



ON ADEN'S BARREN ROCKS

On Aden's barren rocks the Union Jack no longer flutters,
From its shores we have long gone, shut up shop, and closed the shutters.
Though Aden wasn't fun, it had a strange attraction,
Driving on camel trails, through the jebels, gave a sense of satisfaction.

Tail-end charlie in the Scammel, the convoy slowly wends its way,
Ferret scout-cars front and back, to keep the NLF at bay.
From Sheikh-Othman, through Lahej, and on to Habilayn,
Shimmering in the desert heat, like a wild-west wagon train!

Up-country from Aden, there's an occasional patch of green,
Turn the clock back several centuries, no technology can be seen.
Nearly blinded by the dust, sweating heavily at the wheel,
With two trucks on tow behind us, and full of missionary zeal.

We snake slowly to the Radfan, where we lay-up until morn,
Whilst mechanics work their miracles, then in convoy we'll return.
The evening calm is shattered and shells fly overhead,
As artillery strafe the hillsides before retiring to bed.

Two beers, then get your head down, we'll get started at first light,
Sleeping under canvas, it's cool at last at night.
Nearby sentries in the sangar, ears straining, keep eyes peeled,
On the plateau up above us, Special Forces are concealed.

In the morning we mount up, and for Aden we head back,
Passing nomadic goat-herds and their simple Arab shack.
Watch for land-mines inside the wadies, dodging stunted trees,
Skirting round a village, and throwing cheeky kids backsheesh.

Back in camp at Little Aden, air-conditioning is a treat,
Swimming inside the shark net, you don't really mind the heat.
Guard duties now seem endless, dull routine can be so testing,
But soon you'll go back up-country, where it's much more interesting.

Well, those days have come and gone, fading in the mists of time,
And history has been written in another foreign clime.
Old soldiers, they grow older, the Empire is no more,
Yet we long for one more adventure, on a distant foreign shore.