

The Old Grey Duck

Traditional Cornish

From "SengenFiddee", An Daras Cornish Folk Arts Project 2003.

The ol' grey duck she stawl her nest and lay down in the fields And
5
when the young wauns they cum forth they 'ad noa tail nur beels. They
9
'ad noa tail nur beels. They 'ad no tail nur beels and
13
when the young wauns they came forth They 'ad noa tail nur beels.

2 Two eggs were addled and waun was broke,
An' they were thraw'd away,
The young wauns cudn clunk nur swe,
They all died that saem day,
They all died that saem day,,
They all died that saem day
The young wauns cudn clunk nor swem,
They all died that saem day.

3 Next time we'll put 'er in the barn,
An' tie 'er by the 'eels,
The young wauns then 'll 'av a chance,
To grow their tails and beels,
To grow their tails and beels,
To grow their tails and beels,
The young wauns then 'll 'av have a chance,
To grow their tails and beels.

Notes

Dialect Terms:

Beels - Beak of a bird

Clunk – To swallow

The Old Grey Duck was published in Ralph Dunstan's in *Cornish Dialect & Folk Songs*, Ralph Dunstan, *Cornish Dialect and Folk Songs*, (Truro, Jordan's Bookshop, 1932) where he says "This song is known in all parts of West Cornwall, and is sung to various tunes – mostly well-known hymn-tunes. Verses 2 and 3 are reconstructed from fragments." Here the tune is shared with the carol 'The Seven Joys of Mary.' It is also related to the dance tune "Forty Thieves" from the Manuscript of John Old, *Cornish Dancing Master* (Mike O'Connor and Alison Davey, *Dancing Above Par*, Lingham House, 2006). The song was brought to a wide audience by Brenda Wootton in the 1970s and 1980s when she regularly included it in both her Cornish "Folk Club" repertoire and her international concerts. The version given here is from the "Sengen Fiddee" An-Daras Cornish Folk Arts Project 2003.

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