

The Press Gang

Words by Michael Watson and published in 'Coles Treasury of Song', tune by David Johnson 2005.
A version with identical words and a different tune was collected by Ron Edwards from Stan Dean of Cairns, Qld.

Verse **Em** **B7** **Em**

Sit round the gall - ey fire, my lads, and list - en while I sing,

D **Em** **D** **Em**

I'll tell you all how I was pressed when George the Third was king;

G **D** **G** **Bm**

In eight - een 'three the war broke out, and so, to man the fleet,

Em **D** **C** **D** **Em**

The press-gang seized all lands-men that a - shore they chanced to meet.

(Chorus not till after 2nd verse)

G **D7** **G** **D7**

Yeo, heave ho! Here's to all the lass - es, O,

Am **D7** **G** **D7**

Cheer-i - ly, lads, 'time a - board soon pass - es, O,

G **D7** **G** **D7**

Yeo, heave ho! Sing and fill your glass - es, O,

Am **C** **D** **Em**

Cheer-i - ly, lads! Who'll serve the King?

One night, as I was strollin' with my sweetheart on the quay,
She smilin'—oh! so pretty, boys, and happy as could be,
We heard the dip of oars hard by, and voices gaily sang,
And this is what the chorus was, that o'er the waters rang.

The boat was moored 'longside the quay—ashore then jumped the crew,
A gallant young lieutenant and a gang of jackets blue ;
They pounced on me—and lor, how close my little lass did cling,
And how she prayed they'd let me off from servin' of the King.

Says I, "But I'm a barber, boys, so what's the good of me?"
Says they—"Then you're the shaver that's just wanted on the sea,
So bid your lass farewell, my lad, and jump into the boat,
And like a pipin' bullfinch you'll soon chirp when you're afloat."