

## Goodbye, Fare Thee Well

1. We're homeward bound for Liverpool town  
**Goodbye, fare thee well,  
Goodbye, fare thee well.**

Them Liverpool judies they all will come down.

**Hurrah! Me boys, we're homeward bound.**

2. We're homeward bound for the girls of the town

**Goodbye, fare thee well,  
Goodbye, fare thee well.**

So stamp up my hearties, and heave her around,

**Hurrah! Me boys, we're homeward bound.**

3. We're a fine flashy packet and bound for to go,

**Goodbye, fare thee well,  
Goodbye, fare thee well.**

With the girls on the towrope we cannot say no

**Hurrah! Me boys, we're homeward bound.**

4. And one to another you'll hear them all say,

**Goodbye, fare thee well,  
Goodbye, fare thee well.**

Here comes Johnnie with his fourteen months' pay,

**Hurrah! Me boys, we're homeward bound.**

5. The girls there on Lime Street we soon hope to meet,

**Goodbye, fare thee well,  
Goodbye, fare thee well.**

And soon we'll be a-roving both sides of the street

**Hurrah! Me boys, we're homeward bound.**

6. We'll meet those fly girls and we'll ring the old bell,

**Goodbye, fare thee well,  
Goodbye, fare thee well.**

With the girls that we meet there we'll raise bloody hell!

**Hurrah! Me boys, we're homeward bound.**

7. I'll tell my old woman when I get back home,

**Goodbye, fare thee well,  
Goodbye, fare thee well.**

Them flash girls on Lime Street won't leave me alone.

**Hurrah! Me boys, we're homeward bound.**

8. We're homeward bound and I'll have you to know ...

**Goodbye, fare thee well,  
Goodbye, fare thee well.**

It's over the water to Liverpool we'll go,  
**Hurrah! Me boys, we're homeward bound!**



*A British sailor sitting contentedly with a tankard of ale*  
Aquatint with etching, c.1781.

["The scourge of India captains taking his usual regale"]

The Wellcome Library, ([wellcomecollection.org/](http://wellcomecollection.org/))  
and Creative Commons  
(<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

## Goodbye, Fare Thee Well

### Notes

A **homeward bound** shanty sung at **capstan** or **windlass** when raising the anchor for the homeward voyage.

**Alternative Titles:** Goodbye Fare Thee Well, Goodbye Fare Ye Well, Homeward Bound

**This version:** Johnny Collins, CD: *Shanties and songs of the Sea*

Stan **Hugill**, in *Shanties of the Seven Seas* (1994) gives four different versions that he says are common to seamen the world over.

- a) Usual homeward-bound sentiments
- b) Verses taken from the old forebitter *Homeward Bound*
- c) The Milkmaid (which is obscene)
- d) Verses from *The Dreadnought*.

Hugill adds:

*Goodbye, Fare Thee Well* was invariably heard at its best in South American ports like Iquique where the saltpetre and nitrate traders would lie, and often as many as 200 ships at a time, awaiting or loading their cargoes.

When at last a ship was ready to sail crews of the other ships in port would, as **Capt. Frank Shaw** says in *Splendour of the Seas* (London 1953), board the homeward bounder to help raise the

anchor, and swell the song. "That was when a capstan shanty was really sung ... a many as 200 voices chorusing heartily".

**Doerflinger**, William Main, 1951, *Songs of the Sailor and Lumberman*, revised 1990

On the eve of sailing the crew would swing a blazing tar barrel aloft and serenade the other ships in harbour with singing and cheering; on sailing day as the crew raised the anchor to this shanty, cheering rang out from the other ships in port to wish them well.

### Notes on the words

**Liverpool Judies** - Judy was (is!) a Liverpool term for a young girl.

**Girls on the towrope** - When a ship was homeward bound with a favourable wind someone would remark 'Aye, the gals 'ave got 'old of our towrope, me hearties!' They were a sort of magnet, supposedly pulling with sailors and their ship towards the land.

(Hugill)

**Flashy packet** - packet ship delivering mail out of Liverpool.

**Lime Street** - Liverpool's sailor-town



**Lindsay**, Norman, 1918, *The Magic Pudding*, Available as part of Project Gutenberg, [Gutenberg.org](http://Gutenberg.org)