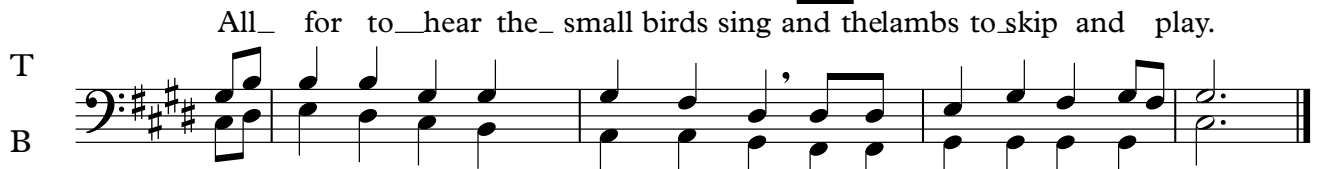
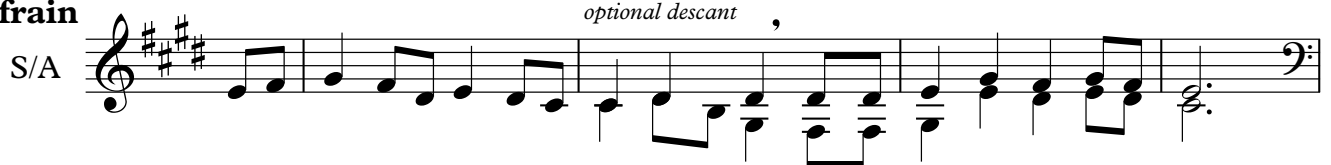


Bushes and Briars

Women's voices



Refrain



I overheard my own true love,
Her voice it rang so clear
Long time have I been waiting for
The coming of my dear.

Sometimes I am uneasy
And troubled in my mind,
Sometimes I think I'll go to my love
And tell to him my mind.

And if I should go to my love
My love he will say nay
If I show to him my bolden-ness
He'll ne'er love me again.

I cannot think the reason
Young women love young men,
For they are so false-hearted
Young women to beguile

Sung by Charles Potiphar, Ingrave Essex, 4 December, 1903;
text completed from broadside version by W S Fortey, of Seven Dials.

RVW noted the tune in 3/4 with pause marks over some of the notes, indicating that it was probably sung in an irregular rhythm. We have rationalised this into 4/4 time, which is how the song is sung by many singers nowadays. RVW said at the time: 'It is impossible to reproduce the free rhythm and subtle portamento effects of this beautiful tune in ordinary notation'.

This was the first song that RVW heard on his first ever trip to collect folk songs. He had been invited to Ingrave Rectory by the Misses Georgiana and Florence Heatley, daughters of the rector. They had heard him lecture on folksong in Brentwood earlier in the year and wanted to show him that the folk singing tradition was alive and well in their parish. At the rectory he was introduced to Charles Potiphar who agreed to sing for him at his home the next morning. RVW duly visited and was able to note down the tunes and some of the words of 7 songs that Charles Potiphar sang for him. The first of these was Bushes and Briars. RVW later wrote: 'An old man began to sing a song which puts all my thoughts about folksong at rest.' According to Ursula VW, when he heard it he 'felt it was something he had known all his life'.