



00017390

Title
Broadsheet ballads 'Harry Bluff' and 'The Caledonian Maid'.

Date
1824 - 1841

Primary Maker
Thomas Birt

Medium
Woodcut engraving and printed text on paper mounted on card.

Dimensions
Overall: 257 x 107 mm, 0.023 kg

Name
Broadsheet

History
HARRY BLUFF. HARRY BLUFF when a boy left his friends and his home, His dear native land on the ocean to roam, Like a sapling he sprung he was fair to the view, He was true British oak the olde he grew. Tho' his body was weak and his hands they were soft When the signal was given he was first up aloft, The veterans all said that he'd one day lead the van, And tho' rated a boy, he had the soul of a man, And the heart of a true British sailor.

When by manhood promoted and burning for fame In peace and in war Harry Bluff wast he same, So true to his love and in battle so brave, May the myrtle and laurel entwine o'er his grave. In battle he fell when by Victory crown'd, The flag shot away fell in tatters around, The foe thought he's struck when he cried out avast, And the colours of old England he nail'd to the mast And he died like a true British sailor. THE CALEDONIAN MAID. O SAY ye Virgin, have you seen My Jessy pass this way, More lovely than the verdant green, More blooming than the May. Long have I sought my little Queen, Through every grove and shade; O say ye Virgins have ye seen, My Caledonian Maid? O comely are her rosy cheeks, And locks of yellow hair, Flow down her neck in ringlets sweet, -- She's fairest of the fair. The dewy morn invites to play, And shepherds in the grove, Are met to hail the Queen of May, Why tarries then my love? Come forth dear maid, come forth bright Queen, And glad this heart of mine ; The fairest looks on all the green, Are naught compar'd with thine. Broadsheets or broadsides, as they were also known, were originally used to

communicate official or royal decrees. They were printed on one side of paper and became a popular medium of communication between the 16th and 19th centuries in Europe, particularly Britain. They were able to be printed quickly and cheaply and were widely distributed in public spaces including churches, taverns and town squares. The cheap nature of the broadside and its wide accessibility meant that its intended audience were often literate individuals but from varying social standings. The illiterate may have also had access to this literature as many of the ballads were designed to be read aloud. The ballads also covered a wide range of subject matter such as witchcraft, epic war battles, murder and maritime themes and events. They were suitably dramatic and often entertaining, but occasionally they were designed as elaborate cautionary tales for those contemplating a life of crime. The broadside ballads in the museum's collection were issued by a range of London printers and publishers for sale on the streets by hawkers. They convey, often comically, stories about love, death, shipwrecks, convicts and pirates. Each ballad communicates a sense that these stories were designed to be read aloud for all to enjoy, whether it was at the local tavern or a private residence.