



## EASTBOURNE CENTRAL U3A (Affiliated to the Third Age Trust)

Website <http://u3asites.org.uk/eastbourne-central>

email – [ebu3a@btinternet.com](mailto:ebu3a@btinternet.com)

### KEEPING IN TOUCH 53<sup>rd</sup> EDITION



Dear Members,

I'd like some more articles for the next edition. *Erik Starkie (editor)*

### CONGRATULATIONS MA'AM

HM The Queen has reigned over us for 70 years since the death of her beloved father King George VI on 6<sup>th</sup> February 1952, a date I will never forget as that is the day my own father died. Few of HM's subjects – except perhaps some committed Republicans – would deny that she has done us proud in good times and bad.



King George V died in January 1936 and was succeeded as King by his eldest son Edward, the Prince of Wales (known to the Royal Family as David).

In 1936 the 10-year-old Princess Elizabeth and her younger sister Princess Margaret Rose spent a holiday in Eastbourne with their parents who were then known as the Duke and Duchess of York. The Duchess had recently suffered from a debilitating illness and was here to recuperate. The Duke and Duchess of York arrived on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March and much to the delight of the local people

they were unexpectedly joined by the young Princesses the following day. They had travelled down by train accompanied by their governess.

The local newspapers covered the event in detail even though the visit was a private one but they did print appeals to the local people to allow the family to enjoy their holiday in peace. There was even an article stating that it was not necessary to say "Good Morning" to the family if they were seen walking anywhere in or around the town.

The family were guests of the Marquis of Hartington who had made Compton Place available to them for the duration of their stay. During their nearly month-long holiday the Princesses were able to enjoy the normal activities of young children at the seaside, playing on the sands near Holywell, collecting pebbles, exploring rock pools, building sandcastles and walking on the Downs.

On Sundays the family worshipped at St Mary's Parish Church sitting in the Cavendish pews. The young princesses were amused by a tale told by the Vicar about Canon Woodward (the Bishop of Bristol in 1936) who as a young boy in the congregation at St Mary's decided that he didn't want to sing a hymn and started singing the nursery rhyme "Old King Cole" loudly when the organist started to play. He was quickly removed by his nurse!

In 1936 Eastbourne saw a number of changes. The school leaving age was raised to 15 years and this meant additional school places were needed. Plans were put forward for a new High School in Eldon Road and an extension to the Hampden Park Council School. The Maternity Home at 9 Upperton Road was also extended and a new Police Station in Grove Road was planned. The political situation in Germany was giving concern and the British Government ordered towns to make preparations to protect their citizens against enemy air raids.

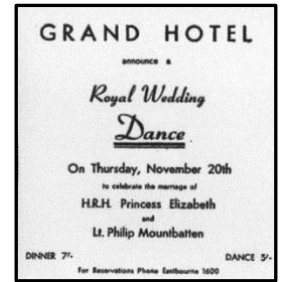
The abdication of King Edward VIII in December 1936 was to bring about huge changes to the lives of the young Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret Rose as their father became King and Princess Elizabeth became the Heir Presumptive. The family also had to move from their home in Piccadilly and take up residence at Buckingham Palace.

War broke out in September 1939 and the young princesses spent much of their time at Windsor Castle. At the age of 18 years Princess Elizabeth joined the ATS and learned to service and repair military vehicles. On

VE Day the princesses persuaded their parents to let them join in the public celebrations outside Buckingham Palace.

In October 1946 Princess Elizabeth and her sister Princess Margaret made another private visit to Eastbourne, this time without their parents. They stayed at Compton Place as guests of the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire. On the evening they arrived the Duke and Duchess had arranged a firework display in the grounds of Compton Place and the boys and staff from Eastbourne College were also invited to attend this. The following morning the Princesses and their hosts attended the Sunday Service at All Saints Church where they were welcomed by a large number of local people.

Just over a year later Princess Elizabeth married Lt. Philip Mountbatten at Westminster Abbey. To allow the people of Eastbourne to celebrate the event a dinner dance was held at the Grand Hotel. The three-course meal cost 7 shillings and there was a separate charge of 5 shillings for those attending the dance. Bearing in mind that rationing was still in force I wonder what was on the menu? There was also a splendid dinner at the Cavendish Hotel and a dance at the Winter Garden to allow local people to celebrate the occasion.



Over seventy years later, how will you be marking Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee? *Frances Muncey*

### **LIVES LOST IN SERVICE WITH THE ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY 1836-1922**

On 29<sup>th</sup> April 2022 an inter-faith Commemoration Service was held at the Royal Military Chapel (Guards Chapel) at Wellington Barracks, just across from Buckingham Palace, to honour the fallen RIC officers. The service was followed by wreath-laying ceremonies at Westminster Cathedral, (R.C), St Paul's Cathedral and the National Police Memorial, to honour the service and sacrifice of the members of the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) who served from the inception of the force until its disbandment in 1922. We celebrate its 100th anniversary this year, in tandem with that of the Irish Independence. An estimated 200 descendants and family members of those who served, especially of those 638 officers who lost their lives in service with the RIC, attended the service. Participants came from all parts of the British Isles, Ireland and the USA and joined in the Service. Much of the practical organization of the event was carried out by the Police Roll of Honour Trust.

The service itself, held in the impressive surroundings of the Guards Chapel, included musical renderings from the Chapel's choral group, laments played by pipers, bugles and police standards. Readings were given by great grandchildren of fallen RIC officers, both in English and Irish. Prayers were offered for peace on the island of Ireland, for all who suffer in conflict, including those of Ukraine and for all who serve in the Police Service.

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the RIC, with an average strength of 11,000 was responsible for policing the whole of Ireland, bar Dublin, which had its own force. The RIC was relatively unique in that it performed a range of civil, local government and policing duties that integrated the constables into their local communities. Many constables were drawn from the same social class, religion and general background as their neighbours. The model of RIC policing contributed to the policing format pursued in many colonial and overseas territories.

After the Easter Rising in Ireland in 1916 and the ensuing War of Independence, the RIC came under attack from Sinn Fein and 549 officers were killed. At Irish Independence in 1922, the RIC provided the mainstay of the new Free State Civic Guard (Garda Siochana) and the Royal Ulster Constabulary for Northern Ireland, later changed to the Police Service for Northern Ireland.

Even 100 years later, the RIC remains controversial to the present day. An attempt to hold the Commemoration in Dublin last year had to be abandoned for security reasons. This year, even in London, security measures led to the changing of the original venue and details of the new location were embargoed until the day itself. Participants were advised not to discuss the event on social media, to wear civilian dress over uniforms en route to the event and medals were to be hidden from public view. Despite the trials and tribulations, the Commemoration attended by family descendants, was a remarkable and outstanding event

and personally was a fitting tribute to my own grand uncle who was killed in action while protecting a widow's farm in Craughwell Co. Galway. (Google: Craughwell murders RIC). *Joe Mullen*

### **HISTORY BY COMIC STRIP – A NEW FORMAT? A Political Parody.**

This is a story about a storyteller whose phenomenal success exceeded his own expectations and overwhelmed him, finally exhausting him, spanning as it did from 1929 to 1983, when he died.

His stories, told in the form of a comic strip, were more popular on the continent than in the UK, but there will be some of you who read them as children or introduced them to your children when they were young. The Belgian storyteller, Georges Remi, liked to be known as Herge, and the hero of his stories was Tintin.

As we take a close look at the whole collection, we can see how Herge himself developed and matured from the young journalist in a Church newspaper to an internationally famous storyteller and artist, and along the way, a serious portrayer of events around the world.

Tintin's escapades were not translated into English from their original French until 1959 so English-speaking people born before 1950 would not be so familiar with Tintin. They did not catch on here until the Times Educational Supplement wrote a glowing reference "The Epic Strip Tintin Crosses the Channel" and it was not until he visited London in 1958 and met the Belgian ambassador that Herge gained any sort of official approval.

The boyish fun-filled stories of his youth were to a small extent challenged in England by the popular appearance of Billy Bunter, and others, but Herge's stories developed into more serious journalism, recording the dangerous challenges such as Nazism spreading through Europe, and the Israel/Palestinian conflict. Herge had to be diplomatic and try to avoid offending the countries upon which his stories were based. He was forced to disguise the combatants, and to invent fictional countries. For this reason, a revised version of "The Land of Black Gold", had to be altered after the State of Israel was created in 1948. It was changed radically in order to conform to new cultural sensibilities and political realities. As a result, this story is remembered more for its slapstick comedy than as political parody.

Herge cleverly disguised the names of Hitler and other potentates. He combined the names of Hitler and Mussolini to make the name Musstler. Despite the serious situations about which Herge was writing, humour was always a defining component of the Tintin stories.

Herge was an artist, and illustrated all his stories himself, though as the pressure increased to present story after story, and the production became more of a commercial enterprise, he used to employ advisers, and professionals to ensure historical, geographical, and fashion accuracy. Thus, his later stories, were remarkably realistic in every detail. There were, however, occasions when Herge slipped up.

For example, in one story, "Prisoners of the Sun", he overlooked the fact that the Incas would have known about the phenomenon of the eclipse: the Incas being expert astronomers.

Altogether, though, his attention to detail was remarkable, as also was his enthusiasm for design and innovation.

Herge's life was disrupted by WW2 in more ways than one. His story writing was interrupted by Military Service. After that, Herge decided not to flee to France as many Belgians did. He and many others, remained in Belgium, adjusting to the privations of occupied life. The Nazis invited him to continue his stories in "Le Soir", which they had taken over from the French. The Tintin stories helped to sell more copies of "Le Soir" for the Germans, so he was useful to them. Herge was expected to comply in this, although he refused to support their politics, and managed to remain neutral. He had to tread a careful path through the intricacies of the situation. He has been accused of complicity with the Germans, but I believe this was untrue. Herge suffered after the British arrived in Brussels in 1944. The entire staff of the newspaper were arrested, and Herge was regarded as a traitor, and blacklisted.

The publisher Casterman came to his rescue, and supported him to continue his story writing.

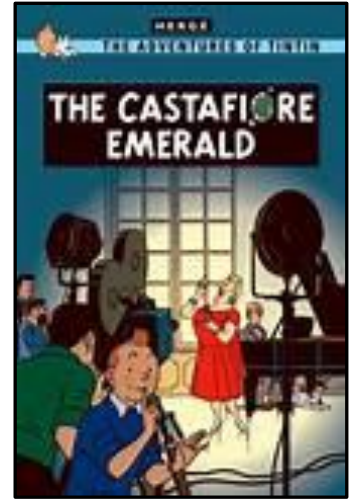
Herge had been courageous to write King Ottokar's Sceptre at the close of 1939, as the plot was directly inspired by the Anschluss, Hitler's annexation of Austria and of Sudetanland.

After the discovery of the Concentration Camps, Herge removed all mention of Hitler. Having previously satirised him with his little moustache. Hitler was no longer funny. Comedy had its bounds.

The Tintin stories spanned the world, even as far as Tibet, and even included the moon.

The careful path Herge had to tread with the Germans also showed itself when in 1942 he wrote "The Shooting Star". Herge decided to make the Americans the bad guys, highlighting rich American businessmen. The Americans objected, so Herge later altered the location to an imaginary South American country, where Tintin escorted a German professor to the Arctic to defeat a Jewish financial conspiracy. The boat for this story was designed by Herge, as he was unable to carry out any research, which would have aroused suspicion of spying, for which Herge could have been shot.

Herge realised he had to be more subtle. Throughout his stories Herge liked to poke fun at pomposity and always had an aversion to totalitarian regimes. Most of his stories were composed of a struggle between two opposing factions, with Tintin supporting the rebels and the underdog. Even in the innocuous story, *The Castafiore Emerald*, he managed to include a defence of the gypsies. But in "Tintin in Tibet" there are no antagonists, just friendship, and after masses of research, this story contained beautiful and very accurate illustrations, as Tintin crosses the Himalayas; considered by some to be Herge's finest work. His strong moral sense pervaded his stories but did not detract from their vivacity and thrill.



Although all the stories were in the form of a comic strip, the later ones were a serious, valuable, and unique record of news items of that era. No event was left out. Every event of any importance appeared in one story or another. Herge had been advised by a Chinese friend named Tchang to write well-researched stories, and this is what he proceeded to do.

Today, we have daily updates in the newspapers and on television of the war in Ukraine by journalists on the spot daring to report on the destruction surrounding them.

Herge, however, made a valuable contribution to the history of Europe during WW2, through the only channel available to him. Herge's ideas were sometimes ahead of his time., and some dealt with problems current today. In "The Shooting Star" he brings in the sabotaging of petrol supplies, and Tintin's escapade in the Congo obviously pre-empted the arguments about racism still prevalent today; and Tintin explored the moon in 1953, sixteen years before Neil Armstrong.

Tintin and his friends wandered through numerous countries, educating us in the customs of each, in a simple and recognisable format that reached the masses. They had grown up knowing his familiar character and style from their youth. The later stories now appealed to adults rather than children, but were still packed with excitement, fun, and adventure. Towards the end Herge was running short of ideas and trying new techniques and new approaches. In the *Castafiore Emerald*, with great humour, Herge took his readers on an adventure where the heroes stay at home. Almost everyone is suspected of theft, (as in Agatha Christie's novel, *Ten Little Indians*, written in 1939). But in Herge's story the culprit was a magpie, giving a gentle anti-climax.

The Tintin stories are still read all over the world to the present day. His books have been translated into 110 languages and had sold more than 270 million copies (by 2019).

There is no doubt that Herge was a genius, and the output and quality of his work were phenomenal.

The stories continue to appeal to a wide international audience, who love the humour and are comforted by the continuity of their familiar friend - Tintin, who never aged, and was neutral as regards religion or politics, or nationality. The stories have been translated into 75 languages and printed many times.

This is a brief overview. One cannot really give Herge the credit due to him in such a short summary.

There is little doubt that Georges Remy Herge was a genius and that the quality and output of his work was phenomenal. *Mary Farmer*