

# Duke of Wyverns Marlborough Head by Tom Hitchcock

*The play begins with the traditional "beeps" from the BBC*

**Presenter:** And now begins Red House Radio's *Thriller* hour.

*SFX - Dramatic music (Dun, dun, dun or similar)*

**Presenter:** *(In a dramatic voice)* The Duke of Wyverns Marlborough head

*SFX - Dramatic music – Theme*

**Presenter:** Yes, I agree with you dear listener, that the title of this evening's play is indeed a peculiar one, but I have it on good authority from the writer that it shall indeed be a pantaloon ripping tale of mystery, murder, and a sweet blend of comedy to boot.

To begin, I shall whisk you thoroughly into the midst of the whoring, I'm sorry, I mean; roaring 1920's. A decade of much decadence. The end of the first world war was in its infancy and the nation as a whole was tearing through this new era with a completely fresh mind set. Everyone from Pauper to Prince dallied in a little of the roaring 20s life style, embracing the new modernising of the era.

So sit back, relax and take in the atmosphere as we propel you into a snug corner of a local inn based in the heart of the Suffolk countryside. An inn which is currently owned by the Ipswich based brewers: Cobbold and co. Yes, you've guessed it, it's the "Marlboro Head".

As we peer round the timber frame of this glorious village inn's nooks and cranny's, past the cane basket containing many a walking stick and surprisingly a shotgun. we find our protagonist, Inspector Clue sat beside the roaring fire, sipping a pint of ale, with his ever faithful companion Pc Correct by his side.

**Inspector Clue:** Ah, Pc Correct, what a beautiful holiday we are having here in..... (name of local town). The Quaint country folk have been most charming as we've ventured past them on our brisk walks. How on earth those gates hold themselves up when the locals aren't around to stand by them I will never know!

**Pc Correct:** Brisk sir, its bloody freezing! Why on earth you thought it was a good idea to go on holiday in February I will never know!

**Inspector Clue:** Not many crimes are committed in February so it's our down time to sit back and relax.

**Pc Correct:** Careful sir I wouldn't .....

*SFX – Sound of someone falling off their chair*

**Pc Correct:** ... sit back to far – are you ok Sir? You had a nasty fall.

**Inspector Clue:** Who took my seat away from me? Did you see who the culprit was that whisked it away from under my very eyes?

**Pc Correct:** There wasn't...

**Inspector Clue:** I bet it was that cheeky Laflin boy ! Do you know he stuck his tongue out at you earlier on our walk.

**Pc Correct:** Another pint sir?

**Inspector Clue:** I don't mind if I do Pc Correct – Not much chance of arresting myself for drink driving.

**Pc Correct:** Especially as were only staying over the road sir.

**Presenter:** As you may be able to tell dear listener, Inspector Clue has potentially had maybe one or two more pints than he should have, none the less, I promise he is a good detective; sozzled or not.

**Inspector Clue:** *(As if shouting over the room towards the bar)* And get some nuts too Correct ol boy!

*SFX – Footsteps on a wooden floor.*

**Presenter:** Pc Correct stands patiently at the bar, awaiting his turn to be served. During his wait, his keen eyes are scouring the room, taking in the tiny details of the individuals as they are illuminated by the gas lights and the glow of the fire place. He spies a pair of quaint country gents propping the bar up no more than three foot away from him. What fantastic eye sight he has!

**John Neewer:** So, I tells him you can't be holding ferret that way, you needs to be holding him like this.

**Squire Chalks:** Absolutely. You know I caught a couple of dashed poachers upon our land the other day. Broad daylight and they were out there beside Park Wood. I shook my stick at them firmly, commanded that they stay where they are and I sent off the gamekeepers lad to fetch the local constable.

**John Neewer:** How did you control them Squire?

**Squire Chalks:** Why Duke and Archibald were with me, as well as the gamekeeper.

**John Neewer:** What too faithful boys you have – we do so like your Duke and Archibald.

**Squire Chalk:** Yes indeed, they are both fine and faithful Labradors. The constable soon arrived and took away the vile creatures that were poaching on my land. I mean the neighbourhood seems to be going down the drain somewhat.

**Anita Phylis Glass:** ‘nother dram squire?

**Squire Chalk:** Yes, why not. John, care you to partake?

**John Neewer:** I’m not a man to turn down another fine gentleman’s hospitality and kindness.

**Squire Chalk:** A simple yes or no would suffice.

**John Neewer:** Yes. Most kind of you.

**Anita Phylis Glass:** Here you go gentlemen.

*SFX – glasses being filled.*

**John Neewer:** To your good ‘ealth and your new venture.

**Squire Chalk:** What the devil?

**Anita Phylis Glass:** New venture?

**John Neewer:** Have I said something wrong?

**Squire Chalk:** (*Slightly embarrassed and trying to be dismissive*) I, ha, no nothing. Just a tickle at the ...er.. back of the throat. The whiskey caught it wrong as it went down.

**Anita Phylis Glass:** You ain’t drunk any of it yet – still in your hands... (*As if to a new customer*) Yes sir, what can I get you?

**Squire Chalk:** (*Quietly*) What did you mean by New Venture? What do you know?

**John Neewer:** Just what everyone else knows

**Squire chalk:** Which is?

**John Neewer:** That you have plans for that field behind the mill and the one over the road new park wood. Something to do with the electricity thingy that they're bringing across the country. You know, it gets rid of the ol gas lights. Mind you I can't see that catching on – imagine how dangerous it could be compared to the gas lights!

**Squire Chalk:** Yes quite! So what have people been saying?

**John Neewer:** Oh the usual title tattle. Anita Phylis Glass runs a knocking shop above the inn, The ..... (*name a local pub*) are aiming to break into the fish and chip trade, the school committee are hoping to do a scarecrow trail around the village. One of the teachers is meant to be on the game, daren't say which one, but definitely isn't the old maid! (*as if to himself*) Mind you she could be the ringleader. (*Back to squire*) That naughty laflin boy has been destroying the quoits courts again, heard he got a hiding from some of the older boys...

**Squire Chalk:** no, no I meant about my plans.

**Pc Correct:** Excuse me miss. Could I...

**Anita Phylis Glass:** Won't be a moment deary.

**John Neewer:** Oh, I see. Yes well it's about you changing some of your fields to dwellings, and also this mad idea of harnessing energy from the sun and using it to power

the village. Apparently your gonna flood the fields with these contraptions.

**Squire Chalk:** (*Flustered noises*) urgh... urgh ... well, the houses are a necessity, but as for the contraptions, there's no guarantee that they'll be going ahead, I mean it's all very complicated you know.

**Anita Phylis Glass:** What can I get you love?

**Pc Correct:** I would like one pint of ale in a tankard and a glass of water please.

**Anita Phylis Glass:** Coming right up.

**John Newer:** So I've heard, But the villagers aren't too happy about these contraptions, ooo no, they're worried about the environment, the blite on the landscape and the damage they'll do to the wildlife.

**Anita Phylis Glass:** Here you go love – sixpence. Are these them electrical thingy's you're talking about?

**Squire Chalk:** You know?

**Anita Phylis Glass:** Course I do. And I must say I am not happy about it squire – they'll destroy the view from my upstairs windows!

**Squire Chalk:** But how did you find out?

**Anita Phylis Glass:** Tongues wag a lot around here.

**John Newer:** In more than one way apparently!

*SFX – Wallop around the head*

**Anita Phylis Glass:** I'll have you know Mr John Newer; that, that rumour definitely isn't true!

**Squire Chalk:** Best you apologise to the good lady before you spend the day in the stocks.

**John Neewer:** Apologies Anita.

**Anita Phylis Glass;** *(To another customer)* Yes coming love.

*SFX – Feet walking away.*

**Inspector Clue:** You took you're time Pc Correct.

**Pc Correct:** Here's your drink Inspector.

**Inspector Clue:** Much obliged to you.

*SFX – Spitting water out.*

**Inspector Clue:** Its bloody water. What's going on?

**Pc Correct:** The landlady has run out of Ale sir.

**Inspector Clue:** What's in your tankard?

*SFX – Quick gulping*

**Pc Correct:** Nothing sir, its empty. But I have some interesting information for you. Turns out that the local squire is out of favour with the locals due to him wanting to place some sort of contraptions all over his fields to harness energy from the sun to help produce electricity for the village.

**Inspector Clue:** Pah, it's the 1920s - it'll never catch on! Anything else?

**Pc Correct:** Oh the usual title tattle. Anita Phylis Glass runs a knocking shop above the inn, The limeburners are aiming to break into the fish and chip trade, the school committee are hoping to do a scarecrow trail around the village. One of the teachers is meant to be on the

game, although they daren't say which one, but definitely isn't the old maid! However, they suspect she could be the ringleader. Also that naughty laflin boy has been destroying the quoits courts again, and its presumed that he got a hiding from some of the older boys...

**Inspector Clue:** Well, seems like there's a lot going on in this little village isn't there – let's hope it isn't a job for the police, if something were to go amiss! ... Where are the nuts ?

**Pc Correct:** Won't be a moment.

*SFX – Footsteps.*

**Anita Phylis Glass:** Back so soon love. What can I get you? Anything you see take your fancy?

**Pc Correct:** Ha, ooo, well. Um...

**Anita Phylis Glass:** I meant behind the bar, not me, you cheeky devil you.

**Pc Correct:** Just some nuts please.

**Anita Phylis Glass:** Coming right up my lovely.... Yes I see you George, I'll top you up in a minute too. I wonder where that girls got too?

**Squire Chalk:** The new barmaid not working out?

**John Neewer:** Apparently not – she's always late. Mind you I heard that's because she's a bit of a flapper!

**Squire Chalk:** I beg your pardon!

**JohnNeewer:** Flapper, bit of a flapper.



**Squire Chalk:** Oh, I see what you mean. Thought you were being derogatory about a lady.

**John Neewer:** Oh no, flapper girls are all the rage in these roaring twenties – or as some may say whoring 20's (*He laughs stupidly*)

**Presenter:** Ladies and Gentlemen, if I could distract you for a moment from this very riveting conversation between Squire Chalk and Mr John Neewer, and divert your gaze towards a rather dingy corner of the room, beneath the dwindling light of a failing gas lamp, we find George, a not so upstanding member of this quaint Suffolk village, he is awaiting a fresh glass full of bitter. As he devours the final entrails of the glass in his left hand, he drops it gently to the table revealing a fantastic foam moustache upon his upper lip from the bitter he has been drinking. With the sleeve of his right arm raised, he kills two birds with one stone. With one swift movement he wipes his foam moustache away as well as dragging some residue from his nose at the same time – and they say men can't multitask!