

Traditional & Folk Songs with lyrics & midi music

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Wha Saw the 42nd

Wha Saw the 42nd

1.

Saw ye the Forty-Second?

Saw ye them gaun awa'?

Saw ye the Forty-Second

Marching to the Broomielaw?

Some o' them had boots an' stockin's,

Some o' them had nane ava;

Some o' them had tartan plaidies,

Marching to the Broomielaw.

2.

Fa saw the Forty-Second,

Fa saw them gang awa?

Fa saw the Forty-Second

Gaein' to the Waupinschaw?

Some o' them gat chappit tatties,

Some o' them gat nane ava.

Some o' them gat barley bannocks,

Gaein' to the Waupinschaw.

Fa saw the Forty-Second,

Fa saw them gang awa?

Fa saw the Forty-Second

Marchin' doun the Broomie-Law?

Some of them had tartan troosers,

Some of them had nane ava,

Some of them had green umbrellas,

Marchin' doun the Broomie-Law.

3.

Wha saw the `Forty-second'

Wha saw them gaun awa'

Wha saw the `Forty-second'

Marchin' doon the Broomielaw.

Some o' them had buits and stockin's,

Some o' them had nane at a',

Some o' them had tartan trousers,

Marchin' doon the Broomielaw.

[Repeat lines 1-4]

Some o' them had kilts and sporrans,
Some o' them had nane at a',
Some o' them had braw Glengarries
Marchin' doon the Broomielaw.

(1) Ford CR, 32; a Glasgow rhyme from the time of the Crimean War. A version coll. 1989 (ultimately from Airdrie, c. 1930) has 4 Sailing (cf. "Wha saw the cotton-spinners"); 7-8 = 1-2.

(2) Nicht at Eenie (1932), 6 (with music); whence Montgomerie SNR (1946), 93 (no. 114), with music.

(3) Carlton Folk Songs (n.d.), 13, with music. (Spelling regularised.) Note says: "The location was altered to suit whichever Town or Place where the ditty was sung. In Glasgow it was Broomielaw, in Perth it was Thimbleraw etc." [Ritchie (1964), 14, has 1-8, with 7 kilts and sporrans, 8 thro'.]

Cf. "Wha saw the Cotton Spinners". At a later date this was parodied into:

Wha' saw the tattie howkers,

Wha' saw them gang awa'?

Wha' saw the tattie howkers,

Marching through the Broomielaw?

Some of them had bits of stockings,

Some of them had nane at a',

Some of them had umberellas

Marching through the Broomielaw.

[MacColl Streets of Song, no. 62, learned in childhood in Glasgow.]

The tune is an adaptation of Whistle o'er the Lave o't; see note to "Katie Bairdie". MS

Note: The version I heard is:

March past, the forty-second,
March past, the forty-twa'
March past, the bare-arsed bastards

Comin' from Ashanti war

Some o' them hae Hielan' bonnets

Some o' them hae nane at a'

Some hae kilts an' others hae na'

They be Hielan' laddies raw..

I have no idea where I heard it, though. RG
MS, RG