

The Keenly Lode

Cornish Dialect Song: "Sengen Fiddee" An Daras Cornish Folk Arts Project 2003

Old Uncle Pengerric a Captan was and a dowser shrewd was he, He
4 feathered his nest from the keenly lode that ruined you and me. The
8 captian traversing Brandy Moor with hazel twig in hand, The
12 Hazel twisted and turned around and brought un to a stand. Oh the
16 keenly lode the keenly lode of bals the best me boys. Old
20 Uncle Pengerric very well knowed how to feather his nest me boys.

Old Uncle Pengerric so brave did brag,
Of ore in Brandy bal;
'Come fork out your money, my Christian friends,
Your fortunes treble all'.
Now Uncle was reckoned a preacher stout
A burning shining light;
The people all said, 'What he has in head
Will surely turn out right.'

Chorus

The company floated, the shares paid up,
The gold came rolling in;
They set up a swhim, and began for to sink,
To that keenly lode of tin;
They had not burrowed but five foot six,
When they come to a buried hoss;
Said Uncle Pengerric 'No fault of mine
Th't turn to someone's loss

Chorus

The shaft descended, but nee'er a grain
Of ore was brought to ground;
And presently Uncle Pengerric too,
Was not in Cornwall found;
But wherever he goes, and whenever he speaks,
He says 'the rod told true,
It brought me luck, but it turn'd and struck
At nought but an old Horseshoe.'

Chorus

Notes

Captain - ie mine captain - expression used in Cornwall for the mine manager.

Keenly lode - Cornish dialect for a good ore bearing lode.

Brave - in Cornish dialect usually means big.

Bal - Cornish for mine.

Whim - a windlass type of device for bringing up ore.

This one of the few dialect songs that Baring Gould recorded and published. He was given this song by an old miner in the Luggar Inn, Fowey in 1894 But reconstructed it for publication. It is clearly based on Willaim Bentinck Forfar's "The Bal – tis a Bra'Keenly Lode" published circa 1860 and subject to the "folk process" in transmission from the original to Baring Gould's miner and subsequent publication in *Songs of the West*. It enjoyed a wide public audience in the BBC's second Poldark series, broadcast in October 2016, when Judd lead a pub singing session in celebration of the success of Wheal Grace.

Merv Davey Nov 2016

References

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