

From Bangs to Black Holes

**The adventures of a much married Provincial Surveyor
turned Astronomer**

Preface

At the Scouts Hut in Longfield Road, Tring there was a hard frost during this war time evening. Rogers, aged 12, was embroiled in a game of Bulldog, when through the door walked Father Frank with a face like thunder. I am required to return home immediately since the police have arrived making enquiries into certain explosions that have occurred in the area. I am led into the dining room to be confronted by a burly police sergeant: there is a roaring coal fire and I am told that it has come to the sergeant's knowledge that I have been involved, with other boys, in the letting off of explosives. I think I have always realised that when confronted with a situation that is impossible to defend the best way out is to put your arms up in surrender. This I did and when asked if I had any explosives in the house, immediately confessed. I went to the attic and produced a biscuit tin (one of the old tins with a capacity of about one cubic foot), full of gelignite. On taking off the lid the sergeant became seriously agitated and told me I could have blown up the whole street. Taking up a fistful I threw it on the fire and explained that a detonator was needed to cause an explosion.

I make no apologies for failing to start any sentence with an “and” or a “but” as seems to be the universal manner these days.

Upon reading this book the vicar of Long
Crendon volunteered “your halo fits too tightly”

In Memory of Margaret’s son Patrick

He liked a laugh

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