

The Collectors' Digest

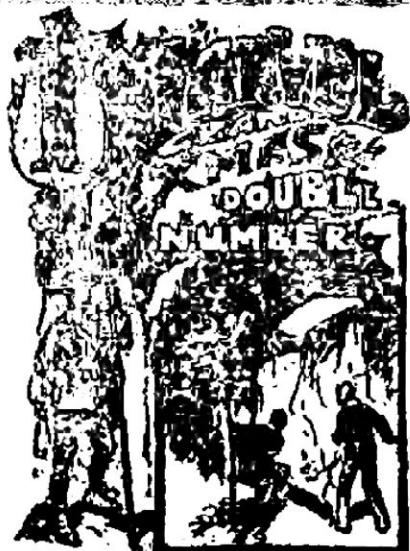
(Vol. 3) No. 25.

January 1949.

Duplicated by Wood's Typewriting Office, 20, Stonegate, York.

Christmas
Double No.
of the Perry
Masque - -
of 5th Decr.
1900 - - -

Price
1/1



Magnets for Sale

(Mint or near condition)

(Denotes copies in Duplicate*)

830-1	832*	853	855	869
870	878	881	922-3	924*
925-36	947	951	953	958
960*	961*	962	963*	964-5
966*	967*	968*	969	970
961 to	970	972-4	976 to	977
978*	980	982	988	992
1000-4	1007	1008*	1009*	1010
1012	1015-21	1023	1027-31	1033-5
1037	1039	1050-2	1055-7	1059-60
1064*-5*	1067	1073-5	1077-83	1090
1110	1116	1129	1131-2	1155
1169-74	1189-90	1196-8	1213-27	1239-43
1247	1249-54	1263-5	1268	1270-3
1276-9	1281	1297	1300-7	1311-16
1319-23	1325-8	1344-5	1354-7	1413
1429	1469-70	1471*	1472-80	1492-6
1498-9	1516-7	-	-	-

Desire to sell in Bulk : 251 in all
£11.10.0 the lot

J. Corbett, 44, Glyn Farm Road
Quinton, Birmingham
32.



(Vol. 3) No. 25

Price 1d. id.

Post Free

JANUARY 1949

Next Issue February

Editor, Miscellaneous Section
Herbert Leckaby, Telephone Exchange,
C/o Control Registry, Northern Command, York.

FROM THE EDITOR'S CHAIR:

A New Year and a New Volume. The year of grace, 1948, is dying as I write, and in view of the fact that we still hear a lot about rations (one ounce of bacon a week) in short supply, austerities, utility, and the rest of 'em, most of us will be inclined to say "Good Riddance". But there has been something to lighten the darkness - the hobby. That has gone on from strength to strength, and for that reason I shall always remember 1948 with affection. Billy Hunter, Sexton Blake, Nelson Lee, and others we know so well have frequently hit the headlines in scores of newspapers and our own London Old Boys's Book Club got quite a good splash in the "Sunday Dispatch", as will be seen from the reproduction in this issue. (Nice work, Bob and Hilary).

Many new friends have joined our ranks during the year, quite a number of them real enthusiasts. There's just one sad feature - we have lost two by the hands of the Grim Reaper, poor

little Alan Kellow, and that kindly soul, R. A. H. Goodyear. God rest their souls.

As for the C.D., we have many splendid, interesting contributions in hand, but that isn't to say we don't want more. So get on with your pens or typewriters. We are determined to make Volume 3 better than either of its predecessors.

As for myself, my mail bag grows and grows, but the more I get the better I like it. And here let me take the opportunity of thanking sincerely all those who sent me Christmas greetings. I didn't attempt to send in reply, but I think all will appreciate the reason why.

* * * *

That Glaring Error. I bet you looked at the cover of the December issue with a puzzled frown, and no wonder. It was a real mix-up, wasn't it? Yet believe it or not, when I got delivery of the copies I was so anxious to get them off that I just glanced at the picture, thought "Okay" and had got half of them wrapped before the caption caught my eye. Then, well, it's a wonder you got your copies at all, or the Annual, for I nearly had heart failure! Phew! What a blunder, or should it be blunders?

Well, it happened like this. I had intended using the Christmas Treble Number of the Marvel 1905 cover for the illustration on ours. It showed Pete, Jack, Sam and Pete fame, prominently. Unfortunately it was found that it would not come out satisfactorily, so the cover of the Union Jack Christmas Double Number 1905 had to be substituted. Due to a bad lapse at the agency the caption intended for the Marvel picture was used, and if that was not enough in preparing it, 1948 was written instead of 1905. Mr. Wood, of the agency, has asked me to convey his sincere apologies. He says you must have thought he had been looking on the wrong wall. It was red, but in justice to him I might say that for weeks he had been working from 5 a.m. till late at night coping with orders, and making sure all would be clear for the Annual.

Anyway, we'll get some consolation by suggesting that some day that cover may be looked upon as a curiosity, and copies valued for it in the same way as a view in a postage stamp.

* * * *

More Limelight.

I am sure all readers will be interested to learn that an exhibition of papers from my collection (and some kindly to be loaned by fellow collectors) is being arranged at the York Public Library, to be held from January 17th to 29th. A preliminary notice which appeared in the Yorkshire Evening Press, December 30th, is reproduced on this page. This thanks to a member of our circle, Mr. Jack Wood, who was mainly responsible for the exhibition being brought about.

Should any friends within easy distance feel they would like to come to York to see it, I should be very pleased to see them.

Yours sincerely,

HERBERT LECKENEY.

BOYS' LITERATURE AND ITS EFFECTS

WHAT effect has specialised boys' literature had on the development of the readers' characters?

The question is one which has caused many arguments, but one answer may well be afforded by an exhibition of old boys' books in the Public Library, York, next month.

Stagged with the enthusiastic cooperation of Mr. R. Deberry, City Librarian, and of Mr. Herbert Leckenev of York—the recognised authority by collectors on this subject—the exhibition will be on the "Boys will be Boys" outline.

It will give a comprehensive over-all picture of the changes in juvenile literature from

Victorian days to the present time—from the once-popular politically-titled "Boys of England" to the post-war revival in novel form of the eve-green Billy Butzer.

Dick Turpin, Section Blake, Nelson Lee and the ever-green "Boys of Grayfriars, St. Paul's, St. John's and Bookwood will re-appear, with Jack Marston and the adventures of Henry's John, E. A. H. Gooden, and "Tallbot Balgoss" head in an exhibition which will revive many friendly "reads."

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, Surbiton, Surrey.

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

(This is the first article by Peter Welker. All will agree it's just the thing for the C.D. The human touch! He says most collectors have a sense of humour - he's certainly got it himself. Note what he says about receiving two letters in feminine handwriting in one day. Peter - I can - well, never mind! I am pleased to say we have more of his articles in hand just as good. - H.L.)

THE POSTMAN'S KNOCK

by

P. A. WALKER.

About twenty-five years ago, to the boys and girls of that particular period, there existed a certain "atmosphere" which was more noticeable on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings.

The reason was that, because on Mondays we stalked along to the nearest newsagent's and bought our shining new copy of the "Magnet", and our carefully folded "Boys' Friend". On Wednesday we awoke with the realisation that it was "Gem" day, and on Friday we invested in the "Penny Popular". Thrills, which also are of the past.

However, in 1948, it is again possible to recapture some of that old "atmosphere". For, in this country today, exist large numbers of "old boys", whose cheery greetings in long pleasant letters are a constant reminder that there are many others who still find enjoyment in the recapture of that old thrill.

Once more, the postman's knock in the early morning might mean the arrival of a beautiful parcel of Gems. Or, probably, better still, a friendly note from Leonard Peckman, or Bob Whiter, or Eric Payne, or Harry Dowler. Or it might mean the arrival of the monthly issue of the little paper which had brought so many strangers together in one vast circle, the "Collectors' Digest". And, of course, it might even be the signal that a letter has arrived from the "great man" himself, our tireless editor.

This circle of ours, is, to me, probably the best feature of the whole rather curious business of collecting old Gems and Magnets. I must confess that today I prefer to read about the

heroes of the past than the actual papers themselves.

Those cheerful letters from people all over the country describing their reactions and sensations on re-discovering the heroes of their youth are very pleasant indeed. We sit and contemplate about their writers. What sort of a bloke is he? Is he old or young or middle-aged? Married or single? As time goes on, more and more news about the fellow comes along, and a letter from him today is like a letter from somebody you have known all your life.

It was really a result of answering an advertisement in the "Exchange and Mart" that made us aware that there existed a number of people who were interested in the collection of old boys' books. A letter arrived from Mr. Jack Corbett of Birmingham, and since then we have been quite regular correspondents. He introduced me to the Story Paper Collector, a Canadian amateur magazine dealing with the collection of books, and subsequently we became subscribers to the Collectors' Digest from the very first issue. It was again Jack Corbett who was responsible for putting me in touch with Herbert Leckenby, and in view of the tremendous interest the Collectors' Digest has given me, I am sure I owe him a vote of thanks.

Surbiton, in Surrey, is a place I have never visited, although I was stationed near there during the flying bomb period whilst serving in the Royal Engineers. And Surbiton is, of course the home of Eric Payne, who, it appears, runs a St. Jims of his own. Eric possesses a vast library of old boys' books, and is undoubtedly an authority on St. Jims, and Greyfriars.

Bob Whiter is a collector who appears to adorn his correspondence with beautiful line drawings of famous schoolboys of fiction. At first, this caused us some embarrassment, as the postmen used to grin wickedly at us when handing over the letters, and pass some comment about "not having grown up yet". However, this was ignored and the arrival of a letter addressed in an elegant calligraphy is a most welcome sign that Bob Whiter is in harness again. On one occasion I was considerably honoured to receive a letter from Mrs. Robert Whiter, the hard-working and charming honorary secretary of the London group. As this coincided with a letter from Miss Flinders of Hitchin, I had some difficulty in explaining to my wife that I was not carrying on

some secret affair! Now, Miss Flinders is a friend in need. She has loaned me Gems which otherwise I should never have had the opportunity of reading. She is a life-long admirer of Arthur Augustus and Lord Maulverer, and is to be congratulated on choosing such types as her heroes. Mine, unfortunately, are Vernon-Smith and Cerdeu, and I have followed in their footsteps by smoking cigarettes behind the woodshed in my father's garden at the tender age of fourteen!

Another English city I have never visited is Hull in Yorkshire, where a gentleman named Leslie Branton lives and moves in an atmosphere of Hull City Football Club. A staunch supporter is Leslie, who declares that Hull City are certainties for promotion to the Second Division at the end of this season. He is a staunch supporter of Greyfriars and he writes as readily as his favourite author. He is another of our circle who does a bit of living in the past, and who can blame him in view of the present! On the same side of England, but rather lower down the country lives Mr. H. A. Smith of Diss, Norfolk.

Mr. Smith's letters to me have always been accompanied by a choice little parcel of Gems or Magnets, and I am sure he will be delighted to know that he has cheered my heart immensely. It was with considerable satisfaction that one noted the election of Mr. Leonard Packman as chairman of the London group. If his letters are any criterion, as I am sure they must be, then no better choice could be imagined.

Mr. Packman's letters are indeed a joy to receive. Incidentally, one realises that practically all these correspondents are lucky enough to be blessed with a sense of humour. Is this the result of such long association with the St. Jims Greyfriars sage?

Leonard is an authority. He can remember the numbers and titles of most "Gems" of note. He is very lucky, inasmuch as his wife is a "Gem" fan. Or is he?

He wallows in the old Talbot series. And rightly. For has anything been better than this period of Charles Hamilton's writing? I doubt it. This series marked my first real interest in the "Gem". At the time these were originally issued (1915) I was not quite old enough to take in such papers, but obtained them in 1918 as back numbers at 6d. and 1d., each!

Leonard's letters have brought back that period with a vengeance! Nineteen eighteen! The Zeppelins; the dimming lights; "It's a long way to Tipperary"; Charlie Chaplin; "The Funny Wonder"; Armistice; Peace again, and the "Gem". Still going strong!

Leonard Packman reminds you of Merie Rivers, and Talbot; George Gore, Croke, Levison, Fatty Wynn - "The Hero of Wales", George Kerr, - "A Son of Scotland", and Eric Kildare of Ireland. In those days the "Gem" seemed streets ahead of its nearest rival the "Magnet". I have no doubt that it was.

The pity of it was that as the years went by it became secondary. The star of Bunter loomed large. The "series" idea became a fixture, and one long magnificent complete story occupied fourteen consecutive issues.

The middle 1920s saw the Gem deteriorating, later to revive a little with reprints of the old yarns, but never to recapture the spirit of the Gem as I first knew it, in its thrilling green cover designed to appeal to any schoolboy.

Mr. Packman reminds us of all this, and because of this and his friendly attitude to life, a letter from him is more than welcome.

Mr. W. H. Neste is another member of our circle who is always willing to oblige, and I am indebted to him for helping me to add materially to my collection.

I have exchanged letters with Mr. Harry Dowler and Mr. Vosper and one or two others, but the correspondence has been somewhat limited.

Other letter writers are often brief. They are busy people.

Mr. Fred Bottomley does not believe in wasting time over nostalgic reminiscence. Neither does Mr. Bill Martin. On with the job, they say.

Mr. Richard Wherwell of Rotherhithe is also brief. These Londoners vary considerably. Whereas Mr. Packman and Mr. Whiter must spend several hours per week in putting pen to paper, Messrs. Bottomley, Martin and Co. do not. Nevertheless, their little notes are always welcome, and we like the Gems and

lanes and perspiring Bunters. All these, and many others, Herbert Leckenby has reminded us are memories which can be revived, and revive them he does in his "Collectors' Digest".

So the knock of the postman can now mean, not necessarily the demand note for your rates, or your premium for your insurance policy, or even your football pool, but a letter from a member of a very happy band, who, although rather sentimental, is a jolly decent bloke.

—oO—

THREE RED MAGNETS for each of the following Magnets: No. 903 "Sports Week at Greyfriars"; 692, "Mauleverer's Peril"; 347 "Changed by Adversity"; Popular, No. 251 (1923) "Mauly, Swot". E. B. Flinders, "Roseview", Gosmore Road, Nr. Hitchin, Herts.

WANTED URGENTLY Populars (1924) 298 and 299. Will exchange for Magnets or pay good price. L. Packmen, 27 Archdale Road, East Dulwich, London, S.E.22.

FOR SALE Boys' Friend Libraries Original 3d. series. No. 33, 94, 176, 189, 219, 220, 227, 232 (Tinker at School), 243, 251, 253, 263, 273, 274, 276 (St. Jims), 280, 283, 307, 213, 321, 326, 360, 413 (4d. Redwood). All in complete condition. No's 42, 224, 247, 294, 295, 349, 444 (4d.). These without covers, stories complete.

Hendersons 1d Nugget Libs. 220, 229, 254, 260 (Tufty & Co. on a Houseboat - without covers).

Populars 322, 333, 388 and others. Magnets 503, 604, 605 and many others.

Three bound volumes Ranger 1-86 1st series.

Also S.O.Ls, Gems, Pilots, etc.

What offers for any of the above? H.A. Smith, 13 New Road, Soale, Diss, Norfolk.

WANTED: Sale - Exchange. Old Boys' Books, Fantasy, Fiction. Offers Detective Weekly 1-50. Henry J. H. Bertlett, Peas Hill, Shipton Gorge, Bridport, Dorset.

9
Magnets which accompany them.

Away up in the North, amongst the "brass-hats", lives our very worthy editor. How in the world he finds time to even write a short note we do not know. But he does. And a letter from him is something to be reassured. Admittedly, it often takes a lot of deciphering! But so does my doctor's signature. And I have no doubt that mine does, too!

Herbert's keenness is unparalleled. He knows all the answers. His memory is astounding. And thank goodness, he is a St. Jims and Greyfriars fan. Herbert's enthusiasm has done a lot to brighten the lives of many in this austere age, when one can delve into the past as a form of escapism. He knows how much our lives and thoughts have been guided by the early reading about the heroes of the Shell and Remove. The influence of these stories is really quite astounding. Above all, they discriminate between right and wrong, decency and oddishness, the gentleman and the snob.

Imagine life without mental pictures of the old quad at St. Jims in the early December dusk. The tuck-shop being besieged after a hectic battle on the football field with the Grammar School. Smithy furtively stealing out at eleven o'clock on a cold and frosty night, and spotting the intruding crackman Gerald Cutts, slipping into the Green Man to place his bet with Banks the bookie.

The wood at Frierdale on a leafy June day, with the sun shimmering on the River Serk. Courtfield Common as the autumn sun sinks into the West.

The Famous Five panting along the dusty lanes, without any motor-cars in sight, putting on speed to prevent being late for cell-over.

The village street at Rylcombe on a hot sleepy day, and the cab from the station clapping along bringing a new boy to St. Jims.

The old Cloisters in moonlight and shadow, as the Bounder keeps watch for the elusive crackman. Tea in Study No.1 with the firelight gleaming on a table groaning under the weight of good things.

The whir of bicycles on the footpath by the river. Dusty

Continued on p. 8

DEATH OF A FRIEND

by
Herbert Leckenby

Last month I had to record the death of one of our youngest members; now it is my sad duty to announce the passing of one of the veterans, that good friend and contributor to our pages, Robert Arthur Henson Goodyear. He died in the evening of November 24th at his home, Wintergleam, Wheatcroft, Scarborough, aged 71.

His death came as a great shock to me, for only a day or two before I had received a letter and an article from him, and during the very morning of the day he died I had tried to get him on the 'phone, quite unaware, of course, of what was happening. His end must have been very sudden, for a newspaper report stated he was busy on a book until midnight the night before.

There was a touch of pathos about his last letter to me, for in it he said, "No one wants to pay me in my old age for what I write, yet I go on through pig-headed perseverance. It was different when I was in my teens - then not 1% of my manuscripts came back." And our friend in Canada, Bill Gander, tells me in an air-mail that in the last letter he received Mr. Goodyear said, "At 71 I am quietly adjusting myself to inevitable early departure from this atom-threatened globe." One feels a little misty about the eyes as one pictures him seated at that well-worn typewriter of his until almost the very hour of his death.

For over 50 years Mr. Goodyear had been writing grand, thrilling, clean stories to delight the hearts of boys. When he was 17 he submitted a short football serial to Hamilton Edwards, editor of the "Boys' Friend". Hamilton Edwards was so impressed with it that he got in touch with the police at Barnsley where Mr. Goodyear then lived to get confirmation of his age. The story was then published, and it must have been one of the first stories devoted to football. He later contributed many stories to boys' papers, but he was best known for his school yarns which appeared in book form and which were extremely popular as school

prises, and much in demand in the juvenile sections of public libraries.

He will be greatly missed by all who read the C.D., and those of us who were young in a long ago yesterday, will feel a twinge of regret at the thought that the ranks of those who thrilled us then grow very thin.

—oO—

THE ANNUAL CAUGHT THE CHRISTMAS MAILS

by Herbert Leckenby

Yes, we did it again! It was a perfect finish. There was not the minute to midnight excitement of last year; nevertheless, there were some anxious moments.

Way back early in September we fixed December 10th for the finish of the typing, December 20th for the completion of the job. All was going well until about a fortnight before "A" Day, then I began to have qualms. For days it was an effort to hold a pen. I was haunted by the fear that I should have to take to my bed, a place I haven't spent a day in since I was a schoolboy - and that's a long time ago. However, determined that "The Annual" Must Catch the Christmas Mails" I shook my indisposition, with the result that, thanks to splendid support by the duplicating agency, everything worked out exactly to plan.

On the evening of December 20th I set off there and found a huge stack all complete. I picked up a copy, and my heart gave a bound. Gosh! didn't it look good, that result of many months' hard work. A hurried glance through the pages. Yes, all looked perfect. Then with a contented mind I settled down to preparing them for mailing. The envelopes were all addressed and stamped ready, and at nine o'clock Mr. Wood and myself staggered down to the nearby G.P.O. Before I set off happily for home 90% were on their way to their destinations, and the rest went the following day. Yes, a perfect finish, not too early, not too late for Christmas.

Browsing over a copy at home, however, I found that, despite all the care that had been taken over the "Collectors' Who's Who" three names had been omitted, curiously enough all London members

I had met on my visit. Well, it was a tremendous job compiling that list, and some of you did not make it any the easier through not returning your questionnaires. Anyway, my apologies, and we'll make good by giving their details in this issue together with any others that may come to light before we go to press.

Apart from these omissions I think we can claim almost a clean sheet, for I believe the typing errors could be counted on the fingers of one hand, and they're small ones at that. Not bad considering there's probably over 50,000 words.

There wasn't time to receive any comments by post before the holiday, but I had several by 'phone - Bristol, Birmingham, Bideford, Sheffield, London, Harrogate, and what they said - well, a blush mounted my cheeks. And when my colleague came through from Cardiff and I heard over 300 miles of wire "Super", why then I knew it was to be for me a very happy Christmas.

Then, on returning to my office after the break I found a pile of letters awaiting me, a record for one day. More followed on succeeding days. What a joy they were to read - ample compensation for the work put into the Annual over many months, for they were all in highly complimentary tones. One thing I was particularly pleased to note: many of you had done as I wished, given details of the articles which appealed to you most. Those who contributed articles have a right to know how they were appreciated. There is no time to do anything this month, but in our February number I propose to publish extracts from letters. It will be a real job, for if I published them all they would fill the whole issue.

And now please, ideas for Annual No. 3.

FOR SALE: 1 Volume of Union Jacks, 50 issues, dated Sept. 1880 to August 1881. Offers invited. Also Union Jacks 1921-1931 for sale. W. Colcombe, 256 South Avenue, Southend-on-Sea, Essex

WANTED: Champions and Triumphs, also details of the stories and authors in these papers. Letters answered. John V. Gocher Junr., Victoria Cottage, Constitution Hill, Sudbury, Suffolk.

These are the omissions from the Collectors' Who's Who.

HALL, MAURICE; 21 Grassmere Avenue, Merton Park, London, S.W.19
Groups 5 (a) (b) (d)
8 (Modern Boy)

HASWELL, MAVIN. 19a, London Road, Morden, Surrey.
Group 5 (a)

JOHNSON, THOMAS, Raby Cottage, Raby Park, Neston, Wirral, Cheshire.
Group 5 (a).

The following "wants" should have been included with
EDWARDS, W.E.; Mill Green Park (Annexe), Ingetestone, Essex.
Schoolboys' Own Libraries 5, 199, 201, 203, 205, 207, 209
and 211. Especially 207.

—oOo—

WANTED URGENTLY. Magnets and Gams up to 1937. Please state
price. W. H. Naste, Wenlock, High Street, Burnham, Bucks.

WANTED: Nugget Libraries (Peter Flint series); Nelson Lees,
1d. series, 100 and earlier; Empire Libraries; Aldine Dick
Turpins and Black Bess; Boys' Comic Library and Boys' Friend
3d. Library about the same period. A few books for disposal.
W. H. Clough, 3 Fonthill Grove, Sale, Manchester.

FOR SALE:- 107 Magnets, mainly between 1931-34.
Nelson Lees, 2d; O.S. 16 1st N.S. 15, 2nd N.S.
Lists sent on application. Robert Blythe, 81 Alsen Road,
Holloway, London, N.7.

Of Special Interest to Nelson Lee collectors.

A personal letter from Edwy Searles Brooks will
appear in our February issue.

THE P.G. WODEHOUSE SCHOOL STORIES

By Leonard M. Allen

Long before Pelham Grenville Wodehouse introduced his famous characters, Ukridge, Bertie Wooster, Jeeves, Archie Moffan, Mr. Mulliner and the crowd at Blandings Castle, to millions of readers, he wrote a number of excellent public school stories. Although he more or less served his author's apprenticeship with these yarns they are by no means the least entertaining of his work. Apart from the inimitable Wodehouse brand of humour they also included descriptions of sporting events, including football, cricket and boxing, at each of which the author was no mean exponent himself. Most of these stories were introduced to his juvenile public through the pages of that popular monthly magazine "The Captain" and long after P.G. had abandoned this class of fiction, subscribers were clamouring for more.

The first two serial yarns to appear were "The Pothunters" and "A Prefect's Uncle". The latter was a diverting story of the trials of Gethry, a prefect of Beckford College, who is inflicted with the custody of his uncle, a junior at the same school. The next story from this illustrious pen was entitled "The Gold Bat" which referred to a decoration awarded to the captain of the leading sporting house at Wrykyn College, the loss of which under awkward circumstances formed the basis of the plot. Rugger enthusiasts were well catered for by the inclusion of several exciting matches, expertly described. This appeared in the 1903 volume and was followed by "The Head of Kays", and, in 1905, by "The White Feather". The action of the latter took place again at Wrykyn and introduced an unusual type of hero, one Sheen. The story opens with a fracas in the town adjoining the College and illustrates the cowardice of Sheen, who, instead of assisting his friends hard pressed by the local rowdies, deserts them and shows "the white feather". His subsequent shame and painstaking endeavours to redeem himself make absorbing reading. Although the Wodehouse humour is not as conspicuous as in other yarns, this was one of the finest school stories from P.G.

"Jackson, Junior" following hard on the heels of "The White Feather" was another tale of Wrykyn, this time introducing Mike Jackson, who made cricket history for the college. The sequel, "The Lost Lambs", considered by the author to be his best school yarn, was especially noteworthy, for it introduced for the first time his famous character, Psmith. Probably this was the beginning of the end of the Wodehouse school stories, for so popular became Psmith, other stories had to be written with this most self-possessed character as the central figure; these, in the course of time, took the action into an adult world. The first of these was "The New Fold" which appeared in Volume 20, the story opened with both Psmith and Jackson at College, but they were quickly projected into the business world. The story was later republished as an adult work retitled "Psmith in the City" and was a best seller for years. Following the author's visit to the U.S.A. in 1909 another Psmith story appeared in "The Captain" and every advantage was taken of American experiences. The action took place in New York and concerned the launching of a magazine "Cosy Moments". The story was republished under the same title as a bound book - "Psmith, Journalist".

Wodehouse only contributed one other serial to the magazine after the Psmith series, this was "The Eighteen Carat Kid" which appeared in Volume 28 for 1912. The plot dealt with a new set of characters, including Ogden Ford, a rather repellent American youth, and the scene was set at an English public school. Later it was republished by Methuen as an adult novel under the title of "The Little Nugget".

Apart from the letter, all the stories mentioned were republished by Black's, several in their popular Boys' Library, alongside such authors as R.S. Warren Bell and R.A.H. Goodyear; also included was a volume of short stories under the title "Tales of St. Austin's". This was a collection of stories which had appeared in "The Captain" from time to time, together with some from "The Public School Magazine" and an original, "A Shocking Affair". The two stories, "Jackson Junior" and "The Lost Lambs" were combined as one whole yarn under the title "Mike".

Other Wodehouse short stories appeared in the magazine between the serials "The Gold Bat" and "The White Feather"; these dealt with Wrykyn College, and in his preface to the letter,

P.G. states, "I wanted Messrs. Black to publish these, but they were light on their feet and kept sway - a painful exhibition of the White Feather".

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REPORT ON THE MEETING OF THE OLD BOYS' BOOK CLUB
HELD AT 12 ASHBURNHAM PLACE, GREENWICH, S.E. 10,
ON SUNDAY, 5th DECEMBER, 1948.

We opened the meeting at 7.30 p.m., after waiting a considerable time for members to arrive. Unfortunately, we had to remain as we were, a little band of ten. I would like to state before giving this report, that attendances have been getting rather poor lately, and, (I'm speaking on behalf of the committee and the hosts) we would be very glad if members would cooperate more, and if they find themselves unable to attend, to communicate with the Secretary to that effect. Our very genial hosts, Mr. and Mrs. Wright, had prepared a wonderful spread with hardly anyone to eat it, and there was a nice array of Christmas Calendars, drawn specially by Mr. Robert White, awaiting owners, as everyone present already possessed one. He had to bring them all back again. A fair amount of business was done, and if more members had turned up, they would have enjoyed a grand evening. And now for the report.

As usual, the minutes of the November meeting were read by the Secretary, and signed by Mr. Chairman, as being correct.

Several letters were read out, and discussed, amongst which was an offer by Mr. Columba, that of using his home for a future meeting. It was decided that the Secretary should write and give him certain information appertaining to the Club, and ask him to become a member. We all liked the idea of a meeting in Southend.

The party was discussed, and it was decided to postpone it to the 8th January, at Mr. Fayne's convenience. A circular letter is to be issued to all members, and replies will be necessary, as Mr. Fayne wants members. Also we agreed that we would like as near as possible, equality of the sexes, as it is more fun for games, etc.

A point was raised about rules, and it was unanimously agreed that a set of rules should be compiled in January.

The Chairman brought up the matter of attendance and decided to write to one member, to the effect that the Club would like to know, one way or the other, whether he wished to remain a member or not, as the Secretary had already sent several letters over the past three months and received no reply.

The Treasurer then gave his report, and we found ourselves to be a little in hand with the funds, after all deductions had been made, including refreshments. Mr. Whiter then read out a letter from the firm dealing with the badge, who had stated that they might be able to come to terms. He informed members how he had replied, and stated that he had not received an answer to his letter up to the time of the meeting. Subs were collected. Members are requested to bring or send their cards, as a fine might be instituted for those not doing so.

Jottings for the research were handed in, and these included a useful page on the Magnet, from Mr. Leslie Branton of Hull, a postal member. Good work, Leslie! Mr. Charlie Wright is to be congratulated on his jottings of the Gem, which comprised an exercise book half full, written in a minute hand. He informed us he had managed to read twenty-five. That, we all agreed, as a marvellous achievement, Mr. Blythe suggested that a member of each circle be responsible for the jottings and these names were decided.

Wanted: Billy Bunter Nov. 1st 1946 Fans

By Sunday Dispatch Reporter

THE Old Boys' Book Club, founded so that fans may sweep up and sell schoolboy trifles, of 20 to 50 years ago wants new members.

With "Frank Richards" (Mr. Charles Hamilton), 70-year-old creator of Billy Bunter, as its president, and headquarters in Archbishop-lane, London, N., the club is open for membership to men and women of any age who will get a sack out of Bexton Blake, Nelson Lee, cowboy talk stories of the "Fifth Form at St. Davinick's" type, and old copies of the "Magnet", "Gem", and boys' stories that began in the twenties and ran until early in the '30s.

Among the 30 members who meet once a month are a million of women who, in courses that attract to the meetings, show they are as familiar with the characters and adventures of bygone days as the "Old Boys" who have taken to their motto, *Parvum inveni, non habeo remanere*.

Cap, Book, Case

Mr. R. Whiter, 24-year-old Treasurer, said yesterday: "I have designed a badge, circular and rectangular, which is being made in the first quarter are a cap, book, and case; in the second a big curved pipe and a magnifying glass; in the third a Humlock pot and Magwayman's hat and mask; in the fourth a Stetson hat, silver holder and belt."

"We have a price control for old 'Magnets' and 'Gems' and other boys' magazines that were originally 6d. from 2d. and 4d. to 7d. They run from 2s. down to 6d. according to age, condition, and rarity."

The Magnet ——— Mr. John Geal.
 The Gem ——— Mr. C. Wright.
 The Nelson Lee — Mr. Robert Blythe.

It was decided to have a trial with Sexton Blake, and this is in Mr. Ben Whiter's, capable hands, so come on, Blake fans, send in your jottings! Send them to me, and I'll let Ben have them.

Next came the last major book pricing, that of the Gem. It was decided to split up, as for the Magnet, according to cover colours. There are slight differences in the prices of the later Gems, and here is the table:-

Green. Start to 1916 (middle of the year)	} 2/6 to 1/6
according to condition and covers.	
Blue and White 1916 to 1917	1/9 to 1/6
" " " 1918 to 1922	1/6 to 1/-
Coloured - 1923 to 1930	1/- to 9d.
1931 to 1937	9d. to 6d.
1938 to the end	6d.

Old early numbers are counted as specialised numbers, but, as for the other books, only odd numbers wanted to make up a series.

The next meeting is provisionally Sunday 2nd January at Mr. Peckman's house, 27 Archdale Road, East Dulwich, S.E.22, but of course this depends on the date of the party. Members will be notified.

A Quiz followed, and this was won by Mr. L. Peckman; second was Mr. Wright, and joint third Mrs. E. Whiter, and Mr. B. Whiter.

Two votes of thanks were offered, one to our kind host, and his wife, and one to Mr. Robert Whiter, who improvised the quiz while the meeting was actually in progress.

The meeting closed at 9.30 p.m.

Attendance was as follows:- Mr. and Mrs. Peckman, Mr. and Mrs. Wright, Mr. and Mrs. R. Whiter, Miss Butcher, Messrs. R. Blythe, J. Geal, and B. Whiter.

EILEEN WHITER.

(Hon. Secretary).

705, Lordship Lane,
 Wood Green,
 London, N.22.

Frank Richards - Honorary President

Dear Mrs. Bob,

Many thanks for your letter. I would have answered earlier, but that fat chep Bunter has been crowding everything else off the typewriter. I am very pleased and interested to hear that the Book Club is progressing so favourably: and if the members desire Frank Richards to be Honorary President, why, Frank, like Berkis, is willing! I regard it as a very great honour, and if all the members are satisfied with the selection, so be it!

Please tell Bob that I was very pleased and amused with his card the other day. At the first glance I thought it really was Bunter; then I discovered that the speech had been added by an artistic hand! I have just heard from Macdonald that he will be doing the sketch Bob wanted, though it will have to wait a little — but better late than never.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,

FRANK RICHARDS.

Readers' Views on the Bunter Books
will appear in the February issue.

FOR SALE: Breaking complete Magnet collection: 600 loose copies for sale in complete years (1917-22, 1929, 1930-40; 85 Union Jacks; 55 Schoolboys' Owns (Rookwood, Greyfriars); 52 Boys' Friends; 113 "Greyfriars Heralds" (including 1st series); 25 Boys' Friend Libraries; 1938 Holiday Annual. John Shaw, 4 Brunswick Park, London, S.E.5. Telephone: Rodney 4862.

The Nelson Lee Column

Conducted by Robert Blythe

81 Alsen Road, Holloway, London, N.7.

The book "Boys will be Boys", published a short time ago, has probably proved a popular topic of conversation among enthusiastic collectors, but although I found it both interesting and extremely entertaining, it appears to me that the author has not portrayed the Nelson Lee Stories in a favourable or even a fair light. Indeed, to me it seems the whole book is written in an ironic vein. A biased reader of the N.L. who finds many faults but confesses to having read only a few (or even none at all) would be excused for saying, "I told you so" and therefore I think it advisable in the interests of just criticism, to examine briefly what Mr. Turner has to say on the subject of the N.L.L. Apart from certain references to Nelson Lee as a detective, the author's comments on the school are confined to the description of only three of the stories, and even in one of these he has incorrectly presented the facts. In a statement which he doubtless believes to be a comprehensive criticism he summarizes the activities of St. Franks thus (p.217) - "When their school was not in the throes of revolution" (a reference to the "schoolboy communist series) "or being machine-gunned under searchlights, the boys of St. Franks had friendly contacts with Irene & Co of a neighbouring school." The reader unfamiliar with the N.L. in its entirety will naturally infer from this that St. Franks was in a continued state of fermenting communistic revolt interspersed occasionally with gun battles with gangsters and orgies of fraternization with the local academic belles. Excuse me! Mr. Turner, but what rot! It seems to me that instead of reviewing the Library as a whole he has chosen to pick out one or two series in order to furnish suitable material with which to amuse his readers. Why, for instance, should he devote two and a half pages out of the five allotted to the N.L. to the description of a series which is not in any way outstanding, and ignore

many of the really fine stories which are to be found. Can it be that it was chosen in an attempt to be topical? And was that why it was considered important enough to be mentioned on the dust-jacket? If so, I think it had criticism to sacrifice the balanced judgment of a critical review in order to pander to the present-day feeling of anti-communism. Apart from the stories mentioned he tries to make us believe that the "answers to correspondents" quoted were genuine, when, of course as we know, they were entirely fictitious, supposedly written by Handforth.

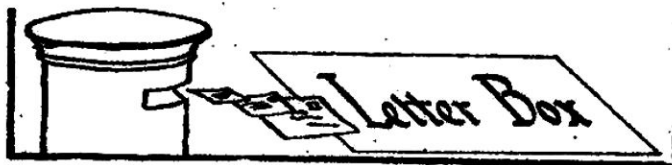
I don't think it is necessary for me to enlarge upon the subject, nor is it needful to urge collectors to read the N.L. for themselves, but I feel, as Mr. Turner's review is so inadequate, that I am justified in thus defending an unfairly maligned Library of first-class boys' stories.

There is just space enough to answer the queries of two correspondents. First, Mr. Smith of Norfolk. "The Monster" was issued monthly, and ran to 19 issues. All the stories were reprints of early St. Franks yarns. The cover artist was Valda. The first St. Franks stories in the "Gem", after the amalgamation, were reprints, but later were entirely original. E.S.B. did write all the St. Franks stories, both in the N.L. and the "Gem".

Mr. J. Cook of London asks, "Where is St. Franks?" It is in Sussex and three miles from the coast. Further information I am unable to offer as no more specific location has ever been given to my knowledge. And here, to round things off, are the next twenty titles.

71, The Case of the Raincoat. 72, The Secret of the Martello Tower. 73, Blue Diamonds. 74, The Caves of Silence. 75, The Night before the Trial. 76, The Affair of the Nebob's Jewels. 77, The House of Hazard. 78, A Christmas of Peril (The first Xmas No.). 79, The Mystery of the Closed Door. 80, The Mid-Atlantic Mystery. 81, The Plantation Mystery. 82, Harlo the Hypnotist. 83, The Broken Vase. 84, Tracked to the Trenches. 85, The Circle of Terror (The 1st of these yarns). 86, The Great Air Mystery. 87, Millions at Stake. 88, The Yellow Mask. 89, A Stubborn Case. 90, Momm, the Miser.

(Note: Through unavoidable circumstances, the Nelson Lee Column was just too late for publication last month. H.L.)



JIMMY SILVER AND BESSIE BUNTER COMING BACK!

Rose Lawn, Kingsgate-on-Sea,
Kent.

December 21st, 1948.

Dear Herbert Leckenby,

I think I like the C.D. better and better every time. Now I am looking forward to the Annual.

Speaking of Annuals, "Tom Merry's Summer Annual" is booked to appear in 1949, published by William Campion Ltd., 26, Manchester Square, London, W.1. I have just finished writing a "Rookwood" story for it.

Page 339 of the C.D. records a really remarkable coincidence. One could almost imagine that Mr. Packmen had had a telepathic tip! Tom Merry certainly will be on the map again in 1949 — we hope early in the year.

I don't know whether it may interest you to know that it is proposed to publish some of my verses early next year. Did I ever tell you that during the War I wrote a volume of verse called "The Bancroft Ballads"? Like Schubert's celebrated symphony it remained unfinished — the War came to an end, so the volume of verse did not. However, several of the "ballads" were completed and one of these will probably see the light.

Now "Hilde Richards" is about to get busy with Bessie Bunter. I don't suppose that that charming young lady will make her appearance before next October; but Hilde is very happy to be writing about Cliff House School again. It's a jolly old world, isn't it?

Best of wishes for Christmas, my dear boy, and may the C.D. in the New Year continue to be a Constant Delight and a Continuous Delectation.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

FRANK RICHARDS.

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SUPPORT FOR ALFRED HORSEY

706, Lordship Lane,
Wood Green, London, N.22.
December 8th.

Dear Editor,

I would like to endorse our old friend Alfred Horsey's letter regarding the birth of the meeting idea. I can remember way back early in the war, Alfred making plans for such meetings and the dinner with our worthy Frank Richards as chief guest. To him I owe my first introductions into our circle and shall always be very grateful to him for same.

Yours sincerely,

ROBERT H. WHITER

+ + + +

SELECT YOUR SIXES

27 Archdale Road, E. Dulwich,
London, S.E.22. 23.11.48.

Dear Editor,

During a quiet evening last week, whilst thinking about the various Old Boys' books and the many stories I had read, I tried to think of the six which to my mind were the most outstanding.

This was, of course, a very difficult task, but on due reflection it worked out as follows:

1. Father Christmas Must Get Through (School in the Beckwoods),
 2. The Housemaster's Homecoming (St. Jims).
 3. School & Sport (B. Friend 3d. Library.)
 4. Billy Bunter's Reformation (Greyfriars)
 5. Figgins Fig Pudding (St. Jims),
 6. A Christmas of Peril (N. Lee Xmas number).
- Now, I am quite sure that every reader has certain stories indelibly printed in his memory, and it would be very interesting to hear what my fellow-collectors' selections would be. How about asking them and then publishing the results in the C.D.? Yours very sincerely, LEONARD PACKMAN.



All Correspondence to

H. M. Bond, 10, Erw Wen, Rhiwbina, Cardiff.

THE ROUND TABLE

A Happy New Year to all fellow Blake lovers! May the coming year bring you all happiness and good health, and may the paperation be increased to such an extent as to allow of the resumption of a Blake weekly and an increase in the monthly issues of the Sexton Blake Library. 1948 was not what I might call an eventful year in the life of our favourite detective and I again have to deplore the lack of human interest in the stories as compared to those of a decade ago. Last January I finished my Round Table chat with the words "here's hoping that 1948 will be a real Blake year". Well, it was certainly not so, at least as far as the Libraries were concerned, although I must give credit for a number of very well written detective stories. When I say "detective stories" I wish to convey that the said yarns could have featured any common or garden sleuth instead of Blake. In the old days a Blake story stood out above, or should I say apart, from all others of the same type inasmuch as they brought The Men From Baker Street right into your existence. The yarns would have been nothing without Blake, for he and Tinker were the star attractions and their everyday lives were handled with feeling and

discrimination whereas the latest efforts are written purely as thrillers with little or no thought to the personalities featured in them. But there I go again, I am always grumbling at the same thing and the Amalgamated Press take not the slightest notice of my, or for that fact anybody's, criticisms, in fact a letter from the Editor to one of our band last year was, to say the least, impertinent. However, we must not grumble too much, time enough for moans and groans when our beloved Blake disappears from the bookstalls altogether, though Heaven forbid that that should come about. We can always turn to the past, thank goodness!

Looking back through 1948 we find one or two changes in the S.B.L. worthy of mention. In February the cover design was altered slightly and I, personally, do not think the change was a good one for one especial reason. That was that for the first time for many years the author's name was missing. One had to turn to the first page of the story to see who had written it, and although this may, to the modern readers anyhow, seem a little thing to grumble at, it was, and still is, the passing of an old tradition to us older readers. Somehow the title of the story encased within a red circle and apparently bereft of authorship was a most unfortunate change, and a most unnecessary one to my way of thinking. Another thing, it did not give the same scope to the artist designing the cover. He now has only three quarters of the cover space. Needless to say, however, the estimable Mr. Eric R. Parker still manages to do his stuff in great style. What SHOULD we do without him. He seems to be the last remaining link with the old days. I wonder if he ever studies his design of the famous Sexton Blake Bust?

Then in June another change came, again a very slight one but again dispensing with another old link with the past. It was the elimination of the Chapter numbers. Now we have only the titles to each chapter instead of the generally accepted Chapter One, Chapter Two etc. etc. Now why on earth had this change to come about? Why, even the cheapest of cheap thrillers have Chapter Numbers! Is it any good asking the A.P., I wonder?

Once again our old friend Anthony Persons heads the list of authors, who incidentally number eight in all, with a total of seven stories. His output was the same as in 1947, I might add. Second place was taken by another of the old timers, Rex Hardinge.

He managed six yarns. John Hunter, alias Peter Meriton, came third with three stories (same as in 1947) and Lewis Jackson, Walter Tyrer and John Drummond all contributed two each. Now there are some signs that the people up at Fleetway House are planning to dispose of all the older elements in the Sexton Blake story, unless, of course, we have lost one or two writers for some reason or other. I was sorry to note, for instance, that Gilbert Chester was not one of the eight authors concerned. It is many many years since Chester started writing for the Library and 1943 was the first year in which he was entirely missing. During the war he was on top line with Anthony Parsons and even in 1947 he contributed three stories. Now although I have never been a real Chester fan I do think that he was a master of the quick action type of Blake story and has done much fine work for the cause. It is therefore very regrettable that he should be absent from our Round Table for so long and I only hope that his absence is not due to his demise. The A.P. wouldn't tell us, anyhow. I must try and find out something about this matter and will let you know later.

I was delighted to note the return of two old favourites, however. One of these, Warwick Jardine, was a great favourite in the latter half of the 2nd series, and it was he who was responsible for the outstanding "Ted Flanagan" series. I hope we shall see more of him during 1949. His first story for the 3rd series, "The Men From Algiers" (No.179) was an extra long and interesting effort. The second old/new arrival was Martin Fraser. We last heard from him with "The Fatal V Sign" (3rd series No.26) in June 1942, so he was absent just over 6 years.

I think the following table will give you all a better idea of the 1948 Blake programme than could be put into words, but in conclusion I would like to point out that our very old friend Lewis "Leon Kestrel" Jackson has been absent since last May (a long gap this time). A very welcome return to the fold was John Drummond. I, amongst others, term him the "new Gwyn Evans".

AUTHOR	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
John Drummond						1						1	2
Martin Frazer			1										1
Rex Hardinge				1			1	1	1			1	6
John Hunter				1						1			3
Warwick Jardine											1		1
Lewis Jackson					1								2
Anthony Persons		1	1				1		1	1	1		7
Walter Tyrer			1					1					2

And now, for the benefit of those who have not been able to get hold of any or all of the S.B.L. issues for 1948 we are printing a detailed list of titles. This list will be the fore-runner of a series of such lists, later ones dealing with the issues of previous years. In due course, therefore, all readers will have a complete record of the Libraries from No.1 of the first series in 1915 up to date. All the necessary data are not at the moment available, but we hope to complete our records ere long. I shall welcome all opinions of this scheme.

To conclude this issue of *Blakeiana* I should like to take this opportunity of thanking all those who have written to me (and to my co-editor) praising the Blake articles in the December C.D. and the Annual. And please don't forget - articles on Sexton Blake are urgently asked for!

H. M. BOND.

THE SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY - 1948

Third Series 159 - 182

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| 159. The Case Of The Doped Heavyweight | Anthony Parsons |
| 160. The Gargoyle of Folgelly | Rex Hardinge |
| 161. The Income Tax Conspiracy | Anthony Parsons |
| 162. The Case Against Dr. Ripon | Walter Tyrer |
| 163. The Mystery of the Shadowed Footballer | Martin Fraser |
| 164. The Loot of Pakistan | Anthony Parsons |
| 165. The Case of the Stolen Mine | Rex Hardinge |
| 166. The Curse of the Track | John Hunter |
| 167. The Mystery of the Red Cocketoo | Anthony Parsons |
| 168. The Man Who Went Wrong | Lewis Jackson |
| 169. The Mystery of the Deserted Camp | John Drummond |
| 170. The Affair of the Spiv's Secret | John Hunter |
| 171. The Man Who Backed Out | Anthony Parsons |
| 172. The Case of the African Emigrant | Rex Hardinge |
| 173. The Motor Coach Mystery | Walter Tyrer |
| 174. The Secret of the African Settler | Rex Hardinge |
| 175. The Mystery of the One Day Alibi | Anthony Parsons |
| 176. The Riddle of the Sealed Room | Rex Hardinge |
| 177. The Riddle of the Russian Bride | Anthony Parsons |
| 178. The Case of the American Tourists | John Hunter |
| 179. The Man from Algiers | Warwick Jardine |
| 180. The Mystery of Avenue Road | Anthony Parsons |
| 181. The Riddle of Highwaymen's Stone | Rex Hardinge |
| 182. The Town of Shadows | John Drummond |

