

THE CALVERTON PLOUGH PLAY (AS AT 2014)

(MAIN SOURCE: CROPWELL PLOUGHBOYS' PLAY 1890)

CAST (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

BOLD TOM / TOM FOOL	MARLING NED
RECRUITING SERGEANT	FARMER'S MAN
RIBBONER	DAME JANE
LADY BRIGHT AND GAY	BEELZEBUB
THRESHING BLADE	DOCTOR
HOPPER JOE / SANKEY BENNY	

Enter TOM FOOL, alone.

TOM In comes I, bold Tom,
A brisk and lively young fellow.
I have come to taste of your best beef and ale,
They tell me is so ripe and so mellow.
Good evening, ladies and gentlemen all,
It's Plough Monday tonight, that makes Tom so bold as to call.
But don't take in all I have got to say,
There's plenty more lads and lasses on the way.
Some can dance and some can sing,
And by your leave they shall come in.
Oking, poking, France and Spain,
The Recruiting Sergeant just the same.

Enter RECRUITING SERGEANT.

SERGEANT In comes I, the Recruiting Sergeant,
I have just arrived at here.
I have orders from the King to enlist all jolly fellows
That follow horse, cart or plough.
Tinkers, tailors, pedlars, nailers, all to my advance,
The more I hear the fiddle play, the better I can dance.

TOM Faith, can thee dance? I can dance, sing or say.
If you begin to dance, I shall quickly march away.

Enter RIBBONER.

RIBBONER In comes I, who has lost my mate,
Drooping tears hang down my face,
Pity my condition!
I do declare,
For a false young girl I am in despair.

Enter LADY BRIGHT AND GAY.

LADY Behold the Lady Bright and Gay,
Good fortune and sweet charms.
How scornfully I have been thrown away,
Right out of my true love's arms.
He swears if I don't wed with him,
Which you will understand,
He'll enlist him for a soldier,
And go to some foreign land.

SERGEANT Come all ye lads that has a mind for enlisting,
List and do not be afraid.
With your hats so nicely dressed in,
Likewise kiss the pretty maid.
Mr Gladstone ain't afraid,
If along with me you'll go,
Scarlet jacket, silver braid,
We shall make a gallant show.

(To Ribboner).

Are you free-hearted and willing?
On your hat I pin this ribbon.
In your hand I place this shilling.

RIBBONER Thank you, kind Sergeant, for your offer,
If I stay longer I may fare worse.
Dash my old wig if I will grieve any longer
For this proud and saucy lass.

LADY Since my love is listed, and entered volunteer,
I neither mean to sigh for him, or shed one single tear.

TOM Does thou love me, my pretty fair maid?

LADY Yes, Tommy, to my sorrow.

TOM When shall be our wedding day?

LADY Tomorrow, love, tomorrow!

(All take hold of hands and sing.)

ALL They make bands and we shake hands,
And Tommy, love, tomorrow.

Enter THRESHING BLADE.

THRESHING BLADE In comes I, old Threshing Blade,
All you good people ought to know
My old dad learnt me this trade
Just ninety years ago.
I have threshed in this part of the country,
I have threshed in this part too.
And I will thrash you, young Tommy, before I go.

Enter HOPPER JOE.

HOPPER JOE In comes I, old Hopper Joe.
I can either plough, sow, reap or mow,
And I hope the Master will bestow
All he can afford in his hopper O!
Not only that, I am also Sankey Benny.

ALL Sankey!

HOPPER JOE I have three or four yards of black and white tape
I will sell you for a penny.

TOM Sank, me old lad, me old marrow,
What have you got in the old hardware line?
Anything but soft soap and treacle?

HOPPER JOE Them's just the two things that I have not got.
I'll call on you a week last Tuesday.

TOM Thank you, you old rag bag.

ALL Rag bag!

Enter MARLING NED.

NED In comes I, old Marling Ned,
I have not been here for a bit.
I turns the soil to make it rich,
And covers it in ... fertilizer.

Enter FARMER'S MAN.

FARMER'S MAN In comes I, the Farmer's Man.
Can't you tell by the whip in my hand?
If there was no Farmer's Man, folk would clam.
I turn the furrow upside down,
And hardly make no baulk nor bend,
And to my horses I attend.

ALL Gee woah, boxer!

Enter DAME JANE.

DAME JANE In comes I, Dame Jane,
With a neck as long as a crane.
Dib-dab over the meadow,
Once I was a blooming maid,
Now I am a downright old widow.
Long time have I sought thee,
And now I have caught thee.
Tommy, take the child.

TOM The child, Jane?
It's no child of mine.

Who told you to bring it here?

DAME JANE The overseer of the parish told me to bring it to the biggest fool I could find.
And I think you be him,
For its eyes, its nose, its cheeks, its chin,
It's as much like you as it ever did grin.

TOM Is it a boy or a girl?

DAME JANE It's a girl.

TOM Well, mine is all boys.
Take it and swear it to the parish pump, you old rag bag.

ALL Rag bag!

Enter **BEELZEBUB**.

BEELZEBUB In comes I, Beelzebub.
Over my shoulder I carry my club.
In my hand a dripping pan,
Don't you think I'm a jolly old man?
Well, if you don't, I do.
Is there any old gal who can stand here afore me?

DAME JANE I think I can.
My head is made or iron.
My body made of steel.
My hands and feet are knuckle bone.
I think nobody can make me feel ... pal.

BEELZEBUB If your head is made of iron,
Your body made of steel,
Your hands and feet are knuckle bone,
I think I can make you feel old, gal!

(Knocks Dame Jane down.)

TOM Oh, Beelzy, Beelzy, what hast thou done?
Thou hast killed the old woman,
And lamed my only son.
Five pounds for a doctor!

DOCTOR *(Off)* I'll not come in for less than ten.

TOM Ten pounds for a doctor!

Enter **THE DOCTOR**.

DOCTOR In comes I the doctor.

TOM You the doctor?

DOCTOR Yes, I the doctor.

TOM How came you to be the doctor?

DOCTOR I have travelled for it.

TOM Where have you travelled?

DOCTOR England, Ireland, France and Spain,
Fireside to bedside,
Bedside to fireside,
And back to doctor old England again.
I've eaten many a pound of pork pie in my time,
Which makes me so stout and my face to shine.

TOM Ah. But what diseases can you cure?

DOCTOR I can cure ...

ALL ... the hipsy, the pipsy,
The palsy and the gout.
The pains within
And the pains without.

DOCTOR I can draw a leg,
I can set a tooth.
Why, I can even bring the dead back to life again
In sunshine and in rain.

TOM Well, you do seem a very clever young man.
Perhaps you should try your skill.

DOCTOR Thank you, Sir, and so I will.
But first I must have a feel ... of the old woman's pulse.

(Grabs hold of Dame Jane's leg.)

My but it does tick exceeding fast,
It's nineteen times to the tick of my watch once.
She's in a very low way.
She'll not get a deal lower unless there's a hole dug for her.
I shall give her a drop of my whiff-whaff.

(Administers the whiff-whaff.)

And then a blow on the head with my tiff-taff.

(Hits Jane on the head with a mallet.)

It's no good.
I shall have to give her one of my pills.
She is to take one in the morning,
One in the evening,
And swallow the whole box at supper time.
These will do her soul the power of good.
These will cleanse her bones
And purify her blood.

But wait!

ALL Wait?

DOCTOR The old woman is not dead!

ALL Not dead?

DOCTOR No! She is merely in a trance.

ALL Merely in a trance?

DOCTOR And if she can dance, then we can sing,
So raise her up and let's begin.

ALL sing Good master and good mistress
As you sit by your fire,
Remember us poor Plough Boys
Who plough through mud and mire.
The mire it is so deep,
The water is so clear,
We thank you for your Christmas box,
And a pint of your best beer.

(Take collection and any other business.)

ALL sing Good master and good mistress
As you sit by your fire,
Remember us poor Plough Boys
Who plough through mud and mire.
We thank you for civility
And what you've given us here.
We wish you all a very good night,
And a Happy New Year.