

Ghosts of Heroes

They left from Shields well loaded down
With coal for the smoke of London town
But two days on at Flamborough Head
A storm had filled the ship with dread
Sails did rip and masts did fall
The air all alive with the Captains call's
When the dark night turned to early light
Robin Hoods Bay came into sight

And I wonder what they're doing now
Ghosts of heroes men of men
Sweat like diamonds on their brow
They watch us as they follow them

And I'm left with the bairns at home
Its bitter and cold we wait alone
Just one more trip love then its home
No more tramping London coal
The brig with icy water filled
We'll all sing a hymn so as not be killed
Into the long boat one last chance
We sang our song the waves did dance

The storm has turned north easterly
No Whitby boats can get to sea
But we can tow 'er over tops t'bay
I thought I heard our coxswain pray
Wet with sweat, blood blistered hands
Men of Whitby pulled and ran
18 horses towed the boat
200 souls dug through the snow

How we got to the Bay I'll never know
Towed the boat o'er the top through eight foot of snow
Though fit to collapse we were into the foam
Where life goes on we bring it home
First time out we're smashed by a wave
So great was the crash so near the grave
But back for those dozen men we steered
The roar of the storm the sting in our ears

So let's not forget what has been done
By those lifeboat men through raging foam
Timbers screamed and oars did break
But those sailor lads have returned safe
And how women and men and horses toiled
To fetch those lads from the devils spoil
Aye remember the Robert Whitworth's men
And all of the boats that follow them

Words and Music Richard Grainger