

UNCLE REGGIE

- i n v e s t i g a t e s -



THE WICKED MEN OF MICKLEHAMPTON

A Radio Play in four parts

PART 1
2s 6d



HELLO



*Wherever you see this symbol
please stop for a few seconds to
imagine the sound. Thank you.*



Intro music. A fanfare perhaps.

Hello children

Do you know who I am? - I'm Reginald Merryweather,
but you can call me Uncle Reggie.

A long time ago, I was very very famous. Long before mobile phones, digital wi-fi's, and the world wide internets, I used to present shows of all kinds on an invention called ... a radio. Do you know what that is? ...well in the olden days, people used to gather around these huge wooden boxes, turn them on and be transported away into a little world of adventure, comedy and music. It was wonderful.

Now then. You've probably heard my first gramophone recording which was called "and other stories" in which I tuned my big magic radio into some very curious programmes, and you've probably also heard my regular radio show "Uncle Reggie Presents" in which I tune into the fabulous American science fiction series called "Escape" - and you probably wondered how I was able to do that. Well, now- you're going to find out how, because tonight, it's my turn to tell a story, as I recount an

astonishing event that happened to me, and one which
was to change my life forever, in a tale that I call:

The
Wicked Men
of
Micklehampton.



Massive, dischordant organ



Chapter 1:-

When I was a very young man, I worked for the BBC as a journalist and I would often travel up and down the country making programmes about local folk and interviewing whoever I could. Initially I had a series called "My Gypsy Life" and later a rural programme called "The Country Matters" and it was whilst I was working on these shows that my producer assigned me to investigate the mysterious disappearance of a young girl called Alice Langhorne and the death of many sheep in a village deep in the Yorkshire Dales called Micklehampton. Little did I know that this was the just the beginning of a very complicated chain of events.

Now, at this point I have to explain a few things.

Firstly, I am not what I might seem to be. No. Through an unfortunate miscalculation on my part, I am today, what seems to be commonly known as a "Time Lord" This is because, back then (when I was a young broadcaster) I was also a keen radio builder and I constructed my very own transmitter and receiver out of a variety of household electrical objects. I was also fascinated by science and the possibility of the human mind being able

to harness the natural elements. All of this led to me developing my secret invention - "The Temporal Solenoid Inducer" - a small vacuum sealed valve, which when inserted into my radio gave it the power to transport the listener through a gateway in the space-time continuum.

Now then, all of this happened in the 1930s but you see, because of what I've done, I'm not really sure which point of time is actually now. As you might understand it. Are you following me? I hope so. Well, back to our story. And I must say, this is going to take some explaining, so if you don't mind I'm just going to light my pipe as this might take some time and I need to concentrate.



Striking match, puff, puff.

Right then. To continue our story, let me fire up the magic radio, and let myself - as I then was - take up the tale... as it's the only way we're going to make head nor tale of what was going on back then - and hopefully might allow me to ...shall we say 'rescue' myself' from a fate worse than death. If there could be such a thing.

I'll just switch it on..... like that. And now, if I fit the Temporal Solenoid Inducer here like that, we should be able to turn the dial back to the morning of June the 15th 1936 - just one day before the terrible events occurred

Audio quality goes retro

My assignment began like any other. A brown paper envelope dropped through my letterbox and in it was a letter, a sheet of objectives, some luncheon vouchers, a map and a train ticket. There was little to alert my suspicion as it looked like any other job that I'd been on, and at first glance appeared to be the perfect break for me. I'd been working hard and a few days in the country seemed like an idyllic idea.

"How hard could it be?"

I thought to myself.

"interview a few local people, maybe ask a few questions, snoop around for a while, write a bit of a story to introduce it and come home again. ...Ahh, three days in the country" I thought to myself.

"Just what I need right now".

Well there wasn't any time to lose as my train was leaving that day, so it wasn't long before I was at the station looking for the train that would carry me to the small Dales village of Micklehampton as part of my series: "The Country Matters", to investigate the failure and mysterious death of last year's lambs and also the equally mysterious disappearance of one of the farmer's children.



Train station ambience; distant voice: "all aboard". Whistle, door slams.

I managed to find a private compartment in the carriage.



Train rumble & clickety clack

I sat myself down, arranged my case under my seat and pulled out a few papers to read to familiarise myself with the case before I arrived. But after a while I couldn't help being hypnotised by the gentle rocking

of the train and the beautiful rolling countryside at my window, and I must have nodded off because after a while I was awoken by a small gentleman wearing tweeds and a flat cap.

Man: "S'cuse me, is these seats taken?"

Reg: "Er no, please help yourself"

I recognised the accent immediately, and he appeared to be a very well-to-do chap, so I decided to engage him in conversation. We had a while to go before I arrived at my stop and it helped to pass the time.

Reg: "Excuse me, I hope you don't mind me asking, but you're a Yorkshireman aren't you?"

Man: "Aye. why do you ask?"

Reg: "Well, I have some business in the area and er, I'm just here for a few days"

Man: "Oh aye?. What do you do?"

Reg: "Well, I work on the radio"

Man: "Oh!.. fancy"

Reg: "So, what about you? ...what brings you here today?"

Man: "Well, it's Skipton Market tomorrow, and er, I'm a butcher and I'm going to meet a few farmers and er, see if I can secure meself a few new suppliers. How about yerself?"

Reg: "Well, I'm off to Micklehampton to do a story about the village and to talk to some of the local people"

There was a long stony silence and he looked at me. Eventually, he spoke.

Man: "Micklehampton eh?"

Reg: "Yes, why?"

Man: "Ah. Rather you than me"

I was intrigued.

Reg: "Why do you say that?"

Man: "Let's just say that folks round there are less than freindly, and there's some funny goings on, and they particularly don't like 'off-cumdens'!"

I had no idea what he meant, but it didn't sound good, and now I was starting to worry.

Man: "Best to think on- it's best not to dabble with stuff tha dun't understand. Well, this is my stop. You mind how you go, but don't turn your back on any of them!"

And with those chilling words, he gathered his things and was gone.



MICKLEHAMPT



It wasn't long before I'd reached the end of the branch line and my own stop. Stepping out of the carriage, I made my way to the ticket office to check the local map and see how far I had yet to go to reach my final destination. I knew it was quite a hike, but it was a lovely spring day and the exercise would do me good.

Looking at the huge, faded map on the wall of the office I was puzzled to see that I couldn't find Micklehampton Anywhere and suddenly I heard a voice behind me.

Station master: "Can I help you sir?"

Reg: "Yes, I'm looking for a village, but it doesn't seem to be on your map. I'm wondering if I've got the wrong train"

Station master: "Can't help you there sir. Can't say I've heard of the place"

Suddenly a gruff voice at the door called out to me.

Farmer: "Mr Merryweather?"

Reg: "Yes! Hello. I mean, how do you do.
Erm..."

Farmer: "We've been expecting you Mr Merryweather. Please, if you'll follow me I have a vehicle and I can give you a lift"

This was something that I wasn't expecting but it was a welcome turn-up for the books and unlike anything the butcher had warned me about earlier. Besides, I hadn't been looking forward to the 4 mile trek from the station to the village.

Reg: "Thank you, let me just get my bag"

We sat in his filthy lorry for quite some time without talking. The unmade roads made the lorry bounce uncomfortably from side to side



Lorry engine, clattering along

Reg: "Is it much farther?"

Farmer: "No. You'll be where you need to be in no time at all"

I sat there with his sheepdog between us. It's tongue all pink and eager as it looked at me with innocent eyes.

Reg: "I'm here to investigate...."

Farmer: "We know why you're here, Mr Merryweather"

Reg: "Oh!, you do?"

Farmer: "Aye"

Reg: "So you know all about young Alice Langhorne?"

Farmer: "Who?"

Reg: "Alice ... Alice Langhorne. The daughter of Hubert - the sheep farmer who reported his daughter missing a while ago"

Farmer: "Can't say I've heard of her"

Reg: "Really? you do amaze me. It was in all the papers"

Farmer: "I'm sure it might have been. But Otley and Leeds is a long way from Micklehampton Mr Merryweather. We do things differently out here. We have to, you see. It's how it is."

There was an edge to what he was saying, but I couldn't get to the bottom of it. I was starting to feel that there was more to this assignment than just a simple story.

Before long we were pulling up outside an old black and white coaching Inn called "the Green Man". It was a beautiful old place. Like a chocolate box lid, with a duck pond, a maypole, a church and willow trees surrounding the village green.

Farmer: "Here you go then. This is where you need to be"

I jumped down from the lorry and thanked him, but he had driven off before I had finished my sentence.



Lorry driving off.

Birds singing and ducks

I walked up to the inn and entered the front door. Inside, the locals were playing some folk music.



Folk music, hey fiddle diddle

But as I entered the public bar the music faded to silence.



Barman: "Mr Merryeather?"

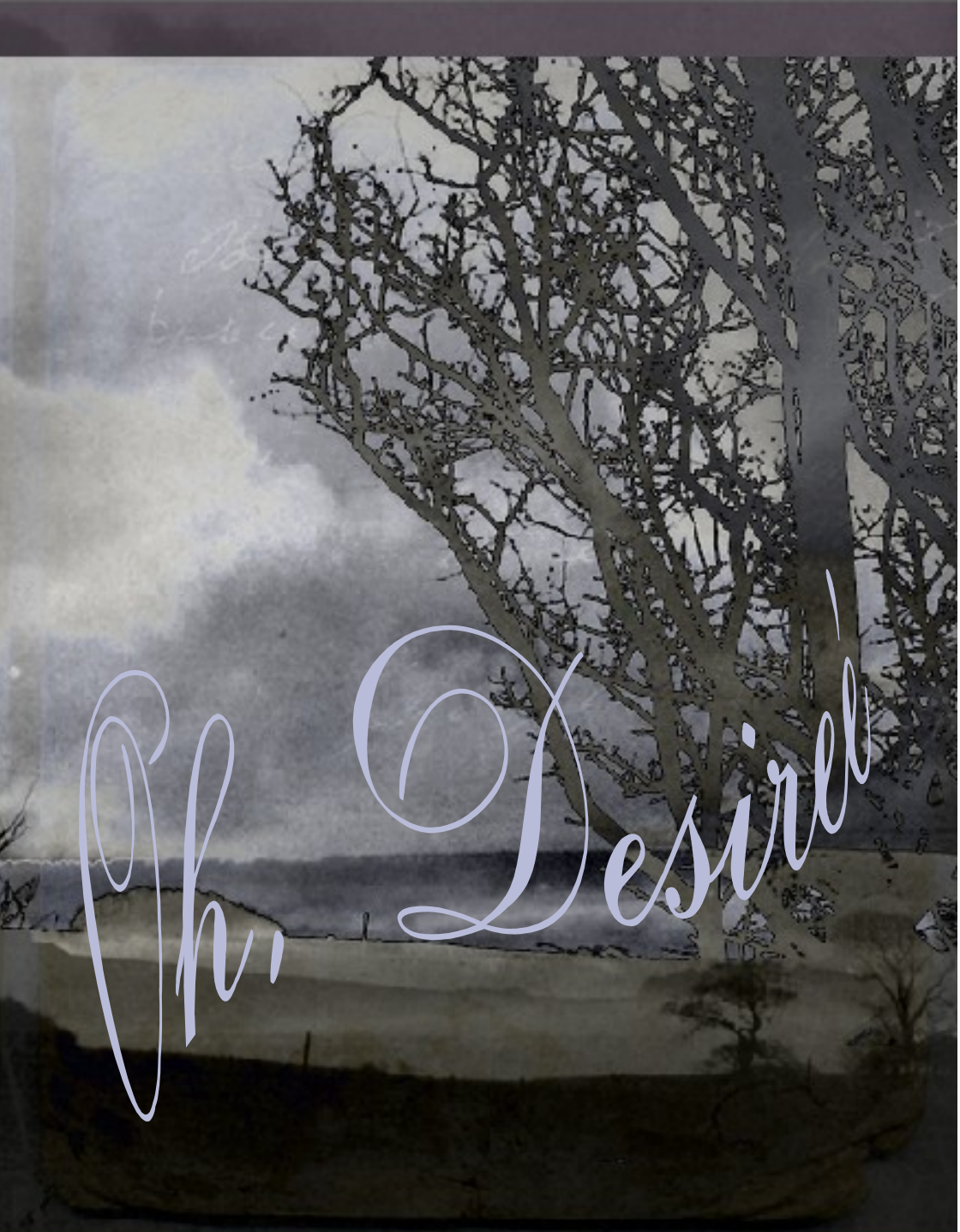
Reg: "Yes, Indeed. I'm looking for a bed and breakfast for the night. I'm here on business and I'd like to..."

Barman: "Not a problem Mr Merryweather. I have you booked in and my daughter Desireé will show you to your room"

A very attractive young blonde girl came out from behind the bar and signalled me to follow her. I went up the stairs and was shown in to a small room that overlooked the courtyard within to one side and the village green to the otehr.

Reg: "Thank you... er Desireé....."





18
18
18

Oh, Desires!

Is there any chance of getting something to eat? I've been travelling all day and I'd quite like a last supper before I retire"

Desireé: "Of course, sir. If you come down in about half an hour I'll have something ready.

She was beguiling. A fully blossomed specimen of woman-hood but in a young girl's body. And what was worse, she knew the alluring power that she possessed as she drifted past me smiling sweetly and descended the stairs to the kitchen.

After a shave and a quick wash I went downstairs to see what fayre the inn had provided for me on my first night in their village. It seemed that these people were far more welcoming than the butcher had warned me about earlier in the day.

I was greeted by the same curious folk music I'd heard before as I descended the stairs and the smell of onions filled the air. Desireé greeted me as I arrived in the kitchen

Desireé: Ahh Mr Merryweather, your supper's ready.

Reg: Thank you.

I sat down and she brought a plate of what looked like stew with freshly boiled vegetables.

Reg: What's that music I can hear?

Desireé: Oh that. That's the Micklehampton Morrismen getting ready for the mayday celebrations.

I tucked into my food with great relish. I was very hungry after such a long journey and the hearty offering was delicious

Reg: What is this?

Desireé: It's mutton and onion stew. It's my own recipe.

Reg: It's very good

After I'd finished eating I thanked her and went into the public bar to meet some of the locals for the first time. It was a small dimly lit room with a large inglenook fireplace. The locals looked me up and down as I went to the bar.

Landlord: Enjoy your meal?

Reg: Yes, it was very nice thank you

Landlord: Can I tempt you with a nightcap?

Reg: Yes indeed. I'll have a brandy please.

The landlord prepared my drink and I turned and leaned against the bar and listened for a while to the musicians playing their strangely haunting tunes. I glanced around the room and saw many faded photographs of people wearing cricket whites and views of the main street from years gone by. And down one wall by the window I saw a series of

photographs that caught my attention of farmers, obviously taken at a local show as some of them were holding trophies. I slowly walked over to look at some of the pictures, and at the bottom of each one was a caption which read "Best in show, 1933" "best of breed 1934" but there didn't seem to be a picture from the year before this one.

I returned to the bar and took my drink from the landlord.

Reg: Those pictures over there. Who's the farmer in them?

Landlord: That? - that's jack Langhorne.

That name was familiar. I reached into my coat pocket and pulled out a photograph.

Reg: Do you recognise this girl?

Landlord: No. Can't say I've ever seen her.

Reg: This is Alice Langhorne. Perhaps she's related

Landlord: No, Jack never had any children.

Reg: But he's a sheep farmer?

Landlord: Yes, that much is true.

I was beginning to feel that the landlord was starting to be evasive.

Landlord: Why exactly have you come here Mr Merryweather?

Reg: Well I'm doing a story about the farmers of this area

Landlord: Well, what's with the picture of the little girl then?

Reg: Oh she's somebody that they've asked me to be on the lookout for.

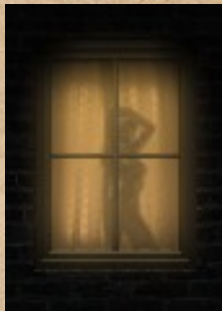
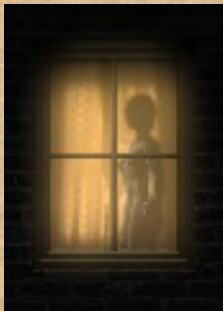
Landlord: "They?"

Reg: Yes, the people at the BBB. That's who I work for. I'm in radio. I'm quite famous you know.


Landlord: Well, as I say. I've never seen her.

I wasn't convinced, but I was too tired to press my questions any further. So I thanked him for his hospitality and said goodnight and returned to my room.

Lying in my bed I was reading some comforting passages from the Bible that I found in the bedside cabinet and in particular the words of the 23rd Psalm. My attention was drawn to a light that I could see through my window. The room they had put me in overlooked a small square stableyard and directly opposite my room was another bedroom with white curtains drawn. Silhouetted against the window, I couldn't help but make out the shapely figure of a woman whom I presumed to be Desiree. But she wasn't preparing for bed. She was dancing in a slow snake-like manner. Her young breasts outlined against the curtains. To say that I was startled by this was an understatement, but it was clearly not an accident. No. This was a performance purely for my benefit, as though she were trying to entice me, lure me, torture me.



I tried with all my might to focus on the religious passages, but all the while I was painfully aware of her presence. I tossed the covers over my head and forced myself to think of my fiancée in Bedfordshire and eventually fell into a fevered sleep.

 Birdsong, tweedly dee.

TO BE CONTINUED

WEBSITE

If you'd like to find out more about Uncle Reggie and his magic radio, please feel free to visit his website, where you'll find much, much more.

<http://www.kooshrecords.co.uk/reg>

The Wicked Men of Micklehampton ©2009

Story by Jools Slater

Design and illustration by Jason Brown

COMING SOON

Reginald, a devout Christian, is increasingly shocked by the villagers' behaviour. He angrily threatens to involve the authorities in ending their pagan schooling and medical practices.

He receives no assistance in his search from the villagers, who initially deny Alice (the young girl) exists and then say that she recently died.

At her grave, however, he finds only a hare interred. Reggie persists and uncovers evidence suggesting the girl was a victim, or perhaps is soon to be a victim, of human sacrifice.

UNCLE REGGIE

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