

## Best Mate

A call to arms, upon us fast, that week in March now looms
When thousands gather for the craic, when spring smites winter's gloom
When stories get wheeled out again, those great Gold Cups of old
It's minus two without the gale, yet no-one feels the cold

And so this year we'll celebrate, a recent hero's past
A horse whose place in Cheltenham lore not just in bronze we've cast
A horse who proudly holds his own with legends of this track
A kindly horse with looks and style and quality to match

Now factor in his entourage, a most unlikely team Led by a former school mistress and harnessed by her dream A dream she shared with Biddlecombe, fine jockey of his time A dream they lived to realize, once they'd put aside the wine

The Owner, good Jim Lewis, vintage Brummie through & through His songs the only downside, his silks Claret & Blue The colours worn by Villa when they last brought home The Cup Engrained in racing folklore now, with Jim Culloty up

They played an almost comic role, when camera's stopped to call But mark me now and mark me well, for him they gave their all They taught Best Mate that what he had was handed to the few They honed his power, they understood, they showed him what to do

And when unleashed in combat, though she couldn't bear to look Preferring racecourse car parks, where with head in hands she shook He always brought her running from behind the heaving stands To welcome him, victorious, clinging tight to Terry's hand

Step forward Henrietta, Racing's first reluctant Knight And take a bow with Terry now for getting it so right For giving us the memories of a truly noble horse Whose early death remains the only reason for remorse

A death that robbed a nation, but upon it we won't dwell Let's celebrate the life of one who served his sport so well Best Mate, you never let us down, you lived up to your name You jumped your rivals ragged, showed 'em how to play this game

He won with ease and nonchalance; he won with craft and style
He won the hearts of England and the mighty Emerald Isle
He gave us what we'd waited for, a Gold Cup crown retained
An undisputed Champion, a King who proudly reigned

Don't judge him upsides Arkle, if you don't judge man by God But see him as a Winter King, who never spared the Rod Who poured it on at Prestbury Park, with smiling Jim aboard And left this world with three Gold Cups, Best Mate by all adored





