

Freeman's Waistcoat

TYG 121

Words and music by
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"It's a wes - kit made of cork!" the Cox'n said. The
lads all laughed and drank their bit-ter beer, But Hen - ry tried it on o - ver his
head; It felt un - gain-ly and both stiff and queer And it's
pull, boys, midst the foam, Life's a flame a fra - gile spark;
Pull, boys, bring them home, Shin- ing lights a - gainst the dark

1. 'It's a weskit made of cork!' the Cox'n said.
The lads all laughed and drank their bitter beer;
But Henry tried it on, over his head;
It felt ungainly and both stiff and queer

Chorus: And it's pull, boys, midst the foam,
Life's a flame, a fragile spark;
And it's pull, boys, bring them home,
Shining lights against the dark



2. The cork it rubbed against both neck and chin,
Made Henry's whiskers both to pull and chafe.
'Now, lad, you'll nivver need to learn to swim;
Gold ring through t' ear will serve to keep you safe.'

Chorus

3. As Henry walked Tate's Sands the bell it spoke;
Struggled to run while pulling seaboots on;
He's hurried to the station and the boat,
His oilskins and sou'wester, last to don.

Chorus

4. Then, last moment, Henry reached out for the rack,
Took the cork waistcoat from its hanging place,
Tied it around his barrel chest and back,
Jumped for the boat to join that fatal race.

Chorus

5. The shipwrecked crew cried, 'Mercy on us, Lord!'
Such prayers young Henry never heard before.
The lifeboat held but thirteen souls on board,
Yet twelve never returned unto the shore.

Chorus

6. Four times they'd braved the ocean's fearsome ire,
When waves upturned their frail and valiant boat;
Through cold more sharp and piercing than Hell's fire,
Henry alone returned, in his cork coat.

Chorus

7. Now when the stormwinds roar and lightnings fork,
The lifeboatmen all know what Henry'd known;
They wear their waistcoats made of bulky cork,
For the first life that you save must be your own.