

The Ballad of the Boar

Contributed by Robert Minchin
Saturday, 24 September 2005
Last Updated Friday, 15 September 2006

The morning air was crisp and fair
The land was hid by new snowfall
The lord for hunting hounds did call
And bid his huntsmen to prepare

Out they did ride that wintertide
And hunted low and over hill
Their joy of hunting to fulfil
And to rejoice in knightly pride

When on the moor their hearts did soar
And hunting horns they well did sound
For on that wintry hunting ground
They spied afar a great wild boar

On spurred the knights, what noble sight
Of colours and of bright array
Out in the fields that winter's day
A noble boar to put to flight

He ran full quick through forests thick
The knights his aim was to confound
But close behind him hooves did pound
Till in a thicket he did stick

The noble lord then drew his sword
And from his horse he did alight
To take the boar in manly fight
And to his honour bring reward

The boar did start and forward dart
His tusk were sharp as any spear
But still the lord did know no fear
Nor troubles cross his noble heart

He forward came with all his fame
The boar's fell glance he did defy
He said that one of them must die
And swore it by his very name

The knight stood tall yet he seemed small
When that great boar stood close beside
So many worried that his pride
Did come before a mighty fall

Then anger white for his sad plight
Upon the noble boar did fall
And loudly he did make his call
As to the knight he took the fight

The shield was low to stop his blow
The sword was plunged towards his heart
Yet when the combatants did part
The knight's blood on the ground did flow

It burst from high on wounded thigh
And swift and scarlet did it run
Until beneath the winter's sun
The lord on that cold ground did lie

The knights around did stand their ground
As in again the boar did dart
And drove his tusk into his heart
To fill the hills with mourning sound

And then away to their dismay
The boar once more did swiftly fly
All heedless of their sorrowed cry
As to the woods he made his way

They bore their lord all drenched with blood
Back to his castle standing fair
And to his daughter waiting there
To tell her that he lay now dead

Then mournful cry was heard on high
And in the village standing near
The peasants knew a rising fear
That their protector dead did lie

For who would take the sword to make
The land safe from the monstrous foe
They cried out in their frightened woe
“One must be found, for all our sake”

Then his sharp sword his daughter bared
With cry to youths of all good will
That he who should that great boar kill
Would have the lordship – if they dared

Then up stood Ben, a farmer's son
Like to the daughter well in age
Who in the Keep had been a page
Already she his heart had won

And so this guard with armour hard
And shield and sword they did array
Until he looked a knight most gay
When sat on horse in castle yard

Not long to bide, for he did ride
Out on the very morrow's morn
To kill the boar as he had sworn
And make the lady his own bride

And on the moor just as before
His quarry true he did espy
But now the beast chose not to fly
For pride had filled the foolish boar

And to the horse he set his course
His tusks were sharp and gleaming white
But neither horse nor knight took fright
With lowered lance they struck with force

Pierced through the boar gave out a roar
And thrashed until the lance did break
But Ben stood clear, for his life's sake
Until the beast lay on the floor

Then climbed he down onto the ground
And drawing sword he close did tread
Then with a sweep took off its head
And to his horse the body bound

So he rode back along the track
That lead him to the castle gate
And as the evening grew full late
He saw once more those towers black

Then they did feast upon the beast
That had their noble lord laid low
The daughter then did bid him know
That in her heart he was not least

Then joyful cry was raised on high
From village came the most and least
To join in with the happy feast
Their new protector to descry

He was made knight and lord by right
And husband to the daughter fair
And on their wedding evening there

They lit the night with fireworks bright