

Rupert and Mr Anteater

When setting off to come here I said to my wife “Did you ever think in your wildest dreams that I would go to Warwick University to a Rupert Bear Conference dressed as Mr Anteater?” Avril said “You never appear in my WILDEST dreams.”

I have written a new Rupert story called “Rupert and Mr Anteater’s Snout”

Firstly, I shall give some background information for those of you did not attend the Followers’ Annual Meeting in 2023 or 2024. I attended the GALA Dinner in 2023 dressed as Mr Anteater, wearing this snout.

PUT MASK ON

The Nutwood Newsletter kindly included a photograph of me but I was described as “Scary”. Someone asked why anyone would go to a Rupert Bear Conference dressed as Elephant Man?

The Assistant Editor advised me not to wear the mask if I returned in 2024. I cannot repeat what she said it reminded her of but her husband was very embarrassed.

I returned snoutless in 2024 and the Newsletter said “You have the opportunity to meet Mr Anteater without his snout”.

Now to the story of *Rupert and Mr Anteater’s Snout*.

When Rupert is involved, I have managed some rhyming couplets but the complexity of the plot is such that most of it is like the paragraphs at the foot of the page in the Annuals.

*Mr Anteater plods with his head bowed
He knows his snout’s not well endowed*

*Across the common the old gent walks
Time for him to see the docs*

*Alas he meets young Rupert Bear
who asks what he is doing there*

*The old gent doesn’t want the truth to out
that he wants help to grow his snout*

*He decides to fob keen Rupert off
and tells him he has a nasty cough*

I don’t know if you have found since COVID that it is more difficult to arrange an appointment with your GP. I can tell you that Doctor Lion has become very elusive. He ignores phone calls and letters and he does not have an email address.

This was why Mr Anteater had decided to beard the Lion in his den. Having shaken off Rupert he rings the surgery bell. It is answered by Dr Lion's maid. You will remember her.

She appeared in one picture only in *Rupert and the Broken Plate* in the 1975 Annual. She was useless and was lucky that one picture was enough for Phil Toze to include her in his *Rupert's Who's Who*.

*The maid thinks that the Doc is out
As to where she's full of doubt*

*When he'll return, she does not know
Anteater snorts at this poor show*

*An appointment date he then requests
the maid just treats him as a pest*

Fortunately, Mr Anteater then remembers that Dr Lion had a practice nurse who appeared in four pictures in *Rupert and the Igloo* in the 1984 Annual. He explained the delicate nature of his problem and asked if she would arrange a face-to-face appointment. She said face to face was only for emergencies and offered a telephone consultation in a week. Mr Anteater said it had to be face to face so Dr Lion could examine his snout. The nurse replied that snout enhancement was cosmetic surgery and would have to wait.

Mr Anteater was furious and told her he had been appearing in Annuals since 1937 (*Rupert and the Chinese Cracker*) and had never been treated so badly.

*Anteater sadly walks away
But again young Rupert has his say*

*It's not enough your Topper's shiny
You must enhance a snout so tiny.*

*Your image is that of a snappy dresser
But your snout needs help from the Old Professor.*

That rang a bell with Mr Anteater as he remembered *Rupert's Birthday* a story in the 1943 Annual. The Old Professor had given Podgy Pig a belt which made Podgy grow to a wondrous size. He finally filled a barn.

Mr Anteater explained to the Professor that he wondered if he could be given a belt for his snout. The Professor said that would be too dangerous as Podgy had grown proportionately in all areas and he could not target a snout.

The Professor tried a different approach. "Anteater my old friend, I wonder if your problem may be mental. Let me tell of a case where positive mental thinking solved a problem. You know, of course, my personal assistant. When he started working for me many years ago, he was a surly fellow and we called him The Dwarf.

Then one day he came and told me that there were changes coming to Nutwood and that the village painter, a fellow called Bestall, was retiring. A new painter was to be appointed and he would freshen up the image of the village. The Dwarf thought this would be a good time for him to freshen his image as well. He was fed up with everyone calling him "The Dwarf" rather than by his own name.

The Professor replied "My dear chap, you have served me faithfully for 30 years. Of course we will agree to that. By the way, Dwarf, what is your name? Sorry I did not quite catch that - did you say Bodkin? Unusual name. Was your mother a seamstress?

So ever since everyone has called him Bodkin and he now bounds about smiling all the time. So, Anteater we should try the same approach with you. You do not have a snout anymore, think of it as your Bodkin and get it into your head that as Anteaters go, yours is an average sized Bodkin.

Mr Anteater went away in a positive frame of mind. For three happy months he went about the village with his head and his Bodkin held up high. Until the day he met Rupert who as always was wanting to help people and to tell the truth.

*Rupert explained that the truth must out
That a tiny bodkin is a tiny snout*

*The old man was stunned in shocked surprise
What Rupert had forced him to realise*

*The Prof had conned him, perhaps in fun
Anteater's right back to Square One.*

*Then Rupert said the Prof's been silly
I suggest you consult Tigerlily*

*Oh yes of that girl I'm very fond
I hope she'll touch my Bodkin with her wand.*

PUT ON THE SNOOT EXTENSION

and say "And she did".

Maurice Paterson

2025 without snout

