

PYE'S PROGRESS PART 1
WANDLEBURY SCHOLARS

In which our three scholars are trying to find Wandlebury Ring, where a great party is
rumoured to be happening.

PYE'S PROGRESS 1
SAM THOMSON 2014
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MARLO

...We'll put you on it when we get there Robbo, just carry it for now!

ROBBO

...We had a deal right? And the deal was you'd help me out with this and I'd...

NASHE

...help us out with our costumes Robbo, yes!

MARLO

...And we're grateful Robbo, truly.

NASHE

Well, he's grateful, I'm a bloody bear aren't I! Ever heard of a bear be grateful?

ROBBO

...Look, if you didn't want to wear it...you seemed to be having fun with all that growling when you first put it on...

NASHE

...I was growling at the Ladies Robbo, and we haven't seen a Lady in bloody hours! And unless it was the corn you were hoping to impress with your own fine and fancy trousers, I don't see why we have to carry you all the way in the bloody litter!

ROBBO

BECAUSE IM THE KING OF THE DEVILS THOMAS! AND THE KING OF THE...and the King of the Devils doesn't just bandy around pulling his own litter and jump into it at the last moment! What if we pass someone and they don't recognise me in this bloody costume? Then What? What could happen then?

NASHE

Is that what this is all about? You're worried you'll be mistook for a *Commoner*?

MARLO

Oh come on Nashey, what did you think it was?

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NASHE

Its bloody hilarious is what it is. You stand out a mile of, *My Lord!* If we happen to find anyone before the night is over, some fanatical Puritan I should say, who might have abstained long enough into the evening that he can still wield a cup and answer simple questions, and if I should tell him I stand next to a tormenting devil, then rather than strike thee with his crucifix he'll answer me "Why, tis not a Devil, sir, but only ROBERT BLOODY CECIL"! And if, in the wake of this puritan should by some chance wander Jack Cut-throat Himself, or old Bloody Bones, or...or Barbarossa, and I say "Look! Tis not a devil after-all, but Robert Cecil, with a purse full of Gold!", then they won't even dare take it because you're ROBERT BLOODY CECIL! AARGH!

MARLO

...Well that was a bit thick, but yes come on Robbo, its the one night of the year when you *don't* have to be a Cecil. Try that out eh? We're right close to the old mess, miles inland, in the woods at night-time. Cut-throats have got better places to be, my good fellow. Enjoy it! A night of Revels! The Worlde turned Upside-down! Magic! Phantasmagoria!

NASHE

[after a while] He's still sulking.

MARLO

Look here, Robbo. I was saving these till we got there, but what the heck, I'm sure its not far now, probably just over that hill. *And we will carry you then I promise*, but in the mean time...voilla!

NASHE

Oh Kit, what excellent fare!

ROBBO

Is that...that is I...Bloody hell, you Jesuit!

NASHE

Right from under his hat as well!

MARLO

Forget about your litter, Robbo, for now you shall fly!

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[It is later, in the same woods. They are still looking for the party, apparently they haven't moved very far]

MARLO

No-one's said anything for a while, how're you getting on?

NASHE

I feel much the same Marlo. I've been drinking a lot of this wine as well.

ROBBO

I've had about enough of carrying this ridiculous stretcher is all. Lets just find this camp shall we. Its not too late is it? I mean there's no sun yet. My father told me all about the old games you see, its pretty much how he got me out here.

MARLO

Hmm, I'm starting to have doubts.

NASHE

Well it lifted my spirits when you pulled them out back there. Thought we'd be in for some right *Mysteries* tonight...

MARLO

Oh no, *those* were the real thing. I just don't know quite where we are is all

ROBBO

You have been here before though? I thought you said...

MARLO

In the daytime. Have neither of you been out of the town before? Well we're looking for a fortress, well, the ruins of one, but its at the top of a great big hill and there aren't many of those around here. I thought we'd be able to see a bit further but we're just going to have to try to head uphill again...

NASHE

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Lets hope it doesn't lead up to one of those rivers again eh?

MARLO

Alright, we all got a little bit wet...

ROBBO

Look, I'm going to leave this litter here if we're going to head uphill again. Probably too late for a grand entrance by now anyway. But I'll pull it up here next to this log in the corner of this field, and I can always send someone back for it later, alright?

NASHE

Do what you like Robbo.

MARLO

Look Robbo, your Father knows all this stuff, pretty much how the whole estate is run down to the last detail, knows what the Queen has for breakfast every day I'd wager...do you think he ever asked anyone to carry him round on a chair? He would have got on his horse and been there before the sun went down, probably would have been telling them where to put the barrels, where to light the fires, then welcoming the nobs himself as they arrive and still beating the gong for the players. You can't do that of course, because you are the nobs, and you have to make your entrance. Every one wants to go up there tonight and play their part, but you could be writing the script, if only you didn't also want the best box at the inn.

ROBBO

What do you want me to do Kit, cry about it?

NASHE

Robbo that doesn't make sense. Just relax is all. Don't take yourself too seriously. People might think a bit more of you if you should only think a bit less of yourself.

ROBBO

I left the litter behind, now button up about it. And Pass the sack. Merlin, were you up here last year or not?

MARLO

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I was, and drunk off my arse. Oxford's Men were up from London and they kept giving me wine

NASHE

Made a right chapel boy of you from what you told me

MARLO

It wasn't so bad, I just helped them copy out foul-pages for their plays. Richard Turdius was on in the mess, and Perne wouldn't let them stay in the colleges because he feared they'd brought the plague with them, so we came up here. Really though, he feared they'd been sent up to Cambridge as some kind of jest at him! Everyone still calls Perne names because he can't make up his mind what damn religion he has...

NASHE

...Turney Purne, Ambo Purnecoat, Father Palinode, His Expediency, the Bishop of Yes-Minster...

MARLO

...and Oxford's Men had just been blasted for "Chameleons" at the court for abandoning Leicester's brother, Warwick, in favour of their new titular Patron. So Perne asked his old school friend Bishop Whitgift if he thought it was a jest at his own shifting loyalties, and Whitgift told him not to let them in, in case it upset Warwick, because that would upset Leicester, and that would upset the Queen. But really Whitgift only said that because both Sussex and our friend-here's father had sent recommendations to Perne to try and get Oxford's Men out of trouble. Well Whitgift was still angry with Burghley because of some incident with Thomas Cartwright ten years previous, although he was probably right about Sussex who...

NASHE

It makes my head spin Merlin, how'd you work all that out?

ROBBO

...it was me who wrote out the recommendation, My Lord Father would never have bothered. Just in case you thought you were saying all this for my benefit.

MARLO

You write letters in your father's name?

NASHE

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Its like a peep behind the curtain! Continue but I'll be hanging onto my soul if you two haven't already split it for this.

ROBBO

I ask him first. Mostly.

NASHE

You should have told me that back when you wanted carrying, My Lord Devil. Write one to the treasury for me perchance?

ROBBO

The treasury are about the only one's have learnt to tell the difference. Father had me sent down there soon as he found out and I spent a week tallying and scrivenning on the Kent lottage for that little *experiment*. Time not entirely wasted, I can tell you.

NASHE

And here we are, me and Marlin asking ourselves why you're no fun.

ROBBO

Oh Tush, I dropped the litter behind. It was you who suggested it in the first place if you recall.

MARLO

Oh I'd forgot that. Some sport that was Nashe.

NASHE

I think we're getting to the top of this hill, are you sure its up here Marlo, I can't hear anything.

ROBBO

Nor I. Come on Marlo, what are we doing out here. This is some game you're playing? There's no ruins up here. I can see that much. Maybe its a fallow year or something.

MARLO

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Well look, I'm going to climb this tree, and from up there I should be able to see all of Cambridge laid out. And there I'm going to have a pipe. And while I'm smoking that pipe, I'm going to have a good look around and see if I can see any signs of life. And anyone who wants to come and sit up there with me *like good Gents* can then help decide which way we're to go next. And don't worry Robert, I'll even help you up. And anyone who wants to stay here whimpering on the ground can busy themselves keeping the lions at bay. Come on now.

[they all start climbing]

MARLO

Oh I remember now, its over there, look!

NASHE

They've set fire to the forest by the look of it.

MARLO

We'll have a good view at least.

NASHE

I can't make it out. I've been working too hard.

MARLO

I can see St John's even. Robbo, can you see St John's?

ROBBO

I faith I can.

NASHE

And I too if faith be blind. I'll just imagine it shall I? Look! There's Oxfords Men down there by the fire, and...and Rob Greene I see too. And he's being given a wreath by the Queen and half of Kent for his good service to London. And half of Cuckoo Land for his service to Truth! And him not yet a man of letters even! Oh look, he's fixing that though, he's just stabbed old Perne through the heart and taken his cap, and now he's proclaiming Cambridge in the service of Good Sport, and never more shall she send her sons to the Church, but only shall they go to Southwark and sometimes the happier parts of Venice, and once a year she shall send an ambassadore to Cockaigne!

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MARLO

Aye Thomas, I'm sure you see right! There's a great magpie down there ready to carry him off on his embassy, but he's too plump and gilded to lift, I can't quite make out his face, because he's currently trying to take a bite out of the very bird! Oh but look, tis thyself Nashe, five years hence! And now the meaning of this night is clear, it is a vision of things to come! A prophecy!

NASHE

You're right Marlo, I see it now! And there's a string-bean young sprat with a head too big for his body, dressed like a Spaniard, talking like an Italian...Bulgarian Habits...

MARLO

...Oh yes, Is this me by any chance?

NASHE

No, its that gaudy fopp Essex...

MARLO

Oh...

NASHE

He's baiting *you* on a chain!

MARLO

You great speck of spittle, I'll knock you from this tree!

NASHE

First you batter me with words, now with more words!

MARLO

Once I've done with this pipe...!

ROBBO

Why do you think they call them the Gog Magog Hills?

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MARLO AND NASHE TOGETHER

What?

ROBBO

It was read out to us last week in the mess, "No one to go to games in the Gog Magog Hills on pain of 6 shillings".

NASHE

I never heard that.

MARLO

They read it out at ours as well. I sent them my 6 shillings early, they only want the money. You know everyone comes up here. Anyway, its from the Bible, Robbo. There's a castle in the mountains in Turkey, and some giants are imprisoned there and...

ROBBO

...on Judgement Day, they'll be let loose. I know that. I can even see that some old ruins on a hill would spur on the comparison. But why pick a place from Turkey?

NASHE

...Its from Monmouth's Chronicles, Robbo. And he says he read it first in another old book. When Brutus of Troy first landed in England, it was only Giants living here, and he got his captain, Corineus, to fight the biggest giant for the land, and it was called GogMagog. Its a Welsh story the Tudors brought to England when they became kings. The castle was still standing in the time of the Conqueror. My Grandmother used to say they moved to England because it still haunted the Marches, made Wales unholy. The Bible doesn't say Turkey either, it just says its in the North, behind the Gates of Alexander. Well how many places called that do you think there are?

ROBBO

Well, you're both wrong as a matter of fact.

NASHE

Oh yes, so it wasn't a really question then Socrates?

ROBBO

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Well, the answer is Greek I think...

MARLO

Go on then, what's your father told you about that?

ROBBO

Well what *I* think is...if a pedagogue is "someone who leads children" and a demagogue is "someone who leads the people", and a haemagogue is something that "leads the blood" then an "agomagogue" is "someone who leads the leaders".

MARLO

Wouldn't it just be "agogogue".

ROBBO

Well, that would be a little bit plain when there's all these other stories to hide behind.

MARLO

Its a bit...tenuous.

NASHE

Definitely sounds like your Father though...

ROBBO

Well there's also the old Saxon "Witenagemot", which was a kind of parliament of wise men that sometimes met to discuss issues of State, whatever that meant back then. So it could be a mix "Ago-Gemot"... "Ago-Magogue". Whenever they have statues of Gog and Magog in the Lord Mayor's parade now, its always a Saxon and a Greek together.

NASHE

A Roman and a Brittan I thought.

ROBBO

They had them at the Queen's coronation too. Right outside the Inns of Court. What are lawyers if not leaders-of-leaders?

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NASHE

Swindlers of Swindlers

MARLO

Dealers of Dealers

NASHE

Tricksters-of-Tricksters

MARLO

Bluffers-of-Bluffers

NASHE

err...

MARLO

Well I think its a nice story Robbo. I'll pass it onto the Archbishop Whitgift shall I, that the Cecil's of St john and their friends at the Inns are, infact, the *Leaders-of-Leaders* hereabouts, I'm sure the Queen would very much like to know as well, as she seems to somewhat misunderstand the situation herself, going around telling your father what to do all the time.

ROBBO

If I thought you had the ear of Whitgift, it wouldn't suit me to be spending time with you.

NASHE

There you go again Kit, you do bring it down on yourself.

MARLO

Look out there at the ring, you two. If there's any leading going on down there, they're leading each other round in a circle. You know we could still get over there before its light, its not too far away.

NASHE

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I'm already thinking about next year, we should put in a play. I think we should do the Life of Oldcastle.

MARLO

If we're doing anything, it should be Machievelli. Who cares about Gassle?

NASHE

You don't even know who he was, Merlin.

MARLO

No one else will either! We should do Torquemada and the Inquisition! Or a Hercules – in 12 parts!

ROBBO

Probably best not to do anything too Roman, even up here. Unless you want to see a performance by - haha - Lord Walsingham's Men.

MARLO

Well what about Arthur? Or Alfred? With great burning cakes!

NASHE

Robbo, you must've read John Bale.

MARLO

I've read Bale! My old Schoolmaster had some of his books when he died

ROBBO

Everyone did, he rescued so many from the Monasteries. Not as many as he burnt, my Lord Father said. Its not a bad idea actually Nashe. Bale said it was about time some Learned Englishmen set right the Chronicles. You mean to do the Examination of Lord Cobham?

MARLO

That? Isn't it just legal stuff...

NASHE

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“Excellent fresh wits”, I thought he said, but its all the same to Merlin.

MARLO

You’re lucky I had a second Pipe, Nashe. Lord Cobham was Oldcastle, I remember now. He’s also in Polydore Virgil’s *Anglica Historia*

ROBBO

My Father said there was only one man who burnt more books than Bale...

MARLO

Well isn’t it *poetic* that the old make way for the new?

NASHE

They’re books, Merlin, not boots.

MARLO

Well there’s a tragedy in this: That our greatest historians are also our greatest pyromaniacs.

ROBBO

I shall never read Bede in the same light again.

NASHE

Old Bede praying to himself in a cell seems venerable...throw Gildas in there as well and they’d be at each other like rutting stags. Only one of them gets to hump the truth.

ROBBO

A puritan told me something similar about Bishoprics – you have to distribute them out across the country because they’re territorial about their piety.

NASHE (AND OTHERS JOIN IN)

Oh come on, lets do the song –

Did you know a Bishopric’s
Where’ere the Bishop sits
The Baliffe has his limits

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But the Bishop throws his wider.

NASHE ONLY

Did you know a Bishopric's
Where'ere the Bishop sits
He's only ever sated
When drunken on the Cider.

NASHE

Next verse anyone?

ROBBO

Don't they go for a jaunt on horse or something?

NASHE

Well if you remember it, we'll do that one. No? Oh well. Where were we with Oldcastle?

END OF PART 1

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COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

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