

STORY PAPER
COLLECTORS DIGEST

NUMBER 32

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JUNE 1978

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LIBRARY.



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Or. The Case of the Stolen Plates.

No. 701

March 17th 1917

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A WORD FROM THE SKIPPER**THE PALACE IN FARRINGDON STREET**

Last month I breathed a sentimental sigh over the demolition of the Fleetway House with which we grew up, and which formed, as I expressed it last month, a backcloth to our childhood.

My friend, Mr. Bill Thurbon of Cambridge, summed it all up well in a recent letter: "Fleetway House had a special appeal for many of our generation; it seemed the home of so much that we found good in our

**"THE UNION JACK'S" NEW HOME.**

youthful reading."

As I mentioned, the editors moved into their new quarters in October 1912, and Mrs. Josie Packman has sent me the Union Jack which was on the stalls at about that time. Consequently I am able to reproduce the picture of the handsome building.

Of the event, the editor of that time wrote as follows:

"Many of my London chums will by now be familiar with the new big building in Farringdon Street - the Fleetway House - which has taken so many long months to build, and which has been regarded with so much interest and wonder by sightseers. But there are many thousands of my chums all over the world who may never come to England and London, and it is mostly for their benefit that I publish a front view of the Union Jack's new offices, specially drawn by a Union Jack artist.

"The height of the Fleetway House is some 90 feet; there is floor space exceeding three acres; the plastering on the walls and ceilings represents at least five acres; and the air space in the whole building totals one and a half million cubic feet.

"So now, my chums, you can gather within a little what a vast home the Union Jack has, and also, what a huge and trying job the moving was."

And now it has gone, along with delightful theatres like Chiswick Empire, Kingston Empire, Finsbury Park Empire, all built about the same time in that Edwardian era, of which Charles Hamilton wrote in his autobiography: "Those were good times, whatever some people may say."

My thanks to Mrs. Packman for giving us a peep into the past. She says: "Fancy pulling down a building like that after only 66 years. It's a good job we humans don't all get put down when we reach the age of 66. Ha, ha!"

Let's hope Big Brother isn't listening in!

EDEN PHILPOTTS

It is pleasant that a correspondent has given a return of the spotlight to that delightful writer, Eden Philpotts. As a lad I read "The Human Boy", and though a Gem and Magnet fanatic, I thoroughly enjoyed it. In later times, I have gone back to it now and then, and have renewed

that enjoyment.

Plenty of readers will recall that we published an excellent article on "The Human Boy", from our contributor Mr. Harold Truscott, and it featured in C.D. No. 332, in August 1974. It is well worth looking up and re-reading.

There can be but few aspects concerning literature for youth which we have not covered at some time or other during the 32 years of the Digest's existence.

BLUE JEANS

For some reason I have regarded "jeans" as peculiarly garments of the post-war age, along with inflation, overpacked goods, deep freezers (as opposed to bum-freezers), tabloid newspapers, one-man buses, gluts of strikes, and the like. Garments made for comfort more than elegance.

They remind me of Oxford Street, that once proud thoroughfare, where today one finds bazaars selling jeans (blatant pop-music proceeds from the interior of those bazaars usually) interspersed with sex shops, betting shops, and take-away food shops, where the prices give you indigestion even before you scent what's cooking from some distance away.

Therefore it was quite a surprise to find in a Rio Kid story, written exactly 50 years ago, the following information: "The man who approached the Rio Kid was wearing blue jeans."

And as the Rio Kid could not reasonably have been riding the ranges much later than the turn of the century, it means that blue jeans are not modern at all, but were what the well-dressed cowboy was wearing 80 years ago. We live and learn.

THE LOSS OF A FRIEND

Those who knew Bill Norris, who died a few weeks back, will never forget him. The London Club is much the poorer for his passing. Humorous, gentle, and kindly, he was a man who made friends easily, and who kept them. He had been ailing for some time, and had met his illness with a bravery and an optimism which was typical of him.

Most of us last saw him at the club meeting at the Rembrandt Hotel in November, and we had high hopes that he was recovering.

It was not to be, and he leaves a gap in our midst which cannot be filled. We shall always remember him. Our deepest sympathy goes to our dear friend, Marjorie, at this sad time.

PURR!

We have purred over so many charming letters from those who were happy to hear that the Princess Snowee has joined the editorial office. A few minutes ago she came in with black smudges all over her normally whiter-than-white countenance. I think she had been rolling on somebody's compost heap. Looked more like Jane Em'ly than Pollie Green or Grace Kelwyn. But royal blood tells, doesn't it?

THE EDITOR

* * * * *

DANNY'S DIARY

JUNE 1928

Felstead won the Derby by $1\frac{1}{2}$ lengths. The race was run in perfect weather. In fact, so far it is a lovely summer.

Through the entire month, in the Gem, Handforth has been at St. Jim's in a five-story series. He refused to stay on at St. Frank's because his word had been doubted by the authorities. So he went to St. Jim's, determined to succeed in four tests, after which he would return to his old school.

He seems to be known at St. Jim's for the fellows there prepare a jokey welcome for him, with a disguised Mr. Lathom and a disguised Headmaster. In the opening tale "Handforth at St. Jim's" he fulfills his first test by thrashing a prefect (Knox).

In the second tale "Playing for the First", he plays for the First Eleven and makes a century (his second test). In "Handforth's Third Test" he goes to sleep in the Housemaster's bed, while Mr. Railton is away - but Mr. Railton returns unexpectedly.

In "Handforth's Triumph" he defeats the Grammar School single-handed, and gets a signed admission of defeat from Gordon Gay & Co.

Finally, having completed his four tests, Handforth wants to

return to St. Frank's, but his father won't let him leave St. Jim's, so he decides to get himself expelled. But that isn't so easy. This last tale was "The Boy They Couldn't Sack."

There has been a very bad railway accident at Darlington, owing to a train driver misreading signals. 23 people died in the crash, and many more were badly injured.

In "The Modern Boy", the "King of the Islands" serial ended in the fourth issue of the month, with Bully Sampson, the freebooter, being finally defeated by Ken King.

The following week Ken King was back with the start of a new series of complete tales of the South Seas. The opening story of the new series is "No Salvage", in which the young skipper finds a vessel named "Sea Cat" adrift on the Pacific. A villain named Peter Parsons tries to cheat Ken over the matter of salvage, but Ken had rescued the real owner of the "Sea Cat", Captain Mac, who had been thrown overboard by Parsons. Ken King has Parsons triced up, and orders Kit Hudson to give the scoundrel fifty lashes. We are not told who was tired first - the whacker or the whacked. There is no mention of Sir Alan Cobham being an author of this new series. Only Charles Hamilton is now mentioned.

At the pictures we have seen the new cowboy star, Ken Maynard, in "The Unknown Cavalier" and I liked it very much. Also John Barrymore and Dolores Costello in "His Lady"; Gary Cooper in "Arizona Bound", a tip-top film; Clara Bow in "Rough House Rosie"; and Billy Sullivan in an exciting film "When Seconds Count". Finally we saw the big production "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" starring Lon Chaney.

There has been a tragic accident at the Dreamland Amusement Park at Margate. A flying-boat broke off from a roundabout, and four of the eight occupants of the flying-boat were killed.

The first story in the Nelson Lee Library has been "Atlantic Flyers at St. Frank's" in which Archie Glenthorne's two brothers are to attempt to break the record in a flight by air from Canada to England. In "The St. Frank's Film Actors" Vivian Travers gets a film camera, and some Removites with three Moor View girls are to make their own film.

In "The Schoolboy Channel Swimmer" Tom Burton tries his luck in a Channel attempt. In "The St. Frank's Gala", Lord Edgemore organises the gala, and Claude Gore-Pearce organises some dirty work to get his own back on the Earl.

In the last story of the month a new series started with "The Bully of the Remove". The Fifth-former, Cuthbert Chambers, is demoted to the Remove. He is no longer a lofty senior; now he is merely a junior. The Remove seems in for a hot time.

In real life, the liner "Jervis Bay" has wirelessly reported that there is trouble with 8 desperate stowaways. It sounds just as exciting as King of the Islands.

A newly-married Chinese woman has been found murdered in the Lake District, near a place called Grange. Her husband, Chung Yi Miao, has been arrested and charged with killing his bride.

The Magnet is back on top form this month with a truly magnificent new series, starting with "The Boy from the East". He is a Eurasian named Da Costa, and he is at Greyfriars to bring about the disgrace of Harry Wharton. But Bunter is under the seat of the railway carriage in which Da Costa and Mr. Gedge are plotting, and hears something of the evil afoot. Nobody believes Bunter. In the next tale "Friend or Foe?", Wharton tries to help and befriend the strange new boy, and there are signs of a better nature in Da Costa - but not for long. In "By Luck and Pluck", Da Costa almost succeeds in ruining Wharton, but Sir Hilton Popper steps in. Next week "The Schemer of the Remove" found Da Costa once again desperately trying to earn the money he has been promised if Harry Wharton is disgraced.

The last of the month, but not of the series, thank goodness, was "Harry Wharton's Enemy" in which Da Costa plots and fails once again. The beauty of this wonderful series is the huge number of side sequences which all fit into the jigsaw puzzle and make up a most satisfying and lovely tale. It will go on delighting me next month.

On the 28th of the month the King and Queen were present at the Tennis Championships at Wimbledon.

In the Schoolboy's Own Library" the Greyfriars story is "Alonzo the Great" which tells of the early adventures of Alonzo Todd. It's great! The other story is "The Tanglewood Twins" by Ernest Protheroe.

The Ferrers Locke tales in the Popular have been replaced by the early adventures of the St. Frank's boys. I don't think, though, that they have started at the beginning for the opening series commences with a story entitled "How Reggie Pitt Came to St. Frank's!"

As we have come to expect, the Rio Kid tales in the Popular continue to be just great. The series ends about the Rio Kid's gold mine. In "The Hidden Hand", the strikers, manipulated by those who want to drive the Kid out of business, cause him to shut down his mine. In "Facing the Music", the theme goes further, and even the town marshal is in the pay of the Arizona Con. Finally, aided by the loyal Apache "Rainy Face", the Kid manages to escape, but not before he has laid the dynamite which will blow up his mine.

In the next story, untitled, the Kid, with the aid of Rainy Face and the Apaches, hold up Eli Robinson, the head of the Arizona Con., who tried to steal his mine. The Kid demands - and gets - a hundred thousand dollars as recompense for the loss of his mine.

Next week "The Man from Texas" brings back memories of an earlier story. The nephew of two-Gun-Casey, who was shot as the result of treachery on the part of Casey, trails the Kid to revenge his uncle. But, after adventures, the Casey nephew and the Kid part friends.

In the last tale of the month (unnamed) the Kid helps a young lady farmer, and falls in love with her - until the man arrives whom she is going to marry. Nice little tale, out of the ordinary. Not that any of the Rio Kid tales are "ordinary".

Also in the Popular this month has been the story of Bunter pretending to be lame. Also the Rookwood series about the French master, M. Gaston, who was recognized by Mr. Greely as a safe-breaker, and who gave himself away when Peele got locked in the safe.

In the Popular now there is a comic page of pictures about "The Bunter Brothers", drawn by Mr. Chapman. I don't like them, for I think they let down the quality of the paper. There is so much in the Pop these days that I can't think why they want to bring in a page of comic pictures.

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: S.O.L. No. 77, "Alonzo the Great" comprised two red Magnet stories of the summer of 1910. The story is discussed in this month's "Let's Be Controversial" article.)

BLAKIANA

Conducted by JOSIE PACKMAN

I trust you will all enjoy the contents of this month's Blakiana. It's nice to have something a bit humorous for a change, especially from a new contributor. Welcome to Mr. Hodge and may he soon become an ardent fan of Sexton Blake.

I am very short of material (seem to have heard that before) so please, somebody, get out your pens and typewriters and set your brains to work.

'CONFESSIONS OF A HERETIC -- OR A CONVERT?'

by James Hodge

To the best of my knowledge I have never read a Sexton Blake story. ("If he had, how could the fool ever forget it?" you are likely saying.) Also, I am a Hamiltonian. ("The fellows not only a fool but a knave to boot" mutters the reader, getting angry now.) Please, easy with the boot 'til my tale is unfolded. As a matter of fact, I've never much cared for tales of detection (cries of "A blasphemy in Blakiana, a Whitehouse to the judgement!"), except for Sherlock Holmes, whose real name was either Basil Rathbone or Carlton Hobbs (shouts now of "Enough, enough - to the stake with him!").

I pray you, still your blood-lust, unheap your curses, stay the burning brand you are about to apply to the faggots beneath these feet, my feet, which may seem to have trod where angels, etc., etc.; in the words of the lady whose connection with the marine life-jacket was purely - er - descriptive, I'm no angel. Yet neither, I trust, fool nor Knave nor blasphemer, just a plain (very) man stating a plain truth, and truth is of times irksome.

My interest in the OBB world awakened four years ago, since which time my shelves have bent 'neath some forty Howard Baker facsimile 'Bulls-Eye', 'Maget', 'Gem', 'Nelson Lee', some hundreds of CD, several annuals of 'Chums', 'BOP', 'Captain' and even 'Girls' Own Paper'; Hadath, Cleaver, Goodyear, Brazil -- they are all there. You will have noticed? -- no Blake; not a single hallowed chronicle by Scott, Graydon, Gwyn Evans, E.S.B., Quirroule, etc., ad infinitum. Blakiana in CD were pages to be hastily skipped through, what meaning

for me had such names as Rymer, Zenith, Plummer, Waldo, Nirvana? All I knew was that a detective named Sexton Blake had an awful (in the quantitative sense!) lot of yarns written about him by many different authors.

That is still all I really know about him, even though it is over a month since I concluded there must be something to this Blake business and bought the Howard Baker facsimile 'Crime at Christmas', which was published over four years ago. The trouble is that I like all things to their season; if I'm with Tom Merry on the Thames it must be in the summer, if I'm ghost-hunting at Mauleverer Towers it has to be around Xmas, while Ezra Quirke is a (super) - 'natural' only on a wild evening in late autumn.

'Crime at Christmas', with dusk falling on a 1920's Baker Street, the first snowflakes drifting down, Mrs. Bardell busy with turkey and pudding, Blake in his leather chair before a roaring fire, the scene set in readiness for that knock at the street door and the drama yet to come. -- No, my friends, you cannot do justice to that when Spring holds the stage and Summer waits impatient in the wings. It must linger there on the shelf 'til next dark December, a promise, perhaps, of good things to come.

No, dear Mrs. Packman, please do not reach for your library list; I'm sure you have for the borrowing plenty of U.J's wherein many a nasty mystery was solved by Blake during every merry month from May to September, but I must not be hurried. My stirring interest is a tender bud: forced to unfold too soon, it may wither e'er it flowers. Given time, my friends, I may not only better understand what makes you 'tick', I could also be ticking along with you. Meanwhile, "Floreat Greyfriars!" but also -- "Vivat Blakiana!".

BONES - BONES - THEM DRY BONES

by Raymond Cure

Skeletons seem to hold a fascination for the young, and to be candid, for me too. One can remember seeing a picture of a skeleton for the first time and on making enquiries, being informed there was nothing to be afraid of as we all had one of our own which we carry around with us until we die, though I still think they are a bit scary. Fiction writers and illustrators of stories have often used the skeleton

theme to add an attraction to the tales.

Rummage through your collection of Old Boys' Papers, be it Magnets, Gems or Nelson Lees and you will find a skeleton in your cupboard. The same applies to the Union Jack, the recorder of the Sexton Blake tales. Recently one of these came my way, the cover illustration immediately drawing my interest to the story. I refer to the "Union Jack", No. 1340, dated June 1929, called "The Riddle of Ruralong Bay" and if you are a skeleton fan this is your story.

At this point I must say I have seen illustrations of skeletons in all sorts of places and positions. The Dick Turpin type of tale had them hanging from a gibbet, to be viewed in the light of a full moon. Some can be seen propped against a treasure chest, some stretched and bleached upon sunburnt sands, some trapped in hulks at the bottom of the sea, some found in a cave or Abbey, or the boot of a car, but for something really different try "The Riddle of Ruralong Bay" in which we view a swimming skeleton!!!!

There it is, surrounded by the dark background of eventide, and the rear of what appears to be a tanker. Through the dark rippling waves comes the gruesome thing, swimming rapidly towards you. (All this and more for your 2d in those days.) Turning your cover over you are treated to the view of a tall framed skeleton wrapped in chains. Sexton Blake trying to believe his eyes - by the light of a storm lamp. Even the caption will give you goose-pimples.

"As the ship lifted on the swell, the bones rattled against the woodwork of the wheel."

"Well Mr. Blake, what do you make of it?" asked the Captain. And in case you still are not sure you want to read it a leading blurb gives the following information: "A skeleton that swam, a ship which blew up, two fingers in a bottle and a man with a broken arm". Its even got Sexton Blake guessing.

Only Gilbert Chester, author of the Ghost Ship, could have come up with Ruralong Bay. If you decide to cast your eyes over the printed page you will find strange characters paraded before you, such as one-eyed Pete commonly called "Cyclops" on account of his single optic.

Let's take a peep at one or two of the skeleton episodes before I leave you.

1. "Upright against the wheel, its bony fingers to the long spokes was a tall skeleton, its grinning jaws agape evilly, as if in sinister mockery."

2. "A second splash and a stifled shriek, the skipper leaped round and looked over - my gosh - down in the dark waters something was moving. It was a skeleton swimming towards the land. The Captain drew a gun and fired but the skeleton kept on, heedless."

On this happy note I close and if skeletons still trouble you, remember we all have one. Get down to Ruralong Bay and see what Sexton Blake reveals.

* * * * *

Nelson Lee Column

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Study C,
St. Frank's College,
Bellton, Sussex.

Dear Sir,

I am given to understand from an article in your April Collectors' Digest that there is some confusion of thought from my narrative of what has become known as the Dr. Karnak story.

Unless somebody has forestalled me and presented you with an explanation matching my own in this letter, please confine this correspondence to the W.P.B.

The article "The Mysterious Dr. Karnak" fails to mention the "clue" I have given on page 2 of number 449, where I have written "The mummy with several other relics, had been sent to St. Frank's several weeks back ..." and on page 5 of No. 451 another "clue" is "... but I believe him to be a fugitive from a secret Egyptian brotherhood" said (Nelson Lee).

Now these two directions can account for Karnak's morbid desire to gain possession of these relics from ancient Egypt that posed a threat from fanatics to his backsliding antics. While those relics were there they involved and invited attention from his erstwhile co-religionists.

That Karnak "makes no attempt to take these relics when he leaves St. Frank's" is understandable in view of the urgency he has to

make for Newhaven on his way to Paris. Which is why they are still housed in the St. Frank's museum. A good thing too since Dr. Karnak met a watery grave in the English Channel.

And while I am about it I would like to put the record in order regarding the Egyptian's Serval cat, Eswit. I have written in No. 453 where Karnak "... had been infuriated and on this night they had struck. They had either killed or captured the cat."

At that point there was no definite report of the fate of the strange African cat. But as has subsequently been written in your journal, Eswit was found in Bellton Wood in an emaciated condition and is now in the loving care of Willy Handforth.

Yours to a cinder,
NIPPER

SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE
2nd NEW SERIES

by J. H. Mearns

In a recent issue of the Digest somebody asked why we do not have more written about the St. Frank's stories in the N.L.L. of the thirties. The inevitable answer is that the standard dropped.

But when we consider the St. Frank's stories as School Yarns, then 1931, in my opinion, gave us a series better than anything I've ever come across in the Nelson Lee Library. Better? Well, in the sense that the interest was concentrated on the School, its politics, and its sport.

I refer to the U.S. Adams as Remove Captain series. The characterisation of Adams was superior to anything attempted by any of the other school story writers of the time. He emerges as a real American - the Adams quick-fire dialogue rings true - and, unlike the reforms introduced by Handforth on an earlier occasion, which were a bit too bizarre for belief, the reforms introduced by Adams seemed typical of what a rich American youth might do to jazz up an ancient establishment like St. Frank's. There is a lot of spontaneous humour in this series, too, with Handforth playing a smaller part than usual. Also, despite his smart-alec ways, Ulysses Spencer Adams comes across as a genuinely likeable guy.

The Christmas series which follows is less well written, and

becomes somewhat repetitious. However, there's plenty of excitement when Jimmy Potts's uncle returns home from China, pursued, it seems, by the slant-eyed minions of a vengeful mandarin. The St. Frank's juniors embarks on a sort of Yuletide Cook's Tour of stately homes - Travis Dene, Tregellis Castle and Somerton Abbey. A variety of strange customers flit about in the background: Ridley, a villainous-looking butler, and the mysterious Zacchi, the fortune-teller, to mention but two. This series, despite its shortcomings, merits an essay on its own.

When the new term comes there is an outbreak of mysterious disappearances in the locality of St. Frank's. It is Professor Zingrave who is responsible. The mad professor escapes from the prison on Bannington Moor, carried out under cover of a cloud of gas from a bomb dropped from an aircraft. There are thrilling events, most of which are witnessed by the St. Frank's juniors' football team, on its way by charabanc across the moor.

They go on to score a 2-2 draw against Kirby Keeble Parkington's lot at Carlton College.

Again, the 1931/32 illustrations by Kenneth Brookes were something special in themselves. His bright covers gave the Library a distinctive use of colour; his pen and ink drawings have the firmness and economy of line of a truly professional artist.

The Round Table Talk, conducted by the editor, has pen-sketches and biographical studies of the characters which are well-written and informative.

All in all, I submit that the years 1931/32 gave us some of the best material ever published.

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FOR SALE: JUNGLE BOOK by Kipling 1910, £2; PETER & WENDY by J. M. Barrie, 1st, 1911, £2; JUST JANE by Evadne Price, n. d. early thick, 75p; MEET JANE by Evadne Price n. d. early thick, 75p; EVELYN SMITH OMNIBUS 1937, £1; ANGELA BRAZIL OMNIBUS 1937, £1; RUPERT ANNUALS 1958, 1959, 1966, 1970, 1973, £1 each; WONDER BOOK OF COMICS (Odhams) 1950's, £1.25; CHAMPION ANNUALS 1950, 51, 52, 55, 75p each; FILM FUN ANNUALS 1955, 1957, £1.50 each; MORE RUPERT ADVENTURES n. d. early, £1.50; ROVER ANNUAL 1928, £1.50. The following Annuals are all by D. C. Thomson and all are £1 each: Dandy 1960, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75; Beano 1966, 68, 70; Beezer 1963, 64, 66, 67, 68, 69, 71, 72; Buntz 1961, 71, 72; Bimbo 1969, 72; Sparky 1971; Mandy 1971; Beryl The Peril 1971, 1973; Topper 1967, 1965, 1970, 71, 72; Hotspur 1967, 68.

WANTED: all "William" books in dustjackets; will buy or exchange for any of the above.

Plus Postage on all books. Please estimate. Cash with Order.

STAN JENKS, THE LODGE, NORTHBROOK, near FARNHAM, SURREY.

"Football Fortune" and "King Cricket" may be regarded as pendants, a nicely matching pair of stories about the winter and summer games. They originate from serials that pre-date the Gem and the Magnet, and could be justly considered as some of Charles Hamilton's earliest work. The use of some of his favourite surnames is a noticeable feature, and the numerous half-page illustrations add a certain charm to the reprinted edition of the football story.

The reprint of "King Cricket" was marred by extreme condensing of the last part of the story, but "Football Fortune" fitted more happily into the reprint format. The hero of the story was Pat Clare who with his cousin Phil Nugent was at school at the beginning, but they both had to leave to go to work in the mill owned by their uncle, Mr. Darrell, when Clare's father lost his money in an unwise investment. Mr. Darrell's secretary, Glyn Elmhurst, was blackmailing Mr. Darrell, and it was against this background and the three young men's admiration for Mr. Darrell's daughter, Madge, that the story was woven.

Clare and Nugent played for Blackfield Ramblers, and the matches were affected by Elmhurst's plot to eliminate Clare as a rival and his success in winning Nugent over to his side. Modern readers may be amused by references to the unsportsmanlike attitude of the supporters of some other football teams, one or two of which (like Bradford, Burnley and Leicester) were real teams. Clare said, "It's a rotten crowd like that which makes people run down footer, without reflecting that such cases are very few in number." Equally interesting, but far less convincing, are the melodramatic attitudes struck by the villains. Elmhurst says, "Let Pat Clare look out! I will crush him to the very dust for the blows he gave me!" Later he drugs Clare's drink to affect his play in a match, whilst the doctor looking after Clare's father is proposing to eliminate Mr. Clare's memory by equally dastardly means. Finally, near the end of the story, Clare is struck down and thrown into a flooded cellar to die.

By the standards of his later stories, "Football Fortune" may seem a little crude: it is certainly strong meat, but it never lacks pace

and has excitement and unexpected twists and turns that lead the reader inexorably forward to the climax. The renewal of suspense at the end of each instalment of the original serial undoubtedly contributes to the gripping nature of the tale. For Charles Hamilton, sport was never of interest for its own sake: it merely provided a background for the development of clashes of personality, a technique that he adopted throughout his writing career. "Football Fortune" is a fascinating example of the early work of a promising author.

* * * * *

LET'S BE CONTROVERSIAL

No. 223. THE PERIOD PIECE

Exactly 50 years ago, as Danny reminds us in his Diary this month, there appeared in the Schoolboys' Own Library a story entitled "Alonzo the Great".

It comprised a story of the same title which featured in the red Magnet of mid-summer 1910 and a further tale entitled "Alonzo's Plot" which had appeared in the Magnet three weeks later.

Read today, 68 years after it was originally written, it is a very pleasant period piece, and one enjoys it contentedly in the knowledge that what happened therein could not happen all these years later.

But the point which strikes the reader, if he bothers to consider it, is that it must also have been a period piece in 1928 when it was reprinted in the S.O.L. In fact more so, for today's reader adjusts himself automatically to any period, whereas, in 1928, the reader was completely attuned to the modern Greyfriars of the late twenties. It is strange, when one considers what a large number of Greyfriars tales were available at that stage, that so dated a tale as "Alonzo's Plot" should have been selected for a new airing.

To be accurate, the "plot" of the title was not really Alonzo's at all. Bulstrode was the plotter, and Alonzo was merely his pawn. Alonzo was made to believe that Mr. Quelch and Miss Primrose were deeply in love with one another, but had no means of showing their love.

Alonzo sent telegrams to Mr. Quelch and Miss Primrose respectively, and caused them to meet in the "summer house". When

Miss Primrose made show of her affection and called Mr. Quelch by his christian name "Horace" (sic) he was horrified. Learning that the telegrams were fakes, Miss Primrose fainted. As Mr. Quelch went to assist the stricken lady, the Headmaster turned up. Dr. Locke was shocked and regarded it as "most unseemly".

"My wife, sir, or my little daughter might have passed at any moment," said Dr. Locke, "and to see you embracing this lady --"

It was truly most Edwardian, nay, Victorian, as Alonzo, the cause of the misunderstanding, might have said.

As a period piece it is amusing for us in the late seventies. But it must have seemed very odd indeed for schoolboy readers as the roaring twenties drew to their close.

In depicting Miss Primrose as an amorous spinster of uncertain years, the author was being just a trifle ungallant. However, that is a mere detail.

The main thing was that Miss Primrose, compared with the Headmistress of Cliff House which readers of the twenties knew, was grossly out of character. Immediately after the war, Charles Hamilton had abandoned a good deal of the Cliff House of red cover days, in preparation for the start in 1919 of the School Friend, for which, just possibly, he may have been expecting to write continuously.

There is a secondary plot in this Alonzo tale (as there was in the vast majority of the Magnet tales of the 1910). Ionides, who had long disappeared from the Greyfriars scene by 1928, is accepting bets on horses. Oddly enough, for one so shrewd as Ionides, he accepts these bets after the race is run, on the assumption that nobody at Greyfriars could know the results till the next morning's papers appear. Loder, who had secretly learned the result of the race by telegram, puts a belated bet on the winner, Black Prince.

Next morning, before breakfast, the two seniors walk to the village to pick up a newspaper from the newsagent, and they read the report that Black Prince won the race the previous afternoon. So, for the time being, Loder collects his ill-gotten gains.

In 1910, it is probable that this little affair made sense. But by 1928, when communications had improved so much, with wireless sets in plenty of studies, and a number of telephones in Greyfriars itself, not

to mention evening newspapers, giving "all the winners", on sale, one would have thought, in a Kentish village near the school, it is absurdly unlikely that the keen Ionides would have allowed himself to be cheated in such a way.

It was, of course, not the author's fault that one of his 1910 stories should be so out-of-date eighteen years later. But one is reminded that with his Rio Kid stories, as I mentioned some time ago, the author made the grotesque error of setting his Rio Kid, in the later stories of the series, in the Hollywood of talking pictures. An outlaw like the Kid could not have existed for long after the turn of the century. With improved communications, roads, and fast transport, the Kid would have been soon wiped out.

A word or two about Ionides. Generally, in the reprinting of the old Magnet tales, in the S.O.L., the name of Loder was substituted for that of the Greek senior. In the case of "Alonzo's Plot", both Ionides and Loder had parts to play, so a substitution was not possible. Actually, the abandonment of Ionides, like that of Mr. Bootles, was a curious mistake on the part of Hamilton. Ionides was a superior piece of characterisation to Loder, just a stock character, who replaced him as the leading senior blackguard at Greyfriars.

In conclusion, one wonders whether "Alonzo's Plot" may, unwittingly, have been a key story to which the substitute writers looked back. In this story, Hamilton gave "Horace" as Mr. Quelch's christian name; soon he was to make Quelch into "Henry Samuel", but the sub writers held on to "Horace". As a kind of compromise, in Pentelow's 1917 Who's Who in the Magnet, Quelch was listed as Horace Henry Samuel.

Also, in "Alonzo's Plot", Miss Locke was named as Miss Primrose's second-in-command. But Hamilton soon dropped Miss Locke from the Cliff House picture, and, when he reconstructed the school for the School Friend in 1919, there was no mention of any Miss Locke.

Yet when somebody or other wrote the Schoolboy Cinema Stars affair in the autumn of 1920, the Cliff House girls were under the charge of Miss Locke. Some sub writers were very much painted with the red Magnet brush.

REVIEWSTHE BIG BANG AT GREYFRIARS

Frank Richards
(Howard Baker: £4.50)

If titles count for anything, then the title of this volume is not adequate in giving much indication of the contents. Although Gladys Smith may have improved her prospects when she became Mary Pickford, she would probably have been a winner in any case, in the same way that a superb book like this one is bound to ring the bell. It is, in fact, the Skip series of late 1937 (8 tales from the series make a generous offering here), one of the most outstanding series of the latter-day Magnet, though one that, oddly enough, we have rather neglected in recent years.

There is infinite variety as the series progresses, and some outstanding characterisation. Skip is a clever pickpocket. After giving nefarious attention to some members of the Famous Five, and causing suspicion to fall on the guileless Wun Lung, Skip redeems himself by going to Coker's aid in a perilous situation. Thereafter, Coker takes an interest in the perky waif, and eventually, with the aid of Aunt Judy, manages to get him placed as a pupil at Greyfriars. A situation of immense possibilities, and the author takes advantage of them all.

At times there is contrivance which cannot but appeal to the reader, and, apart from sympathising with Coker's protege, one has a certain understanding for those Remove fellows who are dubious at having a pickpocket landed in their midst. Absorbing throughout.

The Skip series has the distinction of being the last one to appear in a Magnet with a cover printed in colours. Towards the end of the Skip series, the Magnet changed to covers with a black picture on salmon-tinted paper. At the time, most of the story-paper books made similar changes. There can be small doubt that the reason was economy. In the Magnet the change did not matter a lot, for the new covers were not unattractive. But the Gem, with its bilious-looking covers which came in with 1938, lost at least some of its former brightness.

BUNTER'S ORDERS

Frank Richards
(Howard Baker: £4.50)

This is a magnificent collection of Greyfriars tales which could hardly be bettered. Two stories open the volume and close the Skip series. It has been obvious all the time that there was some secret concerning the origin of the young pickpocket - after all, he possessed a locket which contained the picture of a rather charming young lady. According to Skip he had had that locket all his life - it had been put round his neck by Old Sal (reminding us deliciously of Talbot Baines Reed's "Dog With a Bad Name") - but that photograph seemed oddly familiar to Mr. Quelch and to others, so it looked as though Skip must have stolen it after he came to Greyfriars.

Miss Bullivant, the stern maths mistress of Cliff House, invented by Hamilton in far-off 1919, makes a welcome reappearance in a Hamilton series, and her link with the Skip story is related with touching skill.

For the thinking reader, there must be the pleasure of comparing the Skip series with

the Flip series of much earlier days, for there is a considerable similarity, though each has its individual charm.

The title tale "Bunter's Orders", also from late 1937, shows Bunter in the unlovable act of blackmailing his way into the Remove football team.

In a couple of connected stories from mid-summer 1933, Mr. Lascelles plays the lead, with the Bounder in support, and older readers of Greyfriars get the pleasure of the link with Mr. Lascelles's slightly unsavoury past in the dear, dead days beyond recall.

The volume is gloriously concluded with three tales from the summer of 1931. In "Billy Bunter's Bargain", Bunter tries a spot of blackmail on Price of the Fifth on account of a photograph of Price which would cut short the Fifth-former's career at Greyfriars if it fell into the hands of authority. Finally, two superb connected stories of the Bounder, yet once again a thorn in the flesh of the long-suffering Mr. Quelch. Here again, the older Greyfriars fan will find delicious memories stirring of a lovely old red-cover tale entitled "Quits!"

Two splendid volumes, impeccably produced. A "must" for every lover of Greyfriars and the Magnet.

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BIOGRAPHY OF A SMALL CINEMA

No. 51. MARGARET O'BRIEN - AND "MRS. MINIVER"

Our main feature in the opening programme of the new term came from M.G.M. It was William Powell and Hedy Lamarr in "Crossroads". I used to like William Powell, though I forget all about this one. In the supporting programme was a coloured Travel-talk entitled "Scenic Grandeur" and a coloured Tom & Jerry cartoon "Puss Gets the Boot".

Next, also from Metro, came Spencer Tracy, Irene Dunne, and Van Johnson in "A Guy Named Joe". A splendid cast, and, I seem to recall, a fine film. In the supporting bill was a Tweetie Pie colour cartoon "Papa Gets the Bird".

Now came something which was gradually getting rare in the Small Cinema - the double-feature programme. Our audiences loved one big film plus a huge bill of short subjects. However, this week we had a double. The main feature

was "Mrs. Miniver" starring Greer Garson and Walter Pidgeon, a famous and very popular Metro film in its day, though it always seemed slightly overrated to me. In support, from Warner Bros., was Ben Lyon in a thriller "The Dark Tower".

Next from M.G.M. came Margaret O'Brien (a marvellous child star at this time) in "Lost Angel" which I'm sure was an inspired weepie. In the same bill was a coloured Fitzpatrick Travel Talk "Glimpses of Washington Square" plus a Barney Bear colour cartoon "The Fishing Bear".

Then another double bill. From M.G.M. came (yet again) William Powell and Hedy Lamarr in "The Heavenly Body" plus, from Warner's, Joe E. Brown in "Son of a Sailor", not to mention a colour cartoon "Mad Maestro".

This was followed by, from M.G.M., Joan Crawford and Fred Macmurray in

"Above Suspicion" which sounds attractive, with a big bill of shorts including a coloured cartoon "Tom Turkey & His Harmonica Humdingers", and an Our Gang 2-reeler "Little Miss Pinkerton".

Next came Dick Powell and Lucille Ball in "Meet the People" from M. G. M. With those two starring, it must surely have been a musical of some sort. In the supporting programme was a coloured Travel-talk "Colourful North Carolina" and a colour cartoon "Home on the Range".

Next week, from M. G. M., came Clark Gable and Lana Turner in "Somewhere I'll Find You" (it sounds romantic) plus a coloured cartoon "Romeo in Rhythm".

After that came Kay Kyser in a musical "Swing Fever" from M. G. M. (I believe Kay Kyser had a band or something or other, but the film is vague in my memory.) In the same bill was a coloured cartoon "The Bookworm Turns".

Next what was a big war spectacular in its day, from Warner Bros.: John Garfield in "Air Force", plus a colour Travel-talk "West Point of the Hudson" and a colour cartoon "The Rookie Revue".

Next from M. G. M.: Walter Huston and Ann Harding in "Mission to Moscow", probably a spy drama. In the same bill was a coloured cartoon "The Wacky Worm" plus "The Public Pays", a 2-reel drama in M. G. M.'s "Crime Does Not Pay" series. This series of crime shorts (each one running about 20 minutes) was exceptionally good, so much so that

several of them were re-made into full-length features a little later on.

Then a return of the evergreen and ever-welcome "Good-Bye Mr. Chips", starring Robert Donat and Greer Garson. Needless to say it was even more popular than when we had played it years earlier. The sort of thing that would be far beyond the power of any modern film-maker to produce. In the same bill was a colour cartoon: "Barney Bear's Victory Garden".

Next, from M. G. M., Charles Laughton, Robert Taylor, and Brian Donlevy in "Cargo of Innocents" which surely must have been good, though I have long forgotten it. In the supporting footage were two coloured cartoons: "The Trial of Mr. Wolf" and a Tom & Jerry "Suffering Cats".

Final for the term, from M. G. M., was Spencer Tracy and Katherine Hepburn in "Keeper of the Flame" which sounds like drama. In the bill of shorts was a coloured Travel-talk "Land of the Quins", plus two coloured cartoons "The Little Mole" and "Fresh Fish".

I notice that at this we were playing a number of shorts featuring world-famous dance bands in technicolor. I imagine they went down well. And the Universal News was in every programme, needless to say.

(ANOTHER ARTICLE

IN THIS SERIES

NEXT MONTH)

* * * * *

Anyone interested in Membership of the newly-formed S.W. Club? Contact -

T. SALISBURY, 20 UPHILL RD. SOUTH, UPHILL, WESTON-SUPER-MARE.

The Postman Called

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

Mrs. M. CADOGAN (Beckenham) The Robert Donat film "The Adventures of Tartu" was not a Sheik romance but a war adventure, if I remember rightly. Robert Donat - always a great favourite of mine - played an espionage agent, working for Britain in one of the Nazi-occupied countries. I believe Valerie Hobson was his leading lady - they made a good pair.

HAROLD TRUSCOTT (Huddersfield): Jim Cook has raised a point concerning an article which, I gather, he had not read when he wrote his letter! He refers also to a correspondent who wondered "what on earth has this to do with our hobby?" The article in question was mine on "Pink Furniture" in the latest C.D. Annual. Judging by the variety of subjects I have seen treated in C.D. and the Annual over the years I was under the impression that our hobby included all kinds of books and papers written specifically for perusal by young people. Not having read the article on which he bases a criticism, Mr. Cook would not know, but presumably the other correspondent had read it? If he had, and he still wonders why this article, devoted, as it was, to a study of the author of one of the most outstanding books ever written for children, and of the book itself, was included, I give up before I lose my sanity. As to why you put it in, both Mr. Cook and the unknown correspondent had better ask you, our editor, about that.

BILL LOFTS (London): Whilst it is generally accepted that Arthur Jones drew the majority of S.B.L. covers 1915/29, I am almost certain that there must have been times, when ill and away on holiday when other artists were brought in. To give a classic example, our editor brought attention some years ago to the fact that a mysterious artist had even drawn some Magnet covers, presumed entirely by Shields and Chapman since 1926. It was eventually established that these were the work of R. Simmons who died last year in Scotland. Regarding consistency as early as No. 5 Thriller had to be drawn by Nat Long because of lack of copy from Jones, and I'm certain this happened in the S.B.L.

Regarding the interesting pieces by E. Kadish and Jim Cook, a

fact which may be unknown to them, was that Mrs. Frances Brooks was of the Jewish faith, her father being a master tailor in the East End. So typical of her race, Frances was an extremely warm-hearted woman, who lavished her hospitality on all those fortunate enough to visit her, myself being one of them.

J. BUSH (Herne Bay): I was interested in the article by J. Tomlinson (May C.D.) about the Philo Vance books by S. S. Van Dine, and the role of William Powell as the detective, in films of these novels. Actually, apart from the three films mentioned, he did have the role in one other **THE KENNEL MURDER CASE** (1933) also issued as **RETURN OF PHILO VANCE** (1934). Quoted from **PHILO VANCE: The Life and Times of S. S. Van Dine**, Bowling Green Press U.S.A.

I am a collector of the Philo Vance novels, and have a complete collection, with the exception of **THE WINTER MURDER CASE** (1939) - after many years, this still eludes me, can anyone help?

Finally in answer to Mr. Tomlinson's plea, some of these books are in fact being reprinted by Portway Press, Bath, England.

EDWARD MURCH (Yelverton): I was interested to read L. M. Allen's comments about Eden Phillpotts in the June issue. I have a first edition of 'The Human Boy' (1899) and also 'From The Angle Of Seventeen' (1912) (which follows the adventures of Corkey Major when he leaves Merrivale School). More importantly perhaps I am lucky enough to have the full Widecombe edition of the Dartmoor cycle of novels. The paradox with Phillpotts is that because he wrote so much and so diversely he is not so famous as he should be. As another Devonshire writer so astutely said: "Versatility is suspect in an artist". (L.A.G. Strong commenting on the novels of E.P.) Altogether Phillpotts must have written nearly 300 books - novels, poetry, belle-lettres, school stories, detective stories, etc., to say nothing of such long-running plays like 'The Farmer's Wife' which still gets performed. I have several letters which he wrote to me, and which I treasure very much. He died when he was 96, and like Shaw and Charles Hamilton he was writing to the end.

I hope readers of C.D. who do not know his work will search it out, and read him. I am sure that they will not be disappointed.

E. KADISH (Hendon): May I thank Jim Cook for his kind information about Edwy Searles Brooks and his Jewish character at St. Frank's, Solomon Levi. I thought, perhaps, that Mr. Brooks might have known some Jewish people and the news that he was born in Hackney - as I was! - confirms this.

Please tickle Princess Snowee under the chin for me - or, if this is not considered dignified enough, convey my respects. If she is anything like my long-deceased and long-lamented pet, she may be partial to reclining on newsprint. If this is so, the question arises whether, bring a lady, she will favour reclining on copies of "The Schoolfriend" or "The Schoolgirl" rather than "The Magnet" or "Gem"!

W. T. THURBON (Cambridge): I was interested in Norman Wright's comments on S. Walkey. I read a number of his serials in Chums - Walkey was a very popular writer for that paper. But Herbert Leckenby was a Walkey enthusiast and praised him very highly in some early Annuals. I found him readable around 1915-17; just as I did Henty; but none of these writers, nor the writers like "Morton Pike" were a patch on the writers of historical fiction for children of the last thirty years. One point is that if you know anything about history you realise how little the writers for the boys' papers in the first thirty years of this century knew about the subject; they're almost as bad as the B.B.C. when it does its usual run of historical series.

PHIL HARRIS (Montreal): I notice that L. S. Elliott, of East Ham (I am a former resident of East Ham, not far from the West Ham F.C. ground) writes that "The Dauntless Three" commenced in "The Jester" in April 1919. To be more specific, Mr. Editor, "The Dauntless Three" comprising Tom King, Pat O'Flynn and Alphonse Gerard, commenced in "The Jester", issue number 692, dated 6 February, 1915, and ended in issue number 911, dated 19 April, 1919, when Tom King and Alphonse Gerard both married and left the big Irishman to find adventure in pastures new, which he lost no time in doing, as in issue 912, dated 26 April, 1919, we find him in a new serial, "The Big Three" with two new companions, Jim Hardy and Buster. I have a long run of "The Jester" in my collection and remember as a small schoolboy, just loving "The Dauntless Three" who, almost single-handedly, won World

War I for the Allies.

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News of the Clubs

MIDLAND

The weather was again unfavourable for our May meeting and only 8 members attended. Our monthly newsletter was delayed owing to the illness of Geoff Lardner, who duplicates the copies. This meant members were not reminded of the date of the next meeting and may have accounted for some absences, though not all. It was, however, very gratifying to see Win Partridge and George Chatham after an absence of some months through illness.

The usual feature Anniversary number and Collectors' item were late in arriving as Tom Porter came in late after watching a football match. He is a keen football fan. Both items were combined in a bound volume of Gems. Gem No. 12 was the Anniversary number being published on 25th April, 1908. The bound volume contained the first 26 penny Gems. 70 years is a long time for a fragile penny paper to survive.

Several items of discussion soon got under way and points raised. The charm of Charles Hamilton's Rookwood stories was praised although his output of stories about this school was considerably less than of Greyfriars and St. Jim's.

Tom Porter remarked on his irritation at people writing about Bunter in articles in the local papers, which showed how ignorant they were of the tremendous wealth and variety of Charles Hamilton's work. Pretentious ignorance was no more pleasing on this subject than any other. Some had obviously never read "The Magnet".

The refreshments, owing to the generosity of Ivan Webster, were in real Greyfriars study supper style with hot coffee and hot-cross buns.

There was only one formal item, a reading by your correspondent from the Holiday Annual for 1927 from an amusing story. What

happened to Bunter. A brief episode was read with Bunter holding forth on his merits as a footballer and the fact that he was only kept out of the team by Wharton's ignorance of the game, coupled with jealousy of a superior man.

J. F. BELLFIELD - Correspondent.

CAMBRIDGE

The Cambridge Club held an Open Meeting at the Gonville Hotel on the afternoon of Sunday, 7th May. There was a fair attendance of members of the public, in addition to the club members.

Denis Gifford gave a talk on "One Hundred Years of Comics", illustrated with some eighty slides covering the period from the late 1880's to the present day. He explained the origin of the term "cuts" in "Funny Cuts" and "Comic Cuts", traced the evolution of colour, from black and white drawings on coloured paper to the true colour comics; illustrated characters such as "Ally Sloper" and "Weary Willie and Tired Tim", showed the gradual evolution of the comic from an adult audience to a children's audience, and the further division from papers for young children to those for adolescents. He showed examples of the work of various artists and publishers, who had all gradually been sub-merged by the Harmsworth-A.P. -I.P.C. empire, until this, in turn, was challenged by the Thomson Papers. He referred to the famous "Eagle", which had finally been acquired by the I.P.C. and merged into their inferior "Lion". He recalled the success of "Dan Dare": still mourned by aficionados.

The meeting was thrown open for discussion, and a number of questions were asked.

The Secretary gave a brief resume of the activities of the Club. Mike Holliday and Mike Rouse put on an exhibition of comics, covering a wide range. The Secretary exhibited copies of the "Digest" and Denis Gifford gave particulars of his new association of comic enthusiasts.

Denis Gifford was warmly thanked for his talk.

The Club members expressed their gratitude to Mike Rouse for the hard work he had put into organising this successful event.

LONDON

The hosts of the Twickenham meeting, Thespians Sam and Babs Thurbon, had, with the aid of some of their colleagues, made a tape recording of a Nelson Lee and Nipper adventure that had been adapted from a Ferrers Locke story. The playing over of this recording was thoroughly enjoyed by a good gathering of members. Millicent Lyle rendered a Public School quiz where members had to name twelve of these schools and their location. Roger Jenkins was the winner of this excellent quiz and it was made all the more interesting as Millicent gave the dates of the schools' formations. Mary Cadogan read out a batch of letters that Frank Richards wrote to Margaret Wark when she was a small girl. These letters were delightful and must have been very pleasing to both the little girl and her father, Joseph Wark.

Winifred Morss read a couple of chapters from Magnet, 1032, "Levison Makes Good" and then tested members memories by asking question re the reading. Josie Packman, Mary Cadogan and Larry Morley tied for first place, the latter eventually taking the prize, a copy of Billy Bunter at Butlins that Maurice King had donated.

The hosts had prepared a very fine spread and were suitably thanked at the termination of the meeting.

Next meeting at Greyfriars, Hollybush Ride, Wokingham, Berks., RG11 3QP. Phone 034 46 4626. Date - Sunday, 11th June.

BENJAMIN WHITER

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URGENTLY WANTED: "Thriller", 4d., Lib. number eleven, 1934. "KILLER ABOARD", by G. H. Teed. SBL. No. 295, "The Silent Syndicate" (Aug. 1931). SBL. "The Sacred City", Quiroule. SBL. "The Forest of Fortune", 1934? 1484, 'Union Jack', "Enter The President", 26 March, 1932.

BROOKS, 32A ST. JOHN'S ROAD

SOUTH TOTTENHAM, LONDON, N15.

* * * * *

WANTED: Greyfriars facsimiles, Numbers 20, 24A, 35, 37, 41, 42, 45, 47, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58. SALE: C.D. Annual 1951 to 1961, £2.25 each or will exchange any two C.D. Annuals for one facsimile.

LITVAK, 58 STANWELL ROAD, ASHFORD, MIDDX,

Phone 69 53609

SALE: Autobiography of Frank Richards, £2; Magnet No. 1 (facsimile) £4; Greyfriars Prospectus, £4; Bunter Titles, £2 each; Howard Baker Magnets, £4 each; Boys' Own Annual, £10.

JAMES GALL, 49 ANDERSON AVENUE, ABERDEEN.

Tel. 491716

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WANTED: Buy/Exchange, Bullseye 41, 89; Surprise No. 3; Film Fun 571; Boys' Mag. 602.

41 SWALECLIFF AVENUE, MANCHESTER 23.

* * * * *
CHAMPIONS: 1951 - 1954, 10p each; Modern Wonder 1937 - 1941, 10p each; Marveman Comics early 1950's (Miller) 15p each. Plus postage.

L. MORLEY, 76 ST. MARGARET'S ROAD, HANWELL, LONDON E7.

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FOR EXCHANGE ONLY: Gems - Vol. Jan. to Dec. 1918, Vol. 33 copies, 1907-1908, Vol. Mch. to Sept. 1914. Magnets - Vol. Jan. to June 1917, Vol. July to Sept. 1909. Also single copies early Gems, approx. 100 N.L.L. (o.s.), a few Penny Populars 1913. Further details on application.

PORTEOUS, 18 LON-Y-GROES, GABALFA, CARDIFF, CF4 4AB.

* * * * *
WANTED: Martin Clifford's "Rallying Round Gussy", Greyfriars Holiday Annual (original), 1920, Girls' School Stories by Elsie Oxenham, E. M. Brent-Dyer.

JAMES GALL, 49 ANDERSON AVENUE, ABERDEEN.

Tel. ABERDEEN 0224-491716

* * * * *
FOR SALE: Volume of "Chums" (1925), £1.25; "Billy Bunter's Holiday Annual for 1967" (Odhams), £1; "Jesse James the Outlaw", a 1938 reprint of the American Jesse James Stories No. 1, originally published 1901 (excellent condition), £1; the Fleetway facsimile reprint of Magnet No. 1 (brand new condition), 65p; Magnet 1333 (good copy), £1; Gem 581 "Bunter the Billionaire" in the exchange series, fair copy, 60p; Gem 655, 60p; Gem 818, 60p; Gem 1400 (rather rough), 25p; Magnet 1281 (rather rough), 25p; Thriller 194 (rather rough), 25p; large size Modern Boy (1938) fair copy but folded, 25p. Post and packing extra on all items. Write to ERIC FAYNE (no reply if items already disposed of).

* * * * *
WANTED: Finnemore "Secret Entrance", "House of Kaid".

ROWE, LINDENS, HORSFORD, NORWICH.

WANTED: C.D. Annuals, 1947, 1948, 1949; Greyfriars Holiday Annual, 1941; Monsters; Howard Baker Collectors Editions; also Vols. 18 to 23, 29, 38, 39. Collections bought.

JAMES GALL, 49 ANDERSON AVENUE, ABERDEEN. Tel. 491716.

* * * * *

SALE: Howard Baker Volumes; Greyfriars Nos. 7 and 8, £3 each; St. Jim's, No. 7, £2; Sexton Blake No. 2, £2; 1976 Holiday Annual, £3; the following all at 70p per copy - 17 Skippers, 1935/7; 20 St. Frank's S.O.L's, 1936/8; 21 Wizards, 1935/7; 2 Champions, 1936/7; 3 Collectors' Digest Annuals, 1974/5/6, £1 each; 50 Collectors' Digests, 1973-77, 10p per copy. Postage extra.

P. J. HANGER, 10 PARK SQUARE, KING'S HEATH, NORTHAMPTON.

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THE NEWSBOY

by W. O. G. Lofts

If any readers of the C.D. worked at one of the branches of W.H. Smith prior to 1931, they would probably recall their own staff or trade magazine entitled NEWSBOY. Commencing in March 1914, it was issued free monthly, with a white paper cover and consisting of about eight or ten pages. Its editor was Geoffrey Richard Pocklington, who ten years later became the editor of the B.O.P. (1924-33) whilst its contents were mainly about Scouting, Camping and junior staff news, with later articles and letters from the Newsboy workers of W.H. Smith and Sons. There was also letters from the Heads of the firm including a Peer - who had greatly honoured the most common name in the English surnames by becoming a Lord.

The Womans Lib. must have been active even in those days, as in respect for its many girl assistants, and mild protests. September 1919 saw the title lengthened to NEWSBOY and NEWSGIRL, with a woman assistant editor appointed. After 17 years of editorship, and in June 1931, Pocklington resigned, and in his farewell message confessed that he had never been a member of the staff, but was a free-lance writer. The title was then renamed to the more dignified JUNIOR STAFF JOURNAL starting in July 1931, and running right through to December 1946, when it was incorporated into the senior House Magazine NEWS-BASKET.

One could not really class this as a recognised boys' paper, as perusing the whole of its run in the British Museum (curiously the only

copies I have seen in our hobby) there were no outside contributors, or well-known boys writers in its pages. Newsboys were one must presume, boys who worked on the counters at W. H. Smith's bookstalls, and were not to be confused with Newspaper boys who delivered papers to houses - though the former may have done this as part of their job. Another similar occupation in those days was Newspaper boy sellers, who sold newspapers from pitches in the street. Easily the most famous one was Edgar Wallace, whose plaque now stands in Ludgate Circus, where once he stood and sold papers. A little later he is reputed to have worked at W.H. Smith's at Ludgate Hill for a short time, and, if correct, was probably the most famous Newsboy of all.

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NEWS OF THE CLUBS - STOP PRESS

NORTHERN

Despite the problems created by the Leeds bus strike there was a substantial attendance at the Swarthmore Centre for the May meeting. The Chairman, opening the proceedings, remarked that a recent news item had caught his eye concerning a bookmaker named Banks who had been warned off the Turf for three years. Thus, said Geoffrey, does Life imitate Art.

The main fare of the evening was a stimulating and carefully researched paper by Nigel Shepley, one of our youngest and newest members. He provided a wide range of quotations from political diaries, newspaper articles, memoirs and the like from the inter-war years, and invited us to consider them alongside Magnet extracts from the same period. The burden of Nigel's case, most ably set out was that - such commentators as Orwell notwithstanding - Hamilton's work, so far from presenting an archaic fantasy-world, very accurately reflected the attitudes, the society, and the prevailing ethos of the period.

So thought-provoking was Nigel's thesis that discussion waxed eloquent for the rest of the evening. There was considerable debate as to whether the good old times really were better than those of today; there was more general agreement that Hamilton saw further beneath the surface of his society than is usually acknowledged. Indeed, so far-ranging was the discussion that the Chairman eventually had to appeal to

us to return to the speaker's central point, and he invited Nigel to sum up. This he did with another interesting suggestion: that the poor of the 1930's perhaps were happier than we now think because compared to their grandparents they felt themselves rich.

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JOHNNY BULL

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