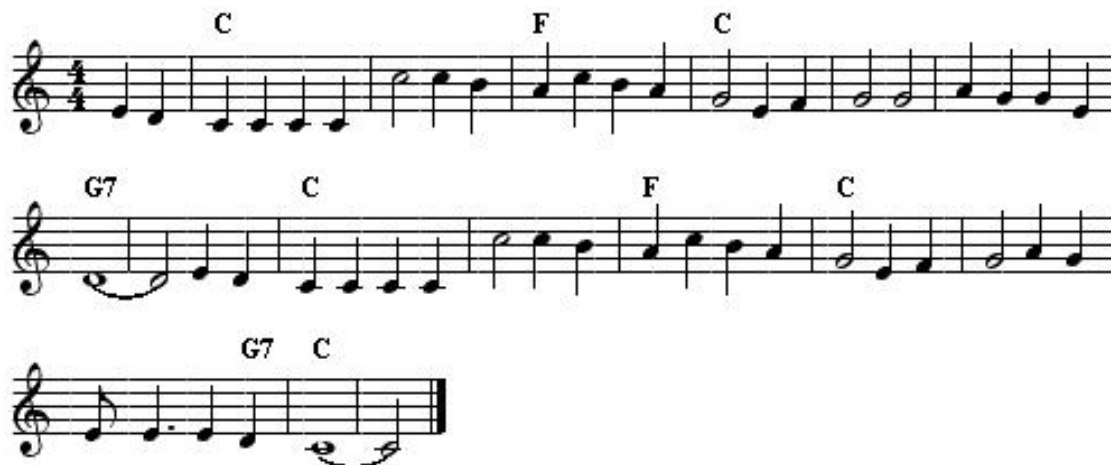


## Little Ball of Yarn



1. It was in the month of May,  
When the lambs do sport and play  
And the birds sing sweetly at the dawn  
When I met a fair maid  
And unto her did say,  
"Let me wind up your little ball of yarn".
2. "Oh, no" says she to me,  
"You're a stranger, to me  
And though I admire your Northern charm,  
I prefer to look to those  
Who have money and fine clothes  
To wind up me little ball of yarn".
3. Then I took her by the waist  
And gently laid her down  
I did not mean to do her any harm.  
She looked up into my face,  
Locked her legs around me waist  
And I wound up her little ball of yarn.
4. Then she got up,  
Took her skirt from round her waist  
And went skipping lightly down the lane,  
And I skipped across the green  
For fear that I'd been seen  
As I wound up her little ball of yarn.
5. So come all you young maids  
Keep your head beneath the shade.  
Don't walk out so early in the morn.  
Like the blackbird keep  
Your head beneath your wing  
And your hand upon your little ball of yarn.

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A song of rural seduction that is very typical of the genre.

This song had not appeared in printed collections until Hugill's **Shanties from the Seven Seas** was published in 1961. However, in bawdier forms the song is widely known, notably among servicemen and rugby football players.

It has been recorded in many southern English counties and has survived particularly well in East Anglia. It was also collected in Missouri/Arkansas area by Vance Randolph and in other parts of the US, Canada and Australia.

I learned it from Geoff DiMego at Penn State.