

The Handsome Cabin Boy

Greig~Duncan 1-181

Emma learned her version of this tale of adventure from the late Peter Hall who collected it in 1966 from 95 year old Jimmy Brown of Muir of Fowlis near Alford. Once again it features a young lady dressing as a man - this time to find adventure on the high seas

It is of a brisk young fair maid as you will understand
She had a mind for rovin in tae some foreign land
Dressed in some sailor's clothing she boldly did appear
Engaging wi a captain tae serve him for a year

She engaged wi the captain his cabin boy tae be
Oh the wind it bein in favour they soon pit oot tae sea
The captain's lady bein on board she seemed in great joy
So glad the captain was o his handsome cabin boy

Well so nimble was this pretty maid she did her duty well
But mark what follows after the song itself will tell
Wi eatin cabin biscuits her colour did destroy
And the waist did swell o pretty Nell the handsome cabin boy

As through the Bay o Biscay this gallant ship did plough
That night amangst the sailors there rose a bloomin row
They bundled fae their hammocks and it did their rest annoy
And they swore about the groanin o the handsome cabin boy

Oh doctor dear doctor the cabin boy did cry
The sailors swore by a that's good their cabin boy should die
The doctor ran wi a his might still smilin at the fun
For tae think a sailor lad should have a dochter or a son

And when the joke they did find oot they a began tae stare
That child belonged tae nane o them they solemnly declared
Said the lady tae the captain my love I wish you joy
For it's either you or I have betrayed the cabin boy

So they a took up a bumper and drank success tae trade
And likewise tae the sailor lad though neither man nor maid
And if the wars should rise again our seamen to employ
We shall ship some bonnie sailors like the handsome cabin boy

aboot=about
amangst=among
dochter=daughter
fae=from
oot=out
pit=put
tae=to
wi=with