



# ***Ripon Sword Dance Play***



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England's cultural heritage**  
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## **The Full English**

The Full English was a unique nationwide project unlocking hidden treasures of England's cultural heritage by making over 58,000 original source documents from 12 major folk collectors available to the world via a ground-breaking nationwide digital archive and learning project. The project was led by the English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS), funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and in partnership with other cultural partners across England.

The Full English digital archive ([www.vwml.org](http://www.vwml.org)) continues to provide access to thousands of records detailing traditional folk songs, music, dances, customs and traditions that were collected from across the country. Some of these are known widely, others have lain dormant in notebooks and files within archives for decades.

The Full English learning programme worked across the country in 19 different schools including primary, secondary and special educational needs settings. It also worked with a range of cultural partners across England, organising community, family and adult learning events.

**Supported by the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund, the National Folk Music Fund and The Folklore Society.**



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Produced by the English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS), June 2014

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## **Ripon Sword Dance Play**

The Ripon text was collected by Douglas Kennedy and was published in the Journal of the English Folk Dance Society 2nd series Vol.3 (1930) pp.23-25

The words of this play were first noted down by Dr. J. G. Husband, of Ripon, in 1920. An additional, and rather more complete, version was given to him a few years later. Where the two versions differ, the alternative words of the first version are printed beneath the corresponding words of the second version. The tunes with a third version of the words were noted by Dr. C.H. Moody, of Ripon, in 1925. I have to thank Dr. Husband for permission to publish the words and tunes.

The Ripon Sword-Dance seems to have been very like the Kirkby Malzeard Dance, if it was not actually the same dance. It is interesting to note that this play was known locally as 'The Words of the Ripon Sword-Dance', and not called the 'Christmas Play' or 'The Mummers'.

*Douglas Kennedy*

### ***A word of caution***

None of The Full English materials have been censored. The contents do not reflect the opinions and views held by the English Folk Dance and Song Society, or any of The Full English partner organisations.

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# The Words of the Ripon Sword-Dance

*Sung by all.*

Make me a room for I am coming,  
All for to let you understand  
That Christmas time is now approaching,  
Since we left yon foreign land, *(bis)*

*Spoken individually.*

The first that comes in is General Warrington  
Who comes he on yonder plains,  
He goes a-wandering and gains the victory  
On the plains of Waterloo, *(bis)*

The next that comes is the Hieland laddie  
Who's got sheep on yonder plains,  
Romping and roving among the bonnie lassies,  
Now he's gone and spent it all. *(bis)*

The next that comes is Tom the Tinker  
Who comes he your kettles for to mend,  
For lassies if you dare not, Tom will venture,  
Tom will stand to be your friend.

In comes old Belzeebug (Belcibub)  
And over his shoulder he carries a club,  
And in his hand a warming (frying) pan,  
And (he calls) himself a jolly old man.

In comes I that never came yet  
With my big-head and little wit,  
Tho' my head be big and my wit be small,  
I'll do the best I can to please you all.  
(but we'll do our best)

---

A room, a room, a gallant room,  
Give us room to rise (arrive).

We have come to show activity on Christmas time  
(our) (here)  
Activity you, activity age, . . . I'll . . . spend  
(youth) (and to maintain I will)  
My blood for Old England again.  
Step in, St. George, and clear the way.

I am St. George, bold Hector (actor) is my name,  
Broadsword and buckle by my side,  
And I hope to win the game.  
Hoop, Scoop, thou lie (hook, crook, thou lies)  
I can if I die (I care not if I die) a  
If I draw my sword I'm sure to break thy head.  
(For)

How canst thou break my head?  
My head is made of steel, (stone)  
(My hands are made of steel)  
My toes and fingers and knuckle-bones,  
(My fingers and toes)  
I'll challenge thee to yield.  
(We'll challenge thee to feel)

A doctor, a doctor, five pounds for a doctor,  
Ten pounds for a doctor.  
Is there a living doctor?  
(Is there never a doctor to be found)

Yes, I am a doctor.

What by?

By my travels.

How far hast thou travelled?

---

I've travelled through Italy, Sicily, France and Spain,  
(Tickerley)  
I (High) Germany and back again.

What canst thou cure?

I can cure all sorts.

What's all sorts?

I can cure the young, the old, the hot, the cold, the lovesick, living and the dead. I can cure the itch, the stitch, the gallop and the gout, the plague within and the plague without. The plague that flies all round about.

If there be seven evils in that man, I can bring seventy-seven out.

Out with them.

Here, Jack, I have a little bottle in my right-hand pocket

Galled 'jollup' and 'plain',

(called every complaints)

Torches for blind bumble-bees,

Spectacles for broken-backed mice.

Here, Jack, take a little of this bottle

(of nif naf)

And run it down thy throple.

(let) (go) (flip flap)

Arise, bold Jack, and fight again.

(Jack, rise up and fight)

Oh, oh, my back!

What's the matter with thy back?

My back is wounded, my heart's confounded

With a horrible, terrible stroke.

(irritable)

Seven senses knocked into four score,

(driven in)

This life has never been acted here before.

(and this life was never active)



*Singing, all together.*

All gentry, all sentry, all stand in a row,

(Old) (slung)

I wish you no manner or ills,

(of ills)

I wish you all sweethearts and me a new jacket.

So, ladies, I bid you farewell, *(bis)*

(Finis)



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