

## The Wellerman

*Traditional: first published in New Zealand in the 1970s by Neil Colquhoun who collected the song around 1966 from F. R. Woods. The song refers to the "Wellermen" ships owned by the Weller brothers, who were amongst the earliest European settlers of Otago, South Island. The Weller brothers sold provisions to whalers in the area from 1830 to 1840. In early 2021, a cover of this song by Scottish postman Nathan Evans became a viral hit on TikTok, leading to a social media craze around sea shanties. No Roud number.*

*"Tonguing" is the task of cutting strips of whale blubber to render into oil.*

There once was a ship that put to sea  
The name of the ship was the Billy of Tea  
The winds blew up her bow dipped down  
O blow me bully boys blow (*Huh!*)

### Chorus

*Soon may the Wellerman come  
To bring us sugar and tea and rum  
One day, when the tonguin' is done  
We'll take our leave and go.*

She'd not been two weeks from the shore  
When down on her a right whale bore  
The captain called all hands and swore  
He'd take that whale in tow (*Huh!*)

### Chorus

Before the boat had hit the water  
The whale's tail came up and caught her  
All hands to the side harpooned and fought her  
When she dived down low (*Huh!*)

### Chorus

No line was cut no whale was freed  
The Captain's mind was not of greed  
For he belonged to the whaleman's creed  
She took that ship in tow (*Huh!*)

### Chorus

<more>

For forty days or even more  
The line went slack then tight once more  
All boats were lost there were only four  
But still that whale did go (*Huh!*)

Chorus

As far as I've heard the fight's still on  
The line's not cut and the whale's not gone  
The Wellerman makes his regular call  
To encourage the Captain crew and all <no huh>

Chorus

<Repeat Chorus and end with “(*Huh!*)”>

