

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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Celebrated Working Man

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I'm a celebrated working man from work I never shirk,
I can hew more coals than any man from Glasgow down to York.
And if you'd like to see my style, call around on me
When I've had several beers in the bar room.

CHO: In the bar room, in the bar room, that's where we congregate,

To drill the holes and fill the coals and shovel back the slate.

And for to do a job of work I am never late,

That's provided that we do it in the bar room.

At puttin' I'm a dandy, I hope you will agree,
And gannin along the gannin board I mak the tyun'uns flee
Your kelly sweeps and back-over turns they never bother me,
When I'm sitting on the limmers in the bar room.

I can judge a shot of power to a sixteenth of a grain,
I can fill my eighteen tubs though the water falls like rain,
And if you'd like to see me in the perpendicular vein,
It's when I'm setting timmers in the bar room.

And now my song is ended, perhaps we'll have another,
Now don't you fire any shots in here, or we will surely smother,
The landlord here would sooner pull beer than go to all the bother
To put up the ventilators in the bar room.

-Gwen and Mary Polwarth, North County songs

You can find an excellent rendition of an American version of this song on
'Songs and Ballads of the Anthracite Miners' Rounder CD 1502 sung by
Daniel Walsh in Pennsylvania in 1946.

Gannin - Going also called shuffling boards, flooring in a mine seam
tynuns - not sure but I think bolts to hold the gannins together

Kelly Turns - Hairpin bend

Limmers - Haunches or haughs ie. sitting down

Timmers - pit props

I also know a verse which goes:

I can set a stand of Timmers, lay a bar or single prop

I can cut me Juds at bottom, I can cut 'em at the top

I tell ye its a marvel lads how I get through the work
While I'm seated in my glory in the Bar room

According to Bert Lloyd in "Folk Song in England" This song was of American origin. George

Korson told the story of this song in "Minstrels of the Mine Patch" (Philadelphia 1943). It seems

that it was composed by Irish miner Ed Foley in Pennsylvania who sang it at a wedding in 1892.

It was brought to Durham England by a Wobbly collier from Kentucky, Yankee Jim Roberts,

some time around the period of the first world war. I first heard Jack Elliot of Birtley singing it

in the late 50s, he then recorded it in 1963 on the LP "Jack Elliot of Birtley" on the Leader

label. (Bill Sables)

It also appears in the book 'Pennsylvania Songs & Legends' (Johns Hopkins 1949).

It doesn't

have the 'In the barroom, in the barroom' chorus of the English version, but it does have a total

of nine verses. Korson says: Foley sang it for the first time at the wedding of a niece at Mount

Carmel in October 1892. It has had a steady popularity ever since. If I remember rightly,

MacColl used the Elliot's version in his radio-balled 'The Big Hewer.'

I always thought Juds were triangular bits cut at the end of the prop so that when they joined to

the overhead timbers they made a arched joint rather than a right angle thus increasing the load

bearing?

CB