BAILIWICK

Following hot on the heels of "Mr. Eternity" from last week's *Bailiwick*, we'll examine the origin of *Kilroy*. *"Kilroy was here"* has been seen chalked, drawn or painted in many places, sometimes accompanied by a picture of a bald man with a long nose looking over a wall (although that character is actually called *Chad* and is somewhat older than *"Kilroy was here".* At some stage the two merged.)

Today, we ask the question, who was Kilroy?

The short answer is that nobody really knows – but that would make for a very brief Bailiwick. As usual, however, there is a strong case to be made for one individual and that is James J. Kilroy (1902-1962). He was a ship inspector for the Fore River Shipyard in Quincy, Massachusetts. One of his jobs was to check that pieces of the ship were riveted together correctly, which involved him crawling into tight places. If he found that the work was satisfactory on that part of the ship, he would leave a "tick" mark in crayon on the metal to show it had been inspected.

However, riveters were paid by the number of rivets they installed, so, when Kilroy had finished his inspections, they would sometimes rub out his mark for the next inspector to see – in that way they would be paid twice. However, it was soon noticed that the number of rivets actually used was significantly less than the number that had allegedly been installed. What was needed was a better system to mark the work.

He toyed with the idea of using paint but carrying an open paint can might prove difficult in some of the tight places he had to work. Instead he continued with the crayon but also wrote, in large letters, *"Kilroy was here"* which would be more difficult to completely erase than a "tick".

Normally, ships would be painted before launch and any such markings would have been covered. However, this was wartime and the ships were

needed urgently so the painting was usually not done. This meant that servicemen would see the writing in unlikely places and, in the spirit of humour, began to write the famous slogan wherever they went. A meme was born.

Legend has it that *"Kilroy was here"* was found on captured American equipment leading Hitler to believe that Kilroy was the codename of a high level spy. At 1945's Potsdam conference, Stalin is alleged to have found the writing in the VIP bathroom, prompting him to ask his aides who this *Kilroy* was.

It should be remembered that Kilroy WAS here: past tense. Jesus Christ, on the other hand, IS here. For, whenever two or three are gathered in His name, He IS there with them.