



Issue 9: Bendigo (18 October 1811 – 23 August 1880)

Published: 8 November 2014

Dawn of the Unread is an interactive graphic novel that is made available across all media devices. It was launched on National Libraries' Day (8 Feb 2014) as a 16 part serial and finishes on 8 June 2015. Each comic in the serial explores a different literary figure from Nottingham's past and uses a wide variety of artistic styles, collaborations and literary forms. [It was created to address the UK's worrying literacy statistics](#) and piloting an innovative way of engaging with a 'youtube generation' of reader who supposedly finds books boring.

William Abednego Thompson aka **Bendigo** was an English bare-knuckle boxer from Sneinton who was one of the first boxers to employ scientific techniques in the ring. He was supported by the Nottingham Lambs, a rowdy group who burnt down Nottingham Castle in the 1831 Reform Riots. Bendigo retired undefeated with four Silver Cups and two Prize Belts to his name, but it wasn't long before he turned to drink. This would see him banged up 28 times in the House of Corrections before finding salvation as a religious preacher. In the following story he is brought back to life via a 'Time Mine' by Nottingham City Council for a fight with Carl Froch. This pays homage to the DC Comics classic fight *Muhammad Ali versus Superman* (1978)

The comic has links (star icons) to additional contextual articles such as:

- Bendigo's fights with [Ben Caunt](#) by James Walker
- Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's [Bendigo poem](#)
- A unique [twitter timeline](#) detailing the Bendigo fight
- Video of the artist and writer on [how they created the comic](#)

Artist: [Rikki Marr](#)

Rikki is a visual thinker. He spends most of his time producing drawings of other people's thoughts, for his company Hawk & Mouse. His style is always live and off-the-cuff – usually drawn in black ink with minimal highlights to add punches and mood – preferring the quick,

instant 'honest' sketch to overlaboured 'pretty pictures'. Born and bred in Nottingham, Rikki draws the *Ayup Duck* strip for *LeftLion* magazine. He's been a comic book fan all his life, but *Bendigo Versus Nottingham* is the first full comic he has completed. It was a real challenge, but one he enjoyed.

Writer: [Al Needham](#)

Al has been reading comics since the age of 3. Since then, he has written for the likes of *Cosmopolitan*, *The Daily Mirror*, *Maxim*, *Penthouse*, *Esquire*, *Scarlet*, commented on topless boxing and catfights from trailer parks in Kentucky for Television X, been a male stripper, won an Erotic Award for a male sex blog, was the Editor of *LeftLion*, and collaborated with Rikki on the *Int Notts Mint* advertising campaign for *Notts TV*. This is his first go at a graphic novel, which allowed him to wallow through the first 600 Progs of *2000AD* and every issue of *Transmetropolitan*. He'd like to do more of this sort of thing.

NOTE TO EDITORS

- Dawn of the Unread is created by James Walker and Paul Fillingham who previously collaborated on [The Sillitoe Trail](#) for The Space and [Being Arthur](#), the first live Twitter adaptation of Alan Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1958)
- The literary figures featured in Dawn of the Unread are: William Booth, Slavomir Rawicz, Charlie Peace, Gotham Fool, Byron Clough, Alma Reville, DH Lawrence, 5th Duke of Portland, Bendigo, Ms Hood, Geoffrey Trease, Alan Sillitoe, Mary Howitt, Margaret Cavendish, Stanley Middleton, George Africanus.
- Dawn of the Unread is a £60,500 Arts Council funded project. It has generated up to [100 placements for students](#) within the Humanities department of Nottingham Trent University.

Contact James Walker and Paul Fillingham at dawnoftheunread@gmail.com

Click on the circles below to learn more about our campaign for 'books'

