
Synopsis

A navy who calls himself Happy Jack travelling in search of work finds employment in Bury. He goes on the spree and undergoes an informal wedding ceremony with Fanny Brandy. He leaves his lodgings without paying for them and Fanny goes begging to get money.

Text

I am a Navy (sic) bold that has tramped the Country round sir
For to get a job of work where any can be found sir
I left my native home, my friends and my relations
To ramble up and down the Town, & work in various stations.

Chorus: I am a navy do'nt you see, I love my beer all in my prime
 Because I am a Navvy that is working on the line

I left my native home on the first of September,
That memorable day I still do remember
I bundled up my [illegible] , put on my smock and Sunday cap sir,
And wherever I do ramble, folks call me Happy Jack sir.

I have got a job of work all in the town of Bury
And working on the line is a thing that makes me merry
I can use my pick and spade, and my wheelbarrow;
I can court the lasses too, but never intend to marry.

I worked there a fortnight and then it came to pay day
And when I geet my wages I thought I'd have a play day
And then a little spree in Clerke Street went quite handy
And I sat me down in Jenkinson's beside a Fanny Brandy

I called for a pint of beer and bid the old wench drink sir
But while she was a drinkin she too at me did wink sir
Well then we had some talk, in the backside we had a rally
Then jumped over brush and steel & agreed to live tally

They called for liquors merrily; the jugs went quickly round
That being my wedding day, I spent full many a crown, sir
And when me brass was done, old Fanny went a cadging
And to finish up me spree, I went and sloped me lodgings

Oh now my chaps, I'm going to leave the town of Bury
I'm sorry for to leave you chaps, for I've always found you merry
So call for liquors freely and drink away me dandy
And cry out here's health to Happy Jack, and Fanny Brandy

Glossary:

Smock	A loose over-garment worn to protect the clothes beneath. See Notes on the Song and Its Historical Background.
Sunday Cap	"Sunday clothes" or "Sunday Best" were a person's best clothes,

traditionally for wearing on Sundays, and (in later use) on special occasions. Frequently associated, especially in the 19th century, with the wearing of formal clothes to attend church. (OED)

Rally	Banter; presumably in this case a euphemism for a sexual encounter
Jumped o'er brush and steel	Informal wedding ceremony
Live tally	Share expenses; and by implication, live as man and wife.
Brass:	Copper coins; and by extension cash of any denomination
Cadging:	To adopt the guise of a deserving case (e.g. a soldier's widow) in order to beg.
Sloped:	To decamp without paying.
Spree	a lively or boisterous frolic; an occasion or spell of somewhat disorderly or noisy enjoyment frequently accompanied by drinking" (O.E.D.).

Source of Text: Bodleian Library, *allegro* Catalogue of Ballads; [Harding B 11\(926\)](#)

Music. No tune given. The tune to a variant of this song Bar532 fits well.

Source of Music: See notes to Bar532

Printer: Livsey

Where Printed: Manchester

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Variant Set: 006, Navy on the Line

Date:

Notes of the Song and Its Historical Background

See Bargery Variant Set 006 – Navy on the Line