

**Boney was a Warrior**

1. Boney was a warrior

- **Way-hey, yah!**

A warrior, a terrier

- **John France-Wah**

2. Boney fought the Rooshians -

- **Way-hey, yah!**

And Boney fought the Prooshians

- **John France-Wah**

3. Boney marched to Moscow

- **Way-hey, yah!**

Lost his army in the snow

- **John France-Wah**

4. Moscow was a-blazing then!

- **Way-hey, yah!**

(So) he marched his army back again

- **John France-Wah**

5. We licked him in Trafalgar bay -

- **Way-hey, yah!**

Carried his main topmast away

- **John France-Wah**

6. 'Twas on the plains of Waterloo -

- **Way-hey, yah!**

He met the beggar that pulled him through

- **John France-Wah**

7. Boney went a-cruisin' -

- **Way-hey, yah!**

Aboard the Billy Ruffian

- **John France-Wah**

8. Boney went to Saint Hélène

- **Way-hey, yah!**

And he'll never come back again

- **John France-Wah**

9. Boney was a warrior -

- **Way-hey, yah!**

A warrior, a terrier.

- **John France-Wah**

**Halyard** shanty

This version sung by Steeleye Span.



**Meissonier**, Jean Louis Ernest Meissonier, **Napoleon in the campaign of France, 1814**

From *A History of the Nineteenth Century Year by Year*, Edwin Emerson Jr., 1900  
via [commons.wikimedia.org](https://commons.wikimedia.org).

**Notes:**

**Halyard** shanty, sung quite quickly.  
Could also be used as a sheet or short-haul shanty.

When used at halyards there would be two pulls on each chorus line; for short-hauls or foreshets there would be only one, this coming on the final syllable.

It could have been taken from the French shanty, Jean François de Nantes., a comic shanty (see below) but **Hugill** believes that more likely the reverse occurred.

Versions have been reported by:

i) **Terry**, Richard Runciman, *The Shanty Book Part I*:

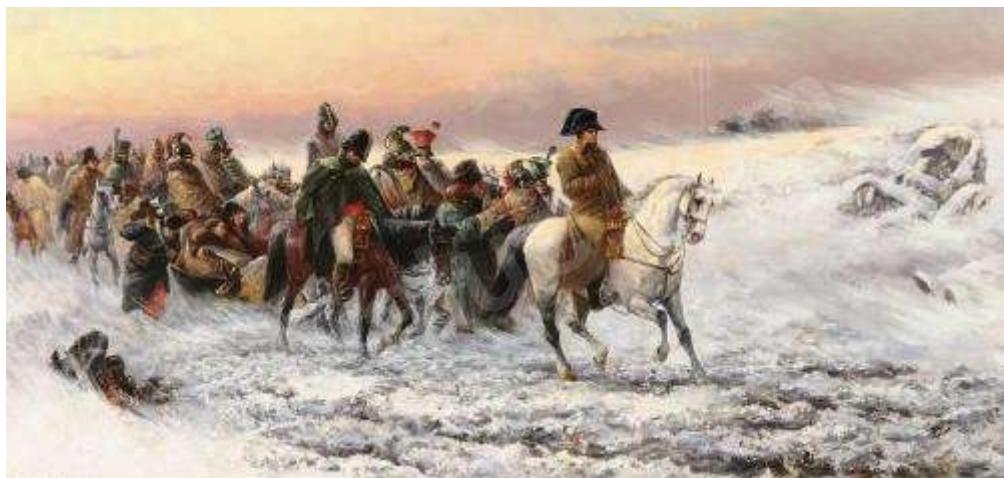
**Sailor Shanties** (Curwen Edition 6308)

ii) **Hugill**, Stan, (1969), *Shanties and Sailors Songs*

iii) **Short**, John, collected by Sharp, Cecil  
Sharp noted: "Mr. Short sang 'Bonny' not 'Boney', which is the more usual pronunciation; while his rendering of 'John' was something between the French 'Jean' and the English 'John'."

**Notes on the words**

**John France-Wah** - how they sang Jean François  
**Billy Ruffian** - Bellerophon, which took Napoleon as a prisoner to St Helena



*Stojanow, Piotr: Napoleon's retreat from Moscow*

The **tune** for Boney was taken from a French shanty, *Jean-François de Nantes*:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. C'est Jean-François de Nantes - <b>oué, oué, oué</b><br>Gabier de la Fringante - <b>oh mes boués</b> | 9. Montre et chaîne s'envolent<br>Mais in prend la vérole      |
| 2. Débarque en fin de compagnie<br>Fier comme un roi d'Espagne  | 10 En revenant de Flandres<br>Il attrape des chances           |
| 3. En vrac dedans sa bourse<br>Il a vingt mois de course  | 11. On lui coupéra son membre<br>Tout droit au ras du ventre   |
| 4. Une montre une chaîne<br>Valant une baleine  | 12. A l'hôpital de Nantes<br>Jean-François se lamenta          |
| 5. Branie-bas chez son hôtesse<br>Bitte et bosse et largesses   | 13. Et les draps de sa couche<br>Déchire avec sa bouche        |
| 6. La plus belle servante<br>L'emmène dans sa soupente  | 14. Il ferait de la peine<br>Même à son capitaine              |
| 7. Il bouline la donzelle<br>Et navigue sur mer belle   | 15. Pauvre Jean-François de Nantes<br>Gabier sur la Fringante. |
| 8. En vidant la bouteille<br>Tout son or appareille   |  |

**Notes:**

Words cribbed online from [Chansons de Marins](#).