

# The More You Think it Changes....

John Clachan & Friends

## The More You Think it Changes....

- 1 Too Little, Too Late? (3.25)
- 2 Folk Heroes of Old (3.39)
- 3 Hallsands (4.30)
- 4 The Pickpocket (3.26)
- 5 Fools' Gold (4.40)
- 6 The Weatherman (3.54)
- 7 The Midsummer Solstice Ball (4.02)
- 8 South Georgia Refrain (4.19)
- 9 She'll Never Get Married Again (3.26)
- 10 East Australia (3.45)
- 11 King John's Reputation (4.38)
- 12 Living Hand to Mouth\* (4.35)
- 13 The More You Think it Changes\* (4.52)

All songs written by J & C Clachan except those marked with an asterisk (\*) which were written by John Clachan.

For more songs, videos and information visit  
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## The More You Think it Changes....

There is no theme to the songs on this CD.... just a desire to play some of them in a 'folk rock' style but others with a more 'traditional folk' feel, and to juxtapose the two styles; my inspiration being some of the early Fairport Convention and Steeleye Span albums that had such an influence on me so many years ago.

With a number of the songs requiring a fuller production, it was great to have Dave, Mark and Ronnie on board again to help me achieve this. They've really helped to create a diverse mix of sounds, particularly with the introduction of Mark's electric guitar which I think combines really well with Dave's accordion.

I hope you enjoy listening to the songs and music as much as we have enjoyed recording them.

John Clachan - December 2022

## 1 - Too Little, Too Late?

Concerns about the effect of global warming are at last concentrating many minds on ways of tackling the problem and I found myself wondering whether these efforts are going to prove to be too little, too late for the planet.

The song isn't meant to be all doom and gloom, just posing the question 'Are we doing too little, too late?'. It reached the semi-finals of the 2021 UK Songwriting Contest in the 'Crisis Songs' category - much to our surprise!

F Bb F  
In the past we built windmills and watermills too,  
Bb C F  
Very few are left standing intact.  
F Bb F  
Now renewable energy sources accrue,  
F C  
The oil industry doesn't like that!  
F C  
But there's a deadline, Earth has a lifeline,  
F Bb  
And we haven't much longer to wait.....  
F Bb F  
If they stick to the rules, there'll be no fossil fuels,  
Bb C Dm Am/C/F  
Don't make it too little, too late. x2

C F  
 Chorus - So look with your eyes, there's no big disguise,  
Am Bb  
 This world's in a desperate state.  
F Bb F  
 Small steps on the ground steer the juggernaut round,  
Bb C Dm Am/C/F  
 Don't make them too little, too late. x2

A 'no fishing' zone can save marine life,  
 Inland there are nature reserves.  
 Wetlands and heaths are in trouble and strife,  
 Protection's the least they deserve.  
 Diversity's critical, nothing political  
 Ever comes 'served on a plate'.....  
 To build a strong base, each brick has its place,  
 Don't make it too little, too late. x2

For every tree planted we cut down a hundred  
 And forests are shrinking in size  
 But we know, if the lungs of our planet are Sundered,  
 This folly is surely unwise.  
 Our leaders, who guide us, make speeches to chide us  
 But actions speak louder than words.....  
 There's a world to be saved, it's time to engage  
 Then it won't be too little, too late. x2

## 2 - Folk Heroes of Old

When thinking about some of our so called 'folk heroes' from the past, it occurred to me that the stories should probably be treated with more than just a pinch of salt. These 'heroes' were more likely to have been rogues and villains in real life - that's if they existed at all of course!

Intro - C / F / G / C

C F G C  
 Tales were told with relish of our folk heroes of old.  
C F G C  
 Handed down through centuries, those stories still get told  
C F G C  
 But, like a game of whispers, the legends grew and grew  
C F G C  
 And now no-one can really tell what's false and what is true!

Near the town of Nottingham, a band of men in green  
 Lived deep in Sherwood Forest to keep from being seen.  
 According to the Sheriff they were outlaws, rogues and thieves  
 But if you heed the legend this is not what you'd believe.

G F C  
 Chorus - They stole from the rich and gave back to the poor -  
G F C / C7  
 I don't think many crooks and thieves do that any more  
C F G C  
 And I can't see how this policy put food upon the table.  
C F G C  
 As stories go, these folk heroes are just the stuff of fable.

Dick Turpin was a highwayman, his horse was called Black Bess.  
 'Stand and deliver' was the mode of his address.  
 He only stole from rich men, which comes as no surprise,  
 As taking gold from beggars is no paying enterprise!

Tales were told with relish of our folk heroes of old.  
 Handed down through centuries, those stories still get told  
 But these altruistic characters are feted out of scale.  
 In reality our heroes would get caught and thrown in jail!

### 3 - Hallsands

I had a vague recollection of reading about a village on the east coast of Norfolk, called Hallsands, which was now under water as a result of rising sea levels. When I started to write the song and research its history, I discovered that Hallsands had actually been a village on the south coast of Devon with its own tragic story to tell. So, I changed the tale but was able to keep the title!

D A  
 On the wild south coast of Devon a village used to stand,  
A A7 D  
 Housing many fishermen, homes clinging to the land.  
D A  
 Corruption and deception led them to despair  
Em G A  
 When human greed destroyed their lives and no-one seemed to care.

To expand the Plymouth dockyard, men drew up mighty plans  
Em G A  
 And from the beach at Hallsands dredging shingle soon began.  
 Sixteen hundred tons a day were removed and not replaced  
 And, despite the local warnings, the coastline was defaced.

D G  
 Chorus - And they told them and they warned them  
G A  
 There would be a price to pay.  
D G  
 They told them and they warned them  
G D A D G/D/A/D  
 But pleas will fall on deaf ears when money's to be made.

(Chords as 1<sup>st</sup> verse)

Thirty-seven houses and a pub, 'The London Inn';  
 This small, tight-knit community watched the work begin  
 And when the crabbing fishermen returned from work each day,  
 They saw their beach protection slowly stripped away.

(Chords as 2<sup>nd</sup> verse)

On the twenty-sixth of January nineteen seventeen,  
 The winter gales whipped up the waves, the highest ever seen.  
 Without the sand and shingle, the coastline broke away.  
 It left just one house standing in the first light of the day.

#### 4 - The Pickpocket

Sometimes it's nice to keep a song simple and light-hearted, which hopefully is what this imaginary 'Dickensian style' romp achieves.

F C F Bb C F  
 If I see a fat cat with a fine silk hat and fancy leather shoes on his feet,  
G C  
 I'll follow him down the street.

F C F Bb C F  
 If I see an old maid in a fine brocade, wearing necklace, brooch and ring,  
G C  
 'Stop thief' you'll hear her sing.

Bb F C Dm  
 Chorus - I blend in to the doorways, I never let a shadow fall,  
Bb F C F  
 And when it's least expected I cram my pockets full.

I enjoy a few refinements,  
 Like baccy and a glass of gin,  
 But for that I need more tin.  
 So I help myself to a silk 'cut' purse  
 And I keep a sharp look out  
 In case I hear the peelers shout!

Now I can't enjoy any paid employ  
'Cause they wouldn't ever let me shirk;  
I've never done a day's hard work!  
There are many honest ways to earn good pay;  
I suppose that I could try,  
You never know pigs might fly!

Well it seems unfair, all the money out there  
Is held by a privileged few,  
Why shouldn't I have some too?  
So I say beware, if you don't take care  
When you take your walks about,  
You'll find you'll share some out!

Now there's not much doubt that I'll get caught out,  
For I'm told crime doesn't pay  
And I suppose I'll rue that day.  
But until I do, here's a tip for you -  
If your fineries catch my eye,  
You can kiss them all goodbye!

## 5 - Fools' Gold

When I wrote this song, it was one of the few occasions when the tune (or at least the hook line) came first and inspired the song - normally, I write the lyrics and then create a tune afterwards.

Bb

The ancient footpath cuts its way through the lower Yukon hills.

Gb7

Bb

The pilgrims pass through daily, young and old.

D#

It's not spiritual salvation or forgiveness that they seek,

Bb

G#

Bb

The deity they're worshipping is gold.

F

D#

Chorus - There's gold up in the hills; the stream of men became a flood,

F

D#

They left their homes, their families, their souls.

Bb

They had visions of great riches but, in return for sweat and blood,

F

D#

Bb

Just how many made their fortune digging gold?

Word travelled like a bushfire that nuggets had been found.  
Small plots of land were quickly bought and sold.  
So many caught the fever and rushed to stake their claim,  
Then with picks and spades began to dig for gold.

Many journeyed on their own as there was no one they could trust.  
'Bring food to last a year' they were all told.  
'Keep watch for rogue claim jumpers, the lowest of the low,  
Never far away wherever there is gold'.

The gold rush brought in thousands who worked the arid land.  
Each night they camped and suffered freezing cold.  
Prospecting in the burning heat, when summer came around;  
They never gave up hope of finding gold.

The sound of picks and shovels echoed through the hills,  
There was no knowing how much dust the claims would hold.  
As the months turned into years, so many panned in vain  
And left their bodies lying with the gold.

## 6 - The Weatherman

With all the technology now available to the weather forecasting industry,  
it amazes me how inaccurate some of the forecasts can still be. I like the  
idea that old weather forecasting techniques may be just as useful (or  
useless!) as modern ones.

Intro/Fill/Outro

Em / D / C / D - Em / C / D / D  
Em / D / C / D - Em / C / D / Em

Em D Bm Em  
G D A  
I am an old weatherman who spends all his time

Checking out weathervanes, predicting the clime.

G Bm D A  
Though many will say, if you listen to me,

Em D Bm Em  
"Believe nothing you hear and only half what you see!"

When I feel in my bones a cold wind from the north,  
I will tell you that snowstorms might soon issue forth.  
Though many will say, if you listen to me,  
"Believe nothing you hear and only half what you see!"

On an east wind in Spring, Jack Frost may arrive;  
Some plants need protection to keep them alive.  
Though many will say, if you listen to me,  
“Believe nothing you hear and only half what you see!”

A warm breeze from the south may bring dust in the air,  
It's Saharan red sand and I'll tell you beware.  
Though many will say, if you listen to me,  
“Believe nothing you hear and only half what you see!”

Middle

C D G C D Em  
I've passed my experience on to you all with no gratitude all my life long.

C D G  
I've made my predictions from winter to fall  
Am C

But no-one remembers the times I'm proved right,  
C D  
Only the times that I'm wrong.

When I raise a wet finger to a westerly gale,  
I know rain for the garden will shortly prevail.  
Though many will say, if you listen to me,  
“Believe nothing you hear and only half what you see!”

I am an old weatherman and no one takes heed.  
When I tell my good wife an umbrella she'll need,  
She says “Here's what I'm told, if I listen to thee –  
Believe nothing I hear and only half what I see”.

## 7 - The Midsummer Solstice Ball

I played at barn dances for many years, with 'The Knock-Kneed Bumblebee Band', and I remember watching the dancers really enjoying themselves as they danced the night away. This song tries to transport the listener into that world of music and dance.

D#

It has seemed like a long time coming,

Cm

It's been such a long, long wait.

G# D#

There's a silver moon and it's deep in June

D# Bb

On the eve of the summer fete.

D#

The village folk are gathering,

Cm

All coming to take their chance.

G# D#

In ones and twos, with their dancing shoes,

Bb D#

They arrive for the solstice dance.



G# D#  
**Chorus 1** - When the local band starts playing  
Bb Cm  
 And the caller starts to call,  
G# D#  
 There's a mighty roar and a rush to the floor  
Bb D#  
 At the midsummer solstice ball.

In their glad rags and their fineries  
 Brought out for this summer night,  
 The reds, yellows and greens and in-betweens  
 Make such a colourful sight.  
 The dancers form a circle  
 And everyone joins in.  
 The intro. sounds, the drum beat pounds  
 And the solstice dance begins.

**Chorus 2** - As the air is filled with music  
 And they hear the caller call,  
 The dancers trip with a lively skip  
 At the midsummer solstice ball.

With a 'promenade your partner',  
 Then a 'left' and a 'right hand star',  
 Then a 'two hand swing' and 'form a ring';  
 What a glorious fracas.  
 Those around the dance floor,  
 Sat waiting for their chance,  
 Hope ale and beer bring courage near  
 And they'll soon be asked to dance.

**Chorus 3** - With the tempo quickly rising  
 To speed the caller's call,  
 The revellers swig and they dance and jig  
 At the midsummer solstice ball.

Many don't seem to recognise  
 Their left foot from their right  
 But some dance once and some dance twice,  
 While others dance all night.  
 And some might find a partner  
 To dance with all their days  
 And give thanks for the midsummer solstice ball  
 Forever and always.

**Chorus 4** - The midnight bell starts chiming  
 At the caller's final call.  
 Then 'the many' and 'the few' bid a fond adieu  
 To the midsummer solstice ball.

## 8 - South Georgia Refrain

Having watched a documentary on the South Atlantic Islands, I was shocked to see the remains of the 20<sup>th</sup> century whaling station on South Georgia. The industry had collapsed after the whales were virtually wiped out in the area. The sound of the wind whistling through the rusted relics reminded me of recordings I had heard of whale song, which stimulated the rather romantic idea that the wind was calling to the whales to let them know it was now safe to return.

Em D  
In the far South Atlantic a ghost town survives,  
C G  
A reminder of folly and greed,  
Em D  
On an island where penguins and albatross cry  
C G  
And elephant seals come to breed.  
Am F  
Though the whalers have gone and time has moved on,  
G D  
Their rusting equipment remains  
Am F  
And the ovens still stand, scarring the land,  
G D /A  
Proof to South Georgia's shame.

Chorus D G  
Now the harpoon guns are no more, the Antarctic wind sings as it rails  
A  
Through the wreckage that litters the shore.  
G /A D  
Will this mournful refrain..... call back the whales?  
There's an eerie evocative sound, as the icy cold wintry gales  
Whistle and echo around.  
Will this mournful refrain..... call back the whales?

In the bay lie the derelict factory ships,  
Abandoned when profits declined.  
With forty eight thousand leviathans killed,  
Such a sad inappropriate shrine.  
In sixty short years, as the whales disappeared,  
Their loss saw the industry fold.  
Now, in our own time, this terrible crime  
Still makes the blood run cold.  
  
Given time, in the waters surrounding the land,  
Ecology mends and repairs.  
Now cruises bring tourists who step on the sand,  
Concerned with their private affairs.  
They tour the enclave, visit Shackleton's grave,  
Take pictures of penguins and seals.  
Now, in the blue-green, a whale may be seen  
And they marvel how nature soon heals.

## 9 - She'll Never Get Married Again

In the early days of the Covid lockdown, I read that divorces and 'husband or wife' murders were expected to increase dramatically as people were thrown together for longer periods! Unsurprisingly, this article quickly stimulated a new song. If you like 'whodunits', see if you can second-guess the ending before the 3<sup>rd</sup> verse starts. At that point, I had no idea myself what the ending was going to be!

D            A        D                    G                    D  
I once knew a lady, a delicate sort, she had a complexion so pale.  
G    D                    E                    A  
Some say that her husbands were accident prone while some tell a different tale.  
D                    A        D                    G                    D  
Ten weddings and funerals passed in a blur, her bank balance grew in proportion.  
G    D                    E                    A  
The registrar pulled aside number eleven and whispered 'I recommend caution!'.  
Chorus 1  
G    D                    A                    D  
For one of her husbands fell down the stairs and one fell into the cellar.  
G                    D    E                    A  
One fell into the well in the dark, such a very unfortunate fella.  
G    D                    A                    D  
One fell from a ladder while mending the roof and one fell under a train.  
G    D                    A                    D  
Let's hope now she's married to number eleven she'll never get married again.

In view of such 'accidents', you'll understand,  
Insurance was quite hard to come by.  
But without compensation, the pecuniary sort,  
She'd have felt just a little hard done by.  
When number eleven succumbed to her charms,  
She made sure he had plenty of money.  
When she explained how her husbands had died,  
Well he laughed for he thought it quite funny.

### Chorus 2

That one of her husbands fell down the stairs and one fell into the cellar.  
One fell into the well in the dark, such a very unfortunate fella.  
One fell from a ladder while mending the roof and one fell under a train.  
But now that she's married to number eleven she'll never get married again.

The first thing he did was to fix the loose floorboard  
And tighten the banister rail.  
Each rung on the ladder he quickly replaced  
And he kept his eyes peeled without fail.  
He roughed up the slippery patio stones  
And tightened the floorboard once more,  
For he knew how these 'accidents' seemed to occur,  
Ten times he'd been married before!

### Chorus 3

One of his wives fell down the stairs and one slipped up heavily laden.  
One fell into the well in the dark, such a very unfortunate maiden.  
One fell from a ladder, not far from the truth, and one fell under a train.  
And now that he's married to number eleven she'll never get married again.

## 10 - East Australia

Having heard that some Australians are leaving their homeland these days, to come and settle in England for various reasons, I began to think about the song 'Will the Circle be Unbroken?' which, in turn, led to the writing of 'East Australia'. Captain Cook's arrival on Australian soil, in 1770, began a cycle of British settlement on that distant continent. The song reached the semi-finals of the 2021 UK Songwriting Contest in the 'Folk' category.

F Bb  
My name is Captain Cook. I've just mapped New Zealand's coast,

C Bb F  
Set the compass pointing west and made this solemn boast -

F Bb  
That if we keep fair weather and the wind should fill our sails,

C Bb C  
We'll discover East Australia and call it New South Wales.

Gm C F Bb  
Refrain - That if we keep fair weather and are not turned back by gales,  
F Bb C F Bb/F  
We'll discover East Australia and call it New South Wales.

My name is Alfred Birdwood and it's eighteen forty-eight.  
I stole four pairs of boots and a judge decreed my fate.  
He ordered transportation - "On the 'Eden' you must go".  
Now I'm bound for East Australia and in chains I'm held below.

Refrain - He ordered transportation, that devilish so and so.  
Now I'm bound for East Australia and in chains I'm held below.

My name is Arthur Goodman and it's nineteen fifty-five.  
With ten pounds in my savings bank, it's all that I require.  
For a new life of adventure, with a passport in my hand,  
I'm off to East Australia to settle in that land.

Refrain - I'll be a 'ten pound pom' and I'll tread those golden sands.  
I'm off to East Australia to settle in that land.

My name is Robin Goodman, I'm Arthur Goodman's son.  
I worry about the future, global warming has begun.  
I've seen droughts and raging bushfires and our forests burn like straw.  
So, I'm leaving East Australia for England's distant shore.

Refrain - We see the wheel keep turning, like a slow revolving door,  
Now he's leaving East Australia for England's distant shore.  
Repeat 1<sup>st</sup> verse only (not refrain)

## 11 - King John's Reputation

When reading 20<sup>th</sup> century accounts of the life of King John of England, they generally give his character very bad press. I was quite surprised to read that accounts of his life, written in Tudor times, gave him a far more positive write-up because, politically, it suited Tudor historians to do so. This made me start to question all conclusions that historians come to, as they might very well be prejudiced, albeit unknowingly, by current thinking.

Em                                      Bm  
King John's reputation is there for all to read -  
A                                      Em                                      D                      Em  
Quick tempered, spiteful, cowardly, his heart run through with terrible greed.  
Em                                      Bm  
In his lust for gold and power, he took more than his due.  
A                                      Em                                      D                      Em  
It's how the books describe him but how much of this is really true?

G                                      D  
Chorus - We're all in the hands of historians of the future  
F#m                                      A  
Who choose the facts to fit their points of view.  
G                                      D  
We're all in the hands of historians of the future,  
F#m                                      A                      Em/D    Em/D  
Amending to excuse or to accuse.

In Tudor times, it seems that John  
Was held in high esteem  
For he took a stand against the pope  
And held that a king should rule supreme.  
This suited Tudor monarchs  
And they closed their blinkered eyes  
To his multitude of vices  
That in other times would be decried.

Victorian historians  
Revised the Tudor view,  
They dwelt more on his character  
And a different story slowly grew.  
He offended all their principles,  
His morals they deplored,  
And any compensations  
Were cast aside to be ignored.

Today we shine another light  
Upon the facts we know  
And illuminate a different man  
Who ruled eight hundred years ago.  
King John's bad reputation  
Still remains without a doubt  
But we recognise the attributes  
That balance up his life's account.

## 12 - Living Hand to Mouth

Unfortunately, this song had to be left off my '65 Million BC to AD 1945' CD as I had too many songs for the project which dealt with our distant ancestors. By including it on this CD, it brings to a close that cycle of songs.

Am Em Am  
Oh, the winters turn much colder every year.  
Am F G C  
The snow and icy landscape bring a bleak and bitter fear.  
Am Em Am  
You might ask yourself how anyone survives  
Am F G C F/C  
Now that mother nature's threatening their short and bitter lives.

C F C  
Chorus - Oh, ancient man – there's an ice age on its way.  
C F G  
Oh, ancient man – it's adapt or fade away.  
Dm F G  
Oh, ancient man – will you stay or follow south?  
Dm F G C  
Ancient man, you've little choice when your living hand to mouth.

The food you eat keeps moving all the time.  
Your staple meat providers all migrate for better climes.  
As the ice encroaches from afar,  
You'll need all of your intelligence for staying where you are.

How to cultivate the land you wouldn't know.  
Anyway, in those cold temperatures there's little you could grow.  
No domesticated animals to kill.  
It's many thousand years ahead before you learn that skill.

There's one important thing that you require -  
A step towards survival, the mastery of fire.  
To leap from hominid to modern man,  
You must keep the embers burning - tip the balance if you can.

### 13 - The More You Think it Changes

People occasionally say to me that they've no interest in 'folk music' because the words of the songs have no relevance to today's living. I have to take issue with that and I decided to write a song proving that subject matters of the past are just as relevant today as they've always been.

A D  
I've been sitting thinking about the songs we used to sing  
A E E7  
Of farmers toiling in the fields and the harvests they brought in,  
A D  
Of sailors on the rolling sea and the work they undertook.  
A E E7 A  
You might think they're rooted in the past but take a second look.

A D  
Chorus - We still fish the sea, we still work the land.  
A E /E7  
We still use our heads, we still use our hands.  
A D  
We make bricks and mortar, many trades remain.  
A /E A  
The more you think it changes, the more it stays the same.

We still have thatched roof houses  
And for that we grow the reed.  
And while we still eat loaves of bread,  
We'll still grow wheat from seed.  
If we want our breakfast honey,  
We need keepers for the bees.  
And our wooden chairs and tables  
Need foresters and trees.

Many old songs told of drinking  
But I still like ales and beer.  
There were many tales of soldiering  
But we still have wars, I fear.  
There were songs of household drudgery  
And today we still have chores.  
They told of poachers, crooks and thieves  
Who still break all the laws.

Chips come from potatoes  
And potatoes have to grow,  
Someone needs to nurture them  
And the roots that spread below.  
The woollen jumper on your back  
Comes courtesy of sheep  
And when the soot comes tumbling down,  
You'll need that chimney sweep!

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## John Clachan & Friends

**John Clachan** - Vocals, Irish flat back Bouzouki, Keyboard & Recorder

**Mark Campbell** - Electric bass & Electric guitar (rhythm & lead)

**Ronnie Laing** - Banjo, Acoustic guitar & assorted Percussion

**David Shires** - Button accordion, Acoustic guitar & Spoons

