

Collectors' Digest

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Swift Story Paper

THE  
RED  
ARROW

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NO. 184

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Price 2/-

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*Laughin' Jim*

No 1. MARCH 1961 TO 1962 BY FRIDAY PRICE 2P

# O.B.B.C. - Northern Section

PRESIDENT - P. G. WODEHOUSE

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT: The Northern Section Library, first in the field, now offers an unrivalled variety of Juvenile Literature to Old Boys - and Girls - of all ages. Some 3,100 books and papers, half of them Hamiltonian items, are available for borrowing. Here are a few of them:-

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PLEASE DON'T FORGET THE EASTER CONVENTION OF THE OLD BOY'S BOOK CLUBS AT BEAUTIFUL MATLOCK. OUTINGS, TALKS, GAMES, CONTESTS, SWOPS, CRISS-CROSS QUIZ, BUNTER DRIVE, BINGO, ETC.

Dates April 21st, 22nd, 23rd.

# Collectors' Digest

FOUNDED IN 1947 by HERBERT LECKENBY

Vol. 16

Number 184

APRIL, 1962

Price 2s. Od.

## EDITORIAL



FRANK HERBERT  
Editor



GERALD SMITH  
Editor



JOHN WHEATLEY  
Editor



ROBERT CLARK  
Editor



ALAN LISTER  
Editor

### WHO'S COCK HOUSE?

That cry, which has echoed down the corridors of St. Jim's for more than fifty years is now resounding in the assembly halls of our Clubs. It is to be welcomed. Friendly rivalry brings in its train the spice of life and plenty of fun and excitement.

Our Northern club is entitled to sound its trumpet a little just now. Two appearances on Television, followed by very many notices in the north's leading newspapers, have given impetus to enthusiasm and justifiable pride. Now we learn that the celebrated novelist, P. G. Wodehouse has accepted the presidency of our club in the North. No wonder those live-wires, Gerry Allison & Co., are cock-a-hoop these days. We congratulate our good friends in the North.

Last month our London club threw open its Hamilton Library to all enthusiasts, whether club-members or not. This month, the North has taken a full-page in the Digest to offer on loan 3,000 books and old boys' papers. Competition is "hotting-up" with a vengeance.

There is, of course, a school of thought which is not happy at too much publicity being given to our movement. An inflow of new members could, no doubt, be absorbed by our Leeds club, with its large permanent club-room. It would clearly be welcome.

The same thing, possibly, does not apply to London, which holds most of its meetings at the homes of different members. In the lounge of the average-sized house there comes a time when saturation point is reached; when, in fact, an additional half-dozen persons make all the difference between comfort and a modicum of discomfort. Some, too,

might regret the passing of the intimacy of the smaller gatherings.

There is the added factor that more and more people becoming collectors forces higher and higher the prices of items which are becoming rarer and rarer. A reader, whose letter appears in this month's Yours Sincerely, was asked to pay £17 for a volume containing 34 Magnets of 1939. Such prices are deplorable and beyond common-sense. On the other hand, it can be argued that, when collecting is no longer a practical proposition, the club libraries fill the gap.

Furthermore, the publicity won by our Northern Club gives our movement and hobby the prestige which we all know it deserves.

So there are two ways of looking at the matter. We, ourselves, pass no opinion either way. So far as Collectors' Digest is concerned, the more support we get, the happier we are.

In any case, rivalry and competition between the clubs is an excellent thing. Long may it flourish. So we have no hesitation in calling for three cheers for the North, the live wires of this Spring of 1962.

#### THE EASTER CONVENTION:

We take this opportunity to draw the attention of all club members to the O.B.B.C. Convention which is being held at Easter at the Queen's Head Hotel, Matlock, the genial host of which is one of our most loyal supporters, Mr. John Gunn. The Convention is being organised to give members a grand time among good friends of similar interests. A visit to Matlock this Easter will provide a holiday to remember. All interested members should contact their local secretaries, or Mr. Gunn at Matlock.

#### PEDRO IS COMING BACK!

The Editor of Sexton Blake Library gives us most welcome and exciting news. Pedro, the splendid bloodhound, which once made a fine team with Sexton Blake and Tinker, is coming back. A new story, featuring Pedro, is being written for early presentation in the Sexton Blake Library.

Large numbers of readers wrote to us expressing delight with the picture of Pedro which we reproduced in the recent C.D. Annual. Many sighed for the days when Pedro supported his famous master. Now, in 1962, Pedro is going to support Sexton Blake again,

We hope that our readers will tell their friends of this coming treat, and will buy the story themselves, thus showing their appreciation of so welcome a gesture.

CONTRIBUTIONS WANTED:

Articles are needed for our Blakiana and Nelson Lee Columns. The supply is running short. If you have any views on any particular facet of Sexton Blake or St. Frank's lore, or any new slant on an old theme, please jot down your ideas on paper and send them along. Our Columnists will welcome them warmly.

THE EDITOR.

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R E V I E W

"BUNTER, THE CARAVANNER" (Frank Richards)

Cassell's 9/6.

The first posthumously-published story by Frank Richards must inevitably be read with some feeling of sadness by Greyfriars fans. Nevertheless, there is nothing but brightness and happiness in this delightful, open-air story. It is quite one of the best of the post-war Bunters.

It is reminiscent of the "Bunter, the Billionaire" series of some 27 years ago. Jarvish, the pseudo-philanthropist of that series, has become Jervis, and whereas Jarvish offered Bunter billions of pounds, Jervis offers him a caravan holiday with all expenses paid.

It is a trifle hard to believe, perhaps, that a man, seeking to avoid attracting attention, would elect to tour the countryside with six schoolboys in a horse-drawn, bright red caravan. On the other hand, it is remotely possible that he might do just that.

In any case, this is a most readable tale, set in the glorious southern-England countryside, with warm Spring sunshine thrown in. Greyfriars fans will find themselves in their nostalgic element, and they cannot go wrong with this one.

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THOMSON PAPERS WERE FOR BOYS

by P. J. HANGER

Soon the elder of my two sons will, if he is anything like his Dad, demand a large supply of exciting reading material.

At the moment he is happy with his PLAYHOUR and there are other comics to interest him. But when the time comes for him to read stories, as opposed to viewing pictures, well, poor lad, my heart bleeds for him.

To a boy, only vaguely conscious of the economic difficulties and the gathering storm (we haven't made much progress have we?) the Thirties was a good time to be alive. Although the choice was large, the little group in which I moved comprised only the Champion and the Thomson's Big Five.

We had heard of the others! Being a keen film fan, I took an occasional Boys' Cinema but I definitely couldn't swap it on equal terms. Another fellow in our group took the Modern Boy. He couldn't swap on any terms.

The Magnet was considered highbrow and even today I regard it as an adult paper. The Wharton Rebel series, for example, was too involved for young boys. The Thomson papers were for boys, for young boys, for boys who had just learned to read, They were what boys wanted and not what adults thought they ought to have.

My first love was The Rover, and in its pages I read a football serial that remains in my memory to this day. I am not sure that I can remember the title but I think it was called "LAWRENCE, THE MARVEL TRAINER." At any rate, he was the central figure in the story - at the outset.

It concerned a football team, the Red Rangers. Even to my young mind it was obviously modelled on the Arsenal of the "thirties". When the fans assembled on the terraces for the opening of a new season, they noticed a grim-looking building at the back of the terrace. It was into this building that injured Red Rangers were taken for treatment. They must have played some dirty teams for two of three weeks in during every match, but after only a few minutes the injured players came out, completely cured of whatever had ailed them. Broken limbs, crushed ribs, concussion; they were all cured within a matter of minutes.

As the story unfolds the secret of the building is revealed to the readers. A huge black Zulu witchdoctor named CHAMBO is the secret

occupant who accomplishes these miraculous cures.

It transpires that Chambo is a fabulous goalkeeper who never let a goal through. Naturally the Red Rangers acquired his services.

The inevitable crooks try to stop the team from winning the F.A. Cup. At the Semi-final, the whole team (except Chambo) is crooked only minutes before the kick-off and Chambo has no time to work his cures. So the other ten members of the team, complete with bandages and crutches, stand on the field of play whilst the Red Rangers opponents "shoot in" at Chambo for the whole ninety minutes of the game and Chambo keeps the leather out all the time. As a result of this marathon effort the Semi-final is drawn and by the time the re-play comes around the team is fit again. Needless to say the Red Rangers win their way to Wembley.

The Thomson papers are noted for their sensational and colourful covers and I remember one of the above accident.

Between the Semi-final and the F.A. Cup final, there is, in real life, a gap of six to seven weeks. In a story of the F.A. Cup, topicality must have presented difficulties. In this story the problem was solved in a novel way.

Chambo was obliged to return to Africa to attend to tribal matters and Lawrence accompanied him. After many adventures they arrived back just in the nick of time for the kick-off at Wembley.

I have read many football stories since this but not one has made the same impact. Was it a story of outstanding quality or was its effect due to the fact that it fell on a young mind?

Although I haven't seen a Rover of this vintage for twenty years there are many other stories I remember. "Peter Paine - the seven foot schoolboy", "The Dinosaur Comes Alive", "Black Duncan - the hammer of the Clans", "The Leaping Avengers of the Snows", "Hawkeye - the Red Indian Detective", and "Poor Blind Joe" are just a few to come to mind.

I took all five of the Thomson papers for varying lengths of time. The Rover was my first love, but my next big love was to be the Hotspur which time was to prove second only to The Magnet.

The youngest Thomson paper was to be one that specialized in school stories and I have always thought of the Hotspur as my Prep. School before going to GREYFRIARS.

The school ranged from the conventional Public School (Red Circle, for which the Hotspur was famous) to "The School of the Gestapo".

In "The Shadow of the Asegi" a class of schoolboys was captured by Cetewayo, a Zulu Chief, during the Zulu War. A typical cover depicted Cetewayo ordering his black army to march over a cliff - which they did.

It was in this story that I first met the horrible torture of spread-eagling the victim, near an anthill, and smearing his body with honey. I introduced this torture into an English composition much to the horror of my Schoolmistress.

Another story called "Down with Home Lessons" tells its own plot and "Red Coat" was a Mountie truant officer in the backwoods of Canada.

"The Big Stiff" was a school teacher with unusual methods of teaching. One of his examination papers (there was a cover of this) asked the following questions:-

- a) What was the colour of Queen Elizabeth's Wedding Dress?
- b) How much earth is there in a hole six feet by three feet by four feet?

After a run of twenty-six years (and a World War II survival medal) the Hotspur suffered a most terrible fate. In 1959 it was re-issued as the New Hotspur IN PICTURES! I buy a copy occasionally more out of mourning than respect. An old story "The Lost School" is now depicted in pictures in the "New Hotspur".

I recall a story of Britain invaded in The Skipper. The invaders were Asiatics and yet another cover imprinted in my memory shows the invading troops advancing on the British positions under the cover of women and children in chains.

The Adventure gave us "Strang the Terrible" and "Solo Solomon". Also a story of a Red Indian Olympic Champion who led his people back to the wilds to prevent them from going soft. "Chang, the Hatchet Man of Red Gulch" was a Chinese Sheriff who slung a pair of hatchets in his holsters in place of the more conventional six-guns.

The Wizard, the only survivor of the original Big Five will always be remembered for Wilson, the super athlete, who did a four minute mile while Roger Bannister was still at school.

Free gifts given with the Thomson papers were usually booklets and a particularly fine set was given to celebrate the Coronation of His Majesty King George VI in 1937.

I end this article by making an appeal to the Thomson Papers to lift the veil of secrecy from these fine papers. They have, for well over thirty years given pleasure to millions of boys and they are remembered with sincere affection as the first reading material purchased by so many.

Yes! indeed, Thomson Papers were for Boys.



# Sexton Blake Today

MARGARET COOKE reviews the latest novels in the  
Sexton Blake Library

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## DEAD ON CUE (No. 495)

DESMOND REID

When Linda Fairway, star pupil of the Ed. Gooch Modern Acting Academy decided to improvise on a theme of suicide during an academy session, she gave a more realistic performance than she expected and gave Sexton Blake a tough case to solve.

An excellent book, well written, and very well planned:- a tale of murder and blackmail set in the phoney atmosphere of the Gooch Academy run by Ed. Gooch, one time small-part actor turned tutor to rich young stage-struck characters whose talents were unrecognised and unwanted by the conventional Schools of Drama. An interesting and amusing bunch of characters, excellently portrayed, play out an interesting and intriguing plot, whilst Sexton Blake, Arthur Kirby, Superintendent Dukelow and Sergeant Hammett try to solve the question - "did Linda Fairway commit suicide, or was she murdered?"

A book which really does fulfil all the claims of the advance blurb and one which should not be missed by collectors. The contents of this book are so good that I feel sure that another first class author is about to graduate from the Reid Academy in the very near future.

## COME DARK, COME EVIL (No. 496)

WILFRED McNEILLY

A first class tale of mystery, black magic and ritual murder by Wilfred McNeilly, its plot unfolding gradually to the "monotonous hypnotic throb of drums stroked by human hands," - its tension rising steadily from the excellent scene-setting of the opening chapters to the surprise ending. An action packed story in which the main characters experience the full range of human emotions - tears, anger, lust, fear and cold, calm courage. Louise Pringle, making one of her rare appearances as a star character, was well portrayed by Mr. McNeilly who seems to like and understand the S.B.L. folk. Once again he has produced some novel situations to amuse, disgust and excite his readers, and once again, his own ironic humour increases our enjoyment of his work.

A well-written, well-planned book which should suit all tastes, but especially those who like a tough determined Blake and a story with a strong plot. I recommend it to all old readers. Mr. McNeilly deserves our congratulations on his novel. Congratulations should also be extended to cover designers H. Cortiella and S. Barany for the clever design of this book.

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## HOW THEY BEGAN NO. 17

This month's cover brings you the first issue of "RED ARROW"  
one of the popular Thomson papers.

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# NELSON LEE COLUMN

Conducted by JACK WOOD

I was wondering where on earth an idea was going to come from for future C.D. articles; and then, in answer to my thoughts, the postman brought a bundle of manuscripts from various readers, forwarded by our editor-in-chief.

From the pile, I picked out the work of a new contributor, Ross Woods - or as she may be better known to some of us - Mrs. Jack Trevor Story. Welcome to the Column, and here's hoping for more contributions from an obviously sympathetic author.

HANDFORTH FOR EVER !

By ROSS WOODS

As a staunch "Handforthian" I feel I simply can't allow Frank Lay's remarks about Edward Oswald (in *Controversial Echoes*, December C.D.) to pass unchallenged. For one thing (steady, Hamiltonians!) I resent the category - or should I say the company - in which Frank placed him. I liked the *MAGNET* stories but for me they were spoiled by the increasing dominance of Bunter. He seemed to absorb and overshadow all the other characters like a fat pale slug. There was nothing likeable about him. He was greedy, lazy, foolish, untruthful, untidy and dishonest; and it amazes me to this day that he has outlived in fiction so many worthy and much more interesting characters.

E.O.H. on the other hand, although he had many faults, had many redeeming qualities. Admittedly in the earlier stories he was represented as something of a braggart and a buffoon, with little to recommend him. But as Edwy's stories mellowed and gained strength, so did Handy. Although still too ready with his fists other aspects of his character came into sharper focus and there were times when he revealed an astuteness which would have done credit to Nipper himself.

Even Handy's critics must, I feel sure, concede him a few good points. He was loyal, outspoken, almost painfully honest both in his actions and in his opinions, generous, and capable of great depth of feeling. He was always ready to do a friend (or an enemy) a good turn; he was courageous, almost foolhardy perhaps, and he never bore

a grudge. Although he ruled Church and McClure with the proverbial rod of iron he would go to amazing lengths on their behalf. Witness his determination to find his missing chums when Church 'died'; and the manner in which he tried to 'crook' himself so that Church could be given his place in the Test Match. (Only Handy could have conceived the idea of riding his bike over the edge of a quarry and expect to emerge with a sprained ankle instead of a broken neck!) Then, too, there was the occasion when he helped Fullwood - a one-time bitter enemy! - reinstate himself in the eyes of his fellows; and the way in which he defended Harry Gresham, the 'funk', when he first arrived at St. Frank's.

All Edwy's characters were 'real' - the only one I heartily dislike was Stanley Waldo (I still don't know why!) but I think Handforth and Co emerged as three of his best. As Handy gained in strength, so did Church and McClure. Whereas in the earlier series they were more or less nonentities and solely regarded as Handy's 'punch-bags'; they gradually became characters in their own right. Both had a keen sense of humour (they certainly needed it!) and a truly commendable loyalty to their leader. It was always Church who had the 'soft' heart when they quarrelled; always Mac who said 'Blow him!' and afterwards relented. And they pulled his leg with a ruthlessness which many times justified his fury.

I liked Nipper and Co - Nipper was one of my favourite characters - but his two friends, Tommy and Sir Montie, were simply names and no more compared with the inimitable Church and McClure. I still think they should have taken their place in the annuals of schoolboy friendships along with the much-vaunted Famous Five, the Terrible Three and the Fistical Four.

There were no half-measures about Edwy Searles Brooks stories - and no half-measures about his characters either. You either liked them or you didn't. And you either liked Edward Oswald Handforth or you hated him like poison.

Personally, I liked him!

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COLLECTORS' DIGEST WHO'S WHO. 1962 edition can now be obtained from the Digest Office. Price 2/6.

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WANTED: S.O.L. 58. B.F. (Green 'Un) 762, 764, 780, 1042, 1257, 1264, 1294 to 1298. 1 TIBERTREE ROAD, OLD HILL, STAFFS.

# THE ROUND TABLE



## BLAKIANA

Conducted by JOSEPHINE PACKMAN, 27 Archdale Road, East  
Dulwich, LONDON, S.E. 22.

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Unless any material is forthcoming in the week following publication of this issue, Blakiana next month will be drastically "reduced" and will continue so. No material - no Blakiana - it's as simple as that!

A number of readers have kindly suggested that further articles from my own pen would be welcome. I do thank them sincerely for the compliment, but I am afraid it cannot be done. I am a full-time Civil Servant - with the same domestic duties as a housewife. All this and preparing and typing "copy" for Blakiana (which I confess I enjoy, otherwise I would not have done it all these years) is as much as I can manage. All I ask is YOUR SUPPORT.

JOSIE PACKMAN

PRE WAR BLAKE  
By Julius Lennard

Bravo Syd Perry. I wish I could express myself like you! In the December C.D. you say "In those days the popular detective was based on Sherlock Holmes." Much as we all admire Sherlock Holmes, and with all respect to him and Dr. Watson, Sexton Blake and Tinker were far superior! I agree that most sleuths did go in pairs in those days, but - do you see the characters NOW that we saw THEN? I think we do NOT. Of all the characters in the modern Sexton Blake, how many do you recall now from, say, five years ago? Only last week I spoke to a man who used to read all the old papers - UNION JACK, MAGNET, GEM, N NELSON LEE, BOYS' REALM, etc. He was very interested when I told him about the C.D., and then I asked him which was his favourite paper. "The Union Jack", he replied. He went on to say that he hadn't read one for over twenty-five years - and then rattled off the names of the majority of the old characters! He never mentioned the "Modern Blake", and neither did I. Sexton Blake could never be "old-fashioned". Those old stories had characters that will ever be remembered, and - with all respect to the writers of the modern Blakes - I for one am satisfied that they do not come into the same class as some of those of the UNION JACK days. I still wouldn't give you two pence for the Sexton Blake Investigations, because, having read the modern and the old-time Sexton Blakes, I am still of the same opinion - the old is better than the new. Good luck to you, Syd Perry. Your opinion differs <sup>to mine</sup> ~~to mine~~ - but it adds to the spice of life. *from*

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ODDS AND ENDS  
By Victor Colby

1. GWYN EVANS:

An amusing yet most perceptive summing up of the haircut and shave merchant, is given by Gwyn Evans in his story "The Great Wax-Works Crime." (S.B.L. 2nd series No. 357, year 1932). Here it is:-

"Hairdressers are notoriously loquacious. They combine with their tonsorial ability a running commentary, ranging from the possible winner of tomorrow's 2.30 to a forecast of the movements of the Japanese troops beyond Hailum to Sunsing, with a few terse opinions regarding the Gold Standard, Disarmament and Mr. Lloyd George thrown in gratis.

"They mix lather with loquacity, brilliantine with banter, and

.....  
 pomade with prophecy. A genial and tolerant section of the human  
 fraternity, the barbers."

## 2. JOHN DRUMMOND:

Sexton Blake author of many exciting 3rd series S.B.L. stories, John Drummond is well known in the hard-covered book field by his real name, John Newton Chance.

An interesting revelation concerning this author was made just recently. On the fly leaf of his new book (The Crimes at Rillington Place, by John Newton Chance) is given a list of his works as John Newton Chance, and a list of four stories by him as JOHN LYMINGTON!

These "John Lymington" stories are all Science Fiction, and are entitled "Night of the Big Heat"; "The Giant Stumbles"; "The Grey Ones"; "The Coming of the Strangers."

Incidentally, the above-mentioned J. N. Chance story "Crimes at Rillington Place" is J.N.C.'s reconstruction of what he considers to be the true facts behind the sordid and dreadful story of Timothy Evans and Christie, and the frightful murders perpetrated at Rillington Place. John Newton Chance believes that Timothy Evans was guilty.

A thing which pleased me immensely was the observation on the inside panel of the dust wrappers:- "John Newton Chance, a distinguished novelist and crime writer of world repute ....." Evidence, is it not, of the wonderfully talented authors who have chronicled for us stories of our beloved Sexton Blake.

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## HAYTER AND HARDINGE: A STUDY IN LOBANGUS

By W. T. Thurbon

It is no easy thing for a writer to take over characters created by another author. Expert Hamiltonians can readily detect the work of the substitutes. Sherlock Holmes, D'Artagnan, Raffles, Bulldog Drummond; all have been essayed in recent years by later authors, but never with full success.

Through the courtesy of Gerry Allison and Dick Whorwell I have recently been enabled to read some of the Hardinge Lobangu tales in the Union Jack, and it is interesting to compare these with the work of Hayter, the creator of Lobangu. Hayter's own conception of Lobangu changed somewhat over the years. There is a difference between the earlier Lobangu of "The Slave Market" or the "Flying Column" and the later Lobangu of, say, "The Gold Reef" and particularly of "The Terms of the Wager." The early atmosphere, and Hayter never really lost this,

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was of Rider Haggard. Lobangu is something of Umslopogaas and something of Ignosi; though by the "Terms of the Wager" there is a dash of Bosambo about him. But if the character of Lobangu changed subtly he is still conceived in terms of Zululand. When one turns to Hardinge, at once the whole background is changed. Here is the full flavour of Edgar Wallace's "Sanders of the River" tales. Indeed, but for a trivial scene in "The Tree of Evil" between Lobangu and Sixpence, based on an incident in "Allan Quartermain" one would never realise that Hardinge had read Haggard.

"Ex Africa semper aliquid novi". To Hayter Africa was still the dark continent in whose secret recesses were to be found lost cities and ancient civilizations - those of us who remember the 1920's will recall the tales still rife of the possibility of finding prehistoric survivals in the forests. Hayter was a great writer of adventure stories. Some of the best tales of this kind in the old B.F.L. came from his pen. Zulu warfare, Slave trading, lost cities, treasure hunts; whaling; all these formed background for his Lobangu tales. He could be influenced by other writers (Conan Doyle's "Lost World" finds echoes in "The Long Trail" and the later "Forest of Ghosts") but his basic ingredients are Rider Haggardish. Hardinge is different. He wrote of the Africa of the 1930's and he wrote in the hey-day of the "Thriller". His Lobangu is not a Zulu warrior but a Jungle Chief like Bosambo; it is not lost mines or arab slavers that he faces but master criminals (black and white) using native ju-ju as cover for their grandiose plans. Hardinge uses Lobangu's dreams in "The Tree of Evil" but in a much more prosaic fashion than did Hayter, whose "red mist" and bloodstained steel (as in "The Island of Death") had the romantic and slightly uncanny touch that made Rider Haggard such a master.

A significant difference is the way Lobangu speaks. In Hayter it is "Inkoos" or "Untwana, my father." Hayter's Lobangu would never have addressed a District Commissioner as "Lord" as does Hardinge's Lobangu (Bosambo fashion) in "Monkey Men." Nor is Hardinge's Lobangu the cunning old war-wise warrior of the early tales. Hayter's Lobangu would never have fallen into the trap into which Hardinge's Lobangu falls in "The Tree of Evil."

Another significant difference is in the character of Sir Richard Losely. The Governor of Musardu, the wealthy explorer of Hayter, is very different from the Commissioner of "The Tree of Evil." Hayter's Losely is primarily "Sir Henry Curtis," Hardinge's "Mr. Commissioner Sanders."

Of minor characters Hayter distinctly has the edge of Hardinge.

"M'Wama" is but a name in Hardinge. In Hayter he is a distinctly well-drawn character. Other well-drawn subsidiary characters appear frequently in Hayter; e.g. Jose the guide in "The Long Trail" and Trott the mining engineer in "The Gold Reef." Hardinge's distinctive minor character is "Sixpence", and here, I think, a character of a type Hayter could not have drawn. Hardinge stresses his master criminals, male and female, including Mexican Rose. A major difference between the two authors is the introduction of heroines into Hardinge's tales. Hayter found no need for them in his adventure stories - writing in the era of the thriller Hardinge had to introduce them. A noticeable omission from Hardinge is Pedro. Hayter always made great play with "My Lord, the King of Beasts" - very often in the lighter scenes, particularly where Pedro and Lobangu feast on jam in "The Long Trail." Hayter as he developed his style introduced a light - and on occasion almost "slangy" - touch and a neat sense of humour, particularly in the conversations in stories like "The Gold Reef," "The Treasure of Sonora" and "The Terms of the Wager." This distinctive flavour is missing from the Hardinge tales. Hardinge's adventures are quick moving and his battle pieces quite good; but he lacks the Hayter touch in the scouting work of Blake and Lobangu, and the interest in shooting shown in such tales as "The Flying Column". "The Long Trail" and "The Gold Reef." And one misses also the echo of "King Solomon's Mines" shown in Hayter's references to Winchester and Express rifles.

Each to his own - fundamentally Hayter and Hardinge wrote of different worlds. Hayter wrote mainly of a pre-1914 world when the wars of Zululand were the memories of many of his older readers and the Matabele and Mashona wars were recent memories. Hardinge wrote twenty years later in a different world and of a different Africa where already even if it was not realised, the "winds of change" had begun to blow. Hardinge would never have written "The Slave Market" or "The Long Trail", Hayter would never have written "The Land of Lost Men."

No doubt it was worth while to try to re-create Lobangu. But I doubt whether it could ever have been successfully done. In a long series like the Sexton Blake stories the main character can be groomed to fit the passing years. I wonder how many people who came first to the Sexton Blake Library either in the late 1930's or, particularly, since the "new look" Library would care to read stories like "In the Shadow of the Plague" or "On the Flood Tide", or even go back further to the first S.E. tales in the Marvel and Union Jack of 1893 and 1894? But if the main character changes it does not necessarily follow that the subsidiary characters who fitted into one decade will fit easily



into another.

In passing, however, one is tempted to wonder what a successor to Hardinge would have to do with Lobangu today? No doubt, by now, "Sixpence" is President of the Republic of Etbaia (within or without the Commonwealth?) But where is Lobangu, and where is Sir Richard Losely? Two old men fighting their battles over again in the Lodge of Lobangu's English estate - all that the Tax Inspector has left them? A sad thought. No. On the whole, let us keep our memories of Hayter.

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SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY TITLES AND AUTHORS (3rd Series) (Contd.)

No. 102	Sergeant Gray's Crime	A. J. Hunter
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\* \* \* \* \*

RESULT OF OUR MARCH COMPETITION

The Prize Winners in this contest were - R. J. GODSAVE, Leytonstone, whose entry was as follows:-

The Nelson Lee said to the Monster: "You've had the best years of my life, you beast!"

and H. HOLMES, Barrow-in-Furness, whose entry was as follows:-

The Magnet said to the Gem: "You've no grouse, chum! You did 'go out' in Triumph."

\* \* \* \* \*

APRIL COMPETITION

Pedro is Sexton Blake's famous dog. Select the five adjectives which you consider would best describe the sagacious animal, using the letter P-E-D-R-O to start each respective adjective. Jot them down on a postcard or a sheet of paper, and post to the editor. Your editor has jotted down the five adjectives, starting with these letters, which he himself considers most appropriate. The prizes will go to the two readers whose list comes nearest to the editor's own list.

One successful competitor will receive a new volume for his library. The other will receive a half-year's subscription to the Sexton Blake Library - that is, the two new volumes each month of this famous Library will be sent to him for six consecutive months.

\* \* \* \* \*

YE OLDE CYNIQUE INN - A bore is a man who telleth you all the things about himself that thou would'st fain tell him about thyself.

# HAMILTONIANA



Chums again !

## FAMOUS SERIES

No. 18

A picture from "Fallen Fortunes" a story in the early Vernon-Smith, Redwing series. The Bounder had thrown away the friendship of the sailorman's son. To regain it, Smithy pretended to lose his wealth. A fine, powerful story in 1918.

Artist - C. H. Chapman.

# ODD MAN OUT

A Story of Tom Merry & Co of St. Jim's

"Let's take Talbot!" said Tom Merry.

He was standing at the window of Study No. 10 in the Shell passage at St. Jim's. Down below him in the sunny quadrangle he could see Kildare, the captain of the school, strolling with Monteith, the head prefect of the New House. The seniors would find plenty on which to reminisce on this last half-holiday of the Spring term.

Classes had ended about ten minutes earlier, and ere long the dinner bell would be ringing. The Terrible Three had met in their study to make plans for the afternoon. So close to the end of term the football season had ended, and cricket had not yet begun.

Tom had received an end-of-term tip from Miss Priscilla Fawcett, and Lowther was set on a visit to the cinema. For once, Tom and Manners had decided to let Lowther call the tune, though, as a result of his tip, Tom would pay the piper. Funds for one meant funds for all in Study No. 10.

Tom Merry turned round from the window. Manners, seated on the study table, had a mildly sardonic expression on his face. Monty Lowther, in the armchair by the fireplace, was scowling.

Tom looked from one to the other.

"I said 'Let's take Talbot!'" he repeated.

"Why not?" agreed Manners. Whimsically he regarded Lowther in the armchair.

"Why so?" queried Lowther.

"Well —" Tom Merry pursed his lips. "We haven't asked old Talbot out with us the whole term —"

"And why should we ask old Talbot out with us?" enquired Lowther. "Is this study expected to provide entertainment for Talbot? He's got plenty of tin, and he knows his way around."

"Oh, rats!" said Tom uneasily. "You know the chap likes to come along with us sometimes."

"You mean he likes to go along with you. He doesn't bother a tinker's cuss about Manners and me," remarked Lowther

irritably.

"Bosh!" Tom Merry ran a hand into his curly hair, possibly in an effort to find inspiration. "Surely you don't mind asking Talbot along, Monty. Everybody likes old Talbot. You know they do!"

"I know they do." Lowther rose to his feet and thrust his hands into his trousers pockets. "Plenty of fellows would be glad to pal with him, but they aren't what he wants. He wants our pal."

Tom Merry grunted with vexation. Manners swung his legs unconcernedly as he sat on the edge of the table.

"This study calls itself the Terrible Three," went on Lowther. "Talbot would like to make it the Ferocious Four. Maybe you would, too."

Manners chuckled softly. He slipped from the table.

"Can it, Monty!" he said, "Run along and ask Talbot if you like, Tommy. I daresay he'd be pleased to come with us — we're such nice chaps — and it won't hurt us for once to extend the happy family."

Tom Merry regarded Lowther rather anxiously.

"Is it all right with you, Monty?"

Lowther shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, it's all right with me, so long as he doesn't expect to come it too often. In any case, you're the host. You're paying the exes. I only hope he won't want you to wheel him in a pram."

Tom Merry laughed involuntarily.

"If he does, I'll take Taggles' wheelbarrow. Less embarrassing than a pram. Thanks, kids, then I'll ask him. Just for this occasion. He might not want to come, of course."

"Some hopes!" grunted Lowther.

Tom Merry moved across to the door.

"I meant he might have something else fixed for the afternoon."

"If he has, he'll cancel it. He won't miss the chance to go somewhere with you," replied Lowther.

"Nuts! I'll ask him at any rate," said Tom.

He left the study. For a moment he paused outside No. 9 which Talbot shared with Gore and Skimpole. After Monty Lowther's reaction to the idea, Tom was dubious about giving the invitation to Talbot, but he made up his mind, tapped on the study door, and looked in.

Talbot was there, seated at the open window, reading a book. Neither of his study mates was present. His handsome face lit up in a bright smile of welcome as he saw Tom Merry. Talbot was always glad to see Tom Merry.

As Tom had said a few minutes earlier, everybody liked Talbot, yet he had no particularly close chum. Older than most of his form-fellows in the Shell, sensible and serious beyond his years, Talbot could have been described as everybody's friend and nobody's pal. For Tom Merry he had an affection and regard which went very deep, and Tom sensed it and reciprocated it. But the Junior Captain of St. Jim's, who was Talbot's ideal, had his own pals, and Talbot knew, though he was incapable of jealousy, that he could never rank first in Tom's esteem.

Tom Merry crossed the study and sat down on the window-seat beside Talbot.

"Doing anything this afternoon?" he enquired.

Talbot shook his head.

"Nothing in particular. I'm always at a loose end when the games are off. Why?"

"My guardian has sent me an end-of-term tip. We're blueing it in an afternoon at the flicks, with tea at the Sun-shop afterwards. Monty always likes to waste an afternoon in a cinema, and we're giving him his head for once. We wondered if you'd like to join us. My treat, of course."

"I'd like it a lot," said Talbot at once. "Let me pay my whack, though."

"Rot!" ejaculated Tom. "I told you it's my treat. All right then. Start immediately after tiffin. Meet you at the gates."

He rose to his feet and grinned with pleasure.

"It's tiffin-time now," he added as a bell rang in the distance.

Talbot closed his book and stood up.

"How are we going to Waxland, Tom?"

Train, bus or bikes?"

"Bikes!" said Tom. "We can leave them at the station while we go to the cinema."

. . . .

The Terrible Three were waiting at the gates at half-past one, and Talbot soon joined them. The four juniors mounted their machines and rode briskly along the Sussex lanes, where the trees were already a picture in their spring growth of leaves.

By common consent Tom Merry cycled beside Talbot, and Manners and Lowther, side by side, rode close behind. Tom and Talbot chatted cheerily as they drove at their pedals. Lowther had been civil to Talbot, but had little to say. Though he whistled softly as he cycled, the expression on his face was set. Several times Manners glanced in his direction. There was the trace of a cynical grin on Manners' lips.

At last he said: "Snap out of it, Monty."

Lowther turned his head, and stopped whistling.

"What do you mean?"

Manners slowed down a fraction and Lowther followed suit. Without noticing, Tom and Talbot drew away from them.

"You know what I mean," said Manners. "Chuck sulking. Don't spoil the afternoon for all of us just because you're ratty that old Talbot's with Tom for once."

"I'm not sulking," retorted Lowther. "I don't care a hoot whom Tom likes to take with him. He can take Trimble or Mellish for all I care, if he feels a yearning for their company."

Manners smiled broadly. He lifted his hand and pulled his cap tighter on his head against the breeze.

"If you're not sulking you're giving a darned good imitation of someone who is," he commented. "It's a bit childish to be jealous of Talbot. He only comes with us once in a blue moon, and he's a decent chap."

"Who's jealous of Talbot?" demanded Lowther angrily.

"It looks as though you are."

"Well, I'm not!"

"I'm glad to hear it," said Manners.

"Come on. Let's put on a spurt."

The two Shell fellows pedalled hard, and came up behind Tom Merry and Talbot

with a rush.

At Wayland railway station, all four dismounted. After padlocking their machines in the racks provided for the purpose, they made their way up River Lane, and came out into the High Street not far from the Wayland Ritz. Tom Merry, Manners and Talbot chatted, but Monty Lowther was very quiet. He replied in monosyllables to remarks addressed to him. Once or twice Tom Merry looked at him thoughtfully, but Talbot seemed to notice nothing amiss. Manners went out of his way to be cordial.

At the cinema, Tom Merry took tickets for the circle. The performance had not yet commenced, but advertisements were being shown in the dimly-lit theatre. Talbot was ushered into the two first, and Tom followed him to sit beside him.

"You next!" murmured Manners to Lowther, but Lowther stood back with a gesture. Manners shrugged his shoulders and went into the row to sit beside Tom.

It was a good programme, and the boys enjoyed it. Lowther who loved anything connected with films, seemed to have gained his good humour during the show, and joined in the enthusiastic chatter of the others as they quitted the cinema.

They had a merry tea at the Wayland Bunshop, and it was getting towards six o' clock when they were strolling along the High Street again.

Outside the Post Office Talbot paused.

"I want some stamps and a postal-order," he remarked. "You fellows meander on to the station and I'll soon catch you up."

"Oh, we'll wait for you," said Tom. "For goodness sake let's walk on," ejaculated Lowther irritably. "We don't want to stand here waiting about like three stuffed dummies. Talbot's not paralysed. He can easily catch us up."

"Yes, don't wait!" said Talbot hastily. "I'll join you before you get to the station."

He entered the post office. Lowther was already walking on, and Tom glanced at Manners who was smiling wryly.

"Give Monty his head," advised Manners. "He's got a mood on, today. Talbot will catch up with us."

Tom Merry nodded, and he and Manners

followed Lowther.

A few hundred yards on they turned into River Lane, which was a short cut to the station. Even the High Street had not been very busy at that time so late in the afternoon, and River Lane was deserted. It was not a prepossessing thoroughfare, being flanked with dingy warehouses. There was a pavement on one side of the road only.

Monty Lowther was still striding ahead, and Tom Merry and Manners hurried to overtake him. The cynical smile was still lurking on Manners' lips, but Tom's brows were knitted.

Key ahead of them, three young men had come into sight round a corner and they came sauntering along the footpath towards Lowther. As Monty approached them, the three were talking together.

All three of them were in need of a haircut, and wore bushy sideburns. All wore tight trousers and leather jackets. They appeared to be in their late teens - young toughs who did as little work as possible in the day time and spent their evenings hanging around snack bars or making themselves a nuisance in the streets.

"Those three members of the great unwashed look mischievous," murmured Tom, and Manners nodded. The two Shell fellows increased their pace to catch up with Lowther.

As Monty Lowther reached them, the three toughs spread themselves across the narrow pavement, came to a standstill and leered at him.

Lowther did not step into the road. He too, came to a stop and Tom and Manners ran up.

"Do you want all the path?" demanded Lowther.

"Do you want all the parf, Rufus?" enquired the young man on the inside. He had a magnificent crop of unsightly pipples. He turned his head of untidy black hair to the fellow in the middle. Rufus was a burly young man with masses of unhealthy fat on his anatomy. He must have weighed sixteen stone.

"Most of it, I fink, Nicky," said Rufus.

"Let the dear little college boys get by," admonished Nicky. "You're taking up all the parf, Rufus. Must be your widf!" He guffawed.

"Young snobs from the swank school," observed Rufus. "One of these days the government will close up all them places, so we all get educated alike."

With a sudden movement he snatched Tom Merry's cap and threw it out into the road.

Tom Merry's eyes blazed, and Manners gripped his leader's shoulder tightly. Discretion was the better part of valour, though whether trouble could be avoided was a question. These young men were out for mischief, and the odds were heavy against the three schoolboys. Tom cast an eye down the road. Nobody else was in sight.

The fellow on the outside drew on one side, and Monty Lowther made to pass him. Suddenly Rufus grasped his companion and shoved him violently towards Lowther. The schoolboy received a terrific jolt, and spun round to fall full length in the gutter.

"I slipped," said Rufus. "My apologies, Norman."

"Don't mention it, dear old chap," replied Norman. He was grinning.

"You pimply louts!" said Manners. He bent down to give Lowther a helping hand, and Norman kicked out at him with all his might. Manners, in his turn, crashed down into the road.

Tom Merry sprang forward, casting discretion to the wind. A fist like a lump of iron crashed on one of Rufus' chins, and that fat young man staggered back, swearing luridly.

Tom felt a big hand take a great handful of his curly hair, and his head was jerked back. He roared and twisted impotently. Rufus came forward, and his ham-like fists struck the schoolboy again and again.

But Manners and Lowther were on their feet now, and they flung themselves into the fray. Nicky released his grip on Tom Merry's hair.

The Terrible Three had been in some mighty scraps in their time, but never anything like this. The three louts fought with their hands and kicked and bit and scratched, using all their superior weight and strength. One of them brought a knee up into Manners' stomach and the Shell fellow doubled up with a

gasp. As a knee came in his direction, Tom dodged and struck at a pimply face. Nicky sat down with a bump. He was up again in a second, mad fury glaring from his eyes.

Pucky and muscular though they were, the Terrible Three were hopelessly at a disadvantage. Three schoolboys against three men who did not care how they used their strength had little chance.

Tom Merry, the best junior boxer at St. Jim's, was holding his own fairly well against the plump Rufus, but Manners and Lowther were receiving a severe mauling from the other two. In a matter of moments the three boys would probably have sustained serious injuries at the hands of the three hooligans had help not been at hand.

But help was at hand. There was a pattering of feet, and Talbot threw himself into the fight. Another stout heart and an extra pair of fists made all the difference.

"There's four-ov-emi!" yelled Norman. The next moment he staggered under a smashing uppercut from Talbot.

"Le'sscram!" panted Rufus.

He backed away from Tom Merry and turned and ran. Breathing heavily, Tom turned to give aid in dealing with the others. But Norman and Nicky were running as hard as they could in the other direction from that which their friend had taken.

The battle was over, and the four heroes of the Shell were left in peace to nurse their wounds.

. . . .

The matter had to be reported to Mr. Railton, of course. The Shell fellows had arrived back at St. Jim's late for call- over, and they had to explain their battered faces, their bruises, and their torn clothing. When they left the Housemaster's study, Mr. Railton was undecided whether to report the affair to the police.

Later that evening, the Terrible Three were seated at their table in Study No. 10. Prep had to be done, even by battered heroes. Manners had turned the key in the door to keep out inquisitive juniors who wanted to hear an account of the fray. The story of the afternoon's adventure had spread quickly through the lower school.

"You know," said Tom Merry soberly, rubbing a jaw in which every tooth felt

loosened, "I think it was jolly lucky that Talbot was with us this afternoon. If he hadn't come along as he did —"

"You're right!" agreed Manners. He glanced at Monty Lowther.

"Talbot backed up well, of course," said Lowther carelessly. "So would any chap have done. Do you think that Talbot did any more than Blake would have done — or Gussy?"

"Of course not!" Tom Merry wrinkled his boyish brow and winced as he did so. "That's rather beside the point. Talbot was there and they weren't."

"If ifs and ans were pots and pans," said Lowther reflectively. He threw down his pen, and leaned back in his chair, passing his hand tenderly over a painful shoulder. "If Talbot hadn't come with us, the chance are we should never have been in River Lane at the psychological moment and would probably never have met up with that gang of louts."

"You're splitting hairs, and you know it!" said Tom Merry tartly. "Talbot came with us because I asked him — and I'm glad that he did."

"And so am I!" observed Manners. He touched a bruise under his.

"Well I'm not!" snapped Lowther. "I like an afternoon with my own pals without an outsider coming along as well."

Manners' bruised face wore a twisted smile. Tom was frowning, but after a moment or two the frown relaxed. He grinned faintly.

"Monty, old chap, you're an awful silly ass sometimes," he said gently. He added softly: "Son, thou art ever with me and all that I have is thine!"

Lowther stared at him.

"What's that gabble?" he demanded. Tom chuckled.

"I was thinking of the Head's sermon in chapel last Sunday. About the silly noodle who was very human, and who was jealous when his father was so happy to see the prodigal son come home."

Monty lifted his eyes in exaggerated unconcern to the ceiling.

"I'm no prodigal son!" he protested.

"Of course not!" agreed Manners. "You're just a modern version of the silly noodle."

#### Coming Soon

CHARLES HAMILTON and  
the TRAPPS HOLMES Papers  
By W.O.G. Lofts

### CONTROVERSIAL ECHOES

#### NO. 55. THE SUBSTANCE AND THE SHADOW

ROGER JENKINS: I agree with you that Pentelow's style is unmistakable, but I think that E. S. Brook's stories in the Gem can also be recognised in many cases, not so much by their style as by their subject matter. If you come across a story that is removed from reality one stage further, the chances are that it will be by the author of the Nelson Lee. Collectors who possess Gems 998 and 999 (or S.B.L. 208) can see a typical example: who but Edwy Searles Brooks would have described how St. Jim's was besieged in 1927 by Russians who were trying to kidnap one of the pupils in the school? And are we to praise him for his originality or condemn him for writing a story so utterly out of place in the Gem?

TOM HOPPERTON: The perfect crime could not be detected and neither could your hypothetical perfect imitation, so we are not likely to know if either was committed. Substitute-writing, with its trading under another man's pen-name on another man's characters, was a dead-end, stop-gap sort of job, continually debarred from the only real stimulus, that of genuine creative effort. Small wonder that only editor Pentelow seemed to enter into the role with gusto. The others saw no future in becoming Hamilton parrots.

We are perhaps still not rid of this substitute business, for I noted with some mis-givings a couple of statements that "Other writers will take over the characters."



If this refers to the stage and T.V. plays it is neither here nor there, but Charles Hamilton himself could not reproduce his happiest effects in the Bunter books. Comparison of the concluding stories in the Gem with those of the pre-1920 days shows more clearly than anything how expansive his style became. He developed it to suit the unlimited elbow-room in the Magnet, but when he was restricted to 50,000 words he was in somewhat the same position as the beef-extract people who assure us that there is sirloin in every jar.

RON CROLLIE: Quite a number of articles have been written over the years concerning the substitute stories written by Pentelow, Clive Fenn, Brooks, Cook, Hedley O'Mant, Michael Poole, Stanley Austin, and, of course, G.R. Samways. It would seem that somebody must have bothered a little more than a "tinker's cuss" about these people, even if it were only the writers of these articles. Of course, a substitute story of Greyfriars of St. Jim's cannot begin to compare with one by Charles Hamilton. Nevertheless I cannot quite accept the assertion that the substitute stories left no impression at all. I have the feeling that many C.D. readers beside myself could summarise the plots of say, "Sportsmen All", "Skinner, the Skipper", "The Boy from South Africa", "Linley Minor", "The Grammar School Mascot", "The Schoolboy Reporter" and "Every Inch a Hero", provided, of course, that their memories were jogged by revealing the name of the central character in each case.

DEREK ADLEY: I was surprised to read that you did not know whether or not E.S. Brooks has ever been credited with having written most of the Gems towards the end of the substitute run. I have always believed this to be a fact because of what you wrote in the 5th C.D. Annual. To refresh your memory - on page 3 you state that you believe Brooks wrote most of the Gems from 1926 - 1931, and on page 8 you more or less accept this to be a fact. From then onwards I believe this has been generally accepted to be true by many collectors of the Gem. Perhaps there may have been an earlier statement by someone else about this subject.

Now we hear that Francis Warwick was generally responsible for most of the stories in this period. I feel it is of interest to collectors as to who wrote the substitute yarns. Whether they were good or bad is beside the point. If by a skilful and dedicated writer you mean a writer of higher accomplishments in the writing world, such as Warren Bell or Wodehouse, I don't believe they could have done a better job than the best of the sub writers - namely, G.R. Samways.

ERIC FAYNE adds: Our contributor above has jolted my memory. I had long forgotten the gist of that old article of mine in an early Annual when our study of the old papers was young. My limited information at that time came from the late Herbert Leckenby, but it is eleven years since that article was written, and our basic knowledge was slight then, compared with what it has become with the passing of time.

We must not overlook the fact that, between early 1926 and the start of the reprints, nearly 300 stories appeared in the Gem. It could still be fallacy to assume that Francis Warwick "wrote most of them." He could have written a large number and still have left plenty to be credited to Mr. Brooks or other writers. At any rate, I regret the false impression I may have given in that old article of mine of more than a decade ago.

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### WHO WAS?

A collectors' Digest supporter, Councillor Patrick Murray, Hon. Curator of the Museum of Childhood, Edinburgh, recently wrote a delightful appreciation of Frank Richards in "The Scotsman". Mr. Murray ended his article thus:

"Though Hamilton is not yet considered the best of school-story writers, he is certainly the most unusual, and as all the British world admits, certainly the most memorable."

For our part, we enquire - If Hamilton was not the best of school writers, then who was? Wodehouse wrote some good school stories over fifty years ago, but we would hardly class him as a school story writer. His fame has come in other spheres of literature. Coke wrote a handful of excellent school stories. Cleaver produced a mixed bunch, some good, some indifferent. Read wrote about three excellent stories of school life at the end of the last century. Avery was prolific in school tales for the younger reader, but he wrote nothing memorable. Admirers of Brooks might put him forward as a candidate, but much of his work had the flavour of adventure and detection.

Charles Hamilton devoted his lifetime to the most popular school stories in the world of fiction. His writings were devoured by school-boys and adults for sixty years. When he died, countless thousands grieved. If he was not the best writer of school stories, then we ourselves are stumped. Who Was?

\* \* \* \* \*

OTTO MAURER seeks Vane St. John's "King Pharaoh's Tower" and "Out with the Pirates of Old"; also information about the Victorian publisher George Harrison, 170 Fleet Street (NOT E. Harrison of Salisbury Court).

WRITE OTTO MAURER, BOX "P", c/o Collectors' Digest Office.

WANTED: Most issue between 400 and 500. GEMS. Most issue between 772 and 879. Also Nos. 935, 953, 954, 956, 975, 980, 984, 985, 989, 990, 992, 993, 998, 1129, 1150. MAGNETS 45, 52, 134, 136, 141, 195, 205, 237, 238, 299, 277, 318, 319, 353, 400, 417, 442, 435, 439, 469, 706, 719, 752, 773, 751, 752, 762, 763, 764, 809. Most issues between 821 and 890. 900, 921, 924, 925, 936, 938, 940, 942, 943, 946, 949, 951, 965, 967, 988, 996. POPULARS 183, 190, 370, 385, 452, 455, 466, 474. Your price paid or liberal exchanges. Volumes bought containing any of the above issues. Good condition essential. ERIC FAYNE, EXCELSIOR HOUSE, GROVE ROAD, SURBITON, SURREY.

MAGNET, GEM, S.O.L. Pre-war Film Magazines and all types of pre-war magazines and Annuals wanted and for sale. (Good prices paid). Offers for Union Jack Detective Supplement. Bound in two volumes, 1922 and 1925. Quiver 1900, beautifully bound. LAWRENSON, "CRAIGIEBURN", BOSSINEY ROAD, TINTAGEL.

WANTED: In good condition S.O.L's 19, 193, 195, 236 and 322. REV. A. G. POUND, 68 FINNEMORE ROAD, BIRMINGHAM, 9.

WANTED: Rockets, Sport and Adventures, also Triumphs (1924-28). Cash or exchanges from U.J's, Thriller, Modern Boys, Nelson Lees (1927-33), offered. JOHN KING, 5 WHITE HART LANE, LONDON, N.22.

# Old Boys' Book Club

## MIDLAND

Meeting held February 27th, 1962

During the ten years or more of existence, the Midland Club has been lucky in having some very important and interesting people as visitors from time to time. Twice Mr. Charles Chapman has been the guest of honour and on another occasion he brought along Mr. C. M. Down. Herbert Leckenby made two visits and we have been graced with the presence of his successor Eric Fayne. Other notable O.B.B.C. personalities who have attended our meetings have been Don Webster, Norman Pragnell, Frank Case, Len Paekman and Bill Lofts. But like the other Clubs, it was our dream ambition to have the GOM himself sometimes, Charles Hamilton as guest of honour. Now that dream will never be realised, but we have some consolation in being able to say that at our last meeting we were proud to welcome the great author's niece, Mrs. Una Hamilton Wright. Brought along and introduced by Jack Corbett, Mrs. Hamilton Wright gave us some very interesting details of the career of her famous Uncle. Everyone present enjoyed her visit and it was our fervent wish that it will not be the last one.

There was no programme. For this notable occasion the Chairman had thrown the meeting open. After refreshments there were quite a number of old boys books for sale cheap (and I mean cheap). Jack Corbett had brought along S.O.L.'s, Magnets and Gems and three Holiday Annuals. Those present were apart from Mrs. Hamilton Wright, Mrs. Winifred Brown, Miss Win Partridge, Messrs. J. Corbett, T.W. Porter, E.J. Davey, Ray Bennett, J. Tomlinson, J.F. Bellfield and the Secretary,

HARRY BROSTER.

## MERSEYSIDE

Meeting held March 10th, 1962

As anticipated, there was a fuller attendance at this meeting, a pleasant contrast to the February get-together, and we were more than pleased to see the return of Norman Pragnell and John Farrell, after their recent indisposition. The absence of such regulars is felt keenly in the section's activities; the meetings do not seem the same without them.

We got off to an early start with the Secretary's report, followed by the usual discussions on a variety of club and section matters, and the planning of future programmes. The sale of a number of surplus library books kept the company busy for quite a while, and it was resolved to purchase replacements, as far as our modest funds permit. After refreshments, once again laid on by the indefatigable Mrs. Windsor, we were treated to a reading by John Farrell - this was from a Gem story published in 1911, and John gave a really capital rendering of his subject, which was mainly the description of a boxing match between two gentlemen bearing the colourful names of "The Chicken" and "Nemo". Naturally, the right man won! Another reading, by Norman, was unfortunately "crowded out" due to lack of time, but we look forward to hearing it next month. The evening ended with

the usual library business, and all present departed well satisfied, if regretful that travel difficulties make a nine o'clock finish necessary.

Next meeting, April 8th, 6 p.m. at Bill Windsor's.

FRANK CASE.

#### NORTHERN

##### Meeting held Saturday, March 10th.

Despite the miserable evening, 18 members arrived to take part in what proved to be one of the most enjoyable meetings ever held in Hyde Park Road.

Geoffrey Wilde, Chairman, welcomed one of our new members making his first appearance - Edmund Dinsdale of Bramhope. Another new postal member, Ian Menzies of Sudbury, Ontario, Canada, has also enrolled.

Gerry Allison then announced the out-standing news that P. G. Wodehouse, the world-famous author, has accepted the Presidency of the Northern Section. This event has already made the headlines in Northern papers, and Mr. Wodehouse's charming letter of acceptance of "the honour - or honor, as we say over here" was read out. Copies have been sent to postal members and to the Editor of the Collectors' Digest.

The speaker for the evening was Breeze Bentley. In announcing him, the chairman referred to the recent disastrous gales which have swept the North, but said "this Breeze from Bradford was always welcome." And after hearing the talk that followed on 'Characters in the Remove at Grayfriars' we all fully endorsed Geoff's remark. It is not often one fully realises what the word 'spell-bound' means!

Refreshments and conversation brought a happy evening to a close. In the regrettable absence of our secretary through illness, this report is written by

NORTHERNER III.

#### LONDON

A happy and jolly meeting at the Goodrich Road School meeting on Saturday, March 17th, even if the worthy host Horace Roberts, was unable to be present owing to indisposition. However some of us spoke to him over the phone and all those present signed the 'Get Well' card. We do sincerely hope Horace will soon be his old self once again.

Roger Jenkins reported a considerable increase in Hamiltonian Library business as a result of the recent advertisement in the C.D. There are now over 90 names on the books, about 50 of whom are active borrowers.

John Wernham was unanimously elected a life honorary member for his generous efforts on behalf of the Hamiltonian Library.

A humorous reading by Millicent Lyle about Prout and Coker from the Magnet story 'The Remove Detectives' was greatly enjoyed. Four fine quizzes, including a St. Patrick's Irish Quiz were also enjoyed by the excellent attendance, Frank Case arriving straight from the Liverpool v Leyton Football Match at "Big Side", nice to see you Frank.

Bill and Mrs. Norris will look after us next month, Sunday, April 15th at 71 Olive Road, Cricklewood, London, N.W.2. Phone GLadstone 8148. Kindly let Bill know if intending to be present.

Suitable thanks to the two ladies in charge of the catering from Don Webster concluded a very happy meeting.

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

#### HORACE ROBERTS

On Saturday, 17th March, the London Club met at Dulwich as the guests of Mr. Horace Roberts. Members learned with regret that Horace had suffered a heart attack and was too ill to attend. All the same, grievously ill though he was, he managed to

.....  
 speak to a few members who telephoned to him. Each member of the Club, that evening, put his signature to a "Get Well" card for Horace. Less than two days later he was dead. He died in his chair on Monday morning March 19th. It is a great loss to the London Club, for he was a man of keen enthusiasm and took a great interest in all the various enterprises. He was the club's Nelson Lee Librarian.

Horace, who was a retired Civil Servant, was in his later seventies. He will be sorely missed.

On behalf of all its readers, COLLECTORS' DIGEST expresses deepest sympathy to Mrs. Betty Roberts and the family.

The funeral took place at Streatham Cemetery on Wednesday, 21st March and Mr. Leonard Packman attended, representing the O.S.B.C.

GEMS 1935 - 2 bound volumes, mint condition, offers. Bunter Books, mint copies, 27 titles available. Tom Merry Annuals and Billy Bunter's Own. Target Book for Boys, 8/6d. Raymond Glendennings Book of Sport for Boys, 1960 and 61. 5/- each. All contain Richards stories. R.A.H. Goodyear The Hope of His House. v.g.d. 5/-. Finnermore Three School Chums, mod. ed. fine. 3/-. Finnermore Teddy Lester in the Fifth, ed. fine 3/-. Gunby Hadath, Never Say Die, v.g.d. 5/-. In and Out of School, chosen by Buckridge fine in d.w. 10/-. Berkeley Gray, The Lost World of Everest 3/-. Reginald Browne, Fortesque of the Fourth, fine. 4/-. Gwyn Evans, The Man with the Scarlet Skull, good reading copy of scarce book 12/6d. Brereton, A Hero of Lucknow ill Rainey v.good 5/-. G. Manville Fenn in the Mahdi's Grasp, ill Lancelot Speed gd. 5/-. Halliwell Sutcliffe Under the White Cockade, ill Townsend v.g.d. 5/-. Many volumes Chatterbox, Captain, Scout, Champion Annuals, Boys of the Empire, Young Men of Great Britain, etc., for sale or exchange.

VERNON LAY, 52 OAKLEIGH GARDENS, WHETSTONE, LONDON, N.20.

WANTED: S.O.L.'s 42, 258. Nelson Lee No. 130 (old series). Your price paid plus postage. The advertiser has some S.O.L.'s, Nelson Lees, Gems and Magnets for exchange only.  
 BRIAN HOLT, BRITISH EMBASSY, REYKJAVIK, ICELAND.

WANTED: Sexton Blake Libraries 1st series Nos. 11, 17, 37, 105, 109, 111, 198, 201, 219. 2nd series Nos. 293, 296, 306, 422, 474, 485, 520, 667. Union Jacks 689, 691, 693, 702, 704, 725, 736, 740, 785, 786, 788, 793, 798, 800, 802, 803, 809, 811, 813, 814, 818, 104, 1064, 1098, 1390.

MRS. J. PACKMAN, 27, ARCHDALE ROAD, EAST DULWICH, LONDON, S.E.22.

WANTED: S.O.L.'S Nos. 60 and 68. Magnets Nos. 829, 862-865, 867, 868, 874, 869, 879, 884, 886, 897, 900.

DR. R. WILSON, 100 BROOMFIELD ROAD, GLASGOW, N.1.

EXCHANGES: Magnets 528 - 634. Populars 10, 11, 14. Exchanges or moderate prices. 24 Bunter books; 142 U.J. Supplements; Dick Books 1853; adult periodicals 1910-1929. s.a.e. DAVIDSON, 252, CATHEDRAL STREET, GLASGOW.

NEW FEATURE STARTING IN NEXT MONTH'S COLLECTORS' DIGEST

## DANNY'S DIARY

Danny is a schoolboy of exactly fifty years ago. There is nothing sentimental about Danny, but we think the entries in his Diary may touch your heart-strings. We hope you are going to like Danny. FASCINATING NEW FEATURE - STARTS NEXT MONTH.

.....

# YOURS SINCERELY

(Interesting Items from the Editor's Letter-Bag)

"THE GHOST OF HOLLY HALL!"



No. 35, Vol. 2, 1 s. Week Ending Dec. 17th, 1919



When the 'Pie' was up-posed

ALEX PARSONS (Tranmere): I was particularly interested in "Green Memory". It echoed my appreciation of Prowse's cover-work, which I still find most attractive and colourful. It was certainly a drawing-card when I was extremely young and gorged myself on the adventures of Buffalo Bill. I knew R.P. stood for Richard Prowse, but the mystery of authorship of the Aldine B.B.'s is still unsolved as far as I am concerned. Perhaps the Digest will solve it for me some time. I read them occasionally, but find that what thrilled me when I was a youngster now amuses me. The dialogue is true melodrama, but whether it was natural to the writers or an affectation I find it hard to decide. However, I still have a soft spot for these attractive little books with their attractive covers. May they live long.

(The book Souvenir which is awarded every month for the Star Letter of the month goes to the sender of the above. - ED.)

GEORGE SELLARS (Sheffield): I am surprised and annoyed over Basil Adam's remarks about Tom's experience in Nobody's Study. I think that Tom showed his pluck by agreeing to spend the night in the haunted room, and when he eventually fled it was the action of any normal schoolboy. "Nobody's Study" was the best ghost story that Charles Hamilton ever wrote, and the eerie atmosphere in the story was masterly writing.

WILLIAM LISTER (Blackpool): I think there is a great deal in first-love, best-love. I came across the St. Frank's boys before I knew the Magnet and the Gem, and the characters of E. S. Brooks always had first place. After being out of touch for years, and now turning back to the old papers, it is still St. Frank's for me. Also, I find myself lapping up all the Victor Gunn - Berkeley Grey stories I can get. Yes, sir.

MRS. VERA NICHOLLS (Leeds): The Annual was splendid. I keep looking through it and forget where I am. I have noticed no one ever mentions Solly Lazarus and Co. of Courtfield Council School. Doesn't anyone like them? I do!

(Our reader, Mrs. Nicholls, sustained a shocking accident last autumn, and has been in hospital for many months. We are happy to know that she is making good progress, and wish her a speedy return to perfect health. - ED.)

P. J. CREIGHAN (Eire): I enjoyed the March issue, as I do every issue, but I feel that the cover, in this instance, didn't reproduce as well as usual. You have set such a high standard of quality both in articles and illustrations that a trivial matter like this (and it is only trivial) seems to jar. To balance matters, let me compliment you on Mr. Buddle, not forgetting Meredith. I enjoyed reading about them in the 1960 Annual and even more so in the 1961 edition. They seem to come really alive, and I can only assume they are taken from real life. Can't we have an occasional story about them in the monthly?

H. C. GOURLAY (Newcastle-on-Tyne): Congratulations on a very fine issue in memory of Frank Richards. It was very moving. Let us hope that in thirty years' time his name will still be alive as it is today. This will only be through the reading of his stories, and it is to the credit of the O.B.B.C. libraries that collections of his stories are being preserved until some sensible publisher decides to reprint the original tales of the Golden Age. I was recently offered a volume of bound Magnets of 1939 for £17 for 34 issues. This seems high for 1939 issues, even if bound. I am afraid the prices demanded by the market are such as to make the collection of Magnets impossible for any person not possessing an unearned income. I did not like the sentence by the publishers of the Bunter books that arrangements are being made to have the stories continued by other writers. Is this true? If so, the disasters and despair caused by the old sub writers in Magnet and Gem will be with us again.

RON HODGSON (Mansfield): Have just been reading "Summoned By Bells" by John Betjeman, and came across the following lines in chapter 3: "Rainbow came on Wednesday - with the pranks of Tiger Tim and Bonnie Bluebell and her magic gloves."

I had some very happy hours with T.T. myself many moons ago.

SYD SMYTH (Australia): I have just read the Devarney series. First Hamilton book I've picked up since the sad news. What beautiful writing! A Bunter that is a true Bunter and not the all-devouring customer he later became. It's a pity the press writers on the Hamilton saga cannot get hold of such stories before indulging in their "Yarcohs" and "I say you cads" business to the exclusion of everything that made C.H. great and lasting.

GEOFFREY WILDE (Leeds): As regards the true estimation of the "autumnal" Magnet in general, I suspect the differences of opinion are largely a matter of terminology and emphasis. Plenty of fine stories, especially by comparison with rival publications, but perhaps lacking the stylistic glow of a few years previously; this would seem to be about a fair summary.

MISS A. M. NEWMAN (Cliftonville): I found absorbingly interesting the Collectors' Digest in memory of Frank Richards. Will you kindly let me know if a Memorial Fund is started? I should like to subscribe, and, of the suggestions so far made, I favour a Frank Richards Ward in a children's hospital.

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#### GEMS OF HAMILTONIANA

Mr. Prout rolled in ponderously. Greyfriars had been built in the days when builders were builders; but the study floor creaked a little under Mr. Prout's tread. Time had been when Mr. Prout had weighed only twelve stone and could have been

measured round the waist with an ordinary yard measure; but those days were long past. Since those days Prout had found, with every passing year, more and more difficulty in buttoning his waistcoat. Perpendicularly Prout was not impressive; but his diameter and circumference were imposing.

Certainly, Mr. Prout was not of an age, or a physique, to roll down the Remove staircase with impunity. All over Mr. Prout were distributed aches and pains too numerous to count; he had been severely shaken up from head to foot - and the damage, therefore, was extensive, for there was an enormous amount of Prout between his head and his feet.

(From "Coker Comes a Cropper" - Magnet No. 1129).

Sent in by Geoffrey Wilde, Leeds.

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