

**A BURNS NIGHT WHIMSY
(A Little Bit of Bonding for the
Boys)**

I wasn't born in Scotland
And love it though I do
I didn't learn 'bout Robbie Burns
at school – it's sad but true

Wer I come fram they talk loik thers
“Ooo arr” is what they say
And “love is loik a red red rose”
Don't really work that way

Ooo arr

So ... best do something different
A ballad would be good
An ode to Glenmore lads perhaps?
You know ... I think I could ...

So settle down, we're going on
a flight of fantasy
To where? you ask ... well wait and
see
So, ... are you sitting comfortably?
Then I'll begin.

This story starts with Harrold
As Glenmore stories ought
Imagine him at home one day
Quietly engulfed in thought
And just as in those years gone by
His thoughts are turned to you and I

“The Glenmore girls are aiming high
They've done the Cuillin ridge on
Skye
And winter climbs upon the Beinn
They've even run the Karrimor
Ski'd UP and down on Aonoch Mor
Cross Scotland walk's a sinch for them

But not it seems, for Glenmore MEN

The Glenmore lads, it seems to me
are growing rather slovenly
The odd tick here and there perhaps
But ... the thing is, ... with the chaps

it's mostly Mar'lyns now a' days
Which doesn't stretch us Munro-ways
We need a challenge”

He thought and thought ... what it
should be
He hummed and ha'd and said, “Ah
me ...
This time the Munros will not do
We've done them all ... and Corbetts
too”

He sat in silence for a while
Then on his face a little smile
appeared

“Aha” he said, “I know ...”

He took the phone and told them all
to meet at Wellington Church hall
next WEDNESDAY ... and he added
then
“Don't tell the girls, it's just for men”

That night he said “I'm glad your here
and for tonight I've brought some beer
instead of tea because I fear
you may today
be shocked by what I have to say”

The room went quiet, breath was bated
While for Harrold's words they waited
Some were feeling trepitated
But all were quite agog

He said, “How slovenly we've got
We really haven't done a lot
Determination's gone to pot
It's all become a slog”

To start with all looked at the ground
Then lifted eyes and looked around
And in the silence Harrold found
the words, and with a merry flounce
even-tu-ally did pronounce!
“The club” he said “must be reborn
and so, we'll climb the Matterhorn”

The silence then was greater still
And so it was some time until
Dave R, emerging from a sleep
Said, "Isn't that one rather steep?"
And Alan C
asked, "Couldn't we
just do a little jolly round
of golf ... feet firmly on the ground?
And John MacLean said, "We could
float
Around the coastline on my boat?"

Some voices piped up from the back
They said, "It isn't that we lack
commitment ... but we have to share
our fear. It's not that we don't care
We just are not sure that we dare ..."

"Right" said Fred "ava cuppa tea
You frightened ones can come with me
I'll take the lead like on In Pin
Together we can surely win
over fear." And Arthur said "I'll help
you out
We can take turn and turn about"

At that point John McP perked up
And cried, "this plan is mega-great
I tried before but had no luck
It's weather that will seal our fate"

He paused but for a moment
Then his thoughts turned to the site
"The web will need some pictures
Any volunteers tonight?"
Chris E jumped up "I'll do it with
my erstwhile colleague, Jimmy Smith"

And Jimmy said, "Another thing ...
Some power food's essential
My steamed fruit pud's the thing to
bring
It really has potential
To stop the legs from quaking
The body mass from shaking
It's easy of the making
In microwave (steam faking)
Just 8 minutes in the baking
And it's very scrummy caking
I'll put it on the web

Then Brian spoke, "Erhm" he said
"Since food's become the theme
I could supply some haggis
With neeps and tatties, creamed"

And that is how the plan took shape
'Mid atmosphere electric
As ideas shot around the place
'Twas frenzied and quite hectic

For Henry said, "We must book places
in the Hörnli Hütte for sure
I will phone to reserve spaces
Soon as I get out this door"

And Dave C said, "We'll all need gear
Descender and a stitchplate
A harness we will need to wear
With karabiners, screwgate
He said, "A duvet would be good
(Be sure to get one with a hood)"

Dave Foster said, "To get this kit
Is going to cost us quite a bit
A discount night is what we need
at Cotswold. Shall I take a lead
in organizing it?"

But David A and Denis
Were hatching up a plot
"Twixt Tiso and the Scout Shop
Most of this stuff can be got
We'll get a list together
And order a job lot"

Dave C resumed his list of things
He said, "We each need several slings
We must have helmets, 'gainst loose
rock"
A voice chipped in, "And Gortex
socks!"

'Twas Jimmy Stevenson who'd spoke
He said, "They're vital, aren't they,
folk?
To keep feet warm is what they're for
You get them from the surplus store"

John Donahoe had hobbled through
He'd had a minor op
But he said "I am coming too
Not a thing will make me stop
behind. I'll join you if I have to hop
Every step up to the top"

And so it was they went

So on the day they're leaving
They fill up a route card form
Glasgow ... Zurich ... Zermatt ...
Hörnli Hütte and Matterhorn

Escape route: none
Return date: 2 weeks hence

And they ticked the box for compass
And they ticked the box for map
And they ticked the box for
waterproofs
For crampons and for sac
And they ticked the box for foodies,
'cos they'd all got steamy pud
They ticked the box for duvet-tops
complete with wrap-round hood
And they ticked the box for bivi bags
as all Glemorons should
And they added three new boxes
One for helmets, 'case of rockses
One for harness, 'case of dropses
And the last for Gortex sockses

They came by train to Zermatt
On the rack and pinion track
All felt now that they were there
There was no going back

They were greeted there by Garrey
John A, Tim and John McP
('Cos they don't have to go to work
each day, like you and me)
So they'd gone out in advance
As they are wont to do
And they climbed the Monte Rosa
And done Castor, Pollux too

And Garrey with a wide grin
That reached from ear to ear
Said, "You know ... I really could
begin
To get to like it here"
Then with a face becoming
increasingly smug
"What's more, I've got the
mountaineering bug"
And with that he gave Harrold a big
bear hug

They bunkhoused in the Bahnhof
('Cos Henry'd booked that too)
And they went out for an evening stroll
To investigate the view
They walked on up the high street
To the point where suddenly
the Matterhorn is full revealed
In all its great glory

They stopped and stared
Inspired, scared

"It's awfa big"
"Huge"
"Humungous"
"Gargantuan"
"Awesome"
"Gruesome"
"Fearsome"
"LOTSAFUN!"

With feelings shared and egos spared
Back to the Bahnhof they repaired

That evening Fred said to the rest
"You know, I think it would be best
I mean, I think it would be wise
for us to acclimatize
We need to climb a lesser peak
or two while we are here this week

So they took a ride in a cable car
to the Kleine Matterhorn
From there it isn't very far
to the summit of Breithorn
Then they took the train to Gornergrat
From where to Stockhorn it's quite flat
Then down to Rifflehorn they ambled

And on its rockface climbed and
scrambled.
And thus their training, slow and
steady
Grad-u-ally made them ready

And then the big day dawned...

Fred and Arthur, in the early morn,
Left with a minimum of fuss
Heading for the Matterhorn
The first part of the route to suss

Such calm did not o'ercome the others
Who made a maximum of bother
Sacs were packed and unpacked again
Socks put on, then rearranged
Boots were cleaned, then after lunch
they all set off ... a motley bunch

Schwartzsee, their first destination
Caused a bit of consternation
Should they walk or should they ride?
Was the issue to decide
By path, three hours is the par
But it's just eight minutes by cable car
In the end some went on foot
Some took the Matterhorn Express
But who did which and which did what
Is something you'll just have to guess

From Schwartzsee to the Hörnli Hütte's
Two hours in the guide book, but
those who'd come by cable car
Hadn't yet gone very far
When someone passed
Very fast
Said, "Must dash
Been training with the Hash"
And quick as a flash
He was gone
It was, course, John Donnelly
Yes, it WAS he

Yet ... 20 minutes later he was spotted
on the track
"Could it be that that is John D coming
back?"
And down he came, running fast

Casting an eye towards them as he
passed
Said "I've been to the Hörnli
But it's still early
So I'll get a bit of exercise
And give the walkers a surprise
While building muscles in my thighs
Then back on down the path he flew
To meet again the walking few

They reached the hütte at a quarter past
four
By then he'd been up and down three
times more

There'd ne'er before been such a sight
As the Hörnli witnessed on that night
For Harrold cleared the tables aside
And o'er proceedings did preside
He said "this room is very big
So we can do a *Glenmore Jig*"

Dave Web' had brought a tape
recorder
And music from the Reel Thing
So Harrold called the troops to order
"OK guys, let's dance and sing"
He then stopped short, "... Ah what a
pity
We are lacking ladies pretty"

'Twas John D'hoer who saved the day
Producing just the thing
His light weight sleeping leg support
He'd by chance thought to bring

So with a flourish he revealed
Those famous blow up boobs (well
healed)
He said, "My friends you must share
these
with me this evening, if you please"

So natty dancers, Keith and Steve
Dave H and John McPart ...
... Well hard though this is to believe
They danced the ladies parts!

Harrold called a *Ratigan Rant*
(He'd brought his head held mike)
The steps were done so elegant
You ne'er have seen the like
The sound of "two more couples" rang
As everybody danced and sang

Dave Watson led *Machine Without Horses*
Getting some of the steps wrong
He finished off the whole performance
With a tasteful Burns night song

Dave Webster, who was club DJ
Was getting well into the gig
And lots of music he did play
Before he called an Irish jig

John MacLean sang a jolly ditty
Accompanied by comments, witty
Some others had a disco (head torch)
Amongst the boots out in the porch

Arms a-flailing, body rocking,
Colin made a rousing speech
Nic nacs off the wall near knocking
(Luckily just out of reach)

His final words: "To climb the
Matterhorn
We must be up well before dawn"
Denis groaned, "What! up at three?!
Could someone pour me a whiskey?"

But wisely they abstained from wine
And went upstairs to bed at nine
And in matratzenlager lied
Gently snoring side by side

(Aah ... don't they look irresistible?!)

Mi mi mi meep ... mi mi mi meep ...
mi mi mi meep

Leaping out of bed at three
Gordon Dykes and John MacP
Peeked outside and cried, "Whoopee
The weather's good, no sign of snow"
Then, "Flippin' 'eck, we'll have to go"
They hurried back up to the dorm

"Still in bunks ... that's not good form
Its time you got up out of beddy
Hurry up, we must get ready"

Harrold put on a jumper
made by Connie yester year
It held together by a thread
The others viewed it with much dread
"It will not last the day", they said
But Harrold argued "Have no fear
it's lasted me for many a wear
In Whymper's day they would have
said,
"This is dead cool high tech gear"

They donned the helmets, what a sight
Daves wore yellow, Jimmys white
Johns had purple on their head
While Alans were adorned in red
But the best of all, so it was said
Were kept for Arthur and for Fred
A very bright fluorescent green
Ensuring they could both be seen
And all the rest wore pink or blue
... All, that is, except for Hugh
Whose hat was orange with white
spots
Interspersed with purple dots

They put on harness, got out slings
Krabs and ropes and other things
Put food and water in their sacs
Then hoiked them up upon their backs
They stepped outside into the night
Some excited, some with fright

They roped in groups of two or three
(They'd practiced lots on the Whangie)
Then rope by rope, they each departed
Now the fun had really started

Some went with Arthur, some with
Fred
Each had a headlamp on his head
An endless trail of fairy lights
Heading off into the night

Bill MacIntyre and John McP
Said they'd take up the rear
"To help out those in difficulty
Its best we stay back here"

And Gordon took a middling spot
Said, "From this place I can trot
out a merry quip or two
A distraction to help chaps through

Fred confidently led the way
(He'd tried this bit out yesterday)
He asked, "Is every one ok?
This first bit really is child's play
But don't forget your running belay
And while it's dark don't go astray"

In darkness climbed they on and on
And on and up and on
There were Iains and Jims
There was Colin and Tim
There were Alans and Rogers and
Johns
There was Chris, there was Gordon
And Daves in profusion
There was Harrold and Henry and
Hugh
There was Bruce, there was Brian
Keith, Graham and Stephen
There was Francis and Malcolm too
There was Bill and Ken and Alistairs
three
There was Denis and Robert and
Garrey
And of course out ahead
There was Arthur and Fred
At the back, were McI and McP

The sun eventually started to rise
Some time around five o'clock
Little by little before their eyes
It exposed vista upon vista of flaky
rock

A splinter group led by Dave Wat'
Sped off at a great pace
Hand over hand, foot over foot
They scrambled up the rock face

They'd stopped to let their group
amass
Beside a tall rock tower
When an Alan said, "We have, alas
been wrong for half an hour"

Feeling worried
They then hurried
Faster than they had all day
In the flurry
And the scurry
They had surely lost their way

But then they heard a voice come
booming
From over on the left
It seemed as if someone was looming
From out of a rocky cleft

It was, in fact, the leader, Fred
With Harrold's mike upon his head
He told the chaps they needn't fear
"Cos we are only over here"
Then asked politely, "Please come
back
And will you please stay with the
pack!"

Just below the Solvay Hütte
There's an awkward bit to climb
And several people struggled there
So Fred put down a line
Arthur hauled them from the top
Bill pushed them from behind
Gordon tied on half way
up and merry quips was making
But its very hard to say
If this stopped or caused much shaking

This scene was snapped by Jim and
Chris
As each the crux did master
"The girls will be impressed by this
... 'though they'd have done it faster"

They stopped but for a moment
in the Solvay bivouac
Just long enough to take some steamy
pud
out of their packs
... But it was sadly long enough
for Gordon some more jokes to crack

Roger, rooting in a pocket
Abruptly shot up, like a rocket
There ... resting in his hand
Was clinking metal on a band
“Oh NO, Oh NO, this cannot be
Ann will be so annoyed with me
She may not even ever see
the funny side, ... it’s the car key”

And I McN said, “I know how it be
To be parted from your car key”
He looked at Colin pointedly
“It happened once to me”

Just above the Solvay Hütte
They finally hit ice
Where slithering all o’er the place
It wasn’t very nice

So they put on crampons all a quiver
... But it wasn’t cold that made them
shiver
They braced themselves against the
shock
of metal grating against rock
Teeth gritted ’gainst that awful feeling
The piercing sound of crampons
squealing

Just then John Donnelly appeared
Coming downwards ... rather weird
Something must be wrong, they feared
“I’ve been to the top
It isn’t too far
Just thought I’d pop
back to see how you are”
And with that back up he disappeared

And up they climbed, and on and on
And on and up and on
There were Iains and Jims
There was Colin and Tim

There were Alans and Rogers and
Johns
There was Chris, there was Gordon
And Daves in profusion
There was Harrold and Henry and
Hugh
There was Bruce, there was Brian
Keith, Graham and Stephen
There was Francis and Malcolm too
There was Bill and Ken and Alistairs
three
There was Denis and Robert and
Garrey
And of course out ahead
There was Arthur and Fred
At the back, were McI and McP

It was on the next bit
That the altitude hit
And suddenly some felt very unfit
Climbing mountains isn’t easy
When your stomach’s feeling queasy
Some retched, some coughed and some
went pale
Some moved as slowly as a snail
But to a man they soldiered on
Even though not feeling strong

In this they were led by Dave Wat
Who said, “This time, helicopter NOT”
And Tim, who’d helicopter fear
Said, “No chance, not for me THIS
year”

Malcom, the boffin, mid a fit of coffin’
Suddenly started to sway
He’d spotted a spider
And sat down beside her
“Now she’s a real beauty” did say

Jon Barnes staggered over
He wanted to look
“To check it out
we’ll need a book
We will have to take it back
to Glasgow .. put it in your sac”

So Malcy took his special pot
(The one with air holes in the top)
And doing just as he was bid
Popped spider in and sealed the lid

“I can’t see how we’ll get it home
In order to consult the tome
We have to fly back on a plane
A spider’d be hard to explain”

But Jon said, “no problem at all
I’ll put it in my cabin bag
It’s ok ... as you may recall
I did it once before with crabs”

Then to himself he added mutely
“WHEN I did it once before
The crabs got out, and rather cutely
Crawled around the cabin floor”

Feeling pukey slowed down their pace
So it was some hours till the last
reached the place
Where the route moves out onto the
North Face
And fixed ropes dangle from outer
space
But waiting there quite patiently
Were Arthur, Bill and John McP
(Joined now and then by John
Donnelly)

Up rope after rope they thrutched their
way
Grunting and groaning and cursing
away
Somehow they kept going – no further
delay
And the last one was welcomed on top
'round midday

Hip hip HOORAY!!

The first group ... who’d arrived at
eight
And hung around there half a day ...
Were very pleased, in their long wait
Of wrap-round hoods on their duvets

Now ... the thing about the Matterhorn
Its summit’s rather small

And so with all the lads adorned
There wasn’y space at all

In Switzerland’s the north top
The South’s in Italy
Squeezed in the middle in the drop’s
An iron cross, you see

In a guddle and conges-tion
There amassed the teaming throng
There were Iains and Jims
There was Colin and Tim
There were Alans and Rogers and
Johns
There was Chris, there was Gordon
And Daves in profusion
There was Harrold and Henry and
Hugh
There was Bruce, there was Brian
Keith, Graham and Stephen
There was Francis and Malcolm too
There was Bill and Ken and Alistairs
three
There was Denis and Robert and
Garrey
And of course, having led
There was Arthur and Fred
Not forgetting McI and McP

Presiding o’er this giant huddle
Harrold sorted out the muddle
Found a place for each to go
So they could take the team photo

The Daves were on the north peak
The south contained the Johns
Crammed in between, too tight to
squeek
The rest were hanging on

Chris E then, and Jimmy Smith
With cameras a-ready
Clambered up upon the cross
And held each other steady
From there they snapped more pictures
And immortalised the scene
A record for the website
To confirm that they had been

GLENMORE LADS ON TOP OF THE WORLD!

Fred said, "Well guys we cannot linger
Now's the time for your descender
Clip it on to your suspender
How to abseil, please remember"

So down the fixed ropes they reversed
This abseiling they had rehearsed
So they were making a pace snappy
Definitely demob happy

"Now lads it is a long way down
So please do take care"
Fred looked around him with a frown
"There are hazards everywhere"

No sooner had he said it, when
As though attracted by the dots
A mass of rocks fell round Hugh, then
bounced off his helmet ... lots and lots

All stood transfixed, their bodies
locked
As more fell down and nearly knocked
Them off the face. ... The mountain
mocked
But they stood still, completely
shocked

Then came a glint in Arthur's eye
"I feel a contraption coming on
A means to help us all get by
This dangerous spot ... let's get it
done"
Keen also to give it a try
Were Dave H, Henry P and John

And so with bivi bags and string
They made a sort of tunnel thing
And through it each one had to crawl
Protected there from the rockfall

Pitch after pitch they abseiled on
They clambered down and on
There were Iains and Jims
There was Colin and Tim
There were Alans and Rogers and
Johns

There was Chris, there was Gordon
And Daves in profusion
There was Harrold and Henry and
Hugh
There was Bruce, there was Brian
Keith, Graham and Stephen
There was Francis and Malcolm too
There was Bill and Ken and Alistairs
three
There was Denis and Robert and
Garrey
And of course out ahead
There was Arthur and Fred
At the back, were McI and McP

The first were back at half past four
No sooner were they through the door
Than Dave B found his mobile phone
And called home for the score

But they were much the stronger
... The trip down took much longer
For those who struggled near the back
And had a steamy pudding snack

It was nearly nine o' clock
When Fred saw in his motley flock
And when the very final group
Had jumped the Matterhorn's last hoop

That night the hütte was dancing free
Their bodies much too sore
But beer and wine and malt whiskey
Were had in cups galore

And Denis said, "It's only fair
I think to give you warning
Wild horses wouldn't even dare
To raise me early in the morning"

And so after a good long lay
They left the hütte late next day
Heading down
To Zermatt town
With a tea shop on the way

John Anderson had spotted it
When he was walking up
(He likes a place like this to sit
With cup of tea to sup)

When to the Bahnhof they returned
A celebratory meal they'd earned
So they had haggis, tatties and neeps
Then crashed out in exhausted sleep

When they returned to Glasgow
Feeling fit and rightly proud
The girls had put on quite a show
to welcome them. ...They said aloud

“Glenmore lads!

We are so very proud of you
You took the challenge and came
through

But we have something to tell too

For as you left us time alone
With nothing much to do
We made a trip to Pakistan
And there we climbed K2”

ner ner-ne-ner ner

CH, January 2005