

Geordie Jooks an the Sand Boat.

A true adventure o bairns playin doon the beach on thair schuil holidays.

Geordie shauchelt his bare feet throu the saft warm sand as he gaed his wey along the front sands o Fisherraw an he felt braw guid. Abuin his heid, he cuid feel the sun bleazin oot a cloudless blue sky an, cled in juist his cutty breeks an a seemit, he felt he wis juist pairt o the beach – pairt o the hail place. This wis the kinna wather he haed aye dreamed o for the schuil holidays.



The tide wis oot an the sands sloped doon in a canny brae tae the sea bed that wis itsel gey near flet aw the wey oot tae the mussel scap. Ayont the scap, Geordie seen the sea like a flet sheet o licht blue gless wi the twa paps o Inchkeith sittin on its horizon an the hills o Fife shimmerin in the backgrund wi the heat. Oot on the scap itsel, he cuid see a wifie as she bent aside her creel fillin it wi the day's pauchle o mussels an aw the time twa three sea-maws birlid around in the sky abuin her heid.

As Geordie got back tae whaur his freends wis playin, he cuid see they war sair wrocht diggin oot a muckle big hole juist abuin whaur the sands jyned the sea bed an he thocht that, bi the looks o't, it wis gaun tae be a gret big booster o a hole.

“Sae ye fund a bit, Geordie!” cried Big Rab. “C'mon well! Gie's a haund for the tide'll be here in about an oor at the maist.”

“Ay.” said Geordie, lookin doon at the bit wuid he haed fund an thinkin it wad mak a better rifle nor a sheil.

There wis fower ither laddies forbye Geordie diggin oot the hole thon day. His wee brither Wattie wis thare wi Wee Jock, Jinky an Big Rab. They aw haed bits o wuid, like Geordie's, that they yaised tae dig oot the sand an dab it intae a dyke around the edge o the hole. The hole itsel wis shaped like a boat an pynted oot tae the sea. The plan wis tae mak the dyke as thick an strang as they cuid tae keep the water oot efter the tide cam in, for they war aw ettlin tae bide in the hole an let on it wis thair boat. The bits o wuid wad then be yaised for oars, or guns in case thair boat wis set on bi onybody or bi onythin.

“No bad at aw!” tcocht Geordie when they haed it feinished, lookin roond an gjein the hail boat a guid lookin ower.

“Ay, this’ll dae fine.” said Jinky, “But listen, dae ye’s no think we shuid pit some yackers an big stanes roond aboot the ouside o the dyke? It might help tae keep the sand frae bein washed awa sae quick.”

Big Rab taen a gliff oot tae the water an said, “That’s a guid idea Jinky. A doot we’ve juist aboot got time tae dae that an nae mair.”

The sea wisnae ony mair nor six or seeven fit awa frae the boat when the laddies lowped oot an stertit pilin big stanes an yackers aw roond the fit o the dyke. When the first wee wavie licked the front o the boat, that wis lowsin time for thaim an they aw lowped back intae the hole agane tae watch the tide winnin forrit up the brae o the sands a wee bit at a time. They aw got haud o thair bits o wuid an taen up thair places at the front an baith sides o the hole. Big Rab wis at the front, him aye bein the gaffer like, an the ithers wis ahint him, twa tae ae side an twa tae the ither.

Efter a while, twa sea maws flew ower the new sand boat on the beach an birlid roond, thair yellae een lookin doon aw the time tae see whit wis gaun on.

“Enemy planes!” yelled Big Rab, “Man yer battle stations men! Shoot em doon!”

Five wuiden rifles pynted up tae the sky an the “Bam! Bam! Bam!” o the laddies’ shootin cuid be heard richt along the beach as far as the herbour. Suddenly, Wee Jock’s rifle chynged intae a Lewis gun an the “Bam! Bam! Bam!” wis jyned wi a “Rat-tat-tat-tat-tat!”

This wis suin tae be mair nor thae sea maws cuid thole an they broke aff the attack tae flee hame tae thair base along near the herbour.

Big Rab gied the order, “Cease fire men! Oo’re ower guid for the likes o thaim.”

“An dinnae come back here agane or ye ken whit ye’ll get!” yelled Jinky, shakin his steekit fist efter thaim.

The laddies’ spirits wis up efter thair quick success agin the maraudin maws an thare wis a lot o lowpin up an doon, wavin wuiden rifles abuin thair heids an shoutin “Hurrey!” Thae high jinks wis suin brocht tae a feinish tho when Geordie’s wee brither Wattie cried oot, “Hey skipper! Is thon no anither airie up ahead?”

Aw the ither fower heids turned oot tae sea.

“Whaur aboots?” cried Big Rab.

“A wee bit tae the richt o Inchkeith an low doon ower the water.” Wattie answered.

“Ay! Ye’re richt Wattie.” cried Geordie as his een laid sicht on the wee bleck speck oot ower the water an juist abuin the horizon, “But it’s ower far awa tae tell if it’s a Spit or a Blenheim.”

“It cuid be a Beaufighter.” said Jinky, “It’s ower big for a Spit, mair liker a twa engined airie.”

“Naw!” interrupted Big Rab, “Thon’s a Jerry turpedo bomber an it’s fleein strecht for us. It’s gaun tae try an sink oor boat sae, get back tae yer battle stations men an stand by tae open fire. But no yet tho.”

“Whit for no?” speirt Wee Jock.

“It’s ower far awa. Wait till ye can see the whites o thair een.”

Bi noo, the tide haed come in a guid bit syne thon first skirmish wi the maws an the hole wis surroounded on three sides wi water. Anither twa fit an it wad be richt round the back an aw.

The dyke wis haudin up weel agin the advancin sea tho, but the fit o the hole wis noo stertin tae feel a wee bit wet an soggie aneath the laddies’ feet. They peyed nae mind tae this at aw tho for they war far ower taen wi the thocht o anither battle an they cooried in agin the sand dyke tae mak a guid position for gettin a shot in at the attackin plane. This ane wis gaun tae get the same paikin as the last twa.

Geordie haed a lean agin the dyke wi his left elbae diggin intae the saft sand so’s he cuid steady his rifle. He kept his ee on the plane an jaloused that it wis noo about twa mile aff an no muckle mair nor three or fower hunder fit abuin the sea an he thocht at the time thon wis gey low for a plane o that size. He cuidnae hear its engines yet for the only soond tae reach his lugs wis the soond o the wee glisterin wavies chasin ane-anither around the ousides o the dyke. An aw the time, the bleazin sun in the sky ahint thaim wis sendin doon its ain waves o heat tae keep thair backs an bare legs warm.

“Ready men!” came the command frae Big Rab, “Open fire! Gie it laldie!”

Fower wuiden rifles pyntin ower the tap o the dyke spat oot thair “Bam! Bam! Bam!” along wi the “Rat-tat-tat-tat-tat!” o the Lewis gun. They war really giein it laldie richt eneuch. Thon turpedo bomber widnae get near eneuch tae sink thair boat. They’d shoot it doon first.

Geordie’s rifle “Bammed” as lood as ony o the ithers. His left ee wis shut ticht while his richt ane squinted along the barrel tae keep it pynted richt at the plane.

“Bam! Bam!” it spat.

Twa wee puffs o white reek appeared suddenly in the sky frae nae whaur juist tae the left o the plane an about twa saiconds efter, he heard a “Pop! Pop!”

“Bam! Bam!” he fired again. Noo fower wee puffs o white reek, juist like wee balls o cotton wool, lowped oot o the solid blue sky aw roond the plane wi a “Pop! Pop! Pop Pop!” The soond wis a wee bittie looder noo; mair liker the soond o squeebs gaun aff in the distance.

Bi noo, the drone frae the plane’s engines wis like the soond o a giant bumbee an it drooned oot aw the ither summer soonds while aw the time mair an mair wee white puffs o reek popped oot aw around the plane wi a “Crack!” efter thaim noo instead o a “Pop!”

The shootin frae the boat lowsed aff bar for twa bursts o “Rat-tat-tat!” frae the Lewis gun an, ane bi ane the laddies stuid up tae get a better look, for the plane wad suin be ower thair heids. Geordie stood wi his een an mooth gawpin as he got a glimpse o the twa muckle black crosses ootlined wi white aneath the wings o the plane.

“Jings! It’s a **real** Jerry! A Heinkel!” he gulped wi his hert in his mooth. He cuid see the sun glentin aff the front windae whaur the nose gunner sat an his ain rifle drapped tae the fit o the hole as the thocht came ower him that he didnae want tae gie a man wi a real gun cause tae get his ain back on him. An aw the time, mair an mair anti-aircraft shells kept on explodin roond aboot the Heinkel wi gey deefenin bangs noo.

“Aw you bairns! Get awa hame tae yer hooses this meenit!”

Geordie looked roond tae see a man staundin on the prom haudin his bike wi the ae haund an shakin his fist at thaim wi the ither.

“C’mon!” he yelled again, “Get oot o thare afore the shrapnel starts drappin doon aboot yer lugs!”

Geordie an his pals didnae need anither tellin an the sand wis fleein aw weys as they raced up the beach an ower the road. There nae kennin whit sprint records wis broken thon day. The street Geordie an Wattie bid in ran strecht up frae the beach an they pelted up the middle o it, thair bare feet slappin doon hard on the warm tar road an, afore they haed gotten halfweys up, the Heinkel passed ower thair heids an banked tae the left heidin for East Lothian.

Throu the close, up the ootside stair an in throu the lobby the pair sprinted athoot breckin stride. Thair mither wis busy, as she aye wis on a wash day, an didnae hae nae time tae listen tae thair haiverins aboot a German airieplane doon the beach. She haed a hail washin tae take doon tae the dryin green, juist across the road frae the beach, an hing oot on the claes line.

“But Ma!” cried Geordie, “Ye can still see some o the reek in the sky!”

“Reek? A cannae see nae reek. Juist you pair get ben the hoose an dinnae gie me ony mair o yer nonsense! A’v got aw thae claes tae hing oot!”

“But Ma!” they baith cried thegither.

Ma opened her mooth tae gie thaim anither flytin but the words froze in her thrapple for it wis juist aboot then the syreens blew for the air-raid warnin.