

SAILORTOWN CD – Liner Notes

Men of the sea describes the career-path of a typical trawler skipper – a job learned over many years in the ‘School of Hard Knocks.’ ***Sailortown*** is the part of any seaport town to which sailors gravitate for onshore amusement. ***Eggshells***, adapted from a 1930s poem by Elizabeth Fleming, brings to life a sea-story from the folklore of childhood. ***Betsy Walton*** is a traditional ballad from the banks of the River Humber, and ***Ranters’ Wharf*** is a sequel to it, imagined by John Conolly. Both songs contain elements of folklore and the supernatural. ***Francesco’s Song*** describes an encounter with an old Flamenco singer in the streets of Nerja, a delightful seaside town on the Costa del Sol, while ***Punch & Judy Man*** celebrates the art of the Punch and Judy ‘Professor’, once a common sight on the beaches of Britain. ***The Jolly Tar***, from a ripping yarn called “The World of Ice” by R.M. Ballantine, gives an alternative take on the Battle of Trafalgar, while ***The Trawling Trade*** follows the action on the deck of a deep-sea trawler, fishing off the coast of Iceland. In ***The Widowmaker***, a fisherman’s wife lies sleepless while the storm rises along the coastline. ***My Own Native Land*** is a stirring song of Irish patriotism, recalled from a memorable performance by the wonderful McPeake Family. ***The Last Ploughshare*** is a plea for the human race to care for its habitat – the only planet we’ve got. ***Tommy’s Gone Away to Iceland*** was inspired by John’s involvement with “Tommy and the Trawler”, a children’s video feature filmed for the National Fishing Heritage Centre. ***The Taxi-Driver and the Trawlerman’s Wife*** relates a true story which once unfolded in the streets of Grimsby, to the great amusement of the local residents. ***Flowers of May*** was written for the Harwich Shanty Festival, to celebrate the port’s connections with the Pilgrim Fathers and Christopher Jones, Captain of the Mayflower.