



# The Pure Drop

## ROUND UP OF TRADITIONAL MUSIC

by Tommy Fegan

### TRAD ON THE WEB

**Ceol Camloch has been promoting traditional music of, and in, South Armagh over the last 15 years through an imaginative programme of festivals, workshops, publications, lessons and sessions. Its latest undertaking is probably its most challenging. With support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Ceol Camloch aims to produce a definitive history of the music, musicians and dances of South Armagh. The main, though not exclusive, focus will be the decades from the 1930s to the 1960s, and the golden age of Ceilís and Ceilí Bands.**

The Sweets of May and the Three Sea Captains are just the tip of the iceberg of dances closely associated with the area and the project hopes to illuminate and disseminate these features locally, and to a wider audience worldwide. The organisers are recruiting part time coordinators and others to help. If you are interested, drop me an email at the address below. Indeed, if you would like to help in any way, or have information, stories, photos or recordings you feel should be included, get in touch. More on this later.

There were two people walking down the street. One was a piano-key player. The other didn't have any money either

**Q. Why do musicians have to be awake by six o'clock?**

**A. Because most shops close by six-thirty.**

### Come West Along The Road; The DVD

I anticipated a belly full of great music from this DVD, but I was surprised at the other delicious helpings that were offered. The selections are about the music and the musicians, and the very opening has a shot of the late Thoe Ryan

playing the fiddle. Thoe was a beautiful young woman and a great musician when she died at a young age back in the early 1990s. Thoe was well known to local musicians, especially Crubeen, and so many great musical memories are evoked by this short clip.

The DVD continues in this spirit, rekindling the memory of musicians now departed, or of clips of established players in their fledgling youth. For younger readers of the Pure Drop, it offers footage of some of the great masters of the 20th century, and the visual contact significantly broadens the appreciation of the music and musicians in a way not available from the audio recording. How else could you, for example, convey the sheer delight of the black and white footage of Padar Bán Ó Broinn dancing to the single tin whistle accompaniment of Dessie O'Connor on the humble tin whistle, in 1972?

The sensitive and culturally acute camera work that permeates most of the footage thankfully provides us with the additional bonus of a context of the music; onlookers at street sessions, the dress, the style, the reverence...the last vestiges of De Valera's "Comely Maidens".

The rich variety of our music, song and dance is displayed to great effect here. The cornucopia of instruments, dance forms and musicians hits you hard, and the pain, pleasure and pathos of the tunes and songs sets you off on a roller coaster of emotions which really does leave you breathless. It's simply a riveting salute to our music in a time of great change, upheaval and uncertainty. An ideal alternative to the regurgitated rubbish the TV channels will be offering over Christmas. Buy it!



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