

# The Saddleworth Rushcart

Words and Music: Nigel Harbron

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of five staves of music. The lyrics are written below the notes. Chords are indicated by letters above the staff lines. The lyrics are: As Sum-mer turns to Au-tumn and the ru-shes grow so tall, We hone our scythes and sic-kles and we try to cut them all, We car-ry ru-shes plen ty in-to a yard in town where the two-wheeled Sad-dle-worth ru-sh-cart is al-ways to be found From Up - per-mill to Green-field, from Delph to the Dob-cross Swan, Let's hope the Sad-dle-worth Rush-cart for ev-er will go on.

As Summer turns to Autumn and the rushes grow so tall,  
We hone our scythes and sickles and try to cut them all.

We carry rushes plenty into a yard in town  
Where the two-wheeled Saddleworth rushcart is always to be found.

*Ch: From Uppermill to Greenfield, from Delph to the Dobcross Swan,  
Let's hope the Saddleworth Rushcart forever will go on.*

Once the cart's been given a spring-clean, the rushes are then built  
In a carefully balanced tower that mustn't have a tilt.  
The layers of rushes build up till they're over twelve feet high  
The load works out around two tons - for as long as it stays dry.

Now unlike other rushcarts, the Saddleworth's pulled by men,  
Since a frightened horse once bolted though nobody knows back when.  
One hundred and fifty strong men, split equally fore and aft,  
All gripping the stangs with both their hands, and not afraid to graft.

Astride the pile of rushes, the Jockey sits so proud,  
Acknowledging spectators as they shout and cheer out loud.  
With his tankard held in one hand, he balances with care,  
And of overhanging branches he really must beware.

The Saturday route is lengthy and lasts throughout the day,  
Just as well the rushcart pauses at pubs along the way.  
The Sunday run is simple - it just goes to St Chad's,  
Some rushes are unloaded, and it's prayers not pints for lads.

But a problem is emerging: the men are getting old,  
With aching knees and back pains made worse when it is cold.  
New blood is badly needed to pull the Saddleworth cart -  
It's time for fit and strong young folk to learn to play their part.



*Here is the splendid Saddleworth Rushcart in 2012, poignantly dedicated to P.C. Nicola Hughes, a local lass who was murdered whilst on duty in Manchester.*

*Rushcarts used to be common in England when church floors were often just bare earth, and a covering of rushes brought a degree of freshness, and a tad of comfort for worshippers. Nowadays, the custom is purely ceremonial, and doesn't happen in many places.*

*The Saddleworth Rushcart is a little unusual in that it is pulled by men (not by a horse), and it really does have 'a jockey' perched precariously on top of it.*