

ATTITUDE

This tale is a true one although, dear reader, you could be forgiven if thoughts of disbelief crept into your mind.

A very old friend of mine had for many years a pet tortoise that lived in her garden and regarded it as his domain and did not take kindly to intruders, as he considered them to be. To this end, he would try and dissuade the intruder from staying. The method he used was one of force, a David and Goliath situation, which did not achieve much but he kept on trying.

All this I was told but never saw in action until, and the incident was somewhat unreal, a chance occurred.

On one of my visits to my friend I was told that a man was coming to cut the hedges; this would be my chance to observe the tortoise.

Sure enough, the man turned up and laid out his shears and clippers. From a far corner of the garden emerged "Rupert" ambling across the lawn up to the man, he withdrew his head and proceeded to butt the man's ankles. The man got the message and moved Rupert away, placed him under restraint and finished the hedges.

I have lost touch with the activities of Rupert but suspect he still carries on to defend his perceived right of independence. As a footnote, the favourite titbit of Rupert's was a finger of bread smeared with jam but then, we all have our weakness and bread and jam was Rupert's.

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