

The Mild Rover

Words and Music: Nigel Harbron

6 I've tra-velled the length and the
breadth of this land, there are not ma-ny trades that I don't un-der-stand. I've not stayed long in
10 a - ny one place, for af - ter a while, I just
12 need some space. For af - ter a while I just need some space.

I've travelled the length and the breadth of this land,
There are not many trades that I don't understand.
I've not stayed long in any one place, for, after a while, I just need some space -
For, after a while, I just need some space.

I left my old school just as soon as I could,
Praying I wouldn't need books in my adulthood.
I can handle money and write my name, and I'm not expecting fortune or fame -
And I'm not expecting fortune or fame.

The first job I took up was washing lead ore,
The sky was my ceiling; the earth was my floor,
But after a while, the mine closed down, so I drifted into the neighbouring town -
So I drifted into the neighbouring town.

There was plenty of work in the towering mills
(And I'm not the first man to speak of their ills),
The fibres and dust, the deafening noise: hardly the place that a worker enjoys -
Hardly the place that a worker enjoys.

So, soon I retraced the path back to my roots,
With straw in my hair and mud on my boots.
The money was poor, but at least I had grub, and always a smile when I dropped in the pub -
And always a smile when I dropped in the pub.

When tracks of hard metal spread out far and wide,
As a fireman I kept on the driver's right side.
I've shovelled a thousand tons of coal, it's hard on the back, but it's good for the soul -
It's hard on the back, but it's good for the soul.

The last job I had was down at the docks,
I was riveting ships raised on great wooden blocks.
I've not saved much; I've spent what I've earned, but, unlike at school, many lessons I've learned -
But, unlike at school, many lessons I've learned.

Flat-caps, Fags and Waistcoats



I am ancient enough to remember traditional farming practices. Although born and bred on industrial Teesside, I had many relatives (on my mother's side) in rural Cumberland, and spent many Summer holidays on farms and in cottages around the Eden Valley. One relative was the first to acquire a tractor (one of those trusty grey Fergusons - picture below) and it had a tool-box affixed to one of the rear mudguards. It was just right for a small bottom, and I travelled many a mile on it. The Health and Safety Executive didn't exist in the 1950s.

