

## The Runcorn Ferry

By Marriott Edgar

On the banks of the Mersey, o'er on Cheshire side,  
Lies Runcorn that's best known to fame  
By Transporter Bridge as takes folks over t'stream,  
Or else brings them back across same.

In days afore Transporter Bridge were put up,  
A ferryboat lay in the slip,  
And old Ted the boatman would row folks across  
At per tuppence per person per trip.

Now Runcorn lay over on one side of stream,  
And Widnes on t'other side stood,  
And, as nobody wanted to go either place,  
Well, the trade wasn't any too good.

One evening, to Ted's superlative surprise,  
Three customers came into view:  
A Mr and Mrs Ramsbottom it were,  
And Albert, their little son, too.

'How much for the three?' Mr Ramsbottom asked,  
As his hand to his pocket did dip.  
Ted said: 'Same for three as it would be for one,  
Per tuppence per person per trip.'

'You're not charging tuppence for that little lad?'  
Said Mother, her eyes flashing wild.  
'Per tuppence per person per trip', answered Ted,  
'Per woman, per man, or per child'.

'Fivepence for three, that's the most that I'll pay',  
Said Father, 'Don't waste time in talk'.  
'Per tuppence per person per trip', answered Ted,  
'And them, as can't pay, 'as to walk!'

'We can walk, an' all', said Father. 'Come Mother,  
It's none so deep, weather's quite mild'.  
So into the water the three of them stepped:  
The father, the mother, the child.

The further they paddled, the deeper it got,  
But they wouldn't give in, once begun.  
In the spirit that's made Lancashire what she is,  
They'd sooner be drowned than done.

Very soon, the old people were up to their necks,  
And the little lad clean out of sight.  
Said Father: 'Where's Albert?' And Mother replied:  
'I've got hold of his hand, he's all right!'

Well, just at that moment, Pa got an idea  
And, floundering back to old Ted, He said:  
'We've walked half-way. Come, tak' us the rest  
For half-price -- that's a penny a head.'

But Ted wasn't standing for none of that there,  
And, making an obstinate lip,  
'Per tuppence per person per trip', Ted replied,  
'Per trip, or per part of per trip'.

'All right, then', said Father, 'let me tak' the boat,  
And I'll pick up the others half-way.  
I'll row them across, and I'll bring the boat back,  
And thruppence in t'bargain I'll pay'.

T'were money for nothing. Ted answered: 'Right-ho',  
And Father got hold of the sculls.  
With the sharp end of boat towards middle of stream,  
He were there in a couple of pulls.

He got Mother out -- it were rather a job,  
With the water, she weighed half a ton --  
Then, pushing the oar down the side of the boat,  
Started fishing around for his son.

When poor little Albert came up to the top,  
His collars were soggy and limp.  
And, with holding his breath at the bottom so long,  
His face were as red as a shrimp.

Pa took them across, and he brought the boat back,  
And he said to old Ted on the slip:  
'Wilt' row me across by me'sen?' Ted said:  
'Aye, at per tuppence per person per trip'.

When they got t'other side, Father laughed fit to bust.  
He'd got best of bargain, you see.  
He'd worked it all out, and he'd got his own way,  
And he'd paid nobbut fivepence for three!