

The York Rd Street Saga as told to Uncle E'Benn.

The day dawned in Herospace much as normal. Debbie and Carole did their ritual fertility dance clad only in slightly used rugby shirts, their faces whitened by Tippex as puppet master Barchart planned more devious routines from behind his security screen.

The nomads of Witless folded their blankets, and made their customary offering to the Gods of Herospace.

The Handy Andys combined together in a melodious trumpet voluntary of such finesse that many fighting back tears had to rush from their vicinity.

Superficially all appeared well, but to the trained eye there was ferment just below the surface.

Bill and Ben, the flower pot men, had split up. Bill was drifting lonely as a cloud as he searched for his beloved Ben. Wigglesby the Magic Dragon ordered a search of Electronland, where Bill and Ben had long sought the meaning of Herospace and a decent camera.

Much was found in the hidden recesses. E'Benn was found asleep in a cupboard lined with swan's down, and Ballcock unknown to all, had leased a nest (not a pair) of drawers as a pied a terre (sounds posh, don't it) to more easily plot the downfall of the capitalist system.

But no sign of Ben. He had last been seen with a large Czech in the York, just before his disappearance. Had Ben gone international in his search for the Midas factor. A 24 hour surveillance had been dispatched to cover Ron Parke's camera boutique lest Ben should return to his old haunts.

At noon the news broke. The Stock Exchange was amazed. Wall Street was staggered. The impossible had happened. Lybian Enterprises Incorporated had made a bid for the People's Engineering Democracy. PED, the jewel in the crown of our beloved Herospace, was at risk.

The Money Programme analysed the bid in depth. Spanish based property tycoon, Tedious Ted Action was believed to be an intermediary in an astonishing deal to link a major Herospace company with this aggressive Mediterranean conglomerate which had recently rejected an assault by Ronny Incorporated of the USA.

Ted Action recently rebuffed by E'Benn Enterprises over the Majorcan Pedello concession, having made a considerable fortune selling topless chip butty makers to the South Koreans, had been looking for a suitable outlet for his marketing skills. It now seemed he had found one.

Political comment was plentiful. Uncle E'Benn, born again politician, firmly opposed the take-over bid from his bunker in Shirley South. He said in a radio interview for the Claret Drinkers daily, "Once again all that is best in Herospace is being sold off to the lowest bidder. The sums involved are frighteningly familiar. Even £17.32p cannot buy the cream that is the People's Engineering Democracy. This is monopoly money economics."

"I haven't seen that sort of money since I got my back pay last Christmas", said Top TASS leader Ballcock at a hastily convened meeting of the Joint Operational Command. "Our brothers in PED will fight to the last drop of somebody else's blood to defend their rights to sup ale and chase women and we are not out of the world cup yet - are we?"

The truth was finally revealed by Roger Disguise, reluctant pensioner and mole of this parish. He had obtained a copy of a tape recording, of conversations from within the infamous tented palace of Colonel G himself.

"I want to get my hands on that fabled creature Mavest (could he mean Mavis?). Such feline grace". (And Grace as well?).

So that had been the plan all along. Nothing to do with the creative genius that was the essence of PED, the restless energy of a wilderness clawed from nothing. That had produced such things as Grunt, and Quarterbrain. No it was asset stripping at its most vile. A deal to gain control of the flower of Herospace womanhood. Mavest, British and Herospace Freestyle Tummy Dancing Champion of 1969. What a coup for Lybian Enterprises Inc. A cultural shock would run around the Western world as far as the Chinese Embassy in Kings Heath.

Ted Action was in too deep now. He needed top political muscle, and turned unhesitatingly to E'Benn, rising star of the Ratcatcher's Alliance.

"What about it E'Benn?"

"Don't be cheeky. I know your sort. You're cheeky!"

"Leave that talk for the council chamber", said Ted. "I want a political solution."

"Would the Colonel accept Windy Barry?" mused the Ratcatchers answer to Mrs T. "I could arrange a cultural visitation in my official capacity as Cultural Attaché for Cranmore Boulevard."

"With a veil and tinselled wellies," said Ted. "He has a finely tuned Belly."

"What we need is a counter bid," interrupted E'Benn incisively. It was a flash of insight that distinguishes the great statesman from a mere politician.

And so it was that under the jurisprudence of Tedious Ted Action, Benbow, Turgid and Totterington, merchant bankers, met in a small bistro of York Road to put together a deal that would shake the financial world.

Sir David Benbow (late of Bill and Ben fame), wheeler and dealer in the property market, well versed in the smoke filled rooms and four ale bars of the market place. Simon Turgid, the Clive Sinclair of Radbourne Road, and Lee Totterington who had made more money on a Saturday morning than some make in a lifetime of roasting peanuts.

All fabulously rich, even by Herospace standards, they conferred in Ron Wigglesby's penthouse suite, above the clouds in his recently built Porta Cabin complex.

"If it's too much for Ted Action, maybe it's too much for us" cautioned Sir David Benbow.

"Action is down to his last few million. He lost a lot of money over the Pedallo deal".

"Buy it up and plough it in" said Totterington, "and turn it into a Garden Festival."

"Roses, Peaches and Fennell all do dwell in Herospace. They would like that," said Benbow, who was quite romantic now that he had access to a major pension fund.

But even as they talk storm clouds were gathering, the dogs of war were straining at their leash and Longswords coffee was becoming quite tepid.

Under the personal direction of Mr C himself, a TASK FORCE was preparing to sail. Admiral Paul, code name Maid of the Mount, was C-in-C, Tippex, reporting to Jack Parnell and he wasted no time.

"Come here, Sexy" he ordered, addressing his aide-de-compost Colonel Graham Sexywick. "We need a plan of action to retake PED. Polyticking has failed. It is now time for the men of action to take their rightful place in the scheme of things."

"Oh goody", said Sexywick.

"We need an HQ and a big table".

"The bigger the table, the bigger the decision. Everybody knows that".

"And chairs".

"And a coat stand to make us all important".

And so it began. Directives were issued, pencils sharpened and the blackboard delivered. But that was only the surface.

Conference rooms, the very reason d'être for Herospace were being commandeered by hard faced young women in dark suits, computer models destined now to fashion all our tomorrows in their own super efficient image. The management team of Rob-some of Parlez vous chambres (the idiot who wrote this is trying to appear educated again - ed) was now in charge of communications, but nobody had told them yet.

Mobility of labour was introduced. Whole communities were uprooted and forced to march hundreds of yards to be housed in disused hovels without even the facilities to make tea, others were thrown into pig-pens.

But still the TASK FORCE was not satisfied.

"All Herospace is mobilized now. Everybody is in a frenzy of activity" said Sexywich.

"You mean they're all awake?"

Sexywick ignored that, but introduced a cautionary note. "Except The Aerospace SS, code named TASS."

"We will send them a white feather."

"They'll be tickled, especially Doddy."

"Where is the Peoples Engineering Democracy?" said Simon Allcars from the bottom of the Straining Pool.

"A good point" said Admiral Paul sniffing his marathon boots! "Before we liberate them and turn them into an efficient profit making sector of the cellular modular economy, we will have to find them. I'm glad I thought of that", and then as decisively as ever, "Stop bowling those off-breaks, Tittlemouse, and study this work".

"I can't do that. I'm management. I'm a TASK FORCE executive!". And with that he stamped his foot.

"Just because you are momentarily in charge does not mean that you can behave like real management".

Next Issue:

What will happen when the troops go in?

Will it be the demise of Disguise?

What about the windows?

Will there **be** a next issue?

Will the forces of capitalism destroy the organ of the down-trodden masses?