

Band of Banshee Airmen

The Somersetshire was "the queen of all RAF Troopships". The ship was not an airforce or RN vessel but was a civilian liner owned by the Bibby Line of Liverpool. The Somersetshire was used to transport personnel between England and the Middle East in the days between the First World War and the Second World War. The song was created in Iraq in the 1920's based on the naval song "The Tiddley Ship", which came to the Royal Air Force during the time when many air force instructors came to the Fleet Air Arm.

1. A band of banshee airmen, way out in the sunny Sudan,
Where all the erks are banshee, and so's the lazy Old Man.
There's bags and bags of NCO's saluting on the square,
And when we're not saluting, we're up in the blooming air.

2. O Shire, Shire, Somersetshire,
The skipper looks on her with pride.
He'd have a big huff, if he e'er saw the stuff
On the side of the Somersetshire.

3. This is my story, this is my song,
We've been in this Air Force too blooming long;
So roll on the Nelson, the Rodney, Renown,
We can't sink the Hood, she's already gone down

* Old Man is the Commanding Officer,

* banshee means wild or crazy,

* Nelson, Rodney and Renown were all battlecruisers of the Royal Navy,

* Hood was the most prestigious battleship in the Royal Navy, sunk by the German battleship the Bismark in 1941.