

# Limestone Harvest



Some of us are fish-ers drag- ging oy- sters from the bay;



Some of us are farm hands from a- long the wag- gon way.



When we sees the ships ap- pear, com- ing round the head, We



hur- ries to the cliff face and har- vest stone in stead.



While the oy- sters rest, be- fore the fields are mown; we cut stone.

Some of us are fishers, dragging oysters from the bay  
Some of us are farm-hands from along the wagon way  
When we see the ships appear, coming round the head  
We hurries to the cliff-face, and harvest stone instead  
(Chorus)

*While the oysters rest  
Before the fields are mown,  
We cut stone*

Farmer's fields must have their lime, to keep the soil sweet  
Else they won't give all we need, of 'taters, kale and beet  
We cart the limestone to the kiln, there we roast it down,  
Mix it with the farm-soil and spread it on the ground  
(Chorus)

The parishes buy chippings, to help maintain the roads  
So Mr Taylor's omnibus can rush by with its loads  
We sees it coming miles away, it raises dust in clouds,  
It settles over everything, a thick white dusty shroud  
(Chorus)

We sells our stone to Bideford, they comes across in ships  
The sailors call 'em 'muffies', and beach 'em by the slips  
We loads the stone in quickly, 'til the tide begins to flow  
Watch the boats begin to float, and cheer 'em as they go  
(Chorus)

There's limestone in the whitewash that keeps our houses neat  
Limestone in the air we breathe and underneath our feet  
There's money in the oyster-beds, money in the fields  
But it's the limestone harvest that gives the greatest yield  
(Chorus)

*While the oysters rest  
Before the fields are mown,  
We cut stone*



The south coast of Gower consists of limestone cliffs. In earlier days lime was in great demand as a dressing for agricultural soil, as well as for making mortar and limewash, and sufacing roads. Devon, across the Bristol Channel, is mainly sandstone, so they had to import their lime, and much came by boat from Gower. The boats used were small craft rigged as *hermaphrodite brigs*, hence the nickname 'muffies'. They would beach at half-tide, load the stone while the tide was out, then float off at high water. Most of the locals would supplement their income in the stone trade at slack times for other employment.