



Alan Francis

LAST YEAR'S LOVE

Lyrics and Notes

As I progressed with writing these lyrics and notes, it became apparent that there was no way that they would fit into a standard CD insert unless rendered in 2pt print, and there is not a lot of point in printing them that small! Perhaps if I had laid down less than fifteen tracks it would have been easier!

Then I had this idea of putting them in a .PDF file and making them available on the Internet. If anyone is interested in the lyrics of the songs on my CD, and my accompanying jottings, they are here for you to peruse, download or print. For those less familiar with Adobe Acrobat, all you have to do to read this online is to scroll through the sixteen pages. With two exceptions, all the lyrics are shown one song to a page with associated notes, so that any individual song may be printed out.

To save the file to your computer, click on the  icon on the Acrobat Menu Bar, choose a directory or folder, and save in the usual way. To print the file, click on the  icon on the Menu Bar to send it straight to your printer (you will need 16 sheets of paper to print it all), or, if your printer software permits it, you can print it double-sided or select individual pages.

I would appreciate any comments to my email address alan@folkmusic.org.uk

ALAN FRANCIS JUNE 2003 (Cover photo: "Meadow - le Chaiseau" AF)

(1) LAST YEAR'S LOVE

Summer, autumn, winter, spring
All these days I've been without you
And though the nightingale sings
To the dew-drenched rose about you
I know you're gone and I'm alone

I still remember April days
Sheltered twilights, lovers' season
But autumn winds took you away
Smote the trees with melancholy
And the leaves fell down from a bitter sky

Spring returns and life goes on
Trees go wild in new attire
Sun returns and butterflies
Flash their wings down shady lanes
But there's no return for a lover's dream

And now when summer skies are bay
In the glow of moonlight showers
I ask the dew-drenched leaves if they
Could echo back those happy hours
But no, this spring is for other loves
Forget her now, she's last year's love

Although I search for this spring's love
My heart still longs for other Aprils
And though I play the mating game
I see her face behind their faces
And I still long for last year's love
I still long for last year's love

One of my favourite love songs which I have now been singing for almost 40 years, but which is nonetheless a source of frustration to me, because I cannot credit it's writer, for the following reason.

Way back in 1964, when Rhodesia had just declared UDI from Britain, I had a friend called Bill Keats, who had come over from Bulawayo to stay with his aunt, who lived just up the road from me in Brightlingsea. With him he had brought some records of Rhodesian and South African music, including an album by a Rhodesian singer whose name has now faded from my memory. This song came from that album and, sad to say, I have no idea who wrote it and all my efforts to trace the composer have failed. If Bill, or anyone else who knows the songwriter, ever gets to hear this and can put me in touch with him, I'll happily pay any royalties he is due.

By way of a clue, I remember other tracks on the album as being "Shangani Patrol" , "The UDI Song" and a song about gold mining in Johannesburg. Well, you know what they say about the sixties - if you can remember every detail about them, you weren't enjoying yourself enough!

GUITAR: Martin D18

KEY: Cm (Am capo 3rd fret EADGBE)

(2) VAMPIRE RAG
Milner/Hart/Francis (Essex Music) MCPS

Back in good old Transylvania, many, many years ago
The living dead devised a dance to keep their spirits low
And so from grave to midnight rave their remains and chains they'd drag
To be on the ball at Dracula Hall for the start of the Vampire Rag

The Count and all his blood relations gathered to propose a toast
"May Peter Cushing break a leg, and the Devil take the Holy Ghost"
And with this oath the Count he quoth, "Dear friends, now let us rise
And dance away 'til the break of day, 'cos we need the exorcise!"

Just as the church clock struck thirteen and the blood began to flow
For party games the guests were split into groups A, B and O
Then all the guests they held their breath as a scream did rend the air
But it was just some fool of a loose-living ghoul necking on the stair

At party games our gruesome guests really knew where it was at
And the vampires' cricket team lined up waiting for their turn to bat
The barbecue was run by Blue, the Monster from the Lake
As they all ran out, they could hear him shout "How do you like your steak?"

But gruesome flings like all good things are seldom here to stay
And by the dawn they all were gone or safely laid away
So if you pass a lonely house and hear an unholy din
Don't stop and ring to see what's happening, or they might invite you in!

In October 1968, I quit my job in Clacton and set off for London in search of fortune and fame. My first lodgings were in a rather grotty flat over Fulham Pianos in Fulham Road, SW, where the inhabitants, Mike Milner, Clare Hart (later Mrs Milner) and John Haddon kindly allowed me floorspace for my sleeping bag in return for a bit of cooking and a contribution to costs. While I was staying in this otherwise rent-free accommodation, Mike and Clare wrote this song. Both were brilliant guitarists, and they had a middle section instrumental that was way beyond my capabilities then (and probably now). Omitting this section made the whole thing a bit on the short side, so I wrote another verse. See if you can guess which it was.

Mike and Clare, later to operate under the name "Michael Clare", were superb musicians and songwriters. I have a tape of them performing "Alice through the Looking Glass" and an instrumental "Guinevere's Wedding", the latter being the tune to which my wife processed down the aisle at our wedding. But that is another story....

The fate of Mike and Clare is a mystery to me, suffice to say that they never received the rewards that their talents deserved, like so many others (sigh!).

GUITAR: Martin D18
KEY: Am (EADGBE)

(3) WHAT'S THE USE OF WINGS

Brian Bedford (Bedspring Music) MCPS

I could have been a giant, said the bonsai tree
But someone bound my roots and held me down
I could have reached the heavens, said the snowy owl
But they clipped my wings and kept me on the ground
I think I heard them tell me they loved me
They'd care for me, without them I would die
What's the use of roots if you can't spread them
What's the use of wings if you can't fly

I could have been a singer, said the mynah bird
But they caged me and they told me what to say
I could have run forever, said the pony
But they bridled me and made me go their way
I think I heard them tell me they loved me
They'd care for me forever, so it seemed
What's the use of voices without freedom
What's the use of living others' dreams

Why do people cage those things they love the most
Is it simply that they fear to be alone
If you give your love its freedom it will stay awhile
If it leaves you it was never yours to own

I could have found adventure, said the angel fish
Now my world's so small there's nowhere I can go
I could have ruled a kingdom, said the lion
But this land inside my head is all I know
I think I heard them tell me they loved me
They'd care for me and it would be all right
What's the use of life without adventure
What's the use of strength if you can't fight

Why do people cage those things they love the most
Is it simply that they fear to be alone
If you give your love its freedom it will stay awhile
If it leaves you it was never yours to own

I think I heard them tell me they loved me
They'd care for me, without them I would die
What's the use of roots if you can't spread them
What's the use of wings if you can't fly

Brian Bedford is a member of Artisan, one of my favourite a capella groups, and a fine songwriter. This song was composed quite early in his career, and has been a favourite of mine for a number of years. I hope that he will approve of my non a capella rendition. If I get away with this one, there are other songs he has written that I would like to try.

GUITAR: Washburn WG2S

KEY: D (EADGBE)

(4) LISTEN TO THE OCEAN
Frederick, Baron van Pallandt MCPS

There's a land of sun and sand
Full of sea and far from land
Where evening breezes caress the shore
With a gentle comforting hand

Fragrant blossoms, honey bees
Careless laughter wafted on the breeze
And lovers fade into pools of deep purple
Shadows among the trees

Listen to the Ocean, echoes of a million seashells.
Forever it's in motion
Moving to a rhythmic and unwritten music that's played eternally

The sound of a seagull's distant cry
His wings like parentheses drawn in the sky
And two small birds, clinging like foam
To the crest of a wave rolling by

The silence of noon, the clamour of night
The heat of a day when the fish won't bite
These are the things that remind me of
The day you sailed out of sight

Listen to the Ocean, echoes of a million seashells.
Forever it's in motion
Moving to a rhythmic and unwritten music that's played eternally

This song is pure nostalgia for me. It was a popular song by Nina & Frederick in the early 60s, which for some reason stuck in my memory. The reception it gets from those "of a certain age" (ie my own contemporaries) is often astonishing, even in otherwise heavily "Trad" clubs and sessions.

For me, if I close my eyes while I sing it, I am transported back in time to a breezy, warm summer's day with a teenaged me astride the sliding seat of a Hornet dinghy, creaming along on a three-sail reach across the Colne estuary. Stop the clock - I want to stay there!

Why does nobody sing anything even vaguely calypsoid these days? Discuss.

GITAR: Washburn Jumbo prototype (Japanese copy of a Gibson J200)
KEY: E flat (C capo 3rd fret EADGBE)

(5) A BALLAD FOR KATHERINE OF ARAGON
Charles Causley ; Tune - Mike Ball, Arranged by Alan Francis

As I walked down by the river, down by the frozen fen
I saw the grey cathedral with the eyes of a child of ten
O the railway arch is smoky as the Flying Scot goes by
And but for the Education Act go Jumper Cross and I

But war is a bitter bugle that all must learn to blow
And it didn't take long to stop the song in the dirty Italian snow
O war is a casual mistress and the world is her double bed
She has a few charms in her mechanised arms but you wake up and find yourself dead

The olive tree in winter casts her banner down
And the priest in white and scarlet comes up from the muddy town
O never more will Jumper watch the Flying Scot go by
His funeral knell was a six-inch shell singing across the sky

The Queen of Castile has a daughter who won't come home again
She lies in the grey cathedral under the arms of Spain
O the Queen of Castile has a daughter, torn out by the roots
Her lovely breast in a cold stone chest under the farmer's boots

Now I like a Spanish party and many o many's the day
That I've watched them swim as the night came dim in Algeciras Bay
O the high sierra was thunder and the seven-branched river of Spain
Came down to the sea to plunder the heart of the sailor again

O shall I leap in the river and knock upon paradise door
For a gunner of twenty-seven and a half and a queen of twenty-four
From the almond tree by the river I watch the sky with a groan
For Jumper and Kate are always out late and I lie here alone

In 1968, an Australian folksinger called Peter Parkhill turned up at the Troubadour, and sang this song. At the time I had only heard one other poem by Charles Causley set to music, Paul McNeill's version of "Nursery Rhyme of Innocence and Experience", which he recorded on his album "Traditionally at the Troubadour". This song, and Peter's version of "Timothy Winters" opened the floodgates for me. Both had been set to music by another Australian, Mike Ball, and they rapidly became part of my repertoire. I have continued to sing them ever since, adding a few touches of my own in the process. Before he went back to Oz, I also introduced Peter to my old friend, Alex Atterson, who, similarly inspired, went even further and included a handful of Causley poems, with tunes written by himself, on his album "Pushing the Business On".

Sad to say, neither Charles Causley nor Alex is with us any more, and it is some time since I heard anyone else sing a song based on a Causley poem. This is a great shame, because not only is he, in my opinion at least, one of the greatest English poets of the 20th Century, but he had the skill to write with rhyme and metre, which makes turning his poems into songs very straightforward. His imagery was always breathtaking, as can be seen here and in "Cowboy Song" (Track 9). The cathedral mentioned is that of Peterborough, which contains the grave of Katherine of Aragon and a memorial to Causley's friend "Jumper" Cross, who died in WW2. The "Flying Scot" train ran through Peterborough on its way from London to Scotland. A "party" is naval slang for a girl.

GUITAR: Washburn WG2S

KEY: C minor (Am capo 3rd fret EADGBE)

(6) Firing the Mauretania
From the singing of Colin (Redd) Sullivan

In nineteen hundred twenty four
Found myself in Liverpool on the floor
So I went to the Cunard office door
Got a job on the Mauretania

Chorus: Oh, firing the Mauretania
She surely is a slaver
To Hell with the Mauretania

The Mauretania's stokehold's a wonderful sight
Sixty-four fires a-burning bright
But you'll shovel coal from morning to night
A-firing the Mauretania

The coal was so hard and full of slate
And that's what got to the four-to-eight
It very soon wearied the four-to-eight
A-firing the Mauretania

The eight-to-twelve were much better men
But they were weary by half past ten
So tired and weary by half past ten
A-firing the Mauretania

The fan's on the bum and fire won't draw
And that's what got to the twelve-to-four
It very soon buggered the twelve-to-four
A-firing the Mauretania

So come all you stokers, listen to me
The Mauretania spells purgatory
Stick to the coast, don't go deep sea
A-firing the Mauretania

Colin Sullivan, universally known as "Redd", was, with his singing partner Martin Winsor, the host of the Troubadour in Earls Court for most of the 1960's. He was a folksinger with a wide repertoire from Delta Blues to music hall songs. His rendition of "I Live in Trafalgar Square", complete with actions describing the "fountains and statues", lives permanently in the memory of all who witnessed it. He encouraged me in my folksinging, engaged me as accompanist when Martin was not available, and frequently slept on the back seat of my old Ford Consul on the way to and from gigs. But for him, I probably would not have persevered, and this record would never have been made.

This song is the only ocean liner shanty I know of, and was a standard warmup number at the Troub. It can also be found on Redd and Martin's "Troubadour" album, which has long been deleted, but turns up on eBay and elsewhere from time to time.

UNACCOMPANIED (Save for "Cathedral" electronic reverb, which was the nearest Steve could find to "Mauretania stokehold reverb"!)

(7) SONG
From Little Giddings (The Four Quartets)
T.S. Eliot ; Tune - Alan Francis

Ash on an old man's sleeve
Is all the ash the burnt roses leave
Dust in the air suspended
Marks the place where a story ended.
Dust inbreathed was a house –
The wall, the wainscot and the mouse
The death of hope and despair
This is the death of air

There are flood and drouth
Over the eyes and in the mouth
Dead water and dead sand
Contending for the upper hand
The parched eviscerate soil
Gapes at the vanity of toil
Laughs without mirth
This is the death of earth

Water and fire succeed
The town, the pasture and the weed
Water and fire deride
The sacrifice that we denied
Water and fire shall rot
The marred foundations we forgot
Of sanctuary and choir
This is the death of water and fire
The death of water and fire

One drunken night long ago, in a West London Folk Club colloquially known as "The Booze Droop", I confided in the resident there, a gangling chap called Rick Wakeman who was in the process of becoming a Strawb, an ambitious project I had. The plan was to set T S Eliot's Four Quartets to music. If you know the work at all, you will realise that this was chutzpah to the power of n.

Rick said that he had thought of doing the same. "OK, I'll race you!" I slurred, drunkenly. Despite the fact that this fragment is as far as I got, I think I won by default, because Rick hasn't yet delivered anything, as far as I know. Apart, that is, from all the success that he has had with the Strawbs, Yes and his other musical adventures.

GUITAR: Washburn WG2S
KEY: F (D capo 3rd fret, EADGBE)

(8) OUTWARD BOUND

Tom Paxton (Cherry River Music/ASCAP) MCPS

Outward bound, upon a ship that sails no ocean, outward bound,
It has no crew but me and you. All alone,
When just a minute ago the shore was filled with people,
With people that we knew.

Outward bound, upon a journey with no ending, outward bound,
Uncharted waters beneath our bows. Far behind,
The green familiar shore is fading into time,
And time has left us now.

So farewell, adieu, so long, vaya con dios,
May they find whatever they are looking for.
Remember when the wine was better than ever again,
We could not ask, we could not ask for more.

Outward bound, upon a ship with tattered sail, outward bound,
Along a crooked lonesome trail. Things we learned,
We'll just be satisfied in knowing,
And we'll tell it to our kids as a fairy tale.

So farewell, adieu, so long, vaya con dios,
May they find whatever they are looking for.
Remember when the wine was better than ever again,
We could not ask, we could not ask for more.

Tom Paxton will, if there is any justice at all, go down in musical history as one of the finest singer-songwriters of the 20th Century. This song, and "Hold on to Me, Babe" (Track 11), are less well-known than "Last Thing on my Mind", "My Lady's a Wild Flying Dove", "Bound for the Mountains and the Sea", "Jimmy Newman" or any of his other countless minor masterpieces, which is my excuse for including them here.

He came from the same New York coffee bar circuit as Bob Dylan, Dave van Ronk and Phil Ochs, but has always been more accessible than most of his contemporaries. He's still with us, still singing in folk clubs, and still writing songs that can be often beautiful, frequently funny and sometimes downright scurrilous.

He once borrowed the D18 I am playing here when he turned up at the Troubadour, unannounced and guitarless, one Saturday night in 1970. I was tongue-tied (meeting with one's heroes does that) and my guitar got so swollen-headed when he complimented it that I had trouble getting it back into its case!

GUITAR: Martin D18

KEY: E (D capo 2nd fret, EADGBE)

(9) COWBOY SONG

Charles Causley ; Tune - Traditional American Arranged by Alan Francis

I come from Salem County
Where the silver melons grow
Where the wheat is sweet as an angel's feet
And the zithering zephyrs blow
I walk the blue bone-orchard
In the apple-blossom snow
When the teasy bees take their honeyed ease
And the marmalade moon hangs low

My Maw sleeps prone on the prairie
In a boulder eiderdown
Where the pickled stars in their little jam jars
Hang in a hoop to town
I haven't seen Paw since a Sunday
In eighteen seventy-three
When he packed his snap in a bitty mess-trap
And said he'd be home by tea

Fled is my flighty sister
All weeping like a willow
And dead is the brother that I loved like no other
Who once did share my pillow
I fly the florid water
Where run the seven geese round
O the townsfolk talk to see me walk
Six inches off the ground

Across the map of midnight
I trawl the turning sky
In my green glass the salt fleets pass
The moon her fire-float by
The girls go gay in the valley
When the boys come down from the farm
Don't run, my joy, from a poor cowboy
I won't do you no harm

The bread of my twentieth birthday
I buttered with the sun
Though I sharpen my eyes with lovers' lies
I'll never see twenty-one
Light is my shirt with lilies
And lined with lead my hood
On my face as I pass is a plate of brass
And my suit is made of wood

[Repeat 1st Verse]

Another poem by Charles Causley. I had numerous attempts to set it to music over the years, but came up with no satisfactory arrangement until recently, when I realised that the metre was the same as the "Willow Garden"/"Lily of the West"/"Lakes of Pontchartrain" group. I tried it with each tune in turn and settled on this modification to Rambling Jack Elliot's "Willow Garden".

GUIAR: Martin D18 KEY: Eflat (C capo 3rd fret EADGBE)



**Picture of Leadbelly
from a limited-edition
print by Derek Piliotis**

Now it just so happens
that Derek and I have a
few of these prints left
for sale at £30 each.
If interested, contact me.
AF

(10) HOUSE OF THE RISING SUN Traditional Arranged Alan Francis

I really do not believe that anyone who is likely to listen to this will not already know the words to this song!

However, I postulate an alternative universe, where, instead of the version recorded by the Animals back in 1964, something more along the lines of this had become popular.

Basically I was bored with the better-known version, and decided to go back to the song as sung by one of my early heroes, Huddie Ledbetter (aka Leadbelly). This is not quite the same as his, but I have three recordings of it by Leadbelly, and they are all different, so I don't really care.

I've tried to capture some of the drive and rawness of Leadbelly - as Steve said when we recorded it, "Wow, that ROCKS!"

GUITAR: Martin DM12
KEY: D DADGBE

OK, the Martin 12-string is nowhere near as raw as an old Stella, but it is a lot noisier, and a damned sight easier to tune!

(11) HOLD ON TO ME BABE

Tom Paxton (*Cherry River Music/ASCAP*) MCPS

As my aching head is begging for a sleep that will not come
I rise and walk the morning streets again
I keep wondering how you're doing and I wonder where you are
And I know I'll be all right, but I don't know when

Hold onto me, babe, wherever you may be
Hold onto me, babe, I'm with you always

There was something locked inside you like a secret burning pain
In a prison where you would not let me go
I was sure we'd find an answer, til I woke and found you gone
Now just what it was, I guess I'll never know

Hold onto me, babe, wherever you may be
Hold onto me, babe, I'm with you always

I keep hanging onto something, but I don't know what it is
But at least I know the sound of my own name
And I work as hard as ever and I see the same old friends
But there's something deep inside that ain't the same

Hold onto me, babe, wherever you may be
Hold onto me, babe, I'm with you always

GUITAR: Martin D18 KEY: Bflat (G capo 3rd Fret EADGBE)

(12) KING OF SPAIN
Paul McNeill / Alan Francis

I dreamed I was the King of Spain,
Seated on my golden throne
When the wild barbarians came
Clothed in skins with knives of bone
Ringing bells, their faces hard as stone

Kyrie Eleison, Kyrie Eleison

I dreamed that in the market place
Flames were licking round my feet
And their fingers touched my soul
Caressed my body with their heat
I raised my voice and cried out "Death is sweet"

Christe Eleison, Christe Eleison

There I hung upon a hill
Like a thief for all to see
And to my tormentors I cried
"Before my God, I pity thee"
I raised my voice and set my spirit free

Eloi Lama Sabachthane, Eloi Lama Sabachthane

I dreamed I was the King of Spain,
Seated on my golden throne
When the wild barbarians came
Clothed in skins with knives of bone
Ringing bells, their faces were my own

Eloi Lama Sabachthane, Christe Eleison
Eloi Lama Sabachthane, Kyrie Eleison

Paul McNeill was another who encouraged me in my early folksinging endeavours, and started my lifelong passion for Martin guitars. He was one of the first professional singers that I met, when he played at Clacton Folk Club in 1966. His 1965 album for Decca is now a collectors' item, and with good reason. While I was living in London, he often took advantage of my me and my old Consul for transport to gigs, and I got to know him well. During his brief partnership with Linda Peters (later Linda Thompson), I continued to act as occasional roadie and was one of the residents with them at the Tuesday night sessions at the Troubadour. He handed over the Troubadour sessions to Alex Norton and myself in 1970, and I lost touch with him for a while. The last time I met him he was living rough, and his decline was sad to see. According to a mutual acquaintance, he died of cancer in Sweden in 1984, having spent the intervening years bumming around Europe busking and living a hand-to-mouth existence. A sad waste of a genuine talent. I cannot honestly remember the genesis of this song, nor yet exactly what inspired it, save that Paul and I spent an afternoon under the influence of some controlled substance or another and this song was the result. I recall that I had more influence on the choruses than the verses. The words of the choruses are from Christian Prayers and the Bible and are in Greek (Lord/Christ have mercy) and Aramaic (My God, why have you forsaken me?). A strange song, but then

GUITAR: Martin DM12
KEY: Am EADGBE

(13) GREY FUNNEL LINE

Cyril Tawney (Dick James Music) MCPS

Don't mind the wind nor the rolling sea
The weary night never worries me
But the hardest time in a sailor's day
Is to watch the sun as it fades away

It's one more day on the Grey Funnel Line

The finest ship that sails the sea
Is still a prison for the likes of me
But give me wings like Noah's dove
I'd fly up harbour to the one I love

It's one more day on the Grey Funnel Line

There was a time my heart was free
Like a floating spar on the open sea
But now that spar is washed ashore
And comes to rest at my true love's door.

It's one more day on the Grey Funnel Line

Each time I gaze behind the screws
It makes me long for St Peter's shoes
I'd walk on down that silver lane
And take my love in my arms again

It's one more day on the Grey Funnel Line

Oh Lord, if dreams were only real
I'd have my hands on that wooden wheel
With all my heart I would turn her 'round
And tell the boys that we're homeward bound

It's one more day on the Grey Funnel Line

I'll pass the time like some machine
Until blue water turns to green
Then I'll dance down that Walker Shore
And sail the Grey Funnel Line no more

And sail the Grey Funnel Line no more

Cyril Tawney is one of the many British folksingers who have not really received the recognition that they deserve. The songwriter of "Sally, Free and Easy", "Chicken on a Raft", "Five Foot Flirt" and this song, to mention but a few, would have been a millionaire had he been born in the US, instead he continues to play the folk clubs for peanuts. Fortunately he is still with us, and long may he flourish. Go and see him whenever you get the opportunity, he is original, entertaining and charming with it.

The "Grey Funnel Line" is the Royal Navy, and, as Cyril is a former RN seaman, he knows that of which he writes. I thought I'd include all the verses, which many who sing it don't.

GUITAR: Martin D18

Key: F (D capo 3rd fret DADGBD)

(14) I LIVE NOT WHERE I LOVE

Lyrics attributed to Martin Parker 1640, Tune Traditional Arranged by Alan Francis

Loyal lovers, that are distant
From your sweethearts, many a mile,
Pray come and help me at this instant
In mirth to spend away the while
Singing sweetly and completely
In commendation of my love
Resolving ever to part never
Though I live not where I love

My constancy shall ne'er be failing
Whatso'er betide me here,
Of her virtue I'll be telling
Be my bidding far or near
And though blind fortune prove uncertain
From her presence me to remove
Yet I'll be constant every instant
Though I live not where I love

Though our bodies thus are parted,
And asunder many a mile,
Yet I vow to be true-hearted
And be faithful all the while.
Though with mine eye I cannot spy
For distance great my dearest love,
My heart is with her all together
Though I live not where I love

The birds shall leave their airy region
The fishes in the air shall fly,
All the world shall be of one religion
All living things shall cease to die
All things shall change to shapes most strange,
Before that I disloyal prove,
Or any way my love decay,
Though I live not where I love

Why this particular 17th Century lute song should have survived in the English Folk tradition when so many others vanished altogether or continued to lurk only in the arcane world of Early Music is something of a mystery. I first came across it on an early Tim Hart and Maddie Prior album and in a folksong collection called "Marrowbones". Then, in 1970 or thereabouts, Derek Brimstone began to include it in his act, and was kind enough to take the time to teach me the accompaniment that he used. Since then it has turned up on albums by Mary Black and Linda Thompson (see also Track 12), to name but two, and has become regarded as a ladies' song. When I decided to include it here I went back, using the invaluable online Digital Tradition and Bodleian Library databases, to find this set of words, which purports to be close to the original and is unashamedly masculine in orientation. I think that it's an interesting variation, and, since the tune has been another victim of my own private "Folk Process", I think I can honestly claim that this is sufficiently different to warrant inclusion. There is an even longer, more circumstantial, set of lyrics from a Broadside ballad of 1638 (attributed to Peter Lowberry), which claims to be sung "To a Northerne Tune Called Shall the absense of my Mistresse", but that was a bit **too** long!

GUITAR: Washburn WG2S

KEY: B flat (G capo 3rd Fret EADGBE)

(15) BEEN ON THE ROAD (SO LONG)

Alex Campbell (Coda Music, London (Essex Music)) MCPS

I've been on the road, So long
Been tired and cold, So long
I've been to the south
Where the winds they are warm
Travelling the road of no return
So long.

I've seen what was war, So long
The ruins and the scars, So long
The mansions of mud
The wounds and the blood
Seen the dying of all that was good
So long

The world's in a shroud, So long
A mushrooming cloud, So long
It's the lies and the greed
Of the leaders of men
Those cheats who would take us to war again
So long

Yet hope lives in me, So long
In the love that I see, So long
The courage and strength
Of a young man's smile
The faith that lives in a little child
So long

(Revised third verse by Alan Francis - March 2003)

Now the world lives in fear, So long
As the war-clouds draw near, So long
Fed by lies and the greed
Of the leaders of men
Those fools who would take us to war again
So long

Alex Campbell was a huge influence on me, as on many folksingers of my generation. He was the original, the boss, the larger than life singer, entertainer and busker; a hard-drinking, hard-living Glaswegian, but one of the most genuine men I have ever met. Even on the odd occasions when he showed up at a gig totally plastered, it was easy to forgive him. When he was on form, he could work an audience better than anyone else I have ever known. The last time I saw him was when I booked him at the Folk Club I was running in Bishop's Stortford in 1981 - his 25th year on the road, by which time his hands were racked with arthritis and his voice was going, but it was still worth "pulling a sickie" to spend the day with him, listening to his tales and swapping songs. When he died of throat cancer in Denmark in 1987, we lost a tremendous and irreplaceable character and one of the founders of the British folk revival. This is his best-known song, which he used to deliver somewhere between a growl and a holler. I modified the third verse in the spring of 2003 to express my distaste for the build-up to the Iraq invasion. I think he might have approved.

GUITAR: Martin D18

KEY : E (D capo 2nd fret DADGBD)

POSTSCRIPT

Since I am not known as a singer/songwriter, although I have managed the odd composition in my time, the songs and most of the lyrics included here are all provided by others. There are two poems that I have set to music, and many of the songs have been modified by my own personal version of the "Folk Process" as I have sung them over the years.

I have included details of the instruments played, the keys and the tunings used, because I am aware that there are a number of people who, like me, find this information of interest. The guitar details are there because I am a self-confessed guitar nerd, and I see others of the same inclination as part of my potential market! As many of the songs are seldom sung or played other than by myself, and not available elsewhere on record, tape or CD, the availability of the lyrics and keys might encourage others to try them. I hope so, the arrangements are all pretty simple and straightforward. I will provide chord progressions and/or tablature in due course if there is sufficient demand.

I was horrified to realise just how many of the folksingers that I mention as sources or influences in these notes have winged their way prematurely to the great session in the sky. I can only hope that they in this can be remembered, even if only for a moment, so:

In Memoriam

Alex Atterson, Alex Campbell, Charles Causley, Paul McNeill, Phil Ochs, Frederick van Pallandt, Redd Sullivan, Martin Winsor

In Addition

Where are you now? Bill Keats, Mike Milner, Clare Hart-Milner, John Haddon

With grateful thanks for their assistance, inspiration and/or personal genius to:

Brian Bedford, Derek Brimstone, Peter Parkhill, Tom Paxton, Cyril Tawney and, especially for his help with this CD, Steve Tsoi

I dedicated an earlier recording I made ("Contrasts" 1975) to my wife and first child. This I dedicate to my wife, Elizabeth, who has been my soulmate, prime encourager, roadie and factotum for the past 35 years; to my daughters, Jenny and Meg, who had the fortitude to endure an unfashionably folkie father and more sense than to try to follow in his footsteps, and to everyone who has ever applauded my efforts to entertain with songs and tunes played on a guitar or any other instrument.

ALAN FRANCIS JUNE 2003



1973



1982



2003

"... and sing about the pictures that I play of Changes" (Phil Ochs)

Photos by
Harald Weisker (73),
John Humphris (82) and
Elizabeth Francis (2003)