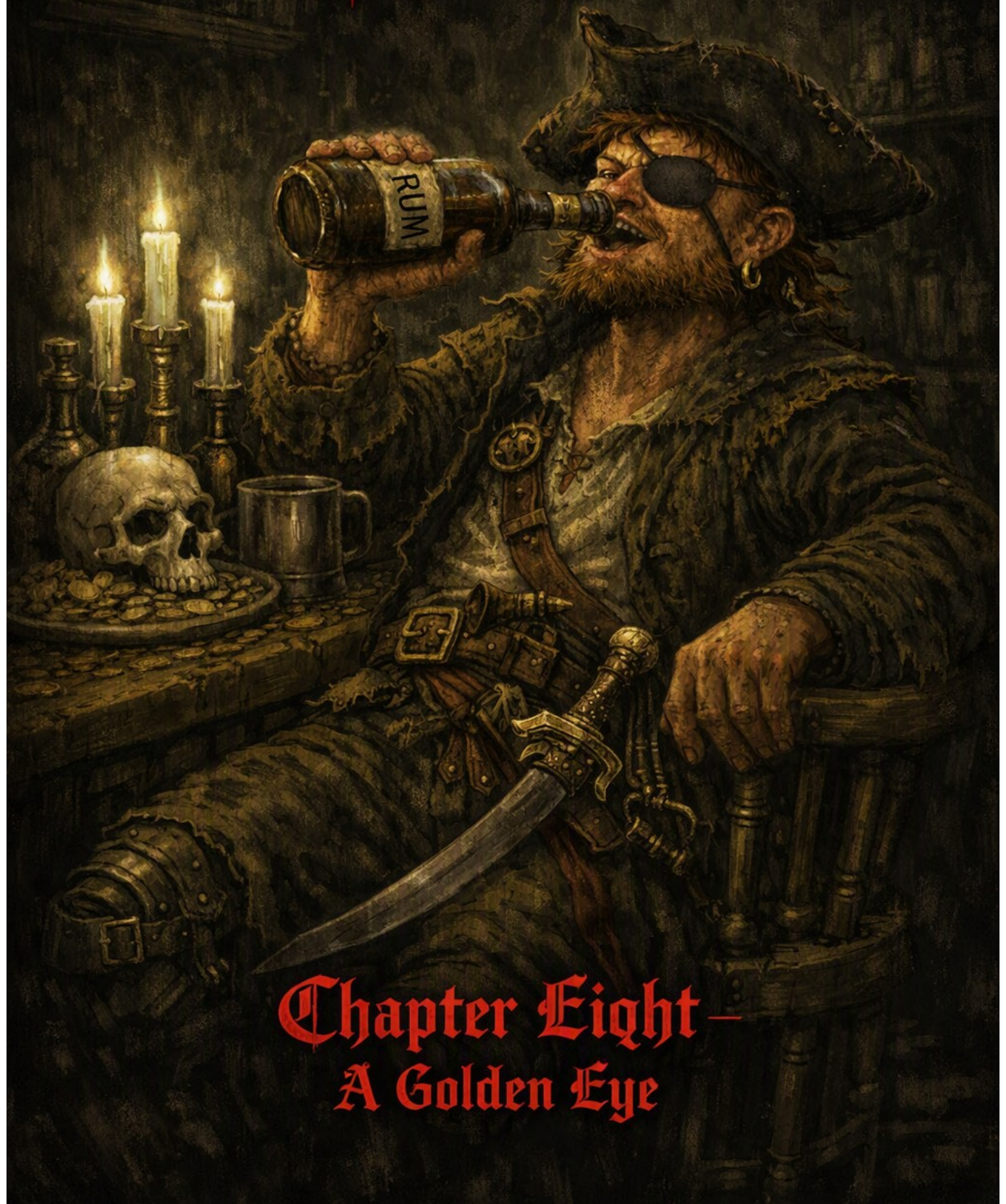


Chronicles of Chesham



Chapter Eight— A Golden Eye

CHAPTER EIGHT – A GOLDEN EYE

The team reformed the next day (not too early) in the Queens Head, ready to plot their next move. Bob had recovered somewhat, Timmy had an unpleasant swelling on his tongue and wasn't able to talk much, and Jake had developed some small grey lines on the side of his head, which everyone put down to stress.

Mick the Watchman was in charge of this one, and was commanding control of the saloon bar table. He explained to the group what his plan was.

Mick always wore his armour, he loved it, and over the years had customised it to suit the different tasks of being in charge of the entrance to Chesham.

Mick was also keen, after perhaps an ale or two, on exposing his buttocks to his friends, and others. This was obviously a bit of a faff when you are wearing armour, so he cleverly had a trapdoor fitted to the back, with first class hinges, so he could give 'em an eyeful should the feeling take him.



He worked most of the time from his tower, at the entrance to Chesham, where he would question people trying to enter. This would be perfectly acceptable, however Mick possesses strong political views about free movement and contributing to the local economy, meaning you were guaranteed a hard time if you didn't have a good story.



Mick had spent so much time in his watchtower that he knew pretty much everyone in Chesham, and their comings and goings, very handy if you know someone has been up to no good and you need a favour in a hurry.

Mick the Watchmen was, at the end of it, very protective of his town and his way of life, even a way of life that people outside of Chesham would not have wanted in the first place.

Mick did not know it yet, but when the Gods eventually introduce social magidia into the mix, he was going to love it.

Back to the plot, Dave the Bastard had explained that in order to find a golden eye, Mick would need to locate the dread pirate known as Ryan the Ruiner. Word had it that he could be found of an evening (and almost any time) in the Generals

Arms.

Word also had it that Ryan the Ruiner was an extremely unpleasant man, with a reputation for spoiling epic nights out with his poor behaviour and extreme potty mouth.

He was known to have sailed the high seas for many years, in command as the captain of the feared sea vessel, the Jilted Johnny. It is rumoured that he had plundered and sunk many merchant ships, including one that a certain Dave the Bastard had sailed on.

“If you find him, you give him one from me!” Dave the Bastard had said, Mick was not entirely sure what that meant but promised that he would when the time was right.

It was also rumoured that Ryan the Ruiner had been invited to reside in Chesham at the invitation of Lord Jasper himself, due to providing so much gold and wealth from his missions on the high seas, that had allegedly been sponsored by the Lord of Chesham.

Mick the Watchman, looked around the table in the saloon bar of the Queens Head.

“We know that the Pirate drinks in the Generals most of the time, and that somewhere on his person is an eyeball made of gold, according to the Dave the Bastard.”

Mick went on to explain that he apparently keeps it on him at all times and is a memento of an epic fight he had with another pirate over the correct pronunciation of a rarely used expletive

, sounded similar to anchor apparently. It happened in a tavern in a far and distant place, known as Ports Mouth.

It was said that Ryan the Ruiner split him in two with a spoon, and then gouged the golden eye out by bare hand. He took the eyeball from his dead body and is said to be very proud of it indeed.

“We are all going to need to go in on this one boys, safety in numbers, and wait for a chance to isolate him, and then get the eye. Ben, Frank, you can chat up the locals at the bar and create a distraction, Russ you come with me and when the pirate has had enough and needs to go to the bog then we can follow him off and get his golden eyeball.”

Everyone nodded their agreement, they would go in mob handed, get the party started and when a distraction had been created, they would strike with military precision (no laughing please).

“Jeff, you can hold the whip.”

Pub Lore Fact

The “whip” is not an actual whip, it is however a contribution from each person in the drinking group towards their own drinking expenses. This is as opposed to the “round” system, where everyone buys in turns, which can become unfair if you are the last one to pay for a round and the drinking is already complete – hence the whip system was born.

There are many complex rules about who must be the “whip

master”.

Firstly, they must be a trustworthy individual, who will not trouser the whip money when no one is looking or keep the change from the rounds for themselves.

Secondly, the whip must be kept in a vessel or pocket that is separate from the whip masters own personal funds, so that they are not blended or confused.

Each person must make an equal contribution to the whip and the whip master must announce when the whip is running low, so further funds can be contributed.

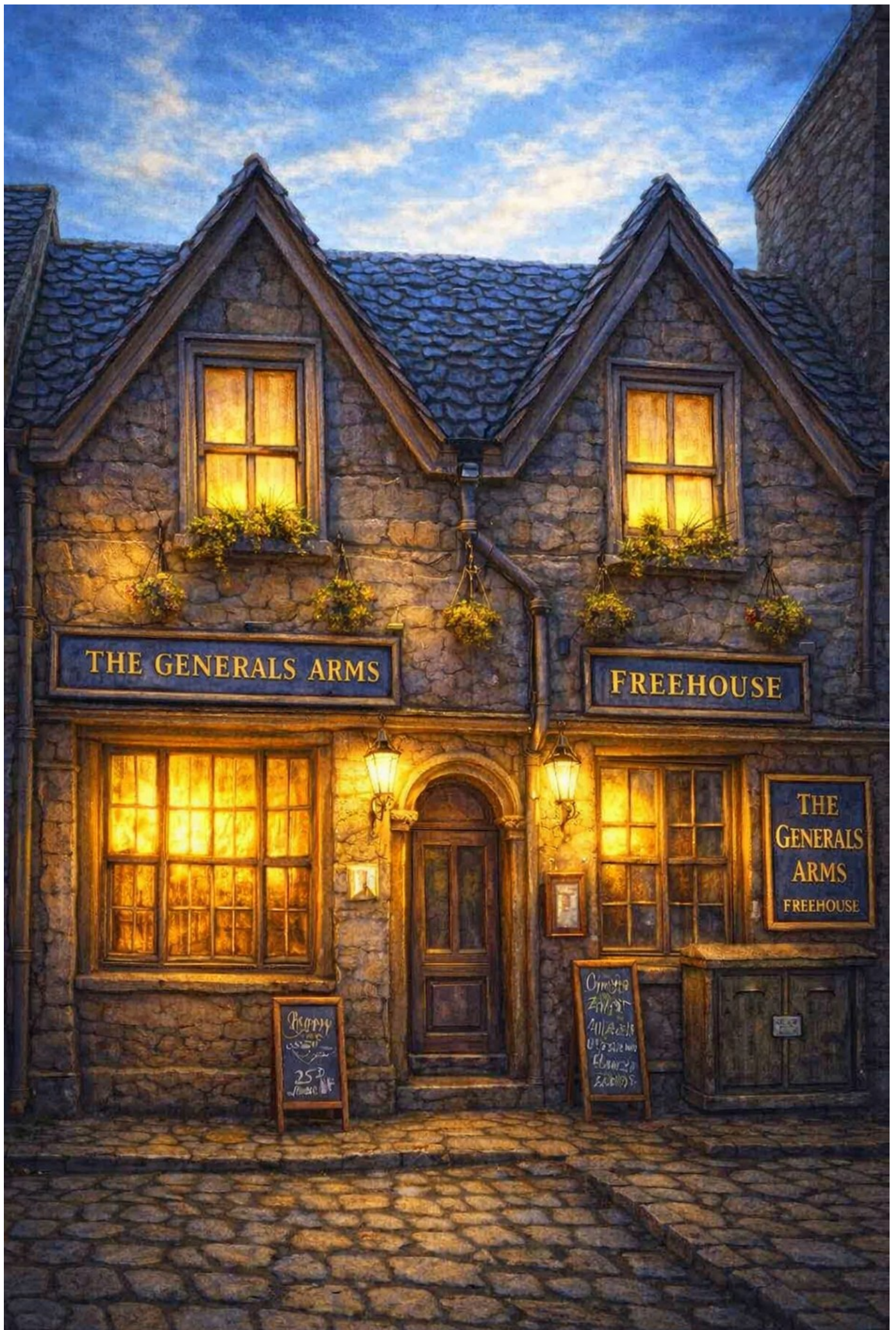
If you are in the whip, you must not operate outside of the whip without discussion first.

End of Pub Lore Fact

Jeff grunted and they headed off up Church Street, over the River Chess, past the town square, it was dark, as usual, and the occasional squawk of a nuisance dragon could be heard in the evening sky overhead. They headed past the main square, as the clocktower began to toll an eerie toll to indicate that night time was drawing upon them once again.

And finally, after passing Trekkers, the Drawing Room and Brazils, one by one, they arrived outside of the Generals Arms.

The Generals Arms was mainly frequented by Guards from the Barracks, which was not far from the main gates, and Mick the Watchman knew a few of them quite well, the Palace of Lord Jasper was not far away.



THE GENERALS ARMS

FREEHOUSE

THE
GENERALS
ARMS
FREEHOUSE

Happy
25th
Anniversary

Open
7/11/12
All day
10.00-11.00
12.00-1.00
2.00-3.00

The Generals (as it was known), was a busy pub with a long bar down the left hand side as you went in and many, many seating areas where both the Guards and the locals could enjoy reasonably priced ale.

It was also a purveyor of the Chesham sausage, one of the finest and proudest products of the town, created by the Master Butcher Gerry Martin.

The sausage had taken over as one of the main exports from the town after the industries Boots, Brushes, Beer and Baptists. As the gang held their final briefing outside of the pub, Jeff collected the whip from everyone, and they entered as a group.

The bar was smoky, and dark and a smell of ale hung in the air, mixed with the tobacco and other numerous aromas too exotic to identify.

Around the room there were clusters of different groups, mainly guards, but also some heavy looking types, bent over their tables in deep conversation about whatever their business was, not for the consumption of others.

And there, further down the bar, sat the Pirate, Ryan the Ruiner, scourge of the seas, the filthiest of mouths and apparently the possessor of a golden eye.

He had a splendid pirate hat, a patch over his left eye and a solid gold earring. His right leg had been lost some years ago and was now replaced with an iron peg (with rather wonderful hinge work). A large dagger hung from his belt, and he was

swigging rum directly from a brown bottle, spilling some occasionally on his raggedy brown tunic and trousers.



Across from Ryan were two henchman, Keith and Ron. They were former crew members of Pirate Ryan, and were both burly, and the owners of many tattoos. Keith had an almost permanently intoxicated look on his face, which bore scars from his days at sea, plundering, he was tall but muscular. Ron was shorter, stockier, and had a look of insanity set deep within his eyes, as if he could kick off at any moment, these were dangerous men. They were listening to a local singer, who wore the most outlandish clothes, but goodness he could belt out a tune.

We are reliably informed his name is Tony Hadley, in an episode about Gold? Who would have thought it.



Jeff approached the bar, a little further away from the pirate, and instilled his presence (see previous pub lore lesson), he turned around and gathered the orders, for he was the whip master, and this was his job.

Orders came thick and fast and ales were distributed.

Frank and Ben, in their fine merchant's attire, were a little out of place here, but they strolled over to a group of drinkers that were located near the pirate.

Jeff gave Ben his pint, to which he loudly announced to his new friends.

"My name is Benamri, and I am not leaving here until I have got gout!"

Everyone cheered.

Most of the Shouty Wednesday crew had either had or currently suffered from gout, this could lead to long conversations about the kind of treatments that each of them were using.

Russ was currently upping his whole grain intake, Jeff was eating more nuts, Franks was using a little blue pill that Rich/Ian had seen him taking, he said it was definitely for gout. Ben had heard that more liquid was required for his, so he was using ale.

With all of the cheering, the pirate pulled a face, but that might be how he always looks.

Frank was engaging with the nearby crowd, who were admiring his Bolex time piece, perhaps in order to rob him later. Ben was too busy knocking back his ale to join in just yet, but was listening.

“I am still so annoyed about the BU vote, the result was madness ...” this was a risky strategy, the vote to leave the BU (Buckinghamshire Union) was very contentious indeed and a cause of much angst within the local community.

Pub Lore Fact

It is alright for regular drinkers who know each other to have different views, and to debate vigorously about why there are right and everyone else is wrong (see previous pub lore), and to argue convincingly, even if you are almost certainly wrong, is to be applauded. However, when raising a highly contentious

issue, upon which there will almost certainly be violence if not handled correctly, then there is a stage at which you have made your point, now drop it.

End of Pub Lore Fact

Frank continued “If they had only taken the “do not drink” labels off of all of the rat poison bottles before the vote, then we would have had a much better outcome.”

This was dangerous territory indeed, rat poison in Chesham is nuclear grade due to the size of the rats, and Glis Glis, and an accidental sip is certain death.

This was also dangerous because Jeff had now returned from the bar, heard what Frank had said and was starting to get very tetchy indeed.

“Don’t start that again, you need to accept democracy, the people spoke, move on.”

“Yes but look at the people here Jeff, would you ask them for advice on anything?” Frank countered.

The locals were getting annoyed, and to add fuel to the fire Ben had broken the whip rules and had bought a huge tray of rocket shots for his new friends, who were all imbibing at a rate of knots. Ben was well known for doing this in the Queens Head, where he would receive many a disappointed look for breaking the whip rules.

We must now survey the scene, Frank is winding up the locals

on a contentious subject, Jeff is stoking the fire by giving them words of support (you could call it that), and to be extra helpful, Ben was giving them lethal spirits, so they are now angry and drunk.

As a slight aside, Mick the Watchman was also struggling with the conversation, but he knew he had work to do, so put it down in the back of his mind as one to even up on at another time.

Mick knew it just needed a spark, and pointed at Frank and shouted “He believes in uncontrolled immigration as well.”

Kerpow – the room exploded.

Fists went flying, feet went kicking, cudgels were drawn and drinks flew up in the air.

Ben moved quickly, and dragged Frank over the bar, as if he was attacking him. Glasses started to fly, and the Ben popped up from behind the bar and pointed at a complete stranger and said “He wants us all to have our laws passed by Beaconsfield.”

And the distraction worked. Ben dragged Frank backwards behind the bar towards the exit and out of the pub to safety.

The pirate had indeed moved away from the commotion, he was secretly a BU supporter and didn’t want to get involved so did what all half intelligent men do when they don’t want to get involved, he went for wee.

Mick and Russ stealthily followed after leaving a few seconds,

down to the back of the Generals and waited outside the gents.

“Right Russ, I am making an assumption that he is not going in for a number 2, so you go right hand side and I will go left hand side and then we will grab his arms and flatten him, then we can search him, get the eyeball and get the hell out of here.”

“What if he wees on me?” Enquired Russ.

Mick rolled his eyes at Russ and didn't even acknowledge the question with an answer.

They stood either side of the door, Mick motioned for Russ to go in, and like a commando Russ went through the door like a shot. Mick was close behind him, and there in all of his piratey glory was the infamous Ryan the Ruiner.

Russ moved to his right hand side, as Mick had proposed, Mick was to the left. Ryan the Ruiner acknowledged both men with a slight nod of the head whilst going for what was really quite a noisy wee.

Russ was trying to see what was going on, but it just looked like he was trying to look at the pirates privates, who responded by turning slightly away from Russ and towards Mick.

Unfortunately, Mick was also trying to see what was going on, and upon turning also caught the eye of the pirate, who was now starting to feel like both men were trying to take a look at his pieces of eight.

On and on the urinating went, Russ suddenly realised that both

him and Mick were just standing there and not even pretending to use the urinal. Then he saw it. Glimmering, glistening and shiny – it was the golden eyeball, just sitting beneath where the action was happening in the pirates pants (quite clean actually and surprisingly supportive).

You may at this point wonder why Ryan had decided he would keep the golden eye in his pants and not in his perfectly vacant eye socket. Too obvious you see, lots of people had heard that he had the artefact in his possession and some had even tried to peak under his eyepatch but that was never where he kept something of great value in a town like Chesham.

Russ was excited, and to be fair, what happened next was not particularly well thought through.

Russ snatched at the golden eyeball, but only succeeded in turning round the pirate who was now doing his business all over Russ's trousers.

“What's your business you \$%* little \$&&%” spat the pirate.

Mick realised what was happening and pulled both the pirates arms back behind his back to secure him. This meant that there was an uncontrolled item in the package area and the momentous pee that the pirate had stored up was going all over the place, including all over Russ, who was now violently tugging at the pirate pants to get the eyeball out.

“At least buy me a drink first,” complained the pirate.

At this point, one of the pirates henchman, Ron, entered the

gents to a scene of a man in a suit of armour restraining a pirate, and another man trying to scoop a glistening golden ball from his undercarriage.

The burly man opened the door and shouted “Keith, get in here.”

Keith, shouted back and his footsteps could be heard approaching, “What do you want Ron?”

“You, in here, I am saving Pirate Ryan.”

Yes, I know there was a long build up to that one – you are welcome!

Both knuckle draggers were now in the bathroom, and as they bore down on Mick and Russ, Russ finally had a breakthrough, and scooped the eyeball out but it went flying up in the air and Russ leapt like a lord to grab it, like a basketball star but shorter and fatter, and the dread pirate Ryan fell to the floor.

There was only time for Russ to shout triumphantly “I’ve got it Mick,” when the two burly pirate supporters bore down on them.

Two things then happened.

Firstly, with the pirate on the floor and ,in need of urgent movement, Mick with his full weight of armour side stepped and trod straight on the pirates parts, he let out a blood curdling scream. My goodness his day was not going to plan was it.

Secondly, in a move so elegant it could have been on a strictly ballroom show (and would have got at least a 9), Mick and Russ in perfect unison kneed their respective Ronnie and Keiths straight in their erogenous zones and piled out of the bathroom and down the stairs to the main bar.

Carnage was continuing amongst the locals, with tables and bars and even Chesham sausages (mmm delicious though) being flung. The pair ducked down with their hands covering their heads and ran straight for the door out into the night on the high street, where the rest of the gang were waiting. Keith and Ron were now fighting with the locals, and couldn't give chase. All of them decided that it would be a good idea to get out of dodge, and move as quickly as possible towards the Queens Head to recover.

Bob had asked to see the golden eye, and had stopped to look at it whilst everyone else went on ahead.

As they were making their way, Bob noticed a shadowy figure lurking in the shadows of an alley. The shadow called out to him, "psst, come here."

Bob stopped in his tracks and the others were so desperate to get to the pub that they were now fully leaving him behind.

"I've got something for you," said the shadowy figure. Bob was now intrigued and moved into the alleyway to investigate further. It was then that he saw the owner of the voice, this was Jamie Dodger.

Bob had not had the pleasure of meeting Jamie. The alarm bells perhaps should have gone off immediately, he had a small gremlin by his side, horrible little thing about the size of a cat. Jamie was also wearing very retro threads, from a bygone era, perhaps where he wished to still be by some account.

Jamie was also known to be a little bit, you know, what's the word Well if you want something that you can't get down the market then he is your man, a bit of a geezer.



“What have you got?” Enquired Bob, hoping sincerely that it might be a luck potion of some description. And then, the demeanour of Jamie Dodger changed.

“The golden ball,” said Jamie, “I know you have it, I have been watching” and he drew a pretty nasty looking curved knife.

Bob was not used to being robbed but started to reach slowly for his lovely hair where he kept his knife. This was far too slow though and the gremlin moved like the speed of light jumped up and bit Bob straight on the nose.

“Ah, get it off,” Bob was waving around the place trying to extract the gremlin from his snozz, and the golden eye fell to the floor. Jamie wasted no time and scooped it up, leaving the imp chomping on Bob’s poor nose still.

Jame ran down the alley back towards the Generals Arms, he knew he could get a good price from the Pirate.

Bob, by now, had managed to throw the gremlin over a fence and was hurriedly chasing after the Jamie Dodger.

Jamie cut into the yard of the Generals, closely pursued by Bob, who was desperate to retrieve the hard earned eye. Then it happened.

Smack, “ow,” said Jamie, who had fallen on the floor and broken his spectacles after colliding with a large man in the yard of the Generals.

“You ought to be careful,” said the large man, who was packing up some sort of musical equipment into a barrow, he had decided to end his gig early due to all of the excitement.

Bob arrived, “Tony Hadley?”

“Yes?” said Tony Hadley.

“Did he drop anything?” Enquired Bob, “he just robbed me.”

Tony Hadley smiled, bent down and picked up the golden eyeball and gave it to Bob.

“Is this yours?” Asked Tony Hadley to Bob.

“We know this much is true,” said Bob who thanked Tony Hadley and gratefully placed the golden eyeball in his knapsack, and before turning to leave, gave Jamie Dodger a small kick.

Bob rushed off to catch up with the others, and they soon arrived back at the Queens Head, where they informed Dave the Bastard that they had well and truly given the Pirate Ryan one, as he had requested.

Quite.