

STORY PAPER  
COLLECTORS' DIGEST

VOL. 39

No. 463

JULY 1985

THE **BAD BOY**  
of the **FAMILY**



*"A son who can rob his father is no son of mine!  
Out of my house and out of my life—and never  
darken my doors again!"*

Do not miss this startling new serial which is  
packed with thrilling incidents from beginning  
to end. Starting this week.

**CHEER BOYS CHEER**  
36 Pages, **1P** Every Tuesday.

52P

LARGE STOCKS OF S.B.L.'S: From 1st, 2nd and 3rd series on. Also Sexton Blake stories in DETECTIVE WEEKLY, POPULAR, THRILLER and UNION JACK.

HAMILTONIA generally. Huge stocks: Magnets, Gems, Populars, Holiday Annuals, etc. Still some volumes left of the "Oldies".

Boys' Realms, Boys' Heralds, Boys' Friends, Garland, Nugget, Boys' World, Boys of England, Our Boys' Journal, Our Boys' Paper, Boys' Leisure Hour, True Blue, etc. Bound volumes going cheap to clear.

Fine selection of bound comics such as Jester, Comic Cuts, etc., mainly in the 20's. Complete range of Howard Baker fascimiles and Book Club Specials. Some out-of-prints also available. Some 2nd hand Facsimiles available. Please list wants.

NEW ARRIVALS. Some more Modern Boys, Triumphs, Plucks, Detective Weekly, Thrillers in addition to present stock. Prices have gone up on these but I'm selling them all at £1.25 each. The same for several years. Lots of Lees! Compare prices. You'll be amazed at the difference.

WANTED: Monster Library 1 - 19. £9 each paid if good and complete. Good B.O.A.'s and CHUMS always wanted; around £7 paid for good volumes.

Thousands of Thomsons - some pre-war but mainly post-war.

Don't pay "thro the nose" for your purchases; try me first. Visitors always welcome by appointment, and a good mail service.

N O R M A N      S H A W

84 Belvedere Road, Upper Norwood, London S.E.19 2HZ

Tel. 01-771-9857

Nearest station B.R. Crystal Palace.

# 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. 463

JULY 1985

Price 52p

(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 TOPHEAVY REMOVE

Many of our enthusiastic contributors have been trying to bring order to the Greyfriars Remove, with everything pointing to the fact that the numbers in the Remove, after the first few years, were too many and too varied to make sense, even allowing for the licence of fiction.

Of course, one point some of them overlook. In any school, pupils are coming and going from term to term. In the Remove, perhaps, all too many came and few went. Starting with a useful nucleus, Hamilton, for a year or two, introduced a minor cast in the form of various surnames, probably culled from his butcher, his baker, and his candlestick maker, not to mention, for the more shifty types, a solicitor's name or two from his acquaintances.

Then new boys turned up who were to be permanent members of the cast. And also a number came along who had a part to play

in one story, and were left around as dead wood instead of being removed from the scene. When the sub writers took a hand, they, too, brought along new boys of their own creation, and these, too, were left straying around in an already top-heavy Remove.

The artists were not blameless in giving a picture of a form which was far too large for a school like Greyfriars. They showed a form which, quite possibly, was something that they carried in their memories from their own school days. Too many characters, too cramped in their old-fashioned desks, for a real public school.

Toward the end of the First War, one or two of the editors set about compiling a Who's Who or something of the sort, collecting together every minor character and every minor detail, which made the Remove totally unbalanced with regard to every other form at Greyfriars or anywhere else. And still the new boys came along. And still they were left lying around when their little hour in the limelight was over.

One wonders whether Hamilton himself ever realised how unlikely his Remove at Greyfriars would be in real life. Perhaps he did. Long, long before the end Bulstrode and Bolsover, two leading lights in earlier times, had dropped from the picture. Possibly if some one totalled up the Remove characters actually mentioned in the last ten years - from 1930 to 1940 - one would get a fairer idea of how Hamilton pictured his famous Remove. As for us, - well, we really would not have wanted it to be different, would we?

### THE BUTLER KNOCKED

In Agatha Christie's short story "The Dream", her detective, Poirot, gained a clue to the solution of the mystery by the fact that the butler, introducing him to his master, knocked on the door before entering the room. In properly run high-class families, butlers never knock on doors. A good butler never knocks.

I seem to recall that, many years ago, a real-life butler who had "butled" to certain members of our Royal Family, ignored the terms of his working agreement, and published a kind of autobiography. "I was expected to knock on the door before entering", he observed in something of a high-class sneer, "and a good butler like me never knocks on a door".

Of course, a common or garden - more common than garden - chap like me is never likely to want the services of a butler. But, if I ever did, I certainly would expect him to tap on the door

---

and wait until I called out "Come in". After all, I might be reading the Magnet, and he might cover me with confusion before I could hide it under a cushion. Even Mr. Scarlet tapped on Mr. Buddle's door before entering, giving Mr. B. the chance to hide his Gem under his chair. It may not be high class, but it seems to me to be common courtesy.

### MYSTERY RIVER

Danny, in the extract from his world-famous Diary, reminds us this month that 50 years ago the Gem editor, to fill the Nelson Lee "slot" in the Gem, dug out an old Lee story, newly named "Mystery River" and started to run it as a short serial. I recall the occasion well, for, to me, it was a remarkable coincidence that, out of the hundreds available, they selected the only St. Franks tale that I ever recalled reading as a boy. It must have been a pretty good yarn for the memory of it to remain with me.

I have an idea that, on its original presentation in the Nelson Lee Library it had borne the title "The Mystery of the Poisoned River" but the experts can refute or confirm that. It must have had qualities which impressed the mind of the youthful Fayne which had developed steeped in Hamiltonia.

### THE EDITOR

\* \* \* \* \*

WANTED: GOOD PRICES PAID  
SBL (Third Series): 31 and 68 (Covers must be sound.)

also Detective Weekly: 26.

Tel. 0273 - 556445 or write: 6 Friar Walk, BRIGHTON, BN1 6NJ.

FOR SALE Complete series of eleven "Goldhawk" (St. Jim's novels.  
Very good condition. £20.

LOVEDAY, 12 THE RUGG, LEOMINSTER, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR6 8TE.

EXCHANGE: 44 Aldine Buffalo Bill Libs. In range 182 - 638 for Jack, Sam, and Pete Material. Please ring: Budleigh Salterton 3826.

\*\*\*\*\*

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH: Procrastination is the art of keeping  
up with yesterday.

# Danny's Diary



JULY 1935

The Modern Boy is in top form at the moment. This month's School for Slackers tales have been "Captain - and Fag", in which the Head appoints Ferguson of the Fourth as Captain of Cricket - with staggering results. "Asking for the Sack", where Aubrey Compton, leader of the slackers, challenges the Head to sack him - and gets the medicine he doesn't want. "Laying for the Head" in which Compton adopts gangster methods in his bitterness against the new Head.

Finally "The High Coombe Joker" in which Carter, the funny man of the Fifth works the biggest jape ever. The victim is the Head, and he, too, has his little joke.

The Biggles stories this month started off with "The Mountain of Light", set in unknown Tibet. This actually is a serial and goes on every week.

Captain Justice started off with "The Invisible Defender", going on with the story of Justice's stronghold in mid-Atlantic. Then "In the Enemy's Hands", with Justice adrift on the fog-bound ocean. Then "The Fight for Justice Island" which is the last of that series. Then the start of a new Justice series "Vanished Without Trace", and it is Captain Justice himself who vanishes.

The Old Boy has published a set of anagrams (he calls them nastigrams). I'm copying them down so that people who read my

Diaries in 50 years' time, can try to puzzle them out. (Doug gave a horse laugh when he read that, but I bet he can't puzzle them out.) They are all seaside resorts. 1. Lots of Wet. 2. Oh, it's mud! 3. Not Sea. 4. Get a Wet Season. 5. No Supreme Waters. 6. Man - he die. 7. Thou'rt mad.

If you read my diary in 50 years time, there may be a tanner prize for a complete correct lot of answers. You can spend the tanner at Woolworth's 3d and 6d store.

The Famous Frenchman Dreyfus is dead. He would be about 70 years old. Years ago he was concerned in a trial for treason, and he was degraded from the French army and given a long term of imprisonment. It turned out, however, that the real guilty man was one named Esterhazy, and eventually Dreyfus was set free and recompensed for his undeserved sentence. The truth came out owing to the activities of a famous French writer who wrote a book called "J'Accuse".

There is a new William book out, under the title "William the Detective". It's good, though far from being the best of William. The best stories in the book are "William and the Monster" in which he has the idea of catching a Loch Ness type, and "A Present from William" in which Ginger's aunt, Miss Carrol has a stuffed cat left to her by her rich uncle. Good, but I've read better "William".

The Libraries have not been all that hot this month. The Greyfriars S.O.L. is "Victory for the Rebels" which is the finish of the rebellion against Mr. Brander, the Dutch Headmaster, and "High Jinks at Grimslade" in which Jim Dainty is expelled by Dr. Sammy Sparshott, his Headmaster. But I don't ever care for the Grimslade tales.

In the Boys' Friend Library I had "The Secret Kingdom" which I had read before in Modern Boy when I was smaller. It is a Captain Justice tale set somewhere up the uncharted Amazon.

The National Government is half-way through its term of office, and there has been a shake-up and change over. Mr. Baldwin now becomes Prime Minister in place of Ramsay Macdonald who has lost much of his appeal to the country. Neville Chamberlain is now Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Home Secretary is Sir John Simon. The big problem for the new Cabinet is high unemployment and the distressed areas.

Some good shows at the local cinemas, even though it's summer. The loveliest film of the month is "Sequoia". Jean Parker and Russell Hardie are the human stars, but the real stars are a deer and a

mountain lion who strike up a friendship amid the lovely trees. A beautiful film which ought to be shown every year at this time for ever and ever.

A rather delightful little Musical was "Happiness Ahead" which is all about milkmen. Dick Powell is the manager of a dairy firm, and there are a number of toe-tapping little songs in it.

Katherine Hepburn is in "The Little Minister" which, secretly, I enjoyed. Doug said it is too sugary. From a play by J. M. Barrie, it is about a church minister who falls in love with a gipsy girl, but she turns out to be the runaway daughter of an earl.

Ann Harding and Robert Montgomery are in "Biography of a Bachelor Girl" about a lady artist who causes a storm when she writes her autobiography. I found it fairish. But I found "The Sacred Flame", a Somerset Maugham story, with George Brent a bit heavy for me.

"Vagabond Lady" with Robert Young and Reginald Denny is a pleasant film. It is unusual as being produced by Hal Roach who rarely stirs far from the Laurel and Hardy films. The big new star Robert Taylor (the ladies swoon over his manly beauty) was good in "Times Square Lady", about gangsters, though it also has one or two good new songs in it. One of them is "The Object of My Affection".

Finally, a good British comedy "Bulldog Jack" in which a playboy pretends to be Bulldog Drummond. It stars Jack and Claud Hulbert, Ralph Richardson, and Fay Wray. Good fun.

Two London publishers have started to reprint subsequent editions of their most popular works in sixpenny editions. They are called paperbacks because they have paper covers. It is expected that other publishers will follow suit. So far, only works of fiction have been published in these 6d editions, but non-fiction works are to follow soon.

Mussolini, the dictator of Italy (they call him the Duce, which I think is pronounced "duck" though it may be "deuce") is threatening to invade Abyssinia. Other countries are watching his threats and antics closely.

Lovely month of tip-top school stories in the Gem. The first of the month is "A Damsel in Distress". Tom Merry starts T.M.L.H. which means Tom Merry's Legion of Honour. The Legion aids the damsel, who is not all she appears to be, but Redfern is the star of the Legion when he rescues Towser, Herries' bulldog, from drowning.

Towser features again the next week in "Towser's Twin". The twin is one of Bernard Glyn's inventions. A typical St. Jim's tale. Then came "Tom Merry's Melody-Makers" in which a number of rival orchestras are formed in the school. With this issue the St. Frank's



serial "The Secret World" reached its final instalment.

In the month's final Gem we have "The Stage-Struck Schoolboy", a great tale starring Monty Lowther. In this issue there started a new St. Frank's serial "Mystery Mill", in which all the fish die strangely in the River Stowe.

The Packsaddle stories have also continued in the Gem throughout the month, but I don't usually bother to read these.

A Comet monoplane has flown from London to Paris in just 50 minutes. And it takes that time for a train to take me from my home town, 22 miles, to London.

As always, the magnificent Magnet has been magnificent, with the lovely Stacy series continuing throughout. First Magnet is "A Traitor to His Side". Stacey is the best junior cricketer at Greyfriars, but he sells his side to save his own skin. Then "A Dangerous Double" in which Stacey lands the result of his own misdeeds on his double, Harry Wharton.

Next, a superb tale "Standing by Smithy". Wharton has been pulled out of a desperate scrape by Vernon-Smith. Now comes Wharton's chance to stand by the Bounder. Final of the month brought "Saved from the Sack", with Stacey out once more to score off his relative and rival, Harry Wharton. It seems that there is just one more story to come to wind up this wonderful series. And I just can't wait for it.

The Third Test Match between England and South Africa has been a draw. So the result so far is one win to South Africa and two draws.

- - -

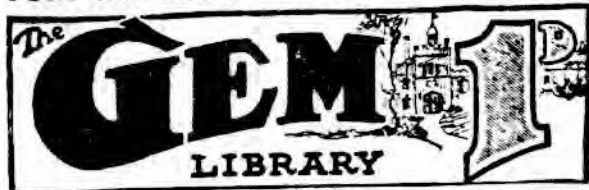
### NOTES ON DANNY'S DIARY FOR JULY 1935

S.O.L. No. 247 "Victory for the Rebels" comprised the last three stories of the Brander series of the Magnet of 1930. A series of reasonably restrained length which slotted neatly into two S.O.L.'s. S.O.L. No. 248 "High Jinks at Grimslade" comprised stories from the Ranger. One wonders whether Grimslade ever really rang the bell.

The 1935 Gem story "A Damsel in Distress" had been "Tom Merry's Legion of Honour" in the summer of 1912. "Towser's Twin" had been "Towser Minor" in the Spring of 1912. "Tom Merry's Melody Makers" had been the delightful "Tom Merry's Concert Party" in the summer of 1912. "The Stage Struck Schoolboy" had been "Stage Struck" from the same period in 1912.

Two stories of this period which were never reprinted were "D'Arcy's Libel Action" and "Tom Merry & Co. in Ireland"; both excellent tales, and it is hard to guess why they were passed over. Probably they were overlooked.

# TOM MERRY'S LEGION OF HONOUR!



**REDFERN JAPES TOM MERRY & CO.  
AND ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY!**

The stories appearing in the Gem in the summer of 1935 came from the golden age of the blue Gem, and it is really sad that a top-heavy supporting programme caused the blue Gem's finest to be sharply pruned.

Apropos of nothing, it is curious how little things stir the memory. Danny's mention of a B.F.L. Captain Justice tale entitled "The Secret Kingdom" reminded me of a silent serial of the same name in the cinemas. My Mum and I went to see it week after week. I have a feeling that it starred George Seitz and Margaret Courtot though I may be wrong. Is there anyone else left who remembers the silent serial "The Secret Kingdom?"

I put one of those big feet of mine in it again. The film "White Heat" which Danny saw in June 1935 was the original version. Danny did not mention the name of the man who played the gangster, and very-clever me went and inserted the name of James Cagney. If I had paused to use my minute brain I could have recalled that we played the later version of "White Heat" with Cagney as the gangster in the early months of 1950 in the Small Cinema. The version which Danny saw in 1935 was made some 15 years earlier.

\*\*\*\*\*

WANTED: Dixon Hawke Stories. Bunter Hardbacks. Bound Volumes  
MAGNETS, "WILLIAM" Books, 1st Editions, with D.W.s Partic.  
"WILLIAM The Lawless". SALE. Original Greyfriars, Holiday Annuals,  
£14 each.

James Gall, 49 Anderson Avenue, ABERDEEN, Scotland.  
Tel. 0224 - 491716.



## HUSTLING HANDFORTH

By Norman Kadish

Charles Hamilton is often praised for the subtleties introduced in his portraying of the idiosyncrasies of his various characters, but I think that there are a lot of virtues in the handling of the 'Nelson Lee' characters by E.S.B., but here more so in the effect of other people using the temperament of an individual character to gain some purpose. Consider 'Handy' for example.

I read the Hamilton stories as well as those of E.S.B. every day in specified periods and so can compare them, whilst the impressions are fresh.

I consider the series 'Handforth as Form Captain' (1st N.S. 20-25). One starts off the stories by comic episodes of 'Handy's' return to school in his new car, accompanied by Church, McClure and Willy. We notice at once the difference of time periods ---- 'We can't expect to do any 30 m.p.h. until we're on the open road'. (Today it often is normal urban travelling!)

In many ways one can compare the triumvirate including Church and McClure as similar to Coker, Green and Potter, although Coker has a motor cycle, a more dangerous affair at times. In both sets of friends, Potter, Green and Church and McClure have to humour their aggressive and fractious leaders although the later 'acolytes' can be just as subtle as the former.

Willy, Handforth's younger brother, (shades of Wally and Arthur Augustus in the Gem) sums up Handy's character in driving his car - 'Instead of a brake being on the car, it ought to be on you' or 'You never seem to know when you're near the edge' - To which is replied by our hero 'The edge of what?'. Willy immediately ripostes tactfully (perhaps sotto - voce) - 'It would take too long to explain'.

Of course like Coker, Handforth is impregnated with false confi-

dence. He is a first class mechanic! Browne immediately disconnects the ignition switch to test Handy's capabilities, with the result that our great man sells a perfect machine to the motor shark Mr. Miggs and the latter's machine drops to pieces. This after McClure and Church have been crushed in the old motor under the weight of Handforth's 'minimum' luggage.

After Handy's comic return to school and Nipper's absence, Handforth tries to get himself elected as permanent captain in his usual braggadocio style. Of course his chums are frustrated at his over weening confidence and lack of imagination -- 'Do you think I've got no brains' -- 'Yes - Er - No!' said Church hastily. 'You've got brains Handy!' To which one is treated to a typical E.S.B. literary aside - 'Even a sheep has got brains' murmured McClure.

The form plays a Joke on their comical favourite, and pretend to be in favour of his being elected, after his almost bellicose electioneering campaign - but with awful results, Mr. Rowell insists upon the results being kept.

As form captain, Handforth is the dictatorial type - "A form captain has to be strict and impartial or he can never rule with the necessary authority!". As he has ordered the school team out every day before breakfast for practice and has instructed Tubbs, the school page to wake him, naturally the latter being very dutiful, pours water over him. Handy can't retaliate as he has given the orders!

Then Handy pushes his two reluctant friends out of the study to carry on his important office of 'ruler' of the form. The result is a cheerless room and no prepared meals and he slinks along to Jarrow's study just to sniff the aroma of the cookery there. A result of Handy's over-riding self-importance and stickler for duty! Even Brewster of the rival football team is not allowed to interfere with Handy in his den, but the latter comes to his rescue and offers tea to Handforth. Of course Handy is interrupted on his way to the other school by Mr. Fakenham, the new master, who persuades him to 'Pinch' food from the school to hold a banquet in honour of his coming - more trouble for the obstreperous one.

Handforth has to interfere with Forest's (the Cad) idea of holding a false 'flag day' to pay for his bad debts, so Forest reciprocates by persuading Handy the flags are genuine, Handy & Co. are arrested and only released through the perspicacity of his young brother, who persuaded Dr. Williams his crazy brother was genuine, having informed the medico beforehand he was helping out.

Again one is reminded one is in the 20's now with the word

'bloaters' being used in a study feed (Has anyone seen this prepared fish now?). Handforth by picking the wrong players for the wrong places in a team and interfering in an 'away' match, creates a riot, becomes decimated, eats some meat paste and imagines he is sick.

Dora, a real student nurse, comes in offering her sympathy. He treats her like a member of the male gender, having been warned of a Remove trick to disguise a boy (Pitt) as a nurse by his two staunch allies. This latter nurse is treated most delicately, 'she' warning him of the strain on his brain. However the plot goes wrong, and 'we have the aggressive E.O.H. of Old'.

The last story brings all to a climax. Hardy has his own office with Willy as secretary (he only does the job to borrow 5/-, then gets himself the sack'). Handforth insists upon the class saluting him and calling him 'Sir'. The boys on the returned Nipper's advice very cunningly do not resist this aggressive, bellicose nature, but continue to salute on the slightest excuse, 'till Handy's arm is practically dropping off'. Irene (Handy being very 'soft' on her) takes part in the plot, making him type a story of her own on a useless type-writer which Handforth has bought from a postal advertisement.

Handforth's nature is not all acrimonious as he wishes to be a 'father' to his class-mates, sympathizing in their troubles. The result is everyone comes in his den with the most trivial and insignificant excuse (Grey's - banjo, Conham's colour of Harold Lloyd's eyes). Perspiring Handforth is then nearly nullified by Doris asking for her manuscript and Irene looks forward to reading it fervently. In desperation Handforth resigns. So the Remove by craft has broken down our Hero's resistance and Nipper is ready to take over again.

#### A FEW THOUGHTS ON THE EARLY LEES

by C.H. Churchill

Most contributors to the Nelson Lee column in the Digest usually dwell on the St. Frank's stories which first appeared in the Lee in No. 112 and continued in the Gem when the Lee folded. St. Frank's stories, of course, also appeared in the B.F 4d Library, the SOL, the Popular, both Nuggett Libraries, the Boys' Realm, Film Fun, Monster Library, the Holiday Annual and Pluck. Over the years naturally.

One is apt to forget, therefore, that there were many excellent yarns in the N.L. prior to the St. Frank's ones and very little seems to have been written about them.

The first few stories were by various authors and were on the

poor side. It was not until G. H. Teed and E. S. Brooks came on the scene that the stories reached a high level. Even the early ones by E.S.B. were nothing to shout about. However, when he embarked on the Green Triangle ones things began to look up.

Teed wrote a good number of single stories which were fine and then a series featuring the Black Wolf, all excellent. Another fine series of his was the Mortimer Crane one and on top of this the Mystery Man of Lhasa series was really gripping stuff. All these were published intermittently and in between these E.S.B. gave us the Green Triangle series of 14 stories followed by the Circle of error one of 11 stories in all.

In between all this we had a long series of Jim the Penman yarns, 19 altogether and also the Eileen Dare series of 16. E.S.B. also wrote quite a lot of single stories which were mostly splendid mystery ones. Two of these come to mind at once. No. 97 "The Manor House Mystery" and No. 109 "The Case of the Crimson Feathers". Both these were of an eerie nature and most gripping to read. Another unusual one was No. 103 "The Sheriff of Blazing Gulch". In this one Nelson Lee became Sheriff of a small American township for a while.

No. 111 "The Yellow Shadow" was another unusual story in so far as it explained the reason for Lee and Nipper going to St. Frank's. It was written in the first person and was mostly "narrated by Nelson Lee". It was a sort of transitional story connecting the detective stories and the school/detective ones which were to follow for so many years.

Two other pre St. Frank's stories Nos. 105 and 119 introduced Dorrie and Umlosi. They were adventure stories rather than detective ones. These two characters became very popular figures in the following St. Frank's saga.

I have never understood why E.S.B. did not rewrite Nos. 97 and 109 mentioned above into "Victor Gunn" stories in later years. He did so with No. 96 "Nipper's Notebook or the Vengeance of Parteb Singh" and used it as the middle one of three Inspector Cromwell stories in the book published by Collins in 1949 entitled "Road to Murder". It seems most odd to me that he only ever used this one out of the many fine stories he had in the pre St. Frank's era of the Lee.

One more thing "niggles" me. When the "Green Triangle" was beaten Zingrave started up the "Circle of Terror". This was practically knocked out for some time. Some years later E.S.B. reintro-

duced the "Green Triangle" again and it appeared from time to time over the years. My "niggle" is why did he ignore the "Circle" completely and revert to the "Triangle"? Can anyone suggest why?

\* \* \* \* \*



### THE SMILES AMID THE TRAGEDIES

By J.W.C.

I believe it was only Anthony Parsons who flavoured his Blake yarns with a humour that has persisted with increasing aplomb long after his passing. And although Sexton Blake was always on the side lines to raillery passed between Tinker and the Yard ace, Superintendent Claudius Venner, I feel sure Blake must have felt like smiling along with the readers.

Here are a few moments during the long battles that ranged between Tinker and Venner that makes you either hate the sooper or love him. But the Yard ace spared nobody with his 'jokes'.

"Cooling the fevered brow?" Venner asked acidly.

"No, I was just thinking", Belford said.

The super snorted.

"The day you start thinking, gooseberries I'll grow plum trees",

he said. "What are you pondering - the price of Beer?"

(Mystery of the Whitehall Bomb. No. 158)

\* \* \* \* \*

"... Ring for a taxi, will you?"

"Where to?" (asked Belford).

"Baker Street!" said the sooper softly. "We'll put the whole thing up to Sexton Blake and see what he makes of it."

This was a departure from Venner's usual contempt for Blake.

(Whitehall Bomb No. 158)

\* \* \* \* \*

"Have another drink, sooper", invited Tinker cynically. "You'll be in tears in a minute."

Venner scowled - but accepted the drink. "Pity I couldn't frame you for it (the murder) "he grumbled ingraciously.

"But I couldn't, or course", he added more brightly, "because obviously it must have taken brains to fix this little lot."

(Case of the Wicked Three. No. 322)

\* \* \* \* \*

"... what stations are there beyond (Kensington High Street)?

"Notting Hill Gate is the next one" Bedford said, "Then Bayswater, Praed Street, Edgware Road, Baker Street ---"

"Baker Street", grimaced the sooper, starting to his feet warily, "We can do without Baker Street barging in at this stage of the affair."

(Case of the Dangra Millions. No. 189)

\* \* \* \* \*

"Come on Casanove! "the sooper growled.

"You're old, Father William", (Retorted Tinker)

It would be difficult to enumerate the many cracks, jibes and battles between the sooper and others in Parsons' stories, but a few more will enhanced the welcome relief that appears in most of the Sexton Blake tales that Anthony Parsons wrote.

"Proper needle in a haystack business, this... somebody we know nothing about disappears in London and we're asked to find him! Where the heck do we start?" (said Tinker)

"Blake'll tell us in a lab, I expect", grinned Venner facetiously.

"Or better still in a test tube!"

\* \* \* \* \*

"an' that'll be all that from you, my lad, too" Venner retorted.

"A few thundering good hidings in your youth wouldn't have done you any harm, either!

"IT'S his digestion", sighed Tinker. "He eats too many iron bars, guv'nor, and drinks too much nitric acid..."

\* \* \* \* \*

"No Venner, you're wrong", (Blake) said softly.

"Dead, by heavens!" gasped Tinker.

"Strangled! He's dead, sooper!"

"Well, what do you think I thought he was?" (Venner) demanded with well-feigned irascibility. "Sitting up eating his Sunday dinner?"

\* \* \* \* \*

---



"Im", (Mrs. Bardell) announced.

Venner blew her a kiss. "The trouble is... that the old battle-axe is really in love with me - but won't own it."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Now you come over with the name of whoever's employing you, Blake and I'll spill the beans from my angle."

"I can't do that Venner" Blake told him.

"Then I'm dumb, pard."

"You've never been anything else..." cut in Tinker jubilantly.

"Want your hat and coat?"

\* \* \* \* \*

"Great suffering cats!" Tinker exclaimed hoarsely.

"It's the sooper, gov'nor" -- disguised as a gentleman!"

(The Car Park Mystery No. 311).

\* \* \* \* \*

"...Now it's just another bomb-site, apparently" said Belford.

"Well, there's no need to run down bomb-sites" the sooper retorted with his usual facetiousness. "If there weren't so many bomb-sites sprawled over the landscape you'd be without a job."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Of course, if you'd rather go it alone sooper..."

"No-no-no" cried (Venner). It isn't that at all, Blake.

I'm always ready to help you in your cases -- well, you know that. We've always worked together hand in glove; you and I..."

\* \* \* \* \*

The inspector indicated the body.

"Murder, sir" he said. "I'm afraid."

Superintendent Venner looked pained.

"You should never be afraid of murder, inspector", he chided him gently. "It's murders that provide us with any breakfasts at all. No murders - no breakfasts." he said and looked round the circle of faces for applause.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Who is he?" (Venner) asked.

The name in the book downstairs is given as Wilson, sir.

... And he's a traveller."

Was a traveller, you mean, inspector!" Venner interrupted in his best style. "He won't travel any more, will he? Not past the Pearly Gates, anyway."

Venner laughed, but he laughed alone.

"All right! All right!" he glared round at them. "You don't have to look like a set of undertaker's mutes round the district. It ain't any of you that's lying there, though I'm not saying the Force as a whole mightn't benefit if it were!"

\* \* \* \* \*

"What is it - murder?" asked the (police) photographer.

"No, it's the L.N.E.R. managing director asking us out for a drink. Venner retorted in his best vein. "He's found a bottle of whisky in the refreshment-room, and he wants a photographic records of the miracle!"

"Joke", gloomed the handmaiden in a pained voice.

"Bah!" growled the sooper...

Well, that's only a few smiles from the tragic chronicles by Anthony Parsons of some of Sexton Blake's cases. I think most of us missed Venner when Blake and Tinker were called on overseas cases. On those occasions it was Tinker's penchant for damsels in (supposed) distress that supplied the humour.

Some of these extracts I have left unnumbered in the hope you may not need them.

\* \* \* \* \*

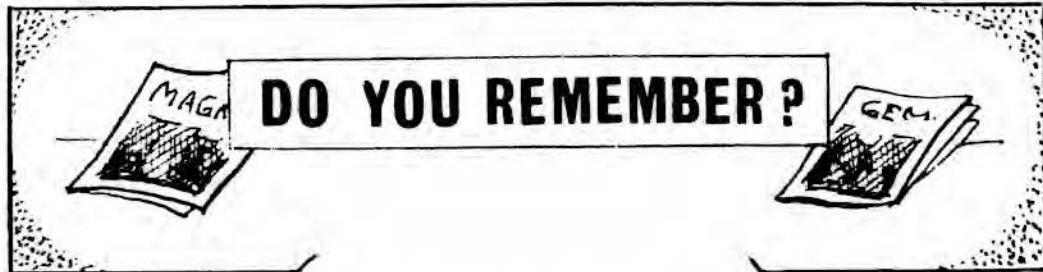
### THE PRINCESS SNOWEE'S CORNER

Last night, about 10.30 I wasn't in any hurry to go home to roost, so the Editor got a powerful torch to search for me, so I knew it was time to stop being deaf to his calls. However, just then the beam of his light picked up a rather delightful looking half-grown hedgehog sitting bolt upright in the middle of my lawn. The Ed said some soothing things to the hedgehog (I reckon it was a lady hedgehog). We both went indoors, and the Ed got a dish of bread and milk and took it out and put it near the hedgehog who was still sitting on my lawn. A half an hour later, he found the dish empty and the hedgehog gone.

Years ago, when they lived in Surbiton, my Mum and the Old Ed had a pussycat named Mr. Chips (a commoner). It was before my time of course. They used to have to search for Mr. Chips just like the Old Ed searches for me now some nights. One night he found a mother hedgehog with a number of babies nestled down in the shed in the garden. My Mum telephoned the R.S.P.C.A. and asked them what was the best thing to do when you find a nest of hedgehogs in your garden shed. They said: "Don't disturb them. Put down a dish of warm bread and milk every night until Mrs. Hedgehog decides to take them away, as she will do."

So my Mum and the Old Ed did just that, and after doing the bread and milk stunt for severy nights (the dish was always empty in the morning), they found that the little family had gone one morning.

Personally, I never have anything to do with hedgehogs. They're too sharp for me.



No. 205 - Schoolboys' Own Library No. 36 - "The Shadow of Shame"

By Roger M. Jenkins

There is an impression that the Rookwood Stories, because of the brevity of their weekly instalments in the Boys' Friend, were rather lightweight material, amusing but never very profound. Like all generalities, there is some truth in this, but certainly the story of the arrest of Bulkeley's father, originally published in the summer of 1918 when the Rookwood stories were at their shortest, was drama of a high order, though the dramatic interest was not sustained for very long. Incidentally, the wartime references were carefully edited: all that remained in the S.O.L. reprint were Mr. Bootles' warnings to save paper and a shortage of food for a study tea.

We were told at the beginning that Catesby's uncle and Bulkeley's father were partners, but later it transpired that Mr. Bulkeley was manager of a bank, presumably a private one, of which there were many more in those days. At all events, £20,000 in bearer bonds were missing from the bank and Mr. Catesby was in Scotland at the time of the theft, having left his key to the safe with Mr. Bulkeley, whose stick was found near the night watchman who had been knocked on the head. It was not surprising that Mr. Bulkeley was arrested but it was unfortunate that this took pace at Rookwood.

The next development was Knowles' ambition to become captain of the school and he made what capital he could out of Bulkeley's awkward situation. Eventually there was an election when Bulkeley felt obliged to leave Rookwood, and at this point the drama degenerated into knockabout comedy, with all sorts of dirty tricks being employed by both sides to influence the result of the election. Knowles' captaincy, which began with such high hopes on his part, ended in disaster. All this time, Bulkeley's affairs seemed to be

forgotten completely, and it was not until the end that the mystery was solved in a very abrupt manner that left a number of loose ends untied.

Of course, it was felt necessary to tell the story through the eyes of the juniors, and so the reader's information was largely limited to what they actually witnessed for themselves. Accordingly, the Fistical Four, out of bounds and hiding to avoid detection, overheard Catesby talking to his uncle, and Tubby Muffin listened at the keyhole when Mr. Bulkeley was talking to his son. In later years, Charles Hamilton did not always use this method and the drama was inevitably heightened as a result. Certainly, "The Shadow of Shame", splendid though it was in parts, could have been immeasurably greater by the use of a different technique.

\* \* \* \* \*

OTHER WORLDS

By Edward Baldock

'The tall figures of the sixth form prefects disappeared into the rain-swept quad.' So ran a sentence in a long ago Magnet, signalling at once another school adventure. One sees - with a little imagination - these tall figures who, if we are to be guided by contemporary illustrations accompanying the story, are clad in tail-coats as opposed to the Eton jacket worn by the junior forms. Enveloped in burberrys no doubt, forth they go into the darkness, why? Someone, a junior possibly, has failed to appear at 'call-over'. Time passes and darkness and a stormy night set in. Here are all the ingredients of another first class Greyfriars' tale. Anxiously Mr. Quelch has waited in his study for the return of the absentee - he has waited in vain. Now having consulted Dr. Locke, it has been decided to send out a search party. The police upon this occasion have not been informed - at least not at this stage - they would of course steal the thunder, (to say nothing of disorganising the plot), which quite rightly is reserved for the Greyfriars' fellows. Armed with torches the sixth-formers set forth, having received directions from Wingate, the leader of the search party. Loder, Walker and Carne move off into the gloom not too well pleased at being thus detailed. They have been obliged to leave a warm study and the prospect of a cosy threesome at banker, with smokes and later a little liquid refreshment, all behind a carefully locked study door. Wingate on the other hand, together with Gwynne and Sykes, a worthy trio, move off into the darkness determined if possible to find the missing junior

despite the discomforts which may accrue during this unsought mission. A very different set of fellows indeed from Loder and Co.

There is a timeless quality pervading these stories so ardently absorbed in our youth, and pursued with no less interest in later life. There is an elusive magic which at once captivates our imagination in the delineation of the characters and the world in which they have their being. Greyfriars and its surrounding district have become as familiar to us over the years as our own particular neighbourhood. The breezy stretches of Courtfield Common, with its expanses of wind-swept gorse and frequent copses, and its footpaths which intersect this great open area. Here and there over its vast expanse are sundry dells and hollows, bracken-filled and bosky, extremely secluded and not unknown to Harry Wharton and Co. in their many scouting activities, and certainly very familiar to Ponsonby and Co. of Highcliff who find them ideal and adequately private for indulging in those favourite little sorties of smoking and surreptitious card-playing. Ideal places in which to lie in wait and leap out upon unwary passing Greyfriars' fellows, only those capable of putting up a less than impressive resistance of course.

Friardale, a rustic village which will, we hope, never be translated into the twentieth century. The quiet village street with its occasional elm casting welcome shade - it is almost always summer here - over the cottages. I like to visualise the High Street as having grass verges. Stone kerbs would somehow be too suburban and out of character; and always, somewhere on the horizon, the official figure of the doughty P.C. Tozer, the local custodian of the law, imposing in his old-style police helmet, always ready to take 'a few particulars'. A purely nineteenth century village and community, long may it so remain.

The shady rides and tracks intersecting Friardale Wood have been the scene of many encounters and incidents in the Greyfriars' story. One calls to mind an attack made on Mr. Quelch by a tramp, a typical seedy and ragged Hamilton tramp, in which the tables were smartly turned on the ruffian when he received a sound drubbing from Quelch's walking stick - a stout ash I would imagine - wielded by an uncommonly sinewy hand developed by years of experience in the administration of the official ash. The incident terminating with the tramp crashing off through the undergrowth howling, leaving the master of the Remove master of the situation also. Elderly gentleman though he may be, oft-times experiencing certain twinges

of pain in his various joints, Mr. Quelch is, nevertheless, rather a formidable opponent when his dignity or law and order are threatened. I like to think that this long-ago incident and the way in which it was so swiftly resolved as typical of the Greyfriars' style generally.

Popper island on the river Sark, scene of countless affrays and japes - and more sober incidents. What memories are stirred by the mention of this tiny island around which swirls the swift-flowing Sark on its way to the sea at Hawkcliff. Legend - or fact, which? - has it that in the centre of the island stands a mighty oak of truly royal proportions which has sheltered in the past many fellows in its leafy branches, who, on various pretexts have found it prudent to seek refuge there from raiding school-fellows, from prefects, from keepers attached to the Popper Court estate. For the island is supposedly sacrosanct being part of the vast estate of Sir Hilton Popper, although this point has been vigorously argued on many occasions.

While above and pervading all stands the old grey tower of Greyfriars School impervious to the seasons as they come and go, getting a little more rugged and weather-worn through the ravages of time, yet still retaining all the dignity and presence of what was once an old monastic establishment. Something permanent in a shifting and changing universe, a still centre around which swirls an uneasy world. Small wonder that we try our best to maintain the continuance of the aura and magic of the place. It is of such stuff that dreams are made. An oasis, always present to which one may turn and meet old friends again and in such enjoyment make new friends also.

We may happily forgive Ponsonby and Co. of Highcliffe for being such complete young bounders and cast a kindly forgiving eye upon Skinner, Snoop and Stott despite their endless iniquities. Young rascals they may be yet they are also an integral part of that world we would seek to perpetuate which would not ring quite true without its lights and shades. A world so very distant and different from the so-called progressive day and age in which we now live.

\* \* \* \* \*

H. HEATH of Windsor writes: It has been pleasing to me to read in Danny's Diary his references to "School for Slackers". I find these all too few stories of High Coombe very enjoyable. The most interesting character for me was Aubrey Compton.

---



## NEWS OF THE OLD BOYS BOOK CLUBS

### MIDLAND

An excellent attendance of 13 members at the A.G.M., and a very enjoyable meeting ensued.

Unfortunately our Chairman Tom Porter was again absent, and we missed the 'flu victim, Johnny Hopton, but Christine Brettell hopes to be with us in June.

Keith Normington, with Johnny and Betty Hopton, attended the Jubilee Dinner of our Northern Club, and showed us the excellent handbook prepared for the occasion.

Refreshments, with Joan Golen, the Lovedays, and Betty Hopton providing the eats, were splendid, and Brian Fahey paid for the tea and coffee. Vin Loveday gave an alphabetical quiz which was won by Geoff Lardner.

There followed a reading from a 1924 Magnet by Ivan Webster. It was an amusing episode where Bunter was missing from school, and Bunter's father held the Head responsible.

Next followed a game called "Take a Letter", and Keith Norminton won all three sessions of it. Then your correspondent gave an oral quiz with a handsome prize for the winner. Vin Loveday, the acting Chairman, won this, ending with a friendly argument as to whether Oliver Cromwell said "Take away that bauble."

The meeting ended with a discussion as to whether Greyfriars and Cliff House should be merged into a co-education school. It was generally agreed that, in these days, it would be a good thing.

The Midland Club wishes you all a happy holiday season. Take a Magnet with you for the rainy days.

Our next meetings are on 25th June and 30th July.

JACK BELLFIELD (Correspondent)

CAMBRIDGE

The Club met at the home of Tony Cowley on Sunday, June 2nd, 1985, on a glorious Summer afternoon.

This was the A.G.M. Keith Hodgkinson asked to be relieved of the office of Secretary, owing to pressure of other duties. The meeting received his resignation with much regret. Warm thanks were given to him for his excellent work as Secretary, and Keith was presented with a Book Token as a mark of appreciation from the members. The meeting heard with great relief that Keith would continue to deal with the Club Newsletter, and with postal membership.

The reports of the retiring Secretary, and of the Treasurer, which showed a satisfactory financial position, were received and approved. Vic Hearn was unanimously re-elected as Chairman and Treasurer with warm thanks for his service. Tony Cowley was elected Secretary of the Club; Bill Thurbon as correspondent to the "Digest", and Edward Witten as Vice-Chairman. Tony Cowley agreed to take on the office of Librarian. The usual Summer break during July and August would be made, and members accepted the invitation of Neville Ward to hold the first meeting of the new session at his Sweffling home on September 1st. Neville agreed to give a talk on Crime - he being the possessor of a fine Library of Detective Fiction.

Tony Cowley entertained with a second display of the wonders and possibilities of the computer and word processor. He showed the various permutations that could be made in the notice of the meeting, and also produced illustrated interviews with several members of the club. This was particularly interesting to the members who were not familiar users of computers. The inquisitive archivist, with thoughts of medieval manuscripts in mind, raised the question of the life time of computer data.

Several members had evening engagements, and after enjoying Tony and Mrs. Cowley's gorgeous tea, complete with strawberries and cream, the meeting broke up and members departed, driving home through a perfect Summer evening. "When you come to the end of a perfect day" and this surely had been one.

LONDON

The attendance at the Greyfriars, Wokingham, meeting on 9th July amounted to a "Bakers dozen" and they were well rewarded by a fine programme of interesting items. The Memory Lane reading



---

by Bill Bradford came from newsletter number 207, February 1970 and it dealt with the Friardale meeting at Ruislip.

Two short quizzes were conducted by Ben Whiter, one on Rookwood and one on sport that was connected with the schools. The host of the meeting, Eric Lawrence, was the winner of both competitions.

Anniversary number on show was an issue of the Thriller number 279 entitled "The Limping Man of Wapping" by Roland Daniel.

Next was a Tony Hancock radio tape recording that dealt with Tony visiting his old school Greystones. This was played by Eric Lawrence.

Bill Bradford read the article by Samways, entitled "Peeps into the Magnet Postbag".

Finally, it was only right that a selected reading from a Magnet should be indulged in. Reader was Mark Jarvis who read a chapter that dealt with Mr. Quelch and this was taken from Magnet 502, entitled "Getting Out of Hand."

Votes of thanks to the hosts Betty and Eric terminated the meeting.

Next Meeting will be "Old Bus" picnic outing to Waltham Abbey on 14th July. Full details will be announced in the July newsletter.

Ben Whiter

### NORTHERN

Meeting held: Saturday, 8th June, 1985

We had twelve members present on a cool "summer" night.

Harry Blowers mentioned that over the past few weeks, various small articles and letters had appeared in our local paper concerning "The Big Five" papers. Harry had written a letter informing people of the existence of our Club. Jack Allison had been approached by Radio Leeds to go along with any other members who wished to join him, to speak about the papers of the past. After some discussion, we were rather dubious about reports by the media concerning the hobby of reading and collecting old boys' papers and such reports are usually dealt with in a flippant way. Indeed the report of our recent Coral Jubilee Luncheon had been a complete waste of time, in our opinion.

We discussed our recent luncheon, and it was agreed it had been a huge success. Special thanks had been given to our guests, W.O.G. Lofts and "The Rochdale Players" and some of our members had made donations to help defray the cost of the event. Special

---

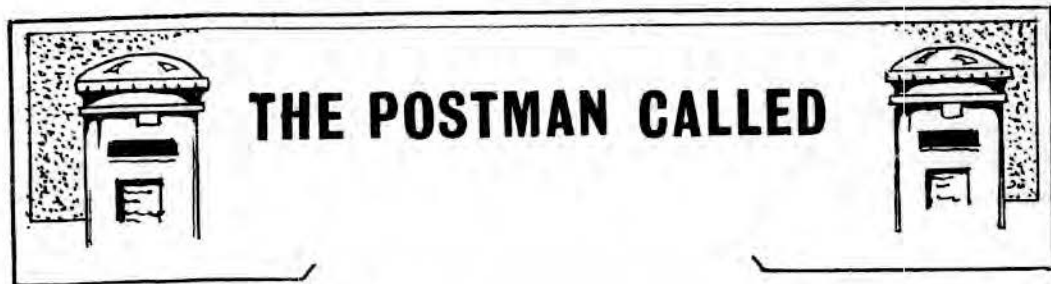
Special thanks were given to our Secretary for the splendid way he had produced printed serviettes and menu/programmes.

Keith played the recording of "Hitchcock's Half Hour" and life at Greystones School. It caused great merriment.

Mollie presented a card game "Beggar Thy Neighbour". A pack of 52 specially made cards was distributed among members: by taking a card from the person on the right, "tickets" could be made by matching two identically-named cards. Jack Allison won the game - but not without a tremendous amount of consternation and laughter as Harry Barlow and Joe Wood insisted on making up their own rules. Mollie was thanked for compiling such a novel game, but was respectfully asked not to bring it again for a long time!

Our next meeting is on 13th July.

\* \* \* \* \*



LEN WORMULL (Romford)

I need hardly say that the good old C.D. continues to delight, and it always makes a nice start to each month. I liked the cover drawings by Bob and Roger Whiter, the one of Bob Cherry was brilliantly done I thought. More please, if possible. Danny mentions the act Collinson and Dean in his diary. I remember them well as a boy and first saw them at the Old Kent Road Picture House (Bricklayers Arms), my favourite haunt in those days. They were almost regulars there, and very funny they were too. Collinson first appeared in a sketch called Will Collinson and Co., and later formed a cross-talk act with Alfie Dean of Brixton. When this act broke up, the new duo was known as Collinson and Breen.

H. HEATH (Windsor) I have been interested to read in C.D. references to the stories written for the Dreadnought by E.S. Brooks under his pen-name of R.W. Comrade, entitled "Scorned by the School" and "The Cad of the School." These stories were reprinted in the

Boys' Friend Library in 1917 and again reprinted in the same format in 1938, under their new titles of "The Imposter of the Fourth" and "The League of Bullies". These tales did not involve St. Frank's as it was 1912 when they were first published in Dreadnought, five years before St. Frank's was created.

The central characters were the Fenwick identical twins, Leonard and David, who made an agreement to change schools for a term, with Leonard going to Sandcliffe and David to St. Otwell's. As far as I can tell this was the first occasion that either Brooks or Hamilton had used the theme of twins or doubles. I would be interested to hear other views on this matter.

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: In 1927, as a sub writer for St. Jim's, Brooks re-hashed his old plot of the Fenwick twins. Now we had the Castleton twins, one twin going to St. Frank's and the other to St. Jim's. It covered a series of 4 stories, and was nothing like so successful as the original stories had been years earlier.)

G. W. MASON (Torquay) During a recent visit to the region of the Thomson Valley and the Fraser River and Kamloops, I failed to locate Cedar Creek and the School in the Backwoods of British Columbia. I did, however, find the road to Cedar Creek in the neighbouring State of Washington U.S.A. whilst passing through the Cascade Mountains in Okanagan National Park and the Indian Reservation. Back in B.C. there were isolated shacks on the shores of lonely lakes. But no sign of the brooding figure of the Remittance Man, seated on his customary log after the previous night's dissipations. The yellow school buses passed us on the highway, but up on the timbered slopes no sunlit clearing disclosed that happy, carefree bunch of youthful riders pausing before that famous fork in the time-worn trail of "long ago".

A. J. STANDEN (Stockport) How many of us, I wonder, would have liked to have had Colonel Wharton as a guardian, or served under him in the Service. Or, for that matter, attended Greyfriars or St. Jim's Preferable, possibly, to Gordonstoun or Dotheboys Hall!

A character I disliked was Ferrers Locke. If, instead of Inspector Irons of the Yard it had been Locke in some sort of disguise in the Courtfield Cracksman series, it would have spoiled the series for me. I enjoyed the Herlock Sholmes stories by Hamilton very much, however.

---

---

JACK MURTAGH (Hastings, New Zealand) It is wonderful to see our well-loved C.D. coming through the letter-box each month so regularly after over 39 years since the first issue in November 1946. The postman has delivered every one of the 462 issues to me over all these years, a record to be proud of and one which has surpassed most of the weekly and monthly papers.

M. R. THOMPSON (Sunderland) One of my nieces gave me a '20 Stories Magazine' for January 1929; the price 1/6d. This is the first time I have seen one. Maybe an article has been written about this magazine in an earlier issue of the C.D. If not, I would certainly like to read something about it - assuming, of course, that someone has all the gen. Stories are by Edgar Wallace, Agatha Christie, Ben Travers, Sydney Horler, Gilbert Frankau, H. de Vere Stacpoole and others.

The other day I was writing a letter and I suddenly thought - my goodness, I have never seen cigarette cards printed with the characters of St. Jims, Greyfriars and Rookwood. This would have certainly been an important collectors item.

I found among my collection 'The Girls Own Annual'; someone has written their name and the month and 1920. I am not satisfied that this is the correct year. Though I have just glanced at it, one article gave me the impression it was published during the 1914-18 War. I have it by to read during the winter weeks when I can really put my feet up - a roaring fire - a glass of wine at one side, a bag of sweets at the other, and me in the middle.

Mrs. MARGERY WOODS (Scarborough) The reminiscences on the curtailment of MAGNET struck a similar memory chord. I too was agog for the next round of the Battle of the Beaks, and I too went charging down to the newsagent to sort out the reason for the very serious omission of my copy. He was a disagreeable man at the best of times and I'm sure must have been one of the originators of that great all-purpose excuse: 'There's A War On, You Know!' After my third day's journey to disappointment he produced the executioner's little list and broke the sad news.

I wonder how many of us all over the country enacted this experience. Despite the well-remembered disappointment there is a certain sense of heart-warming in the thought that all these years later some of us are now sharing and comparing our memories of those happy hours with the storypapers. And we are fortunate in that some of them are being reprinted... except that we shall never know "what happened at the end." (I make this statement

---

deliberately to challenge the fates to through up a long-lost carbon copy from some dusty nook.)

The girls' papers suffered the same fate. SCHOOLGIRL came to an abrupt halt that same day in May, 1940, halfway through Valerie Drew And the Avenging Three, leaving a host of anxious little readers with the firm adjuration that "on no account should you miss next week's dramatic developments of this marvellous serial. Huh! To say nothing of the Cliff House lead story. Cliff House, too, was having ructions in the upper echelons, with The Feud Between The Prefects. Alas, we were never to discover who won... the reformed Helen Hunter or the vindictive, much hated Connie Jackson.

Could you spare a little space for me to acknowledge very gratefully the information so kindly given by Mrs. Cadogan and Mr. Kadish in response to my piece in C.D. 458. Thank you both. Also information about Draycott M. Dell/Joan Inglesant. Incidentally, further to Bells of Mystery, I have just received a catalogue which lists another of these puzzle books. This one is entitled FOSCA THE FOWLER, by Draycott Dell, c. 1920s, again illustrated by Glossop and containing a jigsaw pertaining to the mystery in the story. Unfortunately I was not in time to get this item, but it looks as though Mr. Lofts is correct in his belief that the Inglesant title would be an original. Now that a second book by the same author has turned up it seems possible that Draycott Dell may have done a short series, possibly for the Christmas market. The one in my possession may have been the first Weirdslea story and developed later for Schoolgirls' Weekly. If only publishers would date all books!

\*\*\*\*\*

### NO ESCAPE FROM BUNTER

From Brian Doyle

Readers may like to have advance warning of a new novel, to be published by Hodder and Stoughton, at £8.95, on September 2nd this year.

In the 'Flashman' tradition (the best-selling novels by George Macdonald Fraser which continued the adventures of the bully Flashman, of Rugby, from TOME BROWN'S SCHOOLDAYS, in later life). Daniel Green's BUNTER SAHIB purports to tell the early exploits of the first Viscount Buntingford (William Frederick Augustus Bunter) (1806-92), comprising the candid and sometimes artless confessions of Billy Bunter's great-great-grandfather, and of his hilarious, disastrous and amorous adventures, mainly in India, where he saw Army service and was also private secretary to the Bishop of All-India.

I take the above information from details sent to me by Hodder and Stoughton who state that this is a novel that 'crosses the historical authenticity of a 'Flashman' with the bawdy wit of Tom Sharpe'. BUNTER SAHIB will be the first in a series that promises to be somewhat racy and lusty. The publishers also send me a 50-odd line 'spoof' entry for the above-mentioned Viscount Buntingford from "who's Who", which is amazingly detailed.

Nowhere is the past writing career of the author, Daniel Green, recorded, but it is doubtful if he is descended from the Greene of Greyfriars Fifth, who was (with Potter) Coker's friend. But, judging from the advance publicity, his writing in BUNTER SAHIB will bear extremely little relation to that of the beloved Frank Richards.

I may return to the book when it is published and after I have read it. It will very probably turn out to be (in Prout's words) 'Unprecedented, 'unparalleled.....' What Mr. Quelch will make of it all, I can't bear to think.....

### A TALE OF A FOOTBALL

By LESLIE WILKINSON

In the late 1920's and early 1930's, living in a typical working class district of Sheffield, it is fair to say that the Thompson papers formed the deepest piles of boys' magazines on the local newsagent's counter.

About that time, our local heroes were the Sheffield Wednesday football team, First Division winners in the season 1928/9. Most youngsters in my age group, 11 to 13, idolised the players and at every opportunity tried to emulate them by playing endless games of football. We played on our local recreation ground, a cinder covered expanse, and many were the grazed knees and elbows we suffered in the name of sport. One fervent wish was to play with a proper "caseball", leather panelled, rubber bladdered, pumped up hard and laced with a vicious leather thong. (Now, when watching Match of the Day, I often wonder how our present breed of football ballet dancers would deal with a thoroughly wet and muddy, old fashioned "casey").

Imagine our delight, then, when the Dundee publishers announced they were to award multi-panelled caseballs to readers of the Adventure. Rover, Skipper and Wizard, in return for a little diligent collecting. Details are hazy, including the dates between which the promotion ran. However, I do recall that, for a number of weeks, in each of the "big four" magazines, a paper package appeared which contained four small, coloured cards. Each card depicted a football player of the era. The cards were numbered in the manner of cigarette cards and they came randomly in the

packets.

If and when one managed to collect a complete set (somewhere between 30 and 50, I do not remember), it could be exchanged for a real, full size, multipanelled football.

Our little band of would be soccer stars were fortunate. Between us, our pocket money more than covered the range of Thompson weeklies, so we decided to pool our cards to complete the set for the coveted football. But what weighed most heavily in our favour was that we numbered among us the local newsagent's son. One other gift from the gods was that the small envelopes which contained the cards were sufficiently transparent for the card numbers to be read without breaking the seal.

Needless to say, after a few weeks and a little surreptitious checking into several magazines before handing over the twopence to our fellow conspirator, who insisted on helping out in his father's shop on Saturday mornings, we were the proud possessors of a complete set of cards.

One boy was deputed to complete the necessary form and send for the ball.

I don't recall the day of its arrival - it must have been a Saturday or a holiday - we certainly were not at school, but I do remember it was early morning and I will never forget our excitement. First the leather case came out of the package, followed by the bladder covered with a powdering of french chalk, and finally the lace. We gazed at the parts lovingly and handled them with awe. We were one step away from booting it sky high.

Between us we had plenty of bicycle pumps but unfortunately we did not possess the necessary valve attachment for pumping up a caseball. This operation cost us a penny at the local hardware shop, where the proprietor was prepared, for this sum, to pump up the bladder within the case, tie it off, and finish up the lacing. Looking back, it wasn't a bad pennyworth.

Within minutes we were on our recreation ground, coats down for goalposts, teams picked in the time honoured way, new ball placed at the centre, and we were off for the game of the century.

I suppose our game flowed backwards and forwards for upwards of thirty minutes with no thought of stopping for the next five or six hours when, without warning, someone kicked the ball goalwards and instead of soaring into the net it travelled but a few feet forwards, deflating on the way, finally landing on the ground with a sickening thud. We all gazed in horror. Someone gingerly

picked up our recently acquired treasure and we saw a terrible sight. The cinders had cut the case to ribbons - it was in shreds. The bladder had split from top to bottom. It was useless.

Even at our tender age it dawned on us that the "leather" was really some sort of compressed paper, not meant to stand the punishment of our cinder "rec". It was a very sub-standard football'

Poetic justice? It probably was.

\*\*\*\*\*

WANTED: "Wide World" Magazines - pre 1950.

Thomas N. O'Callaghan, 42, Weston Park, Dublin 14, Eire.

For Sale. Lees old series 477/568 £30 the lot post paid. Condition medium to good. Churchill, 43 Retreat Road, Topsham Exeter. EX3 0LF. Phone evenings Topsham 5488.

Wanted: S.O.L's by Michael Poole. B.F.L's Nos. 316, 336, 339, Robin Hood Library (A.P.) No. 50. Chums 1914, B.O.P.'s 38, St. Thomas' Road, PRESTON.

ANNUALS FOR SALE: Young England 1915/16; Herbert Strang's Annual 1913; British Boys' Annual 1917; Chatterbox 1911; The Captain April 1907/Sept 1907; Sunday 1914. All in poor condition. What offers? Dawkins, 33, Ivy House Park, Henlade, Taunton, Somerset. TA3 5HR.

ARE YOU CONSIDERING disposing of your collection of S.B.Ls? Sexton Blake enthusiast now seeking to purchase Sexton Blake Library books of the 1st and 2nd series that are in good condition. Very best prices paid. Tony Beenham, 35, Esk Way, Rise Park, Romford Essex. RM1 4YH. (Telephone: Romford 66378 - evenings.)

\*\*\*\*\*

WHO'S FOR AVERY, BIRD, and COKE?

"BERT" HOLMES of Preston writes:

There doesn't seem to be much interest nowadays in the old hardback school tales, of which I have scores upon scores. And I've read 'em all at least once down the years. Maybe sometime you'll devote a "page" to these old books. It could arouse more than a little interest and bring sales or swaps. In passing, I greatly enjoyed the June C.D. The "wee" story "The Man Who Came Back" was quite delightful.