

The Banana Song

I did so enjoy unashamedly wallowing in nostalgia, as I read through the latest pages of *The Call Boy* (Volume 51, No. 4). I was particularly taken with *The Wilfred Pickles Phenomenon* on page 26, right from the opening lines: ‘In the summer of 1941 there was a fete in the nearby park...’ and ‘...the go-as-you-please talent competition.’ I remember well, being pushed onto the stage at *our* local talent competition. It was held in Victoria Park, in Elland, Yorks, West Riding. It would have *been* the summer of 1941 and I was three and a half years old. My sister, who was three and a half years older than me, and that much taller, was not to be disobeyed. The previous Christmas, we had been taken to the pantomime; it would have been in either Halifax or Huddersfield. One of the choruses which stuck with me, was,

*When can I have a banana again,
tell me mother do?*

*When can I have a banana again,
like I used to do?*

I'd have 'em for breakfast,

I'd have 'em for lunch.

*I'd have 'em single,
or all in a bunch.*

*When can I have a banana again,
tell me mother do?*



Of course, I didn't know what a real banana was. For us wartime kids, they were hard, black, and about three inches long. But I sang it, unaccompanied, because the resident pianist didn't know it! The chorus has always been with me, but no-one else seemed to recall it, until in 2003, when I found it referred to on page 117 of Jimmy Perry's autobiography, *A Stupid Boy*. I wrote to him telling him the story, asking if he knew how I could find a copy of the words and music. Bless him, four months later, came a handwritten letter of apology for keeping me waiting, enclosing a copy of the 'Banana' song.

Howard Brayton

'The Call Boy' Summer 2015 Volume 52 No 2