

# SPECIAL FEATURE

## Rupert and the Paper Folders

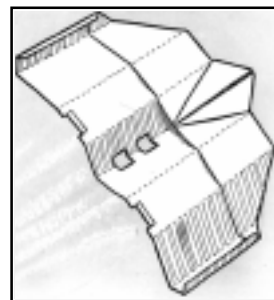
**O**rigami, Japanese for paper-folding, is a fascinating and unique feature of Rupert Annuals. Many a happy post-Christmas holiday has been spent poring over a Rupert Annual in delight (frustration?) with an exquisitely folded (crumpled?) piece of paper, rapidly beginning to resemble an elephant, bird, Spark-Man (or perhaps not?).



The paper bird - a traditional fold - that flew in the window in "Rupert and the Magic Dart" (B84, 1946 Rupert Annual)

In fact, the rise in popularity of Origami in the UK was intimately connected with Alfred Bestall and Rupert. According to Alfred, talking with *Followers* in the *Nutwood Special* interview in 1984, he and Stanley Marshall came up with the idea of an Origami page in 1946 to distinguish the Rupert Annual from its rival children's annuals, which had ceased publication during the war years, but were now expected to reappear. Lord Beaverbrook's Canadian Pine forests kept our chum going through the years of paper-shortage. The traditional Japanese bird fold thus appeared in 1946 and Origami features appeared for most Annuals from then onwards. There is a listing of these, along with all other "non-story" features in *Nutwood Newsletter 11*. Robert Harbin, a South African-born magician, made contact with Alfred in 1953

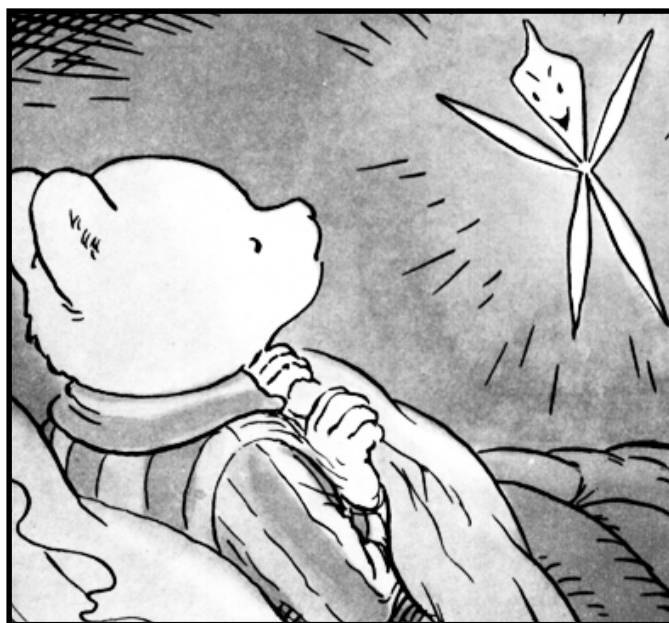
The best paper plane you'll find anywhere - I have won competitions with it and floated it down through lecture theatres when young and silly. From "Rupert and the Crackerjack", BO33, 1957 Annual - what an Annual this was ... The Pine Ogre, The Lion Rock and the world's best paper glider!



and the pair exchanged paperfolded models. In 1967, a small group of enthusiasts formed the British Origami Society (BOS) with Robert as its President and Alfred as its Vice President. Alfred became President on Robert Harbin's death. He was a regular attendee at BOS meetings and the fabulous picture on the front of this newsletter was done by Alfred for the BOS.

In 1989, John Cunliffe of the BOS entertained a (then much smaller) *Followers'* Annual with a talk on Origami and it is fitting that, almost a decade later, we are featuring this unique facet of Rupert's story again, with the welcome involvement of the BOS's David Lister and Dave Venables. Dave made contact with me via electronic mail and sent the cover image by high-tech means ... the Old Professor would have been delighted. I merely coloured it. David will talk about Alfred and Origami and we hope that there will be an exhibition not only of Alfred's paperfolding, but of some of the stunning creations of modern Origami. There will also be easy lessons in Origami for all to try.

P.S. My favourite's the Spark-Man.  
Alan Murray



Rupert and the Spark-Man - my own favourite Rupert Origami page ("Rupert and the Blue Moon", BO31 1956).