

Goodbye, Fare Thee Well

1. We're homeward bound for Liverpool town
**Goodbye, fare thee well,
Goodbye, fare thee well.**

Them Liverpool judies they all will come down.

Hurrah! Me boys, we're homeward bound.

2. We're homeward bound for the girls of the town

**Goodbye, fare thee well,
Goodbye, fare thee well.**

So stamp up my hearties, and heave her around,

Hurrah! Me boys, we're homeward bound.

3. We're a fine flashy packet and bound for to go,

**Goodbye, fare thee well,
Goodbye, fare thee well.**

With the girls on the towrope we cannot say no

Hurrah! Me boys, we're homeward bound.

4. And one to another you'll hear them all say,

**Goodbye, fare thee well,
Goodbye, fare thee well.**

Here comes Johnnie with his fourteen months' pay,

Hurrah! Me boys, we're homeward bound.

5. The girls there on Lime Street we soon hope to meet,

**Goodbye, fare thee well,
Goodbye, fare thee well.**

And soon we'll be a-roving both sides of the street

Hurrah! Me boys, we're homeward bound.

6. We'll meet those fly girls and we'll ring the old bell,

**Goodbye, fare thee well,
Goodbye, fare thee well.**

With the girls that we meet there we'll raise bloody hell!

Hurrah! Me boys, we're homeward bound.

7. I'll tell my old woman when I get back home,

**Goodbye, fare thee well,
Goodbye, fare thee well.**

Them flash girls on Lime Street won't leave me alone.

Hurrah! Me boys, we're homeward bound.

8. We're homeward bound and I'll have you to know ...

**Goodbye, fare thee well,
Goodbye, fare thee well.**

It's over the water to Liverpool we'll go,
Hurrah! Me boys, we're homeward bound!



A British sailor sitting contentedly with a tankard of ale Aquatint with etching, c.1781.

["The scourge of India captains taking his usual regale"]

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Notes

A **homeward bound** shanty sung at **capstan** or **windlass** when raising the anchor for the homeward voyage.

Alternative Titles: Goodbye Fare Thee Well, Goodbye Fare Ye Well, Homeward Bound

This version: Johnny Collins, CD: *Shanties and songs of the Sea*

Stan **Hugill**, in *Shanties of the Seven Seas* (1994) gives four different versions that he says are common to seamen the world over.

- a) Usual homeward-bound sentiments
- b) Verses taken from the old forebitter *Homeward Bound*
- c) The Milkmaid (which is obscene)
- d) Verses from *The Dreadnought*.

Hugill adds:

Goodbye, Fare Thee Well was invariably heard at its best in South American ports like Iquique where the saltpetre and nitrate traders would lie, and often as many as 200 ships at a time, awaiting or loading their cargoes.

When at last a ship was ready to sail crews of the other ships in port would, as **Capt. Frank Shaw** says in *Splendour of the Seas* (London 1953), board the homeward bounder to help raise the

anchor, and swell the song. "That was when a capstan shanty was really sung ... a many as 200 voices chorusing heartily".

Doerflinger, William Main, 1951, *Songs of the Sailor and Lumberman*, revised 1990

On the eve of sailing the crew would swing a blazing tar barrel aloft and serenade the other ships in harbour with singing and cheering; on sailing day as the crew raised the anchor to this shanty, cheering rang out from the other ships in port to wish them well.

Notes on the words

Liverpool Judies - Judy was (is!) a Liverpool term for a young girl.

Girls on the towrope - When a ship was homeward bound with a favourable wind someone would remark 'Aye, the gals 'ave got 'old of our towrope, me hearties!' They were a sort of magnet, supposedly pulling with sailors and their ship towards the land.
(Hugill)

Flashy packet - packet ship delivering mail out of Liverpool.

Lime Street - Liverpool's sailor-town



Lindsay, Norman, 1918, *The Magic Pudding*.
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