

BERT'S FIRST TRIP (Dave Evardson)

Grimsby Town once used to be the place for fishin' & the sea
And at fifteen, lads began as deckie learners
Trousers flappin', jackets flared, to do the town they came prepared
For they were hardened trawlermen, & money-earners

You knew a deckie by his suit, & how he parted with his loot -
Three days in dock in which to cram three weeks of livin'
For to these young lads, the sea was the driest place to be
And caused a thirst to which I hope you're never driven

They were fightin', boozin' men, whose like we'll never see again
And when in dock they sometimes liked a jar
In the Swan or at the Bear, you could find our heroes there
Wherever Hewitts' ales were on the bar

For they worked & played life hard, often bruised & battle-scarred
Every one of 'em deserving praise & glory
But a fickle thing is fame, that won't apportion its acclaim
So I'll single out just one, & here's his story

Now the first time I met Bert, he'd been sick all down his shirt
On his first trip, grimly clingin' to the rail
He says: Pal, I do feel bad. I replied: Well, buck up, lad
Only twenty-five more minutes, & we sail!

Poor young Bert's first trip was rough, ah but he had nerve enough
He was green, but he was willin' to be taught
Every time he'd see a catch heaved up a-starbo'rd, he would watch
Then stagger round, & heave up summat else a-port

But his sea-legs soon were found, & before we'd left that ground
He could hug the deck like any old-time hand
They can tread the scale & slime & keep their balance all the time
Why, they're steadier at sea than on dry land

And how that lad could pull his weight, & he soon impressed the mate
Who took time off watch to give him extra schoolin'
But the place Bert learned the most was up the West Norwegian coast
Where our ships (& thirsty crews) went for refuellin'