

**The
Followers
of Rupert**



Number 118
Spring 2024

Nutwood Newsletter



The 2024 AGM and Fun Day



This is the first notice that:

The Followers' 2024 AGM will take place on

Saturday 31st August

at 12 noon

at the

Radcliffe Conference Centre, Warwick University, CV4 7SH

**There will be our usual 'Fun Day' surrounding the AGM
for which Registration is 9.00 am**

Registration form for the Event is enclosed.

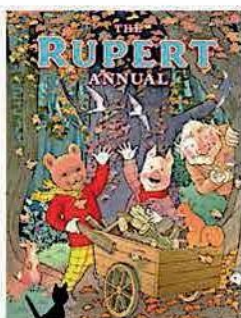
On-site accommodation to be booked directly with the Centre.

Members staying over for the two nights, check in on Friday after 3 pm – Rupert fun commences with the Friday evening meal.



*The comfortable lounge,
with endless tea, coffee
and snacks*

Rupert Annual Signing



As at all past AGM Fun Days since he was appointed as the Rupert artist, drawing and writing new stories and covers for the Rupert Annual, Stuart Trotter will once again be at Warwick University this year to sign and personalise the next Rupert Annual.

Pre-order using the enclosed form – whether you are able to attend on the day or not. Stuart will also draw a full body of Rupert or one of his chums inside the Annual. More than one figure can be commissioned, quotes to be obtained through Tony Griffin (details on the order form).



Stuart with Rupert (and Archie)

IMPORTANT



**The Followers
need YOU**

*see more about
the Event
on page 9*

We are sorry but ...

**we will not be able to hold our super Rupert Raffle at the
AGM weekend this year
unless we can find a new Raffle Gnome.**

Will you volunteer?

The work involves receiving and processing all postal applications and preparing them for the Fun Day, as well as selling tickets on the day itself, and after the event posting out any prizes won by members who were not present.

Is there a member – maybe a couple – out there who will take on this duty? If someone is willing to take on the role, we will issue a raffle ticket postal application form with the Summer Newsletter.

If you are able to offer your services, please notify
Secretary John Beck at beck3861@gmail.com

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Editorial

We hope you all had a nice Ruperty Christmas and New Year and we can announce that 2024 will be bringing us a few new Ruperty items and features.



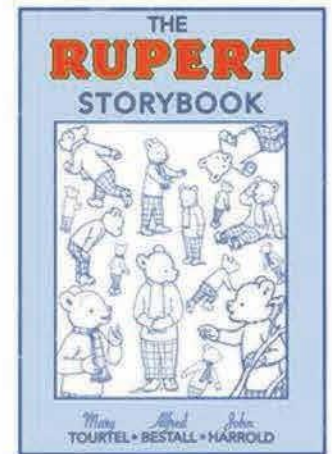
Initially, we can tell you that there was an article on the Followers in the February edition of Collectors Gazette by Ann Evans, who has contributed articles on Rupert in the past. We can only hope that it sparks some interest among the readership to encourage them to join us.

We also believe the Cartoon Museum will be carrying a 'blog' on Mary Tourtel to celebrate the 150th year of her birth.

A more substantial offering will be a companion volume by Harper Collins of 'Rupert Bear Celebration of Stories' published by Egmont in 2020 and it will feature the early stories by Bestall, some from Rupert Annuals that have never been reprinted.

A further book due to appear in late Summer of 2024 is 'The Rupert Storybook', a similar volume to 'The Bestall Book' recently published by the Followers. It will feature previously

uncoloured stories by Tourtel and Bestall now in colour and the new John Harrold story 'Rupert and the Art Show'. A taster image of the cover is shown here. So hopefully these are a few things Ruperty to look forward to.



We note it with sadness when we hear of a number of dedicated Followers who have departed over the past year to that Nutwood in the sky. I do not propose to name them all here but special mention should be made of David Ball, for quite a while our Auditor, and he was also joint promoter with his brother of the Hemel Hempstead Annual Meeting in 1993 which set a new standard for these events making them 'not to be missed' occasions.

Just to let you know that I will be retiring as Secretary after 30 years in the post with effect from the next AGM, along with Minutes Secretary Mike Williams, so we are looking for volunteers to fill these posts, though one person could do both of course.

We are also still seeking a Raffle Gnome which is why there is no invitation to buy tickets early in this Newsletter. If a volunteer can be found quickly then we will include a ticket purchase form with NN119, and of course sell tickets on the day of the Annual Meeting as we usually do. The raffle is a major source of revenue to the Followers, and if it is something we cannot continue it could result in smaller Newsletters or loss of other things we currently offer.

We look forward to seeing you at the Annual Meeting which promises some interesting talks as well as the opportunity to meet Stuart Trotter, plus there will be the usual renewing of old Rupert friendships. The registration form is included and staying in the on-site accommodation can certainly be recommended.

John Beck (Editor)

Mary Tourtel: the Foxy Lady (Part 1)

Ian White

In creating the Fox brothers – and a number of other vulpine characters – either to hinder or to assist Rupert in his early adventures, Mary Tourtel was doing nothing more than continuing a millennia-long tradition of featuring the fox as a key player in western popular literary culture.

From the ancient Greek fables of Aesop (28 of which feature the fox fulfilling one role or another), through the medieval romances of *Reynard the Fox*, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, and the brothers Grimm's fairy tales, to more modern reincarnations of the creature in the guise of Br'er Fox in Joel Chandler Harris' *Uncle Remus* folklore tales, Roald Dahl's *The Fantastic Mr Fox*, Charles Mackesy's *The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse*, and Basil Brush (to name just a few), the anthropomorphic fox has been used as a medium through which human traits and behaviour can be exemplified.

Re-reading John Lester's very informative article *An Evolution of Foxes* in *Nutwood Newsletter 72* reminded me of the different roles that the various fox characters have played in quite a substantial number of the Tourtel stories – indeed, in one manifestation or another, the fox features in more of her stories than almost any other single Nutwood character.

And so, as the year of Mary's 150th Anniversary occurs, it is opportune to further examine some of these characters, whom we might group into one of three categories – the good, the bad and the smugly! In this, the first of two articles we shall focus on the 'good' and the 'bad'. The 'smug' we shall leave until next time. My thanks and acknowledgment to John Lester as the inspiration.



Aesop's Fox and the Grapes



The Fox and Chanticleer in Chaucer's Nun's Priest's Tale



Br'er Fox (with Br'er Rabbit)



The Fox with the Boy, the Mole and the Horse



One of Arthur Rackham's illustrations from the Grimms' fairy tale of 'The Marriage of Mrs Fox'



The Fantastic Mr Fox

Let's start with the bad – indeed, the very bad in the case of Rupert's very first adventure (*Rupert Gets Lost*, T1), in which our Little Bear is accosted at gunpoint by two ruthless foxes who demand the contents of his shopping basket.

They appear again briefly a few months later when, in *Little Bear and the Ogres* (T5), they tell Ogre Gruff which direction the fleeing Rupert has taken. Though unnamed and (as far as we know) unrelated – even if they are identically, and very fashionably, dressed – these two robbers would later metamorphose into Tourtel’s far less menacing but yet irascible duo, the brothers Freddy and Percy who appear together in her penultimate story (*Rupert, the Manikin and the Black Knight*, T84) but in which they do nothing more devious than trick the Little Bear into entering a forbidden forest and leave him arboreally stranded. But we must leave a review of these two miscreants until next time. And move on to another iconic Tourtel character, Reynard.



The two Robber Foxes steal Rupert’s shopping basket at gunpoint



Still nattily dressed, the two foxes show Gruff the way that Rupert escaped

The traditional trickster-type character of Reynard the Fox derives from a literary background of medieval English, Dutch, French and German fables that portray an anthropomorphic red fox whose adventures usually involve deceiving other anthropomorphic animals for his own advantage and avoiding their retaliation. In more modern times the character has been portrayed not only in literature but in film, TV and music ranging from a one-act opera by Stravinsky to eponymous folk songs recorded by Fairport Convention and Martin Carthy.



Reynard as depicted in an 1898 children’s book by Michael Rodange

Mary Tourtel, no doubt influenced by husband Herbert as well as her own love of folklore tradition, was inspired to include the character in several of Rupert’s adventures.

He makes his first (and seemingly last) appearance in the classic and episodic *Rupert and Reynard Fox* (T12) when he makes Rupert’s life a perpetual misery while the Little Bear is holidaying on Uncle Ben’s farm. First the fox lures Rupert to a stretch of the river where he claims that large salmon and trout can be caught but where he knows that fishing is strictly prohibited – Rupert is suitably admonished by the keeper. Then Reynard convinces the Little Bear that it is safe at that time of the year to take some honey from a beehive – Rupert is badly stung.



Reynard as characterised by Mary Tourtel

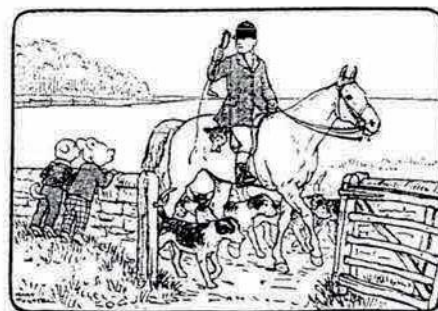


Then, on the pretence of having injured his foot he gets Rupert, while in charge of Aunt Emma’s chickens, to fetch a bandage – well you can guess the rest. Uncle Ben is not amused at the loss of two of the birds. So, together with Algy, Rupert visits Reynard in his lair to recover the fowl but, instead, is persuaded by the fox to help him catch rats. Reynard is up to his tricks again and, just for fun, locks the chums inside a tower – they are eventually rescued by the Rabbit Twins.

Even though he vows never to trust the fox again, when Reynard turns up at Rupert's picnic to mislead him into thinking that the Rabbit Twins have fallen in the river, Rupert dashes off to their rescue leaving the picnic hamper and baby Cousin Joan unattended. Reynard makes inroads into the picnic goodies and kidnaps Joan, hiding her in a ditch – it takes days for her to be found safe and well.

But it is now retribution time, and the concluding episode sees Reynard meet his match.

The huntsman's hounds have caught his scent, and Tourtel presents us with the grisly sight of the fox's head hanging from the huntsman's saddle – as far as I can recall the only time that an anthropomorphic animal meets its death in a Rupert story.



But that is not quite the end of Reynard; just like his namesake in the medieval romances, the fox miraculously returns from the grave. He re-appears nearly three years later in *Rupert and the Birthday Cake* (T31) as a seemingly reformed character. He retrieves the Wise Old Goat's birthday cake from a thieving Beggar Dog, but then reverts to type with a duplicitous plan to steal the cake himself. He lures Rupert into the woods in an attempt to distract him and thereby makes his escape with the confectionary. But he doesn't get far. The fox is caught by a gamekeeper and threatened with a second untimely end if the keeper ever sees him again.



But even if the gamekeeper does not see him again, we do, when the fox dupes Rupert and Algy into helping him steal a couple of the local farmer's ducks (in *Rupert and Algernon*, T40) and then devises a scheme for the two chums to take the blame. But the plan backfires, and Reynard is left frustrated and disappointed.



We next see further evidence of Reynard's resurrection in *Rupert and Beppo Again* (T56) when Percy Fox outruns a pursuing Rupert after jeering at him while the Little Bear takes Beppo the Monkey for a walk. The keen-eyed reader will see from the nameplate on the front door of Fox's house, that the ever-indestructible Reynard apparently lives there and must, we presume, be father, or perhaps third brother, of the fleeing Percy.

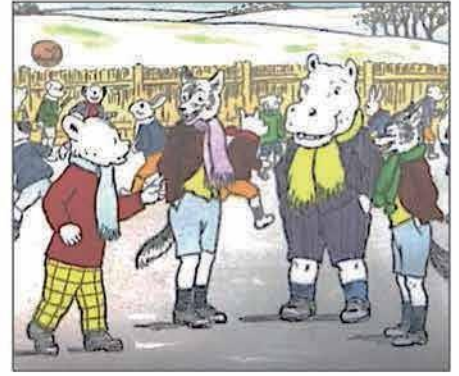
Whatever the relationship, Reynard now seems to be living in relative domestic comfort compared to the lair hidden in the trunk of an old tree that he had previously occupied in *Rupert and Reynard Fox* and *Rupert and Algernon*.

In his final appearance, a miraculously rejuvenated Reynard is back at school (in *Rupert at School - 2*, T73A) and somewhat less villainous. Together with his mischievous classmates Hubert Hippo and Wally Wolf, they gang up to play tricks on

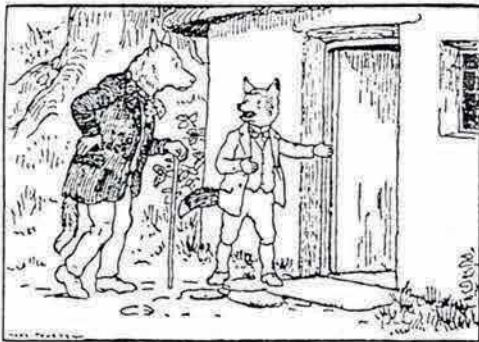


Rupert and his chums and get them into trouble with the new Teacher by first causing the blackboard to collapse then covering their exercise books with inky blots. But the culprits are found out and ostracised by their fellow playmates.

Interestingly, it would seem that Tourtel did not clearly distinguish between the images of Reynard Fox and Wally Wolf in this story. This is surprising bearing in mind the extraordinary level of anatomical detail that Mary usually put into her animal caricatures – compare, for example, with the images of fox and wolf in *Rupert and the Robber Wolf* (T18). Can the reader tell which one is Wally in the frame here that has been reproduced from the Nutwood Special edition of the *Tourtel Reprints 2*?



Where's Wally?

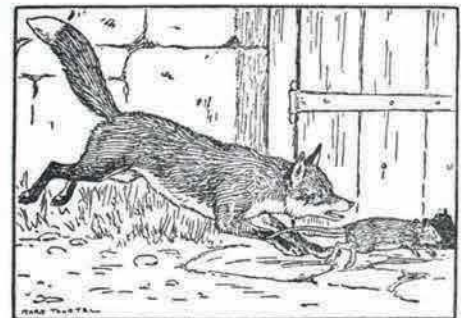


Though not named, foxes in a selection of other Tourtel stories play the role of confrontational adversaries – some more dastardly than others. So, for example, in *Margot the Midget* a cunning Pedlar Fox tries to sell Margot a tart at the local fair, but when he discovers that she has no money he bundles her into his sack and takes her to the castle where he hopes to sell her to the King and Queen. He definitely falls in the ‘bad’ category, as does the similarly unnamed fox in the aforementioned *Rupert and the Robber Wolf*, (T18) who teams up with a Wolf in an attempt to regain the new watch that the Wolf had earlier stolen from Rupert, but which had been retrieved by a friendly Pedlar. The fox’s cunning plan to deceive Rupert and Mrs Bear almost works but is thwarted by Miss Mouse and the Hare before the police descend on the dastardly duo. With charges of theft and kidnapping against him, the fox must surely be considered in the ‘bad’ category.

But not all the foxes in Mary’s stories are presented as villains and adversaries. Several of Rupert’s adventures show them to be kind-hearted and supportive allies.

In *Rupert and the Little Prince* (T20), for example, a lame old fox helps Rupert find the Wizard who knows how to break the spell that has been cast on the young Prince by another Wicked Witch.

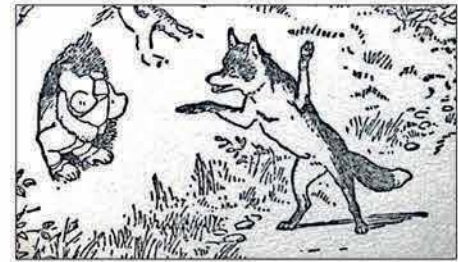
But just when we think that for once the character of a Tourtel fox is not one of subterfuge and deceit, we are forced to think again when he suggests that the Witch turns herself into a rat so that she can creep through a hole in the locked door behind which Rupert is hiding. She does so, but this is merely a devious ruse, and the true good nature of this particular fox is finally revealed as he catches and kills the rat. Rupert is saved.



The fox in *Rupert and the Black Dwarf* (T29) is revealed as the kindly Fairy Binoru in disguise – one of several disguises that she cleverly adopts throughout the story – who comes to rescue Rupert after he has been imprisoned by the evil Black Dwarf.



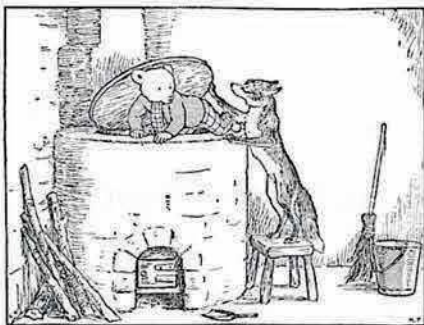
In a subsequent adventure, *Rupert's Mysterious Flight* (T51), a quick-thinking fox helps the airman Rupert escape the clutches of a Dragon from whose jewel case Rupert must take a ruby in order to secure his release from King Toucan.



And in one of Tourtel's later stories – *Rupert and the Magician's Umbrella* (T79) – during the course of his search for the missing umbrella, the Little Bear comes to the aid of a frightened fox that is being hunted. In return for his kindness, the fox agrees to help Rupert in his quest and is able, in turn, to help him escape from the clutches of a Magician. Together they complete the mission.



Although all the friendly foxes in these four stories can talk and are bi-pedal to a certain extent, it is interesting to note that Tourtel chooses to present each of them in their natural state – unclothed – as if to suggest, perhaps, that without the wicked influences of men, and unencumbered by the trappings of human clothing, foxes are inherently innocent, kind and sympathetic animals rather than the sly and cunning creatures that they are more commonly portrayed as in literature.



So, it would seem that Mary Tourtel, while upholding the medieval tradition of presenting the fox as a sly, cunning and devious character in some of Rupert's adventures, also recognised and developed the creature's more positive attributes of kindness and helpfulness in several of the other stories.

More to follow next time when we will review the antics of the Fox brothers – Freddy and Percy – and one or two other of Mary's vulpine characters.

An error from some while ago

While trawling through Annuals to help with a newsletter article, Mike Ward uncovered the following error in the 2000 Annual:

The last image on the penultimate story page is repeated as the first image on the final page. Mike shows here how the correct image might have looked.

In his review of the 2000 Annual in NN37, Roger Coombes noted dryly "the [frame shown in Roger's article] features heavily towards the end of the story".



An amazing and unique display at Coventry



Announcing to great fanfare ...



Come to Coventry on Saturday 31st August 2024 and see an exhibition of an exciting collection of Rupert Bear posters and poster-sized illustrations, courtesy of Follower Tony Astin.

There will be over 130 different posters, together with some original artwork. There will also, if space allows, be a display from Tony's collection of some rare and unique Rupert items, packaging and ephemera, including a unique Bestall family item and a **rare unrecorded** Bestall illustrated publication.

You will see a tribute to a famous innovative British-born female puppeteer and discover more about her life. The exhibition includes original puppet posters and artwork, including the first ever poster for the very first Rupert Puppet Show that premiered in December 1971. These items have come from the late puppeteer's estate, are unique, and being displayed for the first time. The tribute may help Followers to

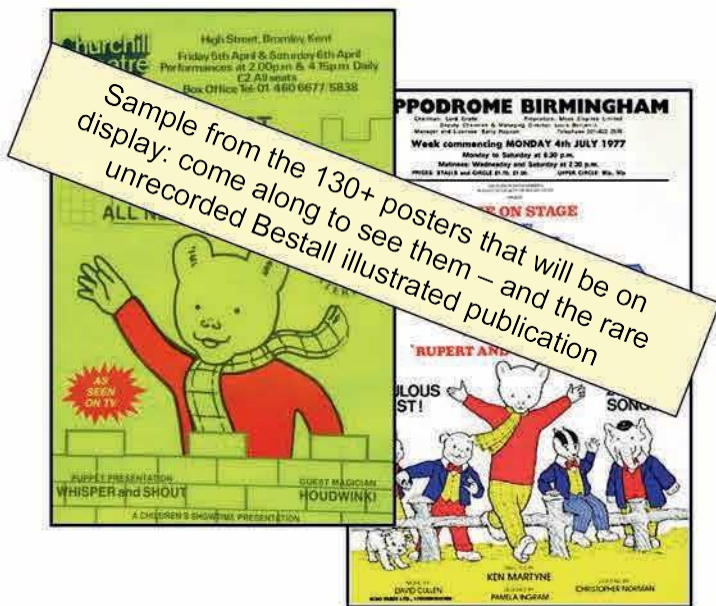
understand the difference between a puppet and a marionette!

There will be a 'Rock and Roll' poster from the late 1960s 'hippy era' which includes Rupert, in possibly one of the earliest – if not the first – depictions of Rupert in a poster.

There will also be some of the earliest Daily Express newsstand posters, various stage show posters, including several rare fluorescent theatre show posters, media posters, children's 'bedroom' posters, early gift wrappings and various one-off exhibition posters. A number of these posters are unique and many are getting harder to find now.

All attendees of the AGM will also be given a free reproduction poster of Rupert at the Circus.

The original poster, shown below, will be a raffle prize if a Raffle Gnome can be found*, otherwise it will be auctioned on the day.



Tony and his niece Cleo show the original poster they are donating

*See page 2: we need a volunteer member to take over as Raffle Gnome in order to run a raffle.

Rupert at Play with his Pals

Part 2: The Alfred Bestall Stories

Maurice Paterson

Following on from my article in NN117 on Rupert's pals in Mary Tourtel stories, I now list all the new pals created by Alfred Bestall and show pictures of various (but not all) pals involved in a variety of activities other than sports which were covered in NN117.

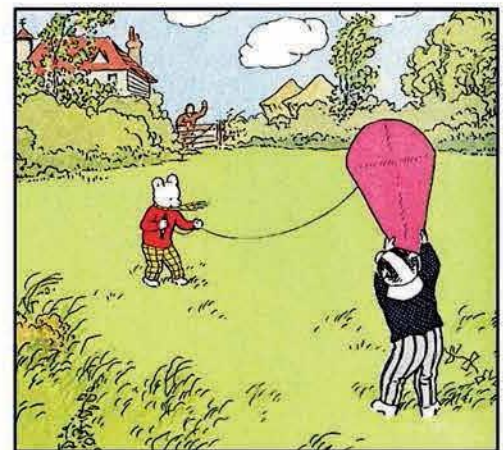
From early on Bestall realised giving Rupert more friends with varying characteristics might avoid a sameness coming over the stories. Billy Goat and Willie Whiskers (later Mouse) were introduced in 1936 followed by Pong-Ping in 1937, Lily Duckling in 1940 and Rastus and Tigerlily in 1943. Bingo was introduced in the 1945 Annual prior to appearing in the Daily Express in 1946. All these were in the first 38% of Bestall stories and thereafter there were only two more, Rosalie Pig in 1950 and Gregory Guineapig in 1954. So in total Bestall created 9 pals making the total up to 18 regular pals. 16 of them are anthropomorphic and the others a midget and a Chinese magician's daughter. I am ignoring the various human children like Barbara, Susan, Mary-Quite-Contrary, Margaret, Sylvia, Rollo, Simple Simon and Peter who appeared occasionally and the Three Guides and Geoffrey the Boy Scout who were usually too busy to play.

The pictures are shown in chronological order, and all first appeared in the Daily Express except when mentioned.

In Bestall's very first story in 1935 (1937 Annual) *Rupert, Algy and the Smugglers* (B1), Rupert and Algy went fishing.



In the 1936 Annual in *Rupert and the Wonderful Kite* (B6) there were two activities: canoeing and kite flying.



In the 1938 Annual in *Rupert, Edward and the Paper Chase* (B20), not surprisingly there is a paper chase!



In the 1939 Annual in *Rupert's Bonfire* (B35), the Guy Fawkes celebrations are carried out.



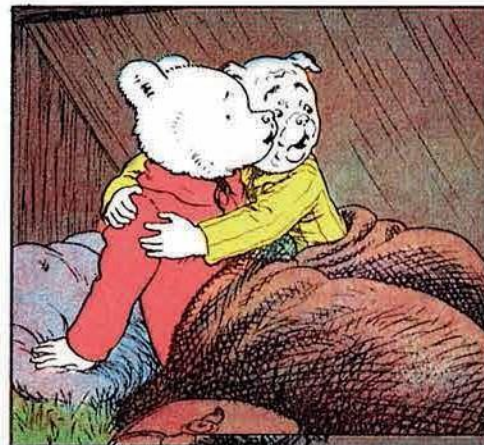
In this frame, Edward demonstrates a cartwheel, but as can be seen in the next frame, Rupert, Bill and Willie are not successful.



In the 1941 Annual in *Rupert and the Mystery Pond* (B45) there is fun with a trolley.



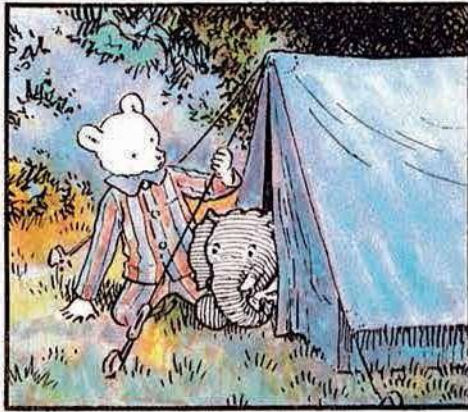
Also, in the 1942 Annual in *Rupert and the Old Ruin* (B42), Rupert goes camping for the first time, his companion being Algy. They have a scary time.



In the 1942 Annual in *Rupert and the Cartwheels* (B51) in the fifth frame the pals are playing follow my leader.



Not deterred by this experience, in the 1944 Annual in *Rupert and the Old Map* (B70) Rupert goes camping and this time he is accompanied by Edward and Rollo.



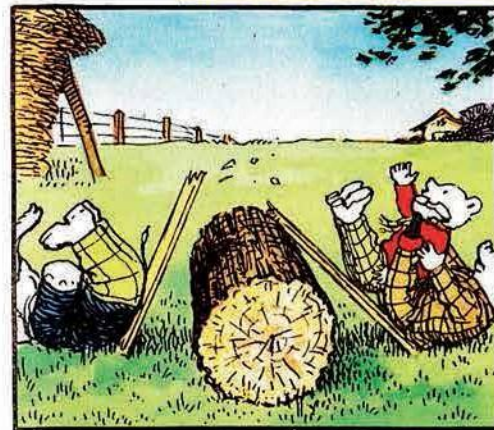
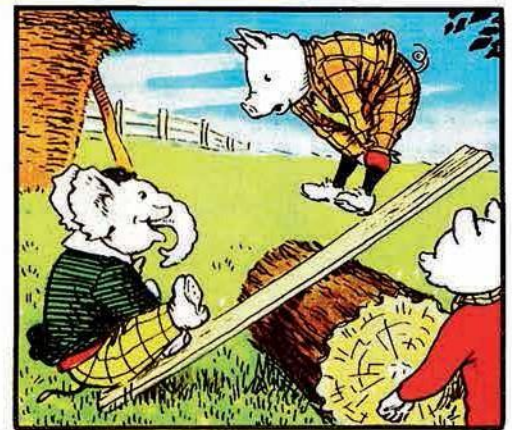
In the 1945 Annual, in *Rupert and the Fairy Cycle* (B78), Rupert receives a cycling lesson from Pong Ping whose credentials for this task were doubtful. In Rupert's face in the picture Bestall has brilliantly captured the concentration and apprehension of a person learning to ride a bike. Tension can also be seen in his hands which are gripping the handlebars.



In the 1945 Annual in *Rupert and Bingo's Trail* (B03) playing with bows and arrows proved a useful way for the pals to find their way out of a thick forest.



In 1946 in *Rupert and Podgy* (B83), Podgy has found a plank so they can play on a see-saw. The problem, as can be seen, was that Rupert was too light to balance with Podgy and Edward was too heavy.



*The pals then work out that
Rupert + Podgy = Edward but...*

In the second half of Bestall's career, understandably he was finding it harder to find further pastimes he had not used before, but in the 1954 Annual, in *Rupert and the Backroom Boy* (B119), catching butterflies is a gentle pastime.

In the 1966 Annual in *Rupert and Billy Goat* (B150) Rupert and Billy tackle the more demanding pastime of rock climbing.



In the 1975 Annual in *Rupert and the Thinking Cap* (B170) Algy tries out stilts.



There were no more new activities in Bestall stories after B170, that is in his final 54 stories.

Maurice Paterson

A straightforward Error?

We are conscious that only a fairly small percentage of our members use Facebook.

One who does feels that sometimes a point being raised on Facebook merits an appearance in the Newsletter as being worthy of sharing with all the membership, and writes:

Last October a post noted that in *Rupert and the Land of Games* (AS43), picture 9, the chess board had been set up the wrong way. Standing behind the white men, the furthest square to the right should be white. Then the third and fifth squares from the right should also be white. Before play starts, as is the case in the picture shown, this means the white queen is on a white square. The artist, Alex Cubie, has set the board up the wrong way round. The error is repeated in picture 10 but in pictures 18, 20 and 22 all is well.



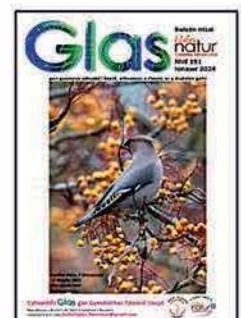
There was speculation as to how the error could have occurred including that there might have been a colouring error but with black and white this is not possible. Cubie, although the compiler of many of the puzzles in the Adventure Series and Annuals, has probably made a straightforward error.

What do you Chess Masters out there think?

Rupert makes an appearance in North Wales

Rupert made an appearance in the magazine *Glas*, which is issued in the Gwynedd area of North Wales. The article features the 1964 Annual cover, the picture most of you will have seen of Paul and Linda McCartney with Alfred

outside his cottage, and an image of Raggety. It is a Welsh language publication and shares readers' reminiscences of Rupert.



Rupert Annuals – Corporate editions

Rupert rarities are difficult to find these days but one such thing, a variant edition of the shop edition of the 1953 Rupert Annual, has been identified to me by member David Lister who has it in his collection.

It has the standard contents of the 1953 trade edition of the Annual but has special gold embossed boards featuring the image from the 1936 Rupert Annual, and the name Maxwell W. H. Aitken.

Maxwell was born in December 1951 and was the third son of Lord Beaverbrook who at that time was the owner of Express Newspapers, so obviously it was a special bound copy for his son. Certainly it is a rarity and, in this case, definitely a 'one off'.

I am, however, aware of other examples of 'corporate' bound editions of Rupert Annuals for those early 1950s years. I personally have two, for 1950 and 1951, which are shown here, and one must presume that they were specially bound and given as gifts to important people within the organisation. However, I am not aware that Alfred Bestall was ever given a copy.

I was originally alerted to these variant versions many years ago by a chap in Canada who had some examples, but unfortunately I seem to have mislaid his letter.

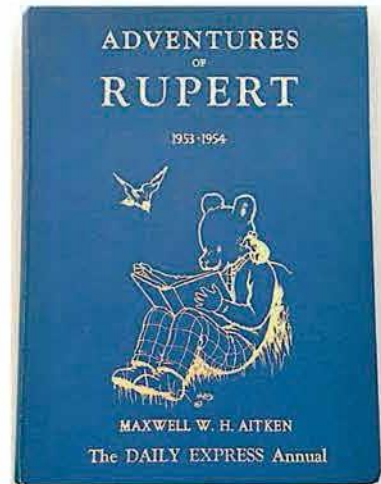
Each of these early 1950s years seem to have had a very limited number of these variant binding editions produced, probably no more than a dozen or so I suspect, so I would suggest they are as scarce as the non-commercial editions of the 1973 (brown faced) Rupert Annual – but I doubt they would fetch the sort of ridiculous prices that have been paid for the few of those that have come onto the market.

Anyway, does any other collector have copies of these 'corporate' editions?

I am not sure if they started before 1950 or continued after 1953, so any further information will be appreciated.

Also, if any collector would like a copy of one of these rarities, I might be tempted to sell mine if the price was right.

John Beck

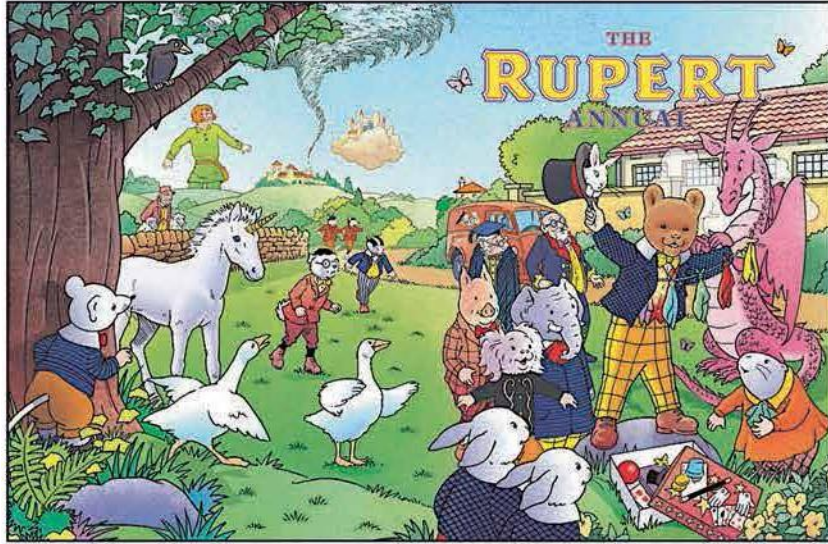


Some little while ago, Mark Smith from Dundee sent in this Fanart sketch he did of Freddie and Ferdie. He had recently rediscovered his fondness for his (and his mum's) old Annuals and as these were his favourite characters, he decided to draw them – whilst admitting to us that his work “may not be quite on the same level as the great Alfred Bestall.” Unfortunately, despite the finest efforts of our Membership Secretaries, Mark appears not to have taken up the suggestion that he might like to join the Followers. Well, he doesn't know what he's missing!

The Rupert Annual 2023 – No. 88

a review by Roger Coombes

Should any readers be wondering why my review is appearing in this issue instead of the Winter (2023) one as has hitherto been the pattern, this was an editorial decision based on comments made by several Followers who said they didn't read it before Christmas nor ahead of reading their copy of the Annual as it would act as 'a spoiler'. It would be interesting to know whether this is a widespread opinion.



If other Followers care to comment, answers on a postcard please.

As always, the cover montage is a showcase for the contents, representing the six stories, five of which are re-tellings selected from earlier Annuals between 1943 and 2003 (a span of 60 years) together with Stuart Trotter's latest contribution, thereby extending the timeline by a further 20 years and presenting us with a total of 80 years of Rupert storytelling.

The focus of the front cover is Rupert wearing a colourful waistcoat and a blue Edwardian style jacket with a stiff collar, much like the one traditionally worn by Bill Badger, as would be appropriate in Stuart's story *Rupert and the Magical Cabinet* (ST21) and as seen in the Spot the Difference puzzle. The large pink Snap Dragon from that story also features prominently next to Rupert, together with a rabbit in a top hat and other accessories associated with a magician or conjuror. When you have read all six stories might I suggest that you match other elements of the covers to the tales in which they appear?

Moving directly to the *Magical Cabinet* story, the contents page of which credits Stuart as 'originator and illustrator' and 'text and couplets written by Mara Alperin', we find a full title on

page 79. It opens on 'a glorious summer morning' – so why, Stuart, is Rupert wearing his scarf? Tradition I suppose, because earlier artists usually dressed him in it in hot weather; there is at least one other example in this set of stories. Time for a break with that bit of tradition?

The story is comprised of 54 single frames and a bank of three; the equivalent of 28 episodes.

It is the last day of term and Rupert is

looking forward to the summer holidays and being at the seaside. On his way to school he meets Mr Magic Man, a stage magician booked to entertain the pupils on this last day. Rupert and others help him carry his props into the school, including his newest trick – a cabinet which he has not yet tested – and Madera his ventriloquist dummy. His performance includes an origami exercise of folding a paper butterfly and turning it into a flock. The cabinet is his final trick, making Madera disappear inside the cabinet – but it fails to make the dummy reappear. Then the Fox twins get involved and things go from bad to worse. They shut the cabinet door with Rupert and Bill inside and our chums disappear in a whirl of magic wands, playing cards and white doves, landing in a strange world of giant flowers.

At a cottage a little man welcomes them to the Land of Enchantment and they are reunited with Madera, who is no longer a dummy. The man is revealed as a Master Magic Cabinet Maker, and therein lies the means by which Rupert and Bill return home – on the back of a large pink magical Snap Dragon. Rupert is home for the start of his family seaside holiday where he again meets the Magic Man and volunteers to assist him in his 'end of the pier' show. This time the illusion goes to plan.



Moving forward in publishing time we have the first of four contributions from John Harrold. *Rupert and Santa's Present* (JH67) was first told in the Daily Express in 36 episodes in December 1992 to January 1993 and subsequently in the 1997 Annual, when it had an L-shaped title and with its seasonal theme consisted of 72 frames (36 episodes). I have selected one of my favourites to represent this tale, being reminiscent of Alfred's 1949 Annual cover.

This story has many of the ingredients of a traditional Rupert tale, involving 'magical' travel to a distant land, a fantasy world or a mythical place, as depicted by earlier Rupert storytellers.

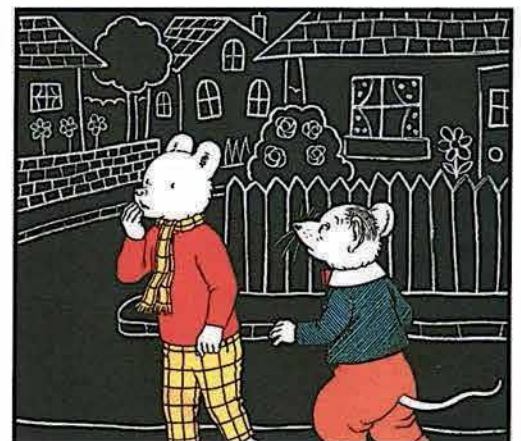
The earliest story, and the only Bestall entry in this collection, is *Rupert and the Piper* (B55), which dates from November 1940 in the daily paper where its episodes consisted of single frames for wartime economy. Two of those frames were cut for the 1943 Annual (*More Rupert Adventures*) so here we have 36 frames/episodes of the original story. It should be remembered though that despite being a softback the artwork was coloured. There are some charming close-ups of Rupert with his father...



Rupert and the Magic Chalk (JH84) returns to the theme of magic running through this Annual. This is a complete retelling of the original 32 episodes in the daily paper in the autumn of 1995, retold in 'colour' in the 1997 Annual, with a full title page. Both Annual appearances (1997 and now) being 'in colour' showcase John's imaginative rendering of transition between a chalk world and the 'real' world in its full glory. Credit for sharing the concept must be owed to Ian Robinson. I am moved to regard the concept as potential for an animated feature for Doctor Who or a similar fantasy.



... and his chums.



It has a full title page.

The next retelling from John Harrold is *Rupert and the Goose Chase* (JH93), in all 38 episodes from February to March in the Express in 1997 and the 1998 Annual with its L-shaped title. This contains lovable character Odmedod and John's recurring villains Sir Humphrey Pumphrey (whose name reminds me of characters in The Two Ronnies' serials) and Scrogg. Villains need to be balanced by sensible people and here we have the Sage of Um. It is a busy tale because they manage to fit in a visit to the Bird King's Palace.



The endpapers, depicting Rupert sketching a rabbit (not Rex or Reggie) posing most obligingly in a clearing in the wood, are also by John Harrold, taken from the 1988 Annual.

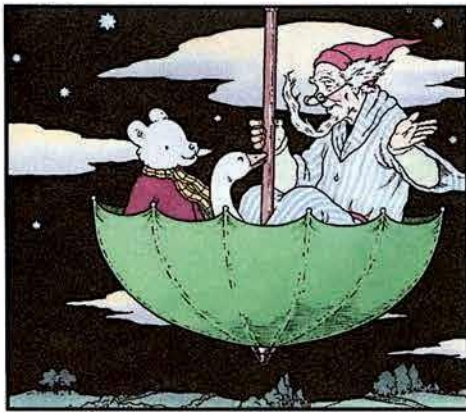
There are eight puzzle pages, including a butterfly maze, and the origami task is for folding a butterfly as in the *Magical Cabinet* story, whilst the butterfly theme is complemented by a recipe for butterfly cakes.

Finally, the page which gives we Followers our name, is from the 1943 Annual, being just the second time it was used, encouraging young readers to '**Follow your leader Rupert in the Daily Express every morning**'. The credit at the foot of the page 'London Express Newspaper Ltd' is an indication of its age.

The current publisher continues the practice of including covers and endpapers in the page count which comes to 120.

In conclusion, it is pleasing to note that the repetition of stories in recent Annuals, and the rather heavy editing of some, of which I had been somewhat critical in previous reviews, has been avoided. If the Followers are being listened to that is most welcome.

Roger Coombes



Incidentally, in making my selection of images I am also reminded of Gina Hart's brilliant colouring.

John's most recent tale from the archives is *Rupert and the Water Bottle* (JH117) which is his penultimate story for the Express in June to August 2002. All 38 episodes were retold in the 2003 Annual as they are again here with its L-shaped title. It is a sunny morning, at the start of the holidays, and Rupert is wearing his scarf, although as leaves appear to be turning gold possibly it is the autumn half term rather than summer holidays. Nutwood is experiencing flood problems although not from excessive rain it seems. The cause lies with the magic bottle (here's the magic theme again) which Rupert and Bill discover in an underground chamber.

Worthing Museum

Long-standing Follower Geoffrey Warner sent in some photos from the Worthing Museum.

There are various Rupert items on show, as part of their wider 'Bear' display. Along with some books and Annuals, there are cuttings of Mary Tourtel stories, figurines and crockery. It is good to see that Rupert is still recognised out there.



World-wide Rupert –

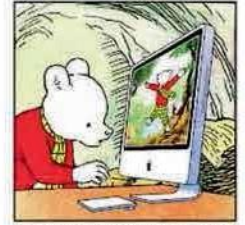
In an exciting new column Jordy Schaap shares what's out there...

Jordy says, “Do linger yet, Rupert found this on the internet:”

Let's not beat about the bush. As we all know the internet can be a dark and foul place. It depends on what you're looking for really. It can be a fun place as long as you filter out all the disinformation, rudeness and nastiness it has to offer. If you manage to do that, the internet is not so bad at all. It can be as fun as you make it. As someone from the 'newer generation' and having grown up in the 90s and early 2000s, being accustomed to the increasing modernization of computers, it has become a place where you can do so much more and see more than you can think of. One of the perks for example is the sharing of things – just ordinary things like pictures – and most of the time pictures of particular things people have seen or made. That applies to every conceivable topic. Even a well-known little bear we know.

So, on darker days where it seems like only a

handful of people are still interested in Rupert these days, the internet reminds me that that isn't the case. From all over the world I see interesting things being shared that are Rupert related. From bad bootleg items to wonderful, creative art, to references and articles, it's fun to see, and even more fun to share.



As Rupert marvelled at the wondrous machine, Rupertbear.co.uk could scarcely be seen.

From time to time in this new little column in the Nutwood Newsletter I will share some of the many, many fun things with you that we found online. So, let's not wait and see any longer. As Jeremy Clarkson used to say on his former show 'Top Gear':

“I went on the internet and I found this.”

Starting off with a 'bang'

Fireworks, produced by Maruti, a company located in Sattur, a town in the Virudhunagar district in far-away India, which sells boxes with small discs of explosive compounds for your clapper gun so it can produce smoke – something you don't want to be caught with on the streets by PC Growler. It shoots a red/yellow spark, according to the box, which is appropriately coloured and uses a Stuart Trotter image of Rupert and Algy as a selling point. Rupert is part of the 'Yes-series' of fire clappers Maruti sells, along with boxes that includes Super Mario, Dennis the Menace and Kipper. I doubt that Express Newspapers have given permission for Rupert to be used for this. A classic example of copying.



Something Delicious

This was created by Manda's Cake Bakery in Birkdale, Auckland in New Zealand, for a 'Rupert' who turned 1 – and what better theme for his cake than Rupert himself? A fitting way to celebrate Rupert. According to the date of this post, Rupert will turn 3 in May of this year. So, Rupert in advance: Happy Birthday!

Clever Marketing

Now I don't want to advertise for companies here, but I have to give this carpet binder from Ringwood, Hampshire, a shout out for his creative way of marketing. Although Rupert is not his name, or that of the company, he noticed that his car license plate was spelling a certain name, and instead of going with a 'Grint', 'Friend' or 'Murdoch' sticker, he choose 'Bear' to put on his car as reference to his plate. Even the colours of the letters are appropriate. Now that's how you bind with your carpet customers!



Bill Badger Sculpture and Bench

All those adventures have taken a toll, Bill just wants to sit, rest and stop the stroll.

This bench was made by artist Simon O'Rourke from Wrexham as a commission from a big Rupert fan (if it's you, please let us know!) Previously, the now owner of the bench had seen another bench by the artist with a seated character and liked the idea of combining the bench and sculpture.

Simon created the oak sculpture and bench in his workshop. The bench was a lovely commission for him; fun, and a little bit different to other subjects he's created. It touches on his background in children's illustration but was also a favourite growing up. In fact, he has memories of reading the Rupert stories as a child, even then the illustrations fascinated him. Anything that took him out of the real world



and sparked his imagination with adventures was good in his eyes, and the Rupert stories did just that! The commission represented a slightly different challenge to his usual sculptures. Unlike many that are all animal or all human, the Nutwood characters have human bodies and proportions with animal heads!

That idea of normal human bodies with animal heads and the style of the characters created by Mary Tourtel always interested Simon, he says, especially as there were normal humans in the stories too! Rupert Bear is a lovely classic, and it was fun to recreate Rupert's fun-loving, optimistic best friend, Bill.

The owner of the bench is, according to Simon, delighted with the Bill sculpture and bench. When asked to comment, they shared with Simon that, "The finished bench is just fabulous and has pride of place in our garden and is much admired by our visitors."



Onward, To Adventure! By artist 'BlueDusk28'

Rupert and Bill are going on a new adventure, ignoring the 'Danger, do not enter' sign. The anonymous artist drew this as a commission. Since the image has been uploaded it has been watched and shared over two thousand views. It captures Rupert and Bill simply yet perfectly and I might believe it's based on a Royal Doulton figurine.

Rupert in Winterland

This Rupert figure was made by artist David Powell, who wove it for an Ayrshire park.

Joining this willow Rupert in the park are Peter Rabbit, Captain Hook and his forever young rival Peter Pan, Harry Potter, Shrek, an astronaut and various other characters and animals. The sculptures took between one and four weeks to complete, with a 6mm steel skeleton being used as a framework for weaving with willow. "I don't use any dye. I aim for balance, I want the work to flow and be natural to the eye," David explained, "the willow needs to be soaked, there are about six different varieties that I use. The whole point of soaking is to make the willow pliable for use, the natural colours fitting into their natural environment"

The South Ayrshire Council, Falkirk Community Trust and the National Trust of Scotland reached out to David to produce a series of sculptures.



These are just some of the many wonderful and interesting things I have found on the World Wide Web. Some of them have been shared in the Followers of Rupert Facebook group already in the past. Not a member of that group yet? Please consider joining. Have you seen anything

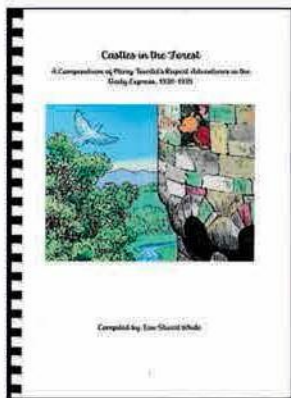
interesting relating to Rupert online? Share it in the Facebook group or send it to me:

jordy.schaap@rupertbear.co.uk.

Until next time!

Thank you, Jordy. We (and we suspect all our readers) will look forward to your next column.

Mary Tourtel Compendium – some great news (and an apology)



As we noted in NN117, Follower Ian White has produced an excellent compendium of Mary Tourtel's Rupert adventures in the Daily Express titled **Castles in the Forest**. Comprising 179 pages, as well as an in-depth record of her earlier works and style, it gives a comprehensive analysis of all the newspaper stories published between 1920 and 1935.

This superb publication is a fitting tribute to the Rupert works of Mary, to celebrate the 150th anniversary of her birth, and is now available on the Followers' website in the downloads section.

Ian has also produced it as an excellent spiral-bound book with profuse illustrations and details of all story plots and his observations. Copies are available at the price of £25.00 including UK postage and packing. Members interested in a spiral-bound copy should contact Ian by email at: i.white1234@btinternet.com

*We are sorry that in NN117 we misnamed Ian. Ian's correct surname is **White** and his email address is as above.*

Picnic Time

As it is springtime and the summer beckons, we thought it would be nice to share with you all this lovely Rupert picture that Mark Manley produced for a friend.

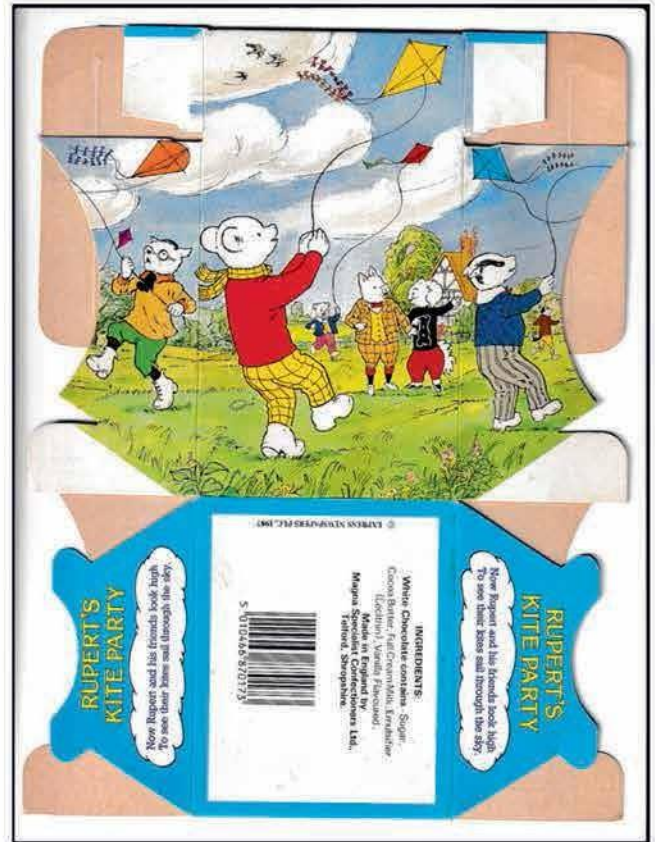
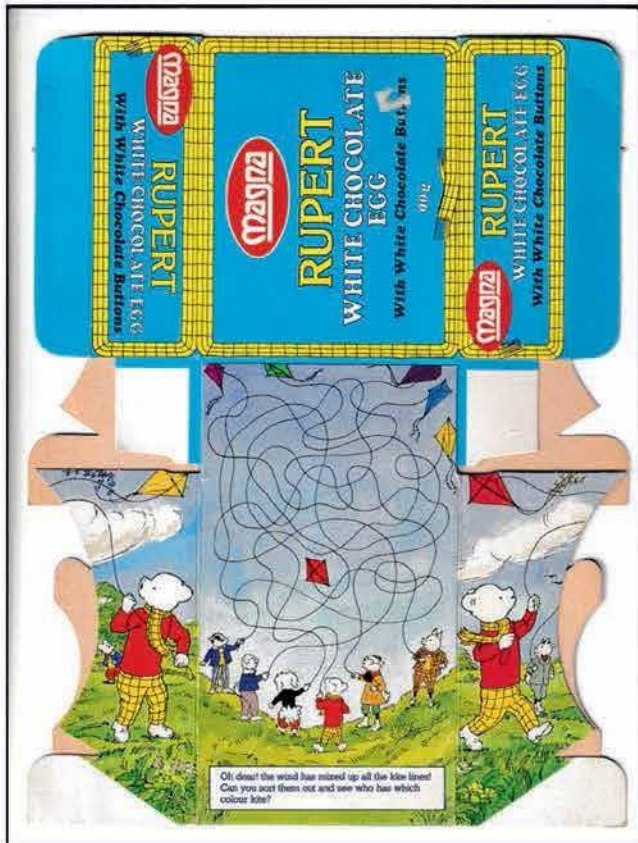


Rupert Easter Egg

In the good old days when there was plenty of Rupert merchandise, Easter Eggs were very popular over a number of years.

Only the packaging for this one survives and one can see that the presentation was superb. It was made by Magna Specialist Confectioners Ltd. of Telford, Shropshire, in 1987 as the copyright date identifies.

Magna were not to my knowledge a major player in the chocolate market, but are still operating today, employing over 1000 people and producing 20,000 tons of chocolate annually.



It is a pity that they are not still producing quality Rupert Easter Eggs today as no expense was spared on the packaging which features very attractive and imaginative Rupert artwork by a competent artist.

Does any other Follower have images of Easter Egg packaging that we can share with others?

John Beck

A Follower's Ruperty tradition

Once again, Follower Alison Carter shares with us images of her traditional – and very scrummy-looking – Rupert birthday pizza.



Spring Letters and Thoughts from you, the Followers

'Old' Followers:

Remember in NN117 we printed a photo, shared by Geoff Warner, of the first Followers' meeting in 1984? We are delighted to have received some responses from Followers who were at that meeting...

Many thanks for the great Christmas package received today. They get better each year! I am the person on the far left of the 1984 photo at the Robin Hood Hotel.

David Humphreys, aka (PC?) 49.

Many thanks for the latest newsletter. It was a surprise to see myself from 39 years ago on page 33. Yes, I was at the first meeting in 1984 and am third from the left in the photograph. I may have changed as I no longer have a moustache and my hair is now grey, but my love of Rupert has not changed. I'm still a member, and together with my Annuals, the Nutwood Newsletters are treasured possessions. Perhaps any Followers from the photo call could pose for another '40 years on', at the next annual meeting if they attend?

Keith Pugh. (Follower no 70)

And from our immediate past Chairman:

Here are my thoughts on the photo of the first AGM. I'm afraid I can't help as much as I'd like.

I was under the second N of 'Entrance'. To my left, under the final 'E' with a blue jumper is Paul Crampton, a stalwart of the early days. I remember clearly, albeit that I have never seen it reported in print, that at that first meeting we had a 'Brain of Nutwood' Quiz. There were just two teams of three, and thanks to being in the same team as Paul, I shared in his success.

Returning to the photo, the next person along from me is – I think – Lionel Bidwell. I'm also pretty sure that the tall chap under the other 'N' is our founder, Tony Shuker.

Keeping the best 'til last, I think that the photo was taken by none other than Alfred. I know that he was a keen photographer and had his camera with him that day, so it makes sense.

Thanks so much for jogging our memories, Geoff, and I hope that others can add to the story.

I also hope that the young man in the brown jacket to the right of the picture has cheered up a little over the last four decades.

John Swan

Lionel is still a member, number 4: the lowest number still a member – Ed.



My Son William wanted to share with the Followers his Rupert room he has been given by his brother Oliver, who now has a new room in the house. I painted the mural for Oliver 13 years ago and now William will be enjoying the views of Nutwood.

We went to Beddgelert in May. It would have been nice to find some mention of Rupert but alas nothing, and the shop owners we asked didn't even know which house Alfred lived in, which is sad. We also visited Canterbury in July; it was a shame I wasn't able to show the boys the Rupert Museum that was.

Thanks to all of you that keep the Rupert Newsletter going, it is most appreciated by Rupert Fans young and old.

Sian Davies

What a lovely mural – no wonder William's delighted – Ed

In NN117 I enjoyed the clear explanation John Lester gave of the varying time lags between stories appearances in The Daily Express and an Annual. In particular he pointed out that the first story involving the Three Guides was *Rupert and the Three Guides* (B102) in the Express in 1947 but not in an Annual until 1950. For Annual readers who did not follow Rupert in the Express, they were introduced to the Guides by the second story *Rupert and the Hobby Horse* (B015).

There is one odder introduction also involving Guides. On the back cover in the first Annual in 1936 there are two guides who look a bit like Beryl, Janet and Pauline. They do not appear inside that Annual. They appear again on the cover of the 1939 Annual and are inside in *Rupert's Adventures in the Snows* (B5). This story was in the Express in January 1936 so some readers of the 1936 Annual would have already met them. They never appeared again.

We show a picture of the Two Guides on the 1939 cover, their first picture in *Rupert's Adventures in the Snows* and one of the Three Guides *Rupert and the Hobby Horse*. For the full history of all five Guides, I refer you to John Lester's article in NN99. Phil Toze's Who's Who does not mention the Two Guides.



Maurice Paterson

RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP

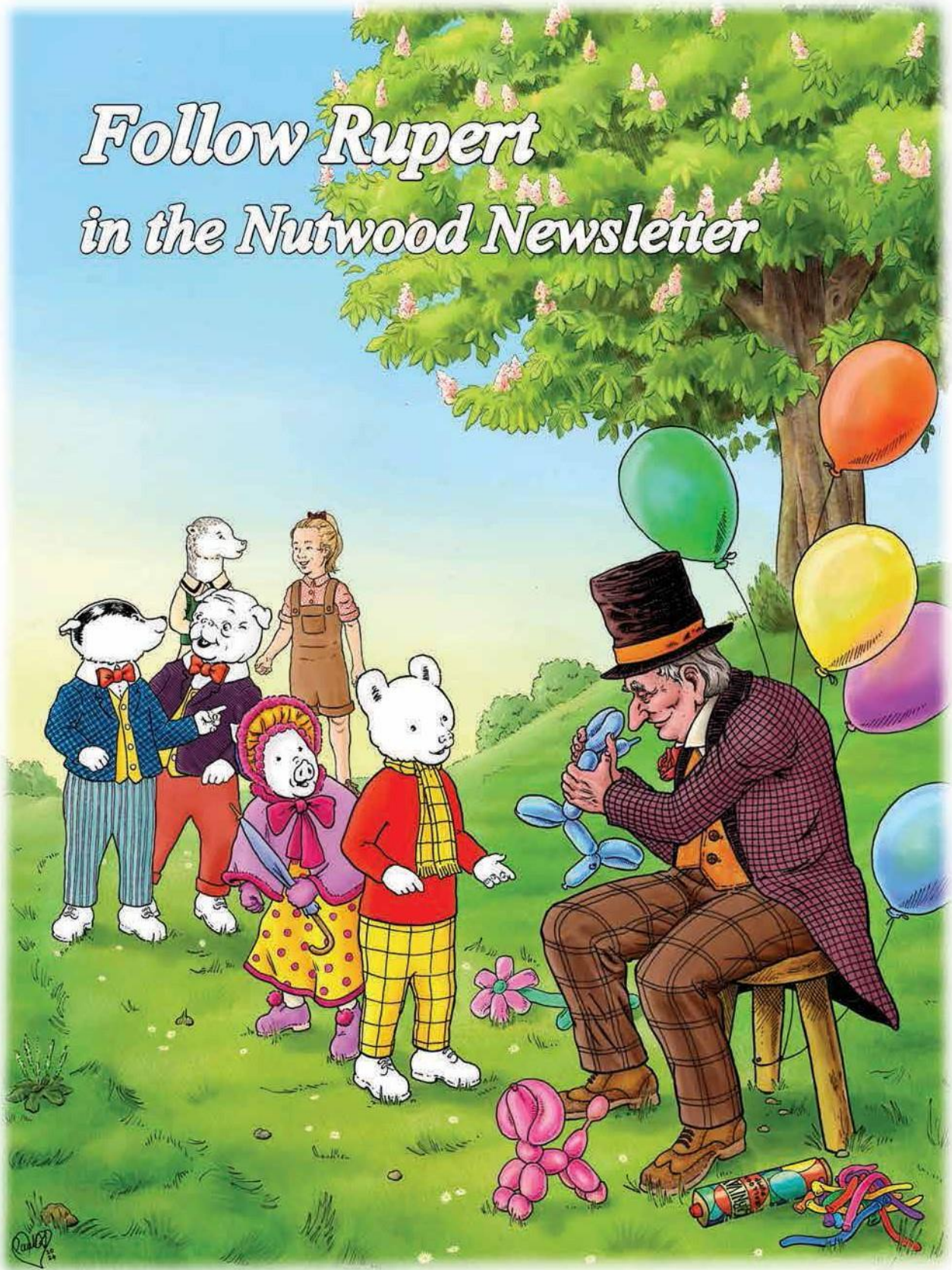
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