

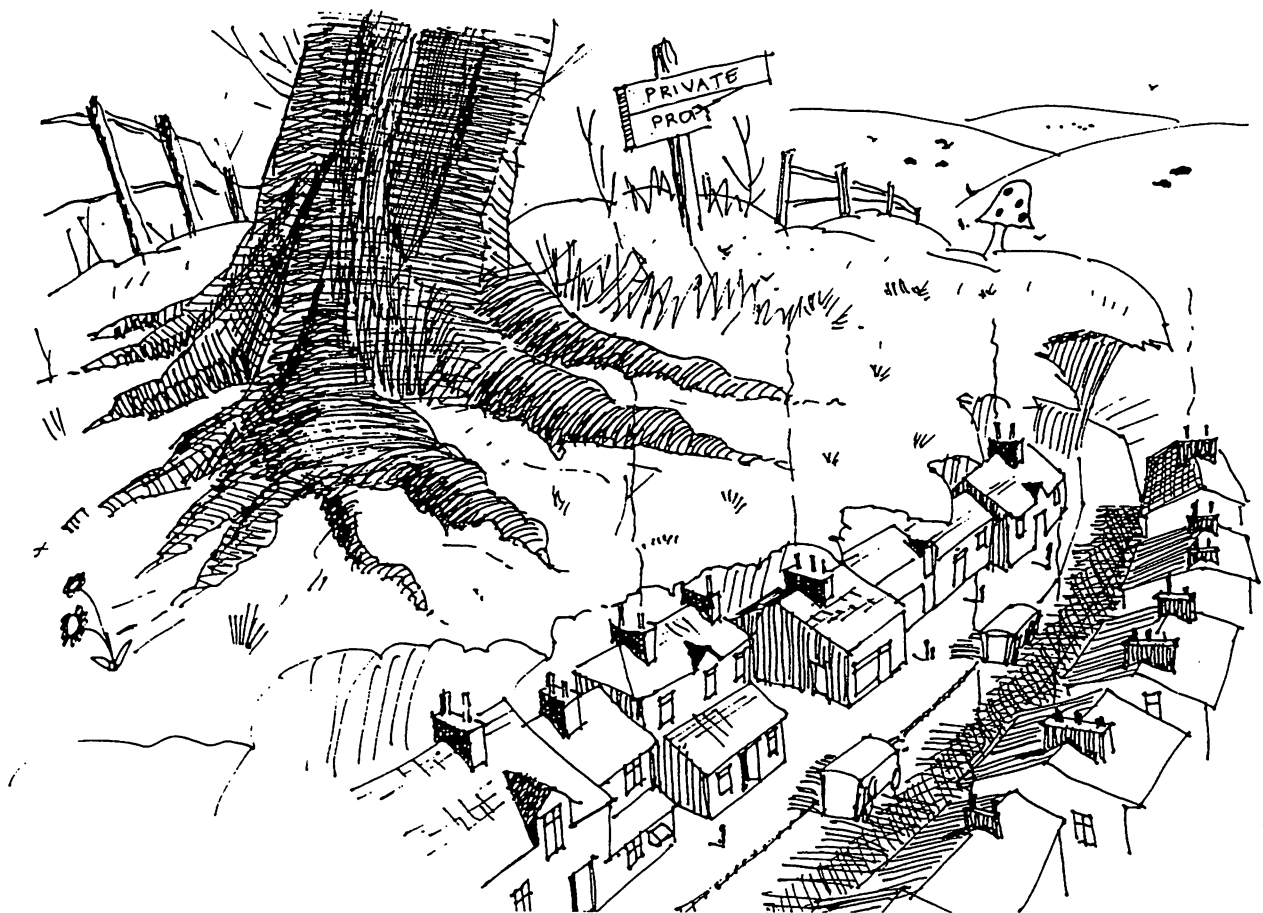
# TALES OF THE WACK AND BACH PACK



By Norman Pryor  
Illustrated by Spencer Bignell



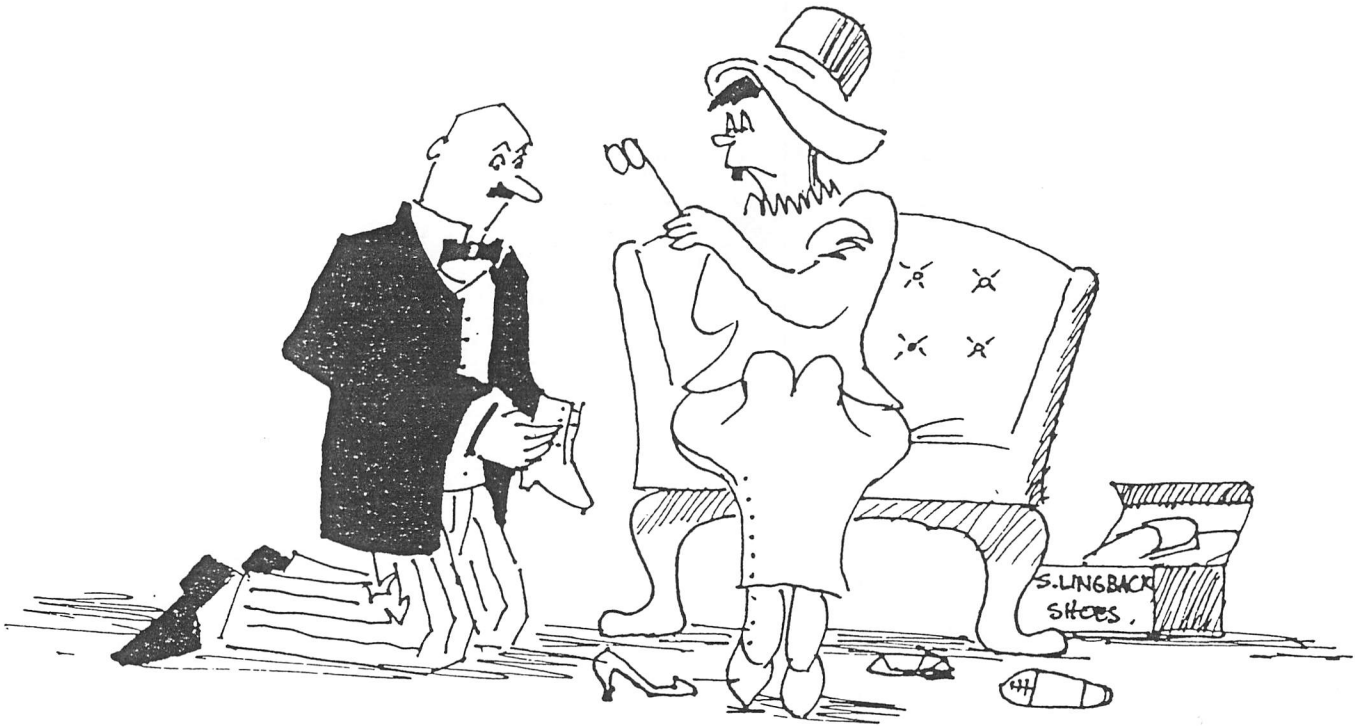
This is a story about Lewellyn Garden City and some of its inhabitants. Situated on the borders of North Wales and North West England just below and across the estuary from Birkenhead. It was a city of little people, animals and insects, some nice and some not very nice, all living together. It was also a city sited in a conservation area where several of the animals were protected species so they were very seldom bothered by large humans. Because of this the city had grown and prospered and most of the older inhabitants had prospered with it.



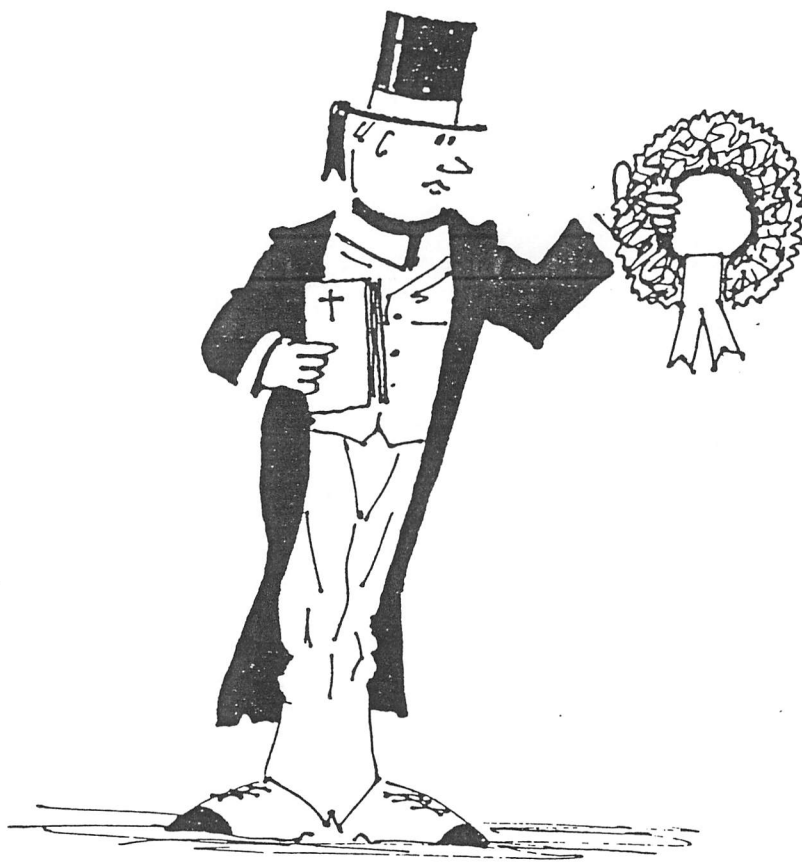
There was Hi and Lo Bach, Furniture  
Manufacturers of distinction,



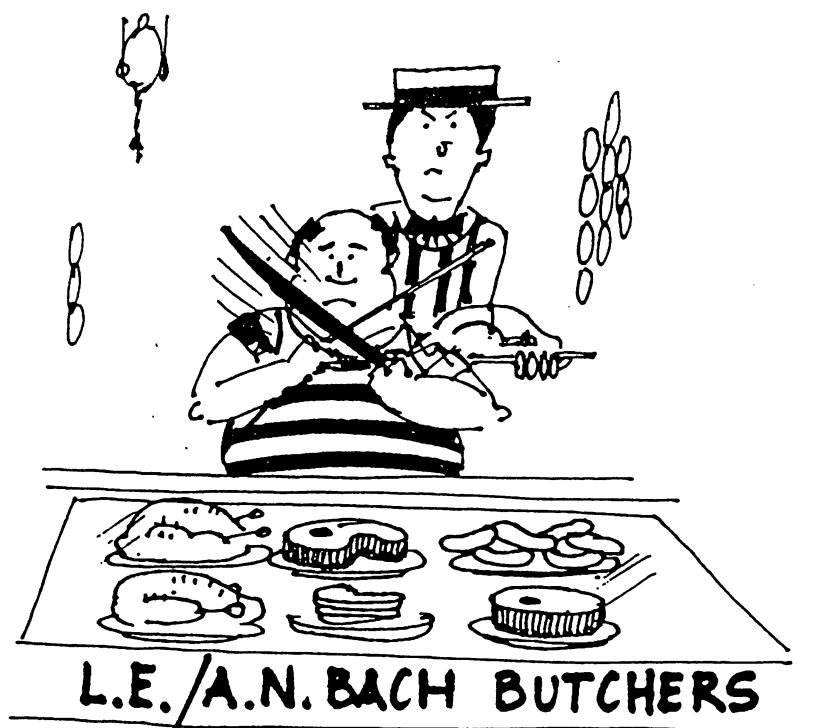
S. Ling Bachs in the precinct that sold quality shoes for discerning females,



D.I. Bachs Funeral parlour, cheap but not  
cheerful,

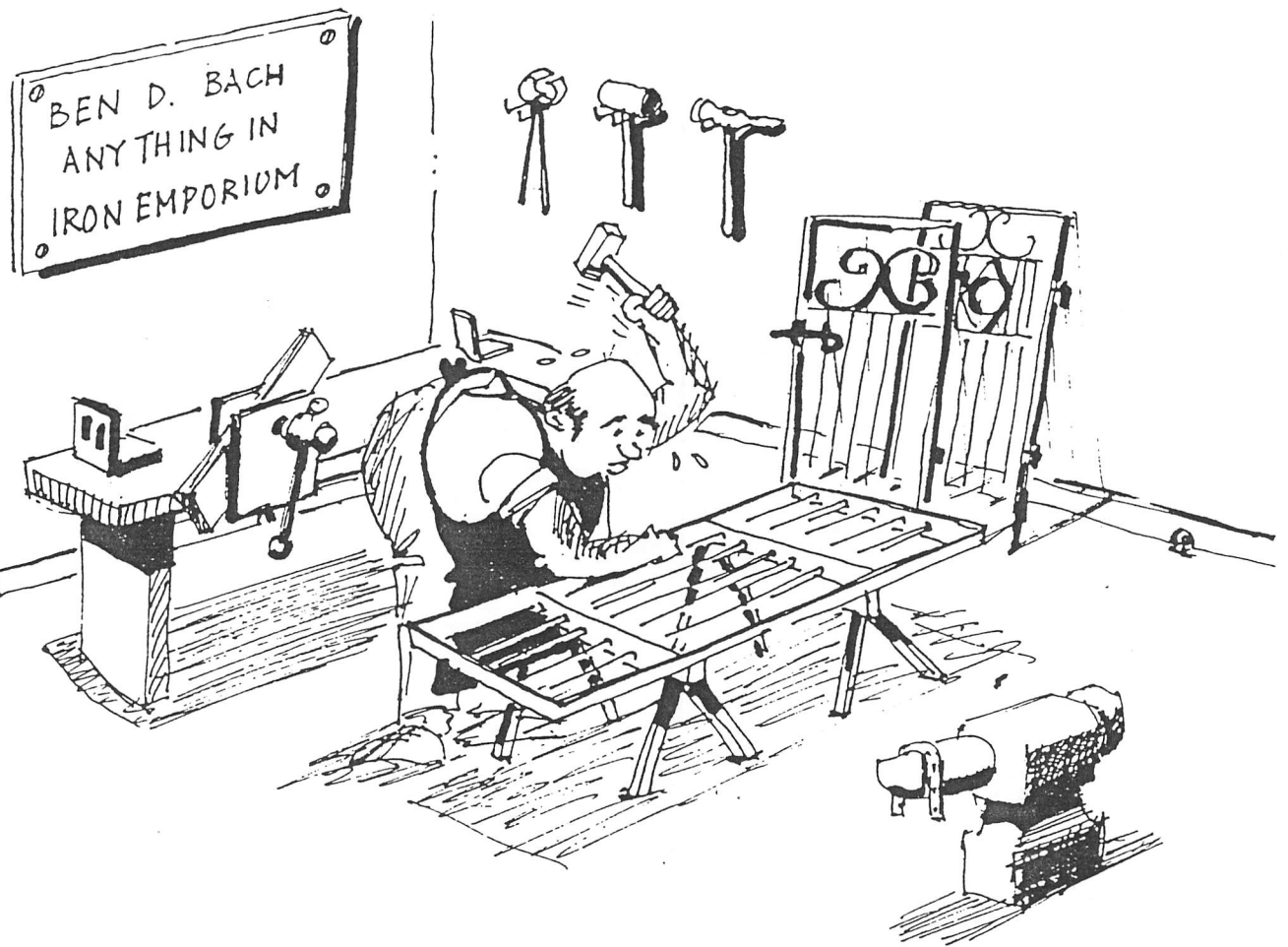


L.E. / A.N. Bach brothers in a Family Butcher's  
business



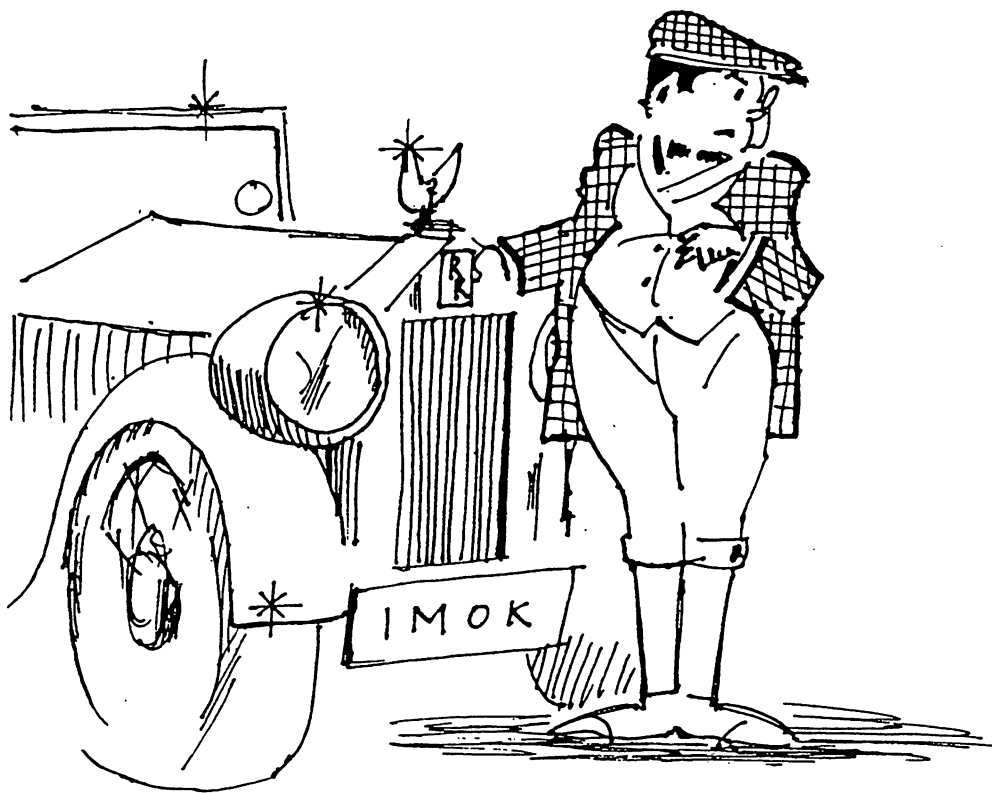
CHICKENS GOING CHEEP.	£ 1./1b
WELSH LAMB GOING BAAACH.	£ 2/1b
TURKEY TO GOBBLE UP.	£ 1/1b.

and Ben D. Bach's Anything in Iron Emporium.



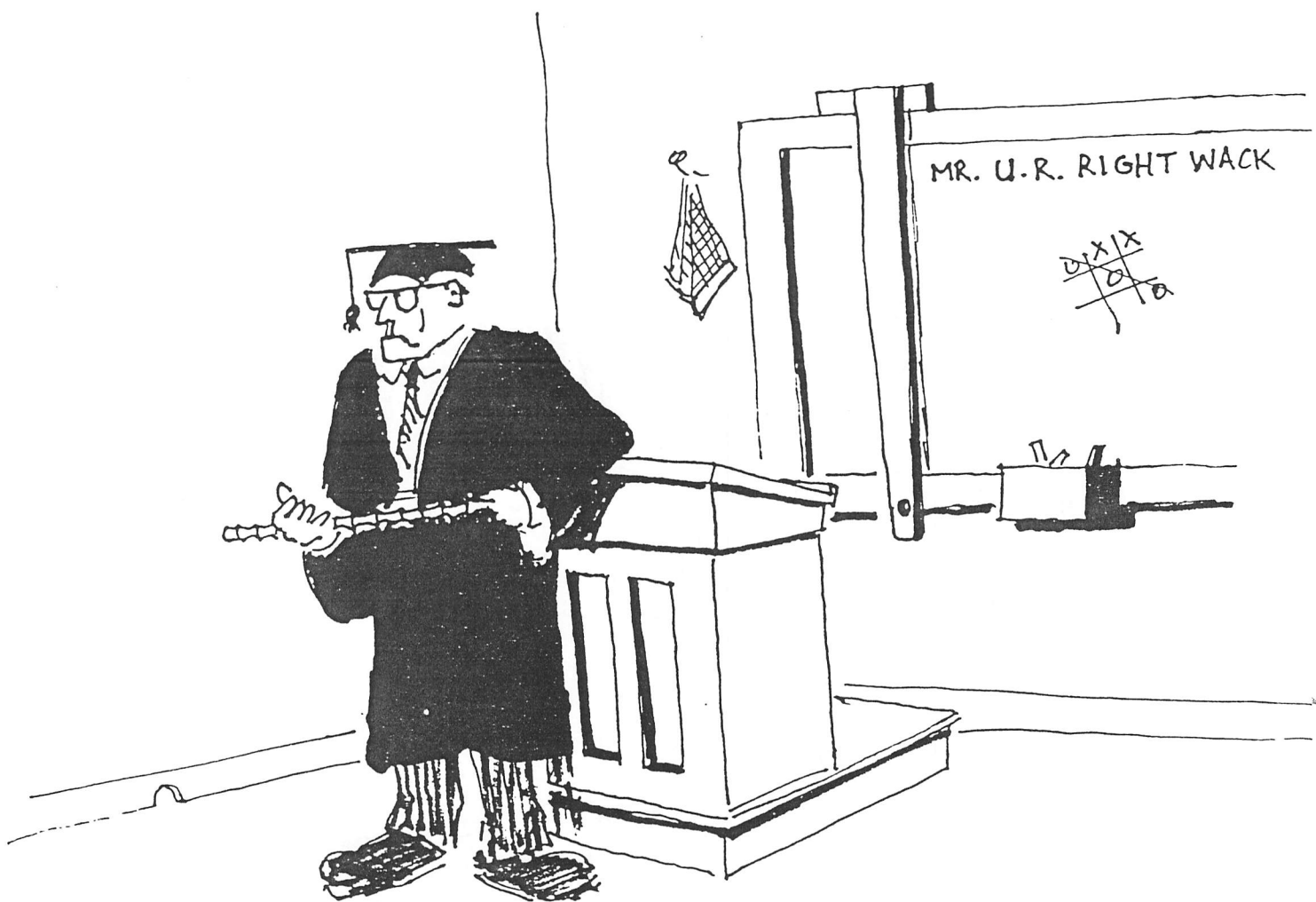
Most of the time he is over wrought.

From the other side of the estuary come the family name of Wack including I.M.O.K. Wack who is of the landed gentry,





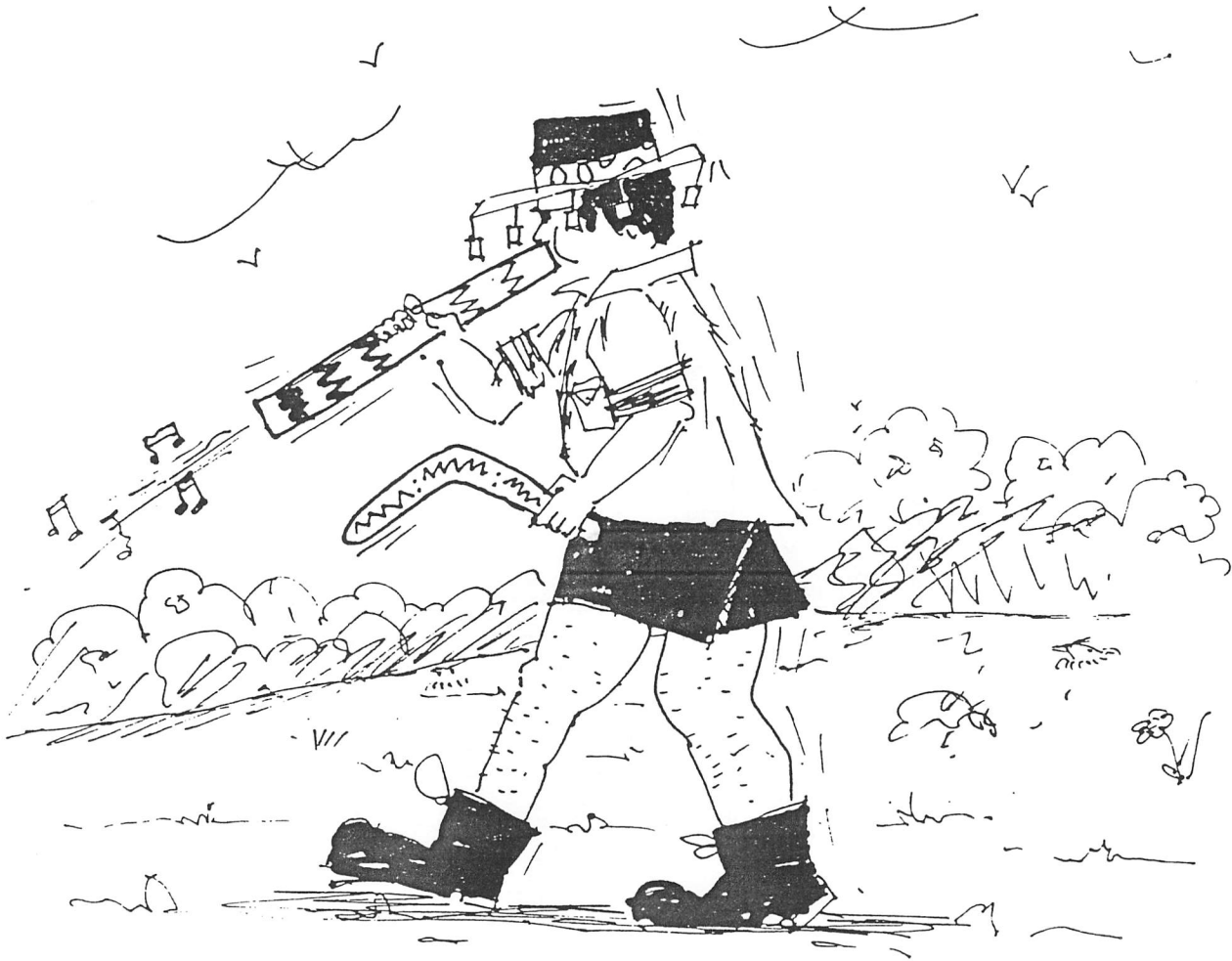
U.R. Right-Wack, Secondary school head and  
man of letters,



Wack, Damn and Wack Solicitors and  
Commissioners for Oaths



and, just back from Oz, G. D.A.Y. Wack.



He was a little different from the rest, always going around in a funny hat looking for hollow sticks to blow on.

Then , of course, there were the inter-married,  
double barrelled names of Bach-Wack and Wack-  
Back.

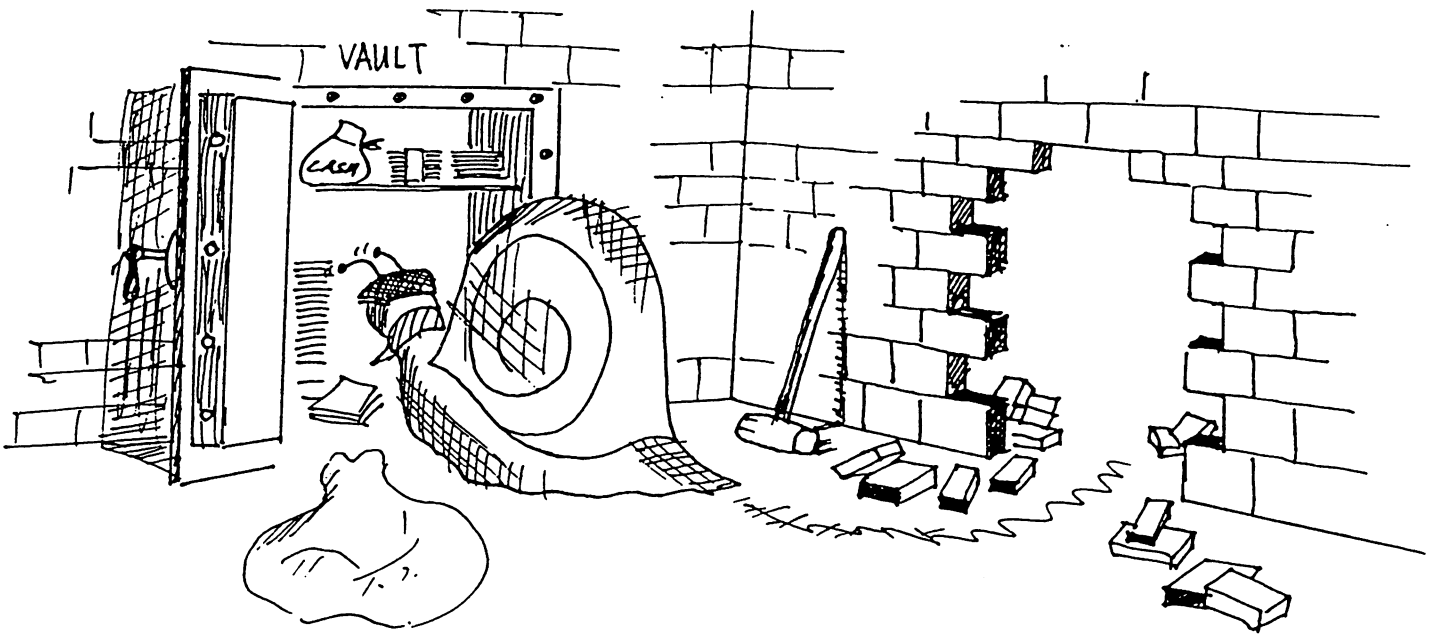
Life had been very good to all of those in the city  
until an unruly element began to creep, or should  
I say slide, in. Slippery Sam Snail, the ne'er do  
well,



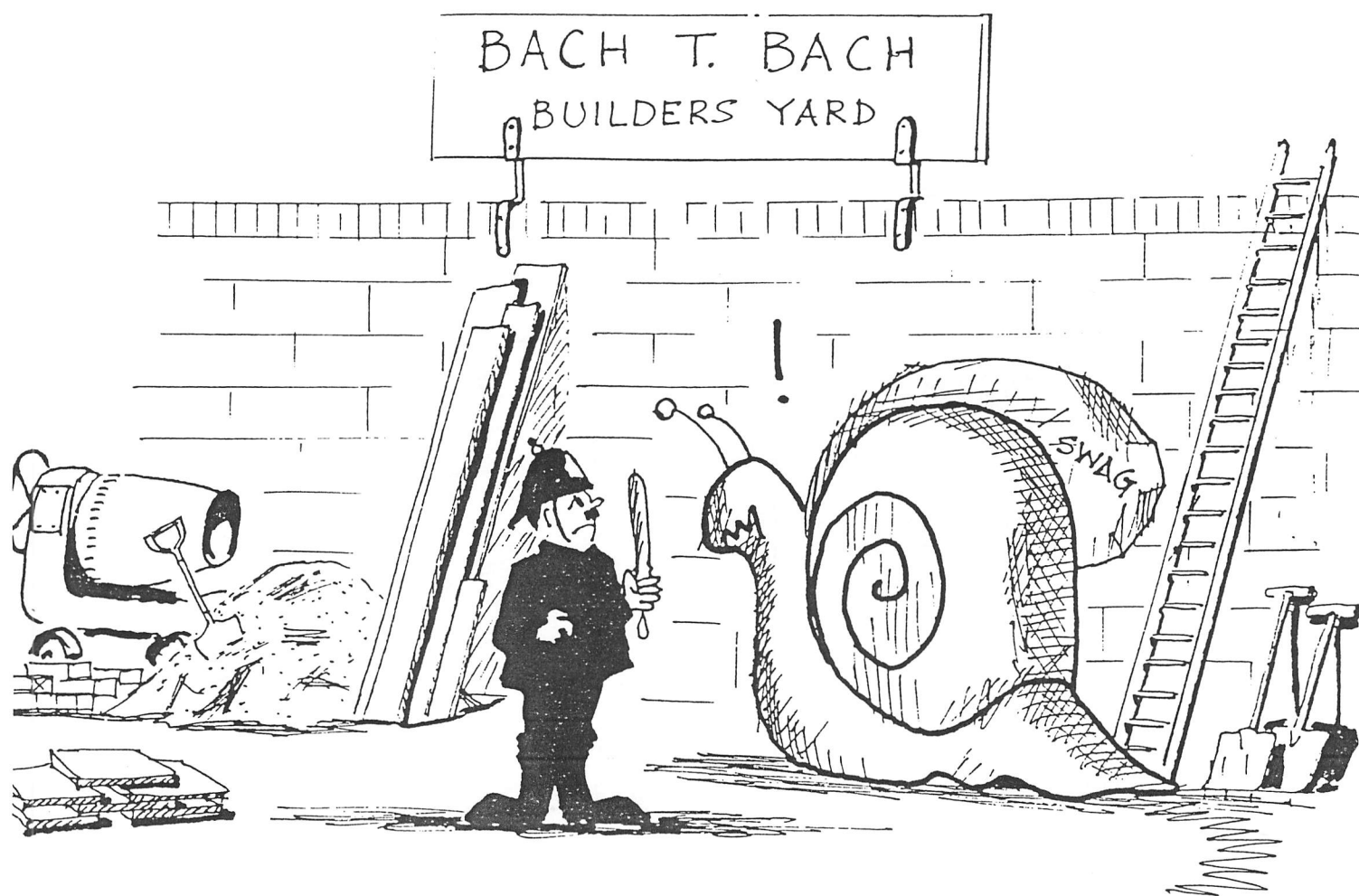
with his cronies Slug and Toad had come to wreak havoc in the town with their drinking, bullying and opportunist stealing. Sam's greatest ambition was to be a master criminal but, so far, this had eluded him.

His one foray into major crime, a well thought out bank job, got him quickly arrested and jailed for a considerable time. He had broken into a bank vault through the wall of the shop next door, having obtained the safe's combination by watching, through a window with binoculars, as the Cashier closed up for the night. He used Toad to leap up and disconnect the outside alarm then sent Slug in under the security beams to switch them off. Slug and Toad then went back to their hideout, their job done, while Sam Snail went in to open up the vault, under cover of darkness.



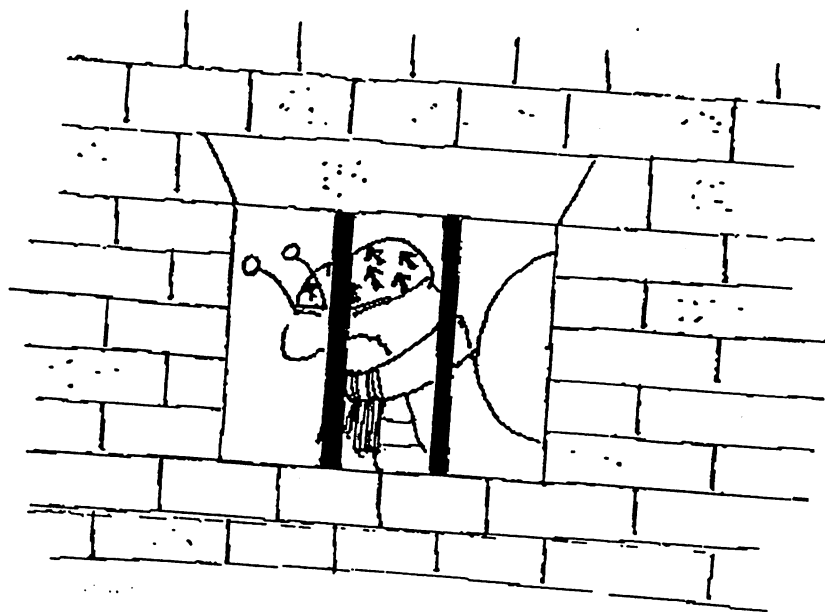


He filled a bag with all the money he could carry and, over-loaded as he was, made off as quickly as possible, which for a snail was not very quick at all. By daylight he had barely crossed the road so decided to lay low in, Bach T. Bach, the small house builder's yard.

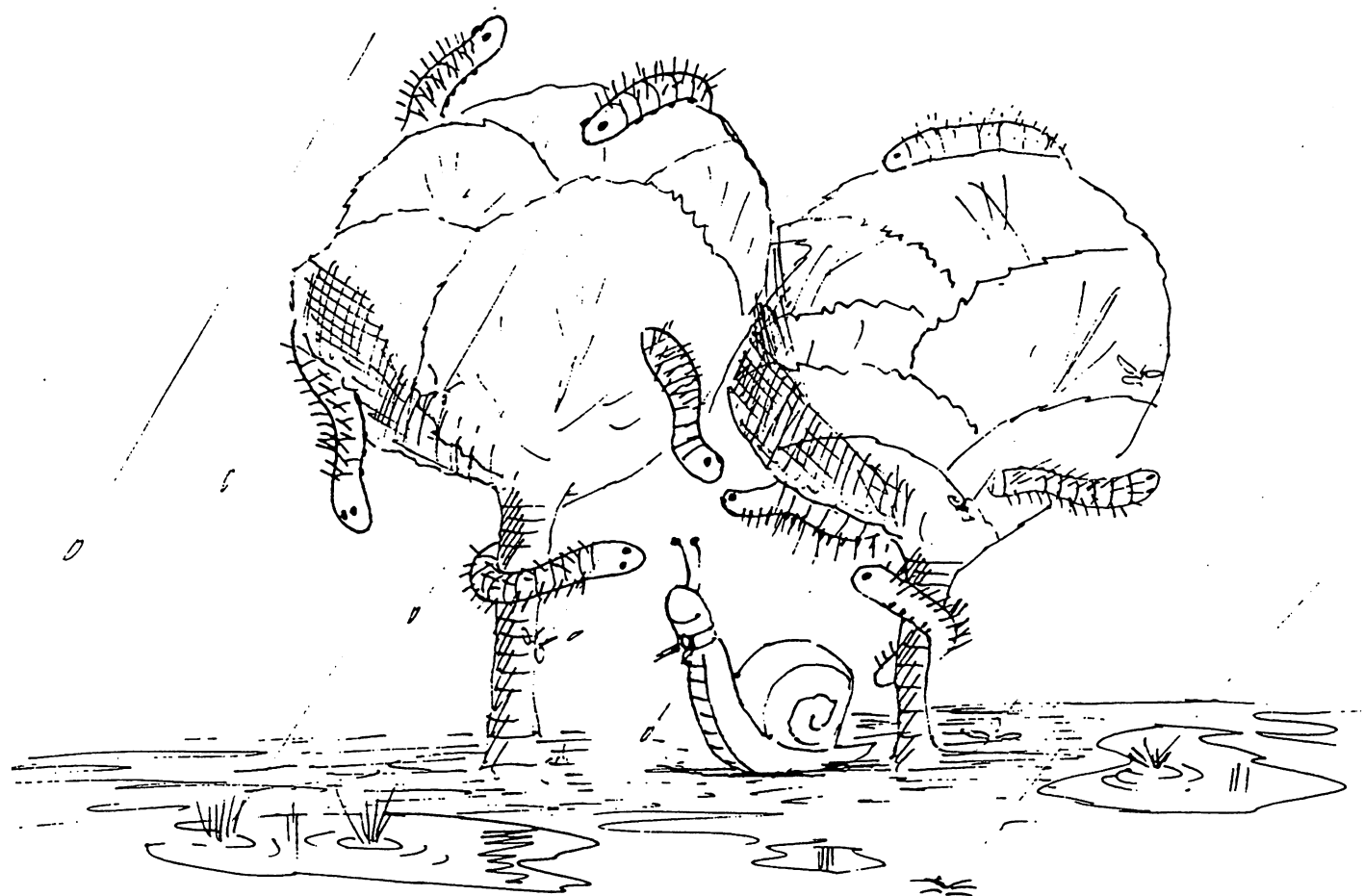


It was here the police picked him up, just minutes after the bank opened, by following the trail that snails always leave when on foot. Being caught, and the jail sentence that followed, did nothing to deter Sam from being a Criminal. He still thought he could become famous and make a lot of money through crime.

Most of Slippery Sam's waking hours were spent thinking about ways of making a quick getaway from the scenes of his crimes. He had thought of a single smooth ski but this needed snow and a Bank built near a slope, too restrictive. A set of wheels might be just the thing, with the wheels set on a frame that he could sit on, but then he would need steering and propulsion, both difficult when you are a snail. (The internal combustion engine had not yet come to Lewellyn City you see).



Time passed with Sam still dwelling on this problem until one day, while sheltering under a cabbage tree during a thunder storm, he looked up at the Caterpillars working away above his head.



A gem of an idea came to him as he watched their versatile antics. Their flexible bodies allowing them to run around the vertical trunks of the trees or upside down, under the leaves, at really high speeds. Could this be the answer to all his problems?

Heedless of the storm Sam rushed back into town to seek out an expert on construction design that he knew of. This particular one was used to making up escape gear, tailor-made, to scale various prison walls etc. Arriving the next day Sam set about explaining his needs to the tiny little man who was delighted to assist for the right price. This was not a surprise to Sam as the name plate above his door read:-

N.O CASH BACH Mech. Eng  
Any project undertaken but  
none guaranteed

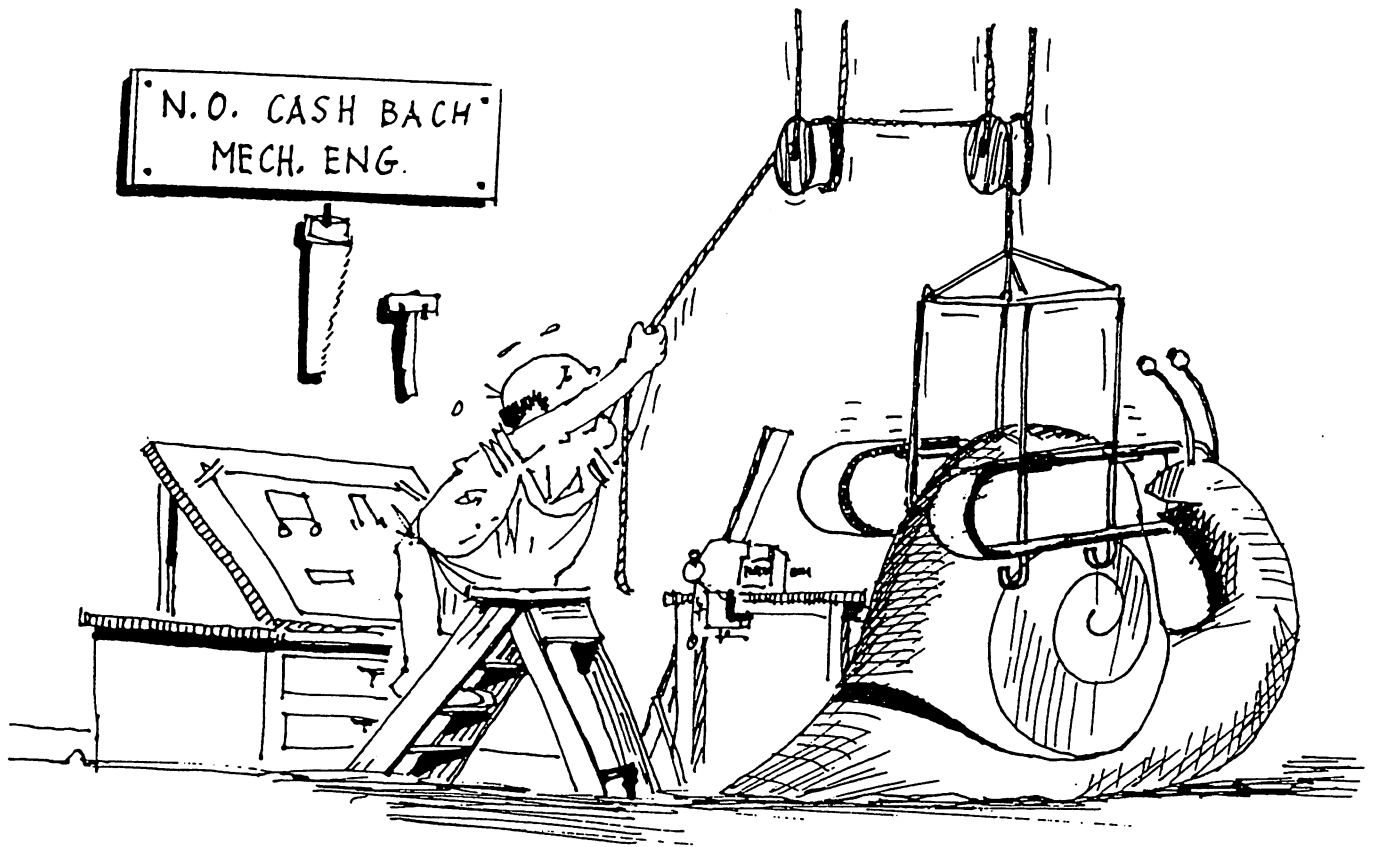


Cash Bach listened intently to Sam's idea, took all sorts of measurements, made lots of calculations and said "I think this can be done OK so come back in two weeks for a trial run". Sam went off in a high state of excitement back to where he had seen the Caterpillars hard at work.

Time passed slowly for Sam over the next two weeks and bright and early, on the fourteenth day, he was back at the Engineer's workshop but he wasn't alone, two big strong Caterpillars were with him.

"I've been expecting you" said the Engineer.

"Here are the working drawings and here" he said proudly "is the full size unit".



With the assistance of the Caterpillars, the lightweight frame was fitted over and onto Sam Snail. Hooks under the edges of his shell kept it tight and straps over his shell kept it from slipping out of place. Next came the difficult bit. Sam raised his shell off the ground as far as he could and the Caterpillars laid on their backs either side of him. Sam lowered his shell down and the frames rested on the upturned feet of the Caterpillars.

The Caterpillars then looped around the frames and linked head and tail together.

Now came the heart stopping moment, Sam had no thought for crime only the thought of how his invention might work. The Engineer, Cash Bach, climbed up onto Sam's back, legs astride his neck, and held tight to his shell.

"Ready?" said Sam.

"Ready" said the Engineer.

"Ready?" said Sam again.

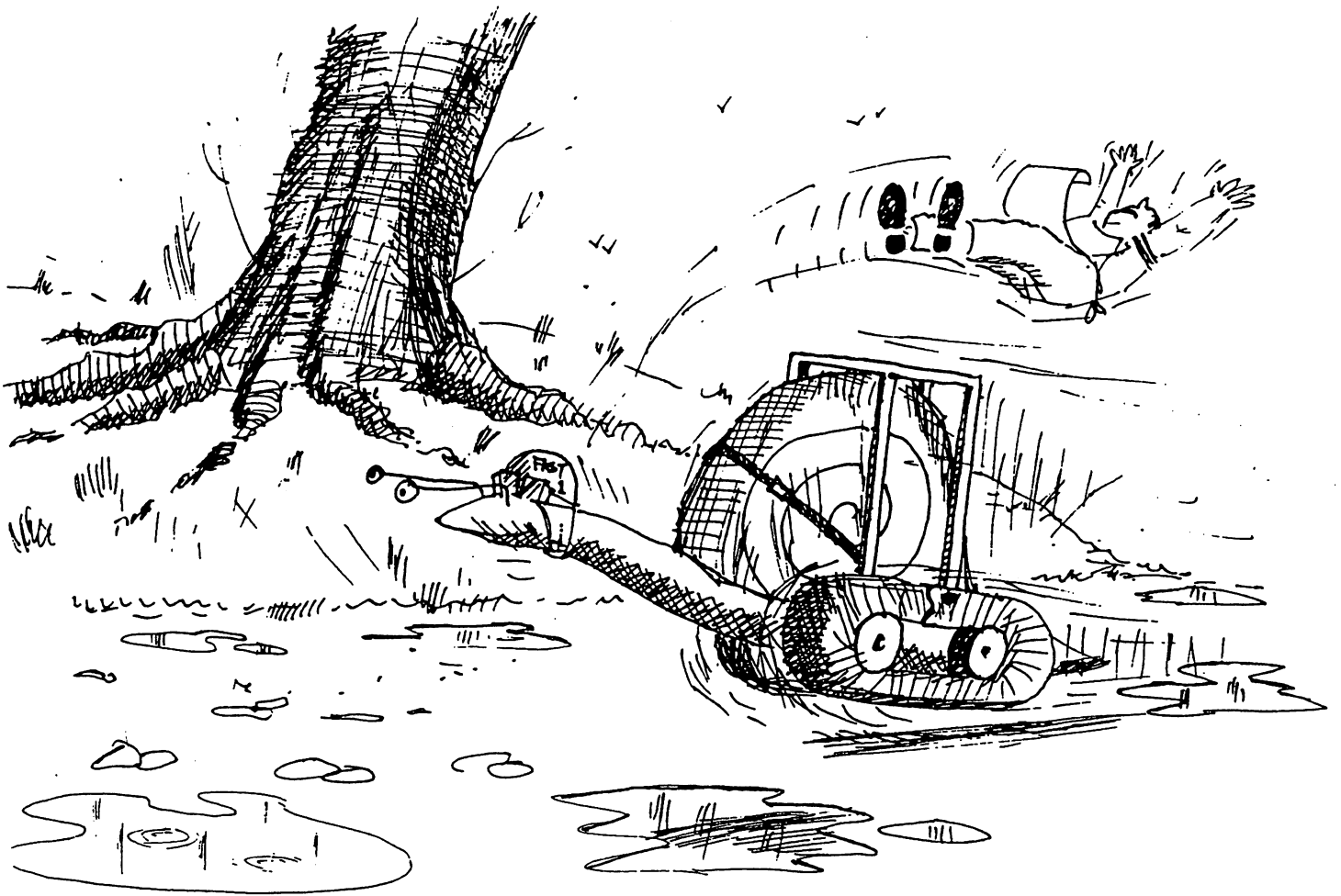
"Ready" mumbled the two Caterpillars.

"Right" said Sam. "All ready and counting; five, four, three, two, one, GO"

The two caterpillars started walking and, without moving a muscle, Sam was moving forward.

"Faster" said Sam and faster they went.

“Slow down” said Sam and, slow down, they did. “Turn Left” said Sam and, with the left side Caterpillar walking slower than the right, Sam turned left.



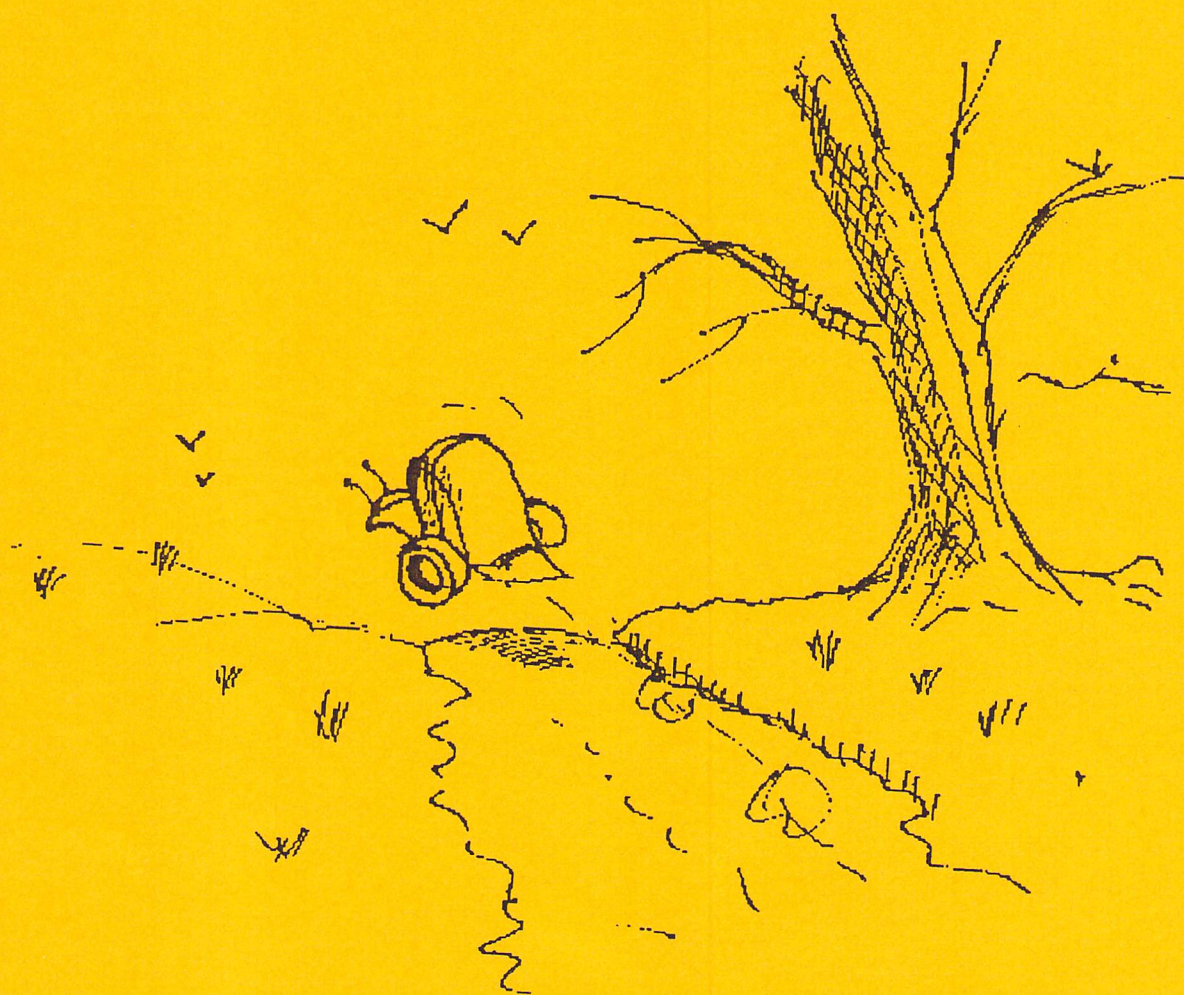
This was working far better than Sam had ever imagined and the Engineer, who was so overwhelmed, forgot to hold on and was thrown off into a puddle.

Sam, in his excitement, was going over the top.  
“Let’s try going up a slippery slope now” and,  
sure enough, up they went. “Right, now let’s try  
a sandy surface and across that they went without  
faltering. “How about water?” said Sam.

“Get Lost” mumbled the Caterpillars together  
“we are not amphibious”.

“OK” said Sam, “enough’s enough, you’ve done  
us proud. Don’t you realise we’ve invented the  
first Caterpillar Traction Unit ever and I shall be  
rich without every having to steal again!”





THE END

N. STAR