

STORY PAPER
COLLECTORS' DIGEST
Vol. 29 No. 340 APRIL 1975

"EXPULSED FROM CLIFF HOUSE!"

A New Story of the Girls of Cliff House. Also in this issue: A Splendid Number of the "Cliff House Weekly!"



No. 71. Vol. 2.

Three-Halfpence. Week Ending September 16th, 1926.



AUGUSTA ANSTRUTHER-BROWNE'S SPITEFUL ACTION!

(An incident from the magazine's own, long complete tale of the Girls of Cliff House, continued in this issue.)

17p

Are you a collector of Annuals? Children's, Boys and Girls:

I carry a stock of over 4,000 of these. Hardbacks? - over 10,000. All the favourite authors - Henty, Fenn, Westerman, Avery, etc. Many in magnificent Victorian and Edwardian pictorial covers. In the market for these if you wish to sell.

Still have some original Eric Parker paintings in colour, £5 each; in fine frames, £10. Two or three Chapman's.

G. H. A's from No. 1, 1920 to 1941.

Large numbers of illustrated books by Rackham, Dulac, Greenaway, etc. Film Mags? Many loose and bound, all years. Several large collections purchased.

I get many duplicates of Boys papers, etc., sometimes in fair or poor condition, but readable copies.

If you would like to tell me what are required, will probably be able to find from stock, much reduced of course. Far too many to attempt to list!

Very good stocks of most old Boys' papers. Several very large collections purchased recently. Please let me know your wants, I'm sure I can help! Visitors welcome, but give yourself plenty of time to view. Almost any time, week days, weekends, evenings - please advise first.

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STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

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S. O. L.: GOLDEN JUBILEE

It is exactly fifty years since the Schoolboys' Own Library came on the market. It has always been much loved for its virtues - neatness, compactness, and the fact that it brought within reach of many readers stories which they might otherwise never have come across. Its vices - mainly those of shoddy editing - are overlooked.

Somebody, fifty years ago, had a brilliant idea. Whoever he was, we honour that misty figure today. Had it not been for the war it seems likely that the S. O. L., out of all the old treasures on the book-

stalls, might still have been appearing regularly all these years later.

THE CADET AND THE MAGNET

The Magnet had only been on the market for eight months when an Osborne cadet named George Archer-Shee was accused of stealing and cashing a postal-order for five shillings. He was compelled to leave Osborne, but, over two years, the Archer-Shee family fought the admiralty in the law courts and elsewhere.

Egged on by the assumptions of popular writers down the years, the general public has generally accepted that young Archer-Shee (he was 13 years old in 1908) was proved innocent. Such, however, was not the case, even though the allegations against him were withdrawn and the law action ended with unexpected abruptness. It was all, apparently, settled out of court.

The excellent writer Ewen Montagu, in a new book "The Archer-Shee Case" (David & Charles: £3.96) has collected together all the known evidence and leaves it to his readers to make up their own minds as to whether George did or did not steal a five bob postal-order from a brother cadet. It is quite a coincidence that another book just on the market is the reissue of the first Holiday Annual of 1919, which contains Charles Hamilton's version of the Archer-Shee case. In Hamilton's hands this remarkable case, so typically English and written about by scribblers all over the world, becomes melodrama. Archer-Shee becomes Bob Cherry and the villain of the piece is a new boy named Heath who cashes the postal-order in a flaxen wig in order to blacken Bob's character in the eyes of the postmistress. The Magnet tale was written in 1911 when the Archer-Shee case was barely closed.

I doubt if the story is evidence that Hamilton had any very strong views of the Archer-Shee case. As we have seen so often, real life events provided grist for the story-writer's mill. We can't even say for certain whether readers of the time saw the link between the real-life case and the fictional story. But for those who did, it was part of the fabric built up to show that Archer-Shee, like Bob Cherry, was innocent.

Much more effective to that end, of course, was Terence Rattigan with his "Winslow Boy", the sentimentality of which left no doubt in the

minds of playgoers and film-goers that the original of the Winslow Boy had been innocent. Winslow is much more famous than Archer-Shee. Many people, who felt sure that they were experts on Magnet lore, have mentioned how Hamilton based his Heath tale on the Winslow Boy case. In actual fact, of course, the Winslow Boy did not appear till something like forty years after Hamilton wrote his tale, based on Archer-Shee, in the Magnet.

The real-life case contained its postmistress, its hand-writing expert, and its obstinately loyal and devoted father (not unlike Major Cherry, perhaps).

Young Archer-Shee went to the States after the case ended. But in 1914, when war broke out, he came back to England, joined up, and was killed at the Battle of Ypres in 1914. He was only 19 at his death. Whether or not he was tempted and fell over the postal-order business we shall never know for certain, but he was obviously a fellow of much real worth. We shan't go wrong if we link him in our minds with Bob Cherry.

FIENDISH!

The huge leap in postal charges is almost unbelievably grotesque. It is one of those things which were typical of banana states but which, we were always sure, could never happen in Britain. To our cost we have found that all too many of these unbelievable things can and do happen here. They are the result of weak and trendy government, both at Westminster and the Town Halls, ever since the end of the war.

This diabolical increase in postal charges is going to hit hard all subscription magazines, and not least our own. Maybe the worst aspect of it, as far as C.D. is concerned, is the fiendish rise of 50% on parcel post. There is no point in disguising the fact that it is a staggering blow.

A wry comment on our postal services and the way they have gone from the sublime to the ridiculous can be found in our own history. In Herbert Leckenby's time, in the first ten years of C.D. 240 separate copies could be posted, to be delivered the next day, for £1. Today, for the same service, 14 copies can be posted for £1.

In Woolworth's last week I saw liquorice allsorts at 3/- a quarter.

Not so long ago they were two ounces a penny. In the Daily Mail yesterday a cherubic child wrote that he wished his mum and dad would not think in old money and in old weights. The government and the shopkeepers wish so, too. 15p for 261.00374 grammes sounds so much better. But I have yet to hear of anyone, apart from cherubic children, governments, and vendors who have gained anything at all from decimal and metric madness. Why didn't they hold a referendum on that?

THE EDITOR

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DANNY'S DIARY

APRIL 1925

A great month at Rookwood in the Boys' Friend. Not a poor story in the bunch. First, "April Fools at Rookwood." Gunner invites a big crowd to the tuck-shop for a huge feed, and when they arrive he reminds them of the date. But Gunner is the real fool in the end, of course. "Lovell's Revenge" was on Mr. Greely. Mr. Greely told Lovell to smarten himself up and to take care with his deportment. So Lovell arranges for a couple of deportment teachers to visit Rookwood - to teach Mr. Greely. A real mirth-quake.

"The Rookwood Raffle" was held by Tubby Muffin on a cricket-bat he had ordered on approval. Finally "Ruptions Ahead" which was another Mr. Greely tale. Mr. Greely gets a swollen nose from an accident with a punch-ball. And the Head is very icy and very disapproving. This one is evidently going to be a series.

In the Cup Final at Wembley, Sheffield United beat Cardiff City. And Summer Time came in on the 19th. It always seems to be cold as soon as we get the extra hour, but one gets used to it.

The Nelson Lee Library is now running extra-long tales of St. Frank's. They are of about twenty-four chapters. Here, too, we had a First of April story. It was called "Fooling the School" or "The Biggest Jape on Record." Willie Handforth puts on all the clocks in the school so that everybody gets up and goes about his business an hour too early. There is a secondary plot introducing an intriguing new character,

William Napoleon Browne.

Next came a holiday tale "Archie's Easter Picnic", with Archie Glenthorne in the lead and also featuring the new character, W. N. Browne. Then came "The Return of Nelson Lee and Nipper". After an absence of several months on detective work, these two favourites come back to their old places in the school.

Last of the month was the first of a new cricket series. The St. Frank's First Eleven is in very poor shape, and the Rajah of Kurpana, a mysterious figure, comes along to coach them. Opening tale of the series is "Fenton's Cricket Sensation", which is to play juniors in the First Eleven. A good thing, too. After all, anyone who reads my papers knows that juniors are far better players than seniors.

At the pictures we have seen Norma Talmadge and Thomas Meighan in "The Forbidden City"; Matheson Lang in "White Slippers"; Mae Murray in "Circe"; and Lon Chaney in "Nomads of the North".

A new Library is out with two issues every month. It is called the Schoolboys' Own Library. No. 1 is "The Schoolboy Players", a Greyfriars tale of amateur theatricals, and "The Waif of St. Jim's" starring Joe Frayne and Wally D'Arcy. Just lovely tales.

A pretty good month in the Gem. Yet another April the First tale to start with. "Fooled on the First" was very good fun and pleasant reading. The Terrible Three set out to fool Blake & Co. with a hamper, but the Study No. 6 chums reverse it and have the laugh at the end. Then came a very long affair called "Rough on Levison". Levison Minor protects Skimpole against the Grammar School bullies who employ a blackguardly farmer's son to beat up Frank, and Ernest Levison goes after the farmer's son - and so on.

But "The Mystery of Holly Lodge" and its sequel "D'Arcy Does It" were very good. Real old-fashioned thrillers. Mr. Lowther, the M. P., who lives on the coast of Hampshire, disappeared. The Terrible Three go to Lowther's home to seek Lowther's uncle, but are not made welcome by Mr. Lowther's secretary who is named Bosanne. Any Gem reader knows what to expect from a secretary with a name like that. Then Monty Lowther disappears, too. But Gussy, who calls at Holly Lodge, recognises Bosanne as Scaife who was secretary to Lord Eastwood and robbed the earl.

The price of milk has gone down a penny a quart and is now 3d. a pint.

There has been a new story of Granite Grant and Mlle. Julie in the Sexton Blake Library this month. It is called "The Secret of Thirty Years", set partly in England and partly in Brazil. It is a splendid novel which has everything a good detective story needs.

A fair month in the Magnet, with a lot of Bunter and Coker. "Aunt Judy Comes to Stay" is sheer slapstick. I wonder whether Mack Sennett wrote it. Even Mr. Chapman's pictures look more like cartoons. "Poor Old Bunter" bagged a ticket for "Hamlet" at the local theatre. It was Coker's ticket. Bunter tried to sell it, and then tried to get an afternoon off to attend his uncle's funeral. This was good fun and I enjoyed it. "Bunter the Cavalier" was by the real Frank Richards, but was rather silly. Bunter discovers he is a descendant of Sir William de Bonterre. He starts to talk like a cavalier, and even dresses like one.

Finally "The Schoolboy Sculptor" which, I fancy, from certain little items, was not by the real Mr. Richards, but was by no means a bad story. Russell has gifts as a sculptor and makes a bust of the Head to enter in a contest at Courtfield.

The King of the Belgians unveiled a memorial at Zeebrugge to mark the British raid of St. George's Day, 1918. We saw the unveiling in the Topical Budget at the Cinema.

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: S.O.L. No. 1 was a single story from the Easter Double Number of the Magnet of 1915. Not a very believable tale though it had its moments. No. 2 comprised two Gem stories of 1911. This was the tale in which Bill Frayne proved that he could not be Joe's father, and opened the door for Joe to be somebody's missing heir, as discussed in a Let's Be Controversial article not long ago. The theme was never followed up by Martin Clifford.)

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Nelson Lee Column

THE PERILS OF PIPPINTON

by R. Hibbert

It's to be hoped that someone, somewhere, is compiling the definitive work on Edwy Searles Brooks' villains. 'A Check List of Brooks' Baddies' would make the person who'd never opened a Nelson Lee rush off to read one, and would give pleasure to Constant Readers who've

never stopped marvelling at his scoundrels' enormities.

In melodrama the villain is far more important than the hero. Tom True may be fearless, incorruptible and chivalrous, but, compared with Jasper Basehart, he's a bit of a wet. Even if your hero's a man of action he seldom initiates anything. Things happen to heroes and it's villains that make them happen. Heroes, in spite of appearances, are often passive; villains are as active as barrowloads of monkeys.

Edwy must have given us hundreds of villains. There's your local tearaway, 'Lumpy Bill, Bellton hooligan. Blacksmith's son', as Mr. Blythe describes him in his "Bibliography of the Writings of Edwy Searles Brooks" and there's your Napoleon of Crime - Zingrave - a man who makes Professor Moriarty look like Mr. Pickwick. And between these two extremes are some of Britain's Best Baddies.

In the short series about the Castleton Twins there's a sub plot which concerns young Lord Pippinton, a languid West House Removeite. There are four attempts on his life in four weeks. His unsuccessful attacker is a run of the mill specimen of a Brooks' villain. We never find out his name. Usually referred to as 'The Gaunt Stranger' he's old, baleful eyed and very active. He's up and down the ivy covered walls, in and out the windows, climbing trees and making mighty leaps across bog swallowing bogs. He never lets up; not until half the Remove sit on him. 'He was bowled over, and held down - in spite of his struggles and his ravings.'

The Gaunt Stranger first appears in N. L. 1st New Series No. 72, 'The Rascal of the Remove'. In this episode he tries to smother our lordling in his bed. We don't get a proper look at the villain. We can't miss the eyes, but the rest is a black shadow.

In No. 73, 'The Spoofer of St. Frank's', Lord Pippinton meets his would be murderer face to face,

'He went out into the dusky Triangle, and saw a queer, gaunt old stranger near the gates ... The old man was tall, with rounded shoulders. Iron grey hair fell about his neck. His frame was obviously wiry, and his face was lined and wrinkled. In the evening light, indeed, he looked rather sinister.'

He has a nice line in patter, and that's been the hall mark of a good villain ever since the days of Red Riding Hood's wolf. Some talk

too much. Too many villains are over fond of the sound of their own voices, especially when they've got a captive audience; the hero bound and gagged in a bentwood chair. Instead of finishing off Tom True then and there, and, after all, the apparatus is to hand - revolvers, gas chambers, black widow spiders, king cobras and immensely powerful hunchbacks who can break a man's spine with a flick of the wrist - these garrulous villains always finish their chairside chats with such remarks as "I will leave you now, you insolent British dog. When I return, you die" or "Gaze upon your last sunset, True. You will never see another. In sixteen hours, forty-two minutes this castle and you, you interfering young swine, will be blasted to eternity."

They put things off. It's always later that things are going to happen. Manana as dago villains say. 'Never do anyone in today if you can do him in tomorrow.'

The Gaunt Stranger isn't like that. He talks just as much as is necessary to lure Pippinton to a suitable spot for polishing him off, and then it's a sharp shove in the back and the last of the Marchants is over the edge of a quarry and hurtling 'down - down - towards the terrible rocks which reared their jagged edges below'.

'"At last - at last," muttered the gaunt old man, in a quivering, shaky voice.

'He turned on his heel and walked away into the gloom - vanishing utterly!'

No long winded valedictions, you'll notice.

He chats quite a bit while he's doing the luring and very well he does it. Being a British Baddy he talks about the weather, but in a lyrical strain,

'"There's a frost in the air ... There is frost on the ground. See the blades of grass - see how they stand up crisply from the hedge rows."'

From doing his Out with Romany imitation he slips easily into his take off of Patrick Moore and draws the lad's attention to the beauties of the evening sky.

'"If you will observe closely, you will see the curious formation of the planets. Look - this one high above! Does it not twinkle with every colour of the rainbow?"'

Then it's a push, and Pippy's tumbling into the abyss.

Unfortunately for the Gaunt Stranger the last of the Marchants falls into a pool and gets safely back to St. Frank's.

So, in N. L. , No. 74, 'A Rank Outsider', this dreadful old man has another go and manages to blow up his victim. He's blasted out of his bedroom window - there's a marvellous picture of it on page 2 - and, if Pippinton hadn't landed in some bushes, it would have been game, set and match to the Gaunt Stranger. But Pippy survives, only to be sucked down into the bog near the Edgemoor footpath in No. 75, 'Staggering the School'.

This time it's hard to see how the Gaunt Stranger can fail because in no time at all only Lord Pippinton's head and shoulders are above the mire. But then, interfering Tom True, in the shape of Arthur Castleton, turns up. Pippy is rescued, the Gaunt Stranger taken prisoner.

Why has he been pursuing Lord Pippinton for the last month?

Well, to begin with, he's a crazy, mixed up, senior citizen, and it turns out he's doing it for charity. When he's not prowling round the purlieus of St. Frank's the Gaunt Stranger is head man at an orphanage. Pippinton is his noble father's sole heir and if the boy should die all the accumulated wealth of the Marchants will be left to this orphanage. The Gaunt Stranger wants to do the place up and make it a brighter, happier Home for his deprived charges. Very laudable; that's the way an orphanage head man should be. As he sees it it's a case of the greatest good for the greatest number, so Pippy has to go. He's an astonishingly vacant youth and I suppose that the Gaunt Stranger - dazzled with the prospect of happy, laughing, well fed orphans, dancing in the sunshine - persuaded himself that it wouldn't make much difference to Pippinton whether he was dead or alive. He was so dim he'd never notice the difference.

The Gaunt Stranger was only with us for four weeks and when we last saw him he was being pushed into the back seat of a police car in the rain, in the dark.

Just a run of the mill villain as far as E.S.B. was concerned, but a memorable one for all that. If, in the Autumn of 1927, thin faced old gentlemen wondered why it was that fourteen year old boys paled at the sight of them, and made any excuse to get out of their company, any

regular reader of The Nelson Lee Library could have told them the reason.

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BACK AGAIN AFTER FIFTY-SIX YEARS

The Great War had been over for less than a year when, in September 1919, the Amalgamated Press put on the market a lovely book which was destined to become beloved by generation after generation of young people. The A. P. planned to call it The Companion Papers Annual, but better counsel prevailed, and, dated 1920 for some rum reason, it was offered to the public as The Holiday Annual.

This first Holiday Annual is now reissued (Howard Baker Press; £3.20). Many people regard this as the finest of all the Holiday Annuals. For one thing, artistically it was Warwick Reynolds's Annual; it was his swan-song, so far as the old papers were concerned. It contains a large and varied selection of his drawings.

There is no doubt that the Annual was mainly bought by those who loved the Hamilton schools, and this one contains a good deal of original Hamilton material. Also, it was the only one named "The Holiday Annual" pure and simple; all the rest were The Greyfriars Holiday Annuals, a gratuitous smack for those who thought St. Jim's and Rookwood every bit as good. On the original Warwick Reynolds dust jacket, the new publishers have sought to gild the lily by popping the word "Greyfriars" into the title of the reissue, which no doubt makes good sales sense to them but for which they get a faint black mark from me.

The original St. Jim's tale, in particular, is delightful. Gussy is on the run again. The theme was extended in a Gem series a year or two later, but this version is charming.

In spite of all the original Hamilton material, it is really the story "Fighting for his Honour" which captures the interest more than anything. This is a reprint of the red Magnets 173 and 174; the famous melodrama in which Hamilton had been inspired by the strange Archer-Shee case of 1908. It lulls the old hand with glorious nostalgia.

The original colour plates are now in sepia and seem a bit fuzzy, but, apart from this unimportant detail, it is a faithful reproduction of the original. It will delight the middle-aged and the elderly, and though,

at the price, it may not reach so many of the boys and girls of 1975, it will thrill those who are lucky enough to get hold of it.

It is almost with awe that we realise one little thing. With the authors and the artists and the poets and the printers to pay, they were still able to sell this book in 1919 for just five shillings.

BILLY BUNTER'S HAT TRICK

Frank Richards
(Howard Baker: £3.20)

This volume contains a nice collection of varied Magnet stories of the thirties. The pair which tell how Mr. Vernon-Smith lost a £100 note which was later found by a tramp and hidden in Bunter's straw hat, are pearls of their type. The single tale "Shylock of Greyfriars", also from 1933, is a glorious chunk of fun starring Fisher T. Fish. "Bunter's Bid for Fortune" (1936) was a gamble on the football-pools, and was more run-of-the-mill, though it is amusing.

"Bunter on the Spot" and "Bunter's Windfall" relate entertainingly how Bunter gets £50 by giving information concerning a smash-and-grab merchant. Finally, a move to 1938 for the first two stories of the Texas series.

A pleasant and happy volume to add to the collection, and, in the first three stories, some welcome examples of above-average Hamilton reading. Anyone who likes Bunter in large doses will be in his element.

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BLAKIANA

Conducted by JOSIE PACKMAN

This month sees the welcome return of one of our most prolific and interesting writers - Vic Colby. It's been a long time since Vic was able to write an article for Blakiana and I am sure this month's contribution will be of interest to all our Blake fans. The two S. B. L.'s mentioned are in the Sexton Blake section of the Library if borrowers would like to read them.

After many years of searching in one way or another, I have at last secured the last copy of the Union Jack I needed to complete the year 1917. It is a story by G. H. Teed (No. 727) and according to the

preamble was intended to be the first of a series of Blake's earlier adventures narrated by an old friend Lawrence Haswell. Alas, this was the only one, after two more tales of Prince Menes in the following weeks, nothing more was written for the UJ or S. B. L. by Teed until 1922. As we all know, he joined up during the war and then went on a trip round the world before settling down in Paris from whence came the stream of powerful post-war tales which lasted until his death in 1938. I would like to take this opportunity of saying thank you to all my correspondents for their kind remarks about the quality of Blakiana and trust that I shall be able to continue to keep up this standard.

FAIRMAIDS AND FLANAGAN

by Vic Colby

I have just finished re-reading with a good deal of relish, two excellent 2nd series S. B. L.'s by Warwick Jardine, namely "The Victim of the Cult", No. 570 and "The 13th Code", No. 673. Each of these stories featured breezy, good-natured rolling stone, Edward Hector Flanagan.

Big Ted Flanagan, six-foot three of sheer muscle, huge fisted, rock jawed, had a rugged good-natured face, permanently adorned with various mementoes of "rough-houses" in some of the world's toughest spots.

Flanagan did not look like a man liable to be bowled over by anything short of a battering ram, but there was one wide-open chink in his armour. Although half a dozen men together would need to be lucky to floor him, nevertheless a pretty girl could always accomplish that feat in a split second:

In each of the above stories Big Ted had looked and was lost, and in pursuing his current "one and only" had been precipitated into a grave and sinister mystery, the girl in each case being an endangered innocent.

Big Ted was always likely to put his foot into something other than his shoe, but he was bright enough to have implicit trust in Sexton Blake and was responsible in each case for the intervention of that great detective.

Poor old Ted! Blake found him to be a handy man in a scrap, but he was also something of a menace. On occasion when it was dark or Blake was in disguise, the well-meaning, but mistaken Ted would attack

Blake with vim and vigour, and turn the tables to the crooks' advantage. One could excuse Blake if he had said "such friends I can do without", but actually Blake was extremely tolerant towards Ted and remained a kind and loyal friend to him. When Ted growled that the information Blake got was of no use to them Blake echoed mildly "No use?" my dear chap it's invaluable." A moment later Blake said to Ted "Care to come with me to Dartmoor? With Tinker at work here in town I'd appreciate your company on the journey". Proof I think that with all Ted's faults Blake liked him still.

Warwick Jardine told a good yarn packed with action and suspense. The climax of each of these stories was reached in big old houses (Babylon and The Abbey) complete with underground passages, cowed figures, flickering candles and burning incense, presided over by evil Occult masters, fat and diabolical with hypnotic voices, who grew rich at the expense of the wealthy adherents to their fatal cults.

Flanagan, subtle as a bull elephant, barged into both these establishments in search of his damsels in distress and confronted the crooks in their own strongholds. At this stage of the game there was no shortage of slamming knotted fists into faces, crashing heads against walls, driving thumbs deep into the windpipes while menaced by blazing weapons. Flanagan invariably lost the initial advantage that brazen effrontery had brought him and was rendered incapable. But not for long. Soon Ted was in action again, smashing doors open with foot and shoulder and (in 1st story) single-handedly charging a complete gang, wielding a heavy ceremonial candlestick as a mace. Really powerful stuff this, particularly when you add the other ingredients found in this story - a sinister moat with anchored corpse, Blake, Tinker and Flanagan besieged, gun fights galore, the notorious Black Bowman appearing and disappearing in the woods, loosening black arrows into the backs of selected crooks, putting panic into the hearts of the rest. Blake and Tinker featured in a powerful and satisfying manner.

Ted Flanagan's fairmaids were undoubtedly damsels in distress. Warwick Jardine really made them suffer. In the first story the damsel was tied to the Black Altar, and surrounded by cowed figures was about to be dissected with a jewelled ceremonial knife which was held poised over her helpless body by the fanatical cult leader. In the 2nd story

the damsel was about to be cast by the cult leader into the flames that belched from the fiery furnace behind the mighty jaws of the great brazen idol.

Blake and Flanagan put a stop to these capers however, but only at the eleventh hour when the readers nerves had stretched to breaking point.

Well of course Ted could not marry both fairmaids. Tinker grinned, he knew of old that when it came to the point Big Ted never found wedding bells at the end of his recklessly chivalrous exploits, or, as Blake put it "When it came to marching up the aisle, I fancy Flanagan would find he preferred to be free to go running into trouble wherever he could find it - as he always has".

Blake and Tinker were right, for two male victims of the respective cults, became the bridegrooms of the respective damsels leaving Edward Hector Flanagan as free as a bird.

A MYSTERY AUTHOR

by S. Gordon Swan

Who was Peter Kingsland? Was there such an author, or was he just an editorial name like John Andrews? Referring to Messrs. Lofts and Adley's book, "The Men Behind Boys' Fiction," one finds the name with no details of the author, save that he wrote in the BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY, Second Series.

Some time ago I read two stories under this name in the B. F. L. (2nd Series); No. 404, "Castaways' Treasure," and No. 683, "The Rancher's Secret." Recently I received a third story, No. 456, "The Golden Secret," and hadn't read very far before it seemed familiar. It was reminiscent of a tale in the BOYS' FRIEND and, looking back through my copies of this periodical, I found the identical story in the year 1913.

In the BOYS' FRIEND No. 640, dated 13th September, 1913, there commenced a serial called "Yellow Gold, or the Mysterious Mr. Henderson, Mine-Owner." It was stated to be by the author of "The Yellow Sphinx," "The Brotherhood of the Yellow Beetle," "The Idol's Spell," and many other popular Sexton Blake stories. This is sufficient to identify the writer to Sexton Blake fans as G. H. Teed,

The serial was described as an enthralling tale of adventure in

the great South African Goldfields. Apparently there had been a strike on the Rand about this time, and it was used as a basis for the story. To further his own ends, Mr. Henderson organised a strike and accompanying riots, and the incidents arising from this form the substance of the story. It is a pity that whoever prepared the yarn for publication in the B. F. L. did not correct an error which appeared in the original twenty-one years before -- the villain was called Joseph Henderson until about half-way through, when he became John Henderson. Apart from this blemish, it is a good story.

The question remains -- who was Peter Kingsland, and why was his name attached to a story by G. H. Teed at a time when Teed was still alive?

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DO YOU REMEMBER?

by Roger M. Jenkins

No. 127 - Gem 948 - "Trimble the Trickster"

The Easter number of the Gem for the year 1926 was a memorable one in that it contained the first real Hamiltonian offering after three months of substitute stories. It happened to feature an amusing little tale which, oddly enough, was never reprinted. Perhaps it deserves to be better known.

It began with Trimble stating his willingness to share his birthday cake with Blake & Co. (one of Mrs. Taggles' fifteen-shilling efforts). This was a very welcome offer as Study No. 6 were unfortunately financially embarrassed at the time. There was one slight drawback: the cake had been confiscated by Knox, according to Trimble, but it was easy enough to go to his study and recover it. Only when it was almost all eaten did the alarming truth become known: it was really Knox's own cake, and they had acted as unwitting catspaws for the astute Baggy Trimble. When Knox eventually caught up with Trimble he gave him a terrific box on the ear, which knocked him over and made him dizzy. It was then that Baggy decided to become deaf and play the game for all it was worth.

Many years earlier, in Magnet 689, Bunter had had a similar attack of deafness, but he had planned it from the beginning and he had

deliberately provoked Walker to box his ears. Whereas Bunter used his imaginary affliction to extort money out of Walker, Baggy seemed to begin it as a means of defence and never extended it beyond inviting himself to tea with Knox every day. The difference between the two stories really reflects the more mellow attitude Charles Hamilton adopted to life in the nineteen-twenties. Generally speaking, it would be true to say that Trimble was normally a much greater rascal than Bunter.

Of course, there was an obvious reason why the Gem editor had saved up this genuine story for the Easter number. A new serial began in this issue, "The Scarlet Streak", which dealt with a death ray, and it was the story of the Universal film of that title which was showing at certain listed cinemas at the time. There was a picture-puzzle about it on Page 2 and five pages of serial, so that the St. Jim's story did not begin until page 8. Perhaps it was only a small point, but it was an indignity seldom suffered by the Greyfriars story in the Magnet after red cover days. It was an indication of the chill wind from the east that was to blow so hard around St. Jim's that its very foundations would soon be in danger.

* * * * *

CONTROVERSIAL ECHOES

W. O. G. LOFTS: I must admit that I have always believed that "Harry Dorrian" was a pen-name for Charles Hamilton, and that Hamilton wrote all the circus stories in Pluck. Nobody has ever raised any query before on the matter. I did not think that the serial in C.D. was all that well-written, but put it down to its being Hamilton's style in the early red Magnet era. Records, luckily, are still in existence, and the official files show that there were only fifteen tales and they were written as follows:

- 251. Circus Comrades. Charles Hamilton.
- 252. The Tiger Tamers. Charles Hamilton.
- 253. Jungle Jack. Charles Hamilton.
- 254. Jack Talbot's Birthday. Jointly written by C. Down
and H. A. Hinton.
- 255. The Circus Hero. Charles Hamilton.

cont'd ...

-
257. Circus Rivals. C. M. Down (written entirely).
 262. The Circus Riders. C. M. Down/Hinton.
 263. The Circus Ventriloquist. Down/Hinton.
 264. The Circus Ringmaster. Down/Hinton.
 265. Queen of the Ring. Down/Hinton.
 266. The Circus Pupil. Down/Hinton.
 267. The Showman's Enemy. Down/Hinton.
 268. The Bogus Ringmaster. Down/Hinton.
 269. The Reformation of Bibby. Charles Hamilton.
 271. Jack Talbot's Rescue. Down/Hinton.

So all I can say is that our editor was absolutely right in all his theories, and I congratulate him.

LEN WORMULL: I enjoyed the Controversial, A Matter Of Taste. The various experts' analyses of sub writing in the Companion papers has long fascinated me. In my view, it provides one of the most interesting topics in this hobby of ours. But I wonder how many boy readers really did suspect "ghost" writing? Ashamedly, I was one of those guileless enough to accept unreservedly the given authorship. But then I was never consciously looking for the finer points of a writer's craft in those days. If a story satisfied me, that is all I asked.

Not long ago I read "Greasepaint Wibley", the first Magnet in my regular ordering. I hadn't seen it since 1930. I enjoyed again Wib's impersonation of a master, putting other masters through a spell of physical jerks. Sub writer, Hedley O 'Mant, had done his homework well, and I was completely fooled.

Pentelow was before my time with the Magnet, but out of curiosity I did read his much-discussed, A Very Gallant Gentleman. I found it not at all bad, and somehow felt it would have passed muster in the period it was written. As a later reader, killing off Courtney meant nothing to me. A matter of taste?

Only once did I ever doubt the real authorship, and that was when I read "Speedway Coker" in 1931. The story was so dull and lifeless that it stood out like a thorn among the many fine stories of the time. We know it as the last of the substitute tales.

R. H. RHODES: Why the use of the phrase "dead wood"? Because a character has not been referred to for a long time it surely does not mean that he has ceased to exist. There must be background characters in every school story. What is known of Alan Lorne? Perhaps someone can supplement my information upon him. Some time known as Eric Page, he appears in numerous Gem stories around the 1913 era, mainly as a background character. He was in Gems 510, 517, and 724, and, as far as I am aware, was still at St. Jim's when an editorial listing is given in Gem 1616, which would seem to be less than six months from the final Gem story.

How does the use of Lorne in "The Schoolboy Refugee" differ from a Magnet story which featured Dupont, Russell, Ogilvy or many others? I would further make the point that "of course" it was "typical of the subs to star characters who had been lost in the mists of time." This surely is a rather thoughtless and unkind remark.

The substitute writers came into the picture rather late in the day and by that time the maestro had created characters of a definite shape who lived in his mind. What was the sub writer to do? Lorne was a highly suitable subject for the sub writer.

By and large I do not like the substitute writers, but, please, a plea from me for them. They were only doing a hack job under difficult circumstances.

Eric Fayne adds: Eric Lorne starred in the late summer of 1912, in a story entitled "The Sentence of the House". Much spoiled at home, he was under the wing of Cousin Ethel. A good, serious school story. So far as I know, Hamilton never starred him again. In Gem No. 510, he was included in a Who's Who (not compiled by Hamilton) and was named as Alan Lorne, "a Scot not often featured in the stories." Somebody got mixed up, unless there was another Lorne between 1912 and 1917. When the story was reprinted in 1936, Eric Lorne, for some mystic reason, became Eric Page. Mr. Rhodes says that Lorne appeared in an editorial list in No. 1616, so it would seem that Master Page had changed his name back to Lorne again.

* * * * *

WANTED: Good loose copies or volumes containing same of BOYS' FRIEND - issues between Nos. 1182 and 1256. Good copies essential. Also Dreadnoughts, preferably bound volumes.

ERIC FAYNE

EXCELSIOR HOUSE, CROOKHAM RD., CROOKHAM, HAMPSHIRE.

Are you comprehensively sick of some things in the Seventies? If so, jump on the Time Machine and come back fifty years to be entered for a summer term at Rookwood School in Hampshire. Your Headmaster is Dr. Chisholm.

LOVELL'S REVENGE

"Lovell!"

"Yes, sir!"

"Hold up your shoulders, my boy."

"What?"

"And take your hands out of your pockets."

Arthur Edward Lovell, of the Classical Fourth, simply stared at Mr. Greely. Really, he could scarcely believe his ears.

Had his own Form-master addressed him in those words, it would have been Lovell's duty to sit up and take notice, so to speak, though it would not have been pleasant.

But Mr. Greely was not his Form-master. Horace Greely was master of the Fifth Form. Portly and ponderous, Mr. Greely was rolling across Big Quad like a galleon under full sail, and he had heaved to, as it were, to fix his lofty glance on Lovell of the Fourth, and admonish him in his deep, rich, fruity voice.

"You should not slack, my boy," he continued. "Slacking is a bad thing for men and boys alike. Slacking undermines the character; it is the beginning of a general deterioration."

This was a sample of Mr. Greely's trite wisdom, which he rolled out as impressively as if it were a new discovery, the fruit of long meditation.

"I'm not slacking," shouted Lovell.

"What! Moderate your tone, Lovell,

moderate your tone! You should not raise your voice in addressing a master."

Repetition of his remarks was one of Mr. Greely's ponderous and exasperating ways. The general opinion at Rookwood was that Mr. Greely's remarks were not really worth hearing once. Hearing them twice was altogether too thick.

"I am speaking to you for your own good, Lovell - entirely for your own good," said Mr. Greely severely. "It is shocking to see a boy loafing - yes, loafing! Hold yourself up, my boy; take your hands out of your pockets."

And Mr. Greely, with a severe shake of the head, rolled on, leaving Arthur Edward Lovell rooted to the gravel path, and in a state of wrath that would have done credit to a Hun.

"The cheeky ass!" gasped Lovell. "The fat old duffer. Talking to me as if I were a fag in the Second! The priceless old ass!"

Luckily Mr. Greely was out of hearing. Still like a galleon in full sail, he was pursuing his lofty course along the gravel path towards Little Quad - stately and solemn and slow. It was fortunate that he had passed out of hearing. Certainly it would have been a blow to his dignity to learn that a junior of the Fourth Form regarded him as a priceless ass.

"Priceless old ass!" repeated

Lovell, finding solace in saying to himself what he could not venture to say to the Fifth Form master.

A burst of merriment apprised him of the fact that the little scene had had witnesses and hearers. Three juniors of the Modern Side were grinning at him: Tommy Dodd, and Cook, and Doyle. That they had heard Mr. Greely's ponderous admonitions and thoroughly enjoyed them was clear. If anything could have added to Lovell's exasperation, that would have done it, to be grinned at by Moderns after being slanged by a priceless ass.

"Don't slack, my boy!" said Tommy Dodd, with a cheery imitation of Mr. Greely's fruity voice.

"Hold up your shoulders!" said Tommy Cook.

"Take your hands out of your pockets!" added Tommy Doyle.

The three Tommies yelled.

"Funny, isn't it?" snorted Lovell.

"Slacking undermines the - ah - general character," howled Tommy Dodd.

"It is the beginning of - ah - a general deterioration!" hooted Cook.

"You cheeky Modern frumps!" roared Lovell.

Tommy Dodd held up an admonitory hand, quite in the style of Mr. Greely.

"Moderate your tone, Lovell --"

"What?"

"It is - ah - exceedingly bad form to raise your voice --"

Tommy Dodd got no further than that.

Arthur Edward Lovell, in a state of blind fury, rushed on the three Modern juniors, hitting out right and left. The roars of laughter changed to roars of quite

another kind.

Lovell did not count the odds. But he soon discovered that the odds were there. The three Tommies reeled right and left under his doughty punches, roaring; but they recovered, and hurled themselves upon him as one man.

And then Lovell found himself collared, and swept off his feet, struggling and wriggling unavailingly in the grasp of three wrathful men of Manders' House.

"Duck him!" yelled Tommy Dodd.

They were near the fountain in the quad. Lovell, struggling wildly, was rushed to the fountain.

Splash!

His head went in, and Lovell gave a suffocated howl. It came out again drenched and dripping.

Splash!

It went in again, and out it came once more, streaming. Then, with a heavy bump, the Moderns set him down on the ground, and walked away, laughing. And Arthur Edward Lovell sat and streamed, and gasped and spluttered, in a state of wild wrath, compared with which the celebrated wrath of Achilles was a mild joke.

(CONTINUE YOUR
TERM AT
ROOKWOOD,
NEXT MONTH)

BIOGRAPHY OF A SMALL CINEMA

No. 13. FROM HELEN OF TROY TO JACKIE HOORAY

Change was in the air in the world of the cinema. Everybody was becoming talkie conscious. But, for the time, care was still being taken of the silent houses. Silent versions of talkies were being issued for those who wanted them. Generally they were not very satisfactory. Action and spectacle sold the silents; talk and sound was all that mattered, pro tem, in the talkies. Also, sound films were shown at a much faster speed than the silents, so action was slowed down considerably when a talking film was shown on silent projectors unless the producers made special allowances for this when preparing the silent versions.

Some all-silent films, newly made, were taken back, and certain talking sequences added to them, so that they could be released as "part-talking."

Our opening picture this term was Bessie Love and Charles King in "Chasing Rainbows", from M. G. M. This was the silent version of a part-talking production. In the supporting programme was Charlie Chase in "Crazy Feet". This was followed, on the Sunday, by a British Racing Drama "Warned Off". This came from M. G. M. and was almost certainly a quota film bought up by the firm, to be released by them as Renters' Quota. (Later on I shall have more to say about the British Film Quota Act, which had been passed about five years earlier. It did not affect us, a private cinema, but, though it may have had its good points, it was, so far as I could see, a bad act which did more harm than good. More of it anon.) With

"Warned Off" we played "Unaccustomed As We Are", Laurel and Hardy's first talkie, though we played the silent version.

Also from M. G. M. that term came Lon Chaney in "Thunder", the "might saga of the railway" according to the campaign sheets. I feel sure it was first-class. Ramon Novarro in "Devil-May-Care"; Buster Keaton in "Free and Easy"; Louis Wolheim and Conrad Nagel in "The Ship from Shanghai"; William Haines and Joan Crawford in "The Duke Steps Out".

From First National came Billie Dove in "The Heart of a Follies Girl"; Dorothy Mackaill and Jack Mulhall in "The Crystal Cup"; Harry Langdon in "Three's a Crowd"; Molly O'Day, Alec B. Francis and John Boles in "Shepherd of the Hills"; Johnny Hines in "All Aboard"; Charlie Murray and George Sidney in "Flying Romeos"; Dorothy Mackaill and Jack Mulhall in "Man Crazy"; Johnny Hines in "White Pants Willie"; Dorothy Mackaill and Jack Mulhall in "Smile Brother Smile". A much-vaunted big First Nat. production this term was Lewis Stone, Maria Corda, and Ricardo Cortez in "The Private Life of Helen of Troy". This was one of those historical films which got its laughs from anachronisms. It was long and spectacular, but a big disappointment, and, out in the commercial world, it flopped at the box-office.

From Universal came Hoot Gibson in "Trailing Trouble"; Hoot Gibson in "The Winged Horseman"; Charlie Murray and George Sidney (they had evidently

changed their companies) in "The Cohens and Kelly's in Scotland".

Among our two-reel comedies this term we played another Laurel & Hardy "Men-O-War"; two Harry Langdon 2-reelers "Hotter Than Hot" and "Sky Boy"; Charlie Chase in "Leaping Love", and Our Gang in "Bouncing Babies". Also a number of ideal comedies.

Of mild interest is the fact that we played this term our first Jackie HooRay Comedy "The House Warmers". The Jackie HooRay Comedies were British made, and tried, quite unsuccessfully, to imitate the American Our Gang Comedies. In fact, these British comedies were crude and vulgar. I booked one or two of them solely because one of my own boys, a lad named Jack Calvert, appeared with this British gang. Jack Calvert was an enormously fat boy - he would have made

a splendid Billy Bunter. I don't think he ever went far in the film world, but I recall him in one feature "Under the Greenwood Tree". I don't think we played it, but I saw it at a Colchester cinema.

Jack was a day boy, but he loved to come round to school in the evenings to do his prep - chiefly, perhaps, on account of the fun and games which went on when prep was over. One evening he was sharpening a pencil with a razor-blade. He somehow caught his own ear. It was only the slightest nick, but he bled like a pig all over the place. Our common-room looked like a slaughter-house. I imagine that Jack was none the worse for losing the blood, even though it smothered all around him.

It is many years since I saw or heard of Jack Calvert. He, like the Jackie HooRay Comedies, disappeared into the mists of time.

* * * * *

The Postman Called

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

CLIFF HOWE (South Australia): Along with the Gem and Magnet, many of us old boys enjoyed "Boys' Cinema", so I feel the early cinema addicts are entitled to some space in C.D. The excellent "small cinema" section is great. Your paper makes me young again and also helps me capture the loved atmosphere of great old England. We valued things more in our youth and did not need drugs, etc., to enjoy our beloved Magnet era. Even in cricket there were many great personalities in the old days, just as in the film world. Stars seem in short supply today.

Now, when you have no talent, you start undressing.

T. HOPKINSON (Dukinfield): Why are most people so condescending about the Lamb series? It was never too long for me. I think C.H. had a great character study in Lamb. Quite one of the most sinister

criminals of the Magnet.

R. GODSAVE (Leytonstone): The savage increase in postal charges are almost beyond belief, especially in the matter of parcel post. This is the sort of thing that can and does kill non-profit making enterprises.

The C.D. helps very much in keeping ones sanity in these rough times.

Fr. FRANCIS HERTZBERG (Wirral): With regard to the Sherlock Holmes/Nero Wolfe relationship, Baring-Gould alluded to it in his biography of Sherlock Holmes, and the British publishers, without his knowledge, used a photograph of William Gillette, appearing in his Sherlock Holmes play, as a dust wrapper illustration, and as a frontispiece, the latter having a Victorian type mount supposedly emanating from the Court Photographer at Cetinj, where Holmes was supposed to have caused Irene Adler to conceive Nero Wolfe. It is interesting that Rex Stout makes Wolfe deliberately to contradict Holmes - for example in his attitude towards food's feeding the brain, whilst Holmes said that starvation was a better treatment of that organ; and on the subject of storing extraneous information - Holmes said one's memory wasn't elastic, Wolfe says it is.

NORMAN YANDLE (Redcar): As I read of the general climate of disaster with which we seem to be surrounded, I feel glad that I am not just starting in life, although, to be fair, the young don't seem to find it daunting. I suppose it's all a matter of use.

Well, we older ones have our memories of what to us were happier times, so I turn to my collection of old papers when things get a bit much.

A. J. STANDEN (Stockport): The articles now running on films are very interesting to me. I saw Micky Brantford in "Meet Sexton Blake" with David Farrar as Blake. Inspector Venner was played, I believe, by Gordon McLeod who played the elder brother in the films about Mick Cardby, featuring James Mason. The books were by David Hume, and one of them, "Meet the Dragon", ran as a serial in Detective Weekly in the mid-30's.

* * * * *

News of the Clubs

MIDLAND

Yet another meeting to add in the book of happy memories. Nine members met in the oak panelled room (bearing some resemblance to a Greyfriars study) at Dr. Johnson House, Birmingham, on the last Tuesday of February.

A new member (though not unknown to those who remember the Chesterfield outings), George Riley, ex-Merseyside club, was introduced and made welcome.

Like Aladdin's genie Tom Porter to everyone's delight whisked forth an anniversary number (Modern Boy 264, 25-2-33, 44 years old) and a collectors' item (Old Boys Book Collector, No. 1, Spring 1952). Tom also provided a talk and reading from Gem 874, 8-11-24, 'The Chinee of St. Jim's'. There was a long quotation, from memory, by the chairman about Mr. Mellish, from an old Magnet circa 1914.

A period of relaxed general conversation, the rosy glow of memories the passing years enhance, laced with refreshment, concluded the evening. Next meeting, last Tuesday of the month.

#

CAMBRIDGE

The Club met on 9th March. Danny Posner gave a fascinating talk about his new shop, "The Vintage Magazine Shop". He had found a large number of people interested in collecting, and also a larger source of supply than had seemed likely. He had found a large number of former collectors, now in their late sixties, who were disposing of collections, many in mint condition, and also one or two, previously unknown large scale collectors. On old boys' books he had found the great majority of purchasers knew nothing about the Club movement, and in general displayed a lack of interest in it. He listed the interests of his customers as (1) American Comics (easily the most popular), (2) Film Magazines of the 1930's (other periods were not popular), (3) Pop Papers, (4) Old Boys' Books and Comics; Comics were particularly

sought after by Commercial Artists, Advertisers and Designers; other collectors seemed to be going in for large scale purchases as an investment; thirdly came the true collector, although these sometimes seemed to be rather vague as to their wants. Parents also seemed to be sent in by their sons to execute special commissions. (5) Women's Magazines (mainly bought by fashion designers), (6) American pulp Science Fiction. There seemed to be not only a much greater interest in collecting than was apparently thought, and also a much greater amount of material, especially Gems and Magnets available than had been thought.

Neville Wood produced a recording of English, Indian and American Train Sounds, and he, and the Secretary, talked about railway stories in such papers as "The Scout", "The Marvel", B. O. P., "Chums", etc., and also about the many railway detective stories by Agatha Christie, J. J. Connington, Freeman Wills Croft, Dorothy Sayers, and Sherlock Holmes.

Next meeting 13 April, when it is hoped to talk about "horror" stories and comics.

#

NORTHERN

Saturday, 8 March, 1975

Chairman Geoffrey Wilde opened the meeting, expressing our sorrow at the passing of our worthy president, P. G. Wodehouse. We had been fortunate, said Geoffrey, in our presidents, for both Hamilton and Wodehouse were numbered among the greatest literary figures of this age.

We were able to enjoy once more the recording of 'The Myth of Greyfriars', a tape brought along by Ron Hodgson, and it was delightful to hear again the voice of Frank Richards telling us about Greyfriars. "It is a life of innocence", he says. "Not things as they are, but things as they should be."

And there is an amusing bit in the recording where Hamilton says, "I've been a teetotaller except for whisky, brandy and various kinds of wine ..."

Then a quiz by Harry Blowers, which was, he said, quite an easy one (which introduction we have oft heard before!).

Tying in first place were Ron Rhodes and Bill Williamson, with Ron Hodgson in second place.

Dominating the evening, of course, was our discussion of the forthcoming Silver Jubilee celebrations.

We are to have a celebration dinner at the Mansion Hotel, Roundhay Park, Leeds 8, on Saturday, 7 June, advertised in this edition of C.D. (page 30).

We hope that all members and friends - and all interested in the Hobby - will be able to be present with us.

#

LONDON

Following last month's treatise on Canadian Capers by Ben Whiter, it was the turn of New Zealand Kiwis given after Ben had spoken of his three Desert Island Books. These were the Comic Cuts serial "The Red Rovers", "The Wizard King" from the B. O. P. and "Bob Cherry's Challenge" which was the second Magnet which Ben read.

Norman Wright gave a reading about St. Frank's and Moat Hollow Schools entitled "Rusty Reading" and featured the sadist cruelty that was portrayed in some of the stories.

A Picture Quiz conducted by Mary Cadogan was won by Norman Wright and the high quality of the photostat pictures was much admired and requests for copies were made by competitors.

Samples of the Frank Richards Commemorative Plate were on view. During the tea break there was an enthusiastic group discoursing on Cliff House and Morcove.

All these items took place at the East Barnet home of the Bradford family. Next meeting at the Kensal Rise home of Laurie and Gladys Peters on Sunday, 20th April. Kindly inform if intending to be present.

UNCLE BENJAMIN

* * * * *

WANTED: C.D. No. 150. Write to -

ERIC FAYNE

please.

LET'S BE CONTROVERSIALNo. 200. MR. GREELY

I have always been of the opinion that Charles Hamilton's finest character work was with his older men. His young masters - Dalton, Lascelles, even Railton - were colourless and not particularly interesting. Much as I love St. Jim's, I realise only too well that it comes a bad third to the other two schools for real character work. Mr. Selby had the greatest potentials, but they were not often fully exploited. Too frequently, like Ratcliff, he was the centre of tyranny or farce.

Greyfriars and Rookwood were miles ahead. Greyfriars with Prout and Quelch. Rookwood with Greely, Bootles, and the awe-inspiring Dr. Chisholm.

Rookwood was well into its autumn years when Mr. Greely came into his own. Named "Don Pomposo" by his form, he was ponderous, portly, and self-opinionated. His dignity was weighty and carefully nourished. Like Prout, he was the master of a Fifth Form.

His great rise to stardom came in the splendid series in which, following an incredible piece of injustice on the part of Dr. Chisholm, Mr. Greely left Rookwood and became the Headmaster of the Manor House School nearby. The man who bought the Manor House and made it into a school for Mr. Greely to reign over was Sir George Hansom, an old pupil of Mr. Greely's and the father of "Cabby" of the Rookwood fifth.

Sir George, too, was a delicious slice of characterisation. He was keen on justice, very kind-hearted - and all went well so long as Sir George was allowed to interfere when it suited him, and as long as the recipient of Sir George's kindness was suitably grateful to Sir George.

It doesn't do, of course, to stop and wonder at the feasibility of a crowd of boys whose fees had been paid at Rookwood leaving that school in the middle of term and going to be educated, housed, fed, and tended at Manor House School. So long as one isn't too fussy over feasibility it is a superb series, showing Hamilton at his humorous and most creative best.

A few years later the same plot was used in the High Oaks series in the Magnet. The Magnet series, though it had some strong drama,

was allowed too many farcical interludes, and it was on a lower plane than the Rookwood series.

Less than a year later, Rookwood came to its end, but the main characteristics of Mr. Greely were transferred to Mr. Prout of Greyfriars. Up till now, Mr. Prout had been a slightly potty, somewhat botty, little man who had, in earlier days, told of his adventures in the Rockies. But after Prout donned the elephantine cloak of Mr. Greely and became "Old Pompous" of Greyfriars, he also became one of the grandest characters in school literature.

Splendid and admirable though Prout was, he never surpassed Mr. Greely whose greatness was compressed into such a lovely little summer.

THE OLD BOYS' BOOK CLUB (NORTHERN SECTION)

announce their

Silver Jubilee Dinner

to be held at

THE MANSION HOTEL, ROUNDHAY PARK, LEEDS 8

SATURDAY 7 JUNE 1975 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm

Dress optional

Tickets (£2.50) on application to the Secretary, the Reverend G Good, Staincliffe Vicarage, Batley, Yorkshire WF17 7QX, before 7 May. Remittance with application, please, enclosing sae.

WANTED: Union Jacks, Union Jack Supplements (both before the year 1926); Sexton Blake Libraries up to No. 85, Third Series; early Champions; Nelson Lee Library up to No. 92 (old series only).

H. W. VERNON

5 GILLMAN ST., CHELTENHAM, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA 3192.

WANTED: Number 29 of Story Paper Collector. £1 offered.

JACK OVERHILL, 99 SHELFORD ROAD, TRUMPINGTON, CAMBRIDGE.

=====

WANTED: Sexton Blakes 1st and 2nd Series, Union Jacks, Collectors' miscellany. Duplicate U.J.'s for sale or exchange.

H. OWEN, 28 NARCISSUS RD., LONDON, N.W. 6.

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VOLUME NUMBERING IN THE MAGNET -

A MINOR MYSTERY

from D. Langford-Allen

Like, I suppose, most collectors of the Magnet, I began my collection with the most recent - and therefore most easily obtainable - issues, and was only slowly able to work my way back. It was thus only recently that I noticed something rather puzzling, when I was looking through my copies for 1920.

Magnet 621, the first in 1920, is numbered volume 13. Fair enough - numbers 622-5 are also numbered volume 13. It is at this point that the matter becomes rather more complicated, as Magnet 627 (I don't have 626) is volume - no, not 14, but seventeen! The volume number stays as 17 until 647, the normal half-year volume change, when it becomes 18. So Magnet never had a volume 14, 15 or 16; but wait. Why was the re-numbering started at seventeen at all - there hadn't been seventeen half-years of Magnet! If you work it out, it would be quite impossible to number your bound set of the paper correctly if you use the 1920-1940 volume numbering. So which system do you use?

An interesting sidelight is the problem of the date of the change - why wait until the end of January, instead of the natural point for a change in numbering at 31st December, 1919? Was it Hinton who made the change, and if so, why did he wait for so long, after taking over with Magnet 580? I'd love to know.

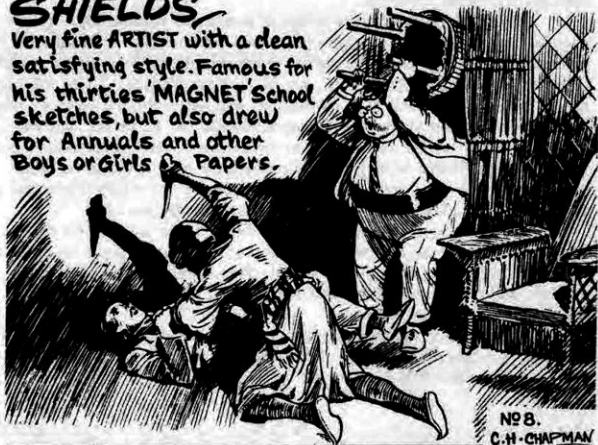
I'm still a very long way from binding up my last volume, but as soon as I get that elusive copy of 626 I'll want to bind up the copies for 1920 ... but what shall I put on the spine?!



THE ARRIVAL OF
RICHARD ROGER ROBERT MEEK!

LEONARD SHIELDS

Very fine ARTIST with a clean satisfying style. Famous for his thirties 'MAGNET' School sketches, but also drew for Annuals and other Boys or Girls Papers.



NO 8.
C.H. CHAPMAN