

OLD PORTS OF CALL

Words & Music by Bob Watson

Allegretto con Spirito

Verse



1 In days of my youth I sailed up - on a Thames barge,
2 I sailed as a Mate and lat - er as a Skip - per,



1 Car - ry - ing the car - goes out of Lon - don Ri - ver
2 Out a - long the coast - line, up and down the ri - vers.



1 Tan col - oured sprit - s'ls they made quite a show, When the
2 Weren't ma - ny pla - ces a barge could - n't go, So the



1 wind blew her right, well she could - n't half go. ---- I
2 har - bours were plen - ty that I came to know. ---- Those



Ch Old ports of call, so ma - ny I re - mem - ber,



An - twerp and Ip - swich, Rot - ter - dam and Ros - coff,



All come to life when a tune starts to play, And it



Puts me in mind of a by - gone day. -----

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1. In days of my youth I sailed upon a Thames barge,
Carrying the cargoes out of London River;
Tan coloured spritsails they made quite a show,
When the wind blew her right, well she couldn't half go.
I sailed as a mate and later as a skipper
All along the coastline, up and down the rivers,
Not many places a barge couldn't go.
So the harbours were plenty that I came to know.

Chorus: Old ports of call, so many I remember, Antwerp & Ipswich, Rotterdam & Roscoff
All come to life when a tune starts to play, and it puts me in mind of a by-gone day.

2. Sometimes going foreign, out across the Channel,
Wherever there was cargoes we could fetch and carry,
Sacks of potatoes, sugar beet or grain –
When they filled up our hold, then we'd sail once again.
Some evenings would find us moored up to some quayside,
Music for the making with the other sailors;
Many diff'rent lingo's, but nobody cared,
When a scrape on the fiddle's worth more than a word.

Chorus

3. This tune that I've played, I learned it off a French bloke,
Skipper of a tugboat, pulled me off a sandbank;
Played it on a squeezebox, sitting in a bar,
Where I took a Pernod with Johnny Francois.
I once saw a girl, they said her name was Rosa,
Standing on a table, dancing for the sailors;
Clack - clack went her heels, while her white frillies flew,
Then two fellers fought for a garter she threw.

Chorus

4. It was good while it lasted, but times they were a-changing,
Cargoes in containers, bigger ships to take them;
Saw many sailcraft driven from the sea,
And a blight on the future for blokes like me.
Now I got no wish for going back to see them,
Old ports of call, to pay another visit;
Too many changes I wouldn't wish to see,
And I'd rather remember how times used to be.

Chorus

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