

Great Canteen Chimney Mystery.

Hello, whoever you are, Al Zeimer here, I think.

I well remember that morning in our rooms in Hut C, Baker Street. Sherlock Cokes, putting down his violin (thanks be the Lord), stood against the fireplace filling his bubble pipe by the snarling Persian cat guard he kept for that purpose.

"Strange things are afoot, Pearson." Cokes said looking at his shoes. Had he got them arsey versey? But no; the great detective pointed at a paragraph in the Penwithian, the Magazine of our old Alma Mater, or Alma Coogan. I fear I am more muddled since that Afghan bullet from a jezail hit the regimental Badge on my pith helmet (or was it pith pot)

Cokes peered at it, "Curious Heiroglyphs on Salmonella Factory Lum", shrieked the headline, by our Crime Reporter, Michael "The Man They Can't Gag" Greet.

I swiftly scanned the story. By the time Cokes returned from his six mile run backwards up and around Regent's Park, I had almost finished.

"Why Cokes," "I said" These heiroglyphs are obviously mathematical formulae, written by some poor crazed Pure and Applied Student who has cracked under the pressure of course work set by the fiendish Hari Oto!"

" Ah, Pearson," my friend replied, " There is more in this than meets the eye. Come, we are booked on The Cornish Riviera Express to Penzance. Speed is of the essence!"

Four hours later we were at Plymouth and crossing the Great Brunel Bridge into the Duchy crunching a leek and marijuana Cornish oggie with Afghan pickles swallowed down with a tot or two of Nigerian rum rot gut from a flask. The following morning we pulled into the grubby smoke filled terminus at Penzance with a headache as the rot gut kicked in with a vengeance.

Cokes grabbed a hansom.

"But Cokes," I cried. " You said speed was of the essence, put the fella down and let us get a cab from Edgar or James boys from Queen's Street!"

It seemed just a few minutes later that we entered the hallowed grounds of Humphrey Davy's great school touching the ground on bended knee, salaam, salaam!

The Head met us as we alighted.

"See, whispered Cokes " The man is a martinet and sadist. Note the callouses on the right palm, they are caused by gripping a cane tightly in order to administer the heaviest blow."

I later discovered those callouses to be the result of holding a badminton racquet, but refrained from mentioning this.

"Look, gentlemen, at the desecration visited upon the pristine and blameless chimney!" cried the Head.

"Cokes!" My eyes ejaculated, for a most fetching French teacher had appeared, "There is someone behind the chimney! We have the culprit!"

"No, no! That is our menial janitor Styles." said the Head, "He is endeavouring to remove the frightful graffiti!"

I looked at my friend. He was filling his meerkat pipe with a strange perfumed Turkish tobacco. I knew that expression on his face! It meant that, once again, the greatest detective in the world had solved the case, or that his piles were playing up again.

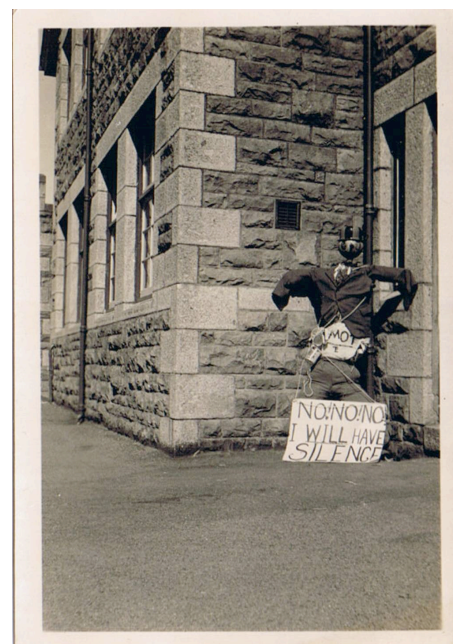
"Have you, Headmaster, a boy who is faddy with his food?" he enquired.

"But what has that to do with it?" The Head's eyes also popped to the ground, he too had noticed the mademoiselle, "This is Devil's work! A curse upon the School!"

Cokes grabbed a passing ear, twisted it and relieved the owner of his slate and chalk. With a few deft strokes of the chalk, the master detective glanced at the rude daubed hyroglyphs on the chimney. Then, with a flourish, he joined them together. We looked.

There, on the scholar's slate, was the solution.

"Waste not, Want not. Pick it up and Eat it". "How dare you laf." "Bring me your journal"



TONY PEARCE to Cokes
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