



Premiere: Derek Piotr – The Bramble Briar

written by [Alex Gallacher](#) 7 April, 2023

Last year, we interviewed musician and folklorist **Derek Piotr** ([read it here](#)) following the release of the **Last Wisps of the Old Ways: North Carolina Mountain Singing**, an incredible album of field recordings featuring mountain songs from North Carolina that crossed nearly a century; the star of which was Mrs Lena Bare Turbyfill. Soon after, he released, *The Devil Knows How*, on which he interprets traditional ballads and folk tunes culled primarily from the repertoire of his honorary new family (Lena Bare Turbyfill and her kin).

“As hard and bare as a timber floor”

The Wire

The album went on to be expanded with a rework of the opening track ‘Yes, They All Sing’, helmed by guitarist and Alan Lomax Archive curator [Nathan Salsburg](#), the release of which was backed with a Machinefabriek Remix.

For the final instalment in the *The Devil Knows How* saga, Derek Piotr and Paul Jacob Smith (Hinton Press) select unaccompanied live recordings from the past year performed in support of the album. The songs were sung everywhere, from the so-hip-it-hurts Public Records in Brooklyn, NY, to an honest-to-goodness Appalachian heritage festival on the border of North Carolina and Tennessee (PA-fuzzcore galore!). They will be available as a Bandcamp/Boomkat digital exclusive, with a limited run of 33 CDs in tow, each with unique disc art.

Listen to *The Bramble Briar* below (recorded live at Public Records). There are a number of versions of this ballad, which also goes under the title of Bruton Town, in which two brothers conspire to get rid of their sister’s sweetheart.

Seven Devils is released on 21 April.

Last year, Derek reached the milestone of having recorded 300 recordings for his online Fieldwork Archive (read about his [Top 5 here](#)). The collection features a wide variety of informants, including professional singers, descendants of musicians, laypeople, and ballad scholars—the vast majority of the recordings in this archive showcase unaccompanied vocal performances.

Find out more here: <https://fieldwork-archive.com/>