

Edward Hordern

By Jerry Slocum

Early and fond memories of our long friendship began in 1977 when I was able to travel to England and visit three new puzzle friends; James Dalgety, Eileen Scott and Dale Overy. Eileen guided me through the marvelous antique stalls at London's Portabello Road and numerous other antique markets in London. We found lots of wonderful puzzles that complimented my collection of about 2,000, mostly American, puzzles. During my visit, James suggested that I contact a "keen" British collector that I did not know, by the name of Edward Hordern.



In his first letter, Edward mentioned that he had been collecting puzzles for about five years, and his collection included about 1,000 puzzles. He said that one of the main reasons that he had been able to collect so many puzzles in such a short time was that his business took him all over the world. His main reason for collecting puzzles was that, "above all, I enjoy solving them, and there are not very many that I have had to give up. The types of puzzles that I am probably 'best' at are the burr and sliding block puzzles." He also mentioned that the sheet of my *Wanted Puzzles* that I had sent him "conforms almost exactly to my sphere of interests". And his book collection included a photocopy of Hoffmann's *Puzzle Old & New*. Our trading of information, patents, lists, compendiums, solutions, books and puzzles started immediately.

Edward also mentioned in his first letter that he would be traveling to Montreal, Canada in March 1978, and perhaps also to California. This was one of the main reasons that the First International Puzzle Party was set for 1 April (April Fool's Day) 1978. His attendance at the First Puzzle Party set the stage for our first big trade. Edward stayed with us, and in his thank you letter, Edward said that the Party "puzzlewise, was the experience of a life time. I took home an entire suitcase-full of 250 puzzles and 40 books". He added, "I can only say that I look forward to reciprocating, and welcoming both of you to England." And he reciprocated many times over with marvelous puzzles, books and warm hospitality. I tried hard to stay ahead of him in our trades, but I seldom was able to accomplish it. One time I felt I caught up was when he visited me to photograph my Hoffmann puzzles for his book. Even though they were not duplicates, Edward succeeded in enticing me to trade every one of them to him

by offering me rare and precious antique puzzles in return. And because they were so important to Edward, I was pleased to help him acquire all the Hoffmann puzzles that he didn't have.

Over 23 years we must have exchanged thousands of puzzles. Both of us traveled worldwide frequently and we bought duplicate new and antique puzzles for our trades as we traveled. In the early 1980s we found and exchanged dozens of variations of Rubik's cubes and cube solution books. Edward brought home many hundreds of turn-of-the century French puzzles from his frequent trips to France and traded hundreds to me. Our last trade consisted of two keychain puzzles that had been on his "wanted" list for at least five years. I sent them to him and, in return, he sent me two rare British keychain puzzles that I did not have. I received them two days before his death.

We usually visited each other several times a year. He was always a gracious and thoughtful guest and it was a pleasure to have him visit. And he and Wendy were equally thoughtful and gracious hosts.

After IPP 19 in London, he invited me to come to his home to photograph his collection of Tangram books, puzzles and boxed sets. After several hours I could see he was tiring. He volunteered to bring the rest of the Tangrams to Los Angeles on his next trip for a treatment at the John Wayne Cancer center. Later when he and his doctor decided not to continue his treatments in Los Angeles, he wrote and said that he would take the photos himself. He sent the photos to me that he had taken, as well as all the negatives and his notes about each puzzle, about one month before his death.

This is typical of the way that Edward has helped me so much over the last 23 years. Many of my fondest memories are of the times we had together and the puzzle trades that we enjoyed so much with each other.

Edward will be sorely missed by all of us! It is very hard to say - "Goodbye".

Jerry Slocum
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