: the Dutch and the Spanish. The primary theatres of war for the British army were the Low Countries and Spain (though not always as hostile territory). Of Britain's five great naval victories, Camperdown (1797) was a defeat of the Dutch, Cape St. Vincent (1797) a defeat of the Spanish, and Trafalgar itself an action against the combined French and Spanish fleets, off the coast of Spain. Britain's conquests in both Indies and at the Cape were largely of Dutch, not French, colonies. The two other significant military opponents of Britain were the United States – who inflicted the only psychologically significant defeats upon the Royal Navy – and Denmark. Though sorely neglected by historians, the Baltic theatre was central. Danish privateers were as hazardous to British trade as the French, and the two large-scale actions against

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<sup>45</sup> Colley, *Britons*, pp.xix, xxvi.

Copenhagen (1801 and 1807) posed the Wars' greatest moral problems to the British patriot. Further east, even Russia spent years as an enemy of Britain.

Colley suggests that we are to read French as synonymous with Catholic, and British with Protestant.<sup>46</sup> It is possible that during the 1790s, French 'atheism' may have fulfilled the same rhetorical and ideological functions as 'papism'. But the period from 1798 tears up this neat dichotomy. Napoleon, loyalists stressed, 'turned Turk' in Egypt, introducing a heathen Other into Christendom.<sup>47</sup> Britain fought to restore a Catholic king – indeed, several Catholic kings, once the Spanish, Portuguese, and Neapolitan dynasties are added, let alone the host of deposed Catholic rulers across the late Holy Roman Empire. Napoleon not only dismantled that most Romish-named of institutions in 1806; he also imprisoned the Pope himself. Britain was colluding with Ancien Regime, Catholic Europe, to restore the authority of Rome.

The Wars made a nonsense of already anachronistic Protestant versus Catholic allegiances. Of Britain's enemies, the Dutch, Danes and Americans were generically Protestant. Of her sometime allies, only Prussia and Sweden could be characterised thus, while Britain's firmest friends, Portugal and Austria, were as Catholic as could be. Once Spain was occupied by the French, Britain's primary efforts involved a close working relationship with their greatest traditional Catholic enemy, directly subsidising Catholic guerrilla priests, with the aim of restoring His Most Catholic Majesty: a restoration in aid of which many civilian English Protestants enthusiastically volunteered. Russia, constantly in the public eye during the later years of the conflict, added the exoticism of Orthodoxy to the mix, complicating things still further.<sup>48</sup> More than a decade earlier, British troops were

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<sup>46</sup> Colley, *Britons*, pp.xx, xxvi.

<sup>47</sup> H. More, 'A King or a Consul?', Appendix no.169.

<sup>48</sup> M.S. Anderson, 'British Public Opinion and the Russia Campaign of 1812', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 34, no.83 (1956), pp.408-25.

fighting alongside Muslim Turks at Acre: the Black Legend used to tarnish Napoleon relied heavily on provoking horror at his ‘massacre’ of Muslims.<sup>49</sup>

It is clear that the mass of the populace was alive to these intricacies: Chapter Six analyses plebeian enthusiasm for the consumption and debate of news, especially with regard to Napoleon’s campaigns, aided by increasing levels of literacy and working-class sociability.<sup>50</sup> Popular songs demonstrate awareness of far-flung dynastic upheavals.<sup>51</sup> London’s poor flocked to see the visiting monarchs of Russia and Prussia in 1814.<sup>52</sup> Taken as a whole the Wars, with their shifting alliances – including over a year’s peace during which Napoleon was widely fêted in Britain – defied definition of the Other as uniformly French and Catholic.

If one rejects or marginalises this cosmopolitan model of awareness among the people, especially in inland English towns, then a new problem arises: that for many the real Other was not the foreigner, but the man down the road. Colley is alive to these regional divisions, citing East Anglia and Yorkshire as especially insular.<sup>53</sup> Yet she treats evidence of localism as generative of national patriotism, ignoring the tensions it could generate.<sup>54</sup> Particularly in the north, local identities often trumped the national, volunteer and anti-invasion songs reserving their vitriol, not for French Catholics, but for a rival industrial town.<sup>55</sup> No one with a passing acquaintance with the concept of the ‘derby match’ in football will be surprised at this. Thus, as Navickas writes, Britishness:

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<sup>49</sup> S. Cottrell, ‘English Views of France and the French, 1789-1815’ (Oxford University D.Phil. thesis, 1990), pp.46, 238.

<sup>50</sup> Chapter Six, pp.260-3. See also Thompson, *The Making*, pp.461-6, 781-3.

<sup>51</sup> E.g. Cobbett’s ‘A New Song, Called Little Boney in the Dumps, or, Brother Joe’s March from Madrid’, Appendix no.231.

<sup>52</sup> C.F. Lawler, ‘More Kings!’ (1814).

<sup>53</sup> Colley, *Britons*, pp.298-9.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p.311.

<sup>55</sup> Chapter Two, pp.91-2.

was never a monolithic or homogeneous concept. Nor did it progress from confusion and localism to embody clear, national principles shared by all. Geographical identities have always been multiple, changing, overlapping, and contested.<sup>56</sup>

Further to identifying the Other, it remains to be seen whether there was a popular phenomenon of self-definition in contrast thereto. *Attempts* at contrasting constructions feature prominently in the historical record. A prime example is Hannah More's song of 1799, to the tune of 'Derry Down', entitled 'A King or a Consul?'<sup>57</sup> Its lyric contrasts the horrors of '*Buoni*' with the boasts of Britons (or, more frequently, Englishmen). It has earlier counterparts in visual culture, most famously several caricatures entitled 'The Contrast': two juxtaposed images contrasting British liberty and prosperity with French excess and poverty.<sup>58</sup> Such propaganda was a notable though not uncontested feature of the 1790s. Loyalists and radicals competed for the hearts and minds of the people, seeking to associate powerful symbols of patriotism with their own political cause.<sup>59</sup> But this contrasting model of self-definition lapsed after 1795, leaving songs such as More's the exception, not the rule. In 1803-5, there was a resurgence of patriotic propaganda that caricatured the would-be French invaders as Other to England's defenders, yet these years aside, there is scant evidence of the consistent contrast Colley describes.<sup>60</sup>

The single most important (though controversial) foundation of British patriotism, as distinct from nationalism, was the navy. It was employed as a positive, self-referential tenet of Britishness, its legendary superiority a unique asset, eclipsing its relationship to any Other. In song culture, both 'Rule, Britannia!' and 'Hearts of Oak' – two of the period's three favourite anthems – endorse this positive, introspective construction. In the former, foreign 'tyrants' are mentioned, but the danger they represent to other nations is precluded, not countered, by Britannia's Heaven-ordained mission to rule the waves and

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<sup>56</sup> Navickas, *Loyalism and Radicalism*, pp.10-11. See esp. *ibid.*, p.3 for a further iteration of this concept.

<sup>57</sup> Appendix no.169.

<sup>58</sup> E.g. T. Rowlandson, *The Contrast 1793, Which Is Best?*, Bod. Curzon b.14(70).

<sup>59</sup> Mori, 'Languages of Loyalism', *passim*.

<sup>60</sup> Chapter Two, pp.47-9.

not be slaves. In the latter, Britain's 'foes' are never named; the active agents are the glorious sons of the waves. Beyond these two songs, those of the three Dibdins – not, as Morse Stephens has it, simply of 'Tom Dibdin' – are rightly acknowledged as powerful vehicles for the construction of naval-based patriotism.<sup>61</sup> Yet the vast majority of their songs deal with the romance of life afloat, rather than with battle or the foe. The overall impression is hardly that of definition in contrast to a French Other.

In determining precisely how Other the French actually were, we must be careful to distinguish between caricatures of frogs, crocodiles, cocks and demons, and the actual experience of individuals.<sup>62</sup> This question in itself deserves a new monograph. Britain's nature as an island on the edge of Europe is commonly taken (Colley shares this view) as evidence for the isolation of its inhabitants, when the reverse is the likelier scenario. The south coast of England from Bristol to London remained in close contact with France, the cessation of formal trade relations merely creating a boom time for smugglers, an activity which united English and French nationals in hostility to representatives of the state: customs and excise-men, and the revenue cutters. The east coast of Britain was engaged in trade with the Dutch, the old Hanseatic ports, Scandinavia and the Baltic. The government was well aware of this: Sir John Moore wrote to the Home Office in 1804 from Kent that 'There is a constant communication with this coast and that of Holland... There is hardly a family in Folkestone which has not relatives settled at Flushing [Vlissingen] and there is a constant intercourse.'<sup>63</sup> Ireland, so closely connected to France and Spain, will be discussed below.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Chapter Two, pp.78-86.

<sup>62</sup> The former is heavily emphasised in Cottrell, 'English Views'.

<sup>63</sup> Sir John Moore to Home Office, 17 February 1804, PRO HO/50/396. Cited in R. Glover, *Britain at Bay: Defence against Bonaparte, 1803-14* (New York, 1973), p.161.

<sup>64</sup> E.g. R. Hayes, 'Irish Links with Napoleon', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, 35, no.137 (1946), pp.63-74, G. Beiner, *Remembering the Year of the French: Irish Folk History and Social Memory* (Wisconsin, 2007), *passim*.

The exoticism of the foreigner would thus have been more closely contained within landlocked counties – locks to which the Wars held the key. Increasing naval demands upon manpower saw the press and other recruiting agencies head inland, whilst the tours of duty of even the auxiliary arms of the army can only have expanded the horizons of those who served. Refugees from Germany, Italy, Iberia and the Low Countries came to Britain in increasing numbers, forming an integral part of street culture.<sup>65</sup> Rather than separating Britain from the Continent, the conflict allowed for greater contact, by no means all of which was hostile. The experience of Thomas Carter, a humble tailor's apprentice from Bath, was typical of thousands. He received some unusual new colleagues in 1814 – six Italian prisoners-of-war, who had already been billeted at a camp in the north of England. He found them 'very pleasant companions', and wrote that most British civilians regarded these prisoners within their communities 'with feelings of, I believe, unaffected respect.'<sup>66</sup>

Thus far, we have neglected the single most influential catalyst for Otherness: the threat of invasion, notably from 1803-5. This threat was seen as more credible, and the response was more enthusiastic and jingoistic, the further removed one was from the reality. Maritime inhabitants of naval towns, aware of how unlikely invasion was due to logistical and nautical complications and the presence of the blockading squadron off Brest, were less affected than those inland. Colley's suggestion that the invasion 'came close to succeeding', and was viewed as probable by inhabitants, runs contrary to informed opinion at the time exemplified by the report of General Dumouriez into the threat.<sup>67</sup> 'I know that English sailors will laugh', he wrote, discussing the implausibility of any attempted landing.<sup>68</sup> As a satirical song by Birmingham's John Freeth wryly observed, 'The inland

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<sup>65</sup> D. Jerrold, 'The Ballad Singer', in *Heads of the People: Being Portraits of the English* (2 vols., 1840), ii, p.289.

<sup>66</sup> T. Carter, *Memoirs of a Working Man* (1845), pp.171, 172.

<sup>67</sup> Colley, *Britons*, p.292; J.H. Rose & A.M. Broadley, *Dumouriez and the Defence of England Against Napoleon* (1909).

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.370-371.

towns the most are frighten'd.'<sup>69</sup> Colley is right to point out that a strong tradition of military service encouraged volunteering along the south coast (though service need not imply hatred of the French), and there are reports even from relatively cosmopolitan Newcastle of an escaped baboon being taken for a French spy, such was the fervour of the moment.<sup>70</sup> But that is precisely what it was: a moment. It is telling that those same reports passed into collective memory as a *mocking* of that hysteria.<sup>71</sup> After that moment, anti-French feeling seems to have waned rather than solidified, allowing the resumption of a more nuanced array of attitudes.

According to Colley, 'The fact that Britain escaped a substantial invasion... merely made responses to the wars more abashedly chauvinistic.'<sup>72</sup> Yet other nations *were* invaded by the French, and it is no coincidence that it was the soldiers of these nations who were responsible for vengeful atrocities upon French soil. British soldiers were relative models of civility. Napoleon surrendered to the British in 1815 because his other enemies would have shot him. The Spanish and the Prussians in particular, after years of humiliation, truly hated the French. The British did not. In truth, the experience of the Wars disrupted, rather than entrenched, the notion of a French-Catholic 'Other'. Britons were not so 'foreigner-hating' as they have been painted.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> 'The French Invaders', Appendix no.129.

<sup>70</sup> Colley, *Britons*, p.299; Chapter Two, p.73.

<sup>71</sup> E.g. Ed Corvan's song, 'The Fishermen Hung the Monkey, O!', in E. Corvan *et al.*, *A Choice Collection of Tyneside Songs* (Newcastle, 1863), pp.62-3.

<sup>72</sup> Colley, *Britons*, p.4.

<sup>73</sup> G. Best, cited in L. Colley, 'The Apotheosis of George III: Loyalty, Royalty and the British Nation 1760-1820', *Past & Present*, 102 (1984), p.97.

## Unity

For the sake of brevity, it has been necessary above to employ generalisations, such as ‘the British people’. This must be addressed in consideration of Colley’s second tenet, unity, beginning on a national scale. Though tentative loyalist attempts were made, even in song, to draw English, Welsh, Scots and Irish under one banner, these relied upon misjudged stereotypes of Taffy, Sawny, and Paddy touting his Shillelagh.<sup>74</sup> More usual was the synonymous use of Britain and England, as in More’s ‘A King or a Consul?’ The Welsh context is just beginning to be studied; at this stage, it appears the principality’s extant songwriters, if not its miners and smallholders, were staunch loyalists.<sup>75</sup> Much has been written on the post-Jacobite rehabilitation of the Scottish, especially the Highlanders, through the celebration of their military contribution to the Wars.<sup>76</sup> For now, there is no need to dispute this narrative. The real focus of national ‘unity’ must be the subject of the only contemporary Act of Union: Ireland.

Colley devotes half a paragraph to Ireland in *Britons*, to justify its deliberate exclusion from the thesis of Britishness. Her grounds are that Ireland, though united by law with Britain in 1801, was in reality a problematic colony prone to rebellion, Francophilia and popery. Yet these are not grounds to ignore Ireland, but rather to complicate the overall picture. Colley admits the prominent role of the Irish in the Wars, yet sets it aside as ‘cut off by the sea’.<sup>77</sup> Perhaps it is a symptom of the Royal Navy’s success that English historians persist in regarding the sea as a barrier, rather than a series of paths and networks. The hundreds of thousands who crossed the Irish Sea, to Scotland, Bristol,

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<sup>74</sup> E.g. ‘The Voice of the British Isles’, Bod. Harding B22 (324).

<sup>75</sup> See F.M. Jones, *Welsh Ballads of the French Revolution, 1793-1815* (Cardiff, 2012), *passim*, for the anti-Gallican character of Welsh balladry, and for radical perspectives, D.J.V. Jones, *Before Rebecca: Popular Protests in Wales, 1793-1835* (1973), pp.27-8, 33, 51-2, and M. Löffler, *Welsh Responses to the French Revolution: Press & Public Discourse, 1789-1802* (Cardiff, 2012), *passim*.

<sup>76</sup> E.g. C.A. Whatley, *Scottish Society, 1707-1830: Beyond Jacobitism, Towards Industrialisation* (Manchester, 2000), B. Harris, *The Scottish People and the French Revolution* (2008).

<sup>77</sup> Colley, *Britons*, p.8.

Liverpool, Manchester, a thousand other places and above all to London, had no difficulty surmounting this barrier. Nor did those who travelled the other way. The ‘Irish question’ cannot be separated from theories of Britishness in this period, if only because a significant proportion of the populace resident on the largest of the British Isles was itself Irish. This thesis considers Irish song culture both in terms of peculiarly Irish concerns, and in dialogue with Britain as a whole, in recognition of the movement of both songs and people between the two islands.

Below the national level, we may isolate major regional discrepancies. M.C. Pottle’s doctoral thesis, ‘Loyalty and Patriotism in Nottingham, 1792-1816’, uncovers endemic if sporadic disaffection from a large proportion of its citizenry, going so far as rampant Bonapartism in 1812.<sup>78</sup> Manchester’s radical tendencies were on display well before Peterloo; in Newcastle, almost no anti-invasion broadsides found a printer; in Derby, with its large Catholic minority, officials repeatedly complained that French prisoners-of-war were being aided and abetted in their frequent escapes by the area’s civilians.<sup>79</sup> Nor was the Luddism of the Midlands and north of England free from elements of Francophilia.<sup>80</sup> Regional concerns complicate the ‘muffling inclusiveness’ derived from excessive study of metropolitan productions, emphasising the disunity of Britain and the strength of local song cultures distinct from that of London.

Beyond regionalism, we need to ask whom we mean by the phrase ‘the people’. If we are to believe loyalist propaganda, ‘the people’ meant honest John Bull, with his cottage, his patch of land, his pint, his roast beef, and his plum pudding.<sup>81</sup> It was to these luxuries

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<sup>78</sup> M.C. Pottle, ‘Loyalty and Patriotism in Nottingham, 1792-1816’ (Oxford University D.Phil. thesis, 1988), *passim* & esp. pp.5, 59, 74-6; *ibid.*, p.98.

<sup>79</sup> C. Emsley, *British Society and the French Wars, 1793-1815* (1979), *idem*, ‘Political Disaffection and the British Army in 1792’, *Historical Research*, 48 (2007); F.M. Thomson, *Newcastle Chapbooks in Newcastle upon Tyne University Library* (Newcastle, 1969), *passim*.

<sup>80</sup> K. Navickas, ‘The Search for “General Ludd”: the Mythology of Luddism’, *Social History*, 30, no.3 (2005), pp.281-95.

<sup>81</sup> For a recent though unoriginal summary, see T.L. Hunt, *Defining John Bull: Political Caricature and National Identity in Late Georgian England* (Aldershot, 2003).

and advantages that loyalist literature of the 1790s gestured. John Bull was possessed of property, however little, and a stake in the state. He was a churchgoer, a family man, and though prone to mistakes, rowdiness and simplicity of thought, his moral integrity was sound. This also applied to his obligatory dependents: wife and children. We need not doubt that he existed. Nor should we doubt that, as the main target of loyalist persuasion, his loyalty was sometimes conditional.<sup>82</sup> We cannot doubt that he and his dependents did not constitute ‘the people’. Concerned as this thesis is with popular culture, it is of paramount importance to take a wider, less idealised view of that culture’s participants.

We must take a similarly broad view of the twin institutions of army and navy. These were of great importance in a society that was, if not as successfully militarised as Colley suggests, still wholly permeated by a military element.<sup>83</sup> We must allow for the poor reputation of the regular army, its quotas met by emptying the gaols in the area of its chief billets.<sup>84</sup> When turning to the healthy take-up for the volunteer regiments, we must acknowledge (as Colley rightly does) that volunteering was the chief route to avoid the more onerous militia ballot.<sup>85</sup> As for the navy, if we must allow the wooden walls, we must also allow the psychological impact of the press-gang.<sup>86</sup> At a time when the mutinies of 1797 were still fresh in the mind, when one of the most popular nautical ballads was ‘The Death of [Richard] Parker’ – a song in praise of the mutineers’ leader – the service stood for a more complicated range of values than loyalist patriotism.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> See also A. Franklin, ‘John Bull in a Dream: Fear and Fantasy in the Visual Satires of 1803’, in M. Philp (ed.), *Resisting Napoleon: The British Response to the Threat of Invasion, 1797-1815* (Aldershot, 2006), pp.125-40.

<sup>83</sup> L. Colley, ‘Britishness and Otherness: An Argument’, *Journal of British Studies*, 31, no.4 (1992), p.322

<sup>84</sup> J.G. Jones, *Sketch of a Political Tour through Rochester, Chatham, Maidstone, Gravesend, &c.* (1796), p.25, E.V. Macleod, *A War of Ideas: British Attitudes to the Wars Against Revolutionary France, 1792-1802* (Aldershot, 1998), *passim*.

<sup>85</sup> Colley, *Britons*, pp.298-9, 305.

<sup>86</sup> Whilst the on-going research of Jeremiah Dancy revises the quantitative impact of the press downwards, the emotional impact upon communities remains significant. See Chapters Three and Seven, pp.124-5, 135, 215, 279-80.

<sup>87</sup> Appendix no.98.

It is this conception of the British people that we encounter in this thesis: sceptical, insubordinate, individualistic, and far from united. To her credit, Colley never insists on the ubiquity of the practices she describes; but since their counterparts go unrecorded, this revision seems necessary. I am not suggesting that the British were all dangerous radicals, though certain professions – such as weavers – and ethnic groups – such as the Irish Catholic and Dissenting underclass in London – were undeniably more ‘awakened’ than others. Nor am I implying a neat alignment of politics with social class. There were seditious lords (Stanhope, Sempill, Fitzgerald) and colonels (Dalrymple, Macleod, Despard) just as there were loyal poachers and beggars; ‘polite’ in no way presupposes ‘loyalist’ any more than ‘popular’ presupposes ‘radical’. My point is that popular culture was more often *inimical* to a political argument, especially a loyalist argument, than it was susceptible. As Chapters Five and Six demonstrate, it was no easy thing to play politics with song. The social backdrop thus established, we may narrow the focus to song itself. This begins, necessarily, by deciding precisely what we mean by ‘song’.

### **Terminology**

In this thesis I generally favour the words ‘song’, ‘popular’ and ‘polite’ over more problematic terms such as ‘ballad’, ‘working class’ or ‘bourgeois’. ‘Song’ refers to any complete musical object comprising both melody and lyric. Unhappily, the majority of extant street songs from this period give no tune, often leaving it to be inferred that they should be sung at all. Many songs contained choruses or refrains, marking them out. Yet others did not. Nor is a lyric’s source necessarily an indicator: broadsides were only *usually* songs; newspapers and journals favoured poetry but included songs; most poets

also wrote songs. Hence the line between a song and a poem is occasionally blurred, requiring subjective judgement.

‘Ballad’ is often considered synonymous with ‘song’. The definition in Johnson’s dictionary, ‘Ballad (balade, Fr.), A song’ has been cited as proof of this.<sup>88</sup> Yet a definition from 1806 ran:

BALLAD generally means a kind of song, adapted to the capacity of the lower class of people. ... Some have supposed that the knowledge of the ballads in common use is necessary to a minister of state to learn the temper and disposition of the people.<sup>89</sup>

Most songs in this thesis were ballads by this definition, but by no means all. The term ‘ballad’ is further complicated by its implication of narrative, an element missing from many songs; by its relatively slow tempo and substantial number of verses; and by its more particular polite connotations, where ‘ballad’ and ‘ancient ballad’ were often interchangeable, the stuff of Scott’s *Border Minstrelsy* rather than the streets. Thus I prefer to employ ‘song’ unless a specific variant, such as a shanty or anthem, is to be indicated.<sup>90</sup> However, I employ ‘ballad singer’ as synonymous with ‘street singer’, as this was common usage at the time. In this thesis, ‘ballad singers’ sing ‘songs’. To discuss a subgenre, a modifier is applied, such as ‘love song’ or ‘comic song’.

A song’s composite identity of melody plus lyric distinguishes it from ‘tune’ or ‘air’, two words used to denote solely the melodic part. Even this is problematic. Many lyrics were penned to the same tune, a far more common occurrence than the setting of existing words to a new melody. When this happened, the lyric would often be prefaced with ‘To the Tune of ----’. Well-known tunes thus required titles, and could not exist independently of words. In popular song culture, tunes were known by the names of famous songs of which they had formed a part. This could change over time. The tune known as ‘The Brags

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<sup>88</sup> S. Johnson, *A dictionary of the English language* (2 vols., 1755), ii, p.201.

<sup>89</sup> G. Gregory, *A Dictionary of Arts and Sciences* (2 vols., 1806), i, p.197.

<sup>90</sup> By ‘anthem’ I intend the secular meaning of an identity-asserting song of celebration, rather than the specific form of church music; the ‘Marseillaise’ rather than a piece by Purcell.

of Washington' in 1812 had become 'A-Hunting We Will Go' by 1840.<sup>91</sup> The United Irishman songbook *Paddy's Resource* insisted that 'Brethren Unite' was to be sung to 'Tune – "God save the Rights of Man"' rather than 'God save the King'.<sup>92</sup> This tune held competing identities in this period, such as Joseph Mather's 'God Save Great Thomas Paine', and 'Bob Shave the King', wherein 'Bob' was Robespierre.<sup>93</sup>

For these appropriations to work, the tune's primary, loyalist association was essential to the irony. In these cases the tune was a loyal one, but the resulting song was not. Samuel Bamford's attorney seized on this distinction when defending the Peterloo marchers' conduct in their trial of 1819. Aware they would be accused of singing seditious songs, the lawyer sought 'to prove the object of the music, and the use made of it, in playing national and loyal airs.'<sup>94</sup> It is probable that the 'airs' were national and loyal. Yet the lyrics may have been subversive. Thus a tune was never purely melodic.

As the thesis develops, the matching of lyric to tune becomes a key determinant of a song's potential to be well received. There is a potential flaw here: performances were often *a cappella* and idiosyncratic, singers elongating or abbreviating phrases at will. This could be said to negate the impact of an ill-stressed lyric – the singer would simply adjust the tune to fit. Yet the instances of 'bad writing' discussed below go further than an occasional extra syllable. In my analysis, I will only base my argument on cases when a lyric goes beyond plausible salvation, or 'reinterpretation', by a singer: cases when repeatedly awkward or over-crammed meter constitutes a real barrier to singing, negating the qualities of the tune concerned.

One of the greatest problems in tackling these songs remains that of dating. Very few broadsides bore a date, and oral testimony is equally obscure. It is difficult to determine

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<sup>91</sup> R. Palmer (ed.), *The Rambling Soldier*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Gloucester, 1985), pp.177-8, idem (ed.), *A Touch on the Times: Songs of Social Change, 1770-1914* (Harmondsworth, 1974), p.299.

<sup>92</sup> *Paddy's Resource, Being a Select Collection of Original and Modern Patriotic Songs* (New York, 1798).

<sup>93</sup> Appendix no.138.

<sup>94</sup> S. Bamford, *Passages in the Life of a Radical* (Oxford, 1984), p.237.

even a printed song's first appearance. Where I have attempted any dating, however broad, I have combined internal lyrical evidence with all known external data – collectors' testimonies, writers' or singers' biographical details, printers' dates of residence at premises registered on broadsides – to provide a date range. This has proved easiest for songs dated between 1803-5, and summer 1814 to March 1815. Where I am not wholly confident, I have refrained from suggesting a date.

'Popular' and 'polite', meanwhile, are short-hand techniques to differentiate two broadly distinct social groups. 'Popular' maps broadly and anachronistically onto both 'working class' and 'underclass'.<sup>95</sup> 'Polite' implies some share or interest in an educated, property-holding public sphere. The crudity of these two terms acknowledges the impossibility of any rigid division of society into two or more horizontal or vertical categories; I go on to enquire into dialogue between the two; into cross-class agency; and into the movement of songs both up and down the social scale. However imperfect, 'popular culture' remains in general academic usage, and to formulate one or more alternatives would be confusing. 'Polite culture' exists as its corollary, thought as stated above, the two were in constant dialogue, and the division was not always clear. Pierce Egan's *Life in London* serves to remind us of this: its characters flit between elegant art galleries, and dens frequented by beggars, appearing comfortable in all settings, simultaneously rogues and gentlemen.<sup>96</sup> 'Popular' as a prefix to 'song' or 'culture' also wards off the associations of 'folk'. Terms such as 'Folk', and 'oral tradition', according to David Harker, 'are conceptual lumber, and they have to go.'<sup>97</sup> It would be as naïve to insist upon a total distinction between print and oral song, as between urban and rural.

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<sup>95</sup> See Thompson, *The Making*, p.22, where 'popular' is preferred to 'working-class'.

<sup>96</sup> P. Egan, *Life in London, or, The Day and Night Scenes of Jerry Hawthorn, Esq.*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (c.1870), *passim*.

<sup>97</sup> D. Harker, *Fakesong: The Manufacture of British 'Folksong', 1700 to the Present Day* (Milton Keynes, 1985), p.xii. See also M. Pickering, 'The Study of Vernacular Song in England', *Jahrbuch für Volksliedforschung*, 33 (1988), pp.95-104.

Similarly, no thesis touching upon William Cobbett could insist upon a rigid binary of loyalist and radical. Recent historiography has lent useful nuance to our understanding of these terms, though they remain extremely useful shorthand in reference to specific writers and publishers, temporally located.<sup>98</sup> Which leaves only ‘Wars’: Britain’s conflict with France, twice interrupted, between 1793 and 1815.

### **Establishing a question**

Historiographically, this period represents the culmination of the arc sketched in Peter Burke’s *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, when urban elite detachment from the recreation of their inferiors had hardened into what some expressed as a duty – patriotic, moral or spiritual – actively to subvert and reshape first the content, then the forms, of popular culture in Britain. Susan Pedersen makes clear that these moral and political actors were neither necessarily coordinated nor even complementary in their actions.<sup>99</sup> Yet Kevin Gilmartin’s point, that the moral and political became thoroughly interwoven, however coincidental the alliance, is also valid.<sup>100</sup> Attempts to reform popular culture by moral and political activists, by turns suppressing and publishing (in idealised form) ephemeral material, were not unprecedented. Yet in the fallout from the French Revolution, their simultaneous engagement with ideas of the collective nation, and the moral life of the individual, took on a particular urgency. As Barrell makes clear, these ‘invasions of privacy’ were given new significance by the political context of the 1790s.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> E.g. Philp, ‘Vulgar Conservatism’.

<sup>99</sup> S. Pedersen, ‘Hannah More Meets Simple Simon: Tracts, Chapbooks, and Popular Culture in Late Eighteenth-Century England’, *Journal of British Studies*, 25, no.1 (1986), p.86.

<sup>100</sup> Gilmartin, “‘Study to Be Quiet’”, p.505.

<sup>101</sup> Barrell, *The Spirit of Despotism*, *passim* and esp. pp.210-46.

This is central to the contentions of this thesis. The immediate issue of Napoleon engages with the wider context of the Wars, loyalism, and the attempted reform of popular culture by elite actors in Britain. The resultant phenomenon – politics *as* culture – is deserving of extended analysis. The focus of the work undertaken in this field has always been more French than British; more geared to the ‘Revolutionary decade’ than the later years; and in the British case – centred largely on caricature, fine art and Romantic poetry – the focus has been polite, rather than popular. The best survey of song in relation to contemporary politics remains Laura Mason’s *Singing the French Revolution: Popular Culture and Politics*, whilst the most insightful collection of essays on the British context, *Resisting Napoleon: The British Response to the Threat of Invasion, 1797-1815*, stays conscientiously within its titular limits.<sup>102</sup> Thus the relationship between Britain’s populace and Napoleon has been left unexplored, despite a wealth of cultural evidence, most especially in the area of popular song.

The best way to access the views of a silent majority, and how others sought to influence those views, is to pay attention to the times when they were manifestly not silent, but in fine voice. The Napoleonic Wars provide a perfect case study. Popular song articulates a great deal about the figure of Napoleon in the popular imagination (a thing so infinitely plural that a singular ‘imagination’ is the only way to represent it at great distance); a figure of great importance to an appreciation of early-nineteenth century British mentalities. Conversely, Napoleon provides a window onto the broader world of popular song, giving us a narrow enough filter to establish a manageable body of source material.<sup>103</sup> This study renders tangible the space where culture and politics meet; its examination brings the ostensibly separate worlds of political and cultural history into mutually beneficial rapport.

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<sup>102</sup>L. Mason, *Singing the French Revolution: Popular Culture and Politics, 1787-1799* (New York, 1996); Philp, *Resisting Napoleon*.

<sup>103</sup> 382 especially relevant songs are listed in the Appendix. These are representative of a far greater total.

Only one article of history has yet been written on Napoleon and British popular song.

It asks a question.

Why should material which treated Napoleon as a romantic hero attain a wide acceptance in oral tradition and remain alive for a century and more when the large number of songs that vilified him seem to have sunk almost without trace?<sup>104</sup>

The author, Gammon, concludes there is a marked ‘discrepancy... between the contemporary and the subsequent image of Napoleon in British popular song’.<sup>105</sup> Why do we find a discrepancy between an enduring (positive) post-Waterloo tradition, and an ephemeral (negative) war-time tradition? The accounting for this perceived discrepancy shapes this thesis.

### **Aftermath: The Nineteenth Century**

Gammon’s is the correct question to ask on the basis of the material he discusses in the article – an article calling for further debate, yet unanswered twenty-four years later. The contrast between the ‘contemporary and subsequent image’ of Napoleon is clear in the songs Gammon has collected, yet inexplicable:

I find it hard to explain why this [positive] image of Napoleon was so persistent and perhaps I should leave it as a matter for debate... What is not in doubt is the amazing contrast between the propaganda pumped out in ballad form during the French Wars and those songs which survived the test of time in popular memory.<sup>106</sup>

This thesis will fundamentally revise Gammon’s assessment of wartime song culture. Yet first it must be shown that the second half of the equation is valid. After 1815, was there really ‘an English plebeian version of what Maurice Hutt has called “the legend of

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<sup>104</sup> V. Gammon, ‘The Grand Conversation: Napoleon and British Popular Balladry’, *RSA Journal*, 137, no.5398 (1989), p.670.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p.665.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p.673.

Napoleon””?”<sup>107</sup> And if there was such a phenomenon, was it linked to the period of the Wars, or simply the product of post-war circumstances?

By ‘post-war’ songs, I mean those written subsequent to Napoleon’s formal surrender to the Prince Regent, but excluding those concerned primarily with the Waterloo campaign. There remains a distinction in focus between Waterloo songs, and songs of Napoleon: the former are discussed at the end of Chapter Three.<sup>108</sup> Though many of these songs are still performed to this day, new material dies with Victoria: twentieth-century popular song culture lies beyond this thesis’ historical scope.

Geographically, Gammon speaks of ‘an English plebeian tradition’ rather than a British, yet only to argue that pro-Napoleonic song was not limited to Ireland. He refutes Frank Kidson’s speculation that:

all these ballads having Napoleon for their hero (in both senses of the word), have emanated from an Irish source, or from that large party of Englishmen who, originally holding the opinions of Thomas Paine, drifted, themselves and their successors into chartists...<sup>109</sup>

The songs in this thesis all derive from the British archipelago, varying in language and dialect, although many crossed the Atlantic to North America.

This breadth of chronology and geography seems daunting. In terms of post-war compositions, Gammon focuses on the repertoire of Henry Burstow, a mere half dozen songs. Yet in total, only thirty-five significantly different songs on Napoleon appear to be extant, as opposed to many hundred from the Wars themselves.<sup>110</sup> However, many of these have numerous variants, and number among the most widespread and popular songs of the century. Though relatively modest, this number precludes analysis of each: I will move from discussing the songs as a body to close reading of ‘typical’ pieces.

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p.666, M. Hutt, *Napoleon* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1972), pp.170-1.

<sup>108</sup> Chapter Three, pp.145-54.

<sup>109</sup> Gammon, ‘The Grand Conversation’, p.669, F. Kidson, ‘Appended Note’, *Journal of the Folk Song Society*, 2, no.8 (1906), p.188.

<sup>110</sup> These thirty-five are indicated in the Appendix by an asterisk following their title in the first column.

Gammon's findings, based on an oral repertoire, hold true for printed broadsides. Not one song speaks ill of Napoleon, and at least a dozen either first appeared in, or found their way into, the broadside press. Still more significantly, there is no evidence that earlier, anti-Napoleonic songs were reprinted after 1815, whilst other songs from the Wars such as 'The Death of Parker', 'The Death of Nelson', 'The Battle of the Nile', songs of Waterloo, and numerous Dibdin sea-songs, appeared with great regularity in the Victorian press.<sup>111</sup> Thus his conclusion – that the 'subsequent tradition' of popular song was positive to Napoleon – may be extended to the entirety of print and oral song culture in Britain and North America. Gammon is right: this requires explanation.

Three interpretations exist. The first is Kidson's; that the post-war body of song was developed by Irish nationalists and frustrated Painites. The second, related view, strongly implied in Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class*, and in specialised folksong works by Palmer and Porter, interprets Napoleon as a convenient symbol, a working-class hero constructed after the event for specific radical political purposes.<sup>112</sup> In this reading, Napoleon is a cipher, a name chosen as emblematic of opposition to the British government, and for his association with a booming war-time economy. This is based upon a reading of songs responding to post-Waterloo economic depression, the Peterloo massacre, and the turbulent years of Wellington's premiership; three contexts where Napoleon was the logical choice of alternative symbol. The third perspective is summarised by Semmel, who attributes the warm regard of the British people for Napoleon, post-Waterloo, to a sense of 'fair play'.<sup>113</sup> This is untenable. The reasoning – that the victors could afford to be charitable and complacent towards a noble adversary – runs contrary to the other argument advanced, that Napoleon was a potent symbol in

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<sup>111</sup> A glance through any major collection bears this out, e.g. Cambridge's *Madden Ballads*.

<sup>112</sup> Thompson, *The Making*, p.331; Palmer, *The Sound of History*, p.298, G. Porter, *The English Occupational Song* (Umeå, 1992), pp.125-6.

<sup>113</sup> Semmel, *Napoleon*, p.18.

radical and Irish anti-establishment song and politics. Semmel himself provides evidence against his own notion, in a chapter dealing with Napoleon's reception at Torbay in 1815, and the grave threat to national security posed by the close proximity of his person.<sup>114</sup> Society figures, newspapers, Viscount Keith, and prominent cabinet members were united by fear of the charisma of even a captive Napoleon.<sup>115</sup> The British Army of Occupation in Paris, which sung insulting songs about Louis XVIII and the likelihood of his departure, was suspected of harbouring Napoleonic sympathies and agitating for his return over the next two years.<sup>116</sup> After Napoleon's death, his son remained a hypothetical figurehead; after *his* death, the ascent of Napoleon III renewed British fears and returned his uncle to the public mind; one of the most prominent broadsides of the 1850s was the new song, 'Napoleon Talks of War, Boys'.<sup>117</sup> Two posthumous songs on Napoleon I are testament to his lasting subversiveness. 'Grand Conversation Under the Rose' emphasises the *sub rosa* nature of pro-Napoleonic expression; 'Bonny Bunch of Roses', set to an old Jacobite tune, was prohibited in Ireland well into the latter part of the century.<sup>118</sup> Complacent fair play was thus out of the question. In the one case where a song's narrator – not one of our thirty-five – articulates this form of good sportsmanship, it is in hypothetical reaction to the reality: a vindictive public ritual akin to the Paine-burnings of the 1790s.

Bonny, shav'd be a bear, was then shot, man;  
 And be au'd Nick weel thump'd in a pot, man;  
 But aw thowt a' the toon  
 Shuddent lick him when doon...<sup>119</sup>

The fictive 'Bob Cranky' persona is a lone voice of moderation, in a song that in any case appeared in 1814, not 1815.

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., pp.171-3.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., pp.171-3, J. Hamilton, *Marengo: The Myth of Napoleon's Horse* (2000), p.195.

<sup>116</sup> S. Hazareesingh, *The Legend of Napoleon* (2004), pp.63-4, J.G. Alger, *Napoleon's British Visitors and Captives 1801-1815* (Westminster, 1904), pp.83-4.

<sup>117</sup> Roud no. 13260. E.g. Bod. Harding B15(245a).

<sup>118</sup> Appendix nos. 140, 56; F. Kidson et al., 'Yorkshire Tunes', *Journal of the Folk-Song Society*, 2, no.9 (1906), p.278.

<sup>119</sup> 'Bob Cranky's Leum'nation Neet', Appendix no.33.

While the first two positions – Kidson’s and Thompson’s – have something to be said in their favour, none provides a satisfactory explanation of the thirty-five post-war songs that inform this chapter. Even where a particular political motivation is plausible, the further question arises, as to why working-class radicals and Irishmen would be drawn to the figure of Napoleon in the first place. Twelve of the thirty-five songs invite a political reading. These may be divided between those concerned with unconditional liberty – such as the liberation of Ireland – and those with a conditional context: franchise reform or economic hardship. Of the latter type, the song most frequently cited by Thompson and others is the ‘Lancashire Weavers’ Lament’, dating from the 1830s, set to the tune of ‘A-Hunting We Will Go’. One verse runs:

You say that Bonyparty he’s been the spoil of all,  
And that we have got reason to pray for his downfall;  
Now Bonyparty’s dead and gone, and it is plainly shown  
That we have bigger tyrants in Boney’s of our own.<sup>120</sup>

The verse addresses pre-1815 loyalist propaganda, denouncing the scapegoating of Napoleon as hypocrisy. The tune had been associated with popular protest since its early incarnation as ‘The Brags of Washington’, though in the 1830s it was contested. Tory supporters sang a variant, ‘With Wellington We’ll Go’; reformers contrasted Napoleon and Wellington in ‘New Hunting Song’.<sup>121</sup> Four verses of this last variant are relevant here:

It’s one of our brave huntsmen, my song I will commence,  
Brave Bonaparte I will begin, he was a man of sense;  
From Corsica he did set off to hunt upon a chance,  
He hunted until he became the Emperor of France.

And Nelson for his hunting he got the nation’s praise.  
He was the greatest huntsman that hunted on the seas;  
He and his war-like terror, a-hunting bore away,  
A musket ball proved his downfall in Trafalgar Bay.

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<sup>120</sup> Thompson, *The Making*, pp.330-1. Appendix no.171.

<sup>121</sup> Appendix nos. 372, 221.

Now Wellington at Waterloo, he had the best of luck.  
He hunted from a lieutenant till he became a duke;  
But men that did fight well for him, and did him honours gain,  
He tried the very best he could to have their pensions ta'en.

O'Connor round the country, a-hunting he did go,  
With meetings called in every town to tell the truth, you know;  
The tyrants tried to keep him down but that was all in vain:  
The people swear they'll back him up and have their rights again.

The song's narrator, in praising Nelson and Napoleon but damning Wellington for his meanness, judges the 'huntmen' on the intrinsic morality of their actions rather than on their allegiance. Again, 'tyrant' is applied to the British government, although unlike 'The Lancashire Weavers' Lament' there is no allusion to earlier use of the term against Napoleon. 1832 was an obvious year for such songs, typified by the Scottish 'The Tyrant's Fall', wherein the tyrant is Wellington, in a pointed inversion of wartime rhetoric, whose contemporary political faults are elided with the execution of Marshal Ney in 1815. The final verse makes common cause with Napoleon against the duke:

How can you gain a soldier's heart?  
Beneath the lash you made them smart,  
Hung them before great Buonaparte,  
For a sma' fau't ony morning.<sup>122</sup>

Six further songs link Napoleon to the plight of workers, dating from October 1815 to the 1850s: three from Ireland, one from Edinburgh, one from Newcastle, and one of unknown origin.<sup>123</sup> They dwell either on the workers' contribution to the war effort –

The corner stones they should protect, that tars may get their right;  
The British flag we've maintain'd, in many a bloody fight:  
It's long since Bonny did intend in England for to land;  
He knew our heroes of the main would stop his warlike band<sup>124</sup>

- or they express nostalgia for the relative prosperity of the war years, attributing this to Napoleon:

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<sup>122</sup> Appendix no.347.

<sup>123</sup> Respectively, 'Larry's Return to Erin' (Appendix no.173), 'Ye Sons of Old Ireland' (380), 'Napoleon Is The Boy For Kicking Up A Row' (204), 'Written at the Seaman's Stick' (378), 'Waterloo Times – A New Song' (361), 'Ballad of the Labouring Man' (7).

<sup>124</sup> 'Written at the Seaman's Stick', verse 7.

Bonaparte taught some men for to ride a fine horse  
That some time ago couldn't ride a jackass.  
'By the silver of my whip!' was their oath then in town;  
'By the nails of my brogues!' since Boney is down!<sup>125</sup>

Whether Napoleon is merely regarded in a neutral, admiring light as a fine soldier, or whether the song goes on to relate his glorious deeds, the essential point is the same: it was the 'labouring man' who fought him, and who went unrewarded, losing rather than gaining by the victory.

These songs may be read in support of Kidson's position: that they stem from Irish nationalists and English radicals. But this raises two problems. Firstly, the question obtains of why these groups found Napoleon so appealing. To Irish Catholics, this was the man who imprisoned the Pope, and abandoned the proposed liberation of Ireland in 1798, in favour of invading Egypt. To English radicals, this was the republican turned monarch who betrayed the Revolution. Other iconic figures, from 'General Ludd' to Thomas Paine, were available, with none of Napoleon's drawbacks. This issue will be addressed below. Secondly and more pressingly, the argument does not even fit the rest of those songs with a political message.

The remaining Anglo-Irish, politically-charged songs are far less rooted to a specific time or issue. Their relative lyricism and claim to literary merit – 'The Grand Conversation Under the Rose' and 'Bonny Bunch of Roses' in particular – is noteworthy, and it is no coincidence that they have been collected from oral and print sources across the British Isles throughout the nineteenth century. Though the former addresses contemporary politics –

The Farm and Comedian would wish the great Bonaparte  
Was brought on the stage to act a new play.  
They find their industry drawn by ministerial art  
But all is not sufficient their vast debts to pay<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> 'Ye Sons of Old Ireland', verse 2.

<sup>126</sup> Appendix no.140.

- these grievances are easily missed in the context of a far longer heroic ballad, the appeal of which was broader than any partisan interest.

It becomes clearer still that we are dealing with more than nineteenth-century politics when the apolitical songs of Napoleon are added to our appreciation of the ‘plebeian legend’.<sup>127</sup> These dwell upon his character, passions, and personal misfortunes or injustices. Even when the author was politicised – one of Bamford’s earliest compositions was ‘Saint Helena’ – the songs they produced were in themselves disinterested, concentrating on Napoleon’s human story rather than engaging in contemporary issues. These may also be divided into two: those structured around notable events in Napoleon’s active career, and those concerned primarily with his exile, this latter body tending towards the Romantic, with heavy emphasis on nature.<sup>128</sup>

All save one are songs *of* Napoleon, taking him as their primary subject rather than merely featuring him: the exception is ‘The Earsdon Sword-Dancers’ Song’, from a Northumbrian collection of the 1880s. Its verses enumerate ‘heroes of old’, each sword-dancer purporting to be the son of one of them. The list is surprising: Elliott, Duncan, Nelson, Wellington, and Napoleon. The first four are praised for their feats against the Spanish, Dutch and French respectively, but whilst the Spaniards ‘fled in disgrace’ and the Dutch ‘ran funkin’, the French are said to have ‘nearly destroyed’ Nelson. There is an escalation in stature as well as chronological progression with each hero, so that the fifth is the most glorious:

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<sup>127</sup> ‘Ashes of Napoleon’ (Appendix no.4), ‘Bonaparte’ (37), ‘Boney Was a Warrior’ (48), ‘Deeds of Napoleon’ (99), ‘The Earsdon Sword-Dancers’ Song’ (113), ‘The Grand Conversation on Napoleon’ (139), ‘The Grave of Bonaparte’ (141), ‘The Hero of War’ (145), ‘Isle of St Helena’ (158), ‘Maria Louisa’s Lamentation: The Green Linnets’ (189), ‘Napoleon Bonaparte’ (201), ‘Napoleon Buonaparte’s Exile to St Helena’ (202), ‘Napoleon the Brave’ (206), ‘Napoleon’s Farewell to Paris’ (209), ‘“One Night Sad and Languid”’ (260), ‘The Removal of Bonaparte’s Ashes’ (285), ‘Saint Helena’ (294), ‘Santiana, or, The Plains of Mexico’ (299).

<sup>128</sup> See also Chapter Four, pp.176-7.

Now my last handsome youth that does enter  
Is a boy that is both straight and tall;  
He's the son of the great Buonaparte,  
The hero that cracked the whole all.  
He went over the Lowlands like thunder,  
Made nations to quiver and quake,  
Many thousands stood gazing in wonder  
At the havoc he always did make.<sup>129</sup>

Death and destruction are transmuted into admirable 'havoc', and Napoleon is likened to 'thunder', both themes that recur in the other songs. There is a sense common to them all that their subject's deeds and reputation were so uniquely immense as to be elemental in their force and grandeur. Songs recounting these deeds have an air of litany about them, as if their mere recitation is itself a potent act.

The songs' writers express themselves according to genre conventions, so that the same narrative receives different forms, from:

When at the Isle of Elba, Napoleon fought for liberty,  
And when he went across the Alps he did the world amaze,  
He would never yield when in the field, but strive to gain a victory.  
Europe will long remember, how Moscow it did blaze<sup>130</sup>

- to:

Oh, Boney marched to Moscow (weigh-hey ah)  
Across the Alps through ice an' snow (Jean François)  
...  
Boney went to Elbow (weigh-hey ah)  
There he got his overt'row (Jean François)<sup>131</sup>

It is this stepping outside of the mundane into a heroic and fabulous realm that Gammon identifies as a key fascination. But it is also worth observing that, though drawn to the Mythic and the Romantic in the 'Napoleon legend', songwriters did not lose sight of his essential humanity. Gammon notes that 'a link can be seen between the suffering hero of classical story and neo-classical art and depictions of Napoleon in British popular song' –

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<sup>129</sup> Appendix no.113, verse 7.

<sup>130</sup> 'The Removal of Bonaparte's Ashes', verse 3.

<sup>131</sup> 'Boney Was a Warrior', verses 4 & 7.

and it is the ‘suffering’ that matters as much as the ‘classical’.<sup>132</sup> Even the shanty above, crudely adapted to the act of hauling on a stay or turning a capstan, finds room for the line ‘Boney broke his heart an’ died’.

His downfall and exile in particular invited empathy. Two devices recur in expressing these themes. In one trope, Napoleon’s downfall is repeatedly attributed to treachery and ‘English gold’, rendering tragic the ‘gallant’ or ‘valiant’ hero, ultimately merely a man, powerless against the machinations of faceless opponents.<sup>133</sup> An especially emotive line repeated in substantially different songs runs, ‘Like a bullock sold in Smithfield was Napoleon Bonaparte’.<sup>134</sup> In the second device, his exile is repeatedly humanised through depictions of Marie-Louise, their separation that of a loving couple, to the sorrow of both parties. While Hollywood and the twentieth century dwelt upon Napoleon and his Joséphine, the popular song tradition of the nineteenth century left her out in favour of the second wife and mother of his child. Some songs framed the narrative from her perspective. ‘The Green Linnet’ bears the alternative title, ‘Maria-Lousia’s Lamentation’, and in its structure and lyrics, is closely related to a series of ‘broken-token’ ballads that appeared after Waterloo, also dealing with sundered lovers, but in those cases, common soldiers and the wives or sweethearts they left behind.<sup>135</sup> The parallel underlines the universal aspect of Napoleon’s suffering: he could be simultaneously the greatest hero of the age, and an everyman, the husband torn from his family. It may be more than coincidence that he is often said to have been ‘transported’ to St. Helena. Transportation of a loved one was a fate shared by many among the lower orders; this forcible separation by

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<sup>132</sup> Gammon, ‘The Grand Conversation’, p.671.

<sup>133</sup> The assertion that his defeat at Waterloo was bought varies in form, with Grouchy, Ney, or ‘the tricks of Blücher’ identified as the Judas figure, and the English usually identified as the paymaster. The claim appears in ‘Napoleon Bonaparte’, ‘The Removal Of Bonaparte’s Ashes’, later versions of ‘Isle Of St Helena’, and ‘The Grand Conversation on Napoleon’, as well as several songs of Waterloo itself.

<sup>134</sup> E.g. ‘Napoleon Bonaparte’, verse 2, ‘The Removal of Bonaparte’s Ashes’, verse 3.

<sup>135</sup> Appendix no.189. Compare to e.g. ‘The Plains of Waterloo (II)’, Appendix no.275.

the state was something with which many could identify from experience, the only difference being the destination, St Helena rather than Bantry Bay.

Some songs, such as variants of the c.1815-6 composition 'Isle of St Helena' amended after Napoleon's death to include additional verses, address all these aspects: elemental and nature imagery; past glories; faceless treachery; sundered lovers. The song ends with a verse tying Napoleon's predicament to the greater mass of the people, drawing a tragic moral for its audience. One typical variant runs:

So all you that have wealth, beware of ambition.  
For there's some twist of fate could soon change your condition.  
Be steadfast in time – what's to come, change you cannot  
For maybe your race will end on the Isle of Saint Helena.<sup>136</sup>

'Isle of St Helena' is meditative and elegiac, its concerns at once personal and universal. Its distinctive tune, melancholic, beautiful and slow, reinforces this transcendent impression. It exemplifies traits common to most of the apolitical songs, their character defying any of the three explanations outlined earlier. Their evidence validates Gammon's conclusion that the post-Waterloo song tradition was pro-Napoleon – in a personal, rather than political, sense – and devoid of a single, immediate explanation. Gammon's 'discrepancy' remains. Why should so many different and frequently disinterested voices take Napoleon's part, if war-time songs condemned him completely and convincingly? There is no answer in the later songs. Therefore it must lie in a re-evaluation of the earlier period.

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<sup>136</sup> This variant, from 1820s Paisley, is in T. Moylan (ed.), *The Age of Revolution in the Irish Song Tradition, 1776 to 1815* (Dublin, 2000), p.159.

## **Conclusions**

Post-war British popular song was universally sympathetic in its treatment of Napoleon, a phenomenon impossible to explain away in reference to a later nineteenth-century context: Gammon professes himself unable to reconcile this fact with what he deems to have been a xenophobic and vitriolic war-time song record. Through close engagement with recent historiography on the British nation during the Napoleonic Wars, it has become clear that Colley's emphasis on the loyalty and the unity of the populace (especially when Britain is considered geographically in its wider sense) has been overstated. We cannot discount the scholarship of Thompson and others that stresses the disaffection of much of the working class. Therefore it seems plausible that war-time song culture as Gammon conceives of it does not reflect the reality. The next two chapters proceed to investigate this, by close reading of several hundred songs. We begin with the years 1797-1805, as it is here that the attention of Gammon and others has focused: specifically, upon the loyalist broadside campaign mounted in reaction to the threat of invasion by Napoleon.

## Chapter Two

### The Songs II: 1797-1805

This second chapter begins by engaging with the issue that has attracted the vast majority of historiographical attention: the astonishing weight of material still extant from the ‘invasion-scare’ period of 1803-5. Beginning in debate and analysis is more rewarding than a chronological approach, which would forfeit scholarly awareness for the sake of simplicity. The homogenous, one-dimensional appearance of these songs is complicated with reference to theories of patriotism, the folk hero, and the didactic authorial voice present in many such songs. The body of non-loyalist song from 1797-1805 is then analysed, demonstrating a more variegated culture across the period. This contributes to the discourse on national identity and loyalist/radical rhetoric mentioned in Chapter One: the contingency of ‘patriotism’, its contestation, and the tensions between national rhetoric and more localised discourses.<sup>1</sup> The chapter concludes with two synoptic case studies, exemplifying the nuances and variegated messages present in the songs of 1797-1805: the Dibdin family, often erroneously viewed as the exemplars of jingoistic songwriting; and the songs of the Volunteer and militia regiments.

Whilst this thesis’ overarching argument relies upon the placing of songs in their performative context, they are first examined as artefacts. This allows for a consideration of their physical and aural characteristics in the second part of the thesis, informed by their content. Extant songs from these years – with the exception of those from an Irish context – are largely loyalist. Yet that loyalism, read in the light of recent scholarship, is shown to be conditional and complex. This allowed a wide range of political and moral positions to be articulated within the bounds of what was deemed permissible at the time, resulting in a treatment of Napoleon that varied by time, place, and a song’s context.

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<sup>1</sup> Chapter One, p.7.

## Conventional readings of the broadside campaign

The historiography focuses on songs responding to the invasion threat of 1803-5, when Napoleon's Army of England was camped at Boulogne. This loyalist campaign, centred on the production of broadside propaganda predominantly in London, was united more by a shared sense of purpose than any formal relations. The result was a still more *ad hoc* version of the Association movement of the early 1790s, based on individual printers, amateur writers, and appeals to dutiful elite patronage, reliant upon street singers for dissemination of its material. A century ago, Wheeler and Broadley, having bought a collection of ephemera from 1803-5, produced *Napoleon and the Invasion of England: The Story of the Great Terror*.<sup>2</sup> Towards the close of the Second World War, a second collection was published in America by a second pair of authors: Klingberg and Hustvedt's *The Warning Drum*.<sup>3</sup> This work has been mentioned in the previous chapter as exhibiting peculiarly illogical notions concerning national unity and the 'English character'.<sup>4</sup> These two anthologies typify older work on the 'Great Terror' that assert its influence:

These ephemeral leaflets tumbled from the presses of many printers, at haphazard and apparently without the supervision of a Master Propagandist. The impact upon the public was therefore not an ordered, a regimented impact; it was, however heterogeneous, a collectively powerful impact... the cohesion of many individual wills into one national will and purpose.<sup>5</sup>

Recent scholars have gone further. Mark Rawlinson writes that:

The cultivation of fear in Napoleonic Britain... represented a significant development in the use of print to try to bring about a war effort that was morally and "emotionally co-ordinated."<sup>6</sup>

As seen below, Semmel complicates this picture, yet even he summarises the campaign as 'a codified, canonical reading of the Napoleonic threat', 'coordinated by a relatively few

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<sup>2</sup> H.F.B. Wheeler & A.M. Broadley, *Napoleon and the Invasion of England*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Stroud, 2008).

<sup>3</sup> Klingberg & Hustvedt, *The Warning Drum*.

<sup>4</sup> Chapter One, p.16.

<sup>5</sup> Klingberg & Hustvedt, *The Warning Drum*, p.vi.

<sup>6</sup> M. Rawlinson, 'Invasion! Coleridge, the defence of Britain and the cultivation of the public's fear', in P. Shaw (ed.), *Romantic Wars: Studies in Culture and Conflict, 1793-1822* (Aldershot, 2000), p.131.

actors, most notably the bookseller-publishers James Asperne, John Hatchard, and John Ginger'.<sup>7</sup> Song specialists too have accepted this position. Leslie Shepard proceeds from ceding total victory to moral reformers in the 1790s – 'the religious organisations virtually took over the whole chapbook and ballad market' – to concluding that 'Such patriotic notices [as James Asperne's] undoubtedly sustained public morale and also, regretfully, diverted attention from political and social problems nearer at hand.'<sup>8</sup>

This reading goes no further than the evidence of printed loyalist texts. Nor does it venture outside London, assuming that songs published in the capital were representative, or that metropolitan songs were successfully promulgated across the kingdom, monopolising the popular market. Twenty years ago, the only full-length treatment of this material eschewed this reading. Stella Cottrell's 'English Views of France and the French, 1789-1815', includes a meticulous examination of the broadside output of these years, applying psychological theories to their text.<sup>9</sup> Cottrell samples 250 pieces of ephemera from 1803, concluding that 177 used examples of French 'atrocities' to engender a loyalist response. 162 took as their prime example, Napoleon's Egyptian campaign: the 'massacre' at Jaffa, and his alleged poisoning of his own wounded on the retreat from Acre.<sup>10</sup> She outlines a generic 'Black Legend' used to vilify Napoleon in these texts, not all of which are songs.<sup>11</sup> This included a focus on physical characteristics, as 'Little Boney', dark or swarthy, and featured two strains of emasculation, infantilising Napoleon to render him safe, or literally demonising him, with mystical or diabolical explanations given for his prowess.<sup>12</sup> Cottrell writes convincingly of the lack of any other primary French stereotype:

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<sup>7</sup> Semmel, *Napoleon*, pp.42, 41.

<sup>8</sup> L. Shepard, *John Pitts, Ballad Printer of Seven Dials, London, 1765-1844* (1969), p.31; idem, *The History of Street Literature* (Newton Abbot, 1973), p.125.

<sup>9</sup> Cottrell, 'English Views of France'.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p.238.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p.305.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.215-9, 209, 226.

there was no counterpart to Britannia or John Bull but Napoleon himself.<sup>13</sup> This supports the conventional ‘Corsican Ogre’ interpretation, whereby this grotesque Other was held up for the reactionary edification of the British people.

### **Acknowledged problems with the propaganda**

Within Cottrell’s cataloguing of these techniques, there is recognition of their implicit complications. She identifies six specific issues, stemming from the essential difficulty of vilifying Napoleon. An issue as petty as the denial of his name was an unusual step driven by ‘superstition about the pleasant and beneficent sound of “Buonaparte”’. Certainly there were those at the time who felt that public opinion might be influenced by the sound of Buonaparte’s name.’<sup>14</sup> I would go further. In recouring to nicknames, from the diminutive (Boney; Nappy) to the fabulous (the Ogre; the Tyrant) to the absurd (the Great Bugaboo), writers were not merely acknowledging the intrinsic power of Napoleon’s name, but creating a new identity that had potential for all manner of resonances. The use of a derogatory nickname, similar to folkloric references to the Devil as, for example, ‘Old Nick’, fed into a broader transposition of Napoleon’s character from the political realm into ungoverned areas of popular culture, as is seen in Chapter Five. The final stage in this process was the post-Waterloo tradition of the engaging, sympathetic, anti-hero Napoleon; it is not coincidental that one verse refers to ‘Bonny’ and ‘Old Nick’ in two successive lines.<sup>15</sup> This was the nicknaming phenomenon that William Hone, in a prominent broadsheet of 1815, ridiculed as self-defeating ‘Buonapartephorbia’.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p.230.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p.220.

<sup>15</sup> ‘Bob Cranky’s Leum’nation Neet’, Appendix no.33.

<sup>16</sup> W. Hone, *Buonapartephorbia. The Origin of Dr. Slop’s Name*, 9<sup>th</sup> edn (1820).

Cottrell's second observation concerns lyricists' habit of presenting one side of an implicit argument, presupposing knowledge of – even adherence to – a contrary position by the audience.<sup>17</sup> This, Semmel concurs, indicates a loyalist fear of widespread Bonapartist sympathies; of a popular mentality predisposed to French invasion.<sup>18</sup> Given writers' natural reluctance to put ideas and vocabularies into the heads of the people, Semmel infers that Bonapartist arguments were already in the popular domain.<sup>19</sup> Numerous songs were composed and titled as explicit refutations. In Klingberg and Hustvedt's collection alone, we find 'Plain ANSWERS to plain QUESTIONS...'; 'Buonaparte answered, or the Briton's War-Song', priced at a hundred for a half-crown; 'Freedom or Slavery'; and 'The Ploughman's Ditty: Being an answer to that foolish question, "what have the poor to lose?"'<sup>20</sup>

This last song, published in London by both the aforementioned Ginger and Hatchard, both of Piccadilly, is typical. It begins with a verse acknowledging that:

Because I'm but poor,  
And slender's my store,  
That I've nothing to lose is the cry, Sir;

Set to the robust stage tune 'He that has the best wife', the song's writer has clearly tried to address the particular grievances of his audience. However, as an appeal to London's urban poor – we have no extant copies from elsewhere – it is sadly lacking, as the second verse displays an excess of sentimentality:

Tho' my house is but small,  
Yet to have none at all  
Wou'd sure be a greater distress, Sir;  
Shall my garden so sweet,  
And my orchard so neat,  
Be the prize of a foreign oppressor?

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<sup>17</sup> Cottrell, 'English Views of France', p.6.

<sup>18</sup> Semmel, *Napoleon*, pp.44, 54.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p.56.

<sup>20</sup> Klingberg & Hustvedt, *The Warning Drum*, pp.101-3, 70-1 & 215, 136-7, 188-90 (Appendix no.277).

Even were the song to reach the countryside, it is unlikely that many agricultural labourers would have recognised themselves in such a well-appointed spokesman in an age of failed harvests and enclosure. The song exhibits precisely those idealised tropes of the cottage as pastoral idyll, likely to appeal to elite purchasers-in-bulk rather than its intended audience, noted in Barrell's chapter, 'Cottage Politics'.<sup>21</sup> In attempting to refute arguments in favour of French rule, the author may have inadvertently aggravated that argument with tactless assumptions about rustic living conditions.

Hannah More's 'A King or a Consul?' of 1799 avoided this pitfall, concentrating on the effects of French rule and citing specific assets of the British poor, such as the naval pensioners' home at Greenwich and the military hospital of Haslar.<sup>22</sup> Lest any should miss these pointed references, their meaning was explained via footnotes interpolated in the song's text – a feature hardly likely to add to its entertainment value. In the twelfth verse, More is brave enough to address complaints of the tax burden caused by the war, as well as the lure of 'liberty':

French liberty Englishmen never will suit,  
*They* have planted the tree, but *we* feed on the fruit;  
Then rail not at taxes, although they cut deep,  
'Tis a heavy Insurance to save the brave Ship.

More stresses duty and loyalty to browbeat her audience, adopting a hectoring tone wholly unsuitable to popular song. This was a common failing of songs advancing an argument: inappropriate use of the medium, mistaking the ballad singer's street corner for the pulpit, too preoccupied with blackening Napoleon's reputation to engage with the conventions of their chosen medium.

It is the hardest task of all to ascertain how these songs were received by their audiences. As Philp writes, 'While the loyalty of the common people has been studied by

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<sup>21</sup> Barrell, 'Cottage Politics', in idem, *The Spirit of Despotism*, pp.210-46, esp. pp.237, 241.

<sup>22</sup> 'A King or a Consul?', Appendix no.169. Also five extant Bod. versions, e.g. Curzon b10(102).

their participation... there is little work (probably because it is so difficult to do) on the private and sub-cultural worlds which lay behind loyalist performances'.<sup>23</sup> Yet it was in reaction to precisely this form of loyalist song that certain working-class writers leave us their thoughts. Joseph Mayett, a young farm-hand and militiaman from Quainton in Buckinghamshire – in other words, these ballads' ideal target – recalled this of the invasion-scare years:

at this time there were a great many tracks [tracts] Came out and their Contents were Chiefly to perswade poor people to be satisfied in their situation... for we had not so much punishment as our sins deserved... which drove me almost into despair for I could see their design.<sup>24</sup>

This critical response is explored further in Chapter Six's study of audience reception.<sup>25</sup> At this stage, we need only note that the argumentative approach was demonstrably flawed.

Propagandists were on similarly shaky ground in their attacks upon Napoleon himself. Semmel isolates the key difficulty: the essential contradiction between humour and horror.<sup>26</sup> The campaign's existence was largely due to the threat of invasion: the public had to be convinced of the danger. Yet conversely, morale had to be boosted. These imperatives were mutually contradictory, and the balancing act posed grave problems to the average hack. 'Little Boney A-Cockhorse', printed by John Pitts in *Seven Dials*, is a prime example.<sup>27</sup> While it succeeds in ridiculing Napoleon, its final rousing exhortation –

Come, come, brother Britons, united together,  
Let's join heart & hand like bird's of a feather  
For our Church & our King we'll fight together  
When Boney comes over from France.

- is inane, given that in the first verse, the invading force has been entirely burnt and sunk before ever having the chance to land:

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<sup>23</sup> Philp, 'Vulgar Conservatism', p.65.

<sup>24</sup> A. Kussmaul (ed.), *The Autobiography of Joseph Mayett of Quainton (1783-1839)* (Cambridge, 1986), p.70.

<sup>25</sup> Chapter Six, pp.238-9, 244-5.

<sup>26</sup> Semmel, *Napoleon*, p.50.

<sup>27</sup> Appendix no.176.

With his flat-bottom'd boats, see how they're burning,  
Little Boney is coming over from France:  
He'll be met by the way by our brave British frigates.  
And a dose of their pills they will clap in his gizzard,  
And down to the bottom send him & his legions  
And teach him our new fashion dance.

Admittedly, popular song was not known for its rationalism. Yet the result here was for its rhetorical strength to pull in two contradictory, thus necessarily weakening, directions.

If writers struggled to decide how terrifying or absurd to make Napoleon, this was partially due to what had already become a national obsession with a man “‘Wrapt in the solitude of his awful originality’”.<sup>28</sup> This was not peculiar to popular song. As Simon Bainbridge writes, leading Romantic authors ‘also saw Napoleon as occupying a place in the public “imagination” which reinforced his hold on power.’<sup>29</sup> Young engineer officer Charles William Pasley wrote to Coleridge recalling that ‘we talked of the dreadful power of Buonaparte with the same reverential awe, that the child feels for the more than human prowess of Jack the giant-killer’.<sup>30</sup> It was, on the whole, persons of this polite milieu who were responsible for the broadside campaign, and who allowed their condemnation of Napoleon to take on a hysterical, sometimes mythical quality. In *The Warning Drum*, we come across epithets beyond the ubiquitous ‘tyrant’ and ‘Corsican’. There are numerous variants on ‘Chief’, ‘Chief Consul’ and ‘Consul-King’; the famous ‘Britons Strike Home!’ strikes a biblical note with ‘Pharaoh’, obliquely drawing on Napoleon’s own discreditable Egyptian campaign; ‘Address to the people of Great Britain. By W.J. Denison, Esq.’ includes ‘the storm’, ‘this modern ATTILA’ and ‘Gothic DARKNESS’; there are so many references to ‘the foe’ or ‘the haughty foe’ that Nicholas Rowe, composer of ‘Britannia’s Charge to the Sons of Freedom’, makes the distinction that Napoleon is ‘a malefactor not a

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<sup>28</sup> C. Phillips, *An Historical Character of Napoleon*, 5<sup>th</sup> edn (1817), p.3. Quoted (but uncited) in Cottrell, ‘English Views of France’, p.206.

<sup>29</sup> S. Bainbridge, *Napoleon and English Romanticism* (Cambridge, 1995), p.1.

<sup>30</sup> J.R. Watson, *Romanticism and War: A Study of British Romantic Period Writers and the Napoleonic Wars* (Basingstoke, 2003), p.2.

foe', clearly worried at the awful dignity of that title.<sup>31</sup> Birmingham's premier light entertainer and joint-owner of its *Chronicle*, John Collins (1742-1808), reached such heights of rhetoric as:

Let the Corsican Fiend then with fiends in his train,  
To the white cliffs of Albion waft over the main,  
Firm as rocks will her sons such Infernals repel,  
And their Legions consign to their own native Hell!<sup>32</sup>

James Plumptre (1771-1832), professor of music at Cambridge, labelled Napoleon 'the haughty invader', replete with 'his host', in 'The Flowers of our Parish'.<sup>33</sup>

If such hyperbole ran the risk of either cowing the British people into terror or raising nerves to the point of hysteria, at least it got the point across: invasion was a dreadful threat. Yet the message was contradicted on several levels. As seen below, this demonization was at odds with representations of Napoleon before 1803. And whilst one might readily explain a shift from admiration of a military genius serving his country, to vilification of a usurpatory war-monger, harangues about a hell-hound were less convincing. Even were the popular memory so short as to accept this escalation of rhetoric, its tone remained incoherent and inconsistent, belying a 'codified, canonical reading'.<sup>34</sup> Collins was typical: not content with the diabolical rhetoric of 'Old England's Strength and Stay', he also turned comedian, belittling the danger of Napoleon in a punning, cod-French accent:

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<sup>31</sup> Klingberg & Hustvedt, *The Warning Drum*, pp.68-99; 72-3; 138-42; 118-9.

<sup>32</sup> 'Old England's Strength and Stay', verse 9, Appendix no.251. T.R. Griffiths, 'Collins, John (1742-1808)', *ODNB* (Oxford, 2004), at [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/5946](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/5946), accessed 14 Aug. 2013.

<sup>33</sup> Appendix no.58. See A.F. Pollard, 'Plumptre, James (1771-1832)', rev. E. Shaffer, *ODNB*, at [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22404](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22404), accessed 14 Aug. 2013.

<sup>34</sup> Semmel, *Napoleon*, p.41.

But as for all de French can do,  
 John Bull he only laugh,  
 And deir Fee Faw Fum Invasions  
 He make his Mock and Joke,  
 For he say, bay Gar, dat BONY PART,  
 Is von great Sheep or Calf,  
 To tink de Necks of Englishmen  
 Vill stoop to veer his Yoke.  
 But to England if he come,  
 Vich so much he make his Brag,  
 Dey swear upon his great long Neck  
 Dey'll only leave de Scrag,<sup>35</sup>

The propensity of songwriters to contradict their own material could even occur in the same song. T. Evans' 'The Corsican Monster', a typical London broadside, tied itself in knots attempting both to scare its audience with tales of Napoleon's evil deeds, and to expose those deeds as mere show.<sup>36</sup>

Bonaparte is his name, and he's rightly named indeed,  
 For the hardest bone that ever was can't his hard heart exceed,  
 Most of the nations round, they do him dread we know  
 But at last he will be found to be only a Bug-a-bow:

Many are the countries, cities, and fine towns,  
 To his disgrace he's laid waste, for his cruelty has no bounds,  
 The widows and the fatherless, and the aged parents,  
 He's left them all in great distress, that savage Bug-a-bow.

Evans predicts he will 'be found to be only a Bug-a-bow' – a fairy tale, a paper tiger, a figment. Yet immediately he becomes a 'savage Bug-a-bow', whose depredations have all too real an effect. Later, Evans imagines the invasion as bucolic farce:

For then our bull we will let loose, and in his mad career,  
 He will run at all without excuse, that dare him to come near;  
 Over hedge and ditch he'll jump and skip, so furiously he'll go,  
 He'll not return till with his horn he's gored the Bug-a-bow.

Evans could have left his audience with this comic, bloody image. However, he again seems caught in two minds: what if the invader catches the bull off-guard?

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<sup>35</sup> 'Mirabile Dictu! Truth Told By A Frenchman! A Song', verse 6, Appendix no.195. The song was 'Supposed to be sung in broken English, by a Fugitive from that Country on this Side the Water.'

<sup>36</sup> Appendix no.88.

But when he'll come no one can tell it may be in the night,  
Appearing like a Bug-a-bow, to put us all in a fright,  
But if the case it should be such as perhaps it may be so,  
They will find our bull an over match for their barking Bug-a-bow.

This final verse moves to uncertainties, darkness, and the unsubstantiated assertion that the bull will triumph even if surprised and frightened. Evans, co-publisher of this song and clearly more used to the business side of the ballad trade, negates his composition's potential impact by miring it in contradiction – a not unusual fate in this body of song.

Cottrell points out one further contradiction: is Napoleon synonymous with France, or at odds with it?<sup>37</sup> Is he the Corsican usurper, oppressor of the callow yet essentially decent French people? Or does he epitomise Gallic haughtiness? This was something of a Trojan horse, and has most interested academics exploring the rhetoric of patriotism. For in depicting Napoleon as a tyrant – unconstitutional, suppressing the universal liberties previously espoused by Frenchmen – writers ran the risk, often intentionally, of damning the British administration by implication.

The first to remark on this radical strain of patriotism disguised as loyalism was William Cobbett. Then at the height of his loyalist phase, Cobbett recognised the danger, finding 'the prevailing critique of Napoleon too democratic' and attempting to counter the trend via tirades in his *Annual Register*.<sup>38</sup> Among modern historians, Thompson led the way in tracing radicals' shift from using Napoleon as an exemplar of revolutionary virtue, to holding him up as a corrupted mirror, a monstrous equivalent of Pitt, in which domestic flaws might be seen.<sup>39</sup> Though at a popular level this disillusion has been exaggerated, the political capital to be gained by radicals in denouncing tyranny was great. Thompson too draws upon Cobbett, from the beginning of his turn back away from the British government in 1804:

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<sup>37</sup> Cottrell, 'English Views', p.231.

<sup>38</sup> Semmel, *Napoleon*, pp.44-5.

<sup>39</sup> Thompson, *The Making*, pp.497-8.

Buonaparté's exaltation [to Emperor]... [tends] to make us fear that...we may, in fact, though not in name, become little better than slaves, and slaves, too, not of the king, but of the minister of the day.<sup>40</sup>

Cookson correctly links the rehabilitation of the Friends of Peace to their disillusion with Napoleon. 'The Friends of Peace were as ready as anyone to accuse Napoleon of "towering ambition", of being a "military despot" and the "disturber of the peace of Europe"'.<sup>41</sup> This is the attitude encountered in Shelley's 1805 poem on Austerlitz. Though Napoleon is a 'tyrant' and a 'restless fiend', the poem's title is 'To the Emperors of Russia and Austria who eyed the battle of Austerlitz from the Heights whilst Buonaparte was active in the thickest of the fight'; the Ancien Regime monarchs are addressed in the opening line as 'Coward Chiefs!'<sup>42</sup> Its political message is that the vigour of tyranny is perpetuated by the failings of the allied powers and their monarchical systems:

...Be sure  
The tyrant needs such slaves as you!  
Think ye the world would bear his sway  
Were dastards such as you away?

It is the suppression of man's natural liberties, according to Shelley, that allowed Napoleon's rise: once more, an attack on Napoleon in particular is used to criticise authority in general.

Patriotism was conditional as well as contested. Both Cunningham and Maurizio Viroli have examined William Frend's essay of 1804, *Patriotism, or the Love of our Country*.<sup>43</sup> To Frend, 'the country must love the individual, or the individual will not love the country' – and this love was to be demonstrated by social justice and the extension of the franchise.<sup>44</sup> Cunningham links this radical argument to the loyalist broadside campaign.

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<sup>40</sup> Cited *ibid.*, p.497-8.

<sup>41</sup> J.E. Cookson, *The Friends of Peace: Anti-War Liberalism in England, 1793-1815* (Cambridge, 1982), p.180.

<sup>42</sup> Appendix no.336.

<sup>43</sup> Cunningham, 'The Language of Patriotism', p.15; M. Viroli, *For Love of Country: An Essay on Patriotism and Nationalism* (Oxford, 1995), pp.99-105.

<sup>44</sup> Viroli, *For Love of Country*, pp.101-3.

‘That these wars, and in particular the invasion threats of 1803-5, brought forth a mass and united patriotism[,] is one of the enduring myths of English history.’<sup>45</sup> Cunningham’s reading of song propaganda is the most subversive yet:

The outpourings from the presses are not so much a celebration of national unity as an exercise in persuasion... Napoleon is presented as a ‘tyrant’ and ‘despot’ who will inflict ‘slavery’ and ‘chains’ and eradicate the ‘freedom’ and ‘liberty’ of Englishmen. No one reading the propaganda could fail to hear the message<sup>46</sup>

To extend Cunningham’s interpretation: just as the government used the threat of invasion as justification for the curtailment of liberties and expansion of the loyalist state, so radicals used the same threat as justification for a recapitulation of the lost battle of the 1790s over liberty and democracy, this time under the guise of staunch patriotism. One does not have to suspect covert radicalism in every loyalist songwriter, to perceive that the mere existence of this argument fundamentally complicates the impact of the broadside campaign.

Perhaps the greatest single strength of the anti-invasion broadside campaign was that, by dint of its overwhelming scale, it denied oppositional and radical voices the public space to wage an overt counter-campaign. Yet in the light of the preceding analysis, I consider it reasonable to judge the campaign as flawed, incoherent, and open to wildly different interpretations by audiences. There is a strong argument *against* these songs having enjoyed ‘a collectively powerful impact’ which engendered ‘the cohesion of many individual wills into one national will and purpose’.<sup>47</sup> Now we must move beyond the propaganda of 1803-5, to consider the wider body of songs concerning Napoleon, many of which professed openly contra-loyalist opinion, in the period 1797-1805.

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<sup>45</sup> Cunningham, ‘The Language of Patriotism’, p.13.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p.14.

<sup>47</sup> Klingberg & Hustvedt, *The Warning Drum*, p.vi.

### **‘Irish rebel songs’ – the self-evident side of dissent**

The radical Irish body of songs, infinitely more prominent, because largely extant, than English radical songs, has also attracted much attention. As stated above, the influential presence of Irish songs and individuals in English and Scottish popular culture reinforces their relevance to considerations of the ‘British’ context. A second pair of anthologies mirrors those of loyalist London: George-Denis Zimmermann’s *Songs of Irish Rebellion: Political Street Ballads and Rebel Songs, 1780-1900*, and Terry Moylan’s *The Age of Revolution in the Irish Song Tradition, 1776 to 1815*. Beyond these, numerous scholars have been drawn to the topic, primarily with regard to 1798. Guy Beiner discusses ‘the lingering messianic reverence accorded to Napoleon Bonaparte in Irish folklore, which was manifested particularly in song and ballad tradition’.<sup>48</sup> Both Kevin Whelan and Breandan Ó Buachalla address the topic in essays within *1798: A Bicentenary Perspective*.<sup>49</sup> Thus it is in relation to this uprising that we find the majority of extant rebel songs from these years – songs which use Napoleon in that specific context, rather than affording him centre stage as they would do post-1815.

Tellingly, these songs are largely in Gaelic, circulated orally, as opposed to the English-language verses found in United Irish publications such as *Paddy’s Resource* and the *Northern Star* from 1793-8: they are the product of voices on the ground, rather than a Dublin elite. A representative verse comes from the song known variously as ‘Na Franncaigh Bhanc’, ‘Na Francaigh Bána’ and ‘Teacht na bhFranncach go Cill Eala’. It has been translated by Richard Hayes as:

I have a great trust in the King of Graces,  
In Bonaparte, too, who never deceived,  
That our friends will come to us again  
And wreak vengeance on the foreign brood.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Beiner, *Remembering*, p.145.

<sup>49</sup> T. Bartlett *et al.* (eds.), *1798: A Bicentenary Perspective* (Dublin, 2003).

<sup>50</sup> Appendix no.200.

and by Beiner as:

But I have great hope in the King of Glory  
And in Bonaparte who never did wrong  
That our friends will come and rewrite our story  
And take revenge on the English throng.<sup>51</sup>

The multiplicity of titles, and uncertain origin and interpretation of the song, is typical. So is the insistence upon Napoleon's arrival: Ó Buachalla notes that 'Bonaparte, like the Stuarts before him, would function in Ireland not as French strategy dictated, but as Irish circumstances demanded.'<sup>52</sup> An untitled *aisling* by Ó Súilleabháin, from Cork, was similarly optimistic, ending with the assertion:

A toast give round and merrily drink,  
and then we will repeat it,  
that in triumph brave young Bonaparte  
we'll soon see here in Erin.<sup>53</sup>

Thus news of Napoleon's victorious Italian campaign is incorporated into a song about the battle of New Ross in Wexford, 'Bualadh Ros Mhic Thriúin', and all real and potential French aid is ascribed to Napoleon in person, despite his actual neglect of Ireland in favour of Egypt.<sup>54</sup> Hoche's mishap at Bantry Bay in 1796 is revised into clearing the way for Napoleon in 'Ó, a bhean an tí', and two songs written during 1798 substitute Napoleon for the real French commander, General Humbert:<sup>55</sup>

Bonaparte is in Castlebar  
Seeking Sarsfield's law<sup>56</sup>

and

The French are in Killala  
helping them in Ballina.  
Raise your hearts and your courage  
and steal away with Bonaparte.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Beiner, *Remembering*, p.147.

<sup>52</sup> B. Ó Buachalla, 'From Jacobite to Jacobin', in Bartlett *et al.*, 1798, p.95.

<sup>53</sup> Appendix no.349.

<sup>54</sup> Appendix no.64.

<sup>55</sup> Appendix no.244.

<sup>56</sup> Beiner, *Remembering*, pp.145-6.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p.146.

This appropriation tells us more about the development of one strain of Irish song culture than it does about Napoleon. These songs of 1798 are distinct from the overtly republican, revolutionary songs promulgated by the United Irishmen. The latter type undeniably had a lasting impact. A report was sent to Dublin Castle as late as 1804 from Newry, describing a scene in a public house, where revellers sung the United Irish composition, ‘Liberty and Equality, or Dermot’s Delight’, which had the refrain,

To the tune of equality, boys, let us dance  
Round liberty’s tree in the morning.<sup>58</sup>

Yet as with the loyalist campaign in England, we must complicate the picture. Ó Buachalla’s essay title, ‘From Jacobite to Jacobin’, points to a different process: the assimilation of Napoleon into an existing song tradition eulogising the saviour across the water.<sup>59</sup> Although Jacobite rhetoric ‘was deemed eminently suitable as a channel for the radical option’ and thus could function alongside French-inspired republican rhetoric, it articulated a very different strain of rebel sentiment, more popular in origin and with roots dating back at least as far as Cromwell.<sup>60</sup> The transition from this phase, to the elegiac post-Waterloo songs on Napoleon’s exile, is thus entirely logical, indicative of deep-rooted rather than newly-generated sentiments. As Ó Buachalla writes, ‘The “popular mind” was not a *tabula rasa* into which revolutionary and radical concepts were injected in the last decade of the eighteenth century’.<sup>61</sup> I would add that neither was it a blank slate in 1815: this was a long-term process.

This distinction between republican and Jacobite strands impels other insights into Irish song culture. We must avoid caricaturing ‘Irish song’ as the homogenous product of Catholic, freedom-fighting Francophiles; the polar opposite of ‘English’ loyalist song.

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<sup>58</sup> Appendix no.174.

<sup>59</sup> Ó Buachalla, ‘From Jacobite to Jacobin’, pp.95, 76-80.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p.95.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p.76. See also Morley, ‘Homology’, pp.122-3

That would be to return to Colley's dismissal of Ireland from British national identity; to buy into one particular English stereotype of the Irish; and, in the specific context of Napoleonic song, to agree with the first half of Kidson's earlier assertion, that 'all these ballads having Napoleon for their hero... have emanated from an Irish source'.<sup>62</sup>

In contrast to the antiquated English anthologies, editors of Irish collections are aware that their subject is not without nuances – particularly of a geographical nature. Zimmermann's assessment is not unreasonable, though he inclines somewhat to the Kidson position:

A number of songs displaying a marked degree of sympathy for [Napoleon] are found both in Great Britain and in Ireland... Street ballads proper to Ireland and more openly favourable to the French emperor are numerous too; most of the ballads in English having Napoleon for their hero have perhaps originated in Ireland.<sup>63</sup>

We need not accept his latter speculation, to agree with his first assertion. Nor should we characterise *all* popular Irish songs as 'street ballads'. Just as in England, songs entered the popular realm from numerous sources, with varying agendas. Thus we find songs originating in newspapers that, whilst not being overtly rebellious, combine the sentiment of an anti-Union dissenter with the style of a London satirist. Two verses of 'Sketch of the Present Times', from the *Dublin Evening Post* in 1799, run thus:

Buonaparte's in Egypt – but that's all we know –  
For whether he's *dead* or *alive*, I declare it,  
No account yet received does with certainty shew –  
So patiently wait till *truth* comes, and you'll hear it.

In England the mind of the Minister seems  
Wholly bent upon *joining this island to – Britain*,  
In spite of the *sea!* – which of all his *bold* schemes,  
I think, is the boldest his fancy has hit on!<sup>64</sup>

This urbane scepticism is neither treasonable, nor inflamed for or against Napoleon; it situates itself well within the acceptable limits of political discourse.

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<sup>62</sup> Chapter One, pp.25, 35.

<sup>63</sup> G-D. Zimmermann, *Songs of Irish Rebellion: Political Street Ballads and Rebel Songs, 1780-1900* (Dublin, 1967), p.32.

<sup>64</sup> Appendix, no.304.

Nor were some regions of Ireland free of loyalist songs; there are garlands extant from Ulster in particular that we might call part of the anti-invasion campaign. One song, simply titled ‘Bonaparte’, shares much with the loyalist ballads above, although its rhetoric is less inflammatory. Its most bullish verse runs:

Quite frantic now, he vows revenge  
The moment that he’s landed;  
And proudly boasts, we cannot hope  
To fight him single-handed.  
What, single-handed, we can do,  
His troops shall know full well, son  
For him he learn’d it long ago  
From single-handed Nelson!<sup>65</sup>

The song’s narrative avoids the Black Legend, focusing on the invasion of Switzerland, Napoleon’s diplomatic wrangling over the Treaty of Amiens, and the unsuccessful conclusion of the Egyptian campaign. Thus, though its intent – the ridiculing of the ‘Bantam cock’ Napoleon and his plans for invasion – corresponded to similar English productions, its frame of reference and level of invective was far more modest, presumably in recognition of its different audience. The opening two verses are especially interesting:

Come, listen every lord and lady,  
Gentleman and states-man,  
I’ve got a little song to sing  
About a very great man!  
And should the name of Bonaparte  
Mingle in my story,  
‘Tis with all due submission  
To his honor’s worship’s glory  
Bow, wow, wow, &c.

The kindness of this philanthropic  
Gentleman extending,  
Colossus-like, from isle to isle,  
Their grievances amending,  
To England would reach (if he could)  
From fancied ills to save ye;  
But though he likes us vastly well,  
He does not like our navy!

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<sup>65</sup> Appendix no.35.

The tone is sarcastic: its appeal to listeners based upon an avowedly respectful stance to the ‘great’ Napoleon is undercut by the subsequent argument. This perhaps indicates the writer was aware it would be sung to an audience accustomed, even predisposed, to songs in favour of Napoleon.

Thus we find several registers of songs in Ireland, articulating different perspectives, by no means all sharing a United Irish, radical perspective: most pro-Napoleon songs were effectively Jacobite successors. With this in mind, we might re-cross the Irish Sea, to interrogate the supposed ubiquity of loyalist songs, and to examine other attitudes voiced in song during these years.

### **Alternative Perspectives from England, Scotland and Wales**

1797-1805 saw many developments on both sides of the Channel, and to view sung responses through the prism of invasion alone would be to miss a fascinating series of shifts in focus. Attitudes varied by location and songwriter. Yet a broader trend is apparent, in which songs’ treatment of Napoleon reflected changing circumstances of war and peace. Largely deriving from a polite background, entering popular culture via broadsheets, these songs articulate a literate discourse concerning the Wars and the rise of the fascinating individual at their centre.

Though known by a small minority since the siege of Toulon, Napoleon first came to real prominence in British society in 1797, his early reputation that of a brilliant republican commander, admired for his martial prowess, youth, and classical virtues – offset particularly well by the backdrop of his Italian campaign.<sup>66</sup> Yet though his feats in command of the Army of Italy are remembered in later, ‘legacy’ songs, he does not feature

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<sup>66</sup> E.g. Semmel, *Napoleon*, pp.19-21.

in British compositions until 1798. Irish rebel songs excepted, his role is as Nelson's adversary, in a slew of triumphalist productions celebrating that admiral's victory at the Nile. In 1798 the Black Legend had not been developed; Napoleon was merely a general serving his country. Thus, although many writers adopted a jingoistic attitude, personal attacks were minimal. 'A Dumpling for Buonaparte' is typical.<sup>67</sup> Written by 'A Norwich Volunteer' to the tune of 'Hearts of Oak', its context is communal patriotic celebration, set to a familiar anthem with appropriately nautical overtones. It is also typical in that the lyrics rarely fit the metre of verse or chorus: although 'Hearts of Oak' was a regular staple for lyricists, very few mastered its rhythms. Its subject – the Battle of the Nile – is preceded by verses listing previous naval triumphs, before Napoleon is introduced in verse six:

But now let us sing of the great Buonaparte,  
Of that Wonderful Hero; I'll something impart;  
They say that bold Nelson has stopt him awhile,  
And has dish'd his grand fleet on the mouth of the Nile.  
Huzza! for brave Nelson, &c.

This verse is notable for scanning rather better than most, and for its treatment of Napoleon as a 'Wonderful Hero'. Whilst this allows for the bathos of the foreign hero exposed as inferior to his English opponent, it nevertheless admits of Napoleon's formidable reputation. It would be no great triumph for Nelson to have defeated a mediocrity. This is presumably why the absent Napoleon is always mentioned, whilst Admiral Brueys, the actual French commander, does not receive a single mention in any song of the battle. Thus the victory gave loyalist songwriters their first context for Napoleon: the feared commander whose cutting down to size served to magnify Nelson's glory. John Tye, a Birmingham songwriter whose pamphlet of 1799 contained no fewer than three separate songs on the victory, makes this use of Napoleon in 'Song 8. *Called,*

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<sup>67</sup> Appendix no.109.

*Admiral Nelson's pursuit of the French Fleet in the Mediterranean, Sept. 1798*, set to the lively hunting tune, 'My dog and my gun':

Their great Buonaparte so suc[c]essful on land,  
On ocean's wide field now refuses to stand;  
He who lately so shone, who to fear once was blind,  
Now a Briton won't meet though with one hand behind<sup>68</sup>

Tye contrasts Napoleon's prowess on land with his failure to master the aquatic element in which the British so excelled. This explains the absence of songs on Napoleon in 1797: there could be no consolation to his defeat of the First Coalition until his victories were offset by coupling his name with British naval victory. After the Nile and the defence of Acre in 1798 and 1799, matching Napoleon with Nelson served both to redound to the latter's credit, and to diminish the former's potency. The same technique obtained in the anonymous 'The New Century, A New Song', published, naturally, in 1800:

What tho' Bonaparte keeps vict'ry in view,  
(For Britons to merit will e'er give its due)  
Still to heroes like our's ev'ry Frenchman must bow,  
As St. Vincent and Duncan, brave Nelson and Howe.<sup>69</sup>

The early loyalist interpretation of Napoleon, as typified in this verse, was based upon frank appreciation of his abilities. It was symbiotic with praise of Nelson, whose own feats would be diminished if the French were seen as craven. Thus Napoleon's early ascent in English song came rather on the admiral's coattails.

The coup of 18 Brumaire 1799 complicated matters, provoking responses such as More's 'A King or a Consul?' Napoleon became both usurper of authority and sole figurehead of his nation, leading to the difficulties of representation above. But his character was not irredeemable. The years between Egypt and Amiens were uncertain for both loyalists and radicals, faced with Napoleon's complex yet compelling character. The anonymous author of *Bonaparte's Reverie: A Poetical Romance*, first published in 1799 –

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<sup>68</sup> Appendix no.1.

<sup>69</sup> Appendix no.217.

a poem too expensive and too dependent upon classical allusion to reach a popular audience – found him or herself caught between contradictory positions. The introduction begins with a torrent of invective.<sup>70</sup> ‘But, at the same time, the writer would wish to speak of him, with that candour ever due to an enemy, as a man of the greatest courage, ability, and resources’.<sup>71</sup> The author admits that ‘To the moderation of Bonaparte’s government...the writer would wish to bear every testimony’, summing up the poem’s position thus: ‘The reader will please to observe Bonaparte’s character is here drawn after the conqueror of Italy had degraded himself into the free-booter of Egypt.’<sup>72</sup> The author’s caveats indicate an awareness of more equivocal or pro-Napoleonic views amongst the poem’s readers than the verses themselves expressed.

This variegated, receptive public sphere is covered by Semmel; I wish to suggest that it was common to popular culture as well.<sup>73</sup> In 1800, a book of Valentines, priced at 6d, sold in six locations across London and pitched at a working market – its subjects are footmen, volunteers, shoe-makers, dairy maids – included a Valentine ‘*From John Bull’s Daughter to Bonaparte.*’<sup>74</sup> The book’s title used this poem as its chief selling point, indicating the degree of popular interest in all things Napoleon. This humorous sally begins by summarising a reasonable loyalist view of the would-be suitor:

I SOME time ago, thought you a quiet man,  
 And with what you had got, was contented;  
 But father tells me, you disturb all you can  
 Though you find that our coast’s well defended.

John Bull’s daughter proceeds to lecture Napoleon on the virtues of modesty and humility, advising him to leave off vainglorious pursuits and threats of invasion. The concluding lines hold out a promise:

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<sup>70</sup> ‘Bonaparte’s Reverie: A Poetical Romance’, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (1800), pp.i-vii.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p.vii.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.vii, xi.

<sup>73</sup> Semmel, *Napoleon*, pp.15, 20-22, 26-9.

<sup>74</sup> Appendix no.352.

So when reason takes place, and in you I find grace,  
Act with prudence, like a nation divine;  
Each land might be blest, and with a smiling face,  
Perhaps I'd choose you for my Valentine.

In short, there is no unconditional animosity between them, and reconciliation might be achieved.

This open-minded though still loyalist perspective highlights a fundamental consideration of chronology. Though we tend to talk of 'the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars' as lasting from 1793 to 1815, treating the two peaces as little more than breathing space, that was not the majority perception at the time. When in late 1801 peace with France became a probability, popular discourse did not treat the prospect as a temporary ceasefire, but as a long-awaited, permanent deliverance from the travails of war. This stemmed in part from Napoleon's coup; peace could be made with a strong, respectable leader, as opposed to an insatiable republic. A better-known Birmingham contemporary of Tye was the comedian James Dobbs. J.A. Langford, that city's great Victorian local historian and a die-hard conservative, deemed Dobbs 'a great favourite' and 'very popular' in his earthy stage performances.<sup>75</sup> In 1802, Dobbs published a pamphlet entitled *The Lisper. Songs, &c. addressed to The Friends of Peace*.<sup>76</sup> Dobbs eschewed comedy in this collection, focusing on the moral and commercial blessings of peace between England and France, attacking the detrimental impact of war upon commerce.<sup>77</sup>

Both Tye and Dobbs employed maritime themes in spite of their landlocked geographical situation, suggesting both the ubiquity of naval imagery as a British patriotic construct, and the extent to which great manufacturing cities' inhabitants saw their own

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<sup>75</sup> J.A. Langford (ed.), *A Century of Birmingham Life: or, a Chronicle of Local Events, from 1741 to 1841*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (2 vols., Birmingham, 1870), ii, p.379.

<sup>76</sup> J. Dobbs, *The Lisper. Songs, &c. addressed to The Friends of Peace* (Birmingham, 1802).

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.9-12, 13-26.

prosperity as linked to maritime trade. Thus the most arresting song in the collection is ‘Peace on the Ocean’, set fittingly to the (unknown) tune, ‘In the midst of the sea’.<sup>78</sup>

Now our battles are done, and the French foes no more,  
Pull away, pull away, so hearty;  
For we’ve haul’d PEACE in tow, to our own native shore,  
And a friend made of great BONAPARTE!

The song concludes, echoing the Valentine’s sentiment, with the line ‘May the French be our friends, and our friends foes no more’. The second clause is ambiguous; it is tempting to read it literally, as meaning the two nations are natural friends and should cease quarrelling. The alternative is that Dobbs has missed an apostrophe, and the wish is for the French to enjoy a lasting peace with Britain’s continental allies in the erstwhile coalition, primarily Austria and Prussia. The overall sentiment is striking: anti-war arguments and pro-French feeling are combined with patriotic confidence in the Royal Navy.

Increasingly, the campaign of 1803-5 appears isolated within this broader period. Before 1803, loyalism and denigration of Napoleon were far from necessarily complementary, just as one could oppose the war in the name of patriotism – for what was more British than the toast ‘trade’s increase’? This even-handed, complex song culture sits more comfortably with the craze of fashionable Bonapartism that seized polite society during the Peace – a period during which propertied Britons flocked to Paris to catch a glimpse of the great man. The phenomenon has received recurrent treatment from different perspectives over the past century.<sup>79</sup> Love of peace and hostility to war, irrespective of one’s politics, also squared better with traditional popular song culture than the bellicosity of anti-invasion propaganda. Though war-weariness will be discussed at greater length in Chapter Three, which deals with 1806-15, its presence was felt even in this earlier period.

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<sup>78</sup> Appendix no.268.

<sup>79</sup> Alger, *Napoleon’s British Visitors*, R.R.M. Sée, *Masquerier and his Circle* (1922), A. Halliday, ‘English Artists and Visitors to Paris during the Peace of Amiens’ (Oxford University D.Phil. thesis, 1983), W. Maierhofer *et al.* (eds.), *Women Against Napoleon: Historical and Fictional Responses to his Rise and Legacy* (Frankfurt, 2007).

The sentimental songs of the radical, Francophile poet Thomas Campbell (1777-1844) – notably ‘The Wounded Hussar’, ‘The Soldier’s Dream’ and ‘Hohenlinden’ – proved remarkably successful upon publication in these years, their reach extending beyond the drawing-room: not only were the songs pirated as broadsides, but their melodies began to be cited as tunes for other popular songs dealing with the Wars.<sup>80</sup>

There is an argument that the resumption of hostilities rewrote existing narratives of Britain’s relations with Napoleon, and that what went before was either forgotten, or an embarrassing anachronism. This was typified by D.B.P. Eccleston, alias ‘Phocion’, author of a twenty-page pamphlet sold in Lancaster marketplace during the Peace.<sup>81</sup> A more fervent and lyrical Bonapartist would be hard to find; Napoleon’s personal habits and physical characteristics receive as much praise as his domestic, military and diplomatic achievements. Yet on the reverse of the title page of the Bodleian’s copy, the author has scribbled the following apology:

This pamphlet was written and published during the short cessation of hostilities which we enjoyed, and when I thought the two countries were going to consult their mutual interest, by being at peace with each other. – When Nappy became our enemy again, I called them in from the shops, and suppressed their sale.<sup>82</sup>

Eccleston is still more precise on the frontispiece. Beneath a highly flattering portrait of the young Napoleon – slim, handsome, well-dressed – the following verse is printed:

It was a maxim in ancient Greece,  
To learn the art of War in time of Peace;  
But He found out a better maxim far,  
By conquest to make Peace in time of War.  
And, through all Europe, bidding discord cease  
Gave to FRANCE Liberty; To the WORLD, Peace.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> G. Carnall, ‘Campbell, Thomas (1777-1844)’, *ODNB*, at [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4534](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4534), accessed 14 Aug. 2013; Appendix nos. 376, 308, 147. Two garlands published by John Marshall at Newcastle – one untitled, one called *The Thrush* – include ‘The Wounded Hussar’, but these belong to 1806-1815, as do most subsequent songs using the tune, and are examined in Chapter Three. See Thomson, *Newcastle Chapbooks*, pp.43, 75.

<sup>81</sup> D.B.P. Eccleston, *A Sketch of the Character of Gen. Bonaparte, In letters to the Editor of the Lancaster Gazetteer* (Lancaster, 1802).

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p.2.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, frontispiece.

Eccleston's marginalia is restricted to the pithy comment, 'This ill accords with the present situation of Europe. February 1814'. By this reading, proponents of peace were rudely disabused by Napoleon in 1803, just as republicans were disenchanting following his coup. Yet this did not result in a uniformly hostile body of songs, even in the immediate wake of the renewal of war.

The first prominent popular song to address the resumption of hostilities was 'The Corsican Drover'.<sup>84</sup> The circumstances of its production appear to place it firmly within the nascent anti-invasion campaign. It was published by a leading London printer of ephemera, T. Batchelar of 115 Long Alley, Moorfields, though it was subsequently picked up by the acknowledged giant of the trade, John Pitts of Seven Dials.<sup>85</sup> The composer, J. Thompson, was not afraid to be acknowledged as such beneath the song's title. This was no run-of-the-mill ballad: subsequent editions by Pitts were lavishly illustrated with a bespoke woodcut (a rare thing at the time) of two society ladies, their daughter and a gentleman fleeing a pair of soldiers.<sup>86</sup> These editions were also unusual in occupying an entire broadsheet, rather than being paired with another song: this was being marketed as a hit.

'The Corsican Drover' was topical in more than its subject matter. Unlike the slew of songs based on anthems from the 1740s, Thompson took as his (now lost) tune 'London now is out of town', known alternatively as 'All the world's in Paris!'<sup>87</sup> This was a stage song, advertised by the printer Thompson of Liverpool as sung in 'The Clown, A New Pantomime', and by London printers Whittle and Laurie as 'Sung with great Applause by Mr. GRIMALDI, in the popular pantomime of "Harlequin Whittington"'.<sup>88</sup> 'London now is out of town' and 'The Corsican Drover' both satirise London society for its fascination

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<sup>84</sup> Appendix no.87.

<sup>85</sup> Bod. Harding B 17(62b).

<sup>86</sup> Bod. Curzon b.5(195), Bod. Firth c.16(13).

<sup>87</sup> For a similarly lavishly-illustrated edition of the latter title, see Bod. Harding B 10(46), 1 Feb. 1815.

<sup>88</sup> Bod. Harding B 28(209); Bod. Harding B 10(46).

with Paris, rather than Napoleon. He scarcely figures in the former lyric, the final verse of which begins,

Prudence chides, folly guides,  
We know which to mind most:  
And fairly bid, as Bony did,  
The devil take the hindmost!

If the line is an allusion to Napoleon abandoning or poisoning his own wounded at Jaffa, then it is a subtle one. The song's wit lies rather in its sending up of various Londoners, from 'Bagatelle to Clerkenwell' to 'elegance from Aldgate', and in its relentless internal rhyme scheme, a vehicle for intricate, virtuoso wordplay. There is no malice in the mockery, least of all to the French.

'The Corsican Drover' places Napoleon at the centre of the action, as it is he who has occasioned the flight of London town *from* Paris, comically mirroring the earlier song's description of flocking in haste *to* that city. The reworked chorus exemplifies this contrast:

London now is out of town,  
Who in England tarries?  
Who can bear to linger there,  
When all the world's in Paris?

to:

London now is come to town,  
Few are found who tarries,  
Boney there had made them stare,  
And drove them back from Paris.

This chorus gives 'Boney' agency in the manner of an admired mischief-maker, rather than as a brutal tyrant. It is the English who are mocked for fearing him, not he who is berated for being fearsome:

The motley crew exclaim'd, Mon Dieu,  
At Calais when assembled,  
At Boney's name, each nervous dame  
Stood on the shore and trembled

runs the second half of the first verse. The second begins with a tremulous young lady exclaiming:

Lawks, mamma! where's papa?  
I fear he will not find us,  
I hear the drums, and Boney comes!  
O Lord, he's close behind us!

War has returned, and British lives are imperilled – but this is humorous, rather than shameful.

This ironic voice is related to the song's origins in pantomime, yet its irreverent, sceptical tone is common to a rich strand of popular song culture reflected in further topical songs of 1803-5 from across the country, the products of very different musical milieus. In Newcastle and its environs, for example, we find a host of songs sending up the invasion threat. One of the most celebrated incidents of the time was recorded in 'The Baboon', which recounted how an animal, escaped from the circus, caused hysteria.<sup>89</sup>

Tom flang doon his pipe, an' set up a great yell;  
He's owther a spy, or Bonnypairty's awnsel: [own self]  
Iv a crack the High Fellin was in full hue an' cry,  
Te catch Bonnypairt, or the hairy French spy.

While the hysteria dissipated almost instantly, the song remained, passing into local legend and retold decades later in Ed Corvan's 'The Fishermen Hung the Monkey, O!'<sup>90</sup> Corvan noted that 'These words are the greatest insult you can offer to the Hartlepool fishermen.'<sup>91</sup> In short, the incident was remembered with glee in Tyneside song culture, because it served to illustrate the folly of local rivals. The original is less a manifestation of anti-invasion hysteria, more a satirical distancing therefrom: anyone hearing the song would be in on the joke, as it were, expressing their own superior wisdom to those who believed in hairy, ape-like French invaders.

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<sup>89</sup> Appendix no.5.

<sup>90</sup> Appendix no.125.

<sup>91</sup> Corvan *et al.*, *A Choice Collection*, pp.62.

Perhaps the most celebrated exponent of this wry, informed, counter-cultural stance was the Birmingham publican and ballad singer, John Freeth (1731-1808).<sup>92</sup> Something of a Jacobin, Freeth's tavern was host to a 'circle of twelve' local artisans and small businessmen with revolutionary sympathies, one of whom revelled in the name John Wilkes.<sup>93</sup> In common with many radicals, Freeth grew disenchanted with Napoleon, composing several scathing songs in the wake of his coronation. 'Bonaparte's Coronation' likened the event to 'a raree-show' and a 'farce', and speculated that news of it would drive Thomas Paine to an early grave.<sup>94</sup> His 1805 collection *New Ballads, to Old Familiar Tunes* included two songs ostensibly on the same subject, 'Upstart Emperors' and 'The Marvellous Leap'.<sup>95</sup> Yet here we find the epitome of radical-dressed-as-loyalist subversion: both of these satirical lyrics were really aimed at the British administration. The former begins by poking fun at Napoleon's self-coronation. Yet, via several verses taking side-swipes at the Prussian king's ambition, and indeed the pretensions of all the Ancien Regime states, Freeth works his rhetoric round to both the loyalist anti-invasion campaign, and Pitt's political machinations:

That dreadful *monster* of the day,  
 INVASION, is suspended,  
 And who will now pretend to say,  
 'Twas seriously intended.

Tho' England can no Emperor boast,  
 Her greatness what evinces,  
 She's got of Knights and 'Squires a host,  
 As rich as German Princes;  
 Within the space of twenty years,  
 Have titles swell'd the nation,  
 For P-tt has caus'd of British Peers  
 A wonderful creation!

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<sup>92</sup> J. Horden, 'Freeth, John (1731–1808)', *ODNB*, at [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/37433](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/37433), accessed 14 Aug. 2013.

<sup>93</sup> Langford, *A Century*, ii, p.274.

<sup>94</sup> Appendix no.40.

<sup>95</sup> Appendix nos.351, 191.

Both verses begin innocuously before delivering their blows, pillorying invasion fears and Tory cronyism.

Given the subtlety of these attacks, their impact upon a casual readership and audience is debatable. Yet Freeth includes in the same volume two songs more explicit in their attacks. ‘The French Invaders’ combines conventional patriotism with this second verse:

Jersey and Guernsey – step-stones two,  
Their blustering with derision view;  
All from Brighthelmstone to Penzance,  
Treat with contempt the threats of France;  
    Rumours afloat,  
    Artfully wrought,  
Much have imagination heighten’d;  
    Strange to behold!  
    But so we’re told,  
    The inland towns the most are frighten’d.<sup>96</sup>

We have seen earlier the difficulty of both exaggerating the threat and puffing up Britain’s potential defenders, a situation Freeth exploits by turning patriotic disregard for danger to a sceptical, anti-loyalist purpose. And, lest his message had not got across, Freeth named another song, emphatically, ‘No Continental War; Money and Men at Home’.<sup>97</sup> Freeth poses the question early on: ‘War is the farce, but who is the dupe?’ His answer: John Bull, apt to pay for the government’s follies, first with taxes that are sent in vain to Prussia, and then with his life, in Flanders. Freeth directly criticises those afraid of invasion in the couplet:

Threats of the *Carmagnols* dancing o’er,  
Only the timid can tend to fright

- deploying patriotic notions of valour and martial ability throughout the song as reasons to *dissuade* his audience from taking up arms, rather than encouraging them so to do. It is an eloquent and forceful argument, reinforcing the final payoff, emphasised by the typeface, ‘*So keep your own MONEY and MEN at home.*’ In Freeth, we find a master of his

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<sup>96</sup> Appendix no.129.

<sup>97</sup> Appendix no.238.

medium – all his lyrics scan perfectly, set to jaunty, well-paced airs – taking advantage of a pivotal event – Napoleon’s coronation – to publish his radical material to a far wider audience than could be found in his tavern.

To find openly seditious English discourse concerning Napoleon, rather than Freeth’s canny subversion, we must look in vain: strict censorship, and the activities of vigilante groups such as Reeves’ Association and its imitators, has served to drive already ephemeral material underground. Whilst we find many examples of revolutionary and pro-Napoleonic sentiment in England, Scotland and Wales in this period, we must credit the exponents of such sentiments with the intelligence to restrict their songs to purely oral, or at the most, manuscript transmission. The radical Wilson family – noted songwriters and ballad singers in Manchester engaged variously in the furniture trade and animal portraiture, and regulars of local tavern culture – possessed just such a manuscript; a collection of thirty-five unpublished songs, several concerning Napoleon and the wars.<sup>98</sup> However, the book was lent to one Thomas Brotherton in the years after Waterloo, and subsequently lost forever, despite a reward of £2 being offered for its recovery. We have the ex-Croppie fugitive and amateur poet John Lauderdale, of whom almost nothing is known, who escaped across the Irish Sea to Wigtonshire. Lauderdale had run-ins with a lenient magistrate for roaring treasonable songs at the top of his voice, in the streets and in grog shops, before emigrating to America.<sup>99</sup> Yet the collection of his own compositions was lost, and the only recorded snatch of his singing that has survived is the chorus,

Viva la the new convention,  
Viva la republican,  
Viva la America,  
It was in you it first began<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> J. Harland (ed.), *The Songs of the Wilsons: With A Memoir of the Family, and Several Additional Songs Never Before Published* (Manchester, n.d.), p.27.

<sup>99</sup> S. Robinson, *Reminiscences of Wigtonshire* (Wigtown, 1995), p.26.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p.27.

Other glimpses are briefer still. A Manchester magistrate compiled a commonplace book of seditious ballads and pamphlets around 1805, in response to fears of a United Irish infiltration of that city, but only scraps remain.<sup>101</sup> In Sheffield, work into the radical underground supports the view that pro-French sentiment persisted, and that songs in the tradition of the Jacobin Joseph Mather (1737-1804) were sung in taverns – but never committed to paper.<sup>102</sup> The local militia colonel reported seditious handbills disseminated amongst his troops, but not, apparently, songs.<sup>103</sup> A Huddersfield man, John Taylor, was taken up ‘for drinking repeated toasts of “Success to Buonaparte and his undertakings”, in front of recruiting parties in a public house’, but if Taylor ventured a song as well as a toast, it went unrecorded.<sup>104</sup> Robert Thomas Crossfield was charged with treason and tried at the Old Bailey. During his trial, it emerged that the defendant had ‘said his name was not Crossfield, it was Thomas Paine, and laughed; I said nothing to him, but after supper, he began singing some very bad and audacious songs’ – yet the songs were not recorded.<sup>105</sup>

Most frustrating of all is the Welsh context. We know of Jacobin societies at Hereford, Brecon and Cardiff, and have it on good authority that ‘at Brechfa, in Carmarthenshire, a weaver and others sang a seditious song’.<sup>106</sup> Tomos Glyn Cothi (1764-1833), an itinerant weaver, translator of Priestley, and correspondent of Frennd, also sang an unrecorded seditious song in public, receiving the pillory twice, and two years in prison, in 1801.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Navickas, *Loyalism and Radicalism*, p.116.

<sup>102</sup> R. Palmer, ‘Mather, Joseph (1737-1804)’, *ODNB*, at [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/39747](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/39747), accessed 15 Aug. 2013. Mather is discussed at greater length in Chapter Five.

<sup>103</sup> F.K. Donnelly & J.L. Baxter, ‘Sheffield and the English Revolutionary Tradition, 1791-1820’, *International Review of Social History*, 20 (1975), pp.405-6.

<sup>104</sup> A. Brooke & L. Kipling, *Liberty or Death: Radicals, Republicans and Luddites, c.1793-1823* (Honley, 1993), p.8.

<sup>105</sup> POB, t17960511-1.

<sup>106</sup> Jones, *Before Rebecca*, pp.28,33. This narrative of protest is entirely absent from the song evidence represented in Jones, *Welsh Ballads*.

<sup>107</sup> Löffler, *Welsh Responses*, p.29. H.M. Davies, ‘Evans, Thomas [Tomos Glyn Cothi] (1764-1833)’, *ODNB*, at [www.oxforddnb.co.uk/view/article/8984](http://www.oxforddnb.co.uk/view/article/8984), accessed 15 Aug. 2013.

Yet the only extant songs from the principality are vociferously loyalist, and we must assume their opposites to be lost forever.<sup>108</sup>

Thus we cannot progress from the evidence of Freeth to an account of openly seditious songs. We must concur with Thompson that the ‘continuous underground tradition, linking the Jacobins of the 1790s to the movements of 1816-20’ avoided unwanted attention, and instead look for less explicit ways in which the loyalist body of song was subverted or countered.<sup>109</sup> Rather than concentrate on hypothetical external opposition, it is instructive to return to purportedly loyalist song, and demonstrate by two case studies that two of its central pillars were less reliable than may at first appear. The second is the volunteer movement. The first is Britain’s most prolific songwriting family: the Dibdins.

### **The Dibdins**

It is impossible to turn to Charles Dibdin the Elder, and his sons Charles and Thomas, without acknowledging perceptions of their pre-eminence.<sup>110</sup> Yet though many historians refer to the family, they have never before received extensive scrutiny, especially in a politicised context. As Stephens put it, ‘First in Britain arose a burst of national patriotism... Tom Dibdin wrote his sea-songs’.<sup>111</sup> Fifty years before Stephens, the historian of street culture ‘F. Folio’ wrote:

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<sup>108</sup> Jones, *Welsh Ballads*, *passim*.

<sup>109</sup> Thompson, *The Making*, p.923.

<sup>110</sup> J.A. Gillaspie, ‘Dibdin, Charles (*bap.*1745, *d.*1814)’, *ODNB*, at [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7585](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7585), M. Kilburn, ‘Dibdin, Charles Isaac Mungo (1768–1833)’, *ODNB*, at [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7586](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7586), J.R. Stephens, ‘Dibdin, Thomas John (1771–1841)’, *ODNB*, at [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7589](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7589) (all accessed 14 Aug. 2013.)

<sup>111</sup> Morse Stephens, ‘Nationality and History’, p.230.

Fletcher of Saltoun said, “Let me make the ballads of a country, and I will let them make the laws who like!” Without going so far as the Scotchman, it must be admitted that in days gone by such writers as Tom Dibdin worked a wonderful effect on the populace with their songs.<sup>112</sup>

Twenty years before ‘Folio’, composer William Gardiner – a relative radical who had opposed the treason trials, and visited Paris during the Peace of Amiens – recollected that ‘As commerce increased, and trade was protected by our ships, a new order appeared of naval songs ... Dibdin, it is said, wrote more than a thousand. No other music was heard in public or private.’<sup>113</sup> James Donnelly notes that ‘Arthur O’Neill complained around 1810 that harpists increasingly performed the tunes of English composers like Charles Dibdin’.<sup>114</sup> Mary Lisle described the phenomenon as she remembered it from her girlhood in 1803, in a striking if heavily stylised passage, rooted in the middle-class milieu of a village rectory:

The songs of the period added not a little to the enthusiasm of the people... Dibdin made our vessels echo to the same patriotic and heroic sentiments. Who shall say that that was not true poetry which stirred the hearts of all classes so deeply? There was one song of Dibdin’s called “True Courage,” which was for ever in our ears that summer.<sup>115</sup>

In the first instance, the Dibdins were theatre-managers. Yet we may discuss their songs as relevant to a widespread popular audience, for not only did they publish collections of their theatrical songs; they were constantly victims of piracy, and wrote at length of their distress at seeing their compositions copied and sold with impunity in single broadsides and cheap songbooks. Charles the Younger sought legal counsel, and was advised to put up with affairs as they stood, his own printer opining that ““you’ll get damages awarded you no doubt, but you’ll have your own expenses, £60 perhaps, to pay; for the People that

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<sup>112</sup> ‘F. Folio’, *The hawkers and street dealers of Manchester and the North of England manufacturing districts generally* (Manchester, 1858), p.117.

<sup>113</sup> W. Gardiner, *Music and Friends: or, Pleasant Recollections of a Dilettante* (2 vols., 1838), i, p.227. See L.M. Middleton, ‘Gardiner, William (1770-1853)’, rev. D.J. Golby, *ODNB*, at [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10368](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10368), accessed 14 Aug. 2013.

<sup>114</sup> J.S. Donnelly & K.A. Miller (eds.), *Irish Popular Culture, 1650-1850* (Dublin, 1998), pp.15-16.

<sup>115</sup> M. Lisle, *‘Long, Long Ago:’ An Autobiography* (1956), pp.67-8. See also Appendix no.342.

publish these things are too poor to pay damages or your expenses”<sup>116</sup> The one time he did act, over the pirating of his first real hit, ‘Abraham Newland’, the case foundered on the legal grey area over whether or not a broadside constituted a ‘book’.<sup>117</sup> His father, undaunted, pursued at least fourteen separate prosecutions.<sup>118</sup> The family’s inability to protect their copyright in a world of underground, ephemeral printers indicates that their songs reached a truly popular audience.

A theatrical family, fruit of the father’s third marriage, the Dibdins were never as financially or socially secure as their reputations suggest. Historians tend to elide one composite ‘Dibdin’ with Pitt, as a tool of loyalist propaganda. Dyck summarises the arrangement thus: ‘Pitt himself [took] a hand in the operations by instructing the dramatist and song-composer Charles Dibdin to compose loyalist war songs for distribution among the people’ – a stance that has led Rawlinson to speak of ‘Charles Dibdin, “the real laureate of the Great Terror”’.<sup>119</sup> The reality was more complicated.

Charles the Younger was still a minor songwriter and impresario in the period to 1805. He had a keen eye for an advertisement: his playbill for a benefit concert around 1802 boasted of ‘the invincible Flag of BUONAPARTE’ as forming part of the spectacle, in enormous typeface: far from slandering the foe, Charles the Younger was capitalising on the public fascination with Napoleon.<sup>120</sup> This opportunism is exemplified in Jane Taylor’s poem of 1804, ‘The Beggar Boy’, in which the eponymous child proclaims that:

I've Bonaparte's life, and adventures, and birth,  
And histories of all the great men of the earth:  
Enigmas, and riddles, and stories complete:  
Come buy them, dear ladies, a penny a sheet.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> G. Speaight (ed.), *Professional & Literary Memoirs of Charles Dibdin the Younger* (1956), p.47.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p.35.

<sup>118</sup> C. Dibdin, *The Professional Life of Mr. Dibdin, Written by Himself* (4 vols., 1803) i, p.vi.

<sup>119</sup> Dyck, *William Cobbett*, p.88; Rawlinson, ‘Invasion!’, in Shaw, *Romantic Wars*, p.124.

<sup>120</sup> Speaight, *Professional & Literary Memoirs*, p.51.

<sup>121</sup> Appendix no.26.

There is no suggestion that the child is peddling the Black Legend, simply the story of Napoleon, coupled with other ‘great men’. Thus, although in later years he might pen a bellicose or jocular piece denigrating him, Charles the Younger’s testimony linked his own career to Napoleon with an air of gratitude, rather than enmity:

I had begun [in] the Season of 1803, a series of Songs, sung in the various pieces, allusive to *Bonaparte*, which I continued occasionally to the very last Season of my being at the Wells, which... would furnish a tolerably accurate history of the progressive rise of that wonderful Man to the period of his being made Emperor, and beyond it. They were all songs which became popular<sup>122</sup>

The younger Charles was ever-conscious of the commercial imperatives of his profession; unlike backers of the loyalist campaign possessed of greater means, he could not afford to make patriotic sacrifices. In the aftermath of Trafalgar, he recycled the props and effects from his 1804 production at Sadler’s Wells, *The Siege of Gibraltar*.

I therefore produced, as quickly as I could, a new aquatic piece, which I called ‘The Rival Patriots, or the Battle of Trafalgar’, which received general, but not heart and hand applause. People had seen the Ships before, the surprize they had excited had subsided, and they were disappointed.<sup>123</sup>

Swiftly abandoning the relative flop, Dibdin adapted his paraphernalia for a less topical show, called *The Invisible Ring, or Water Monster and Fire Spectre* – and enjoyed far greater success.<sup>124</sup> He was manifestly no loyalist propagandist.

Charles the Elder was more constrained by politics, employed by Pitt, and, like Gillray, given a government pension. Yet, as a writer of naval odes, he was more a pressed man than a volunteer. His memoir records that, despite the pension, he made a loss on the affair, having been ‘obliged’ to ‘put himself to an expense of more than £600, by quitting highly lucrative engagements, and opening his theatre in a hot July to considerable nightly loss (in town), where he was instructed to write, sing, publish, and give away what were

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<sup>122</sup> Speaight, *Professional & Literary Memoirs*, p.65.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, p.87.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, p.87.

termed War Songs'.<sup>125</sup> He was not opposed to writing the songs themselves.<sup>126</sup> Yet he *did* object to his treatment by Pitt, and to his subsequent lack of official recognition: he was indignant at having received not 'a single public compliment from the navy'.<sup>127</sup> He had intended to retire in 1801; the unrewarded labour to which he was put rankled for the rest of his life.<sup>128</sup>

This would be a mere ironic aside if Dibdin's *oeuvre* had nevertheless espoused the jingoistic sentiments of the broadside campaign. Yet exhaustive analysis of the output of all three Dibdins belies Rawlinson's 'real laureate of the Great Terror' epithet. The elder Charles wrote above 900 songs, yet only two castigate Napoleon, and a mere handful denigrate the French.<sup>129</sup> In the latter category are three naval songs of the late 1790s: 'A Dose for the Don', 'Duncan and Victory', and 'A Salt Eel for Mynheer'.<sup>130</sup> Their titles indicate that they are not specifically anti-French, but written to commemorate naval victories against Britain's triumvirate of traditional maritime foes.

Then let perfidious France come on,  
Aided by Holland and by Spain

boasts the first, whilst the second jibes at 'Vain Holland', 'fearful France' and 'trembling Spain', and the third predicts that:

We'll bang the Spaniards,  
Belabour the Dutch,  
And block up and laugh at the French

The last was a reference to the ongoing blockade of Brest and Toulon; a modest sentiment of containment echoed in Thomas Dibdin's ode to Britain's powers of self-defence, 'The

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<sup>125</sup> C. Dibdin, *Songs of the Late Charles Dibdin; with a Memoir*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (1852), p.xxviii.

<sup>126</sup> Dibdin, *The Professional Life*, i, p.xxii.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, i, p.7.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, iv, p.288.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, i, p.6 has the author's estimation of his total output.

<sup>130</sup> Appendix nos. 104, 110, 295.

Land in the Ocean’, in which Nelson ‘land-lock’d the great Bonaparte’.<sup>131</sup> The invective is hardly extreme.

Five of Charles the Elder’s specifically anti-invasion songs also belittle the French in a half-hearted manner. In ‘Britons United’ they feature as ‘poor fools’ for their presumption; in ‘The Invasion’ reference is made, anachronistically, to their ‘liberty tree’ and ‘carmagnol’; the collection *Britons! Strike Home* is innocuous light verse, entertaining rather than bellicose, only three songs of which – ‘The Call of Honour’, ‘A Trip to the Camp’, and ‘A Welcome to the French’ – deal with the enemy at all.<sup>132</sup>

‘A Welcome to the French’ alludes to the French ‘with their Vive Bonaparte’ and the cry ‘We’re in arms, little Boney’ – the only references to Napoleon in any of the above. Unlike Charles the Younger, his father produced just two songs targeting Napoleon directly. ‘Vive la Peste’ reads a little like one of Freeth’s songs on the imperial self-coronation, its venom directed at Napoleon’s corruption of the old monarchical order by his transgressive act:

Let the French, in their raptures so vapid and vague,  
This mock emp’ror with honours invest;  
So the thieves, as they plunder’d a house in the plague,  
To each other cried out – ‘Vive la Peste!’<sup>133</sup>

Later, ‘the Corsican hero’ is likened to various Roman despots, and warned of the dangers of hubris. The tone is far from demagogic, as the song features in one of his luxury editions, *New Year’s Gifts*, and its suitability for a mass, pirated market is doubtful. Its most interesting feature is the opening couplet:

‘Vive l’Empereur!’ vociferates a true Paris parrot;  
So a magpie near Wandsworth bawls out

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<sup>131</sup> Appendix no.172.

<sup>132</sup> Appendix nos. 61; 154; 74, 339, 364.

<sup>133</sup> Appendix no.356.

The implication is that London's disaffected poor may be impressed with Napoleon's assumed grandeur. 'So a magpie near Wandsworth bawls out' is specific in both its location and its present tense – perhaps Dibdin had an individual in mind.

His other direct assault came at least a year earlier, in 'The Song of Acre'.<sup>134</sup> This was part of a collection commissioned by Pitt in 1803, *British War Songs*, and is exceptional in its lack of topicality. In this paean to the defence of the city four years earlier, Napoleon features as the 'Corsican' and the 'foe', nothing more; the man whose 'vaunting taunts' are given the lie by 'Britain's chosen band' and 'gallant Sidney'. This is typical of Charles the Elder's repertoire: his is the positive brand of patriotism discussed above, where 'True Courage', the song remembered by Mary Lisle, was cited as an example. 'True courage' is shown by acting mercifully and with humanity towards one's enemy, whatever the provocation in the heat of the moment. The overwhelming majority of his songs pursue this line, eulogising the romantic, heroic, witty Jack Tar, focusing on qualities extrinsic to the conflict with France and Napoleon. The success of these songs, and their permeation of both the public consciousness and nineteenth-century broadside collections, is undeniable: the two Charles Dibdins did more than any other writers to generate tangible national feeling. Yet theirs was a benign, introspective patriotism based on positive and personal sentiments, not a xenophobic nationalism.

It is ironic that the songwriters credited with a dominant and influential position in the loyalist ballad campaign, were writing against the pejorative, nationalist grain. This was not the only difficulty within the loose network of individuals and organisations that comprised this 'movement', as one of its primary actors, Professor Plumtre of Cambridge, found out. In his early initiatives to spread loyalist songs, Plumtre applied to

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<sup>134</sup> Appendix no.314.

the elder Dibdin for permission to use his works. He was flatly denied.<sup>135</sup> Persevering, Plumptre asked to use the words alone, without Dibdin's music. 'Neither to this request would Mr. D. assent; saying, that wherever his songs were so introduced, they were piracies.'<sup>136</sup> Dibdin did see fit to send Plumptre a single, personal copy of his autobiography, replete with six hundred songs. Here a second complication arose: Plumptre realised that, 'with all my fastidiousness, there are above an hundred and ten, out of the six hundred, which, upon the whole, I highly approve.'<sup>137</sup> Five out of every six songs he rejected as unsuitable for mass consumption. He gives examples of inappropriate lyrics, most songs being rejected on religious grounds, including 'True Courage' itself. Two objections were found: firstly, that the Devil was called 'the *old one*; which is making light of that which we should only think of with horror and detestation', and secondly, that 'the Sailor says, "I don't care a d—m!" which I would alter to, as equally appropriate and less objectionable, "I don't mind your bam!" or banter.'<sup>138</sup> Nevertheless, Plumptre persisted in his quest, and in 1811 finally obtained permission from the harassed and ailing songwriter.<sup>139</sup> Given Plumptre's objections to the vast majority of the songs – that is, to the lightness of touch and easy familiarity that made them popular in the first place – it is doubtful how much joy his long endeavours brought him.

Rather than serving to typify a united loyalist movement, even in the years 1803-5, Charles Dibdin the Elder exemplifies the thorny tangle of attitudes, and commercial and political considerations, that made the broadside campaign so heterogeneous. He was no anti-Gallican cipher, nor did he treat his audience as thus minded. One of his most successful songs, 'Nongtongpaw', is a satire on unworldly English patriots, in the guise of

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<sup>135</sup> Plumptre, *A Collection*, p.30.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, p.30.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, p.30.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, p.34.

<sup>139</sup> J. Plumptre, *Letters to John Aikin, M.D. on his volume of Vocal Poetry* (Cambridge, 1811), pp.xxix-xxx.

the parochial John Bull, unable to comprehend the fundamentals of the French language.<sup>140</sup>

It can be read as a direct lampoon of precisely those little Englander songwriters he supposedly epitomised.

Though staggeringly prolific, effectively the national voice in naval song culture, the Dibdins appear to have neglected one crucial patriotic area: the volunteer and militia movements. No examination of the period would be complete without considering this specific context, to which Colley attributes such importance.<sup>141</sup> The case study that follows acts as a synoptic close to this chapter, as the themes and issues present in volunteer song reflect wider aspects already addressed: even this most bellicose milieu fostered a contested and conflicted song culture.

### **Volunteer songs**

The volunteers have received attention in recent decades from Clive Emsley, Cookson, and Colley, as well as figuring in wider studies of the period.<sup>142</sup> The critical consensus chimes with the songs of the period: patriotism was both problematic and conditional. Motivations for enlisting were manifold and often self-interested: to avoid the more onerous militia ballot; for the pay; for the commercial opportunities afforded petty tradesmen in a captive market; or simple peer-pressure.<sup>143</sup> Volunteering could be an elite activity; some regions, such as Yorkshire and East Anglia, were especially averse to the practice; many regiments

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<sup>140</sup> Dibdin, *The Professional Life*, iv, pp.37-9.

<sup>141</sup> Colley, *Britons*, pp.289-326.

<sup>142</sup> Emsley, *British Society*, *passim*, idem, 'The Social Impact of the French Wars', in H.T. Dickinson (ed.), *Britain and the French Revolution 1789-1815* (1989), Cookson, *The British Armed Nation*, *passim*, Colley, *Britons*, pp.294-325, idem, 'Whose Nation? Class and National Consciousness in Britain 1750-1830', *Past & Present*, 113 (1986), pp.97-117. See also P. Horn, *The Rural World, 1750-1830: Social Change in the English Countryside* (1980), pp.61-5, Pottle, 'Loyalty and Patriotism', pp.vi, 155, 171, Glover, *Britain at Bay*, p.134, K. Watson, 'Bonfires, Bells and Bayonets: British Popular Memory and the Napoleonic Wars', in B. Taithe & T. Thornton (eds.), *War: Identities in Conflict, 1300-2000* (Stroud, 1998), p.102.

<sup>143</sup> Emsley, 'The Social Impact', p.219, Colley, *Britons*, p.308; Emsley, 'The Social Impact', p.219; Colley, *Britons*, p.xxvi; *ibid.*, p.311.

were ‘forced to advertise in the newspapers’ due to the dearth of recruits.<sup>144</sup> The militia was still less popular. Indeed, insurance companies were founded to provide a substitute if the ‘policyholder’ was balloted for service.<sup>145</sup> In 1797, the Bromley militia ballot was composed of 44 substitutes out of 45; by May 1804, the Militia Act was acknowledged as having failed, as fully a ninth of the 45,492 militiamen had deserted.<sup>146</sup> Horn writes that,

contrary to later beliefs, there is little evidence that the majority of men had any great patriotic enthusiasm...Even the desire to defeat France, the traditional enemy, did not arouse much fervour, and support for the various constitutional associations...soon dwindled away<sup>147</sup>

This unprecedented mobilisation of ill-disciplined men had a further, undesired consequence. Just as loyalist broadsides allowed the introduction of radical arguments under the cloak of patriotism, so the volunteer movement paved the way for greater working-class self-consciousness and radicalisation.<sup>148</sup> Thompson, too ready to paint the volunteers as sanitised and sadistic (because of Peterloo) groups of the middling, loyal sort – ‘Pains were taken... to keep arms out of the hands of the disaffected’ – misses a trick here.<sup>149</sup> From forming committees, to forcibly liberating press-ganged comrades, these bodies can be seen as proto-unions, inimical to the established order, excellent preparation for post-war collective action. And if volunteer or militia companies were suspected of radicalism by authorities, they could be just as contentious to the general populace for the reverse: their embodiment of authority. In Nottingham, volunteers were attacked and beaten.<sup>150</sup> The tailor Thomas Carter remembered his bafflement and scorn on first seeing militia exercises in his youth at Bath, writing of the ‘degrading actions and the disgusting

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<sup>144</sup> Ibid., pp.294, 298; *ibid.*, p.305; Horn, *The Rural World*, p.63.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., p.65.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., p.64; Glover, *Britain at Bay*, p.134.

<sup>147</sup> Horn, *The Rural World*, p.61.

<sup>148</sup> Emsley, ‘The Social Impact’, p.223, Colley, *Britons*, p.323-5, *idem*, ‘Whose Nation?’, pp.114-5.

<sup>149</sup> Thompson, *The Making*, p.495. See also *ibid.*, pp.495-6, 189-90.

<sup>150</sup> Pottle, ‘Loyalty and Patriotism’, p.155.

language of the private soldiers and their companions'.<sup>151</sup> Even the staunchly loyal Mary Lisle, writing of the Mitchelmore and Mitchelden volunteers, could not avoid criticism, recollecting 'Colonel Somebody, who was the only real soldier in the field', and confessing that 'there was a worthless idle set in Mitchelmore as in every other parish, and the whole crew had joined the volunteers, and men were so scarce, from the smallness of the village, that the officers were glad enough to enroll them'.<sup>152</sup> Her contemporary, Elizabeth Ham, mocked the craze as 'Scarlet Fever', decrying both the sartorial and martial pretensions – and shortcomings – of local officers.<sup>153</sup> Edinburgh bard William Nicholson satirised even the private soldiers for this behaviour in his subsequent poem, 'The Peacock':

Or like the raw recruit's cockade,  
 Who thinks himsel' a flashy blade,  
 While ribbons roun' his tap he gathers,  
 An' thinks to fear the French wi' feathers;  
 Or dream o' gear an' great preferment,  
 Because he's pimped for his serjeant<sup>154</sup>

None of this light-hearted mockery could compare, however, to the wrath of Sheffield's leading ballad singer, Joseph Mather. His song 'Raddle-Neck'd Tups' immortalised a notorious occasion in 1797 when two men were killed by the local volunteers, *The Blues*.<sup>155</sup>

Music was intrinsic to volunteering. Colley stresses the exotic range of instruments in a recruiting party's band as especially exciting, quoting George Cruikshank's description of the soundscape created by arming the populace:

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<sup>151</sup> Carter, *Memoirs*, pp.18, 87-8.

<sup>152</sup> Lisle, 'Long, Long Ago', pp.82, 78.

<sup>153</sup> E. Gillett (ed.), *Elizabeth Ham, by herself 1783-1820* (1945), p.62.

<sup>154</sup> Appendix no.270, p.80.

<sup>155</sup> Appendix no.282, below, pp.96-7.

in one place you might hear the “tattoo” of some youth learning to beat the drum, at another place some march or national air being practiced upon the fife, and every morning at five o’clock the bugle horn was sounded through the streets, to call the volunteers to a two hours’ drill...and then you heard the pop, pop, pop, of the single musket, or the heavy sound of the volley, or the distant thunder of the artillery.<sup>156</sup>

Whilst Colley incorporates musical motivation for service within her iconography of patriotism, others have seen music as unaligned with loyalism. Watson in particular distinguishes the theatrical and performative from the ideological, deeming the former motives frivolous.<sup>157</sup> This might seem overly reductive. If music was co-opted into a loyalist cause and given the requisite signifiers, then why should its enjoyment not enjoin a deeper bond with that cause? Yet Watson’s distinction is borne out by the testimony of many of those involved. Loyalist commentator J. Stephen perceived a difference between the two attractions when he wrote:

The lighter motives for volunteering also, are peculiarly felt by young men; but I will not particularise them, lest I should seem to detract from that manly, generous, and patriotic spirit, by which the defenders of their country are chiefly actuated.<sup>158</sup>

Robert Butler, born at Peebles in 1784, was certainly susceptible to ‘the lighter motives’: he joined the Earlston volunteers purely because they wanted an additional fifer, and he wanted a chance to gain employment on that instrument.<sup>159</sup> From the volunteers, he passed into the Army of Reserve – not from a spirit of patriotism, but in search of a regiment ‘where I could get proper instructions in my favourite music’.<sup>160</sup> Subsequently stationed at Dublin, far from being conditioned into love of the army and his country, Butler ‘found pleasure in nothing but music and musicians’.<sup>161</sup> Similarly, Roz Southey’s musicological research into the Newcastle volunteers has led to her dubbing that regiment’s band ‘a commercial lifesaver for many a local musician’, wherein ‘fashion and

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<sup>156</sup> Colley, *Britons*, p.314.

<sup>157</sup> Watson, ‘Bonfires’, p.102.

<sup>158</sup> J. Stephen, *The Dangers of the Country, by the Author of War in Disguise* (1807), p.145.

<sup>159</sup> R. Butler, *Narrative of the Life and Travels of Serjeant B-----, Written by Himself*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Edinburgh, 1826), p.16.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, p.18.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, p.24.

novelty... won out over nationalism' in the music they played.<sup>162</sup> The band was hired out by officers for private functions – even those of freemasons.<sup>163</sup> Joseph Mayett, meanwhile, was a farm labourer who enlisted in the Buckinghamshire militia because, on the arrival of the recruiting party, he 'was much delighted to see them and to hear the Musick this was Congenial with my Carnal nature'.<sup>164</sup> Rather than being indoctrinated upon enlisting, he was scarred by his experiences.<sup>165</sup> But in the meantime, he had become fascinated by music:

Satan [required me] to sing a good war song telling me there Could be no harm in that and from that to a merry love song and from that to all the paltry and filthey songs that could be devised.<sup>166</sup>

Mayett's testimony links martial song to less respectable genres. His experience is symptomatic of volunteer song culture, which was far from genteel. Edgar Johnson, the biographer of Sir Walter Scott, recounts the following story of his subject's time in his volunteer company of light dragoons:

Scott showed them [the troopers] his own War-Song, scribbled by candlelight the night before:

To horse! to horse! the standard flies,  
The bugles sound the call;  
The Gallic navy stems the seas,  
The voice of battle's on the breeze,  
Arouse ye, one and all!

There were nine more tirelessly patriotic stanzas. The dragoons, loyal to their quartermaster [Scott], praised it and adopted it as their official song, but...it never took the place of "Hey! Johnny Cope."<sup>167</sup>

'Hey! Johnny Cope', an established and thoroughly vernacular composition, was at least decent. Lieutenant Ward of the Sheffield volunteers almost fought a duel with a fellow officer, for the latter having allowed one of his privates to sing 'an indecent song' in the

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<sup>162</sup> R. Southey, *Music-Making in North-East England During the Eighteenth Century* (Aldershot, 2006), p.12

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, p.153.

<sup>164</sup> Kussmaul (ed.), *The Autobiography*, p.23.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, p.xii.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, p.23.

<sup>167</sup> E. Johnson, *Sir Walter Scott: The Great Unknown* (2 vols., 1970), i, p.160.

officers' mess.<sup>168</sup> The young John Clare joined his local volunteers to obtain the bounty and avoid the militia ballot, and detested his time in its ranks, during which he penned a vulgar song about one of his officers. This song he:

ventured to offer one evening at Bell's the printers for publication A young man behind the counter read it & laughed heartily saying he had heard of the circumstance but it was too personal to print & returned it I felt fearful of being found out so I quickly destroyed it.<sup>169</sup>

It is unlikely that any of these volunteer songs would have proved as scandalous as 'Mr Mayor', composed by Thomas Thompson, a captain in the Newcastle Light Horse and local timber merchant, in the wake of Trafalgar.<sup>170</sup> Discussed at length in Chapter Seven, the song is simultaneously obscene, slanderous, and radicalised. Thompson was wiser than Clare: he contented himself with writing out his song by hand, rather than taking the perilous step of print publication. A volunteer context was no guarantee that a song would be either respectable or loyal, the corps' musical culture proving as varied as that of civilian society.

Not all songs written by volunteers, for volunteers, were so disreputable. Yet for every 'model' song, there was a problematic alternative. Let us remain in Newcastle. 'Sons of the Tyne' was an exemplary loyalist volunteer song, almost unique in using the tune 'Hearts of Oak' and managing to fit its lyric to the tricky meter of the melody.<sup>171</sup> But on the south bank of the Tyne, a very different volunteer song enjoyed great success, entering the repertoires of various local singers: Gateshead anthem 'The Bonny Geatsiders', written by John Shield in 1805, set to the now-lost comic Newcastle tune 'Bob Cranky'.<sup>172</sup> Written in rich dialect, the song eschews conventional, inclusive patriotism. Verse six indicates that the real 'Other' is not the French, but those on the north bank:

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<sup>168</sup> T.A. Ward, *Peeps into the Past* (Sheffield, 1909), p.169.

<sup>169</sup> J.W. & A. Tibble (eds.), *The Prose of John Clare* (1951), pp.49-50.

<sup>170</sup> Appendix no.196.

<sup>171</sup> Appendix no.322.

<sup>172</sup> Appendix no.57. Shield's authorship is asserted in J. Stokoe (ed.), *Songs and Ballads of Northern England* (Newcastle, 1893), p.196.

The Newcassel chaps fancy they're clever,  
And are vauntin and braggin for ever;

Verse eight voices sceptical attitudes:

Some think Billy Pitt's nobbit hummin, [only pretending]  
When he tells about Bonnepart cummin;

The final verse counters this scepticism with a proof of loyalty, suggesting that the issue was in some doubt:

Now, marrows, to shew we're a' loyal,  
And that, wi' the King and Blood Royal,  
We'll a' soom or sink, [We'll all swim or sink]  
Quairts a piece let us drink,  
To the brave and the Bonny Geatsiders.

The toast is not to the king (Church and constitution go unmentioned), but to *themselves*.

Is this in fact simply an excuse for drinking? Earlier, the song hints at outrageous behaviour:

To Newcasel, for three weeks up-stannin,  
On Permanent Duty they're gannin;  
And sune i' th' papers,  
We's read a' the capers,  
O' the corpse o' the Bonny Geatsiders.

In such a context, the song would have done little to reassure an audience of either the discipline or the loyalty of the corps.

Imposing a carefully-vetted song also had drawbacks. The sentiments of 'Chester Lads forever' may have been plausible to the volunteers themselves if en masse and in their cups, but many would have found such braggadocio unintentionally comical:

When Frenchmen heard of their intent,  
To Bonaparte in haste they sent,  
And said, since Chester thus is bent,  
We are ruin'd, sirs, for ever.

O dreadful news! said Bonaparte,  
Enough to break each Frenchman's heart...<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Appendix no.78.

Such hyperbole could have provoked embarrassment. Yet at least it displayed spirit, unlike others such as ‘The Local Militia’.

The local militia are men of high renown,  
Give credit to their country, and honour to their Crown,  
All with their muskets shouldered to meet the daring foe,  
To go with Lord - - - , that valiant hero.

Our fifes and drums shall beat, the band shall sweetly play  
While the Local Militia lads, shall boldly march away.<sup>174</sup>

Printed by Jennings of Fleet St, London, a publisher at the heart of the loyalist campaign, the song was designed to fit *any* local regiment – hence the gap after ‘Lord’, for someone to fill in the appropriate name. The word ‘local’ is used instead of the county or town; the sentiments throughout are anodyne and token. It is a stretch to envision recruits enthused by this identikit option: another example of the failings of the metropolitan campaign on a national level.

Some volunteer songs stressed the virtues of individual officers, whilst some were scurrilous and dirty. Welsh songs, for example, might emphasise devotional, pious aspects of loyalism.<sup>175</sup> Yet we must add to volunteers’ own songs, those written by observers, for it is here that we find the strongest criticisms of loyalism. Freeth’s ‘Drilling, or Warring without Blows’, to the tune of ‘Larry Grogan’, a swift Irish jig, combines a degree of patriotism with the usual Birmingham complaints about expense:

The burthen tho’ heavy, let each have his share,  
Why always should trade feel the heaviest smart?  
But they who have got the most money to spare,  
Appear the most sparing how with it they part.<sup>176</sup>

His thrust, as before, is that a fictitious threat is being used to justify oppressive taxes; the volunteers are a symptom, not the cause, of what has provoked his ire. Newcastle showman John Scriven penned two more pointed send-ups of the volunteers; ‘We Must

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<sup>174</sup> Appendix no.177.

<sup>175</sup> Jones, *Welsh Ballads*, pp.241-5.

<sup>176</sup> Appendix no.107.

All To Drill’, and the cunningly titled ‘Country Joe, or, Down with Bonaparte’.<sup>177</sup> The former is straightforward: a tale of a seduced recruit finding soldiering both absurd and overly strenuous. Scriven ends with two self-advertising verses, wherein the ex-recruit turns to dancing in Scriven’s playhouse, opining that ‘I’d sooner dance to the fiddle than march to the drum’ – the song concludes with ‘the wooden shoe dance’. The latter song begins as a standard loyalist number, yet before the song is out, the tone has become satirical:

With my Gaiters, Cartouch-box, my Cap all awry,  
I shall then look as wise as a pig with one eye

On parade, the man on the narrator’s left treads on his toes; finally, his real aspiration is revealed to be ‘by chance pretty lasses to meet’.

The same benign Geordie tone is encountered in the young cobbler’s apprentice William Mitford’s ‘The Local Militia-man’, wherein, during manoeuvres, one of their number falls into the sea, before clambering out, unrecognisably filthy.<sup>178</sup> Similar songs, poking fun at the volunteer service in the context of false invasion scares, are found elsewhere. ‘Simon and Janet’ comes from Buchan in Scotland, wherein Simon, the husband, is an eager volunteer, though too old for regular service.<sup>179</sup> The comedy lies in the wife’s imprecations for Simon not to risk his life, and Simon’s protestations that he himself will have shot Bonaparte before sunset. Yet it is all a ‘Fat trick!’ The alarm is false, and having spent the whole night fretting, ranting, and rushing to muster, Simon and Janet have to wander home, cursing the French for their fickle behaviour.

Two great northern songs that endured for a century sprang from the volunteering phenomenon: ‘Bob Cranky’s Adieu’, written by either John Selkirk, a Newcastle clerk born in Gateshead, or the prolific John Shield; and ‘Joan O’Grinfil’, written under a hedge

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<sup>177</sup> Appendix nos. 362, 90.

<sup>178</sup> Appendix no.178. For a biography of Mitford, see D. Harker (ed.), *Allan’s Illustrated Edition of Tyneside Songs: Facsimile* (Newcastle, 1972), pp.132-6.

<sup>179</sup> Appendix no.303.

by two Lancashire schoolmasters in 1803.<sup>180</sup> Both eponymous figures, Bob and Joan (a dialect rendering of ‘John’, sometimes spelt ‘Jone’), became hugely popular regionally. As northern variants of John Bull they went on to feature in many more songs by different writers, characterised by bathetic humour, good intentions, and a veneer of comic naivety that served as a vehicle for mild satire. ‘Joan O’Grinfilt’ is the story of Joan going to Oldham to enlist, in the hopes of fighting the French. He is driven by hunger, rather than patriotism, as displayed in this exchange between Nan and Joan:

'Aye, Jone, sin we come into Grinfelt for t'dwell,	
We'n had mony a bare meal, I con very weel tell.'	
'Bare meal, ecod, aye, that I very weel know,	[egad]
There's been two days this week 'at we'n had nout ate;	[nothing to eat]
I'm very near sided, before I'll abide it,	[very thin]
I'll feight either Spanish or French.'	

His aunt Margaret believes Oldham to be overseas, and Joan hopes to find the French there. The comedy lies in Joan's speech, parochialism, and his homely appearance. ‘Bob Cranky's Adieu’ is similar in tone. Cranky decides the best way to cope with the rigours of service is through drink and good food:

Sae smash! aw think'st a wiser way,  
 Wi' flesh and beer  
 Mysel' to cheer  
 The lang three weeks that aw've to stay  
 A-sougering in Newcassel.

He worries about the sergeant's harsh tongue – but holds out the prospect of premature reunion with his love:

But, hinny! if the time seems lang,	
An' thou freets aboot me neet an' day,	
Then come away,	
Seek oot the yell-hoose where aw stay,	[ale-house]
An' we'll kiss and cuddle;	
An' mony a fuddle	
Shall drive the longsome hours away	
When sougering at Newcassel.	

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<sup>180</sup> Appendix nos. 32, 161.

The charm is in Cranky's lack of willpower, and the bathetic rendering of duty: having begun with lofty farewells, admonishing his wife to bear the sacrifice for the patriotic cause, he himself caves in to carnality in this final verse.

The song parodies Charles Dibdin the Elder's 'The Soldier's Adieu' from which it takes its tune, ridiculing the pretensions of leave-taking. Shield repeated this trick in 'O No, My Love, No', written in Standard English.<sup>181</sup> The first verse opens with grandiose lines typical of war poetry of the time, immediately undercut with Shield's negative answer to his own rhetorical question:

Whilst the dread voice of war thro' the welkin re-bellows,  
And aspects undaunted our Volunteers show,  
Do you think, O my Delia! to join the brave fellows,  
My heart beats impatient? O no, my love, no.

Shield turns conventional honour and duty on its head by asking, 'Can I, cruel, desert thee?' A man's primary duty is construed as to his love, or wife, rather than his country. Thus desertion, usually applied to a regiment, here refers to 'Delia'.

Though critical, the songs are wryly comic. Sheffield's Joseph Mather was moved to abandon satire in his 1797 song 'Raddle-Neck'd Tups', alluded to above.<sup>182</sup> The commander, Colonel Athorpe, is condemned as 'Black Cerberus', whilst his soldiers are 'subtle, blood-thirsty, and careless'; 'evil'; cowards who 'run' and 'skulk away' from danger but shake hands 'with the devil'. The volunteer-narrator swears:

To Beelzebub I will be true,  
I'll show no love, remorse, or pity,  
And that's just the part of a blue.

The two men killed by volunteers in 1795 – Sorsby and Bradshaw – are named, described by the narrator as 'swine', plausibly (Mather was well-read) in reference to Burke's 'swinish multitude'. It is stated that the regiment was forced to drill behind closed doors,

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<sup>181</sup> Appendix no.243.

<sup>182</sup> Appendix no.282.

‘For none durst be seen in his blue.’ If true, then Mather’s outrage was clearly shared by many locals.

This pitiless song demonstrates the extremity to which anti-loyalist sentiment could stretch, its rhetoric outstripping any song targeted at Napoleon. Between these extremes, the case study of volunteer songs has reinforced and refined what was seen earlier with regard to the song culture of these years: discourse was far from universally loyalist, and within the scope of loyalism and patriotism, many different perspectives could be articulated, intentionally or otherwise.

## **Conclusions**

Faced with such a disparate, and often subtly nuanced, set of attitudes, it will require a thorough analysis of contextual factors – performance, mediation, reception – to gauge which of these songs were most representative, and had a chance at genuine popularity. However, recognition of this variegated evidence is important in its own right: having begun with Gammon’s assumption that popular song from the war years was universally loyalist and anti-Napoleon, we have reached a fuller, wider, and deeper understanding of the different songs circulating between 1797 and 1805. Many of these songs and their composers have gone wholly unremarked outside of folkloric cataloguing, overshadowed by the wealth of loyalist propaganda from 1803-5, and their restoration to the historical record is in itself worthwhile. We must complete this excavation by extending both our chronology and our song set, to encompass the final decade of the Napoleonic Wars.

### Chapter Three

#### The Songs III: 1806-15

This chapter begins with Britain's 'wilderness years' of 1806-11, focusing on loyalists' attempts to find topical issues that detracted from the calamitous progress of the war. It moves to the renewed excitement of 1812-13, looking first at responses to Napoleon's reverses, then at the increasing public interest in the Peninsular War occasioned by the victories of Salamanca and Vitoria. Domestic battle reports are set alongside soldiers' own songs. Then the obverse of prolonged conflict is analysed: war-weariness and anti-war sentiment. Thompson posits, beyond Luddism, 'a continuous underground tradition' of Jacobinism.<sup>1</sup> Song evidence demonstrates something more interesting: non-partisan dissent occasioned by the repercussions of the war. Napoleon's first abdication and exile in 1814 follow, before we reach the Waterloo campaign, bringing us full circle to the songs discussed in Chapter One. It is seen that the apparently exceptional response to Waterloo in fact epitomised many phenomena discussed in these two chapters.

#### **1806-9: Writers' block?**

Late 1805 marked a watershed in the war. Trafalgar and Austerlitz refigured Britain's role in the conflict, from the besieged, to impregnable yet impotent witness. Nelson's last triumph ended the invasion threat. Yet within weeks, the Army of England had marched away to defeat the forces of Austria and Russia at Austerlitz. The following years saw Britain safe yet helpless, as the other powers were defeated on the battlefield. Britain also became diplomatically isolated, the two Treaties of Tilsit in 1807 ratifying Prussian subjugation and a Franco-Russian alliance.

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<sup>1</sup> Thompson, *The Making*, p.923.

While Trafalgar occasioned an outpouring of triumphalism and grief, continental affairs were greeted in song by deafening silence. Popular song was no medium to play down the collapse of the fourth and fifth coalitions. This thesis is not concerned with Nelson, and needs not add to Philp's article on Trafalgar and song, which emphasises the transience of that 'historical moment', highlighting the dissonance between triumphalist renderings and the battle's natural place in song tradition as tragedy.<sup>2</sup> The most pertinent feature of Trafalgar songs are their eschewal of Napoleon, beyond a rare throwaway line about stopping his proud boasts. Songs do not position the battle as the closing act of the invasion story, scarcely engaging with that narrative. Trafalgar was too grand and affective to be reduced to a symbolic role. Thus Napoleon received little attention: unlike reports of the Nile, the tale now had room for only one wide-hatted, short-statured military genius.

Trafalgar songs continued to circulate for a year, as new responses were composed, before a handful – typically, those portraying Nelson's death as timeless tragedy, rather than stressing the victory's temporal relevance – became 'standards', suitable for republication over the years.<sup>3</sup> Trafalgar songs replaced the flagging loyalist broadside campaign: the victory removed the invasion threat and simultaneously dominated public and popular interest as far as the war was concerned.

Post-Trafalgar, new songs on the Wars and Napoleon dried up. The occasional volunteer song was still published in 1806. George III's golden jubilee in 1809 provided an ideal occasion for another concerted outburst of loyalist patriotism.<sup>4</sup> The death of Sir John Moore at Corunna in 1809, his brave last stand transforming an ignominious

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<sup>2</sup> M. Philp, 'Politics and Memory: Nelson and Trafalgar in Popular Song', in D. Cannadine (ed.), *Trafalgar in History: A Battle and its Afterlife* (Basingstoke, 2006), pp.93-120.

<sup>3</sup> An exhaustive account would require a chapter of footnotes. An excellent example is Marshall's themed post-war garland, consisting of 'The Battle of Waterloo. The death of Nelson. Death of Abercrombie. The wounded hussar. The Battle of Trafalgar.' –Thomson, *Newcastle Chapbooks*, p.43.

<sup>4</sup> Chapter Six, p.250. See also Colley, 'The Apotheosis', pp.94-129, O. Cox Jensen, "'Strategies of Condescension": Taming John Bull through the Inversion of Spaces, 1809-14', *Journal of the Oxford University History Society*, 8 (2012), at [sites.google.com/site/jouhsinfo/issue-8-hilary-2011](http://sites.google.com/site/jouhsinfo/issue-8-hilary-2011), accessed 29 February 2012.

evacuation into a proto-Dunkirk, inspired one or two tragic songs, examined below, in the tradition of the deaths of Nelson, Abercrombie and Wolfe before him. There was little else to write about. Moore's 1808 expedition to Sweden failed. The infamous Convention of Cintra (30 August 1808), whereby a defeated French force was transported home, in possession of their arms, by British ships, overshadowed Wellesley's minor victories in Portugal. The second Copenhagen expedition of 1807 was a moral nightmare, barren ground for propagandists. Expeditions to Walcheren in 1809, and Rio de la Plata in 1806 and 1807, were unmitigated disasters. Vernacular song eschewed these issues, whilst polite productions such as those carried by the anti-administration *Morning Chronicle* were derisive.<sup>5</sup> By contrast, Napoleon was winning battle after battle. In earlier years, French victories by land had been balanced by British naval triumphs. Now, naval engagements worth celebrating were limited to occasional single-ship actions.

There is a methodological issue here. As Mary-Ann Constantine writes,

Ephemeral genres are vulnerable to historical misreadings...we can only work with what has survived in print or manuscript, and "dangerous" material is damned twice over by being suppressed or never committed to paper in the first place.<sup>6</sup>

Thus the following figures cannot be called definitive. Yet it is remarkable that the Bodleian Broadside Ballad archive has dated 49 publications (many comprising at least two songs) to 1806, 40 to 1807, and 26 to 1808. Of these 115, none deals even tangentially with Napoleon, or – beyond Trafalgar – with the wars at all.<sup>7</sup> The same is true of Cambridge's Madden collection.<sup>8</sup> Potentially, we are faced with a cessation of topical British song on Napoleon between 1806 and 1808.

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<sup>5</sup> 'Song on the New Affair of Copenhagen (Not Lord Nelson's)', Appendix no.319, depicts the English as 'sly as a thief'. 'Catch', Appendix no.76, on Cintra, uses the form of a sung catch to embroil, in turn, Sir Hew Dalrymple, Sir Arthur Wellesley, and the ministers responsible.

<sup>6</sup> M-A. Constantine & E. Edwards, "'Bard of Liberty': Iolo Morganwg, Wales and Radical Song', in J. Kirk *et al.* (eds.), *United Islands? The Language of Resistance* (2012), p.64.

<sup>7</sup> Figures derived from search function at Bod.

<sup>8</sup> Until its microfilm is properly catalogued and digitised, this remains impossible to reference appropriately.

Several are extant from 1809. Of the Bodleian's 23 for that year, two touch on Napoleon. 'John Bull in Town; or, British Wool Forever' is mildly comic, satirising the profligacy of country visitors to London, and criticising high commodity prices. The final verse gives a patriotic gloss to an otherwise critical lyric:

What signifies fine Spanish wool,  
Our own makes us very good cloth, sirs,  
And while proudly it's worn by John Bull,  
There's no fear of the *Corsican moth*, sirs:  
Old England's a bee-hive well stor'd,  
We're ruled by a merciful king, sirs,  
And shou'd France dare attack our rich hoard,  
She'll find British bees wear a sting, sirs.<sup>9</sup>

The sentiment is loyalist. But its isolationist tone and suggestion that Spanish wool is susceptible to '*Corsican moth*' is pessimistic, given its publication date: 15 August 1809. In July, Wellesley won the battle of Talavera. Yet in early August, the Anglo-Portuguese army retreated into Portugal. Aware of these developments or no, the song's author (and original singer) Mr Emery cannot have entertained great hopes for the liberation of Spain.

The second, related song was a comical allegory based upon the sort of tortuous pun so beloved of Georgian humorists. 'The Ghost of a Scrag of Mutton' was first published on 23 January 1809, and subsequently reprinted and pirated in numerous collections.<sup>10</sup> The first four verses describe a coaching inn haunted by the spectre of a scrag of mutton, before a scholar arrives and uses the mutton to flavour his broth. The song is bizarre and enigmatic – until the final payoff:

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<sup>9</sup> Appendix no.164. The beehive was a contemporary metaphor used by economists for the industrious British nation, e.g. *A Clear, fair, and candid investigation of the population, commerce, and agriculture of this kingdom* (1810), p.57, or G. Edwards, *A General Appeal* (York, 1815), p.33.

<sup>10</sup> Appendix no.135.

The story thus finish'd, the moral shan't lag:-  
The landlord who'd such little heart,  
Not the only one he who's been scar'd by a scrag,  
For a *scrag's* but a small *Bony-part*.  
So the Emperor Scrag in fear Europe has got,  
Tho' John Bull don't mind him a button;  
For Johnny's the scholar who'll send him to pot,  
Like the Ghost of the grim Scrag of Mutton.

Napoleon is dished by the no-nonsense John Bull: however bad the situation may seem abroad, the British are equal to the danger and should not be afraid.

Both songs shared a publisher – Laurie & Whittle, of 53 Fleet St, London – and a context: they were well-appointed editions of stage songs, with details of composers, dates, and performance. 'John Bull...' was written and sung by Mr Emery at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket; 'The Ghost...' was by Charles Dibdin the Younger, with music by Mr Reeve, sung by a Mr Smith at Sadler's Wells. Both, the broadsides note, were met 'with unbounded Applause', and are further distinguished by large etchings, drawn for the purpose and depicting the songs' central incidents. Each has a whole sheet devoted to it, and though the price is not specified, it is clear that these were luxury productions. Neither was specifically written for a popular market, nor by an overtly loyalist writer: these were commercial, polite productions trading on witticisms, rather than propaganda.

### **1809-12: the bedroom as a theatre of war**

It might be argued that there was a simple explanation for the cessation of anti-Napoleonic popular song: the invasion threat was over. Yet loyalists remained fearful of the Corsican's lure. Dorothy Wordsworth, over-sanguine, wrote to Catherine Clarkson on 12 May 1811:

God be thanked the tide is turned against Buonaparte and we shall see, I trust, the delusion speedily vanish which even in England has spread too widely, that he was a great genius and a great Hero.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *The Collected Letters of the Wordsworths* (8 vols., Charlottesville, 2002), ii, p.486.

Her hope reveals her worry: that even in 1811 there was considerable Bonapartist sentiment. Elizabeth Ham, a gentlewoman of modest means, never lost her early attraction to Napoleon despite relentless propaganda. Shortly before the first Peninsular campaign, she remembered,

Napoleon was still my hero, much to my family's annoyance. One evening, my Mother thought to enlist Capt. Napier on her side. "Do you know," said she to him, "that Bessy won't believe a word against Bonaparte. She denies that he could have ordered his own wounded to be poisoned."... "I honor you," he exclaimed. "I honor you from my heart!"<sup>12</sup>

Of all the Napier clan, this was William, who would write the *History of the War in the Peninsular*. And if the affections of one young lady were no worry to loyalists, the activities of Luddites were quite another matter. One typical Luddite letter from March 1812 boasts that 'we hope for assistance from the French Emperor in shaking off the Yoke of the Rottenest, Wickedest and most Tyrannious Government that ever existed'.<sup>13</sup> A spy within the Luddites reported that 'Napoleon was ready to supply men and arms' to assist the coming revolution.<sup>14</sup> These were presumably bluffs; claims to French connections calculated to prey on the paranoia of authorities. But they demonstrate the plausibility of popular English support for the Emperor, if not his military support for them.

Midland and northern cities in particular were noted for their pro-Napoleonic stance. In late 1813, the *Nottingham Gazette* reported that 'Twelve months ago, he who would have dared to attempt burning the effigy of Bonaparte in Nottingham, would have run some risk of himself being committed to the flames'.<sup>15</sup> Lieutenant Ward encountered six workers in a Sheffield public house talking of revolution in October 1812:

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<sup>12</sup> Gillett, *Elizabeth Ham*, p.102.

<sup>13</sup> K. Binfield (ed.), *Writings of the Luddites* (Baltimore, 2004), p.210.

<sup>14</sup> Navickas, 'The Search for "General Ludd"', p.293.

<sup>15</sup> *Nottingham Gazette*, 1, no.49 (3 Dec. 1813), p.3.

Everything, they say, is wrong in this country, from the King to the Constable, and Bonaparte is an honest fellow. I insisted upon the despotic nature of the French Government, and the great freedom which we enjoyed. They would not believe me.<sup>16</sup>

When he insisted on the accuracy of his information, ‘They said the rich always pretended to know better than the poor, who had, or ought to have, equal rights with them’.<sup>17</sup> These were no gullible lappers-up of loyalist doctrine. Nor was Thomas Carter, the Bath tailor, now at London. His political consciousness was ‘awakened’ by the Copenhagen expedition of 1807; he and his friends thereafter sought all the accurate news they could obtain.<sup>18</sup> In 1812,

The paper we took was called “The News”. Its arrival was looked for with very considerable interest, so anxious were we to see some bulletin of the Great Napoleon respecting his military operations.<sup>19</sup>

He himself was staunchly for Napoleon. Thus we see evidence of working-class Bonapartism in the south, the north and the midlands. Nor was Ireland silent. The country was undergoing its greatest disturbances since 1798. Its songwriters had not forgotten their hero across the water, and Dublin Castle was still receiving confiscated seditious songs from informers and police.<sup>20</sup> This verse, translated from the Irish, came from Meath in 1809:

Even though many people who do not fear justice  
Believe that there is no help or protection available to them;  
Still, the leader will come from France without delay  
And he’ll take the English down a peg or two – that’s Boney.<sup>21</sup>

In the face of such attitudes, loyalist writers could ill afford complacency. William Coxe’s *The Exposé, or Napoleon Buonaparte Unmasked*, published in 1809, was a self-

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<sup>16</sup> Ward, *Peeps*, p.192.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p.192.

<sup>18</sup> Carter, *Memoirs*, pp.89-90.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p.170.

<sup>20</sup> Murphy, ‘The Ballad Singer’, p.80.

<sup>21</sup> G. Ó Tuathaigh, *Ireland Before the Famine, 1798-1848* (Dublin, 1972), p.66.

professed ‘compilation’ of the Black Legend, fully six years after it had entered the public consciousness.<sup>22</sup>

The chief aim in the composition has been, to render the narrative concise, to occupy the mind but for a short time in the reading, yet to endeavour to leave an impression which might come home to the bosom of every one<sup>23</sup>

Coxe’s insecurity comes through strongly; this was a writer aware of the need to convince a sceptical audience. A representative sample runs:

It may be deemed a bold suggestion to maintain, that Buonaparte would not hesitate to march an army across the crater of Vesuvius...but should the opinion be thought too strong, let it be remembered that...<sup>24</sup>

This is a far cry from the hectoring tone of the Hannah More school, though the medium – extended prose rather than verse – may be partly responsible. Coxe was writing for a literate audience, and must have felt it necessary to grant readers greater independence of thought than More’s ‘A King or a Consul?’ had done a decade before. In any case, it is clear that the propaganda battle had not been won, which renders more plausible the narrative of growing disaffection charted by Thompson and subsequent writers even in time of war.

Coxe also apologised for his lack of ‘originality’.<sup>25</sup> This was the chief difficulty for loyalists: with a popular readership eager for topicality, what material could they employ when the war was going so badly? Indirect attacks on Napoleon could be made by targeting his brother Joseph, whose ascent to the Spanish throne in 1808 was suitably farcical. Coxe himself included the poem ‘Introductory Lines on Joseph Buonaparte’s Princely Visit to Spain!’ in his *Exposé*.<sup>26</sup> Cobbett, still pro-war, produced ‘A New Song, Called Little Boney in the Dumps, or, Brother Joe’s March from Madrid’ to the tune of

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<sup>22</sup> W. Coxe, *The Exposé; or, Napoleon Buonaparte Unmasked* (1809), p.9.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p.10.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p.90.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p.9.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.15-16 (Appendix no.153).

‘Just the Thing’, printed by Jennings of Fleet St, one of the publishers at the heart of the 1803-5 campaign.<sup>27</sup>

But Joey he begins the storm to dread,  
I wish dear brother, you wou’d go in my stead;  
For the Spanish Patriots will never stand this rig,  
I’ll plunder all I can and then I’ll hop the twig.

Now Spain is all in an uproar and hue and cry,  
And on British assistance they do rely,  
So let us take our pot and glass so hearty,  
And drink confusion to the crimping Buonaparte.

The lines are problematic: Joseph’s cowardice implies that, for all his faults, Napoleon would be capable of subduing the Spanish, and the phrase ‘crimping Buonaparte’ carried connotations of the much-despised *British* practice of crimping: luring soldiers to enlist through entrapment with prostitutes and drink.

Few other writers seized the opportunity to come at Napoleon through his brother, though the possibility was there: impeccable as a military commander, Napoleon could be attacked via his domestic relations. The next opportunity arose in 1810, as loyalists seized hold of a silver lining. Austria’s defeat in the Wagram campaign, the subsequent Treaty of Schönbrunn, and the collapse of the Fifth Coalition, were disasters. The resultant French hegemony, sealed by Napoleon’s marriage to Marie-Louise of Austria in March 1810, might have seemed the nail in the allied coffin. Yet, by divorcing Joséphine and attempting to establish a dynasty coupled to Europe’s noblest house, that of Habsburg, Napoleon was unwittingly opening up another front on which English loyalists could do battle: the bedroom.

Loyalist songwriters were not alone in seizing upon the bathetic possibilities that a domestic setting afforded. Sergeant Maclaren, an invalided veteran of the 26<sup>th</sup> Highlanders, published an unperformed play in 1810 called *Empress and no Empress; or, Mr. Bonny’s*

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<sup>27</sup> Appendix no.231.

*Wedding: A Farce, With Songs.*<sup>28</sup> Priced at sixpence and laden with typographical and spelling errors, clearly directed at a plebeian market, this was an early example of a writer exploiting Napoleon's divorce from Joséphine. The play's modest claims to humour make subtle digs at the respectability of the French crown. By seeking to marry into Ancien Regime royalty – 'Russian princesses' are mentioned – Napoleon rendered himself susceptible to an especially heinous crime in British eyes: aiming above his station. Caricaturists too attempted to emasculate Napoleon through domestic figurings. Having previously portrayed him in bed or as an infant, they now used depictions of the infant son and the nursery to poke fun at the father.<sup>29</sup> Visually, this was a one-dimensional, unproblematic strategy: wife and child are signifiers, not real persons with an emotional connection to the main subject. In popular song, the saddling of Napoleon with a family will be seen to have fed into more interesting traditions, wherein the beleaguered husband and father – in many ways an everyman – is as much the subject of sympathy as derision.

For years, a weak spot had been sought in the general's armour. Songwriters now realised this by imagining him in his nightshirt. This also solved the problem of how to reconcile terror with humour: this scenario was based solely on the ridiculous. The songs that emerged – all, tellingly, from the same band of London publishers, such as Jennings and Pitts, who had backed the campaign of 1803-5 – were purely comic, their structure, tunes, tone and rhyme schemes rooted in that genre. These were largely derived from traditional songs of gender conflict: the 'struggle for the breeches' trope. As Anna Clark notes, publishers aiming 'not to inculcate moral but to sell songs [by speaking] to the realities, not just the aspirations, of plebeian life', were increasingly producing songs that catered to the female perspective, enriching an older market of songs about shrewish

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<sup>28</sup> A. Maclaren, *Empress and no Empress; or, Mr. Bonny's Wedding: A Farce, With Songs* (1810).

<sup>29</sup> E.g. W. Elmes, 'The Gallic magi led by the Imperial comet' (1811), BM no.1868,0808.7985, or 'The Imperial nursery or news from the army' (1811), BM no.1868,0808.12625.

wives.<sup>30</sup> Clark observes that songs of domestic dispute ‘drew upon a language of tyranny and slavery familiar from the political rhetoric of the time’.<sup>31</sup> This was the exact reverse: politics drawn from domesticity. Engagement with this genre finally moved the loyalist influence beyond the anthem. Oman posits that these songs, predicated on the hope that Marie-Louise would fail to conceive a male heir, attempted for a time to report that the resultant son was in fact still-born. Once this position became untenable due to evidence of the boy’s health, she writes, this line of attack was abandoned in favour of reports of the Russian campaign.<sup>32</sup> In fact the domestic angle, once introduced, was never entirely abandoned.

The first songs, published at the time of the marriage, predicted a fall for the would-be father. ‘Boney wants a Baby’, published by Jennings, envisioned his disappointment:

Then to crown their joy,  
Nine months hence will shew it,  
Th’Emperor cries, A boy!  
If ‘tis, pray let me know it;  
Then the joke to clinch,  
The midwife on that gay day,  
Says, yes! within an inch,  
For bless you ‘tis a lady.<sup>33</sup>

‘Madam Boney the 2nd’, published by Pitts, was less sanguine, holding out hopes and prayers in place of predictions:

...And then the wife, he took for life,  
In getting sons was rather idle,  
So he turn’d her out of doors with his long sword, saddle, bridle,  
Rub dub, &c.

Another wife he now has got young devils for to rase  
But e’er he does accomplish it, let’s hope he’ll end his days;  
And let us pray without delay,  
His dad Old Nick will not be idle,  
But fetch him safe away, with his long sword, &c.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> A. Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class* (1995), pp.67, 67-9.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p.69.

<sup>32</sup> C. Oman, *Britain Against Napoleon* (1942), p.293.

<sup>33</sup> Appendix no.47.

Both songs used the reduction in status afforded by viewing Napoleon in a domestic light, to cast aspersions on his masculinity – the study of which has more usually been applied to Napoleon in a visual context.<sup>35</sup> The latter song contented itself with the ironic epithet ‘the mighty little man’; the former was more explicit.

His bride see Boney leave,  
Cock sure he had succeeded,  
She the maid did call,  
And looking slyly at her,  
Cry’d, Well! his little all  
Is no prodigious matter.

It is probable that the ‘long sword’ featured in the refrain of ‘Madam Boney’ engaged with the same idea, through connotations of overcompensation. The line is a part of the tune’s original lyric ‘The Bold Dragoon’, which may have been why Pitts’ writer chose that air. These songs expressed greater assurance than those of 1803-5, drawing on a rich tradition of bawdy domestic insinuation in song, resulting in more ‘authentic’ compositions than the invasion-scare ballads.

Although the successful birth of a son represented a blow to propagandists, the scenario remained attractive. The oft-reprinted ‘Daggerwood’s Description of Bonaparte’ added domestic verses to the existing legend –

He found an odd *Way to get Married*,  
*The Honey Moon* pass’d without strife, sir,  
And though his point nobly carried,  
It was a *Bold Stroke for a Wife*, sir.  
Josephine, like a sad *Mourning Bride*,  
Saw Hymen’s soft fetters undone, sir,  
And the poor *Son-in-law* thrust aside,  
To make way for the *Doubtful Son*, sir.  
Tol de rol, &c.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Appendix no.186.

<sup>35</sup> B. Beaton, ‘The Cult of the First Duke of Wellington’ (2 vols., Oxford University D.Phil. thesis, 2007), pp.30-40, Cottrell, ‘English Views of France’, pp.216-7.

<sup>36</sup> Appendix no.97.

Napoleon's decision to anoint his son as King of Rome was also absurd enough to warrant satirical treatment. Jennings and Pitts followed up their marital songs with one apiece on the new heir in 1811. Jennings' 'The Young King of Rome' favoured cynicism:

He tried at his best, and she brought him a Son,  
And he soon let us know it, by firing of guns;  
Since now his tyrannical race is begun,  
How he'll love his Louisa – because of her Son,<sup>37</sup>

Pitts' 'The Christening of Little Boney' was one of those rare songs featuring two spoken interjections, both of which – stranger still – accord Napoleon the same military respect as was common before 1803.<sup>38</sup> The first runs,

(Spoken) I know Jack English would willingly do any thing to stop the progress of my talent and my warlike arm – but I will let them know that I will always do my endeavour, to conquer them by land. Let them do what they will by sea which I well know them to be expert lads at. Could I conquer by sea as well as by Land, not a ship in the ocean ever should stand.

and the second,

(Spoken) O my darling boy, it is my sincere wish that you may be like your father Napoleon, to be courageous and brave in the honour of war when in battle in the field, for such I mean you to be, if you could once humble Little England I should be happy.

This was a return to positive patriotism, a more winning tactic than xenophobia, wherein Britain could take credit from her naval superiority over a redoubtable enemy by land. These interjections heighten the contrast between warlike father and babe-in-arms; it is in the pretentiousness of the infant's title that the author finds his comedy:

Both Lords and lady's were invited,  
Unto this grand banquet at home,  
[---?] by his mother's desire,  
He should be christened young King of Rome;  
Grand presents unto him was brought  
Though he never was known for to tipple,  
If they had it had been all the same,  
He would rather take of the Nipple.  
Rum ti iddity, &c.

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<sup>37</sup> Appendix no.382.

<sup>38</sup> Appendix no.80.

Loyalists drew on this theme for the rest of the war, in popular productions and in epigrams, poems and songs intended for polite journals. In 1813, J. Poole's *Othello-Travestie*, an amusing rendering of Shakespeare's tragedy in modern dialect, included as an appendix several attempts at wit in which standard English was written phonetically to give the appearance of Latin. 'BONA PARTES VI SIT TU HIS ERE', or 'Bonaparte's visit to his heir', details Napoleon consulting a doctor and a drunken nurse regarding the uncertain health of his infant.<sup>39</sup> In the end, the emperor storms out, enraged at the suggestion that the boy's real father is one of his Mameluke guardsmen. Numerous sallies in magazines and newspapers as late as 1814 focused on the same subject, in spite of the positive course of the war. There was a fad in polite circles for composing mock proclamations of the young King of Rome, the image of a crowned baby making grand pronouncements tickling the public's fancy.<sup>40</sup> In February 1814, the *Morning Herald* published a poem to Joséphine, beginning,

Hail! unprolific Josephine,  
Of wives Imperial most serene,  
Who've been – as soon as barren known –  
Kick'd out of bed, and off a throne!<sup>41</sup>

Interestingly, it went on to suggest a connection between the ex-empress and the Prince Regent.

These later examples share a delight in the subject for its own comic sake, rather than as a vehicle to denigrate Napoleon. The introduction of the domestic angle, resulting in more appropriate songs than the anthemic tirades of earlier years, may have achieved more than loyalists intended: it rounded out the character of Napoleon, a man with whose every foible, whim and attribute the British were fascinated. Philippe Kaenel approaches this notion in discussion of the corresponding caricatures: 'Paradoxically, the vast iconographic

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<sup>39</sup> J. Poole, *Othello-Travestie: In Three Acts* (1813), pp.83-8.

<sup>40</sup> E.g. *The Spirit of the Public Journals for 1814* (1815), pp.104-5, 108-9.

<sup>41</sup> Appendix no.157.

corpus of works ridiculing Napoleon... did nothing but magnify his aura... the cartoons only strengthened the collective fantasies of the masses.’<sup>42</sup> Antecedents of the post-Waterloo song tradition may be observed here. As conquering hero *and* husband, lover and father, however inept, Napoleon was infinitely more human and compelling than the one-dimensional ogre, or military genius, of former years. Songs of his exile focusing upon his separation from his family and his emotions had their precursors in the rude, comic portrayals of 1810-11. In seeking to render him absurd, satirists had also rendered him human.

### **1812-13: Russia and Leipzig**

Although the ‘domestic’ songs of 1810-11 were published by traditional broadside printers aiming at a popular market, examples from 1812-14 have been gleaned largely from the polite press. Most broadsides remained topical, which meant switching focus to French reverses in Russia and the allies’ advances in 1813, culminating in victory at Leipzig. Whilst these songs resumed the levels of invective displayed in earlier years, the most interesting feature of their rhetoric was the continuation from the domestic songs, humour being deployed far more frequently than condemnation. Pitts’ ‘The Russian Bear’, possibly written by T. Best, is a fine example. Loosely based on a hunting allegory, it tells the story of the failed invasion of Russia in light-hearted tones, and directly references earlier domestic preoccupations:

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<sup>42</sup> P. Kaenel, ‘The Image of Napoleon: Conformity and Deformity’, in M. Guilosan *et al.* (eds.), *Napoleon I in the Mirror of Caricature* (Zurich, 1998), p.41.

The sportsman he could think of nought,  
But overthrow and ruin sir,  
Instead of hunting of the Bear,  
He wish'd himself at home sir,  
And playing hunt the slipper,  
With the little king of Rome sir<sup>43</sup>

Jennings published 'Boney's Degradation', a song analysed in Chapter Four.<sup>44</sup> The tune, 'Maggie Lauder', was that of a popular Scottish comic song, fast-paced, in a jaunty major key, rhyme scheme and meter lending themselves to humorous wordplay. The same playful tone predominated in 1813, with typical titles such as 'Boney and the Gay Lads of Paris Calculating for the Next Triumphal Entrance Into Moscow', published by Fores of Piccadilly, raising comic expectations fulfilled by the rhyme scheme:

But take care Master Nap, you meet with no trap;  
To poke either leg or your head in:  
Loss of legs stops your flight, lose your head why the sight  
Will be welcome at Miss Platoffs wedding.<sup>45</sup>

The internal rhyme in lines one and three of each verse was a common comic device, elevating the banal lyric to the level of wit.

Songs on Leipzig were more convincing. These focused, not on the battle's wider significance or the example of four allied powers combining in victory, but on the farcical circumstance of 'Bonaparte's Bridge.' Several songs were published along the same lines, the best of them making use of an existing nursery rhyme, a tactic more common to caricature:

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<sup>43</sup> Appendix no.291.

<sup>44</sup> Appendix no.52, Chapter Four, pp.171-2.

<sup>45</sup> Appendix no.45. 'Miss Platoffs wedding' was a reference to the rumour that Platoff, the Cossack commander, was offering his daughter's hand and a substantial dowry to the man who brought him Napoleon's head. See W. Elmes, 'A tit-bit for a Cossack or the Platoff prize – for the head of Buonaparte' (1813), BM no.1872,1012.5028.

This is the bridge that was blown into air.  
These are the Miners who had the care  
Of mining the Bridge that was blown into air.

This is the Corporal stout and strong,  
Who fired the Mine with his match so long,  
Which was made by the Miners, &c.

This is the Colonel of Infantry,  
Who ordered the Corporal stout and strong  
To fire the Mine, &c.

This is the Marshall of high degree  
Who whispered the Colonel of Infantry  
To order the Corporal, &c.

This is the Emperor who scampered away,  
And left the Marshall of high degree  
To whisper the Colonel, &c...<sup>46</sup>

The tune, of course, was ‘This is the house that Jack built’. The parallels between the two songs were ideal for this chain-of-command fiasco, but also allowed the anonymous writer to trade on the infantile, emasculating connotations of nursery rhyme, linked implicitly to Napoleon’s recent domestic affairs.

The London publishers who had backed the anti-invasion campaign – principally Pitts and Jennings – were consistent in depicting Napoleon’s reversals in 1812 and 1813 as comic. No longer the Ogre, the Monster, he was ‘Runaway Boney’ – a phrase that so angered one broadside’s reader, that he scribbled out the offending word.<sup>47</sup> Few contemporary topical songs from outside the London-loyalist milieu are extant, although many post-Waterloo songs take the Russian campaign as a central narrative theme. Yet at least one shared this light-hearted perspective. William Lillie was a ploughman of Inverugie, just north of Peterhead in Aberdeenshire, previously unregarded by historians.

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<sup>46</sup> Appendix no.39.

<sup>47</sup> ‘Runaway Boney, or, The White Cockade’, Appendix no.290, has several excisions by a Bonapartist sympathiser.

Credited with several songs and poems, he composed ‘The Twa Emperors, or, Sandy and Nap’ in 1813.<sup>48</sup>

Twa Emperors ance had a bit o’ a spree,  
I wat na fat was the meanin’ o’ t, [I know not]  
I believe they fell out ‘cause they could na agree,  
Sae it maks na fat was the beginnin’ o’ t.  
The tane wis a general o’ muckle renown, [tane = one]  
His name it was Nap, an’ he wore the French crown,  
He swore he wad eat’s geese in Peterburg town,  
Quo Sandy, “Ye’s ken o’ the winnin’ o’ t.”

This was humour of a different kind. The first four lines are undeniably comic, the narrator’s pose of bafflement tipping an ironic nod to the futility of war. Lillie finds more comedy in depicting a colossal modern conflict as a medieval, parochial Scottish affair of the sort celebrated in historical ballads. Lillie was well aware of the war’s true scale – he records that Napoleon ‘had four hunner thousan’ men’ – but chose to portray the antagonists as brawling Scotch lairds. Alexander is given the diminutive ‘Sandy’. Napoleon ‘touted his horn to gather his clan’. Rather than portraying the Russians as defenders of national sovereignty, Lillie has Alexander simply keen to have a (decidedly medieval-sounding) fight:

Noo Sandy was eery to see sic a thrang [shocked to see such a throng]  
O’ guns, swards, an’ halberts, a’ marchin’ alang,  
Sae he thocht it was time to be raisin’ his gang  
To help him a hitch to the thinnin’ o’ t.

The two emperors exchange words, taunts and insults like a couple of fishwives; idioms such as ‘Shank’s mare’ (walking) are introduced; there are Cossacks, casualties and snow aplenty, but the overall effect is ridiculous rather than epic. Though Napoleon loses and Alexander has the last word, the crucial difference from the London broadsides is that the humour is not employed to denigrate Napoleon, but to render war itself absurd. There is no malice or favouritism. The song bridges perfectly the space between the comic, topical

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<sup>48</sup> Appendix no.344.

London productions of 1810-13, and the humane, wry, politically disinterested popular songs that appeared after Waterloo, altogether more typical of traditional broadside culture. Sadly, it is pure serendipity that this ballad was ever recorded by a folk collector, and others of its kind from these years are now unknown, leaving the London broadsides to predominate in the historical record. Even these had substituted comedy for invective: though Napoleon was geographically further away, songs had come a lot closer to the reality of home in the years since 1805.

### **The Peninsular War**

The extant song record becomes less one-sided when we turn our attention to the British war effort. Songs of the Peninsular may be divided into two categories: those composed and sung by soldiers on campaign; and domestic productions reporting, celebrating or commenting on events in Portugal and Spain. When dealing with the former it should be remembered – as was true in domestic contexts – that soldiers’ songs about current events were merely one element of their song culture. Behind the lines and when in camp in particular, it appears that the taste was for sentimental and nostalgic songs, of loves and lands left behind rather than of the battle to come.<sup>49</sup> Songs of battle were reserved for marching, or particular celebrations, and were essentially both insular and commemorative, furthering a collective sense of memory and identity. This operated primarily on a regimental level, as in these contexts a soldier would be surrounded by the rest of his unit, and led to songs suited for communal rather than individual performance.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Chapter Six, pp.241-2

<sup>50</sup> See L. Winstock, *Songs & Music of the Redcoats: A History of the War Music of the British Army 1642-1902* (1970), *passim*.

The most remarkable feature of such songs is their scarcity. Tradition and memory were crucial to regimental identity; it would take an exceptional event and a gifted songwriter to result in a new lyric worth substituting for an existing, non-topical regimental piece. Lewis Winstock has collected several such songs from the Peninsular, each connecting a regiment to a battle: the 92<sup>nd</sup> Foot and Arroyo dos Molinos (1811); the 87<sup>th</sup> Royal Irish Fusiliers and Barossa (1809); the 15<sup>th</sup> Hussars and Sahagun (1808).<sup>51</sup> This last, representative of the three, combines a banality of detail with lukewarm patriotism and attempts at hyperbolic description –

So we saddled our horses, and away we did go  
Over rivers of ice, and o'er mountains of snow.  
To the town of Sahagun, our course we did steer  
For the 15<sup>th</sup> Hussars, my brave boys, never fear.

- before concluding with a generic salutation:

Here's a health to Lord Paget, and long may he live,  
Likewise Colonel Grant, and our officers brave.  
With a full flowing bowl, we'll drink, and we'll sing,  
Success to the 15<sup>th</sup> and God save the King.

There is no trace of anti-French or anti-Napoleonic sentiment in this or any other soldiers' songs, and because the British never fought against him in person before Waterloo, Napoleon is never accorded more than a name-check: in 'Sahagun', one line runs 'Whilst loudly they cried on Napoleon their king'. 'King' was almost certainly chosen for the sake of the rhyme scheme; topical soldiers' songs were preoccupied with recording their own deeds, rather than engaging with a politicised discourse.

The domestic record is more extensive, and may be divided into the periods before and after Salamanca, in July 1812. Until that battle and the subsequent sustained advance caught the public imagination and convinced the British press that headway was being made, songs were infrequent and circumspect. Only Jennings appears to have made much

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<sup>51</sup> 'Go and tell Napoleon, go' (Appendix no.137); 'Barrosa' (12); Sahagun' (292).

effort to publicise Wellesley's early victories. 'A New Song, Called, British Valour in Portugal' by William Cabe, set to 'Rule, Britannia!', may have appeared as early as 1808, for it salutes 'brave General Sir Arthur Wellesl[e]y' and tells 'Of two noble battles so lately been won,' which correspond to Roliça and Vimiero.<sup>52</sup> Cabe concludes:

Now a health let us drink to our officers and men,  
Who so boldly fought your rights to maintain  
May God help each widow that's left in distress,  
Comfort and support the young fatherless.

Focus on the human cost was characteristic of this conflict, highlighted by the following year's retreat and evacuation, concluding in Sir John Moore's death at Corunna. The song Jennings printed on 'The Battle of Corunna' was set to the tune of 'Battle of the Nile' – a subtle way of linking Moore's death with Nelson's, since no single song on Trafalgar had become definitive in the popular consciousness.<sup>53</sup>

Jennings' song devoted a solitary couplet to Moore's death, whereas the lasting legacy of the battle, reprinted throughout the century, was the song beginning 'Not a drum was heard, nor a funeral note', that took as its subject Moore's funeral rather than the battle itself.<sup>54</sup> The lyric was by noted Irish poet Charles Wolfe (1791-1823), and became his most famous composition, praised by Byron as 'the most perfect ode in the English language'.<sup>55</sup> Yet Wolfe did not write his elegy until 1816. If this post-war ode had a forerunner in popular song culture, it was perhaps 'General Moore', printed by J. Ferraby at Hull.<sup>56</sup> It begins,

Ye gen'rous Britons, who honour the brave,  
Attend to my ditty – shed a tear o'er the grave  
Of Moore! gallant chief! who in glory's bright hour,  
Fell like Wolf[e], in his prime, of manhood the flow'r.

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<sup>52</sup> Appendix no.233.

<sup>53</sup> Appendix no.13.

<sup>54</sup> Appendix no.241.

<sup>55</sup> J. Edwards, 'Wolfe, Charles (1791–1823)', *ODNB* (Oxford, 2004), at [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29831](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29831), accessed 3 Dec. 2012.

<sup>56</sup> Appendix no.132.

Recognisably vernacular in tone, the song twice draws comparison with General Wolfe, and once each with Abercrombie and Nelson. The impression is of a composer striving to spark recognition and respect by comparison to familiar examples, rather than discussing a well-known subject. Perhaps Moore's fall at Corunna was not initially the glorious event it later became, but a minor and unheralded setback to be recast, rather than exploited, by propagandists. Napoleon never features in songs of Corunna, despite that campaign being the only one to feature his personal involvement, albeit at an early stage. As it was, the early narrative of the Peninsular was one of modest tragedy, unrelieved by either the glamour of Napoleon or the glory of British arms.

It is unsurprising that Moore's death achieved iconic status only after the wars were over, the better to be rewritten. It was not until Salamanca in 1812 that Wellington's victories generated substantial enthusiasm. The British retreat into Portugal after Talavera, however strategically sound, was hardly inspirational. William Tucker did compose the song 'The Battle of Talavera', published in the *Universal Magazine*, yet its exuberant tone:

Britons arise! the voice of glory brings  
Illustrious tidings from Iberia's shore!

- hardly matched the public mood of apathy, and its lofty stylings precluded a popular incarnation.<sup>57</sup> But Wellington's victories at Salamanca, and then Vitoria in 1813, were not only triumphs in their own right, but coincided with welcome news from the Russian front, amplifying their significance in a war effort that, for the first time, held out the possibility of ultimate victory. It was in these years that middle- and working-class writers recorded their excitement at news from Spain, not from 1808-11.<sup>58</sup> In London, Astley's amphitheatre staged *The Battle of Salamanca*, and Pitts produced a broadside of the same

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<sup>57</sup> Appendix no.16.

<sup>62</sup> E.g. Gillett, *Elizabeth Ham*, p.188, T. Cooper, *The Life of Thomas Cooper. Written by Himself*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (1872), p.17.

name.<sup>59</sup> Napoleon is absent, the focus on the battle and its victor, who is dubbed ‘The Nelson of the land’ – a telling comparison for a nation in search of a new hero. The third verse finds room for bathetic humour to undercut the grandeur of its theme:

From plains with carnage spread,  
Inglorious Marmont fled,  
Wounded sore,  
In the rear,  
On the field of battle O!

Other productions on the battle are extant, one of which, ‘Lord Wellington for ever, huzza!  
A Favourite New Song’, makes the first link between the tune ‘A-Hunting We Will Go’ and Wellington.<sup>60</sup> Its closing sentiment suggests the author’s patriotism is of the conditional, self-interested kind:

All you that wish to have a peace, from heavy taxes free,  
Pray for success to Wellington and all his grand army.  
May he always gain the victory so that the war might cease,  
Then trade again in England will flourish and increase.

Five of its seven verses simply describe the battle: this was a topical piece, supplying information as much as fulfilling a loyalist directive.

Once the Peninsular entered the public and popular consciousness as a worthwhile, even glorious, conflict, songwriters could use it as patriotic shorthand, not merely as a source of news.<sup>61</sup> This ‘Newcastle Election Song’ was sung by its author at a dinner in October 1812:

While Wellington, leading the soldiers of Britain,  
Eclipses the glories of Greece and of Rome,  
Old England might smile ‘midst the dangers that threaten,  
Did nought vex or bias our Councils at home.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> M. Kwint, ‘Astley’s Amphitheatre and the Early Circus in England, 1768-1830’ (Oxford University D.Phil. thesis, 1994), p.305; Appendix no.14.

<sup>60</sup> Appendix no.183.

<sup>61</sup> See S. Bainbridge, *British Poetry and the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars: Visions of Conflict* (Oxford, 2003), esp. p.148.

<sup>62</sup> Appendix no.235.

By contrasting the government's failures with Wellington's neo-classical triumphs, the author could trade on the general's glory by association, marking himself out as a true patriot despite his criticisms of state policy. Only a year earlier, the Peninsular itself might have been bundled up with those failed policies. Yet by 1813, a flurry of victories and a British advance to the French border transformed the war into something worth celebrating at the most tenuous opportunity. The enterprising E. Humble, also of Newcastle, produced 'Boney Invaded, A New Song', to the tune of 'Hearts of Oak', which listed four of Wellington's victories of the past year, also finding room to praise Generals Hill and Graeme.<sup>63</sup> His motive for writing the song, however, only becomes clear in the last two verses: he is advertising a lottery.

Having taken a view of LORD WELLINGTON'S roam,  
Let's now cast our eyes, my dear friends, towards home,  
For quickly approaches the third of November,  
A day which in England we all should remember.

...

THE THIRD OF NOVEMBER! *pray mind what I say,*  
*The neat little Lottery will draw on that day;*  
After Gen'ral's in Spain, Sirs, I hope you'll not grumble,  
If I call your attention to General HUMBLE;  
For tho' he has never commanded in Spain,  
Steady, boys, steady, he always is ready  
*To sell the great Prizes again and again\*.*

\* For a List of which see the other Side.

For Humble to devote six verses to events in Spain, merely to preface his advertisement, is testament to the rhetorical power of the war. From mid-1812 onwards, the Peninsular provided a context in which loyalists could situate patriotic songs, free from active engagement with Napoleon, focusing on purely positive feats of arms. Yet the song record from this war was far from universally positive. The years of this conflict – 1808-14 – were also those in which a powerful counter-narrative was articulated: that of war-weariness and hostility to the conflict, its methods and its goals.

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<sup>63</sup> Appendix no.46.

## ‘I Wish the Wars were Over’

There had been a strong counter-current of anti-war sentiment in the 1790s, stemmed by the threat of invasion. From 1806 it returned, exacerbated by war taxes, casualties, and the drain of Britain’s stock of young men: husbands, fathers, brothers and sons. Even when the Peninsular was acknowledged as successful, hostility remained. The people of Nottingham hissed the mail coach that proclaimed the victory of Vitoria.<sup>64</sup> Many judged the costs of crimping and the press-gang as too high a price for success.<sup>65</sup> This sentiment was expressed culturally at all social levels: Maria Edgeworth digressed in one 1814 novel to dwell on the psychological horror for those left at home –

Alas! how many tenderly anxious wives and children dread the sight of a newspaper; the pages of which daily teem with details of thousands slain, which they have not resolution to peruse [peruse?], fearful of encountering amongst the list of slaughtered heroes the name of a beloved husband or father

- and made an explicit link between this fear, and the unworthy cause for which the war was fought:

posterity will blush indignantly at the cause which has imbrued the sanguinary plains of Spain and Portugal with the blood of so many thousands of the flower of our English youths; and for what? to establish that GRAND achievement – to seat again the dastardly Ferdinand on that throne he had not courage to defend.<sup>66</sup>

Edgeworth’s outburst was uncharacteristic of a romantic novel; such opinions were more traditionally and widely articulated in song. Anti-war themes permeated different genres, spanning polite verse, popular ballads, and children’s nursery rhymes. Spofforth’s ‘The Sailor’s Wife’ was one of a collection of ‘Little Ballads’ printed in 1807, drawing on numerous stock characters, and – priced at 3s 6d and including the notation – clearly aimed at a polite market:

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<sup>64</sup> Pottle, ‘Loyalty and Patriotism’, p.96.

<sup>65</sup> E.g. Thompson, *The Making*, p.470, A.L. Lloyd, *Folk Song in England* (1963), pp.255, 269.

<sup>66</sup> M. Edgeworth, *The Ballad Singer; or, Memoirs of the Bristol Family: A Most Interesting Novel in Four Volumes* (4 vols., 1814), i, pp.89-90.

I lov'd a Sailor bold and brave,  
a nobler Tar you ne'er will see,  
He fought and found a Wat'ry Grave,  
O think on him and pity me.

Why was not MARY by to save?  
Her gallant Husband on the Sea;  
Ah no! he found a Wat'ry Grave,  
O think on him, and pity me.<sup>67</sup>

More elaborate was 'The Orphan Boy' by noted radical John Thelwall (1764-1834), published for a halfpenny in the popular format of an eight-page, single-sheet pamphlet.<sup>68</sup>

Intensely sad, the song moves from innocence –

But, ah! there came a war, they say,  
What is a War, I cannot tell:  
But drums and fifes did sweetly play,  
And loudly rang our village bell.<sup>69</sup>

- to disenchantment, as the boy's father enlists –

But, when I found he rode so far,  
And came not home as heretofore;  
I said it was a naughty war,  
And lov'd the drum and fife no more.<sup>70</sup>

- to tragedy:

At length the bell again did ring;  
There was a victory, they said,  
'Twas what my father said he'd bring;  
But ah! it brought my father dead.<sup>71</sup>

The song ends with the boy's mother dying of grief, hence the orphan of the title.

Though written in response to this particular war, these nursery rhymes describe abstract conflicts, and are in a sense timeless. Many other contemporary songs adopted the same approach, engaging with a venerable tradition of anti-war balladry, and also perhaps

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<sup>67</sup> Appendix no.293.

<sup>68</sup> Appendix no.261. See N. Roe, 'Thelwall, John (1764-1834), *ODNB*, at [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27167](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27167), accessed 15 Aug. 2013.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p.3.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p.4.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p.6.

influenced by the pre-eminent tragic song of the era, Campbell's 'The Wounded Hussar'.<sup>72</sup> However, 'timelessness' did not preclude politicisation. Both Spofforth and Thelwall were advancing a radical argument.<sup>73</sup> Campbell's own 'The Soldier's Dream', another tragic lyric striving perhaps for transcendency, included the loaded phrase 'the war-broken soldier': 'broken' is important, as it suggests a permanent loss rather than a noble but temporary sacrifice for the sake of duty.<sup>74</sup> 'The Soldier at Night', written at Blackburn in 1809, included the following verse:

O thou seducer of the human mind,  
Thou bane of millions, and thou bliss of none,  
Ambition! restless tyrant of mankind,  
No knee bend I before thy blood-stained throne.<sup>75</sup>

Similarly abstracted temporally, yet with an all-too-real target, were the numerous songs that circulated orally and in print concerning the press gang. One published example eschewed criticism of the state itself, the deserted wife declaring that

But suppose in the wars my Jemmy should be slain,  
Then to the Gods I will complain<sup>76</sup>

More usually, however, the complaint was directed at mortals. One Northumbrian song knew both whom to blame, and how to attempt to salvage the situation:

O the Weary cutter  
That stole my laddie away  
They always come in the night  
And never come in the day  
They Always come in the night  
And steal the Lads away –  
I'll give the cutter a Guinea  
Ill give the cutter na More  
Ill give the Cutter a Guinea  
To steal my laddie a shore.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> This 1790s composition was constantly in print over the following decades. Appendix no.377.

<sup>73</sup> Spofforth's other 'little ballads' included attacks on taxation and monarchy as an institution – R. Spofforth, *The Twelfth Cake* (1807), pp.6-7, 10.

<sup>74</sup> Appendix no.309.

<sup>75</sup> Appendix no.306.

<sup>76</sup> 'O Cruel Pressgang', Appendix no.242.

<sup>77</sup> 'Oh the Weary Cutter', Appendix no.249.

Songs attacking the press-gang were especially prevalent in the north-east, from ‘The Tarpaulin Jacket’ and ‘I Wish the Wars were Over’, to an incidental half-verse in the Newcastle favourite ‘The New Keel Row’, a variant on an older song, written by Thomas Thompson:

But gie’s a peace that’s steady,  
And breed cheap as lang-syne;  
May a’ the press-gang perish,  
Each lass her laddy cherish;<sup>78</sup>

One that became rooted in local song culture was ‘Here’s the Tender Coming’. As in Chapter Two, when John Shield subverted notions of loyalty and duty in ‘O No, My Love, No’, this song privileged the sailor’s obligations to his family above those to his country:

Hide thee, canny Geordie, hide theesel’ away;  
Hide thee till frigate makes for Druridge Bay.  
If they take thee, Geordie, who’s to win our bread?  
Me and little Jackie better off be dead.<sup>79</sup>

These songs were vehement in their attacks on the press-gang, and by implication in their scorn for the importance of the state. This was equally true for songs relating to the army’s methods of recruitment. These ranged from attacks on individual crimps and their methods, to broader indictments of war. John Leonard, another unregarded but fascinating figure, penned several songs of the former variety. ‘Johnson Reed’, from 1813, castigated the eponymous crimp for the harm he caused both the young men, and their dependents.<sup>80</sup>

One verse ran:

You Mothers that have lost Your Sons  
Each wife and Maid by him Undone  
Assemble quick and Swiftly run  
Duck J--- R---

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<sup>78</sup> Appendix nos.328, 150; Appendix no.222.

<sup>79</sup> Appendix no.144. See also The Unthanks, *Here’s the Tender Coming*, track 12 (EMI CD, 2009).

<sup>80</sup> Appendix no.167.

Another cried:

See those Youths now drench'd in gore  
Aloft on Rapid pinions bore  
While chaind upon the Sulphureous Shore  
Lies J--- R---

The 'youths' are at least destined for heaven, whilst Reed is given the fate of Lucifer. 'The Soldiers' Wives Complaint', meanwhile – an anonymous composition – is broader in scope, attacking both the war in general and its royalist credentials:

Their poor wives they've left behind them,  
Full of grief in every town,  
Whilst they're gone to defend the nation  
In fighting for King George's crown.<sup>81</sup>

The song goes on, after detailing the suffering and distress occasioned by the conflict, to target particular social evils:

Ask relief, then the parish grumble,  
It's the truth you really do know;  
And when they can't keep house no longer  
To the workhouse they're bound to go.

David Love (1750-1827), a Nottingham-based ballad-singer, had one song called 'Remarks on the Times', which included the verses,

Sin caus'd the present war abroad,  
Sin robb'd us of our peace;  
Sin doth provoke the Lord our God  
To hide his gracious face.

When God doth, with a liberal hand,  
Plenty for all provide,  
Why should poor people in this land  
Of cheapness by deny'd?<sup>82</sup>

Potentially written as early as the American War of Independence, Love found the song equally appropriate to the Napoleonic conflict. Though he is less explicit and more overtly religious than the preceding songs, his argument is essentially the same.

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<sup>81</sup> Appendix no.310.

<sup>82</sup> Appendix no.284. J. Sambrook, 'Love, David (1750–1827)', *OBND*, at [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17039](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17039), accessed 14 Aug. 2013.

Between this abstracted yet political position, and the personal vendettas of John Leonard, fell the radical bard Robert Anderson's (1770-1833) composition in the Cumberland dialect, 'Jenny's Complaint'.<sup>83</sup> This is still a folk standard, sometimes called 'The Collier Recruit'. The Jenny of the title is the lover of Jemmy, whose recruitment is heralded as 'fearfu' news'. The act itself is portrayed as crimping:

To Carel he set off wi' wheat;  
Them ill reed-cwoated fellows [red-coated]  
Suin wil'd him in – then meade him drunk: [wiled]  
He'd better geane to th' gallows.

The song displays animosity to patriotic iconography: the sight of Jemmy's cockade sets everyone 'a crying', and Jenny scorns the news that her lover is sure to be made 'a brigadier, or grenadier', the bathetic ignorance of the gulf between those two military terms lending a touch of hollow, desperate humour. The tone is similar to many press-gang songs, yet whilst some of those held out hope for the sailors' return, 'Jenny's Complaint' ends pessimistically:

Brek heart, at yence, and then it's owre!  
Life's nought widout yen's dearie,  
I'll suin lig in my cauld, cauld grave,  
For, oh! of life I'm weary!

If melancholy could be an effective instrument, then so could comedy. 'Odsbobbins! I'ze go for a Sodger' appeared in urban and urbane songbooks throughout the wars, and centred on Ralph, a caricature of a vain, foolish young man keen to sign up – for perhaps the wrong reasons:

Wi' the girls I were always a fav'rite, I know,  
And as red-coats they never refuse,  
Mayhap, if so be for a *sodger* I go,  
I, among 'em may then pick and chuse.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Appendix no.159. See T.H.H. Caine, 'Anderson, Robert (1770–1833)', rev. D. Finkelstein, *ODNB*, at [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/498](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/498), accessed 14 Aug. 2013.

<sup>84</sup> Appendix no.248.

Ralph achieves one moment of insight that gives him pause, and lends the song an awkward undercurrent:

When I go to the wars for my country and king,  
I'ze kill every Frenchman I see;  
But hold – mayn't it turn out another guess thing,  
The Frenchman, mayhap, may kill me.

Thus far, though steeped in the context of the Wars, dates, places, and names of great men have been conspicuously absent. Representing a longstanding and uncowed popular tradition, these all but timeless songs serve as an imposing counterweight to jingoistic ephemera of the day, articulating the plight of the common man or woman as victim of the state and the war. Others were more specific, situating themselves within the Peninsular War, though in some cases aspiring to grander themes. These too occupied a spectrum, one extreme of which was the literate, Westminster satire of the Irish poet, songwriter and Bonapartist, Tommy Moore.<sup>85</sup> In 1813 he produced two comic attacks, 'Lord Wellington and the Ministers', and 'Reinforcements for Lord Wellington'.<sup>86</sup> The latter's targets were Castlereagh, Canning, the other ministers and the Regent; Moore's real targets were all domestic. The anonymous song 'Fate of Faithful Nancy', later reprinted by Thomas Ford of Chesterfield near Sheffield, could stand as its polar opposite.<sup>87</sup> Free of cynicism, this was an apolitical song focused on its own tragic narrative of lovers Nancy and Will. Nancy follows Will to Spain and watches his final battle from a mountain: Will is slain and she is shot, managing to write a last message home before sealing it 'with her gore' and dying beside her lover.<sup>88</sup> Rather than drawing conclusions about the war, the song's moral exhorts its audience to 'be true and kind, ne'er change your mind', its tragedy bent to purely romantic ends. Though it discusses the Peninsular, it takes no stance on the conflict.

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<sup>85</sup> G. Carnall, 'Moore, Thomas (1779-1852)', *ODNB*, at [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19150](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19150), accessed 14 Aug. 2013.

<sup>86</sup> Appendix nos. 182, 283.

<sup>87</sup> Appendix no.122.

<sup>88</sup> For the wider song tradition of women in battle, see D. Dugaw, *Warrior Women and Popular Balladry* (Cambridge, 1989).

As its tale is unremittingly tragic and free from glory, it may perhaps be treated as a temporally-located variant of some of the tragedies discussed above.

‘The Soldier’s Death’, also anonymous, falls into the same category: it is sung by a maid who has lost her Johnnie in Spain.<sup>89</sup> The first verse, all willows, billows and ‘wild howling storm’, draws on the same tropes of Romantic nature imagery so prevalent in the post-Waterloo songs discussed in Chapter One.<sup>90</sup> The conclusion is more pessimistic than ‘Fate of Faithful Nancy’, as Johnnie is proved to have ‘vainly’ attempted to cheer his love, who is left as inconsolable as Anderson’s ‘Jenny’. The second verse, which details Johnnie’s battle record, makes an explicit comparison to Sir John Moore: increasingly, songs from 1809-15 sought to eulogise the sacrifice of the ordinary soldier, rather than sharing the obsession with the glorious commander witnessed in songs of Nelson at Trafalgar.

Bravely he fought on the hills of Vimiera,  
Was doomed at Corunna with Moore to lie low;  
But bravely he fell, his brave comrades declarèd,  
While bravely he pressed on the ranks of the foe.

This juxtaposition of common soldier with commanding general was taken further in two further tragic ballads. ‘The Bantry Girls’ Lament’ features another Johnny, who ‘went a-thrashing the dirty King of Spain’.<sup>91</sup> As with ‘Jenny’s Complaint’ and ‘Here’s the Tender Coming’, a contrast is drawn between the domestic void he has left behind, and the onerous duty he has undertaken. His soldiering is not in service to British patriotism: ‘Johnny died for Ireland’s pride in the foreign land of Spain’, rather than for Britain’s. Three verses end with Johnny depicted as personally fighting the King of Spain, Joseph Bonaparte: it is the everyman who fights and dies, not his leader.

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<sup>89</sup> Appendix no.308.

<sup>90</sup> Chapter One, p.41.

<sup>91</sup> Appendix no.11.

Still more explicit is the far more famous ‘Bonny Light Horseman’, alternatively known as ‘Broken-Hearted I Will Wander’.<sup>92</sup> One verse, either the first or the last depending on the edition, runs:

When Bonaparte he commanded his troops for to stand,  
And he planted his cannons all over the land;  
He has levelled his cannons the whole victory to gain,  
And he’s killed my light horseman, returning from Spain.

Contrastingly, many Victorian versions omit Napoleon, whilst that collected by Moylan appends the extra verse, not found elsewhere:

Oh Boney, oh Boney, I’ve done you no harm.  
So why, tell me why have you caused this alarm.  
We were happy together, my true love and me  
But now you have stretched him in his death over the sea.

‘Stretched him’ is Irish slang for being hanged, as well as more generic shorthand for laying someone out. Whilst we may confidently deem this a later addition, as it appears nowhere else, the *former* verse appears in all broadside editions including ‘new song’ in the title, and may be supposed to have featured in variants contemporary to the Peninsular.<sup>93</sup> Thus the cavalryman in question is linked directly to Napoleon, though the chorus tells us more neutrally that ‘in the wars he was slain’. Lyrically, the song is apolitical. It is unclear how much agency to attribute to Napoleon. Is he individually responsible, or the instrument of destiny? The latter is the likelier, considering the two references to ‘cannon’, the ultimate representation of arbitrary death dealt from afar. Thus Napoleon is simply the only human figure, due perhaps to his ubiquitous fame, via whom the grieving lover may connect with her dead horseman. She feels impossibly detached from the field of battle, and imagines two fantastical means by which to reach her lover:

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<sup>92</sup> Appendix no.58. Many versions are extant – the Bodleian alone has fourteen broadside variants. Moylan gives the song an English, not Irish, origin. Two variants in the following footnote were printed at Liverpool, a melting-pot of Anglo-Irish song.

<sup>93</sup> Bod. Harding B 28(165), Harding B 25(260), Firth c.14(182).

Sure if I was a blackbird and had wings to fly,  
I would fly to the spot where my true love does lie

The other draws on a rich vein of folklore concerning cross-dressing female soldiers studied in depth by Dianne Dugaw:<sup>94</sup>

I will dress in men's apparel, to his regiment I'll go,  
And I'll be a soldier for to fight all his foes.  
And I'll count it an honour if I could obtain  
For to die on the field where my true love was slain.

Both scenarios articulate the narrator's struggle to bridge the geographical, conceptual, and mortal distance between her condition and his. Thus the song achieves a deeper profundity than most under discussion. This, coupled with the beauty of its far older tune, has made it a standard for British folksingers. Its verdict on the wars is negative; Napoleon's place remains enigmatic: potentially he stands as the one man whose name, face and deeds are well-enough known by the isolated lover to form an imagined framework for the otherwise faceless context of the horseman's death. Once again his evocation is humanising, giving us a clue to the highly personal articulations of Napoleon that were so prominent after 1815.

### **1814: Defeat, Abdication, Exile**

Loyalist songwriters found more to celebrate in 1814. Rather than reporting individual battles – there were few notable victories – the 'news' was of a grander narrative of turned tables and the imminence of ultimate victory. Some songs focused on a particular event: two republished in an Edinburgh songbook highlighted the Dutch revolt.<sup>95</sup> The very titles of others, such as 'Glorious News, Wellington in France and Bonaparte out of Germany!!'

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<sup>94</sup> Dugaw, *Warrior Women*.

<sup>95</sup> 'Buonaparte's Vagaries' (Appendix no.71), 'All Been Fish in de Frenchman's Net' (2).

epitomise their celebratory rhetoric and news-bearing function.<sup>96</sup> This song's chorus situates its performance in an appropriately festive context:

So fill your glasses to the brim  
And laugh at Nap's presumption,  
These victories have given him,  
A galloping consumption.

The final verse ends with Napoleon in danger, as he 'trembles for his neck'. The theme of overdue retribution, usually envisioned in terms of capital punishment, was widespread in the London press in early 1814, an aspect dealt with at length by Semmel.<sup>97</sup> Byron's anonymous 'Ode to Napoleon Bonaparte' castigated the fallen emperor for not falling on his sword:

Is it some yet imperial hope  
That with such change can calmly cope?  
Or dread of death alone?  
To die a prince – or live a slave –  
Thy choice is most ignobly brave!<sup>98</sup>

Shelley was just as forthright:

I hated thee, fallen tyrant! I did groan  
To think that a most unambitious slave,  
Like thee, should dance and revel on the grave  
Of Liberty...<sup>99</sup>

The manner of Napoleon's fall prompted gloating from loyalists, and condemnation from former admirers. The suggestively monikered 'Philo-Brutus' published a shilling pamphlet, in which former virtues were shown as tarnished:

he was no longer the great, the brave, the magnanimous Napoleon,... but basely did he descend from the consistency of his conduct, and degraded himself so low as to beg for assistance and asylum from his foes.<sup>100</sup>

Few broadsides drew this distinction. Loyalist songs were as vituperative as in 1803-5, but with the greater confidence and coherence of victory. Jennings led with 'A New Song on

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<sup>96</sup> Appendix no.136.

<sup>97</sup> Semmel, *Napoleon*, pp.149-52.

<sup>98</sup> Appendix no.247, fifth stanza.

<sup>99</sup> 'Feelings of a Republican on the Fall of Bonaparte', Appendix no.123.

<sup>100</sup> 'Philo-Brutus', *Political metamorphoses* (1814), pp.21-2.

the Triumphant Entry of the Allies into Paris; Being the Sure Prelude to Universal Peace!!!’, set to ‘Hearts of Oak’.<sup>101</sup> Even Batchelar, whose ‘The Corsican Drover’ had been one of the subtler, more equivocal productions of 1803, devoted ‘Swaggering Boney’ to crowing over Napoleon’s fall.<sup>102</sup> This song, like many others, recapitulated the Black Legend, now updated to include Russia, before ending in an odd mix of bloody-mindedness and insecurity:

And now we have got him again it is true,  
I hope they will take better care of him now,  
For he is like an eel with his slippery tricks,  
He will never be easy till in death he’s fixt.

Similar songs were published across England and Wales. ‘The White Flag’, first performed in a Surrey theatre before broadside publication, found its way into an Edinburgh collection of comic songs: its alternative titles were ‘Boney’s Abdication’ and ‘Boney Done Over’.<sup>103</sup> ‘Peace, and England’s Glory’ even heralded from radical Nottingham.<sup>104</sup> Broadside took various forms, from ‘Downfall of Buonaparte’, set to ‘Rule, Britannia!’, to ‘Napoleon Signing his Abdication’, which eschewed a tune altogether.<sup>105</sup>

Just as a decade earlier, however, there were subversive nuances among the rhetoric. S. Taylor, a Birmingham printer, produced a double-broadside, lavishly illustrated with two custom woodcuts of Napoleon and the devil, featuring – unusually – two songs on the same theme.<sup>106</sup> These were ‘The Devil’s Own Darling’ and ‘Buonaparte’s Lamentation, or His Banishment to Elba’s Isle’. The former describes itself accurately as a ‘comic song’ about ‘that little great man Bonaparty’; the latter is more complex. The song repeatedly

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<sup>101</sup> Appendix no.229.

<sup>102</sup> Appendix no.326.

<sup>103</sup> Appendix nos. 368, 369.

<sup>104</sup> Appendix no.269.

<sup>105</sup> Appendix nos. 106, 205.

<sup>106</sup> Bod. Johnson fol.198 (Appendix no.101).

addresses ‘all you cruel Tyrants’ and ‘brother Tyrants’, admonishing them to learn by Napoleon’s example and ‘Leave off your cruel Tyranny’:

‘Lest Judgment should you overtake,  
The same as it has me;  
O then you will be sorry for it  
When it is too late,  
And banish’d to a desert place,  
For that is my hard fate.

Two aspects are striking: the (relative) compassion accorded the ‘Tyrant’ as he reconciles himself to his just deserts, and the unknown identity of these other tyrants. There are echoes of Shelley’s poem from 1805: is this another case of radicals using Napoleon as an indirect attack on hereditary monarchy or the British government? It is highly plausible.

In this respect, the song is the opposite of ‘A New Song Called Little England’, which avoids criticism of ‘Boney’, devoting itself to a patriotic celebration of England’s soldiers, sailors, and liberty. Its first lines are addressed to those most likely to have suffered:

You poor of old England give hear and attend...  
One and twenty long years been oppress’d by the war,  
Half starv’d we have been for a number of years,  
Could hardly get food, it was so very dear...<sup>107</sup>

While other broadsides sought to prompt rejoicing in Napoleon’s fall, this avoided inflammatory rhetoric (perhaps it was intended for a city such as Nottingham or Sheffield, with strong popular pro-Napoleonic sentiment), and targeted the complaints anticipated in its popular audience, heralding peace as the end to all ills, welcoming the return of loved ones and trade’s increase.

Peace was celebrated in its own right as much as for its accompanying clouds of glory. The ad hoc celebrations, lacking central coordination, are discussed in greater detail in Chapter Six – yet it should be said that on many occasions, the greatest expressions of joy were not jingoistic.

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<sup>107</sup> Appendix no.226.

Capt. Hedington, on the impress service at Lynn, lately received orders to pay off and dismiss the press-gang, which for so many years had excited the terror of the seafaring part of the inhabitants. It is impossible to express the demonstrations of joy which took place on the occasion; even the British flag, from having been constantly displayed at the rendezvous, was torn piece-meal, and the staff burnt by the wives and families of the sailors who were thus liberated from the fear of being impressed.<sup>108</sup>

This was the ultimate manifestation of the press-gang songs above: the literal dismembering and burning of the state's ultimate icon, the flag. In this light, the author of 'A New Song Called Little England' had been right to worry.

Other songs shared these preoccupations. Nicholson's 'Song on the Prospect of Peace' from Edinburgh focuses on the human interest:

See, where the war-worn soldiers come,  
Once more to view their native plains!  
With joy they hail their friends – their Home,  
And bless the hands that burst their chains!<sup>109</sup>

He ends with a call not to denigrate Napoleon, but to learn from his example:

Yet, tho' the proud, the great, are low,  
His eagles fall no more to rise –  
We tread not on the vanquish'd foe,  
But LEARN by OTHERS to be WISE!

'Peace' by Robert Anderson, who penned 'Jenny's Complaint', updated the unpatriotic sentiments of that song to the new context:

The King thowt war wad ruin aw,  
An Bonnyprat the seame;  
What, some say teane, an some say beath, [teane = the aine, e.g. the one]  
Hae lang been mickle to bleame.<sup>110</sup> [much]

Once again, the focus is upon the return of loved ones:

Now, monie a weyfe'll weep for joy,  
An monie a bairn be fain,  
To see the fadders, they'd forgot,  
Come seafe an soun agean;

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<sup>108</sup> *Gedge's Bury Post*, cited in the *Monthly Magazine*, 37, no. 255 (June 1814), p.480.

<sup>109</sup> Appendix no.320.

<sup>110</sup> Appendix no.267.

But the soldiers' return is not a happy one. Tom has merely lost his left thumb, but Peter has a wooden leg, and is reduced to begging. The plight of Sally and Lanty echoes that of Jenny and Jemmy, for Lanty has not yet returned, and:

Sally's heart for suir mun brek,  
If he's amang the deed.

In common with Nicholson, Anderson takes no pride in victory. The final two verses articulate the perspective of the disenchanting poor:

Wer dang'rous wars aw flung aseyde,  
How happy fwok wad be! [folk]  
But ruin's monie a Ruler's preyde,  
Throughout the warl, we see! [world]  
To fratch an fecht's ay their deleyte,  
They leyke to crush the peer! [poor]  
Wad they dui gud, as aw fwok sud –  
Hut! – Ills the warl mun bear!

Oh! but I us'd to wonder much,  
An think what thousans fell;  
Now, what they've aw been fechtin for,  
Wey, deil a yen can tell! [the devil only knows]  
But, God be prais'd! we've peace at last,  
The news hev spread afar;  
May Englan, leyke the weyde warl, hear  
Nae mair ov murd'rous wars!

Clearly not all songs welcoming peace fitted either a celebratory or a loyalist context. Similarly, the celebrations themselves occasioned a new raft of compositions, and whilst these were occasionally loyalist, such as 'The Wonderful Wonders of Town', which depicted London's rejoicings in a rosy light, they were more commonly satirical, finding fault with the excesses of triumph.<sup>111</sup> Even this song included lightly veiled criticism, two verses ridiculing the mock naval engagement in Hyde Park, and highlighting the lack of refreshments for the ordinary spectators:

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<sup>111</sup> Appendix no.375

You never see'd yet a procession so fine,  
As when into the city the kings went to dine;  
I gap'd with my mouth open, like many an elf,  
Till no dinner I got to put in it myself.

These complaints were articulated more emphatically by C.F. Lawler, London's premier 'Peter Pindar' – a common pseudonym of satirical poets. Lawler's attacks on the celebrations stemmed from a polite milieu, and their target was the Regent.<sup>112</sup> Yet their humorous critique of loyalist celebrations was shared by popular songs, especially in the north of England. One of Samuel Bamford's first songs, 'The Petition of Jammy's Hen', mocks the miserly contributions of the local Middletonian gentry in providing a dinner: allegedly, only one old hen was volunteered.<sup>113</sup> 'Bob Cranky's Leum'nation Neet' is a sceptical reading of the Newcastle festivities as both unsporting and hypocritical.<sup>114</sup> Not only does the song's hero come away with neither beef nor ale, indignant at the mockery of Napoleon, but he opines – via a comic misunderstanding – that his own contribution to the war effort, as a pitman, is as worthy of recognition as that of any local dignitary:

Then agyen, what a shem an' a sin!  
Te the Pit Dinner nyen ax'd me in:  
Yet aw work like a T[u]rk,  
Byeth wi' pick, knife, and fork, -  
An' whese mair a *Pittite* nor Cranky?<sup>115</sup>

Discontent only increased as the economic hardships of peace began to tell. In Bolton, Cobbett reported, workers first burnt Napoleon's effigy – and then swiftly repented once French goods flooded the market for their products, ritually restoring the effigy to a position of respect.<sup>116</sup> Symptoms of unrest and disloyalty often incorporated by social historians into a 'Waterloo to Peterloo' narrative were evident in 1814. In Manchester,

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<sup>112</sup> Among Lawler's poems of 1814, all of which ran through numerous editions, are 'Lilliputian Navy!! The R---t's Fleet; or, John Bull at The Serpentine', 'More Kings!', 'The P---e's Jubilee; or R---l Revels!!', 'The R---t's Fair, or, Grand Galante-Show!!', 'The R---l Brood; or, an Illustrious Hen and her Pretty Chickens', 'The R---l Showman, or the R---t's Gala'.

<sup>113</sup> Appendix no.272.

<sup>114</sup> Appendix no.33.

<sup>115</sup> See also Chapter One, p.37.

<sup>116</sup> *CWPR*, 26, no.4 (23 July 1814), p.101.

Michael Wilson's comic song 'Soldier Jack', a parody of 'Soldier Dick', expressed frustration with the tall tales of Peninsular veterans, hinting at tensions caused by a newly-bloated workforce.<sup>117</sup> In protest at unemployment, 7,000 Newcastle seamen pitched a camp at Cullercoats for a month and five days in autumn 1814; 'their organisation and discipline rendered such meetings extremely dangerous', and it took army, navy, and watch combined to dissolve 'the combination' there assembled.<sup>118</sup> The song 'Tyne Cossacks' recorded the event.<sup>119</sup> Nine months later, the government was terrified at the thought of Napoleon coming ashore at Torbay, more afraid of invasion by Napoleon alone, in chains, than they had been in 1803. Would the groundswell of support for the fallen emperor they suspected in 1815 have been less in 1814? Captain Tower of the *Undaunted*, which carried him to Elba, discussed the subject with his much-admired captive. Napoleon is recorded as opining that 'If I went to England the English Government would be afraid of my popularity and would pack me off'.<sup>120</sup> The hero-worship displayed by the seamen of the *Undaunted*, and the gushing testimonies of Britons of all political persuasions who visited him on Elba, suggest this was no empty boast.<sup>121</sup>

In this context, it comes as little surprise that the post-Waterloo song tradition of Chapter One was in evidence during Napoleon's first exile. Few popular productions shared Southey's vindictiveness:

Hide thee from earth's wide rage, a second Cain  
 Condemn'd to live, to brood on English slain,  
 And roam o'er Elba's rocks, a pension'd slave,  
 Till the dark death-worm battens on thy grave.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Appendix no.307.

<sup>118</sup> E. Mackenzie, *A Descriptive and Historical Account of the Town and Country of Newcastle* (2 vols., Newcastle, 1827), i, p.78.

<sup>119</sup> Appendix no.345.

<sup>120</sup> Alger, *Napoleon's British Visitors*, p.302.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.301, 297, 273-296, H. Fortescue, *Memorandum of Two Conversations between the Emperor Napoleon and Hugh Fortescue*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (1823), *passim*, J.M. Thompson, 'Napoleon's Journey to Elba in 1814 Part II. By Sea', *American Historical Review*, 55, no.2 (1950), pp.301-20, N. Campbell, *Napoleon at Fontainebleau and Elba* (1869), *passim*.

<sup>122</sup> Appendix no.146.

Many songs approved of Napoleon's fall, but none shared the exultant, quasi-biblical wrath of the Romantic poets. 'Patent Snuffers Exploded, or, A Hint to the Commissioners at Elba', picked up by *The Champion*, falls between journal poetry and popular song; despite its anti-Napoleonic bent, it is more concerned with jibes at the corn laws, and with making puns in Latin.<sup>123</sup> It even casts aspersions at the Bourbon restorations:

...A patriot Spaniard, I confess,  
Has rather cause to curse than bless  
Your day of deposition.

For then the dastard, monkish thing,  
That dares to call itself a ----, [king]  
Had never prov'd a traitor;  
Nor had those heroes been enslav'd  
Who from one knave their country sav'd  
To give it to a greater.

More personal was 'A Crocodile's Tears: or, the Sighs of Boney' by L.R. Shilling, published at Norwich. Though 'crocodile tears' precludes the audience taking Napoleon's regret seriously, its sorry tale, written from his perspective and beginning 'O hear my sad story of woe', is nevertheless affecting.<sup>124</sup> Similarly, one untitled broadside-cum-poem focused on topical revelations of Napoleon's reception on Elba. Though he is 'the poor elf' and 'the wondrous little man', those diminutives display a kernel of sympathy, epitomised by the final four lines:

Without a wife – without a mother,  
Without a sister, or a brother,  
And even of a friend bereft,  
Poor Nap is to his conscience left.<sup>125</sup>

Though derogatory, the author is making a step from contemporary politics to timeless concerns of estrangement, loss, and regret.

Radical Belfast schoolmaster Hugh McWilliam took this change in emphasis further in 'Fallen Boney', unpublished until 1816.<sup>126</sup> Verses two to four chart Napoleon's career,

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<sup>123</sup> Appendix no.265.

<sup>124</sup> Appendix no.93.

<sup>125</sup> 'On board th' Undaunted he embark'd', Appendix no.253.

from 'great and noble' to 'lawless tyrant'. Verse five draws conclusions from his example, displaying both universal and radical concerns:

But fortune's fickle, so is life,  
They're here today, away tomorrow,  
Since he has lost both crown and wife,  
No wonder he does mourn in sorrow.  
Let Kings not with their subjects play,  
To spill their blood or waste their money,  
Lest they should fall some other day,  
And mourn their fate, as well as Boney.

Yet the final verse professes the author's 'little skill' at politics, concluding:

'Bout great folks I do little care.  
I'll take my glass, and kiss my Annie,  
For I partake of comforts here,  
Unknown to Emperors, Kings, or Boney.

In the furthering of the domestic angle, we see striking parallels with later songs, though the author is against, rather than for, Napoleon. The song is a synthesis of earlier radical pieces, using Napoleonic tyranny to reflect upon Britain, with the everyman concerns that increasingly predominated.

Peace also allowed publication of openly positive pieces. In 'Napoleon's Lamentation' and the semi-disintegrated 'N.B. Bonaparte's Farewell to Paris', we find sympathetic, elegiac songs as pronounced as any from the years after Waterloo.<sup>127</sup> The latter was written by 'R.A.H.' and published by G. Summers of Sunderland: even if the author was reluctant to put his name to a pro-Napoleonic broadside, Summers saw no such difficulty. Both lyrics combine past glories with domestic concerns. The former recalls Austerlitz and Egypt as twin triumphs, and dwells sadly on Moscow and Leipzig, before changing tack -

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<sup>126</sup> Appendix no.121.

<sup>127</sup> Appendix nos. 210, 199.

So it's fare thee well, my royal spouse,  
And offspring great that I adore,

- whilst the latter blames his downfall on betrayal by his army, before turning to the domestic:

It is well known I have a wife,  
Like other Princes ev'n --- [?];  
A lovely Son, a [?] smiling [?] boy...

Both songs prefigure those of 1815 and beyond, for just as many saw the Peace of Amiens as the dawn of a pacific age, Napoleon's exile to Elba was envisaged as permanent. They demonstrate that, in contrast to the elite radical tradition that derided the abdication of 1814 but celebrated the glory of the Hundred Days, popular song culture could be more objective in its sympathies. Waterloo and Napoleon's escape from Elba thus played their part in the evolution, rather than revolution, of this tradition. It is in these events that we find the apotheosis of many themes discussed in these two chapters.

### **1815: Escape!**

What do you think now of my supernatural friend, the emperor? ... Milton's Satan is nothing to him for portentous magnificence – for sublimity of mischief! If that account in the papers be true, of his driving down in his carriage like lightning towards the royal army embattled against him, bare-headed, unguarded, in all the confidence of irresistibility – it is a fact far sublimer than any that fiction has ever invented, and I am not at all surprised at the dumb-founded fascination that seizes people at such daring.<sup>128</sup>

Thus wrote Tommy Moore, in characteristically playful yet elated tones, at news of Napoleon's escape from Elba. Here are the hallmarks – Milton, supernatural powers, weather imagery, subversion – that recur in song tradition. The manner of his return rehabilitated Napoleon among those who, like Byron, had deplored the ignominy of his

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<sup>128</sup> Thomas Moore to Lady Donegal, 27 Mar. 1815, in W.S. Dowden, *The Letters of Thomas Moore* (2 vols., Oxford, 1964), i, pp.355-6.

abdication. Once in Paris, his liberal politics and pacific proclamations did still more to restore the faith of British radicals.<sup>129</sup> For the first time, Napoleon was juxtaposed in close geographic and temporal proximity to the Bourbon alternative, against the backdrop of the Congress of Vienna. Such a staging could not help but favour Napoleon in the eyes of most British observers. Scott wrote to Southey that ‘to hear the nonsense which the people talk in London about the alteration of that man[’]s nature and disposition is enough to make a dog sick.’<sup>130</sup> One of Bamford’s early poems from March 1815, ‘The Retrospection’, contrasts the vainglorious celebrations of the previous year with news of Napoleon’s return, beginning, ‘Ah! where are now our bonny white cockades?’, devoting a verse to ridiculing the 1814 celebrations.<sup>131</sup> Bamford inverts the triumphalism of ‘Boney-burnings’ to imply British cowardice and Napoleonic valour:

Napoleon chained on his stubborn ass,  
 Whilst valiant Cossacks club’d him on the pate,  
 Knowing the figure was inanimate.  
 Ah! one short glance from his keen eagle eye  
 Had made a host so despicable fly,  
 And from the warrior’s face one darkening frown  
 Had scatter’d all the Cossacks of our town

Tommy Moore too returned to this subject, contrasting the ‘calm and easy grandeur’ of the ‘eagle’ Napoleon’s return, with the ‘Royal craven’ who had flown the throne in terror.<sup>132</sup> Lawler (‘Peter Pindar’), fresh from satirising the arbitrary division of Europe at Vienna in *The German Sausages*, produced *Bonaparte in Paris! Or, the Flight of the Bourbons!*, in which Louis is derided as Napoleon’s ‘warming-pan’, keeping the throne warm.<sup>133</sup> The Congress is used to accuse the Allies of hypocrisy for calling Napoleon a

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<sup>129</sup> Semmel, *Napoleon*, p.159.

<sup>130</sup> Cited in Watson, *Romanticism and War*, p.159.

<sup>131</sup> Appendix no.286.

<sup>132</sup> ‘The Fudge Family in Paris’, (Appendix no.130), Kent, *The Poetical Works*, p.319.

<sup>133</sup> C.F. Lawler, ‘The German Sausages; or the Devil to Pay at Congress!’ (1815), idem, ‘Bonaparte in Paris! Or, the Flight of the Bourbons!’ (1815), p.3.

thief, since their own robbery of Europe has proved worse.<sup>134</sup> And Lawler turns loyalist rhetoric on its head, mocking the flight of British visitors from Paris:

Away they scamper, high and low,  
Like children from a bugabo;  
Run, Johnny, run, should Boney meet you,  
The cruel monster'll kill and eat you!

“Boney is coming! Oh! the devil!  
Whoever dreamt of such an evil.  
They say – I shall expire with fright, -  
He will be here to-morrow night.<sup>135</sup>

The absurdity of patriotic vocabulary from 1803-5 is revived to ridicule the cowardice of British polite society: an act directly paralleled in London broadsides by Batchelar's republication of 'The Corsican Drover' under the revised title, 'Boney's Return to Paris'.<sup>136</sup> As discussed above, this song ridiculed Londoners fleeing Paris in panic at the renewal of hostilities after Amiens, with Napoleon as *deus ex machina*. Its revival in 1815 was apt, its comic rhymes and satirical send-up of London stereotypes furthering a reading of Napoleon as a trickster, whose arrival signals a farcical reversal of the status quo. The accompanying etching is positively Saturnalian.

Such was the mood of much of the London public, as caught in two broadsides, one metropolitan, and one unknown in origin. Both came with a woodcut, replete with speech bubbles, illustrating the lyrics. That produced by John Fairburn of Ludgate Hill even bore an advertisement in a footnote for one of 'Peter Pindar's' satires on the Congress of Vienna. Thus these were atypical publications. Yet their lyrics fit the emergent model of Napoleon the anti-hero; a folkloric mischief maker, rather than the respectable hope of radicals. The contrast with the Congress and Louis' flight was instrumental in this, as indicated by the two titles: 'John Bull in alarm; or Boney's escape, and a second

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid., p.22.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., pp.14-15.

<sup>136</sup> Appendix no.51.

deliverance of Europe’ and ‘The bungling tinkers! or Congress of blockheads!’<sup>137</sup> The former song speculates on a pact with the devil – not, as a decade before, out of hatred, but from admiration:

Some think that this wonderful fellow,  
Must sure have Old Nick to assist him,  
For whether they’re sober or mellow,  
The devil a soul can resist him.

But what must make everyone stare,  
And well may the matter alarm ye,  
When the rogue in his chaise and *two pair*,  
*Put to flight the French King and his army!*

The second eschews explicit demonic allusion, though the imagining of Napoleon’s return as a sprite emerging from the hole in ‘Great Europe’s kettle’ is a typical folkloric manifestation of a demon or faerie:

Avast! cried one – the hammers stopped,  
When from *the hole* there nimbly popp’d  
A man, that made them all to start; -  
Who could it be? – *’Twas Bonaparte!*

They scarce believe their eyes and ears,  
He nods and cries – “*Bon jour Messieurs!*  
“I have no time to lose, - *adieu*;  
“I’m off – *le Congress est disout.*”

This engaging, trickster Napoleon is in both cases combined with criticism of British policy. The former song is convinced of allied victory, but only if ‘John Bull *pays the piper*’: Prussians and Russians will succeed if ‘John Bull will *equip and maintain ‘em*’. The latter includes two verses on the greed of Castlereagh at Vienna. These are broadly patriotic news-bearing broadsides that nonetheless portray Napoleon as a charismatic worker of wonders, hoodwinking the greedy monarchs and statesmen at Vienna and in Paris.

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<sup>137</sup> Appendix nos. 163, 66.

## Waterloo

The manner of Napoleon's return did much for his reputation in Britain. Yet the event's currency as a 'moment' was short-lived, absorbed into the grander narrative of the Waterloo campaign. Waterloo instantly achieved, and has long retained, a colossal, mythic status, as tragedy, triumph, the close (or beginning) of a historical epoch, and simply as perhaps *the* definitive land battle of all time.<sup>138</sup> Other battles, even within the Wars, were larger by far, with higher casualties, and certainly Waterloo was no great showcase for tactical genius. Yet its significance, in part in reality but far more importantly in the western imagination, is unparalleled. To meet one's Waterloo remains a standard English idiom. To the British, the meeting of Napoleon and Wellington – akin classically to that of Hannibal and Scipio at Zama – carried especial resonance. For its sustained power in popular song one need only look at ABBA's breakthrough at Eurovision 1974 with 'Waterloo'; for the peculiarly British obsession with the battle, the second series of BBC Radio 4's comedy *Warhorses of Letters*, first aired in late 2012, which revolves around the battle, serves as one of the latest in an incessant string of cultural productions for the past two centuries. No other battle looms so large in the English-language folk tradition. Given this legacy, it is tempting to view Waterloo as exceptional. Yet in many ways, Waterloo exemplifies the themes of the past two chapters. When broken down and examined in terms of song culture, its place becomes both comprehensible and useful.

A precise chronology of songs is impossible. However, a rough separation of songs of Waterloo into those composed in the battle's immediate aftermath; in subsequent months; and in later years, gives us three fairly reliable groups to consider in turn. The first comprises those written by soldiers as well as hacks. These could have a commemorative

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<sup>138</sup> For contemporary perceptions, see M.A. Favret, 'Waterloo and the Romantic Imagination', *Studies in Romanticism*, 43, no.3 (2004), pp.479-82, and S. Semmel, 'Reading the Tangible Past: British Tourism, Collecting, and Memory after Waterloo', *Representations*, 69 (2000), pp. 9-37.

as well as a news-bearing function. The celebratory ‘type’ was exemplified by the song pattern variously known as ‘The Battle of Waterloo’ or ‘The Plains of Waterloo’, of which several distinct variants exist, all set to the meter and presumably (it is only sometimes stated) the tune of ‘A-Hunting We Will Go’.<sup>139</sup> Closely related is ‘With Wellington We’ll Go’.<sup>140</sup> This tune’s rhythms and rhyme scheme appear to have been chosen as the most suitable form for conveying factual information in a digestible manner, while retaining an up-tempo, victorious tone. Association with victories such as Salamanca also recommended it.<sup>141</sup> Though the authors of these variants seem conscious of the unique importance of the battle they relate, the songs are not dissimilar from battle ballads discussed above. Sometimes beginning by specifying the date as the 14<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> of June, they incorporate Quatre Bras (fought on the 16<sup>th</sup>) into the narrative, though in attempting to describe the overall tactical picture, confusion occurs:

Our grape shot flew among them and put them to the route,  
But still those cowardly rascals refused to come out.

When Duke Wellington saw their cowardness he ordered a retreat  
Which orders was comply’d with and his design it was complete<sup>142</sup>

These lines are a muddled attempt to explain the retreat from Quatre Bras to Waterloo – an inevitable failure, given that the lyricist, ‘Samuel Wheeler, trumpeter, in his Majesty’s First or King’s Regiment of Dragoons’, was not privy to Wellington’s strategic considerations. The variants aimed to incorporate key names, in this case, Uxbridge, Ponsonby, and Somerset: as a cavalryman, Wheeler was keen to commemorate generals from his arm of the service.

Estimates of casualties, times of day, and details of specific manoeuvres, dominate the narratives. This variant, sold for a penny by Pitts, featured a large woodcut of the battle,

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<sup>139</sup> E.g. Appendix nos. 19, 21, 22, 275.

<sup>140</sup> Appendix no.373.

<sup>141</sup> Chapters One and above, pp.29-30, 120.

<sup>142</sup> ‘The Battle of Waterloo’, Appendix no.19, excerpt of verses 2-3.

extensively annotated: the aim was to inform, visually as well as aurally. Beyond news-bearing, the emphasis falls upon the sacrifices, exertions, and glory of the British soldiers – though Blücher receives his share of plaudits. Castigation of Napoleon, who does not escape references to bantam cocks, seems incidental: his role in these songs is negligible, subordinated even to his own soldiers.

Although extant broadsides of these variants tend to derive from a London printer, the song entered oral repertoires, even being carried across the Atlantic and preserved for generations by one Scottish veteran.<sup>143</sup> The final verse of this variant is especially intriguing, marking it out as a soldier's song, not disinterested in worldly concerns:

Here's health to our Prince Regent,  
And long may he govern;  
Likewise the Duke of Wellington,  
That noble son of Erin.  
Two years he added to our time  
For pay and pension too.  
And now we are recorded  
As Men of Waterloo.

The claiming of Wellington as Gaelic, and the final four lines, are especially striking in the context of later songs protesting at Wellington's betrayal of his own troops with regard to pensions.<sup>144</sup> This Scottish perspective is taken further in the slightly later composition, 'Sandy and Donald', set to the tune 'The Lass o' Glenshee' and collected from both Glasgow and Shevado, a village just west of Peterhead, Aberdeenshire.<sup>145</sup> The eponymous heroes are troopers in the Scots Greys, a heavy cavalry regiment whose heroic, tragic charge at Waterloo is immortalised in Elizabeth Butler's painting 'Scotland Forever!', which until recently was most famous as the box-art for the board-game *Risk!* The song records the deeds of the regiment, personified by the two heroes, in taking a French eagle and driving back D'Erlon's columns. Such details are rendered colloquial by the style and

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<sup>143</sup> Appendix no.22.

<sup>144</sup> Chapter One, p.39

<sup>145</sup> Appendix no.298.

dialect, which recalls ‘The Twa Emperors, or, Sandy and Nap’.<sup>146</sup> Wellington, and indeed the entire Anglo-Dutch and Prussian armies, go unmentioned, yet Napoleon figures prominently. He is ‘crafty wee Bony’, but he acts ‘courageously’ and is described with affection, his only fault being his inferiority to his Scottish adversaries: at one point, ‘Bony cried out, “Oh those terrible Greys!”’ The song is dedicated to ‘auld Scotland’s glory’, not Britain’s, and is comic rather than heroic. The equality and intimacy of two Scotsmen against Napoleon is common to both several Peninsular songs above, and the songs of Chapter One.

Other immediate productions differed from the news-bearing soldiers’ songs. The ‘Battle of Waterloo’ printed by Batchelar reserved its final verse:

For our brave men who nobly died,  
Let pity’s tear be shed,  
Relieve their hapless widows wants,  
And give their orphans bread.<sup>147</sup>

But this sentiment feels ‘tacked on’ to a triumphalism centred purely on commanders, rather than men, the chorus running:

Brave Wellington, and Blucher’s arm,  
Has made proud Boney yield,  
And after long, fierce, ragin fight,  
To fly the crimson field

The song is uninterested in commemorating the deeds of soldiers, its only ‘facts’ being that the battle begun at 10am, and that:

300 captured cannons show,  
Our victory’s complete;  
While Boney’s eagles crouching low,  
Now Kiss the Regent’s Feet!

This focus on material tokens of victory is highly unusual: most songs emphasise the shocking loss of human life, a matter sidestepped by Batchelar’s writer.

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<sup>146</sup> Above, pp.115-6.

<sup>147</sup> Appendix no.20.

By contrast, ‘The Eighteenth of June’, apparently composed and sung by soldiers on the march from Waterloo to Paris, takes a more personal, empathetic approach.<sup>148</sup> This is matched by the tune associated with the lyric; a sombre ballad in a minor key, its repetitive melody resolving time and again on the dominant minor in a perfect cadence, the effect of which is truly dolorous. The second of its three verses engages with the human dimension, representing Waterloo as tragedy:

You lasses whose sweethearts were yonder, go gaily and buy a black gown,  
A thousand I will lay to a hundred he fell on the eighteenth of June,  
Sixty thousand stout hearted mortals that fell, made an awful paltune            [?]  
Many a sad heart will remember with sorrow the eighteenth of June.

The chorus is more interesting still in its sympathetic depiction of Napoleon’s defeat:

What a sad heart had poor Boney  
To take up instead of a crown  
A canter from Brussels to Paris  
Lamenting the eighteenth of June.

Here the melody complements the lyric, leaving the listener in no doubt: this is empathy, not sarcasm. Rather than concentrating upon either the cost to the common soldier, or the role of the commanders, this song elides the two, including Napoleon among the victims of the battle.

If immediate productions differed in perspective, they shared a focus upon the events of the day itself. Those songs and poems composed upon greater reflection in the later months of 1815 often extend their narratives beyond the physical and temporal confines of the battlefield. ‘Nappy’s Napped’, printed by Batchelar and sung by Mr Sloman at Sadler’s Wells, combines a summary of events with flippant wordplay, extending its story to the entire Hundred Days:

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<sup>148</sup> Appendix no.115.

Ney brought Boney back,  
The Marshals Emperor sound him,  
Louis forc'd to pack,  
Th'Allies all rallied round him;  
Nap didn't care a rush,  
He said for what they'd do, sir,  
And vowed he'd have a *brush*,  
So *brush'd* at Waterloo, sir!

Nappy's napped at last,  
To St. Helena going;  
I hope they'll keep him fast,  
Not let him tricks be shewing;  
Some at his fate repine,  
And wish, the case to alter,  
As he must cross the line,  
They'd make the line a halter.<sup>149</sup>

This facetiousness was perhaps appropriate to a stage entertainment, and its comic infantilisation of Napoleon – ‘*brush'd* at Waterloo’ is a reference to domestic corporal punishment – echoes the loyalist songs of 1810-14 especially. However, such a light-hearted, *en passant* treatment of Waterloo was unusual. Public as well as popular opinion preferred to dwell upon the solemn cost of victory. A farce intended for the stage in September 1815 was forbidden by the Licenser due to its frivolous tone.<sup>150</sup> R. Shorter wrote an entire song, published in the two-penny radical paper *Sherwin's Political Register*, based upon his outrage ‘On Seeing in a List of New Music, *The Waterloo Waltz*’, his point being that the tragedy of Waterloo was far too sombre for a dance of that name ever to be appropriate.<sup>151</sup> More appropriate was Bamford's ‘The Patriot's Hymn’, set to ‘God save the King’, which he specifies as having been written in July 1815 upon hearing the details of Waterloo:

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<sup>149</sup> Appendix no.213.

<sup>150</sup> *The Duke's Coat; or, The Night After Waterloo* (1815), pp.v-vi.

<sup>151</sup> Appendix no.255.

Gory is Europe's plain,  
Whelmed beneath her slain,  
Dreadful to see.  
Bleeding promiscuously,  
Victors and vanquish'd lie,  
Mingled in butchery;  
Let man be free.<sup>152</sup>

Entirely contrary to Bamford in their politics yet equally sombre – or macabre – are two Welsh productions, their titles translated as ‘A new song on the retaking of Bonaparte, together with his sending to St Helena’ and ‘A new song about the success which our soldier had over Bonaparte and his army in France on the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of last June’, written by Ioan Dafydd and Thomas Jones respectively, the former published at Porth Tywyll, Caerfyrddin, and the latter at Trefriw.<sup>153</sup> Just as Bamford uses Waterloo as a spur to universal emancipation, these lengthy Welsh songs present the battle as a spur to greater piety. The latter begins:

Britain! Britain! Great is your success!  
Give the King of heaven the glory!  
It was He Himself – neither man nor angel –  
who caused success to our men of war.

Both Welsh songs are rich in imagery of suffering, dwelling on the plight of soldiers’ families and displaced civilians as well as considering the sacrifice of the combatants. Concerning Napoleon, they are as vindictive and wrathful as ever:

He had deserved to be hung, so it is, so it is,  
without need for judge nor jury, so it is;  
and to have his head struck off on a block  
and be slowly drawn afterwards  
and cut up piece by piece, so it is, so it is,  
and be buried in the pigsty, so it is

Such is the verdict of Dafydd, whilst Jones opines that:

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<sup>152</sup> Appendix no.266.

<sup>153</sup> Appendix nos. 227, 225.

The betrayer of the Isle of Britain  
deserves not a scowl but to have his windpipe broken;  
he has been the cause of the death of myriads  
for twenty years now!

Both writers, though thwarted in these bloodthirsty hopes, find satisfaction in the awful finality of his second exile. This formed the subject of Byron's first major topical effort post-Waterloo. 'Napoleon's Farewell', set to Campbell's 'Wounded Hussar', was swiftly pirated as a broadside, but first appeared in Leigh Hunt's *Examiner* on 30 July.<sup>154</sup> A reference to returns and violets in the third verse has led Moylan to date the broadside to 1814 (Moylan was unaware of Byron's authorship), yet it required the Waterloo campaign to rehabilitate Napoleon in Byron's opinion. This declamatory song focuses upon the relation between the emperor and France itself, a fleeting reference to 'the veteran hearts that were wasted' constituting the only nod to Waterloo's casualties. Indeed, no great poet managed to do the battle justice in the short term. Scott's attempt was the most infamous. Tommy Moore wrote to Mary Godfrey on 6 December 1815 that 'I have read *Walter-loo*, since I heard from you. The battle murdered many, and he has murdered the battle'; Lord Erskine went one better in his verdict on the poem:

Of all who fell, by sabre or by shot,  
Not one fell half so flat as Walter Scott.<sup>155</sup>

Two notable poems were produced by popular songwriters. Bamford's 'Waterloo', not published until 1819 though presumably written earlier, devotes several verses to the fallen soldiers and their dependents, yet his radical aim is not to mourn, but to accuse:

Thy baubles are black gouts of gore,  
Wrung from the soldier slain,  
With countless tears empearled o'er,  
And steep'd in woe and pain.  
Wear them, to England's blushing shame,  
And the dishonour of thy name!<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Appendix no.208.

<sup>155</sup> Dowden, *The Letters*, i, p.378.

<sup>156</sup> Appendix no.359.

Bamford eschews names, yet it is the ‘gallant Gaul’ who is the ‘noble’, defeated hero of his poem; the Prussian is a ‘phrenzied’ ‘daemon’; the Bourbon king ‘a BEAST’; priests and kings are scorned, and most damning of all,

Hell, in her darkness, triumph’d then,  
For freedom fell by Englishmen!

Not content with this politicised production, Bamford also wrote ‘The Dying Dragoon’, which eschews the very name ‘Waterloo’, referring to the battle as ‘Mount St John’s too dearly purchas’d day’ – Mont St. Jean was the French name for the battle.<sup>157</sup> The poem has strong echoes of Campbell’s ‘The Wounded Hussar’, and concentrates on the sentimental plight of one fallen soldier and his loved ones. Napoleon receives a mention as ‘the mighty chief that’s now afar’. Here, as in ‘The Eighteenth of June’, Napoleon’s personal fate is combined with a central focus upon ordinary participants: another link in the chain of the empathetic song tradition.

If Bamford’s ‘Waterloo’ was straightforward in its polemicism, the ‘Waterloo’ by Thomas Dibdin was anything but.<sup>158</sup> Written early in the reign of William IV, its imagery is classical and antiquarian, eliding the battle with William’s coronation of 1831 in an apparent bid to bestow the glory of the victory upon the new monarch. Napoleon receives one mention as ‘Earth’s great Despoiler’. Its lofty tones and dense structure admit of no intercourse with popular song; it is most notable for its emphasis upon memorials and symbols of the victory, and thus of especial interest in conjunction with Semmel’s article upon polite ways of remembering the battle.<sup>159</sup>

Dibdin’s poem was prompted by a specific event: the coronation of William IV. However, those songs of Waterloo which appeared in years subsequent to the battle itself avoided temporal specifics, incorporating the battle into a centuries-old tradition of songs

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<sup>157</sup> Appendix no.112.

<sup>158</sup> Appendix no.360.

<sup>159</sup> Semmel, ‘Reading the Tangible Past’, pp. 9-37.

and stories about lovers returned – or failing to return – from the wars. These songs were widespread across Britain: Pitts carried ‘Elwina of Waterloo’, Thomas Wilson of Manchester wrote ‘Young Edward Slain at Waterloo’ to the tune of ‘Garland of Love’, and at least two entirely distinct ‘The Plains of Waterloo’ were current in Ireland.<sup>160</sup> ‘Elwina’ and the first ‘The Plains of Waterloo’ appear to have become standards in the later nineteenth century, judging by the frequency with which they appear in major broadside collections. They contain only faint traces of politics; all four are highly sentimental and concerned with the affairs of common combatants and their lovers, who are usually named – Elwina and the narrator; Edward and Susan; and Willie Reilly and Nancy, in the first three of these four songs. The second ‘The Plains of Waterloo’ does not name its central pair. More remarkably, the fallen Irish soldier fought *for* Napoleon:

When Ireland fell and traitors rowed, his rambles first begun  
To Bonaparte he was faithful and he wore the soldiers’ blue.

Interestingly, he also fights ‘for our land’: Ireland. Yet this radical Irish perspective is incidental to the central tragedy of the soldier’s death and his lover’s subsequent restless wanderings. Elsewhere, lockets, tokens, and flowers abound: these are typical popular songs of romance, imbued with the most resonant context available to popular writers and audiences: Waterloo. Thus the lasting popular incarnation of Waterloo was not as triumph at all, but as tragedy – and, therefore, was wholly commensurate with sympathetic responses to Napoleon’s own plight.

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<sup>160</sup> Appendix nos. 117, 381, 275-6.

## Conclusions

If we relate the findings of the last two chapters to our original question, we find that Gammon has been building upon a false premise: there was no clear discrepancy between the contemporary and post-war body of songs on Napoleon, but rather a continuum of divergent, evolving strands. Some may be traced across our entire period; others were more peculiar to certain circumstances. The necessary evolution of loyalist songs on Napoleon, from the Anglo-centric jingoism of Chapter Two, to the purely comic, domestic treatments of the emperor in later years, fed into the increasingly prevalent ‘folk anti-hero’ figuring, first as trickster and then as tragic everyman. The human cost of the Wars, from the Peninsular and especially from Waterloo, stimulated a non-patriotic popular song culture dwelling upon loss and suffering. This culture was inherently receptive to empathetic readings of Napoleon. My argument, in seeking to make judgements about reception or popularity, and to privilege the importance of some song types over others as indicative of popular opinion, will be further strengthened by placing these songs, now they have been thoroughly analysed, in their lived context: that of composition, distribution, performance, and audience expectation.

## Part II: Song

## Chapter Four

### Song I: Composers and Compositors

‘It goes like this: the fourth, the fifth  
The minor fall and the major lift...’  
- Leonard Cohen<sup>1</sup>

The next three chapters add human agency to popular song. In so doing, Barrell’s enjoinder, echoed by many political historians, is taken to heart: if we are to pursue the political in culture, we must engage with the underlying cultural processes, and – in this instance – the musicological theory around them.<sup>2</sup> This chapter takes as its subject those persons primarily involved in the production of songs: songwriters and printers/publishers. Chapters Five and Six deal with the act of consumption, in the form of performers and audiences. There is necessarily some overlap: some publishers were songwriters, and many songwriters were also performers. However, a clearer argument may be advanced by considering the four roles as conceptually separate. Even if one individual played as many as three of the parts, they would be acted out consecutively, not concurrently. We begin, logically, with songwriters, moving from creation to consumption (in the full knowledge that every performance was also an act of *recreation* on the part of both singer and audience). An articulation of writers’ circumstances, motivations, and methods, will help situate the songs in their lived environments, allowing a deeper appreciation of their merits and impact. In so doing, the historical agency of numerous minor and obscure figures will be brought to light, deepening our knowledge of popular culture and society in the period.

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Hallelujah’, *Various Positions*, track 5 (Columbia CD 1984).

<sup>2</sup> Chapter One, p.7.

## Songwriters

As with any historical source, the songs in Part I are illuminated by knowledge of the motives and circumstances of their writers. We have encountered songwriters engaging with a popular audience from widely different backgrounds, from Samuel Bamford – a common weaver – to Professor Plumptre, via Tyneside tradesmen and professional entertainers. Tommy Moore turned down a knighthood; many may have wondered why Charles Dibdin was not offered one. Hannah More must be ranked amongst the self-made, yet accorded a greater degree of respectability than was usually commensurate with that status. Thus, no clear correlation may be observed between social status and ideology. Chapters Two and Three have included loyalist compositions deriving from the lowest rungs of society; one of the most powerful pro-Napoleonic songs was written by Lord Byron. Byron's example serves to remind us that an individual writer's position could change and even oscillate; Cobbett is another case in point. Moreover, Cobbett was always actively engaged with popular politics, whilst Byron wrote for other reasons, his songs entering our milieu via printers and pirates. Nor was one's social position always fixed, as the rise of Moore, Hogg or Alexander Wilson (1766-1813) demonstrates.<sup>3</sup> Thus a writer's background might not tell us much. However, status becomes pertinent when we turn to a more fruitful field: that of a writer's motivation.

Philp, discussing Reeves' Association, argues convincingly that many of those who contributed songs and other material were, on some level, seeking a degree of social respectability.<sup>4</sup> Though amateur writers might hail from lowly backgrounds, they sought through participation to be included in a dutiful, loyalist public sphere. Letters accompanying submissions are full of self-justifying discourse in which the distinction

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<sup>3</sup> F.N. Egerton, 'Wilson, Alexander (1766–1813)', *ODNB*, at [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29634](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29634), accessed 14 Aug. 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Philp, 'Vulgar Conservatism', p.52.

between the ‘vulgar’ language necessary for a plebeian audience, and that which the authors might ordinarily employ, is painstakingly made clear. A ‘polite’ prejudice against writers of street ballads certainly existed in the London press. The *European Magazine* declared that ‘There are few writers more frequent or more presumptuous in their intrusions on the public than, we know not what to call them, versifiers, rhymists, metre-ballad mongers, [anything] you will but poets.’<sup>5</sup> The *Scourge* went further. ‘It scarcely need be mentioned, that these songs are generally composed by those who have been initiated in all the slang, filthiness, and corruption, which that seat of vice, St. Giles, can produce.’<sup>6</sup> Caulfield’s *Blackguardiana* defined such persons as ‘CHAUNTER CULLS, Grub-street writers, who compose songs, carols, &c. for ballad singers, (*cant*)’.<sup>7</sup> Even in Cork, one old bookseller defined ‘the composer of common ballads’ as belonging to ‘the lowest grade’ of Grub Street writers.<sup>8</sup> Thus Reeves’ contributing songwriters, in their exculpatory letters, were distancing themselves from both the masses and the stereotypical ‘chaunter cull’, bidding for conceptual membership of a responsible club of elites. This attitude persisted beyond 1793, reflecting broader societal positions: by treating loyalist songwriting as a patriotic duty akin to parish charity, even the humblest could claim a share of Britannia’s glory. J. Tye, author of a Birmingham song collection, laboured the point in claiming that his *Loyal Songster, Dedicated to the Birmingham Loyal Associated Corps of Infantry* possessed ‘no other recommendation than novelty and loyalty.’<sup>9</sup> In discussing his motivation, Tye eventually found some synonyms: ‘I have felt a pride in promoting unanimity and good order in the above corps.’<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> ‘G.F.M.’, *European Magazine*, 71 (May 1817), p.434.

<sup>6</sup> ‘C.R.-S.’, *Scourge, or, Literary, theatrical, and miscellaneous magazine*, 7 (May 1814), pp.378-9.

<sup>7</sup> J. Caulfield, *Blackguardiana: or, a dictionary of rogues* (c.1793), p.54.

<sup>8</sup> W. West, *Fifty Years’ Recollections of an Old Bookseller* (Cork, 1835), p.68.

<sup>9</sup> J. Tye, *The Loyal Songster* (Birmingham, 1799), p.i.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. ii.

One natural consequence of this was the ‘us and them’ mentality manifest in much loyalist songwriting, where even the most vulgar appeals to unity carried the sheen of condescension, clear in songs such as ‘The Ploughman’s Ditty: Being an answer to that foolish question, “what have the poor to lose?”’<sup>11</sup> Either Hannah More, as Robyn Ganey states, or likelier More’s sister Patty, articulated this attitude thus:

They [the poor] have so little common sense, and so little sensibility, that we are obliged to beat into their heads continually the good we are doing them; and endeavouring to press upon them, with all our might, the advantages they derive from us.<sup>12</sup>

This mentality could prove counterproductive.<sup>13</sup> At least in part, this fundamental flaw in the loyalist campaign stemmed from self-conscious positioning by writers as benevolent patricians, viewing their actions as moral or political rather than contributions to cultural life.

Any cachet to be gained stemmed from the loyalist credentials of a composition, with the logical result that politically-motivated songwriters were the likeliest to be amateurs, with no previous experience of the form. Morfitt, an amateur in Birmingham, took up his pen in 1803 because, faced with ‘this tremendous crisis’, he could ‘no longer be silent’.<sup>14</sup> Similar amateur effusions flooded the market. Moreover, amateurs might be motivated to write politicised songs for baser motives. Veteran radical John Cartwright recorded that one publisher had advertised a prize of twenty guineas for a loyalist songwriting competition, and received a dozen entries.<sup>15</sup> As seen in Chapter Three, Edward Humble prefaced an advertisement for his lottery with a loyalist account of Wellington’s recent victories.<sup>16</sup> J. Allin, a Birmingham draper, composed a typical anti-invasion broadside

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<sup>11</sup> Appendix no.277, Chapter Two, pp.50-51.

<sup>12</sup> Cited in R. Ganey, *Songs of Protest, Songs of Love* (Manchester, 2009), p.205.

<sup>13</sup> Chapter Six, pp.244-5.

<sup>14</sup> J. Morfitt, *The British Tocsin; or, The War with France Justified* (Birmingham, 1803), p.1.

<sup>15</sup> J. Cartwright, *England’s Aegis; or, The Military Energies of the Constitution*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (2 vols., 1806), i, p.83.

<sup>16</sup> Chapter Three, p.121.

simply to advertise his 'Cheap Clothes and York Shoe Warehouse', the address of which featured prominently at the song's head.<sup>17</sup> The profit motive could hold true for amateur loyalists as well as professional songwriters.

Whilst 'amateur' is of obvious utility, 'professional' is somewhat limited in this context: few of our writers beyond the Dibdins and Moore technically qualify. It might be better to extend the category to those who frequently wrote songs *in general*, rather than engaging purely with this political question. This is not to imply that they were necessarily disinterested when they did address politics. Bamford, for one, often admits his radical motives. Recalling the composition of his 'Lancashire Hymn', he writes:

I often said to my companions; 'observe our neighbours, the Church-folks, - the Methodists, - and the Ranters, - what charms they add to their religious assemblages by the introduction of vocal music. Why has such an important lesson remained unobserved by us? Why should not we add music, and heart-inspiring song to our meetings?'<sup>18</sup>

In his very first publication, he calls himself 'one of old Burke's pigs', and introduces the work thus:

The Author presents this little Book to the Public, hoping that it may prove, in some degree, interesting. That the sentiments of Liberty which it contains may arouse a corresponding feeling in the bosoms of his Countrymen.<sup>19</sup>

Bamford differed from the amateur loyalists above in his wider experience of songwriting; political pieces formed a small part of a wider repertoire. Bamford and his ilk, by participating more broadly and deeply in song culture, possessed greater credibility and knowledge of their subject than partisan amateurs. William Thom (c.1798-1848), a weaver from Inverury, links the importance of understanding song to the act of composition: 'It was not enough that we merely chaunted, and listened; but some more ambitious, or idle if

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<sup>17</sup> Langford, *A Century*, ii, p.267.

<sup>18</sup> Bamford, *Passages*, p.123.

<sup>19</sup> Idem, *The Weaver Boy; or, Miscellaneous Poetry* (Manchester, 1819), p.2.

you will, they in time would try a self-conceived song.<sup>20</sup> He lists his own influences – Byron, Moore, Hogg, Burns, and above all Tannahill – and emphasises the importance of existing songs to the writing of new ones with a weaving metaphor: ‘some waxed bold...groping amidst the material around and stringing it up, ventured on a home-made lilt.’<sup>21</sup> Inspiration and long practice marked out such ‘authentic’ songwriters, from Hogg to Clare, and if they left memoirs, they were quick to acknowledge this debt, locating themselves within an established tradition.<sup>22</sup>

The impression left by memoirs such as Thom’s is that writers composed because they could not help it; the songs were inside them and had to be let out.<sup>23</sup> Although it is easy to bracket these testimonies as artistic self-fashioning after the fact by writers conscious of their public image, the creative impulse should not be wholly disregarded. Yet other motivations were always present. This applies equally to the profit motive and the patriotic impulse. Welsh singer-songwriters openly admitted their desire for remuneration in even the most pious of loyalist ballads. This might be expressed humbly, as in George Stephens’ verse:

Three small half-farthings is my tribute  
before the whole world in public;  
if they are accepted (this is the truth)  
it will be more in my mind than a piece of land.<sup>24</sup>

- or more assertively, as by Ioan Dafydd:

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<sup>20</sup> W. Thom, *Rhymes and Recollections of a Hand-Loom Weaver*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (1845), p.16. S. Roberts, ‘Thom, William (1798?–1848)’, *ODNB*, at [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27194](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27194), accessed 14 Aug. 2013.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.13-14, 15.

<sup>22</sup> J. Hogg, *The Mountain Bard, Consisting of Legendary Ballads and Tales* (Edinburgh, 1821), pp.xii-xvii; Tibble & Tibble, *The Prose*, p.30.

<sup>23</sup> See also e.g. D. Love, *The Life, Adventures, and Experience, of David Love*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (Nottingham, 1824), pp.14-15.

<sup>24</sup> ‘A Song of praise to the volunteers of the three counties’, Appendix no.317.

I must now conclude,  
lest I should tire anyone by singing,  
by asking those of all ages  
to give a single penny swiftly  
for the little piece of paper,  
and to respect it while reading it...  
Let no one sell this song without the author's permission.<sup>25</sup>

Even pious loyalist songwriters had to eat: unlike Reeves' contributors, this was their livelihood. Those soldiers who penned proud songs of Waterloo were presumably, in offering them to London printers, also keen for recognition on a cash basis. Charles Dibdin the Elder managed to invert this consideration in his *Life*, capitalising on the patriotic sentiments of 1803:

It was not enough...merely to write love-songs, pastorals, invocations to Bacchus, to sing the pleasures of the chase, or be a sonnet monger...It was necessary to go beyond what had been already done, and in particular to give my labours a decided character... and therefore as a prominent feature in my labours, I sung those heroes who are the natural bulwark of their country...I thought therefore the subject honourable, and commendable.<sup>26</sup>

Though his phrasing is disingenuous, and though he operated under Pitt's duress for a stipend, we may readily believe Dibdin's motives also to have been essentially patriotic. Yet whatever his true feelings, Dibdin was universally acknowledged as a master of his craft. The real utility of analysing motivation in this context is in its bearing on the art of songwriting itself.

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<sup>25</sup> 'A song of encouragement', Appendix no.315.

<sup>26</sup> Dibdin, *The Professional Life*, i, pp.xxi-ii.

## Songwriting: Music

The act of songwriting, along with performance and reception, lies at the centre of this thesis. Historicised appreciation of the issues involved adds depth to the evidence of the songs under discussion. Much of this revolves around a single consideration: ‘appropriateness’. Was a song appropriate for its audience and the circumstances of its performance? Were the decisions taken in its composition appropriate for the conveying of its intended message? These questions let us judge a song’s merits without overly-subjective value judgements. As the construction of a song involves two essential components – music and lyrics – these shall be taken in turn, beginning with the musical element.

‘I was told, on all hands, that it was not the words that ever “made a ballad, but the subject; and, more than the subject, - the chorus; and, far more than either, - *the tune!*”’<sup>27</sup> Thus wrote social reformer Henry Mayhew, subsequent to his research among (Victorian) ballad singers. ‘To select a tune for a ballad, however, is a matter of deep deliberation.’<sup>28</sup> When composing a song during the Napoleonic Wars, the choice of tune was critical, yet it was often neglected by writers. The majority of broadsides were published without a specified tune; loyalist contributors to magazines or associations would often submit ‘songs’ that were technically poems. This relative lack of evidence of tunes, and their implied lack of import, has led to disagreement among academics on the necessity of the musical component. Connell and Leask agree with Mayhew: ‘Melodic structure was as important in securing the popularity and currency of a song as its words, and in the case of national songs it was often the distinguishing feature.’<sup>29</sup> Yet no less an authority than David Atkinson writes:

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<sup>27</sup> H. Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (2 vols., New York, 1968), i, p.275.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, i, p.275.

<sup>29</sup> Connell & Leask, *Romanticism*, p.7.

the fact that singers often associate the same or very similar sets of words with quite different tunes, and vice versa, does mean that in practice the semantics of the words and the music can be separated, and that for practical purposes they can be legitimately studied on their own, notwithstanding their recombination into a unified whole when the song is sung<sup>30</sup>

Anthony Bennett goes so far as to suggest that, when a broadside did not specify a tune, it might not be intended to be sung.<sup>31</sup> I would demur at this, preferring Bennett's subsequent proposition that this ambiguity reflected a common truth: a song's writer rarely had total control over the tune performed. He identifies all four actors in song culture as potential arbiters of melody: writer, printer, performer and purchaser.<sup>32</sup> This was true when a lyric matched a flexible meter: those written for distinctive meters, from 'God save the King' to 'The House that Jack Built', were resistant to melodic reappropriation. We must also be alert to the possibility that 'both the words and the tune of any given song are liable to change, even between two performances of the same song by the same singer'.<sup>33</sup> A singer might embellish or simplify, misremember, or transpose challenging notes to a pitch more conducive to their own range. These phenomena will be discussed below. For now, we are concerned with the tunes writers *did* specify.

'Specify' is a strange word to employ. Yet it reflects the reality that very few songwriters in this context were active composers of music. Most new melodies were written for polite, not popular, audiences, and their appropriation by plebeian audiences, where it occurred, was not due to the songwriter.<sup>34</sup> This polite/popular creative division was not absolute. Moore and the Dibdins frequently composed melodies to their own lyrics, with Moore allegedly expressing 'anguish' upon seeing his lyrics printed devoid of

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<sup>30</sup> D. Atkinson, *The English Traditional Ballad: Theory, Method and Practice* (Aldershot, 2002), p.x.

<sup>31</sup> A. Bennett, 'Sources of Popular Song in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain: Problems and Methods of Research', *Popular Music*, 2 (1982), p.77.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.77-8.

<sup>33</sup> A.C. Rouse, *The Remunerated Vernacular Singer: From Medieval England to the Post-War Revival* (Frankfurt am Main, 2005), p.28.

<sup>34</sup> Chapter Six, pp.256-8.

notation.<sup>35</sup> Some working-class singer-songwriters appear to have done the same.<sup>36</sup> We know that in Birmingham in 1803, ‘Mr. Joseph Harris supplied both words and music to a song called “John Bull”’.<sup>37</sup> Other lyricists employed named composers to set their works to music.<sup>38</sup> We have encountered Cartwright’s allusion to a composition competition:

As patriotic songs can produce little effect unless, by the enchanting sweetness and animating strains of music, they captivate the public taste, and touch the springs of national enthusiasm, the publisher of the first edition...advertised a prize of twenty guineas...for the best musical composition to which the foregoing ballad might be sung<sup>39</sup>

Yet these were exceptional cases. More infuriatingly still, even the most literate composers, ready to discuss lyrics or their relations with a publisher, say nothing of composition. The most we have from Moore is his contemplation of a prospective song, and the importance of its melody: ‘I shall write at the other side some words, which I think, with a gay and elegant air, might be made popular’.<sup>40</sup> Perhaps it is the old chestnut that writing about music is like dancing about architecture. Whatever the reason, we have no evidence concerning the craft of melodic composition in popular music, and must examine the properties of a tune as written, rather than the process of writing.

The rarity of original composition is hard to appreciate from a 21<sup>st</sup>-century perspective. In modern pop and indeed even folk music, tunes and lyrics are effectively indivisible, and new songs are written from scratch, whilst covers are new interpretations of complete existing songs. Exceptions are usually comic parodies, trading on the dissonance between the original tune’s associations and the newly-composed lyric. ‘Weird Al’ Yankovic is the most prominent such parodist, whilst I cannot listen to Chopin’s ‘Heroic Polonaise’

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<sup>35</sup> C. Kent (ed.), *The Poetical Works of Thomas Moore* (1952), p.481.

<sup>36</sup> None write specifically of tunes, so the case is always hard to judge. David Love, for example, lays much stress on his original compositions, yet does not discuss melody. See Love, *The Life, Adventures, and Experience*, pp.14-16, 32-3, 38.

<sup>37</sup> Langford, *A Century*, ii, p.290.

<sup>38</sup> E.g. Plumptre, *A Collection*, p.29; R. Anderson, *The Poetical Works of Robert Anderson* (2 vols., Carlisle, 1820), i, p.xxv; T. Holcroft, *Memoirs of the Late Thomas Holcroft, Written by Himself* (3 vols., 1816), i, pp.280-1.

<sup>39</sup> Cartwright, *England’s Aegis*, p.83.

<sup>40</sup> Thomas Moore to James Power, 13 Aug. 1812, in Dowden, *The Letters*, i, p.204.

without John Cleese's superimposed lyric 'Oliver Cromwell' mentally intruding.<sup>41</sup> It is this practice that was the most common method of popular songwriting in our period, trading on associations beyond the comic to achieve diverse emotional and political resonances. Historians have therefore focused on tunes as carriers of contestable ideology.<sup>42</sup> This conceptualisation of tunes plays to the strengths of the historian above those of the musicologist:

an understanding of the meanings created by the musical aspects of songs from the past is subject to the same difficulties of recovery and interpretation as textual meaning; such meanings are cultural and contextual... It is cultural in that it has a place in the web of meanings that cultures create and in the way it relates to cultural norms and values<sup>43</sup>

Those less immersed in song culture than Gammon might be happy to leave an analysis of tunes here: it enables the historian to contextualise a lyric with a melodic signifier. If the given tune is 'God save the King', then either the song's loyalist credentials are affirmed if the lyric is straight, or it is labelled 'contested' or 'ironic' if the lyric is subversive. This appreciation of familiar tunes as bearers of meaning is valuable – further instances have already been discussed above.<sup>44</sup> However, this conceptualisation is both problematic, and limiting.

In employing a tune, a writer was doing more than lending a lyric a set of associations; besides ideology, tunes carried expectations of genre, mood, delivery. Tempo, key, and melodic structure made a tune lively or sombre, comic or tragic. Alan Lomax writes persuasively on the constraints imposed upon a song by its tune:

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<sup>41</sup> Monty Python, 'Oliver Cromwell', *Monty Python Sings*, track 5 (Virgin CD, 1989).

<sup>42</sup> E.g. V. Gammon, 'Problems of Method in the Historical Study of Popular Music', in D. Horn & P. Tagg (eds.), *Popular Music Perspectives: Papers from The First International Conference On Popular Music Research, Amsterdam, June 1981* (Göteborg & Exeter, 1982), p.24; Philp, *Resisting Napoleon*, pp.173, 175; K. Whelan, 'The United Irishmen, the Enlightenment and Popular Culture', in D. Dickson *et al.* (eds.), *The United Irishmen: Republicanism, Radicalism and Rebellion* (Dublin, 1993), p.283.

<sup>43</sup> V. Gammon, *Desire, Drink and Death in English Folk and Vernacular Song, 1600-1900* (Aldershot, 2008), p.8.

<sup>44</sup> Chapter One, pp.29-30.

the formalities of melody and meter tend to limit the choice of the singer and song maker to a set of stock phrases, devices, and poetic forms... These brief bits of discourse, linked tightly together by the inexorable demands of tempo, severely limit the input of text. Further restrictions are imposed by the other redundancy features present, such as melody, rhythm, and phonotactic structure.<sup>45</sup>

A well-matched tune could elevate a lyric. Clever dissonance of tune and lyric could create comedy or satire. But a clumsy match of tune and lyric ruined the song.

Of these three possibilities, the second was rarest. Bamford's 'The Patriot's Hymn' was politically subversive in appropriating, as others had done before, 'God save the King', to a radical end. Yet his use of the tune was musically 'straight', not dissonant, as his own lyrics were appropriately strident and grim; in a word, anthemic. Attempts by loyalists to use 'Rule, Britannia!' as a setting for devotional lyrics met with contrasting success on two occasions.<sup>46</sup> Yet the attempts were made because the music, though written for a Masque in 1740, would not sound out of place in a church service. The volunteer regiment that succeeded in adapting the tune employed it in praise of Emmanuel: and indeed its thundering chorus, sung in unison, is similar in tone and effect to that of 'O come, O come, Emmanuel', the traditional advent hymn. Songwriters usually strove to be appropriate, rather than to achieve comic dissonance. The practice was not wholly unknown. A London novel of 1797 features a ballad singer admonished for his bathetic irreverence:

The clerk of the parish sent me word yesterday, that understanding I sung my ballad to a psalm-tune, he let me know, that I must change my note directly, [and] ordered me to make use of an old, blackguard tune, which he sent me, the vulgar stupidity of which blunts the edge of the ridicule<sup>47</sup>

Among our songs, only two instances stand out. 'Bob Cranky's Adieu', possibly written by John Selkirk, set coarse, bathetic Geordie dialect to the grandiose strains of Dibdin's 'Soldier's Adieu', sending up the martial ardour of both the original tune and the local

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<sup>45</sup> A. Lomax, *Folk Song Style and Culture* (Washington, 1968), p.275.

<sup>46</sup> 'The Celebrated Ode', p.230; Cooper, *The Life*, p.46.

<sup>47</sup> C. Johnstone, *Chrysal: or, the adventures of a guinea* (3 vols., c.1797) ii, p.12.

volunteers personified by Cranky.<sup>48</sup> Use of ‘The House that Jack Built’ as a tune for a satire on the Battle of Leipzig capitalised on the opposite melodic register. By matching the melodic naivety of a nursery rhyme to a lyric about military mishap, the unknown loyalist writer hit the farcical, infantilising note that characterised so many songs about Napoleon in 1810-14.<sup>49</sup>

These two exceptions aside, tunes were either well- or, very often, ill-matched. Too much store has been set by one letter to Reeves in 1792, opining that ‘any thing written... to an Old English tune... made a more fixed Impression on the Minds of the Younger and Lower Class of People, than any written in Prose’.<sup>50</sup> This has been taken to imply that loyalists mastered the popular song market through judicious use of appropriate old tunes. They did not. As is clear from the preceding chapters, the loyalist preference was for just three tunes in particular: ‘God save the King’, ‘Rule, Britannia!’, and ‘Hearts of Oak’. Other longstanding anthems were occasionally employed, such as ‘Britons, Strike Home!’, composed by Purcell in 1695. In 1808, *The Satirist* discussed this tendency.

[T]here never was... a nation more zealously attached to its ODES, of all sorts, than Britain. [This is] to be attributed [to] that inflexible spirit of loyalty, of valour, of clemency, and of patriotism, that blazes so intensely in the bosoms even of our most illiterate and most thoughtless vulgar... “God save the king,” “Britons strike home,” “Conquer to save,” and “Rule Britannia,” are compositions which deservedly claim the lead<sup>51</sup>

The author’s following comments affirm the emotional currency of these tunes:

Never shall I forget that night when news of Nelson’s *victory of the Nile* reached us. I was at Drury-lane, and the theatre was crowded. These *four* songs were alone called for and sung. I exulted as much at thus witnessing the sublimity of the national feelings, thus wound up to the highest pitch of enthusiasm, as my high-souled countrymen themselves could possibly exult at this recent and astonishing accession to their before unparalleled renown. It was, truly, the *national triumph* of MIND.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Appendix no.32.

<sup>49</sup> Chapter Three, pp.107-11.

<sup>50</sup> Cited in e.g. Palmer, *The Sound of History*, pp.16-17.

<sup>51</sup> *Satirist*, 8 (May 1808), p.241.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p.241.

The potency of an anthemic tune in such a context cannot be denied. Yet these strengths were also restrictions. A rousing, communal ode was perfect for a crowded theatre on a night of celebration. But it was a hopeless tune type for more common popular contexts; solo performance by a reedy-throated street singer, or as an aid to work or recreation. The theatre, the parade-ground, and the public house – if enough likeminded revellers were present – were the three suitable spaces for anthemic performances. These issues will be dealt with at greater length in the following chapters. For now it is important to note that, though loyalist broadsides dominated the popular song market, the customary tunes specified by these broadsides severely restricted their scope for performance. Wittingly or no, in specifying a tune, a songwriter was prescribing an appropriate context.

This overwhelming anthemic propensity helps explain the ubiquity and popularity among loyalists of the songs of Charles Dibdin the Elder – the lyrics of which, it must be remembered, evinced a positive, non-pejorative brand of patriotism.<sup>53</sup> Though he was a dab hand at the stirring ode, Dibdin's prolific melodic output ranged across most genres of popular song; comic and tragic, epic and bathetic. Pure talent notwithstanding, his dominance in this sphere may be ascribed to his capacity for melodic variation, and his ability to pair a lyric with an appropriate tune. As he wrote in his *Life*,

The music must be sorted to the mode of expression as well as the sentiment itself; and thus, there must be a kind of give and take accordance between the music and the words, which is indispensibly [*sic.*] necessary to heighten the effect of both.<sup>54</sup>

Amateur loyalist songwriters lacked this facility. For every rare success, such as 'Lord Wellington Forever!' and its use of the tune 'The Brags of Washington' – a song outside the loyalist canon in its conditional patriotism and lack of nationalism, most plausibly

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<sup>53</sup> Chapter Two, pp.82-4.

<sup>54</sup> Dibdin, *The Professional Life*, i, pp.xxiii-iv.

written by a professional hack – we find many examples of failure: ill-matched tunes, inappropriate to their lyrics.<sup>55</sup>

More's 'A King or a Consul?' specified its tune (and refrain) as 'Derry Down'.<sup>56</sup> This presents problems, as there was no consensus on which tune was meant, the words being a common 'scat' chorus designed to imitate an instrumental accompaniment. Two likely candidates in 1799 were 'The King and Lord Abbot', with the alternative title of 'Derry Down' (Roud no.302), and 'The Keeper' (Roud no.1519). Neither fits. But in 1817, William Hone noted that 'a ballad is hawked about the streets, written by Miss HANNAH MORE, to the tune of "a cobbler there was, and he liv'd in a stall," describing its lyrics as 'the dull lying consolation offered to the half-starved and the miserable.'<sup>57</sup> 'A Cobbler There Was' has a 'derry down' chorus, and most verses scan. Eighteen years later, then, More had learnt to title her adaptations correctly – only to incur Hone's predictable wrath. The original, a tragicomic love song, was popular due to its personal, emotive narrative, and hardly fit for either a hectoring, didactic political appropriation as 'A King or a Consul?', or for More's later attempt to downplay the effects of economic depression.

The anonymous broadside 'Boney's Degradation', printed by Jennings, displays the same failing.<sup>58</sup> Its tune was 'Maggie Lauder' (Roud no.5625) – a seventeenth-century comic song of Scottish origin, the original lyric of which was a bawdy narrative about a buxom girl. 'Maggie Lauder' enjoyed considerable popularity at the time; it was an up-tempo, infectious tune with an undemanding range, set in a jolly major key. The lyricist does better than More, telling a narrative rather than delivering a sermon. Yet his choice of subject – the retreat from Moscow – proves too demanding for his powers. His lyric does not scan with the tune. He assumes a chorus – 'Sing, tal, lal, lal, &c.' – where none exists;

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<sup>55</sup> Appendix no.183.

<sup>56</sup> Appendix no.169.

<sup>57</sup> W. Hone, *The Reformists' Register and Weekly Commentary* (1817), pp.391-2.

<sup>58</sup> Appendix no.52.

Maggie Lauder consists only of verses. The greatest problem lies in the tune's tempo and complexity: even slowed right down (which would ruin its merits), the notes are too clustered, making tongue-twisters from the detailed commentary on events in Russia. Since his lyric lacks intrinsic comedy, the writer has sought to enliven his words by introducing additional internal rhymes in every odd-numbered line. In another song this could have worked, but here it simply makes rendition doubly difficult. The result, when performed, is incomprehensible to the casual listener – as should be apparent from the recorded version in this thesis. The attempt is a brave one, but 'Boney's Degradation' is a case of a fine tune, and a serviceable lyric, combining to form a failure of a song.

At least the use of 'Maggie Lauder' was a breath of fresh air amongst Jennings' loyalist output. Audiences of the day responded well to 'novelty' in a tune – the word itself is repeatedly used to recommend a song by both listeners and writers.<sup>59</sup> Many a broadside's title included the boast, 'A New Song', from 'A King or a Consul?' to 'Isle of St Helena'. Though the songs we have documented expressing subaltern or radical perspectives were in the minority before Waterloo, outweighed by the mass of loyalist productions, their range of tunes was far broader than the anti-invasion campaign. Many, such as 'Bonny Light Horseman', possessed their own clearly-identified tune, or at least so successfully appropriated that of another song, that at their point of collection, the melody has been identified as their own. In discussing post-Waterloo Napoleon songs, Karl Dallas writes, 'instead of the deceptively simple two-line verses of the classic ballads...we have long, free-ranging melodies, as grandiose and gothic as the words' – in other words, a perfect match.<sup>60</sup>

Where an alternative existing tune was specified by truly popular writers, the range was far wider, less constrained to martial odes of the previous century. A common choice for

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<sup>59</sup> Langford, *A Century*, ii, pp.252-3; Tye, *The Loyal Songster*, p.i; J.T. Smith, *The Cries of London* (1839), plate XXII facing p.67; C. Hindley, *The History of the Catnach Press* (1887), p.222.

<sup>60</sup> K. Dallas, *The Cruel Wars: 100 Soldiers' Songs from Agincourt to Ulster* (1972), p.137.

anti-war songs was Campbell's 'The Wounded Hussar' (Roud no.2699), ideal for a tragic ballad.<sup>61</sup> In Newcastle, John Shield's 'Bob Cranky' became the standard model for satires; though the tune is now lost, the limerick form imposed on the lyrics suggests a suitably comic air.<sup>62</sup> It was remarked of Freeth that 'his verses sing because they are always written to some "common tune"'; we have observed his ability to match light satire to appropriate airs.<sup>63</sup> Northern tunes were held in common. Anderson's satirical Cumberland song 'Nichol the Newsmonger' was set to the Dublin comic air 'The Night Before Larry was Stretch'd'; Scriven's Tyneside satire 'We Must All To Drill' borrowed the tune of 'Margery Topping', itself a comic love song by Cumberland composer Mark Lonsdale; also on Tyneside, William Mitford's 'The Local Militia-Man' went so far as to reach south and specify Dibdin's famous 'Madam Fig's Gala' (also known as 'The Yorkshire Concert').<sup>64</sup>

This facility at matching lyrics with tunes in disparate and appropriate genres appears to have been far more common among independent and subversive writers, especially those personally immersed in popular song culture, than among loyalists. We should reconsider the apparent ubiquity and dominance of loyalist broadsides, and make more critical distinctions along lines of genre and performance. By appreciating tunes as more nuanced and significant than simple bearers of ideological shorthand, we avoid the mistake made by most loyalists, and perceive the significance of this fundamental flaw to the propaganda campaign in general. Writers failed to master this element of popular culture. This crippled the potential impact of the broadsides of 1803-5. Further articulations of the importance of tunes to performance and reception will be found in the following chapter. For now, it is time to consider the second, more widely studied aspect of songwriting: the words.

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<sup>61</sup> E.g. 'Napoleon's Farewell' (Appendix no.208), 'The Tear of Pity' (329).

<sup>62</sup> E.g. 'The Bonny Geatsiders', Appendix no.57.

<sup>63</sup> Langford, *A Century*, ii, p.270; Chapter Two, pp.74-6.

<sup>64</sup> Appendix no.237; Appendix no.362 & FARNE N2450902; Appendix no.178.

## Songwriting: Lyrics

Though this thesis has already analysed lyrics in terms of their meter and fit, it has not yet explicitly interrogated the mechanics behind their writing. We must return to Lomax's point that 'the formalities of melody and meter tend to limit the choice of the singer and song maker to a set of stock phrases, devices, and poetic forms'.<sup>65</sup> The creation of a lyric was as technical as artistic; attention had to be paid to rhyme scheme and meter if the song was to work. Manchester songwriter Alexander Wilson relates this anecdote about his brother Samuel, who as a young boy in 1808 witnessed the dispersal of a weavers' meeting by the Royal Irish Dragoons. The tale illustrates how fundamental rhyme and meter were, both as prescriptive and as an aid to creativity:

Almost breathless, [Samuel] exclaimed, "Father! I've made a song!" "Indeed," said my father, "what is it like?" So, setting himself straight up, stroking his hair down as if trying to recollect something he had forgotten, and putting his hands into his pockets, something in the position of an Egyptian mummy, he began, -

"It was in the year one thousand eight hundred and eight,"

Then he paused. "Well," said my father, "go on," -

"A lot of bold weavers stood in a line straight."

"Very good," said my father, "what's next?" He raised his hand above his head as if wielding a sword, -

"Then coom th' barrack sogers o in a splutter,  
And knock'd the poor weavers right into the gutter."

"Capital! capital!" said my father, laughing heartily, and the young poet sat down by the fire, reading "rounds of applause" in my father's risibility.<sup>66</sup>

The comic focus is upon the bathetic rhyme of the second couplet, yet Samuel's real immaturity is apparent in his clumsy meter: even without a tune to fit, lines one and three of his improvisation do not quite scan. A lyric that did not scan to its tune was not fit for purpose, and thus we must be harsh critics of many amateur variations on 'Hearts of Oak',

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<sup>65</sup> Lomax, *Folk Song*, p.275.

<sup>66</sup> Harland, *The Songs of the Wilsons*, pp.6-7.

‘Rule, Britannia!’ and ‘God save the King’ encountered in previous chapters. It is a crowning irony of the loyalist preference for these tunes that, while many tunes consisted of eight-syllable, four-line verses with simple rhythms, these three in particular had more demanding meters, especially when it came to their choruses.

The chorus was the most important element of any song designed for mass consumption and communal rendition; it was essential that unskilled non-singers could participate in the refrain. Yet many broadsides bodged their choruses, misplacing stresses or inserting too many syllables.<sup>67</sup> This was the greatest weakness of those unused to popular song culture, when attempting to manipulate it as propaganda. We return to the *Satirist* to illustrate this problem. The author mocks the parson Rowland Hill for his reformist dabbling. The parson allegedly bribed a cobbler to sing psalms, rather than bawdy ballads, whilst working. Some days later the parson returned to find the cobbler singing ‘The Black Joke’, one of the most notorious songs of the day. The shoemaker defended himself:

’twould have ruined me shortly. Would your Honour believe it? though I got up an hour sooner, I was three whole days mending two pairs of shoes to

“All-peo-ple-tha à-àt-on-yearth-dò-dò-dwell.”

whereas, with *Morgan Rattler*, or *The Black Joke*, or any of them there quick sort of tunes, do you see, I knocks them off cleverly in a couple of hours.<sup>68</sup>

The psalm was an inappropriate accompaniment to his labour due to its tempo and syllabic structure. Had the parson known more about the form and craft of popular song, he would have understood this basic mechanical aspect.

On the nebulous border between song and verse, it was this subservience of a lyric to musical imperatives, and very often the inclusion of a chorus, that distinguished the ballad from the poem. Yet, just as a song could be read without its tune, a poem could be set to music. Campbell’s ‘The Wounded Hussar’ is the most prominent cross-over piece in our

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<sup>67</sup> E.g. ‘A Dumpling for Bonaparte’, Appendix no.109.

<sup>68</sup> *Satirist*, 8 (May 1808), p.244.

repertoire, since other lyrics were subsequently sung to its tune. We must concur, with Bainbridge, that:

texts could shift in status and meaning as they were adapted for different forms of production and different audiences... In this context, it is unnecessary and reductive to make too careful a distinction between ‘poetry’ and ‘song’, given that the same text could be experienced in these different ways<sup>69</sup>

This reminds us that not all our lyricists were conscious that they were writing songs. We have seen one of Byron’s poems reconfigured as a broadside.<sup>70</sup> Increasingly, as urban workers in particular sought and obtained access to newspapers and periodicals – Thomas Carter’s memoirs are eloquent in this regard – those participating in popular song culture were also becoming accustomed to a politer poetic register.<sup>71</sup>

Besides the pirating of poems by broadside printers, we may observe the influence, or at least the shared discourse, of journal poetry and popular song. The poem ‘Napoleon’s Soliloquy In the Island of St. Helena’ appeared in Cobbett’s *Register* in November 1815. Around the same time, the famous ballad ‘Isle of St. Helena’ was first published as a broadside. The former begins,

The round sea-waves round this sequester’d Isle,  
In swelling pride their foaming volumes roll;  
Far from the pomp of war – from Gallia’s smile –  
Here lonely musing fills my pensive soul!<sup>72</sup>

The latter’s third verse runs,

The wild rushing waves ‘round our shore they are washing.  
And the wild billows deep, on our rocks they are lashing.  
He may look o’er the main to the great Mount Diana  
With his eyes on the waves that surround Saint Helena.<sup>73</sup>

The two productions hold several other themes and phrases in common. I would not insist on the direct influence of one upon the composition of the other – in either direction – yet

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<sup>69</sup> Bainbridge, *British Poetry*, pp.10-11.

<sup>70</sup> Chapter Three, p.152.

<sup>71</sup> Carter, *Memoirs*, pp.89-90, 114, 144, 170, 186-7, 191.

<sup>72</sup> Appendix no.212.

<sup>73</sup> Appendix no.158. This variant is from Moylan, *The Age of Revolution*, p.159.

it is clear that we have two likeminded compositions using slightly different registers to pursue the same ideas and evoke the same images. This serves as a warning that we should not necessarily label a lyric as appropriate or inappropriate for a popular audience based upon its register and vocabulary – though tempting exceptions of course occur.

Many writers, from Bamford and Anderson to Thomas Dibdin, wrote both song and verse. Yet their productions display familiarity with the requirements of both forms. Rather than concentrating on *register*, we would do better to focus on lyricists' 'poetic' shortcomings where they display incompatibility with the *form*, through excessively verbose, tongue-twisting phrases or awkward meter. Academics such as Robert Colls and Harker have warned against equating lyrics rendered in dialect, with a popular origin, making the point that the rendering of dialect was itself a stylised and artificial act.<sup>74</sup> In fact, provincial writers such as John Shield or Robert Anderson grew up with a natural mastery of two registers – local idiom and polite English – and employed whichever register they felt appropriate.<sup>75</sup> Anderson, who learnt old Scottish ballads at the knee of an elderly neighbour, showed a facility for 'taking off' this idiom, and wrote four in one day which he sold to Vauxhall Gardens.<sup>76</sup> Yet this was merely a case of fooling a polite London audience. The success of his Cumbrian-dialect ballads *in Cumbria* was no more artificial than that of his received-pronunciation songs. To dwell on the authenticity of register or the complexity of vocabulary *for its own sake* is to become embroiled in a folkloric debate irrelevant to this thesis. Better to interrogate the question of appropriateness, when interpreting a lyric, in terms of subject matter, reference points, and

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<sup>74</sup> R. Colls, *The Collier's Rant: Song and Culture in the Industrial Village* (1977), pp.17, 22; D. Harker, 'The Original Bob Cranky?', *Folk Music Journal*, 5, no.1 (1985), p.70.

<sup>75</sup> For Shield, contrast 'O No, My Love, No' (Appendix no.243) with 'Bonny Geatsiders' (57): both are on the same subject and to the same purpose, yet one is a parody of polite poetry, the other heavily idiomatic. Neither is the more 'authentic'.

<sup>76</sup> Anderson, *The Poetical Works*, i, pp.xxiv-v.

the suitability of *style*, not register, to the song's genre. As Joseph Mather's contemporary biographer wrote,

His influence...was powerful, because in him the artisans recognised a champion of labour. This was the secret of his popularity. His coarse invectives were congenial to the thoughts and feelings of his class.<sup>77</sup>

Though 'coarse invectives' suggests a low register, there is a stress on 'thoughts and feelings' that indicates the importance of subject, sentiment, and allusion to the success of Mather's compositions.

Porter and Lomax provide another concept useful in problematising a lyric's appropriateness. Both stress the importance of context, place and purpose. 'Insider songs, usually rooted in a distinctive use of dialect, local setting, and technical processes, express what Ian Watson calls "shared, class-internal experience"', writes Porter.<sup>78</sup> To take root, a lyric should articulate something already present in its audience. Lomax's notion of 'maximal accord' takes this further: a lyric must reflect its audience's shared value system and cultural references.

If this is not the case, a song is not likely to hold its audience and it probably will not pass into oral tradition, where acceptance means that consensus has taken place over and over again through time. Thus, in theory, song texts ought to be heavily loaded with normative cultural indicators.<sup>79</sup>

Pursued to their logical conclusion, these theories lead to the long-discredited theory that popular songs are easily-read documents that reflect the views of the society in which they are found.<sup>80</sup> Yet Porter and Lomax merely imply that a songwriter should strive for appropriateness in his lyric; a song that sought to impose purely external values upon an audience would fail. This concept of 'appropriateness', which I wish to develop further, is at the centre of this thesis' contentions. It epitomises the gulf between truly popular song,

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<sup>77</sup> J. Mather, *The Songs of Joseph Mather* (Sheffield, 1862), p.xi.

<sup>78</sup> G. Porter, 'Cobblers All: Occupation as Identity and Cultural Message', *Folk Music Journal*, 7, no.1 (1995), p.43.

<sup>79</sup> Lomax, *Folk Song*, p.275.

<sup>80</sup> This theory is deconstructed in R. Elbourne, 'A Mirror of Man?' Traditional Music as a Reflection of Society', *The Journal of American Folklore*, 89, no.354 (1976), pp.463-6.

and the majority (though not all) of elite impositions, which failed to permeate that culture. It may be reflected in even the most incidental aspects of songwriting.

One Dublin commentator discussed the matter of false compositions in an article of 1830. His particular subject in this instance is the ‘Bacchanalian’ genre.

English people in particular, suppose ‘Patrick's day’ in words and music must be the *beau idéal* of an Irish song, whereas, ... for the words, there is amongst then a couplet that pronounces, at once, damning sentence against the whole composition.

And we will be merry  
A drinking of sherry.

Bah! sherry indeed, no Irish ballad laureat ever wrote two such lines, it is the production of a bungler, especially when we consider that any but a thorough blockhead could have so easily rhymed it thus:

And we will be frisky  
A drinking of whiskey  
On Patrick's day in the morning.<sup>81</sup>

Thus the smallest detail could sabotage a song's reception in popular culture. The Lancastrian Joseph Ramsbottom made the same point in his ‘Writing in the Dialect’:

And we have little doubt that the singer has greatest influence, and is most loved by the people, who, avoiding all elaborate forms of expression and high flights of sentiment, comes to them in their own simple way, and, with their own homely phrases, weaves his songs, as it were, with a musical thread into portions of their every-day life.<sup>82</sup>

Such considerations mitigated the Isles-wide impact of metropolitan compositions, reinforcing the strength of regional song traditions. Those still sceptical of Anderson's compositions in the Cumbrian dialect must contend with the county's foremost song-scholar of the nineteenth century, Sidney Gilpin:

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<sup>81</sup> *National Magazine*, 1, no.2 (Aug. 1830), p.201.

<sup>82</sup> Cited in R. Elbourne, *Music and Tradition in Early Industrial Lancashire, 1780-1840* (Woodbridge, 1980), p.29.

Anderson's "Ballads in the Cumbrian Dialect" have passed through numerous editions, and still enjoy a considerable reputation in his native district. He may fairly be called the bard of our peasantry. There are few ploughmen, shepherds, or buxom country girls throughout the county, who are not in some degree acquainted with his ballads... Most of the songs which Anderson has left us are intensely and thoroughly Cumbrian songs, and belong to no other county; they are Cumberland in expression, feeling, and sentiment; they are Cumberland even in their prejudices and bragging<sup>83</sup>

Other songwriters have been praised for their ability to judge tone and style. Alun Howkins and Ian Dyck re-evaluate Cobbett's lyrics, stressing the resonance of his 'peasant vision' and its 'quaint' preoccupations about the superiority of bacon and beer to tea and potatoes: these things mattered to his audience.<sup>84</sup> 'Hence he was able, where others had failed, to attract an audience and following among the rural poor'.<sup>85</sup> The *Satirist* attributed the same facility to Charles Dibdin the Elder, whose lyrics were deemed to be 'by a mode, at once the most simple, the most pleasing, and the most persuasive to unenlightened minds.'<sup>86</sup> This was no accident. Dibdin was extremely self-conscious on the subject:

I must confess, had I gratified my inclination, and gone for fame alone, I should have written my performances in a style of elevation, and given them a classical turn; but, I knew that trifles, mere nothings, were best calculated to succeed with the public. Of what use would it have been to lecture my audience when it was my business to make them laugh, which nothing can do, or ever did, but broad humour?<sup>87</sup>

It is precisely this propensity to 'lecture', which Dibdin denounces as useless, that has been seen as characteristic of moral and loyalist activists:

lower-class readers are continually reminded of their vulnerability to their own violence, illness, the birth of too many children, ignorance, and bankruptcy; and of the gratitude that they owe to English society and to the government for whatever security they have.<sup>88</sup>

I do not wish to labour the particular involvement of Hannah More, Olivia Smith's subject here, which in any case was much reduced after 1800.<sup>89</sup> The revisionism of Anne Stott,

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<sup>83</sup> S. Gilpin (ed.), *The Songs and Ballads of Cumberland* (1866), pp.290-1.

<sup>84</sup> Howkins & Dyck, "'The Time's Alteration'", p.28.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p.26.

<sup>86</sup> *Satirist*, 8 (May 1808), p.242.

<sup>87</sup> Dibdin, *The Professional Life*, iii, p.272.

<sup>88</sup> O. Smith, *The Politics of Language, 1791-1819* (Oxford, 1984), p.76.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p.96.

Susan Staves, and in particular, Harriet Guest, rightly highlights the dynamism and even radicalism of her activities regarding gender and the role of the Church in society.<sup>90</sup> Yet her reformism is still understood to have been rooted in the prohibition of the working classes ‘from conceiving of themselves as political citizens who might have a voice’: she remains representative of a wider tendency to sermonise.<sup>91</sup>

More is so frequently discussed because so much is known of her methods and productions. Due to their customary anonymity, we have little evidence of others’ approach to the craft of songwriting. Plumptre, however, is another exceptional case, hitherto unregarded. As a professor of music, he was atypically aware of his own inability to deal with the melodic component of popular song. In 1793, he asked his friend Dr. Hague to supply the music to his patriotic lyrics, ‘as, without it, they were not likely to be sung, or at least to but indifferent tunes.’<sup>92</sup> In September 1803, he begun by soliciting Charles Dibdin the Elder, aware of the quality of his melodies.<sup>93</sup> However, Plumptre judges himself capable of handling the lyrics, and it is here he exhibits inappropriate tendencies.

I shall object to all *derry downs*, and *toll de rolls*, as unmeaning impertinence. The last line of a verse should contain some valuable sentiment or point, and to repeat this is to enforce the sentiment; but a chorus of derry down is merely an apology for noise and riot.<sup>94</sup>

Not content with removing refrains, Plumptre proceeds to censor blasphemies and oaths. As described in Chapter Two, he uses Dibdin’s ‘True Courage’ as a case study,

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<sup>90</sup> A. Stott, *Hannah More: The First Victorian* (Oxford, 2003), S. Staves, ‘Church of England Clergy and Women Writers’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 65, no.1/2 (2002), pp.81-103, H. Guest, *Small Change: Women, Learning, Patriotism, 1750-1810* (Chicago, 2000), idem, ‘Bluestocking Feminism’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 65, no.1/2 (2002), pp.59-80, idem, ‘Hannah More and Conservative Feminism’, in J. Batchelor & C. Kaplan (eds.), *British Women’s Writing in the Long Eighteenth Century: Authorship, Politics and History* (Basingstoke, 2005), pp.158-70.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p.159.

<sup>92</sup> Plumptre, *A Collection*, p.29.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.30-1.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p.12.

systematically removing almost every distinctive quality of the lyric on moral grounds.<sup>95</sup> Plumtre's naivety is epitomised by his statement that 'A single song is commonly sold for one shilling', his reckoning out by a factor of twenty-four.<sup>96</sup> This is symptomatic of the broader point here: a lyric's technical proficiency and stylistic suitability should be as significant in our historicised appreciation of song, as its intended ideological meaning. Plumtre was an ideological songwriter disregarding those aspects which made a lyric fit for purpose; a phenomenon not restricted to loyalists and moral reformers. It is of radical land-reformer Thomas Spence, whose songs were tortuously overwritten and heavy-handed, that Davis writes the following.<sup>97</sup> Its pithy appraisal may stand as the last word on the subject of lyric writing. 'Songs like this were deliberately didactic. Their lyrics intended to be politically instructive, but often they must have been virtually impossible to sing.'<sup>98</sup>

## **Printers and print**

Once written, a song was often given a physical manifestation. To some degree, placing this act immediately after composition is contentious. All songs in this thesis have been written down; most have been published. However, in some cases this took place after the most relevant performative stage. Those collected from singers, whether by contemporaries such as John Bell (1783-1864) and Walter Scott, or by their successors – Cecil Sharp *et al.* – often functioned in purely oral form until then (though many songs collected from 'oral tradition' had a broadside origin).<sup>99</sup> In illiterate communities, a printed

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<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.13-14, 34.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p.44.

<sup>97</sup> E.g. T. Spence, *Spence's Songs* (1807, and 2<sup>nd</sup> edn 1812), *passim*.

<sup>98</sup> Davis, "'An Evening of Pleasure'", p.119.

<sup>99</sup> Biographical details of John Bell may be found in P. Isaac, 'Bell, Thomas (1785–1860)', *ODNB*, at [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/2028](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/2028), accessed 14 Aug. 2013.

text was redundant without an interpreter.<sup>100</sup> Nor is this purely a ‘folk’ issue; many songs premiered on the stage would be performed to paying audiences both within and without the theatre, before being published as broadsides or in songbooks.<sup>101</sup> Alternatively, songs – especially subversive ones – may have circulated in manuscript, rather than print form.<sup>102</sup> The decision *not* to publish – and thereby to avoid damnation – was significant; the role of manuscript transmission in eighteenth-century song culture is frequently underappreciated.<sup>103</sup> In Ireland, English-language songs were usually printed, whilst Irish-language songs frequently circulated through oral and manuscript transmission.<sup>104</sup> Yet despite all this, the overwhelming majority of songs in this thesis were published in print within the dates under discussion. The printer’s role was crucial.

The term ‘printer’ rather than ‘publisher’ is preferred as a catch-all term. It may be objected that the reverse should be true, as the latter definition encompasses the role of the former.<sup>105</sup> It is best to avoid too nice a distinction; in many cases, a single individual was responsible for the entire process, from typesetting, to legal responsibility, to point-of-sale, while most distribution and off-premises vending was undertaken by singers themselves. Books, entered at Stationers’ Hall, with known authors, bound between hard covers, may have been ‘published’; ephemeral broadsheets may merely have been ‘printed’. But again, it was often the same person behind both processes. Overwhelmingly, our sources prefer the term ‘printer’. The chief exception is James Asperne, who refers to himself as a ‘publisher’: elsewhere, as a rule it is ‘printers’ who ‘publish’ things.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> See Jones, *Welsh Ballads*, p.6, for further consideration of this aspect.

<sup>101</sup> E.g. Chapter Three, p.102; Chapter Six, pp.257-8.

<sup>102</sup> Chapter Two, p.76.

<sup>103</sup> The best recent work is Darnton, *Poetry and the Police*.

<sup>104</sup> N. Ó Ciosáin, *Print and Popular Culture in Ireland, 1750-1850* (1997) p.165.

<sup>105</sup> OED, “publisher, *n.*” 2a & 2b, at [www.oed.com/view/Entry/154076](http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/154076), accessed 14 February 2013.

<sup>106</sup> J. Asperne, *European Magazine*, 44 (1803), p.455.

Most studies in this era have centred on one or both of two great London printers of ephemera, John Pitts and Jemmy Catnach.<sup>107</sup> In relation to the broadside campaign, Semmel judges the print effort to have been ‘coordinated by a relatively few actors, most notably the bookseller-publishers James Asperne, John Hatchard, and John Ginger’.<sup>108</sup> Semmel is perhaps too influenced by Asperne’s self-aggrandizement; his own magazine praised:

the laudable zeal, ingenuity, assiduity, and perseverance of our Publisher, Mr. James Asperne, who, for a considerable time, has made an extraordinary and attracting display from the front of his house, and in his shop, of various loyal and patriotic papers, and has printed and circulated to the remotest parts of the united kingdom, pamphlets, consisting of humorous dialogues, ironical play-bills, dramatic pieces, and songs<sup>109</sup>

This boast appears designed to solicit tangible reward for his services, rather than simply to state a fact:

It is well known, that these publications have produced the most beneficial effects; and, convinced of this, we think our fellow-citizen merits public encouragement, and the support of his superiors.<sup>110</sup>

Contrary to Asperne’s claim, our songs indicate that the London printers at the centre of loyalist song culture were Jennings, Batchelar and Pitts, aided by lesser names such as Thomas Evans.<sup>111</sup> Pitts also inherited the London-based John Marshall’s work printing Hannah More’s tracts.<sup>112</sup> This nucleus of Londoners should not distract us from the larger picture. Dutifully, Shepard lists the provincial ‘competition’ to Pitts: John Marshall in Newcastle, Swindells and Aston in Manchester, Turner in Coventry, Walker in Durham, Cheney in Banbury, Sutton in Nottingham, Harward in Tewkesbury.<sup>113</sup> Cottrell adds Harrop in Manchester, Gilbert in Newington Causeway, another Jennings in York, Lyon in

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<sup>107</sup> Shepard, *John Pitts*, idem, *The History of Street Literature; The Life of Old Jemmy Catnach, Printer* (Penzance, 1965), Hindley, *The History of the Catnach Press*.

<sup>108</sup> Semmel, *Napoleon*, p.41.

<sup>109</sup> Asperne, *European Magazine* 44 (1803), p.455.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p.455.

<sup>111</sup> Chapters Two and Three, pp.52, 55-6, 105-14, 117-20, 132-3, 143, 146-50.

<sup>112</sup> Shepard, *John Pitts*, p.31.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, p.46.

Wigan, Norbury in Brentford, and another Walker in Preston.<sup>114</sup> Lists such as these risk tokenism, furthering a metropolitan focus: there is nothing so dismissive as a string of names. We must take a deeper, not just a broader view.

In part this may be achieved through case studies of individuals or areas. Palmer has done this for Birmingham, emphasising the relative autonomy and energy of regional presses; between them, Jones and Löffler have illuminated Welsh popular print culture, revealing a carefully regulated and highly devout network of printers unusually dependent upon elite patronage.<sup>115</sup> Chapter Seven of this thesis focuses on Newcastle, a key centre for the Isles as a whole. A regional perspective brings to light the radical or non-loyalist status of numerous provincial printers. J. Jackson, an obscure Lancaster printer, was prepared to publish openly pro-Napoleonic pamphlets.<sup>116</sup> G. Summers of Sunderland published a pro-Napoleonic song in 1814.<sup>117</sup> Joseph Russell of Birmingham served a prison sentence for publishing radical sentiments.<sup>118</sup> Montgomery, a Sheffield newspaper editor, was fined £20 and served three months' imprisonment at York for printing a radical song by a Belfast cleric, a verse of which ran:

Europe's fall on the contest's decision depends;  
Most important the issue will be;  
For should France be subdued, Europe's liberty ends;  
If she triumphs, the world will be free!<sup>119</sup>

By far the best known radical printer, who suffered no reprisals, was John Marshall of Newcastle – after Pitts, the greatest printer in the kingdom.<sup>120</sup> Like Freeth in Birmingham, Marshall was the centre of a literate, radical circle which included John Bell, in whose

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<sup>114</sup> Cottrell, 'English Views of France', p.309.

<sup>115</sup> R. Palmer (ed.), *Birmingham Ballads* (Birmingham, 1979); Jones, *Welsh Ballads*, Löffler, *Welsh Responses*.

<sup>116</sup> Eccleston, *A Sketch*, frontispiece.

<sup>117</sup> 'N.B. Bonaparte's Farewell to Paris', Appendix no.199.

<sup>118</sup> Palmer, *The Sound of History*, p.13. His post-1815 output includes numerous pro-Napoleonic songs: see [mustrad.org.uk/articles/birming3.htm](http://mustrad.org.uk/articles/birming3.htm), accessed 18 July 2013.

<sup>119</sup> Mather, *The Songs*, p.xxii.

<sup>120</sup> See Chapter Seven, esp. pp.292-5, 298-300, 307-8, 314-5, 317.

bookshop could be found the works of Spence and Paine.<sup>121</sup> In the post-war period, Marshall published songs in support of the miners' strikes and Queen Caroline, and *The Radical Reformers' New Song Book*, containing inflammatory pieces on Peterloo.<sup>122</sup> His obituary of Napoleon was a labour of love, cramming 1,570 words onto a single broadsheet, and reads as hagiography rather than biography.<sup>123</sup> Britain's second most influential popular printer was a confirmed Bonapartist – a consideration of some weight in judging the supposed ubiquity and impact of loyalist songs, which are only notable in inventories of Marshall's stock by their total absence.<sup>124</sup>

Greater attention has been paid to radical printers in Ireland. At least five were arrested as United Irishmen during the 1798 rising in Dublin alone; some years earlier, the Dublin branch of the UI included fifteen printers and booksellers.<sup>125</sup> One Dublin printer, Corcoran, was infamous for his seditious and immoral song publications, yet although 'he had people constantly employed to circulate them all over Ireland... The civil power never interfered to prevent him'.<sup>126</sup> However zealous Castle authorities were in prosecuting radical printers, they failed to suppress their publications, as correspondence with various spies makes clear.<sup>127</sup>

The hardest aspect to gauge is the relative importance of the printer among the actors in popular song culture, due largely to lack of evidence. Loyalist London printers of 1803 claimed credit as autonomous promulgators of the broadside campaign. In some cases,

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<sup>121</sup> Harker, 'The Original Bob Cranky?', p.64; idem, *Songs from the Manuscript Collection of John Bell* (Leamington Spa, 1985), p.xiii.

<sup>122</sup> M. Vicinus, *The Industrial Muse: A Study of Nineteenth Century British Working-Class Literature* (1974), p.14; Thomson, *Newcastle Chapbooks*, p.67.

<sup>123</sup> 'An Account of the DEATH, and also of the LIFE and CHARACTER of Napoleon Bonaparte', in A Collection of Broad-sides and Ballads Printed in Newcastle upon Tyne, British Library, 1875.d.13.

<sup>124</sup> Thomson, *Newcastle Chapbooks*, *passim*.

<sup>125</sup> Whelan, 'The United Irishmen', in Dickson *et al.*, *The United Irishmen*, p.276.

<sup>126</sup> R. Bell, *A description of the condition and manners as well as of the moral and political character, education, &c. of the peasantry of Ireland* (1804), p.41 *fn*.

<sup>127</sup> T. Bartlett (ed.), *Revolutionary Dublin, 1795-1801: The Letters of Francis Higgins to Dublin Castle* (Dublin, 2004), *passim*, esp. pp.154, 159-70, 181; see also *Report of the Trial of the King versus Hurdy Gurdy* (Dublin, 1794), *passim*.

printers published their own compositions.<sup>128</sup> In others, they set songwriters' lyrics to a tune of their choosing.<sup>129</sup> Before Catnach allowed a song to leave the press, he vetted it personally to ensure it was 'fit for the national taste'.<sup>130</sup> Conversely, a professional printer might be left out of the process, as when a newspaper editor like Birmingham's John Collins chose to self-publish his own songs, or a commercial firm operated a private press as ancillary to their real business – as with Humble & Sons, the Tyneside lottery agents.<sup>131</sup> A cooperative middle-ground was more usual, whereby a printer relied upon ad hoc individual partnerships with significant singer-songwriters. The business relations of Scottish ballad singer David Love with both Steed of Gosport, and Evans of London, is a case in point.<sup>132</sup> These potentially symbiotic partnerships could be perilous: the implication of two verses of Aberdeen singer Charles Lesly's elegy is that the printer of his songs was left high and dry by his death:

Those songs in the lang nights of winter,  
 Bonnie Laddie, Highland Laddie,  
 He made, and Chalmers was the printer,  
 ...  
 O mourn, good master Chalmers, mourn,  
 Bonnie Laddie, Highland Laddie,  
 For Charlie will no more return<sup>133</sup>

The financial imperative united all ephemeral printers. Tales of the fortune amassed by Catnach became legendary because it was exceptional: most printers struggled, and even failed.<sup>134</sup> This precluded even the most jingoistic from self-funding a propaganda

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<sup>128</sup> E.g. Two editions of T. Evans, 'The Corsican Monster', Appendix no.88.

<sup>129</sup> *The Life of Old Jemmy Catnach*, p.8.

<sup>130</sup> Elbourne, 'A Mirror of Man?', p.467.

<sup>131</sup> J. Collins, *Scrapapologia; or, Collin's Doggerel Dish of all Sorts* (Birmingham, 1804), p.vii; 'Boney Invaded, A New Song', Appendix no.46.

<sup>132</sup> Love, *The Life, Adventures, and Experience*, pp.65-6, 73, 76. See also Harris, 'A Few Shillings', *passim*.

<sup>133</sup> From 'Mussel-Mou'd Charlie', Appendix no.198.

<sup>134</sup> Contrast Mayhew, *London Labour*, i, p.220 and *The Life of Old Jemmy Catnach*, p.11, with Speaight, *Professional and Literary Memoirs*, p.47 and Thomson, *Newcastle Chapbooks*, pp.6, 12. John Clare gives a sad account of a less notable printer, J.B. Henson, and his slide into bankruptcy, cited in G. Deacon, *John Clare and the Folk Tradition* (1983), p.40.

campaign. The proclamations of Asperne, above, and Ginger, acknowledge the need for patronage:

The very great Demand for the *Spirited and Loyal Patriotic Papers* lately published by MR. GINGER, Piccadilly, has induced him to print NEW EDITIONS, at a considerable Expense. – NOBLEMEN, GENTLEMEN, and others, who are desirous of serving their Country, would do well to embrace the present Opportunity.<sup>135</sup>

This advertisement of Ginger's proceeded to list his productions, grouped by price bracket for single items, and by the hundred. Bulk-buying and distribution by wealthy backers was an economic solution as much as the product of a slick propaganda machine, and the need of printers to advertise in search of patronage indicates that the process was not without difficulty. Interestingly, Ginger's lowest advertised price for single items was a penny: his patriotism did not prevent him charging wealthy purchasers double the market price of a halfpenny. This loyalist alliance of printers and patrons cannot have been easy, especially when extrapolated across the Isles. As Andy Rouse reminds us, most printers were not reputable booksellers.<sup>136</sup> Most printers sold loyalist songs alongside bawdy, even obscene material, and relied upon borderline criminals for their dissemination; printers as well as ballad singers were frequently condemned in polite publications for their tendency to corrupt the politics and morals of the people.<sup>137</sup> Ian McCalman's 'radical underworld' of pornographers and dissidents did not stand apart from loyalist ephemeral print culture: it pervaded it.<sup>138</sup> As Clark puts it, 'publishers aimed not to inculcate morals but to sell songs. To do so, their proclamations had to speak to the realities, not just the aspirations, of plebeian life.'<sup>139</sup> Thus Pitts' stock included 'The Death of Parker' and 'Napoleon's

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<sup>135</sup> Cited in Klingberg & Hustvedt, *The Warning Drum*, p.214.

<sup>136</sup> Rouse, *The Remunerated Vernacular Singer*, p.10.

<sup>137</sup> E.g. *On the use and abuse of charity* (Edinburgh and London, 1819), p.10, and *The Labourer's Friend and Handicraft's Chronicle* (1821) for an Irish perspective.

<sup>138</sup> I. McCalman, *Radical Underworld: Prophets, Revolutionaries and Pornographers in London, 1795-1840* (Cambridge, 1988).

<sup>139</sup> Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches*, p.67.

Farewell to Paris’, and Catnach printed satirical children’s songs that used the Wars to poke fun at the Prince Regent – in this number, ‘Prinny’ is illustrated as a teddy bear:

Here’s Prinny with gun,  
Sword and gorget so smart,  
He’s going to France,  
To fight Bonaparte.

And Joan’s threat had fill’d  
Poor Prin with alarms,  
He said he’d not fight,  
And so grounded his arms.<sup>140</sup>

Catnach was braver than the assistant at Mr Bell’s, encountered by John Clare during his time in the volunteers. As alluded to above, Clare wrote a ballad on a minor scandal which, though ‘heartily’ amusing, was deemed ‘too personal’ to be worth the risk of printing for fear of reprisals – indeed, Clare subsequently destroyed even the manuscript copy.<sup>141</sup>

The ephemeral print trade often involved brushes with the law. As seen above, printers could fall foul of recent legislation on seditious publications, or simple libel laws. Yet the nebulous social status of printers also provided some protection from prosecutions for piracy. Charles Dibdin the Elder let it be known in 1803 that he had already prosecuted fourteen persons.<sup>142</sup> Charles the Younger was advised against prosecuting by his own printer, as he was unlikely to recoup his costs.<sup>143</sup> The relevant act was updated in 1810 to account for broadsides: though it thence stipulated that the name of the printer must appear, and prohibited printing an author’s ‘name or mark’ without permission, it still neglected to proscribe the pirating of their words on a broadside.<sup>144</sup> As stated in Chapter Two, this loophole contributed to the national impact of the Dibdins’ compositions. More locally, the two composers of ‘Joan O’Grinfilt’ lamented that ‘we met habin worth mony a

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<sup>140</sup> Shepard, *John Pitts*, pp.129, 136; ‘Jumping Joan’, facsimile in C. Hindley, *The History of the Catnach Press* (1887), pp.155-7.

<sup>141</sup> Chapter Two, p.91.

<sup>142</sup> Dibdin, *The Professional Life*, i, p.vi.

<sup>143</sup> Speaight, *Professional and Literary Memoirs*, p.47.

<sup>144</sup> *The Statutes of the Realm* (11 vols., 1810), v, p.430.

hunthert peawn iv widdin had sense to ta'care oth brass' – in other words, their lack of business acumen meant that, though numerous printers published their famous Lancastrian song, they saw little of the proceeds.<sup>145</sup>

The informality of operations in this legal grey area also facilitated the spread of material from one context to another. As Bainbridge writes, 'There were frequently overlaps between texts published in broadsheet form and those printed in newspapers and magazines.'<sup>146</sup> This transference of a song or poem would have been far less common if copyrights were enforced. We must allow, not only for broad plebeian readership of magazines, but for popular access to texts from a polite context in pirated, ephemeral republications. We have seen this with Byron; but even as vernacular a song as 'Bob Cranky's Leum'nation Neet' was first published in the *Tyne Mercury*.<sup>147</sup> This should not imply that the song was inauthentic, but rather highlight the permeability of cultural boundaries. Harker stresses the self-conscious commodification of working-class song culture for an emerging bourgeois market, a process he dubs the manufacture of 'fakesong'.<sup>148</sup> This had its corollary in the consumption of 'bourgeois' material by a working-class audience, often via illicit publication. Nor were two separate agencies necessarily at work in this re-commodification. Freeth's biographer believes the singing publican disdained to preserve his most topical, ephemeral pieces, yet points out the high-end material qualities of Freeth's published editions, and their favourable reception in polite reviews.<sup>149</sup>

As Bennett points out, Freeth's collections, however lavish, represented better value than most broadsides; a halfpenny ballad suffered from economies of scale.<sup>150</sup> The average

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<sup>145</sup> S. Bamford, *Walks in South Lancashire, and on its Borders* (Blackley, 1844), p.171.

<sup>146</sup> Bainbridge, *British Poetry*, pp.9-10.

<sup>147</sup> Harker, *Allan's Illustrated Edition*, p.85.

<sup>148</sup> Idem, *Fakesong*, esp. pp.26-7, 37.

<sup>149</sup> J. Horden, *John Freeth (1731-1808): Political ballad-writer and innkeeper* (Oxford, 1993), pp.1, 7-8, 14.

<sup>150</sup> Bennett, 'Sources of Popular Song', p.70.

labourer paid a half-hour's wages for a single-song slip, or an hour's for a full, two-song broadside. Costlier chapbooks, garlands and songbooks were far less expensive per song. It is perhaps unsurprising, therefore, that flash London town was the centre of the broadside market, while northern and Irish ephemeral printers produced a far higher proportion of garlands and songbooks. The publication and sale of multiple songs in mini-repertoires created cumulative associations.<sup>151</sup> 'A tune's meaning and affect is dependent upon, and in part created by, the other tunes that form a known set or repertory.'<sup>152</sup> Typically, a two-song broadside would pair a comic song with a tragic, to satisfy the buyer's desire for variety. More interesting were politicised conjunctions which passed comment without risking censorship. Palmer provides one pairing that subtly criticised the war, where 'A New Song, called The Tradesman's Lamentation' was 'Printed, appropriately, on the same sheet as a ballad on a naval battle'.<sup>153</sup> A Belfast garland entitled 'The Wounded Hussar' used Campbell's tragic ballad, and the anti-war sentiments of 'Mary's Dream at Sandy's Tomb', to preface its third song, 'Battle of Trafalgar'.<sup>154</sup> Though this last was patriotic rather than tragic, the preceding songs could easily have been read as a satirical comment on the real impact of war. Newcastle's John Marshall often themed his shorter songbooks. One five-song collection contained 'The Battle of Waterloo. The death of Nelson. Death of Abercrombie. The wounded hussar. The Battle of Trafalgar.' Few purchasers can have felt especially bellicose after that particular combination.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> See Chapter Five, pp.214-23, for further discussion.

<sup>152</sup> Gammon, *Desire*, p.8.

<sup>153</sup> Appendix no.232. R. Palmer, *Working Songs: Industrial Ballads and Poems from Britain and Ireland, 1780s-1980s* (Todmorden, 2010), p.290.

<sup>154</sup> *The Wounded Hussar* (Belfast, n.d.).

<sup>155</sup> Thomson, *Newcastle Chapbooks*, p.43.

## **Conclusions**

Aspects of performance and reception have infringed upon writing and printing; creation is inextricably linked to consumption. Discussion of song in this chapter has stressed technical aspects of song – musical and physical – that build upon the picture emerging from the songs themselves. The concept of ‘appropriateness’ in particular helps explain why lasting songs of Waterloo were tragic; why anti-war songs articulated sentiments other than contemporary radicalism; and why loyalist songs focusing on the comedy of Napoleon’s domestic relations were more appealing than earlier jingoism, leaving a legacy in the popular image of Napoleon quite different to that intended. The ephemeral print trade was not split between a ‘radical underworld’ and respectable loyalism: all printers engaged to some extent in subaltern activity. This becomes clearer when we turn to distribution. This necessarily forms part of the next chapter; the disseminator of song was not the printer, but the ballad singer.

## Chapter Five

### Song II: Performers and Performance

‘A song is not a song unless you sing it’ – Oscar Hammerstein II<sup>1</sup>

Singing as a universal popular pastime in this era has received scant attention, given the wealth of source material. The first filter herein is to concentrate on those for whom singing was a primary or at least significant activity. This involves a central focus on the ballad singer, analysed through the prism of the Napoleonic question. No one was more significant in song culture than the singer, who exercised great control over songs’ distribution, performance, and interpretation: their agency is crucial in determining how the songs of Part I functioned in society. The first half of this chapter concentrates on singers’ social status, economic independence, and personal politics. The second half turns to aspects of performance pertinent to our politicised enquiry: sellers’ and singers’ tactics, spatial and material contexts, and musical delivery. As before, there is a degree of overlap – in this case, between performance and reception, discussed in Chapter Six. The distinction is largely one of perspective. Sources used in this chapter focus upon singers’ agency; those in the next focus upon the impression made upon audiences. British ballad singers have received no dedicated scholarly attention in their own right, rather than as an adjunct to the print trade, save from Rouse, whose study sacrifices depth in favour of remarkable breadth across many centuries.<sup>2</sup> Victorian Irish singers have been examined in an article by Neilands, and there is some fine musicology on theoretical aspects of ballad singing.<sup>3</sup> This chapter thus breaks new and sometimes unsupported historiographical ground, in its attempt to enrich our understanding of both the culture and the politics of song by stressing the role of its most significant mediator.

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Sixteen Going On Seventeen (reprise)’, *The Sound of Music* original stage production, 1959.

<sup>2</sup> Rouse, *The Remunerated Vernacular Singer*.

<sup>3</sup> Neilands, ‘Irish Broadside Ballads’; see esp. Atkinson, *The English Traditional Ballad*.

## Singers

Everyone sang. Communal renditions in public houses; domestic, recreational singing; weavers singing at their looms; soldiers singing in camp or on the march; protestors singing in demonstration: these are songs' afterlives, subsequent to initial transmission. Popular songs were communicated to audiences orally, the tunes sung rather than set out in formal notation, even when sold or distributed *gratis* in print form. Therefore the act of singing on the part of this initial audience was recreative, not creative. By 'singers', then, I denote individuals, not collectives, whose aim was to communicate their song to listeners: transmitters, not receivers. The term 'performer' would emphasise this distinction. However, the contemporary usage in popular music was 'singer'. In most cases, it was 'ballad singer'.

Aside from listening to a ballad singer in the street, at a market or fair, or occasionally in a public house, a popular audience could encounter a song on a rare foray to a theatre; pleasure gardens such as Vauxhall were effectively out of bounds.<sup>4</sup> The spatial and material characteristics of theatre are fascinating, with their potential for loyalist iconographical signifiers, yet with the ever-present chance of subversion. Transgressive possibilities of riotous audience participation were most frequently manifested when the time came for 'God save the King'.<sup>5</sup> However, actor-singers themselves are less interesting as independent agents. Their lines prescribed, their appearance and actions to some extent dictated by directors, individual agency in the stage singer was at a relative if not absolute minimum. Langford records of Mrs Billington, a Birmingham actress performing during the Peace of Amiens, that 'In "The Soldier tired of War's Alarms," she introduced a variation from thirds to fifths, no less novel than pleasing, thus evincing at will the

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<sup>4</sup> Chapter Six, p.250.

<sup>5</sup> Below and Chapter Six, pp.224, 246-7.

wonderful powers of her voice.’<sup>6</sup> H.M. Burke presents the case of Robert Owenson or MacOwen, a Dublin actor who appeared as a ‘Teague’ in English productions, yet who subverted this stage Irishman stereotype through improvisations and substitutions of material, drawing on the songs of O’Carolan.<sup>7</sup> His individual performance served to parody the assumptions and intentions of these plays. However, given the lack of similar examples, we must generalise. Samuel Johnson expressed to Boswell his preference for the ballad singer above the actor, ‘for he does two things; he repeats and he sings; there is both recitation and music in his performance: the player only recites’.<sup>8</sup> At the risk of endorsing Dr Johnson’s facetiousness, we must assume that a focus on stage singers would not advance our appreciation of the songs of Dibdin *et al.* to the same extent that an analysis of the ballad singer – a more idiosyncratic figure, as a rule – will enhance our understanding of popular song.

Ballad singers were often characterised by their peripatetic existence. I have examined singers’ geographical functions as circulators of songs elsewhere.<sup>9</sup> That discussion emphasises the cross-pollination of distinctive regional discourses with cross-border material, as long-distance itinerants overlapped with singers operating a local circuit based upon an urban hub. Its conclusions stress aspects of agency elaborated in this chapter: singers operated outside ‘mainstream’ society, were frequently regarded as criminal elements, and often held subversive or heavily idiosyncratic opinions which affected their performance and repertoire.

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<sup>6</sup> Langford, *A Century*, ii, pp.252-3.

<sup>7</sup> Burke, ‘The Revolutionary Prelude’, p.12. See also J.C. Greene, ‘Owenson, Robert Nugent (1744-1812)’, *ODNB*, at [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/21043](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/21043), accessed 15 Aug. 2013.

<sup>8</sup> *British Stage and Literary Cabinet*, 4, no.48 (Dec. 1820), p.348.

<sup>9</sup> Cox Jensen, ‘The Travels of John Magee’.

Several exceptional first-hand accounts exist, such as the *Travels* of John Magee and *Lives* like those of David Love.<sup>10</sup> Some singers were written of in detail, either as biography – John Freeth, Charles Lesly, Michael Moran, Willie Purvis, Joseph Mather, the Manchester Wilsons – or in collections such as J.T. Smith’s *Vagabondiana*.<sup>11</sup> The danger of relying on these sources is that we conceptualise the exceptional as normal: these men received special attention because they were in some respect worthy of it, and were to some extent engaged in self-fashioning by writing memoirs or cooperating with biographers to exploit that attention for gains in wealth or recognition. To broaden our source base, we must turn to external perceptions. As we are concerned with singers as mediators, these are pertinent historical considerations. Unfortunately, most of this information comes from ‘polite’ sources – caricatures, paintings, journal articles, novels, poetry and even plays – rather than from singers’ plebeian peers. These sources are thus of greatest value in assessing the relationship between polite propagandists and the singers on whom they relied to disseminate their message.

There were several semi-discrete positive conceptions of ballad singers, all at odds with reformers’ experiences. Virtually all these fictionalised sources stem from London. Most are sentimental, and at times clearly rooted in stock eighteenth-century picturesque, even pastoral, characters such as the milkmaid or shepherd.<sup>12</sup> Idealised visual depictions of child singers are positively Dickensian – it is plausible that such images and writings were among his earliest influences. These may have been designed to engage with moral debates, in defence of traditional, sentimentalised street culture. But it is likelier that, with

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<sup>10</sup> J. Magee, *Some Account of the Travels of John Magee* (Paisley, 1826); Love, *The Life, Adventures, and Experience*.

<sup>11</sup> Langford, *A Century*, ii, pp.269-77; *The Ballad Book [a collection, preceded by a life of Charles Lesly]* (Edinburgh, 1827); ‘Gulielmus Dubliniensis Humoriensis’, *Memoir of the Great Original Zozimus (Michael Moran)*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Dublin, 1976); Corvan, *A Choice Collection*, pp.136-8, 140-2; Mather, *The Songs*, *passim*; Harland, *The Songs of the Wilsons*, *passim*; J.T. Smith, *Vagabondiana* (1817), pp.27-9, 33, 36, 45-6.

<sup>12</sup> Playbills reveal that ‘Ballad-Singer’ was even a stock role in pantomimes: e.g. notice reproduced in *European Magazine*, 45 (Jan. 1804), p.58.

their abstracted backdrops and mannered prettiness, their goals were market-driven; scenes of everyday life intended to charm and amuse. As Dickinson has long since made clear, this market was both polite, and largely metropolitan.<sup>13</sup> The burgeoning middling demand for prints – a now familiar subject – was especially susceptible to the charms of sentimental scenes of local life.<sup>14</sup> These had their apogee in Thomas Barker's undated 'A Young Ballad Singer' – a Romantic oil painting of a cherubic, curly-mopped ragamuffin under a wayside tree – and John Russell's 1793 pastel work 'Love Songs and Matches', in which the singer is a rosy-cheeked, blond angel accompanied by a be-ribboned dog.<sup>15</sup> Both featured boys, as did Jane Taylor's famous poem of 1804, 'The Beggar Boy', featuring a generic pedlar rather than a specialised singer, which combined tropes of the worthy urchin with details of his wares:

I'm a poor little beggar, my mammy is dead;  
My daddy is naughty, and gives me no bread:  
O'er London's wide streets all the day long I roam,  
And when night comes on, I've got never a home.

I would not be idle, like some wicked boys,  
So I got me a basket with trinkets and toys;  
Nobody was e'er more industrious than I,  
Nobody more willing to sell, if you'll buy.

I've Bonaparte's life, and adventures, and birth,  
And histories of all the great men of the earth:  
Enigmas, and riddles, and stories complete:  
Come buy them, dear ladies, a penny a sheet.<sup>16</sup>

The same went for little girls. Two etchings after John Rising, 'The Young Ballad Singers' from the 1790s and 'The Ballad Girl' from 1809, echo the above paintings down to the neat wicker baskets and the pretty little dog.<sup>17</sup> The former is reproduced overleaf.

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<sup>13</sup> H.T. Dickinson, *Caricatures and the Constitution, 1760-1832* (Cambridge, 1986), pp.14-15.

<sup>14</sup> D. Donald, *The Age of Caricature: Satirical Prints in the Reign of George III* (Yale, 1996), pp.2-5. See also B.M. Stafford, 'The Eighteenth-Century: Toward an Interdisciplinary Model', *The Art Bulletin*, 70, no.1 (1988), pp.11, 17.

<sup>15</sup> Holburne Museum of Art, Bath, nos. A108, A366.

<sup>16</sup> Appendix no.26.

<sup>17</sup> 'The Ballad Girl', BM no.2010,7081.3573.



**Figure 1.** J. Jones (engraver) after J. Rising, 'The Young Ballad Singers', c.1790-8. Mezzotint. BM no.2010,7081.2456.

Mr Cherry's song 'The Beggar Girl', S.J. Arnold's song 'Little Bess the Ballad Singer', and Eaglesfield Smith's poem 'On seeing a surly watchman drive a little beggar-child from the streets, for singing ballads', all elicit pity and romanticise their subjects in the manner of Taylor's poem.<sup>18</sup> Interestingly, 'The Beggar Girl', published in 1800, specifies that the orphan's father was a sailor who 'fell in battle'; linking distress to military sacrifice in order to solicit charity was a key theme of begging and ballad singing during the wars.<sup>19</sup>

Similarly compassionate depictions could extend into adulthood. Grown women treated in this fashion were always large or shapeless, with an infant, rather than depicted as sexually attractive. The stereotype of the stout, careworn single mother could be used to other ends, as seen below, but positive, charitable depictions existed in both verse and image.<sup>20</sup> Interestingly, just as Smith's poem, above, references a real-life incident, two prose sketches of old male singers proclaim their authenticity. The author of 'The Benevolent Sailor' claims to have witnessed the eponymous tar buying both a ballad from and bread for the 'melancholy figure of a blind man, who was singing a song of love.'<sup>21</sup> Judging by Love's accounts of the extreme generosity of sailors on shore-leave, flush with prize money, who gave 'sixpence or a shilling' where a halfpenny would do, the incident is probably authentic.<sup>22</sup> Two years later, the author of a travel diary entitled an entire chapter 'The Ballad Singer', discussing 'a real object of compassion' – an old male singer of remarkable neatness and cleanliness, clearly not born to the life.<sup>23</sup> In this case, it is the author who is moved to part with his change. In both, it is pathos derived from age and incapacity that prompts the charitable treatment.

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<sup>18</sup> Appendix nos. 27, 175; *European Magazine*, 64 (Aug. 1813), pp.147-8.

<sup>19</sup> Below, pp.231-3.

<sup>20</sup> 'The Ballad Singer' (Appendix no.8) is the best example in song. Visually, see 'The Ballad Singer(s)', print after Emma Crewe (c.1781), BM no.1917,1208.3079; 'The Ballad Singer', print after Henry Singleton (c.1775-1804), BM no.1884,0209.14; 'Untitled', print by Thomas Rowlandson (1799), Madden 1:3. Many other images, predominantly of women, are discussed in B.P. Millar, 'Eighteenth-Century Views of the Ballad', *Western Folklore*, 9, no. 2 (1950), pp. 124-135.

<sup>21</sup> *Britannic Magazine*, 1, no.12 (1793), p.376.

<sup>22</sup> Love, *The Life, Adventures, and Experience*, p.67.

<sup>23</sup> *The observant pedestrian; or, traits of the heart* (2 vols., 1795), ii, pp.211-2.

The descent of respectable persons to the level of street singers undoubtedly occurred, rendering the last account plausible. Moral reformers gestured to such falls in dire warnings to sinners.<sup>24</sup> Such a plight could also prompt sympathy from one's erstwhile peers. The subject was often a bookseller.<sup>25</sup> Yet one salacious, improbable tale concerned a young heiress of Inverary, cheated of a £3-4,000 fortune and given the pox by a scoundrel, and thus forced to sink to the level of a ballad singer.<sup>26</sup> This last report carries an undertone of sexual prurience that generally obtained when the imagined singer was young and female. Rowlandson's 1789 print 'The Ballad Singer' features a sexless, mature woman.<sup>27</sup> But his undated 'The Ballad Singers' is a coquettish study of two girls, with lowered eyes and plump bare arms, the hand of one casually resting against the wide expanse of the other's bosom. It is reproduced overleaf.

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<sup>24</sup> E.g. *Religious tracts, dispersed by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge* (12 vols., 1800), xii, p.28.

<sup>25</sup> West, *Fifty Years' Recollections*, p.50; Deacon, *John Clare*, p.40.

<sup>26</sup> W. Thomson, *Travels in Scotland, by an Unusual Route* (2 vols., 1807), ii, p.556.

<sup>27</sup> National Library of Wales, Thomas Rowlandson collection, PZ52.



**Figure 2.** T. Rowlandson, 'The Ballad Singers', n.d.  
Watercolour. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, no.B1977.14.367.

Other pictures, such as the 1780s London print ‘Dotage’, were more explicit: in this case a busty ballad singer is being pawed at by an old lecher.<sup>28</sup> The latter image had a Hogarthian moral purpose; the former, given Rowlandson’s pornographic side-line, probably did not.

Works of fiction elided the pure yet vulnerable damsel with the fall from grace. Numerous short romances carried by the polite London press contained more than a hint of sexuality. Typically, the gallant protagonist intervenes to preserve the (suspect) honour of a ragged singer, only to discover her noble birth: inevitably, a marriage follows which restores her proper station.<sup>29</sup> These stories differ from the static romantic image of contemporary prints in their implicit redemptive narrative: however virtuous the individual, the occupation of ballad singer is seen as romantic precisely because of its disreputable connotations. Thus in Maria Edgeworth’s novel ‘The Ballad Singer’, the fallen heroine Angeline is viewed with suspicion by her aristocratic audience, before her true identity is revealed:

“Oh! the light-fingered practices of those gentry are pretty well known,” said a spruce Baronet: “and this said BALLAD SINGER, I presume, is of eminence in her profession. We had better keep a good eye on the plate; those sugar-dispensers and fruit-spoons are all portable.”<sup>30</sup>

One anonymous story differs in taking for its subject the stereotypical widow, with three infants and a husband to bury. Before the narrator is moved by knowledge of her plight, he jumps to similar conclusions to the baronet:

I considered her to be one of those common beggars that infest the streets of the metropolis to prey upon the compassion of well-disposed persons. They are a class of people who make benevolence a means of plunging into riot and excess – and misery, a cloak to cover the effects of drunkenness and sensuality.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> ‘Dotage’, print after Heroman van der Mijl (c.1780s), BM no.2010,7081.976.

<sup>29</sup> E.g. ‘The Ballad Singer’, in *Belle Assemblée* (Oct. 1811), pp.185-9, in which the singer is sixteen.

<sup>30</sup> Edgeworth, *The Ballad Singer*, iv, p.71.

<sup>31</sup> *Lady’s Monthly Museum*, 2 (Mar. 1807), p.115.

In the most engaging of these works, the fifteen-year-old heroine is impoverished from birth.<sup>32</sup> It is only her virtue, not her rank, which is threatened, in unusually graphic style:

I had been decoyed into the house of a vile procuress, and destined to the most degrading purpose...if they knew there was no person, in reality, who had any claim to me, of a legal nature, they would throw off all fear of detection, and use me with unprincipled violence.<sup>33</sup>

Published at Falkirk rather than London, the story is unusually egalitarian: the villain is a Baronet; her redemption ends in a governess' post rather than as a rich wife, while her fellow singer obtains a place in a glover's.<sup>34</sup> Its rich and colourful detail appears to be drawn from genuine experience of the life in question. As such, it shares much with autobiographical redemption narratives such as Mary Saxby's *Memoirs*, which also dwelt upon the peculiarly feminine perils of ballad singing.<sup>35</sup> Saxby and others may well have exaggerated the iniquities to which they were subject, as a trope by which to heighten the contrast with their state of relative grace after an evangelical conversion experience. These nuanced, romanticised attitudes stood at odds with the moral condemnation of female singers found in reformist literature, complicating their social position as mediators of song.

The prospect of redemption, combined with a compassionate portrayal, is a common feature of these stories: though the writers depict singers as low and disreputable, they are criticising a social situation, not the morals of their characters. Curiously, in one stereotype, it was the singer himself who became a moral arbiter. Two further stories published at London cast ballad singers as mouthpieces of popular opprobrium, articulating righteous censure at hypocritical targets.<sup>36</sup> In both cases, these are anticlerical actions, aimed at abuses of the church. Performed at Sadler's Wells, the song 'The Ballad

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<sup>32</sup> 'E. Wargrove', *The Surprising History of a Ballad Singer* (Falkirk, 1818).

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.17-18.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.20, 24.

<sup>35</sup> M. Saxby, *Memoirs of a Female Vagrant, Written by Herself* (1806).

<sup>36</sup> *London Magazine*, 4, no.22 (Oct.1821), pp.405-6; Johnstone, *Chrysal*, ii, pp.7-11.

Singer's Duett' [*sic.*] devoted seven verses to condemning the hypocrisy of all manner of persons from preachers to publicans, contrasting their sins with the openness of the 'merry merry songsters'.<sup>37</sup> These fictitious accounts mirror anecdotes told of real singers such as Joseph Mather, who held to account quacks, employers, and magistrates, reinforcing widespread polite respect for the popular authority of the ballad singer's pronouncements.<sup>38</sup> Thus in the second of the stories above, the singer is fittingly named Momus, after the Greek god of satire. There was a different Greek allusion more frequently applied to male ballad singers during the Wars: that of Homer. It was this reference that did most to endorse the authority of male singers, and to recommend them to patriotic songwriters as mediators.

In 1821, the *London Magazine* sought to dispel what it saw as an all-too-prevalent myth about Homer: 'The idea of this old minstrel that floats about the mob of readers, is something like the frontispiece to *Scarronides*; a blind ballad-singer, with a fist-full of printed songs.'<sup>39</sup> In the years before this article, plays featured 'Mr. Homer, a blind old ballad-singer'; even Tommy Moore, neither blind nor destitute, was compared to Homer.<sup>40</sup> Subsequent biographers of both Charles 'Mussel Mou'd Charlie' Lesly of Aberdeen and Michael 'The Great Zozimus' Moran of Dublin (c.1794-1846), two famous ballad singers neglected by scholars, made the same Homeric comparison, as did Douglas Jerrold in his oft-cited elegy for the Napoleonic ballad singer.<sup>41</sup> The *National Magazine* used Homer to evoke the entire street ballad culture of Dublin.<sup>42</sup> Even James Rankin, a humble

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<sup>37</sup> Appendix no.10.

<sup>38</sup> Mather, *The Songs*, pp.vii, viii, ix (three incidents)

<sup>39</sup> *London Magazine*, 4, no.21 (Sep. 1821), p.269.

<sup>40</sup> *Theatre, or, Dramatic and Literary Mirror*, 2, no.16 (24 July 1819), p.23; *The Fudger Fudged; or, The Devil and T\*\*\*Y M\*\*\*E* (1819), p.8.

<sup>41</sup> *The Ballad Book*, pp.iii-iv; Gulielmus, *Memoir*, p.3; Jerrold, in *Heads of the People*, ii, p.289. See also H. Shields, 'Moran, Michael [Zozimus] (c.1794–1846)', *ODNB*, at [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/37780](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/37780), accessed 14 Aug. 2013.

<sup>42</sup> *National Magazine*, 1, no.2 (Aug. 1830), p.194.

Aberdeenshire itinerant, was flattered by the likeness.<sup>43</sup> Blindness was a factor in only two of these allusions, and by no means decisive even then. The post-war Homeric allegory was rooted in a grander narrative. As William Hone wrote in his compendium of 1825, ‘We know little of the times sung by Homer but from his verses’.<sup>44</sup> ‘The times’ is the key: the ballad singer was to Homer as the Napoleonic Wars were to the siege of Troy. In classicising the ballad singer, English patriots were fleshing out a new legend.

This self-aggrandising phenomenon was first analysed in theologian Richard Whately’s 1819 tract *Historic Doubts Relative to Napoleon Bonaparte*, a jeu d’esprit from a young Oxford scholar, the real aim of which was to defend the Gospels against scepticism.<sup>45</sup> Whately ranks Napoleon above Philip of Macedon, Alexander and Caesar, deeming classical comparisons ‘vain’, before proceeding to the heart of the matter.<sup>46</sup>

There is one more circumstance which I cannot forbear mentioning, because it so much adds to the air of fiction which pervades every part of this marvellous tale; and that is, the nationality of it.

Bonaparte prevailed over all the hostile States in turn, *except England...* and to crown all, *England* finally crushes this tremendous power, which had so long kept the continent in subjection or in alarm; and to the *English* he surrenders himself prisoner! Thoroughly national, to be sure!<sup>47</sup>

He dubs the Wars England’s *Iliad* or *Aeneid*: ‘Bonaparte’s exploits seem magnified in order to enhance the glory of his conquerors’.<sup>48</sup> For a classically-educated elite, there was no other comparison worthy for Britain’s own epic. Pierce Egan’s 1821 *Life in London* parodies this Grecian self-fashioning. Its opening Cruikshank illustration features a disreputable ballad singer at the base of a classical motif, the Corinthian columns, plinths and wreaths subverted by the addition of this and other contemporary low-lives.<sup>49</sup> One

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<sup>43</sup> D. Buchan, *The Ballad and the Folk*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (East Linton, 1997), p.211.

<sup>44</sup> W. Hone, *The Every-Day Book; or, the Guide to the Year* (1825), p.204.

<sup>45</sup> R. Whately, *Historic Doubts Relative to Napoleon Bonaparte* (1985).

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p.25.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.34-5.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p.35.

<sup>49</sup> Egan, *Life in London*, p.xiii.

patriotic song inserted early on epitomises the hyperbole of both Homeric and historical classical allusions:

*Avast! Achilles, Grecian famed,  
And fiery Hector, Trojan named;  
Avast! Your Philips, Alexanders,  
Your Caesars too, war's Salamanders;  
And eke gave way, Imperial NAP,  
For thou alike didst doff the cap  
To Neptune's darling son of war,  
I mean JACK JUNK, the British tar.*<sup>50</sup>

Classical comparisons were not restricted to the post-war period. As early as 1798, Francophile poet Helen Maria Williams gave Napoleon a Homeric parallel.<sup>51</sup> Eccleston, the Lancastrian Bonapartist of 1802 who later repented, compared Napoleon physically to Alexander, but placed his statesmanship above the Greeks, and praised his idol for having Plutarch's *Lives* ever in his pocket.<sup>52</sup> Watson's analysis of Romantic war-time literature discusses writers' frequent use of Homer and Virgil to emphasise the transcendent qualities of the ongoing conflict.<sup>53</sup> The association of the ballad singer, supposed mouthpiece of loyalist accounts, with Homer, fulfilled a heroic need.

This was a comfort to loyalists only as long as the story being sung was their version: the dignity and poetic authority the comparison accorded the street singer may otherwise have been highly problematic. Obvious tensions existed in all positive conceptions of the ballad singer, principally because they were at odds with prevailing attitudes. David Love writes that, as singers were 'despised' and 'set at naught', he 'must go many miles distant' from his home when singing to avoid disgrace.<sup>54</sup> Even in literature, the figure could have strong negative connotations. The specifically Irish ballad singer might be dismissed by

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p.55.

<sup>51</sup> D. Kennedy, 'Englishwomen and Napoleon Bonaparte', in Maierhofer *et al.*, *Women Against Napoleon*, p.40.

<sup>52</sup> Eccleston, *A Sketch*, pp.18, inside cover, 4.

<sup>53</sup> Watson, *Romanticism and War*, p.32.

<sup>54</sup> Love, *The Life, Adventures, and Experience*, p.33.

English authors as a jolly, half-witted bumpkin, fit for taking off in song.<sup>55</sup> The singer was disparaged in passing by major writers. Goldsmith's narrator likens his eldest daughter's 'vulgar attitudes' to a ballad singer's in *The Vicar of Wakefield*.<sup>56</sup> To Wordsworth, the singer was abject, 'single and alone', standing where 'files of ballads dangle from dead walls'.<sup>57</sup> After Waterloo, the metropolitan rise in numbers of beggars and ballad singers, and the resultant legislation, prompted J.T. Smith to compile his *Vagabondiana* in indulgent defence of his subject. But others saw the rise as a nuisance. The debate was enacted in Bartlett's 1817 farce, *The Soldier's Return*:

*Old Mordrant.* A very pretty heroic ditty, upon my word! And now your fine lover is about to be discharged for want of employment for such coxcombs, I suppose you intend commencing ballad-singer, whilst he grinds music at your elbow, and begs of passers-by to 'relieve a poor soldier.'

*Cecilia.* Oh! sir, do not sport with his misfortunes; the man who has stood up in the defence of his country, and shed his dearest blood for her protection abroad, is surely entitled to our respect at home.<sup>58</sup>

As late as 1821, Egan's *Life in London* contained negative depictions of ballad singers, portraying them as talentless, disreputable charlatans.<sup>59</sup> This had much in common with contemporary received wisdom, a discourse only Rouse has emphasised: 'It must not be forgotten that the ballad was coupled with the balladeer, a thing of rags and tatters' ... 'the singer under present discussion is by and large... a raggie-taggle figure of dubious origins who bawled his tunes through stinking, filth-ridden streets.'<sup>60</sup> Polite repulsion at singers' appearances, however, was a minor detail set against concerns over singers' morals. Firstly, commentators associated the ballad singer with threats to property. These could be

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<sup>55</sup> J. Collins, 'The Chapter of War' (Appendix no.77), C.F. Barret, 'The Irish Pedlar', C.F. Barret (156).

<sup>56</sup> O. Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1800), p.56.

<sup>57</sup> W. Wordsworth, 'The Prelude' (New York, 1850), pp.178-9.

<sup>58</sup> J.M. Bartlett, 'The Soldier's Return; A Musical Farce in Two Acts', in *Lady's Monthly Magazine*, 6 (Sep. 1817), p.154.

<sup>59</sup> Egan, *Life in London*, pp.174, 234, 374-5, 378.

<sup>60</sup> Rouse, *The Remunerated Vernacular Singer*, pp.10, 108.

indirect; the crowd drawn by a singer provided a perfect target for pickpockets.<sup>61</sup> They could be more calculated; the Lord Mayor ‘had the fact from indubitable authority, that ballad-singers, and such persons, were leagued with, and in pay of, pick-pockets’.<sup>62</sup> They could be direct: ‘I took note, also, of her success in picking of pockets...and squeaking out the history of Robin Goodfellow, or singing the ballad of Black-eyed Susan.’<sup>63</sup> Charles Dibdin the Younger’s experience was an ironic inversion of the virtuous urchin sentiment seen above. The anecdote, from 1814, is worth quoting at length:

We brought out a little boy...whom we announced as Master Demar; who had a very sweet, strong, and flexible voice. Mr. Reeve had frequently heard him singing Ballads in the Street wherein he resided, and was so much pleased with the Voice, that he called him into the house one day, and questioned him, concerning his Parents, and how he came to sing in the Streets. The Boy, (about 10 to 12) told, with much *naiveté*, an apparently artless tale. His Mother was dead: and his Father, a journeyman Hair Dresser, had turned him into the Street; where by begging, he obtained money enough to buy a few Ballads, and between begging and Ballad singing he had supported himself, from the time that he was deserted by his Father; sleeping at night, under Sheds, or wherever he could hide his head. Reeve...resolved to snatch him from what he considered would be his destruction... But, Master Demar, also became more than pleased with many articles of Reeve’s Plate, with which, one Morning, before anyone was up, but the Servant, he absconded, from Reeve’s House, and we never heard any more of him.<sup>64</sup>

Where no specific crime could be imputed, descriptions imply nefarious intent, whether anecdotal – ‘an old, unshaven ballad-chanter, who looked as if he had made a hair’s-breadth escape from one of his Majesty’s houses of correction’ – or legal:

*Persons described in the statute of 17. Geo. II. as rogues and vagabonds, comprising... ballad-singers, minstrels with hurdy-gurdies and hand-organs, &c. ... All these different classes of vagabonds visit almost every fair and horse-race in the country, and live generally by fraud and deception.*<sup>65</sup>

Such troubling connotations resulted in tensions between singers and authorities, compromising their utility as loyalist mediators and increasing their subversive potential.

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<sup>61</sup> B. Silliman, *A journal of travels in England, Holland, and Scotland*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (2 vols., Boston, 1812), i, pp.166-7.

<sup>62</sup> *Examiner*, 457 (29 Sep. 1816), p.623.

<sup>63</sup> *European Magazine*, 50 (Oct. 1806), p.280.

<sup>64</sup> Speaight, *Professional & Literary Memoirs*, pp.109-10.

<sup>65</sup> *Exchange Herald* (31 Aug. 1826), cited in Elbourne, ‘A Mirror of Man?’, pp.467-8; P. Colquhoun, *A Treatise on Indigence* (1806), p.41.

Of still greater concern than their essential criminality, was the perceived threat of singers to morality. Part of this was sexual. One moral reformer detected the influence of female ballad singers in the performance of religious music: ‘some of the girls that stood by her sung the praises of God just as if they had been ballads; and tossed their bonnets back, and let their cloaks hang about their shoulders as if they were ballad singers.’<sup>66</sup> Singers were also strongly associated with drunkenness.<sup>67</sup> Yet it was the union of a singer’s personal habits with the sentiments expressed in his or her songs that caused greatest consternation.

The effects of the fulsome, obscene, and improper songs that are sung to a surrounding *mob*, composed of people of all ages, who affect the sneering grin or fascinating look, when any thing ludicrous or infamous is expressed, must assuredly be stamped and riveted on the imagination, and ultimately corrupt the morals of the idle crowd.<sup>68</sup>

This typical article supposed a specific London origin of immorality: St. Giles. A decade earlier, a similar piece pinpointed the source as ‘the neighbourhood of Chancery Lane, the Admiralty, in that part of Piccadilly near St. James’s Street, and in other quarters’.<sup>69</sup> Yet these fears were spread across our period chronologically and geographically, especially in England and Ireland. Singers’ actions were seen as potent; terms such as ‘licentious’, ‘destructive’, ‘subversive’, ‘seditious’ and ‘treasonable’ were common.<sup>70</sup> Writers were genuinely alarmed about the effect upon the general populace. As such vocabulary reveals, these fears were political as well as moral, the two aspects generally being conceived as intrinsically related.

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<sup>66</sup> *Religious tracts*, xii, p.29.

<sup>67</sup> POB, t17870221-29; G. Davis, ‘Saint Monday; or, Scenes from Low-Life: A Poem’ (Birmingham, 1790), p.11 (Appendix no.295); Palmer, *A Touch on the Times*, p.13. The wider connection between singing and inebriation, frequently assumed by prosecutors and others, is strikingly apparent from a brief survey of POB accounts cited herein.

<sup>68</sup> *Scourge*, 7 (May 1814), pp.378-9.

<sup>69</sup> *An address to the public, from the Society for the Suppression of Vice* (1804), p.37 fn.

<sup>70</sup> J. Hall, *Tour through Ireland; particularly the interior & least known parts* (2 vols., 1813), ii, p.266; *Belfast Monthly Magazine*, 4, no.22 (May 1810), p.321; Southey, *Music-Making*, p.195; *Patriot*, 6 (2 Oct. 1819), pp.93-4; *Weekly Entertainer*, 42 (8 Aug. 1803), p.103.

This fear provoked responses of varying practicality. Some measures remained merely hypothetical.<sup>71</sup> An 1816 proposal to transport all Britain's singers to the colonies understandably gained little traction.<sup>72</sup> Some private societies, following More's example, resolved to co-opt singers to a nobler purpose by subsidising their distribution of tracts.<sup>73</sup> Such intentions were common; their implementation is harder to gauge. Other stances were firmer. In 1794, the corporation of Birmingham decreed that all strolling ballad singers were to be apprehended and removed from the city.<sup>74</sup> Patrick Colquhoun, the most voluble metropolitan reformist, oscillated between all these positions, advocating the regulated use of singers to loyalist and moral ends in 1800, insisting on the rigorous sentencing of '*fine, imprisonment, and the pillory*' for singers in 1803, and adopting a more equivocal stance by 1806: 'since they cannot be suppressed, they might be greatly reduced by licensing a certain number under peculiar and severe restrictions.'<sup>75</sup> No full-scale measure was attempted until the cessation of hostilities, beginning with the 1815 Mendicity report.<sup>76</sup> This report, discussed with regard to performance, below, was part of a wider government drive to tackle mendicancy in the capital, exacerbated by the laying-off of servicemen and the nascent economic depression caused by the peace.

In subsequent years, responses toughened in both England and Scotland. A private society was dedicated to the question.<sup>77</sup> London's beadle was instructed specifically regarding their duty to remove ballad singers.<sup>78</sup> Unlicensed Scottish singers were to be forcibly returned to their parish of origin.<sup>79</sup> The wider potential of this law so terrified

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<sup>71</sup> E.g. C. Weston, *Remarks on the poor laws, and on the state of the poor* (Brentford, 1802), p.151.

<sup>72</sup> 'British Traveller', *The Colonial policy of Great Britain* (1816), p.225.

<sup>73</sup> E.g. *First report of the Liverpool Religious Tract Society, MDCCCXV* (Liverpool, 1815), p.8.

<sup>74</sup> Palmer, *Birmingham Ballads*, p.4.

<sup>75</sup> P. Colquhoun, *A Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis*, 6<sup>th</sup> edn (1800), p.348, idem, *A Treatise on the Functions and Duties of a Constable* (1803), p.6; idem, *A Treatise on Indigence*, p.74.

<sup>76</sup> *Report from Committee on the State of Mendicity in the Metropolis* (1815).

<sup>77</sup> *The First Report of the Society Established in London for the Suppression of Mendicity* (1819).

<sup>78</sup> *New police report for 1817. The second report of the select committee* (1817), p.594.

<sup>79</sup> R. Burns, *Historical dissertations on the law and practice of Great Britain, and particularly of Scotland, with regard to the poor*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Edinburgh, 1819), p.265.

David Love, then at Nottingham, that he fled the city, taking refuge in London, lest he be separated from his wife and taken back to Scotland.<sup>80</sup> In 1819 the residents of Oldham St, Manchester, petitioned the police in protest at ‘the pestilent and grievous nuisance of profane and debauched ballad singing, by men and women, to the corrupting of the minds and morals of the public in general, and our children and servants in particular’, and the police duly obliged, removing the singers.<sup>81</sup> In the same year, Francis Place reminisced about the ‘bawdy’, ‘blackguard’, ‘infamous’ songs heard in his youth. He attributed the decline in both songs and singers to associations such as Reeves’, the Society for the Suppression of Vice, and local magistrates, whose methods rested as much on threats of violence as on genuine reform.<sup>82</sup>

The bulk of these actions occurred after Waterloo. This prevarication – Colquhoun *et al.* had been calling for such measures for more than a decade – may have been due to the establishment’s need of the singer to promulgate loyalist propaganda during the conflict: authorities could not afford to suppress their own popular mouthpieces. Yet this earlier alliance was by no means an easy one, as the disquiet above makes clear. Wartime ballad singers could not be relied upon as passive mediators of loyalist material. As seen below, singers’ performances were often inimical to a loyalist stance, by virtue of their setting, appearance and underlying mentalities. But just as tellingly, polite qualms about singers’ morals and politics were justified: ballad singers frequently were criminal, seditious and treasonable. As such, they were wholly unsuitable mediators of prim exhortations to obedience such as ‘A King or a Consul?’, or of the jolly yeoman appeals of ‘The Ploughman’s Ditty’, and far more suited to anti-authoritarian songs about the press-gang and crimps, and the privations of war.

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<sup>80</sup> Love, *The Life, Adventures, and Experience*, pp.145-6.

<sup>81</sup> Cited variously, inc. Vicinus, *Broadsides of the Industrial North* (Newcastle, 1975), pp.12-13.

<sup>82</sup> F. Place, *Manners. Morals*. British Library, Add. MSS. 27825, f.144-5.

We know nothing of the majority of singers. Yet almost all our information of individuals, treated here collectively for the first time, reveals attitudes and actions at odds with law and order, loyalism, and even patriotism. We have encountered the radical leanings of singer-songwriters such as Freeth.<sup>83</sup> David Love was arrested consecutively in Newcastle, Durham and Hull, either for breaching the peace or on suspicion of burglary.<sup>84</sup> His famous poem ‘Remarks on the times’ decried the ‘oppression of the poor’, and claimed that ‘Sin caus’d the present war abroad’.<sup>85</sup> Moran agitated in the Catholic cause, lampooning Orangemen and praising O’Connell.<sup>86</sup> His fellow Irishman, peripatetic singer and poet Tomàs Ruadh O’Sullivan, was also an advocate of O’Connell, with close connections to Wild Geese – ex-patriot Irishmen in Napoleon’s forces – whose songs often targeted landowners and tithing proctors.<sup>87</sup> Charles Lesly was a known Jacobite, credited with notorious pro-Stuart songs.<sup>88</sup> Those of a younger generation were often Jacobins, such as the ‘Jacobin Fish-woman’ who sung ballads in Liverpool.<sup>89</sup> Celebrated Mancunian singer Michael Wilson was a self-confessed Jacobin who ‘occasionally avowed his political opinions so strongly, that his family were for some time in great fear of his being apprehended’.<sup>90</sup> As discussed above, their own radical material has rarely survived: the Wilson family, for example, rarely dared print their songs.<sup>91</sup> Wilson was, however, successful enough in his other, mercantile endeavours to commission a portrait, in which he posed with one hand on a life of Wesley, and the other on a book titled ‘Democracy’.<sup>92</sup> Sheffield’s Joseph Mather was another Jacobin.<sup>93</sup> His 1790s output included two radical

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<sup>83</sup> Chapter Two, pp.74-6.

<sup>84</sup> Love, *The Life, Adventures, and Experience*, pp.102-4.

<sup>85</sup> Appendix no.284.

<sup>86</sup> Gulielmus, *Memoir*, p.24.

<sup>87</sup> S. Dub, *The Songs of Tomàs Ruadh O’Sullivan, The Iveragh Poet* (Dublin, 1914), pp.12, 9, 18.

<sup>88</sup> *The Ballad Book*, iii.

<sup>89</sup> *A Collection of addresses, songs, squibs, &c. published at Liverpool* (Isleman, 1807), p.83.

<sup>90</sup> Harland, *The Songs of the Wilsons*, pp.23-5.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.11, 21, 24, 49.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p.25.

<sup>93</sup> Mather, *The Songs*, ix.

1794 compositions on Pitt's repression and the treatment of other Jacobins, and a later piece entitled 'God save great Thomas Paine'.<sup>94</sup> One may guess its tune. John Magee, the itinerant and sometime ballad singer who dictated his 1820 memoir at Paisley, was the most actively dissolute of these singers, having served as a drill-sergeant for the United Irishmen.<sup>95</sup> After fleeing across the Irish Sea, he was arrested on numerous occasions, either for theft, or the more political crimes of wearing tricolour cockades and selling seditious material.<sup>96</sup> He enraged some audiences by praising 'the French emperor', and his views were altogether radical.<sup>97</sup> Nevertheless, Magee escaped prolonged incarceration, unlike Tomos Glyn Cothi, the itinerant weaver of south Wales discussed in Chapter Two, who took his dissenting and radical interests too far when he sung a seditious song in public, receiving the pillory twice, and two years in prison, in 1801.<sup>98</sup>

In spite of the risks, all these singers were to some extent open advocates of radical, Bonapartist, or otherwise seditious opinions. It is unclear whether they were exceptional or representative; lack of evidence will forever preclude an absolute judgement. Yet they constitute a powerful endorsement, uncontradicted by counter-example, of the scruples of polite commentators when discussing ballad singers. These individuals were anything but reliable role models of loyalism, and the investing of singers with power over popular opinion was a deeply hazardous act on the part of propagandists.

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<sup>94</sup> Appendix no.282, 'Britons Awake' (63), 'True Reformers' (343), Appendix no.138.

<sup>95</sup> Magee, *Some Account*, p.30.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.19-20, 31, 34.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.38, 37, 12.

<sup>98</sup> Löffler, *Welsh Responses*, p.29.

## Singing

It is clear from the post-war song tradition, and the evidence of other source types throughout this thesis, that Napoleon figured prominently in the popular psyche during the Wars, exercising a powerful and complex imaginative hold over the people and uniting realms of political and apolitical discourse. This did not of course mean that most performances in the period were of songs of Napoleon: the demands of genre and repertoire precluded the domination of loyalist themes in particular, as seen below. Sadly, as Gammon points out, ‘broadsheet ballad collections may give us little insight into what was actually performed and need to be compared with full repertoires of singers when these are available.’<sup>99</sup> No individual popular repertoires *are* available; we are forced to hypothesise. It is perhaps significant that most anecdotes of actual performance, where they specify a song, name apolitical love songs, comic and bawdy songs, or venerable ballads like ‘Chevy Chase’. The testimony of Joseph Ramsbottom, a Lancastrian, provides further insight:

In almost every country village there is a stock of well-known songs... the best of which have seldom risen to the dignity of being printed, even on a broadsheet; yet they maintain their hold on the minds and in the hearts of our villagers, by whom the songs of our greatest singers are altogether uncared for... and with whom even the popular street lyrics of our large towns obtain only a transient resting place before they pass away into obscurity.<sup>100</sup>

Though Ramsbottom’s prose stylings call for a degree of scepticism, there is a valuable lesson here: song culture did not consist solely of current or published pieces, just as the UK Top 40 is not representative of present-day listening habits. Singers were demonstrably aware of the need to cater to audiences’ eclecticism, going so far as to carry both ‘godly books’ and ‘stupid’ ballads, ready for all eventualities.<sup>101</sup> As Magee learned

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<sup>99</sup> Gammon, ‘Problems of Method’, p.18.

<sup>100</sup> Cited in Elbourne, *Music*, p.29.

<sup>101</sup> Plumptre, *A Collection*, p.4 *fn.*

from experience, ‘Some would call for ballads, play books, or political pamphlets; so very different is the taste of men.’<sup>102</sup>

Our only examples of full repertoires are artificial:

Sweet ditties would my Patty sing,  
*Old Chevy Chase, God Save the King,*  
*Fair Rosemy, The Sawny Scot,*  
*Lillibulero, the Irish Trot*<sup>103</sup>

So ran a verse in Dibdin’s opera *The Milkmaid*. Working within the constraints of rhyme and meter, Dibdin was striving for a ‘British’ effect. More plausibly ‘authentic’ is Henry Robson’s song of c.1800, ‘The Northern Minstrel’s Budget’.<sup>104</sup> Robson claimed a Northumbrian minstrel would be able to play or sing all the songs and tunes listed in his song, many of which are famous to this day. Of the 230 titles he names, two referenced soldiers, and two were generically patriotic: ‘The Famed Anti-Gallican Privateer’ (Roud no.3169), and the rather more famed ‘O’er the Hills and Far Away’ (Roud no.8460). Conversely, there were two Jacobite numbers – ‘The White Cockade’ (Roud no.191) and ‘O’er the Water to Charley’ (Roud no.729) – and two against the press-gang: ‘Liberty for Sailors’ (Roud no.3179) and ‘Here’s the Cutter coming with a lousy crew’. This left 222 songs or tunes of no contemporary political import. Once again, this emphasises the greater likelihood of non-partisan songs of Napoleon entering these repertoires, than that of pieces limited by their contemporary political message.

The danger of leaning on Robson and Ramsbottom is that we revive the old canard of a rich rural oral tradition and a cheap, ephemeral urban song culture, as it may be argued that, unlike these well-versed ‘minstrels’, the average city ballad singer was a mere journeyman, turning to the trade to avoid persecution as a beggar and abandoning it just as quickly. Urban singers had greater ease of access to topical material. As Palmer writes of

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<sup>102</sup> Magee, *Some Account*, p.18.

<sup>103</sup> R. Nettel, *Sing a Song of England: A Social History of Traditional Song* (1954), p.159.

<sup>104</sup> Appendix no.240.

Birmingham, 'The best seller was perhaps sensational crime, followed by news of death and disaster.'<sup>105</sup> Yet the overall argument is invalid. Even printers like Pitts and Jennings, heavily invested in the propaganda campaign, published far more songs in other genres: traditional numbers were as common and popular in print as in remote villages. Commercial printers facilitated mixed repertoires; the standard broadside had two songs, often one old and one new, or one comic and one tragic, whilst garlands and songbooks could cater to still greater diversity. Right across the Isles, singers were drawing on wide-ranging repertoires and combining different genres of song. This reality is best articulated in Rising's aforementioned etching 'The Ballad Girl', reproduced overleaf.

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<sup>105</sup> Palmer, *Birmingham Ballads*, p.4.



**Figure 3.** J. Young (engraver) after J. Rising, 'The Ballad Girl', 1809. Mezzotint. BM no.2010,7081.3573.

Published in 1809, close examination reveals the singer is pointing at the woodcut heading the uppermost song slip in her sheaf: a silhouette of a man in a bicorne worn broadside on, the title beneath the image reading either ‘N[ap]oleon’ or ‘Nelson’ – the ambiguity is perhaps deliberate, a witty allusion to the similarities of the appeal both had in contemporary broadsides. Yet the singer holds dozens of songs, many of which have visible woodcuts at their heads – all of which are different. Even this sentimentalised stereotype bows to the demands of repertoire: her first song is on Napoleon (or Nelson), but as one among many.

Two points are noteworthy, the most interesting being the situating of Napoleon within a wider cast of song characters. What Gammon says of tunes applies to complete songs:

A tune’s meaning and affect is dependent upon, and in part created by, the other tunes that form a known set or repertory. It is cultural in that it has a place in the web of meanings that cultures create and in the way it relates to cultural norms and values.<sup>106</sup>

The influence of repertoire is elaborated by Atkinson in his concept of ‘traditional referentiality’:

for any text or performance in the traditional idiom, the relevant tradition supplies a range of further, extratextual and extra-performance data; these in turn provide a ready-made spectrum of implications and interpretations, selected by the unifying context of tradition, upon which both poet/singer and audience/listener/reader can draw<sup>107</sup>

In popular imaginations, Napoleon stood in this spectrum alongside Robin Hood and Robin Goodfellow, Jack the Giant Killer and dirty Morgan Rattler. As in the oeuvres of popular songwriters from Thomas Thompson to Samuel Bamford, contemporary politics mixed with fairies and witches.<sup>108</sup> As Thomas Cooper recalled:

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<sup>106</sup> Gammon, *Desire*, p.8.

<sup>107</sup> Atkinson, *The English Traditional Ballad*, p.11.

<sup>108</sup> Southey, *Music-Making*, p.155; Bamford, e.g. *Homely Rhymes* or *The Weaver Boy*, *passim*.

Many fragments of the fairy, and witch, and ghost-stories, told by the beggars and wandering pedlars, remain in my memory; but I have a far more vivid recollection of the blind soldier's relations of the way in which he stepped out of the boat up to the waist in water, in the Bay of Aboukir, and how they charged the French with the bayonet<sup>109</sup>

Napoleon earned his place in this canon – and that place, however variable and subjective, was influenced by the immediate context of repertoires. As studies of caricature have repeatedly observed, Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* was a strong influence on polite depictions of Napoleon. In his summary of this print parallel, T.M. Kelly observes that, even in making a pygmy of Napoleon, caricaturists were implicitly acknowledging his immense stature, concluding: 'By these turns of image and text, the figure of Napoleon could serve as a representative for the aspirations and rhetoric of the unrepresented.'<sup>110</sup> Popular song had its folkloric equivalent. The comparison chosen by Pasley cannot have been arbitrary, when he wrote to Coleridge that 'we talked of the dreadful power of Buonaparte with the same reverential awe, that the child feels for the more than human prowess of Jack the giant-killer'.<sup>111</sup> This heightens our appreciation of the 1815 interpretation of his return from Elba as a fairy popping out of a cracked kettle discussed in Chapter Three: no flight of fancy, but an acknowledgement of his folkloric, antihero status as conferred by the cultural context of surrounding songs.<sup>112</sup>

There is a supplementary point here: songs of Napoleon were not merely coloured by folkloric references, but by religious and biblical imagery. Jack the Giant Killer could also be David. Thomas Carter's imaginative faculties, which led to his glamorising Napoleon and attempts at verse, were stimulated in his youth by the Book of Revelations and Barbauld's *Hymns for Children*, as well as by *Robinson Crusoe* and *Jack the Giant*

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<sup>109</sup> Cooper, *The Life*, p.10.

<sup>110</sup> T.M. Kelly, 'J.M.W. Turner, Napoleonic Caricature, and Romantic Allegory', *English Literary History*, 58, no.2 (1991), pp.351-82, 377.

<sup>111</sup> Cited in Watson, *Romanticism and War*, p.2. See also Chapter Two, p.53.

<sup>112</sup> Chapter Three, p.144.

*Killer*.<sup>113</sup> When the young Thomas Cooper and his friends sought to celebrate – and profit by – the peace of 1814, they knew no patriotic songs, and instead performed ‘hymns we had learned at school, or in the church,’ in exchange for pennies.<sup>114</sup> Hogg’s first compositions were inspired by the Psalms of David; Clare’s entire ‘world of literature’ came from prayer books and folktales; in 1813, Cobbett elided the Bible with children’s books in forming the youthful mind for the reception of ballads.<sup>115</sup> Whately, ever perceptive, not only parodied Napoleon’s story as a modern *Iliad*, but as a book of the Old Testament.<sup>116</sup> Overtones of Sunday schooling, and the early influence of hymns and religious book-learning on both singers and audiences, must have been sub-conscious factors in the Napoleonic song tradition, contributing both vocabulary and interpretative frameworks. This may have fed sub-Romantic visions of his ‘elemental powers’, divinely-ordained chaos, and the duty to forgive his fallibility when set against the righteous, cleansing zeal of his martial ardour. It also reinforced loyalist allusions to his demonic nature, to Phaeronic tyranny in the wake of his Egyptian campaign, and to the sobering moral implications of his ultimate fall.

The second significant implication of repertoire, beyond the influence of these two imaginative realms, is the marginalisation of both loyalist and explicitly radical song in contemporary performances. Although battle ballads and other topical compositions enjoyed an immediate audience as ‘news’ pieces, their appeal as a genre was entirely ephemeral, having no further recommendation. Only the very best included transcendent characteristics; thus ‘The Battle of the Nile’ or ‘The Death of Nelson’ found their way into popular canons, the former as sub-‘Chevy Chase’ heroic battle narrative, the latter as

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<sup>113</sup> Carter, *Memoirs*, pp.27-8, 30, 32, 40-1.

<sup>114</sup> Cooper, *The Life*, p.24.

<sup>115</sup> Hogg, *The Mountain Bard*, p.viii; Tibble & Tibble, *The Prose*, p.19; W. Cobbett, ‘Letter to Alderman Wood, on the Subject of Teaching the Children of the Poor to Read’, 8 Dec. 1813, cited in P. Keen (ed.), *Revolutions in Romantic Literature: An Anthology of Print Culture, 1780-1832* (Ontario, 2004), p.27.

<sup>116</sup> Whately, *Historic Doubts*, pp.30-33.

timeless tragedy. This was manifestly not the case with 1803-5 broadsides, whose appeal was transient. This was not necessarily a problem for topical writers; the relative impact of transitory, topical ‘hits’ when weighed against perennial favourites will be considered at greater length in Chapter Six.<sup>117</sup> Yet the limitations of the topical song form as interpreted by partisan writers applied even at the height of these songs’ relevance. The key shortcoming here, as alluded to above, was writers’ preference for three or four anthems when choosing a tune.<sup>118</sup> The anthem was ideal for communal, celebratory performance due to its mid-tempo, recognisable melody and undemanding chorus, perfect for audience participation on triumphalist occasions.<sup>119</sup> It was ill-suited to rendition by a single, street singer: solo performance required a strong, ideally baritone voice, commanding delivery, and air of solemnity incongruous with the reedy-throated ragamuffin persona of the average ballad singer.

Moreover, in situating almost all ‘loyal songs’ within the anthemic musical genre, writers passed up the opportunity to ‘infiltrate’ other areas of popular song culture. In *The Two Shoemakers*, More explicitly forbids the singing of most love songs and all drinking songs, condemning their impiety.<sup>120</sup> Sarah Trimmer was still more prescriptive. In *The Two Farmers*, she lays out suitable and unsuitable song types for private performance in the home, at a stroke prohibiting several key genres.<sup>121</sup> So keen was she to prevent political discussion among the poor, that even ‘God save the King’ is deemed inappropriate for domestic recital, as likely to lead to dangerous conversation.<sup>122</sup> This adds an ironic dimension to More’s ‘adherence to the ideal of decollectivized domesticity’ propounded in

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<sup>117</sup> Chapter Six, pp.263-71.

<sup>118</sup> Chapter Four, p.169.

<sup>119</sup> Chapter Six, p.249.

<sup>120</sup> H. More, *The Two Shoemakers. In Six Parts* (n.d.), p.88.

<sup>121</sup> S. Trimmer, *The Two Farmers*, 5<sup>th</sup> edn (1808), p.14.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.114-5.

Barrell's chapter on the ideology of the cottage.<sup>123</sup> Reformers' attempts to seal off each family's 'sequestered paradise' came at the price of denying patriotic song a domestic role.<sup>124</sup> Similarly, we recall Plumptre's abhorrence of 'drinking, hunting, or sailors' songs filled with oaths, or love songs full of impiety and nonsense', and his fear that 'a chorus of derry down is merely an apology for noise and riot'.<sup>125</sup> Plumptre, as a scholar of music, was presumably aware of the importance of the performative aspect, and the need to match genre to context. Yet he was unwilling to compromise by adapting compositions to existing conventions, preferring to place his hopes in the example of 'social superiors'.

'Much good might be done, if the superiors would not only join in the songs, but occasionally sing a single song; it would recommend the best songs, and teach them a better mode of singing and articulation.'<sup>126</sup>

Unlike More and Trimmer, Plumptre engages here with the collective leisure activities the former sought to separate from the cottage idyll.<sup>127</sup> Yet the invasions of privacy he recommends by dutiful 'superiors' are compromised by a refusal to adapt to the forms of that collective recreation. Reformers dipped a toe into popular song culture, but eschewed full immersion. These ironies should be of interest in the debate provoked by Peter Burke's seminal *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, as well as in the context of 1790s political culture.

Loyalists more generally suffered by writing exclusively within a topical, triumphalist niche. The exception was the development, from around 1810, of a comic sub-genre of anti-Napoleonic productions, set to lively tunes.<sup>128</sup> Though numerous, loyalist songs remained limited to these two genres in practice. Conversely, the performative range of the far smaller body of anti-war or pro-Napoleonic songs was largely restricted to other

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<sup>123</sup> Barrell, *The Spirit of Despotism*, pp.243-4.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, p.243.

<sup>125</sup> Plumptre, *A Collection*, pp.5, 12.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, p.20.

<sup>127</sup> Barrell, *The Spirit of Despotism*, p.213.

<sup>128</sup> Chapter Three, pp.107-14.

genres, often the tragic ballad. Freeth was adept at giving political satire a lively, comic setting, and Bamford and Mather contested the use of anthems.<sup>129</sup> Perhaps the majority were essentially laments; some could be classed as love songs, some as pastoral, some as topical. This was not a severe limitation, as these were ideal for solo rendition, whether by a ballad singer in the street, or in a domestic context. Both lyrics and melodies were more subdued, considered, even intimate, than their anthemic counterparts, recommending them as everyday, commonplace choices for singing. Amongst folk scholars, Albert Lloyd in particular has stressed how ‘satisfactory’ these ‘long striding Myxolydian tunes’ were for singers in the street.<sup>130</sup> Thus, if a singer’s standard repertoire consisted of a minority of politicised songs within a broader whole, there is no reason to suppose that loyalist songs dominated this minority – indeed, the opposite was likelier. The loyalist tunes of Chapter Two were usually either too highly specialised for the stage, or too clumsily adapted, to slot into street repertoires. This is borne out by the post-war song tradition: the compositions that entered singers’ and printers’ canons expressed non-loyalist perspectives, and were in non-anthem genres.<sup>131</sup>

Lloyd’s comment highlights the performative importance of physical space. Gammon concurs:

Not only are the immediate social relations of musical production important, but so is the physical environment. We must ask how it was defined as social space and in what ways did interaction take place in the environment.<sup>132</sup>

By applying Gammon’s theoretical imperative to the context of the Wars, it becomes possible to relate the issue of space to our overall interpretation of popular song culture. The primary question we should ask of space concerns control: were sites of performance within the physical or moral control of loyalist authorities? The desire to control private

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<sup>129</sup> Chapter Two, pp.74-6; Appendix nos. 266, 138.

<sup>130</sup> A.L. Lloyd, *The Singing Englishman* (1945), pp.46-7.

<sup>131</sup> Chapter One, pp.34-44.

<sup>132</sup> Gammon, ‘Problems of Method’, p.22.

behaviour was more developed in moral than political writing, seen in More and Trimmer's concerns over what was sung in the home, and Plumptre's wish that responsible authority figures be present at festive plebeian occasions where singing occurred. The attempted extension of state control over the spaces of popular culture was a common theme of the period. Francis Place's recollection, that 'if anyone was found singing any but loyal songs, he or she was carried before a magistrate', has been accepted by Gammon as evidence of omnipotence during the Wars.<sup>133</sup> Yet Place's statement, applying merely to London in 1792-3, is contradicted by commentators encountered above, decrying the ubiquitous pernicious effects of singers in streets, at fairs and marketplaces. Some environments were harder to police than others. Navickas and Rogers address the use of open and wild space, as a traditional site for popular protest – which, as Bamford's trial in 1819 made clear, often featured singing as an integral element.<sup>134</sup> Porter highlights the urban workplace, such as a weavers' factory, as a likely site of counter-cultural singing, since occupational songs – in his example, songs critical of the Napoleonic war effort – exhibited 'a characteristic stance of being at loggerheads with the prevailing ideology'.<sup>135</sup> This communal workers' mentality was resistant to external interference. Many such spaces existed. Even the theatre was susceptible to discord and riot, the singing of 'God save the King' repeatedly provoking protests and contestation.<sup>136</sup> Epstein in particular notes the subversive reclamation of controlled public spaces through the ritualised rejection of 'God save the King' and other overtly symbolic actions.<sup>137</sup>

One might suppose it a simple matter to police the public streets, via the watch, or the vigilante intimidation of loyalist groups that Place remembered, at least in settlements

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<sup>133</sup> Cited in Gammon, 'The Grand Conversation', p.667.

<sup>134</sup> K. Navickas, 'Moors, Fields, and Popular Protest in South Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1800-1848', *Northern History*, 46, no.1 (2009), pp.93-111; Rogers, 'Crowds', in Harris, *The Politics*, pp.233-64; Bamford, *Passages*, p.147.

<sup>135</sup> Porter, 'Cobblers All', pp.54, 44.

<sup>136</sup> Chapter Six, pp.246-7.

<sup>137</sup> Epstein, *Radical Expression*, pp.149-52.

where majority loyalist feeling held sway. Yet difficulties arose even here. In 1795, thirteen year-old singer William Brown took advantage of the darkness of the London streets to sell around sixty ‘song slips’, purporting to be the current naval hit ‘The Arethusa’: in fact, the songs were cut up old newspapers.<sup>138</sup> In his recollection, the watch is an idle threat made by an aged resident, rather than a real danger. Suspect Irish street singers, more actively hounded by authorities, simply refrained from stringing up their songs at permanent pitches, facilitating a swift getaway.<sup>139</sup> Dubliners wishing to hear the better street singers were directed to lawless streets such as Cutpurse Row, and advised to leave behind their watch and coins, and carry even handkerchiefs inside their hats, lest these be stolen.<sup>140</sup> Yet subversive singing was not confined to dark alleys. Mather, the Jacobin Sheffield singer, defied court orders and sung his compositions in the public streets, even in front of the magistrates themselves.<sup>141</sup> Dublin journalists feared seditious songs would infect genteel private residences via the street, witnessing singers plying their trade through open gratings to kitchen maids and footmen.<sup>142</sup> The same liminality, with street dissidence spilling into the private home, is apparent in Rowlandson’s *Characteristic Sketches of the Lower Orders*, five plates of which depict this form of trans-spatial conversation.<sup>143</sup>

Singers did move beyond the street, to perform in public houses. These places, effectively impossible to police, afforded obvious opportunities for disorder at any time of day or night, and more than one account links ballad singing to violence in pubs.<sup>144</sup> Certain establishments became notorious, such as The Fox, Castle Street, Birmingham, where ‘all

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<sup>138</sup> W. Brown, *A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of William Brown* (York, 1829), p.13.

<sup>139</sup> Neilands, ‘Irish Broadside Ballads’, p.210.

<sup>140</sup> *National Magazine*, 1, no.2 (Aug. 1830), p.195.

<sup>141</sup> Mather, *The Songs*, p.viii.

<sup>142</sup> *The Press*, 40 (30 Dec. 1797), p.1.

<sup>143</sup> T. Rowlandson, *Rowlandson’s Characteristic Sketches of the Lower Orders* (c.1820), plates 19, 31, 41, 46, 52.

<sup>144</sup> *Weekly Entertainer*, 48 (4 Apr. 1808), p.261; ‘The Collier’s Pay Week’, Appendix no.84.

the scum of creation meet', or Noah's Ark, St Giles, London, the subject of a riotous Cruikshank caricature.<sup>145</sup> Two incidents in which the political consensus of a public house's microcosmic community was explicitly anti-authoritarian (a common enough occurrence) display how this consensus could be articulated in song. When Bamford and his friend Healey, drinking in an unfamiliar haunt, were suspected of being officials, 'Healey made himself agreeable by singing, in his best manner, "The deil cam fiddlin' thro' the toon / An' danc'd awa wi' th' exciseman.'" <sup>146</sup> And around 1820, a body of interloping soldiers in a Mancunian pub dared sing a song called 'Waterloo', and were met with a hostile rendition of 'Peterloo' by the establishment's regulars.<sup>147</sup>

Still less subject to state control were the overlapping environments of the fair and the marketplace. Even the Regent's Hyde Park fair of 1814, for all its attempted stage-management, saw the general populace roaming freely, stall-owners refusing to leave when requested, and Congreve's rockets accidentally burning down the main attraction.<sup>148</sup> From the 'rough music' of Lady Holland's mob at Bartholomew Fair, to 'the destructive doggerel' complained of at Belfast fairs, singing in this space had clear connotations of 'counter-culture'.<sup>149</sup> As late as 1815, fairs' sausage stalls were known as 'Wilkes' Parlours'.<sup>150</sup> As Ben Heller has argued convincingly, polite audiences increasingly eschewed this disreputable environment, at least in London.<sup>151</sup> In Mary Lisle's rural parish, local elites still patronised the fair, yet it was scarcely 'controlled': 'the roads and lanes

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<sup>145</sup> Davis, 'Saint Monday', p.11; G. Cruikshank, 'Tom and Jerry "Masquerading it" among the cadgers in the "black slums," in the Holy Land', print (1821), BM no.1864,0611.408.

<sup>146</sup> Bamford, *Passages*, p.58.

<sup>147</sup> R. Poole, 'The March to Peterloo: Politics and Festivity in Late Georgian England', *Past & Present*, 192 (2006), pp.140-1.

<sup>148</sup> Lawler, 'The P----e's Jubilee', *passim*, esp. pp.4, 8, 14; also Russell, *The Theatres of War*, pp.90-1.

<sup>149</sup> Golby & Purdue, *The Civilisation of the Crowd*, p.37; *Belfast Monthly Magazine*, 4, no.22 (May 1810), p.321.

<sup>150</sup> H. Morley, *Memoirs of Bartholomew Fair* (1973), p.477. For further evidence of the subversive political tone of fairs, see *ibid.*, pp.456, 459, 461.

<sup>151</sup> B. Heller, 'The "Mene People" and the Polite Spectator: The Individual in the Crowd at Eighteenth-Century London Fairs', *Past & Present*, no. 208 (2010), pp.131-57, esp. p.153.

were rendered quite unsafe by the troops of gipses, [*sic.*] pedlars, showmen, and rogues of every description, by which they were thronged'.<sup>152</sup> Markets were little better:

If you have a mind to have a ballad on a treasonable subject, or one which injures the peace of Society, you have but to apply at this House with seven-and-six-pence, and you may hear it sung in the course of three hours from your time of payment in ... the Corner of Fleet market.<sup>153</sup>

The trial of Robert Wright in 1779 was for just such an offence: composing a libellous ballad and having it sung 'up and down the market' of Whitechapel.<sup>154</sup> It required a lengthy private prosecution by the libelled party to force the authorities to act, and Wright escaped with a merely notional fine, whilst the singers he employed were not even called to trial. Parker's testimony, above, indicates that matters had not changed by our period. Renewed calls to action after 1817 suggest that Place's example was a limited one, and that more generally, ballad singers remained free to voice heterodox sentiments in their performances – a likelihood that increased in radicalised or less politicised parts of the kingdom.

The act of performance itself has received a degree of theoretical analysis, endorsing the active role which the singer as mediator played in shaping the material performed; E.R. Long, Alan Merriam and Porter concur with Rouse that 'the ballad singer is involved in a process that transcends even interpretation, but which enters the realm of creation'.<sup>155</sup> Barclay has recently gone further: in singing, the balladeer not only constructs the song, but his or her own identity.<sup>156</sup> To a certain degree, this construction was based on musical technicalities. Accomplished singers were known to indulge in extensive gracing, embellishing melodies, accentuating and holding certain notes and 'ghosting' over others,

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<sup>152</sup> Lisle, *Long, Long Ago*, pp.38-9.

<sup>153</sup> G. Parker, *A View of Society and Manners in High and Low Life* (2 vols., 1791) ii, pp.58-9.

<sup>154</sup> POB, t17790707-48.

<sup>155</sup> E.R. Long, 'Ballad Singers, Ballad Makers, and Ballad Etiology', *Western Folklore*, 32, no.4 (1973), pp.231-3, A.P. Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music* (Evanston, Ill. 1964), p.179, J. Porter cited in Atkinson, *The English Traditional Ballad*, p.6; Rouse, *The Remunerated Vernacular Singer*, p.28.

<sup>156</sup> Barclay, 'Composing the Self', p.349.

thus transforming the tune.<sup>157</sup> The ability to ‘keen’ convincingly was also held in high regard: to display extreme grief without straying off-key.<sup>158</sup> This highly individualistic agency should be added to the historical record: on some level, the singer was always an artist, if not necessarily a very good one. This enabled singers consciously or inadvertently to subvert songwriters’ intended meanings through ironical or bathetic delivery. Yet the singer’s performative importance could also represent a great strength of the loyalist campaign. Reliance upon a stunted repertoire of simple tunes had many drawbacks, but the resultant songs, if the meter remained unmangled and the words comprehensible, were at least performable by the worst singers, deficient in range, accuracy and understanding. It is in this context that Jerrold’s over-cited panegyric on the ballad singer is of real historical worth:

It was his harsh, cracked, blatant voice that growled, squeaked, shouted forth the glorious truth, and made big the patriotic hearts of his humble and admiring listeners. If he were not the clear silver trump of Fame, he was at least her tin horn. It was he who bellowed music into news, which, made to jingle, was thus, even to the weakest understanding, rendered portable.<sup>159</sup>

Viewed in terms of performance, Jerrold is not just sentimentalising the homely, honest, earthy Englishness of the now-vanished ballad singer. He is making the valid point that many ballad singers were terrible musicians – and yet they were capable of communicating basic messages. In this respect, loyalist broadsides’ chief musical limitations became a pragmatic strength.

As we shall see in Chapter Six, the performative act as an act of creation has increasingly been understood as a reciprocal process: whether symbiotic or antagonistic, a performance exists in the interaction between singer and audience.<sup>160</sup> Musicologists and

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<sup>157</sup> Neilands, ‘Irish Broadside Ballads’, pp.219-20; F. Cunningham Woods, ‘A Consideration of the Various Types of Songs Popular in England during the Eighteenth Century’, *Proceedings of the Musical Association*, 23<sup>rd</sup> session (1896-7), p.40; Ó Madagáin, ‘Functions’, p.183.

<sup>158</sup> Ó Madagáin, ‘Functions’, pp.151-2.

<sup>159</sup> Jerrold, in *Heads of the People*, ii, p.289.

<sup>160</sup> See e.g. Porter, *The English Occupation Song*, p.12.

folk scholars excel at theorising that dynamic in its purest form, yet its material, tangible aspects are often overlooked. In fact, the act of singing in our context was heavily conditioned by visual, aural and corporeal considerations. Street, fair and marketplace were public, commercial spaces, and singers faced competition from a multitude of other vendors and distractions:

A noise at every turn you'll find:  
"Ground-ivy – Rabbit-skins to sell;  
"Great news from France! and knives to grind,  
"Matts – muffins – milk, and mackarel!"<sup>161</sup>

Where possible, singers would perform in the evening, thus avoiding the majority of their competitors, from around 7-11pm.<sup>162</sup> This placed them in greater danger of harassment, particularly from the watch. Moreover, connotations of criminality and intoxication lent night-time performances a subtly subversive, heterodox overtone: once again, there was no natural affinity between loyalist authorities and their disseminators of propaganda.

Many singers performed during the day, usually of necessity, and thus developed numerous strategies in response to aural, visual, and even olfactory competition. Aurally, these tactics were detrimental to their social standing. Ballad singers frequently pitched their voices high, using a soprano or even falsetto register to elevate and distinguish their singing from the bass or baritone cries of grocers and butchers, leading to a greater risk of losing the tune and straining one's voice.<sup>163</sup> They sang as loudly as possible, thereby gaining a reputation for vulgarity and hoarseness.<sup>164</sup> An instrumental accompaniment, where possible, added depth and strength to a song. Though traditionally a fiddle, or

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<sup>161</sup> 'London Cries', Appendix no.179.

<sup>162</sup> Silliman, *A Journal*, ii, pp.166-7, Brown, *A Narrative*, p.13, POB, t18020918-20, t18091101-45, t18180114-124.

<sup>163</sup> Cunningham Woods, 'A Consideration', p.40; Jerrold, in *Heads of the People*, ii, p.296; Robinson, *Reminiscences*, p.26; *London Magazine*, 4, no.22 (Oct. 1821), p.406; *The Observant Pedestrian*, ii, p.212.

<sup>164</sup> References are endless; one must suffice: 'One [balladeer] sang a loud maritime battle-ballad, in a loud equal tone of voice, which rivalled, in hoarseness and melody, the clamour of a storm in the shrouds' – *London Magazine*, 6, no.35 (Nov. 1822), p.432.

increasingly a guitar, even the meanest improvised instrument enlivened a performance.<sup>165</sup> And, in common with other vendors, singers might insert spoken patters into their performances, prefacing a song with an exhortation to passers-by, or breaking up verses with a pitch.<sup>166</sup> In thus emphasising the base, commercial motivations of their act, singers profited, but any aesthetic pretensions of a song or singer were necessarily negated.

Aural performative strategies rooted ballad singers' songs in a tawdry commercial milieu at odds with the elevated rhetoric of many loyalist compositions. Yet it was singers' material attempts to appeal to audiences that carried the greatest potential for subversive mediation. The most explicit of these were generally good-humoured. Joseph Mather:

used to "raise the wind" by vending his songs in the streets, seated on a grinder's donkey, or on the back of Ben Sharp's bull...He used to be seated (as Robin Hood seated the bishop), with his face to the animal's tail<sup>167</sup>

The rude humour of Mather's act was both eye-catching and Bacchanalian, drawing upon the communal, subaltern tradition of 'rough music' discussed by Rogers, John Bohstedt, and Golby and Purdue, all in examinations of the riotous crowd.<sup>168</sup> So too, to a lesser extent, was the direction in John Scriven's comic song 'We Must All To Drill', that it should '*conclude with The WOODEN SHOE DANCE*'.<sup>169</sup> This revelry was rendered anti-authoritarian by the preceding declaration, in the song's final verse, that 'I'd sooner dance to the fiddle than march to the drum': the singer's unrestrained gaiety is contrasted with the clumsy drilling forced upon volunteers.

Mather's act was rooted, as the allusion to Robin Hood suggests, in popular tradition: others engaged specifically with the context of the war. Two black London singers

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<sup>165</sup> J. Strutt, *Glist Gamena Angel-Deod, or, The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England* (1801), p.142; *Director*, 2, no.16 (9 May 1807), p.101; Smith, *Vagabondiana*, p.45.

<sup>166</sup> For three fairly elaborate pitches, see G. Parker, *Life's Painter of Variegated Characters in Public and Private Life* (1789), p.124, 'The Galanti Show', Appendix no.131, Love, *The Life, Adventures, and Experience*, p.32.

<sup>167</sup> Mather, *The Songs*, p.viii.

<sup>168</sup> Rogers, 'Crowds', in Harris, *The Politics*, pp.236-7, Bohstedt, *Riots*, p.8, Golby & Purdue, *The Civilisation of the Crowd*, p.37.

<sup>169</sup> Appendix no.362.

employed contemporary iconography to different ends, one loyalist, one subversive. Joseph Johnson's unusual headgear – 'a model of the ship *Nelson*; to which, when placed on his cap, he can, by a bow of thanks, or a supplicating inclination to a drawing-room window, gave the appearance of sea-motion' – which embellished his performance of nautical odes, situated him within a patriotic discourse, the combination of ship and repertoire ("The British Seaman's Praise," or Green's more popular song of "The Wooden Walls of Old England.") serving to amplify the rhetoric.<sup>170</sup> Billy Waters, a famous one-legged fiddler mentioned by Jerrold and Egan, took a contrary approach.<sup>171</sup> In three separate George Cruikshank prints he is depicted wearing a bicorne, broadside on, with a large tricolour plume; this, combined with his ragged attire and blue jacket reminiscent of a sans-culotte, lent him an appearance uncannily similar to metropolitan caricatures of Frenchmen and indeed Napoleon himself.<sup>172</sup>

The wearing of uniforms was common among impoverished singers, particularly in London, the aim being to play upon patriotism to solicit charity. The Mendicity Report published by the House of Commons in 1815 contains numerous contradictory testimonies, some declaring these persons impostors and sturdy beggars, others judging the majority to be genuine discharged veterans.<sup>173</sup> The committee responsible had its origins in one aspect of a private enquiry begun by philanthropist Matthew Martin in 1796, taken over and funded by the Duke of Portland and his successors, and renewed in 1803 and 1811.<sup>174</sup> The research was undertaken by a wide range of reputable figures with experience of the underclasses, from vicars to beadles.<sup>175</sup> The report found both Chelsea and Greenwich Pensioners culpable of moonlighting, stealing away from their quarters in full

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<sup>170</sup> Smith, *Vagabondiana*, p.33.

<sup>171</sup> Jerrold, in *Heads of the People*, ii, p.297; Egan, *Life in London*, p.378.

<sup>172</sup> G. Cruikshank, 'Tom and Jerry', idem, 'Landing the Treasures, or Results of the Polar Expedition!!!', print (1819), BM no.1859,0316.142, idem, 'The New Union-Club', print (1819) BM no.1859,0316.148.

<sup>173</sup> *Report from Committee on the State of Mendicity*, pp.12, 14-15, 18, 58-9, 65.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, p.5.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, e.g. pp.26, 41, 58, 60, 65, 67.

uniform to sing and beg, thus supplementing their income.<sup>176</sup> Singers without uniforms might exhibit conspicuous infirmity to obtain charity, again suggesting the injury had been incurred through battle.<sup>177</sup> In one sense, singers' use of the patriotic association of service furthered loyalism: audiences were stirred by the sight of those who had fought for the cause. However, the phenomenon was also highly detrimental to loyalist rhetoric. That even Chelsea and Greenwich Pensioners should resort to begging hardly did credit to the state: veterans on the street were living accusations, suggesting the armed forces could not take care of their own. Still more significantly, this led to jarring dissonance between singer and song. Smith describes one French beggar, who later took to calling himself 'A *Poor Spaniard Man*' after Spain's change of allegiance:

Sometimes he will, by an artful mode of singing any stuff that comes into his head, and by merely sounding the last word of a line, so contrive to impose upon the waggoners and other country people, as to make them believe that he fought in the field of Waterloo.

"Poor fellow," exclaimed a spectator, "he has been in the battle of Waterloo."  
"Yes, my beloved friends," returned the mendicant, "*De money de money go very low too.*"<sup>178</sup>

Crippled 'soldiers' or 'sailors' were likelier than most to favour martial songs in their repertoires. Where these were tragedies or anti-war songs, a synergy of sentimentalism resulted. However, if these were loyalist songs, relying upon triumphalist, bellicose rhetoric, mediation by crippled veterans transformed the effect. A heroic song of victory performed by a tattered cripple in the gutter is not rousing, it is pitiful and bathetic. This suited the destitute singers; it can hardly have suited loyalist songwriters.

Female singers employed the same tactics. The same Mendicity Report found that women 'allege their husbands are gone away from them into either the army or the navy'; Irishwomen in London 'generally give an account of themselves, that they are the widows

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid., p.67.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., pp.52, 59, 67.

<sup>178</sup> Smith, *Vagabondiana*, pp.27-8.

or wives of men serving His Majesty'.<sup>179</sup> The sentimental currency of the abandoned widow with mouths to feed was powerful, and images of singers such as Rowlandson's *Norwich Market Place* or Cruikshank's *Picture of London* endlessly replicated the trope of the statuesque woman with an abject infant on hip or shoulder.<sup>180</sup> Egan was more cynical:

The poor married woman with twins, who you are led to imagine, from her piteous tale, has been left in distress, in consequence of her husband having been sent to sea, you will find is a single woman, and has only *hired* the children from poor people, who lends them out for the purpose.<sup>181</sup>

This scepticism is partially borne out by a case from 1817, in which Ann Lee was sentenced to seven years' transportation for kidnapping.<sup>182</sup> Lee had abducted a two-year-old infant to supplement her ballad singing. That she took such a risk demonstrates the emotional appeal of the war widow trope – an act conducive to songs lamenting the press-gang or a lover's death, but woefully ill-suited to jingoistic productions. Although I have found no contemporary discourse on this particular dissonance, audiences were sensible of similar ironies:

A few mornings ago, (I remember it was a rainy one,) as I was walking along one of the back streets of the metropolis, I was very much struck with a melancholy figure of a blind man, who was singing a song of love. Misery could not have found, among the numbers of distressed mortals, a form more suited to her nature...I was contemplating the wretchedness of the object, and comparing it with the strain which necessity compelled him to chaunt...<sup>183</sup>

It is no great leap to conclude that the singing of bellicose propaganda by cripples in tattered uniforms in itself constituted a bathetic subversion of their rhetoric, whilst tragic tales of loss and privation would be given strong sentimental resonances.

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<sup>179</sup> *Report from Committee on the State of Mendicity*, pp.8, 17.

<sup>180</sup> B. Falk, *Thomas Rowlandson: His Life and Art, A Documentary Record*, (1949), facing p.197; BM no.1871,0429.725. Dozens of similar images are extant.

<sup>181</sup> Egan, *Life in London*, p.375.

<sup>182</sup> POB, t18171029-137.

<sup>183</sup> *Britannic Magazine*, 1, no.12 (1793), p.376.

## **Conclusions**

In the last quotation, the singer's strikingly dissonant performance is unconscious, a matter of ill-fortune rather than satirical intent. Whether the act of singing was sophisticated and witty or sadly inappropriate makes little difference: in both cases, the singer's role as mediator was decisive. Even if singers were sometimes more or less automatons, passive mouthpieces of propaganda, their material circumstances and appearance had the potential to subvert a songwriter's intentions. Many singers, however, have been shown to have possessed a far greater degree of active agency, and to have performed in spaces outside the direct control of authorities – an aspect addressed at greater length in the next chapter. Singers and performances were highly individualistic; we cannot generalise about a default conception of the singer – and thus this very idiosyncrasy is fundamental to the nature of singers. In both their characters and performances, singers possessed a remarkable degree of autonomy. We should see them as the most significant actors in popular song culture; shapers and mediators, not neutral transmitters. This transmission was also affected by the recipient, and it is to this context that we turn now: audiences, and the impact and reception of popular song.

## Chapter Six

### Song III: Audience and Appreciation

‘A song is not a song until it’s listened to’ – Neil Hannon<sup>1</sup>

This chapter begins with a discussion of the scant direct evidence of reception, drawing conclusions about the variable responses of groups and individuals. It proceeds to a series of considerations enabling us to read more into the act of listening, and to think about ongoing effects beyond the performative moment. What contributed to the listening experience? Moreover, what was the cumulative impact of song on the populace over time, and what historical phenomena were involved in this process? This involves close engagement with the historiography of reception and print culture – and, subsequently, with discourse on space, time, and news. Songs that sought to manage the topical ‘moment’ are shown to have left far lighter impressions upon audiences than those which could be absorbed within existing repertoires. Theoretically, engagement with the problematic issue of reception studies eschews traditional, quantitative attempts to gauge impact and popularity in favour of a more nuanced historicised analysis, rooted in informed critical judgements and an unearthing of obscure but articulate members of the supposedly silent majority. It is repeatedly shown that our best hopes of assessing the reception of songs rest in consideration of literary and psychological factors, rather than the statistical. These conclusions all endorse an emergent conception of popular song that resisted the influence of external moral and political forces, and instead assimilated those songs, both from within and actively appropriated from above, that were in tune with audiences’ emotional expectations of the form.

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<sup>1</sup> From The Divine Comedy, ‘Note To Self’, *Regeneration*, track 4 (Parlophone CD 2001).

## Reception and response

Attempting to judge the popular impact of Hannah More's *Village Politics*, Smith notes that 'although very little praise from her intended audience was recorded, there were also few angry comments'.<sup>2</sup> We cannot hope to quantify the reception of songs: fragments of audience opinion exist, and shall be examined, but they cannot take us far. Nor can a statistical analysis of extant broadsides, or even of their republication, do so. Niall Ó Ciosáin warns against this: 'studies tend to conflate popular printing with popular culture and to stress production of texts rather than consumption or reception. For a peasant readership there is little direct evidence of reception.'<sup>3</sup> Matthew Grenby provides excellent empirical reasons why pure numbers are unhelpful, such as the endless re-reading of a favourite text or the vast sales of 'loathed' volumes 'popular with purchasers rather than end-users'.<sup>4</sup> Lomax, Lloyd, and Shepard, folk scholars all, suggest that a song's endurance and entry into an oral canon was a reliable signifier of its popularity.<sup>5</sup> This is reasonable, yet as we shall see it should not necessarily imply the reverse: that a song of brief longevity left no mental impact. The position comes with its own caveats, hinted at by Lomax's own definition of 'maximal accord':

If this is not the case, a song is not likely to hold its audience and it probably will not pass into oral tradition, where acceptance means that consensus has taken place over and over again through time. Thus, in theory, song texts ought to be heavily loaded with normative cultural indicators.<sup>6</sup>

That 'in theory' warns us against easy generalisations. Lack of empirical evidence, meanwhile, means that the little theory that exists in this area hesitates to discuss

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<sup>2</sup> Smith, *The Politics of Language*, p.96.

<sup>3</sup> N. Ó Ciosáin, 'The Irish Rogues', in Donnelly & Miller, *Irish Popular Culture*, p.78.

<sup>4</sup> J. Briggs *et al.* (eds.), *Popular Children's Literature in Britain* (Aldershot, 2008), pp.4-5.

<sup>5</sup> Lomax, *Folk Song*, p.275; Lloyd, *Folk Song*, pp.273-5; Shepard, *The History of Street Literature*, p.126.

<sup>6</sup> Lomax, *Folk Song*, p.275.

‘audience’ in detail, or to elaborate on the probable effects and implications of performance.<sup>7</sup>

Direct evidence divides into the private recollections of individuals, and the demonstrative, even violent responses of crowds or communities. This division between contemplation and direct action must be leavened with the awareness that a song might move an individual to act at a stage subsequent to a performance – by being moved to enlist after dwelling on a recruitment song, for instance – and that the collective action of a crowd need not articulate the internal responses of all its members. In either case, audiences were not mere spectators, if ‘to be a spectator is to be separated from both the capacity to know and the power to act’.<sup>8</sup> We can agree with Bohstedt, when he writes that ‘society could be portrayed... as “crowds, crowds everywhere”’, depicting British audiences as continually active.<sup>9</sup> Yet we may also share Shepard’s stress on emotional, rather than literal responses to song: ‘It should not be assumed that nineteenth century ballads necessarily provoked specific public action...Rather they created a climate of opinion and sentiment.’<sup>10</sup>

It is the hardest task of all to judge the strength of this communal climate. Philp writes of the 1790s that:

While the loyalty of the common people has been studied by their participation in local riots, rites, rituals, monarchical pageants, and volunteer movements, and, at a distance, in the analysis of their reasons for contentment... there is little work (probably because it is so difficult to do) on the private and sub-cultural worlds which lay behind loyalist performances.<sup>11</sup>

The existence of a handful of responses from ‘silent minorities’ within a crowd merely underlines the difficulties. John Nicol, a loyal sailor, found himself in a radical Scottish community in 1805. On hearing news of Trafalgar, he wished to celebrate openly, yet kept

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<sup>7</sup> E.g. *ibid.*, p.275, Gammon, *Desire*, p.9, Porter, *The English Occupational Song*, p.12.

<sup>8</sup> J. Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator* (2009), p.2.

<sup>9</sup> J. Bohstedt, *Riots and Community Politics in England and Wales, 1790-1810* (Harvard, 1983), p.6.

<sup>10</sup> Shepard, *The History of Street Literature*, p.125.

<sup>11</sup> Philp, ‘Vulgar Conservatism’, p.65.

his joy to himself in the face of general hostility to the news.<sup>12</sup> How common, yet how undetectable, such attitudes must have been, in both loyalist and non-loyalist communities. Yet we may attempt to access these private worlds more broadly, by examining the effect of song, and patriotic display, upon individuals operating as both part of, and apart from, a group or crowd.

The testimony of private individuals – exceptional persons, in that they recorded their thoughts on paper – reveals an emotional response to song and spectacle tempered with critical evaluation. These are typified by Thomas Carter. Parts of his memoir, somewhat self-aggrandising in the manner of Victorian working-class autobiography, are sceptical, even satirical:

One of the first incidents I remember is that of having seen a party of militia recruits going through their exercises in the public street. I could not comprehend what was meant by the incessant cry of “right,” “left,” with other words of command, nor could I see the utility of so many persons walking to and fro, and putting themselves into so many different postures and positions, without any apparent purpose.<sup>13</sup>

In later years, witnessing a ‘grand military review’ on Wimbledon Common, he felt that ‘I had paid a great deal “too much for my whistle.”’<sup>14</sup> He contrasts his response with that of the crowd at large: ‘the spectators were truly multitudinous, and when they lifted up their united voices in one general acclamation’ the result was positively biblical.<sup>15</sup> Yet Carter was not unsusceptible to martial performance. After Waterloo, he was ‘Well pleased’ with the military band’s music at Whitehall Palace’s banqueting room, used as a military chapel.<sup>16</sup> And as the Hundred Days begun, he recorded that

The roll of the drum, the shrill notes of the “spirit-stirring fife,” with the sonorous tones of trumpets and bugles, again greeted our ears, and brought back all the warlike feelings and thoughts which, for the few preceding months, had been in a state of abeyance.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> J. Nicol, *The Life and Adventures of John Nicol, Mariner* (1937), pp.209-10.

<sup>13</sup> Carter, *Memoirs*, p.18.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p.158.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p.157.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p.192.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p.183.

This last statement bears all the hallmarks of nostalgic autobiography glamorising individuals' wartime experience. Yet Carter undercuts the hyperbole by ascribing the excitement he and his fellows felt, not to patriotism, but to their hopes that renewed conflict would restore prosperity, thus demonstrating the self-interested response of an entire group – in this case, tailors – to loyalist music. To Carter, reception was always shaped by personal consideration. He acknowledges this, comparing his response to stimuli as a child and as an adult. As a boy, he recalled,

The book of the Revelations inspired me with [sublime] feelings. Of course I understood its wonderful narratives and descriptions according to the literal import of the language employed; and therefore my imagination was more powerfully affected than it would have been, had I known it to be highly if not entirely figurative.<sup>18</sup>

A few pages later, he contrasts this innocent enthusiasm with his more mature reaction during:

the public rejoicings in the town on account of the general peace of 1802. I was much amused with the novel spectacles I then witnessed. The town was generally illuminated; the streets were filled with people; the church-bells were ringing; bonfires were blazing; and everybody seemed to be happy. For myself, I could almost wish again to be a child, if thereby I could once more feel the lightheartedness which these festivities produced.<sup>19</sup>

As a thinking individual rather than a child, Carter could not suspend his critical faculties and enter into the spirit of the crowd.

It is tempting to label the credulity of those who formed an uncritical part of a crowd as childlike, particularly as two further accounts of childhood reinforce the comparison. Thomas Cooper recollects his reception of both a traditional ballad, and news of the Peninsular, eliding the two responses in a neat yet insightful piece of literary embroidery:

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p.30.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p.43.

The first rhymes that I can remember to have read with a sense of delight were those of the old ballad of Chevy Chase. I used to repeat them, when alone, until they used to make me feel as warlike as did the sight of Matthew Goy when he rode into the town with the news of a victory; or the array of the Gainsborough Loyal Volunteers, when they marched through the town, on exercise-days, to the sound of fife and drum.<sup>20</sup>

There is an interesting implication here underneath the colourful writing: that a song's context could transform its relevance. Thus 'Chevy Chase', an antique border ballad, plays a contemporary function in Cooper's perceptions of the war. This reinforces points made in Chapter Five concerning the importance of repertoire.<sup>21</sup> More to our purpose in this chapter is Cooper's elision of his solitary reading of a song, as a child, with the communal reception of news and martial display. He elaborates on the crowd's responses, writing that between 1811 and 1814,

our little town was kept in perpetual ferment by the news of battles, and the street would be lined with people to see old Matthew Goy, the postman, ride in with his hat covered with ribbons, and blowing his horn mightily, as he bore the news of some fresh victory.<sup>22</sup>

His child's delight in 'warlike' verses is paralleled by his experience of a loyalist crowd. Interestingly, Cooper would grow up into a radical.

Mary Lisle's accounts of reception as a child lead us to similar conclusions. First, she describes the heart-stirring effects of Charles Dibdin the Elder's sentimental ballad 'True Courage' upon a succession of individuals.<sup>23</sup> She then contrasts her own firm belief in the likelihood of a French invasion, inculcated by songs and a review, with the teasing she receives from adults in her family, in a plausibly self-effacing passage.

"May [Mary] looks rather grave about it," my father said.

"Ah," said Cousin Charles, with a wicked laugh, "well enough she may, the French will make nothing of eating up such a morsel as she is. They are all ogres, May, and particularly fond of little girls."<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Cooper, *The Life*, pp.22-3.

<sup>21</sup> Chapter Five, pp.214-21.

<sup>22</sup> Cooper, *The Life*, p.17.

<sup>23</sup> Chapter Two, p.79.

<sup>24</sup> Lisle, *Long, Long Ago*, p.80.

Her father and cousin, as individuals, make fun of her gullibility. Yet they are also present as part of a male group at a dinner, who work themselves up into a patriotic fervour *en masse* by singing and boasting of how they will defeat the French.<sup>25</sup> The communal dynamic once again fosters a more heated, patriotic reception of each other's singing, than when the men are discussing a child.

These conclusions are endorsed by two complementary lines of critical thought. Joe Butwin observes that 'An audience of readers isolated at the independent fireside operates in less spontaneous, coherent ways than what we would call a "live" audience.'<sup>26</sup> This is supplemented by Richard Cronin's view that 'The sentimental can only ever form themselves into accidental communities', and not respond collectively, as true sentimentalism locates 'ethical value not in principles of conduct but in the play of the individual's emotional responses to the plight of his fellows'.<sup>27</sup> In Cronin's literary analysis, loyalist broadsides would generally not qualify as sentimental productions, as their emotional appeal was rooted in collective heroic and patriotic exhortations. This rhetorical stance was contrasted by the overtly sentimental balladry typified by anti-press-gang laments, songs of Napoleon's exile, or of the lover gone to the war.

Once again, there is a fundamental distinction between two broad bodies of song, one that disappeared after the contemporary moment, and one that endured. This latter category was the better fit for engendering an emotional reception in individual listeners, who responded *as* individuals, not as a body. We find more direct evidence of this form of reception in a Scottish soldier encamped near Badajoz in 1811. His account stresses the individual elements of his sentimental response:

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p.72.

<sup>26</sup> J. Butwin, 'Democracy and Popular Culture Before Reform', *Browning Institute Studies*, 17 (1989), p.4.

<sup>27</sup> R. Cronin, 'Walter Scott and Anti-Gallican Minstrelsy', *English Literary History*, 66, no.4 (1999), p.865.

One evening, as I lay in the woods thinking upon home... I heard, at a small distance, music... I soon knew the air. I crept nearer and could distinguish the words. I became riveted to the spot. That moment compensated me for all I had suffered in Spain. I felt that pleasure which softens the heart, and overflows at the eyes. The words that first struck my ear, were, "Why did I leave my Jeanie, my daddy's cot and a', / To wander from the country, sweet Caledonia".<sup>28</sup>

Though the soldier's lyricism is clearly influenced by the conditions of his account – a romanticised reconstruction consciously or unconsciously adapted to an emerging print market for soldiers' stories – the underlying experience is unlikely to have been fabricated. It may also be objected that, though the soldier's isolation is key to his response, the song he overheard was being sung in company: 'Soon as the voice ceased, I looked through the underwood and saw four or five soldiers seated on the turf, who sung in their turn, Scotland's sweetest songs of remembrance.'<sup>29</sup> Yet 'in their turn' is crucial: one man after another sung a sentimental tune, to which his fellows responded by inward contemplation, rather than as a body. Our listener is not moved to join the company, but preserves his solitude: 'Every opportunity, I returned to the scene of my happiness and had the pleasure, more than once, to enjoy this company unseen'.<sup>30</sup>

The sentimental response to song was well understood at the time, and was even the subject of satire, as in Rowlandson's print, 'Weeping'. The image, reproduced overleaf, is accompanied by the lines,

As laughter is often ex[c]ited by the most simple cause, so frequently is Weeping, in this instance the hard & obdurate features that would be callous to real sufferings melts at the fancied sorrows of a Village love Ballad.

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<sup>28</sup> C. Hibbert (ed.), *A Soldier of the Seventy-First: The Journal of a Soldier in the Peninsular War* (Moreton-in-Marsh, 1996), p.66. Also cited in Palmer, *The Rambling Soldier*, p.4.

<sup>29</sup> Hibbert, *A Soldier*, p.66.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.66-7.

WEEPING

No. 13



Woodward Del

cut by Rowlandson

*As Laughter is often excited by the most simple causes, so frequently is Weeping, in this instance the hard & odourate features, that would be callous to real sufferings melts at the fancied sorrows of a Village love Ballad.*

*London Pubd 21 Jan 1800. at R. Assermann's Repository of the Arts, 101 Strand.*

**Figure 4.** T. Rowlandson (etching) after G.M. Woodward, 'Weeping', 1800. No.13 in series *Le Brun Travesté [sic.], or Caricatures of the Passions* Hand-coloured etching. BM no.2004,1130.47.

As Lisle's account above demonstrates, Charles Dibdin the Elder was a master of this genre. Yet the sentiments required were inimical to the rhetoric of most loyalist songs, with their militant patriotism and its goal of instilling a participatory, uncritical, unified spirit. Of course, an individual had the capacity both to be stirred passionately, and to function as a discriminating consumer. Joseph Mayett, a farm labourer encountered above, was apparently moved by music to join the Buckinghamshire militia, citing the familiar trope that 'I was much delighted to see them and to hear the Musick this was Congenial with my Carnal nature'.<sup>31</sup> Yet, as mentioned in Chapter Two, he could also step back and resist the effects of moral propaganda in the form of tracts:

those kind of books were often put into my hands in a dictatorial way in order to Convince me of my errors for instance there was the Sheperd of Salsbury plain... the Farmers fireside and the discontented Pendulum and many others which drove me almost into despair for I could see their design<sup>32</sup>

As the anonymous 'Fitz-Albion' put it in a contemporary pamphlet, 'Did they [the administration] suppose that the people of this Country were like the inmates of a nursery, and were to be roused or silenced as they cried Wolf or Bugaboo?'<sup>33</sup>

The most recent writer on this subject is Ganev, who devotes a chapter to More's attempts at lyrical persuasion, concluding that 'Popular resistance to her benevolence shows that the poor understood what she was doing and were not willing to be manipulated'.<sup>34</sup> John Clare, too, demonstrates the individual's capacity for different responses in different circumstances. His poem 'After Hearing a Lady Sing "Banks O'Doon"' articulates a heartfelt sentimental reaction to the sweet melody of the pastoral ballad, illustrating his ability to be moved as an individual by a fine vocal performance.<sup>35</sup> Yet in 'The Parish', he scorns the loyalist songs of the stereotypical hack-writer 'Young

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<sup>31</sup> Kussmaul (ed.), *The Autobiography*, p.23.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p.70.

<sup>33</sup> 'Fitz-Albion', *Fitz-Albion's letters to the Rt. Hon. William Pitt* (1803), p.8.

<sup>34</sup> Ganev, *Songs of Protest*, p.184.

<sup>35</sup> E. Robinson (ed.), *The Early Poems of John Clare, 1804-1822* (2 vols., Oxford, 1989), ii, pp.232-3.

Brag', his only response being disgust. This is combined with a reflection on how successfully Brag passes off the songs on a collective audience, again distinguishing between the sceptical response of the individual, and the receptiveness of the impassioned crowd, to overt displays of patriotism.

& Poems too the polishd patriot chimes  
Stanzas to Cobbets truth & Comic Ryhmes  
To which he fits a hacknied tune that draws  
From patriot dinners echoes of applause  
...  
Nor will he pass his comic singing oer  
For they too set the table in a roar  
& then concludes it with the pompous clause  
- Success to patriots & the good old cause  
A hacknied tune which patriots daily sing  
Like variations of 'God save the King'<sup>36</sup>

Eight pages later Clare returns to this theme, reiterating the gullibility of mass reception.

True Patriotism... is above my song  
Not that which tells its emptiness aloud  
Like quacks & pedlars to a gaping crowd<sup>37</sup>

There is nothing new in the suggestion that crowds are more receptive *en masse* to political grandstanding than reflective individuals. Yet this trope has particular implications in our context. Collective, demonstrative reception of songs and spectacle, especially under the influence of alcohol, often involved vocal displays of unity by encoring a song or joining its chorus. We have seen this in the case of Mary Lisle's male relatives at a patriotic dinner: loyalist songs were sung in unison.<sup>38</sup> The same phenomenon is depicted in Dr Moore's *Edward*, reprinted in the *Weekly Entertainer*, upon an anniversary of Wolfe's capture of Quebec:

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., pp.727-8.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p.736.

<sup>38</sup> Above, p.241.

and then [the company] desire blind old George, who was once a grenadier, and now sells ballads, to sing “The British Grenadiers,” which he does, all about Mars, the god of war, and all the other gods, descending upon spears, and then they all join in the chorus, and beat the grenadiers’ march with their tongues, and they are all as drunk as lords<sup>39</sup>

Such incidents must have been common in both public and private houses. In the 1790s, London’s Crown and Anchor tavern witnessed these activities by both the London Corresponding Society and Reeves’ Association, often dining one above the other in separate private rooms.<sup>40</sup> But what of when two groups participated in the performance of songs in exactly the same time and place?

The contestation of songs by participating audiences characterised mass reception during the Napoleonic Wars. In Chapter Two, the peculiar suitability of the ode or anthem for a large and vocal audience was noted.<sup>41</sup> Philadelphian J.P. Malcolm remarked that English audiences had been moved to a disruptive ‘tumult’ for decades by performance of the most stimulating anthems.<sup>42</sup> The very attributes that rendered the anthem potent to sympathisers inflamed those of an opposing view. Writing on the ideological power of music, Sorce Keller observes that:

Precisely because it catalyzes and amplifies emotions more than other artistic endeavors, music easily becomes divisive, discriminating, a potentially belligerent symbol of oversimplified, one-piece identities which, the less they allow nuances, the more they are prone to conflict.<sup>43</sup>

During the Wars, this divisive potential resulted in numerous incidences of disorder when audiences reacted to ‘God save the King’. In 1792, Wexford theatregoers hissed a performance into silence.<sup>44</sup> In 1794, it was hooted at in the Edinburgh theatre by university

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<sup>39</sup> *Weekly Entertainer*, 41 (24 Jan., 1803), p.76.

<sup>40</sup> I. Newman, ‘The Hopes of the Party: Revolution in the Strand’, unpublished paper, Locating Revolution Conference, University of Wales (Aberystwyth), July 2012.

<sup>41</sup> Chapter Two, pp.168-70.

<sup>42</sup> J.P. Malcolm, *Anecdotes of the Manners and Customs of London During the Eighteenth Century* (2 vols., 1810), ii, p.243.

<sup>43</sup> Sorce Keller, ‘Why is Music So Ideological’, p.113.

<sup>44</sup> Whelan, ‘The United Irishmen’, in Dickson *et al.*, *The United Irishmen*, p.283.

students.<sup>45</sup> This continued for several nights, with the students calling for ‘revolutionary tunes’ in response, until the young Walter Scott led an armed band of loyalist toughs into the pit, and a pitched battle broke out during the song, resulting in the expulsion of both groups.<sup>46</sup> In 1797, two separate Dublin audiences launched full-scale riots at its airing.<sup>47</sup> In 1800 another riot greeted the song in a Nottingham theatre, after it ‘had been loudly called for by a section of the audience and as noisily opposed by another.’<sup>48</sup> In 1812, in Sheffield, officer Thomas Ward wrote that:

There have been violent noises to interrupt the performance at the Theatre, for the South Devon officers insist on having “God Save the King” sung, and the mobility in the gallery insist on its not being sung. One night when the officers bespoke the play they thought it necessary to quiet the non-contents by sending a guard among them, and also posting one at the door. A disturber has been sent to prison.<sup>49</sup>

We may suppose many more instances, especially at key moments of popular discontent. Thompson rightly links opposition to this song in particular to growing confidence on the part of the disaffected element, concluding that ‘as the Wars dragged on, the audience often proved itself to be less easily cowed by “Church and King” bullies than later generations.’<sup>50</sup>

These forms of popular action, besides expressing political division, represented a deeper worry for traditional loyalists: such displays were indicative of political engagement and increasing self-consciousness on the part of the people. As Philp writes, those who learned to burn Paine in effigy one day might burn Pitt upon the next – and the same applied to the mass rendition of anthems.<sup>51</sup> This brings us back to the qualms of Bamford’s lawyer after Peterloo, aware of the prosecution’s interest in the singing of the

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<sup>45</sup> Davis, ‘An Evening of Pleasure’, p.118.

<sup>46</sup> Johnson, *Sir Walter Scott*, i, p.102, H.J.C. Grierson (ed.), *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott* (3 vols., 1932), i, p.30.

<sup>47</sup> Whelan, ‘The United Irishmen’, in Dickson *et al.*, *The United Irishmen*, p.283.

<sup>48</sup> Pottle, ‘Loyalty and Patriotism’, p.59.

<sup>49</sup> Ward, *Peeps*, p.196. ‘Mobility’ as opposed to ‘nobility’: OED at [www.oed.com/view/Entry/120495?rskey=qS8rj8&result=2#eid](http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/120495?rskey=qS8rj8&result=2#eid), accessed 31 July 2013.

<sup>50</sup> Thompson, *The Making*, p.808.

<sup>51</sup> Philp, ‘Vulgar Conservatism’, p.66.

protestors.<sup>52</sup> In such a climate, especially where loyalist propaganda relied on these sort of songs – those suiting mass rendition, their rhetorical emphasis upon unity and patriotic zeal – it was imperative that performances could be controlled. Even in the fairly stable space of the theatre, policed as it often was by soldiers, audiences could boo, hiss, and riot. Loyalist songs would exert a more powerful effect upon audiences when their performance could be carefully stage-managed. The authorities appear to have been aware of this. Ascertaining their success should facilitate broader judgements concerning reception.

### **The control of place and time**

If the theatre – a contained, interior environment – was often beyond the control of authorities, then there was little hope for many traditional spaces of popular song. In Chapter Five, we encountered the difficulties of supervising performances in public houses, fairs, markets, and even streets.<sup>53</sup> Although the focus of that analysis was upon singers, loyalists were also aware of the importance of controlling audiences, who frequently figure in this discourse, tellingly, as ‘crowds’ or ‘mobs’. It is worth repeating the words of the *Scourge*’s correspondent:

The effects of the fulsome, obscene, and improper songs that are sung to a surrounding *mob*... must assuredly be stamped and riveted on the imagination, and ultimate[ly] corrupt the morals of the idle crowd.<sup>54</sup>

This concern was a commonplace of a period in which attempts to regulate the crowd reached new heights. Fuelled by the spectre of the French Revolution, wherein scenes of destructive mob rule in Paris passed through the imaginative filter of London’s Gordon

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<sup>52</sup> Chapter One, p.30.

<sup>53</sup> Chapter Five, pp.223-7.

<sup>54</sup> *Scourge*, 7 (May 1814), pp.378-9.

Riots of 1780, the administration and its adherents brought constraints and scrutiny to bear upon popular forms of assembly.

On this subject in general, I need add little to the work of Rogers.<sup>55</sup> His analysis prompts us to view the orchestrated festivities of the war years in the light of concerns over crowd control. The rhetoric of patriotic song would be significantly bolstered if performed to large yet passive audiences, augmented by further loyalist iconography. At Yarmouth in 1814, for example, flags, garlands, laurels, transparencies and effigies ensured that the expressly loyalist and patriotic vocabulary which framed the celebrations was permanently before the eyes of the 8,023 impoverished diners, whilst ‘the bands of the Wexford and Third East Norfolk Local Militia paraded round, playing martial and other airs, in a fine style’.<sup>56</sup> Rogers gives us a double-edged perspective: ‘festivals provided both a focus and definition of revolt as well as a plausible source of social integration and ruling-class hegemony.’<sup>57</sup> If orchestrated correctly and appropriately policed, loyalist festivals could have a powerful impact upon popular audiences without the associated drawbacks of disorder. Music served a specific purpose within this context.

Above all, festive organisers attempted to keep the crowds relatively immobile and spectatorial... plebeian celebrants were encouraged to join in the singing of patriotic songs and glees rather than leave the tables prematurely.<sup>58</sup>

The phrase ‘join in’ reminds us that these gatherings, attended by military bands, were the perfect performative setting for the patriotic songs favoured by loyalist songwriters, with their familiar, anthemic choruses, grand tunes, and grander rhetoric. These elements were drawbacks when performed by a tattered ballad singer to a small street crowd, but assets when one’s audience was large, well-fed and well-watered, and stimulated by a sense of occasion. The only difficulty was the management of these potentially volatile crowds.

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<sup>55</sup> Rogers, *Crowds, Culture, and Politics*, idem, ‘Crowds’, in Harris, *The Politics*.

<sup>56</sup> *A Narrative of the Grand Festival, at Yarmouth, on Tuesday, the 19<sup>th</sup> of April, 1814* (Yarmouth, 1814), p.14.

<sup>57</sup> Rogers, ‘Crowds’, in Harris, *The Politics*, p.234.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p.255.

Such considerations illuminate discussions of George III's golden jubilee of 1809, and the decision of some boroughs to eschew the risky stimuli of illuminations, pageants and public meetings in favour of more subdued charitable activities.<sup>59</sup> Studies by Colley, Malcolm Chase, and Semmel have emphasised the inherent dangers of organised celebration to authorities – the radical contestation of the ideology of jubilee, the potential to encourage less controlled meetings in the future – and, as with volunteer song, the tendency to evoke non-national identities such as inter-city rivalry or pre-British local traditions.<sup>60</sup> Despite the hazards, adventurous municipalities exploited the occasion to the full, and many repeated the exercise upon news of peace in 1814. Yet certain spaces were never co-opted for popular celebration. During the 1814 revels, Vauxhall Gardens and its imitators excluded the poor, raising admission prices to 3s.<sup>61</sup> This attitude also meant that the 1813 *Grand Fête* at Vauxhall in honour of Wellington's victory at Vitoria, though the talk of the town, played no part in the lives of the general populace.<sup>62</sup> And after Waterloo, beyond the immediate response to news of the victory, a more sober, frugal attitude predominated, manifesting itself in the decision to make 18 January 1816 an official day of Thanksgiving. This was reported in the *Gazette* as gratitude 'for the re-establishment of Peace with France', a less than triumphant phrasing, and its ceremonies took place behind closed doors, in churches and chapels.<sup>63</sup> A particular prayer was specified across the country, not uncontroversially: the *Examiner* took exception to the bishop's reading in the royal chapel.

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<sup>59</sup> S. Semmel, 'Radicals, Loyalists, and the Royal Jubilee of 1809', *Journal of British Studies*, 46, no.3 (2007), p.554, Griffin, *England's Revelry*, p.94.

<sup>60</sup> Colley, 'The Apotheosis', *passim*, M. Chase, 'From Millennium to Anniversary: The Concept of Jubilee in Late Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century England', *Past & Present*, 129 (1990), pp.132-47, Semmel, 'Radicals', *passim*. Also Rogers, 'Crowds', in Harris, *The Politics*, pp.239-57.

<sup>61</sup> T. Preston, *The Jubilee of George the Third* (1887), p.li.

<sup>62</sup> P.J. Corfield, *Vauxhall and the Invention of the Urban Pleasure Gardens* (2008), p.37.

<sup>63</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine* (Jan. 1816), p.73; *Augustan Review*, 2, no.11 (1816), pp.295-6, *New Annual Register* (Jan. 1816), p.5, *Weekly Entertainer*, 56 (1816), p.153.

“Some trust in chariots and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God” – Which means, we suppose, if there be any meaning to it, that battles are won “by faith, and not fighting”... as if the vanquished Hero now at St. Helena had been stopped at Waterloo by any thing but hard blows<sup>64</sup>

Nor was this an occasion for generosity towards even the most deserving poor:

the company retired, and the soldiers were dismissed; but it is not said that the poor fellows had even a pint of porter allowed them on this brilliant occasion... a little earthly refreshment might not have been altogether unacceptable to the veterans who had survived the carnage of that day<sup>65</sup>

Thus, when examining the effects of loyalist celebration, we should consider their inherent conservatism: a combination of fear of the crowd and frugality restricted their scope in many places at many times.

The phenomenon of festivity is too broad to interrogate to the full in this chapter; my arguments are expounded at greater length in an article, taking as a case study the festivities at Yarmouth in 1814.<sup>66</sup> The boldest organisers sought to capitalise on the potential for control, not only to deploy the full panoply of loyalist iconography, but to negate the physical distance between themselves and the populace, thereby symbolically denying the corresponding social distance and generating imagined unity between groups in society. The ‘Saturnalian’ aspect of festivity was key here: elites played at servants to appeal to (and covertly to supervise) their plebeian ‘masters’. Frustratingly, we have almost no account – from this or any other loyalist occasion – of the actual impact upon the audience. Intention predominates; reception is absent. The only glimpse is a footnote in the official record at Yarmouth concerning the scripted toast, ‘The speedy Return of our Townsmen imprisoned in France’. The author reports, ‘It is difficult to describe the emotion with which this toast was drunk... suffice it to say, that many, very many, drank it

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<sup>64</sup> *Examiner*, 421 (1816), p.43.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p.43.

<sup>66</sup> Cox Jensen, “Strategies of Condescension”.

with tears of joy.’<sup>67</sup> Though experiencing the sentiment *en masse*, participants’ thoughts at that moment must have left their immediate surrounding and neighbours, to dwell on the absence of particular male relations or friends. It is interesting that this most emotional moment of the day, worthy of singling out by the writer, hinged on a transmutation from a unified community to a vast body of individuals – or, alternatively, the construction of an imagined local community, currently divided in reality by the effects of war. This atomisation – the assertion of discrete entities within the collective body – was reinforced by the spatial arrangement at Yarmouth, as dining tables were strung out linearly and separately along the Quayside, rather than being amassed in a solid body – the principle purpose here being, inevitably, to avoid disorder.<sup>68</sup>

In seeking to gauge the impact of such events, we find little direct evidence of immediate responses. It appears that audience reactions were only noteworthy if they consisted of direct action – usually rioting. We may only learn more if we place these occasions within a broader chronology of audience reception throughout the Wars, and attempt to balance the impact of different cultural influences – from loyal toasts and victory songs, to press-gang ballads and the tensions involved in waiting for news. We must engage with how the war was brought home, and reconstruct the afterlives of performed songs, to assess their cumulative effect on audiences.

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<sup>67</sup> *A Narrative of the Grand Festival*, p.17.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.6, 8.

## Afterlives: Beyond performance

Our sources make it clear that singers were rarely short of a ready audience: whether walking a city street, attending a fair, or socialising in a public house, ordinary people exhibited a rapacious appetite for songs. Here Malcolm's observation of London is at odds with other evidence. He writes,

The English walk very fast: their thoughts being entirely engrossed by business, they are very punctual to their appointments, and those who happen to be in their way are sure to be sufferers by it: constantly darting forward, they jostle them with a force proportioned to their bulk and the velocity of their motion.<sup>69</sup>

This account of street-walking should be contrasted with witness statements from the Old Bailey: far from being ruthless marchers, many citizens stopped for singers. In 1799 Edward White, a private in the First Foot Guards living in Pimlico, admitted that around ten o'clock, he 'might delay the time in many foolish fancies, to hear a ballad sung, or any thing.'<sup>70</sup> In 1802, James Munyard stated that 'on the 21st of June, between the hours of one and three, I was standing in Cranbourn-alley, to hear a man sing'.<sup>71</sup> In 1809, Messrs. Hoskins, Squirrel and Walker, three artisans, 'were standing hearing a song' in Drury Lane (the street itself) between eight and nine in the evening.<sup>72</sup> In 1810, James Pine, a smith, 'called in a strange public house that I never was in before; I had a pint of porter, and hearing a few songs sung caused me to stop till between twelve and one o'clock [at night]'.<sup>73</sup> And in 1813, William Raper, a servant, was ordered to call for his mistress with a coach at 4am.

I came back before ten o'clock, and just before eleven I went out. I thought if I went to bed I should not get up at the time. I went to the public-house [on] the corner of Bennet-street. I went there to hear William George sing, as I had heard him sing before.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Malcolm, *Anecdotes*, i, p.393.

<sup>70</sup> POB, t17990911-67.

<sup>71</sup> POB, t18020918-128.

<sup>72</sup> POB, t18091101-45.

<sup>73</sup> POB, t18100411-48.

<sup>74</sup> POB, t18130407-115.

Morning, noon and night, in different parts of the metropolis – the busiest, noisiest, least leisured place in Britain – passers-by were amenable to forming impromptu audiences, and to seeking out specific singers. This readiness to listen must also have applied to songs on Napoleon. Whately was typically penetrating in his description of the subject as ‘upon that grand scale, so common in Epic Poetry, so rare in real life, and thus calculated to strike the imagination of the vulgar’.<sup>75</sup> Yet what did the crowd take away with them once the song was sung?

Materially, the decision to purchase and take home a song, in the form of a broadside, garland or songbook, indicates a successful impact upon the audience, who thus voluntarily took on the role of consumer. These artefacts could then be shared further, both orally and – among the literate – by copying. Stringfellow, a witness in an Old Bailey prosecution for theft, gives us an example from 1819:

I saw that song-book in his [the prisoner’s] possession about a fortnight before the robbery, and told him I should like to copy one song out of it - it was, “Love among the Roses,” which is on the top of the leaf.<sup>76</sup>

Ballad scholars stress the habit of plastering songs upon walls of private homes – yet there is no data on which songs received this treatment, and to what extent.<sup>77</sup> The existence of multiple editions of a song could indicate this practice, via the implication that a song sold out its first printing. Yet during the Wars in particular, we cannot assume the operation of a free and objective market, as loyalist (and potentially radical) backers are known to have funded the free distribution of certain songs. Moreover, so incomplete is the record of ephemeral publications that the little evidence we do have assumes vastly amplified proportions that may be wholly misleading.

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<sup>75</sup> Whately, *Historic Doubts*, p.24.

<sup>76</sup> POB, t18191027-6.

<sup>77</sup> E.g. R. Collison, *The Story of Street Literature: Forerunner of the Popular Press* (1973), p.2, Shepard, *The Broadside Ballad*, p.5.

The persistence of a song in tradition and repertoire is a surer indicator of its persistent impact, as suggested above.<sup>78</sup> A caveat remains: just as we cannot discriminate between songs based on their extant editions, as some may be lost to us, we cannot know for certain that given songs did not endure orally for generations, only to go uncollected. Chapter One detailed the afterlives of songs of Napoleon written after 1815. Songs were constantly entering traditions. We may take the example of ‘The Pitman’s Revenge Against Buonaparte’, a light-hearted volunteer song featuring colourful characters and self-knowingly hyperbolic lyrics.<sup>79</sup> Its author, Sergeant George Cameron,

sung it amongst his fellow volunteers at a meeting held at the Three Indian Kings on the Quayside [in Newcastle]. The song was greatly admired, being most appropriate to the times. It was afterwards borrowed by a comrade, who, unknown to the author, got it printed.<sup>80</sup>

Here is an instance of a song, written in manuscript form and sung among friends, meeting such a positive reception that it made the leap to print – and, from there, to winning a place in Bell’s collection of Northumbrian songs. Unlike typical volunteer songs that began in print and failed to enter repertoires, its humour was rooted in wry observation and gentle mockery of the very volunteers it celebrated. Its second and third verses indulge in vainglorious boasts, before a bathetic undercut; the braggart is shot down, and talk turns to the absurdity of drilling:

Then to parade the pitmen went,  
Wi’ hearts both stout and strong, man;  
Gad smash the French, we are so strang,  
We’ll shoot them ev’ry one, man:  
Gad smash me sark if I would stick  
To tumble them a’ down the pit,  
As fast as I could thraw a coal,  
I’d tumble them a’ down the hole,  
And close her in aboon, man.  
Toll loll, &c.

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<sup>78</sup> Above, p.236.

<sup>79</sup> Appendix no.273.

<sup>80</sup> Harker, *Allan’s Illustrated Edition*, pp.102-3.

Heads up, says one, ye silly sow,  
 Ye dinna mind the word, man:  
 Eyes right, says Tom, and wi' a dam,  
 And march off at the word, man:  
 Did ever mortals see sic brutes,  
 To order me to lift my kutes? [feet]  
 And smash the fool, he stands and talks,  
 How can he learn me to walk,  
 That's walk'd this forty year, man?  
 Toll loll, &c.

Another contemporary lyric that appears to have found favour with Tyneside auxiliary forces is 'The Sons of the Tyne', though the evidence is slender. The song was written in 1803-5 to the tune of 'Hearts of Oak'.<sup>81</sup> In 1808, an untitled song in honour of the king's birthday gave its tune instead as 'Sons of the Tyne'.<sup>82</sup> The implication is that the former was now the primary lyric associated with the tune. Yet, given that both were parade-ground songs for the volunteers, it is possible that the tune's attribution was a simple in-joke among soldiers – or indeed by Bell, the subsequent editor and collector. Then again, it may have been a convenient short-hand for the regiment's musicians, who presumably already had sheet music labelled 'Sons of the Tyne' – is this evidence of the song's impact, or simply of a simplified filing system?

More reliable are instances where a song has moved between milieus. If the mere existence of a broadside says nothing about its reception, then the phenomenon of movement between social or cultural spaces is indicative of something stronger: an appetite for consumption by an audience for which it was not originally intended.

[M]usic, particularly the music of high culture, did not simply float into the lives of the poor; it was taken there by employers, educators, philanthropists, working-class leaders, and others... Society was not a neutral and passive recipient of culture, but was actively involved in transmitting culture, and in determining the shape and form in which it was made available to different social groups.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Appendix no.322.

<sup>82</sup> 'Come, haste to Newcastle, ye sons of fair Freedom', Appendix no.85.

<sup>83</sup> Griffin, 'Popular Culture', pp.630-1.

Emma Griffin's surprisingly recent comments (2002) bring to mind the efforts of More and Plumptre; her phrase 'taken there' carries a top-down implication. While true, this should be supplemented by an awareness of the bottom-up acquisitiveness of popular audiences. J.F. Herling, an animal portraitist, made this point in an 1807 consideration of types of music. "But is it fit for John Bull?" I venture to say, that he will not rest satisfied with anything like that insipid species of melody prescribed for him as *suitable to his character*.<sup>84</sup> A year later, the *Edinburgh Annual Register* lamented that 'a ballad-singer in the street can attract greater crowds, by chaunting the comic songs of a Sadler's Wells burletta, than he would draw together by repeating the text of *Macbeth*.'<sup>85</sup> A singer's patter might begin:

Come, my lucky masters, here's a choice collection of songs, that have been sung at Drury-lane, Common [Covent] Garden, Sadler's Wells, the Uproar House, Fox-Hall, and other places, out of the most famourest roratorios.<sup>86</sup>

This appetite for theatrical songs on the part of those in the street could be facilitated by the habits of stage singers; there are numerous recorded instances of well-respected performers moonlighting in low-end public houses.<sup>87</sup> Piracy was another common path between social levels. This could occur on a purely oral level, as street singers listened at stage doors, or put an ear to the palings of pleasure gardens such as Bermondsey Spa, to learn songs.<sup>88</sup> Low-class printers, protected from prosecution by their poverty and obscurity, would pirate songs shamelessly if profit could be made from selling to a popular audience. William Shield once remonstrated at length with an Irish shopman, who had attempted to pass off a composition of Shield and Holcroft's as that of himself and Ann

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<sup>84</sup> *European Magazine*, 51 (1807), p.109.

<sup>85</sup> *Edinburgh Annual Register*, 1 (Jan. 1808), p.326.

<sup>86</sup> Parker, *Life's Painter*, p.124.

<sup>87</sup> Returning to POB, see cases t17950520-47 & t17770910-21. We also learn of Thomas Walker, who was 'no more than a good ballad-singer' but a celebrated stage and operatic actor, that 'to have spent an evening with him at the tavern, was the highest feather in a Town Buck's cap' – *European Magazine*, 37 (1800), p.117.

<sup>88</sup> Wargrove, *The Surprising History*, p.14; J.T. Smith, *A Book for a Rainy Day* (1845), p.137.

Catley, who had first sung the piece at Vauxhall.<sup>89</sup> As noted in Chapters Two and Four, the Dibbins suffered from dozens of cases of piracy by disreputable hacks.<sup>90</sup> Indeed, the main conclusion to be drawn from the phenomenon is to stress still further the impact of the Dibbins' songs – often in spite of themselves. Though Charles the Elder's war songs played to half-empty theatres in the 1790s, their popular reception was greatly facilitated by piracy. Charles the Younger's early song of 1799, 'The Grinders', is a case in point. He dismissed it as 'nonsense', the work of a single hour for which he was paid a one-off sum. Yet it succeeded in 'carrying all the town before it'.<sup>91</sup> What he called 'doggerel' appealed to a mass audience, with its world-weary, cynical, yet jocular message of life's hardships, containing mild anti-clericalism and distrust of doctors.<sup>92</sup> Thus pirated broadsides of Napoleonic stage songs by the Dibbins, such as 'The Ghost of a Scrag of Mutton', already indicate a positive level of popular reception, in their movement from one milieu to another. As found repeatedly in this thesis, the agency behind such movement demonstrates the vigour and discernment of bottom-up popular song culture.

Other enduring songs from the Wars typically share similar traits of detached observation and everyman sentiment to 'The Grinders' or 'The Pitman's Revenge Against Buonaparte'. Three were 'Napoleon's Lamentation', 'Bonny Light Horseman', and 'Jenny's Complaint'.<sup>93</sup> Correspondingly, battle songs with significant afterlives – 'Battle of the Nile', 'The Battle of Trafalgar' and numerous songs of Waterloo – were those which included a relatable human narrative, with as much compassion and tragedy as triumphalism.<sup>94</sup> Two of those battles – Trafalgar and Waterloo – were easily read as

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<sup>89</sup> Holcroft, *Memoirs*, i, pp.281-2.

<sup>90</sup> Chapters Two and Four, pp.79-80, 189-90, Dibdin, *The Professional Life*, i, p.vi; Speaight, *Professional & Literary Memoirs*, pp.46-7.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p.32.

<sup>92</sup> Bod. Harding B12 (150).

<sup>93</sup> Appendix nos.210, 58, 159.

<sup>94</sup> A similar observation may be found in Lloyd, *Folk Song*, pp.274-5.

tragedy. In Nottingham, the former was largely marked by mourning for Nelson.<sup>95</sup> Shaw writes of the latter, that ‘Since a sizeable portion of that people had been slaughtered in the campaign, the muted reception of the news amongst the labouring classes seems entirely credible.’<sup>96</sup> The testimony of Harriet Martineau extends this reading further:

[S]omebody (I forget whether father or brother) burst in with the news of the Waterloo slaughter. It was the slaughter that was uppermost with us, I believe, though we never had a relative, nor, as far as I know, even an acquaintance, in either army or navy.<sup>97</sup>

Thus it is unsurprising that the song legacy of these battles was more sentimental than bellicose.

Here we arrive at a clear conclusion: afterlives suggest that non-partisan balladry, with elements of narrative and empathy, had an important impact on audiences. These songs remained in the popular consciousness over time, reinvigorated by re-sings. For a song to be sung by an erstwhile audience is a further indicator of significant impact. Yet this conclusion is inherently weighted to favour certain genres, and stresses long-term over short-term impact. We may go a stage further by balancing this with the impact of topical and news-bearing songs, which were never written to endure. What was the relative reception of these most ephemeral of all ephemeral songs?

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<sup>95</sup> Pottle, ‘Loyalty and Patriotism’, p.73.

<sup>96</sup> P. Shaw, ‘Leigh Hunt and the aesthetics of post-war liberalism’, in idem, *Romantic Wars*, p.188.

<sup>97</sup> H. Martineau, *Harriet Martineau’s Autobiography* (2 vols.,1983), i, p.80.

## How long is a moment? The effect of topical songs

‘No subject was ever found so inexhaustibly interesting as the present’.<sup>98</sup> Whately’s dry wit neatly encapsulates the insatiable wartime appetite, both popular and polite, for news and topical detail. Both John Magee and David Love found their audiences’ foremost desire was often for news.<sup>99</sup> Topical songs did not sell if they were ‘stale’.<sup>100</sup> The clamour for the latest reports was widely satirised, from Rowlandson’s sketch ‘Great News’, to a series of ‘Peter Pindar’ verses describing the effect of Napoleon’s return in March 1815.<sup>101</sup> Both works focus on the human agency behind the transmission of news: Rowlandson depicts two disreputable hawkers, one tooting a horn; Pindar’s central character is a paperboy. While illustrative of the momentous quality of news, these accounts lead us to question the role of song, rather than prose. Where possible, people sought sight of a paper. In London, journeyman tailor Thomas Carter recorded his colleagues’ interest in the Copenhagen expedition of 1807. ‘[T]hey clubbed their pence to pay for a newspaper, and selected the “Weekly Political Register” of that clever man... William Cobbett.’<sup>102</sup> Carter took to breakfasting in a public house, ‘that I might have an opportunity of looking at the morning newspaper... I felt a considerable degree of interest in regard to the course of public affairs, and therefore was the more anxious to see a newspaper every day.’<sup>103</sup> This privilege cost him a halfpenny, the purchase price of a single ballad. Yet few had such opportunities. Carter notes that workers’ coffee-shops, stocked with daily papers, were only becoming ‘general’ in 1815.<sup>104</sup> Moreover, he was not always sure of a paper being available, as the appetite for news increased still further in the latter stages of the

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<sup>98</sup> Whately, *Historic Doubts*, p.15.

<sup>99</sup> Magee, *Some Account*, p.32, Love, *The Life, Adventures, and Experience*, pp.16, 38.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p.66.

<sup>101</sup> Rowlandson, *Characteristic Sketches*, plate 46; Lawler, ‘Bonaparte in Paris!’, pp.11-12.

<sup>102</sup> Carter, *Memoirs*, pp.89-90.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p.144.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p.186.

Peninsular War, following the widely-publicised victory at Salamanca. Thus, several workmen:

...united with myself in subscribing for a weekly newspaper. We would gladly have taken a daily journal, but our pockets would not allow of so costly an indulgence... Occasionally a debate would ensue between the sturdy John Bullites and those who were dazzled by the exploits of the French emperor.<sup>105</sup>

Carter's account is coloured by his desire to present himself as an informed, literate individual participating in the life of the nation. This in itself is significant, and this particular recollect further highlights the communal, contested reading of news amongst urban workers; their hunger for information; and the prohibitive cost of sating that hunger. This was no mere passive consumption, but active and participatory. Thompson stresses the significance of sociability and reading in the construction of working-class consciousness.<sup>106</sup> Interest in the War and discussion of news was as much a part of this as Friendly Societies or reading groups after 1815. Once more, it is not a case of sudden progress after war-time stagnation; the stimulus of conflict itself fostered the post-war activities on which Thompson focuses.<sup>107</sup>

This was no mere metropolitan phenomenon. Perhaps every 'Village Gang' had its opinionated 'Jwohnie', who

...reads the papers yence a week,  
The auld fwok geape and wonder –  
Were Jwohnie king, we'd aw be rich,  
And France mud e'en knock under.<sup>108</sup>

Throughout the British Isles, where newspapers were available, similar communal acts took place. Two accounts stem from rural southern Scotland, the first from an ex-mariner at Cousland, seven miles south-east of Edinburgh:

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., pp.170-1.

<sup>106</sup> Thompson, *The Making*, pp.461-6, 781-90

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., pp.799, 806, for acknowledgement of this focus.

<sup>108</sup> R. Anderson, 'The Village Gang', in Gilpin, *The Songs*, p.345.

As Mr Dickson knew I was anxious for the news, he was so kind as [to] give me a reading of the newspapers when he was done. The other workmen assembled in my cottage on the evenings I got them, and I read aloud; then we would discuss the important parts together.<sup>109</sup>

The second comes from Kirkinner, near Wigtown, situated on the Irish Sea roughly equidistant between Belfast, Carlisle, and Dumfries, and demonstrates both the paucity of news, and the determination of the poor to access it.

...every one was feverishly anxious for intelligence – that six London newspapers once a week were all that were received in the whole parish of Kirkinner...my uncle, who was manager for one of the gentlemen who received one of them, used to read the news on a certain evening weekly to the inhabitants of the village, who met at his garden stile – hence called the Parliament stile. There is little doubt that the whole country was similarly situated.<sup>110</sup>

All these accounts, of times when daily life was enriched by news, discuss the role of papers – an aspect thoroughly addressed by recent historiography.<sup>111</sup> Carter’s evidence demonstrates the increasing availability of papers to an increasingly literate working class, moving from the aegis of Cobbett to the *Black Dwarf* and its hundred counterparts. Yet many still found it impossible to obtain or read a newspaper. As one itinerant wrote of rural Britain,

There were few newspapers in these days...the various classes of people who made their living by travelling among these wilds were then the real news-mongers, and of course, were always welcome guests.<sup>112</sup>

Song remained an obvious alternative, or indeed supplement, to newsprint, possessing the advantage of recasting prose in a more moving, immediate, and memorable form.<sup>113</sup>

Freeth’s obituary stressed his role as a shaper of topical information. Here was a man:

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<sup>109</sup> Nicol, *The Life and Adventures*, p.208.

<sup>110</sup> Robinson, *Reminiscences*, p.39.

<sup>111</sup> For an overview of work on the reading experience, see I. Jackson, ‘Approaches to the History of Readers and Reading in Eighteenth-Century Britain’, *The Historical Journal*, 47, no.4 (2004), pp.1041-54.

<sup>112</sup> J.D. Burn, *The Autobiography of a Beggar Boy* (1855), p.31.

<sup>113</sup> For three views of ballads’ news-bearing function in this period, see C.M. Jackson-Houlston, “‘You Heroes of the Day’: Ephemeral Verse Responses to the Peace of Amiens and the Napoleonic Wars, 1802-4”, in Philp, *Resisting Napoleon*, p.186; Shepard, *John Pitts*, p.47; A.L. Lloyd, cited in Shepard, *The Broadside Ballad: A Study in Origin and Meaning* (1962), p.29.

Who, when good news is brought to town,  
Immediately to work sits down,  
And business fairly to go through,  
Writes songs, finds tunes, and sings them too.<sup>114</sup>

It did not require a ‘celebrity’ balladeer to fulfil these multiple roles. An anonymous ballad reporting the Battle of Salamanca, discussed in Chapter Three, could combine descriptive, news-bearing verses –

On the 23rd next morning just at the break of day  
British light troops engaged again, it was a bloody fray.  
The French they fought most valiantly, refusing for to yield,  
Though they had near eight thousand men lay dead upon the field

- with a rousing chorus to the tune of ‘The Brags of Washington’.<sup>115</sup> This served as a ‘hook’ for listeners, who could participate in the song’s performance by the third or fourth repetition of the two simple lines:

With Wellington we’ll go, we’ll go, with Wellington we’ll go,  
Across the main o’er to Spain and fight our daring foe

The conventions of the ballad form allowed the writer to append a moralising final verse, giving the audience a potential interpretative angle. In this case, it was politically uncontentious:

All you that wish to have a peace, from heavy taxes free,  
Pray for success to Wellington and all his grand army...  
Then trade again in England will flourish and increase.

Thus a topical song could inform its audience, pass comment, and shape a collaborative, communal response to its news in the very act of performance.

News and song carried strong connotations in this period, as a reprint of Horne’s sermons noted:

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<sup>114</sup> *Birmingham Gazette* (3 Oct.1808), cited in Langford, *A Century*, ii. p.277.

<sup>115</sup> ‘Lord Wellington for ever, huzza! A Favourite New Song’, Appendix no.183.

When the spirits are raised by good news...every one whose actions are unobserved, and therefore unrestrained, will break forth into singing. It is the proper expression of pleasure; it is “the voice of joy and health in the dwellings of the righteous.”<sup>116</sup>

Recipients of good news in whatever form did not for the most part respond with the spontaneous composition of new songs. Audiences voicing an immediate reaction did so through recourse to old, familiar pieces. We return to the *Satirist*'s recollection, in 1808, of events ten years earlier:

Never shall I forget that night when news of Nelson's victory of the Nile reached us. I was at Drury-lane, and the theatre was crowded. These four songs [‘God save the King’, ‘Britons Strike Home’, ‘Conquer to Save’ and ‘Rule, Britannia!’] were alone called for and sung.<sup>117</sup>

This form of reception of the news may well have been general, as it was commemorated in one variant of the song ‘Battle of the Nile’ itself:

But now the Battle's o'er, and Toulon's fleet's no more,  
Great News we shall send unto George our King,  
All the Kingdoms in Europe shall join us in chorus,  
The bells they shall ring, and bonfires [*sic.*] they shall blaze,  
Rule Britannia shall be sung, through country and town,  
While sailors, hand in hand, round the can do sing...<sup>118</sup>

‘Rule, Britannia!’ had been written fifty-eight years earlier, yet it provided an apposite articulation of audiences' feelings. Thus, an oppositional anthem from the masque ‘Alfred’, performed for the long-dead Prince Frederick, served a Napoleonic function without the need for lyrical updating: its very familiarity was an asset. The same phenomenon occurred in humbler form in the childhood of Thomas Cooper, and not only in his stylised recollection of Chevy Chase encountered above. On the outbreak of peace in 1814, he and his friends – knowing no contemporary patriotic songs – sung ‘hymns we had learned at school, or in the church’ instead.<sup>119</sup> What mattered was the creation of the moment, and an active response to news through singing. Thus the experience of the war

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<sup>116</sup> G. Horne, *Sixteen Sermons on Various Subjects and Occasions*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Oxford, 1795), p.305.

<sup>117</sup> *Satirist*, 8 (May 1808), p.241.

<sup>118</sup> Appendix no.18.

<sup>119</sup> Cooper, *The Life*, p.24.

was brought home in song via a wider rhetorical range than contemporary productions. The topical moment could be enriched with the venerable associations of ‘Rule, Britannia!’, the Romantic, legendary strains of ‘Chevy Chase’, or the pious dictums of a hymn.

Here we engage with an argument sparked by Mary Favret: was the ‘paper shield’ of literary and sub-literary productions, which stood between civilians and the direct experience of war, a means of reducing the impact of the conflict?<sup>120</sup> Her position – which side-lines the human impact of the press-gang, recruiting parties, and the presence of veterans on street corners – is that war failed to penetrate the public sphere, due to its mediation by cultural mediums. The mail coach, *Childe Harold* and Dibdin transposed violence into a more palatable key.<sup>121</sup> Our focus on popular song allows an extension of this argument to the popular realm. Catriona Kennedy, while placing greater stress on the significance of these experiences – ‘the British population was undoubtedly profoundly conscious that they were a nation at war’ – agrees with Favret that ‘modern war could be rendered palatable, even aesthetically pleasing’ by such means.<sup>122</sup> Yet Rawlinson warns against belittling the psychological impact: ‘In privileging the empirical over the cultural and imaginative, Favret’s assumptions become obstacles to comprehending the signification of war in Napoleonic Britain’.<sup>123</sup> Evidently, the British civilian experience (with the exception of Ireland) did not compare to that of a Spaniard, Milanese, or Prussian. Yet the impressions left were nevertheless profound, and often indelible. We must determine the relative impact of the moment when set against the sustained experience – two phenomena typified by two bodies of song, the topical-patriotic and the

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<sup>120</sup> M.A. Favret, ‘Coming Home: The Public Spaces of Romantic War’, *Studies in Romanticism*, 33, no.4 (1994), p.539.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, p.540.

<sup>122</sup> C. Kennedy, ‘From the Ballroom to the Battlefield: British Women and Waterloo’, in Forrest *et al.*, *Soldiers, Citizens and Civilians*, pp.142, 146.

<sup>123</sup> Rawlinson, ‘Invasion!’, in Shaw, *Romantic Wars*, p.115.

sentimental ballad. Did the ephemeral impression of good news, like ‘shots in the arm’, induce brief ‘highs’ in the general populace, or a more constant loyalist boost?

For many, the sustained experience, for the best part of twenty years, involved fear and privations, as manifested in songs of the press-gang and lovers’ laments.<sup>124</sup> Waiting for news was itself a harrowing burden, as Maria Edgeworth illustrated in *The Ballad Singer*.<sup>125</sup> Thus in 1809, when one young Scotsman told his father he meant to enlist, the immediate riposte was, “‘the first news I hear of you, may be that your corpse is bleaching on the Continent – a prey to wolves and eagles’”.<sup>126</sup> For some, that tragedy was realised. Burn, the itinerant, remembered:

The French war was then carrying desolation ... and there were few of the people even in these lonely, and sequestered vallies [*sic.*] who had not occasion to mourn some dear relative who had fallen in the service of his country. If these people had not heard the martial sound of the bugle, or the roar of the murdering cannon, many a loved one was missed from the family circle.<sup>127</sup>

This was the longer-term climate of the sentimental song-type, a near-constant presence throughout the Wars.

Chronology is key here. Discussing satirical prints of Napoleon, Kaenel writes compellingly that ‘they contributed to a new historic conception that might be termed *narrative*.’<sup>128</sup> This ‘History in the making’, told in song as much as print, was largely a narrative of Napoleon’s rise and the allies’ failures.<sup>129</sup> The first decade of the conflict provided only three major victories for Britain: the naval engagements of the Glorious First of June, Cape St Vincent, and the Nile. Between the resumption of hostilities and the middle stages of the Peninsular War – almost another decade of conflict – the only victory that truly resonated was Trafalgar. These isolated incidents were offset by the deaths of

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<sup>124</sup> Chapter Three, pp.122-31.

<sup>125</sup> Chapter Three, p.122.

<sup>126</sup> J. Donaldson, *Recollections of an Eventful Life Chiefly Passed in the Army*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Glasgow, 1825), p.68.

<sup>127</sup> Burn, *Autobiography*, p.31.

<sup>128</sup> Kaenel, ‘The Image of Napoleon’, in Guilosan, *Napoleon I*, p.71.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p.71.

Abercrombie, Nelson and Moore, debacles such as Flanders, Rio de la Plata, Cintra, and Walcheren, and controversies like the Copenhagen expedition, and punctuated a backdrop of French victories by land. Thus they were truly isolated moments in a bloody and unsuccessful war – and celebrated all the more fervently for that reason.

The impact of patriotic song culture could not be sustained permanently by a handful of victories in nearly twenty years. In search of a handle to long eighteenth-century mentalities, we may turn to Rousseau's theories of the effects of propaganda (in his example, moral propaganda) upon an audience. In a letter to D'Alembert, he interrogates the lasting influence of theatrical performance upon a people. In the first place, he is sceptical of its power to alter the thoughts or even the habits of citizens:

[W]hen a man goes to admire the great exploits of fabulous heroes, and to weep over imaginary woes, what can we expect more from him? Is not he content with himself? ... Does not he discharge every duty he owes to virtue, by honouring it on the stage? What would you have him do more? For him to practise it himself? By no means: he has no part to act; he is no player.<sup>130</sup>

This observation, later elaborated by Rancière, is worth considering more generally in assessing the reception of songs, and endorses Philp's point that loyalist ephemera 'hardly provides a stable, consensual base of popular opinion; it delivers temporary compliance, not allegiance - quiescence, not patriotism.'<sup>131</sup> Regarding the 'moment', meanwhile, Rousseau stresses its transience, and the shortcomings of repetition:

Can the concern, the pain, the pity we feel during the play, and which continue some time after it is over, can these be said to be the forerunners of a disposition to regulate and subdue our passions? Those lively impressions, which by frequent repetition must needs grow habitual, are they proper to moderate our affections?<sup>132</sup>

The overall implication is that the heroic and patriotic emotions excited by loyalist song were fleeting, when set against the enduring body of sentimental songs that more accurately articulated the long-term experience. Moreover, one-off celebrations involving

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<sup>130</sup> J-J. Rousseau, *A Letter from M. Rousseau, of Geneva, to M. D'Alembert, of Paris* (1754), p.25.

<sup>131</sup> Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, p.61; Philp, 'Vulgar Conservatism', p.64.

<sup>132</sup> Rousseau, *A Letter*, p.18.

song tended to involve alcohol, which – though it heightened the moment itself – could have the effect of negating any lasting impression, as the questioning of this Old Bailey witness in December 1806 makes apparent:

Q. What time did you go to the play. - A. At eight o'clock.

Q. Where was the place that you went to the play. - A. Upon my life I cannot speak the name of the street, somewhere in Whitechapel.

Q. Are you sure it was a play. - A. Yes.

Q. Had you been drinking before you went to the play. - A. No, I had beer at the play, it goes round.

Q. What play did you see. - A. I cannot say, there was a song singing.<sup>133</sup>

Thanks to the beer, neither play nor song lodged in the spectator's consciousness.

Thus, topical-patriotic songs as isolated experiences may have had a negligible impact. Yet there were two periods during the Wars when the 'moment' occasioned by news was extended by the 'frequent repetition' Rousseau mentions: 1803-5 and 1812-14. It is no coincidence that these are the two most prominent periods in the memoirs of those who grew up during the conflict. For Thomas Cooper at Gainsborough, it was during the later Peninsular War that 'our little town was kept in perpetual ferment by the news of battles'.<sup>134</sup> Harriet Martineau recalled 1813-14 vividly:

In the old days, I used to fly into the kitchen, and tell my father's servants how sure "Boney" was to be caught, - how impossible it was that he should escaped, - how his army was being driven back through the Pyrenees, - or how he had driven back the allies here or there...I remember my father's bringing in the news of some of the Peninsular victories<sup>135</sup>

Elizabeth Ham also shared Cooper's impressions of these years:

Great changes were now going on in the Peninsular, and we used to watch anxiously for the Mail coach to see if it were decked with laurels to show that it bore the news of Victory. At length day after day the clanging bells, and the mails as they dashed by, horses and passengers in perfect bowers of green branches, told of triumph after triumph, keeping everyone in a state of joyful excitement.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> POB, t18061203-17.

<sup>134</sup> Cooper, *The Life*, p.17.

<sup>135</sup> Martineau, *Harriet Martineau's Autobiography*, i, p.79.

<sup>136</sup> Gillett (ed.), *Elizabeth Ham*, p.188.

Several years older than the others, Ham also remembered the previous decade, wittily dubbing the period 1803-5 ‘Scarlet Fever’.<sup>137</sup> The militia paraded beneath her window ‘every evening, with a full band’.<sup>138</sup> To Mary Lisle, it was the summer of 1803 that left its mark. ‘The songs of the period added not a little to the enthusiasm of the people... There was one song of Dibdin’s called “True Courage,” which was for ever in our ears.’<sup>139</sup>

The language is telling: ‘perpetual ferment’, ‘day after day’, ‘keeping everyone in a state of joyful excitement’, ‘every evening’, ‘for ever in our ears’. It was the accumulated impression of repeated moments that made its mark, so much so that the pastimes of both Cooper and Lisle – and there is no reason to suppose they invented these memories – reflected topical stimuli. Cooper and a friend drew ‘imaginarily, Wellington and “Boney”’.<sup>140</sup> Lisle’s game was more active:

we invented a new game, at which we played incessantly, and with unwearying delight. It required noting but a moderate-sized stick, and a very strong imagination. The sticks we called our swords, and arming ourselves with them every day when we went out, we used them to beat the bushes, and cut off the heads of the nettles, exclaiming, “And this is the way we beat the French, we beat the French, we beat the French!”<sup>141</sup>

If we are to read this after Kennedy’s view of the ‘palatable’ effects of imaginative transposition of the conflict, then this is a picturesque rather than a harrowing impact.<sup>142</sup> Yet both periods – 1803-5 and 1812-14 – bore the potential to influence audiences’ mentalities and responses through the sustained repetition of songs, news, and loyalist iconography such as the mail coach and soldiers’ marches. Yet even in these cases, the reception was temporary. Cooper soon became a disenchanted radical.<sup>143</sup> Martineau was horrified by Waterloo, and ‘was more impressed still with the disappointment about the

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid., p.62.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., p.41.

<sup>139</sup> Lisle, ‘*Long, Long Ago*’, pp.67-8.

<sup>140</sup> Cooper, *The Life*, p.18.

<sup>141</sup> Lisle, ‘*Long, Long Ago*’, p.76.

<sup>142</sup> Kennedy, ‘From the Ballroom to the Battlefield’, in Forrest *et al.*, *Soldiers*, p.146.

<sup>143</sup> Cooper, *The Life*, pp.35-6.

effects of the peace'.<sup>144</sup> In post-war life, of course, she played a leading role in feminist networks of radical activity, and composed reformist songs of her own.<sup>145</sup> Ham remained a confirmed Bonapartist from 1798.<sup>146</sup> Her chief recollection of the invasion-scare period was its farcical nature, and how, upon causing a false alarm in 1804, 'poor Mr. Daniel hid himself behind his Portland Stone for weeks after.'<sup>147</sup> Even Lisle 'had grown tired of waiting for them [the French]' by the summer's end, recalling that 'The people maintained their warlike attitude during some months, but gradually the alarm of invasion died away'.<sup>148</sup>

The conclusion is akin to that drawn by liberal composer Thomas Gardiner: 'Dibdin, it is said, wrote more than a thousand [naval songs]... They increased with our victories, but at the close of these struggles they disappeared, and are now nearly forgotten.'<sup>149</sup> Gardiner was writing in the late 1830s; the Dibdins' songs would enjoy a revival during the Crimea. It is telling that he cannot recall any other songwriters: in the popular imagination, as opposed to in the print record, we may state with confidence that loyalist propaganda songs exerted little to no influence beyond their brief seasons of the invasion period and the later Peninsular War. No wonder that these two periods have attracted virtually all the historiography in this area. But we cannot privilege these six or seven years, the impact of which was so materially copious yet so psychologically impermanent, above fifteen other years of conflict. The topical 'moment' possessed undeniable power, especially when extended by repetition over months and years. But it was the lesser experience, not the greater, in a war of short peaks and long troughs. Thus, when temporally situating the songs we have analysed, we cannot suppose the cumulative impact of anti-invasion

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<sup>144</sup> Martineau, *Harriet Martineau's Autobiography*, i, p.80.

<sup>145</sup> K. Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens: Women, Gender, and Political Culture in Britain, 1815-1867* (Oxford, 2009), *passim*, esp. p.174.

<sup>146</sup> Gillett (ed.), *Elizabeth Ham*, pp.43-4, 102, 194.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.64-5.

<sup>148</sup> Lisle, 'Long, Long Ago', pp.79, 85-6.

<sup>149</sup> Gardiner, *Music and Friends*, i, p.227.

broadsides to have imposed itself over mentalities beyond 1806, when the greater incidence of anti-war song reasserted the traditional 'lived' experience of conflict.

## **Conclusions**

In attempting to access audience reception of Napoleonic popular song, we have eschewed bald statistical methods in favour of more subjective judgements, informed by the responses of groups and individuals, the suitability of songs' rhetoric to their listeners' situations, and the relative impact of ephemeral and enduring song types. Clear patterns have emerged: sentimental and personal responses ran deeper than collective, celebratory ones, and audiences were largely independent of external influence, able to discriminate between songs and react as self-conscious individuals to performances. These conclusions reinforce the findings of previous chapters, effectively completing the investigation, instigated by Gammon's speculations, into the contemporary and post-war Napoleonic song traditions. It has been shown that the latter tradition did not represent a surprising break from the experience of the Wars, but stemmed from a persistent body of anti-authoritarian, empathetic song, enriched rather than subdued by loyalist interference. Before we can summarise this thesis, however, we must consolidate these findings into a synoptic case study, by analysing the songs, song actors, and reception of song, in a single environment: the city of Newcastle.

## Chapter Seven

### Canny Newcassel: A Case Study<sup>1</sup>

'Bout Lunnun then divent ye myak sic a rout,  
There's nowse there ma winkers to dazzle;  
For a' the fine things ye are gobbin about,  
We can marra iv canny Newcassel.<sup>2</sup>

This chapter brings together the thesis' arguments in an analysis of Napoleonic popular song culture in Newcastle. Rooting discussion of songs and song actors within a narrowly-defined physical and temporal context will clarify and test the judgements of previous chapters. This follows other insightful historiographical case studies of Newcastle, such as Pam Graves' use of topography to examine civic ritual and social identity.<sup>3</sup> After first setting out the rationale for using Newcastle, I proceed to a brief sketch of the city, situating its political environment in demo- and topographical details. The argument moves to a chronology of relevant events, exploring their significance for song culture. This culture is examined in terms of individuals, networks, compositions, publications and performances, located in precise urban geographies. Where appropriate, comparisons are drawn with cities such as Dublin and London. The emergent story exemplifies the themes of this thesis: the role of Napoleon in articulating different attitudes from above and below; the importance of regional and local identities; the discrimination and autonomy of popular writers and audiences; the predominance in song of non-partisan attitudes; and the tensions between loyalist authorities and the plebeian populace.

Overleaf is a plan, c.1806, of the urban area of Newcastle, overlaid by a grid. Subsequently, when sites are mentioned in the text, a grid reference is given to a specific

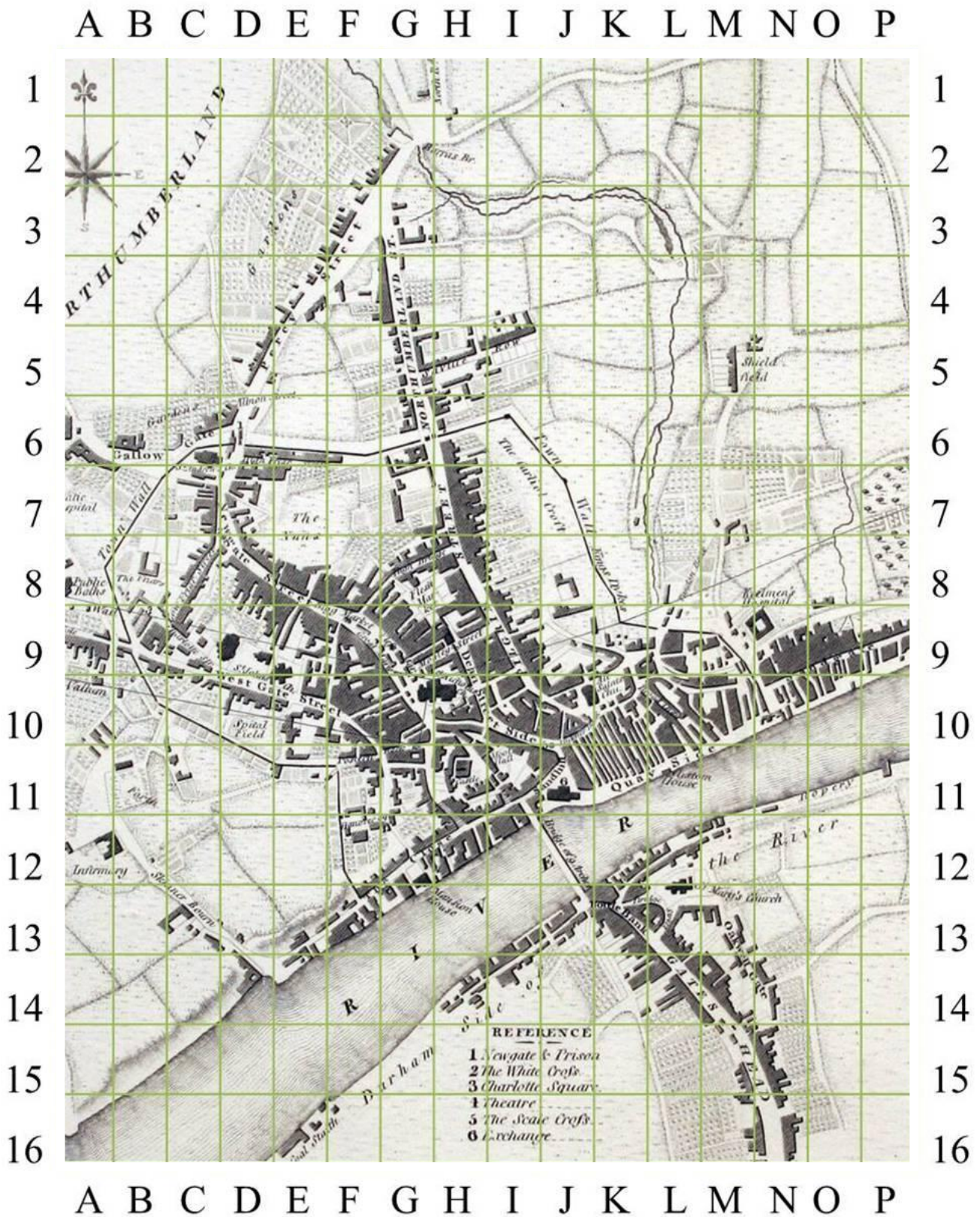
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<sup>1</sup> Whilst the standard definition of 'canny' obtained secondarily in Northumbrian dialect, its primary meaning was 'Agreeable to the eyes... In the north of England (in some parts pronounced *conny*) a general epithet of approbation or satisfaction, as in "Canny Newcastle"' – OED at [www.oed.com/view/Entry/27143?redirectedFrom=canny#eid](http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/27143?redirectedFrom=canny#eid), accessed 8 May 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Chorus of 'Canny Newcassel', Appendix no.75.

<sup>3</sup> C.P. Graves, 'Civic ritual, townscape and social identity in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Newcastle upon Tyne', in Lawrence, *Archaeologies of the British*, pp.31-54.

square or intersection (indicated by a '/'). This allows us to appreciate how interconnected the main actors in song culture were, in what was ultimately a fairly small, compact city.



**Figure 5.** Adapted from G. Cole & J. Roper, 'Newcastle upon Tyne & Gateshead' [detail], c.1806. Copperplate engraving. From G. Cole *et al.*, *The British Atlas*. Author's own copy.

## Why Newcastle?

Academics of popular song in this period such as Thomas Crawford and Harker stress Newcastle's importance within Britain as second only to London, in terms of print – widely circulated – and for 'organised cultural activity of all kinds'.<sup>4</sup> Its four weekly newspapers, two of which – the *Tyne Mercury* and the *Newcastle Chronicle* – were vocally liberal, were the most prominent in northern England.<sup>5</sup> The source material concerning songwriters and songs is exceptionally rich. The ephemera and stock lists of its major popular printers are largely extant, and the energies of John Bell preserved many unpublished songs.<sup>6</sup> Such is the vitality of its song tradition that it might be supposed altogether exceptional, of little use as a representative study. I argue otherwise, attributing this strength to the self-conscious activities of Victorian Geordies, who – thanks to Bell's volume, and the long lives of singers like Blind Willie Purvis and William Mitford – were deeply conscious of the tradition they inherited, and were at pains to acknowledge this legacy in print and in archival collections.<sup>7</sup> Accordingly, though Bell's collections are central to our understanding, we cannot unduly privilege his *contemporary* importance. Newcastle cannot have been so different from other northern cities, whose popular song culture has subsequently been neglected and thus lost.

In contrast to some of those cities – Sheffield, Manchester, and further south, Nottingham, in particular – Newcastle was not a hotbed of popular radicalism in the 1790s. The Wilkite enthusiasm identified in Thomas Knox's case study had not palled into apathy, yet ongoing disaffection lacked a marked Jacobin or subsequent Luddite

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<sup>4</sup> Thomson, *Newcastle Chapbooks*, p.6, T. Crawford, *Society and the Lyric: A Study of the Song Culture of Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1979), pp.5-6; Harker, *Allan's Illustrated Edition*, p.x.

<sup>5</sup> K. Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715-1785* (Cambridge, 1995), p.324, *The Picture of Newcastle Upon Tyne* (Newcastle, 1807), p.110; P. Brett, 'Political Dinners in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain: Platform, Meeting Place and Battleground', *History*, 81, no.264 (1996), p.537.

<sup>6</sup> Harker, *Fakesong*, p.52. Also J. Bell (ed.), *Rhymes of Northern Bards*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Newcastle, 1971), *passim*.

<sup>7</sup> E.g. Harker, *Allan's Illustrated Edition*; Corvan *et al.*, *A Choice Collection*; T. Thompson *et al.*, *A Collection of Songs, Comical, Satirical, and Descriptive* (Newcastle, 1827).

character.<sup>8</sup> Nor was it a bastion of Home Counties conservatism. Its notable Literary and Philosophical Society, akin only to a similar body at Manchester, was liberal and enlightened in its interests and membership, yet, in contrast to its failed predecessor, the Philosophical Society, discussion of religion or politics was prohibited.<sup>9</sup> Newcastle's popular enthusiasms were far from uniformly loyalist. Those involved in song culture expressed robustly unorthodox views. But the city possessed no definite partisan character, rendering it a more appropriate microcosm of the kingdom.

The geographical extent of its influence was certainly distinctive, however, not merely south towards York and west into Cumbria, but north into Scotland.<sup>10</sup> This cross-border phenomenon reinforces this thesis' focus on regional networks besides the long reach of London.

### **Newcastle c.1797**

In another case study of late eighteenth-century Newcastle, Kathleen Wilson draws attention to 'extremes of luxury and want', entitling a section 'The rejection of deference: Newcastle'.<sup>11</sup> These phrases contextualise a city at the end of a century of growth, change, and spasmodic improvement. A three-fold increase in coal production brought prosperity and problems, as a burgeoning urban population increasingly relied upon a widening

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<sup>8</sup> T.R. Knox, 'Popular Politics and Provincial Radicalism: Newcastle upon Tyne, 1769-1785', *Albion*, 11, no.3 (1979), pp.224-41.

<sup>9</sup> R.S. Watson, *The History of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1793-1896* (1897), p.25.

<sup>10</sup> To take but two examples. 'A Collection of Broad-sides', British Library, 1875.d.13, includes Scots dialect songs such as 'Will ye gang to the North Highlands wi' me'. Iconic press-gang song 'Here's the Tender Coming' (Appendix no.144) was first published (though not sung) in Blackwood's *Edinburgh Magazine* – Palmer, *The Sound of History*, p.283. See also Cox Jensen, 'The Travels of John Magee' for a further articulation of this argument.

<sup>11</sup> Wilson, *The Sense of the People*, pp.288, 369.

hinterland for basic resources.<sup>12</sup> New mercantile interests after the Seven Years' War broke existing coal monopolies, yet failed to secure representation in local government.<sup>13</sup> The resultant discontent with what was perceived as a closed oligarchy was mirrored on every level in a town still tarred with Jacobitism, and boasting a significant Scottish element.<sup>14</sup> An extremely large dissenting community, headed by Scots Presbyterians but including Unitarians, Baptists, Independents, Quakers, Methodists, Congregationalists, Glassites and Catholics, was severely underrepresented in the franchise.<sup>15</sup> Wilson identifies unusual 'absence of active popular participation' in politics and ceremonials, which cast ordinary citizens as 'observers' or 'passive recipients of patrician munificence' on public occasions.<sup>16</sup> Yet this oligarchy did not go unchallenged.

In apparent opposition to this constellation of power, party divisions, a politically conspicuous citizenry, a lively press, tavern and club life, and increasingly complex strategies of political organisation contested the forms and substance of elite hegemony.<sup>17</sup>

Though Wilson's focus is the middling sort, this framework proves equally applicable to a popular context.

Wilson identifies the press as symptomatic of this contestation of hegemony.<sup>18</sup> One clear attempt to engage in civic life was the publication in 1807 of what purported to be the first guide to the city, published by and for the Akenhead family of printers, whose shop was situated on the north side of Sandhill (J11).<sup>19</sup> Its opening advertisement purported to express 'some surprize that the large commercial town of Newcastle upon Tyne, intimately connected as it is with the British metropolis, has hitherto offered no such assistance'.<sup>20</sup>

This guide, a prominent indicator of local aspirations, supplies more details of the town's

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p.289.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.291-2.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.320-3.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.300-302.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.296-7.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p.315.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p.324.

<sup>19</sup> *The Picture of Newcastle.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, advertisement (preceding paginated section).

recent expansion. An increase of 887 houses in Newcastle and Gateshead between 1781-1801, taking the total to 4,377, represented a 25% rise, the census recording a combined population of 36,891.<sup>21</sup> A little over three quarters of these lived in Newcastle proper. Significantly, ‘in this statement there is no account of the numerous class of seamen which forms a considerable part of the population. Lodgers, travellers, and soldiers are also generally omitted.’<sup>22</sup> The guide’s editors were conscious of the importance of a large, peripatetic demographic – persons of particular interest to us.

This explosion in population and development brought tensions between what Wilson characterises as ‘two nations’.<sup>23</sup> In 1796, a second major round of improvement was undertaken: streets were widened, and gates and walls demolished.<sup>24</sup> Yet polite visions for the city were often at odds with reality. In 1827, Eneas Mackenzie would complain that ‘There are no *coffee-houses* in Newcastle... This defect in our public establishments seems almost unaccountable’.<sup>25</sup> The 1807 guide lists half a dozen respectable inns and coaching-houses – yet a trade directory of 1790 names nine taverns, and above two hundred public houses.<sup>26</sup> These informal establishments fell beneath the notice of the guide’s compilers, demonstrating the gulf between a very small set of polite locations, and an overwhelming plebeian culture of sites of sociability – and, of course, song. Further juxtapositions indicate the rude health of popular institutions. Newcastle boasted five charity schools.<sup>27</sup> Yet 7,000 working men and women of the town were members of mutually-supportive benefit societies.<sup>28</sup> Still more noteworthy was the Keelmen’s Hospital (N9). ‘Keelmen’ transported coal by boat to waiting ships – a close-knit community of labourers, conscious

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p.7.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p.7.

<sup>23</sup> Wilson, *The Sense of the People*, p.297.

<sup>24</sup> *The Picture of Newcastle*, p.4.

<sup>25</sup> Mackenzie, *A Descriptive and Historical Account*, ii, p.718.

<sup>26</sup> *Whitehead’s Newcastle and Gateshead Director, for 1790* (Newcastle, 1790), pp.49-55.

<sup>27</sup> *The Picture of Newcastle*, pp.39-41.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p.50.

of their iconic and material place at the heart of Newcastle's prosperity. 'This Hospital was built by each keelman paying one penny a tide. It is probably the only one in the kingdom built by the poor for the support of themselves.'<sup>29</sup> Yet if Newcastle's workers possessed a strong identity, this did not indicate small-town parochialism. Trade was a cosmopolitan affair, and the quayside thronged with foreigners – so much so that the governments of Russia, Prussia, Sweden and the United States each maintained a lifeboat for the benefit of their citizens in Newcastle.<sup>30</sup>

Polite entertainment spaces were commensurate with the city's provincial status. The only theatre, the Theatre Royal (H9), 'is open about three months in winter, and generally in summer at the races and assizes.'<sup>31</sup> But new Assembly Rooms (D9) had been opened in 1774.<sup>32</sup> Popular song lacked comparable sanctioned outlets. White Cross (C/D7/8) was recorded as 'one of the places where public proclamations are made' – improvement had not done away with this medieval tradition.<sup>33</sup> Several squares hosted markets; Sandgate (N-P9) and Butcher's Bank on a daily basis, and the Old Flesh Market (G8) on Saturdays, whilst a prominent central pair of parallel streets were increasingly used for the same purpose (F-G9).<sup>34</sup> These spaces had potential for popular song. Yet anecdotal evidence points us instead to public houses and places of work as sites of performance. This distinguishes Newcastle from comparable cities such as London and Dublin, both of which had streets, squares and entire districts notorious for their singers.<sup>35</sup> But in Newcastle, when the itinerant singer David Love attempted to ply his trade, he reported that:

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p.48.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p.71.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p.28.

<sup>32</sup> J. Burchell, *Polite or Commercial Concerts?* (New York, 1996), p.279.

<sup>33</sup> *The Picture of Newcastle*, p.26.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., pp.15-17, 14, 12.

<sup>35</sup> See references to e.g. St. Paul's Churchyard, London, in *Examiner*, 457 (1816), p.623, Parker, *A View of Society*, ii, pp.58-9, and *Director*, 2, no.16 (1807), p.101; and Dublin streets in *National Magazine*, 1, no. 2 (Aug. 1830), p.195.

on the second day, as I was selling my papers, a crowd being around me, two constables came and bid me give over, and said if we find you again making a noise, we will put you in prison.<sup>36</sup>

This threat was carried out when he continued singing in a different street.<sup>37</sup> The restricted nucleus of well-maintained streets in Newcastle's urban centre, combined with a zealous corporation, served to drive the city's popular song culture behind closed doors – except on the keelmen's annual meeting day, when they would 'walk in procession through the principal streets of the town, in decent plain dresses, attended with music, playing their favourite air of "Weel may the Keel row."'<sup>38</sup>

Events of 1792-7 reinforce this impression. There were no Paine burnings in 1792, allegedly because 'the wisdom of the magistracy of Newcastle saved that town from such a foolish, disgraceful, and riotous expression of popular opinion'.<sup>39</sup> It is unclear whether there was any popular enthusiasm for such acts. As war with France approached, authorities sought to reinforce their control over popular opinion. On 13 December 1792, 'the common council of Newcastle passed resolutions expressive of their determination to support the constitution, to repress the dangerous spirit of disaffection, and to promote a veneration for the laws'; on the 17<sup>th</sup>, a resolution was passed 'in bringing to legal punishment all persons concerned in seditious publications.'<sup>40</sup> Thus began Newcastle's loyalist contribution to the war effort, at odds with popular sentiment:

In February, 1793, the seamen belonging to the port of Newcastle associated to defend themselves against the threatened impress... These measures did not, however, prevent the impressment of seamen, which commenced at Shields on the 15<sup>th</sup> of February.<sup>41</sup>

Rioting at North Shields against the press was misinterpreted as a French invasion, and Lord Fauconberg led the York militia in an inglorious march halfway to the scene, and

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<sup>36</sup> Love, *The Life, Adventures, and Experience*, p.102.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p.103.

<sup>38</sup> *The Picture of Newcastle*, p.48.

<sup>39</sup> Mackenzie, *A Descriptive and Historical Account*, i, p.69.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, i, p.70.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, i, p.70.

then back again – an incident immortalised in two derogatory songs.<sup>42</sup> Resistance to the press-gang was especially prominent in the north-east; unlike those of the south, these were substantial port cities with no traditional Royal Navy presence. Northumbrian seamen manned merchant and fishing fleets, and exploitation by the military was thus especially intrusive. Moreover, the keelmen – Newcastle’s commercial lifeblood – were unusually well organised, furthering the animosity.

In the autumn and winter of 1795, there were two further manifestations of discontent. In September, many of the 33<sup>rd</sup> (Ulster) Light Dragoons, stationed at Newcastle, engaged in ‘mutinous’ activities.

It was suspected... that some of the inhabitants assisted in fomenting these disturbances. The following caution was therefore issued:- “That all sober-minded inhabitants will refrain from collecting in the streets, lest, from an idle curiosity, they should mix amongst those ill-intentioned people, and expose themselves to the misfortunes that may happen.”<sup>43</sup>

This caution was flouted in November, when ‘Great numbers of the working classes assembled’ to protest at the price of butter, wheat, and potatoes.<sup>44</sup>

Such was Newcastle in 1797: fiercely patriotic yet socially and politically divided; rich in cultural expression yet lacking sanctioned outlets; prosperous yet suffering from the economic and human privations of war. Events from 1797 only furthered these fractures, creating a volatile context with which popular song interacted.

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<sup>42</sup> ‘The Alarm (or Lord Fauconberg’s March)’, ‘The Patriot Volunteers (or Loyalty Display’d)’, in Bell, *Rhymes*, pp.309-10.

<sup>43</sup> Mackenzie, *A Descriptive and Historical Account*, i, p.72.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, i, p.72.

## The state of song culture in 1797

Music in Newcastle was at a low ebb in the later 1790s. Polite musical culture had blossomed mid-century under the stimulus of composer Charles Avison, who introduced an imitation of Vauxhall Gardens.<sup>45</sup> In 1774, four years after his death, the newly-built Assembly Rooms began to host concerts.<sup>46</sup> Venues such as this, the Cathedral Church of St Nicholas (G-H10), and the Theatre Royal sustained a regular series of charitable musical festivals.<sup>47</sup> Yet the privations of the 1790s prompted a decline in these activities across the north of England.<sup>48</sup> Whilst Roz Southey excepts Newcastle from this trend, citing the establishment of a Volunteer band and the continuation of concerts, contemporary local historian, radical and printer Eneas Mackenzie (1777-1832) was less sanguine:

In 1796, Messrs. Meredith and Thompson ventured to treat the Newcastle public with a Grand Musical Festival, under the patronage of Prince William of Gloucester... The Oratorios were performed in St. Nicholas' church in the mornings, and the Concerts in the Assembly-rooms each evening... The tickets were £1, 11s. 6d. each; but the conductors of this spirited undertaking lost 120 guineas, besides all their trouble and fatigue.<sup>49</sup>

The corporation was also tightening its belt. Until 1793, the city had maintained five waits. Waits, or pipers, were employed, sometimes on a hereditary basis, to provide music on public occasions.<sup>50</sup> Since the 1770s, they had been professional musicians, with a stipend and a new cloak provided annually.<sup>51</sup> But as war broke out, their positions were abolished, 42 years before the Municipal Corporations Act did the same nationwide. This action lessened the popular appeal of civic ceremony; it also meant there were five out-of-work musicians in Newcastle. Ex-waits may have been grateful to sing and sell anti-invasion

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<sup>45</sup> Burchell, *Polite or Commercial Concerts?*, p.276

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p.279.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p.23.

<sup>48</sup> Southey, *Music-Making*, pp.12, 156. A. Bell, 'Mackenzie, Eneas (1777-1832)', *ODNB*, at [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17576](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17576), accessed 14 Aug. 2013.

<sup>49</sup> Mackenzie, *A Descriptive and Historical Account*, ii, p.591.

<sup>50</sup> Southey, *Music-Making*, p.63.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.64-5.

propaganda. Yet the circumstances of their dismissal also gave them an obvious motive for opposing the war effort.

Southey makes further links between polite music and the war, tracing the increase of military motifs in new compositions, and emphasising reliance upon the unusually large Volunteer band in public concerts.<sup>52</sup> The presence of these musicians, hired by independent promoters, provides one plausible link to popular forms of music, as does the prominence of compositions by Thomas Thompson, a local timber merchant, who would write many popular songs in the coming decades. One of his earliest contributions was to this polite context; a song in response to the Battle of the Nile titled ‘The Orphan Boy’, which included this verse:

To force me home my mother fought,  
She shuddered at my joy;  
For with my father’s life ‘twas bought,  
Unhappy Orphan Boy.<sup>53</sup>

Songs such as this must have tempered the bellicose tendencies of these concerts. Yet the effect on lower class audiences may have been negligible. Entry to the Spring Gardens cost a shilling, as did a place in the gallery at the theatre, whilst most concerts charged 3s 6d for a ticket.<sup>54</sup> Popular reception of these events would have been second-hand, mediated by publication of songs such as Thompson’s, or informal re-performance of pieces by musicians when removed to a public house. Manifestations of elite interest in popular music included the appropriation of pipers’ tunes and traditional melodies by Thomas Bewick and his circle.<sup>55</sup> Dancing-masters and composers exemplified a national trend in their fondness for adapting traditional Northumbrian airs for use in art music.<sup>56</sup> Yet this fondness did not extend to contemporary incarnations: itinerant musicians were harassed

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., pp.152-3.

<sup>53</sup> Cited *ibid.*, pp.155-6.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p.61.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., pp.5-6.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., pp.66-7, 71.

and forcibly removed here as elsewhere, and even mild-mannered Bewick condemned the habits and subversive tendencies of ballad singers.<sup>57</sup> Orthodox opinion had it that, in time of war, lower-class ‘singing clubs could only be regarded as subversive and sinister’.<sup>58</sup> The *Newcastle Courant* condemned such activities during the American war:

managed and conducted by evil-minded, dissolute, and disorderly pretences [these clubs had] seduced and drawn into their infamous associations numbers of Apprentices, Journeymen, Shop-Servants, Gentlemen’s Servants, and other unwary Young Men, to their great loss and discredit.<sup>59</sup>

Such was the climate encountered by David Love on his ill-fated visit shortly after 1796, when he was arrested for disturbing the peace.<sup>60</sup> This helps contextualise ‘Colliers of Wear & Tyne’, c.1800.<sup>61</sup> The song is a very rare example of moralising, loyalist writers engaging with popular song in Newcastle:

A truce with all peevish complaining,  
Or on the right head let it fall  
They say it’s a madman call’d Boney  
That makes the poor earning so small  
If I had him dead I assure you  
I’d cover him heavy with stones  
And living if I could but catch him  
I’d sharpen my pick on his bones.

The song’s rhetoric appears designed to combat specific, known complaints by workers, attempting to divert popular disaffection by use of Napoleon as a scape-goat. This theme, common to metropolitan broadsides encountered in Chapter Two, is otherwise remarkable for its absence in Newcastle.

Indeed, prior to the rise of Napoleon, the story of topical song is one of remarkable absences. Songs opposing the press-gang had renewed relevance, some of which – like ‘Captain Bover’ – dated back to the Seven Years’ War.<sup>62</sup> But contemporary pieces were

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<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.62, 195.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p.195.

<sup>59</sup> *Newcastle Courant* (8 Dec. 1781).

<sup>60</sup> Above, pp.278-9.

<sup>61</sup> Appendix no.83.

<sup>62</sup> J.C. Bruce & J. Stokoe (eds.), *Northumbrian Minstrelsy* (Newcastle, 1882), p.125.

rare. Love, a strident critic of the Wars, had been silenced by constables. Disreputable itinerant James ‘Jemmy’ Allan, ex-wait, bigamist, deserter, horse-thief and celebrity, might have contributed, yet his instrument – the pipe – precluded a role as a singer-songwriter.<sup>63</sup> Thomas Thompson stands as a lone songwriter, operating in a polite milieu. Until 1801, ephemeral print culture was largely sustained by the long-running family firm of Angus, based in the Side (I10).<sup>64</sup> Angus’ stock included ‘The Death of Parker’, a sentimental response to the 1797 execution of mutineer leader Richard Parker that spoke of his ‘bright genius’ and predicted ‘endless glory’ as his reward in heaven, whilst avoiding direct criticism of the navy’s actions.<sup>65</sup> Yet this was exceptional, as most Angus garlands eschewed specific topical events.<sup>66</sup>

Popular song culture was by no means inactive. Rather, it was devoid of topical voices: there is no trace of radical or loyalist discourse in response to the first decade of the French Revolution. The plethora of topical songs that derive from the Napoleonic era, written by a new generation of artisans and shopkeepers, were not descended from revolutionary debates, but from a localised, indigenous song culture whose concerns were personal, rather than political. It was this song culture that thrived. Henry Robson’s ‘The Northern Minstrel’s Budget’ listed 230 Northumbrian songs that a wandering musician should be able to play or sing, only eight of which had any potential relevance to the Wars.<sup>67</sup> This minstrel was to attend ‘at hoppings, at bridals, and fairs’; the popular festivities of the city and its hinterland were well provided for musically.<sup>68</sup> Mackenzie emphasises the wealth of the ‘local’ musical tradition drawn upon on such occasions by ‘pedlars, tinkers, and

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<sup>63</sup> J. Thompson, *A New, Improved, and Authentic Life of James Allan* (Newcastle, 1828).

<sup>64</sup> *Whitehead’s Director*, pp.61, 94.

<sup>65</sup> Bod. 2806 c.18(83). Appendix no.98.

<sup>66</sup> E.g. G. Angus, *A Collection of New Songs* (Newcastle, n.d.), and holdings in Thomson, *Newcastle Chapbooks*, *passim*.

<sup>67</sup> Chapter Five, p.215.

<sup>68</sup> E. Mackenzie, *An Historical, Topographical, and Descriptive View of the County of Northumberland*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Newcastle, 1825), p.140.

pipers', stressing the familiarity of the songs and stories performed.<sup>69</sup> This Northumbrian repertoire was enriched by Scottish pieces and the presence of Scottish performers, facilitated by similarities of dialect. The burial records of St Nicholas alone list four travelling mendicants, hawkers and pedlars laid to rest between 1797-1803, two of whom were identified as Scottish; a third had the surname 'Burn'.<sup>70</sup> David Love was another Scot. The result was a distinctively 'North British' song culture that could identify as such, rooted in regular cultural practices, not necessarily conducive to co-opting by London-based propagandists.

This indigenous, apolitical song culture was epitomised by Blind Willie Purvis. Born in 1752, he would live to be eighty, and was already something of an institution by 1800.<sup>71</sup> Blind, slow-witted, and bare-headed, Purvis is not known to have engaged with contemporary politics, yet he was central to popular entertainment throughout this period. Although Corvan describes his habit of wandering the streets 'in all weathers', Harker situates his performances almost exclusively indoors:

Street performances were rare with him... his more general custom being to attend some favourite public-house, where he never failed to attract a company to listen to his fiddling and singing the old Newcastle ditties<sup>72</sup>

This tallies with the attitude of constables towards David Love; public houses were safer than the streets. It is no coincidence that a contemporary woodcut, reproduced overleaf, depicts Purvis in a pub, accompanied by tankard as well as by fiddle:

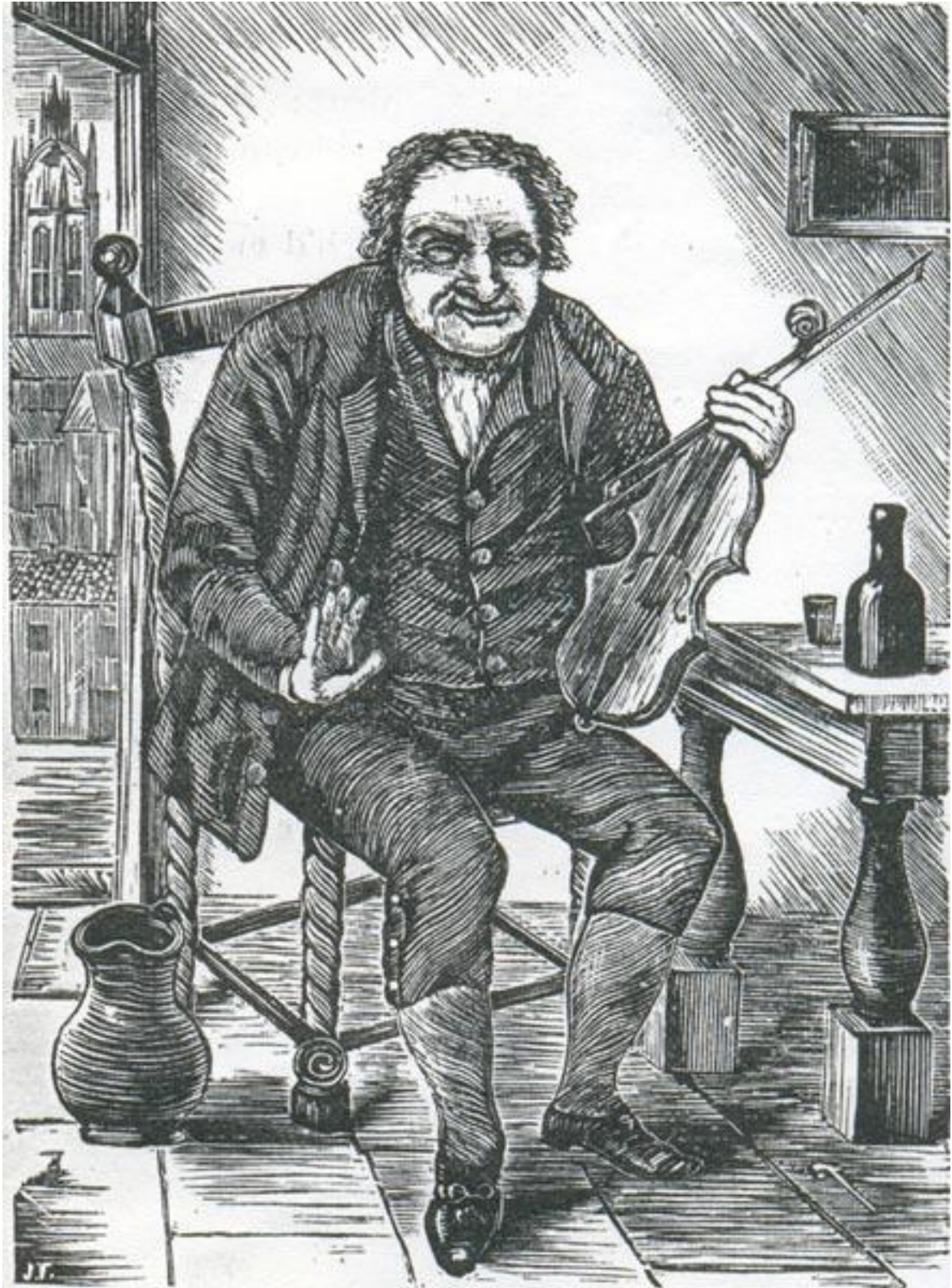
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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., pp.200, 203.

<sup>70</sup> H.M. Wood, *St Nicholas Newcastle Vol. VIII: Burials, 1791-1812*, Newcastle City Library Archive (Newcastle, 1913), pp.10, 15, 27, 33.

<sup>71</sup> Corvan *et al.*, *A Choice Collection*, p.136.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p.136; D. Harker, 'The Making of the Tyneside Concert Hall', *Popular Music*, 1 (1981), p.31.



**Figure 6.** Anon, 'Blind Willie', n.d.  
Woodcut. Reproduced in M. Vicinus, *Broadsides*, p.24 No attribution or copyright.

One of the public houses attended by Purvis, The Flying Horse, featured a room called ‘Hells [*sic.*] Kitchen’, reserved for ‘ruffians, tramps and low life of the town centre’. This pub stood adjacent to another, the Blackie Boy, which opened onto Groat Market (F9), and served as the meeting place of Swarley’s, a debating club that included Thomas Bewick and Thomas Spence.<sup>73</sup> Both were also members of the Philosophical Society founded in 1775, allegedly by Marat, though only Bewick joined the more respectable Literary and Philosophical Society founded in 1793.<sup>74</sup> Indeed, the latter body publicly disowned any connected with the former and with Thomas Spence, in a notice placed in the national press in 1798.<sup>75</sup> In one sense, then, Purvis enjoyed social proximity to the town’s liberal, even radical veins of discourse. Yet this was negated by segregation: regular patrons of The Flying Horse were denied access to the Blackie Boy.<sup>76</sup>

This exclusion seems more reasonable when one considers Blind Willie’s role in songs such as ‘The Collier’s Pay Week’, a ribald account of the revelries accompanying payday:

BLIND WILLIE the fiddler sat scraping,  
 In corner, just as they went in;  
 Some Willington callants were shaking                    [gallants]  
 Their feet to his musical din’.<sup>77</sup>

This occurs in a public house ‘not far from the head of the Quay’(K11): the song then describes a mass brawl, which results in ‘Robin’ having his breeches burnt off. The fight stems from the enthusiastic reception of Willie’s music. When considering the physical environments of popular song in Newcastle, we must privilege the public house over the street, rendering performance especially convivial and potentially irreverent. The singer-songwriters encountered below are presumed by Harker to have met in private: probably in

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<sup>73</sup> This local tradition is elaborated at [www.blackieboy.co.uk/blackieboy-history](http://www.blackieboy.co.uk/blackieboy-history), accessed 14 May 2013. For an academic account of Swarley’s club, and the involvement of Spence and Bewick, see J. Uglow, *Nature’s Engraver: A Life of Thomas Bewick* (2006), p.118.

<sup>74</sup> Watson, *The History*, pp.15, 18-19.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p.25.

<sup>76</sup> [www.blackieboy.co.uk/blackieboy-history](http://www.blackieboy.co.uk/blackieboy-history), accessed 14 May 2013.

<sup>77</sup> Appendix no.84.

a club located in one room of a public house.<sup>78</sup> Yet singers and published songs also operated outside this context: the songs ‘Winlanton Hopping’, from 1813, ‘Newcastle Fair; October 1811. The Pitman A-Drinking of Jacky’, and ‘Tyne Fair’, from 1814, all situate song in other dedicated festive environments.<sup>79</sup> Significantly, the first two link singing to inebriation, and specify pub-like spaces in which these activities took place: ‘Tenche’s Hotel’ in the former, and Sandy’s Brandy House in the latter. Performatively, many songs featured boisterous audience interaction, and were relatively free from interfering authorities by virtue of their sheltered, self-controlled setting. By contrast, many laments about the press-gang, stressing the plight of abandoned women, may have been sung by communities of wives and widows engaged in petty work – we have no concrete information. Traditional street performances by solitary, outsider ballad singers appear to have been virtually non-existent: this was a communal, familiar song culture, carried out for the most part in secure leisure spaces.

In keeping with this theme of dedicated leisure time, Blind Willie also features in numerous other songs, fiddling at ‘The Skipper’s Wedding’, and fiddling and singing in the nineteenth-century songs of Robert Gilchrist.<sup>80</sup> His songs were as idiosyncratic as his appearance, chief among them ‘Buy Broom Besoms’, an ancient advertisement for heather brooms.<sup>81</sup> Thus, though central to the daily and festive cultural activities of Newcastle’s workers, Blind Willie made no contribution to topical discourse on the Wars or Napoleon. Widespread plebeian musical involvement with these issues only really began after Amiens, in response to the renewed activities of invasion-fearing loyalists.

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<sup>78</sup> Harker, ‘The Original Bob Cranky?’, p.65.

<sup>79</sup> J. Leonard, ‘Winlanton Hopping’ (Appendix no.372); J. Stawpert, ‘Newcastle Fair’, in Harker, *Allan’s Illustrated Edition*, pp.100-2; ‘Tyne Fair’ (346).

<sup>80</sup> *The Budget; or Newcastle Songster for 1816* (Newcastle, 1816), pp.2-3; Corvan *et al.*, *A Choice Collection*, pp.15, 77, 136-8, 140-2, 150-1.

<sup>81</sup> Bruce & Stokoe (eds.), *Northumbrian Minstrelsy*, p.119.

## Popular song and the war with Napoleon, 1797-1805

Aside from attacking the press-gang, Newcastle's popular voices had little to say concerning the war with Revolutionary France. There is no evidence of a Tyneside version of the loyalist-radical debate waged elsewhere, and no trace of one-sided loyalist propaganda in vernacular form prior to the threat of invasion. This was perhaps in part an accident of chronology; those who featured so prominently from 1803 were mostly young adolescents or children in the 1790s.<sup>82</sup> More importantly, the Napoleonic period stimulated Newcastle's songwriters as the Revolution never did – an interest attributable to both an upsurge in local loyalist activity, and to fascination with Napoleon himself.

Elites organised patriotic gestures in the later 1790s – there were illuminations for both Camperdown and the Nile – yet in between the two events, it was resolved 'that the use of the Mansion-house, and all the occasional and public entertainments usually given there, should be discontinued after the following Michaelmas-day, during the existing calamitous state of public affairs.'<sup>83</sup> This ambivalence was typified by the celebrations that greeted rumours of peace. On 14 October 1801, a benefit concert of twice the usual size was held, fully 400 tickets being printed.<sup>84</sup> Its programme eschewed triumphalist anthems – Amiens was no victory – indeed, in describing the melancholy songs performed, Roz Southey writes, 'These are not the celebratory accents to be expected in a concert of this type... there was clearly a feeling of weariness and unease'.<sup>85</sup> The tune of 'God save the King' was accompanied by the lyric 'Hail, hail! O Peace divine!', calling for an end to toil and cares, and the return of trade, peace and prosperity.<sup>86</sup> This was the least strident reappropriation of the anthem yet, though sanctioned by the concert's organisers. The

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<sup>82</sup> Below, pp.291-2.

<sup>83</sup> Mackenzie, *A Descriptive and Historical Account*, i, p.73.

<sup>84</sup> Southey, *Music-Making*, pp.153-4.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p.158.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p.155.

following day, more illuminations greeted news of the preliminary negotiations, and the official ceremony of 4 May 1802 included a splendid procession during which ‘The reading of the [peace] proclamation was preceded by the sound of trumpets, when the town-sword was sheathed’, accompanied by drinking, marching and merriment.<sup>87</sup> Little enthusiasm for the conflict remained in Newcastle. By contrast, the resumption of hostilities the following year enflamed the dampened ardour of all parties, most of whom found their voices for the first time.

We know nothing of the origins or performance of Tyneside press-gang songs. We know nothing of the author of ‘Colliers of Wear & Tyne’.<sup>88</sup> Yet from 1803, there is an extraordinary glut of information concerning a circle of young male songwriters, all artisans, clerks, or shopmen – a cut above the keelmen, possessed of some education, yet below established polite society. Their songs were first dignified by preservation in John Bell’s 1812 volume, *Rhymes of Northern Bards*, their reputations and legacies secured by a subsequent generation of Victorian singers and enthusiasts. Ed Corvan, Thomas Allan, and Bruce & Stokoe collated and expanded upon periodicals and oral tradition to annotate the surviving songs, and in the later twentieth century, Harker subjected these collections to serious academic study.<sup>89</sup> This afterlife elevates Newcastle’s minor songwriters above their peers elsewhere; we must not overstate their comparative significance. It does, however, allow insights into connections between writers, their environment, and the songs they wrote and performed. As Martha Vicinus stresses, the appellation ‘singer-songwriter’ was especially apt in Newcastle: ‘The writer-singer was an essential member of many northern industrial communities in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.’<sup>90</sup> They sang

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<sup>87</sup> Mackenzie, *A Descriptive and Historical Account*, i, p.74.

<sup>88</sup> Above, p.283.

<sup>89</sup> See esp. Corvan, *A Choice Collection*, Harker, *Allan’s Illustrated Edition*, Bruke & Stokoe, *Northumbrian Minstrelsy*.

<sup>90</sup> Vicinus, *Broadsides*, p.11.

their own compositions: there is no evidence of purely performative, ‘mouth-piece’ ballad singers on Tyneside.

From 1803-6, this new generation responded to the war effort with a large body of predominantly satirical songs, many discussed in Chapter Two. ‘The Baboon’ derided false fears of invasion. Shield, Thompson, Scriven and Mitford all pilloried the volunteer movement. Certain features of these and other songs indicate the presence of this sceptical discourse in city life. It is significant that the singer-songwriters concerned were all involved in daily plebeian activity and, with the exception of John Shield, all aged between 16 and 30 at this time. Thomas Thompson (born *c.*1773), an established timber merchant, held the highest social status, but came from a lower class. His obituary states that ‘From an humble origin, he raised himself, by his talents and merit, to respectable rank in society’.<sup>91</sup> Thompson’s main shop, opening onto Groat Market, was backed by the grocery which John Shield (born 1768, and thus, at 35, something of an elder statesman) ran with his brother Hugh.<sup>92</sup> This grocery opened in turn onto Cloth Market (G9), thus the Shields had hairdresser-cum-sergeant-cum-songwriter George Cameron as a near neighbour.<sup>93</sup> Their younger acquaintance John Selkirk (born 1782-3) worked as a clerk on Quayside (K-M11), but was himself a barber’s son.<sup>94</sup> His fellow quayside clerk, James Stawpert (born *c.*1775) was the same age as Henry Robson, who worked for printers Mackenzie and Dent, though he had a small press of his own in his house.<sup>95</sup> Robson and John Bell (born 1783) both learnt their trade at the established family press of Angus, who later printed Bell’s *Rhymes*.<sup>96</sup> In 1803, Bell’s father set him up as an independent bookseller, also operating on

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<sup>91</sup> Corvan *et al.*, *A Choice Collection*, p.138.

<sup>92</sup> Harker, *Allan’s Illustrated Edition*, pp.58, 82-3.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.64, 102.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p.84.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.100, 106-7.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.106-7; Bell, *Rhymes*, p.328.

Quayside.<sup>97</sup> Meanwhile, a young cobbler's apprentice, William Mitford (born 1788) was learning his trade on Dean St (H9-10).<sup>98</sup> Behind all these young writers was fledgling ephemeral printer John Marshall (no relation to his London namesake), who, though based south of the river, operated a large circulating library of songs and pamphlets from 1801.<sup>99</sup>

Harker summarises the situation thus:

When we examine the coterie in which John Selkirk (and, presumably, Bell) took part, we find that it was composed of young men, some of them of liberal and even radical sympathies, amongst whom was the key figure of John Marshall, the radical bookseller and publisher of broadsides and chapbooks of songs.<sup>100</sup>

The ranks of this songwriting circle were later swelled by John Leonard, a gardener's son, whose output was most prolific from 1812-13.<sup>101</sup>

These associations demonstrate a lively web of singer-songwriters. They do not prove its relevance to the working population, beyond the circumstantial fact of geographical proximity. Harker demurs on this point, noting that Bell's *Rhymes*, the collection that brought together most of these writers, sold for sixpence – and was thus aimed at a 'bourgeois [and] petty-bourgeois' market, not a labouring one.<sup>102</sup> He concurs with Colls in labelling the use of dialect an affectation.<sup>103</sup> And he emphasises the importance of a private, petit-bourgeois milieu to the circulation and appreciation of the Bob Cranky songs.<sup>104</sup> His arguments have merit, and might lead us to draw parallels between the well-documented yet ineffectual compositions of southern propagandists, and those of this liberal Northumbrian clique. Bell in particular is worthy of scrutiny: he collects numerous anonymous songs against the press-gang in manuscript form, yet the only one published in

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<sup>97</sup> Harker, 'The Original Bob Cranky?', p.49.

<sup>98</sup> Idem, *Allan's Illustrated Edition*, pp.132-4.

<sup>99</sup> Thomson, *Newcastle Chapbooks*, p.11; Vicinus, *Broadsides*, p.10.

<sup>100</sup> Harker, 'The Original Bob Cranky?', p.64.

<sup>101</sup> Idem, *Allan's Illustrated Edition*, pp.128-9.

<sup>102</sup> Idem, *Fakesong*, pp.51-2.

<sup>103</sup> Idem, 'The Original Bob Cranky?', p.70, Colls, *The Collier's Rant*, pp.22, 25.

<sup>104</sup> Harker, 'The Original Bob Cranky?', pp.65, 73-4.

his *Rhymes* is by Henry Robson, a member of Bell's circle.<sup>105</sup> Bell may have discriminated by class or gender: though all the songs collected adopt a first-person female persona, it is only in Robson's case that we know the writer to be male. The others may have been women, unless they too were men choosing the most suitable and sympathetic character – the forlorn female dependent – to narrate their songs. Yet set against these insular arguments, there is much to indicate a far broader, popular influence.

First, we may question the utility of the term 'petit-bourgeois': it is clear that some of these men were extremely literate, yet engaged in humble artisanal work. Stawpert, for example, was an ink-stained clerk, but employed by a brewer on the bustling quayside. Socially, these singers were far from complacent or established: none were in the recognised professions, and though some, like Thompson, rose to mercantile success, others, like Marshall, ended in bankruptcy.<sup>106</sup> Mitford may have borrowed Charles Dibdin the Elder's tune 'Madam Fig's Gala' for 'The Local Militia-man', yet the original had already passed into popular repertoires under several names; moreover, as a sixteen-year-old cobbler's apprentice, his use of dialect seems natural rather than affected.<sup>107</sup> The notion that those who spoke in a local vernacular would only read and write in standard English – the stance taken by Harker and Colls – is only convincing if we suppose a base level of *formal* literacy. Those without a standardised education may have been likelier to recognise phonetic spelling than polite usage. The use of dialect and idiom, far from being an artificial, condescending barrier to a popular audience, may simply have rendered lyrics more accessible to the barely-literate, the easier to be spelt out. J. White, Northumbria's only significant broadside printer from the era before Holcroft, Edgeworth, Scott *et al.* made the dialect form fashionable (in business 1711-69), mostly reprinted southern songs

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<sup>105</sup> 'The Sandgate Lassie's Lament' (Appendix no.297). To be contrasted with 'Oh the Weary Cutter' (249), 'The Tarpaulin Jacket' (328), 'I Wish the Wars Were Over' (150).

<sup>106</sup> Thomson, *Newcastle Chapbooks*, p.12, Vicinus, *Broadsides*, p.10.

<sup>107</sup> Appendix no.178.

in standard English.<sup>108</sup> This leaves it unclear whether dialect lyrics could have had a popular use, or were merely symptomatic of polite fashion.

We may at least be certain that these songs were available to a wide, popular market. Harker has commented on Marshall's practice of printing songbooks, often priced as high as sixpence, rather than individual broadsides priced at a halfpenny.<sup>109</sup> This neglects the fact that garlands, or small collections of songs, were the accepted popular print form in the north of England, Scotland and Ireland: the individual broadside was the creation of a southern urban market.<sup>110</sup> Harker is right to draw attention to the commodification of the songbook after Ritson's involvement in the later eighteenth century, yet many of Marshall's collections were simple garlands of four to six songs, following the established practice of the family firm of Angus.<sup>111</sup> 'The Collier's Pay-week', discussed above, depicts miners and keelmen as prone to periodic excesses of consumption and revelry, when their not-insubstantial pay came around.<sup>112</sup> Yet if a Newcastle worker were to pay sixpence for a songbook, or a lesser amount for a garland, they were getting far better value per song than by frequent purchase of halfpenny broadsides, due to economies of scale. Nor has account been taken of the fact that Marshall operated a large, circulating *library*. If workers rented publications, committing songs to memory before handing them back, then their costs would be greatly reduced, allowing for a broad social impact.

It may be argued that this was mere potential, comparable to the potential impact of loyalist propaganda, disseminated at a discount or for free in broadside form. Yet Marshall and the writers around him were intimately connected with their popular audience and with

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<sup>108</sup> R. Welford, *Early Printing in Newcastle-upon-Tyne* (Newcastle, 1895), pp.18-19. White also founded the *Newcastle Courant*. See Bod. Archives for his extant song output (searchable by name).

<sup>109</sup> Harker, 'The Original Bob Cranky', p.74; see also e.g. *The Newcastle Songster, or, Tyne Minstrel* (Newcastle, 1806), priced at 6d.

<sup>110</sup> J. Ritson (ed.), *Northern Garlands* (1810), p.v. Ritson writes, 'A county garland is one of those minor publications scarcely considered worthy the attention of a county editor; and from the motley basket of an itinerant mendicant, the reader is alone supplied with such an entertainment'. See also Tibble & Tibble, *The Prose*, p.19, for the popular context of the garland tradition.

<sup>111</sup> Harker, *Fakesong*, pp.26-7, 37; Thomson, *Newcastle Chapbooks*, pp.32-44.

<sup>112</sup> Above, p.287.

the local events their songs parodied; they lived, worked and drank in that very environment. By 1810, Marshall had immersed himself still more deeply by opening his main shop in the Old Flesh Market (G8), which was such a busy, disreputable hub of local popular activity that the corporation had been attempting to shut it down since 1807, to avoid inconvenience to passing carriages.<sup>113</sup> Marshall's new location may thus be regarded as an act of self-alignment with insubordinate elements, as well as good business practice. Given his later involvement in the nascent unionisation of local miners, and the popular activism evident in his post-1815 publications, it is hard to regard Marshall as in any way separate from truly popular culture.<sup>114</sup> Socially, he also moved in polite liberal circles. For some time prior to February 1817 he served as Librarian to the Literary and Philosophical Society. Yet in that month, Marshall was dismissed from the Society's committee for engaging in prohibited debates. According to a minute,

That Mr. Marshall, having printed and published a Pamphlet, entitled, a Political Litany, in which both [Religion and British Politics] have been introduced in a manner calculated to injure the reputation and interests of the Society, is no longer Librarian to the said Society, and the Treasurer is hereby authorised to pay his Salary up to March next.<sup>115</sup>

By preferring to publish, rather than to keep his prestigious position, Marshall was choosing popular politics over club culture.

These writers' songs demonstrate involvement with the popular community, its culture and politics. Two from late 1804, John Shield's 'Blackett's Field' and the uncredited 'Kiver Awa', attack the drilling of local volunteers in the most personal terms.<sup>116</sup> Both ridicule 'Dixon', who appears to have been the drillmaster. Shield also lampoons Ridley, the commander, in a series of absurd questions. Shield pursues a favourite theme – that the soldiers would rather be drinking in 'Heaton's cellars' (a public house) than marching –

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<sup>113</sup> Thomson, *Newcastle Chapbooks*, p.10; *The Picture of Newcastle Upon Tyne*, p.12

<sup>114</sup> Vicinus, *The Industrial Muse*, p.14; below, pp.298-9, 314-5.

<sup>115</sup> Watson, *The History*, pp.26-7.

<sup>116</sup> Appendix nos. 30, 170.

and peppers his song with references to daily life and topography. The unknown writer of ‘Kiver Awa’ adopts a different rhetorical strategy, engaging with the high patriotism of volunteers’ own songs, subverting the imagery through hyperbole and the bathetic undercut that ends each verse: the repetition of Dixon’s incessant shout “‘Kiver awa’, kiver awa’, kiver awa’.”

This interaction is further illustrated by ‘Delia’s Answer’: a direct, loyalist riposte to Shield’s ironic ‘O No, My Love, No’, discussed in Chapter Two.<sup>117</sup> Its writer rephrases Shield’s lines to accuse the song’s subject – ‘Colin’ – of cowardice, suggesting that his real duty is to serve his country, not stay with his love. In so doing, they appear to have missed Shield’s point: the knowing subversion of heroic expectation is the basis of the song’s humour. But it indicates that at least some of these songs exerted a tangible influence in Newcastle life. Charles Purvis’ ‘The Bards of the Tyne’, a witty sally impugning the talents of the collective of writers, was printed in the *Tyne Mercury*, described by Harker as a ‘progressive bourgeois’ paper, as were ripostes by Shield and Selkirk.<sup>118</sup> This mannered spat suggests a certain exclusivity and self-indulgence. Yet Purvis was an ex-schoolmaster and something of a wheeler-dealer, occupying a disreputable and essentially plebeian social status.<sup>119</sup> Moreover, the initial printing of songs in newspapers – the *Mercury* carried several – did not preclude a broader afterlife in garlands or oral repertoires.<sup>120</sup>

Elsewhere, we find these writers democratising and coarsening their humour. The first Bob Cranky song, ‘Bob Cranky’s Adieu’, was set to the tune of Charles Dibdin the Elder’s ‘The Soldier’s Adieu’. Its chief irony lay in the contrast between the broad Geordie dialect of the new lyric, and the grandiosity of the original tune. Yet that tune required a

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<sup>117</sup> Appendix no.100; Chapter Two, p.96.

<sup>118</sup> Harker, *Allan’s Illustrated Edition*, p.61; idem, ‘The Original Bob Cranky?’, p.71.

<sup>119</sup> Idem, *Allan’s Illustrated Edition*, p.61.

<sup>120</sup> Chapter Four, p.190.

classically-trained voice and piano accompaniment to do it justice, restricting the joke to a drawing-room milieu. Though Marshall could – and did – publish Dibdin’s original lyrics in a garland, he had no means of publicising the demanding, distinctive tune.<sup>121</sup> But when John Selkirk revisited the persona of Cranky in ‘Bob Cranky’s ‘Size Sunday’, he kept the name and dialect and changed the form: the verses are structured as a limerick, and Selkirk had them set to a new tune by an otherwise unknown Gatesheader, Thomas Train.<sup>122</sup> The art-music reference was abandoned, and Bob Cranky entered local tradition, subsequent variations following the new, more accessible tune and structure.

Similarly, when Thomas Thompson wrote his anti-establishment ‘Mr Mayor’ in the wake of Trafalgar, he employed, not the sophisticated elements of his 1790s output, but the tropes of bawdy vernacular song.<sup>123</sup> Its opening couplet situates the song in local popular culture:

Pal Fargie is my name Mr. Mayor Mr. M  
And Sandgate is my Hame Mr. Mayor

Pal Fargie was a local prostitute; Sandgate was the main haunt of the keelmen.<sup>124</sup> The song’s ensuing references to ‘C[un]t’, and how Gatesheaders will ‘F[uc]k and fight like deels [devils]’, neither necessitate a popular audience nor preclude a polite one: after-dinner singing in elite clubs could be equally bawdy. Yet its preoccupations with the scarcity of bread and beer, and the dismissal of the waits, demonstrate an engagement with workers’ concerns, not those of prosperous merchants:

It’s lang upon my Soul Mr. Mayor Mr. M  
Since we saw a halpenny rowl Mr. Mayor  
A – wish the Millars a wi the Corn Merchants in a raw  
Were in the devels claw Mr. Mayor –

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<sup>121</sup> *A Garland of New Songs* (Newcastle, c.1810), p.7.

<sup>122</sup> Bell, *Rhymes*, p.25.

<sup>123</sup> Appendix no.196.

<sup>124</sup> *The Picture of Newcastle*, pp.15-16.

A gud Beer's grown unco scarce Mr. Mayor Mr. M  
It's like farden wow se warsh Mr. Mayor [farthing water so thin]  
...  
And gies Beer that'l taste wor Gobs Mr. Mayor

Yance on your worship's day Mr. Mayor Mr. M  
The wates did sweetly play Mr. Mayor  
But hinny dat mi skin when ye have a Greasy chin  
Ye shouts give us Beer & Gin Mr. Mayor

Thompson's grievances mirror those of the later-period William Cobbett, a theme identified by Howkins and Dyck as demonstrating awareness of the 'peasant vision' and the political economy of ordinary workers.<sup>125</sup> If not all, then a large part of these songwriters' output engaged with a broad popular audience, and was presumably more successful in its impact than the less-informed, less appropriate productions of a loyalist metropolitan elite.

Given the incendiary nature of 'Mr Mayor', it is unsurprising that it is known only in the manuscript form preserved by Bell; a print edition was unlikely. We have already noted the resolution of 17 December 1792 to bring 'to legal punishment all persons concerned in seditious publications'.<sup>126</sup> Fortunately, a large part of Bell's manuscript collection remains extant. Thus a question obtains: why, if these singer-songwriters were liberal and anti-establishment, are there no manuscript songs about Napoleon himself? Is this not precisely the environment in which we might expect an unpublished song or two in his praise? One plausible explanation is that this silence masks a difference of opinion between Bell and Marshall. Bell's sympathies were Paineite and Spencean: his bookshop included 'six of Paine's works, and Joseph Clarke's *Freeman's Pocket Companion*', as well as Spence's *Pig's Meat*.<sup>127</sup> As such, he is unlikely to have shared Marshall's enthusiasm for the French emperor, whom many – including Spence – saw as a betrayer of

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<sup>125</sup> Howkins & Dyck, "The Time's Alteration", p.28.

<sup>126</sup> Mackenzie, *A Descriptive and Historical Account*, i, p.70.

<sup>127</sup> Harker, *Songs*, p.xiii.

the revolution, the hero turned despot.<sup>128</sup> This difference between the friends' stances was mirrored in their approach to song and print. Marshall, the Bonapartist and ephemeral printer, shared the common man's warm, less overtly-politicised regard for the figure of Napoleon as manifested in many later popular songs. Bell, the hard radical and antiquarian bookseller, may have been as sceptical of Napoleon's actions as he was of the merits of the broadsides that celebrated them.<sup>129</sup> Thus no consensus would have prevailed in their circle, rendering Napoleon a subject for lively debate rather than for communal song. Another possibility is that Marshall's own views on Napoleon altered substantially over time, yet there is nothing to indicate a shift in his position either during the Wars or in his retrospective accounts.

It should not be imagined that all participants in this song culture were wholly opposed to the war. The firm of Angus published 'Bonaparte and Talleyrand' and 'Boney in England', two metropolitan loyalist broadsides attacking Napoleon, as well as a garland called 'Britannia's Defenders' – though, when compared to the extent of their other publications, this contribution is still notable for its meagreness: Angus was no Pitts or Jennings.<sup>130</sup> Nor did this prevent Angus from printing broadsides critical of the establishment. The spectrum of patriotism was a broad one. Apparently contradictory positions could be held by the same individual, such as opposition to the press-gang and support of the navy: a victory was always preferable for sailors' relatives, as far fewer casualties were sustained by the winning side. And though loyalist rhetoric may have attempted to impose a 'for us or against us' binary upon subjects, this dichotomy seldom manifested itself in practice. As we have observed, Thomas Thompson could both hold his Volunteer's commission as a captain, and pen scurrilous verses attacking the mayor, the

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<sup>128</sup> For Spence's view, see Spence, *Spence's Songs* (1807 & 1812), pp.2, 18, 20.

<sup>129</sup> See Harker, *Fakesong*, p.52, for Bell's lack of faith in ephemera.

<sup>130</sup> Thomson, *Newcastle Chapbooks*, pp.32, 37, and *passim* for overall output.

press-gang, and the war-time economy.<sup>131</sup> John Scriven's songs lampooned the volunteers, but this did not prevent his singing Cecil Pitt's 'The Newcastle Signs', a comic patriotic sally against the French threat, on stage at the Theatre Royal in 1806 – presumably for a suitable fee.<sup>132</sup>

Two songs reflect this nuanced stance. George Cameron's 'The Pitman's Revenge Against Buonaparte' does not appear to have originated within the songwriters' circle: Cameron was a volunteer sergeant and hairdresser with no known connection to others in this chapter, who worked by the Cloth Market.<sup>133</sup> He performed his song in the Three Indian Kings public house (J11) on Quayside in 1804. Since many amateur writers worked on Quayside, it is plausible that, when his manuscript 'was afterwards borrowed by a comrade, who, unknown to the author, got it printed', the approach to Marshall (who printed it) was made through his wider circle.<sup>134</sup> The song constitutes a more convincing appeal to duty and heroism than most loyalist productions, centring on a dispute between 'Cowardly Willy Dunn' and 'loyal Tom'. The developing conversation articulates many genuine grievances of the volunteers, such as annoyance at drillmasters –

Did ever mortals see sic brutes,  
To order me to lift my kutes? [boots/feet]  
And smash the fool, he stands and talks,  
How can he learn me to walk,  
That's walk'd this forty year, man?

- and sends up Tom's wilder boasts as 'a joke': the loyal soldier's claims appear intentionally hyperbolic.

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<sup>131</sup> 'Mr Mayor' (Appendix no.196), 'The New Keel Row' (222), verse eight.

<sup>132</sup> Appendix no.236.

<sup>133</sup> Appendix no.273; Harker, *Allan's Illustrated Edition*, p.102.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.102-3

As fast as I could thraw a coal,  
I'd tumble them a' down the hole,  
And close her in aboon, man.

...

Ay Bonaparte's sel I'd take,  
And throw him in the burning heap,  
And with great speed I'd roast him deed

Thus far, the song reads like most of the satirical compositions detailed above. Yet the cynical Willy is shown up, and the braggart Tom implicitly endorsed, in the final verse:

Enough of this has shure been said,  
Cry'd Cowardly Willy Dunn, man;  
For should the Frenchmen come this way,  
We'd be ready for to run, man.  
Gad smash you for a fool, says Tom,  
For if I could not use my gun,  
I'd take my pick, I'd hew them down,  
And run and cry through a' the town,  
God save great George our king, man.

Overall there is a degree of ambivalence, yet the moral burden is that, however absurd, the brave and loyal volunteers are the better men. There is no animosity towards the French or Napoleon – Tom's threats are comic, not xenophobic – and the humanised, colloquial tone, written and sung by an insider, served as a more convincing stimulus than an identikit London broadside.

Cameron's song exhibits a highly local, vernacular patriotism, suitable for a Tyneside pub. James Stawpert's 'Trafalgar's Battle' stands at one remove to this, occupying an uneasy space between Cameron's localism and the unitary, nationalist discourse printed at London.<sup>135</sup> Stawpert was a brewer's clerk working on Quayside, and was around 30 at the time of Trafalgar.<sup>136</sup> He would have had regular contact with other songwriters, especially John Selkirk, also a Quayside clerk. 'Trafalgar's Battle' is unique among Tyneside songs in appealing to 'Britons' and 'Englishmen', rather than invoking local identities. Verse three, however, moves from the national to the local:

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<sup>135</sup> Appendix no.337.

<sup>136</sup> Harker, *Allan's Illustrated Edition*, p.100.

Tis COLLINGWOOD he, our Townsman & friend,  
May Heaven send Angels his life to attend,  
To guard him through dangers on Oceans great space,  
Returning in Peace may we all see his face.  
    To bless him, caress him,  
    In kind words address him,  
    Ye Britons and *Sons* of the *Tyne*.

The fifth and final verse situates its rhetoric in a communal, convivial space, reconciling the dual focus on Nelson and Collingwood:

Drink a health then my friends to the dear honour'd shade,  
Each widow, each wife, every matron, and maid,  
And though you lament for the loss of his blood,  
Drink a health to our own, our brave COLLINGWOOD.  
    Who fought with that *great man*,  
    That bother'd the Frenchmen,  
    At Trafalgar's great battle, and died.

There is some confusion as the attention moves from Nelson to Collingwood, whose glory is vicarious, reflected by association with the 'great man' Nelson.

The song's greatest incongruity, as so often the case with loyalist material, was its tune: 'Chapter of Kings'. The lyric's meter bears superficial resemblance to the original, yet the stresses are all wrong, with the final, emphatic 'COLLINGWOOD' notably out of place: the melody at that point cannot support more than a single syllable. Whilst its position at the close of the verse suggests prominence, in the tune it is unstressed, serving as a lead-in to the chorus. The phrasings in the chorus itself, a swift series of notes ascending the scale, are also clumsy: 'Trafalgar' has to be contracted to two rushed syllables to reach the resolution in time. The original lyric also includes a 'bothered' in the chorus, yet it occurs in the first line, not the second: Stawpert misjudges his reference here. Beyond the clumsy execution, the choice is strange: 'Chapter of Kings' is a jaunty, pert, comic melody, written to carry a light-hearted history of the monarchs of England from the Norman Conquest to the present day. The tune is neither celebratory nor melancholic: the best word to describe its effect is 'flippant'.

Perhaps in part for these reasons, the song seems to have met with less success than Stawpert's other compositions. Marshall did not print the song, preferring a different 'Battle of Trafalgar'. Stawpert's rhetoric appears to have fallen between two positions, one local, one national. His song fits a developing pattern in Newcastle, whereby the invocation of local boy Collingwood did not preclude controversy. The creation of Collingwood St, in 1807, was part of a ruthless programme of improvement that cut through the heart of the old city, while the colossal statue of the admiral that now overshadows the Tyne's mouth was not successfully completed until 1845.<sup>137</sup> Thus, though there were popular songwriters in Newcastle whose compositions advanced a loyalist stance, theirs was a minority voice, and it was more successful when, as in Cameron's case, it articulated a coherent Geordie perspective, rather than attempting, as Stawpert did, to reconcile this position with national loyalist rhetoric.

Stawpert may have grasped this, for he wrote a second song in the aftermath of Trafalgar: 'John Diggons'.<sup>138</sup> This was nearer in tone and references to 'The Pitman's Revenge', avoiding the loftier references of 'Trafalgar's Battle': its narrator, Diggons, is given the persona of an honest fool, much like Cameron's loyal Tom, or Bob Cranky. Diggons, on learning that Nelson has died, vows to join Collingwood in order to avenge his death: here, Stawpert finds a narrative formula that eases the transition from Nelson to Collingwood, and bolsters the song's call for patriotic action. This time, Stawpert took as his tune 'Roast Beef of Old England', a lusty drinking song well-suited to the new lyric. Though Stawpert once again struggles with his meter – the first half of the chorus fails to scan – the overall match is far better than 'Trafalgar's Battle'.

In the event, Trafalgar met with a muted reception. The corporation voted for an address of congratulation to the king, and a 150-guinea plate for Collingwood. Yet it

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<sup>137</sup> *The Picture of Newcastle*, p.14; [www.northumbria.info/Pages/collingwood.html](http://www.northumbria.info/Pages/collingwood.html), accessed 22 May 2013.

<sup>138</sup> Appendix no.166.

eschewed the illuminations customary for a naval victory, preferring to donate 100 guineas to charity. The only public demonstration marked Nelson's funeral, not the victory:

January 9, 1806, being the day appointed for the funeral of Lord Nelson at St. Paul's cathedral in London, the bells of St. Nicholas' and All Saints' churches in Newcastle rung muffled peals at intervals through the day.<sup>139</sup>

This dolorous, sensitive reaction for once matched the public mood. Following several false alarms of invasion, such as on 1 February 1804, martial enthusiasm had dampened even among the volunteers.<sup>140</sup> An undated song, 'Beaumont's Light Horse' – presumably this was Thompson's regiment – which later appeared in Bell's *Rhymes*, tells the sorry tale of how their horses were sold, and that they were being sent overseas against their will as auxiliary infantrymen.<sup>141</sup> It also includes an enigmatic verse, hinting perhaps at the troop's failure to quell an unspecified riot, suggested by the contrast between the 'folks' and the soldiery:

We mounted our horses and rode through the town,  
We hid us in holes, and our guns we laid down:  
Now see the Newcastle folks drive away fears,  
And now see the brav'ry of their Volunteers.

The war effort was thus faltering in Newcastle by 1806. In popular culture, the main achievement of mobilisation had been to galvanise the city's satirical songwriters, whose liberal, anti-authoritarian perspective dominated Northumbrian popular song. In southern loyalist circles, the second phase of the Wars witnessed a turn from serious exhortations to broad humour, in attempts to contain the impact of Napoleon. The reverse was true in Newcastle's song culture, as playful mockery of the volunteers gave way to more heartfelt articulations of the privations of war.

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<sup>139</sup> Mackenzie, *A Descriptive and Historical Account*, i, p.75.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, i, p.75.

<sup>141</sup> Appendix no.23.

## Popular song and the war with Napoleon, 1806-15

After the excitement and embarrassments of 1803-5, the final decade of the Wars proved uneventful. Urban improvement from 1807, involving the demolition of much of the town centre to make way for Collingwood Street and other constructions, and abortive plans to abolish the Flesh Market, cannot have sat easily with the prevalent mood of hardship.<sup>142</sup> The authorities were broadly sensitive to this, and the period was punctuated with highly visible philanthropic gestures. The Friendless Poor Society had been founded in 1797, and St Nicholas' Poor-house in 1803. In 1807, the Newcastle Benevolent Society formed; in 1810, St Andrew's Poor-house was enlarged; 1811 saw the foundation of the Friendly Society, and 1815 prompted the formation of the Society for Clothing Distressed Females.<sup>143</sup> This patrician acknowledgement of the impact of war provides a tangible backdrop to the numerous press-gang songs of the area, constituting a form of dialogue with those bitter laments in attempting to deal with the drain on Newcastle's male workforce.

Other civic activities also deferred to a war-weary populace, in line with an austere, circumspect, yet philanthropic attitude articulated more broadly in the national press.<sup>144</sup>

The Jubilee... was celebrated in Newcastle on October 25, 1809, with public rejoicings and acts of enlightened benevolence. In lieu of an illumination, above £600 was subscribed for founding a public school on the improved plan of education. By another subscription, ten debtors were liberated from prison.<sup>145</sup>

Pious, non-partisan acts were preferred to profligate and potentially volatile illuminations. The now-numerous charitable institutions treated their parishioners, members or inmates to lavish dinners, often featuring beef, alcohol, and even portions of sugar to take away. Military display was limited to a sermon and ceremonial volleys, perhaps in recognition of

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<sup>142</sup> Mackenzie, *A Descriptive and Historical Account*, i, pp. 12, 14.

<sup>143</sup> See *ibid.*, ii, *passim* for details.

<sup>144</sup> Semmel, 'Radicals', pp.543-69.

<sup>145</sup> Mackenzie, *A Descriptive and Historical Account*, i, p.77.

the troops' unpopularity.<sup>146</sup> This contrasted with the previous year. Mackenzie writes that 'At the period, great exertions were made to cherish the military ardour of the people. On Monday, June 4, all the troops in Newcastle marched to the Town Moor, to celebrate his majesty's birth-day'.<sup>147</sup>

This parade included a newly-written song, the last hurrah of volunteer compositions, to the tune of 'Hearts of Oak' – or, as Bell put it, to the tune of 'Sons of the Tyne'.<sup>148</sup> In one respect, this song is of real interest, contrasting with the broader corpus of Northumbrian volunteer songs. Those, all particular to one regiment, emphasised their local prowess, focusing on local rivalries between Gateshead, Sunderland and Newcastle. The 1808 composition dedicated its second to fourth verses to detailing the different localities represented, taking pains to give them equal precedent – the author uses 'likewise' twice, and 'too' three times, in order to avoid suggesting a hierarchy. Gateshead, Sunderland, the Shields, and Hexham are all named alongside Newcastle, whilst Wallsend is included via an obvious pun: 'flank'd by the boys from the End of the Wall.' The song is a micro-version of pan-nationalist loyalist songs typified by John Mayne's 'English, Scots, and Irishmen. A Patriotic Address to the Inhabitants of the United Kingdom', published at London in July 1803.<sup>149</sup> The 1808 Newcastle song undercuts the ambition of Isles-encompassing metropolitan broadsides, demonstrating that at a regional level, efforts were still required to unite local divisions.

The reserved celebration of the 1809 jubilee, focusing on charity rather than display, suggests that the 1808 birthday celebrations were less than wholly successful in cherishing 'the military ardour of the people'. It cannot have helped that there were no victories to celebrate. When the tide turned in the Peninsular, Newcastle songs began to acknowledge

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid., i, p.77.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., i, p.76.

<sup>148</sup> Appendix no.85.

<sup>149</sup> Appendix no.119.

the triumph of British arms. One Marshall garland included ‘The Victory of Barossa’, and ‘The Woodlark a new song book. Being a choice collection of the most celebrated new songs’ included ‘Battle of Vittoria’.<sup>150</sup> This suggests a willingness even by a Bonapartist to capitalise on Wellington’s victories. However, his songbook ‘The Thrush’ comprised nineteen songs, numbers six to eleven of which were ‘Death of Abercrombie. The death of Nelson. The Battle of Trafalgar. The Battle of Salamanca. The wounded hussar. The soldier’s funeral.’<sup>151</sup> Here we see Marshall using the connotations of repertoire to incorporate two famous victories within a narrative of death and tragedy.

Popular culture was not reduced to interpreting events from above and abroad. But neither was it thriving. Newcastle’s ephemera printers were plagued by setbacks. In 1810, Marshall opened his premises in the Old Flesh-Market; in the same year, fire damage suspended his circulating library.<sup>152</sup> Freemason printer David Bass went out of business in 1811.<sup>153</sup> Their ranks were swelled by the arrival of the Catnaches from Alnwick in 1808, yet the father-and-son business foundered, causing the family to relocate again to London in 1813 after a spell in debtor’s prison for John, the father.<sup>154</sup> It is unclear how far these events reflect Marshall squeezing out his competition, rather than a decline in the overall market. Bell chose to publish his *Rhymes* in 1812, the culmination of years of research, indicating that the songbook market, at least, was still healthy. Nor were printers the only sources of song: songs against the press circulated orally, while the print market was enriched by visiting itinerants. In 1806, John Magee, ex-United Irishman, Bonapartist, and pedlar of ballads, chapbooks and tracts, visited Newcastle twice: southbound from Glasgow, and by sea from London.<sup>155</sup> Thus productions from the capital as well as

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<sup>150</sup> Thomson, *Newcastle Chapbooks*, pp.42, 79.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, p.75.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, p.12.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, p.10.

<sup>154</sup> Hindley, *The History of the Catnach Press*, pp.33-8.

<sup>155</sup> Magee, *Some Account*, pp.3-5.

Scotland would have been made available, though, given Magee's politics, it is unlikely that he sold loyalist compositions. In 1810, beggar James Dawson Burn and his father also passed through, travelling north from London: the father, a veteran, had just been denied a pension from Horseguards, so he too is unlikely to have peddled loyalist material.<sup>156</sup> And in 1814, David Love returned to Newcastle, where he had formerly been imprisoned.<sup>157</sup> This time he 'called the town' with ephemera of his own, printed at Berwick-upon-Tweed, and obtained new stock from Marshall to carry south as far as Leeds. He was firmly opposed to the war, and his visit will have furthered Marshall's own agenda.

Marshall did not enjoy a monopoly on popular sentiment. In 1810, Newcastle got its own Religious Tract Society, 'for the purpose of diffusing religious knowledge and the promotion of morality.' It advertised that:

"Hawkers' Tracts" are sold at prime cost to persons who will undertake to dispose of them. These tracts are suited to the capacities of ignorant persons, and are intended "to drive foolish ballads, tales, and stories, out of circulation."<sup>158</sup>

Thus the liberal, irreverent popular discourse of Newcastle acquired a new enemy. Yet the impact of this society appears to have been negligible. Mackenzie also describes how in 1811, a Society for the Suppression of Vice was founded, yet was widely condemned and swiftly dissolved.<sup>159</sup> The cleansing, moralising movement depicted in Francis Place's papers in relation to London failed on Tyneside. This strength of local cultural tradition was echoed at a bourgeois radical level. Between 1812 and 1818, a succession of 'Fox dinners' were held in Newcastle in memory of the late politician. Whig leader Lord Grey often spoke at these dinners. Yet from their inception, the *Tyne Mercury* and *Newcastle Chronicle* criticised their complacency and focus on the past, condemning their irrelevance to the city's liberal-radical bourgeois and petty-bourgeois elements. Faced with this local

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<sup>156</sup> Burn, *The Autobiography*, p.24.

<sup>157</sup> Harris, 'A Few Shillings', p.96.

<sup>158</sup> Mackenzie, *A Descriptive and Historical Account*, ii, p.573.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, ii, p.573.

frustration, the dinners ceased.<sup>160</sup> Moralising, government, and opposition voices alike failed to impose themselves in Newcastle.

In contrast with the dour philanthropy of the war years, the peace of 1814 was received joyously. Even London papers made mention of Newcastle's 'splendid' illuminations.<sup>161</sup> The organisers pursued an overtly loyalist agenda, enraging the young Harriet Martineau:

I remember the proclamation of peace in 1814, and our all going to see the illuminations; those abominable transparencies, among the rest, which represented Bonaparte (always in green coat, white breeches and boots) as carried to hell by devils, pitch-forked in the fiery lake by the same attendants, or haunted by the Duc d'Enghien.<sup>162</sup>

The legacy of this traditional loyalist iconography mocking Napoleon was one of strong criticism. John Selkirk immortalised the event in 'Bob Cranky's Leum'nation Neet', first published in the *Tyne Mercury* on 7 June 1814, but also receiving a broadside edition.<sup>163</sup> This entered the popular canon of Cranky songs, adhering to the now-conventional tune and idiom. Selkirk subverts the 'Peace and Plenty' rhetoric of the illuminations by exposing instances of hypocrisy:

A leg of meat sed, "Doon aw's cummin!"  
But some chep aw seun fand was hummin; [soon found was lying]  
For aw stopp'd bit below,  
Haudin oot a lang paw, [Holding out my hand]  
But mutton cam ne nearer Cranky.

A cask on the Vicar's pump top, man,  
Markt "Plenty an' Peace," gard me stop, man:  
Thinks aw te me sel, [to myself]  
Awse here get some yel, [ale]  
But only cau'd waiter gat Cranky. [could water get]

Several verses stress the role of pitmen in the British success, suggesting they are those deserving of reward, not the late Pitt. One makes use of the Napoleonic imagery, privileging the miners over the navy:

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<sup>160</sup> Brett, 'Political Dinners', pp.536-9.

<sup>161</sup> *Monthly Magazine*, 37, no.255 (June 1814), p.471.

<sup>162</sup> Martineau, *Harriet Martineau's Autobiography*, i, p.79.

<sup>163</sup> Appendix no.33. Thompson *et al.*, *A Collection*, p.28 speculates at an 1815 dating; this is corrected in Harker, 'The Original Bob Cranky?', p.71.

Some had anchors of leet high hung up,  
To shew folk greet Bonny was deun up;  
But, far as aw see, man,  
As reet it wad be, man,  
To leet up the pick o' Bob Cranky.

The vindictive portrayal of Napoleon is also cast in a negative light, Cranky's moral force deployed in denunciation:

Bonny, shav'd be a bear, was then shot, man;  
And be au'd Nick weel thump'd in a pot, man;  
But aw thowt a' the toon  
Shuddent lick him when doon,  
Tho' he'd a greet spite to Bob Cranky.

Selkirk uses the Cranky persona to portray the sung response to the illuminations as one of popular discontent and disillusion. This became the event's legacy, enshrined in the collective memory of local song tradition. The song would have been all the more successful as its pessimistic predictions about prices and employment were immediately realised by the sharp economic downturn. Mackenzie records:

The sudden reduction of the navy happening at the time of the arrival of the ships from the fisheries and other trades, a great body of seamen were at once thrown out of employment... On the 20<sup>th</sup> of September, they mustered 7000 men on Cullercoates sand, while their organisation and discipline rendered such meetings extremely dangerous. But on the 25<sup>th</sup> of October, the navy and military, aided by the civil power, dissolved the combination...<sup>164</sup>

This incident too was cast into song, in 'The Tyne Cossacks', published, inevitably, by Marshall.<sup>165</sup> The tone is comic, as in the event the assembled forces merely scuppered and sunk a large number of boats, rather than committing Peterloo-like atrocities. But contempt for their actions is clear, whilst the appellation 'Cossacks' is at once a condemnation of their violence, and an ironic use of bathos: these would-be soldiers could not match the ferocity of the Russian horsemen. Marshall followed the song in his garland with a reprint

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<sup>164</sup> Mackenzie, *A Descriptive and Historical Account*, i, p.78.

<sup>165</sup> Appendix no.345.

of Mitford's 'The Local Militia-man', tying the incident to an earlier, equally absurd occasion.

The renewed use of humour as a weapon could not mask the grievances that developed in the later period of the Wars. Those songs that included unfettered, bitter, personal attacks circulated orally rather than in print: Bell recorded them, but left them unprinted. Many have been discussed in Chapter Three.<sup>166</sup> Most – 'Oh The Weary Cutter', 'The Tarpaulin Jacket', 'I Wish the Wars Were Over', 'Here's the Tender Coming' – were anonymous; two pointed attacks on the crimpers Johnson Reed and Billy Kirton were penned by John Leonard in 1813.<sup>167</sup> Leonard, a joiner, was at one stage imprisoned for expressing liberal views on the Irish Question.<sup>168</sup> Opposition to the war and a radical stance on other matters often went together, yet it is remarkable how non-partisan the majority of these songs were: their engagement with ultimately political questions is phrased in terms of the human angle, rooted in personal and local issues, rather than addressing a wider debate. This popular preoccupation with issues in their own lives dominated topical song culture during the Wars; this was to continue after their conclusion.

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<sup>166</sup> Chapter Three, pp.124-6.

<sup>167</sup> Appendix nos. 249, 328, 150, 144; 167, 29.

<sup>168</sup> Notes to FARNE, N0107901.

## Newcastle and Napoleon after Waterloo

In turning to Mackenzie for the reception of Waterloo, or details of ensuing celebrations, we draw a complete blank: the campaign goes unmentioned. This silence is logical, given the muted reaction described in Chapter Three, when taken in conjunction with the city's general antipathy to the war.<sup>169</sup> The post-Waterloo fallout, as evidenced by its intersection with song culture, also matches the pattern discerned in Chapter One.<sup>170</sup> Repeatedly, in songs of the late 1810s, Napoleon and Waterloo are employed to contrast the heroic efforts of Newcastle's labourers and sailors with the injustice of ensuing depression.

But we settled the job when at WATERLOO  
And now we're come home, and have nothing to do<sup>171</sup>

Thus ran two lines of 'The Tradesman's Complaint', printed by Marshall. Eerily similar was the opening couplet of William Mitford's 'The Wonderful Gutter':

Since Boney was sent to that place owre the sea,  
We've had little to talk of, but far less to dee;<sup>172</sup>

Verses four to seven of 'Written at the Seaman's Stick', from October 1815, elaborate upon this fundamental complaint:

Many were in prison laid, that escap'd the murdering shot,  
The wars are o'er, and they've come home, not a birth [berth] is to be got;  
Our services they've done with, we may go from whence we came;  
Their coffers they've enrich'd while we were on the main.

In grateful thanks we must give praise unto our British tars,  
For the hardships they've endur'd through tempests, storms, and wars:  
They've braved many dangers, with courage and with spirit;  
Is this the reward they are to have for their daring merit?

But, after all, let reason be lodg'd in every breast,  
For if the wars break out again, you know we'd do our best;  
There's many a ship of two hundred tons eight servants do keep,  
While many a brave fellow for a birth long may seek.

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<sup>169</sup> Chapter Three, pp.148-51.

<sup>170</sup> Chapter One, pp.37-41.

<sup>171</sup> Palmer, *The Sound of History*, p.298

<sup>172</sup> Appendix no.374.

The corner stones they should protect, that tars may get their right;  
The British flag we've maintain'd, in many a bloody fight:  
It's long since Bonny did intend in England for to land;  
He knew our heroes of the main would stop his warlike band.<sup>173</sup>

As Palmer comments in his annotation of 'The Seamen's Complaint', these songs accompanied a strike along the eastern seaboard, centring on the Tyne and Wear shipyards.<sup>174</sup> The song's subtitle is 'A New Song written by a Sailor who was present at the Battle of the Nile', lending its grievance the moral weight of a veteran; the tune – Burns' 'A Man's a Man For a' That' – demonstrates an engagement with nascent, literate discourse by an emerging working class: since the 1790s, this had become one of the first iconic protest songs. Burns' influence was furthered in 1820 by Thomas Thompson's 'Coaly Tyne' in support of Queen Caroline, printed by Marshall, set to 'Auld Lang Syne'.<sup>175</sup> Verses five to nine mark a subtle but steady progression, from commemorating the service of Tynesiders during the Wars, to mocking the volunteers by comparison, to homing in on one specific grievance: the conduct of the new king.

When Bonaparte the world did sway,  
Dutch, Spanish did combine;  
By sea and land proud bent their way,  
The sons of coaly Tyne.

The sons of Tyne, in seas of blood,  
Trafalgar's fight did join,  
When led by dauntless Collingwood,  
The hero of the Tyne.

With courage bold, and hearts so true,  
Form'd in the British line;  
With Wellington, at Waterloo,  
Hard fought the sons of Tyne.

When peace, who would be Volunteers?  
Or Hero Dandies fine?  
Or sham Hussars, or Tirailleurs?  
Disgrace to coaly Tyne.

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<sup>173</sup> Appendix no.378.

<sup>174</sup> Appendix no.300.

<sup>175</sup> Appendix no.81.

Or who would be a Tyrant's Guard,  
Or shield a libertine?  
Let Tyrants meet their due reward,  
Ye sons of coaly Tyne.

The song again demonstrates Thompson's proficiency at matching tune to lyric: a regular and memorable melody to anchor the verses' progression; a moderate tempo to render the lyrics comprehensible; a strong and simple ABAB rhyme scheme; and careful attention to stress and meter. The chorus, not given here, substituted 'coaly Tyne' for 'Auld Lang Syne' – a happy case of phonetic similarity.

These uses of Napoleon to interpret post-war hardship, by turns nostalgic and self-justifying, fit the model contemplated in Chapter One, locating the pro-Napoleonic song tradition in contemporary politics.<sup>176</sup> Newcastle's workers were becoming more overtly politicised. Harker notes: 'John Buddle asserted that Thomas Wooler's radical paper, the *Black Dwarf*, was "to be found in the Hat Crown of almost every pitman you meet" on Tyneside before the end of 1819.'<sup>177</sup> Yet to adopt that position is wilfully to ignore the powerful continuities, rather than topical changes, in Newcastle's song culture. Even 'Coaly Tyne', in including a verse disparaging the volunteers as late as 1820, makes explicit the link between the post-Peterloo situation and that of 1803-5, rather than distinguishing between distinct periods. It also disregards the role of leading printers, who were not themselves directly affected by the downturn: at least, their output shows no sign of diminution. Marshall was among the first to publish one of the earliest and most successful songs of Napoleon's second exile, 'Isle of St Helena', under the variant title, 'Bonapa[r]te's Lamentation at the Island of St. Helena'.<sup>178</sup> It was not until 1821 that he could do justice to his feelings, with a 1,570-word obituary, printed on a single broadside: the dense wall of text made no concessions to commercial appeal, its production and sale

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<sup>176</sup> Chapter One, pp.35-40.

<sup>177</sup> D. Harker (ed.), *Songs and Verse of the North-East Pitmen c.1780-1844* (Gateshead, 1999), p.6.

<sup>178</sup> Appendix no.158.

relying upon the aligned interests of Marshall and his readers.<sup>179</sup> This positive, practically hagiographic account of Napoleon's life dwells on his personal character as well as his deeds. Favourable comparisons to both Caesar and Cromwell might be imagined as bearing implications of tyranny, yet there is no suggestion of this in Marshall's text. Indeed, the only allusion to tyranny is turned to Napoleon's advantage:

He was steady and faithful in his friendships, and not vindictive when it was in his power to be so with impunity; in this respect his character forms a grand contrast with that of the little despots of Europe, most of whom, particularly those of the Holy Alliance, owe their crowns to his clemency...

To Marshall, the only despots were 'the mean persons who were placed in high stations by the accident of birth'. Marshall was willing to argue his point:

If it be said that his elevation was to be attributed to the turbulent times in which he lived, it may be answered, that those turbulent times rendered it the more impossible for a man of small powers to raise himself.

Yet there is no argument against the events of the Black Legend, or even minor incidents such as the plundering of Malta. These do not feature at all. It is possible that this was mere bluffing on Marshall's part. But it seems more plausible that he was speaking from a position of strength: that the Black Legend, found predominantly in London broadsides, had never taken hold on Tyneside. Given the remarkable paucity of metropolitan propaganda printed by Marshall's rivals, this is among the most powerful evidence countering the disconnect assumed by Gammon, and suggests that the wartime vilification of Napoleon was not only unsuccessful in some parts of Britain: it was even almost unknown.

This view is reinforced by a publication of Mackenzie's. Thus far, as a local historian and printer, Mackenzie has articulated a non-partisan polite perspective for a polite market. Thus his own account of Napoleon's life is more surprising than Marshall's, until we

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<sup>179</sup> In 'A Collection of Broad-sides', British Library, 1875.d.13.

realise that he later became a significant union activist.<sup>180</sup> Printed in 1816 for a low to middling market, the account is a far cry from the level, respectable tone of his later publications:

The following interesting narrative of events, in brilliancy, rapidity, and importance, eclipse all that is recorded in the history of man. The resumption of the imperial dignity, by Bonaparte, resembled more a scene in Eastern romance, than a real occurrence; while the second downfall of this wonderful man was equally sudden, astonishing, and complete.<sup>181</sup>

Mackenzie too focuses on Napoleon's humanity, describing him on Elba as 'a simple individual among individuals'.<sup>182</sup> He explicitly condemns the Allies' actions in exiling him: this was not evidence, as Semmel has it, of fair play on the part of a gracious victor, but indignation from a genuine sympathiser.<sup>183</sup> Repeatedly, Mackenzie refers to 'the Emperor Napoleon', using the title interchangeably with 'Bonaparte'. His description of the Torbay incident portrays the crowd as overwhelmingly in Napoleon's favour, rather than mere sightseers.<sup>184</sup> Again, there is no sense of contestation of a controversial, even notorious figure: both Mackenzie and Marshall resemble men preaching to the choir. Nor does either rendering link Napoleon to current affairs: they are concerned with an intimate depiction of their subject alone.

This is the timeless Napoleon who survives throughout the century, outlasting the context of depression and reform. It is the figure found in two separate Northumbrian sword-dances of the mid-Victorian period: in one, the character is accompanied by a simple tailor; in the other, Napoleon's son is incorporated into a canon of otherwise British military heroes – in both cases, this is a folkloric, not a political portrayal.<sup>185</sup> The

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<sup>180</sup> Bell, 'Mackenzie', *ODNB*.

<sup>181</sup> E. Mackenzie, *An Account of the most Striking and Wonderful Events in the life of Napoleon Bonaparte* (Newcastle, 1816), p.2.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, p.3.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, p.6.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.107-8.

<sup>185</sup> 'A Northumbrian Sword Dance', *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society*, 1, no. 2 (1933), pp.111-2; 'The Earsdon Sword-Dancers' Song', Appendix no.113.

continuity of this figure over time was facilitated by the strength of Newcastle's self-referential, tradition-loving song culture, manifested both orally and in the commercial habits of ephemeral printers. Marshall's choice of compilations helped to transpose the best topical songs of the Wars into a non-temporal tradition of tragedy and heroism: as observed above, one of his garlands consisted simply of the five songs, 'The Battle of Waterloo. The death of Nelson. Death of Abercrombie. The wounded hussar. The Battle of Trafalgar.'<sup>186</sup> This tradition was inherited by Fordyce, a printer of the 1820s who took over much of Marshall's stock. He reprinted an aforementioned songbook 'The Thrush', which had also included four of those five songs, along with 'The Battle of Salamanca'. Fordyce dropped this last song from his publication, in what appears to have been a refinement of the theme – Salamanca was not a battle noted for tragedy.<sup>187</sup> Fordyce also assimilated other Napoleonic ephemera such as 'Grand Conversation under the Rose', and a mystical pamphlet, 'Napoleon's Book of Fate'.<sup>188</sup> His later successor, the firm of Walker, operated in the 1860s, including in its output 'Deeds of Napoleon' and the 1814 song 'Napoleon's Farewell to Paris'.<sup>189</sup> Crucially, these were not the only songs perpetuated by republication: many local compositions concerning the invasion years were also continued. Bowmann's collection, *The Tyneside Songster*, mixed songs of Victorian Newcastle such as 'The Eagle Steam-packet' with what were now classics: 'Canny Newcassel' and 'The Baboon' by Thompson and Mitford, as well as Selkirk's 'Lord 'Size' and the horse-racing song of 1814, 'XYZ'.<sup>190</sup> Thus, songs of Napoleon were maintained in the same local tradition as other Tyneside songs, whether related to the Wars or not: this was the city's common cultural heritage, embracing Napoleon, Bob Cranky, and those who had

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<sup>186</sup> Thomson, *Newcastle Chapbooks*, p.43.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, p.75.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.59, 62.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.73, 28.

<sup>190</sup> *The Tyneside Songster, A Collection of Comic & Descriptive Songs, chiefly in the Newcastle Dialect* (Newcastle, n.d.), in Tyne & Wear Archives Microfilm, MF290:DX891 /7.

participated in that culture. Most pleasingly of all, Bowmann's songbook bears on its cover an illustration accompanied by the caption: "For fiddling, [?], now who is there wor Blind Willie can beat?" This was a further stamp of self-definition, linking the songs to the context of local performance. If Napoleon mattered in Newcastle, it was not as a malleable political figurehead, to deploy solely in the face of post-war depression: it was as a well-defined character in his own right, part of a tradition of self-expression and identity that was rooted, not in the aftermath of Waterloo, but in the regeneration of Tyneside song culture that can be traced back to 1803.

## **Conclusions**

As argued at the start of this chapter, the example of Newcastle is exceptional in the wealth of its source material, indicating the city's subsequent self-consciousness as a centre of popular song. Yet as a case study it pulls together and crystallises the key themes of this thesis, lending a coherent sense of individual identity and location to a broader discussion. We may stress the continuity of war-time and post-war song culture concerning Napoleon; the resistance of actors in regional popular song to interference, both from above, and from the capital; the emergence of increasingly coherent class sentiment; the role of place in performance; and the interaction of popular cultural forces with contemporary politics on their own terms, rather than as passive receivers.

## Conclusion

Far from being denied a voice by the deluge of loyalist ephemera, the example of Newcastle indicates that anti-authoritarian song culture was stimulated by loyalist activity – a phenomenon that may well have occurred in many other locales. Popular singers and writers were not only reacting to the press-gang and the crimps, but to drilling and to volunteer song. ‘Bob Cranky’s Adieu’ is most explicit in its parodying of Dibdin’s ‘Soldier’s Adieu’, echoed at Manchester in 1814 by Michael Wilson’s ‘Soldier Jack’, a take-off of ‘Soldier Dick’.<sup>1</sup> Rather than articulating an innovative radical agenda inspired by the Revolution, genuinely popular non-loyalist song culture was overwhelmingly reactive, engaging with existing events and discourse. This was the case both during and after the Wars, so that later songs of Napoleon were generally responding to a sentimental situation, not advancing a contemporary partisan argument. This active yet reflective role, so typical of the traditions of popular song, was distinct from attempts to ‘interfere’ with popular culture, whether by loyalist propagandists introducing a xenophobic bellicosity to song, or Thomas Spence, seeking to popularise his agrarian-socialist philosophies.

Of course subaltern song *was* intrinsically political. Colley writes that ‘Being a patriot was a way of claiming the right to participate in British political life, and ultimately a means of demanding a much broader access to citizenship.’<sup>2</sup> By the same token, to articulate a protest in song was to claim a voice and a right to be heard. Popular song sought to engage with the body politic. Yet let us consider the grievances expressed: oppressive taxation; recruitment by force or by guile; the ignobility of the retribution meted out to Napoleon, and to Marshal Ney; the subjugation of Ireland. None of these complaints required an Enlightenment, or a Revolution, before they could be expressed.

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix nos. 32, 307.

<sup>2</sup> Colley, *Britons*, p.5.

Few historians have pursued this cultural reliance on traditional forms and sentiments, drawn instead to the perceived newness of iconography and vocabulary generated by the discourse of the 1790s. Several aspects of this broader phenomenon have received attention. Howkins and Dyck recognise the potency of unawakened popular politics in their study of Cobbett's rhetoric, realising the importance of bacon and beer (note: not roast beef and plum pudding, those weary loyalist staples) in his 'peasant vision'.<sup>3</sup> A series of writers on Irish song similarly identify the continuity of a rebel song tradition, little altered by the Enlightenment terminology of United Irish productions, rooted in Jacobite and pre-Jacobite forms, wherein any new discourse that entered the tradition did so, not by rewriting the values of the form, but by adapting thereto.<sup>4</sup> Most recently, Stephen Dornan writes of dialect English songwriting that 'the rejection of linguistic norms often entails a rejection of mainstream political assumptions. This correlation between dialect and oppositional politics underpins what I call "the vernacular aesthetic"'.<sup>5</sup> Dornan argues convincingly that these songs need not engage explicitly with politics; their vernacular, heterodox form is enough to generate 'subversion'.<sup>6</sup> All these conclusions are endorsed by this thesis: indeed, I would claim that Cobbett, nostalgic Irish poets and English dialect writers all formed part of a larger cultural trend, by which contemporary politics were framed by far older discourses.

These examples help explain the resistance of the song form to political manipulation – a realisation that accounts for the false discrepancy encountered in Chapter One, between

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<sup>3</sup> Howkins & Dyck, "The Time's Alteration", p.28, pp.26-30.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. Ó Buachalla, 'From Jacobite to Jacobin', pp.76-80, 95-6, Whelan, 'The United Irishmen' in Dickson *et al.*, *The United Irishmen*, pp. 272-5, 296, R. Markus, "'NÁ-l an Focal Sin Againn": Orality, Literacy, and Accounts of the 1798 Rebellion', *New Hibernia Review*, 14, no.1 (2010), pp.116-7, V. Morley, 'Homology, Analogy and the Perception of Irish Radicalism' in Kirk *et al.*, *United Islands*, pp.109-23. But see also C. Kennedy, "'A gallant nation": Chivalric Masculinity and Irish Nationalism in the 1790s', in M. McCormack (ed.), *Public men: Masculinity and Politics in Modern Britain* (Basingstoke, 2007), pp.74-5, for an argument attributing greater effectiveness to United Irish influences.

<sup>5</sup> R. S. Dornan, 'Radical Politics and Dialect in the British Archipelago' in Kirk *et al.*, *United Islands*, p.173.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p.174.

post-war songs sympathetic to Napoleon, and contemporary songs attacking him.<sup>7</sup> It is hard to appreciate the importance of these cultural factors by reference to the texts of songs alone. Rather, they become evident by examining conditions of production and performance. Loyalist propagandists had the funds to carry out their campaign. In the south and in Wales, there was an abundance of important printers willing to assist, and a plethora of minor printers across the Isles. Yet their ideology of a notional, united Britain in arms was hard to impose upon a cultural form whose performers were idiosyncratic and individualistic, whose traditions were inherently anti-authoritarian, and whose values were either intensely personal or local, or so broad as to be universal. The national was the wrong level to express in songs unless they were either hymns or anthems – not only in their tunes, but in the circumstances of their performance. We tend to overestimate the power of the anthem by imagining it anachronistically – via the proms, or the Victorian music-hall – or via the eighteenth-century polite masque. This was not the performative context of the loyalist broadside; the anthem could not convince sung solo on a street corner, and in the middling theatre, it was furiously contested.<sup>8</sup> The figure of Napoleon fared far better in the truly popular context than that of Britannia, especially as unwittingly assisted by songwriters rounding out his character with domestic foibles, farces and loved ones. The former was *sympatico*, the latter was remote. These subtleties are readily appreciable once the functioning cultural context is established. The potential of wider studies of song, or of its key participants, beyond this specific politicised enquiry, is an exciting one for the historian.

The question remains of why the contrary impression as endorsed by Colley – that popular song was successfully co-opted by paternalistic loyalists and reformers – has figured so large in our conception of this period. I would propose that a similar study be

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<sup>7</sup> Chapter One, p.34.

<sup>8</sup> Chapter Six, pp.246-7.

conducted of the Victorian period, building upon the work of Patrick Joyce.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps there is a long shadow cast backward by the 1850s. The Crimean War, and fear of invasion by Napoleon III, occasioned another deluge of ephemeral, patriotic song. Circumstances may have been more conducive to its effectiveness as a nationalist vehicle. The reach of Sunday schools was far broader. The ballad singer had declined. Working-class song was increasingly mediated by the music hall: a more structured experience affording an inherently communal and theatrical setting, which played to the strengths of patriotic anthems.

For now, the thesis of *Britons* is enriched and revised, not through radical counter-example or a simple diminution of Colley's claims, but by an appreciation of the unexpected and often tangential consequences of loyalist activity. Post-Thompson narratives of the working class receive an additional dimension: increasing self-awareness and resistance to oppression on the part of workers, in terms of cultural resilience rather than direct action, is extended from recent discourse on leisure and pastimes to the field of topical song. Rather than concentrating on the oppositional dynamic of suppression of entertainment, this thesis has concentrated on a distinct theme: the failure of elite engagement with the song form, and song's continued relevance to class and regional identities when produced from below, rather than above. Finally, the broad appeal of Napoleon to the British people is rendered intelligible, by incorporating him into a detached song culture that was challenged and stimulated, but never successfully co-opted, during the course of the Wars.

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<sup>9</sup> P. Joyce, *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class, 1848-1914* (Cambridge, 1991).

## Appendix

This appendix compiles relevant data on 382 songs mentioned in, or especially pertinent to, the thesis. The songs, arranged alphabetically by title (or first line), are given a number, by which they are referenced in the footnotes.

Up to six categories of data are appended to each title, where known: tune; writer(s); date; whether the song circulated as a contemporary broadside or otherwise; the preferred source of reference in the bibliography; and whether the song corresponds to a number in the Roud index. Bibliographical references are given in a highly truncated short-form, but should all be clear. Idiosyncracies of spelling and formatting have been largely preserved in the titles. Pseudonymous writers have been included, as these pseudonyms are often expressive of the spirit of the song. Additional categories have been discounted as too subjective, too generally unknown, or for reasons of formatting: it has proved impossible to represent more data in print form.

The table of songs begins overleaf. Song titles followed by an asterisk (\*) are those referred to in Chapter One, p.35 *fn.*111. Song titles underlined, as elsewhere in this thesis, are those recorded in the audio supplement to this appendix.

No.	Title (or 'first line' if untitled)	Tune	Writer(s)	Date	Known Broadside?	Preferred Source	Roud
1	Admiral Nelson's pursuit of the French Fleet in the Mediterranean, Sept. 1798	My Dog and My Gun	Anon	1799	Pamphlet	Tye, <i>Loyal Songster</i> , pp.16-17	-
2	All Been Fish in de Frenchman's Net	Unknown	Anon	1814	Book	<i>Oliver's Complete Collection</i> , p.51	-
3	Anagram. Buonaparte in Elba	None	Anon	1814	<i>Morning Chronicle</i>	<i>Spirit of the Public Journals for 1814</i> , p.323	-
4	Ashes of Napoleon *	Unknown	Anon	c.1860	Broadside	Bod. Curzon b.40(87)	-
5	The Baboon	Unknown	Anon	1803-5	Unknown	Thompson <i>et al.</i> , <i>A Collection</i> , p.69	-
6	'Baby, baby, naughty baby'	Unknown	Anon	Unknown	Unknown	Gutch & Peacock, v, pp.368-84	20649
7	Ballad of the Labouring Man *	Unknown	Anon	1816	Unknown	Emsley & Walvin, <i>Artisans</i> , p.57	-
8	The Ballad Singer	The Ballad Singer	R. Spofforth	1807	Pamphlet	Spofforth, <i>The Twelfth Cake</i> , pp.14-15	-
9	The Ballad Singer, A New Song	Unknown	Anon	c.1800	Broadside	<i>The Ballad Singer, A New Song</i>	-
10	The Ballad Singer's Duett	Unknown	Anon	Unknown	Broadside	Madden 2:932	-
11	The Bantry Girls' Lament	The Bantry Girls' Lament	Anon	c.1809-14	Unknown	Moylan, <i>The Age of Revolution</i> , p.135	2999
12	Barrosa	Unknown	Anon, 87 <sup>th</sup> Royal Irish Fusiliers	1809	Unknown	Winstock, <i>Songs &amp; Music</i> , pp.126-7	2182
13	Battle of Corunna	Battle of the Nile	Anon	1809	Broadside	Madden 5:356	0
14	The Battle of Salamanca	Unknown	Anon	1812	Broadside	Madden 6:801	-
15	The Battle of Salamanca (II)	Unknown	Anon	1812	Broadside	Bod. Johnson Ballads 1977Ar	-
16	The Battle of Talavera	Unknown	William Tucker	1809	Periodical	<i>Universal Magazine</i> , 12 (Sep. 1809), pp.224-5	-
17	The Battle of the Baltic	Unknown	Thomas Campbell	1798-1809	Book	Campbell, <i>Gertrude</i> , pp.107-12	-
18	The Battle of the Nile	Unknown	Anon	1805-6	Unknown	Ashton, <i>Real Sailor-Songs</i> , p.11	950
19	The Battle of Waterloo	Unknown	Samuel Wheeler (trumpeter)	1815	Broadside	Madden 1:28	1132
20	The Battle of Waterloo (II)	Unknown	Anon	1815	Broadside	Madden 5:615	5824
21	The Battle of Waterloo (III)	Unknown	Anon	1815	Unknown	Dallas, <i>The Cruel Wars</i> , p.203	1922
22	The Battle of Waterloo (IV)	The Plains of Waterloo	Anon	c.1816	Unknown	Hendricks, 'The Battle', pp.21-4	5825

23	Beaumont's Light Horse	Unknown	Anon	c.1806-14	Book	Bell, <i>Rhymes</i> , p.85	-
24	The Bee	Unknown	Samuel Bamford	1814-15	Pamphlet	Bamford, <i>Homely Rhymes</i> , p.188	-
25	The Beggar Boy	Unknown	Thomas Inskip	c.1800	Book	<i>Myrtle and Vine</i> , iv, pp.27-8	-
26	The Beggar Boy (II)	None	Jane Taylor	1804	Book	J. Taylor, <i>Memoirs</i> , p.295	-
27	The Beggar Girl	Unknown	Mr Cherry	c.1800	Book	<i>Myrtle and Vine</i> , iii, pp.170-1	1304
28	The Berkshire farmer's thoughts on invasion. A song	Liberty Hall	Anon	c.1803	Broadside	Bod. Curzon b.10(103)	-
29	Billy Kirton	Unknown	John Leonard	1813	Broadside	Harker, <i>Songs</i> , pp.4-5	8976
30	Blackett's Field	John Anderson My Jo	John Shield	1803	Pamphlet, book	Bell, <i>Rhymes</i> , pp.12-13	-
31	Bob Cranky's Account of the Ascent of Mr Sadler's Balloon, from Newcastle, September 1st, 1815	Unknown	Anon	1815	Pamphlet	Harker, <i>Songs and Verse</i> , p.91	-
32	<u>Bob Cranky's Adieu</u>	The Soldier's Adieu	Anon	c.1803	Broadside	Stokoe, <i>Songs and Ballads</i> , p.93	3148
33	Bob Cranky's Leum'nation Neet	Bob Cranky	John Selkirk	1814	<i>Tyne Mercury</i> , Pamphlet	Thompson <i>et al.</i> , <i>A Collection</i> , p.28	-
34	The Bombarding of Paris; or, Boney's Last Blow	Unknown	J. Parkerson, Jun.	1815	Broadside	Bod. Harding B25(245)	-
35	Bonaparte	Unknown	Anon	c.1803	Pamphlet	<i>The Yorkshire Irishman</i> , pp.6-8	-
36	Bonaparte (II)	Madam Fig's Gala	Mr Lawler	1811	Broadside	Bod. Curzon b.39(197)	349?
37	Bonaparte (III) *	Unknown	L.C. Richmond	Pre 1834	Unknown	Huntington, <i>Songs</i> , pp.209-11	1992
38	Bonaparte and Talyrand	Unknown	Anon	1803-5	Broadside	Madden 6:122	-
39	Bonaparte's Bridge	This Is The House That Jack Built	Anon	1813	Broadside	Ashton, <i>English Caricature</i> , ii, p.163	-
40	Bonaparte's Coronation	Religion's a Politic Law	John Freeth	1805	Book	Horden, <i>John Freeth</i> , pp.203-4	-
41	Bonaparte's Disasters in Russia, A New Song, With a Striking Likeness of GENERAL Wellington	Green Grows the Rushes	Anon	1812	Broadside	Bod. Curzon b.41(23/1)	-
42	Bonaparte's Escape From Russia, A New Song	Unknown	Anon	1812-13	Broadside	Bod. Harding B 25(246)	-
43	Bonaparte's Lamentation, or His Banishment to Elba Isle	Unknown	Anon	1814	Broadside	Bod. Johnson Ballads fol.198	-

44	Bonaparte's Mistake at Germany	Unknown	Anon	1813	Broadside	Bod. Harding B 25(247)	-
45	Boney and the Gay Lads of Paris Calculating for the Next Triumphal Entrance Into Moscow	Unknown	Anon	1813	Broadside	Ashton, <i>English Caricature</i> , ii, p.148	-
46	Boney Invaded, A New Song	Hearts of Oak	E. Humble	1813	Broadside	FARNE N0116601	-
47	Boney Wants A Baby	Unknown (Toora loo ra loo)	Anon	1810	Broadside	Madden 5:363	-
48	Boney Was A Warrior *	Boney Was A Warrior	Anon	Post 1821	Unknown	Hugill, <i>Shanties</i> , pp.444-6	485
49	Boney's Adventures	Unknown	Anon	c.1815	Broadside	Bod. Harding B25(249)	-
50	Boney's Return From Elba, or The Devil among the Tailors	The Devil Among the Tailors	Anon	1815	Broadside	Ashton, <i>English Caricature</i> , ii, p.218	-
51	Boney's Return to Paris	All the World's At Paris	Anon	1815	Broadside	Bod. Curzon b.32(64)	-
52	<u>Boney's Degradation</u>	Maggie Lawder	Anon	1813	Broadside	Madden 5:364	-
53	Boney's Disappointment	Unknown	Anon	c.1813	Broadside	Bod. Firth c.16(9)	-
54	Boney's last shift	Unknown	Anon	1813	Broadside	Bod. Curzon b.41(25/1)	-
55	Boney's Total Defeat, and Wellington Triumphant	Roast Beef of Old England	J. Thompson	1815	Broadside	Bod. Harding B12(6)	577
56	The Bonny Bunch of Roses *	The Bunch of Rushes, O!	Anon	1821-32	Broadside	Holloway & Black, ii, pp.204-5	664
57	The Bonny Geatsiders	Bob Cranky	John Shield	1805	Pamphlet, book	Bell, <i>Rhymes</i> , pp.29-31	8772
58	<u>Bonny Light Horseman</u>	Bonny Light Horseman	Anon	c.1809-14	Broadside, pamphlet	Moylan, <i>Age of Revolution</i> , p.139	1185
59	Bony's Dethronement	Unknown	Anon	1815	Broadside	Bod. Curzon b.33(191)	-
60	Britannia's Volunteers	The Newcastle Volunteers' Quick March	S.G. Kemble	1803-5	Book	Bell, <i>Rhymes</i> , pp.15-16	-
61	Britons United	Unknown	Charles Dibdin the Elder	1803-5	Broadside, book	<i>Songs of the Late Charles Dibdin</i> , pp.119-21	-
62	Britons! To Arms!	Unknown	William Thomas Fitzgerald	1803	Broadside	Bod. 2376 a.1(6)	-
63	Britons, Awake!	Unknown	Joseph Mather	1794	Broadside	Mather, <i>The Songs</i> , p.35	-
64	Bualadh Ros Mhic Thriúin	Unknown	Anon	1798	Unknown	Dunne, 'Subaltern Voices', p.31	-
65	The <i>Buckinghamshire</i> Militia Ballad	A-Hunting We Will Go	Anon	c.1803-5	Broadside	Bod. Johnson Ballads 1527	-

66	The Bungling Tinkers! or, Congress of Blockheads!	Unknown	Anon	1815	Broadside	Bod. Curzon b.5(206)	-
67	Buonaparte and Talleyrand; or The French invasion	Unknown	Anon	1803	Broadside	Bod. Curzon b.10(143)	-
68	Buonaparte; A Song	Derry Down	Anon	c.1803	Broadside	Huntington Library, ANALS 297305, no.8	-
69	Buonaparte's answer to John Bull's card, inviting him to England, with a few lines concerning his brothers, Taffy, Sawney, and Paddy	Here we go up, up, up	Anon	1803	Broadside	Bod. Curzon b.10(112)	-
70	Buonaparte's Courtship and Marriage	Unknown	Anon	1810	Broadside	Bod. Curzon b.41(23/2)	-
71	Buonaparte's Vagaries	Our Immortal Poet's Page	Anon	1814	Book	<i>Oliver's Complete Collection</i> , pp.45-6	-
72	'But see, the transports crowd the strand'	One and All	Col. Willyams, Royal Cornwall Rangers	1811	Manuscript	Hart, 'British Regimental Marches', p.586	-
73	Cakes; or My Eye and Peggy Martin	Unknown	Anon	1806-14	Book	<i>Oliver's Complete Collection</i> , p.251	-
74	The Call of Honour	The Call of Honour	Charles Dibdin the Elder	c.1803-5	Book	Hogarth, <i>Songs</i> , p.228	-
75	Canny Newcassel	Unknown	Thomas Thompson	c.1812	Pamphlet	<i>Newcastle Songster</i> , part 1, pp.21-3	3060
76	Catch	Unknown	A	1808	<i>Morning Chronicle</i>	<a href="http://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/warpoetry/1808/1808_18.html">www.rc.umd.edu/editions/warpoetry/1808/1808_18.html</a>	-
77	The Chapter of War	Unknown	John Collins	1803-4	Book	Collins, <i>Scrapscrapologia</i> , p.88	-
78	Chester Lads For Ever	Unknown	Anon	c.1803-5	Book	Bell, <i>Rhymes</i> , p.287	-
79	A Choke-Pill For Human Pride; or, The History of Man, Compris'd in a Song	Unknown	John Collins	1803-4	Book	Collins, <i>Scrapscrapologia</i> , p.74	-
80	The Christening of little Boney	Unknown	Anon	1810	Broadside	Madden 6:854	-
81	Coaly Tyne	Auld Lang Syne	Thomas Thompson	1820	Pamphlet	Thompson <i>et al.</i> , <i>A Collection</i> , p.18	-
82	Cocky and the Bull, or, the Downfall of Boney	Unknown	Anon	1815	Broadside	Bod. Harding B22(49)	-
83	Colliers of Wear & Tyne	Unknown	Anon	c.1800	Broadside	Palmer, <i>Working Songs</i> , p.6	8966
84	The Collier's Pay Week	Unknown	Anon	c.1812	Pamphlet	<i>Newcastle Songster</i> , part 2, pp.17-23	9024
85	'Come, haste to Newcastle, ye sons of fair Freedom'	Sons of the Tyne (Hearts of Oak)	Unknown	1808	Book	Bell, <i>Rhymes</i> , pp.102-3	-
86	Corporal Casey	Unknown	Anon	c.1800-15	Book	<i>Irish Musical Repository</i> , pp.135-7	-

87	The Corsican Drover	All the World's At Paris	Anon	1803	Broadside	Holloway & Black, ii, pp.185-6	-
88	The Corsican Monster	Unknown	Thomas Evans	1803-5	Broadside	Madden 5:53-4	-
89	The Corsican Tyrant	Unknown	C.X.F.	1814	Broadside	Bod. Johnson Ballads 1307	-
90	Country Joe; or, Down With Bonaparte	Unknown	John Scriven	1805-6	Pamphlet	<i>Newcastle Songster</i> (1806), p.9	-
91	Crazy Paul	Unknown	Anon	1800	Book	<i>Myrtle and Vine</i> , iii, p.157	-
92	Crippled Jack of Trafalgar	Unknown	Anon	c.1805-6	Broadside	Madden 5:62	-
93	A Crocodile's Tears, or, The Sighs of Boney	Farewell to the Green Fields	L.R. Shilling	1814	Broadside	Bod. Harding B16(65b)	-
94	Crocodile's tears: or Bonaparte's lamentation. A new song	Bow, wow, wow	Anon	1803-5	Broadside	Bod. Curzon b.12(62)	-
95	Cuddy's Fair	Unknown	Anon	c.1800	Broadside	Harker, <i>Songs</i> , p.137	8957
96	The cushion dance, or Paddy's description of the long trot	Unknown	Patrick Fitzpatrick	1813	Broadside	Bod. Curzon b.41(25/2)	19195?
97	Daggerwood's Description of Bonaparte	Madam Fig's Gala	Anon	1814	Book	<i>Oliver's Complete Collection</i> , pp.234-5	-
98	Death of Parker	Unknown	Anon	Post 1797	Broadside	Palmer, <i>Thomas Ford's Ballads</i> , p.106	1032
99	Deeds of Napoleon *	Unknown	Anon	Post 1821	Broadside	Bod. Firth c.16(99)	2419
100	Delia's Answer	O No, My Love, No	Anon	c.1805	Book	Bell, <i>Rhymes</i> , p.34	-
101	The Devil's Own Darling	Unknown	Anon	1814	Broadside	Bod. Johnson Ballads fol.198	-
102	A DIALOGUE Between the Devil and Bonaparte in the Council Chamber at Paris	Derry Down	Anon	1804-5	Broadside	Madden 5:74	-
103	Done Over	Bow, wow, wow	T. Best, the Well Known Angler	1805	Broadside	Holloway & Black, ii, pp.190-1	-
104	A Dose for the Don	Unknown	Charles Dibdin the Elder	1798	Book	<i>Songs of the Late Charles Dibdin</i> , pp.107-8	-
105	Downfal [ <i>sic.</i> ] of Bonaparte!!!	Unknown	Anon	1813	Broadside	Bod. Harding B 25(544)	-
106	Downfall of Buonaparte	Rule, Britannia!	Anon	1814	Broadside	Madden 2:1161	-
107	Drilling, or Warring Without Blows	Larry Grogan	John Freeth	1803-5	Book	Freeth, <i>New Ballads</i> , p.8	-
108	Dublin Sights	Unknown	Anon	c.1800-15	Book	<i>Irish Musical Repository</i> , pp.261-5	-

109	A Dumpling for Buonaparte	Hearts of Oak	A Norwich Volunteer	1798	Broadside	Madden 2:1172	-
110	Duncan and Victory	Unknown	Charles Dibdin the Elder	1798	Book	<i>Songs of the Late Charles Dibdin</i> , p.113	-
111	The Durham Volunteers	Anacreon in Heaven	Anon	1805	Book	Bell, <i>Rhymes</i> , pp.290-1	-
112	The Dying Dragoon	None	Samuel Bamford	c.1815	Book	Bamford, <i>Homely Rhymes</i> , pp.192-3	-
113	The Earsdon Sword-Dancers' Song *	Unknown	Anon	Post 1821	Unknown	Stokoe, <i>Songs and Ballads</i> , p.155	610
114	The Egyptian Wedding	Unknown	Anon	c.1803	Broadside	Bod. 2806 c.18(98)	-
115	<u>The Eighteenth of June</u>	The Eighteenth of June	Anon, 95 <sup>th</sup> Rifles	1815	Unknown	Williams <i>et al.</i> , 'Songs', p.193	2539
116	The Elba King	The Elfin King, or Alice Brand	A Friend of the Author	1814	Pamphlet	<i>Madison Agonistes</i> , pp.100-101	-
117	Elwina of Waterloo	Unknown	Anon	Post 1815	Broadside	Madden 7:62	1566
118	Encouragement for all to venture valiantly to the war against the French, in the name of the Lord God of the hosts of Israel, and not only in human Strength	Belisle March	Evan James	1810	Broadside	Mair Jones, <i>Welsh Ballads</i> , pp.293-7	-
119	English, Scots, and Irishmen. A Patriotic Address to the Inhabitants of the United Kingdom	King Robert Bruce's March	John Mayne	1803	Broadside	Klingberg & Hustvedt, pp.173-4	-
120	The Ex-Emperor in a Bottle	Unknown	Anon	1814-15	Unknown	Ashton, <i>English Caricature</i> , ii, p.253	-
121	<u>Fallen Boney</u>	Unknown	Hugh McWilliam, a schoolmaster	1814	Book (1816)	Moylan, <i>Age of Revolution</i> , p.154	-
122	Fate of Faithful Nancy	Unknown	Thomas Ford	1808-14	Broadside	Palmer, <i>Thomas Ford's Ballads</i> , p.105	23928
123	Feelings of a Republican on the Fall of Bonaparte	None	P.B. Shelley	1814	Periodical	Rogers, <i>The Complete Poetical Works</i> , ii, p.10	-
124	A Fig for the Grand Buonaparte	Roast Beef of Old England	Anon	1803	Broadside	Huntington Library, ANALS 297305, no.17	-
125	The Fishermen Hung the Monkey, O!	The Tinker's Wedding	Ed Corvan	c.1860s	Unknown	Corvan <i>et al.</i> , <i>A Choice Collection</i> , pp.62-4	-
126	The Flowers of our Parish	Unknown	Anon	c.1803-5	Book	Plumptre, <i>A Collection of Songs</i> , p.23	-
127	For A' That and A' That	For A' That	Walter Scott	1814	Unknown	Kirk <i>et al.</i> , <i>United Islands?</i> , pp.6-7	-
128	Forestalling Done Over	Unknown	Anon	1815	Broadside	Bod. Harding B11(1242)	-
129	The French Invaders	Away to the Downs	John Freeth	1803	Book	Freeth, <i>New Ballads</i> , p.9	-
130	The Fudge Family in Paris	None	Thomas Moore	1818	Pamphlet	Kent, <i>Poetical Works</i> , pp.307-30	-

131	The Galanti Show	Unknown	Anon	1814	Book	<i>Oliver's Complete Collection</i> , pp.72-4	-
132	General Moore	Unknown	Anon	c.1809	Broadside	Bod. Harding B 25(715)	-
133	Gen. Wellington	Green Grows the Rushes	Anon	1812	Broadside	Bod. Firth c.14(376)	-
134	The Genius of Britain	Marseillaise	Anon	1803	Broadside	Bod. 2376 a.1(4)	-
135	The Ghost of a Scrag of Mutton	Unknown	Charles Dibdin the Younger	1814	Book, broadside	<i>Oliver's Complete Collection</i> , pp.242-3	-
136	Glorious News, Wellington in France and Bonaparte out of Germany!!	Mrs Casey	Anon	1814	Broadside	Bod. Harding B25(743)	-
137	'Go and tell Napoleon, go'	Johnny Cope	Anon, 92 <sup>nd</sup> Foot	1811	Unknown	Winstock, <i>Songs</i> , p.139	-
138	God Save Great Thomas Paine	God save the King	Joseph Mather	1790s	Broadside	Mather, <i>The Songs</i> , pp.56-7	-
139	The Grand Conversation on Napoleon *	The Grand Conversation Under the Rose	George Brown	Post 1832	Broadside	Holloway & Black, ii, pp.207-8	1189
140	The Grand Conversation Under the Rose *	The Grand Conversation Under the Rose	Anon	Post 1815	Broadside	Moylan, <i>Age of Revolution</i> , p.150	21272
141	The Grave of Bonaparte *	Unknown	Anon	Post 1821	Pamphlet	<i>Songs for the Million</i> , p.8	7073
142	'Hail, hail! O Peace divine!'	God save the King	Anon	1801	Unknown	Southey, <i>Music-Making</i> , p.155	-
143	Harlequin's Invasion	Unknown	Anon	1803	Broadside	Bod. Curzon b.12(9)	-
144	<u>Here's the Tender Coming</u>	Here's the Tender Coming	Anon	c.1803-15	Pamphlet, book	Harker, <i>Songs</i> , p.6	3174
145	The Hero of War *	Unknown	Anon	Post 1821	Broadside	Bod. Firth b.26(292)	-
146	'Hide thee from earth's wide rage, a second Cain'	None	Robert Southey	1814	Periodical	Watson, <i>Romanticism and War</i> , p.159	-
147	Hohenlinden	Unknown	Thomas Campbell	1800	Book	Campbell, <i>Gertrude</i> , pp.125-7	-
148	I Am Napoleon Bonaparte *	Napoleon's Farewell to Paris	Anon	1815	Broadside	Moylan, <i>Age of Revolution</i> , p.142	-
149	'I Say - Stop!!!'	None	J. Allin	1804	Broadside	Langford, <i>A Century</i> , ii, p.367	-
150	I Wish the Wars Were Over	Unknown	Anon	c.1803-14	Unknown	Harker, <i>Songs</i> , p.33	19108
151	Iberia's War Song	Rule, Britannia!	Francis Armstrong, Esq.	1813	Broadside	Bod. 2376 a.1(11)	-
152	Impromptu (Little Nap Homer)	None	Anon	1814	<i>General Evening Post</i>	<i>Spirit of the Public Journals for 1814</i> , p.115	-
153	Introductory Lines on Joseph Buonaparte's Princely Visit to Spain!	None	Anon	1809	Pamphlet	Coxe, <i>The Exposé</i> , pp.15-16	-

154	The Invasion	The Invasion	Charles Dibdin the Elder	c.1803	Book	Hogarth, <i>Songs</i> , p.191	-
155	Ireland Forever	Unknown	Anon	c.1800-15	Book	<i>Irish Musical Repository</i> , p.235	-
156	The Irish Pedlar	Unknown	C.F. Barret	c.1800	Book	<i>Myrtle and Vine</i> , iv, p.51	-
157	Irregular Ode to the Ex-Empress Josephine, with an imaginary present of botanic plants	None	The Opposition Poets Tripartite	1814	<i>Morning Herald</i>	<i>Spirit of the Public Journals for 1814</i> , pp.87-8	-
158	<u>Isle of St Helena</u> *	Isle of St Helena	Anon	c.1815-16	Broadside	Bod. Harding B 25(245)	349
159	<u>Jenny's Complaint</u>	Nancy's to the Greenwood Gane	Robert Anderson	c.1805-14	Book	Gilpin, <i>Songs and Ballads</i> , pp.333-4	2525
160	Jervis For Ever	Unknown	Charles Dibdin the Elder	1790s	Book	<i>Songs of the Late Charles Dibdin</i> , p.110	-
161	<u>Joan O'Grinfilt</u>	Joan O'Grinfilt	Joseph Lees & Joseph Coupe	1803-5	Broadside	Palmer, <i>Rambling Soldier</i> , pp.33-4	1460
162	John Bull in a Rage at the Corn Laws	Unknown	Anon	1814	Broadside	Madden 5:423	-
163	John Bull in Alarm, or, Boney's Escape, and A Second Deliverance of Europe	'An old tune'	Anon	1815	Broadside	Bod. Curzon b.5(208)	-
164	John Bull in Town; or, British Wool Forever	Unknown	Mr Emery	1809	Broadside	Bod. Harding B 10(27)	-
165	John Bull's Invitation to Bonaparte	A Cobler there was	Anon	1803	Broadside	Bob. Curzon b.10(120)	-
166	John Diggons	Roast Beef of Old England	James Stawpert	1805-6	Book	Bell, <i>Rhymes</i> , pp.16-18	-
167	Johnson Reed	Unknown	John Leonard	1813	Broadside	Harker, <i>Songs</i> , pp.1-2	8977
168	Jonathan and the Lion	Unknown	Anon	1814	<i>The Champion</i>	<i>Spirit of the Public Journals for 1814</i> , pp.235-6	-
169	A King or a Consul?	Derry Down	Hannah More	1799	Broadside, book	More, <i>The Works</i> , ii, pp.90-2	-
170	Kiver Awa'	Unknown	Anon	1804	Book	Bell, <i>Rhymes</i> , pp.14-15	9023
171	Lancashire Weavers' Lament *	A-Hunting We Will Go	Anon	Post 1815	Unknown	Thompson, <i>The Making</i> , p.299	-
172	The Land in the Ocean	Unknown	Thomas Dibdin	c.1805	Book	<i>Songs of the Late Charles Dibdin</i> , pp.230-1	-
173	Larry's Return to Erin *	Unknown	Anon	c.1819	Broadside	Palmer, <i>Working Songs</i> , pp.297-8	-
174	Liberty and Equality, or Dermot's Delight	Unknown	Anon	c.1798-1804	Pamphlet	Murphy, 'The Ballad Singer', p.92	-
175	Little Bess the Ballad Singer	Unknown	S.J. Arnold	c.1805	Pamphlet	Arnold, <i>Little Bess the Ballad Singer</i> , pp.2-3	-
176	Little Boney A-cockhorse	Unknown	Anon	c.1803	Broadside	Holloway & Black, ii, pp.188-9	-

177	The Local Militia	Unknown	Anon	c.1808-9	Broadside	Holloway & Black, ii, pp.192-3	-
178	The Local Militia-Man	Madam Fig's Gala	William Mitford	1803-5	Unknown	Thompson <i>et al.</i> , <i>A Collection</i> , p.61	-
179	London Cries	By the Deep Nine	Anon	c.1800	Book	<i>Myrtle and Vine</i> , i, pp.130-1	-
180	London Cries (II)	Unknown	Anon	c.1800	Book	<i>Myrtle and Vine</i> , iv, pp.176-7	-
181	The Lord of Douro	The Green Immortal Shamrock	Anon	1814	Pamphlet	<i>Madison Agonistes</i> , pp.102-3	-
182	Lord Wellington and the Ministers	None	Thomas Moore	1813	Periodical	Kent, <i>Poetical Works</i> , p.546	-
183	<u>Lord Wellington for ever, huzza! A Favourite New Song</u>	The Brags of Washington	Anon	1812	Broadside	Palmer, <i>Rambling Soldier</i> , pp.177-8	-
184	Louis Dix-huit [fragment]	Unknown	Anon	1816	Unknown	Alger, <i>Napoleon's</i> , pp.83-4	-
185	The Loyal Hexham Volunteers, A New Song	Unknown	Jasper Potts	c.1803-5	Book	Bell, <i>Rhymes</i> , pp.228-9	-
186	<u>Madam Boney the 2<sup>nd</sup></u>	The Bold Dragoon	Anon	1810-11	Broadside	Holloway & Black, ii, pp.194-5	-
187	Madison to Buonaparte	None	Anon	1814	Unknown	<i>Spirit of the Public Journals for 1814</i> , pp.290-2	-
188	The March to Moscow	None	Robert Southey	1812-3	<i>The Courier</i>	Watson, <i>Romanticism and War</i> , p.156	-
189	Maria Louisa's Lamentation: The Green Linnet *	Unknown	Anon	Post 1815	Broadside	Holloway & Black, ii, pp.202-3	1619
190	A martial song for the gentlemen soldiers of the Hertfordshire militia	Lillibulero	Anon	c.1803-5	Broadside	Bod. Firth b.33(43)	-
191	The Marvellous Leap	The Irish hay-makers	John Freeth	c.1805	Book	Freeth, <i>New Ballads</i> , p.13	-
192	Master Boney's hearty welcome to England. 3 <sup>rd</sup> ed., with alterations, revised and corrected	Derry Down	Anon	1803	Broadside	Bod. Curzon b.10(136)	-
193	Matthew Murry's Escape to America	Unknown	Anon	1826	Pamphlet	<i>New Song Called the Shan Van Vough</i> , pp.3-5	-
194	Medley's Remarks on the Times	Unknown	Anon	1809	Broadside	Palmer, <i>Working Songs</i> , p.290	-
195	Mirabile Dictu! Truth Told By A Frenchman! A Song	Unknown	John Collins	1803-4	Book	Collins, <i>Scriscrapologia</i> , p.172	-
196	Mr Mayor	Unknown	Thomas Thompson	1805-6	Broadside	Harker, <i>Songs</i> , pp.31-2	8783
197	Music	Unknown	S. Webbe	1779	Unknown	Plumptre, <i>Letters</i> , p.180	-
198	Mussel Mou'd Charlie	Highland Laddie	Anon	Post 1791	Book	<i>The Ballad Book</i> , pp.ix-xiii	-

199	N.B. Bonaparte's Farewell to Paris	Miss Forbes's Farewell to Bamf-	R.A.H.	1814	Broadside	Bod. Johnson Ballads fol.282	-
200	Na Franncach Bhanc / Teach na bhFranncach go Cill Eala	Unknown	Anon	1798	Unknown	Hayes, <i>Last Invasion of Ireland</i> , p.244	-
201	Napoleon Bonaparte *	Napoleon Bonaparte	Anon	Post 1840	Broadside	Moylan, <i>Age of Revolution</i> , p.157	-
202	Napoleon Buonaparte's Exile to St Helena *	Unknown	Anon	1815	Broadside	Bod. Firth c.16(93)	-
203	Napoleon in Exile	None	R.C. Fair	1818	Periodical	<i>The Black Dwarf</i> , 2 (1818), p.782	-
204	Napoleon is the Boy for Kicking up a Row *	Napoleon is the Boy for Kicking up a Row	Anon	c.1830	Broadside	Moylan, <i>Age of Revolution</i> , p.151	-
205	Napoleon Signing His Abdication	None	Anon	1814	Broadside	Ashton, <i>English Caricature</i> , ii, p.188	-
206	Napoleon the Brave *	Unknown	Anon	Post 1821	Broadside	Bod. Firth c.12(225)	-
207	Napoleon's Dream *	One Night Sad and Languid	Anon	Post 1821	Unknown	Moylan, <i>Age of Revolution</i> , p.158	1538
208	<u>Napoleon's Farewell</u> *	The Wounded Hussar	George Byron	1815	<i>Examiner</i>	Moylan, <i>Age of Revolution</i> , p.159	-
209	Napoleon's Farewell to Paris *	Napoleon's Farewell to Paris	Anon	1815	Broadside	Holloway & Black, ii, pp.200-1	1626
210	Napoleon's Lamentation	Napoleon's Lamentation	Anon	1814	Broadside	Moylan, <i>Age of Revolution</i> , p.148	-
211	Napoleon's Retreat from Leipsig	Unknown	Anon	1813	Unknown	Ashton, <i>English Caricature</i> , ii, p.162	-
212	Napoleon's Soliloquy In the Island of St. Helena *	None	Anon	1815	Periodical	<i>CWPR</i> 29, No.5 (4 November 1815), pp.154-5	-
213	Nappy's Napped	Unknown	Anon	1815	Broadside	Madden 5:652	-
214	Naval Victories	Naval Victories	Charles Dibdin the Elder	c.1803	Book	Hogarth, <i>Songs</i> , p.197	-
215	Nelson's Glorious Victory at Trafalgar	Unknown	Anon	1805	Broadside	Firth, <i>Naval Songs and Ballads</i> , p.301	522
216	The New Bunch of Loughero *	The Bunch of Rushes, O!	Anon	c.1820	Unknown	Zimmermann, <i>Songs</i> , pp.188-9	-
217	The New Century, A New Song	Hearts of Oak	Anon	1800	Book	<i>Myrtle and Vine</i> , iii, pp.146-7	-
218	A New Constitutional Song. Conquer or Die	Hearts of Oak	J. Wilkins, a Blind Man	1803-5	Broadside	Madden 3:1207	-
219	The New Granuwale *	Gráinne Mhaol	Anon	Post 1815	Unknown	Zimmermann, <i>Songs</i> , pp.182-3	-
220	The New Humours of Bartholomew Fair	Unknown	Anon	1790s	Broadside	Madden 3: 1226	-
221	New Hunting Song *	A-Hunting We Will Go	Anon	1840	Unknown	Palmer, <i>A Touch</i> , p.299	-
222	The New Keel Row	Unknown	Thomas Thompson	c.1814	Pamphlet	<i>Newcastle Songster</i> , part 1, pp.2-3	8949

223	A New Loyal Song on his Majesty's Entering the 50 <sup>th</sup> Year of his Reign	Hearts of Oak	Anon	1809	Broadside	Madden 5:339	-
224	A New Song about the celebrated victories against the united fleets of France and Spain and the death of the peerless and successful commander, Lord Nelson	God save the King the Old Way	Robert Morris	1805	Broadside	Mair Jones, <i>Welsh Ballads</i> , pp.271-7	-
225	A New Song about the success which our soldiers had over Bonaparte and his army in France on the 16 <sup>th</sup> , 17 <sup>th</sup> and 18 <sup>th</sup> of last June	Unknown	Thomas Jones	1815	Broadside	Mair Jones, <i>Welsh Ballads</i> , pp.333-9	-
226	A New Song called Little England	Unknown	Anon	1814	Broadside	Bod. Harding B25(1119)	-
227	A New Song on the retaking of Bonaparte, together with his sending to St Helena	Mentra Gwen	Ioan Daffyd	1815	Broadside	Mair Jones, <i>Welsh Ballads</i> , pp.319-22	-
228	A New Song on the successful attempt of destroying the French Fleet in Basque Roads on the 11 <sup>th</sup> April 1809	Unknown	Anon	1809	Broadside	Firth, <i>Naval Songs and Ballads</i> , p.306	-
229	A New Song on the Triumphant Entry of the Allies into Paris; Being the Sure Prelude to Universal Peace!!!	Hearts of Oak	Anon	1814	Broadside	Madden 5:340	-
230	A New Song The Scale Is Turn'd	Unknown	Anon	1814	Broadside	Bod. Harding B 28(129)	-
231	A New Song, Called Little Boney in the Dumps, or, Brother Joe's March from Madrid	Just the Thing	William Cobbett	1808	Broadside	Madden 5:331	-
232	A New Song, called The Tradesman's Lamentation	Unknown	Anon	1790s	Broadside	Palmer, <i>Working Songs</i> , p.290	-
233	A New Song, Called, British Valour in Portugal	Rule, Britannia!	William Cabe	1808	Broadside	Madden 5:329	-
234	A New Song, On the threaten'd INVASION	The Beggar Girl	Anon	c.1803	Broadside	Madden 3:1385	-
235	Newcastle Election Song	Unknown	Anon	1812	Pamphlet	<i>Newcastle Songster</i> , part 1, pp.7-8	-
236	The Newcastle Signs	Unknown	Cecil Pitt	1806	Book	Bell, <i>Rhymes</i> , pp.62-3	-
237	Nichol the Newsmonger	The Night Before Larry was Stretch'd	Robert Anderson	1802	Book	Gilpin, <i>Songs and Ballads</i> , pp.310-12	-
238	No Continental War; Money and Men at Home	Near to a place call'd Dover in Kent	John Freeth	c.1805	Book	Freeth, <i>New Ballads</i> , p.20	-
239	Nongtongpaw	Nongtongpaw	Charles Dibdin the Elder	c.1802	Pamphlet	Dibdin, <i>Professional Life</i> , iv, pp.37-9	-
240	The Northern Minstrel's Budget	Unknown	Henry Robson	c.1800-3	Unknown	Bruce & Stokoe, <i>Northumbrian</i> , pp.140-3	-

241	'Not a drum was heard;'	None	Charles Wolfe	1816	Book, broadside	Madden 24: 232	13873
242	O cruel Pressgang	Unknown	Anon	Unknown	Broadside	Madden 4:1458	-
243	O No, My Love, No	Unknown	John Shield	c.1803	<i>Newcastle Chronicle</i>	Thompson <i>et al.</i> , <i>A Collection</i> , p.105	23110
244	Ó, a bhean an tí	Unknown	Anon	1796	Unknown	Beiner, <i>Remembering</i> , p.145	-
245	O'Shaughnessy Callaghan Mulrooney's Description of London	John Grouse and Mother Goose	Anon	1815	Book	<i>Oliver's Complete Collection</i> , pp.286-7	21416?
246	Ode to Napoleon Bonaparte	None	H.R.M.	1815	Periodical	<i>CWPR</i> 28, No.13 (30 September 1815), p.414	-
247	Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte	None	George Byron	1814	Pamphlet	Byron, <i>Ode to Napoleon</i>	-
248	Odsbobbins! I'ze go for a Sodger	Unknown	Anon	1800-14	Book	<i>Oliver's Complete Collection</i> , pp.135-6	-
249	Oh the Weary Cutter	The Wedding o' Blyth	Anon	1799-1815	Unknown	Harker, <i>Songs</i> , p.5	8772
250	Old England For Ever!	Unknown	John Stagg	1805	Unknown	Gilpin, <i>Songs and Ballads</i> , pp.189-91	-
251	Old England's Strength and Stay	Unknown	John Collins	1803-4	Book	Collins, <i>Scrapscrapologia</i> , p.68	-
252	The Old Grey Mare *	Unknown	Anon	c.1816	Unknown	Hayes, 'Irish Links', pp.67-8	3039
253	'On board th' Undaunted he embark'd'	Unknown	Anon	1814	Unknown	Ashton, <i>English Caricature</i> , ii, p.206	-
254	On Napoleon's Flight from the Field of Battle	None	Anon	1814	<i>Morning Post</i>	<i>Spirit of the Public Journals for 1814</i> , p.16	-
255	On Seeing in a List of New Music, <i>The Waterloo Waltz</i>	Unknown	R. Shorter	1817	Periodical	<i>Sherwin's Political Register</i> , 1 (1817), pp.303-4	-
256	On the Late Jubilee	None	Anon	1814	<i>Morning Chronicle</i>	<i>Spirit of the Public Journals for 1814</i> , p.300	-
257	On the Late Report of the Death of Buonaparte	None	R.B.G.	1814	<i>Morning Post</i>	<i>Spirit of the Public Journals for 1814</i> , p.42	-
258	On the Reported Death of Buonaparte	None	T.S.M.	1814	Broadside	<i>Spirit of the Public Journals for 1814</i> , pp.94-5	-
259	On the Threaten'd Invasion of France	None	Alfred N.	1815	Periodical	<i>CWPR</i> 27, No.4 (17 June 1815), p.768	-
260	One Night Sad and Languid *	One Night Sad and Languid	Anon	Post 1821	Unknown	Huntington, <i>Songs</i> , pp.215-6	1538
261	The Orphan Boy	None	John Thelwall	1793-1801	Pamphlet	<i>Nursery Rhymes for Children</i> , pp.3-8	-
262	The Orphan Boy (II)	Unknown	Thomas Thompson	1790s	Pamphlet	Southey, <i>Music-Making</i> , p.156	-
263	Paddy Macshane's Seven Ages	Unknown	Anon	1800-15	Book	<i>Irish Musical Repository</i> , pp.13-5	-
264	Paddy's Trip from Dublin	The Priest in his Boots	Anon	1803-14	Book	<i>Irish Musical Repository</i> , pp.81-5	-

265	Patent Snuffers Exploded, or, A Hint to the Commissioners at Elba	Unknown	Anon	1814	<i>The Champion</i>	<i>Spirit of the Public Journals for 1814</i> , pp.268-70	-
266	The Patriot's Hymn	God save the King	Samuel Bamford	1815	Pamphlet	Bamford, <i>Homely Rhymes</i> , pp.47-8	-
267	Peace	Up and war them a'	Robert Anderson	1814	Book	FARNE H1701002	-
268	Peace on the Ocean	In the Midst of the Sea	Anon	1802	Pamphlet	Dobbs, <i>The Lisper</i> , pp.27-8	-
269	Peace, and England's Glory	Roast Beef of Old England	Anon	1814	Broadside	Bod. Firth c.16(8)	-
270	The Peacock, A Modern Satire, in Four Parts	Unknown	William Nicholson	1803-14	Pamphlet	Nicholson, <i>Tales</i> , pp.80-91	-
271	The Pensioner's Complaint	Unknown	Anon	Post 1815	Pamphlet	<i>Teddy Roe!</i> , pp.5-6	1663
272	The Petition of Jammy's Hen	Unknown	Samuel Bamford	1814	Pamphlet	Bamford, <i>Homely Rhymes</i> , pp.169-70	-
273	The Pitman's Revenge Against Buonaparte	Unknown	George Cameron, Volunteer Sgt.	1804	Pamphlet, book	Bell, <i>Rhymes</i> , pp.37-8	9025
274	The Plains of Waterloo	Unknown	John Robertson, bugler, 92 <sup>nd</sup> foot	1815	Unknown	Greig, <i>Folk-Song</i> , Issue LXXIX	1106?
275	The Plains of Waterloo (II)	The Plains of Waterloo (II)	Anon	c.1815-16	Broadside	Moylan, <i>Age of Revolution</i> , p.145	960?
276	The Plains of Waterloo (III)	The Plains of Waterloo (III)	Anon	c.1815-16	Broadside	Moylan, <i>Age of Revolution</i> , p.145	2853?
277	<u>The Ploughman's Ditty: Being an answer to that foolish question, "what have the poor to lose?"</u>	He That Has the Best Wife	Anon	1803	<i>British Neptune</i>	Klingberg & Hustvedt, pp.188-90	-
278	The Politicians	Newcastle Fair	Anon	c.1812	Pamphlet	<i>Newcastle Songster</i> , part 3, pp.9-10	-
279	Prince of Orange	Unknown	Anon	1813	Broadside	Bod. Harding B 25(1574)	563
280	The prophecy! Or Bonaparte killed at last by his own troops!	Unknown	Anon	1803	Broadside	Bod. Curzon b.10(111)	-
281	Quiries for Quidnuncs	Unknown	I Ask	1814	Broadside	<i>Spirit of the Public Journals for 1814</i> , pp.219-20	-
282	Raddle-Neck'd Tups	Unknown	Joseph Mather	1797	Broadside	Mather, <i>The Songs</i> , pp.46-9	-
283	Reinforcements for Lord Wellington	None	Thomas Moore	1813	Periodical	Kent, <i>Poetical Works</i> , p.545	-
284	Remarks on the Times, &c.	None	David Love	c.1803-12	Pamphlet	Love, <i>A Few Remarks</i> , <i>passim</i>	-
285	The Removal of Bonaparte's Ashes *	Unknown	Anon	Post 1840	Broadside	Moylan, <i>Age of Revolution</i> , p.157	-
286	The Retrospection	Unknown	Samuel Bamford	1815	Pamphlet	Bamford, <i>Homely Rhymes</i> , pp.211-13	-

287	A Rope's End for Bonaparte	Unknown	Mantz, Finsbury	1803-5	Broadside	Madden 6:32	-
288	The Royal Eagle *	The Blackbird	Anon	c. 1830	Unknown	Zimmermann, <i>Songs</i> , pp.186-7	-
289	Rule Britannia, from Sailing of Admiral Duncan and defeat of the Dutch fleet	Rule, Britannia!	Maidstone Concert Society	1797	<i>Kentish Chronicle</i>	<i>Kentish Chronicle</i> 1853 (27 October 1797), p.2	-
290	Runaway Boney or The White Cockade	Unknown	Anon	1812	Broadside	Bod. Harding B 11(3367)	-
291	The Russian Bear	Unknown	Anon	1812	Broadside	Holloway & Black, ii, pp.198-9	5826?
292	Sahagun	Unknown	Anon, 15 <sup>th</sup> Hussars	1808-9	Unknown	Winstock, <i>Songs &amp; Music</i> , p.124	1660
293	The Sailors Wife	The Sailors Wife	R. Spofforth	1807	Pamphlet	Spofforth, <i>The Twelfth Cake</i> , p.11	-
294	Saint Helena *	Unknown	Samuel Bamford	1815-17	Pamphlet	Bamford, <i>The Weaver Boy</i> , p.8	-
295	Saint Monday; or, Scenes from Low-Life: A Poem	None	George Davis	1790	Pamphlet	Davis, <i>Saint Monday</i>	-
296	A Salt Eel for Mynheer	Unknown	Charles Dibdin the Elder	c. 1803	Book	<i>Songs of the Late Charles Dibdin</i> , pp.114-15	-
297	The Sandgate Lassie's Lament	Unknown	Henry Robson	c. 1798-1814	Book	Bell, <i>Rhymes</i> , pp.301-2	3170
298	Sandy and Donald	The Lass o' Glenshee	Anon	c. 1815	Unknown	Greig, <i>Folk-Song</i> , Issue XCIV	2642
299	Santiana, or, The Plains of Mexico *	Unknown	Anon	Post 1821	Unknown	Hugill, <i>Shanties</i> , p.85	207
300	The Seamen's Complaint: A New Song written by a Sailor who was present at the Battle of the Nile	For a' That	Anon	1815	Broadside	Palmer, <i>Working Songs</i> , p.149	-
301	The Shan Van Vough	Unknown	Anon	1826	Pamphlet	<i>New Song Called the Shan Van Vough</i> , pp.2-3	-
302	The Sights of London	Unknown	Anon	1814	Book	<i>Oliver's Complete Collection</i> , p.138	-
303	Simon and Janet	Unknown	Anon	1803-5	Unknown	Greig, <i>Folk-Song</i> , Issue XXV	5771
304	Sir John Moore	Unknown	Anon	1809	Broadside	Palmer, <i>Thomas Ford's Ballads</i> , p.34	1979
305	Sketch of the Present Times	None	Anon	1799	<i>Dublin Evening Post</i>	<i>Dublin Evening Post</i> 7575 (21 February 1799), p.2	-
306	The Soldier at Night	None	T	1809	Unknown	Hull, <i>The Poets</i> , p.8	-
307	Soldier Jack	Soldier Dick	Michael Wilson	1814	Manuscript	Harland, <i>Songs</i> , pp.15-18	-
308	The Soldier's Death	Unknown	Anon	Post 1808	Unknown	Palmer, <i>Rambling Soldier</i> , p.248	3848

309	The Soldier's Dream	The Wounded Hussar	Anon	1800-15	Book	<i>English Minstrel</i> , pp.136-7	13899
310	The Soldiers' Wives Complaint	Unknown	Anon	1800-14	Unknown	Palmer, <i>Rambling Soldier</i> , pp.250-1	-
311	A Song	Unknown	POP-GUN	1814	<i>Morning Chronicle</i>	<i>Spirit of the Public Journals for 1814</i> , p.195	-
312	Song	To Anacreon in Heav'n	Anon	1798	Unknown	Bainbridge, <i>British Poetry</i> , p.12	-
313	Song 9	Mrs. Cassey	Anon	1799	Pamphlet	Tye, <i>The Loyal Songster</i> , p.18	-
314	The Song of Acre	The Song of Acre	Charles Dibdin the Elder	c.1804-5	Book	Hogarth, <i>Songs</i> , p.277	-
315	A Song of encouragement for everyone to regard God as leader of the allies in France	King's Farewell	Ioan Daffyd	1815	Broadside	Mair Jones, <i>Welsh Ballads</i> , pp.325-31	-
316	A Song of praise to the militia of the twelve counties of Wales	Unknown	Anon	c.1807	Broadside	Mair Jones, <i>Welsh Ballads</i> , pp.279-83	-
317	A Song of praise to the volunteers of the three counties, namely Pembrokeshire, Cardiganshire and Carmarthenshire	Unknown	George Stephens	1799	Broadside	Mair Jones, <i>Welsh Ballads</i> , pp.241-5	-
318	A Song of thankful commemoration for the triumphant victory which we received recently over our enemies	God save the King	John Thomas	1805	Broadside	Mair Jones, <i>Welsh Ballads</i> , pp.265-9	-
319	Song on the New Affair of Copenhagen (Not Lord Nelson's)	Unknown	Anon	1808	<i>Morning Chronicle</i>	<a href="http://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/warpoetry/1808/1808_1.html">www.rc.umd.edu/editions/warpoetry/1808/1808_1.html</a>	-
320	Song on the Prospect of Peace	Unknown	William Nicholson	1814	Book	Nicholson, <i>Tales</i> , pp.250-1	-
321	Sonnet (Written November, 1814,) to an old news room at Penzance	None	An Original Member	1814	Printed slip	Huntington Library, 434623	-
322	<u>The Sons of the Tyne, or, British Volunteers</u>	Hearts of Oak	Unknown	c.1803	Book	Bell, <i>Rhymes</i> , pp.87-8	-
323	The Strutting Emperor	Unknown	Anon	1803-5	Broadside	Madden 5:578	-
324	A Substantial Song, urging Britain to embrace its secular and religious privileges and to correct its faults	Unknown	J.P.	1804	Broadside	Mair Jones, <i>Welsh Ballads</i> , pp.259-63	-
325	Surrender of Paris	Unknown	J. Thompson	1815	Broadside	Bod. Curzon b.33(190)	-
326	Swaggering Boney	Unknown	Anon	1815	Broadside	Madden 5:633	-
327	Table-Talk Scan Mag; or, what will Mrs Grundy say?	Unknown	Anon	1806-14	Book	<i>Oliver's Complete Collection</i> , p.178	-

328	The Tarpaulin Jacket	Unknown	Anon	1814	Unknown	Harker, <i>Songs</i> , pp.13-14	829
329	The Tear of Pity	The Wounded Hussar	A Poor Framework-knitter	1821	Broadside	Palmer, <i>Working Songs</i> , p.304	-
330	'The fame of the brave shall no longer be sounded'	Unknown	Anon	Post 1807	Book	Hone, <i>Every-Day Book</i> , pp.40-1	-
331	'The R[egent] was told'	The Tight Little Island	Anon	1814	<i>The Champion</i>	<i>Spirit of the Public Journals for 1814</i> , pp.190-1	-
332	The Threatening of the whole continent against Bonaparte	Runaway Boney or The White Cockade	Anon	1813	Broadside	Bod. Harding B 11(2284)	-
333	The Three Parks: A New Trio	Unknown	Anon	1814	<i>The Champion</i>	<i>Spirit of the Public Journals for 1814</i> , p.204	-
334	Times Past, Present, and to Come	None	Joseph Mitford	1814	Pamphlet, periodical	<i>Spirit of the Public Journals for 1814</i> , pp.35-8	-
335	To Sir Hudson Lowe	None	Thomas Moore	1816	Periodical	Kent, <i>Poetical Works</i> , p.550	-
336	To the Emperors of Russia and Austria who eyed the battle of Austerlitz from the Heights whilst Buonaparte was active in the thickest of the fight	None	P.B. Shelley	1805	Pamphlet	Rogers, <i>The Complete Poetical Works</i> , i, pp.90-1	-
337	Trafalgar's Battle	Chapter of Kings	James Stawpert	1805	Broadside	FARNE N0101301	-
338	A Trip to Egypt, Nov. 1798	Hark hark away, away to the Downs	Anon	1799	Pamphlet	Tye, <i>Loyal Songster</i> , pp.21-3	-
339	A Trip to the Camp	A Trip to the Camp	Charles Dibdin the Elder	c.1803-5	Book	Hogarth, <i>Songs</i> , p.229	-
340	The Triumph of Peace	The Sons of Albion	L.R. Shilling	1815	Broadside	Bod. Harding B11(3367)	-
341	The Triumphs of Russia - A Song	Unknown	Horatio Smith	1812	Periodical	Anderson, 'British Public Opinion', p.416	-
342	True Courage	True Courage	Charles Dibdin the Elder	1803	Broadside, book	Bod. Firth b.25(527)	-
343	True Reformers	Unknown	Joseph Mather	1794	Broadside	Mather, <i>The Songs</i> , pp.37-8	-
344	The Twa Emperors, or, Sandy and Nap	Unknown	William Lillie of Inverugie	c.1813	Unknown	Greig, <i>Folk-Song</i> , Issue LIII	2874
345	Tyne Cossacks	The Bold Dragoon	Anon	1814	Pamphlet	FARNE N0801101	-
346	Tyne Fair	Unknown	Anon	1814-16	Pamphlet	<i>Budget; or Newcastle Songster for 1816</i> , p.6	-
347	The Tyrant's Fall *	Johnny Cope	Mrs Kennedy	1832	Broadside	Freshwater, <i>Sons of Scotia</i> , p.18	-
348	The Tyrant's Fate	None	Anon	1814	<i>Morning Chronicle</i>	<i>Spirit of the Public Journals for 1814</i> , p.109	-

349	Untitled aisling [fragment]	Unknown	Ó Súilleabháin	c.1798	Unknown	Kirk <i>et al.</i> , <i>United Islands?</i> , pp.119-20	-
350	Up with the Orange and down with the French	Unknown	Anon	1813	Broadside	Bod. Johnson Ballads 1977Ar	-
351	Upstart Emperors	Push About the Jorum	John Freeth	1804	Book	Freeth, <i>New Ballads</i> , p.12	-
352	VALENTINE <i>From John Bull's Daughter to Bonaparte</i>	None	Anon	1800	Book	<i>The Herald of Love</i> , pp.28-9	-
353	The Visit Returned	None	Anon	1814	<i>Morning Post</i>	<i>Spirit of the Public Journals for 1814</i> , pp.30-2	-
354	A Visit to Bonaparte in Plymouth Sound	None	A Lady	1815	Unknown	Ashton, <i>English Caricature</i> , II, p.244	-
355	Vittoria! Or King Joe's Last Gun	Unknown	Anon	1813	Broadside	Bod. Curzon b.41(25/1)	-
356	Vive la Peste	Vive la Peste	Charles Dibdin the Elder	c.1804	Book	Hogarth, <i>Songs</i> , p.244	-
357	A Voice to Europe, Asia, Africa, America, all the world over!	Unknown	Anon	c.1808-11	Broadside	Bod. Curzon b.12(68)	-
358	The Volunteer; a song, written by order of the Stanmore association	Unknown	Anon	c.1803	Broadside	Bod. Curzon b.10(145)	-
359	Waterloo	None	Samuel Bamford	1815-17	Pamphlet	Bamford, <i>The Weaver Boy</i> , pp.10-11	-
360	Waterloo (II)	None	Thomas Dibdin	1830-7	Unknown	<i>Songs of the Late Charles Dibdin</i> , pp.251-3	-
361	Waterloo Times - A New Song	Unknown	Anon	1815	Broadside	Palmer, <i>Working Songs</i> , p.291	-
362	We Must All To Drill	Margery Topping	John Scriven	1806	Pamphlet	<i>Newcastle Songster</i> (1806), pp.5-6	-
363	The Wedding o' Blyth [fragment]	The Wedding o' Blyth	Anon	c.1798-1805	Unknown	Bruce & Stokoe, p.163	-
364	A Welcome to the French	A Welcome to the French	Charles Dibdin the Elder	c.1803-5	Book	Hogarth, <i>Songs</i> , p.230	-
365	'We're told that the French to invade us intend'	Unknown	Anon	1803	Unknown	Lisle, <i>'Long, Long Ago: '</i> , pp.72-3	-
366	What d'ye think of the new Spanish war	Unknown	Anon	c.1811	Broadside	Bod. Firth c.16(14)	-
367	'What's to be done to save the State?'	None	Y.N.S.	1803	<i>Gentleman's Magazine</i>	<i>Gentleman's Magazine</i> 72 (August 1803), p.764	-
368	The White Flag, or, Boney's Abdication	Derry Down	Hucknell	1814	Broadside	Bod. Curzon b.5(144)	-
369	The White Flag; or, Boney Done Over	Derry Down	Anon	1814	Book, broadside	<i>Oliver's Complete Collection</i> , pp.204-5	-
370	'Who says the Age of Song is o'er'	None	Thomas Moore	1814	Book	Dowden, <i>Letters</i> , I, p.313	-

371	Who's Afraid	Unknown	Anon	1807	Broadside	Bod. Harding B 25(2045)	-
372	Winlanton Hopping	Unknown	John Leonard	1813	Broadside	Palmer, <i>Working Songs</i> , p.345	-
373	With Wellington We'll Go	A-Hunting We Will Go	Anon	Post 1815	Broadside	Dallas, <i>The Cruel Wars</i> , p.204	-
374	The Wonderful Gutter	Unknown	William Mitford	Post 1815	Unknown	Thompson <i>et al.</i> , <i>A Collection</i> , p.54	-
375	The Wonderful Wonders of Town	Unknown	Anon	1814	Book	<i>Oliver's Complete Collection</i> , pp.175-7	-
376	The Wounded Beggar	Unknown	Mary Robinson	c.1800	Book	<i>Myrtle and Vine</i> , iii, p.15	-
377	The Wounded Hussar	The Wounded Hussar	Thomas Campbell	c.1798	Broadside, book	Campbell, <i>The Pleasures</i> , pp.127-9	2699
378	Written at the Seaman's Stick	Belfast Shoemaker	T.R.V.	1815	Pamphlet	<i>Gateshead Cabinet</i> , pp.5-6	-
379	Ye Mariners of England, A Naval Ode	Unknown	Thomas Campbell	1805-9	Book	Campbell, <i>Gertrude</i> , pp.101-3	-
380	Ye Sons of Old Ireland *	Ye Sons of Old Ireland	Anon	Post 1815	Unknown	Moylan, <i>Age of Revolution</i> , p.151	2357
381	Young Edward Slain at Waterloo	Garland of Love	Thomas Wilson	c.1815	Broadside	Harland, <i>Songs</i> , pp.29-31	-
382	The Young King of Rome	The Conjuror	Anon	1811	Broadside	Holloway & Black, ii, p.196	-

## Supplement to appendix

### Tracklisting

1. 'The Ploughman's Ditty' (Appendix no.277)
2. 'Bob Cranky's Adieu' (32)
3. 'Joan O'Grinfilt' (161)
4. 'The Sons of the Tyne, or, British Volunteers' (322)
5. 'Here's the Tender Coming' (144)
6. 'Bonny Light Horseman' (58)
7. 'Madam Boney the 2<sup>nd</sup>' (186)
8. 'Lord Wellington For Ever, Huzza!' (183)
9. 'Jenny's Complaint' (159)
10. 'Boney's Degradation' (52)
11. 'Fallen Boney' (121)
12. 'Eighteenth of June' (115)
13. 'Napoleon's Farewell' (208)
14. 'Isle of St Helena' (158)

These fourteen songs, arranged in approximately chronological order, may be found as mp3 files on the attached USB drive. The recording process aimed for a degree of authenticity – rough rather than polished – and this is intentionally reflected in the varying quality of the vocal performances. A blurring of genders of singers and narrative perspectives reflects both contemporary practice and the musicians available to me: it has not proved practical to employ specialised dialect singers. Where an instrumental accompaniment is provided on fiddle or guitar, both the quality of instrument chosen, and playing style, are intended to reflect contemporary usage. Technical details of individual songs follow overleaf.

**1. ‘The Ploughman’s Ditty’**

Vocal by Freyja Cox Jensen. A simple but enthusiastic rendering of a lyric ill-adapted to its stage tune: several verses struggle to scan.

**2. ‘Bob Cranky’s Adieu’**

Vocal and fiddle (plucked) by Freyja Cox Jensen. The melody would clearly tax an untrained singer; the lyrics increasingly fail to fit the meter of Dibdin’s melody. Here as with other dialect lyrics, an authentic accent has not been attempted, but the singer adapts her voice as far as is natural and reasonable to the appropriate regional tone.

**3. ‘Joan O’Grinfilt’**

Vocal by Emma Whipday. Guitar by Oskar Cox Jensen. The melody, almost lullaby-like in its sweetness, is well matched by the lyric.

**4. ‘The Sons of the Tyne, or, British Volunteers’**

Vocal by Graham Head and crowd. Although this is one of the better attempts to fit lyrics to ‘Hearts of Oak’, the singers still demonstrably struggle over certain verses. The recording experience brings home that communal rendition, influenced by drink, is often far more satisfying to the singers than an audience. Though listeners may take nothing from this track, the participants experienced a palpable bond.

**5. ‘Here’s the Tender Coming’**

Vocal by Emma Whipday. Achingly sentimental in both tune and lyric, to the extent that a modern listener may find its phrasings cloying.

**6. ‘Bonny Light Horseman’**

Vocal by Freyja Cox Jensen. With a tune this old and well-known, melodic variants have emerged that subtly alter the central ‘skeleton’, especially in the chorus: the singer here performs a composite and somewhat idiosyncratic version that seeks to eschew any influences that have crept in from country and blues renderings.

**7. ‘Madam Boney the 2<sup>nd</sup>’**

Vocal by Freyja Cox Jensen and crowd. Those songs featuring a ‘crowd’ aim to recreate something of the ambience of a live performance in contemporary context: this is the most enthusiastically acted, playing up to comic qualities in the lyric. Repeatedly, the lyricist has struggled with the central lines of the verse, resulting in awkward, jarring rhythms that cause the singer real problems.

**8. ‘Lord Wellington For Ever, Huzza!’**

Vocal by Oskar Cox Jensen and crowd. This is a less extreme example of the same phenomenon – a few lines fail to scan – but the familiar tune is strong enough to survive any missteps by the unskilled singer.

**9. ‘Jenny’s Complaint’**

Vocal by Freyja Cox Jensen. Guitar by Oskar Cox Jensen. A beautifully matched tune and lyric, heavy on pathos.

**10. ‘Boney’s Degradation’**

Vocal and guitar by Oskar Cox Jensen. This is the most serious instance of a lyric compromising the qualities of the tune, resulting in a fumbling and somewhat lacklustre delivery. I suggest searching out performances of ‘Maggie Lauder’ in its own right to hear what might have been.

**11. ‘Fallen Boney’**

Vocal by Freyja Cox Jensen. Again, it is clear that the lyricist lacks proficiency in pairing his words to even this simple tune, resulting in problems not only of meter, but pacing and breathing. It proved impossible to record the song in one take, as the incongruity repeatedly baffled the singer at some stage.

**12. ‘Eighteenth of June’**

Vocal and guitar by Oskar Cox Jensen. A slow, haunting tune. Even if inexpertly delivered, it is clear that words and music suit each other well.

**13. ‘Napoleon’s Farewell’**

Vocal by Freyja Cox Jensen. Even Byron does not completely convince in following the rhythms of Campbell’s ‘The Wounded Hussar’, but the extremely powerful and beautiful tune is slow and spacious enough to allow for improvisation and extension of certain phrases. Note the peculiarly taxing accidentals in the fifth line of each verse: this was one for the specialised ballad singer, not the part-time beggar.

**14. ‘Isle of St Helena’**

Vocal by Oskar Cox Jensen and Emma Whipday. Guitar by Oskar Cox Jensen. Simple and mournful, tune and lyric are in perfect harmony. Notably, the singers are not: there is no evidence of ballad singers harmonising in this period, thus, though tempting, this performance is restricted to alternation and unison.

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Inverted commas around a name indicate a pseudonymous author.

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*Gentleman's Magazine*

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