

The Hermit

There once was a hermit who lived by a dell,
I swear to the truth of the story I tell,
My grandfather's grandfather knew him quite well, this hermit....

This hermit he lived by the side of a lake,
Concoctions of herbs for his meals he would take,
Of nothing but fish would the good man partake, on a Friday....

His hair was all matted, and tattered his clothes,
Once a year he would bathe his body unclothed,
How the lake stood it the Lord only knows, and he ain't tellin....

One day this hermit rose dripping and wet,
His horrified vision three young ladies met,
In feminine matters he was no vet, so he blushed....

He reached for his hat as it lay on the beach,
To cover up all that its broad brim would reach,
Let out to the girls with a horrified screech, go away...!

Now just at that moment a wandering gnat,
Made the poor man forget just what he was at,
He swiped at the insect, let go of the hat, oh horrors...!

And now I come close to the crux of my tale,
The hermit turned red and then he turned pale,
He uttered a prayer, for prayers never fail, so it's said...

The truth of this story there's no doubt at all,
The Lord heard his prayer and answered his call,
He let go of the hat ... but the hat didn't fall, blessed miracle...!

As re-told to me by Roger Brown on 1st September 1972, three years after we left
Chester College where the song was a favourite at the folk club.