

AUGUST, 1955



No 1-101

—WHILE IN USE AND SETS, HOLIDAY—

1d.

ROSEBUD ROB; OR, NUGGET NED OF THE GULCH.



DATE: SEPTEMBER 6th, 1892

The Collectors' Digest

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AUGUST, 1955

Editor, HERBERT LECKENBY,
c/o YORK DUPLICATING SERVICES,
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From the Editor's Chair

COLLECTORS MEET: My 'summer season' has started. First visitor was Jack Cook who arrived by bus from Newcastle on July 2nd, just fifteen minutes before Bill Lofts descended from the Kings Cross express. The following day, Bill set off for Leeds to see Gerry Allison and Jack and I called at Jack Wood's home. The two Jacks, staunch Brooks' fans, both were soon surrounded with piles of Nelson Lees.

July 13th brought Bill Williamson from Leeds for several well-spent hours and July 17th a train from Liverpool deposited another welcome visitor, Frank Case.

Halcyon days for me, King Sol shining on the streets of York almost all the time. How I enjoy these meetings with members of the Brotherhood. Who's next?

And, whilst this was going on, I received two letters which gave me a particular thrill for they told of other collectors meeting in far distant parts of the world. The first was from Alan Stewart, member of the London Club. Alan has a grand job; he is at present a musician on the Cunarder Caronia and he has for months been travelling about the world. Already he has seen far more countries than even the Famous Five ever saw. I'll quote from his long and interesting letter:

"I will, of course, be seeing Jimmy Iraldi in New York. What a grand chap he is! I always get a great welcome from him and his charming wife, Eda. The usual procedure is: I 'phone him from the ship, he arranges a rendezvous, we have a walk round talking all the time, of course, on our beloved hobby, then its the subway to his cosy flat; a nice meal and more talk, then all too soon I have to make my way back to the ship".

Jimmy, of course, is the Chap who once worked his passage to England in search of Magnets, and went back home without a single copy. That was, of course, before he had heard of the O.B.B.C. How different now!

Alan went on to say that he was going to Iceland where he hoped to meet Brian Holt.

And how's this for a coincidence?

"Walking down one of the main streets in Bombay I noticed a sign 'Charles Hamilton & Co.' and immediately opposite 'Magnet House'!

Well can you beat that?

The other letter was from Bernard Thorne of Toronto. Said he: "I was recently visited by no other than Ray Hopkins of New York. Ray, as many will remember, recently spent two years in London. On June 1st I received a letter from him saying he was coming to Toronto and would like to call on me. The following Sunday the telephone rang and a strange voice stated that my New York visitor was on the outskirts of the city.

Within two hours I had driven out to our meeting place and had convoyed Ray and his Hillman Minx to our small apartment where we ate lunch before settling down to a ten hour chin wag on Old Boys' Books and everything pertaining thereto. Long before evening had set in Ray had disentered his own collection from the bowels of the Hillman, and we were literally knee-deep in over 1600 Magnets, Gems, Nelson Lees, C.D's, Annuals, etc., etc."

Bernard goes on to say how Ray set off on a 1500 mile journey to Transcona to see Bill Gander where he eventually arrived safely. From there he hoped to go on to Vancouver.

Gosh! aint it grand to read of such goings on. No wonder my mail is a joy for ever.

* * * * *

The Rex Hardinge Letter. You'll find the letter I promised last month in later pages. I am sure all will agree, even those who think that Blake sometimes gets more than his proper quota, that it is one of the friendliest letters ever to appear in our pages. He isn't afraid to admit, too, that he has had his ups and downs, as for instance when he tells how he had to sell cakes

for a living. If Mrs. Hardinge's cakes were as light and tasty as Mr. Hardinge's style I guess he had no difficulty in selling them.

* * * * *

THE ANNUAL: Orders are coming in nicely and another valuable article has come along from someone who has not been in the Annual before. More about it next month. Don't forget the adverts.

Yours sincerely,
HERBERT LECKENBY.

THE ANNUAL (1954) BALLOT

FINAL POSITIONS

| | | |
|----|--|-----|
| 1. | Those Beguiling Blue Gems | 191 |
| 2. | Hundred Years of Boys' Periodicals | 177 |
| 3. | 'Comic' Characters | 171 |
| 4. | Bob Cherry's Romance | 163 |
| 5. | Britain Invaded - Often | 149 |
| 6. | More of the Man from Baker Street | 145 |
| 7. | Peter Flint | 139 |
| 8. | Dead Man's Secret | 137 |

Other articles close up

Altogether it was a very satisfactory result for every article seems to have been well liked, and there was practically no criticism.

REX HARDINGE LIFTS THE CURTAIN

Guiting, Postbridge, Devon. 11.6.55.

Dear Mr. Leckenby,

Thanks so much for sending me the copies of the C.D. You can count me as an Old Faithful from now on. I think it's a great bit of work, and can appreciate the effort you put in to produce it. But what a worthy cause!! Looking at the stuff kids have to read (?-- almost all ghastly strip cartoons) nowadays, I realise how lucky we oldsters were to have the papers we had. And all over the world I have met men whose characters were really moulded by those old weeklies. Names like Bunter, Nelson Lee, Dixon Hawke (who you don't seem to mention), and the rest of the characters who were household words to me as a youngster, I have found

brought answering gleams to the eyes of old stagers everywhere. And it is great to think that your paper is enabling those memories to be kept going. More power to your elbow.

I first met Blake when I was very small, and that was in the days of the pink-jacketed U.Js. My father was in the Indian Army, so my childhood consisted of being whisked about hot and dusty corners of India and Burma, so it was not until my mother brought us youngsters home just before the first World War that we discovered what we'd missed. We lived in an old farmhouse on Exmoor (my mother has since told me she rented it for £15 a year fully furnished -- those were the days!!!), and my first memories of Blake are linked with lying out in favourite nooks on the moor, reading -- curled up in a loft, reading -- and in bed, when mother attached to our candle a patent spring-snuffer that flapped the light out automatically, always at a most exciting moment in the story! But of course we had our reserve supply of candle-stubs in readiness.

We did more than read Blake in those days. We lived him. Jack (the eldest by almost 2 years) was of course Blake, I was Tinker, and Brian, the baby, had to be content with Pedro (fair enough since his means of locomotion at the time was mostly on all-fours with nose close to the ground). How many a plot from the old pink U.J. was re-enacted on the moors, in the disused mines, and along the cliffs and on the beach, by those wild Hardinge boys and the poor baby! (I quote the locals). Those were halcyon days. Summers WERE summers.

And it wasn't only Blake. I particularly remember a serial in Dreadnought, in which Buffalo Bill rescued a circus girl who misjudged her jump through the hoop. A small friend and I spent all our pocket-money, ran into debt, to go to every performance when Lord George Sanger's circus came our way, and sat carefully where we judged Buff Bill must have been, and waited tense throughout the girl's act on the pony -- every detail worked out of the rescue -- but she never fell!!

And I was equally disappointed when school proved so different to St. Jim's (always my favourite over Greyfriars). I had an Eton-suit and used to wear a bow-tie with it (the St. Jim's uniform of the time), and remember the blow when my appearance was greeted with jeers. Sure those stories moulded our lives.

I got out of touch for some years. It was the fashion in those days to sneer at "penny dreadfuls", and one only read them

clandestinely. But Blake was more loyal to me than I was to him. Invalided out of the Army in the early 20's, I was in Africa, transport riding, and doing odd jobs for a land company. While fumigating orange trees I was temporarily blinded by an accident with cyanide and sulphuric acid. There were not many books in that isolated region, and in the course of scrounging stuff to read to me, my wife got hold of some U.Js. The old thrill came back, and when my sight returned I decided to have a shot at a yarn of Blake in the Africa I knew, set on an orange estate -- and, yes, with the murder done while fumigating orange trees. I wonder how many old-timers remember it? -- The Black Cloud -- For I sold it, first shot.

I was back transport-riding, camped by the waggon for the night, when my wife came tearing after me on a borrowed pony, and neither of us will ever forget the excitement as she brandished my first letter from the Amalgamated Press -- and in it, not just an acceptance -- a cheque for more than I earned by 2 months sweating in the heat and dust!

Although I have launched into many kinds of writing since then, I can trace my life from there on through my Blake stories. I did one more in Africa, re-introducing many of the characters who were in The Black Cloud (absurdly enough, I cannot remember the title). Then I decided that the writing world was at my feet. But I did have the sense to qualify that with the thought that to do a job well you must know the ropes -- serve an apprenticeship. So we packed up and went to India, where, through previous connections, I got a job on Kipling's old papers -- The Pioneer and The Civil & Military Gazette. I stayed there for a couple of years, learning something of the technical side of the job, and writing a couple of Blakes -- The Man in the Darkened Room, and The Man who Sold Death -- both introducing a young reporter on an Indian paper.

Then England -- 1929. I started writing for Chums, did my first S.B.L. -- but you've got to learn the hard way. By the end of 1930 we were living in a converted railway carriage on the beach in Sussex, my wife was baking home-made cakes, and I was selling them from door to door! Perhaps there may be old-timers who holidayed at Pagham Beach at that time and bought Cookie's Cakes from me?! I think I sold 2 stories that year.

But I kept at it, and some time in 1931 came the Chicago gangster series, which I always think was a mistake in U.J., but

Slim Corrigan did put me back on my feet, so we always remember the big slob with affection.

The next few years of U.J. stories were I think vintage years of Blake. H.W. Twyman got some great stuff through as editor at the time. Teed, Evans, Stuart, Skene — they went to town in a big way! And they were happy years that those of us who survive will not forget. Gay, frivolous times. Gwyn Evans, the fantastic — sitting on the pavement staring at an egg, so as to collect a crowd, only he knew why! — George Hamilton Teed descending on London with his grandiloquent flourish to dumbfound the Savoy with his grandeur. Somebody — I forget exactly which of the giants — landing in jail in France, and the office in a flap trying to find how to get him out, or they'd never know how to get Blake out of the mess he'd left him in! Four of us at a coffee-stall in the dawn hours spinning a Blake yarn — each taking it to a point and passing it on — the finest Blake yarn ever told. But not one of us could remember a word when we revived next day. But Twy got an idea for a serial out of it — remember The Next Move?

Then Africa again. I took over Lobangu and Loseley, who had been started by Cecil Hayter. More than that, I started nipping back to Africa on trips, each of which was sign-posted by at least one Blake story. And the time Twyman was spending the week-end with me in Sussex, and we sheltered from a shower by the village war memorial. Result — The War Memorial Mystery.

I spent 1942 to 1946 of this last war in China with a cloak-and-dagger outfit, so of course there followed The Man from Chung-king, and other bits of China for Blake.

Now I live in a little cottage in the middle of Dartmoor, and Blake has already worked all around here, for he is still with me, and I hope will be for many years to come. It is strange how life goes round in circles, for it is not 20 miles away that Blake and I first met on Exmoor, and I am proud to think that that little boy (who had to be Tinker because his brother was older) has — as your magazine has shown me — done his share to keep Blake going for so many who also first met him when they were little boys. It makes the past 30 years of writing well worth while — better than if I had pulled off that literary best-seller of my early dreams.

Heavens, I could go on like this for ever, but we've both got livings to earn, old boy. So I'll hobble off to the post. Take care of yourself — and keep at it! You should have a medal for keeping fresh what is, after all, almost folk-lore.

To work!

Yours very sincerely,

REX HARDINGE.

P.S. If any enthusiasts are in this neighbourhood at any time, and like to ask any local inhabitant for "the writing chap with the two red spaniels" -- I'll enjoy meeting them.

HAMILTONIANA

Compiled by HERBERT LECKENBY

One of the 'famous names' in the "The Names the Same" programme on July 11th was - Billy Bunter.

The moment the name was mentioned a great roar of laughter went up from the studio audience. The members of the team began to get on the track towards the finish. One member asked "Was the author famous" and Raymond Glendenning replied emphatically, "Yes, indeed". Frances Day got it just too late.

Anyway Billy caused more amusement than all the others put together and was certainly the hit of the programme. It was another illuminating example of how he has become a household word.

(NOTE. You'll remember that article in which Gerry Allison suggested that maybe Harry Wharton wasn't an ideal captain. Well, here's another provocative one from the same pen. I won't promise to publish all your retorts. H.L.)

SHOULD THEY HAVE GROWN UP?

Yes. By Gerry Allison

"It's always six o'clock now", the Mad Hatter said mournfully. A bright idea came into Alice's head. "Is that the reason so many tea things are put out here?" she asked.

"Yes, that's it," said the Hatter with a sigh; "it's always tea time, and we've no time to wash the things between whiles."

"Then you keep moving around, I suppose?" said Alice.

"Exactly so," said the Hatter; "as the things get used up."

"But what happens when you come to the beginning again?"

Alice ventured to ask.....

Well, when they came to the beginning again at Greyfriars, we got the same story with different names, or with a reversal of

characters. Instead of the villain being the Head's chauffeur and the detective the Remove Form-master, (temporary), they would change roles.

Anyway, let's start at the beginning. In 1908, when Edward the 7th was on the throne, Harry Wharton came to Greyfriars and entered the Lower Fourth. Like the kiss to the Sleeping Beauty, Wharton's arrival awoke the school into life; the clocks began to tick, the wheels went round, and the figures started to move.

And now in 1954 - 46 years later, they are still revolving in their timeless orbit. Wharton is still fifteen, Gosling is still ninety-nine, and nothing has changed.

Whether it was at the instructions of the editors, or by a stroke of his own genius, the characters in the Magnet and the Gem never got any older, and Charles Hamilton found himself with what looked like being a job for life. For it was only by accident, after all, that Hitler's submarines succeeded where those of the Kaiser failed. If those cargoes of wood-pulp had not gone to the bottom, if we had mastered the menace of starvation a little earlier, the Magnet and the Gem might have been coming out every week still. The Christmas issues of both papers for 1954 - number 2441 in each case - might have been in our hands today. But as it was, our author found himself out of work for the first time in his life.

Well, no one could possibly have grudged him his bread and butter - and an occasional flutter at Monte Carlo - for those many years. Besides being the saddest words of tongue and pen, 'it might have been' are also the most futile. But just let us try to imagine what would have happened at St. Jim's, Greyfriars, and Rookwood, etc., if the characters there, instead of being a wonderful community of Peter Pans, frozen in a timeless world, had really and actually 'grown up'.

A moment's thought will show what an immense scope there would have been for fine dramatic stories from the pan of our great author, and can we doubt but that he would have risen mightily to the occasion?

But let us examine the matter dispassionately, please, and keep prejudice out of it. Because, you know, I could be as ready as any of you to say - "WHAT? Alter Greyfriars in any way? Never! NEVER!! NEVER!!!

The question anyway is purely academic. Greyfriars never will be altered. There is no need for anyone to worry. Just let us keep cool and think what Frank Richards could have made of

Greyfriars, what Martin Clifford could have made of St. Jim's, what Owen Conquest could have made of Rookwood, had this trinity of authors, this great three-in one, been allowed to exercise their genius to it's full scope. They never were, you know. Don't forget that. A rein was put to their imagination; a curb was on their pen; a block inserted into their typewriter.

We pay our three authors a very poor compliment if we assume that their stories would have suffered had they been permitted to make their characters really live. There is immense food for thought in the very idea. The readers of the papers often made the suggestion to the editor that the boys should grow up, but the idea was always treated in a nonsensical way - usually in the pages of the Greyfriars Herald. The boys were all in the same Forms, but were usually aged about 80! A stupidly tiresome form of 'humour'.

But if the boys of St. Jim's, Greyfriars, and Rookwood, had been allowed to grow older, the rate of growth could have been under the full control of the author. Only when he felt that he had written enough on one page, or painted sufficient pictures on one canvas, need he have turned the leaf, or moved to another easel with a virgin canvas gleaming before him. The speed of time could have been just what he wanted it to be - or, to quote the Mad Hatter once more, "You could keep it to half-past one as long as you like".

Say, for instance, that in 1914 - after six years in the Remove, the Famous Five had moved into the Upper Fourth; Temple & Co. entered the Shell; Hobby became leader of the Fifth; and old Wingate yielded the Captaincy of Greyfriars to ----- whom?

What a superb series could have been written around Wingate's departure. Perhaps a fight against disgrace by enemies inside the school or out of it. And that final story, when everything came out well in the end, and there was the greatest scene ever to come from the pen of Frank Richards - Wingate's farewell to Greyfriars in Great Hall. The Magnet containing that story would indeed be priceless!

And then, imagine Bunter's efforts to wangle his remove out of the Remove - away from the tormenting company of Tubb & Co. - ye Gods! that would indeed be the funniest series of all time.

And so on all through the school, and also at St. Jim's. Imagine Cutts as a prefect, and perhaps getting sacked for attempted murder. There was a depth of evil in Cutts which sometimes

used to frighten me.

In such stories as these we should have been looking at real life, and not at a series of 'stills'; the screen would have flashed into movement, and would have been truly three-dimensional, thanks to the genius of our grand author, and his fertile and never failing inspiration. No, never tell me that Charles Hamilton's lively imagination would have dried up. He would have certainly gone from strength to strength.

Every five or six years there could have been a change of scene, until finally Harry Wharton became Captain of Greyfriars, and perhaps Tom Merry Captain of St. Jim's. And then what cricket and football matches we should have had, my masters! First eleven versus first eleven, and no mistake.

Finally, even when the Famous Five, and all the others we know so well had to leave in the end. Well, would not Greyfriars still have been Greyfriars, and St. Jim's still situated by the lovely river Rhyl? Surely we do not consider it out of the power of Charles Hamilton to create other, and even greater characters than Figgins, or Vernon-Smith, or Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, or even Bunter! To say so is to insult this great writer of school stories.

No. If he could have allowed his characters really to live, grow older, and develop, he would, I am perfectly sure, have found his pen, or rather his ever faithful Remington, eager and willing to pour out more and more fine tales of Rookwood, Greyfriars, St. Jim's, Highcliffe, etc. etc. Other authors of far inferior calibre have produced book after book, all with different dramatis personae, and have found no difficulty in doing so, even if their readers have found some in the perusal.

Can it be supposed therefore that such a gifted writer as the Wizard of Broadstairs would have been unable to people the stage of his beloved schools with living human beings as real to us as all those which he invented so long ago, and which we have loved so well. Practice would have brought ever-increasing variety to his stories of school life. It would, as I stated above, have been like looking at moving pictures of the beautiful schools in Kent, Sussex and Hampshire.

The schools themselves, and their delightful surroundings, would remain constant, but real living characters - fags, juniors, seniors, masters, headmasters, servants, villagers, etc., etc., all the people who make up the pictured cosmos of Greyfriars and the other schools would be moving over the canvas, playing their part

for a time, and eventually making room for their younger brothers, perhaps in time for their sons.

Just imagine how we oldsters would have thrilled to read of the arrival at Greyfriars of the Son of Harry Wharton! Think of that, my dear readers, and mourn that it never happened, and never will happen.

* * * * *

Here are one or two opinions on the first Bunter story in the new T.V. series:

"Jolly good! Especially my old pal, Mauly. The casting of the Famous Five is shocking; two or three look about 40 years old. I expect it is very difficult for the producer though.

Miss E.B. Flinders.

Mr. Raf de la Torre as Mr. Quelch could have been an excellent Remove master had he not taken his cue from Bunter and determined to be a comic character. But then the mood of the play was comic. The expressions "I say you fellows" from Bunter and "is terrific" from Huree Singh, were a little laboured. The "dark handsome" was missing in the make-up of Harry Wharton and the "hallo, hallo, hallo" of Cherry reminiscent of a well known radio comedian. The languidness of Mauloverer was missing, and his shrewdness. He was too easily taken in by one of Bunter's whoppers. But, my hat! didn't we all enjoy that Saturday half-hour.

F. Sturdy, Middlesbrough.

The St. Jim's 'Sports Competition' Series
by Leonard Packman

The stories written by J.N. Pentelow under the name of Jack North (Wycliffe and Haygarth schools) were, without question, some of the finest of their kind. As a substitute wrtier of Greyfriars and St. Jim's however, he was 'an also ran'. Nevertheless, certain of his sports stories in the GEM were very good. One series in particular I have enjoyed reading many times, in fact I read them only a few weeks ago and found them just as entertaining as I did 37 years ago. (As Charles Hamilton wrote five of the fifteen numbers comprising the series, this may have something to do with it.)

For the benefit of those who cherish memories of their boyhood days when the stories were first published, and also for the interest of the younger reader/collector who has not (as yet) had the

good fortune to read them, the following, in brief, are the details of this series.

Commencing with 'Rival Forms' (No. 527), Jack Blake (with George Figgins' co-operation) on behalf of the Fourth Form challenges The Shell (viz Tom Merry & Co.) to an 'all-in' contest, on a points basis. On a matter pertaining to Mr. Selby the Fourth takes the lead, but the final outcome of this affair finds the Shell level again. In the first of the running races Figgins scores for the Fourth, and Racke (without being able to help himself) scores for the Shell.

The second story 'Shell v Fourth' (No. 528) finds the Fourth kicking off with a good 'japing' contest score. The Shell gain an odd point in the High Jumps which follow, and in further running races the Fourth gain a slight lead.

The third in the series 'A Stern Chase' (No. 529) starts with boxing events, the star performer being Herbert Skimpole (!) who defeats Mellish. The one and only George Alfred Grundy takes on twelve of the Fourth and outpoints nine of them (names drawn from a hat each time). The Fourth are now leading by a dozen or more points, and should they win the football match - the next event - the Shell would really be in trouble. In point of fact the result is a draw, (3-3) with a replay to come at a later date.

The next yarn 'A Drawn Game' (No. 530) starts with the scores standing at 86 points for the Shell, and 99 the Fourth. More boxing events follow, with Grundy against all comers and - all honour to him - adding 12 points for his Form. A Second Eleven football match comes next, resulting in a win for the Shell. (This is in lieu of a First Eleven replay).

'The Three Minors' (No. 531), the next in the series, features a three-legged race in which the Shell scores all the points. A postponed boxing contest follows, the winner (H. Noble) adding seven points to the Shell score.

GEM No. 532 is not a Competition Series story, but No. 533 'Spoofing the Shell' (a Charles Hamilton contribution) introduces a very peculiar contest - smoking! Certain members of the 'shady set' (Shell and Fourth) are caught smoking by the leaders of their Forms, and have to keep on smoking until, one by one, they are sick, the one to hold out the longest being declared the winner for his Form. Crooke is the winner! A 'spoofing' contest follows, the outcome of which is a brilliant score by Kerr for the Fourth.

The next GEM (No. 534) 'The Shell Scores' has a Form cricket match as its main attraction. The winners, as the title denotes, are the Shell (by 24 runs).

'Racke's Man' (No. 535 by Mr. Hamilton) is the title of the next story, which starts with further boxing contests, wherein Skimpole beats Racke. The Fourth is still further let down by Racke, who plays an ignoble part throughout the whole story.

In 'The Skipper of the Shell Second' (No. 536) the competition continues. Skimpole, still in fighting mood, defeats Clampe and Serope, and in the Second Eleven cricket match the Shell wins by four runs.

The next story 'Friends Though Divided' (No. 537 by Mr. Hamilton) is centred round a boat-race, the final outcome being a win for the Shell.

'The Champion of the Shell' (No. 538, and again by Mr. Hamilton) finds chess as the main attraction. Manners comes out very well in this contest, although at one state Koumi Rao actually defeats Manners. (A good story this, with all the thrills of an air raid (Gothas) whilst the game is in play)

'Against All Comers' (No. 539) continues the good work. Wrestling is the main feature. Cardew comes out well; Blake throws Grundy; Roylance beats Noble; Noble beats Koumi Rao (after a great struggle) and Cardew beats Talbot. The Fourth score heavily in this contest.

'Six on the Scent' (No. 540 by Mr. Hamilton) has for its main theme another novel event - a 'detection' contest - in which Kerr comes out strongly as the winner.

'Herries' Special Turn' (No. 541) deals with a 'musical' contest. It is entirely a Herries story and, rightly enough, finds him the ultimate winner of this event.

GEM numbers 542 to 550 are not 'contest' stories, the finals being recorded in No. 551 'The Final Event'. The main attraction is a marathon race and makes very exciting reading. The result of this terrific race is: 1 Merry; 2 & 3 Royland and Levison (level); 4 Grundy; 5 & 6 Blake and Dane (level).

Thus, with this grand finale the sports Competition is ended. And now you ask, who won? The answer is - SHELL, by two points!

MAGNET TITLES: (Continued) 1471, His Gunman Guardian; 1472, Gun Play at Greyfriars; 1473, Horace Coker's Dark Deed; 1474, The Gangsters Swoop; 1475, Ordered Out; 1476, Bunter Beats the Gangsters;

1477, The Vengeance of Bunter the Ventriloquist; 1478, The Bogus Beak; 1479, Billy Bunter's Burglar; 1480, The Popper Court Tea-Party; 1481, Bunter the Lion-Tamer; 1482, Billy Bunter's Bunk; 1483, From School to Circus, 1484, The Circus Schoolboy; 1485, The Haunted Circus; 1486, The Rascal of the Remove; 1487, Not Wanted in the Circus; 1488, The Signor's Secret.

CAN ANYONE HELP?

31st May, 1955.

4 Wellington Street East,
 Toronto, Canada.

Dear Mr. Leckenby,

I saw your letter in Time & Tide of 23rd April, and write to find out more of the Old Boys' Book Club.

I am particularly interested in tracing a couple of school stories which appeared in a boy's magazine published about 1920-25. It's name I've forgotten - tho I'm sure it was not B.O.P. or Chums. The stories concern the adventures of one Esme, a boy who in one story was forced by circumstances to spend a term at a girls' school in petticoats.

With this very tiny clue, I wonder if you can give me the name of the magazine and the author?

Yours sincerely,

CHARLES MANHALE.

NOTE: As soon as I read this letter I felt sure I had seen a story somewhere entitled "Poor Dear Esmé". Thanks to the help of an assistant at York Public Library I got on the track, a story with that name was published by Newnes at 2/6 about 1930. The author was A.M. Burrage. I am perfectly certain it was published in a boys' weekly and I can somehow visualise the type for the heading with pictures by someone like Hutton Mitchell. I've got the idea that it was in "Cheer Boys Cheer" or its successor the Boys Journal, but if so, it would be in 1912-1915. Can anyone help further? I do like to solve these little problems.

H.L.

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Numbers 1300 to 1683. Orders for complete series given priority.

Prices 1300 - 1552 @ 1/6 each
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Apply:- GERALD ALLISON, 7 Summerfield Gardens, Bramley, Leeds.

BLAKIANA

Conducted by JOSEPHINE PACKMAN

27, ARCHDALE ROAD, EAST DULWICH, LONDON, S.E.22.

I do hope you will all enjoy Bill Lofts contribution this month. It seems that our favourite detective and his assistant appeared all over the world under various names, but it is certainly interesting to note how the U.J. stories were used time and again.

I am happy to say that during the past month I have had several interesting letters from readers of Blakiana who have not previously written, and I think them very much for increasing my circle of letter writers.

Herbert Leckenby sent me his letter from Rex Hardinge to read. Pertaining to this I was able to supply Mr. Hardinge with some information, and I received a most interesting reply.

A treat in store for you is a very unusual contribution from our good friend Walter Webb. The first part will appear in the September C.D. Walter has also sent me another fine article for later use. He really does work hard for our benefit, and I don't know how he finds the time to write so prolifically. I did ask him in my last letter what he did in his spare time - if any. Walter's reply was that he goes to the cinema, football and cricket matches and is a keen tennis player. With all this plus writing articles for our enjoyment, I leave it to your imagination as to just how much spare time he has left!

Josie Packman.

SEXTON BLAKE IN THE U.S.A.

by W.O.G. Lofts

P R O L O G U E

One day in the early 1900's, a young man named Herbert Leckenby bought some copies of an American periodical on sale in his local market. The paper was called BRAVE & BOLD, thousands of copies of which were being sold in this country, having been shipped from America as surplus copies.

Herbert started to read one of the stories, but had not gone very far before something about it seemed very familiar. He had a good idea why it was familiar, and on looking through several old copies of the UNION JACK (new series) was amazed to find that one of the stories was exactly the same as that published in BRAVE & BOLD - except that, whereas in the former, the names of the

detective and his assistant were Sexton Blake and Tinker, the detective and his assistant in the American publication were Gordon Keith and Checkers.

Young Herbert sat down and wrote to the editor of the U.J. and asked him if he knew about this. The editor answered the letter but did not, however, reply to Herbert's question; but a curious thing was, that shortly afterwards the words "Copyright in the U.S.A." appeared in the UNION JACK.

Herbert also noted other stories reprinted, and found that in one they had slipped up by printing the name Sexton Blake instead of Gordon Keith; also, they did not bother to change Pedro's name..

Nearly Half a Century Later

In March 1955, Mr. Le Blanc, the editor of the American Collecting Paper "Dime Novel Round-Up", in correspondence with the writer asked if he knew that Sexton Blake stories had been reprinted in the American boys' paper BRAVE & BOLD nearly 50 years ago, with the name of Blake changed; also, that one of the most famous of all American detectives, Nick Carter, once had his name substituted in stories which were originally Blake yarns. Mr. Le Blanc went on to say that the information furnished by his correspondent, Mr. W.H. Bradshaw (see C.D. Annual 'Who's Who'), is that these Blake stories were issued in the New Magnet Library. Mr. Bradshaw states that he compared Sexton Blake stories with the Nick Carter in the New Magnet and found them word for word, with the exception of the name of the detective, for at least 40 numbers. (The New Magnet Library is not to be confused with the English MAGNET Library.)

The writer of this article had not heard of any of this before, neither did he expect to get very far in making enquiries, for he naturally assumed that the titles of the Blake reprints in BRAVE & BOLD listed by Mr. Le Blanc would be changed.

He then wrote to Walter Webb, one of the most knowledgeable Blakiana experts in the country, asking if he could furnish any information on the subject. Walter promptly replied saying that he had been able to trace most of Mr. Le Blanc's titles in BRAVE & BOLD, in some instances the task being a simple one, for the American publishers, Street & Smith, had in a number of cases, not bothered to change the original Sexton Blake story title. The subtitles, too, were a great help to Walter, who went on to say that all the Blake yarns from which the BRAVE & BOLD stories were written were published in the UNION JACK in the years 1905 - 06 - 07 and 08

and were, with one or two exceptions, all purely adventure stories of plot and peril in distant lands. Walter also added that he was not altogether surprised to learn about these reprints, because he had read the work of many a Blake author in some of the better known American magazines. In particular, the work of Hamilton Teed, Donald Stuart and Rex Hardinge must have been as popular in the States as it was over here in pre-war days, for their stories appeared regularly in THRILLING MYSTERIES and other Yankee magazines of a similar kind. These stories were, of course, reprints of those which had appeared in English publications, chiefly THE THRILLER.

The list of Gordon Keith stories in BRAVE & BOLD furnished by Mr. Le Blanc, and the original UNION JACK numbers traced by Walter Webb are as follows:-

- 159. "That Boy Checkers"; or, Chased Half Way Around the World.
- 168. "The African Trail"; or, Adventures in the Dark Continent.
(Reprint of U.J. 112. "Sexton Blake in Africa".)
- 172. "Under Many Suns"; or, Gordon Keith's Longest Chase.
(Reprint of U.J. 104 "Twice Round the World".)
- 181. "The Lost Chief"; or, G.K.'s Adventures among the Redskins.
(Reprint of U.J. 118 "The Lost Chief".)
- 184. "On Sampan and Junk"; or, Gordon Keith adrift in China.
(Reprint of U.J. 101 "Sexton Blake in China".)
- 188. "Tracked Across Europe"; or, The Clue of the Moving Picture.
(Reprint of U.J. 99 "Tracked Across Europe".)
- 206. "The Sky Smugglers"; or, G.K.'s Great Balloon Chase".
(Reprint of U.J. 133 "Sexton Blake - Aeronaut".)
- 210. "Gordon Keith in Java"; or, The Search for the Lost Wild
Animal Taker!
(Reprint of U.J. 146 "Sexton Blake in Java".)
- 214. "On the Pampas"; or, A Strange Chase Across South America.
(Reprint of U.J. 135 "Sexton Blake K.C. (His Adventures on the
Pampas)
- 226. "Marooned in the Ice"; or, Gordon Keith's Arctic Chase.
(Reprint of U.J. 134 "The Far, Far North".)
- * 232. "In the Land of the Slave Hunters"; or, G.K. in Darkest Africa.
- 236. "To Unknown Lands"; or, Gordon Keith in Patagonia.
(Reprint of U.J. 161 "Sexton Blake in Patagonia".)
- * 240. "Among the Witch Doctors"; or, Gordon Keith in Zululand.
- 251. "The Red Wafer"; or, Gordon Keith at Bay.
(Reprint of U.J. 136 "Sexton Blake at Bay".)
- 258. "Gordon Keith, Magician"; or, Through the Danger Zone of

Ashanti Land.

(Reprint of U.J. 199 "Sexton Blake in Ashanti".)

262. "Gordon Keith's Double"; or, The Chase of the Coiners.

266. "Gordon Keith, Whaler"; or, A Chase Through the Frozen North.

(Reprint of U.J. 206 "Sexton Blake, Whaler".)

270. "Gordon Keith, Lumberjack"; or, Wild Life in the Great North.

(Reprint of U.J. 207 "Sexton Blake, Lumberman".)

274. "Far Below the Equator"; or, G.K. in the Land of Revolution.

* 278. "Among the Arab Slave Raiders"; or, G.K. in the Wilds of Africa.

282. "Gordon Keith, Diver Detective"; or, A treasure Search Under
the Sea.

(Reprint of U.J. 124 "The Diver Detective".)

286. "The Road to Fez"; or G.K.'s work in Morocco.

(Reprint of U.J. 225 "Sexton Blake in Morocco".)

298. "The Thumb-Print Clue"; or, G.K.'s Remarkable Case.

(Reprint of U.J. 126 "The Thumb-Print Clue".)

316. "The House of Fear"; or, Gordon Keith's Greatest Case.

(Reprint of U.J. 221 "The House of Fear".)

326. Gordon Keith in Zululand"; or, How 'Checkers' Held the Fort.

(Reprint of U.J. 139 "Sexton Blake in Zululand".)

* 330. "Gordon Keith Under African Skies"; or, Four Comrades in the
Danger Zone.

346. "Comrades Three"; or, With Gordon Keith in the South Seas.

368. "Sparkling Plunder"; or, Gordon Keith Bagging Jailbirds.

373. "The Airship Destroyer"; or, G.K.'s Greatest Mystery.

379. "The Trail Over Seas"; or, G.K.'s Brilliant Play.

385. "A Dash into Mystery"; or, G.K.'s Amazing Nerve.

The authorship of the BRAVE & BOLD stories was shown as
Lawrence White, Jr.

* Walter Webb also adds that these numbers (all African stories) are obviously reprints of U.J. Nos. 171, 181, 201 and 229; titles respectively "The Slave Market", "Sexton Blake's Zulu", "The Sleeping Sickness" and "By Order of the Foreign Office", although not necessarily in that order.

Of the remaining numbers (159, 262, 274 and 346) Walter is almost certain they are old Blake stories, but he has his doubts about the last four - 368, 373, 379 and 385.

The writer is of the opinion that Messrs. Street & Smith had full permission from the A. Press to reprint the stories in their publication. The A.P. would of course derive financial benefit, and I do not think any of their papers were on sale in the U.S.A.

at that time. Perhaps they did not reckon on the keenness of readers comparing Gordon Keith with Sexton Blake.

MORE BABBLINGS OF BARDELL

by Victor Colby

"Excusing me, Mr. Blake, but if it's cold enough for a fire, I'll -

"It isn't, thank you, Mrs. Bardell", the detective said. "We are quite warm".

"For which I'm very glad to 'hear you say it sir", the old lady said, obviously relieved, "seeing as coals is so short, which they calls 'em black diamonds, and I'm not surprised. Worse'n lump sugar as used to be, and that's a fact. All because of the strikes and things, and the miners won't work. And more's the pity which it's not to be wondered at, having to crawl to work on all fours, pore men, like worms - though worms haven't got legs, I suppose - and in some dreadful places under the ground 'aving to lie on their stummicks and bite the coal off, as the milkman told me only this morning - though he's an awful liar, as everyone knows".

Later Mrs. Bardell tapped at the door, and came in diffidently.

"Excusing me for protruding, sir", she said, "but when you are misengaged there's a young lady below as wishes to see you important".

"I will see the lady now Mrs. Bardell", said Blake after a while.

"Oh, sir," she gasped, "but you can't! She's gone! 'The bird has flown!' as the saying is. She just took one sort of frightened look up the stairs, sir, and the next minute she was off - off like a jug handle - which she was scared about somethink as is plain, Mr. Blake".

"Oh, sir", she panted a few mintues later, "what a place this is! She's back again, Mr. Blake. Playing a game of tippet, or somethink. Shall I show her up?"

(U.J. 815 "The Strange Case of the Naval Lieutenant")

"Which as how, Mr. Blake", said Mrs. Bardell volubly, "you live an' learn as the sayin' is, and it's a wise man who knows everythink - and a wise woman neither for that matter, which men 'ave got more brains, I serpose; though wimmen has instink - like pigeons".

"But you wouldn't compare the instinct of a pigeon with that of a woman, would you?" asked Blake.

"Yes I would", said the old lady, "being as which I've knowed plenty that looked like doves, and cooed like'em, too, which turned out to be pigeons - and carrion pigeons at that - always carrion-on, in a manner of speaking, and gallivanting about miles away from their proper 'en-coops, as the saying is, and never learning nothing".

"The old lady took a quick gasp to replenish her wind.

"As I've just learned about this rabbies what the police-notices are about, 'aving read about the chief Rabbis in the sinnygog, and never dreaming as how they had anythink to do with this awful hydriphobia".

(U.J. 825 "The Case of the Decoy".)

Tinker had broken the news gently to Mrs. Bardell of Blake's and his own proposed trip abroad.

"So its Canada this time are it?" she wailed. "The land of the scalloping Indians and wolves, and fierce man eating buffaloeses! And you, Master Tinker, who never will put on flannel next to your skin unless I almost puts it on for you - you goin' to a country where the temperament is a hundred decrees below Nero in the shade. You'll catch your death of cold".

(U.J. 950 "The Fur Thieves".)

Mrs. Bardell smiled "In course we can put Mr. 'Anson up, Mr. Blake. The spare room's in happle-pie order, and I'm sure I'm delighted to 'ear that there American gentleman's coming over. It must be awful for 'im to live in a country where cowboys is always shootin' innercent gals and tying 'em to sawmills and sich".

Tinker chuckled. Mrs. Bardell's idea of the United States were a trifle coloured by her frequent visits to the cinema.

(S.B.L. 2nd series 149 "King of the Underworld".)

" 'Morning Mrs. B., what's on the menu?"

"Devilled kidneys and bacon, Master Tinker, "though why devilled I don't know. Casting nasturtiums on a good breakfast dish like that by bringing ole Nick's name into it. I was allus taught at Sunday School that sich langwidge weren't fit and proper for the well behaved".

(S.B.L. 2nd series 164 "The Case of the Jack of Clubs".)

Nelson Lee

Column



 by JACK WOOD
 NOSTAW, 328 Stockton Lane,
 YORK.

First, may I offer to all my readers an apology for an unfortunate misprint which appeared throughout my article last month, due entirely to my handwriting.

The name, of course, in all cases where the error occurred should have read STANIFORTH and not, as it appeared, with middle letters transposed.

Turning to this month's article, I am sure it will prove of interest, even though football is not yet upon us. The content of Jim Sutcliffe's eminently readable article proves once again our argument some months ago that Edwy Searles Brooks was, if nothing else, topical. In the serial to which Jim Sutcliffe, whom I had the privilege of meeting for the first time during my recent visit to London, draws attention, E.S.B. was at his most topical. So here, without further preamble, is.....

RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS by JIM SUTCLIFFE

No. 1 "RIVALS OF THE BLUE CRUSADERS"

Back in those halcyon days of 1929 when dirt track racing was gaining a foothold in this country and threatening the "gates" of the football clubs, Brooks, with his usual flair for the topical, gave us this fine story. It appeared first as a serial in the Nelson Lee, 1st New Series numbers 145 - 159 inclusive and later in 1931 in the Boys' Friend Library, No. 277 New Series and brought the rivalry right to our doorsteps when the Speedway opened up practically next door to the Crusaders ground in Bannington. The footballers were in fine fettle when the story opened and fighting

for promotion but Mr. Ulysses Piecambe, the manager, was already anxious as to the effect of the counter attraction on future gates.

At the first speeding meeting quite a number of St. Franks' juniors and Blue Crusaders attended. Rex Carrington, the Blues popular centre forward decided to "have a go" on the track in defiance of "Piecan's" orders and proves himself a born rider and wins himself £50 into the bargain.

Peter Burke, the rascally manager of the speedway knows that Rex, already the idol of the football enthusiasts, would be a star attraction at his meetings. Rex however is loyal to the Crusaders and turns down flat the suggestion that he should sign a contract to ride for the speedway. Burke, however, decides that if fair means are of no avail he will get his man by foul means. Rex himself still has a lingering desire to get a bike beneath him on the cinders again and Mr. Piecambe helps him unintentionally by unnecessarily quibbling over Rex Carrington's last performance and by placing the speedway out of bounds to the players.

Meanwhile Burke enlists the help of Curly Hankin, the cad of the Crusaders Reserves and his two cronies, Roger Parr and Maurice Brewer who taunt Rex into going to the speedway in a mood of reckless defiance.

Needless to say, in this frame of mind he takes chances and comes a cropper, slightly injuring his shooting foot. To earn their wages of treachery, Hankin & Co. make certain that Piecambe hears of the episode and to ensure that Rex gives a poor display in the following days league match, Hankin inserts a needle point in the boot of his already injured foot; with the result that the Blue Crusaders lose the game by one goal to nil.

The breach between Rex Carrington and Mr. Piecambe rapidly widens. In the evening Rex rides at another speedway meeting and the jeers of the afternoon quickly turn to cheers. He becomes further entangled in the meshes of Burke's cunningly spread net when he is inveigled into taking part in a game of faro which ends in Rex giving Burke an IOU for £150.

Rex and Piecambe have another heated argument and reach the breaking point -- Rex is suspended without pay!

By now, however, Rex is beginning to see through Burke's cloak of friendliness and during a quarrel between them Rex punches him in the face and Burke while appearing to lose his balance snatches the opportunity to "accidentally" drive the ferrule of the umbrella he is carrying through Carrington's foot.

Rex is well and truly crooked and while his injury is being examined by "Grouser", the trainer, Mr. Piecambe arrives to tell him that on second thoughts his suspension is cancelled!

Burke's triumph which seemed complete now, is shortlived, however, for retribution in the shape of Julian Harding, the speedway director, overtakes him.

Burke had returned to Harding's office boasting that he had used his own brand of diplomacy to ensure that Rex would be forced to turn to the dirt track for a living by maiming him.

Harding, however, is not the type of man to be a party to anything crooked and sacks Burke on the spot. Burke's scheme has already begun to operate though, for Rex Carrington, faced with the prospect of not being able to kick a football for weeks, signs a contract with Harding, mainly with the object of paying back the rascally Burke his £150. His luck is in for not only does he win £100 in the first meeting, but also the Gold Helmet Handicap. After the meeting Rex finds Burke waiting for his money, along with Hankin & Co. They throw out taunts and jeers that Rex is scared of a game of cards and Rex is foolish enough to swallow the bait and go with them. This time it is poker and during the game, which is for high stakes, Rex is called to the 'phone. Burke sitting with three kings in his hand knows that Rex holds the other king in his hand which he has left on the table. Unobserved he takes Carrington's king and substitutes an ace. Rex returns and the betting continues and with something like £500 on the table in "chips" the showdown comes: Burke shows his four kings in triumph and then sags in his chair like a burst balloon as Rex produces his master hand of four aces which Burke by his cheating had given him!

So Rex settled his debt but made Burke more bitter than ever against him and the latter now began to plan to smash Rex Carrington and Julian Harding at one go. Rex is due to ride in his final speedway meeting before returning to football and Burke makes his plans accordingly. Once again he enlists the help of Curly Hankin and his two satellites and his scheme was a cunning one, rehearsed and timed so that no hitch could occur.

On the evening of the meeting Rex is in the pits warming up when Hankin dashes up and tells him that Fatty Fowkes, the Crusaders goalkeeper has been injured and Fatty being Rex Carrington's special pal, he runs off to a store shed where they are supposed to have taken Fatty Fowkes. Naturally as soon as the shed is reached Rex is seized and bound up. A few seconds afterwards a figure looking

exactly like Rex runs towards the pits clad in a similar riding suit and carrying Carrington's No. 1 on it.

Who could possibly guess that this rider was a substitute?

He was in fact "Lightning" Smith, a brilliant but unscrupulous rider who had been warned off every track in England for his dirty riding, and this was the man Burke hired to blacken Rex Carrington's character for ever.

"Lightning" Smith took his place at the starting line and after a spectacular display of foul riding in which one rider is taken to hospital with injuries and another narrowly escapes being burnt to death, the crowd break on to the track in anger.

Smith makes a bolt for the store shed and when the mob arrives they find a very confused Rex Carrington who was released as Smith arrived. Burke, Smith and Hankin have no difficulty in dispersing amongst the crowd whose attention is focussed on Rex. Naturally enough his story is discredited and he is eventually rescued by the police. All the Crusaders except Fowkes disown him and when he arrives back at the Stronghold, Mr. Picambe refused to admit him and tells him he is no longer wanted as a Crusader.

He has fallen between two stools. Unable to race on any speedway track after the report on his alleged riding that evening and now unwanted in the Blue Crusaders it seems that Burke's revenge is now complete.

Rex manages to find lodgings in Bannington, but finds the majority of townspeople hostile towards him.

On the following day Rex is set upon by a gang of public house loungers and in the brawl that ensues Rex falls under a heavy lorry. Like lightning the rumour goes round that Rex has been killed and reaches Burke and "Lightning" Smith in the Wheatsheaf. Smith, partly in panic and partly in atonement confesses to his part in the previous evening's affair.

Meanwhile Rex is in hospital with nothing more than a shaking up but Fatty Fowkes arranges for him to be kept there until his name has been cleared publicly in the Bannington Gazette.

Fatty produces Rex right at the start of the match against Denton City and of course the Blues, at full strength at last, beat them to the tune of eight goals to nil, Rex scoring six of them off his own boot.

Burke comes in for a hot time and under police protection shakes the dust of Bannington from his feet forever and so the rivalry ends with the Blue Crusaders certain of promotion to the First Division

the following season.

OLD BOYS' BOOK CLUB

LONDON SECTION

Last meeting of the summer term took place at "Cherry Place" on Sunday, July 17th. A good attendance enjoyed a varied programme. Roger Jenkins reported a good month's borrowing in the Hamilton section of the library and stated how popular the older books were. Roger conducted his Rhyming Synonym Puzzle and whilst the company were puzzling their brains tea was ably served by Eileen and Kathleen. After over 7 years, it is remarkable how new ideas for quiz competitions and puzzles keep being thought out. Result of Roger's good idea was that Bob Whiter was first, Len Packman was second and in third place was myself. Postal and other members will have the opportunity of attempting this puzzle as it will appear in the August newsheet.

With Len Packman as chairman, Frank Vernon Lay's "The Names the Same" was conducted and Frank was an easy winner with Roger second and the British Museum browser, Bill Lofts, third. It was unanimously decided that owing to the hols, no meeting will be held in August. Date and venue of September meeting will appear in next month's issue of the "C.D."

Thus another enjoyable gathering.

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

-----ooOoo-----

NORTHERN SECTION MEETING, JULY 9th, 1955

Despite the call of the great outdoors on a lovely summer's day, there was an excellent attendance, an important event, and a delightful surprise.

On opening the meeting Breeze Bentley announced with great regret that our secretary Norman Smith had been compelled to resign office owing to calls of business. Norman was heartily thanked for his services. The chairman went on to say that Ronald Hodgson had been asked to take over and he had consented. It was agreed by all that Ronald was the very man for the job.

Last month I announced that a columnist on the "Yorkshire Evening Post" was going to give us a 'write up' in his "Treasure in Leisure" series. Well it duly appeared on June 28th and jolly good publicity it was. At this meeting Gerry Allison revealed

that there had been a most gratifying sequel for a school teacher in a Leeds suburb had written him offering a splendid long run of Magnets. In almost less time than it takes to tell Gerry was at the home of the School Teacher and had come to terms.

When sorted out, there will be quite a lot of duplicates available and these will be offered to fellow collectors. See advert elsewhere.

Gerry then went on to read the third cricket story. On this occasion it was taken from J.M. Pentelows (Jack North) "The Fourth Mac" and told of a game between Haygarth and Cromwell House. Once again the reading was listened to with great interest and amusement.

After refreshments Ronald Hodgson conducted a Quiz covering the Hamilton schools. Gosh! if he is going to carry out his secretarial duties with as much care as he dug out some of those questions, he's going to be a superlative one. 60 points were possible. Gerry came out top with 35. I'd be ashamed to say how many I got.

Next meeting, August 13th, when we hope to have Cliff Beardsell with us.

H. LECKENBY,

Northern Section Correspondent.

* * * * *

MIDLAND SECTION MEETING, JUNE 27th

We were to have had a short talk by Mr. Jack Ingram to open a discussion to-night, but unfortunately he was not able to be present owing to an important meeting of "Beaks", (Mr. Ingram is a Headmaster). So our chairman who was with us once more after his recent enforced absence, began by suggesting that Mr. Tom Porter filled the breach. This Tom did admirably as will appear presently.

Our Chairman read a letter from the Merseyside Club concerning a proposed visit. We were most pleased to hear of this and look forward keenly to what promises to be a very pleasurable event.

Tom Porter then produced a letter written by Frank Richards to a boy who had written expressing his appreciation of the Rookwood stories. Tom then began his impromptu talk mentioned earlier and discussed admirably and lucidly the pros and cons of binding our treasured papers.

During our final discussions Mrs. Corbett read a most interesting article which had appeared in a Co-operative Magazine recalling

the work of Talbot Baines Reed. It was suggested that Reed initiated the idea of a series of stories dealing with one set of characters, but did not realise how immensely popular the plan would be; and it was left to Charles Hamilton to fully exploit this type of School Story in the imitable manner so well known and so much appreciated.

EDWARD DAVEY.

MERSEYSIDE, 10th July, 1955

Considering the counter-attraction of the lovely sunny weather, there was quite a fair attendance at this meeting, and even the secretary managed to turn up after a long absence. Little time was wasted on formal business, as there were quite a few matters to be discussed; these included a reading of Mrs. Corbett's letter re our proposed trip to Birmingham in September, which promises to be a happy occasion. Then followed a talk on our meeting next month which takes the form of a farewell party, when we say au revoir to one of our staunchest and most affectionately regarded members, Frank Unwin, whose work takes him down to the other end of the country. Enough to say, simply and sincerely, we shall miss him.

This was Nelson Lee Night -- and capitals are needed to do it justice. The entire proceedings were taken over by those incorrigible Lee-ites, Frank Unwin and Norman Pragnell, and they did us proud. First came Frank's quiz, a fairly simple but most entertaining effort which kept us on our toes for the next half-hour. This was won by Don Webster (I hope he will forgive me saying "rather surprisingly" -- we had no idea he was so well up in N.L. lore). It was far from being a one-horse race, however. Then ensued an "Any Questions?" session on the N.L. and E.S. Brookes, during which the experts were subjected to a barrage of queries. Messrs. Pragnell and Unwin were undaunted, however, and dealt more than adequately with the critics of their beloved paper, and must surely have won one or two of us over to a better understanding of their views. We certainly enjoyed this programme, and must have a repeat soon. The meeting did not end until 10.30, and even that seemed too early!

FRANK CASE.

SALE: Holiday Annuals, 1928-36, 1938, 1940 (some imperfect), Chums 1899, 1909, 1923, 1924, 1927-8, 1929-30, 1932-33, 1936-37, 1908, 1922; Champion 1925. WANTED: S.P.C. 28-32. GEORGE MELL, 49 GRACEFIELD GARDENS, STREATHAM, LONDON, S.W.16.

WANTED: S.O.L.'s Nos. 366, 369, 374, 379, 385, 394, 397, 400, 403, 407, 408. Complete and in reasonable condition. Your valuation asked. For Sale: Magnets 1643, 1644, 1650. D.HARRISON, 51 MERTON WANS, S.W.20.

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