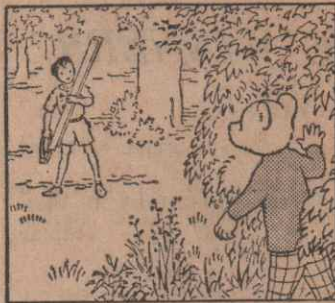


Rupert and the Tree-house-1



Rupert has wandered a little way from home toward the lower ground, not far from the river, and is keeping a sharp look-out for any of his pals, when, over the top of a hedge, he spies something moving. "There's someone there carrying two pieces of wood," he



thinks. "I wonder why?" Inquisitive as ever, he finds a way through the hedge and at once comes face to face with David, the Boy Scout. "Hello, Rupert!" the boy calls cheerily. "I'm glad I met you. D'you want a bit of work?"

Sat., 18 April '64

Rupert and the Tree-house-2



The Scout's words interest Rupert. "What sort of work do you want me to do? Where are you going? What is that wood for?" "Steady on, one thing at a time!" laughs David. "My troop is building a tree-house, it's not finished, but it's going to be



the best ever. It's strong, and it's high up, and it's hidden by leaves. And there's a long rope ladder to reach it, and there's already a supply of food up there!" Rupert needs no urging. Soon he is marching into the wood with David.

Rupert and the Tree-house-3



David the Scout strides firmly forward as Rupert plies him with questions. At first he answers with equal interest, but Rupert notices that he gradually becomes silent and walks less certainly. "Something's gone wrong," he murmurs. "There should be a rope

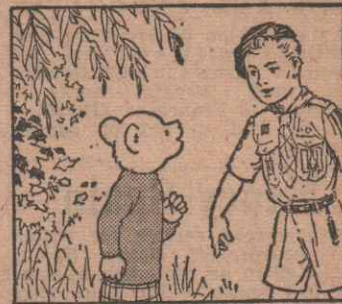


ladder hanging somewhere here to show where the tree-house is. I wish the trees weren't all about the same size. Without the ladder I can't be sure which is ours! Come, let's walk slowly around and keep a sharp look-out for the right tree."

Rupert and the Tree-house-4



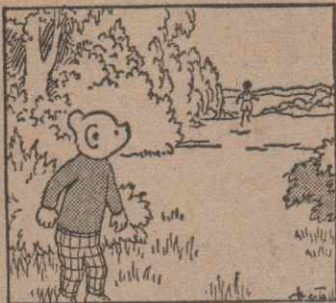
Rupert and David walk about for some time and peer in every direction without seeing any sign of the rope ladder or of the tree-house, and at length the Scout is completely puzzled. "We needn't carry these pieces of wood back again," he says. "I'll hide them



under these thick bushes until I can bring some more of the troop to find where I've gone wrong." "If you won't be away too long I'll stop and mark the place," says Rupert. "When you return, just call and I'll answer. I'll be listening for you."

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Rupert and the Tree-house-5



The Scout David thanks Rupert for his idea. "It's jolly good of you to help us," he says. "I'll be as quick as I can." Rupert sees him off at the edge of the wood, and then, returning, he finds the thick bushes quite easily. Hardly has he reached them when some-



thing moving catches his eye and he crouches down in astonishment, for what he has seen is a rope ladder swinging down from one of the big trees. "It must be from the tree-house!" he gasps. "Someone was up there all the time!"

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Rupert and the Tree-house-6



At first Rupert feels like starting forward toward the rope ladder. Then he dodges back into hiding. "That must have been a stranger up in the trees," he mutters, "for David didn't know anyone was there at all." He keeps still and silent, and very



soon footsteps pass quite near the bush under which he is crouching, slow, uncertain steps that gradually move away. At length Rupert ventures to leave his shelter and peep round a tree. "Whoever it was, he's gone now," he thinks. "Who can it have been?"

Fri., 24 April '64

Rupert and the Tree-house—7

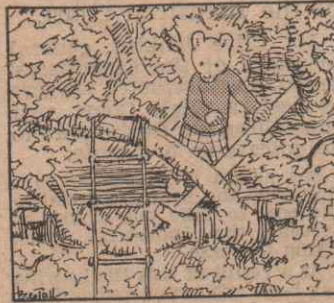


Rupert watches carefully to see if the stranger returns. When there is no sign of anyone he cautiously returns to the rope ladder that is still hanging near by. At the foot of the tree he pauses, listening. "There's no noise. I

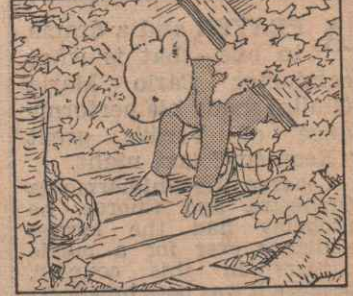


don't believe anybody else is up there," he murmurs. "I must see how far the tree-house is built." He puts his foot on the first rung of the ladder and climbs slowly up through the leaves until some planks and ropes appear.

Rupert and the Tree-house—8

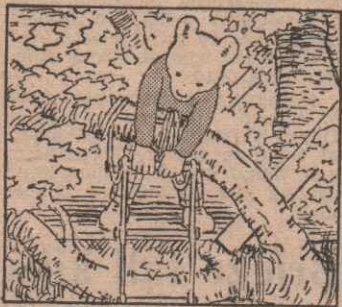


Reaching the top of the rope ladder, Rupert steps off on to a firm platform of planks. "My, those Scouts have made a good start here!" he thinks. "It looks as strong as anything. I wonder what more they're going to do?" He moves about examin-



ing everything. "Hello, what's this up against the tree trunk?" He peers at a strange bundle, something tied up in a large coloured handkerchief. "That doesn't look like anything wrapped up by a Scout," he says. "I wonder if David knows about it."

Rupert and the Tree-house—9

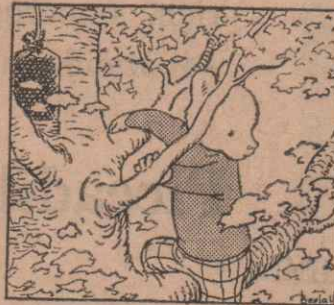


Rupert leaves the strange bundle without opening it. "It must belong to the stranger who was here," he thinks. "I wonder why he didn't take it with him." Then he gives a start. "Why, it must be because he's coming back for it! I'd better pull up



the rope ladder so that he can't return and catch me. I'll look down through the leaves, and if the Scouts come I'll call them. Oh dear, I can't get it up. It's too heavy for me!" Suddenly he stiffens. "Somebody IS coming!" he breathes.

Rupert and the Tree-house—10



To Rupert's anxiety, the figure below makes straight for the rope ladder. "My, I mustn't be found here!" he gasps. "Thank goodness this tree's so easy to climb. If I get up higher he may not see me." On a higher branch he finds a small, dark kit-bag, "That



must be the Scouts' supply of food," he murmurs. Soon he stops and keeps quite still as the stranger reaches the platform and, with a great effort, pulls up the rope ladder after him. "Why, he's only a BOY!" thinks Rupert.

Rupert and the Tree-house—11



Keeping quite silent, Rupert watches the stranger with increasing surprise as the boy stands, with drooping shoulders, before collapsing against the tree and burying his face in his hands. "He looks tired out!" thinks Rupert. "And I do believe he's



crying!" Quietly he moves to a lower branch. "Please, I don't know who you are, but are you ill?" he asks. At the sound of his voice the boy is up in an instant. "B-but I pulled the ladder up!" he says hoarsely. "How did you get here?"

Rupert and the Tree-house—12



Rupert tries to explain how he comes to be in the tree-house, but the boy stops him. "Please, please be quiet," he whispers. "If they hear us, they'll catch me and take me back." "Who will?" questions Rupert. "Are you running away from some-

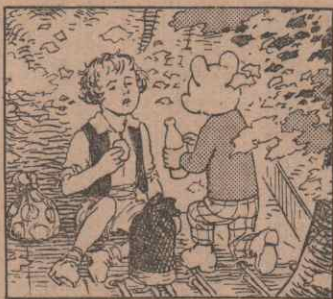


body?" To his alarm the boy tries to answer, and then slumps down again, looking very pale. "I'm sorry," he gasps. "I'm so weak. I've had no food for ages." "But there's food just here!" says Rupert. "You keep quite still and I'll get it."

Rupert and the Tree-house—13



Quickly Rupert climbs to untie the dark little bag of provisions, and soon the stranger is feeding ravenously. "I'm sure the Scouts would agree to their food being given to someone who's starving," he says. "My name's Rupert. Now, please, who are you?"

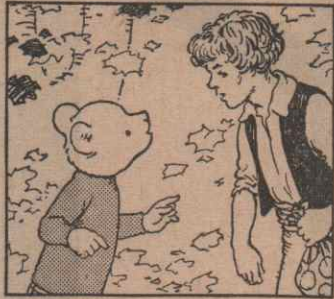


"My name is Ian," says the boy. "My Daddy earned his living running a motor-boat down the river. Some ruffians overpowered him and locked us inside. Then they used the ship. Now I've escaped but, you see, they're chasing me!"

Rupert and the Tree-house—14



While the boy is recovering Rupert tells him why the tree-house is there and who made it. "Oh dear, will the Scouts be angry if they find me here?" says Ian. "No, of course not," declares Rupert. "If you're in trouble they'll want to help as



much as they can! Let's listen in case they come back." "Yes, and in case those wicked men who are using our ship for bad purposes come looking for me," says the boy. "They must not find me, nor this precious bundle I'm carrying!"

Rupert and the Tree-house—15



For a long time all is quiet. "There's no sound of anybody coming," murmurs Rupert, "and I don't think you ought to stay up here much longer. I'd like to take you to the Scouts. They'd take care of you and perhaps recapture your boat and free your



Daddy. I'll go down first and look around." Gently the rope-ladder is lowered and Rupert leaves the tree-house. Hardly is he on the ground when he hears distant noises, and he calls a quiet warning to the boy he has left in the tree-house.

Rupert and the Tree-house—16



Rupert peers toward the approaching noise. When he turns he sees to his dismay that the boy Ian has mistaken his quiet warning for an all-clear call and, instead of pulling the rope-ladder up again, has come down to join



him. "There's someone coming!" whispers Rupert. "It will hardly be the Scouts from that direction. It may be your enemies! We've no time to climb again and pull the ladder up. We must find somewhere else to hide."

Wed, 6 May '64

Rupert and the Tree-house—17



The boy Ian is still too tired to run, and increasing noises mean that heavy men are approaching. "We're in an awful jam," whispers Rupert. "There's only one thing to be done. Thank goodness this tree has such an enormous trunk. We must keep



close to it and edge round as the strangers come near, so it always hides us from them." Soon a gruff voice gives a sudden call. "Hey, I'm here's a rope-ladder. This looks promising. Someone must be up there. Let's have a look."

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Rupert and the Tree-house—18



So far Rupert's plan has worked perfectly. He and Ian have kept out of sight by edging round the tree away from the voices, but now he gets anxious and grabs the boy's arm. "I can hear one of the men say he's climbing the



rope-ladder," he whispers. "That's dangerous! You must get away before he reaches the tree-house or he'll see you. The men don't know me, so I'll try to make them look the other way. You slip off and hide under those bushes."

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Rupert and the Tree-house—19



Rupert realises that his new plan leaves no time for delay. Peeping round the trunk of the tree he sees that one of the men is already well up the rope-ladder. The other one looks a forbidding kind of ruffian but, without wait-

ing, Rupert goes forward and faces him. "Hi, what d'you think you're doing?" he shouts. "Let that ladder alone!" The man, who hasn't heard him coming, is at first too startled to speak. Then he scowls fiercely.

Rupert and the Tree-house—20

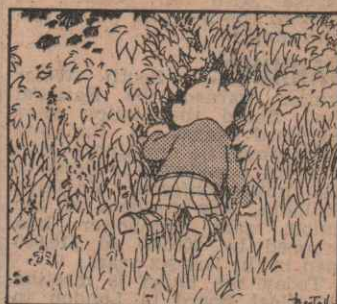


Seeing that one man is returning down the ladder and that the other is getting over the shock of his sudden appearance, Rupert backs away to a safer distance. "That ladder belongs to our Scouts. It's private!" he cries loudly. "You impudent young

varmint!" growls the man. "Who may you be? I'll teach you to come startling the likes of me. Wait till I catch you!" He strides forward, and Rupert dodges away as fast as he can beneath the low branches of a little coppice.

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Rupert and the Tree-house—21



Because the two men take longer to get through the tangled branches of the little coppice, Rupert gains a good lead and is now well ahead of them. "My plan has come off perfectly!" he puffs. "Those men have no

idea that they are running right away from the boy Ian! He must be in hiding by this time. Now to hide myself." Finding himself out of sight for a moment, he dives into the bottom of a thick hedge and wriggles through.

Tues., 12 May '64

Rupert and the Tree-house—22



Keeping very quiet, Rupert hears his two enemies thudding their way past the other side of the hedge. "Good! They didn't see the gap where I came through," he thinks. "I wonder what they'll do now." He finds

himself on the edge of one of the farmer's big fields and, peeping along the hedge, he sees the men clambering over a gate. "They think I crossed the field and they're still chasing me that way!" he mutters, with relief.

Rupert and the Tree-house—23



Rupert feels a little shaky as he makes his way back through the hedge. "It would have been awful if they had spotted this!" he murmurs. "If one man had come to each end of the gap I must have been caught! Now I must see if I can find the

boy Ian and help him more." Back on the right side of the hedge he retraces his steps, and soon to his joy he hears more voices, young voices. "It's the Scouts at last!" he cries, and hurries forward as fast as possible to meet them.

Rupert and the Tree-house—24



Rupert calls and runs to stop the two Scouts. "Hello Rupert," says David. "I've brought Peter to help us search for the rope-ladder and the tree-house. But you're supposed to be keeping an eye on that wood I brought.

What are you doing here?" "Never mind the pieces of wood," says Rupert. "And I've found the tree-house, but something jolly important has cropped up. I'd better tell you all about it. We mustn't talk too loud."

Rupert and the Tree-house—25



The two Scouts listen intently as Rupert tells them why the rope ladder was not in sight when David searched for it, and of the ruffians who are searching for the boy Ian. "You will be able to help the boy, won't you, although

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I gave him your provisions?" he asks. "Of course we will!" declares David. "This is just the job we'd like to tackle! Lead on!" A few yards further on the Scout Peter spies the rope ladder ahead of them.

Rupert and the Tree-house—26



The Scout David wants to go straight up the rope ladder. "I must see that all is well with our partly finished tree-house," he says. "There's no need," says Rupert. "It's much more important to make sure that that

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poor boy is safe. He should have escaped when I led his enemies the other way." He moves toward the bushes, calling quietly, and it is not long before he hears Ian's reply and sees him crouching in the undergrowth.

Collet Monday 18 May '64

Rupert and the Tree-house—27



The boy Ian is slow to understand what Rupert tells him. "My, you must be tired," says the little bear. "Those two men who were after you have gone the other way and here are the Scouts I spoke about. You'd better tell them your story

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before the men come back to look for you." So the boy pulls himself together, and soon he is describing the troubles that have beset him and his father. The Scouts listen carefully. "This looks like a real job for us!" says the Scout Peter eagerly.

Rupert and the Tree-house—28



When he has grasped Rupert's meaning that help is near, Ian's spirits improve. "Even if those men catch me again they must not get this bundle I'm carrying," he says urgently. "It holds our few possessions and the precious

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papers that prove that the motor-boat belongs to my Daddy. They must not be lost." "You can trust us," says David. Just then there is a sharp warning call from the younger Scout Peter who has been on the look-out.

Rupert and the Tree-house—29



The others turn at the warning call. "There are two heavy men coming," whispers Peter. "I could just see them through the leaves. They are still some way off and moving toward the rope ladder and the tree-house."



"Then we'd better get moving, too," says Rupert. "H'm, if we take Ian the other way we'll reach the river," says Peter. "Is that safe?" "Let's chance it," says David. "We'll protect him somehow." And off they go.

Rupert and the Tree-house—30

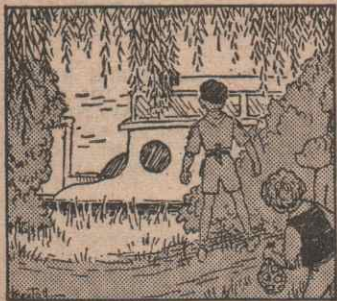


The little party gives many a backward glance as they move out of the wood without seeing any sign of being followed. "If those men are searching for Ian in the tree-house they'll probably climb right up the tree," says Rupert,



"and that will delay them a lot." "That's good for us," says the Scout David. "Here's the river, and look, there's a boat tied to the bank." "Yes, that's ours," says Ian. "Then we'll go ahead and see if all's clear," says Peter.

Rupert and the Tree-house—31



"I say, it's a jolly good motor-boat," says the Scout Peter. "It's a motor cruiser!" "And Ian's Daddy is on board," says Rupert. "Can we get him off?" "No. He's locked in," Ian moans sadly. "The doors are heavy and those horrible men have the



key!" "Well, we must make a plan, as they may come back soon," says David in a business-like way. "The first thing is for you and Rupert to go into hiding, then we Scouts will be free to tackle them, and we'll do it as best we can."

Sah, 23 May '64

Rupert and the Tree-house—32



The boy Ian is very worried. "I don't mind hiding again," he says, "but I should never feel that this precious bundle of mine is safe if it is hidden here, right beside the boat." "Let me run back to the village with it,"



Rupert begs. "My Daddy would keep it safe." The Scout David thinks keenly. "That's a good idea, little bear," he says. "And it's given me a still better idea. Quick, give the bundle to Peter and then listen to my plan."

Rupert and the Tree-house—33



The elder Scout, David, gives his orders crisply. "Go back at your top speed and lock that bundle safely with our camping gear in the Scout hut," he says. "Then tell some of the other chaps what has happened and bring them to



help me." He turns to Ian. "Peter's the sprint champion of our troop. Even if your enemies see him they could never catch him. Now you shall tell me the plan of your boat and Rupert shall help you to hide."

Rupert and the Tree-house—34



When Peter has disappeared into the distance David becomes very brisk and looks at the boat. "Tell me, where is the engine? Is it locked up too?" "No," says Ian. "It's amidships, beyond that porthole. Nothing's locked except the cabin, where my



Daddy is imprisoned." "Right!" says David in an excited voice as he hurries on board. "Now I've got the perfect idea. And you, Rupert, see that Ian is well hidden, then keep careful watch in case those two men come this way."

Rupert and the Tree-house—35



Wondering what David's idea may be, Rupert goes back to Ian. "These bushes are thick enough. You can hide perfectly if you push your way under them. Have a look round to find the best places. I'll give you warning if there is



any danger." Ian remains at the side of the bushes while Rupert works his way round until he reaches a peephole from which he can keep watch on the wood and give warning of danger, while keeping himself out of sight.

Rupert and the Tree-house—36



Rupert has not been on the watch for very long when he spies slight movement in the distant wood. Moving further under cover he peers through the leaves and soon he gives a gasp. Backing carefully through the bushes he



reaches the boat just as David is leaving it. "Quick, you must hide!" he breathes. "Those men are just coming between the trees." To his surprise David is quite calm, showing no fear, and smiling quietly.

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Fin, 29 May '64

Rupert and the Tree-house—37



Still showing no fear in spite of Rupert's alarming news, the Scout David takes him quickly and quietly to the bushes near the stern of the boat. "First we must make sure that Ian is completely hidden for some time,"



he says. "Ah, there he is. No, that won't do, Ian. Squirm your way right under that bush and don't move. Above all, don't sneeze if you can help it!" And, leaving Rupert with him, David moves away to continue his plan.

Rupert and the Tree-house—38



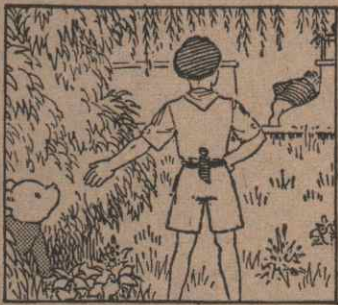
Rupert is so anxious about David's danger that he cannot keep still. Leaving Ian safely hidden, he thrusts through the bushes until he can again peep through the leaves, and is just in time to see the two rough men



striding past. Next minute David, who has moved around the bushes, appears behind them and boldly calls to them. "Hi, you strangers," he says. "Who gave you permission to moor your boat here? This is our farmer's field."

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Rupert and the Tree-house—39



The two men snarl at David, telling him to mind his own business and threatening to beat him. Then, knowing they could never catch him, they turn and go on board. Rupert is thrilled at the Scout's courage and presses



nearer. "But this is awful," he whispers. "Now they'll drive the boat away with Ian's Daddy still a prisoner!" "Hush, little bear," says David. "Stop worrying and follow me." He edges round to Ian's hiding place.

Rupert and the Tree-house—40



David warns Ian to keep hidden even if he becomes frightened by noises from the ship, then he moves away. Almost at once the noises begin and the boy gives a gasp. "Those men are starting the engine!" he breathes. "They'll take my Daddy away!"



"Wait a mo' and listen," whispers Rupert. "They're trying to start it. That's all. You must do what David says." Feeling more excited than ever, he moves round and finds the Scout coolly watching as the men leave the ship.

Rupert and the Tree-house—41



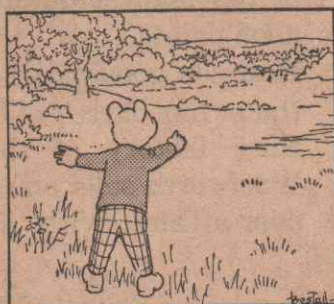
The bigger of the two men is furious. "Of all the rotten luck!" he growls. "My engine won't start and we've lost our . . .!" Catching sight of Rupert he glares. "Why, if it isn't that dratted little bear! We've chased him away once and . . ." "Here,



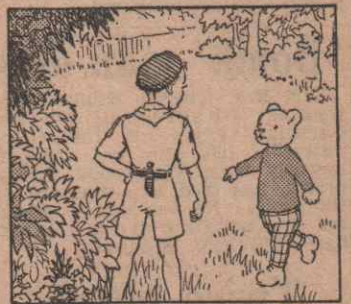
calm down," exclaims David. "And don't start threatening us! Our whole Scout troop will be here at any minute with the constable, and probably the farmer too. Then, there's no doubt about it, you'll have some explaining to do!"

Shura, 4 June '64

Rupert and the Tree-house—42



Rupert is filled with anxiety in case the angry men become violent and, moving back from the clump of bushes, he gazes towards the village. To his relief he spies some distant figures running across the grass towards him. "It's the



Scouts' troop!" he mutters. "I can't see Constable Growler with them but, my! This is good. I must tell David." Hurrying back, he finds to his astonishment that David is standing alone with a quiet grin on his face.

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Rupert and the Tree-house—43

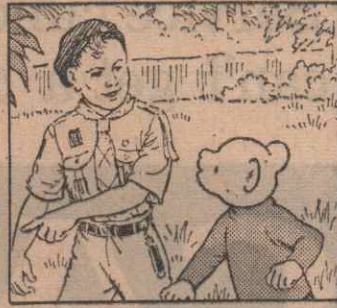


Rupert tells his good news that the troop of Scouts will soon be on the spot. "I thought they wouldn't waste any time," David smiles. "There'll be several jobs for them as soon as ever they arrive." "Oo, look!" says Rupert suddenly. "Those two



men are hurrying into the wood! Are you going to let them escape?" "I doubt if they can escape!" says David. "They're carrying all their heavy gear and can't get far. They're in real trouble now and well they know it!"

Rupert and the Tree-house—44

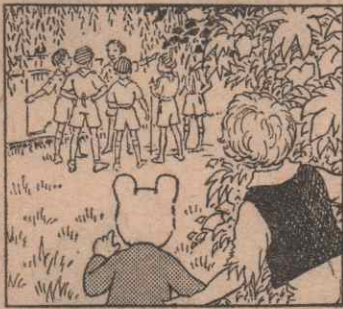


Rupert can't help worrying at seeing the escape of the two ruffians. "What I can't understand is why they didn't go away in the boat," he says. "It would have been quicker. Did you know they'd leave it behind?" "Yes,



I was pretty sure," laughs David. "And very soon you shall know why I was sure! Meanwhile, go and tell Ian that all is well." So Rupert hurries to fetch the astonished boy out of hiding while David waits for the Scouts.

Rupert and the Tree-house—45



At first the boy Ian can hardly believe that his troubles are over. When at length Rupert persuades him to come out of hiding, they find most of the troop gathered beside the boat. As Rupert approaches them two of the Scouts set off towards the wood. "Con-

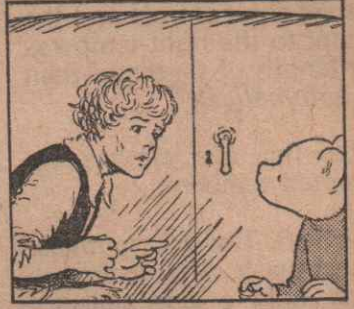


stable Growler can't be here for a few minutes," says David. "So I've sent those two to follow the rough men. It will be grand practice in trailing and stalking. Then they will bring back a report to us, and we can help the constable!"

Rupert and the Tree-house—46



Most of the Scouts want to help in the exciting exercise of tracking the men who have deserted the ship, but the boy Ian is full of anxiety about his father. "He's a prisoner in the rear cabin," he says. Bending down, he calls out, and Rupert

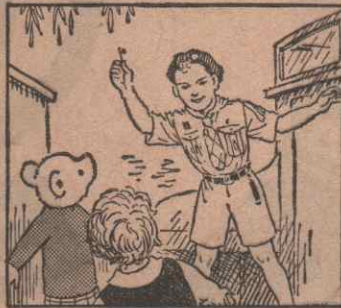


hears a tired voice answering from inside. "Cheer up, Daddy," cries Ian. "Help is here. The door's locked but we'll break it and have you free very soon." "No, no, break nothing until you've searched the boat thoroughly," says the voice.

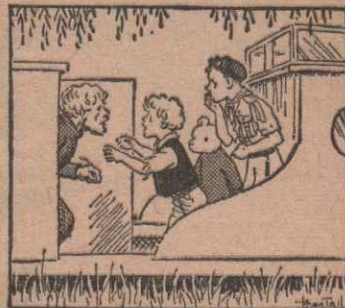
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Wed., 10 June '64

Rupert and the Tree-house—47

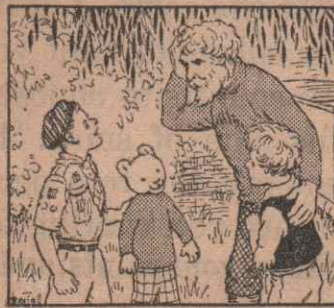


Rupert and Ian have hardly risen to start their search for the key when there is a cry from the Scout David. "I've got it already!" he chuckles. "Those men must have been in a tearing hurry. They dropped it on the floor—near—the engine." In a

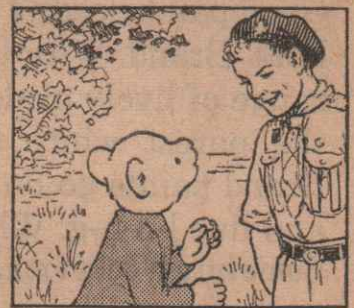


moment the door is open, and Ian is welcoming his Daddy, who straightens himself stiffly and blinks at the bright daylight. "I don't understand," he says hoarsely. "Who are these people? Why is a Scout here? And why a little bear?"

Rupert and the Tree-house—48



The boy Ian tries to explain all that has happened, and David stands smiling cheerfully. "I can hardly believe it," says the tired man. "There must be something still to explain. You are all very young. How on earth did you manage to drive those ruffians



away?" Rupert turns suddenly to the Scout. "You did it all!" he says. "You knew those men wouldn't take the boat away. How could you possibly know?" For a moment David smiles. Then he puts his hand in his pocket.

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Rupert and the Tree-house—49

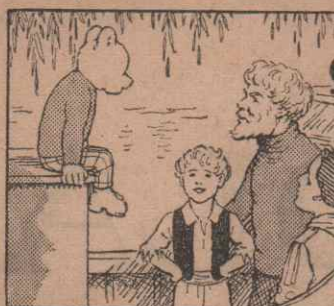


From his pocket David takes something very small and shows it to Rupert. "There's the whole secret of the mystery," he says. "I'm going to be an engineer and I already know a bit about motors. I took this from the engine during the first few

minutes I was aboard. It's called a brush, but it's only a tiny bit of carbon. Without it the engine could never start, so I knew the men couldn't take the boat away! It's jolly lucky for me that they never suspected what I had done!"

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Rupert and the Tree-house—50



When David has finished his explanation Ian's Daddy goes back on board. "I must hear more about this wonderful story," he says. "And when I'm feeling fit again you must all come for a trip with us. I owe you such a lot!" Then David calls two Scouts. "When our Tree-house

is finished, Rupert shall be our first visitor," he says. "Meanwhile, see him home safely and bring back Ian's precious bundle. So goodbye little bear, and good luck!" And away they run.

THE END

Another Rupert adventure begins tomorrow.

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Mon,