



Press Release – June 20, 2024 – For Immediate Release



Riverside Racket Covers

As we announced, for our first *Carol Day* story book, we are publishing *Riverside Racket*. We think the backstory will interest *Carol Day* fans, so this is an account of how it came to be....

Roger Clark, June 2024

The Slingsby Bros and the Adventure of the Lost Art

If you're lucky, every now and then as a collector you get a whiff of the Indiana Jones life, that thrilling moment when a long-sought treasure, one you weren't even sure existed, at last comes into focus and is within your reach.

The Slingsby Bros recently had such a moment.

Back in the Day

When I bought the *Carol Day* art archive from Patrick Wright, David Wright's son and the executor of the estate, in 2007, he had just recently gotten it returned to him from

the University of Kent. Some stories were complete, some were nearly complete, and a few had only scattered examples, but every *Carol Day* story was represented, except one: *Riverside Racket*, the eighth story, comprising strips 610-698, running from Thursday, August 28, 1958 through Tuesday, December 9, 1958.

I didn't think much about it at the time. I had thousands of *Carol Day* boards to deal with and I didn't know much about the strip, so a missing story didn't seem all that consequential. As I immersed myself in the strip and my understanding of the magnitude of Wright's achievement grew, the pressure from that missing story grew in proportion, looming larger and larger.

I had asked Patrick about *Riverside Racket* early on in our acquaintance, and he had told me that wasn't sure where the art was. He thought the entire story had been taken to the US by his brother Nicky and eventually donated to an automobile museum in the mid-West. Patrick said he would try to get it back for me, but he wasn't optimistic. He was also fairly sick by that time, with little energy, and when he didn't around to it, I let it drop. These matters rested for several years.

The Slingsby Bros Gather

Fast forward to 2019 when the Slingsby Bros formed to work on the *Lance Hallam* project. When we audited our library of scans and tearsheets to get an accurate picture of our options, *Riverside Racket* emerged once again as a glaring hole. We talked about trying to find the art but got consumed by getting *Lance Hallam* out and deferred it.

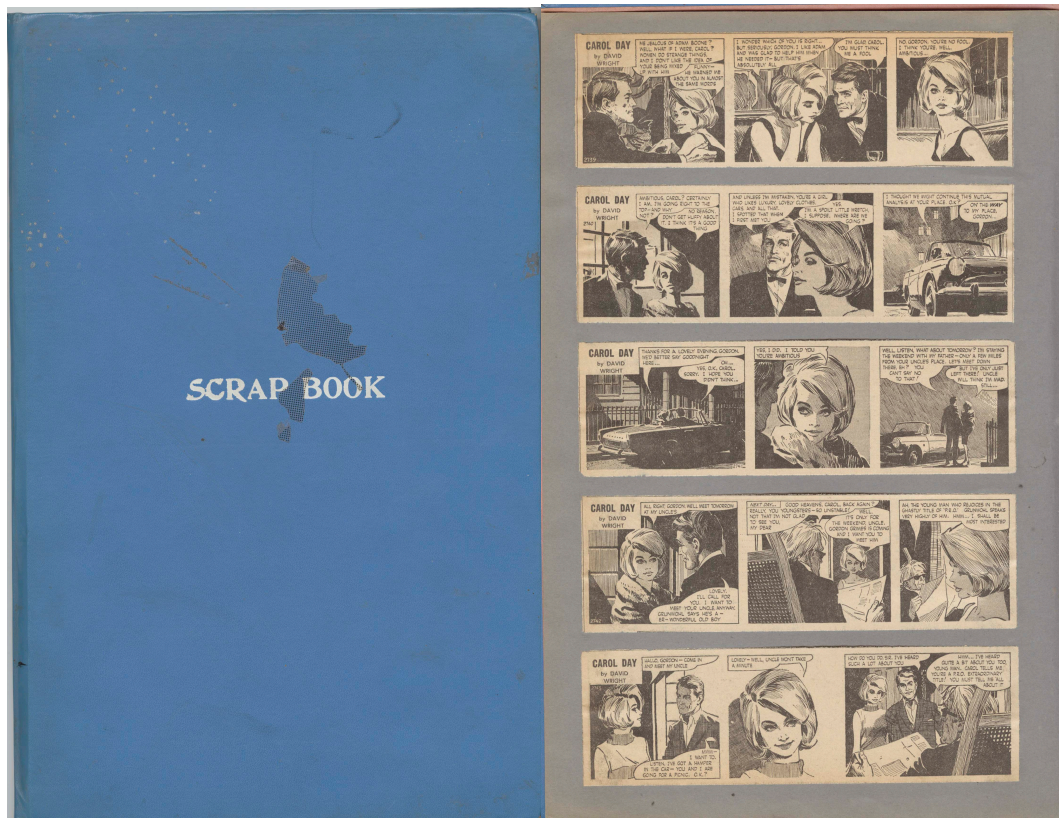
But a *Carol Day* mystery is never dead to a true *Carol Day* fan! Once *Lance Hallam* was behind us, the synergy of a few *Carol Day* nerds was enough to reignite the enthusiasm to try again to solve the *Riverside Racket* mystery.

By the spring of 2022 the timing was right to look for the art, and doing the *Lance Hallam* project motivated us to aggressively find every piece of *Carol Day* art we could. With Patrick unable to help us, we were on our own.

Auburn Cord Duesenberg Automobile Museum

Since Patrick had given us a clue with the mid-West auto museum, we started there. Slingsby Bro Chris Killackey exhaustively researched automobile museums in the mid-West and found the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Automobile Museum in Auburn, Indiana. It was the only relevant institution in our search area, so our fingers were crossed that this was the place Patrick remembered!

In fact, it was sort of the right place. They had never heard of *Riverside Racket* and had no David Wright art, but they did have a *Carol Day* donation from Nicky - one of the scrapbooks where David Wright pasted in *Carol Day* tearsheets each day. It contained tearsheets of strips from 2739-2949. Sam Grate, a curator at the museum, very graciously photocopied it for us, filling in some big holes in our archive of *Carol Day* tearsheets!



Once again matters rested. We were thrilled to fill in another gap in our scrapbooks, but no closer on the *Riverside Racket* art. We had exhausted all our leads, and when Patrick died in the fall of 2022, we thought the search was over – we'd gotten some good results but the whereabouts of the art would remain an unsolved mystery.

Thomas Ward Re-enters

Then out of the blue, early in the fall of 2023 Thomas Ward, the original *Carol Day* detective, re-enters the story! *Carol Day* collectors have long owed Thomas a major debt for tracking down Patrick Wright and the return of the *Carol Day* art to him, starting the process of bringing this art to the US. Had Thomas not so very kindly referred Patrick to me back in the day, my all-consuming *Carol Day* affair would in all likelihood never have begun.

While going through some old emails Thomas ran across one from Patrick in which Patrick mentioned that the University of Kent still held the *Riverside Racket* art. He forwarded that to Chris Killackey, and we were off to the races again! Patrick had told me years ago that the University of Kent had returned all the art that they had, and this was a direct contradiction! Could it be true?!?!??

University of Kent Closes the Case

At the University of Kent Clair Waller, the Digital Archivist, helped us find the answers. Most important, she confirmed that the University still had the *Riverside Racket* art.

Apparently it is customary when returning an archive to an author or artist (as when returning the *Carol Day* art to Patrick) to ask for some small part to remain with the university, and the Wright estate chose *Riverside Racket* for reasons that are now lost.

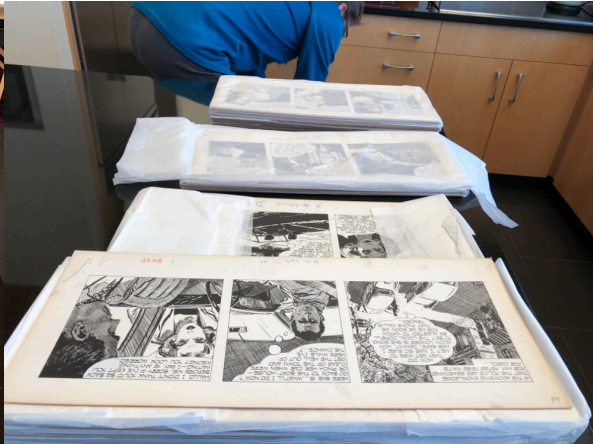
Now that we knew where the art was, was it possible to get it? It was clear that an attempt to get the university to deaccession the art would have to come from the Wright family, since they originated the donation. We didn't think we'd get very far with a cold call asking if we could acquire the art.

Paul Wright Goes to Bat For Us



After Patrick died, David Wright's last surviving son, Paul, became executor of the estate. A great supporter of our publishing projects, Paul is also a highly recognized marine artist in his own right (google him, you won't regret it!). We asked Paul if he would be interested in requesting the return of the art, specifically to sell it to us.

Paul was enthusiastic, the University of Kent was agreeable, and a couple of weeks later Karen Brayshaw, the Special Collections and Archives Manager, personally drove the box of art over to Paul. After another couple of weeks and some trials and tribulations with FedEx, the art appeared at my doorstep!



For the first time in decades, very likely the first time since it was published in the *Daily Mail*, the story and the art can be seen and appreciated by fans and collectors.

Was it worth it? A frustrating off and on again 15 year search, with many dead ends and roadblocks and a high degree of uncertainty as to whether the art would ever be found? Check out some of the highlights from the story below and you be the judge!

CLARA BECK AT HOME...

SWEET OF CAROL TO BREAK INTO HER HOLIDAY TO SHOW THESE DRESSES, PAUL. I LOVE THIS ONE - WHAT DO YOU WANT, IRMA?

MR. FLOWERS IS HERE, MADAM

611

FLOWERS? IT-IT CAN'T BE THE ONE I KNEW. NOT HERMOY. FLOWERS - THAT CROOKED -

WELL, WELL, CAROL, LONG TIME NO SEE, MY DEAR. HOW'S EVERY LITTLE THING? AND TELL ME, HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN THE MODELLING RACKET?

OH, QUITE A WHILE.

AND YOU? WHAT - ER - RACKET ARE YOU IN NOW, MR. FLOWERS...?

GIVE MYSELF UP, SHE SAYS. YOU LITTLE IDIOT, WHAT CHANCE WOULD I HAVE NOW, AFTER TRYING TO FAKE CULLEN'S DEATH AS AN ACCIDENT AND THE WAY I'VE ACTED SINCE? THEY'D THROW THE BOOK AT ME... MAYBE IF I'D GONE TO THE POLICE IN THE FIRST PLACE -

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WHY DIDN'T YOU THEN - IF IT WAS AN ACCIDENT?

I PANICKED. I COULD ONLY THINK THAT I HAD TO GET RID OF HIS BODY AND FAKE UP SOMETHING THAT'D CLEAR ME OF ANY SUSPICION. I'LL TELL YOU THE WHOLE STORY, THEN. MAYBE YOU WON'T THINK YOU'RE IN THE HANDS OF A MURDERER

I'D BEEN HAVING AN AFFAIR WITH CULLEN'S WIFE. SOUNDS PRETTY SORDID, EH? BUT FOR ONCE I WASN'T PLAYING AROUND - I WAS ON THE LEVEL WITH IRENE. SHE DIDN'T GET MUCH OF A BARGAIN IN ME BUT AT LEAST IT MADE UP FOR THE LIFE SHE'D HAD WITH CULLEN

PETER TRIBE CONTINUES HIS STORY...

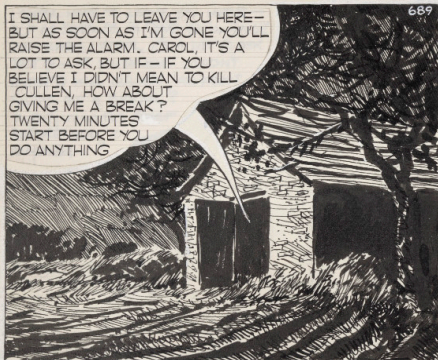
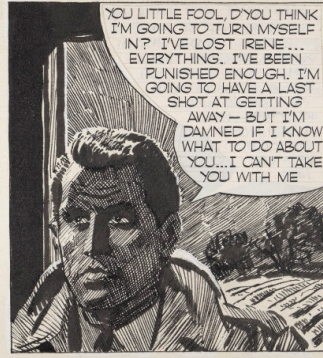
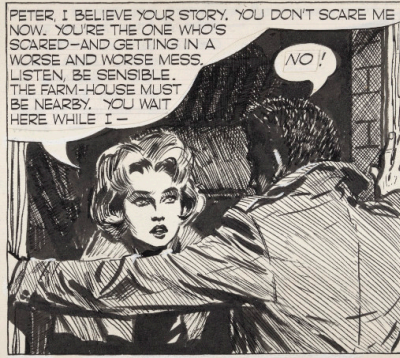
CULLEN FOUND OUT ABOUT IRENE AND ME, OF COURSE. THE NIGHT I KILLED HIM HE CAME TO SEE ME, BUT NOT TO PLAY THE INJURED HUSBAND. HE WANTED MONEY - THREATENED THAT IF I DIDN'T COUGH UP HE'D TAKE IT OUT ON IRENE

687

I'D HAD A FEW AND THERE WAS A BRAWL. I THOUGHT OF THE FILTHY WAY HE TREATED HER. I WENT SORT OF CRAZY. I KEPT HITTING HIM - HITTING HIM...

LISTEN, IF THIS IS ALL TRUE AND YOU GIVE YOURSELF UP TO THE POLICE, YOU COULD PLEAD SELF-DEFENCE

IT'S TRUE ALL RIGHT, BUT WHO'D BELIEVE THAT, NOW? CAROL, DO YOU? YOU'RE NOT QUITE SURE, ARE YOU? NO, IF THE POLICE CATCH ME I'LL BE SENT DOWN FOR YEARS



Two takeaways from this tale of lost art are certainly that you have to chase down every lead and you have to double check every apparent dead end on a treasure hunt. But

bottom line, I think we succeeded because of luck and serendipity. We had done a lot of groundwork, but really, what a series of coincidences?

There's also a weird and beautiful circularity to the story....separated by time, geography, intervening events, vastly different experiences, interests and priorities, somehow everything came back to the beginning of *Carol Day* art being released to the world – the Wright family, the University of Kent and Thomas Ward were the keys to unlock the mystery.

Riverside Racket is the first in our new series of story books. Click [here](#) to read about the story book format.

You can pre-order *Riverside Racket* now, with shipping planned for the fall of 2024. As with our last book, *Jack Slingsby*, we will take pre-orders through the Book Palace for *Riverside Racket*. Pre-orders close on September 1 at which time we'll set the print run. Click [here](#) to go to the Book Palace's order page.