

## John Of Ditchford

### Steeleye Span

In the spring of thirteen twenty two  
Henry Felip and his son  
Were riding home from Northampton  
When they met with six bold robbers

Henry shouted to his son  
"Take the money, boy and run"  
So he's turned his horse to Courteenhall  
For to raise the hue and cry

His father faced this ugly crew  
But six to one, what could he do?  
And when his son returned with help  
He was too late to save him

He left his father where he lay  
Through his tears to ride that day  
And pursue the killers in their way  
As they made off in the distance

Five of six, they swiftly caught  
But one alone did slip their grasp  
And to Wooten Church, he's turned away  
And through her doors she's took him

Sanctuary was his claim  
Sword and grief outside remain  
Till the Coroner he quickly came  
To hear the thief's confession

"I'm John of Ditchford", said the man  
"I was there of six our band  
And yes, we killed that nobleman  
On the road to Stoke Bruerne"

"Do you now abjure the realm?  
What's your meaning?", says young John  
"You will leave this land and never return  
Or your blood we will spill on her"

"Do you now abjure the realm?  
I abjure it", says young John  
"So to Dover you will straightway go  
And the first ship you will take her"

He must reach that distant port  
Without coin nor shoes nor friend  
And stand in the ocean to his knees  
And wait what ship would have him

They took from him all he had  
Gave him sackcloth for to wear  
And a wooden cross for him to hold  
On the lonely road to Dover

He sets out upon the road  
Cross in hand and heavy heart

They found him headless in a field  
A mile away from Wooten