

# Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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## The Jolly Bold Robber

The Jolly Bold Robber

Oh come you good people that go out a-tipping,  
I pray you give attention and listen to my song.  
I'll sing you a ditty of a jolly bold robber,  
Stood seven foot high, in proportion quite strong.

He robbed lawyer Morgan and old Lady Dawkins;  
Five hundred bright guineas from each one of them;  
And as he was a-strolling he met a young sailor,  
And bold as a lion he slewed up to him.

"Hand over your money, you saucy young sailor.  
You've plenty of bulk in your pocket, I know."  
"Oh, aye," says the sailor, "I have got a bit of money,  
And I'd damned if I see why I should give it to you.

I've just left my ship, give the press-gang the slip,  
And I'm bound up to London my sweetheart to see.  
I've four bright sovereigns for to pay our sweet lodgings,  
So I pray you, jolly robber, please leave it to me."

Then the robber caught hold of that gallant young sailor;  
With a blow like a pole-axe felled him to the ground.  
"Oh aye," says the sailor, "You have struck me quite heavy,  
And now I'll endeavour to repay you in kind."

It was then, boys, they stripped and like tigers they skipped,  
And they fought blow for blow like to soldiers in the field.  
At the ninety-seventh meeting it was the completing,  
For this gallant young sailor the bold robber he killed.

Then the sailor looked down on the bloodstained bold robber.  
"I hope you'll forgive me, old fellow," says he,  
"But if I had just lifted a thousand bright guineas,  
I'm damned if I'd have stopped a poor sailor like me."

This song was collected by Ralph Vaughan Williams from a fisherman called Anders on, of King's Lynn in Norfolk, England, and published in his Folk Songs from the Eastern Counties (1908, re-published in 1961 in a collected edition edited by Cecil Sharp, as English County Songs), and subsequently in A.L. Lloyd's Folk Song in England (1967), which is where I found it. It is confusingly called The Saucy Bold Robber ; the more obvious title I use here is also that used by Brass Monkey on their 1983 recording of it, the only one I have ever come across.

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"The moral is Brechtian;" says Lloyd, "it is folly to rob the poor  
when one can so much more profitably plunder the rich

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