

STORY PAPER  
**COLLECTORS DIGEST**

VOL. 37


No. 440

AUGUST 1983

**BRIGHT STORIES MAKE BRIGHT BOYS!** THAT IS WHY THIS IS JUST  
THE PAPER FOR YOU!

**THE NELSON LEE**  
LIBRARY *And St. Frank's Magazine*

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**THE SIEGE OF THE REBELS!**

No. 460.

EVERY WEDNESDAY.

March 29, 1924.

34P

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Nelson Lees. All the series available, quite a number of bound vols. of the old series. 1st new, 2nd & 3rd series, 100 good for £60, my selection. Old series - many bound vols.

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# COLLECTORS' DIGEST

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HERBERT LECKENBY

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## THE WEEK THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY FADED OUT

So it is exactly 50 years since the last Nelson Lee Library appeared in the shops. It just ended, of course. Amalgamation with another paper was merely a euphemism to disguise the stark facts.

To the discerning, which few if any of us were at that time, it was clear what was in the wind. For many months the Gem had lavishly advertised the Lee, and the Lee had carried advertisements

for the Gem most weeks. It should have been no surprise when the Lee folded and was absorbed by the Gem. "The last insult!" the late Bob Blythe once wrote sadly. Amalgamations rarely please the supporters of the paper which fades out, and, probably, the amalgamation is even less acceptable to the patrons of the paper which carries on with its structure unbalanced somewhat. I doubt whether any Gem fan was happy over the merger.

In a way it was curious that the Gem was selected to take on what was left of the Nelson Lee, for, in their heyday, neither paper had much affinity with the other. Possibly the powers that be recalled that there had been nebulous links in the recent past - with the Castleton twins twin-series in which one twin went to St. Frank's and the other to St. Jim's, and another series when Handforth was transferred to St. Jim's. Both series in both papers were, of course, by Brooks. I, personally, didn't like any of it at the time, and I doubt whether the Lee fans were any more enthusiastic.

It is odd that the Ranger, at the very same time, started again at No. 1 new series, as Danny reminds us this month. It seems to me that, with the Ranger moving around, it might have been far more sensible to transfer the St. Frank's stories to that paper, which was obviously sagging somewhat. But it wasn't done, so, all these years later, we just look back on what might have been and what was, and we decide that everything that happened was just something for us to hold an inquest on all this time further on.

#### THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL?

After wallowing in Greyfriars, St. Jim's, and Rookwood for a bit less or a bit more than 60 years an enthusiast of average intelligence should know the difference between a sub story and the real thing. As Gerry Allison used to say, if you know your Hamilton you can tell the feel of the genuine article, and the sub writer soon gets the grit crunching between your teeth. A nice metaphor from Gerry.

As the years go by, some contributors who have given close study to the matter, come up from time-to-time with "suspects" -

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tales of which they are not quite, quite sure. By the end of the century, at this rate, we shall be wondering whether a man named Hamilton ever wrote any Gems and Magnets at all.

Was there really some "Scarlet Pimpernel" in the dusty rooms of the Fleetway House - some writer who was able to write tales which were so good that we did not detect them long ago, and only now, as a result of close study and hard labour, they are labelled as "suspect"? If so, who was he? Why hasn't he been named in the tumbling years since the last Magnet appeared?

My own view is that sub tales stand out as inferior to the genuine thing. If a tale is "suspect", merely that and nothing more, then it was written by Hamilton himself. But I am no expert.

### IN THE BEGINNING

I expect that most readers recall the very first copies they ever had of their favourite papers. My first Gem was "D'Arcy's Libel Action", a glorious blue Gem in which Gussy, in an article for, I think, Tom Merry's Weekly, criticised the shapeless baggy trousers of Mr. Japp the Mayor of Wayland. When I was very small my sister used to read the Gem to me - Gems, I am sure, bought at 2 a penny at a second-hand stall on Gravesend market. They bought them back at tuppence a dozen.

Those readings by my dear sister so long ago gave me a love for the Gem which has never diminished down the years.

My first Magnet was "The Greyfriars Insurance Company", a red Magnet Fisher T. Fish story in which Fishy insured his customers against lickings, lines, and broken windows. That came in a stack of Magnets given me by a neighbour, a Mrs. Allen. They had belonged to her son who had gone off to the First World War. I have no knowledge of what he thought about it when he came home from war.

Finally, my first Rookwood story was "The Bagshot Bounders". I had measles or some other childish complaint, and my father brought me home a new Boys' Friend. It was to be quite a few years more before I bought the Boys' Friend - and Rookwood - regularly.

Happy memories are the prime advantage of being ancient.

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Who'd want to be a kid today?

NEWS OF OUR PATIENT

Our grateful thanks to the large number of readers who have written to me concerning Madam's illness which has, at the time of writing this, put her in hospital away in Surrey for the past fortnight. Thank you, too, for the cheering "get well" cards which so many of you have sent to her. It has been impossible for me to answer the kind letters and messages, but I assure you of my deep appreciation. Madam is making excellent progress, and, by the time you read this editorial, she will be back with me, I am sure.

In case some of you have ever wondered, Madam's christian name is Beatrice, often lovingly shortened to Beta. She is the kindest, sweetest soul who ever breathed. The name "Madam" was one which she had, long ago in my school at Surbiton when she was in charge of the welfare of generations of my resident boys, and it is one of deep affection which she has carried down the tumbling years. God bless her. And God bless you all for your thoughtfulness and kindness.

THE PRINCESS SNOWEE'S CORNER

With her Mum away and the temperature verging on the nineties, the Princess is disgruntled. She doesn't like it at all. Maybe next month she may see fit to put paw to paper to let you know what she thinks about it all.

THE EDITOR

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DEATH OF Mrs. DORIS DOYLE

It is with the utmost sadness that we record the death of Mrs. Doris Doyle. Dearly loved by everyone in our London club, and vivacious and kindly to the very end, Doris never ceased to enjoy the Hamilton stories and her enthusiasm for this magazine and the Annual will be just one of our happiest memories of her.

Doris had been ailing for a number of years. All the same, her bravery and gaiety made her seem indestructible, and her loss comes as a great shock.

At the end of June, Doris collapsed with a stroke and was rushed to hospital where she died peacefully a fortnight later.

Doris loved all animals and birds. The Princess Snowee will miss her, for a catnip

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mouse came along to her from Doris several times each year.

Our deepest sympathy to our dear friend, Brian, in the loss of his mother. He will miss her enormously, as will everyone of us who knew her.

### ROBERT SINGLETON DIES

We were sad to learn that our loyal reader, the Rev. Robert Singleton of Southport had died on 8th June. Robert loved the C.D. and anything connected with Greyfriars. He only retired a few years ago, - a period, all too short, when he was able to give more time to his hobby. His wife, May, tells us how his retirement was brightened by the part that C.D. played in it. Our deep sympathy to May and the family.

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# Danny's Diary

AUGUST 1933

A startling and very sad happening this month. With the second issue of the month, dated 12th August, the Nelson Lee Library appeared on the bookstalls for the last time. It has come to an end, and it is now amalgamated with the Gem. I don't think I am at all happy at the amalgamation with the Gem, and I feel tearful about the end of another fine old paper.

The China series continued in the two Nelson Lees published this month, and now it has become a serial entitled "St. Frank's versus Foo Chow", in the Gem.

To mark the occasion they are giving away parts of a working model of an aero-car each week in the Gem.

Another curious happening is that the Ranger, which replaced the Popular, has now started again at No. 1 New Series. This new Ranger contains the Frank Richards stories about the boys of Grimslade, Jim Dainty & Co., being cast away on a desert island with their Headmaster, Dr. Sparshott. I don't care much for the Ranger.

Lovely tales in the Gem this month. The first one is "Skimpoles Three" with Glyn inventing a mechanical Skimpole. And then a third Skimpole turns up. Awful rot, really, but good fun.

Then two fine stories introducing Signor Tomsonio's Circus,

with Joey Pye, the clown, Clotilde, Jack Talbot (Jungle Jack), Jim Carson, the Handsome Man, and Demon, the wild Wonder Horse. The first tale of this pair is "Chums of the Circus" and the second one is "Gussy's Star Turn", when Gussy joins the circus, and Mr. Ratcliff gets on his trail.

Final tale of the month is "Under Suspicion". One of Gussy's fivers is missing, and it looks as though his pal, Blake, is the pincher. He isn't, of course. It is Gore who accidentally shows how the mix-up occurred. All lovely tales.

In the Boys' Friend Library there is "Sexton Blake at the Varsity", showing how the future detective's education is continued at Oxford. Not bad at all.

It is the Golden Jubilee of the Parcel Post in the Post Office. So it is just 50 years since the first parcel was sent.

It has been a very hot August. In London on 6th August, the temperature reached 91, and the next day it reached 92 at Farnborough in Hampshire. Just the right weather for 22-years old Sunny Lowry who swam the Channel in 15½ hours.

In Modern Boy there is a new series of a character named Crackerjack Charlie, about a husky team in the Yukon. It is a novel series and is written by Douglas Dundee. I haven't heard of him before. The Captain Justice tales this month have been "Rivals in Space"; "Midge's Ordeal"; "The Winged Terror"; and "Midge's Busy Day". The Biggles stories have been "The Bottle Bombers"; "Biggles Pats Tit for Tat"; "The Funk"; and "The Wing-Riders". The Rio Kid picture serial goes on, as does "Just My Foolin'" by the Old Boy. There is a new Percy Westerman serial entitled "Standish of the Royal Air Constabulary"!

There has been an explosion at Battersea Power Station. One man has been killed and three are badly injured.

Two glorious tales in the Schoolboys' Own Library this month. One is "Billy Bunter's Circus" with the Owl becoming the boss of Whiffles Circus. This story will go on next month. It is outrageous and more than quite gorgeous. A very cleverly-contrived affair. The other S.O.L. is "The Rookwood Gipsies" which is

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absolutely tip-top reading. I shall read it again soon.

A fairish month in the local cinemas. There has been Edmund Lowe in "The Devil is Driving", a motor-racing tale; Clara Bow in "Call Her Savage", a tale of a half-breed girl.

John Barrymore and Myrna Loy in "Topaze" is a nice picture about a schoolmaster. "State Fair" is a picture about simple country folk and their pleasures and it stars Janet Gaynor, Lew Ayres, and Will Rogers; Ralph Bellamy in "Air Mail" is an exciting film about the rivalry between the air companies carrying the mail. Clark Gable stars in "No Man of Her Own" with Carole Lombard and Dorothy Mackaill, the British actress. Story of a gambler who marries a nice girl and does not tell her how he earns his living. George Carney and Leslie Day in a modest little British musical film "Television Follies". George Raft in "Undercover Man", and Mary Pickford and Leslie Howard in "Secrets", which is a happy little picture.

Clark Gable and Helen Hayes in "The White Sister" is about a girl in the war who becomes a nun when her husband-to-be is reported killed - and then he turns up again.

Finally, a film packed with star names and little short stories in which a millionaire gives a number of different people a million dollars - and the film tells how the different people spent them. The funniest little story featured Charles Laughton.

Another marvellous month in the magnificent Magnet. To start the month, "The Bounder's Good Turn". The Bounder does a good turn to Wingate Minor of the Third Form, and lands himself in a mighty scrape as a result, with expulsion staring him in the face. Next, "The Millionaire Detective". Mr. Vernon-Smith is highly annoyed that his son has been expelled - and the father comes to Greyfriars to clear his son's name. An original and very outstanding story, in my opinion.

Then the start of what promises to be a holiday series. The tale is "Micky, the Sprat". There is a smash-and-grab raid in Courtfield, and the smasher-and-grabber hides his plunder - and leaves the only clue to its whereabouts in a Holiday Annual which

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belongs to Bob Cherry. (I always think it a bit rum when the chums have anything to do with the books which print their adventures. It seems to destroy illusion, though it is only a carping detail, isn't it?)

Finally, "The Greyfriars Hikers" with the chums tramping the countryside in perfect peace and enjoyment - till Billy Bunter joins them unexpectedly. And they have that Holiday Annual with them.

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### NOTES ON THIS MONTH'S "DANNY'S DIARY"

S. O. L. No. 201, "Billy Bunter's Circus" comprised the first three tales of the Whiffles' Circus series from the Magnet of the summer of 1928. S. O. L. No. 202, "The Rookwood Gipsies" was the magnificent caravanning series (probably Hamilton's first series on a theme which he always handled so delightfully) of the Boys' Friend of the summer and early autumn of 1918. A 9-story series, but one story, dated by the escape and capture by the caravanners of a German prisoner-of-war, was omitted. The following year Hamilton contributed a splendid caravanning series to the Gem, and these two series on the theme were never surpassed. Just lovely reading.

Of the Gem stories read by Danny in August 1933, "Skimpoles Three" had been "Skimpole the Third" in early 1910; "Chums of the Circus" and "Gussy's Star Turn" had been "The Circus at St. Jim's" and "Jack Blake's Little Dodge" in the autumn of 1909; "Under Suspicion" had been "Tom Merry's Trial" in early 1910.

In the cinema, "Call Her Savage" found Clara Bow almost at the end of her career. She was to make only one more film. She never took to talkies, or talkies never took to her - which was a great pity. "Secrets" was Mary Pickford's last film - the end of a career the like of which will never be seen again. It was a good and successful film, and there was no reason why Mary should not have gone on. But a series of tragedies in her private life had knocked out of her all the will to carry on.

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# BLAKIANA

Conducted by JOSIE PACKMAN

Herewith the fourth and last instalment of the Eric Parker story which I trust you all enjoyed. This month there is also an article from our friend Ann Clarke which I am sure you will find interesting. Please start thinking about writing something about Sexton Blake for the Annual.

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THE ERIC PARKER STORY - Part 4

by W. O. G. Lofts

With his thoughts no doubt rekindled with memories of Eric Parker, on a later visit to Mr. Twyman, I was most interested to learn that he had remembered something that might be of great interest not only to myself but other collectors of Sexton Blake material. During his period of office as Union Jack Editor, it was his practice to take home with him art-work of Eric Parker that had been returned from the printers. He used to store this in his loft at his home at Benfleet in Essex. On leaving the Amalgamated Press towards the late thirties, and having to sell his house in a great hurry, as well as losing his interest in Sexton Blake - he left this Parker material behind. If the owner had not discovered this and the house had survived the heavy bombing by the German Air-Force there was a faint chance that the paintings could still be there. Drawing a map of where the house stood plus giving me the owner's name, on a visit a few days later I found the house still standing with the owner still in residence after 25 years. He at first was very suspicious of me as there had been a lot of burglaries recently. After convincing him that my call was genuine he told me that unfortunately during the last war the whole roof had been set on fire by a fire bomb and had been completely destroyed. As it happened they had not used the loft and no-one knew the paintings were there. I left Benfleet back to Fenchurch Street a very sad man, realising that some unique original illustrations had now been lost for all time.

It was during the fifties that Eric Parker first contributed to newspaper strips such as 'Pepy's Diary' in the now defunct London Evening News. 'Making a Film', and 'Paula' in the Daily Express - as well as 'An Age of Greatness' in the Daily Graphic. He also contributed to The Daily Mail Annuals. For some reason, and about 1960 he always seemed to be worrying about the standard of his work, and whether he was slipping a bit. Whether he had for the very first time had something rejected I do not know, but he also seemed concerned that he was not on the Amalgamated Press staff, and therefore would qualify for a pension when he decided to call

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it a day. I assured him that I would put in a good word for him to the powers that be - should the need arise, emphasising the fact that he had given over 40 years faithful service to the same firm. Next to my surprise, and I will never know if my 'hints' had done the trick in the right places, but I heard he had been appointed an Art Director at the now Fleetway Publications, where his brilliant ideas and layout was used to just sketch rough for other lesser artists to polish and colour. Actually he had been given a similar position to that of Bert Brown the famous comic strip artist (Charlie Chaplin, Pa Perkins, Dad Walker, and Homeless Hector fame) who was a genius at amusing ideas and comic situations.

Personally I thought that this would be the ideal job for Eric in the twilight of his career, as like all human beings his work was bound to lose its edge in the passing of the years. But to be truthful, he really hated being cooped up in an office with its dull routine. After forty years as a free-lance, it was like a wild bird being trapped in a cage! In fact he used to get out of Fleetway House as often as he could to get some fresh air.

Some years ago, an enthusiast estimated that Eric Parker had produced about a run of no less than 900 covers in the Sexton Blake Library alone. Adding to this his work on the Union Jack, Detective Weekly, and Sexton Blake Annuals, plus the many thousands of inside illustrations, chapter headings, and tail pieces - his output was really astonishing. A quick and deeply conscious worker, he usually delivered four Sexton Blake Libraries at a time, and was always on schedule. Indeed he thought so much of always being on deadline that often he would delay his holidays because of pressing work - much to the despair of his wife Beatrice and daughter. Married in 1929, it should be recorded that his wife helped him a great deal in not only keeping the books, but delivering art-work on his behalf when he was too busy to go in to town himself.

The very last time I saw Eric, was when he was taking some of his 'fresh air' and walking along the Embankment. His blue-grey eyes lit up when he saw me. "Got time for a drink Bill" was his first remark, but unfortunately I had to decline, as I was late for an

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appointment at The Daily Mail. Eric hid his disappointment, and said as genial as ever "Next time, then Bill". Unfortunately there was never a next time, as I learned later that he had died at Edgware General Hospital of Double Pneumonia on the 21st March, 1974, when he was 76 years old.

I suppose I walk through Fleet Street and by the old Amalgamated Press building site almost daily. I often think of the many friends I used to meet in the various taverns, and especially up in Fleetway House. Sometimes I forget that the years have gone so quickly, and the familiar figure of Eric Parker - as well-groomed as ever - will come round the corner. Give me a friendly smile, and then we would have an enjoyable evening talking about the good old days. It was not only my pleasure to know Eric as a friend, but also as one of the best boys' paper illustrators in the history of detective and thriller publications. May he never be forgotten.

#### MORE BLAKE, PLEASE!

by Ann Clarke

I certainly agree with Jim Cook that there should be more about Sexton Blake. Sherlock Holmes is continually reprinted - why not Blake?

Could one reason be the very reason I like Blake - the enormous variety of the stories? They are loosely categorised as detective stories, perhaps because Blake is described as a detective, but what proportion of them are conventional detection? There are adventure and travel stories, war, spying, westerns, romance, impersonations, and so many others - whatever type of story you like, you can find it somewhere in the Sexton Blake saga.

For lovers of the school story, there are "Sexton Blake at School" and "Sexton Blake in the Sixth", "Tinker's Schooldays" and its sequel "The Four Musketeers", and the Kingsmere series in the Detective Library with Blake as a master and Tinker as the Head's secretary.

Animal stories - Pedro, of course, and later Milly the Siamese cat; horse-racing and circus stories.

Supernatural - such as "Fear", or "The Victim of Black Magic", where the supernatural element is never fully explained.

Horror - as in "The Plant of Prey", where Tinker almost becomes the victim of a man-eating plant.

Stories of futuristic inventions, such as the flying car in "The Case of the Deported Aliens". Some of these could be called science fiction, as the Mr. Mist series. Some later stories go further into the fantasy field, as in "Bred to Kill" or "Touch of Evil".

Historic - many of the early stories, especially the war stories, and those from pre-1914, send me to the history books to see what was really happening then - or what we are now told happened - perhaps fiction written at the time gives a more accurate picture. Real people sometimes appear - King Edward in "The Great Cattle Show Mystery", the Kaiser in "The Kaiser's Mistake" or "The Case of the Naval Manoeuvres" (which has the Kaiser kidnapped by anarchists and rescued by Blake).

Unforgettable characters - Waldo, Zenith, Wu Ling, Kestrel, and so many others.

So far as I can see, the only type of story not included is the type of domestic story where "nothing ever happens". Apart from that, whatever your taste or mood, there is something there to suit it.

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# Nelson Lee Column

A LETTER FROM ST. FRANK'S

by An Old Boy

Sussex is full of quiet, peaceful country lanes such as Bellton Lane. It leads up to St. Frank's College and, if it could converse with you, would tell of many an incident connected with the history of the old school.

Today, as I approached the lane which was looking so tranquil, a sports car had just passed St. Frank's at a speed quite unnecessary and was coming towards me. A young rabbit scurrying across the road tried to reach the other side, but it was too late. The car hurled the poor thing into the air and it landed in the hedge.

As the car shot past me I saw it contained the River House

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boys known as the 'Honourables', a name given by reason of their background by the lesser lights at the River House.

As I entered St. Frank's the first junior I saw was Willy Handforth, brother of the imperious Edward Oswald.

Describing what has occurred in the lane Willy asked me to return to the spot and show him.

It was a very warm summer's day ... one of those sweltering periods that come only seldom.

Arriving at where the rabbit had been struck we looked into the dry ditch and saw the mangled body.

Already flies were beginning to buzz their foul symphony about the shattered skull.

Willy's love for animals is well-known - he keeps all kinds at the back of the woodshed as pets - but he turned his head looking at the remains of the rabbit.

The River House juniors must have seen what had happened, and although it really was an accident, yet the howl of exultation that went up as they passed me showed they knew what had happened.

Now the flies' symphony was rising to a saw-like crescendo and Willy turned to return to the school. He decided to borrow a spade from the porter's woodshed and bury the animal.

It is strange how such a peaceful scene can be suddenly transformed into one of tragedy. A tragedy to people like Willy, but to many it was another animal run over on the roads.

Now to more pleasant items. A rumour that St. Frank's is up for sale has been denied by Dr. Stafford. It is true the Board of Governors are trying to economise in the running of the school, but every avenue they have explored so far hasn't been workable. And the school fees will most certainly rise. Which will cause a few frowns from some parents who already find it difficult to keep their sons at the college.

The fees at the River House are, I understand, in the same bracket as those at St. Frank's. On a few occasions to my knowledge, some juniors had to leave St. Frank's and enter a cheaper establishment in the Midlands.

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As I would like to know more about the Moor View School for Young Ladies near St. Frank's, perhaps I may make my next visit there, but first writing to Miss Bond, the Principal. I know quite a bit about the history of this school before it was a large private house. But when Nipper chronicled the events at St. Frank's he was very sparing with his knowledge of the Moor View if and when that Academy entered in his narrative.

I know a little about the River House School from incidents that have occurred there and the proximity that brought about sporting events and classical japes. But it is very surprising these three establishments, St. Frank's, the Moor View School and the River House form an area of historical happenings quite remarkable for such a small district.

E.S.B. AND THE GEM

by Ernest Holman

Browsing interestedly through Derek Adley's 'Gem Index' (which he produced for us, with Bill Lofts, a while ago) I found myself taking much note of the various contributions made to this Companion Paper by Edwy Searles Brooks. It is from this 'Index' that I gratefully acknowledge the source of the following information.

ESB first contributed to the Gem (under his Robert W. Comrade guise) in 1910/11, when his end-of-paper serials ran continuously in Nos. 144 to 182. In the third week of his first serial (No. 146) this writer also contributed his first St. Jim's story to the Gem. From then until the end of 1912, few 'sub' stories of St. Jim's appeared; but 1913 started off with five such yarns, one of which (No. 258) was by Edwy. Then, from Nos. 261 to 346, only eight substitute tales appeared in a long Hamilton run. The interesting part of this period of more than 18 months is that all eight 'subs' were by ESB.

From No. 348 there was a nine-month Hamilton sequence, broken only by one 'sub' - again, by Brooks. This was in 1915, during which year he later penned two other St. Jim's tales. One further story by him followed in 1916; but by now the Nelson Lee was on the market and the author's work was to appear weekly in that publication. He did not re-enter the Gem for over a decade;

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in March 1927, however, four of his St. Jim's stories were published consecutively in Nos. 994-997. In the autumn of that year, the 'Castleton Twins' series occurred in Gems 1022-1025. During the following summer, Nos. 1059-1063 were ESB tales, the first four being the 'Handforth at St. Jim's' series. (A few series of St. Jim's by 'sub' writers went into later editions of the S.O.L. and the 'Handforth' stories constituted S.O.L. 224.)

No new St. Jim's tales were written by Brooks after that. With the demise of the Nelson Lee in 1933, however, St. Frank's arrived at the back of the Gem. Some of the stories were from his earlier Nelson Lees, others were written by him especially for the Gem. From No. 1331 in August 1933 to No. 1448 in November 1935, St. Frank's stories by ESB appeared without a break. Then St. Frank's left the Gem; but not the author! The very week after the cessation of St. Frank's, the first reprint of one of his St. Jim's tales was published.

From No. 1449, near the end of 1933, to No. 1575 in April 1938, a long run of Hamilton reprints was broken periodically by only six 'subs' - once again, they were all by ESB.

August 1983 marks fifty years since the Nelson Lee ceased existence. It is surely a good time to recall what a varied contribution E. S. Brooks also made to its sister-paper. Many 'sub' writers penned quite a few St. Jim's stories (Austin exceeded the century); but Edwy, whether as Brooks, Clifford or Comrade, managed nearly 200 weekly contributions to the Gem. After Hamilton, no other writer provided so much.

#### A QUESTION OF AGE

by R. J. Godsave

Since E. S. Brooks was generally writing in the Nelson Lee Library for readers of around fifteen years of age it was in keeping that the age of his St. Frank's Remove characters should be of a similar age.

This somewhat confined age limit in his school characters did not give Brooks much scope in introducing new girl characters to Moor View School who had brothers or brother at the neighbouring school of St. Frank's. A certain amount of thought had to be given

in such circumstances in order to prevent such a happening becoming ridiculous.

The case in point is that of Ena Handforth who became a scholar at Moor View School and enjoyed the friendship of girls of a similar age, such as that of Irene Manners and her friends. The age gap between Willy and Edward Oswald Handforth was such that Ena fits in as a fourteen-year-old plus schoolgirl. Thus Willy as a thirteen-year-old plus, and Handy as a fifteen-year-old plus clears this family up nicely from the age point view. It would, of course, have been possible for Ena to be a twin of Edward Oswald, but we have never been informed that this was ever the case.

The regular reader would be well aware that Handy had an elder sister Edith who featured so prominently in the Clement Heath series and at that time was approaching her twenty-first birthday. Had Brooks placed Ena between Handy and Edith then she would have been too old to enjoy the friendship of Irene Manners and her friends.

A similar case is that of Winnie Pitt who joined Moor View School and was the sister of Reggie Pitt of the St. Frank's Remove. In the Jack Mason series in the earlier Nelson Lees, Pitt was tried by the form for impersonating a sister which did not at that time exist, in order to discredit Norman Grey, or Jack Mason as he was then. Here again was a similar case where care had to be taken by Brooks in the question of age.

There is no doubt that the inclusion of Ena Handforth and Winnie Pitt was a great asset to the Nelson Lee characters, especially Winnie's friendship with Ralph Leslie Fullwood of the St. Frank's Remove.

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BRITISH COMIC AND STORY PAPER PRICE GUIDE: 2,650 titles with current prices and complete details on dates, runs, amalgamations, publishers, etc. £3.50.

DENIS GIFFORD, 80 SILVERDALE, LONDON SE26 4SJ

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WANTED: Mint copies of C.D. for March, April, May 1983. FOR SALE: YAROOH: A Feast of Frank Richards, £3.50; The Barring Out at St. Frank's, £3.50; Meccano Magazine 1939, £6.50; all good condition, post free.

MICHAEL BENTLEY, 70 WOODHALL LANE, CALVERLEY, PUDSEY, YORKS.

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DO YOU REMEMBER?

by Roger M. Jenkins

No. 190 - Schoolboys' Own Library No. 268 - "The Rookwood  
Barring-In"

Valentine Mornington (who was originally called Lord Mornington) was one of the outstanding characters in the early Rookwood stories. In the time when he still had possession of his fortune, he was under the impression that money could buy anything and, though there was no lack of toadies like Topham and Townsend, his cash never quite had the power he felt it ought to possess.

In the early stories, Mornington's character was not handled very skilfully. He used stilted language such as "Then you will not let me enter the cricket?" and his roguery was not redeemed by any compensating features. He was in fact a hopeless cricketer at this time, but his uncle and guardian, Sir Rupert Stacpoole, M.P., was chairman of the Board of Governors, and his intercession almost ensured Mornington a place in the junior eleven. Some time later, after Mornington lost his fortune, his uncle's indulgence ceased somewhat abruptly.

This was a series of stories in the summer term and there were a number of attempts by Mornington either to gain a place in the eleven or to take it over altogether. On one occasion he kept Jimmy Silver a prisoner in the old tower, for which he was eventually flogged by Dr. Chisholm. This incident enabled Sir Rupert to force the Head's resignation in favour of his own nominee, Mr. Scroop. The new Head was in favour of strict punishments for everyone except Mornington, who was treated with obvious favouritism, and like all weak people Mr. Scroop was stubborn and deaf to the voice of reason.

Rebellion came when the new Head ordered twenty floggings in one day. Eventually his authority snapped like a broken reed, and he was incarcerated in the Hall, with the door screwed up. When Sir Rupert arrived at the school, he discovered that his nephew had been pushed through the window to keep Mr. Scroop company. All three left Rookwood that day, though Mornington eventually returned.

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In later years, Charles Hamilton would have made much more of the rebellion, which occupied only a few chapters - a single issue of the Boys' Friend. As it is, the rebellion seems to be over before it has hardly begun. Momington's character would have been drawn more subtly, and his unbelievable arrogance would have been toned down. "The Rookwood Barring-In" is interesting mainly as a signpost to the future, pointing great things to come. Rookwood's finest hour had not yet arrived.

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GREYFRIARS SCHOOL (Chuckles version) by Maurice Hall

In 1920, "Chuckles" comic advertised that they were going to produce plans for a model of Greyfriars School. This was not, as I thought 63 years later, a pre-printed give-away cardboard design, but proved to be a series of nine plans printed on the last page of the weekly issues.

The idea was for the reader (aged between 4 to 7 I should think) to cut the parts out and to paste them onto thin card and then assemble the nine buildings. I suspect that very few were ever attempted and even fewer actually made. None appear to have survived!

Having obtained a set of plans, I decided to reduce them by 50% and to model Greyfriars in 'Pyruma', which is a modelling cement. Had I realised just how difficult this would be, I might never have started, but start I did.

The method I used, was to roll out a thin (max  $\frac{1}{8}$  thick) sheet of 'Pyruma' onto a sheet of plastic and fairly rapidly laid onto this the various cut up pieces of one plan, marking round the edge to establish the various sections.

One has to work fairly quickly, to mark in the windows and doors, removing the surplus cement with a pen-knife or modelling instrument, also marking in bricks or other detail. These sections are then left to dry overnight. The next day you must get a thin knife to ease the pieces off the plastic and turn them over, lightly scratching the back of each section. The reason for this is to stop the piece curving as it dries and therefore distorting when joined to

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another part. Leave the parts for at least 24 hours, if not 48 hours, according to weather conditions. It is possible to bake the parts in an oven, but I preferred not to do this.

Now is the time to join each part to its correct other member. Take good care to read the instructions and to try a dry run before using 'Tiluma' to fix each section to the next. In due course of time, you will have nine parts assembled and can then place each item in its correct position for a trial run.

The next move is to get a suitable piece of chipboard (I used one 18 inches square) and to paint each piece before mounting the sections onto the board. If you paint each piece first, you will be able to experiment with colours to get the feel of the look model right, plus it is easier to paint before full assembly.

Before final mounting down, decide if you want to incorporate lights under the buildings, it's too late afterwards! With careful positioning, all eight centre buildings can be illuminated by four lamps.

After mounting down with 'Tiluma' you will have to re-paint the bases and roof joined sections.

It is necessary to put the paths down next, by painting the board with a PVA glue and sprinkling a suitable grey model material on the marked out sections. Railway modelling materials are very suitable for this and also they have packs of green and other coloured foliage, suitable for trees and bushes, etc. The grass is applied as for the paths, ivy is applied to the walls where indicated on the plans. Put the flagpole on the tower last, as it is very easy to knock off while working on the model. The editor has a photo of my model which he maybe able to re-produce in the C.D., but go ahead and try to make one for yourself. If you need advice, please write (with s.a.e.) to Maurice Hall, 26a Sidney Road, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey, KT12 2NA, and I will try and help you with any problems.

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"DEVOTION, EMOTION, RELIGION AND DEATH" by Tommy Keen, with Graham McDermott. Pathos at Greyfriars and St. Jim's (illustrated). 21 pages - A4 size. £1 (incl. postage) from:-  
T. KEEN, 16 WESTON PARK, THAMES DITTON, SURREY

# The Postman Called

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

BRIAN DOYLE (Putney): In the July C.D. you ask if anyone knows anything about Charles Gleig, author of *CONTRABAND TOMMY*.

Among the little I can discover about Gleig is that one of his books was titled, curiously enough, *BUNTER'S CRUISE*, published by Methuen in 1901!

Gleig's other books included *WHEN ALL MEN STARVE* (1897), *THE ROGUES' PARADISE* (with Edwin Pugh), *THE EDGE OF HONESTY* (1898), *THE MISFIT MANTLE* (1903), *THE NANCY MANOEUVRES* (1907), *COWARD AND HERO* (1908), *THE REBEL CADETS* (1908), and *THE MIDDY OF THE 'BLUNDERBORE'* (1909). He also wrote a dramatized version of Cutcliffe Hyne's popular *CAPTAIN KETTLE* in 1903, and contributed to various magazines.

The reference book I found this information in was published in 1914 and his entry disappeared after this edition so perhaps he was a casualty of the Great War. But I cannot verify this.

HARRY PEMBERTON (Manchester): As regards the July C.D., it still keeps its high standard, and, to echo the thoughts from the readers' letters, I hope it flourishes for a long time to come.

The covers alone are always a pleasant surprise.

E. CONNOLLEY (Gloucester): I am pleased to read "Princess Snowee's" column again. I have missed it very much indeed. Give her a pat from me.

BILL LOFTS (London): I'm afraid that what Jim Cook says is true - many Blake authors did not have the same love for the characters as their readers. Many were only interested in the financial side of it, and I suppose it was after all their living. I can well remember one famous writer in answer to my query of 'what did he really think of Blake as a character' answering 'that he thought he was a cold poor fish - and Tinker unprintable'. For the record 'Pierre Quiroule' first met his wife, when she was a schoolgirl in the early days of the First World War. She suggested the character of Mademoiselle Julie

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to him, as well as his nom-de-plume of 'The Rolling Stone'. Secretary for The National Union of Journalists, and forming other Press organisations as well as a Literary agency - he later joined the British Lion Film Company - so no wonder he never had time to write!

ERNEST HOLMAN (Leigh-on-Sea): I do hope Laurie Sutton hasn't taken things too personally. He does not need to stress his own success in 'sub' identification - his findings are well-known and mostly accepted by many, including myself. Five of the 'six in question' that I have read offer a mixture of 'true' and 'not quite' Hamilton. A couple of them give the impression of a schoolboy hurrying through his homework in order to get on with other things. My overall report would probably be 'could do better'! I do not regard it as unthinkable that they could be 'subs' but will stick with my previous "H'm!" Mr. Sutton's article, as always, was most interesting and informative - his title was excellent!

I was most grateful for Ron Beck's data on Sanders. My book-store hunting list now has some additions and my notes have been considerably augmented. I also am sure we are more than two. Who will join us - perhaps with more news of the "Topical Times" stories? Come in, No. 3.

NICOLA SMITH, GRAHAM McDERMOTT (Epsom): We reassure Mr. R. Gordon that there are still a number of young people interested in the reading and collecting of the MAGNET & GEM. Furthermore they are prepared to make every effort to ensure that the C.D. continues to flourish after, as he puts it, the older enthusiasts have "passed away".

The good news is that the youngsters of today are steadily renouncing the modern so-called "school" story, such as is seen on the BBC these days. Instead they turn to the ever-green pages of the MAGNET, or any of the other Companion papers.

Only recently, the writers' witnessed, in a large London bookstore, two young boys aged 9 and 11 purchasing two of the Howard Baker reprint volumes. And, as if that were not enough, from the way they were browsing through the titles on show it was

clear that they had bought and read other volumes in the series.

This must bode well for the hobby and our beloved "C.D.".

H. HEATH (Windsor): I would be most interested to here how readers rate two very contrasting mystery stories, both of which I regard as outstanding. The two stories are:-

1. "A Fifth Form Mystery", by Harold Avery.
2. "The Mystery Of A Hansom Cab", by Fergus Hulme.

I know that "A Fifth Form Mystery" was serialised in a Boys' Own Paper printed in the 1920's, but when was it first written and what was the year of the B.O.P. Annual referred to?

"The Mystery Of A Hansom Cab", first published I understand in 1887, must be one of the very first detective stories ever written. In my opinion what makes it a little different is that the story is set in Australia. It was serialised by the B.B.C. (wireless) in the 1950's.

ESMOND KADISH (Hendon): There were some nice nostalgic topics in the "Digest" this month. Danny's reference to the formation of the L.P.T.B. in 1933, and the editorial notes about the gradual disappearance of trams in the London area, inspired some childhood memories. Personally, I always preferred the old trams, and never liked the new-fangled "trolleys" which replaced them.

The review of the new versions of the "Wind in the Willows", and your references to reading aloud to the boys in the war years, reminded me that I was first introduced to this delightful book in just such a manner. It was my first year in the Junior School, when "teacher" read to us of the doings of Mole, Ratty, Badger and Toad. Wisely, she omitted complicated sections such as "The Piper at the Gates of Dawn". Of course, I had to have it! The seven-and-sixpenny edition - with pictures! - was too expensive, so I had to be content with the small three-and-sixpenny version.

Snowee's contribution this month was most welcome. Alas, no candidates called on me to ask for my vote during the election campaign! (or, perhaps, hooray!). It seems you need a baby or a pussy-cat to qualify for such attention.

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NORMAN YANDLE (Redcar): I was most interested in the reference to the "Chuckles" Greyfriars School model in the June issue of C.D.

In 1920 I was in my last year at a County Durham village school. We had a new form master, a Mr. Weldon, just demobilised, very much the Army Officer type. He brought a huge change to teaching, which for most of my school life had been under lady teachers, and an elderly Head who relied on lavish use of the cane, and to us, incomprehensible Latin quotations to teach us the 3 R's.

Under Mr. Weldon we had modern history, he had us spell-bound with his stories of his life in the trenches, Politics, gardening and, capital letters, HANDICRAFTS.

One Friday afternoon he produced 20 sets of the "Chuckles" cutouts one for each desk of two pupils in the class. We spent the next few Fridays assembling the models.

We held him in such respect that there was no messing about and all the models were finished, some better than others.

R. J. McCABE (Dundee): Another truly wonderful issue of C.D. I seem to enjoy it even more than ever these days. Danny's Diary, especially, brings back memories of Happy Days.

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## News of the Old Boys' Book Clubs

### MIDLAND

June 1983. 1983 has been so far a poor year for attendance. Only ten members turned up. It was a pity for Tom Porter handled a well-thought-out programme in superlative fashion.

Tom Porter's usual features were on display. The Anniversary Numbers were Nelson Lee o.s. No. 212 entitled "The Prefect's Revenge" the 8th and last of the "Expelled" series. This was followed by a famous holiday series "Neath African Skies". The Collector's Item was the Monster Library full edition of this

series. The A.N. was published on 28th June, 1919, and was 64 years old to the day.

Refreshments were provided by Joan Golen and the Lovedays. Geoff Lardner provided the tea and coffee. Geoff Lardner incidentally, who is retiring from his post as Principal of Rowley Regis 6th Form College, has received an invitation to the Queen's Garden Party. This is thoroughly deserved by Geoff, who is an outstanding character.

There were two rounds of Greyfriars Bingo and Christine Brettell won both. It is a marvel how she does it.

There were two readings from "The Joker of Greyfriars". Both dealt with the quarrel between Hacker and Quelch, read by Ivan Webster and your correspondent.

There will be no official meetings till 27th September, 1983.

The evening finished with a discussion on what venue would one choose for a holiday series by Charles Hamilton? There were lively suggestions.

Good-bye and good luck to all O.B.B.C. members everywhere.

JACK BELFIELD - Correspondent.

### NORTHERN

399th Meeting, held on Saturday, 9th July, 1983

We had thirteen members present - and certainly not an unlucky number for us, as it proved to be a most successful meeting that warm, July evening. We were particularly pleased to welcome three visitors, who had previously attended a meeting of Richmal Crompton's "William" fans, that very afternoon in Leeds - our very own Bill Lofts, Graham McDermott, and Stephen Mortimer, from Littleborough, in Lancashire. (If you would like to know more about future William Get-Togethers, please write to Darrell Swift.)

Mention was made of the Museum at Bethnal Green, and Bill had brought along one of the splendid catalogues.

Although not an "official" guest, Bill kindly consented to give two talks. The first was hilarious and all enjoyed it. Seemingly Bill had seen the name and address of a clergyman living

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in the West country, by the name of C. Ponsonby, and so he had written to him, asking if he was indeed the same Ponsonby that had resided at Highcliffe School. Bill had been surprised to get a long reply back, indicating that indeed, he was the very same person - now "seeing the light" as it were, and a man of the cloth. He agreed that he had been a bounder at school - and went on to relate how some of the other well-known characters in Frank Richards' stories, were now progressing - and from members' reaction at the meeting, it appeared that they fully agreed with many of the suggestions. For instance, Bessie Bunter now owned a chain of outside dress shops! And, Frank Nugent was a female impersonator by the stage name of Frank La Rue! Mr. Prout became the head of Greyfriars, but had to retire because of heart attacks, and Mr. Quelch became subsequent head, before he also retired, to continue writing his famed "History Of Greyfriars". The present head, was Dr. Mark Linley. A very well done tongue-in-cheek item by Bill.

After refreshments, Bill continued by giving a brief talk on Dixon Hawke, the Thomson detective who first appeared in a 1912 story in the sports paper, "Saturday Post".

To conclude, a game of cards in which we had to get as many "tricks" as possible - organised by Mollie, using cards of Hamilton school suits.

Next month, - our 400th meeting - we meet at the home of our Secretary, at Thornes Vicarage, Wakefield.

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

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SILVER LINING

by Margery Woods

I had an instant fellow feeling for L. Holland (Feb. 1976) whose attack of scarlet fever proved that a black cloud does sometimes have a silver lining. I suffered the same scourge, at the same age, and was kept in bed, isolated, for a whole six weeks. Some angel sent in a collection of books for me, among which was an old Schoolgirls' Own Library entitled JOHNNIE, HER FEUD WITH THE ARTFUL THREE, by Joan Vincent. I was hooked. Instantly. The sun came into the hot little bedroom that had been

so dreary a moment before, and I began to believe that sometime in the dark future I might actually stop peeling and cease to be an infectious menace to all who laughed and lived out there. Of course the reckoning came when our cottage had to be "stoved" and all books I'd handled burnt. My beloved Johnnie was consigned to the flames, along with Tiger Tim and my treasured SECRET GARDEN. A darling aunt replaced this that Christmas, but I'm still searching for Johnnie. My mother did her best. She tried every shop in town, including the second-hand stall in the market, in the hope of finding a replacement copy, but it was long out of print. However, she landed home with an assortment of consolation which included The Children's Newspaper (read dutifully, but not requested again -- I preferred the Daily Mail and the News of the World), The Girl's Own Paper, (also given the thumbs down), A Gloops Summer Number (Yoicks!), a Morcove S.O.L., and the current edition of THE SCHOOLGIRL. The doors of Cliff House opened and I entered a Saturday world of new friends. This marked the start of a life-long love affair with Amalgamated Press. For me, there has never been a children's publisher with quite the same magic. And the Magnet ..? that was still to come, the last summer by the sea before the war clouds opened ... But more of this another time ...

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SOME ANIMADVERSIONS ON THE MAGNETS

OF THE MODERN ERA

from John Lewis

I note with interest, in this month's C.D., Ian Hewson's comments on the standard of Charles Hamilton's work, in the Magnet, during the late twenties and thirties.

I agree with Roger Jenkins when he opined that the Magnet commenced its modern idiom with the Levison series of 1923. The years 1923-6 witnessed a number of first-class series - Pengarth, Sahara, First Wharton Rebel, Ragged Dick, Bunter Court, Loder Captain, India - some of them comparable with anything Hamilton ever wrote about Greyfriars. Unfortunately they only appeared spasmodically over a span of nearly four years, the period being also marred by a large number of substitute stories, ergo it is my

firm belief it was the beginning of 1927 (Game Kid series) that saw the start of the Golden Age of the Magnet which, I aver, ran up to the end of the Smedley series in 1934.

I cannot agree with Mr. Hewson when he asserts the Magnet's peak period extended through until the Stacey series of 1935, or that everything that came after that series was 'stale and flat'.

For me the nadir of the Magnet's modern era, with a few honourable exceptions such as the Stacey series, was between 1934 (1373) to 1937 (1555). However, from No. 1556 until its demise in 1940 - the Salmon Period - Hamilton's writing in the Magnet was, for the most part, of a very high standard. Indeed I opine these final  $2\frac{1}{2}$  years saw such a sustained run of high quality stories that they were only excelled by those of the Golden Age.

No Mr. Hewson! Frank Richards 'home-made Magnet wine' 1938-40 vintage was not a 'trifle thin and vinegary', but was very potent with a good body, and an excellent bouquet.

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(EDITORIAL COMMENT: Many readers have written in concerning our item on "The Art of Reading Aloud" in our Editorial last month. Reference is also made to it in the following delightful item from Mr. Lang. My copy of "Contraband Tommy", still in my bookcase in excellent condition, was probably bought second-hand not long before I read it to my boys. It is a fine story.)

### CONCERNING "THE CAPTAIN"

by Peter Lang

I have been very fortunate in receiving admirable service from a number of booksellers in the Tyneside area. I have found them generally keen to assist me as an 'Old Boys' Books' collector, and in consequence of their efforts on my behalf, I have managed to add some varied and attractive volumes to my small collection. Included among some of my recent purchases have been volumes of 'Boys' of Our Empire', 'Boys' Own Paper' (1920-1930 period), 'The Scout' (1928-1932) and 'The Captain' (1900-1914 period).

The volumes of 'The Captain' are my own special favourites. What a lovely publication this magazine was at this period (1900-1914). First-class adventure serials provided by John Mackie;

Herbert Hayens; Capt. Charles Gilson; Percy F. Westerman. Excellent school stories and serials written by R. S. Warren Bell; P. G. Wodehouse; Fred Swainson and Gunby Hadath. The illustrators were of the highest class in their field of activity: Gordon Browne; R. Caton Woodville; T. M. R. Whitwell; George Soper and last, but not least, the incomparable Stanley L. Wood.

As an admirer and student of 'The Golden Age of Cricket' I especially appreciate the contributions on cricket to 'The Captain's Athletic Corner' supplied by C. B. Fry and Pelham Warner. The articles providing information about the Public School Cricket of this period (1900-1914) are also very interesting and informative.

I have come to have a high regard for the publishers of 'The Captain' who were George Newnes Ltd. of course. They produced two other excellent magazines at this time: 'The Strand Magazine' and 'The Wide World'. I believe these publications are worthy of high praise and did great credit to their publisher.

In the Editorial of this month's 'Collectors' Digest' and within the feature on 'The Art of Reading Aloud' you recall among the books which you read to the boys a tale called "Contraband Johnny" written by Charles Gleig. You ask your readers assistance in providing information about this author.

## The Middy of the "Blunderbore"

By CHARLES GLEIG

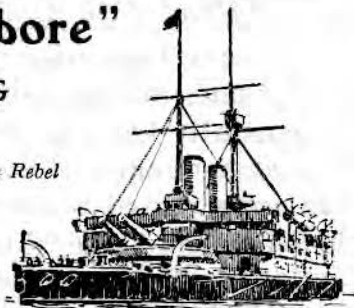
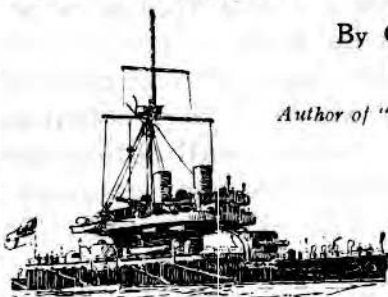
Late Lieut. R.N.

*Author of "Bunter's Cruise," "The Rebel  
Cadets," &c.*

Illustrated

by

E. S. HODGSON



Volume 20 of 'The Captain' (includes issues from October 1908 until March 1909) has a serial called 'The Middy of the "Blunderbore" ' by Charles Gleig.

In the issue of 'The Captain' for December 1911 there is a feature entitled 'Books for Christmas Reading'. Among the books reviewed is 'Contraband Tommy' by Charles Gleig. Book published by T. C. & E. C. Jack at 3/6d.

There is mention within the review that "this tale, by the way, has won the £200 prize offered by Messrs. T. C. & E. C. Jack for the best boys' story submitted to them this year . . ."

I do hope this information helps you; if it does I shall look upon it as some small return offered to you in appreciation for many happy hours spent with 'Collectors' Digest'.

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"HOBBIES" WEEKLY

John Bridgewater remembers

Going through my volumes of the old papers the other day I came across three volumes of "Hobbies" which I bound as a school-boy. I was very keen on fretwork in those days and used several of the free designs given with "Hobbies" every week. The fretwork tools sold in little sets for a few shillings each around 1930 were wonderful value. I still have those I bought with my (by today's standards, minute) pocket-money and they are still as good now as they were then. One really amazing gadget is a plane which is almost too small to use now my hand is somewhat larger than it was at school. It is in perfect working order after 50 years and only cost a shilling or so. Which reminds me of the remarkable value in hand tools we got at Woolworths 3d and 6d stores. My hand drill which came in two pieces at 6d each has been in constant use for those 50 odd years and the 6d box of drills (twist type) will still do their job. I also have a tenon saw, price 6d, still doing a good cut when required. I little thought that when I spent my 6d's, wondering whether tools at that price could possibly be any good, that they would be still doing the job they were designed for, and efficiently too, over half a century hence. We certainly did get

value for money in those days. I used to love to have a copy of "Hobbies" annual catalogue of tools, glues, stains, parcels of fretwood and other carpentry paraphernalia at Christmas. Just before this last Christmas I saw a copy of the latest "Hobbies" catalogue, price 70p - about 14 times the cost of those I used to have - and what a poor shadow of it's former self, I was sadly disappointed to see it. Do any other reader remember "Hobbies" weekly with the same affection, I wonder?

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LONDON CLUB REPORT (Stop Press)

It was hard to distinguish what was the pièce de résistance at the July Ealing meeting, Bill Lofts treatise on the Chuckles model of Greyfriars, Maurice Hall's model also of Greyfriars or Millicent Lyle's dissertation on a supposed visit to Greyfriars of the B.B.C's "Any Questions" programme. Backing these three items were Brian Doyle's School Songs competition, Eric Lawrence's Musical quiz and Winifred Morss "Who was Springheel Jack?" reading. However, Robert Whiter and his son, Roger, greatly enjoyed this very varied programme.

An excellent attendance took advantage of the fine weather to enjoy their tea in the beautiful garden and pose for the many Harry Manners devotees.

Next meeting at the home of Mary and Alex Cadogan on Sunday, 14th August. Kindly let the hosts know if intending to be present as a full tea will be provided. Telephone 650 1458.

BEN WHITER

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FOR SALE OR EXCHANGE: Early Magnets 1908 to 1930. WANTED: Comics and HB Facsimiles.

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