

VOLUME 23
No 270

STORY PAPER

JUNE
1969

COLLECTORS DIGEST

PRICE

2/3



STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

Founded in 1941 by
W. H. GANDER

COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Founded in 1946 by
HERBERT LECKENBY

Vol. 23

No. 270

JUNE 1969

Price 2s 3d

The Man of the Wheel.



STOP TINKERING WITH TINKER!

Last month was noteworthy in Sexton Blake history. For the first time a new Blake novel was published between stiff covers. Our literary critic, who reviewed the story which marked the occasion, produced the throwaway line of the month: "--And, in fact, Tinker does not feature in the story at all."

Probably Tinker now has not the popularity he enjoyed years ago when he was merely Sexton Blake's "assistant." Blake himself has emerged successfully enough as the rather flashier consultant adventurer of the brave new world. The passing of time has not been so kindly to Tinker who does not seem to have won hearts as a junior partner as he did when he was merely an assistant. Possibly Tinker as a young masher does not appeal as he did as a youthful detective. The dithering about between Tinker and Edward Carter irritates old readers and must be somewhat puzzling to the new. Most C.D. readers would like to see Tinker more as he used to be. It

is time the tinkering stopped. Many of us love Tinker - and hate tinkering.

THOSE CRITICS

The excellent re-printing of the Magnet's Egypt Series - fresh, clean, and delightful - seems, oddly enough, as modern as this morning. But there was a quaint, old-fashioned air about the work of the critics who reviewed it in the press.

None, of course, appraised the long story in the slightest. There was a liberal splashing of "Yarooos" which showed how very limited these critics are in knowledge of the subject they attempt to write about. One dug out that old yawn of George Orwell's, and delivered a hoary homily on snobbery. He also mentioned that Hamilton was reticent about his own school-days, a theme which grew whiskers long ago.

There were references - quite untrue - to "tiny print," to blobby lettering and to crude orange and purple covers. The main story was almost ignored, but the critic found a justifiable chuckle in the old advertisements, forgetting that plenty of 1969's publicity is quite hilarious and daft.

Speaking of the heroes of the Egypt series, the critic says, "But, then, the idiom of them all is rather bewildering." Surely no more bewildering than that of the cream of Britain's youth in 1969 - those selected for expensive training in universities - who appeared on a TV programme the same evening and whose idiom would have been a disgrace to the most illiterate and unfortunate porter of Billingsgate.

It would, of course, be a waste of time to argue with critics who throw stones from the shelter of their 1969 glasshouses.

THE SCOURGE OF ADVERTISEMENT

It is pleasant and amusing to browse over the advertisements in the old papers. In fact, they get scanned more now than they ever were when they originally appeared in 1912 or 1922 or 1932. Today periodicals cannot exist at all without a mass of advertisements. Recently I read a short article which featured in a modern women's magazine. Small chunks of the article appeared, wedged in among advertisements for almost everything under the sun, and, in fact, the article, short though it was, was spread over no less than ten pages of the magazine.

Local newspapers, which used to have a special charm of their own, have greatly increased in size. There is no more local news than there ever was - probably less. The few news items are oases amid masses of advertisements. Idly, one wonders why so much more advertising is deemed necessary today than was the case thirty years ago.

Young women's papers - for instance, the Girls' Friend and the Girls' Reader - carried a fair amount of advertising even sixty years back. Probably the fair sex is more ready to take as gospel what it reads. Today, in women's papers, there is far more advertising than anything else.

With the exception of the Hamilton Edwards empire, boys' papers carried comparatively few ads. While we stagger, bemused, under the shoals of advertising matter which is hurled at us today, it is indeed remarkable how papers like the Magnet, Gem, and Lee managed to keep going in the later years of the first world war when their advertising was restricted to small blocks which exhorted us to "eat less bread" or to buy war bonds. Maybe an economist can explain it. It's beyond me.

OUR NEW SERIAL

This month we publish the final instalment of our classic serial "The Swell of St. Jim's." Readers have enjoyed it. We presented it in serial form because it is most unlikely that most people will ever have the opportunity of reading it in any other form. Published well over sixty years ago, it is almost non-existent today in any form at all.

Next month we are giving C.D. readers the opportunity to read yet another lost classic, written in his young days by one of Britain's most famous and most beloved novelists. The story is "THE SWOOP" by P. G. Wodehouse. It is so rare that few people possess a copy today. It is satire at its most choice. Nowadays, satire is seldom anything but barbed, and few writers can be funny without being dirty. The Wodehouse satire is a gentle chuckle throughout, and as clean as a new pin.

It tilts lovingly at Britain, where the latest score from Lords is of far greater importance than the news that a foreign invasion has taken place. As the story was published in 1909, the year in which Bleriot flew the Channel, it is quite amazing that P.G.W. wrote his foreword to "The Swoop" as from a "Bomb-Proof Shelter, London."

Look out for the first instalment of "The Swoop" in next month's Collectors' Digest. It appears with the blessing of celebrated Mr. Wodehouse who is, of course, the president of our Northern Club.

THE EDITOR

WANTED: Magnets, Gems, Populars, Monster, Bullseyes, etc., pre-war comics, science fiction, etc. Pulp magazines. All offers welcomed, some for sale.

WALTON, 41, WOODLAND ROAD, MANCHESTER, M19 2GW.

WANTED: Good loose copies or volumes containing any one or more of the following: GEMS: Some issues between 801 and 832; 953, 954, 959, 970, 974, 975, 981, 984, 985, 986, 987, 989, 970, 990, 992, 993, 995, POPULARS: 401, 403, 407, 409, 413, 415, 421, 422, 441, 442, 466, 467, 474.

ERIC FAYNE, EXCELSIOR HOUSE, GROVE ROAD, SURBITON, SURREY.

THE CAPTAIN: Vols. 27, 31, 35, 50 required. First class condition only. Publishers binding. Extremely generous price paid for MINT copy of "SCHOOLBOY GRIT" by Gunby Hadath.

REG GUEST, 35 THORNSETT ROAD, LONDON, S.E.20.

YOUR PRICE PAID FOR:- Rovers, Wizards, Hotspur, Adventure - 1939 - 1944. Will die happy if I can get some Dixon Hawke Libs first.

McMAHON, 54 HOZIER CRESCENT, TANNOCHSIDE, UDDINGSTON.

WANTED: Magnets and Gems, and also girls' papers. Please state numbers and prices. Also film magazines 1936 - 1939 inclusive.

B. M. NASH, 8 ROYAL YORK CRESCENT, BRISTOL.

SIX BLUE/GOLD MAGNETS (or TEN PINK ONES) offered for each ONE of the following:- 4d. B.F.L's (CEDAR CREEK), 417, 465, 469, 473, 497, 509.

HANGER, 10 PARK SQUARE, NORTHAMPTON, NN5 7LQ.

DANNY'S DIARY



JUNE 1919

It has been a blistering hot month. Down here in the south of England we have had 48 days without a drop of rain. Perhaps that is why Kingston Empire burned so merrily when it caught fire one night. The main building was saved, but the roof fell in.

In the middle of the month John Alcock and A. W. Brown flew from America to England in 16 hours, the first flight ever made from America to England.

It has been a disappointing month in the Magnet. The first tale was "Weggie of the Remove." "Weggie" was R. Pye-Smith, a new boy, who talks like Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. In the end it turns out he was meant for Greyfriars Secondary

Another of the posters which Danny saw outside the cinemas 50 years ago.

School in Yorkshire.

"Billy Bunter's Bank Holiday" was the story of a cricket match played at St. Jim's on Whit Monday, with Bunter breaking detention to go there also, and Mr. Quelch trailing after him.

Maybe the best of the month was "Bunter the Bolshevik," but Bunter as a Bolshie was really too silly to be very funny.

Lastly, "The Greyfriars Swimming Sports" was yet another one of those awful sports affairs with the Heads of Greyfriars and St. Jim's giving silver cups. It gave me the hiccups.

Early in the month the Derby was won by a 33 - 1 outsider. The horse was "Grand Parade."

The editor of the Gem is beginning to get hot under the collar about the circulation of the Gem. Perhaps that is why the Gem has been a good bit better than the Magnet lately.

The first Gem of the month was "For School and County." Rushden dropped a catch, so Kildare told him off in strong terms. As if a captain would! Rushden was dropped from the team, but was soon playing for his county - Loamshire! Wherezat?

"The Heart of a Hero" was very good. A Whitsun holiday story, it introduced Doris Levison. She is a bit too much of a good thing. She and Cardew got locked up in some ruined vaults.

"Schoolboy and Boxer" was a tale about Redfern.

Far and away the best of the month - and a real gem - was "The Goodness of Gussy." A tramp named George Merry, who is an ex-convict convinces Gussy that he is Tom Merry's uncle, and, with the best will in the world, Gussy stirs up all sorts of trouble for Tom. I loved this one. It was illustrated by Hayward who illustrated a lot of Rookwood tales during the war.

There is another set of Cedar Creek tales in the Boys' Friend Library. It is entitled "The School in the Backwoods."

There are three new papers out, all published fortnightly. They are Tiger Tim's Tales, Wonderland Tales, and Detective Library. The last-named comprises two detective stories, featuring respectably, Nelson Lee and Gordon Gray.

Finland has declared war on Russia which is a bit of a problem. Some people think the Bolshies may be a problem for everyone later on.

And there has been a strike on the London and South Western Railway over their new timetable. The men say the new timetable will cut their earnings and give them more work.

The Treaty of Versailles was signed on June 28th, and next month, on July 21st, the whole nation will celebrate Victory Day. Doug says we will all let our hair down, and go mad. A new temporary cenotaph is being built in Whitehall, and the King will unveil it on Victory Day.

I have just seen the silliest thing. Advertisers are nuts. They announce Mrs. Charles Chaplin and W. S. Hart in "Her Big Brother." The star is, of course, W. S. Hart, and they just call Mildred Harris, Mrs. Chaplin in order to cash in on the Chaplin name.

Charles Ray was tip-top in "The Coward." Mae Murray pleased the girls in "Face Value." Eddie Polo is very popular in his serial, "The Circus King." Bryant Washburn has a dimple in his chin, and was good in "Till I Come Back to You." Theda Bara was fearfully vampish in "Forbidden Paths." And Tom Mix is a winner in "Fame and Fortune." Finally, W. S. Hart was in an unusual part for him as a sailor in "Shark Monroe."

In the Boys' Friend a wonderful thing has happened. In the third week of the month the size of the paper was increased to 12 pages, for no extra charge. It shows things are going in the right direction. I wonder why the B.F. gets all the special favours.

At Rookwood, the strike of the prefects has gone on its triumphant way and finished. "School Versus Captain" told how Carthew was made school captain by the Head - and how the school refused to have him at any price. In "The Fifth Form Prefects," the Head, at his wits end, appoints prefects from the Fifth - and they also come a cropper. The series ended with "Bulkeley's Chance" in the first enlarged issue. Carthew, smoking in his study, set the school on fire, and Bulkeley redeemed himself, and the Head made him school skipper once more. So the prefects' strike ended. A splendid series.

Last Rookwood yarn of the month was a double-length one, but not a good one. It was "The St. Jim's Match." Jimmy Silver got locked in his study, so he missed the train which the cricket eleven caught for St. Jim's. But an aeroplane, flown by Lord Conway, was forced to land near Coombe station, and after repairs, Lord Conway flew Jimmy on to

St. Jim's where he won the match.

The Cedar Creek tales have been grand. "Cleared" told of Frank Richards proving that it was Gunten and not he who had written an insulting letter to Mollie Lawrence. Gunten, son of the postmaster, was able to get at the mails.

The chap who made "A Strange Disappearance" was Beauclerc. Then came a double-length Cedar Creek tale, "Missing," in which Bob Lawless also disappeared. Lastly, in "The Rescue," Frank Richards was kidnapped and joined the other victims. It was the strange Mexican new boy, Ricardo Diaz, who brought about their rescue. Very fine series, I thought.

Doug bought me a Sexton Blake Library called "The Bath-Chair Mystery," and I enjoyed it muchly. It was novel, as it introduced Nelson Lee and Nipper.

Out in America, Mary Pickford, Charlie Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, and D. W. Griffiths have formed their own company to make and distribute films. They have called the company United Artists.

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: "Missing," the Cedar Creek tale referred to by Danny, was obviously two stories joined together to make one. The enlargement of the Boys' Friend may have caught the editor on the hop. A very worthwhile fill-up was the start of a new series of excellent verse under the title of "Rookwood Personalities."

The story "The St. Jim's Match" was only the ninth substitute story of Rookwood since the school began over 4 years earlier. "School-boy and Boxer" was the last Gem to be illustrated by Warwick Reynolds.

THRILLER: 1 - 15, 18, 28 - 37, 39 - 210, 367, 371 - 589 WANTED.
DET. WEEKLY: Most numbers WANTED. C. DIGEST ANNUAL: 1948 WANTED. All good condition only.

REG GUEST, 35 THORNSETT ROAD, LONDON, S.E.20.

WANTED: S.O.L. No's. 149, 151, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 173, 177, 181, 186, 189, 207, 215. Other S.O.L's and Magnets for exchange.

PHILIP TIERNEY, 6, ABBEY PARK ROAD, GRIMSBY.

BLAKIANA

Conducted by JOSEPHINE PACKMAN

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

ENTER GRANITE GRANT

by Derek Smith

Walter William Sayer, born 1892, began to sell stories to the juvenile magazines in 1912. War service in France interrupted his career, but in 1919 he sold his first story to the Sexton Blake Library. As PIERRE QUIROULE he was soon to become one of the most popular contributors to the Saga.

He specialised in cloak-and-dagger tales of the Secret Service, and the pattern was immediately established with the first story, "THE CASE OF THE KING'S SPY" (S.B.L. no. 110), in 1920. Spies and secret agents had not then been invested with the rather specious glamour they have since acquired, and the Editor evidently thought it prudent to pen a special introduction:

"KING'S SPIES. These men hold their lives in their hands almost every day of their lives. Where it would not be safe for an army to go, one man must often venture alone, dragging his body through the very jaws of death, that wars may be prevented, and the lives of others saved."

Though he was to play a rather passive role in the first story, James Grant was never less than heroic in stature. "With his great courage went also a simple kindness of heart" and "it was because of his iron will and courage that he had earned the name of 'Granite' Grant" - the nickname by which he was known throughout the Embassies of Europe.

The story began in Whitehall in the early hours of the morning. Granite Grant had just been entrusted with a secret mission to Russia - the problem was swiftly moving to a crisis, and Grant was the one man who could save the situation. Powerful enemies, however, were determined to defeat him.

To further this end, he was kidnapped by one Baron Rodanoff, and the King's Spy's identity was assumed by a double. "The man had the same crisp short beard, cut in the naval fashion, the same dark

moustache. His thick head of hair was tinged with grey at the sides, and brushed straight back over his forehead, as was Granite Grant's."

The false Grant was soon discovered wandering the streets, apparently suffering from complete loss of memory. His instructions were to "stall" for a fortnight, by which time the real Grant's mission would have failed by default.

Sir Vrymer Fane, the Minister who had entrusted Grant with the task, then called in Sexton Blake. It did not take the great detective long to detect the imposture, but he could not expose it until he had rescued the real Granite Grant. Dining with the King's Spy's fiancée, the actress Laura Valentine, Blake came face to face with his unknown adversary, Baron Rodanoff, and induced him to engage in a sporting wager upon the outcome of the case. Shaken by the encounter, the Baron made plans to remove his prisoner from London. En route, Grant managed to escape, and returned to his Chelsea flat. It was really bad luck when, upon leaving his home, he was immediately re-captured. It was a fate he might have avoided if he had remembered the Holmesian dictum: "Always take the second cab. The first may be dangerous."

Blake soon traced the Baron and his party to a small village called Denesford, in an old stone house which was locally supposed to be haunted. While keeping watch in the grounds, Tinker was pursued through the woods by a giant ape (only slightly less lethal than its infamous predecessor in the Rue Morgue) and fell headlong to the bottom of a Dene hole.

Blake and Pedro made the perilous descent to rescue him, and the faithful old bloodhound covered himself in glory in a fight to the death with the monstrous ape. The Baker Street trio found themselves trapped in the bowels of the earth - but they soon escaped. Blake claimed his wager from Rodanoff and the King's Spy was rescued. Grant brought his mission to a successful conclusion and paid his respects to Blake. "The two men, so different in many respects, and yet so alike - both fearless and resolute, both strong in mind and body, and whose professions brought both in constant contact with that strange current in human affairs that flows beyond the pale - silently shook hands and vowed eternal friendship."

The story ended with wedding bells for Granite Grant and Laura Valentine - and disturbing hints of retirement from the King's Spy. Fortunately, this adventure was only the first of many that were to be recorded in the UNION JACK and the SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY during the next decade.

The tale met with a rather odd fate in 1932. It was one of a dozen yarns raided from early issues of the S.B.L. and reprinted in the Nelson Lee Library, 2nd New Series. Editorial policy here was a mystery. The archives of the Nelson Lee were rich with tales well worth reviving. In the first volumes alone were such choice items as "The Terror of Troone Towers" by E. S. Brooks and G. H. Teed's splendid stories of the Black Wolf - notably the fine three part adventure of "The Crystal Urn."

Yet the Editor chose to re-vamp early tales from the S.B.L. Drastically abridged and re-written, "The Case of the King's Spy" (No. 135, August 20th, 1932) was a disturbing failure. Sexton Blake and Tinker became Nelson Lee and Nipper - a change which was fair to neither partnership - and Granite Grant became an irritating nonentity called Jimmy Stone. Even Pedro was forced to masquerade as Wolf, the Alsatian!

About the only redeeming feature of the whole sorry exercise was the choice of illustrator - apparently R. J. MacDonald. He produced several excellent drawings, notably the cover picture depicting the pursuit of Nipper by the giant ape.

* * * * *

SURPRISED BY JOY

by William Lister

"Surprised by Joy" is the title of a book by C. S. Lewis. It is an intriguing title. I have no hesitation in using it for this article.

Most readers will remember enough of their childhood to recognise similar traits breaking out in their grandchildren. I have tried to discourage my grandsons from purchasing "Lucky Bags" ($\frac{1}{2}$ d. in my day) and at 3d. today they are being robbed. But really I know how they feel - it is the element of surprise when the bag is opened. Recently I realised I still retain that characteristic.

Being a borrower of copies of "The Nelson Lee Library," I began to wonder if one could borrow copies of "The Sexton Blake Library" or

"Union Jack" but from where? Eric Fayne suggested trying Gerry Allison of Ilkley, Yorkshire, secretary of the Northern O.B.B.C. This I did and was assured that on becoming a member of the club I would be able to borrow from a large selection of "Sexton Blake" literature.

I would only have to inform Mr. Allison of my choice - and for 6d. a copy - plus postage - I could have what I wanted for a month.

And thereby hangs my tale.

I wrote to say I had no choice, as I had not read any for a long while apart from the last series - and of course the new 3/6 series - enclosing 2/6. Within a few days I received a small parcel containing three copies of "The Sexton Blake Library."

To say I was "Surprised by Joy" is to say the least. I really enjoyed those three "Sexton Blake's," I really did. I spent a month of reading the old time Sexton Blake, Tinker and Pedro.

Mind you! I had difficulty with one (I am told it is now re-issued as "Bismark Memoir" at 3/6). The copy I had was marked 4d. - great value - but the print was small, or should I say it seems smaller when you are 56 than when you are younger. However, I borrowed a magnifying glass (which no stamp collector seems to be without) and found it well worth the effort. As it was one of the 1st series, Mr. Allison has taken pity on me and says "no more 1st series for you." The print on the 2nd and 3rd series I managed with ease.

Most things are very expensive these days so you must believe me when I say that for a mere 2/6 (and this included postage) I was indeed "Surprised by Joy" and, by the way, the next time my grandchildren ask for 3d. for a "Lucky Bag" they'll get it - you see - I know that delightful feeling of surprise.

* * * * *

A MAN TO REMEMBER

ON A notable day in December,
In the year eighteen-ninety and three,
There appeared first a man to remember,
Who was destined to make history.

By Harry Blyth was he created;
In the Marvel his place he did take.
By crooks he was soon to be hated
As that clever new 'tec, Sexton Blake.

This Blyth spirit through the 'nineties progressed,
When the century turned he was there;
Of time his skill had stood well the test,
For detection he had quite a flair.

In due course he acquired an assistant,
As Tinker he is always best known;
Then a bloodhound on trail most persistent,
Whether tracking a crook or a bone.

And so all three came down through the ages,
The famed trio from Baker Street:
Blake, Tinker and Pedro -- in the pages
Of many journals they gave us a treat.

In exploits that were well worth the writing
(Often with old Coutts of the police)
Many rogues they have fought and are fighting,
Such as Plummer and Rymer and Reece.

I'll venture now on a prediction:
If there's always an England I'll stake
My life that so long as there's fiction,
There'll always be a Sexton Blake!

S. GORDON SWAN

CAPTAIN: Vol. 1, 27 & 50 WANTED. Publishers binding. S. BLAKE
LIBRARY: 1st Series WANTED. All in good condition only.

REG GUEST, 35 THORNSETT ROAD, LONDON, S.E.20.

NELSON LEE COLUMN

A LETTER FROM ST. FRANK'S

by
Jim Cook

The records of the history of St. Frank's College differ from those of a newspaper office where the chronicler's words are filed in the Morgue, Fleet Street word for the cuttings library, where articles, etc are preserved under subject. Corrections, denials and apologies that may follow up an event are not filed and your error is undeleted forever.

But in recording the activities of the juniors - and seniors - at St. Frank's it is to be regretted that any good deed which may have been enacted by chance by the cads was never reported. The operative words "by chance" may account for the recorder missing out the event or not putting too much faith in it.

You may have heard of the story they use in psychological testing which concerns among other things a husband who went off to town for the day; a wife, who crossed a river to visit her lover; a madman, who killed everyone who crossed the bridge after sundown; an unrequited lover and a ferryman.

The woman stayed till after dark, found she'd forgotten her handbag; the ferryman wouldn't take her over without money and neither the lover nor the unsuccessful lover would lend her any. So she crossed the bridge and was slain. What was the order of responsibility of the six people?

While you work that one out I am going to describe a good deed by Bernard Forrest. And how the order of responsibility arising from that good deed came home to roost on the shoulders of Claude Gore-Pearce.

Nipper's little dog Boz had got out of his kennel the other day; the fact that Willy Handforth's monkey was in the vicinity at the time must be noted. The dog ran across the Triangle and got under Forrest's feet causing the leader of Study A to fall flat on his face. Then Boz, aware of grave consequences, darted for the main gate which old Josh Cuttle had left open to admit Dr. Stafford in his car. The fate of

Nipper's dog hung in the balance for it was making straight for the path the car would take and the chances were that one of the four wheels would catch it.

It was one of those incidents that comprise several actions at once. Bernard Forrest rose with lightning rapidity and dived for the dog. The dog yelped with the swiftness of Forrest's grip and both dog and junior rolled away from the oncoming car. A matter of inches separated the off side front wheel from them. Boz parted from Forrest and quickly ran off down the lane. And the only person who saw everything was Gore-Pearce. Not even Dr. Stafford or his chauffeur noticed the dreadful battle that was played out in those very few seconds. Perhaps the gathering dusk of the winter's evening and the headlights of the car had contributed to the figures of the boy and the dog merging into one background of twilight.

In the interval between the disappearance of Boz and his subsequently being found by Nelson Lee and Nipper near Pelton's Bend - the lane leading to Holt's Farm where his workmen have their cottages - Claude Gore-Pearce had reported to Nipper that Forrest had deliberately kicked the dog and caused it to run off down the lane. And to be fair to Claude the impression could have been created when Boz ran under Forrest's legs. Nipper was naturally highly incensed when he heard that Forrest had ill-treated his dog, and the leader of Study A was in one of those moods of obstinacy that sometimes breed out of an act of rectitude or a hidden truth. Bernard Forrest would neither confirm or deny Gore-Pearce's allegation. Thus Nipper could draw but one conclusion and this resulted in challenging Forrest to a fight which Forrest merely shrugged his shoulders in reply.

The recognised arena for resolving arguments in the good old English fashion was behind the gym and so it came to pass that the following afternoon saw a crowd of excited juniors watching the captain of the Remove and Fourth Form severely punish the leader of the so-called Lower School fast set. But it was a pyrrhic victory for Nipper for his opponent seemed so unconcerned that after the first round Forrest was on the defensive and seemed to lose all interest in the fight. And in the fourth and final round Forrest dropped his guard completely and Nipper was left with no alternative but to send his opponent crashing to the ground.

It was a most unsatisfactory contest altogether. And Nipper did

not feel very comfortable at the silence that followed the knock out. After all, there is no glory from winning a battle that takes place after the enemy has surrendered. And Forrest, for some strange reason, had surrendered to Nipper before the fight began.

That evening a discussion was held in Study C on the events of the day. Sir Montie was of the opinion that Forrest was undergoing a mental crossroad battle with himself; the kind of emotional conflict that must have confronted Fullwood at the beginning of his reformation, but both Nipper and Tommy Watson would have none of this. Sir Montie Tregellis-West, being guileless himself, always promoted to what is best in people their finer points, but Nipper's extraordinary knowledge and understanding of human failings could not reconcile Bernard Forrest's past record capable of reform.

Nipper's vast experience with criminals and his association with Nelson Lee should give the Junior captain a profound understanding of the frailties which live in us all and if Nipper has no faith in a person's failure I will always accede him that dignity of experience.

When I asked Nipper what he thought was the reason Forrest had acted so out of character the leader of Study C replied that Forrest was putting on an act; the same as he did before when he returned to St. Frank's after being expelled.

Boz is as lively as ever. Gore-Pearce seems to have got a kind of satisfaction for what happened to Forrest. One day, these two juniors will make history at St. Frank's, but it will be written by a crime writer. For Claude Gore-Pearce is the most rascally junior ever known at the college. From my own knowledge of the hundreds of pupils at St. Frank's I did at one time think Claude Carter the most evilly minded junior and a really bad egg but Carter is not now at St. Frank's.

When I began this report I did give Gore-Pearce the benefit of the doubt, but I now know that somebody else was watching when Forrest saved Boz from the wheels of Dr. Stafford's car. Ellen, the ancient house maid, saw the dog run into Forrest and trip him up. Ellen mentioned it to Mary Jane and Mary Jane mentioned it to Phipps who in turn advised Nipper.

The mystery of Forrest's behaviour has not been solved. Nipper approached Bernard Forrest to apologise but Forrest ordered Nipper out

of the study and Nipper gave it up.

Yet Nipper feels that Gore-Pearce should pay for the terrible misunderstanding. But the millionaire's son maintains that what he saw was the truth. Now Nipper is wondering just where the order of responsibility for his fight with Forrest directly lies. The chain of reaction really began with the escape of Boz from his kennel, yet the dog's freedom was not entirely fortuitous; did Willy Handforth's pet monkey let him out? If so, can Marmaduke be absolved from blame by reason of his own being unleashed? The monkey has been known to escape from his quarters before and anybody so inclined can quite easily give Marmaduke his freedom by forcing the lock from his cage. That young scamp Fullerton of the Third did it once.

P.S. I often get enquiries from the villagers in Bellton about the juniors - and seniors. And some of the shopkeepers seem to get anxious when certain people from the school no longer patronise their shops. With so many at St. Frank's it is difficult to record the activities of everybody. For so many stick to routine that to just memorise them is sufficient to know what they are doing and thinking. For example, Timothy Tucker tried to get the Remove out on strike when Fatty Little complained the other day about the inadequacy of the school meals. Handforth punched Harold Grayson of the 5th when the East House senior twisted the arm of Billy Dale of the Third. William Napoleon Browne offered to "look after the Remove" when Mr. Crowell was confined to his bed with a bout of 'flu. On the advice of Dr. Brett "old Crowell" will stay in bed for a few more days but Browne's valiant offer has been turned down by Dr. Stafford.

I could go on but I am sure I am boring you.

WANTED to complete set Collectors' Digest No. 6. Will pay £1.

W. SETFORD, 24, COLWYN AVENUE, DERBY.

SIX BLUE/GOLD MAGNETS (or TEN PINK ONES) offered for each ONE of the following:- ROOKWOOD S.O.L.'s 170, 202, 224, 296.

HANGER, 10 PARK SQUARE, NORTHAMPTON, NN5 7LQ.

THE END OF THE BEGINNING

THE SWELL OF ST. JIM'S

Figgins and Wynn found Kerr in their study when they returned from the walk. He was in his own clothing, but a bundle on the floor, from one end of which the leg of a ragged pair of trousers protruded, proved, if that was needed, that he had really been the claimant to kinship with the house of D'Arcy. They flung themselves upon him and hugged him.

"Oh, chappy, I never dreamed you had it in you!" gasped Figgins. "It was great!"

"It was glorious!" said Wynn, with tears of joy in his eyes.

"Well, it wasn't a bad jape," said Kerr modestly. "I thought I'd take the bouncer down a peg or two!"

"And you did - you did!"

"They all swallowed it whole.

They'd believe it now if you hadn't given it away."

"I say, I hope the Lathom bird hasn't scented anything!" said Kerr anxiously. "There would be no end of a giddy row if he spotted the wheeze."

"That's all right. He doesn't know anything. By gum, I can forgive him for once for taking us out on a giddy walk. Which reminds me. D'Arcy is going to punch your head, Kerr, for taking such a liberty with his royal highness, and spoiling his collah!"

Kerr grinned.

"Let him! It will give our house a leg-up for a New House chap to lick a School House cad, even so funny a merchant as that fellow. I could lick him with one hand."

"I don't know. I hear he's been taking boxing lessons off Blake lately; and you know Blake's a cough-drop."

Tap! It was a knock at the door of the study.

"Oh, come in!" said Figgins.

Jack Blake walked in.

"A truce, ye giddy kippers!" he exclaimed. "Behold a messenger of peace or war! D'Arcy wants to know if Kerr is

going to apologise."

"Does he want an answer to that?" asked Kerr.

"Certainly."

"Tell him to go and eat coke!"

"No good telling him that; he wouldn't," said Jack serenely. "I suppose you've got no objection to meeting him, then?"

"I don't want to hurt the poor beggar, that's all!" said Kerr loftily.

Jack Blake grinned.

"Oh, you needn't be afraid of that. He's willing to risk it. Now, what will suit you as to time and place?"

"Any time and any place you blooming well choose!" said Kerr angrily. "What a fuss to make over whacking a silly ass like D'Arcy!"

"All serene. Shall we say behind the fives-court, in ten minutes from now?"

"Yes, if you like."

"Right-ho! You'll find us there."

And Jack Blake departed.

"I suppose they mean business," said Figgins. "Well, it's one comfort that you'll easily knock that duffer into the middle of next week, Kerr, if you try."

"Oh, I'll make short work of him Figgy, no fear!"

And at the appointed time Figgins & Co. repaired to the rendezvous.

They found half the Fourth Form there, boys of the two houses being mingled in about equal numbers. Blake, Herries, and Digby were, of course, on the spot, with Arthur Augustus.

"Hallo!" said Kerr, as he came up.

"How's your Cousin Bob, Algernon?"

There was a laugh. Arthur Augustus screwed his monocle into his eye, and stared severely at Kerr.

"You have behaved most impertinently he exclaimed. "It is due to my own dignity to inflict some slight chastisement upon you, in ordah that you may know bettah than to twifle with your bettahs again."

Kerr shrank back behind Figgins,

pretending to be terribly frightened.

"Hold him back!" he gasped. "He's dangerous. I can tell he's dangerous by the gleam in his eye. Have pity on my tender years, Algernon Aubrey!"

"Cut the cackle, and come to the boss!" said Blake, interposing. "We shall have some giddy prefect down upon us if we don't buck up!"

"Right! Let's get to business!" agreed Figgins. "Strip, ye cripples!"

The two boys removed their jackets. Kerr flung his to Figgins, and then threw off his waistcoat. Arthur Augustus carefully folded his jacket and laid it down, and then tenderly deposited his waistcoat upon it. His collar and tie followed, and last, but not least, his eyeglass.

The juniors watched these proceedings with considerable interest. Arthur Augustus was evidently in deadly earnest. The two combatants toed the line, and shook hands. This was done cordially enough, for though they were going to fight, there was nothing like real malice on either side.

"Three minute rounds!" exclaimed Herries. "I'm going to keep time. Now, are you ready? Go it, ye cripples -- go it!"

Arthur Augustus showed at once how much he had benefited by his steady course of instruction in the manly art in Study No. 6.

His guard was good, he kept his eye upon his adversary's, and his glance was firm and steady. Kerr circled round him looking for an opening, but could not find one. When he rushed in impatiently, determined to get to close quarters, he succeeded in planting his fist upon D'Arcy's cheek, but Arthur Augustus countered smartly and with force, and Kerr staggered back before a slogging drive on the chin.

"My giddy aunt!" he ejaculated. He came on more cautiously. This time he got his fists home, and Arthur Augustus reeled into his second's arms.

"Time!" said Herries. The combatants stopped for a rest. They were both breathing rather hard.

"Good for you!" whispered Blake. "Stand up to him like that, kid, and you're all right. He's stronger than you, but you're a bit longer in the reach, so keep him off,

and don't let him get close enough for any in-fighting. You must lick him."

"I shall lick him!" replied D'Arcy composedly.

"Time!"

They faced each other again. D'Arcy did not forget Blake's advice, and he kept Kerr at arm's length through the second round, and got home twice as many blows as the New House champion. Blake patted him on the back when "Time!" was called.

"You'll do!"

Figgins was not so well satisfied with his man.

"You must buck up, Kerr!" he said. "It would be a disgrace we should never recover from if you got licked by a School House chap, and that chap the biggest muff in the school."

"Who's going to get licked?" asked Kerr crossly.

"Well, it looks as if you are!"

"Kats!"

"Look here ---"

"Oh, dry up!"

Figgins looked wrathful. It was new to him to be so addressed by either of the Coats; but Kerr was beginning to have a secret doubt as to whether he would succeed in licking the swell of the School House, and that made him cross.

"Time!"

They stepped up again. The third round was exciting. The juniors crowded round in a ring, looked on with keen interest. Both combatants received a good deal of punishment, but both stuck to it gamely, and at the end of the round it was hard to say which had had the best of it.

The fourth round was decidedly, however, in favour of D'Arcy. He drove Kerr round the ring twice, and finished up by a slogging drive on the jaw which flung him fairly off his feet.

It was the first time either had really gone to grass, and the School House boys raised a cheer for Arthur Augustus.

"Good old School House!"

"Who's cock-house now?"

Figgins picked up his man, and sponged his face.

"Do you hear what they're saying?" muttered Figgy.

"I'm not deaf!"

"They think you're licked!"

"And you think so, too, Say it out, and have done with it!"

"Well, I really think it looks like it, if you're not more careful. Get close to him and punch hard. That's your only chance. You mustn't be licked."

"Oh, shut up!"

And Kerr toed the line again. His doubts about victory were stronger than ever, but he was obstinately determined to go on to a finish.

He watched his chance, and perhaps D'Arcy was a little careless after his success. Kerr found an opportunity, and rushed in, and some sharp in-fighting followed, and D'Arcy was not able to break away till the end of the round. When he did so, he was gasping for breath, and looking decidedly the worse for wear. Kerr went back to his second looking triumphant.

"What price that?"

"Better, my son. Keep that up."

Blake sponged over his principal's heated face.

"I - I feel a little out of breath!" gasped D'Arcy.

"You can go on?"

"Oh, yes, I shall go on till I win."

"Bravo!"

The next proved, indeed, to be the last round. All through it was seen that D'Arcy was getting the better of it, though Kerr resisted obstinately, and would not own himself beaten. With a desperate effort Kerr managed to clinch; but D'Arcy, exerting himself, hurled him back, and followed that up with a heavy drive from his right, which caught Kerr fairly between the eyes.

Kerr staggered, and D'Arcy's left came briskly up, and landed on his lower jaw, and he went down like a log. D'Arcy stood a little unsteadily, waiting for him to rise. Figgins picked him up.

"Done?" he asked sympathetically.

Kerr gasped for breath.

"Yes."

"Well, you put up a good fight, old chap," said Figgins, "and no one could do more than that. Let me help you on with your coat. We're done, Blake. Your man wins."

"Right-ho! Arthur Algernon Aubrey, you're the giddy victor!"

"Weally!" Arthur Augustus stepped over rather timidly towards Kerr. "I say ----"

Kerr looked at him through his swelling, half-closed eyes.

"What do you want?"

D'Arcy held out his hand.

"Will you please shake hands with me, deah boy? I don't bear any malice, and I'm sure you don't. And you would weally have beaten me hollow if Blake hadn't taught me how to use my hands, so you needn't mind this."

Kerr grinned faintly.

"You ain't a bad sort, Aubrey," he said. "Give us your fist!"

Arthur Augustus gladly shook hands with him.

"That is weally good of you," he said.

"I am so glad. Except when there is a house wow, you know, there is no reason why we shouldn't be fwends."

"Cheero!" said Figgins, giving him a slap on the back that took his breath away. "Blake, this funny merchant will do you credit yet."

And Figgins and Wynn marched off with the defeated champion. Blake gave Arthur Augustus an arm back to the School House. The juniors, eagerly discussing the fight, and expressing their wonder at the quality shown by Arthur Augustus, dispersed. As they went towards the School House the chums of Study No. 6 met Kildare. The captain of St. Jim's looked curiously at Arthur Augustus.

"What is the matter with D'Arcy's face?"

"Only a little friendly argument with a New House chap," replied Blake cheerfully. "I'm bringing this kid out, Kildare. You know what he was when he came to St. Jim's, and look at him now!"

Kildare laughed.

"Well, I can't say that his personal appearance is improved," he remarked. "Run along, D'Arcy, and get something done to your face. Well, Blake, are you sorry you did as I wished, and took the new boy under your wing instead of ragging him?"

"Not a bit of it, Kildare!" said Blake frankly. "You were right. We're educating him in Study No. 6, and making a man of him. He isn't half the ass he was when he came, and he's got real good

qualities, too. He has, Kildare. We're making a man of him."

"Yes," said Kildare; "and if you want to know, Blake, that is why I put him in your study. You were the friend in need that he wanted, my boy."

And the captain, with a pleasant nod, passed on.

"My giddy hat!" muttered Blake. "Fancy me as an educator of youth! Well, I'll keep it up, and I'll guarantee that Arthur Augustus turns out all right and sixteen ounces to the pound, although he's the swell of the school."

And we shall see that Blake was right.

(Next Month will see the first instalment of a rare, old story in Collectors' Digest. Be ready for "THE SWOOP" by P. G. Wodehouse.)

FOR SALE: Lovely volume (bound in red with gold lettering) containing "Silver Jacket" Nos. 1 - 25, with Hamilton's Carcroft stories: £3.10s. Plus, for the collecting connoisseur BFL No. 70, "The Captain of Abbotsrag" (as illustrated on cover of Jan. C.D.) - superb copy bound in red with gold lettering: 30/-. Also School Cap (1953) Nos. 1 - 10: £1. Postage extra on all items. S.a.e. to

ERIC FAYNE, EXCELSIOR HOUSE, GROVE ROAD, SURBITON.

Reducing or disposing of your collection? Very good prices paid or exchanges made. Large stocks of OLD BOYS' BOOKS available. Please state interests.

NORMAN SHAW, 84 BELVEDERE ROAD, LONDON, S.E. 19.

771-9857 Evenings

WANTED: Greyfriars Holiday Annuals, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1932, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1941. Magnets, any, particularly any "series." "Billy Bunter and Blue Mauritius."

JAMES GALL, 1, CHAPEL COURT, JUSTICE STREET, ABERDEEN, SCOTLAND.

ANOTHER BOUQUEST FROM THE STATES: I must compliment you on the great improvement in C.D. The type is sharp and clear and very easy to read and the grade of paper used shows up everything in fine detail. It is indeed a great improvement. (So writes Mr. Stanley Pachon of Bethlehem, Pa.)

LET'S BE CONTROVERSIALNo. 135. "YOUR EDITOR" AND HIS "PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS"

"Your Editor" was Mr. H. A. Hinton. His "Personal Recollections" formed a serial which he ran in the Gem fifty years ago. It was quite charming, and it was a strange blending of fact and fiction. It purported to give readers a peep behind the scenes at the Fleetway House, and it delighted boys who felt happily privileged like someone being shown over the operating box in a cinema or back stage at a theatre.

Hinton got a kick out of it all, and readers enjoyed it immensely, so, for one reason or another, Hinton kept it going too long and it deteriorated into nonsense. Like many things in this life, it would have been improved had it ended earlier, though that factor did not matter a lot. Hinton was not alone in not knowing when to stop, and it is possible that occasionally he told the truth by accident.

The more intelligent reader who could see clearly that St. Jim's, Greyfriars, and Rookwood had stemmed from the same source - and realised that plenty of stories in recent years had not come from the man who had sired those schools - accepted "Personal Recollections" with a grain of salt, and enjoyed it just the same. For, despite its drawbacks, the serial was irresistible. Its charm was immense.

It is not quite certain why Hinton decided to favour the Gem with his serial. It is possible he felt the Gem needed a shot in the arm, and certainly Charles Hamilton, after making a pet of the Magnet for several years, was, for a while, giving his best to the Gem during 1919. More likely, probably, was that St. Jim's as the first of the great Hamilton schools and Martin Clifford as the doyen of the Hamilton writers had to be given pride of place in the serial - so the Gem got the serial.

The first few chapters were written tongue in cheek; then came a chapter headed with the halo of truth; and finally Hinton donned his jester's outfit and let himself go.

Among the most interesting items he gave while speaking the truth was the information that an Annual for boys was to be published in September. It was to deal mainly with the three Hamilton schools

and it would contain original stories of each. It would be called "The Companion Papers Annual." That it was eventually published as the Holiday Annual was not Hinton's fault. He was speaking the truth at the time.

He told a pleasantly imaginative tale of how the Gem started. He was on a cycling tour, and at a lovely old rustic inn at which he stayed he met a young man, also on a cycling tour. The young man was named Martin Clifford and he was writing a story. "Your Editor" was so interested. He told young Mr. Clifford that he was thinking of starting a new school story paper for boys. It would start with adventure stories for a week or two (for no good reason at all) and would then change over to school life.

Hinton and Martin got on like a house on fire, and it was agreed that the forthcoming Gem should be written by Mr. Clifford. The stories would be based on a public school with which Martin was acquainted, and the permission of the Headmaster would be obtained. "We were both so very young and ambitious," commented Hinton, wistfully.

Soon, Hinton had a stock of Tom Merry manuscripts in hand for the proposed Gem, and while they were waiting for the Gem to materialise Martin Clifford wrote a few St. Jim's tales for use in a paper named "Pluck."

This was, of course, largely fiction, though there may have been, here and there, a stratum of truth in the pen-pictures of Mr. Clifford. The big snag, naturally, was that Hinton was not editor of the Gem when it was launched, and it was extremely unlikely that he had anything at all to do with the launching. The St. Jim's tales in Pluck were credited to one, Charles Hamilton, who had been writing other yarns for Pluck for some years before the Gem was born.

Hinton added, tongue firmly in cheek; "The Gem, in those days, was only a third of its present price, but the St. Jim's stories were much shorter." Actually, the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. Gem was exactly the same size as the $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. Gem of 1919, and, if anything, the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. Gem stories of St. Jim's were longer than those of 1919.

Following the enormous success of the Gem, Hinton explained, he decided to launch another school story paper to be named the Magnet. He looked around for some writer to do for the Magnet what Mr. Clifford

had done for the Gem. Hinton, in fact, was asking his readers to believe that, as editor (which he wasn't, when the Magnet began) he had all the authority of a publisher.

Hinton went down into Kent one day with a friend who was visiting his old school. The old boys were playing the first eleven. Hinton's eye was caught by an "old boy" who was hitting sixes with such regularity that the scoreboard was in perpetual motion. Later, Hinton had a chat with that "old boy" who confided to the editor that he had just returned from completing his education at a school in Canada and was now seeking a job as a writer. This young man's name was Frank Richards.

Not unnaturally, Hinton devoted much less space to Owen Conquest. He mentioned that Mr. Conquest had no fixed home, but moved about from one inn to another, accompanied by a portable typewriter. Mr. Conquest loved flying, and, in fact, typed a large portion of one Rookwood story while in the air. This was really an odd comment, when one remembers that in 1919 passenger flights were very much in their infancy.

But it was Mr. Clifford who had an ambition to swim the Channel. He was good at most sports, but at swimming he excelled.

It is impossible to say whether Hinton was merely being naive or whether he was enjoying a private chuckle when he wrote that Martin Clifford and Frank Richards were surprisingly alike in appearance, while their work was of such high standard that it was impossible to say that one was a better writer than the other.

Obviously, in such a serial, it was essential that Hinton should give clear pictures of the three writers, Messrs. Clifford, Richards, and Conquest, and, circumstances being what they were, it was inevitable that the editor had to write mainly from imagination. After all, real life is dull, and usually lacks the colourful quality of fiction. But it is Hinton's chapter on the artists which is really the most interesting to us, and this chapter has the real ring of authenticity. There is no space to quote from the chapter here, but it is so good that I think it will be worthwhile to reprint Hinton's comments on the artists, either in a later C.D. or in full in the next edition of Collectors' Digest Annual.

The serial deteriorated as the weeks passed. One week he mused

on the greatest stories of the past, and some of this was bound to grate unless your opinions coincided with those of the critic. Another time he wrote too much on the very dubious subject of letters from readers, and finally entered the farcical world of the Companion Papers' office-boys.

But all told, it was a great success, and it is likely that all readers loved it from its very novelty. Readers who thought they knew better, chuckled and surrendered to the story's innate charm. And those boys who were happy to believe everything they were told must have loved every minute of it.

* * * * *

CONTROVERSIAL ECHOES

TOM PORTER. (Re the S.O.L.)

As so often in the past you have summed up comprehensively and there is little left to say. You say, quite rightly, that in appearance it was enormously attractive. So much is this so that its appearance has charmed me for over 40 years and I should hate to part with my copies.

In its heyday, too, it was a reasonably satisfactory substitute for the original MAGNETS, etc., especially if these were published years earlier - perhaps before you were born - and as far as you then knew were unobtainable.

About 1925 I picked up a few N.L.L.'s of the 1918 - 21 era from a stall in Cradley Heath Market, and found it most irritating to be left suspended in the middle of a story because I couldn't get the next issue. What a thrill it was when the MONSTER LIB. came out and set right the omissions in the market supplies. Later on with all its shortcomings the S.O.L. supplied a similar want.

* * * * *

PHILIP TIERNEY.

I became a reader of the Magnet and the Schoolboys' Own Library at the age of ten, and did not realize for some years that the S.O.L. stories were re-prints.

In some cases I think the pruning was done remarkably well. Even now I can re-read "Ragged Dick" and "His Majesty King

Bunter" without realizing that anything is missing, although many Magnet episodes which I have never read must have been omitted.

On the other hand I was so disgusted more than thirty years ago by the abrupt and unsatisfactory ending of the second "Wharton-Rebel" serial that I gave my copies away. It is only in recent years that I have read the story in full and realized how pruning had ruined it and how the extension of the serial from four to five S.O.L's would have retained its brilliance as one of Charles Hamilton's greatest stories.

As for "A Schoolboy's Honour," the condensed version of the filmstar - Wingate love affair story, I think it was absolute piffle from the first paragraph to the last.

I cannot see how the inclusion of all the missing chapters could have made it any better and am still not quite convinced, despite what the experts say, that it was Charles Hamilton himself who wrote it.

THE BUTTERFLY'S BEST YEARS

by O. W. Wadham

There can be no doubt that the green-coloured BUTTERFLY had its best years in the 1912 to 1920 period. In the comic field it would have been next to CHIPS in sales and popular appeal. No doubt the Oliver Hardy-looking cover character Butterfly Bill (he was Portland Bill till 1916) had much to do with the comic's success, but the stories inside the paper were a big factor, too. They must have been to have survived so long. Going strong in 1913, "Daring and Co.," "The Doings of Dr. Dread," and "Cheerful Charlie Brown" were still running six years later. Did any other comic have THREE serials running together for so long?

In the picture pages two characters besides Butterfly Bill had a long innings; they were Beatrix Buttercup, and a Charlie Chaplin type, Dicky Doenut.

MERRY AND BRIGHT was the companion paper to the BUTTERFLY but I do not think it ever had the same popular appeal.

NEW SERIAL NEXT MONTH: "THE SWOOP"

NEWS OF THE CLUBS

MIDLAND

Meeting held 29th April, 1969.

Eleven members were present at yet another very full and happy meeting. Variety is the spice of life and the principal programme item tonight was something of a novelty. It consisted of extracts from talks which had been recorded when given at former meetings. To these edited extracts, our Vice-Chairman, George Chatham, had added a musical journey to Greyfriars. The tape recording ended with "Sleigh Ride" by Delius, which seems to George to conjure up visions of snowy Christmases at the old schools. Members much enjoyed and greatly appreciated this programme which, incidentally, also brought back happy memories of some very interesting talks.

The anniversary number was Magnet No. 1629 dated 29th April, 1939, thus exactly thirty years prior to tonight. The story was the last one of that very good "Blackrock Island" series.

Also exhibited by Tom Porter as a Collectors' item was that very fine new publication; a superb reproduction in their entirety of eight Magnets covering the "Egypt" series. This lovely book was much admired by members, and certainly opens up some fascinating future possibilities. There are many good stories and series centred on Greyfriars, and the writer feels that Frank Richards was at his superb best in these. Many authors have written good adventure stories, but there is only one Maestro of school stories.

Letters from correspondents add very much to the life of our Club, and they have really done us proud this month! Letters have been received from Jack Bond, Stan Knight, Brian Sayers and John Tomlinson. Many interesting points are made by our esteemed correspondents. Brian makes a very topical one with reference to Frank's former house "Rose Lawn" at Kingsgate on Sea. He states that the house next to Rose Lawn is for sale. "Now if it had been Rose Lawn . . ."

Unhappily space would not permit dealing satisfactorily with the many thoughtful and pertinent comments made by the writers.

As usual the time sped by all too quickly, but we did squeeze in a raffle. Tonight's prizes had been kindly donated by Bill Morgan, Tom

Porter and Ivan Webster.

EDWARD DAVEY

Chairman and Secretary.

* * * * *

NORTHERN

Meeting held Saturday, 10th May, 1969.

When the Chairman, Geoffrey Wilde, opened the meeting, both Gerry Allison and his wife, Myra, were missing. (They are usually among the first arrivals - Gerry, laden with the Library, and Myra, equally laden, with the refreshments.) But as Gerry had only just arrived home from hospital after a spell of heart trouble, they were both unable to come. Harry Barlow also reported that Jack Roberts (whose films we enjoyed last month) would have liked to come but did not feel up to it. We all hoped that both Gerry and Jack would soon be feeling much better again.

After the Minutes and Financial Report, the Secretary gave news from postal members sent by Gerry, and we were all very distressed to learn that Albert Lorryman had passed away after a long illness. Albert joined the Club in 1967, and though, due to working Saturdays, could not attend many meetings, he loved to borrow - especially during his illness.

We are all agog to see the new facsimile Egypt Series Magnets, and we decided to send a joint order for copies. Whilst the ladies were setting out the refreshments, Geoffrey conducted a sort of "Gallup Poll" among the men to see which series would be most popular for any future reproductions, and, amongst many, the "Wharton Rebel Series No. 1" and the "Courtfield Cracksman" came at the top of the charts!

Tom Roach had brought the recording of the interview of Mr. C. H. Chapman on his 90th birthday by Brian Doyle of London, and, for most of us this was the first time we had heard the voice of this very lively nonegenarian. We all enjoyed very much hearing his comments on the characters we know so well, his illustrations of which, over the many years, have been a joy to all.

After the break, Jack Allison commenced the reading of the Last Magnet. (During the evening we had held a 'draw' to arrange the order

of writing by our members. It was decided to be guided by three titles of the Magnets which never appeared - "The Battle of the Beaks," "What Happened to Hacker?" and "The Hidden Hand.") Jack read about four chapters and these held the hearers' attention raptly. We hope to finish this reading during the next meeting or two in readiness for hearing the 'continuation.'

And now it was time to leave, the evening having sped by as usual. Next Meeting, Saturday, 14th June, 1969.

M. L. ALLISON
Hon. Secretary.

* * * * *

LONDON

There was an excellent attendance at the May meeting which was held at East Dulwich, Len and Josie being the perfect hosts.

Don Webster, in the chair, welcomed one and all and stated that both Bill Hubbard and Eric Lawrence were unable to attend.

The usual formalities were quickly dealt with, excellent librarian reports from the Hamilton and Nelson Lee sections were given and members were informed that there will be no transactions of the former at the June meeting, owing to Roger Jenkins being unable to attend.

The Rembrandt luncheon party meeting was unanimously agreed to be a great success and the financial side of it was found to be satisfactory. Bill Lofts gave information re the sales of the Egyptian series of the Magnet reprint. These have been good. Next series to be done will be the second Wharton the Rebel set of twelve numbers, and probable publication date will be September next.

Charles Wright had composed a paper entitled "Stand and Deliver." This featured the highwaymen of the old books and, owing to Charlie unable to read it out, Marjorie Norris undertook to do it for him. This she did very well and what a grand feature it turned out to be.

A talk by Don Webster entitled "The George Orwell Controversy," then took place. Then Don read extracts from a Penguin paperback and Marjorie Norris read an article by the late Tom Hopperton on the subject. Once again Marjorie obliged with a fine reading. Then followed a general debate on the talk, and nearly all present expressed their views.

The catering arrangements were very good and thanks were expressed to the hosts, Len and Josie, and to the willing fags who passed around the comestibles and assisted with the washing up.

Next meeting provisionally fixed for the 15th of June at Greyfriars, Wokingham. Hosts Betty and Eric Lawrence. A bumper attendance will be appreciated.

UNCLE BENJAMIN

THE POSTMAN CALLED

(Interesting items from the Editor's letter-bag)

ROBER JENKINS (Havant): The D'Arcy story this week reads as though it was written specially for reproduction in a single unit. I have noticed before how one comes across a complete episode in a Hamilton story - perhaps one chapter - which is completely self-contained.

BILL LOFTS (London): In answer to Cyril Rowe's interesting article - In my researches through the years I have found many cases where Sexton Blake has appeared in other disguises. Editors have told me that in the majority of cases it was done without their knowledge. Authors being human have just used old stories in other papers with the main characters changed. One must remember that in the twenties there were quite a few other publishers, with no knowledge of what was written for other firms. It was simple for an author to write originally a Blake story, then palm it off to Newnes and call the 'tec' Tubby Haig. On to D. C. Thomson for Dixon Hawke, and then maybe to Aldine's for 'Dixon Brett.' Even Blake stories appeared in the U.S.A. with the name changed I believe to Nick Carter. In our eyes this may be dishonest, but we should think deeply before criticizing and wonder whether we would do the same thing if we were stuck for plots and money.

BEN WHITER (London): I fully agree with your opinions of the debunking of famous men and women who have crossed the Great Divide. I was very pleased to see the Churchill play withdrawn after a short run. They would not have dared to put it or if the old man had still been alive. I think the conception of art today is terrible.

NEIL BECK (Lewes): I wonder whether it is possible for a small space,

perhaps in the Editor's Chat, each month to give us some relevant information about the cover picture. Quite often we see a reproduction from one of the old papers, but often I have failed to find any link-up with an article inside. I feel that a short pen-picture dealing with the cover illustration would be appreciated by many readers as well as myself.

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: Neil Beck is to be married early in June. Many of us have met the charming young lady who is to be the bride of this lucky young man. We wish them both countless years of happiness. As a family, the wonderful Becks have long been ardent followers of the hobby, and C.D. enthusiasts. It is heart-warming to see a family so devoted to one another and to a common cause. The older Becks remind us of the Britain of our youth; the younger Becks restore our faith in Britain's young people today.)

M. HALL (Penryn): I would like to thank Mr. Walter Webb for his article regarding the Aldine Publications. Can some kind reader tell me when the following serials appeared in "The Boys' Magazine" and how long they ran: "Power of the Iron Invaders," "City of Steel," "March of the Weed Men."

J. A. WARK (Dunoon): Congratulations on the present format of the Digest. The print is so clear and large that it is a great blessing to one like yours truly who, like the old maestro, has a great deal of trouble with his eyes.

(Many readers have expressed appreciation of our new format, and we thank all who have written. - ED.)

BILL SHARPE (Australia): May I say this - that I greatly enjoy the C.D. Editorials. They could be worthily collected and published as - I was going to say "as essays," but the word so often describes what is dull, while the editorials are always lively. Some day someone may do us an article on the C.D. editorials.

NEW SERIAL NEXT MONTH: "THE SWOOP"