

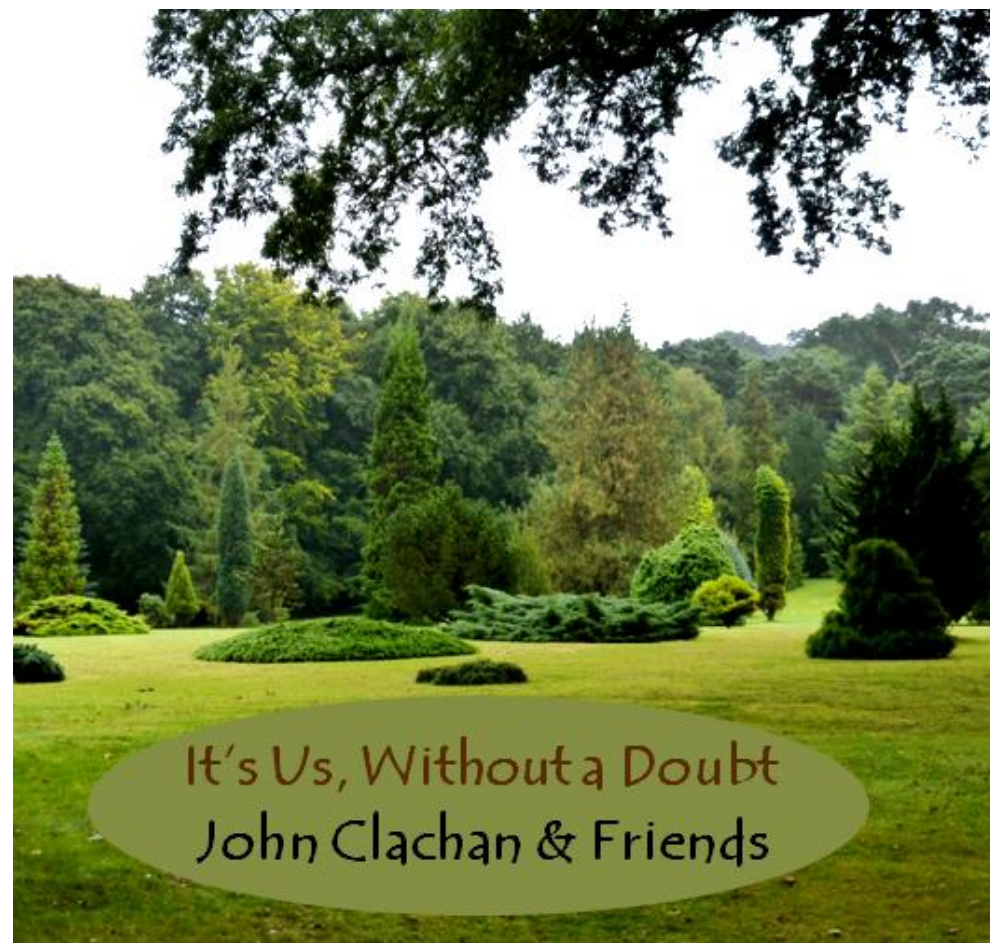
## It's Us, Without a Doubt

- 1 It's Us, Without a Doubt (4.04)
- 2 Disconnect (3.10)
- 3 Museum Pieces (3.32)
- 4 Waiting for the Rains to Come (3.34)
- 5 Speak to me Someone (3.54)
- 6 Away, Away from England (5.02)
- 7 The Writing on the Wall (3.00)
- 8 The Seasons (3.11)
- 9 The Crown (3.23)
- 10 The 'Hanging' Man (3.04)
- 11 Weary the Spirit, Weary the Bones (3.26)
- 12 The Bobby on the Beat (4.30)
- 13 The Words Poured Down Like Rain (3.42)

All songs written by J & C Clachan

For more songs, videos and information visit  
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## It's Us, Without a Doubt - Acknowledgements

Here is another collection of my self-written songs. Again, there is no overall theme but historical scenarios are to the fore as usual, with a few social comment songs and a touch of humour thrown in for good measure.

All songs were co-written with Chris, my wife, who looked at my original song ideas and helped me transform them into something so much better. Chris also provided the cover photo and proof read the insert..... I really can't thank her enough for the fun and her inputs.

Unfortunately, we're missing Ronnie Laing in the line up for this CD as he was unwell throughout 2024, but he was with us in spirit. Thanks, as usual, to stalwarts Dave Shires and Mark Campbell for their excellent playing throughout, on accordion and bass/electric guitar respectively, both of whom have been recording with me for many years now. Also, a special thanks to an old friend, Martin Wayne, for stepping in so well on percussion and to a new friend, Ben Hickman, for adding his superb violin playing to many of the songs, bringing a wonderful new dynamic to the sound. Thank you guys for helping to turn these songs into something special.

I hope you enjoy the new songs and music.

Best wishes - John Clachan (vocals, bouzouki, keyboard & recorder)  
January 2025

## 1 - It's Us, Without a Doubt

It often feels to me as if the human race is losing touch with the natural world, where every action taken has a consequence. What was once well understood by our forefathers is now being ignored or forgotten, not only to the detriment of other life forms but to our own race as well.

This song tries to make the point that, with our knowledge and understanding today, we really should know better and can no longer make excuses. Much of the rapid species extinction happening currently can be directly put down to us - without a doubt!

A                    D    A                                    D

I know it's been said before, but no one seems to listen.

D                                    A                                    Bm                    E

Life's balance, here on Mother Earth, is in a perilous position.

A    D                    A    D

A chain is made of links and if the weakest one gets broken,

D    A                                    Bm                    E

The house of cards comes tumbling down, it's time to be outspoken.

D A  
For we can't say 'I'm not sure', we can't say 'I don't know'.  
D E  
We can't say 'I'd have changed my ways but no one told me so'.  
D A D  
We can't keep blaming others when ecologists point things out.  
D A E A  
We're breaking links in every chain; it's us, without a doubt.  
D A Bm/EE A  
We're breaking links in every chain; it's us..... without a doubt.

Take a look at animal life and all of Earth's vegetation.  
You'll see one thing links another, nothing lives in isolation.  
Lose the plankton from the oceans and we'll see the dominos falling.  
How many times must we be told before we heed the warning?

Vast fields of monoculture stretch far to the horizon,  
You'll see no other sign of life and that's not so surprising.  
We really should know better now we understand the key.  
To keep a thriving, healthy world, we need diversity.

## 2 - Disconnect

It's always seemed to me that manual work is generally looked down upon as a career in life and, although some manual skills are respected, many more are undervalued in society, marking a disconnect with our place in the world we live in. The skills we've developed with our hands deserve great respect.

D  
Our hands evolved for using tools  
C G D  
like needle, pen and plough.

D  
To sew, to write, to work the fields  
C A  
Are skills we practise now.

D  
Some we honour, some revere,  
C A  
While some face disconnect.

D  
Be it tailor, author, labouring man,  
C G D  
These skills deserve respect.

D  
Our hands evolved for using tools,  
C G D  
Those skills deserve respect.

D

Wipe the sleep from out your eyes,

C Em D

It's time that you arose.

D

If there's frost upon the window pane,

C Em

Put on your winter clothes.

D

Take some cheese and home-made bread,

C Em

An apple from the larder.

D

With every year that passes by,

C Em D

Working life gets harder.

You put your back into your work,

It keeps you dignified.

You're taken much for granted

But still you have your pride.

With age, your spirit and your strength

Are receding ever farther

And, every year that passes by,

Working life gets harder.

Em G

Time moves on remorseless,

C D

The years are slipping by.

Em G

It's hard to lift your weary bones

G A

But still you have to try.

And so, like other working men

Who graft for shoddy pay,

You wear your fingers to the bone

With little time for play.

The skills that guide your own hands

Were passed to son from father

But a labouring man gets scant respect

And working life gets harder.

### 3 - Museum Pieces

I was an avid science fiction reader throughout the 1960s & 70s, so perhaps that's where the idea for this song came from. Almost as soon as I'd written the song, I began seeing articles about AI encroaching on our lives more and more so, who knows, this may actually be our eventual destiny!

C7 (F) (C)  
Come view the 'last of the elephants' here in this cage;

Bb F C  
They were killed for their ivory tusks, so they say,

C7 (F) (C)  
From which humans made trinkets, sold them and bartered;

Bb F C  
For greed and sheer avarice, thousands were slaughtered.

Bb F C  
Now they're gone and will never return.

Bb F G  
Gone and will never return.

Here's a video film, you'll see it's a whale;  
They were killed for their oil and their blubber, wholesale.  
As humans put paid to these kings of the ocean,  
Too few did protest and create a commotion.  
Now they're gone and will never return.  
Gone and will never return.

See this insect with a sting, they called it a bee;  
They were killed off by pesticides, wanton and free.  
For the humans – disaster, there was no more pollination;  
With less and less food there came global starvation.  
Now they're gone, bees will never return.  
Gone and will never return.

Now here are the protagonists, woman and man;  
For this great desolation they both carry the can.  
Two long dead human specimens, now kept by machines;  
They reaped of their folly, undone by their genes.  
Now they're gone and will never return.  
Gone and will never return.

I guess you can see there's a moral to this tale -  
'If you don't consider others, your own species will fail'.  
So, when human domination became history,  
Machines kept exhibits for 'the future' to see.  
Now we're gone and will never return.  
We're gone and will never return.

#### 4 - Waiting for the Rains to Come

Ronnie had been relating one of his entertaining stories of life in his native South Africa and I began to imagine a land where droughts and rainy seasons came and went on a regular basis, and how people dealt with such weather extremes. This song is the result of those ponderings.

D

The ground is dry, it's cracked and parched.

A

The ground is dry, it's cracked and parched.

Bm

The ground is dry, it's cracked and parched.

G D A D

We're waiting for the rains to come.

The clouds are building overhead.

The clouds are building overhead.

The clouds are building overhead.

We're waiting for the rains to come.

G

The first few raindrops hit the ground,

D

Nearer and nearer the thunder sounds,

E

Lightning flashes, the deluge pounds,

A

Standing here we watch spellbound.

The rainfall soaks into the earth.

The rainfall soaks into the earth.

The rainfall soaks into the earth

Now the season's rains have come,

Now the season's rains have come.

Then the rivers all fill and they overflow.

Then the rivers all fill and they overflow.

Then the rivers all fill and they overflow

Now the season's rains have come.

Our homes and crops get washed away.

Our homes and crops get washed away.

Our homes and crops get washed away

Now the season's rains have come.

So everyone makes for the higher ground,

To the hills and the mountains safe and sound,

Though there's no shelter to be found,

Each yearly cycle, round and round.

In time the floods will soak away.

In time the floods will soak away.

In time the floods will soak away

When the season's rains are done,

When the season's rains are done.

## 5 - Speak to me Someone

This song completes my trilogy of songs about the astronomers credited with shaping our early views of our place in the universe and takes us into the world of Sir Isaac Newton as he tries to piece together earlier discoveries and create a new law explaining gravity. The other songs were Johannes Kepler (Post Modern Man CD) and Nicolai Copernicus (Postcards from England CD).

D Em  
The shadows start to lengthen in the sitting room,  
G A  
The minute hand moves slowly round the dial.  
D Em  
Another evening spent in contemplation,  
G A  
But everybody knows that's just your style.  
Em A  
You've always had the talent to be someone  
Em A  
And now you have the chance to prove your worth.  
You ponder all the findings and the theories  
Formed by mathematicians in the past;  
Your task - to gather all the strands together  
And define the laws of gravity at last.  
To be a giant you have to stand on shoulders,  
A puppet master learns to pull the strings.

D G D  
Speak to me someone – explain your thoughts and secrets,  
D G A  
Speak to me someone – I know you hear my call.  
Em G A  
Help me find the answers to pull it all together  
Bm G / A Em  
And, from the garden, Newton hears an apple fall  
A D GG/DD  
- Newton hears an apple fall.

Descartes thought of gravity as a vortex,  
Gilbert's theory magnetised the Earth,  
There were Galileo's laws of falling bodies  
And Kepler's laws of motion, and their worth.  
To be a giant you have to stand on shoulders,  
A puppet master learns to pull the strings.

## 6 - Away, Away from England

During the English Civil War, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the son of Charles I (the future Charles II) had a series of adventures trying to escape capture by Oliver Cromwell's soldiers. In later life he would apparently 'bore' his subjects to tears with his tales but, the truth is, he certainly had many exciting exploits to reminisce about, some of which are included in this song.

Em D / Em

After the Battle of Worcester, in 1651,

G D A

Prince Charles had a great adventure which kept him on the run.

G D A

Oliver Cromwell's soldiers searched the land in vain

Em D Bm Em

And how he led them a dance, to the coast of France, is a story I'll explain.

He fled to a house in Shropshire and donned his first disguise.

He dressed as a farmer's labourer that none would recognise.

When hiding deep in a coppice wood with the Roundheads on his tail,

They searched in vain in the pouring rain but good fortune did prevail.

C G D A

Away, away from England, away to bide his time,

C G D Bm Em

Nine years he'd wait to fulfil his fate and restore the Stuart line.

With a trusted friend he spent the day inside a hollow oak  
And a night inside a priest hole, in his torn and tattered cloak.  
Then disguised as a lady's servant he travelled the countryside.  
O'er miles of ground, to Bristol bound, Lord Cromwell he defied.

From a well of royalist sympathy, many helping hands were drawn.  
They ignored the price upon his head - one thousand pounds were sworn.  
No ship would sail from Bristol, destination France,  
So he turned his thoughts to the south coast ports where he hoped to take his  
chance.

At Charmouth, Captain Limbry sang the royalist tune  
But his poor wife sensing danger upped and locked him in his room!  
Then, feigning to elope at dawn, with a fair Miss Coningsby,  
From their night's abode they took the road that led to Bridport Quay.

But that little town of Bridport was like a hornet's nest,  
Parliamentary soldiers swarmed and gave the two no rest.  
The troops were bound for Jersey which spoilt the couple's plan.  
No ship was spared, all commandeered, misfortune played its hand.

On a coal boat docked at Shoreham, safe passage was agreed.  
For eighty pounds some room was found for a 'gentleman in need'  
But the Captain recognised the Prince and his face began to pale,  
'By God', he swore, 'Two hundred more I'll ask before we sail'.

When the Roundheads came they arrived too late to make a state arrest,  
The Prince of Cavaliers had gone, their bird had flown the nest.  
When safe in France he sent back word and, when this came to pass,  
Every Englishman, not Puritan, in secret raised his glass.



## 7 - The Writing on the Wall

Words often conjure up pictures to me and the words 'Belshazzar's feast' paint a vibrant scene in my head. When researching the term, I discovered it came from the biblical story in which the phrase 'the writing on the wall' originated, which was all I needed to inspire this atmospheric number.

Em

The lords were at Belshazzar's feast,

Em

The wine was overflowing.

Em

They drank from stolen temple cups

Em

And sang praise to their idols.

B

But, as they drank, a ghostly hand

A

Was seen by one and all,

B

Inscribing Hebrew letters -

/A

Em

The writing on the wall.

Belshazzar sent for Daniel,

The wisest in his kingdom.

He offered him a fine reward

If the words he could interpret.

But, as he read, a deathly silence

Fell across the hall.

He gave a dreadful warning from –

The writing on the wall.

B

This omen terrified the king,

A

All gaiety did cease.

G

/A

The lords all sat in fear and awe -

Em

At Belshazzar's feast.

'Mene' – god has numbered out

The last days of your kingdom.

'Tekel' – your deeds have been weighed

And these have found you wanting.

'Upharsin' - Medes and Persians

Will prosper from your fall.”

Take heed the words of Daniel from -

The writing on the wall.

These words terrified the king,  
All gaiety did cease.  
The lords all sat in fear and awe -  
At Belshazzar's feast.

Belshazzar gave to Daniel gold  
And a purple robe of power  
But then ignored the words of God,  
Despite the deadly warning.  
Next day the king's attendants  
Heard no answer to their call.  
The cost of no repentance to -  
The writing on the wall.

## 8 - The Seasons

I was born in England and have lived here all my life. I relish our changing seasons each year and it's crossed my mind that there's a tangible moment when we can feel, in the atmosphere, the seasons have changed and moved on, which triggered the writing of this song.

C F C  
It's a cold, cold morning and the frost lies thick

Dm G  
But the low sun's rising and the ice melts quick.

C F C  
There's a warmth in the rays that you've felt before

Dm G C  
And you recognise springtime coming through the door.

F C  
You can feel it on the wind. You can smell it in the air.

G C  
It's a tingle on your skin. It's the light upon your hair.

F C Am  
It may be a sight or it may be a sound

C G C  
But we sense every season when the change comes around.

The leaves grow fast on the bushes and the trees,  
There's a hustle all around from the birds and the bees  
But the pace slows down in the sport and play  
And something in your bones tells you summer's on its way.

In the middle of the year when the roses bloom,  
Those blue skies make you sing a happy tune  
But when the late summer sun-light mellows and dims,  
We can sense another autumn waiting in the wings.

When the leaves turn brown and the winds blow strong,  
You know a change is coming and it won't be long.  
When the snow lies silent and the old year dies,  
Autumn turns to winter, putting on a new disguise.

## 9 - The Crown

With the passing of Queen Elizabeth II, I found myself thinking about the suitability of heirs who are destined to succeed to the throne - born to rule, whether they wished to or not. This led my thoughts to the abdication of Edward VIII in 1936 and the possible conversations between the King and his brother.

C F C

In the palace halls of power,

C F C G

Two brothers talk for hours .... on end.

C F C

One plans his own demise,

C F C G

The other fears and so he tries .... to mend.

F

But now the secret has been told,

C

The King will break his chains of gold

G Am

And lift the crown from off his head,

F G C

Saying 'Brother, you must bear this weight instead'.

The trade off's almost done,  
One's free, one's overcome .... with doubt.  
The King says to the Duke of York  
'There's nothing left to talk .... about.  
I'll leave this all for love,  
Take off my velvet glove,  
The rules of generations I will flout;  
This burden I will gladly live without'.

They thought Prince Albert weak,  
His nature seemed so meek .... and mild.  
And was he fit to rule?  
He stammered like a fool .... ish child.  
With all in disarray,  
He chose the hardest way  
And honour found him answering the call.  
Could he prove himself a king to one and all?

One lived a playboy's life,  
In exile with his wife .... to be.  
The other rose up to the test  
And tried his very best .... they'd see.  
The Windsor house he'd save  
But find an early grave  
And leave his legacy, a queen;  
As protector of 'The Crown' he would be seen.

## 10 - The 'Hanging' Man

I was surprised to read that, in days gone by, public hangings were a popular family event which would draw hundreds, if not thousands, of spectators! I conjectured that the hangmen themselves might have become celebrities of their times - a rather bizarre thought, but that's what inspired this song!

A D E A  
By Tyburn brook, at the gallows pole, the crowd took their positions;

A D E A  
There were porters, tinkers, tradesmen all, doctors and physicians.

B E B E  
A host had followed the convict cart; they chanted, jeered and sang

A D E A  
But silence fell when, as if from hell, up stepped the 'hanging' man.

All make way for the 'hanging' man, the star of the occasion;  
He's a master of macabre if you're of that persuasion.  
Don't think the crowd have sympathy for the convict on the stand,  
The cheers and adulation are all for the 'hanging' man.

E B  
Dressed in black, with a leather hood,

E B  
He holds the crowd in awe.

D A  
Then he takes a knotted rope in hand

D E  
And thrills them all some more.

A hangman likes to please the crowd, each has his own technique.  
So, if spectators heckle, he might give the rope a tweak.  
They've made a pretty fortune since 'swinging' first began.  
It's quite perverse, gold fills the purse of every 'hanging' man.

You'd think an execution was not for the faint-hearted  
But parents bring their children to speed the soon departed.  
Today the stars of cinema are merely also-rans;  
In times gone by, they'd deify the illustrious 'hanging' man.

Some felons offer money  
Before the trapdoor falls  
But he just whispers in their ear  
'I'm sorry, duty calls!'

It's strange that many hangmen, who worked with such decorum,  
Killed far more victims with the rope than those who stood before them.  
Public hangings, as a warning, were really just a sham,  
Folks made their way on gallows' day to see the 'hanging' man.

## 11 - Weary the Spirit, Weary the Bones

When I was working on a set list for the band to play at Dorking Folk Club in 2023, I thought it would be nice to have a 'call and response' song for the club to sing along to. This led to me writing the song in question.....and I've now recorded it.

A D A  
I've sailed on this ship now for two years or more.

A E  
Weary the spirit, weary the bones.

A D A  
I've crossed seven oceans and seen many shores.

E E7 A  
Given the chance I would join Davy Jones.

I've swabbed every inch of the planks of the deck.  
Weary the spirit, weary the bones.

I've been beaten and cursed, now my body's a wreck.  
Given the chance I would join Davy Jones.

D A  
How many times have I drawn out the sails,

D E  
How many times nearly foundered in gales?

A D A  
Oh, weary the spirit and weary the bones.

E E7 A  
Given the chance I would join Davy Jones.

Rum barrels are empty, our food comes from hell.  
Weary the spirit, weary the bones.  
But his Majesty's captain still dines very well.  
Given the chance I would join Davy Jones.

I've loaded the cannons with powder and ball.  
Weary the spirit, weary the bones.  
And many a time have I watched a man fall.  
Given the chance I would join Davy Jones.

How many times becalmed on the sea,  
How many times have I longed to be free?  
Oh, weary the spirit and weary the bones.  
Given the chance I would join Davy Jones.

I'm stricken with scurvy, I've lice in my hair.  
Weary the spirit, weary the bones.  
I barely keep warm in the rags that I wear.  
Given the chance I would join Davy Jones.

The skin on my fingers is calloused and raw.  
Weary the spirit, weary the bones.  
And the 'cat' on my back, I can't take any more.  
Given the chance I would join Davy Jones.

How many times have I cursed the press gang,  
How many times have I wished them to hang?  
Oh, weary the spirit and weary the bones.  
Given the chance I would join Davy Jones. X2

## 12 - The Bobby on the Beat

I sang some of my songs to a group of 'ladies of a certain age' who then came up with some ideas that I might like to use for future songs, one of which was a suggestion that I write a song about the old 'Bobby on the beat'. My guess is that they thought I was too young to remember the old 'Bobby' but that wasn't the case, so I delved into my memory and came up with this 'music hall' ditty.

E B  
I'm a Bobby on the beat and it's you I'd like to meet,  
B7 E /B  
If you think of causing mischief in the night.  
E B  
I know all the likely places of the rough and roguish faces,  
B B7 E  
I'll be there to help a victim in his plight.  
A E  
If you think of heading home with some property not your own,  
E B  
Then have second thoughts or else you'll rue the day.  
A B E A  
'Cos, before you get much older, there'll be a hand upon your shoulder  
A B E  
And the 'boys in blue' will be taking you away.

A E  
I'm here to put your mind at rest, and criminals to the test.

E B  
You'll know me by the sound of my two feet.

A B E A  
Every villain 'in the know' fears the words 'Hello, hello'

A B E  
And the whistle of the Bobby on the beat.

Any cheeky lad I hear gets a clip around the ear  
And every young offender gets a caution.  
Though we focus on prevention, if you do catch my attention  
I try to keep the sentence in proportion.  
I know all the local bruisers when they pour out from the boozers;  
On a Friday night I see them drunk as hell.  
As they stagger and they list, I slip handcuffs on their wrists  
And they'll soon be sobering up inside a cell.

So I earn my daily bread, when you're tucked up in your bed;  
I go walking round the streets to show my face.  
If I see a window open, it's a right suspicious omen,  
I'm on hand to stop them emptying your place.  
When not protecting your abode, I'll help you cross the road.  
If you're lost, I'll point you in the right direction.  
I'm your friend if you're in need but if you pull a dirty deed  
There's a place that you'll be sent for your correction.

I've a notebook and a pencil, to add to my credentials.  
I've a helmet on my head to make me tall.  
In my belt I have a truncheon, which has a simple function,  
But I seldom have to use the thing at all.  
And there's something I detect, I get given great respect;  
I'm an icon that will never disappear.  
If there are crooks and thieves about and you hear a victim shout,  
Then my footsteps on the pavement you will hear.

### 13 - The Words Poured Down Like Rain

When I start to write a new song, I'll often have a rough tune in my mind which helps determine the metre of the words and phrases. In this song about my own song writing and Chris's involvement, I wrote the words to the tune of Bob Dylan's 'Tangled up in Blue' and at the end decided to keep the tune untouched as it fitted so well with the words.

          E          D          E          D  
On the day that I retired from work, I set myself a goal  
          E          D          A          D  
To start to write my own songs, drawn up from my soul.  
          E          D  E          D  
Words that told a story, tales that would unfold;  
          E          D          A  
A pastime that would see me through the winter nights of cold.  
          B          C#m          E          A  
I bought myself a notebook and then, with pen in hand,  
          B          C#m          E          A  
I awaited inspiration, far longer than I'd planned,  
          B          D          A          E  
But when it came - the words poured down like rain.  
  
At first I took some folk songs and started changing lines,  
Re-writing many stories that were sung in olden times.  
This tested my vocabulary and sharpened up my rhyme;  
The tunes came from the distant past but now the words were mine.

I can't remember when it was but I started changing tack,  
And when I used my own ideas I found that I had tapped  
A deeper vein - and the words poured down like rain.

I'd opened up the floodgates, the words came thick and fast,  
Subject matter taken from the present and the past.  
I gave them to my better half to proof read and correct  
For my hazy grasp of grammar had fallen into neglect.  
Then I wrote a song that I just couldn't finalise  
And so together we worked it through and then, to my surprise,  
We linked a chain - and the words poured down like rain.

Now epic songs from history flow across the page,  
I pick my favourite characters drawn from a bygone age.  
Many songs have humour, some are written to a theme,  
I trawl through many walks of life and the people I have seen.  
I start each ball a-rolling, I offer up my lines,  
And then we both pull up a chair and two heads we combine  
Without restraint - and the words pour down like rain.

Now I call myself a song writer and I guess those words are true,  
Though I must admit I took this tune from 'Tangled Up in Blue'!  
And still the songs keep forming and I've plenty more to say,  
Though there may come a time when the lines 'dry up' one day.  
Then, if I find I'm lost for words, I'll open up my mind  
And with paper, pen and furrowed brow, hopefully I'll find  
It will start again - and the words pour down like rain.