

SCRIPT – Land of Green Ginger

KF Draft 2nd April

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SYNOPSIS

In Hull city centre, an underground chamber is discovered containing a cache of packing cases, all marked with the words “To Hull, from Land of Green Ginger.”

The cases do not behave entirely normally – emanating sounds and smells for example - and are moved to a different location in order that they can be investigated fully.

An organisation called “the Green Ginger Fellowship” takes custody of the crates, cataloguing and reporting on the finds and expounding theories about this peculiar discovery. The Fellowship is a group of enthusiasts, professionals with an interest in local myth and legend.

Just as the Fellowship is getting into its stride, opening the crates from the central cache, another set of crates – identical to those found in the city centre – is discovered near to the Freedom Centre in East Hull. This time the crates are marked with more information – dates, times and a location.

On the appointed dates, in the specified location, a mythical world opens up and the “audience” who have gathered there bear witness to an old myth from their neighbourhood coming to life. At the end, they are handed a paper with some unintelligible references on it.

The Institute report on what happened and try to decipher what the references on the paper mean. They are also opening more crates which reveal other strange artefacts and documents.

Another crate is found in Longhill which leads to a series of events and activities galvanising the community in that area.

Crates are also opened in the central cache which require the Fellowship to carry out certain actions. They find themselves caught up in the story, not just investigating but also helping to carry out the actions which move the story forward. They find clues in each Act which only become clear when another story unfolds in another neighbourhood.

More Acts of Wanton Wonder take place across the city, bringing curiosity, collective spirit, humour, contemplation, the Fellowship start to knit together their theory about why this is all happening now. The series of events culminates with a parade through the city centre, past the Land of Green Ginger – joyful and wild and thrilling and unforgettable – containing references to all of the other Acts.

The final findings of the Institute are simple. They say that the Land of Green Ginger isn't a place, but the intangible Spirit of Hull. It's a way of behaving and believing that anything is possible, of laughing and embracing what's thrown at you. Sometimes this spirit needs renewing and at those times, the crates reappear to unleash the behaviour again.

It's a bit like the very normal practice of "putting away childish things" when you become grown up and that it's not until you dig them out again for grandchildren that you remember how things were and how much fun you had. We have been handed a sense of wonder and magic and possibility and curiosity which should change the way we behave. Now we ought to find a way to pack a piece of that away for future generations, the next time that sense of wonder needs to be renewed.

Some weeks after the final Act, the Fellowship start collecting artefacts and memories from the Acts of Wanton Wonder. They pack them away into one of the original crates. This crate is to be kept safe.

A few months later, brown envelopes, stamped with the Land of Green Ginger stencil start arriving on people's doormats. When opened they are found to contain a book which is full of beautifully drawn adventures of the city of Hull when it became the Land of Green Ginger and played host to Acts of Wanton Wonder.

PROLOGUE

There once was a land that nobody believed existed. And every day people passed by it or around it or over it or through it, but never once saw it or felt it or heard it or knew any person or thing in it. Until, one day, the land revealed itself..

In preparation for Hull's year as City of Culture, the Council has carried out a huge programme of public realm improvement. The city centre was thoroughly dug up, lines of orange barriers interrupted usual walking routes, businesses were disrupted and disgruntlement was rife.

During this process, workers made an interesting find, near to the junction of Whitefriargate and Land of Green Ginger, when they happened upon what appeared to be the roof of a previously unknown underground chamber. Further investigation showed this to be an annexe of various other vaults and cellars under buildings in that area.

Workers broke through to this previously unopened chamber to find inside a cache of neatly stacked packing crates, each stencilled with "To Hull from Land of Green Ginger."

An investigation was instructed and the find reported to the press.

WEEK OF 3RD APRIL

A newspaper article with photos appears describing the find. It explains that the crates were discovered some weeks previously. Some have been x-rayed and found to contain books and other unidentifiable objects. Some of the crates are behaving oddly, ringing with the sound of bells for example. The crates cannot yet be opened as they need to be acclimatised first. Garry Taylor, from Hull City Council Major Projects talks about the find to the press. Humber Archaeology Partnership are also quoted. They have passed on the find to a group of local enthusiasts and professionals with a specific interest in local history.

A few days later, a follow up article appears, profiling this group: "The Green Ginger Fellowship". This group first banded together some years previously. Including Archaeologists, Academics and Scientists as well as interested enthusiasts, they had initially started out meeting to look into and explore all aspects of local history and particularly local mythology – such as the Beast of Barmstone

Drain. They had also developed a specific interest in the unusual street name of Land of Green Ginger. They believed that there was more to the street name than whimsy or linguistic confusion.

With this recent discovery, somebody at Humber Archaeology Partnership had remembered the group and got in touch with the founder members to see if they would be interested in taking the crates and investigating the contents. They have already opened one crate in-situ, but the contents immediately vaporised, leaving only an empty crate with the words “Acts of Wanton Wonder are coming.” They plan to move the rest of the crates before opening to better preserve the contents.

They talk, with some confidence and knowledge, of the probability of the cases containing artefacts that are of the utmost curiosity to students of the weird and wonderful. They talk about the kind of mythologies that have no physical evidence but still remain somewhere in the psyche and folklore of the communities. They are looking forward, with great excitement, to unearthing some hidden mythology -and who knows what this might unleash!

For those who go looking at www.greenginger.org they find background on the group, details of “the members” and blog posts reiterating the above. There is also a facebook group to sign up to to follow the details of this fascinating discovery.

WEEK OF 10TH APRIL

The Fellowship has set up a temporary HQ in Hull. Their members – or associates - in branded overalls and truck, have started to move the crates to the HQ so that they can be acclimatised. The crates billow green smoke as they are driven around and people start to report sightings on social media. HDM run another story on this including statements from witnesses.

They reveal that some of the crates are stamped with more specific locations and dates, some of them seem to contain a library of book and some of them seem to contain bells which ring at odd times. The Fellowship start documenting their findings and posting blog posts, short videos and photographs of what they are finding.

The Fellowship also take out an advertisement in the Hull Daily Mail and distribute leaflets around the place saying “Acts of Wanton Wonder are coming. Have you seen this mark [Land of Green Ginger mark]. Report sightings and any other strange and unexplained occurrences to www.greenginger.org “

Later in the week, they reveal that they have opened a smaller crate because it was ringing loudly with the sound of bells. Inside they found a beautiful glass bottle with a scroll of paper inserted. The scroll indicates that the residents of Preston Road should be invited to join the search for the Seven Alleys and some other coded information which they are working on deciphering.

WEEK OF 17TH APRIL

On the morning of 19th April, there is a buzz around the Freedom Centre as, overnight, a pile of huge packing crates have arrived. Each bears the stamp “To Hull from Land of Green Ginger” and also the words “7 Alleys, 3rd-6th May, East Park”. Around lunchtime, peoples start reporting that they have also received flyers through their letterbox. The flyers are from the Green Ginger Fellowship, inviting the people of the area to come and witness what they believe is going to be an “Act of Wanton Wonder”.

The GGF post on their website that they have deciphered the coded message and now have full details of an Act of Wanton Wonder which is to take place in East Park on the appointed dates. They believe that the old East Hull myth of 7 Alleys is about to reawakened. They are confident it won't be dangerous, but are advising people to take certain precautions and also asking people to register on their facebook event page if they are thinking of joining the search for 7 alleys. They admit that they can't explain the appearance of the packing crates in the area, but verify that they appear to be identical to those found in the central cache.

A few days later, reports are made of a beautiful carriage pulled by two black stallions in full regalia parading through the streets. It bears the sign of 7 Alleys. People remember the carriage from last year and this time it again appears to be carrying messages in bottles to select people in the area.

Week of 24th April

The GGF interview one of the bottle recipients and photograph the message. This invitation is from the Seven Alleys and dares the holder to bring 7 friends along on the same dates and times circulated by the GGF.

Strange things continue to occur. The Land of Green Ginger mark starts appearing in East Park and the surrounding area. The crates at the Freedom centre start making more noise. To allay concerns, the GGF decide to move the crates to East Park in case they become more volatile. The horse and carriage is also reported to have been seen around East Park and Holderness Road area.

WEEK OF 1st MAY

From Wednesday 3rd to Saturday 6th May, the public go to East Park to search for the Seven Alleys. They gather at the entrance to the park, excited and nervous, under a 7 Alleys signpost. Out of the darkness, the horse and carriage appear and start to lead the audience up a central walkway, lit with lanterns.

The audience are led into the flickering landscape until, reaching a dark area of the park, they are halted and wait in anticipation. Suddenly, lamp-lights high on poles either side of them flicker into life. Without forewarning the audience have arrived in the 7th Alley.

Action and imagery unfold in the expanse of field on either side of the 'alley' through alternating scenes, firstly on one side, then on the other. This expanse becomes a magical realm, a space where the imagination can conjure strange and beautiful realities, where characters and images appear, disappear and reappear elsewhere in the blink of an eye. The work takes the images of the 7 alleys apparitions and characters, like the White Lady, Bubble Boy and Statue that weeps, and reimagines these with a local historical root. The ash people are revealed to be the evacuees who migrated to East Hull as a direct impact of the blitz bombing of the city.

As the performance concludes, a confetti drop of burnt pages drifts across the site. The audience find that the pages they have gathered carry a story about the mythical Wild Boar of Bransholme and mention of a talisman which protects the area (or parts of architectural drawings, or a part of a constitution for a Guild). They are nonplussed, wondering what connection this has to the sight they have just witnessed.

WEEK OF 8th MAY

The Fellowship is inundated by people asking them to explain what just happened, what does the page mean, are these crates dangerous, what might we expect next? They report to the papers and social media that they have no concrete answers, but they believe that this was probably just the first Act in a series of “Acts of Wanton Wonder”. They have found a book which tells of several other crates having been deposited throughout Hull and each day they are unearthing more artefacts and clues from the crates in the original cache. They have recently gone through a stash of smaller crates with a particular aroma to them, which also carry an additional stencil “GNNG Bransholme”. They report that they found architectural drawings and designs and a number of fittings which they believe to be the instructions to recreate a space. They are unsure what the purpose of this space is.

The Fellowship is contacted by Louise Smith of Northpoint Shopping Centre. She has become intrigued by the Land of Green Ginger activity and asks the GGF if they would like the use of an empty shop unit to attempt to recreate the environment described by the contents of the cases.

Week of 15th May

HDM print an article about Margaret, from the Longhill Allotments, who reports that she has several crates stacked in an abandoned shed. She has already opened them and there are 10 tabards, bells, shoes and hats in each. She’s also discovered a constitution for “The Green Ginger Guild of Commoners.”

This is reported in the press and on social media. The Institute report that they are in contact with Margaret to advise her following other discoveries they are making in the central cache.

She’s taken it upon herself to follow the instructions in the constitution and is recruiting volunteers through a network of Longhill organisations and institutions. Within the constitution is a directive that demands that its members “create and display Acts of Wanton Wonder that originate from life experience, manifest in all forms and celebrating the spirit of place.” So that’s what she plans to do.

WEEK OF 22nd MAY

The Fellowship has taken up Northpoint shopping centre’s offer and delivers the GNNG Bransholme crates to the atrium. The aroma of ginger hangs around the crates

The Green Ginger Fellowship report that they have found a strange golden object in another crate. It looks important but they are not sure what it is. The Hull Daily Mail print an article about this and ask the public if they can identify it, pointing them towards the GGF website to log theories.

A member of the public identifies it as the Gold Nose of Green Ginger, dug up when the foundations of the Bransholme estate were being laid, 50 years ago. At the time, there were many theories for where it came from – including one about a Wild Boar, which they link to the pages left behind after the 7 Alleys story – and for the magical properties it had, including the luck it could bestow on an area. However, it was lost shortly afterwards and hasn’t been seen since.

The GGF realise that the plans which have been unearthed relate to this object and that this has been fated to happen. The Golden Nose has returned to Bransholme and must be placed in its enchanted house.

WEEK OF 29th MAY

Gradually the crates at Northpoint disappear into the shop unit as the build takes place. The GGF and Northpoint reveal that the space will be ready to receive its first guests on Saturday 17th June.

[GGF also reports, this week, on finding some strange bits of apparatus in a crate which later turn out to relate to the Re-rediffusion project.]

WEEK OF 5th JUNE

The GGF go to visit the Guild of Commoners who are now meeting regularly. The GGF find out that the group has established a Guildhall on the estate and is creating a series of performances and artworks – particularly inspired by the rivers which provide the names for many of the streets. They hope the wider community of Hull will come and experience their works. The GGF take a closer look at the Longhill Crates and establish that there are some cryptic clues contained in them. The Guild is not willing to give up their crates to the central investigation yet, however.

WEEK OF 12th JUNE

On Saturday 17th June, the Gold Nose of Green Ginger is to be delivered to Northpoint. Announced by bugle calls, the appointed Nose Guardian, dressed in a nose tunic and accompanied by banner bearers takes the nose from the Fellowship and walks it through the shopping centre in a solemn procession to its new home which has been prepared in readiness.

This marks the beginning of a two-month period of activity in Nobody Nose, an enchanted house, a social space, a space for collective and individual activity where visitors can make wishes to the Gold Nose, take part in Nose Flute classes, have their own nose cast, build a relationship with the Nose Guardian and so on.

WEEK OF 19th JUNE

Excavations are going on at the former Rediffusion Head Quarters on Beverley Road. This is led by the legacy/heritage group “Re-Rediffusion” who are researching the history of the organisation and are keen to learn more about the network which used to exist under the city and this central hub point.

As the hole gets larger it becomes clear that there is a packing crate in the ground. The crate is unearthed and found to match the Land of Green Ginger crates. The crates contain books, documents and some contraptions. Naturally, Re-rediffusion call in the Green Ginger Fellowship who immediately realise that the contraptions connect to something they found in a central crate a few weeks earlier.

WEEK OF 26th JUNE

Re-rediffusion and the Fellowship decipher the documents and realise that the contraptions are designed to capture the Essence of Voice. They work together to get the apparatus working again and someone from Re-rediffusion guest blogs on the Fellowship website about the project.

Later that week, operatives are sent out with the voice collecting apparatus. Before they go out there is a photo shoot moment / press call showing the operatives in their gear and asking people to contribute their voice. They visit schools, groups, sports games and begin to extract people’s voices into a cloud of vapour which is sucked back into the collecting device. As the vessels become full they are decanted into an incubator in the Re-rediffusion van.

[Potentially Fellowship update on activity in Longhill to start to build audience].

WEEK OF 3rd JULY

Further voice collecting takes place. Meanwhile, the members of Re-rediffusion and the Green Ginger Fellowship are getting on so well that they form a joint team to take part in the pub quiz.

At the weekend, the public activity starts on the Longhill Estate as the Guild of Commoners present a series of works which inspire people to explore the estate, its history and all it has to offer.

WEEK OF 10th JULY

Further voice collecting takes place by Re-rediffusion.

The Guild of Commoners presentations continue. Perhaps one of the stories is of an ancient member of the Guild who was (like Gulliver) coerced by some tiny people to stand guard while they constructed a secret metropolis. This story is dismissed as fantasy, but the tinkling of tiny bells and the presentation, by the Guild, of some tiny clothes and a boat made of a take-away dish is enough to get us questioning the veracity of the claims.

The pieces celebrate collective activity in song and movement. The Guild are also gathering materials, adding them to a sculptural form which is growing in size over the week. On the final night the pieces are all performed and, as a culmination, the sculptural form is burned as a beautiful bonfire. The crowds gather round, enjoy the heat and share conversations. Among the fire are the Green Ginger crates, which they have burned, so that the Guild may live in perpetuity, free of the constraints of the past.

WEEK OF 17th JULY

The Fellowship are in uproar about the burning of the crates. It has upset the harmony of the discoveries and goes back on the promise the Guild made to allow them to further investigate the cryptic clues within those crates which might have helped to explain why all this is happening now and what the purpose of it is. This bonfire could jeopardise their research and collation of an invaluable resource for the people of Hull. They go back to the books and documents they have found in the central cache to try and follow the threads by another route.

WEEK OF 24th JULY

WEEK OF 31st JULY

The Fellowship and Re-rediffusion release an update on the voice collecting project. The voice vessels are relatively volatile now and they realise they are behaving like a colony. They issue a call out for a site which they can use for the next phase of the project. It needs to be an aquatic or watery site because of the vapour that the voices were originally captured in. They also encourage people to contribute their voice to the project online.

WEEK OF 7th AUGUST

Various people reply with aquatic sites which are unsuitable (Stanley's garden pond, the Deep, the lake at East Park). The gardener from Pickering Park has written to the Fellowship, offering the paddling pool as the Aquatic Site.

WEEK OF 14th AUGUST

After a period the Golden Nose of Bransholme has received so many wishes that it starts to appear unstable. The Fellowship suggest that the nose is overloaded with goodwill and needs to be moved to a space where it can breathe more easily. The Nose Guardian plans a procession to send the Nose off and take it into safe keeping for the city.

On the day, the Nose Guardian leads a processions out of Northpoint Shopping Centre. Banner bearers mark a path. People of Bransholme wear false noses, nose masks and full body nose costumes. Outside the shopping centre a horse and carriage has arrived, carrying an important guest (an official or royal). They have come to collect the Golden Nose and take it into safe keeping.

The Nose Guardian gives the VIP a tour of Nobody Nose, showing how it has been used. Finally, with a fanfare of nose flutes and bugles, the Guardian carries the Gold Nose of Green Ginger in its casket, and the sealed box of wishes on a velvet cushion, out to the horse and carriage and it is taken away.

By the time people return to Northpoint, the windows are already painted out. Nobody Nose has gone.

WEEK OF 21ST AUGUST

WEEK OF 28TH AUGUST

WEEK OF 4TH SEPTEMBER

Further voice collecting takes place by Re-rediffusion but this is now focused around Hessle Road and Pickering Park area.

The Fellowship ship out crates to Pickering Park which contain some of the voice vessels which are going to be installed. The public can't see this, but they can hear sounds emanating from the crates and other signs of activity.

WEEK OF 11TH SEPTEMBER

Voices continue to be gathered.

WEEK OF 18TH SEPTEMBER

At the weekend, the public are able to see and experience what was being installed at Pickering Park. The Super-voice installation is a system which houses and rediffuses all of the vocal components collected in a kind of voice pool. There are 30-40 voice vessels that you can walk amongst, ranging in shape and scale from the size of a melon to an 8 foot bass pod. They resonate with sounds and pulse with sound reactive light.

The vessels are also connected to a distillation system. The Re-rediffusion engineers are tapping this to bottle the essence of Hull's voice. Small vials of this are given to members of the public to take away with them, making them agents in the rediffusion of the power of Hull's voice.

WEEK OF 25TH SEPTEMBER

The Voice Installation continues.

The Fellowship report on a crate they have been investigating. Try as they might, they can't prise it open. However, they have drilled some holes in the sides and it appears to be filled with tiny

artefacts, furniture and so on, but it appears to be uninhabited. This crate reads “For delivery to Springhead Pumping Station”

WEEK OF 2ND OCTOBER

People start reporting tiny footprints in the vicinity of Springhead. Tiny paraphernalia is found across the area and photographed

The Fellowship send the crate out to the Pumping Station where it stays, outside the gates.

Then people start reporting that invitations have been sent to door, requesting their company at the Pumping Station on certain dates.

WEEK OF 9TH OCTOBER

Signs of life are seen at the usually dark Pumping Station. Lights are seen flickering across windows and the occasional burst of what looks like fireworks. When passer-by peep into the holes in the side of the crate, they are astonished to find movement in there too. Tiny people can be seen, arranging things, readying themselves.

WEEK OF 16TH OCTOBER

The Fellowship report that as well as having uncovered a vast array of tiny paraphernalia, they have also found the complete opposite – over-sized artefacts, clothes and instruments. They spend a lot of time posting comparison pictures.

On Friday 20th October the [Pumping Station] opens its gates and the public are allowed inside. Within they find a giant and spectacular cityscape inhabited by little people. They look like they’ve been there since the doors of the building were first closed. Numerous detailed vignettes show different aspects of the little people's life, collecting the everyday waste from Hull and reusing and recycling it, adapting its intended purpose for their own existence.

The audience will be lead through a maze of suburban sprawl, which is illuminated by buildings, train tracks, street lights and detailed scenes of little people going about their everyday life. This labyrinth will eventually open out into the centrepiece - a giant cityscape, a bustling and spectacular hive of activity made of the re-appropriated detritus and quotidian objects. There are several Land Of Green Ginger crates among the cityscape.

Many wonders are witnessed including tiny versions of local people. There is a tiny Hull Fair and a shipping port with ships made of take away dishes. A tiny horse and carriage races across some scenes.

WEEK OF 23RD OCTOBER

The public continue to be delighted by the cardboard metropolis of the tiny people.

The Fellowship report that some of the tiny footprints appear to have grown into considerably larger footprints.

A giant crate appears at the junction of Whitefriargate and Land of Green Ginger. Periodically it rings with the now familiar sound of bells and, at times, is joined by the same tune played on the bells of Guildhall to the North and Holy Trinity to the South.

The crate carries a date and time, a stylised map and the legend “Land of Green Ginger Unleashed.” The Fellowship report that they believe the full potential of the Land of Green Ginger has almost been reached and there will be some kind of mass gathering at the appointed time.

WEEK OF 30TH OCTOBER

Other crates begin to appear around the city centre along the route shown by the map they all carry.

On the final night of viewing the Cardboard Metropolis, a row of tiny people is seen, carrying various belongings down a mouse hole. Outside, they can be seen disappearing back into the crate.

The Fellowship remove the crate back to the HQ for further investigation and the doors of the [Pumping Station] are closed firm again.

WEEK OF 6TH NOVEMBER

The Fellowship reports – with a mixture of excitement and alarm – that the tiny people crate has started to grow. Each day it gets bigger and one day the address on the outside changes to “Queens Dock Avenue, 12th November”. The Fellowship know that they need to follow the instructions of the Land of Green Ginger, so that they can fully understand and report on the Acts of Wanton Wonder.

On Sunday 12th November, the Fellowship move the now giant crate to the address on its side. As the time approaches, a company of strange and wonderful characters appears around Saville Street. Crowds of curious people gather along the route.

The company begin to parade and as they come to the enormous crate, it opens to reveal [a giant] inside, which leads the parade on through the streets. Strange giants, kinetic structures, masks, music and performance, sparks and smoke. They have all the behaviours of a cast of people who are confident of their ability to encourage imagination, reflection, reinvention, contemplation, having your voice heard, taking action, being inventive, inquisitive and bigger than your size.

The parade is punctuated by familiar figures from the Land of Green Ginger: ash people, people wearing false noses, the Guild of Commoners, a black stallion, winged this time, even the re-rediffusion gang.

The parade passes the Guildhall and the bells ring out with the same tune heard across many of the Acts of Wanton Wonder; it passes the end of the Land of Green Ginger and is joined by [XXX]. It moves through the old town and towards the Humber. At the rear of the parade is a platform carrying a timeless, ageless figure. She carries a book and reads/sings aloud:

There once was a Land that nobody believed existed. And every day people passed by it or around it or over it or through it, but never once saw it or felt it or heard it or knew any person or thing in it.

Until, one day, the Land revealed itself...

And because of that, people began to believe and behave in all sorts of strange and wonderful ways. They wanted to leave work and play and wonder and be part of this amazing world. They wanted to share it with friends and family and neighbours and visitors and strangers.

And because of that, this real world changed too. The status quo was not so fixed and people questioned things they had always accepted.

Until one day, the Land started to fade away and things began to return to something more akin to normal, but traces and reminders and changes remained.

Perhaps, one day, the Land of Green Ginger will return, but for now, our world is a little more like it.

Pack it away. Keep it safe. Pass it on. Until next time...

WEEK OF 13TH NOVEMBER

The final findings of the Fellowship are simple. They say that this practice of packing away memory and possibility was not a simple act of placing history in a time capsule to be discovered; it was, in fact, a way of changing people's daily practices and behaviours in light of the need to conform to a greater good. It's a bit like the very normal practice of "putting away childish things" when you become grown up and it's not until you dig them out again for grandchildren that you remember how things were and how much fun you had.

The Fellowship is concerned that this practice must be continued and has resolved to capture some of the power of this unleashing of the Land of Green Ginger for whenever it might be called on again. They are gathering together artefacts and memories and packing them into one last crate: a fossil or time-capsule to be lodged in the Land of Green Ginger.

SOME TIME IN THE FUTURE

Brown envelopes, stamped with the Land of green Ginger stencil start arriving on people's doormats. When opened they are found to contain a book which is full of beautifully drawn adventures of the city of Hull when it became the Land of Green Ginger and played host to Acts of Wanton Wonder.