

The Pressgang

Words by Michael Watson

Tune D Johnson 2005

Verse

Musical notation for the Verse section, consisting of four staves of music in G major. The chords indicated are Em, B7, Em, D, Em, D, G, Bm, Em, D, C, D, Em.

Chorus

Musical notation for the Chorus section, consisting of four staves of music in G major. The chords indicated are G, D7, G, D7, Am, D7, G, D7, G, D, G, D7, Am, C, D, Em.

Sit round the galley fire, my lads, and listen while I sing,
I'll tell you all how I was pressed when George the Third was king ;
In eighteen 'three the war broke out, and so, to man the fleet,
The pressgang seized all landsmen that ashore they chanced to meet.

One night, as I was strollin' with my sweetheart on the quay,
She smilin'—oh! so pretty, boys, and happy as could be,
We heard the dip of oars hard by, and voices gaily sang,
And this is what the chorus was, that o'er the waters rang.

Yeo, heave ho ! here's to all the lasses, O,
Cheerily, lads, 'time aboard soon passes, O,
Yeo, heave ho ! sing and fill your glasses, O,
Cheerily, lads ! who'll serve the King ?

The boat was moored 'longside the quay—ashore then jumped the crew,
A gallant young lieutenant and a gang of jackets blue ;
They pounced on me—and lor, how close my little lass did cling,
And how she prayed they'd let me off from servin' of the King.

Says I, "But I'm a barber, boys, so what's the good of me?"
Says they—"Then you're the shaver that's just wanted on the sea,
So bid your lass farewell, my lad, and jump into the boat,
And like a pipin' bullfinch you'll soon chirp when you're afloat."