

## Rome by John Broadhurst

We Broadhursts are off again  
Boarding yet another plane;  
Off the ground  
Rome bound.  
Britannia Airways, the best,  
Take off today, from the West  
The South of England far below,  
The Alps all covered in crisp white snow.  
The 757 with its happy band  
At Naples Airport came safely to land.  
Passports inspected  
Cases collected.  
"Please wait in the seats on the left."  
Said the Archers' Rep. totally bereft  
Of any other knowledge of what we were to do,  
Where and when to go, or even with who.  
Eventually Italian Laura came by  
But didn't offer us a reason why  
She was late, so on the bus we got,  
We British being an obedient lot.  
We all sat back so she could tell  
Useful hints on Italy 'in a nut shell.'  
Arrived at the Hotel Centrale in early afternoon  
Our cases were delivered to our third floor room.

The room was spacious with bathroom attached  
Wall and floor tiles all of which matched.  
A bidet and tucked in the corner  
A bath more suitable for little Jack Horner.  
Just big enough for one to sit  
I can't see them ever being a hit.  
Considering the heat, the towels answered ones wishes  
But back home we'd use them for drying the dishes.  
Thin tea towels were all they were  
In all that heat I know which I prefer.

A quick unpack and a cup of tea  
Then off into Fuiggi for to see  
What a typical Italian town is like:  
Posh shops from clothes to, hire a bike.  
A central square  
Where  
Everyone can sit and chat  
Pass the time discussing this and that,  
Or relaxing in an outdoor ristorante  
Drinking what so ever you want.  
The supermarket was but a few steps away,  
Luckily open at that time of day.  
1.20 Euros bought a bottle of wine  
Which just had to be consumed before we could dine.

We had to drink it all as we had no seal,  
The perfect way to prepare for our evening meal.  
The food itself right through the week  
Was everything that we might seek.  
With pasta in so many delicious ways.  
The only down side being that on three days  
We had exactly the same ice-cream  
Sadly, not the famous Italian dream.

Next morning at 8.30 the usual greeting  
At the rep's welcome meeting.  
Daria was to be our guide  
Her nicotine habit she could not hide.  
Her Yugoslav accent was rather strong  
But still we were glad to have her along.

We were asked to be on the coach by nine  
And being a keen lot, we were there on time.  
Antonio, our driver for the trip  
Throughout the week he never made one slip.  
To a Benedictine Abbey he took us first  
By which time we dying of thirst  
So, one our very first tasks  
Was to take out our newly purchased flasks.  
Coffee hastily made in the cup  
Didn't half perk us both up.  
The path to the Abbey was long and steep  
No wonder for OAPs its cheap  
Not all of them will make the grade  
But at least the pathway was covered in shade.  
The Abbey itself, an engineering feat  
Built into the hillside long since complete.  
One thing to me was sad to behold  
The monks we saw were all so very old  
Perhaps it's a sign of the day  
That religion is frightening the young ones away.

Tivoli was one next port of call  
The place where for centuries the Italian all  
Have taken the native stone away  
Poor man's marble, so they say.

