

**DEDDINGTON DITTIES**  
**and**  
**other verses**

**John Cheney**

*with brief explanatory notes.*  
*Submitted in great humility to*  
*The Friends of Deddington Festival 2012*  
*for limited publication*

*Proceeds to Deddington Festival*

## **Foreword**

It was suggested that I produce a small collection of my verses for limited publication and this is the result.

I came to live in Deddington in 1988 and the village has always shown me great kindness. It has also inspired some of my poems.

I started the 'Poetry Please' informal verse readings some years ago at the Unicorn. These proved popular and now occupy an evening in the summer Deddington Festival season, where some of these poems were first aired.

No literary merit is claimed, but perhaps some of this halting verse may be found mildly amusing.

J.C.2012

*To someone who has become a very dear friend  
and a good companion, this book is humbly dedicated.*

## About the author



**J**ohn Cheney was born in 1929 in Banbury. After living at Bodicote and Adderbury he came to Deddington in 1988, residing in a flat in Grove Court and more recently at Featherton House.

He can be seen frequently walking from Featherton House to one of the pubs, which he fairly visits in turn.

John has performed on stage, in various choirs and in the Deddington Festival community concerts. Who can forget his rendition of 'When the night wind howls' from 'Ruddigore' in the Gilbert & Sullivan concert in 2006?

He paints, mainly landscapes in watercolour, which are much enjoyed by supporters of the Deddington Parish Show and customers at The Crown and Tuns.

His other main talent is writing amusing verse, some of which is often first heard at his popular 'Poetry Please' evenings in the Deddington Festival in summer each year, hence this book.

# DEDDINGTON DITTIES

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*Having been medically barred for some months from driving due to a stroke, my driving licence was restored the day I finished this poem, hence the final couplet*

### **THE PEDESTRIAN**

I am here, on my side of the road,  
Trying to comply with the green cross code.  
On the other side the Crown and Tuns beckoning,  
Reminds me that, by my reckoning  
It's half past five, the time is prime  
For Gardeners' Question Time,  
To meet George and Bill and Charles, and John and Terry,  
To drink some wine and make merry.  
And maybe as a nice surprise,  
Have one of Anton's steak and kidney pies,  
With short crust pastry,  
Very tasty.  
So what is keeping me from this delight?  
It's what assails me every night,  
Traffic!  
When they're not southward then they're northward bound,  
The yobbos' thudding radios make a hideous sound.  
They tail back from the lights,  
I suppose it is within their rights  
To close right up so that you cannot squeeze  
With any ease,  
Your way through that narrow route,  
'Twixt dead flies on the bumper and mud upon the boot;  
It messes up your jumper and your suit.  
But let's rejoice – I'm in there with the pack,  
I've got my driving licence back!

*Two pretty girls at the Crown and Tuns Laura and Kate, sent me a too  
complimentary but beautiful poem they had written for my 80<sup>th</sup> birthday (it was very  
funny, even using the word 'fart'). This was my reply, even using the same four-letter  
word. Apologies to puritans who may be offended*

## **TWO NEW TALENTS**

What a gladsome great surprise  
Two dazzling poets now arise  
To brighten up our autumn skies.  
Through my post box an arrival  
To commemorate my strange survival  
Of eighty years upon this planet;  
It cannot be a poem can it?  
It is! Of such exquisite worth  
As seldom wrought upon this earth.  
Shakespeare, Milton, Keats, despair.  
No words of yours with this compare.  
With heavenly skill each limpid line  
Flows wondrously like cool white wine  
Each joyful phrase a work of art  
Why! E'en incorporating 'fart'  
So mischief making dark-eyed Laura  
This humble servant doth adore her  
And pretty Kate's beguiling smile  
Causes me to linger quite a while.  
Together, Laura, you and Kate  
Make my new poet Laura-eate!!

*A friend of a friend was having her little girl baptised. She asked for a poem to mark the occasion. A photo was produced, cleverly lit with stripes of pale rainbow hues running across the pretty child's figure. Hence the poem.*

## **ZOE**

O little Zoe, shining light  
Lit up by tints of rainbow bright.  
You're looking happy, thoughtful too,  
Wond'ring what lies in store for you?  
May life be a rosy place,  
Like the pink glow upon your face.  
May your thoughts be ever mellow,  
Like that enchanting palest yellow.  
May your kindness e'er be seen  
Like the little splash of green.  
And yet it may occur to you  
To sometimes feel a little blue.  
Do not despair or make a fuss,  
It happens to the best of us.  
But all these colours gleaming bright  
When mixed together turn to white  
And come, like Zoe, shining light!



*Genesis Chapter 1 verse 16. I love the unintended humour here.  
Five words written, almost as an afterthought, to describe the entire vastness of the  
universe. Visualise the scene – the old sages have done the first 15 verses.*

*One says, 'Let's have a break, what about lunch?'*

*General agreement. Halfway to the pub someone stops and says 'We've done  
the sun and moon, but we've forgotten the stars!' 'Don't worry' says the youngest.  
He runs back and there is just room at the bottom of the page for one more line.*

*Quickly he writes in*

## **HE MADE THE STARS ALSO**

Winter is not my favourite of the seasons  
Let me give you a few reasons.  
It's grim, it's dim,  
No sooner does the sun rise than it goes down again,  
Which makes trying to get out of town again, a pain.  
A non-stop headlight queue  
Driving straight at you;  
Not nice, especially upon ice.  
Then there's fog and frost and getting out of bed  
Which in the morning I detest, I dread.  
And pottering, peering through the window at the grey light  
Of dawn, in what passes for daylight.

\* \* \* \*

But there is another winter. On a night  
That's frosty clear with God's whole skyscape burning bright.  
Over our heads the Seven Stars aglow,  
Orion's Belt and all the planets go  
On course, (He made the stars also.)  
And having seen what he had wrought  
An afterthought,  
He threw them sparkling in the air  
And laughed with joy to see them twinkling there  
And give them to us, that we too might see  
A tiny version of eternity.  
Thank God for sun and moon (although,  
You know, He made the stars also).

## HEAVEN and HELL

*Horribly self-explanatory*

### HEAVEN

I'm now on Peter's heavenly roll, I've  
made it through Passport control.  
Slight delay at Pearly gate  
Pete makes you wait to learn your fate,  
But now I'm in, what do I do?  
I simply haven't got a clue.  
Seems life will be a bore to me  
Stretching to eternity  
I know! I'll have some art tuition  
By Michelangelo, Rembrandt, Titian,  
But alas, no Caravaggio,  
Like other baddies, he's below.  
Let's to the bar! All's free up here,  
Holy spirits, wine and beer.  
Alas, I'm posted to the sector  
That serves non-alcoholic nectar.  
Never mind, a thousand years,  
Just as an evening, disappears.  
I'll wake up in a happier zone  
Where I'm awash with Cotes de Rhone.

### HELL

I never made the Pearly Gate,  
I knew I'd left it far too late.  
All my sins were of commission,  
Far too late to seek remission  
So, the dreaded vote is  
'Down you go by Waygood Otis'\*  
Heaven's above, but I'm below.  
I hear it said, 'I told you so'  
While above, they're all celestial,  
I'm stuck down here, subterrestrial.  
I do not know how long I've got,  
But this I know it ain't 'arf hot!

*\*A leading firm of lift manufacturers*

*2010. Wimbledon was on the TV screen. I needed a poem for that evening's 'Poetry Please' evening.*

### **MIDSUMMER MADNESS**

When forced to look at Wimbledon I've often cause to wonder  
Why all the greatest players assume a countenance like thunder,  
And to hear the 'ladies' grunt and groan does not it really weary  
yer?

Like howling wolves on snowy steppes in forests of Siberia.  
Andy Murray looks quite fearsome when his mouth is open wide,  
Same distance top to bottom as it is from side to side.  
Tennis players are under 'pressure' not a word I would employ  
When folk are being paid a lot for a job that they enjoy.  
They are highly skilled, of course of that one can't deny  
But grumpy, sulky, petulant, I often wonder why.  
People don't look sad and gloomy playing golf out on the links  
And whoever lost his temper in a game of tiddlywinks?  
So as the ball goes to and fro, I query all the while  
Why they cannot just cheer up a bit – reward us with a smile.  
There's folk too I would like to phone, invite them out to sup  
But with tennis on the telly I dare not ring them up.  
When asked 'why do you watch it, John, if tennis ain't your wont?'  
My response is at the ready – I simply say 'I don't!'

*A gentle send-up of a familiar Advent hymn.*

## **S4 THE BANBURY BUS**

Come, thou long expected Stagecoach  
Take us into Banbury, please  
Bus passes are at the ready  
(Most of us are OAPs)

Ten sonorous strokes denote the hour  
Our anticipation surges,  
Till from out of Hudson Street  
Behold the new S4 emerges.

On the brow of Deddington Hill  
See that wondrous view appear  
Looking to the glorious westward,  
Green and pleasant Oxfordshire.

So to Adderbury proceeding  
Horn Hill Road, known oh so well  
Down the slope and cross the river  
Traffic chaos by the 'Bell'

Mary at the chapel waiting  
Boards the bus and heeds our hints  
Delves into her copious handbag  
Dishes out her glacier mints.

At the Twyford stop are waiting  
The Adderbury Army's boarding party  
Armed with children, pushchairs,  
trolleys  
Noisy happy, hale and hearty.

Thus we journey on to Sainsburys,  
Horton bus stop, surgery,  
Round the Cross and to the bus stop  
Handy for the KFC.

Always cars blockade the bus stop  
Parked on double yellow lines.  
Self-important people shopping  
Heedless of 'No Waiting' signs.

So, descending to the pavement  
Journey's end for creaking bones  
Forward march across the High Street  
Through the doors of SH Jones.

*A poem for the Crown and Tuns, with respect, sent for Christmas*

### **FRIDAY PILGRIMAGE**

From Featherton, through Chapel Square,  
Twenty minutes I'll be there.  
Leave the market to the North  
Slowly, steady, I plod forth.  
Gently go past Finishing Touch  
I've no need to use them much.  
Wobble along Hudson Street,  
On my poor slow-moving feet.  
Otmoors there for gun and rod,  
Fifteen minutes, on I plod.  
Hair Razers on the right I see:  
Don't trim my eyebrows, Melanie!  
Now down New Street, straight the way  
Past May Fu's Chinese take away.  
And terrace houses, very nice  
Lead me on to Bengal Spice:  
A rather pleasant smell of curry  
Wafts the air, but I must hurry –  
Just three minutes to the sign  
'The Crown and Tuns' and then some wine  
BUT ... It's not to be as I supposed  
I try the door. The pub is CLOSED.  
I stand there, freezing in the cold,  
And then a light! Lo and behold,  
Footsteps sounding through the bar,  
And suddenly the door's ajar.  
Anton, expecting quite a queue,  
Peers out and mutters 'oh, it's you'

*A 'clever' (inevitably American) nutritionist, talking on the  
Today programme, told us if we wanted a long and healthy life we  
should restrict ourselves to only a small glass of wine or half a pint of beer  
daily.*

*I responded with these verses.*

## **THE KNOWALL**

There are some bright researchers who think they're mighty clever  
    'Stick to our old folks diet' they say, and you will live for ever.  
    They offer help to oldies with advice so sane and sage  
    Even though these jumped up idiots are less than half my age.  
They turn up on 'Today' programme with advice ponderous and weighty  
    And presume to give advice to folks like me who're over eighty.  
    And what's this elixir to cheat this death we're meant to fear?  
    Only drink one glass of wine or half a pint of beer.  
    'Christmas is coming' I hear the salesman's cry  
    So dig deep into your pockets though we're scarce into July.  
    With Tesco oven-ready and Sainsbury's Christmas Pud  
And Marks and Sparks fine mince tarts we'll fill ourselves with food.  
    And to wash all this lot down in the season of good cheer  
    We'll have just one small glass of wine a day or half a pint of beer.  
    There is perhaps a way to dodge around these frightful strictures  
    Depicting views of arid thirst and other ghastly pictures.  
    There's somewhere in the village that offers rescue from the thirst  
    And I'm delighted that it's there for bestest or for worst.  
The Ten Commandments do not say what we should eat or drink,  
    Turn a blind eye to the 'keep the Sabbath holy' don't you think?  
    St Peter and St Paul were chaps who didn't mind a jar  
And Hugh and Dan\* follow after them, for in the church the bar  
    Dispenses tea and coffee, true, but wine to all and sundry  
    On that fantastic joyful day that we call Easter Sunday.  
    And our dear Lord who's rising's celebrated  
    Would surely not wish to see us all inebriated.  
    But I think there'd be a smile on the countenance divine  
    If we had one extra jug of ale or another glass of wine.

\* *Deddington clergy*

## LIMERICKS

An ice cream salesman called  
    Miliband  
Sold ices hygienically chilly-vanned  
    Till one fell from a basin  
    Outside Fortnum and Mason  
Now Miliband's from Piccadilly  
    banned.

The Deddington vicar called Hugh,  
At the wicket, said 'What shall I do?  
    I'm making runs, which is fun,  
    But it's twenty past one  
And I've a wedding at quarter to two'

A Deddington lady called Glad  
    (or Gladys) she really was bad  
    With a gin and martini  
    She seduced John Cheney  
Which just goes to show that she's  
    mad.

A Deddington lady called Mabel  
Got drunk and fell under the table  
    So being unable  
    To finish this fable  
She left the last line to Vince Cable.

*I came to Deddington, to live in Grove Court, on the eighth of  
the eighth, nineteen hundred and eighty eight.*

*Things, and names, have changed, but I've left the verses as they were written.*

## **DEDDINGTON – EARLY IMPRESSIONS**

Antique shops in Deddington are all around  
In this small place, they are thick on the ground  
And there's other relics, you really should see 'em  
And you will, if we're able to have our museum.

If you look for a platform to express your views  
Just seek no further than the Deddington News  
It's packed full of tidings, though no girls on Page 3  
It's better than the Sun, and moreover, it's free.

The church bells ring forth on each bright Sunday morn  
And a fair congregation to worship is drawn.  
At the end of the service, it receives  
A handshake, or a kiss, from the Reverend Ken Reeves.

In the shops in the square there's provisions to eat  
Acorn for your groceries, Mr. Goff for your meat,  
For pot plants or peace offerings we have Gillyflowers  
The Post Office, like Arkwrights, is open all hours.

In public houses Deddington does us fine.  
I'm glad, they're a particular interest of mine.  
They're so close together it's really convenient,  
You can visit them all in the course of an evening.

Turn left from Grove Court and it's not very far,  
I'm soon in the Holcombe Hotel's Cottage Bar.  
Across at the lights to the King's Arms I go,  
Then to the Red Lion's open fire all aglow.

Then to the Unicorn, always good fun  
And a quick final pint at the old Crown and Tuns.  
I've been to all five – and though people may talk  
It's really for exercise, I've just been for a walk.



*An entry for a poetry contest on the set theme of  
'Journey'*

## **JOURNEY**

A lengthy journey for a snail,  
The route will take me quite a time.  
I cannot help but leave a trail  
Of rather conspicuous slime.

To move into my new abode,  
(A green voluptuous cabbage patch)  
I have to cross the Oxford Road  
Where many others meet their match.

I'm safely on the other side,  
I feel content and take my rest,  
For I am fully satisfied,  
I'll find a nice damp mossy nest.

But I sense danger and react;  
Still visible to all at large,  
Into my shell do I retract,  
A far from perfect camouflage.

Alas, alack, my eyes are dim,  
The sharp-eyed thrush has spotted me.  
My presence all too plain to him  
Who's lurking in the walnut tree.

A shadow dark looms overhead,  
A beak thrust causing stabbing pain.  
I know no more, for I am dead.  
I never made it up the lane.

\* \* \* \*

My 'Daily Snail' obituary  
Was brief – there was not much to tell,  
An epitaph they wrote for me:  
'He wished he'd had a thicker shell'

*When choirmaster at Bodicote Church, I wrote this, my one and only hymn, for our Thanksgiving service on the occasion of Her Majesty the Queen's Silver Jubilee, 1977*

## **BODICOTE JUBILEE HYMN**

God bless our Queen; for duty loyally done  
Since that first calling to her royal throne.  
May Thy strong hand be ever there to bless  
Our Queen with peace and joy and happiness.

‘God save the Queen’. So oft without a care  
We sing our easy anthem, unaware  
Of all it means, of all we ask of Thee  
God save the Queen on this her Jubilee.

So we give thanks, with heart and soul and voice  
Together, we in full accord rejoice.  
We give Thee thanks; with worship and with praise,  
A nation's thanks, to Thee, O God, we raise.

*Repairs to the chimney and fireplace at the Crown and Tuns  
revealed a gap behind the fireplace, into which was inserted a variety  
of items representative of life in Deddington in 2010, including this poem.  
Mr Vaughan and Mr Clarke are respected long-term members of the  
Deddington community.*

### **TIME CAPSULE 2010**

You've found our capsule, open it with care  
And treat with reverence all that you find there  
For therein you will find in confined space  
A humble record of this little place.  
So, 'read, mark and learn and then you'll know  
How we lived and laughed and loved those years ago.

Anton and Kathy, here held royal sway  
The former mighty pies did he purvey  
The latter, at the bar attending  
Encouraging the clients to keep spending.  
And pretty girls, as fast as they were able  
Brought food, all piping hot, unto the table.

Goodly John Vaughan was here, so we hear tell  
Some valuable antiquities he'd sell.  
Residing in the nearly next door house  
He liked a drop of whisky, 'Famous Grouse'  
An honest dealer aye he sought to be;  
A worthy man of high integrity.

And Bryan ('Nipper') Clarke of football fame  
To this fine inn to drink he oft times came  
And over copious pints of varied ales  
Of battles long ago he'd tell his tales  
Of famous vict'ries won on Castle Ground  
(Of odd defeats we never heard a sound).

### *Epilogue*

Who is it then, who's found this capsule hidden?  
That months, years, generations, lay unbidden.  
Has he, with history's archives, recalled then  
Deddington, in two thousand years and ten?  
Please view, with some respect, I thee implore  
The gentle lives of those who went before:  
For just like us, who've fled this earthly scene  
You will be dead, as dead I long have been.

## PARTY THOUGHTS

Christmas is coming, the goose is getting fat  
To provide Fortnums with foie gras and jolly things like that.  
A slab of pate perched upon a rather soggy biscuit  
With half an olive stuck on top – I wonder, should I risk it?

Suppose the olive gets detached and falls upon the ground,  
I'll tread it in the carpet while no-one's looking round.  
The canape is very good, I really mustn't mock it,  
I've a good half dozen cocktail sticks embedded in my pocket.  
Smoked salmon on brown bread squares is my especial favourite  
I chase the platter through the crowd, the first, and last, to savour it.

Ah! Here's the wine man coming round,  
I know what he is thinking,  
'John's checking on the bottle levels to decide which one he's  
drinking'  
He's absolutely right, of course, 'I think I'll change to red'  
(Five red bottles on the sideboard and the white is nearly dead).

Everybody's talking, what a jolly jamboree!  
But after eating garlic sausage no one wants to talk to me.  
And now it's hat and coat time as we head into the rain;  
If my hostess sees this poem, I won't be asked again.

*The Play Reading Group in the village every so often, as a change  
from plays, used to have a poetry afternoon, with a set subject.  
On this occasion, we had to write a poem about love*

## ONCE

Love and marriage we were asked to write about  
But of both I have not much to shout about.  
I was in love once, very briefly  
Because she was beautiful, chiefly.

We met at a restaurant, she at the next table:  
I was struggling but was unable  
To get the blasted plastic butter pot lid off.  
'May I help?' said a voice  
And under her smooth delicate fingers it slid off.

'Thank you so much' I said and turned to stare  
Into deep blue eyes, an immaculate complexion  
And brilliant golden hair.

We were both on our own, so I invited  
Her to join me at my table – she'd be delighted.  
She was funny, friendly, sensational,  
We got on well, even though I am hopeless at matters  
social and conversational.

She was off to New York next day.  
She said, 'I must be on my way.  
Really nice to have met you, John',  
And with the lightest of kisses she was gone.

*Another poem written for one of the  
Play Reading Group's poetry afternoons*

## **DEDDINGTON DOGGEREL**

In Deddington I have my dwelling,  
It's a nice little flat in Grove Court.  
Though it was expensive and hardly extensive,  
It's the best thing that I ever bought.

The flat is definitely diminutive,  
But I'm as snug as a bug in a rug.  
I've room to manoeuvre when I use the Hoover  
I can clean the whole place from one plug.

It's good to look down on a scrap yard  
It's, well, different and rather good fun.  
I'm superior to most, there's not many can boast  
They live next door to Steptoe & Son.

They've moved all the scrap from the scrap yard,  
Well, not really all, nearly all.  
There's less than when I came, for then I could claim  
Piles of scrap were fifteen feet tall.

There's still a table, a vice and an iron,  
A clutch housing from an Austin Montego,  
Some strong metal poles, a bucket punctured with holes  
But nothing to puncture my ego.

I've fixed up a novel birds' restaurant,  
A coat-hanger laden with food.  
It's hooked to the guttering, with much pecking and  
fluttering  
The customers really get rude.

It gives me pure delight to observe them  
As all round the fixture they fly.  
Coat-hangers are tops for high altitude ops  
But this one's just one storey high.

Iron Down, Great Tew woods in the distance  
From my window's a wonderful view.  
A tree that was dead has now lost its head  
So I can see right across to Duns Tew.

There are horses I see in the paddock,  
Some are fit, some are fat, some are craggy  
And the ponies one can tell, well, they're drawings by  
Thelwell  
And their coats are decidedly shaggy.

The westerly winds are quite violent  
The roof sounds 'though it's likely to crack,  
It's shifting, it's lifting, I'll be off down to Clifton  
Tomorrow, to bring the thing back.

But it's pleasant to live here in Deddington,  
Though the church is bereft of its steeple,  
With its pubs, church and shops, it's top of the pops  
And the neighbours are wonderful people.

## READY

She sits there, with a smug smile on her face  
All's ready for Christmas: everything in its place.  
Cards signed, addressed, stamped, ready to post,  
Overseas card gone, of course, sooner than most.

Self-basting turkey, ready to go  
In the oven, like Shadrach, Meshak, Abednego.  
Oven-ready roast potatoes, ready-made bread sauce,  
Ready sprouts, deep frozen, from Waitrose, of course.  
Puddings all ready, in a nice floral basin  
Bought on the internet from Fortnum and Mason.  
Tree all electric, colours winking, it's here  
From Yarnton Garden Centre, tho' made in Korea.

At this point in the poem, I thought I'd be clever,  
Have a Christmas Day power cut. And then I  
thought, 'never'  
That's not playing the game. I'd better go steady.  
She's taken the trouble to have everything ready.  
So to all who are ready for Christmas I say  
May your readiness pay off this Christmas Day.

\* \* \* \*

Some of us, though, I expect the majority  
Are content to rejoice in disorganised jollity.  
Eat, drink and be merry's our scurrilous motto  
Maud's at the sherry and Uncle Fred's blotto.  
Friends at the door, neath the mistletoe kissing  
But something's wrong, the corkscrew is missing!  
But we can rejoice, we've nothing to fear  
All's well, we bought screw-top bottles this year.



*A send-up of the 'Vicar of Bray', perhaps  
appropriate for Diamond Jubilee year*

## **FIVE QUEENS**

Queen Boadicea was the one to fear  
She made the enemy quiver  
With her chariots of fire she did damage dire  
Her vengeance to deliver.  
Her daring raids and whirling blades  
Caused her enemies exasperation  
With her forces large she forward charged  
It was death or amputation.

*Chorus.*

But this is law I will maintain  
Until I'm no more seen, sir  
The Vicar of Bray with a loud hooray  
Will greet each succeeding queen, sir.

Elizabeth Tudor, tho' some people rued her,  
As a queen got harder and harder.  
Sir Francis Drake was a bit of a rake  
But he dealt with the Spanish armada.  
She got quite pally with Sir Walter Raleigh  
A warrior-poet of fame, sir  
But she wanted him dead, removed his head  
He thought that a bit of a shame, sir.

When sturdy Anne became our Queen  
The Church of England's glory  
Another face of things was seen  
And I became a Tory.  
Then Methodists in droves arose  
Led by dear old Charley Wesley  
He spiritual songs and hymns composed  
An eighteenth century Elvis Presley.

Victoria's reign was rich and great  
Our empire vast and mighty  
Our soldiers won state after state  
The sun shone on them brightly.  
The Church of England had become  
A most attractive living  
And I'd be pleased to lead my flock  
In service of thanksgiving.

When our Elizabeth was crowned  
Life went on and no-one changed it  
But the old prayer book they then forsook  
And know-alls rearranged it.  
When lady clergy first appeared  
I thought it was a pity  
But now I find I've changed my mind  
For some are rather pretty.

*A friend of a friend was given a token for a flying lesson from Kidlington  
for her birthday. I was asked to produce a poem to go with the gift. It got  
a bit out of hand.*

## **COME FLY WITH ME**

### **Part 1**

Helen (never under-rate her)  
Aspires to be an aviator.  
So some kindly folk laid on  
A birthday flight from Kidlington.  
How to take off, how to land, look  
In that bland instruction handbook.  
When the day came, warm and bright  
For Helen's tutored maiden flight,  
She turned up at the aerodrome  
To find that she was all alone.  
There on the runway she detected  
A plane much larger than expected.  
It was in fact a jumbo jet  
Boeing's latest, largest yet.  
But though it was against the rule  
Filled with aviation fuel,  
Helen said 'That's mine, I'll try it,  
No-one to show me how to fly it'  
She clambered in, without a care  
For all the controls lined up there  
Everything so smart and neat  
She sat in the co-pilot's seat.  
Gingerly she pressed a knob  
Four engines coughed, began to throb  
The plane moved forward, gathered pace  
Taking all the runway space.  
She pressed the auto-pilot switch  
And, just before the boundary ditch  
The plane swooped upward to the dome  
Of heaven, its elemental home.  
That's the end of part the first  
I'll take a pause to quench my thirst.

### **Part 2**

That's better – now the muse has beckoned,  
I can embark on part the second.  
Part 2 opens in the air  
Helen's happy floating there.  
Last seen she was having fun  
Taking off from Kidlington.  
Where is she? We don't know yet,  
In her massive jumbo jet.  
It's been a while, but news at last  
Is streaming down the radio mast,  
Now here's Helen, blonde and pretty  
Calls from Welwyn Garden City.  
She's becoming rather bold  
As the Orient doth unfold  
Paddy fields, Great Wall of China  
Viewed from above, there's nothing finer.

One of our better sports girl players  
Drones on high o'er Himalayas  
She wants a crafty look at Burma  
Before it's back to terra firma.  
High above St Peter's, Rome,  
She radios 'I'm coming home.  
I know the runway where I'll land,  
So please stand by to lend a hand.  
Heathrow's Runway Number Three  
That's the one that best suits me'  
And now alarm bells start to ring:  
They haven't built the bloody thing!  
  
But Helen's flight they did divert  
She landed safely, quite unhurt.

### *An Appreciation*

I cannot let this little volume see the light of day without reference  
to my good friend Wendy Burrows.

She it was who suggested the idea in the first place, and by her  
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She did all the typing, deciphering my writing and alterations  
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I am deeply grateful to her.

J.C.

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