

The Hot Asphalt

Em G D Em

D Em G D Em Bm

G D Em G

Em D Em G

D Em Bm G D Em

1. Repeat for Chorus

2. Repeat for Chorus

1. Good evening all me jolly lads,
 I'm glad to see you're well.
 If you'll gather all around me now
 The story I will tell,
 For I've got a situation
 And begorah and begob
 I can whisper I've the weekly wage
 Of nineteen bob.
 'Tis twelve months come October
 Since I left me native home
 After helping in Killarney, boys
 To bring the harvest down,
 But now I wear a geansai
 And around me waist a belt.
 I'm the gaffer of the squad
 That makes the hot asphalt.

Chorus

Well, we laid it in the hollows
 And we laid it in the flat
 And if it doesn't last forever
 Sure I swear I'll eat me hat.
 Well, I've wandered up and down the world
 But sure I never felt
 Any surface that was equal
 To the hot asphalt.

2. The other night a copper comes
 And he says to me, "McGuire,
 Would you kindly let me light me pipe
 Down at your boiler fire?"
 And he planks himself right down in front
 With hobnails up, till late
 And says I, "Me dacent man
 You'd better go and find your bate"
 He ups and yells, "I'm down on you
 I'm up to all yer pranks
 Don't I know you for a traitor
 From the Tipperary ranks?"
 Boys, I hit straight from the shoulder
 And I gave him such a belt
 That I knocked him into the boiler
 Full of hot asphalt.

Chorus

3. We quickly dragged him out again
And we threw him in the tub
And with soap and warm water
We began to rub and scrub
But devil the thing, it hardened
And it turned him hard as stone
And with every other rub
Sure you could hear the copper groan.
"I'm thinkin'", says O'Reilly
"That he's lookin' like Ould Nick
And burn me if I'm not inclined
To claim him with me pick"
"Now", says I, "it would be easier
To boil him till he melts
And to stir him nice and easy
In the hot asphalt".
Chorus
4. You may talk about yer sailorlads,
Ballad singers and the rest,
Your shoemakers and your tailors
But we please the ladies best.
The only ones who know the way
Their flinty hearts to melt
Are the lads around the boiler
Making hot asphalt.
With rubbing and with scrubbing
Sure I caught me death of cold
And for scientific purposes
Me body it was sold.
In the Kelvingrove museum, me boys
I'm hangin' in me pelt
As a monument to the Irish
Making hot asphalt.
Chorus

"The Hot Asphalt" is a song about Irish navvies in Britain which dates back to 1880's. The first British patent for the use of asphalt was "Cassell's patent asphalte or bitumen" in 1834. Then in 1837, Richard Tappin Claridge patented the use of Seyssel asphalt, for use in asphalt pavement.

The original version was a humorous song. It was re-written with new words in 1959 by Ewan MacColl as part of his **Radio Ballads**.

It was recorded by The Dubliners, The Corries, The Wolfe Tones, The Pogues and The Dublin City Ramblers.