

Horace's song

A valley man, a cycling fan
was born on Christmas Day –
Horace Hirst of Cockley Cote
knew the country ways
like hens for eggs and rabbit stew
and hen for Christmas dinner too.
His father died when he was three.
He went to school at Wilberlee.

He cycled up, he cycled down,
he even dreamt in bed
of pushing pedals round and round
from Tiding Field to Shred.

At Wilberlee owd Arrin reigned
with cane to warm your hands
but Horace Hirst of Cockley Cote
thought walk to school was grand.
On top o' walls, when snow was thick
he'd do the journey double-quick.
He'd warm hissen ont' cinder can,
our valley man, our cycling fan.

He cycled up, he cycled down,
past bullocks, ewes and lambs,
his pedals going round and round
from Tyas Lane to Wham.

On summer days he'd take his bike,
head off to Sunny Vale
or take a pedal-powered hike
to Harrogate or Leeds.
Leavin' school to work at mill
meant cycling up and down t' hill.

For holidays – well as he'd say –
'Blackpool's just a ride away!'

He cycled up, he cycled down
and never owned a car.
He pushed his pedals round and round
from Bradshaw Lane to Spa.

Now boys are boys and girls are girls
so courtin' came reet soon
and Horace Hirst he cast his eye
on Ann who worked the loom
They went for walks and out for days
and giggled at the village plays –
it wasn't long before they wed
int' chapel on the hill at Shred.

He cycled up, he cycled down –
he never needed fuel.
His pushed his pedals round and round
from Moorside Lane to Pule.

And even when it tipped it down
he'd bike to feasts and teas
'cos Horace was the kind o' chap
who'd share a joke or three.
A lifelong fan o' Slawit Band,
this kindly barm-pot of a man
would march behind to brassy beats
and dance and sing int' streets.

He cycled up, he cycled down –
he loved his daily hill,
that pushing pedals round and round
from Cockley Cote to mill.

Now Easter time was bonnet time
when Horace faced a test
'cos everyone expected him
to make the very best:
an Easter chicken on his head –
you pulled a string, it laid an egg;
a carousel that turned and swayed
while horses danced a serenade.

He cycled up, he cycled down –
he cycled all about,
he pushed his pedals round and round
from Huck Hill Lane to Scout.

Though Horace was a sprightly man
even they grow old.
He kept his bike int' owd coal hole
and rode through heat and cold.
With shopping bags ont' handlebars
he had to dodge those bull-bar cars
and then one day he passed away
so now he rides on God's highway.

Horace Hirst of Cockley Cote
is cycling in the sky.
He speeds along with fiery spokes
a pedalling star on high,
a pedalling star on high.

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