

Mr Captain, Presidents Vice

Nice to see you – to see you.....
 Mr.Rabbit Captain of Huddersfield Golf Club,
 Visiting Rabbit Captains,
 Distinguished Guests and Rabbits all
 Welcome to dinner at Woodsome Hall.

Mr Captain, it's now your Rabbit Captain's pleasant task

To review the past season, but "Why?" you ask
 Have I decided, for better or worse,
 To formulate my speech in verse.

Well, quite simple is the reason.

After a quite long and busy season
 And despite help from Chris Hillaby and other blokes,
 I'm getting very low on jokes.

So Mr Captain, sincere thanks for your toast

To us Rabbits who are most
 Honoured that you've been able
 To join us here at our dinner table

But what a season, I have to say

April seems like yesterday
 When for our first friendly to Meltham we ventured.
 I recall my speech that night was censored
 For hints about a girl called Beryl
 When we'd played John's yellow peril.

At Fixby, The Heath, Bradley Hall and Longley

We were unvanquished – we played strongly
 But despite this best of starts unbeaten,
 The wheels came off against Cleckheaton.
 Where I arrived one hour overdue
 Lost in rush hour jams on the M six two
 And when I'd finally found my way there
 I was in no state to play there
 Poor Derek Haigh, my partner, tried to cope
 But there really wasn't any hope
 As I was firing all my balls
 Into trees or over walls.

Back to Fixby to secure a double

But we ended in all sorts of trouble
 Damn near a whitewash, I tell you boy
 If it hadn't have been for Mr.Stoy
 We'd have had NO wins to enjoy.

Visitors Wakefield were somewhat kinder

And some of our team played a blinder
 So honour, after last year's double mauling,
 Was restored and now the lads were calling
 For further blood when next we clashed

And so, with high inflated hopes

We bravely scaled the Dewsbury slopes
Harder than reckoned-we finished second
Again our victory hopes were dashed.

Away at Wakefield we'd a draw

Then back to winning ways once more
As to Outlane we played host
And of the six fours we won most

At Marsden, in the sunshine, the teams were mixed up

So neither win nor loss was fixed up
But your hitman joke, Paul, caused so much laughter
So I told it here just two nights after
When we welcomed Meltham here
And had a 3 – 1 win to cheer

With the last friendly here against West End

The Woodsome Rabbits had the best end
Continuing in winning ways
To the end of the summer days.

Back in April, a hand-picked Rabbits team

Ran rather badly out of steam
And were beaten by Past Captain's eight
Julian - I'll be there next year – just you wait.

On Rabbit Captain's Day in June we all were blessed

With weather of the very best
The sun burnt down from an azure sky
As England's World Cup team played Paraguay
But, still, thanks to all the Woodsome gentry,
We had a more than ample entry
And standing on the first as sentry
I watched the balls go long and high.

I decided that it was my role

To monitor progress hole by hole
And, though feeling somewhat nervous,
I pressed a brand new buggy into service
But by then there'd been libation
And much to yours truly's irritation
A mistake was made in navigation
I scratched the buggy – consternation
Woodsome threatening litigation
Pursuing me for reparation
Buggeration

But a special word for Stephen Hirst,

Who after hours in Scholes slaking his thirst
(And being thus for wear the worst)
Heard the news by phone that he'd come first.

When he learned of this sensation

"Stuff me", was his exclamation
 (I declined his invitation
 For such is not my inclination.)
 But swiftly donning tie and jacket
 And paying a taxi man a packet
 Steve arrived with a grin this size
 To collect his well-earned winner's prize.

Mr Captain, you have to hand it

To the Rabbits' resident bandit
 For carrying off the 5-club prize
 Another one with a grin this size

But this chap sometimes has it tough

He runs our league team – the serious stuff
 The League Team were up for promotion but
 At the very last match, 18th hole, last putt
 The hole just wasn't big enough.
 But praise is due for a well done job, son
 Let's have a clap for Andy Dobson

But, gentlemen, there's a new contender

For the title of Chief Handicap Bender
 He joined the Rabbits really late
 And claimed he played off twenty eight
 Well, we hadn't seen him drive,
 Till he won the Buck Rabbit scoring forty five
 He's not here tonight, he's had to fly
 With his work out to Dubai
 When he returns, he owes us all a whisky
 A clap please in his absence for Gerry Nowicki

This year we were really hope'n'

For increased entries in our Rabbits' Open
 But when it was all done and dusted
 Just fifty three pairs were what was mustered.
 The winners were two visiting tykes
 But for all his sterling work in making
 The Open still a worthwhile undertaking.
 Our thanks once more go to Alan Sykes.

In August, a season's high point was reached

And some historical defences were breached
 The Rabbits were in heaven - for them it was Hades
 We won 5 ½ to 1½ against the Woodsome Ladies.

And I will long remember the first of September,

When, despite a forecast most shitty,
 Twenty one Woodsome Rabbits, dressed in various habits
 Departed for Lancaster City.

The sun came through on the M62

And stayed with us all through the day
 We had a good hack round a beautiful track
 And Julian showed us the way
 He was the clear winner
 So after the dinner
 He took our new trophy away.
 He's the first to win the new Woodsome Rabbit
 So Julian, please step up again and grab it.

On the way back, though the journey was long,

There was a good deal of ribaldry, laughter and song
 At the end I stood up, as you do, to say "Thankers"
 To the driver, when all at once, for no reason, he threw on the anchors
 I flew backwards through the air, hit the screen with my head
 Cracked the glass top to bottom – I could have been dead.
 You'd have thought that the driver would have shown a bit more
 Concern for my state, as I lay on the floor
 But, no, he was from Barnsley and, surveying the damage,
 " They'll charge yer for that, lad" was all he could manage.

Now he who is last was also the first

I'm talking, once more, about young Stephen Hirst
 Who I'll ask now if he'll kindly step up
 As this year's winner of our Rabbits' Cup,

If he goes on like this, then the Tigers will choose him

With the consequence that the Rabbits will lose him
 Or he could go back to Scholes and start to sup again
 And then his handicap might go up again

And people ask me now it's done

After all the laughs and fun
 Whether in fact my golf's improved
 And how far my handicap has moved.

Well, I've practiced to destruction

I've had Mike and Deena's instruction
 I've even been videoed twice
 But still my handicap's plenty
 Bang on eight and twenty
 And I've still got a horrible slice.

Now to Julian Goodall

I think that we should all
 Give credit where credit is due.
 He's been efficient, discreet
 He has helped things run sweet
 And left me with little to do.

I can hear some chairs creaking

So I'll shortly stop speaking
 To carry on more would destroy things.
 Just to Julian I ought
 To say thanks again for your support
 And I know that next year you'll enjoy things.

There'll be some heckling and hooting

Jim and Thorpey saluting
 And generally taking the piss
 There'll be some frustration
 But more fun and elation
 And I'll tell you one thing and it's this

There's nothing mysterious

Just don't take it too serious
 And ensure that all's well when it ends
 For when the truth's out
 All it's really about
 Is playing some golf with your friends.

Now The Yorkshire Rabbits Golf Association

Is a few rungs up the ladder from my humble station
 But a distinguished Rabbit who's resident here
 Has been chosen as President this coming year
 He's already spent a year doing his stint on
 The County Committee. We're grateful and proud of you,
 Stand up Brian Hinton

And my thanks to Karen's staff and Will's team in the kitchen

Our hunger and thirst they requite
 At 9:30 – or later – they've been there to cater
 Often till deep in the night.

And of course, thanks to the GM, the one and only Mrs Mee

But one shouldn't do that publiclee
 So I aim to do it personallee
 When you lot aren't around to see.

Now I know that you are all asking the question

What am I doing about the succession?
 And you think I should now, before it's too late,
 Name the Rabbit Captain for 2008

To find the right man, it's no good urging

You have to wait for him emerging
 And after much consideration,
 Sleepless nights, deliberation
 Older vee younger generation
 We've got someone who will, someone who can
 Gentlemen, Mike Coupland is your man.

Mr Captain, Sir, "Tell us a joke" is the cry

So with your permission, I'll have one last try.

The Ballad of the Blind Deaf Dendrologist

(A traditional folk tale, put into verse by Rupert Wilson)

Among our company this evening there's a chap called Mike

Past Rabbit Captain from Wakefield, an affable tyke
Runs a joinery firm and he's very good
Making a living from working with wood.

I heard that just a couple of years ago

The business took off, really started to grow.
It was growing so fast, like real wildfire
So Mike decided to employ a new buyer.

"We need a man for good prices, a man who could

Tell the difference between all the kinds of wood
A man who could quickly and with great ease
Really tell the wood from the trees".

So they looked around, asked the lads

Wakefield Express, classified ads.
But the job description didn't find a match
None of the applicants came up to scratch.

Mike was beginning to feel a bit sick

When in walked a chap with a big long white stick
And sunglasses, who said
"Hi, I'm called Jeff. And I'm not only blind, I'm also stone deaf"

Mike said "How the bloody hell?"

But Jeff went on " but I can tell
All types of wood just by their smell"
"And to prove to you that I'm thus able,
Please put some wood out on the table"

So they all went out and fetched wood from Mike's yard

Some was soft and some was hard.
Mahogany, sycamore, cedar and pine
Oak, ash and willow all laid out in a line.

Jeff sniffed at English wood, Scottish wood, some from abroad

Cheap wood, expensive wood, pieces of board.
There was holly wood and elderberry
Swedish larch and planks of cherry
Beech and rosewood, peach and lime

And Jeff got it dead right every time

Mike just stood there shaking his head

"It's the daftest thing I've ever seen
 But I've got just one more test," he said
 Go and fetch Big Annie from 't works canteen.

So they brought in Annie – Mike said "Now we'll see if he's able.

Lay her arse up upon the table."
 And Jeff, unseeing, unhearing, bent down, sniffed, shook his head.
 "I'm a little uncertain, please turn it over" he said.

Mike said "That won't change very much

But now Jeff, seeing nowt, hearing nowt, was sniffing her crutch.
 He asked himself "What can I tell,
 From this quite unusual combination of smell?"

Then he smiled, cried "Wait!" and stood up straight

And made himself four feet taller.
 He said "Look here old chap, that's not new wood, it's scrap
 It's an old shithouse door from a trawler."

Now the dinners season beckons

And my missus reckons
 That I'll add a few stone to my weight
 But it's an honour I'm wrapped in
 To be your Rabbit Captain
 So to one and all, thanks – it's been great!

