

Final Trawl

Song by Archie Fisher (b. 1939)

A cran is a measure for fresh herring as caught; fixed by the Fisheries Board in 1852 at 37 gallons (about 750 fish). Up to 1815 the cran was measured by heaping full a herring-barrel with the ends taken out, which was then lifted, leaving the heap on the ground or floor.

Now it's three long years since we made her pay.

Sing haul away me lad-di-o

And the owners say that she's had her day.

Sing haul away me lad-di-o.

So it's heave away on the final trawl.

It's an easy pull for the catch is small.

Now it's stow your gear lads and batten down.

Then i'll take the wheel lads and turn her round.

And we'll join the "Venture" and the "Morning Star"

Riding high and empty beyond the bar.

But I'd rather beach her on the Skerry Rock.

Than see her torched in the breakers dock.

And it's when I die you can stow me down.

In her rusty hold where the breakers sound.

Then we'll make the haven and the Fiddlers Green.

Where the grub is good and the bunks are clean.

For I've fished a lifetime, boy and man.

And the final trawl scarcely makes a cran.

So it's heave away for the final trawl ...