

Songs:

THE MOONSHINE CAN

Come all ye good people, come listen unto me,
Beware of the bold informer, you'll see how he served me,
Beware of the bold informer good people all around,
Since jealousy could not agree he put our whiskey down.
On Easter Sunday morning as you may plainly see,
As soon as Nickey got the news he then come down to me,
He then come down to me. my boys, and put me on a stand,
Saying, "Pat, me boy, there's a big kick up about the bloody can, M
The chap that brought us up the news, he was one of our rank,
I suppose you all do know his name, his name it was young Frank,
His name [it] was young Frank, me boys, as you may understand,
He is one of our lively chaps belong to Nfld,
Early the next morning the summons come to me,
The summons come to me, my boys, and I was forced to go,
To travel to the lonley [sic] place up to my knees in snow,
To travel to that lonley place, it was against my grain,
To march up to that courthouse before a crowd of men.
When I walked up to the stand the judge to me did say,
"What did you make it out of, come tell to me, I pray,
What did you make it out of," The judge to me did say,
"O yeast cake and molasses, sure that's the proper plan."
O yeast cake and molasses, sure that's a curious plan,
And the next misfortune that fell on me, I had to lose my can,
I had to give it up, you see, and that without delay,
And up come Constable Parsons my can to take away.
I went in and brought it out and that without delay,

And stood just like a monument and not one word did say,
To hear those pipes a-rattling it would grieve your heart sore,
And when he put it in the bag it grieved me ten times more.
Well now our whiskey is put down we will take to the spruce bud,
It don't exceed the whiskey to purify the blood,
It don't exceed the whiskey, I vow and do declare,
It's enough to draw you in a crump, the cold of the spruce beer.
Well now our whiskey is put down we'll take to the spruce beer,
We'll gather in a neighbour's house, drink a health all around,
Not health to the informer, he put our whiskey down.

Song by Pat Troy. -taken from THE SONG COMPLEX OF -THE MOONSHINE CAN: AN INTEGRATED
APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF WORDS AND MUSIC IN TRADITIONAL SONG BY JULIA C. BISHOP

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Swish Song

Inflation isn't bad enough
But Johnny Crosbie makes it tough
He's putting up the drop of stuff Swish will cost ten dollars
Into the barrels from the Store
So much hot water you would pour
A three buck deal, but now it's more
Swish will cost ten dollars
Liquor soaked into the wood
Drawn out by water as it should
A swishy product makes that's good
Swish will cost ten dollars

If Crosbie likes to spread his name
Quite sad will be his claim to fame
The jaced up price on him we'll blame
Swish will cost ten dollars
Making moonshine on one's own
Will Mr. Crosbie now condone
Why not, the way that things are goin'
Swish will cost ten dollars.

Daily News 2 May, 1973, p. 4 "Swish":

Liquor Book

After three long years of working sure there finally came a day
When my three weeks of holiday for my trip around the bay
Sure I tore off my overalls and rushed up in my [quay]
For I promised to get a drop of stuff to take along with me

After three long weeks of waiting and goodness knows I tried
With a half a dollar in my hand I finally got inside
I walked up to the wicket along with many more
Such names and occupations sure I never heard before

There were young men there with curly hair and old men with bald heads
Some pretty looking females and old maids with wooden legs
Young men with whiskers on their chin with disappointed looks
Whose faces growing longer as they waited for their books

Then a big policeman came along and he lined us up in twos
He had a billy in his band sure none of us refused

[...]

Twas then I learnt they're trying to get a book to get a drink

[...]

By Jove said he I might have sent my grandson here instead

[...]

[...] their waiting for their books Too late to go around the bay my book I finally got

I bought myself a bottle of screech and drank the whole damn lot
I went right out just like a light dead to the world it seems
And boy oh boy while I was out what queer old things I dreamed

I saw Adam eating the apple [...]
[...]
King Solomon trying to count his wives [...]
[...] don't make any wonder if I never drink again

McEdward Leach and the Songs of Atlantic Canada

"Did You Get Your

Liquor Book?" first documented in 1945:

There were people there from everywhere, Grand
Falls and Corner Brook,
From Joe Batt's Arm and Billy's farm, all wailin' for
their book;
From Greenland's icy waters and Tex's kitty brook,
All waitin' tired and thirsty to gel their liquor book.
There were young men with curly hair and old men
with bald heads,
And pretty little maidens, old maids with wooden legs;
Old men with whiskers on their chin who gave an
awful look,
And their whiskers they grew longer as they wailed
for their book

(Martin (20), Nolan, Newfoundland Songs 10-11).

The Sick list Song -- Air: 'Keep the Home Fires Burning''

They were coming from the Southside
And they came from Nagles' Hill,
And each man brought a bottle
Captain Bonia had to fill.
For the doctors gave prescriptions
To all who came along,
And when they met the Captain
Sure they sung this gay old song:
Keep the bung hole going,
Keep the old tom flowing,
The doctors say 'tis the best thing in the world to
cure a cough,
So let us all be drinking
For ere long we are thinking
The 'sober' prohibition men will turn it off (Murphy).

A Tankard of Ale

Oh some are for the lily, and some are for the rose,
But I am for the sugar=cane that in Jamaica grows;
For its that makes the bonny drink to warm my copper nose,
Says the old, bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh some are fond of fiddles and a song well sung
And some are all for music for to lilt upon the tongue;
But mouths were made for tankards, and for sucking at the bung,

Says the old, bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh some are fond of dancing and some are fond of dice,
And some are all for red lips, and pretty lasses' eyes;
But a right Jamaica puncheon is a finer prize
To the old, bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh some that's good and godly ones they hold that it's a sin
To troll the jolly bowl around and let the dollars spin;
But I'm for toleration and for drinking at an inn,
Says the old, bold mate of Henry Morgan

Come and I will sing you = The drunken captain

The Brown Jug

by Francis Fawkes, English poet (1720–1777)

DEAR TOM , this brown jug, that now foams with mild ale,

(In which I will drink to sweet Nan of the Vale)

Was once Toby Fillpot, a thirsty old soul

As e'er drank a bottle or fathomed a bowl;

In boosing about 't was his praise to excel,

And among jolly toppers he bore off the bell.

It chanced, as in dog-days he sat at his ease,

In his flower-woven arbour, as gay as you please,

With a friend and a pipe, puffing sorrows away,

And with honest old Stingo was soaking his clay,

His breath-doors of life on a sudden were shut,
And he died full as big as a Dorchester butt.
His body when long in the ground it had lain,
And time into clay had resolved it again,
A potter found out in its covert so snug,
And with part of fat Toby he formed this brown jug;
Now sacred to friendship, to mirth, and mild ale,
So here 's to my lovely sweet Nan of the Vale.

A smart steamboat from Canada – with the first written reference to Screech

Three weeks ago came down;
With booze enough Stowed in her hold to paralyze the town.
As no one ever saw her
And didn't see her come;
And now the town is asking who shipped this foxy rum.

She didn't come from Trinity
Or any northern bay;
As all the stills for making booze
Are taken down to-day.
No more the drop of moonshine
We all did love so dear;
We now must buy a bottle,
Since the stills did disappear.

“Darn the man that I can get”
With so many men around,
I know it’ shard for you
To understand that any girl
Could be lonely, sad and blue;
For the boys don’t seem to notice me,
For my life I can’t see why,
Darn the man that I can get no matter how I try
I haver a few cents in the bank
A home down by the beach
And the very first night I am married
Hub will have a bottle of screech;
He’ll get his arms around my neck
Like my husband used to do
For I have buried four more of them,
And I’m only sixty-two.

Songs by Johnny Burke

Timothy Murphy kept the pledge
For nearly fourteen year,
But Christmas Eve he felt so bad,
He got out on the beer;
Oh, he came home like a roaring lion
Filled up with rum and gin,
For he's like a Bengal tiger
When he gets a mouthful in.
There's not a porch for half a mile
That came in Murphy's sight,
But felt his hob-nailed bluchers

When he let out that night;
And sashes tumbled 'round the floor
And cats at doors did scrape,
For they knew their time on earth was short
When Timothy rounds the cape.

(chorus)

He broke lamps and cups and crockeryware,
The pots and soup tureens,
He ate everything that was in the house,
Pigs' heads and boiled crubeens;
Now there's not a sound eye in the block,
From Murphy's heavy sledge,
And the town is all on crutches now,
Since Murphy broke the pledge.

Johnny Burke - (1851-1930)

Johnny burke song “ Who put the herring on the booze.” based on an actual event where someone had bottles of whiskey in barrels of herring bound for New York. Unfortunately one of the barrels broke open and the ruse was discovered.

Who Put The Herring On The Booze? *(Johnny Burke)*

The *Nerissa* from the Red Cross Line from Harvey's wharf did sail,
While pantry stewards and passengers were leaning o'er the rail;
And as she cut out through the gap, while slowly she did go,
They little thought the herrings had a corking time below.

I wish I was a herring, boys, if only for that trip,
Not trying to beg a nickel, and I dying for a nip;
And herrings saturated, boys, with Old Tom and foxy rum,
While us poor devils in the town a drink is trying to bum.

With five hundred barrels of herring in the Red Cross Liner's hold,
Just worth a million dollars when the whiskey is all sold;
But the cute New York detectives never saw the like before,
When a barrel fell from off the slings and scattered on the floor.

When they opened up the barrels, sure they found in every tier,
A keg of Old Scotch Whisky and the herrings on the beer.
So we read on Friday morning in the *Telegram* and the *News*,
How five hundred barrels of herring were arrested on the booze.

Now who shipped the two-eyed beef steaks, he must have a scalded heart,
And a million gone to blazes, sure he got the devil's dart;
He won't put herrings on the beer for this gave him a check,
For trying to smuggle in New York he got it in the neck.

We heard of fellows on a time a drink is trying to bum,
We heard of tars some years ago off Nelson drank the rum;
But we never heard of herrings buying whisky by the keg,
And land in New York City with five hundred on the jag.

They didn't come from Halifax, for that they did deny,
They didn't come from Newfoundland, so much they can't supply;
To tell the one who shipped the booze, some bare-faced brazen pup,
Do you give up, Mr. Johnson, yes, we all give it up.

####.... Johnny Burke [1851-1930] of St. John's, NL, 1928####

Published in *Burke's Ballads*, pg.7, c.1960, compiled by John White and archived at Memorial University of Newfoundland, Libraries, Centre For Newfoundland Studies - Digitized Books collection.