

GB/6b/23 The Wreck of the Royal George

(I noted it in G.)

Sung by W. Wickham, Blackham, Sussex, May, 1907.

Chorus (in marching time)

Four-teen hun-dred men, wo-men and chil-der-en, On-ly four of them reached the shore (And)

5
all the Roy-al George and all its glo-ries They went down and was seen no more.

Take 6 Editorial note:

This song was not collected by Butterworth, but by Annie Gilchrist, who wrote a letter that was attached to GB/6b/20. Her letter was subsequently annotated by Lucy Broadwood. For reasons of space, the text is quoted here, rather than with GB/6b/20.

Royal George

To Mr Keel:

I do not think this is properly a folk-song - at any rate as regards the tune. I obtained what appears to be the chorus from a young labourer in Sussex in 1907. He had learnt it "from other men" - very likely in camp, as he had been a volunteer and had learnt other songs in a similar way. I doubt whether the tune is even as old as the time of the loss of the Royal George (1782). The phrase "little did we think of our sad misfortune" certainly has quite a modern ring. I can't account for the "fourteen hundred men, women and children" - some other wreck seems to have got mixed up with the Royal George!

A.G.G.

I don't think we should print this. It does not seem to me to be anything other than a reminiscence of a quite late 18th Century composed story.

LEB