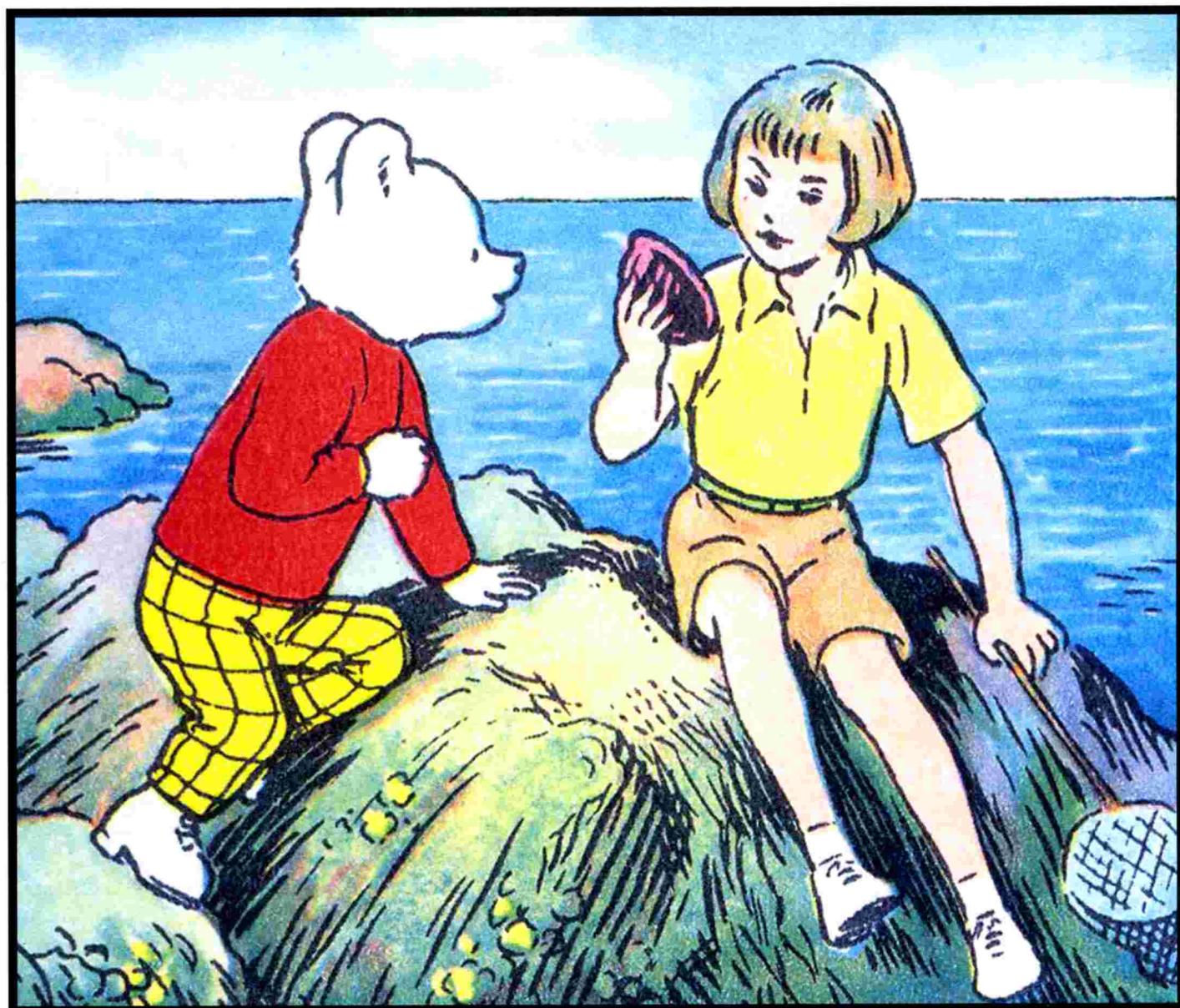




# Nutwood Newsletter



*Number 76 - Summer 2010*

# 2010 Annual Meeting

**Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> August in Warwick**

If you were at Wembley in 1966 when England won the World Cup, or saw the Beatles live in concert, then these are memories that will stay with you forever, and you can say “I was there”. In its own way the 2010 Annual Meeting should be a similar experience for Followers of Rupert, with the opportunity to celebrate Rupert’s 90<sup>th</sup> birthday in style. We have pulled out a few stops to make the event extra special and we hope it will be a weekend to remember for those attending, and when you do you can tell your grandchildren “I was there”.



We have already announced that Ian Robinson will be presenting a talk on his time as the last Rupert Editor at the Express, something that will be both interesting and informative. Ian will also be available to sign and dedicate special bookplates for his book, *The Rupert Companion*. Unfortunately due to production schedules the book will not be available at the meeting but Egmont have promised to bring along some pulls and pictures so we can see what the book will be like. We hope to have advance copies of the latest Rupert Annual available and are pleased to report that Stuart Trotter will be attending to sign them for you, and we are currently working on having pre-publication copies of the 1966 facsimile for sale on the day.

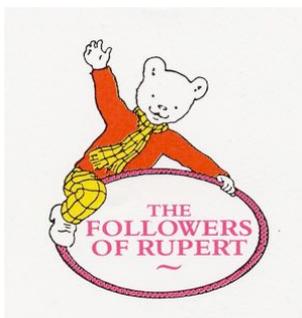
One of the “extras” this year is the opportunity for attending members to have one of the special T shirts we produce for the day, and if you would like one, (or more), then please note and pay for it on the enclosed Registration Form. If you have already booked and would like one then just send the enclosed registration form with cheque for the T shirt and it will be ready for you to collect on the day. Don’t forget to note the sizes you want. There are still some places available for the dinners on Friday and Saturday, but with numbers limited you had better get your request in early to avoid disappointment. As usual refreshments will be available throughout the day and a lunch can be booked.

Among the other attractions during the day will be our usual Origami demonstrations and workshops, the special Rupert play performed by the Stagecoach Theatre Group, and a talk on modelling Rupert by John Hunt, the talented expert who makes our figurines. While I am mentioning that, don’t forget to order this year’s figurine, which we illustrated in NN75. They are limited to 100, so get in early so as not to miss out. Of course there will also be face painting, a magician and painting competition for Junior Members, plus the regular dealer’ bourse where you will see a magnificent range of vintage Rupert books and ephemera available for you to add to your collection. The Raffle Gnomes will also be around enabling you to purchase extra tickets as we hope that most of you will have already pre-ordered some as it makes administration of the draw easier.

If you would like to stay overnight, there are still a few rooms available on site, so contact me quickly on 01926 401707 to reserve accommodation.

Well I hope that gives you a flavour of what will be going on. If you have been before then a lot will be familiar but also many things hopefully new, and if you have never been before then come along for a super Rupert experience.

*Tony Griffin (Organiser)*



## **2010 Followers' AGM – official notification**

Please take this as official notice that the 2010 AGM will take place in Warwick at 12 noon on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> August. All existing committee members, except Shirley Reeves our Sales Officer, are prepared to stand. There are some proposed changes to subscriptions and publishing arrangements, which are outlined in the Chairman’s Report included in this Newsletter. Any other proposals must be with the Secretary at least 30 days before the meeting.

*John Beck (Secretary)*

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one of the leading children's societies as far as what we produce for members, and your subscriptions are all used to produce this Newsletter and other goodies we have given away. With falling membership due to non-renewals and losing stalwarts to the Nutwood in the sky, our income has dropped, so we hope the suggestions we are making are acceptable so that we can still offer you full value for your money. Don't forget, you can also help by recruiting new members. So if a friend or relative were interested in Rupert, enrolling them would help to swell our ranks and give them the opportunity of sharing the Nutwood experience.

The Annual Meeting arrangements proceed apace, and Tony and his team are working hard to ensure Rupert's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations will be something to remember. You are all invited to the party so fill in the registration form enclosed and join in. If you have never been before we can assure you our Annual Meetings are extra special.

# Editorial

As you will see from the Chairman's report the Society has had to take a long hard look at the finances and make some recommendations to ensure that we can continue to afford the quality standards we have achieved over the years. We have always tried to be



We are disappointed that apart from the forthcoming Rupert Companion there does not seem to be any other new Classic Rupert offerings this year. Our efforts to contact Classic Media to ascertain if there is anything new licensed have not been productive so we must presume there will be nothing else new issued this year. With it being Rupert's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday it would seem to be an opportunity missed. Let us hope it is not a sign that the Classic Rupert market is cooling. It does mean however you can save your money and invest it on some of those quality vintage Rupert things of yesteryear.

*The Wise Old Goat*

# Chairman's Report

Yes, it's that time of the year again when the AGM is upon us. For over a quarter of a century (doesn't that sound a long time), it's been a highlight of my year and I know that that feeling is shared by so many of you. I also know from my chats with Tony that he's doing his best to make sure that justice is done to Rupert in this, his 90th year.

Talking of justice being done to Rupert, wasn't that an excellent preview picture we had of the front of the new Annual cover in the last Newsletter? I'm privileged to have had a sneak preview of the whole of the cover - front and back - and it certainly doesn't disappoint. (*check page 4 for your preview – Ed*) So, there's yet another reason to come along to the meeting – to have your Annual signed by Stuart and at the same time to take the opportunity to let him know how good you think it is.



But of course there's the formal side of the AGM when we need to take the decisions which will enable us to continue to provide a valuable service to Followers. John has referred to our falling membership and rising costs in his Editorial. Do also take note of his suggestion to try to do your bit to recruit someone; for my part I've sent letters to a number of those who had fallen by the wayside over recent years and this led to about 20 renewals which all helps a little especially if they stay with us. And to those in that category who are reading this - a warm welcome back!

However, one particular problem of which you will all be aware to some extent is rising postal charges and these have an especially adverse effect on material like our Bulletins. This, going hand in hand with the membership problems, has the potential to create a downward spiral on which we must take action. Of course it isn't just a matter of maintaining solvency because Followers have rightly come to expect a high standard of service from the Society particularly on the publications side. I will therefore be asking members to consider the following:- to increase subs by £3 to £28 and to reduce the number of Newsletters per year from 4 to 3, while increasing the content of each one. Thus the total amount of Nutwood News you receive will more

or less be maintained but we will save printing costs and, more importantly, postal costs, by having our fixes of the Nutwood newsletter in 3 slightly larger doses rather than 4. An additional possibility is to adjust the calendar format, again mainly to reduce postage.

These, as I say, are things which we will have to decide at the AGM, but we need to hear, and to get a real feel for, the membership's views. Of course we'd rather you were there to join in any discussion, but if you aren't able to get to the meeting and would like to express your opinion, please feel free to write to me and I'll ensure that your views are taken into account - my postal address is on the calendar or you can e-mail me at [john.swan9@btopenworld.com](mailto:john.swan9@btopenworld.com).

However I don't want to end on that rather serious note. Even apart from the formal AGM, there'll be lots to enjoy - I've seen a picture of the latest model Tony's commissioned and it's a worthy rival to the magnificent Gooseberry Fool who recently joined our ranks. Don't miss it!

I really do look forward to meeting you all at the end of August.

*John Swan (Chairman)*

## The Rupert Raffle

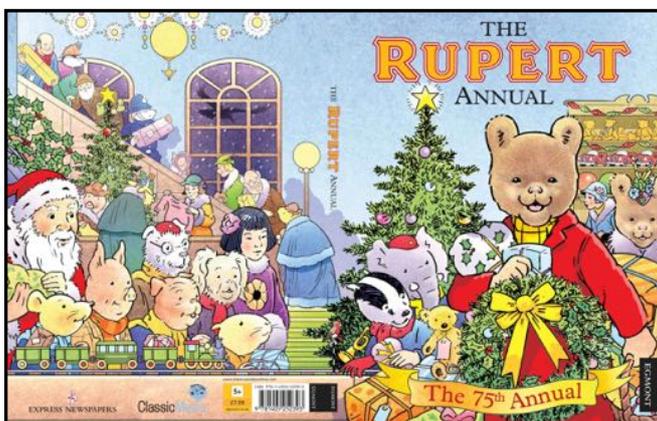
We would like to thank the many Followers who sent money for raffle tickets for their patience and understanding when there was a hiatus over our correct address. Thanks to the lovely lady who bought our house in Derbyshire and the Post Office, we have now received any outstanding letters.

We should be very pleased to receive more requests for tickets for the raffle in August and enclosed is a form with our correct address.

We have already noted a number of the over 50 exclusive prizes available and to add to those we will have a special handmade Golly, plus some of the earlier Rupert sculpture models, which are not normally available to non-attending members, and some proof pulls of the Rupert Annual cover, (an especially nice one this year), kindly donated by Egmont which will look super when framed and on your wall.

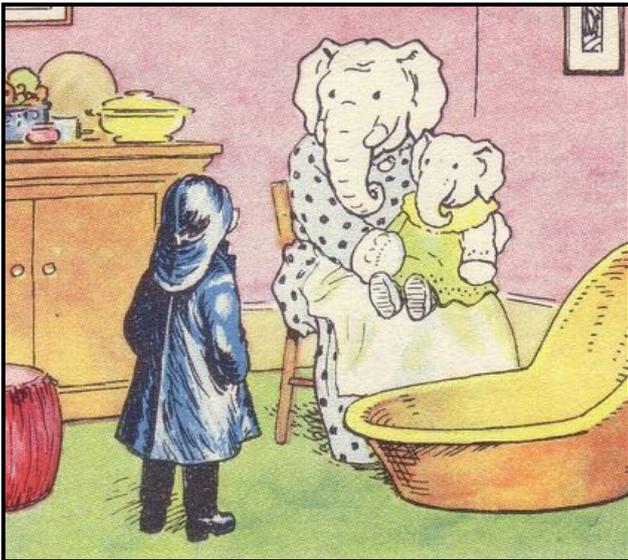
If you are attending the AGM and have already bought raffle tickets by post, please come and say hello to us so that we can put a face to a name.

*The Raffle Elves*



# Rupert's baby chums

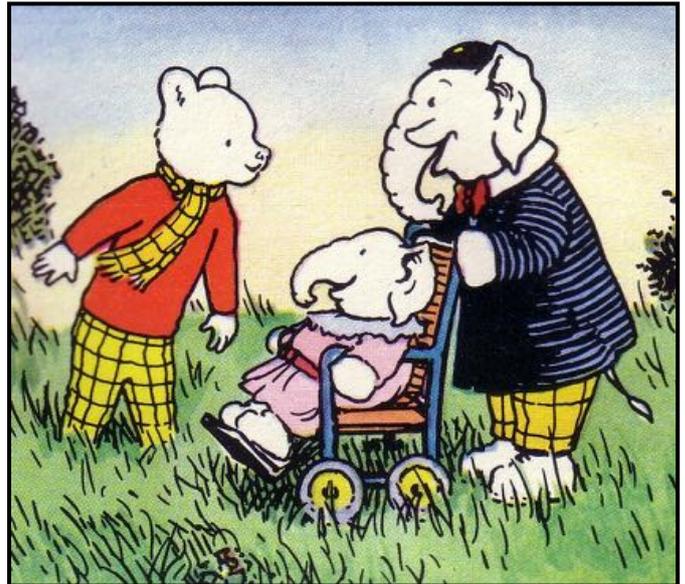
The Rupert stories, featuring human and anthropomorphic animals of varying ages, rarely feature babies and very young animals. However, looking through Alfred Bestall's tales, there are times where an infant's presence is essential to the plot. Take, for example, the two baby siblings of Edward Trunk and Bill Badger. Unfortunately something unpleasant happens to the babies when they make an appearance, and it's simply because Mrs Trunk and Mrs Badger foolishly leave their young offspring in the care of their older brothers. When Rupert appears it's a cue for an adventure, and something is bound to happen to the babies ...



*"He splashes such a lot, that's why,  
I need these togs to keep me dry!"*

The young brother of Edward Trunk is called Pompey. Mr and Mrs Trunk made a strange choice for the youngster's name; why didn't they choose a conventional name, for example, John or David? (Incidentally a young elephant is known as a calf.) Baby Pompey is wearing a green dress with a floppy collar in *Rupert's Rainy Adventure* (Adventure Series no 11). Mrs Trunk leaves him in Rupert's care whilst she pops out to the shops; naturally an adventure befalls the bear and Pompey's life is put at risk. An old fashioned piece of baby equipment is featured in this tale. It's a baby bath, a very large, heavy, cumbersome piece of equipment, causing one

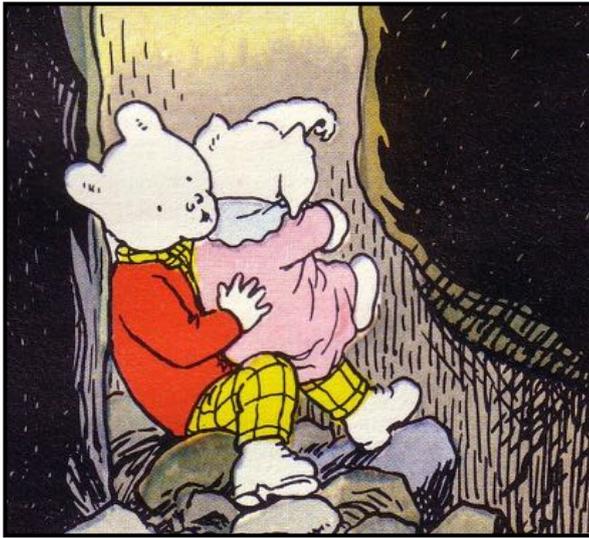
to think that Mrs Trunk must be a strong, powerful cow (that's the name of a female elephant). However, the bath makes an effective boat when flooding occurs.



*"The buggy's made of toughened steel,  
With extra springs on every wheel."*

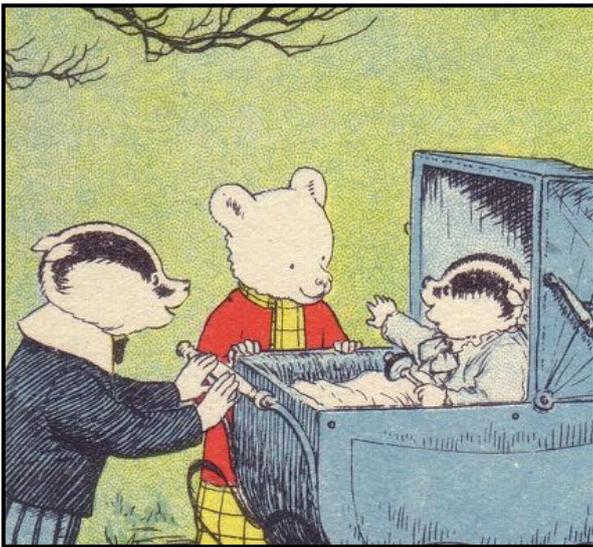
Pompey is also featured in *Rupert and the Windy Day* (Annual 1976). Edward takes the baby for an outing on a very windy day. Pompey is sitting in an uncomfortable looking pushchair which, although it has a sensible footplate and a restraining strap, does not appear to have a brake. Here, Pompey wears a pink dress with a large floppy collar. One worries about taking a baby out, not adequately dressed, in the cold wind. Is Pompey warm enough? Big brother Edward certainly is – he's wearing a waistcoat, jacket, cap and trousers (the same yellow check design as Rupert's, but a larger size). The chums leave the pushchair and its occupant on a hill top above a steep slope whilst they join Willie Mouse who has a kite. On their return the reader is not surprised to learn that Pompey has disappeared. Eventually the baby is found down a deep underground hole.

Despite having rolled down the hillside in his pushchair, ejected from his conveyance, pitched onto rocks in the bottom of the hole, Pompey is in a very



*“Oof!” Rupert gasps, “You weigh a ton,  
And hefting you is not much fun.”*

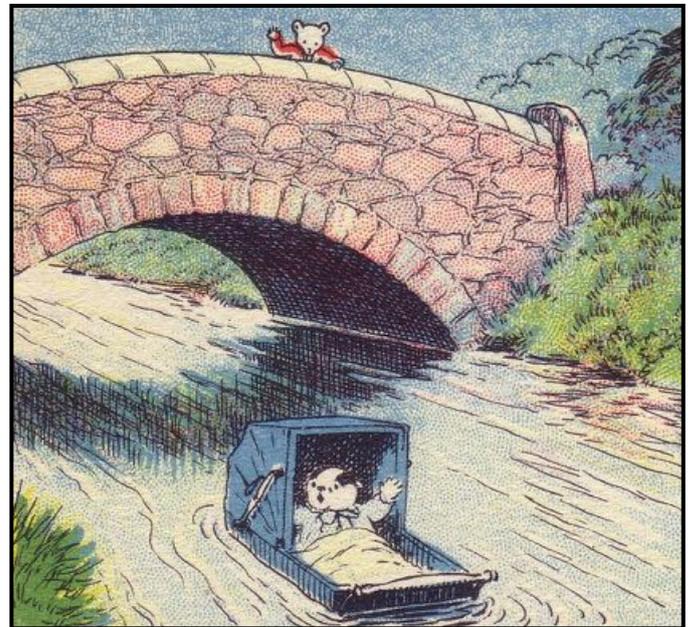
good mood. “Fancy falling on these hard stones and keeping cheerful!” Rupert exclaims as the baby gives him a happy smile. Most babies would have been lustily screaming after the sort of accident just described (if they survived).



*“Aahh” Rupert says “the baby’s cute,  
And pushing him is such a hoot.”*

Bill Badger’s young brother is called Baby Badger, which is another strange choice for a first name; unless Mr and Mrs Badger haven’t yet decided what to call him (a young badger is known as a cub). In *Rupert and Baby Badger* (Annual 1941), Bill takes his baby brother out in an enormous old-fashioned pram. Rupert perceptively says to his chum, “Fancy your mum trusting you!” As the chums pass by a

hedge, Rupert spies some berries and says, “I’m sure the baby would like those to play with.” The anxious reader now has visions of a poisoned baby! The story progresses as Bill abandons the pram with its occupant on a hill top. With a sense of déjà vu we now have Baby Badger in the same situation as the one that befell Pompey. The pram veers down the slope, falls into a river, floats downstream, and Baby Badger is finally stolen by a wicked man. Rupert rescues the baby, the pair fall from a moving caravan, get lost in a fog, and eventually Rupert leaves his young charge with an ‘old countrywoman’. He arrives in Nutwood only to find he’s forgotten where the countrywoman lives ... Baby Badger is safely recovered at the story’s end, and although he’s been through a traumatic time, he thankfully wasn’t poisoned by those berries after all.



*Rupert looks over in dismay,  
As Baby Badger floats away.*

In *Rupert and the Blue Balloon* (Annual 1948), Baby Badger is wearing a pink dress which changes to orange at the end of the story. Bill, Rupert and Willie leave Baby Badger unattended whilst they run away to play. Mrs Badger arrives to collect her offspring and is horrified to find her baby has disappeared. She collapses in shock when she sees him floating in the sky, hanging on the string of a balloon! The flying badger is saved in the nick of time from dropping into a lake. The story finishes with a presumably very angry and upset Mrs Badger hurrying home, manipulating both her baby in a pram, and Bill, down a hill.

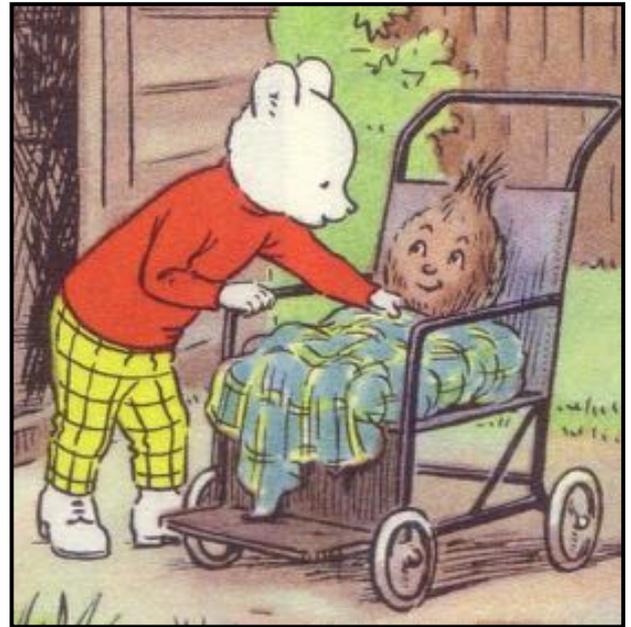


*“Podgy’s too big for that chair,  
He’ll get wedged in, I do declare.”*

In *Rupert and the Birthday Candles* (Adventure Series no. 39), Podgy Pig regresses in age and becomes a piglet again (a young pig is also called a suckling or a shoat). In this story cousin Rosalie is pushing Podgy in a pushchair. Podgy is physically as big and fat as usual although his behaviour is immature. One feels sorry for Miss Rosalie who pushes the heavy Podgy and she is scarcely taller than the chair’s handles. However she is a strong young lady and performs her task effortlessly.

In *Rupert and the Shy Coconut* (Adventure Series no. 31), a coconut, very timid and – as the title implies – shy, gets taken to the Bear’s cottage. Rupert’s old high chair and pushchair are produced which causes one to question *why* Mr and Mrs Bear kept them – are they anticipating another little bear at some future date? The coconut sits on the high chair and Rupert feeds it (with milk, of course, but is the milk from a cow or a coconut?) Then the nut is

placed in the uncomfortable looking pushchair and taken for a ride by Rupert. If you or I put a coconut in a pushchair and strode out, the nut would promptly fall from its seat and pitch downwards onto the hard



*“I’ll tuck the coconut up snug,  
And wrap him in this nice soft rug”.*

pavement. But happily for Rupert, his nut has a pair of hands with which it clings to the arms of the chair. Rupert receives quite a shock when the little nut leaps to its feet and stands upright on the seat. By the way, this chair, like the one in which the infantile Podgy rode, doesn’t appear to have a brake.

Now Rupert and his pals are generally kind, caring, honest and reliable – but would you entrust *your* baby with them? After reading what happened to the baby animals, it isn’t surprising why babies and very young animals rarely feature in the stories – the mums of Nutwood deem it safer to be responsible for looking after their own babies.

*Ruth Sear*

### ***Let's hear it from the readers***

The Newsletter welcomes contributions from readers – both articles and photographs (as well, of course, as letters). You don't have to be a professional, just enthusiastic about Rupert Bear. The Editor would like to hear from you at 29 Mill Road, Lewes, Sussex BN7 2RU

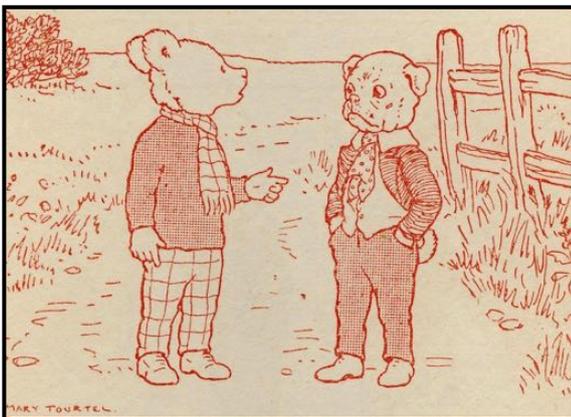
# Algy Pug – Rupert's best pal?

After Bill Badger, Algy Pug is Rupert's most encountered friend, appearing in over 3000 Rupert Annual pictures. Rupert and his parents apart, these two alone have never missed a year. Podgy, in third place, is over a thousand pictures behind him and has been absent on five occasions. Time for an assessment.



*The old dog, walking with his cane,  
Met a midget in the lane.*

Unusually, Algy makes his entrance on Wednesday 5 October 1921 (just a year after Rupert) as a companion for Margot in *Margot the Midget*,



*Two strangers stopped to have a chat,  
They became friends and that was that!*

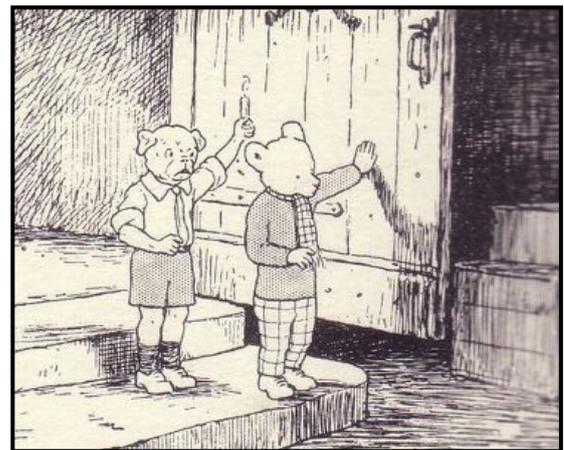
performing the kind of protective role for the little girl that Rupert will later assume. Like Bill on his debut, he uses a stick, which gives him the aspect of one much older. On this first appearance he is able to

rescue Margot after she has been stolen by the Pedlar Fox. In *Margot by the Sea* he and Margot attend a sea-creatures wedding and are instrumental in recovering the wedding cake from some greedy frogs. Following an encounter with pirates, they meet the King of Birds, this first appearance of Toucan majesty occurring on Monday 21 August 1922.

Margot does not enter Rupert's world for another three years but the important meeting of Algy with the Little Bear occurs on 21 May 1923 whilst Rupert is being outwitted by the cunning Reynard Fox (T12):

He left the house all by himself  
And wandered to and fro.  
A friendly dog, who came along,  
Called out to him: "Hullo!"

They talked a while and Rupert told  
How he had been betrayed.  
"My name is Algy," said the dog,  
"And I'll give you my aid."



*"There's nothing here, you can be sure",  
Said Rupert, pushing back the door.*

In the event he proves just as ineffective as Rupert in countering the wily fox and the pair find themselves imprisoned, needing Rex and Reggie Rabbit to release them.

Algy is not yet a regular presence though. Four years and 27 adventures pass before he is seen again, this time with his name in the title – *Rupert and Algernon* (T40). Once more he and Rupert are fooled

by a fox, who tries but fails to get them into trouble with a farmer. With this track record a story entitled *Rupert and Algernon at Hawthorn Farm* (T58) promises progressive chaos and duly delivers. But apart from a supporting role in *Rupert Goes Hiking* (T68) Algy isn't to the fore again under Mary Tourtel; it is after this that he really starts to bloom.

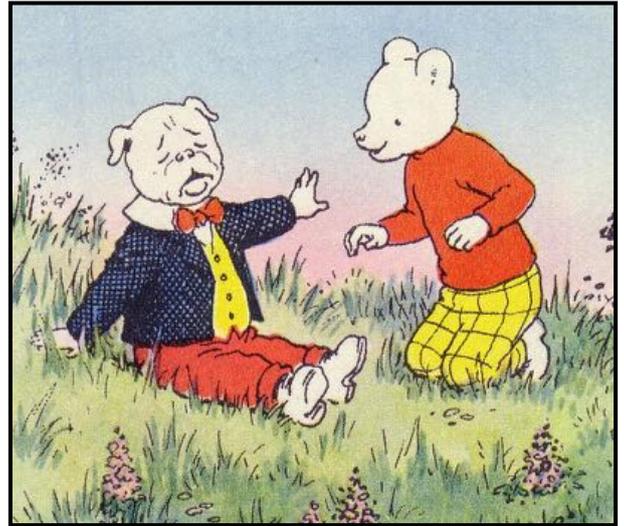
Alfred Bestall's first story was *Rupert, Algy and the Smugglers* (B1) with Algy appearing in the third frame he drew, the first of Rupert's friends to appear from his pen. Algy's parents also take part in this adventure, which is a long one (108 frames). That would feature in the 1937 Annual; promoted above it to take its place in the first Rupert Annual was *Rupert, Algy and the Cannibals* (B7), also 108 frames and including Algy's name in the title. Bill remains pre-eminent but Algy is already clearly second in line. There is more of him too. The Algy of *Rupert Goes Hiking* (T68), for example, is quite slim and active; Bestall from the start endows him with greater bulk and gradually makes him lazier in disposition.



*The heron might have fish to catch,  
The chums, though, have a plan to hatch.*

In the early stories though, Algy reveals an unfortunate inclination to hide in containers. In *Rupert, Algy and the Smugglers* he spurns the good advice of Rupert and Sylvia to follow them into a cave and hides instead in a huge chest which is carted away by a smuggler. The captain's expectations of 'valuable goods inside' are confounded by Algy's anxious face peeping out. He escapes from this predicament but when he repeats the process in *Rupert, Algy and the Cannibals*, this time in a crate,

the consequences are more serious, which is ironic since the worst he can expect from being caught on this occasion is a scolding – which Rupert later receives – for ignoring a 'No admittance' notice in pursuit of a cricket ball. The crate is closed and nailed down and it is only through Rupert's persistence on board the ship carrying it to foreign parts that Algy is able once more to peep out at an astonished audience. An exotic adventure is under way.



*"Don't bother me, just go away,  
It's much too early in the day".*

Algy then is quickly established as number two pal under Bestall's regime. Indeed in the 1937 Rupert Annual he is Rupert's companion in two of the seven stories – *Rupert and the Little Men* (B12) in addition to *Rupert, Algy and the Smugglers* – and appears in over 120 pictures, almost twice as many as Bill. In 1939 he has a particularly busy year. After sharing Rupert's wintry experiences in *Rupert and King Frost* (B38) from January to March, he joins up with the Little Bear for a trilogy – *Rupert and the Old Ruin* (B42), *Rupert and the Lost Boat* (B43) and *Rupert and the Sea Serpent* (B44) – which lasts from June to October. Thus the boat journeys Rupert and Algy embark on for their summer holiday begin in the sunshine of peace and end in the gloom of war. The boat is one given to Rupert by Mary Quite Contrary and in the first story the friends discover that a thief and a suspected ghost are an acquisitive and chatty jackdaw. In the second a counterfeiter of half-crowns steals the boat and imprisons Algy; in the third a sea-serpent wanders up-river and takes Algy off to his island home. Algy is usually the one to be whisked away in these stories and Rupert has to track him

down to effect a rescue; he will need to do this again in *Rupert, Algy and the Bee* (B97) when Algy loses himself in a cave.

This trilogy was split up for the annuals, *Rupert and the Lost Boat* (the middle story) being seen in the 1941 edition; the other two in 1942, Algy appearing in 150 pictures in the latter.

There have been many memorable moments since. Algy is one of those who join up with Rupert and Bingo for their ill-fated Waffle-Fly expedition in the 1947 Annual and falls into the water looking for the aforesaid fly with Bingo's magnifying glass. Edward soon follows suit trying to retrieve the glass and the pair of them, clothed in sacks, are confined to a handy shed.

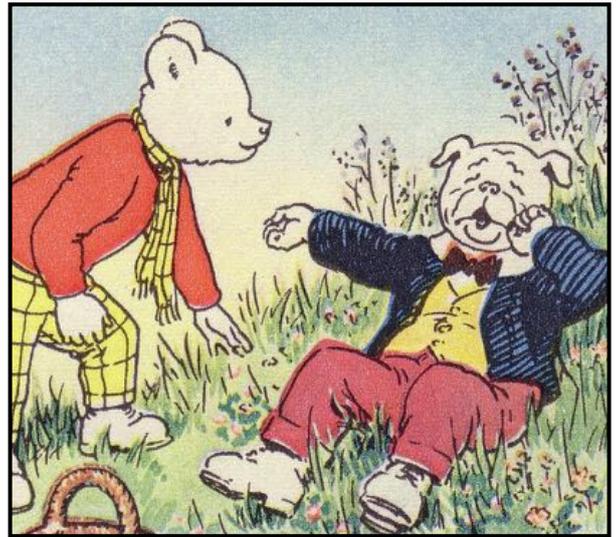
Algy's laziness becomes a feature in two late 1940s adventures. In both *Rupert and Mr. Punch* (B108) and *Rupert and the Snuff-Box* (B116) Rupert comes across his pal having a doze on a sunny day. Indeed frames 1 and 2 of *Rupert and Mr. Punch* and 15 and 16 of *Rupert and the Snuff-Box* are very much the same – switch them to the other story and nobody would be any the wiser. The prose is similar too: “You old lazybones,” laughs Rupert. “Get up this minute” (*Rupert and Mr. Punch*); “Hi, lazybones, get up and help me to pick blackberries . . .” laughs Rupert’ (*Rupert and the Snuff-Box*).



*Rupert is towing up a rise,  
When Algy's legs, ahead, he spies.*

The trait is more evident in the former of these tales. Finding Podgy, even lazier than Algy, dozing in a hammock, persuades Algy that this is just the place to be on such a warm day. Sailor Sam speeds them to

Sandy Bay in the side-car of his motor-bike and Captain Barnacle gives them some sail-cloth to work on. With the help of Mr. Punch, whom Rupert met in the pre-war adventure *Rupert and Dog Toby* (B8) – no wonder Mr. Punch exclaims ‘I haven't seen you for ages’ – the hammock is completed and hung across a handy break-water. Both pals fall asleep and wake to discover that the tide has come in. Mr. Punch comes to their rescue and takes them to his secret cave where all his little folk live – rather more harmoniously than they appear on-stage.



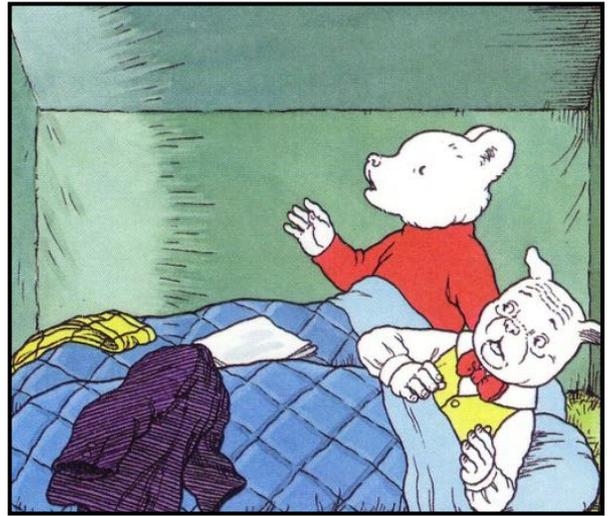
*Algy can only stretch and yawn,  
Too tired to stir this summer's morn.*

Exit from this cave is achieved through a narrow hole in the rock at the top of some steps. Toby, who is guiding them, slips through easily but Algy's bulk now becomes relevant for, in trying to squeeze through the gap, he presses against a large boulder and succeeds only in closing it completely. Salvation comes via the hammock which, once retrieved from the break-water, can be turned into a sail for Mr. Punch's boat, enabling Rupert to sail round to the beach and an anxious Sailor Sam. Sam lifts the boulder allowing everyone to escape. Back in Nutwood Podgy's response to their story is to climb back into his hammock and go to sleep again.

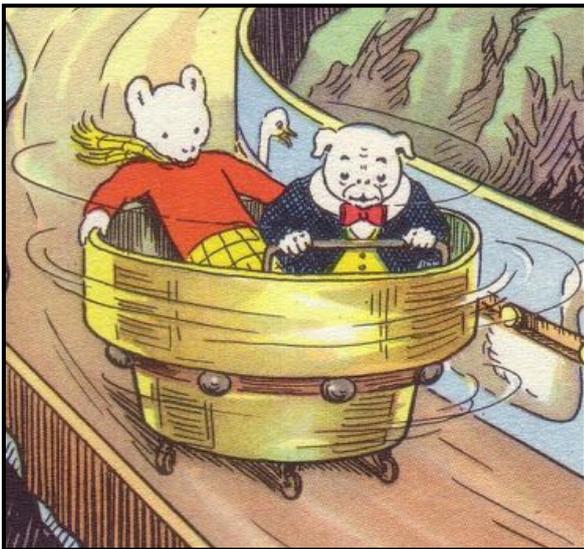
After his second lazy start, Algy becomes active in *Rupert and the Snuff-Box*. He helps Rupert to pick blackberries but is then ducked with the little bear when the plank across the river is snatched away by the Foxes. When the pals catch up with them, the foxes flee, knocking Mrs. Sheep's shopping into the river in the process. Rupert and Algy get wet again, jumping into the river to retrieve the groceries. Soon

they see the Admiral, whose snuff-box Rupert has returned, and the old man takes them to his home for a hot bath. Wrapped up in blankets and with Sylvia in attendance, they tell their tale, receiving at its end blackberries, to compensate them for those they lost in the river, and other ripe fruits – a happy end to the outing. The last frame sees the friends walking into a golden sunset. “When you woke me to-day I never thought things would turn out this way,” says the little pug happily. “No,” laughs Rupert. “It’s the first time I’ve had two cold baths and one hot one in an hour.”

Algy is an attractive character, usually placid and helpful, though he does have one fall from grace



*While in the tent, they get a fright,  
And Algy's eyes are big and bright.*

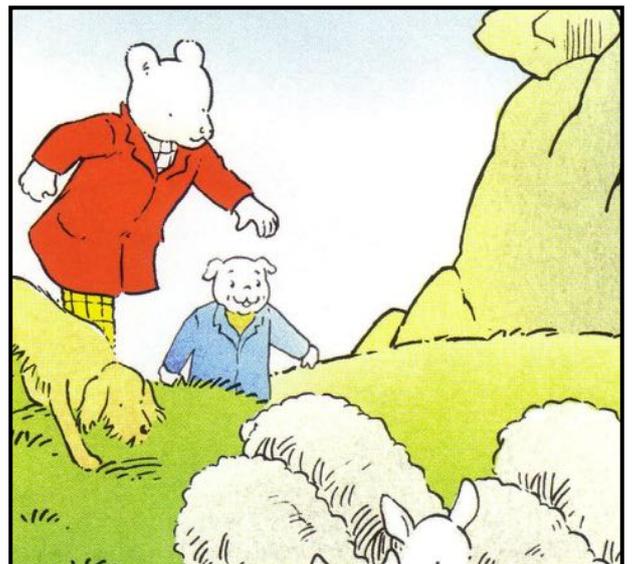


*"Whiz Ho!" said Algy, "This is fun,  
I hope this ride will run and run".*

when Rupert finds he has disobeyed his parents at the beginning of *Rupert and Snuffy* (1944 Annual). His no. 2 pal status continues into the Adventure Series, where he is particularly prominent in *Rupert and the Wild Goose Chase* (AS20). Here, in search for neva-neva plums that will cure a sick girl, he and Rupert take seriously the term ‘wild goose chase’, used by a fruit-seller, and find themselves on a memorable journey in a fairground cave that embraces a spinning tub, a padded room and a goose-car ride leading to distorting mirrors which show themselves as the geese. Their mistake is fortuitous, however, for the showman knows about neva-neva plums – he needs them for his monkey – and finds some for them.

Under John Harrold Algy continues to be seen frequently but is no longer second in line. His eyes

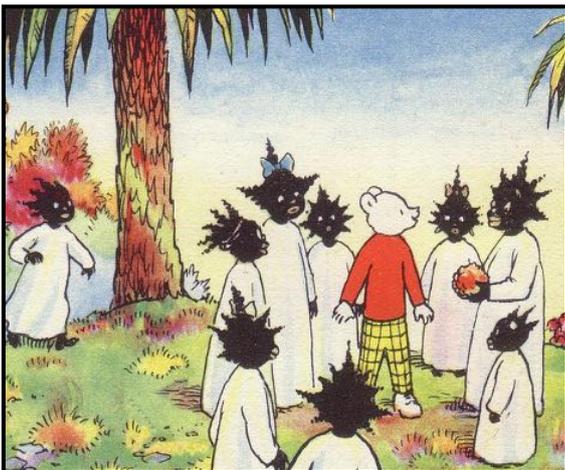
become more prominent too. In *Rupert and Algy's Misadventure* (1988 and 2007 Annuals) he discovers a medieval double ‘Duke Algernon’ when he is sent back in time by means of the Wise Old Goat’s History Clock. In *Rupert and the Raft* (1998 Annual) there is an echo of the 1939 Bestall trilogy as Algy and Rupert return to their boat for a trip on the river. There is a reminder of earlier times, too, in Algy’s first real outing under Stuart Trotter’s hand, *Rupert and the Lost Sheep* (2009 Annual), since the pair going off to an uncle’s farm revives memories of Mary Tourtel’s *Rupert and Algernon at Hawthorn Farm*. And that’s almost where we came in.



*From starting out with Mary Tourtel,  
Our Algy Pug has gone full circle.*

# Rupert and the Coons

It is unfortunate that given the way society has changed over the approximately 70 years of the Rupert Annual that phrases which were judged by many to be acceptable at the time of publication are now deeply offensive. When considering the characters presented in some of the earlier stories it is difficult to avoid the adoption of some of the language used in these tales. This should not be taken as a suggestion that such terminology is appropriate or acceptable today, but as a requirement of discussing stories which are firmly rooted in a different time. This is a distinction, it is believed, that the Followers and its members will understand well. Indeed this distinction has already been highlighted by the Followers' publication of the story *Rupert on Coon Island* (The Bestall Reprints 9).



*The Coons are just a friendly band,  
Rupert meets in a far-off land.*

Despite the arguments outlined above, many readers will be wondering why a title as contentious as *Rupert and the Coons* has been adopted rather than a more sensitive one. It is the central argument of this piece that the Coons illustrated by Bestall in a series of stories beginning with *Rupert on Coon Island* (BO4 1946 Annual) and running through to *Rupert and the Diamond Leaf* (B137 1960 Annual) are a distinct group of characters which are separate from other representations of black humans in Bestall's stories. It is convenient to continue to use the name given to them at the time of the stories as an alternative name would lead to confusion.

The preface to the Bestall Reprint mentioned earlier discusses the social attitudes of the time but does not contrast the depiction of the Coons with representations of other black characters in Rupert stories.

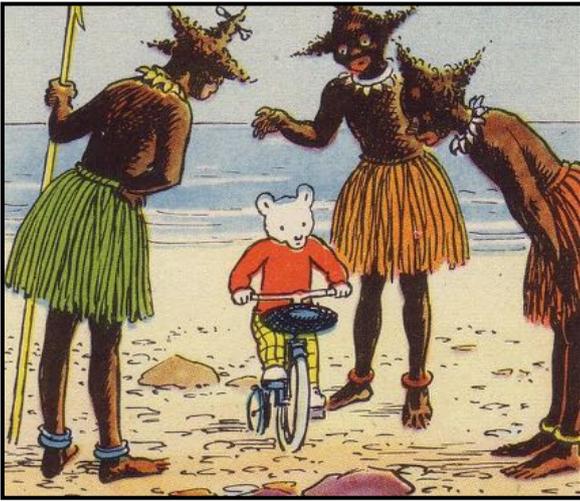


*The chums are quite relieved to find,  
The Emperor is very kind.*

While all the characters are unarguably stereotypical caricatures, it is possible to argue that the minstrel that appears in *Rupert and the Ruby Ring* (B21 1938 Annual) and *Rupert at Sandy Bay* (B32 1942 Annual) or the 'dark skinned' men in *Rupert's Marvellous Bat* (B41 1940 Annual) are much more realistic representations of black characters than the Coons.

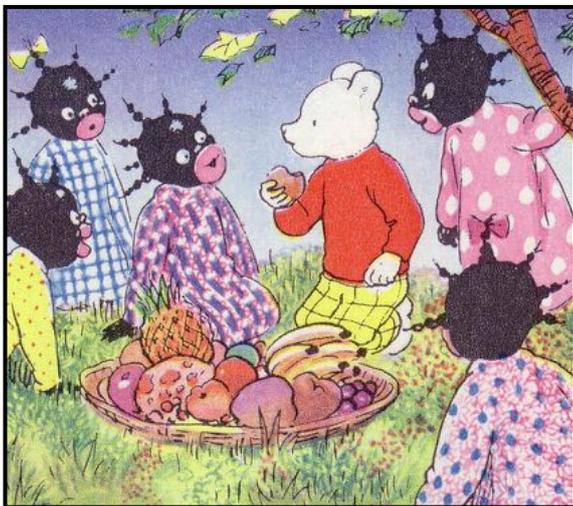


*Said Mammy "Rupert, have no fear,  
I'm only stewing veg. in here".*



*These Savages, with odd hairstyle,  
Are humans, from a different isle*

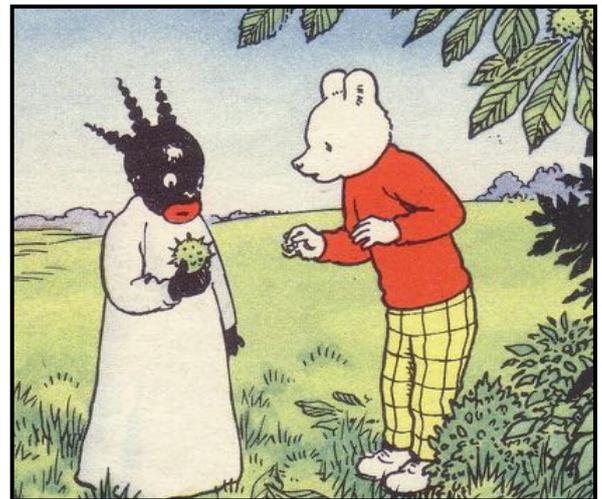
Even in *Rupert and the Travel Machine* (Boys' and Girls' Book 1938 and 1950 Annual) or *Rupert's Fairy Cycle* (B78 1945 Annual) the 'savages', although less sympathetically drawn, look significantly more human than the Coons.



*With Rupert, they all gather round,  
To eat the fruit spread on the ground.*

It is true that representation of the black characters within the Rupert stories draws on racial stereotypes that in modern day Britain would be condemned as racist, and the choice of language is now also deeply offensive. However, given the more humanistic drawings of the other black characters identified, caricatures though these are, it is suggested that the Coons were not meant to be a direct representation of an ethnic group. Indeed, parallels can perhaps

more usefully be drawn with the Golly, which, I suspect, many readers would have accepted without any direct thoughts about race. It was suggested in the Followers' reprint of the *Rupert on Coon Island* that Bestall's "inappropriate" characters were, and are, simply as a source of "otherness". The argument forwarded here goes further, suggesting that they are not a direct attempt to represent black people, but to introduce a distinctly far away character to Rupert's world. If Bestall had intended them to be interpreted directly as human characters, as he had with the other black characters of a similar period identified above, then they would have been drawn in a more human form. The fact that they are consistently referred to as Coons, and as far as the author is aware this name is not used to describe any other character, further supports the argument that these are a distinct group of characters.



*He eyes the fruit, but with despair,  
It's rather spiky, like his hair.*

In conclusion, therefore, it is the contention of this article that the Coons are a distinct group of characters within the Rupert stories. While they draw on racial stereotypes that would make them unacceptable in today's society, in the same way as the Golly, they were not, even in their original time, intended to represent a specific racial group. The extreme stereotypes used in deriving them were intended to produce a character which was extremely different to those commonly seen in Nutwood and indeed individuals of different race who were becoming increasingly present in the wider community from the 1940s onwards.

*John Woods*

## Another brown faced 1973?

This short piece appeared in the Daily Express on 22<sup>nd</sup> May. It is easy to see how easily fiction becomes fact with the Express stating that all post-1973 Annuals have a white faced Rupert on the cover. Oh dear!

### Rupert to fetch £30k

A RARE copy of a Rupert Bear annual is set to fetch £30,000 at auction because it features him with brown fur.

The Daily Express's comic strip hero was drawn brown from his first annual cover in 1936. But in 1973 it changed to white and

it has been that colour since. But a dozen copies of the 1973 annual with a brown Rupert were printed and are the Holy Grail for Rupert collectors.

Two sold in 2007 for £23,000 and £22,000.

The auction takes place in South Cerney, Glos, on June 17.

We wonder if the 1973 being offered here is a new one to have surfaced or is just an earlier copy being recycled. Perhaps someone can tell us and advise what crazy money this copy made.

*John Beck*

## Special Rupert T-Shirts

As those of you who come along to our Annual meetings will know we produce a special T-shirt featuring that year's logo. In the past these have been exclusively for the helpers on the day and have never been available to ordinary members before. But as it is Rupert's 90<sup>th</sup> we thought others of you might like one to celebrate the special occasion. They are included on the enclosed

Registration Form and orders should be sent to Tony Griffin, (cheques payable to A.W. Griffin), and they can be collected on the day. We are also offering them to non-attending members at £10 per shirt to cover post and packing and they will be sent out shortly after the event. If you want one by post please use the Registration Form noting you want one posted and send a cheque for £10 per T-shirt to Tony.

You are allowed to order more than one if you would like one to wear and one in the wash, or need one for a partner or child. Please note the deadline date for your order is August 8<sup>th</sup> as we will need to place a firm order on that date. Also don't forget to note the sizes required.

*Tony Griffin*

## The Rupert Companion

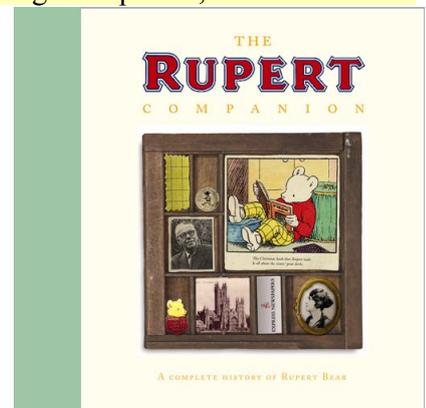
The book is now at the printers in Singapore but we are told it will unfortunately not be available in time for our meeting. Those of you who have already ordered and paid for a copy to be collected at the Annual Meeting will now get it posted to you when copies are ready. To help overcome the disappointment Egmont will be providing special bookplates, which can be collected by those ordering on the Registration Form, so you will be able to get Ian to sign and dedicate these on the day. We will also provide signed bookplates to all who order from Shirley, but we are sorry, no dedications.

Published at £25 we are offering it to you at a discount but will have to charge for postage and packing which adds a further £6, sorry.

We can assure you the Companion will be well worth waiting for with 144 pages and full colour illustrations throughout. With hardcover boards and a green cloth spine it will make it a bit more upmarket than other similar publications in the bookshops. As we have noted elsewhere it will be an essential book

for the serious Rupert collector as author, Ian Robinson, was the final Rupert Editor at the Daily Express, a post he held for ten years. During that time he both wrote all the new Rupert stories and worked closely with illustrator John Harrold, as well as planning and organising all the Rupert Annuals during that time. Not much has been written about Rupert during this period, so we are sure many new interesting insights will be revealed.

We look forward to seeing the publication and welcoming Ian to the Annual Meeting where he will be talking on his involvement with Rupert.



*The Wise Old Goat*

# Water – a favourite element in Rupert adventures

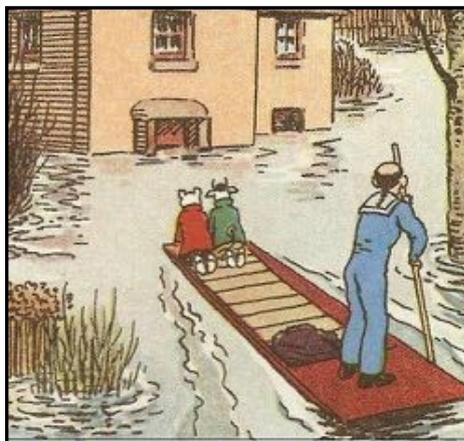
Water has appeared consistently as a major element of Rupert stories and in this article I am looking at a range of examples and comparing and contrasting them with other watery examples of children's literature.

It is generally stated that there are only seven different types of story. All others are versions and variants of the 'magnificent seven'. These are, in alphabetical order, comedy, overcoming the monster, quest, rags to riches, rebirth, tragedy and voyage and return. Most of these have appeared to some degree in Rupert tales, often in the stories of Mary Tourtel, and many have included water as a significant part of the stories.

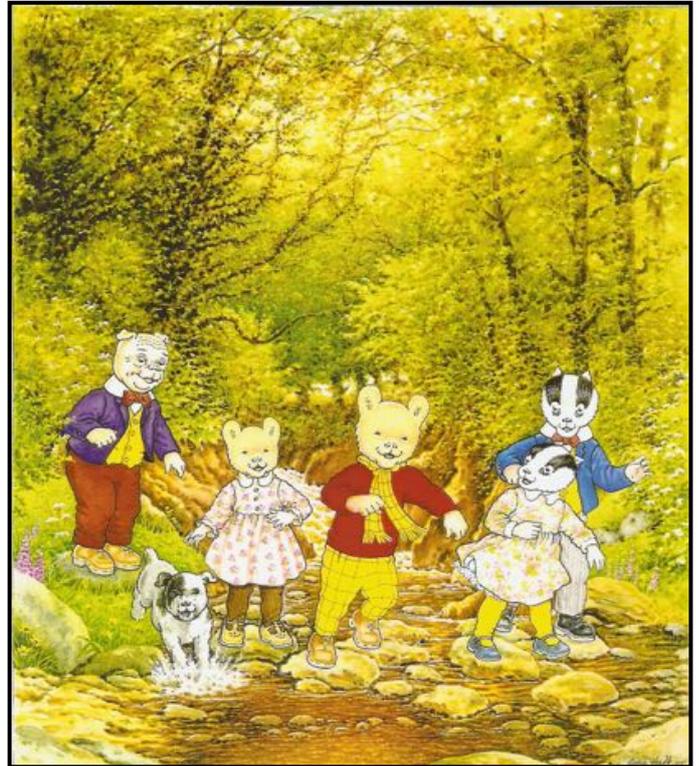
Some authors have been best known for their tales for children that have concentrated on aquatic storylines. Probably the leading children's author in this respect is Arthur Ransome (1884-1967). His first book, *Swallows and Amazons* (1930), is a classic story about the Walker children and their camping and sailing adventures. It was followed by *Swallowdale* (1931) and ten further tales with the final story being *Great Northern?* (1947).

I will only be concentrating on water in its liquid state, rather than its gaseous or solid forms. If one was to study all the stories involving the latter, then all the tales involving Rupert's visits to the home of his Uncle Polar would have to be included.

I will be looking at Rupert and other children's stories in three different watery 'forms' and illustrate them with a variety of pictures from different artists. The examples chosen are just a small sample of the many different tales that have involved water as a significant, and often pivotal, story device.



*A change from sailing on high seas,  
Sam finds the punting such a wheeze.*



*Rupert and chums splish and splash,  
As through the water they all dash.*

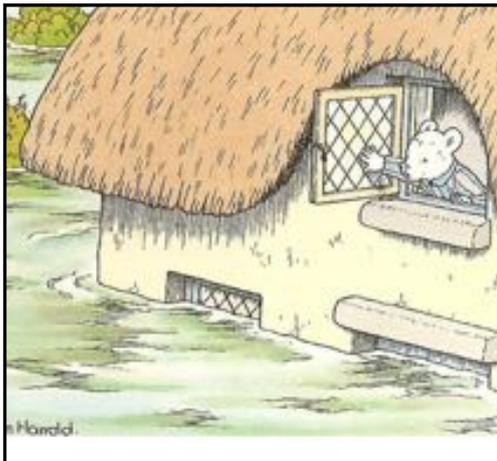
(original by Gina Hart)

## FLOODWATER

This seems to be a particularly relevant section to commence with due to many recent floods in England including Boscastle (2004), Tewkesbury (2007) and Cockermouth (2009). Back in 1952 was the Lynmouth disaster with a dreadful loss of life. The first Rupert Annual that I ever read was the 1959 edition which contained the incredibly exciting *Rupert and the River Rescue* (B134) story. It is difficult to describe the thrill that it gave to a young child as I read about Granny Goat being marooned in Ivy Cottage and being rescued by Rupert, Billy Goat and Sailor Sam. It still remains, half a century later, one of the most gripping Rupert stories ever told because it relies on a river flooding, rather than tropical or exotic lands

and it uses familiar friends of Rupert rather than characters that are new to the reader. The image of Rupert in his Wellingtons, oilskin coat and his little sou'wester have remained with me ever since and Rupert is rewarded for his bravery by being given a whole tin of biscuits, rather than the solitary sugar biscuit that his father had promised him if Rupert managed to do a good turn.

*The Sleepy Water Vole* (1953) is a Ladybird book written by Noel Barr and illustrated by PB Hickling (1876-1951). Sadly Hickling died before the publication of at least four, and possibly more, of the books that he illustrated so he must have completed his commissioned work in extremely good time. This tale relates how two water voles, Squidgy and Brownie, nearly lose their family of four young voles, due to the rising river during incessant rain and Squidgy wanting to sleep rather than move to higher ground. The illustrations are magnificent and despite impending tragedy – one of the seven principal story forms – when the young voles are washed away, they are rescued by a neighbour, Mrs Short Tail, another riverside resident, and the story ends happily with Squidgy finding a new hole – this time much higher above the river. As *Rupert and the River Rescue* appeared in the Daily Express in 1952 and *The Sleepy Water Vole* must have been illustrated before Hickling's death, the two stories were probably written at almost the same time!



As *Rupert and the River Rescue* appeared in the Daily Express in 1952 and *The Sleepy Water Vole* must have been illustrated before Hickling's death, the two stories were probably written at almost the same time!

Another dramatic adventure involving floodwater for Rupert is *Rupert's Rainy Adventure* (B66 & AS11). This tale involves Rupert in the same wet weather gear and also includes Sailor Sam who is an extremely useful character when water presents the major problem in a story. The adventure has a most dramatic frame when Rupert is babysitting Pompey (no mention of Edward or Mr Trunk) while Mrs Trunk is shopping and water cascades into the front

room. Unfortunately, Mrs Trunk's new home is near an old weir which has been unable to cope with the relentless rain. Rupert scrambles into the baby bath with Pompey and is propelled out into the flood where Sailor Sam who is in a tree with a boat-hook rescues the two of them. Sailor Sam's boat has been destroyed when it was smashed against the tree but with the aid of sailcloth, twine and rope that he rescued from his boat, and a friendly crow, they manage to reach solid land where Mrs Trunk is waiting for them – fortunately she only has to loop twine around a branch rather than utilise any of Sailor Sam's knot-tying skills.

The flood keeps rising up until it's almost at the window sill.

*The flood keeps rising up until it's almost at the window sill.*

A final example of floodwater playing a significant part in a Rupert story is *Rupert and the Water Bottle* (JH117) which is John Harrold's and Ian Robinson's penultimate story and appeared in the 2003 Annual. This story does not involve continuous precipitation; in fact, it does not include a single drop of rain. The problem is a bottle that Rupert and Bill find in the woods which the Wise Old Goat deduces is one of his ancestor's finest inventions and a source of water in times of emergency. Unfortunately, it has caused the flood and has to be retrieved. In a dramatic climax the spell is reversed with a counter-charm and a whirlwind sucks up all the water and deposits it back into the bottle. The story ends rather suddenly and PC Growler who has gone to Nutchester to get a motor launch never



*The dwarves inside the barrels hide, Protected from the rising tide.*

(The Hobbit by Tolkien)

The dwarves inside the barrels hide, Protected from the rising tide.

appears and the Old Professor is absent as he is shell-seeking in the South Seas. These little details however add to the story and it is certainly quite different to old weirs, heavy rain and Rupert in a sou'wester!

## FRESHWATER

The flowing water of rivers has regularly been a staple ingredient of children's literature. In *Tom's Midnight Garden* by Philippa Pearce (1920-2006), a river by the eponymous garden features at frequent



*It really was the strangest thing,  
A pig, equipped with water wings.*

intervals. The story is nowadays rightly believed to be a classic and apart from a strong storyline, there are intriguing questions of time and reality. The closing section of the book when Tom meets the elderly Hatty is considered to be one of the most moving passages in children's literature. There is a well described passage in the book when the river is frozen over and Tom and a teenage Hatty skate to Ely. The front cover of the 2005 Annual which shows an exuberant Rupert skating reminds me of the relevant chapter by Philippa Pearce.

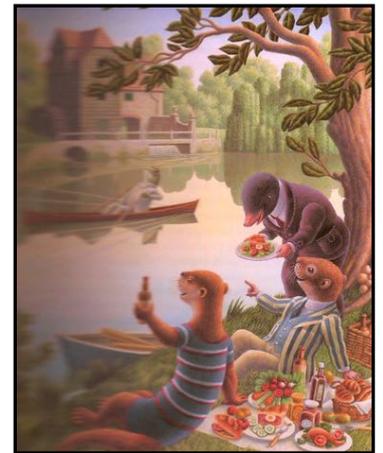
Another popular story that includes a river, and a particularly gripping scene by a weir, is *The Shadow Guests* by Joan Aiken (1924-2004). This has proved to be the most successful story that I have ever read to primary school children during my teaching career and has been responsible for a tremendous amount of follow-up activities – easily exceeding the demand for *The Hobbit* by JRR Tolkien (1892-1973) which includes an exciting sequence involving water itself. The hobbit, Bilbo Baggins, rescues his dwarf companions by hiding them in empty barrels while he relies on his ring of invisibility which plays such an important part in *The Lord of the Rings*.

In *Rupert and the Swan Lake* (AS13), Rupert and Podgy go swimming in a lake while sporting very



*Ratty rows along the water,  
To have a picnic with friend Otter.  
(The Wind in the Willows by Graham)*

colourful swimming costumes. It transpires that the lake is Silver Swan Lake and that Podgy who is wearing water-wings which Rupert has let him borrow (and had been an unused present from Pong-Ping) has been drawn down by magic into Silver Swan City. Both Rupert and Podgy are able to breathe underwater as they have eaten sweets from a lakeside nest and the swans can stay at the bottom of the lake as they wear magic neck-bands. The friends are flown home by a swan until she descends on Nutwood Pond. They had been allowed to select gifts from the swan workshops and Podgy chooses a swansdown pillow for his mother and Rupert decides on a swan-feather fan for Mrs Bear.



Undoubtedly, the best-known children's story that includes water as an integral theme (apart from *Treasure Island*) is *The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame (1859-1932). The first chapter is entitled 'The River Bank' and during its course Mole encounters a river for the first time in his life, meets Ratty and goes on a boat trip for a never-to-be-forgotten picnic which culminates on their way home in a sound ducking for both of them due to Mole's desire to row the boat. When Mole first espies the river there is a passage of purple prose which describes the river as a "sleek, sinuous, full-bodied animal, chasing and chuckling, gripping things with a laugh.....glints and gleams and sparkles, rustle and swirl, chatter and bubble."

Less well-known is the tetralogy of 'Willows' books by William Horwood which continues and ultimately

concludes Grahame's immortal classic. *The Willows at Christmas* (1999) includes an exciting passage in which Otter and Ratty rescue Toad from an extremely cold river. *The Willows in Winter* (1993) has an gripping chapter in which Mole is swept down-river clutching at an ice-floe. *Toad Triumphant* (1995) has a segment in which a fearsome pike attacks Mole and Ratty "in a boiling, raging, swirling whoosh of water and cruel teeth" and finally *The Willows and Beyond* (1996) contains an incredibly moving paradigm of superb children's literature in which Mole and Ratty make their final voyage in the familiar blue-and-white boat as they row to Pan's Island "and on their faces was a look of sweet companionship and contentment, and in their silence the calling of farewell."

*Rupert and the Whirlpool* (AS49) is an enchanting story in which Rupert and Edward Trunk find a whirlpool in the woods. Edward's cap is blown into the water but when they eventually retrieve it downstream, the cap keeps rotating like a spinning top as if it is still in the whirlpool. Pauline who is at a nearby Girl Guide camp lets Edward dry his cap at the Guides' campfire but it continues to spin until the Chinese conjuror puts it into a humming-top which eventually cures the cap of its strange condition. In an amusing secondary plot Rupert and Edward give the 'whirlpool treatment' to the wheels of Podgy's go-cart which gives them all speedy rides across the hillocks.

In *The Water Babies* by Charles Kingsley (1819-1875), Tom is a young chimney sweep who escapes from his dismal world into a marvellous underwater world. Many of the artists who have illustrated this book have depicted Tom as a character rather similar to the Merboy and the pictures make it appear as if Rupert's friend has abandoned whales and sea-serpents in favour of the company and transporting ability of carp, trout, roach and perch.

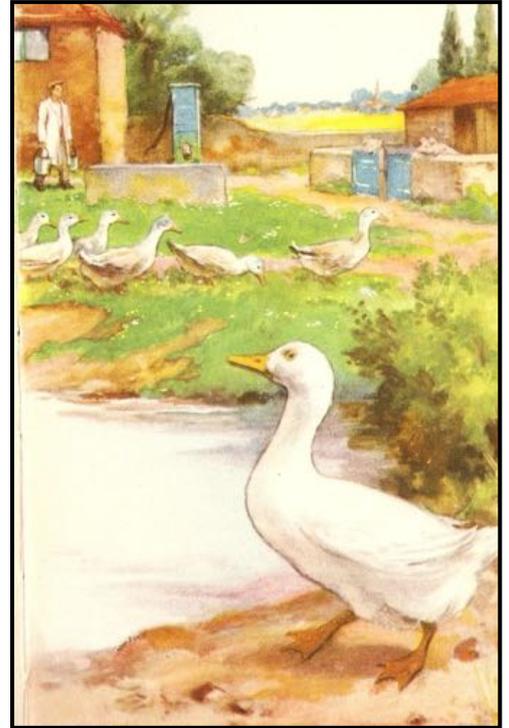
A final attractive children's story that has water as an underlying 'current' is *Beaky the Greedy Duck* (1951). As with all ten stories in this Ladybird

series, it is written by Noel Barr (real name was Dorothy Noel Barrow) and illustrated by PB (Percy Bell) Hickling. It tells of a smart white duck which was extremely greedy and always grabbed the best items of food before the other ducks had time to arrive. However, Beaky was caught out one day when she was still in the pond when the farmer's wife distributed the food and she scrambles out in great haste at a rather muddy place and ended up filthy.

The farmer's children washed off the mud and put a blue pinafore on her.

Due to her embarrassment Beaky hid in the barn and when she realised how nasty she had been, a wise owl helped her get the

pinafore off and from then on, she was cured of her greedy ways The most recent Rupert Annual – No. 74 – has two eligible entries for this category which are *Rupert and the Dam* and *Rupert and the Cut* so Stuart Trotter has continued a long tradition of involving Rupert in watery adventures. However, *Rupert and the Golden Carp* is more of a case of 'Rupert and the Red Herring' as it is relevant in name only!



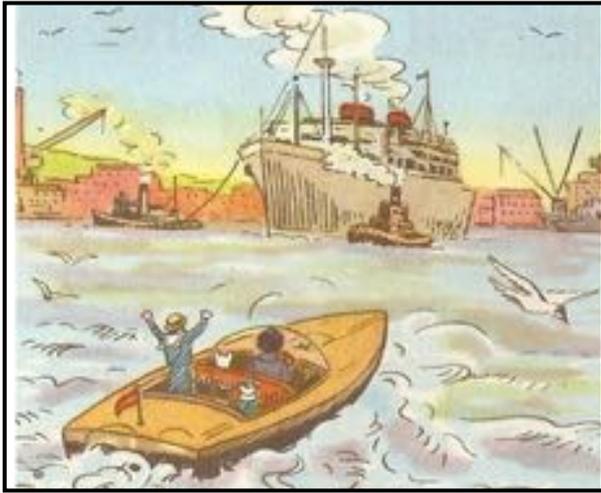
Now Beaky has her apron off  
She takes her turn to eat the troff!  
(Ladybird book)

## SEAWATER

Enid Blyton (1897-1968) wrote many stories that featured the seaside and the majority of her characters appeared in some adventures that were by the coast. Her Famous Five cast who were usually accompanied by lashings of lemonade, gallons of ginger beer and ham rolls were the most frequent visitors to the sea and their best known story is *Five on a Treasure Island* (1942).



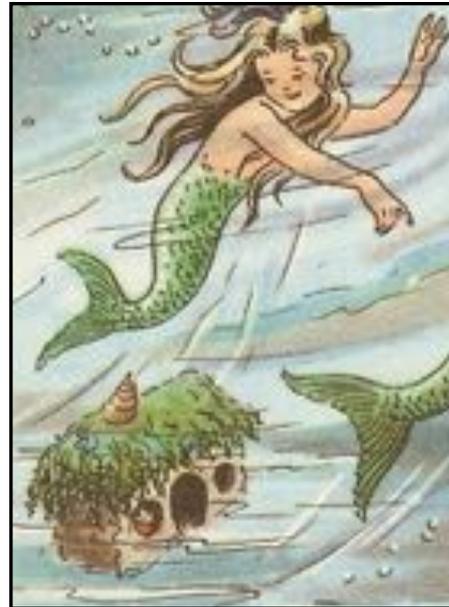
Tom, adventure doesn't lack, Perched upon a roach's back.  
(Water Babies)



*The two black bears are very lost,  
They must get home at any cost.*

The archetypal adventure story for children is probably *Treasure Island* (1893) by Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894). It contains hair-raising escapades of piracy and adventure and possibly inspired some of Rupert's many adventures involving pirates, tropical islands and treasure chests. *Rupert and the Seaside Mystery* (AS26) is a delightful tale in which Bill Badger joins Rupert and his parents when the Bears have their summer holiday at Sandy Bay. The two friends are allowed to spend the night in a beach hut rather than return to the boarding-house. They meet two little black bears who are unable to communicate with them, other than by drawing an 'S' on the sand. The two bears also have a scarf with an 'S' on and Rupert takes it to the boarding house which is presided over by Mrs Tiger who appears to have moved from Rocky Bay for the season – presumably so she would not lose the valued custom of the Bear family! Sailor Sam is recommended by Mrs Tiger as he conveniently has a shack on the cliffs but when he returns with Rupert, the two black bears have put to sea in their canoe using Rupert's and Bill's spades as oars. Rupert waves their scarf to attract them back to land but no progress is made until the two bears make an island in the sand shaped like an 'S' and decorate it with dune grass which Rupert realises is meant to represent native trees and the island is their homeland. Sailor Sam suggests they go to Captain Barnacle who identifies the 'S'-shaped island from his nautical maps and the two seafarers, along with Bill and Rupert and the two black bears leave Sandy Bay in the Captain's motor-boat and eventually reach the 'big harbour'. A cargo ship is leaving port

and the two bears are transferred to the huge vessel and fortunately its captain knows the 'S'-shaped island well and promises to put them ashore as he passes through the South Seas. It is a most attractive story which has never appeared in an Annual but was reprinted in the Sunday Express in 1983.

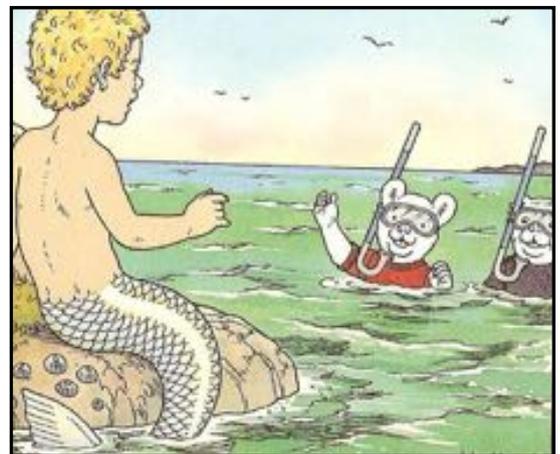


*Rupert and the Mermaids' Cottage* (AS30) involves another summer holiday for the Bear family who are staying at an unidentified 'quiet little fishing village'.

*Rupert was stranded, quite forlorn  
He'd been trying to help a prawn!*

Rupert has made friends with a girl called Susan who is staying next door and on her penultimate day she pays for the two of them to have a boat trip around the bay. Unfortunately she loses her bracelet overboard but she cheers up after the trip is over when they find a cottage on the shoreline which is exposed when the tide goes out. Rupert finds a coral necklace in the cottage but nobody claims it and the following day Rupert returns it to the cottage but he is delayed while he rescues a large prawn that is trapped under a shell. To his horror, the tide

comes in and he is trapped inside the cottage even though the sea does not enter through the openings



*The King had lost his magic shell,  
With Rupert's help it turned out well.*

that are the doorway and ‘window-ways’. Two mermaids swim in who are named Pearl and Mirabel and it turns out that the coral necklace belongs to Mirabel. They want to reward Rupert but all he requires is that they can find Susan’s bracelet. While they search for it the prawn returns with a seafood platter for Rupert which is served on a shell. The mermaids return with Susan’s bracelet and they fashion a seaweed garland for Rupert which entitles him to the rank of a sea-prince. Eventually, the tide recedes enough for Rupert to run up the beach to the village and he is just in time to return the bracelet to Susan as her parents are already driving away. His parents are not particularly surprised to hear that Rupert has been ‘under the sea’ for most of the day or that he has had his lunch!

A final seawater story selection is *Rupert and the Lost Shell* (JH118) which appeared in the 2003 Annual and is the final Robinson/Harrold story. It

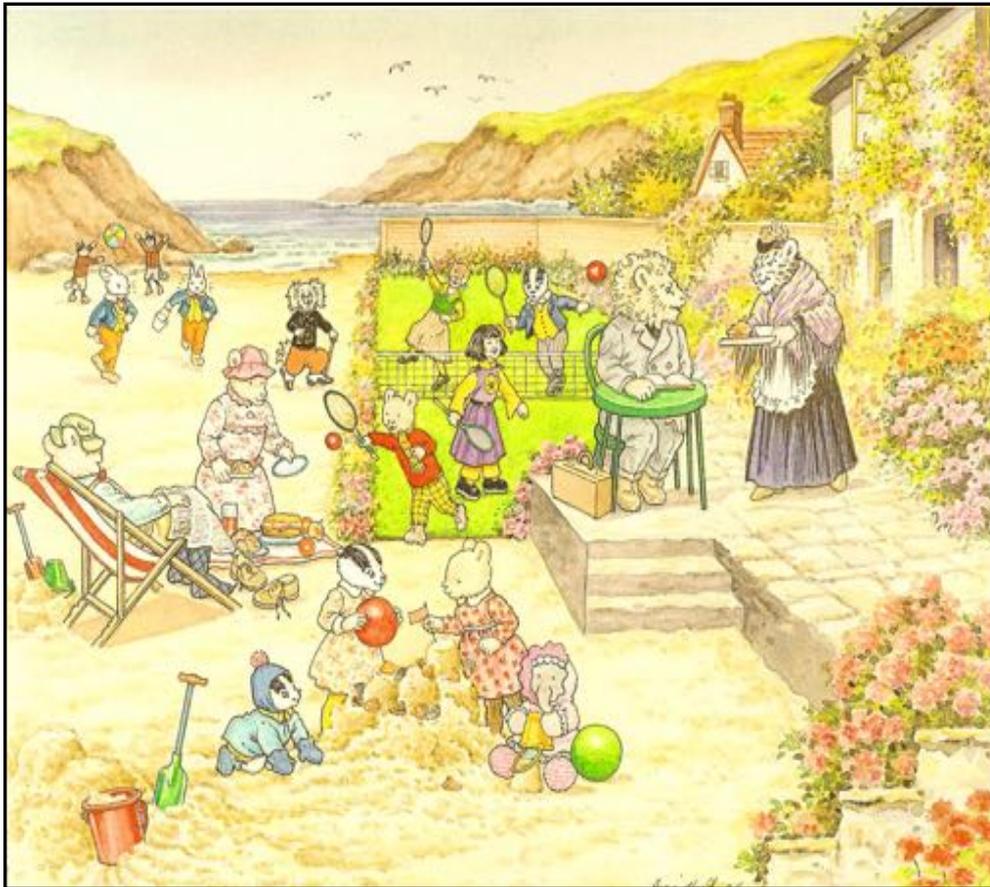
appeared in the Express in August and September 2002 which means that there have been nearly eight years of reprints since then. In this story which is gloriously coloured by Gina Hart, Algy joins Rupert and his parents at Rocky Bay for their annual summer holiday. Mrs Tiger appears to have retired

– unless she has indeed moved to Sandy Bay! – and after unpacking the two chums go for a boat trip with Captain Binnacle in his new glass-bottomed boat. They spot the Merboy and meet him the next day when they are snorkelling. The Merboy tells them that King Neptune has lost his special trumpet which is a golden shell, inlaid with precious jewels.

The two friends promise to help look for it and before long Rupert spots it. However, it moves away and eventually when Rupert catches it, they find that a hermit crab has taken up residence in it. The Merboy reappears and takes them and the inhabited trumpet to King Neptune which means some deep-water snorkelling for the two chums. Rupert speaks up for the crab who is awarded the honorary rank of Tenant of the Trumpet. Rupert and Algy are appointed Sea Scouts and presented with a silver shell each which is pinned to their swimming costumes. The Merboy leads them back to Rocky Bay and the story ends with Rupert and Algy meeting up with Captain Binnacle and Rupert’s parents.

In conclusion, water has contributed to a wide range of storylines in the adventures of Rupert; some of them have been dramatic, a few had moments of humour or whimsy and the vast majority were rattling good yarns. My memories of Rupert’s aquatic adventures include

flood dramas with Sailor Sam, adventures at Nutwood Lake and other local water sports and traditional family holidays at Mrs Tiger’s boarding house. Many children’s stories have shared similar broad themes with Rupert’s adventures and it is certainly possible that there has been a subtle sharing of influences over the years.



*Snoozing and playing on the sand  
For Nutwood's gang, life is quite grand!*

Whether Rupert dons a sou’wester, picks up his swimming costume or goes looking for Captains Barnacle or Binnacle, one instinctively knows that adventure is just around the corner.

*Mike Williams*

## Report from the North West Group

### *"What colour are Bingo's Trousers?" Spring Meeting of the North-west Group - March 2010*

We continue to meet on the Sunday when the clocks have altered and in between gatherings we try to keep up to date with each other's news. This time we were glad to welcome a new member who became a Follower about a year ago and will henceforth be known to us as Guide Pauline.



In Spring 2009 we had counted the bird species in Shirley's garden (there were 15 including a jackdaw). This time, a little earlier in the season, we saw none - but we spent far less time gazing out of the window as there were new items to see and much to discuss. We hoped there would be publicity for Rupert's 90th Birthday (the answer should be known by the time this Newsletter appears) and more Rupert merchandise. This led us

to try to define 'Classic' Rupert - are we including the Tourtel images, do we mean just Bestall, or do we think of it as anything but the three-fingered version? (Answers on a postcard.....)

We rarely stop talking and occasionally insulting each other and generally behaving like the overgrown children

we (or some of us) are. Eric had set us a quiz on Nutwood colours and clothes. "This will be easy," he said. Oh yes? Bingo's trousers? "Er..." Ottoline's shoes? "Um.." Shirley had made us do it out of sight of the Annuals to avoid cheating. Lily Duckling won. Tiger Lily couldn't even recall the colour of the Brella, which she has helped to haul down from the ceiling of the Theatre after the last four AGMs



*Tea at Shirley and Eric's*

We are all looking forward to this year's Warwick Annual and those of us who can, intend to journey down on the Friday so as to make a nice long weekend of the event. There is so much more opportunity to sit and chat before the 'big day' and the Friday evening Dinner in the school is a really enjoyable 'get-together'. See you there!!

*Tiger Lily*

## *That Bird – problem solved!*



*Real Moorhen*

Roger Bemrose has written and seems to have solved the problem posed in Ruth Sear's article "What's that Bird?" in Nutwood Newsletter 75. He says the answer is a moorhen. Some red is missing off its beak, but apart from that it is a good likeness. Roger notes that all the animals in the picture seem to be associated with water, and says the shrew (pointed nose) must be a water shrew and the voles, water voles, having the typical round nose of their species.



*"Rupert's" bird*

*Looks pretty spot-on to me - Ed*

## Nutwood Postbox

I was very interested to read about the "1969" pottery that has been mentioned in NN nos. 73,74 and 75.

About three years ago, a friend acquired a teapot for me from this range from a local market for £10.

The front has the 1969 annual "Follow Rupert" page whilst the back shows Rupert and Bill talking to an elderly bearded gentleman wearing plus fours. The top side of the spout has an image of Rupert whilst the underside shows Golly with the word "Golly" in large letters. The handle bears images of Algy, Rupert and Bill. The rim of the teapot has the inscription "Do come along, said RUPERT". The lid shows Rupert, Algy, Bingo and Edward. It is also marked "© Beaverbrook Newspapers Ltd., 1969", but unlike the plate described in NN 74, it is marked "Printed in Great Britain". It measures just under four inches from base to the knob on the lid and seven inches from spout to handle.

It seems strange that these pieces are suddenly appearing when no mention of them has been made in the last forty years.

I have shown this piece to a fellow collector and he, like me, believes them to be fakes. The fact that the one recently bought on e-bay bears the name "Romania" begs a question. On my example, the images appear to be over-glaze as they have a matt appearance as opposed to the gloss of the item. They also have a slightly roughish feel.

Perhaps the other readers might like to enlighten us as to where they found their examples and how long ago.

**Brian Nelson**

I was interested to find details of a Rupert tea pot in the newsletter. A while ago my son gave me a present of

a Rupert tea pot. He told me that he understood it was rare!

On the back it has "Gibson made in England Beaverbrook Newspapers Ltd 1969 Printed in Gt Britain"

On the lid is a Golliwog and Rupert. It says "GOSH GOLLY" on the knob and "WELL I NEVER" on the lid.

Freddy and Ferdy Fox are on the handle. Golly and Rupert on one side and it says "Rupert discovers a Golliwog".

Podgy Pig is on the teapot side of the spout, Rupert is on the front. On the other side of the tea pot are Bill Badger, Edward Trunk and Pong Ping. Under the handle are Rex and Reggie Rabbit.

This takes pride of place in my cabinet along with a few of my Rupert figures. Can anyone tell me anything about this item, please?

**Doreen Russell**

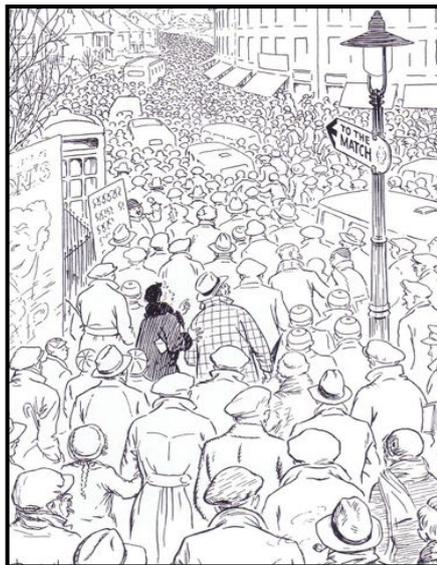
## Postbox Special Caroline Bott's book - a true celebration of Alfred's work

What a truly delightful experience it was – to open a surprise present and find the wonderful book of Alfred Bestall's Drawings and Paintings! Many thanks to Caroline Bott for such an imaginative gift to the Followers. It is fascinating to be transported back into another period and also to see different aspects of Alfred Bestall's skills as a superb draughtsman and humorist. All the characters depicted, whether adults or children, strike one as being "real people", each with their own delightful personality and authentic background. This is indeed a book to treasure.

**Jenny Kisler**

On opening my Nutwood Newsletter it was a surprise to receive a book of Alfred Bestall Punch cartoons. Very many thanks to his God daughter for the copy. What a brilliant artist Alfred Bestall was.

**N Banks**



*A crowd, -  
just like in Rupert and Ozzie*

Very many thanks to you all for the lovely Newsletters that I receive and what a surprise to find the excellent A.B. Punch and Tatler. Pure joy!

Again, very many thanks for all you do for us Followers.

**C Villiers (Mrs)**

Please convey our thanks to all of those responsible for producing the "Alfred Bestall's Punch and Tatler Drawings and Paintings" book. It is a delight to browse and to be reminded of a time of life the likes of which we shall never experience again.

Particular thanks must go to Caroline Bott for all her hard editorial work. Thank you

**Philip and Irene Reeves**

I just thought I'd let you know how much I enjoyed the Bestall book which came with the most recent Followers' Newsletter. What a delightful volume! Seeing all the drawings together like this really shows how fine Bestall's early work was (not that his later work wasn't pretty special too!) There were quite a few I hadn't seen before. It makes a great addition to Caroline Bott's earlier biography. Please pass on my thanks to her.

**Ian Robinson**



*Head transplant and it's Mr Bear*

Thank you all for the superb book of Alfred Bestall's Punch and Tatler Drawings and Paintings by Caroline Bott that you so very kindly sent with the Spring issue of the Nutwood Newsletter. It is always a delight to receive the Newsletter on its own, but receiving the Alfred Bestall book as well was sheer heaven!

Many, many thanks.

**Clare Bradshaw**

What a wonderful surprise thanks to the generosity of Caroline Bott. This book could not have been a greater joy to me as I have been looking for these paintings and drawings by Alfred Bestall. He was such a great artist; the lovely lines and the tenderness with which he depicted children, imps and fairies. He may have been a quiet man but he certainly communicated with his pen. With the book I was reminded of days gone by – the ashtray on the backs of cinema seats, the tea rooms with art deco decoration and, of course, a different style of fashion. I was particularly captivated by the lovely image (p33) of grandpa and granddaughter sitting by the

firelight. I spotted in a few drawings a young boy who greatly resembled A.B. I am pleased, also, to remember that I have something in common with Alfred Bestall – we share the same initials!

**Alice E Berry**



*Should this be Mr Chimp or Hippo?*

Thank you, thank you, thank you – what a thrill and a delight! I didn't read my copy straight away as I wanted to make sure I could read it all through without being interrupted. Alfred Bestall's Punch and Tatler drawings and paintings took my breath away. Of course, I knew he was a talented artist but his insight and skill were wonderful. His sketches of people were very clever and his children were gorgeous; willowy little girls and tousled boys stood their ground against the wittily observed adults. Three pictures caught my eye especially; page 34, the scene in the shop – how many times have Rupert and his friends been seen standing at a counter looking up at the shopkeeper. Page 35; is that daddy pruning the roses in plus fours and smoking a pipe? Also page 37, is that Sailor Sam at Rocky Bay? The animal pictures at the back were also an eye-opener – no wonder his anthropomorphic figures in Nutwood are so believable. When I finished it I found that I'd been grinning all the time and my face hurt! Thank you Caroline Bott for sharing such wonderful images with us. Our subs. have always seemed modest but it's good to know we have enough members to make such a venture possible.

**Joy Cooper**

Just before the spring newsletter arrived I was thinking how good it would be to see more of Alfred Bestall's pre-Rupert artwork published in book format. Imagine my surprise on opening the usual much anticipated quarterly big white envelope. Thank you to everyone involved. It's brilliant!

While looking through this Bestall gift my thoughts soon turned to Rupert and I started to notice a few signs of things to come:

1 The postbox scene on p11 and the shop counter p34 stand out immediately as future Nutwood scenarios

2 Everything about the man in the garden on p35 suggests Mr Bear (apart from the head!) and on p37 can it be anyone other than old Captain Barnacle/Binnacle in the seaside cartoon?

3 Finally, compare the image and sentiment expressed on the left side of p82 with the scene in Rupert and Miranda in the 1953 annual p25, top right.

**Tony Curtis**



*Didn't we see bedposts just like this in our Rupert stories?*

**Send your letters and pictures  
to The Editor,  
Nutwood Newsletter,  
29 Mill Road, Lewes,  
Sussex BN7 2RU**

# Follow Rupert



*every day in the Daily Express*

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*The Secretary, John Beck, 29 Mill Road, Lewes,  
East Sussex, BN7 2RU. (Tel. 01273 477555)  
email - [RupertSecretary@btinternet.com](mailto:RupertSecretary@btinternet.com).*

  
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