

The Ballad of Johnny Golden

By Sigerson Clifford

Let Kerry's sons remember well the men who marched alone
As they tramped the hills and mountains to bring Caitlín her throne.
It was in 1867 when O'Connor did command
And by his side the man who died out in Van Diemen's land.

First at Kells Station they drew rein to face Coastguard Dingwall
And to take from him his rifle, his powder and his ball.
He said, "This is a bad night's work for any rebel band
And you'll all face transportation unto Van Diemen's land".

They said, "We do not fight alone for Ireland is aflame
And men are marching on the hills to spoil a Saxon game.
Like Mitchell and like Smith O'Brien we'll fight and take our stand
And if we fail we'll risk the jail or face Van Diemen's land".

At Drung Hill then beside the bridge they shot a policeman down
And searching in his pockets found a letter to the Crown.
O'Connor read and grimly said, "We can't fight now as planned
And may God keep us in his care far from Van Diemen's land".

And Talbot, Massy, Corydon where are you all today?
Your hearts you sold for English gold and you swore their lives away.
In Tralee town the judge looked down upon that rebel band
And he sentenced Johnny Golden to far Van Diemen's land.

O'Reilly, Griffin, Donovan, O'Connell and O'Shea,
Conway, Sheehan and O'Brien their names are strong today.
They're masters in their own house now; they plough and till the land
But brave young Johnny Golden lies in Van Diemen's Land.

For he sleeps today where lonely waves wash over Australia's shore
And never again he'll see the glen of lovely sweet Foilmore.
But Foilmore's sons remember well that gallant Fenian band
And forget not Johnny Golden out in Van Diemen's land.