

FOLK SESSION - Howard Arms, Brampton

Although there is still 'Covid anxiety' around, the theme of 'topography' gathered a slightly larger group of performers on the 18th of January in the Howard Arms.

Some of us seemed to be competing to find the largest possible number of geographical features in one song: Gerda cited a mountain ledge, an island, rock pool, salt marsh and sand in *Dig In*; Sam mentioned highway, valley, redwood forest; Gulf Stream waters and deserts in *This land is your land*; Anne stayed local with *King Dunmail's* mountainside, mere, moor, field and plain and Phil came up with mountains, hills, crags, moorland peaks and stony ridges in *The Joy of Living*.

Various songs and one reading covered specific places. Sally sang of Arisaig and Craigmore in *The Isle of Eigg*, and Adrian followed with *The Mingulay Boat Song*; Polly found her love on *Blueberry Hill*; David read to us about the early life of the great civil engineer Thomas Telford who was born in poverty in Westerkirk, Eskdale, near Langholm. Phil (competing again?) covered most of England in *Brough Hill Fair*, gathering us in from the Chilterns, the Cheviots, the Yorkshire Moors; the Sussex Downs, the Pennines and the Norfolk Broads. Some contributors preferred to name one single, thumping great unmistakable feature, such as *The Mountains of Mourne* (Sally); *The Water of Tyne* (Polly); Cape Horn (*The Rounding of the Horn*- Katy) and *South Australia* (Adrian on melodeon).

Water features were almost as popular during the session as they were in an 18th Century nobleman's grounds: Wastwater and Windermere in Anne's *Witch of the Westmorlands*; Beaufort Sea and the Davis Straits in *Northwest Passage* (Phil); the Hudson Dam in Gerda's lyrics to *Ashokan Farewell*; sea, river and valley in *Darling Home Town* (Sam).

We next meet on 15th February in the Howard Arms, Brampton, from 8pm onwards. The theme (should be a counter-irritant for those who dislike red satin hearts and Valentine's Day!) is 'unhappy/unrequited love'. ALL WELCOME!