

The
**Collectors'
Digest**

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Price 1s. 6d.
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Robert WINTER '47



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THE
COLLECTORS' DIGEST

June 1947
 Next Issue
 July 1947

Editor:

Miscellaneous Section
 Herbert Leckenby,
 Telephone Exchange,
 C/o. Central Registry,
 Northern Command,
 York.

FROM THE EDITOR'S CHAIR:

One issue of the C.D. follows so quickly on the heels of another these days that this chat has to be written quickly following the mailing of the preceding one. Notwithstanding I have on my desk a pile of views on the proposed Annual. They are very encouraging, too, for so far everyone is enthusiastically in favour. Many offer suggestions too, all of which shall have careful consideration.

The view of a bona-fide list of collectors has indeed caught on. Well, there's nothing like taking time by the forelock so please send us as soon as possible details of the papers you collect in order of preference, and if you like, some idea of the size of your collection. How long you have been collecting, and so on.

I am sure it will be agreed that if we could compile a really comprehensive "Who's Who" of those who collect, the story papers primarily as a hobby, it is sure to prove of the utmost value.

Another suggestion is that we should publish photographs of the editors and prominent contributors to the C.D. Well, so far as one of the Editors is concerned, that will take a little thinking over. However, the progressive and enterprising people who do the typing and the duplicating for us say that can now be done, so we'll keep it in mind and thank Leslie Vosper for suggesting it.

Already we have received many congratulations on the new dress in which No.5 appeared. We are pleased to say that that energetic young man, Bob Whiter, is already at work on another sketch. A different colour will be used for it to lend still a little more variety.

When the idea of the C.D. was first mooted someone remarked to me "Yes, it might be alright at first, but won't you soon run short of copy?" I look at my pending file, and smile a satisfied smile. We've reached No.6 and there's certainly nothing to worry about yet. And the best of it is the articles therein are so splendidly varied, they come from lads who would have pulled up short if they had seen a motor car whilst on their way to school down to young fellows who hail the wireless as an aid to their lessons in the not so long ago. Thanks a lot, one and all.

Yours sincerely,

James Bentley

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ADVERTISEMENT RATES:

Small advertisements 1d per word (name and address inserted free of charge).

WANTED: Magnets before 1932; Schoolboys Owns, Populars and 3d Boys' Friend Libraries by Charles Hamilton. Also 100 Schoolboys Owns for SALE. Roger Jenkins, 2 Town Hall Road. Havant, Hants.

WANTED by Australian Library of Amateur Journalism (to complete files) Vanity Fair (J.Parks) No.1,6,8,12; Collectors' Miscellany (Parks), New Series Nos. 18,21,23 - Leon Stone, Elgin Street, Gordon, N.S.W. Australia.

We take great pride on herewith presenting the first of a series by the founder and one-time editor of a famous boys' weekly "The Champion". In this series the author will tell us about some of the authors and artists who helped to make his paper the great success it was.

PERSONALITIES OF THE PAST

by F. Addington Symonds

Foreword: Those who helped to make "The Champion" and its companion journals the great success they were, were essentially as individualistic as their work was often brilliant and original. Here are a few fugitive memories of some of the many authors and artists who were frequent visitors to the Editor's Office in the hey-day of "The Champion".

1. A.C. Marshall ("Arthur Brooke"):

He was all that you would have expected of the Editor of the "Big Budget" whose one constant claim was that he was the real friend of his readers. He loved his work and he was genuinely concerned for every one of his readers. His claim to be "friend" was no mere journalistic euphemism; he really WAS their friend. A well-built, upright man, with a fine head, kindly, smiling blue eyes, and a quiet cultural voice. He had the gift of making you feel that you were the most important person in the world while he was speaking to you. An expert horticulturist and a great lover of gardens, his home on the outskirts of Hounslow was a paradise of colour. He had a fascinating library and his study was a real author's "workshop" - comfortable, but plainly furnished. His manuscripts were models of clean, clear typing, with few corrections and these always inserted with painstaking neatness. He was always very punctual in sending in his material and always kept his promises. A man with a strong religious sense and a very high personal code, a real lover of his fellow men, a sincere believer in his work; a most generous and unselfish friend, to whom one at least (the Editor of "The Champion") owed much

more than he could ever re-pay.

2. Stacey Blake:

No one seemed more surprised than he was when he was approached to resuscitate the famous old B.B. character Moreton Stowe for "The Champion". He said he thought Stowe was well and truly dead and buried! A keen-faced man with twinkling eyes and a great sense of humour. His MSS were always typed, somewhat erratic though clearly readable, with uneven spacing as if he wrote at whiteheat. He never wasted words and his work therefore needed very little sub-editing. He began at the very top of the page, sometimes omitting a title and merely beginning "Moreton Stowe"? No chapter headings. He went straight on with his story and stopped when he'd finished.

Editor's Note: A lady once approached a man in Nottingham and said "Excuse me, but are you Mr. Blake?" The man admitted he was. Rather embarrassed at her temerity, but nevertheless gratified at the chance of speaking with a famous man, the lady ventured to compliment him on his skill and to say how the reading of his stories had thrilled her. The man, gratified in his turn, said he was glad he had been the means of giving her pleasure. Inwardly he was wondering how she knew him. It was not until she explained that she recognised him from his pictures and enquired if Tinker was with him in the town, that he began to realise that something was wrong somewhere. "I'm sorry", he said, "I think there must be some mistake. I am not SEXTON Blake." "But-but-- you said you were Mr. Blake!" "So I am." And the man went on to tell the lady that he was STACEY Blake and that he was an AUTHOR and NOT a Detective. As a matter of fact Stacey Blake was one of the writers entrusted with the task of fictionizing his more famous namesake's adventures.

3. J.H.Valda:

Perhaps the most enthusiastic and loyal of all

the artists who worked for the "Champion". A tremendous enthusiast, he would think nothing of working far into the night on pictures for "The Champion" and its associated journals. Extremely conscientious, if the least criticism was made of his work he would readily offer to do it all over again. A delightful man socially, most unassuming and happy in disposition.

4. Gwyn Evans:

He was a member of "The Champion" staff as well as a contributor. A mercurial temperament, brilliant, enthusiastic, but unstable. Caused trouble by his unreliable habits, his unpunctuality and his moods. Time and again he was warned about arriving late for his work and even staying away altogether for whole days at a time without reason. A charming personality, affable and obliging, always bubbling over with ideas - many of them extremely clever - but he had to be watched and followed up; one could never be sure of him. He would make solemn promises about his work or his writing and then break them. He would apologise profusely and meekly swear to mend his ways - but a few weeks later the same trouble would break out again.

Next Issue Mr. J. Addington Symonds will tell us about more authors he knew: Leslie Beresford, Sydney and Francis Warwick, A. S. Hardy, Coutts Brisbane, and others.

WANTED: Early Magnets, Gems, Plucks; would buy or exchange. 5/- each offered for Plucks containing St. Jims stories, and Gems Nos. 16 & 22. John R. Shaw, 4 Brunswick Park, Camberwell, London S.E.5.

WANTED: Schoolboys Own Libs. No. 282 (Mystery of St. Franks) and No. 321 (Ghost of Barrington Grange) offer good price; or will exchange early 1918-27 Gems or/and 1926 Magnets. William L. Bawden, 7 Penryn Street, Redruth, Cornwall.

OUR SWINDLES SERIES

The man of many Aliases gets a Shock
Pearson still "Cashing In".

We Write the Leicester Police

There have been further developments in the affair of the Two Tricksters. Whilst No.5 of the C.D. was being typed we heard from Mr. Joseph Baguley of Pensilva. Following an advert of his in E.& M. he received a letter which made him smile broadly, for as a subscriber to the C.D. the story the letter contained was familiar to him. Yes, it was the yarn of the treasure in the old oak chest once more. The Roving Racketeer was having another go. He was back in Bristol again, at a different address, and no longer was he Lancelot Percival Merrivale or Gerald St. Clair, but Hugh Montgomery!

Well, Mr. Baguley sat down and wrote a reply to Mr. Montgomery thanking him for his offer. We have a copy of that letter and we have pleasure in reproducing it here in full. We feel confident it will bring a smile to the features of each and every one of those who read it.

Dear Sir,

Many thanks for your letter to hand this morning with offer of a large quantity of Magnets, Gems, Schoolboys Owms, and other boys' books, in new state. I shall be perfectly happy to buy these at the price you quote, but I feel there are other collectors with a prior claim on these particular books. You may be interested to know that whenever I buy I am prepared to pay a fair price for the material, and that it is my rule to pay approximately twice the prices which you quote: but on the other hand, I make a point of viewing the books first, before remitting, and would not change this rule for all the Hugh Roger Anthony Lancelot Percival Montgomery Merrivale Carstairs' in Bristol.

Yours sincerely,
J. Baguley.

H.R.A.L.P.M.M. Carstairs, Esq.

There's a real sting in the tail, isn't there? One would cheerfully have given the price of several packets of Mr. Dalton's cigarettes to have seen the look on the face of the man of many aliases when he read that letter. We haven't that pleasure, but anyway, it seems to have shocked him for he has disappeared into the blue, no more letters, or fancy names, having come to our notice up to the time of writing this. Good for you, Mr. Baguley.

And now, once more, to the Leicester scene. Mr. Baguley's advert brought him a letter from there too, but needless to say the writer wasted his stamps. A little later, however, we heard some news that was not so satisfactory. In accordance with our practice of sending a copy of C.D. and a warning letter to advertisers in E. & M. one went along on 3rd May to Mr. R. Burrow of Yeadon, Leeds. We received a reply a few days later and to our chagrin we learned that Pearson had just beaten us to it. He had seen E & M. a day before we had the opportunity, as a consequence just when Mr. Burrow was reading the copy of C.D. Pearson was adding ten guineas to his plunder. Even then he was not satisfied for later he had written Mr. Burrows again and with his usual audacity was telling the old story of having received a better offer and asking for a further £10. He added that if Mr. Burrow's could not agree he would return his ten guineas. By that time, however, Mr. Burrow's had been to the police and needless to say he has not seen his money again.

Perturbed at the evidence that Pearson was still carrying on his impudent racket, we had an interview with an officer in the Army who deals with cases of alleged fraud. As a result he strongly advised us to place all the details before the Leicester police with the amount of the various

sums which had been received by the man in question. This was done without delay with a request that some action might be taken.

We have also received two letters on the subject from Mr. John Medcroft. The first, through unavoidable circumstances (one being the flood mishap referred to in No.4) has been delayed, but as the frauds are still going on it is still topical. It will be seen that fourteen years after the first came in contact with Pearson he has been able to obtain evidence that the Leicester letter writer is still working the same racket.

64, Woodlands Rd.,
Ilford, Essex.
20.3.47.

Dear Mr. Leckenby,

I have perused Emergency Bulletin No.3a of "The Collectors' Digest" with sympathetic interest and note that the enterprising Leslie Pearson is back at his old games again. Petty swindlers of this type rarely know enough of the subject to avoid errors which should be glaringly obvious to the collector were he not dazzled by the wonderful offer and intent upon closing with it before others of the Old Boys' Book fraternity scented the hare. Truly the Great Barnum was right when he said "There is one born every minute".

It was way back in May 1933 that Pearson, living then as now at 70, Knighton Fields East, Welford Road, Leicester, obtained £3.10.0 from me and a lesser sum from a collector friend, by similar frauds. In fairness to myself I must state that my friend recommended Pearson to me in all good faith but, unfortunately, before he knew his man. Hence, I accepted Pearson as genuine and did not take the precautions I normally adopted in all first transactions.

A week's delay and two letters of excuses quickly aroused my suspicions and I communicated

with both the Leicester police and my local C.I.D. A few days later I had a call from one of the latter and he told me that Pearson had been interrogated and had confessed to the frauds and that it would be necessary for me to go to Leicester to prefer the charge. In the interim, I received a pitiful letter from Pearson admitting fraud, pleading poverty and an aged mother and throwing himself on my mercy, promising to re-pay the money if I let him off.

I consulted with my friend who had also contacted the police with the same result, and we agreed that this repentance was too timely to be genuine but as neither of us wished for the journey to Leicester, we decided to give Pearson the benefit of the doubt, first ascertaining that no felony would be compounded thereby.

However, justice was done for a week or two later the C.I.D. informed me that Pearson had been charged with a third offence and asked for our two cases to be taken into consideration at the trial. He was eventually sentenced to three months' imprisonment for the frauds.

Sincerely yours,

J. Medcroft.

:: :: ::

64, Woodlands Road,
Ilford, Essex.
14.5.47.

Dear Mr. Leckenby,

Further to my letter of 20th March re Pearson, I have more news of this enterprising individual.

Upon first hearing of the recent swindles I decided to insert an advert in the Exchange & Mart in the hope that one or other of these pests would favour me with a reply. Obviously, I had to use a Box number for the publication of my name would scare them off.

To my surprise the third letter I received was from Pearson, still in his feminine role, with a staggering offer of books at a ridiculous price and a partiality towards speedy payment by telegram. Incidentally, the description of the books, brief as it was, contained three obvious errors which should have warned a collecting novice.

My first impression was amazement that Pearson should still be operating for this was five weeks after the swindles had become general knowledge. The answer was obvious; not one of his victims had troubled to prefer a charge against him at Leicester. My first impulse was to allow myself to be defrauded of a small sum and then prefer a charge against Pearson myself. Upon reflection, I realised that the officials might take an unfavourable view of such an action and so my public-spirited impulse waned. However, all I could do was to forward particulars to the Commissioner of the Leicester Police and add one more small item to the list of charges to confront Pearson - when he is brought to book.

This will only be when one of his victims, desisting from licking burns and feeling foolish, prefers a charge against Pearson who will then pay for his long list of misdeeds to the ultimate benefit of the fraternity.

Sincerely yours,

J. Medcroft.

We hope to hear before our next issue appears that the Leicester Police have been impressed by all the evidence placed before them.

WANTED: Aldine Publications, Turpins, Duvals, etc. Landy, 4 Nuneaton Road, Dagenham, Essex.

WANTED: Chums Bound Annual 1900. Boys Friend 3d, No.100, Pete's Great Plot. Frank Osborn, 24 Harpur Street, Bedford.

STOP PRESS:

We have received a letter from Leicester Police stating Pearson has been arrested, remanded, and will appear on a charge of obtaining money under false pretences, on 3rd June. If possible, developments will be added to this issue.

Yet another talented member of the story paper collecting world writes for "The Collectors Digest". HENRY STEELE, well known within our little circle and lover of the real old timers, gives us some details of one of the outstanding boys journals of the Victorian era.

T H E B O Y S S T A N D A R D

b y

HENRY STEELE

This grand old boys journal was born on 6th November, 1875. On the heading was displayed a Lion. I must confess that the first time I saw this lion I was not impressed by him, but this may have been due to the fact that in my boyhood I knew him not.

When the new series of the B.S. commenced in 1881 they changed the lion and replaced him by a more convincing looking animal. It was this one I always remember. The opening stories in No.1 were "Follow my Leader" by H.Leemans, illustrated by "Phiz", "Gentleman George - the King of the Road" by J.J.G.Bradley, and "A Sword for a Fortune". In No.20 commenced Burrages famous "Handsome Harry" which introduced that immortal character Ching Ching.

It was followed in due course by other stories such as "Cheerful Ching Ching", "Daring Ching Ching" and other by R.Harcourt Burrage. Some fine historical stories appeared such as "The King's Champion" (commenced in No.75). With regard to this tale it is interesting to note that the hero's name was

Regonald Dymoke. The death of Mr. Frank Seeman Dymoke, The King's Champion was announced in the Press recently.

Another historical story in the old series was "Strike for the King" (No.184). The first illustration was a very dramatic one, showing a roon in Whitehall, while through the window could be seen the execution of Charles I. No.288 was the last number of the old series and was dated 7th May, 1881.

The New Series of "The Boys Standard" commenced on 14th May 1881. This was marked by the commencement of a new serial by Charles Stevens entitled "Lightning Blade, or, The Bullfighters of Madrid". In No.9 (New Series) started another story by this fine writer "Jack o' Clubs" dealing with 'prentice life in the days of James I'. In No.20 appeared "Giant Jack" by that great boys favourite E.Harcourt Burrage. In No.52 commenced "The King of the Pampas" by Bradley. The noteworthy feature of this story was a remarkably good plot. No.78 saw the start of another rather remarkable tale by V. St. John entitled "The Link Boy of Old London". As one got into the story one found oneself engrossed in the grim doings of Sweeny Todd the Denon Barber of Fleet Street. With No.87 came "The Inprisoned Heir". This yarn was embellished by some very fine illustrations taken from one of Dumas' novels. I may mention here that some of the historical stories that appeared in the new series were "Wallace, the Hero of Scotland", "Dick Whittington", "King Harry the Fifth", "The Hugenot Captain", "Dickon the Page", "The Days of the Merrie Monarch", "The Sentinel of Ponpei".

The "Boys Standard" was noted for its highwayman stories. Here are a few that appeared in its pages: "Jack o' the Mist", "Turnpike Dick", "Dashing Tom", "Starlight Tom", "Claude Duval", "Jack o' the Sword", "Captain Ralph", "Tin Ne'er-do-Well".

The New Series ran to 596 numbers, the last one

being dated 8th October, 1892. The Editor was Charles Fox. In all the journal ran for 17 years and was a formidable rival to Brett's "Boys of England". There was something virile and robust about "The Boys Standard" that certainly appealed to the boys of its day, and it included some excellent writers among its contributors. Men like George Emmett, Harcourt Burrage, Charles Stevens, V. St. John, Frank Mercer, Borlase and others, who were able to hold the interest of their juvenile readers and provide them with thrills the memory of which lasted throughout life. To-day the volumes of "The Boys Standard" are rare and difficult to obtain and I doubt if there exists a collector who possesses a complete run of the journal.

As a boy I was greatly disappointed at the termination of Fox's journals in 1892 and I was quite unaware at the time that he issued two more boys' papers, namely, "The Boys of the Nation" in 1895 which ran to only 13 numbers, and "The Half-penny Standard Journal" in 1896. This ran to 85 numbers. The stories were reprints from "The Boys Standard". It was only when I had reached mature years that I realised what I had missed.

WANTED: Bound volumes of early Magnets; also loose Magnets between 1908 and 1929. Good prices paid for good material. Eric Payne, 23 Grove Road, Surbiton.

WANTED: Nelson Lees, old series, 1/6 to 2/6 each paid for copies between 1 and 230. Have quantity of old series for exchange. Also wanted No.2 of Collectors' Digest. J. Murtagh, 509 Selwood Road, Hastings, New Zealand.

WANTED: Nelson Lees, Boys Realms, Nugget Libraries also Schoolboys Owns, Boys Friend Libraries, Plucks, etc. containing St. Franks and Nelson Lee stories. Burrow, Albert Square, Yeadon, Leeds.

WANTED: Magnets 1924-27 inclusive. State numbers and price to J. Corbett, 49 Glyn Farm Road, Quinton, Birmingham.

More Grand News from Frank RichardsThe Return of Tom Merry

We have the greatest pleasure in publishing two letters recently received from Mr. Richards. Its your turn faithful Gemites! We can picture the delight with which the news contained in the second letter will be received by a big proportion of our readers. Perhaps some of you too, will send along your views on the question put by Mr. Richards?

: : :

14th May, 1947.

Dear Herbert Leckenby

Many thanks for the Collectors Digest. Not merely excellent but ecelentissimo!

It looks now as if "Billy Bunter of Greyfriars School" may be along in June. I have just seen the proofs of Macdonald's pictures which I like very much. Frank Richards is now planning the second volume.

By the way, you may be interested to hear that another publisher will probably be producing "Billy Bunter's Christmas Annual" in time for next Christmas. This will be a miscellany, containing stories by Frank and Hilda Richards, Martin Clifford, Owen Conquest, Ralph Redway, etc., with some verses and cross-word puzzle, and so on - all the work of my own fair hands! It is not settled yet whether it may not be called "Frank Richards" Christmas Annual but, as our old friend from Stratford remarked, "What's in a name?"

Speaking of cross-words, the idea has been mooted of "Frank Richards" Cross-word Puzzle Book. This, if it materialises, will contain about two dozen cross-word puzzles in English, and one each in Latin, French, Italian, German, Spanish, and Portuguese, by way of variety. I have always thought that cross-word puzzles in foreign languages would be very useful to students; indeed I think they might very well be used in schools. It will be an

interesting experiment anyhow. Perhaps you may have some across my Latin cross-word puzzle in "Modern Boy" about a dozen years ago, or the French one in an early Greyfriars Annual. I was quite surprised by the interest the readers seemed to take in them: especially the Latin one which evoked a great deal of correspondence.

What you tell me about those old numbers of the Realm is extremely interesting. "King Cricket" brings back happy memories. All the world was young when that story was written, and I remember how I enjoyed writing it. It is very pleasant to read that you liked it. "Cliveden" was in the Herald, and it lasted, I think, quite a long time. I remember my talk with Hamilton Edwards, when the series was mooted, as if it were yesterday; and it must be forty years ago. Father Time seems to step on the accelerator sometimes!

With kind regards,
Yours sincerely,
FRANK RICHARDS.

: : :

17th May 1947.

Dear Herbert Leckenby,

I think I mentioned in my letter the other day that "Bunter's Annual" was projected: but on second thoughts, proverbially the best, there has been a change of plan: attractive fellow as W.G.B. is, it is possible to have too much of a good thing!

I am now getting busy on a book-length story of Tom Merry and Co, at St. Jim's, which will be the next to follow "Billy Bunter of Greyfriars School", expected to see the light in June now. Next time you write, will you tell me what you think of this idea: and whether in your view Owen Conquest might as well get busy on Rookwood for the third volume later on?

I am told there is a very big demand for the Bunter book in advance of publication; but whether

the same welcome will be extended to Tom Merry and Jimmy Silver I just don't know.

With kind regards,
Yours sincerely,
FRANK RICHARDS.

: : :

Verily, this lively controversy has caused some hard hitting, and Roger Jenkins in his reply does not concentrate on stone-walling. It is only fair that the defenders of St. Franks should have their second innings, then I am afraid we must draw stumps. When it is over I am sure like all good sportsmen, no hard feelings will be felt on either side.

H.L.

: : :

My opinion of St. Franks stories is still that they are - A PLETHORA OF PLAGIARISM

Mr. Simpson has taken up cudgels in earnest, especially over the Handforth at St. Jims episode. Perhaps I may remind him that the fact that Gem was flagging at the time was caused by a number of unprincipled hack-writers - E. S. Brooks included - who were using Mr. Hamilton's characters and pen-names without his consent, and producing stories of a type calculated to deter even the most ardent St. Jims fans. In 1931 this practice ceased, the Gem recovered from these toxic influences, and absorbed the Nelson Lee in less than two years time.

This type of plagiarism explains why St. Franks was based on the Hamilton schools. Does Mr. Simpson think "Handforth at St. Jims" an example of what he calls E. S. Brooks "inspired genius"? Or is he referring to the El Dorado series, an idea taken from an ancient myth and painstakingly exhausted in two different ways (compare Gems 1344-1354 with Schoolboys' Owns 306, 309, 312)? More than once he re-wrote his earlier tales either for want of any better ideas or because he was not satisfied with

his own work. Mr. Simpson also claims that 'tec yarns appeared in only 20 of some 300 stories he selected. But how often were the tales written around some type of malefactor upon whom Nelson Lee had been keeping an eye in his capacity as detective? Of all the St. Franks stories that appeared in the Gen after 1933, every one retailed the adventures of a crook either in England or abroad. The same is true of all the Schoolboys' Own reprints that appeared after 1936, with the exception of three. I really thought my estimate of 90% too conservative. At any rate, the non-fantastic, non-criminal St. Franks stories comprise a very small percentage of the total, and do not seem to have merited reprinting.

Mr. Simpson claims that St. Franks stories are more adult than ones by C.H. Does he prefer to have his headmaster drugged and acting like a wild beast his housemaster attending to everything but his own scholastic work, his school being burnt down, blown down, or blasted down with maddening frequency, his quad frequented nightly by crooks of all nationalities jostling each other in their anxiety to administer knock-out drops, and his boys spending every vacation with past or potential inmates of Pentonville of Colney Hatch? Adult, Mr. Simpson? Educative Mr. Simpson? Or is it not a sign or infecundity of genius, a lack of ideas, a wild abandon, a frantic recourse to sensationalism to retain the reader's interest at any cost?

I am sorry if I gave the impression of attacking E.S. Brooks in order to support Charles Hamilton, actually I was a confirmed Greyfriars, Rookwood and St. Jims fan long before I even guessed the secret of their authorship. I wish there were space enough for me to discuss Charles Hamilton's merits and demerits here; perhaps some day an article of comparison between the two writers will appear. In the meantime, I may remark that I am unrepentant of my heresy, unconvinced of my alleged errors, and utterly antipathetic to all Nelson Lee stories.

R. N. Jenkins.

FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS

Personalities of the Past (Contd).	..	F.A.Symonds
Sentiment in Schoolboy Fiction ..	..	Tom Armitage
The Shylock of Greyfriars ..	..	Roger Jenkins
The Circulation Mystery. ..	..	Eric Fayne
Authors & Artists I Disliked. ..	..	R.A.H.Goodyear
Those Were the Days .. ..	..	F.W.Webb
Off the Beaten Track .. ..	..	Roger Jenkins
Masters of Greyfriars .. ..	..	T.W.Puckrin
These We Loved in the Old Days ..	..	Frank Osborn
Tim Pippin and Grantland .. ..	..	F.W.Wearing

FIRST MEETING:

During the week from 15th June to 21st June, 1947, your co-editors Herbert Leckenby and H.Maurice Bond will be meeting for the first time at the home of the latter. Both think that they would like to extend a welcome to any member of our circle who could see his or her way clear to visit Cardiff during that week. It is obvious that we shall never have a "full meeting" of our band of collectors and sentimentalists but it would be nice to think that wherever possible, personal contacts have been made. As you all know this magazine has been edited and produced in a unique fashion. When Messrs. Leckenby and Bond first corresponded they little thought that they would eventually produce a magazine like the C.D. and possibly never gave a thought to a possible meeting in the flesh. However, such will be the case in the near future, and so, once again, we say if YOU can come to Cardiff ANY DAY during the above week you will be assured of a hearty welcome and a real friendly atmosphere at the headquarters of "Blakiana".

Write and let us know immediately!

WANTED: "Mort the Mill Girl" by Noel Hope, or Mildred Duff "Broken Earthenware" and "The Angel Adjutant of Broken Earthenware" by Harold Begbie.
E.C.Read, 2 Grove Road, Chatham.

BLAKIANA

A Section of the C.D. devoted to Sexton Blake. All letters, articles, etc. to be addressed to H.M.Bond, 10, Erw Wen, Rhiwbina, Cardiff.

THE ROUND TABLE:

Once again I have to thank many readers for their complimentary remarks upon "I Visit Baker Street" and trust that the final instalment this issue will also please them. I am sure that you will all agree that the second Blake Crossword printed in our last number was an excellent and ingenious effort on the part of Mr. Rex Dolphin. I know how difficult it is to compile such a puzzle. Did you get it right? The solution is on another page together with the second S.B. Quiz. May I again ask for co-operation re these rather entertaining features? Why not try and make up a Blake Crossword, or, for that matter, any sort of Crossword so long as it deals with the subject of old boys papers. And what about a few Quiz questions from you Blake lovers? All will be most welcome I assure you.

Bill Colcombe of Southend writes to say that he was very interested in Eric Fayne's article on Pierre Quiroule in our No.4 but wishes to point out that "The Man from Tokyo" was NOT the first Grant and Julie story written by Mr. Jardine. He says that an earlier yarn of these two favourites was also by W.J. and that it was entitled "The Crime in Park Lane". Probably Mr. Fayne will be very interested in this statement, but I cannot confirm Mr. Colcombe's assertion except to indicate that stories appeared in the S.B.L. second series under both titles in 1933. The first was in Vol.403 "The Crime in Park Lane" and the second in Vol.409 "The Man from Tokyo". The first appeared in October of that year and the second in December.

Then Mr. Colcombe has a little more to say about Granite Grant. I'll quote from his letter: "Another

point about Granite Grant is that of his marriage. About this, the author's memory and knowledge seems to be as bad as Mr. Fayne's. I quote below the following from Pierre Quiroule's story "The Phantom of the Pacific":-

Then he began to pace to and fro again like a caged tiger. Presently he paused, and gave a low sigh. Then, taking the locked from his pocket, he opened it and gazed at the two photographs long and steadily. The one was the portrait of the woman he had loved - who was now dead. For a few brief months of enchantment she had been his wife; and then had come the blinding grief of a bitter and devastating loss. The other was the portrait of the woman who at that moment was singing in the stateroom, Mademoiselle Julie, one of the most trusted agents of the French Intelligence. And as Granite Grant gazed again at these two portraits slowly, the harsh lines of his face relaxed, his mouth grew tender, his eyes suspiciously moist.

Well, what do you say to all that, you lovers of Grant, Julie and Pierre Quirouls? If this letter results in a little more controversy, than all will be well, for that is what we want in these pages. Thrash the problems out!

I have come across another little problem too! Keen students of Blake history will recall that we were informed before the commencement of the Hitler war, that Zenith the Albino, creation of Anthony Skene was dead, that he had, in fact, been dead for a considerable time, was buried in a certain Northumberland churchyard and that all the stories that had been recently published about him had been taken from an old casebook which Mr. Skene had borrowed from Baker Street! (See Sexton Blake Annual No. 2 for full details). Is it not strange then, that we should be given a taste of the redoubtable Albino still quite active during the war, to be accurate in March 1943? I refer to the story "The Affair of

the Bronze Basilisk". Now I know that there had been numerous requests for another by Mr. Skene, in fact I know of one who probably had a lot to do with it, but I think it rather strange for an author to revive a dead character and place him in an up-to-date setting. Were he to have written of the past, yes, it would have been O.K. but having read of Albino's demise years before, and then finding him fighting with Blake in a bombed hotel during the second world war, well!! I have a feeling, however, that the A.P. thought that the insertion of that announcement in the Annual would dispose of an old character quite adequately. But they evidently forgot that Mr. Skene was a popular writer and did not anticipate pressure from readers for a return of his character. And added to this it might have been that there was a change of editors in the meantime, the second one not having the ghost of an idea what responsibilities an editor of S.B. publications really had. We know to our great regret that there is not the same "pep" there as there was in the old days. Enough said.

Cheerio for now,

H. M. Bond.

FOR LATEST SWINDIE DETAILS
SEE PAGES 175 and 176

NO MIRACLES EXPECTED: Fair prices always paid for parcels Schoolboys Owns, Magnets, Gem, Lee, Monster, Popular, Friend, Realm, Greyfriars Herald, H.A., Young Britain, etc. Joseph Baguley, Middle Hill, Pensilva, Cornwall.

WANTED: Early issues of Gem, Magnet, Pluck, Dreadnought; early 1914 & 1925. Eric Fayne, 23 Grove Road, Surbiton.

REMEMBER! THE C.D. STUDIES YOUR INTERESTS

I VISIT BAKER STREET

by H.M.B.

No.1 : Part 4

Naturally I felt quite elated that the well known assistant of Sexton Blake should be interested so I picked up the specimen copy and handed it to him. Tinker turned over the pages slowly and after a few minutes remarked:

"You certainly seem to have some enthusiastic chaps gathered around you".

"Rather" I answered quickly, "you'd never credit the number that are really keen on re-reading the old papers of their youth, and many of them wish to form a collection too, myself included".

"What is your collection made up of" put in Blake, reaching for another spill from the mantle-piece. "Oh, all 'tec stuff" I smiled, and felt rather hot under the collar when I thought of all those S.B.L's. and Union Jacks I had on the shelf at home. "Interesting" said Blake enthusiastically "I suppose you have a vast number of Dixon Hawkes, Nelson Lees and so on?"

"And a few Blakes" I added modestly and then burst into a laugh. "As a matter of fact I have a few thousand of your Adventures as yet unread" I said. "Guessed as much" smiled Sexton Blake "and I expect some of them are as old as the proverbial hills". Oh, only back as far as 1894 or thereabouts" I replied, still smiling "in the days when you used to call a horse drawn cab instead of a high powered taxi". I was now getting warmed up and felt that I could talk to Blake from now until doomsday without flagging interest.

While Blake and I had been talking Tinker had been reading the C.D. Suddenly he looked up. "Jolly well done" he enthused "how about a commission for an article Mr. Bond?" "Done" I cried enthusiastically "just what I want". And then realising that Blake was looking at me I added:

"But I really wanted a few of Mr. Blake's reminiscences".

"What, with all those adventures of mine still unread!" exclaimed Blake "you read some of them up my young friend - they'll probably give you ideas for umpteen articles."

I looked a bit crestfallen then, or at least felt as if I did.

"Ch, don't let me down, Mr.Blake" I pleaded - "after all it is for a good cause, you know".

Blake laughed. "Alright, Mr.Bond" he said, rising from his chair and holding out his hand and gripping mine as if in a vice "You come along here in a month or two and I'll have a few items for you".

"Thanks a million" I exclaimed warmly "you are a sport, sir".

As Blake released my hand I turned and clasped Tinker's and must admit that his grip was almost as vice-like as his masters.

"Goodbye then" I said "and thanks for a very interesting chat".

"It would have been longer" said Blake "but you see we have something rather urgent on hand".

"A case?" I asked eagerly.

"Yes" replied Blake "a case of 'find the joint' we're just going to have dinner - cheerie Mr.Bond".

I had to smile as the door of Blake's house closed behind me and I ambled down the few steps to the much worn pavement of Baker Street. Sense of humour? Oh yes, he certainly had that - but how I wished that we were not on austerity diet - some of that cooking of Mrs.B's. used to sound so good!

FINIS

WANTED: Lists, Prices, Dreadnoughts, Boys Friends, Complete Bloods. Exchanges. Some for Sale. Henry J.H.Bartlett, Peas Hill, Shipton Gorge, Bridport, Dorset.

WANTED: Old Blue covered Gems and Red covered Magnets. Good prices offered. T.Satchell, 84 Ankerdine Crescent, Shooters Hill, Woolwich, S.E.18.

Herewith we present another informative article this time on a character who proved to be one of the greatest favourites in Sexton Blake stories, Gunga Dass, the Indian Crook. Our contributor of this article is already known to you.

MASTER CROOK OF THE ORIENT

A Brief History of Gunga Dass by William Colcombe

One of Sexton Blake's oldest and most able opponents was Gunga Dass, the master crook of the Orient. I say "was" advisably, for nothing has been heard of him since early 1940. Gunga Dass had been an opponent of Blake for over 20 years, the first stories featuring him appearing in both "The Sexton Blake Library" and "Union Jack" just after the first world war. The creator of this master of Oriental mystery was H. Gregory Hill, a regular Blake contributor of the early 1920's and stories about him by this author appeared up till 1925. H. Gregory Hill's stories include "The Case of the Rajah's Son" (later re-printed with author given as Hylton Gregory - see below), "The Rajah of Ghanpore", "In Darkest Madras", "The Shrine of Kali" (also reprinted later as by Hylton Gregory), but title altered alightly to "The Curse of Kali", and two stories about the hidden loot of Nana Sahib, a rebel leader of the Indian Mutiny, "The Great Museum Mystery" and "The Loot of Nana Sahib".

A regular colleague of Blake in his fight with Dass at this period, was Detective Inspector Rollings, one of the few regular Yard friends of the detective to get killed in a story.

After a lapse of ten years, some of H. Gregory Hill's earlier stories were (as has been said) re-printed, the author's name being given as Hylton Gregory. As I have been unable to trace an original story by this author I think that it can be safely assumed that he never existed outside the imagination of the Editor of the B.B.L. The stories re-

printed were slightly modernised otherwise they differed little from the originals.

The next author to introduce Dass was also the creator of the redoubtable Dr. Ferraro, in other words Coutts Brisbane. He wrote three stories of the Indian crook for the S.B.L. 2nd series, viz: No.534 "The Crime of Gunga Dass", No.550 "The Trail of the White Turban" and No.587 "The Masked Men of the Desert".

The last author to take over Dass was in my opinion, the best of them all, namely Anthony Parsons. Mr. Parsons, with his intimate knowledge of modern India and his accurate characterisation of the Indian People, was the ideal choice to handle Gunga Dass, and it is a great pity that, in recent years, he has forsaken the character.

Gunga Dass was one of Blake's most formidable enemies, a consummate actor, skilled in the art of make-up, a master of hypnotism, he combined the recklessness of a fanatic with the wiles and trickery of a Hindu fakir.

The background of Dass varied with the authors writing about him. H. Gregory Hill described him as the son of a deposed Hindu prince intent upon regaining his lost riches and position, while Parsons described him as a deserter from the Indian Army, a fanatical believer in the Hindu religion, intent upon driving the British out of India and setting himself up to rule in their place.

There is no doubt that the S.B.L. was the poorer for the loss of Gunga Dass stories and it is a thousand pities that Anthony Parsons cannot be persuaded to write again of The Master Crook of the East.

SEXTON BLAKE QUIZ No.2:

Questions:

- (1) Who created the character "Useful Eustace"?
- (2) Who was the extra assistant often employed

by Blake in Allan Blair stories?

(3) A dwarf appeared in the Kestrel series. Give his name and nationality.

(4) Which opponent of Blake do you associate with Abbey Towers.

(5) Who was Peter Brim? Give his nickname. Name the author responsible.

(6) What is the Christian name of Superintendent Venner?

SOLUTION OF CROSSWORD (C.D.No.5):

	R		G	W	Y	N		A	P	E		
	L	E	E			C	I	D		A		
R	O	X	A	N	E	K	R		E	R	P	
	B		G			E	V	A	N	S		
C	A	R	K		A	C		A		D	O	G
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	M	A	R	L		J			W			

FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS IN "BLAKIANA":

Sexton Blake on Stage, Screen & Radio ..Rex Dolphin
 Laughing with Mrs. Bardell H.M. Bond
 The Big Four of the 3rd Series .. John W. Gocher
 War-time Discovery.. .. John W. Gocher
 The House! A Description of S.B.'s residence(series)
 Regular features will include Round Table, Quiz.&c.

Don't forget! We want all the articles you can write and will welcome the very lengthy and the very short equally.

Mr. John Gocher making his bow as a contributor proves himself a stout defender of the present day Blake story in :-

THE BIG FOUR OF THE THIRD SERIES

Whatever opinions we hold with regard to the writing prowess of present day authors in the Sexton Blake Library, I think that we must all agree that Messrs. Anthony Parsons, Gilbert Chester, John Hunter and Lewis Jackson are to be congratulated on the manner in which they kept the flag flying during the difficult days of the war and the even more difficult days we are at present enjoying!

The amazing output of Anthony Parsons is a factor which is sometimes incredible. In the short space of about seven years, this ex-officer of the Indian Army has contributed no less than 35 titles and I do not think that one of these can be classified as a dud number. True, some have not reached the same peak as the others but the majority have been shrewd well written and topical. Of his most successful numbers, I think that "The Mystery of the Bombed Monastery" is the best. The plot is novel, the presentation excellent, and the characterisation grand. If you have been unable to read this novel, do so now, you will think it to be in the best tradition of Teed. Other stories which are in a class of their own are "The Riddle of Cubicle 7", "The Case of the Pribces' Prisoners" (Parsons is on his own ground here writing of a country which he understands and obviously loves), "The Case of the Swindlers' Stodge" and "The Case of the Stolen Evidence". His two poorest efforts I thought, were "The Yank who Came Back" and "The Case of the Secret Road". I think that the editor of the Library should allow Parsons to take over the characters of Teed and use them in his own stories. Parsons could make Plummer, Hymer, Roxane and Yvonne live again and revive old memories for the readers.

Many people consider that Gilbert Chester is not nearly so good as he was when writing of the adventures of Gilbert and Eileen Hale. True, he has yet to write a story in the Third series to equal the brilliance of "The Gnomid" and "Certified Insane", but one must consider his "Previously Reported Mis-

singy... Now" as one of the best stories of the new series. Topical and crisply written, one finds Tinker in an amorous situation from which only Fate rescues him. The idea was novel to some extent and the story excellent. His latest effort "A Date with Danger" brings him right back into the foremost rank of writers of Blakes. Here is a novel plot, well written dialogue and the creation of a woman of fixed mind who falls into line with some of Gwyn Evans' excellent stories of the past. But I think we can safely say that Chester wrote two of the biggest flops of the series as well, namely "The Strange Case of the Footman's Crime" and "The Secret of Stillwater Mere".

And what shall I say of the third author, John Hunter (alias Peter Meriton)? I know that many of the older generation condemn this author but I have spent many a happy hour in the pages of his novels. Maybe he is not too happy a choice as a writer but one must admit that some of his yarns show great originality and the action seldom flags as it does in the work of some of his contemporaries. His plot, I admit, is changeless, and the presence of two criminals, one large and dumb, the other small and clever, searching for some mysterious treasure, can bore one at times. But he has written some successful stories. Take "The Great Airport Racket", "The Secret of the Grave" (bizarre title which echoed in the story) "The Man from Madrid" (as Peter Meriton) and "The Monopoly Mystery" were all excellent. His poorest stories to my mind were "The Devil of Danehurst" and "Barred from the West End". But as a writer in another sphere Hunter has his followers. Take for instance the success of "Captain Dack" and "Conspiracy" both of which sold well, and "Dead Man's Gate", "After Darvray Died" and "When the Gunmen Came".

Last but not least is Lewis Jackson. The days of the Master Mummer are no more, and Nigel Blake has faded from the pages of fiction. Instead we have a different Jackson who seems inclined to preach politics by giving Tinker a political belief, a factor

which I abhor strongly. Nevertheless, Jackson, as always, is a good writer. Some of his recent stories have shown a touch of genius. I think I can safely say that "The Case of the Biscay Pirates" was a brilliant success, featuring as it did Leon Kestrel for a little while. And so too were "The Tenant of No.13", "On Compassionate Leave" and "The Case of the Five Red Herrings". With regard to his poorest story I think that I can cite without argument that nondescript opus "The Case of the Five Fugitives". The plot in that story was completely beyond me, although I pride myself as an armchair detective. The entire set up was phoney, the dialogue weak and the manner in which the story progressed boring to say the least.

There you are then, the Big Four. Many of you will consider the authors shadows of those of a past generation, but as a member of a younger generation, I uphold their efforts, although the names and writings of Gwyn Evans, G.H. Teed, Mark Osborne, and all the others are brilliant to an extreme.

The Press Cutting opposite is a photostat copy of a paragraph from the Leicester "Mercury" dated the 3rd June, 1947.

Also received, was the telegram which is reproduced on Page 176.

Accused Of False Pretences

Three charges of obtaining money by false pretences were preferred at Leicester magistrate's court, to-day, against Leslie Edwin Pearson (43), unemployed, of 79, Knighton Fields, road East, who was committed for trial at the Quarter Sessions.

Mr. A. H. Headley (prosecuting) said Pearson had obtained £54 from three advertisers in a magazine to whom he had promised old copies of comic papers and magazines which were, in fact never sent.

Detective-Sergeant W. H. Elliott gave evidence that, when questioned, Pearson said, "That's right. I've had it. That's all I can say."

Pearson was granted bail.

FROM THREE THOUGHTFUL FRIENDS

Charges to pay

_____ s. _____ d.

RECEIVED

POST OFFICE



148

TELEGRAM

No. _____
OFFICE STAMP



Prefix Time handed in _____ Origin and Service Instructions _____

12 7/8 79

From LE 4

LE G 4070 12.0 NOON 19

To _____

SH

LAGKENBY G/O TELEPHONE EXCHANGE CENTRAL
REGISTRY NORTHERN COMMAND YORK =

HARRIS SATCHELL NEATE AT TRIAL TODAY PEARSON
COMMITTED TO ASSIZES +++

For free repetition of doubtful words telegraph in "TELEGRAMS ENQUIRY" or call with this form at office of delivery. Other enquiries should be accompanied by this form, and, if possible, the envelope