

Limejuice and Vinegar

Collected from Jimmy Cargill of Randwick NSW by Warren Fahey. Limejuice and vinegar were issued to sailors to prevent scurvy which results from inadequate vitamin C in the diet. In 1747 James Lind showed that scurvy could be treated with citrus fruit.

Verse

If you want to join an Eng-lish ship, you must roam a-bout at large,
 If you want to join an Eng-lish ship, you must have a good dis-charge,
 Signed by the board of trade and with ev-'ry-thing in-tact,
 Or else there's no ad-vance a-board, it's con-trar-y to the Act.

Chorus

So, shout boys, hur-rah, I tell you it's a fact,
 There's noth-ing done a-board the ship con-trar-y to the Act.
 So lay aft, boys, lay aft, and see you get your whack,
 Lime-juice and vin-e-gar, ac-cor-ding to the Act.

Now when you've signed your articles, of course you've heard 'em read,
 They'll tell you of the beef and pork, the butter and the bread,
 The sugar and the marmalade and, with quantity exact,
 Limejuice and vinegar, according to the Act,

Now when you join the ship, my boys, your heads are always sore,
 And you expect a watch on watch, just as you have before,
 But the mate he cries, "Lay aft, and do as I say exact,
 For watch on watch the first day out's contrary to the Act."

Now slack away your weather main-braces and haul upon the lee,
 Swell up your jib-halliards and let your sheets go free.
 And bring along the watch tackle to board the stout main tack,
 For I want to see the main-sail set according to the Act.