

Tudors

WORK AND PLAY BY MICHAEL COLEMAN

BARNEY: In Tudor England, work was easy if you were a member of a rich family - because you didn't do any. Everybody else worked for you. If you weren't rich, though, you'd have had a job of some sort. What sort of job? Well, you might have been a carpenter or a butcher or a blacksmith or a baker or a jeweller. Not too bad. But some jobs would have needed really good advertising to tempt you into taking them. Like risking your life as a royal food taster...

ADVERTISER: Swallow it down, taste the Queen's bread / It might be poisoned, so you'll end up dead!

BARNEY: Too dangerous? How about being a toilet-visiting gong farmer?

ADVERTISER: You don't grow much, 'cos gong means poo / That's what you do, you clean out loos / And when you're finished - phwoar, you poo too!

BARNEY: Prefer not to smell? You could always put some thick padding down the back of your trousers and be a whipping boy.

ADVERTISER: The prince is special, he can't be bashed / So when he's naughty, you get thrashed!

BARNEY: It's true! When a Tudor prince was naughty his 'whipping boy' was given the punishment! Perhaps you'd like to leave dry land behind, though. England is an island, remember, so there have always been plenty of jobs on ships. During the reign of Elizabeth I for example, sailors like Sir Francis Drake and Sir William Raleigh were really famous. What with their regular voyages to steal gold from other ships or find new lands to steal from, they must have always been on the look-out for extra hands...

RALEIGH: Ahoy there! My name is Sir Walter Raleigh. I'm a poet, a favourite of Queen Elizabeth...and a sea-going explorer! So, how would you like to join my on one of my voyages? I'm going to tell you about the jolly exciting time you'll have - and I've brought my ship's boy along to help me out. Say hello, little chap.

SHIP'S BOY: Hello little chap.





- RALEIGH: So, me hearties, what's in store if you join my crew? For a start, lots of fresh, sea air...
- SHIP'S BOY: On deck, yeah. Below deck we're all jammed together and it smells horrible.
- RALEIGH: Exciting work...
- SHIP'S BOY: Climbing up in the rigging to change sail with a howling wind trying to blow you into the sea? Terrifying, more like.
- RALEIGH: Your food costs you nothing...
- SHIP'S BOY: And that's about what its worth. We get hard biscuits with bugs in - and mouldy meat.
- RALEIGH: Ah, it's a healthy life being a sailor!
- SHIP'S BOY: No, it's not. Because we don't get any fresh fruit, we suffer from a disease called scurvy. It makes our teeth fall out - so then we can't even eat the biscuits!
- RALEIGH: So join me on my next voyage. There's a berth waiting for you!
- SHIP'S BOY: Oy, Sir Walter. You didn't mention the punishments for misbehaving. Y'know, the floggings and being clapped in irons.
- RALEIGH: No - but you're going to find out all about them. Come here, you...
- BARNEY: If you didn't fancy going to sea, then you could be a farm worker. This meant getting up very early and going to bed very late and earning very little money. What's more, you worked six days a week and went to church every Sunday! The good bit about the church-going, though, was that the church had lots of holy days - which is where our word 'holiday' came from. On holy days (after going to church, of course) you could play instead of work...
- SPINNAKER: Hello from me, Harry Spinnaker! I'm here, in the middle of the road between the villages of Thumpam and Basham. The annual football match between these two deadly rivals will be kicking-off any minute - and I do mean kicking! In this match there are hundreds of players on each side and the only rule is that there aren't any rules!

For the benefit of new listeners, Thumpam have goalposts in their village square. Two miles away, Basham have goalposts in their village square. The aim of the game is for one village to force the ball into the other village's goal.



- SPINNAKER:** Here we go! A Thumpam man has got the ball. Basham look determined to get it from him...
- And they have got the ball! Or is it the Thumpam player's head? No, it's the ball. I can see the Thumpam player's ended up in the ditch - ouch, and it looks like both his legs are pointing the wrong way - but at least he's still got his head!
- So it's Basham with the ball. Oh, a whole gang of Thumpam players have dived on him and are bashing him. Now a whole gang of Basham players have started thumping them! There's a very good chance we won't see the ball again until they're all knocked out and carried off. I'm going to get closer to see if I can spot the ball...
- Hmm, no sign of it. This is why these games can last for a couple of days. And if you're not playing then it's a good idea to stay out of their way, because having hundreds of boots jumping on you can hurt!
- A-ha! The ball's popped out of the scrum! Oh no! It's rolling my way! I'm off! This is Harry Spinnaker handing you back to the studi-ohhhhhhhhhh!
- BARNEY:** If you survived the holidays, then you went back to work! At least, you did if you had a job. Many country people didn't. In Elizabethan times many farms switched from crop-growing to rearing sheep for their wool. As this needed fewer people, lots of farm workers headed to the towns to try and find work. This is where the story of Dick Whittington and his cat came from.
- But, as Dick found out, the streets of towns like London weren't paved with gold. Jobs were hard to come by. It got so bad, that Queen Elizabeth introduced laws to try and help out...
- TOWN CRIER:** Oyez, oyez, oyez! Now hear this, anybody who has not got a job!
- JOBLESS #1:** I haven't got a job! I've been going out every day to look for one, but I've always returned home empty-handed.
- TOWN CRIER:** Then you will be given help with food and clothing, or given work for which you will be paid!
- JOBLESS #2:** I'm too ill to work.
- JOBLESS #3:** And I'm too old.
- JOBLESS #4:** And I'm too young, mister!



- TOWN CRIER: Then you will be given places in hospitals, or homes, or orphanages.
- JOBLESS #5: Well I ain't got a job - and I don't want one. I'm lazy, see? An' I love it!
- TOWN CRIER: Not for much longer you won't. The Queen says that you must be whipped through the streets until you change your mind!
- BARNEY: If you were a young man, though, there was one interesting job in Elizabethan London that was becoming more common - you could pretend to be a girl! No, don't laugh. I'm serious. Watching a play was very popular in Tudor and Elizabethan times. Groups of actors would travel from village to village putting on plays. And in the towns, theatres were being built - like the famous Globe Theatre in London, where lots of the plays were written by a certain William Shakespeare...
- JULIET: Romeo! Romeo!
- BARNEY: This is where the lads pretending to be lasses, came in. There were no actresses in Shakespeare's time. So any girls' parts - like that of the heroine in Romeo and Juliet - would be played by a boy!
- JULIET: Wherefore art thou...I mean... *(Switching to a 'girlish' voice)* Wherefore art thou, Romeo?
- BARNEY: This might explain why quite a few of Shakespeare's plays feature girls pretending to be boys! It couldn't have helped with Romeo and Juliet, though...
- JULIET: Oh, Romeo. Parting is such sweet sorrow...
- ROMEO: Farewell, farewell! One kiss, and I'll descend.
- JULIET: Yuk! You haven't had a shave, Romeo!
- ROMEO: Neither have you, Juliet!
- BARNEY: So there you are. Work in Tudor times wasn't always available, but it was invariably hard. As for playing - that was often even harder work!