

## Spanish Ladies

1. Farewell and adieu to you fair Spanish ladies  
 Farewell and adieu, you ladies of Spain,  
 For we've received orders for to sail for  
 old England  
 But we hope in a short time to see you again.

**We'll rant and we'll roar like true  
 British sailors  
 We'll rant and we'll roar across  
 the salt sea;  
 Until we strike soundings in the Channel  
 of Old Eng-I-and.  
 From Ushant to Scilly is thirty-four  
 leagues**

2. We hove our ship to with the wind at  
 the sou'west,  
 We hove our ship to, to take soundings clear.  
 In fifty-five fathoms on a fine sandy bottom  
 We clewed our main tops'ls and up channel  
 did steer.

3. Now the first land we made was a point  
 called the Deadman,

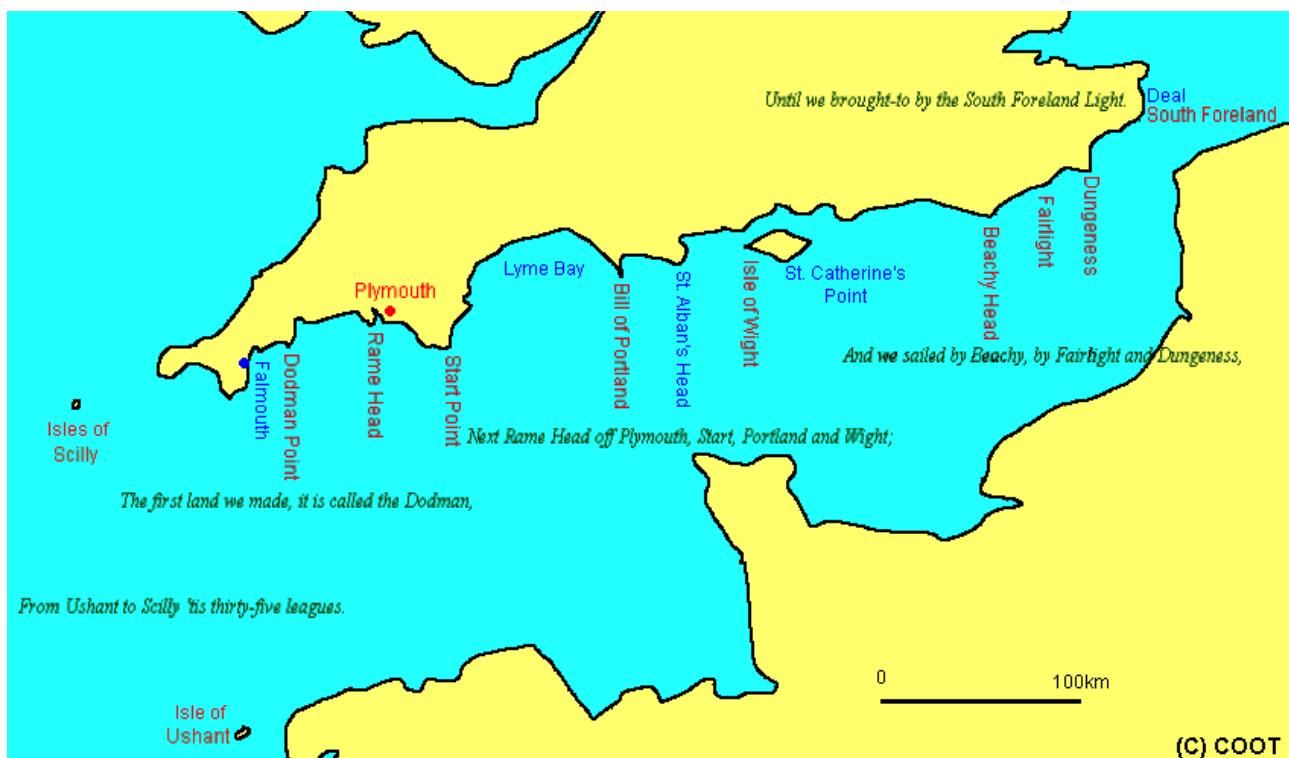
Next Ram's Head, past Plymouth, Start,  
 Portland and Wight  
 We sailed then by Beachy, by Fairlight,  
 and Dungeness,  
 Then wholly cracked on for the  
 South Foreland Light.

4. Then the signal was made for the grand  
 fleet to anchor,  
 All in the Downs that night for to lie.  
 We stood by our stopper, and brailed in  
 in the spanker,  
 Haul all our clew garnets, let tacks and  
 sheets fly.

5. Now let every man toss off a full bumper  
 And let every man drink off a full glass  
 And we'll drink and be merry and drown  
 melancholy  
 Singing, here's a good health to each  
 true-hearted lass.

Hear Hughie **Jones**' sing this version at  
<https://youtu.be/9B8Ex6uMRDQ>

You can see where the song's landmarks in this map:



**Stan Coot: A Map of English Channel**  
 From the web pages of **Oda Akio** (ARC Sea Shanty Club, Japan),  
 "Ransome Songs," [www.geocities.jp/coot2tm/songs/](http://www.geocities.jp/coot2tm/songs/)  
 Thank you [Stan](#).

## Notes:

A **Capstan** shanty - **homeward**, from 1769 or earlier.

**Alternative Titles:** Spanish Ladies, Farewell and Adieu

## Place Names

**Ushant** - island off the westernmost point of Brittany.

**Ushant to Scilly** - usually sung as 35 leagues but sometimes 34 or 45.

"It's actually 38.7 leagues (187.0 KM)... But the distance from Ushant to Scilly had been used as an instrument of maritime law to determine the official length of the league, with the number increased or decreased depending whether the Crown wanted the league shorter or longer. Hence the song may correct, only outdated."

[\[strangenewwords.wordpress.com/2015/11/17/from-ushant-to-scilly/\]](http://strangenewwords.wordpress.com/2015/11/17/from-ushant-to-scilly/)

**Deadman - Dodman** Point, a headland near Mevagissey, Cornwall. Dodman means snail.

**Ram Head - Rame Head**, Cornwall, is a prominent hill west of the entrance to Plymouth Sound. (Eight miles south of Rame are the Eddystone rocks, along with the Eddystone Light.)

**Start - Start Point** promontory in Devon, by Start Bay, where the Dart emerges

**Portland - Portland Bill**, promontory on the Isle of Portland, Dorset

**Wight** - St Catherine's Point, the southernmost tip of the Isle of Wight

**Beachy - Beachy Head** (Jones puts Fairlight first!)

**Fairlight** - East Sussex, about halfway between Hastings and Winchelsea (Fairlight Hill presumably)

**Dungeness** - shingle headland, Kent. There have been seven lighthouses recorded here.

**South Foreland** - chalk headland five miles west of Dover, just before the Kent coast turns northward

**The Downs** - a roadstead, or sheltered area of sea, between Deal and the Goodwin Sands, between North and South Foreland - a very useful anchorage.

See: [www.clamchowdah.org/2018/04/21/from-earth-day-to-scilly-is-thirty-five-leagues/](http://www.clamchowdah.org/2018/04/21/from-earth-day-to-scilly-is-thirty-five-leagues/) - fascinating read.

## About other Words

**league** - the distance a person could walk in an hour, being 3 miles on land. At sea 3 nautical miles is about three and a half land miles. [*wikipedia*]

**Fathom** - six feet

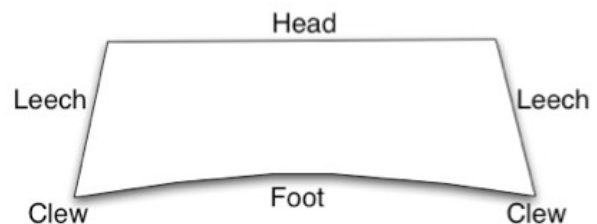
**Sandy bottom** - sandy sea floor, such as occurs on or near a beach (land ahoy!)

**Stoppers** - to fasten the anchor onto the cathead

**Spanker** - a sail on the aft-most mast of a ship

**Clew** - a lower corner of a square sail, to which **clew lines** are attached,

**Clew garnet** - the tackle attached to the clew line.



**Tacks** - ropes attached to sails and leading forward

**Sheets** - ropes attached to the sails and leading aft



Jon **Such**, *Bird's eye view of The Dodman* from [nationaltrust.org.uk](http://nationaltrust.org.uk)



Kevin **Walsh**, *Beachy Head Lighthouse* from [commons.wikimedia.org](https://commons.wikimedia.org)