

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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Bonny Keel Laddie

Bonny Keel Laddie
(1812)

My bonny keel laddie, my canny keel laddie,
My bonny keel laddie for me o!
He sits in his keel, as black as the deil,
[keel is pronounced kee-ul - from Anglo-Saxon "ce-ol = a ship", I believe]
And he brings the white money to me, o!

Ha' ye seen owt o' my canny man,
An' are you sure he's weel, o!
He's geane ower land, wiv a stick in his hand,
T' help to moor the keel, o!
[This verse is often in another song beloved of choirs "Ma canny lad"]

The canny keel laddie, the bonny keel laddie,
The canny keel laddie for me o!
He sits in his huddock and claws his bare buttock,
And brings the white money to me, o!

Bruce and Stokoe: Northumbrian Minsterlsy (Reprint, Llanerch Publishers, Felinfach, 1998 - ISBN 1 86143 039 6) page 150 gives "The Bonnie Pit Laddie" and "The Bonnie Keel Laddie" sung to the same tune and clearly related.
AL Lloyd: Folk Song in England gives The Bonnie Pit Laddie with the air much as in Bruce and Stokoe, and on page 332 says the song was widespread in northern England and that it was still sung traditionally in 1967 when he wrote.

Allan's Tyneside Songs gives the same words as Bruce and Stokoe but attributes them to Robert Bell's Rhymes of Northern Bards

JM
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