

Number 125

Nutwood Newsletter

Summer 2026



Summer 2026 – Chairman's Welcome

Greetings to fellow Followers. In this issue you will find further confirmation of the revised date(s) and change of venue of this year's Fun Day and AGM, flagged up in our previous newsletter (NN124). Whilst this might be inconvenient for some who were accustomed to the previous pattern, I am hopeful that it will encourage those who have not attended previously to take the plunge. For me, the new venue appears to be leafier and greener than Warwick University, avoiding the city conurbation if travelling by car. Noting the rates for children reminds me of our days at Barford and earlier venues – when we were so much younger – at which children were plentiful, accompanying their (youthful) parents. The intervening years have seen those parents grow (no, correct that to 'develop') into grandparents whilst their children have become parents and, sadly children are now few and far between at our Fun Days. Why is that, I wonder? Is fondness for Rupert something we grow out of 'putting aside childish things' as someone once wrote.

Can we encourage those loyal (youthful?) grandparents of yesteryear to treat their



grandchildren to a day (or longer) out exploring the wonders of Nutwood in beautiful English parkland – in the hope that they too will become Followers and carry Rupert's torch forward into his second century?

Circumstances may have determined Charles our AGM organiser to move our Fun Day away from the August Bank Holiday weekend and Warwick, but the attractiveness of Ashorne Hill and its location in central England still provides Followers of two (or why not three?) nights with a convenient destination. I look forward to meeting new faces and a new generation of Followers.

Roger Coombes, Chairman

2026 Followers' AGM Official Notification

This is formal notification that the **2026 AGM** will take place at

**Ashorne Hill
Leamington Spa CV33 9QW
at 12 noon on Saturday 22nd August**

♦ Registration for the **Fun Day at 9.00 am** ♦

Meeting business:

- ♦ Adoption of 2025 AGM Minutes and 2025/26 Accounts
- ♦ Confirm appointment of auditors as Moorlands Accountants
- ♦ All existing Committee Members are prepared to stand
- ♦ There are no proposed changes to Rules and Constitution

Any other proposals must be with the Secretary 30 days before the meeting.

Please note only full members, including e-members, are eligible to propose and vote.

Alan Murray (Secretary)

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The **North West Group** held their bi-annual get-together the Sunday the clocks moved forward.
We welcome any new members who live within striking distance of Blackburn.
Contact me at pamela.stones@rupertbear.co.uk for Shirley (our host's) contact details.

Order forms:

In this issue you will find a number of order forms:

- AGM Event Registration – send to Charles Knappe
- Raffle ticket application – send to Joy and Martin Cooper
- Signed Annual order – send to Mark Hackney
- Second Rupert Storybook– send to Melanie Beck

Please send applications and payments to the correct person – we live at various corners of the country and are not able to forward these on for you.

Editorial

Summer is upon us and plans are well advanced for this year's AGM and surrounding event. We appreciate Charles' efforts in organising – not an easy job. He explains more about what's planned on page 24 and you will find it includes some super talks. The Sales Team advise us that there will be some exciting new items on offer, plus some price reductions on existing stock.

My Publications Team colleague, Mike Ward, has been busy and in this issue you will find a blog he located about the Dumpy book *The Three Little Foxes*; also the contents of the book itself, carefully reproduced for you by Mike. Mike has also been investigating dwarfs.

John Lester was pleased to see Billy Goat's appearance in the 2025 Annual and was inspired to pen an article which you will find starting on page 10. There is also a piece by our regular contributor, Maurice Paterson, and a further selection of 'Rupert goodies' on eBay, courtesy of Martin Cooper. Please keep your contributions to our newsletter coming.

The launch of the Second Rupert Storybook and John Harrold signing in Lewes was a great success. Followers attending were delighted to see John and have their books signed by him. John has sent a message to all Followers (page15).

As in the last issue, you will find an order form for the Storybook. The book is proving very popular, so if you haven't ordered one yet, make sure you don't miss out. Our chairman has reviewed the book for us; his review is in this issue.

We hope you have kept the weekend before the August Bank Holiday free and will be able to join us at this year's AGM and Fun Day. I paid a quick visit to Ashorne Hill, as we happened to be driving along the relevant section of the M40 on our way home from the Lewes book-signing. All the facilities we saw looked to be of the highest standard and we look forward to seeing you there.

Pamela Stones (Editor)



A Dwarf by any Other Name – Part 1

Mike Ward

When he succeeded Mary Tourtel as Rupert artist, Alfred Bestall inherited a cast of characters which is still mainly intact today. However, it didn't take him long to start adding to that list.

In his second story, *Rupert's Autumn Adventure* (B2, 1935), Bestall introduced two characters who have gone on to feature in nearly seventy stories in the ensuing ninety years: the Old Professor and his dwarf servant. It is the stories involving the dwarf that I will concentrate on in this article. We get a fleeting, first glimpse of the dwarf as he helps Rupert and his friend, Barbara,



out of a tight spot before taking them to meet his master. Rupert and Barbara find themselves involved in a further adventure before the dwarf and his master come to their rescue.

The dwarf next appears in *Rupert's Adventures in the Snows* (B5, 1936) when Rupert helps the Professor search for and collect a special plant in order to make some medicine for Granny Goat. This is followed by *Rupert and the Flying Bottle* (B10, 1936) where the dwarf plays a vital part after Podgy helps himself to the Professor's latest invention.

In *Rupert and the Snow Machine* (B14, 1937) the dwarf ropes in Rupert to help his master with his latest invention, a machine that turns rain into snow. But something goes wrong (when does it not?) The gas release lever on the balloon in which he is flying gets stuck and Rupert gets blown away. Eventually he is rescued by the dwarf and his master but not before spending the night in the snowy mountains.



The dwarf next appears in *Rupert and the Courier Bird* (B31, 1938) when Rupert asks the

Professor to identify a jewel given to him by a courier bird he had helped. Later, when the Professor's new flying machine runs out of fuel, the dwarf is able to send him a can of fuel with the aid of Rupert and a giant eagle. And *Rupert's Marvellous Bat* (B41, 1939) takes Rupert and Edward on a trip to a foreign land after Rupert meets the dwarf gathering cricket balls for his master.

When Pong-Ping gives Rupert a red egg from the batch of eggs he's received from China, in *Rupert and the Red Egg* (B49, 1940), it causes great excitement in the old Professor and the local birds but some anxiety to the dwarf servant. The dwarf is even more concerned when a giant eagle arrives to take Rupert to see the King of the Birds but not half as concerned as the giant hen becomes when she sits on the egg to hatch it!



It's Rupert's birthday and in the story *Rupert's Birthday* (B57, 1941) Rupert can't understand why he hasn't grown taller overnight. He goes to see the Professor and is greeted at the door by the dwarf in one of his briefer appearances. The Professor lends Rupert a machine that will help him grow but it is Podgy who ends up super-sized.

When Algy finds a speaker and puts it on his head to amuse Rupert in *Rupert and the Mystery Voice* (B68, 1942) the dwarf suddenly appears, takes it off Algy's head and runs away. A little later the dwarf approaches Rupert to say that his master requires his help before running off again. Rupert follows as fast as he can but hears someone crying out for help. It turns out to be the Professor testing his new invention, a radio that projects the voice of whoever



speaks into it. Rupert borrows it, has a bit of fun with his chums, a misadventure with a poacher and gets his own back on the Professor and the dwarf.

The dwarf makes another of his briefer appearances in *Rupert and the Blue Mountain* (B81, 1944), when he answers the door to Rupert and Bill so early in the morning he is still in his nightclothes and dressing gown.



Rupert meets a little coon from Coon Island in *Rupert and Koko* (B90, 1945) when an airman arrives with a message for the Professor. The little coon, whom Rupert names Koko from the sounds he makes, runs off. After Rupert catches him, they make their way to see the old Professor and meet the dwarf in the garden. Because the airman has had to

take the Professor's answer straight back, the dwarf carries Rupert and Koko to Rupert's cottage, and picks them up again when the airman returns for Koko.



When Rupert tries to find out what the Professor is up to in *Rupert and the Rocket Plane* (B06, 1946) the dwarf pretty much tells him to mind his own business. However, Rupert does find out, but ends up being stranded on an island with the Professor before being rescued. And an island features in the dwarf's next appearance, *Rupert's Island Adventure* (B99, 1947). When the old Professor invents waterproof paper, the dwarf invites Rupert and Willie to join him in his island workshop.

Unfortunately, once there, the gate mechanism jams but



Rupert is able to get out and go to fetch Sailor Sam with some tools so that the dwarf can fix the mechanism.

The dwarf is badly hurt when the new plane he is testing, in *Rupert and the Paper Kettle* (B07, 1947), crashes and he is flung out into the treetops. After fetching the Professor, but with the wrong type of medication, Rupert saves the day, and the dwarf, by making a paper kettle.

There is another 'medical emergency' in *Rupert and Dr. Lion* (B105, 1948). Almost everyone in Nutwood is suffering with a heavy cold. Dr. Lion says they need more sunshine so Rupert goes to see the old Professor and finds that both he and his dwarf servant are also suffering and cannot help. Help is, however, not far away. The Wise Old Goat has developed liquid sunshine and soon everyone is on the road to recovery.



It is an apologetic dwarf who appears in *Rupert and the Arrows* (B111, 1949). When Rupert and

his chums get blamed for breaking a window, the dwarf turns up and explains to the house owner that his master is responsible and will pay for the damage done.



In *Rupert and the Back Room Boy* (B119, 1950) a black imp, the Back Room Boy of the title, thinks that Rupert is the one who has caught him in a net and sets about taking his revenge by causing bushes to grow in Rupert's path and plants to push up the floor boards in his house. Rupert takes a cutting to the old



Professor and the dwarf plants it, but it withers almost immediately.

When Rupert goes to see the Professor about autumn primroses in *Rupert and the Autumn Primrose* (B123, 1950) the dwarf is on hand but is of no help. And when Rupert later tells of how he found some primroses in autumn the dwarf is amusingly surprised.

A gold locket and chain provides a mystery in *Rupert and Simon* (B127, 1951). Rupert found it in a fallen rotten tree when helping his new friend, Simon, gather logs. On his way to see PC Growler Rupert meets the dwarf who suggests that Rupert takes the locket to his master to see if he can help identify the owner.



One day in school, in *Rupert and the Butterflies* (B136, 1952), Dr. Chimp notices a strange butterfly on the window and draws it to the attention of the class. A little later, while



gathering wild flowers for his mummy, Rupert sees it again and coaxes it onto the flowers. He goes to see the Professor and meets the dwarf who says that the

butterfly is rare. He takes Rupert to the Professor who confirms what the dwarf said. After a misadventure with the Professor's new butterfly-attracting scent and a thief, the dwarf pops up again with a warning that the scent also attracts wasps, but Rupert already knew that. And the Professor causes another environmental issue in *Rupert and the Robins* (B140, 1953) when the fruit tree spray he has invented causes the Nutwood robins to turn yellow. The dwarf makes a couple of brief appearances but plays no significant part.

It is a very angry dwarf who appears in *Rupert and the Pepper-Rose* (B143, 1953). Rupert has a

rose that he acquired from Mary-Quite-Contrary. The problem is the rose smells of pepper and anyone smelling it has a violent sneezing fit. Unfortunately the dwarf smells the rose hence the anger. The dwarf has another sneezing fit in *Rupert and the Cold Cure* (B157, 1955) but this time it is because he has a heavy cold. So has the Professor, who is close to perfecting a cold cure but has lost a vital sheet of paper which tells how to complete the cure.



Rupert and his mummy and daddy have just arrived in Greypoint, in *Rupert's Deep Sea Adventure* (B160, 1955), when he suddenly sees the dwarf down by the quay. When he catches up with the dwarf, Rupert is invited to join the Professor the following day. The next day Rupert joins the Professor and the dwarf on a deep sea



expedition though only the Professor is diving. But he gets stuck so the dwarf helps Rupert into the spare suit and sends him down. The professor is freed but Rupert is stranded and ends up having an adventure featuring the Merboy and King Neptune before being returned to Greypoint.

After a sudden violent wind causes Rupert and his chums to take shelter, in *Rupert and the Winter Woolly* (B164, 1956), Rupert finds a large leaf upon which is a large hairy caterpillar. As it looks like nothing he's seen before, he takes it to the old Professor and is met at the door by the dwarf. After an adventure with Jack Frost Rupert, with Willie, goes back to see the Professor and here we can see them with the dwarf in the background.



In *Rupert and the Silent Land* (B175, 1957), an extremely loud noise upsets the inhabitants of Nutwood. Rupert sets out to find an answer and

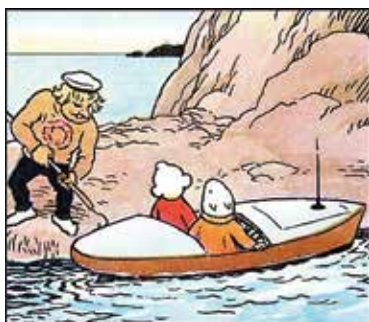


finds the dwarf on the woodland floor. He has fallen out of a tree and hurt his leg. Rupert asks some scouts to help the dwarf then goes to tell the Professor what has happened.

From here Rupert ends up meeting a hermit and some little people who live in a silent world.

Heavy snowfall makes for a silent world in *Rupert and the Jackdaw* (B177, 1958) and also makes heavy going. However, the dwarf makes light of it by wearing snow-shoes and is on hand to give assistance wherever needed.

Rupert has been playing out and is on his way home, in *Rupert and the Secret Boat* (B181, 1958) when he spies a figure in sailor's gear. It is the dwarf servant and



he is on his way to meet his master by the river. The next day Rupert receives an invitation to join Gregory Guinea pig on holiday and shortly after they reach their destination Rupert and Gregory bump into the Professor and the dwarf and end up having an adventure in the Professor's new remote-controlled boat.

It is Gregory's birthday, in *Rupert and the Copper Bird* (B035, 1959), but it looks like he won't be



having a party until Pong-Ping says he can have it at his house. Preparations are in hand but are interrupted by mysterious noises. The dwarf, in

another of his briefer appearances, is questioned by Pong-Ping but all he does is smile and walk away. Nonetheless the mystery is eventually

solved and the party goes ahead. In another brief appearance, in *Rupert and the Purple Star* (B194, 1960), the dwarf is on hand when Rupert and Sailor Sam bring the Professor the star that had been found by Rupert and Bill when they were on holiday.

Rupert is playing with his yacht on Nutwood Lake, in *Rupert and the Flying Boat* (B201, 1961), when it disappears.

He finds the old Professor carrying his yacht and when he notices Rupert gives it back to him and tells him to come and see him the next day. Next morning he meets the dwarf, who tells him that he is to replace him in an experiment. Needless to say there is a problem, which is solved by Gregory Guinea pig who then gets himself into trouble and has to be rescued by the dwarf in a helicopter.



The final appearance of the dwarf in the Bestall era is in *Rupert and the Dover Sole* (B040, 1964). There are strange scents in the air that are traced to the old Professor and his latest invention. The dwarf initially blocks Rupert from seeing the Professor but the Professor allows Rupert to know what he is doing. Unfortunately a phial containing the scent of Dover sole is smashed and every cat and bird for miles around is attracted to the Professor's laboratory. Having left the lab Rupert is called back by the dwarf and hauled



onto the building roof where Rupert asks for the cloth that was used to clean up the spillage so that he can lead away the cats and birds from the building.

After a chase, a tree climb and a spell cast by Tigerlily, everything is returned to normal.

Note: Story numbering is as per *The Rupert Index*, B*** numbers being newspaper stories and B0** numbers being original stories in the Annuals. Dates are first appearances in those publications.

Rupert and the Grey Squirrel

Maurice Paterson

Given the idyllic countryside around Nutwood, I had always assumed the squirrels in the area were red. The colouring has sometimes been dodgy, but generally supported that view. However, in the 2024 Annual in *Rupert and the Truffle Trouble* (ST22) in the text on page 68 it states 'A grey squirrel bounds down from his tree'. The colour in the picture on that page is light brown.



In the same Annual we have *Rupert and the Pine Ogre* (B130) where there also was a squirrel. I show the picture from the 1957 Annual but it is virtually identical to that in the 2024 Annual.



This led me to investigate squirrels from Mary Tourtel's day onwards. Consulting Phil Toze's *Who's Who* it is stated, 'Numerous squirrels are in the adventures'. Sam Squirrel appeared in the 13th picture of the first Rupert story *Little Lost Bear* (T1) but the picture is not in full colour. Most Tourtel stories are only available in black and white so I am not showing the Squirrel

footman from *Rupert and the Brigands* (T13). The Followers' full colour version of *Rupert at School* (T7) features Sidney Squirrel but his face is white. I did not find any story which mentioned the colour of squirrels until the 2024 Annual.



The early Rupert Annuals were not in full colour. The first squirrels were in the 1938 Annual and an example is shown from *Rupert and the Daffodils* (B16) where the colour does look as though as though it could have been grey but this was probably not intentional. The first full colour Annual with a squirrel was 1943 and an example from *Rupert and the Black Moth* (B60) shows a reddish coloured squirrel.



In the 1945 Annual *Rupert's Fairy Cycle* (B78) and in *Rupert and the Three Guides* (B102) the King of the Squirrels is a squirrel with a light brown colour, a picture from the latter being shown. Thereafter the pictures are clearly of red rather than grey squirrels. An example of this is *Rupert and the Hazel Nut* (B139).

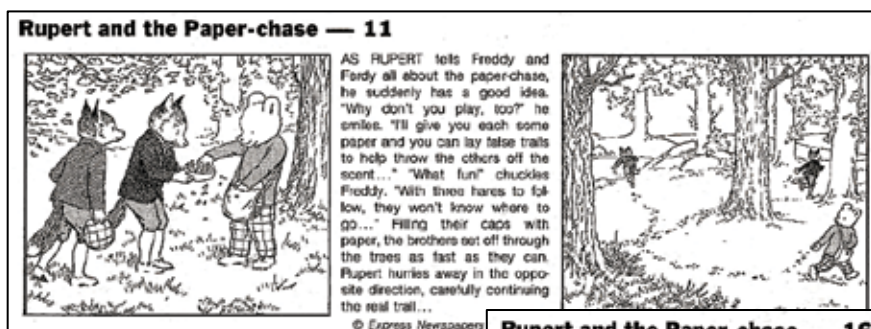
There's no doubt thereafter that red is the colour, right up to the 2019 where I show King Squirrel again in *Rupert and the Bearcycle* (ST17).



Let us hope that this recent advancement of the grey squirrel will soon be repelled in Nutwood.

The Nutwood Lawbreakers

An interesting letter appeared in the Daily Express back in June 1993 when a reader commented on the wrongdoings perpetrated in the then recent story *Rupert and the Paper-Chase*. The letter and incriminating panels are shown here.

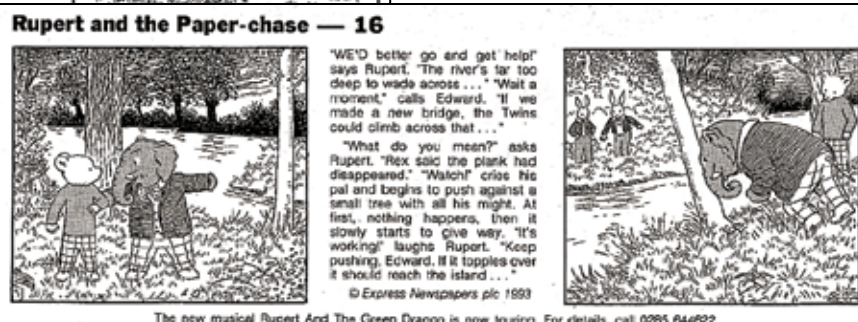


Rupert needs a ticking-off

RUPERT and his chums, in their last adventure, have been naughty and Constable Growler should be sent for. Not only have they had the bare-faced cheek to litter the Nutwood area with their paper-chase, but Edward Trunk has uprooted a healthy young tree.

I cannot bear it!

George Thirlby,
Quorn, Leicestershire



The new musical Rupert And The Green Dragon is now touring. For details, call 0205 844022

(from the archives)

Billy Goat

John Lester

It was good to see the brief appearance of Billy Goat in the 2025 *Rupert Annual*, being useful to Rupert in *Rupert and the Learner* by taking his shopping home and allowing Rupert to pursue his investigations – and also being included on the back page of *Nutwood Newsletter* for Winter 2025. Unlike many of Rupert's friends, he only features occasionally so it is often four or five years between his being seen on the pages. Time for an appreciation.

Billy Goat first appears on the front cover of the 1936 *Annual*, quite prominently in fact immediately below Rupert, so it is strange that there is no mention of him in the book, just an apparent appearance among friends in the last frame of *Rupert's Christmas Adventure*. This seems to be an example of Bestall doing the cover before it was decided what stories were going to be included, for when Billy Goat finally takes part in an adventure it is in *Rupert's Adventures in the Snows* (B5) in the 1939 *Annual*.



This story, though, was in the *Daily Express* in January and February 1936 and the two tales that succeeded it were both included in the 1936 *Annual*. Clearly Bestall expected it to be in that first *Annual*, especially since the two guides who also appear in *Rupert's Adventures in the Snows* but not in the 1936 *Annual* can be seen on its back cover.

So those who wondered who this anonymous goat on the cover of their *Annual* was had to wait another three years to find out. In the story the snows have caused the doctor to have an accident so Rupert takes the medicines around. Unfortunately, Podgy thinks the medicine for Mrs Goat is lemonade and drinks it all so Rupert has

to arrive empty handed at the Goats. Billy Goat answers the door and we learn his name and the fact that Mrs Goat is his granny. Lots of adventures befall Rupert before he can return with the medicine.

Rupert and Granny Goat (B73) in the 1944 *Annual* has all three of Bestall's goats to the fore. Billy Goat, unusually doing the shopping, informs Rupert that Granny Goat is ill so Rupert joins him on his return and takes some flowers to her. She tells Rupert that her illness is a strange one and asks him to take a box to the Wise Old Goat so he can provide the right medicine. She doesn't explain why she hasn't asked Billy to do this. Rupert finds the Wise Old Goat but not at his house, so he is sent to the Wise Old Goat's house to fetch the medicine – a bottle of green pellets.

Rupert finds some medicine but takes the wrong bottle so that when Granny Goat takes a pellet, it has an elevating effect on her – Dr Lion arrives to see her flying out of the window. Rupert and the Wise Old Goat find her stuck up a tree. Fortunately, Rupert still has three of the pellets on him so he gives one to her so she can fly home; he and the Wise Old Goat take the others and follow her. They all fly into Granny Goat's garden, much to Billy Goat's astonishment. The final scene sees Rupert with all three of the goats with Granny about to take her proper medicine and looking forward to being 'quite well again.'

Like buses, after waiting five years for a sighting of Billy Goat he turns up twice in the 1944 *Annual*. In *Rupert and the Yellow Cloak* (B01) he has his first starring role. In picture 2 he is sitting on a fence, waiting for the Wise Old Goat to come. The Wise Old Goat has been hunting for rare plants.



In the next frame Rupert spies a strange man carrying a bundle of plants and discovers a tent with a yellow cloak bearing the Wise Old Goat's name. He chases after the strange man and sees him walking around an old quarry. Billy now appears with news that the Wise Old Goat has sprained his ankle. The Wise Old Goat asks Rupert and Billy to fetch his precious plants.

Rupert tells Billy Goat of his suspicions and, sure enough, they find the tent is bare of plants. They see the man pulling an empty hand-cart and see him entering a cave in the quarry. They hear the man snoring and take away his hand-cart. Next, Rupert decides to use the Wise Old Goat's yellow cloak. He and Billy Goat drop some coins outside the cave and when the man emerges with his bundle and starts to pick these up, they drop the yellow cloak over him and tie it at the top. Billy Goat goes for help and returns with Mr Bear, Mr Badger, and Mr Pug. They take the man away and Rupert and Billy take the precious plants off to the Wise Old Goat.



Billy's next appearance comes in one of the first Rupert stories I ever read: *Rupert and the Young Imp* (B100), which is in the 1949 Annual. Strange things are happening to Rupert's apple tree, which has fruit as well as blossom. Rupert meets Billy Goat who tells him that his "grannie is ill

again and she's sad because none of the flowers she planted in that window-box has come up." Rupert goes in to see her and she is delighted to see him "Having nice visitors makes up for not having any flowers in my window-box," she says. Soon after this Rupert meets the young imp who has been causing the unseasonal growth. He also discovers that the young imp is in trouble with the other imps because of this, so when he finds the young imp again, he suggests that if he can do a good turn to Granny Goat by making her flowers grow "they might be pleased with you and let you off."



The young imp does as he is bidden and when Rupert tells the King of the Imps this, the young imp is forgiven. Soon after, an excited Billy Goat takes Rupert to see his Granny with the window box now full of flowers. So the goats have played a crucial role in the story.

Billy also plays a small but important role in *Rupert and Dr. Lion* (B105) in the 1951 Annual. Nutwood is beset by colds and Dr. Lion is desperate for more sunshine. Rupert consults Gaffer Jarge, the Professor, the Chinese conjuror, and the wise old owl in vain but Billy Goat tells him that "my uncle, the Wise Old Goat, lives" [in a nearby fortress.] The Annual version makes it sound as if Rupert has never met the Wise Old

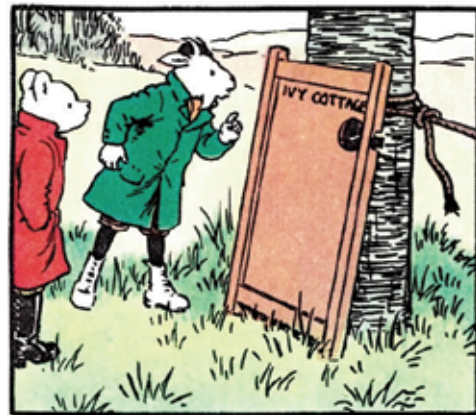
Goat before but in the original newspaper version it is clear that he just hasn't seen him for some time. Billy's role here is one of liaison, and the Wise Old Goat provides bottled sunshine to cure everyone.

In *Rupert and the Back Room Boy* (B119) in the 1954 Annual, Billy is the catalyst for what happens in the story. Hunting butterflies, he catches an angry little black imp who blames Rupert and sends sudden plants to trip him up and invade his home. The other imps take Rupert to see him and explain that Rupert just set him free but that means Billy Goat is now in the firing line and when Rupert and Podgy find a huge tree has suddenly sprung up, they discover Billy and his grannie in its branches (the second time we have seen Grannie Goat up a tree). The imps have given Rupert a bottle of liquid to apply to any suspicious growths; he applies this and the tree descends into the earth, leaving Grannie Goat on the grass. She and Billy continue with their shopping and an imp appears to tell Rupert that "our back-room boy's revenge is finished."



After that dramatic episode it is perhaps not surprising that it is another five years before Billy Goat ventures into an Annual (1959) again. In *Rupert and the River Rescue* (B134), heavy rain causes the river to flood. Rupert helps Farmer Brown to cross the river on an old gate he has found. Rupert rescues a kitten, which he takes home but when Billy Goat calls, he recognises the kitten as belonging to his grannie, who has just gone to Ivy Cottage. This is the name on the gate Farmer Brown found and Rupert takes Billy to see Sailor Sam. Sam finds a punt and they move towards Ivy Cottage. The water is halfway up the building and Grannie Goat is trapped upstairs. Sam makes a huge net to lower her into the punt and all is well. Mrs Bear invites Grannie Goat to

stay with them and Mr Bear, who had promised to give Rupert a sugar biscuit if he was able to do a good turn for anyone, which he had thought unlikely, gives Rupert the whole tin of biscuits.



Billy Goat and his Granny have some problems with Pong-Ping's Chinese Dragonfly in *Rupert and the Dragon Fly* (B038) in the 1962 Annual – it ruins Grannie Goat's best bonnet – but, for once, Billy's two relations are absent in the story that bears his name: *Rupert and Billy Goat* (B150) in the 1966 Annual. This begins with Rupert finding a rope hanging from a tree. Soon after he sees Constable Growler looking for clues for some bad men who are thought to be in the area. Rupert mentions the rope but the tree only contains Billy Goat. Billy is practising climbing with 'a real climber's rope that my daddy gave me' – first time we've heard about either of his parents. He and Rupert practise climbing but at the top of a cliff, looking for an easier way down, they find a rope ladder heading down another part of the cliff.



Rupert investigates and finds a cave but the two men inside are those Constable Growler was after and they tie him up. They leave and Rupert is trying to free himself when Billy Goat comes

down and releases him. The rope ladder has gone and Billy has had to use their own climbing ropes to reach him but, with Billy's guidance, Rupert is able to climb back to the top. They hide as the men return but, with the men in the cave, Rupert and Billy pull up the rope ladder, trapping the men. They rush off to find Constable Growler, who returns with them and, keeping very quiet, hears 'the sound of muffled, distant voices from within the cave', proving that the men are still there. Growler is delighted with Billy and Rupert, and Mrs Bear is grateful to Billy for rescuing Rupert.

It's a while before Billy Goat is prominent again, this time under John Harrold in *Rupert and the Mulp Gulper* (JH12) in the 1986 Annual. He and Rupert go to visit the Wise Old Goat but find him not at home. The Wise Old Goat's huge messenger bird guides them to some caves and they find the Wise Old Goat sprawled on the floor, having slipped and hit his head. He is investigating why water has been diverted from the spring to a trough. The trough has been built by some little creatures (The Spelies) so that water can soak the fruit (mulps) eaten by the Mulp Gulper dragon to prevent it from breathing fire on them. The mulps taste horrible to Rupert and the Goats so the Wise Old Goat sends Rupert and Billy to his workshop for a round flask. The Wise Old Goat tips the liquid from this into the water falling on the mulps. Now the dragon spits them out, and with a 'long, low moan dashes out of the cavern.' The mixture tastes lovely to Rupert but the opposite to the dragon and the water returns to Nutwood and its river. Mulp, of course, is plum spelt backwards so just as plums are nice it follows that the opposite is true of mulps.



It seems that whenever Rupert goes with Billy to visit the Wise Old Goat, the Wise Old Goat is in trouble. This happens again in *Rupert and the Secret* in the 2005 Annual where the Wise Old Goat has been tied up by a Warlock who quickly ties up Billy too. He's after the Nutwood Secret and sends Rupert down a well to find it for him. Rupert finds a chest with a key in it, which the Warlock thinks is the key to the Nutwood Secret (how to make gold from nuts) but Rupert fools him into entering the Wise Old Goat's History Clock and sends him off to 1066. The key is returned down the well.



Billy Goat appears most often in the 2015 Annual but that repeats *Rupert and the Mulp Gulper* as well as *Rupert and Santa Paws* from 1983, where Billy Goat also has a role. Only twice does he feature on the front cover of an Annual, including that 1936 one where, effectively, he doesn't appear, but he is often seen quite prominently on the back covers in the bottom corner of the page: in 1962, 1986, 2005, and 2015 for example. He is a good friend of Rupert's and I for one would like to see more of him.



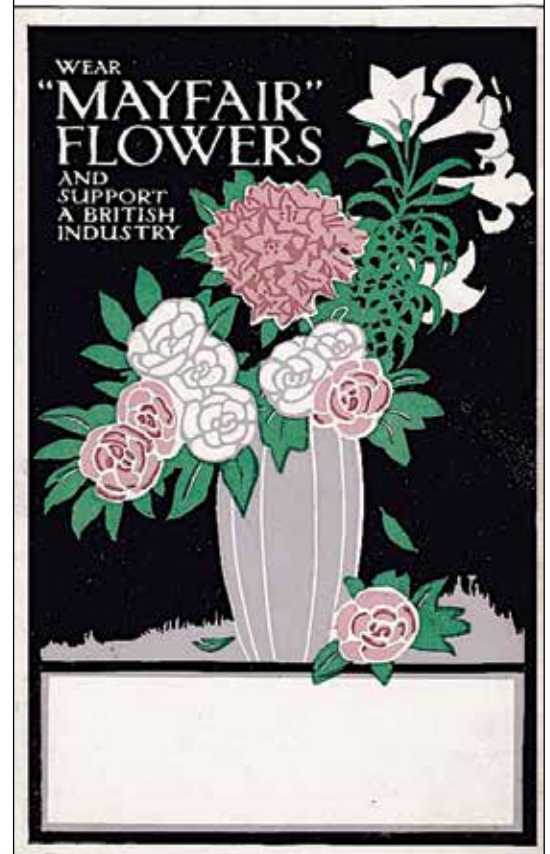
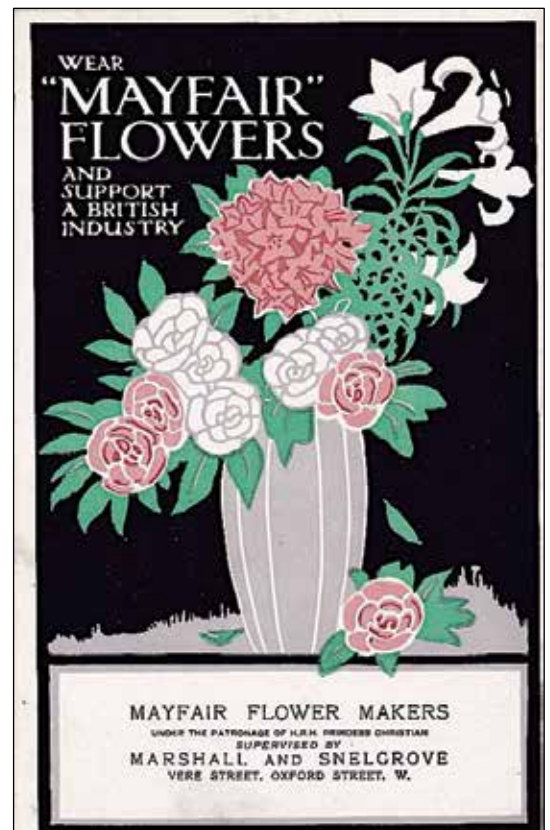
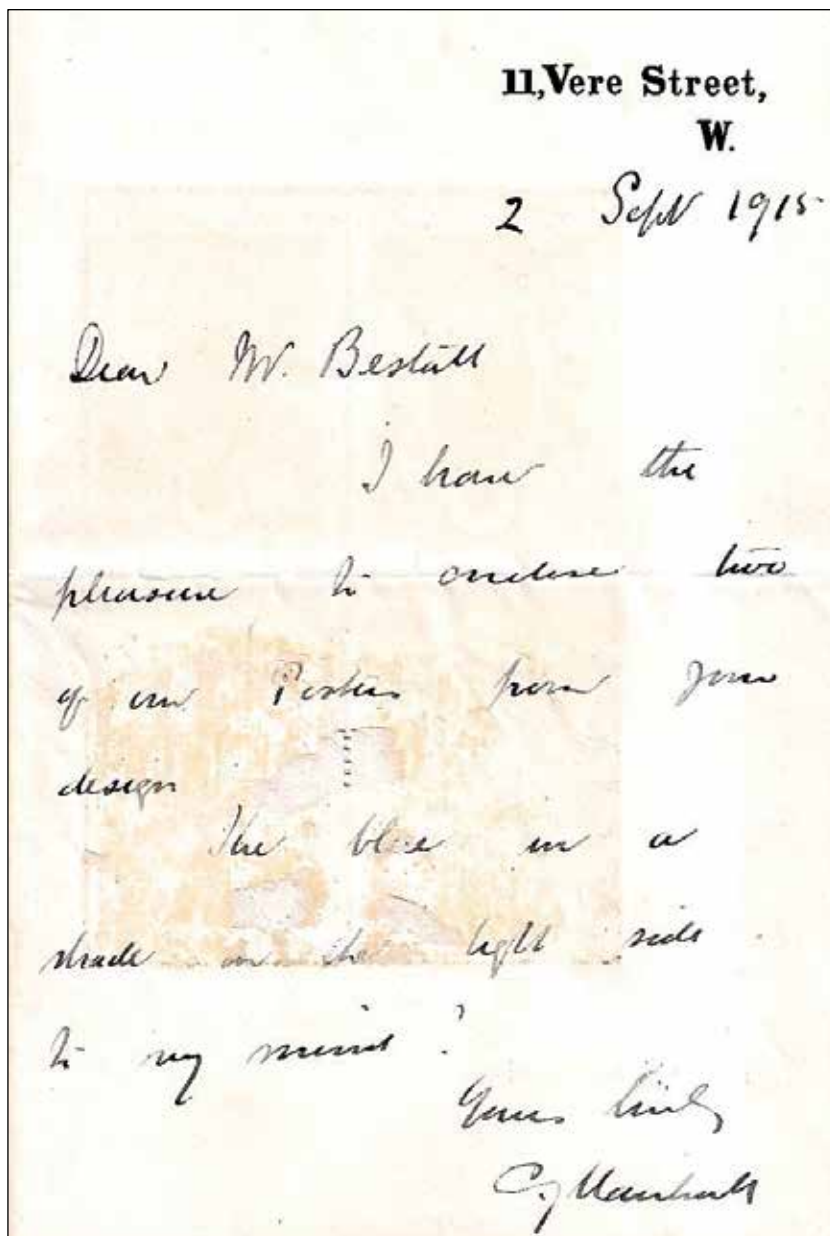
Ed note: we have used the spellings Granny and Grannie as they appeared in the original stories.

Early Bestall Artwork?

An interesting letter from correspondence that Alfred retained, which surfaced when Caroline Bott inherited his archive, and which she shared with John Beck.

We're not sure who the writer is but 11 Vere Street was used by Marshall and Snelgrove at that time, so G Marshall was presumably one of 'the' Marshalls. The two cards accompanied the letter. Strange that Alfred did not sign or initial the artwork but as it happened in 1915 it was well before he got into his commercial stride.

Perhaps someone can research the Mayfair Flower Makers and provide more details.



The Second Rupert Storybook – and John Harrold Book-signing

It was wonderful to see so many of you at the launch of the **Second Rupert Storybook**, which was anchored by the presence of John Harrold signing copies of the book.

We are extremely grateful to Melanie Beck for suggesting that we could arrange John's attendance to coincide with the Lewes Book Fair, organised by Melanie, and which saved costs for the Followers. Charles had his Rupert stall at the Book Fair itself and Lizzie and Mark were busy selling Followers' merchandise.

The day was a huge success and a great opportunity to recruit new members.



The Team: John Harrold, Mark, Pamela and Paul, with Melanie and Charles who organised it all



A message from John Harrold:

My warmest thanks to all those faithful Rupert fans who attended the Second Rupert Storybook launch and made it such a success – especially as some had travelled a considerable distance and/or booked hotels for the occasion!

It gave me enormous pleasure to chat to them and explain various artistic and technical aspects of this new volume, which I consider the finest Rupert book I've worked on, boasting superb colouring from Mark and Paul, exceptionally high production values and top-class printing on quality paper. And it's a bonus to see those Tourtel stories enjoy a new lease of life thanks to Pam's clever prose panels and couplets.

We're indebted to Mel and Charles, without whom the event could never have taken place.



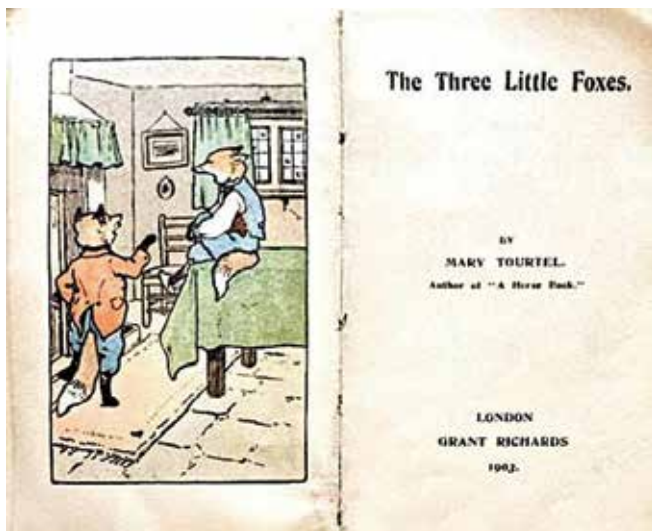
Mary Poppins and the Three Little Foxes by Mary Tourtel

Mike Ward

The following article is taken from a blog that I came across whilst doing a search for Mary Tourtel's *The Three Little Foxes*.

The blogger was revisiting a transcript of a conversation between P.L. Travers, the author of the *Mary Poppins* books, and Janet Graham that took place in P.L. Travers' home on June 23, 1965. The title of the interview is 'A Conversation About Sorrow,' and in it P.L. Travers spoke about *The Three Little Foxes* by Mary Tourtel, a book that she had kept with her since she was 7 years old. Interestingly, on the flyleaf of her book someone wrote the name of Mary Poppins, but according to P.L. Travers, it was not she who wrote it.

P.L. Travers loved the story of *The Three Little Foxes*. She said, "It was a lovely story. Three Foxes called Ringoe, Bingoe and Lubilee – what beautiful names, Ringoe, Bingoe and Lubilee. They were great family names; my mother was always calling us those names. She had the kind of mind quotations stuck in."



And that is all she said about the story in the interview. What was it about? What did the little foxes do? Why did she like it so much to keep it with her all this time? Was it because of her fond memories of her mother, or was it something else?

The blogger wanted to find out, and luckily, managed to find an old (and affordable) copy on the Internet so that at least she now knew the story and could speculate about why P.L. Travers might have liked it.

'The Three Little Foxes' tells the story of three brothers who decide to leave their cosy home and seek adventure in the world. In fact, it is the two oldest brothers, Ringoe and Bingoe, who are bored and need a change of scenery. Meanwhile Lubilee, the youngest brother, is quite content at home and doesn't really have time for boredom. He is busy in the kitchen cooking and taking care of his brothers. But when the older brothers decide to leave their home, he must follow them, albeit unwillingly.

The three brothers meet a frog who tells them that if they are in search of adventure, maybe they could rescue the Fox Princess, who is kept



hostage by the Old Bear Ogre. The three little foxes must go to see the Queen of the Rabbits, who knows of a secret entrance to the grounds of the Bear Ogre's castle. The Queen agrees to help them and orders one of her guards to lead the brothers through a secret passage leading

to the garden where the Fox Princess likes to spend time.

When the three brothers arrive at the entrance of the passage, which turns out to be a long and winding tunnel, it is only Lubilee who musters enough courage to follow the guard. Scared Ringoe and Bingoe remain behind.

Lubilee succeeds in finding the garden and meets with the Fox Princess who, at that precise moment, happens to be strolling there. He tells the princess that he and his brothers have come to save her, but she warns him that the task is going to be difficult. The Ogre keeps her locked up in a lonely tower.



It was at this point in the narrative that I failed to follow the logic of the story. It is unclear (and frankly does not make much sense) why the Princess does not run off with Lubilee towards the secret tunnel and out of the garden right there and then. Instead, she tells Lubilee where the Ogre hides the key to her tower. It is in a box he uses as a footstool while sitting on his chair.

Lubilee goes back to his brothers, tells them all about the Princess and the key, and they come up with a plan on how to gain entrance into the Ogre's Castle. They present themselves as acrobats who want to perform before the Bear Ogre.

During their performance, which consists of the two older brothers standing on their heads while



Lubilee spins plates on sticks, the Bear Ogre sits comfortably in his chair with his feet on the footstool.

However, their chance comes when Bear Ogre invites them to stay over for dinner and a little dance.

After dinner, the Bear Ogre wants to show his abilities too and he

begins to dance the Keel Row. He is so taken by his dancing that he does not notice little Lubilee taking the key from the box in the footstool.

As soon as the little foxes find themselves outside of the castle, Ringoe and Bingoe start quarrelling over who should marry the Princess. In the meantime, Lubilee runs towards the tower and frees the Princess.

The Fox King was so glad that he called his Queen, gathered his court together and made Lubilee a Prince on the spot. Lubilee and the Princess become husband and wife.



When Ringoe and Bingoe finally find their way to the Fox King's City, they begin to tell everyone who wants to hear that they were the ones who saved the Princess, and that Prince Lubilee is an impostor. Their slander lands them in a dungeon, but then good-hearted Lubilee frees them and appoints Ringoe his Prime Minister, and Bingoe the Commander-in-Chief of his Army. This decision seems very unwise to me... and could potentially propel Lubilee on another hero's journey. Maybe I will try my hand at writing a sequel... but who will illustrate it?

The original author of this blog is Lina Slavova, to whom I am grateful for giving me permission to reproduce her blog, or at least part of it, here. The full blog and many more can be found on Lina's website themarypoppinseffect.com.

Mike

Rupert and the Velvet Pouch

Be part of Rupert's next adventure!

John Harrold has written and started illustrating the next Followers-exclusive story and you are invited to join the adventure by sponsoring his new original artwork, in *Rupert and the Velvet Pouch*, introducing the character, Gimble. There are still a few episodes available, so if you are interested in sponsoring one for yourself or as a gift for a loved one, please email markmanley@hotmail.com for details.





The Three Little Foxes

BY
MARY TOURTEL
Author of "A Horse Book."

LONDON
GRANT RICHARDS
1903

THE THREE LITTLE FOXES.

This is a tale of three little foxes. Their names are Ringoe, Bingoe and Lubilee. In the first picture you see Ringoe and Bingoe. Lubilee is in the kitchen cooking their dinner. Ringoe and Bingoe are tired of staying at home. They are deciding to shut up the house and go out into the world in search of adventures.

They started next day and this is where they have stopped after walking miles and miles. Little Lubilee was not very happy at leaving home. A frog came along, surprised to see three foxes on their travels. He asked them where they were going and Ringoe told him they were in search of adventures.



"If you want adventures why don't you rescue your Princess, the Fox King's daughter, from Old Bear Ogre?" asked Mr. Frog.

"The very thing," answered Ringoe and Bingoe together, "tell us just what we must do?"

"She is in Bear Ogre's castle on the other side of the marsh in which I live. Come home with me and I will tell you all I know," said Mr. Frog.

This is where they are approaching Mr. Frog's house in the marsh. They will have to cross the marsh to get to Bear Ogre's castle. Crossing the brook by the stepping stones they see Mrs. Frog waiting for her husband at the door of their little cottage. He ran forward to tell Mrs. Frog that he had brought some friends in to supper and that they would stay there for the night.

This is where Mr. Frog is telling Ringoe and Bingoe all about the Princess. Kind little Lubilee is helping Mrs. Frog to prepare the supper. Mr. Frog told them that if they could gain admittance to the Queen of the Rabbits she could tell them of a secret entrance to the grounds of Bear Ogre's castle. There would be guards at the gate of the Queen's Palace, he explained, but they would let anyone pass who thumped three times on the ground. This was the secret signal. Afterwards they had supper, and next morning they went on their way, Mr. Frog going with them as far as the edge of the marsh.



This is where they have come to, Bunny Palace. They gave three taps on the ground, as Mr. Frog had told them, with their feet and they were at once allowed to enter. They sent a message to the Queen begging that she would help them to rescue their Princess. After waiting some time a Royal Footman appeared and begged that they would follow him into the Queen's presence. Telling Lubilee to wait for them there, Ringoe and Bingoe went on with the footman to be led to the Queen.

The Queen, who was a beautiful kind rabbit with blue eyes, received them in state, surrounded by her Royal Bodyguard of Bunnies,

She told them that she would help them all she could to help them rescue the poor Princess from Bear Ogre. She would let them go through the secret passage and would send one of her guards to guide them. This would bring them quite close to the garden in which the Princess walked every day.



This is where the three little foxes and the guide have come to the secret passage. Ringoe and Bingoe said that the passage was too small for them, but they were really afraid. So they sent Lubilee with the guide to see the Princess and to tell her that they were coming to rescue her. They said that they would wait there until Lubilee came back.

After going a long, long way through the winding passage, which was really a secret way the rabbits used when they wanted to get the sweet grass that grew in Bear Ogre's park, Lubilee saw the end of the tunnel not far away. Here the guide said he must go no further, but would wait there until Lubilee returned. Lubilee crept cautiously to the opening and hearing nothing he peeped a wee bit out. Not far away was the entrance to Bear Ogre's garden. All was quiet, so Lubilee stole along. He managed to gain the garden unseen and hide himself in some bushes.





When the Princess came into the garden, Lubilee thought that he had never seen anyone so lovely. As she passed the place where he was hiding, he called gently to attract her attention. "Princess! Princess!" he said. She stopped, frightened for a moment, until Lubilee stepped from his hiding place and knelt at her feet. He told her that he and his two brothers were determined to rescue her. She was overjoyed, but said that it would be difficult as she was kept in a lonely tower of which none but Bear Ogre had the key. He kept this key in a box which he used as a footstool. Lubilee said that they would manage to rescue her somehow and the Princess promised she would go with them if the three little foxes could get her away from Bear Ogre.



Lubilee got back to the secret passage safely where he found his guide waiting to take him back to his brothers. He told them all about the Princess and the key to the Tower. They decided they must get into the Castle somehow or other. They thought a lot about it and at last decided to go to Bear Ogre and say that they were acrobats. "Now," they said, "we must go to the front door of the Castle and ask to be allowed to perform before the old Bear." Here in the picture you see Ringoe and Bingoe standing on their heads, supporting little Lubilee who is spinning the plates. Bear Ogre was delighted, but he sat all the time in his chair, his feet on the footstool that contained the key of the Tower.



Old Bear Ogre has asked them all to dinner. They gladly accepted his invitation, for by this time they were hungry and very tired. They are all very jolly together and Bear Ogre tells them that after dinner he will show them how to dance a jig.



When dinner had been cleared away he asked Ringoe to join him in a dance. In the picture you see Ringoe and Bear Ogre dancing the Keel Row, while Bingoe is looking on in admiration. Meanwhile little Lubilee, watching his opportunity, gets ready to take the key. Bear Ogre is so taken up with his dancing that he does not notice Lubilee stealing towards the footstool where the key is concealed. You see him on the point of securing the precious key, without which they could do nothing.



After some time Bear Ogre grew tired and the three little foxes said they really must be going. So, after promising to come again soon, they left. As soon as they were outside the Castle gates Ringoe and Bingoe began quarrelling as to who should marry the Princess. Each of them said he deserved her. Leaving Ringoe and Bingoe to settle their case, little Lubilee, seeing that no time was to be lost, ran as fast as he ever could to the tower where the Princess was kept by Bear Ogre, telling Ringoe and Bingoe to wait for him there.



Lubilee ran along the outer walls of the Castle until he reached the lonely tower and found the little door the key fitted.

He ran as fast as ever he could up the winding stairway to the Princess's room.



Lubilee found the Princess anxiously waiting for him. "Ah, dear Mr. Lubilee," she said. "How glad I am that you managed to get the key. I was afraid that you would never be able to get it."

Taking her hand and bowing low Lubilee led her to the stairway and implored her to hasten as much as possible as he was afraid Bear Ogre would miss the key.

Running down the stairway of the tower as fast as they could, they locked the door behind them and took the key away with them.



Here they are running, running, running, faster and faster and faster. They are so frightened! They think that every minute old Bear Ogre and all his soldiers will be after them. In their hurry they miss Ringoe and Bingoe. They are afraid to go back and look for them, so they go on and on, hoping that they will find the road that leads to her father's kingdom.



This is where old Nurse Friggabrigg, the Princess's attendant, has come to tell Bear Ogre that the Princess is nowhere to be found. Bear Ogre has been having a comfortable nap and he jumps up in a terrible temper.

"What is that you say," he roared. Poor old Friggabrigg was so frightened that she was helpless and could say nothing more. Bear Ogre at once gave his soldiers orders to look everywhere for the Princess and to bring her back alive or dead.



Lubilee and the Princess wandering on and on lost themselves in the midst of a lonely forest. They did not know which way to turn and the little Princess was quite exhausted. At last Lubilee climbed up a tree to see if he could discover the whereabouts of the Fox King's city. To their great joy he saw towers in the distance and from the description he gave her the Princess knew that they were near her home.



If I were to tell you one half of the joy that greeted the return of the Princess it would take twenty books as big as this one. As soon as they reached the gates the guards at once recognised their long-lost little Princess, and hurried with the good news to the King's Palace. There was great rejoicing, bells were rung, bonfires were lighted and every one all went about saying that their own little Princess had come back again. The King was so glad that he called the Queen and all his Court together and made Lubilee a Prince on the spot.



Now we must go back to Ringoe and Bingoe. When they found out that Lubilee and the Princess did not come to them they began to think all sorts of things. They were afraid to stay there too long, and when they saw the soldiers come out of the Castle they ran off as fast as they could. They knew then that the Princess had escaped. Like Lubilee and the Princess, they lost their way and it was not till after three days that they managed to reach the Fox King's city. They began to demand where the Princess was and to say that they had rescued her and that Prince Lubilee was an imposter. The end of it all is that Ringoe and Bingoe were seized by the guard and put in a dungeon.



This is where Ringoe and Bingoe were in prison. They are feeling very wretched and miserable and wondering how they will ever get out again.



They could hardly believe their eyes when they saw Lubilee coming down the steps of the dungeon dressed most beautifully as a Prince. He hastened towards them with open arms and embracing them both ordered their chains to be struck off.



Prince Lubilee had Ringoe and Bingoe set free from the prison and dressed in nice clothes. Then he took them to the Palace and told the King how they had all worked together to rescue the Princess. The King then said that he wished Prince Lubilee to marry the Princess and that Ringoe should be his Prime Minister and Bingoe the Commander-in-Chief of his army.



Here we have the wedding of Prince Lubilee and his beautiful Princess. It was a very grand wedding. Everyone was there, the King, the Queen and all the Court, the Queen of the Rabbits, and the guide who had taken Lubilee through the passage. Mr. and Mrs. Frog were not forgotten, as you may imagine, although they are sitting where you cannot see them in the picture. Prince and Princess Lubilee are very happy and as the King is getting old they will one day be King and Queen of the Foxes.

Tourtel Stories in 'Annual' format

Ian White

During the course of my research for the *Castles in the Forest* compendium of all of Mary Tourtel's Rupert stories, I tried to imagine what a selection of such stories reproduced in a more modern 'Annual' style format might look like. My curiosity eventually got the better of me, and early last year I embarked on a project to prepare (purely for my own amusement, I should stress) a collection of the stories originally published in the *Daily Express* during the year 1926 in this format – cleaning and colouring the original *Express* frames and creating rhyming couplets together with a more traditional prose narrative that attempted to retain the essence of the original Tourtel storylines. When, at that time, I suggested to John Beck that such a collection might be of interest to some other Followers, he agreed but thought, on reflection, that attempting to produce such a volume comprising only Mary Tourtel stories might not be commercially viable.

Now, I must admit here that I am neither an artist nor a poet, but despite these limitations and notwithstanding John's reservations about its viability, I was nevertheless determined to continue my attempt to produce such a collection (purely, I must stress again, for my own amusement). This project was completed earlier this year.

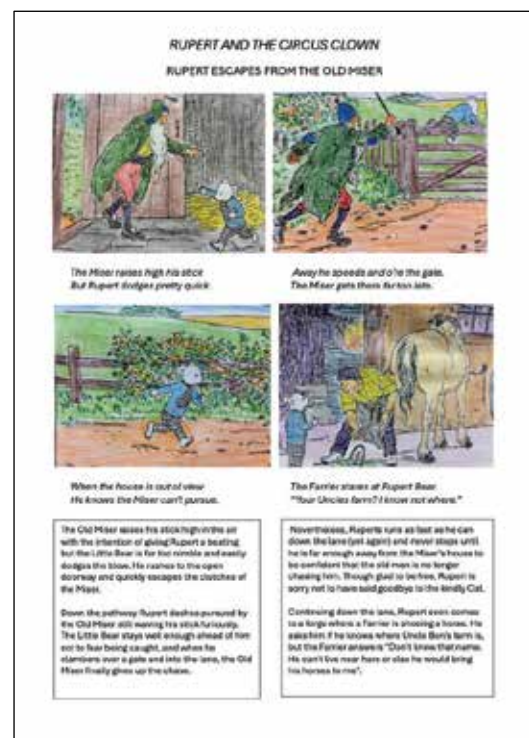
How wonderful, therefore, it is to see two of Mary Tourtel's Rupert adventures brought to life by Mark Manley, Paul Ross-Dale and Pamela Stones in the recently published *Second Rupert Storybook*. In this new publication (a must for any Nutwood enthusiast), the two stories – *Rupert's Seaside Holiday* (T19) and *Rupert's Picnic Party* (T38) – have been very professionally and brilliantly restored and coloured by Mark and Paul with excellent prose narrative and rhyming couplets prepared by Pam. These stories follow-up the same style reproduction of Tourtel's *Rupert and the Christmas Tree Fairies* (T55) that was included in the first *Storybook* published in 2024.

Of course, these were not the first attempts to reproduce Mary's stories in a more contemporary style. In a number of *Nutwood Special Issues*, some of these early Rupert stories have been presented in a more up-to-date format. Notwithstanding these fine efforts, no

one (to my knowledge) has attempted to produce a selection of Mary's stories relating to a single year together in a 'Rupert Annual' style format. Until now, that is.

The six 1926 stories that I have prepared in this way (far less professionally I have to admit and without the digital technology available to the present-day graphic designer) are:

- *Rupert and the Wise Old Goat's Birthday Cake* (originally published under the title *Rupert and the Birthday Cake*) (T31)
- *Rupert and the Magic Hat* (T32)
- *Rupert and Bill Keep Shop* (T33)
- *Rupert and the Circus Clown* (originally *Rupert Gets Lost Again*) (T34)
- *Rupert and Margot and the Air Balloons* (originally *Rupert and Margot*) (T35) and
- *Rupert and the Wooden Soldier* (T36).

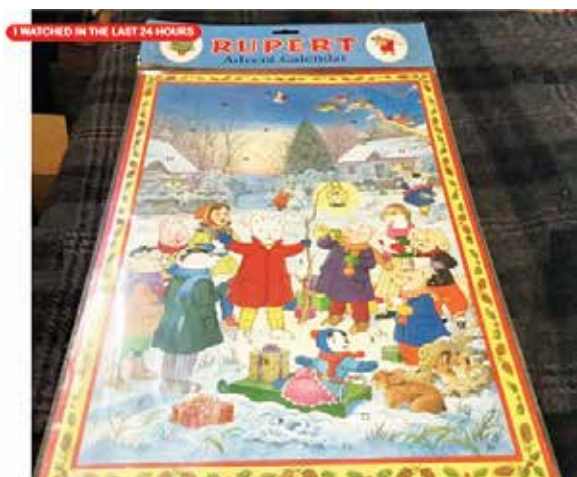


A copy of one of the pages is shown here to illustrate the type of layout adopted. While I have prepared this collection solely for my own amusement, I can offer to send to any interested *Newsletter* reader an electronic copy. Who knows, it may even inspire Mark and Pam to produce a commercially viable version of such an Annual.

For a copy contact Ian at
i.white1234@btinternet.com

In the Name of Rupert – surfing eBay so *you* don't have to by Martin Cooper

Hello all – here's my third look into the world of eBay, for better or worse. I've been making a note of these interesting eBay listings for a while now. We're still only up to October 2024, when this one appeared. With luck we'll be up to date soon!



It's the Methuen Advent Calendar from 1994, which my records tell me I did buy for Joy, but I don't think it was this particular one, as it was on offer for £80. In case you thought you misread that, I received an offer from the seller (an increasingly common practice) of 5% off, making it a bargain at £76. No thanks.

If you have the space (and the desire to collect everything Ruperty), how about this rare item? It was listed as Buy-it-Now for just £12.



There were no dimensions but it looks child-size so I don't think many of you would fit.

Here's a nice little item, as our annual Raffle caller might say. It's a Martingale dog collar (one that prevents a dog from being choked when it strains), but I don't mind what *you* use it for... Presumably it comes in one size – Algy Pug!



From my searches, I found out that there is a Rupert the Bear in the US TV series Family Guy. That's where the similarity ends, but this photo featuring him, signed by David Boat who voiced him, was on sale for \$24 (about £18 then).



Apparently, Brian the Dog 'killed' him, but then bought Stewie a replacement and Stewie believed it was the original returned. Ahhhh! This Rupert was also voiced by Derek Jacobi.

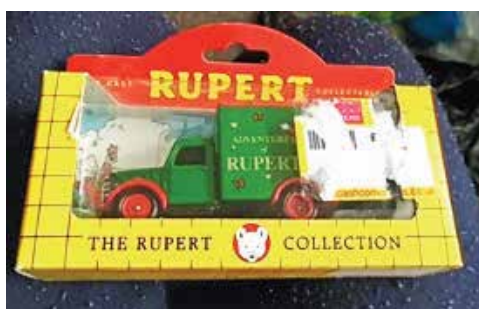
Do you have a Rupert Thermometer in your collection? If not, I'm afraid you missed out on three chances. The one in the first picture was on sale for £129.78, billed as 'Vintage' and 'Rare', but not that rare, obviously, because the one in the middle picture was on sale at the same time for less than a third of that at £35.95. No. 3, still in the original packet, was an auction starting at £9.99.



Here is a nice little Rupert van – mint, in mint box for £3.99, Buy-it-Now. Lovely.



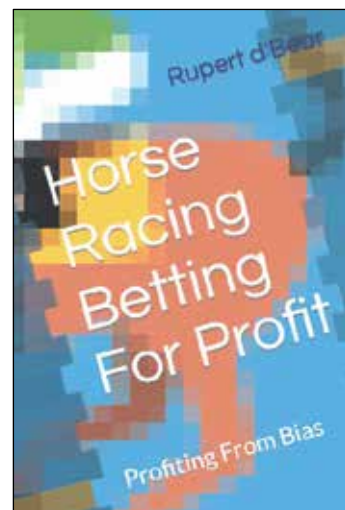
...and the same thing, on sale at the same time, in a box that could have been smartened up to match the price - £30.



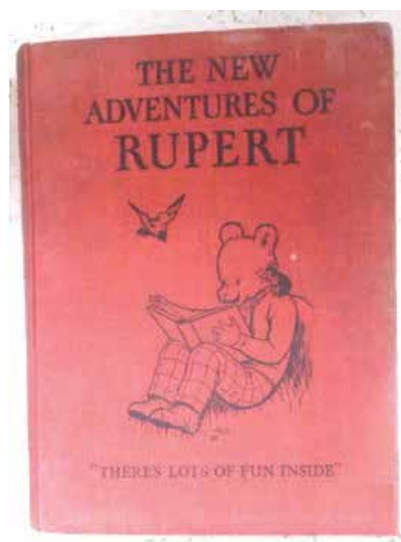
Then there was *this* listing, an auction for the same van plus five other vehicles, with a starting price of £24.99. If no-one else bid, you could have had all six vehicles for less than the price of the van in the second listing!



This next one from November '24 is another example of what happens when you search for 'Rupert' and 'Bear' rather than 'Rupert Bear' – Horse Racing Betting For Profit... by Rupert d'Bear! I thought I recognised that chap in the red jumper and yellow trousers in Ladbrokes...



And finally, a bargain from December 2024. An original Annual with minor marks on the cover, with the book itself coming away from the cover inside. There were loose pages in the middle of the book, missing pages at the front, including the title page, tape repairs to a couple of pages and crayoning on a couple of others. Small losses and tears to several pages.



Having said all that, a lot of the damage is repairable or live with-able if you wanted a copy of the first Annual. And it was sold for just £19.10, with six bidders competing for it. Bargain!

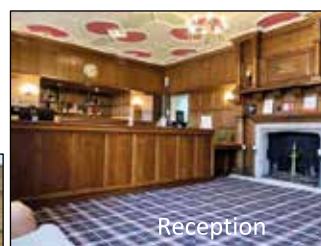
Annual Fun Day and AGM 2026

As we confirmed in the Spring Newsletter, the date of this year's AGM and Fun Day is

Saturday 22nd August 2026

and at a new venue: **Ashorne Hill, Leamington Spa, CV33 9QW.**

Ashorne Hill is set in 35 acres of beautiful grounds in the heart of the Warwick countryside with accommodation (to be booked directly with the Centre) available to us for three nights: Thursday to Saturday. A beautiful mix of traditional and modern, the venue is perfect to catch-up with old Follower friends, and to make new ones. Light lunch and all-day refreshments are included in the daily rate, along with your welcome pack and new badge. Try to come for more than the day though, and explore the estate. There is a gym and sauna for those who are staying in their accommodation, making it more of a long stay weekend away.



Reception

The main entrance has some disabled parking bays right by the door

Bourse from 9.00 am

Sellers' stalls will be offering both rare items and hard to find or unique pieces as well as items from their collections, usually at fantastic prices.



Refreshments

free and available all day, also a lovely bar area.



Friday Quiz

After the evening meal will be a quiz.

Join the fun or if you prefer, just chill out in the bar and relax over drinks



Day rate

includes:

Access to the event plus
Welcome pack
New badge
Saturday lunch
All day refreshments
Access to vast grounds and facilities



Tombola

Sales Team will be running a tombola. Chance to win many Ruperty prizes

The Follower's shop

will be selling discounted stock items and also the latest Followers' sales items.

Stuart Trotter

the Rupert artist for the Daily Express Rupert Annual will be offering some limited original artwork and other children's books he has illustrated, and of course there'll be time for a chat.

Talks

from
Stuart Trotter
Mark Manley
Jordy Schaap

Origami Team

will demonstrate their art and help you create your own piece of origami to take home

Rupert artists

Mark, Paul and Elizabeth will be present: to talk to and look at their art work – it's an opportunity to buy some for your collection.



Gala Meal
is back -
limited space
so book early

Unique items
available only by
being present:
Printed programme
Meal Tickets
Menu and placemats

Saturday Gala Meal

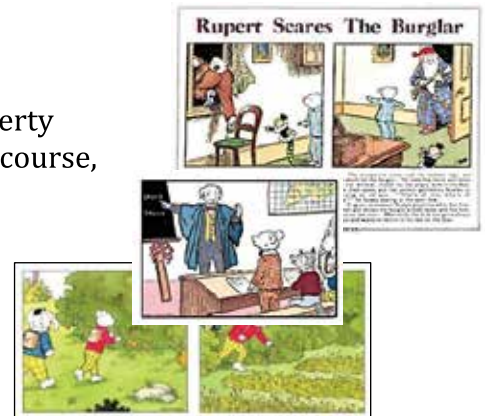
The evening meal always proves to be a fun evening with a few interruptions and a table game, not to mention the three course meal.



The 2026 Rupert Raffle

As always, our raffle gives the chance to win some wonderful Ruperty prizes – unique items that are not available elsewhere – and is, of course, open to all Followers, whether you are able to attend or not.

- Stuart Trotter is producing a brand-new piece of artwork
 - Prints from John Harrold's last new story
 - Hand-coloured John Harrold, Tourtel and Bestall artwork
- and lots more unique items.



Join the fun this year

With the easy parking, facilities and grounds, free refreshments throughout the day, plus all the booked planned events, this promises to be an amazing occasion – and not a bad deal! So come along and enjoy a day or weekend with Ruperty friends in the Warwickshire countryside.

Easy to find!

- From M40 Southbound, leave at Junction 14 (there is no southbound exit at J13). Go straight over the mini roundabout. At the next roundabout take the third exit, signed A452, Gaydon. After 2 miles, turn right at the sign the Ashorne Hill Conference Centre; the entrance is 500 yards on the right.
- From M40 Northbound, leave at J13. Turn left onto the B4100 towards Gaydon. After half a mile, turn right at sign for Ashorne Hill Conference Centre; the entrance is 500 yards on the right.
- The centre is a similar distance from both Leamington Spa and Warwick Railway stations. Here's a local taxi number: 01926 888 888.



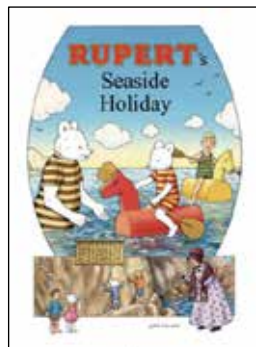
photos from Ashorne's own website

The Second Rupert Storybook

a Review by Roger Coombes

Joining the Rupert Storybook as a companion volume is the Second Storybook. The concept comes from John Beck and the result reflects the dedication and creative energy of a team of Followers, duly credited on the contents and 'Follow Rupert' pages of this latest volume. I have been impressed by a 'collegiate' approach of the Followers' team which includes Melanie Beck who is continuing John's concept, Pamela Stones, bringing not only her expertise as editor of the Nutwood Newsletter but also re-working Mary Tourtel's text and other 'technicalities' of presentation, and Mark Manley with editorial contributions.

The earliest stories are by Mary Tourtel: *Rupert's Seaside Holiday* (T19) and *Rupert's Picnic Party* (T38) which were first published in the Daily Express in 1924 and 1927 respectively. Both were subsequently included in Rupert's Little Bear Library and in occasional reprints from Nelson and other publishers.

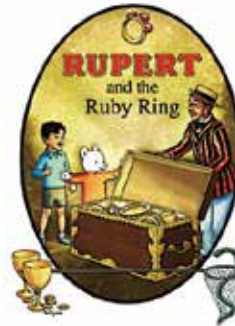


What we have here are collaborations by Pamela (re-working text) title pages by John Harrold and colouring by Paul Ross-Dale (*Seaside Holiday*) and Mark Manley (*Picnic Party*).



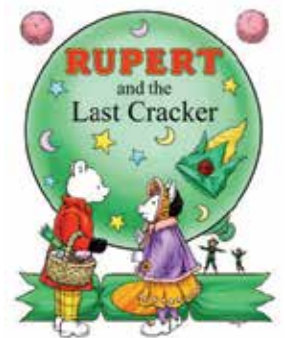
If you possess any of the black and white reprints published in the intervening years, I'm sure you will welcome the enhancement the team has given in these fresh tellings.

The 'collegiate' approach is continued with two stories by Alfred Bestall.



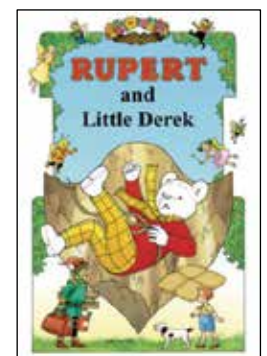
Rupert and the Ruby Ring (B21 – 1937) and *Rupert and the Last Cracker* (B215 – 1963/4) have title pages by Mark who has also coloured *Last Cracker*, whilst Paul Schilling has coloured *Ruby Ring*.

We can admire the results of this collaboration.



We are brought up to date by John Harrold with the inclusion of two of his original tales, made possible by sponsorship from Followers in the form of purchasing the original frames.

Rupert and the Water Fairy (H04) and *Rupert and Little Derek* (H06) were published recently in limited editions for the Followers.



Many of you already have these in your collections although I'm confident that you will want to add these splendid hardback versions.

From Mary Tourtel's *Seaside Holiday* in 1924 to John Harrold's *Little Derek* in 2026, the Second Rupert Storybook spans a century of Rupert storytelling and is a fitting tribute not only to the artists (and writers) over that period, but also to the memory of John Beck.

Summer Postbag

Hello, I thought I would share a picture of my Rupert chums garden ornaments with the other Followers. I was wondering if any remember the place along Carpenters Road on the way to St Helens on the Isle of Wight that made and sold these? We would buy a new chum each year while on holiday. Sadly, they moved from the island to somewhere on the mainland before we got ourselves an Algy Pug! Pink Panther has joined the chums as he too was created at the same place on the Isle of Wight.

Kind Regards
Siân Davies



With regards to Rupert Money Boxes, here are my flock money boxes. I remember having the lighter one in the early 1970s and the other one on the left in around late 80s early 90s, sadly no packaging. The eyes look neater on the earlier one.

Just thought I'd add to the money box thread.

Best Wishes
Jan Joel



Thank you, Jan. We always appreciate follow-ups to our articles. Ed.

DO YOU NEED TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP? LOOK OUT FOR A MESSAGE ON YOUR ENVELOPE AND A FORM INSIDE

If your membership of the Followers is due for renewal this will be indicated on the envelope in which your newsletter arrived, and a renewal form will be inside.

If you are an E-member you will receive a reminder by email.

You can renew by on-line banking, by post with a cheque or by PayPal using the members' area on our website www.rupertbear.co.uk.

Bank:	Barclays
Branch:	Business Direct Support Central
Sort Code:	20-45-45
Account number:	23593940
SWIFTBIC ^{\$}	BUKBGB22
IBAN ^{\$}	GB95 BUKB 2045 4523 5939 40
Account name:	The Followers of Rupert
Reference:	Your membership number

^{\$}members outside the UK may need these codes]

Please help us by renewing as soon as possible

If you don't already do so, please consider making subscription payments that auto-renew each year.

For details of how to do this and for all other membership queries please contact the Membership Secretary, Chris Hellen by email: membership@rupertbear.co.uk.

Please note that membership numbers are printed on newsletter envelopes. If you don't have your membership number, you can request it by email from the membership Secretary.

Send your letters, articles, news and pictures to:
The Editor, Nutwood Newsletter,
by email, to pamela.stones@rupertbear.co.uk

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Front cover art by Stuart Trotter
Rear cover art by Mark Manley

