

THE
HECKMONDWICKE
SAGA



For nigh on sixty years these half forgotten
tales of early Dolphin Camps lay undisturbed
in an old biscuit tin in a Northumberland
attic. Then, unfortunately, someone found it.

THE HECKMONDWICKE SAGA

or

The Life and Times of Sam Heckmondwicke

Second Edition: November 1990

Foreward

Jubilee Cottage,
Scarsdale Road,
Wath.

I first met old Sam Heckmondwicke at the Todmorden Palais in April 1952, when he were playing bass triangle with Reginald "Fingers" Ramsden and the Grewelthorpe Envoys Jazz Combo, (formerly The Hot Club of Kirby Overblow). It were the occasion of The Heptonstall Coal Company's annual staff dance and I were there to receive an engraved bakelite trophy as "Pitman Of The Year", in recognition of the fact that I had hewn more coal than any other of the Company's employees during the fiscal year 1951-52. I were proud to receive the trophy, which, in turn, had been won by my father and my grandfather, in years gone by. I came from a family of pitmen (tho' my grandfather had later gone on to invent the shorthand typist).

After the presentation ceremony, and over a glass of vitaminised tonic wine (customary tippie at Company "do's"), I had occasion to enter into conversation with Sam, seeing as how I were a keen amateur triangle player myself and Sam's triangle solo in "Lullaby Of Broadway" had gone down a storm, during the Ladies Excuse Me. Sam began telling me tales of how it used to be "in my day": his interminable stories of half-forgotten days at Dolphin Camps of yesterday never ceased to induce me into a certain state of ennui and I hope that as he's now written them down, he'll stop telling them. One can but hope.

Derek Catchpole, R.N.*

Sam Heckmondwicke :The Early Years

It were a cold, wet, Saturday afternoon in late autumn and Greasborough Memorial Hospital were uncommonly busy. Greasborough Town had lost again (five-nil, and to Barnstoneworth United, at that!) and when the referee had sent off Greasborough's centre-forward, for the third time in the match, well, the Slattocks End went right mad. It were an awesome sight, all three hundred Town supporters demanding their money back at the one turnstile and it were to no-one's surprise that turnstile collapsed and 64 "cuts and bruises", twelve "sprains" and two "broken limbs" were now sitting in Casualty Department. Even the man from the Greasborough Argus were there, excitedly interviewing one of the "cuts and bruises". "And what happened then?" "Oh, well, I'd reached turnstile window and then I were just pushed straight past and there I were, out in t'road". "Would that be Bacup Street or Bath-house Road?". "It were Bath-house Road, just opposite Heckmondwicks, the grocer's". "Oh, them that sells that grand Scattermole's Rhubarb and Dripping Preserve?" "Aye, that's the shop: do you like it as well? What a coincidence, we have some every second Sunday, when Cousin Mabel from Thorngumbald comes for high tea". "Aye, grand it is, particuarly on a bit of parkin. I wonder if they saw incident from shop, I'll catch next tram up to Bath-house Road".

Within the hour, man from Argus were interviewing sole proprietor of J.J.Heckmondwicke, Grocer and General Provisions Merchant. Jedidiah Heckmondwicke (for it was he) were recounting tale of how he were watching game from the room over the shop and how he'd seen, at first hand, the pandemonium that had ocured from referee's eventful decision. He told of how he and his good lady wife, Molly, had rushed to aid the wounded and of how they had used four dozen bread poultices within fifteen minutes. Man from Argus were supplied with particulars and Monday's edition were resplendant with the front page story "Sole Proprietor of Town Grocery and General Provisions Emporium Comes To The Aid of The Slattocks End", and underneath were a heart-warming account of the assistance so nobly given by Mr. and Mrs. Heckmondwicke, complete in every detail and including a mention of Scattermole's Rhubarb and Dripping Preserve.

Well, after that, whole neighbourhood were intrigued by mention of this unusual delicacy and soon people began to appreciate the subtle and delicate flavour and sales trebled within a fortnight. Within the month, sales had trebled again and people were coming from as far afield as Linthwaite and Skelmanthorpe to purchase a jar. It wasn't long before Jedidiah were appointed Main Agent for whole of Greasborough and District and a Scattermole's director came all the way from Rochdale to pass on the factory's grateful thanks for such high and sustained sales. By the end of the year, Jedidiah were doing so well that he opened another branch in Greasborough's premier shopping thoroughfare, Mafeking Street. It were a palatial establishment, latterly a thermal underwear shop but now furnished with groceries and general provisions for every taste, with a special window display featuring everyone of Scattermole's products, with pride of place being given to the Rhubarb and Dripping Preserve.

Jedidiah and Molly were right successful and soon had a staff of a dozen people and sales just went up and up. They moved from Bath-house Road to a nice town villa, one of them new houses, beyond the Municipal Slipper Baths and just by the park. By and by they were blessed with a baby boy, whom they called Samuel, after Sammy Grindlay, outside left for Greasborough Town, who'd scored equalising goal against Sprotborough Spartans, in semi-final of Challenge Trophy, (in eighty-ninth minute: game went into extra time but Town lost 1-2 in the end), the very day that young lad were born.

Samuel grew up in a life of comparative luxury in the house by the park. Not for him the crust of dry bread and slice of stale cheese for his lunch, like others at Bacup Street Elementary School; no, he had Hovis butties, liberally spread with Scattermole's Rhubarb and Dripping Preserve. How he hated the stuff! But he dare not mention it to his mother and father, seeing as how family fortunes were founded on Scattermole's sickly substance. How he envied the meagre rations of his classmate, Fred Grimethorpe. Fred were not so lucky a lad as young Sam: he lived with his mother and father and four sisters in a little old house in Colliery Row, near the Gas Works, (to be absolutely truthful, it were more like a corrugated tin shed but it were a house to the Grimethorpes!). How Fred used to look forward to going to tea with the Heckmondwickses: a real house, with glass in the windows, carpets on floor, real gas mantles and all the Rhubarb and Dripping Preserve a growing lad could eat, (and Fred were right partial to the stuff).

One Sunday afternoon in early spring, the Heckmondwickses were taking high tea in the front parlour and were eagerly trying a new Scattermole's product, Kipper and Bilberry Spread, which they ate with small slices of toast. Mrs. Heckmondwicke noticed that Sam were having some trouble in forcing his down, "now then, Samuel, you must eat all your tea, or you'll not be allowed out to play". Samuel complained but mother were adamant, "I know it's an unusual flavour but it's all goodness, just look at the list of contents: bilberries from Blubberhouses Moor, kippers from Lowestoft...". "Lowestoft?" said the lad, "where's that?". Jedidiah looked up, "do they teach you nowt at that school? why, it's in East Anglia". "Is that beyond Glossop?" "Aye, lad, a good way beyond, too and in t'other direction. You know, Molly, this young lad doesn't know his own country". "Well, he's not travelled like you have, Jed; and we've not had a holiday for years, not since that week at our sister Enid's in Mytholmroyd. What with building up the business, we've just not had the time. What Samuel needs is a holiday, seeing some of his own country".

Jedidiah had to agree and it were decided that that very summer, the Heckmondwickses would embark upon an holiday designed to broaden young Samuel's geographical horizons. The holiday would be in two parts, firstly, Mrs. Heckmondwicke would take Samuel to her other sister's, in Kirby Grindlaythe, for a week, whilst Jedidiah went to Brighouse, for the annual conference of the Northern Federation of Retail Provision Purveyors, where, in the event, he were elected Greasborough and District Official Representative for the succeeding year. Second part of the holiday involved the whole family, who would take a six day charabanc tour of East Anglia, including a day and

overnight stop in Lowestoft, town that had started whole idea off and home of one of the now legendary ingredients of one of Scattermole's celebrated products.

Well, summer came and summer went, and holidays were much enjoyed and young Samuel were particularly taken with tour of East Anglia, where he were especially delighted to find that none of the guest houses where they spent overnight stops, had any of Scattermole's products at all. Samuel were all for going again, the next year, and were therefore most disappointed to find, due to Jedidiah's election as President of the Northern Federation of Retail Provision Purveyors and his required attendance at important meetings throughout the month of August, that a family holiday were out of the question.

Not even the promise of another week with Mrs. Heckmondwicke's sister in Kirby Grindlaythe, where they had that marvellous confectioner's that sold sugar whippets, could cheer up young Samuel, who became most disconsolate whenever the subject of holidays were mentioned.

It were Mrs. Heckmondwicke who made a most important discovery, on the Tuesday before Greasborough Town were due to play Raistrick Rovers in Challenge Trophy. She were unwrapping three pieces of halibut, which she'd bought for family's tea and were casually reading sheet of newspaper which had served as wrapping. It were some southern paper...Telegraph, or the like, and it had an interesting article on a camp for schoolboys, to be set up in the summer holidays. Molly found it right interesting and saved the newspaper, carefully removing loose halibut scales and a small, glutinous piece of entrail that had become affixed to the large crossword. That night Jedidiah and Samuel eagerly read the article and noted as how the camp were to be not far from Lowestoft, where they had holidayed the year before.

Within what seemed like a moment but was, in fact, four weeks, it were all fixed up for Samuel to spend a fortnight at West Runton, in Norfolk, at a canvas establishment by name of Dolphin Camp. His pal, Frederick Grimethorpe, were to accompany him, seeing as how it were a long way to go on one's own and happen two lads were best of friends. Jedidiah Heckmondwicke magnanimously paid camp fees, and travelling fees, for both lads, as Mr. Grimethorpe were temporarily unemployed, owing to a recession in blood albumen boiling business, where he were customarily employed as a skilled gut-scraper.

Day of departure came and two young lads were sat in third class compartment of one of the Great Northern Railway Company's clerestory coaches ready to depart from Greasborough Central. Mr. & Mrs. Heckmondwicke and Mr. & Mrs. Grimethorpe were stood on platform issuing usual last minute instructions and advice. "Now, you've got tickets, haven't you?" "Don't forget, you must change in London...to Liverpool Street Station". "Have you got your packed luncheon readily available?" "Don't forget to put on a clean singlet every day". "Have you got 'Boys Book of Fireside Yarns' to read?" "Aye, father, and I've got 'Amateur Ferret Racer', as well". Whistle went and great clouds of steam enveloped both sets of parents on platform, as train slowly heaved its way out of station: they were on their way, the 8:37 to Spofforth, Ravensthorpe, Linthwaite, Snaith and...London!

Two lads were right excited and couldn't settle down to porusing reading matter and with noses pressed against the window, they stared out as the rich tapestry of industrial heritage unfolded before their very eyes. Past slagheaps, mines, mills and canals, past factories, warehouses, chimneys, great smelters spitting sparks, past rows and rows of terraced houses, roof slates glistening in the early morning drizzle, sped the train and on the distant horizon lay the somnulent hulk of the Pennines, reaching up to touch the leaden skies. Gradually the conglomeration gave way to fields: brown and damp at first, then green and luxuriant. The drizzle faded away and the train began to pass burns and becks with clear, sparkling water, rushing beneath the railway bridges. Slowly the sun slipped from behind the clouds as the train snaked its way southwards through the Derbyshire hills.*

Eventually, lads sat back in their seats and opened packed lunches: straightway they swopped, Fred loved Scattermole's Rhubarb and Dripping Preserve and eagerly took Sam's proffered sandwiches, whilst Sam were overjoyed to receive Fred's, which were great, uneven hunks of Milk Pan, liberally spread with 'Explorer' Brand Bloater Paste. Silently two lads consumed the repast, as they became engrossed in epic tale of Greasborough Town's run in Challenge Trophy, year that Samuel had been born and contained in a slim volume of 'Greasborough Town: The Golden Years', lent to them, for the journey, by Jedidiah.

By early afternoon, they were in London and two chums successfully negotiated intricacies of the Circle Line and found themselves at Liverpool Street Station, where they joined Main Party ready to set off for that very first Dolphin Camp, all those years ago.....

* This paragraph is on loan from Mills & Boon.

I Remember

Let us eavesdrop on two old campers, who, as if by chance, meet one day in the street:

FG: Is it ? Is it ? No.

SH: It must be.....no.

FG: I know face though, it must be old..um..no.

SH: Eee, now I know face, it be old Fred Grimethorpe.

FG: Aye, it is, and you must be old Sam, Sam Heckmondwicke.

SH: Eee, lad, it must be years since I last saw thee: it must have been at that camp at West Runton.

FG: Aye, that'd be it; they were grand days them, do you remember old times, Sam ?

SH: Aye, lad, that I do; we were only campers from North...

FG: Aye

SH: ...and you were in that young Gilbert's tent.

FG: By, that's going back a bit.

SH: Aye.

FG: I hear he's Commy now. I wonder if camp life's just the same ?

SH: Aye. It were a hard life in our day, afore the war...real camping it was, all the time.

FG: That it was.

SH: I remember what it were like; hardest bit were the Sunday, traditional Sunday, back in 1919, not that it's changed since: we had to get up at 7 o'clock, have tent inspection outside, breakfast on field, game of crocker on beach, lunch on top of Bump, tea at Roman Camp, coffco on beach, miles we'd walk, and then, then, come back and sleep eight of us to a tent!

FG: Them were days. I remember year before: in my tent we'd be up at half past six, we'd brush T.O.'s shoes, comb his hair, put his teeth in to soak, do washing up all day long, wi' just a break for tea, go to bed at 9 o'clock and sleep, wi' out paliasses, wi'out paliasses, mind you, ten of us to a tent!

SH: That were easy life compared to my tent the year before that: we'd be up at five o'clock, run round field twice before breakfast, have no lunch and no tea, except a couple of dry biscuits and a spoonful of cold Soapy, we'd wash up and scrub tables all day long, and go to bed at ten o'clock, having paid ten bob a day for old newspapers to sleep on...twelve of us to a tent!

FG: Tent! You were lucky to have a tent: we had to sleep under an awning next to the gubbins bin.

SH: Well, when I say 'tent', it were just a hole in the ground, covered with an old tarpaulin, but it were a tent to us!

FG: Sheer luxury! I remember my second camp: we'd be up at 3 in t' morning, make all officers breakfast in bed, run up Bump ten times, grow our own vegetables, milk a herd of cows, get nowt to eat but a crust of dry bread for lunch, tea and coffco, and then pay £5 a day for privilege of sleeping twenty of us in Wet Sump!

SH: Oooo..we used to dream of sleeping in Wet Sump! We used to have

to get up at one o'clock in t' morning, make breakfast for whole of West Runton, run to Cromer and back twenty times, carrying T.O., eat a handful of dry gravel once a week, and be in bed at midnight, having paid a hundred pounds a day to sleep fifty of us in a plate of cold porridge!

FG: Well, we had it tough! We'd get up two hours before we went to bed, we'd lick camp field clean wi' tongue, eat broken razor-blades once a month, spend all day holding cliffs up, wi' bare hands (bare hands, mark you), get back late at night, when Adj. would thrash us to sleep wi' his belt (if we were lucky!)... and then sleep 100 of us in old paper bag, five miles out to sea!!

SH: And if you try and tell that to the campers of today, they won't believe you!

FG: They won't!

I Wanted To Be Q

"Aye, I remember this place, and some of those faces: aye, I were here last year (and the year before), telling you some tales of old days at Camp. You'll remember me, old Sam, Sam Heckmondwicke, I were at Camp in 1919, I were. Have you seen me old mate, Fred Grimethorpe? No? well, he must be on his way. Eee, grand old chum is Fred, met him years ago, when we were campers, not that he were just a camper tho'.. he went on to great things, to be a Quartermaster. Oooh, I wanted to be a Quartermaster, ee, what a job that were, breakfast in bed, up at nine o'clock, sunbathe all day, give a few orders to the stewards now and then and terrorise the cooks..ee, that were the job..suppose it's still the same?

Mind you, in them days, not just anyone could be Q., oh dear me, no: why, they used to have exams., aye, exams! And that's why I never became Q., I didn't have the Latin, didn't have sufficient Latin to get through the rigorous Quartermaster exams. They were very rigorous, the Quartermaster exams., they were noted for their rigour: lads would come staggering out of their examinations, clutching their poor heads and moaning, "what a rigorous exam.!".

Fred Grimethorpe had the Latin tho' and became a Q. I decided on next best thing and so I became a steward, had to pass an exam., too: but the Stewarding exams. were not so rigorous as the Quartermaster exams. In fact, they only asked the one question, they said, "who are you?". And I got 75% in that. So I was allowed to become a steward.

Only trouble with being a steward is that conversation tends to be a bit on the boring side. If you want to hear a boring conversation, just listen to the stewards washing up. Stuff like, "hello", "I've just found a dirty plate", "have you really? ooh, no doubt about it, this is a dirty plate alright, jolly good, the very thing we're looking for, we'll put it in bowl with the others". And, "I've found another plate and this one's dirty as well", "you're right there, that's a dirty plate alright, why, it's so grubby even the clean bits are dirty", "why not wash it up?", "why not, indeed?". Eee, it were boring (just the same nowadays, I expect), so one day I thought I'd introduce a little intellectual substance into the conversation round the washing up bowl. I said to my fellow steward, "have you heard of William Shakespeare?" and he said "William Shakespeare? no, he must be a steward at Dolphin I".

So, after that, I decided I'd like to be an officer, but I see young whippersnapper of an editor's come back, I'd best be off. If I can find old Fred tomorrow, he and me might tell you about being an officer in old days. Goodbye."

Frederick Grimethorpe's Mishap

Imagine now, a cold January evening...a lone figure trudges across the snowy wastes of London's Wandsworth Common, towards Trinity Road. Slowly, he makes his way across the desolate landscape until he reaches Burntwood Lane, he shuffles along past Collarmore Avenue until he finds Marham Gardens: he reaches No. 7 and starts the long walk up the drive to the big house hidden in the trees. Minutes pass and eventually he is in front of the mansion. He looks up at the huge Georgian hall, steps up to the front door and takes the magnificent, Dolphin-shaped, brass door knocker in his hand...knock, knock...he taps, thinking of a thousand mediocre T.& T.P.T. jokes. The door opens and there stands the butler in the imposing entrance hall. The butler looks down at the weary traveller, whose threadbare overcoat is lightly covered with snowflakes. The traveller's grimy, unshaven face, with bloodshot eyes, looks up at the butler. "Ah, Mr. Higgins", says the butler, "do come in".

Adj. (for it is he) eagerly steps inside and stands in the warm hall, grateful to be out of the icy night air, whilst the butler disappears to announce the visitor. The drawing room doors open and a figure appears. The butler speaks: "Mr. Higgins to see you, Commy". "Why, if it isn't Adj? You do look cold, have you walked all the way from West Runton? Oh, do come in for a minute, you must be exhausted". "Oh, thank you sir", says Adj., "how very kind of you to see me".

Commy ushers Adj. into the drawing room and indicates an armchair by the blazing fire, "I'll sit there, Adj., you sit on the floor over there, by the window". "Thank you sir, very kind...I'm sorry to trouble you at home, sir, but I've received a letter which I think you ought to read". Adj. takes a letter from his overcoat pocket and passes it to Commy. Commy opens it and begins to read:

'Dear Dolphin II,

I am writing to you as the matron of the Northern Branch of the Home for Retired Runton Gentlefolk, which, as you know, provides accommodation for campers, officers and others of bygone years. Here, in our spacious premises at 13b, Acacia Avenue, in Hebden Bridge, we have many former Dolphin II campers and officers and once a year we manage to send a few of them on holiday, for a day or two. Commy Pratt, the Senior Commandant of West Runton Camps, suggested that you could take two of our residents and he kindly sent a cheque for two railway tickets. I'm delighted to inform you that, at Mr. Pratt's suggestion, you can look forward to a return visit of two of our oldest residents, Samuel Heckmondwicke and Frederick Grimethorpe...'

Commy can read no more; he stares through the french windows, at the bleak, wintry landscape painted on the garage wall, then, ashen-faced, he turns towards Adj., "Heckmondwicke and Grimethorpe, again! How can Commy Pratt do this to us? We've handed over the profits from camp every year, haven't we? We've given him a year's supply of Tizer, we've done what's expected? Adj., remember Heckmondwicke and Grimethorpe last year...the sixty year old jokes? Oh, it's too terrible for words". A faint glimmer of hope appears in Commy's eyes, "I know, we'll have Dolphin II in some strange, remote place they'll never find us".

"Northampton ?", suggests Adj., "Streatham, East Grinstead ? ". Gloom descends again. "It won't work, those terrible two will turn up wherever we go, but they won't find me afraid...", and with that, Commy quietly slips to the carpet, in a dead faint.

Adj. looks aghast at the prostrate form of the Commandant and rings for the butler. "Ah, Brownless, my good man, would you, er, revive the Commandant, so that he can read the last bit of the letter". Brownless, the butler, smartly produces a small bottle of Soapy (1974) from his pocket and wafts it under Commy's nose. Commy slowly comes to and Adj. shows him the letter again. "Look, Commy, their arrival date". Commy looks at the date: "August 17th, why, that's TODAY!!"

(Sam Heckmondwicke slowly wanders on)

"Aye, here we are, then: Heckmondwicke's the name, Samuel Nathaniel Heckmondwicke...folk just call me Sam.

Some of you might remember Fred Grimethorpe, an old pal of mine, he should be here today with me but he had a mishap. Reminds me of another mishap he had, all them years ago, at the very first Dolphin Camp, 1919, on this very field; him and me were campers then.

Now, I've got a poem for you here about Fred's mishap. Some of you will have heard a recitation called 'Lion and Albert', a right good monologue, 'course nothing like that's entirely original, just listen to this poem and see what you think. Right, here we go...and by the way, Fred will be along to-morrow."

Frederick Grimethorpe's Mishap

There's a famous seaside place called West Runton,
That's noted for fresh air and fun,
And Mr. and Mrs. Grimethorpe went there,
Took along, young Frederick, their son.

There were a camp on cliff top, by the sea,
That went by the name of Dolphin;
It were for boys like young Fred to stay at,
And for two weeks, it were only four pound, all in.

The Grimethorpes wanted peace and quiet,
So left their son at the camp,
And said they'd return in a fortnight,
And hoped the weather wouldn't be damp.

Young Frederick was put in a tent with four others,
In the charge of an handsome young 'O',
Whose name was Septimus Bradley,
(Ancestor of one you all know).

There were wide games and crocker,
Rugger and football, bathing at every tide,
Campers were right happy young lads;
And if it rained, entertainments inside.

Now, it were second week, that it happened:
The incident that shook Dolphin II,
Young Frederick Grimethorpe's mishap,
(Are you wondering if this is all true ?)

One day when Bradley lay having a rest,
Having won tug-of-war by himself,
Young Frederick just happened to be passing by,
And stopped, concerned for Officer's health.

Now, Fred had got used to a lively T.O.,
One who was ferocious and wild,
And to see Bradley lying so peaceful,
Why, it didn't seem right to the child.

So he leaned over the somnulent hulk,
To see if his breathing was right;
But suddenly Bradley sat up with a start,
And knocked young Fred out of sight.

One blow of his hand had seen the lad off,
Frederick flew a good ninety yards,
Over the cookhouse, in a parabolic arc,
Disturbing the stewards playing cards.

Stewards looked up, down came young Fred,
He landed with a splash not a bump;
Alas, sad to say and sad to relate,
Frederick landed in the Wet Sump.

Pa and Ma Grimethorpe were informed of mishap,
And came to the camp that same day;
They looked proper vexed at the loss of their son,
And Commy was asked what he'd got to say.

Commandant wanted no trouble,
And took out his purse rightaway,
Saying, "how much to settle the matter ?",
Pa said, "what do you usually pay ?".

Then Ma said, "are we sure that he's gone ?,
Has anyone dived in to see ?",
"Why no", said Commy, "who'd go in that ?",
Pa looked down and said, "aye, not me!"

But a man in a wet suit appeared on the scene,
And jumped in the Sump with a splash:
It were Septimus Bradley, young lad's T.O.,
Known for his verve and his dash.

Pa and Ma, and Commandant, too,
Waited and nothing was said;
But just then, Bradley appeared from the mire,
Holding aloft, a lively looking young Fred.

There were cheers all around, and afternoon tea,
Bradley became 'Hero Of The Day';
But Pa wondered how Fred had not drowned,
And asked the lad what he'd to say.

Fred replied, "I can hold me breath for hours on end,
It's a trick we've all learn't", he said, gladly,
"To save ourselves, every night, from being overcome,
By the feet of Tent Officer Bradley!"

The World Of Runton

The World Of Runton: the item that rips the lid off the events that really matter in Camp today. Tonight, the Government cutbacks, what will they mean for Dolphin II ? Here, with an Indepth Analysis, our senior investigative reporter, all the way from the local Old Jokes Home, it's Sam Heckmondwicke, and friends:

SH: Aye, Sam Heckmondwicke here, reporting for duty and I've brought along my old friend, Obadiah Lofthouse.

OL: Aye, I've been brought in to assist young Sam, here, the man wi' his finger on the pulse...

SH: ...finger on the pulse...

OL: ...of Runton, to see whether these cutbacks will mean trouble at Camp.

SH: Well, I've looked at finances and I've come up with a few proposals, what I've put in a report.

OL: A report ?

SH: Aye, now where is it ? Ooh, I know, I'd given it to my secretary to type, now where is she ? Oh, here she is: hello !

GS: Hello, Mr. Heckmondwicke, I've just finished typing the report, here it is.

SH: 'The Heckmondwicke Reprot Into Rinton Fiances', I see your typing's improving.

GS: Thank you, sir, can I go now ?

OL: Wait a minute, don't I know you ?

GS: Ooh, I don't know.

OL: Weren't you a cook here, on t'camp field, back in 1921 ? Aren't you Gladys, er, Gladys, er...

GS: Gladys Slaithwaite.

OL: Aye, that's it: how have you been, lass ?

GS: Ooh, well, I've got on a bit since being a cook at Dolphin Camp: I got a job at Harry Ramsden's.

OL: Not Harry Ramsden's ! Best restaurant in whole of North ?

GS: Aye, we did a nice line in Cow Heel Pudding, and a grand Tripe and Onion Trifle.

SH: Aye, and the bset Whippet Pie in world.

GS: But after the Health Inspectors moved in, I had to get another job, so I became Mr. Heckmondwicke's secretary; best be off now, tho', there's racing vultures to feed.

OL: Aye, well, grand to see you lass.

GS: Cheerio.

SH: Aye, grand lass is Gladys, you wouldn't have thought she was 75 years old.

OL: No, she doesn't look a day over 60. Now, what does your report say ? Let's have a look.

SH: First of all, there's too many officers.

OL: Aye, far too many.

SH: These young campers nowadays, they get one officer for each tent.

OL: One ?

SH: Aye, one. One for each tent: not like when we were campers, eh, Fred ? Do you remember when we had cutbacks ? Back in 1926, year of General Strike.

OL: General Strike, weren't he that army chappie ?

SH: That's it, General Strike, V.C., D.S.O., M.M.
OL: That's a funny way to spell Strike.
SH: Anyway, 1926, Year Of Austerity; there were economies on field then.
OL: Right enough, I can remember what tent we were in: 13C.
SH: 13C ?
OL: Aye, we had three storey tents in them days, so you'd get more campers per square foot of field.
SH: Aye, that's right, 13C, top floor we had, lovely view of Beeston Regis. There were six of us in tent, weren't there, and all from North ?
OL: Aye, Heckmondwicke, S.,
SH: Lofthouse, O.,
OL: Ottershaw, J.,
SH: Ottershaw, G.,
OL: Satterthwaite, S.,
SH: And Ackroyd Minor.
OL: Aye, and there should have been six more but they caught dysentery on first day and had to be sent 'ome.
SH: Ooh, they were lucky to get dysentery, with the cutbacks then, most of us could only afford food-poisoning.
OL: True, money was short in those days.
SH: Right enough, we never had a T.O.
OL: Couldn't afford one!
SH: Whole of Tent 13, A, B and C, had to make do with a cardboard cut-out called Nicholson.
OL: I think it's still here, must be fifty-five year old now.
SH: Mind you, we got as much sense out of a cardboard cut-out, as we would have done one of these modern officers.
OL: True: where would you find anyone to match that cardboard Nicholson ?
SH: You wouldn't! All T.O.'s were cut-outs in those days, and we only had one steward for whole Camp, one Lady Cook, one Commandant and half a Quartermaster.
OL: Half a Quartermaster ?
SH: Aye, an eighth.
OL: What were his name ?
SH: Henry, the eighth!
OL: Mind you, campers had to do a bit of work themselves in them days: remember digging lats in 1926, wi' just a bucket and spade from Woolies ?
SH: Aye, took us 'til lunchtime on first day.
OL: Then putting marquees in the afternoon, by ourselves, then tug of war, funny how us campers always won, cardboard T.O.'s never put up much of a struggle.
SH: Then singing, dancing, enjoying ourselves.
OL: Sometimes as late as half past six!
SH: What a life! And all for...how much were Camp fees then, Obadiah ?
OL: Oh, 15 shillings.
SH: Ooh, what a memory! He's good with figures is Obadiah, he's got a head for money, it's got a slot in the top!
OL: 15 shillings for a really good Camp; 'course this lot nowadays

have it real soft: all them Tent Officers.
SH: Real ones ?
OL: Real! Have you seen them ? And stewards, cooks, Commies, Adj.'s, Admins., Docco's...
SH: Docco's ? Bet they never get dysentery nowadays.
OL: Ooh, no, they have a choice nowadays: Tents 1-9 can have malaria, mumps or tonsillitis...
SH: ...and Tents 10-15 (or those on their third Camp) can have Yellow Fever, St. Vitus's Dance or three different types of headache!
OL: What a choice! Campers are right mollycoddled.
SH: Namby-pambies! Only hope is to bring back cardboard cut-out Tent Officers; save pounds it would; and make campers do some work; now, those are my proposals.
OL: Quite right. Let's see if we can find that old cardboard Nicholson, I'm sure I've seen it around.
SH: Aye, come on then, let's have a look.
OL: Where shall we start ?
SH: Village Inn ?
OL: Aye!

T.&T.P.T. Archives

Regular newspapers readers will be aware of the custom of giving brief details of news stories of 25, 50 or even, 100 years ago. We're sure that, at least one of you will be wondering why no such similar feature has appeared in the Tent & Tent Peg Telegraph. Well, it's all due to the fact that some of the goings-on at Dolphin Camps of yesteryear were of such a nature that the Senior Commandant of West Runton decided to "hush it all up" and old T.&T.P.T.'s have been protected by the (Un)Official Secrets Act. However, it is now 1982 and some of the earlier editions have just become available to the general public.

So, we thought we'd fill in an idle moment or two, by letting you hear what went on all those years ago...and who better to tell us of bygone days than those two relics of the past...complete with jokes, many of which will be appearing for the very last time before retirement...it's Sam Heckmondwicke and Fred Grimethorpe!

(Reads)...Reads aloud: applause.

SH: Hello, Dolphin II, nice to be back here once more.

FG: 'Tis that.

SH: Fred and meself have come hot foot...

FG: Hot foot!

SH: ...aye, hot foot from the T.&T.P.T. archives where secrets of old Dolphin Camps have been kept under lock and key, and under some rather unpleasant 50 year old items of lost property, for many years.

FG: Now can be told the tales of what really went on when we were young campers, just like yourselves.

SH: Aye, just listen to the first item: the Mutiny of 1923; apparently, there had been a miscalculation with the catering and Camp had nowt to eat but a crust of dry bread for lunch, tea and coffco!

FG: Aye, I seem to remember hearing that before, somewhere.

SH: There were angry scenes as campers crowded round the cookhouse: the stewards were revolting...

FG: Nowt's changed, has it ? I can just see Commy and Q talking to each other in the cookhouse, barricaded behind empty porridge packets (changes to 1923 Commy voice), "I say, Q, what is one going to give the chaps to eat?"

SH: (In pre-war Quartermaster's voice) "Well, Commy, one does have the four water biscuits and small jar of bloater paste one was saving for your supper".

FG: "That won't go far amongst the whole Camp, just listen to those hungry campers: what shall we do ? Disaster is staring us in the face".

SH: "I know, I've read the rest of this script. Yes, Commy, this could get really nasty".

FG: "What could?"

SH: "This three month old pork pie: I bought it as a memento of the Empire Exhibition".

FG: (Back in t'normal voice) 'Course, Mutiny were quickly put down:

troops were drafted in from Kart Camp.

SH: (Also back in t'normal voice) It were Horse and Kart Camp in them days, and then there were no more trouble until 1929.

FG: What happened then ?

SH: Do you not remember, lad ? It were the year of The Great Depression.

FG: Oh aye, do you mean the hole in the ground under Mr. Bradley's sleeping bag ?

SH: No lad, I meant the terrible occasion when lemon meringue pie was taken off the menu by an errant Quartermaster: whole Camp were so deeply upset by the enormity of this culpable dereliction of duty by West Runton's "Mr. Catering", that extra T.&T.P.T. staff had to be rushed in from Dolphin I, to try and cheer everyone up.

FG: Oo, desperate measures! I remember now, but it were no good were it ? Do you recall T.&T.P.T. in that second week ?

SH: Aye, they were dangerously low on jokes.

FG: Bit like this piece!

SH: Aye and they were reduced to telling old jokes like...the day the lady cooks held a knitted sock contest, which ended in a tie.

FG: Well, that was a very medium joke.

SH: A medium joke ? What do you mean ?

FG: Well, it wasn't rare and it certainly wasn't well done! And do you remember the one about the man who stole a calendar ? Got twelve months. But we shouldn't laugh.

SH: They didn't (but you lot can) (well go on!).

FG: It were a depressing time but at the last moment, supplies of lemon meringue pie were produced by that lady cook from North. Do you remember her ?

SH: Oh, now then, weren't it, let me see now, weren't it Jessie Catchpole ?

FG: No, it were Morag Auchtermuchty.

SH: Oh aye.

FG: Don't you remember her ?

SH: Oh yes, I do and I weren't right keen on her, I thought her cooking left a lot to be desired. Why, I remember at the next year's Camp, 1930, one night I dreamt I were eating one of Miss Auchtermuchty's sandwiches, and when I woke up next morning, why, the hot water bottle had gone! No, I weren't too keen on Morag Auchtermuchty.

FG: Oh, that's a shame, 'cos as a special surprise, I've brought her along tonight. Come along Morag.

MA: Now, Mr. Grimethorpe ? Eee, I'm not quite ready; I need time to make myself presentable.

SH: Well, come back next year!

FG: Sam, don't be so rude, you've snubbed her.

SH: Snubbed her ? Nay, lad, I hardly noticed her.

FG: Morag is an old friend of mine and I think you should be a bit more polite. Eee, Morag, it's grand to see you again. I'm sorry about old Sam, he is an idiot, isn't he ?

SH: What do you mean by telling all these people that I'm an idiot ?

FG: I'm sorry, I didn't realise it were a secret. Now, Sam, you do remember Morag, don't you ? (To Morag) Sam and I grew up together in t'North...

SH: Well, Fred grew up: I left him to get on with it. (To Morag, who has wandered off) Look, if I'm going to talk to you...I wish you'd pay a little attention.

MA: I'm paying as little as I can. I remember you, Mr. Heckmondwicke, you're a bit funny, aren't you ?

SH: Now look, I'm not a man to be laughed at.
MA: I know, I've seen you in T.&T.P.T. before!
SH: (Have you got the right script there, lass ?).
FG: Now, now, you two, behave: I shall introduce you to each other properly. Morag, have you met Sam before ?
MA: Yes, but I'll get over it.
SH: Fred, I think your friend's manners are as bad as her cooking: terrible!
MA: (Bursts into tears)
FG: Why did you have to say that ?
SH: I have to: it's written here.
FG: Sam, that's enough, I'm going to give you a piece of my mind.
MA: Oh, has he made you angry, as well ?
FG: No, it's just that he seems a bit short! Enough of this: come along now, you two must be friends, Sam, say something soft and sweet to Morag.
SH: ...Treacle pudding.
MA: Oh, this can't go on.
FG: Why not ?
MA: 'Cos I've lost my place.
SH: Well, just say something off the top of your head.
MA: Dandruff! Oh, I can't stand anymore of this: I'm going to end it all!
FG: End what ?
MA: This sketch. Come on you two, there's Q and he's got our Ovaltine ready.
SH: Grand, goodnight campers.
MA:)
FG:) Goodnight.

The Trial Of Samuel Heckmondwicke

Beeston Regis Magistrates Court.

Judge: Silence in court.

Usher: Call Samuel Heckmondwicke.

Other 1: Call Samuel Heckmondwicke.

Other 2: Call Samuel Heckmondwicke.

Other 3: Call Samuel Heckmondwicke.

SH: I'm here, in t'court.

Other 3: He's here, in t'court.

Other 2: He's here, in t'court.

Other 1: He's here, in t'court.

Usher: He's here, in t'court.

Judge: Good, now we can begin. What is the charge ?

Usher: You are Samuel Nathaniel Heckmondwicke of 13B, Acacia Avenue, Hebden Bridge ?

SH: Aye, that's right.

Usher: You appear here today charged with an offence under the Prevention of Cruelty to Dolphin II Act 1976, namely, that you did wilfully and malevolently subject Dolphin II campers and team to pain and suffering to the very limits of human endurance by performing a so called comedy sketch, entitled "Heckmondwicke Remembers", some 792 times...on or about the third Friday in August 1983.

Judge: Mr. Heckmondwicke, have you anything to say before this court considers your case ?

SH: Aye, it's true, I did it.

Judge:)

Usher:) (disappointed) Oh!

SH: I did perform the sketch 792 times, but as you're so looking forward to this case, I thought I'd plead "not guilty".

Judge: Thank you very much. Counsel for the prosecution, you may begin: just a minute, where is the counsel for the defence ?

Prosecuting Counsel: He's not here yet but he said we could start without him. Me lud, in this case I appear for the prosecution ...and for the money.

Usher: Ah, here's the defence counsel now.

Defence Counsel: Sorry I'm late me lud, don't bother to recap, I'll pick it up as we go along. Now, you are Samuel Nathaniel Heckmondwicke ?

SH: Yes sir, I am.

DC: I suggest that you performed this sketch 792 times.

SH: Yes sir, I did.

DC: I put it to you that you did perform this sketch.

SH: Yes sir, I did.

DC: I submit that you performed this sketch!

SH: Yes, I did.

DC: (excited) Did you, or did you not, perform this sketch ?

SH: Yes, I...

DC: Yes or no!

SH: Yes.

DC: Answer the question!!

SH: I did perform the sketch.

DC: (triumphant) Ah ha ha, we've wheedled it out of you at last have we ? Ah ha ha ha ha!

Judge: Mr. Nelson-Griffiths, you do realise you're meant to be the Counsel for the Defence ?

DC: Oh no...sorry, sorry everyone...oh dear...er...er...no further questions, me lud. (Sneaks off, embarrassed)

Judge: Mr. Slack ?

PC: Thank you, your honour. I shall now endeavour to prove that the snivelling, cowardly wretch whom you see cowering before you... (Judge & SH look vaguely behind them for the wretch) ...performed this awful deed. This Samuel Heckmondwicke, widely regarded as a legend in his own mind, first performed his piece of tomfoolery, with his accomplice, one Frederick Grimethorpe, during a Dolphin Camp many years ago, when "Heckmondwicke Remembers" was first performed in the T.&T.P.T.

Judge: The T.&T.P.T. ? What is that ?

PC: The Tent and Tent Peg Telegraph, me lud...a compendium, in magazine format, of topical items regarding the daily life of Dolphin II, presented in a whimsical and humourous manner.

Judge: And what is the point of it ?

PC: That, your honour, is a question heard throughout the Upper Marquee every tea time! Following the first performance in an early T.&T.P.T., an errant T.O. of the time...

Judge: A T.O. ?

PC: Tent Officer, me lud...a large and magnificent human being, admired throughout the land but most importantly by his or her own campers.

Judge: I see, carry on.

PC: ...an errant T.O. of the time, the balance of his mind disturbed by a surfeit of macaroni cheese, asked Heckmondwicke to perform the sketch again. For the next fifty years or so, the sketch was performed every single night of camp: the same dreadful northern accents, the same lines, the same jokes...until...and I quote... (northern) "whole camp knew 'em word perfect". More recently, Heckmondwicke has started to perform the sketch more and more often. In 1981, he performed it sixteen times, in 1982, twenty times but in 1983, he finally went over the top. Not only was the sketch performed in the T.&T.P.T. but during the Rag Concert, during Wide Games and Coffco...until the last Friday of Camp, when Heckmondwicke and Grimethorpe performed the sketch during breakfast, during Tent Inspection, during Bank, during lunch, twice during Shuteye, at 30 minute intervals throughout the afternoon, six times during tea, eight times during a swim, ten times during Coffco, until finally there was a son et lumiere production (by torchlight) round the gubbins bin at midnight!

The Camp woke on the last morning to the sounds of the sketch being performed in French, in Italian, then in German, Russian, Spanish and seven other European languages...and campers endured the final thirty seven performances on West Runton station and the train pulled out to a special condensed version lasting some 17 seconds. On arrival in London, 63 campers, six cooks, twelve Tent Officers and eight stewards were taken to Guy's Hospital suffering from "chronic boredom", brought on by this horrendous experience.

In 1984, no campers, cooks, officers or stewards arrived for Camp, for fear of hearing the sketch again and A.D.C., Adj. and

Q spent twelve peaceful days dividing their time between playing Wide Games in the "Seaview" Tea Rooms, Cromer and giving each other 10+++ each day for tent inspection. (Incidentally Adj. won because he got there first and had an extra day's marks.)

It is, your honour, to seek an end to the performing of "Heckmondwicke Remembers" and to protect these innocent people, that this man stands before you.

Judge: What, my turn to get a word in, is it? Mr. Heckmondwicke, is this all true?

SH: Aye, I suppose it is.

Judge: But why do you do it?

SH: Well, I think people ought to know what it were like in my day...back in 1919..you know, when campers were men: no girls then, dear me no, too tough for girls it were. Camp life were hard...we'd have to sleep ten of us to a tent, wi' out sleeping bags or mattresses...

PC: Objection! Me lud, that's part of the sketch, it's inadmissable evidence.

Judge: (northern) Ooh, I were just enjoying that. (normal) Very well, continue, Mr. Heckmondwicke, without lines from the sketch.

SH: Well, I were just saying how hard life was and how these young people ought to be told, told about traditions; none of this modern namby-pamby camp life, dear me, hot water for washing, stewards to do washing up, ladies to do cooking...why, one year our tent had to make breakfast for whole of West Runton...

PC: He's at it again! Stop him!

Judge: I've heard enough, Mr. Heckmondwicke. It seems to me that camp has changed a bit since your day and you ought to change, too. Having studied the Prevention of Cruelty to Dolphin II Act 1976 and the Use of Old Jokes Regulations 1968, I have come to the conclusion that these poor folk must be protected from what we in legal circles refer to as "boring old toadies", like yourself. Therefore, I find you guilty of the charges laid against you and I sentence you to the maximum penalty allowed. I sentence you to...write a new sketch!

Omnes: No!

Judge: And, furthermore, you are to refrain from performing the old rubbish. You will now go from this court and you will write a new sketch, to be performed next year.

SH: It's a fair cop.

School Days

The Editor looks at his script and realises, with horror, that he can put off the moment no longer: it is time to introduce Sam Heckmondwicke. Sam wanders on.

SH: Evening all.

E: Mr. Heckmondwicke, I understand that you've come to tell us a little about the early years of Dolphin Camp.

SH: Aye, that's right.

E: And you've come down especially, all the way from the north of England. Tell me about the north: is it really as bad as we've been led to believe?

SH: I suppose you expect me to tell you that north is full of run down woollen mills, redundant black pudding factories, closed down collieries and towering slag heaps.

E: (Apologetic) No, no, not at all.

SH: Well, it is mostly, which is why it's so nice to come down here every August.

Let me tell you a little more of history of Dolphin Camp: well, not so much about Dolphin Camp: more how I came to be at that very first camp, back in 1919. I heard about camp being set up while I were at school. I didn't go to one of those namby-pamby southern schools, like you whippersnappers...oh no...I were sent, at the age of two, to one of the north's most famous public schools, Grimstone Hall, set amongst the desolate Foulridge Moors, up on t' North Pennines.

For hundreds of years there had been a school there: I can still picture, even now, that old, moss-covered ruin...the headmaster, Dr. Scarcroft. I remember my first day: the school were reached only by a winding, single track road across the moors, made impassable by the snow for months at a time; so much so that we only had the one term each year: it lasted from September 'til June, with just an afternoon off, weather permitting, for Christmas.

I arrived at the gate that first day and walked up the long drive to the front door, where there were a notice reminding the reader to keep the door shut on account of the wolves. I know what you're thinking: there can't have been any wolves out on the moors...no, there weren't: they were inside. The headmaster kept them for amusement: he'd set them on the matron now and then, for a laugh.

I were greeted by head boy, Spofforth Major, who showed me to my room. It were a single room but he said I'd have to share and hoped I wouldn't mind: the other 25 didn't. As the rain beat down and the wind howled across the moors, I lay awake that first night, looking through the dormitory window: and wishing I were inside.

It rained for weeks at a time but luckily the dormitory were dry: at least it were after 10:30 pm.

They were grand chaps in our dormitory...and I can still recall the friends of my youth who stood beside me in times of trouble...and never lifted a finger to help. We had midnight feasts in dormitory and one of my fondest memories were of cooking by log fire: until I were quite done on both sides.

The days always began the same way: we were woken by alsatians at four-thirty; there would be a six mile run across the moors and two games of football, before breakfast, lessons on Latin, Greek, Difficult Sums, history of the Empire, the Playhouse and the Palladium: rugby before lunch, more lessons in the afternoon, making tea for the prefects, cleaning your boots, scrubbing floors and four hours Prep. every night, except Saturdays, when, for a treat, Dr. Scarcroft, a keen observer of the weather, would give us the week's rainfall readings, taken from various points around the school.

Once a year, on Wigtwizzle Day, whole school had to turn out for the famous Grimstone Hall "Wall Game". Each competitor had to carry an eight foot section of brick wall, strapped to his back, over a twenty mile course covering some of the highest and most inhospitable moorland in the country, including swimming the entire length of Beckwithshaw Reservoir (most boys held their breath and did that bit underwater). Last few stragglers were chased back to Grimstone Hall by the school leopard and anyone who failed to complete the course were sentenced to two weeks detention in the school maggot pit.

'Course it weren't all fun.

Each year we had to endure school Speech Day, when a famous Old Boy would come and drone on and on about what life were like "in his day" and then present inscribed copies of Driffield's Illustrated Logarithm Tables for academic and sporting achievements.

One year, however, we had a right interesting speaker. It were the famous Rear-Admiral Higgins, celebrated polar explorer, whose daring deeds were known throughout the land. There were proper excitement at the thought of his visit: on Speech Day itself, whole school were in a fever...mostly dysentery and beri-beri but with a few cases of blackwater fever and scurvy amongst the older boys. Rear-Admiral Higgins gave a fascinating account of his recent exploration of the enormously interesting polar ice caps. He told of how he had explored for over 3 months, eight hours a day, exploring from nine 'til six, with a one hour non-exploring break for lunch. He explored every weekday and alternate Saturdays and created several exploring records.

You can imagine the excitement in the school hall: less than a dozen boys and four masters had nodded off when the Rear-Admiral mentioned that, instead of presenting customary books as school prizes, lucky pupils would win places at a new summer camp to be set up on part of the Higgins Norfolk estate, at West Runton.

I were overjoyed to discover that I had won a place, due to the high marks achieved by my essay, "The Place Of The Cloth Cap In The Industrial Revolution", (which were later adapted as a musical by George Formby). Well, that were 1919 and that's how I became one of the very first campers here, all those years ago ...

The First Girl Camper

After the appearance of Sam Heckmondwicke and Fred Grimethorpe in the T.& T.P.T. last year, we've received many requests. Despite these, here they are, once more, with tales of Dolphin Camps of yesteryear.

SH: Hello, good day to you all: Sam Heckmondwicke here and this is Fred Grimethorpe.

FG: How do.

SH: Tonight, we've brought along an old friend of ours...

FG: ...the very first girl camper, who were at Dolphin Camp back in 1927: sixty year ago.

SH: And here she is now: Gladys Slaithwaite.

GS: Hello Sam; hello Fred.

FG: Hello Gladys, thanks for coming along. Now, you were first girl camper here at West Runton, sixty year ago.

GS: Aye.

SH: I expect you've got some very wonderful memories of Dolphin Camp in the 1920's.

GS: (Very old and dodderly) Yes, I have. I have some very wonderful memories, I have some very wonderful memories indeed.

(Pause)

SH: And I expect you'd like to tell us all about them.

GS: Oh yes. Yes, I would. I would like to very much, I would like to very much indeed...but I can't remember them.

FG: But surely there's that anecdote told about you and Commy.

(Fred begins to look at old photographs)

GS: Oh yes, that one. Oh yes: well, I was appearing in the Rag Concert in...in 1927...or was it 1928 ? That was it: 1928. Yes, and I'd just been performing The...The Penguin Sketch, I think it was and Commy came to watch from the side of the marquee. I walked off and we stood together for a few moments and then he leaned over towards me and whispered in my ear, in that gracious way of his. He said, "get off my foot, you silly old fool".

SH: What a lovely old story. How very true those words are, even today. (Gladys has absent mindedly stepped onto Sam's foot, during last few lines)

FG: Eee, look, Sam, I've found this old photograph from Camp in 1927. Isn't that Gladys, on the front row ?

SH: Aye: it is. Do you know: she looks almost the same as today.

FG: Aye: how do you keep so slim and youthful, Gladys ? Are you on a diet ?

GS: No, not really.

SH: Well, do you watch what you eat ?

GS: Oh yes, of course.

FG: Why ?

GS: Well, I find it much easier to get it into my mouth that way.

SH: Fred and I are on diets: I'm on the F-Plan diet, which means that I eat high fibre foods: brown bread, wholemeal biscuits and so on.

FG: And I'm on the G-Plan diet: which means that I can eat sofas, armchairs, dining tables, wardrobes and so on.

SH: Aye. Now you're here, Gladys, tell us what it were like to be the very first girl camper.

GS: Well, I suppose you'll be expecting me to tell you how tough it were...

SH: } Aye!

FG: }

GS: And of how we didn't have lilos or sleeping bags but had to make our own bedding by stitching dead mice to old sacking.

FG: (Animated) Aye, that's the sort of thing!

GS: Of how we used to have to get up at crack of dawn and have nowt to eat all day long but a couple of dry biscuits and a spoonful of cold Soapy.

SH: Go on.

GS: Of how we used to have to pay 10 bob a day to sleep twenty of us in a hole in the ground next to the gubbins bin.

FG: Eee...magic!

GS: Well, it weren't like that at all.

SH: (Shocked) It weren't!?

GS: No.

SH: Are you sure ? What about our reputations ? Think on, lass, think on.

GS: No, it weren't. It were a bit strange at first though. I'd never been away from home before: well, I'd been grape-picking but that were in the conservatory: I didn't have to go abroad or anything.

No, my first Dolphin Camp, back in 1927: I can picture it now: ee, being met at West Runton station by camp chauffeur, then being shown to my own luxury tent, with piped hot water, Persian carpet, four poster bed, electric light, refrigerator full of ginger beer and my own personal wireless.

We'd get up at 10 O'clock, after breakfast in bed, brought by my T.O., Miss Lear. Then we'd have an exciting day, strolling around the tea shops of Cromer and Sheringham, with perhaps a little paddle in the sea or maybe a spot of embroidery, if we felt up to it.

SH: Eee, I think there must be some mistake.

FG: Aye.

SH: This doesn't sound like the Dolphin Camps we remember.

FG: No, it does not. No, we had it right tough, we did. It were proper gruelling in 1920's at Dolphin II.

SH: Right gruelling.

GS: Dolphin II ? Oh no, I weren't talking about Dolphin II. Oh dear me, no, I were first girl camper at Dolphin I.

SH: Dolphin I! No wonder: namby-pambies!

FG: Eee, you know Sam, I thought that didn't sound right: all that about being in Miss Lear's tent in 1927 and I've got all my photographs right muddled up.

SH: Aye, of course: it must have been another Miss Lear. Our Miss Lear's not nearly old enough to have been a T.O. in 1927.

FG: Aye, far too young.

SH: Look here, Fred, on this photograph: here's Miss Lear. You see she wasn't a T.O. at Dolphin II until...(turns photo over and shows to Fred)

FG: ...1930!

The Great Grimethorpe

An old man shuffles in and walks slowly towards the space at the end of the marquee. He is wearing a tatty old jacket, a flat cap and has a grimy muffler around his neck (looking suspiciously like an oven-mitt...the muffler, that is, not the neck!). He walks with the aid of a stick. He stops, slowly gazes round the marquee and, in a North Country accent, speaks:

SH: Aye, Sam Heckmondwicke here and I've come to tell you about what it were like to be an officer in the old days, when the Quarter-master first came to Dolphin Camp. Picture Camp field in 1919...marquees, bells, all down the one side...you'll probably be wondering why bell tents were all down one side and not t'other: aye, well, there's an old Runton saying (pauses)...but I can't quite remember it at the moment. Now, look over there: is it ? No!

FG: Is it ? No!

SH: It must be ? No.

FG:) Is it ? No...

SH:)

SH: I know, why, if it isn't Fred Grimethorpe, if it isn't, it's a jolly good impression!

FG: Me old mate, Sam Heckmondwicke, I've not seen you since...ooh...last year, in this very marquee, at tea time.

SH: I see Camp tea's improved a little since our day, must be in aid of the Quarter-master retiring.

FG: Aye, grand tea it were tonight: who'd have thought 64 year ago, that we'd be sitting down tonight having a "shrimp" cocktail starter, salad and lemon meringue pie...

SH: Who'd have thought it ?

FG: ...all washed down with lovely cups of tea!

SH: Aye, sixty-four year ago, you were lucky to get a cup of tea.

FG: True, we had to have ours with no sugar.

SH: Or milk.

FG: Or tea...and in a cracked cup and all.

SH: You were lucky to get a cup, best we could manage was to sup out of a rolled up newspaper.

FG: Luxury! We had to suck on a damp tea-bag.

SH: Ooh, we used to dream of damp tea-bags (and I've been seeing a psychiatrist about that, for the last fifty years).

FG: But we were happy campers, weren't we ? And then we went on to be officers.

SH: Aye, and how long were we officers ?

FG: Oo, twenty-five years.

SH: That were it, twenty-five years, aye, and we used to do T.&T.P.T.: serious business it was in those days, though.

FG: That it were.

SH: I were Editor for 21 years.

FG: (Aside) Imagine listening to the same jokes for 21 years!

SH: There were traditions in them days: we'd have the same song, the same sketches, the same serial, every single day, year in...

FG: ...year out...

SH: ...until whole Camp knew 'em word perfect!

FG: Mind you, people used to laugh in those days.
 SH: They had to; they were tough in those days...no namby-pambies then...you wouldn't find stewards washing their clothes in 1919.
 FG: You wouldn't! What do you reckon to this lot, Sam?
 SH: Well, I suppose they're tough enough, after all, they've sat through 8 editions of T.&T.P.T. already!
 FG: Shall we see if we can remember a few of the old jokes?
 SH: Aye, what about this one? 1921-1936, this one, about the steward who became a showjumper, then broke his nose jumping against the clock...didn't get a laugh in 1921, either!
 FG: Aye, and at the World Fencing Championships, the stewards' team withdrew when they ran out of creosote. 1947 to 1953, that one. And here's another: what has the head of a dog, the body of a lion, the neck of a giraffe and the voice of a chicken?
 SH: I don't know, what has got the head of a dog, the body of a lion, the neck of a giraffe and the voice of a chicken?
 FG: Nothing! That were a good one, told every single night in 1930's, do you remember it?
 SH: (laughs)...No! But let's do Q's favourite joke (1954-69): go on.
 FG: Oh yes, eee, I'd like to do my impression of a whelk.
 SH: Come now, you're just being shellfish! But time's getting on: we must be away. Oh, hang on a minute, but...how about doing your pièce de résistance?
 FG: Eh?
 SH: You remember, 1919, the very first camp, brought the tent down.
 FG: The storm?
 SH: No, you daft happorth, "The Great Grimethorpe".
 FG: Aye, I remember, aye, we'll do that; this lot may as well have sommat to laugh at toneet!
 SH: Righto, now we've got prop down here...and who were our assistant... Jessie? Jessie?
 FG: Jessie Linthwaite, Clog Dance Champion of Cromer Carnival in 1919. Why, here she is now, what a stroke of luck.
 SH: Hello, Jessie.
 JL: Hello.
 FG: Ooh, don't you look smart, what with new muffler an' all.
 JL: Aye, I got it special for Q's Gala Dinner tonight. It were only half-a-crown and 4 labels off jars of bloater paste from Greasborough Co-op.
 SH: (to FG) Eh! Isn't she the daft one?
 FG: (to SH) I think you're right.
 SH: Jessie, do you notice how peaceful and quiet it is in here: so quiet you can hear yourself think?
 JL: (pause) I can't hear anything.
 SH:)
 FG:) Aye, she's the one!
 SH: Do you remember this bit?
 JL: Oh aye!
 SH: Here we go: dim the lights, dramatic music, fanfare, then the announcement: Ladies and Gentlemen, Quartermaster, Campers...may I present to you (in association with BBC-2, Time-Life and Hebden Bridge Borough Council's Environmental Health Department)... "The Great Grimethorpe and Assistant", in an act what has terrified and delighted audiences everywhere...a death-defying feat of stupendous courage: watch now, Ladies and Gentlemen, as The Great Grimethorpe puts his head in a Lyon's ...drum roll...absolute 'ush..The Great Grimethorpe will put his head in a Lyons.....Jam Sponge!

(He does exactly that and Jessie closes the Sponge...all three exit amidst tumultuous applause!)

Press Cuttings

HECKMONDWICKE IN £20 MILLION FILM DEAL !!

Hollywood, Tuesday: Twentieth Century Fox Studios confirmed here, yesterday, that they have paid Sam Heckmondwicke over 40 million dollars (£20m.) not to bother them ever again with the so-called script of "Heckmondwicke: The Movie".

WHAT THE PAPERS SAID ABOUT "THE HECKMONDWICKE SAGA":

"Who ?"

...The Times

"Wh ?"

...The Guardian

"No, not him again! I will run and run."

...The Daily Mail

"One of the world's funniest pieces of writing from the man thought by many to be the new...(some mistake here, surely ? Ed.)"

...The Daily Express

"Ashen faced retired Tent Officer, Samuel Heckmondwicke, today appeared in court to answer charges of greivous bodily harm on the English language by the publication of literary makeweight, "The Heckmondwicke Saga". Faced with the prospect of two weeks hard labour at the notorious Lake District "Base Camp", or the alternative of five hours at Dolphin II's "Rear Party", Heckmondwicke pleaded not guilty, pending the report of a qualified psyciat... syciat...psychy...pleaded guilty."

...The Whitley Bay and
North Shields Guardian

"This will go down in the History of English Literature, a long, a very long, way down."

...The Times Literary
Supplement

"And they said it couldn't be done!"

...The Tent and Tent
Peg Telegraph

A Few Notes

THE HECKMONDWICKE PLAYERS

The complete company, from 1977 to 1988, were:
Andrew Brack, Tony West, Mike Edmondson, Pam McFarland, Angie Matley, Maggie Cumming, Sarah Higgins, Greg Solomon, Steve Slack, Mark Nelson-Griffiths and Bridget Galpin.

THE SKETCHES

- "I REMEMBER": based, loosely, on Monty Python's "Four Yorkshiremen", performed in the T.& T.P.T., with A.B. and T.W., and published in "Pure Flannel", in 1977. Revised and performed, at the barbecue, or during Rear Party (1981) by A.B. + M.E. in 1978, 1979, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984 and 1986 and by A.B. + T.W. in 1980.
- "I WANTED TO BE Q": based, loosely, on a Peter Cook/E.L. Wisty sketch, "The Miner", performed by A.B. in T.& T.P.T., 1979, at Rear Party in 1981 and 1983 and at the barbecue, in 1988.
- "FREDERICK GRIMETHORPE'S MISHAP": rather obviously based on "The Lion And Albert" by Marriott Edgar, performed by A.B. in T.& T.P.T., in 1980, 1983 and 1987.
- "THE WORLD OF RUNTON": performed, at the barbecue, in 1980, by A.B., M.E. and A.M. as Gladys Slaithwaite; revised and performed in T.& T.P.T. in 1986, by A.B., M.E. and B.G. as Gladys II.
- "T.& T.P.T. ARCHIVES": performed, the barbecue, in 1982 and 1984, by A.B., M.E. and M.C. as Morag Auchtermuchty.
- "THE TRIAL OF SAMUEL HECKMONDWICKE": based, in part, on a sketch from "Cambridge Circus", the 1963 Cambridge University Footlights Revue, written by John Cleese: performed in T.& T.P.T. by A.B., M.E. as the judge, G.S. as the court usher, S.S. as the prosecuting counsel and M.N.-G. as the defence counsel, in 1985; during the remainder of T.& T.P.T., A.B. did try to perform "I Remember" several times but was escorted from the marquee by P.C. Tony Whitaker.
- "SCHOOL DAYS": whole chunks of a story from "I'm Sorry, I'll Read That Again", with a few bits of "Tompkinson's Schooldays" from Terry Jones and Michael Palin's "Ripping Yarns" and the occasional original line, read as a T.& T.P.T. piece, in 1986, by A.B.
- "THE FIRST GIRL CAMPER": some lines from "Round The Horne" and some from Victoria Wood went into this T.& T.P.T. item from 1987, performed by A.B., M.E. and B.G. as Gladys.
- "THE GREAT GRIMETHORPE": including six lines from "Four Yorkshiremen", this was a 1979 T.& T.P.T. piece, with A.B., M.E. and P.McF. as Nellie Ramsbottom and published in the Jubilee T.& T.P.T. Book of that year (Nicholson, Pratt & Co.); rewritten for Richard Evans' Retirement Gala Dinner and performed in the Gala T.& T.P.T. by A.B., M.E. and S.H. as Jessie Linthwaite, in 1983 and performed again, in 1987 by A.B., M.E. and S.H.