

# STORY PAPER COLLECTORS DIGEST

VOL. 38

No. 455

NOVEMBER 1984

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# COLLECTORS DIGEST

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Founded in 1941 by  
W. H. GANDER

COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Founded in 1946 by  
HERBERT LECKENBY

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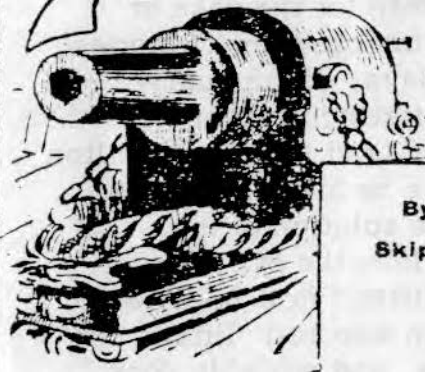
No. 455

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## From the Quarterdeck



By the  
Skipper,

The future is only the past again,  
entered through another gate.

### THE NAME OF HEPWORTH

On a previous occasion I have referred to a novel named "Coming Thro' The Rye" by Helen Mathers. It was a story of which my beloved Madam was very fond. She had two copies of the story. One, from the solid style of binding, was clearly very old, going back, probably, before the turn of the century. The second one was of a good many years later, and was, in fact, the book of the silent film.

Just where each came from I have no idea, but I fancy that the earlier one was given to Madam by one of her old teachers who had herself won it as a prize. It is possible that Madam came on

the second one in a second-hand book shop, and could not resist acquiring it.

On several occasions, in the past year, Madam observed that she would like a very dear friend in the States to have the original copy, and intended shortly to post it to her. But the months slipped by and Madam did not get down to packing it up for the post - she was a very busy person - and then she was taken from me. But I remembered her wishes with regard to the little book, and sent it off myself to our friend in America.

I have read the book and enjoyed it. I have mentioned before that it is quaint - so far as I am concerned it is unique - in being written throughout in the present tense. One has to get over a chapter or two before becoming used to the rare style.

One finds some Victorian and Edwardian writers who, here and there in a story, drop into the present tense for the sake of effect. Talbot Baines Reed did it in the closing chapters of stories, and our own Charles Hamilton, in his early days, did the same thing. I have no doubt that Hamilton was imitating Reed in this matter - one can see the distinct influence of Reed in early Hamilton stories. Hamilton shook off that influence as he himself became established. I suspect that here we have the solution of the otherwise inexplicable dropping of Monteith from the St. Jim's saga after early Gem days. Monteith was "lifted" from Reed, and so, later on, became unacceptable to the man who had "lifted" him. The same might also apply to Bulstrode, and probably does.

"Coming Thro' The Rye" was made into a film by the English Hepworth Company in late 1916, and the film was released in this country in early 1917. Somehow I assumed that Henry Edwards starred in it, but I could never pick out his face in the photographs in Madam's second volume of the story. I knew it was a Hepworth film, and one always associated Henry Edwards with Hepworth.

Our friends in the States are intrigued with the book, and asked me when the story was written and first published. I didn't know for there is no date in the film version. So I wrote off to the British Museum. They replied with the information that the

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book was first published in 1875, and I am surprised that it goes back so far as that. They give biographical details of the authoress, who wrote many other novels, and has a string of titles to her credit. The film starred Stewart Rome, Alma Taylor, and Chrissie White.

It must have been rare for film editions of silent films to be published, I would think. The one in question is not described as "the book of the film", but there are a number of first-class full-page stills from the film included at intervals in the text.

Which brings me, at rambling last, to the old Hepworth Film Company. Up to 1914 the British film industry was thriving, and the productions were at least on a par with those from America. The same thing applied to France, which, with Max Linder, was reckoned to lead with film comedy.

But the coming of the 1914 war gave a stunning blow to the British Film Industry. Hepworth's continued to produce films, however - pleasant family films, plenty of period romances, but nothing in the spectacular line. I imagine it was well into the roaring twenties before the Hepworth Company bit the dust.

The old Hepworth studio was in Brentford, close by Kew Bridge. Outside the trams ran past - I forget the route numbers of the services, but cars ran from Hounslow via Brentford to Chiswick and Shepherds Bush. And, years later, that old studio was converted into the famous "Q" Theatre, where, during the war years and post-war years I saw scores of first-class West-End plays with first-class West End casts.

### CORONATION & JUBILEE

In our serial last month, the newsagent, Mr. Chadley had reached the year 1935, and one of his Gems contained "Jubilee Day at St. Jim's." Chadley confided to his wife that the story, 25 years earlier, had been entitled "Coronation Day at St. Jim's". What Mr. Chadley did not know was that the presentation of the old Coronation story as a Jubilee story 25 years on was due to a youthful enthusiast who was destined to become editor of a little magazine named Collectors' Digest.

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Very early in 1935 I suggested to Mr. Down that the old Coronation tale should be used as a Jubilee story - and it was done. I very much doubt whether the idea would have occurred to anyone at the Amalgamated Press. The staff didn't seem to do much real thinking at the A.P.

### ANOTHER SONG

Last month I mentioned a song entitled "Saturday" which I composed for one of our musical comedies in the early post-war years.

That brought to mind, in these days when nobody composes songs any more, another song which I composed for another musical comedy about 50 years ago. It was a naval show - many of our early productions had a nautical background, because the naval uniforms were easy to hire and all the nice girls love a sailor. One of the characters was a woolly lady, rather after the style of Agatha Christie's "Mrs. Ariadne Oliver", who voiced the opinion that things would be much improved if a woman were head of the Admiralty.

That gave rise to the song in question. It went like this, and the sailor boys sang it with gusto:

"If the girls ran the King's Navee -  
What a farce it all would be! What a real cat-as-tro-pee!  
If the girls ran the King's Navee.  
Uniforms of pink sateen. Union Jacks of crepe-de-chine,  
And in firing practice session, use for powder shem-el-  
neschen,

--See the World! See the World! -

With the ships no longer manned but merely girlled.  
Then the navy that fights for us  
Would become a beauty chorus -  
If the girls ran the King's Navee."

And my beauty chorus, in the show, came dancing on actually clad in sailor suits of pink sateen. It was most effective and brought down the house.

I can't help thinking that the lyric was as good as those

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some of the pop crowd use now, and it had a toe-tapping tune.

In passing, I'm not sure whether I have spelt "shem-elleschen correctly. I wonder if there is such a thing now. I believe it was a perfume in the powder my sister used, or it might have been a trade name for the powder itself. I don't seem to have heard of it for years.

Which is absolutely nothing to do with Old Boys Books, so it's time I signed off for the month.

THE EDITOR

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MISS MOLLY HARLOW

We are saddened by the sudden death of yet another of our loyal readers. Miss Harlow died in the early hours of 26th September, after taking ill a few days earlier. Miss Harlow had been a devoted fan of Frank Richards since childhood after she discovered "THE MAGNET" being read by her brother and she had a medium-sized library of her favourite author's works which she treasured. Miss Harlow was one of our oldest readers - and no doubt held the honour of being the oldest woman reader. She was loved by everyone who had the privilege to meet her and she will be sadly missed by all who had that privilege in hobby circles.

DARRELL SWIFT

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FOR SALE: Collectors' Digests Nos. 364 to 444 (offers); Best of "Chums" £5; G.H.A. 1925 £5; Boys' Own Annual 1926 £5. Wanted: G.H.A.'s 1922, 1929.

W. TURVEY, 71 HIGHAMS ROAD, HOCKLEY, ESSEX, SS5 4DF.

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SALE: Champion Annual 1924; Chatterbox 1926; G.H.A. 1931; School Friend mags: Nos. 72, 135, 165 and new series 9. Sale or Exchange: Gem Nos. 1507; 1515; S.O.L. No. 392; Monster No. 8.

WILLIAM TURVEY, 71 HIGHAMS ROAD, HOCKLEY, ESSEX, SS5 4DF.

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SALE: Nelson Lee series: China (8) India (6) etc. Also S.O.L. St. Frank's; and B.F.L. not St. Frank's, in mint condition. All £1 each.

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# Danny's Diary

NOVEMBER 1934

The new series of Ken King stories in Modern Boy are really tip-top. That rare bird, the truly original plot. Some of the best ever, methinks.

First tale of the month is "War Canoes of Suna-Suna". Ken's former shipmate, Kit Hudson, in partnership with the greatest rascal in the South Seas, fights for his life with a horde of Head-Hunters, over the fortune they have come to salvage in a wrecked ship.

Next week produces "Guardians of the South Seas Treasure" and has Ken King speeding with the "Dawn" in an effort to save his old ship-mate. Then comes "Ken King's Cannibal Hunt", with the boy skipper still racing to try to save Hudson.

Finally "Prisoners of the Canoe-House" in which Koko, Ken's giant Kanaka seaman, deals with the Devil-Doctor of Suna-Suna and he finds Ken King's lost chum. The series continues next month. It's great.

Also in Modern Boy there is Captain Justice, the Gentleman Adventurer, exploring the basement of the ocean, in the weirdest mechanical monster ever built. There is also a Robin Hood serial entitled "Strongbow the Outlaw" by John Bredon.

And Biggles come back in a new series next month.

In London, the Old Bailey, the Central Criminal Court, is celebrating its centenary. And, speaking of real-life crime, Mrs. Major has been found guilty of poisoning her husband, at Lincoln Assizes, and has been sentenced to death.

Another great month in the "monthlies". In the Schoolboys' Own Library the first story is "The Boy Without a Friend". This is a new boy at Greyfriars who is very anti-Jewish because he thinks his father was ruined by a Jew. He has a feud with Newland and is very unpopular. The other S.O.L. is "The Rebel of Grimslade"

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which consists of the first few Grimslade stories in the Ranger, with Jim Dainty, a new boy who is sent to the school to be tamed.

In the Sexton Blake Library there is a great Granite Grant tale entitled "The Outlaw of Jugo-Slavia". In the Boys' Friend Library there is "The Schoolboy Republic, by Edwy Searles Brooks, relating the adventures of the St. Frank' chums in South America. How they get around! Don't spend much time in school.

Pretty good month in the local cinemas. First of all "Chu Chin Chow" starring George Robey and Anna May Wong. A British film of a stage musical. Then a lovely one "The House of Rothschild" starring George Arliss, Loretta Young, Boris Karloff, and Robert Young. Very elaborate, this one, partly in technicolor.

Spencer Tracey was in "When New York Sleeps", a tale of cops and robbers. Next, "Stand Up and Cheer" in which someone stages a giant musical show to lighten the days of the depression. There is a host of stars, but little Shirley Temple steals the picture from under their noses.

"Tarzan & His Mate" was great with Johnnie Weissmuller and Maureen O'Sullivan. "Wonder Bar" is a grand musical with some smash-hit songs, and a host of stars headed by Al Jolson, with Kay Francis and Dick Powell.

Finally Richard Dix and Irene Dunne in "Stingaree".

One evening we went to Finsbury Park Empire and saw a stage revue "Paris En Fete" which had a new comedian Sid Field, and the two famous variety stars Jane Ayr and Eddie Leslie. Another night this month we went to Holborn Empire and saw a whoosh of a variety bill including Mrs. Jack Hylton and Her Boys, plus Albert Sandler, the violinist, and Tommy Handley, the comedian. Great.

The Gem continues with the series about Lumley-Lumley. In "The Schemer of the School", Lumley, having contrived to create bad blood between Tom Merry and his chums, proceeds to plot further vengeance upon the boy he has sworn to ruin.

The final story in this series is "Lumley's Last Chance". Retribution catches up with the Outsider, and with expulsion hanging over him, he finds that Tom Merry is the one who stands by him in spite of all.

The next yarn "The Mystery of the Vaults" also has Lumley

in the lead. There are masked men meeting in the vaults under St. Jim's.

The final week sees the start of what looks like a superb travel series. The opening yarn is "Under Sealed Orders". Tom Merry, supported by his chums, undertakes to carry a very important document to Southampton, but they little realise that they are embarking on an adventure which will take them into the perils of Darkest Africa. This series continues next month.

There has been a railway accident at Wormley in Hertfordshire. An express crashed into a motor lorry at a level crossing. The driver and the fireman on the train were killed.

In the Magnet the series has continued with Mr. Prout as Headmaster and Loder as Head Prefect. So, in the months opening tale, "The Secret Seven", a number of boys unknown to the reader, form a secret society to deal with the tyrants. Next tale is "Fooled on the Fifth". Loder is determined to make the Remove squirm, but the Secret Society hits back hard.

Then "The Dictator of Greyfriars". It's Loder, of course. He puts the real life dictator, old Adolf, in the shade.

Final of the month is "The Brotherhood of Justice". There is now war to the knife between Mr. Prout's head prefect and the juniors. But Loder does not have everything all his own way.

Going back to the Gem, the St. Frank's series has continued with various boys being tested for courage. First tale this month is "The Flaming Pit" with Tommy Watson being tested - thrown to ravenous rats. Next "The Fatal 'Fifth'". This time it's Handy's turn. He finds himself the centre of a fireworks display.

Then "The Horror of the Ruined Abbey" with Jack Grey under test. In this one, a picture postcard saves his life. Final of the month, "The Devil's Mire", stars McClure. Nipper's alsatian, "Wolf", treated with luminous paint, puts the wind up the terrorists.

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

The November 1934 Sexton Blake Library "The Outlaw of Jugo-Slavia" had originally appeared under the same title in the Spring of 1923. Just here, in this consecutive series of reprints one Quiroule novel "The Case of the Cabaret Girl" was omitted. It is a good story,

and original in plot, so the omission is not understandable. It had flashbacks to the war, and it is possible that the editor in 1934 may have felt that it was too far on to be looking back at episodes connected with the war.

No doubt the St. Frank's experts can tell us whether or not "The Schoolboy Republic" was reprinted from the weekly Lee.

In the Gem, "The Schemer of the School" had been "The Faithful Fags" early in 1911. "Lumley's Last Chance" had been "By Request of the Head" the following week in 1911. "The Mystery of the Vaults" had been "The Dormitory Secret" towards the end of 1911. "Under Sealed Orders" had appeared under the same title the following week in late 1911. This was the first story in an excellent 3-story series.

In July 1920 this 3-story series, under the collective title "Under Sealed Orders" appeared in the Boys' Friend Library. I have a splendid copy of it, very nicely bound and lettered. As I was leafing lovingly through it for the purpose of these notes I came on an advertisement for another B.F.L. published in July 1920: "Nipper at St. Frank's" by Robert W. Comrade. Can the experts tell us whether any other St. Frank's story was published under Brooks' Comrade nom-de-plume?

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# BLAKIANA



## SEXTON BLAKE -- LOOKING BACK EXACTLY 50 YEARS

Our detective seems to have been at the peak of his popularity 50 years ago. Let's have a look at what the programme was for the Sexton Blake Library way back in November 1934, when most of you had not ever been born, and the rest of us were young

and innocent. To me, it looks a very attractive programme. Let's see what the Editor had to say about the four stories on the menu.

"The **SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARIES** contain thrilling fiction, and are justly popular with all who appreciate strong, exciting mystery stories.

First on the list is

"ON THE MIDNIGHT BEAT", by John G. Brandon

That famous adventurer and genial man-about-town, the Hon. R. S. V. Purvale, is taking a midnight stroll along a West End street. He is joined by a young constable, and they walk along together. Suddenly their attention is drawn to a certain shop window. The constable flashes his torch on the figure of a girl apparently reclining there. She does not move, and then, to their horror, they discover she has been murdered. After this sensational opening there are pages of exciting incident and dramatic scenes. Quite one of John G. Brandon's best.

The next item is

"THE DOG TRACK MURDER", by Mark Osborne

For once Sexton Blake and his assistant go to "the dogs". But instead of an evening's harmless amusement it is to be as witnesses of a terrible crime. From then on the story unfolds with unflinching excitement, and an absorbing problem is set the great detective.

And then there is

"THE OUTLAW OF YUGO-SLAVIA", by Pierre Quiroule

This brilliantly-written mystery novel is packed with dramatic scenes both abroad and in England. Once again that famous member of the Secret Service, Granite Grant, finds himself working with his charming friend and rival of the French Secret Service - Mile. Julie. A web of international intrigue and criminal plotting is disclosed, and it needs all the skill and courage of Blake and Grant before at last the crooks are brought to book.

The fourth book is entitled

"THE FATAL AMULET", by G. H. Teed

Here is a thrilling narrative which centres round a valuable charm worn by a little Chinese boy. The yellow crooks who are out to get this amulet stop at nothing - not even murder. And then Huxton Rymer, a criminal of world-wide reputation, becomes involved in the case, and the action becomes even faster. Mr. Teed, as all lovers of detective fiction well know, is a master hand at delineating the sinister intricacies of the Chinese criminal mind. There is not a dull page in this engrossing story of thrills and mystery."

If only it were 1984 instead of 1934! Ah, me!

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FOR SALE OR EXCHANGE: Magnets, Gems, Annuals, all periods. Early Nelson Lees, Bullseyes, Fun & Fiction, Early Thompsons, Boys' Herald Friend Magazine Nugget, Popular Ranger, Triumph, Union Jack, etc. H.M. Facsimiles.

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FORTY YEARS OF SEXTON BLAKEPART FOUR

By W. O. G. Lofts

It was remarkable how things snowballed after meeting John Hunter. It was he who first told me about the creator of Sexton Blake - a Harry Blyth. During the last War, he used to visit his Mother who lived at Broadstairs, when during his stay he used to play skittles with a white haired elderly gentleman at a nearby Inn. This gentleman called himself Harry Blyth junior - for he claimed that his Father had created the famous detective character way back in 1893 when he was a boy. John Hunter also told me that Blyth had lost all his money on the Baltic Exchange, and Blyth felt that he was entitled to some royalties in view of the enormous financial profit the publishers had made out of the character. As when he had last met him, he seemed quite old, it was unlikely he was still alive, so I let the matter rest.

However, about a year later, the same Harry Blyth had a letter published in a National newspaper, and so I lost no time in going down to Broadstairs to meet him. He was living in a basement flat and obviously far from being financially secure. He was quite friendly to give him his due, and told me about his father's early work on Scottish newspapers, and how he wrote the first Blake tale in the Halfpenny Marvel (No. 6 The Missing Millionaire) 1893. According to him his father asked him what name he liked best for his new detective Sexton Blake or another name, and he plumped for Sexton Blake. Though later when meeting an elderly editor at the Amalgamated Press, he disputed this statement. He had worked on the Marvel/Pluck/Union Jack papers as a young man, and he recalled that the detective's original name was 'Frank Blake' but this was rejected on the grounds that it was not colourful enough. The editor suggested the name of 'Sexton', as it was a name that conjured up the sombre and somewhat mysterious atmosphere of graveyards and gloomy crypts and it was finally chosen in order to give the character an element of eeriness. But one plain fact cannot be disputed was that Harry Blyth had sold the copyright of the character and story for £9.9.0. never dreaming how popular he was

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to become - for the author died only a few years later of typhoid fever, and he was only 46 years old.

A few years later, whilst staying with Frank Pettingell the famous actor and his wife Ethel at their sea-side cottage at Broadstairs - Frank incidentally appearing in many British films still shown on T.V. as well as being a subscriber and contributor to the C.D. until his death. We decided to call on Harry Blyth, as although Frank was not strictly a Sexton Blake fan - he was interested in all aspects pertaining to Victorian periodicals. We found to our dismay that the basement flat was empty, he had died not all that long before. However, the chap who lived above, and was a member of the local dramatic Society, and had recognised Frank as a famous actor, invited us in to a slap up feed, so the journey was not wasted!

Frank had confirmed to me that a number of people in the theatre world were collectors, some liked to keep it secret. Tod Slaughter possessed every single Sexton Blake Library up-to-date, whilst Bransbury Williams collected Penny Bloods and old Boys' periodicals.

I cannot now recall his name, but those enthusiasts of Will Hay films may recall in the opening scene of 'Oh Mr. Porter' - where the Mayor is drenched with water by Will turning on some turncock that supplied the old steam engines with water. Well the poor actor actually caught cold and died through this incident, and his collection of old boys' papers was bought by Frank.

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## Nelson Lee Column

A LETTER FROM ST. FRANK'S... by An Old Boy

Enter the little post office at Bellton and the chances are you will see somebody from St. Frank's - especially if it is Saturday afternoon.

I had occasion to visit the post office and saw both Mr. Arthur Stockdale of the Modern House and Phipps, the Head's

butler and Archie Glenthorne's valet. Old Stocky, as the juniors irreverently call him, is your typical schoolmaster, a dry stick of a man, but just and firm. Meeting up with him you immediately think of the time when he tried to sell his landscape paintings to pay for his sister's long trip to a tropical climate to recuperate from a serious illness.

But what Mr. Stockdale thought of his amateur paintings and what the dealers did wasn't profitable and poor old Stocky was left with a troublesome mind.

By accident, Nipper and other juniors got to know of the Housemaster's dire straits and went to an art shop in Bannington where they hoped to see the paintings on display.

They saw the two oil paintings, unframed, and with the "A.S." in the corners gathered they were Mr. Stockdales. But the juniors were shocked to see the price tag on the paintings.

The price was 5/- each! And both Buster Boots and Bob Christine who had come along as Mr. Stockdale was their Housemaster, decided that something had to be done.

The events are still fresh in my mind, and the outcome was a consultation with Phipps, who always seemed to Archie to know what to do on tricky occasions.

So it was decided to help Mr. Stockdale by stealth since it was impossible to assist him without explaining they knew of his plight. A letter the Housemaster had sent to an art dealer had been opened by a cad and although it was later posted the contents were public knowledge.

When the time came for the juniors to get the dealer to hold a fake auction and thereby raise enough money Bannington became out of bounds due to a case of smallpox. So they had to abandon the scheme. Piper, the art dealer, had visited Mr. Stockdale and arranged for an exhibition of the paintings. And when the juniors saw the Housemaster afterwards in such a buoyant mood they found it impossible not to go ahead and think of a way and not let old Stocky down.

Eventually the sale of the paintings went through by Mr. Piper and beyond the Housemaster's dreams a sum of £150, 17/-

and 6d. was raised. If old Stocky did suspect at some future date that the juniors had faked the sale he would never be able to prove it. And the juniors had risked a flogging by visiting Bannington; but such was the main thrust of their purpose to assist the House-master, they took a chance, and in the end Mr. Stockdale was able to send his sister away to recover.

But a vindictive junior who hadn't been at St. Frank's very long told Mr. Stockdale how he had been hoaxed. Alan Castleton was a newcomer to the school and the story of him and his twin brother must be told another time. But it was Phipps who finally settled the matter by bringing in from London a Mr. Oscar Hammerton and between the two arranged a real sale for the paintings.

Mention Arabella Pringle to Phipps and you will get an icy stare. It is a name Phipps will never forget... nor will the rest of St. Frank's. For Phipps, who has knocked about the world a lot, once proposed marriage to Arabella in Sydney, Australia.

But it is better to go back to the period when the St. Frank's holiday party went to Antarctica and on their return their adventures were featured in the world's press together with photos. Miss Arabella Pringle saw the photo of Phipps and decided to come to England and claim her 'husband'.

The affair is a bit hazy now, but previous to the Antarctic holiday Phipps was in Sydney and having imbibed too well proposed to Miss Pringle at a party. When he recovered full realism came to him and he took off to England. It was a great surprise to know the imperturbable Phipps had this other side to his nature. Yet that was a long time ago.

When the lady arrived at St. Frank's she created a scene in the Triangle that is still spoken about to this day. But when her brother appeared on the scene and demanded money from Phipps to hush the affair up Phipps refused, and with the lady from Australia still in the district poor old Phipps decided to leave the services of Archie and go away. He didn't want to bring trouble on his master.

Meanwhile, Arabella's brother had burgled the Head's

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bureau and stole £150. The coincidence of Phipp's flight was too much and he was blamed. Although Nelson Lee was away in London at this time it was left to the resourceful juniors to put matters right.

It is a pity this one and only time Phipps featured in an affair with a lady of doubtful honour has to be condensed into a few lines but it has been recorded and is available to those who wish to read the full account.

But it will be many a day that Phipps and his affair with a lady, the one and only Arabella, will be forgotten.

It is never wise to remind him either. And I am sure he will never allow himself to be accused to jilting a young girl.

And he never did. That skeleton in his cupboard will stay there till the end of time.

There are a thousand stories about the history of St. Frank's... this has been one of them.

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DO YOU REMEMBER?

By Roger M. Jenkins

No. 198 - Magnets 1360-73 - Smedley Series

Mr. Vernon-Smith's attitude to his son changed considerably over the years. In the beginning he was absolutely indulgent, and was able to blackmail Dr. Locke into keeping the Bounder at Greyfriars. In the early 'twenties he still seemed permissive, and merely smiled when he saw his son gambling with Ponsonby & Co. on the express to Nice in No. 880. By the time of the Smedley series, however, his patience had worn thin as his moral standards improved. The Bounder had had a number of narrow escapes from expulsion over the past twelve months, and when he was actually expelled in No. 1361, Mr. Vernon-Smith disowned his son - "The fortune I have amassed will never be yours to fling in the winds!" The money was now to go to Lucius Teggers, who ran a scholastic agency, supplying teachers at short notice. It was Dr. Locke who, astonished at Mr. Vernon-Smith's severity, decided to give the Bounder one more chance, and it was Lucius Teggers who arrived



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at Greyfriars under the name of Smedley, to take Mr. Quelch's place for a while and to catch out the Bounder if he could.

The Smedley series was one of the longest of all in the Magnet, but there was no tediousness or repetition because of the variation and developments that took place. At first the Bounder tried to be on his best behaviour but his natural recklessness kept asserting itself, and it was partly by his friends' exertions and partly by sheer luck that he escaped from Smedley's watchfulness.

The Easter holidays ranged widely over different venues, and there was a close relationship in fact to Charles Hamilton's own residences. Mr. Vernon-Smith had planned for the Bounder to be taught by a tutor in the holidays, and Bunter was persuaded by the millionaire's son to take his place at Seacliff Bungalow, Ampinge - a clear allusion to Apple Trees at Hawkinge, both of which had a study at the back of the bungalow. When they crossed over to Boulogne for the day, Mr. Vernon-Smith had business that would take him to Wimereux - where Charles Hamilton owned a holiday villa. But the main part of the holiday took place at Wharton Lodge where Mr. Smedley ("The Creeper and Crawler") was still shadowing the Bounder, and where a mysterious attack on Mr. Quelch ensured that he could not return to Greyfriars next term.

This marked a further development in Mr. Smedley's attitude. He now ceased to be a watchful observer and began to make opportunities for the Bounder to kick over the traces, and towards the end he even began to manufacture evidence against the Bounder. As he said to the millionaire at the climax of the series, "Did you think that you could dangle a fortune under a man's eyes and nothing come of it? You are an old fool, Mr. Vernon-Smith - and your son is a young rascal!" Mr. Vernon-Smith turned purple with rage and, though Smedley did not deserve to succeed, there was truth in his remarks, and it is the changing relationship between the millionaire and his son, played out against a background of deception and plotting, that makes the Smedley series one of the glories of the Golden Age.

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LET'S BE CONTROVERSIALNo. 245. LAST VOYAGE

The original Greyfriars Herald, which brightened eighteen weeks of that grim year 1916, was novel. It had a quaint charm which is not matched elsewhere. It was, of course, a freak paper, and, as such, its circulation can never have been large.

Its surprising format, along with its slight but fascinating contents, gave the reader the distinct and pleasing impression that he was indeed enjoying a real school magazine. But that fact alone limited the circulation to the ranks of the most rabid Magnet fans. In spite of that, it was helped by the additional fact that most of the contents were written by Charles Hamilton himself, though that was not enough to save it. The first Herald died from lack of support and not from the paper shortage.

It was surprising, everything considered, that the publishers decided to revive the Greyfriars Herald in 1919. It is perhaps indicative of the way Greyfriars had grown in popularity, in spite of the scourge of the sub writers, between 1916 and 1919. All the same, the original enthusiasts who hastened to the newsagent's to buy the revived paper must have been disappointed.

The new Greyfriars Herald was too professional, too commercial, for it to give even the most ingenuous Greyfriars fan, eager to be deluded, the impression that he was actually reading a paper edited and composed by schoolboys. There was but little of the original charm left. Most illusion-destroying of all was that the chief attraction was a series of school stories about the Benbow, written by Owen Conquest. Herlock Sholmes, who, as an old favourite, should surely have been on the scene from the start, was not brought back till thirty or so weeks had gone by, and then it was too late.

The Benbow stories have always been pleasant reading, and they have the novelty of their setting as a school on a ship. They have all of the Hamilton competence but little of his genius. The characters were out of the school story writer's stock drawer, and the plots, despite the ship setting, were hackneyed.

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It was clear, early on, that the new Greyfriars Herald was really a failure. It was nothing in particular. The illusion of its school magazine origin was faint, it was not a school story paper, and it was not an adventure paper. It foundered on the rocks of uncertainty.

Those who loved the Benbow tales, and there were plenty such readers, were, I have no doubt, lost when they took the decision to send the Benbow on a trip to the West Indies, with a section of the schoolboys including all the leading characters. The Benbow tales became purely adventure yarns.

The tales of the Benbow at sea continued for about seven months, and during that time the paper's name changed, via the Greyfriars Boys' Herald, to the Boys' Herald. So they adopted the abandoned name of Hamilton Edwards' far better paper of distant days.

When the Benbow returned to England, Jack Drake and Rodney went to Greyfriars, and the change was abrupt, clumsy, and unconvincing. The Benbow was laid up, and St. Winifred's, the parent school, destroyed in an air raid during the war, was not yet sufficiently re-built to house all the boys. So only a percentage of the Benbow boys could go to the newly-built school. The two heroes went to Greyfriars. Tuckey Toodles said he was going too. Luckily he didn't.

After the Benbow docked, Drake, Rodney, and Tuckey Toodles, were the only boys left aboard. Incredibly, Harry Wharton went on the ship to invite Drake and Rodney to Wharton Lodge for Christmas. Tuckey Toodles also accepted a non-existent invitation to Wharton Lodge. He had meant to invite them all to his own magnificent home, Toodles Towers, but ---

But yes, they would all accept with grateful thanks, as the result of a wink from Drake. So Toodles, dismayed at the thought of arriving at his own modest home with three unexpected guests, made himself scarce very hastily - for the last time.

Harry Wharton was astonished at Toodles's activities, but surely he should not have been. He had experienced exactly the same thing from Bunter on many an occasion.

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Hamilton, by transferring Bunter's characteristics to so many of his fatties like Trimble, Muffin, Todgers, Toodles, etc., devalued Billy Bunter. He came perilously near to making hackneyed the greatest money-spinner in schoolboy fiction. Today it doesn't matter. Bunter has lived on, still making money, while his photostats are forgotten except by the few who never forget.

The Drake and Rodney at Greyfriars tales continued for quite a while, appearing anonymously now with the Owen Conquest name dropped though Hamilton wrote practically all of them. Then they, like the Benbow, ended just as abruptly, and Drake went off to be the assistant of Ferrers Locke, the detective, in a new series, written for a time by Hamilton himself.

Towards the end, the Herald became a receptacle for nondescript short stores, until, with a life of about five years behind it, it was amalgamated with the Marvel.

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### Drawing to a Close

TOM MERRY CAVALCADE (Serialised from a Long-Ago C.D. Annual)

1937

They had waited for hours to see the procession pass; they had stood outside Buckingham Palace and shouted "We want the King"; they had walked down Pall Mall and through the West End, admiring the lavish decorations; and, when dusk fell, they had wandered again, with Ethel gaping in ecstasy at the brilliant illuminations.

Now, weary to the bone, but gloriously happy, they were seated in the train, and heading for home. Lizzie was asleep in her corner, but Ethel, with all the resilience of the very young, was wide awake, and gazing with shining eyes at the cover of the Gem - a cover which bore the portraits of King George the Sixth and his Queen, superimposed on the Union Jack - a fine effort enhanced by the printing in red, white and blue.

Ethel snuggled up to her father, and

opened the Gem. She read aloud the title of the story: "He Wanted to be Expelled". Looking up at her father, she asked: "Have you read it, Daddy?"

"I read it before you were born, my dear", he said. He put an arm round her shoulder. "It was called 'Brought to Book' then, way back soon after the war started. A fine dramatic tale about Tom Merry being kidnapped, and his double taking his place". He smiled at the memory. "Wake your mother up, Ethel, we're nearly at our station."

1938

Chadley served a few customers, and after they had left he strode up and down continuously between the shop and the counter. His hands were clasped behind his back, his fingers twisting and untwisting.

He stood still for a few moments, listening. There was the sound of a tread

in the room overhead, a further sound of a chair being moved.

Chadley approached the counter, and thumbed a newspaper. He glanced without interest at the headlines: "Chamberlain Flies to Munich", "The Queen Mary Gains the Blue Riband of the Atlantic", "Chaplin's 'Great Dictator' to be shown in London Shortly".

Again Chadley strode the shop floor, and then he picked up a Gem from the counter - a buff-coloured Gem, a pocket-sized Gem. Time changes all things, thought Chadley, and not always for the better. He opened the journal - "Ructions on the Road", a caravanning story, dating from 1919 or thereabouts. An excellent yarn, too, but it held no fascination for Chadley now.

Footsteps on the stairs at the back of the shop; the ting of the telephone in the sitting-room as someone lifted the receiver; the deep voice of a man in conversation.

The door behind the counter opened, and Christopher Venner came through into the shop. As he noted the expression on the doctor's face, Chadley felt old, spiritless, hopeless. He sank down on the chair placed for the use of customers.

"How is she, doctor? How is my little Ethel?"

Chris ran a hand through his hair; his cheekbones looked gaunt and high. He said: "Chadley, why in Heaven's name didn't you and Lizzie send for me before? Why? Why?"

"We didn't know she was really ill. She had a sore throat yesterday, but seemed better this morning. Then, this afternoon, her breathing was bad. Doctor, what is it? Is she dangerously ill?"

"Diphtheria, without doubt", said Chris, tersely. "She must have an injection at once. I have telephoned for an ambulance to rush her to the isolation hospital. Pray God we are not too late."

"My little Cousin Ethel I used to call her." Chadley was speaking almost to himself.

Chris gripped his shoulder, and turned away.

Chadley said, wearily: "You must save her for us, Mr. Chris. Time eased things when I lost Ronnie and his mother. A hundred years will never make any difference if we lose Ethel".

From the distance came the warning bell of the speeding ambulance.

1939

"Who's afraid of the big bad wolf?" sang the youngsters who, only a week earlier, had been singing carols with saintly looks on their faces. The sound of their youthful voices reached Leslie Chadley in the sitting-room behind his shop.

There was a big fire in the grate, but Chadley, in his armchair, looked cold, pale, and shrunken. He was sixty-two -- not really old at all - yet somehow he felt old age creeping on him, stooping his shoulders, dimming the keenness of his eyes.

"We're going to hang out the washing on the Siegfried Line", sang the boys outside in the pitch-dark street.

"Can I come in?" said a voice at the door.

Chadley looked up and smiled.

"Come in, doctor. Shut the door, will you? The draught shifts the black-out curtains.

Chris closed the door, and sat in the other armchair. He unfastened the heavy coat he was wearing.

"How are you feeling tonight, Mr. Chadley?"

"Better, doctor, better. I'm taking the tablets regularly."

"Good," Chris regarded him appraisingly. "You'll be all right if you take things easily for a time. I mustn't stay, for Penny is alone. I had to pop along and wish you and Lizzie a Happy New Year.. and to say good-bye. I'm going in the R. A. F., Chadley - every doctor on the youngish side is needed in the forces. While I'm away, Penny is going to Cornwall to stay with her parents."

Chadley did not speak. He stared



into the fire.

"How's the old 'Gem', Mr. Chad?"

Chadley turned his head, and gave him a twisted grin.

He said: "This week's story is 'Silverson on the Spot'. The 'Gem' is on the spot. It's finished, Mr. Chris - the last issue this week. That squirt of a white-washer has done something that Kaiser Bill never achieved. He's killed the 'Gem'".

"Gosh, that's bad news." Chris sat in thought. Then he went on: "It'll be out again - after the war. You'll see."

"It will never be out again, Mr. Chris. It's dead. The world that Lizzie and I knew is dead. After the war, another world will be born - maybe a better world. But our world is like the 'Gem' - dead!"

Lizzie entered the room, carrying three cups of steaming coffee. For twenty minutes or so the three of them chatted, and then Chris took his departure, Lizzie seeing him out through the shop into the dark road.

"Are we going to sit up to see the New Year in?" Lizzied asked her husband, an hour later.

"I suppose we should - maybe we'll listen to the radio. They'll be ringing the bells, and singing 'Auld Lang Syne'. You and me, Liz, we've not got much left, except each other". Leslie Chadley kissed his wife. He looked down at the dying fire, and wrinkled his brows. He said: "Liz, old girl, the shop won't half seem funny without the 'Gem!'"

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NEXT MONTH:

The final instalment.

20 Years on.

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REVIEW

"THE KING'S GUEST"

Frank Richards  
(Howard Baker Special  
Book Club Edition)

Another magnificent volume from the dearly-loved Red Magnet age, and, further, from the year 1911, the Golden Age of the Red Magnet and the Blue Gem.

Seven Red Magnets, not consecutive, to delight you for the remainder of your life. The volume opens with the two famous tales based on the true life Archer-Shee case, when a Dartmouth Naval Cadet was expelled from Dartmouth for allegedly stealing a postal-order. (The case was made into a play "The Winslow Boy" by Rattigan.) Here we have a new boy Heath, who plots to get Bob Cherry expelled for stealing a postal-order, the star witness being the postmistress who points to Bob Cherry as the one who cashed the order. And Major Cherry, like the real life father who fought the authorities for years to establish his son's honour, fights to prove Bob's honour.

We remain uncertain whether or not young Archer-Shee was guilty. We know, of course, that Bob Cherry was innocent.

In passing, our contributor, Mr. Harold Truscott, discusses this pair of Magnets in a fine article in the coming C.D. Annual.

The volume's overall title story, "The King's Guest", was the Coronation story - the coronation of King George the Fifth. It is that rare phenomenon, a Magnet tale which introduces a real-life character among the fictional heroes - and the real-life hero is no less than the new



King himself. Lovely heart-warming bit of nostalgia for all.

"The Slacker" is the story of one, Arthur Carlton, a sleepy Removite who plays his brief life out in the Remove in the quaint tale.

Then the famous story "The Only Way" - famous because we ran it as a serial in this magazine many years ago, and because the leading character, Courtney of the Sixth, was "bumped off" to provide a Roman Holiday, years later, for editor Pentelow as a sub writer. Roger Jenkins is of the opinion that this is the finest of all the Red Magnets, and he may well be right. It is a beautifully plotted tale. It is just slightly marred by an uncomfortably sadistic episode, which could have been toned down a little. This could be the reason, possibly, why this tale was never once commercially reprinted, not even in the Penny Popular or the Popular.

(A fine tale in the Gem, with sadistic undertones, was similarly treated and never reprinted.)

We condemn Pentelow for his cheek in killing off another man's creation as he did. But Hamilton was not blameless. He never used Courtney again in a story, and quite a few years passed before Pentelow revived him for the Roman Holiday.

"Driven to the Wall" is another rare and unknown tale. It stars Russell, and is a serious school tale, a wee bit reminiscent of "Fifth Form at St. Dominic's". An original story in the Magnet, of a type little seen in later times.

Finally "Ashamed of his Father". Another once only character, Cecil Leigh, a snob, who, among his well-bred school friends, is ashamed of his relative. One can sympathise a bit with poor Cecil, and it's touching, if you can stomach tales of snobbery. A grand tale for the sentimental among us.

Another truly superb volume, beautifully produced and printed. And, once again, the art-work of Arthur Clarke, is a delight for all. Not to be missed.

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# News of the Old Boys' Book Clubs

## MIDLAND

We began our new term with 10 members present and one welcome guest - Mrs. E. Hopton, the mother of our popular Johnny Hopton. Before the programme we stood in silence in memory of Frank Lowe, our member who died recently.

Tom Porter, as usual displayed the Anniversary Number - Nelson Lee Library No. 275 "The Secret of North Tower", September 1920 - and the Collectors' Item - Monster Library "The Boy Who Vanished".

We had a discussion on the future of the Club. When you are as old as I am you tend to avoid thinking of the future, but we want to do all we can to boost the club. After over 30 years as a

member I deal with each meeting as it comes.

Refreshments were so good that our chairman proposed a vote of thanks to Ivan Webster, Johnny and Betty Hopton, and Joan Golen, the founders of the feast.

We have to be tight on time these days. Dr. Johnson's House is a Quaker establishment, and we have to be finished and out by 9.30.

There was time for two rounds of Greyfriars Bingo, both won by Joan Golen.

The next meetings will be on 27th November and 18th December. Our address is Dr. Johnson's House, Colmore Circus, Bull Street, Birmingham. Best wishes to O.B.B.C. friends everywhere.

JACK BELLFIELD (Correspondent)

#### SOUTH WEST

There were only eight of us who met on 30th September, but we had a thoroughly enjoyable time. The venue was Tim Salisbury's home.

Bill Lofts was able to fit in a good walk by the tide, and this Weston "air like wine" must have given him extra energy, as he gave us three separate talks before tea. The one on "100 Years of Comics" was illustrated with copies from Tim's collection. There was much laughter as he told us his own story "The Vampire of Greyfriars". "Fun on the Farm" came next, and being in Somerset it was appropriate and amusing, all about characters in farm comic strips.

We were glad to welcome a new member who lives in Weston, and also to have Terry Jones and Simon Garrett with us after a few meetings' absence.

After a study tea, hobby talk ensued, and a sale of books before the meeting closed. Our next meeting is in the Spring of 1985.

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£2 offered for a good, clear, clean photostat of the Herlock Sholmes story "The Mystery of the Mince Pie" in the Greyfriars Herald for the 25th December, 1920 (issue No. 61). This is very urgently required for research purposes.

Please reply to Box 282, c/o The Editor, Collectors' Digest.

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CAMBRIDGE

The Club met at the home of Adrian Perkins on 7th October. Bill Lofts gave a talk on the famous early Amalgamated Press characters - Jack, Sam and Pete. This entertaining address was completely comprehensive, ranging from the early days when the fictional heroes were laying a solid base for the Harmsworth fortunes, till the time in the twenties when juvenile tastes had changed and their popularity declined. Bill mentioned the various artists who had illustrated the series as years passed by.

Bill Thurbon, a devotee of Jack, Sam & Pete from his boyhood, added a number of stirring points in the subsequent discussion.

After enjoying Mrs. Perkins' magnificent tea, the programme was resumed. Jack Doupe displayed three of his water colour paintings to general admiration. Talk turned to Dick Turpin, Jack Doupe giving details of the various Turpin Libraries and how they were compiled, and Bill Lofts gave an hilarious account of his visit to a Turpin enthusiast who had a great collection of Turpin items.

Bill Lofts was warmly applauded for his contributions to the success of the meeting. Proceedings closed with a warm vote of thanks to Adrian and Mrs. Perkins for their hospitality.

LONDON

The 1984 luncheon party took place on Sunday, 14th October, and forty were in attendance. The function was highly successful and the occasion to be celebrated was the 100th anniversary of the comic paper in the United Kingdom. The President of the club, John Wernham had once again provided a splendid souvenir menu card, the front cover having a beautiful colour reproduction of a halfpenny issue of Chuckles.

After an excellent repast, Roy Parsons proposed the toast "One Hundred Years of Comics". Chris Harper, chairman of the club, proposed the toast of the club. He mentioned how Bob Blythe and Len Packman met at East Dulwich and decided to form a club with the result that we all fully know of as a great success.

John Wernham responded to the toast and spoke of the

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forthcoming issue of the next Charles Hamilton Companion which will be on sale later on in the year. A cover of the new Companion was on show and it was stated that there will be no increase in price.

Cyril Rowe gave a talk on the author John Finnemore.

Norman Wright talked on Warren Bell, alias the Old Fag, of that admirable Boys' periodical, The Captain.

Mark Jarvis conducted a Mastermind session. Don Webster's subject was St. Jim's and he defeated Lauri Sutton by one point, the latter subject being Greyfriars. Brian Doyle was third on Boys' School stories and Mary Cadogan fourth on Cliff House. Leslie Rowley had done a fine scroll for the winner.

Don Webster proposed hearty votes of thanks to Bill and Thelma Bradford, the Lady helpers, and our worthy president, John Wernham.

Next meeting will be at the Walthamstow rendezvous on Sunday, 11th November. Tea will be provided but kindly bring own tuck.

BEN WHITER

NORTHERN

Meeting held on Saturday, 13th October, 1984

We were sorry that Jack Allison was unable to be with us as he recently had a fall - but we were pleased that he was improving.

Keith Smith presented a quiz based on school stories; the authors and the characters that appeared therein - and in some difficult questions we had to locate the name of the school that some of the more "obscure" characters attended. Darrell Swift was the winner (an amazing fete as he dislikes quizzes immensely!), Keith Atkinson and Geoffrey Good tied for second place.

For "My Choice" Darrell spoke about his recent discovery of the Jane Turpin books by Evadne Price: from latest information the authoress is still living, but now residing in Australia. The Jane books have been out of print for many years and the ten books in the series are now difficult to obtain. The stories are

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similar to the William stories by Richmal Crompton - and the titles of some of the books are much alike. Darrell commented that the subtle writing, humour and style were hardly suitable for children and were more for adults' appreciation. Geoffrey Good read in his inimitable style the story "Please To Remember" - in which Jane makes some fireworks from "gumpowder" (as Jane called it) and the inevitable result of her blowing up the nursery! Hardly material for the impressionable child - but amusing stuff for adults.

Geoffrey was applauded for his fine reading; and good news to Jane fans of C.D., in that it is hoped the Jane books will be re-published in the near future.

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

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# The Postman Called

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

STAN KNIGHT (Cheltenham): I was delighted with the cover of the August C.D. depicting the Flood at St. Frank's. One of the first series I ever read in the Lee was the new series on the same theme which I thoroughly enjoyed.

When I was a boy there was a verse on the wall which I never forgot:

"Not till the loom is silent and the shuttle cease to fly,  
Will God unroll the canvas and explain the reason why.  
The dark threads are as needful in the Weaver's skilful hand,  
As the threads of gold and silver in the pattern He has planned."

I found out later from Ben Whiter that this was part of a poem of which he was able to send me a complete copy.

JAMES HAMILTON (Glasgow): On the lunchtime News today a cartoonist said that he wanted to bring out a comic for today's children. One of the comic (?) strips would involve skinheads "Putting the boot in". The artist went on to say "We are not here to educate the children but to provide humour!".

Enough to make the angels weep!



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H. HEATH (Windsor): I am anxious to obtain the issue of C.D. which featured No. 190 in the "Let's Be Controversial" Series, entitled "The Last Voyage of the Benbow". As I became a reader of C.D. in January 1975, unfortunately this particular issue is not in my possession. Can you assist please by quoting the number of the issue which contained the essay.

I have always enjoyed the Benbow tales, and was intrigued with the similarities of Daubeny (before he reformed), Egan, & Torrence, the Bloods of the Benbow, with Ponsonby, Monson, and Gadsby of Highcliffe, and Smythe, Tracey, and Howard of Rookwood.

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: As that particular Controversial essay appeared ten years ago, we are repeating it this month to interest Mr. Heath, and, we hope, every body.)

LEN HAWKEY (Leigh-on-Sea): Yet another interesting and enjoyable issue of C.D. - its amazing how you manage to maintain the quality month after month, year after year! One small criticism - the October cover was not by the "incomparable" J. Louis Smyth but by the "gorgeous" G. W. Wakefield.

The latter - whose work first arrived almost a decade after Louis Smyth's earliest efforts - must, I feel, have been influenced by the former, as sometimes his style - especially portrayals of men - women - is similar to J. L. S., full of a quaint nostalgic charm, but lacking the grace of the older man Wakefield also sometimes erred when it came to proportions &/or perspective - Smyth never did.

Having studied all the artists of the old periodicals over 50 years, my personal opinion is that, between 1905 and 1925 Louis Smyth was not only the most prolific but far and away the most accomplished - his only real rival was Warwick Reynolds, whose style was equally effective but very different.

LESLIE ROWLY (Chingford): In this month's Digest, Danny mentions "The Ghost Train" and "Evensong" as the films then showing at his local picture palace. Surely, the version of the "Ghost Train" to which he refers was the one in which Claude Hulbert starred as the silly ass/detective? If so, I remember

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enjoying it very much indeed. Dear, delightful, Evelyn Laye, I worshipped from afar - seeing "Evensong" twice at that little cinema in Sunninghill (which I believe you know very well), the name of which escapes me. 'Bo' (as she liked to be known to her friends) may not have made many films and, perhaps many will remember her either for her stage performances or her marriage to Frank ("Young Woodley") Lawton, but she could have had me down on my knees for that one film performance alone. I expect many of my generation were as much in love with her as I then was. I always did prefer the English product to the American!

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COLLECTORS DIGEST No. 1 to 450 -- NOT OUT!

by M. M. Hall

For some time I have been thinking as month by month the Collectors' Digest have been dropping through my letter box, how nice it would be to have an index of all those marvellous articles that have made our magazine such an enjoyable read.

Well some months ago I did start the long task and a few days have now passed since I gazed at the last page, of the last copy and wrote the last entry on its file card. The result of this interesting labour has quite transformed me, because although these copies had already been read at various times, it is not until you start to catalogue that you find you have to re-read many items to find which card, or cards, you should make an entry on.

Apart from an article reference, one must also create a cross-reference card for each writer and many cards for some. There were, I found, over 300 contributors many of whom only penned one article, while others were (almost) in every issue and these writers are the backbone of the magazine.

The contributor with the greatest number of articles must surely be Eric Fayne, who under his own name, plus those under the 'Let's be controversial' and many other unsigned items let alone the weekly editorials, accounts for well over 1000 entries in the Collectors' Digests.

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Next in line comes Bill Lofts, who bearing in mind his much later entry into our pages, pushes even Roger Jenkins into third place, though Roger seldom failed to have one of his articles, appearing in each copy. Herbert Leckenby's last article was in C.D. 138 and had his death not occurred at this point, who knows how many more of his fine, carefully written works would have appeared? As it was, Herbert was the pioneer who collected information, lists and wrote them out as discussable treatises. He and Bill Gander (of the Story Paper Collector) between them, founded the format of the Collectors' Digest back in those early days.

Some of the other prolific writers were Reuben Godsave, S. Gordon Swan and Leonard Packman, which brings me to the sad part of my task. As I proceeded copy after copy, the list of deaths slowly mounted but this is inevitable. I did note, however, that there were new writers coming forward to replace those that we had lost.

My recorded articles ranged from 'Abdulla the Horse Dealer' by S. G. Swan, to 'Zingrave, Professor Cyrus' by C. Churchill. Surprisingly few of my 800 categories had many articles on the same subject. Of those that have 150 or more, first comes Sexton Blake, followed by Hamilton, Nelson Lee, Edwy Searles Brooks, St. Frank's, Union Jack and many items on the subject of Christmas.

In carrying out an exercise of this nature, one turns up odd items and one I noticed was when Bill Lofts mentioned his first article published in C.D. No. 72! Well Bill, that was your second article, your first was in C.D. No. 69 on page 283...!

The result of my index is now available to any reader of Collectors' Digest. If you should want to know if there is an article in C.D. about your favourite writer or series or school, then all you have to do is to write to me, enclosing a s.a.e., at the address below, defining your query and I will send you the required information.

Write to... Maurice Hall, 26a Sidney Road, Walton on Thames, Surrey, KT12 2NA, or ring 0932 224848.

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FOR SALE: Original G.H.A.s - 1921, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933. H.B. Volumes - 71, 74, 76, 79, 81, 83, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89. Gem issues - 788, 789, 790, 791, 899, 773, 774, 795, 797, 799, 805, 807, 726, 727, 728, 742, 737, 738, 739, 729, 730, 731, 732, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 749, 750, 751.

MR. C. OLIVER, 34 BELFIELD AVENUE, MAY BANK, NEWCASTLE, STAFFS.

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WANTED: Howard Baker Reprints of Magnet 27 (single issue): BELLFIELD, 65 BRIDGE COURT, CRADLEY HEATH, WARLEY, W. MIDLANDS, B64 6LW.

Must be in good condition - your price paid - phone C.H. 68952.

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WANTED: O.s. Nelson Lees 27, 31. Captains 37, 41. S.B.L. o.s. 5, 12, 13, 33, 265, 336; 2nd series 406. S.O.L. 224, 381. Reasonable Prices Paid. 1st series L. H. Brooks 250, 269; 2nd series 43.

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ADVANCE ANNOUNCEMENT: Coming in December. The Latest Charles Hamilton Companion: FROM WHARTON LODGE TO LINTON HALL - a comprehensive coverage of the three Hamilton Schools and the Girls' Schools - the Christmas Stories we enjoyed. This latest from the Hamilton Museum will be on sale in early December, written by Mary Cadogan and Tommy Keen. Available only by post. Price to any address in the British Isles at £5 including post and packing. Overseas: £5.20. Full details in next month's C.D.

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DEATH OF EDWARD SABIN

Sadly we record the death of Edward Sabin, at the age of 82. Mr. Sabin had been a C.D. reader and also a member of our Midland Club for very many years.