



THE
STORY
REPUBLIC

Thirteen Jollifs & Other Stories

Tales of Liskeard, Looe & Polperro

LISKEARD TOWN RIOTS by Keith Sparrow*

It's a wild old place is our Liskeard Town,
There's always someone fer startin' a riot,
You never quite know what's about to go down,
But one things for sure, it'll never be quiet!

You could say the people are easily riled
(We do like a protest it has to be said)
but whereas some towns are all mealy and mild,
Round here we've a tendency to see red
over what might to you seem a trivial matter

See, riots to us come as easy as breathin'
Why, we 'ad one last night
Over whether believin' in God was a reason
why folk shouldn't drink!
Well...you should've seen Tom, he didn't half cause a stink

He emptied his pint over one of them maidens
That shout about temperance,
and hate fornicatin'
(at least that's what Old Tom reckons
and I s'pose 'ee should know - his old lady's one)

And then there was all o' them refugee Belgians,
Comin' round here with their fancy ideas about
'Moules mariniere' - tha's mussels to you, 'case you doesn't speak French
And they cook 'em in wine and serve em with chips!
Chips!!
With mussels??
Cooked in wine??!!

Well...you should've seen Sally, 'er face was a picture
She marched up the Town 'all an' quoted 'em scripture -
"Thou shalt not serve mussels with chips!
Now put them damn Belgians back on a ship down at Looe,
Or else there's no tellin' what else I might do!"

Of course, then it all 'ad to kick off, and proper
Old Bill even took him a swing at a copper!
Now me, I confess I weighed in with the Flem's,
I'm partial to moules mariniere as it goes
So i bopped Sally's old man on the end of his nose
And shouted 'Vive La France! at the top of my voice
And yeah, I know Belgium isn't in France
But I tell 'ee I didn't have much of a choice
Cause I haven't a clue what a Belgian would say...
They all speak the same lingo anyway!

Anyway, I better be off and away -
I'm booked for a riot at Mr Moon's place
His daughter's been flashing her cash around town
Trouble is, it ain't 'er's, so it's all goin' down!
Later boy!

*This poem is a work of affectionate fiction, but it's true that Liskeard in the 1800's had a thriving population who were very vociferous about any contentious matters in the town. Riots and demonstrations were a part of everyday life, including incidents involving the Temperance movement and the arrival of a group of Belgian refugees in the town, both of which are referenced in the poem, along with a local scandal about a Hotelier's daughter. KS

Liskeard



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