

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

And out of Shaftmoorland came big Geoff General von Cotton. His destiny was to lead the Softies and Subbies to their rightful place in the scheme of things.

Too long the Hardmen under Wrigglesby the Unready had prevailed in downtown Herospace, but things were soon to change.

The Subbies were on the march. Gobbling up the bench space, aided by the Softies they were seeking their place in the sun. United under their new leader, General von Cotton, whose lust for territory could only be matched by the legendary Evenly Puds desire for soggy chips.

First to go was young Bobby Burrowbridge, who was banished to the Manor of Witney in Oxfordshire to await his fate. He had been a goodly leader, only falling asleep occasionally when others were awake, but a momentary lapse - he had arrived five days late - had been his undoing. He had found his resting place occupied by squatters, led by Big Jim Tripton a would be henchman of General von Cotton.

General von Cotton had picked a good time for his offensive. Weakened by internal feuding over the division of spoils claimed from the Irish plenipotentary Mikus O'Kelly, Tassitus soon agreed to concede most of the Territorial claims of General von Cotton.

"I have here a piece of paper", said Ballcock alighting from his bike at Hall Green Airport. "We have guaranteed peace in our time for Herospace. We have seen the plans of Herr Plantoid and have accepted them voluntarily in the interests of world peace".

"And a new washer for his bicycle pump", whispered a cynic.

Foreign Miniscule Grunt knelt on the apron, swooning with delight. "Only those who wish to be deported to the colonies will be considered for Transportation. A Transit camp will be set up in the old School of Correction".

Cheers echoed around the bicycle shed.

Despite the outward show of euphoria, the Joint Operational Command of Tassitus was in disarray.

"General Wrigglesby has promised to promote all of our lads to Private 1st class next Friday fortnight," said Ballcock.

"Acting unpaid for the moment," said Fartkins. "But we have been assured that the necessary paperwork has been raised".

"Oh goody," said Grunt.

"This is indeed a great step forward," said E'Benn. "And should lead to victory."

"Our supply system is critical. The perceived view is that our logistical systems are at melt down."

"Never fear," interposed Perky Judy who had not yet been afflicted by the large pimple on the tummy which was beginning to afflict some members of the JOC, mostly female. "I have seen Pierre Skinhead attacking a filing cabinet with a tin opener."

"We can't get the metal you know," said Catonic Phil. "But now thanks to young Skinhead we will soon fettle the metal into tin helmets."

Major Ballcock was in the thick of it. He had dug himself into desktop 7, and despite heavy pressure from the enemy, and confusing messages from General Wrigglesby, was holding on.

There had been desertions. Dippy back from his trip in the Herospace Loony module

had fled, taking up residence in the School of Correction, no longer willing to be used as a pipe cleaner for Wrigglesby's cannon.

E'Benn was chasing moonbeams, his finely divided mind long since destroyed by over exposure to the Wrigglesby phenomena. Accompanied by only a foot soldier he had gone once too often to the Cave of Vanished Dreams. Lost in the labyrinth of the Masters mind, his brain had finally dissolved to jelly, and with his age preventing him taking his place in the management structure, as one of the undead, he was no longer relevant to the grand design.

Captain Grunt was desperately keen to join the elite Officers Corps, but had been black balled on a technicality by E'Benn, who was jealous of his rugged beauty, and the way his tummy tumbled joyfully over his underpants.

On the home front things were developing well.

The Ministry of Memos had finally been created.

Many had argued for such a Ministry, it fitted so well into the ethos that was Herospace. Herospace had developed an economy based on paper, the added value element being particularly important in a stand alone system.

Everyone of importance must be seen surrounded by paper. Green computer paper, with little perforations was the most sought after, and machines had been installed all over Herospace where such paper was spewed out at irregular intervals. The ability to deal with vast quantities of paper had almost taken over from serf watching as the prime status symbol.

To be seen peering over the shoulder of a serf (designated a worker) looking intelligent and overworked, if coupled with ability to tear along the little perforations usually ensured a field promotion.

A report produced by the Ministry of Memos had identified the need for increased back-up services for on the job serfs (or workers). The report stated that due to the erosion of serf status, it was necessary to provide three supervisors per serf covered by two data correlators, and at least four progress pushers.

"What we need" said Ron Clones, "is more detailed schedules of work through-put, and three dimensional, real time datum cross references with spatial and time related correlations. You would like that wouldn't you?"

He poked a nearby serf who fell happily onto his soldering iron. "Yes," chorused the Supervisors, "of course he would."

"would he be more comfortable if we extracted the solder bit from his left nostril," said shirtless griffin waving his pink folder importantly.

"Do not be hasty," said Vic Needless, ever looking for ways of improving productivity. "With a soldering iron surgically implanted into his left nostril would that not leave his hands free to do a bit of drawing or whatever those D.O. chaps do nowadays."

"Is that what we do?" said Jeff Shore. "I always wondered what we did."

"Don't worry," said Mike McCloudy "we shall have a task force drafted into your department as soon as they have decided how to keep the toilets clean using the null manpower mode."

"Elastic bands and rubber knickers," whispered E'Benn who had majored in incontinence, and now wore rubber knickers as a fashion accessory.

"Quality is never having to take the blame," said John Fudge thoughtfully.

But the war still went on, even at the weekends.

"We require a 36 hour day or the Fully Automated Flying Coconut will never be ready on time, and we shall have lost the war," said Anton Plantoid sadly.

"We could keep the serfs awake easily enough," said Wigglesby "on the big V in Slacks bunker (or Tommoes Tool shed.)"

Yes, amazing as it will seem to Herospace watchers, Wigglesby had been flexible with the truth when he had told Ballcock, in confidence, that the true purpose of big V was to break the skin of the canteen gravy and shake the lumps out of the custard. but all is fair in love and war.

But I digress. I forgot my duty as a chronicler of this most savage war that ever rent Herospace asunder.

The army of Herospace had been totally reorganised, pruned down to a cutting edge of seven, foot soldiers, and a wheelbarrow for casualties. However despite this there were still doubts amongst the officers who had looked into the cannons mouth - where was Dippy? Would those foot soldiers pull their weight. Nowadays you could never be sure.

"Despite the back-up, the time devoted to honing leadership skills, logistics, battle plans, all they ever do is moan about money," said Wigglesby. "If only we had Subbies. They never complain about money. Never want any holidays."

So despite the inadequacies of the foot soldiers, the poor food (the soggy chips were not getting through), the adverse weather conditions (it was so draughty sometimes and so hot) that kept working to a minimum, Electronland refused to submit to the unnatural demands of the Subbies and Softies.

After many days of being pounded by heavy calibre memos, little territory was lost and as the icy hand of winter took Herospace in its grip, (that's proper writing that is) Cheese Plant ridge was still in allied hands. Protocamp, the industrial Heartland of Electroland, still proudly flew the cross cucumber flag of 'Wigglesby the Unready', and all were on double time.

Next Issue.

Will General von Cotton get the Fully Automated Flying Coconuts ready for the party season?

Will Fartkins defect to Porton Down?

Will Princess Phillipa ever be the same again after tasting the delights of nuptial naughtiness?