

The Collectors

DIGEST



The following appeared in The Yorkshire Evening Press on 13th October.

Don't say I ought to have a new size in hats for reproducing it, will you?

H. L.

BILLY BUNTER STILL ROLLING ABOUT

MR. HERBERT LECKENBY, member of a well-known York family and employed at the Northern Command Central Registry telephone exchange, has an unusual hobby—collecting and disseminating copies of, and information about, the books which have delighted countless generations of boys and girls.

During the past two or three years, thanks to the help and active interest of several dignified enthusiasts in all parts of the world, he has accumulated an amazing mass of information about the contents, authors and publication of these long-remembered books.



A CASUAL chat with Mr. Leckenby is likely to develop into several hours' delightful reminiscence of Billy Bunter and the charms of Greyfriars, whose

By Mr. Nobody

creator, Frank Richards, is still producing stories of the famous "Owl" after 40 years—an unqualified record, surely?

Mr. Leckenby and his friends—and the thousands who, unknown to him, share his enthusiasm for the books of our youth—will find a kindred spirit in a new book by Mr. E. S. Turner, which is aptly described as "the mythology of all Dick Barton's associates."

This book is "Boys Will Be Boys," published by Methuen Joseph, Ltd. at 10s. 6d.



ATTRACTIVELY told, with a wealth of detail and a sprinkling of familiar magazine power-compiled details, is the story of Sweetest Todd, Deadwood Dick, Dickon Blake, Tom-Merry, Little Hunter, the church of St. Frank, and all that vast gallery of fictional characters who will never be forgotten.

None of them are, many of them no longer with us, alas, but still very much alive in the memories of the generation in whom the "Magnum," "Gem," "Hedgehog" and the rest were the prime eagerly awaited articles of the week.

It may be a mild point whether these were better copies than the type so frequently seen on the book-shelf to-day, but the Londoner who staunchly ordered the St. Frank a year ago, and those of the Frank Richards (Greyfriars, St. Jim's and Rookwood) take and treat an equally determined upholder of his own favourites.



CERTAINLY the year have not dimmed the popularity of the old yarns of Mr. Leckenby and which.

During the war he was crooking a barrack square when a military police corporal, who had a reputation for being a tartar, asked him if he had anything to read in order to pass the night hours.

Mr. Leckenby handed him a number of "Gems" which he happened to have in his pocket. "Good gracious, it's old Gussy," said the corporal glancing at one of the covers, a reminiscent grimacing his usually stern face to the affection with which the books of our youth were regarded liners on growing into something stronger with the swaying of the years.



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Post Free

NOVEMBER 1948

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

FROM THE EDITOR'S CHAIR

An Important Event:- Since our last issue something has happened of real interest to all collectors of old boys' books - the publishing of "Boys Will Be Boys" by E. S. Turner. Incidentally, this is the book referred to in our No. 19 under the title "The Penny Blood". That was to have been the name for it but it has been changed since that issue appeared, and we have a shrewd idea we know why. The authors' note at the beginning of the book maybe will give you a clue.

However, we are devoting a good deal of space to the book in this issue for two reasons. Firstly, it is of absorbing interest to all readers of the C.D., whatever their particular favourites, for they are all dealt with. Secondly, and even more important, because of the way it has been received by the press. When it is recommended by the Book Society, when serious papers like the "Sunday Times" and the "Observer" feature it prominently, to say nothing of a host of other Sunday, national and provincial papers, it is something of no little significance, in these days when newspaper space is so precious.

Moreover, almost all these papers praised it highly, and gentlemen of the Fourth Estate (with the possible exception of A.A. Milne in the Sunday Times) all admitted they had been avid readers of the papers in their youth, and now found real enjoyment in the recalling of them. Thus we can claim that the subjects of our hobby gets at long last a real place in the sun. Collectors have often told me that they used to be a little bashful about admitting they were interested in the papers they read as boys. I used to think that way too; I had an idea I had a hobby almost to myself. Needless to say, I think that no longer, not likely, with my mail bag, and a certain holiday still fresh in my mind. No, there is no need to be shy, there's no reason why we shouldn't proclaim our devotion to the papers of our youth from the house tops if we want to.

Well, at the time of writing this I have only had the book for a few hours, but sufficiently long to see that Mr. Turner has made a grand job of it. He is slightly ironic in places, and I don't suppose we shall ever have him in our ranks as a serious collector, nevertheless, he has evidently thought the subject of sufficient importance to make necessary several months of busy research, and I know what that means. It is gratifying to note too that he has made a study of our collectors' magazines, he mentions some of them on page 18, and we seem to have provided him with a few useful paragraphs. For instance, he says "One researcher spent many months during the early part of the war in examining the school stories of the Gem and Magnet, and determining which were written by Charles Hamilton, and which were not, a feat of literary research which may yet receive wider recognition". Well, we all know that was John Shaw, don't we? And we hope the latter part of Mr. Turner's comment will come true.

Then I was amused to note that in the chapter on the Gem and Magnet he quotes extensively from that St. Jim's story "Figgy's Folly", for it brought back recollections of some criticism I made about it in the C.M. - and of the friendly difference of opinion with John Shaw which followed. Did my comments catch Mr. Turner's eye, and make him think that some quotes from that unusual story would make good copy? I hope so.

Further, in the Sexton Blake chapter Mr. Turner twice quotes Rex Cox's well remembered "Sexton Blake's File" in "Saturday Book",

and there are other items here and there which strike a familiar note. Yes, I think we can say we helped a little.

There are a few errors, it would be strange if there were not in a book of that length, and with all the difficulties of research. On page 125, The Green Triangle is quoted among Sexton Blake's opponents. Messrs. Blythe, Simpson, a couple of cooks, and a few other faithful Recites will know the right answer to that one; also that the Red Terror should be the Circle of Terror, and that Lee, not Blake, was at grips there also.

On page 108, reviewing the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. Union Jack, it is stated that after 100 numbers the magazine was devoted to Sexton Blake exclusively, but that didn't occur of course, until the advent of the penny series ten years later.

On the next page The Penny Pictorial is referred to where, obviously, it should have been the Penny Popular.

Then on page 110 it is stated the Boys' Leader was a companion of the Boys' Friend, Boys' Realm and Boys' Herald. If Mr. Turner means a stable companion, I am afraid Hamilton Edwards will be turning in his grave. For, week after week, month after month he solemnly warned "his boys" that he was editor of only three. The Boys' Leader came from the House of Pearson, and when after a run of two years it died, Hamilton Edwards could not resist a parting gibe.

Further, on page 178, commenting on the invasion stories, after mentioning several, he says "Britain Invaded", and "Britain at Bay" ran as end of the book serials in very short instalments, and adds, "The impression given perhaps wrongly, was that here the editor was printing only because he had to". Here he was referring to the "Marvel" for he says A.S. Herdy's boxing stories, and Jack, Sam and Pete had pride of place. But strangely enough in view of Mr. Turner's thoroughness he has overlooked the fact that "Britain Invaded", "Britain at Bay" and "Britain's Revenge" first appeared in the "Boys' Friend" starting in 1906, had nearly always the front page, had very long instalments, and that the three stories combined ran for two years. They were the most famous of the invasion stories. Moreover, besides being republished in the "Marvel" they also appeared in the "Gem".

Then in the Sexton Blake chapter it is stated that "Harry Blyth" was probably a pen name of Hal Meredith's. Actually it was the other way about.

And here's something of interest o Hamilton fans. On page 207 Mr. Turner, commenting on the style of the Magnet-Gem stories says "A typical exclamation passage in this description of the punishment of Cardew of St. Jim's". He then goes on to quote nineteen one-line paragraphs, some of which are:-

Cardew struggled furiously.
Levison and Clive looked on grimly.
Cardew had asked for it, and he was getting it now.
There was no mistake about that.

Now I am prepared to gamble, and I am sure John Shaw will support me, that that was not typical of Charles Hamilton at all. He must have been on holiday or something at the time, and that particular story written by one of what we call the substitutes, duds, or imitators.

However, as I have said, the errors and misconceptions are very few in a book with so much in it.

And now read (if you haven't already done so) J.V.B. Stewart Hunter's review on another page. For a lucid knowledgeable criticism on the book I am sure you will agree it equals anything which has appeared in print.

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Visitors: A few weeks ago, Harry Dowler, my first hobby friend, spent a short week-end in York. We had not seen each other for four years. Harry's school years were almost identical with mine, his were spent in Manchester and mine in York. He was keen on the Boys' Friend, and its companions, so was I. He ferretted out information about the authors - that Henry St. John was also Mebel St. John; that David Goodwin and John Tregellis were one and the same, and so on. So did I. But forty years passed before we compared notebooks. Thanks to Collectors Who's Who's, collector's magazines and meetings, we arrange things better now among those who have so much in common. Needless to say, Harry and I made the most of our time together.

Then on Sunday, the 10th, I had a surprise visit from

Arthur Harris of Llundudno. He was accompanied by Mrs. Harris. It was our first meeting. Arthur Harris, of course, possesses the largest collection of amateur magazines in the country - over 8000 of them. He is also the lucky owner of 2000 comics. On the Tuesday Mr. and Mrs. Harris went over to Scarborough where they spent an hour or two with that great friend of our circle, Mr. R.A.H. Goodyear.

They're red letter days for me these meetings in my native city. That there may be more in the near future is the heartiest wish of

Yours sincerely,

HERBERT LECKENBY.

WANTED: Champions, Triumphs, Champion Libraries, Rocket, Pluck (1923-) and Young Britain. Also Annuals. Please state price required. John W. Gocher, Junr., Victoria Cottage, Constitution Hill, Sudbury, Suffolk.

WANTED: Copies of "Yorkshire Evening Post" August 27th to September 3rd, 1937. R. A. Hudson, 5 Throstle Row, Middleton, Leeds, 10.

WANTED: Boys' Friend Threepenny Libraries, particularly Martin Clifford, Clark Hook, Sexton Blekes. Magnets Nos. 1 and 2 only. Chums Bound Annuals, Vols. 3, 4, and 8. - F. Osborn, 24 Harpur Street, Bedford.

OLD BOYS BOOK CLUB! Collectors! Why Not Join! If you can't attend meetings be a Postal Member. Mrs. Eileen Whiter, 706 Lordship Lane, Wood Green, London, N.22.

WANTED: Early Issues of Gem, Magnet, Pluck, Dreadnought. A few Magnets and Gems for disposal, and Red-covered Magnets for exchange only. Eric Payne, 23 Grove Road, Sarbiton, Surrey.

WANTED: Aldine Publications, Dick Turpins, Claude Duvals, etc. E. R. Lendy, 4 Nuneston Road, Dagenham, Essex.

"..... AND GIVE ME YESTERDAY"By J.V.B. Stewart Hunter

There was a character in one of the melodramas of my youth whose passionate request to the Almighty was to "Turn back Thy Universe and give me Yesterday!" Mr. E. S. Turner, in this entrancing book, (BOYS WILL BE BOYS - E.S. Turner: Michael Joseph: 10/6), gives back to all of us, however far away these yesterdays may be, the long, happy hours of our boyhood.

I confess to opening the volume with a feeling of trepidation. What would the style be — the laboured facetious; the politico-sociological a la Orwell and Disher; the uninspired catalogue, or, (perhaps worst horror of all) the uncritical hero-worship. I need not have feared. Mr. Turner has a wide knowledge, not only of his subject, but also of what has already been written on it. His style is clear and objective, only a short-sentence comment at times betrays that he is on the side of the angels — a delicious example is where, after describing a modern version of SWEENEY TODD which eliminates the cannibalistic pie-shop theme, he says: "A good companion to this work would have been the story of Dracula with all references to blood-sucking omitted."

The opening chapter, GOTHIC HANGOVER, is devoted to the popular fiction of the early nineteenth century with its 'spectres gliding in a green phosphorescence, hags picking over the bones of charnel houses, deathsheds in closets, heirs to great estates chained in dungeons, forests stuffed with robbers and werewolves, graves creaking open in the moonlight to let the vampires out.' It is extremely well done, but 47 pages (12 of which are devoted to SWEENEY TODD) allow us only a glimpse of that totemic sub-literature of the early Victorian era. The near-genius of Prest is recognised, but the considerable influence of Reynolds and Egan receives only brief mention, and there is no mention of Frost and Lindridge. The preface says, tantalisingly, 'It would have been easy to fill this volume with an account of the Victorian penny dreadfuls alone. The temptation has been resisted....' Here is one reader who hopes that Mr. Turner, remembering the views of Oscar Wilde on temptation, will one day give us that volume.

ROGUES AND VAGABONDS carries the story onwards through the highwaymen and robber era of Harrison and Lee, but with three whole pages devoted to the puerilities of CHARLES PEACE, surely the super-bloods of the Newsagents Publishing Company deserved some space. And where is BLUESKIN and EDITH THE CAPTIVE.

The odd schools and scholars — and even odder schoolmasters of the Brett and Emmett publications are covered, with the JACK HARKAWAY saga deservedly rating a chapter to itself.

But it is with the arrival of Alfred Harmsworth, 'The Cuckoo in the Nest', that boys' fiction enters the era which will be best remembered by C.D. readers. This chapter, which traces the beginnings of the great A.P. team of boys' periodicals, and recounts the Harmsworth 'crusade' against the 'penny dreadful' is, perhaps, the most valuable, as it is certainly one of the most entertaining chapters in this entertaining book.

With this chapter Mr. Turner enters on the second half of his book and, abandoning the semi-chronological arrangement, treats subsequent chapters on a subject-matter basis. Inevitably, the detectives come first, and here are Nelson Lee, Nick Carter, Dixon Breet, Dixon Hawke, the numerous progeny of the Aldine Detective Library, and dozens of others new to me.

Sexton Blake has, of course, the dignity of a chapter to himself, and to one who has always had a wholesome respect for the workmanship of the S.B. authors, it is a pleasure to note how thoroughly Mr. Turner has gone into his subject. There are few aspects of the Man from Baker Street which are left unilluminated. Such devotees as Maurice Bond will relish Mr. Turner's references to modern issues — particularly THE CASE OF THE NIGHT LOBBY DRIVER. They share his wonder 'if Blake is quite his old resourceful self.'

Other chapters deal with the invention, scientifiction, sport, war, and wild west types, and there is an interesting review of the Dundee School, aptly summarised in the description of the illustrations — 'everything a little larger than life.'

But the great majority of C.D. readers will already have turned eagerly to Chapter XIII, to consider that twenty pages devoted to the output of Charles Hamilton is too brief treatment of the Master. Although, to my great regret, I am one whose

enthusiasm for Greyfriars and St. Jim's flickered out when schooldays ended, I am inclined to agree. Nevertheless, I think that even the most fanatical will agree that Mr. Turner is scrupulously fair. If he draws attention to the standardised, exclamatory dialogue, and repetitious style, he equally concedes that the style had much to do with the success of the stories and defied imitation; in the Orwell-Hamilton debate he is plainly on C.H.'s side; he draws attention to C.H.'s habit (I have always thought it a charming one) of assuming that his readers would be familiar with his many literary and academic allusions. The closing sentence of the chapter is typically Turnerian: 'Anyone in doubt about the present-day status of Bunter might like to know that his adventures are available in Braille.'

In a book which covers so wide a field, the experts will, no doubt, discover errors of fact. Even I, who am no expert, would like to know where SAWNEY BEAN and the SOCIALIST GIRL are to be found, doubt that Rymer wrote VARNNEY THE VAMPIRE, and, faced with the weighty evidence of the Parisian derivation of the immortal SWEENEY TOOD, I still say, like the obstinate old lady confronted with the giraffe: "I don't believe it!"

But these are trifles to weigh against the benefits that Mr. Turner has brought to the collecting fraternity. A book which the great non-collecting public will find extremely interesting will inevitably attract many converts to our ranks. For the new collector it brings within the covers of one book much of the data which previously could only be obtained by laborious dredging through back numbers of the collectors' journals, or by pestering the cognoscenti. It has, in my opinion, an even greater value in widening the horizons of the collector, and redeeming the hobby from the constrictions of a too-narrow specialisation — I know that I will not be happy until I know more of some of the characters I have met, for the first time, in these pages.

Finally, I wish I had a financial interest in BOYS WILL BE BOYS, for it is going to sell a lot of copies. The collector who can forbear from adding his half-guinea to Michael Joseph's receipts will be strong-minded indeed.

Shanghai, nevertheless Sexton Blake would be at that distant point commencing next week. Sure enough he was, and I still can recall the thrills I experienced while reading the fine series of Chinese Civil War stories which were, as I have since discovered, written by that classic Blake author, George Hamilton Teed. He was incidentally, responsible for that "Black Den's Treasure" yarn which first introduced me to Blake.

Now, some 20 years later, I can still recall the pleasure I had from those yarns and can, whenever I feel inclined, turn to them, for they are, I am glad to say, part of my valued collection of Blake stories. Memories come and go but these particular ones will remain with me for all time.

These notes are but part of the recollections of some of the old papers that I get while sitting by that comforting fire on a rainy autumn afternoon, but all old boys of similar age and interests will agree with me I am sure when I say that one could not wish for any happier memories. I hope that one day my children may gain the same delightful pleasures from remembering the books and papers of their youth. Time will tell if post-war children's papers will equal their counterparts of years ago.

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RESULT OF COMPETITION NO. 3

To decide this interesting little competition set us an unexpected problem. Mr. Fayne's sealed solution showed 46 names, and four competitors found these correctly, but three of them found many more and the other an additional one. On examining the extras a good many were found to be too far-fetched, but there were some which we decided should be allowed in order to be perfectly fair. Therefore the prize of £1 was divided between Clive Simpson, Knaresborough, Leonard Peckman, 27 Archdale Road, S.E. 22, Robert Whiter, 706 Lordship Lane, London, N.22, and Joseph Baguley, Pensilva.

OLD BOYS BOOK CLUBOctober Meeting

There was another "gathering of the Clan" on Sunday October 3rd, this time at 27, Archdale Road, East Dulwich, the home of Mr. Packman, our Chairman. We were very pleased to have with us as our guest of honour Mr. Kenneth Brookes, the celebrated artist of Gem and Nelson Lee fame.

The meeting opened at 6.30 p.m., and the secretary read the minutes, which was followed by "question time". A point was brought up about the badge, and it was agreed that enquiries should be made and the badges done as soon as possible.

Following this, Mr. Chairman gave a hearty welcome to Mr. Brookes, saying how honoured the Club was by his presence, and that it was a pity that Mr. Parker could not come as well. He hoped that the Club would be seeing him soon. We were also very pleased to welcome Mr. Herbert Smith of Scole, and his brother, and a newcomer to the Club, Mr. Robert Mortimer of East Molesey.

The most important news of the meeting followed, which was in the form of a letter from Mr. Frank Richards. Previously the secretary had written to him, asking him to become the Honorary President of the Club, and his welcome and genial reply, in which he said it would be a very great honour for him to accept, was read out. Truly this is an honour for the Club, and it was very enthusiastically welcomed by all members.

Mr. Chairman then mentioned that the collection of Magnets which Mr. Martin had bought, was nearly all sold.

The next point was that of marking the front covers of the books. This is done by several people, by markings in ink or with a rubber stamp. The Club would be very pleased if this practice could be stopped as it seriously affects the value of the books, and is an eyesore to people who treasure them and naturally like to see them as near to perfection as possible.

The diary of Mr. Leckenby's week in London, and part of the "Editor's Chair", were given a preview by Mr. Chairman,

and everyone was thrilled by our dear friend and Editor's latest literary efforts.

This was followed by the Treasurer's Report. The forthcoming adverts were discussed, and the C.D. Annual was added to the list, while, thanks to our friend Herbert Smith of Scole, "Hobbies Weekly" was included. Mr. Smith also said he could get us a free advert in a Science Fiction Magazine called Fantasy, and this was welcomed by all.

The Annual Meeting was discussed, and eventually Easter was decided on, as being the best time of the year, and arrangements are to start forthwith. We would like to know how Provincial folks feel about this, so let's hear your views on the subject!

A point was brought up by Mr. Smith about lending books, but, as several members have found that they are usually returned in a worse condition than that in which they are sent, this was agreed as being impracticable.

Mr. Smith then brought up the question of prices being according to serial numbers as well as yearly divisions. He will be furnished with a full price list showing the coordination between the two. The next paper to be priced will be dealt with at the November meeting.

Mr. Chairman then called upon Mr. Brookes to give us a review of his experiences in the artistic world, which he accordingly did, and very interesting it was too. At one point, questions were literally fired at him, but he answered everyone. Mr. Brookes said he had illustrated the Gem, Nelson Lee (St. Franks Stories), Boys' Own Paper, Union Jack, Scout, Sexton Blake Library, and last but not least, the Holiday Annuals. He also told the Club that he has exhibited paintings in the Royal Academy, and is a member of the R.I., and the London Sketch Club. He says he is at his best when painting landscapes, though he likes the juvenile illustrations as well.

Mr. Chairman then gave a vote of thanks to Mr. Brookes, saying that he was sure of a cordial welcome any time he liked to come along. Mr. Brookes replied that the meeting had been very interesting, and he would like to try and come along again one day.

The next meeting was fixed and for this there is a change of date. It will be at 706 Lordship Lane, Wood Green, N.22, on Sunday November 14th, so will all members please take note. The house will be open from 2 p.m. onwards.

The meeting was then closed, and refreshments and "Exchange and Mart" were the order of the day.

The attendance was as follows:- Mr. & Mrs. Packman, Mr. Kenneth Brookes, Mr. & Mrs. F. Keeling, Mr. & Mrs. R. Whiter, Messrs. M. Ha., M. Haswell, J. Robyns, J. Geal, H. A. Smith, C. Wright, D. Brooks, B. Whiter, R. Blythe, and R. Mortimer.

GILLEN WHITER,
706, Lordship Lane,
Wood Green,
London, N.22.
Hon. Secretary.

"THE BIG BANG AT GREYFRIARS"

By Robt. H. Whiter

Such was the title of November 5th week of the Magnet 1937, No. 1551, one of the many excellent stories written around the glorious "fifth" at Greyfriars School. Certain types of stories always had a strong appeal for me, and the Guy Fawkes episodes were an example. Of the '30s the one that stands out in my mind more than any of the others was the famous "Secret Seven" series. With the Headmaster away and Mr. Prout in his place, things were bound to happen. Hoodwinked by Loder, Prout makes him head prefect, with the result that the juniors have a bad time of it. Lickings, lines, detentions are the order of the day. When Mr. Quelch, master of the Remove, intervenes, Loder engineers his temporary retirement following hot words with Prout. Thus was the "Secret Seven" born. Shell, Upper Fourth and Remove banded themselves together so that whilst one lot of seven juniors were carrying out retaliation, prominent members of the various forms were always in view. Disguise was affected by the wearing of bulky overcoats and Guy Fawkes masks, members had a secret code, invisible pencils and a thumb print recording

kit similar to the fingerprints system of the C.I.D. Loder is ragged several times, once nearly having his head shaved, Each time he names different fellows as the culprits, only to be made a fool of, the juniors always having perfect alibis. On the actual fifth, following an explosion in his study by fireworks having been stacked in the firegrate, Loder induces Mr. Prout to issue an order confiscating all fireworks.

Vernon Smith, the old "Boulder" who is blamed for the explosion and is in the presence of Prout when the order is given, writes a warning on the back of a sheet of deponent verbs with the invisible pencil and drops it from the window of the study to the famous five waiting below. Loder sees him, but when examining the paper can find nothing on it but the verbs. Harry Wharton & Co. empty the woodshed of all crackers etc., after the message had come to light in front of the study fire, and Will O' the Wisp like scamper about in the dark throwing fireworks at the prefects, who give up searching as a bad job and retire to the house. Loder isn't so lucky, however; he is collared, dressed in the Guy's clothes and paraded round the bonfire, despite the cries of "burn him!" from fellows not knowing the realness of the effigy! Mr. Prout finds his dutiful prefect still in the effects of the guy, left under the master's windows - thus ended the glorious fifth for Loder.

The series ran on for five more weeks. Loder finding himself desperately in need of a fiver, breaks open the desk in Prout's study where lies Mauleverer's confiscated banknote, in the middle of the night, little knowing that Peter Todd had already been down and had ragged the study by giving it and its contents a thick coating of white paint as a warning to Prout. Naturally on the morrow the Secret Seven are blamed for the theft as well as the rag. Vernon Smith, however, takes a snapshot of the thumbprint left in the paint on the smashed drawer. He being as keen as a razor suspects Loder and with the rest of the fellows forces the prefect to give an impression of his thumb - the prints tally exactly. The Boulder wants to hold it over Loder's head, but Mauly says that it's not cricket and they fight. Finally, the Remove are given detention by Prout, and Loder, grateful to them for keeping mum, lets them off on his own account, whilst Prout is on a walk. Later on, Prout refuses to listen to Loder and is about to commit punishment

when at the crucial moment Dr. Locke arrives to take over headmaster once again and smooths everything over very quickly. Here then is a brief summary of the famous "Secret Seven" series, one of the many yearly series revolving round the anniversary of the celebrated Guido Fawkes episode presented by the Magnet from the gifted pen of the King of Schoolboy Story writers - Frank Richards.

N.B. The actual Guy Fawkes number of this series was entitled "Pooled on the Fifth", No. 1395. November 10th, 1934.

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FOR SALE: Exmas Gem 1916. 21 Magnets, 1916. Monster Libraries 1 - 3, 384 pages. Hobby Annual, 1927; Sexton Blake, 3d. No.35. WANTED: Magnets, 1914-15. W. H. Neste, Wenlock, Burnham, Bucks.

FOR SALE: Volumes of Ferrers Lord & Co., stories also included Greyfriars Lyrics. Extracted from Boys' Friend and Magnet etc. Libraries 1901 onwards.

Three volumes bound at publishers, stiff covers slightly soiled, otherwise perfect. What offers.

WANTED: Halfpenny series Boys' Friend 147-217. Sykes, Cotton Lane, Tamworth, Staffs.

WANTED: Odd boys' books. Anything. What offers!
Exchanges: Detective Weekly, 1 - 90. Henry J. H. Bertlett, Peas Hill, Shipton Gorge, Bridport, Dorset.

WANTED: 1/1 each offered for S.O.Ls with Greyfriars Stories also. Boys' Friend Pre 1916. Bill Martin, 93 Hillside, Stombridge Park, London, N.W.10.

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LATE NEWS

Two reprints of "Boys Will Be Boys" within a week of publication.

TAKE A LOOK AT THIS:PART BILL OF FARE FOR THE ANNUAL

The Collectors' Who's Who: Compiled by Herbert Leckenby.

Dwellers in the Remove - How They Came to Greyfriars:
By W. H. Gander, Canada.

Mr. Croft Passes By: By Jack Corbett.

The Story of the "Popular": By Roger M. Jenkins.

The Authors' Who's Who: Compiled by Herbert Leckenby.

Reprinted Stories in the Sexton Blake Library: By Wm. Colcombe.

Golden Days of the Gem: By Leonard Packman.

Dr. Ferrero and His Creator: By Rex Dolphin.

A Look at the Libraries: By Herbert Leckenby.

Girls in the Limelight: By Gordon Kirby, Australia.

The Hobby Again: By Reginald Cox.

Heigh-Ho the Holly - The Lure of the Christmas Number.

With Blake on Their Spots: By Wm. Colcombe.

I Travelled for the St. Franks League: By James W. Cook.

Topicity was the Keynote: By H. M. Bond.

A Post-War Christmas at Baker Street: By H. M. Bond.

Cover Sketch by Nemo. Inside Sketches by Robt. Whiter,
W. W. Branton, and others.

Map of Greyfriars and District.

Something for Everybody, written by a talented band of
contributors - British, Canadian, Australian.

HAVE YOU ORDERED YOUR COPY?
YOU'LL BE SORRY IF YOU MISS IT.

The Nelson Lee Column

Conducted by Robert Blythe,
81 Alsen Road, Holloway, London, N.7.

The most important news this month for Lee fens is, of course, the visit of Mr. Kenneth Brookes to the London Book Club.

I think that this can be regarded as a distinct feather in our cap, as Mr. Brookes is the first person who had an active part in the production of any of the Old Boys' Papers, to come to our meetings.

As you know, he illustrated most of the 2nd New Series. I won't go into details of what he spoke about, as our secretary will be reporting on the occasion elsewhere.

Our ambition now is to get E.S.B. himself to come along, in spite of his somewhat uncompromising attitude regarding his St. Franks' stories. However, we in London have got all our fingers crossed!

I mentioned a couple of months ago about St. Frank's stories appearing in other papers. It may be of interest to some to know that the following stories appeared in the "Nugget" Lib.(3d.)

- No. 49 The Amazing Schoolboy
- " 51 The Outsiders
- " 53 Expelled
- " 55 The Pet of St. Frank's
- " 57 Rebels of St. Frank's
- " 59 The Scapegrace of St. Frank's
- " 61 The Outcast of St. Frank's
- " 63 The Mystery of St. Frank's
- " 67 The St. Frank's Professional
- " 69 Nipper's Circus Chum

Whether these were actually written by E.S.B. I'm not prepared to say for certain, as I have only read No.63. However, in my opinion, No.63 was not written by Brooks, therefore it's fairly safe to assume that the others were not either. Lacking

the books and information to the contrary, I shall have to leave it at that. While I'm about it, I might add that St. Frank's stories appeared in the "Boy's Realm" 1st Lib. in the 1919-1922 period. Also a serial entitled "The Crusoe Scouts" appeared from June 6th to July 4th, 1925.

The "Boy's Friend" 4d. Lib. also printed St. Frank's stories occasionally. Most of them were original, although, here again I'm hampered by the fact that I've never seen them. I only know of them. N.B. This list is by no means complete.

- No. 514 Nipper at St. Frank's
- " 633 The Idol of St. Frank's
- " 708 The Kidnapped School
- " 709 Phantom Island
- " 713 The New York Mystery
- " 704 (?) Pots of Money

Did you know that:-

When Alf Brent first came to the school he adopted the name of Alf Higgins and said that he was the son of a bricklayer?

The Moor View Girls were first introduced in No. 436 O.S. in a story entitled "A Rod of Iron"?

The Head has two sisters? One Maud, married to a Mr. Cresswell. The other, Honorie, is married to Sir Lucien Dexter, a member of the Board of Governors.

And so to the titles (at present rate of 10 a month I reckon I shall get through them in $7\frac{1}{2}$ years!!! so I'm increasing them to 20, if there's space).

No. 51, The Mystery of the Moor; 52, At Half Tide; 53, Zingrave's Lost Card; 54, The Mystery of the Mail Van; 55, The Man with 4 Identities; 56, The Case of the Fatal Fight; 57, Nelson Lee's Lady Assistant (Intro. E. Dere); 58, The Crimson Disc; 59, The Ribbon of Light; 60, The Mystery of the Turret; 61, The Golden Boomerang; 62, The Amazing Case of the Lost Explorers; 63, The Spectre of Scarcroft; 64, The Plague Ship; 65, Against the Law; 66, The Mystery of the 10-20 Express; 67, The Crook; 68, The Great Insurance Swindle; 69, The Mystery of Barron Hall; 70, The House in the Hollow.



When was Ionides Expelled?

Santerstead,
Surrey.

Dear Sir,

In the course of an article entitled "Prefects of Greyfriars", Mr. Puckrin mentions Ionides, the Greek prefect, as soon vanishing from the precincts of Greyfriars, even earlier than Carberry.

Might I courteously point out Mr. Puckrin has made a chronological error here. Ionides, as a matter of fact, is mentioned as late as 1916 in Magnet 436, entitled "Called to the Colours", though it is only passing mention. He was evidently still at Greyfriars, while Carberry, if I am not mistaken, was sacked from the school in the old halfpenny days of the paper.

Perhaps someone can tell us when Ionides left Greyfriars. I confess I do not know.

Yours very sincerely,

BERNARD PRIME.

The Bunter Books Are Out!

50 Alexandra Road,

London, S.W. 10.

Dear Mr. Leckenby;

26th October, 1948.

and remittance.

Many thanks for your orders of October 18th,

Today is publication day, but in view of the very considerable amount of work involved in disposing of the edition, for which as you will appreciate we have many hundreds of orders, it may be that some will arrive a few days late, but we are afraid that this is inevitable.

Yours sincerely,

CHARLES SKILTON LTD.,
Charles Skilton.

MORE ABOUT "THE MODERN BOY"

By

Eric Fyne

Your review of "The Modern Boy" is most timely. This famous paper has certainly been neglected by contributors to the C.D.

Though I possess a complete set of the paper, it was never a periodical which I liked a lot, though I imagine its appeal to teen-agers was fairly considerable. My best pal always eulogized the Ken King stories, so I have no doubt of their worth.

The mention of the "Told in the Tuckshop" series strikes an interesting note. I have seen them in the "Boys' Friend", the "Modern Boy", the "Popular", and the "Gem", but I believe that the stories were first published in the "Boys' Friend". Can any reader substantiate this point?

The Rio Kid, was, of course, a "Popular" character, appearing in that paper for years before he made his brief appearance in the "Modern Boy". It is my opinion that these stories were brilliant. So convincing were they, with such perfect atmosphere, that I always believed that they were the

work of one who had travelled a good deal in Texas and Mexico. Though I had known for many years that Charles Hamilton was responsible for most of the Greyfriars, St. Jim's, Rookwood, Cedar Creek, and Benbow stories, and could always detect his hand, I was completely amazed when I learned that he was also Ralph Redway.

Strangely enough, when the Rio Kid appeared in the Greyfriars stories which your writer mentions, he was, in my opinion, a poor shadow of the lovable Texen outlaw of "Popular" days. Mr. Hamilton's stories of the Greyfriars chums in Texas contained nothing of the atmosphere which was so convincing in his Rio Kid tales.

Also remarkable was the fact that, though his Cedar Creek tales made very pleasant reading, they had nothing of the same stamp of authenticity which he gave the Kid.

The war seems to have brought about the absorption of the "Modern Boy" by the "Boys' Cinema". But the M.B. had been subjected to several changes of shape and style in the year before it ended, and one can but wonder whether it would have passed on, war or no war.

—oOo—

Have you ordered your Annual yet?



All Communications to
H. M. Bond, 10, Erw wen, Rhiwbina, Cardiff.

THE ROUND TABLE

Once again I am pleased to be able to publish another article by Mr. Wm. Colcombe. This time he has struck an entirely new note and I am sure that you will all read "Sexton Blake at the Races" with interest. His mention of the old U.J. story "The Puzzle Of The Blue Ensign" recalled many memories for me as you will guess when you read my own contribution this month. "Impressions Of Boyhood" was written four years ago when I was serving with the R.A.F. and was originally intended for publication in our contemporary "The Story Paper Collector", but was shelved when Bill Gander fell ill and was unable to publish his magazine regularly. In the light of Bill Colcombe's newest article it should prove a fitting companion item for this issue and, although not strictly a Blake article, is nevertheless the memories of most ardent Blake fan, yours truly. And it gives me an idea, how about making "Impressions of Boyhood" the subject of a series of articles for Blakians. All you Blake addicts have a story to tell. The story of how you first came to meet the Man from Baker Street. I shall welcome any articles of this nature, so, once again I ask you to get your pens busy. Rex Dolphin and Bill Colcombe together with John Gocher have been the only members of our circle to come along with articles for many

a moon. What about you other chaps - and ladies too if it comes to that! It WOULD be a change to see some fresh talent in our pages. Look at the variety the Hamilton fans get!

An unfortunate error crept into our pages last month. John Gocher, in his article "Known In Other Fields" mentioned that Messrs. Skeffington had published several novels by Anthony Skene. This is not the case, and we apologise to the publishers in question.

H. M. BOND.

Next month Will Be Our Special Xmas Number. We will welcome any articles of suitable nature for the December issue.

—oO—

SEXTON BLAKE AT THE RACES

By William Colcombe

Some of the best Sexton Blake stories have had the great sport of horse racing as a background. The Sport of Kings is well fitted to play the part of backdrop to some of the detective's most interesting cases. Blake himself has owned a race-horse. It was called Grey Phantom and it happened in a story called "The Stables Crime" by Mark Osborne (S.B.L. 2nd series No. 378). In attempting to clear a jockey who had been "framed" with a murder, he finds it necessary to purchase the horse and is successful in winning the Kempton Park Jubilee handicap and also finding the crooks in their efforts to land a huge racing coup.

Several of the big racing events have been featured in different stories, amongst them "The Derby, Grand National, St. Leger and Cambridgeshire Handicap. One of the most interesting of these was by Allan Blair, "The Man from Dublin" (S.B.L. 2nd series No. 382). This story tells of the attempt to defraud the organisers of a Derby Irish Sweepstake of £250,000 and ends with the capture of the crooks on Epsom Downs during the running of the Derby. Details of the organisation of the huge sweepstake is given in the telling of the story.

Another racing yarn by Allen Blair, "The Great Turk Fraud" (S.B.L. 2nd series No. 399) in which The Man from Baker Street cleans up a gang of crooked owners, trainers and jockeys who gain control of important races and so be able to rig the betting market to the benefit of their own pockets.

"The Puzzle of the Blue Ensign" (U.J. No. 1223) is a story of the Grand National Steeplechase. 'Blue Ensign' is favourite for the race, but Blake and Tinker have their work cut out to prevent a cunning crook's efforts to keep the horse from reaching the starting post, the young owner's future fortune depends on his horse winning the race. Another story by Allen Blair, "The Bechers Brook Mystery" also mentions the Grand National, but only incidentally and racing does not play a major part in the story.

An unusual yarn with a racing theme was "The Million Pound Double" which appeared in U.J. No. 1151. A man backs two horses at odds of a thousand to one in a double, that is, the winnings of the first horse are staked on the second, if the first horse wins a thousand is staked on the second at a thousand to one to win a million pounds. The first horse duly wins, but the unfortunate punter loses his voucher and claims the bookmaker with whom he made the bet has stolen it and tries to persuade Blake to recover it for him.

The race for the Cambridgeshire Handicap on Newmarket Heath is the background for another U.J. story, "The Norman Duke Mystery" (No. 1257). The four most prominent horses in the race are owned by men of different nationalities, British, French, German and American. Attempts are made to 'noble' the British and French horses while the American's is stolen, a stableman is murdered and Tinker has a rather unnerving experience with a Phantom Horse, he and his gov'nor successfully clear up the tangle, Phantom Horse and all.

It may be news to Tinker fans to know that their hero has won the St. Leger or even that he was a jockey at all. According to Mark Osborne in his story, "The Tour Of Terror", he has won several races and in this particular yarn he is successful in winning the last Classic race of the season as well as helping to prevent the winner being killed and its trainer murdered.

Arthur S. Hardy is well known as a writer of sporting stories and three of his Sexton Blake yarns have a racing interest, "Who Killed Trainer Lincoln", "The Crook Of Newmarket" and "The Bookmaker's Crime", the last named being yet another with the Derby Stakes as a central theme.

Dog racing has also featured in at least two of Sexton Blake's cases. S.B.L. No. 357, "The Kennels Crime" by Mark Osborne centres around the activities of a gang of dog track crooks, this was the first Blake story to deal with the then new sport of Greyhound racing. An invitation from Blake's old friend Inspector Martin to go to the "Dogs" results in his witnessing a murder and eventually puts the detective on the track of a hold-up king. It all results in Blake taking up the profession of bookmaker complete with Tinker as clerk, the old firm does as well at laying the odds as at crook catching, to the benefit of the sleuth's pet charities. The story is another Mark Osborne effort, "The Dog Track Murder". (S.B.L. No. 454).

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IMPRESSIONS OF BOYHOOD

By H. M. Bond

A drowning man is said to see his whole life pass, like a cinematograph film, through his mind's eye. There is undoubtedly a great deal in this belief, and although I am glad to say that I have never had the experience, I have had several flashbacks of memory, in which many things in my boyhood days have appeared vividly and realistically. A quiet afternoon beside a comforting fire, plus a little concentration, has, for instance, brought many memories of my happy hours (and some not quite so happy) with the old papers in my young days.

A lot has been written about each and every boys' paper I can bring to mind, but a few more remarks of individual impressions, would not, I am sure, be out of place. I remember, for instance, my eager anticipation of each issue of "The Boys' Magazine". At one time I was enthralled by a serial called "The Raiding Planet", in which the earth was invaded by the denizens of a mythical member of the solar system called "Thor". These beings, "Thorians" they were called, were highly advanced

in every form of science, and I was very much impressed by all the suggestions of various devices which have since had some foundation in fact. In this same paper I also looked forward to certain yarns of motor racing, featuring a character called "Hoxy Milligan" who was the devilish owner of a supercharged monster. I remember this speed fiend being able to do almost anything with his racing car; it even jumped chasms unptoen feet across, all by wizard driving at devastating speeds! Shades of jet propulsion!

Then to my mind comes another paper, "The Rocket". It was, I believe, short lived, but I was terribly thrilled with the first issues I read. One story, dealing with discoveries of mummy cases in ancient tombs I can bring to mind most vividly. This story, a serial, was responsible for a nightmare, and my subsequent refusal to go to bed the following night. The explorer in the story, opened a mummy case, and, to my horror - "the still figure moved!" (continued next week). This final scene so much affected me that that night I imagined ancient Egyptians under the bed, in the cupboard, in fact my imagination ran riot and I finally had to be taken into my parents' bedroom before I could sleep. My father soon got the truth of the matter and I thereafter had great difficulty in seeing my "Rocket", although even he (my father) was interested in the series of "Famous Fights" photographic cards that the paper gave free for the first 12 weeks of its short life.

Of course "The Magnet", "Gum" and "Popular" were great favourites with me. I had had the first named paper bought for me each week for some time as it was considered of a type suitable for me, but one day a man knocked at the door and gave my mother a huge bundle of books and papers of all types. It was, I remember, an advertising stunt of the Amalgamated Press. They presented a complete range of all their weeklies, suitable for all tastes and ages. Amongst them was a "Gum", the first I'd seen. Naturally, being already a Greyfriars fan, I soon became equally engrossed in "St. Jim's", and thereafter I had the good fortune to have the "Gum" every week. I urged my parents to see that I MUST get the "Popular" every Tuesday, as it, too, contained stories of my favourites. After a struggle I triumphed, and thereafter cost them 6d per week instead of 2d! When, sometime later, the

"Schoolboy's Own Library" started, however, I only managed to get enough coppers together to buy one now and then. I was told that I had to make a 4d one last longer. How well I remember the first S.B.O.L. I managed to obtain: "Billy Dunster's Xmas Peeking" it was called. Needless to say it only lasted until I had read it right through, at one sitting!

Other papers and comics came to my mind too, although at no time did I take any of these regularly. "Palm Pup", "The Kinema Comic", "Chips", "Butterfly", "Tiger Tim's Weekly" (a great favourite in my very young days) and the never to be forgotten "Funny Wonder". I remember being convinced that Tiger Tim was real, but I "impressed" on my elders that "it was really a little boy dressed up". Ah, happy days!

Many pages could I fill with these memories, but one cannot go on for ever, so I will conclude by remarking upon the greatest of all my youthful discoveries - "Sutton Blake". On day in 1925 (not so long ago to the older members of our collecting circle) a young friend of mine came to our house as company for me while I was recovering from an illness. He brought with him, a large pile of "Union Jacks". Now although I had heard of this paper from various sources including advertisements in its companion papers, I had never actually held a copy in my hands. Neither had I any idea of the type of story published in "Sutton Blake's Own Paper" as it was then called. I espied a story entitled "The Mystery of Black Den's Treasure" amongst this pile of U.J.s and decided that, of them all, this was the one I wanted to read most of all. So I started it at the first opportunity and was so enthralled with it that I lost no time in borrowing other copies from my friend.

Needless to say, I soon became an ardent Blake fan and from that day to this my interest has never flagged when reading of this grand character. Also I have often blessed that youthful friend of mine, who was actually responsible for bringing the detective to my notice. I might add, at this point, that, after reading those early U.J.s I decided to take it regularly and I sacrificed my weekly "Gem" (with certain pang of regret) in order that I could have it weekly. The first issue I bought contained a story dealing with that classic race "The Grand National". It was called "The Puzzle of the Blue Ensign" and although this particular story did not greatly impress me, an announcement in the same issue announcing the programmes for the following four weeks certainly did. It was a small inset stating that although Aintree was a far cry from