

A Programme for Wassailing the Bolhayes Apple Trees as Celebrated at the Bolhayes Orchard

Opening song:

Wassail, wassail, all round our town,
Our cup it is white and our ale it is brown;
Our bowl it is made of the good old ash tree,
So now, my brave fellows, let's drink unto thee.
 Drink unto thee, drink unto thee,
 So now, my brave fellows, let's drink unto thee

There was an old man who had an old cow,
And how for to keep her he didn't know how;
He built up a barn for to keep his cow warm,
And a little more cider won't do us no harm.
 Harm, me boys, harm; harm, me boys, harm;
 A little more cider won't do us no harm.

Down in an old lane there lived an old fox,
And all the day long he sat mopping his chops;
Shall we go and catch him, oh, yes, if we can,
Ten thousand to one if we catch the old man.
 Catch the old man, catch the old man,
 Ten thousand to one if we catch the old man.

A poor little robin sits up in the tree,
And all the day long so merry sings he;
A widdlin and twiddlin to keep himself warm,
And a little more cider won't do us no harm.
 Harm, me boys, harm; harm, me boys, harm;
 A little more cider won't do us no harm.

A lady comes round with her silver pin,
Pray open the door and let us all in;
For this is our 'sail, our jolly Wassail,
And jolly go we to our jolly Wassail.
 Jolly wassail, jolly wassail,
 And jolly go we to our jolly wassail. *(Churchstanton Wassail Song)*

THE CEREMONY

Cider is poured into the roots of the apple tree.

The Wassail Queen places toast, dipped in cider, into the branches of the tree.

The traditional Wassail is sung:

Old apple tree we wassail thee, and hoping thou wilt bear,
For the Lord doth know where we will be till apples another year.
For to bloom well, and to bear well, so merry let us be.
Let everyone take up their cup and drink to the old apple tree.

The chant is recited:

Old apple tree we wassail thee, and hoping thou wilt bear
Hatfuls, capfuls, and three bushel bagfuls,
And a little heap under the stair.
Hip, hip, Hooray! Hip, hip, Hooray! Hip, hip, Hooray!

A loud noise is made round the tree — drums, tin trays, etc., perhaps even shotguns.

Part of *Sights and Sounds of the Blackdowns* — a folk and environmental arts and oral history project.



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