

## a chronological list of the comic strips in look & learn

sprinkled randomly about among the factual articles in the 1000 odd issues of look & learn were various comic strips of varying quality. despite the fact that the magazines themselves are not remotely scarce, because the decent comic strip material has hitherto been difficult to locate they have been undervalued + underappreciated by the sort of people who normally buy 60s + 70s comics. this file should help to rectify that: knowing where things start + finish ought to enable anyone to navigate through the mags more easily + hopefully ultimately find a wider audience for a few forgotten masterpieces (check the art on eg montezuma's daughter if you think that's an exaggeration)

the list below is in three sections (before + after merging with ranger, with a section on ranger in between) + goes up as far as 859. the only long running comic strip appearing from 860 to the last issue was the trigon empire, which either consisted of don lawrence reprints or new material which featured artwork so terrible in comparison with what the strip was like in its heyday you're better off not knowing about it

### ranger

ranger combined with look & learn at 232, importing its comic strips + eventually orienting the magazine away from being a family general knowledge paper + directing it more at a schoolboy audience.

although copies of ranger bear a cover date but no issue number, from memory all the people to whom I've sold the magazine have identified which issues they were after by the numbers of the prize crossword (1 -> 40) on the interior. I've opted to stick to this system: cover dates follow crossword (ie issue) numbers in the list

### annuals

to the best of my knowledge all the look & learn annuals contained only factual material. they appear to have been designed as an educational resource, divided into sections by subject matter + incorporating quiz questions at the end of each section to test your recall of the preceding information

there were one or two look & learn summer specials which could have had anything in - no one I've met has ever read one

the two ranger annuals contain what appear to be reprints of factual articles, perhaps from early issues of look & learn, although there may be new ones in there as well. there is a certain amount of factual comic strip material in these annuals which has also been omitted from the list below as it was thought highly likely to be reprinted from an earlier source, although judging from the length of these strips they cannot have been reprinted from look & learn

the fictional comic strips in both annuals had not been previously published in either magazine. note these strips are long compared to the weekly episodes - eg there are 15 pages of dan dakota in each annual

### omitted material

factual photo sequences (mostly in ranger) have been deemed to be outside the scope of a list of sequential art. these featured stuff like USAF planes overshooting aircraft carriers, a bank raid, + even one of a mini rolling over two photographers. that sort of thing is a lot scarcer in look & learn

comic strip techniques (page layouts, etc) are used for a lot of the features in look & learn, usually when they're on historical or geographical topics. these have been excluded as well on the grounds that they do not have much if any narrative to them

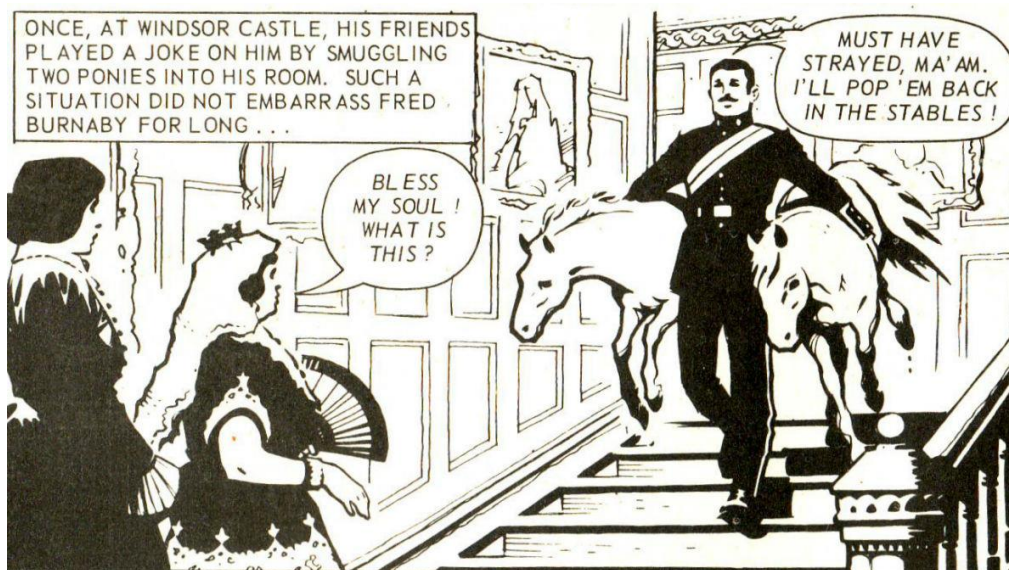
note the borderline between a comic strip + a sequence of paragraphs interspersed with illustration art gets crossed all the time in look & learn. try to locate + read the following

roger's rangers, [cap] [fac] if it's a comic strip, in L&L 420 -> 434

this + numerous similar cases have been judged to fall the wrong side of the border + omitted. roger's rangers consists of historical events in north america circa 1750, told with sometimes as few as three prose paragraphs alternated with or superimposed on images by ron embleton. as such it does not really count as a comic strip at the level of the individual episode, but it could technically appear here because it comes across as similar enough to one of the factual strips like howard carter from 113 -> 117 if you read the episodes consecutively. you can tell the publisher didn't think this was a comic strip because they put an art credit on it: 'illustrations by r embleton'

the acid test of whether it is or not is to ask yourself could you tell what the story was by ignoring the words + using the pictures on their own. my view is you can't tell who specific characters are + need to use too much of your own imagination to fill in the gaps, + perhaps there are multiple stories the reader could imagine, so it isn't a comic strip but it is a good read with high class artwork which is why I've picked it as an example

the only proper comic strip material which has been left out is anything with only one instalment, usually on a single page, where there is no continuous story



there is a lot of this + it is almost never worth the effort of locating + reading because of its brief summary nature. the eg above (the Frederick Burnaby episode of bravest of the brave from L&L 455) is a major exception

advertising - eg supermousse + sir lastalot and ye nights of ye rountrees table where there is no continuing story has also been excluded. these things start to appear in the early 70s + although they may have nostalgia value for a specific population their artistic credentials are small enough to merit their omission for that reason as well

## reprints

are not identified even when they are obvious (asterix: pilote), except when the strip in question has already appeared earlier on the list

## key to abbreviations etc

[cap] caption comics

[ad] comic strip adaptations of pre existing literature

[fac] factual comic strips

as has just been stated with the exception of long running serials factual comic strips are not identified in look + learn, although as there were so few in ranger + most of them were borderline cases they do appear in the list

assume everything that isn't [ad] or [fac] to be original material

[ . . . ] an ellipsis before or after the issue number indicates a strip originally in ranger continued past the last issue into look & learn

## look & learn 1 -> 231

howard carter [cap] [fac] 113 -> 117

the travels of marco polo [cap] [fac] 141 -> 148

the last of the mohicans [cap] [ad] 147 -> 158

the first fictional comic strip serial before the merge with ranger

the epic voyage of admiral anson [cap] [fac]  
149 -> 158

men of the jolly roger [cap] [fac] 161 -> 168

this (a history of piracy) has been included as there are narratives in there

the ten thousand mile motor race [cap] [fac]  
173 -> 178

a continuous run of comic strip versions of the works of shakespeare, all [cap] + [ad] (+ perhaps the histories technically count as [fac] as well), start in issue 173 + are listed continuously below

some (all?) of these bear the credit 'taken from 'let's discover shakespeare' by geoffrey murray' ie they may have been reprinted wholesale from this source. if they are, this is not a

book worth hunting down - the captions read like summaries of the events of the story, rather than a sequence of enthralling prose reductions of the play's dialogue. note the adaptation of othello is so awful the title character has been drawn as white

king henry the fifth	173 -> 182
julius caesar	183 -> 190
hamlet	191 -> 198
king henry IV part one	199 -> 206
king lear	207 -> 214
pericles prince of tyre	215 -> 223
othello	224 ...

the list returns here to original material starting during henry IV above:

the briggs family emigrate [cap]	200 -> 210
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this is extraordinary - it reads like advice (encouragement?) for families about how to get out of the UK, with historical or geographical facts inserted pertaining to the locations on the journey. this is so odd I thought it was worth mentioning even though it almost certainly ought not to appear here at all

the bayeux tapestry [cap] [fac]	212 -> 214
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this is even more extraordinary - the continuous sequence of the story as it was originally embroidered has been subdivided into rows + captioned so it can be understood by 1960s comic readers in a format with which they are familiar

the only remaining fictional comic strip serial which ran before the merge with ranger was

coral island [cap] [ad]	215 -> 228
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+ there were two last factual series:

the taming of the west [cap] [fac]	217 -> 221
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as with men of the jolly roger this strip (the history of the western states of the US becoming less wild) has been included as there are great stories told within it

the fastest men on earth [cap] [fac]	221 -> 229
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## ranger 1 -> 40

the trigan empire	1 [18 sep 65] ...
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rob riley	1 [18 sep 65] ...
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space cadet [cap] 1 [18 sep 65] ...

it's difficult to work out why this was so popular, + we have to assume it was because of the length it went on for: a science fiction strip running at the same time as the trigan empire would be expected to compare with that badly (+ it does). what L&L readers saw in it is a mystery, although to be fair you can hardly criticise space cadet for being uneventful: inside the duration of three episodes the cast find themselves rescuing a space station from pirates, crash landing on a planet of giants + taking sides in a war on it. things don't happen at that speed in any other UK comic strip I can think of

macbeth [ad + fac: history but based on a play] 1 [18 sep 65] -> 11 [27 nov 65]

treasure island [cap] [ad] 1 [18 sep 65] -> 19 [22 jan 66]

asterix + the big fight 1 [18 sep 65] -> 40 [18 jun 66]

in a different translation serialised at one page per issue

king solomon's mines [cap] [ad] 5 [16 oct 65] -> 22 [12 feb 66]

blood on the prairie [cap] [ad + fac: history but based on a novel]

10 [20 nov 65] -> 31 [16 apr 66]

the globe mutiny [cap] [fac] 12 [04 dec 65] -> 17 [08 jan 66]

how dick turpin was unmasked [fac] 15 [25 dec 65] - one episode only

tyrant of rome [cap] [fac] 18 [15 jan 66] - one episode only

the demon king [ad + fac: history but based on a play]

20 [29 jan 66] -> 28 [26 mar 66]

moby dick [cap] [ad] 22 [12 feb 66] -> 27 [19 mar 66]

rip solar 22 [12 feb 66] -> 33 [30 apr 66]

dan dakota 23 [19 feb 66] -> 29 [02 apr 66]

32 [23 apr 66] -> 37 [28 may 66]

the black arrow [ad] 27 [19 mar 66] -> 40 [18 jun 66]

around the world in eighty days [ad] 29 [02 apr 66] -> 35 [14 may 66]

allan quartermain [cap] [ad] 29 [02 apr 66] -> 40 [18 jun 66]

sky ray - highway to the moon 32 [23 apr 66] ...

this was 1/2 a page of paid advertising in the form of a comic strip. each week it carried a new instalment of a continuing story. it has been included here a) because eagle had tommy walls in the 50s but also b) because it's a better read than rip solar

## ranger annual

the 1967 + 1968 annuals both contained the four regular original strips - the trigan empire in an eight page story by a different artist, rob riley, dan Dakota + space cadet by a different artist in b+w, + using speech balloons in 1968,

with asterix in 1967 only

this consists of one page about setting up a fair ground which is difficult to place because none of the main cast members are on it. it may be something edited out of the version of asterix + the big fight they published earlier in the year

additional strips (all of which could be reprinted from elsewhere):

1967

a disgrace to the service	(war)
monkey tricks	(funny)
danger man	(based on the tv show)

1968

the toledo mask	(the adventures of someone in a mask during the french revolution)
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note there is also a three page illustrated short story elsewhere in this annual about the same character

## look & learn 232 -> 859

when the titles initially merge the trigan empire + rob riley are reduced to 1.5 pages + space cadet is printed in black + white

also note the first episode of rodney stone is preceded by a half page summary of the story so far + a brief conan doyle bio

the eventual pattern for the ranger strips in look & learn is that they all run to one page each per week with the exception of the trigan empire which gets two

othello [cap] [ad] ... -> 233

rodney stone [cap] [ad] ... -> 238

sky ray - highway to the moon ... -> 242

space cadet [cap] ... -> 306  
rob riley ... -> 496  
the trigan empire ... -> 859  
asterix + cleopatra 232 -> 275

in a different translation serialised at one page per issue

the translator of the story previously serialised in ranger (the big fight) elected to identify the rebel village as consisting of ancient britons instead of gauls. the problem with that was the next story in order of original publication was asterix in britain, so they had to follow it with asterix + cleopatra which was in fact the preceding one

kidnapped [cap] [ad] 239 -> 250  
the story of perseus [cap] [ad] 239 -> 253

adapted from part of the heroes by charles kingsley

sir nigel [cap] [ad] 251 -> 270  
dan dakota 257 -> 396  
the three musketeers [ad] 271 -> 306

in its epic 36 part adaptation (72 pages in total) is the longest continuous comic strip story to appear in the magazine. art is signed giovannini

the rime of the ancient mariner [cap] [ad]  
307 -> 315

note the verse is exactly as coleridge wrote it - this has been identified as an [ad] partly because of the way the poem has been subdivided into captions for the image sequence + but mostly because it is (obviously) not an original comic strip script

the hound of the baskervilles [ad] 307 -> 318  
wildcat wayne 307 -> 433

the first original strip in look & learn not to come from ranger was wildcat wayne. this starts to come to life in issue 352 when wayne gets a sidekick called liz + the standard of the artwork picks up because it gets given to martin salvador

despite having three new strips starting in the same issue 307 is not a very good place to start reading L&L - you're in the middle of a story in all the main strips + as it says above wildcat wayne takes a long time to get going

montezuma's daughter [ad] 319 -> 346

the sign of four [ad] 347 -> 360

a man for the throne [cap] [fac] 355 -> 360

the count of monte cristo [ad] 361 -> 371

the life + death of king richard III [cap] [ad] + [fac] 367 -> 379

the demon king (ranger 20 [29 jan 66]) + the life + death of king richard III adapt the same play by shakespeare. the demon king qualifies as an adequate telling of the story, the life + death of king richard III is one of the worst strips they ever published: whoever adapted it seems to have decided there should be no drama at all in their version, although some of the poetry from the play appears in the (captioned) dialogue, so perhaps technically they're half way to adapting dramatic verse

ben-hur [ad] 373 -> 392

potts' progress 393 -> 402

kit carter's clarks commandos 397 -> 411

419 -> 427

449 -> 461

471 -> 480

501 -> 510

525 -> 534

554 -> 563

as with sky ray above this was paid advertising with a continuing story. let the sequence below speak for itself



tally ho lads + keep the british end up while you're doing it. the old values are very unfashionable these days but you can still get into them in fictional form

note although this was basically just advertising for shoes it ran to 97 pages altogether, which makes it the 7th longest running strip in the magazine



passport to adventure 403 -> 448

was not a great strip but an episode in L&L 407 has the protagonist + his female assistant escaping from a disguised gangster amazingly slowly due to her fear of chickens + inability to get over a fence. most stories with the word 'adventure' in the title would leave that scene out

the argonauts [cap] [ad] 416 -> 425

space rangers 434 -> 458

the legend of beowulf [cap] [ad] 440 -> 451

is by the same artist as the argonauts but for its premiere in L&L 440 it was given a fantastic ron embleton front cover. very few of the comic strips in look & learn were allowed to appear on the front of the magazine - I believe this is the first, + even if it isn't, it has to be the best so far by a country mile

the man from yesterday 449 -> 468

is an initially unsuccessful (but it gets better) horror strip which is getting a footnote here because it would never have appeared in look & learn during the 60s. it cannot be the first of its genre to appear in a UK weekly but there seems to have been a long drought of them immediately previous to it

the maze master 459 -> 472

fighting flynn 469 -> 486

bears close similarities to rodney stone. it's worth seeking out for what looks like the influence of superhero artists on the fight scenes

the king's musketeers [ad] 487 -> 505

the song of roland [ad] [cap] 495 -> 502

eagles over the western front 497 -> 612

note L&L 559 has the first appearance of pootle, who becomes a regular cast member

although slightly annoying because of what he looks like, he is worth mentioning because he gets the same storyline as the overweight guy in rob riley, when he saves a maharajah's life + receives the gift of an elephant

one of the best stories involved kaiser bill's parrot (L&L 594 -> 598), where the parrot repeats obscene stuff in french + is just about to be put down by an officer in the royal flying corps when it suddenly starts speaking german + reveals the kaiser's battle plans

the black pirate [cap] 506 -> 517

warlock 506 -> 522

there is a good reason why very few people remember this supernatural series + why it was so short lived - it was crap. with the exception of the life + death of king richard III there hadn't been a strip this weak since the last issues of ranger (moby dick - ouch - watch the film with gregory peck in it) + that includes bill lacey's early stuff

in fact, having reappraised warlock after writing the paragraph above I am now completely out of the closet about it - it's unreadable. the artwork contradicts some of the script, the spooky stuff has no suspense about it + worst of all the ending (the boy in question turns out not to have the potential to develop supernatural powers) undermines the whole point of the story: they might as well not have written it at all. sheesh

506 counts as a jumping on point for anyone interested in reading things from the beginning. the trigan empire + technically eagles over the western front start new stories in this issue as obviously do the titles listed above which make their debut. all four strips run to two pages in length. the only story you're in the middle of is the advert for clark's commandos, but the snag in this plan is the black pirate + warlock, which are about as weak as L&L strips ever got

the haunted liner 523 -> 532

is by the same artist who drew chairman cherry for princess tina

the knights of the round table [ad] [cap] 530 -> 541

is RH's first sequential art (signature 532) for the magazine, + is featured on the cover of 530 - only the second comic strip to receive this honour (after the legend of beowulf)

frazer's folly 533 -> 543

the art (by eric parker?) is very sketchy + looks more like the first draft or almost the thumbnails for a comic strip rather than the finished version

is it possible the explanation for the low quality strips appearing in L&L during this period is that they were rejects from other IPC titles - this policy definitely applied to one shot publications like annuals + specials where they needed to fill a larger than normal page count + thus resorted to scraping the bottom of the artwork barrel

the great sailor [fac] 535 -> 558

robinson crusoe - mariner [ad] [cap] 544 -> 555

horatius - the hero of rome [cap] [fac?] 556 -> 558

this story is old enough to be a myth, thus the '?' as to its factual status

the lost world [ad] [cap] 559 -> 573

has ok artwork when the dinosaurs start turning up + a great cover on L&L 562 (by a different artist?)

legends of the rhineland [ad] [cap] 559 -> 575

is adapted from wagner's version of various german legends, constitutes embleton's first proper comic strip (not counting filling in on the trigan empire) + features on the cover of 560

these two strips debuting make 559 a great jumping on point for new readers - the trigan empire + eagles over the western front start new stories as well (you're in the middle of a serial advert for clark's commandos again but nothing has really happened in it yet)

the crusader 574 -> 585

the legend of gudrun [ad] [cap] 581 -> 587

is the second of ron embleton's adaptations of german legends, with an excellent cover on 581

michael strogoff the courier of the czar [ad] [cap]  
586 -> 598

the legend of tannhauser [ad] [cap] 595 -> 599

the third embleton legend, featured on the cover of 595

a sword for the stadtholder 599 -> 608

tristan + isolde [ad] [cap] 600 -> 607

is the last of embleton's run + on the cover of 600

note altogether these four strips add up to only 37 pages of art but they represent perhaps the greatest eg of how look & learn did comic strips as distinct from other UK magazines: giving them four covers against the trigan empire's one may be evidence the editor believed that to be the case as well

the legend of richard the lion heart [ad] [cap]  
608 -> 610

the story of spartacus [ad] [cap] [fac] 609 -> 612

the trials of sir isumbras [ad] [cap] 611 -> 612

havelok the dane [ad] [cap] 613 -> 619

peter the whaler [ad] [cap] 613 -> 623

this is possible to have been drawn by the same artist as michael strogoff + perhaps the lost world as well. a fully painted cover for it appears on L&L 616

the man who searched for fear 613 -> 655

is the saving grace of L&L during this very lean period of reprints + the absence (from 630 -> 689) of don lawrence. the strip consists of a wide variety of different two or three part scary stories, all based in more or less realistic settings + without (very much of) the usual default genre tactic of resorting to supernatural phenomena

art is by bill lacey - compare the way he now successfully renders suspense with his work on the maze master

the two stories I remember are the one based on the fear of drowning in a swamp (L&L 638) + the one with the dinosaur (640). the format is to quickly establish simple relationships between a small cast of characters one of whom feels compelled to commit some sort of evil act. potentially the best of these tales features a mathematics genius who builds a chess playing automaton + programs it to out think him on the chess board. then it starts out thinking him in the rest of his life as well ...

613 is the second best issue at which to start reading L&L after 559. all the above new strips commence in it, as does the greatest trigan empire story they ever published - the one about the first landing on elekton's lesser moon (trailed as 'the evil from outer space' in L&L 612) - plus it comes with a free booklet: spotter in the country - 614 comes with spotter on the move

while I'm on the subject of L&L 614 it might be worth mentioning that there were two issues with that number - 614 20 Oct 73 (= 614) + 614 27 Oct 73 (= 615) - in case anyone is finding 615 difficult to track down

the only major snag (+ it is major) with starting reading at 613 is that the don lawrence art stops (for 59 issues) at 629. his strip is relaunched as 'more adventures from the trigan empire' in 635, drawn by an artist who (at least at the start of his run) makes gerry wood look like neal adams

the seige of malta [cap] [fac] 625 -> 628

the general who never was - [fac] 629 -> 631

the haunting of macbeth [ad + fac: history but based on a play]

632 -> 642

note this is a reprint of the macbeth strip from ranger 1 [18 sep 65] -> 11 [27 nov 65]

moby dick [cap] [ad] 643 -> 648

+ this is a reprint of the moby dick strip from ranger 22 [12 feb 66] -> 27 [19 mar 66]

the call of the wild [ad] [cap] 656 -> 662

number 13 marvel street 663 -> 706

the legend of rodrigo of vivar - better known as el cid [cap] [fac]

664 -> 671

the prestigious back cover slot for legends established by ron embleton gets an artist of equal quality - jesus blasco. I believe this series of legends are his first art for L&L (signature on 664) since montezuma's daughter. they're in colour as well. sweet.

the sea wolf [ad] [cap] 669 -> 678

the legend of ilya [ad] [cap] 676 -> 679

they challenged the giants of the skies 679 -> 682

black bartlemy's treasure [ad] [cap] 683 -> 700

martin conisby's revenge [ad] [cap] 701 -> 715

black bartlemy's treasure + martin conisby's revenge are adaptations of a series of consecutive novels by jeffery farnol, the first of which finishes with the hero's story unresolved. they run consecutively in L&L as well + basically constitute a continuous comic strip. art on both is by blasco

20,000 leagues under the sea [ad] [cap] 707 -> 717

agent of the queen 716 -> 723

740 -> 747

don quixote [ad] [cap] 718 -> 723

oliver twist [ad] [cap] 724 -> 739

724 is another potential place to start reading L&L. the trigan empire starts a new story here + oliver twist is a decent adaptation. the only negative issue is that there are now only four pages of comic strip material in the magazine

note 740 also commences two new comic strip stories (agent of the queen + the trigan empire again). additional negative issues are that agent of the queen isn't one of bill lacey's best - he peaked with eagles over the western front, the man who searched for fear + number 13 marvel street, + the clock is ticking very loud now on don lawrence - with 748 we are down to only two pages of sequential art, + those are the start of his last trigan empire story (ending in 752)

the fall of the house of usher [ad] [cap] 750 -> 751

tanglewood tales - the golden touch [ad] [cap]

753 -> 754

"the prince and the pauper" [ad] [cap] 758 -> 769

great expectations [ad] [cap] 770 -> 781

moby dick [ad] [cap] 786 -> 792

this is a different adaptation to the one previously published in L&L 643 -> 648 + ranger 22 [12 feb 66] -> 27 [19 mar 66]; also note the whale is not drawn all that white

westward ho! [ad] [cap] 798 -> 808

artist is baker - signature 805. it was he who drew the call of the wild in 656 -> 662, not to a very high standard, + he will go on to draw a tale of two cities starting in 827, which is where he suddenly starts getting genuinely good

treasure island [ad] [cap] 812 -> 826

this is a different adaptation to the one previously published in ranger 1 [18 sep 65] -> 19 [22 jan 66]

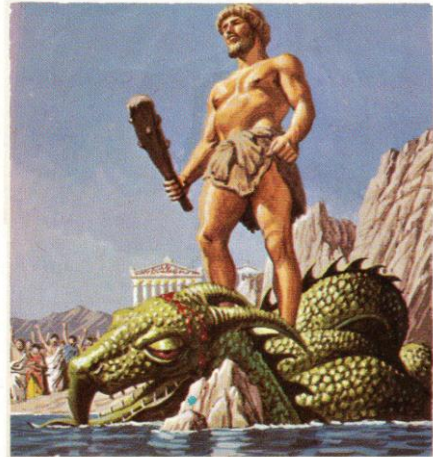
legends of ancient greece [ad] [cap] 821 -> 822

824 -> 827

833 -> 843

this series starts with a complete legend in each one page episode, so it would not be expected to be listed here, but as most of the stories run over several issues it has been

L&L 821 has an icarus cover; the story of the golden fleece is in four parts, starting in 833, with a great front cover for that as well. there is another complete story in 837 before the flying horse two parter. art is by roger payne up until 839 so these are worth reading, even if the short page count makes them more like summaries of events rather than the epic sagas they probably ought to be



a tale of two cities [ad] [cap] 827 -> 839

note the trigan empire also concludes its story in 839, as does legends of ancient greece (which switches to a different artist with 840). since all three comic strips end in this issue this is a good point to stop reading L&L if you still are: it doesn't get any better

the red badge of courage [ad] [cap] 840 -> 843

definitely stop reading here: the format of the magazine alters for the worse with 844, the illustration art takes a nose dive, + whoever is responsible for the trigan empire scripts does not seem to have read the strip before they started writing for it

ivanhoe [ad] [cap] 844 -> 859

the land of legend [ad] [cap] 844 -> 863

another series like legends of ancient greece which includes multi part stories + odd one page episodes

it adapts the misfortunes of sir isumbras in L&L 848 -> 852. this is a different version to that published as the trials of sir isumbras in 611 -> 612. they also present a two part version of havelok the dane again in 855 -> 856

ivanhoe stops here, an extremely weak trigan empire story stops here, + the land of legend has a complete one part story which stops at the end of the back page

do not allow curiosity, brand loyalty, or even someone making you a gift of L&L 860 to whatever number it went up to to influence your decision to stop reading here. just stop reading here: there are other magazines in the world - get your nose out of L&L + set off in quest of them

(unless you are a fan of arthur ranson, who was the artist on a very prose-heavy adaptation of

the hunchback of notre dame [ad] [cap] 924 -> 933)

## appendix

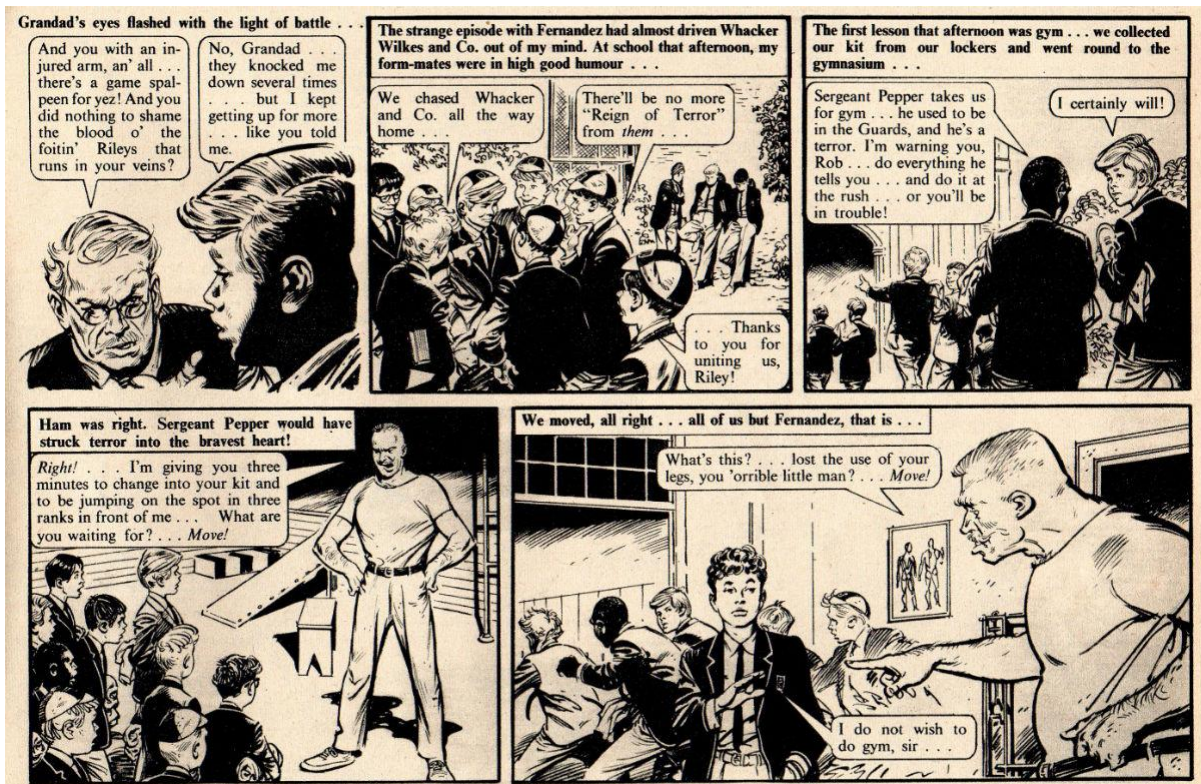
### 1 the sequence with the fence + the chickens from L&L 407



### 2 rob riley

2.1 the art was originally by jesus blasco, + ultimately by someone who also drew a strip with almost identical lead characters in for countdown. countdown was the first UK weekly with art credits so if you need to know what his name was you'll have to sift through those

2.2 rob's gym teacher is called sgt pepper - first appearance ranger 9 [13 nov 65] - the only other character with that name is on an album by the beatles (recorded nov 1966 -> apr 1967 + released may 1967)



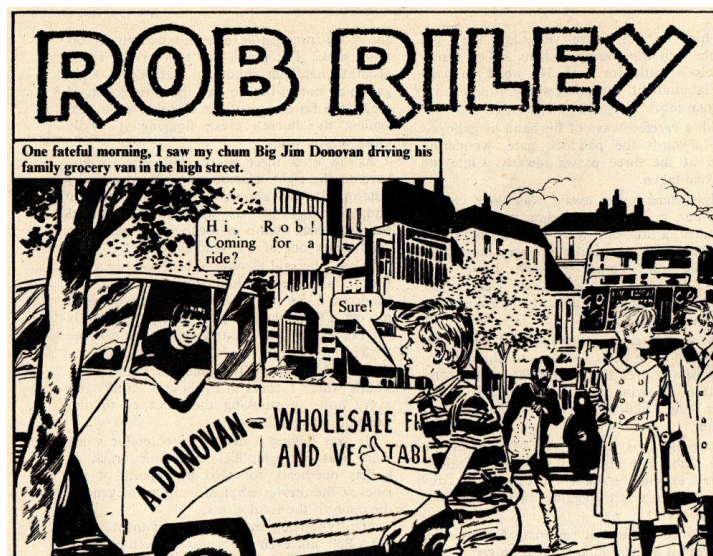
(c) IPC 1965

according to Paul McCartney he thought he overheard someone saying that name when they had in fact said the phrase salt and pepper

it's still an odd coincidence + he could have misremembered the source or just made something up to stop people asking him the same question

2.3 ranger 36 [21 may 66]'s episode of rob riley has an artist crossing the road in the centre of the background of panel 1 which is the sort of place comic book artists put a self portrait. in this instance it probably isn't: the only pics I've seen of blasco are of him as an older man but extrapolating backwards through to his youth it's difficult to imagine him ever looking like that

(c) IPC 1966





panel 6 of rob riley in L&L 403 (middle of top row below) features an extra completely unnecessary character who only appears in this shot + does not resemble the one in ranger 36 either. why is he there if not for the amusement of whoever drew the panel. although this is an extraordinarily long shot I personally would like to believe this represents an image of the capable but noticeably less talented artist who took over the strip in blasco's style + never signed his work



(c) IPC 1969

there's no evidence for that. some people think there are real elves

2.4 the best story in this strip appears in look & learn 307 -> 310 + concerns a brown paper bag rob is given by the headmaster to deliver to his wife, involving (as well as the headmaster's wife + a mysterious package) riding around on bikes, polly maddocks's bright ideas + amateur dramatics for the denouement. that's basically a full house. the only other contender is a four part story starting in L&L 403 (see above again) featuring various pompous wealthy people in the supporting cast in which ham sells a mink stole by mistake

2.5 rob leaves school in 424 + starting from here he is drawn as older with a different hairstyle. this is probably because the decade had just changed from the 60s to the 70s + the strip was deemed to be looking old fashioned. basically it's a different strip about an unlikely private detective agency. the short sequence below with the headline for the next episode says it all



(c) IPC 1970

next week mr grumble gets to say: 'six pounds of sausages, two bottles of tomato ketchup and a pick axe handle - now that's a pretty strange selection' about mrs timkins's shopping. coming across that sort of dialogue is why people still read these comics

### 3 the trigan empire

a few random points follow:

the people of daveli (as represented by keren) are drawn as green up until L&L 242. when he next appears in 246 he + the rest of his ethnic group from now on are blue, presumably to distinguish them from the lokans who are also green + whose only other identifying ethnic characteristic is their different eye shape (angled instead of straight)

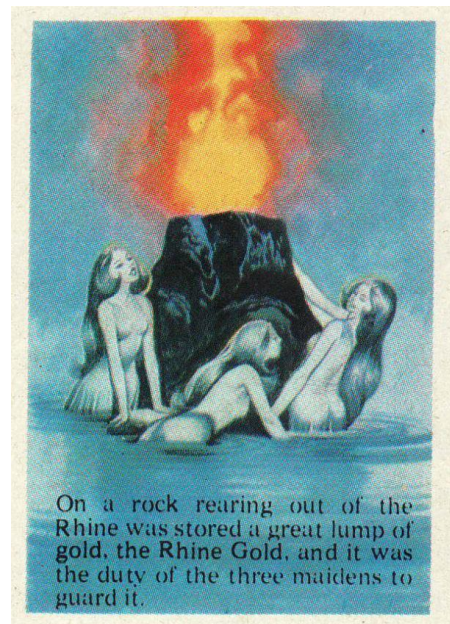
313 introduces roffa - the only major recurring member of the cast not to have appeared in the first few stories

382 - the trigan empire appears as an example of fantastic fiction in that issue's 'from then till now' page (in one panel, drawn by a different artist)

383 -> 390 has ron embleton art. it is anecdotally famous that embleton stepped in for don lawrence when he was behind schedule. apparently he may have contributed to odd pages of the trigan empire earlier in lawrence's run - this is the first time he gets a whole story

although this strip is identified as embleton's work in the comic book price guide for great britain it's difficult to tell when you first look at it because he's working in a different style: the light effects are flat compared with the usual silky lustre you would normally associate with ron embleton + crucially there are some elements appearing in the story (eg dragons + a frankly absurdly literal drawing of a hovercraft) which betray a lack of imagination I prefer not to associate with him

the attribute which really gives embleton's authorship away is the use of characters who always appear in monochrome when the rest of the strip is in full colour, the technique he used for eg the rhine maidens in legends of the Rhineland



555 - in answer to a reader's letter about the trigan empire: 'all our readers will be pleased to know that we shall be starting a new trigan empire story soon that promises to be one of the most exciting we have ever published. it's worth waiting for'

they must be referring to the story of the discovery of the ancient tomb of king yutta, which has a curse associated with it, starting in L&L 559. if you remember the guy being attacked by piranhas in his own swimming pool, it's that one

635 - marks the start of a long run of issues (635 -> 677 + 682 -> 689) by an artist who replaces don lawrence. at this point his work is terrible - he seems to be unable to draw the human figure consistently from one frame to the next: proportions differ drastically, characters are rendered badly when they have to be seen from difficult angles. however, less than 10 weeks later (during the elixir of youth story) he has more or less sorted these things out, which implies he was probably always able to draw to a decent standard because he can't have learned in such a short time. perhaps any initial flaws were due to tight deadlines



narrod (who has become a boy), crillus (L&L 651: 'you have turned me into the oldest living creature on this planet')+mallo, (c) IPC 1974

you can see he's not in don lawrence's league but he is perfectly capable of drawing a trigan empire story. this + the one about alien strawberries which cause a group of schoolboys (+ incidentally some rams with golden fleeces) to go psychotic are well worth reading

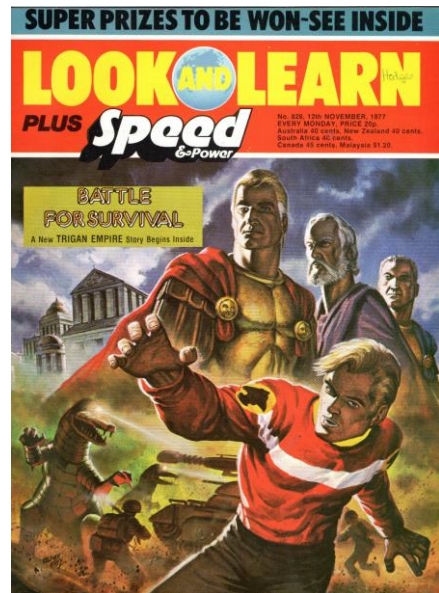
the only serious problem with putting this artist on the trigan empire is he either can't or won't draw monsters: when the script requires an image from which the reader is supposed to recoil in a mix of horror + wonder he delivers something that wouldn't scare a six year old

678 -> 681 reprint the 8 page story from the 1968 ranger annual in 4 episodes

690 -> 752 we're back to lawrence's art again (hurrah, phew, etc)

753 -> 819, 826 -> 833 is oliver frey's run (signature 753 + virtually every episode). note just prior to this he provided illustration art (his first for L&L?) for a series of factual articles entitled the oregon trail, starting in 741

during the period covered by this list there was only ever one trigan empire cover: on Look & Learn 826, by oliver frey. ranger never put the trigan empire on the front, even though dan dakota got one cover, the frankly daft space cadet did as well + even moby 'what book is this supposed to be' dick did ...



frey was perhaps a more interesting sequential artist than lawrence. even if the way he drew things was technically less attractive to look at, the things he drew + where he chose to put them on the page were often pretty classy



on the left above is a flashback sequence with a unique design for the overlapping panel borders (+ one colour per image). in the full page reproduced on the right he uses a more or less standard grid format but all the panels are parallelograms instead of squares (wow). note the geometric shapes in panel 2 + panel 8 are not representational but purely part of the design, related to the pattern of the page rather than to the characters superimposed on them (unless you prefer to read the first as a metaphor for peric's thought processes + think the second functions like whiz lines to accentuate senna's pouncing action)

frey's vehicles were miles better than most of lawrence's (especially those naff triangular atmosphere craft early in his run) + more like something by chris foss:



notice the exhaust on the vehicle on the right. frey's use of light + shade allows him to get that sort of effect - lawrence would probably have put a stream of fire there instead. generally speaking, in comparison with lawrence frey's art is greyer in general, possibly because of the way he works (putting the shadows in first + adding tonal colour after?). if he wants something to really blaze out of it like the exhaust eg above he has that option if everything around it is greyed down

also, his art seems to depict action well (because the brush strokes look like they go in the direction of the movement?). a sketchier style tends to render movement more prominently than a detailed one because there is less other visual information to take in - elsewhere on this site I've described art in terms of its signal to noise ratio + it fits in here as well: the action depicted is louder in less detailed artwork because there is not so much noise interference from the detail

820 marks the start of the transition to gerry wood's run on this strip (820 -> 825, 834 +). in short, he wasn't very good (he can't even use the elekton alphabet), which is annoying because he has produced excellent fully painted science fiction art in the past



(c) IPC 1974

given the right script set in the sort of landscapes he draws well with his own style of technology for the vehicles, etc that strip if it had existed would surely have been remembered as a worthy successor to Lawrence's Trigan Empire

in fact an editorial decision seems to have been made to turn their existing SF strip into something more like Star Wars, with an almost completely different cast + a Marvel Comics look for the aliens, starting from L&L 834

that was a massive error. Wood just comes across as IPC's fourth choice of regular artist for a strip which ought to have been cancelled when it became obvious they were beginning to flog a dead horse, which it was once he started drawing it

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