

Isle of Wight Singing Games (words and updated notes)

Content

The Wind Blows High; See this pretty girl of mine; The Dairy Ho!; Bingo; The Jolly Miller; Rose, Apple, Lemon or Pear; Threadle the Needle; Oats and Beans and Barley; Babes in the Wood; A hunting we will go; When I was a Lady; My man John; The Grand Old Duke of York; Hark the Robbers; English Soldiers; Yellow Gravel; London is the Capital; There stands a lady; Sally Waters; Down in the Meadows; How many miles to Barbary Land?; Here Comes the Duke from sunny Spain. Plus: Down in the Valley; Milking Pails; Jenny Jones.

1. The Wind Blows High

The wind, the wind blows high,
The rain is falling from the sky!
Mary Parker is sure to die
Because there is so much rolling sky.

Chorus

She is handsome she is pretty,
She's the girl in this bright city,
She goes courting one, two, three,
Pray can you tell who it can be?

Georgie Walker says he love her!
All the boys are fighting for her!
Let the girls say what they will,
Georgie Walker loves her still.

Chorus

Notes: Song noted since 1875. Similar to "I'll Tell Me Ma". Names are changed to Johnny Walker, Lizzie Johnston, Margaret Thompson. Bright City is Golden City or other city. Very many versions.

2. See this pretty little girl of mine

See this pretty little girl of mine,
She cost me many a bottle of wine
A bottle of wine and a guinea too,
See what my little girl can do.

Down on the carpet she shall kneel,
As the grass grows in the field;
Stand upright upon your feet,
And choose the one that you love sweet.

Merry, merry, I wish you joy,
First a girl and second a boy!
Seven years after, a son and a daughter,
Merry, be merry and kiss together.

Notes: Another verse. First she brought a wooden ladle, Then she bought a wooden cradle, The very next day the babe was born, Rock rock the cradle, rock rock the cradle.

3. The Dairy Ho! (The Farmer's in his den)

The Farmer's in his den!
The Farmer's in his den!
I am the dairy ho!
The Farmer's in his den!

The farmer takes his wife
The farmer takes his wife
I am the dairy ho!
The farmer takes his wife

The wife takes the child,
The child takes the nurse,
The Nurse takes the dog,
The dog takes the cat, ...
The cat takes the mouse,
The mouse takes the cheese,
The cheese stand still!

Notes: Most versions use "wants". The farmer wants a wife etc. Also in Hampshire book.

4. Bingo

There was a farmer who had a dog
And his name was Bingo!
B I N G O, B I N G O, B I N G O,
And his name was Bingo.

Notes: Claps often replace some of the letters. Clap in place of B, claps in place of B and I. Other verses; The farmer loves a cup of good ale, And he called it rare good STINGO.... The farmer loved a pretty lass, And got her a wedding RINGO.... Also in Hampshire book.

5. The Jolly Miller

There was a jolly miller lived on the hill,
If he is not dead he lives there still!
One hand in the hopper, one in the bag,
As the wheel went round he made his grab!

Notes: From the "Miller of Dee". Many more verses available.

6. Rosy Apple, Lemon or Pear

Rosy apple, Lemon or Pear
Bunch of roses she shall wear;

Gold and silver by your side,
Choose the one to be your bride!

Take her by the lily white hand,
And lead her to the alter,
Give her kisses one, two, three,
Old Mother Hubbard's daughter.

Katie Rock has got a lover!
All the boys fight for her,
Let the girls say what they will,
Georgy Price has got his girl.

Notes: Rosy apple verse is sometimes used as chorus. Also in Surrey Singing Games.

7. Threadle the Needle

Threadle the needle poor Tom, poor Tom,
Threadle the needle poor Tom, poor Tom,
'Tis so dark I cannot see
To threadle my Grandmother's needle.

Notes: Not yet.

8. Oats and Beans and Barley

Oats and beans and barley grow,
Oats and beans and barley grow,
Nor you, nor I, nor nobody knows,
How oats and beans and barley grow.

First the farmer sows his seed,
Then he stands and takes his ease,
Stamps his foot and claps his hands,
Turns around to view the land.

Waiting for a partner,
Waiting for a partner,
Open the ring and let one in!
Make haste and choose a partner.

Now your married you must obey,
You must be true to all who say,
You must be kind you must be good,
And help your wife chop the wood.

Notes. "Oats and beans" verse used as chorus. "Waiting for a partner" section is in a dramatic minor key.

9. Babes in the wood

My mother said I never should
Play with the gypsies in the wood.
If I did she would say,
Naughty little child to disobey.
(Disobey, disobey,
Naughty little child to disobey.)

She would say if I did
She'd knock my head with a teapot lid.
Away I went and said I should
Play with the gypsies in the wood.

The woods were dark and the grass was green
Up comes Sally with a tambourine
Tambourine, tambourine
Up comes Sally with a tambourine.

The tambourine was made of skin
And she kept beating it out and in
The tambourine was made of wood
Up came Sally with a scarlet hood.

O, my little dear what a cough she's got
Come with me to the Bull's Eye Shop
Have one drop, have two drops
Come with me to the Bull's Eye Shop.

She went to the river and she couldn't get across,
She'd paid ten shillings for an old blind horse.
The horse fell down and the cart ran away.
Billiock, billiock dee, daw, day.

Notes: It should be noted this has no connection with the well known folk song. Gypsies is sometimes changed to fairies. Interesting verses but also found in Hampshire Singing Games. Sometimes called "My mother said I Never Should or Gypsies in the Wood"

10. A hunting we will go

A hunting we will go.
A hunting we will go.
I had a little fox
And put it in a box
A hunting we will go.

Notes: Date 1777. Last line can be "And never let him go or And then we'll let him go." Another verse is "A roving we will go, A roving we will go, We'll catch a bear and cut his hair, A roving we will go." also "We'll catch a pig and dance a little jig" "We'll catch a fish and put him in a dish."

11. When I was a lady

When I was a lady, lady
When I was a lady, happy and gay.
See all this way, this way, this way
Alli,galli, gallee.

When I was a gentleman, gentleman
When I was a gentleman, happy and gay
See all this way, this way, this way
Alli,galli, gallee.

When I got married, married, married
When I got married, happy and gay
See all this way, this way, this way
Alli,galli, gallee.

When I had a baby, baby, baby
When I had a baby, happy and gay
See all this way, this way, this way
Alli,galli, gallee.

When my baby died, died, died
When my baby died, sorrowful and sad.
See all this way, this way, this way,
See all this way
My poor baby.

Where shall I bury it? bury it, bury it?
Where shall I bury it, sorrowful and sad,
Bury it under the ash tree, ash tree, ash tree,
Bury it under the ash tree,
My poor baby.

Notes: Not yet.

12. My Man John

Beating my man John
With a ree, rah, ratty O.
Beating my man John
With a ree, rah, ratty O.

Double sledges on the track
With a ree, rah, ratty O.
Double sledges on the track
With a ree, rah, ratty O.

Beating my man Redcap

With a ree, rah, ratty O.
Beating my man Redcap
With a ree, rah, ratty O.

Beating my man Bluecap
With a ree, rah, ratty O.
Beating my man Bluecap
With a ree, rah, ratty O.

Beating my man Greencap
With a ree, rah, ratty O.
Beating my man Greencap
With a ree, rah, ratty O.

Note: Not yet

13. The Grand Old Duke of York

O, The grand old Duke of York
He had ten thousand men.
He marched them up to the top of the hill
And he marched then down again.
When they were up they were up
When they were down they were down
And when they were half way up
They were neither up nor down.

Notes. Plenty else where on this one.

14. Hark the Robbers

Hark the robbers coming through,
Coming through, coming through.
Hark the robbers coming through.
My fair lady.

Chorus

They have stole your watch and chain
Watch and chain, watch and chain,
They have stole your watch and chain
My fair lady.

Robbers

We've not stole your watch and chain
Watch and chain, watch and chain,
We've not stole your watch and chain
My fair lady.

Chorus

Forty pound they'll have to pay,
Have to pay, have to pay,
Forty pounds they'll have to pay
My fair lady.

Robbers

Forty pounds we have not got,
Have not got, have not got,
Forty pounds we have not got,
My fair lady.

Chorus

Off to prison they must go,
They must go, they must go,
Off to prison they must go,
My fair lady.

Robbers

Off to prison we won't go
We won't go, we won't go,
Off to prison we won't go,
My fair lady.

Notes: Noted 1744 but earlier connections. Cecil Sharp also collected it in 1909. Same tune as "London Bridge is falling down". Many versions.

15. English Soldiers

Will you give us bread and wine?
We are the Boers.
Will you give us bread and wine?
We are the Boer soldiers.

No, we won't give bread and wine!
We are the English!
We won't give you bread and wine,
We are the English soldiers!

Then we'll tell our King of you!
We are the Boers!

We don't care about your King!
We are the English!

Will you have a fight with us?
We are the Boers!

Yes, we'll have a fight with you!
We are the English!

Will you make up friends with us?
We are the Boers!

Yes, we'll make up friends with you!
We are the English! ...

Now we've made up friends again!
We are the English!
Now we've made up friends again!
We are the English soldiers!

Notes: Also called "Roman Soldiers" or "Romans and English". This version connected with Boer War which would be right at that time. Associated with two tunes; Bobby Shaftoe and Nuts in May.

16. Yellow Gravel

Yellow gravel, yellow gravel,
The grass is so green
The fairest young lady
That ever was seen.
Washed in milk and dressed in silk
The last one down shall be married.

Yellow gravel, yellow gravel,
The grass is so green
The fairest young lady
That ever was seen.
O Mary, O Mary your true love is dead,
I send you a letter to turn back your head.

Notes: More often called "Green Gravel". Alice Gomme collected 2nd verse from Miss E Smith of Cowes in the 1890s. Many versions and other verses choose some from Gomme. Versions by Clancy Brothers, Horslips, Fay Hield, Peter Knight's Gig spanner.

17. London is the Capital

London is the capital, capital, capital,
London is the capital,
The capital of England.

Notes: Not yet

18. There Stands a Lady

There stands a lady on the mountain,
Who she is I do not know.
All she wants is gold and silver,

All she wants is a nice young man;
(Please choose a nice young man).

She is handsome, she is pretty
She's the fairest in the city.
She is number one, two, three
Pray tell me who it can be?

I went to her door and dropped a pin
Pray tell me is Marie within?
She's neither in and neither without,
She's up in the garden walking about.

She dipped her hand in a bowl of milk,
With a rose in her bosom as soft as silk.
She pulled off her glove and showed me her ring,
Tomorrow, tomorrow the wedding begin.

Notes; "I'll tell me ma" tune. Also in Hampshire Singing Games.

19. Sally Waters

Sally, Sally Waters, Sprinkle in the pan.
Rise Sally rise, For a young man.

Choose for the best and choose for the worst,
And choose for the prettiest that you love best.

Now Sally's married we wish her joy,
First a girl and then a boy.

Seven years after a son and a daughter
Please be merry and kiss together.

Seven years in and seven years out,
Please Sally Waters kiss and turn out.

Notes: Often called Little Sally Walters or Sally Walker. Reminders of the sea shanty Little Sally Rackett. Version sung by Louise Bennet. Versions; Little Sally Waters sitting in a saucer (sprinkle in the saucer), Rise Sally, Rise Sally wipe away your tears (wipe your eyes). Sally turn to the east, Sally turn to the west, Sally turn to the very one that you love the best. Chorus: Huddle up and kiss her up, And put her in the bridle room.x2

20. Down in the Meadows

Down in the meadow where the high grass grows
See Grace Kellaway she grows like a rose.
She grows and she grows and she grows so sweet.
Will you come and tell your thoughts to me?

Grace made a pudding she made it nice and sweet,
Up came Teddy Attrill and ate a slice of it.
Taste, love and kiss, love and don't say no.
For tomorrow is our wedding day and we shall have to go.

All the boys in Cowes shall have a happy life,
Excepting Teddy Attrill and he shall have a wife.
He kisses her, he cuddles her, he sits her on his knee.
And says "My darling, do you love me?"

I love you! You love me!
And next Sunday morning the wedding shall be.
The bells shall ring, the girls shall sing.
And next Sunday morning our wedding shall be.

Notes: Often "Down in the meadow where the green grass grows". Noted 1888, many local versions but there is a mention of Cowes in the song. Miss E Smith notes "Down in the Valley". It is a Skipping Rope Song.

21. How many miles to Barbary Land?

How many miles to Barbary Land?
Three score miles and ten.
Can I get there by candle light?
Yes, and back again.

Open the gates and let me through
Not unless you're black and blue.
There's my black and there's my blue,
So open the gates and let me through!

Dan, Dan, thread the needle, Dan, Dan's son.

Notes: Often called "How many miles to Babylon" or "London Town" Date 1801. Version "If your heels are nimble and light, You can get there by candlelight". Recent version by the Albion Band with more verses.

22. Here comes a Duke from Sunny Spain

Here comes a Duke from Sunny Spain,
On purpose in court your daughter Jane.
My daughter Jane she is too young,
She hath not learnt her mother tongue.

Duke
Let her be young, let her be old,
For her beauty she must be sold.
Mother

Go back, go back you Spanish Knight.
And rub your spurs till they are bright.

Knight

My spurs are bright from tip to toe
And in the street I take my woe.

Girl

Come back, come back, you Spanish Knight,
And choose the fairest in your sight.
Go through the parlour and into the hall,
And choose the fairest of us all.

Duke

The fairest one that I can see
Is Grace come over to me.
I have bought your daughter safe and sound,
And in her pocket one thousand pounds,
And on her finger a gay gold ring,
Tomorrow, tomorrow the wedding begin.

Notes: Not yet.

Other ones noted.

Milking Pails Cowes, Isle of Wight (Miss E. Smith).

We want to buy a wash-pan, wash-pan, wash-pan,
We want to buy a wash-pan, early in the morning

Where will you get the money from, money from, money from?

We'll sell my father's feather bed, feather bed, feather bed.

Where will your father sleep? Father'll sleep in the boys' bed.

Where will the boys sleep? Boys will sleep in the girls' bed.

Where will the girls sleep? Girls will sleep in the pig-sty.

Where will the pigs sleep? Pigs will sleep in the washing-pan.

Notes: This is the IOW version collected from Miss E. Smith of Cowes. There a large number of extra verses collected all over the UK.

Down in the Valley Cowes, Isle of Wight (Miss E. Smith).

Down in the valley where the green grass grows
Stands E— H—, she blows like a rose.
She blows, she blows, she blows so sweet.
In came F— S— and gave her a kiss.
E— made a pudding, she made it nice and sweet,

F— took a knife and fork and cut a little piece.
Taste of it, taste of it, don't say nay,
For next Sunday morning is our wedding day.
First we'll buy a money box,
Then we'll buy a cradle; Rock, rock the bottom out,
Then we'll buy another.
Bread and cheese all the week, cork on Sunday,
Half a crown on Saturday night,
and a jolly good dance on Monday.

Jenny Jones (Miss E. Smith version similar to the Hanwell version below 1878)

We've come to see Jenny Jones, Jenny Jones, Jenny Jones,
We've come to see Jenny Jones, And how is she now?

O Jenny is washing, O washing, O washing,
O Jenny is washing, And you can't see her now.

Chorus

*Very well, ladies, ladies, ladies,
Very well, ladies, and gentlemen too.*

We've come to see Jenny Jones, Jenny Jones, Jenny Jones,
We've come to see Jenny Jones, And how is she now?

O Jenny is starching, O starching, O starching,
O Jenny is starching, And you can't see her now. Ch.

We've come to see Jenny Jones, Jenny Jones, Jenny Jones,
We've come to see Jenny Jones, And how is she now?

O Jenny is ironing, O ironing, O ironing,
O Jenny is ironing, And you can't see her now. Ch.

We've come to see Jenny Jones, Jenny Jones, Jenny Jones,
We've come to see Jenny Jones, And how is she now?

O Jenny is ill, O ill, O ill,
O Jenny is ill, And you can't see her now. Ch.

We've come to see Jenny Jones, Jenny Jones, Jenny Jones,
We've come to see Jenny Jones, And how is she now?

O Jenny is dying, O dying, O dying,
O Jenny is dying, And you can't see her now. Ch.

We've come to see Jenny Jones, Jenny Jones, Jenny Jones,
We've come to see Jenny Jones, And how is she now?

O Jenny is dead, Is dead, is dead,
O Jenny is dead, And you can't see her now. Ch.

What shall we lay her in, lay her in, lay her in?
What shall we lay her in? Shall it be red?

Red is for soldiers, soldiers, soldiers,
Red is for soldiers, and that won't do. Ch.

What shall we lay her in, lay her in, lay her in?
What shall we lay her in? Shall it be blue?

Blue is for sailors, sailors, sailors,
Blue is for sailors, and that won't do. Ch.

What shall we lay her in, lay her in,
What shall we lay her in? Shall it be black?

Black is for mourners, mourners, mourners,
Black is for mourners, and that won't do. Ch.

What shall we lay her in, lay her in, lay her in?
What shall we lay her in? Shall it be white?

White's what the dead wear, dead wear, dead wear,
White's what the dead wear, and that will just do. Ch.

Notes: Many versions of this song. At least 3 tunes. Jenny works too hard.