



Wassailing Ceremony

At

Rivers Heritage Site & Orchard

Wassailers were originally rural luck visitors who travelled from house to house blessing the landowners and their property. Apple Tree wassailing has its origins in the West Country where the trees were sprinkled with cider to attempt to ensure a good harvest. It is a form of tree-worship and has parallels in prehistoric rites noted in cultures across the world.

Lancashire Wassail

Here we come a wassailing among the leaves so green,
And here we come a-wandering so fairer to be seen.

*Love and joy come to you and to you your wassail too
And God bless you and send you a Happy New Year
And God send you a Happy New Year*

Our Wassail cup is made of the rosemary tree,
And so is your beer of the best barley

*Love and joy come to you and to you your wassail too
And God bless you and send you a Happy New Year
And God send you a Happy New Year*

We are not daily beggars that beg from door to door,
But we are neighbours' children who you have seen before

*Love and joy come to you and to you your wassail too
And God bless you and send you a Happy New Year
And God send you a Happy New Year*

Bring us out a table and spread it with a cloth
Bring us out some mouldy cheese and some of your Christmas
loaf!

*Love and joy come to you and to you your wassail too
And God bless you and send you a Happy New Year
And God send you a Happy New Year*

Yorkshire Wassail

We've been a-while a-wandering among the leaves so green.
But now we come a wassailing so plainly to be seen

*For it's Christmas time, when we travel far and near;
May God bless you and send you a Happy New Year.*

God bless the master of this house, likewise the mistress too
And all the little children that round the table go

Chorus

We have a little purse made of leather stretching skin;
We'd like a silver sixpence to line it well within

Chorus

Call up the butler of this house put on his golden ring
let him bring us up a glass of beer and better we shall sing

Chorus

Good Master and good Mistress, while you're sitting by the fire,
Pray think of us poor children that's wandered on the mire

Chorus

Apple Tree Wassail—Somerset

Old Apple Tree, we'll wassail thee, and hoping thou wilt bear
The lord does know where we shall be to be merry another year

So to blow well and to bear well and so merry let us be
Let everyone lift up their cup and 'health to the old apple tree'!

(Cider is poured on the roots of the trees)

Apple Tree Wassail—Devon

O lily, O lily, O lily-white pin,
Oh please to come down and let us come in!
O Lily, O lily, O lily-white smock,
Oh please to come down and pull back the lock!

Our wassail jolly wassail!, Joy come to our jolly wassail!

O Master and Mistress, oh are you within?
Oh please to come down and let us come in
Oh Master and Mistress oh pray do not mock,
Oh please to come down and pull back the lock

Our wassail jolly wassail!, Joy come to our jolly wassail!

There was an old farmer who had an old cow,
But how for to keep her he didn't know how.
He built up a barn for to keep his cow warm
And a drop of old cider will do us no harm
Harm me boys harm, harm me boys harm,
And a drop of old cider will do us no harm
Oh well may the bloom, oh well they may bear,
So we may have apples and cider next year

A Nursery Rhyme for Rivers

Come worthy folk of Sawbridgeworth a wassail for to go
To bless the trees and hurry growth to help a good crop grow.

*And its up and down the twitchells see the people throw
A drink to the left, a drink to the right as onward they all go
To Wassail, Wassail, Wassail as onward they all go.*

The stars shine bright in heav'n above and light the apple trees
The Rivers plums and pears we love, bad spirits we displease

Chorus

The wassail cup anoints the trees, the amber liquid flows
The drums are beaten with such glee to help the orchard grow.

Chorus

Build bonfire high, and set alight, the sparks will rise up high
With red and gold to silver go as they reach to the sky.

Chorus

The future lies ahead of us, a health unto you all
With apple cake and cider too a frolicking home we fall.

Chorus

Written by the High Wych Wassailers—1999

Gloucestershire

Wassail

Wassail! wassail! all over the town,
Our toast it is white and our ale it is brown;
Our bowl it is made of the white maple tree;
With the wassailing bowl, we'll drink to thee.

***For it's your wassail and it's our wassail
And it's joy to be you and a jolly wassail***

So here is to Cherry and to his right cheek
Pray God send our master a good piece of beef
And a good piece of beef that may we all see
With the wassailing bowl, we'll drink to thee.

Chorus

Here is to Dobin, and to his right eye,
Pray God send our master a good Christmas pie;
And a good Christmas pie that we may all see,
With my wassailing bowl we'll drink to thee!

Chorus

So here is to Broad May and to her broad horn
May God send our master a good crop of corn
And a good crop of corn that may we all see
With the wassailing bowl, we'll drink to thee!

Chorus

And here is to Fillpail and to her left ear
Pray God send our master a happy New Year
And a Happy New Year as e'er he did see
With the wassailing bowl, we'll drink to thee.

*For it's your wassail and it's our wassail
And it's joy to be you and a jolly wassail*

And here is to Colly and her long tail,
Pray God send our master he may never fail
A bowl of strong beer: I pray you draw near,
And our jolly wassail it's then you shall hear.

Chorus

Come butler, come fill us a bowl of the best
Then we hope that your soul in heaven may rest
But if you do draw us a bowl of the small
Then down shall go butler, bowl and all.

Chorus

Then here's to the maid in the lily white smock
Who tripped to the door and slipped back the lock
Who tripped to the door and pulled back the pin
For to let these jolly wassailers in.