

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