

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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Cob Coaling Song

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We come a cob a coalin', come a coalin', come a coalin'
We come a cob a coalin' on/(for) Bon Fire Night.

We come a cob-coalin' on/(for) Bon Fire Night
For coal and for money we hope you'll set right,

Fol the ray, fall the ray, fol the riddle-ee-I dum day.

Now the first house we come to is an old cobbler's shop,
with nought on his cornice but an old pepper pot,

Pepper pot, ball of wax morning to night,
If you give us nowt, we'll take nowt, farewell and good night.

Now me father is dead. He's dead and he's gone,
Attention to his grave.

Hello boys, hello boys, let the bells ring,
Fire boys, fire boys, fire we sing.

The fifth of November we hope you'll remember
for gunpowder treason and plot,
I see no reason for Gunpowder treason to ever be forgot.

Oh we,
Come a cob a coalin', come a coalin', come a coalin',
We come a cob a coalin' on Bon Fire Night.

Oldham Tinkers- add a verse:

We knock at your knocker, and ring at your bell,
To see what you'll give us for singing so well,

(Iona and Peter Opie, 1992: 120 identify this excerpt as a ditty used by Christmas carolers!)

This verse follows the verse about the cobbler.

They also have a chant which they recite after they insert before the above "knocker" excerpt:

Up a ladder, down a wall, a cob a call 'll save us all

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If you haven't got a penny, a 'apenny will do,
If you haven't got a 'apenny, God bless you

Note from the Voices CD insert:

The English tradition abounds with rituals ranging through Mummers Plays, Well Dressing, Rush Cart Bearing, Ball Games and so on (it is worth seeking out a copy of The National Trust Guide to Traditional Customs of Britain by Brian Shuel, published by Webb & Bower). This song, from the Lancashire and Yorkshire border is associated with Bonfire Night. It is believed to have been part of a Mummers Play before transferring to the more recent calendar ritual. It was given to The Watersons in the 1960s by A. L. Lloyd. It was to have been included on their album on ritual songs, Frost And Fire, in the 1960s but space did not permit. (Topic Records has recently reissued Frost And Fire as TSCD 136). The Watersons in full flight is

that even when singing in unison there is an aural illusion of harmony. This is the first time this line-up has recorded and The Watersons were Norma, Michael and Ann Waterson, Martin and Eliza Carthy and Jill Pidd.

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