



THURSDAY EVENING TALKS

Thomas the Rhymers

with Poppy Holden

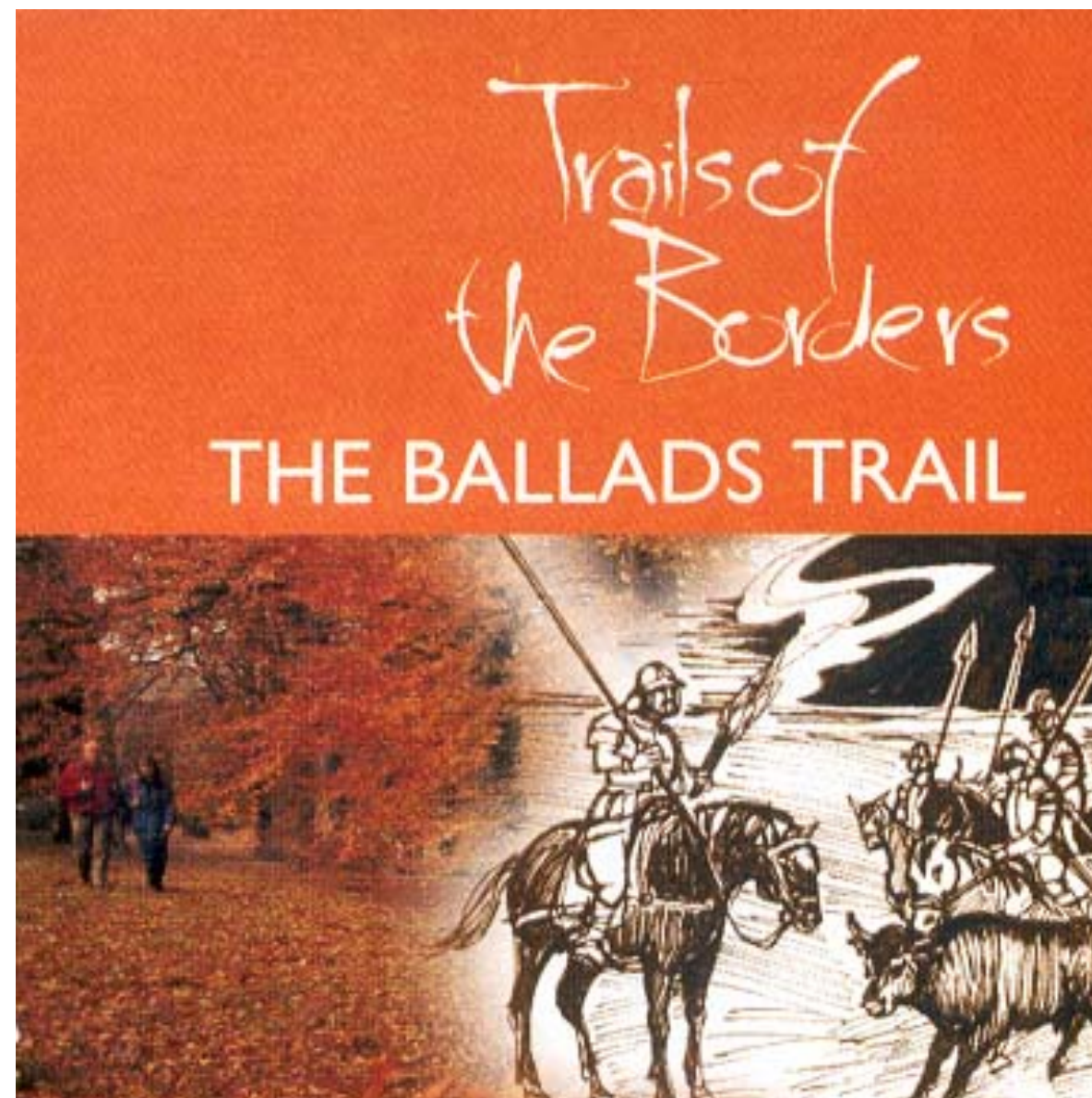


For further information
events@jesmondlibrary.co.uk or 0191 281 2385
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Thursday Dec 14
6.00pm £3

St George's Terrace Jesmond Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 2DL





Thomas the Rhymer

Elsbeth Smellie, Walter Elliot, Billy Kay, Scocha



Rhymer's Tower, Earlston. 16th century border peel









1993 ~ 2016

23 YEARS SERVING THE SCOTTISH BORDER

Rhymers Tower

Rhymers Tower Coffee Shop & Restaurant
Melrose Road, Earlston
TD4 6DL
The Scottish Border

Phone; 01896 849 452 Mobile; 07791 123456
Email; john-mckee@btconnect.com

Proprietors; John & Lynda McKee

Rhymers Tower

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Soutra Aisle, near Lauder, Scottish Borders. Photo PH

THOMAS OF ERCELDOUNE

Als I me wente þis endres daye,
Ffull faste in mynd makand my mone,
In a mery mornynge of Maye,
By Huntle bankkes my selfe allone, ...

Hir payetrelle was of irale fyne,
Hir cropoure was of orpharë,
And als clere golde hir brydill it schone
One aythir syde hange bellys three, ...

He knelyde downe appone his knee,
Vndir-nethe þat grenwode spraye,
And sayd, Lufly ladye, rewe one mee,
Qwene of heuene, als þou wele maye!

Then spake þat lady milde of thoghte:
Thomas, late swylke wordes bee;
Qwene of heuene ne am I noghte,
Ffor I tuke neuer so heghe degre.

THOMAS THE RHYMER

True Thomas lay on Huntlie bank;
A ferlie he spied wi' his e'e;
And there he saw a lady bright,
Come riding down, by the Eildon Tree.

Her skirt was o' the grass-green silk,
Her mantle o' the velvet fyne;
At ilka tett o' her horse's mane
Hung fifty siller bells and nine.

True Thomas he pu'd aff his cap,
And louted low down on his knee:
Hail to thee, Mary, Queen of Heaven!
For thy peer on earth could never be.

O no, O no, Thomas, she said,
That name does not belang to me;
I'm but the Queen o' fair Elfland,
That am hither come to visit thee.



Duncan Williamson

Fifesing 2007 photo P Holden

As I walked out__ one May morning, one May morning__ be - time, I

6

met a maid__ from home had strayed just as the sun did shine.

Searching for Lambs

Cecil Sharp, 100 English Folk Songs (Dover) #48

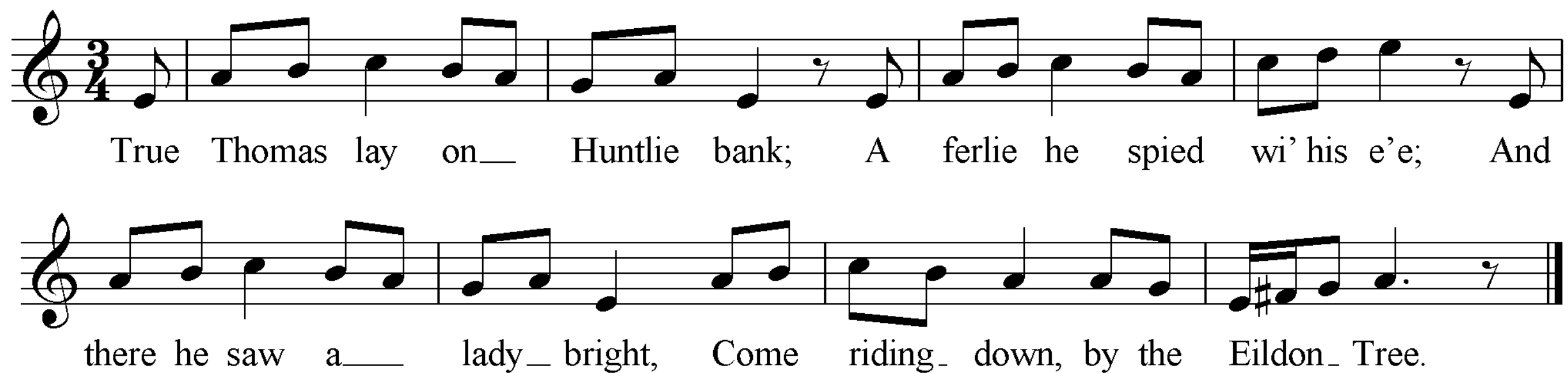
6

This is the truth_ sent from a-bove, The truth of God,_ the God of love There -
fore don't turn me from your door, But hear-ken well both rich_ and___ poor.

The image shows a musical score for a Christmas carol. It consists of two staves of music in treble clef. The first staff is in 5/4 time and contains the lyrics 'This is the truth_ sent from a-bove, The truth of God,_ the God of love There -'. The second staff is in 4/4 time and contains the lyrics 'fore don't turn me from your door, But hear-ken well both rich_ and___ poor.'. The number '6' is written to the left of the second staff. The lyrics are written below the notes, with some words underlined or followed by underscores to indicate phrasing.

This is the truth sent
from above

Trad English, used by RVW in Fantasia on Christmas Carols

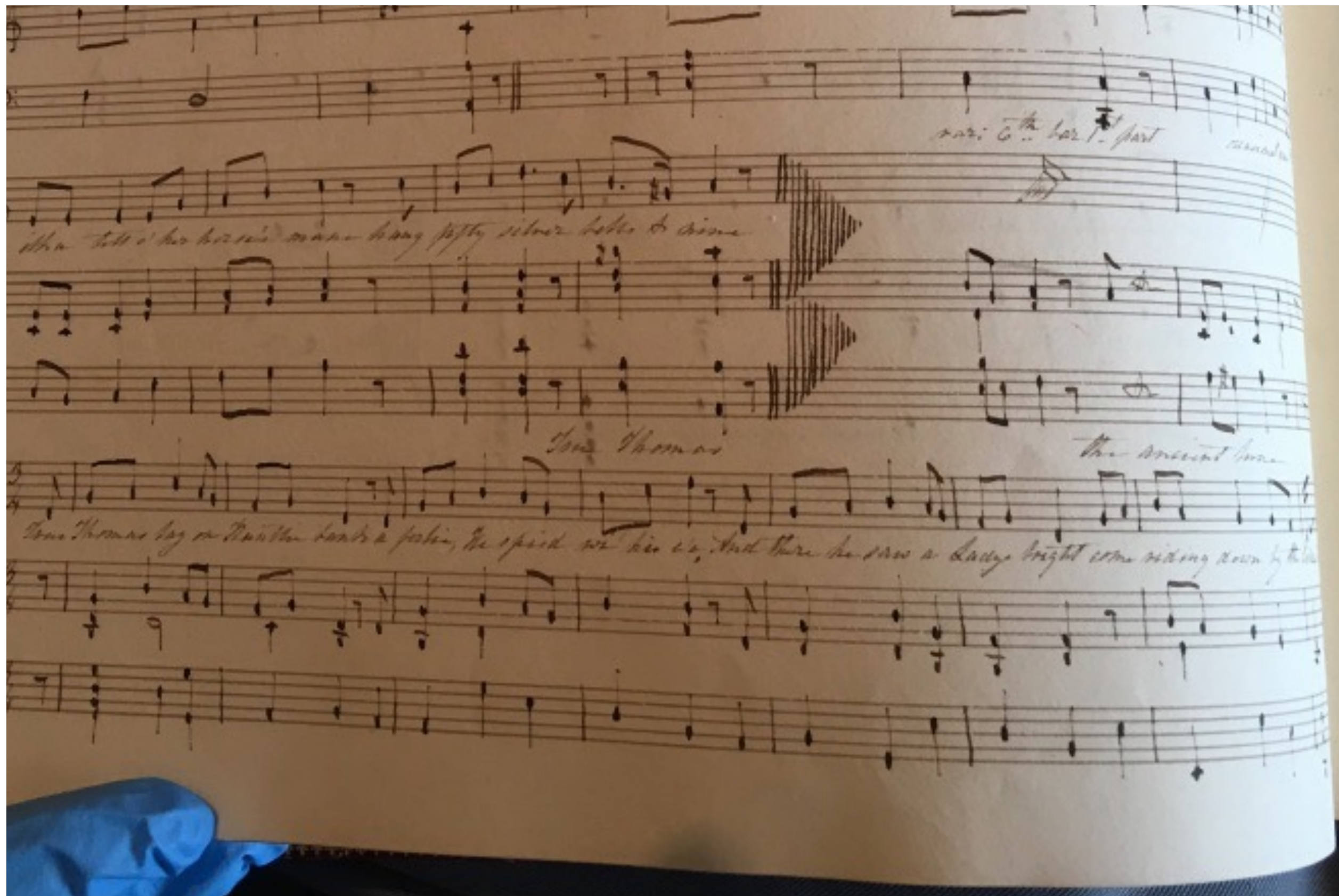


True Thomas lay on__ Huntlie bank; A ferlie he spied wi' his e'e; And
there he saw a____ lady__ bright, Come riding_ down, by the Eildon_ Tree.

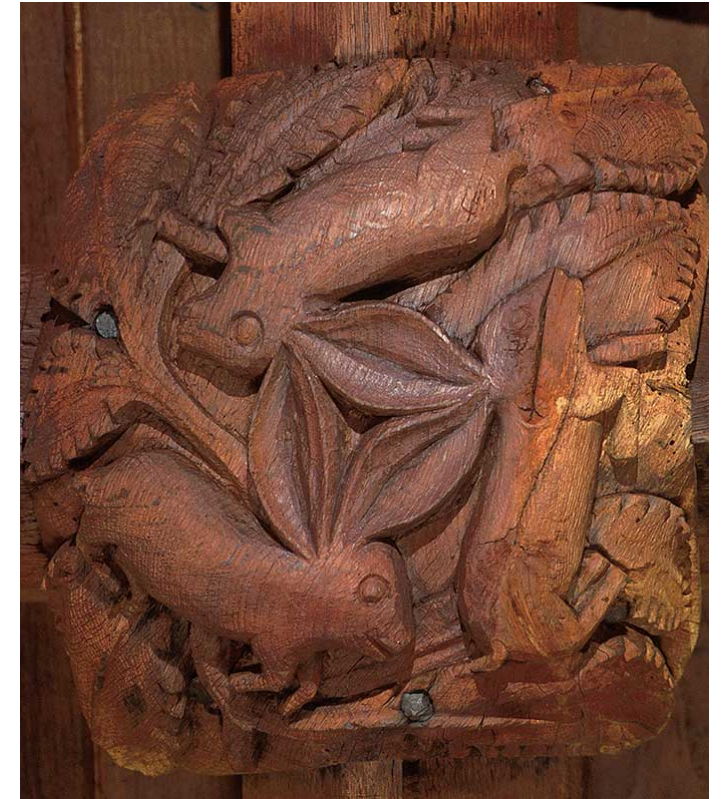
The image shows a musical score for the song 'Thomas the Rhymer'. It consists of two staves of music in 3/4 time, written in treble clef. The melody is simple, using eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics are written below the notes, with some words underlined to indicate phrasing. The first staff ends with a double bar line, and the second staff continues the melody and lyrics.

Thomas the Rhymer

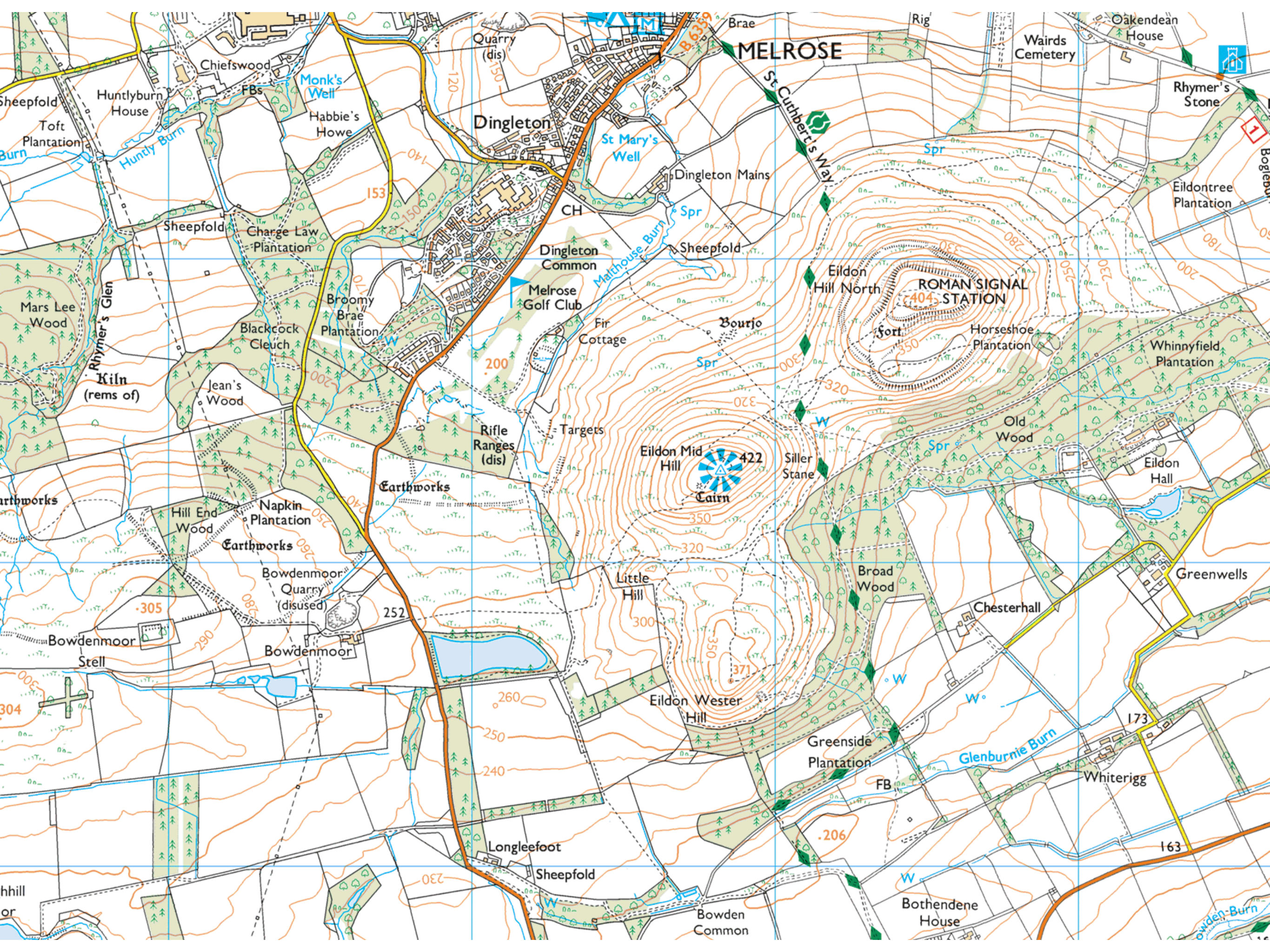
“The Ancient Tune”
transcribed by Poppy Holden



Sophia Scott's MS, Abbotsford c.1805. "The Ancient Tune" at the bottom of the page.

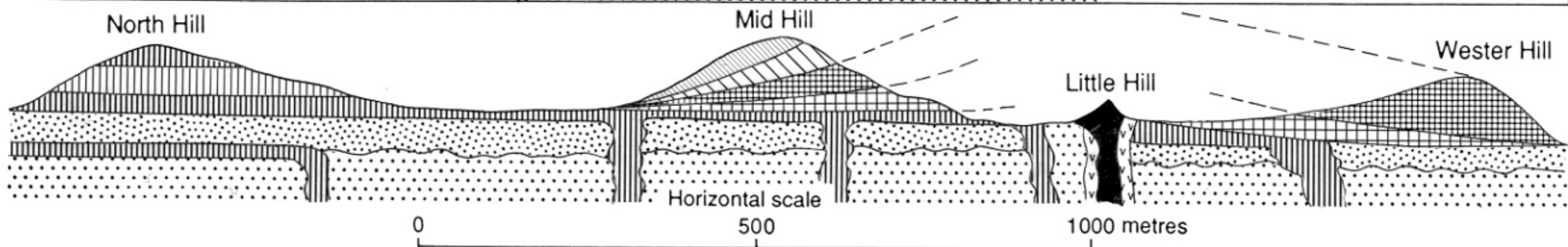
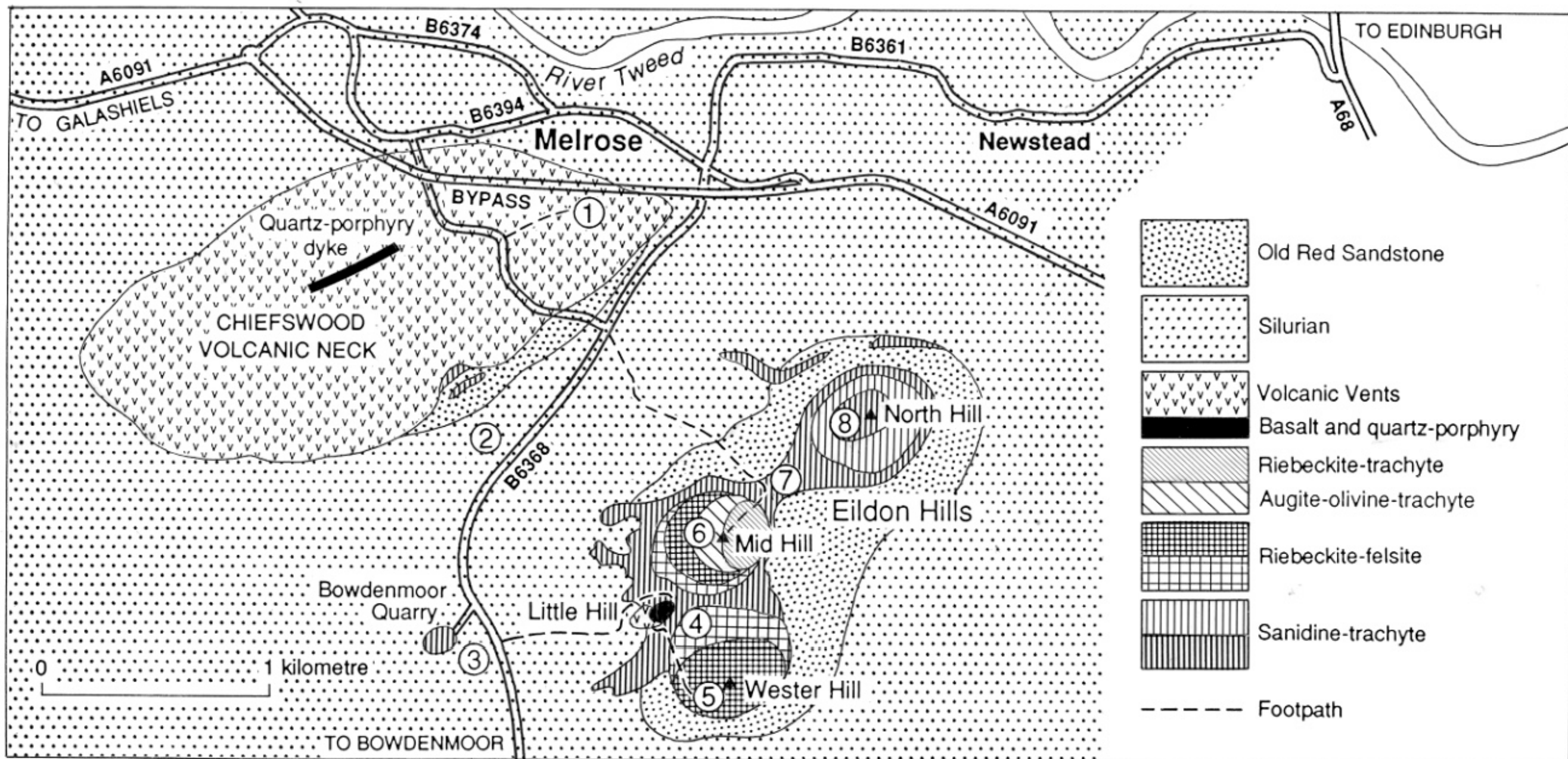


Lucken Hares (locked together by their ears):
Long Melford stained glass; South Tawton, Devon, roof boss; 1300 Chester tile.









Beware a fair lady on a grey horse

Legend tells how Thomas the Rhymer fell asleep near here, beneath a tree on the side of the Eildon Hills. He woke to see a shining lady on a dappled grey horse - the Queen of the Fairies! She entranced him and led him away to Fairyland. He stayed there for what seemed to be three days, but was in fact seven years. When he left she gave him the gift of speaking the truth and told him many prophecies of great events in Scotland's history.

Thomas became famous both as a poet and as someone who knew the future. Just up the road you can check how accurate he was. He prophesied that one day 'a bridge over Tweed' would be visible from the Eildon tree: if you have sharp eyes you can see whether this has come true!

And if you sit down to rest - take care. The Fairy Queen promised Thomas she would return to the Eildon tree; perhaps this time you will fall under her spell.



Thomas was a real person who lived in the late 1200s in Erceldoune (now Earlston, on the road to Edinburgh). His life is as mysterious as some of his prophecies, which were 'ay hid under obscure words' as one early historian said. But his rhymes have been popular for hundreds of years, and are some of the earliest examples of Scottish poetry.

The Rhymers Stone Project has been funded by the Council Leader 11 public donations and



Heritage Lottery Fund





Manesse Codex c.1300



Cantigas de Santa Maria, 13th c

Harpe and fethill bothe þay fande,
 Getterne, and als so þe sawtrye;
 Lutte and rybybe bothe gangande,
 And all manere of mynstralsye.

that þey þe by þe god and alyhede
yit no sold it telle i sold no i told
þe god þe god þe god þe god
þe god þe god þe god þe god
þe god þe god þe god þe god
þe god þe god þe god þe god
þe god þe god þe god þe god
þe god þe god þe god þe god

Amou for his name sonow
and alle þe have heide the passion
Sall have a thespando go to þe
Amou Amou þe charyte
and lonyng to god þe fore gyse de

Al. S. for

Explicit Passio domini nostri ihesu xpi

Hic incipit descriptio per iherosalem quoniam Titus et vaspasianus
obsederunt et distinxerunt iherosalem et viderunt morte domini ihesu xpi

The Sorrow of iherosalem
Of Titus and vaspasianus





Allonne in longynge thus als I laye,
Vndyre-nethe a semely tre,
Saw I whare a lady gaye
Came ridand ouer a longe lee.

True Thomas by Katherine Cameron, 1908

My lorde es serued at ylk a mese
With thritty knyghttis faire and
free:
I sall saye, syttande at the desse,
I take this speche by-3onde the
see.

Queen Mary Psalter, 1310





Scho blewe hir horne with mayne
and mode,
Vn-to þe castelle scho tuke þe waye

c 1340 BL Yates Thompson



Manesse Codex c.1300



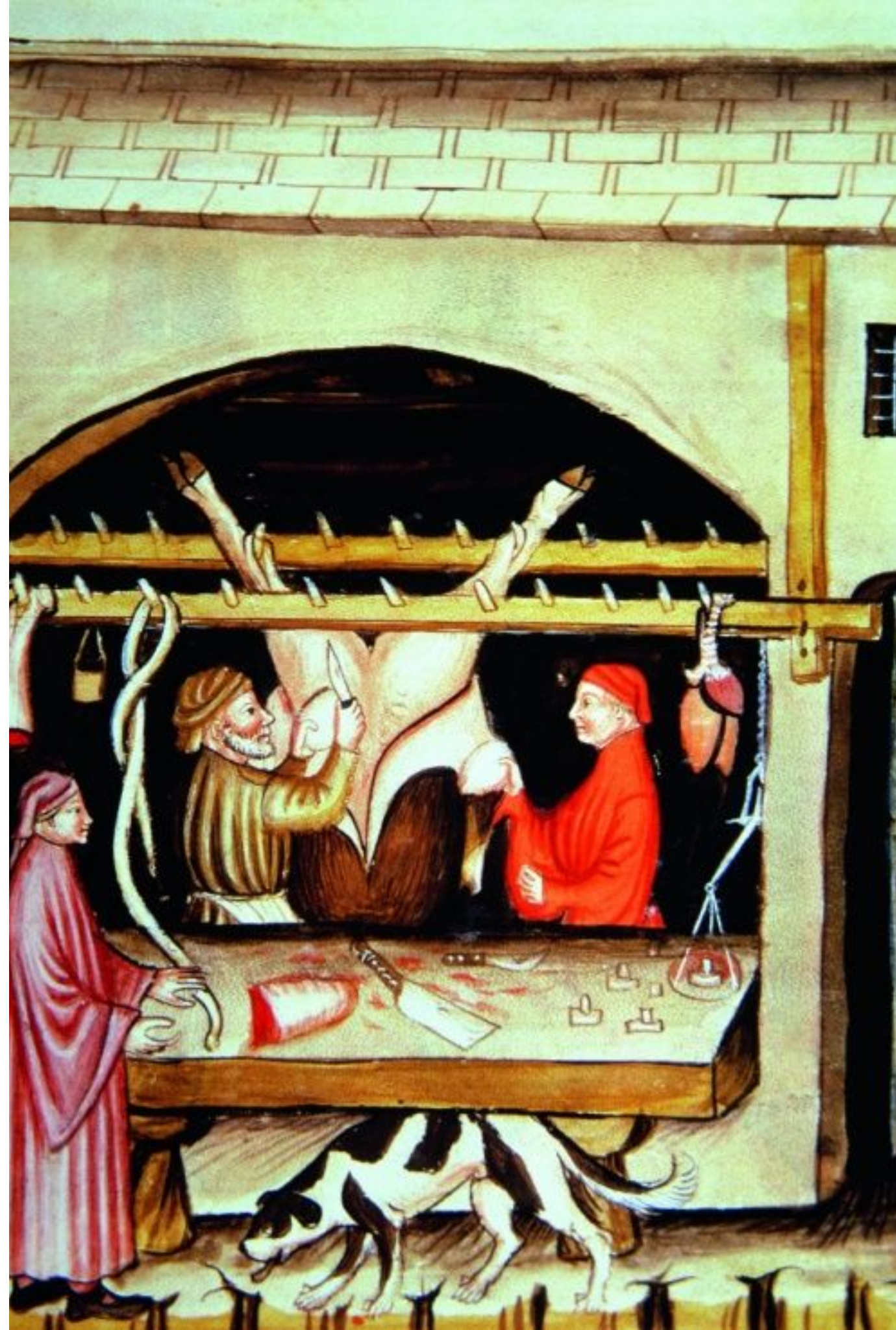
Cantigas de Santa Maria, 13th c

Harpe and fethill bothe þay fande,
 Getterne, and als so þe sawtrye;
 Lutte and rybybe bothe gangande,
 And all manere of mynstralsye.

Tacuinum Sanitatis

13th century

Raches laye lapande in þe blode,
Cokes come with dryssynge knyfe;
Thay brittened þame als þay were wode;
Reuelle amanges þame was full ryfe.





Knyghtis dawnesede by
three and three

Manesse Codex c. 1300



There was revelle, gamene and playe;
Lufly ladyes, faire and free

Manesse Codex c. 1300

Further reading:

- Sir Walter Scott, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, 1802
- Sir James Murray, *The romance and prophecies of Thomas of Erceldoune*, 1875
- Sir Walter Scott, *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*, 1830
- Brian Moffat, *SHARP Practice: Report on Researches into the Mediaeval Hospital at Soutra, Lothian/Borders Region, Scotland*, 1989
- Bertrand Harris Bronson, *Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads*, 1959
- Emily Lyle, *Fairies and Folk: Approaches to the Scottish Ballad Tradition*, 2007
- Greeves, Chapman and Andrew, *The Three Hares*, 2016



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