

Rollin' Down the River

By Jack Forbes (1982)

This song reflects the workings of modern container shipping in the Thames estuary. OCL is the 'Overseas Container Line' and a TEU is a 'Twenty foot Equivalent Unit' – a container.

Oh! I once was a rigger and I worked like hell.
Rolling up. Rolling down.

But now I'm sailing with the OCL
And go rolling down the river.

Rolling up. Rolling down.
We'll all get drunk in Tilbury town
Twenty four hours to turn around.
And go rolling down the river.

When first I saw a TEU.
I wondered where they stowed the crew
To go rolling down the river.

Well cargo comes in TEUs.
A 20 foot box, boys, filled with booze.

There's a Tilbury girl called Kettle Jane.
First on the boil then off again.

She's got a mate called Teapot Anne.
She gets well brewed. She likes a man.

Tilbury girls go round in pairs,
You won't catch them unawares.

Down on the dock-gates where the work is done,
You can pick 'em up, one by one.

Well, we're the boys to see her through.
So to hell with the Channel and the TEU.
Let's roll down the river.