

The Adventures of Julius Chancer by Garen Ewing



THE RAINBOW ORCHID

SUPPLEMENT



inkytales



Spring 1999



December 2002



April 2002



February 2003



May 2003



September 2003



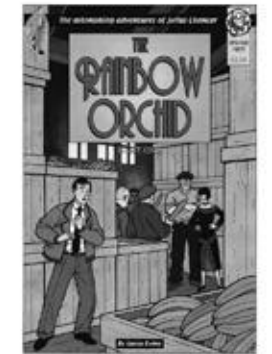
November 2003



October 2004



March 2005



October 2003



November 2007



August 2009



July 2010



April 2012



September 2012



September 2010



April 2011



June 2012



June 2012



November 2012



November 2012



November 2012



January 2013



January 2013



January 2013



I created The Rainbow Orchid because making comics is such hard work that I wanted to write and draw one that I could be absolutely certain at least one person would really like - that person being me. It is steeped in all the things I love. From the adventure stories of H. Rider Haggard, Jules Verne and Arthur Conan Doyle I took the long build-up to a fantastic element, made all the more amazing because the characters are immersed in the 'real world' for so much of the story. From the comics medium I dipped my pen into the European tradition of Hergé, Edgar P. Jacobs, Yves Chaland and the descendents of their ligne claire legacy, along with the strong sense of environment - a believable world - from Asterix and Tintin. Yet I wanted characters and a setting that were very strongly British, without being patriotic. Mixed into all this is my fondness for an involving and compelling plot, and artistic influences absorbed from a wealth of comic artists and illustrators, from Kay Neilsen to Bryan Talbot, and a simple love of history and adventure. No zombies, no bikini-clad gun-toting nubile, and no teeth-gritting ... grittiness. Just a huge slice of pure adventure, made to go with a big mug of tea.

- Garen



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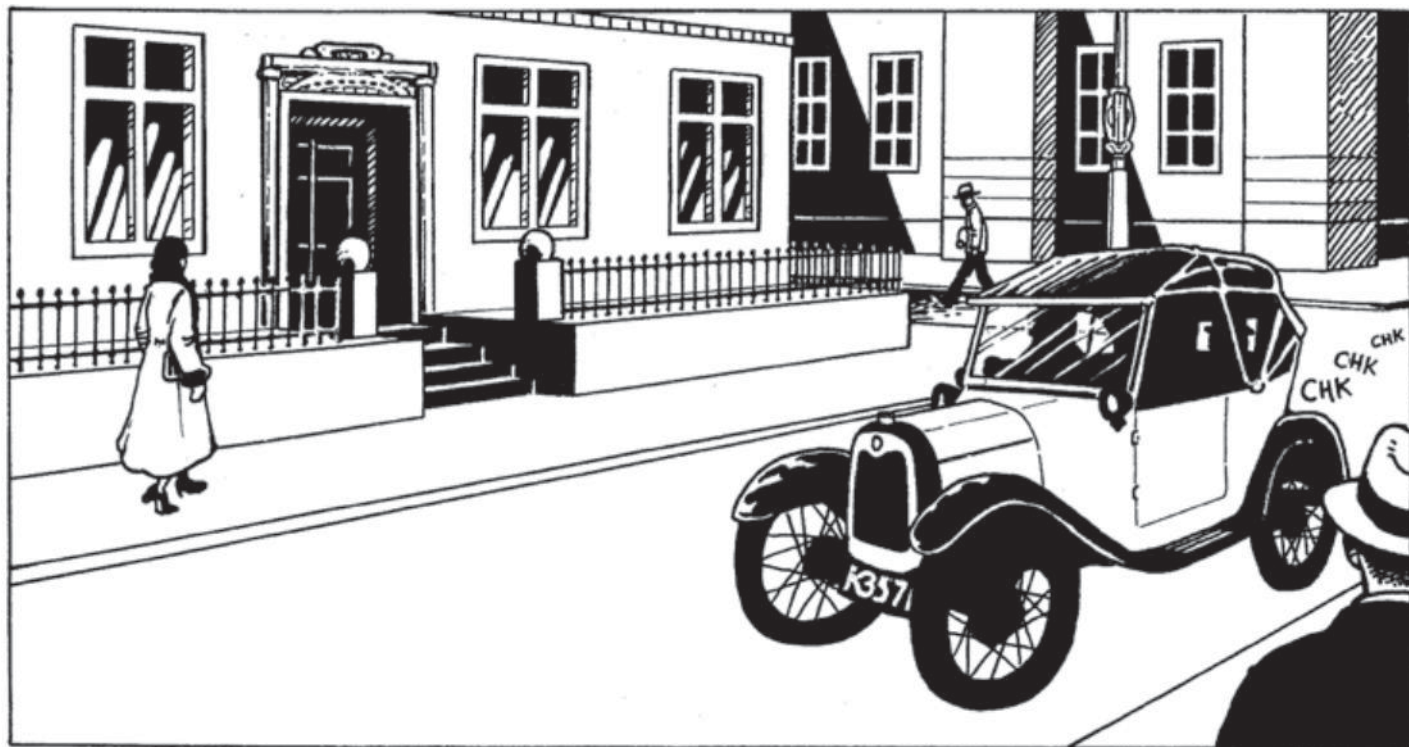
The Rainbow Orchid is published in the United Kingdom by Egmont UK, in the Netherlands by Silvester Strips, in Spain by Netcom2 Editorial, in France and Belgium by BD Must Éditions, in Germany by Salleck Publishing and in Denmark by Tellerup.

For more information please visit:

www.rainboworchid.co.uk

ANNOTATIONS TO THE RAINBOW ORCHID

by Garen Ewing



*These notes are intended to give some background information on various aspects of **The Rainbow Orchid**, whether mentioned in dialogue or shown as part of the world the characters inhabit. They are not necessary to understand the story - that stands on its own - and I haven't used them to explain the plot in any way. The page numbers refer to the Egmont Complete Edition (published Sep 2012), though the earlier volumes 2 and 3 page numbers are given in parentheses. Each annotation accompanies the panel number it refers to.*

Page 1

1. This panel was redrawn for the Egmont edition in December 2008. In the original version the buildings and street scene were from imagination. In the new version I based Sir Alfred's house partly on the architecture of buildings in Bloomsbury, such as those in Fitzroy Square and Gordon Square. Palfrey's car is a 1922 Austin 7 Prototype.

7. Sir Alfred's library is based partially on the library of Queen's College, Oxford - the book cases in particular.

8. Sir Alfred's personal museum here contains (from background to foreground): a mask from a carved figure found at Maprik, Papua New Guinea; the skull of a triceratops; a statue of King Khaefre (reigned 2550 BCE), one of the sons of Khufu; and a Mayan statue found at Quirigua, Guatemala, c.1890.

9. The portrait on the wall is of the actor Henry Irving (1838-1905).

10. Julius Chancer went through quite a few sketches before I settled on his final appearance. His hair style was initially based on a photograph of the actor Neil Hamilton, in a still from the 1924 film *Isn't Life Wonderful?*, though it developed further from there. Sir Alfred was based more directly on the author Sir Henry Rider Haggard, a writer who has a fair influence on the genre that *The Rainbow Orchid* falls into.

Page 2

2. The carved stone slab fixed to the wall is a pre-Inca sculpture from the valley of Casma, possibly dating from around 1500 BCE.

4. The sheet music is rather roughly based on an actual sheet of original sheet music by Henry Purcell.

5. Sitting on the low book cabinet is an example of ornate black bucchero pottery, commonly found in Etruscan tombs (c. 6th Century BCE).

Henry Purcell (1659-1695) was an English composer of songs, opera and theatre music. He was organist at the Royal Chapel and 'Composer in Ordinary of the King's Music'.

10. Echinoderms are a phylum of marine animals that includes starfish and sea cucumbers. Crinoids are a class of echinoderm, such as sea lilies, and paracrinoids are an extinct class of the same that existed in the early Ordovician and Silurian periods.

11. Halkieria are a fossil from the Lower and Middle Cambrian period, generally thought to be a type of mollusc, with one kind (evangelista) being described specifically as a 'slug in chainmail'.

Page 3

8. 'Grub Street hack', a well-known term for those who will write anything for any money, usually of a very low quality, comes from a real place in London, called Grub Street, which was indeed largely occupied by impoverished small-time writers, publishers and booksellers. It was renamed as Milton Street in 1830.

12. The first two posters in the background here are based on postcards I bought after a visit to the now sadly closed Robert Opie Collection in Gloucester (the Museum of Advertising and Packaging). The motorcycle image came from an ad for Dunlop tyres and the boy and dog was originally an ad for Mars bars. I

can't recall where the third poster image came from, though it was updated for the Egmont edition in Dec 2008 - it was a Vogue cover in the black and white version (2002).

13. This gathering of photographers was based on a photo showing the assembled media gathering to get pictures and comments from Babe Ruth, the US baseball hero, at the 1921 World Series. Von Stroheim refers to the Austrian-born film director and actor Eric Von Stroheim (1885-1957) - one of his last film appearances was as Max von Mayerling in the 1950 film *Sunset Boulevard*. Douglas Fairbanks (1883-1939) was a very famous silent-film actor known for his swash-buckling roles, charm and good looks. Fay Wray (1907-2004) had her first film role in 1923 but is most famous for her portrayal of Ann Darrow in the 1933 film, *King Kong*.

Page 4

1. As with Julius Chancer, Lily Lawrence went through quite a few sketches before her final look was settled upon. She is partially based upon a photo of the fashion designer Coco Chanel from a 1929 picture by Cecil Beaton. United Players is a made-up film company, though inspired by United Artists.

2. The British Empire Exhibition was a huge celebration of the United Kingdom's colonial assets (consisting of 58 countries) held in London in 1924 and 1925. There wasn't actually a fifth exhibition (or third or fourth), a fictional concept for this story. See the notes from page 112 onwards for more details.

3. Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) was one of the British Empire's best and most well-loved authors and poets. His work included *The Jungle Book*, *Kim*, *Just So Stories*, *Barrack Room Ballads*, and *The Man Who Would Be King* (a particular inspiration on *The Rainbow Orchid*).

12. The car here is an American 1927 Lincoln Coaching Brougham.

Page 5

1. *Newspaper article*: It was pointed out to me by a reader that Lily's father, Reginald Lawrence, could not be titled both Lord Lawrence and the Earl of Baggall, if he was the Earl of Baggall then he would be Lord Baggall. The answer is that when Lord Hugo Stone bequeathed his family estate and title to the Lawrences in 1445, they were already the Earls Lawrence and this is the title they chose to take precedence. The second earlship was ratified by Royal decree on the marriage of Henry VI to Margaret of Anjou in the same year. Reginald Lawrence's correct titles are: Sir Reginald Lawrence, Lord Lawrence, Earl Lawrence, and Earl of Baggall.

John Gilbert (1897-1936) was an American actor, well-known for his on and off-screen partnership with Greta Garbo in films such as *Flesh and the Devil* (1926) and *Love* (1927).

Edna Purviance (1895-1958) was Charlie Chaplin's (1889-1977) leading lady in the majority of his Essanay, Mutual, and First National comedies. She also starred in Chaplin's dramatic 1923 classic, *A Woman of Paris*.

Odontoglossum nevadense, the High Mountain Odontoglossum, is a rare orchid that can be found in Colombia and Venezuela.

3. Theophrastus (c.371-287 BCE), the 'father of botany', was a student of Plato and Aristotle, and inheritor of Aristotle's collections, unfinished works and library. He was in charge of the first botanical garden at the Lyceum, and gained much of his knowledge thanks to samples sent to him by the botanists on campaign with Alexander the Great.

4. Alexander here refers to Alexander III of Macedon, or Alexander the Great (356-323 BCE).

The Dardanelles is a narrow strait in Turkey connecting the Aegean Sea to the Marmara. Here it refers to the Dardanelles, or Gallipoli, campaign (1915-16), where British, French, Australian and New Zealand Forces landed on the peninsula in a strike against the Ottoman Empire in order to control Constantinople. The campaign was a failure for the British and their allies.

Page 6

6. Edith Sitwell (1887-1964) was a poet with a dramatic profile who sometimes performed to specially-written music, or through a kind of loudspeaker called a Sengerphone. The real Aeolian Hall event (which took place earlier than this story, in 1923) saw Noël Coward in attendance - he walked out - and much jeering from others.

7. A quidnunc is a gossipmonger or someone who wants to know all the latest news. It comes from the latin *quid* (what) and *nunc* (now).

Page 7

3. The Crusades here refers to the Second Crusade of 1145-1149, launched in response to the fall of Edessa.

The march to Kandahar refers to General Frederick Roberts' 300-mile march with 10,000 men from Kabul to the besieged city of Kandahar in September 1880, at the end of the Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878-80).

6. Le Truc is a two-player card game with its origins in 15th century Spain and comes from the word 'trick'.

Page 8

7. The stone slab on the back wall is a Greek representation of Oedipus and the Sphinx, originally discovered on a Hellenistic sarcophagus. There is also a small stone figure on the sideboard of the warrior-god Baal, of the Canaanites.

Page 9

1. The Egyptian relief sculpture on the wall is of Nefertiti, the queen of Akhenaten (c.1370-1330 BCE) worshipping the Aten (sun disc). The statue on the right is of Idrimi, King of Alalah (in Turkey, c.1500 BCE), the first king of the Mitanni. In the background you can just make out a glass case containing a display of ancient fossils, including crinoids. In the original black and white version there were no chairs present, but I thought a little more furniture was needed so added the antique Louis XV-style chairs.

2. Pope Nicholas V (1397-1455) was Pope from 1447 until his death in 1455. During his tenure he founded the Vatican library with nine thousand books, including many ancient Greek texts.



3. The Lost Notebook of Theophrastus is fictional, invented for this story. Theophrastus did, however, write two important tomes on botany - *De Historia Plantarum* and *De Causis Plantarum*, both collected by Pope Nicholas V, who had the texts translated into Latin.

5. In the 2003 black and white version I did my best with the ancient Greek text and dialogue using both Greek and ancient Greek online dictionaries. For the Egmont edition I sought the advice and services of Quintus, an expert and translator of ancient Greek. The now correct full extract reads:

Ἐκ τοῦ Ἀλεξάνδρου ἐφαίνετο πολλὰ καὶ νέα φυτεύματα, ἐν οἷς νέος ὄρχις θαυμαστός, ὃς δὴ οὐ μονόχρους ἔστιν ἀλλὰ μάλα πολυχρῶς, ᾧ τὰ χρώματα δοκεῖ μεταστῆναι ὥσπερ ἶρις, ὥστε ὀνομάζω αὐτὸν τὸν Ἰριώδη Ὀρχιν.

Transliteration:

Ek tou Alexandrou ephaineto polla kai nea phyteumata, en hois neos orchis thaumastos, hos de ou monochrous estin alla mala polychrous, hoi ta chromata dokei metastenai hosper iris, hoste onomazo auton ton Iriode Orchin.

English:

From Alexander came many new plants including a wonderful new orchid. It is not a single colour but has many that seem to shift like a rainbow, so I name it the Rainbow Orchid.

Page 10

1. The stone slab here is fictional though it does contain elements of Indus Valley pictographic writing as well as symbols culled from James Churchward's works on the supposed lost continent of Mu (particularly the lotus flowers, the sign of three, and the sun). The figure pointing to the hills is based on the Priest King statuette found at Mohenjo-daro in 1927, and is also the model for the character of Gozavu, who appears later in the story. The Indus Valley civilisation is thought to have existed in various stages between about 3300 BCE and 1300 BCE. Many ruined cities have been discovered over a wide area, taking in India, Pakistan and Afghanistan, the two most important being Mohenjo-daro and Harappa (indeed it is sometimes referred to as the Harappan Civilisation). Its writing remains undeciphered.

2. Indra is the Hindu god of war and thunder and king of the gods.



5. The Hindu Kush is a mountain range stretching from Afghanistan into Pakistan and forms part of the Pamir Mountains, a sub-range of the Himalayas. In the background you can just make out some of Sir Alfred's fossil collection, particularly a Spriggina and an ammonite.

8. This 'meta-panel' (a term coined by comic artist Bryan Talbot, I believe) shows a Macedonian warrior's helmet from 330 BCE and a Kalash woman and child.

The Kalash are a tribe of people residing in the Chitral region of what is now northern Pakistan. They are unusual in that they retain their old pre-Islamic polytheistic beliefs, having survived the enforced conversion of Kafiristan to Nuristan by Abdhur Rahman in the 1890s. They have their own unique (and endangered) language, Kalasha, and are thought by some to be the descendants of the soldiers on campaign with Alexander in the 3rd century BCE, though this idea is not as scientifically favourable as it once was (it lingers for more political reasons). In the Egmont edition of volume 1 (2009) the Kalasha lady shown here was wearing the bright multicoloured shawl the women are today well-known for. I changed this after more research in 2010, so the Dutch edition (and now the Egmont *Complete*) has her wearing plain dark brown woollen robes. I spent a lot of time trying to discover if the Kalash women would have had these brightly coloured garments in the 1920s, and after finally reading that brightly coloured dyes only came to them when the roads were opened up in the 1970s, and seeing a single photograph of an aged woman in an 'old style' robe (without the colours), I decided to go ahead and change the robes. This can be seen more fully later on in the story when Lily, Julius and Meru stay at a Kalash village (see pages 81-85).

Page 11

1. Julius's car is a 1928 Mercedes Benz SSK. The architecture in the background was partially referenced from a postcard of old Dundee (though the story is not set in Dundee).

2. More Dundee reference here as the large building in the background is based on the old Cholera Hospital in Union Street.

5. And yet more Dundee ... the entrance gate to Urkaz Grope's mansion is based on the gate that leads into Baxter Park from Arbroath Road. If you're wondering why I have used so many Dundee references, it is because my father's side of the family hails from Dundee and I happen to have a couple of books on old Dundee, very useful for older architecture.

7. Urkaz Grope's mansion house is based on Scone Palace, Perthshire, Scotland. It is from my own photograph taken while on honeymoon there in 2002. The white peacock was also photographed at Scone Palace, and makes an appearance in this panel.

Page 12

1. The entrance hall is based loosely on the hallway at Hever Castle in Kent (built around 1270), home to the Bullen (Boleyn) family in the 1500s and the Astors in the early 1900s. The painting to the left of the suit of armour is of Richard III, based on the 16th century portrait by an unknown artist, currently residing in the National Portrait Gallery. The painting above the door, behind Scobie, Grope's butler, is based on a fresco by Domenico di Bartolo (c.1400-c.1447) housed at Santa Maria dell Scala, Siene, Italy.

Page 13

1. The offices of *The Daily News* are based on the Courier Building, home of the *Dundee Courier* newspaper, from a photo taken in 1906.

3. The office interior has aspects loosely based on the newspaper offices seen in the film *Citizen Kane* (1941), the pillars in particular.

14. The shop sign 'McClean & Phillip' is an obscure reference to a grocery business owned by my ggg-uncle, John Phillip, in partnership with his late brother-in-law, William McClean, and then his sister, Isobel, in Dundee in the 1880s.

Page 14

1. Rex Ingram (1892-1950) was an Irish-born film director and actor. His films included *The Prisoner of Zenda* (1922), *The Arab* (1924), and *The Three Passions* (1929). Not to be confused with the African-American actor of the same name (1895-1969). *Foolish Women* is a spoof title based on an actual Von Stroheim film, *Foolish Wives* (1922).

12. Hanging up in the background of Newton's office can be seen some oak galls. If you know what they can be used for then you may work out his actual role for Urkaz Grope.

Page 15

1. The bridge here is based on an old stone bridge that crosses the River Teme and leads to Ludlow Castle in Shropshire, though the background is from imagination.

2. The gateway to Lord Lawrence's Stone estate is based on a gate that appears on a postcard sent by my g-grandfather, James Ewing, with a note written on the front saying "you know this place". At the time I didn't know this place, but subsequent research showed it's the gate to Abraoth's Western Cemetery.

6. Lord Lawrence's house (Pitscally House) is based on two real buildings plus a smidgeon of imagination. The front is based partially on Langwith Lodge in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, while the towers come from a French townhouse I photographed while on a trip to Boulogne in 1999. Pitscally, by the way, is the name of a farm some of my ancestors worked in the mid-1800s, at Clunie in Perthshire.

Page 17

5. The interior here is based on a room from Buscot Park, Farringdon, Oxfordshire, the source being another old family postcard. The two portraits that adorn the walls are of Lord Lawrence's late wife (Ann) and his son, Peter Stone Scott Lawrence, killed on the Western Front in 1916.

7. Ladysmith refers to the siege of Ladysmith that took place during the Second Boer War from Oct 1899 to Feb 1900.

9. I borrowed the film title *Melody of Life* from Charlie Chaplin, who discarded it as a working title for his 1923 film *A Woman of Paris*, starring Edna Purviance.

Page 18

1. This panel was redrawn for the 2009 Egmont edition. Apart from updating Sir Alfred's house to reflect the first panel in the story, it also features a 1922 AEC S-Type bus, as operated by the London General Omnibus Company.

7. Achi Baba refers here to a height of Gallipoli and one of the main Turkish defensive positions in the Dardanelles campaign of 1915. It features as part of Julius Chancer's backstory, as told later on (see page 69).

10. The appearance of Mr Drubbin is based almost entirely on that of George Akin Lusk (1839-1919), right down to his moustache, hat and coat. Lusk added his name to history when he set up



the Whitechapel Vigilante Committee at the time of the Jack the Ripper murders in 1888, and he was also the recipient of the famous Ripper letter that included a piece of human kidney.

Page 19

2. Sir Alfred's intention here is not to be scientifically accurate (mainly because he doesn't actually know any such information about the rainbow orchid), but merely to bamboozle William Pickle.

Orchis ouranio-toxo is the incorrect Greek term for rainbow orchid. It should properly be *irioide orchino*, but was not changed when I updated the earlier ancient Greek translation from Theophrastus' notebook.

Caenogenetic means development in an individual not common to its species.

Genus apostasioideae is one of the three main orchid groups (the other two being *orchidoideae* and *cyprapedioideae*).

Monocatyledonae is the subclass of flowers to which orchids belong.

Zygophotic refers to a plant that reproduces by the union of two similar cells.

Hortensial means it is suited to growing in a garden.

Esculent means it is edible.

Paphiopedilum and *laeliocattleya* are types of orchid.

3. *Iridisation* comes from iridescent, having rainbow-like luminous or gleaming colours.

Septochromatic - I made this word up but it refers simply to composing of seven colours.

Epiphytic means that it grows on trees but is not parasitic.

Herbaceous perennial refers to the flower being herb-like, with its growth dying down annually, though the roots survive for at least three years or more.

Mycorrhizal nutrients refers to the process whereby sustenance enters the root system through fungi. But you probably already knew that!

4. The poster on the building behind William Pickle is based on a 1927 magazine advertisement for Cadbury's Naples Chocolates, "tastes that thrill!".

5. The street scene here is based on the junction of London Road, the High Street and Ship Street in East Grinstead, Sussex, from an early 1900s postcard when it was known as the Constitutional Club. It was originally built in 1893 for the Conservative Association.



6. The fictitious Colonial Missionary Society is based upon the real London Missionary Society, which was indeed founded in 1794.

10. The post office here is based upon the old post office in Kirkcaldy, Fife, from a postcard in my great-grandfather's old collection. Today it is a hotel. In the 2009 Egmont edition of volume 1 the words 'Post Office' were accidentally left off the building above the doorway.

12. The poster (which was added for the 2009 Egmont edition) is for the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company deluxe cruises. The company was founded in 1839 and was at its height in 1927 when it took over the White Star Line. By 1930 it was involved in financial scandal and was liquidated, its assets transferring to the newly created Royal Mail Lines Ltd.

Page 20

5. In 2002 I spent ages trying to find a post van of the right era (now they're all over the Internet!). This one is a 1928 Morris Commercial.

6. I had no luck finding a contemporary postal uniform. The driver here is wearing one based on a 1905 example. The shako cap he's wearing was introduced in 1896 and was, apparently, very unpopular. It was finally replaced in 1932.

8. Hasan Wahan is small village on the left bank of the Indus, very close to the archaeological site of Mohenjo-daro.

Page 21

2. Reference for the telephone came from the one owned and used by Adolphe Menjou in Chaplin's *A Woman of Paris* (1923).

10. Urkaz Grope's car is a Crossley 15.7 four-door saloon. Only 1,200 were manufactured.

11. The story about Egyptian settlers in the Grand Canyon can be traced to an Arizona newspaper, *The Phoenix Gazette* of 5 April 1909. It claimed that a cave system, artefacts and

hieroglyphs were discovered there and then possibly covered up by the Smithsonian Institute. Fuelling this conspiracy theory are place-names such as the Tower of Set, Horus Temple and Cheops Pyramid.

Page 22

1. The statuette on Sir Alfred's desk is based closely on a Sumerian deity figurine from the Square Temple at Tel Asmar (Eshunna), Iraq.

Page 23

1. William Pickle is using the *Daily News* company car, a Morris Cowley 'bull-nose' c.1926.

2. The demonic door ornament is from the Norman west front of Lincoln Cathedral.

10. More oak galls hanging on the wall.

Page 25

1. The posters are referenced from ads in 1921 issues of *Picture Show* magazine. The one on the left is for Sharp's Super-Kreem Toffee ("hours of brightness in every tin") while the one on the right is for Bird's Egg Substitute ("one spoonful - one cake!").

3. Lubitsch refers to the German-born film director Ernst Lubitsch (1892-1947). His films included *Anna Boleyn* (1920), *The Love Parade* (1929), *Ninotchka* (1939) and *The Shop Around the Corner* (1940).

Page 26

3. Elstree refers to the Elstree studios in Borehamwood, Hertfordshire. The first studio was opened there in 1914. Ivor Novello (1893-1951) was a British composer and actor after whom the Ivor Novello Awards are named.

4. Hepworth refers to Cecil Hepworth (1874-1953), a pioneer of the British film industry. He filmed the famous *Rescued by Rover* (1905) and carried on making films into the early 1920s.

Adrian Brunel (1892-1958) was a director who made several films with Ivor Novello, including an adaptation of Noël Coward's *The Vortex* (1928).

British International Pictures were founded in 1927 and were involved with some of the early work of Alfred Hitchcock, including *Blackmail* (1929).

8. Noël Coward (1899-1973) was one of Britain's best-loved writers (*Private Lives* (1930), *Blithe Spirit* (1941)), composers (*Mad Dogs and Englishmen* (1931), *Mad About the Boy* (1932)) and actors (*In Which We Serve* (1942, which he also wrote and directed), *The Italian Job* (1969)).

12. The station telephone is taken from a scene in Charlie Chaplin's 1923 film *A Woman of Paris*, where Edna Purviance phones her fiancée from the station.

Page 27

1. The Cunard Line's *Aquitania* was launched in 1913, but after only two years of civilian service she was acquisitioned for wartime service and acted as a troop and hospital ship during the 1915-16 Dardanelles campaign (meaning that this could, in fact, be Julius Chancer's second time aboard). During the 1920s she became one of the most profitable liners in service, making up a third of the Cunard's 'Big Three' (the others being *Mauretania* and *Berengaria*). After a downturn from the 1929 economic crash, *Aquitania* saw more war service from 1940 as a troopship. She was put out of service in 1949 and scrapped in 1950.

Page 28

2. Jack Dempsey (1895-1983) was a US heavyweight boxer who held the World Championship from 1919 to 1926. He held 65 wins out of 85 fights, 51 of them with a knockout.

11. *Picture Show* magazine was a popular UK-based film magazine that ran from 1919 up until at least 1960.

Page 30

7. As a teenager I was offered the opportunity to work for Geest, a banana importer that had a warehouse in Lingfield, not far from home. One of the employees there told me stories of some of the creatures that quite often hitched a ride with the bananas, one of these being the occasional tarantula spider. This fact made sure I went no further with my application (I ended up at the far less tropical mushroom farm in Horley). Of course, the banana/spider relationship was made more famous by Harry Belafonte's 1957 *Banana Boat Song* (based on an old Jamaican folk ditty):

*A beautiful bunch of ripe banana!
(Daylight come and we want to go home)
Hide the deadly black tarantula!
(Daylight come and we want to go home)*

11. ... and, of course, spiders always have that habit of turning up again once you think you've got rid of them for good!

Page 31

6. Panels 6-11 were drawn especially for the 2009 Egmont edition, in order to flesh out the action a little further.

Page 32

1. Panels 1-5 were drawn especially for the 2009 Egmont edition.

11. The aeroplane featured in the Tayaut poster is a 1925 long-range Breguet 19A2.

While *Sky Devils* and *Hearts of Brass* are invented film titles, *Wings* (1927) was the first film to win the Best Picture Oscar. It starred Clara Bow, Buddy Rogers and Richard Arlen.

12. Tayaut is a French term equating to "tally-ho!", and while often used to alert hounds during a fox hunt, it was also used by French pilots during WWII.

Page 33

6. The first true farming tractor was developed by Francesco Cassini in 1927. The model driven by Josette Tayaut here is an invented amalgamation of that first Cassini, a 1929 Deere, and a 1926 Rumley tractor.

Page 34

9. The aircraft in the foreground is a De Havilland DH60 Gipsy Moth.

Page 35

2. The Breguet 280T was capable of 215 km per hour. A direct line from Cherbourg to Amman is roughly 2200 miles, and from Amman to Karachi we're looking at another 2000 miles, which in total, converted into kilometres, is about 6758 km. That's 31.5 hours of flying - I added 8.5 hours for refuelling, opposing wind forces, and mountain-avoidance. Artistic licence allowed me to ignore the fact that it only had a single-run range of 680-700 miles, though the plane is known to have made several longer international runs with fuel stops.

4. Twenty-one Breguet 280T aircraft were built, with almost all of them owned by Air Union (later Air France) on the London-Paris-Switzerland route. Two were used over French Indo-China (Vietnam).

10. Panels 10-13 were new panels drawn for the 2009 Egmont edition in order to give more time to the take-off. By this time I had asked a friend, Harvey Needham, if he would consider building me a small balsa wood model of the Breguet 280T from blueprints I'd found in a back issue of *Scale Aircraft Modelling* (and a more detailed 1979 set was sourced by Linda Wada). He kindly agreed, allowing me more scope for accuracy in drawing the plane from any angle required.

Page 36

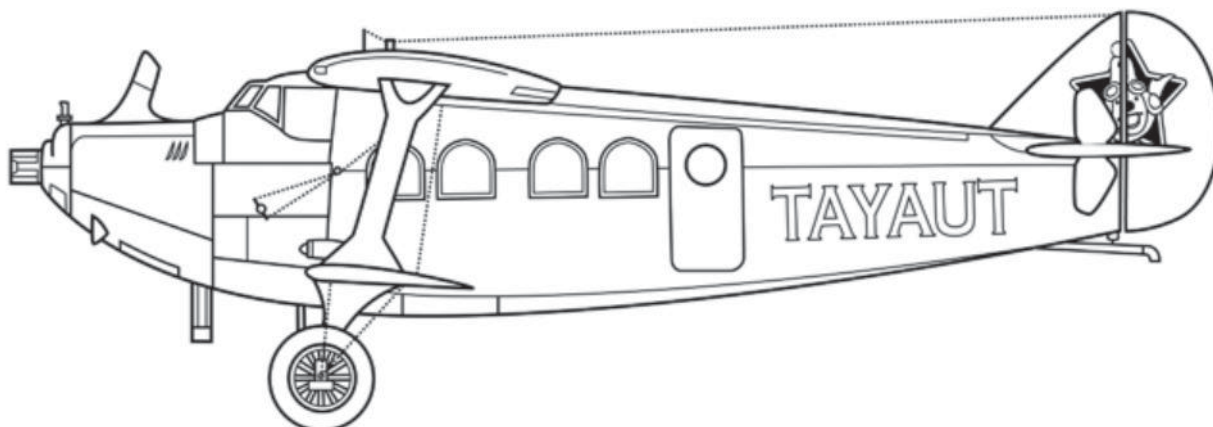
1. Panels 1-4 were drawn especially for the 2009 Egmont edition.

5. The three clowns in this panel are based on costumes found in the 1928 Charlie Chaplin film *The Circus*. The leading clown is based on the outfit worn by Henry Bergman (1868-1946). The pilot in the goggles is based on my own 'jetpack-man' logo.

7. The final panel on this page was redrawn for the 2009 Egmont edition in order to end the scene with a splash panel. You'll see here the plane is named *Grace*, after the daughter of a friend of mine.

Page 37 (1)

1. The Natural History Museum in Kensington was completed in 1880. Visible at the apex of the central roof is a statue of Adam - odd for a building dedicated to idea of evolution. You won't see the statue there today as in 1940 the upper part fell and smashed onto the steps below. The remains were put in a crate and stored where they disappeared and haven't been seen since. It is,



however, rumoured that a particular part of Adam's anatomy was used as a paperweight by a member of staff for a while.

2. Today the main occupant of the central hall of the Natural History Museum is a Diplodocus cast, but back in the late 1920s it was George, an African elephant - you can just see part of his hindquarters in this panel. It was about this time that the statue on the landing of the steps at the far end of the hall was swapped for Richard Owen, the first director of the museum, but I have elected to keep Charles Darwin in place, who originally sat there from 1885 until 1927 (in fact he is back there today, reinstated for his 200th anniversary in 2009).

5. Despite the fact that gorillas are normally rather gentle creatures, early explorers' reports dictated a more dramatic posture for some of the more impressive exhibits. A giraffe skeleton can be seen in the background.

8. Here is the Diplodocus that, as every member of a school expedition since the 1970s knows, is the main exhibit in the central hall today. It came to the museum in 1905 and is actually a cast of the original, which is in the Carnegie Museum of Natural History, Pittsburgh, USA. The cast was a gift from Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919), and in the twenties had its home in the reptile gallery.

9. Mr. Drubbin finds himself in the fish gallery, standing next to *Platanista minor*, the Indus River Dolphin. This dolphin was originally going to play a much stronger part in the story - I'd worked out a map that used animal symbols to show the route to the lost city of Urvatja, including the dolphin, and Julius and chums were to traverse the Indus by boat, encountering the dolphins themselves - until I realised, of course, that they'd be sensible and take the train.

Page 39 (3)

4. I was unable to find any visual reference for the interior of a

Breguet 280T, so I adapted that of a Fokker Avro, for both the passenger and cockpit details.

7. *The Ten Commandments* was a grand silent-film epic made in 1923 by Cecil B. DeMille that starred Theodore Roberts, Charles de Rochefort, James Neill and Estelle Taylor. DeMille remade the film in 1956, this time starring Charlton Heston and Yul Brynner.

8. Cecil B. DeMille (1881-1959) was a film director known especially for his spectacular epics which, as well as *The Ten Commandments*, included films such as *Cleopatra*, *Samson and Delilah* and *The Greatest Show on Earth*.

Julia Faye (1892-1966), as well as being DeMille's mistress, played the wife of the Pharaoh in *The Ten Commandments*. She also appeared in the 1956 version, playing Elisheba.

9. The Moabite Stone, also known as the Mesha Stele, was discovered in Jordan in 1868, and resides now at the Louvre in Paris. It dates from around 840 BCE and contains one of the longest inscriptions in existence from that age and region. Mesha was king of the Moabites in the 9th century BCE.

Page 40 (4)

3. The idea of a petrol pipe fracture comes from the real story of a Breguet 280T that I found reported in *The Times* of 20 Feb 1929, when an experimental mail-carrying flight left Le Bourget, France, intending to fly to Hanoi in French Indo-China. The aircraft crashed after just a few miles, over a Paris suburb, destroying the plane but with the three-man crew unharmed.

Page 41 (5)

7. *Janaab* is Urdu, generally meaning 'sir' - a form of politeness.

8. *Shabaash, habib* can be translated as 'well done, friend'.

12. To answer Nathaniel's question, a ghutra, sometimes known as a keffiyeh or a shemagh, is a traditional Arab headdress.

Page 42 (6)

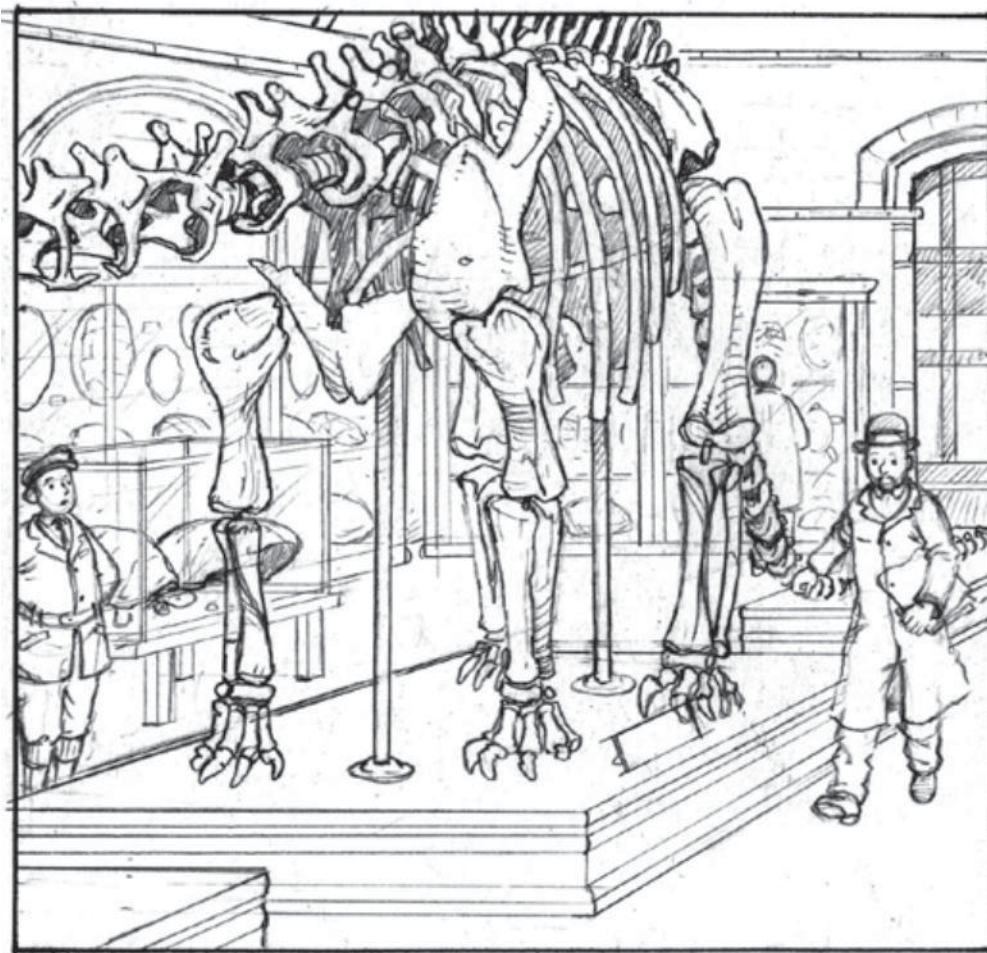
8. *Khush amdeed* is an Urdu greeting, translating roughly as 'you're welcome'.

11. The Queen's Guides refers to the Queen's Own Corps of Guides, a regiment consisting of a cavalry unit and an infantry unit. It was raised in 1847 by Lt. Harry Lumsden and saw most of its service on the Northwest Frontier of India, gaining a reputation for being something an elite unit and much admired by fellow officers and men alike.

12. Cunningham House is invented but I named it for Alexander Cunningham (1814-1893), the father of the Archaeological Survey of India, founded by him in 1861.

Page 43 (7)

8. Cunningham House, shown here, is based on the real Government House in Lahore, Punjab, rebuilt in 1850 and today the home of the



governor of Punjab Province in Pakistan and known as Governor House.

Page 44 (8)

3. The King, at the time *The Rainbow Orchid* takes place, was George V (1865-1936), who ruled from May 1910 - Jan 1936.

4. The Great Game refers to the political and military manoeuvrings that took place on and around the Northwest Frontier of India and Afghanistan between the Russian and British empires throughout the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. A *jalebi* is an Indian and Persian sweet, made from batter and honey.

7. The little cottage here is based on a house featured in a postcard I found in my g-grandmother's collection, situated on Abbey Road, Knaresborough in North Yorkshire, on the banks of the River Nidd.

Page 45 (9)

2. The mercury vortex engine is a favourite concept of those who believe in alternative energy and secret anti-gravitational technology. It is particularly linked to Vimanas, ancient Indian flying chariots. I'm not sure how it's supposed to work (something to do with gyroscopically spinning electrified mercury) - but I love the term, and it's obscure enough to sound feasible for the story we're in.

3. In the background here, behind Pendleby, is a stone Egyptian *djed* column. It usually appears as a hieroglyph representing stability and connected with the god Osiris, though actual wooden *djeds* were also used in Egyptian ceremonies. Their appearance in certain antique reliefs, for instance at the temple of Hathor at Dendera, has led some to speculate on the idea of ancient Egyptian technologies that used some form of energy such as electricity. There is no actual evidence for this, of course.

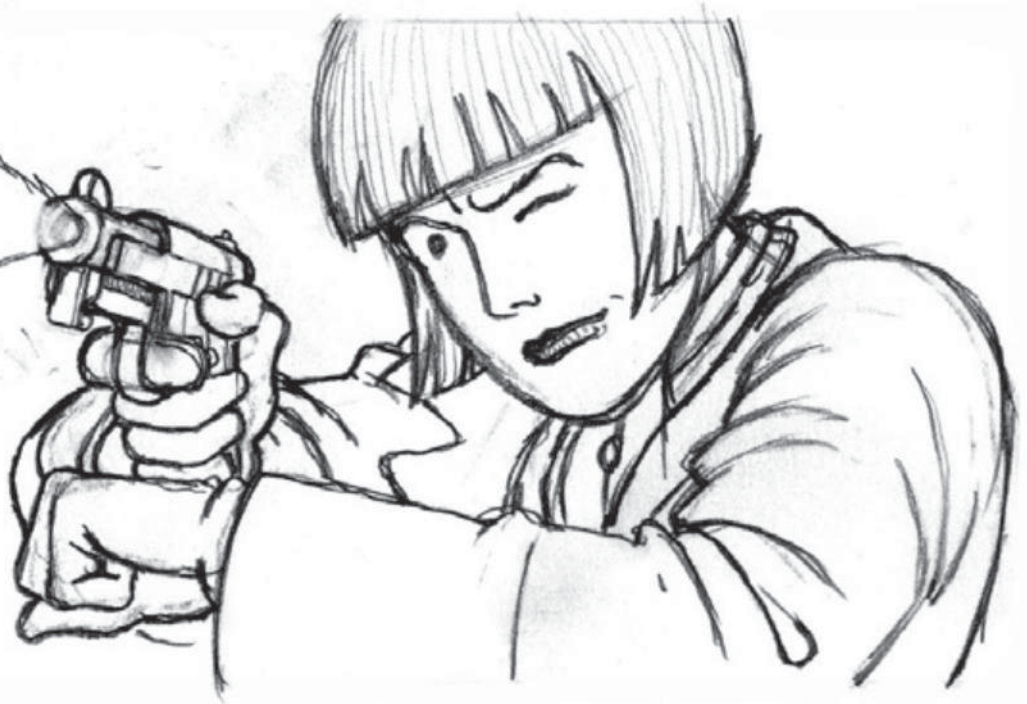
The Western Front here refers to the battle-lines and trenches of France in World War I.

4. Peeking out from under the sheets in the centre of the panel is an Assyrian or Babylonian winged disc sculpture.

Page 46 (10)

5. Mr Zukor is Adolph Zukor (1873-1976), one of the original movie moguls and co-founder of Famous Players Laskey (1912), later becoming Paramount Pictures.

11. Sujan's comment about the moon obscured by clouds has its basis in a Buddhist proverb, "three things cannot be long hidden - the sun, the moon, and the truth".



Page 47 (11)

2. Saran Sar was the location of a violent skirmish between British soldiers and Afridi tribesmen during the 1897 Tirah expedition on the Northwest Frontier.

6. The medal on the left in the frame on the wall behind Fraser-Tipping is an Afghan War medal (1878-80) with two clasps.

The Khyber Pass is a passage through the Safed Koh mountains connecting India (Pakistan today) and Afghanistan. It was the focus of much attention through various moves in the Great Game between Russia and British India.

Page 48 (12)

5. *Kala nag* means black snake, this one in particular being a king cobra. It also happens to be the name of the old elephant in *Toomai of the Elephants* by Rudyard Kipling, collected in *The Jungle Book* (1894).

Page 50 (14)

2. The aircraft is a Fokker F.II, designed and first built in 1919 and used throughout the 1920s. It had a fuel range of about 750 miles, a little further than the Breguet 280T, though it was a good 40mph slower.

Page 51 (15)

1. *Kuri* is Punjabi for girl.

14. *Malika* is an Urdu word meaning queen, or at least a female leader.

Page 52 (16)

3. Evelyn's handgun is a German 1914 model Mauser pocket pistol.

Page 53 (17)

2. The car here is a Model A Ford c.1928, the car that replaced the famous Model T.

Page 54 (18)

1. The fictional Milton Square is based on the real Bedford Square, London.
7. The portrait on the wall behind Sir Alfred is of the British explorer of South America, Percy Fawcett (b.1867). He died sometime around 1925, disappearing into the Amazon while trying to find the lost city of Z.
8. Sesostri III was an Egyptian Pharaoh who ruled 1878-1839 BCE; Mentuhotep was the first ruler of the Eleventh Dynasty (from around 2060 BCE).
9. Nephertites ruled 398-393 BCE.
10. Djoser was the first ruler of the third dynasty, probably dated from somewhere around 2650 BCE. Teti ruled at the start of the sixth dynasty, 2345-2333 BCE; Khufu ruled in the fourth dynasty from around 2580 BCE.
A *serekh* is an enclosure used in Egyptian hieroglyphs indicating that the name therein is royal.
11. The name Professor Bech is a little tribute to Sussi Bech, the Danish author and artist of the *Nofret* series of comics set in ancient Egypt and known for their historical accuracy. I gave a copy of RO2 to Colin Mathieson to give to Sussi on his trip to a comic festival in Denmark, and he returned with a *Nofret* book for me with the sketch shown below. I met Sussi myself on a subsequent trip.



Nofret © Sussi Bech

Page 55 (19)

4. *The Platochronian Atlas* is invented, but refers to the author as possibly being Plato, the Greek philosopher and mathematician (428-347 BCE).
The three maps visible on the wall are, from left to right, the 14th century Polychronian map, the 1532 Oronteus Finaeus map, and the 1513 Piri Reis map.
7. The Solomon Temple refers to the ancient temple supposedly built on Mount Zion in Jerusalem in the 10th century BCE. Solomon was king of Israel after his father, David, though evidence for his actual existence is almost non-existent outside of the Bible.

Page 56 (20)

1. Jampur is a town in Rajanpur in what is now Pakistan.

Page 57 (21)

1. A *sepoy* is an Indian military rank equivalent to that of a private.
4. A *subedar* is an Indian military rank equivalent to that of a lieutenant.
5. The 14th Punjab Regiment were formed in 1922 from an amalgamation of the 19th, 20th, 21st, 22nd and 24th Punjabis and 40th Pathans, each of these forming a battalion in the new regiment. Their uniform was usually red with green facings, but here they are shown in their field khaki while on manoeuvres.
9. Timbuktu is a town in Mali, West Africa. It is quite often used as an exclamation for a place of unknowable or impossibly remote distance.

Page 58 (22)

1. The Civil Hospital building is based on the Byculla Railway Hospital in South Mumbai (formerly Bombay), built to provide care for workers on the Great Indian Peninsula Railway (started in 1849 and completed in 1870). It still exists today as the Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Railway Hospital.
2. A vertebrosteral rib is one that is connected to both the spine and the sternum, and is also known as a true rib. The pulmonary pleura is a double-membrane part of the lung.
3. *Saheb* (sometimes *sahib*) is an Urdu word (though it exists in many related languages) meaning owner or proprietor, though more often just as friend or comrade.
9. Jamsetjee refers to the Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy Hospital, also known as Grant Medical College, in Mumbai (Bombay). The name Surgeon-Major Hatch is used here after an actual surgeon by the name of William Keith Hatch (1854-1935) who was professor of pathology, anatomy, and curator of the museum at Jamsetjee. He wasn't at Ahnai Tangi, though he did serve in the tail end of the Second Anglo-Afghan war in 1880.
Ahnai Tangi was an eight-day battle in Jan 1920 during the 1919-20 Waziristan campaign on the Northwest Frontier of India.
13. *Haleem* is a thick soup-like dish of Arabian origin made up from slow-cooked wheat, barley, lentils, spices and meat.

Page 59 (23)

12. *Grummy* is a 1920s expression meaning depressed. *Hit all the sixes* is another term of the era, meaning to give 100%, referencing the firing of all six cylinders on a powerful engine - nothing to do with cricket!

Page 60 (24)

3. Flappers were the young and trendy, liberal young women, the 'It' girls of the 1920s Jazz Age. They tended to wear shorter skirts, have their hair bobbed, drove cars, smoked, danced and flirted!
10. Josette's call to arms, "Chacun son chemin! Chacun son destin", is French and translates as "Each man his path! Each man his fate!". She means everyone is responsible for making their own decisions and is thus responsible for their own actions and consequences.

Page 61 (25)

1. The *reveille* is a military trumpet call, usually used to wake up the soldiers at sunrise. Indeed the French word translates as 'wake up'.



Page 62 (26)

1. Mr Burke has the occupation of genealogist, and so I named him after John Burke (1787-1848), the founder and original publisher of *Burke's Peerage*, the authoritative guide to the royal and titled families of the United Kingdom since 1826.

4. As with Mr Burke, Mr Herber is named after a genealogist, this time Mark D. Herber, the author of a very useful book on genealogy, *Ancestral Trails* (1997).

Page 63 (27)

1. Karachi Cantonment railway station was built in 1897-98. The letters NWR on the train stand for North Western Railway, and after much research and hunting through a couple of obscure books, I found that, for the late 1920s, they were generally painted red.

4. A *dhodi* is a bearer or carrier. A *kuli* is a manual labourer and may also be used to mean carrier. In some instances the term, usually spelled *coolie*, can be used or taken in a derogatory manner, so it is seldom used today in the West. Simikot is a town in the high mountains of Nepal, in the Himalayas. Sherpas are an ethnic group from Nepal and often highly regarded as mountaineers and guides.

5. *Juldi* means hurry. It is a word well-known to me from when I worked as a porter at a mushroom farm - the pickers were primarily Indian and had to pick a lot of mushrooms in a certain time. If us porters weren't emptying their buckets quickly enough we'd get a "Juldi! Juldi!", usually accompanied by a hard stare! They had a wicked sense of humour to make up for it, though.

Page 64 (28)

2. Sepoy Sarru carries a Short Magazine Lee Enfield No.1 Mark III (in use from 1907 onwards).

3. *Sahiba* is the feminine form of *saheb*.

5. *The Kid* was a film made by Charlie Chaplin in 1921 and starred himself and Jackie Coogan (1914-1984). Incidentally, Jackie Coogan's 'Kid' character was the starting inspiration for Josette Tayaut, and therefore her twin sister, Eloise.

6. Ellen Terry (1847-1928) was a great English stage actress, especially known for her Shakespearian roles. She even made a

few films into the early 1920s.

Sarah Bernhardt (1844-1923) was Terry's French equivalent, though her fame was even more widespread and she made a film as early as 1900.

Miranda refers to the daughter of Prospero in Shakespeare's 1611 play, *The Tempest* (one of my favourites, and one I adapted into comic strip form in 1994. My wife and I named our daughter Miranda, born in 2011.)

11. Lady Macbeth is from Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (c.1607); Josephine refers to the wife of Napoleon Bonaparte, Empress of France (1763-1814); Ayesha refers to the Queen of Kor, 'She who must be obeyed' in the 1887 novel *She* by H. Rider Haggard; Joan of Arc (1412-1431) is the French Saint and folk heroine, the Maid of Orleans.

12. *Didi* is a Hindi term meaning older sister.

Page 65 (29)

6. Sixteen *anna* make up one *rupee*.

Page 66 (30)

4. Mr Banerji is the only real-life character (I think) who appears in *The Rainbow Orchid*. He was R. D. Banerji, also known as Rakhaldas Bandyopadhyay (1885-1930), an indigenous pioneer of Indian archaeology who worked extensively at Mohenjo-daro.

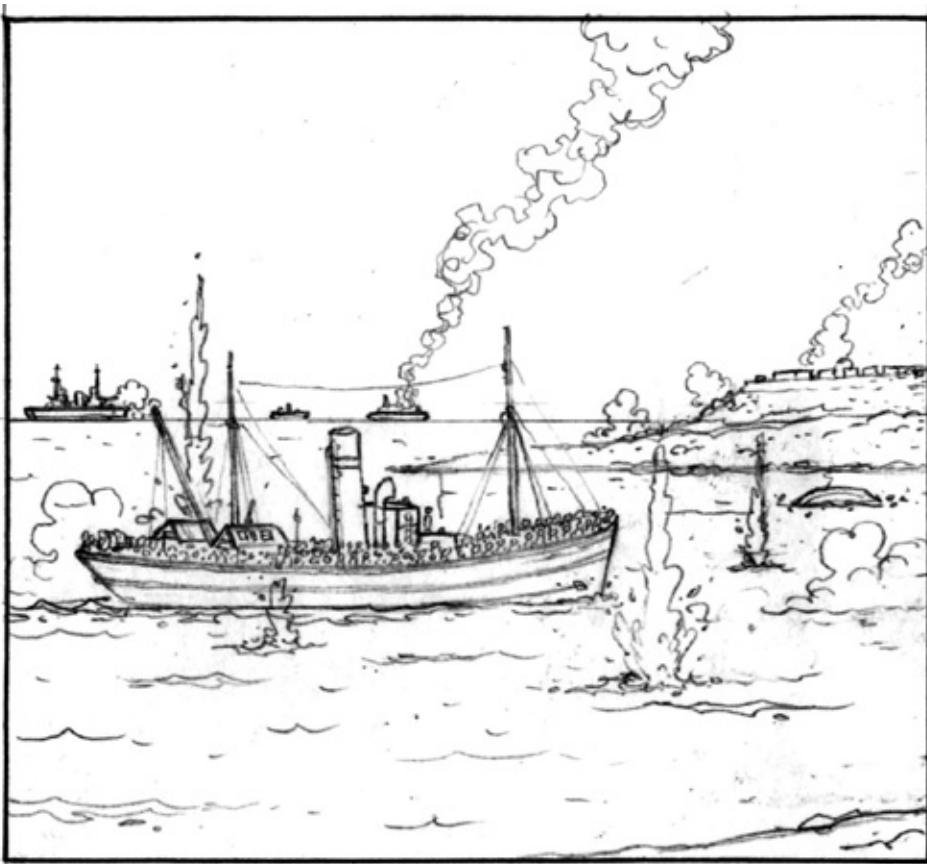
5. The white pillar at Pushtabasti is an invented artefact. The Archaeological Survey of India was founded by the aforementioned Alexander Cunningham in 1861.

8. Mr Spencer is a mistake that I never corrected - I misremembered the name Spooner, as I meant to reference David Brainerd Spooner (1879-1925). Mr Banerji corresponded with Spooner, an Archaeological Survey of India officer, and it is he who suggested the single-horned animals on the seals might be unicorns.

10. This female figurine is made from terracotta and is today housed at the Harappa National Museum in Karachi.

Page 67 (31)

11. Combermere refers to Stapleton Cotton, 1st Viscount Combermere (1773-1865). As well as serving under the Duke of Wellington in the Peninsular War, he besieged the fort of Bharatpur in Rajasthan (1825), a feat that earned him his viscountship.



Page 68 (32)

2. The language Pinkleton and Meru speak is Urvatjan, Meru's native language, and it is invented. It does have some etymological basis, however, in that it is based loosely on a cross between Sanskrit and Romani. My brother, Murray Ewing, wrote a database program so I could build up the vocabulary and use it to translate words and phrases with some consistency. In this panel Pinkleton is saying "They will take you home, Meru. You will see your home again."

3. Meru: "After all this time, father, I am afraid they will not accept me in my homeland."
Pinkleton: "Alfred will do it. I trust him."

10. The Royal Geographical Society was founded in 1830 and was located, from 1870, at no.1 Saville Row, London, then from 1913 at Lowther Lodge in Kensington Gore, where it still exists to this day. It was home to many a famous explorer and supported expeditions by Charles Darwin, David Livingstone, Captain Scott, Ernest Shackleton and Edmund Hillary, to name a few.

Page 69 (33)

2. The panel here shows troops landing on the shores of the Gallipoli peninsula in 1915. One of the prime planners for this operation was the then First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill. The landings were something of a disaster and the experience fed into Churchill's far better-prepared plans for D-Day in World War II (1944).

3. Kerves Spur (more correctly Kereves Spur) is one of the spurs leading up to the high point of Achi Baba on the Gallipoli peninsula, looking over the Dardanelles.

4. In November 1915 a storm raged over Gallipoli and the North Staffordshire Regiment's trenches were flooded with icy water, drowning many men, while others died from the collapsing trench walls or were even dashed against rocks from the force. My own grandfather just missed this disaster as he was invalided to Malta

a few days beforehand, then home to England, with pleurisy and pneumonia. Like Sepoy Saru in India, British soldiers in Gallipoli carried the Short Magazine Lee Enfield Mark III, as can be seen here.

7. Hand grenades were manufactured on campaign by using empty tin cans and packing them with bursting charges and barbed-wire, named jam-tin bombs.

11. Sir Alfred is holding an ancient Mayan gold plaque here, while in the background is a wooden Inca statuette.

Page 70 (34)

1. Pinkleton is being cremated on a funeral pyre in the Hindu and Sikh (and Urvatjan) tradition.

7. George Scrubbs and Newton's meeting place is based on the 1926-built Bond Street tube station, demolished in the 1980s.

10. Chalksea and Little Trilling are both invented place names.

Page 71 (35)

7. The Afridi tribesman is pulling out a Khyber knife, or *pesh-kabz*.

Page 72 (36)

3. The bird soaring above the party here is a White-backed Vulture.

5. *Dhal* is a split-pea or lentil stew. The word 'dal' comes from the Sanskrit 'to split'.

7. *Barfani chita* is Urdu for snow leopard (or snow cheetah).

Page 73 (37)

2. The markhor is a wild mountain goat that lives in the region (Afghanistan and Pakistan). It is currently thought there may be as few as 2000-4000 in existence. They are excellent climbers.

5. Snow leopards cannot roar. But this is a loud growl!

6. Snow leopards are characterised by their light colour (ranging from almost-white to a greyish-tan), thick fur (to keep them warm), big paws (for snow walking), and long tails (for balance). Despite its name, the snow leopard is more closely related to the tiger than the leopard. They are an endangered species, with possibly as few as 4000 animals existing in the wild.

Page 76 (40)

11. Back on page 46 Julius and Sujan looked up at a full moon. Here, eight days later, it is in its waning gibbous phase.

Page 77 (9)

5. In Stanley Kubrick's final film, *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999), the password Dr. Bill Harford (Tom Cruise) uses to get into the mansion house for the party, in disguise, is Fidelio (in an earlier version of the script it was actually *Rainbow Fidelio*). *Fidelio*

is the name of Beethoven's only opera (1805), in which the character of Leonore disguises herself as a prison guard, named Fidelio (meaning faithful), in order to rescue her husband from prison. With the idea of disguise and rescue I decided to have Leonore as my password in this scene.

Page 79 (11)

2. *Bowling action* refers to the set of movements and techniques a cricket bowler uses to deliver the ball towards the batsman. Here Scrubbs is using it to describe Eloise's effective jug-striking method!

8. Scrubbs misremembers the password as Elsinore because he can remember the 'L' and the 'nore' but nothing more. Elsinore is in Denmark and is largely known in Britain as the location for William Shakespeare's play, *Hamlet*. Getting back to the original password, Leonore, and its trail back to Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut* - that film was based on a novella by Arthur Schnitzer, *Traumnovelle* (Dream Story), where the password used is Denmark.

10 Eloise's cry of *Montjoie Marianne* is based on the French war cry, *Montjoie St Denis!* Montjoie means 'show me the way' (little mounds that served as direction posts) and Saint Denis was the patron saint of France. Eloise has adopted Marianne instead of St. Denis, the revolutionary national female emblem of France and liberty - much more her style.

Page 81 (1)

5. In Kalash society goats are seen as pure so can only be looked after by the men. Women must take care of the other, less-pure, livestock, including cows. Pure (*onjeshta*) things include water, wheat and wine; impure (*pragata*) things include women, Muslims and chicken!

6. The Kalasha language is spoken today by around 6,000 people, of which only half are true Kalash (the other half having been converted to Islam, where the language will probably die out). Until the year 2000 the Kalash had no alphabet, though a written Urdu-based form had been developed under linguists Greg and Elsa Cooper throughout the 80s and 90s. In 2003 a Roman-script version was developed and adapted from the old Urdu-script, again with the help of the Coopers, allowing the Kalash to record their oral traditions in book form.

When faced with having the Kalash characters speak in *The Rainbow Orchid* I spent quite a while looking at the sparse online word lists and reading obscure research by various linguists, but knew I'd never be able to present the language accurately through my own meagre efforts. I eventually made the decision to try and contact the Coopers, and in March 2010 I got in touch with Elsa Cooper. Thanks to her, and her friendship with a native speaker, Taj Khan Kalash, I was able to have my dialogue correctly translated - a rare outing for the Kalasha language in the West. *Abuij e Baba! Tay s'is suais e?* - Ah, you are awake! How do you feel?

7. *Tay anora kay shiaw tik. Adhek hasi his e, baba?* You must be hungry. Would you like something to eat?
Ajo ticak takla jhonet day! pari la, c'as'a zhe ja' au on! She looks better! Fetch some cheese and walnut bread!

8. *Ug pi aas e?* Have you had some water?

Isa shilak hawa ajat hui! She needs fresh air!

The little girl in this frame has blonde hair, which is one of the outstanding things about some Kalasha - blonde hair and blue eyes. This is just one of the factors that has led to speculation about a connection with Ancient Greece and Macedonia.

Page 82 (2)

9. *Khamkha tay au zhuel'i hiw takla apaw des!* Make sure you eat plenty and stay strong!

Khodayar baba. Farewell, sister.

Koshan thi pari. Have a safe journey.

Wheat and maize bread is staple part of the Kalasha diet - it is round and flat, and sometimes flavoured with walnut and cheese.

10. *Warek deshaw moc in day!* Outsiders are coming!

11. *Wareg asta angris ita aan!* Here come more foreigners!

The wooden statue here is a *Gandao*. These are crafted in memory of deceased ancestors and loved ones and placed on their gravesites. The tradition is no longer as prevalent as it once was, partly due to the decline of wood carvers and the expense of the feast that accompanies their installation, and partly due to the fact that they are often plundered by thieves for museums or destroyed by local Muslims.



Page 83 (3)

5. The Afridi are a Pashtun tribe who live on the Northwest Frontier of the Khyber and Spin Ghar mountains.

The Dolly Sisters (Rosie and Jenny Deutsch) were twins and Vaudeville performers, active from about 1907 and into the 1930s. Part of their act included dancing as Siamese twins. They were born in 1892. Jenny hanged herself in 1941, a few years after a serious road crash, and Rosie died in 1970. A film about their life was made in 1945.

Zotzed is 1920s slang for killed.

6. The Lowari Pass is one of the four main mountain passes leading into Chitral.

Page 85 (5)

1. The building here is a Kalasha temple to the goddess *Jeshtak*, the door flanked by replicas of the horse of another of their gods, *Balimain*.

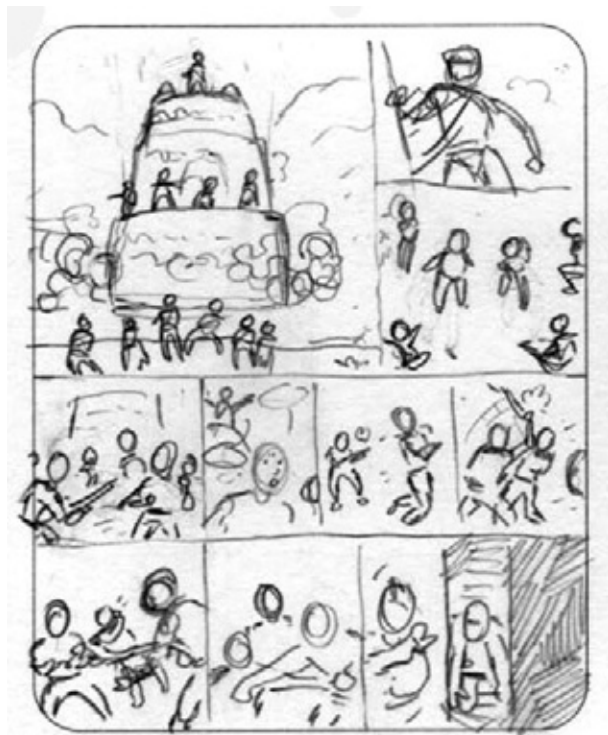
2. Sir Alfred here is referring to Daniel Dravot, one of the characters in Rudyard Kipling's 1888 novella, *The Man Who Would Be King*, who declared himself a god in Kafiristan and ended up falling to his death when his subjects discovered he was a mere mortal.

Page 88 (8)

10. Mr Drubbin here shows off his ju-jutsu skills.

Page 89 (13)

9. Vesicular rock is covered in tiny holes formed by gas bubbles in volcanic magma that has since cooled and left their mark.



Page 90 (14)

1. More Ancient Greek from my translator, Quintus...

Ἐνθαδεῖρρεται ἡ ὁδὸς εἰς τέλος ἡμῶν ἐν τῇ πυλῇ νικηθέντων. ὁ μὲν Βάλακρος καὶ ὁ Πολέμων ἀπολώλασι τῷ φύλακι, οἱ δὲ λοιποὶ ἀπέθανον λόγχαις ἐμπυροῖς ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ βληθείσας. ἔνθαδε τέλος ἔχει ἡ γῆ. ὁ Ἀδμητος τοῦ Καλλίνους.
Ὁ φύλαξ

Transliteration:

*Enthade erkhetai hē hodos eis telos hēmōn en tēi pulēi nikēthenton. ho men balakros kai ho balakros ho polemōn apolōlasi tōi phulaki, hoi de loipoi apethanon logkhais empurois ek tou ouranou blētheisais. enthade telos ekhei hē gē. ho admētos tou kallinous.
Ho phulax.*

English:

*Our journey ends here, defeated at the gate. Balakros and Polemon are lost to the guardian, the rest killed by flaming spears from the sky. Here is the end of the world. Admetos, son of Kallines.
The Guardian.*

Page 93 (17)

9. The Urvatjan spoken here translates as "Outsiders! They've come from the outside!"

Page 94 (18)

1. Meru says "Wait ... Let me talk to you! Wait!"

9. Upjanu's head-gear is based on that of a Harappan statuette.

10. Upjanu is saying: "Outsiders! Come to invade our peace!"

Page 95 (19)

2. Upjanu: "It is foolish for you to return, Meru. This is no longer your home."

3. Meru says "I have come to clear my name, Upjanu. Many years have passed."

5. *Vastavaa* is translated literally as "hands forward" (*vasta vaa*), it is an Urvatjan call to action.

6. The armoured blades that adorn the right arms of the makahatharuu guard are inspired by the 'proto-Shiva' figure, found on a seal at Mohenjo-daro (as shown on page 66).

Page 96 (20)

3. Upjanu is saying "Here is Meru, a traitor to his people, returned to confront justice!"

4. A *vimana* is a mythical flying chariot that has its forerunners in the *Vedas*, ancient Indian texts, and appears in Sanskrit epics such as the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, ridden (or piloted) by gods and men alike. A Sanskrit document of highly doubtful origin appeared in the early twentieth century, the *Vaimanika Shastra*, which shows how a *vimana* works and how to build different types of *vimana*.

The *Mahabharata* (The Great Tale of the Bharata Dynasty) is a Sanskrit epic of ancient India, with its older parts dating to, perhaps, around 400 BCE.

5. The guard is saying "Quiet! No talking!"

6. Upjanu says "Here stands a murderer. Mahiku, son of the great queen Madsha, is dead because of this man!"

Gozavu says "Peace, Upjanu. The court will decide, our queen will judge."

As mentioned already (see page 10) Gozavu's appearance is based on that of the statue of the 'Priest King', discovered at Mohenjo-daro in 1927 by Rao Bahadur Kasinath Narain Dixit, an Archaeological Survey of India officer.

8. Note that the royal trumpeters have instruments made from the horns of the single-horned cattle seen earlier (the Mohenjo-daro 'unicorns').

10. The guard is saying "Respect Makshjia!"

12. The queen's head-dress is inspired by a number of Harappan terracotta figures. The royal colour, as you can see, is red. In Urvatja red can only be worn by those with a direct connection to the queen. So, for instance you can see her priestess guard have red belts. (This does not include red beads or stones, for instance those around Majaa's neck or on Gozavu and Upjanu's headbands). The only other person you can see wearing red on these pages (96 and 97) is Upjanu's son, Yadhu, the queen's consort.

The priestess guard have their origins in the 'dancing girl' bronze statuette discovered at Mohenjo-daro in 1927, though developed somewhat - especially as the dancing girl is pretty-much naked.

Page 97 (21)

2. Upjanu says "Silence, murderer!"

3. Upjanu is saying to the queen "Great queen, a traitor has returned to Urvatja. I advise the death sentence."

4. Gozavuu says "Great queen, my advice is that the court must decide. Let us consider carefully."

6. The queen says "The court."

The mark you see on Makshjia's forehead is a sun with three rays - this occurs throughout the story, on the stone tablets at the beginning and elsewhere in Urvatja, for instance on Gozavu's staff. It is the sign of the Urvatjan's original homeland - three land masses, the sun shining a single beam on each.

7. The guard says "Enter."

11. Upjanu says “You are, for now, guests of Makshjia. You will be looked after.”

Page 98 (22)

8. I’m not sure what kind of a creature a *bakku* might be, but I suspect those are its horns, or tusks, adorning the queen’s throne on the previous two pages.

9. *Uha* is an Urvatjan term that can mean yes, okay, indeed, or any kind of acknowledgement.

Page 99 (23)

1. The vague basis for this story was the idea of Augustus Le Plongeon’s, and later James Churchwood’s, lost continent of Mu standing for the homeland, with the Urvatjans founding what would become the Indus Valley civilisation and the Agva the founders of Plato’s mythical Atlantis. Perhaps the Ukkha had something to do with Ancient Egypt. I intentionally left this all very vague as I didn’t want to relate it specifically to those ideas.

5. The priestess is saying “She was discovered by a farmer in the Caves of Devizacara” (*Devizacara* refers to ghosts or spirits).

7. The priestess says “Her wound has been bathed in the water.”

10. Gozavu says “Bring food for our guests, priestess.” *Gurasunti* is the word for priestess, it means pure (*gura*) one or person (*sunti*).

The priestess replies “At once, Keeper Gozavu.”

Page 100 (24)

1. This page was a little bit of a risk in that it is mostly silent, and any dialogue is all in Urvatjan. However, I hoped that the reader would be able to pick up the general idea of the relationship between Makshjia and Meru, and of course of it is explained a couple of pages later with Meru’s story.

3. The priestess is saying “Greetings, sister.”

7. The guard says “No entry, priestess. Turn back.”

12. Makshjia says “Meru, you must leave. Upjanu intends to kill you.”

Meru says “He lied and set me up, Makshjia. It was an accident. I still love you.” While ‘set me up’ is the modern translation, he actually uses an Urvatjan phrase - *hoha mi oochaya* - he ‘fabricated my shadow’.

13. Makshjia says “Don’t say that. You must forget this life.”

14. Makshjia says “You must forget your home and find a new place.”

15. She says “Go now, Meru. For me - save your life and leave.”

Page 101 (25)

5. The guard is starting to say “Do not ...”

13. The Urvatjan that Gozavu speaks here means “Guards! Meru is free!”

Zirvana means peace, or calm.

14. Meru says “Let me tell you.
Gozavu says “Tell then!”

Page 102 (26)

1, *Makhatharuu* is the name for the pilot class of the *makhatha*, the Urvatjan flying machines.

3. *Navu* (plural *nava*) is young boy or apprentice, *nava* (plural *navi*) is young girl or acolyte. This relates also the terms for man (*naru*) and woman (*nara*). Words ending in ‘u’ tend to be male, words ending in ‘a’ tend to be female.

4. *Shimdalo* is rainbow and *ludisa* is orchid.

5. Meru’s Urvatjan is translated as “let me speak!” Majaa’s *babata* means father.

Page 103 (27)

6. *Urvaa- dar* translates as eastern door.

7. *Paani devatu* is exactly as Meru says, water of the goddess.

Page 104 (28)

3. The Urvatjan scholar is saying “Greetings of the day, Majaa.” She replies “My greetings to you.”

7. *Laastra* is book or record, *Mahaa Migaka* is Great Doom (*migaka* is doom, *migata* is dead, and *migatu* is death).

11. The Somme refers to the action in the First World War that took place between July and November 1916. July 1st - the first day of the Allied offensive - saw almost 20,000 British dead (20% of the fighting force) and over 35,000 wounded, not to mention over 2,000 missing and almost 600 captured as prisoners of war. Total Allied dead for the operation are thought to stand at around 146,500, with 165,000 on the German side.

Page 105 (29)

1. *Ilukajanu* is the Urvatjan word for heart.

4. Gozavu here speaks a tribute to his goddess, “My goddess, I adore thee.”





7. *Ziknu* means small. *lisha* is the name of a mountain.

Page 107 (31)

2. Evelyn uses a rather unusual fighting technique here, giving away the fact that she knows some karate, a martial art that had only been made public a few years earlier, in Japan at least. The technique is *nukite*, or spear-hand. She follows it up with a *mae-geri* (front kick) and *taisho* (palm-heel strike).

Page 108 (32)

12. Gozavu's phrase here translates as "Light of the goddess!"

Page 110 (34)

2. Majaa is saying to her father "He has made a copy of the Book of Great Doom, father!"

3. The Guard-captain is saying "They are escaping!"

4. Majaa is saying "You mustn't take it!"

6. The Guard-captain is giving the order to fire at Drubbin ("strike him!").

10. Upjanu is saying "Block that makhatha's path!"

13. Queen Makshjia is saying "Farewell, Meru, my love."

Page 111 (35)

3. *Miltonia spectabilis* is a species of orchid most commonly found in Brazil. *Catasetum macrocarpum*, also a South American flower, is also known as the Monk's Head orchid.

4. *Huntleya wallisii* is another South American species of orchid, found particularly in Colombia and Ecuador. *Paphiopedilum* is a genus of orchid. Perkins is referring here to a *Paphiopedilum dayanum*, an example found uniquely on Mount Kinabalu in Borneo.

7. *Phalaenopsis aphrodite* is a beautiful white orchid native to Taiwan and the Philippines, discovered in 1704 by the Moravian missionary Georg Joseph Kamel (1661-1706).

12. A *gudgeon* is a small edible fish, related to the carp and often used as bait. It's exactly how Grope sees Newton.

Page 112 (36)

1. In the middle background of this panel you can just see one of the towers of Wembley Stadium, which was built especially for the 1924 Exhibition - as many of these buildings were. The stadium was demolished in 2003.

The British Empire Exhibition of 1924 was described by the then Prince of Wales as the "shop window of the Empire!"

2. The Battle of Arghandi was also known as the battle of the Chardeh Valley or Killa Kazi and took place in the Second Anglo-Afghan War on 11 Dec 1879 near to Kabul. On that date F Battery A Brigade of the Royal Horse Artillery had to retreat in the face of overwhelming numbers of Afghans, abandoning their guns in the process, which were in danger of being captured by the tribesmen and ghazis. The 9th Lancers made several charges to try and save the guns, which was eventually done under Colonel Charles Metcalf Macgregor (1840-87). The Reverend James William Adams (1839-1903), of the Bengal Ecclesiastical Establishment, won the Victoria Cross for rescuing several 9th Lancers who had become trapped in a water-filled ditch while trying to recover the guns of F/A RHA, including lifting one of the guns to free a man.

3. As well as the Palace of Arts and the Palace of Industry, the British Empire Exhibition boasted the Palace of Engineering, the Palace of Beauty and the Palace of Dancing.

Treasure Island was described as 'a real children's paradise', 'for children only, a playground with no tiresome rules and regulations ... in which boys and girls may enjoy themselves without restraint'. No doubt the featured characters of Captain Hook, Sir Francis Drake, and Mr and Mrs Noah kept an eye on them though!

4. The description of the India Pavilion given by the guide here and in the next panel is a very paired-down version of the actual description in the 1925 guide-leaflet and visitors' map.

6. A very good friend of mine is known for her prolific use of the word 'marvellous', so I decided to have her in the comic, in 1920s form, exclaiming just that word. I think she's the only person I know who I put in the comic.

Page 113 (37)

1. The two 'extras' in the foreground here are based on the mother and father characters in David Lean's 1944 film of Noël Coward's 1939 play, *This Happy Breed*, as played by Robert Newton (1905-1956, playing Frank Gibbons) and Celia Johnson (1908-1982, playing Ethel Gibbons). In the film they visit the British Empire Exhibition and sit outside the India Pavilion for a bit.

2. The idea here, as just about discernible from the hoarding in front of the orchestra, is that Mr Palfrey is conducting the lost Henry Purcell operetta that Sir Alfred and Julius discovered for him, and which opened our story.

3. There really was an ostrich paddock at the British Empire Exhibition, though it was attached to the Africa Pavilion and was closer to Wembley Stadium.

6. The lion emblem, the logo of the British Empire Exhibition, was designed by poster artist and illustrator Frederick Charles Herrick (1887-1970).

Page 114 (38)

8. Although I didn't intend it at the time, I've since thought of the trio of background characters on the left in this panel as an alternative-reality Julius, Lily and Sir Alfred. I wonder what they're called and what they do?

10. I found (and have since lost) a recipe that mentioned some of these ingredients for a powder that gets rid of ants.

Page 115 (39)

1. The Royal Horticultural Society was founded in 1804 with the purpose of promoting horticulture and gardening. The Amateur Orchid Growers' Council of Great Britain is an invented body, though there is a real British Orchid Council, an umbrella organisation whose membership includes over fifty UK-based orchid societies as well as several other orchid and botanical groups and charities.

2. *Miltonia flava* (the Yellow Miltonia) is a Brazilian orchid. *Gongora maculata* is native to Trinidad, Guyana and Peru. *Serapias occultata* is also known as *Serapias parviflora*, but I liked the idea of the Reverend growing an *occultata*. It can be found across the Mediterranean.

11. Charles 'Buddy' Rogers (1904-1999) has been mentioned in these annotations already as he starred in the 1927 film *Wings* (see page 32). I chose him to be suggested by Lily as he does look a little like Julius Chancer and is almost the same age (a little younger, actually).

Page 116 (40)

1. The ostrich is a large flightless bird that inhabits the continent of Africa. Contrary to popular belief, they do not stick their head in the sand. Nathaniel is pretty lucky really, as their powerful clawed feet are capable of kicking, disembowling, and killing a man.

11. The woman on the far right of this panel, in green, is the same woman who appears at the very start of *The Rainbow Orchid*, on the left of panel 1.

Page 117 (41)

3. The Ashmolean Museum is the world's first university museum, in Oxford, started in 1678 to hold the collection donated by Elias Ashmole. I've always been interested in Ashmole (1617-1692) because on a trip to Lichfield I discovered that my mum was born in the same house that he was (albeit 325 years later).

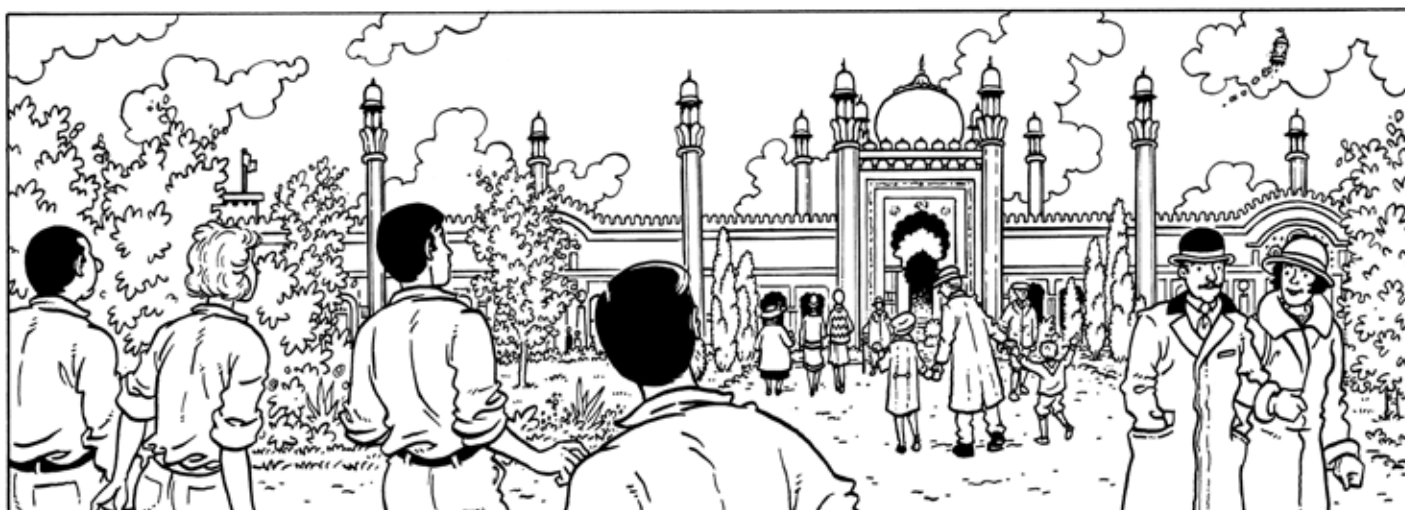
4. Szilárd refers to Leó Szilárd (1898-1964), the Hungarian physicist who came up with the idea of the nuclear chain reaction in 1933. At the time of our story here, he was a professor at the University of Berlin and worked with Albert Einstein (1879-1955). In 1939, by which time he was working in the United States, he persuaded Einstein to co-sign a letter to the US President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, warning him about the Nazis' research into nuclear weapons, an event which had its own chain reaction resulting in the Manhattan project and the atomic bombs dropped on Japan in 1945. Szilárd was the first scientist to conceive the idea that a nuclear chain reaction could be used as a bomb, though he was against the idea of its actual use, hoping that a mere demonstration would be enough to end the conflict. His horror of the atomic bomb led him switch disciplines and he became a molecular biologist, though he still ended up conceiving the idea of a cobalt bomb, a device that had the potential to destroy all life on Earth.

5. The statue is the head of Amenophis III, also known as Amenhotep III, chiseled in quartzite. He was the ninth ruler of the eighteenth Dynasty, from about 1386-1350 BCE, and the father of Akhenaten.

6. Sir Henry Rider Haggard (1856-1925) was an adventure writer, most well-known for novels such as *She* (1887), *King Solomon's Mines* (1885) and *Allan Quatermain* (1887). As already noted, his work is a major influence on *The Rainbow Orchid*, and his physical appearance was the basis for the look of Sir Alfred Catesby-Grey.

7. I chose a lemonade factory because my gg-grandfather, David Ewing, worked in one in the late nineteenth century.

12. You'll notice the posters behind Scrubbs and Pickle realising Tayaut's ambition for the *Fantastic Flying Furnace*, as inspired by the crash, in Karachi, of the Breguet. You might also notice the colourful nature and orchid-like appearance of the artificial flower in the woman's hat in this panel. ●



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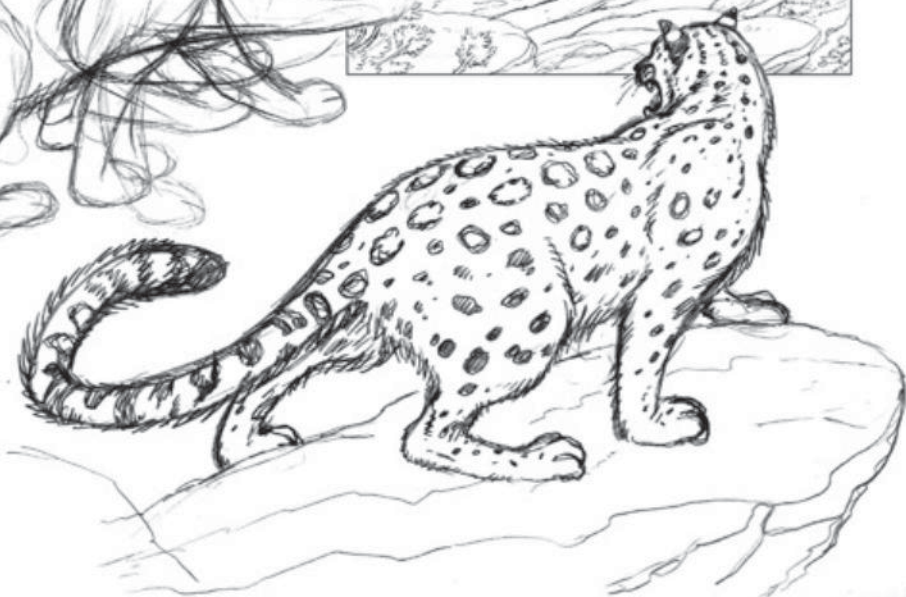
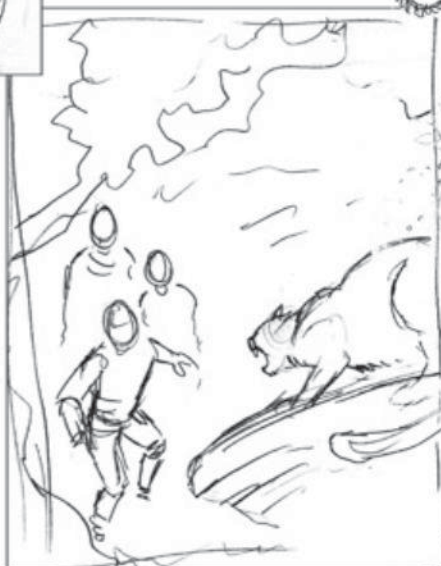


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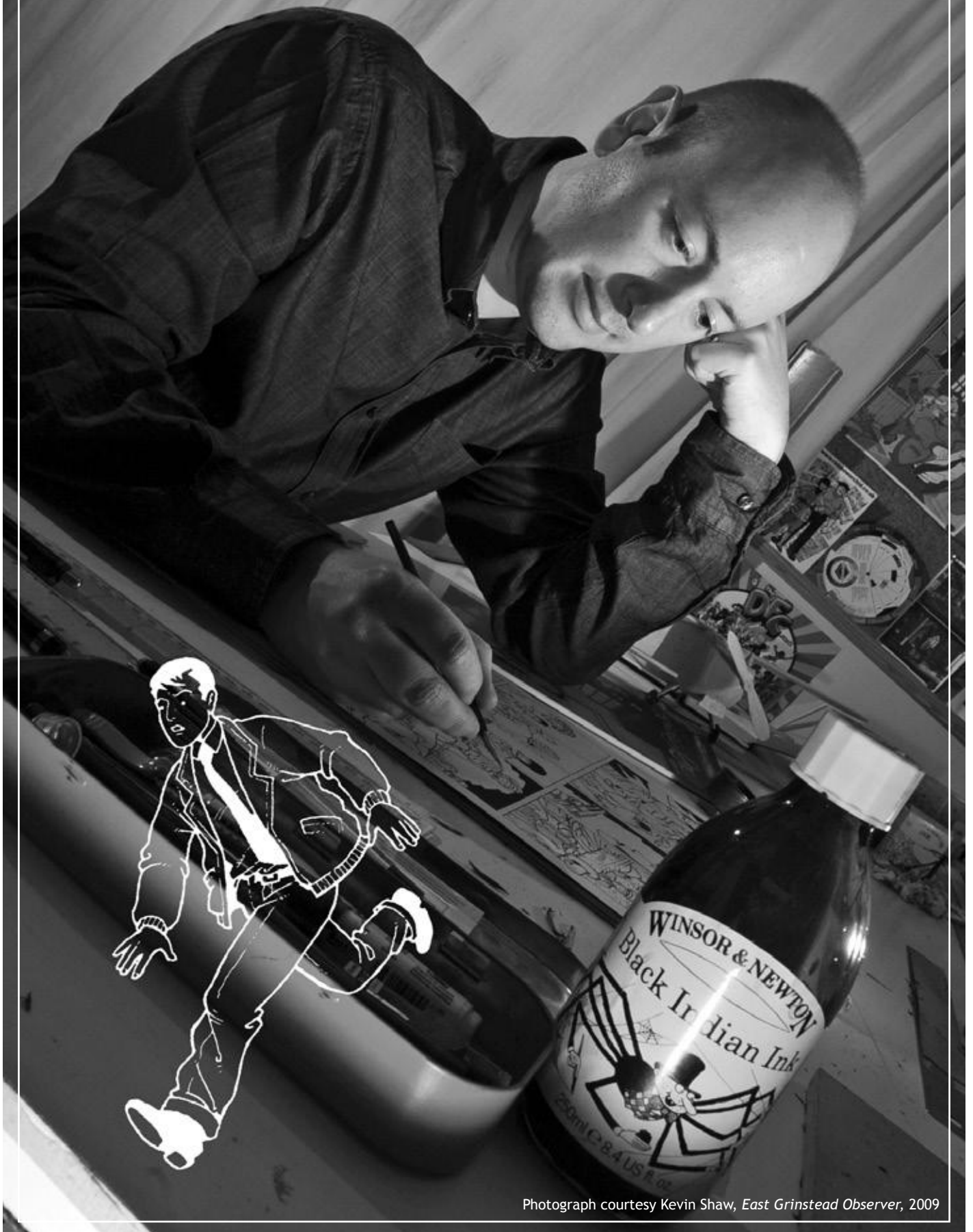
COVER SKETCHBOOK *Complete edition*





CLEARING THE LINE

Matt Badham talks to Garen Ewing



Photograph courtesy Kevin Shaw, *East Grinstead Observer*, 2009

The following interview was conducted in November 2008 and published on the Forbidden Planet International Blog in February 2009. Many thanks to Matthew Badham and Joe Gordon for permission to reprint the interview here.

Matt Badham: Please tell us about your life and career as a cartoonist so far* (with its various ups and downs). *Bit of a tall order, I know.

Garen Ewing: Crikey, a big question! I'll see if I can keep my answer as short as possible. My introduction to both drawing and comics came mainly through spending quite a bit of time in hospital as a child. My mum would supply me with comics to read and blank paper and pencils to draw with, and I think the escapism these tools offered was quite an important aspect of my early life. Making-up stories and telling them as comics has seemed like the only natural thing to do since then. I was very average at school and left on my sixteenth birthday, going to live in the States with my dad for a year. I returned to the UK and got onto a college art course, which I dropped out of after a few months. Since then I've had a variety of jobs, intermingled with patches of self-employment as an illustrator. I've been on my latest stint as an illustrator and comic creator, full-time, since 2002.

MB: What lessons have you learnt along the way? What would you do differently?

GE: I don't really regret the route I've ended up taking so far, but I sometimes wish I'd been more focussed on my art and writing in my formative years. I got sidetracked several times into other areas. I got into a band, did amateur dramatics, martial arts. Anything I got into I'd immerse myself 110% and everything else would be abandoned. I think I'd be a lot further on in my 'career' if I'd have been more focused. Having said that, all those things provided experiences that helped form me, so I can't say I'd like to go back and erase any of them from my life.

MB: Did that year in America influence your art?

GE: The big thing I discovered in America, and this was late 1985, was getting an Apple Mac, which opened up the world of desktop publishing for me. I was producing a little fanzine then, and my dad's wife at the time was a professional typesetter. She had this huge machine at work (a phototypesetter, I think), in downtown Los Angeles. It produced proper type whereas I'd been bashing away on a ribbon typewriter until then. She very kindly typeset a few articles for my fanzine, bringing the master text home on bromide paper to be pasted up. Just a couple of weeks later I was producing text just as good on a home printer.

MB: How come you dropped out of college (I did too, all the good people do)?

GE: I'd attempted to get on to a couple of local courses and not been successful. My mum actually wrote to one of them and asked why I'd been rejected, to which they answered that while I had the skill to "copy neatly" other artists' work, I "did not have the creativity that could lead to worthwhile employment in the world of creative art". In fact, the portfolio I took to my interviews was all original work; the only difference was that it consisted of my fanzine illustrations and comic strips - in black ink and looking quite commercial - whereas

other applicants took work from their sixth form art classes, paintings and pencilled art and so on. I guess I didn't show a lot of variety, but I knew they were wrong in their judgement of me. I was eventually offered a place on a general art course that became unexpectedly available, but I didn't enjoy it. I knew exactly what I wanted to do, so spending much of my time doing photography, pottery, fashion and art history didn't engage me. I've never been very 'arty' and didn't fit in at all. I wasn't a fashionable dresser like the other art students, I didn't like the music they liked, but also I was surprised at the poor level of drawing skill some of them had. In retrospect, I now realise there's a lot more to art than just drawing technically well, but at the time, I felt like a fish out of water, so skipped loads of lessons, got called in with an ultimatum, and decided to leave rather than stick it out. I was young, and probably foolish! Why did you drop out of college? I'm always interested in hearing that other people did too.

MB: Now I think about it, I was kicked out for being a waster, which I was (and, in a way, still am). Do you think that there's a part of the 'art world' that looks down on commercial art and fails to appreciate the sheer skill of many commercial artists?

GE: It's a two-way street, I guess. Both parties are guilty of it. Commercial illustration is, after all, done for the money, but it has to be priced competitively, and actually it's Proper Art that makes the big money in the end. The level of skill involved in commercial art often has to be very high, whereas it's less a quantifiable skill and more an aesthetic value that drives arty-art. I'm making sweeping statements here; many artists straddle both worlds. At [small press comics con] Caption this year a show of hands was asked for from one of the panel audiences: how many people made comics just for the love of it, how many people made comics hoping one day to do it as a living, and how many people made comics for a living (which is where I put my hand up, along with two or three others). The largest segment was the middle group, and the sentiment expressed was that it was a shame fewer and fewer people seemed to be making comics purely for the love of it. Well, of course, I do make comics for the love of it, it just so happens that I love doing it so much, I've turned it into my job, and unfortunately I need money to live as well. I haven't chosen comics because I think it's an easy way to earn money; you'd be mad to think that. In fact, I make a loss on my comics work, because I spend too much time on it (I write them as well, and I don't think any of my clients would pay for the research I do, for instance). My hourly rate would be a very unrealistic price to charge when it's all added up.

MB: Please tell us a bit about your early fanzines.

GE: At secondary school I got into role-playing games with a small group of friends and soon discovered the gaming fanzine scene, which was vibrant. Within a few months I was putting together my first fanzine, which came out in March 1985, when I was fifteen. It was through this that I started doing illustrations for other fanzines and got my art around the place. Comic strips were always a part of these fanzines, and I eventually turned my attention solely to the comics aspect, my first love.

MB: I get the impression you've never been that bothered about being in fashion. Has this attitude influenced your art? Didn't you get advice at one point that you should go all Image/Rob Liefeld to sell your work?

GE: I don't have the patience for doing something that I have no real interest in. It's fine with a short commercial illustration job, where the work will take up no more than a couple of days, but comic strips are so labour-intensive that I lose interest very quickly unless I'm completely into it. This is why I'm not very good at collaborating with others on strips, I'm afraid. Starting *The Rainbow Orchid* was a result of this attitude. I thought, if I'm going to spend so much time creating a comic, I have to forget what anyone else might be interested in and do something that I can be sure one person will love, that person being me, and anyone else who liked it too would be a welcome bonus. I have never really had the drive to try and 'get into comics', and the Liefeld comment came about from probably my one and only real attempt to test the water in that direction. I think it was at UKCAC 95, I queued up with my portfolio, getting some interest from a DC editor (for the *Big Books*) and an invitation to follow up from David Bishop [then-editor] on *2000 AD*, and, as Marvel hadn't shown up, Alan Davis was giving critiques in their place. As I remember it, he gave me some good advice but thought my work looked old-fashioned and I should look to current artists, like the Image chaps, to see what direction I could take my style in to get work. Perhaps there's some irony in the fact that I have gravitated towards a recognised existing style after all, the Franco-Belgian clear line, but it wasn't a commercial decision, and in fact was a style somewhat out of fashion in the late 90s, in France, at least.

MB: Please tell us how you found your current style and how you first became aware of it.

GE: Every year, from around the age of six, my mum would buy me either an Asterix or a Tintin book. Asterix was first, in fact *Asterix and the Roman Agent* was the first of the first. To this day these are probably my favourite comics, and my love of them led me to seek out more European albums, beginning with the Smurfs. When I was older I came across Yves Chaland and Serge Clerc in the pages of Heavy Metal, and got my first taste of Blake and Mortimer after a trip to the *Centre Belge de la Bande Dessinée* in Brussels. I got into Yoko Tsuno from the couple of Comcat albums that came out in the late 1980s, and also discovered the English Bob and Bobette translations around the same time. In the late 1990s, when I was looking for something new to do, and had made that decision to do something totally for my own enjoyment, I looked at what I really loved in comics and decided to do something along the lines of the Franco-Belgian album model. I actually didn't change my style too much. It was the dot-eyes and the page layout (four tiers, regular box panels) that were the conscious nods to Hergé and his ilk. I'm not sure I'd claim to be pure ligne-claire. There's still a fair bit of detail in there, but after my quite over-rendered version of [Shakespeare's] *The Tempest*, I was already moving to a cleaner style of artwork.

MB: Could you please tell us some more about the early comics fanzines you worked on and put together (they had some now-famous contributors, I seem to remember)?

GE: My games fanzines had always included a strip of some kind, and I was writing a fair bit about comics in them too. Eventually I decided to produce a pure comics anthology and leave role-playing games behind. I'd long lost interest in them, and it was the actual publication production that I enjoyed most. All this coincided with me having to pay my mum some rent, so I got on to the Thatcherite *Enterprise Allowance Scheme*. This would be 1987 or 88. I had to come up with a business plan and attend an interview. If the board thought the idea had merit I was accepted onto the scheme and would get £40 a week for a year to help fund my enterprise. Thus *Cosmorama* was born, a black and white A4 anthology somewhat ambitiously modelled on Dez Skinn's *Warrior*. I'd been going to the Westminster Comic Mart quite regularly by then, and advertised for artists and writers in all kinds of comics publications, including *Speakeasy* and *Escape*, and got a great response. The first issue [of *Cosmorama*] came with a free flexi-disc, and some of the contributors to the three issues I produced included Warren Ellis, Paul H. Birch, David Wyatt and David Leach, among others. It was great, but I wasn't really cut out for it on the business side, though I loved putting the magazine together.

MB: Have you ever had times when you thought about chucking in comics?

GE: I have done in those exceptional moments of creative despair, but never seriously, I don't think. Telling stories with comics has been hardwired into my brain since my earliest days. I definitely had a few wobbly years after my mum died, and couldn't seem to commit to anything, but it's only in retrospect I noticed that.

MB: Please tell us a little about your research work and your wider interests. Didn't you and Colin Mathieson of Accent UK head to the museum recently?

GE: As you know, Colin is into the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879, he did a wonderful two-part comic set there, and I enjoy researching and writing about the Anglo-Afghan War of the same period, 1878-1880 (I was the invited 'expert' on BBC Radio 4's *Making History* a few years ago for a listener's question about it), so though they're a continent apart, it's something we always talk about when we get together. Colin invited me along to the National Army Museum a few weeks ago to a talk on the Zulu War by Ian Knight, and then he came back to East Grinstead where I was able to show him my Afghan War comic yet, but a scene from the campaign does appear briefly in *The Rainbow Orchid*, and I've also included a bit of it in my strip for *The DFC*, *Charlie Jefferson and the Tomb of Nazaleod*. If I couldn't draw, being a researcher and writing articles would be high on the list of alternatives. It's a real joy to do research and then assimilate it into the story, creating fiction from actual fact. I did a ton of research for *Nazaleod*, but only about 20% makes it into the story. You have to know when it provides a colourful backdrop and when it starts overflowing to the detriment of the plot. Research can be very rewarding. I settled on the Breguet 280T as the aircraft that takes Julius

Chancer and his chums from France to India in *The Rainbow Orchid*; a plane, I soon discovered, of which only twenty-one were made, so getting hold of reference became something of a Snark-hunt. Having said that, the Internet has made things easier, but you can still feel clever with a bit of lateral Googling. I've just asked a friend, who makes and flies his own model aircraft, if he'd build me a model Breguet, and am very excited as he's agreed; though it won't fly, it's purely for reference.

MB: Have you ever considered going the non-fiction route with your comics or doing drama-docu-type stuff (I ask because of your interest in history. It seems like it might be something that would appeal to you)?



GE: Every idea I have I think of as a comic strip first, and a comic strip history of the Second Anglo-Afghan War has definitely been on my mind, though, in reality, I think it would be too big a project for me. An incident from it, like Colin's *Zulu Water Cart* episode, might surface at some point. More manageable has been the idea of doing some little family history stories, for instance a series of four-page tales of some of the unusual deaths among my Ewing forebears. So yes, I think about doing that kind of strip quite a bit.

MB: The unusual deaths of the Ewing forebears! Please tell me more.

GE: I'd like to build up little stories based around the bare facts I know concerning some unusual deaths among my nineteenth century Ewings. My great-great-great-grandfather was found dead at the foot of a cliff after a particularly foggy night. His son left home one day and placed his head on a railway track just as the express train came along. His granddaughter picked up the lodger's shotgun one evening and it went off into her chest, killing her, and just a few weeks later the lodger himself was killed by the same gun. A Ewing great-great-great-uncle drowned off the coast of Syria. There's a murder that happened in another branch of the family in the 1920s, but I think that's still too recent to delve into... I was certainly given that impression when I tried to find out a little more about it.

MB: Could you please tell us a little about how the Brit' small press scene has changed while you've been involved with it?

GE: I've never really been in the thick of things as far as the British small press scene goes, but it is certainly quite different from when I came into it in the late 1980s, when most publications were A5, black and white and photocopied. I bought titles from Ed Pinsent's *Fast Fiction* stall, and from reviews in [fanzines like] Andy Brewer's *Battleground*, and later Pete Ashton's *Vicious*. There doesn't really seem to be a place for a big central comics fanzine now we've got the Internet. Getting on to the web was the main thing that really slowed down my own self-publishing endeavours. Suddenly I could get my work out to readers in full colour and at no real cost. Not long after came affordable desktop publishing and then digital printing. Where it used to be people sneakily using their work photocopier then stapling books together to go and sell at a mart, now everyone's pumping out full colour hardback books, doing daily strips, writing blogs, making movies, animating their characters... what a difference. The big thing I really liked was noticeable when I put out my first black and white edition of *The Rainbow Orchid* in 2003. Before, I'd have to get up to London and trudge around the comic shops to distribute my comics, then do it again to collect the pennies I'd made on them. Now, a website and PayPal gives you a worldwide audience, and all from your own office. You still need to get out there, and I made my biggest sales at the London Comics Festival, but the digital world has been a complete revolution. Making contacts, and keeping them, is much easier too thanks to email, but also from blogs and Facebook. I've got two enormous files of letters from the 'old days' that I probably haven't added to in almost a decade thanks to email. But the Internet can feel extremely overwhelming at times. In the 1980s and early 90s, I knew who was who and who did what, and fanzines such as *Battleground*, *Vicious* and *Caption* would pretty much cover the entire scene. Now there seems to be a billion cartoonists out there, and so many of them are hugely talented. When I was a kid I knew I had an aptitude for drawing, which was encouraged by my mum and the occasional teacher. You felt

as though you had a special talent. The Internet kind of takes that away from you... everyone's talented! There's a whole population of brilliant creators out there. You're no longer special! It's probably good for the ego to note and accept that. There is another downside to computers... if it can be called a downside, maybe it's not really... sometimes you'll see some amazing looking art, but, when you look closer, you discover it's really being held up by fantastic Photoshop skills and the underlying drawing, stripped of its digital embellishment, is actually quite shaky. There are also a lot more comics that are basically photographs that have been digitally drawn over; totally valid, but I can't but help feel a little cheated, or maybe even threatened, by them. All in all, I'd rather have the Internet than not, as it's hugely enriched things.

MB: How important is it to have a posse of fellow freelancers to talk you and chill with to keep you sane? You know, for general networking and support duties?

GE: I'm discovering that it is very important. There's a serious danger that if you don't get out and see anyone at all you may end up just making autobiographical comics all the time (that's a joke!). None of my close friends are into comics, but I used to include them when I sent out my occasional promotional emails, or give them a self-published comic or two. But I never got any feedback, which can be a little disheartening after a while. I don't blame them one bit! They're just not into comics, it's not their world, which is fine (and they're fabulous friends, I should add). I've also come across one or two comic creators who don't like to mix their personal lives with their 'comics lives', and prefer to keep their distance. But yes, meeting up with others who make comics is essential. You can moan about how long it takes to draw a page, how underpaid you are, or how you have to try and explain your occupation at parties, and get an understanding ear. When you're working on your own all the time, you have to keep generating comics output. Meeting up with fellow creators, whether it's at a comics festival or just for a quick tea, and getting some comics input, is a real battery charger. Living outside of London, in a fairly small town, I don't get to do it a lot, but I am attempting to meet up more. Knowing someone like [fellow DFC contributor] Sarah McIntyre, for instance, is fabulous because not only is she talented and creative, so therefore inspiring, but she's a hub of contacts and can always introduce you to someone new. You also need those positive people. I was sat round a table at an old UKCAC once with a group of artists who had nothing good to say about anything. There was real bitterness, about the industry, about other creators, about readers who didn't appreciate them and I came away feeling totally dejected. Sometimes it is difficult to stay positive, especially if you catch a negative comment about your work, or just can't seem to draw anything right, but getting into a sort of creators' mutual support group is a terrific remedy.

MB: We've digressed and skipped a bit in terms of your biography. Please tell us about the work you did between first self-publishing and your adaptation of *The Tempest*, and how you decided on and embarked upon the latter.

GE: My first self-publishing was the already-mentioned games fanzine, which was called *Demon Issue*. After seven issues I changed the

name to *Pandemonium* and moved more into general articles on science fiction and fantasy, though still with a gaming bias. The last issue of that I produced was a team-up issue with an American fanzine called *The Chronicles of Chaos*, before I passed it on to a new editor who took it up to issue 24 or so. I did three issues of a fanzine called *Raven*, which was specifically for the cult role-playing game, *Tunnels and Trolls*, and then I did *Cosmorama*, which was the comics anthology I mentioned earlier. I did a fantasy-science-fiction comic strip called *Realm of the Sorceress* for a few years, which was heavily influenced by a mixture of Edgar Rice Burroughs adventure and Ralph Bakshi animation, and also a humour comic called *Captain Powerchord*, which appeared in a local entertainments guide. I had a couple of collections of odds-and-sods-strips, one I put out myself called *Delirium*, and one put out by David Hobden called *Alchemist*, and then a fair number of one-off strips here and there. I can't recall the precise origins of how I came to adapt Shakespeare's *The Tempest* into a comic (in 1994), but I'm pretty sure I was inspired after seeing a Russian puppet animation of the play, and realised that Shakespeare told a darn good tale behind all that 'language'. I started studying the story and all resistance to the bard that I'd built up at school fell away. I loved it, language and all. It was the first comic where I really spent weeks and weeks on the research, and built up a back-story from the facts and clues that Shakespeare gave within his text. For the first time, too, I really thought about 'camera angles' and how to tell the story. My art was rather overworked, but I learned an enormous amount from doing it and enjoyed it too.

MB: Didn't you do a *Tunnels and Trolls* cover for the game?

GE: Ken St Andre had long been planning a sixth edition, and when the game was given a new lease of life thanks to the Internet, Flying Buffalo, the publisher, agreed to print it. Ken asked me to do the cover, which I was delighted to do, but then the idea just seemed to fade away over the months. Fanboy me took over, I didn't formalise the agreement and I didn't chase up the fee that had been mentioned, despite the hours spent on the artwork, something I would definitely do these days. I believe a seventh edition has since come out, so the game does still live on, which is great to see. I think without the Internet it would have faded away completely.

MB: What was overworked about your *Tempest* art and what did you learn from the project?

GE: I put so much detail into *The Tempest*. Actually, looking at it again, the drawing is fairly bold, but I used a lot of little lines and stippling to get various grey-tones, to shade clothing, grass and even the sky. The characters are too busy with lines and feathering. It's all right for what it is, but since doing it I definitely prefer leaving stuff out rather than putting it in. The main thing I got from doing *The Tempest*, besides getting a lot of lines out of my system, was the value that research can bring to a project, but also how to 'point the camera'. I've got a lot of rotating round characters as they walk and changing point of view and all that. I also learned that some people really don't like anyone messing with 'their Shakespeare'!

MB: What did you work on between *The Tempest* and *The Rainbow Orchid* or was it straight from

one to the other?

GE: The first thing I did after *The Tempest* was a short story by Rol Hirst for his *Jock Annual* and then I put out a small collection of strips under the title *Delirium*. The biggest thing I did was an issue of *The Devil's Workshop* for an American publisher, Blue Comet Press. It really wasn't my cup of tea, lots of violence and sex, though the issue I worked on was heavily re-scripted by Paul H. Birch who managed to give it some depth and character, despite the main thrust of the content. Joe Ahern, who sadly died a few years ago, also did work on the Blue Comet titles. I've just remembered, we both did work on another series called *Zorann Star Warrior* too. I did a small jam comic with Mooncat and Paul Barlow, a two-part story for Stephen Prestwood's *Dark Zone*, collected the *Captain Powerchord* Strips together and added a couple more to put them out as a collection. I also started doing some work as an assistant to Tony O'Donnell, including a few pages here and there in DC Thomson's *Football Picture Monthly*. Besides being in a few plays and a band or two, that was just about it between *The Tempest* and the start of *The Rainbow Orchid*, a gap of a couple and a half years, I think.

MB: Is this, then, when you're starting to get your first semi-pro/pro work? You mentioned before that there's been more than one period when you went freelance.

GE: Yes, I think it was. As well as the Tony O'Donnell work, there were a few other little jobs that started to flit my way. Nothing rent-busting! I wobbled after a year or so, and decided I wanted some stability, so I found myself a job at a software company as a designer, though I still did the odd bit of freelancing in the evening.

MB: Was the Blue Comet stuff pro/semi-pro?

GE: Maybe you could call it semi-pro in that the comic company were a proper concern, though I was on a contract for royalties rather than a page-rate, if I remember correctly. After all that work, I think the only thing that ended up actually being printed was a promo pin-up I did, on the back page of one of their other titles.

MB: Please tell us a bit about the evolution of *The Rainbow Orchid*.

GE: I found an old notebook the other day that has some of the ideas I jotted down after I'd finished my adaptation of *The Tempest*, and one of them was about a vampire researcher operating in Victorian India. It was through this I read about the Victorian obsession for orchid collecting, and the idea mutated into an orchid quest. Besides a European bande dessinée influence as far as the graphics were concerned, the other big thing I liked, and wanted to inject a taste of, were the tales of lost worlds and lost civilisations. The kind of stuff authors such as Haggard, Conan Doyle and Verne wrote. I have quite a collection of that kind of material, the sort of story that begins with a solid grounding in the real world, so any fantastical elements introduced later give the reader a heightened sense of wonder, and seem to have an air of legitimacy due to the factual backdrop already established. The third main element was setting it in the 1920s rather than the Victorian period. The biggest influence on this was my love of silent films. One of the main characters, Lily, is a silent film actress in the story, but also the



design of that period is just gorgeous, the cars, the aircraft, art deco... all that.

MB: Tell us a bit about *Orchid*'s publication history. Didn't it first appear in *Bulldog Adventure Magazine*, edited by Jason Cobley, before making its way onto the 'net'?

GE: In April 1997 I had done the first three pages of *The Rainbow Orchid* and sent it out to a few trusted comics colleagues, which included Jason Cobley, creator of *Bulldog*. At the time he was thinking of cancelling *BAM!* (*Bulldog Adventure Magazine*) and, along with Pete Bangs and Paul Harrison-Davies, starting up a new adventure comic called *Verve*, to be printed on newsprint with *Bulldog* as the lead strip, and he asked if I'd consider *Orchid* as a regular contribution. I guess that idea fizzled out eventually, but in January 2001 a new, improved *BAM!* was on the horizon, and Jason was looking for back-up strips to *Bulldog*, and I wanted to continue with *Orchid* and find a home for it. I helped contribute to costs for the title, and the first episode of *The Rainbow Orchid* debuted in *BAM!* 22, in April 2002. Jason published five episodes, and at the end of 2003 I collected these into an A4 black and white collection as part one of the story. I think I sold just over a hundred of these in one day at the London Winterfest that year, and the rest sold over the next few months through my online shop and at Bristol 2004. That self-published comic was just testing for reader reaction really, my aim has always been the completed book, and so not wanting to reprint it (the last copy sold on eBay for £79) I decided to put the strip on the web, and continue it there instead. I've always thought of that as a sort of online preview rather than

a proper webcomic though.

MB: And what happened next. When did pro' publishers start to express an interest in *Orchid*?

GE: Once the strip went online, I was regularly getting the odd request from unknown entrepreneurs somewhere in Asia or self-publishers in the States and various webcomic collectives from who-knows-where, but the first serious request came from Gollancz/Orion in January 2006. So I sent *Orchid* off to them and while it was with their readers and editors I asked for some advice from an old university friend of my wife's, who was then a literary agent with A. P. Watt. I had no thoughts whatsoever of getting an agent, but the next thing I knew I was up in London at their offices and being asked if they could represent *The Rainbow Orchid*. With A. P. Watt the plan was for me to finish *Orchid* before approaching publishers, but after just over a year, Anji, my book agent, decided to leave for pastures new, and offered some of her list to Blake Friedmann, and after meeting them I decided to move there. Somewhere in the changeover I was approached by Titan and David Fickling Books also expressed an interest as well as a couple of others. I think it was about a year ago that my new agent, Oliver Munson, sent *Orchid* to ten publishers, and after a bit of what I guess is called bidding, or maybe haggling, I decided to go with Egmont, which I'm very pleased about.

MB: Exciting! When and in what form is *Orchid* coming out from Egmont? You mention David Fickling Books. Is that how you got involved with (relatively) new children's comic *The DFC*?

GE: Egmont will be bringing *Orchid* out in three parts, each about forty pages long, and in the same format as the softback *Tintin* books, which they also publish. Part one will be out in August 2009, as long as everything remains on schedule. David Fickling Books got in touch with me after seeing *The Rainbow Orchid* online in September 2006, and asked if I'd be interested in doing something for a new weekly children's comic they were planning. They liked *Orchid*, but at the time were only interested in brand new material for *The DFC*. At first I tried out for a strip by Philip Pullman, and got the job, but as it developed they felt a more manga style might be more appropriate, which was probably the right decision. Unfortunately I accidentally discovered I was off the strip a couple of weeks

before being told officially, which did knock my confidence a little. I looked at another story they offered but turned it down as too big a project for me, and was then asked if I'd like to write and draw my own strip, which I was more than delighted to do. The result is *Charlie Jefferson and the Tomb of Nazaleod*, which will be appearing in *The DFC* within the next few months.

MB: Can you give us a bit of background on *Charlie Jefferson and the Tomb of Nazaleod* and what it's about, and maybe pimp *The DFC* while you're at it?

GE: *Nazaleod* is about a boy and his half-sister who are kidnapped by a creepy old man called The Professor who, in turn, is after a stone pendant the boy's ex-burglar father stole a few years before. The boy ends up having to find a second and third pendant in order to save his family, following clues left by the followers of an ancient brotherhood of four forgotten British kings... or something like that! The spark of the story came from the idea of a gang of villains needing a child to fit through a tiny gap in order to enter an ancient tomb, but another aspect came from the fact that my mum was born in the same house as Elias Ashmole in Lichfield, and I've always wanted to include something about this fascinating character into a story. It's turned out he's not in it as strongly as originally intended, but the Ashmolean Museum features, which, entirely coincidentally, is just a few doors down from the David Fickling offices in Oxford. I don't know how well *Nazaleod* will fit into *The DFC*, and is something I sometimes get a little anxious about. It's quite wordy, has a fairly involved plot, and is definitely one for the older readers. From the little I've picked up I get the feeling the more cartoony strips generally seem to be the most popular in *The DFC*. It's just my style that I have a more documentary approach to adventure stories rather than, say, Saturday morning kids' TV-style stuff, and I do sometimes wonder if there's an audience out there for that. But that's one of the great things about *The DFC*: the sheer variety contained within its pages. Just look at Jim Medway's *Crab Lane Crew* and Adam Brockhurst and Ben Haggarty's *Mezolith*, each quite different from each other, but both wonderful. I think *The DFC* is such a great new thing that is going to go from strength to strength, I can't wait to see how it grows and changes throughout 2009. There has been a bit of negativity and cynicism from some corners of the UK comics world, especially concerning the fact that it is currently subscription only. If the subscription model did not exist, *The DFC* would not exist, and we'd all be poorer for it. The buzz among *DFC* creators and the editorial team is fantastic, and there's still so much more to come.

MB: What's post-*Orchid* for Garen Ewing? More adventures in that world, more *DFC* stuff, other stuff, or all three?

GE: I don't know yet. 2009 will be pretty much filled with finishing off *The Rainbow Orchid*, the last few pages of part two, and then all of part three. After that, if *Orchid* does okay, then I'd definitely like to do another Julius Chancer adventure, but future stories would probably be only one book long. Before I submitted *Nazaleod* to *The DFC* I offered them another strip, which I'm really fond of, but some of its ideas clashed with another story they already had - they liked it so it may be one for the future. I'll wait and see how well *Nazaleod* goes over. Ideally, I'd

like to concentrate on Julius Chancer and build up that world, it's much closer to my heart than anything else.

MB: Garen, thanks for your time. I think we're done. Anything else you want to flag up or mention?

GE: I don't think I have anything to add. I've gone on for far too long on each answer as it is! Thank you for your questions, it was fun looking back and noting how and when various things originated.

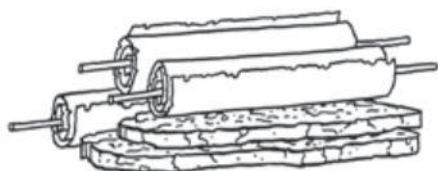
MB: I almost forgot. I always ask people to big up any up-and-coming cartoonists that they think are particularly worthy of notice. So, comics-wise, who is really doing good stuff at the mo' and perhaps isn't getting the attention they deserve?

GE: There are so many comic artists I like and feel inspired by, and this past year has been an especially good one for creativity in comics. One of my favourites recently has been Darryl Cunningham's *Super Sam* strip. I love his art style and storytelling, so simple but highly effective. I'm glad to see he's recently coloured up his old *Uncle Bob* stories. Like Lee Kennedy, another long-time favourite, he deserves some publishing success. Sarah McIntyre, who does *Vern and Lettuce* in *The DFC* is fantastic, and I think I actually take in raw energy from her almost-daily blog sketches. I greatly admire Colin Mathieson and Dave West, the Accent UK guys, for their enthusiasm and commitment, and they're producing some lovely titles at the moment. Colin can turn out a great short story, and Dave's *Strange Times* comics are superb. David O'Connell's *Tozo* is one of the very few webcomics I read regularly, and am glad to have in paper-form too; he's producing a very intriguing story there. A new *Whores of Mensa* is out, brilliant stuff, featuring three wonderful creators, Jeremy Dennis, Ellen Lindner and Mardou, none of these are exactly up-and-coming, but all deserve top places in comics, I think. I'm really looking forward to the *Spleenal* book from Blank Slate and *Grandville* from Bryan Talbot looks gorgeous. I think I could just keep on listing names here. I'm always looking at new artists online and marvelling at their work, and follow a fair few blogs of fellow creators, whether I know them personally or not, to keep up with what they're doing.

MB: Garen Ewing, thanks for your time. You're a gent!

Matt Badham has written for, amongst others, the Judge Dredd Magazine, Comic Heroes, the Big Issue in the North and 2000 AD. He writes for money and also for kicks. (It's a quiet life at Badham Towers!). If you want him to write something for you (and you're going to pay him) please email mattbadham@hotmail.com

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SCRIBBLEHOUND

Interview with Garen Ewing, the creator of *The Rainbow Orchid*

David O'Connell, the writer and artist behind *Tozo*, interviewed Garen for his website, *Scribblehound*, in July 2009, just before *The Rainbow Orchid* volume one was released. Thank you to David for giving permission for the piece to be reprinted here.



David: Firstly, congratulations on having *The Rainbow Orchid* published! How did it feel to hand over what had been a long-time personal project to a big publisher like Egmont?

Garen: I felt quite confident in Egmont actually, and I think that's largely down to Tim Jones, the commissioning editor, who I met with a couple of times first, along with my agent, Oli Munson. Tim is a comics fan himself and knows his stuff, and I just felt at ease that, with him in charge, I'd have my best interests looked after. There were some unknowns, and there still are - for instance, Egmont are known as a children's publisher, but I don't see my book particularly as a children's book (though it's perfectly fine for children) so it will be interesting to see what audience it finds - or what audience finds it.

D: What kind of changes did they ask for, if any?

G: As far as story and plot goes - none at all. Actually, I told them I wanted to make a few changes - mainly adding a couple of new pages to volume one. Peter Marley, the editor, has been very eagle-eyed with a few textual and dialogue queries and making sure things are consistent throughout, but having been an editor and writer myself, and then with my wife being a magazine editor, by the time it gets to Egmont it's really been through the word-wringer! Peter did convince me to go the extra mile and get my Ancient Greek text absolutely right by hiring a professional translator, and I had some quite amusingly complex notes asking me to confirm the taxonomic group of the genus of so-and-so a flower, which served me right for trying to be so clever in the first place.

D: Ha! But it must be great to know you have that authenticity with the language when you look at the level of research put into the visual

side of things. How hard was it to go back and make changes to work that had been done some years in the past? I think if I had to redo bits of *Tozo* I'd go bonkers, especially as it's sometimes such a struggle to produce them in the first place.

G: I did go a bit bonkers! I spent every night into the early hours of the morning re-doing and rethinking every bit of dialogue. As I was making the lettering a little bigger I had to move around some of the characters in various panels slightly, or make them a little smaller, and re-draw little bits of background. It did my head in. But in the end it was worth it - probably no one will notice the minute changes, but it's made me feel better about such old work, and I do think several bits of dialogue are much improved. Thank heavens for Mr. Adobe Photoshop!

D: How has it influenced your creative process in the later chapters?

G: Going back to what I mentioned earlier, about Egmont being a children's publisher, I did have a few wobbles wondering where I should aim things, and worrying about my use of longer words or too much dialogue - especially in volume two where things get a little more complex. But then I remembered why I'd started doing *The Rainbow Orchid* in the first place, for my own enjoyment, and that the only audience I should aim to please is myself. I got a publisher under those parameters so it would be a mistake to change that view, I think. If you write a story with some imaginary audience in mind, it waters down the vision and you end up trying to please too many different ideals. And anyway, children can look up long words and learn something new. Children across the land will soon know what a quidnunc is!

D: What level of ownership do you feel you have over the project now?

G: I feel as though it's still all completely in my hands, which is very important to me. Contractually, Egmont has English language rights throughout the world, plus a few other subsidiary rights, but the copyright is mine, of course.

D: Are you pleased with the finished book?

G: Yes, it's very nice. At first I was a bit worried at the idea of the spot varnish on the cover, but the designer, Faye Dennehy, reassured me and she was right - it's the first thing people notice as they say "ooh... shiny!" And the colours and printing are all great too, so I'm very happy with it.

D: That's good to know. How hands-on were you in the design and general look-and-feel of the book - you did the cover, obviously, but you also designed the logo too which is probably unusual? And you created the typeface used in the speech balloons - was that before or after

Egmont agreed to publish?

G: Faye did suggest she might redesign the logo, and I was happy enough to let that happen - but in the end they went with the one I'd designed, and I was very glad about that - it makes it more mine. There was some talk about the fact that there was already an audience for *The Rainbow Orchid* online, and keeping some continuity of design would be good as it returns to book form. With the lettering, it's something I've wanted to do for ages, for at least three or four years. I actually bought the software and made the font after I'd been taken up by Egmont, but it was the realisation that it was going into a bigger production that made me get off my derrière and actually do it.

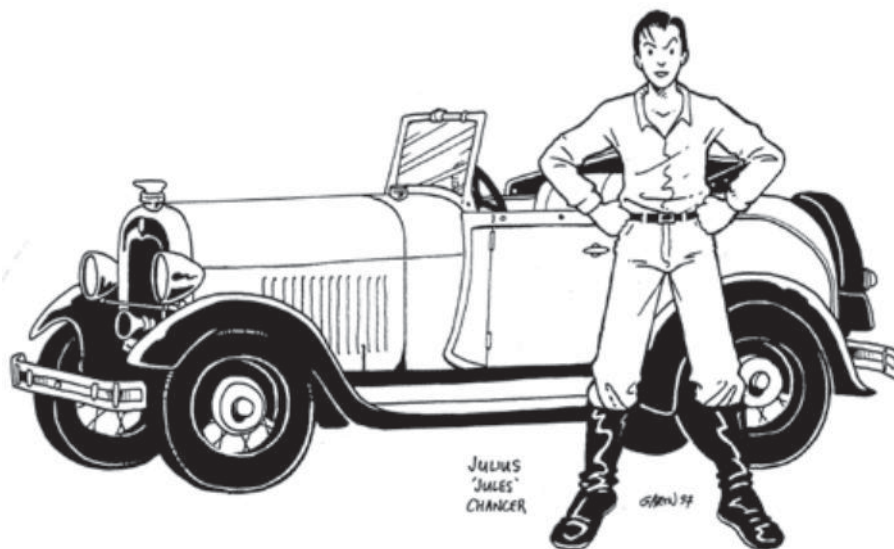
D: What made you choose the particular scene that is being used for the cover image?

G: I offered a few different sketches for the cover, but my favourite - and theirs - was something from the warehouse scene. I think it's just the obvious scene from the book really, it's got the threat of the baddies and it's a fairly simple environment so keeps the focus on the characters. Egmont did make the suggestion of making Julius Chancer bigger in the frame - I think my versions showed him from head-to-toe - as they wanted him established as the central character from the start. The cover for volume two was much trickier as the main action scene in that, I realised, is in a barn - pretty similar to the warehouse. In the end I had to pick a scene from the later part of the book that I actually haven't scripted yet!

D: The setting of *The Rainbow Orchid* is the 1920s, which I believe was influenced by your interest in silent films of the period. Is it an era for which you have a particular affinity?

G: It's a really interesting time, and I think it was reading Kevin Brownlow's *The Parade's Gone By* that really got me hooked. The world was just starting to close-in a bit more thanks to the wider accessibility of radio, easier international travel and mass communication, and I think it's one of the first times when the younger generation really started to assert itself as a force to be reckoned with. Most stories I've seen set in the 1920s are American - they had prohibition and gangsters, the glamour of Hollywood, Jazz, flappers and 'It' girls, so it's more glitzy. Britain reflected that to some degree but also had a heavier post-war burden and was facing the fact that the British Empire was no longer the mighty thing it once was. It's a historical period and still has enough interesting connections to the Victorian era, but is also recognisably modern, so to be able to incorporate something of both those worlds is really nice.

D: You hired a translator for the ancient Greek so the detail is obviously important to you, but did you research the period down to the last detail or have you allowed yourself a bit of creative licence?



G: When I first started the story I decided it was going to be a heavily fictional twenties, which was probably an excuse to be very fuzzy with the research. But the more I researched the more specific I became. There is creative licence, and I haven't actually mentioned a year in which the story takes place, though I now know it's pretty much 1928 and I try and make sure everything fits into that. That meant making a few changes - for instance, on page 3 I originally had someone refer to the Taylor murder as a recent event, but that happened in 1922 so had to be changed. Now it's going out to a wider audience I'm waiting for all the emails telling me where I've got little details wrong! Trying to find out simple things such as when zips and elasticated fabric came into general use has been a bit of a challenge.

D: As a result, how much time have you spent on research?

G: It takes up loads of time. Trying to find specific things from the 1920s can sometimes be quite hard - it's easier now with Google images and more and more stuff going up on the Internet, but a few years ago when I had to find reference for a 1920s Royal Mail van it took most of a day. Getting references for 1920s India - now Pakistan where the characters are - is even harder. At the moment I'm trying to find out about the trains of the Indian North Western Railway. There's not much on the Internet, and seeking out second-hand books is the only option, but rather hit-and-miss. I'm pretty sure that the trains that ran up and down the Indus Valley in the twenties were red, but I'm not 100% certain! It's fascinating stuff actually, and you learn all kinds of strange and probably useless things, but it's very time-consuming, especially when deadlines are involved.

D: I suppose the 1920s-30s was the last period where there were still undiscovered parts of the world and before any social/environmental conscience had properly developed. So it makes it an ideal setting for uninhibited exploration and adventure! Will you stick to this period for further Julius Chancer stories? Taking a guess at Julius's age he could have a career spanning into the 1970s.

G: I'd like to keep it in the twenties, and if I go forward it can happily sit into the 1930s too. There were some wonderful adventure films made in the 30s that are a big inspiration - *King*

Kong, *Lost Horizon* and the RKO version of *She*. I've even had a few ideas for what Julius Chancer gets up to in World War II, and I can always go back in time too.

D: I think you've said before that you had always wanted to do a Rider Haggard/Jules Verne style adventure story. Did you have a plot in mind or did the characters come first?

G: The plot started to develop before I thought about the characters, then the two aspects went in fits and starts for a while, side-by-side. I loved the slow build-up of

King Solomon's Mines, and it's only right at the end that a flavour of the fantastic comes into it, but I think it's all the more potent for that - so I started with that as model, I think. I did worry that *Orchid* may end up being a bit slow-moving for modern audiences who are used to crashing in at the beginning and then something of a non-stop themepark ride from up to the end credits. *The Rainbow Orchid* isn't that.

D: It's interesting that you have, at first glance, a group of characters that fit the classic adventure types - hero, comedy sidekick, damsel-in-distress, boffin - but in actual fact they're all slightly different takes on those types. How deliberate was that?

G: I'm not a great original, I know that, but I think I can take something I'm very enthusiastic about and make it my own. My main influence for character is the film-maker Kurosawa, who has wonderful characters in his films whose attitudes and foibles actually shape the plot - they're not just puppets reacting to outside events. So I hope I've got a little of that. Nathaniel is fairly stereotypical, as you say, a bumbling idiot - but I've made sure that he's the one who comes up with quite a few solutions to various problems. And then there's someone like William Pickle, a seemingly selfish reporter, but who reveals a kind of moral code when he states that he can't be bought off, he's actually dedicated to his art, which deserves some kind of respect. So yes, the characters, even though founded on well-known types, have always been quite strong in my mind.

D: It's fascinating to see how much you've been influenced by film and film-making. As to whether they are original or not, I think it's important to recognise that certain types of characters are necessary to drive certain types of story along. Also, in a group (and so far *Rainbow Orchid* has been an ensemble piece to certain degree) people will naturally adopt certain roles as the group dynamic sorts itself out (at least according to a number of boring team-building workshops I've been on!). I worry with *Tozo* that I've got so much plot that the character development sometimes gets left behind.

G: It's a balancing act. As comic creators we only have so much space in which to move the plot forward, reveal character, be funny, show action and impart vital information. *Tozo* and

Orchid are quite similar in that we both have quite deep plots, so the challenge is all the greater, but the rewards can be richer! I think you've got it spot on actually.

D: Do you allow your characters to grow as the story goes along or do you have those attitudes and foibles fairly set throughout?

G: They do change. Julius is all gung-ho at first and goes off despite Sir Alfred's concerns, but when he gets to India and realises the enormity of the task ahead, he wobbles a bit - especially when they all come quite close to death at the hands of Evelyn Crow. They all reveal new facets of themselves faced with adversity and in extreme situations.

D: I've always thought Julius to be an interesting character. Physically he's not exactly Doc Savage or Indiana Jones (and he's afraid of spiders!) but he has a real sense of justice and a terrier-like attitude when something's got his goat. I think he's probably the most original character so far. How did his design evolve? Will we see more of his background and will he get the chance to shine on his own? Is there anything of you in his character?

G: Heroes can quite often be the blankest canvas, so it's nice of you to say that. You will learn more of his background in volume two and he will certainly get the chance to shine - especially in volume three. There are aspects of myself in every character I expect, but I probably do put more of myself into Julius - or my ideal self at any rate! I shouldn't analyse it too much, but I can say I dislike spiders too and had to be very brave drawing that bit! As for his design, I don't really recall the process much - I knew I didn't want him to be a big muscled thing! I noticed on Wikipedia someone has described him as 'camp'. I think he is a bit effeminate in some ways, but that might be more the 1920s film-star looks, as his hair style came partly from an actor called Neil Hamilton, though also from a young portrait of J. B. Priestly - not that he's ended up looking like either of them.

D: Neil Hamilton played Commissioner Gordon so there's a nice little comics link there! If there was a film version of *The Rainbow Orchid* today who would you see playing Julius?

G: I just can't imagine that, and I'm not really up on the young actors of today! Someone who wasn't a big name would be good, I think. Naomi Watts would have made a good Lily, perhaps. And Cate Blanchett has already had a go at Evelyn Crow - in *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*!

D: Is it fun to write for the baddies? I find it one of the most enjoyable parts as I can make them say the most terrible things - they tend to act as the mouthpiece for all my darkest thoughts (although I'd never say which thoughts are actually mine...). Evelyn is another interesting character - just how did she end up so bad?

G: I haven't really fathomed Evelyn; she's an enigma even to me. I get the feeling Urkaz Grope and Box both pale in comparison, but there's a lot

more to see of her yet. She is easy to write, so yes, that makes her enjoyable, but I also find her a little intimidating! What am I saying? She's a figment of my imagination! Maybe you're right about the dark thoughts...

D: If *The Rainbow Orchid* had been written in the 1920s then Lily would probably be screaming and tripping over tree roots a lot. When writing, how conscious of modern sensibilities are you? I find there's always a part of my brain that is acting as 'Equal Opportunities Monitor' and I'm quietly counting the proportion of non-white faces in the cast and making sure there are plenty of important female characters. It annoys me a bit because I'm not a fan of positive discrimination as a rule but I recognise that you have to be responsible and 'inclusive' in your story-telling. How do you feel about this? Is it more difficult because of the time period in which the story is set?

G: Yes, and having worked for a couple of educational magazines I've been on the end of some fairly strict positive discrimination views, always involving much redrawing or post-production Photoshoppery. It's kind of re-enforcing the prejudice if you point out a problem and want to 'correct' it, it's like you accept it and want to overcompensate to hide it. As you suggest, Britain didn't have the rich cultural mix in the 1920s that it enjoys today, and it would be wrong if I changed that just to be inclusive. Having said that, loads of people in the twenties smoked, and *The Rainbow Orchid* is a pleasantly but fictionally smoke-free world. Another area to watch out for is the political and religious issues surrounding British India, which I'm just keeping well away from.

D: Is Lily likely to be a recurring character in future Chancer Adventures? Is she a potential romantic interest? Are the characters we're seeing part of a fixed supporting cast or will each adventure have new faces around Julius?

G: Julius and Lily were initially conceived of as a double-act, both headliners, if you will. In the first draft of *The Rainbow Orchid* Julius was Lord

Lawrence's assistant, and it was he who went to the station to collect Lily and Nathaniel. So in my head they're the two main characters, and Lily features in my early ideas for the next Julius Chancer adventure too. I do see most of the characters as ones that would have roles beyond *Orchid* in the tradition of most character-based comic series. As for romantic interest, well, we'll have to see. Some of my female readers have demanded it, one of them by handwritten letter no less.

D: Is writing something that comes naturally to you?

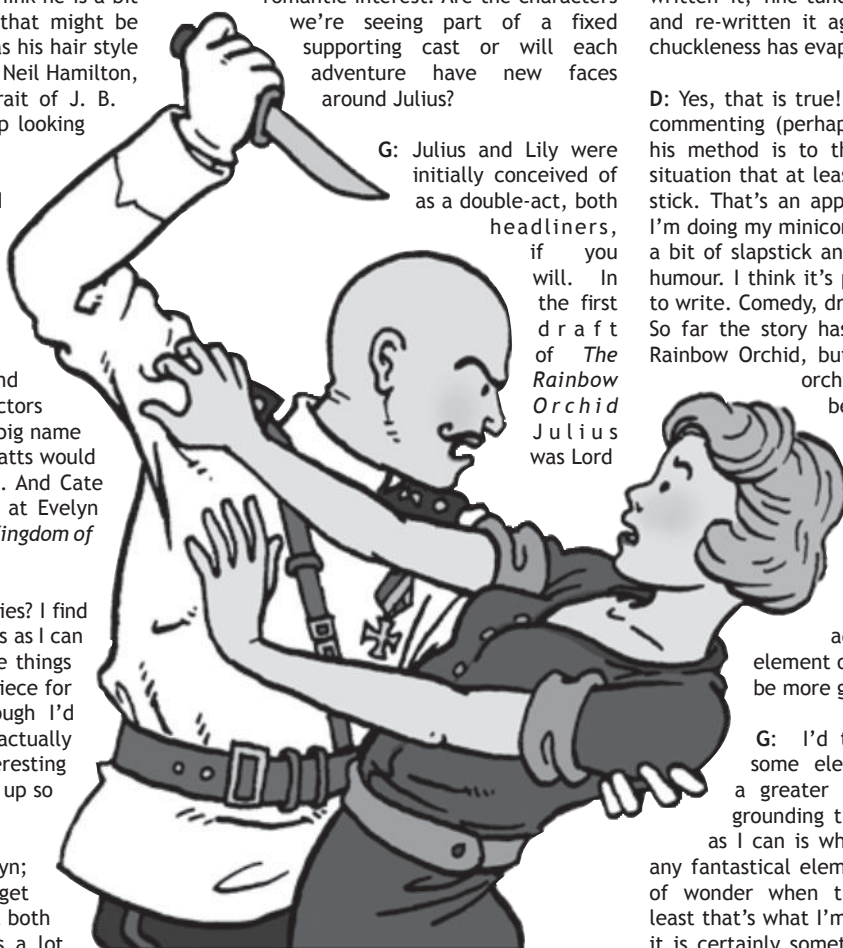
G: I don't know - mostly it seems quite hard. I love plotting and find that the nicest bit, so maybe that comes easily. I really work at dialogue, writing and re-writing. As you know very well yourself, the thing with comics is you have a space limitation, so that's probably normal. Everything about making a comic is hard work, it seems, though very rewarding when the completed page emerges. I get the feeling if I was a natural I'd just breathe out pages one after the other, and I don't think that's ever happened!

D: Are you more comfortable with writing comedy or the more serious scenes?

G: I find comedy very difficult and there isn't a huge amount of it in *Orchid*. Also, because I love silent film comedy, a lot of my favourite funny stuff is just straight slapstick, and Hergé did that so well that I'm worried the comparisons would be accusatory. But I don't know, I just decided to relax about that a little and had Nathaniel falling onto his backside from an elephant. I don't know if you find this too, but when I write something I think is really funny, by the time I've thought of it, scripted it, re-written it, fine-tuned it, analysed it, drawn and re-written it again for the balloon... the chuckleness has evaporated somewhat.

D: Yes, that is true! I remember James Turner commenting (perhaps not very seriously) that his method is to throw so many jokes at a situation that at least one of them is bound to stick. That's an approach I tend to use when I'm doing my minicomics, whilst in Tozo there's a bit of slapstick and a bit of character-based humour. I think it's probably the hardest thing to write. Comedy, drama, action - it's all here. So far the story has been a race to find the *Rainbow Orchid*, but there are hints that the orchid has other properties beyond being merely decorative and that we're heading into the realms of fantasy or science fiction. I'm intrigued as to how a flower can be made to have this kind of dangerous potential. Do you see Julius Chancer adventures all sharing that element of the fantastic or will they be more grounded?

G: I'd think they would all share some element that is unusual to a greater or lesser degree, though grounding that in as realistic a world as I can is what I really enjoy - just so any fantastical elements have a greater sense of wonder when they are encountered. At least that's what I'm hoping! As for the orchid, it is certainly something special but there's a



bigger story around it. A couple of reviews have speculated that the flower is a MacGuffin, and I think there's something to that theory.

D: Do you worry that you'll get bored of churning out Jules Chancer stories?

G: Well, the story has been with me since 1997, and I've known the ending since that time, and I'm still excited about it. I haven't really allowed myself to get into any other projects properly and I haven't felt as though I'm missing anything - it's the Julius Chancer world I really love and feel as though there is so much to explore within it. I hope I get the opportunity to do more and see if I get bored of them! But I also sometimes think I may only do one proper piece of work in my life, and if that's *The Rainbow Orchid* and if I can then no longer write and draw, or am destined to get run over by a bus, then that'll be fine - as long as I finish *Orchid* first!

D: So you never think: "After *Rainbow Orchid*, the world!?" It's your masterpiece and your ambition (happily) stops there?

G: It is the most important thing I've ever done. My ambition would be to do an even better story for the next one - I'm not one for experimenting and pushing boundaries in Art! I feel very comfortable with *Orchid* - it's really really nice it being published by Egmont and it going out to a wider audience, I'm supremely lucky, but if I had to self-publish it, I'd be just as happy. I highly doubt this is going to make me lots of money, so it's the creative rewards that are the important bit. I honestly feel that, but I get doubtful looks from people if I say it, and people think I'm being falsely modest! Maybe it's because I'm older and it's taken a long time before a publishing deal materialised.

D: What about *Charlie Jefferson and the Tomb of Nazaleod* that you recently did for the now folded *DFC*? Also, any news on whether Charlie will ever appear in print?

G: I'm not sure about *Charlie Jefferson*. I struggled with it and there were a number of reasons for that. I think *The DFC* wanted a strip like *The Rainbow Orchid*, not the same obviously, but it was close enough in genre that I felt it wasn't something totally brand new. I actually had a time-travel story that I really wanted to do, but they wanted to save that for later. But again, I think *CJ* had a really good ending, and I'm still dying to do those final scenes in it! I think it could well see print, but it's out of my mind for now. I have a few vague ideas for other things I'd like to do, but I'm so slow I feel I should only concentrate on one thing. I'd like to do three Julius Chancer adventures, that would be my goal, then I'd be free to explore something else - probably the grounds of the nursing home I'd be in by then!

D: Do you still consider yourself part of the small press world?

G: I do, but I don't think it's reciprocated, and for good reason as I haven't self-published properly in years! There's a whole generation moved in to dominate the small press in a much bigger (and better) way since I last produced anything. I always did genre comics anyway, science-fiction and fantasy, which didn't fit very easily into the bulk of the scene of the late 80s and early 90s when I was most active.

D: You could dash off a Chancer micro-adventure: 8 pages, A6 size, home-printed. Easy! And it would go down a storm. Your *Forbidden Planet* advert was effectively a minicomic.

G: I almost did one recently, for *Stripwire*, and Egmont okayed it as long as it could also be used to promote *The Rainbow Orchid*. Unfortunately I just didn't have the time in the end. But Egmont would have a say in it as they have publishing rights in this country, and that includes me self-publishing anything - though I think I could do it, it's all promotional and Egmont seem very open. It's just the time factor for now.

D: Finally: you work at home - what kind of environment do you need to be most productive? Space, music, deadlines, things around you?

G: I'm really lucky to have a lovely work room all to myself. Sometimes I'll take my wife's laptop and work downstairs to be away from the Internet, though I often need it to research various things as I'm writing, it can also be a rather slippery distraction. How do all those terrific comic artists produce so much work yet do so much Twittering as well? I can only listen to music while drawing, though actually I prefer to listen to people talking - podcasts, Radio 4, audio-books. It all goes off again when I'm lettering as I quite often re-write it a little at that stage and read the dialogue aloud. The burning fuse of a deadline is always useful!

D: I suspect there might be a couple of those fuses burning right now! Best of luck with the book and I'm looking forward to seeing volumes 2 and 3 next year! Thank you for your time.

David O'Connell is a writer and illustrator. He is the creator of the adventure comic Tozo, and the editor of the comic anthology series ink+PAPER. His children's book series, Monster & Chips, is out from HarperCollins in 2013. See more at scribblehound.com.



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GAREN EWING: FROM A GOLDEN AGE TO A RAINBOW ORCHID

The following interview was conducted by Anna Jay for her blog, Mondo-a-go-go, in September 2010, and appeared the following month. My thanks to Anna for her permission to reprint the piece here.

A little while ago, I interviewed comics artist Garen Ewing about his adventure series *The Rainbow Orchid*. We had a very interesting chat about book illustrators from the so-called Golden Age, Ukiyo-e prints, animation, computer games and 1970s comics. Here is the interview for your edification, and I hope you enjoy it as much as I did!

AJ: There's a very obvious ligne claire influence on your work, which you've made no secret of, but I'm curious about any other influences on your drawing. From what I've seen of your adaptation of *The Tempest* - which I've not read in full - the line was much more detailed, and reminded me far more of artists like Arthur Rackham and William Heath Robinson. Are there any other artistic influences besides the obvious ligne claire stylings of Edgar P Jacobs and Hergé who you would like to namecheck?

GE: Arthur Rackham and Heath Robinson are two of my favourite artists, and were my gateway into discovering Edmund Dulac, Kay Nielsen, Harry Clarke and others of that era. That may seem a long way from Hergé or Yves Chaland, but there's a sensibility that connects them all in Japanese print work, which I used to sit and copy for hours in my mid-teens. Those prints, by artists such as

Kuniyoshi and Hiroshige are very ligne claire, and they also influenced the Art Nouveau and Art Deco movements. Another big influence on my comic work is Richard Corben, I'm aware of him within my work but I doubt it shows through the Hergé that I suspect blinds the casual observer. I used to want to be like Brian Bolland, but I'm all right now (I still love his work). The artist I got compared to most in the early 90s was probably Bryan Talbot, which is fine by me!

AJ: Was it a conscious decision to move towards the ligne claire style because of the style of the story you were telling, or was it more of an organic change?

GE: It was a conscious decision. I kind of decided to give up wanting to become a 'proper comic artist' - I realised I didn't want to be a pen for hire, I wanted to indulge myself, so it was a matter of deciding the kind of comics I loved most, and wanting to do my own. There are a lot of good reasons, I think, for doing this kind of adventure comic in ligne claire. Having said that, after the complexity of my style in *The Tempest*, I did clean up my art a bit - I did a little strip for Rol Hirst's *The Jock* that is a sort of missing link between *The Tempest* and *The Rainbow Orchid*.

AJ: Speaking of influences, you mentioned on Twitter a while back that your narrative was quite influenced by playing the *Broken Sword* computer game. Are there any other writerly influences people might not guess at?

GE: I've mentioned the authors H Rider Haggard, Jules Verne and Arthur Conan Doyle before - they really are the biggest story influences on *The Rainbow Orchid*. I like film directors who also wrote their own scripts, especially Akira Kurosawa and Charlie Chaplin. They solved story problems visually and through character. That is always a background to my writing, but I don't think I've had the time to really indulge in that area of things yet - I haven't given myself enough space. But I think there are probably one or two moments where I'm channelling that spirit, if you like. I want readers to get lost in the book, and that's what happened to me when I read *King*

Solomon's Mines, or *Asterix and Tintin*, and when I played *Broken Sword* for the first time. *From Hell* is another example - I forgot I was reading a comic, which is a lovely feeling.

AJ: It's interesting that almost all of the storytelling influences you mention are prose or cinema writers rather than comics writers, and *From Hell* is not exactly a typical comic - or at least, it wasn't when it came out; being

as literary as it was. Are there any comics writers you particularly admire?

GE: I don't think there are any comic writers, separate from artists, that have left any kind of an indelible mark on me, apart from Alan Moore to some degree. Most of the comics that have had any kind of impact are the product of a singular vision - Hergé, Jacobs, Lewis Trondheim, Hayao Miyazaki, Osamu Tezuka and all that. One of my very favourite comics was, and is, *Charley's War*, but I'm not certain that I feel particularly influenced by Pat Mills - but I'm sure it must be there in the mix to some degree. What child that grew up in the 1970s and went on to make their own comics doesn't have Pat Mills in there somewhere?!

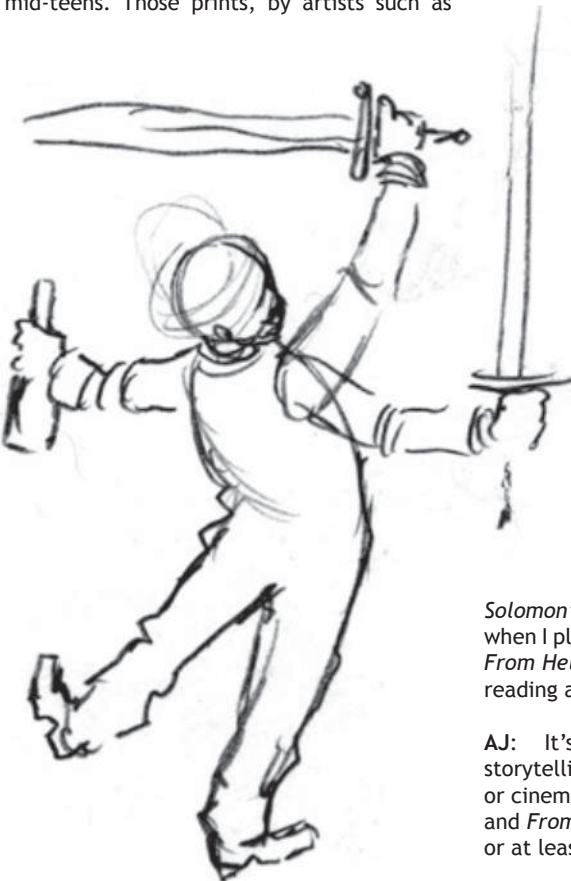
AJ: That's true! You do a lot of research to get tiny details right. You must come across a lot of temptingly interesting tangents. What's been the most intriguing, which might make you want to abandon what you're doing and chase fragments of a new story?

GE: Looking into the Kalash people of Chitral was fascinating, and I did a disproportionate amount of research seeing as they only appear in a few panels, but I would be tempted to follow them up, and the myth that they might be the descendants of some of the soldiers of Alexander the Great, which I'm not sure I believe is actually true. I think it would be too close to Rudyard Kipling's *The Man Who Would Be King* though!

AJ: That's not necessarily a reason not to write about it, though - if it was then pretty much most comics or movies would never get made!

GE: That's true, but I think Kipling (or John Huston for the excellent film version) said it all so well already, I don't think I'd bring anything new to it. Another thing might be the Breguet aircraft - I had a friend of mine make a balsa wood model of it, though the plane crashes in a ball of flame in volume two - so I'd like to get more use out of that and give the Tayaut family some little adventures of their own.

AJ: It would be great to see more of the Tayaut family. I love the twins; they seem like great role models for little girls: I think they probably would have been my favourite characters when I was a kid. They remind me of the character Fio in Miyazaki's *Porco Rosso*, being girls doing things with airplanes that weren't - and still aren't - traditionally female. In some ways that film also has a similar aesthetic (albeit from a slightly later era), which brings me to another question - animation is another medium which combines words and images, almost a bridge between live action cinema and comics. So what sort of animation do you like?



GE: Miyazaki hits the spot for me. I just watched *Whisper of the Heart* (for which he wrote the script) - it was a four-blub film, so beautiful. *Spirited Away*, *Castle in the Sky* and *My Neighbour Totoro* are masterpieces, and I remember thinking *Porco Rosso* probably was about the same time setting as *The Rainbow Orchid* ... late twenties? I used to really love Disney, but since discovering Miyazaki I can only watch a few of them now. *Pinochio* is the best, *Snow White*, and I quite like *Mulan* and *Atlantis* from the later period. When I was about 11 my mum wrote off to the Disney Studios on my behalf to enquire about working there, and I got a reply letting me know how much hard work it would be!

AJ: Yeah, I'm under no illusions that doing animation is an easy job, even with computers. Speaking of work, you're working on volume 3 of *The Rainbow Orchid*, before it all comes out in one collection next year. What do you want to work on after that?

GE: Already plotted out is another Julius Chancer adventure. This one takes place mainly in Britain and leans more towards being a detective story, a murder mystery. It also focuses more on Julius Chancer as the central character, because *The Rainbow Orchid* is rather an ensemble piece, I think. I want to dive straight into that as soon as *Orchid* is done.

AJ: Oooh, exciting! The 1920s and 1930s is

such a classic era for detective fiction. I'm tempted to quiz you further on that, but I think I'd rather be surprised.

GE: I just hope *The Rainbow Orchid* does well enough to see a second story published. *RO* was conceived and plotted, including the ending, back in 1997. I'm dying to originate something new, with all I've learnt about comic storytelling in the past ten years.

AJ: The second *Rainbow Orchid* book has a couple of 'origin' stories - how Lily became a Hollywood actress, how Julius ended up working for Sir Alfred - will the next book have some more of those?

GE: The only other story that gets told in *The Rainbow Orchid* will be Meru's story in volume 3. William Pickle's was told in *The Girdle of Polly Hipple*, which appeared in Accent UK's *Twelve* anthology, and Lily's was a longer story that appeared in *The Girly Comic* back in 2004. Julius's was plotted out for an anthology as well, but in the end was just summarised in *RO* volume 2. Sir Alfred would be the other big story to tell, but I think that will just be revealed in little snippets as we go along.

AJ: Is there any plan to collect them, or at least make them available to more people? And I'd love to know more about young George Scrubbs, Pickle's photographer. He seems like he might have some stories to tell.

GE: I haven't thought very seriously about collecting them - the Lily story just appeared in the Dutch comics magazine, *Stripschrift*. It was a twelve-page story that I crammed into six pages, and the Pickle story was an eight-pager that went down to four, so it would be nice to give them more space one day, though I doubt that will actually happen. George Scrubbs I haven't thought about, to be honest, but you're right, there's a story there somewhere ...

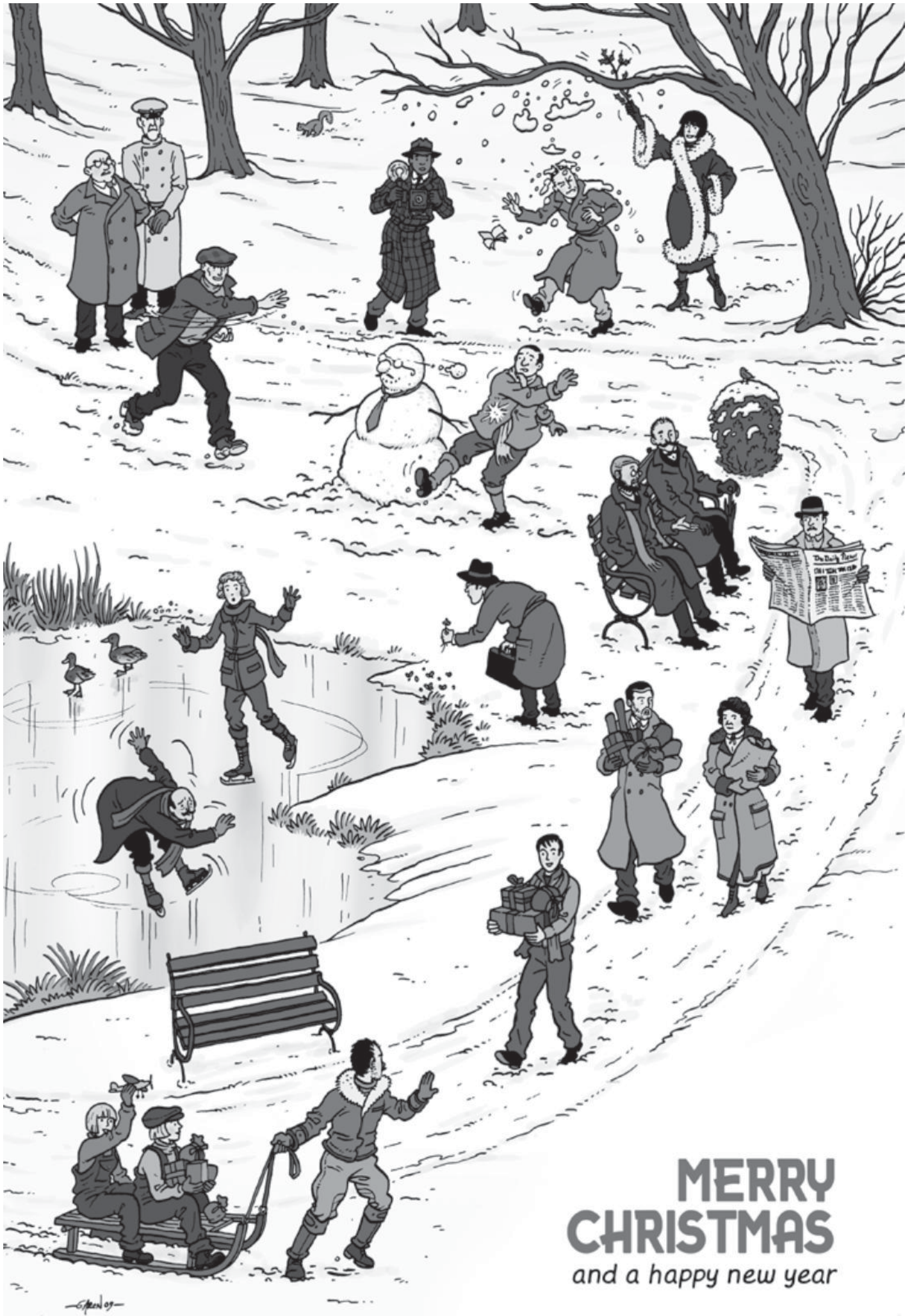
AJ: This probably ties into the question above, but how did Evelyn Crow get to be so nasty?

GE: She would be the other main origin story readers would want, certainly! But actually she's probably best kept as an enigma, which she is, even to me at the moment! Maybe she'll reveal herself one day.

AJ: It seems fitting that of all the characters, she's the one who remains most shrouded in mystery. I think in some ways that's a large part of her appeal, and learning the truth about her might seem ... disappointing or anticlimactic.

GE: I think you're right. Evelyn is my most common sketch request at comic shows and signings, though she does have to survive volume three yet - Nathaniel did put a bullet in her at the end of volume two! ●





**MERRY
CHRISTMAS**
and a happy new year



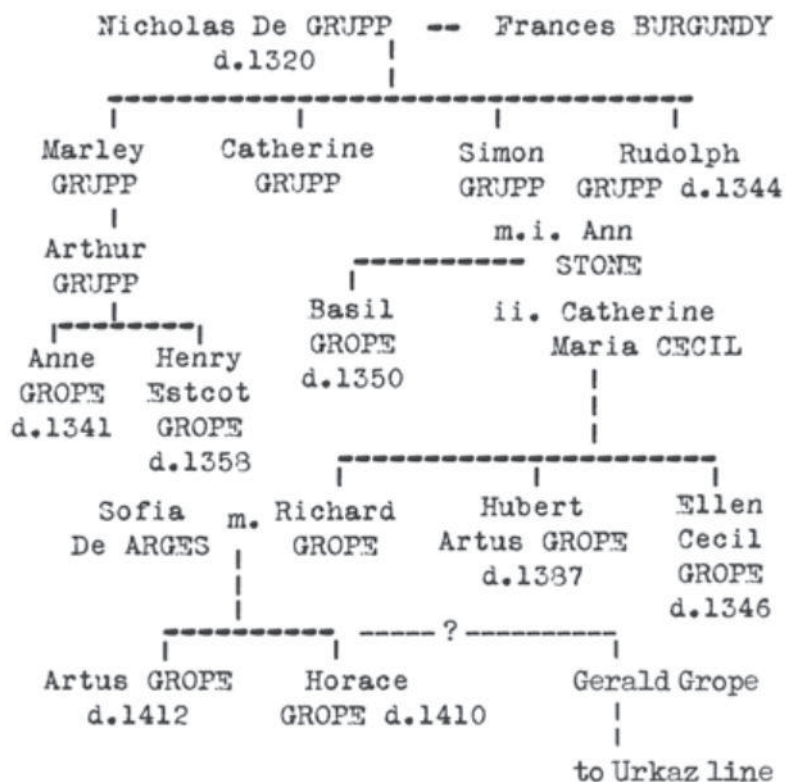




WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!



The family tree below represents the research of the genealogist, S. Herber. The additional brother to Horace and Artus Grope, Gerald Grope, was 'discovered' and added by L. Burke, Mr Herber's successor.



The Seven Councils of the Order of the Black Lion

First Council 1335

Henry Stone (Grand Lion), Henry Estcot Grope

Second Council 1365

John Tybalt Stone (Grand Lion), Richard Grope (cousin of Henry Estcot Grope)

Third Council 1376

Henry Tybalt Stone (Grand Lion), Richard Grope, Henry Lawrence

Usurper's Council 1377 (briefly known as the Fourth Council)

Geoffrey de Haven (Grand Lion), John Kenneth, William Martle

Fourth Council 1377

John Stone (Grand Lion), Richard Grope (Artus Grope in 1387), Henry Lawrence (Thomas Lawrence in 1391)

Fifth Council 1414

Hugo Stone (Grand Lion), Thomas Lawrence (Carminus Lawrence in 1426)

Sixth Council 1445

Carminus Lawrence (Grand Lion)

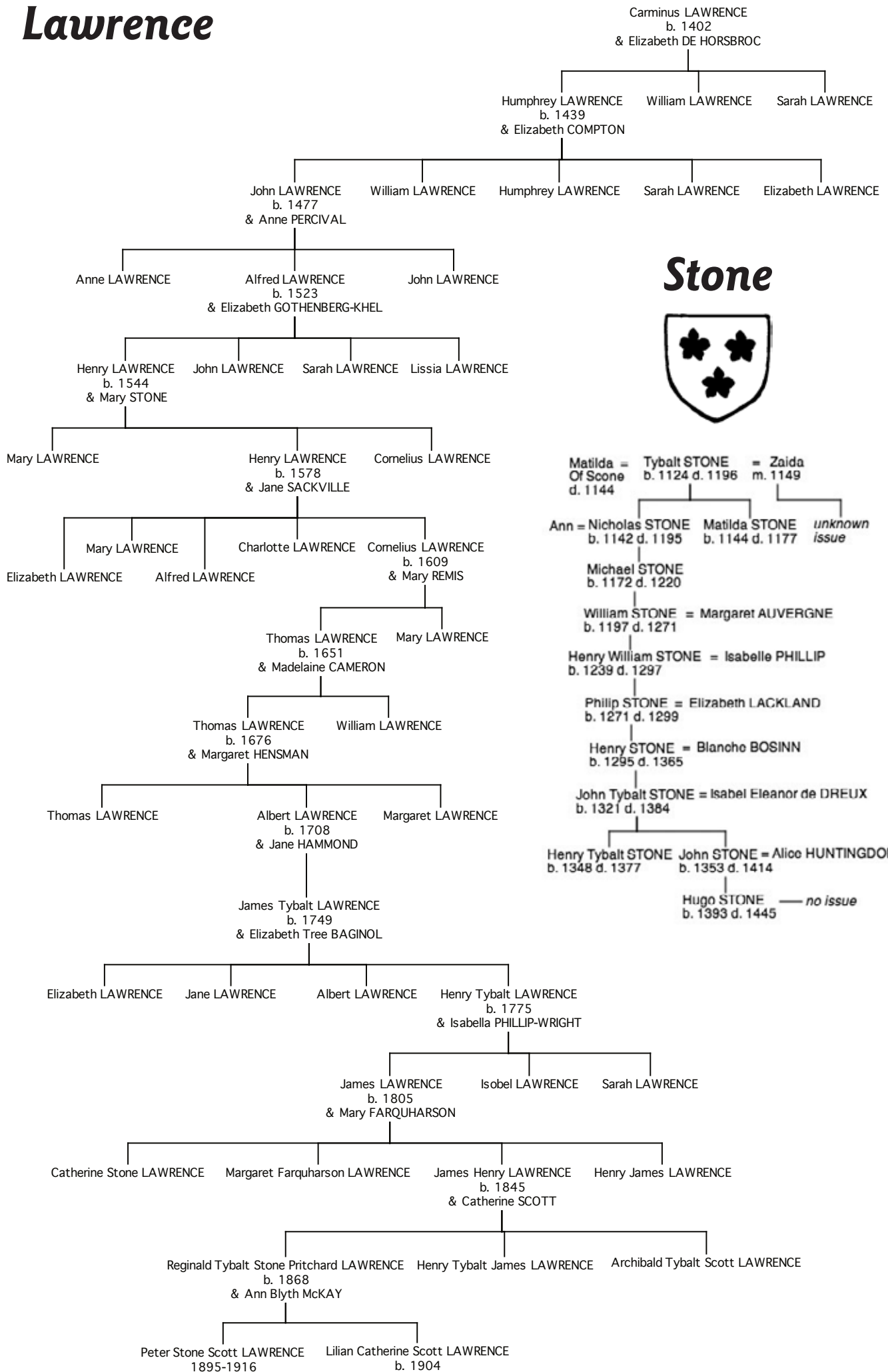
Seventh Council 1470

Humphrey Lawrence (Grand Lion)

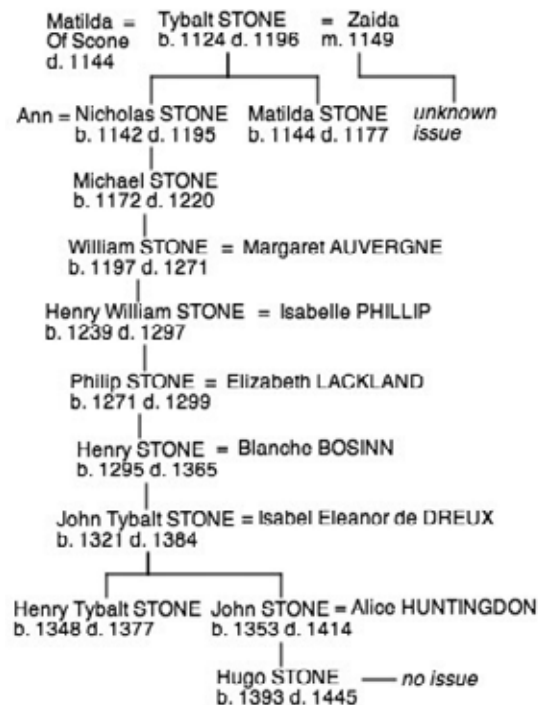
Disbanded 1485.



Lawrence



Stone



THE RAINBOW ORCHID

The biggest adventure in comics

Part One available now for £3.00 (inc p+p) from:
Garen Ewing, www.kingratpress.co.uk
or buy online at www.kingratpress.co.uk

Fool Britannia Small Press Comic
of the Year 2003

THE RAINBOW ORCHID

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If you have your comics full of mystery and adventure and you have the words of Peter Higgins, Conan Doyle, Alan Watts, Edgar R. Jacobs and King, then you're in for a treat. The Rainbow Orchid is back!

Set in the 1930s, it is a tale of the search for a mythical flower called the Rainbow Orchid, a flower that is said to be the most beautiful flower in the world. It is a story of mystery, adventure, and the search for the truth.

But why does the world care about a flower that is said to be the most beautiful flower in the world? The answer is simple: because the flower is said to be the most beautiful flower in the world.

It is a story of mystery, adventure, and the search for the truth. It is a story of the search for the truth.

The Rainbow Orchid part one collected edition was published by King Rat Press in November 2003 and awarded the Fool Britannia Small Press Comic Award 2003. In 2004 it was nominated for a National Comic Award. Part one (five episodes) was published in 2004. Part two will be published in 2004 in Puddle from Ewing Comics with a collected edition coming out in May 2005.

www.rainboworchid.co.uk

THE RAINBOW ORCHID

Nominated (Foolish) National Comic Awards 2004
Fool Britannia Best Small Press Comic 2003

It's here! Garen Ewing's fantastical new adventure story
the biggest adventure in comics...

THE RAINBOW ORCHID

Artwork exhibition
East Grinstead Library
24-25 Aug 2009

Buy a copy of *The Rainbow Orchid* in *The Bookshop* any time between 4th and 21st Aug 2009 and you could win some original art!

Come to the launch event Friday 21st August 2009 7-9pm

The Bookshop

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East Grinstead
West Sussex RH19 3AW

PUBLISHED BY
EGMONT

A small selection
of Rainbow Orchid
advertisements
and promotional
materials 2004-2010



The Rainbow Orchid volume 2 will be available exclusively at Bristol - one month before release!

22-23 May 2010

Bristol

RAMADA BRISTOL CITY HOTEL & THE MERCURE HOTEL

GLENN DAKIN (Candle Man)
GAREN EWING (THE RAINBOW ORCHID)

2PM SAT 22 MAY 2010 MERCURE HOTEL
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the guardian
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THE RAINBOW ORCHID

Event HF102

MAKE COMICS!

Comic writer and artist
Garen Ewing talks about
how a comic is made, from
writing to art, and his book,
The Rainbow Orchid -
the biggest adventure
in comics!

Saturday 5 June 2010 1pm Oxfam Studio

DON'T PANIC!

The following interview with Garen Ewing was conducted by Peter Whitehead in March 2012 and published on Waterstones' dedicated bookseller intranet.

PW: Congratulations on the release of the third volume of *The Rainbow Orchid*! How long has this book been in the works?

GE: Thank you! *The Rainbow Orchid* as a whole was conceived and started way back in 1996. I drew the first three pages in 1997 and then left it until I picked it up again in 2002 when it was serialised in a small press comic called *BAM!* Over the next few years I did more as and when I could. As for volume three specifically, it was already plotted, but I started scripting it in late 2009 or early 2010, so two years ago. Making comics can be a long process.

PW: I missed your recent appearance on the Simon Mayo show, which has of course a massive audience. How did it feel to suddenly be presented with such a huge potential platform for your work?

GE: It was indeed quite sudden - from initial contact at lunchtime to being on-air at 5.20 the same day, so that was probably a good thing, giving me very little time to worry about it. In the end it was more about how to make comics, a bit of advice, rather than promoting my own work, though *The Rainbow Orchid* did get a couple of good mentions too. It was a nice thing.

PW: When you initially set out to begin work on *The Rainbow Orchid*, did you immediately decide to mirror the European bandes dessinées album format or was this something that evolved over time?

GE: It was a conscious decision from the start. I'd come to the realisation that I found comics really hard work and I didn't seem to have the motivation to draw other people's comic scripts as a day-to-day job. So I decided to concentrate on commercial illustration for work and make comics purely for my own amusement. That meant I could indulge myself, so *The Rainbow Orchid* is made up of all the things I love - the Franco-Belgian format, classic adventure, absorbing and involving plots ... all that lovely stuff.

PW: You are Britain's leading exponent of clear-line comic art. What do you feel are the advantages of clear-line over the usually more loose style of artwork we normally associate with comics?

GE: Probably the main advantage is accessibility. 'Ligne claire' has a lot to do with clear storytelling as well as an open drawing style, and this makes it easier for people who perhaps aren't used to reading comics to engage with. Characters tend to be slightly cartoony, making them easily identifiable and appealing, while environments and vehicles are generally well-researched and technically rendered. That, along with backgrounds in almost every panel, gives the impression the characters are living in a real world

which helps to immerse the reader more fully into the story. Also there's no reliance on heavy narration captions, so the artwork and dialogue share more of the burden of storytelling, making sure it has to be visually well-told. As a clear-line author you've got to make sure your story is well-structured and engaging - there's nowhere to hide!

PW: Was there a particular comic strip that inspired you to adopt that style?

GE: I was a Tintin reader from age of 6 or 7, so that type of comic is in my blood. Along with Asterix it's informed so much that I love about comics, leading me to seek out similar work and finding authors such as Yves Chaland, Joost Swarte, Tardi, etc. I think it was the discovery on a trip to Belgium of the work of Edgar P. Jacobs (Blake and Mortimer) that first sowed the seeds of doing that kind of book myself. I picked up *La Marque Jaune* (now published in the UK as *The Yellow M*) and it knocked my socks off.

PW: What comics did you read as a child? Did you prefer the output of DC Thomson or the weeklies that IPC were producing?

GE: Asterix and Tintin were the mainstays of my youth but I was also heavily into war comics, especially *Battle* and those little *Commando* books from DC Thomson. I did get some humour titles too, *The Dandy* mainly, but it was the adventure stuff that I preferred - *Tiger*, *Warlord*, *Victor*. I eventually moved on to *2000AD* and then *Warrior* as I got into my teens. Really it was anything that took my fancy that week - as far as pocket money would allow, anyway!

PW: Why do you think that weeklies like *Whizzer and Chips* and *The Beezer* disappeared from Britain's newsagents?

GE: That's a good question and one, I think, that comic creators and publishers are still wondering about today. The obvious answer lies in increasing competition from more instantaneous forms of entertainment - television and computer games in particular. I'm sure there's a complicated combination of things ... I don't know the ins and outs of 1970s publishing, but it must have been harder and more expensive to promote titles as competition for children's pocket-money increased. One thing is certain - people still love comics. It's making them easily available and getting them in front of readers that's the problem.

PW: Although Graphic Novels have gradually gained a certain degree of acceptance in the UK over the past few years as a valid form, we still seem far behind our European cousins in terms of range and cultural exposure. It's a broad question but why do you think this is?

GE: Yes, there are plenty of examples of this

cultural difference. In the UK comics are often derided as 'for children', which shows something of a prejudice against children's books in general, many of which are actually among our country's very best classics and read by all ages. We also seem to have a problem with words accompanied by pictures - pictures are seen as something you should grow out of, something to aid slow readers, which just isn't the case. And then there's the fact that people all too often equate comics exclusively with superheroes, leading to the idea that comics are a genre rather than a medium, and a medium that can, in fact, successfully tell any kind of story.

In France there is great respect for art and artists, there's a tradition of the auteur. Their government help to fund the country's biggest comics festival and comic albums are read by the whole family, consistently selling in huge quantities. Some of their comic creators are given civic honours; in Holland, Joost Swarte was knighted by the Queen! In the UK comics come from a tradition of throw-away entertainment, cheap thrills for the kids. When Tintin had his first adventure published, in 1929, within a year it was collected into a book and sold as a single piece of work. You can see the value that gives to the art form - it takes on permanence and quality, it's something to be treasured and read again and again. Our French and Belgian counterparts grew up with that example. As you say, things are changing, but we've got a lot of catching-up to do.

PW: What advantages does the comic strip have over other storytelling methods?

GE: I talked about the special accessibility of the clear-line earlier, but comics as a whole have an instantaneous attraction about them. As soon as you pick up a comic you can be sucked in by the artwork, from the very first panel, and before you know it you're reading and turning the pages to see what happens next. Art has an immediate effect, you don't have to interpret it, you just see the action. Of course comics have words too, so it's a powerful combination of the two - perfect for storytelling or getting information across in an absorbing way, especially for children. You don't need a team to create a comic - unlike film, which comics are often compared to, one person can be the writer, director, special effects technician, casting manager and even all the actors! And talking of special effects, you don't need a budget. Just a pencil and some paper and you can show anything your imagination cares to conjure up. It really is quite magical.

PW: Children are probably less likely to encounter comics now than we were back in the seventies. Do you feel that children are as naturally able now to understand the form?

GE: From what I've seen when I go into schools

or do comic workshops at literary festivals, yes. It's all I can do to hold them back. I try to get the children to do a simple four-panel story in comic form and by the time I've explained the concept a third of them have pencilled 6 panels of a story already! Children are very open to new things and if a comic is well written they'll have no problem diving in. Often it's adults with no comics-reading experience that find them more of a challenge.

PW: On the back of Steven Spielberg's film adaptation, the sales of the Tintin albums in Waterstones were very strong. Do you feel that the market is opening up for comic albums or do you think that people are reluctant to look past the work of Hergé?

GE: As long as other comics are available and visible, then they do really well. Tintin is everywhere, but there aren't too many books like *The Rainbow Orchid* - a new, original content, all ages, British comic album. From my experience the big sellers are American reprints, imported manga, literary adaptations and licensed characters and film tie-ins. All good stuff, but the quality of a country's comic industry is at least partially reflected in how many of its published authors are creating new material, made to be a comic (ie. not a fill-in for a movie), and made available to the general public. The more we get of that - and it is already much better than when my first book came out two years ago - the more people will start accepting comics as part of the mainstream culture. It's very heartening to see what publishers such as Cinebook and Blank Slate have achieved in such a short time. I hope that continues.

PW: Egmont publish both your work and Hergé's for the British market, so it would seem that Egmont have some affinity with the clear-line style. Did you approach them to publish *The Rainbow Orchid* or was it the other way around?

GE: Although I believe Egmont were already aware of my work, and interested in it, my agent sent *The Rainbow Orchid* out to ten publishers, including Egmont. About half of them showed interest, three quite seriously. It was really the enthusiasm of Tim Jones, the commissioning editor at Egmont, that made me want to go with them, and I'm really pleased I did.

PW: How much time do you spend writing your stories as opposed to completing the artwork?

GE: It's difficult to split the jobs as two separate tasks really. While I'm plotting, I'm doodling and sketching. While I'm writing the first draft of the script, it's accompanied by page layouts and rough compositions. Comics are a nice blend of the two disciplines. In the end, though, it's the final drawing that eats up the hours ... well, days, weeks and months!

PW: Do you see *The Rainbow Orchid* as an open-ended series or is there an end-point for the tales?

GE: *The Rainbow Orchid* finishes with volume 3, so that's that story completed. As for further Julius Chancer stories, there will definitely be more. I'd quite like to give

Julius three good adventures, the quest for the Rainbow Orchid being the first. I won't look any further than that for now, but I do like the idea of a shelf-full of his escapades!

PW: You are both artist and writer of *The Rainbow Orchid*. Would you consider collaborating with another writer or another artist on a different project?

GE: This opportunity comes up a fair bit and I nearly always turn the offer down, though it's incredibly flattering to be asked. I don't think I'm a very good collaborator, actually. I find drawing quite hard, but I have more motivation if I'm working on my own story. I did have the opportunity very recently to work with an author who I greatly admire and I really struggled to come to a decision. But in the end I realised if I took the job then I wouldn't get to work on a new Julius Chancer story for another two or three years, and I didn't want that, not after getting this far. I have drawn a couple of very short stories by Ben Haggarty (writer of *Mezolith*) for *The Phoenix*.

PW: What are the advantages and disadvantages of being both artist and writer?

GE: I suppose the biggest disadvantage is that it's time consuming - I do all the plotting, writing, research, rough sketches, layouts, pencilling, inking, colouring and lettering myself. Another one might be that I have no one to bounce ideas off, but actually my wife takes on that occasional role very nicely - she's come up with three or four good plot solutions when I've been stuck and she's listened to me countless times as I use her as a sounding board.

The advantages lie in the single vision I bring to the work - for better or worse I'm in complete control of the story. I'm always adjusting dialogue, from the first draft to



when the pages are all finished, and I can do that when I need to without having to consult anyone (well, except for one occasion when I had to ask my editor at Egmont if I could make a change after the proofs had already been signed off!). If a new idea strikes me, I can implement it, no matter what stage I'm at. This suits me very well. Most of my favourite comics are the product of a single author.

PW: You have worked on both *The DFC* comic and its fresh incarnation, *The Phoenix*. Do you think there is still a place for a weekly, story-led comic for children that hasn't got the nostalgia factor of *The Beano* or *The Dandy*?

GE: Yes, I'm sure there is. *The Phoenix* is brilliant, and getting better and better with each issue. It's a real step up from *The DFC*, which was good, but you can see they've learned a lot from its short run. Again, it's just that lack of visibility, but if such high quality comics are given enough time, and a bit of room to grow, I think they'll get there. Everyone loves a good story, no matter what the format - but comics do happen to be a rather fabulous format for telling great stories.

PW: Aside from any future tales from the world of *The Rainbow Orchid*, do you have any other projects that you're willing to tell us about?

GE: I'm doing another short story with Ben Haggarty for *The Phoenix*, but apart from that I'm looking at getting on with the next Julius Chancer adventure as soon as possible. I have one plotted out in some detail, and a couple of other ideas waiting in the wings. I'm the sort of person who has to concentrate on one thing at a time, and I'm not fast, so we'll have to see what emerges!

PW: How do you think that a national book-selling chain like Waterstones can better support graphic novels for children?

GE: If I was put in charge of Waterstones children's books (let me have that fantasy for a few moments!) I think it would be all about providing and displaying a good range of the best comics in a dedicated area - giving comics visible importance as part of a child's reading material. Tintin and Asterix, certainly, but I'd give prominence to new home-grown material as this is what will help to grow the UK comics scene, these are the authors that children can actually meet and be inspired by - maybe even at Waterstones-run events. Books from the DFC Library, Andi Watson's *Gum Girl* and *Glisters* books, Metaphrog's *Louis*, Gary Northfield's *Derek the Sheep*, and *The Rainbow Orchid*, of course! I wish such a list was bigger, but it's a struggle to add to that off the top of my head. All supplemented with the wonderful Cinebook translations, old DC Thomson collections, and the best manga and US imports too.

I think if children and parents see that comics are taken seriously by booksellers and can see the range on offer, then sales will go up - along with a growing respect for both the medium and its creators. Perhaps then we'll be that little bit closer to where the Franco-Belgian scene is now.



From J.C.
to JP -

with best
wishes -
Goran Ewing
April 2009

JULIUS CHANCER WITH A FEW BOOKS
FOR SIR ALFRED!



To Michael -
with best wishes -
Goran Ewing
April 2009

EVELYN CROW LOOKS AT A COMIC!



To Nyrce -
with best wishes
Goran Ewing
April 2009

LILY LAWRENCE READS THE LATEST
D.W. GRIFFITH SCRIPT TO MAKE SURE
HER CHARACTER SURVIVES THE FIRST REEL!



To Claudia
with best wishes -
Goran Ewing
April 2009

JULIUS CHANCER SEARCHING
FOR THAT ELUSIVE FACT!

STRIPSCHRIFT

RUPERT VAN DER LINDEN
SCOUTS IN DE STRIP

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GAREN EWING



The Dutch comics magazine *Stripschrift* has been going since 1968 and is the world's longest-running publication about comics. Garen Ewing and *The Rainbow Orchid* were the subject of a six-page article in the September 2010 issue, as well as featuring on the cover.

[illegible]

There are many other abandoned ideas, from lines of dialogue to characters and whole scenes, as well as plot twists and turns ... all part of the development of a story, so these are just a handful to show you some of the process before the final direction is decided upon and published.



PAGE 37

Panel 1:

We see Drubbin reading his paper, at his usual spot opposite Sir Alfred's place, though we are looking face on, so see him leaning against the low wall. One or two people passing by to emphasise street scene.

Panel 3:

Close in on his paper. The headline clearly reads 'Disappearance of Pickle a Mystery' with sub-line of 'Our correspondent still missing'.

Panel 3:

Charlotte has suddenly appeared beside Drubbin, in her apron and with tea-tray in hand, teapot and steaming cup.

Charlotte: "Would you care for a spot of tea, sir?"

Drubbin (surprised): "I beg your pardon?"

Panel 4:

Detail on Charlotte, Drubbin in foreground.

Charlotte: "Tea? Sir Alfred worries about you standing out here in the cold all day."

Drubbin: "Sir Alfred? I'm sorry, I don't believe I know the chap."

Panel 5:

Swerve round to behind Drubbin and Charlotte to see Sir Alfred's place across the street. It might be best to show a car just going by too, just to help set the period for new readers (Fusion).

Charlotte: "He owns the house you've been watching. You've been following him for three days."

Drubbin (laughing nervously): "Following? Really, that's quite absurd."

Panel 6:

Charlotte: "Mr Drubbin, Sir Alfred told me to say if you want a biscuit with your tea you must come inside for it."

Drubbin: "But... how do you know my name?"

Charlotte: "Does that mean that you would like a biscuit, sir?"

Panel 7:

Large panel, inside Sir Alfred's office, the various artefacts adding an air of mystery to the whole thing. A small bell on the desk - or somewhere. Mr Drubbin (hat now off, tea in hand?) has just stepped through the doorway, with Charlotte behind him. Sir Alfred is sitting behind his desk. Best view would be slightly from above, showing floor.

Drubbin: "Sir Alfred Catesby-Grey. I suppose my cover has been broken."

Sir Alfred: "I've been trying to ignore you for three days, Mr Drubbin, but now I want to talk."



Professor Rupali Clare was created as the Empire Survey Branch's India expert, but I sadly discarded her after realising Pendleby could take on her role without introducing yet another character.

Victorian Era - strip.

Man sets up expedition to find & collect the rare Rainbow Orchid, ~~the~~ that grows in a secret valley in India.

A rival gang hears of it & sets out to beat him (evil).

Victorian - coming, era,

- Orchids & Orchid collecting (history)

Victorian India & animals & botany

+ evil cult

Books RAS - a scrapbook of British India

1877 - 1947 by

Charles Allen (p. by Anne Deane)

(AD)

& Turn of the Century by Robert Hoare

(p. by Maudslayi)

Children's section - history

Now to include loads of little historical details,

- hunting, egg races, Ciplan tea etc...

backgrounds.

Above: the first story notes from 1996 that mention the rainbow orchid.

PAGE 38

Panel 1:

Sir Alfred has stood up.

Sir A: "Why has Winston got you keeping an eye on me?"

Drubbin: "Ah. You know who I work for as well as my name, then."

Panel 2:

Close in on Sir Alfred, he's being fairly casual, perhaps putting some books back on the shelf while he's talking.

Sir A: "I recognised you straight away, Mr Drubbin. You were a new recruit to the Empire Survey Branch in my last week as Director, though you didn't have the moustache then."

Panel 3:

Drubbin: "I'm impressed, sir, and flattered. I shouldn't say this, but many of the senior agents look back on your time at the Branch with great fondness. They don't like what happened."

Sir Alfred: "Agents! It started out as an organisation for enlightenment. Now it's all covert operations and secrecy."

Panel 4:

Sir A: "Look at you for instance. Branch members used to be explorers, researchers, archaeologists and adventurers. Now you're more like secret policemen!"

Drubbin: "As agents we simply support the main work, which goes ahead, as always."

Panel 5:

Sir Alfred holds the morning's paper up to Drubbin.

Sir Alfred: "That reporter who's gone missing, William Pickle, is that you lot? Do you have him?"

Drubbin: "No sir. I assumed it was just another newspaper stunt."

Panel 6:

Sir Alfred rings a bell on his desk (to call for Charlotte).

Sir Alfred: "No, something's going on. Pickle's the one who stirred all this orchid business up. I presume that's why Attle has you out here. The Rainbow Orchid?"

Panel 7:

Drubbin: " ...

JAGTEN PÅ REGNBUEØRKIDÉEN



Tellerup



“... I couldn’t like it more if I tried ... It is all so beautifully done: the historical references are spot on ... the dialogue is pitch perfect ... the result is one of the most satisfying comics around, whether you are a small boy, or a grown woman.”

- Rachel Cooke (*The Observer* - *Graphic Novel of the Month*)

“... we’re looking at a climax worthy of Phileas Fogg at his very best. Ewing takes everything so wonderfully exciting and entertaining in all of these influences and delivers a trilogy of graphic novels that really entertains.”

- Richard Bruton (*Forbidden Planet International*)

“Enchanting, beguiling, astonishingly authentic ... in these books he has managed to synthesise something vibrant, vital, fresh and uniquely entertaining for modern readers of all ages. Pure comics mastery ...”

- Win Wiacek (*Now Read This!*)

“It’s a gripping conclusion, with the kind of tip of the hat to Hergé (and Haggard) we’ve come to expect from this wonderful ligne claire series, but with a modern take of action, adventure and intrigue that leaves plenty of openings for further adventures and returning villains.”

- John Freeman (*Down the Tubes*)

“Tightly-plotted, well-researched and beautifully drawn, this book is a real delight. Garen Ewing’s mix of engaging characters, exciting old-school adventure, attractive ligne claire artwork and fluid storytelling makes *The Rainbow Orchid* easily one of the best graphic novels of the year.”

- Bryan Talbot (*Grandville, Alice in Sunderland*)

“... I really love your *Rainbow Orchid* books. They fuel my hunger for classic adventure!”

- Rhys Darby (*Flight of the Conchords*)

“... an extraordinary example of the craft of comics ... an all-ages, all-people adventure classic happening right now before our very eyes. Get on board immediately before everybody else is talking about it.”

- Paul Rainey (*Comics on the Ration*)

“Ewing has successfully mastered everything that makes a great adventure comic strip - engaging characters, a rattling quest with intrigue, meticulous research, and a deceptively simple and communicative art style ...”

- Tim Pilcher (*Ilex Press*)

“It looks lovely ... A book to share across generations, as older readers will find it as satisfying a read as younger ones.”

- Dr. Mel Gibson (*Write Away*)



British Comic Award winner 2013