

SAM SMALL, ALBERT RAMSBOTTOM and UTHERS

English dialect stories read by Wallace House/Folkways Records FL 9899



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Albert and the Lion
The Return of Albert
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Runcorn Ferry (Tuppence per Person per Trip)
The Jubilee Sov'rin
Goalkeeper Joe
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'Alt, 'Oo Goes Theer?
The Magna Charter
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Three 'Appence a Foot

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

SAM SMALL, ALBERT RAMSBOTTOM and UTHERS

FOLKWAYS RECORDS Album No. FP 99

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Wallace House was born in Guernsey, Channel Islands. His forbears all came from the south of England. His family went to Canada when he was nine years old and settled in Toronto. From his parents and their English friends he learned many English dialects. He came to New York where he played in a number of Broadway shows, and radio productions. Mr. House has appeared recently in a number of plays on television as an actor and is at present on the drama faculties of both Columbia and New York Universities.

Mr. House has recorded for FOLKWAYS an album of English Folk Songs in dialect, issue FP 823.

ALBERT AND THE LION

There's a famous seaside place called Blackpool,
That is noted for fresh air and fun,
And Mr. and Mrs. Ramsbottom
Went there with young Albert, their son.

A grand little lad were young Albert,
All dressed in his best; quite a swell;
With a stick with an 'orse's 'ead 'andle,
The finest that Woolworth's could sell.

They didn't think much to the ocean:
The waves, they was fiddlin' and small,
There was no wrecks and nobody drowned,
Fact, nothing to laugh at at all.

So, seeking for further amusement,
They paid and went into the Zoo,
Where they'd Lions and Tigers and Camels,
And old ale and sandwiches too.

There were one great big lion called Wallace;
His nose were all covered with scars --
And he lay in a somnolent posture
With the side of his face on the bars.

Now Albert had heard about Lions,
How they were ferocious and wild --
And to see Wallace lying so peaceful,
Well, it didn't seem right to the child.

So straightway the brave little feller,
Not showing a morsel of fear,
Took his stick with it's 'orse's 'ead 'andle
And pushed it in Wallace's ear.

You could see that the lion didn't like it,
For giving a kind of a roll,
He pulled Albert inside the cage with 'im,
And swallowed the little lad 'ole.

Then Pa, who had seen the occurrence,
And didn't know what to do next,
Said "Mother! You Lion's 'et Albert,"
And Mother said "Well, I am vexed!"

Then Mr. and Mrs. Ramsbottom --
Quite rightly, when all's said and done --
Complained to the animal keeper
That the Lion had eaten their son.

The keeper was quite nice about it;
He said "What a nasty mishap.
Are you sure that it's YOUR boy he's eaten?"
Pa said "Am I sure? There's his cap."

The manager had to be sent for.
He came and he said "What's to do?"
Pa said "You Lion's 'et Albert.
And 'im in his Sunday clothes, too."

Then Mother said, "Right's right, young feller;
I think it's a shame and a sin
For a Lion to go and eat Albert.
And after we've paid to come in."

The manager wanted no trouble,
So he took out his purse right away,
Saying "How much to settle the matter?"
And Pa said "What do you usually pay?"

But Mother had turned a bit awkward
When she thought where her Albert had gone,
She said "No, 'omeones got to be summonsed"--
So that was decided upon.

Then off they went to the P'lice Station,
In front of the Magistrate Chap;
They told him what happened to Albert,
And proved it by showing his cap.

The Magistrate gave his opinion
That no one was really to blame
And he said that he hoped the Ramsbottoms
Would have further sons to their name.

At that, Mother got proper blazing,
And "Thank you, sir, kindly," said she.
"What, waste all our lives raising children
To feed ruddy lions? Not me!"

THE RETURN OF ALBERT

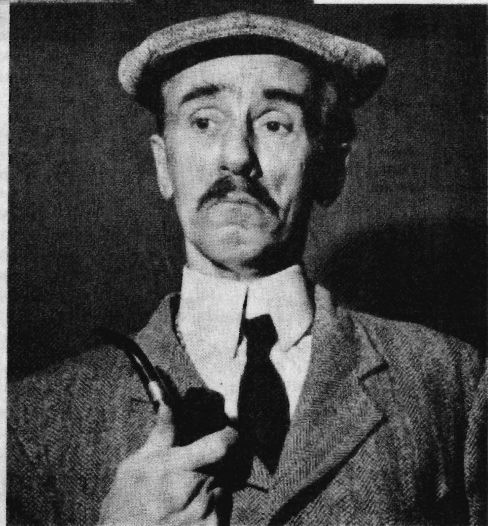
You've 'eard 'ow young Albert Ramsbottom, in the Zoo up at Blackpool one year, With a stick with an 'orse's 'ead 'andle, gave a lion a poke in the ear. The name of the lion was Wallace, the poke in the ear made him wild; And before you could say "Bob's your uncle," 'e'd up and 'e'd swallowed the child. 'e were sorry that moment 'e'd done it, with children 'e'd always been chums, And besides, 'e'd no teeth in his noddle, and he couldn't chew Albert on t'gums. 'E could feel the lad moving inside him, as he lay on his bed of dried ferns, And it might have been little lads birthday, he wished him such happy returns. But Albert kept kicking and fighting, Till Wallace arose feeling bad, And felt it were time that he started to stage a come-back for the lad. So, with his head down in a corner, on his front paws he started to walk, And he coughed and he sneezed and he gargled, till Albert shot out like a cork. Old Wallace felt better directly, and his figure once more became lean, But the only difference in Albert, was his face and his hands were quite clean. Meanwhile Mister and Missus Ramsbottom, had gone home to tea feeling blue; Ma says "I feel down in the mouth like," Pa says "Aye! I bet Albert does too." Said Ma "It just goes fer to show yer, that the futre is never revealed, If I though we was going to lose him, I'd have not had his boots soled and heeled." "Let's look on the bright side," said Father, "What can't be helped must be endured, Every cloud has a silvery lining, and we did have young Albert insured." A knock at the door came that moment, as Father these kind words did speak, Twas the man from t'Prudential, he called, for their tuppence per person per week. When Father saw who had been knocking, he laughed and he kept laughing so, That the young man said "What's there to laugh at?" Pa said "You'll laugh and all when you know." "Excuse him for laughing," said Mother, "But really things happen so strange, Our Albert's been ate by a lion, you've got to pay us for a change." Said the young feller from t'Prudential, "Now, come, come, let's understand this, You don't mean to say that you've lost him?" Ma says "Oh, no! we know where he is." When the young man had heard all the details, a bag from his pocket he drew, And he paid them, with interest and bonus, the sum of nine pounds four and two. Pa had scarce got his hands on the money, when a face at the window they see, And Mother says "Eeh! look, it's Albert," And Father says "Aye, it would be" Young Albert came in all excited, and started his story to give, And Pa says "I'll never trust lions again, not as long as I live." The young feller from the Prudential, to pick up the money began, And Father says "Eeh! just a moment, don't be in a hurry, young man." Then giving young Albert a shilling, he said "Pop off back to the Zoo. 'Ere's your stick with the 'orse's 'ead 'andle, go and see what the Tigers can do!"

ALBERT AND THE 'EADSMAN

On young Albert Ramsbottom's birthday, his parents asked what he'd like most; He said to see t'Tower of London, and gaze upon Anne Boleyn's Ghost. They thowt this request were unusual, and at first to refuse were inclined, Till Pa said "A trip to t'metrolopse might broaden the little lads mind. They took charrybank up to London, and got there at quarter to fower, Then seeing as pubs wasn't open, they went straight away to the Tower. They didn't think much to the building, 'tweren't what they'd been led to suppose, And the "Bad Word" Tower didn't impress them, they said Blackpool had got one of those. At last Albert found a Beefeater, and filled the old chap with alarm By asking for Ghost of Anne Boleyn, as carried her head 'neath her arm. Said Beefeater "You ought to come Fridays, if it's Ghost of Anne Boleyn you seek, Her Union now limits her output, and she onle gets one walk a week." But", he said, "if it's ghosts that you're after, there's Lady Jane Grey's to be seen, She runs around chased by the 'Eadsman, at midnight on t'old Tower Green" They waited on t'green till near midnight, then thinking they'd time for a sup, They took out what food they'd brought with them, and waited for t'ghost to turn up. On the first stroke of twelve, up jumped Albert, his mouth full of cold dripping toast, With his stick with the 'orses 'ead 'andle, he pointed, and said "'Ere's the Ghost!" They felt their skins going all goosey, as Lady Jane's Spectre drew near, And Albert fair swallowed his tonsils when the 'eadsman and all did appear. The 'Eadsman chased Jane round the grass patch, they saw his axe flash in the moon, And seeing as poor lass were headless, they wondered what next he would prune. He suddenly caught sight of Albert, as midnight was on its last chime; As he lifted his axe Father murmured, "We'll get the insurance this time." At that Mother rose, taking umbridge; she said "Put that cleaver away. Your're not cutting our Albert's head off, yon collar were clean to-day." The brave little lad stood undaunted, till tha Ghost were within half a pace, Then taking the toast he were eating, slapped it, dripping side down, in his face. 'Twere a proper set-back for the 'Eadsman; He let out one howl of despair, Then taking his lady friend with him, he disappeared - just like that there. When Pa saw the way as they vanished, he trembled with fear and looked blue, Till Ma went and patted his shoulder, and said "'Sallright, lad, we saw it too" Some say 'twere the dripping as done it, from a roast leg of mutton it came, And as the 'Eadsman had been a Beefeater, they reckoned he vanished from shame. And around Tower Green from that moment, they've ne'er seen a sign of a ghost, But when t'Beefeaters go on night duty, they take slices of cold dripping toast.

RUNCORN FERRY (TUPPENCE PER PERSON PER TRIP)

On the banks of the Mersey, on Cheshire side, lies Runcorn that's best known to fame By 'Transporter Bridge' as takes folks o'er its stream, or else brings them back across same. In days afore 'Transporter Bridge' were put up, a Ferry Boat lay in the slip, And Old Ted the Boatman would row folks across, at per tuppence, per person, per trip. Now Runcorn lay over on one side of stream, and Widnes on t'other side stood. And as nobody wanted to go either place, Well, the trade wasn't any too good. One evening to Ted's superlative surprise, three customers came into view - A Mister and Missus Ramsbottom it were, and Albert, their little son, too. "How much for the three?" Mister Ramsbottom asked, and his hand in his pocket did dip. Ted said "Same for three as it would be for one: Per tuppence, per person, per trip." "You're not charging tuppence for that little lad?" said Mother, her eyes flashing wild. "Per tuppence, per person, per trip," answered Ted, "Per woman, per man, or per child." "Fivepence for three, that's the most I'll pay," said Father, "Don't waste time in talk." "Per tuppence, per person, per trip," answered Ted, "And them as can't pay has to walk." "We can walk and all," said Father, "Come Mother, it's none so deep, t'weather's quite mild." So into the water the three of them stepped - The father, the mother, the child. The further they paddled the deeper it got, but they wouldn't give in once begun; In the spirit that's made Lancashire what she is, They'd sooner be drowned than done. Very soon the old people were up to their necks, and the little lad clean out of sight. Said Father, "Where's Albert?" and Mother replied, "I've got hold of his hand, he's allright." 'T were just at that moment Pa got an idea, and floundering back to Old Ted, He said, "We've walked half way - Come take us the rest - for half price, that's a penny a head." But Ted wasn't standing for none of that there, and making an obstinate lip, "Per tuppence, per person, per trip," Ted replied, "Per trip - or per part of per trip." "All right, then," said Father, "Let me take the boat - and I'll pick up the others half-way, I'll row them across and I'll bring the boat back, and thruppence in t'bargain I'll pay." 'T were money for nothing. Ted answered "Right-o," and Father got hold of the sculls. With the sharp end of boat towards middle of stream, he were there in a couple of pulls. He got Mother out - it were rather a job - with the water she weighed half a ton; Then pushing the oar down the side of the boat, started fishing around for his son. When poor little Albert came up to the top, his collar was soggy and limp, And with holding his breath at the bottom so long, his face were as red as a shrimp. Pa took them across and he brought the boat back, and he said to old Ted on the slip, "Wilt row me across by myself?" Ted said "Aye! at per tuppence, per person, per trip." When they got t'other side Father laughed fit to bust, he'd got best of bargain, you see, He'd worked it all out and he'd got his own way and he'd paid nobbut fivepence for three.

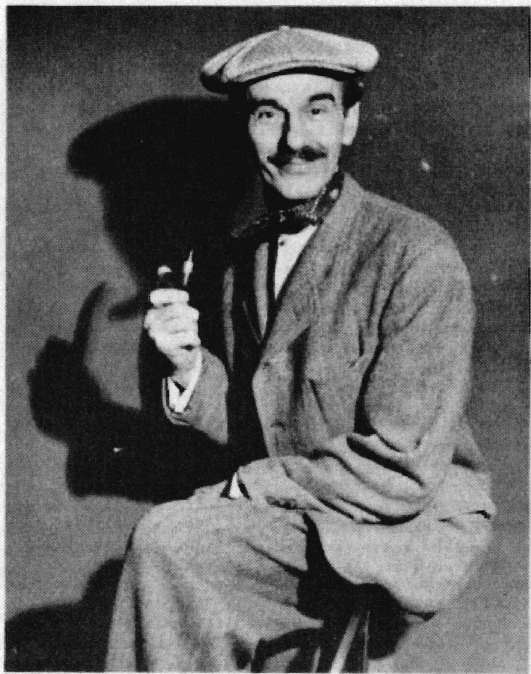


THE JUBILEE SOV'RIN

On Jubilee Day, the Ramsbottoms, asked all their relations to tea, including young Albert's Grandmother - an awkward old party were she. She'd seen Queen Victoria's Jub'lee, and her wedding to Albert the Good, And got quite upset when young Albert asked how she'd got on in the Flood. She cast quite a damper on t'party, but cheered up a bit after tea, And gave Albert a real golden sov'rin she'd saved since the last Jubilee. It had picture of t'Queen on t'one side, and a dragon fight on t'reverse; It tasted of camphor and cobwebs, through being so long in her purse. Albert cuddled the coin and kissed it, and felt the rough edge with his tongue, For he knew by the look on his father, it wouldn't be his very long. "Shall I get you your money-box, Albert?" said Mother, so coaxing and sweet, And Albert let drop an expression he must have picked up in the street. "I'll show you a trick with that sov'rin," said Pa, who was hovering near; Then he took and pretended to eat it, and brought it back out of his ear. This Magic filled Albert with wonder, and before you could say "Uncle Dick" He'd got the coin back from his father and performed the first part of the trick. When they saw as he'd swallowed his sov'rin, with excitement his relatives burned, And each one suggested some process for getting the money returned. Some were for fishing wi' tweezers, some were for shaking it out; If they only got back a few shillings they said t'would be better than nowt. They tried holding Albert head downwards, and giving his back a good thump; Then his Uncle, who worked for a chemist, said "There's nowt for it but stummick pump." They hadn't a stummick pump handy, but Pa did the best that he could With a bicycle pump as he'd borrowed, but that weren't a ha-porth of good. At the finish they sent for the doctor, who looked down his throat, through a glass And said "Aye, this'll mean operation, I'm afraid as he'll have to have gas." "How much is this here going to cost us?" said Father, beginning to squirm; Said the Doctor "It comes quite expensive, the gas will be eightpence a therm." "Then there's my time, four shillings an hour, you can't do these things in two ticks; By rights I should charge you a guinea, but I'll do it for eighteen and six." "What, eighteen and six to get sov'rin?" said Father; "That doesn't sound sense. I'll tell you what, you'd best keep Albert, and give me the odd eighteen-pence." The Doctor concurred this arrangement, and to this day remains in some doubt As to whether he's in eighteen shillings, or whether he's eighteen-pence out.

GOALKEEPER JOE

Joe Dunn were a booby for football, he gave all his time to that sport, He played for the West Wigan Whippets on days when they turned out one short. He'd been member of t'club for three seasons, and had grumbled again and again, 'Cause he found t'only time as they used him were when it were pouring wi'rain. He felt as his talents were wasted, when each week his job seemed to be Nobbut minding their clothes for the others, and chucking clods at t'referee. So next time selection committee came round to ask him for his sub, He told them if they didn't play him, he'd transfer to some other club. Committee they coaxed and cajoled him, but found he'd have none of their shifts; They promised to play him next week-end, in t' match against Todmorden Swifts. This match were the plum of the season, an annual fixture it stood, 'T were reckoned as good as a cup-tie by them as liked plenty of blood. The day of the match dawned in splendour, a beautiful morning it were, With a fog drifting up from the brick fields, and a drizzle of rain in the air. The Whippets made Joe their goal-keeper, a thing as weren't wanted at all, For they knew that once battle had started they'd have no time to mess with the ball. Joe stood by the goal-posts and shivered, while the fog round his legs seemed to creep, 'Til feeling neglected and lonely, he leant back and went fast asleep. He dreamt he were playing at Wembley, and to t'roar of a thundering cheer He were kicking a goal for the Whippets, when he woke with a clout in his ear. He found 't were the ball that had struck him, and inside the net, there it lay, But as no one had seen this 'ere happen, he punted it back into play. 'T were the first ball he'd punted in anger, his feelings he couldn't restrain; Forgetting as he were goal-keeper, he ran out and kicked it again. Then after the ball like a rabbit, he rushed down the field full of pride, He reckoned if nobody stopped him that happen he'd score for his side. Half-way down he bumped into his captain, who weren't going to let him go by, But Joe, like Horatio Nelson, put a fist to the captain's blind eye. One he went, till the goal lay before him, then stopping to get himself set, He steadied the ball - then kicked it and landed it right in the net. The fog seemed to lift at the moment, and all eyes were turned on the lad; The Whippets seemed kind of dimfoundered, while the Swifts started cheering like mad. 'T were his own goal as he'd kicked the ball through, he'd scored for his foes, 'gin his friends, For he'd slept through the referee's whistle, and at half-time he hadn't changed ends. Joe's transfered from West Wigan Whippets to the Todmorden Swifts, where you'll see Him minding their clothes for the others, and chicking clods at t'referee.



LITTLE AGGIE

When Joe Dove took his elephants out on the road, he made each one hold fast with his trunk To the tail of the elephant walking in front, to stop them from doing a bunk. There were fifteen in all, so 'twere rather a job to get them linked up in a row, But once he had fixed them Joe knew they'd hold on, for an elephant never lets go. The pace it was set by the big 'uns in front, 'twas surprising how fast they could stride, And poor little Aggie - the one at the back - had to run till she very near died. They were walking one Sunday from Blackpool to Crewe, they'd started at break of the day, Joe followed behind with a bagful of buns, in case they got hingry on way. They travelled along at a rattling good pace, over moorland and valley and plain, And poor little Aggie - the one at the back - her trunk fairly creaked with the strain. They came to a place where the railway crossed road, an ungated crossing it were, And they wasn't to know as the Express was due at the moment that they landed there. They was half-way across when Joe saw the Express - it came tearing along up the track - He tried hard to stop, but it wasn't much good, for an elephant never turns back. He saw if he didn't do something at once, the train looked like spoiling his troupe, So he ran on ahead and he wagged his buns, to show them they'd best hurry up. When they caught sight of buns they all started to run, and they soon got across at this gait, Except poor little Aggie - the one at the back - she were just one second too late. The Express came dashing along at full speed, and caught her, end on, fair and square; She bounced off the buffers, turned head over heels, and lay with her legs in the air. Joe thought she were dead when he saw how she lay, with the back of her head on the line; He knelt by her side, put his ear to her chest, and told her to say "ninety-nine." She wagged her tail and she twiggled her trunk, to show him as she were alive; She hadn't the strength for to say "ninety-nine," she just managed a weak "eighty-five," When driver of t'engine got down from his cab, Joe said "Here's a nice howdedo, To see fifteen elephants ruined for life by a clumsy great driver like you" Said the driver - "There's no need to make all this fuss, There's only one hit as I've seen." Joe said - "Aye, that's right, but they held on so tight, you've pulled back end off t'other fourteen."

Joe still walks around with his elephant troupe, he got them patched up at the vet's, But Aggie won't walk at the back any more, 'cos an elephant never forgets.

THE NIGHT BEFORE WATERLOO

It occurred on the evening before Waterloo, and t'troops were lined up on parade. And Sergeant inspecting them, he were a terror, of whom every man was afraid. All excepting one man, who was in the front rank, a man by the name of Sam Small. 'Im and the sergeant was both daggers drawn - they thought nought of each other at all. As Sergeant passed by, he was swinging his arm, and he happened to brush against Sam. And knocking his musket clean out of his hand, it fell to the ground with a slam. Pick it up" said Sergeant, abrupt like but cool. But Sam, with a shake of his head Said "Seeing as tha knocked it out of me 'and, praps tha'll pick the thing up instead." "Sam, Sam, pick up thee musket" the Sergeant exclaimed, with a roar. Sam said "Tha knocked it down, reet then, tha'll pick it up, or it stays where it is, on t'floor." The sound of high words very soon reached the ears of an officer, Lieutenant Bird. Who says to the Sergeant, "Now what's all this here" And Sergeant told what had occurred. "Sam, Sam, pick up the musket!" Lieutenant exclaimed with some heat. Sam says "He knocked it down, reet then, he picks it up, or it stays where it is, at me feet." It caused quite a stir when the Captain arrived to find out the cause of the bother. And every one there, excepting Ols Sam, was full of excitement and bubble. "Sam, Sam, pick up the musket." Said Captain, for strictness renowned. Sam says, "he knocked it down, reet then, he picks it up, or it stays where it is, on t'ground." The same thing occurred when the Major and Colonel both tried to get Sam to see sense. But when Old Duke of Wellington came into view, well, then the excitement was tense. Up rode the Duke on a lovely white horse, to find out the cause of the bother; He looked at the musket and then at Old Sam, and he talked to Old Sam like a brother. "Sam, Sam, pick up the musket" The Duke said, as quiet as could be. "Sam, Sam, Sam, Sam, Sam, pick up the musket. Come on, lad, just to please me." "All right Duke," said Old Sam, "Just for thee I'll oblige, and to show thee I meant no offence So Sam picked it up. "Graidly, lad," said the Duke, "Righto, boys, let battle commence."

MARKSMAN SAM

When Sam Small joined the regiment, he were nought but a raw recruit;
And they marched him away one wintry day his musket course to shoot.
They woke him up at the crack of dawn, with many a nudge and shake;
He were dreaming that Sergeant had broke his neck, and he didn't want to wake.
Lieutenant Bird came on parade, and chided the lads for mooning;
He talked in a voice like a pound of plums, his tonsils needed pruning.
"Move to the right by fours," he said, crisp-like and most severe,
But Sam didn't know his right from his left, so pretended he didn't hear.
Said Lieutenant - "Sergeant, take that man's name," the Sergeant took out is pencil,
He were getting ashamed of taking Sam's name, and were thinking of cutting a stencil.
Sam carried a musket, a knapsack and coat, Spur boots that he managed to wangle,
An 'atchet, a spade - in fact, as Sam said, he'd got everything bar kitchen mangle.
"March easy, men," Lieutenant cried, as the musket range drew near,
"March easy, me blushing Aunt Fanny" said Sam, "What a chance with all this hero."
When they told him to fire at five hundred yards, Sam nearly had a fit,
For a six-foot wall, or the Albert Hall, were all he were likely to hit.
He had fitted a cork in his musket end to keep his powder dry;
And he didn't remember to take it out the first time he let fly.
His gun went off with a kind of pop! Where his bullet went no one knew,
But next day they spoke of a tinker's moke being killed by a cork near Crewe.
At three hundred yards, Sam shut his eyes, and took a careful aim;
He failed to score, but the 'marker' swore - and walked away quite lame.
At two hundred yards, Sam fired so wild, that the Sergeant feared for his skin.
And the lads all cleared into neighboring field and started to dig themselves in.
"Ooh, Sergeant! I hear a scraping noise," said Sam. "What can it be?"
The noise that he heard were Lieutenant Bird, who were climbing the nearest tree.
"Ooh, Sergeant!" said Sam, "I've hit the bull! What price my shooting now?"
Said the Sergeant, "A bull? You gormless fool, yon isn't a bull, it's a cow!"
At fifty yards his musket kicked, and went off with a noise like a blizzard,
And down came a crow looking fair surprised, with his ramrod through its gizzard.
As he loaded his musket to fire again, said the Sergeant, "Don't waste shot!
You'd better fix bayonets and charge, my lad, it's the only chance you've got!"
Sam kept loading his gun while the Sergeant spoke, till the bullets peeped out at the muzzle,
When all of a sudden it went off bang! What made it go off were a puzzle.
The bullets flew out in a kind of spray, and everything round got peppered.
When they counted his score, he'd got eight bulls-eyes, four magpies, two lambs and a shepherd.
And the Sergeant for this got a D.C.M. and the Colonel an O.B.E.
Lieutenant Bird got the D.S.O. and Sam got - five days' C. B.

Old Sam first came to London, when George the fourth were king.
He'd been in t'army, man and boy, for twenty year come spring.
The Troops were lined up on parade, and Sergeant says "Hey! Sam.
Toneet tha' goes on sentry-go at Palace - Buckingham."
So off goes Sam to Palace Gate, his chest puffed up with pride.
With musket on his shoulder he walked up and down outside.
A crowd soon thronged around him, and caused a fearful jam.
Some come to look at King & Queen, some come to look at Sam.
Sam stood there cold and haughty like, with dignity sublime.
Some asked "Were you at Waterloo?" and some asked "Hey, what's the time?"
When suddenly from out at crowd, a chap walks bold and straight.
He crosses reet in front of Sam, and tries to open gate.
Old Sam says, "'alt! & 'oo goes theer? 'oo's thee does tha' suppose?"
The stranger answers "George the fourth. I live in here, tha knows."
Old Sam says, "Does tha think I'm daft? Don't try to tell me that.
If thou art king, then where's thee crown? Thou'rt wearin' bowler 'at."
"That's reet," said King, "that's reet enough. It's strange to thee, no doubt.
But I put on bowler 'at because 'twere raining when I come out."
"Oh, well," says Sam "I spose your reet. I didn't know t'were thee."
The king said, "No offence, my lad. Come in for a cup of tea."
"I'd like a cup of tea" said Sam, "I don't mind if I do."
The Queen pours cup of tea and says, "'Ow many lumps, Sam, two?"
They chatted theer for 'alf an hour, when knock came at the door.
The King he goes and finds the Duke of Wellington theer for sure.
"Good day" said Duke of Wellington, "Is Sam in there with thee?"
"Aye, Duke, he is and all." said King. "He's having a cup of tea"
"Well, that's a pretty thing," says Duke, "That's pretty, I declare."
He catches sight of Sam and says "Sam, what's tha doing in there?"
Sam come to door all gumpy like, and red as anything.
"I'm doing nothing, Duke," he cries "but having tea with King."
"I thought as there was summat up" the Duke coldly replied,
"Because I see thee musket - leaning against rails outside.
Some clumsy chap 'ad knocked it down. It gave me quite a scare.
So I stooped down and picked it up, seeing as tha weren't there."
"You stooped and picked me musket up" said Sam, "Well, I declare.
And thee with thy lumbago too, I'll bet it made thee swear.
I'll not wait for second cup", said Sam, "I'll come along with thee.
So, goodbye, both your majesties, and long live both your majesties,
And when thart next in Lancashire, tha has tea with me!"

THE MAGNA CHARTER

I'll tell of the Magna Charter, as were signed at the Barons' command,
On Runningmead Island in t'middle of t'Thames, by King John, as were known as "Lack Land."
Some say it were wrong of the Barons, their will on the King so to thrust,
But you'll see if you look at both sides of the case, that they had to do something, or bust.
For John, from the moment they crowned him, started acting so cunning and sly,
Being King, of course, he couldn't do wrong, but, by gum, he'd a proper good try.
He squandered the ratepayers' money, all their cattle and corn he did take,
'Til there wasn't a morsel of bread in the land, and folk had to manage on cake.
The way he behaved to young Arthur, went to show as his feelings was bad;
He tried to get Hubert to poke out his eyes, which is no way to treat a young lad.
It were all right him being a tyrant, to vassals and folks of that class,
But he tried on his tricks with the Barons and all, and that's where he made a "faux pass"
He started bombarding their castles, and burning them over their head,
'Til there wasn't enough castles left to go round, and they had to sleep six in a bed.
So they went to the King in a body, and their spokesman, Fitzwalter by name,
He opened the 'ole in his 'elmet and said, con-cil-lat-o-ry like, "What's the game?"
The King starts to shilly and shally, he sits and he haws and he hums,
'Til the Barons in rage started gnashing their teeth, and them with no teeth gnashed their gums.
Said Fitz, through the 'ole in his 'elmet, "It was you as put us in this plight."
And the King having nothing to say to this 'ere, murmured "Leave your address and I'll write."
This angered the gallant Fitzwalter; He stamped on the floor with his foot,
And were starting to give John a rare ticking off, when the 'ole in his 'elmet fell shut.
"We'll get him a Magna Charter," said Fitz when his face he had freed;
Said the Barons, "That's right, and if one's not enough, get a couple and happen they'll breed."
So they set about making a Charter, when at finish they'd got it drawn up,
It looked like a paper on cattle disease, or the entries for t'Waterloo Cup.
Next day, King John, all unsuspecting, and having the afternoon free,
To Runningmead Island had taken a boat, and were having some shrimps for his tea.
He had just pulled the 'ead off a big 'un, and were pinching its tail with his thumb,
When up came a barge load of Barons, who said, "We thought you'd be here so we've come."
When they told him they'd brough Magna Charter, the King seemed to go kind of limp,
But minding his manners he took off his hat, and said, "Thanks very much, have a shrimp."
"You'd best sign at once," said Fitzwalter; "If you don't, I'll tell thee for a start,
The next coronation will happen quite soon, and you won't be there to take part."
So they spread Charter out on t'tea table, and John signed his name like a lamb,
His writing in places was sticky and thick, through dipping his pen in the jam.
And it's through that there Magna Charter, as were signed by the Barons of old,
That in England to-day we can do what we like, so long as we do what we're told.

THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS

I'll tell of the Battle of Hastings, as happened in days long gone by,
When Duke William became King of England, and 'Arold got shot in the eye.
It were this way - one day in October, the Duke, who were always a toff,
Having no battles on at the moment, had given his lads a day off.
They'd all taken boats to go fishing, when some chap in t'Conquerors ear,
Said "Let's go and put breeze up the Saxons"; said Bill - "By gum, that's an idea,"
Then turning around to his soldiers, he lifted his big Norman voice,
Shouting- "Hands up who's coming to England." (That was swank, 'cos they hadn't no choice.)
They started away about tea-time - the sea was so calm and so still,
And at quarter to ten the next morning they arrived at a place called Bexhill.
King 'Arold came up as they landed - his face full of venom and 'ate -
He said "If you've come for Regatta, you've got here just six weeks too late."
At this William rose, cool but 'aughty, and said - "Give us none of your cheek;
You'd best have your throne re-upholstered, I'll be wanting to use it next week."
When 'Arold heard this here defiance, with rage he turned purple and blue,
And shouted some rude words in Saxon, to which William answered - "And you,"
'Twas a beautiful day for a battle; the Normans set off with a will,
And when both sides were duly assembled, they tossed for the top of the hill.
King 'Arold he won the advantage, on the hill-top he took up his stand,
With his knaves and his cads all around him, on his 'orse with his 'awk in his 'and.
The Normans had now in their favour, their chance of a victory seemed small,
For the slope of the field were against them, and the wind in their faces and all.
The kick-off were sharp at two-thirty, and soon as the whistle had went,
Both sides started hanging each other, till the swineherds could hear them in Kent.
The Saxons had best line of forwards, well armed both with buckler and sword -
But the Normans had best combination, and when half-time came neither had scored.
So the Duke called his cohorts together and said - "Let's pretend that we're beat,
Once we get Saxons down on the level we'll cut off their means of retreat."
So they ran - and the Saxons ran after, just exactly as William had planned,
Leaving 'Arold along on the hill-top, on his 'orse with his 'awk in his 'and.
When the Conqueror saw what had happened, a bow and an arrow he drew;
He went right up to 'Arold and shot him. He were off-side, but what could they do?
The Normans turned round in a fury, and gave back both parry and thrust,
Till the fight were all over bar shouting, and you couldn't see Saxons for dust.
And after the battle were over, they found 'Arold so stately and grand,
Sitting there with an eyeful of arrow, on his 'orse with his 'awk in his 'and.

GUNNER JOE

I'll tell you a seafaring story, of a lad who won honour and fame
Wi' Nelson at Battle Trafalgar - Joe Moggeridge, that were his name.
He were one of the crew of the Victory, his job when a battle begun
Was to take cannon balls out of basket and shove 'em down front end of gun.
One day him and Nelson were boxing - the compass, like sailor lads do,
When 'Ardy come up wi' a spyglass, and pointing, says "Ere, take a view!"
They looked at where 'Ardy were pointing, and saw lots of ships in a row.
Joe says, abrupt-like but respectful, "'Oratio lad, yon's the foe."
"What say we attack 'em?" says Nelson, says Joe "Nay, lad, not to-day,"
And 'Ardy says, "Aye! Well, let's toss up," 'Oratio answers "Okay."
They tossed - it were heads for attacking, and tails for the other way 'bout.
Joe lent them his two-headed penny, so the answer was never in doubt.
When penny came down head side up, they was in for a do, it were plain,
And Joe murmured "Shiver my timbers" and Nelson kissed 'Ardy again.
And then, taking flags out of locker, he strung out a message on high;
'Twere all about England and duty - crew thought they was hung out to dry.
They got the guns ready for action, and that gave then trouble enough,
They hadn't been fired all the summer and touch-holes were bunged up wi' fluff.
Joe's cannon it weren't half a corker, the cannon balls went three feet round,
They wasn't no toy balloons neither, they weighed close on sixty-five pound.
Joe, selecting two of the largest, was going to load double for luck -
When an hot shot came in through the porthole and a gunpowder barrel got stuck.
By gum! There weren't 'alf an explosion, the gun-crew was filled with alarm
As out of the porthole went Joseph with a cannon ball under each arm.
At that moment up came the 'Boatswayne,' - He says "Where's Joe?" - Gunner replied
"He's taken two cannon balls with him and gone for a breather outside."
"Do you think he'll be long?" says the 'Boatswayne', and gunner replied "If as how
He comes back as quick as he left us, he should be here any time now."
And all this time, Joe, treading water, was trying his hardest to float,
He shouted through turmoil of battle - "Tell someone to lower a boat."
He'd come to the top for assistance, then down to the bottom he'd go;
This up and down kind of existence made every one laugh except Joe.
At last he could stand it no longer, and next time he came to the top
He said "If you don't come and save me I'll let these 'ere cannon balls drop."
'T were Nelson at finish who saved him, and he said Joe deserved the V. C.,
But finding he hadn't one handy, he gave Joe an egg for his tea.
And after the battle was over, and vessel was safely in dock,
The sailors all saved up their coupons and bought Joe a nice marble clock.

THREE 'APPENCE A FOOT

I'll tell you an old-fashioned story that grandfather used to relate, Of a joiner and building contractor His name it were Sam Oglethwaite In a shop or the banks of the Urwell, Old Sam used to follow his trade - In a place you'll have heard of called Bury - you know - where black puddings is made. One day Sam were filling a knothole wi' putty, when in through the door Came an old fellow fair wreathed in whiskers. T'old chap said "Good morning, I'm Noah." Sam asked Noah what was his business, and t'old chap went on to remark That not liking the looks of the weather, he were thinking of building an Ark. He had gotten the wood for the bulwarks, and all other ship-building junk, And wanted some nice bird's-eye maple, to panel the sides of his bunk. Now maple were Sam's monopoly - that means it were all his to cut - And nobody else hadn't got none - so he asked Noah three-'appence a foot. A 'appeny too much" replied Noah, "A penny a foot's more the mark. A penny a foot, and when rain comes, I'll give you a ride in me Ark." But neither would budge in the bargain, t'whole thing were in kind of a jam. So Sam put his tongue out at Noah, and Noah made 'long bacon' at Sam. In wrath and ill-feeling they parted, not knowing when they'd meet again. And Sam 'ad forgot all about it, till one day it started to rain. It rained, and it rained for a fortnit, and flooded the whole countryside, It rained and it still kept on raining, till t'Urwell were fifty miles wide. The houses were soon under water, and folks to their roofs 'ad to climb - They said 'twere the rottenest summer that Bury 'ad 'ad for some time. The rain showed no signs of abating, and water rose hour by hour, Till the only dry land were at Blackpool, and that were on top of the tower, So Sam started swimming to Blackpool, it took him best part of a week. His clothes was wet through when he got there and his boots were beginning to leak. He stood to his watchchain in t'water, on tower-top, just before dark. When who should come sailing towards him, but old Noah, steering his Ark. They stared at each other in silence, till Ark were alongside, all but, Then Noah said "What price your maple?" Sam answered "Three-'appence a foot." Noah said, "Nay, I'll make thee an offer, same as I did t'other day, A penny a foot and a free ride. Na, come on lad, what does tha say?" "Three-'appence a foot" came the answer, so Noah his sail had to hoist, And sail off again in a dudgeon, while Sam stood determined, but moist. Noah cruised around, flying his pigeons, till fortieth day of the wet, And on his way back passing Blackpool, he saw old Sam standing there yet. His chin just stuck out of the water, a comical figure he cut, Noah said, "Now what's the price of your maple?" Sam answered, "Three-'appence a foot. Said Noah, "You'd best take my offer, it's last time I'll be hereabout. And if water comes half an inch higher, I'll happen get maple for nought. "Three-'appence a foot, it'll cost you, and as for me, Sam said, "Don't fret" The sky's took a turn since this morning, I think it'll brighten up yet.

