

Skit Notes: Near Coxon's Tower

Rebecca Locklear

Summary: In 1803, some young British militia soldiers from Coxon's Tower are in despair over the possible invasion by France. How do they gain the will and courage to fight?

Grades: 7-12

Cast of Characters

	# of Lines
Tavern-Keeper	5 ad lib.
Ruddick, former soldier	31
Soldier 1	6 ad lib.
Soldier 2	3 ad lib.
Soldier 3	2 ad lib.

Setting: 1803, in a pub near Coxon's Tower in the town of Berwick-upon-Tweed in northeast England.

Props: Tables, chairs, drinks, some food.

Performance Time: 5 minutes

Background Information

Napoleon: Napoleon started preparations to invade England in 1803.

By summer of 1804, more than 70,000 French soldiers, the nucleus of the Army of England under generals Ney and Soult, were encamped at the northern sea ports. ... By August of the following year, the new Emperor had accumulated enough landing craft in the Channel ports to transport 167,000 soldiers. (Lipscombe,122)

In England, fears of a successful French landing were downplayed, but for many, the fears were real. Men were willing to fight for their own shores. Some were called to the militia

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Near Coxon's Tower

Chris Green

Adapted by Rebecca Locklear
for the production *The British in Napoleonic Times*

SCENE **Early evening in a pub with soldiers stationed at Coxon's Tower**

TAVERN-KEEPER: Good 'evenin, Ruddick. A fine ale to keep out the cold?

RUDDICK: Thanks, Hugh. (*looks around at men at table discussing the war*) A gloomy crew. What's the tale tonight?

TAVERN-KEEPER: (*gives ale*) The usual. News of war. French and Boney's schemes.

RUDDICK: (*walks over to men*) What ho, lads. (*a few respond weakly*) Come now, let's not be downhearted.

SOLDIER 1: (*acknowledges RUDDICK*) Ruddick. (*worried*) They say Boney's got a mass of ships and men. He's about to sweep the Navy from the sea.

RUDDICK: (*doesn't believe it*) Is that so? Poppycock.

SOLDIER 1: (*worried*) Boney's men may skulk over at night, screened in a fog.

SOLDIER 2: (*to SOLDIER 1*) Aye, that *would* be hard on the Navy.

RUDDICK: (*sits with SOLDIERS*) I tell you lads, the Tars of old England will make short work of them...if those land rats dare venture out of their element.

SOLDIER 3: You reckon they may *not* put to sea?

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"The language is spot on when depicting this time period." ~Ann M., educator

Other history skits by British playwright, Chris Green & Rebecca Locklear:

Beyond Scotland's Golden Age	1286-1296
The Great Siege	1333
The Battle of Halidon Hill	1333
The Ramparts	1587

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