

HARRY ELLIS

Born August 10th, 1856: Still Going Strong.

Hail to a British citizen, an ordinary Man,
But typical of England's Best is Campden's Grand Old Man.
All hail to Harry Ellis on his Eightieth Anniversary;
Let's view his life, so free from strife, although the view be cursory.
For if into the past you delve and for an hour just tarry,
Good fortune will be yours if you can have a chat with Harry.
His memory is marvellous; he really should be screened;
He recollects the 60's well, and also being weaned.
When starting life beside his wife for fame he did not hunger,
But settled down in Campden Town, it's first and sole Fishmonger.
In fear of God he sold his cod, and seldom made mistake
By charging them for salmon when he only gave them hake.
At early morn he would arise and fetch his horse from paddock,
And, looking smart, would fill the cart with kippers, dabs and haddock.
Then round through all the villages he went complete with whiting
And wormed his way both night and day from Wormington to Guiting.
With upright form, his cheery mien at every house respected,
His customers became his friends when they "the man" detected.
Both countesses and cottagers he had upon his books;
False rumour says he left a trail of broken-hearted cooks.
A word of praise for his black cob; for many years he drew a
Load of fish, so was the first to pass some fish manure.
All sorts of sports he did enjoy, and running made some fast times;
At home as well he did excel in good old English pastimes.
His family like marrow plants have spread upon the earth,
And may there ne'er in Campden be of Ellis's a dearth.
He is himself Conservative, the bluest of the blue;
And, staunch indeed to Dizzy's creed, his arguments are few.
So if opponents wanted fish, he still could serve John Dory
Or crab, undressed, with equal zest to Radical and Tory.
But times are changed, for motor comes and ousts his dear old cob;
He scorns to drive the beastly things, so seeks another job.
How craftily he changed his trade, this handy Harry Ellis,
From fishmonger to basket work, for Dover sole to trellis.
So no more now behind his cob across the hills he scampers.
But turns his lot to making pot and half-pot wicker hampers.
As volunteer he served his land; he could not bear the wrong sort
Who would not help his country to protect its King and Consort.
Old Colour-Sergeant Ellis, in the Great War, for the Gloucesters
Went drilling and recruiting, shewing up all the imposters.
And so through intervening years a pillar of the State he,
Both fearing God and living true, has reached the age of Eighty.
And may he still for many years have health that he may tell his
Friends his reminiscences, for they love Harry Ellis.

August 8th, 1936.

GUY PEMBERTON.