

Mad Dogs and Bowling Men

With apologies to Noel Coward, who thought of it first.

by Harry Dunn - received 16/10/13

**In winter-time
In this southern clime
Most senior cits retire
To their heated rooms, when weather looms
For the comfort they desire.
It's a golden rule
That the average fool
Will naturally obey,
For cold and rain is endured in vain,
So they raise the heat and remain indoors
On a cold and wintry day.**

**The young folk grieve
When their oldies leave
Their comfortable Inverloch huts
To bowl in the rain, and suffer the pain
Because they are clearly,
Not just nearly,
But absolutely and definitely -
NUTS**

**Only mad dogs and bowlers
Go out in the pouring rain;
Footy fans don't care to,
Cricketers wouldn't dare to,
Even gardeners can see no reason to explain
The need to stay indoors
When it snows or hails and pours;
They know there's nothing there to gain
By getting soaking wet,
As they will surely get,
So why endure the pain
Of playing bowls, those poor old souls,
Out there in the pouring rain.**

**Pussy-cats can't stand the wet,
They'd rather die or visit the vet,
And some people are insane,
But only mad dogs and bowling - men
Go out in the pouring rain.**

They don their bowling whites
And on their noses they smear zinc,
Some even wear their shorts
For this most conservative of sports,
Rather unsuitable attire, don't you think,
For old codgers past their prime
Displaying legs, all kinds and sorts,
In this infuriating clime
Where there's frost and snow and pain
And frequent driving rain
Causing floods out there on the rinks.

Tourists, driving by,
With their heaters turned up high,
And their 'wipers having trouble keeping up
Look a bit perplexed,
And some are sorely vexed
At the sight of ageing bowlers blue with cold;
Wind-swept and soaking wet,
Frozen stiff - and yet
Insisting that they're tough and feel no pain;
They say they're out there rock and rolling
When they do their winter bowling
And it helps to keep them sane.
So it's mad dogs and bowlers
Out there in the pouring rain.

Yes - mad dogs and bowlers
Out there in pouring rain,
But the madness didn't start there,
As Mister Coward could explain
Having witnessed sim'lar madness
In the tropics East of Suez,
With their fever and their heat,
When the Brits still did their Empirical Grand Tours.
He saw stuffy Army types striding on their beat
Showing those poor native chaps
Their imperviousness to heat,
Wearing solar topees
And swinging swagger sticks
With their sun-burned English slopies,
While the wily local chappies rested under shady trees
And laughed out loud at those idiotic British sahibs
As they strutted tall and proud, the natives to impress,
Yes, strutted all about, dominant, imperious,

**Saying to themselves - these white chaps can't be serious,
But for us poor local wallahs, it's all in a good day's fun,
Watching mad dogs and Englishmen
Out there in the noon-day sun.**

**Now, let us return to the bowling green
Where strange things are often heard
And even stranger seen,
Like bowler's winter madness
Described in lines above;
Of course, that's not the end of it,
For when spring morphs into *summer*
Those dumb bowlers just get dumber,
And out they go in the heat of the the noon-day sun,
Like Noel Coward's English men,
They don't know where, or how or when
To avoid that loaded gun,
And sometimes I have wondered
How many must have died -
When the thermometer passed the hundred
They have fricassied and fried
In that zinc and sun-screen basting
Generously applied,
(For protection from the sun
With its ultra-violet rays so hell-bent on destruction,
Absolutely guaranteed, to save your tender hide
If used according to instruction,
Meaning - frequently applied**

**As Mister Coward might have written,
If he'd visited Down Under
And by the Bowling Bug been bitten:
Only mad dogs and *bowlers*
Go out in the noon-day sun;
The toughest Aussie rabbit deplores this reckless habit:
In Hong Kong, they strike a midday gong,
And fire off a fortress gun,
And in Rangoon and old Bangkok
At exactly twelve o'clock
They foam at the mouth, then they madly cut and run
But only mad dogs and bowlers
Go out in *our* noon-day sun.**

**Down here in Inverloch,
To reduce the thermal shock,**

We hydrate ourselves with stubbies,
Then go out on the bowling greens, by all and any means,
The tallies and shorts, all kinds, all sorts,
The skinnies and the tubbies
To bowl straight and true at kitty;
In blinding rain or scorching heat,
Wearing whites or blues, in their ones and twos,
Or perhaps a pair of daggy old blue jeans.

If they can still get on their feet,
Old bowlers will never admit that it's time to quit
Or accept an honourable ... defeat
By temperature, tempest or rain,
If because of their age they're no longer fit,
An admission like that would cause monstrous pain.
So the point to this little ditty
Is to explain why you'll see bowlers bowling
On greens in the country and city
When everyone else is inside;
It's because some of them are troppo,
And some are barking mad,
And if you should meet one in the street
Try hard to avoid eye-contact -
Much safer to just step aside
Because a few of them are really, not just nearly, but clearly,
Bad.

Mad dogs and bowlers
Are often confused - because they look so alike,
And if you should meet one unexpected,
Please do not panic
Unless his behaviour is manic.
If he has froth round his mouth, don't run north and south,
It *might* just be froth from his beer
But if his eyes are bright red, and he looks in-bred
Be prepared to run, for now you've good reason to fear;
Even worse at high noon, if we've just had a full moon
And the sun's blazing hot,
Well, it *could* be only a poor rabid dog
But if he's wearing white clothes and a silly sun-hat
You're facing a real rabid bowler, and there's nothing as scary as that!

Only mad dogs and bowling - men
Go out in the noon-day sun
And I should know, because I'm part of that show, and afraid that I'm also one.