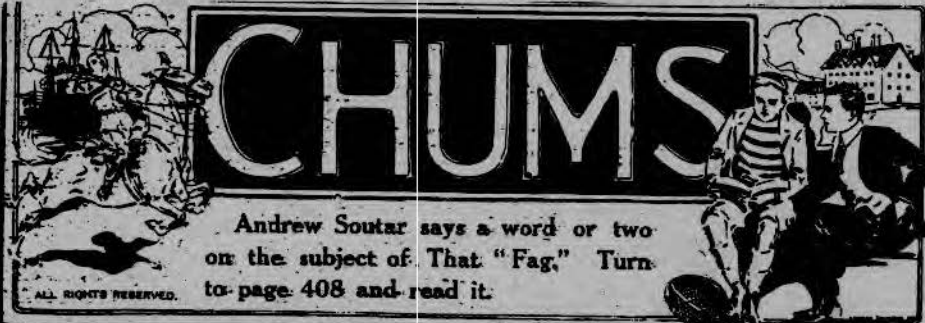


# STORY PAPER COLLECTORS DIGEST

VOL. 36

No. 429

SEPTEMBER 1982



# CHUMS

Andrew Soutar says a word or two  
on the subject of That "Fag." Turn  
to page 408 and read it.

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No. 1,085.—Vol. XXI.]

FEBRUARY 8, 1913.

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# STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

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HERBERT LECKENBY

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## GEORGE ARLISS

Danny, in the extracts from his famous Diary which we present this month, seems to have been, as plenty of us were who were around at that time, a regular picturegoer. He records that, exactly fifty years ago, he went to see a film entitled "The Silent Voice" (called "The Man Who Played God" in America). It starred the great British actor, George Arliss, with Bette Davis in a supporting role (her first Warner film, I believe).

The story concerned a wealthy musician whose ear-drums were burst in the explosion from an anarchist's bomb. He learned to lip-read, and, with the aid of powerful binoculars, set about discovering some people's problems and heartaches and tried to put them right. Far-fetched, of course, but glorious family entertainment of the sort we knew in those days in the cinemas.

(Years later, not so long ago, this film was made again, with Liberace starring. It is a pointer as to what happened to films in recent times. Liberace is an excellent entertainer in his own sphere, but it is very hard to imagine him in an Arliss role.)

Arliss, famous on the West End stage, had made "The Silent Voice" as a silent film, in the very early twenties. But it was the coming of sound to the cinemas that brought Arliss the full and world-wide recognition of his great gifts. I believe his first sound film was "Disraeli" and he followed this with a number of productions, all unfailing grand family entertainment. Arliss, with his magnificent voice, was always superb, but, even more important, he would only star in films which had absorbing stories. He was in his mid-60's by the time that he made his first talking film, but as a star he was ageless.

I can recall him in "Old English", "Alexander Hamilton", "The Millionaire", "The House of Rothschild", "The Working Man", and "Voltaire", but I am sure there were others. We played some of them in the Small Cinema between the wars.

The odd thing is that I can never recall an Arliss film being shown on television in this country, and I find it rather surprising. Technically, no doubt, films have improved tremendously since those early days of the talking screen, but every single Arliss film had a quality of entertainment which one seldom finds in the dreary modern stuff of recent years. Maybe, some time, somebody will remember George Arliss.

### ADDICTION?

Over many years an overseas reader had been a regular subscriber to this magazine. He had all his copies sent to him by air mail, which is nice and quick, providing one can afford it, but an extravagance otherwise. I never learned much about this reader - he seldom corresponded, but everything was sent to a small post-office

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address. I just assumed that he was probably a sub-postmaster, and had living quarters over his post-office.

About a year ago he failed to renew, and, if I happened to notice that his card had been withdrawn, I may have just wondered why. Then, out of the blue, late last year, I had a letter from his widow. Our old reader had died. She explained that they had never been flush with money, and she had had to work herself, in order to help towards the upkeep of the home and the rearing of their three children. Her late husband had left debts, so much so that the very roof over their heads was threatened. Then, suddenly, she discovered that her husband had been on the mailing list of various publishers, who posted him books regularly. In some garage, probably away from the family home, she found that he had a huge accumulation of expensive books which he had been buying down the years. While they had been scraping to make ends meet in the home, the husband, it seems, had never ceased to indulge himself with his hobby. He also collected Artwork.

That is a sad story, and it is a warning that a hobby is, like fire, a good servant but a bad master. As so many of us have found, our hobby is a comfort and joy, keeping the years at bay, but we have to take good care that it does not become a mere obsession.

### WOT! NO SEXTON BLAKE!

In a recent TV quiz programme a hundred people, plus twelve members of two families present on the stage, were asked to name six famous fictional detectives. And not one of them mentioned Sexton Blake. Where on earth were they brought up?

### C.D. ANNUAL 1982

In November this magazine will reach its 36th Birthday. It really IS an EVENT. And in December the C.D. Annual will reach its 36th edition.

The publication of this year's Annual has hung in the balance for some months now, due to the rising costs of production. Anybody who buys new books these days knows how costs rocket, and with a small circulation publication like our much-loved Annual, which is, nevertheless, professionally printed, the problem remains acute. And there



is the additional factor that postage for packets has increased considerably since last December, especially overseas postage. And lots of our Annuals go to the faithful, overseas.

However, with a splendid programme in hand, I have decided that the Annual will come your way as usual. The order form will be enclosed with this issue of C.D. It will help a lot if you will order in good time. Last year many latecomers were disappointed.

As in previous years, on the order form is space for any advertisement you may like to include. It is a good way of sending your Season's Greetings to your friends, and helps to keep the wheel turning.

THE EDITOR

\* \* \* \* \*

# Danny's Diary

SEPTEMBER 1932

The splendid new series about King of the Islands in 'Modern Boy' has continued throughout the month. It is the best of all the Ken King series in my opinion if that is worth anything. ("A monkey-nut!" says my brother, Doug, reading over my shoulder.) The first tale of the month is "Long Palm Island" (which is actually the 4th tale of this particular series) and Dandy Peter Parsons, the reckless blackguard of Lukwe, finds himself stranded on the cannibal island of Long Palm.

The next week brought "Ben Keefe's Secret". Somewhere in the wastes of the Pacific Ocean lies an uncharted island where a fortune in pearls is waiting to be picked up. Only Ben Keefe knows where the island is, and ruffians have kidnapped him. But Ken King is on the trail.

Then "Ken King's Clue" in which Ken solves the secret of the whereabouts of Ben Keefe's island, and the "Dawn" is speeding eastward under full sail. Final of the month, "Warriors of the South Seas". Ken finds land where no land is marked on the charts. And the natives, armed with spears, are gathering there, mustered by their war-drums. This gorgeous series continues next month.

The other series, including Jan of the Jungle continue, though some new ones are announced for next month. A lot of free gifts are to

be given soon with Modern Boy.

In "Just my Foolin'" the Old Boy has included a puzzle one week. It is:

"My first is in cat, but not in dog;  
 My second's in mist, but not in fog;  
 My third is in mile, but not in foot;  
 My fourth is in shoe but not in boot.  
 My whole a judge will sometimes give,  
 It is life's swiftest fugitive."

I worked it out in no time, of course. "I bet!" jeered my rude brother.

In the Schoolboys' Own Library this month the Greyfriars tale is "The Toad of the Remove". The "toad" is Edgar Bright, who is seeking for the Will of a Mr. Thorpe who was once a master at the school. Also at Greyfriars to seek the will are the two Levison Brothers of St. Jim's. A lovely tale.

The other S.O.L. this month is "Chums Afloat", about St. Jim's on holiday with a motor-boat. It is not by the real Martin Clifford, and it is a waste of fourpence. Pretty grim.

Yorkshire are the cricket county champions this year, and in second place comes Sussex. Larwood, the fast bowler, is top of the bowling averages, and Sutcliffe is top of the batting ditto.

In the Nelson Lee Library the long detective tale is "The House of Horror", an eerie affair. The St. Frank's serial "Waking Up St. Frank's" continues.

Next month "Doublecrossed" is the detective tale, plus the St. Frank's serial. Then "The Mystery Box", which is a good tale, and finally "The Treasure of Wu Ling".

A really gorgeous month at the pictures. I usually go twice a week, and Mum comes with me. I take her, and she rewards me by paying for the tickets. We saw Douglas Fairbanks Junior in "It's Tough to be Famous". George Arliss and Bette Davis in "The Silent Voice" was a lovely film about a rich man who has gone deaf. With the aid of binoculars he lip-reads what two young lovers are saying, and he uses his wealth to make their dreams come true. George Arliss films are always grand entertainment, and Bette Davis is so youthful and fresh and

delightful. Marie Dressler in "Emma" is a tip-top film, about a house-keeper who marries her boss and runs into trouble with his family. Myrna Loy and Richard Cromwell are part of his family.

"Good-Night, Vienna" is tuneful and spectacular, and stars Jack Buchanan. Spencer Tracey is fine in "We Humans".

"The Big Timer" is a good film, starring Ben Lyon and Constance Cummings. In this programme there was a new Laurel & Hardy two-reeler entitled "One Bad Turn" which tickled me pink. Finally, we saw William Haines, Madge Evans, and Anita Paige in "Are You Listening?" A rattling good month.

The Gem started off the month with "The Ocean Rebels" in which Mr. Ratcliff, the tyrant in charge of the school ship "Condor", caused Tom Merry to jump overboard to avoid a flogging.

Then came "The Shipwrecked School", in which Skimpole, experimenting with gunpowder, caused disastrous results to the ship. I wonder whether the Insurance Company would pay up. The St. Jim's boys are accommodated at the Headland School, and there are fun and games and rivalry with the Headland boys, including the bully, Barker. Last tale in this series is "Skimpole, the Deep Sea Diver" in which the boys are back at St. Jim's, but Skimpole and Gussy return to the wrecked "Condor" to recover Skimpole's telescope.

Last story of the month is "Detectives of St. Jim's". Thieves break into the school chapel and steal the offertory box. So all our pals set up as detectives to trail the thieves, a couple of tramps named Dodger and Snipey. The successful tec is Herries's bulldog, Towser. Cheers for Towser.

There is a serial running in the Gem entitled "The World Wreckers", by J. E. Gurdon. Who on earth is he? A new one on me, and I haven't read his serial.

A new Underground line has been opened in London. It extends from Finsbury Park to Arnos Grove. How huge the London Underground is getting!

In the Magnet, Harry Wharton & Co. are still in Egypt in a grand series. "Billy Bunter's Bargain" is a donkey. But the real ass is Bunter, for he buys the same donkey on three separate occasions.

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Next comes "The Shadowed Schoolboy". He is Lord Mauleverer. He owns a priceless scarab, and is never safe from Kalizelos, the Greek, who is trying to steal it. Even on their large house-boat, with heaps of servants, Mauly is not safe from the Greek. In "The Secret of the Scarab" the Greyfriars chums have further amazing adventures in Egypt, and final of the month, "The Eye of Osiris", the giant diamond which is hidden in the scarab, comes to light at last and winds up a grand series.

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: S.O.L. No. 179, "The Toad of the Remove" comprised a reprint of the 4-story Edgar Bright series of late 1927. An excellent and novel series in the Magnet, it did not make a very satisfactory S.O.L., owing to the fact that one story of the series was omitted entirely, and the other three suffered some pruning. S.O.L. No. 180, "Chums Afloat" comprised three stories from the sub-written 5-story series of the summer of 1927 in the Gem. The boys go on a motor-boat "Silver Spray" cruise. Pretty awful, and not in the same street as the charming Old Bus series in the Gem or the Water Lily series of the latter-day Magnet. It is rather puzzling why, with such a wealth of Hamilton material available, it was necessary to publish any substitute tales at all. No doubt the fact that St. Jim's was being reprinted in the Gem offered some difficulties for the S.O.L. editor, while Rookwood's had only lasted eleven years in the Boys' Friend and the individual tales were short.

The 1932 stories in the Gem had appeared consecutively in the 1908 Gem. "The Ocean Rebels" had originally been "The School on the Steamer"; "The Shipwrecked School" had been "The Wreck of the Floating School" in 1908; "Skimpole, the Deep-Sea Diver" had been "Skimpole's Salvage"; and "Detectives of St. Jim's" was entitled "The Boy Detectives" in 1908.)

And now, by Special Request, a few extracts from the Danny's Diary were published twenty years ago:

#### SEPTEMBER 1912

It's as clear as a bell now. I wondered why they had moved forward the publication days of the Gem and the Magnet - the Gem from Thursday to Wednesday, and the Magnet from Tuesday to Monday. I know why now. A new paper is coming out next month. It will be called "The Penny Popular", and I am looking forward to it very much. It will be published every Friday.

We went to Yarmouth for our holidays. We went in the sea most days, and they had bathing machines which were taken down to the water's edge by horses. I asked Mum why they did this, and she said it would be rude unless we stepped straight from the machine into the sea. Mum had a beautiful swimming costume with flounces and frills and lots of material, but Dad did not go in the water, owing to his dignity.

I had two Gems while we were at Yarmouth. Both were excellent. "The Spy of the School" was the perfect school story. Langton, the prefect, told a confidential secret to Kildare. Mellish overheard it and let it out, and Tom Merry was blamed for it. Wally D'Arcy played quite a big part in this story.

The other was "Rough on Ratcliff", in which Kerr disguised himself and pretended to be Mrs. Ratcliff. Great fun.

Back home, they have opened another picture palace in my town. It is called "The Cinema". If you go to the afternoon performance they give you a cup of tea and a biscuit. There is a nice orchestra which accompanies the films. We went to the new picture palace during the first week, and the programme was Tom Mix in "Back to the Primitive", a Selig film; Wallace Reid in "The Deerslayer", a Vitagraph film; Eva Prout in "Little Red Riding Hood", an Essanay film; Norma Talmadge and John Bunny in "The Troublesome Stepdaughters", a Vitagraph film; Mary Pickford in "Sweet Memories of Yesterday", an Imp film (I have seen Mary Pickford once or twice before and love her very deeply); and a real scream of a picture "Cohen at Coney Island", a Keystone Comedy. This was the first Keystone I have seen, and I hope there will be a lot more. I rolled and roared with laughter. Also the Pathe Gazette, with the news and a fashions bit in Pathecolor. A lovely programme.

My first Magnet this month was "The Hidden Horror" which was absolutely great. It was fearfully creepy. The boys found a derelict steamer with nobody on board. Doug says it is based on the Marie Celeste, and Dad says it is based on the Flying Dutchman. I said I didn't care if it was based on the Clacton Belle - I thoroughly enjoyed it. Not half! Another Magnet was "The Tuckshop Raiders" in which Smithy, Snoop, and Stott raided Mrs. Mible's shop, and the Famous Four were blamed for it.

... And Yorkshire has won the County Cricket Championship.

\* \* \* \* \*

A YEAR OF CHUMS 1931/32 (Vol. XL)

by W. Bradford

This was the first year that I purchased 'Chums' as a weekly paper. It cost 2d. and contained 20-pages within the covers. I still have most of my original issues and can fill any gaps from the Annual - published as 1932-33.

I suppose the serials were the highlights of this paper so shall we see how many we can recall?

In July 1931, there began "The White Arab" by Percy F. Westerman, "Sanction Stands Alone" by Gunby Hadath and "Maroon Island" by Piers Anson (Draycott M. Dell - the then Editor. How is that for a starter?).

Three months later came "Wake Up Marston" by Michael Poole,

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followed in late October by "Drake Goes West" by our old friend S. Walkey, who wrote some 37 serials for Chums in as many years. The next week, "Sons Of The Legion" by Alan Breck, a relatively unknown author, but one whose style has a familiar ring.

Strangely, six weeks later we have another Legion story, "The Quest Of The Rug" by Francis Marlow - only four episodes. Most series and serials ran between 12-16 issues. On the conclusion of "Wake Up Marston" on 2nd Jan., 1932, we have "The Forbidden Study", surely a Hylton Cleaver classic? Three weeks later commenced "The Happy Company" by Reginald Crunden, a pen-name of Hylton Cleaver who thus had a serial and a series appearing simultaneously.

From 9th January, 1932, for its remaining days, the weekly issue contained only twelve continued consecutive numbered pages and eight pages in the centre (I - VIII) which did not appear in the Annual. As these contained "Blake Of The Whip Hand" by Piers Anson, "Piracy Ahoy" by John Inglesant and "The Star Of Adventure" and "The Mystery Of The Blue Dragon" by V. (Verdi?) Lovel. All excellent serials. The Annual reader missed a treat.

On 26th March, there began "Captain Robin Hood - Skywayman" by Geo. E. Rochester, and we little knew this was to be the last Chums serial in its present format. My last issue is No. 2076, dated 25th June, 1932, and ends on page 820. Messrs. Lofts & Adley have stated that Chums ended on 2nd July, No. 2077 and the Annual ends at page 832. So it would seem that I have been wrong all these years, in thinking I had the last weekly issue of Chums!

To conclude, we cannot overlook the many excellent complete stories by A. Carney Allan, Stanley Austin, (Hylton Cleaver again), Oswald Dallas, L. C. Douthwaite, Charles Gilson, C. Glabon Glover, Gunby Hadath, Eric W. Townsend, plus a series of tales of the N.W. Frontier by Robert Harding (and expert on the East) and World War I stories by Robert Jameson, who saw service in the trenches of Flanders. Illustrated by Paul Hardy, T. H. Robinson, Fred Bennett, Harry Lane, Eric Parker and Glossop, was there any other paper that could offer such a galaxy of authors and artists?

There are many views on the best period of Chums. But I suspect that your first year of reading is the most memorable. To me, Walkey

and Hardy were chums, but I thrilled to them all.

\* \* \* \* \*

# BLAKIANA

Conducted by JOSIE PACKMAN

Herewith the September Blakiana which I trust you will all enjoy. The whole of Blakiana has been taken up with the very good article from Mr. Thurbon of the Cambridge Club, and I am sure will all find it very unusual.

If anyone has written something for the Annual this year, will they please send it direct to Eric for inclusion in this year's opus?

SEXTON BLAKE, COMMENTATOR

by W. T. Thurbon

To those of us whose youthful days include the period before the Great War, fitful memories recur of the news of those days we heard discussed by our elders. "The Sidney Street Siege"; "Dr. Crippen"; Lloyd George; a general election, was it in 1911? Watching from the street door the day long passage of brakes, wagonettes and carriages, decked with the rival colours, "blue and buff" liberals, "pink and white" conservatives, taking voters to the poll - and we with a bonus days holiday from the schools needed as polling stations.

In working-class districts in those days, before we became slaves to radio and the "box", and when gramophones and pianos were rare luxuries, people would stand at the street door to watch the world pass by, and exchange news and gossip with their neighbours.

Traffic was still mainly horse drawn, or by cycles. Motor cars were relatively few. One of my early memories is being awakened at seven o'clock each morning by the cabs driving up to the station to meet the morning trains - a wonderful, nostalgic sound - clatter of hooves, jingle of harness, rumble of wheels. How many now can recall the names of the horse-drawn vehicles: landau, hansom cab, carriage, trap, dogcart, buggy, etc.; fewer still, would recognise them now if seen - my own mind now grows hazy about the shape of some. And, another memory, on hot summer afternoons, the clean, sweet smell of the water cart as it sprayed the dusty road. Apart from the still rare

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motor car, the side streets were still playgrounds for us.

In those days, when money was scarce, and books relatively dear - never did I dream the day would come when I would pay £15.00 for a single book - men as well as boys found their reading in the weekly papers such as the *Marvel* and the *Union Jack*. As a small boy I read these. I still recall vividly the first *Union Jack* I read. A *Loosely-Lobangu* story, with a cover vivid with a picture of Zulu warriors. This was my introduction to *Lobangu*, to whom I have remained ever faithful, even though, as I now know, he was plagiarised shamelessly from *Rider Haggard*.

A look at the *Sexton Blake Catalogue* is a ready-made commentary on those long ago days:

- |      |  |   |
|------|--|---|
| 133. | <u>Sexton Blake, Aeronaut.</u>         | Reminds us of the early 1900's ballooning craze, before the first aeroplane flew. |
| 139. | <u>Sexton Blake in Zululand.</u>       | The Zulu troubles of the early 1900's.  |
| 140. | <u>Sexton Blake, King's Messenger.</u> | This was the period of writers like William le Queux.                             |
| 161. | <u>Sexton Blake in Patagonia.</u>      | Probably based on Hesketh Pritchard's exploration of Patagonia.                   |
| 177. | <u>Salvation Army Blake.</u>           | A period when the Army was not so popular as they later became.                   |
| 185. | <u>The Remittance Man.</u>             | The period when the "black sheep" of the family was sent to the Colonies.         |
| 190. | <u>The Stock Exchange Detective.</u>   | A period when stockbrokers were often made the villain of the story.              |
| 195. | <u>The Broker's man.</u>               | A familiar figure of those hard times.  |
| 198. | <u>Sexton Blake, Cheapjack.</u>        | The days of the travelling trader.  |
| 209. | <u>Sexton Blake, Whaler.</u>           | A <i>Lobangu</i> story; when whaling was regarded as a legitimate pursuit.        |
| 207. | <u>Sexton Blake, Lumberman.</u>        |   |
| 211. | <u>The Cattle Mystery.</u>             | An outbreak of cattle maiming was rife.   |
| 217. | <u>The Slate Club Scandal.</u>         | When shops and pubs ran their small savings clubs for Christmas.                  |
| 227. | <u>The Flood.</u>                      | Rainy seasons do not change.  |
| 235. | <u>Sexton Blake, N. S. P. C. C.</u>    |   |
| 238. | <u>The Master Anarchist.</u>           | "Remember the Sidney Street siege?", brother ancients?                            |
| 239. | <u>Sexton Blake, pavement artist.</u>  | A trade still occasionally seen!  |

cont'd ...



243. Drink. Still a problem, as big as ever.
250. The Apaches of Paris.
253. The Case of the Naval Manouvres. When the growth of the German Navy was beginning to be a menace, and espionage was thought to be rife.
258. The Hop Pickers. Before the days of mechanical picking. Whole East End families would combine an outing with work in the Hop Fields of Kent. And earnest undergraduates would run missions to provide care for them.
273. The Vendetta. When Corsica was regarded as the home of vendettas. I recall the cover of this issue; a group of sword bearing Corsicans shouting threateningly at a sailing boat.
277. The Road Hog. The speeding driver is no new figure; he is probably as old as the motor car.
285. C.Q.D. The signal of distress. The early days of wireless on ships. The first international distress signal was the morse code letters C.Q.D. (unofficially said to mean 'come quickly, drowning'). It was later replaced by SOS. (in morse ...---... ). When the Titanic struck the Iceberg the Captain told Phillips, the senior marconi man to send out a distress signal. He began CQD. Bride, his assistant, said "send out the new signal SOS. It may be your last chance". In fact, it was, for Phillips was lost with the ship, though Bride was saved. The signal now, with radio telephone is, of course, "Mayday".
287. The Old Age Pension Mystery. The beginning of social security. Only those of us whose memories go back before 1914 can realise what that 5/- per week (25p) meant to many of the elderly.
322. Sexton Blake, Sandwichman. A once familiar form of street advertising. Now normally only seen for charity stunts.
317. Sexton Blake, Aviator. Early flying days.
318. Bridge. A story of high-class society gambling.
319. Sexton Blake, Scoutmaster. Blake was quickly off to follow B.P.!
323. The Third Degree. Scandal of U. S. Police methods, then very topical.
327. The great Election Case.
328. The Slum Landlord. Early Rachman-ism.
338. The case of the Smallholding. Reminding us of the movement for setting people up in co-operative small holdings. cont'd...

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|------|--|--|
| 351. | <u>The Labour Member.</u>                        | When Labour Party M. P's were a rare phenomenon.   |
| 355. | <u>Sexton Blake, bathchairman.</u>               | Another forgotten sight of pre 1914.   |
| 359. | <u>Sexton Blake, Territorial.</u>                | Formation of Territorial Army. Strongly supported by Northcliffe.  |
| 391. | <u>The affair of the Billiards Championship.</u> | Billiards then, was what Snooker is today.   |
| 397. | <u>The Problem of the Pageant.</u>               | Pageants were very popular in Edwardian days; a precursor of "Son et Lumiere".   |
| 393. | <u>The Shadow of the Plague.</u>                 | The outbreak of Bubonic Plague in Manchuria in the early 1900's. I read the tale when I was about nine years old and had nightmares for years. |
| 430. | <u>Case of the Cinematograph Actor.</u>          | Early "Pictures"; note how they used the full name then for what became the "Flicks".  |
| 438. | <u>The Strike Pay Swindle.</u>                   | Sounds familiar still!   |
| 461. | <u>Case of the Colonial Cricketer.</u>           | Was he a South African, I wonder?  |
| 479. | <u>Case of the Balkan War Correspondent.</u>     | Reminds us there were wars before 1914.  |
| 501. | <u>The Detective Airman.</u>                     | Sexton Blake competing in a race round Britain. A Mille. Yvonne story.   |
| 540. | <u>The Garden City Swindle.</u>                  | There was a craze for garden cities before 1914.   |
| 556. | <u>The Sixpenny doctor.</u>                      | There was a real "sixpenny doctor" at that time.   |
| 561. | <u>Arms for Ulster.</u>                          | Ireland's problems have a long history.  |

What a garland of memories these titles raise for those of us fast approaching, or having reached four score years. How different the world is in some ways from that of the first decade of the century! Times were hard then. But in spite of it all I wonder whether we have really gained from all our experiences. Those early years were tough; but we had pride in our country then and guts to work. We have gained so much in four score years - but have we used it as wisely as we should?

But if these rambling memories cause some to look back and study the period covered by my list, they will realise the truth of what I have often urged to fellow Archivists. To learn the real mind and life of a past period, look at its popular, cheap literature. Stories reveal attitudes, and even advertisements are of value to the student of the past.

The three shillings and sixpenny (say 35p) watch Jack Overhill saved up for in 1911 (see report of Cambridge Club's May meeting in the Digest) is as much a piece of archaeological history as the guns raised from the Mary Rose.

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# Nelson Lee Column

EZRA QUIRKE - REVENANT CHARACTER

by J.W.C.

I don't know why a character like Ezra Quirke should have made three appearances in the Nelson Lee Library when it was customary in other Boys' Papers to resussitate once only an expelled boy.

Much has already been written about Quirke and his exploits into the realms of the Occult, and when it was discovered he was just a tool of a wicked uncle and was subsequently expelled from St. Frank's we were casting him from our minds.

But like the proverbial bad penny Ezra turns up again in the Raithmere Castle story. It is because such characters have an impact that won't leave the reader is the reason they refuse to sink into oblivion. Arthur Conan Doyle revived Sherlock Holmes on demand although Doyle wanted to be well rid of his invention.

One cannot place Quirke in the same category as Holmes, but there is no doubt the requests for more Quirke flowed in from readers who found him fascinating and mysterious enough to want to read more about him. The similarity between Holmes and Quirke ends there.

But the pity is after the third appearance of Ezra Quirke we saw no more of him. 1931 was about the time when the Nelson Lee Library was beginning to cast doubts at Fleetway House for its continuance. Yet the character of Quirke was a vehicle that could quite easily move forward for at that period I am sure the Occult may not only have been taboo for a schoolboy journal, but at least not so highly descriptive as that written by Edwy Searles Brooks.

Evidently Fleetway House couldn't see farther than their nose and the type of schoolboy stories that followed in the N.L.L. suffered from the lack of "Quirke Mysticism". Changes in policy can often be attributed to subsequent downfalls in whatever strata of society and it is no less obvious to the decline of the NELSON LEE LIBRARY which ultimately 'died' in 1933.

It is well-known that Brooks' favourite character was Handforth. But even Edwy was aware that any character can be pushed too far. But

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the editor of the day who urged Brooks to make Handforth a central character - which Edwy did as per editorial policy - was perforce destined to carry out that edict from the editorial sanctum.

It may well be that other schoolboy story papers suffered from similar editorial mistakes and thus either reduced the readership and/or was responsible for the death of the journal.

Perhaps somewhere in another world our Ezra Quirke continues to exert his influence among the followers of his particular brand of entertainment. Be that as it may I still think he was a weird and interesting character and he will be with us who read about him till we reach that Undiscovered Country.

The history of Ezra Quirke can be found in Old series 542 - 1st New series 137 and 2nd New series 91.

### CROWN COURT

by William Lister

I don't suppose many of us would have had any Crown Court - or any other court - experience way back in 1926.

In 69 years I have only had the pleasure(?) on three occasions. In 1934 I was called as a witness in a case at Fleetwood; 1938 in a case over property. It ended happily for me. Around six years ago was the third occasion, this time in a small room about an accident in which I had been injured. In all three I seemed to have a fair hearing from the police and judges, but then - that was because there was no skullduggery!

Talking about skullduggery let's have a look at "St. Frank's in Court" one of a 'Nelson Lee' series, 561-568, included in the London Club Library bound copies under the title "Horace Stevens - Actor". To be fair, the main underlying plot was the stealing of the script of a play written by Horace's late father. It later became a money-spinner.

The "St. Frank's in Court" episode gives details of the actual court scene; but the series is either leading up to it or away from it. As I said in 1926 not many of us had Crown Court experience, but now, thanks to T.V. and the series of that name, we know what it's all about without even attending one. It's all about the joys and sorrows, the hopes and fears of people in general.

Horace Stevens - schoolboy actor, assisted by the St. Frank's boys, brought the case to court and fought for the rights of the play.



Their fight was against two masters in the art of skullduggery, one a Roger Barton, the other Joseph Salter. One does well to keep one's eyes on these shifty gentlemen.

As usual, with that master of suspense, Edwy Searles Brooks, the case swings backwards and forwards. Just as you are sure the Judge and jury are convinced that Horace has a good case, the two skullduggers work in a crafty one that swing the issue their way.

Suspense builds up each week to the last chapter, no more so than in "St. Frank's in Court" which leaves you with a mouth-watering taste for the next issue.

Being lovers of St. Frank's, we all know that right will triumph.

To relieve the suspense Brooks threads the whole issue with a vein of comedy.

Horace Stevens - schoolboy actor after several successful appearances, forcasting a successful stage career - has this to say, as the curtain falls on this series:-

"I'm going to forget all about the stage, mother; at least put it at the back of my mind. Instead of being a blessed stage-prodigy, I'll become a schoolboy again; I would be dotty to think of anything else."

"And when the schoolboy actor went to bed that night he wasn't thinking about the stage or his ambitious plans for the distant future. His mind was on the coming term at St. Frank's. His thoughts were centred on cricket, swimming and rowing."

"In other words he was as much a schoolboy as ever. It was almost as if he had glimpsed into the future when deciding to throw himself wholeheartedly into school life once more."

Now wait for it! here is Edwy Searles Brooks' punch line in order to be sure of your next week's tuppence: 'For the coming term was likely to provide the most thrilling sports struggle that St. Frank's had ever witnessed'.

\* \* \* \* \*  
FOR SALE: BFL (2nd) 111 "Digger Tec" by G. H. Teed, VG £3; SBLs 1st Series: 89 (Bobin), Fair £2; 188, ts Good, £2.50; 204 (Granite Grant), Fair £1.75; 250 (L.H. Brooks), ts F-G, £1.95; 314 Good £2.50; 342 (Topper) F-G, £2.00; 381, Good £2.50; SBLs 2nd Series: 5 (Granite Grant), ts Good, £2.50; 18 (Granite Grant), VG £3; 153 (Rymer) ts Good, £1.50; 351 (G&E Hale) Fair, £1; Union Jacks 1267 (Waldo), 1273 & 1274 (Capt. Christmas), VG £1.75 each. Postage extra on all items. Write first. No reply: items sold. CHRISTOPHER LOWDER, CLEMATIS COTTAGE, CRADLEY, Near MALVERN, HEREFORD & WORCESTER, WR13 5LQ.



DO YOU REMEMBER?

by Roger M. Jenkins

No. 179 - Gem No. 499 - "Walker!"

1917 was not one of the more successful years in the history of the Gem, and "Walker!" was one of the lighter stories, based on inter-house rivalry and an incriminating document. The School House juniors were about to interrupt a New House drama rehearsal, but they fell into a trap, and Figgins prepared a confession of failure for them to sign, with the added incentive of a tar brush in case they were recalcitrant. Cardew, who had not long arrived at St. Jim's, effected a rescue, and it was realised that the document in Figgins' handwriting could be interpreted as a New House confession of defeat. Accordingly the basic theme of the story was attempted repossession of the document.

Whereas Cardew & Co. came out of the various episodes in a creditable light, showing circumspection and caution, Tom Merry & Co. seemed by contrast to be trusting and ready to be beguiled. When Kerr disguised himself as a ridiculous new boy called Albert Adolphus Walker, they fell for him, hook, line and sinker. They even left him on a sofa, apparently asleep, under the framed document in Figgins' handwriting.

The title of the story used to puzzle me a little. Obviously it referred to the new boy's name, but there was clearly another meaning as well. A dictionary of slang has revealed that Walker (or Hookey Walker) was an early nineteenth century exclamation of derision, indicating incredible nonsense. Presumably Charles Hamilton meant this to apply to Kerr's masquerade and not to the story itself.

This particular Gem is of interest because it contains the first instalment of Pentelow's serial "The Twins from Tasmania", featuring Flip and Flap Derwent, re-introducing Goggs, and using large numbers of Hamilton's characters as well. It has the usual defect of his customary prosing style with long analyses of people's motives and failings and singularly little incident. In the editorial column, Pentelow reminded readers that the previous Goggs serial was being reprinted in the Boys' Friend 3d. Library, and of "The Twins from Tasmania" he said, 'I hope and believe - nay, I am sure - that you will like it.' He was nothing if not modest.

MASTERS AND HUMOUR

by Len Wormull

'Have form-masters a sense of humour?' asks Jim Cook in his St. Frank's letter. A good question, and I suppose the simple answer would be Yes and No, for who hasn't come across the humorous and the humourless in masters? A laugh memory from schooldays concerns an Art teacher, whose idea of fun would be to hurl an India-rubber at anyone not paying attention. If it found its mark he would give a whoop of delight, as would the rest of the class. (I recall a couple of 'Brander'-types too, but I should think most schools had their share of little dictators.)

In popular school fiction, no-one handled masters more masterly than Hamilton, and it was at Greyfriars, the school he loved, where some of the finest examples were to be found. Here were no backcloth cap and gown figures feigning erudition, but real flesh and blood characters who knew their stuff; colourful, and stars in their own right. They also could be described as martinets, quaint, and a little old-fashioned. Constantly blessing their souls, but with little laughter in them. Long years together and still not on first name terms. We laughed at them rather than with them. And as it is laughs I am here about, here are a few impressions:

- Dr. LOCKE: In public, levity strictly frowned upon.  
In private, able to wrest great fun wrestling with Sophocles.
- PROUT and MOSSOO: The best comedy double-act outside Bunter and Coker. And not a quip between them!
- QUELCH: Celebrated for his caustic wit.  
Misinterpreted by his boys as "sarc".
- WIGGINS: Said to have a dry chuckle and a 'gift for humour'. An absent-minded gent, who probably forgot to substantiate the claim.
- LASCELLES: Rarely seen and heard, despite the importance of Maths. Strong, silent type. Humour unknown.
- HACKER, CAPPER, TWIGG: Three academic miseries.

Having said that, prepare now for a surprise. Humour can be like

that - totally unpredictable. Something did in fact happen to give these staid old gentlemen (Lascelles excused) the laugh of their lives. Indeed, it so tickled Dr. Locke and Mr. Quelch that they could hardly stop laughing - years of repressed "Ha, ha, ha's!" suddenly unleashed, as it were. Mind you, it was, as Nugent remarked, enough to make a cat laugh! Poor old Prout, ever the comic butt, was never more hilarious than with two lovely black eyes (Magnets 1187-88). Thinking Harry Wharton & Co. were laughing at him, he reports them to Dr. Locke and Mr. Quelch. It transpires they were laughing at Bunter's jammy face . . .

. . . 'The door had scarcely closed on them when the Head broke down. A ripple of irresistible laughter pealed from him.

"Ha, ha! Bless my soul! Mr. Quelch --"

"Ha, ha!" Quelch looked round from the window at last. Remove men would hardly have known his usually severe countenance at that moment. It was suffused with mirth. "Oh, sir! Ha, ha! Most - most ridiculous! Really, sir - Ha, ha, ha!"

"Most unfortunate - ha, ha!" ejaculated the Head. "Really, Prout is too - too sensitive! If a Lower boy cannot laugh without Prout supposing he is the object of it - ha, ha--"

"Ha, ha, ha!" trilled Mr. Quelch. "Really, this is - is ludicrous. Poor Prout! Ha, ha, ha!"

There was chuckling in the Common-room when the story reached the august apartment - even the grim face of Hacker melted into a grin, and Capper chortled, and little Mr. Twigg sniggered till he almost choked.'

The moral to this is fairly obvious, chaps. Never be deceived by outward appearances. Circumstances can sometimes alter cases. Especially if it's funny!

\* \* \* \* \*

WANTED: PICTURE SHOW WEEKLIES: 504-520; 526; 544-46; 548; 550; 551; 558; 560; 562; 565; 567; 593; 594; 597-605; 607; 608; 609; 621-621; 623; 665; 681; 682; 684; 698; 716; 717; 719; 748; 750; 752; 759; 761; 763; and all of 1935 issues. Have a few to exchange. Top prices paid for good condition with earlier issues complete with gravure supplements (in any case would be nice to hear from other collectors).

SMYTH, P.O. BOX 366, MONA VALE, N.S.W. 2103, AUSTRALIA.

REVIEWSCOLLECTORS' PIE No. 2

(£7.95. Howard Baker)

A pot-pourri of collectors' items which is a dream-come-true for the connoisseur. Probably the most fascinating item in an entrancing volume is the very first Sexton Blake story ever written. Perfectly reproduced is this copy of the halfpenny Marvel which was published early in the last decade of the reign of Queen Victoria. Harry Blyth, under the pen-name Hal Meredith, wrote "The Missing Millionaire", giving his detective the name Sexton Blake; he can have had no thought of what he was starting. If anyone had told him that his story would be reprinted, ninety years later, for thousands of admirers, he would have laughed his head off.

Two delightful St. Jim's stories, from the reprint period of 1936, are to be warmly welcomed, and show Martin Clifford at the peak of his early powers. "The Traitor", an excellent tale of cricket and starring St. Jim's seniors, had been entitled "Playing to Win" in 1913. Even better, and a sterling Gem, is "The Black Sheep's Dupe" which had been "The Black Sheep" in 1913, an age-old favourite of mine. This is the theme where Cutts persuades Digby to copy out what the senior claims is part of a play he has written, containing a letter in which the writer confesses, in the play, to certain misdemeanours. Cutts uses the letter to try to blacken Digby in the eyes of a wealthy uncle.

The theme was used again, many years later, in a Magnet story. In passing, this issue of the Gem, if you happen to notice it, contains a photograph of a number of schoolboys of the Modern School, Surbiton - the "Gem Club" - yes, we had them all those years ago - in the Editor's Chat page, with an introduction at the top of the page by the editor, Mr. Down. Many of the names of the boys in the picture are, alas, forgotten now, but the two in the very front were named, respectively, Hayman and Flower, and both lost their lives for King and Country in the Hitler War. Both were in the R. A. F.

Two copies from the Magnet of 1915, before the paper shortage began to bite in the First World War, provide plenty of fascination for any browser. Though Hamilton was, perhaps, not at his very best in the war years - he had lost, pro tem, a little of the brilliance of Red cover and Blue cover days - the two stories provide fine entertainment. In "Bunter's Anti-Tuck Campaign" we find the cunning Owl leading a crusade to save food in the war years, yet eating heartily on the sly. "The Jape of the Season" is also an amusing effort in which we learn why Mr. Quelch had never married. He had been let down by his lady love in his youthful days.

"Bunter's Bluff" comes forward to 1920 is a farcical effort with Billy disguising himself as Bessie, and "Chumming With Loder" sees Bunter as Loder's pal - as the result of a spot of blackmail. There were very few genuine stories in 1920, and these two are among the few real pearls of that year.

A charming and heartwarming addition to this volume is part of the musical score of the Greyfriars Suite composed by Mr. Thomas A. Johnson. Mr. Johnson, who has been a C. D. reader for a great many years, is a gifted musician and composer. Long years ago he composed his suite, inspired by Hamilton's Greyfriars, and sent it to the famous author who



valued it highly.

And, of course, there is a supporting programme of merit for the fan to gloat over. A splendid book.

## McCALL'S GREYFRIARS GUIDE

Peter McCall  
(Howard Baker: £7.95)

This remarkable book is described as a Who's Who, a What's What, and a Where's Where, and that seems a pretty apt description. One has seen the same sort of thing in connection with Sherlock Holmes and Agatha Christie, but somehow, owing to the very vastness of the canvas, one never really expected to see it done for Greyfriars. Yet, probably, it was inevitable that some enthusiast would take the bit between his teeth and get down to it.

The mind boggles at the countless hours which must have been swallowed up with the work involved, searching through hundreds and hundreds of Magnets and making notes of the names and details of the great variety of people, places, and things. Without any doubt at all, this has been a labour of love for Dr. McCall, the dedicated author.

Naturally, in a work of this kind, one is bound to find a few incongruities. For instance, there are entries for Bernard Punter and Wilfred Punter, both of which are the creations of a sub writer, yet there is no entry for the ubiquitous Captain Punter, the gambler, who turned up now and then at the Hamilton schools. Plenty of the Magnet serial numbers are indicated, but in many cases only the number of the Howard Baker volume is given. If every serial number concerned were given, in addition to the H. B. number, it would have been an advantage.

However, any criticism of this work is a very minor one, and must surely be carping. That this work gave joy to the compiler is obvious. It will give equal joy to readers, and much of the pleasure will be in finding references to people and places, long hidden away in the niches of memory. As I said in the beginning, a remarkable book, and one to be treasured.

\* \* \* \* \*

WANTED: Chums Annual 1934-35; Greyfriars Holiday Annual 1941; Monsters; R. Crompton's "William The Lawless", "William The Superman"; Thriller Picture Library.

SALE: C.D. Annuals 1970, 1971, 1973, 1975, 1977, £3.75 each.

JAMES GALL, 49 ANDERSON AVE., ABERDEEN

Tel. ABERDEEN 0224-491716

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QUICK SALE - moving house. H. B. Facsimiles, s/h, £4 each, plus postage. Vols. No. 4, 6, 9, 13, 24, 25, 28, 31, 37, 41, 44, 51, 52, 64, 67, 68; also set of "Digests" from Nov. '73 onwards.

R. AKERMAN, 24 JEWELL CLOSE, BISHOPDOWN, SALISBURY

WILTS., SP1 3HR. Tel. 0722-332513



# News of the Old Boys' Book Clubs

## MIDLAND

July 1982

In the height of the holiday season we did well to get an attendance of nine. We were glad to see Keith Normington, who brought his wife along.

Our usual features, Anniversary Number and Collectors' item were on display. The A.N. was Nelson Lee Library No. 104 (o.s.), part of the South Seas Holiday Adventures Series and published on 27th July, 1918, and 64 years old to the day. The C.I. was No. 1 of the Newsletter started by the Friars Club. This was chosen as a token of appreciation of the great relationship of the Friars Club and the Midland Club.

Three members of the Midland Club visited Bob Acraman's meeting on Sunday, 18th July. It was a grand affair, so they said.

Joan Golen at our meeting provided the whole of the refreshments out of her own pocket. They were superb. There certainly are some generous people in our club.

A game of Greyfriars Bingo was thoroughly enjoyed. Your correspondent was the caller and Tom Porter and Joan Golen were the winners.

It was good to hear that Ray Bennett was out about again after a long illness. He was once one of our members.

Ivan Webster read an extract from Magnet 1042, "The Boy who would not be Caned". Coker is the one, of course, and in the end he is not caned. We thoroughly enjoyed it. Roger Jenkins says that this issue of the Magnet has been taken out of the library more than any other Magnet.

A discussion on whether Greyfriars should have been co-educational indicated that, to our members, at least, it would have been a flop.

The cheery party broke up at 9.30. Our next meeting is on 28th September.

JACK BELLFIELD - Correspondent

## LONDON

There were two distinguished guests present at the visit of the club to the Charles Hamilton Museum, Maidstone. These were Norman Longmate and the Rev. J. P. H. Hobson, the former being instrumental for the "Good Old Greyfriars" broadcast and the latter being the headmaster of St. Mary's School, Reigate, Surrey. A good attendance enjoyed the neatly arranged Hamiltonia exhibits and the programme arranged after the picnic lunch.

After Mary Cadogan had read some of her criticisms of the book "The Heirs of Tom Brown" John Wernham gave a film show. The first film was called "Childhood Memories" and it featured the Cadogan family when Mary was much younger. The second projected was one made by John Wernham called "Daylight Robbery". Then the evergreen film of both the Margate and Folkestone visits of some years ago and the delightful scenes taken at Roselawn which featured Frank Richards and his young relatives and friends. After the film show, the Rev. J. Hobson talked on some of the correspondence that he had with Frank Richards. He exhibited copies of his own school's magazine and particularly the one that Frank Richards contributed a short Carcroft story entitled "No Tuck For Turkey".

Then it was time for tea and conversations and get togethers ere call over and the return home. Before we departed, a hearty vote of thanks was given to John Wernham for his excellent hospitality.

Next meeting will be at the Leytonstone residence of Reuben and Phyllis Godsave on Sunday, 12th of September, when there will be an emphasis on both St. Frank's and Chums. Tea will be provided, but bring own comestibles.

BEN WHITER

## NORTHERN

Meeting held: Saturday, 14th August, 1982

We had 13 members present, a very good turn-out for a holiday month.

For the second month running, our proposed programme could not be organised; we should on this occasion, have paid a visit to Michael Bentley's home, but this has now been held over until October.

A batch of Howard Baker programmes for the forthcoming reprint publications, were handed round, along with a dust jacket (BUNTER DOES HIS BEST) from the new series of Bunter books to be published in September by Quiller Press.

A discussion took place about our future meeting days and times: it appears that our present accommodation cannot offer rooms on a Saturday evening after September. Arrangements are in hand to find alternative accommodation.

Molly brought along a Greyfriars word game: a list of nine characters - with jumbled letters - was given to each person, who had to unscramble the name (not as easy as it sounds, as some names were "obscure") and if the names were correct, the initial letters would form the names of two well-known cricketers. Keith Atkinson was the winner, with the names of Hobbs and Gray.

After refreshments, a tape recording of BILLY BUNTER'S CHRISTMAS PARTY was played, from the t.v. series of c. 1960. This prompted discussion on the series now being shown, A. J. WENTWORTH, B.A. It appeared that the majority of members preferred the books.

An enjoyable meeting came to an end, at 9.15 p.m.

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

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# The Postman Called

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

ESMOND KADISH (Hendon): I have a feeling that this has already been mentioned in the pages of the "Digest", but I came across a reference to a Lord Mauleverer whilst reading Elizabeth Gaskell's "Cranford" the other day. I wonder whether Mr. Hamilton ever read "Cranford". Not his cup of tea, perhaps, although you never can tell!

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: I recall "Cranford" being one of the prescribed books in one of my English examinations, but I forget whether I noted Lord Mauleverer. Surely, I must have done.)

ERNEST HOLMAN (Leigh-on-Sea): Bunter edited for the modern child! Grangefriars? I'll stick with the originals, which I often read.

C. J. BROWN (Glasgow): I was interested in the comments of Alan Stewart as it started up a train of thought. My regulars were: Mon - Champion, Adventure; Tues. - Wizard, Triumph; Wed. - Gem; Thurs. - Rover; Fri. - Hotspur; Sat. - Skipper. We had a local second-hand shop where they exchanged periodicals on a 2 for 1 basis, so I was able to get Magnets, Modern World, Film Fun, Boys' Cinema, etc. Not forgetting Dixon Hawke of which I had No. 1, called, I think, "The Three Chinamen". I know it was dated 1911. What a pity I didn't hold on to it and some of the others, but then, we should have required warehouses eventually to store them all, had I been allowed to keep them.

LEN WORMULL (Romford): Your reference to Wildney in "Eric" interested me - a fine character, as you say. And how sad to see "Eric" lampooned by modern-day writers. The latest is Benny Green, in his biography of Wodehouse. He devotes some space to the story and Farrar, even to calling him a 'lunatic'. The story captivated me as a boy, and I must have borrowed it from the library more times than any other book. It was my first love in school stories. Many's the time I have tried to go back in time to places I once knew, to recapture a boyhood memory, only to find it impossible. Time erases all but the memory. How beautifully Farrar captures this in his closing remarks:

'I visited Roslyn a short time ago, and walked for hours along the sands, picturing in my memory the pleasant faces, and recalling the joyous tones of the many whom I had known and loved. Other boys were playing at the sea-side, who were strangers to me and I to them; and as I marked how wave after wave rolled up the shore, with its murmur and its foam, each sweeping farther than the other, each effacing the traces of the last, I saw an emblem of the passing generations and was content to find that my place knew me no more.'

R. F. ACRAMAN (Ruislip): I have been swamped with requests for the Magnet computer print-out as a result of the announcement you printed concerning this item in August C.D. I have decided to do a similar print-out of the Gem numbers with the relevant H.B. volume the number appeared in. This will be available on exactly the same terms as those quoted for the Magnet in the C.D. announcement.



D. HARKNESS (Sydney, Australia): A few days ago I received the May issue of the C.D. and read with interest your editorial on the "Proud Tram Series". Back when our good friend Len Packman was with us, I sent him an article I wrote on the subject, which was subsequently published in the C.D. By researching the series, I was able to give an outline of the story Robert Murray intended to write before illness prevented him, and Edwy Searles Brooks was called upon at the last moment, to supply the final story. His won the contest. I also pointed out the remarkable coincidence that both the story intended by Murray and the one written by Brooks dealt with a blind man.

Gwyn Evans, at the time, was writing his "Onion Men" series and I thought that the way he brought the "Tram" theme into it without striking a forced note was very commendable.

Perhaps, as our good and able Josie is going to reprint some of the Blake articles, she might like to include my little effort on the "Proud Tram Series".

D. V. WITHERS (Poole): Old memories come flooding back, particularly about St. Frank's. The end for me was when the Nelson Lee went over to those fortnightly oh so dull detective stories, and Nipper went away, leaving Handforth as the chief character with a host of newcomers such as Hal Brewster & Co. who never had the same impact to me.

I saw a mention of that good old comic 'Lot of Fun' in one of your issues. I wonder if any of your readers will remember the front page character 'Dreamy Daniel'?

Going back to the Nelson Lee I have recently read "The Rebellion at St. Frank's" where Nelson Lee leaves and comes back in disguise as a Mr. Wrott. Whilst this rings a bell with me I remember a different rebellion where the Head and Nelson Lee were both expelled on the grounds of being drunk when in reality both had been drugged. Can any of your Nelson Leeites help me on this?

Mrs. E. E. HOPTON (Burton-on-Trent): I really enjoy every issue of your lovely publication. It is always such a pleasure to read from cover to cover. Long may it go on.

T. V. JONES (Gloucester): May I take this opportunity of telling you

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what a joy it is to receive your cheerful little magazine every month. I live on my own, and have very little to do with the outside world. Who wants to, anyway? To stay with Bunter, D'Arcy & Co., as a permanent schoolboy, is my station now, and I have no complaints about that.

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: It is immodest to publish those last two letters, but they made me so starry-eyed that I couldn't resist it.)

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### THE ROOKWOOD RESERVES

by Laurie Sutton

Some 15 years ago I obtained a long run of Boys' Friend weeklies, covering the first Rookwood story (B.F. 715, Feb. 1915) through to 1038 (Apr. 1921). In reading the Rookwood stories, I wrote a brief summary of each story, and made a note of all the substitute efforts.

A few weeks ago I was reading through some early C.D. Annuals which featured articles by the late Bill Gander ("Rookwood Review" - 1950), and Eric Fayne ("The Years of Conquest" - 1953).

Bill Gander included in his article a list of stories that, in his view, were "not genuine". These totalled 15 titles, plus 4 of which he was uncertain (and which the late Gerry Allison subsequently confirmed as subs in his own opinion. These 19 coincide exactly with the subs that I myself noted, except that I have one further sub (977) which Bill Gander did not mention.

Eric Fayne's article does not actually list subs, but in a brief résumé of the Rookwood tales he remarks on those that he considers to be sub stories. There are 13 of the 19 titles on which all three of us agree, but the first two listed by Bill and myself were not reviewed by Eric, so that could have made it 15. There are just two stories (912 and 1012) which Eric considers were subs, but which Bill and I were convinced were genuine.

I feel that in all cases where the three of us agree on the sub origin, readers can take it as certain that they were, indeed, subs, and it might be of interest to list all suspected subs, with titles as cross references. Obviously, the letters F, G, S, denote Fayne, Gander, Sutton.

Where there is no unanimous agreement readers must obviously make up their own minds on that particular story.

cont'd ...

No.	LS	BC	EF	Title
823	S	G	+	Lovell's Luck
828	S	G	+	The Eccentric Headmaster!
856	S	G	F	In Another's Power!
881	S	G	F	The Schoolboy Investors
888	S	G	F	The Scare at Rookwood
912	-	-	F	Tubby Muffin's Benefit!
913	S	G	F	Tubby Muffin - Musician!
916	S	G	F	The Christmas Captives
917	S	G	F	The Mystery of the White House!
934	S	G	F	Lovell's Great Aunt!
942	S	G	F	The St. Jim's Match!
943	S	G	F	The Tyrant of Rookwood!
950	S	G*	F	Jimmy Silver's Trial
952	S	G	-	The Right Sort
957	S	G	F	Lying Low
967	S	G*	-	The Form-master's Double
970	S	G	F	Backing Up Bulkeley
975	S	G*	-	With Pankley's Compliments
976	S	G*	-	Singeing Pankely's Beard!
977	S	-	-	Tubby's Golden Dream
1010	S	G	F	Muffin the Mischief-Maker
1012	-	-	F	Sir Tubby, of Rookwood!

+ Not reviewed by Eric Fayne.

- Not considered as sub story.

\* Suspected as sub, and confirmed by Gerry Allison.

(My own run checked from B.F. weekly 715-1038, but with the following copies missing, and therefore not checked: 1001, 1011, 1018, 1019, 1029, 1031.)

EDITORIAL COMMENT: I really can't remember the motivation behind an article I wrote thirty years ago, but I fancy that "Years of Conquest" was more a history of the Boys' Friend over the period, rather than an analysis of Hamilton's work. And at that time, my collection of Rookwood was not complete, as it is today. I agree that each of the stories listed above by Mr. Sutton is a sub affair. I see that Danny, in his Diary (published in C.D. in 1967) commented that "The Right Sort" was a sub tale, and, of "The Form-Master's Double" he wrote (in our 1969 extract) that it was too silly, and not by the real Owen Conquest. Of "Tubby's Golden Dream" Danny said that it "didn't seem to be written by the regular Rookwood writer". One that Danny had was "The Missing Manuscript", of which he says that it "is a rather short Rookwood tale, not written by the real Conquest". When I get time, I will look up the story.

I have, however, checked on the two Pankley tales, and have no doubt they were counterfeit. I can't imagine Hamilton writing "Jimmy Silver knew that his uncle was a sucker for tidiness".)

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THE OTHER 'ERIC'

by Tommy Keen

Regarding the article, SCHOOL STORIES, in the August issue of the Collectors' Digest, may I say that this echoes my sentiments exactly.

When, as a schoolboy, avidly reading the adventures of the Greyfriars and the St. Jim's characters, I was often left wondering as to the author's frequent reference (usually in a slightly mocking way) to 'Eric'. Evidently the boys who were compared to Eric, were not the Harry Wharton/Tom Merry types, although perhaps Tom Merry's arrival at St. Jim's in velvet suit and white collar, may have had some bearing on F. W. Farrar's famous hero. I learned that the full title of the book concerned, was ERIC or LITTLE BY LITTLE, but I had never seen a copy, or even wished to, until two years ago ...

Now, back into the world of my schoolboy heroes, I decided I would like to discover the history of this famous Eric, and mentioning the name of this book to a very good friend (and contributor to the C.D.), I was, to my absolute delight, presented with a copy of the book. Quite prepared to be scornful of this so-called sanctimonious school story, to my amazement I was absolutely enthralled and fascinated by the adventures and misadventures of the erring Eric. The death scenes were very emotional, not only to the boys in the story, but also to THIS very late reader of the book. Thinking about it now, I am quite certain that the early Frank Richards/Martin Clifford, J. R. Pentelow, and many other of the substitute writers, were influenced by various incidents from ERIC, in several of their stories.

Also, the mention of THE BENDING OF A TWIG! Oddly enough, until a year or so ago, I knew nothing of this story, and then, in correspondence with another Greyfriars enthusiast, I was informed as to what a splendid story it was. A few weeks later, to my utter amazement, when glancing at some books being offered for sale, very cheaply, in Esher Library, there it was, THE BENDING OF A TWIG, on top of a pile of books. A lovely, lovely tale. Also, soon afterwards, another book was discovered in an OXFAM shop, THE HILL, by Horace Annesley Vachell, this is another real beauty.

But, compared to these three books, TOM BROWN'S SCHOOL-DAYS, which I have recently tried to read, I found heavy going, and

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have laid it aside. It reminded me of how, when a boy, I tried to become interested in the Nelson Lee, but gave it up as a bad job, the Magnet and Gem dominated my existence.

May I say one more thing regarding the amalgamation of the Nelson Lee and the Gem, although perhaps this subject should now be considered closed, but in those far off days of long ago, when I was a St. Jim's addict, suddenly a series cropped up featuring identical twins, one being sent to St. Jim's, the other to St. Frank's. St. Frank's in the St. Jim's stories ... I just couldn't believe it! I switched to the PICTURE SHOW!

\* \* \* \* \*

TIMELESS MAGIC

by Mary Cadogan

Like lots of our favourite juvenile stories, fairy-tales can often be enjoyed even more by us as adults than when we were children. Hodder & Stoughton have just reissued a superb facsimile edition of BILL THE MINDER, which was first published in 1912. This is written and illustrated by W. Heath Robinson, whose work will be familiar to many C.D. readers for his numerous and beautiful illustrations in children's books and magazines like 'Little Folks' and the Oxford Annuals. The story is fresh, and full of magic with mischievous twists, as small-boy Bill graduates from humble baby-minder to celebrated general. It is far from cheap (£14.95), but not overpriced by today's standards as everything about this bumper book from its blue and gold cover to its gorgeous and prolific pictures has a sense of 'old-world' quality.

The same can be said of THE ENCHANTED FOREST, another facsimile from the past. Angus and Robertson have reproduced this lovely 1921 story which features masses of fairy pictures by Ida Rentoul Outhwaite. These, in countless postcards and picture-books of the '20s and '30s, formed for many of us our lasting images of what fairies should actually look like! A nostalgic delight at £6.95. A talented modern artist, Krystina Turska, has produced a truly enchanting new version of a classic fairy-tale. THE PRINCE AND THE FIREBIRD (Hodder & Stoughton, £4.95) is just the sort of book one would buy for a child but long to keep for oneself.

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