



Slowly Downward TAGLIBRO.



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OCCASIONAL.

“My Giro” & “Wage Packet” perform’d at Wiffle.

Esteemed Actor Mr. Ric Jerrom told these two stories, among other diverse excursions on impecunious matters to a Restaurant full of people, on both the 9th & 10th of March in 2006.

These evening readings were the ‘fringe’ to a Literature Festival held in Bath, Somerset; the fringe otherwise known as the painfully acronymous *Walcot International Fringe Festival Literature Event*, or WIFFLE.

Subtitled ‘*A License To Print Money*’, the events were partly an investigation into the phenomenon of Finance & partly an excuse to have a Party & test some local Cider. Guests were required to change their Sterling into a new currency, the Munt, in order to buy drinks at the Bar, reflecting the fact that Oil is traded only in the Dollar. A Financial Advisor was also on hand to help people who had not made adequate plans for the future.

Mr Jerrom’s readings were superb, his rounded vowels insinuating dark possibilities into the ears of those gathered. My favourite moment was when his ullulations became intense as he described the Lake of Vomit and Sewage that features in ‘Wage Packet’-*mbilft diners were eating their deserts*. No-one was actually sick, much to my disappointment.

Anyway, the shadowy organisers of Wiffle, Augustus Weaken & Devlin Crease have made an Audio CD of Mr. Jerrom reading these two stories. You can buy it, if you wish, from www.slowlydownward.com, for the sum of £6.66.



“LONDON VIEWS” Show in Soho this May if I get it together.

In 1493 a book called *The Nuremberg Chronicle* was published. This book, more properly known as the *Liber Chronicarum*, is a history of the world from creation to its publication in 1493. Its structure follows the story of human history as related in the Bible while also including digressions on *natural catastrophes* & the histories of a number of important Western cities. Hartman Schedel, a Nuremberg physician & humanist scholar, compiled the work. It was illustrated & engraved by leading artists of the day, Michael Wohlgemut & Wilhelm Pleydenwurff, & published by Anton Koberger, the largest printer and publisher in Germany at the time.

I bought a book containing some of the illustrations, & had it with me during the flood at Boscastle, Cornwall in 2004. The terrifying sight of buildings torn apart, trees ripped from the earth & the endless thundering roar of the flood remained fixed in my mind. The next day I began to draw, half-copying the woodcuts from the *Chronicle*, half exorcising my memory. That summer I carried on drawing imaginary Medieval disasters, most of which were spattered by the persistent

rain. Flood never seemed far off; the fact that I spent the rest of the summer camped by a Dartmoor river renowned for sudden inundations did not help.

Versions of these drawings were commissioned for *Virgin Atlantic’s* in-flight magazine, but were eventually rejected, following the tsunami of December 26th 2004, a disaster that made the Boscastle floods seem a mere trickle. Versions of further drawings (rejected due to the perceived delicate sensibilities of American passengers) I later made into the screenprints called *Operation Phantom Fury & Storm Shadow*.

After many false starts I began working on the series of pictures that I ended up calling “London Views”, pictures that owed more than ever to the woodcuts in the *Liber Chronicarum*, in particular the illustrations dealing with the fall of Babylon & the destruction of the cities of Sodom & Gommorah.

Fascinated by the extravagant curls of flame & the Op-art floods, I wanted to work like one of the Nuremberg artists; because travel in the 15th century was tricky, most of the far-off cities they depicted were drawn either from description or imagination - so much so that everywhere ended up looking like, well, Nuremberg. So I stayed at my desk, calling up images on Google whenever memory hit a particular dead-end, as was the case with the Swiss Re tower.

The series eventually became a panorama that stretches from the outer reaches of the Thames estuary upstream as far as Battersea, destroying the Flood Barrier, Canary Wharf, the Tower of London, the Houses of Parliament and much more besides.

At the time of writing my plan is to massively enlarge these apocalyptic scenarios, & then cage them, much as the daily headlines for London’s *Evening Standard* are caged with a diamond lattice of galvanised wire.

They will be on display from the 19th of May 2006 in a former emporium of sado-masochistic paraphernalia at 8 Greek Street, Soho, London; next-door to a pub called *The Pillars of Hercules*. The real Pillars of Hercules (Gibraltar & Monte Hacho) were once considered the western end of the world.

References:
www.lib.umd.edu/RARE/Exhibits/Nuremberg/index.html

