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COLLECTORS' DIGEST
Vol. 29 No 343 JULY 1975

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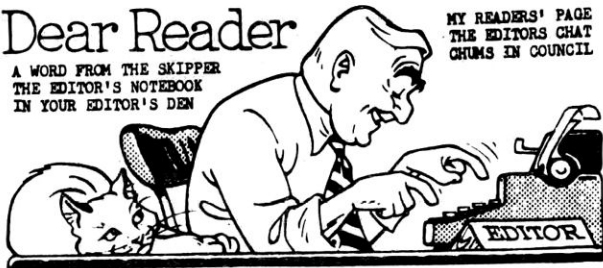
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Dear Reader

A WORD FROM THE SKIPPER
THE EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK
IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN

MY READERS' PAGE
THE EDITORS CHAT
CHUMS IN COUNCIL



COURTNEY - AND COURTENAY

Nearly sixty years ago, the editor of the Magnet mentioned in his Chat Page that he had received a huge number of letters in praise of a story entitled "A Very Gallant Gentleman", and mused on how beautifully the story had been written. As the editor was also the writer of the story, Mr. J. N. Pentelow, he wasn't being exactly modest. The story, of course, was the one in which the prefect, Courtney, died at the finish.

However, the editor also mentioned that some readers had been abusive, and that one had mixed up Arthur Courtney of Greyfriars with

Frank Courtenay of Highcliffe. That, the editor said, quite rightly, was ridiculous. He also mentioned, quite correctly, that Arthur Courtney had seldom featured in the stories. In fact, as we ourselves once pointed out, Courtney had not been starred since 1912 until his death in 1917.

Nowadays, it seems, a bit of legend has got tacked on, to the effect that Pentelow was ordered by his superiors to get rid of Courtney, because readers were getting him mixed up with Frank Courtenay of Highcliffe. One wonders where that bit originated. If it came from Pentelow himself, the person who recalls it must be getting a bit long in the tooth, for Pentelow died as long ago as 1931 - well over forty years ago.

In my view, it's just a yarn. Pentelow bumped off Courtney simply to provide a sentimental sensation in a story. To my mind it is quite fantastic that there is any truth in the Courtney - Courtenay business. The powers-that-were might just as well have ordered somebody to bump off Tom Merry of St. Jim's in case readers confused him with Gordon Gay of the Grammar School.

COMICS, MOVIES, and PEAS

In this day and age, you know, and at this moment of time, you know, we are within a kil-lom-eter's breadth of seeing the prostitution of the English Language - and of being driven up the wall in the process. I am sure you can think of dozens of examples of what I mean. That horrible abbreviation "pea", for instance. Five pea for a doughnut which, a year or two back, was sold at seven for sixpence. Not only did they murder our currency, they ruined our language along with it.

"Movies" is an American word. They always called their films "movies" over there. But, over here, it was always the films or the pictures or, even, among the less-particular, the flicks. Now, thanks to TV programmes and trendy critics, a number of people are referring, nasally to "movies".

But the term "comics", applied by the ignorant to the old story-papers, is the bane of the post-war years. Last month we referred to it in our Post-bag column. This month we come back to it again. A paragraph in a Cambridge newspaper refers to four middle-aged men

gathered round a piano and singing "Bessie Bunter, the Pride of the School." It goes on to mention that the four are devoted to "those late, great boys' comics, Magnet and Gem."

As the report concerned something which happened at a private club meeting, it seems fair to assume that the reporter was given his information by someone who was present at that meeting. We really must make sure, when we give some hopeful reporter a little scoop, that he is properly educated as to what is and what is not "a comic".

SCATTY:

Did you see a programme on TV in which a collector of "comics" was said to have a collection worth £100,000? I gather that the same information was offered to the wondering readers of a national newspaper.

The TV interviewer seemed impressed - and I don't wonder at it. That's what he's paid for. These rubbishy reports are laughable but they have a serious side. Old people rush to dig out dusty and grubby items from their attics in the belief that they are sitting on a fortune. It is a shame when they are disappointed.

Personally, I should think there is a risk for the wealthy collection owner who yearns for brief importance in a newspaper or on TV. He might attract the attention of the Great Comic Robbers one dark night. Particularly if the robber gang is not very intelligent.

I hasten to add that there is no truth in any rumour that I am selling my own modest collection in order to retire and live in luxury in Bermuda. Or Clacton!

In the same month we have heard of a sale at Sotheby's where some well-to-do gent paid £500 for about 250 Mickey Mouse Weeklies, and a distinguished dealer paid £4,000 for a quantity of comics. Things like that are mind-boggling for most of us.

Yes, a depressing month, one way and another. However, a cherubic youngster (another of 'em) gave me a laugh in my newspaper last week. This cherub claims that tennis players should be treated with respect. "Players are not circus animals who are paid to perform to crowds. It is the crowd who should feel privileged to watch the star players."

I have yet to learn of a circus animal that laughed all the way to

the bank. But if pampered, temperamental tennis stars are not paid to perform, then I don't know who is.

Next month I shall be lifting the curtain on the C.D. Annual.

THE EDITOR

* * * * *

DANNY'S DIARY

JULY 1925

There is a serial running in the Boys' Friend entitled "The Lion's Revenge" by Roger Fowey. It is set in fifty years time in the year 1975, and there is a big war on. Britain, the greatest nation in the world, leads her allies in an invasion of China. I don't like it much. One thing, if there is a war in 1975, as in the story, I shall be an old gent and they won't make me drive a tank.

Much better, in the Boys' Friend, is Rookwood, which goes merrily on its way. The first story "Well Meant" was a sequel to the one last week in which a frowsy old tramp makes Gunner believe that he, the tramp, is Mr. Dalton's brother.

Then, two rib-tickling tales about Carthew. In "Done In The Dark" Carthew is bullying all the juniors, and he is tied up, and has his face smothered in tar in the woodshed. He accuses the Fistical Four. In the sequel, "The Whip Hand", Jimmy Silver & Co. are expelled for attacking Carthew. But Mornington, who was the guilty one, takes a hand, and Carthew has to climb down or admit that he was telling lies. He climbs down.

"Tubby Muffin's Invitation" was the last of the month and the first of a new holiday series. Muffin invites the Fistical Four to go for a cruising holiday on the fine steam yacht of his uncle, Captain Montague Muffin. Lovell, who had invited his friends to stay with him for the holidays, finds that he can't have them after all. So he accepts Muffin's invitation - but the others are suspicious of the whole thing, at least until they see the yacht.

The month's new issues of the Schoolboys' Own Library contain

"The Kidnapped Cricketers", a good tale but rather jerky reading, about Vernon-Smith and Greyfriars, and "His Brother's Burden", a sad and excellent St. Jim's tale.

It is being a very hot summer, and after many days with temperatures round 88, the month ended with very heavy thunderstorms.

First of the month in the Nelson Lee tales was "The Lost Patrol", continuing the series about the St. Frank's scouts. The chums suspect Captain Starkey of being a smuggler. Then "The Lighthouse Scouts" in which the two patrols, the Lions and the Tigers, find themselves marooned on Shingle Head Lighthouse.

"Saved from the Sea" told of the gallant rescue, in a raging gale, of the scouts in the lighthouse. This ended the scouting series, and made way next month for "Adventure Bound", the first of a great holiday series. Lord Dorriemore is the host on a trip to the South Seas, and it looks like being a stunning series. The St. Frank's tales are now increased in length.

At the pictures we have seen Agnes Ayres in "The Guilty One", Mary Philbin in "Rose of Paris", Priscilla Dean in "Siren of Seville". Those were the sort of films that the ladies like, but I liked "The Midnight Express" which starred William Haines, and two other good ones were Buck Jones and Wanda Hawley in "The Man Who Played Square" and George O'Brien and Dorothy Mackaill in "The Man Who Came Back". Also good was Laura La Plante in "Butterfly".

The trouble with the Gem is that the stories by the real Martin Clifford these days are so short. "Levison's Luck" was really the final story about Mr. Selby's high-value French banknote. Levison has been expelled for stealing it, but it was really Racke who found it. Racke sent it to Mr. Lodgey to pay a gambling debt, and could not undo the harm he had done. However, Mr. Lodgey guessed that the note had been stolen, and sent it back. And Racke took it and left it on the Head's desk so everyone should think it had been a potty joke. A lovely series, this one - lovely reading and lovely writing.

Next week was a kind of delicious bit tacked on to the series. "D'Arcy the Detective" decided to use his detection powers to find out who had really taken that famous banknote - and Gussy, unintentionally, stirred up quite a bit of bother. All first-class reading, but such short

stories of only about nine chapters.

"Saving the Head" was much longer - one of those with lots and lots of plot. It starred Lumley-Lumley and one of his old acquaintances, Flash Ike. Not a bad tale of its type. Last of the month was "The Plundered School", with Marie Rivers and Talbot and Jim Dawlish and a new secretary named Jack Harper for the Head. (I think the naughty Harper featured in the Christmas tale in the Gem last December.) Talbot and Marie (always in her nurse's uniform according to the artist) were kidnapped. All very familiar. This one goes on next week.

One of the best Sexton Blake tales I have ever read came out this month in the S. B. L. It is "The Mystery of the Platinum Nugget", which brings back Granite Grant and Mlle. Julie. A splendid tale, full of mystery and excitement.

The railways are a hundred years old. A special railway centenary exhibition has been held at Darlington this month, and there was a 6-mile procession of locomotives and trains, opened and led by the Duke and Duchess of York.

Two stories this month have wound up the Ragged Dick series in the Magnet. The titles are "Ragged Dick's Resolve" and "A Boy's Cross-roads". Ragged Dick has gone to Greyfriars as the grandson, who is actually dead, of Sir Henry Compton. It is a scheme to stop the Compton fortune falling into the hands of the worthless Roger Compton who is the real heir if the grandson is dead. But the Compton's have a birthmark resembling a hawk's head. And Ragged Dick has that birthmark. He is the son of Sir Henry's brother, and is the real heir.

Of course, it's fearfully melodramatic, with the villain hissing out a thousand curses. And the coincidence is really too odd for belief. All the same, it's great reading, and I loved the closing story.

Billy Bunter has always bragged about a non-existent mansion, Bunter Court. And now, in "Billy Bunter's Brain-Wave", the first of the summer holiday series, Bunter is able, with the unknowing assistance of Lord Mauleverer, to make Bunter Court really exist - or seem to exist. In the second tale of the series, "Bunter of Bunter Court", Harry Wharton and Co. are ready to believe that black is white when they are invited to Bunter Court - and find out what a splendid abode it is. Great, great fun.

There were to have been free photographs of cricketers with this series, but the editor has apologized that the scheme is delayed to mid-August, when the photographs will be replaced with cut-out figures of cricketers.

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: "The Kidnapped Cricketers", No. 7 of the S.O.L., was one of those unsatisfactory stories which occasionally took the gilt off the gingerbread of the Library. It comprised four Magnets of the summer of 1917; the story was an excellent Vernon-Smith tale of the type which became rather hackneyed later on. But in this S.O.L. version there was so much drastic pruning, cutting it to about two-thirds of its original length, that continuity was spoiled. S.O.L. No. 8, "His Brother's Burden", also from the summer of 1917, was far better, comprising three Gems which starred Manners and his minor, and presenting, in most acceptable style, one of the finest dramatic series of the war years.)

* * * * *

BLAKIANA

Conducted by JOSIE PACKMAN

This month's Blakiana is devoted to the theme of "Gangsters", John Bridgewater's article on the three Blackpool tales started it off, and then I received an idea from Don Harkness of Australia who asked me to write something on the Gangster type tales in the Union Jack. So here are two articles on the subject for your delectation. I hope you will all enjoy them, maybe someone will write me something on the same subject in return. Everyone has their own feelings about these Gangster tales so I should like to hear about them.

At the time of writing these words the weather is more like winter than summer, but I hope it will soon change so that we can enjoy our holidays and also our summer meetings of the Old Boys' Book Clubs which are invariably spent in lovely gardens, weather permitting.

THE GANGSTER ERA CYCLE

in the Union Jack and the effect on the stories thereof

by Josie Packman, from an idea suggested by
Don Harkness of Australia

When the Volstead Prohibition Act of 1919 came into force in the

U. S. A. it started a cycle of crimes of a type never really encountered before which eventually created a period in time forever known as "The Gangster Era". In this article I have tried to show the effect of this particular crime wave on the stories of Sexton Blake in the Union Jack.

The above Act which created all the trouble was finally repealed in 1933, but the aftermath remains with us to this day.

From our vantage point of forty years on, we look back to the Gangster days of the 1920's and 1930's with some sort of affection created by the actors in gangster films of the period. The so-called Gangster film of today bears no relation to our pre-war ones. The modern ones are really nasty, violent, vicious and sex-ridden, whereas the old ones although violent with their many shootings and hi-jackings, etc., were popular because of the well-known film stars who gave such excellent portrayals of such gangsters as Al Capone, Legs Diamond, Bugs Moran and many others.

Now what has this to do with Sexton Blake, you may well ask? This is the answer.

The Union Jack, ever up to date with its stories of Blake and Tinker's adventures had, necessarily, to go in for some gangster type tales. Whilst these became fairly popular with some of the Union Jack readers they did not gain the adherents which those marvellous films did, much to the dismay no doubt, of the then Editor. In my opinion, only one Sexton Blake author could write gangster tales from his own experiences in America and that was Mr. G. H. Teed. Others tried their best to follow him - Gilbert Chester for one - but Teed was the Tops. This type of tale was first introduced into the U. J. in November 1930, the first story with the word Gangster in the title being Union Jack No. 1414, called "Sexton Blake - Gangster" by Robert Murray, but the tale was merely a story about a London small time gang into which Blake penetrated as a member in order to break it up and arrest the leader. There was an earlier Union Jack, No. 1372 - with the word Gangster used in the title - "Gangster's Gold" by Anthony Skene, not a very good tale I am sorry to say, also it wasn't really a gangster tale, so the honours go to the tale by Robert Murray.

When we speak of the Gangster Era we immediately think of the 1920's and early 1930's. It is a period, or Era, set in that particular

time forever its own, and the films made about it are also something special. Apart from those made about the real gangsters such as Al Capone, there were many made of the stories of the new "Private Eye" type of detective. We think then of the most famous of those writers, four of whom spring to mind - Dashiell Hammet, Damon Runyan, Raymond Chandler and Micky Spillane. Sam Spade was the creation of Dashiell Hammet and was ably portrayed by that wonderful actor, Humphrey Bogart. Our old musical friend, Dick Powell, turned dramatic actor in the part of Raymond Chandler's Philip Marlowe. So I could go on for ever, but not finishing without naming the film star who was perhaps the greatest of them all - Edward G. Robinson, Gangster Supreme.

Oddly enough, although I always enjoyed the excellent Gangster films of this period - and still do when we are permitted to see them on TV - I was never able to read and enjoy a story of that type.

What I found interesting in that period of the Union Jack was the 2-page centre inset which featured the real life activities of Al Capone and his contemporaries. This feature first appeared in Union Jack, No. 1416, under the title "The Menace of the Gunman". (A truly prophetic menace.)

Incidentally this first episode mentions the names of two men, members of the Committee of Chicago Citizens known as the Secret Six, whose activities were to lead eventually to the cleaning up of Chicago and other cities with the same gangster problems. Their names were Robert Isham Randolph, Chief of Police and Alexander Jamie, an F. B. I. man. Jamie had married the elder sister of Eliot Ness and was instrumental in giving Ness the job as leader of the famous team called "The Untouchables". No doubt some of you may have seen that excellent TV series called "The Untouchables" with Robert Stack as Eliot Ness. Every episode was true, based on the book published by Eliot Ness and Oscar Fraley one of his associates in the team.

By a stretch of the imagination one could picture our own detective, Sexton Blake, leading such a team. In fact, as I have mentioned elsewhere, Mr. Teed wrote several fine stories of Blake's activities in New York during the early 1920's. These appeared in the Sexton Blake Library, the first one being No. 219, called "The Spirit Smugglers", a title which speaks for itself. Efforts were made by

several other Blake authors to break into the field of Gangster tales, but they were not successful and finally caused the demise of the Union Jack as a decent detective story paper, in 1933. Twenty three years later the same thing happened to the Sexton Blake Library when the so-called New Look Blake was introduced. Merely a repetition of the Gangster period of the Union Jack with modern gunmen out to get Blake. Editorial policy once again tried to turn Blake into a "private Eye" detective for modern readers, in consequence of which, the Sexton Blake Library faded out.

Thus the Gangsters had an evil effect on our detective literature of the period, bringing to an end the wonderful long run of real detective stories written for our beloved Union Jack.

SEXTON BLAKE IN BLACKPOOL

by John Bridgewater

I was a little surprised to find that there are three stories with Blackpool in the title. U. J. No. 306, "Sexton Blake in Blackpool" (1909), U. J. No. 1444, "Sexton Blake Saves Blackpool" (1931) and S. B. L. 2nd series, No. 201, "The Blackpool Mystery" (1929).

The first, by E. J. Gannon, is a leisurely story of the older sort. Blake suspects that all is not well with a widow for whom he has some responsibility. The lady keeps a boarding house in Blackpool, one of those which must have disappeared before the 1920's. It was never my good fortune to find myself in such a grand establishment. However, Blake goes to the seaside and finds a well organised gang of burglars headed by an audacious rascal who has inveigled the lady into parting with her fortune. The truth is soon discovered, but finding proof, and the loot, presents many difficulties. U. J. 1444, by Gilbert Chester, is an American type gangster tale. The gang try to blackmail Blackpool by demanding a large sum of money for not putting germs into the water supply and ruining the holiday season. Blake saves the situation with the help of a cockney gang. The S. B. L. by L. Bidston tells of an attempt to swindle an inventor out of his discovery. He is murdered right at the beginning and much of the story is taken up with both sides trying to find his papers.

Superficially these are three very different stories, but on closer examination they have quite a number of similarities. Of course

they all take place in holiday time. Less predictably though the crooks are gangsters in all three. (I could have called this article "Hoodlums Holiday".) In U.J. 306 we have a good old fashioned gang of burglars. In complete contrast U.J. 1444 has an Al Capone type gang. I read this one immediately after No. 306 and the "snap, crackle and pop" tale rattled along at breakneck pace and literally left me breathless, at least that was my impression. S.B.L. 201 has American gangsters too, but their victims are limited to a few individuals instead of the general public as in the U.J. tales.

In both U.J.'s, Blake chats-up the gang leader and physically assaults him with considerable success and no immediate retaliation. Tinker is not so lucky. He suffers capture with unpleasant results in U.J. 306 and S.B.L. 201. Both U.J. stories open in London and both gang leaders have sea-going vessels to aid their nefarious exploits. As would be expected both live in grand style.

The fair sex play a part in all three stories. Their fortunes are particularly important in U.J. 306 and S.B.L. 201, Blake having to recover their losses in both. The lady is kidnapped in S.B.L. 201 and U.J. 1444. Unexpectedly Blake does the kidnapping in the latter. The incident, illustrated on the S.B.L. cover, is not the same in the story as in the picture. One wonders whether the story was changed or the artist did not read the story.

The pleasure beach is well represented in action packed scenes in the later tales and whilst the holiday attractions feature in the early one they are rather less familiar.

I find it adds quite a lot to the interest by selecting related stories in this way and reading them consecutively, preferably the old first. I am going to read the two "Coffee Stall" stories next.

* * * * *

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D. M. BENTLEY

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NELSON LEE COLUMN

A LETTER FROM ST. FRANK'S

by Jim Cook

The day St. Frank's was ruled by women!

It sounds like the insensate title of a book, but at one time St. Frank's was run by females, and it has been recorded that the "ladies, had they realised the nature of their task, would have preferred to have taken in hand a colony of young elephants": Well, no doubt they would. But they were not to know that St. Frank's wasn't a suitable school for women teachers. They soon found out. Miss Trumble, the new lady governor of St. Frank's, challenged the authority of Dr. Stafford to administer corporal punishment, with the result that the Head, supported by the other masters, tendered their resignations. Miss Trumble accepted them. At once, the other masters who were left, were unable to maintain order and so the school was left to look after itself.

Miss Trumble, unable to find masters to run the school, decided to install mistresses.

It is open to conjecture whether St. Frank's would have accepted the ladies if Miss Trumble hadn't treated the boys like little children and started making rules and regulations more befitting a kindergarten. But that she did was the fuse that set off the explosion in the shape of Revolt!

But not before the Press made headlines such as "Great Public School Taken Over By Women!" - "Mistresses replace Masters at St. Frank's College!" - "Novel situation at Big Public School!" Miss Trumble rapidly became the most talked of woman in England. There was no denying her courage, but among educationalists, her scheme was a doubtful matter, and a subject for humorous speculation by others.

The arrival of the mistresses came as a shock to the boys. They anticipated the arrival of seven or eight learned gentlemen. Instead, a number of elderly, unpleasant-looking ladies turned up and gazed out upon the school in a grim, defiant kind of way.

And with these mistresses Miss Trumble was determined to make big alterations.

This invasion was treated by Fenton, the school captain, as a joke. It just wasn't possible, it being so bizarre, to think of it as otherwise.

But it was no joke. That the boys found out very soon! It is interesting to note the names of these mistresses and their appointments. There were two Housemistresses. Miss Babbidge ruled the Ancient House. Miss Rice - "the one with the fat face" - was destined to rule the College House.

A Miss Skinner was in charge of the lordly Sixth, and a rather young and pretty mistress, Miss Nixon, had the terrible task of teaching the Third-form.

Then a Miss Teezer was booked for the Remove. There was also a Miss Crimp. I haven't been able to find out just what her duties were. Perhaps she "looked after" the Fifth.

The silliest change Miss Trumble made was to substitute netball for football!

Very soon, the fellows talked about Revolt.

The novelty of feminine rule provided the boys with endless fun and amusement for the first week, but when Miss Trumble went to extremes with punishments like a diet on bread and water the difficult task of organising a "Barring-Out" fell, as usual, to Nipper.

A stirring account of how the Remove of St. Frank's rebelled against the new Lady Head has been recorded. In the dead of night trenches were dug in the fields near the school to accommodate the juniors against a siege and a possible attack. Then an ultimatum was sent to the Headmistress demanding the return of Dr. Stafford and the other masters. But this only succeeded in infuriating Miss Trumble and increased her determination to run the school in her own way.

Hired mercenaries were hired in an attempt to quell the revolt and bring the rebels back into the school by force.

But Fort Resolute, the stronghold, was well named by the juniors. The attack failed, like many more that Miss Trumble tried.

Petticoat Rule was destined to be accepted in many institutions and positions of power in the future, but the sudden invasion at St. Frank's by ladies who regarded both seniors and juniors as naughty children was not only before its time, but out of date altogether.

It is difficult to understand why the pretty young mistress, Miss Nixon, was put in charge of the fags. I think Miss Trumble might have ruled St. Frank's to this day had Miss Nixon been put in the Remove. For the Remove always led a rebellion. Led by Nipper they were always successful. But I doubt if a rebellion would have been started had Miss Nixon and not Miss Babbidge, ruled the Remove. On such small details are world events created.

Even Nipper is unable to say what the outcome would have been had Miss Nixon took charge. For Miss Nixon was only young and pretty, a fact that shouldn't enter in such a serious situation like a schoolboy rebellion, but the rest of the female staff were so unbecoming ladies that Miss Nixon stood out in prominent relief as it were.

Consequently, Miss Nixon was treated with the greatest respect by the boys during the revolt, and she eventually resigned. The fate of Miss Trumble and her female staff was decided when Nipper sent for the school governors and, after being misled by Jane Trumble, they returned to St. Frank's to see Farmer Holt demanding his payment of Miss Trumble for services rendered in the shape of selling of the meadows adjoining St. Frank's. Among other things, Holt wanted paying for flooding the trenches, money spent on barbed wire and money for paying his men whom Miss Trumble used in her attempt to break the revolt.

This disgraceful behaviour on the part of Miss Trumble coming to light was enough evidence for the school governors and she uttered a kind of wild scream and ran from them.

It was the end of Jane Trumble, one time Head of St. Frank's. It was the end of Petticoat Rule.

ALL FOR YOU - VIA A TYPEWRITER:

by William Lister

In a recent T. V. item showing a set of old comedy films and featuring Harold Lloyd, Chester Conklin, and Ben Turpin, the commentator faded out while saying "We owe our thanks to these men who provided us with so much happiness all those years ago."

Perhaps we (thinking of Edwy Searles Brooks, Charles Hamilton and the Sexton Blake authors) can express the same sentiments, with an added rider that we can still share that happiness, through the foresight of Harold Leckenby, Eric Fayne, and a host of other enthusiasts.

It's not only the old films and old papers, but old customs too, that can bring back happy memories. How many happy hours of day's gone by were spent bowling the hoop along the street. A little wooden peg and a little wooden stick was all that was needed to play 'PIGGY'; there was the Whip and Top; and Shuttle-cock for the girls. All of which are rare, very rare, today. Take April Fool's Day. On the first day of April, you were caught out as an April fool fifty times before dinner. Every kid in every street had a do at 'doing' you, to shrieks of laughter. I don't think, in the last three years, anybody has attempted to make an April Fool out of me - not even my grandchildren. All of which brings me to "The Prisoners of the Mountains" an Edwy Searles Brooks, Monster Library success.

Going back into the late twenties the St. Frank's boys were quite capable of entering into the spirit of April Fool's day. In this tale Lord Dorriemore, Nelson Lee and boys from several forms all fall under the spell of April the first. Japes, rags and what-not come thick and fast in the opening chapters,

Edwy Searles Brooks was of our generation. Some of the japes and tricks he describes with his pen he had, no doubt, experienced in his youth.

All good stuff to get the tale underway. Have you ever tried writing so many thousand words a week, wet or fine, in good health or bad, summer and winter, Easter, Whit, Bank Holiday and Christmas, and weave those words into sentences and the sentences into paragraphs and the paragraphs into chapters? Add to all this a plot and a theme good enough to satisfy the story - hungry lot of youths such as we were in those days. (None of your picture-stories please. So many thousand words per copy and more if possible, double numbers always welcome was the order of the day.)

It took real hard work for Brooks, Hamilton and the Sexton Blake fraternity to wring that 'tuppence' out of us week by week.

So April the first and its effect on the St. Frank's boys was good for a new opening chapter prior to boarding a Lord Dorriemore type of airship for fun and adventure of a more serious nature, and by that, I mean, ... TAGOSSA - a name to strike dread into our schoolboy hearts. TAGOSSA, A DEADLY AND DANGEROUS SECRET SOCIETY, add to

that a storm-ridden schooner in lashing seas on a dark terrifying night. Now take a monastery hidden in the mountains and occupied by bandits and for good measure a kidnapped prince shivering in the brigands' lair. I can almost see the steam rising from Mr. Brooks' typewriter. I wonder how many words he typed a minute?

I think I'll leave you here - leave you to the clicking of his typewriter as the last few thousand words leave his fertile imagination to wend their way, first to the pages of the 'NELSON LEE' and then (as an encore) to the pages of the 'MONSTER LIBRARY'.

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REVIEWS

THE SLEUTH OF GREYFRIARS

Frank Richards
(Howard Baker: £3.20)

Here we have two of the shorter Magnet series of the mid-thirties. The first one is the 4-story series concerning Peter Hazeldene's uncle who disappeared from the Brighton bank where he was employed and who was suspected of having made off with bank funds. Marjorie Hazeldene and the Cliff House girls play substantial parts, and, with many very original sequences, the whole yarn is well-above average in entertainment value.

The second series also strikes a note of crime and detection, with Jack Drake, Ferrers Locke's assistant, on the trail of the elusive Jimmy, the Fox. It is an Easter holiday series, winding up with the delightful tale which introduced the Jubilee of King George the Fifth.

Neither of these series is particularly well-known and that is, possibly, one reason, why this volume may be even more welcome than some of the more famous stories.

Both come across to the reader with a charming freshness.

BUNTER'S SEASIDE CAPER

Frank Richards
(Howard Baker: £3.20)

The 6-story Portercliffe Hall series is typical of the English holiday tales of the latter-day Magnet in some ways, but the combination of the fellows included in the holiday party is reminiscent of at least a decade earlier. Pleasant reading, with plenty of excitement and thinly-

veiled mystery, the basic plot relates how Mr. Hiram K. Fish took a lease on a mansion on the Kentish coast with the idea in view of unearthing a hidden hoard of sovereigns. In passing, the Fishes work hard in their project, though it goes without saying that they fail in the end.

Billy Bunter is very much in the forefront of activities, but Kipps, Wibley, and Alonzo Todd are also there to make things rather unusual. In passing, this was Alonzo's final appearance in the Magnet, and he is so well up-to-form that it is sad to say farewell to him.

As makeweight in the volume is a light, amusing single story, "Mr. Quelch's Easter Egg", from earlier in the same year.

The attractive dust jacket is novel in that it presents small reproductions of all the seven Magnets included in the volume.

* * * * *

DO YOU REMEMBER?

by Roger M. Jenkins

No. 128 - Magnet No. 404 - "Going the Pace"

The Magnets of the First World War period are not noted for their humour or exuberance, and in late 1915, when the red dye became unobtainable and the covers displayed blue print on white paper, the grimness and weariness of war inevitably found expression in the spirit of many of the stories. It must have been a pleasant change when No. 404 appeared starring two characters most useful in forwarding the plots of several Magnet stories, Fisher T. Fish and Rupert de Courcy.

De Courcy, the Caterpillar, had of course made his debut in the two famous 3d. Boys' Friend Libraries, well known since they were reprinted by the Museum Press. "Going the Pace" reflected the new set-up at Highcliffe, and the relationship between de Courcy and Courtenay was well maintained, with the Caterpillar pretending to do everything his friend wished without having any ideas of his own, at the same time complaining about the stern morality of the working classes. The usual result of this whimsicality was to leave Frank Courtenay half-vexed and half-amused, but it was quite clear to the reader that the Caterpillar possessed a keen mind which he could bring to bear on any problem that interested him.

The problem in this story was caused by Fish's bookmaking business. He was taking bets on the favourite and making a handsome profit for himself when the favourite lost. To prevent the possibility of welshing, all the stakes were held by third parties, and de Courcy happened to find himself nominated to hold stakes from Ponsonby and his friends. Suspecting that he had been unwittingly implicated in a swindle, he decided to discover how the swindle was worked: a swindle it had to be, since Fishy was too clever to risk losing money.

This was the type of story that Charles Hamilton was so successful with at this stage of the Magnet and Gem, a story with interesting characterisation and a well-constructed puzzle plot with a surprise ending, in this case a matter of making the punishment fit the crime. The same theme was later used at Rookwood, in connection with Smythe's Red Cross sweep, but it lacked the development and interplay of characters that the Magnet displayed so triumphantly. One of the most memorable sketches was Mr. Mobbs toadying to Ponsonby because of his titled relations: one of them, an earl, had shaken hands with him, a marquis had told him it was a fine morning, and a baronet had sat beside him in a whacking big motor-car. Mr. Mobbs had never got over the exhilaration of all this, and Ponsonby traded on it unscrupulously. In a few sentences, Charles Hamilton could make an indelible impression in the mind of personal relationships at different levels of mutual understanding. This is surely one of the marks of a gifted writer.

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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: Girls' Friends, Readers, Homes for 1912, 1913, 1914 - bound volumes preferred. Dreadnoughts. Bound volume of Boys' Friends - mid-1924 to mid-1925.

ERIC FAYNE

EXCELSIOR HOUSE, CROOKHAM RD., CROOKHAM, HANTS.

The Summer Term is growing old at Rookwood - over fifty years ago.

LOVELL'S REVENGE

Mr. Greely took his accustomed stroll in Big Quad after dinner that day.

That day was Wednesday, a half-holiday, and after his stroll in the quad Mr. Greely settled down in a deep arm-chair in his study, with a newspaper, to enjoy his leisure. From his seat by the window of his study, he naturally could not see into the corridor upon which masters' studies opened and he was quite unaware that a number of the Classical Fourth were gathering in the big bay window in the corridor, nearly opposite his door.

The Fistical Four came first, and annexed the window-seat; then Morny arrived, and Oswald, and Towny and Toppy, and several more fellows. Quite a little crowd had gathered there before three o'clock.

And they were all smiling.

Arthur Edward Lovell had started by telling two or three fellows about his little rag. The news had spread. By that time nearly all the Classical Fourth knew that Mr. Greely was to receive unexpected visitors that afternoon, and they were deeply interested. They wondered what would happen.

From the bay window in the corridor they had a partial view of the quad, and just before three they sighted a tall, lean gentleman, in a tight-fitting frock-coat and silk hat, advancing towards the House.

"That will be Purkiss!" said Lovell.

"He's really come!" murmured Raby.

"Rather a catch for him to get a Rookwood master as a pupil for his giddy department."

"What on earth will Greely say?" murmured Mornington.

"I wonder!" said Lovell. "We shall soon hear from this place - Greely's too carries like a megaphone."

The juniors chuckled.

Timothy Tupper, the House page, appeared in the corridor, conducting the tall, lean gentleman. He conducted him to Mr. Greely's door, tapped, and opened the door.

"Mr. Purkiss, Sir!"

Mr. Greely glanced up from his paper. He glanced in surprise at the lean gentleman, in his tight black coat, with his silk hat in his hand, and an aggressive smile upon his rather cadaverous face.

"Mr. Greely --"

The gentleman from Latcham stepped in, and Tupper closed the door and retired.

Mr. Greely rose politely; he was always polite in a ponderous way, though he was surprised and not very pleased by this visit.

"My card, sir!" said Mr. Purkiss.

The Fifth-Form master glanced at the card, which informed him that Mr. Purkiss' academy at Latcham gave instruction in dancing, deportment, and drill. Not being, so far as he was aware, in need of instruction in those branches of knowledge, Mr. Greely was puzzled.

"You will excuse me, Mr. Purkiss, but I do not quite understand --"

"Naturally, sir - naturally," agreed Mr. Purkiss. "A little instruction will make all the difference."

"But I do not see --" recommenced the puzzled Form-master.

"My dear sir, we will begin at once, if you wish. Not a moment shall be lost," said Mr. Purkiss. "Do not be discouraged by the fact that you are - hem! - perhaps a little elderly."

"What?"

"Age is no bar, sir, to improvement, provided that the pupil is keen and painstaking."

"The - the pupil?"

"Exactly, sir," said Mr. Purkiss, with an agreeable smile. "Even at your time of life, sir, deportment can be studied with the greatest advantage."

"Deportment!" said Mr. Greely dazedly.

"Deportment, sir!" assented Mr. Purkiss. "A very important subject, sir - very important! Now, sir, since you have asked me to lose no time, your present attitude --"

"Eh?"

"Defective, sir - very defective," said Mr. Purkiss. "Not a word, sir - without instruction, no-one can be expected to master the important art of deportment. Now, sir, the chin up a little bit --"

"What?"

"The right leg a little forward."

"Sir!"

"Your hands, at the present moment, hang at your sides in the most graceless way. Not a word, sir. Of course, you have not observed anything of the kind. How should you? It is my business, sir, to enlighten you --"

"What? What?" stuttered Mr. Greely, wondering dizzily whether he had a lunatic to deal with.

"Now, sir, the left hand --"

Mr. Purkiss advanced with the bowing grace of a dancing-master, and took hold of Mr. Greely's left hand.

The next moment Mr. Greely's right hand came into action.

With a violent shove, he sent Mr. Purkiss toppling back; and in his surprise the dancing-master of Latham sat down on the study carpet with a heavy bump.

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Purkiss.

Mr. Greely glared down at him.

"Are you mad, sir?" he shouted.

"What?"

"If you are not insane or intoxicated, what do you mean?" roared Mr. Greely.

"How dare you come here, sir, and play such antics in my study?"

Mr. Purkiss stared up at him.

"What? What? What?" he stuttered.

"Antics? Sir, I was instructing you - I was, upon my word!"

Mr. Purkiss picked himself up and backed away from Mr. Greely. He was feeling alarmed. This was not the reception he had expected from a middle-aged pupil who was anxious to study that important branch of knowledge, deportment.

Mr. Greely pointed to the door.

"Go, sir!" he hooted.

"Mr. Greely! I presume there is no mistake? You are Mr. Greely --"

"I am Mr. Greely! Go!"

"Then there is no mistake! Am I to understand, Mr. Greely, that you do not desire to receive instruction from me in deportment, in spite of your very evident need of it?"

"You are to understand, sir, that you are to leave my study this instant

and take your absurd insolence elsewhere!" roared Mr. Greely.

"I will leave your study with pleasure, sir," exclaimed Mr. Purkiss, quite enraged now. "I have no desire whatever, sir, to waste my instruction upon a man with the manners of a Hun - the manners of a particularly savage bear, sir. But I have no intention, sir, of coming here from Latcham for nothing, sir. I shall charge

you, sir, with my taxi fare, sir, and if you do not settle my account, sir, I shall bring a summons in the County Court, sir!"

And with that Mr. Purkiss flung out of the study, slamming the door behind him, jammed on his silk hat, and departed.

(NEXT MONTH WE BREAK-UP AFTER OUR TERM AT ROOKWOOD, OVER FIFTY YEARS AGO.)

THROUGH OTHER EYES

by Les Rowley

Greyfriars, its Staff and Scholars, as seen by persons in everyday life.

James Soames

I was coming to the end of the story and was about to turn the final page when a shadow fell across the columns of small print. I waited for the shadow to move and for its owner to pass further along the cliff path near which I sprawled at my ease.

But the shadow remained and I turned my head and looked up. A tall, lean, and rather correctly dressed stranger looked down at me. I say 'stranger' but there was something vaguely familiar about the smooth features with their deferential expression. He smiled, but it was not what I would call a pleasant smile for it bore more than a trace of a sneer. When he spoke his voice was as smooth as his appearance.

"I trust you will pardon the intrusion, sir, but I could not fail to observe your choice of literature," he nodded toward the copy of the "Magnet" that lay beneath my hand.

"You appear presently interested in the adventures at Eastcliff Lodge that took place in the early Spring of 1940. That is a long time ago, sir, but thirty-four years is nothing to one like myself who is embraced in an ageless society. We have met several times, you and I, but until now the acquaintance has been limited to the rather coloured accounts you have read of the scholars of Greyfriars School and myself. I feel no introduction is required, but to settle the doubt that I can see is in your mind I will tell you that my name is James Soames, one-time

valet to Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith, the well-known financier.

"Today movement is afoot to ensure the more even distribution of wealth - a movement with which I have great sympathy and have long sought to bring about as far as it was in my own interest. No, do not feel for your wallet, sir. It is quite safe for I assure you that I am not a petty thief out to rob another of a pittance.

"Eastcliffe Lodge, about which you have been reading, was the scene of my last really great adventure, and adventure there has surely been in the life of a sea-lawyer, freebooter, pirate - call me what you will. True I had had my moments whilst in the service of the Vernon-Smiths. I make no excuse for attempting to deprive them of the wealth which had been acquired by means only slightly more honest than my own. There was no other attraction in the post for both father and son were insufferable snobs. I will say, however, that Master Herbert could show rare courage on occasion, but there was little else to endear him to his father's valet.

"Through the Vernon-Smiths I met the boys from the Remove Form at Greyfriars School. In retrospect, I find my palms itching with an almost intense desire to box once again the ears of that fat fool Bunter who so often interfered with my plans. I would welcome, too, another chance to outwit the others who once outwitted me.

"Wharton, Nugent, Cherry, Bull and Hurree Singh are youths of a different character. They represent a challenge - a challenge I would be pleased to meet if the prize were sufficiently attractive. I do not wittingly put lives at risk not even when the game is fought where the rollers break against some distant island shore. Those young men have survived encounters with me before; there is always the chance that they would survive again.

"I must take my leave of you, sir, and allow you to finish your reading. May I commend to your especial attention the final story about Eastcliffe Lodge, sir? I feel that it does me some small credit, as Master Wharton has cause to remember. Good day to you."

Soames turned and, resuming his walk along the cliff path was soon lost to sight. I turned to my "Magnet" once again. I had read the story before, more times than I could remember. But the account of how Soames saved Wharton's life in the dark early days of that far off war now had a different meaning.

The Postman Called

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

F. OSBORN (London): I would like to thank you for including the prayer for animals (who cares if it is soft!). There is not much sentiment in the world today. Needless to say, I liked it. I was very interested to learn of Mister Softee.

ERIC RUFFLE (Woking): Although I did not read many Rookwood stories I liked the school very much. How like is Mr. Greely to the Greyfriars Fifth-form master. Your reference to the Sherlock Holmes "Wisteria Lodge" and the outings in Esher and Oxshott interested me. As a boy I lived in Esher almost opposite the Bear Hotel. Today, unfortunately, traffic has spoiled this delightful district.

G. HARDAKER (Skelmersdale): A year ago I collected only Dandy, Beano, Magic, Comics and Annuals, deviating only for the big Five. Since, however, no subscriber to CD reads his copies less than three/four times, plus the casual browse, it was only natural that such titles as Magnet, Gem, Bullseye, Boys' Mag., Boys' Journal, B/F, S.O.L., etc., would sooner or later attract me; wondering what they were like to read has occupied my mind for some time. So, consequently, over the past few months, I have picked up a few B/Mags., about forty, eleven Journals, three B/F/L's, and some other stuff, and will commence reading them when next I go deep sea. And, too, I have bargained for the first twenty-seven issues of Bullseye, successfully, I think, and look forward to receiving these in the near future. I'm swopping some early Beano/Dandy for these. (Nothing's Sacred!) and the hunt is beginning to get serious. Anyway, thanks for an all round enjoyable Magazine. Lots of moral support and good luck.

BEN WHITER (London): "The White Hell of Pitz-Palu" was classed as the last great silent film to be made. I saw it at the Dreamland Cinema in Margate, in the early 1930's, and was thrilled to see the location first hand when holidaying at St. Moritz and Davos in 1955. Truly a great film.

MISS I. M. LEES (Canterbury): I like reading articles on Tom Merry

although I don't always agree with the writers, of course. I read the article by John Wallen with interest, but fancy - my childhood favourite hero being called 'The Faceless One'.

JOHN GEAL (Hampton): I think the Artist Series is great and it represents the various styles well. I think the artists were an underrated part of Old Boys' Books. How we looked forward as youngsters to the arrival of the latest issues, and, before reading, eagerly scanned the illustrations. I wonder how the characters in the stories would have registered without the backings of the artists.

W. LOYNES (Tewkesbury): I find that I have lost a week of Magnets. By doing a Sexton Blake I think I have traced it to the General Strike of 1926. I haven't any 1926 Magnets, but I think if you look through the series you won't find a Magnet dated 8th May, 1926, or somewhere around that date. The General Strike lasted from 3rd to 12th May, 1926. Am I right?

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: The Magnet was printed a number of weeks in advance of publication. The missing issue was the one for 3rd June, 1926.)

JOHN GUNN (Grantham): In regard to the Iron Pirate, I have just glanced through my Chums collection and it would appear that the fourth instalment of the Iron Pirate when reprinted in 1927/8 Chums was virtually the same - a paragraph or so trimmed out and other minor changes, e.g. "For Heavens Sake" instead of "For God's Sake" - this possibly because the ejaculation "For God's Sake" had appeared several times in a bunch.

BILL LOFTS (London): I thought Roger Jenkins review of our book quite fair, but I should point out that both myself and Mr. Adley had correspondence with Frank Richards for many years. I have also done quite a large amount of research for the Hamilton family. In 1964, I paid my first visit to Rose Lawn and was able to make notes of the place, as well as books in the Library. I have discussed them with various members through the years after perusing copies of them in the B. M. and other Libraries. Readers will note that my versions differ in places, with more detailed names and corrects an error. I must have met Miss Hood at least a dozen times at various meetings/dinners, etc.,

and had odd chats with her. I do agree with Roger entirely that more acknowledgements should have been made in the book. They were in there originally, but somehow in hasty proof-reading got omitted. Through the pages of the C.D. we would especially give thanks to Chris Lowder, and others, as well as to Roger Jenkins for his original articles on Rose Lawn, and his article in last October C.D. which prompted me to write up my own version. We would apologise to them for this omission, and it will be rectified in future editions.

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BIOGRAPHY OF A SMALL CINEMA

No. 16. THE BOTTOM OF THE BARREL

Things were becoming difficult for the silent cinemas. They congratulated themselves that they had not rushed to install equipment for the early talking films, for Sound-on-Disc had died to be replaced by the much more convenient and efficient Sound-on-Film. Plenty cinemas, with Sound-on-Disc, now found themselves with expensive equipment which they could no longer use and could not sell.

But silent films were becoming scarcer and scarcer. Though firms announced that they were preparing silent versions of their talkies, those silent versions often never materialised now. Fortunately new silent films were still coming from Europe and some of them were excellent, but others were heavy-going and one missed the big star names.

Universal asked me whether I would like to book "Les Miserables" and I did; This was a very long and remarkable film - no better version of the Victor Hugo novel can ever have been made. Though it was booked as one film, it was actually two. The first part (running about 2½ hours)

was entitled "The Soul of Humanity". The second part (running just under two hours) was entitled "The Barricades". It had had a season in the West End at increased prices, both parts being shown together in one long programme with a 15-minute interval between the two parts.

How various cinemas handled it when it was released I do not know, for I do not recollect ever coming across it in my travels. I think it possible that its extreme length may have made it not too popular among booking-managers, but I don't know. We played the first part on Friday and the second part on Sunday. I recall it as an extremely good film, tense and beautifully acted and photographed. Though I have quite a few recorded items about it (including the actual length of each section), I do not have any records of the people who starred in it, and from that I fancy that it was probably French.

Our only other release from Universal that term was another big one: Conrad Veidt and Mary Philbin in "The Man Who Laughs".

From Gaumont British we played "The Soul of France", a big French war film; Ben Lyon, Shirley Mason and Jason Robards in "The Flying Marine"; Jameson Thomas and Benita Hume in "High Treason"; Jack Holt in "The Donovan Affair"; Brigitte Helm in "The Wonderful Lie".

From Wardour came Jameson Thomas in "Poppies in Flanders", and Carl Brisson and Lillian Hall-Davis in "The Ring". This was a German boxing film, and I fancy that Carl Brisson was a German boxing star of the day. Also from Wardour came Simone Genovois in a very beautiful French film "St. Joan the Maid". This was a real weepie, and I remember that the auditorium was awash with tears.

From Unity Films came Crauford Kent, George Fawcett, and Marguerite Courtot in "Silas Marner". From F. B. O. we had Hobart Bosworth, Jacqueline Logan and Richard Arlen in "The Blood Ship". From P. D. C. came Sue Carol and Arthur Walling in "Walking Home"; Jack Oakie in "Sin Town", and Rod La Rocque and Lupe Velez in "Stand and Deliver".

Another renter, B. & F. F. (British & Foreign Films) supplied one or two of this term's films, mainly or all German, including Hans Schletton and Lillian Hall-

David in "Volga-Volga" (a famous film in its day), and Max Schmelling in "The Love Ring". Max Schmelling was another famous German boxer, and, unusual for a fighter, an extremely handsome man. His films were popular at the time.

This term brought us our very last serial, "The Yellow Cameo". It was a talking serial, and we ran the silent version. I can't remember anything about it, but the heyday of the cinema serial was long past.

So we were carrying on as a silent cinema, largely helped by European films, and always wondering just how long the supply of any silent pictures would last. First National reissued five Harry Langdon features, plus some of the Ken Maynard films, and a few others. So, over a term or two we gave a second showing to some of them, including all the five Langdons.

But as silent films grew scarcer, more and more cinemas were installing sound.

(ANOTHER ARTICIE IN THIS SERIES SHORTLY)

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£1 per copy offered Magnets 496, 501, 502, 503, 505, 547, 548, 553, 555, 556, 613, 614, 615, 743, 744, 745, 756, 760, 776, 779 to 784, 809 to 812, 819 to 823, 834, 841, 846, 848, 852, 853, 858, 859, 860, 873 to 877, 906 to 909, 945 to 948, 971, 981 to 984, 992, 1009, 1036, 1037, 1099 to 1102, 1135, 1137, 1158, 1199, 1205, 1263.

STANIFORTH, 10 LYME ROAD, AMPHILL, BEDFORD.

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GOLDEN FUN, No. 2, is a special adventure strip issue and features Eric Parker, Derek Eyles and others. Send 11 pence (in stamps) for postage to: ALAN & LAUREL CLARK,
1 LOWER CHURCH ST., CUDDINGTON, (Nr. AYLESBURY), BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

NEWS OF THE CLUBS

LONDON

Aptly named Greyfriars, the Wokingham home of Eric and Betty Lawrence, saw the first distribution of the Frank Richards' Centenary Commemoration plates when the club held its June meeting. First two of the distribution went to Madam and Eric Fayne who had made their now customary yearly visit. There was only a small supply and these went to members who are unable by distance to attend many meetings, thus saving postage. Eric Lawrence conducted his Quotations competition, these being the ones that Frank Richards used in his writings; winner was Roger Jenkins. Eric Fayne's Consequences was won by Ray Hopkins and afterwards Ray gave a very interesting account of the three books that he would take on a Desert Island, these being Magnet number 617 and Schoolboys' Own Libraries numbers 353 and 335.

Roger Jenkins spoke of a visit to Miss Hood and for the record there were a batch of coloured slides, that Eric Lawrence took at last year's Greyfriars meeting, for members perusal by means of a viewer. Eric and Betty were thanked for their hospitality and thus it was au revoir Greyfriars and on to Courtfield, 49 Kingsend, Ruislip, Middlesex, HA4 7DD, for the 20th July meeting. Hosts the Acraman family. Phone Ruislip 31025.

UNCLE BENJAMIN

CAMBRIDGE

The Club met at 3 Long Road, on Sunday, 8 June. In view of the glorious weather the meeting was held in Danny Posner's garden.

Much pleasure was expressed at the return of Harold Forecast after his illness, and a warm welcome was expressed to Mrs. Forecast who had accompanied him.

In the absence of the club's reporter on new items (Deryck) the Secretary reported on John Creasy's posthumous work "The Masters of Bow Street" - tracing the policing of London from the first quarter of the 18th century to the formation of Peel's police.

The President welcomed the guest speaker, Mr. Derek Barlow, author of a recent authoritative work on "Dick Turpin and the Gregory Gang". Mr. Barlow gave a long and interesting talk on Turpin, giving first the outline of the real Turpin and then tracing the growth of the legend. Mr. Barlow, who is a member of the staff of the Public Record Office, explained how his interest in Turpin had first been aroused by reading original sessions records of Turpin's trial, this had led him on to five years of researches and another two years in writing his book. He drew attention to the difference between the real Turpin, a petty housebreaker and gangster, and the figure he had become through chap-books, novellists, Ainsworth's "Rookwood", etc. The ride to York and "Black Bess" being pure inventions so far as Turpin was concerned. He produced many interesting items about Turpin, from rare pamphlets to film programmes, a Mermaid Pantomime programme on Turpin, and Turpin matchboxes. He thought that Turpin had made a special impact on society almost from the date of his death, and concluded by expressing the opinion that Turpin's main contribution to English history was that of entertainment. Mr. Barlow was warmly thanked for his most interesting and entertaining talk.

President Bill Lofts drew advance attention to the Charles Hamilton centenary in August 1976 - it was agreed that this must be celebrated, and it was agreed to consider whether an approach should be made to Anglia T. V. about a programme on the world of Charles Hamilton, especially in view of the East Anglian associations with C.H. through Pentelow, a native of East Anglia.

Bill Lofts also reported that the new biography of Charles Hamilton was selling well and attracting much interest.

The next meeting will be held on 14th September.

NORTHERN

THE SILVER JUBILEE DINNER

At our Silver Jubilee Dinner, held at the Mansion Hotel, Leeds, on Saturday, 7 June, we were pleased to have John Wernham as our Guest Speaker, and to welcome a goodly gathering of members and friends, among whom was Bob Blythe of the London Club. It was also delightful to have with us two of our stalwarts - Bill Williamson and Harry Barlow -

both of whom had been present at the Inaugural Dinner held in 1950.

We assembled leisurely for chatter and drinks and before dinner we posed for the photographer. The result, now available, will provide an interesting memento to treasure into the future.

After the dinner, the main course of which was Roast English Turkey, our Master of Ceremonies, Ron Rhodes, proposed the toast to the Queen. Our Guest Speaker, John Wernham, proposed a toast to the Northern Club and the response was made by Geoffrey Good. Harold Truscott then proposed a toast to the Hobby and Geoffrey Wilde responded.

It was unfortunate that many had to leave early so that there was no opportunity for chatter afterwards. Apart from this we really have to say that a good time was had by all and that it was an occasion which will live long in our memories.

Mollie was able to display the Greyfriars Plate and orders are being taken.

The Silver Jubilee Booklet is available and may be obtained from the Reverend G. Good, Staincliffe Vicarage, Batley, Yorkshire, WF17 7QX. Please enclose a 5½p (or 7p) stamp. An interesting souvenir - and perhaps a collectors' item in the years to come!

Saturday, 14 June, 1975

We met in the aftermath of our Silver Jubilee Dinner, all of us quite delighted with the result of our efforts, and Mollie was able to display proof copies of the group photograph.

After several sessions of Jubilee planning we were now able to revert to the normal type of programme. Harry Blowers began the batting, so to speak, with what he introduced as a 'quite easy quiz'! Those words seemed to evoke an echo in our memories which, perhaps, was responsible for the ribald noises which emanated from the gathering!

Not all of us, however, had to mark our papers with rows of crosses! Ron Rhodes came top with 19 out of 20 (but, then, he's an old boy of St. Frank's!) and tying in second place with 14 came Bill Williamson and Ron Hodgson.

Jack Allison then read to us from Magnets 1265 and 1266, from the second Vernon-Smith Captain Series. It seemed, said Jack, that they were written independently of the series and were simply adapted to fit.

But, at any rate, Frank Richards at his best. Smithy tries to rile Wharton into defying him. Bunter tricks Smithy and Smithy thinks that Wharton is the culprit. Wharton for a time is in a moral dilemma, though Bunter is caught out when he tries the same trick again! And, as Shakespeare put it, all is well that ends well!

THOMAS HENRY.

Always associated as the Artist with RICHMAL CROMPTON'S-'JUST WILLIAM' Books. But did far more work elsewhere. PUNCH/CHUMS, many more.



WILLIAM — IN TROUBLE



THE FOOTBALL FUNK!



NO 11.
G.H. Wakefield