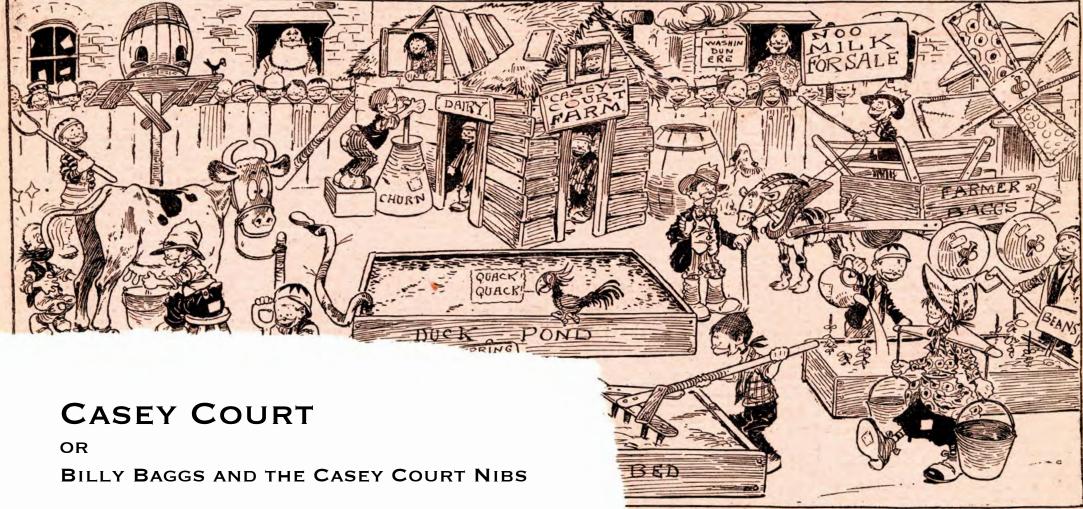
#### THE CASEY COURT NIBS ARE GETTING BACK TO THE LAND,



produce is to be obtained at the lowest market prices, and Billy hopes to make a .e cow.

#### **EXCERPTS FROM THE KEVIN CARPENTER COLLECTION**



#### IMPRESSUM:

Texts: Kevin Carpenter, with minor addages by Jakob Dittmar. Images: Amalgamated Press 1904-1932. Edited by Jakob Dittmar. Printed by WIRmachenDRUCK, Backnang, Germany. Published by New Smallprint Press, Trelleborg, 2025.

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Other volumes showcasing the Kevin Carpenter Collection:

WEARY WILLIE AND TIRED TIM. PERFECTING THE MOLD FOR KNOCKABOUT TRAMPS Trelleborg, 2025: ISBN: 978-91-981603-9-0 (print) ISBN: 978-91-990299-2-4 (pdf)

BITS AND PIECES. MISCELLANEOUS COMIC STRIPS FROM ILLUSTRATED CHIPS AND PUCK 1906 / 1907. Trelleborg, 2025: ISBN: 978-91-981603-9-0 (print) ISBN: 978-91-990299-2-4 (pdf) As individual work in the periodicals of the Amalgamated Press was not signed, authorship is not always attributable. Research suggests that most works in this volume were likely drawn by Julius Stafford Baker (1869-1961). We do not know whether he wrote the texts or if somebody else provided these.

The images have not been edited apart from careful adjustments of contrasts in case of particularly weak print. For the most part, they are scanned from cheap paper more than 115 years old that was not intended for archiving and it shows.

Images are reproduced in original size if not indicated otherwise.

The main texts in this volume are based on Kevin Carpenter's "wonderfully vulgar" (2013), and have been carefully adapted and expanded by the editor to fit the purpose of this volume.

All images are from the Kevin Carpenter Collection, apart from the following:

20 February 1904, 21 January 1905, 12 September 1914. These are held by the Library (BIS) of Oldenburg University.

28 February 1914 and 20 November 1915 are held by Peter Gray: https://petergraycartoonsandcomics.blogspot.com

30 October 1915 held by Lew Stringer: https://lewstringer.blogspot.com

The issue from 1932 was obtained from somewhere on the internet, our apologies for not being able to name the provider of the scan.

## CASEY COURT

#### OR

#### BILLY BAGGS AND THE CASEY COURT NIBS

**EXCERPTS FROM THE KEVIN CARPENTER COLLECTION** 

## THE KEVIN CARPENTER COLLECTION

While the library of Carl von Ossietzky-University in Oldenburg, Germany, holds a special collection of around 5000 early British comics, that collection is not catalogued nor digitised extensively, far from it. Throughout his years as a teacher at the university, Kevin Carpenter has promoted research into this special collection, and while insisting that he did not collect comics, he has collected his own catalogue of early British comics to be able to show how these work, how stories were told in text-adventures as well as in caricatures and comics, how themes re-appeared and changed when re-told.

While working with Kevin Carpenter's collection, its width and strengths have become clear: The material allows us to look not only into the bandwidth of productions at the time, understand the development and establishment of a dedicated section in publishing and its titles, figures, styles, and genres. Also, influences on and interdependencies between individual publications become visible and allow to understand better in what way individual social issues, cultural changes, and historic events and incidents were taken up in what ways in the comic papers then. It invites to discover forgotten contributions to the history of comics as well as the narrative culture of its time – good and bad.

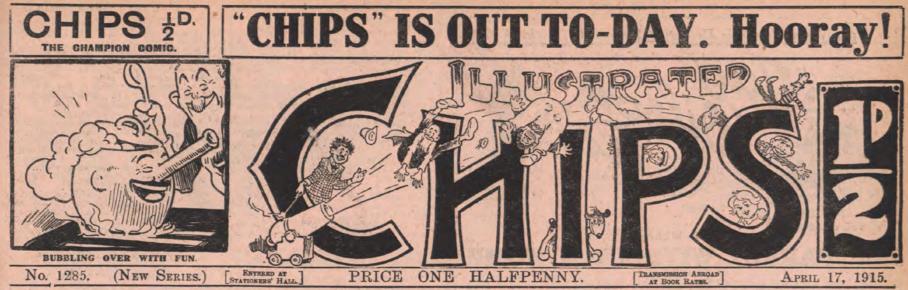
Not only because I am most grateful for receiving Kevin Carpenter's collection, but also because of the doors it opens for research and contemplation, I want to share it with interested readers and researchers by publishing selections from it. This way, more than just single representative examples become easily accessible and allow to understand the narrrative strategies, routines, but also the extend of experimentation and development in these comics. And, not at least, they allow us to see better similarities and differences in other comics' developments.

Jakob Dittmar, 2025

#### TABLE OF CONTENTS

- The Kevin Carpenter Collection 6
- Amalgamated Press and Illustrated Chips 9
  - Casey Court 10
  - issues from: 1904 11
    - 1905 12
    - 1907 13
    - 1914 30
    - 1915 32
    - 1917 34
    - 1922 35
    - 1930 36
    - 1932 37
  - Diversification across Titles 38
  - Cross-marketing the Franchise 40
    - Spanish Edition 44
    - **Repeating the Pattern** 46
- Stereotypes, Types, and Fictions of Empire 48
  - **Related Publications** 50





#### AMALGAMATED PRESS AND ILLUSTRATED CHIPS

Illustrated Chips was published by Alfred Harmsworth (later Lord Northcliffe), who founded the Amalgamated Press in 1901 to contain his diverse publications. While he later established the Daily Mail and Daily Mirror, he started with smaller publications across different fields, earning most from entertainment periodicals.

In 1890, after having analysed the market, he hastily assembled a paper called Comic Cuts. Its huge success marked the beginning of the comics paper-boom in Britain. The new paper cost a halfpenny each, and competition for these ha'pennies was fierce. Without revealing its exact weekly sales, the editor of Comic Cuts soon boasted that its circulation equalled the combined sale of all its competitors (Comic Cuts, 15 November 1890), a few months later assessing its average issue readership as "two or three million people" (Comic Cuts, 7 March 1891), and scornfully adding early the following year that most of the forty or fifty imitations had "died a lingering death" (Comic Cuts, 6 February 1892).

To squash the remaining competition, Harmsworth speedily brought out a companion to his first comic, calling it Illustrated Chips (1890). Both of these comic journals initially pinched material from abroad, although they very soon relied almost exclusively on material provided by British artists. Short comic strips and full-page comics appeared on the pages of these periodicals together with single-picture cartoons, while each volume consisted of four pages text-stories and four pages comics.

Casey Court and similar slapsticky material, also referred to as "Knockabout", was printed in black on tinted paper, green, blue, pink or yellow in contrast to the brightly-coloured nursery comics. These comics printed in black were cheaper than the coloured publications and were known as "black comics" even though they are dominated by their papers' colour. The term "yellow press" for cheap newspapers in general originates from these tinted papers, the strategy was definitely not restricted to cheap entertainment periodicals with their combination of serialised texts, caricatures, and comics.

Following price standardization at the Amalgamated Press in the autumn of 1922, they cost a penny (1d) apiece, a price that seemed to have fallen within the discretionary pocket money of lower-middle-class and working-class youngsters, particularly boys. These "black comics" included the old stalwarts Funny Wonder, Chips, Comic Cuts and Merry and Bright along with the newcomers Joker and Larks and many more.

In its heyday in the 1930s, Chips alone reputedly sold a million copies per week. Nor were these comics only available in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. Many "overseas editions" were distributed through agents in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, the shipped-out versions generally consisting of one or more comics folded or stapled inside one another.

#### CASEY COURT

Casey Court was created in 1902 by Julius Stafford Baker. After he stopped drawing it in the 1920s, it was continued by different artists until 1953, amongst others Walter Bell, M.C. Veitch, H. O'Neill, Louis Briault, and Allan Morley, and Charlie Pease (which was Albert T. Pease).

We have to smile at the cunning and ingenuity of these bad boys, grin at the wildness of their escapades, and nod in approval at their strong sense of friendship and solidarity against an inimical adult world. The Casey Court Kids were a gang of poor, skinny, East End children in patched clothes and worn-out boots who enthusiastically embarked on outrageous but ultimately futile plans to earn a heap of money, or create some extravaganza in reaction to current events - always under the leadership of one Billy Baggs (originally Billy Bangs). They succeed in building quite advanced contraptions for diverse purposes, even though these will most probably collapse or lead into trouble with the authorities in the end. Individual creativity and group solidarity were firm values, as was cheerfulness in all circumstances. From early on, a parrot, a goat, and the dog Smiler appear in more or less all installments of Casey Court. While the parrot comments on things to signal certain aspects of the set-up to readers, the other animals enliven and fill the scene where the children would not have fitted in as easily or casually. They are typical animal sidekicks, already in 1904.

Casey Court was a single half-page panel, busy and cluttered, published on the back page of the comic Illustrated Chips, and evoking strong reader affection for many years. It is the starting point for all British comic series about wild children who create entertainments from whatever they can get their hands on. The comic magazine Puck soon integrates figures from Casey Court into other comics to cross-advertise and promote sales, while

Casey Court remains delivered in one image that details a situation while accompanying text tells of the before and after to that moment. Every week offers a new situation that is not continuing from previous events. Obviously, the Casey Court panels are no comics in today's understanding of the word, they are one-panel jokes or humouristic drawings, simply.

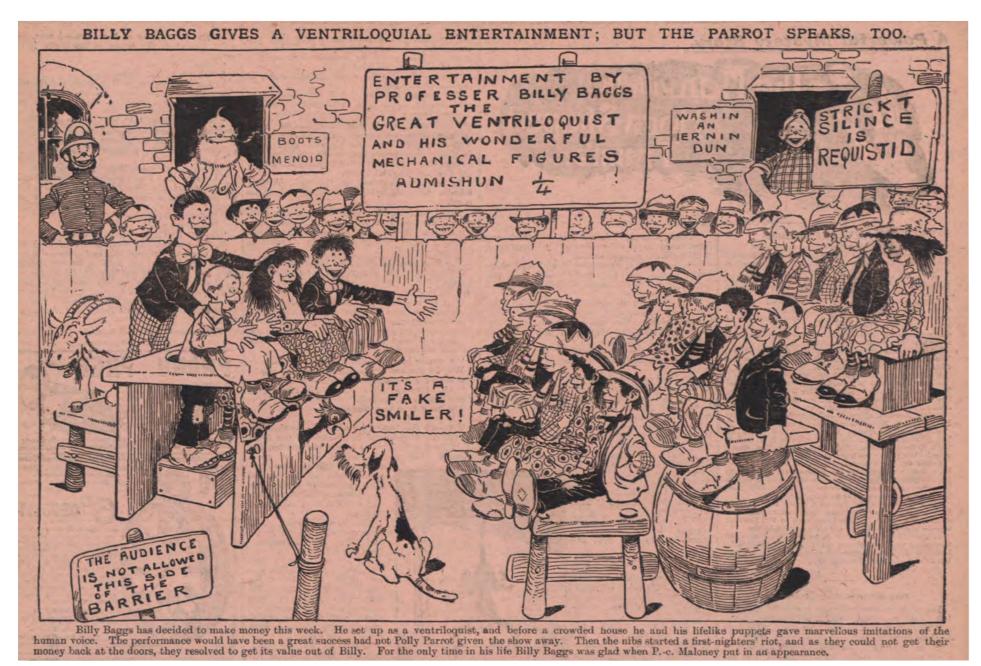
The style of figures, environments, and jokes changed over time, but would refer to developments in the real worlds. Like most other funny papers, perhaps in response to increasingly heavy war casualties from early 1915 on, these and most of the other comic characters retreated from active involvement in the war so as to pursue their previous antics in scenarios set in the colonies or the East End of London. Soldiers were known to be readers of comics, bundles of comics and other magazines being shipped out free by the Post Office to "the boys in the trenches" (Pluck, 11 September 1915). In this context, the unusual design and position taken in the installment for 30 October 1915 remains exspecially noteworthy as it warns against over-zealous or even hysteric reactions against Britain's favourite enemy at the time.

Attribution of comic strips produced during the 1914–18 war to their artists is trickier than usual, as "duplicators" replaced some of the men away on active war-service. While no names of artists or writers are stated in the pages of Illustrated Chips and its sister-publications, most work presented in this volume was most likely drawn by Julius Stafford Baker (1869-1961), it is assumed that themes were set by the editors, of they even provided the finished text, is unknown. From some time in the 1920s on, Casey Court was drawn by different artists. And at some point in the 1930s, the familiar background of the rundown courtyard Casey Court is given up for a more indistinct, even suburban location.

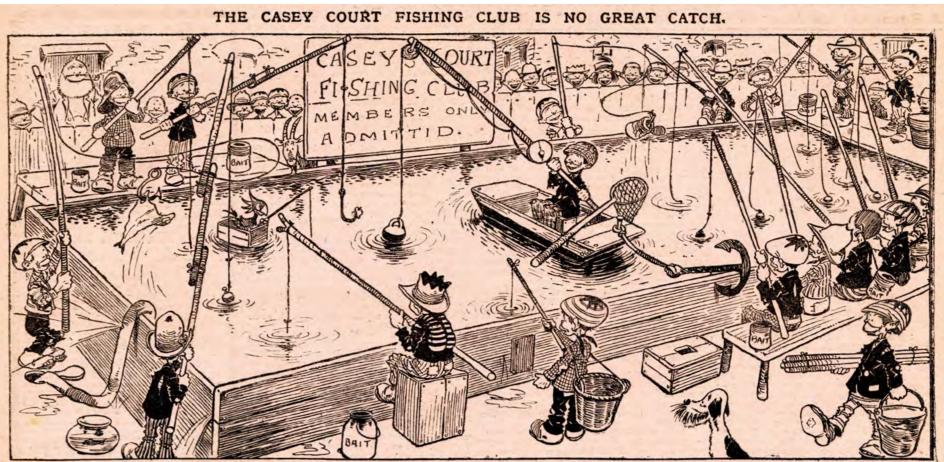


The latest attack down Casey Court way is the astronomic craze. The nibs have rigged up a full-blown observatory, as you will observe above, and Billy Baggs, who is the Court astronomer, gives lessons on the solar system each evening (weather permitting). Needless to say, the kids are improving their minds greatly under such able tuition, and no one can say of them, or of any of CHUPS' readers, that they are frittering their time away. No! (We will tell you more next week, and give you a real surprise.)

Illustrated Chips, 20 February 1904

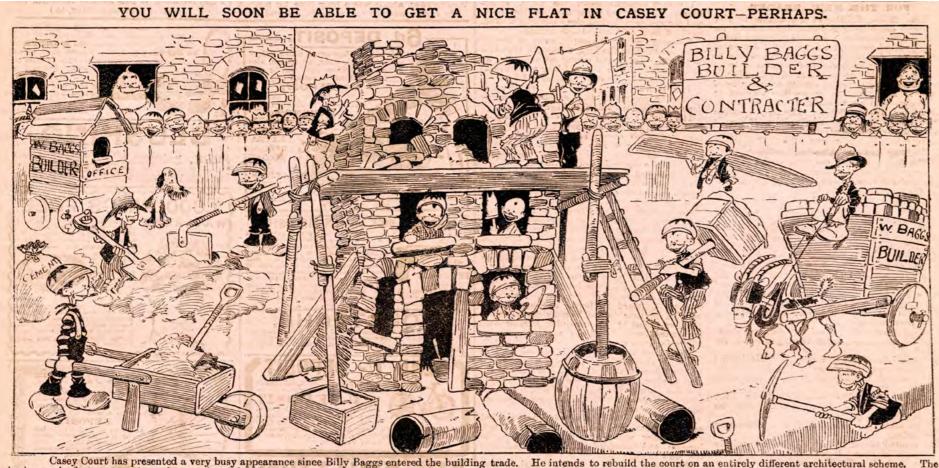


Illustrated Chips, 21 January 1905



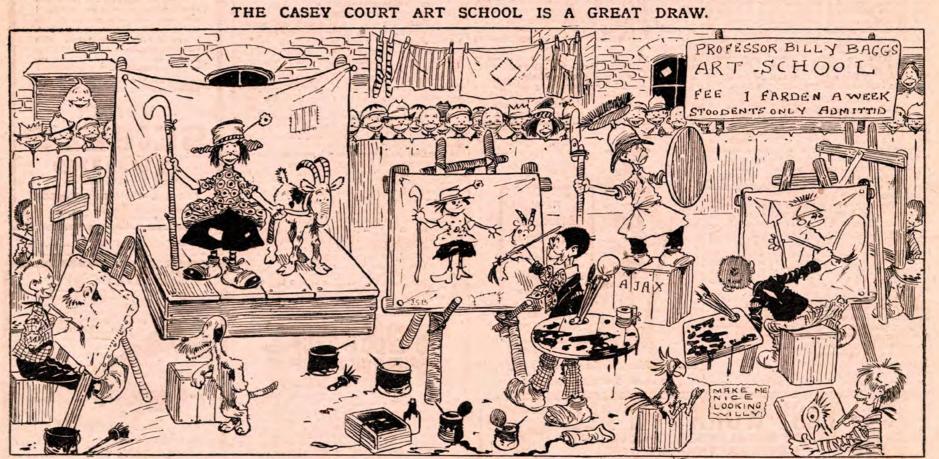
Casey Court was the scene of another startling transformation this week, readers. Under the magic touch of that world-renowned wizard Billy Baggs a trout stream has sprang into existence. The nibs have formed a club, and angling is now their pet pastime. A competition took place yesterday, the prize being won by Willie Wagstaffe, who landed a magnificent two-pounder. It was unfortunate, however, that his ma arrived on the scene and recognised his catch as the fourpenny haddock she had bought for dinner; and as the harmony of the meeting was further disturbed by the appearance of the waterworks man and P.-c. Maloney, the competition came to an abrupt close.

Illustrated Chips, 16 February 1907

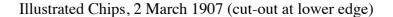


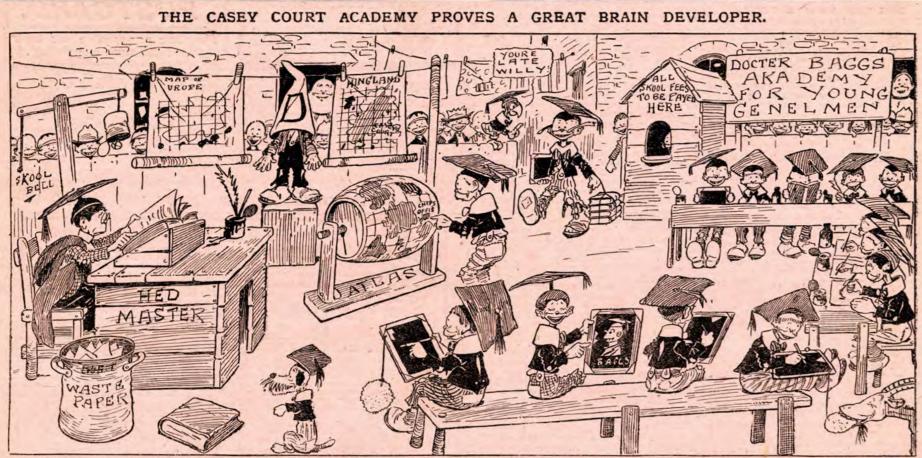
Casey Court has presented a very busy appearance since Billy Baggs entered the building trade. He intends to rebuild the court on an entirely different architectural scheme. The brainy one's first venture is to be a palatial hotel and restaurant, on which the nibs have been hard at work. It was expected that the building would be finished by the year 2902, but a delay has been caused by an unfortunate accident. A hodful of mortar was unfortunately dropped over the head of P.-c. Maloney, and consequently the building operations have had to be postponed till the nibs come out of hospital.

Illustrated Chips, 23 February 1907



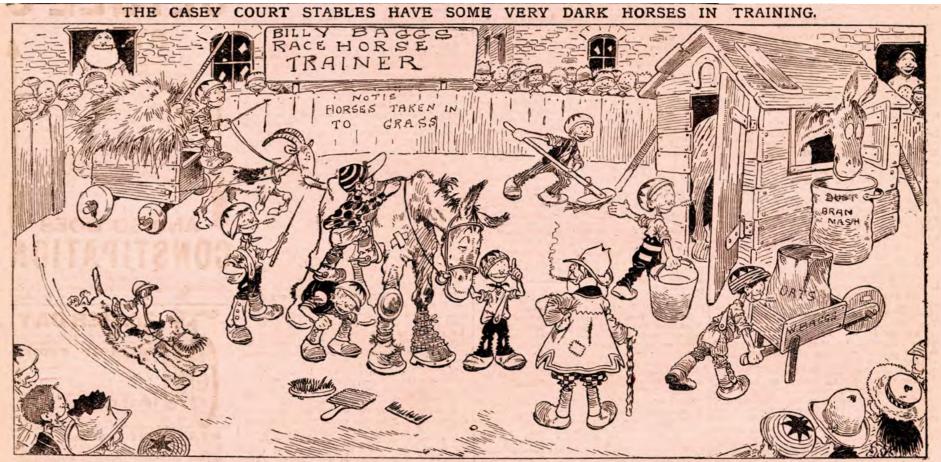
The Royal Academy will soon have some new members now that Professor Billy Baggs has opened his Art School in Casey Court. Under the able tuition of the brainy Baggs, the nibs are making splendid progress in their artistic studies. Willie Wagstaffe's soul-stirring picture of a Roman gladiator is generally considered to be a masterpiece, and is expected to command a high price when it is exhibited later on, whilst it is confidently anticipated by the court critics that Professor Baggs' wonderful canvas, Miss Sally Scraggs as a Shepherdess, will be bought by the nation, and hung in the National Gallery.





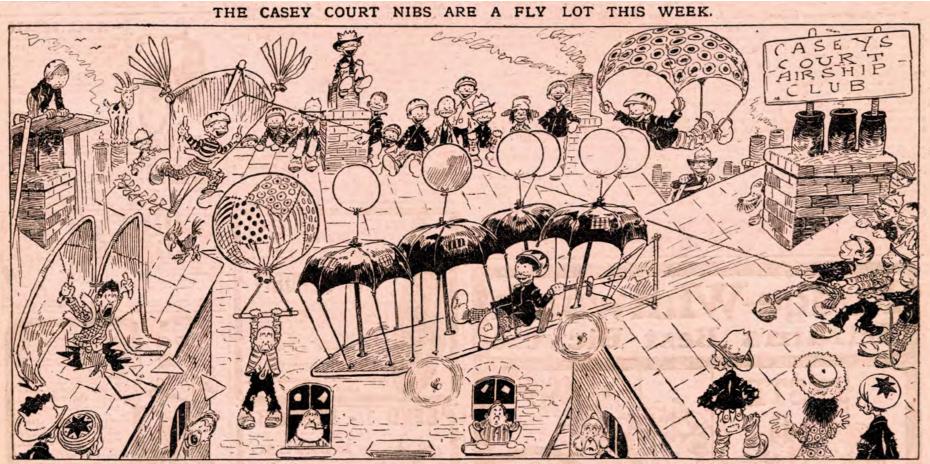
The event of the week in Casey Court was the opening by that renowned scholar, Professor Billy Baggs, of his great academy of learning. As the nibs suddenly developed a thirst for knowledge, the professor soon had more students than he could properly control. The consequence was, of course, that a great many familiar faces at the local Board-school were conspicuous by their absence. That made the School Board officer suspicious, so, with that sleuthhound of justice, P.-c. Moloney, he set out upon the trail of the truants, and ran them to earth at the academy, which is now a mere wreck of its former self. So are several of the nibs.

Illustrated Chips, 9 March 1907



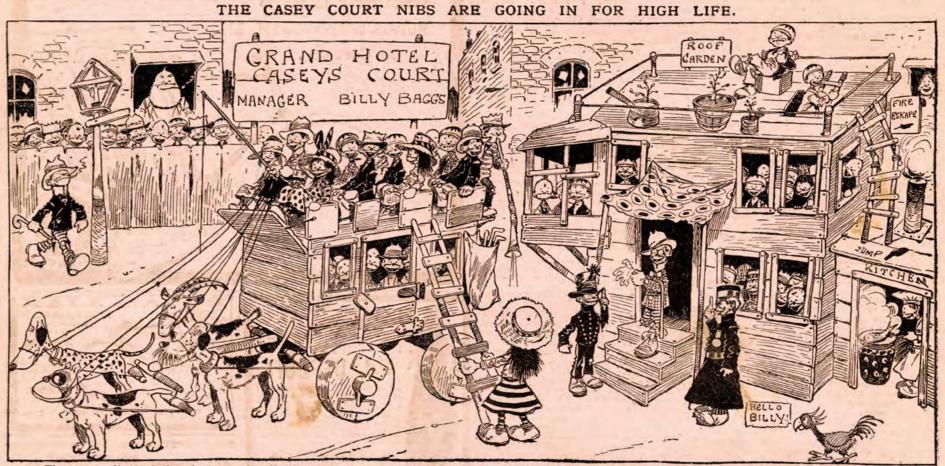
The sole topic of conversation in Casey Court circles this week is the swagger racehorse training establishment set up by that prominent figure in the sporting world Billy Baggs, Esq. It is prophesied that some marvellous pieces of horseflesh would be turned out this season—possibly a Derby winner. Those who saw the trial performance of Fleetfoot, ridden by Willie Wagstaffe, say it was simply staggering. Nobody was more staggered than Tom Howlit the coalman, who recognised in the equine wonder his missing mare. The discovery, of course, bred more trouble for the brainy Baggs and his assistant, who are still suffering from severe shock and other injuries to the system.

Illustrated Chips, 6 April 1907



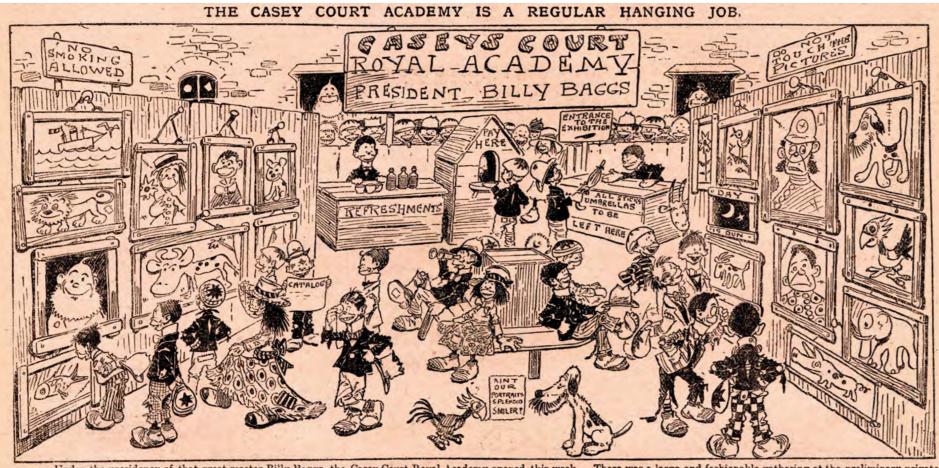
The Casey Court nibs have formed an airship club-president, Billy Baggs, Esq. -with the intention of competing for the "Daily Mail" ten thousand pound prize. The first meet of the club took place on Monday last, and was a huge success. It was rather a pity, however, that just as Billy Baggs looked like making a record flight Mrs. Dooley and several other of the court residents missed their umbrellas; then, of course, the nibs had to fly in quite another sense of the word.

Illustrated Chips, 13 April 1907



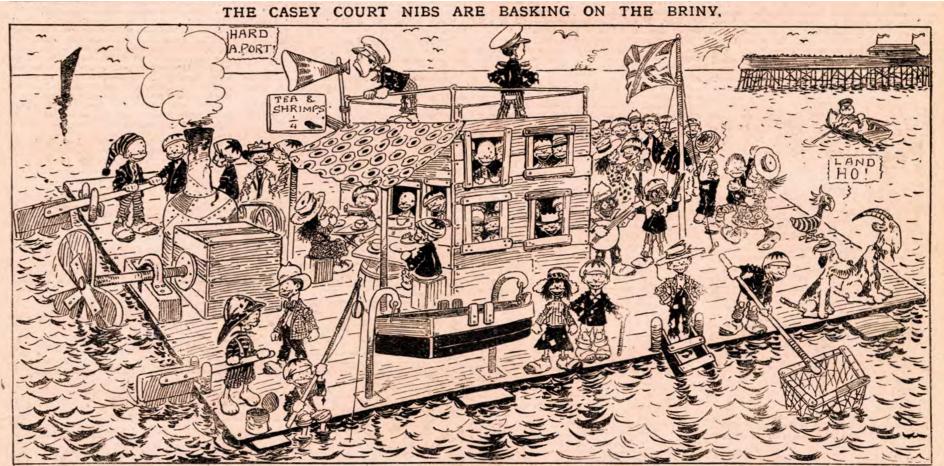
There was a distinguised gathering on Monday last at the opening of the Casey Court Grand Hotel. The palatial edifice, designed, built, and managed by the court genius Billy Baggs, is the last word in modern architecture. Everything has been carried out on the most lavish scale, the comfort of guests being catered for in every detail. A feature which is sure to attract visitors is the four-in-hand coach "Tally-ho," which starts daily from the hotel on a tour of the surrounding district.

Illustrated Chips, 20 April 1907



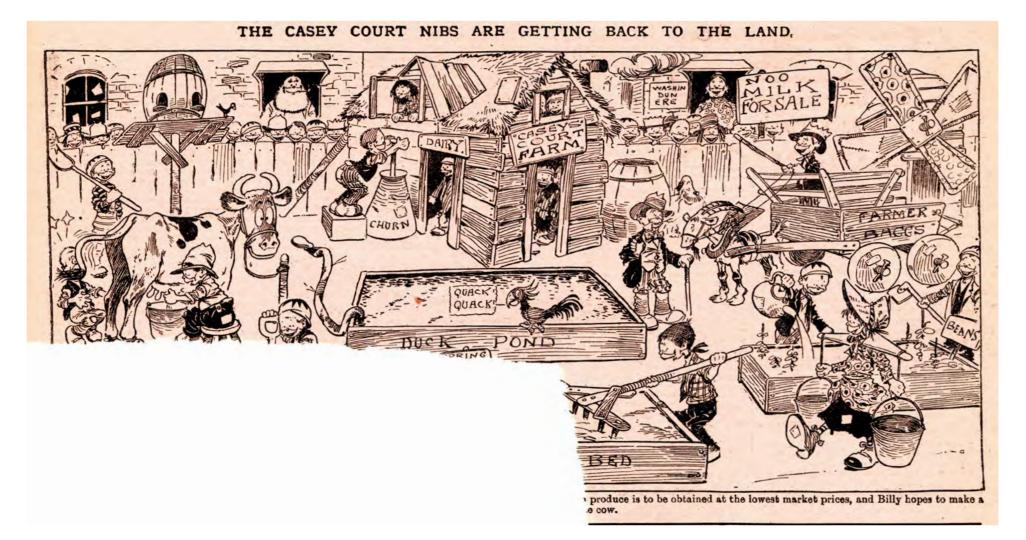
Under the presidency of that great master Billy Baggs, the Casey Court Royal Academy opened this week. There was a large and fashionable gathering at the preliminary private view, and the collection of pictures by local artists was voted superb. Everything would have gone well if P.-c. Maloney had not strolled in. Unfortunately, the portrait of himself, by Willie Wagstaffe, R.A., was the first masterpiece that attracted his attention. The scene that ensued baffles description. Suffice it to say that the exhibition closed abruptly, and that several of the exhibitors are not yet out of sticking-plaster.

Illustrated Chips, 27 April 1907

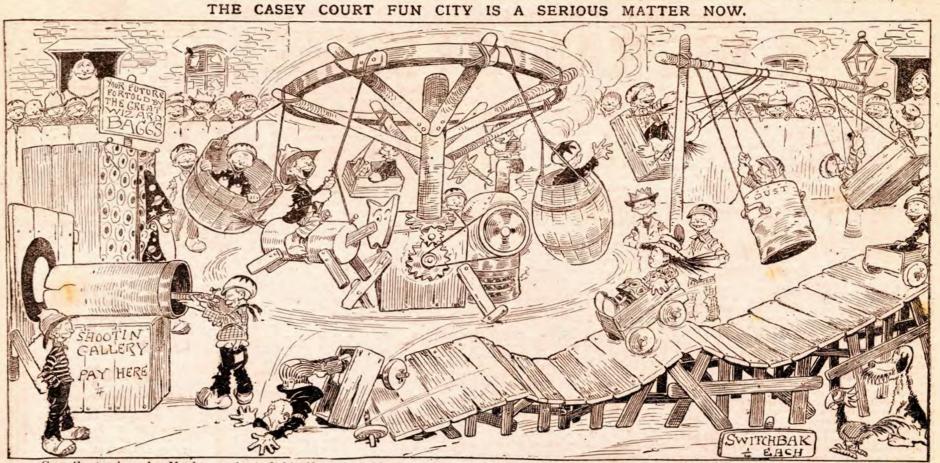


You could have heard a pin drop in Casey's Court this week end, for the nibs were all out of town, spending a life on the ocean wave, aboard the floating island, designed, built, and navigated by the court marvel, Billy Baggs. It was their intention to land at Margate and pay their respects to the mayor, but as he threatened to read the Riot Act and have them put into quarantine if they came within a hundred yards of the shore, that part of their plans had to be altered. They'll tell you how they got on in next week's CHIPS.

Illustrated Chips, 4 May 1907

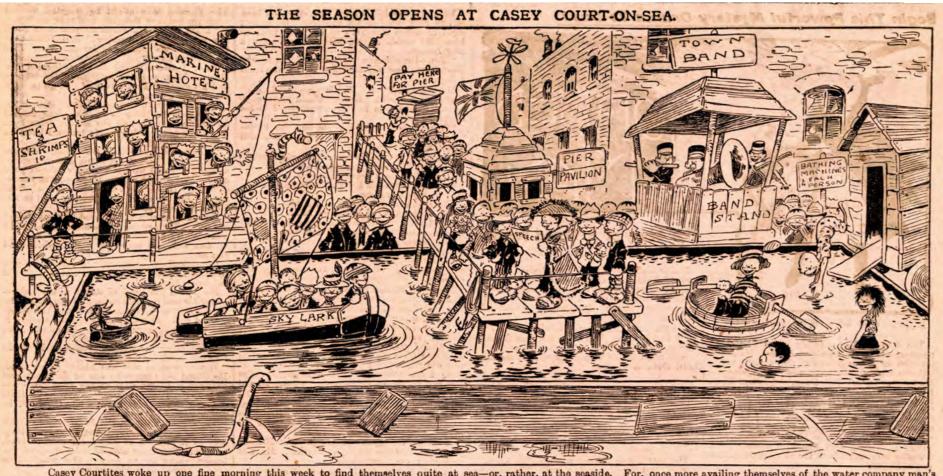


Illustrated Chips, 11 May 1907 (damaged)



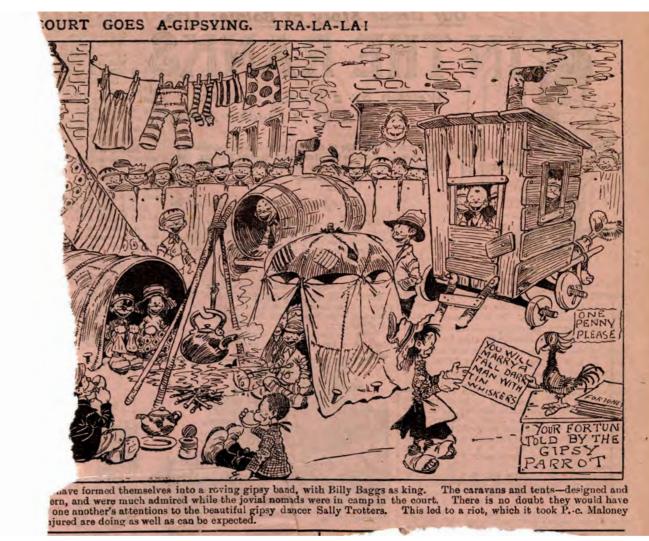
Casey Court woke up last Monday morning to find itself transformed by the magic art of Billy Baggs, the court marvel, into a rollicking Fun City. All the delights of the fair were to be had at the modest charge of one farthing per delight. Everything went well, and the Nibs had a glorious time of it until P.-c. Maloney recognised the switchback as fifteen yards of wooden fence which had vanished mysteriously in the night. Then the fun ceased abruptly, and several of the merrymakers retired hurt.

Illustrated Chips, 18 May 1907

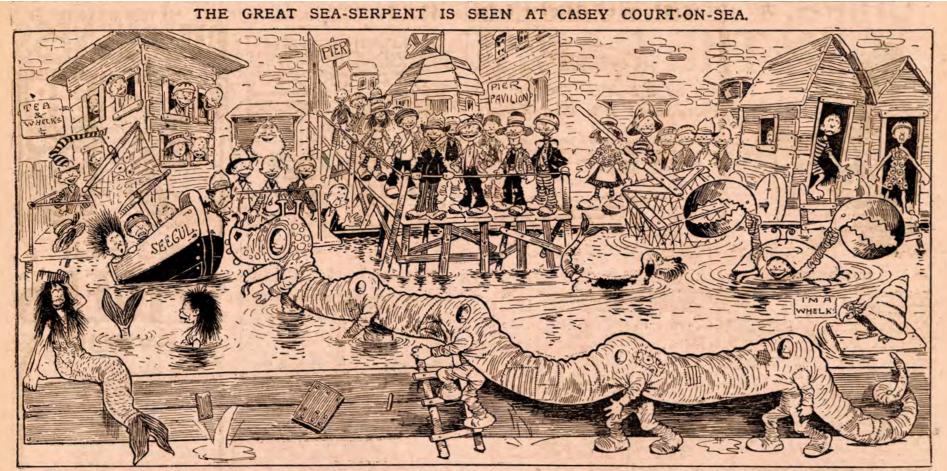


Casey Courtites woke up one fine morning this week to find themselves quite at sea—or, rather, at the seaside. For, once more availing themselves of the water company man's absence, the Nibs—under the guiding genius of Billy Baggs—transformed the court into a fashionable holiday resort. His worship the mayor, Billy Baggs, Esq., yesterday, in the presence of a distinguished gathering, declared the splendid pier open, thus putting the finishing touch to Casey Court-on-Sea, which is now preparing for the record rush of visitors that is confidently expected.

Illustrated Chips, 25 May 1907



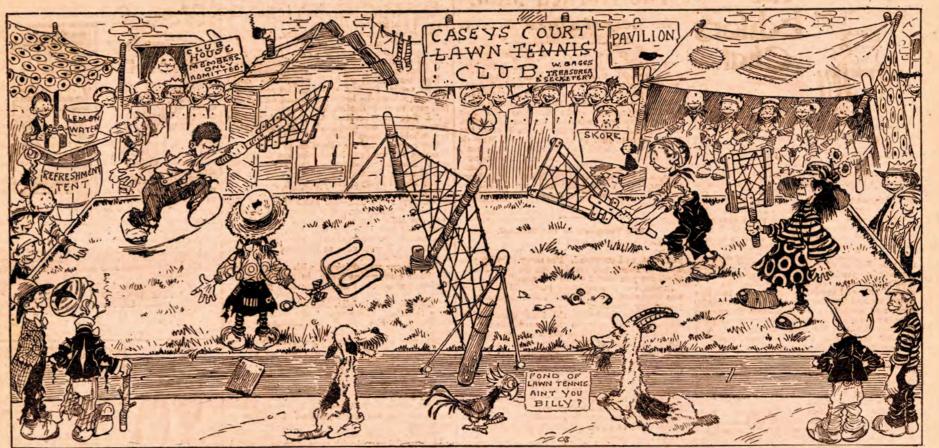
Illustrated Chips, 1 June 1907 (damaged)



Thanks to the continued absence of the waterworks man, Casey Court-on-Sea is still flourishing apace. The beautiful stretch of sea which gently laps the shore is full of shell and other fish, affording visitors plenty of sport. This week, also, an unexpected sensation was created by the sudden appearance of a sea-serpent. The huge monster, which possessed innumerable eyes and legs, needless to say caused considerable alarm, especially amongst the fair sex, and a general stampede was only prevented in the nick of time by Professor Billy Baggs, the eminent scientist, who restored calm by announcing that the weird reptile was merely a harmless microbe from the German-sausage factory round the corner.

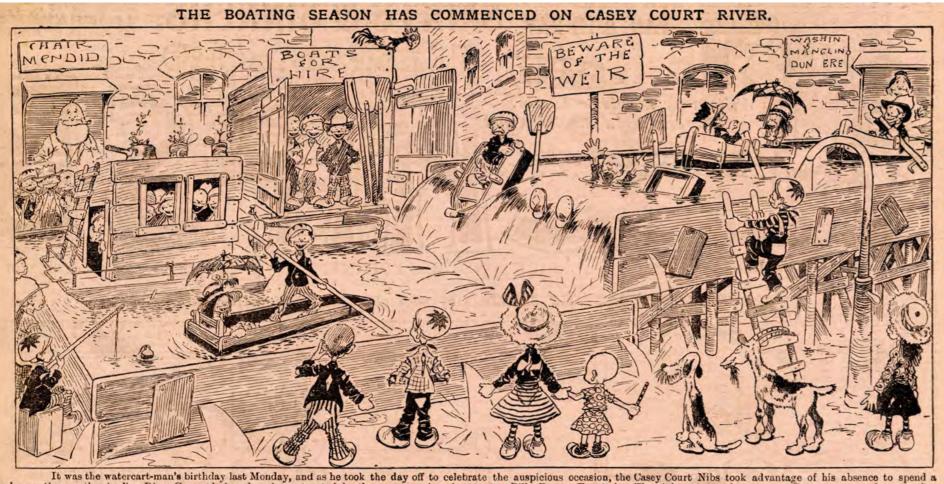
Illustrated Chips, 8 June 1907

THE CASEY COURT TENNIS CLUB HAS SET TO WORK.



The social event of the week in Casey Court circles was the opening of the Lawn Tennis Club—president, treasurer, and secretary, Billy Baggs, Esquire. No trouble has been spared in the preparation of the beautiful grass court, the Nibs having been working for weeks collecting the necessary turf from neighbouring gardens by dead of night, when the owners and police were wrapped in gentle slumber. The net and rackets employed are the invention and manufacture of the brainy Baggs, who also looks like easily carrying off the club championship as usual this season. His famous "smart" service is deadlier than ever. It was rather unfortunate, however, that yesterday Bill accidentally served P.-c. Maloney's face with a ball, instead of his opponent. The gallant constable was extremely annoyed about it, but it is confidently expected that Billy will be well enough to appear in public as usual next week.

Illustrated Chips, 15 June 1907



It was the watercart-man's birthday last Monday, and as he took the day off to celebrate the auspicious occasion, the Casey Court Nibs took advantage of his absence to spend a happy time on the rippling River Casey (designed and constructed by the great engineering genius, Billy Baggs, Esquire). The sight was a truly gay one. Boats, punts, and every other kind of river craft darted hither and thither, the bright colours of the ladies' parasols and new summer dresses lending colour and charm to the scene. Unfortunately, the day was marred by one or two accidents at the new weir, but, on the whole, the Nibs had a very good time indeed, thank you.

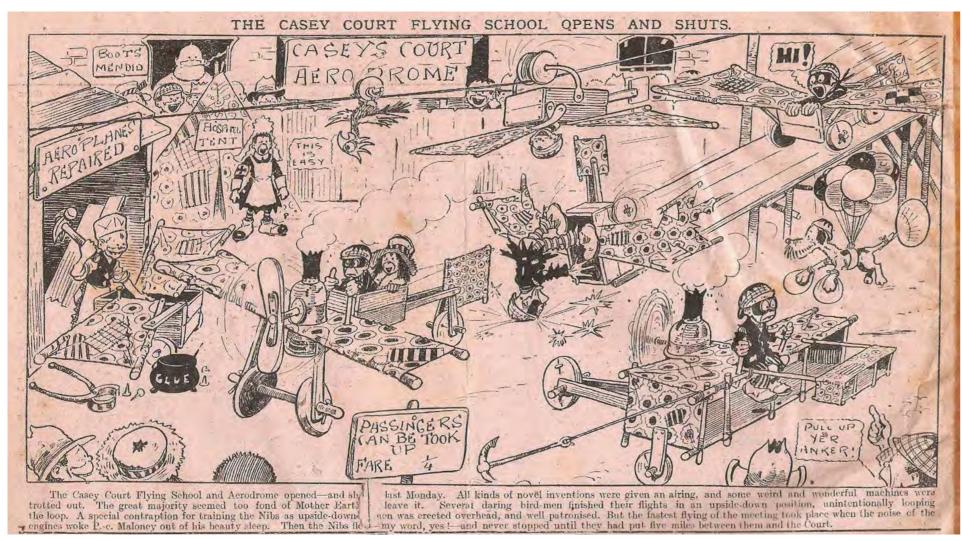
Illustrated Chips, 22 June 1907

CASEY COURT CRICKET CLUB IS A WICKET AFFAIR.

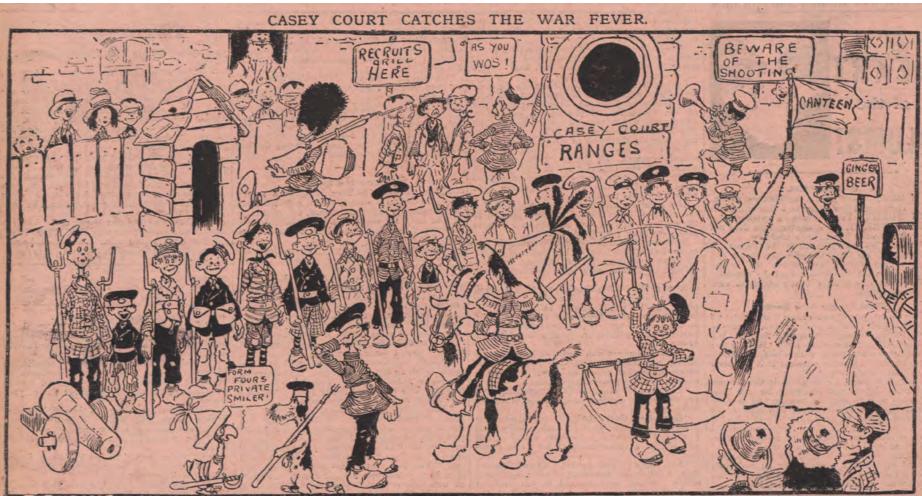


The Casey Court Cricket Week opened last Monday, before a large and distinguished gathering, with a match between the Court Eleven and Riley's Alley C.C. The new cricketpitch was in grand condition, but the match was of short duration. Billy Baggs, the demon bowler, succeeded in putting the whole of the visiting team out (and in hospital) for no runs, a performance which created a new record—the great Baggs' previous best being ten wickets, three runs, and seven injured.

Illustrated Chips, 29 June 1907

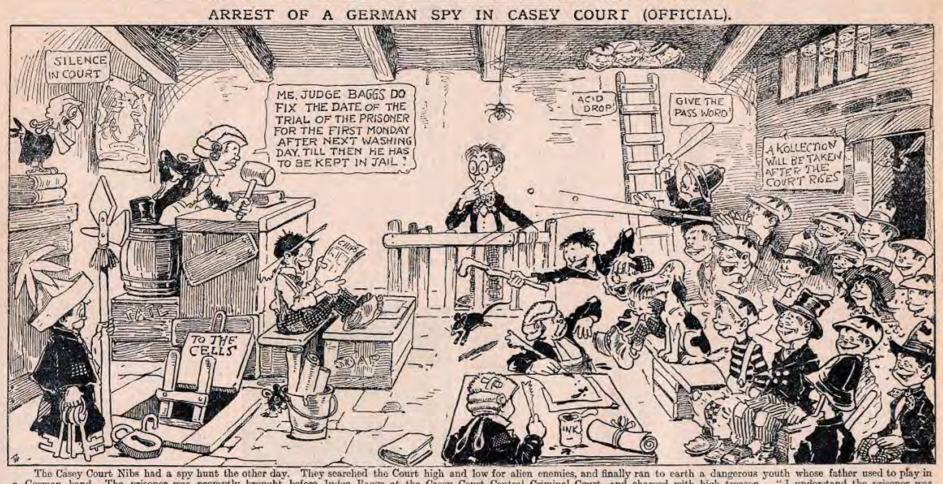


Illustrated Chips, 28 February 1914



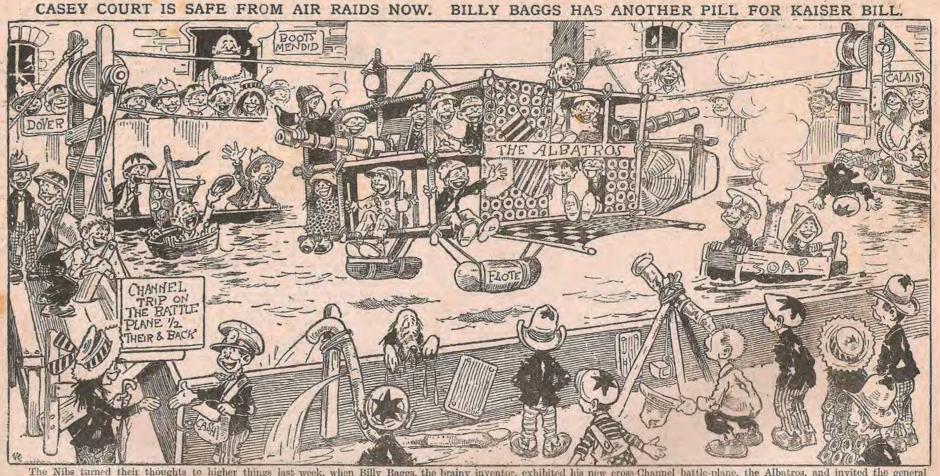
Needless to say the martial fever is at war height in Casey Court. The call to arms has not left the Nibs unmoved. No ! Bubbling over with patriotism, they have formed themselves into a Legion of Darealls, with the gallant Billy Baggs as generalissimo. Training is going on in every military way, and the Court is under martial law. The rush to recruit was what might be expected, and the Legion is at full war strength, and ready for active service the moment the War Office gives the word, with everybody willing to go to any part of the world, even to the wilds of distant Tooting, or the lonely mountain passes of Hampstead Heath !

Illustrated Chips, 12 September 1914



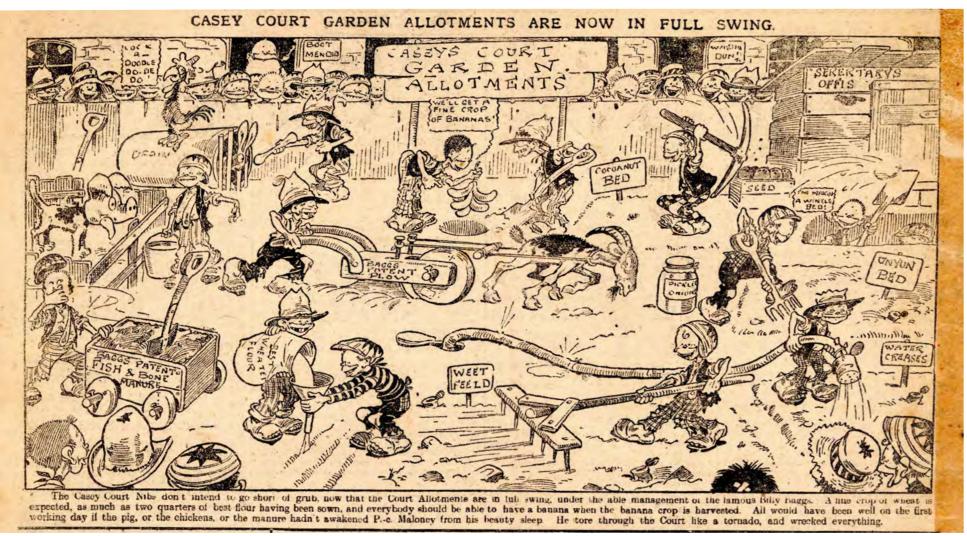
The Casey Court Nibs had a spy hunt the other day. They searched the Court high and low for alien enemies, and finally ran to earth a dangerous youth whose father used to play in a German band. The prisoner was promptly brought before Judge Baggs at the Casey Court Central Criminal Court, and charged with high treason. "I understand the prisoner was seen eating a German sausage?" remarked the judge. "A very suspicious case! There is no doubt he is a desprit character!" The grand jury, having found a true bill against the prisoner, his lordship ordered that he should be brought up for trial the first Monday after next washing-day. As the prisoner was conducted to the cells loud jeers broke out in court.

Illustrated Chips, 30 October 1915

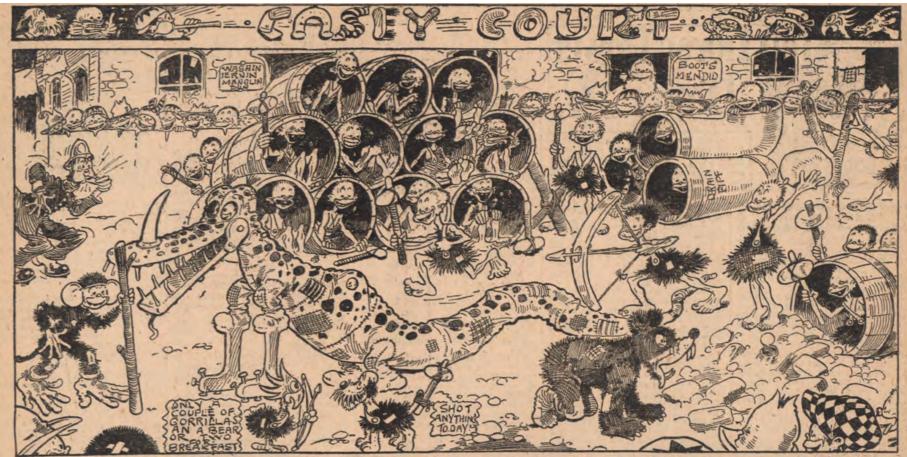


The Nibs turned their thoughts to higher things last week, when Billy Baggs, the brainy inventor, exhibited his new cross Channel battle-plane, the Albatros, and invited the general public to take a passage in it. The small sum of one halfpenny was charged for the trip from Dover to Calais and back, which is absurdly cheap when you come to think of it. The monster flying-machine was fitted with two fine aircraft guns, capable of bringing down a sparrow at three yards. Those in the secret know that the guns were made out of a lot of flower-pots, but —hush !—not a word to Kaiser Bill about it. Kitchener knows it, and one or two Cabinet Ministers, but mum's the word ! When the next Zeppelin raid takes place Casey Court will not be caught napping—Billy Baggs will see to that. (The Nibs are making tremendous preparations for CHIPS Grand Christmas Double Number next week, so look out !)

Illustrated Chips, 20 November 1915

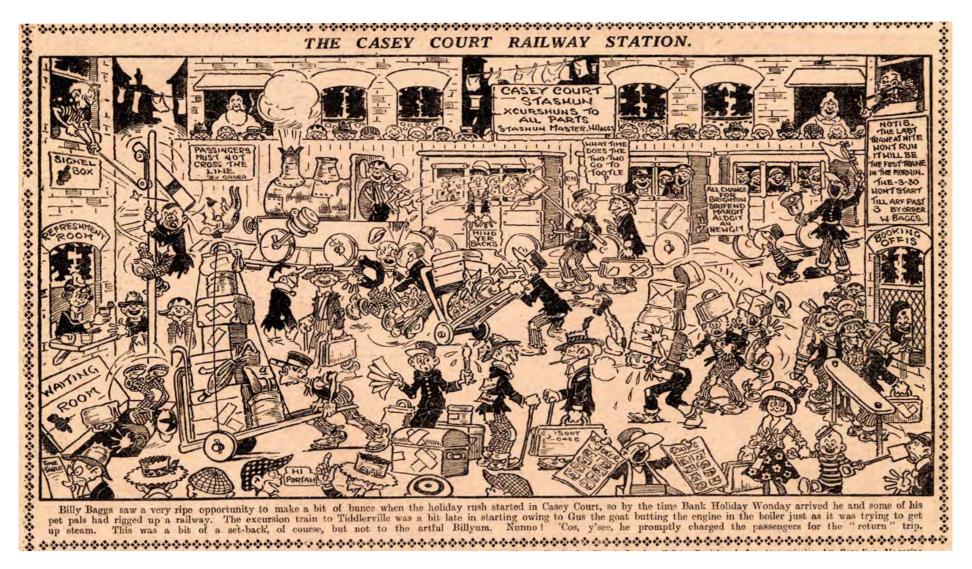


Illustrated Chips, 17 February 1917

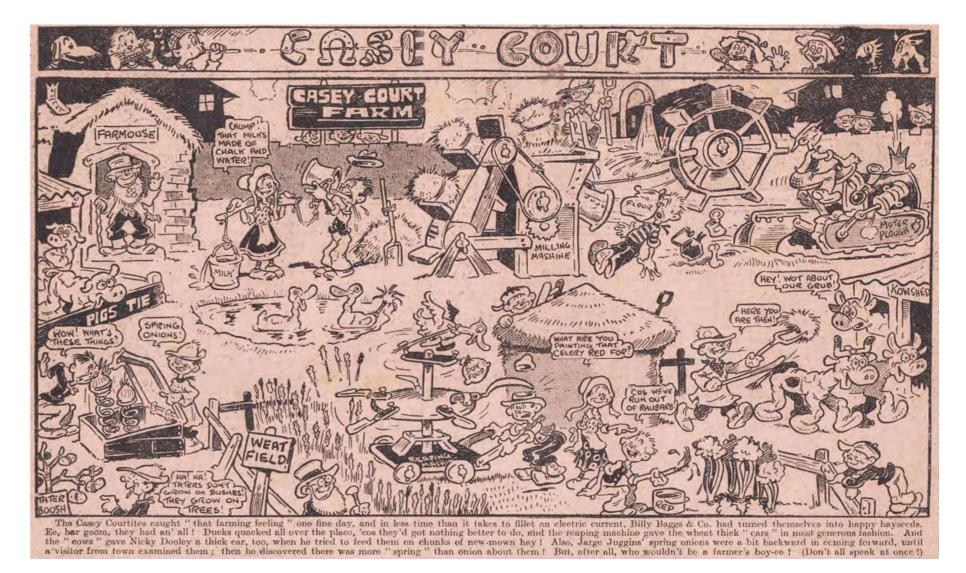


The Casey Court nibs are making rapid strides in their school studies. In fact, last week they started learning all about the prehistoric cave men that lived in the year dot, and they found the subject so interesting and exciting that to quench their thirst for knowledge they borrowed a few empty barrels from the ginger-beer factory round the corner, and on Saturday afternoon started leading the simple cave life themselves. P.-c. Maloney got a proper pink fit when he spotted the Wotisitsoorus, and blowing his whistle, he called out the fire brigade, and dashing off to the police-station reported that the microbe of German measles had broken loose in the Court.

Illustrated Chips, 29 April 1922



Illustrated Chips, 2 August 1930



Illustrated Chips, no exact day, 1932 drawn by Charlie Pease

#### **DIVERSIFICATION ACROSS TITLES**

Amalgamated Press pushed new titles into the comics market and dominated it quite quickly. Content and talent was shared and moved between the different publications, while adjustments for different audiences were made. Some comics appeared in several of the titles without changes to their narration or style, others were contextualised differently (see examples and comment on the following pages).

The advantage of cross-publication marketing as well as the pull-factor of established sucessfull figures was maximised, not least on the editor's pages, where these editors advised to buy and recommended the sister papers to they readers. Figures reading the different papers published by Amalgamated Press are included in several of the comics and one-panel series like Casey Court.

While coloured comic journals were more up-market and expensive, the papers printed in black were cheaper and directed at a different audience These one-colour publications were called "black comics" despite their tinted papers. These spread into a group of aproximately a dozen newspaper-format comics produced for lower-middle-class and working-class families: Larks, Jester, Joker, Butterfly, Favourite Comics, Jolly Comic, and others, including the established Comic Cuts and Illustrated Chips. They contained four pages of serialised story in small print and four pages of humorous strips.

Due to the immense speed and pressure in Julius Stafford Baker's production of material for different publications within the Amalgamated Press, recognisable overlaps happened, as scenarios, ideas, and jokes were re-used to some extend. For the Amalgamated Press, Julius Stafford Baker produced amongst other work also:

'Hans the Double Dutchman' (Comic Home Journal, 1904), 'Billy Smiff's Pirates' (Puck, 1904), 'Stone Age Peeps' (Illustrated Chips, 1904), 'The Inventions of Pat' (Nuggets, 1905), 'Henry Hawkins' (Jester and Wonder, 1906), 'Comic Cuts Colony' (Comic Cuts, 1910), 'Raggs Rents' (Merry and Bright, 1915), 'Prehistoric Pranks' (Funny Wonder, 1919), 'Dr Croc's College' (The Sunday Fairy, 1919), 'The Moonshine Movie Nibs' (Lot-O'-Fun, 1920).

Jester and Wonder, 24 November 1906, page 7 Dooley's Guests.

The Jester (with various fusions). London: Amalgamated Press. 10 May 1902 to 18 May 1940.



Dooley asked Riley an' Finnigan to come an' bring a few | arroive in one constant praceshun for three hours. "But | receive his guests. "An' a foine an' enjoyable time we had frinds wid 'em to an avening parthy on Christmas Eve ; but | phwat's the use av worryin', shure isn't there the pig-sty an' | entoirely, an' finished up wid the swatest bit av a foight Oi shure he was a bit surproised whin the frinds began to | cow-shed," said Dooley as he stood at his manshun door to | phwas iver in," Finnigan remarked to a frind.

## **CROSS-MARKETING THE FRANCHISE**

The Amalgamated Press's pioneering four-colour children's comic Puck had proven that affluent parents were happy to spend more on good print and approved content for their young children's entertainment. The Amalgamated Press decided to explore this market more thoroughly. From 1914, the huge popularity of the colour-printed comics The Rainbow and Chuckles indicated how large the upmarket market for these "nursery comics" actually was. Playtime was launched in 1919, followed by Tiger Tim's Weekly and The Chicks' Own; then Henderson's Sparks was taken over by Amalgamated Press and retitled Little Sparks.

The Casey Court Boys appear again and again as main figures in whole-page comics published in Puck, e.g. on the cover page on 18April 1908, where they "Easter in Egypt". The examples shown here illustrate the cross-publication of established titles and figures, on the right with a noteworthy change in perspective on these figures expressed in the text: The Casey Court nibs appear in the Puck's The Newlyweds, redrawn after the US-original to give it some Edwardian style. Here, the perspective on the Nibs is less favourable: They are considered a threat to their hosts' middle-class Christmas, are invited to be culturally improved upon and are shown their social place, but get to eat all they can anyway. For several installments, this clash of cultures is used to drive the stories, allowing the middle-class child in the story to exhibit his culture, while jovially interacting with the nibs, partly directing, partly limiting their mayhem.

The example on the following double-page uses the Casey Court as location in this installment of the very successful long-running comic-series Weary Willie and Tired Tim by Tom Browne, that from 1896 to 1953 appeared on the front page of Illustrated Chips. Please note the comments that reflect on and joke about the comics-medium and individual publications in the text, a routine continued up to this day in the Private Eye Magazine! Browne and Baker were two of the major influences on the development of the British comics. Like Casey Court, Weary Willie and Tired Tim were often copied, exported and also translated.

Puck, 22 December 1906, page 1 (reproduced in reduced size). Mr. Newlywed has a merry party, and the Casey Boys are all there.

Puck. Jokes and Pictures for the Home.

London: Carmelite House / Fleetwood House / Amalgamated Press. 30 July 1904 to 11 May 1940.

#### Next double page:

Illustrated Chips, 11 May 1907, page 1 (reproduced slightly larger). Weary Willie and Tired Tim are Casey Court-Martialled.

Please note the editor's comment under image No 2, the same kind of jokes that ironise the tone and build-up of mood in texts is used until today in the Private Eye Magazine.



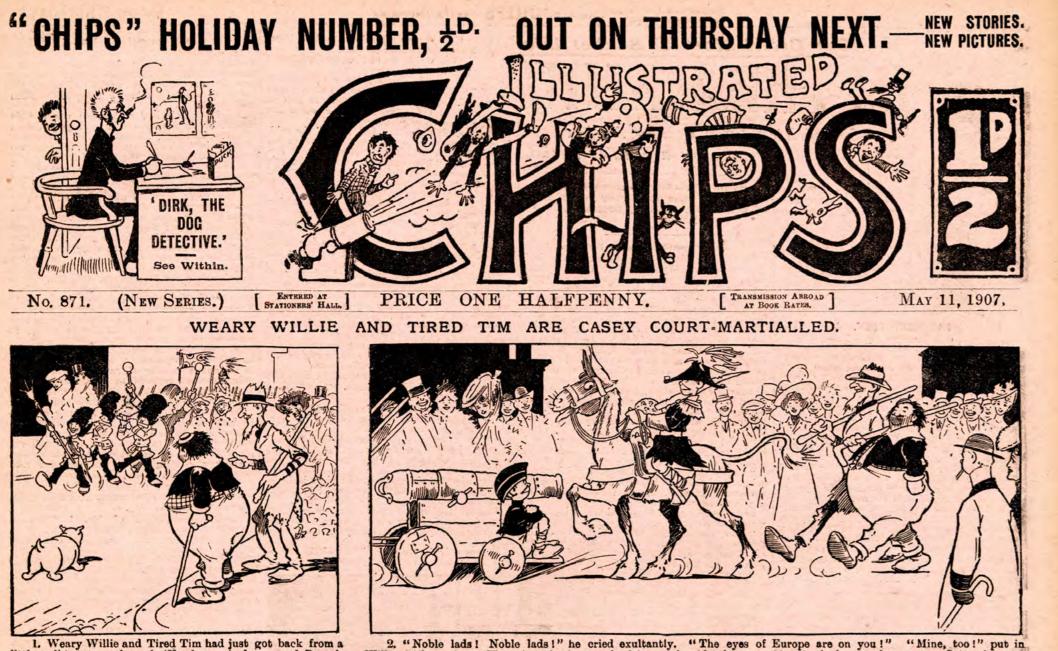






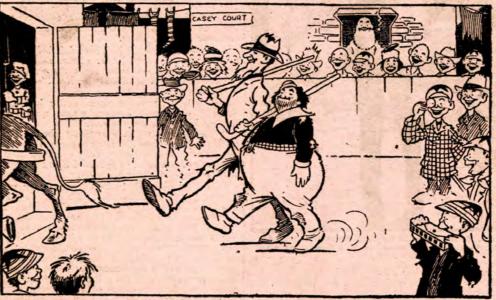




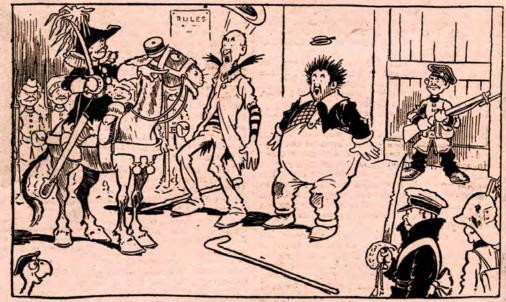


1. Weary Willie and Tired Tim had just got back from a little walking tour through Wendover, Andover, and Bound-over, and were consequently feeling more weary and more tired than usual when the sudden sound of martial music seemed to put new life into them. Then the Casey Court Boy Army marched past, and a large salt tear quivered on Tim's eyelash as he thought of his young cadet days at Sandhurst.

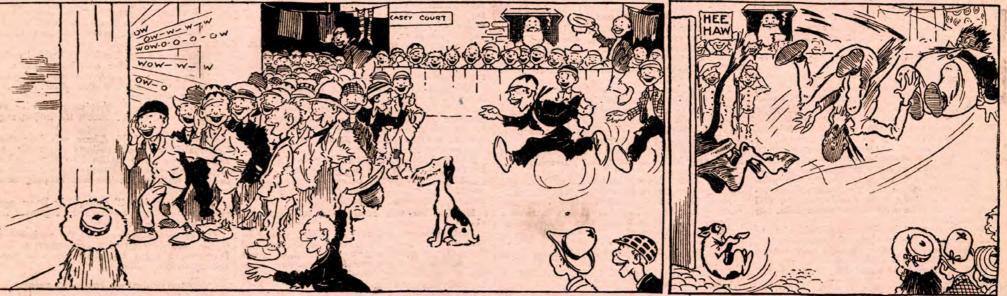
2. "Noble lads! Noble lads!" he cried exultantly. "The eyes of Europe are on you!" "Mine, too!" put in Willie, with passion. Then that glowing spark of imperial pride that smoulders in the bosom of every true Briton leapt to flame (Hark at us!), and our tired heroes, travel-stained and footsore though they were, shouldered their staves, and with flashing eyes and swelling breasts stepped lightly forward, their throbbing feet keeping rhythmic time to the stately march music. (Oh, just hark! We're off again!) It was a touching spectacle. These two hardened men of the world, whose patriotic zeal— (That's enough for one picture.—EDITOR.)



3. On, on, on they marched to the soul-stirring strains of "Johnny, get your gun 1" till anon they reached Casey Court, where Casey himself, standing at his cottage door, smiled proudly to find himself figuring so unexpectedly upon the front page of the greatest comic journal in the world.



4. On, on, on they peregrinated (no extra charge for peregrinated. Wonderful how we do it for a halfpenny, isn't it? The "Times" would have just said "walked," but we spare no expense). On, on, on, through the barrack gate; on (three times as before), till at last they found themselves in the guard-room before that stern, relentless martinet Captain Billy Baggs.



5. The next moment the heavy door had slammed behind. "Seize the spies!" shouted the cruel captain, in cold, hard tones. And immediately our pair were seized in several places. But let us get outside into the fresh air, where we cannot behold their anguish. The smiling faces of the Caseyites are more pleasant to look upon. "I'd rather be a dog and bay at the moon," remarked Smiler, quoting from the classics, "than be either of them front-page fellows at the present moment."

## **A SPANISH EDITION**

These comics were not only available in Britain and Ireland. Many "overseas editions" were distributed through agents in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, the shipped-out versions generally consisting of one or more comics folded or stapled inside one another. Comics were evidently a viable export.

Beyond these direct exports of the publications within the Empire and Commonwealth, they were re-published in other languages, too. So far, it has not been established if they were simply copied without consent or if some form of licencing agreements had been reached. Practice in early comics' publishing suggests otherwise, and it has to be remembered that from the very beginning of comics, material from other countries and publications was used or adapted without pay nor reference to their authors and illustrators.

For comtext, it is worth to look into the example of the nineteenth-century German caricaturist Wilhelm Busch, who became a very massive influence on comics storytelling. His "picture stories" ("Bildergeschichten") were frequently reprinted in European comics without any mention of the original artist's name. Barefaced pilferings appeared in numerous cheap periodicals from 1869 to around 1900 with derivative strips to follow his original stories and designs. Most pairs of wild boys simply copied his Max & Moritz-designs and storylines into US-newspaper comic strips as well as into British comics etc.

In consequence of that practice, it remains unclear on what legal basis the reprint on the right stood. Like in the British publications, the name of the artist is not given.

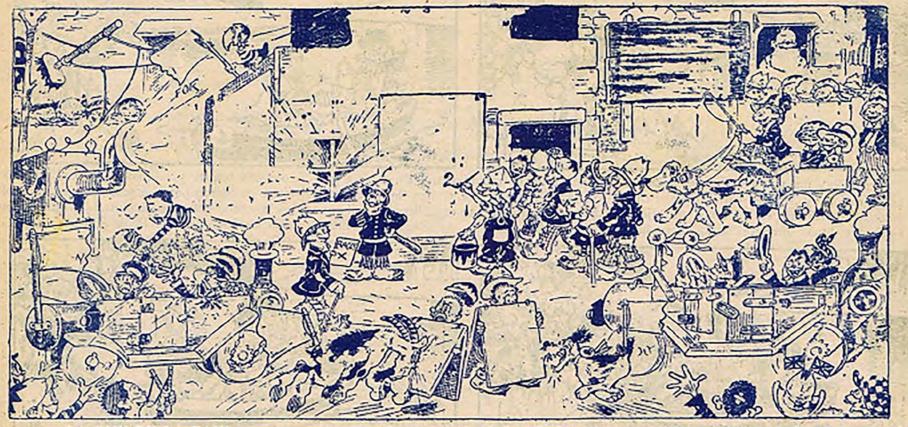
Casey Court by Julius Stafford Baker in Spanish:

the backyard court is transfered to «la República de los Zaragateros, en el archipiélago de las Mandangas»

Editorial Marco (Spain): La Risa Infantil. Primera época: 1925-1936. No. 164 (?)

# De lejanos países

Para que podáis admirar la moderna organización del tráfico en la isla de los Zaragateros



LA RUE DE LA PAIX No os figuréis que se trata de la de París. no: se trata de cierta Rué de la flamante república de los Zaragateros, sita en el Archipiélago de las Mandangas. En ésta podéis admirar dernier cri; un monumental cine al aire libre; los concurrentes que bien lo necesitan, por además de las más o menos ligeras tiendas, el tránsito rodado que por ella transita, con los úl- famosa Rué de la Paix. Una tienda en la que

pero sobre todo la última novedad de aquella cierto ...

timos modelos de auto-inmóviles alli inventa- por módico precio, y por riguroso turno, afeidos; los hombres anurcio expuestos a las iras tan, cortan el pelo y los callos, limpian, cosen de los simpáticos y abundantes perros calleje- y planchan la ropa, dan lustre a los zapatos, y ros que por aquellas islas hay; un pollo pera especialmente desinfectan y perfuman a todos

#### **REPEATING THE PATTERN**

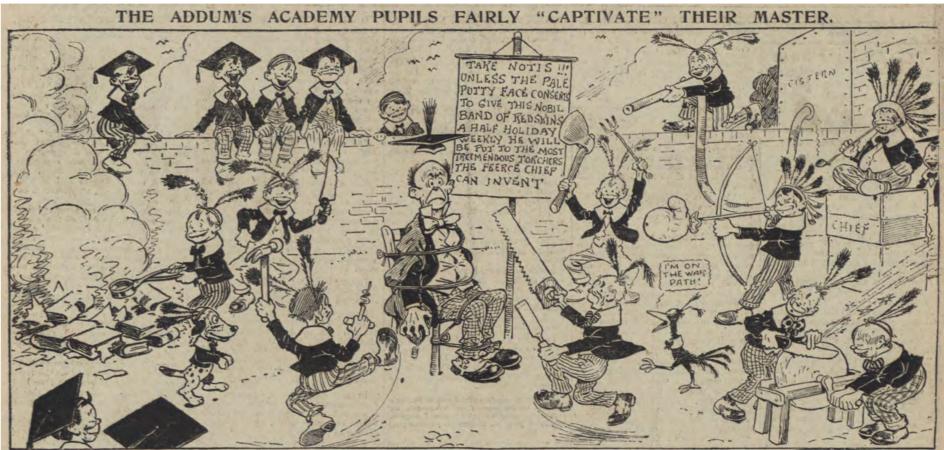
As described before: during the First World War, comics publishing separated into two divisions: The black-ink comics basically retained their mixed-audience orientation, even if they did cater increasingly to early-teen readers. Colour-printed comics slowly transformed themselves into comics for young children.

The diverse titles offered by the Amalgamated Press constantly needed new content. Overlaps and reproductions in variation happened, as scenarios, ideas, and jokes were re-used with more or less adjustments. Artists were under constant pressure of deadlines as they worked for many papers, sometimes also in marketing. For example, Baker was fired from his work on Tiger Tim in 1914 because he too often missed his deadlines, as he was stretched between editing other papers and producing his own material. Despite that, he continued production for other papers within the Amalgamated Press even after, Casey Court for example, until some point in the 1920s.

In the need to produce new material quickly, tried and tested plots, stories, and environments were returned to, for example mystery, romance, and adventure plots from serialised texts were repeated heavily and adapted for visual storytelling. Also, to counter criticism of the comic as vulgar and of bad influence, stories that related to the ideals of the middle-classes were peddled at working-class readerships as well: for example, adventure stories set in or around public school-environments became successful and remain so to this day, despite or because of their mystical remoteness.

Merry And Bright, March 21, 1914. Addum Academy by Julius Baker, beginning 1913.

Merry and Bright / Merry & Bright. London: Fleetway House [Amalgamated Press]. 22 October 1910 to 19 January 1935.



Addum had stopped the usual half-holiday, and was having a snooze when a band of wild and woolly injuns seized and bound him fast. They carried him into the playground, and the fierce chief (Podge Tomkins) threatened him with terrible torture unless he accepted their terms. Addum held out at first, and promised them 500 smacks apiece until he saw the instruments of torture—from the humble corkscrew to the red-hot pincers. Then he gave up, and gave in.

## STEREOTYPES, TYPES,

#### AND FICTIONS OF EMPIRE

All publications from that time, not only the entertaining press with its ready use of ethnic and racial stereotypes, reflect and mostly sustain the Imperialist world view interwoven with racist ideas of superiority for some. This is true for all real or imagined empires in Europe before and after the First World War, and the position was predominant in British popular media, too, but not shared by all.

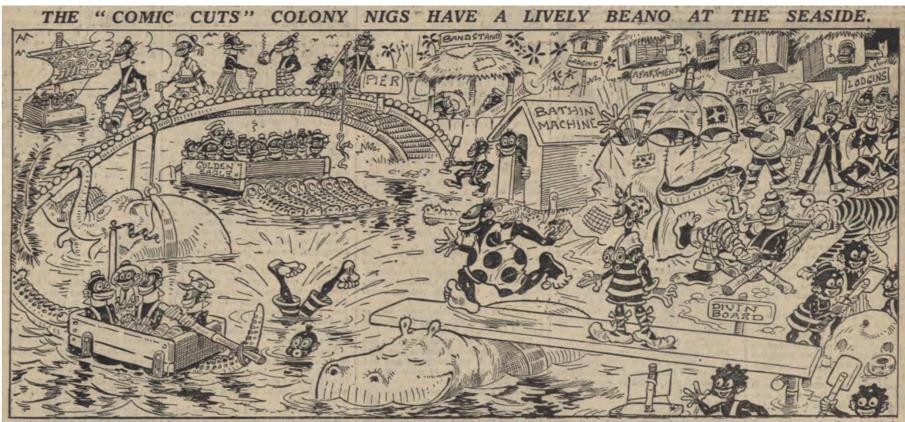
Current events fed straight into the entertainment section, with wars and revolts in foreign parts of the empire being hinted at in the ethnic types used. But in Baker's early Casey Court, Asians seem not to appear at all, while faces and clothing do not allow for black or white racial differentiation easily. While the Comics Cuts Colony used routines established in other contributions, like Casey Court, the racist dimension is obvious: Visual stereotypes go beyond simplifications into types, in early comics they often combine with the use of derogatory terms and names. Even when comparing these to the generally rough humour that is played out in names and attributions given irrespective of racial or national contexts the difference is getting more clear in the use of these figures for telling jokes, usually around their generally child-like-ness is taken into consideration. In the example on the right, the image uses established visual stereotypes to show crowded but harmless cartoon chaos, while the text tells unperturbed of carnage to come. The narrative strategy is exactly as in the Casey Court-installments, but with all cartoon violence suggested. people there do never get eaten.

Please bear in mind that these routines were conspised by some already then, while the mainstream continued to consider racist stereotyping funny much longer. It continued easily into post-Second World War society, where some elements of this everyday racism were so established that some less-reflective members of society defend it as part of their nostalgic memories of childhood even today: There is a straight line from the material here to the racism of Boris Johnson and sorts.

It has to be pointed out that the Science Fiction adventure comics of the 1950s and 60s apply the same jingoistic approach too, only black figures have become extra-terrestrian green, Africa has turned into a planet of its own, and the colonial officers have gotten new uniforms (Carpenter 1982, 77). The treatment of the Windrush-arrivals and after is part of the wider picture, not an illustration of its excesses. Earlier, in 1939, George Orwell examined the contents of the best-selling boys' weekly papers and concluded that these preserved the Edwardian mindset. The positions taken in these papers had not reacted to changes in the world nor to the increasing demands for representation and independence from colonies and dominions - in his words the position taken was that "the clock has stopped at 1910 and Britannia rules the waves" (Orwell, George: "Boys' Weeklies." In: Horizon, March 1940). Most of the material shown in this volume is taken from exactly those final years of the Edwardian rule with emphasis on 1907, as the collection happens to contain a long stretch of Illustrated Chips published then.

Comic Cuts, August 12, 1922 Comic Cuts Colony, drawn by Julius Stafford Baker.

Comics Cuts (with various fusions). London: Amalgamated Press. 17 May 1890 to 12 September 1953.



The COMIC CUTS Colony Nigs had a high old time down at Banana Bay on Bank Holiday, and that's a fact! The famous seaside resort was simply crowded, and everybody was having a lovely time bathing and boating when the tiger family looked in to hear the band and pick up a nig or two for lunch. Their sudden appearance so startled the sea-end of the pier that the elephants let go, causing the bridge to fly up and shoot the promenaders into Wonga Wongaland, thus saving them their return fare home. Most of the other visitors caught the first boat home after that. Still, they thoroughly enjoyed the fun while it lasted.

#### **RELATED PUBLICATIONS:**

Carpenter, Kevin: *Wonderfully Vulgar. British comics 1873–1939*. Catalogue of exhibition held at the library of Oldenburg University and online-exhibition: https://wonderfullyvulgar.de/toc.html Oldenburg: BIS. 2013. Online.

Carpenter, Kevin: *Penny Dreadfuls and Comics: English Periodicals for Children from Victorian Times to the Present Day.* Catalogue of an exhibition held at the Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood. London: Victoria and Albert Museum. 1983. Print.

Carpenter, Kevin: Vom Penny Dreadful zum Comic. Eine Ausstellung englischer Jugendzeitschriften, Heftchen und Comics von 1855 bis zur Gegenwart. Catalogue of exhibition held at the Stadtmuseum Oldenburg. Oldenburg: BIS. 1981. Print.

Clark, Alan: *The Fun Factory of Farrington Street*. A Half-Holiday production, 2021 (no place information). Print.

Clark, Alan: *Edwardian Comic Papers*. A Half-Holiday production, 2021 (no place information). Print.

Dittmar, Jakob: "Comic" in: *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik* (HWRh). Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2011; 319–331. Print.

The Kevin Carpenter collection allows us to look not only into the bandwidth of early British comic productions but also to discover forgotten contributions to the history of comics. They open doors to the zeitgeist of their times.

This volume is dedicated to the Casey Court, a series of single panels invented by Julius Stafford Baker for the Illustrated Chips published by Amalgamated Press. While examples in this volume span the years 1904 - 1932, most were originally published 1907.

Here, we can read beyond the single examples that are available on the internet. We can start to understand narrative strategies and routines, reactions to current events, but also the extend of experimentations and developments in these comics. Personal styles and influences on as well as interdependencies between individual productions across different comics publications become visible.

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