



ST JUST BUS - a dialect sketch written by Edgar Rees

A local saying in West Penwith, still used today, is 'Always room for one more, like the St Just bus.' This incident portrays the departure of the last bus to St Just on Saturday evening prior to the Feast. When the curtain rises Jan - the driver of the horse bus is sitting on a shaft of the vehicle enjoying a pipe of 'bacca. Then man No 1 comes along and talks as follows:

- 1st Man. Any room on th' buus, es'aw, Jan?
 Jan. Room! O'coose 'ee es. Edd'nt nobody t'al in'en yet.
 1st Man. Lookin' like rain, ed'ne, Jan?
 Jan. (Gruffly) Iss! Straim ob'm cumin' down drekkly. Allus blong to enty down cats an' dogs Faist'n Saardaay ebenin.
 1st Man. Iss! So'aw do, Jan. Well, I think I'll git in an' set meself down, an 'ave a bit o' smawk like. Spose thee'se abben gaut heef inch o'roll t'spaare, 'av'ee, Capp'n Jan?
 Jan. Iss! Me son, bleeve I 'ave. (takes out a twist of Roll, breaks off a piece and gives it to the man who then gets into the bus. An old woman, laden with parcels, comes along and enters into conversation as follows):
 1st woman. (Panting) Anny room in th' buus, es'aw, Jan 'enry? (places package on the ground).
 Jan. Room! Why you're awnly th' secon' wan cum so far.
 1st woman. Aw! Well, I'm sum glad fur that'n, fur I shuss'nt furgit laast Faist'n Saardaay in a 'urry.
 Jan. Ow's that'n, me dear?
 1st woman. Cos'aw wus 'entin' down cats an' dogs proper, an th' warter wus runnin' out o.me like th' revvar Jardin.
 Jan. Aw! Well, thas nawthen' new fur ee do blong t'be like that Faist'n Saardaay ebenin' doant 'ee, now?
 1st woman. Iss, yoy, bleeve aw do cum think pon'en now.
 Jan. Gaut'aw braa menny parcels, aben'ee me dear?
 1st woman. Why, iss, cos that stinkin' auld erran' boy wudd'n carr wan o'em farr me t'al.
 Jan. Praps thee'se dedd'n gove'n no Chresmus box laast 'ear?!
 1st woman. (Indignantly) Chresmus box! Chresmus box! Watevvar nex' will'ee be tellin' of? Nobody doant nevvar gove me no Chresmus box t'al. Why, I 'ad a braa 'ard job to git'aw Halmanac frum th' shop where I blong t'ave me things from.
 Jan. Wat do yer auld man blong t'gov'ee'n?
 1st woman. Gove me? Ugh! Why, th' vurry same thing every 'ear. A ppace of 'is mind, to be sure!
 Jan. (laughs) Ugh! Ugh! Ugh!

1st woman. Well, better git inan' setty down 'fore th' crowd cum, sponse. (Picks up parcels and enters the bus. Almost immediately man No. 2 arrives on the scene.)

2nd man. Ebenin' Jan, anny room in th' buus, es'aw, me son?

Jan. Room! Why, edd'n 'ardly nobody in'en so fur.

2nd man. Aw! Thas'aw good job'n. Thot I wus a bit pon th' late side, like.

Jan. Laate! Why I shaant be startin' 'fur heef 'our, you.

2nd man. Heef 'our, Jan? Ef thas th' caase'n, I'll gone in th' Firs' an' Laast fur 'nuther pint, bleeve.

Jan. Naw! Naw! Me son, thee's 'ad nuff t'drink fur wun ebenin. Taake an' git in th' buus an' set'ee down quiet-like, now.

2nd man. Simmin' t'me like a dirty night, doant'ee. Jan?

Jan. Iss, well, et do allus blong t'be that Faist'n Saardaay night.

2nd man. Aw! Well, I'll git in th' buus an' 'ave a bit o'smawk, recon. Abb'n gaut a bit o'twist to speer, sponse, Jan?

Jan. Think I'm made o'bacca do'ee'n? Thee's th' secon' wan bin cadgin' ove me this ebenin. (Hands an inch of roll to the man who after receiving it, rolls it in the palm of his hand, and enters the bus. Close upon his heels comes woman No. 2, also laden with parcels.)

2nd woman. Any room in th' buus, es'aw, Jan? (Looks in the bus).

Jan. Room! Iss, any amount o'room to be suure. Why, I edd'n goin' fur a braa spur yet.

2nd woman. I'm sum glad fur that'n. I was feerd there wudd'n be no sait fur me t'al, an I cuss'nt stan' up all the way at my time o' life.

Jan. Well, the's waint 'ave no stannin' up to do this time, me dear.

2nd woman. Well, I 'ad to las' 'ear this time, an I wadd'n no good fur nawthin' fur a braa long time afterwards.

Jan. The's leff'n a bit late, sponse?

2nd woman. Laate! Laate! Naw, I wadd'n late t'al, t'was awnly they auld toads in there (pointing) that was eerly, zaakly th' same as they es tonite.

1st woman. (Indignantly) 'ere! ere! Maary Jaane Neckells, don't you go callin' me an auld toad now, fur thas zaakly wat you are yourself.

2nd woman. Oll rite, Susan Ann Jinkin, you waat till I git ith' buus, I'll gove'ee Cambern t'wance!

(She gets in after much opposition, and difficulty with her parcels; a row beginning immediately. The men interfere without success, when Jan comes along and says, "Now look 'ere you wemmen, ef thee's duss'n stop yur row an rakit t'wance I shall tarn'ee awl out, then thee's waint git 'ome fur th' nite." The noise quietens down for a second or two, but when the 2nd woman goes for the men, telling them to "Puut there stinkin' auld pipes away", another racket occurs, being eventually quelled by the driver, Jan).

Several men and women all laden with parcels now appear on the scene and scramble to be the first to enter the bus. Immediately they are seated a youngish man wearing a broad-brimmed hat comes along carrying a large-sized trunk on his shoulders. He addresses the driver as follows:

- 3rd man. Hullo! Capp'n Jan, 'ow are'ee after all this time'n?
Jan. (Looking hard) Lemme see, now. Joe Nankervis's booy, arnt'ee, me son?
3rd man. Iss, Jan, thas me, bleeve.
Jan. Gove'us yur 'and'n. (Shakes hands) Ben away braa many 'ear; aben'ee, me son?
3rd man. Iss, Jan, over ten 'ear, now, an' I thot I'd like cum 'ome far Faist, an' see th' auld plaace a bit.
Jan. Thas rite, boy, jump in there, me son, plenty room far'ee inside.

(The trunk is then placed on top of the bus, when one of the women remarks, "Law! Wat a heavy geer box ee es! I'm moast feer'd ee'l thro' th' roof!" Another woman says, 'Watevvar es in'n, wundar? Etc., etc. Immediately the young man gets inside the bus he is bombarded with questions from the women, "Married, spose?" " 'ow many cheldren'n?" "Wheere's th' wife to'n? etc. not giving him time to reply, but when he does get half a chance, he replies, "Naw, I edd'nt married so far", the women remarking "Well, thee's gaut a maid somewhere, I'd know", etc.

By this time a third woman has come on the scene, she is laden with parcels, carrying a baby and leading a child carrying a doll, teddy bear, and making an awful din by blowing musical toys. She says to the child:

- 3rd woman. (Sharply) Ush-up that row an' rakit, you little nuisance, you.
(to Jan) Aw! Jan, me dear...
(to child) Ef thee's duss'nt 'ush-up that noise t'wance I'll gove'ee sum scat in th' chacks.
(to Jan) Aw! Jan, me dear...

Dropping her parcels, she gives the troublesome child a proper scat causing her to yell lustily. The mother then says to the driver:

- 3rd woman: Aw! Jan, me dear, I'm sum glad to git 'ere. Thot I shud miss me buus tonite.
Jan. Tes oll rite, mawther, thee's jis in time, I'm now goin' stable fur th' osses. Jump in, me dear.



- 3rd woman. (Looking into bus) Tes simmin' full up to me, Jan.
 Jan. Aw! No, tes allus room in th' auld buus far wan moore, as you'd know, me 'ansum. (Goes out for the horses).
 3rd woman. Picking up her parcels she endeavours to enter bus but is pushed away by those inside who shout, "Tes no room far'ee 'ere t'al"
 3rd woman. (Angrily) No room, ed'na!? I'll soon leev'ee know ef there edd'n no room inside. (To the child) "ere, Em-lee, 'old th' baby far me a mennet, an' puut they auld noisy things away t'wance."
 Emily. (Half crying) Well, mawther, wat'ee gove'm to me far'n?
 3rd woman. (Warmly) Gove'ee! I'll gove'ee anuther scat ef thee's duss'n behave yerself fitty.
 (To 2nd woman) Now, look 'ere, Maary Jaane Neckells, I duss'n want to shaw'ee up, but you know thee's nevvar gove me back th' munny I paid fur yur fare 'ome t'uther daay.
 2nd woman. (Indignantly) Well, Lezzie Rechards, of awl th' sauce I evvar 'eerd! Why, that wus th' munny thee's 'ad o'me to puut a fitty dress pon th' back o'yur forthy maid there.
 Emily. Forthy! I edd'nt heef so forthy as yur auld cheel.
 3rd woman. Thas rite, me dear.
 (To 2nd woman) Well, Maary Jaane Neckells, there's wan thing I can tell'ee. I do allus kip me children clane an' tidy-like.
 3rd woman. Iss! Lezzie Rechards...pon uther people's munny, too!
 2nd woman. Look 'ere, Maary Jaane Neckells, I wait 'ave no back answers from you, you know...fur thee's wus awnly dragg'd up!
 2nd woman. (Indignantly) Dragg'd up?! Me, dragg'd up!
 3rd woman. Iss! An' y'ur auld mawther awnly sold Lempots up Carpuus Cristy Feer.
 2nd woman. An' wat ded y'ur auld mawther sill'n? Why, clidgy... an' made weth 'er baistly auld 'ands, too!
 3rd woman. Oll rite, Maary Jaane Neckells, laive me puut me 'and on'ee a mennet.
 2nd woman. (Fiercely) 'ere, lem'me git out o' th buus.

(Gets out quickly and kicks some of the parcels lying on the ground)

I'll leev'ee know, Lezzie Rechards, if thee'sl lif' y'ur 'and gin me. They close and are encouraged on by those in the bus, shouting 'Go far'n Maary Jaane'... 'Go far'n Lezzie!', etc. Emily also dances around the pair, excitedly clapping her hands, saying: 'Go far'n mawther, gove she Cambern, saame's faither gove you uther daay!' Jan then appears on the scene with the horses and says to the others,



'Bless me sawl ef they edd'n 'at it agin.' To the scrappers ' Ere! ere! you wemmen, thee'sl friten th' osses waay in a mennet.' When he endeavours to part them, they both pitch into him, causing him to say 'Oll rite you vixens, I'll drive off and laave'ee behind.' Whilse Jan is harnessing the horses, the child, Emily, puts the baby and all the parcels quickly into the bus; and pulling her mother by her dress, cries 'Quick! Quick! Mawther, th' buus es goin now and pulls her mother into the bus. 2nd woman then tries to enter bus but is pushed away by the inmates crying out, 'No! no! Maary Jaane Neckells, theee's eddn't cumin' in 'ere t'maake anuther row and rakit.' And whilst she is still struggling to enter the bus, Jan whips up the horses, leaving the second woman crying out 'Stop! Stop! Stop!' and, whilst she is running behind, the inmates throw out all her parcels to her, saying 'Ere you are, you auld vixen, 'ere y'ur auld parcels.'

