



Sterlington Stairlift Stories for Children

The Morecambandwheezer in Africa

Part 1

The first time anybody saw it was on a summer day many years ago.

A black tribesman called Mbande went to the stream to wash the dust off his legs. That was because he had to put some special dye on them for an evening ceremony in his village.

He looked at the "thing", jumped back, made angry shouting noises, shook his spear and jumped up and down. But it stayed exactly as it was.

The thing was shiny and black. It was about four feet high, tapered a bit, and had rounded "shoulders".

While Mbande watched it, the thing started to make a peculiar sound. It was a sort of "boomwhistleflutterboioioingpowwww" type of noise which didn't sound like anything else on earth.

Of course, Mbande didn't know that at the time because he had only ever been to the plains and the swamps and most of them were no more than ten miles away.

Anyway, after about five minutes, he ran to the village to get some more tribesmen.

Part 2

Out they came, the magnificent painted warriors of the local tribe.

All had spears, some had axes and everybody had a shield made from tree branches and grass.

They looked, they shouted, they did dances, they threw rocks and stones, they spat at it and even swore.

But the morecambandwheezer stayed put and every few minutes it started making the same sound again, with the same time between each sound, at the same pitch and the same volume.

What on earth was it?

We have called it a Morecambandwheezer (for a very good reason) but at the time, nobody from the village knew what it was, or what it was called.

How could they?

The tribesmen tried to kill it, but failed. They lit fires round it, stabbed at it, poured evil spirit juice and mud all over it, tried to scratch it, tried to move it, tried to drown it and all sorts of other things.

But it didn't budge an inch, not even a millimetre, not even a micron. But it did still make the same sound.

Some of the women took their babies out to it because they thought it might give them power and protect them from illness and wild animals - perhaps it did, who knows?

Part 3

The first bit happened in 1938.

If the people who were around then had seen Dr Who's Dalek enemies they may have thought the Morecambandwheezer looked a bit like one of those, but the Daleks hadn't been invented then.

So where on earth did it come from?

The tribesmen knew some traders and they asked them to see if they could identify this strange "thing."

The traders were rough, tough, but hard-working pioneers of the land. They had seen some wonderful sights, some horrible sights and they had seen people die.

But they had never seen anything like this before.

So the traders asked along the great Limpopo River. They asked along the great Mackenzie River. They asked along the great Victoria Falls, They even asked along the mighty Nile. But nobody had the slightest idea what they were rabbiting on about.

Eventually, the story of the peculiar "thing" reached the ears of some English archaeologists who were working on a dig in north east Africa. They couldn't resist a good story or an unusual discovery, so they travelled down to the stream in the south-west just as soon as they could make it.



They looked at it, measured it, took its temperature, photographed it, sketched it, washed it, looked at it upside down and sideways, tried to imagine it in a different colour and all sorts of other things-- but they didn't know what it was, or where it came from.

Part 4

The Second World War started soon after the archaeologists' visit.

The war was horrible and millions of people were killed. Some people thought the Morecambandwheezer might have been a secret weapon, or a bomb or something like that.

But it wasn't!

After the war, when most of the countries in the world were on fairly friendly terms again, they asked each other the question - "Did you put the "thing" in Africa?"

But nobody had!

Some countries were so sure that their old enemies knew something about it that they almost started another war.

But they didn't!

All through the war, all through the questions and arguments, all through the picture taking, the measuring and everything else, the Morecambandwheezer stayed exactly where it was, stayed the same size and the same temperature, within a few degrees on the thermometer.

It kept making the same sound, at the same pitch and the same volume.

Clever scientists from various parts of the world recorded the sound and analysed it in big, expensive laboratories. They fed the information to giant computers and tried all sorts of ways to find out what it meant.

But they couldn't!

Part 5

If you go to south west Africa you can see it.

It is still about 4 feet tall, and the scientists have the exact height from the ground. (They tried to dig it up once, but they couldn't).

It still makes the same sound, and everything else is still the same as it was in 1938.

Nobody knows what it is, or where it came from.

If we find out we'll write a book about it!

If you have any ideas about what it might be or where it came from please let us know.

Thanks!



The End