

# THE DAY THE WORLD MISSED THE NEWS

This is a true story. Around 1947 my company was engaged in the maintenance of Public buildings and a 'brickie' and his mate were despatched to the top of Big Ben, for minor repairs. The 'brickie' was Bill Duran and his stocky but thick mate was Charlie Rook. Panting their way to the top of the clock tower, a Ministry official showed them the repainting, etc. and then the keeper of the clock uttered a fateful warning! 'Please be quiet at noon, as the BBC transmits the chime preceding the 'World News'.

A wicked glint came to Charlie's eyes! Sure enough at noon, the Westminster Carillon thundered out its sixteen boingg preamble and then - BOINGG !! S\*#\* - a four-letter expletive echoed around the world!! BOINGG !! - A\*#####s - an even worse nine-letter ditto shattered the fabric of the Empire!! BOINGG!! - B\*### - a five-letter oath sent mothers in Manitoba shooing their children out of log cabins, and pedal-driven generators in the Australian Outback ground to a disbelieving halt. BOINGG!! - Charlie was now in full obscenity and a further expletive sent rubber planters in Malaya bouncing backwards and tea growers in the Raj stirred to the core. BOINGG!! - F\*#####\* - Charlie's repertoire was limitless, and grizzled African goldminers couldn't believe their grizzled ears. BOINGG!! - but by now, a stunned BBC technician switched off the BOINGGS, and what sounded like a world-wide round of applause for Charlie's dirty debut, was merely ten million or so colonials clapping their hands over their daughters' ears.

There was a pregnant silence all over the globe as men fanned their prostrate wives, and then - 'This is the BBC World Service, Here is the News' - but the world was not listening. Seeds of Independence were sown that day. Come to think of it, Charlie Rook was probably responsible for the Dissolution of the British Empire !!!.

**Eric Stokes**

*taken from Port Isaac - Harbour of Love, published 1994*