

Botany Bay

The image shows a musical score for the song 'Botany Bay'. It consists of four staves of music in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff begins with 'To see my poor old fa - - ther as he stand at the ___ bar Like -'. The second staff continues with 'wise my dear old mo - - ther Her old grey locks she tore And in'. The third staff continues with 'tear - ing of those old grey locks These words to me did say O'. The fourth staff concludes with 'son, O Son what hast thou done Thou art bound for Bo - ta - ny Bay'.

1. Come, all young men of learning, a warning take by me,
I'd have you quit night walking and shun bad company;
I'd have you quit night walking, or else you'll rue the day,
When you are transported and gone to Botany Bay.
2. I was brought up in London Town, a place I know full well,
Brought up by honest parents, the truth to you I'll tell;
Brought up by honest parents, and reared so tenderly,
Till I became a roving blade which proved my destiny.
3. The cry went forth, "Tonight my lads, in front of yonder town,
We'll meet with hatchet, sledge and bar, and riot up and down."
But a traitor spied upon us, before the break of day,
And soon the soldiers came and said, "You're down for Botany Bay."
4. My character soon taken was and I was sent to gaol,
My parents tried to clear me, but nothing could prevail;
At the Old Bailey Sessions the judge to me did say -
"The jury have found you guilty - you must go to Botany Bay."
5. To see my aged father dear as he stood at the bar,
Likewise my tender mother, her old grey locks she tore;
In tearing off her old grey locks, these words she then did say -
"Oh, son! Oh, son! What hast thou done? Thou'rt going to Botany Bay."
6. As we sailed down the river on the twenty eighth of May
All in the morning early - at the dawning of the day
On every ship that we passed by we could hear the sailors say -
"Oh, for some crime or other, my lads, they're bound for Botany Bay."
7. There is a girl in London town, a girl I know full well,
If ever I get my liberty along with her I'll dwell;
If ever I get my liberty I'll forsake all other girls,
And shun all evil company, then adieu to New South Wales!

Alfred Williams wrote: "This old "Wassail" Harvey of ninety years, whose mother led him up the street to see the debris after the riot when he was a young child. The next day the Yeomanry troops were on the scene: the ring leaders were arrested and sent for trial: and were then dispatched off to Botany Bay ... This old Wassail sang to me sitting in his armchair in the cottage one rough winter's night."

Source: Sung by Chas [Charles] Smith, Coates, on April 10th 1911. Tune and one verse collected by Cecil J. Sharp. Verses from Henry 'Wassail' Harvey, Cricklade, Wilts, noted by Alfred Williams

Notes: In verse 2 AW sometimes had "Reading Town".

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