

## Poor Paddy (works on the railway)

1. In eighteen hundred and forty one  
I put my corduroy breeches on  
Put my corduroy breeches on  
To work upon the railway.

**Fillimi-oori-oori-ay, Fillimi-oori-oori-ay,  
Fillimi-oori-oori-ay,  
To work upon the railway.**

2. In eighteen hundred and forty-two,  
I left the old world for the new,  
Bad cess to the luck that brought me  
through  
To work upon the railway.

**Fillimiooriay, Fillimiooriay  
Fillimiooriay, To work upon the railway**

3. In eighteen hundred and forty-three  
'Twas then I met sweet Biddy Magee,  
An elegant wife she's been to me,  
While workin' on the railway.

**Fillimi-oori-oori-ay, Fillimi-oori-oori-ay,  
Fillimi-oori-oori-ay,  
To work upon the railway**

4. When I left Ireland to come here,  
To spend my latter days in cheer,  
Bosses they did drink strong beer,  
While Pat worked on the Railway

**Fillimi-oori-oori-ay, Fillimi-oori-oori-ay,  
Fillimi-oori-oori-ay,  
To work upon the railway.**

5. It's "Paddy do this" and "Paddy do that"  
Without a stocking or cravat,  
And nothing but an old straw hat  
While Paddy works on the railway

**Fillimi-oori-oori-ay, Fillimi-oori-oori-ay,  
Fillimi-oori-oori-ay,  
To work upon the railway**

6. In eighteen hundred and forty-six  
They pelted me with stones and bricks.  
I was in a hell of a fix  
While working on the railroad.

**Fillimi-oori-oori-ay, Fillimi-oori-oori-ay,  
Fillimi-oori-oori-ay,  
To work upon the railway.**

7. In eighteen hundred and forty-seven,  
Sweet Biddy Magee, she went to heaven,  
If she left one kid, she left eleven,  
To work upon the railway.

**Fillimi-oori-oori-ay, Fillimi-oori-oori-ay,  
Fillimi-oori-oori-ay,  
To work upon the railway.**

Sing along with **The Weavers** (lyrics on-screen) at  
<https://youtu.be/l8KevH0fZSO>



Navvies on a railway track, from web site [A Liverpool folk song a week](#)

### Notes:

A capstan and pumping shanty

**Other names:** Fi-Li-Mi-Oo-Re-Ay, Poor Paddy, Poor Paddy on the railway, Poor Paddy works on the railway.

**Hugill**, Stan, 1994, *Shanties from the Seven Seas*, where Hugill wrote :

Poor Paddy works on the railway was mainly sung at pumps or capstan. Most authorities seem to think that it started life as a musical song. **Alden** in *Harper's Magazine* (July 1882) declares that it is a sailors' song tamed to do land service ... on the minstrel stage.

But the land version was also sung by the early railroad workers around the 1840s and 1850s. It's probably became popular in the western ocean packets about the time of the Irish potato famine. **C.F. Smith** came across a reference to it in the MS of a magazine called *Young America* published aboard the James Bains in 1865.