

The Banks of Newfoundland



1. Ye ramblin' boys o' Liverpool,
Ye sailormen beware;
When you go in a Yankee packet ship,
No dungaree jumpers wear,
But have a monkey jacket
All up to your command,
For there blows some cold nor'westers
On the banks of Newfoundland.
We'll scrape her and we'll scrub her down
With holystone and sand,
And we'll bid adieu to the Virgin Rocks
And the banks of Newfoundland.
2. We had Jack Lynch from Ballynahinch,
Mike Murphy and some more,
And I tell you by's, they suffered like hell
On the way to Baltimore;
They pawned their gear in Liverpool
And they sailed as they did stand,
But there blows some cold nor'westers
On the banks of Newfoundland.
Chorus
3. Now the mate he stood on the fo'c'sle head
And loudly he did roar,
Now rattle her in me lucky lads,
You're bound for America's shore;
Come wipe the blood off that dead man's face
And haul or you'll be damned,
But there blows some cold nor'westers
On the Banks of Newfoundland.
Chorus
4. So now it's reef and reif, me boys
With the canvas frozen hard
And this mountain pass every Mother's son
On a ninety foot topsail yard
Nevermind about boots and oilskins
But holler or you'll be damned
But there blows some cold nor'westers
On the Banks of Newfoundland.
Chorus

5. We had a lady fair aboard,
Kate Connor was her name,
To her I promised marriage
And on me she had a claim;
She tore up her flannel petticoats
To make mittens for my hands,
For she could not see her true love freeze
On the banks of Newfoundland.

Chorus

6. So now we're off the Hook, me boys
And the land is white with snow,
And soon we'll see the pay table
And we'll spend the whole night below;
And on the docks, come down in flocks,
Those pretty girls will say,
Ah, It's snugger with me than on the sea,
On the Banks of Newfoundland.

Chorus

7. I dreamed a dream the other night
And I thought I was at home,
Alongside of my own true love
And she in Marybone,
A jug of ale all on my knee
A glass of ale in hand,
But when I woke, my heart was broke
On the banks of Newfoundland.

Chorus

"The Banks of Newfoundland" is the title of at least six different songs. These are not variations on a single tune, but entirely different songs with different airs and lyrics. All share a common theme – the dangers of fishing or sailing off the coast of Newfoundland – but none are very similar. Edith Fowke suggested this abundance of songs existed because the waters off Newfoundland are an interesting and dangerous place.

"The Banks of Newfoundland" is an old forebitter often used as a capstan song. It was really a parody of an older forebitter, itself originally a shore ballad called "Van Diemen's Land", a song often sung in Liverpool and as a forebitter often heard in Liverpool ships.

This is the first of two versions in Hugill's book.

It appears in the **Roud Folksong Index** as #1812.

It was printed in Hugill's **Shanties from the Seven Seas** (1987).

It was recorded by Ewan MacColl and A.L. Lloyd's **Blow Boys Blow** (1957) and a number of others.