

## Cornish Wassail

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### Version A

- 1        Now here at this house we first shall begin  
          To drink the King's health which a custom has been  
          Now unto the Master we'll drink his good health  
          We hope he may prosper in virtue and wealth  
              With our wassail! Wassail! Wassail  
              Wassail and joy come to our jolly wassail
  
- 2        Now here at your door we do orderly stand  
          Our jolly wassail and our hats in our hand  
          We do wish a good health to the master and dame  
          To the children and servants we wish it the same
  
- 3        In the friendliest manner this house we salute  
          That it is an old custom we need not dispute  
          O ask not the reason from hence it did spring  
          For we very well know 'tis an ancient old thing
  
- 4        Now for this good liquor to us that you bring  
          We lift up our voices we merrily sing  
          That all good householders may continue still  
          To provide the brown liquor our bowl for to fill
  
- 5        We hope that your barley will prosper and grow  
          That you may have barley and beer to bestow  
          And where you have one bushel we hope you'll have ten  
          That you may have beer against we come again
  
- 6        We hope that your orchards may blossom and bear  
          That you may have cider against the next year  
          That where you've one hogshead we hope you'll have ten  
          That you may have cider when we come again
  
- 7        We wish you great plenty and long may you live  
          Because you are willing and free for to give  
          To our wassail so cheerful, our wassail so bold  
          Long may you live happy, be lusty and old
  
- 8        Now neighbours and strangers you ever shall find  
          The wassailers courteous, obliging and kind  
          We hope our civility you will approve  
          With a piece of small silver in token of love
  
- 9        A welcome kind Sir as we merrily meet  
          With our jolly wassail as we pass up the street  
          O welcome kind Sir, if it please you to stop  
          A piece of small silver in our bowl for to drop
  
- 10       Now jolly old Christmas is passing away  
          He's posting off from us, and this the last day  
          That we shall enjoy long 'o you to abide  
          So farewell, Old Christmas, a merry good tide
  
- 11       Now jolly old Christmas, thou welcomest guest  
          Thou from us are parting which makes us look wisht  
          For all the twelve days are now come to their end  
          And this the last day of the season we spend

12 Now for this good liquor, your cider, your beer  
And for the fair kindness that we have had here  
We return you our thanks and shall still bear in mind  
How you have been bountiful, loving and kind

13 Now for the great kindness that we did receive  
We return you our thanks, and we now take our leave  
From this present evening we bid you adieu  
Until the next year and same season ensue

Sent by Jno Barrett, 30, Lemon St, Truro. "At last I am able to send you the Cornish Wassail song, which I promised you a twelvemonth ago. Mr JJ Mountford, the organist of St John's church has got the two versions of the music, one from the old man from whom I got the words, but I do not know from whence he obtained the other. Michael Nancarrow from whom air and words were taken is a native of Grampound and is now 73 years old. He has been singing the song for fifty years, and learnt it from Wm Griffin and Rd Darker, old men who have been dead near twenty years. The words I send have been known in this neighbourhood as the 'Grampound' song, being distinct from the 'Tregoney' and other versions. The first three verses are usually sung outside the house and, before the fourth verse is sung, some liquor is supplied. The singers carry a bowl into which all liquor given is poured, and when they leave the home they usually carry some away in case they should meet anyone on their way to the next house. Should they do so the ninth verse is sung; verses 10 and 11 are only sung on Twelfth Day



Two other tunes are given but not related to texts

## Version B

- 1        Wassail, wassail all round the town  
          For the ale is white and the ale is brown  
              For 'tis our wassail, and 'tis your wassail  
              And 'tis joy come to our jolly wassail
- 2        The cup is made of the ashen tree  
          And the ale is made of the best barley
- 3        The great dog of Langport burnt his tail  
          The night that we went singing wassail
- 4        O maid, fair maid in holland smock  
          Come ope the door and turn the lock
- 5        O maid, fair maid with golden (tag)  
          Come ope the door, and show a pretty leg
- 6        O maister, mistress that sit by the fire  
          Consider us poor travellers in the mire
- 7        O maister, mistress if you do so please  
          Put out the brown loaf and the raw milk cheese  
          And then you shall see how happy we be

Somersetshire form taken down at Langport by C L Eastlake, Jan 1893

## Version C

- 1 We stand at your door and we first shall begin  
To drink the Queen's health as the custom has been  
And unto the master we wish a good health  
And hope he may prosper in virtue and wealth  
    To maintain our wassail, Wassail! Wassail! Wassail  
    And joy come to our jolly wassail
- 2 Now here at your doors we submissively stand  
With our jolly wassail And our hats in hand  
We wish perfect health to both master and dame  
And children and servants we wish you the same
- 3 In a friendly manner the house we salute  
*(as version A - verse 3)*
- 4 And to the old town the same thing do we wish  
We hope all good folk will not take it amiss  
For us true companions who never will fail  
To call at your homes with our friendly wassail
- 5 Come fill our old jolly bowl up to the brim  
Which ever stands garnished so neat and so trim  
Sometimes crowned with laurel and sometimes with bay  
According to custom we'll keep the old way
- 6 Methinks I can smile when I look at the bowl  
That just now was empty again becomes full  
By the hands of good people, long may they remain  
And live and continue the same to maintain
- 7 Now for this good liquor which to us you bring  
*(as version A - verse 4)*
- 8 Now for your good liquor, your cider and beer  
*(as version A - verse 10)*
- 9 We wish you great plenty and long time to live  
*(as version A - verse 7)*
- 10 O may all your barley both prosper and grow  
*(as version A - verse 5)*
- 11 And now we will wish you one great blessing more  
That you trees may bring forth an abundance of store  
As much as their stocks and their branches can bear  
That you may have plenty of cider next year
- 12 O may all your apple trees prosper and bear  
*(as version A - verse 6)*
- 13 But jolly old Christmas the merry old guest  
*(as version A - verse 11)*
- 14 Now neighbours and strangers you always will find  
*(as version A - verse 8)*
- 15 And for the great kindness that we have received  
*(as version A - verse 13)*

From an old printed copy at Fowey, as sung there 60 years ago, and still sung

## A Wassail

- 1 Gude Maister and Missus a zittin by the fire  
Whilst we poor souls (Wassailers) Are dabblin in the mire  
    With our wassail! Our jolly wassail  
    And joy come to our jolly wassail
- 2 Little robin redbreast has a fine head  
Give us a cup of cider and we'll go to bed  
With our wassail etc
- 3 Little Robin Redbreast as a fine wing  
Give us of good zider and we'll begin to sing  
    With our wassail etc
- 4 Little Robin Redbreast has a fine leg  
Give us of your zider that we be come to beg  
    With our wassail etc
- 5 Little Robin Redbreast has a fine toe  
Give us of your zider and we'll begin to go  
    With our wassail etc
- 6 Your ale it is white, your beer it is brown  
Your zider is the very best in all our town  
    With our wassail etc
- 7 Your gin it is brew'd from juniper free  
Your gin is the best that ever can be  
    With our wassail etc
- 8 Then send out your man and let us come in  
Give us of your zider and to sing we will begin  
    With our wassail etc

As sung at Jacobstow, Nth Cornwall, sent me by Mr Batchellor and as heard from a man from (*Mavis*)?

No tune given

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