

## Gloucestershire Wassail



1. Wassail, wassail, all over the town.  
The cup, it is white and the ale, it is brown.  
The cup, it is made of the good ashen tree  
and so is the malt of the finest barley.
2. Oh, master and missus, are you all within?  
Pray open the door and let us come in.  
Oh, master and missus who sit by the fire,  
Pray think of the trav'lers who walk through the mire.
3. Oh, where is the maid with the silver hair pin  
To open the door and let us come in?  
Oh, master and missus, it is our desire,  
A good loaf and cheese and a toast by the fire.
4. There was an old man and he had an old cow  
And how for to keep her, he didn't know how.  
He built up a barn for to keep his cow warm  
And a drop of good cider will do us no harm.
5. The good dog of Langport, he burnt his long tail  
And this is the night we go singing wassail.  
Oh, master and missus, now we must be gone.  
Bless all in this house until we come again.  
Bless all in this house 'till we come again!

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Ralph Vaughan Williams collected this version of the Gloucestershire wassail in the Inn at Pembridge, Herefordshire in July or August 1909 and it was subsequently published as the "Gloucestershire Wassail". Despite the Pembridge version being complete and presumably from a Gloucestershire singer, Vaughan Williams chose when he published the song to use words from versions collected by Cecil Sharp from William Bayliss of Buckland and Isaac Bennett of Little Sodbury. This version of the carol has become popular worldwide and is sung today by many singers and choirs. I learned this first from the recording of the Kingston Trio on their **Last Month of the Year** album. It is included in **The New Oxford Book of Carols** (#155).