

# THE THUNDERER

## A.K.A. THE INMATES' GAZETTE

June 2008

Number 20 St Pancras Almshouses

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### THE EDNA BROWN CINEMA CLUB PRESENTS:-

June 7<sup>th</sup>. **AFRICAN QUEEN** 1951

Starring Humphrey Bogart and Katherine Hepburn in an African adventure. Two people who have nothing in common are bound together by adversity and become as unlikely friends as Humphrey Bogart and Claude Rains in the last scene of Casablanca. If you are fond of bloodsucking leeches you will love this picture

JUNE 14TH OLIVER 1968

Directed by Carol Reed and starring Ron Moody as Fagin, Oliver Reed as Bill Sykes, and Harry Secombe as Mr Bumble.

You will all be familiar with these songs:-

'Food, Glorious Food'

'You've got to pick a pocket or two' and

'Yourself'.

June Consider 21<sup>st</sup>. **SCROOGE** 1951

With Alistair Sim as Ebenezer Scrooge and Hermione Baddeley as Mrs Cratchit.

June 28<sup>th</sup>. **ROMAN HOLIDAY** 1953

This is the film that introduced the Belgian born Audrey Hepburn to American and British audiences and for which she won the Academy Award as Best Actress.

The male lead is Gregory Peck.

June 28th. THE BRIDGE ON THE RIVER KWAI 1957

Featuring Alec Guinness, Jack Hawkins and William Holden. This is a work of fiction which 'borrowed' the construction of the Burma Railway by Allied Prisoners of War (POW's) in 1942-1943.

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On Sunday afternoon 20 April while Michael and Harry were relaxing on a bench and enjoying the peace and quiet of the garden, the gate opened and let in a scream of men and women of all ages, who quietly grouped round their two leaders and listened intently.

Who were they? Had they come to know more about the almshouses and their history?

Not at all. It was an artist-led walking tour organized by the new arts centre that has opened at 176 Prince of Wales Road..

We heard stories and memories written around the Maitland Park Estate and stopped at the modern sculpture named 'The Family' which arrived in the 1960's without a signature. It is in fact by Jeremy Harris, who started out working in Henry Moore's studio and the influence is unmistakable. Some of you will have walked by it many times.

We finished at the Isokon building, the very white and futuristic block of flats in Lawn Road, which was designed for artists and writers (Agatha Christie lived there for a while) who shouldn't have to waste time on domestic chores and so a restaurant was installed for them on the ground floor. This is now a garage! After many years of neglect Camden Council took it over and refurbished it for single men or women working in the borough.

Why not go and have a look round at No 176? It's the large building that looks like a temple or church and was a drama centre for many years. Anyone living locally can become a member and visit the exhibitions for free. There's a café too, but you'll have to buy your drink.

Ellen Farquharson (friend of Lore 4B)

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1. A vulture boards an airplane, carrying two dead raccoons. The flight attendant looks at him and says, "I'm sorry, sir, only one carrion allowed per passenger."

2. Two fish swim into a concrete wall. The one turns to the other and says "Dam!"

3. Two Eskimos sitting in a kayak were chilly, so they lit a fire in the craft. Unsurprisingly, it immediately sank, proving once again that you can't have your kayak and heat it too.

4. Two hydrogen atoms meet. One says "I've lost my electron." The other says "Are you sure?" The first replies "Yes, I'm positive."

5. Did you hear about the Buddhist who refused Novocain during a root canal? His goal: transcendental medication.

6. A group of chess enthusiasts checked into a hotel and were standing in the lobby discussing their recent tournament victories. After about

an hour, the manager came out of the office and asked them to disperse. "But why?", they asked as they moved off. "Because," he said, "I can't stand chess-nuts boasting in an open foyer."

7. A woman has identical twins and is forced to give them up for adoption. One of them goes to a family in Egypt and is named "Ahmal." The other goes to a family in Spain; they name him "Juan." Years later, Juan sends a picture of himself to his birth mother. Upon receiving the picture, she tells her husband that she wishes she also had a picture of Ahmal. Her husband responds, "They're identical twins! If you've seen Juan, you've seen Ahmal."

.,Submitted by E.L., Vermont

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**His name was Fleming, and he was a poor Scottish farmer. One day, while trying to make a living for his family, he heard a cry for help coming from a nearby bog. He dropped his tools and ran to the bog.**

**There, mired to his waist in black muck, was a terrified boy, screaming and struggling to free himself. Farmer Fleming saved the lad from what could have been a slow and terrifying death. The next day, a fancy carriage pulled up to the Scotsman's sparse surroundings. An elegantly dressed nobleman stepped out and introduced himself as the father of the boy Farmer Fleming had saved. 'I want to repay you,' said the nobleman. 'You saved my son's life.' 'No, I can't accept payment for what I did,' the Scottish farmer replied waving off the offer. At that moment, the farmer's own son came to the door of the family hovel. 'Is that your son?' the nobleman asked. 'Yes,' the farmer replied proudly. 'I'll make you a deal. Let me provide him with the level of education my own son will enjoy. If the lad is anything like his father, he'll no doubt grow to be a man we both will be proud of.' And that he did. Farmer Fleming's son attended the very best schools and in time, graduated from St. Mary's Hospital Medical School in London, and went on to become known throughout the world as the noted Sir Alexander Fleming, the discoverer of Penicillin. Years afterward, the same nobleman's son who was saved from the bog was stricken with**

**pneumonia.**

**What saved his life this time? Penicillin.**

**The name of the nobleman? Lord Randolph**

**Churchill. His son's name?**

**Sir Winston Churchill.**

Submitted by Margaret. Toronto

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The Archbishop of Canterbury has partially got his way, British weather has been declared Muslim.

It's either Sunni or Shiite!

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When I wrote, for my daughter, my life history, I was fortunate that many of the letters that I had written home to my family had been kept. The following episodes are based on these letters. At the time, for security reasons, we had to censor our letters. From regimental records and other sources I have been able to 'edit back' some of that censored material..

15<sup>th</sup> October 1950

Pusan

KoreaWe came into port last night. We're staying on board the Fowey until all our kit and equipment has been unloaded. It's difficult to put into words my feelings at our first sight of "The land of morning calm". (some war office expert

tells us that the word 'Korea' translates as this). As I told you in earlier letters, the aroma of each landfall was different and I suppose, not surprisingly, more 'foreign' and exotic the further away from England we are. Here it's more an atmosphere than a definable smell: Try and imagine curry cooking in an over used public lavatory and then this aromatic mixture being wafted on a drifting haze of burning rubbish. The thought that you could find yourself buried here is a sobering one!

Very early the official welcome struck up: An all black American military band. Teeth and brass a'shining.. Brilliant syncopation but it was odd to see the bandsmen's feet tapping to the rhythm. They did not resemble in any way the band of the Household Brigade playing at Trooping the Colour. They stopped rather abruptly to give way to a little American with General's stars on his ill fitting tin helmet. He was reading what we could only assume was a speech of welcome. You can't really be expected to hear much six or more decks up with the deafening racket of cranes and and winches unloading, among other equipment, 60 ton centurion tanks. (On this subject I was told about two days ago that the four tanks that were to make up my troop had been delayed by a dock strike in Wales and are being shipped to Kure in Japan.)

I think we are all feeling sad sad at leaving the ship that has been our comfortable home for a month.

There is also a sense of apprehension, what are we going to find? I am worried about fear. Will I be able to control it? Will the others notice? How will I hide it from my troop? All except five of the members of my troop fought in the War. How can I with none, lead men with their experience? Then the sense of excitement, of adventure, takes over. I will have to finish this letter tomorrow as I have to go ashore to the warehouse where our equipment is being stored..

Next Morning:

My first encounter with our American allies did not fill my cup to overflowing with enthusiasm for them and may well have sparked a diplomatic incident. I went into the warehouse and was rather aimlessly wandering round unable to identify any of our baggage. As I made my way over to an office in the corner I could hear voices then screams. Looking through the window I saw four of our gallant allies; one behind the desk, one holding a metal object in the wood burning stove while the other two, showing great bravery, were holding a Korean dock worker, twisting his arms to force him to bend over. You've heard the expression 'time seemed to stand still', well it did just that. The soldier at the stove pulled out a red hot coal shovel and pulled open the Korean's baggy pants pushing the shovel down on the poor bastard's bare a\*\*\*. This, as you can imagine, caused the victim immense unhappiness. It made me very angry. Much emboldened by adrenaline and self righteousness I

burst into the office and asked them what they thought they were doing. My intervention had absolutely no effect. The shovel went back into the stove for a reheat, the wretched man was bent further over and the 'heat treatment' was repeated. I shouted at them to stop. They looked surprised and explained that they had caught him stealing. As they showed no intention of stopping I said, this time with a little more control in my voice, "If you do not release this man I will arrest you." This they found highly entertaining and obviously thought it was an example of 'Limey humour'. On an impulse, mainly because I didn't know what else to do, I drew my revolver and announced that they were now under arrest.

This action certainly 'grabbed their attention' and they let go of the Korean. He now threw himself at my feet howling and sobbing, obviously thinking that I was going to shoot him.

It was turning out to be a more complicated evening and not the sort of 'happening' for which I had received any training. Having placed the brave quartet under arrest the next move was by no means obvious. "I'm taking you to the military police" I said with a confidence I did not feel. I had no idea where to find 'The Snowdrops' so rather lamely said "Right, get going" hoping that they assumed I knew the way and would therefore go in the right direction and so lead me to the MP's. They obliged. The subject of all this drama had deduced that execution was not imminent

and had b\*\*\*\*\*ed off fast gibbering as he ran. After I had explained my reason for making the arrest the MP duty officer was fetched. It could well have been a language problem but this redneck was totally unable to grasp what I was saying. Eventually a British Liaison major was found and, judging by his vile disposition, aimed by the way at me, he had been dragged away from his dinner. I gave the name of my regiment and it's location as 'Empire Fowey'. This also he found difficult to fathom. He told me to report back to my unit and that he would be "reporting me for *deliberately* upsetting the American forces under whose command we were."

I told the adjutant what had happened and I must say he took a sympathetic line. I await developments: Fingers crossed. Tomorrow we move to our base camp a few miles out of Pusan. That's one consolation, that we're not going to be in this Godforsaken city.

I'll write again soon always assuming that I haven't been thrown into an American army stockade.

All love,

Michael 12c