



GEOFF ABBOTT'S  
TALES OF THE TOWER RAVENS

**Yeoman Warder**  
**HM Tower of London**  
Member of the Queen's Bodyguard  
of the Yeomen of the Guard Extraordinary



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*For Geoff.  
We will miss you.  
Thank you for being our friend.  
(1922 - 2016)*

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Great Escapes from the Tower of London  
The Tower of London As it Was  
Mysteries of the Tower of London  
The Beefeaters of the Tower of London  
It's a Weird World

## HISTORICAL NOTE FOR PARENTS

**T**here were always ravens in the medieval towns and cities, nesting in the church steeples and high towers, and scavenging the scraps of food thrown out in the streets. Those residing in the Tower were mentioned in the reign of Henry VIII, and when the Royal Observatory was established in the round turret of the White Tower, in the centre of the castle, by Charles II, the Astronomer Royal complained about the mess the birds made. However, the King's order that they should be destroyed was rescinded when, it is said, he was informed of a legend to the effect that this

would cause the White Tower to collapse, the sovereign to lose the throne, and England to be deprived of all her power and overseas possessions. It can only be assumed that the person who related this to His Majesty had studied Celtic mythology, for therein lies the origin of the legend (re-told in *The Mabinogion*).

Brân the Blessed, a god of the Underworld, had engaged his enemies in mortal combat but had been wounded in the foot by a poisoned arrow and, near to death, directed that his head be severed, taken to London, and buried in the 'White Mount', Tower Hill. The head was to face France, and as long as it remained there, England would never be invaded. The significance of this becomes immediately apparent when it is realised that the

name 'Brân' is Celtic for raven!

The birds were also revered by the Norsemen as the messengers of their gods and were portrayed on the battle standards carried by the fierce warriors from Norway and Denmark. So where is there a more fitting home for the ravens than a castle built by the Nordic descendants, the Normans?

Charles II heeded the warning, and since then the ravens have been a feature of the Tower. For many years six have been on the official ration strength, plus one or two in reserve. An allowance is paid for their food, which nowadays consists of raw meat and rabbit carcasses, and although they are mainly carnivorous birds, they love fruit and eggs, and are adept at extracting sandwiches from

plastic packs discarded by the tourists!

They are fed and cared for by the Yeoman Ravenmaster, a Yeoman Warder who takes on the task in addition to his normal duties. A dedicated and conscientious keeper, he gets up early, summer and winter, to clean their cages, prepare their food and, when dusk approaches, to coax them back on to their own personal perches for the night. They know his voice of course, but being independently-minded, will go to bed only when it suits them. Born mimics, they have been known to reply when bade good night! Many believe that they also understand what is said to them, but the birds keep that secret to themselves!

Destructive by nature, they pick at the putty in window frames, and leaded lights, and will also

use their sharp beaks on tourists' fingers and ankles. According to recent research by the University of Vienna, 'Ravens feel compassion for other ravens and even console them if they are attacked.' They rarely breed in captivity but are obtained when young from Scotland, Wales and the West Country. When they are finally summoned to the Great Litter Bin in the sky, they are buried in graves set aside for them in the moat by the Middle Drawbridge.

They are indeed the **real** Kings of the Castle!





## *RAVEN MARLEY SAVES THE QUEEN'S JEWELS!*

**R**aven Marley hopped across the ground in front of the Jewel House. There were a lot of visitors that had come to see him and the other ravens, and now they were also queuing up to have a look at the Queen's Jewels. Marley remembered that he had promised Raven Gwyllum to meet him around the back of the Jewel House, and from there they'd both go to where a friendly Beefeater's wife sometimes threw crumbs to them.

Gwyllum wasn't there, but in a corner there were two men, and as Marley got nearer, he heard them whispering. He hopped closer and,

pretending that he was looking at his reflection in one of the men's polished shoes, he tilted his head to one side and listened to what they were saying – then clenched his claws angrily as he heard them planning to steal the diamonds from the **Queen's Crown**.

They were going to go into the Jewel House with the tourists, hide until everyone had gone and then, with the diamonds in their pockets, they'd climb out through a window and run away!

Marley didn't wait any longer. Instead of walking – as he sometimes did – he hopped as fast as he could to the Ravenmaster and told him what he had heard. The Ravenmaster instantly sent a message to the general, who looked after the Tower of London for the Queen, and to the officer in

charge of the soldiers. Marley watched as the officer's men ran to the Jewel House and waited outside the window. By now it was dark, and Marley could just see the window open and the two thieves climbed out.

### **Straight into the arms of the soldiers!**

The soldiers took them away and locked them up until the police came.

The general was very pleased with Marley, and although ravens didn't like having their heads patted, he was OK with the general doing it that time.

The general also told the Queen that one of her ravens had saved her Jewels, and she said that Raven Marley deserved a reward. So a few days later all the ravens lined up in a row and watched,

and because ravens can't clap their hands, they all fluttered their wings as the general placed a small crown, sent by the Queen, on Raven Marley's head. It didn't fit very well and wobbled a bit when he hopped, but he was the proudest raven you ever did see!



WHEN RAVEN BALDRICK  
LOST HIS CLAWS!

Raven Baldrick woke up.  
'Brrh!' he said, tucking his wings tightly  
round him. **'It's ccccccld!'**

His cage door clicked as the Ravenmaster  
opened it to let him out. Raven Baldrick paused –  
then hopped down to the ground. He looked  
around and opened his eyes wide. All the grass had  
gone, everywhere was white!

He frowned and looked down. He gave a  
startled croak – for his claws had disappeared!

'Where have they gone?' he wondered. 'They  
were there a minute ago. I was standing on them!'

He waggled his left leg, then lifted it slowly and his claw reappeared. It vanished again when he put it back down.

‘Something **very strange** is happening,’ he thought, and tried lifting his right leg. He saw that his claw was still there, but it vanished like the other one when he put it down again.



Small, white, wet bits landed on his nose. He shook them off, then frowned as another and another fell on his feathers. He looked up across

the lawn and saw something strange standing there. It was as big as the Ravenmaster, but it was all white, with tiny black eyes and a nose just like a carrot.

Baldrick tilted his head to get a better look at it. He wasn't at all frightened, because it wasn't moving, but he wished it would go away! He wished he could see his claws *every* time he looked down, and that he could find out what these white blobs landing on him were.

Nearby he saw Raven Gwyllum, who had been at the Tower a long, long time and knew everything. He knew what time the man in charge of the Tower Café threw scraps of food into the bins, where not to stand when the soldiers were marching on parade, and where the shadiest

corners were on a hot summer day.

Gwyllum told Baldrick, 'It's because it's nearly Christmas. This white stuff covering your feathers and claws is snow, and the big thing on the lawn is a snowman that the Beefeaters' children have built!'

Baldrick gave a sigh of relief. **'Phew!'** he said. 'Thank you very much for explaining it to me!'

He scraped a clawful of it up into a snowball, and threw it at Raven Thor who was hopping by!

RAVEN THOR NEARLY  
GOES TO SEA!

Raven Thor had often wondered what was on the other side of the high walls round the Tower, so one day he hopped up the steep stone steps by the Lanthorn Tower, where a long, long time ago the Beefeaters hung a lantern to guide ships coming along the River Thames which flowed next to the Tower. When he got to the top of the steps he jumped up on top of the wall. It was a *breezy* day and it ruffled his feathers. Just then a gust of wind came along, and blew him high up into the air and carried him out over the river!

Down below he could see the waves and little

fishing boats, and ships sailing along, full of people, but the wind was blowing him straight towards a huge ship, a battleship that was moored against the bank on the other side of the river.

Next minute the wind dropped, and although he flapped his wings as hard as he could, he felt himself falling down and down, until suddenly everything went dark.

‘Oh dear!’ he croaked. ‘I hope I haven’t fallen down the battleship’s funnel and burned all my feathers off!’

But he hadn’t. Instead he had fallen into a box fixed near the top of the battleship’s mast. He started getting a little frightened, though he knew that somehow the Ravenmaster would rescue him – but how would he know where to look?

At that moment Raven Thor saw Sam the Seagull, who lived nearby, flying over him, so he croaked, **'Help! Help!**

Tell the Ravenmaster where I am!'

Sam nodded, and flew to the Tower.

When he got there, he saw the Ravenmaster, but, as everyone knows, seagulls can't talk, so he flew around until he saw Raven Erin pecking at a worm in the grass, and squawked to her about where he had seen Raven Thor.

Erin, who had been wondering where her friend had gone and was getting very worried, hopped as quickly as she could to the Ravenmaster and gave him the good news. The Ravenmaster immediately went to the Constable of the Tower, who telephoned the captain of the battleship, who said

he would find out what had happened.

It wasn't long before he phoned back and said that everything was alright. One of his sailors had climbed up the mast and found Thor in the place where sailors kept a look-out when the ship was sailing out at sea – **it was the crow's nest!**

Raven Thor was brought back to the Tower and he told the other ravens about all the exciting things he had seen when he was high above the river; but the Ravenmaster was very cross and told him he had been *very* naughty and was never to climb upon to the walls ever again!



*RAVEN MERLIN  
VISITS THE VET*

**R**aven Merlin looked around and she saw the Ravenmaster coming towards her across the grass, carrying a small cage. She frowned.

‘What was he going to do with that?’ she wondered.

She gave a little **hop** of delight as she remembered – all the ravens went to London Zoo once a year so that their doctor, the Vet, could make sure they didn’t need any medicine or anything, and it was her turn to go today! She hoped that there would be other birds and animals there, so she could make some new friends, like

she did last time.

So she hopped into the cage, and the Ravenmaster carried her into the van, and off they went, through the busy streets. Whenever the van slowed down, people looked at her, and she nodded her head and waved to them, just like the Queen did when she rove through London.

When they reached the  the Ravenmaster carried her past the big cages. She saw lots of the other birds who lived there, and they all chirped and whistled hello to her. Kenneth the Canary asked her whether he could come back with her to the Tower, but she said oh no, the Queen only allowed ravens to live in her Palace, and when Kenneth heard that, he gave a disappointed squawk, and kicked a peanut right across the floor

of his cage.



The Ravenmaster took her into the surgery; it was very crowded – naughty Michael the Monkey was trying to pull Peter the Parrot off his perch, and Emma the Baby Elephant was there as well; she had a poorly leg but was being very brave and didn't cry! Georgina the Giraffe looked through the window and watched while the Vet examined

Raven Merlin.

The Vet had to make sure that all her feathers were shiny and straight, not dull and curly at the edges, because if they were, the tourists wouldn't want to come and see her, and he'd have to give her some medicine. But he said that everything was all right! Then he saw that her toe-nails had grown very long, so he clipped them, but because he knew that ravens scratched behind their ears a lot, he didn't cut them too short.

After that, the Ravenmaster brought her back to the Tower, and because she had kept quite still and hadn't wriggled about while she was having her toe nails clipped, he gave her an extra egg for her tea!

## HOW THE RAVENS STAYED UP LATE!

**R**aven Munin raised her beak after having a drink at the bird bath and looked up.

‘Oh no!’ she croaked. ‘It’s not that late already!’

The Ravenmaster was coming along the path. Every evening he walked up behind them so that they had to hop towards their cages and climb in. This happened even in the summer time when there were lots of things to do, like standing outside the building where the soldiers lived, and listen to the music that was on the soldiers’ radios – ravens love **hipperty-hop** tunes, of course, and especially the sounds of other birds when there

were wild life programmes on.



But the Ravenmaster insisted on putting them to bed early every evening, and although sometimes they tried to disobey him and refused to go towards their cages, he always knew exactly how to make them do as he wanted. So Munin and the other Ravens obediently hopped along in front of him – even though they really didn't want to.

But the next evening Munin saw Beefeater Geoffrey coming along the path and smiled happily, because that meant that the Ravenmaster had gone on holiday, and now one of his friends, who hadn't done it before, was going to put them to bed instead!

All the ravens knew that only the Ravenmaster could make them do as they were told, so Munin croaked to the others: 'Let's all flutter away in different directions!' And that is just what they did.

Raven Thor hopped up the hill towards the White Tower, while Raven Marley and Raven Erin headed towards the General's House. Raven Baldrick and Raven Merlin pretended to hop towards their cages – then suddenly rushed up the steps by the Lanthorn Tower!

Beefeater Geoffrey had brought his wife Shelagh along to help, and they both ran on and on, over the lawns after the ravens, nearly tripping over, shouting loudly and spreading their arms really wide, until they were out of breath and had to stop.

When Raven Marley saw this, he croaked: 'That's enough now – let's do as they want, or they'll tell the Ravenmaster how naughty we were, and we'll really be in trouble!'

And when the Ravenmaster came back from holiday, they **were** in trouble, for Beefeater Geoffrey told him what had happened, and the Ravenmaster scolded them all.

'We're very sorry!' the ravens said.

But the Ravenmaster knew that the ravens would do it again the next time he went on holiday!

RAVEN HUGIN  
AND THE FURRY THING

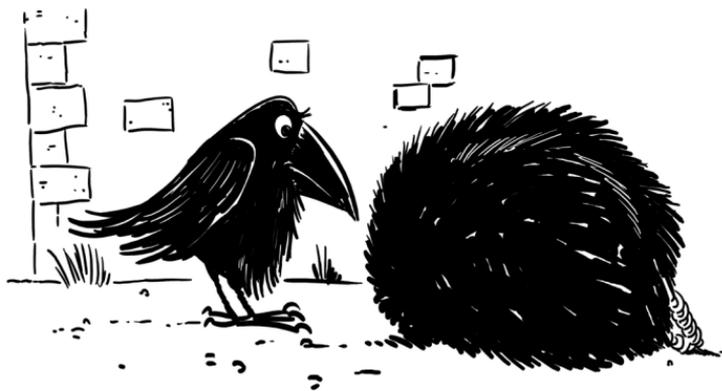
Raven Hugin walked slowly round the corner of the White Tower, looking for crumbs. He stopped suddenly as he saw a mysterious black furry thing lying on the ground just in front of him.

‘What can that be?’ he thought. ‘I’ve never seen anything like that, all round and podgy!’

Cautiously he hopped closer and nudged it with his beak – **then jumped back as it moved!**

Hugin looked closer, he couldn’t see if it had any eyes because of its fur, but its mouth was wide open. He wasn’t afraid, because he couldn’t see

any teeth, and as everybody knows, only things with teeth can bite. He frowned, and scratched his head with one claw.



‘If only Raven Gwyllum would come along,’ he thought, ‘He would know what the furry thing is, because he’s been at the Tower a very long time!’

He heard shouting in the distance; someone was running his way. It was a soldier; he came round the corner and Hugin heard him shout: ‘Here it is! It’s here!’

Hugin opened his eyes wide and watched the soldier pick the black furry thing up and put his head into its mouth!

It wasn't a scary thing at all – it was the soldier's fur hat that had fallen off and rolled away!

Hugin hopped back to the lawn and told Raven Gwyllum all about it excitedly, and Gwyllum said that he should have dragged it away with his beak and hidden it – it would have made a lovely warm nest to snuggle down in, on a cold day!

## RAVEN ERIN FINDS A PACKET OF NUTS

**R**aven Erin scratched her leg with her beak and pushed the white ring that was round her leg a little further down.

The sun was shining, and she made her way along the path. She stopped as she saw something lying there, dropped by a visitor – a small packet of nuts! **What a lovely surprise!**

Picking it up in her beak, she shook it from side to side and managed to tear it open. One of the nuts fell out, and she tried to break it with her beak to get at the yummy bits inside. But no matter how much she tried, the nut was too hard.

What could she do?

**And then she had a clever idea!**

Gripping the packet in her beak, she fluttered across the ground, not even noticing a visitor who was trying to take a photo of her!

A soldier was on duty outside the General's house. Up and down he marched, back and forth, from his sentry-box and back again, stamping his feet every time he turned. He would break the nuts open for her!

Quickly she spread the nuts on the ground just where he would turn round, then stood back and watched.

On came the sentry. **Thud! Thud! Thud!**

then he stopped and turned, stamping hard!

Erin gave a little whoop of delight as bits of the

nut shells flew in all directions – her plan had worked! As the soldier marched back to his box, she quickly hopped forward and scooped all the yummy bits up in her beak, then fluttered into the bushes for a tasty breakfast!

*RAVEN MERLIN  
AND THE GOLD RING*

**T**he sun was shining as Raven Merlin walked  
across the lawn.

She stopped. Something glittering in the grass.

It was a small **gold-coloured** ring.



She frowned and looked at it closer still. All the ravens had different coloured rings on their legs; Lizzie's was yellow, Hugin's was red, Thor's was orange. That was so that people would know who was who, but of course the birds thought this was silly, because they knew that they didn't really look all the same! But this colour wasn't like any of the others, and anyway it was much too **small**.

Sparky Sparrow happened to fly past, so she stopped him and asked him if it was a sparrow's leg-band, but he told her that sparrows didn't wear such things.

There was only one way to find out, so she picked it up in her beak and went to ask the Ravenmaster.

He was in his office, and she dropped the ring

on the floor in front of him, and told him what Sparky Sparrow had said. The Ravenmaster said Sparky Sparrow was right; sparrows don't have leg-bands. It was, in fact, a ring that tourists wore on their fingers, not on their legs, because they had socks on instead.

The ring was gold, and belonged to a lady tourist who was very sorry she'd lost it, and she'd gone back to America, so he would send it to her and tell her who had discovered it.

When the American lady received it, she sent a letter personally addressed to Raven Merlin, thanking her for finding it, and the Ravenmaster pinned it to her cage. But, because ravens couldn't understand writing, he read it out to her at bed-time every night for a whole week!

## RAVEN THOR AND THE STICKY DOUGHNUT

One day, when Raven Thor was walking along by the White Tower, he saw a few crumbs scattered all along the path in front of him.

He picked one up in his beak, and it tasted **scrumptious!**

He tasted another one, and another, and as he hopped round the corner of the building, he saw where they had come from. For there, right in front of him, was a very big doughnut lying in the grass near the Tower Cafe!

It couldn't have been there for very long, or else the man who kept the Tower neat and tidy for the

Queen would have found it and thrown it in the bin.

Raven Thor looked at it closely, then decided that as he had already eaten his breakfast biscuits, he would carry it away, hide it in the bushes, and eat it later when he was hungry.

So he bent forward and slipped his beak into the hole in the middle of the doughnut, raised his head...

**...and then something terrible happened.**

The doughnut slipped all the way back along his beak, covering his eyes, so that he couldn't see anything in front of him!

He shook his head from side to side, trying to shake the doughnut off, but it was stuck tight. He couldn't even squawk for help because the

doughnut was keeping his beak closed.

‘What are you doing, Raven Thor?’ It was the Ravenmaster, who was just going on duty.



Thor couldn't reply, but held his head still so the Ravenmaster could pull the doughnut along his beak. Off it came, and the Ravenmaster said, ‘Now look what a mess you've got yourself into!’

Thor blinked his eyes and looked down. The strawberry jam had **dripped** down out of the

doughnut all over his feathers, and was running down on to his claws!

‘I’d better carry you over to the birdbath and clean you up. We can’t have the tourists seeing one of the Queen’s Ravens looking like that!’

The Ravenmaster carefully picked Raven Thor up, taking great care not to get any of the sticky stuff on his smart uniform.

When they got there, Raven Thor had to stand very still and spread his wings as wide as he could while the Ravenmaster got a sponge and carefully wiped all the jam off his feathers and legs, and from between his toes.

And Thor decided that from then on, if he ever saw another doughnut on the ground, even if he was hungry, he would definitely walk right past it!

## *THREE NAUGHTY RAVENS TRY A BALANCING ACT!*

**I**t all started when ravens Marley, Baldrick and Thor perched on a window ledge of the Waterloo Block looking through the window at the television; the soldiers were watching a programme about a circus, and when the clowns came on and started throwing water over each other, Thor laughed so much that he nearly fell off the ledge.

### **And the other two had to hold on tight!**

After the clowns there were acrobats who went head over heels. One acrobat stood on another's shoulders, and a third acrobat climbed up and stood on his shoulders. When they saw that, all

three ravens hopped down on to the ground, and Baldrick said, 'Why don't we try to do that?'

Marley agreed, so they all trooped to where there was lots of grass behind the White Tower. Baldrick bent his knees and Marley scrambled up on to his back, clutched Baldrick's shoulders tightly with his claws, and bent his knees so that Thor could get hold of his feathers and climb up right up on top.

Then they all straightened their legs and stood up, wobbling as they tried not to fall off each other!

Baldrick, at the bottom, squawked. 'Keep still! Keep still!'

But Marley lost his balance and leaned forward a little too much, so step by step Baldrick had to start walking. **Faster and faster** he went, the two

on top of him hanging on and swaying from side to side!

Next moment Baldrick tripped over a stone, and down the slope they **hurtled**, towards the Ravenmaster's Office, squawking loudly!

Halfway down Marley and Thor fell off and all three rolled head over claws, wings flapping wildly, not stopping until they **tumbled** over at the bottom of the slope!

In the fall, Baldrick had hurt his knees just a little bit. Marley's shoulders were sore where Thor's claws had gripped tightly as he'd tried to hold on, and Thor had lost several of his smaller feathers.

After that all three decided that they would never, ever try to be acrobats again!

## RAVEN MARLEY AND RAVEN MUNIN VISIT THE LITTER BIN

**R**aven Marley had been given a biscuit by the Ravenmaster, so he held it down with one claw and ate the last few crumbs, but he was still hungry – in fact, he was **raven-ous!**



He looked around, then spotted a litter bin nearby, so he hopped across the grass and jumped

up on to its brim. He looked down, then frowned. The bits of food left there for him and his friends by the visitors who had come to see them, had gone.

The Man with the Sack had been and taken them away.

Just then Raven Munin hopped past.

‘Where are you going?’ asked Marley.

Munin put one claw to her beak. ‘Sshh!’ she whispered ‘I’m going to that litterbin round the corner. There’s lots of scraps there! Do you want to come along?’

Marley nodded, and together they went round the corner.

There were lots of torn paper bags lying around, and Marley could see more in the bin. Maybe there were pieces of fish-paste sandwiches in them – he

loved fish-paste! – or even sardine and tomato! The Ravenmaster always said that fruit was very good for humans and ravens.

Just then Munin, who had hopped up on to the rim of the bin, pushed her beak into the litter, and some of it fell out on to the ground. Marley quickly scattered it around with his beak.

‘Goody, goody!’ he thought. ‘There’s lots of lovely crumbly bits!’

Munin looked down.

‘Save some for me, Marley,’ she croaked, and because she had shown him where the bin was, he left some of the scrumptious bits for her.

**But he ate a banana that was there!**

## *HOW RAVEN HUGIN GOT A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP*

**R**aven Hugin had a busy day. She never got to tuck her head beneath her wing and have her usual little nap in the corner by the Wakefield Tower in the afternoon. Lots of tourists had come from all over the world to see her, and they would have been disappointed if she hadn't been wide-awake and on duty.

In the evening the Ravenmaster opened the door of her cage, and she was only too pleased to grip her perch tightly with her claws and snooze. But it wasn't long before she heard the soldiers start shouting orders, and the bell in the big clock on the

Waterloo Block, where the soldiers lived, struck ten times. That meant that the Tower gates had been locked tight, and the trumpeter would play the loud tune he played every night at that time!

‘Why does he have to make all that noise?’ she thought angrily. ‘Just when we’re trying to go to sleep. Doesn’t he know we’ve got to be up early in the morning and get ready for the tourists to see us?’ Grumpily, she tucked her head under one wing. ‘I really have to do something about it tomorrow!’ she thought.

But she forgot all about it until late the next afternoon.

It had been a very wet day, and as she hopped across the grass she found her claws caked in mud. She hated having to scrape it off with her beak, but

if she didn't, it got on to the pieces of sandwiches she ate, and they then tasted **horrible!**

But as she flicked the bits of mud off her claws and on to the ground, she suddenly had a bright idea!

And so later, when evening came, she hopped up the slope by the big White Tower. There she saw the trumpeter sitting on a bench, talking to other soldiers.

His trumpet was lying on the ground behind them! Cautiously she looked round. No one was taking any notice of her.

### **So it was time for her plan!**

Scraping up a big blob of mud with her beak, she hopped round the back of the bench and pushed it as deep as she could into the end of the

trumpet! Then she hopped back to her usual place on the lawn, where a lot of tourists were waiting for her to show them how clever she was at standing on one claw, while scratching her ear with her other claw.



When it got dark, the Ravenmaster came along and persuaded her and the other ravens to scramble up into their cage. There she settled down, and waited.

The soldiers started shouting, the clock struck ten, the trumpeter blew his trumpet... And then

there was just a

**globbely-bobbely-spluttery-chuttery**

noise. The mud had blocked the end of it! Hugin's plan had worked!

She gave a little smile and snuggled down. Now she could get a good night's sleep!

## WHEN RAVEN LIZZIE LOST HER EGG

**I**t was nearly raven bed-time, but Raven Lizzie was standing on the lawn outside the General's House trying to remember where she had buried the egg the Ravenmaster had given her that day.

All the ravens were given **1** egg a week, but she hadn't been very hungry at the time, so she had made a little hole in the ground, popped the egg into it, and covered it with grass.

She looked around. 'Where did I bury it?' she thought. 'Is it by this tree, or over there near that bush?' She started poking her beak into all the likely places, and didn't stop, even when one or two

worms came wriggling out of the ground.

### **She was determined to find that egg!**

‘I hope none of the seagulls have already found it and eaten it up!’ she thought.

She heard the Ravenmaster calling that it was bed-time!

‘Oh dear!’ she thought. ‘I’ll have to leave it until tomorrow.’

She slowly hopped back to her cage and, jumping up on to her perch, tried to go to sleep.

The next morning the general woke up especially early. It was going to be a very important day, for the Queen was visiting the Tower to inspect the soldiers – although the Ravens knew she was really coming to see them!

The general had to check that everything was in

order, so he got out of bed, walked to the window and looked out. He couldn't believe his eyes, for the lawn where the Queen would soon be standing had little holes all over it!

Quickly he got dressed, then he and the Ravenmaster walked around and looked closely at the holes, and saw that they were not round, but just as if they had been made by a beak – a raven's beak!

The Ravenmaster got all the ravens together and made them stand in a straight line, and he and the general inspected them closely. They saw bits of earth sticking to Raven Lizzie's beak and between her toes. **She was the naughty one!**

The general set all the gardeners to work, filling in the holes and spreading the grass over them, and

they finished just in time as the Queen's car arrived at the Tower gates.

The Ravens all lined up on the lawn, and the Queen inspected them as well, and nodded approvingly as she saw how smooth and shiny their feathers looked.

Afterwards the general wagged his finger sternly at naughty Raven Lizzie, and said she was not to be allowed on the lawn for ages and ages, so she never found the missing egg. But Raven Marley was sorry for her, and gave her half of his egg!



## *RAVEN GWYLLUM AND THE MOTOR CAR*

**I**t was a windy day, and the breeze was blowing lots of Raven Gwyllum's feathers out of place. He had spent ages smoothing them so that the visitors, who had come from all over the world to the Tower, could take photographs of him. He just had to get out of the wind somehow.

He saw the big motor car outside the general's house; there was no one inside the car, and its door was open.

He hopped across the lawn and before anyone could say 'what is that naughty Raven doing?' he had jumped up inside on to the driver's seat! He

didn't stay there long though, for as everybody knows, ravens like to hold on to something with their claws, so he hopped up on to the steering wheel and gripped its rim firmly.

The wind was blowing harder, rocking the car, and one gust was so strong that the door slammed shut! Gwyllum lost his balance and fell forward. His beak pressed against the horn, which honked very loudly! He tried to move his head, but he couldn't, for his beak was stuck firmly in the side of the horn!

Pull as hard as he could, he just couldn't get it out!

But worse happened next, for at the terrible noise, the general came rushing out, and yeoman warders and soldiers appeared from everywhere!

Some of them tried to open the door, but it had locked itself, and it wasn't until the driver arrived that the door was opened.

The general sent for the Ravenmaster, who came running across the grass and quickly freed Gwyllum's beak from the steering wheel, then carried him back to his cage.

Luckily his beak wasn't hurt at all, but the Ravenmaster was very angry, and Raven Gwyllum was sent to bed early every day for a whole week!

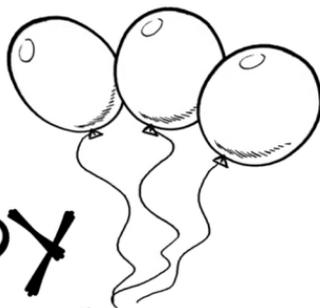
*THE RAVENS GET  
LOST IN THE FOG*

**T**he Ravenmaster opened the cages and all the ravens jumped down to the ground. There they ate the breakfast of tasty bits of meat and biscuits he had made for them. When they'd finished, the Ravenmaster made sure their beaks and claws were clean, and their feathers nice and smooth, and they all went along to the birdbath together to have drinks of water.

It was a chilly day and a mist was getting thicker as it rolled up from the River Thames, which flowed along by the Tower.

After they'd had a drink, Merlin said, 'It's the

Ravenmaster's birthday next week, and we've got to practise singing



**HAPPY  
BIRTHDAY**

to him, so all of you start when I give the signal.'

Then she tapped twice on the edge of the birdbath with her beak.

**And they all joined in.**

'Happy Birthday!' they squawked, but Erin, then Gwyllum and Munin, only got as far as 'Happy Birth' before they started coughing and spluttering.

The mist had turned into fog, and it was getting

thicker by the minute, so thick that they could hardly see each other.

Lizzie whispered nervously, 'I'm frightened, please hold my claw, Marley!'

All the ravens huddled together. They could hear the tourists calling out loudly in the distance, and Baldrick tried to walk little way away, but he couldn't see where he was going and tripped headlong over a big tuft of grass! Then Hugin had a bright idea.

'I think I know which way to go,' she squawked. 'Let's all stand in a line, then Munin, get hold of my tail feathers with your beak, and you, Gwyllum, do the same to Munin, and Erin, you get hold of Gwyllum's tail feathers in your beak, and so on!'

Meanwhile the Ravenmaster had seen the fog and was getting very worried about the ravens in case they tried to **flutter** out of the fog and hurt themselves by flying into walls and buildings. Anxiously he peered up the hill, and breathed a sigh of relief as he saw them emerge from the fog, one after the other, all hanging on to the others' tails.

**They were all safe and sound!**

They were also very glad to see him, and followed close behind him until they were back near their cages.

So the ravens all decided to leave rehearsing *Happy Birthday* until another, sunnier day!

*RAVEN BALDRICK AND FRIENDS  
GO SKATEBOARDING*

**B**aldrick loved perching on things. Whenever he saw a bench or a chair he would take a deep breath, then hop up on to it, so when he noticed what looked like a board lying on the square in the middle of the Tower, he gave a little run and hopped on.

As he did so, the board moved a little bit, and when he looked down he saw it had four small wheels underneath.

**It was a skateboard!**

What fun, he thought, and wriggled his tail. The board started moving!

He wriggled harder, and the board rolled even quicker over the ground, the wheels making a loud rumbling sound.



Now Merlin, Erin and Hugin were just on their way to the birdbath and heard the noise, so they all rushed over to join in the fun and have a ride. They ran alongside, then hopped on board, and all four ravens wriggled and wagged their tails until the skate board was travelling really fast!

But, because they were enjoying themselves so much, it wasn't until the very last minute that Baldrick saw that the board was heading straight for the top of the big steps that led down to where a group of tourists were listening to a yeoman warder.

'Look out!' he squawked as loudly as he could, but the people didn't understand raven squawk-talk and took no notice.

All four birds tried to hold on by gripping the edges of the board tightly with their claws. They spread their wings and jumped off just as it started to go **bumpety-bump,bumpety-bump** down the steps!

At the noise, the yeoman warder looked round, then shouted for everyone to get out of the way. He was just in time, as the board shot past, and

crashed into a wall.

Baldrick and Erin, Merlin and Hugin, had all landed safely and walked away, pretending that it wasn't their fault, but the yeoman warder, who had seen everything, told the Ravenmaster, and the four naughty ravens had to go without their very special biscuits for three whole days!

*RAVEN GWYLLUM  
PLAYS FOOTBALL*

**A** new Ravenmaster had just taken over, and as Raven Gwyllum was hopping up into his cage one evening, he squawked, 'D'you know, we once had a football match with the sea gulls who live along the river? Well, not all of us; it was just me, Marley, Thor and Baldrick. The girl ravens, Hugin and Lizzie, didn't join in because they said football was a rough game, Merlin had a pimple on one of her claws, and Erin and Munin had the sneezes.' Gripping his perch, he went on, 'One of the yeoman warders' boys had given us a football, and Jack Daw was the referee. It was great

fun until Seagull Sam kicked the ball right over the wall, and he and Seagull Stephen had to fly over and carry it back. And then I scored a goal!

The new Ravenmaster nodded. He had to get all the other ravens to bed, but didn't want to be rude, so he said, 'Well done! What happened next?'

Gwyllum shook his head. 'Seagull Stanley kicked the ball high in the air. Thor tried to head the ball as it came down, but instead, his beak stuck right into it and it went **POP!** and slipped off on to the ground, as flat as a pancake, so we couldn't play with it anymore!'

The new Ravenmaster said, 'Oh, dear! Now go to sleep. You've got to be up early tomorrow and have all your feathers brushed!'

At that, Raven Gwylun tucked his head under

his wing, closed his eyes and snuggled down,  
hoping to dream about the goal he'd scored that  
day!



*RAVEN LIZZIE RINGS THE  
TOWER'S BELL!*

**R**aven Lizzie had just finished her breakfast of tasty pieces of meat and a biscuit, and because the tourists would soon be photographing her, she carefully removed the crumbs from her beak by wiping it on a tuft of grass. After that she walked towards the General's House on Tower Green, and as she passed the store room next to it, she stopped and sniffed. There was a horrible smell coming from under the door. It made her cough and splutter.

‘Oh dear,’ she thought. ‘There must be a fire inside the room!’

Quickly she hopped to where the soldier was standing on sentry duty outside the general's front door. Tapping his boot with one claw, she squawked, 'Fire, fire!

### **Send for the firemen!**

But the sentry didn't understand squawk-talk, and anyway he had been ordered to stand still all the time without moving, and not even speak to anyone! What could she do?

Then she remembered that behind the General's House was the Bell Tower, and every evening a yeoman warder pulled the bell rope, and its bell would ring to tell all the visitors it was time to go home.

So she would ring the bell to warn everyone about the fire!

Quickly Lizzie Raven hopped up the steps to the top of the wall and then along to where the bell hung inside a little wooden hut on top of the tower. Leaning right out as far as she could, she let go of the wall and gripped the rope with both claws. Then, by fluttering her wings, she started to swing from side to side, making the bell ring loudly!



**Clang, clang!** it went, and down below, the yeoman warders came running to see what was happening!

Looking down, Lizzie Raven saw that one of them was the Ravenmaster. He understood what the ravens said, so she squawked, '**Fire!** There's a fire in the store-room!'

When he heard that, he ran into the office and sounded the alarm, then ran round and up the steps that she had climbed. When he got to the little wooden hut, he leaned out and gently took hold of her. She let go of the rope, and the Ravenmaster slowly carried her down to the ground.

There, the firemen were busy putting the fire out, and the general, who had heard the alarm, was waiting at the bottom of the steps.

'Well done!' he exclaimed. 'What a clever Raven you are!' And he told the Ravenmaster to give her an extra egg and six grapes for her tea!

## *RAVEN MUNIN AND THE PEANUT BUTTER JAR*

**A**s Raven Munin walked round the back of the Waterloo Block where the soldiers lived, she saw something glinting in a corner. She went nearer, and saw that it was a jam jar lying on its side. It had lost its cap, and it hadn't had jam in it at all. She could see the picture on the label; it was a chunky-peanut-butter jar. And it wasn't quite empty!

Now Munin loved eggs and grapes, but more than anything, she loved peanuts, and she could see a big chunk of the yummy bits inside the jar! So she tried to slide one claw in, but the opening

was too narrow, so she squeezed her fingers together as tight as she could, slipped her finger tips into the jar, and pushed hard. In they went, all the way to the bottom!

**Eagerly she took a big handful – well, a clawful** – of the yummy butter that was just waiting to be licked, and closed her fingers tightly so that she wouldn't lose any of it. But when she tried to pull her claw out of the jar, she found that she couldn't.

**Her claw was now too big to slide out!**



Angrily, she banged the jar on the ground, hoping that it would break, but it didn't! Perhaps one of the other ravens could help, she thought, if she promised they could have a lick or two afterwards.

So she made her way back round the building;  
**humpety plonk, humpety plonk, humpety plonk;**  
the jar hit the ground as she walked.

The entrance to the Jewel House was at the front of the Waterloo Block, and at the noise, the visitors waiting in the long queue turned round and stared. Some started laughing, and others got their cameras out and photographed her.

**It was very embarrassing!**

She even tried to lean forward and hide the jar under her wing, but it was no use. Some of the

visitors even gathered round her, thinking she was showing off especially for them.

Raven Gwyllum, who was a very clever raven, saw the commotion and came up to her. He took one look at what had happened, then whispered in her ear, 'If you open your claw, you can easily slide it out, then get at the peanuts bits with a stick!'

Gratefully she looked at him, then did as he said. Out came her claw. She found a stick, and both of them had a **scrumptious** lunch!