

UNSEEN UNIVERSITY

THE DA QUIRM CODE
REVEALED

A lecture by
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First given on 31st GRUNE,
Year of the Battered Codpiece

Or possibly on
Sunday 20th August 2006 at the International Discworld
Convention*

*Or possibly both.

Those of you who have attended my previous lectures will, of course, know where you are and how you got here. Please bear with me while I explain to the many hundreds of new faces who are wondering what they have wandered into that they are, in fact, in room IIIB of Unseen University.

Room IIIB is not readily located by students or wizards as it exists only on the Quantum Level, which is situated somewhere between the ground floor and the library.

For students the normal method of entry is to suddenly swoop down in the Mended Drum in order to retrieve a lost half dollar. As you straighten up you get that odd feeling for a moment that you either know who you are but not where you are or where you are but not who. This dizzying effect is known as the Quantum Uncertainty Principle. In that brief moment you find yourself existing in a field of violent quantum fluctuations and quantum itself can transport you anywhere and any time.

For myself, it is normally sufficient to be hurrying down to the library and skid on a banana skin left by a careless anthropoid of a librarian. One lurches into space and heads straight for a solid stone wall, only to pass through two narrow slits at the same time (and that brings the tears to your eyes, I can tell you) whereupon you then form an interference pattern with yourself when you hit the far wall of Room IIIB

So here we are – the universe has a body of students and a lecturer occupying the same place at the same time – an incredibly rare educational event. And here we stay until the fluctuations in quantum space die down and we can make a sidle for the exits back into the real (if you care to call it that) world.

Room IIIB is interesting in that it not only has a stock of all the lectures that have ever been given in the past but also those that will be given in the future and those that should have been given at any time. As students, you will naturally enough never have actually attended a lecture before, so let me advise you that the process is simple – sit as still as you can, on no account attempt to take notes and most important of all do try not to snore. It only keeps the speaker awake.

The lecture that has floated into temporary existence concerns a book that will not be published for another 300 years, long after our present stern but benevolent Lord Vetinari has sadly become just another name in the list of rulers of our fair city. A book however that is readily available, thanks to the nature of L-space, now or at any time to any student who gives the Librarian a generous hand - of bananas that is (no sewn up skins, please). This lecture will first be given in 2006, the year of the Startled Trousers Ferret. *Unless* by chance, Quantum has transported us all to that far distant time and this is that first airing in reality*.

This lecture is an exposé of nothing less than the notorious book by one Samuel Browne: The Da Quirm Code (De Worde Press Inc).

*All rather confusing, really.

The not-yet -written No 1 Bestseller

SAMUEL
BROWNE

THE
DA QUIRM
CODE



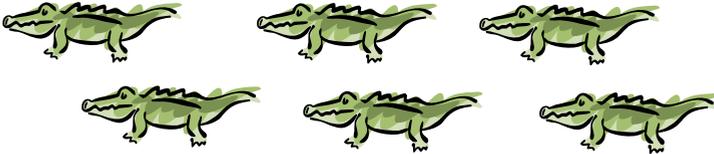
DE WORDE PUBLISHING INC

It a thick and heavy book—DETRITUS
Couldn't pick it up—CASANUNDA

This fictional work tells of a supposed endeavour to make public a long-hidden secret concerning the rise and development of the worship of the Crocodile God Offler. The book expands on the theme of another spurious work *The Unholy Brood and the Holey Gruel*, which claims that human descendants of the god Offler escaped the purge of worshippers in Fourecks and founded a dynasty that survives even unto the time of the book's publication.

Are you a crocodile Godlet?

THE UNHOLY BROOD



& THE HOLEY GRUEL

DE WORDE PUBLISHING INC
DEWI WANTCASH
MIKE MEAGENT

It is claimed that the knowledge of this line of crocodilians was discovered and preserved by a deeply sinister and totally dedicated secret society called the Priority of Shawn. It originated as an offshoot of a much older chivalric order, the Knights Tippler who, at the time of the great Cruise Aids, set up and manned a number of pubs throughout Fourecks and eventually most of the Disk's inhabited regions before being suppressed in the great purge in the Year Of The Dicky Tummy during the Scumble Wars.

The Priority of Shawn is said to have been formed by the survivors of these Knights Tipplers, and this bunch of latter-day derring-doers roamed the Disk and followed the Chivalric Code first enunciated by a bald knight, Sir Shawn of Locksley, who one day moved to the head of a queue and when challenged by a disgruntled cabbage waterer's apprentice uttered the famous words 'I'm a knight. I got a sword. So I get priority, right? Any problem with that, squire?'



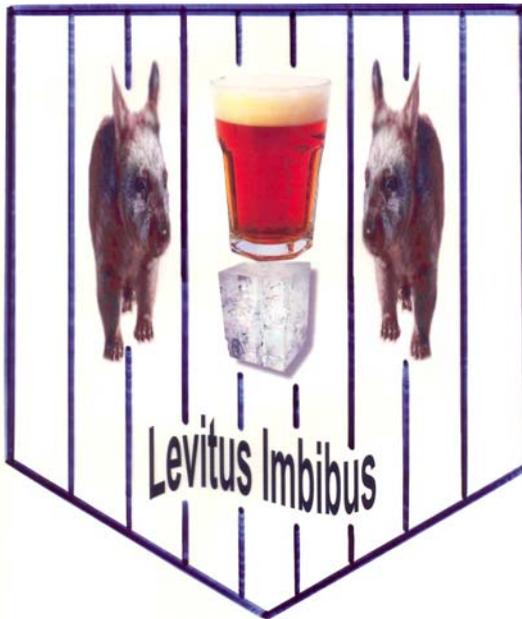
As you can see, this, the only known extant likeness of Sir Shawn, does portray him when he was half way up the wall.

This formed the basis of the knightly code of conduct which included not waiting at stables, toll-free bridge crossing and 'droigt de seigneur' or right to sign here – a system of payment using a chitty which would never be honoured – a sort of I don't owe you.

Why the secret has to be kept and not revealed has never been adequately explained, but no doubt, in the fullness of time, the reptilian descendant directly in line will reveal itself and usher in a new age of Offler worship that will reduce Om to his former status of tortoise to Brother Brutha. Or so the acolytes fervently believe.

Much of the evidence for this fanciful tale is purported to reside in the works of no less a current personage than Leonard of Quirm, also known as Leonard Da Quirm. We will examine this so-called evidence in due course.

First, however, we must point out that the Da Quirm Code asks us to believe that there exists in our own time this secret society, The Priority of Shawn, which claims to have discovered the ancient holey gruel served up at the very morning meal whose guest of honour was none other than Gordon Yermate, the original disciple of Offler, about whose real life little is known. The P of S is supposed to have re-hidden the Holey Gruel and preserved it through the centuries. Gordon's Groupies, who did much to promote Offler worship, were originally marsupial hunters who initially eschewed property, women and alcohol and took a vow of 'no worries mate'. In the dusty heat of Fourecks the vow lasted for all of three hours and was then revised and simplified to a vow of chastity and sobriety, if ever anyone really feels that bad and just must. Their insignia was a beer rampant on a bed of ice, barred, with wombats droit et sinister and the motto Levitus Imbibus. It was later adopted as the emblem of the Knights Tippler.



It was while stumbling in the depths of a curry house that members of the Priority of Shawn claimed to have discovered the holey gruel which was so they say, for a while carried in procession every Chunder Day before being conveyed to some secret hiding place where, supposedly, it remains to this day.

This group spread across the Disk and among its Grand Slurpers are named no less august personages than Leonard Da Quirm himself, BS Johnson, Mad Achmed and Wuffles, Lord Vetinari's dog. Not to mention Lord Vetinari himself – so we won't mention him. Anyone here present who has actual evidence that this society really does exist is advised not to mention it to anyone, least of all to my Lord Vetinari – just in case... The main burden of the Da Quirm Code is the search by two inordinately inept investigators for evidence that Leonard Da Quirm hid messages concerning the society and the secret of the Holey Gruel in his works of art and that other clues exist as to the existence of an actual bloodline of Gordon Yermate, A theory that is anathema to believers who fervently hold that Gordon was definitely one of the boys and, if not actually celibate, was at least mostly pretty well incapable through alcohol.

But before finally turning to this evidence, we must mention our two heroes' main adversary – a supposed sect of fanatics, apparently growing in power in the years around 2006 known as Elpus Daily.

This is yet another secret society- so secret that not one of its members is actually aware of the existence of any other member or even of their own membership of the sect. A member is characterised by being in a state of total apathy to anything and everything. A member of Elpus Daily takes stubborn ignorance and inertia to the limit and then some way beyond. He/she does not just *not* react to external stimuli but positively repels them. Apparently, in the time when the book will be written, our descendents will not only have the benefit of magical talking cubes but magical picture boxes which will change from one set of pictures to another at the press of a lever. Your adherent of Elpus Daily will not, apparently even be able to lift a finger to change what are called 'channels' but will watch whatever happens to be on view. These people are characterised as those types who always ride their horses down the middle of bridleways and who punish their bodies with cruel poisons called pizzas and burgers.

Collectively, the inertia generated by this group is set to become the most powerful force on the Disk. They will sit through wars munching pre-prepared snacks or 'takeaways' as they will become known, watch natural disasters with a resigned shrug and a disinterested eye and generally oppose progress by sheer lack of interest. A sleeping troll is considered a 'bit of a goer' by any of the Elpus Daily brigade. They are the ones who will inherit the Disk when the even the meek have finished with it.

Yet somehow, it is this bunch of deadbeats who, according to the conspiracy theorists, oppose any revelation of the supposed secrets of the Priority Of Shawn by the simple process of not bothering to listen or care.

In the book, members of Elpus Daily continually thwart the adventurers trying to discover the secret of Offler and the Holy Gruel by doing absolutely nothing at all on any page in which they appear. The plot cannot progress, therefore, until they slowly fade away into invisibility, which accounts for the fact that the book takes up several hundred pages

when an edit down to its necessary content would reduce it to a short story or longish letter. The associated moving picture is, apparently, going to be even worse.

But what evidence is there for this secret and its hidden code?

It is claimed, that in Fourecks worship of the crocodile god Offler (a deity normally associated with Klatch but with followers who live anywhere near a river bank in a warm climate where swimmers have a tendency to disappear) was first propounded by this semi-mythical character, named Gordon Yermate. Among his disciples were Strewth Blew and Noah Wurries and he went about the land teaching that there was but one God, Offler, and that crocodile tears had curative powers.

Draw your own Crocodile God

An Offler you can't refuse

After travelling the desert, or wandering Out The Back as it was known, for 40 minutes he hopped into history waving his one remaining arm (his limbic losses being the result of attempting to worship a croc that was more in the mood for a snack than adoration) and called upon the population to cast out Om and render unto Offler all those things that were Offler's (legs, children, mother's-in-law...)

Tried by the High Priests of Om, Gordon was condemned to the ultimate punishment of Jump The Creek – or as much as he could manage with only one leg of an 80ft wide crocodile-infested swamp.

The myth that has come down to us says that he gathered his followers for a last ring-pull of the holy tinny and a bite before setting out for his final hop.

At this meal the holey gruel was, supposedly, served and it is this substance, believed by followers to have been preserved down the centuries, that carries within it the secret of everlasting life, luxury, or at the very least the prospect of a regular chunder in the dunny.

It is now time to turn to the supposed facts in the book and examine the theory that the works of Leonard Da Quirm carry a message of Offler Worship that has been unexplained for centuries. Of course, we of this present generation are in the privileged position of being able to obtain an audience with Leonard himself, Lord Vetinari willing, and could determine the truth directly. But clearly that cannot actually happen otherwise temporal causality is right up the creek and the mystery revealed in 300 years time would simply not exist. In any case, it is likely that any question put to Leonard would simply produce an abstracted 'eh what?' and a slow potter into the far corner of his overcrowded laboratory-*cum*-studio.

Following the laying down of the plot, the first interesting item in the book is a supposed secret code of numbers:

1 2 4 8 16...

Hardly difficult to work out the pattern except that Sam Browne claims there is a misprint and what the mathematician camel Evil Smelling Bugger actually pawed out on the desert sand was:

1 1 2 4 8 16...

Explaining that one, being totally beyond the intellectual grasp of the protagonists upon whom all the reader's hopes of enlightenment depend takes up about thirty pages of dreary text until it is realised that, given just the first 1 each number is the sum of **all** the preceding numbers in the series – it is the ultimate Ephebenacci series, so named after Leonardo of Ephebe (no relation to our Leonard) who discovered the series after taking up an unhealthy interest in the breeding habits of rabbits.



The next and main argument concerns the artistic works of Leonard Da Quirm: in particular his famous painting

WHERE THE HELLS' BREAKFAST?



This canvas, currently leaning against a damp wall in Lord Vetinari's dungeon is said to depict the last gathering of Gordon Yermate and his followers before his final and fatal hop into oblivion. Artistic licence, or the convention to only show semi-divine beings in perfect form, has endowed Gordon with two arms and legs rather than the more realistic cross between Admiral Lord Nelson and Long John Silver.

Art critics take it to be exactly what it says on the canvas – a gathering of mates for a final tinny and a bit of chow to dry it up with.

Clearly the meal has not fully arrived –hence the claim for the existence of the missing holey gruel. It is suggested by some that the scene actually depicts The Miracle of the Breaking of Dwarf Bread.

As is well known, only exceptional magic is capable of even making a dent in a piece of mature dwarf bread. If we look at the scene, we can clearly see samples of the bread spread around the table. Indeed, the central figure has that smug look and hands spread in a 'just like that' posture that lends credence to this notion of recently performed magic. The groups to right and left are pointing in an excited manner and seem to be arguing over what they have just witnessed. The figure of Strewth Blew next to Gordon is leaning away as if evading a sliver of flying shrapnel.

The supposed use of a knife is claimed by Browne in his book to refute this possible explanation of the scene. He cites as conclusive the common knowledge that, as we are all aware, you can cut a knife with dwarf bread but not dwarf bread with a knife. Browne ignores the unmistakable signs of crumbled bread in front of Gordon and only Browne, apparently can clearly see a knife in the picture.

Believers though, take the view that the painting offers clear evidence that Leonard is asserting his secret knowledge that Gordon could perform miracles.

However, it is far more likely that Leonard has himself managed to do the impossible and has actually broken a piece of dwarf bread. He has, in his usual dithering manner simply incorporated this incredible event into one of his works. If such is the case, we must needs beseech Lord Vetinari to investigate, as Leonard will no doubt dismiss his great discovery with a shrug and forget it, whereas a method of rendering this bread harmless will do much to negate the current arms race and prevent the spread of that monstrous new device – the *gonne*.

Ignoring the theory concerning the portrayal of the Miracle of the Dwarf Bread, Sam Browne goes on to claim that instead the picture contains hidden messages that go far beyond what is seen and that are being revealed for the first time thanks to the research of Mr Browne himself. Research that has, to those of us in academic circles, a hint of gazing into that far distance found only at the bottom of a wine glass.

According to Browne, The two central characters, supposedly Gordon and Strewth Blew are sitting at a curious angle, which has nothing to do with flying bread but are surely portrayed thus so as to form a large letter V – which can, in Mr Browne's eyes stand for nothing less than Vetinari – not only is his dog supposedly a leading light in the Priority of Shawn but the ruler of Ankh-Morpork is himself the current head of this dread group. So the book claims. This is, you will understand, the second time that we have carefully *not* mentioned it – government spies please note.

For further evidence that Leonard has skilfully included hidden messages into this work of art Browne draws attention to the character behind Gordon with one finger raised.

A contemporary of Gordon's, as the scene supposedly demands? Oh no, claims Browne it is nothing less than a hidden message to be understood only by an informed and intelligent (ie Mr Browne) posterity. The meaning implicit in raising one finger is universal and clearly shows Leonard's contempt for his lord, master and current gaoler. But we who know Leonard can be sure that even if this unworldly artist actually knew the meaning of this gesture he would never portray it in a painting destined for public viewing. Also, we are aware that there is actually one person in the entire the history of the Disk who can make that sign and not have any opprobrium heaped upon him for the employment of what is a deeply antisocial gesture. Look carefully at this enlargement. Despite the inevitable distortion – we can clearly see that the finger is swathed in a *bandage*!



The person portrayed here is none other than **Hodgesaargh**. As ever this much-injured soul is doing nothing more than inspecting a finger after its latest bite from a falcon. Perhaps the two central figures are separated like that because the bird has just flown between them, but other evidence will dispute this second quite reasonable explanation. We leave the interested student to determine the identities of the others portrayed here, one indeed, being Leonard himself.



We now turn to the most astonishing claim in the whole book – that the figure seated on Gordon’s right hand is not Stewth Blew, his great mate, but, something unheard of at any gathering of blokes – it is asserted that if you look closely, you will see that the figure next to Gordon is in fact the portrayal of nothing less than A SHEILA! These ethereal creatures are said to inhabit only the domesticated parts of Fourecks and have the awesome power to create teas at cricket matches. They are almost never seen when blokes get together.



A Sheila?

True, the figure sports an early Shane Warne hairstyle, but then so do some of the others. Leonard is well known for not knowing the essential differences between men and women and that his poor eyesight leads him to portray figures that are at best androgynous.

In the famous portrait of Mona Ogg it is said that if you cover up half the face with a hand the other part portrays a man. But if you cover the other part with a hand the semi-visage of a woman appears. However this negates the fact that the best, indeed only sensible way to view this portrait is with both hands covering, between them, the entire face.

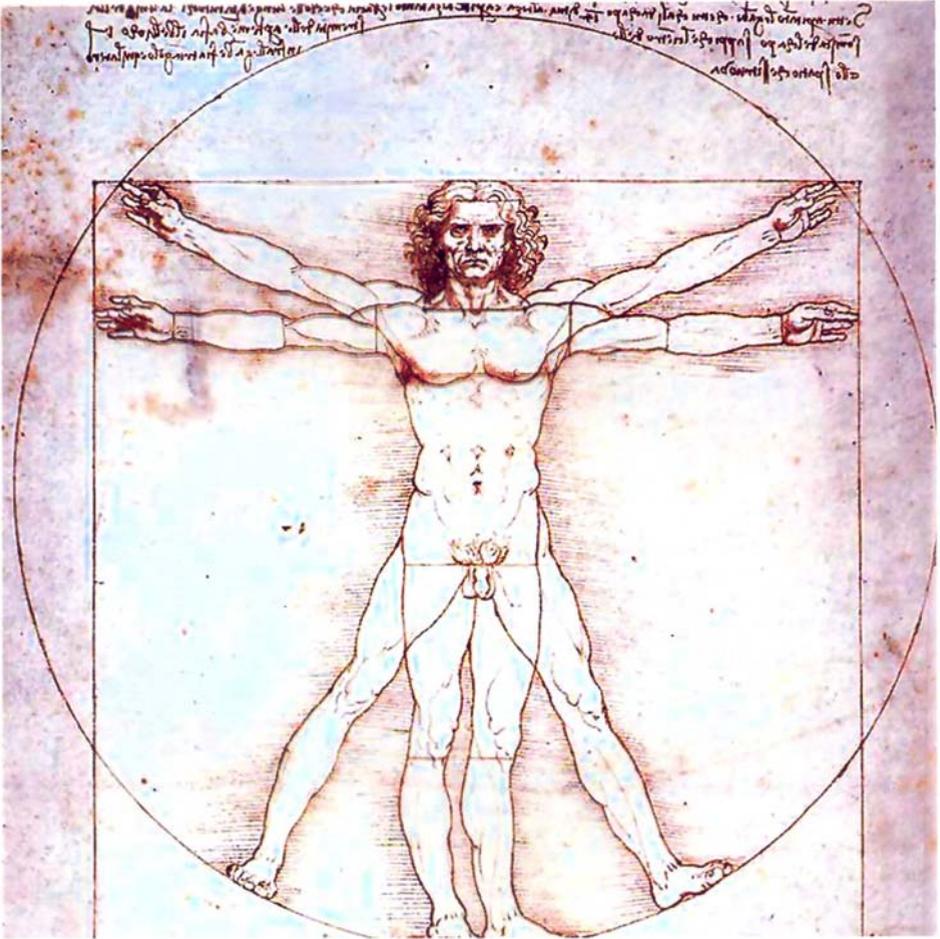
The ridiculous claim is made that not only was a Sheila permitted to attend the lad’s last get-together but also that, seated oh his right hand, she is clearly a *close personal* of Gordon. The ugly question is supposedly raised that Gordon was not entirely one of the lads at all but a closet boyfriend or even worse (we shudder to mention the word) an actual - husband. If such a revelation were proved true it would shatter all faith in the followers of Offler who know Gordon to be the real heir of, if not the original, Crocodile Madeira.

It is said that this Sheila would, of course, be responsible for the provision of the holy gruel and that the distance he/she/it and Gordon are apart is indicative of a certain coolness between them consequent upon the failed appearance of the chow.

But let us put these fanciful dreamers in their proper low place by bringing forth a few simple facts. Let us accept that the painting is probably not about dwarf bread at all – what explanation can cover this curious representation of a mythological event?

Leonard is well known to have never actually completed any work he starts on and the explanation for the unusual presentation of the characters may be nothing more than a partly completed scene. But if we claim this we have to answer the question as to what is it that could be missing?

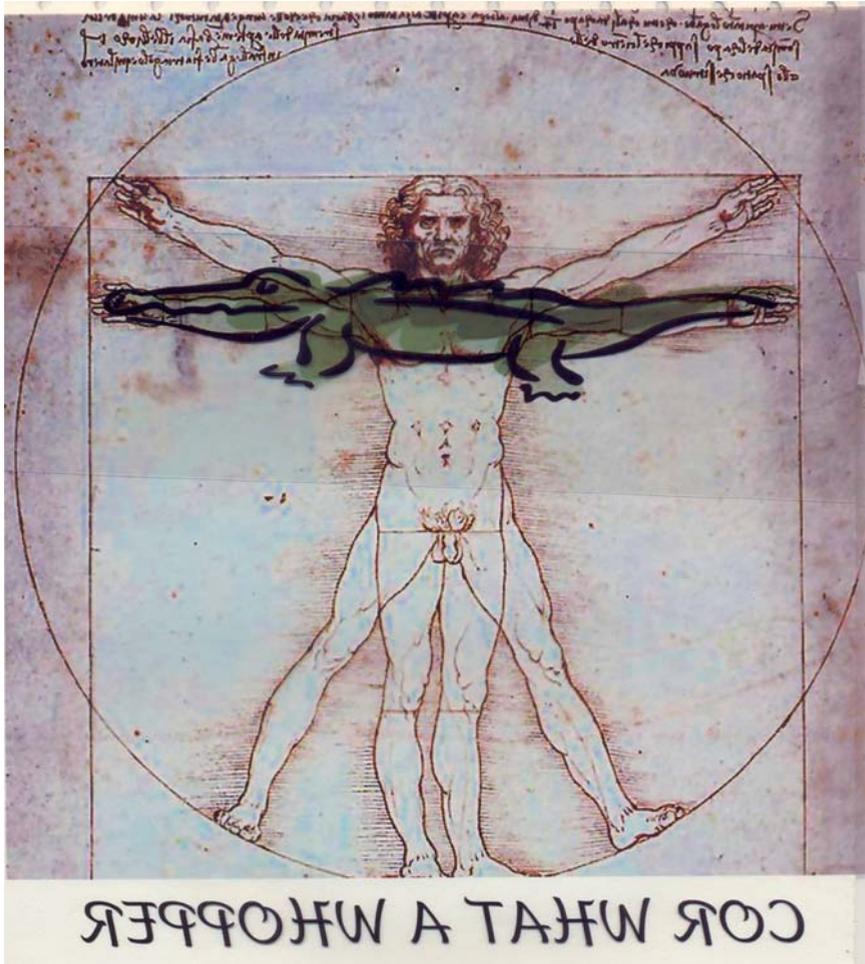
In another of his masterpieces *Cor what a Whopper*



COR WHAT A WHOPPER

it is evident that something is being grasped by the hands, or the hands are indicating something of considerable size, like a fisherman emphasising the enormity of the one that got away.

Since Gordon has been clearly associated with Crocodile Maderia, the supposed Universal 'Good Mate', it is not asking too much to believe that the missing figure in this portrait is none other than the crocodile god itself being grasped by snout and tail.



Incidentally, this same figure could also explain the otherwise inexplicable gap between Gordon and Strewth Blew in the breakfast scene. Clearly, Leonard intended no mystery to be misinterpreted later but simply never got round to painting in the Crocodile God in it's central, deified position. As anyone who has been near enough to inhale the halitosis of the standard river croc will know, it is to the credit of Gordon and Strewth that they have only moved that far apart and are not imposing a swap of seats with those lesser mortals at the ends of the table.

But let us leave this plausible speculation here as there are other very good reasons for supposing that it is not the crocodile god who is the missing central character at all but someone else and someone altogether far more human, if we are prepared to take the broad meaning of the word.

Leonard, it is generally known, paints only on commission – so who requested this work of art and for what purpose? To discover that we might ask the simple question that Sam Browne ignores completely: once completed, where was the painting intended to be exhibited – was it palace, rich mansion, or perhaps a business property?

Is it a coincidence and nothing more that the size of the picture exactly matches only one site in Ankh-Morpork - a greased-stained wall in a certain famous eating-house? We suspect not. This great work of art was clearly and manifestly destined to adorn the long wall of Harga's House of Ribs.

The missing figure then just has to be Harga himself, bearing a loaded salver of meat. The two characters are leaning aside in the time-honoured manner of all diners in attire just back from the cleaners who see a gravy-slopping plate coming between them.

This glance into the future, afforded us by Browne's book and the peculiar properties of L-Space tells us that for some reason Harga never actually sat for this, his greatest portrait, and that the painting never appeared in its rightful place. What a loss to advertising.

Finally, let us turn now to the subject of the so-called Holey Gruel – the purpose of many a quest and the secret apparently known only to the members of the Priority of Shawn. After a long trail through the Sto Plains, Browne would have us believe that the gruel is hidden somewhere in Rustling Castle, so named for the many cattle in the vicinity known to have disappeared at regular intervals. (A place of very peculiar architecture, it is often attributed as an early work of BS Johnson and has a style, belonging neither to the Perpendicular or Gothic, but more to the Leaning, and is unmatched by any other edifice or even bomb-site.)

This Holey Gruel is, Browne claims, nothing less than the dish that was served up at the last meal enjoyed by Gordon before he went for that final giant leap for mankind. Now the word 'dish' can either be the vessel in which the food is served or the food itself. Browne argues that it must refer to the vessel as the food would, if still extant, by now have walked into history's dustbin of its own accord.

But the exact nature of this dish matters not, as it is, like so many supposed mysteries beloved of second-rate writers, based on nothing more than a spelling mistake.

For evidence we turn to an early work by Mel Orrie where he writes:

YE KNIGHTS ROWSE UP BETIMES AND
HASTILEE WENT FORTHE UPON THEIR
QUEST TO BE YE FIRST TO COME UPON
YE HOLEY CRULL.

MEL ORRIE—MORT D'ARFTER

'The knights rose betimes and hastily went forth UPON THEIR QUEST to be the first to come upon the Holey CRULL.

Crull, being unknown to later readers was supposed to be an early or erroneous form of Gruel. But in the Sto Plains Crull is simply the shortened form of cruller – a cake.

Cruller ► (noun) a small cake made of rich dough fried in deep fat.

So the knight who boasted the quest would be a piece of cake was not making light of a difficult task, but explaining to his young squire exactly what they were looking for.

Holey Gruel

Holey Crull - Holey cake

A CAKE WITH HOLES IN

Students, the reality is obvious.
What these knights were in search of was –



Crumpet

All this, of course, is ignored by Sam Browne and his fellow conspiracy theorists. Research and Browne being about as close as the Hub to the Rim, we can only condemn this work as a piece of execrable fiction based upon spurious history.

As a severe critic of the Da Quirm Code will one day observe – Sam Browne should belt up.

Thank you.

AND NOW...

The boring legal bit:

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Hope you enjoyed it, but I rather feel you had to be there – audience participation made the day.

Critical reviews of this pamphlet:

'At least it's printed on only one side of the screen.'

(Who's Green PC is it anyway?)

'The writing is tight and dense – much like its author.'

(De Worde Literary Digest)

'Packed with pins.'

(The Guardian)

'Picked with Pens.'

(Guardian Corrections column)

'I read it at one sitting – and immediately flushed.'

(Lou Rolls)

'Arrange the usual accident will you?'

Lord Vetinari