

An Apology for an Anthology

FROM BAD TO VERSE

I dedicate this little book to Jessie, Greg and Leo,
No grandchildren can hope compete with my delightful trio,
These poems span some seventy years and, as you might have guessed,
Some were written on a whim, and some were by request,
Some are sad or serious, whilst others voice my views,
But most of them were written just simply to amuse,
Indeed my rhyming efforts will all have been worthwhile
If just one verse, or just one line, can conjure up a smile;
Yes, these poems, for the most part, were written just for fun,
They have no lasting merit, no prizes will be won,
But if one single poem is worthy of your note
For the beauty of its language, for the words what I have wrote,
Then my head will be in heaven, my feet will be in clover,
My heart will start a-singing, and my cup will runneth over.*

The Old Rectory,
Lower Blandford St.Mary,
Dorset.

July 1998



DJ

* MY CUP RUNNETH OVER

When in Junior School in the 1930s (Wood End Junior School, Greenford, Middlesex) we had to stand up in class each morning and recite the 23rd Psalm. The teacher, a large woman I recall, would pace up and down making sure that every child was saying the words. If you faltered you got hit over the head with a ruler and hauled out in front of the class the next morning to say some of the lines on your own. Occasionally she would stop the recital and pick on one unfortunate child to say the next line. Despite my fear and trepidation during this daily ritual, I was inexplicably fascinated by one particular phrase in the psalm - "my cup runneth over" - and I did hope that one morning she would stop the class at the appropriate place and I would be selected to say those magical words. She never did! I am pleased, therefore, that I have been able to include this phrase in my Apology for an Anthology.

September 1944 *June of this year I won a place at Chiswick Polytechnic School to study commercial subjects, including typing and shorthand. A few days before I was due to start at this school it was totally destroyed by a doodle bug - an unmanned flying bomb known as a V1. I wrote this poem, aged 14, soon after joining the school, which had been set up in a large, disused building nearby. I obtained details of the school and school life by talking to older students.*

BOMB DAMAGE

Back in the year '44, near the end of the war,
A bomb smashed our school to the ground,
And the classrooms and hall, so familiar to all,
In our memories could only be found.



Think back once again on the thoughts that remain
Long before the school met its fate,
Rehearsing for plays, the dancing Fridays,
The rooms for games and debate.

How we thought what to say on that dreaded speech day,
Trying to speak as a student should,
The notices and prayers, the countless stairs,
To retrieve them .. if only we could.

True the school was gone, but the spirit lived on,
That's where Hitler had made a mistake,
For unknown to us all, the Staff answered the call,
And provision was made for our sake.

Let's hope we shall see, in the years yet to be,
When freedom and peace are the rule,
Built upon the old site, along Bath Road on the right,
The new Chiswick Polytechnic School.

* *The school was rebuilt on the same site after the war. I believe it is now some kind of commercial college for students in further education.*

July 1952 *Mardon Hall, my hall of residence at the University College of the South West, Exeter, is situated on a hill overlooking the River Exe.*

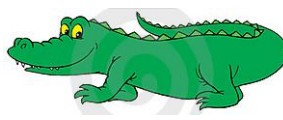
EXE-ECUTION

There is but one solution to my grief and disillusion,
Into the Exe with one sad cry I'll leap,
And if I do not drown and gain posthumous renown,
It's because the river's only three feet deep.



JUST A THOUGHT

The crocodile would come to grief
If he lost his big white teeth,
But left with gums to eat his tea,
I'd rather him bite you than me.



November 1952 *One day in this month while studying at Mardon Hall I received a little bunch of flowers from Peggy. They had not travelled well! We had known each other for just over a year.*

CHRYSANTHEMUMS



If ever I was deeply moved
By feelings rare of gratitude,
It was upon a winter's day
When I received a limp bouquet
Of crumpled flowers;
Such simple offering, sweet and kind,
A timely comfort for mankind,
Recalled the warmth of summer's sun
And of that love, near lost but won,
In treasured hours.

November 1952 *Written while at Mardon.*

THE END



In matters close relating to sports like roller skating
I must admit I'm not the stable kind,
For despite intensive training (indoors when it is raining)
Fate always seems to leave me sore behind.

December 1952 *I don't know what inspired this!*

DEATH

O ceaseless refrain
Of invisible rain
As you comfort the pain
Of a life on the wane,
Now we part;
Dark clouds you but weep
Till black shadows creep
Like a soft velvet sleep
O'er the care of my deep
Silent heart.

New Year 1953 *Home on vacation. Sent this poem to Peggy.*

RESOLVED

A good resolution that I never shall break
Is that as from this moment I never shall make
Another resolution;
For my will-power succumbs
To the Future's war-drums,
And my palm tree becomes
But another illusion,
And I find I'm surrounded by duties too grim
As to venture with light-heart upon flimsy whim
'Mid earth's wondrous confusion.



6th January 1953 *While on holiday in Swanage the previous summer we met Anne Marie, a Swedish girl who was over here to improve her English. We made a friend of her and after the holiday she visited us a number times while working in London. We were all sad when she left for Sweden.*

FAREWELL

And so you're bound for Sweden, Anne, a wooded land of snow
Where cabin fires burn eagerly and send their homely glow
To warm the hearts of those you love, of those who smile to know
You now depart;
This land of glassy, silent lakes, of tall white gallant firs,
Where mountains reach above the clouds and misty vapour blurs
Their lower slopes, this is your homeland where each snowflake stirs
Your happy heart;

Your stay upon a foreign shore has not been spent in vain,
You've groped your way through murky fog, you've felt an English rain,
You've seen a glowing sunset and waves that surge again
In sandy bays;
The frost and snow of winter, the haze of summer heat,
A stretch of shady parkland, and a golden field of wheat,
The crowds of bustling people who throng a London street,
Have felt your gaze;



God bless you Anne, good health, good luck for days that are to be
And ever know that in this land, a rock amid the sea,
There's a welcome never failing for all as kind as thee,
For hearts so true;
And when the moonlight flickers on a lovely Swedish lake,
And shadows softly fall asleep, and stars from slumber wake,
Please pause sometimes and think of us for we, whose leave you take,
Will think of you.



Easter 1953

Sent to Peggy with an Easter Egg.

THE EGG AND I



Once upon a yesterday, in a farmyard of surmise,
Was born a fluffy chicken that produced a big surprise.

When but a chick she never seemed peculiar or queer,
But once she started laying her deformity was clear.

Despite her strict up-bringing, and the cooped-up life she'd led,
Her eggs were never white and yoke, but chocolaty instead.

At first this caused amusement, she was called a broody freak,
But it soon became apparent that this hen was quite unique.

And gradually the strange news spread to every coop and run
Until the hen who laid choc eggs was known by everyone.

The farmer who had cursed his luck for housing one so poor
Soon found that he could sell her eggs for fifty pounds or more!

And so began the custom and since then we've always made
Chocolate eggs at Easter time, just like the ones she laid.

But alas, like every story, a life must have an end,
And so, one Easter Sunday, passed away our little friend.

As she lay upon her deathbed, she clucked and softly sighed,
And laying her last chocolate egg, she cock-a-dooed and died.

That egg it was a beauty, the biggest one reported,
Complete with fancy ribbon and filled with milk assorted.



And so priceless is its value, so rare and precious too,
That I thought that only this one could be worthy, dear, of you.

And so I send it to you with the hope that you will be
Thinking over Easter of this chocolate egg ... and me.

JUST A THOUGHT



The owl, we're told, is very wise,
He sees all with his big, round eyes,
But if he has a brain to use
How come he only wits and woos?

July 1953

In this month I learnt that I had passed my History subsidiary. This was a subject you had to take alongside your main degree subject during your first two years of study.

SUCCESS



When I am decrepit at forty-three
With children and water upon my knee,
My task will be, I am assured,
To keep the children from being bored.

What stories then can I dare recall
Of gallantry, action, of fight and fall,
When at the age of twenty-two
I wasn't there at Waterloo?

Can I relate how I charged with the Blues
When I can't stand cold water, won't wear new shoes,
Can I boast of my valour while in the Marines
When I must wear a bib and won't eat my greens?

Will an attack seem convincing upon hostile nests
When I swim with a lifebelt, won't wear hairy vests?
I can hardly show scars, every scratch, every mark,
When I jump at a spider and fear the dark.

I have but one answer I can claim to be true
To this persistent question of "What did you do?"
With modesty casual and in tone candid
I shall whisper like thunder, "I passed my Subsid!"

1953 *Sent to Peggy while working(?) in Mardon.*

JE T'AIME



A painter, fired by love, I'm told,
Will even let his beer get cold
To paint like some demented crank,
Unshaven, dirty, lean and lank,
A portrait of his Miss;
And Wagner may a maiden thank
- Like Schubert, Liszt and Cesar Franck -
For works like Tristan and Isolde
And inspiration just as bold
From love's sweet bliss.

What writer has there ever been
Who hasn't had some Josephine,
Who hasn't worked by candle-light
To pen his love, celestial bright,
For some fair, comely maid?
And poets such as Yeats and Clare
Have seen cascades in women's hair,
And likened smile or laughter free
To some forlorn anemone
In verdant, bosky glade.



But me, a student versed in French,
 Can I aspire to praise my wench?
 Can I declare her shapely curve
 Recalls the works of dull St. Beuve
 Without a trace of shame?
 My lady-love completely bare
 Would hardly bring to mind Bruyere,
 And yet no art, however rare,
 No magic muse could hope compare
 With my sincere "Je t'aime".

JUST A THOUGHT

I wish I were a conifer, no need to blush or fear,
 It is no joke to be an oak, I'm naked half the year!



1954 *During one of my many visits to Torquay to see Peggy I had to wait while she was in the hairdresser having a new, short hair style. I wrote this little poem while waiting for her.*

THE GODDESS

With commendable, Grecian-like grace
 And the haughtiest smile on her face,
 Her charms are complete
 From her head to her feet,
 She's a nymph of superior race.



Her wardrobe, a mark of good taste,
 Is never too vulgar or chaste,
 And shows to effect
 That she's free from defect,
 That she's nothing that's going to waste.

In her carriage, deportment and pose,
 Plus superior turn to her nose,
 She depicts *tout au fait*
 The most elegant way
 Of wearing or not wearing clothes.

In matters relating to food,
 She is neither a glutton nor prude;
 Epicureans state
 That her appetite's great,
 Yet her figure is perfect when nude.



Such beauty, such virtue select
 Are not without cause or effect,
 For her short curly hair
 Makes her fully aware
 That in every respect she's perfect.

JUST A THOUGHT

A keeper's life is not all fun,
 He's glad when all his work is done,
 It's not an easy job to barf
 A great big lolloping giraffe.



6th June 1954 *Awaiting the result of my final examinations at University College of the South West. (London BA Honours in French). I began the course in 1951 a year after completing my National Service in the Royal Air Force.*

FINALS

If you've stood in the Tate for the rain to abate
 You'd have noticed, perhaps with surprise,
 That attached to the walls of those quiet, lofty halls
 There are paintings of every known size.



Enthralled by the awe of the elderly four
 Who gaze at each colourful view,
 You'd forget, I've no doubt, that the sun was now out,
 That you're due to watch cricket at two.

With slow, solemn stride, and a glance to the side,
 You would pass in review each new vista,
 Till your neck had a crick, your heart a faint tick,
 And your left heel a large, handsome blister.

Delacroix you might like, or prefer a Van Dyke,
 But be he a rogue or a saint,
 One fact is quite plain, whatsoever his name,
 His works are in soft, slimy paint.

And so every picture is a wild, hopeless mixture
 Of a thousand and one different hues,
 Which, caressed by the master like some delicate plaster,
 Forms a worthy product for a Muse.

Be you only thirteen you can yet mix a green,
 You need only add yellow to blue,
 But without true proportion you'll create a distortion,
 As many aspirants now do.



So with agonised gait, as you limp from the Tate,
 At these masters take one final glance;
 Is paint all you need if you wish to succeed?
 No? In that case I haven't a chance!

July 1952 *At Exeter, I roomed for two years with a zoologist called Roy Pickering. I would often find a sea-urchin, a fish or a frog in my bed!*

THE CARVE-UP

I often wonder what cruel fate
 Has chosen you as my room mate;
 I must assume - I beg correction -
 I'm being kept for vivesection.



August 1954

Written at Mardon. The cold war was at its height and America had just produced the first H-bomb.

THE SECRET

The secret of the universe will never be unearthed
While clever men seek ceaselessly to find the atom's worth;
While scientists, bluntly, coldly, foretell of our poor fate
And toil throughout the fleeting hours to make our exit great;
A bang, a puff, a mighty flash and midnight seems like dawn,
Was it for such a feat as this that wretched man was born?
Well I've no special knowledge, my algebra is poor,
I've never used a chemical nor learnt a basic law,
And yet the answer's clear to me, as clear as stars above,
For it nestles 'mid earth's beauty and it reigns supreme in love.

JUST A THOUGHT

There once was a Balinese guy
Who wanted to learn how to fly,
When at last he went solo,
He flew the plane so low,
He never did get Bali High.



April 1955 *One of my first "serious" poems! Written while working as the chief reporter at the Hornsey Journal, North London.*

SNOW SPELL

Snow - 'tis nature's soothing balm,
A sleepy sedative to calm
The racing pulse of modern life
And drown its bustle, noise and strife
Ten thousand snowflakes deep;
How playfully he flutters down,
This sprightly imp, this deadly clown,
Until the village and the town
Are softly sealed in sleep,
The hasty step, the traffic's roar,
Are muffled, stifled, heard no more;
A phantom cloak, an eerie hush,
Descends upon the world to crush
Man's noisy quest for fame;
Till Earth awakes, refreshed and well,
And casting off its snowy spell,
Reveals once more its firm, bleak shell,
And leaves us to our game.



1955 *Written at a time when the country was still recovering from the war. Russia posed a serious threat to world peace and there was much economic unrest in the country.*

SPRING FEVER

Spring, yet we fret
At the future we face,
There's the H-bomb to fear
And the armament race,
There's the coming elections,
Quo Vadis Bevan?
Is Churchill to go,
That remarkable man?
Will there be a world war?
Will our export drive last?
Can we trust the new Bank rate?
And ... stay, not so fast,
God is working his wonders,
There's no need for this gloom,
In the darkest of worlds
There's a crocus in bloom.



August 1955 *Written and sent to Peggy after we had been separated for some time. Peggy was in Switzerland and I was on holiday at Whitsands Bay, just south of Plymouth. I sent this message "on the wind".*

ODE TO THE SOUTH-WEST WIND

I told the wind as he did curl each swell into a foamy furl,
And as the sun caressed each wave and sank into its watery grave,
My messenger, my panting friend, arose above the sunshine's end
And, whirling high with magic might, he roared and vanished into night.

Unhampered by the light of day, I heard him take his blustering way,
He bellowed over lonely moors, banged with glee old creaky doors,
Softly groped through sleepy dales, strode a-singing down dark vales,
Bustled impatient through each town, a strident giant, a wisp, a clown.

Until with voice both soft and shrill he danced upon your window sill
And troubled your romantic dream with vague notes of his promised theme
Until you woke and quietly lay to hear the serenader play,
To hear his music from above confirm the promise of my love.
No orchestra could be more true in rendering my love for you,
Its noble chords can softly sigh with tender, sleepy lullaby,
And then, awakened, surge again to frenzied passion, drunk, insane
With love that thunders, ever grows, eternal as the wind that blows.

1959 *We were working in a little grammar school in Ile Ife, Western Nigeria at this time. We received a letter from Peggy's father in Newquay to say that he had been called upon at very short notice to stand in for the conductor in an musical production at the Cosy Nook.*

PINK CHAMPAGNE

Some may talk of great heroes, like Nelson and Drake,
Of Hercules, Lincoln or Hereward the Wake,
But in Newquay, I'm told, there is now a new name
To add to this list of indelible fame.

No sword in his hand had this Newquayan Star,
 No gun in his belt, no tough armoured car,
 No trusty steed with a seat to be sat on,
 His weapon, in short, a thin, harmless baton.



The saga begins when fortune did wane
 On a sprightly production of "Pink Champagne",
 The cast they did "Champ", near went insane,
 When the chorus master felt in "pagne".

Imagine the scene for this unhappy Soc,
 A conductor struck down by a lightning shock;
 The back-cloth, the costumes, voices tuned to top doh,
 But no guiding hand from the dark pit below.

With only two weeks to the opening night,
 There seemed no way out of this pitiful plight,
 Till "Eureka" cried one in a bright uniform,
 "Tis full steam ahead if we Webber the storm".



Meanwhile, unaware of the part to be played,
 Mr Webber did strive with fork and with spade
 'Mid the calm of his garden, at peace and content,
 His life free from bustle and disappointment.

Such was the man, then, to whom they did plead,
 "Please save us, Sir, in our hour of need,
 Please come to (sic) auxilium nostrum,
 And get up on that empty rostrum."



Long had he spurned overtures to recapture
 The footlights, the missed cues, the musical rapture,
 He sought not the limelight, the fame and applause,
 What bothered him now was the lunchtime scores.

Now really, Sir, it isn't cricket
 To have to bat on such a wicket,
 But Mr Webber, never fearing,
 Cried, "Give me the helm, I'll do the steering"

Then calmly, quietly, like a mouse,
 He did unravel Johann Strauss,
 Night and day with endless labours
 He wrestled with his semi-quavers.

I lack the ink, the time, the space
 To tell you of that mighty race;
 Rehearsals, discants supersonic,
 No solfa had a stronger tonic.

Then came the day, Oh all too soon,
 For the curtain to rise 'mid melodious tune,
 Imagine the scene, let us take a look
 On the opening night at the Cosy Nook.

A hush descends on the crowded house,
 All eager to hear the works of Strauss,
 The house lights dim and, just as planned,
 The conductor enters to take his stand.



To the audience there as he takes his place
 He shows no signs of that marathon race
 'Gainst the clock. Unruffled, neat, supremely calm,
 He smiles, taps, and then raises his arm.

The maestro begins and warms to his theme,
 And then from his baton there flows a sweet stream
 Of melody, both light hearted and gay,
 To brighten one's heart on the gloomiest day.

No one would have thought that in 14 short days
 Our hero could master such a musical maze
 Of andante, crescendo, con brio, legato,
 Without one faint boo or the smallest tomatoe.

The performance ran late, the reason's no wonder,
 The encores were many, the clapping like thunder,
 And all through the night there were "Well done", "Bravo",
 For the man on the rostrum who'd stolen the show.



At the close of the season long was he praised
 For the courage he'd shown, for the banner he'd raised,
 But long e're the last word of tribute did fade
 He was back in his garden with mower and spade.



Long shall his story of prowess be sung,
 Long will it wag from many a tongue,
 And so to this chorus we'll add our refrain
 And toast to our hero ... in Pink Champagne.

1963

HORIZONS

May I hire your boat for a penny, Sir,
 Said the boy with the deep brown eyes,
 Can I row till I reach the sunlight
 Where the waters touch the skies.
 I'm told that over that skyline
 There's a land of wonder and cheer,
 A world where our daydreams are granted,
 A land free from sorrow and fear.



Me lad, said the kindly old sailor,
 Said the wise man knowingly,
 Yer can row my boat for nothing me lad
 For yer young face pleases me;

But I'll tell you this, and take advice
From one whose travelled far,
There ain't never no use in trying
To hitch yer anchor to a star;

You'll find me lad, when you're older,
That life is deceiving that way,
The things that glitter ain't ever gold,
Don't heed what some folk say.

Now that distant, sunny skyline
Where the sun sinks to its rest
Will always remain outside yer reach,
Though yer row your very best.



But undaunted by this warning,
The youngster put to sea,
With shining eyes and eager heart,
He pulled with the force of three;

And yet each time he glanced behind,
The sky still seemed remote,
Dark clouds began to crowd the sky,
Fierce waves to rock the boat;

The sun began to dip its head,
He pulled with all his might,
The sea became a tireless foe,
And blackness came with night.

One, then two days quickly passed,
The mariner shook his head,
The boy with the smiling deep brown eyes
Had scorned what he had said.

But four years later, one bright morn,
A vessel of great size
Entered the bay and from it stepped
The boy with the deep brown eyes.



Sir, said he to the sailor,
I fear my trip proved long,
But I have travelled round the globe
Just to prove that you were wrong.

You placed no faith in distant goals
Which never seemed in reach,
You never tried to practise
What the wiser prophets teach;

Each skyline holds out an adventure,
Each horizon provides a new aim,
You may think that you'll never reach it,
But you're moving along just the same;



And then one day that skyline
Stands still and is soon close at hand,
And you find, dear Sir, just as I did,
That you've reached your magical land;

Horizons are but distant gateways
On the path that a brave heart must wend,
One must never be frightened to venture
If you want to get there in the end.

And then with a wave this bright youngster,
The boy with the laughing brown eyes,
Went down to the sea and sailed away
Across waters that reach to the skies.

1973 *Sent to my son Lincoln when he went off of on a ski-ing holiday with the school. It was not a complete success. He sent us a postcard telling us that the skis were too heavy, he had caught a cold, and he didn't like the food!*

BEND THOSE KNEES



When on the slope
There's no need to mope,
You can do anything you please,
But there's one golden rule, now don't be a fool,
Just remember to BEND THOSE KNEES.

You may catch a chill,
When you're on the hill,
I don't care if you cough and sneeze,
But you'll live to regret it, If you dare to forget it,
That warning to BEND THOSE KNEES.

You can drink the best wine
When you sit down to dine,
You can eat lots of French snails and cheese,
But, needless to say, you will rue the day,
If you don't think to BEND THOSE KNEES.

You may glide with no hands
Down the snow covered lands,
You may jump in the air on your skis,
You may hit the deck and break your neck
As long as you BEND THOSE KNEES.



JUST A THOUGHT

There was a young man of Crete
Who suffered from smelly feet,
He washed them in the Med
Till they turned a bright red,
Now the Med doesn't smell very sweet.



1977 While on holiday on Exmoor, we strolled out one evening to take a look at Dunkery Beacon at sunset. I wrote this poem afterwards and dedicated it to “Dear Old Pop”.

SUNSET OVER DUNKERY BEACON

I climbed a hill and scanned the height
And my gaze was filled with a blinding light,
The blue above, the greens below
Were lost in a shimmering furnace glow,
The sky and earth became as one,
Fused by the heat of the setting sun.

Then the sun dipped low and a mighty hand
Scrawled a dark line between sky and land,
Great darts of fire engulfed the blue
And seared my eyes, confused my view,
My head was filled with a noise so shrill,
Yet the world around stood deathly still.



Then sudden glare gave way to glow,
The sun smiled softly, slipping low,
And as it faded, lost from sight,
The height regained its former might,
Against a sky now bled and weak
It stood majestic, sombre, bleak.



JUST A THOUGHT

Since days of Noah and the flood
The cow has chewed upon the cud,
How come the Good Lord never gave her
A lemon or a spearmint flavour?

The platypus, I don't suppose,
Is very pleased with his flat nose,
But when he sniffs there's never been-a
More efficient vacuum cleaner.



24th October 1978 This month, for some unaccountable reason, the Education Wing received a leaflet on women's underwear, complete with an order form. The then Senior Education Officer, Richard Drewe, sent the leaflet down to me, stating that it was obviously meant for me and marking it "For Action". He had the following reply on his desk thirty minutes later.

IN BRIEFS

Sir, I find your comment in poor taste,
Not one of these slips fit my waist,
And all the cups are far too small,
They don't give me a lift at all.



The nighties, too, are so austere,
In those I'd look a proper queer,
They'd have to be a darn sight bigger
To cover up my manly figure.

I'd have you know that satin lace
Does nothing for my ageing face,
Whilst briefs and tights below my size
Bring water to my bloodshot eyes.



This insult, Sir, deserves one better,
I've sent away the pre-paid letter
And ordered in the name of Drewe
Three satin bras, size 42.

(This poem forged a friendship that has lasted to this day!).

JUST A THOUGHT

Christmas comes but once a year,
That's a fact, applaud it,
For if it came but one more time
We never could afford it.



We think the beaver very good
To work away like beavers should,
But actually it's all a sham,
He really doesn't care a damn.

August 1979 Whilst on holiday in Scotland I wrote this poem for Richard Drewe's three children. I later sent it to the Museum at Loch Ness (with a different intro), but received no reply.

THE MONSTER



Dear Martin, Sally, Isobel, I hope that you are keeping well,
Up here, I fear, it's rather wet, we haven't had much sunshine yet,
It's clear to see with skies so black why Scotland is the land of Mac!

But, rain apart, I have to say, we've had a most exciting stay,
For, truth to tell, I must confess, I've met the monster of Loch Ness!
That creature which is seldom seen, who some believe has never been.

I was on the loch in a tiny boat, all alone and quite remote,
When suddenly I heard a roar, the water opened like a door,
My little boat plunged up and down; I thought I was about to drown.

Then there, before my very eyes, arose a creature of great size,
Long and large and gleaming black, as big as any chimney stack,
He'd two big eyes, both round and red, staring from a large round head.



I thought I was about to die until I caught sight of his eye,
'Twas then I saw he wasn't mad, but very kind and very sad;
This monster with the thick black hide was just a softy deep inside.

And then he spoke, I do not lie, in English, just like you and I,
"Forgive me," he politely said, "for rearing up my ugly head,
But really Sir, I'm very sad 'cos everybody thinks I'm bad."

"Please tell your folk I mean no harm, I'm simply full of grace and charm,
Then maybe they will let me be, I'm really not a mystery;
In case you think it's worth the knowing, I'm just a worm that kept on growing."

And then, before I could reply, the monster gave a long deep sigh,
And, diving smoothly to his right, he swiftly disappeared from sight,
Leaving me to gently rock, alone upon an empty loch.

I rowed to shore, my mind disturbed, amazed at what I'd seen and heard,
But when I told of what occurred, no one up here believed a word,
"Och Aye," they said, "You'd had a few, the Monster wouldna talk to you!"

I won't forget that sad old face, you know I think the human race
Has quite a lot to answer for in searching for a dinosaur
Which, in effect, I can confirm, is nothing but a big fat worm.



JUST A THOUGHT

There was a young man of Bangkok
Who cooked all his food in a wok,
As he shook the hot plate
He would dance and gyrate,
A-rocking his wok round the clock



August 1979 *While on holiday in Scotland we visited the battlefield of Culloden where, in 1746, the Young Pretender, Bonnie Prince Charlie, was defeated by an English army and was forced to flee the country. It was not difficult to imagine the bloody battle that was fought across this bleak stretch of moorland.*

CULLODEN

On that fateful day on Culloden Field
Blade clashed with blade, or hacked upon shield,
There were shots and shouts 'mid a sea of red
Which swept o'er the fallen, the dying, the dead;
And hopes died too, above the glen,
The hopes of a King in the hearts of men,
And the Highlands paid a pitiful price
For the courage of their sacrifice.



I stood today on Culloden Field,
The noise of the battle now stifled, stilled,
No red upon the deep, lush green,
Yet a spirit disturbed that peaceful scene;
Did I not hear, on the edge of the breeze,
The sound of the pipes, faint 'mid the trees,
A ghostly wail with more intent
Than the long sad notes of a Scottish lament?



As I took my leave of Culloden Field,
Where we, as a nation, had died and killed,
Where a bold rebellion, halted, crushed,
Lay buried deep, its anguish hushed,
I heard again on the wind afloat
The distant cry of a piper's note,
And I pondered anew on those bygone wars
And the spirit born of a long-lost cause.

August 1979 *Composed at the end of our holiday*

FAREWELL TO SCOTLAND

Purple and blue, purple and blue,
These are the colours I'm leaving with you;
One for the heather that climbs to the sky,
The other for sadness at saying goodbye;
Purple and blue, purple and blue,
These are the colours I'm leaving with you.



August 1979 *Written during our holiday in Scotland*

MY HIGHLAND HOME

I wouldna sing, I wouldna dance
If I were forced to leave, perchance,
My highland home, my Scotland free,
And all the love they bring to me.



There's a spring in my step, there's a song in my heart,
There's a joy beyond my ken
When I hear the sound of the plaintive pipes
A-stealing down the glen;
Have you noticed yet, has your eye not seen,
The thousand different ways
The colours change as the sun goes down
On those bonny banks and braes.



There's a beauty on the mountain-side,
A feast beyond compare,
The purple of the heather,
The fragrance of the air,
And nestled 'mid the valleys
The lochs stretch out for miles
'Till their waters meet and fashion
Those lovely western isles.

Can you wonder then, can you be surprised,
Wherever they may roam
My folk are ever dreaming
Of their lovely highland home,
Cross waters deep, cross countries wide,
However grand and fine,
Their thoughts are ever turning
To the land of Auld Lang Syne.

I wouldna sing, I wouldna dance
If I were forced to leave, perchance,
My highland home, my Scotland free,
And all the love they bring to me.



JUST A THOUGHT



There was a young man called Fred Opolis
Who journeyed to see the Acropolis,
He climbed to the top
And then fell down non-stop,
And thus came a nasty acrop alas.

The camel, when he's fully growed,
Eats sugar by the barrel load,
But when invited out to tea,
He only takes two lumps, not three.



1982 *At this time in the MS Wing we had a charming little cleaner working on the top floor. The Senior Educaion Officer suggested that she was good material for a poem!*



ODE TO PATTY

Fair, not dark, slim not fatty, is my dearest cleaner, Patty;
She works and makes my heart to sing at the top of MS Wing,
Like some lovely ballerina, there does dance my contract cleaner,
Hoovering across the floor till dirt and dust are seen no more,
Graceful, lithe, with smile so sweet, she simply sweeps me off my feet,
With mop and brush and yellow duster, her presence puts me in a fluster,
Equipped with Harpic she doest tend to send my heart around the bend,
Oh I'd be in sweetest clover if she would but dust me over,
Or with soap, but not a lot, touch those parts that beer cannot;
But woe, alas, I'm roundly spurned, my love for her is not returned,
Her eyes, it seems, are for another, never shall I be her lover,
I can only watch and sigh as she dusts and hooovers by,
Would that I had sooner seen her, my lovely Yorkshire upstairs cleaner.

8th May 1982 *For my birthday, five days earlier, Peggy gave me a surprise, a delightful weekend away at West Bexington, right on the south Dorset coast.*

WEST BEXINGTON

The sigh of the sea on a stony shore.
The thunder of waves, like the guns of war,
The song of the lark, all this and more
I'll not forget;
The shimmer of light on a shining sea,
The soaring seagulls plaintive plea,
The comfort of you as you walk beside me,
Fill my heart yet.

25th September 1985 *Dedicated to a relative who was staying with us at the time.*

THE LET DOWN

Will somebody please tell Autumn about the Country Code?
Those leaves might look delightful in brown and red and gold,
But they clog up all the gutters and block up every drain,
And they can become quite dangerous when moistened by the rain;
He ought to keep Britain tidy wherever he might roam;
Why can't he get a bag or two and take his litter home?

Will somebody please tell Autumn to leave the trees alone?
We know he's got a job to do and it's not like us to moan,
But with breezes, storms and tempests what is it he achieves
We know he must reduce the light and chill the evening air,
But, tell us, does he really need to leave the place so bare?



Will somebody please tell Autumn to keep leaves just where they are;
Now that would solve the problem, the best result by far;
What's that you say? You've told him? What did he have to say?
Oh, he's very very sorry and he thinks he's found a way;
He's making us a promise ... now that sounds just the thing,
He's going to make an effort and put them back next Spring.



JUST A THOUGHT

The elephant is like a bus,
His trunk is quite ridiculous,
But with it, you may be awares,
He can collect the fares upstairs.



April 1988 *This was published in the Mary-go-Round, the village News Sheet. The council had just completed the building of a large council estate and there was talk of a by-pass and the prospect of more development within its boundaries.*

TOPSY TURVY

St. Mary, Mary, quite contrary,
How does our village grow?
With countless roads and loads and loads
Of little homes all in a row.



St. Mary, Mary, quite contrary,
Our hearts are sorely troubled,
Our fields and woods are gone for good
And our population's doubled.

St. Mary, Mary, quite contrary,
We've let the planners know,
Don't leave us be, like dear Topsy,
To grow and grow and grow.



St. Mary, Mary, quite contrary,
Please take your plans elsewhere,
You must concede in housing need
We've more than done our share.

JUST A THOUGHT

The zebra, we are sad to state,
Is fast becoming out of date,
On tele, try hard though he might,
He's always seen in black and white



23rd August 1990 *During August of this year I attended a two-week course at the SMAE Chiropody School at Maidenhead. Having studied by a correspondence course for eighteen months, I had to take the practical part of the course before passing out as a "qualified" chiropodist. I read this out to the class on the last day of the course.*

FEET FIRST

We've had a foot-filled fortnight, dear Mary and dear Lorne,
Full of nails, verrucae, and every kind of corn;
We've pared a ton of callous and clipped nails by the score
(And countless times forgotten to close that bloody drawer!) *
We've dealt with involuted nails and arches that have dropped,
We've clipped, we've pared, we've padded, in fact, we've never stopped,
Yes, we've been so very busy that we've never known so far
Whether we've been standing on our dorsum or plantar;
We've made a few mistakes of course, and though we've made amends,
At times we've driven both of you around the Tincture Benz!
But now the course is over, our thanks, we all agree,
Are due to you who taught us about chiropody,
So armed with brand new cases, new instruments and drill,
With plasters, mefix, padding, and tubes of Phytocil.
We're off to start our practice and to join the SMAE elite,
..... And we hope it won't be too long before we "find our feet".



* We were constantly being told that the drawer containing all our instruments had to be kept closed for reasons of hygiene. However, we were so busy that we often left it open!



During the course I was teamed up with a young Afghan fellow. We agreed from the start that when dealing with a patient, he would treat the right foot and I would treat the left foot, and we made out our notes accordingly. It was only after ten days that we suddenly realised that, when facing the patient, the right foot was actually the patient's left foot and vice versa!

JUST A THOUGHT



One hippopotamus alone
Is only big when fully grown,
So I don't see what all the fuss is
Over hippopotomuses.

29th April 1991 *Written on the boat as we set sail from the island of Mykonos during our holiday to Greece.*

THE CABARET

When we set sail from Mykonos
The night had conquered sea and sky
And closed in part the watchful eye,
The white-washed walls were seen no more,
Lights danced along a fading shore.



When we set sail from Mykonos
A silver moon, majestic, proud,
Was piercing through the scudding cloud
To cast a path of shimmering lace
Across the water's darkened face.



When we set sail from Mykonos,
Pure liquid marble, cut by steel,
Swirled out from deep beneath the keel
'Till, green and blue, it foamed and fell
Beneath a vast and inky swell.

When we set sail from Mykonos
The cabaret had just begun
And, 'mid the laughter and the fun,
As music and as engine throbbed
Those taking part were sadly robbed.

When we set sail from Mykonos,
Then nature staged its own display
Above the carefree cabaret,
And those below, theirs was the loss
When we set sail from Mykonos.

JUST A THOUGHT

I like big dogs, in the main,
Like a Labrador or big Great Dane,
But you'll never beat a good Alsatian,
He knocks the spots off a Dalmatian.



26th May 1991 *I drove two old friends back to Newquay and,
on the way, we stopped for coffee in a lay-by.
It was a lovely Spring day.*

BLUE HEAVEN

A sea of bluebells in a wooded glade,
A sight to cherish where by chance we stayed.

A sea of bluebells by a road in Devon,
A cup of coffee and a glimpse of heaven.



JUST A THOUGHT

A fisherman living in Haifa
Was anxious to catch a nice wifa,
He found a young girl who made his heart whirl,
Now he's hooked for the rest of his lifa.

November 1994 While on our world tour we stayed on a delightful tropical island,
just off main island of Tonga. Our little palm-covered hut was on
the beach, just four yards from the lapping water of a blue lagoon.

PANGAIMOTU

The sun all ablaze, the sky a warm glow,
Diamonds a-dance on the waters below,
The long lazy drag of tide upon sand,
The shimmer of heat where sky touches land,
The sound of child's laughter, caught on the breeze,
The lapping of surf and the whisper of trees,
The beauty of sunset spilling over the bay,
The clouds stirred to life by the embers of day;
O would that I had the magical power
To stop fast the clock at this very hour,
To linger if only for just a brief while
Upon the soft sand of this magical isle,
To fathom its secret and capture perchance
The peace and contentment induced by its trance;



Then suddenly the sky turns grey,
An angry storm whips 'cross the bay,
My paradise melts like fleeting snow
And I am back to the world I know.

November 1994 *Written after reading an article on the life and work of Darwin.*

MY ORIGIN OF SPECIES

I'm sure when Darwin wrote his thesis
On the origin of species
He must have known, he must have guessed,
It would stir up a hornet's nest,
But as for me, I'm quite elated
If, indeed, I am related
To a primate in the shape
Of some large and hairy ape,
I don't care a fig or hang
If grandad was orang-utan,
You see, I've had a careful look
At old Darwin's clever book,
I have learnt that my selection
Has evolved to sheer perfection,
Derived from monkeys though we be,
Please note that I'm a pedigree.



20th March 1995 Wrote this poem to celebrate the 90th birthday of
a very keen stamp collector living in Blandford.

MINT CONDITION

Your name is Phil French, but it's easy to see
Why so many people call you Phil Ately,
In ninety long years you've stuck fast, still undated,
You've never been franked and you're not perforated,
You've kept your face clean and your colours alive
From your very first issue in 1905,
And so it's a pleasure sincerely to say
We wish you, dear Phil, a Happy Birthday,
May your future be sunny, your blessings hand-picked,
And in all that you do may you never be licked.



April 1995 *Peggy and I took Ivy, an elderly lady living in Pigeon Close, to
visit the grave of her husband, George. They were married at
Houghton church and he was buried in the cemetery there.
It was a very cold, bleak day.*

SUMMER FLOWERS

A chill wind o'er the living and the dead,
Crows squawking as they circle overhead,
So wet the grass and cold the marble stones,
A heavy sky, etched with sombre tones
And full of sudden showers;
Yet he lies warm, untouched by wind and rain,
At peace with death, his living not in vain,
He feels your presence, knows your step above,
And smiles at that sweet token of your love,
A gift of summer flowers.



JUST A THOUGHT

In winter spare a thought for moles,
They find it hard to dig their holes,
Their lives are not a bed of roses
With ice-cold feet and frozen noses.





The tortoise is not fast, we know,
 But mentally he's far from slow,
 When winter comes, he's never late
 To make his bed and hibernate,
 While we all shiver he sleeps well,
 Snug and warm inside his shell.

December 1998 *It was around this time that dear friend Richard Drewe had a very nasty fall at home and badly hurt his face. He spent many painful months recovering.*

THE FACE LIFT

Going up Sir, mind the doors,
 Bones for making up new jaws,
 Very sturdy, super-jointed,
 Lantern, square and finely pointed.



Second Floor, go to the right
 If you need a second bite,
 Teeth to meet your every need,
 Gums that never shrink or bleed.

Third Floor Sir, for lids and eyes,
 Made to measure, any size,
 Every colour, straight or crossed,
 Bloodshot comes at extra cost.

Fourth Floor Sir, for lengths of skin,
 Free from wrinkles, paper thin,
 Peachy soft and never rots,
 Guaranteed to have no spots.

Fifth Floor Sir, a good selection
 Of noses fashioned to perfection,
 Roman, flat or finely done,
 Never red and will not run.



Sixth Floor Sir, turn to your left
 For dimples, freckles, moles or cleft,
 For cheek bones, lips, all made to size,
 Plus bags to go beneath your eyes.



Seventh Floor Sir, mind the gap,
 Oh I say! You poor old chap!
 A nasty fall, flat on your face!
 Just as well you're in this place.

Going down Sir, mind the doors,
 You'll be needing ALL the floors.

March 1999 *Dedicated to Dr. Percival after a nasty bout of flu*

FLU AND DRIVE

That influenza hit me hard, but yet I must confess,
 My space excursions "Flu and Drive" have been a great success,
 I only had to close my eyes, my body filled with heat,
 My head began to pound and throb, my heart to loudly beat,
 Then three - two - one and lift-off, I blasted into space

And flew straight through the window at a terrifying pace,
 But what a comfort, what a joy to feel the cool, fresh air,
 To leave behind my sick bed, that hot pond of despair,
 Yes, astride my little capsule, my starship "Annadin",
 I boldly went to places where few men have ever been;



My first excursion, half a day, was centred round the Stour,
 I zoomed along the by-pass at ninety miles an hour,
 I hovered over Safeways, 'twas like a little box,
 I saw your tiny surgery, I landed in the Plocks,

Then, once I'd made a study of my universal guide,
 I pressed hard upon the throttle and crossed the oceans wide,
 I surveyed the wall of China from some 20,000 feet,
 Buzzed the Sphinx and Pyramids, and glided over Crete,
 I saw the Taj Mahal at dawn and spied the Barrier Reef,
 I shot across Niagara Falls - and nearly came to grief,
 I flew non-stop to Cape Town and came back via Brazil,
 I spiralled down the Eiffel Tower - that made me feel quite ill,



I took a trip to Venice, to Moscow and Kuwait,
 And even drove my little ship across the Golden Gate;
 But my last excursion was the best, I left the human race,
 My little capsule picked up speed and shot me deep in space,
 I travelled through the Milky Way amid a thousand stars,
 I did a tour of Venus, and I spent some time on Mars,
 I went as far as Jupiter and saw some living "things",
 And enjoyed a roller-coaster on one of Saturn's rings;

Yes, those trips were truly wonderful, but spoilt I must admit
 By my method of re-entry, that hurt me quite a bit,
 I hadn't got a shuttle to land me safe and dry,
 My capsule on a parachute just fell from out the sky
 So my splash-downs were quite dreadful, I'd land upon my head
 In the middle of a whirlpool in a hot and sticky bed;

I suppose you couldn't make, by chance, a tablet, pill or potion
 That would have kept my spaceship perpetually in motion?
 Then I could have kept on flying for ten or fourteen days
 Until my fever, aches and pains had gone their separate ways,
 Till back to health and normal strength and full of joy and mirth,
 I could then have brought my spaceship safely back to earth.

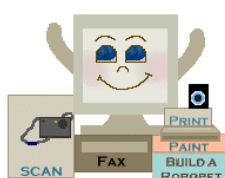
And think of the potential if you patented that pill!
 For flu, at least, all patients would never need be ill,
 They'd take a Flu-Drive Holiday and just a pill or two,
 And not come down to earth again till feeling just like new,
 And you would make a fortune, gain universal fame,
 Move, no doubt, to Harley Street, become a household name,
 And if, by chance, this comes to pass in six months to a year,
 Please don't forget that it was me that gave you the idea,
 I wouldn't ask for very much, just enough to pay the rent,
 From all your income what about a mere fifteen percent?



April 2000 Written at the end of an IT course held in Charlton Marshall

OUR SUSIE DOT.COM

My fellow classmates it would be quite absurd
To finish this course without saying a word
To thank our dear Susan, our computer Queen,
You've been a great teacher that's what you have been;
You've filled all our heads, and footers as well,
With words like formatting, toolbars and cell,
Layout and autofill and discs that are floppy,
Preview and borders and cut, paste and copy;
We've looked into windows, we've studied the view,
We've gone to some bars and we've scanned a menu;
We've learnt how to copy, to zoom and delete,
Formulate, insert and compile a spreadsheet,
And as for that mouse, he's now good as gold,
Just one double click and he does as he's told!



Yes, we've made our mistakes, the occasional bloomer,
But you've faced them all with a good sense of humour,
You've never got angry, you've never got miffed
When we've pressed down control instead of the shift,
Or clicked without thinking and, for this offence,
Were faced with a question that didn't make sense,
And when we have thought things couldn't get worse,
Our screen has gone blank and we've lost that damn cursor!

But despite our shortcomings, you've been very patient
With students like us who are getting quite ancient,
And now we can claim that we excel at Excel,
We know about Word and can make charts as well,
And it's all down to Sue, our excellent tutor,
That we've all learnt so much about the computer;
We've looked up to you; in the course that has gone
You've been the star of our screen, our little Icon;



But before we depart, we'd like to possess
Your telephone number and E-mail address,
We know the procedures, we've learnt them by heart,
But what if we can't get the damn thing to start!

August 2000 Entered in the Blandford St. Mary Flower Show and awarded 1st Prize!

A WITTY DITTY

I intended to write a great ditty,
A masterpiece, clever and witty,
Which, with little surprise,
Would win the top prize,
But it didn't work out, that's the pity;



Due to liquid excess, it transpired
That my ball point would not be inspired,
Imagination, I fear,
Was so steeped in beer,
It was simply too wet to be fired!

To save me from utter despair,
Dear Judge would you kindly declare
That I be recommended
For a "Highly Commended"?
..... Just to ease the sore head of a bear!



October 2002 Dedicated to our doctor, Dr. Percival.

WARTS AND ALL

I had a wart between my eyes, a growth of such enormous size
That those who saw it did suppose it was a supplementary nose;
But you, undaunted by this hump, attacked that superficial lump
And with a heated wire, in short, cut off that large and ugly wart;
So thanks to you, devoid of pain, I now can face the world again.



Now with that magic heated wire do you think you could aspire
To make my nose both small and thin, reshape my lips, repoint my chin,
And, best of all, reduce in size those large black bags beneath my eyes?
You can't do that? Well thanks a lot, I'll have to stick with what I've got!

JUST A THOUGHT

When in the pouch, young Kangaroo,
You must be careful what you do,
If you play snooker in your pad
You'll drive your mother hopping mad.



September 2004

PROBLEMS SOLVED



It was a "Big Bang" that, apparently, gave instant birth to our galaxy,
It blew its top some time, some place, and hurled bits into outer space,
And according to that clever thesis, our world is just one of those pieces,
Which, tossed around for countless years, gave birth to us, so it appears!

Well all of that we comprehend, but now we're told we face our END!
For now it seems - perhaps its moles - we must beware of big "Black Holes",
Just one of these, the scientists fear, could swallow up our little sphere,
There'd be no time to make a fuss, that would be the end of us!

And just in case that's not enough to put the fear of God in us,
There's yet another danger forming, the dire effects of "Global warming"!
The poles it seems are melting fast, the ice-caps have not long to last,
And when they melt and sink below, where will all the water go?!



Of our globe at least a quarter would soon be under rising water,
England? Well our shrinking shores would just contain the Yorkshire Moors,
And parliament, if it ever sat, would meet on Ilkley Moor Bar Tat,
Though likely some would doubtless wonder, better if't were ten feet under.



But I can save the human race from the dangers that we face,
For one who has a brilliant mind, the solution is not hard to find,
Just take the water from those poles and pour it down those big black holes!
Both problems solved at just one stroke, now say I'm not a clever bloke!

July 2005 *Going for a biopsy re. my prostate trouble*

THE BOTTOM LINE

The train now standing at North Wing station
Has quite a special destination,
That little tube train soon is due
To make a journey inside YOU,
To boldly go - need I say more? -
Where no one else has gone before,
To travel deep then stop to see
How best to do a biopsy,
It has the kit to operate
And pinch small bits from your prostate!
Now this procedure isn't fun,
But it's a job that must be done,
Unpleasant though it might well be,
It's hardly major surgery,
So just relax, lie on your side,
And let them take you for a ride.



HOWEVER, though there's naught to dread,
A word of **warning** must be said,
Before that train goes up your stern,
Make sure you've got a day return!

BY OPSY

Dedicated to Mr Afzal and his trained crew – July 2005 DJ



September 2005 *Going for a scan re. my prostate trouble*

THE ATOMIC MAN

Thank you for your letter, it made exciting reading,
A little boost of nuclear power is just what I am needing,
'Twill change my frail old body, puny at the best,
Pump up all my muscles, put hair upon my chest,
Make me a sporting hero, a hunk at six foot ten,
Admired by all the women and feared by all the men;
And it will stir my tiny brain, just you wait and see,
I'll be a man of intellect, give lectures on TV,
And every one will listen, hang on my every word,
I'll understand Pythagoras and do the Times' crossword;



.....
But hang on just a minute, I've now read your second page,
It seems I'm not to benefit from this atomic age,
The dose I will be given wouldn't hurt a flea,
So I am left, it would appear, to stay just little me,
I was hoping that injection might well improve my lot,
Now I'll have to bite the bullet and put up with what I've got.

September 2005 *The Scan as a Scam*

THE CHOCOLATE ASTRONAUT

I hear you're going for a scan in just a day or two,
It seems that Mr Cornaby wants a closer look at you,
But for a "scan" you'd best read "scam", just let me put you wise,
When you arrive at Dorchester you're in for a surprise;
It's all a spoof, a cunning plan, a clever sting in short,
Cos you've been chosen, little you, to be an astronaut!
Sponsored by the company that makes those chocolate bars,
You're going to see the Galaxy, the Milky Way and Mars;
You will lie upon a launch pad and be slowly slid inside
Your little capsule "Bounty", for your advertising ride,
Soon ground control at Houston will briefly contact you,
"Good day Commander, just relax, there's nothing you need do",
Then next you'll feel a tremble as the motors start to race,
Three, two, one and lift off, and you'll be speeding into space!
You'll see the earth receding as you hurtle through the stars,
You'll catch a glimpse of Pluto, then Jupiter and Mars,
Saturn will be close at hand, just like a big balloon,
You will hover over Venus and circle round the moon;
Then a voice comes on your intercom, again it's Houston centre,
"Stand by, Commander, mission's done, we're going to re-enter",
And so your little spacecraft will fire its "retro burn"
And heading for our planet, will make a safe return,
The motors will go silent as your shuttle finds its berth,
And, sliding from your spacecraft, you'll be back again on earth;
And for your gallant effort, your prize, needless to say,
Will be a galaxy, a double mars, and a king size milky way,
And you'll be known by everyone who eats those chocolate bars
As the one who just went for a scan and journeyed to the stars;



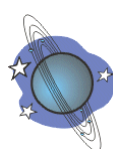
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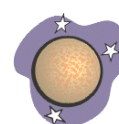
SATURN



JUPITER



.....
But sad to say, you must be warned, you'll get no certain proof
That you were, in fact, the hero of that advertising spoof,
The photographs they take of you upon your epic flight
Will come out very fuzzy and be only black and white,
You'd think they could do better, it's simply a disgrace,
Those diagnostic images are just a waste of Space!



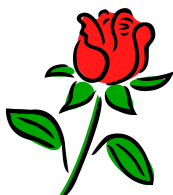
Dedicated to Mr Cornaby and his down-to-earth team - Sept 2005 DJ

December 2005 *Another visit to Poole Hospital!*

MY TATTOO DREAM

I believe it is today I'm due
To have my very own tattoo,
So you can find and terminate
Those nasty bits in my prostate;





Now when you've done that small tattoo
Please spare me just a sec or two
To etch my name "DJ" in green
In a place that can be seen,
My cheeks, perhaps, my chin or nose,
Embellished with a small red rose ...
What's that you say? You'd rather not?
You're only trained to make a dot!
What a shame, so it would seem,
It's ta-ta to my tattoo dream.

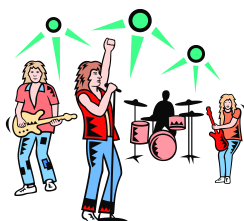
January 2006 *My first trip for radiotherapy*

The Radiotherapy Department,
Poole Hospital.

Dear young ladies

THE LOST CHORD

Dear ladies kindly bear in mind
My poor prostate is quite refined,
Please treat it with some music gems
From Radio Four or Classic FM,
It likes a little Brahms or Liszt,
And Mozart it just can't resist,



What's that you say? That can't be done?
You're going to give it **Radio One**!!
You've got to knock my prostate out
With songs that have a bit of clout!
You're using Wham until it's Strangled,
Busted, Killed and truly mangled!
Well you know best, so fair enough,
But please give me some good ear muffs?

March 2006 *The end of my treatment!*

Radiant, as their name infers, Are Poole's Radiographers

Dear ladies of the basement, everyone a friend,
For the past six weeks, I must confess,
I have been at my beam's end,
But you've been there to comfort me
With kindness and good fun,
You've prodded me, you've pushed me,
You've written on my tum,



So THANK YOU, my dear ladies,
Plus Cobber, Nathan, John,
May your lives be filled with sunshine
By a beam that's always **on**.

DJ Automatic

April 2006 *I had quite a nasty cyst on my back and had to go to Blandford Surgery for about three weeks to have it treated and dressed.*



LADIES IN BLUE

My dear ladies in blue, I am grateful to you,
It is clear you know how to persist,
Yes, day after day you have laboured away
To dig out my herbaceous cyst;
So my thanks are now due to each one of you,
Now I'm free from all worry and pain,
My cyst floribunda, has lost all its thunder,
And you'll not see my back back again.



March 2008 *Our builder friend David Miles kindly delivered us some compost.
Apart from being a builder he exhibited vegetables at national level!*

COMPOST COMPOSED

Dear Sir we'd like to thank you for the compost you have brought,
Pop in to see us some time and we'll pay what sum we ought;
We think we have enough now to meet our present needs,
To make our soil delicious and feed our little seeds.



But that compost that you brought us, we openly confess,
Might well rebound against you and cause you some distress,
We're going to grow some onions, we know how it is done,
So your champion days are over, your last cup has been won.

April 2009 *Earlier this month I was fitted with two hearing aids
Keeley was the young lady who looked after me..*



PARDON ME

Dear Keeley I am duty bound
To thank you for the gift of sound;
Your expertise, gained over years,
Has given me two tip-top ears;
I now can hear as good as new
All those sounds I one-time knew,
Like music, bird song, idle chatter,
The traffic roar and household clatter;
Those pots and pans make such a to-do,
Like gunfire straight from Waterloo,



The door bell, never heard since when,
Is now a miniature Big Ben,
And the toilet, flushed when nature calls,
Is louder than Niagara Falls!

.....

Yes, what a difference you have made,
But there's a downside to these aids;
Of course I'm grateful and surprised
To have my ears computerized,
But for this gain I've paid a price,
I've lost my cosy paradise
Where all the noise of modern life
Never caused me pain or strife;
I sometimes think, I must admit,
If everyone was deaf a bit,
Our loud and noisy human race
Would live in a much nicer place!



June/July 2010 *Together with my brother Ken, we spent a wonderful week travelling down the Thames aboard Baglady. It was Ken's present to us for our 80th birthdays. I wrote this little poem at the end of our cruise. (With apologies to John Masefield!)*



CARGOES



Roy and Sue's Baglady, stately and majestic,
Moving out of Oxford on a sunny June day,
With a cargo of three very decrepit pensioners,
Pathetic, arthritic and looking very grey.

Roy and Sue's Baglady, stately and majestic
Coming into Kingston in the space of a week,
With a cargo of three very sprightly pensioners,
Agile, suntanned, and looking very sleek.



June 2012 *About this time our dear friend Richard Drewe told me of the trouble he was having with badgers. Every night they came into his back garden and dug holes in his lawn. He often got up at night, but never saw them at work. A neighbour told him that he should pee on his lawn in the evening because badgers did not like the smell of urine! It cried out for a poem!*



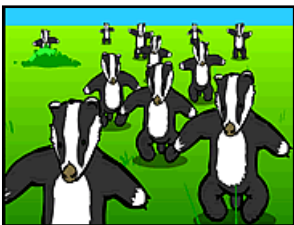
BADGER BEER



Dear Richard, twenty Dorset men,
Soldiers strong and hearty,
Will be arriving at your house today
To have a little party;
Each armed with forty pints of beer
And a thirst you won't believe,



They are going to drink the day away
With no time to relieve,
Then at a chosen moment,
Just before the dawn,
They'll march out in close order
And pee upon your lawn!
Now rest assured dear Richard
That this concentrated piss



Will teach those bloody badgers
To give your place a miss,
When next they come a calling
Then you can stay in bed,
Cos the grass they've come to damage
Will be well and truly dead.

PS. He later discovered it was the next-door cat!

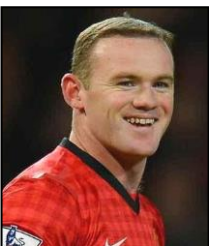
September 2013 *This month I was diagnosed with a hernia! I went to see the consultant at the Winterbourne Hospital, Dorchester and took along this poem.*

NETHER NETHER LAND

At last I've proved that I've got guts,
Of that there is no ifs or buts,
Cos one small part, there is no doubt,
Is very clearly sticking out!
And you, kind Sir, with little pain,
Are going to put it back again;
I'm very grateful, thanks to you
I'm going to be as good as new.



Now after you've made cuts and joins,
And girded up my clapped-out loins,
Please be so kind, while in this place,
To help restore my handsome face,
I understand, to strengthen flesh,
You have a clever piece of mesh,
The very stuff to minimise
Those big black bags beneath my eyes!



Now once my guts are reinstated,
And those bags have been deflated,
Then I will be as fit as Rooney,
And have the looks of suave George Cloony,
No woman then will pass me by,
Each one will want to catch my eye,
To gaze in awe, knees going weak,
At my good looks and fine physique.





..... What's that you say, I speak in haste,
You never work above the waist,
You only deal with lumps and lesions
In those lower "nether regions"?!
Oh that's a blow, and so it seems,
That puts an end to treasured dreams,
Now all my hopes are truly blighted
Re. Hollywood and Man.United.



June 2014 *Composed following the death of our dear Tracy (daughter-in-law)
and read at her funeral.*



*Throughout her life dear Tracy was fond
of butterflies,
Those sudden bursts of colour that
brighten up our skies;
To her they were reminders of happy,
carefree hours,
When they danced across the garden
like gentle, fluttering flowers;
Those tiny, graceful visitors always made
her heart to sing,
They were messengers of freedom, love
and laughter on the wing;
So when next you see a butterfly, no
matter time or place,
Please pause awhile, softly smile, and
think of our dear Trace.*



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