
Synopsis

A description of the opening of the railway and of the people who went to watch the ceremony.

Themes: Railway Opening ceremony,
 Reaction of onlookers,
 Association of steam power with sexuality

Text

Now folks I will tell you although I'm no clown
By steam you may ride with speed up and down
Now that's all the go, and I'll tell you for why
The people are eager for to learn to fly

Chorus : You may travel by steam, so the folks say
 All over the world, upon the Railway

On the 4th of July I recollect well
What bustle there was in the morning I'll tell
With lasses and lads so buxom and gay
Delighted and talking about the railway

There's coaches and carts to accommodate all
The lame and the lazy, the great and the small
If you wish to ride, to be sure you must pay
To see all the fun sir upon the railway

To view the railroad away they did go
Tis a great undertaking as you very well know
It surpasses all others believe me its true
There's tunnels for miles that you have to go through

The colliers from Hampton and Bilstos likewise
And Wedgeburry nailors are struck with surprise
Dress'd up in their best, they cut a fine show.
To see the railroad away they must go

The cobbler left the old shoes in the shop
Old men on crutches were seen for to hop
The tailor his customers would not obey
But rode on his goose to see the railway

There was dumpling bet with Jack the Moonraker
There was buxom young Kit with the Butcher and Baker
And Black Sal from Walsall with two wooden legs
To see the railroad how she trudged on her pegs

What a treat for young lovers to see Gretna Green
The blacksmith will tie the not (sic) for them by steam
With his hammer and anvil he'll make them obey
And pack them off snugly upon the railway.

In London I've heard there is a machine
Invented for making young children by steam
Such dear little creatures full 30 per day
For young engineers to supply the railway

Talk of ships on the sea – that is all stuff
By water or land you may ride far enough
If you have got money, your passage to pay
You may ride far and near upon the railway

So now my good fellows let us be free
Again fill our glasses, and merry we'll be
Success to all trades in the reign of our queen
And boiling hot water that travels by steam.

To see them come in how the people do flock
To accommodate all there's lots of fine pop
And the ladies dress'd up in their costume so fine
Partake of good ale and whiskey so fine

Glossary:

- Buxom - Full of health, vigour, and good temper; well-favoured, plump and comely, 'jolly', comfortable-looking (in person). (Chiefly of women.)
- Hampton - the name by which people living around Birmingham and Wolverhampton and the Black Country would have referred to Wolverhampton
- Wedgeburry - Erroneous rendition of Wedgebury, the name by which people living around Birmingham, Wolverhampton and the Black Country would have referred to Wednesbury
- Bilstos - An erroneous rendition of Bilston a town in the Black Country
- naillors - Makers of iron nails
- goose - A tailor's smoothing-iron. (So called from the resemblance of the handle to the shape of a goose's neck.)
- moonraker - A simpleton
- Gretna Green - A village on the Scottish side of the border with England famous as a destination for elopements. English law stated that if both parties to a marriage were not at least 21 years old, then parental consent was required. Under Scottish Law, it was possible for boys to marry at 14 and girls at 12 years old without parental consent. The village blacksmith was empowered to officiate at weddings.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gretna_Green
- Stuff - Worthless ideas, discourse, or writing; nonsense

Source of Text: Bodleian Library, *allegro* Catalogue of Ballads; Firth c.16(450)

Music. No tune given

Source of Music: No tune given

Printer: Huntley, T
Where Printed: Sunderland
Author : Anonymous
Date: 1839 -

Notes of the song:

This song was much reprinted and can be found in variants from London, and Birmingham; see also Bar030, Bar301, and Bar350.

The text is identical to that of Bar301 printed in London. It repeats the mis-spelling of "Bilston" as "Bilstos" and introduces a new error; spelling "Wedgebury" as "Wedgeburry". Taken together these facts suggest that this version is later than Bar301.

Sunderland was connected to Durham in 1839. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Durham_railway_station)

More information about the history of railway construction in the area is required before a more reliable estimate of the date can be made.