

Cheap Print and Street Literature of the Long Eighteenth Century

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9. Story Books, Godly Books, Ballads, and Song Books: The Chapbook in Scotland, 1740–1820

Iain Beavan

Two book reviews, nearly a decade apart, have encouraged — if not actually enjoined — those writing on the chapbook and its forms either to move beyond strict (analytical and historical) bibliographical engagement, or else, in so far as chapbooks are assumed to have ‘represent[ed] popular mentalities’, to attempt to make those features clearer.¹ We might first summarily consider four factors — social, legal, economic, and cultural — that together contributed to the increased number of chapbooks produced in Scotland.

Social, legal, economic

The first factor — which might *prima facie* seem somewhat counter-intuitive — was population growth (particularly urban) and urban migration. A growing and ever more concentrated urban population, and increasing industrialization, provided printers with a potential commercial market, although it is important to bear in mind (as T. C.

¹ R. A. Houston, ‘Review of *Folk in Print: Scotland’s Chapbook Heritage, 1750–1850*, ed. Edward J. Cowan and Mike Paterson’, *Scottish Historical Review*, 88 (2009), 181–83; Oskar Cox Jensen, ‘Review of *Street Literature of the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. David Atkinson and Steve Roud’, *Modern Philology*, 116 (2018), E30–E33.

Smout has observed) that 'even as late as 1820 seven Scots out of ten still lived in rural communities: the farm and the village were still not replaced as the typical social environment in which a man spent his life'.²

The second factor relates to the confused legal background under which Scottish printers had hitherto worked. Of the thirty-nine active printing localities identified in Scotland to 1800, only fourteen had presses before 1750. The printing trades in Edinburgh and Glasgow, which can be dated to earlier centuries, were far larger than elsewhere, and produced very large numbers of chapbooks, yet of those other towns and cities now recognized as centres of eighteenth-century chapbook production, most saw printing begin after the 1770s.³ Economically and legally, this is unsurprising, as jurisdictional differences over perpetual common-law copyright were finally settled in 1774 and the numbers of printers in Scotland consequently increased. The result was, as the Edinburgh printer William Creech is said to have noted, 'in every town there is now a printing press [...] The country is overrun with a kind of literary packmen, who ramble from town to town selling books. In the little inconsiderable town of Falkirk there is now set up a printing press [...]'.⁴ It is also worth noting that the printer in Falkirk in 1774 to whom Creech referred was Daniel Reid, whose output included chapbooks and whose business, taken over in 1783 by Patrick Mair, established that town as a major producer of Scottish chapbooks.⁵

2 T. C. Smout, *A History of the Scottish People, 1560–1830* (London: Fontana, 1972), p. 242.

3 Anette Hagan, 'The Spread of Printing', in *The Edinburgh History of the Book in Scotland*, vol. 2, *Enlightenment and Expansion, 1707–1800*, ed. Stephen W. Brown and Warren McDougall (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), pp. 112–17; Aberdeen (printing dated from 1622); Stirling (1571); Falkirk (1766); Paisley (1769); Greenock (1778); Kilmarnock (1780); Ayr (1790). Chapbooks were occasionally printed elsewhere in Scotland (e.g. Banff, in the very late 1790s). Our understanding (particularly of the earlier, formative period) has been transformed by Adam Fox, *The Press and the People: Cheap Print and Society in Scotland, 1500–1785* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

4 Gwyn Walters, 'The Booksellers in 1759 and 1774: The Battle for Literary Property', *The Library*, 5th ser., 29 (1974), 287–311 (p. 308).

5 The autobiography of the chapman David Love, *The Life, Adventures and Experiences of David Love*, 3rd edn (Nottingham: printed by Sutton & Son, for the author, 1823), p. 31, probably refers to Daniel Reid: 'Lucky for me, a book-printer had taken his residence in Falkirk; I bought small books of him very cheap, and gave him a copy to print.'

The third background factor can be put as a twofold question. What percentage of the Scottish population could actually read a chapbook, and did that percentage increase with time? The question of literacy in Scotland has preoccupied historians, and their answers (based on differing methodologies and data) have led to some divergence and disagreement. Their comments, however, suggest a relatively high level of functional literacy by the end of the eighteenth century. Making use of comments within the *Statistical Account of Scotland*, Don Withrington concluded that 'in many very different areas of the country, literacy in reading at least was very widespread'.⁶ R. A. Houston concluded that male *illiteracy* in lowland Scotland in the mid-eighteenth century stood at around 35 per cent, and 'the rise to nearly universal literacy which we can see during the 1850s must have come at some stage during the later eighteenth or early nineteenth century'.⁷ However, even in the 1770s illiteracy levels among women throughout Scotland were higher than those for men because of the contemporaneous economic realities and social attitudes. And male literacy levels varied geographically. A relatively high level in Edinburgh in the early and mid-eighteenth century has been asserted;⁸ however, readership levels in the sparsely populated Scottish Highlands, much of which was at the time Gaelic-speaking, were lower. Houston suggests 50–60 per cent male illiteracy,⁹ though in some Highland areas the situation was reportedly considerably worse.¹⁰

Such figures and summaries do not and cannot provide a full explanation of the noticeable uplift in chapbook production, particularly from the 1780s, as they take no account of cultural preferences and taste,

6 Donald J. Withrington, 'Schooling, Literacy and Society', in *People and Society in Scotland, 1760–1830*, vol. 1, ed. T. M. Devine and Rosalind Mitchison (Edinburgh: John Donald with the Economic and Social History Society of Scotland, 1988), pp. 163–87 (pp. 172–73).

7 R. A. Houston, *Scottish Literacy and the Scottish Identity: Illiteracy and Society in Scotland and Northern England, 1600–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 56.

8 Adam Fox, 'The Emergence of the Scottish Broadside Ballad in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries', *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 31 (2011), pp. 169–94 (p. 176, citing several sources).

9 Houston, *Scottish Literacy and the Scottish Identity*, pp. 56–67.

10 Society for the Education of the Poor in the Highlands, [*Resolutions ... Brief Statement*] (Inverness: printed at the *Inverness Journal* Office, by James Fraser, 1818), printed inauguration notice in University of Aberdeen, Special Collections and Archives, Innes of Cowie papers, MS 2970/2/4.

but they do supply some deeper appreciation of the social, demographic, and economic conditions relating to the increase in printing activity in Scotland. The market (and one that could be further encouraged) for printed material for the lower orders, not just in the towns and cities, was in significant measure met by the chapbook. In 1837, J. G. Lockhart described 'Penny Chap-books' as 'still in high favour among the lower classes in Scotland', and this view, although much modified, remains essentially unchallenged.¹¹ The Rev. Charles Rogers wrote disapprovingly of one aspect of eighteenth-century Scotland: 'Ribald songs and profane ballads were everywhere. The Falkirk Chapmen books, impure in every page, constituted the literature of the people.'¹² In similar fashion, the writer of an article on 'The Scotch Penny Chap-Books' in *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal* judged that 'without an unreasonable stretch of authority, they might all have come within the jurisdiction of the Society for the Suppression of Vice [... They] constituted for many years a universal literature among the lower classes of persons, both old and young.'¹³ And, putting aside the moral judgements, the assessment of the readership groups stands largely accepted.

Cultural

Garlands — that is, song collections — constituted more than 50 per cent of the output of Scottish chapbooks over the later eighteenth century. While it would be fair to say that such chapbooks were purchased and read largely by the lower classes, their form of expression places them in the wider context of song culture in Scotland. This point has been made forcefully in Thomas Crawford's landmark work on *Society and the Lyric*, wherein he distinguished five types of popular song in eighteenth-century Scotland, among them slip or chapbook songs and broadside or 'stall' ballads, which, he argued, 'did not appeal to five separate publics or even to two — the "masses" and the "educated"; they appealed

11 J. G. Lockhart, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.*, 7 vols (Edinburgh: Robert Cadell; London: John Murray, and Whittaker, 1837–38), I, 122.

12 Rev. Charles Rogers, *Scotland, Social and Domestic: Memorials of Life and Manners in North Britain*, Grampian Club [series], 1 (London: Griffin, 1869), p. 60.

13 'The Scotch Penny Chap-books', *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, 3 April 1841, p. 84.

in varying degrees to all of lowland Scotland'.¹⁴ He laid out some of the functions of popular lyric (which, in the present context, relates largely to chapbooks): 'they transmitted past attitudes and emotions [...] they provided a medium in which people of all ages could share such experiences as love, tragic emotion, "social glee", and bacchanalian abandon'.¹⁵ Such popular song culture did not, of course, spontaneously come into existence with the arrival of the printing press, nor with the attainment of literacy — scholars have long recognized that its existence was rooted in a predominantly oral society and that there was much interaction between literate and oral cultures.¹⁶

Citing Crawford's work, scholars have recently reaffirmed the importance and significance of the large number of 'formally published songbooks' emanating from Scotland.¹⁷ Indeed, we can extend Crawford's seventy-one eighteenth-century titles (his count taken to 1786 only) with a further forty-six (these up to 1800) to give a very provisional total of 117 Scottish-published songbooks.¹⁸ A general overlap in content between these songbooks and the chapbook garlands is quickly detectable. As an example, *The Lark*, printed for Robert Clark in Edinburgh in 1768, contains some eighty-six songs, of which nearly 39 per cent can be readily identified as having also appeared in Scottish-printed chapbooks.¹⁹ It is also worth noting that some of the songs in *The*

14 Thomas Crawford, *Society and the Lyric: A Study of the Song Culture of Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1979), p. 9. See also Thomas Crawford, 'Lowland Song and Popular Tradition in the Eighteenth Century', in *The History of Scottish Literature*, vol. 2, 1660–1800, ed. Andrew Hook (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1987), pp. 123–39 (pp. 123–24).

15 Crawford, 'Lowland Song and Popular Tradition', p. 132.

16 Crawford, *Society and the Lyric*, p. 7; Houston, *Scottish Literacy and the Scottish Identity*, chapter 6.

17 Katherine Campbell and Kirsteen McCue, 'Lowland Song Culture in the Eighteenth Century', in *The Edinburgh Companion to Scottish Traditional Literatures*, ed. Sarah M. Dunnigan and Suzanne Gilbert (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), pp. 94–104 (pp. 94–95).

18 This figure includes fifteen Scottish-printed editions, plus one from Berwick, of Ramsay's *Tea-Table Miscellany*. Such songbooks were not cheap. *The Tea-Table Miscellany*, 9th edn (1733), and 10th edn (1740), printed in London, sold there for 3s., and a further 3s. if the music notation was wanted.

19 Whether the contents of *The Lark: A Collection of Choice Scots Songs; together with a Few Songs for the Bottle* (Edinburgh: printed for Robert Clark, bookseller, 1768) [ESTC T178387] had been expurgated needs further investigation, as some British publishers were careful to remove what might have been taken to be obscene pieces. See the advertisement for *The Polite Songster* in the *London Evening Post*, 31

Lark (for example, 'Bessy Bell and Mary Gray', 'Down the Burn, Davie', and 'Katharine Ogie') also appeared in chapbooks printed in Newcastle upon Tyne. *The Linnet*, printed and sold by J. & M. Robertson in Glasgow in 1783, has an even higher percentage, with around 50 per cent of the 109 songs therein appearing in Scottish chapbooks, although in some cases not until the nineteenth century.²⁰

As might be expected, versions of some of the more famous historical (border) ballads that were printed in Scotland were also included in chapbooks printed in northern England. Examples from the Angus family of Newcastle upon Tyne — major printers of chapbooks and broadsides — include *Chevy-Chase* and *Sir James the Rose*, and they were also responsible for editions of *The Pleasant and Delightful History of Johnny Armstrong*, a border ballad that appeared many times in London and elsewhere in England. It was also known in Scotland and was included on an Aberdeen broadside printed by James Chalmers III in 1776.²¹ The overlap between the popular song culture of (mainly lowland) Scotland and the northern counties of England went far beyond the border ballad. This can be seen in Angus's two slip song editions of *The Soldier's Return*, one of them very close to Burns's version, and within their many chapbooks Scottish songs such as 'Maggie Lauder', 'Auld Lang Syne', and 'Come Under my Plaidie'.²²

There is little doubt that some chapbooks printed in Newcastle that contained Scottish songs were intended for distribution and sale within Scotland, but presumably not exclusively so. Angus's editions of *A Garland of New Songs, containing 1. Moll of the Wood; 2. The Soldier's Lass; 3. Come under My Plaidie; 4. The Answer* may have sold on either — or

January 1760: 'Care has been taken to insert no obscene pieces, so much and so justly complained of in other Works of this Kind.' (*The Lark*, published in 1765, the contents of which are discussed in Crawford, *Society and the Lyric*, pp. 13–14, was a considerably larger work and the two books appear to be unrelated in terms of publication, although there is, unsurprisingly, some overlap in content.)

20 *The Linnet; or, Cheerful Companion, being a Select Collection of the Most Favourite and Admired Scots and English Songs* (Glasgow: printed and sold by J. & M. Robertson, 1783) [ESTC T178326].

21 *John Armstrong's Last Good-Night* (6 May 1776) [ESTC T29104].

22 Some of the literary magazines of the northern English counties, such as *The Satellite* (earlier issues published in Carlisle, later issues in Newcastle) and the *Alnwick Magazine*, also quickly started to include Burns's compositions, which rapidly passed into chapbook form in both Scotland and the rest of Britain.

both — sides of the border.²³ The figure of the collier appears somewhat more often in Northumbrian chapbooks than in those from Scotland, but the absorption by a Scottish printer of a piece from Tyneside was not unknown. Edward Chicken's poem *The Comical History of the Collier's Wedding* was printed in Niddery's/Niddry's Wynd, Edinburgh (i.e. Alexander Robertson), in chapbook form in 1779, and again by Charles Randall in Stirling in 1808.²⁴

There are lingering issues over quite how far and how deeply concepts relating to popular culture can be applied without qualification in chapbook analysis. As physical objects, it is unproblematic to describe chapbooks as part of popular *material* culture. But discomfort may arise when elements of the definition of culture — usually those that centre around the concepts of shared meanings and values — are employed to form some broad idea of a class or group *mentalité*.²⁵ While some cohesiveness can reasonably be argued for chapbooks by affirming that they consist of a number of common compositional forms, literary genres, and broad themes, the more closely and narrowly their textual contents are considered, the clearer it becomes that, in terms of general attitudes, values, and conduct, there was considerable divergence. Chapbook themes (such as social status and conditions, aspirations to social advancement, prophecies and foretelling) have frequently been identified and systematized, but such modes of categorization may not reflect how the original readers regarded the contents.²⁶

Firstly, approaches to these themes varied widely — for example, compare *The Happy Beggars*,²⁷ with sentimental songs like *The Begging*

23 *A Garland of New Songs, containing 1. Moll of the Wood; 2. The Soldier's Lass; 3. Come under my Plaidie; 4. The Answer* ([colophon] Angus, printer) [ESTC T40459, T40460].

24 *The Comical History of the Collier's Wedding in Fyfe*, wrote by a Kirkaldy Gentleman, new edn (Edinburgh: printed and sold at the Printing Office in Niddery's Wynd, 1779) [T215478]; Edward Chicken, *The Comical History of the Collier's Wedding at Benwell, near New Castle upon Tyne* (Stirling: printed and sold by C. Randall, 1808) [Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, L.C.2866(18)].

25 Peter Clark and R. A. Houston, 'Culture and Leisure, 1700–1840', in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, vol. 2, 1540–1840, ed. Peter Clark (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 575–613 (p. 576).

26 Many themes are elucidated in Edward J. Cowan and Mike Patterson, *Folk in Print: Scotland's Chapbook Heritage, 1750–1850* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2007).

27 *Jockie to the Fair, with The Answer; to which are added, The Turkish Lady; The The [sic] Happy Beggars* (entered according to order) [Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, L.C.2846(42)] (almost certainly printed by the Robertson family (the

Girl and *The Blind Beggar Boy*.²⁸ Chapbook songs touching on begging tended not to criticize that way of life or disapprove of those who adopted it, whether driven by misfortune or choice; rather, they portrayed the differing attitudes of beggars themselves, such as independence and perhaps fatalism, as opposed to vulnerability and fear. To that limited extent, many of the songs identified with the beggars. *The Happy Beggars* portrays a distinct way of life, separate from the rest of society, a situation of which the beggars were totally accepting. It is an attitude sometimes detectable in the autobiography of William Cameron ('Hawkie'), whose lifestyle wavered between earning a small income by selling chapbooks and ballads on the streets, and sharing rat-infested lodgings with vagrants.²⁹

Secondly, the reactions of most individual readers to the songs are now largely irrecoverable and we may be thrown back on pursuing an exploration of some of the more frequently appearing themes, when they occurred, and the attitudes they expressed.³⁰ For example, *An*

woodcut used appears on their chapbook *The Northern Ditty* of 1808). 'The Happy Beggars' in printed form can be traced back at least to *The Tea-Table Miscellany*, vol. 4 (1740), p. 348. See also Crawford, *Society and the Lyric*, chapter 10, for a sustained discussion, including on 'beggar pastoral'.

- 28 *Six Excellent New Songs: The Begging Girl; My Only Joe and Deary, O; The Blind Beggar Boy; The Galley Slave; Scotland's Comfort; Bleak Was the Morn* (Edinburgh: printed by J. Morren) [Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, L.C.2808(6)]. 'The (Poor/Little) Blind Beggar Boy, (a Pathetic Ballad)', by John C. Cross (the title varies), is one example of very many songs that were first performed in English music halls in the 1790s and later picked up by literary and poetic miscellanies, and then by chapbook printers. It was printed in *The Asylum; or, Weekly Miscellany*, 41 (10 June 1795), 239, a periodical published by William Bell in Glasgow's Saltmarket. Such 'music hall' contents in chapbooks indirectly raise the question of the extent to which such texts were intended for an urban readership.
- 29 [William Cameron], *Hawkie: The Autobiography of a Gangrel*, ed. John Strathesk (Glasgow: David Robertson & Co., 1888). See also Michael Harris, 'A Few Shillings for Small Books: The Experiences of a Flying Stationer in the 18th Century', in *Spreading the Word: The Distribution Networks of Print, 1550–1800*, ed. Robin Myers and Michael Harris (Winchester: St Paul's Bibliographies; New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 1998 [1990]), pp. 83–108 (esp. p. 89), on David Love, chapman in Scotland before he removed to England.
- 30 Roger Chartier, *Forms and Meanings: Texts, Performances and Audiences* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), p. 92: 'One must challenge [...] any approach claiming that the repertoire of the literature of colportage expressed the *mentalité* or the "world view" of popular readers. Such an argument, commonly found in works on the French *Bibliothèque bleue*, the English chapbooks [...] is no longer acceptable.'

Invitation to North America published by James Chalmers III in Aberdeen in September 1783.³¹ The song was written in response to perceived economic hardship, but simultaneously reflected the end of the American Revolutionary War. It refers to ‘The times they grow harder in Scotland ev’ry day’ — increases in the price of grain and its being exported to France — and ‘Manufactories in Scotland are grown so very bad, / For weavers and combers there’s no work to be had’. The song held out the prospect of a more prosperous life in New York or Nova Scotia, where pay and living conditions were supposedly better than in Scotland. It is also a song that might be thought to express an attitude approaching a resigned acceptance of the prevailing economic conditions, which could only be escaped by emigration.

The Complaint of the Poor portrays the vulnerability of the poor, exploited by ‘meal-mongers, ingrossers, forestallers and all’, and appeals to wider society for compassion:

Poor people of Scotland with tears in their eyes
Stand and look at a sixpenny loaf with surprize,
Our markets so dear makes our hearts for to bleed,
When they hear their poor children crying for bread.³²

More importantly yet, it could be argued that both the contents and the general tone of *The Complaint of the Poor* contain hints of the beginnings of nineteenth-century working-class consciousness.

The familiarity of the Scots with alcoholic liquor is very evident within chapbook literature.³³ The temperance movement may have taken off after the 1820s, but differing attitudes to drink and its effects appear quite regularly in Scottish chapbooks of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, veering from the indulgent, such as *The Topper’s Advice*, to the expression of considerable concern over the

31 *Six Excellent New Songs: I. Get Married Betimes; II. An Invitation to North America; III. The Eating of the Oysters; IV. The Betrayed Shepherd; V. The Drowned Mariner; VI. Betty Brown* (printed in September 1783) [ESTC T174282]. The woodcut appears in Chalmers’s publications and the form of dating is characteristic of Chalmers.

32 *The Married Man’s Lament; or, Fairly Shot of Her; to which is added, The Butcher’s Daughter; The Roving Young Man; Todlan Butt, and Todlan Ben; The Complaint of the Poor* (entered according to order) [ESTC T173523].

33 T. C. Smout, *A Century of the Scottish People, 1830–1950* (London: Fontana, 1987), chapter 6, ‘Drink, Temperance and Recreation’.

social consequences of alcoholism.³⁴ Hector Macneill's *Scotland's Skaith; or, The History o' Will & Jean*, with its focus on the deleterious effects of drink, clearly reflected a wider anxiety. It was published in various formats by Charles Randall in Stirling in what appear to have been five separate editions (some of them chapbooks) in 1795, and also in Dumfries, Carlisle, and Workington before 1801. By the time Victorian respectability and the temperance movement took it on, the alternative title was sometimes modified — for example, *The History of Will and Jean; or, The Sad Effects of Drunkenness*.³⁵ It is at this point, too, that questions might arise about the level of disapproval — often enough characterized as implacable — of Hannah More and the Cheap Repository for Moral and Religious Tracts, towards the contents of at least some of the chapbooks. While the tone differed, More's *The Carpenter; or, The Danger of Evil Company*, also published in 1795, addressed exactly the same concerns as *Scotland's Skaith*.³⁶

Echoes of Jacobitism — a largely, though by no means entirely, Scottish movement — appeared in various forms. It is a thoroughly rehearsed and discussed theme, but one that again reflects a variety of attitudes towards the uprisings. While a sense of nostalgic national identity could be said to come through most of the songs, a few (such as *The New Way of Lochaber*, ostensibly written by a prisoner taken at Culloden and imprisoned at Carlisle) express disillusionment with the insurgency.³⁷ More poignant songs, such as versions of Burns's *The Highland Widow's Lament*, did not start to appear in Scottish chapbook

34 *The Dandy-O; to which are added, Tippet Is the Dandy-O; The Toper's Advice; Picking Lilies; The Dying Swan* (Glasgow: printed by J. & M. Robertson, 1799, Saltmarket) [Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, L.C.2835(14)].

35 *The History of Will and Jean; or, The Sad Effects of Drunkenness* (Glasgow: printed for the booksellers) [Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, L.C.2852.B(10)].

36 *The History of Will and Jean; or, The Sad Effects of Drunkenness* (Glasgow: printed for the booksellers) [Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, L.C.2852.B(10)].

37 *The Galloway Shepherds; to which is added, The Royal Highlanders Farewel; The New Way of Lochaber; with The A[n]swer; Love Inviting Reason; I Fear It Is Love* (entered according to order) [ESTC T184462] (almost certainly printed by the Robertson family); *The Merchant's Garland, composed of Several Excellent New Songs: I. The Sailor and the Merchant's Daughter; II. A New Song, Call'd Loughaber; III. The Answer; IV. A New Song an [sic] a Hundred Years Hence* (licensed and enter'd according to order) [ESTC T39239]; *A Garland of New Songs, containing 1. The Bonny Lass of Bannachie; 2. 'Twas within a Mile of Edinbro'; 3. A New Song Called Loughaber; 4. The Answer to Loughaber* ([colophon] Angus, printer) [ESTC T40481].

form until the 1820s.³⁸ But whatever sense of national identity may have been reflected by Jacobite poems and songs, the threat of the then-present common external enemy to Britain encouraged a more general cohesiveness and patriotism, as was made explicit in large numbers of chapbooks of the 1790s and early 1800s.³⁹

Marriages were happy, contented, to be avoided, to be regretted, abusive, frustrating, or loving. Unexpected meetings could break down social barriers and lead to happy (and fortuitous) relationships, as explained in *The Jolly Sailor; or, The Lady of Greenwich*, found in a chapbook that includes a number of songs with nautical themes and carries a title-page woodcut of a sailor and a lady in an affectionate embrace.⁴⁰ It is widely accepted that such songs would have been frowned upon by the late eighteenth-century evangelical propagandists, such as Hannah More and Sarah Trimmer, partially because of its crossing social divides, but far more because of its reliance on circumstance and sheer chance for both the sailor and the Lady of Greenwich to achieve mutual happiness. Such emotional fulfilment had to be earned by hard work, dutifulness, and religious observance.⁴¹

True, warm affection and companionship is found in versions of *John Anderson my Joe* that appeared in several chapbooks.⁴² The many variants of *John Anderson*, at least to the early 1800s, all seem to have been created by a combination of elements from the distinctly sexually

38 *Two Popular Songs, viz. Falkirk Fair; Highland Widow's Lament* (Falkirk: printed in the year 1825) [Edinburgh: National Library of Scotland, L.C.2828.A(2)]: 'I was the happiest of a' the clan [...] Till Charlie, he came o'er at last, / Sae far to set us free.'

39 Oskar Cox Jensen, *Napoleon and British Song, 1797–1822* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

40 *The Jolly Sailor; or, The Lady of Greenwich; to which are added, Pretty Peggy's Love to Sailor Jack; The Sailor's Widow's Lament for his Death on Board the Trial; Merry May the Maid Be; When Late I Wander'd* (Glasgow: printed by J. and M. Robertson, Saltmarket, 1803) [Edinburgh: National Library of Scotland, L.C.2837(29)].

41 *Family Magazine*, 2 (July 1788), 451: 'Diligence is the mother of good luck, and God gives all things to honest industry.'

42 *Poor Jack; to which are added, The Tar for All Weathers; Bold Jack; John Anderson my Joe* (Stirling: printed by C. Randall) [ESTC T44038]; *The Matrimonial Farce; or, Three Weeks after Marriage; to which are added, John Anderson my Joe; Sweet Poll of Plymouth; The Vicar of Bray; The Lamp-Lighter* (entered according to order) [ESTC T171942] (probably printed by the Robertson firm of Glasgow); *Six Excellent New Songs: The Belfast Maid's Lament; John Anderson my Jo; The Yellow Hair'd Laddie; Lass of the Brow of the Hill; The Butcher's Frolic; or, The Affrighted Tailor; Every Man to his Humour* (Edinburgh: printed by J. Morren) [ESTC T174353].

loaded version in *The Merry Muses of Caledonia* and Burns's heavily modified composition. And married couples could become reconciled, even after less than exemplary behavior by either or both parties. The story of Peter and Betteries (or Betterish) appeared widely in chapbook form.⁴³ Although it is easy to identify the prominence of the patriarchy in marital relationships in so many chapbook songs, it was nonetheless a characteristic of all social groups; it was a reflection of far more than the culture of the lower orders.

It is almost certainly the case that the single most common theme in Scottish chapbook garlands is that of love and its pursuit. But this, too, is a reflection of far more than the preoccupations of the lower orders in eighteenth-century Scotland, though they may have had their own distinctive expression.⁴⁴ Expressions of devotion were commonplace, but affection, if it had ever existed, could go sour and lead to disdain. The chorus of *I Wish that You Were Dead, Goodman* is striking in its directness:

I wish that you were dead, goodman,
And a green sod on your head, goodman,
That I might ware my widowhood,
Upon a ranting highlandman.⁴⁵

It is, however, clear that there were particular aspects of the lives of some groups within the lower orders that did reflect a common attitude. The fragility of human relationships constituted a commonly held anxiety. It is evident particularly in the chapbooks of the last

43 *The Woman's Spleen Abated; or, A Little Labour Well Bestowed, in Quelling the Rage and Fury of a Scold* (Glasgow: printed by Robert Sanders, and are to be sold in his shop, 1716) [ESTC T179863]; *Peter and Betterish; or, The Woman's Spleen Abated* (Aberdeen: printed in the year 1739) [ESTC T206305] (printed by James Chalmers II); *The History of Peter and Betteries; or, A Little Labour Well Bestowed* (Edinburgh: printed and sold in Niddry's Wynd) [ESTC T27873] (printed by Alexander Robertson); *The Woman's Spleen Abated; or, A Little Labour Well Bestowed, in Quelling the Rage and Fury of a Scold* (Glasgow: printed by James and John Duncan) [ESTC N492256].

44 Crawford, *Society and the Lyric*, p. 16; Crawford, 'Lowland Song', p. 135.

45 *Two Excellent New Songs, called The Midnight Messenger; I Wish that You Were Dead Goodman* (printed by J. Chalmers & Co., Castle Street, Aberdeen) [Bloomington, IN, Lilly Library, PR 974.A1/894] (printed by James Chalmers III). The song had previously appeared in [David Herd (ed.)], *The Ancient and Modern Scots Songs, Heroic Ballads, &c.* (Edinburgh: printed by and for Martin & Wotherspoon, 1769) [ESTC T78132]. Goodman/gudeman = either husband or farm owner; in the context of the present song, possibly both.

decades of the eighteenth century, a time when Britain as a whole required manpower for war. Songs on the related themes of 'The Soldier's Farewell' or 'The Sailor's Farewell' which described the pain of parting were common, printed as slip songs or in chapbooks throughout Britain, and continued into the nineteenth century. The Robertson firm in Glasgow had (at least) two similar and frequently used woodcuts of a sailor with his sweetheart or wife, on shore, with a ship in the background, which appeared (among others) with *The Gosport Tragedy* and *The Jolly Sailor; or, The Lady of Greenwich*.⁴⁶ Thomas Bewick recorded, 'in cottages everywhere were to be seen [prints of] the "Sailor's Farewell" and his "Happy Return"'.⁴⁷ The motif can be seen in ceramic work from at least the 1760s, and it appeared again dominating a mezzotint print of Charles Dibdin's 1789 song 'Poor Jack', much performed in places of public entertainment.⁴⁸ And with this, not just visual but yet more textual connections appear as the popularity of brave and steadfast 'Poor Jack' was not missed by chapbook printers in England and Scotland, who added Dibdin's song to their publications in the 1790s or early 1800s.

There is a general point to be drawn out here, which is that some of the songs (and stories) included in chapbooks printed in Scotland were indeed distinctively Scottish, but very many were not. Scottish readers' tastes also encompassed material emanating from south of the border. Any idea that Scottish-printed chapbooks necessarily expressed some form of undiluted Scottishness is wide of the mark. It can, however, reasonably be claimed that the very combination of songs in any particular chapbook is essentially Scottish, in the sense that it represents

46 *Gosport Tragedy; or, The Perjured Ship Carpenter; to which are added, The Scots Bonnet; The Relief by the Bowl; Get Married as Soon as You Can* (Glasgow: printed by J. & M. Robertson, Saltmarket, 1801) [Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, L.C.2836(16)]; *The Jolly Sailor; or, The Lady of Greenwich* (n. 40 above).

47 *A Memoir of Thomas Bewick, Written by Himself* (Newcastle upon Tyne: printed by Robert Ward, Dean Street, for Jane Bewick, Gateshead; London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1862), p. 247.

48 London, British Museum, 1887,0307,E.193 (earthenware tile, c.1760–70); 2010,7081.3129 (mezzotint, 1790). See also Nicholas Grindle, 'Dibdin and John Raphael Smith: Print Culture and Fine Art', in *Charles Dibdin and Late Georgian Culture*, ed. Oskar Cox Jensen, David Kennerley, and Ian Newman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 158–67; Jon A. Gillespie, 'Dibdin, Charles (*bab.* 1745, *d.*1814), actor, composer and writer', *ODNB* <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/7585>.

an attempt by a Scottish printer to represent the tastes of his assumed local and regional readership.

A preliminary quantitative view

Any attempt to calculate how many distinct chapbook editions were actually published over the eighteenth century is fraught with extreme difficulty.⁴⁹ But without the construction of an (albeit very imperfect) set of data, we are fundamentally hampered as to any form of quantifiable overview whatsoever. An initial investigation through ESTC, supplemented with checks across the records of major research libraries,⁵⁰ suggests that the number of chapbook titles printed in Scotland from 1780 to 1800 (inclusive) ranges between *c.*1,200 and *c.*1,345 editions (Table 9.1).⁵¹ Chapbook production had not only increased markedly over the period (very crudely, over sixty-five new editions every year), but had also become much more geographically

49 Some chapbooks are very rare, which leads researchers strongly to suspect that not all are actually known. Difficulties can relate to the chapbooks themselves. Indeed, there are differences of opinion as to what even counts as a chapbook. Some printers (thoughtlessly for subsequent historians) did not give up business in December 1800, the end point for ESTC. Many printers did not date their works, and many imprints do not give a place of publication. There are listing/cataloguing difficulties, particularly the problem of the sufficiency of catalogue records for identification purposes. Because so many chapbooks are undated, there has been a marked, albeit understandable, tendency to date them to the beginning or end of a decade. Beyond these challenges, we do not necessarily know what influences and preferences acted on contemporaneous collectors. And bibliographical work on detecting variants within titles has been uneven.

50 Likely chapbook titles, identified by either format and associated pagination, printer, or subject or genre headings in the British Library, Bodleian Library, National Library of Scotland, Glasgow University Library, and Aberdeen University Library.

51 A range is given so as to allow for the fact that many chapbooks are undated, with no evidence to suggest a publication date, so a proportion of them (here assumed to be 50 per cent) might have fallen into the early nineteenth century. The greatest problem arises with printers such as John Morren of Edinburgh, whose trading dates stretched from 1790 to 1822, but who did not date his works (few of which can be dated on internal evidence). The method adopted here was to take his total known output of 255 titles, distribute this figure annually over his entire career, and then calculate the output for 1790–1800 inclusive, which gives a figure of eighty-eight titles.

widespread, reflecting the spread of Scottish printing activity as a whole.

Locality	Chapbook editions provisionally identified	Approx. percentage (rounded)
Aberdeen	81	6%
Dumfries	11	< 1%
Dunbar	14	1%
Edinburgh	378	28%
Falkirk	110	8%
Glasgow	563	42%
Stirling	89	6.5%
Other localities and Scottish unknown	100	7%
Total	1,346	

Table 9.1. Estimated number of chapbook editions published in Scotland, 1780–1800.

There is often little enough that can be said about chapbooks without being acutely aware that whatever propositions are advanced may be subject to challenge. This is true even of the appropriate use of the word ‘chapbook’. Fortunately, Matthew Grenby has put forward a workable framework which proposes indicative characteristics — physical form (predominantly imposed and contained within a single sheet and of small format, and paper quality might usefully be included here); cost; distribution by hawkers; content — and, as Grenby suggests, it was the ‘relationship between these traits that caused contemporary readers to understand a text as a chapbook’.⁵² This allows for a pragmatic approach, and one that resonates with those eighteenth-century

52 M. O. Grenby, ‘Chapbooks, Children, and Children’s Literature’, *The Library*, 7th ser., 8 (2007), 277–303 (p. 278). Duodecimo format (12°) was particularly common. See John Meriton, with Carlo Dumontet (eds), *Small Books for the Common Man: A Descriptive Bibliography* (London: British Library; New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2010), p. 898. There are exceptions to the conventionally accepted 24- or 32-page limit for a chapbook. Editions of *Thomas the Rhymer*, for example, regularly exceeded this figure. Here, Brash & Reid’s *Poetry, Original and Selected*, Cameron & Murdoch’s ‘celebrated pieces’, and Stewart & Meikle’s poetic series, all including material by Burns and all published in Glasgow, are considered as poetry pamphlets rather than chapbooks.

printers' advertisements and notices that indicate what a chapman may actually have carried.

Analyses of chapbooks have tended to overlook those of a religious nature, particularly in the later decades of the eighteenth century, while giving prominence to more imaginative (humorous, exciting, emotionally stirring) genres. An exception to this is found in the contribution by Adam Fox, wherein he discusses the evolution and establishment of the Scottish chapbook to the mid-century, and, in particular, the stock of Robert Drummond.⁵³ But quite what conventions and criteria might be applied to the phrase 'religious chapbooks' is far from straightforward.⁵⁴ Ann Matheson has recently written: 'Religion dominated eighteenth-century Scottish life in a way difficult for the twenty-first-century reader to comprehend [...] the observance of religion and all its outward forms forged the way people thought and behaved.'⁵⁵ There is more than sufficient evidence from printers' notices and chapmen's recollections to conclude that cheap religious works regularly bulked out the hawker's pack. Although having to call on early and mid-nineteenth-century examples, we can draw attention to,

53 Adam Fox, "'Little Story Books' and 'Small Pamphlets' in Edinburgh, 1680–1760: The Making of the Scottish Chapbook', *Scottish Historical Review*, 92 (2013), pp. 207–30.

54 The criteria adopted (with few exceptions) in the present chapter for inclusion as a 'religious chapbook' are: produced by already recognized chapbook printers; an author otherwise known or acknowledged for having published in chapbook form; no indication of further distribution through booksellers in the 'regular' trade; and, where known, of a common chapbook format, such as 12°. This does not contradict the parameters suggested by Fox "'Little Story Books' and 'Small Pamphlets'", p. 209, and is also in line with the most frequently encountered chapbook formats identified by Meriton, with Dumontet (eds), *Small Books for the Common Man*, p. 913 (Table 3). Nevertheless, unlike, say, garlands, we are left with a high degree of individual judgement as to what should count as a 'religious chapbook'. What can be conceived of as small religious or doctrinal pamphlets (for example, sermons, catechisms), sold from printers' shops and sometimes far exceeding the conventional 24- or 32-page limit, were also regularly carried by some chapmen. Moreover, the definition in terms of content is complex. How, for instance, should the many small format, short catechisms in Gaelic printed in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Inverness be regarded? See Rev. Donald Maclean, *Typographia Scoto-Gadelica; or, Books Printed in the Gaelic of Scotland from the Year 1567 to the Year 1914* (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1915).

55 Ann Matheson, 'Religion', in *The Edinburgh History of the Book in Scotland*, vol. 2, *Enlightenment and Expansion, 1707–1800*, ed. Stephen W. Brown and Warren McDougall (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), pp. 459–70 (p. 459).

for example, the travels of John Magee through Scotland and England in 1806 and 1808:

As I carry with me in my travels a few pious books and sermons for sale, when I enter any house, and shew these articles, the common salutation I get is, we want no good books; for we have more good books than we have time to read. Others cry, we cannot read, we would much rather have something to eat and drink; Others would run and shut the door.⁵⁶

James Chalmers III of Aberdeen placed advertisements in two religious works issued from his press, *Translations and Paraphrases of Several Passages of Sacred Scripture* (1776) and *The A B C, with the Shorter Catechism* (1783). What is interesting about these notices is not the (hardly surprising) presence of religious titles, but that they included several secular works. Thus, the works advertised in *Translations and Paraphrases* include *The Mevis: A Collection of the Best English and Scots Songs*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Valentine and Orson*, *Hocus Pocus*, and *Tom Thumb's Play Book*. And in Chalmers's *A B C* he drew attention to the fact that he had a 'Great Variety of Story-books, Ballads, Mother's Catechisms, Larger Catechisms [...] Proverbs &c.' for sale.

Catechisms did not make up the entirety of the hawker's religious stock, although the history of travelling merchants offering such material for sale can be traced in Scotland to at least the late sixteenth century.⁵⁷ The lengthy imprint and advertisement of Daniel Reid's 1775 printing of Thomas Boston senior's sermon *Worm Jacob Threshing the Mountains* suggests that sermons were taken up by chapmen:

Falkirk printed, *where travelling chapmen may be served with a great variety of Bibles, Testaments, Books in Divinity, School Books, also small Histories, Rev. Mr. Renwick's Sermons, Rev. Mr. Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine's*

56 John Magee, *Some Account of the Travels of John Magee Pedlar and Flying Stationer, in North & South Britain, in the Years 1806 and 1808* (Paisley: printed by G. Caldwell, jun., 1826), p. 18. See Oskar Cox Jensen, 'The Travels of John Magee: Tracing the Geographies of Britain's Itinerant Print-Sellers, 1789–1815', *Cultural and Social History*, 11 (2014), 195–216.

57 William Cramond, *The Records of Elgin, 1234–1800*, 2 vols (Aberdeen: New Spalding Club, 1903–08), II, 60–61: 'It is appointit that the haill inhabitantis of this burgh [i.e. Elgin] be warnit be sound of the hand bell to buy catecheis sa lang as the merchantis ar in the toun.'

Sermons, Rev. Mr. Townshend's Sermons, and many others too tedious to mention. — 1775.⁵⁸ (original italicization)

This was a piece of advertising that Reid used several times over his career, and evidence for the sale of sermons and other religious texts by chapmen can be found in advertisements from his successor, Patrick Mair, and also from Alexander Robertson of Edinburgh, who advertised sermons by Willison, Bunyan, Peden, Boston, Cameron, Hall, and other worthies, 'and none of the above Sermons exceeds Four-pence to one Penny'.⁵⁹

Just as advertisements for secular works are found with religious titles, so advertisements for religious texts appeared with secular works. One of the lengthiest lists, running to eleven titles is on the overall title page of Daniel Reid's 4d. edition of *The Gentle Shepherd and Shepherdess* (1782).⁶⁰ Reid's list is important because not only does it give an (albeit fleeting) impression of the stock he was carrying, but even a cursory examination shows a number of editions otherwise not known (Table 9.2).

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- 58 Rev. Thomas Boston, *Worm Jacob Threshing the Mountains: A Sermon Preached on a Sacramental Occasion* (Falkirk printed; where travelling chapmen may be served with a great variety of bibles, testaments, books in divinity, history, school books, also small histories, Rev. Mr Renwick's sermons, Rev. Mr Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine's sermons, Rev. Mr Townshend's sermons, and many others too tedious to mention, 1775), price 1d. [ESTC T179561].
- 59 Ebenezer Erskine, *The Angel's Seal Set upon God's Faithful Servants* (Edinburgh: printed by Alexander Robertson, Niddry's Wynd, 1782) [ESTC T75160]. Similar titles are advertised for chapmen in *Peter's Repentance, after He Had Denied His Lord and Master Jesus Christ* (Glasgow: printed and sold by J. & J. Robertson, 1776) [ESTC T25775] and *A Token for Mourners; or, The Advice of Christ to a Distressed Mother* (Belfast: printed by James Magee, at the Bible and Crown, in Bridge Street, 1780).
- 60 *The Gentle Shepherd and Shepherdess* (Stirlingshire Printing Office, in Falkirk: printed and sold by Daniel Reid, near the Old Kirk, 1782). The volume also carries a separate title page for Allan Ramsay, *The Gentle Shepherd, a Scots Pastoral Comedy* (Falkirk: printed and sold by Daniel Reid, at the Stirlingshire Printing Office, in the High Street, 1782) [Aberdeen University Library, SB 82:3985 Cha co 1]. Reid's list is important because not only does it give an (albeit fleeting) impression of the stock he was carrying, but even a cursory examination shows a number of editions otherwise not known. It was first noticed and discussed in William Walker, *Some Notes on Chap-Books* (Aberdeen, [1931?]), p. 2.

Title	ESTC no.	Printer (if known)
<i>Fiery Pillar of Heavenly Truth</i> [by Alexander Gosse, 72 pp. 8°]	N18667	Daniel Reid, Falkirk
<i>Faith's Plea on God's Word</i> [by Ralph Erskine, 32 pp. 12°]	T186255	Daniel Reid, Falkirk
<i>Rent Vail of the Temple</i> [by Ralph Erskine, 44 pp. 8°]	T230914	Daniel Reid, Falkirk
<i>Christ the People's Covenant</i> [by Ralph Erskine, 64 pp. 8°]	T165478	John Bryce, Glasgow
<i>A Cry to the Whole Earth</i> [by John Welch]	No edition known in or before 1782	
<i>Mr Welch's Life and Prophecies</i> [32 pp. 12°]	T194378	Daniel Reid, Falkirk
<i>Mr Peden's Life and Prophecies</i> [56 pp. 8°]	T168937	Daniel Reid, Falkirk
<i>Thomas the Rhymer's Whole Book of Prophecies</i> [48 pp. 12°]	T180400	Alexander Robertson, Edinburgh
<i>Mr Peden's Sermons</i> [probably an edition of <i>The Lord's Trumpet</i> , sometimes published with two prophetic sermons]	Too vague for closer analysis	
<i>Reverend Mr Erskine's Harmony of the Divine Attributes</i> [64 pp. 8°]	T166614	John Bryce, Glasgow An edition by Reid is known in 1783
<i>Mr Willison's Young Communicant's Catechism</i>	N70194 or T177728	
<i>Proof and Mother's Catechism</i> [Mother's Catechism is by John Willison]	Too vague for closer analysis	
<i>Father's Catechisms, &c.</i> [Father's Catechism, by Robert Lang, 24 pp. 12°]	T203273	Alexander Robertson, Edinburgh

Table 9.2. Titles advertised with Daniel Reid's 4d. edition of *The Gentle Shepherd* (1782): 'Where Travellers and Shopkeepers may have the following Books (among many others)'. Editions cited are those that may have been referred to by Reid. It is also entirely possible that Reid printed editions of some of the titles, copies of which are now not known. The physical size of some of the works is such that they challenge the conventional criteria for chapbooks.

It would be wrong, however, to assume that during this period it was only chapmen based in Scotland that dealt in religious titles and for whom catechisms were a stock-in-trade. Some mid-century imprints of the Newcastle printer John White carry generalized wording to the effect that, 'chapmen may be furnished with sermons, histories, ballads, &c.'⁶¹ Shorter catechisms were often combined with alphabet tables. Entirely typical of this group is John Morren's printing of *The A, B, C, with the Shorter Catechism, Appointed by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland [...] to which are added, Short and Easy Questions, and Hymns for Children*.⁶² As Margaret Spufford has observed, though of an earlier period, many catechisms were designed especially to include the mother in religious upbringing.⁶³ And so it was in eighteenth-century Scotland. The Rev. John Willison's *The Mother's Catechism*, of which ESTC records thirty-three editions in various formats, published in Britain and America (in English and Gaelic) has prefatory remarks addressed to 'Christian parents', who were charged with the responsibility of ensuring that they did not 'lead [their children] straight to hell and damnation'.⁶⁴

The structure of catechisms lent itself to parody, a fact lighted upon almost certainly by Charles Randall of Stirling who printed off *The English Lady's Complete Catechism* (c.1800), thus: 'Q. How do you employ your time now? / A. I ly in bed till noon, dress all the afternoon, dine in the evening, and play at cards till midnight.'⁶⁵ And if not parody, then straightforward witticism, as with *The Scots Piper's Queries; or, John Falkirk's Cariches*, which appeared from presses in Glasgow, Stirling, and Falkirk around 1800.

61 ESTC T195530, T300528.

62 *The A, B, C, with the Shorter Catechism, Appointed by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland [...] to which are added, Short and Easy Questions, and Hymns for Children* (Edinburgh: printed and sold by J. Morren, East Campbell's Close, opposite the east side of the Meal Market, Cowgate; where may be had Brown's, Willison's Young Communicants, Mothers, and Proof Catechisms, large and small Proverbs, &c.) [ESTC T19062]. For Morren, this is an extremely rare announcement of what stock he held.

63 Margaret Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories: Popular Fiction and Its Readership in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985 [1981]), p. 211.

64 John Willison, *The Mother's Catechism for the Young Child; or, A Preparatory Help for the Young and the Ignorant, in Order to their Easier Understanding the Assembly's Shorter Catechism* (Falkirk: printed and sold by T. Johnston, 1799), p. 2 [ESTC T170255].

65 *The English Lady's Complete Catechism* (Stirling: printed in this present year), p. 4 [Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, L.C.2882(20)].

What is noticeable about the Scottish chapbook sermons of the eighteenth century is that many were by ministers who could be placed within an Evangelical tradition. Some (for example, Samuel Rutherford, James Renwick, and Alexander Peden) were seventeenth-century individuals, recognized as Covenanters, while others (such as Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine) had felt driven to take an independent stand against the position of the Church of Scotland and to establish the Associate Presbytery.⁶⁶ Scholars have already noticed that ‘Erskine and Thomas Boston were among the writers most widely read by the eighteenth-century peasant [in Scotland].’⁶⁷ The pronouncements of two leaders of the First Secession (1733), the brothers Ebenezer and Ralph Erskine (especially those of the latter), were frequently printed in chapbook form. Ralph Erskine’s communion sermon *Faith’s Plea upon God’s Covenant*, far from being condemnatory, adopted a hopeful, pardoning, and rewarding approach in exhorting respect for God’s commandments, and was printed in chapbook form at least six times in the 1770s and 1780s.

Some sermons of Thomas Boston senior, and to a much lesser extent those of his son, Thomas junior — the former of decidedly Calvinist convictions, the latter a founder of the Relief Church (1761) — were offered by the chapbook printers.⁶⁸ *Worm Jacob Threshing the Mountains* by Thomas Boston senior, a text (taken from Isaiah 41:14) that emphasized faith and grace, was printed at least seven times in eighteenth-century Scotland, with another edition in Newcastle by Thomas Saint. Alexander Peden ‘combined a kind of second sight (insight and foresight together) with impassioned forewarning of imminent peril’ and his prophetic sermons ‘assumed a denunciatory directness.’⁶⁹ His biography and predictions proved a popular subject for chapbook printers, through to the 1840s, although the resultant publications tend to be somewhat

66 Matheson, ‘Religion’, p. 463.

67 Smout, *History of the Scottish People*, chapter 13, esp. pp. 308–09. Alexander Somerville, *The Autobiography of a Working Man* (London: Gilpin, 1848), refers several times (e.g. p. 39) to his father, who was a carter and labourer, reading religious titles, including Erskine, almost exclusively in the late eighteenth century.

68 The Erskine brothers were printed in small format editions (mostly twelve- or 24-page) over ten times post-1780, most often by Glasgow presses. Thomas Boston seems to have been a relative favourite of the Falkirk presses, with seven post-1780 editions out of thirteen.

69 D. F. Wright, ‘Peden, Alexander (1626?–1686), Preacher’, *ODNB* <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/21756>.

larger than the usual chapbook. That said, John Morren reduced his *Life and Prophecies of the Reverend Mr Alexander Peden* to eight pages in 1799.⁷⁰

The overall contents of Scottish chapbooks changed somewhat over the century, and the single largest detectable difference was the declining percentage of religious titles compared with song collections. From the 1780s onwards, the chapbook became a major force for the distribution of songs, with approximately 51 per cent of the total. No other subject or category (*none* of them mutually exclusive) came near it. Tales (for example, *The Seven Champions of Christendom*) accounted for 12 per cent, followed by witty stories and accounts (for example, *The Comical and Witty Jokes of John Falkirk the Merry Piper*) at 6.5 per cent, and religious, including 'moral conduct', chapbooks (for example, *A Key to Open Heaven's Gate*) at 13 per cent. Such a change in content, and its timing, broadly agrees with the gradual move towards the reading of more fictional material observed by George Robertson, who suggested that the 1760s was the pivotal decade.⁷¹

Although medieval and early modern romances, stories of legendary figures, and pseudo-histories continued to appear in English chapbooks throughout the eighteenth century, their appeal in Scotland during the later part of the century seems to have been relatively limited. *Guy of Warwick*, an otherwise very popular and widely printed work, is not known to have been issued from an eighteenth-century Scottish press at all, and *The History of Thomas Hickathrift* only very rarely.⁷² *The Tragedy of Jamie and Nancy of Yarmouth* was a popular text and appeared in chapbook form in Scotland, under varying titles, at least six times in editions all dated 1770 or later. It was also printed in chapbooks from Newcastle, Manchester, Dublin, and North America, and on broadsides from London and from James Chalmers III in Aberdeen (1775).

The Factor's Garland first started to appear as a chapbook in Scotland in the 1740s, with nine editions to the end of the century, and was still available in that form a century later, printed (probably stereotyped) in Falkirk. As a narrative it evidently resonated widely, with editions

70 *The Life and Prophecies of the Reverend Mr Alexander Peden* (Edinburgh: printed and sold in East Campbell's Close, Cowgate, 1799) [Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, L.C.2813(2)].

71 George Robertson, *Rural Recollections; or, The Progress of Improvement in Agriculture and Rural Affairs* (Irvine: P. Cunningham, for the author, 1829), p. 107. See also Matheson, 'Religion', p. 469.

72 Fox, "'Little Story Books'" and "'Small Pamphlets'", p. 213.

throughout Britain and also in America. *The Children (Babes) in the Wood* was a hugely popular and widespread story which appeared in print throughout Britain, including at least nine times in Scotland during the eighteenth century. While modern readers find the deaths of the children (who are abandoned and left to starve) shocking, the fundamental morality of the story — which is aimed at parents, not children — lies in the element of divine retribution after they have been callously treated by adults, including their relatives, and ultimately forsaken as a result of avarice. Humorous stories sold well and went through many editions. *The Comical Tricks of Lothian Tom* went through at least twelve eighteenth-century Scottish editions, *Fun upon Fun; or, The Merry Tricks of Leper the Taylor* six editions (none outwith Scotland), and *The Witty and Entertaining Exploits of George Buchanan* possibly as many as twenty Scottish editions.⁷³

The printers of Scottish garlands (chapbook song collections) exercised a broad choice in what they included. Some songs were regarded as old, others highly topical. The garlands themselves were sometimes linked by an overall theme, sometimes not at all. ‘The Blythesome Wedding (Bridal)’ is said to have first appeared in print in 1706 in James Watson’s *Choice Collection of Comic and Serious Scots Poems*, and remained a regular choice in the many songbooks published over the century. It finally moved into chapbook orbit in the 1790s and was included in garlands printed in Edinburgh and Glasgow. ‘For the Love of Jean’ (also known as ‘Jocky Said to Jeanie’) appeared in the 1724 (first) and subsequent editions of Ramsay’s *Tea-Table Miscellany*. It did not appear in chapbook form until 1802, when it was included in three separate garlands from the Robertson press in Glasgow.⁷⁴ And this

73 See also R. H. Cunningham (ed.), *Amusing Prose Chap-books, Chiefly of Last Century* (London: Hamilton, Adams; Glasgow: T. D. Morrison, 1889); John Fraser, *The Humorous Chap-books of Scotland*, 2 parts (New York: H. L. Hinton, 1873–74).

74 *The Laird of Logie, an Old Song; to which are added, The Sailor’s Epitaph; or, Tom Bowling under the Hatches; The Phoenix.; ‘Twas Yes, Kind Sir; For the Love of Jean* (Glasgow: printed by J. & M. Robertson, Saltmarket, 1802) [Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, L.C.2837(6)]; *The Luckie Plou’-boy; to which are added, The Lamp-lighter; Virtue and Wit, the Preservatives of Love and Beauty; Sweet Jean of Tyrone* (Glasgow: printed by J. & M. Robertson, Saltmarket, 1802) [Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, L.C.2836(10)]; *The Vanity of Pride; to which are added, Matrimonial Deafness; Young Men Are Deceitful; For the Love of Jean; The Distressed Maiden; with The Answer; The Men Will Romance* (Glasgow: printed by J. & M. Robertson, Saltmarket, 1802) [Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, L.C.2835(33)].

neatly demonstrates a characteristic of many songs in chapbooks: they were picked up by printers, exploited over a few years, then dropped from the repertoire.

The ballad *Edom of Gordon* was first printed by the Foulis brothers in 1755 as a single twelve-page item, then later by James Chalmers III in Aberdeen in the 1780s or a little later.⁷⁵ Given that the text is close to Foulis's, the use of 'new' in Chalmers's title is a typical example of publisher's licence. But its presence and presentation does raise the suspicion that the ballad was included (at least by Chalmers) either as a piece of conscious antiquarianism and not aimed at the lower classes at all, or else as an attempt to copy the Foulis edition. The first lines of the fourth stanza are indicative: 'O see ze nat, my mirry men a' / O see ze nat quhat I see?' To what extent 'ze' would have been recognized and pronounced as '3e', as in Older Scots, remains unanswered.⁷⁶

Francis James Child wrote of *Thomas the Rhymer* that his 'fame as a seer' was 'after the lapse of nearly or quite six centuries, far from being extinguished';⁷⁷ and James Murray observed that "The "Whole Prophecies" continued to be printed as a chap-book down to the beginning of the present [nineteenth] century, when few farm-houses in Scotland were without a copy of the mystic predictions of the Rhymer and his associates."⁷⁸ These assertions are supported by some twenty-five Scottish editions to the end of the century, with (at a conservative estimate) a further ten into the nineteenth century. At often more than thirty pages it could stretch the conventions of what constitutes a chapbook, and by the time the basic text was expanded with additional prophecies by 'Marvellous Merlin, Bede, Berlington, Waldhave, Eltrain, Banester, and Sybilla' nearly forty pages were needed. The text also contains elements that, during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic

75 *Edom of Gordon, an Ancient Scottish Poem, never before printed* (Glasgow: Robert and Andrew Foulis, 1755) [ESTC T86547]; *Two Excellent New Songs, called Will Ye Go and Marry; to which is added, Edom of Gordon* [Bloomington, IN, Lilly Library, PR 974. A1/895].

76 Similar features are found in Chalmers's *Three Excellent New Songs, called the Young Laird of Ochiltree; Macpherson's Rant; Hey Jenny Come Down to Jock*, where the spelling 'sche' is used for 'she'.

77 Francis James Child (ed.), *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, 5 vols (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1882–98), I, 317.

78 James A. H. Murray (ed.), *The Romance and Prophecies of Thomas of Erceldoune*, Early English Text Society, O.S. 61 (London: N. Trübner, for the Early English Text Society, 1875), p. xlii.

Wars, caused 'much distress and consternation in the border counties of Scotland, where people were fearing an invasion'.⁷⁹ If Rymer's prophecies created anxiety among the people, the power of prophetic print was able to disconcert the government in other parts of the United Kingdom, particularly during the 1820s. In response to a question about what the 'peasantry' read in Ireland, a witness to a government enquiry stated that it consisted of 'generally common spelling books and story books, and one very dangerous book that is circulated through the country called Pastorini's Prophecy; the circulation of it in the south of Ireland is quite astonishing'.⁸⁰

The chapbook song collections were far from a constant repackaging of long-standing material. Their contents could reflect contemporaneous events. *The Tax'd Dogs' Garland* was a song that reflected on recent legislation. Among the reasons that had led to the introduction of a dog tax in 1796 was that it provided another source of government revenue, and it was seen as a way of reducing poaching and the worrying of livestock by dogs. Some, indeed, argued that it might have the effect of diverting the income of the lower orders away from feeding dogs and towards feeding themselves.⁸¹ The song itself appeared in chapbooks from Falkirk and Stirling.⁸²

Some chapbooks were not only topical but made an immediate local reference, although that is not to say that the content was merely of such interest. *Four Excellent New Songs*, printed in 1785 and ascribed to a Paisley press, offered its prospective readers *The Memorable Battle of*

79 Child (ed.), *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, I, 317.

80 *Report of the Select Committee on Condition of Labouring Poor in Ireland and on Application of Funds for their Employment*, House of Commons Papers, 561 (London: House of Commons, 1823), p. 28. The witness referred to an edition of *The Prophecies of Pastorini*, a pseudonym for Bishop Charles Walmsley, who foretold the collapse of Protestantism and the visitation of God's punishments on the enemies of Catholicism. A 32-page edition, printed in Dublin by Thomas and Robert Conolly, costing 5d., is known.

81 These comments are heavily dependent on Ingrid H. Tague, 'Eighteenth-Century English Debates on a Dog Tax', *Historical Journal*, 51 (2008), pp. 901–20.

82 *The Humorous Exploits of Mally Dyver; to which is added, The Farmer's Witty Remarks on the Dog-Tax* (licensed according to order; [colophon] T. Johnston, printer, Falkirk, 1802; where a good assortment of pamphlets may be [had] in wholesale on the lowest terms) [Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, L.C.2828.B(8)]; *The Tax'd Dogs' Garland; to which are added, The Maid of Primrose-Hill; Hap Me with thy Petticoat* (Stirling; printed and sold by C. Randall, 1806) [Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, L.C.2864(19)].

Bannockburn, which has obvious nationalist references, while another song, *Galloping Dreary Dun*, is a very close match to 'A Master I Have' which formed part of a comic opera, *The Castle of Andalusia*, first performed in 1782. It raises an interesting question as to how well this last song was recognized along the Clyde coast, and to what extent it reflected opera attendance in the area.

The appearance of works of Robert Burns in chapbook and broadside form has been closely mapped by Craig Lamont, so that the publication details of *The Calf* (1787), *The Prayer of Holy Willie* (1789), and *An Address to the Deil* (1795), among others, are well documented.⁸³ The appearance of Burns's songs and poems in chapbook garlands seems to have started early and continued with increasing frequency to the end of the 1820s.⁸⁴ Charles Randall's printing of *My Nannie O* and *The Peck o' Maut* around 1795 is typical.⁸⁵ Burns's death in 1796 was felt throughout Britain and was quickly reflected in a variety of literary forms. From a Kilmarnock press came *Burns' Widow's Lament*, and Thomas Johnston in Falkirk printed *A Solemn Dirge on the Death of R. Burns, Poet*.⁸⁶

What depth of thought was given to the completion and textual layout of Scottish — and, more broadly, British — chapbooks is debatable. There is much evidence of what was effectively padding, usually by placing a short song or poem on the last page, mainly for reasons of length. Examples are very common. *The Soldier's Wife* has an additional song, comprising two four-line stanzas, set on the last page.⁸⁷ A single eight-line stanza neatly completes the last page of Charles Randall's *The Sailor Dear*.⁸⁸ If a further song or poem was not felt requisite, then the

83 Craig Lamont, 'A Bibliography of Robert Burns for the 21st Century, 1786–1802' (2018) https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/Media_518307_smx.pdf.

84 Iain Beavan, 'Burns and Chapbooks: A Bibliographer's Twilight Zone', *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 43 (2017), pp. 321–27.

85 *Eight Songs: My Nannie O; The Peck o' Maut; Willie Wastle; Wandering Willie; Jocky and Jenny; The Braw Wooer; Death of Sally Roy; Oaths in Fashion* (Stirling: printed by C. Randall) [ESTC T32462].

86 *Four Songs: The Banks of Clyde; Burns' Widow's Lament; Crooked Disciple; The Sprig of Shilelah* (Kilmarnock: printed for the booksellers) [Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, L.C.2856(28)]; *The Perthshire Gardeners, a Popular New Song; to which is added, The Constant Shepherd; and A Solemn Dirge on the Death of R. Burns, Poet* (printed by T. Johnston) [Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, 5.6150(37)].

87 *The Soldier's Wife; or, The Fruits of a Victory; to which is added, Let Fortune's Angry Tempest Blow* (printed for the booksellers) [ESTC T160127].

88 *The Sailor Dear; with The Answer; to which is added, A Hunting Song* (Stirling: printed by C. Randall) [ESTC T200532].

last page of the chapbook could be completed with a woodcut. A good example is *Three Excellent New Songs* printed in August 1784, where the cut occupies more space than the final stanza on the last page.⁸⁹

The title of a garland could either stand for the entire piece, as, for example, *Black-Ey'd Susan's Garland, in Four Parts*, or else refer just to the first song in the work, a style adopted particularly by Newcastle chapbook printers, as, for example, *The Greenwich Pensioner's Garland*, where the other songs have no relevance either to Greenwich or to a government pension.⁹⁰ It would, however, be mistaken to conclude that the inclusion of songs in chapbook garlands was necessarily indiscriminate. A Newcastle *Garland of New Songs*, for example, consists of four songs all linked by being on broadly Scottish themes.⁹¹ An amorous theme is explicit in *Seven Love Songs* printed in Kincardine, and George Miller of Haddington brought out a collection of *Sea Songs*.⁹²

The adjective 'new' sometimes functioned as little more than a marketing ploy and an attempt to inject an element of contemporaneity into the work (Fig. 9.1). For example, in *A New Garland* printed in Falkirk, *Captain Ward and the Rainbow* had been floating around since the previous century, and *There's my Thumb I'll Ne'er Beguile* was in Ramsay's *Tea-Table Miscellany* in 1724 and subsequent editions.⁹³ John Morren's

89 *Three Excellent New Songs, entituled, I. The Irishman's Ramble; or, Drunk at Night and Dry in the Morning; II. Peggy Bawn; III. The Answer to Peggy Bawn* (printed in August 1784) [ESTC T174859]. Although ESTC assigns it to Glasgow, it is almost certainly by Chalmers of Aberdeen. The woodcuts on the title page were used contemporaneously by James Chalmers III, and the style of dating, 'printed in August 1784', was also used, albeit not uniquely, by Chalmers.

90 *Black-Ey'd Susan's Garland, in Four Parts* (Edinburgh: printed by J. Morren, Cowgate) [Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, L.C.2805(20)]; *The Greenwich Pensioner's Garland, containing Several Excellent New Songs: I. The Greenwich Pensioner; II. The Tobacco Box; III. The Neglected Tar; IV. Poll and my Partner Joe* (licenced and entered according to order) [ESTC T35877].

91 *A Garland of New Songs, containing 1. The Bonny Lass of Bannachie; 2. 'Twas within a Mile of Edinbro'; 3 A New Song, called Loughaber; 4 The Answer to Loughaber* ([colophon] Angus, printer) [ESTC T40481].

92 *Seven Love Songs: Och hey Johnnie Lad; Thou Bonnie Wood o' Cragie Lea; Ane & Twenty Tam; Logan Water; The Land o' the Leal; &c.* (Kincardine: W. Liddell, printer) [Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, L.C.2861.A(1)]; *Sea Songs: The Tempest; The Wat'ry Grave; Heaving of the Lead; Far, Far at Sea* (Haddington: printed by G. Miller; at whose shop may be had a variety of pamphlets, ballads, children's books, pictures, catechisms, &c., wholesale and retail) [Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, L.C.2853.A(3)].

93 *A New Garland, containing Three Excellent New Songs, viz. 1. The Highlandman's Lament. 2. Captain Ward and the Rainbow; 3. There's my Thumb I'll Ne'er Beguile* (Falkirk: printed and sold at the south gate of the Old Kirk, in High Street) [ESTC T186166].

Three Excellent New Songs was right to the extent that *Lord Douglas's Tragedy*, although far from new, had not long been in print, and chapbook versions of that particular ballad would be criticized by Walter Scott as being 'in a state of great corruption'.⁹⁴ If it were inappropriate to use the word 'new' in relation to the contents, then a common stratagem was to suggest that the chapbook as material object was new by incorporating 'printed this present year' into the imprint.

Crime and punishment seem to have been addressed in Scotland either on broadsides or half-sheets, or else in longer, much more sustained accounts, although the Edinburgh printer Robert Brown's account of Margaret Dickson, 'ill hangit Maggy', was contained within a single folded sheet.⁹⁵ The number of post-1780 Scottish chapbooks given over to executions or lesser punishments is relatively few — initial indications suggest around fifteen. As a publishing form, the chapbook evidently did not meet market expectations for lurid accounts of executions, and it would have required something particularly shocking to have persuaded a chapbook printer to commit eight or sixteen pages of type to the event (though the nineteenth-century Burke and Hare scandal was an exception). That said, Patrick Mair in Falkirk must have thought that the deaths, some fifty years earlier, by shooting and suicide, of members of the Smith family would constitute a saleable sensational text, though any sense of immediacy or topicality would have dissipated by the time of its publication in 1785, when he issued the eight-page *Surprising and Melancholy Account of Richard Smith*.⁹⁶ John Morren adopted a somewhat different approach and *The Lamentation of Thomas*

94 *Three Excellent New Songs: Jeany Diver; Lord Douglas's Tragedy; Rindordin; or, The Mountains High* (Edinburgh: printed by J. Morren) [ESTC T174861]; [Walter Scott], *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, 2nd edn, 3 vols (Edinburgh: Longman and Rees, 1803), III, 244.

95 *The Last Speech, Confession and Warning of Margaret Dickson, Who Was Executed in the Grass-Mercat of Edinburgh, for the Unnatural Murder of her Own Child, on Wednesday the 2d of September 1724* (Edinburgh: printed by Robert Brown, in the middle of Forrester's Wynd, 1724) [ESTC T193695]. For her 'wonderful restoration', see 'Account of the Hanging of Margaret Dickson', *Scots Magazine*, December 1808, pp. 905–06.

96 *Surprising and Melancholy Account of Richard Smith, Book-binder, and Prisoner for Debt within the Liberty of the King's-Bench, and Bridget Smith, his Wife, Who Were Found Hanging near their Bed, and in Another Room, their Child, about 2 Years Old, Was Found in a Cradle [sic] Shot through the Head* (Falkirk: printed and sold at the Printing Office, in the High Street, opposite to the Cross Well; where variety of other pamphlets are sold in wholesale and retail, 1785) [ESTC T192950.] See further Philippa Marks, 'Suicide Pact of Bookbinder's Family' <http://blogs.bl.uk/untoldlives/2012/01>.

Smith and George Stevenson, the Horse Stealers was simply included among *Four Excellent New Songs*, undated, but presumably 1807 when Smith and Stevenson were executed in Edinburgh.⁹⁷

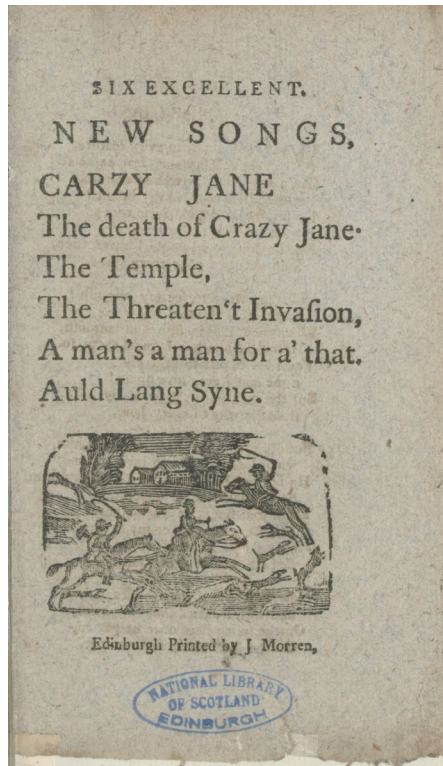


Fig. 9.1. *Six Excellent New Songs* (Edinburgh: printed by J. Morren) [National Library of Scotland, L.C.2808(1)]. The title page illustrates Morren's typographical carelessness ('Carzy'). Most interestingly, it includes two Burns songs, both close to the 'authorized' or 'accepted' versions, but in neither case is the authorship acknowledged. Reproduced by permission of the National Library of Scotland through the Creative Commons 4.0 International Licence.

Addendum on aspects of print history

No Scottish printer issued chapbooks to the exclusion of other print forms, though a few came very close to it. The available evidence suggests that the printing of chapbooks in Scotland was dominated by just a few

⁹⁷ *Four Excellent New Songs: The Lass of Benochie; The Banks of the River; The Rose Bud; The Lamentation of Thomas Smith and George Stevenson, the Horse Stealers* (Edinburgh: printed by J. Morren) [Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, L.C.2807(31)].

firms. The Robertson family of Glasgow are said to have made £30,000 from the sale of their chapbooks, which they started printing in the 1770s and continued until 1809.⁹⁸ Up to and including 1801 (mercifully, Robertson titles were dated) they produced, very conservatively, 214 chapbook editions (religious and moral material, c.22 per cent; tales, c.15 per cent; song collections, c.35 per cent). And Adam McNaughtan has calculated that between 1802 and 1809 the firm produced 'some 150 eight-page song garlands'.⁹⁹ However, this total of around 369 titles is probably too low (see below).

The Robertson brothers' premises were in the Saltmarket, where conditions appear not to have been ideal. The northern end of the street in the late eighteenth century was described as having 'abominably dirty closes [...]. At the bottom of one of those, up an outside stair, in an old-fashioned Flemish-looking house, lived two famous booksellers, J. and M. Robertson.'¹⁰⁰ By the 1780s, the Saltmarket, which formed part of the historic city centre, accommodated merchants and tradespeople (such as grocers, hatters, and ironmongers), and several connected with the printing trade, among them John Williamson, James Duncan, Peter Tait, John Bryce, Robert Ferrie, James Robertson, and John Mennons. In 1785, of those engaged in the book trade, the shop of James Duncan, printer and bookseller, was liable to the highest amount in shop tax (£10), and James Robertson's premises was liable to pay £9 10s. By the mid-1790s, however, records indicate that the Robertson family was prospering and was the only one in the Saltmarket that had to pay both carriage and horse taxes.¹⁰¹

Their prosperity up until that time *seems* to have been founded on printing, publishing, and selling a high percentage of religious texts, children's books, and relatively few chapbook titles. Their early chapbooks include *The Young Coal-man's Courtship to a Creelwife's Daughter* (1782), *The Comical Sayings of Pady from Cork* (1784), and

98 George MacGregor, 'Chap-Literature of Scotland', in *The Collected Writings of Dougal Graham, 'Skellat' Bellman of Glasgow*, ed. George MacGregor, 2 vols (Glasgow: T. D. Morison, 1883), I, 68–80 (p. 78).

99 Adam McNaughtan, 'A Century of Saltmarket Literature, 1790–1890', in *Six Centuries of the Provincial Book Trade in Britain*, ed. Peter Isaac (Winchester: St Paul's Bibliographies, 1990), pp. 165–80 (p. 166).

100 'Senex' [Robert Reid], *Glasgow Past and Present*, ed. David Robertson, 3 vols (Glasgow: David Robertson & Co., 1884), I, 121.

101 National Records of Scotland, Cart Tax Rolls, Dog Tax Rolls, E326/8/18/45, E326/9/11/81 <http://Scotlandsplaces.gov.uk>.

possibly (though lengthy at forty pages) *The Witty and Entertaining Exploits of George Buchanan* (1777). Together with James Duncan, they appear to have conducted a significant amount of business in printing and/or selling children's books, most of modest cost, and not all of them unremittingly didactic or moralizing. Their 1d. works included *Tom Thumb's Folio*, *The Puzzling Cap*, *Nurse Truelove's Christmas Box*, *The House that Jack Built* and (an almost ubiquitous title) *The London Cries* 'with twenty-six cuts'. *The History of Little Goody Two-Shoes*, at 156 pages, was more expensive at 6d.¹⁰²

From an analysis of ESTC, it might appear that the Robertson brothers radically changed their publishing strategy in 1799 in three major ways. Their annual printed output rose considerably, and the number of chapbooks they produced increased very markedly. For the two years 1799 and 1800, chapbooks constituted more than 90 per cent of their output (as identified by imprint). And the type of chapbook they published also changed, with eight-page garlands becoming their preferred form (Fig. 9.2). But the change in strategy may be more apparent than real. *The Dandy-O* was published under the vague imprint 'entered according to order', but then exactly the same set of five songs, in the same order but reset (there are some minor textual differences), appeared under the imprint of J. & M. Robertson, Saltmarket, in 1799.¹⁰³ Similarly, *The Surprizing Adventures of Jack Oakum & Tom Splicewell* 'printed in the year 1798' was also reset and issued in 1800 with the imprint of J. and M. Robertson, with exactly the same woodcut of a dancing man.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, apart from the cuts, the typographical style

102 Information taken from a list printed in *A New History of England* (Glasgow: printed and sold by J. & J. Robertson, and J. Duncan, booksellers, 1777), pp. 187 ff. [ESTC T186672].

103 *The Dandy-O; to which are added, Tippet Is the Dandy-O; The Toper's Advice; Picking Lilies; The Dying Swan* (entered according to order) [ESTC T190596]; *The Dandy-O; to which are added, Tippet Is the Dandy-O; The Toper's Advice; Picking Lilies; The Dying Swan* (Glasgow: printed by J. & M. Robertson, 1799, Saltmarket) [Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, L.C.2835(14)].

104 *The Surprizing Adventures of Jack Oakum & Tom Splicewell* [...] to which is added, *The Merry Revenge; or, Joe's Stomach in Tune* (printed in the year 1798) [ESTC N25874]; *The Surprizing Adventures of Jack Oakum & Tom Splicewell* [...] to which is added, *The Merry Revenge; or, Joe's Stomach in Tune* (Glasgow: printed by J. and M. Robertson, 1800) [ESTC T65125]. The dancing man cut is yet another small piece of evidence for the overlap of the chapbook trade between Scotland and northern England. A similar cut appears with *Four New Songs: 1. Billy Taylor; 2. The Insulted Sailor; 3. The Brazier's Daughter; 4. Bonny Bet of Aberdeen* (Alnwick: printed 1792) [ESTC T40101]; and the general motif is found again on the early nineteenth-century *Sprig of Shillelagh*

and layout in these examples is identifiably that of the Robertson brothers, all of which indicates that a proportion (currently unquantifiable) of chapbooks with an 'entered according to order' style of imprint actually came from their press.¹⁰⁵

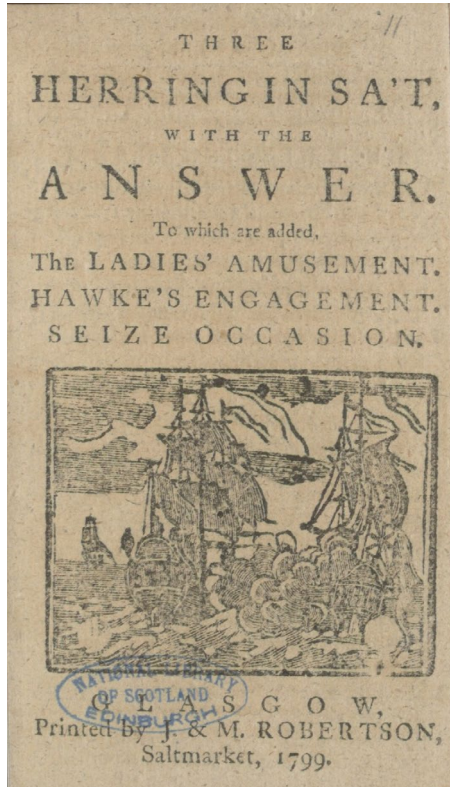


Fig. 9.2. *Three Herring in Sa't* (Glasgow: printed by J. & M. Robertson, 1799) [National Library of Scotland, L.C.2835(11)]. Reproduced by permission of the National Library of Scotland through the Creative Commons 4.0 International Licence.

and Shamrog [sic] *So Green; Dear Mary to Thee; Burns' Farewell; The Banks of Ayr; & My Friend and Pitcher* (printed by Graham & Lennin, Down [i.e. Downpatrick]) [Belfast, Ulster Museum, Cleland Chapbooks, BELUM.X188.1980].

- 105 As another example, the title-page woodcut on *Patie's Wedding; or, All Parties Pleased; to which are added, Absence Ill to Bide. Johnny and Mary; The Braes of Yarrow* (entered according to order) [ESTC T180468] is the same as that on *An Excellent Old Song, intituled Maggy Lauther; to which are added, The Farmer's Son; The Fond Swain and Sleeping Maid; The Sailor's Return* (Glasgow: printed by J. & M. Robertson, Saltmarket, 1802) [Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, L.C.2837(24)].

Thomas Duncan, who published many broadsides, was almost certainly also responsible for nine out of perhaps a total of eleven chapbooks in Gaelic printed up to the early nineteenth century. Of those nine, eight were for distribution and sale by Peter Turner, an Inverary-based chapman. Gaelic chapbooks can indirectly pose a definitional problem, if a criterion for chapbooks is that they were largely not distributed and sold through the regular trade but through itinerant chapmen, which is a distinction that works in the context of a predominantly urban book trade but is not so easy to sustain in a rural environment.

John Morren, in business in Edinburgh between 1790 and 1822, is perhaps a somewhat overlooked printer, though his output (predominantly of chapbooks, with some broadsides) was considerable, with (conservatively) over 245 titles, some 65 per cent of which were garlands, followed by tales at around 16 per cent.¹⁰⁶ He married into a printing family — one that was a major producer of chapbooks — when in 1784 he married Isobel Robertson, daughter of Alexander Robertson. Chapbooks could generate sizeable profits, and Morren's estate was worth over £5,000 at his death in 1822.¹⁰⁷ He was also perhaps lucky not to have been the subject of prosecution, as he was named (by his own brother) in a sedition trial as having printed 1,000 copies of a radical handbill.¹⁰⁸ High-quality, meticulous printing is not exactly associated with the production of chapbooks, but even within those qualifications Morren was a particularly careless printer. Typesetting and presswork were poorly undertaken and the results were often illegible, with titles such as *Five Songs* and *The Happy Stanger*.

Morren presents print historians with similar problems to those posed by the Robertson brothers. He almost certainly printed three separate editions of *Black-Ey'd Susan's Garland* (for convenience A, B, and

106 At least 95 per cent of Morren's known output consists of chapbooks and broadsides, but in 1797 he 'printed for the author' a two-volume novel called *Evening Amusements; or, What Happens in Life* (Edinburgh: printed for the author, by J. Morren, 1797) [ESTC T183781], by a Mrs M'Donald.

107 https://www.scotlandsppeople.gov.uk/sub/wills_and_testaments.

108 *An Account of the Trial of Thomas Fyshe Palmer* (Perth: printed by R. Morison, junior, for R. Morison and Son, booksellers, Perth; and Vernor and Hood, Birchin Lane, London, [1793]), p. 71 [ESTC T117134]; *A Complete Collection of State Trials and Proceedings for High Treason and Other Crimes and Misdemeanours*, vol. 23 (London: R. Bagshaw; Longman & Co., 1817), p. 514.

C). A has two title-page woodcuts, one of which is of a rowing boat, and is 'printed by J. Morren, Cowgate'.¹⁰⁹ B has an additional song, *Here Awa, There Awa*, and a single title-page woodcut showing a ship in full sail, and is 'printed by J. Morren'.¹¹⁰ C has the same title as A, and the same woodcut as B, but is 'printed for the Company of Flying Stationers'.¹¹¹ One plausible interpretation is that the editions with Morren's imprint were sold by the printer himself, but he also produced an edition for sale by chapmen.

Morren recycled standard or popular texts. He printed at least three editions of *The Babes in the Wood* and the same number of *The Gosport Tragedy*, but to each he added a different subordinate song. Different editions of *The Babes in the Wood*, for example, had either *The Yorkshire Beauty*, *The Bonny House of Airly*, or *The Sailor's Adieu*. Morren's father-in-law Alexander Robertson had previously worked his way through almost the entire list of chapbook humorous stories, witticisms, and pseudo-histories during the 1770s and 1780s. And as with the Robertson family, there is reason to believe that Morren used the 'entered according to order' form of imprint. Thus there are two editions of *The Poor Nevoy Press'd at the Desire of the Deceitful Uncle; or, Young Grigor's Ghost* with the same woodcut of a highland soldier, sword and shield in hand, one of which was 'printed by J. Morren' while the other was 'entered according to order'.¹¹²

Up to the 1760s, 'garland' in Scottish chapbook titles usually indicated a sustained verse narrative, a pattern that can be detected from *The New Glousiershire [sic] Garland*, printed in Edinburgh by John Reid senior in 1704 through to *Sweet William of Plymouth's Garland* ascribed to a Glasgow press at the end of the 1760s.¹¹³ By the 1740s, 'garland' was also being

109 *Black-Ey'd Susan's Garland, in Four Parts* (Edinburgh: printed by J. Morren, Cowgate) [ESTC T189577].

110 *Black-Ey'd Susan's Garland, in Four Parts; to which is added, Here Awa, There Awa* (Edinburgh: printed by J. Morren) [ESTC T189579].

111 *Black-Ey'd Susan's Garland, in Four Parts* (Edinburgh: printed for the company of flying stationers) [ESTC T189580].

112 *Poor Nevoy Press'd at the Desire of the Deceitful Uncle; or, Young Grigor's Ghost, in Three Parts* (entered according to order) [ESTC T228786]; *Poor Nevoy Press'd at the Desire of the Deceitful Uncle; or, Young Grigor's Ghost; to which is added, Green Grows the Rashes* (Edinburgh: printed by J. Morren) L.C.2805(19). (Scots 'nevoy' = nephew.)

113 *The New Glousiershire [sic] Garland* (licensed according to order; printed by J. Reid, Bells Wynde, 1704) [ESTC T96976]; *Sweet William of Plymouth's Garland, in Four Parts* (printed in the year 1769) [ESTC T168299].

used in the closely related sense of a collection of shorter songs. *The Irish Boy's Garland* printed in Edinburgh by Robert Drummond in 1744 is an early example.¹¹⁴ The taste (and market) for short song collections had found clear expression by the 1760s, with at least six song chapbooks all beginning with the title [*n*] *Excellent New Songs* from the Edinburgh press of William Forrest, and from Alexander Robertson mostly in the 1770s.

Scottish chapbook printers were undoubtedly acutely aware of competition emanating not only from their own localities but also from other parts of the country, and their advertisements and notices responded to it. In two editions of *The Witty and Entertaining Exploits of George Buchanan* (c.1780 and 1787) Alexander Robertson placed notices that 'That Shop-keepers, Chapmen, and Flying Stationers, will be served [...] at as reasonable prices as in Newcastle, Glasgow, or Edinburgh'.¹¹⁵ In 1782 he went further and advertised 'A great variety of Histories, Pamphlets and story books, Children's books, with a great variety of pictures. A large assortment of Curious Song books, Ballads, &c. Both in Whole-sale, to serve Merchants, and Chapmen, at as low prices as any in Britain.'¹¹⁶

Robertson was not alone. Falkirk chapbook printers reacted similarly, though they were perhaps more concerned with competition nearer to home. In extended imprints in both religious chapbooks and garlands, Daniel Reid and his successor, Patrick Mair, announced that travelling chapmen could be served with a whole variety of books 'as cheap as in Edinburgh or Glasgow'.¹¹⁷ The challenges of competition could to an extent be overcome by increasing and extending distribution channels through cooperation. Although direct evidence of this is very thin, Patrick Mair tried this around 1790, collaborating with George Caldwell

114 *The Irish Boy's Garland, compos'd of Three Excellent New Songs: I. The Irish Boy; II. The Bony Irish Girl; III. The Valiant Sailor* (Edinburgh: printed and sold in Swan Closs, a little below the Cross Well, north side of the street, 1744) [ESTC T300128].

115 I am grateful to Prof. Adam Fox for this reference.

116 *The Angel's Seal Set upon God's Faithful Servants* (Edinburgh: printed by Alexander Robertson, Niddry's Wynd, 1782) [ESTC T75160].

117 *Jamy and Nancy of Yarmouth; with The Flowers of the Forest, Old and New Way; and Canst Thou Leave thy Nancy* (Falkirk printed; where travelling chapmen may be served with variety of books in divinity, history, poetry, spelling books, books in arithmetick, small sermons, proverbs, catechisms, and writing paper, as cheap as in Edinburgh or Glasgow, at the Printing Office, in High Street, near the south gate of the church [ESTC T187787].

senior in Paisley, a successful bookseller and circulating library owner, and printer of chapbooks and prints (Caldwell's son, also George, continued the business and produced many chapbooks from the 1820s to the 1840s).¹¹⁸

The chapbooks of James Chalmers III of Aberdeen can usefully be viewed in the context of his printing and publishing activities as a whole. Aberdeen was very much a regional capital, with two separate university institutions, King's College and Marischal College, which pulled students in from the region. James was one of four generations of a family of Aberdeen printers that until the nineteenth century held an almost constant monopoly on newspaper publishing in northern Scotland (the *Aberdeen Journal*, founded in late 1747), printed the *Aberdeen Almanack* (restarted in 1771), the *Aberdeen Magazine*, the *Literary Chronicle and Review* (1788–90), and much material for the civic authorities, as well as publishing a large number of books (often by subscription) and sermons, and remaining the major publishing enterprise in the region despite increasing competition.¹¹⁹ In spite of its being a strong advertising medium, Chalmers does not appear to have used his newspaper to draw the attention of either hawkers or readers to his chapbooks. But what the *Journal* did offer was an extensive network of contacts and country sellers. We also know that Chalmers established a distribution chain for the *Aberdeen Almanack* which stretched as far as Inverness, some 120 miles to the north.¹²⁰ This perhaps unexceptional accumulation of facts illustrates that Chalmers & Co. was at the centre of a series of regional distribution networks which could be exploited for the distribution of the nearly eighty chapbooks and forty broadsides

118 *A New Garland, containing Three Excellent New Songs: viz. I. Bold Alexander; 2. Jack Rand's Farewel to Miss Roach; 3. The Faithful Swain's Love-Letter to a Beautiful Young Lady* (Falkirk: printed and sold at the Printing House; and by Mr Caldwell, in Paisly [*sic*]; where travellers can be served with great variety of books as cheap as in Edinburgh or Glasgow) [ESTC T186165]. For Caldwell, see K. A. Manley, *Books, Borrowers and Shareholders: Scottish Circulating and Subscription Libraries before 1825, a Survey and Listing* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Bibliographical Society, with the National Library of Scotland, 2012), pp. 57, 217.

119 Iain Beavan, 'Chalmers family (per. 1736–1876)', ODNB <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/64303>.

120 Aberdeen University Museums and Special Collections, MS 3167, William R. MacDonald, 'The Distribution of Books and Periodicals in the North-East of Scotland [...] 1750–1800' (unpublished among his professional papers on Scottish bibliography).

and slip songs that they printed.¹²¹ We know, for example, that the *Aberdeen Almanack* was sold by booksellers, merchants, and postmasters in the smaller townships of north-east Scotland, among whom was James Davidson of Banff, who himself printed some five undated (but c.1800–10) chapbooks.¹²² In addition to such distributors, there are stray references to travelling hawkers. *The Elegy on the Death of Peter Duthie* (d. 1812), ‘upwards of eighty years a flying stationer’, stated that he carried in his pack ‘Almanacks frae Aberdeen’, along with several chapbooks.¹²³ Charles Leslie was said, allowing for poetic exaggeration, to have travelled through Angus, Buchan, Strathbogie, the Garioch, and the Mearns selling Chalmers’s song chapbooks.¹²⁴

In memoriam

Scottish chapbooks continued at a high rate of production for the first two decades of the nineteenth century and then declined markedly. George Miller, printer and bookseller of Haddington and Dunbar, died in 1835, and his publishing output exemplifies some of the pressures faced by chapbook printing. Up to the beginning of the nineteenth century Miller’s output included chapbooks, with such familiar titles as *The Comical Sayings of Pady from Cork* and *The Battle of Prestonpans*, after which between 1802 and 1804 he began a ‘Cheap Tract’ series (not dissimilar to the Cheap Repository Tract initiative) and ceased further production of chapbooks. In 1813 he brought out his *Cheap Magazine; or, Poor Man’s Fireside Companion*, an ‘improving’ but short-lived publication, subsequently replaced by the *Monthly Monitor and Philanthropic Museum*.

121 Iain Beavan, ‘The Chapbooks and Broad-sides of James Chalmers III, Printer in Aberdeen: Some Re-discoveries and Initial Observations on his Woodcuts’, *Journal of the Edinburgh Bibliographical Society*, 10 (2015), 29–85 (since 2015 a further eleven chapbooks have been identified).

122 *Aberdeen Journal*, 4 February 1807.

123 *Memoirs of the Late John Kippen, Cooper, in Methven, near Perth; to which is added, An Elegy on Peter Duthie, Who Was upwards of Eighty Years a Flying Stationer* (Stirling: printed by C. Randall), p. 21 [Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, L.C.2868(1)].

124 [The] Garioch Garland; [or, The] Life and Death of the Famous Charles Leslie, Ballad-Singer, Commonly Called Musle-Mow’d Charlie, Who Died at Old Rayne, Aged Five Score and Five; to which is added, Two Excellent New Songs, entitled and called Johnny Lad; and The Old Way of the Highland Laddie, by the Foresaid Author (licensed and entered according to order) [ESTC T176926] (printed by James Chalmers III).

As *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal* agonizingly eulogized in 'Verses to the Memory of Mr. George Miller':

No more, from door to door,
The lounging pedlar hawked his poisoned lore;
For now, subservient to one virtuous end,
Amusement, with instruction, thou didst blend.
And, lo! Where Brougham and Chambers blaze in day,
Thou went before, and gently cleared the way.¹²⁵

125 *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, 30 October 1835, p. 288. On Miller, see Graham Hogg, 'Latter Struggles in the Life of a Provincial Bookseller and Printer: George Miller of Dunbar, Scotland', in *Periodicals and Publishers: The Newspaper and Journal Trade, 1750–1914*, ed. John Hinks, Catherine Armstrong, and Matthew Day (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press; London: British Library, 2009), pp. 139–59.

Appendix

Simplified list of *major* Scottish chapbook printers, 1750s–1800, based on the Scottish Book Trade Index <https://www.nls.uk/catalogues/scottish-book-trade-index/>.

Location	Printer	Dates of chapbook activity
Aberdeen	James Chalmers III	1770s–1800
Edinburgh	Robert Fleming, 1724–69 (Pearson’s Closs, 1725–35)	1724–69
	Robert Drummond 1740–52 (Swan’s Closs, 1746–52)	1740–52
	Alexander Robertson (Niddry’s Wynd, 1773–84; foot of the Horse Wynd, 1785–95; frequently address only in imprints)	1773–95
	James Robertson (Horse Wynd, 1792–1806) John Morren (Cowgate)	1790–1809 1790–1822
Falkirk	Daniel Reid	1773–83
	Patrick Mair, 1783–97 (as <i>printer</i> , previously bookseller); took over Daniel Reid’s business	1783–97
	Thomas Johnston, succeeded father-in-law Patrick Mair	1797–1831
Glasgow	William Duncan (Saltmarket)	1717–64
	John Bryce (Briggait (Bridgegait) and Saltmarket)	1742–87
	James Duncan senior (Trongate)	1749–1809
	James Duncan junior (Saltmarket)	1769–1824
	Robertson family: brothers John and James, then James and Matthew (Saltmarket)	1774–1809
	Robert Hutchinson & Co. (Saltmarket) Thomas Duncan (Saltmarket)	1796–1831 1801–26
Stirling	Charles Randall	1793–1812
	Business passed to wife Mary (1813–20), who sold it to William Macnie in 1820 Apprentices included John Fraser; independent business as John Fraser & Co., 1816–	

