

The Incredible Captain Tom

by Jules de Jongh

Season 2 Episode 6

[opening theme music and strapline]

Nanny Bea: Hello and welcome to my cottage, you've come in the nick of time, I have my cup of tea in hand ready for my neighbour Jules to bring a story any...

[knock sfx]

Nanny Bea: minute now.

Nanny Bea: Who ever could that be? Yes, who is it?

Jules: Hello Nanny Bea, it's your neighbour Jules with a story.

Nanny Bea: What a lovely surprise! Do come in, hello, hello.

Jules: Why thank you Nanny Bea and hello to you. Oh it's nice and cosy in here. Perfect for some tales and tea.

Nanny Bea: Speaking of, I have a cup ready for you and I can't wait to hear the story you have for me, well for all of us, but first we've had a call from a very special friend. He has something for my poet tree.

Poet Tree jingle

Tommy: Hello Nanny Bea this is Tommy, it's something for your Poet Tree, it's a song for Captain Tom. We'll meet again, don't know where, don't know when. But I know we'll meet again some sunny. Keep smiling through just like you always do, 'til the blue skies drive the dark clouds far away.

Chime

Nanny Bea: Oh Tommy that brings back memories. Thank you for that lovely tribute for such an exceptional man.

Jules: I agree Nanny Bea and that's why today we honour Captain Tom with a tale of his adventures. Are you ready for his story?

Nanny Bea: Oh, yes please

Jules: Okay then, The Incredible Captain Tom, adapted for radio

All around us are heroes, we don't always notice them. The lady behind the checkout, the boy across the lane or even the very old man next door. They can live for a 100 years and only just reach our radar at the very end. So goes the story of one man, a captain in fact, well now a colonel and a sir stuck in between after he was knighted by the Queen, Captain Sir Thomas Moore or Captain Tom to those who knew of him.

Until last year his heroic life was a mystery to most of us. Now there are all kinds of heroes and Captain Tom was many of them. His very last battle was against a tiny but deadly monster that is so small it creeps in without people even noticing. Captain Tom raised a huge army of supporters to pay for the fight against this enemy. It was in fact that enemy that took his life in the end but he left so much for us to remember him by. His picture has been painted on the side of a building 3 stories high, he's had a number one song in the charts and his story turned into many books on the shelves.

But what is his story, how does one very old man make such a big difference.

Let's wind the clock back 100 years to the beginning of Tiny Tom. Tiny Tom was born near the same time as the automobile, the airplane and the transistor radio. He was born in a far off land called Yorkshire. A region with a proud heritage and even prouder people. They seem to be a tougher breed up there maybe that's because their great great great Great and greater grandparents had invaders from around the globe or maybe it's because the ground they live on is hard as stone. From there we've got the cheeky Yorkshire Terrier, the world's first football club, and the country's oldest inn, hopefully not serving the oldest food!

When Tom was Tiny Tom the world had just stopped fighting each other and life was swell but the fighting didn't stop for long. By the time Tiny Tom was Teenage Tom the world was at it again, another war! Tom was signed up and picked out as officer material. But instead of being in the spotlight, Tom was sent off fighting where no one was noticing, they even call his troops, 'The Forgotten Army'. A hero in the shadows although whenever he was asked he'd say, he wasn't a hero at all, just one of many soldiers but to see him you'd wonder how he could stand upright with all the medals of honour on his chest.

Captain Tom was a husband, a father, a grandfather, he may have seemed like any other. After a long life, a good life you would think he'd slow down by 99 but that's when his goodness came under the spotlight.

As he approached his 100th birthday his son in law challenged him saying, he'd pay him a pound for every lap Tom walked around the garden if he could do 100 by his birthday. That 100 pound pledge kicked him off. Walking frame at the ready Captain Tom started his humble mission all in aid of a worthy cause. His daughter goaded him further, raise 1000 pounds why don't you!

It wasn't long before his target was passed. When Captain Tom finally crossed the finish line, his regiment saluting him and flying over head, he'd raised millions. So much in fact that

he broke the world record for a charitable walk. And then another world record for his number one song, as the oldest person to achieve that.

Captain Tom was sent enough birthday cards that piled up they'd reach the Eiffel Tower. It's quite something living 100 years. Tom said he didn't know what it was supposed to feel like, he'd never been 100 before.

The money kept coming in, still keeps coming in. It's nearly 40 million pounds so far. And what an achievement that is but something more is how he inspired others to step up and step out just like 5 year old Tony who lost both his legs and uses artificial limbs. He saw Captain Tom and walked 10 kilometres raising 1.5 million pounds for charity. Tobias aged 9 uses a walker like Tom as he has cerebral palsy but he said, if Captain Tom can do it, maybe I can too. So far he's raised 150,000 for charity.

Ordinary people doing extraordinary things all starting with one step. And if even that seems like too much today, just remember Captain Tom's words,

Tomorrow will be a good day.

The end

Nanny Bea: Thank you Jules and thank you to both our Tom's today, Captain Tom and our special friend Tommy with the poetic song, 'We'll Meet Again'. My Senior Citizen Rhythm Express Band is frequently requested to play that number. Oh you've never really heard it until you've heard it on 37 kazoos, the nuance we achieve.

Jules: I thought you played the drums in your band.

Nanny Bea: Yes, yes I do, 37 kazoos and me on drums, it's a bit tricky when we are marching but the laying down a thumping beat pulls it all together.

Jules: I have got to see you guys in action.

Nanny Bea: Perhaps we'll hit the lanes this summer on the European leg of our tour. I'll keep you posted. And what of you and your stories, when will we meet you again.

Jules: I will be here next week for more tales and tea?

Thomas: Go to NannyBea.com

Jules: Go there to find out about all our episodes and how to get in touch. As well as a link to the Captain Tom Foundation. Tales & Tea is written for you so please do let us know what you think. You can like or follow us on iTunes or Spotify.

[Be on the Show jingle]

Mr Announcer: This has been a Toad in the Hole production for NannyBea.com.