

THE GUINNESS BOOK OF

# FAKES, FRAUDS &

# *Forgery*



WORLD WAR III

THE  
MAN  
WHO  
NEVER  
WAS

SCOPE  
DE LUXE

HAME

RICHARD NEWNHAM

DIRECTED BY RONALD NEAME SCREENPLAY BY NIGEL BAUCHIN FROM THE NOVEL BY EWEN MONTAGU PRESENTED BY 21

615275

# **The Guinness Book of Fakes, Frauds & Forgeries**

**Richard Newnham**

**GUINNESS PUBLISHING** 



Editor: Honor Head  
Picture Editor: Alex Goldberg  
Design and Layout: Cathy Shilling

© Richard Newnham 1991

Published in Great Britain by Guinness Publishing Ltd,  
33 London Road, Enfield, Middlesex

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission in writing of the publisher.

Typeset in Bembo and Gill Sans  
by Ace Filmsetting Ltd, Frome, Somerset  
Printed and bound in Great Britain by  
The Bath Press, Bath

'Guinness' is a registered trade mark of Guinness  
Publishing Ltd

A catalogue record for this book is available from the  
British Library

ISBN 0-85112-975-7

The right of Richard Newnham to be identified as  
Author of this Work has been asserted in accordance  
with the Copyright, Designs & Patents Act 1989.

# CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	6
<b>DISTORTIONS AND DECEPTIONS    IDEAS</b>	13
Protocols of the Elders of Zion: a witches' sabbath	13
George Psalmanazar: the island inventor	20
William Henry Ireland: playwright for a day	22
Munchausen/Raspe: tall tales	25
Alessandro Cagliostro: master mason	27
Lauder: Milton revisited	34
Anton Mesmer: the animal magnetist	36
James Macpherson: the maker of Ossian	38
Rampa: the Lama and Mr Hoskins	45
Albert Abrams: the 'distance healer'	46
William Summerlin: a man and his mouse	48
Cyril Burt: intelligence expert	50
Backhouse: our man in Peking	57
'Doc' Brinkley: goat-gland implanter	58
Graham: the celestial bed	61
Trofim Lysenko: creative geneticist	62
Roy: is anybody there?	68
Did we really swallow that?	70
Herbert Marwitz: one man and an eagle	72
Elias Alsabti: the instant scientist	79
Irving: the Howard Hughes story	81
Paul Kammerer: the fraudulent toad	82
 <b>FEATS AND COUNTERFEITS    MONEY</b>	 86
Thérèse Humbert: woman with a will	86
Ponzi: the coupon con	94
Antonio de Angelis: the salad oil king	95
Brockway: forger of note	99
Artur Alves Reis: printer of money	100
Krüger: the Führer's fivers	102
Fraudware – Four cases	104
Harkins: a pen and a cheque book	106
Beraha: sovereign achievement	108
Black: funny money	109

<b>TRICK OR TREAT? OBJECTS</b>	<b>111</b>
Denis Vrain-Lucas: prodigious penman	111
Moses Shapira: a dealer in scrolls	117
Michelangelo: the sleeping cupid	120
Hanka: creating a culture	121
John Payne Collier: Shakespeare finder	122
Wise: firsts on demand	124
Giovanni Bastianini: Florentine sculptor	126
Piltown Man: the 'missing link'	132
Becker: the numismatist's friend	134
Han van Meegeren: the Vermeer student	137
Simpson: 'Flint Jack'	143
Dossena: the sculptor in love	145
Glozel (Auvergne, France): the jury's still out	146
Hull: a giant fake	147
Byron: the son of his father?	149
Lothar Malskat: restorer of frescos	150
Lagrange: obsessed by the Madonna	157
Mark Hofmann: a killer and an Oath	158
Rukhomovsky: the token tiara	160
Elmyr de Hory: the modern master	165
Tom Keating: the art-faker hero	167
 <b>A QUESTION OF IDENTITY PEOPLE</b>	 <b>171</b>
Martin Guerre: a man takes a wife	171
Simnel & Warbeck: a Yorkist conspiracy	178
Yuri Otrepyev: Tsar Dimitry	180
D'Eon: sex unknown	182
Cross-dressing – who gets what	184
Karl Naundorff: the found Dauphin	186
Serres: niece to the King?	188
Kaspar Hauser: the German conundrum	190
Wilson: a royal for America	192
Barry: double-life doctor	197
Stella Newborough: Princess of Orleans	199
Domela: Prince William of Hohenzollern	202
The Tichborne Claimant: mother's boy	203
Willcocks: Napoleon's last love	204
James Addison Reavis: the quit-claim baron	210
Martin: the man who never was	211
Anna Anderson: the Romanov heiress	214
 Further Reading	 217
Index	219

**The Guinness Book of  
Fakes, Frauds & Forgeries**

# A NEW METHOD OF

TEACHING THE  
ARTS AND CRAFTS

OF THE

1914  
NEW YORK

615275

# **The Guinness Book of Fakes, Frauds & Forgeries**

**Richard Newnham**

**GUINNESS PUBLISHING** 



Editor: Honor Head  
Picture Editor: Alex Goldberg  
Design and Layout: Cathy Shilling

© Richard Newnham 1991

Published in Great Britain by Guinness Publishing Ltd,  
33 London Road, Enfield, Middlesex

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission in writing of the publisher.

Typeset in Bembo and Gill Sans  
by Ace Filmsetting Ltd, Frome, Somerset  
Printed and bound in Great Britain by  
The Bath Press, Bath

'Guinness' is a registered trade mark of Guinness  
Publishing Ltd

A catalogue record for this book is available from the  
British Library

ISBN 0-85112-975-7

The right of Richard Newnham to be identified as  
Author of this Work has been asserted in accordance  
with the Copyright, Designs & Patents Act 1989.

# Introduction

The tale of a fake, fraud or forgery must move in on the listener and take possession, just as a good film or play does. It will also allow things to emerge from the telling that were not known before – about material objects, about the place these have in our lives, the way they are made and loved, bought and sold; or about the ideas and beliefs of science, literature and the arts. Most importantly of all, such a tale will underline a truth (often a very complicated one) about human beings. Every story in this book is, in the end, about people.

A word on how fake, fraud and forgery will be used as terms. Let's say an artist invents a drawing that a recognized master-artist might have done, and produces this as the master's own drawing. The result is a fake. Forgery, by contrast, is the term for when the artist copies an already existing drawing by the master. And fraud is whatever improper use is made of what has been faked or forged.

That at least is how this book understands and applies the three terms. For specialists they often have quite other meanings. In ceramics, for example, a faked piece of china is an existing piece altered to seem something it is not, perhaps to look older or made by another factory. Again, lawyers will narrow the meaning of forgery to give the word a special sense (if that artist had signed the drawing 'Picasso', the signature would not be a forgery because a drawing is not a document). Nor are fake, fraud and forgery by any means the only terms we could use. This collection of stories, however, applies them in the manner just described, to books and archaeological finds, to lab data and counterfeit bank notes, to a play, a sculpture, an autograph letter – whatever the item may be. If an item exists or once existed, it can be forged; if not, it is said to be faked.

Here and there the term 'fraud' gets an extra meaning. As well as referring to an improper use of something, a fraud can also be the person most directly involved. 'Faker' or 'forger' are sometimes awkward or incorrect for that.

The stories are grouped in four sections – *Distortions and Deceptions: Ideas* (fraudulent science and medicine, history, literature); *Feats and Counterfeits: Money* (notes and coins, cheque frauds, fund-raising schemes); *Trick or Treat? Objects* (art, archaeological finds, manuscripts); and *A Question of Identity: People* (impostors and false claimants).

Choosing the stories found fewer options available than were expected. Science does its work in the open, in front of fellow professionals. The test of replicability (will an experiment run for a second time under identical conditions to those of the first experiment repeat its results?) is everywhere demanded. Scientific constants are laws which never alter. Matter behaves according to named effects that when they change at all do so only with wide general agreement. As a result, although there is any amount of bad science, if the work itself is worth doing then scientific fraud is rare. Medicine too does not tolerate fraud for long, though with the healing sciences an extra point must be remembered: the so-called 'placebo' effect. A patient getting treatment will usually be open to psychological suggestion. The worthless pill or the impressive box of tricks can achieve results that are hard to measure or account for, even though medically they occur. To sum up – science may be bad, but that does not make it fraudulent; medicine may be good, but that does not make it genuine. In consequence the stories from both areas quickly chose themselves.

With religion, every Messiah is somebody's anointed one. To go looking for fraud among what in the Near and Middle Eastern world alone would have been identified as thirty-two named pseudo Messiahs by the year 1707 would soon cause offence. So there are no stories here about faked relics, spurious miracles or idols with feet of clay.

Large-scale city swindles – fraud in its meaning of financial wrongdoing – generally involve too many technicalities for an outsider to stay interested in what is happening. Politics seems too close to half-truths to force any one particular fraud into the book. If both these judgments are wrong, then certainly those two areas of life would fill a volume on their own.

Finally the question of morality. Several stories here are shocking and surprising. In the worst cases it is hoped that the facts condemn the guilty out of hand (three stories show a killer at work). But once beyond such extreme cases the moral question becomes slippery, and the book avoids passing judgment. Faked art, for example, by one view gives the taste of its age a valuable stimulus. By another view it has at last compelled art dealers to accept the practice of selling under guarantee. Certainly, any lesson that teaches that there is a difference between the false and the genuine will be worth learning.

A further shock may be felt as, one by one, the stories reveal how seldom people in authority seem to learn any lesson at all. Can't 'they' do something to stop such ridiculous and shameful things from happening? it may be asked. The answer is no, they can't. Every imposture related here, and most of the money tricksters, idea peddlers and object fakers too, could be matched to a similar story told in the ancient world. Authority in this regard never learns: so much the better for true creativity must be our conclusion.

# Picture Acknowledgements

Archiv für Kunst  
Ashmolean Museum (Oxford)  
Associated Press  
Ullstein Bilderdienst  
Bodleian Library (Oxford)  
Bridgman Art Library  
British Museum  
Camera Press  
E.T. Archive  
Hulton Picture Library  
Images Colour Library  
Keystone (Hamburg)  
Mary Evans  
Museum of Fine Arts (Boston)  
Národní Muzeum v Praze

Popperfoto  
Rex Features  
Roger Viollet Collection  
Ann Ronan  
Royal Library Windsor  
St. Paul's Bibliographies, Winchester  
UPI-Bettmann Archive  
Victoria & Albert Museum

Special thanks to:  
Catherine Cheval  
Jocelyn Clapp  
Simon Conti  
Jürgen Raible

# Author

At the start of his career in publishing, Richard Newnham had as his first assignment an author who believed that Shakespeare's plays were in fact by Marlowe. His later publishing projects, while seldom matching the theme of fakes, frauds and forgeries quite so exactly, have given him a background from which to tackle the present work. Richard Newnham has edited books on most non-fiction subjects, including art, archaeology and literature, and is an advocate of science popularization. His own book *About Chinese* (Penguin 1971, new edition 1987) is established as the layman's introduction to that language. He lives in Oxford.

# Acknowledgements

For help at the planning stage, thanks are due to David Battie, of Sotheby's, London and to his colleagues Andy Hooker (musical instruments) and John Michael (postage stamps); to Walter Gratzer, of the MRC Cell Biophysics Unit, London; and to Chris Howgego and Nick Mayhew at the Heberden Coin Room, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

Useful comments on the text were made by Nicolas Barker, of the British Library; Lorna Carney, law student of St Hilda's College, Oxford; Peter Claxton, of Lloyds Bank plc; Martin Dodsworth, of the Department of English, Royal Holloway and Bedford New College, London University; Walter Gratzer; Anne Stevenson, poet, of County Durham; Doreen Stoneham, at the Archaeological Research Laboratory, Oxford; Michael Valentine, company director, and David Walker, theatre designer, of London.



# CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	6
<b>DISTORTIONS AND DECEPTIONS    IDEAS</b>	13
Protocols of the Elders of Zion: a witches' sabbath	13
George Psalmanazar: the island inventor	20
William Henry Ireland: playwright for a day	22
Munchausen/Raspe: tall tales	25
Alessandro Cagliostro: master mason	27
Lauder: Milton revisited	34
Anton Mesmer: the animal magnetist	36
James Macpherson: the maker of Ossian	38
Rampa: the Lama and Mr Hoskins	45
Albert Abrams: the 'distance healer'	46
William Summerlin: a man and his mouse	48
Cyril Burt: intelligence expert	50
Backhouse: our man in Peking	57
'Doc' Brinkley: goat-gland implanter	58
Graham: the celestial bed	61
Trofim Lysenko: creative geneticist	62
Roy: is anybody there?	68
Did we really swallow that?	70
Herbert Marwitz: one man and an eagle	72
Elias Alsabti: the instant scientist	79
Irving: the Howard Hughes story	81
Paul Kammerer: the fraudulent toad	82
 <b>FEATS AND COUNTERFEITS    MONEY</b>	 86
Thérèse Humbert: woman with a will	86
Ponzi: the coupon con	94
Antonio de Angelis: the salad oil king	95
Brockway: forger of note	99
Artur Alves Reis: printer of money	100
Krüger: the Führer's fivers	102
Fraudware – Four cases	104
Harkins: a pen and a cheque book	106
Beraha: sovereign achievement	108
Black: funny money	109

<b>TRICK OR TREAT? OBJECTS</b>	<b>111</b>
Denis Vrain-Lucas: prodigious penman	111
Moses Shapira: a dealer in scrolls	117
Michelangelo: the sleeping cupid	120
Hanka: creating a culture	121
John Payne Collier: Shakespeare finder	122
Wise: firsts on demand	124
Giovanni Bastianini: Florentine sculptor	126
Piltown Man: the 'missing link'	132
Becker: the numismatist's friend	134
Han van Meegeren: the Vermeer student	137
Simpson: 'Flint Jack'	143
Dossena: the sculptor in love	145
Glozel (Auvergne, France): the jury's still out	146
Hull: a giant fake	147
Byron: the son of his father?	149
Lothar Malskat: restorer of frescos	150
Lagrange: obsessed by the Madonna	157
Mark Hofmann: a killer and an Oath	158
Rukhomovsky: the token tiara	160
Elmyr de Hory: the modern master	165
Tom Keating: the art-faker hero	167
 <b>A QUESTION OF IDENTITY PEOPLE</b>	 <b>171</b>
Martin Guerre: a man takes a wife	171
Simnel & Warbeck: a Yorkist conspiracy	178
Yuri Otrepyev: Tsar Dimitry	180
D'Eon: sex unknown	182
Cross-dressing – who gets what	184
Karl Naundorff: the found Dauphin	186
Serres: niece to the King?	188
Kaspar Hauser: the German conundrum	190
Wilson: a royal for America	192
Barry: double-life doctor	197
Stella Newborough: Princess of Orleans	199
Domela: Prince William of Hohenzollern	202
The Tichborne Claimant: mother's boy	203
Willcocks: Napoleon's last love	204
James Addison Reavis: the quit-claim baron	210
Martin: the man who never was	211
Anna Anderson: the Romanov heiress	214
 Further Reading	 217
Index	219

