

John Paul Jones

Words and Music: Nigel Harbron

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It consists of two staves. The first staff contains the melody and the lyrics: "Kir - cud-bright was his town of birth, John Paul Jones, John Paul Jones, And". The second staff continues the melody and lyrics: "once at sea he proved his worth, May God bless his bones." Chord symbols are placed above and below the notes: F, C, F, Bb, F, Gm, C above the first staff; Bb, F, C, F, Bb, F, Gm, C, F below the second staff.

Kirkcudbright was his town of birth
John Paul Jones, John Paul Jones
And once at sea he proved his worth
May God bless his bones

From Whitehaven he sailed away
On a slaving ship he earned his pay

When the captain and the first-mate died
He took to the bridge with one long stride

Although endowed with seamanship
He killed a crewmate with his whip

He fled across the Atlantic Sea
And joined the Americans' new navy

In April 1778
He tried Whitehaven to lay waste

He scuppered two coal ships in the port
Before his mission he had to abort

Off Flamborough Head he won the day
When he boarded Serapis and sailed her away

The King of France held him most dear
And proclaimed him as his Chevalier

Then off to Russia he did go
The Ottomans to overthrow

Then back to Paris as a well-to-do
Where he died in his bed in '92



He looks rather angelic, doesn't he, but he was the last man to invade Great Britain! Born in Scotland, and sailing out of Whitehaven in Cumberland in 1760, his rise in the British Navy was matched only by his reputation as a hard man. Forced to flee from the navy after one barbaric act too many, he arrived in America during the War of Independence, and joined (some say 'formed') the USA Navy without so much as a penny/cent being paid as a transfer fee.

In 1778, he crossed the Atlantic intent on destroying Whitehaven, then a major port. He and his men managed to land and scupper the odd boat, but once the locals discovered what was going on, he was forced to beat a hasty retreat. It's still a bit like that in Haven, so be warned!

Not daunted, he sailed around the coast of Britain, capturing the odd ship on the way, then found favour in various European courts. He died at the relatively young age of 45, but no doubt quite a few folk around the world were relieved.