

# MORE RIPPING YARNS

*... or alternately*

**A pre-Christmas tale to warm the cockles of the coldest of hearts**

**'Bend me, shape me, anyway you want me' - Andy Fairweather-Lowe**

**'Mmm, sounds nice!' - Dale Winton**

**'There'll be a braw, bricht moonlicht nicht the nicht' - a token Scottish person**

**'You are a complete idiot, you are' - my mate down the pub**

Whilst musing on the philosophy of Descartes' *'I think, therefore I am. At least I think I am, I think'* (© 2002 Dennis Descartes, Ward 6, Tipton Respite For Retired Headcases) and aided only by the soft ambience of the cool evening together with my copious consumption of Budweiser with Brasso chasers, I dreamt all this up. But it doesn't make it any the less truthful so settle in that armchair whilst I relate it to you, dear friends, and decide for yourselves as I whisk you on a journey through history to answer two of the most enigmatic questions ever posed in man's incessant search for knowledge; namely what is the origin of Roses and Castles on boats, and why is there a fairy on the top of a Christmas tree? Read and learn, my fellow conspirators, read and learn.

Despite the trappings of fabulous wealth bestowed upon his dynasty by ownership of the sole banana-bending factory in the whole of the tiny eastern European state of Spottyfacia, young Xavier Moonstrut the Third sought only to lead a normal life regardless of his being a hunchback midget with halitosis and prolapsed arches. A magical, enchanting kingdom limited only by imagination, Spottyfacia was the land that time forgot and life for Xavier was idyllic. But he wanted more. His father, XM the Second, had been an avid collector and had accrued a sizeable compilation of works by Rembrandt and Stradivarius. Unfortunately his judgement fell some way behind his enthusiasm and too late did he learn of Rembrandt's inability to fashion a violin and Stradivarius' total incompetence with a brush. Worried that his inheritance was being squittered Xavier tried one day to remonstrate with his father who was in one of his curious dressing up and drinking phases.

Adorned in miner's boots, silk stockings, figure hugging basque and a gas mask he chastised his child with *'We're not all mad you know'* before consuming a gallon tin of varnish. *'A horrible suffering, but a beautiful finish'* the mortician commented dryly, and that was that.

But art was in the boy's blood and so Xavier decided to develop his skills at painting. Yet what to paint? Inspiration came in the form of a long narrow vessel, unadorned and unlovely, emerging from the underground stores with its precious cargo of yellow sticks on their way to be bent to the regulation angle. A chill afternoon as winter approached saw Xavier sitting at the side of a boat gazing abroad for ideas. The family castle with its turrets and moat appeared beautiful but barren in the dank afternoon. *'Eureka'* he exclaimed in a flash of genius which little did he know would influence the boat world for centuries to come *'I will brighten this craft with gaily adorned castles to remind me of the mellow morns of Summer. And I will imbue them with that most quintessential of summer flowers, the rose !'*

At that precise sublime moment his ecstasy was stymied by the arrival of a former cross-dressing acquaintance of his deceased father, attired in a frock with a crown resting on his head and a pair of cellophane wings on his back. *'Hallo Xavier'* said the newcomer *'I've been out all day selling Christmas trees and I've just got this one left. Where do you think I could stick it ?'*

So now you know, dear friends, how roses and castles came to be painted on your boat. And also why the fairy sits on top of your Christmas tree. Merry Christmas from all in Ward 6.

**Graham Fisher**  
**July 2002**