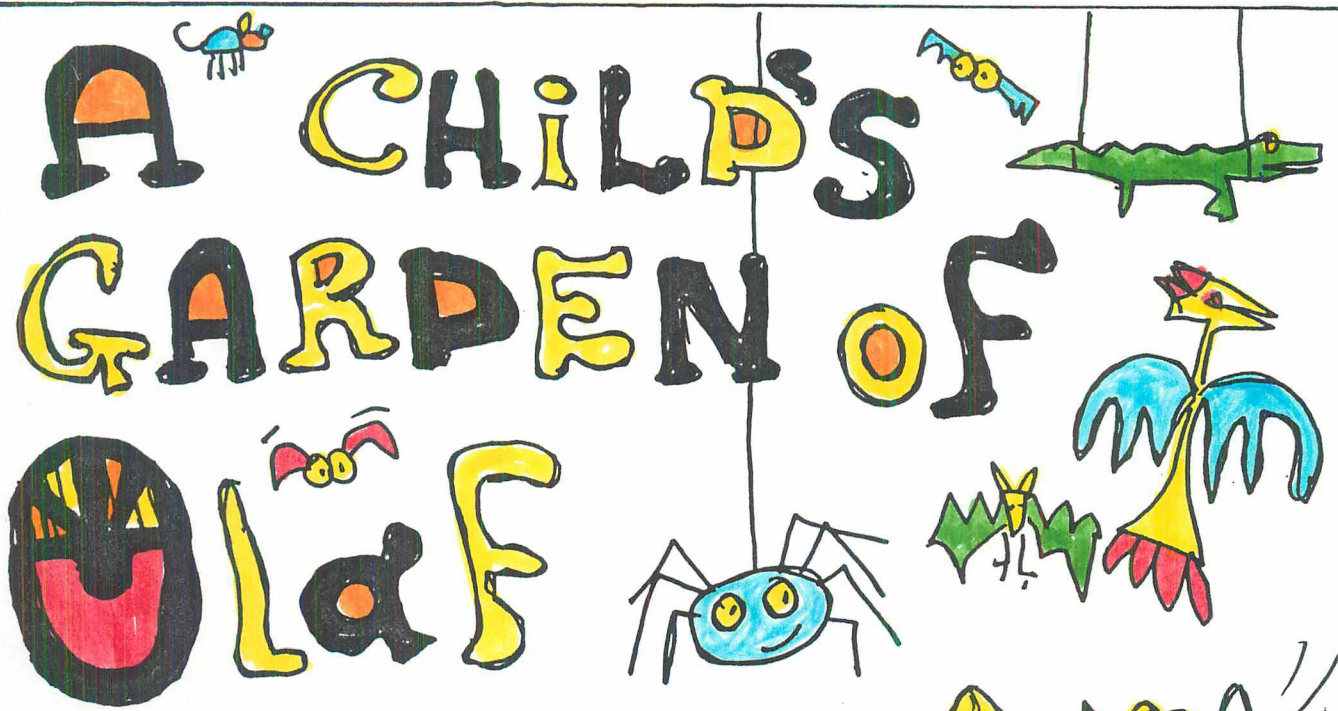


A CHILD'S GARDEN OF Olaf



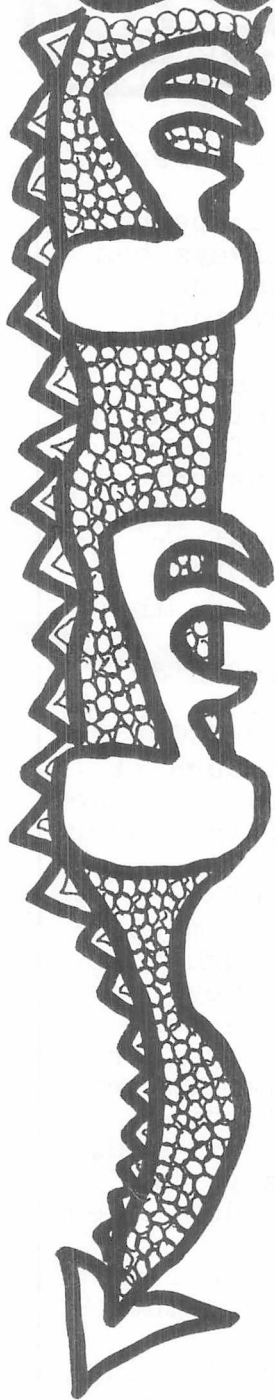
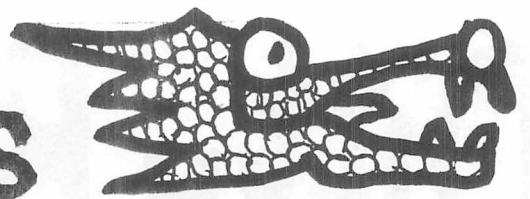
"with inferior grade
dried bats blood you
can hardly expect
to get a Tucker or
a Willis".



revisited



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The Map is not the Country.

when Adam delved and Eve span
who was then the gentleman.

I'd be obliged if those of
you wanting to get ACC003
would respond in some way.

Fench.

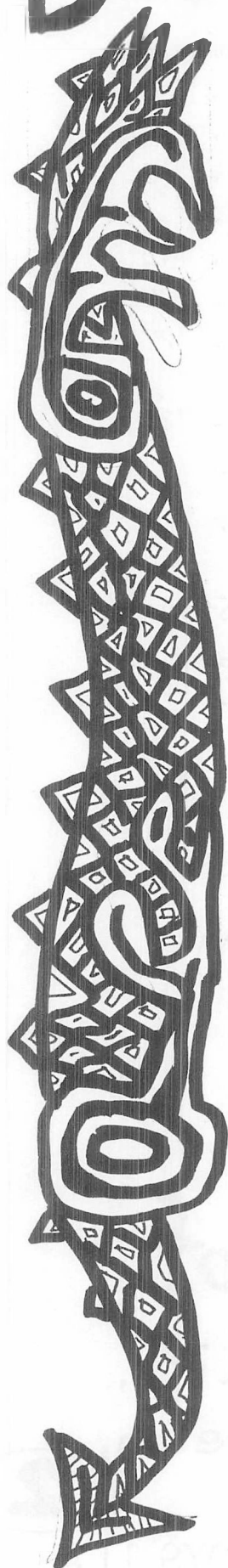
A Childs Garden of

Olaf 2

Ken Cheslin,
10 Coney Green,
Stourbridge,
West Midlands DY8 1LA.

2

Ditty Box



Well, well, well, here's something I never thought I'd see again.

Oh, not another fanzine, though its been many years since I published one I've always had an ambition to break into fanzine publishing again, even when it seemed most unlikely that I would ever have the opportunity.

No, what really surprises me is that I'm using this particular title for I thought that, having no captive artist to do my illos for me, I'd never be able to put my cartoon ideas onto paper.

What, you object that this isn't another zine like that first A CHILDS GARDEN OF OLAF, that was all cartoons and this zine is more than half typing.

True.. But this Childs Garden of Olaf didn't start out to be they way its turned out.

Since my resurrection back at the BECCON I've done a few stories and articles, but, though it may not show, I've been mostly concerned with the cartoon ideas I've accumulated, some of them over many years.

It was more or less as a measure of desperation that I resorted to drawing them up myself, and, primitive and unskilled though the resultant drawings may be, I felt that they had a sort of rustic charm. So much so that a few months ago I started to try to collect together the illos I'd mailed out to various folk, to try to recall illos that had never been collected together in one place, and to draw new cartoons, with the idea of publishing, at some very uncertain time in the future, a new Childs Garden of Olaf.

Whilst engaged in this I happened to find the 'Little' pubs and eventually concieved the idea of doing an article about them.

As I framed the first thoughts about doing the pub article, in the same breath as it were, it suddenly struck me that I had a story lying around that was in some related to pubs and beer and such, The Case of the Missing Brew to be precise.

Suddenly, before I was aware of it, I had the makings of a fanzine 'proper' rather than the specialised cartoon one I had first concieved.

But without that first impulse to publish the cartoon collection this zine would never have come into existance.

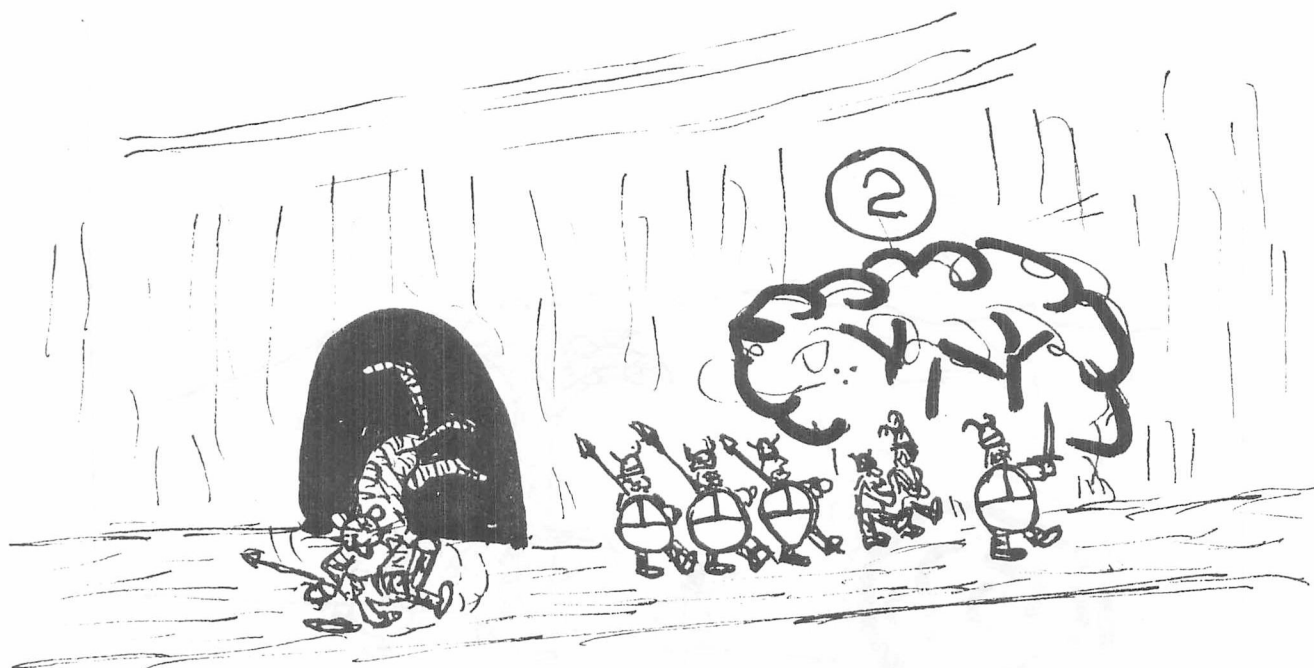
So thats why I'm using this title.

The last CHILDS GARDEN OF OLAF came out in 1964. kench.



"Tell me"

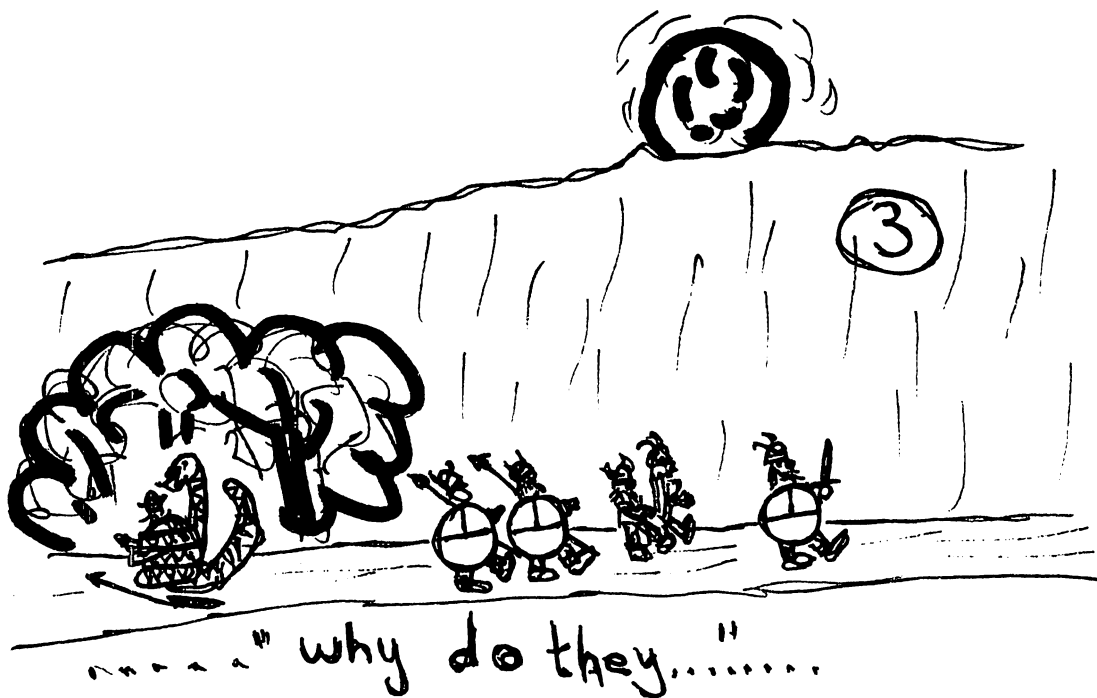
KENCH



"..... old friend".....

KENCH

4

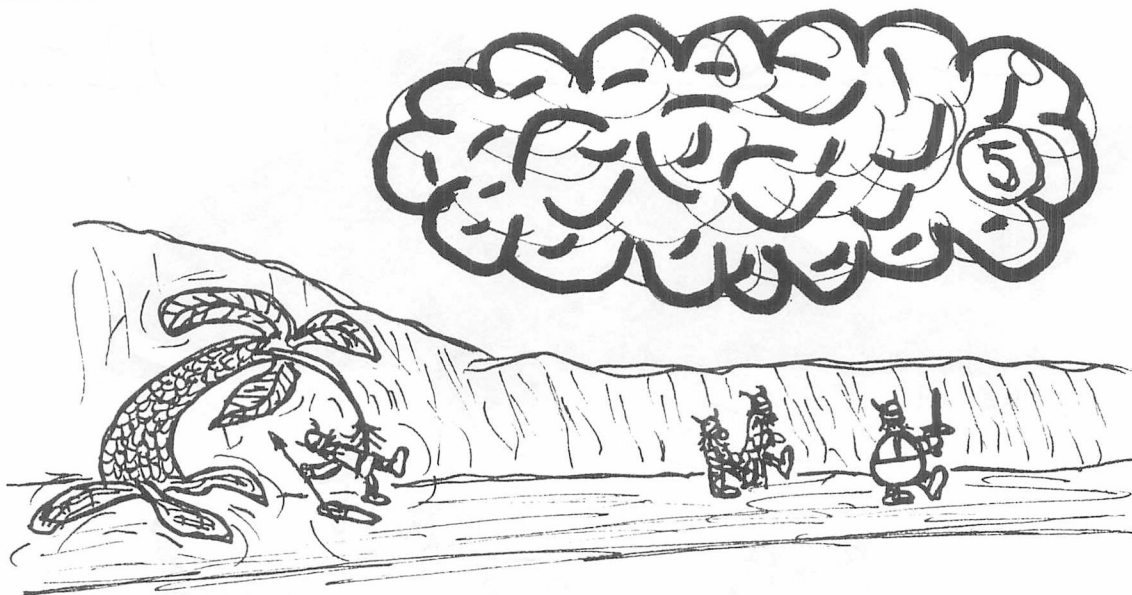


KENCH



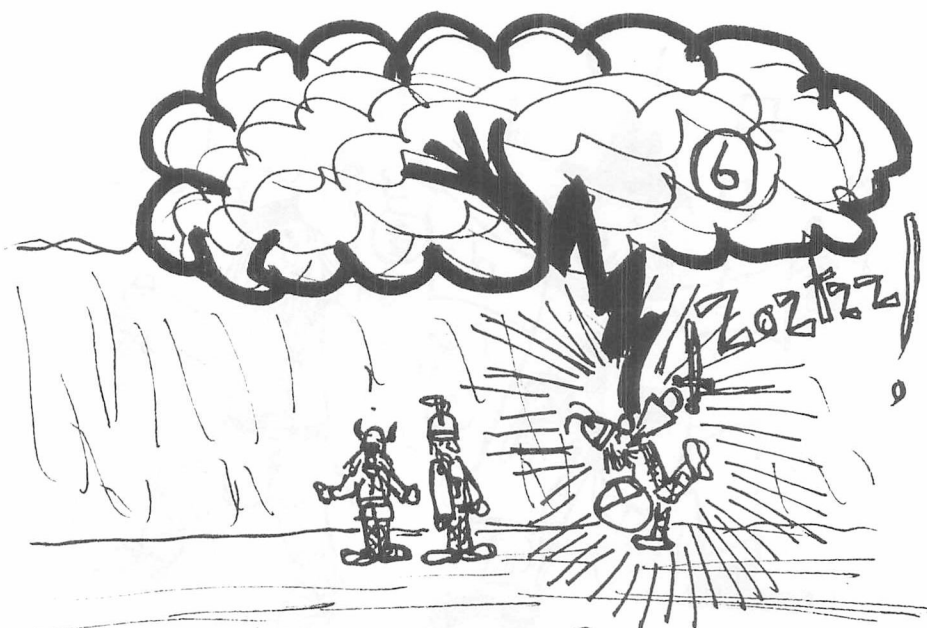
KENCH

5



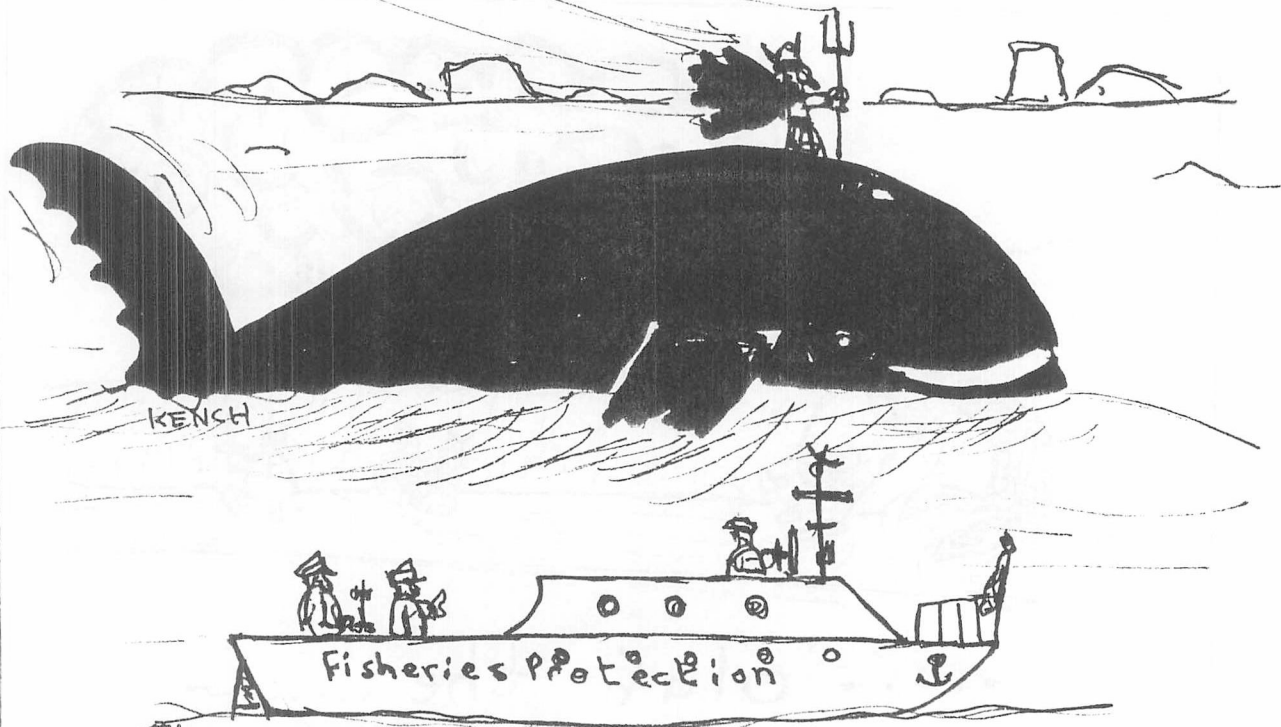
....."Olaf the".....

KENCH



..... lucky?

KENCH



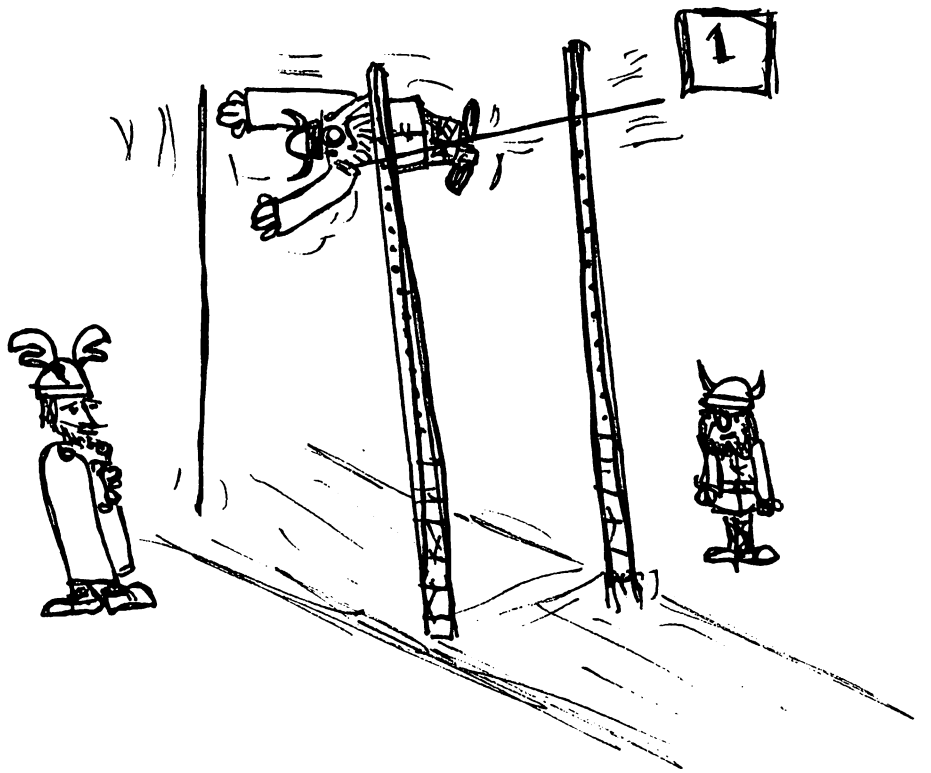
The new bloke obviously takes his duties very seriously.

kench

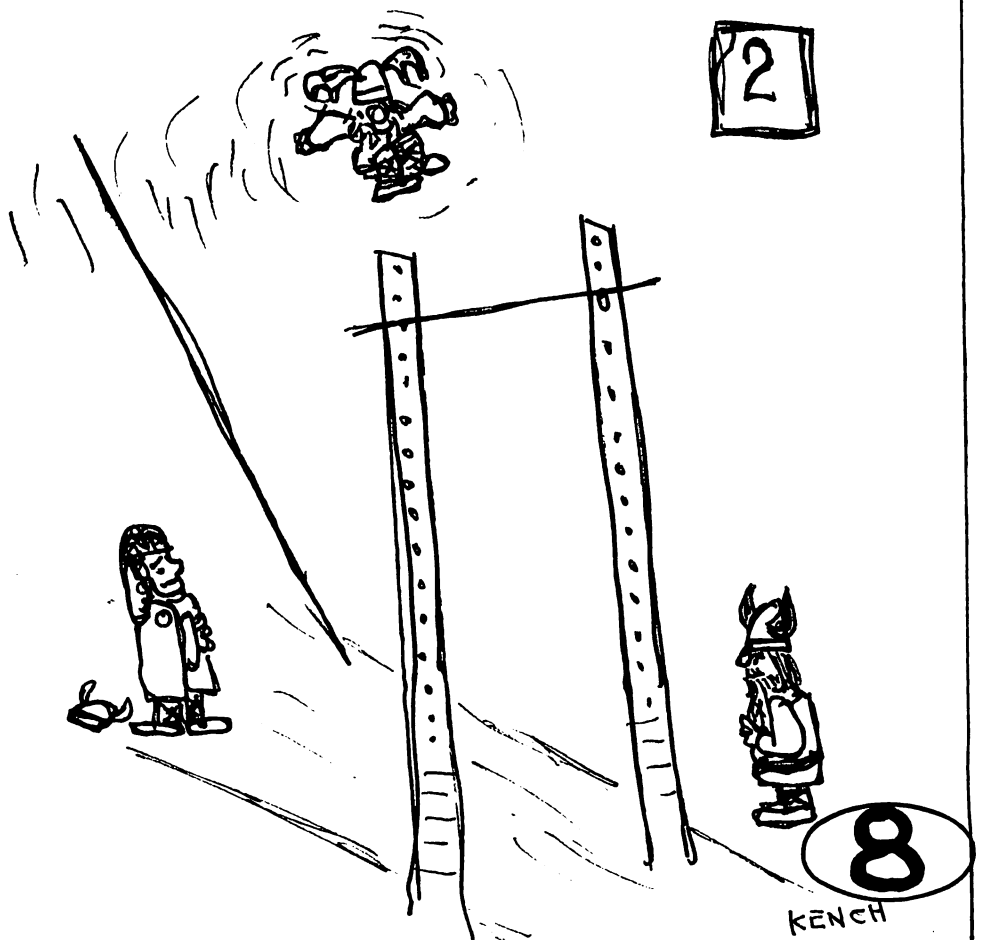


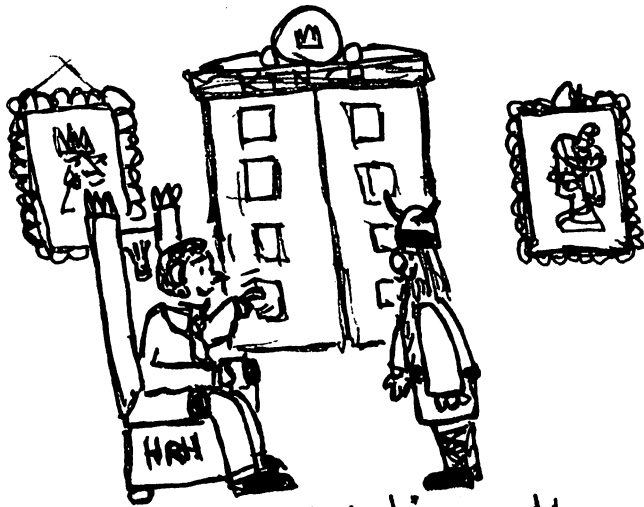
"In this life, onething counts,
in the bank, large amounts."

kench



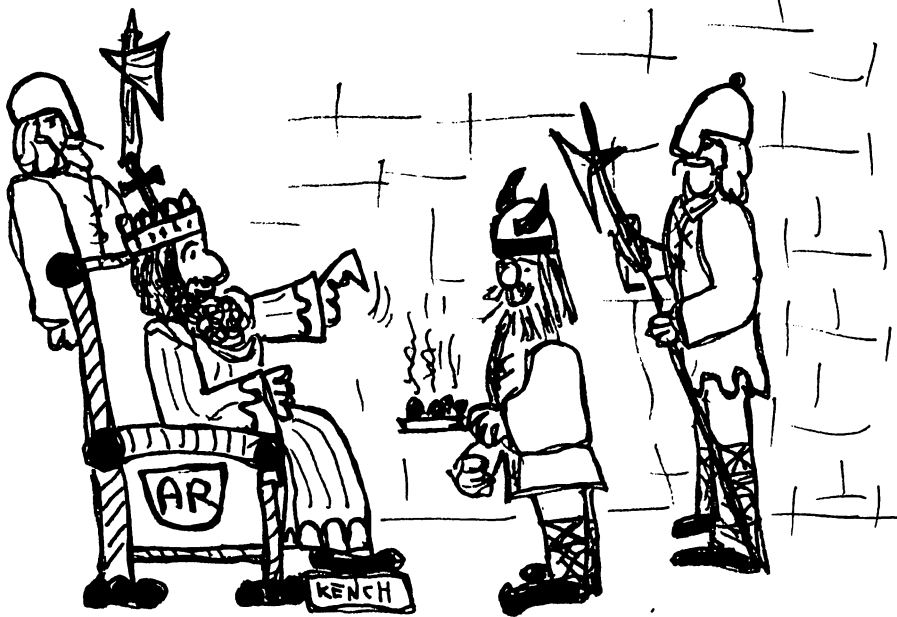
KENCH





One night, with difficulty,
swallow "Fidel Castro" but
"Spike Milligan"? Never!

Kench



Not only did you burn the poor
woman's cakes, you also gave
a false name. Mine!!

Kench

9

The Little Pubs

by Ken Cheslin.

**M. A. D. O'ROURKE'S
PIE FACTORY**
TIPTON 021 557 1402



**"A Technological Leap
Backwards"**

* **The New Inn**, a humbly down, tiny pub built a hundred years ago - one of the many which surrounded the giant Round Oak Steel works, somehow pottering on, surviving the closing & demolition of the works.

LUMPHAMMER BITTER

REAL

ALE



**"A PINT
IS YOUR ONLY MAN!"**

± **BATHAMS - THE VINE** - they brew the beer in buildings at the back of the pub. Lots of room but a run-down atmosphere.

It is hard to say precisely when The 'Little' Pubs came to my notice.

I believe that I had heard something of them now and again, and son Matthew was acquainted with at least one, **THE LITTLE DRY DOCK** at Wetherton, but the nearest I'd come to 'Black Country' breweries was....well, there was **Simpkiss's**, which I knew about because one of my mate ex-SADO member Tony Hill, used to keep **THE BUSH** at Hinksford. But the only one I ever had more than one drink at was one round the corner from our old house at John Street, Brierley Hill, and I've forgotten its name. *My Yorkshire dad-in-law had a high opinion of that pub. Alas the Simpkins's sold out to another "small" brewery, who do **Wem Ales**.

On the other side of our old street there was a **Holden's** pub, another brewery with less than a dozen houses. They brew a strong beer...and then there's **Holts**, and **Morgans**....but I've never had the time and money to develop into a "real ale" fan.

Another place, only one of them is a curious place, which I've just visited, sports a large sign saying **BLESSINGS ± OF YOUR HEART YOU BREW A FINE BEER**, which is a quote from (I think) The Merry Wives of Windsor.

Of greater fame was **MA PARDOE'S** pub, which has now passed out of the family's hands I think. They brewed their own beer too and is about the best known pub in the "real" Black Country.



GOING FORWARD THE BACK WAY



**EVERY LITTLE PUB
HAS GOT A MAGIC OF ITS OWN
EVERYONE IS DIFFERENT
AND NOT A BREWERY CLONE.**

So said the Stourbridge poet Cranbourn Thrupp
in his epic poem "Ode To A Skylarking Night Out".

Yes, famed in song and story The Little Pub Company goes back to a time
that even the very old can only remember vaguely. Even the founder now
sadly with HIS advancing years and its consequent memory loss, cannot
quite recall just when the company began, even for the V.A.T. man.

Suffice to say that The Little Pub Company is a totally independent
company, dedicated to sociability, good food and a decent pint.



They came up to visit us sort of in passing, for they were in
fact engaged to meet up with some people they know, presumably
locally. These folk took Jackie and Peter to a 'Little' pub
about two miles from here. Its located on the main Stourbridge
to Birmingham road at a place called Windmill Hill.

This was **THE LITTLE WHITE LION, COLLEY GATE.**

Well, this interested us. Me especially. The idea of
enormous meat pies with big horns sticking out of them sort
of tickled my fancy.

And we had recently been out and had an enjoyable meal at
a canalside pub in Kinver and wished to repeat the experience,
so trying out the place Jackie and Peter had been to was a
good excuse (well, good enough) for another adventure of the
beer and culinary kind.

(Ordinarylly we don't go out much, not on teachers pay. Now
that I'm retired, working part-time, and all the insecurity
that implies I'm fair amazed at my recklessness..however..)



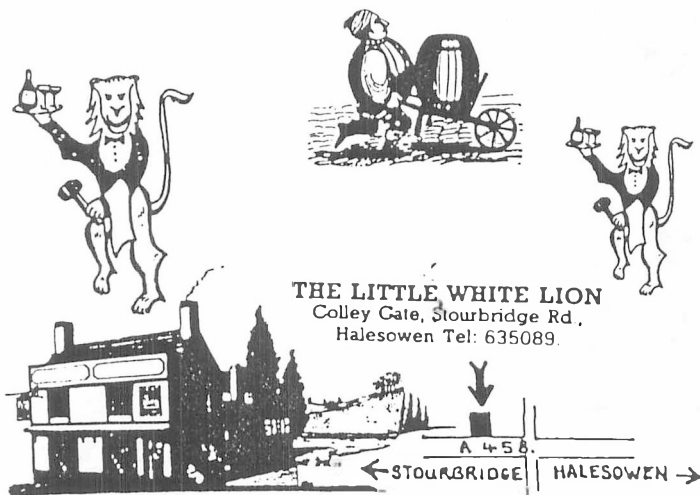
The place I've really been
meaning to visit lies only half
a mile from me as I write, this
is a place at Stambermill called
GROUTY DICK'S. (I'm not sure if
it's pronounced to rhyme with
gout, or with grort). This is not
really a pub...but then I would
hardly call it a restaurant...maybe
an eating place. You have to book
to get a place so you can induge
in such Black Country specialities
as faggots and peas. ("faggits
and pays")

Interesting. But not so intriguing
as "Black Pudding Thermidore",
"Sausage Wellington", or even
"Desperate Dan Pies".

The which you can get at the
'Little' pubs.

(I've also seen them advertise
Kinver Cat Pie, but I am a bit
doubtful of its authenticity)

It were the brother-in-law and
Jean's sister Jackie who really
brought the 'Little' pubs to our
(my) attention.



THE LITTLE WHITE LION
Colley Gate, Stourbridge Rd.
Halesowen Tel: 635089.

Never short on celebrities, The Little Pub Co. were fortunate enough to engage the services of the well known British Sumo Wrestling Champions Brian and Leslie Robinson, Gold Medalists at the Tokyo Olympics, who give frequent demonstrations of the art at the Little White Lion.

Should you and your partner decide to take up the sport, enormous one pound weight "Bear Steaks" are the speciality of the house.



So one day not long after Jackie and Peter had visited us I rushed home to get Jean and we went off to sample the delights of 'Little' pub cooking, and of **Lumphammer** beer.

Lumphammer beer, I suppose, is so called because its strong. Well, that may well be...if it is it's a smooth operator because it doesn't actually hit you like a hammer. Though I admit that I've never tried more than two pints of it at any one time, being cautious about drinking when I know I've got to drive. But I can say that it certainly makes me feel merrier, and also that it revives parts other beers probably don't wish to know about.

Jean says that Lumphammer makes the best shandy that she's ever tasted.

I've tried it and am of the opinion that she's probably right.

On the pump handled for the Lumphammer are shaped like sledgehammers, only about hand hammer size. The design of these hammers comes, I think, from the traditional hammer used domestically to break up coal.

OK, so I'm getting to THE LITTLE WHITE LION.

The pub is on the main road, as I've said, with a car park very reminiscent of a demolition site, and not too big. The pub is painted up in rather canal-boatish colours on the outside, and the inside is decorated rather Victorianeseish, but not High Victorian, rather Victorian pubish been mixed up with a museum of folk culture stuff. Like we dined at what was the latest fashion sewing machine table, 100 years ago, and few tables were the same, plus the fact that some of them were beer barrells, as were some of the seats.

I rather liked the landlord of the pub..he seemed friendly but not intrusive. The food was not up to our expectations, but the drinks were. The food seemed less than hot and a bit scanty. To be fair when we told Peter and Jackie of our visit the were very surprised at our criticisms, they suggested that maybe we should have visited it



LUMPHAMMER Ale



REAL ALE

Lumphammer Ale is an only excellent pint. Its brewed exclusively for The Little Pub Co. and you won't find it anywhere else. Incidentally, a curious and suprising effect can be obtained if you look into a mirror and mouth the well known phrase "A pint of lump is your only man". The astonishing result of the facial contours is a remarkable likeness of a specific animal. I won't spoil it by telling you which. Give it a try.

WHITE LION

in the evening, as they did. They said that the pub then had a great atmosphere, the beer was good, and so was the food. So maybe we'll have to try in the evening some time, cash flow permitting.

Hooked on the 'Little' pubs by this time we decided that it was only fair that we should try them all, as occasion permitted.

In fact we have now been to all of them except one, and to some we have been twice, and one thrice.

Not in order of our visits the pub next on my list is **THE LITTLE PACK HORSE** at Bewdley.

(Bewdley I believe comes from Norman times when some follower of the Conqueror gave it that name. I don't know why exactly, the site is pleasant enough, but not a patch on Bridgenorth, a few more miles up the river.)

We have been to Bewdley many times and never really noticed the pub. Previously we went to wander by the river or to poke about in the craft shops....or to visit the museum, which somehow has always managed to be shut when we get there.

The town is tourist conscious, it has a tourist office, and behind the town one can get into the Wyre forest...it is also one of the routes you can use to get into Shropshire...Judlow, Church Stretton, Much Wenlock...the Cluns...Stokesey Castle (A MUST) and middle Wales..

REAL FOOD

If you like real food then you have come to the right place. The Little Pub Co. prides itself on the originality and variety of it's food. From "Desperate Dan Pies" to "Suishi", its different in each pub and you will find something to suit you.

See you soon.

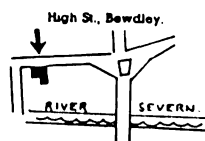
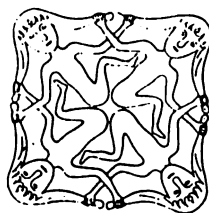




THE LITTLE PACK HORSE

The Little Pack Horse dates back to the time when the river Severn was being built, linking Stourport with Shrewsbury.

Charles II hid here to escape government cuts, and it has been used as a secret location for Royalty ever since and so only a few locals knew about Edward and Mrs. Murphy.



Bewdley and the LITTLE PACK HORSE.

The day we chose to go to the Little Pack Horse the Museum, of course, was closed.

But to make up for it the bridge and the top of the High Street were closed off.. which meant an extra ten or fourteen miles for motorists to find a river crossing.. (The Severn)..

In stead of traffic they had stalls of various kinds, folk in costume supposed to be Victorian.. including folk from the Severn Valley Railway..and the place fairly bustled.

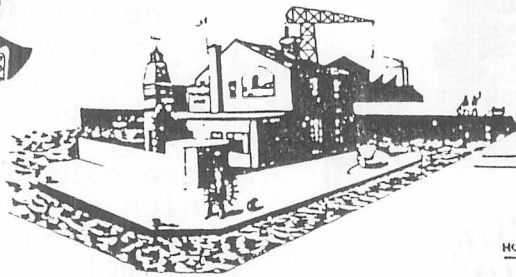
We arrived at the pub a little before the middle of the day opening time..its on a road north and south just a spit from the middle of the town, with almost non-existent footpaths

and a few doors north of the house where Joseph Chamberlain, or maybe Stanley Baldwin was born, raised, or summat. I looked at the plaque but now forget what it said.

We were first in the queue and sat down an arms length away from the bar. The pub was individually decorated, as are the other 'Little' pubs, to some extent in a manner fitted to its name, though the beer barrell tables seemed to predominate. I found it rather dark and cramped inside. Though the beer and food were good...I had a Desperate Dan pie...which I don't reccomend for anyone with a little appetite to try, because they are enormous. The pie had cauliflower and kidney in it, the both of which I dont like but apart from that it was good, (different Little pubs seem to have different recipies for the Desperate Dans) also this pub did the most magnificent curly horns, made of pastry, on their pies, better than any of the other pubs. (the different pubs, besides having the "standard Little pub" foods each seem to have their own specialities, like for instance sea food). The pub soon got very crowded, which could have been because of the affair in the main street, and seems to be one of the more 'up market' of the pubs as regards to clientel, which is not surprising seeing where it is located. I can imagine that this pub can be very cosy and full of convivial atmosphere, especially on an evening.

Oh, several of the pub have some sort of entertainment, some more often than others, but more of that anon.

THE LITTLE TUMBLING SAILOR



Having the same planning history as its twin town, Hiroshima, it was natural that Kidderminster would become a tourist attraction for its outstanding architecture. The Little Tumbling Sailor is a prime example with its fine Lighthouse built by Giotto and the main building by Fitzpatrick.

Mill St., Ring Rd., Kidderminster Tel: 747527.

Kidderminster is still a famous carpet manufacturing town, though greatly hit by overseas competition. It lies about eight miles south of Stourbridge and maybe two or three miles east of the River Severn. As you go west from Kiddy you pass from its suburbs into the suburbs of Stourport almost without noticing it. Kiddy is larger than Stourport, but both are small. Stourport is horribly touristised now, with a fair and "amusements", and boat trips on the river.

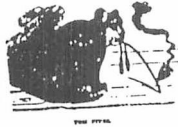
Kiddy has a good shopping centre and this benefits by being compact. Not more than a mile from the town centre is **THE LITTLE TUMBLING SAILOR**, (which for some reason, possibly two pints of Lumphammer, I find myself persistently referring to as 'The Little Stumbling Tailor').

They really do have a lighthouse on the roof, not a sky scraping edifice, but definitely a lighthouse. The bloke who runs the pub is supposed to be an ex-sailor. The pub is furnished and decorated in a nautical manner. For instance in the little bit of garden, more a yard, they have a dingy concreted into the yard, and also the wheelhouse of some sort of a small ship, maybe a Grimsby trawler.

Inside they boast such things as a Nelson-like figure-head, at least he's in Napoleonic (British) naval uniform, with hammocks slung from the ceiling, knots and seagoing utensils, lots of models of ships, ancient and modern, some in glass cases, some up on shelves. Also they have very many paintings, drawings and photos of ships, the emblems taken from many naval vessels. Around the one room the walls are divided into panels about eighteen inches long by twelve inches high. A few of them have painted in them, with the sort of enamel paint you find used on narrow boats, seaside or sea scenes, but by far the majority of them are illos of ships, mostly modern but a fair number with sails, and one or two of them eighteenth century types.

The furniture is the same interesting mixture of odds and ends, barrells included, one of the pumps sports the Lumphammer but the others are tiny lighthouses.

The staff are quite jolly and efficient, and the food is some of the best we've found in the 'little' pubs. We've been there two or three times now, always in the daytime. That time is the most convenient for us, the kids not being around, tho I'd like to visit some of the pubs



THE LITTLE DRY DOCK

Netherton



Wind Mill End, Netherton.

SALTWELLS RD.

ST PETERS RD.

The Little Dry Dock is very easy to get to, and is situated on a beautiful canal junction at the mouth of the Netherton tunnel.

If, however, you are in a car it can be a bit more difficult.

The Little Dry Dock was of course a boat building yard for narrowboats. Now converted into a pub it still retains the odd bits of memorabilia of those early days.



in the evenings its hard for us to do sa. Heather is rather old to have a baby-sitter, if we could get one, but rather too young, (and accident prone) to leave to her own devices.

For instance last night she fell off the window ledge in her room and twisted her ankle so badly that we took her off to the nearest casualty department.

Any road up. One of the first of the 'Little' pubs that we tried was

THE LITTLE DRY DOCK at Netherton.

Now Netherton would not win any prizes in a "most senic Black Country town" competition. In fact there's a lot of

industry in the area, and old houses, or tired looking post war housing estates. A canal and last centuries overgrown slag heaps are the dominating features of the landscape. But.

The **LITTLE DRY DOCK** is tucked away in the shadow of an embanked canal amid a rather grey estate, and comes as rather a surprise.

Most surprising perhaps is the bar, which is a very old, (or the replica of a very old) narrow boat, thrust into the pub like. I say "old" narrow boat because the timbers are stout..er, and of wood, the hulls of the newer boats were invariably made of iron plates. Barrells predominate as furniture, and the usual amusing odds and sods of furniture. (I think this is the home of Black Pudding Thermidore)..the food is good, as usual, (tho not invariable) in the 'Little' pubs, and the Lumphammer of course adds flavour to the meal.

Various, indeed one could say, a multitude of narrow boat paraphenalia adorns the ceiling, walls, etc., painted enamel jugs and the like. As in all the 'Little' pubs they retail their own particular Tee-shirt, and

mug with their own particular insignia.

THE LITTLE DRY DOCK is one of the pubs which has 'acts' on certain occasions, As far as I remember something like fortnightly at THE LITTLE DRY DOCK, but more frequently in some of the pubs. I couldn't guess at what some of the 'acts' consisted of, but some must have been Irish folk singers or groups.

Around the side of the pub there is a track which leads up to the canal. There is a junction there, and I suspect the canal could be quite busy in some seasons, by modern standards.

The first time we went to have a look at the canal, now that the canal-side industry has vanished from this stretch of the canal nature has burgeoned and the place is quite countryfied.

In the near distance we could see lots of grassy over tailings heaps, big ones and small.

On a subsequent visit, fortified by pub food and Lumphammer, we were a little bolder and crossed the canal. Not a hundred yards away we found the entrance to the Netherton tunnel. This must have been quite an engineering feat in its day, and is still very impressive. The tunnel is about a mile and a half long, and when you peer into it you **can** see, faintly but plainly, the other end of the tunnel.

Some lads idling about nearby volunteered the information that the tow path through the tunnel on our side of the canal was pot-holed, but that the other tow path was in good order. Some day

maybe we'll return with a torch and walk through.

We strolled further on and found an old dock and a pool. Both had returned to nature, were green and pleasant, and the pond inhabited by several ducks. Quite a surprise after the unpromising view from the back of the pub.

In our book the LITTLE DRY DOCK rates high amongst the 'Little' pubs, probably it is the best "furnished and decorated".

I don't know how many locals use the pub but when we were there there seemed to be a lot of 'out of town' visitors. (not a criticism, more of an observation...all of the 'Little' pubs seem to attract what one could call 'outsiders', perhaps Real Ale fans.

No. 66563

REAL
ALE

GOOD
FOOD



UNSPOILT BY BREWERIES

1 B + SARCIC 1.95

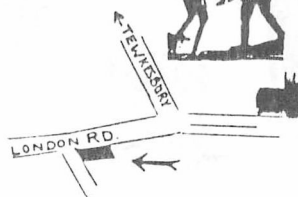
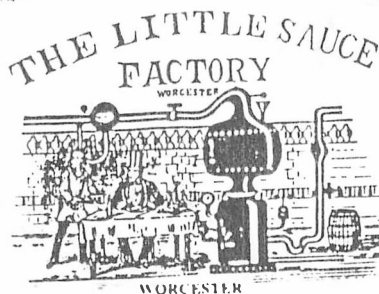
1 PORKER 1.95

3.90



Please Drink Harder & Faster
VAT No. 311 502813

17



This is the one 'Little' pub we have not been to, so anything I might write is mere hearsay.

I have heard that this is one of the more upmarket and expensive of the pubs.

By looking at the map you will have as good an idea as me as to its location, and of the sort of food it specialises in.

I would imagine that the food would be up to the usual high 'Little' pub standards.

God be with the days, we'll not see their likes again, when me Mother would go about with a hip flask of Worcester Sauce and a bottle of Cork Dry Gin in her handbag, and then ask, in a genteel little voice, for "Tomato juice".

Now at the Little Worcester Sauce Factory, there is all the sauce you could ever want (even some by the pint).

Sauce from the four corners of the world, to go with the delightful food, yes even the genuine "Suishi" of Japan. Raw fish? good for the brain.

Clever chaps, Japs.

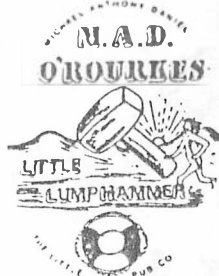
And besides there is always the lumphammer.

One item of information we did glean, (apart from it being a large pub) was that it had something of a feature in its ceilings, which I think are tiled.

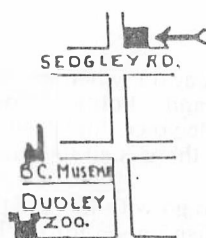
Which reminds me that tiles feature in many or most of the 'Little' pubs. They are single tiles, depicting maybe a sausage or a pie or a pig, and scenes made up of several tiles. The illos are often of a humorous nature and I believe they are desined by the present boss of the 'Little' pubs...whose name escapes me but which I am pretty sure is not O'Rourke...Having the tiles in mind I'd guess that the blurbs which go with the 'Little' pubs leaflets...those you see in this article were all culled from one large sheet.. were written by the same fellow.

Oh yes. One thing we were unhappy about was this bit about "nice cat" which appears on the adverts. We saw no cats, living or dead, (unless you count the ones advertised in the KINVER CAT PIES). This was a severe disappointment to us. The DRY DOCK did seem to have a dog...but all the cats we saw were illos on tiles or in the form of small, about four inches, embossed black sillouettes which appear in many or all of the pubs in the strangest places.





M. A. D. O'ROURKE'S
PIE FACTORY
TIPTON 021 557 1402



What can you say about Mad O'Rourke's Pie Factory? Well, "Keep your dog on a lead" I suppose, - might be sound advice.

Yes here you can take refuge from a world of rules and regulations. Just relax, have a nice meal, and a few drinks and let our attentive staff look after your money.

might be less traffic and the atmosphere of the pub would probably be jolly.

Many of the tables were once butchers chopping blocks, which was entertaining, plus the usual assortment of odds and ends and the inevitable but not unwelcome barrells.

There were plaster pies and pie boxes all over the place, and pigs heads grinning from the walls, machinery to do with (one supposes) pie making, and a strange surrealistic machine with a cows head. This was attached to the front of what looked like some flour winnowing device three yards long, with various bits of apparatus welded at hazard by someone with a Heath-Robinson imagination, on the top.

This place also had a large upstairs room and advertised a regular folk group.

At the foot of these stairs there was a little windowed office furnished 1914 style occupied by a life-size pig in human clothing. I'm not sure that this drollery appealed to me, but many of the customers commented on it as if they were amused and entertained.

The food was fine and the beer of usual excellence, but I don't know about going again..at least not during the day, maybe in the evening, when there's a folk group and the atmosphere is more congenial.

We have been to this pub.
MAD O'ROURKE'S PIE FACTORY.

From where we live this pub is on the far side of Dudley. Its on the main road north to Walsall, Burton-on-Trent and Derby, where the road crosses a busy route between the conurbations of Birmingham and Wolverhampton.

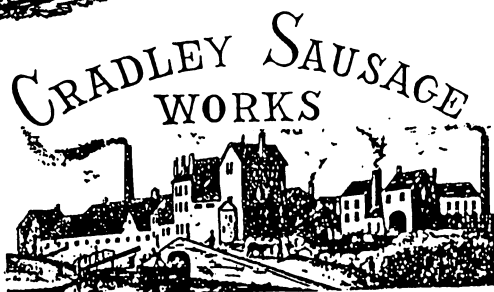
To my mind this is its main drawback.

It is also on the large side and though there was no derth of customers on the afternoon we went there the place did seem a bit emptyish.

The traffic on the roads outside was a distraction, though I suppose that in the evening there



One could hardly imagine a more mundane and cloth cap, plus belt and bracers, place than the location of this particular



(WE SERVE ONLY MR. BOXLEY'S FAMOUS AWARD WINNING SAUSAGES)



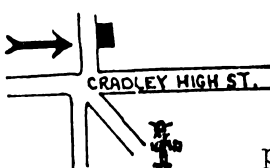
incomprehensible to any furriners.

'Little' pub. Cradley is very much a Black Country town, with phlegmatic (sp?) folk and a dialect

Hats off to the man who invented the Sausage, its a damn sight more useful than, say, the square root.

You will find Cradley Sausage Works just off the "Five Ways" crossroads in the centre of Cradley Heath. And you will find the sausages "only amazing", real proper meaty sausages like you've never seen before. The sausages, and much more are served, with fine ale in a genuine old sausage works. Its amazing the trouble we go to, to find genuine old places for pubs.

Stannes Road, Five Ways,



But of all the 'Little' pubs this is my favourite.

The food is the best of all the 'Little' pubs, which is really saying something.

I had faggots and peas here the first time, really superb. When we've been back again its been with the intention of eventually working our way through the entire menu...at least of things we like. I don't like cauliflower cheese for instance, and Jean turns pale at the thought of tackling a Desperate Dan pie. But next time, ah, next time I'm going to try the Sausage Wellington....

The staff were different on one occasion, but still jolly and helpful. My favourites though were the Black Country lasses, (including the lovely West Indian descent girl with the...ooooerr...delicious bottom). All of these girls, or women or ladies if you prefer, are the sort of earthy, or down-to-earth, merry Black Country lasses one reads about but encounters rather more rarely.

We park a little way along the road from the pub, where the air is filled with the sound of great hammers, many of them, pounding in the adjacent factories, and stroll fifty yards or so to the pub, which is at the top of the not very up-market High Street. An amazingly mundane setting.

But Cradley is a place of surprises. The last time we were at **THE CRADLEY SAUSAGE WORKS**, (it is one of the few 'Little' pubs to boast a garden) we found a troupe of Morris Dancers had taken over the place. The cook and the waitresses, with exceeding good temper I might say, were bustling about trying to whip up thirtyfive or forty meals. While waiting to get their food, the drink was easier to get, the Morris Dancers cavorted on the grass at the back of the pub, and later, to the crogglements of stray shoppers, on a pocket handkerchief size bit of rubble strewn ground at the front of the pub. We had to wait to be fed, but we didn't care, the Morris Dancers were quite an entertainment just standing around, and the food, when we did get it, was of the really excellent standard we had come to expect.

This pub has a lot of 'cartoon' tiles, many depicting folk in Victorianish costume declaiming variations of,



"Take yer hands off me Cradleys!".

Like the other pubs this one is imaginatively accreted with things related to its name, in this case the making of sausages.



The furniture is mixed, old fashioned tables of

various ancestories, the beer barrel tables, sausages of various kinds...

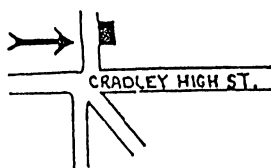


(WE SERVE ONLY MR. BOXLEY'S FAMOUS AWARD WINNING SAUSAGES)

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Stannes Road, Five Ways.



As I said, this is my favourite 'Little' pub, because of the small size it is intimate and cosy..the beer

is Lumphammer, the food of the best...nothing furrin or fancy for me, just well prepared, and the staff splendid.

Of course I realise that I've done this all wrong, I should have taken a notebook and pen when I visited the various 'Little' pubs, and made notes about the trimmings. But then, it never occurred to me at the time that I might be going to do an article about them, and besides I'm not sure that I could have weilded a writing tool and at the same time done justice to the excellent food...and maybe I'd have been incapacitated by the two pints of Lumphammer I allowed myself.

Anyway, any time you're up this way I'll be pleased to give you directions to one of these 'Little' gems, and maybe even act as native guide.

Ken Cheslin.

Contributions

in the form of:-

Letters of Comment,

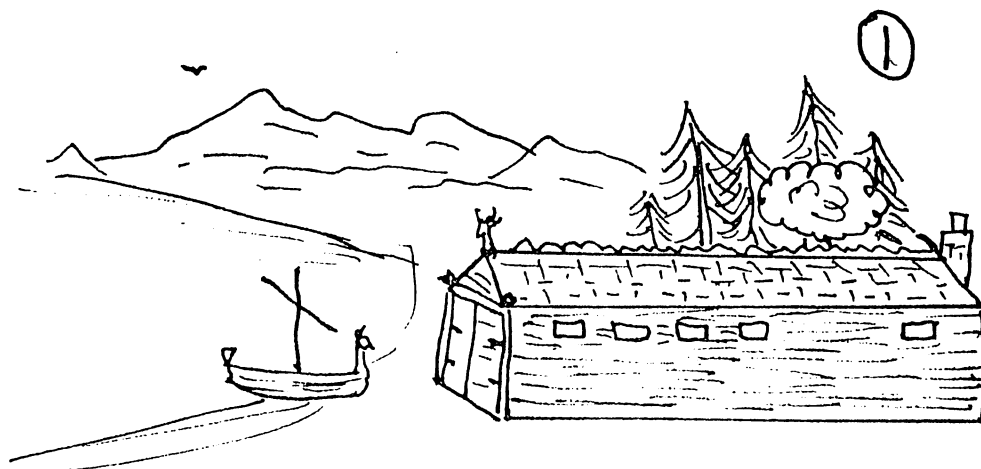
Fiction,

Articles.

Welcome

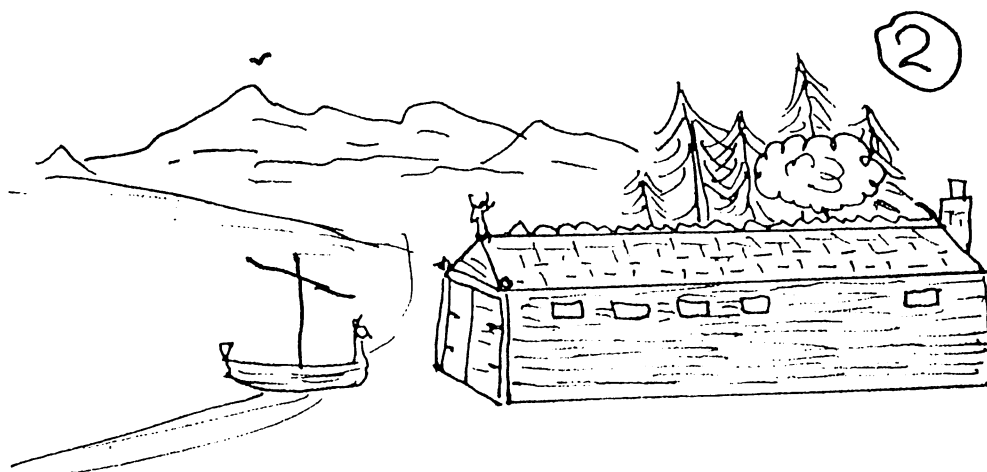


but
not
necessarily
used!



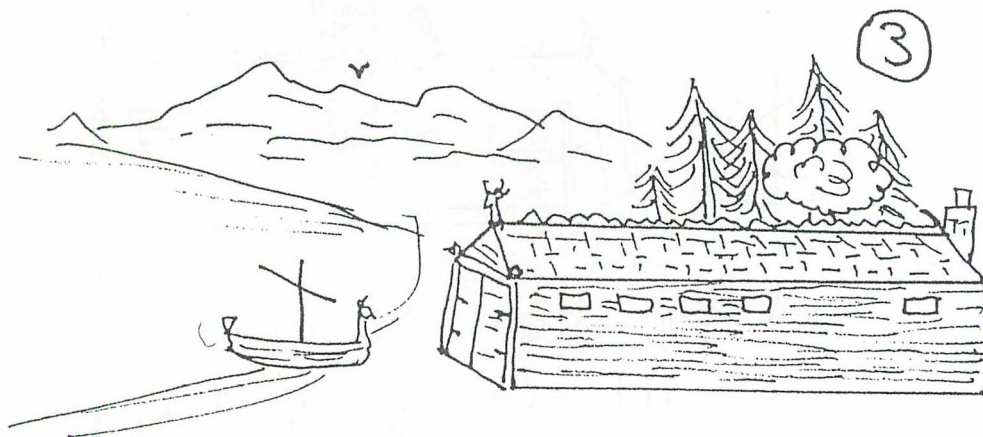
- they seem to come
in all sizes don't they?

KENCH



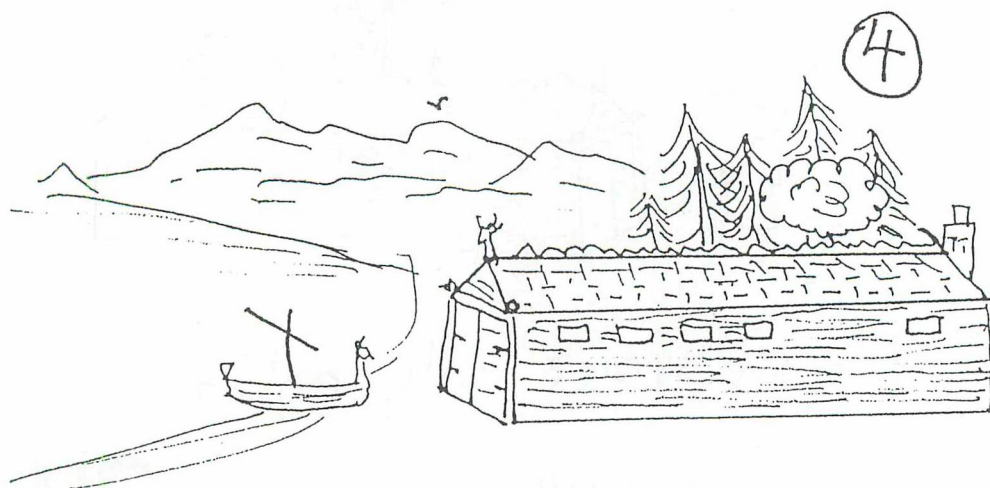
Aye, Sven's only got a
little one.

22
KENCH



Ragnar's is a decent
length.

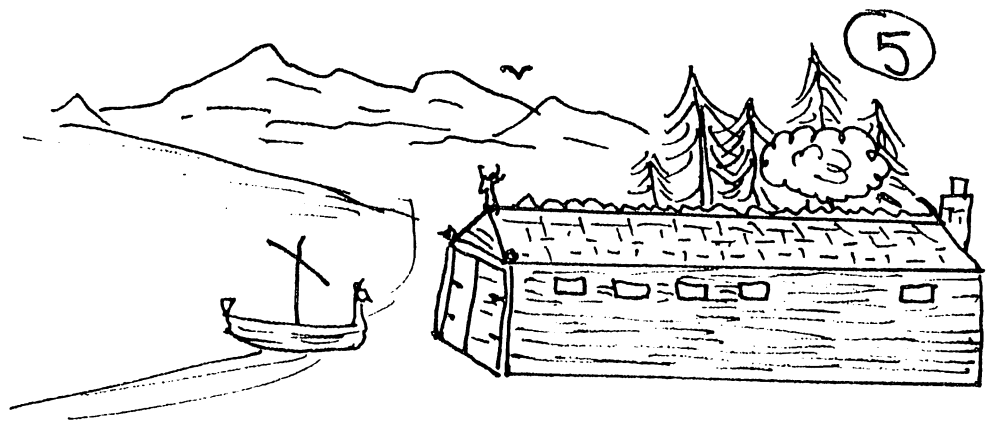
KENCH



So is Snorri's.

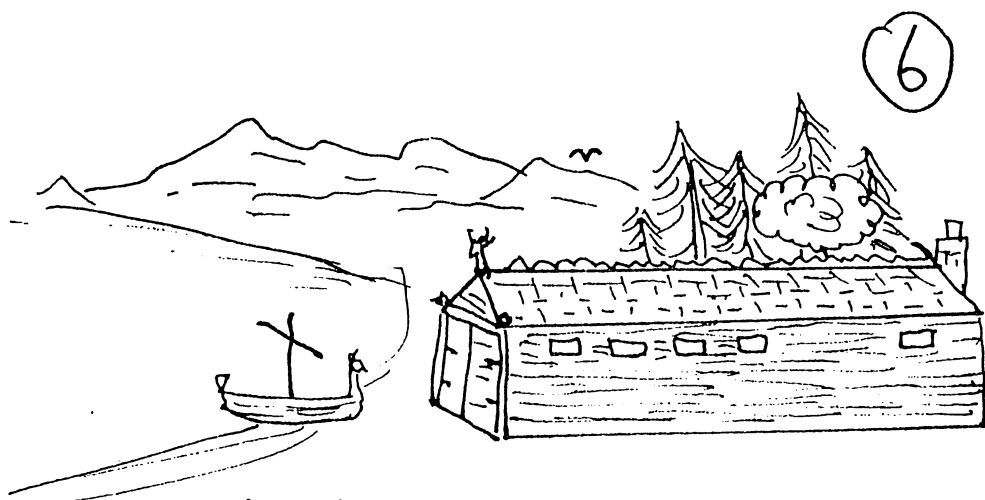
23

KENCH



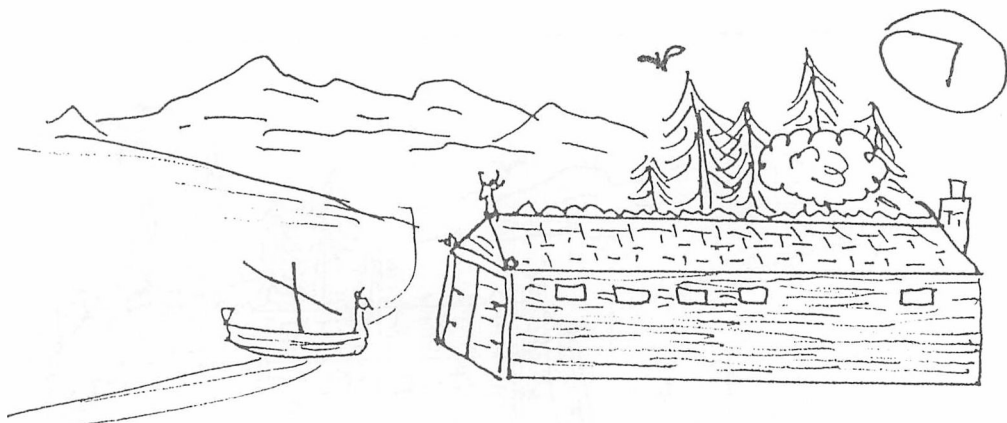
Ah, but mine's
longer than his.

KENCH



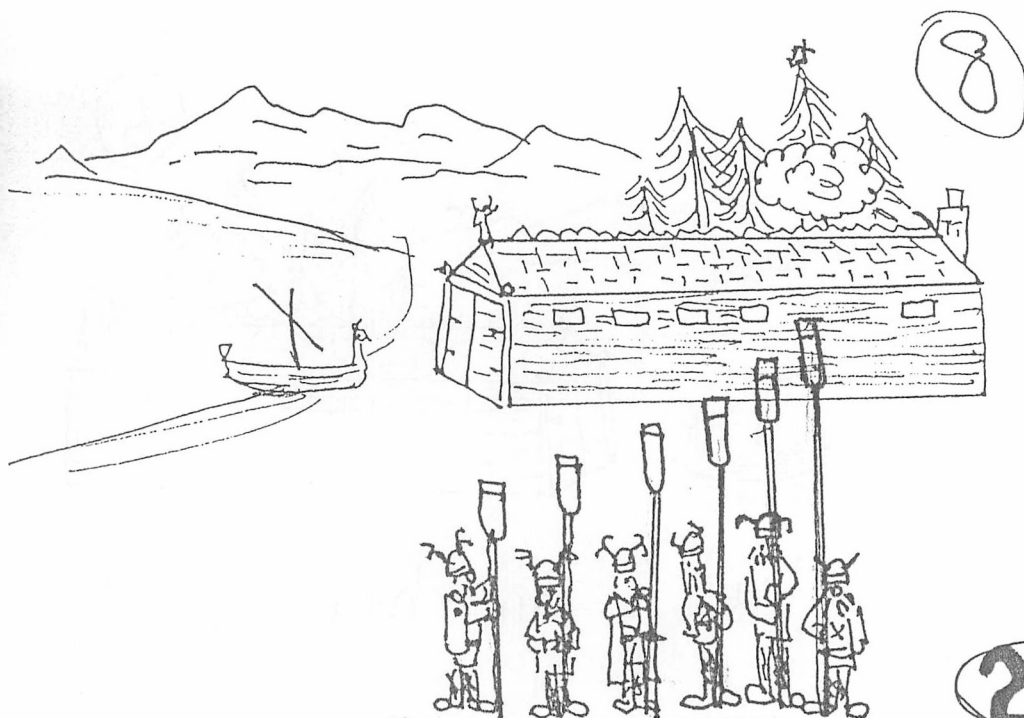
C'nut's another shortie.

KENCH



Trust Olaf, his is
longer than anyone else's!

KENCH



25

KENCH



There there Penelope, I'm sure
that Mr Olaf will take good care
of Mountjoy.

Kench

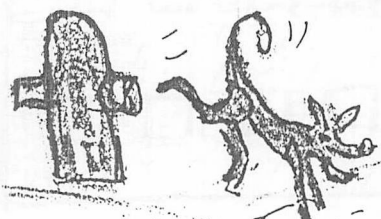


Kench

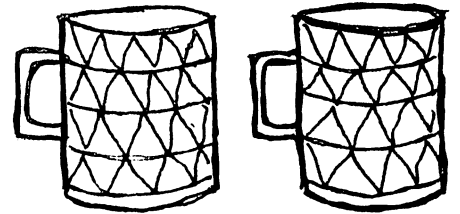
The Case of the Missing Brew

a
Hemlock
Soames
story

by
Ken
Cheslin



The Case of the Missing Brew



a Hemlock Soames story by Ken Cheslin.

I staggered, groggy from the shock, my trembling fingers scrabbling at the edge of the bar for support. I felt Flotsam come up behind me and heard the scuff of the stool which he placed for me to slump onto.

"Say it again, Sam", I gasped, hoping that my ears had played some cruel trick.

"'t beer's on ration. One pint, per person, per day", said Sam dolefully, intoning the words as if they were some sort of funeral dirge.

I shuddered, and a chorus of heartrending groans was wrenched from the parched lips of the regulars thronging the bar from over in Old Tom's corner there came the sound of sobbing.

"But you can't do this to us"! I remonstrated, "Generations of sturdy chainmakers, skillfull glass-blowers, and sweaty students from the Mavis Pagg School of Dance have slaked their thirst here!

I thumped the top of the bar with my fist. "We'll complain to the brewery, that's what we'll do"! I exclaimed.

"T'wont do no good", said Sam in gloomy triumph, "It were young Mr. O'Rourke from the brewery, the boss's son hisself, wot give me the order".

Another outcry of anguished moans and groans reverberated around the room at this. One robust fellow, "Lumphammer Rules OK!" tastefully tattooed on his chest, fainted and slid almost unnoticed to the floor.

I must confess that I didn't feel too good myself, what with the shock and the heat and all.

"Well, I suppose we'll have to drink lager", piped up a pin-striped pipsqueak from near the door.

The atmosphere fairly crackled at this. Faces, a moment earlier green or ashen, turned red, suffused with indignation, rage even.



"One of them furriners from up Hagley way", someone growled.

"He orta be bloody well drowned in a butt of lager", put in another, menacing, voice.

"Or chucked in the cut", added another peeved regular.

Amid angry cries of "Shame!", "Blasphemy" and "aye, chuck 'im in the cut!" the whimp, white faced, fled.

Meanwhile I had been cogitating mightily.

"There's only one thing to do!" I exclaimed, "I will personally go up to the brewery and get to the bottom of this".

There was some little brightening of the general gloom at this.

"But", I said, "first of all, Sam, do you serve out our paltry ration of Lumphammer whilst Flotsam takes the hat round to cover our travelling expenses".

Engaged as I was in morbid speculation I hardly noticed the blazing heat of the day as our 'bus wended its way between the parched fields and the drought stricken hedges towards our destination.

The brewery, as viewed from the 'bus stop, stood silently surrounded by the brown burnt meadows. On one side of it lay the canal, and on our side ran the road, winding dusty into the distance. Crossing the road we paused by the gates while I expanded my nostrils the better to savour the aroma of toasting hops which custmarilly filled the air all about with their heady fragrance. But there was hardly a sniff to be snuffed. No steam rose from the oast houses, the great drays were parked in rows, like some prehistoric leftovers, and nothing and no-one stirred in the yard.

There was one sign of life, or near life, a chap snoozing in the gatehouse. It took a dint of gate shaking and shouting to rouse him. When he did eventually come to the gate he opened it but a little way, and then only to say, "They'm 'avin a meetin' an' they conna be disturbed".

An expression of extreme stubbornness struggled with the gloom in his face.

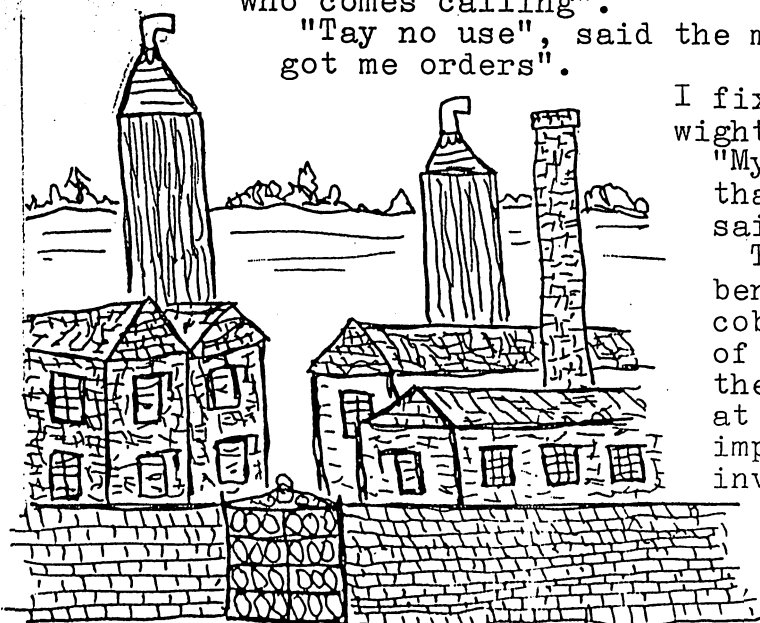
"My dear fellow", I quothe, "I insist that you let us in. Tell whoever is in charge that it is I, Hemlock Soames, who comes calling".

"Tay no use", said the minion, truculently, "I got me orders".

I fixed the uncooperative wight with a stern gaze.

"My companion also insists that you let us in", I said, and nodded to Flotsam.

Taking the hint Flotsam bent down and tore a cobble out of the surface of the yard, which impressed the gatekeeper somewhat, at least that was my impression as he took an involuntary step back.



Casually, slowly, with relish; and looking straight into the gateman's eyes; Flotsam crumbled the solid cobble between his two hands. As the dust trickled out from between Flotsam's fingers the colour trickled out of the gateman's face.

Somehow I felt much more confident about gaining the gate keeper's cooperation.

He swallowed visibly.

"I'll see what I can do", he muttered nervously, and backed away in the direction of the offices, his walk becoming a run after the first few yards.

A few minutes later the gate keeper returned, peering anxiously from behind the back of a scholarly bespectacled gentleman.

"What's all this then?" the newcomer demanded, "We can't have any Tom, Dick or Harry coming along here and putting the wind up our Alf".

"I", I said coolly, "am no 'Tom, Dick, or Harry', I am Hemlock Soames, the famous consulting detective; and this 'ere is my assistant, Dr. Don Flotsam". (Actually Flotsam really does have a degree of sorts. I think he got it from one of those "\$20 for a B.A." places in the States, at least it had an American stamp on the envelope; some place with the initials M.I.T.).

"Hemlock Soames?" said the chap thoughtfully, "I do believe that I've heard Harry, the editor of the Black Country Trumpet, speak of you". He eyed me speculatively.

"If he's been filling your head with wild, unfounded tales of missing tins of Sobrani forget it", I said hastily, "anyway it was all a mistake".

"I beg your pardon?" he replied, evidently completely mystified.

I breathed a silent sigh of relief.

"Never mind", I said, "I've really come here to find out why you've introduced this dastardly beer rationing".

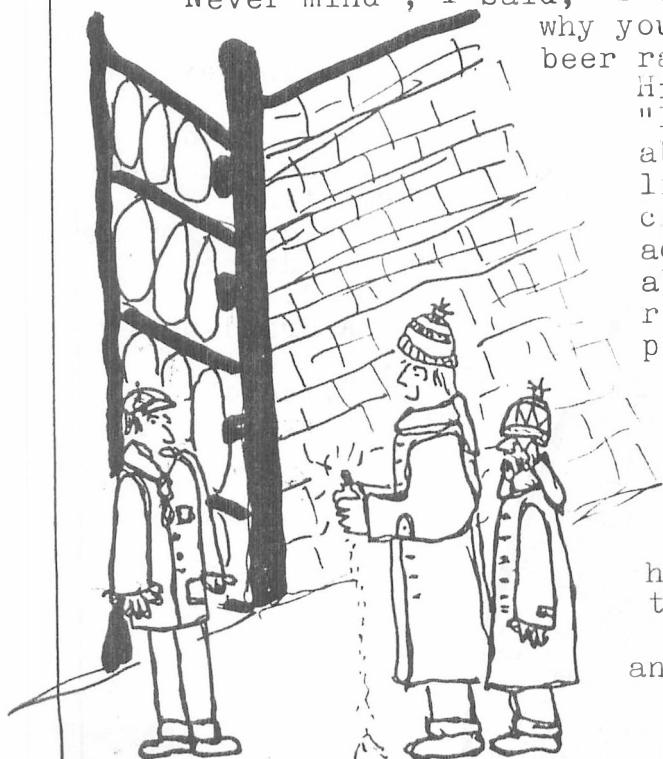
His face fell.

"I don't think you can do anything about that", he said. But a little flicker of interest crossed his features and he added, "But Harry has told me about some of the remarkable results you have had... perhaps.....".

His manner became decisive.

"Come on in", he invited, "it can't do any harm to explain just what the problem is".

Young Mr. O'Rourke, for such he proved to be, led us across the cobbled yard, the heat beating up as if from a furnace, and into the venerable factory.



It was much cooler inside.

Mr. O'Rourke conducted us past stacks of empty beer barrells, our footsteps echoing eerily on the bare boards of the floor, between the hugely towering vats and intricate silent machinery which looked as if it had come straight from the set of some Hollywood "mad scientist" movie. Time seemed to be standing still in there; all the paraphernalia of the brewery seemed to be poised motionless but expectant.

We came at length to a great iron-bound door set into the side of an ancient igloo shaped vault built of massive stone blocks and higher than a house. From the top of this strange structure a gargantuan pipe rose up and vanished amid a maze of pipes in the gloomy recesses of the roof.

His attitude expressing reverence our guide solemnly unlocked the massive padlocks and swung the great door outwards on silent hinges. From the opening thus revealed there came an eddy of air, cool, pure and wholesome.

"This way", said O'Rourke in hushed, reverent tones, and led us inside.

The centre of the room was taken up with a circular stone wall about eight feet across and three feet high. The great pipe came down out of the roof and disappeared into the ground at one side of this, and over the top of the structure there was fitted a great iron lid, counterweighted and padlocked.

Mr. O'Rourke unlocked the padlock and, with some little effort, swung back the lid.

"Here you are", he said, "together with the secret recipies this is the most important factor in the brewing of the famouse Lumhammer beer".

Flotsam and I peered over the wall.

"What is it?" I asked, "a mine?"

O'Rourke sighed.

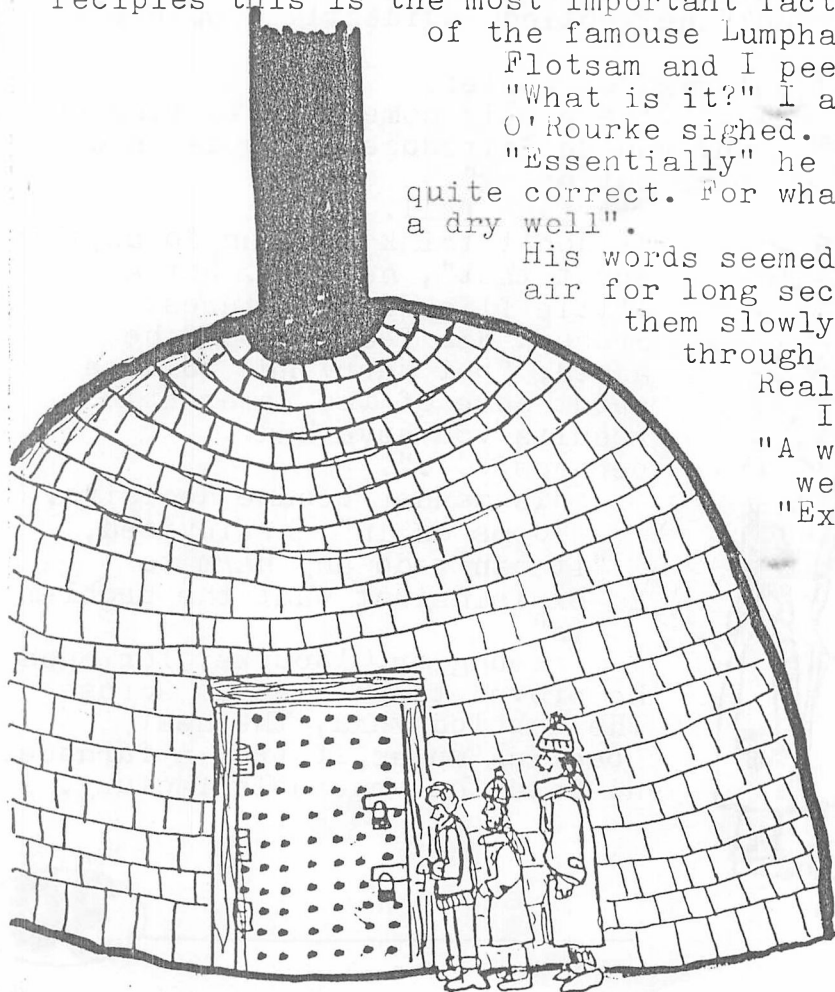
"Essentially" he said, "you are quite correct. For what is a mine except a dry well".

His words seemed to hang on the air for long seconds, the sense of them slowly perulating through into my consciousness. Realisation dawned.

I gabbled.

"A well. A dried-up well".

"Exactly", said O'Rourke.



"This is the very well from whose pure waters the unique Lumphammer beer has been brewed for these past many generations. And now it's bone dry!"

Bone. Dry. Icy fingers of horror wound themselves around my palpitating heart. I think I must have fainted. Anyway I came round to find myself sitting on a bench with O'Rourke wafting a tankard of Lumphammer in front of my nose.

I clutched at the glass and greedily quaffed the holy nectar.

After a while I began to feel more my old self.

"Dry?" I asked, my voice still weak.

"Dry as a bone", confirmed O'Rourke solemnly.

For a minute or two we all sat in silence contemplating the situation. At last I broke the stillness.

"Can't anything be done about it?" I enquired anxiously. "Perhaps you could dig the hole a little deeper?"

"We thought of that", said Mr. O'Rourke, but it would do no good. We're down to the bedrock already. The real cause of the well's failure is this wretched drought we're having. Before this the well hasn't dried up since the Great Drought of 1783".

"Yes, the water table must be very low after all this hot weather", remarked Flotsam.

"It's not tables we're talking about", I said peevishly, "It's the dryness of the well we're concerned with".

"Dr Flotsam is quite right", put in O'Rourke, "when the rain falls the water sinks slowly into the ground and seeps along over the impervious rocks or clays. That's why springs continue to flow even if there has been no rain for some time. But the ground is so dry now, so deep down, that there is no underground seepage at all".

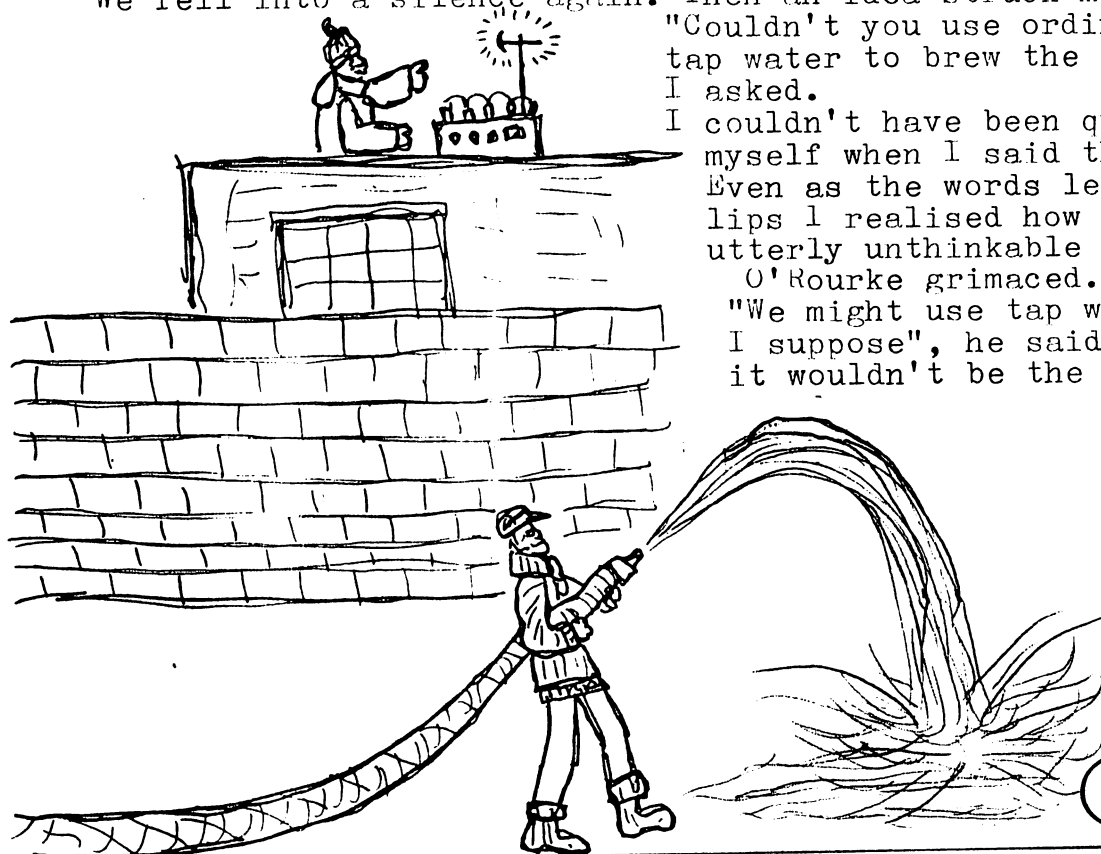
He finished sadly, "So there will be no water in the well until we have had a good downpour and the ground is thoroughly soaked".

We fell into a silence again. Then an idea struck me.

"Couldn't you use ordinary tap water to brew the beer?" I asked.

I couldn't have been quite myself when I said that. Even as the words left my lips I realised how utterly unthinkable it was. O'Rourke grimaced.

"We might use tap water I suppose", he said, "But it wouldn't be the same."



"Besides we've never used the Water Boards supply and the nearest main is over two miles away".

I fell to furious thought once again.

"If the ground for a few hundred yards around the brewery was to get a really good soaking", I said, "Might that do the trick?"

"It might", said O'Rourke doubtfully, "but you are talking of thousands, maybe millions, of gallons of water. We use ten gallons of water to make one gallon of beer you see, so our needs are pretty tremendous".

"The canal", I said calculatingly, "There's still plenty of water in the canal. Couldn't you use that?"

"Oh no!" exclaimed O'Rourke, horrified. "It's nowhere near pure enough".

"I didn't mean use the water straight from the canal", I explained, "but if you were to pump the water onto the ground all around the brewery wouldn't that fill up the well?"

Briefly O'Rourke's face lit up, but then it darkened again.

"I suppose it might work", he admitted, "the ground might filter the water. But how would you get the water up from the canal?"

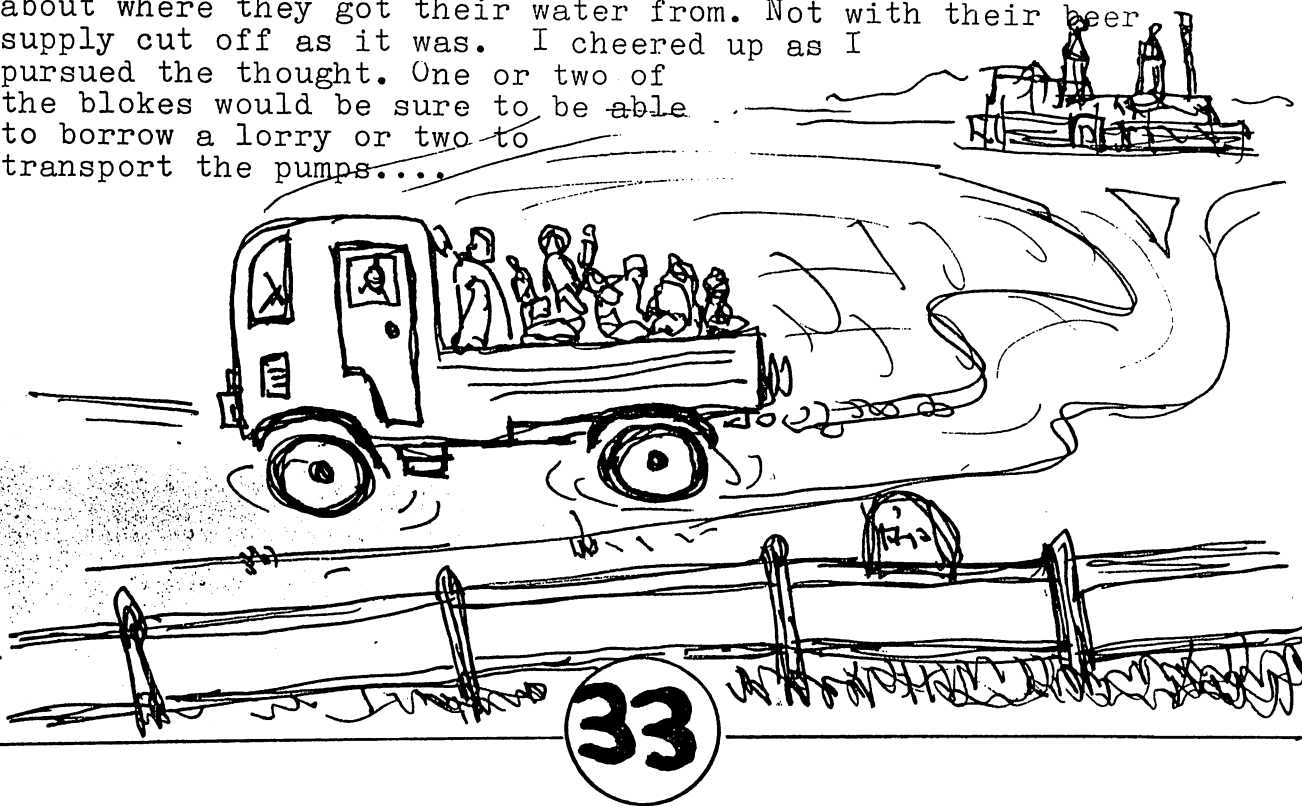
"Well", I said, "On the way here today I noticed that some of the local farmers were attering their fields. They have these great big pumps which they use to draw water out of the canal. Maybe we could borrow a couple of those".

"Ah," he said, "it might do the trick. But I've an idea that it might not be legal to pump water from the canal without some sort of a licence. And besides I don't think the farmers would lend you their pumps".

He threw his hands up in despair.

"No," he declared, "All we can do is pray for rain".

When we left a little while later I was feeling grim but not defeated. I resolved not to give up so easily. I was thinking that I might know of a certain pub where I could recruit a few daring souls, men who would not be too squeamish about borrowing some farmers pump, or sticking strictly to the letter of the law about where they got their water from. Not with their beer supply cut off as it was. I cheered up as I pursued the thought. One or two of the blokes would be sure to be able to borrow a lorry or two to transport the pumps....



about this time Flotsam made some remark about something he'd read about electronically induced rainfall, but I was too engrossed with my plans to pay him much heed.

"You run along and twiddle with your gadgets", I said, "while I pop along to the Spotted Cow to work out the details of my masterly plan to restore our beer supply".

Luckily it was a Saturday and me and my henchmen were able to make our arrangements well before dark.

We boarded the lorries outside the pub just as dusk was falling. It didn't prove difficult either to borrow a couple of pumps on the way to our destination, we could return them well before morning.

Well before midnight we were all set up, with the pumps happily slurping up water from the canal and jetting it into the air all around the brewery.

Flotsam kept getting in the way with this big box thing he'd insisted on bringing him along so I sent him up onto a roof to keep a look-out for the fuzz.

I was soaked to the skin, but happy. The plan was going excellently well and in a few more hours, well before dawn, I was sure the well would be filling up again.

Suddenly there was a flash of lightning, which strangely enough seemed to leap up from the brewery roof rather from the clouds which had unnoticed crept up.

I was still wondering about this when Flotsam arrived to say that he had seen the headlights of a procession of cars heading our way. Sure enough at that moment we heard the wail of police sirens floating over the darkened fields.

"Drat it!" I thought, or something like that.

"OK lads", I shouted, "the cops are coming. Leave the pumps running and let's scarper!".

And scarper we did.

"Anyway", I said philosophically as we rocked from side to side in the back of our fleeing lorry, "at least we had a good try, and it might even have done the trick".

"I believe it has", remarked Flotsam, but whatever else he might have been going to say remained unsaid, for at that moment the heavens opened and rain began to pour down so hard that you couldn't even hear yourself think.

It rained steadily for a week. By the second day of the rain O'Rourke's had resumed production of Lumphammer and the beer came off the ration.

In recognition of my interest in the affair the Little Spotted Cow got the first deliveries of the new brew.

"It were a good scheme", opined Sam, breathing into a spotless glass before giving it a final polish, "though I'm not sure that we pumped enough water to do the trick. It was lucky that the weather broke when it did".

"Funny sort of rain it were, an all", remarked Old Tom, looking only half his ninety-six years now that his favourite brew was on tap again. "It rained all round the brewery but two miles away there was narry a drop".

We all agreed that we had been favoured by some benevolent beer-loving deity. As we toasted the benevolent Providence I did make a mental note to have a quiet word or two with Flotsam at some later time.

Ken Cheslin.

KENCH

Come in No 13, your time is up.

Smorris Boat Hire

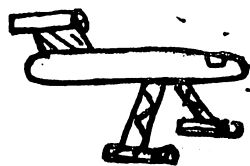
2

KENCH

up and after!
Mayhem! death!
Oodini!
Fire!
rapine!
SLAUGHTER!
GORE!
13

1

1



"Increase to warp six
scottie"
"Aye, Aye Cap'n"

KENCH

2



Faster! faster!

kench

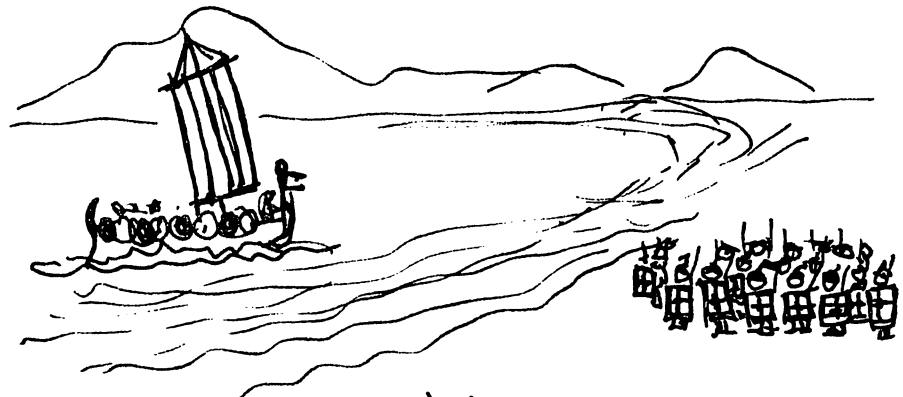


KENCH



KENCH

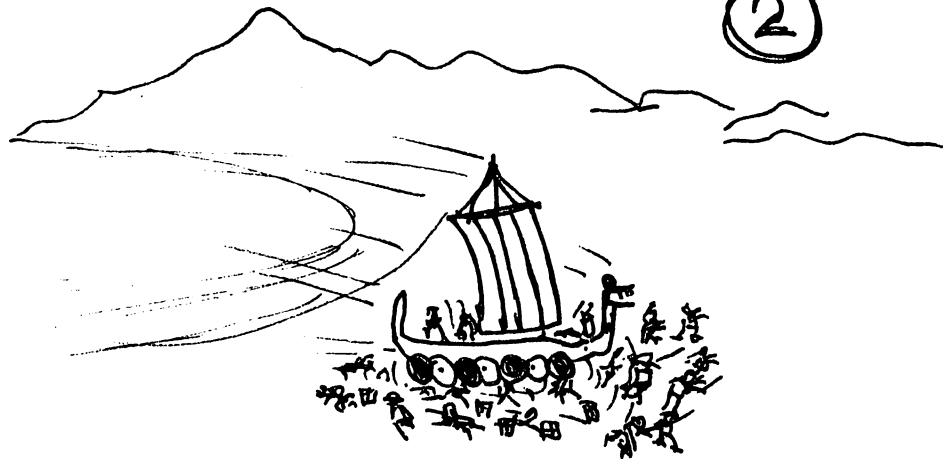
1



OK Tads we'll cut 'em down as
they wade through the surf.

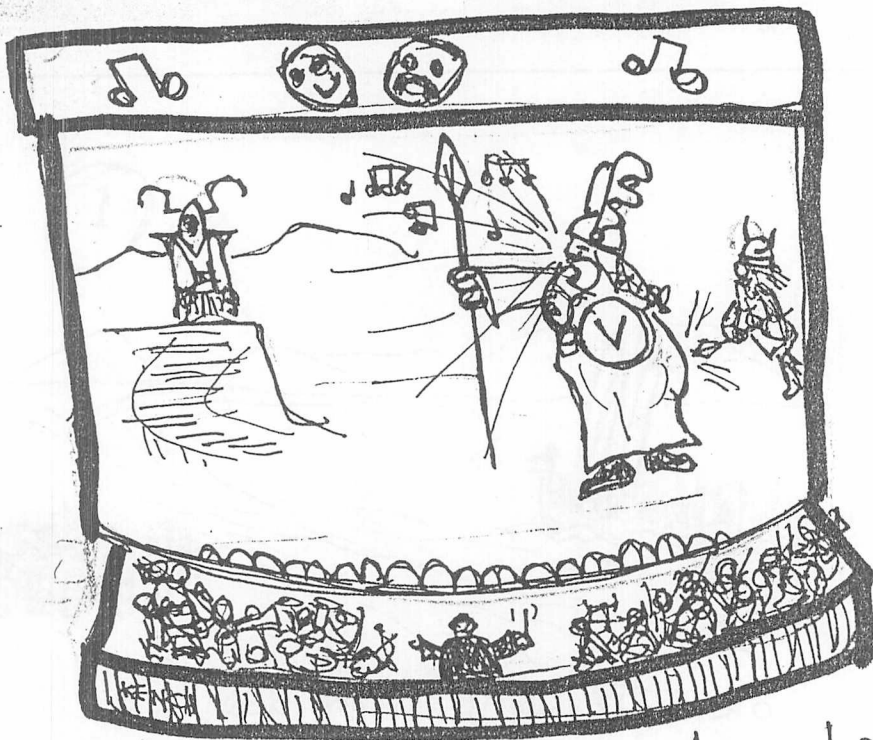
KENCH

2



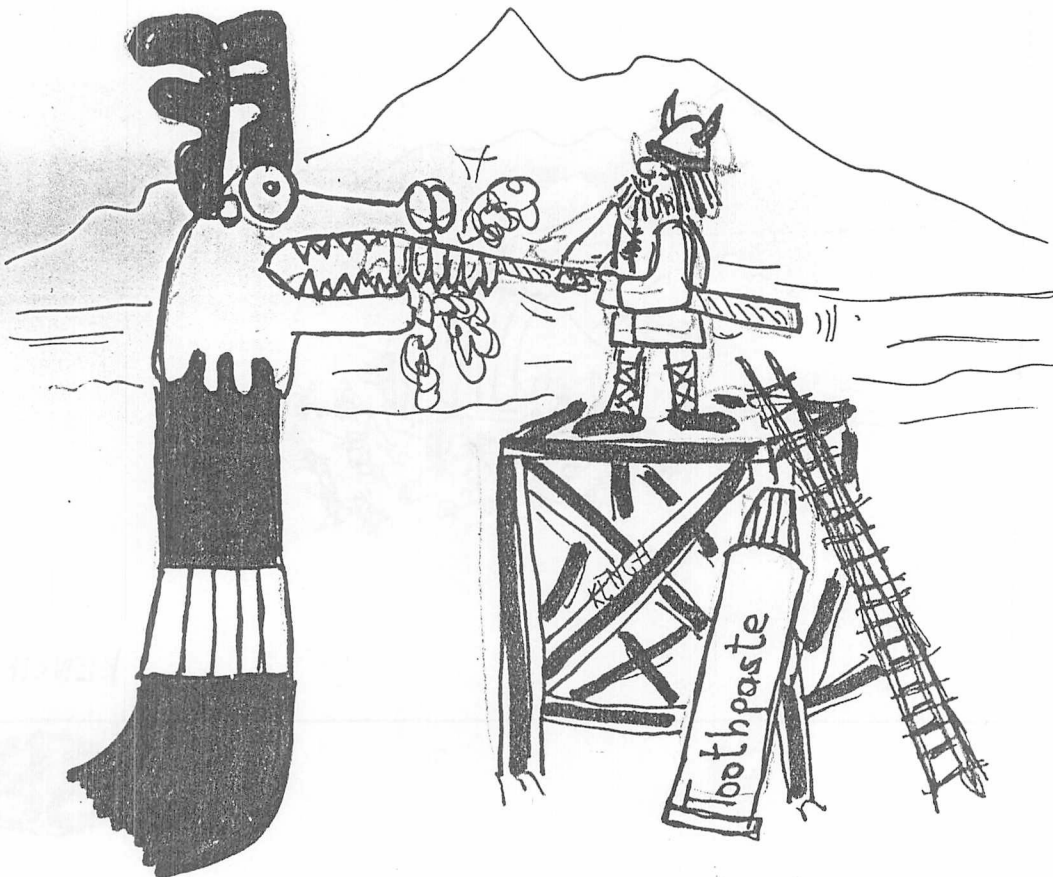
KENCH

38



At her age it beats me how she reaches those high notes.

Kench

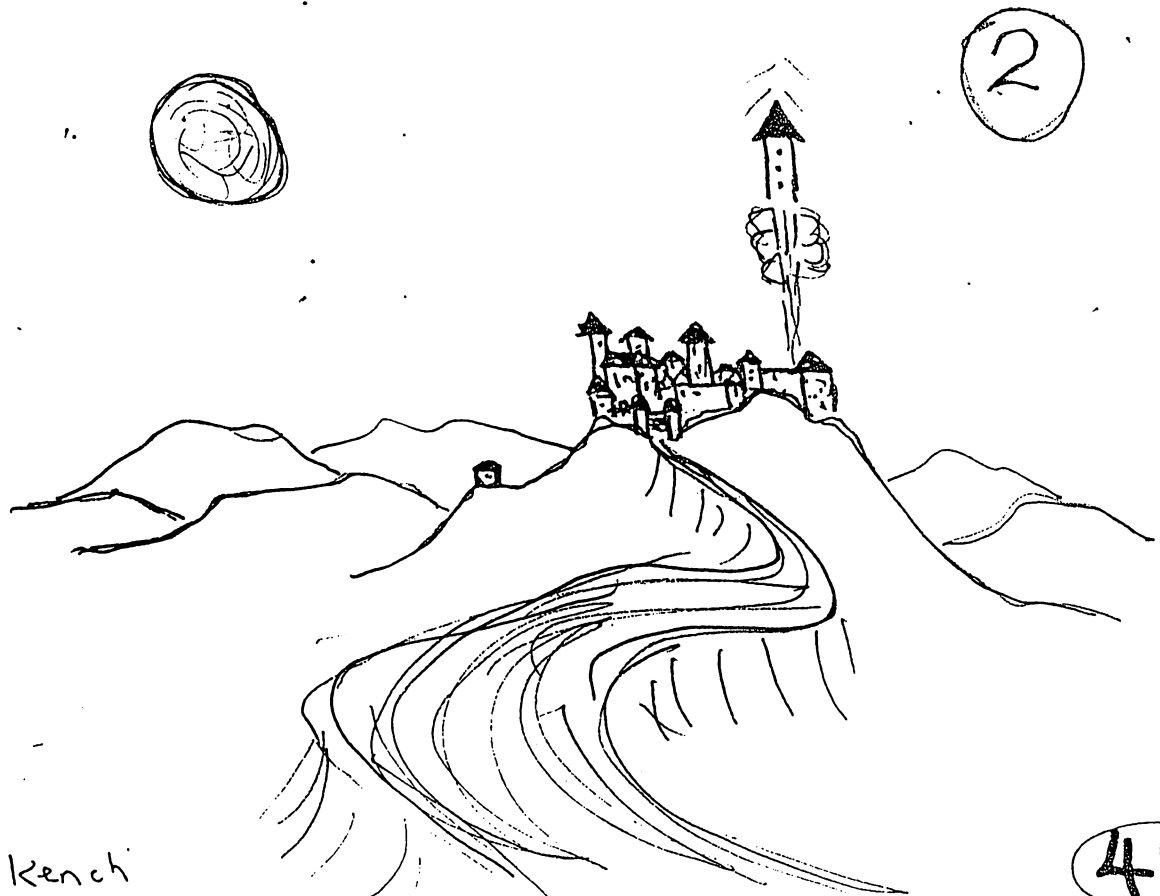


Kench



You've converted the
East Tower into a what?!

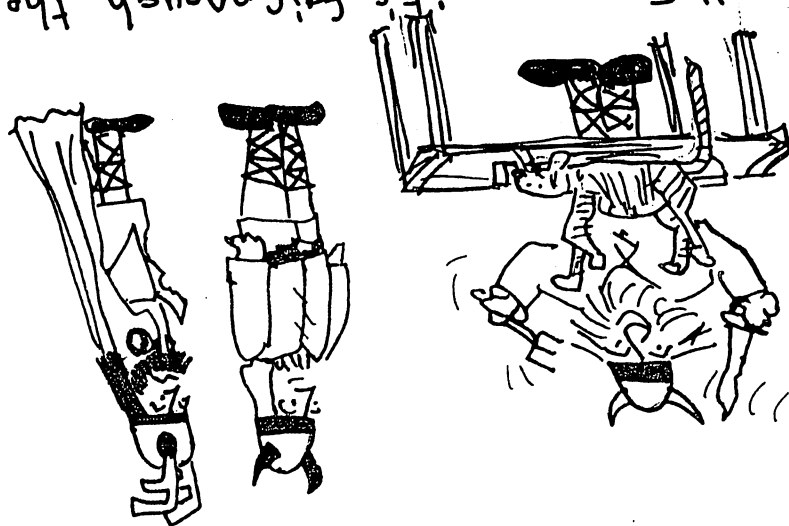
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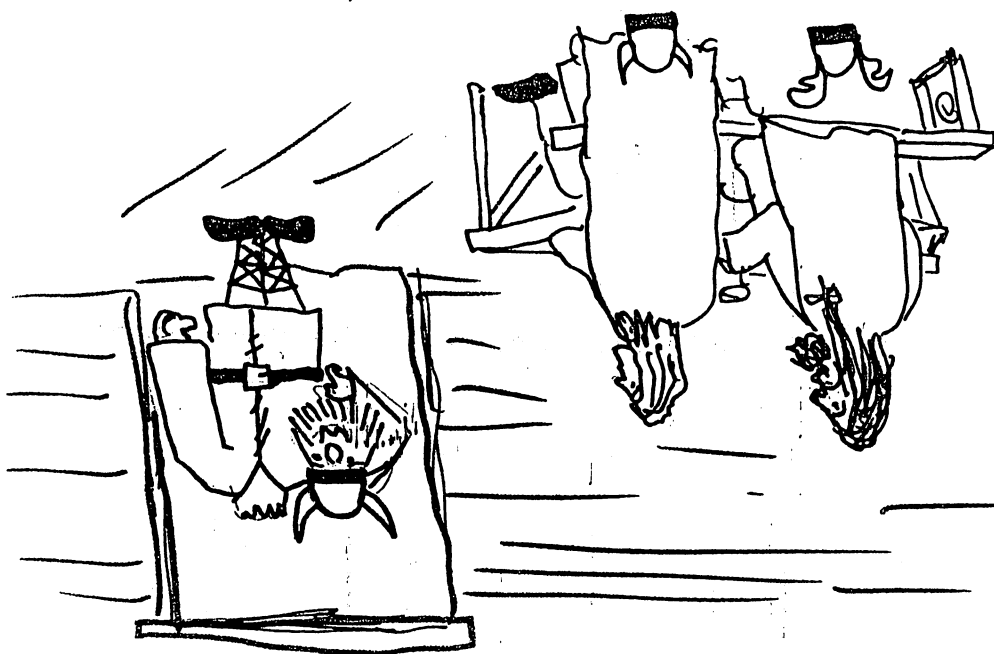
kench

40

Well I suppose it's fair enough, the cat ate his dinner so now he's eating the cat.



You were right Sven, it has cured my headache.

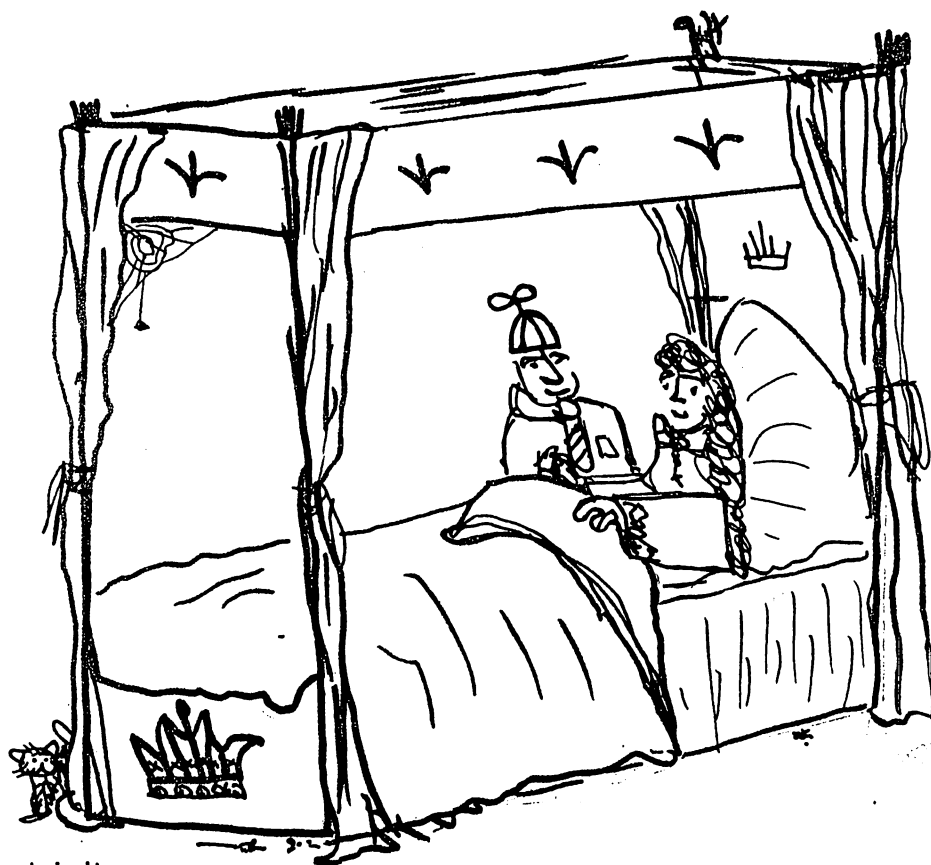




Next time you call me a BOF
make sure I've got my
hearing aid switched off.



No daughter, they never did find out
who sawed Courtney's Boat, tho'
there was a story going round that
it was Eney's fault.



Well I'm not a prince exactly. But I
did once have a loc printed in CRY.

A Childs Garden of Olaf 2

Ken Cheslin

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AUGUST 1989

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