

# Good English Ale

Words and Music: Nigel Harbron

The musical score is written in 2/4 time and consists of two staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The melody starts with a quarter note G4, followed by eighth notes A4 and Bb4, and a quarter note C5. The second staff begins with a bass clef and continues the melody with a quarter note Bb3, followed by eighth notes C3 and Bb3, and a quarter note C3. The lyrics are written below the notes, and chord symbols are placed above the notes. The lyrics are: "This song's a-bout good En-glish ale. It-'ll cure your ills, it - can-not fail. So raise your glass and give a toast un - to the drink we love the most!"

This song's about good English ale.  
It'll cure your ills - it cannot fail.  
So raise your glass and give a toast  
Unto the drink we love the most!

There was a time in days gone by  
When Watney's Red Barrel was all you could buy.  
Oak barrels replaced by metal kegs,  
With beer so filtered it had no dregs.

Double Diamond, Trophy and Sheffield's Stones -  
All chemical beers that weakened your bones.  
Then Younger's and Drybrough's became the norm,  
All fizzy and cold, so uniform.

If you glance at CAMRA's first Good Beer Guide  
You won't find many pubs, nationwide.  
Little wonder that lager was drunk with glee  
Despite causing belching and tasting of pee.

But finally common sense did prevail,  
With drinkers changing back to real ale.  
It's goodbye to Heineken, Foster's and Harp,  
Welcome back live beers (though they make you parp!).

There's only one problem with this change-around,  
Now in every pub real ales abound.  
As you stand at the bar, your heart's sinking  
As you know there's not one worth drinking.

There's Cornish Shag, Ginger Tossler and old Bear's Ass  
All longing to find themselves in your glass,  
Bishop's Finger, Hardcore and Thumb Ducker -  
Choose your words with care when ordering the latter!



*This large can featured throughout my teenage years. Taking booze to a party wasn't always easy in the pre-supermarket days of the '60s, as off-licences were few and far between. One easy way was to buy one of the above tins which required a special opener (often overlooked, thus requiring a screwdriver and a hammer!). Once the can had been opened, the real problem started, as the beer within was just disgusting. It started fizzy and disgusting, but within seconds changed into flat - and disgusting, and there were seven pints of the stuff!*

*This is a Victorian beer-engine from The Eagle, Skerne, near Driffield in the East Riding of Yorkshire. For a couple of years in the '70s it was my local, and I was sad to hear that the pub had closed a few years ago. The beer engine was in the pub's cellar, so mine host had to disappear down the stairs every time beer was ordered. The man beer served was Cameron's Strongarm, and very good it was.*

