

Here We Come Home in a Leaky Ship

1. Oh here we come home on a leaky ship
(Leaky ship, leaky ship)
And here we come home on a leaky ship
(And away boys, away)
2. The old man shouts "the pumps stand by"
(pumps stand by, pumps stand by)
Oh we can never suck her dry
(And away boys, away)
3. Oh leave her Johnny we can pump
no more
(Pump no more, pump no more)
Of "pump or drown" we've had full store
(And away boys, away)
4. Oh pump or drown the old man said
(Old man said, old man said)
Or else damn sure you'll all be dead
(And away boys, away)
5. Oh heave her round or we shall drown,
(Or we shall drown, or we shall drown)
Don't you feel her settling down
(And away boys, away)
6. Oh heave her round those pump poles
bright,
(Pump poles bright, pump poles bright)
There'll be no sleep for us tonight
(And away boys, away)
7. The starboard pump is like the crew
(Like the crew, like the crew)
It's all worn out and it will not do
(And away boys, away)
8. Oh leave her Johnny and pump no more
(Pump no more, pump no more)
It's time we were upon dry shore
(And away boys, away)

Sing along with Stan Hugill and Stormalong John at youtu.be/J7zbrqIWhqw

Notes

A pumping shanty.

Bob Walser writes at <https://bobwalser.com/down-in-those-valleys/> that this song was from Rees Baldwin, of Barry Dock, Wales, who sang it c.1929-30 to James Madison Carpenter, the American folklorist



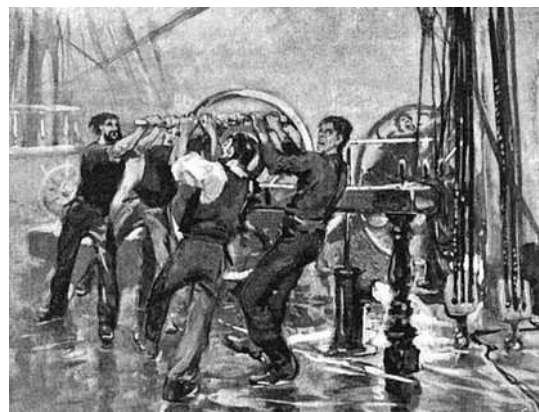
Stan Hugill, *At the Jiggity-Jig Pump, 1878-1886* from *Shanties of the Seven Seas, 1994*.

Kimber's Men say:

Pumping is one of the worst jobs on board a ship. The men hate it because it's a long and back breaking job. If the ship smelt like a sieve pumping could take up an entire (four-hour) watch.

Hugill would tell how an old sea hand signing onto a ship in port would often lift the hatch and smell the ship out before coming aboard. If the ship smelt sweet and clean he'd be off that ship as fast as his two little legs could carry him. If the ship smelt foul and dank he would sign on, because it would mean less pumping.

On the **Downton Pump**, (see below) where more men could be employed thus lightening the load, the shantyman would be at one of the handles. The main part of the crowd would be tailing him on the 'bell-rope'. The ropes were looped over the handles of the pumps flywheels. 'Roll the wheel' or 'Who was drunk last night?' is the cry. This would be followed by the shantyman breaking into song. Then as the wheel was about to descend the men first on one side and then on the other would haul on the rope, lightening the toil considerably.



Symons, W, *Sailors working at a Downton pump*. From an article on sailor chanteys, in "*Sailors' Work Songs*." by Patterson, J.E. 1900, via [Wikimedia Commons](#).