

Basic Detail Report



00017413

Title

Broadsheet featuring the ballads 'The Bay of Biscay' and 'The Female Auctioneer'

Date

1813 - 1838

Primary Maker

James Catnach

Medium

Woodcut engraving and printed text on paper mounted on card.

Dimensions

Overall: 262 x 184 mm, 0.015 kg

Name

Broadsheet

History

BAY OF BISCAY. LOUD roar'd the dreadful thunder; The rain a deluge show'rs, The clouds were rent asunder, By lightning's vivid pow'rs : The night both drear, and dark, Our poor devoted bark, There she lay, till next day, In the Bay of Biscay, O. Now dash'd upon the billow, Her op'ning timbers creak ; Each fears a wat'ry pillow, None stop the dreadful leak ; To cling to slipp'ry shrouds, Each breathless seaman cro As she lay, on that day, In the Bay of Biscay, O. At length the wish'd for morrow, Broke through the hazy sky ; Absorb'd in silent sorrow, Each heav'd the bitter sigh The dismal wreck to view, Struck horror to our crew, As she lay, on that day, In the Bay of Biscay, O. Wyielding timbers sever, Hr pitchy seams are rent ; Hallowen, all bounteous ever, Is boundless mercy sent ; A sail in sight appears ! We hail her with three cheers, Now we sail, with the gale, From the Bay of Biscay. (Andrew Cherry, who wrote the words of 'The Bay of Biscay', was the son of a printer and bookseller in Dublin. He later became an actor and song writer.)

THE FEMALE AUCTIONEER. Well here I am, and what of that, Methinks I hear you cry, Why I am come, and that is pat, To see if you will buy? A Female Auctioneer I stand, Though not to seek for pelf, And the lot I have in hand, Is for to sell myself. And I'm going, going, going, Who bids for me ? Ye Bachelors, I look at you, And pray don't deem me rude, Nor rate me either scold or shrew, A coquet or a prude, My hand and heart I offer fair, And should you buy the lot, I swear I'll make you here my own, When Hymen ties the knot. And I'm going, going, going, Who bids for me ? Though some may deem me pert or so Who deals in idle strife, Pray where's the girl, I wish to know Who'd not become a wife; At last I own I really would, In spite of all alarms, Dear Bachelors now be so good, Do take me to your arms, For I'm going,

going, going, Who bids for me? Broadsheets or broadsides, as they were also known, were originally used to communicate official or royal decrees. They were printed on one side of paper and became a popular medium of communication between the 16th and 19th centuries in Europe, particularly Britain. They were able to be printed quickly and cheaply and were widely distributed in public spaces including churches, taverns and town squares. The cheap nature of the broadside and its wide accessibility meant that its intended audience were often literate individuals but from varying social standings. The illiterate may have also had access to this literature as many of the ballads were designed to be read aloud. The ballads also covered a wide range of subject matter such as witchcraft, epic war battles, murder and maritime themes and events. They were suitably dramatic and often entertaining, but occasionally they were designed as elaborate cautionary tales for those contemplating a life of crime. The broadside ballads in the museum's collection were issued by a range of London printers and publishers for sale on the streets by hawkers. They convey, often comically, stories about love, death, shipwrecks, convicts and pirates. Each ballad communicates a sense that these stories were designed to be read aloud for all to enjoy, whether it was at the local tavern or a private residence.