

Galloway Tam

Traditional

This song, about the mischievous 'Galloway Tam', is often connected to Robert Burns. It is, in fact, a much older song that dates back to the 1600s. Burns was not only a writer but a collector of songs too. Some sources say 'Galloway Tam' was written about a man called Billy Marshall, full name William Marshall, who was a renowned member of the traveller community. Many named him as King of the Gypsies. Born in 1672, he is reported to have died in 1792 – making him 120 years old! You can visit his grave in Kirkcudbright Kirkyard.

Songs such as 'Galloway Tam' were sometimes sung at weddings and acted out for entertainment during the celebrations.

Oh Gall - o - way Tam came here to woo, I'd rai - ther we'd gi'en him the
braw - nit coo; For ou - r lass Bess may curse and ban The
wan - ton wit o' Gall - o way Tam O Gall - o way Tam cam
here to shear, I'd rai-ther we'd gi'en him the guid grey mare; He kist the guid wife and
strack the guid man, And that's the tricks o' Gal - lo way Tam -

Lyrics

Oh Galloway Tam cam here tae woo,
I'd rather we'd gi'en him the brawnit coo,
For our lass Bess may curse and ban,
The wanton wit o' Galloway Tam

Oh Galloway Tam cam here to shear,
I'd rather we'd gi'en him the guid grey mare,
He kissed the guid wife and strack the guid man,
And that's the tricks o' Galloway Tam

Words

cam - came
raither - rather
gi'en - given
brawnit - well muscled
coo - cow
guid - good
wife/man - female/male head of the household
strack- struck

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