

STORY PAPER
COLLECTORS DIGEST

VOL. 39

No. 458

FEBRUARY 1985

THE ONLY BOYS' FOOTBALL PAPER IS

The Boys' Realm.

24
LARGE
PAGES

USUAL
PRICE
1d

THE WINNING GOAL!

MAMMOTH FOOTBALL NUMBER.

No. 223.

September 8th, 1906.

47p

C.D.'s bound in years, 21 volumes, from No. 1 1947 to 1968 included. Lacks 1956. Best Offers, please, for the lot; will not split. Single issues also available and Annuals.

LATEST COLLECTIONS PURCHASED include bound volumes: Boys' Friend weekly, Boys' Realm, Boys' Herald, Boys' Champion Story Paper, Boys of the Empire, Our Boys' Journal, Boys' of the World, Boys' Graphic, True Blue, Nelson Lees, Chums, B.O.A.'s, Young England, and others. Large variety of unusual singles.

Can Always make up Bumper Lots (my selection) of either Good or Fair Reading Copies, 50 or 100 or more. So many duplicates in stock and must reduce.

EAGLES. Large stock. Also bound volumes from No. 1.

H.B. Facsimiles and Book Club Specials: Complete Stock.

Good selection of second-hand; please advise Wants for these: In Print £6; Out-of-Print from £11.

A visit always advisable if you can. Usual hours; also after hours and week-ends, but please advise first. You are very welcome! The largest stock with the best prices.

N O R M A N S H A W

84 Belvedere Road, Upper Norwood

LONDON, S.E.19 2HZ

Tel. 01-771-9857

STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

Founded in 1941 by

W. H. GANDER

COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Founded in 1946 by

HERBERT LECKENBY

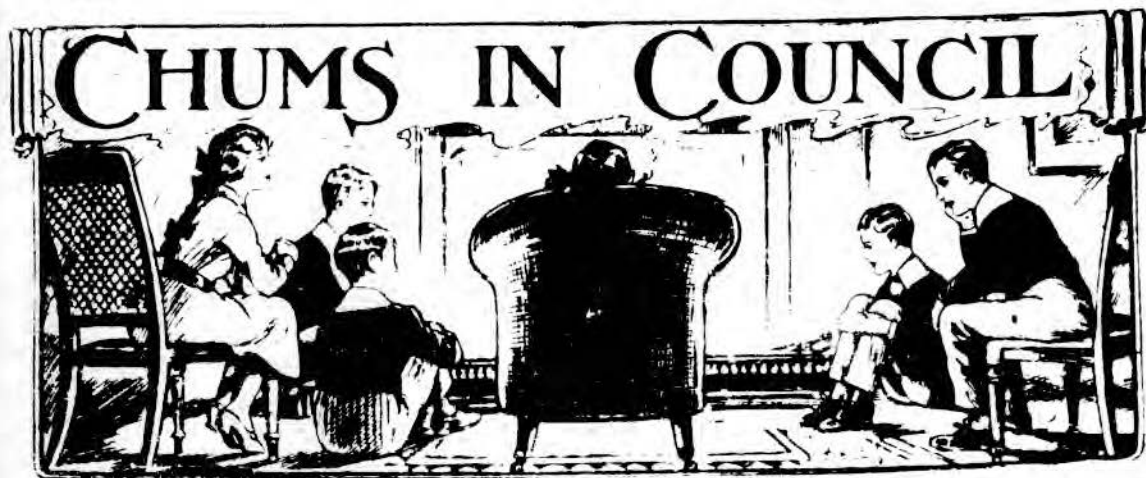
Vol. 39

No. 458

FEBRUARY 1985

Price 47p

(COPYRIGHT. This magazine is privately circulated. The reproduction of the contents either wholly or in part, without written permission from The Editor, is strictly forbidden.)



THE LANCASHIRE LAD'S INVENTION

Exactly 50 years ago our Danny was enjoying a Gem story entitled "Glyn's Line-Writer". Glyn's invention would produce "lines", taking all the unpleasantness out of any "impositions" which a master or a prefect might impose upon some offending junior. The junior would write two or three lines and then the machine would reproduce those lines in any number required. So Mr. Ratcliff's barked order: "Figgins, take a hundred lines" meant nothing at all.

Danny, in 1934, may have thought to himself: "Oh, yes, a kind of duplicating machine. There's nothing so wonderful in that".

But that story, under the title "The Lancashire Lad's Invention" had originally appeared in the Gem in January 1912. Were there

duplicators so long ago as that? If not, Hamilton was farseeing, and ahead of his time. In a picture which Macdonald drew to accompany the 1912 story the machine is not unlike the famous Gestetner which we were to know so well with the passing of time.

By the nineteen-twenties there were certainly duplicators. They used to advertise one called the Petit Plex Duplicator in the Gems and Magnets of the twenties. When I was a youngster at school I somehow acquired a Petit Plex, having been lured by the advertising.

I started a school magazine, calling it "The Blue Ensign" which was really most inappropriate, except that my father was a sea captain. I ran that magazine for several years, and, somewhere, I still have all the copies stacked away.

I wrote it all out by hand, using a thin nib, a specially supplied ink, and non-absorbent paper. My cousin then took over and reproduced the copies. It was not a machine. A tray of refined blue clay. One placed the original copy face down on the clay, left it for a minute or two, and then ran off the copies with a squeegee. Then the clay had to be washed off, and the second copy applied, and so on. It was a messy affair, I seem to recall. I fancy one could run off about three dozen from the one original, the early ones being very dark and the succeeding ones getting fainter and fainter.

I wonder whether anyone else in the hobby ever possessed one of those Petit Plex Duplicators which they advertised so often in the companion Papers in the twenties. Glyn's machine of 1912 seems to me to have been vastly superior, more on the lines of those we know today.

CAN ANYONE HELP?

Some years ago a dear friend of mine, who was seriously ill, wrote to me that he had no belief in an After Life. He described us as "cabbages", with nothing to look forward to when this life on earth is ended. I was saddened, and at a loss for what to say to him in reply. My friend died suddenly before I could answer his letter.

At that time, the closing words of a poem came to me. They were:

"Alas, for love if thou wert all
And nought beyond - O Earth!"

For a Believer - and that Belief is surely Knowledge - it is the fact that we will meet our lost ones again which sustains and comforts us. If there is nothing beyond the Earth, the poet says, life would be indeed dismal. "Alas, for love..."

Those closing words of the poem have run through my mind again many times in recent months. To my surprise I found that I could not bring to mind anything else of the poem, though I am sure that years ago I knew the whole of it. I had an idea that the line came from Longfellow.

But apparently such is not the case. I cannot trace the lines in either Longfellow or Wordsworth. It occurs to me that the line may come from one of the minor poets - Mrs. Hemans or Cowper. Those lovely reading books, published by Chambers, which we read and enjoyed in schooldays long ago, often had delightful poems which we learnt and which remained in the memory.

If any of my readers happens to recollect the lines, and would send me on the information, I should be grateful.

THE EDITOR

Danny's Diary



FEBRUARY 1935

I don't know what a snipe is, but it must be something pretty unpleasant. His formfellow in the Remove have nicknamed Caffyn "The Snipe". Caffyn is Coker's cousin, and Caffyn is trying to disgrace Horace in the eyes of his rich Aunt Judy. The month's first

story in this new Magnet series is entitled "Fool's Luck". Prout gets knocked down, and Coker is suspected - but Coker has an infallible alibi. Caffyn has failed again.

Next week "The Schemer of the Remove",. It's the best in the series so far. Old Coote's horse disappears - Coote is the village carrier - and the disappearance of the horse is due to Caffyn. And as Caffyn is Coker's cousin, Coker, who can never mind his own business, feels he must take a hand. So Coker is suspected of backing horses. It's great fun - and Caffyn fails again.

Next, "The Remove's Remarkable Recruit". Coker plays football for the Remove, and Caffyn plots again. He also fails again.

Final of the month is "The Unseen Witness". This time Lodgey, the bookie, attacks Caffyn, who has welshed over a bet. Caffyn is badly knocked about. He claims Coker did it, and thinks that this time he is really on a winner. But Joyce, the gamekeeper, saw what happened, and Coker is in the clear - and Caffyn has failed yet again.

It's all very entertaining, even though the plot really makes no progress. Caffyn will still be trying next month.

The trial of Bruno Hauptmann has gone on for several more weeks in the United States. But at last Hauptmann has been found guilty, and sentenced to the electric chair, for the kidnapping and murder of the Lindbergh baby.

The Greyfriars story in the S.O.L. is "Bunter, the Bad Lad". It comprises separate Bunter episodes. A quantity of food is ordered to be delivered to Mr. Quelch from Chunkley's, and it all ends with Bunter as a hero, having rescued a child who was playing on the railway in the path of an express train.

The other S.O.L. is another collection of Grimslade tales, under the title "The Fourth Form at Grimslade". Dr. Sparshott is determined to discipline his school, but he finds the new boy, Jim Dainty, a hard nut to crack. These tales come from the Ranger, but I don't care much for Grimslade and have no great love for the Ranger.

In the Sexton Blake Library the Pierre Quiroule story is "The Vanished Million", a splendid novel set in London and Latvia, and introducing Granite Grant and Mlle. Julie, along with Blake, Tinker, and Pedro. I get my S.B.L.'s from my brother, Doug, and another one I have this month is "The Tithe War Mystery" by Gilbert Chester. It is an unusual tale, set in the English countryside and among country folk.

In the Boys' Friend Library I had "The Earthquake-Maker", a Captain Justice story about our world being in great danger.

Herbert Morrison, the Home Secretary, has promised to preserve the Green Belt. That is all the lovely open country within reach of London. He is going to put a stop to what he called the "urban sprawl" - that is, putting up houses in every open space that the builders can find. More power to his elbow.

An Air Mail service has opened between Liverpool and the Isle of Man. It was inaugurated by the Lord Mayor of Liverpool.

Doug and Mum took me one night to the Holborn Empire where a new revue is running instead of weekly variety at the moment. It is named "King Folly" and it stars Billy Bennett, who calls himself "Almost a Gentleman", Anton Dolin, the classical dancer, and Wendy Toye.

Some lovely stories in the Gem this month, though I think the St. Jim's tales are shortened a bit to make space for the new Packsaddle westerns.

The month opened with two connected tales, and very good ones they are. "From Footlights to Form-Master" tells of a new master, Mr. Wodyer, who is due to take Mr. Ratcliff's place for a time. After that New House barring-out, Ratty needed a break. But just when Mr. Wodyer was due to leave his home to take his post at St. Jim's he went down with a severe attack of 'flu. So his brother, who is a music-hall artist out of a job, went to St. Jim's in his place. And the boys found him a very unusual school-master. However, he got on all right, till Edith Glyn, who knew the first brother and had once been engaged to marry him, recognised that the new master was not the real Mr. Wodyer who had been booked for St. Jim's.

The second tale is "True Blue" with the real Mr. Wodyer replacing his stage brother. The new master turns up trumps when a gang of burglars are working the district; so much so that, at the end, he is engaged to marry the fair Edith Glyn once again. A rattling good couple, and very novel.

Next, "Glyn's Line-Writer", a good tale concerning another of Glyn's inventions. Finally "Captain Gussy". Kildare has to leave St. Jim's for family reasons. Knox expects to become Captain of the School in his place, but Arthur Augustus puts up in his place and is elected. An amusing little trifle.

Two human legs have been found in a parcel in a railway carriage at Waterloo, and later the rest of the body was taken

from the Grand Junction Canal at Brentford. The police are making wide enquiries.

At the pictures we have seen Matheson Lang in "The Great Defender". And Charlie Ruggles in "Murder on the Runaway Train". This sounded much more exciting than it really was. Cary Grant was in "Kiss and Make Up" about a beauty specialist who was going to marry a rich client, but changed his mind at the last minute and married his loyal secretary.

Conrad Veidt was in "Jew Suss" which I found heavy-going, though it is a much praised film. Kay Francis was in "Dr. Monica". Ralph Lynn and Gordon Harker in a British comedy "Dirty Work". Jack Oakie in a flimsy musical "Thank Your Stars". Finally Russ Columbo in "Wake Up and Dream". Tragically, Russ Columbo accidentally shot himself and died just before the film - his last - was released.

The Modern Boy is a bit weak just now. The most popular characters are all missing at the moment. There is a serial entitled "Daytona Luck", concerning a boy, Jim Cameron, who plays a part in an effort to break the Land-Speed Record. The serial is said to be written by Kaye Campson, who is a racing driver in real life.

The comedy western series continues, about Percival Ulysses Woodger, who is supposed to be touring the wild west. I wonder why there are so many farcical western tales about just now.

Biggles is in a series of tales about Peace-time air thrills. Biggles is trying to find the base of the mysterious flying-boat which is causing much trouble. And there is a picture serial about the adventures of Mickey Mouse - more comedy westerns.

But Captain Justice is due back in Modern Boy next month, so maybe there are better times just round the corner.

- - -

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

S.O.L. No. 237 "Bunter the Bad Lad" comprised three separate Bunter episodes from the years 1927, 1928, and 1929 respectively.

The Sexton Blake story "The Vanished Million" had originally appeared under the same title in mid 1924.

All of the Gem stories had come from the Spring of 1912, though they had appeared in a different order. The two stories "From Footlights to Form-Master" and "True Blue" had originally been entitled respectively "Figgins & Co.'s New Master" and "The Hero of St. Jim's". An excellent pair of connected stories on unusual lines, the two originals, in their full-length, would have made a

first-rate story for the S.O.L. Presumably they had been overlooked for that medium. Mr Wodyer, who became Edith Glyn's fiance, made minor appearances now and then in blue cover days, as did the setting of Glyn House and the Glyn family.

"Glyn's Line-Writer" had been "The Lancashire Lad's Invention" in 1912. It was reprinted on several occasions, and the cover picture, which was copied in the 1935 reprint, was familiar to old-time readers.

"Captain Gussy" had been "Captain D'Arcy" in 1912, and it was actually the earliest of these four 1935 reprints.

The Bruno Hauptman trial in the States lasted for over six weeks, and, though he was found guilty, it was more than a year later, due to legal wrangles, before Hauptmann went to the electric chair. His counsel tried to throw suspicion on the baby's English nursemaid who was named Betty Gow. I believe that most of the ransom money paid by Lindbergh has never been traced to this day.

Russ Columbo, mentioned by Danny this month, made a number of films. He had his own band, and as a crooner he is said to have rivalled Bing Crosby. He was only in his twenties at the time of his death.

* * * * *

BLAKIANA

FORTY YEARS OF SEXTON BLAKE (Part 6)

by W.O.G. Lofts

I suppose one of the highlights in meeting personalities connected with the old Blake - must have been meeting B. W. Twyman many times at his 300 year old cottage in the wilds of the Surrey countryside. The nearest house was at least a mile away. 'Twy' had unlike most writers kept his own personal records of his editorship of The Union Jack that was right in the golden years of stories from 1921 to the first year of the new detective Weekly in 1934. He not only had a list of authors of the tales (when they were anonymous) but graphs showing the popularity of series, authors and characters. There was also a large chest full of letters from readers, and authors, which I found most interesting to read as they contained some household names including titled people and members of the Government, plus stars of the stage and screen. 'Twy' was also in many ways, for he had started at the A.P. as a proof reader on The Magnet/Gem group, and was able to relate all the inside details about the inner workings of the most popular school story paper. He also at a later date wrote two Magnet stories published in 1926, as well as drawing a map of Greyfriars and devising a Billy

Bunter Game. Editor of the 1919 short lived Detective Library and Nugget Weekly, he also knew every writer who wrote for Amalgamated Press in probably the best years of their history.

Looking back at it all now, I suppose it could be said that I was extremely useful to 'Twy' - as he was then earning his living by writing for the American True Crime Magazines. I used to attend trials and send my personal reports for him to write up. I even once investigated a Haunted house at St. John's Wood (curiously that I remembered had this reputation when at school nearby) and had a most nerve-racking experience. I also used to send him the last editions of all the then London Evening Papers, that contained full reports of trials, so that they reached him first thing the next morning. How one could rely on the post those days! Twy also attended an Old Boys' Book Meeting at Surbiton, where the greatly loved Madam made him feel so much at home, that they were soon chatting away like old friends.

I lost contact with Twy when he had long periods in Hospital in the late sixties. I only learned of his death via an Australian friend who had heard it from Twy's son living in the U.S.A. I was horrified later to learn from the Estate that all his personal records had been burnt. They regarded it as rubbish, not having any historic or literary value. I told them straight that a large part of our social history had been lost dealing with juvenile literature in the twenties and thirties that could never be replaced. Extracts from readers' letters could have provided a feature for Blakiana for many many years full of interest.

THE HOME OF HOLMES

by Rev. Francis Hertzberg

Sherlock Holmes, as "J.W.C." writes, may have had less authors than Sexton Blake - although if we include all the parody and pastiche writers even that may not be the case - but he certainly had more homes! J.W.C. simply quotes an address and thinks that is all. But it never is in Holmesian study! I shan't get into the question of "Upper" Baker Street ("These are deep waters, Watson") as in Holmes' time it was called York Place. I shan't even make much fuss about J.W.C.'s omission of the "b" in 221b, Baker Street - it probably meant "bis", i.e. half-a-house, or set of rooms. But I will point out that the only thing almost all students are agreed about regarding The Home of Holmes is that is wasn't at the house

numbered 221. Hard luck as that may be for the Abbey Nat. Building Society, which makes so much of the fact, it just doesn't fit all the clues - the relationship to the various Mews (one now called Sherlock Mews), to "The Empty House", etc. At least in his middle-late period Blake is far easier to track down - there are few buildings in Berkley Square anyway, and even fewer that could have been the modern (sic) Blake's trendy '60s abode.

And I'm glad to say Blake isn't really even left behind in the birthday stakes. Certainly some astrologers have found the feast of the Epiphany a suitable time for the Birth of Holmes. But the date was first suggested on the basis of nothing more substantial than that the only Shakespeare play Holmes quoted more than once was Twelfth Night! Holmes himself, who ranted against those who theorised with insufficient data, would disown the lot of such "students"

And lastly Blake writers, J.W.C. notes, never wanted to kill off Blake the way Doyle did Holmes. No? Why then did some of them not introduce him into stories until the last decent moment, and sometimes even later? They didn't seem to have much bursting desire to get their hero onstage at the earliest possible moment. And many were only too happy to kill him off in his own stories but see those stories without Blake but with another hero - certainly for money and wider and new sales areas, but kill him off none the less.

* * * * *

Happy New Year to all O.B.B.C. Friends, especially Bill, Eric, Jack, Norman and Jaygee.

WANTED: Boys' Cinema Weeklies and Annuals, Champion, Triumph, Boys' Favourite Library by E. R. Home-Gall, Numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4 and Victor Gaunt Books.

ERN DARCY, 47 FISHER STREET, MAIDSTONE, VICTORIA 3012, AUSTRALIA.

* * * * *

WANTED: Biggles books - not Dean or children's clubs. I have duplicates that could be used as swops or sale.

GORDON HARRISON, 14 AMBERLEY CLOSE, DOWNEND, BRISTOL, BS16 2RR. Tel. 0272 564969 evenings.



A LETTER FROM ST. FRANK'S

BY An Old Boy

A small news item in one of the London dailies had me off to St. Frank's as fast as I could. Colonel Kerrigan who had been rescued by a St. Frank's holiday party led by Lord Dorrimore and Nelson Lee some time ago in the jungles of South America was visiting his son Stanley Kerrigan at St. Frank's and somehow the newshounds had discovered it. What made it news was the association of Col. Kerrigan's rescue and Percy Harrison Fawcett's disappearance in the same region. Readers of the St. Frank's history will recall the time a party penetrated the fever-ridden jungles of the Matto Grosso to search for the lost colonel and found a modern El Dorado peopled by White giants and ARZAC Indians. News of Stanley Kerrigan's father rekindled interest for the colonel was hoping to create fresh light on Fawcett's long absence and perhaps lead a rescue party. And from little incidents bigger things grow. Although it was nearing Christmas and the chances of a South American trip by the St. Franks crowd was extremely unlikely.

The areas bounded by the mighty Amazon River are still shrouded in mystery and "Lost Cities" are still thought to exist and only the terrible snake-infested swamps, hungry fever haunted wilds and savages ready to resist with poisoned arrows curb the treasure hunters for gold is said to exist in plenty.

So it was with much interest that my visit to St. Frank's was heightened by meeting Lord Dorrimore and Umlosi too. Though why old Umlosi would want to embrace an English winter from the warmth of an African sun I never could understand, but loyalty builds strange affections.

Whether Colonel Kerrigan's visit is the precursor of another El Dorado visit I can't say at this stage. It may well be that

a London newspaper may finance a party led by the colonel in the search of Mr. Fawcett. Colonel Kerrigan's knowledge of the region might succeed in discovering the lost explorer where others have failed. In any event, Lord Dorrimore would surely be interested as would Nelson Lee and with Umlosi it would make a very thrilling adventure. The pity is that it is a few months before any lengthy school holiday can be expected although, as Nipper remarked to me, school work could still go on while travelling - it has been done before.

I have never been on a treasure hunt or to find a lost explorer in the steamy jungles of a foreign land, but I like to read about it. Very few of us are given the opportunity to visit mysterious exotic areas where danger and death are a daily hazard. But were it not for intrepid hunters like Dorrie, Nelson Lee and others this would be a dreary old world of ours.

FALSE EVIDENCE

by J. R. Godsave

It is a somewhat debatable point as to whether an author can afford to 'kill off' a leading character for the sake of writing a sensational story or a sensational ending. Such a position must have faced E. S. Brooks when he finally wrote Walter Starke out of the famous St. Frank's characters.

In some cases a character who has offended against school rules, etc., is reprieved by the saving of a life from either drowning or fire. Starke's crime, if his can be called such, was that he swore that Nipper had struck him down with a walking-stick one night when in actual fact he was knocked down and injured by a passing motor car.

The whole incident started with Nelson Lee leaving St. Frank's for a few weeks at the request of a Government Minister for some secret work in Italy. Had Lee not gone he would have saved Nipper a lot of trouble.

It was Teddy Long who was responsible for informing Starke that Nipper was to break bounds that night for the express purpose of playing a jape against Hal Brewster & Co. of the River House School. Armed with this information Starke took it upon himself also to break bounds with the idea of confronting Nipper in the lane. His idea was to aggravate Nipper to such an extent that Nipper would strike him. Starke would then collapse and as he had previously arranged with his study-mate, Kenmore to arrive on the scene shortly

after and would then witness an assault on a prefect which, of course, would earn Nipper a flogging by the Headmaster.

It was unfortunate that Nipper while walking along the lane bound for the River House School should see over by the left hedge there seemed to be a black patch. As he came level and was about to stride by he could see something lying on the ground. Walking towards the object Nipper discovered that it was a human form, lying huddled and motionless. As he bent down he caught sight of a St. Frank's cap, and the figure as he saw when he looked closer, as that of Walter Starke of the sixth.

The first explanation to flash into his mind was that Starke was laying intoxicated after a visit to the White Harp. All attempts to rouse Starke failed and resting his hand on the ground near Starke's head his fingers touched something wet and sticky, and then Nipper saw that the senior's forehead was bleeding.

Starke had suffered a violent blow on the forehead, and there was an awful wound. Nipper saw a walking-stick on the ground and mechanically picked it up. Even as he touched the heavy knob he recognised the stick as his own. He dropped the stick at once for his fingers were still smeared with the blood he had touched. He wiped his hand in the grass and then picked up the stick again.

At this point Kenmore arrived and was labouring under a misapprehension. He fully believed that Starke was shamming. Finding out that such was not the case he immediately accused Nipper of striking Starke across the head with the walking-stick. It was Mr. Crowell who came out to investigate the voices he heard in the lane. The three of them carried Starke into the School and the Head and Mrs. Poulter were also sent for. It is at this point that Brooks in a truly dramatic style brings out the evil nature of the stricken senior.

Alone with Kenmore, Starke recovers consciousness to hear Kenmore asking if his assailant was Nipper after all. Although in a hazy mental condition Starke sees the opportunity of accusing Nipper of hitting him with a stick. All the evidence is against Nipper - the bloodstained walking-stick and almost the first words in answer to Kenmore's enquiry was to the effect that Nipper was guilty of the attack. On the face of it it would be seen that Starke was in no condition to manufacture evidence and it was obvious that Nipper must have lost his temper and struck Starke.

With such evidence against him it would be almost impossible

to prove his innocence unless Starke could be forced to give a true account of his injuries. How Nelson Lee on his return to this country forced Starke to admit he was hit by a passing motor car makes fascinating reading. o.s. 211 "The Trapping of Starke". Such was the gravity of his action that under no circumstances could he be allowed to remain a scholar of St. Frank's. Expelled and disgraced his final act against Nipper is recorded in o.s.212 "The Prefect's Revenge".

* * * * *

DO YOU REMEMBER?

by Roger M. Jenkins

No. 200 - Magnets 1028-34 - The Toad of the Remove

This series illustrates only too clearly the variable quality of the Magnet at this time. Perhaps the most astonishing feature is the publication of a substitute story in No. 1030 ("A Ventriloquist at Large") that had nothing at all to do with the series. Another slightly unsettling aspect was the number of newcomers and returners that were introduced in such a short space of time. But no matter what faults could be discerned in the structure, both in details and in style the series was largely very satisfying.

Redwing was making a late return to Greyfriars, now as a fee-paying pupil since he had found a fortune in the South Seas, and he was accompanied by Vernon-Smith who had persuaded his father to extend his holidays until late October! They came across Edgar Bright torturing an animal and Redwing was so disgusted that he fought with him. Sir Hilton Popper was also encountered and he passed some disparaging remarks about their fathers, which they denied, and as Mr. Quelch later remarked with a good deal of prescience, "Sir Hilton's resentment may cause more trouble than you can be aware of".

Sir Hilton Popper was a fine character drawing, and in early days he was a typical Edwardian squire who flogged poachers and could influence the Board of Governors at Greyfriars in any way he chose. By the late 'twenties, however, his finances had gone to pieces, the estate was heavily mortgaged, and the servants were expecting a crash at any moment. The account of Sir Hilton in the toils of a moneylending solicitor, Mr. Bright, was superb. Mr. Bright blackmailed Sir Hilton into recommending Edgar for

Greyfriars after Dr. Locke had refused to accept him. The description of Sir Hilton's predicament was enhanced by delightful irony, and his discomfiture at having to recommend the son of a man he despised was related with telling effect. Sir Hilton was no longer an ogre to be loathed by the reader: he was now more of a figure of fun, and any dramatic situation in which he appeared was always tinged with amusement.

As well as Edgar Bright, the Toad of the Remove, there were two other characters who appeared, both from St. Jim's - Ernest and Frank Levison. All three were searching for the will of a former Remove master, and the legal intricacies were explained in the contemporary Gem as well as the Magnet. What mattered was not the complicated financial tangle but the way in which the episodes were integrated into the plot: Guy Fawkes celebrations became part of the continuing story, the Highcliffe match ended in one number and was picked up again in the next, and there was also the unexpected gratitude of Skinner that saved Levison from being expelled for theft; all added up to produce some magnificent fireworks, literally and metaphorically. There were, however, two elements that were typically Hamiltonian: the new boy who was a sneak was also dishonest, and the solicitor was a rogue. Only a detailed knowledge of the author's own private life could explain these constantly recurring curious themes.

* * * * *

THE WILMOT SERIES

by H. Heath

I regard the "Eric Wilmot series" in the Magnet as being a neglected subject in the columns of the C.D.

This is puzzling, as to me the theme and quality of the writing bear a very strong resemblance to the "Victor Cleeve series" in the Gem, eight years earlier in 1928. The "Victor Cleeve series" is rightly regarded as one of Charles Hamilton's best, but the "Eric Wilmot series" appears to have received scant recognition. This is my view after ten years of reading the C.D.

In my opinion, the quality of the writing of the Wilmot stories, is equal to that of Victor Cleeve in the Gem. The main points of these two stories were certainly extremely similar.

Both Cleeve and Wilmot had left their former Schools, Barcroft and Topham, after being accused of theft. Cleeve, thanks to his

relative at St. Jim's, Mr. Railton, is admitted to that School, whilst Mr. Hacker who was related to Wilmot, performed the same service at Greyfriars. Cleeve and Wilmot were both extremely good at sport, at cricket and soccer respectively. However, both boys had no wish to continue with their sporting activities at their new Schools, or to make new friendships. Their common and most fervent desire is to return to Barcroft and Topham, after somehow having had their innocence proved. This object is eventually achieved.

Evidently in 1947, Hamilton introduced Topham, Wilmot's old school, in slim booklet form. I would be most interested to know if this booklet featured Wilmot, and the only other boy named in the Magnet series, Raleigh, captain of the Topham soccer team.

If this is the case then Charles Hamilton would seem to have fond memories of the "Eric Wilmot Series" of 1936 not to have forgotten Topham. There is no doubt that two unknown Schools temporarily provided the readers of the Gem and Magnet, with two splendid characters in Victor Cleeve and Eric Wilmot, in two magnificent series.

* * * * *

LET'S BE CONTROVERSIAL

No. 246. THE SOUND AND THE ECHO

In the article which we publish this month, Mr. Heath expressed the opinion that the Magnet's Wilmot series of 1936 is one which has been much neglected in our pages and not given the credit it deserves.

Long years ago I wrote that the Cleeve series was the best of 1928 in the Gem. It was not a difficult decision at which to arrive. The Cleeve series of 4 stories was the only writing which Charles Hamilton did for the Gem in that year. The rest were sub tales, and pretty awful ones at that. When I wrote, the Cleeve tales were but little known, and rarely quoted, for the simple reason that the old die-hards were not bothering about the Gem while it was under the sub scourge.

Long years ago Roger Jenkins wrote that the Wilmot series in the Magnet - a copy - lock, stock, and barrel - of the Cleeve series, was the most outstanding work in the Magnet in 1936.

I think Mr. Heath is probably right. The Wilmot series does

seem to have escaped popular favour. The reason could be that it was so close a copy in theme to the Gem series - a little variation on the theme might have helped - but, as I observed, the Cleeve tales were not all that well known at that time, 1936.

The Wilmot tales were competent enough. It is a well-written series with an excellent study of the boy's uncle, the form-master Mr. Hacker. Maybe, by the time of Wilmot, the Golden Age of the Magnet was fading. When Cleeve was written in 1928 the writer was at the peak of his powers. By the time of Wilmot, eight years later, he was over the top of the hill.

Both series were restrained in length. The Cleeve series ran to four stories, but at that time the Gem stories were a good deal longer than they had been earlier. There was nothing much apart from the serial to provide the supporting programme and hog the space.

The Wilmot series ran to six stories, somewhat longer than Cleeve but certainly no better. And there was that most odd factor - one of the great mysteries of the Magnet and one which has received but very little attention - when, after four tales had appeared, the series was interrupted for the publication of the eight-story Brazil series. After two months we were back with Wilmot for the two stories to wind up the Wilmot series.

I can think of no explanation to account for this strange affair, but it makes one think that neither the author nor the powers-that-be were particularly enamoured of the Wilmot series.

But that inexplicable hiatus, when the series was about two-thirds through its course, may have made a difference to the Wilmot popularity.

I'm sure I liked the Wilmot series well enough in 1936, with little if any memory of Cleeve. Today I like the Cleeve series very much the better of the two. The cricket backgrounds make a difference for me, but I also find it easier reading.

I'm a little doubtful whether, when Hamilton created Topham School for those little post-war oddities, he was affected by any fond memories of the 1936 Wilmot series. I think it was his weakness for using names over and over again. I don't know how many Topham booklets appeared, but I fancy not many. It was just a marking-time exercise until the author was able to write Greyfriars again.

News of the Old Boys' Book Clubs

LONDON

Despite the inclement weather there was an average attendance at the Walthamstow meeting and those present fully enjoyed themselves.

A paragraph, taken from the Union Jack 1365, "The Mistletoe Milk Mystery" by Gwyn Evans had been jumbled up by Chris and Duncan Harper and competitors had to solve the puzzle to give the correct paragraph. Roger Jenkins was the winner. Prizes were donated by the compilers of the puzzle.

Mary Cadogan had brought along the B.B.C. tape recording of the recent broadcast featuring the William books and the author Richmal Crompton.

From the Holiday Annual of 1936, Bill Bradford read the extremely funny St. Frank's story "Handforth's Windfall".

Memory Lane reading from newsletter number 204 was read by Duncan Harper.

Finally, London Underground maps were distributed and competitors had to name stations with names that appear in the old papers, e.g. Russell Square for the junior in the Remove Form at Greyfriars. Mark Jarvis was the winner.

Thelma Bradford and Gladys Peters were given a vote of thanks for making the tea.

The Annual General Meeting of the club will be held on Sunday, 10th February, at the Loughton residence of Chris and Suzanne Harper, a full tea will be provided.

BEN WHITE

CAMBRIDGE

The Club met at the home of Jack Overhill on Sunday, 6th January despite snow and ice, hence only six members being present. Keith Hodgkinson gave a talk on 'Collecting Gone Mad'. After introducing many zany items collected by people all over the world he then gave an account of the many things he had collected throughout his life. First of all there was a model railway collection, all 1940's and early 1950's Hornby Dublo three rail locomotives,

rolling stock and accessories and these were displayed before members. Next came the old cinematograph films but the items displayed this time were another aspect of this hobby - vintage home cinematograph equipment. The first Kodak 16mm projector of 1924 and the Pathe 9.5mm Baby Cine of 1926 occupied the centre of attention followed by several late 1920's and early 1930's cine cameras. The third collection was, of course, boys papers, comics, and books together with adult magazines of the 1940's and 1950's. The examples chosen for display were the first ones that Keith had been given or bought as a child which influenced his collecting in the future - his first 'Boys' Own Paper', first 'Beano', first 'Meccano Magazine', first 'Wizard', etc. etc.

After a marvellous tea provided by Mrs. Overhill, Edward Witten presented one of his quizzes.

The meeting finished early due to the deteriorating weather conditions but not before appreciation was expressed for the tea and hospitality to the Overhills.

NORTHERN

Meeting held (417th) Saturday, 12th January, 1985

Mention was made that Gerald Champion had recently appeared on t.v. and had stated that he would not play the part of Bunter, again!

Keith Smith asked the question "Where is Greyfriars?" He read the article by Bill Gander from Story Paper Collector in 1942 in which the writer had done some research to try and locate the fictional school. Two maps had been produced to show us - the one appearing in Magnet 1672 and the colourful production from Howard Baker Press. In Magnet 22, the school was quoted to be "inland": in number 62 it was "near the coast" and in Magnet 323 it appeared the Famous Five would have to cycle 100 miles from the school to get to Dover. In later Magnets, the text gave the establishment as being on the south coast then back to north Kent. The editor, in answer to a reader's letter, said the school was "situated near the south coast of Kent". It was admitted, that the maps were well produced, but from information obtained from Magnets, many discrepancies could be found only to find certain things to be confirmed in other numbers. Peter McCall, in a recent article, discussed the problem and it was incredible that after 40

years people were discussing something that after all, was fictional. Frank Richards had stated that he had not kept notes of various facts and figures relating to his stories.

The B.B.C. World Service had recently transmitted a programme about William to be followed up by Martin Jarvis reading from the stories. Darrell had brought along a tape recording of a radio play of William, 40 years' old. It was interesting to hear the presentation - the script being written by Richmal Crompton. William is very much in vogue at the moment and appears to be getting as popular as the stories of C.H.

A very enjoyable meeting - complete with a discussion on our forthcoming celebrations for 35 years' existence at Northern Club.

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

* * * * *

The Postman Called

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

BOB CUSHING (Welwyn): I cannot miss this opportunity of congratulating you on your recent Editorial, always I might add, a source of great pleasure to me but, this one in particular, struck a chord of memory which transported me back to my distant childhood. I refer to your observations on the Victorian novel "Coming Thro' The Rye".

What must have been an early edition of that saga reposed on my mother's bookshelf, together with such 'masterpieces' as "If Winter Comes", "The Way of an Eagle" etc., as far back as I can remember. I was far too young at the time to display even the mildest interest in such literary gems but regarded them merely as additions to the decor of the room.

However their titles, if nothing else, clearly made an impression on my mind as many years later, I recall reading about the film version which you also comment upon.

Again, because I was too young, I was not privileged to see either of the two film versions later released.

However, with the passing of the years, the motion picture business, together with Hamiltonia, became my ruling passions, and I took great delight in viewing old screen classics, mainly at the NFT, of which I am still a member.

A further point of more than passing interest to me, is the

reference in your editorial to the location of the Hepworth studios. I was born in that area but not early enough to recall the Hepworth premises but, like your good self, well remember the many and varied stage productions launched by the famous 'Q' Theatre, which superseded Hepworth.

ERIC LAWRENCE (Wokingham): With reference to the Nelson Lee column in C.D. No. 456 (Dec. 1984), the author speaks of going back in time to St. Franks. He must have gone back a very long way if the music used only seven notes.

Many centuries ago, the musical scale did indeed consist of seven notes - what we now call the "white" notes - but other semitones began to be introduced and by the middle of the 15th century the five "black" notes had been added to keyboard instruments. Hence the chromatic scale of twelve notes as on our present day pianos.

This took place more than 200 years before the birth of J. S. Bach whose tercentenary falls in 1985. So "an old boy" must have been speaking with the ancestors of Nelson Lee, Nipper and Lord Dorrimore.

HAROLD TRUSCOTT (Deal): St. Frank's must be a peculiar place of learning if your Old Boy correspondent did indeed learn there that all music is written with seven notes. To begin with, does his "all" music consist only of Western music, or does he include Oriental systems as well? If he takes in the latter in his wide sweep, there are Oriental systems which have as many as 43 recognisable divisions to what we would call an octave. But even confining it to Western music the chromatic scale of semitones (leaving aside 20th century phenomena such as $\frac{1}{4}$ -tones and $\frac{1}{6}$ -tones) goes back certainly as far as Ancient Greece, one of the modes in use there being known as Chromatikos. And there is fair evidence to suggest that some such scale was in use in Egypt 3,000 years ago.

It surprises me, too, that the Old Boy needed to learn, after he had left the seat of learning, that the English alphabet contains 26 letters.

This makes it obligatory that all "our" literature (by which I take it he means English literature) is written with 26 letters, since there are no others.

TOM PORTER (Cradley Heath): You may recall that it was I who first suggested a PRINCESS SNOWEE CORNER - the idea came

to me in a flash one afternoon - and I had missed news of her recently. I am sure others have too.

With regard to the S.O.L. despite its faults - I wonder how many of us saw them in the 20's and 30's - I certainly didn't - it gave us a service otherwise unavailable.

I was a Nelson Lee fan in the '20s and '30s - it was only after the war that I became acquainted with the delights of Hamiltoniana - and am still a Lee fan to this day; but there were many tantalising gaps in my collection and I was often wishful that I didn't know what Nelson Lee and Nipper did next week. Now I can go to my complete collection of NLLs, MONSTERS, SOLs, BFLS, (NLL & CH), DETECTIVE LIBRARY, NUGGET WEEKLY, etc., to check on something or to re-read a half forgotten story.

* * * * *

ESMOND KADISH (Hendon): The Annual - as excellent as ever! - was doubly welcome when one remembers what a difficult year 1984 has been. Nice to see Gussy on the cover for a change, instead of the ubiquitous Owl. In fact, the Annual is not only a marvellous read, but it LOOKS so attractive, too, and the illustrations complement the text perfectly. Congratulations, once again, dear Editor!

I was interested to see that, in the latest Hamilton "Companion" volume, the writers credit John Wheway as the author of the Cliff House tale, "Forbidden to be Friends", from the 1937 SCHOOL FRIEND ANNUAL. In fact, it originally appeared in a 1927 issue of the SCHOOL FRIEND (No. 96), when L. E. Ransome was writing most of the Cliff House tales. Wheway's schoolboy characters - Jimmy Richmond & Co. - have been substituted for Jack Tollhurst and Co., who appeared in the original version. The story has been shortened for the Annual, and incidents such as Bessie's falling through the ice, and apparently being left to her fate by Tollhurst have been deleted. The question arises: who really wrote it - Wheway or Ransome? I must say that the style doesn't seem much like that of Wheway's Cliff House tales in the thirties, although that doesn't necessarily mean that he didn't write it, of course.

There's a further mystery over the authorship of the opening Cliff House tale in the 1938 SCHOOL FRIEND ANNUAL, too. Again, this is reprint of a 1926 tale in the SCHOOL FRIEND (No. 55) entitled "The Hidden Schoolgirl", with suitable adjustments made to the characters and text. Significantly, perhaps, the Annual version

refers to "plump Bessie Bunter" instead of the "fat Bessie Bunter" of the original. Perhaps Mr. Wheway and Mr. Ransome collaborated on both stories!

L. S. ELLIOTT (London): At the Cambridge meeting mention was made of the pre-war Thriller which lasted from 1929 to 1940. It was stated that Edgar Wallace first wrote of Mr. J. G. Reader in a Thriller tale. Not so. "The Mind of Mr. J. G. Reader" was published in 1925 and "Terror Keep" in 1927. His first Thriller tale was "Red Aces", later to appear as a book - plus two more stories. Other full-length Thriller tales appeared in book form as "The Guv'nor and Other Stories".

It was also mentioned at the Cambridge meeting that Leslie Charteris wrote a Saint story for the Thriller. In fact he wrote many new short novels in this paper, all to be published as books. The only Saint book prior to the Thriller was "Meet the Tiger", later converted to a Saint book "She was a Lady".

BILL LOFTS (London): I can assure Fr. Hertzberg that all contributions to the C.D. are from my own pen. My writing I would suggest has improved through the years - like wine matured with age. As far as I can discover, the S.O.L. reprints were edited by C. M. Down the Magnet editor who was paid about £2.2.0. a time for them. So he could hardly sack himself. I never raised the question with him pertaining to S.O.L. but I do know when suggesting that the Gem reprints could have been done much better, he blamed Arthur Aldcroft who was in charge of the paper at the time, and did not have a high opinion of him. Much later when Aldcroft was traced he only had unpleasant memories of his days on the Companions Papers and would not elaborate much on his days on The Gem. As he was the author of the short Greyfriars story in The Boys' Herald 'Wun Lung's Pie' - that like the pie was simply awful, maybe he was not as versed about the characters and correct subbing as the Magnet editor suggested. I feel certain that the Rookwood serials (or the bulk of them) in The Gem were written by Stanley Austin and Kenneth E. Newman. The former reputed to be the best of the sub-writers, and who was far superior to Newman in my own opinion.

REV. F. HERTZBERG (Hr. Bebington): "Tom Merry Cavalcade" has been one of the most enjoyable items in S.P.C.D. - and "Twenty Years Later" was certainly the most moving instalment. Is there

any chance of a separate publication of the series entire? Danny keeps criticising Magnet free gifts. Can they have been so bad if Prout and Coker "endorsed" them? But Wharton did so also. Prout might have been expected to know the difference between a six-shooter and an automatic pistol.

* * * * *

RANDOM THOUGHTS FROM A LADY READER OF C.D.

MARGERY WOODS writes:

I don't know if I told you that I collect children's books as well as storypapers. Recently a very interesting item came into my collection. A booklength story in annual format, its title is BELLS OF MYSTERY by Joan Inglesant, whose name will be instantly recognised by collectors of A.P. schoolgirl fiction. This one, however, is not one of theirs but was published by Puzzle Books Ltd., of Garrick Street, Covent Garden, and the puzzle element is provided by a jigsaw enclosed within a pocket inside the back cover. When completed the jigsaw illustrates "the wonderful revelation that solved the mystery of Weirdslea for ever".

Weirdslea, of course, was the Village of a Hundred Secrets, wherein dwelled Helen Bourne, famous in the pages of SCHOOL-GIRLS' WEEKLY during the 1930s. There is also an interesting dedication which reads: To my very good friend Reginald Thompson Eves this little books is affectionately dedicated. "Finis coronat opus". Inglesant Grange, November 1933. The illustrations are by Glossop.

I wonder if this was a reprint of a SCHOOLGIRLS' WEEKLY tale, or an original. Perhaps one of our C.D. experts could tell me which author was behind this pseudonym. S/he wrote a great number of stories and serials for all the A.P. girls' papers, many of which were reprinted in the SCHOOLGIRL'S OWN LIBRARY. I've discovered references to John Inglesant, but none to Joan.

The Merlin edition entitled BESSIE BUNTER AND THE MISSING FORTUNE mentioned by Miss Evelyn Flinders may be an abridged reprint of BAFFLED BY JEMIMA (S.O.L. No. 605 of Oct. 1937, which in its turn was probably a reprint of a series first seen in the SCHOOLGIRL some time in the early thirties). I have two MERLIN copies. One is BESSIE BUNTER AND THE GOLD ROBBERS, which was published in S.O.L. 694 as MABS MUST NEVER KNOW. The other is BESSIE BUNTER JOINS THE CIRCUS, which

appeared as BABS AND CO.'S CIRCUS TASK in S.O.L. 524. It would be interesting to compare these edited versions with the original weekly series, almost certainly all by John Wheway as Miss Flinders surmises, but so far the relevant issues of SCHOOLGIRL have eluded me. For me, Wheway's stories date least of all in writing style, and his construction and plotlines were usually very sound.

* * * * *

DEATH OF ANOTHER LOYAL C.D. READER

(A Tribute from Larry Morley)

I was saddened and shocked to learn of the death in November of Fred Oak of Cricklewood. He took a keen interest in the Hamilton stories, and particularly in the Magnet - and he dearly loved our C.D.

In a way, long ago, I was instrumental in re-introducing him to the old papers. We worked on night duty at Hoover's, and he would watch me reading the Howard Baker reprints. We would discuss the much loved old papers of which he had a fair collection.

He was a big man in every way, huge in stature and big of heart, and, like most big men, he was of a gentle disposition and a thoroughly good fellow. During the war he was a sergeant in the Infantry, and for a time was stationed near to Eric Payne's home.

My regret is that I did not keep in touch with him till the last. We would have a telephone chat from time to time during a year, but I did not communicate with him in recent months. On behalf of us all, I extend sincere sympathy to his widow and daughter. Good-bye, old friend, rest peacefully. I will always treasure the memory of both of us reading the old papers while working on those night shifts.

* * * * *

WANTED: Old Aeromodeller Magazines and Annuals, Model Aircraft Magazines and old plans, Kits, Engines. Also old books on same subject. Please state condition and price.

ARNOLD MONEY, 2 SUNDOWN AVENUE, BRADFORD, BD7 4BS.

* * * * *

JOE CONROY writes:

It is just on 23 years since I received my first copy of Story Paper Collectors' Digest. It was an issue with a white cover, and the picture had the caption "The Empty Chair".

23 years of wonderful stepping-stones in memory.

NEW LIGHT ON PENTELOW?

by Simon Garrett

The accent is on the question mark.

After so many years of dedicated research by Bill Lofts and others, one sometimes feels that nothing can be new, but has anyone read "J. N. Pentelow: a Biographical Enquiry"?

This booklet was privately printed in 1969 for the author, Irving Rosenwater, and limited to fifty copies.

All I know of it is a review by John Arlott in the 1970 edition of "Wisden Cricketers" Almanack". Mr. Rosenwater is said to have unearthed a great deal of Pentelow' work under his own name and five pennames, including some fourpenny paperbacked novels. There is also reference to the famous clashes with Charles Hamilton.

I was not involved in the hobby in 1969, but I wonder if anyone can tell me whether this booklet has ever cast any light on old controversies?

* * * * *

BILL LOFTS writes:

The Blake serial in The Wild West Weekly, that was continued in The Thriller, was original but I believe the character The Phantom

Sheriff had some American origins. The author was probably Ernest Holmes incidently the last editor of 'Everybody's'.

In answer to E. Holmans query - editors have slipped up before in their editorials, by revealing the real name of an author, known only to readers under a nom-de-plume. R. Samways used to answer readers letters often making some up on the instructions of H. A. Hinton, especially those on white feathers, on why Hinton had not gone to War for his country. The well known office boy to Hinton was Will Gibbons, a small boy who remained in small stature all his life. Smoked cigars, spoke in a high pitched voice and was a comical character around the corridors of Fleetway House. Whether he answered letters will now never be known as he was killed in a road accident in 1970. He not only wrote a Magnet story, but became quite prolific in the writing field, when his stories were usually like his character, very comical.

THE MODERN GIRL

by W. O. G. Lofts

I would suppose almost every collector, whether they collected it or not, must have heard of The Modern Boy. This was published by The Amalgamated Press and had a run of over ten years in the 1928/38 period. Easily its most popular stories were those of Ken King of the Islands - by Charles Hamilton, as well as the science fiction element stories by Robert Murray. Its editor whom I once met in the fifties was Charles Boff - whom C. M. Down editor of the group which included The Magnet & Gem, always spoke very highly of.

But I wonder how many C.D. readers heard of a publication entitled - The Modern Girl that seemingly started in 1936? Unfortunately the only copy I have seen was dated 1949 and when paper shortage was acute in the period just after the end of the last War. It had obviously (like many A.P. comics) been greatly reduced in size by this time about 4 inches by 5 inches like a small pocket Library. It was published by Coury Pub.Co. of London. W.14, when its yellow cover had an illustration of a very grown up schoolgirl drawn by 'Zara'. At the price of nine-pence it was edited by probably its owner a Louise Andree Coury, and its pages were few indeed! The opening story (no authors name given) was 'The Missing Will' that reminds one of the same title in the Nelson Lee saga by Maxwell Scott. Articles included 'A French Girls Idea of Fashion'. 'Rug Making at Home' - and modern girls cookery, with prizes for recipes. There was also other shorties and odd items.

How long it exactly ran for I'm still trying to discover, when I have no doubt that before the war it probably was of a greater size and would have had many more features.

It would be most interesting to learn if any C.D. reader can remember or has seen any earlier publication, though I don't honestly think it had anything like the circulation like our own so popular Modern Boy.

* * * * *

WANTED: Howard Baker reprint of Magnet No. 27 (Single issue).

BELLFIELD, 65 BRIDGE COURT, CRADLEY HEATH, WARLEY,
WEST MIDLANDS, B64 6LW.

It must be in good condition - your price paid. Phone C.H. 68952.

"CHUMS" ECHO

by S. Perry

I was very interested in the article by Edward Baldock in the latest Annual.

Over the past few years my collecting has been mainly "Chums Annuals" and I have a few including the 1920 referred to.

It may interest readers of Collectors' Digest to know that when the "Champion" was started in 1922, Eric Townsend the author of "The Bell of Santadino" was also writing for Chums "Blackbirder's Treasure" at the same time!

The leading characters in both stories were very similar. Clarence Dollaby in The Champion and Claude Galloway in "Chums". In fact it could be the same chap.

I find it rather surprising that so few readers of "Digest" refer to "Chums" and I suppose for that matter to "Champion". All the favourite authors are in both papers. Tom Hunter, Earle Danesford, George Rochester, Walter Edwards, John Wheway, Michael Poole, Morton Pike, etc.

I could not find E. S. Brookes in "Chums" but he may have been in there somewhere, no Charles Hamilton, although quite a few of the "Sub" writers were there.

* * * * *

SATURDAY ECHO

CHAS. CHURCHILL writes:

In the section of your Editorial in the October C.D. headed "Once upon a Saturday" you mention how you remember the crowds of people around the town on a Saturday, especially in the evenings and wonder whether the time of "payday" had anything to do with it. I think this was the main reason for the rush of shopping on a Saturday evening as in those days paytime was usually at the actual end of the working week or just before.

I well remember an uncle of mine who worked in the office of a large firm of grocers, etc., in Paignton, Devon, in the early twenties. He was paid (I won't say earned) the princely sum of £2 weekly, and was paid when the shop closed on Saturday evenings at 8 p.m. His wife, my aunt, one day wrote the proprietor asking if wages could be paid at midday on Saturdays, pointing out how difficult shopping was late in the evenings. To her great surprise the boss agreed and my aunt ever after claimed that she was the

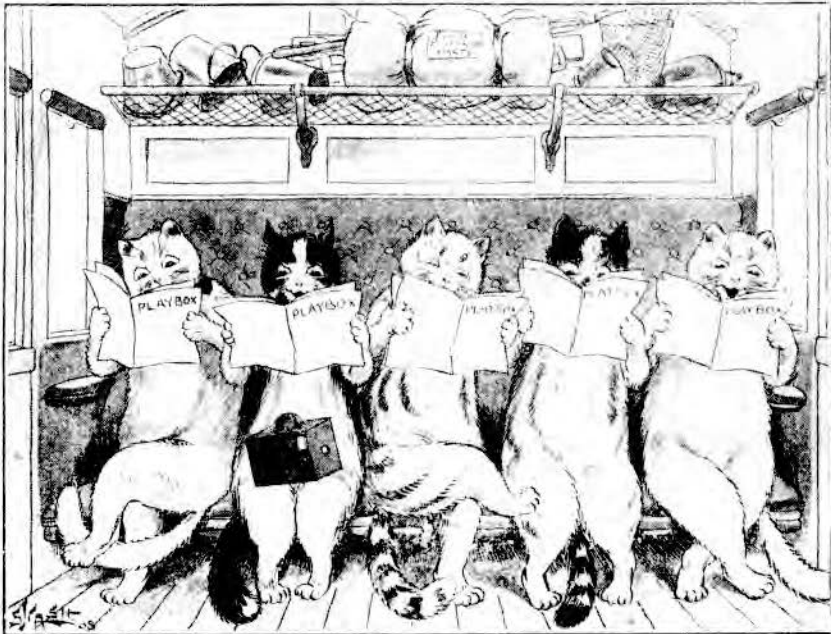
real reason why wages commenced generally being paid on Saturday mornings or even on Fridays, from then on.

Speaking for myself I always found Exeter packed with people in the city shopping area on Saturdays and I usually visited the second hand bookshop in the market at least twice that day. Late in the evenings some of the butchers sold off meat by auction and one could with luck obtain a nice leg of REAL lamb for 1/6.

* * * * *

P.S.—Mother says she never knew us so quiet on a railway journey before. We *do* look good, don't we?

Ferry Hufferin



Next stop, Catville-on-Sea

S. J. Cash drawing from "The Playbox" of July 1908.

A PLEASURE RECALLED

BY E. Baldock

The day is approaching. We know the exact date. Have we not marked it in red ink on our calendars long since? The day when 'IT' is published. There is the all-significant clue. It could be a book, a paper, a journal or a proclamation - anything. It is more important and of far greater moment than any mere book or magazine. It is nothing less than the Christmas number of the Magnet: looked forward to for so long and with such anticipation.

The Christmas number of the Magnet. A bumper issue double its normal size. An extra long main story involving a mystery and much fun over the holidays, together with numerous seasonable articles, the cover usually fringed with holly depicting a festive scene, possible at Wharton Lodge. There is a roaring log fire blazing in a wide grate. The groaning board is heaped with rich fare and is surrounded by happy faces, not forgetting that of William George Bunter with the broadest of smirks upon his fat features, with his spectacles gleaming and in his element with a large wedge of cake in one hand and a brimming glass of ginger 'pop' in the other, the very epitome of smug contentment. A glimpse through the leaded window in the rear reveals that it is snowing heavily. Obviously one of those old-fashioned Christmases when it always snowed at just the right time. A scene, in fact, redolent of another age, perhaps a less sophisticated, less sensitive and simpler age when it was less difficult to amuse a more imaginative youth.

Or again it may have been an outdoor scene. A wild and whirl-ing night of wind and storm. A black sinister-looking house with no lights visible and surrounded by wind-tossed trees. In the foreground, gazing upon this dismal scene, a group of well-coated fellows wearing Greyfriars' caps, Bunter being evident once more, looking less than happy on this occasion. Mystery and adventure are in the air. How we long to make a start on chapter one. Wonderful old Christmas numbers.

It is upon such memories as these that we senior 'boys' are able to look back and ponder, and to a degree re-live. It has been truly said that the boy is father to the man and in the make-up of most of us this boy has been carefully nurtured and not allowed to fade or diminish with the passing years. Sympathy must go to the man who has at some point along the road lost this 'boy', the fellow he once was. Friars happily are a unique breed, neither

circumstances, age nor change can alter their perpetual enthusiasm for the joys of yesteryear. They are an evergreen species, a very special brand of brothers who, each year on the anniversary of the cherished 'Christmas Number', never forget to raise a brimming bumper of Mrs. Mimbles' 'best' to the memory of Charles Hamilton the founder of the feast.

MR. BUDDLE AND THE FLAG LIEUT.

BOB CUSHING (Welwyn) writes:

I would like to add my congratulations to the chorus of praise which I feel sure is, even at this moment, still swelling the post-bag of Excelsior House, in tribute to the latest C.D. Annual.

Clearly, Mr. Buddle graced the pages of our favourite magazine, long, long ago but he is a newcomer to me and one to whom I will hope to renew acquaintance in future issues.

On the subject of this month's issue of C.D., I was particularly interested in your reader's reference to the 'Flag Lieutenant's films of the silent era starring Henry Edwards.

The patriotic themes exemplified by such productions were, of course, immensely popular in their day as your reader implies and perhaps obscures the tremendous success of the stage tour enjoyed by Henry Edwards and his wife, Chrissie White.

I saw this naval epic at the King's Theatre, Hammersmith during 1929 or 30 and to this day, I vividly recall the standing ovation the couple received at 'Curtain Call', accompanied by masses of floral tributes, excessive even by the standards of those heady days,

FOR SALE: Duplicate Nelson Lees, O/S, N/S, Union Jacks, various other O.B.B.s, Post War Thomsons, etc. Would exchange for Sexton Blake Publications.

Further details (stamp appreciated):

KEN TOWNSEND, 7 NORTH CLOSE, WILLINGTON, DERBY, DE6 6EA.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: Everyone makes mistakes. That's why some pencils have erasers.