

The Jolly Postman Audio Transcripts

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Clip of Blue Peter Episode, BBC 1, 1992

(in 'About The Ahlbergs')

[Music]

Diane Louise-Jordan (presenter): Have you ever sped down the lane on the Jolly Postman's bike?

Allan Ahlberg (reading in voiceover): Dear Mr and Missus Bear and Baby Bear, I'm very sorry indeed that I came into your house and had Baby Bear's porridge. Mommy says I am a bad girl. I hardly eat any porridge when she cooks it, she says. Daddy says he will mend the little chair.

Love from, Goldilocks.

Diane (voiceover): Janet and Allan Ahlberg have created Burglar Bill, Mrs Wobble the Waitress, The Jolly Postman and loads more characters. Where do they get them from?

Allan: In a curious way, I particularly don't want to know where I get my ideas from. It's rather like a man who has a watch and wonders how it works and takes it to bits to find out and then he can't tell the time. The best ideas I get just sort of pop into my head and I don't know how that happens.

Janet Ahlberg: We like to spend a long time on things and perhaps that's how ideas, they don't just come just like that. You work on something and one thing leads to another.

Allan: In the case of *The Jolly Postman*, it happened at this table really. We would sit having our breakfast, and our daughter, who was two, liked to play with the envelopes, so she would take an envelope and just take the letter and put it in and out as though it were a toy. And we watched her doing this, and it seemed to us you could make a book with envelopes in it, and we liked that idea. But when you look at envelopes, you find lots of beautiful things. Not just the stamps, but postmarks and other little things that have been stuck on the envelope. There's one here. You see this? This envelope just says on top, across one of the corners: 'as seen on TV. An important message for policyholders aged over 50.'

Obviously not intended for me, but that kind of graphic joke, really, on an envelope was the kind of thing that Janet seized on when she did the book.

Diane (reading in voiceover): Open now! Don't delay! This could be your lucky day.

Free Witch Watch with every order.

Diane (voiceover): With so many ideas, the Ahlbergs are often busy with different books at the same time. I had a preview of the treats to come from Janet's drawing board.

Diane: What are you working on at the moment, Janet?

Janet: Well, at the moment I'm doing a piece of artwork from 'It Was A Dark And Stormy Night.'

And here's Antonio, who I haven't quite finished yet, you can see he isn't coloured, telling a ludicrous story and he's describing what the castle's like and what the various threats are. There are some ghosts in armour, there are pictures in the hall with moving eyes and there's a thingy in the Moat.

Diane: So what's this over here?

Janet: This is a rough layout of the whole book, all the 32 pages, just showing exactly where to put the type, how to, how to arrange the type with the pictures so that two pages don't look the same, like you've not got two big pictures next to each other.

I do that or I make a little tiny book like this one here.

Diane: I like this one here. What's this?

Janet: This was the first 'Jolly Postman or Other People's Letters' book and you can see it's really yellow now. So it's well used and quite old. And it is the version of the whole book, although it's very rickety now. And I think I put even the inserts in.

Diane: Oh gosh, yes, why do you have to make it like this?

Janet: We make a, a version this size because it's, it's easier than making a full size, but it's to see if the whole thing works.

Diane (voiceover): The follow up was 'The Jolly Christmas Postman.' It's full of little presents including a beautiful peep show.

Janet: This was the very first one. I actually made it as a birthday card for Allan before the book was made. So that one just says 'Happy Birthday Allan', but it doesn't actually represent the one in the book.

[Music]

Allan: Well Diane, this is my palatial shed.

Diane: Why do you have a shed at the bottom of the garden for working?

Allan: Well, we have two places to work. One is a beautiful studio and the other one is a pokey little shed and Janet has the one and I have the other.

Diane: I thought I'd see a big word processor.

Allan: No, I have a, I have a routine, which is not uncommon with writers. I like to write in, in notebooks, but I like squared paper. So they're all, I get these little notebooks and I scribble away. And when I start, I scribble and probably fairly soon after that, I'll type it.

After a while, as you'll see, I begin to have doubts and I start to cross out and change it again until I think it's good enough. It's like wringing a dishcloth out. You squeeze out the last drop of water, or the last word that is, ought not really to be there.

Diane: So do you ever start like in these exercise books with some ideas and just think, you know, like the more you think, oh, that's a good idea and you come back to it in the afternoon and it's not so great?

Allan: Oh, yes. I mean, in, for example, in these cupboards and drawers over here, I've got more unfinished books, more unpublished words than I've published.

Diane: Don't you ever get lonely being a writer in this little shed?

Allan: No, it's deliberate. I, I, I, I like to be completely on my own. I don't like I don't like the cat walking around outside or something.

I really like solitude. I work best early in the morning. So when, when writing is going well, I get up at six and come down here early and my best work is done before breakfast.

Letterbox interactive - Inspired By Everyday Life

Take a look!

Once upon a bicycle,
So they say,
A Jolly Postman came one day
From over the hills
And far away...

With a letter for the Three Bears:

Mr and Mrs Bear
Three Bears Cottage
The Woods

Radio interactive - Inspired By Everyday Life

1. (top
button) Dreaming of flying far, far away?
Magic Carpet Tours – book today!
Fun, food, music and dancing too.
Hop on board – what’s stopping you?

2. Coming to you live from the Palace with
today’s top story — the Royal Wedding of
Cinderella and Prince Charming!

Stay tuned for a special report on this
joyful celebration.

3. Welcome to your Fairy-Land forecast!

We’re starting with sunshine and bright
skies. Later on, clouds will roll in, bringing
rain showers. Keep those brollies handy!

**4. (lowest
button)**

If you go down in the woods today
You're sure of a big surprise
If you go down in the woods today
You better go in disguise.

For every bear that ever there was,
Will gather there for certain, because
Today's the day the teddy bears have
their picnic.

[Music – 'Teddy Bears Picnic']

Letterbox interactive - Spotting Small Details

Dare to peek?

Off went the Postman,

Toodle-oo!

In his uniform of postal blue

To a gingerbread cottage –

And garage too!

With a letter for the Wicked Witch:

The occupier

Gingerbread Bungalow

The Woods

Letterbox interactive - Keeping Us Connected

Who's come to the party?

Now the Jolly Postman,
Nearly done (so is the story),
Came to a house where a party had begun.
On the step
Was a Bear with a bun.

But the letter was for... Goldilocks:

To:

Goldilocks

24, Blackbird Road

Banbury Cross

Letterbox interactive - Happily Ever After? (1)

Who's at home?

So 'Grandma' read the letter
And poured the tea,
Which the not-so-Jolly Postman
Drank... nervously.

B. B. Wolf Esquire.
Care of Grandma's Cottage
Horner's Corner

Letterbox interactive - Happily Ever After? (2)

What's inside?

Once more on his bicycle

The Postman rode

To a beautiful palace, so we've been told,

Where nightingales sang

And a sign said 'Sold',

With a letter for... Cinderella.

(There's a surprise!):

Her Royal Highness Cinderella

The Palace

Half Kingdom Road

Letterbox interactive - Working Together

Who lives here?

Soon the Jolly Postman,
We hear tell,
Stopped at a door with a giant bell
And a giant
Bottle of milk as well,

With a postcard for... guess who?

Mr V. Bigg
Mile High House
Beanstalk Gardens

