

STORY PAPER
COLLECTORS' DIGEST

VOL. 41

NO. 487

JULY 1987

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THE EDITOR'S CHAT



ST. FRANK'S - SEVENTY YEARS ON!

As our contributor Mr. G.H. Churchill points out, Edwy Searles Brooks' St. Frank's will be seventy years old this month. This surely is a cause for celebration not only for Nelson Lee fans, but also for collectors who have other favourite schools. We all recognise Brooks' achievements in the school story field; he was, of course, a man of many parts, equally at home with tales of high adventure, of mystery and detection, or the world of school. We salute him in this issue of the C.D. by including articles from some of our

St. Frank's stalwarts, and an illustration from the Nelson Lee for our cover.

I never came across St. Frank's as a child, because the Nelson Lee ended in 1933, when I was still as the Tiger Tim's Weekly stage of reading! I didn't discover this celebrated school until I made contact with Eric Fayne, and the Collectors' Digest Annual, at the end of 1969. Although I was avidly scouring this for everything I could find about Greyfriars or Cliff House, I was intrigued by a contribution from Rueben Godsave - a great supporter of St. Frank's - about Phipps, the Jeevesian character who did double duty as Dr. Stafford's butler and Archie Glenthorne's valet. This was perhaps a slightly bizarre introduction to the world of Nipper, Nelson Lee, Handforth, Reggie Pitt and their various chums and rivals, but I was grateful for this, and many more Nelson Lee articles by Rueben, Jim Cook and other Brooks enthusiasts. Prompted by them, and above all by the late Bob Blythe (co-founder of the London Club, and its Nelson Lee Librarian), I savoured many of Brooks' greatest stories - the Ezra Quirke series, the unforgettable 'Death of Church', to name only a few.

Brooks, of course, had a writing career which continued long after the Nelson Lee folded. We are all happy at his post-St. Frank's successes, but for most of us it is his school stories which claim our affection. May St. Frank's flourish for another seventy years!

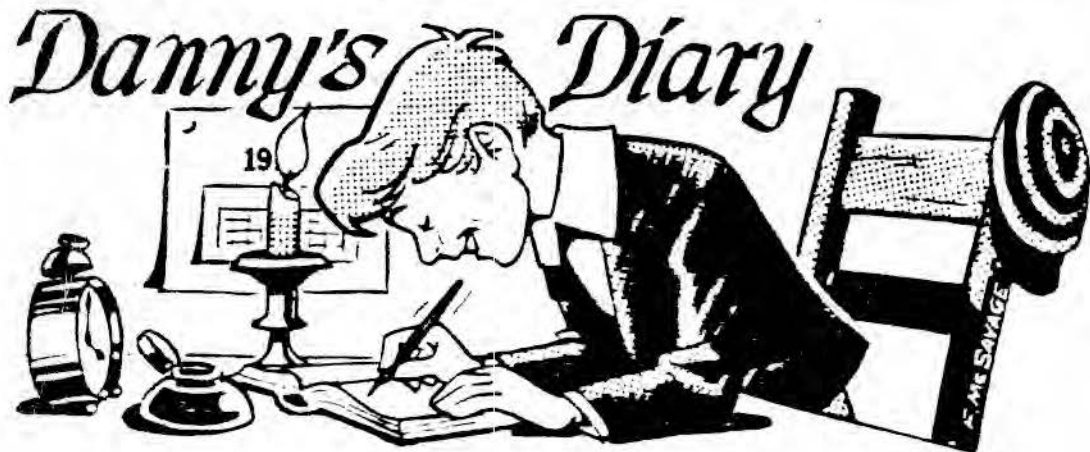
It is a truly marvellous how our favourite fictional schools are so firmly etched into our hearts and memories.

MARY CADOGAN

OBITUARY

We are sad to have to report the passing of another C.D. reader, Harry Marriott. For sometime he had been spending regular periods in hospital each month for treatment, and he was so appreciative of the C.D. that, at his request, we posted his copy as a 'priority' so that he could receive it in time to take it with him during these periods of hospitalization. We are indebted to Mr. C.H. Groombridge of Northampton for news of the passing of this dedicated member of our collecting circle.

* * * * *



JULY 1937

It has been an exceptionally good month in the Gem, with a fine variety of splendid stories. The opening tale of the month is "The Tough Guy of the Shell" which tells of the arrival of George Alfred Grundy at St. Jim's. He is not exactly a bully, but he is arrogant and heavy-handed as well as a know-all. He is put into a study in the Shell with two fellows named Wilkins and Gunn.

It's all amusing, but Grundy, Wilkins, and Gunn of St. Jim's seem very much akin to Coker, Potter and Greene of Greyfriars. And they are not every chap's cup of tea.

The next story "Lowther Brings the House Down" is really tip top. To celebrate the end of term the junior Amateur Dramatic Society plans to stage a comedy "Catching the Colonel", and Lowther has the idea of making Colonel Potsdam a comic take-off of the German master, Herr Schneider. So Lowther asks the Herr for some extra German lessons so he can watch the quaint little ways of the German master. But Herr Schneider is expecting the arrival on a visit to St. Jim's of his niece Fraulein Marie Erlen, and he asks Lowther to meet the young lady at the station.

She proves to be a sweet maiden, and Lowther falls for her. But that does not stop him guying the Herr in the play, with great success - and the beautiful friendship between Lowther and Fraulein Erlen is at an end.

Then started a short summer holiday series. The opening tale of the series is "The Boy Who Knew Too Much." Tom Merry & Co. are spending their summer vac at Eastwood House, and nearby, by a coincidence, Cutts & Co. have a holiday bungalow, and their guest is Captain Punter, the card sharper. And, intending to fleece the millionaire's son, Cutts presses Lumley-Lumley also to become

a guest at his bungalow. But Lumley, assisted by his St. Jim's chums, turns out to be something that Cutts, Punter & Co. didn't expect. A magnificent tale.

The next tale is "Gussy's Unwelcome Guest." The unwelcome guest is Bunter of Greyfriars who joins the party without being asked. And Chungum's Circus plays a big part in this fine story.

Final of the month is "The Stolen Study." Monty Lowther gets the idea to pretend to be ill so that they can have an extra day or two's holiday. That works well, but when Tom Merry & Co. return to St. Jim's they find that Levison, Mellish, and Hooker have bagged Study No. 6, and Mr. Railton allows them to keep it. First come, first served. Finally Lowther takes a photograph of Levison and his pals gambling in the study, and a bit of blackmail means that Blake & Co. can have their old study back.

The early Greyfriars tales are still being serialised at the back of the Gem. One told of a rival school, Friardale Academy, being opened by Herr Rosenblum, near Greyfriars, and the school rivalry with Hoffmann, Meunier, and Co. This one is followed by the arrival of the Chinese, Wun Lung, at Greyfriars.

In real life there is very sad news in the world of flying. Amelia Earhart, the brave airwoman, was on a solo flight round the world. She wirelessly that she was short of fuel. The wreckage of her plane has not been found, and it is presumed that she is dead.

There is a new Agatha Christie book out this month about her great detective, Hercule Poirot. It is called "Dumb Witness", and Doug bought it for 7/6. He has let me read it, and I have loved it. It is one of the best of all Poirot stories.

Last month I entered in my Diary that June was about the best month ever in the Fourpenny Libraries. One month later I have to say that this month is about the worst one ever.

In the S.O.L. the Greyfriars tale is "Goodbye to Bunter Court". It's all good fun and excitement, and Bunter finally has to say farewell to Bunter Court and clear out of Combermere Lodge which he got, complete with servants, through a lot of delicious wangling.

The 2nd S.O.L. of the month is "The Packsaddle Bunch" about life in a Wild West school run by its unusual headmaster, Bill Sampson who uses a quirt and a gun instead of a crane. It was in the Gem not so long ago, and I don't like it any more now than I did then. It's all too farcical. Not a patch on the Rio Kid tales. The chums of Packsaddle are Dick Carr & Co, which sounds very English.

The 3rd S.O.L. is "The St. Frank's Explorers". The boys, with Nelson Lee and Lord Dorrimore, the Millionaire globe-trotter, are in Brazil in search of a lost explorer.

The only other fairly worth-while Library is a B.F.L. which contains "The Boy They Couldn't Tame" which is a story of Tallenbury School, a place for Unwanted Boys. The Head is a wily scoundrel and the punishments are shocking. But one youngster won't give in.

Mum had to go shopping one day in London, and she took me with her for safety's sake. We ended the day at the first house at the Holborn Empire. A glorious variety bill. All the turns were good, but the top of the bill stars were George Robey, the comedian, and Donald Peers. Donald Peers sang some nice lilting songs. He always starts and ends his lovely act with a song about a shady nook near a

babbling brook. Also on the bill was Herschel Henlere, who is a marvellous eccentric pianist. I revelled in it all.

In Modern Boy the main attraction for me just now is the Captain Justice stories. He and the Scientist Professor Flaznagel are rivals for the immense fortune to be had from a salvage operation. The Captain and his friends are marooned on a tiny island, and the ship which comes to rescue them is sinister. The captives are made invisible by a system of scientific camouflage, and Bingley, who is searching for Justice and Co. is puzzled that he cannot find them anywhere. This month's stories are "Captain Justice's Vow" ("Those salvage raiders are going to wish they had never come within a thousand miles of the South Atlantic"), "Ship of Darkness", "Invisible Captives", "Camouflage", and "Bursting Point". A new wonder of Professor Flaznagel's rescues Justice and Co. from their diving-bell prison just before it bursts.

"Biggles' Treasure Island", the serial, goes on its way, and Modern Boy has another flying series about Scotty, and some motor-racing yarns.

There is a new William book out this month by Richmal Crompton. It is William the Showman". Mum bought it for me. It cost 7/6. The funniest tale in it is "William and the Love Test".

I love going to the pictures, and I often go. Of course, I like some films better than others. The first one I saw this month was Loretta Young in "Ramona". This was in Technicolor, about an Indian girl and some greedy white pioneers. A bit stodgy.

James Cagney was in "Pluck of the Irish" about an ex-prizefighter who joined the police in the fight against various rackets. It was pretty good, but I have seen better Cagneys.

Clark Gable, Joan Crawford, and Franchot Tone were in "Love On The Run", about rival newspapermen who help an heiress to escape an unwanted marriage. Farical but good fun. Jack Buchanan had Elsie Randolph with him in a jolly little British musical "This'll Make You Whistle".

Robert Young and Ann Southern were in "Dangerous Number", and Bing Crosby was tuneful in "Pennies From Heaven". Edward G. Robinson was in "Thunder in the City", a rather dull affair making fun of American and British funny little ways. Warner Baxter was in a fairly exciting affair "White Hunter", and Jessie Matthews trilled and danced in "Head Over Heels".

Finally "Moonlight Sonata" with Charles Farrell and Marie Tempest, and with Paderewski playing the piano, made my brother Doug say "Marvellous picture" but it bored me a bit.

The Magnet opened the month with a new series starring Hazeldene and Bob Cherry. The series started off with "The Bad Hat of the Remove". Hazeldene gets heavily in debt to Lodgey, the bookmaker. Mauleverer uses a £10 note as a bookmark in a Holiday Annual - and Mr. Quelch confiscates the book with the note in it. Hazeldene steals the note, Lodgey, guessing the money was stolen, refused to accept it. Hazel confessed to his sister, Marjorie, and asked her to put the note back in the Holiday Annual which is now in the Head's study. As Marjorie is trying to do this, the Head comes in, and Marjorie drops the note out of the window. Bob Cherry sees her do it, recognises the number on the note, thinks that she has stolen it. Quite a plot! But I always think

BARRING BOB CHERRY!



Unable to explain how he came to have a stolen banknote in his pocket, Bob Cherry, of the Greyfriars Remove is turned down by his chums. And it's all brought about by a weak-kneed fellow who cannot run straight and who lacks the courage to face the music when trouble accrues from running crooked. To divulge the secret locked up in his breast would not only spell trouble for the culprit but also for one for whom Bob has a very great respect. Read and enjoy this powerful cover-to-cover school story of Harry Wharton & Co. in

THE MAGNET

it a bit daft to introduce the Holiday Annual into a Greyfriars tale.

Next week, "Bob Cherry's Burden". Poor Bob is worried sick about the banknote. Can sweet Marge be the thief she appears to be? Then "Barring Bob Cherry". Bob is in hot water with his chums who cannot understand Bob's coolness to Marjorie. Then the Bounder takes a hand. He guesses what has happened. A delicious little series.

Next came the start of another new series, this one starring Wibley.

In "Spoofing the School" Wibley disguises himself as Monsieur Charpentier - and is expelled for the impudent prank. But Wibley comes back to Greyfriars, with red hair, and disguised as a new boy, Archibald Popper, the nephew of Sir Hilton, who had been entered at the school but never turned up. In the month's final tale "The Boy Who Came Back", Popper lets his friends know that he is really Wibley in disguise, and they keep the astounding secret. This Wibley series will continue next month, if Fate is kind.

ERIC FAYNE comments on this month's DANNY'S DIARY

The 1937 Gem story "The Tough Guy of the Shell" had been "Grundy of the Shell" in the early summer of 1915. I always considered the introduction of Grundy, with his new Co. of Wilkins and Gunn was a mistake on the author's part. It was the start of a number of new "Co's" to what would soon be an overcrowded

St. Jim's stage, diffusing the limelight from the established and much loved earlier characters.

Now, in 1937, they went back a year to collect 4 earlier consecutive stories which had, for some reason, been omitted. "Lowther Brings the House Down" of 1937 had been "Monty Lowther's Mistake" in the summer of 1914. A story providing sympathetic roles for Herr Schneider and his pretty German niece would not have been written after the outbreak of war with Germany.

In fact, Herr Schneider, and his counterpart at Greyfriars, Herr Gans, were rarely ever mentioned again. I do, however, recall one later blue Gem story in which Herr Schneider drew a distinction between the Prussians and the rest of the German people.

"The Boy Who Knew Too Much" had been "The Outsider's Choice", a fine tale in mid-1914. "Gussy's House Party" in 1914. "The Stolen Study" had been "Held by the Enemy" in 1914.

The "Aliens at Greyfriars" tale which Danny mentions at the back of the Gem just then, had brought Herr Rosenblum back on the scene. It had started in No. 33 of the halfpenny Magnet in 1908. (It had been reprinted in S.O.L. No. 39). One of the "aliens" was Hurree Singh. A little while ago we presented in CD the first Hurree Singh story of all, in which he went to Netherby. After Netherby closed, Inky and his Netherby friends went to Beechwood Academy, run by Herr Rosenblum. Years ago, in a CD Annual, we printed the Beechwood story. This was written by Martin Clifford, so Martin Clifford introduced Hurree Singh before Frank Richards took him over.

Now we find Herr Rosenblum opening Friardale Academy with all the Beechwood aliens. The Herr does not seem to have made his schools very successful, for Friardale Academy and the Herr soon disappeared from the Magnet.

S.O.L. No. 304 "Goodbye to Bunter Court" comprised the second and final part of the Magnet's Bunter Court 8-story series of the summer of 1925. It reads well enough for those who do not know better, but it is not a good example of the S.O.L. medium, being heavily abridged and with one story omitted entirely.

The James Cagney film "Pluck of the Irish" was released in the States under the title "Great Guy". It was Cagney's first film after leaving Warner's who had made so many of his finest films.

It is interesting to note that in blue Gem days Monty Lowther was the amateur photographer of the Terrible Three. In later times the hobby was transferred to Manners. It was Lowther who took the incriminating snapshot in the story "The Stolen Study".

Danny has rung a bell in my memory with his mention of the music hall artist Herschel Henlere. The latter was a brilliant pianist whom I often saw at the lovely Kingston Empire. A highlight of his act was his reluctance to leave the stage. He insisted on giving many encores to his delighted audience, much to the apparent anxiety of the stage management. I wonder if any other C.D. reader recalls Herschel Henlere in the Music Halls.



A RED LETTER DAY.

By C.H. Churchill

To any keen reader of the Nelson Lee Library the date July 28th 1917 stands out in letters of fire because it is the date of No. 112 which contained the first St. Frank's story ever published. St. Frank's, of course, was the brain child of Edwy Searles Brooks. Doubtless he chose this name for his mythical school because his wife was named Frances. He had a brother named Oswald, and maybe this is why the famous Handforth had the christian names of Edward Oswald. We do not know, of course, but it is highly probable.

When school detective stories were decided on by the powers that be for the Lee it was deemed a good idea to go slowly and not have one every week, so the St. Frank's episodes were spaced out every other week to see how they went. They must have been successful as after No. 127 no more non-St. Frank's stories appeared for many years until the second new series in 1930. This was when the Lee was on the downward grade, due to bad management say all we Lee fans.

Just let me quote from Lee No. 112 with the first description of the famous school as told by Nipper on Page 6 -

'I nodded approvingly. St. Frank's was a splendid place. There were two main houses, the College House and the Ancient House. They formed a kind of letter A, the northern ends of both houses being much wider apart than the southern. The wide open space in front - in most schools called a quadrangle - was known as the Triangle at St. Frank's.

'Both houses were ivy-covered, and they looked delightful in the evening sunlight. Bob Christine & Co. had been for a run down the river between afternoon lessons and teatime. Seniors and juniors were now pouring in from the playing fields and other quarters for

tea.

I noticed that many fellows were wearing caps of the same pattern as Christine's, but coloured blue and gold instead of green and yellow. These, I found, were Ancient House boys.'

There can be no doubt no-one on the editorial staff in 1917 ever dreamed that St. Frank's stories would last so many years and that, even when Mr. Brooks ceased to write any more, they would be reprinted in the S.O.L. until the war. Furthermore, since 1946 many have been reprinted by Howard Baker.

Just to glance at Bob Blythe's Bibliography makes one's mind reel to see the titles of so many hundreds of St. Frank's stories that E.S.B. produced, the vast majority of them being first class.

To close I would like to add a personal experience. A few years ago we moved house and next door was a young lad of about 12 to 13 years of age. He claimed to be a reader so I lent him some Magnets and then some Gems. After this I lent some Nelson Lees. When he returned them I asked him which he preferred. He said, at once, "I like the St. Frank's ones best of all". This young man is now a headmaster of a school in Botswana, South Africa, teaching the natives to speak English.

FOR SALE: Billy Bunter at Butlins £2. World's Greatest Detective Stories £2. Chardin Masterpieces in Colour. Offers. William Does His Bit £1. Whiplash. Buck Jones. Kit Carson - Davy Crockett, Kansas Kid. Bound Vol. £3. The Hitler Years, A Photographic Documentary £6.

The Modern Boys' Annual 1935-36 £5 each. Champion Annual 1944, 1952 £3 each, post £1.

Greyfriars Holiday Annual 1926, loose cover £5, post £1. Felix Annual, a little pencil drawing on 2 pages. Rupert Bear Annual 1966 £1.50.

Some 20 Dandy & Beano comics 1980 & 1979. Offers. The Old Man of Lochnager by the Prince of Wales - offers. Greyfriars Holiday Annuals 1925, 1927, 1930, 1931 £10 each. £1 postage.

Record: Floreat Greyfriars, personal reminiscences of Frank Richards £3. Send S.A.E. Watson, 1 Cartbridge Close, Walton on Naze, Essex, CO14 8QJ.

HOW MANY WORDS WILL YOU READ IN 1987?**William Lister**

How many words do any of us read in the course of a year? Let me take it further, say five years - ten years - twenty years? I am afraid my mind boggles at the thought. Some words are quickly forgotten, others live on for years, some no doubt till life shall end. It all depends on the writer and the reader. Some writers create an amazing effect on certain readers, while some find their readers prefer a different style. Charles Dickens has etched his work forever on my mind with his 'Christmas Carol' and the 'Pickwick Papers', as also Harrison Ainsworth with his 'Lancashire Witches' (especially effective if read while living in the Clitheroe district).

However, some writers outside of the realm of the classics latch onto our minds, in the days of our youth. Take, for instance, Charles Hamilton and Edwy Searles Brooks. The first few tales by E.S.B. led me to place an order for the "Nelson Lee", a decision I never regret.

A decision that has led to reading and re-reading his works at this late-stage of my life. Mention Handforth, Church and McClure, or Nipper, Archie Glenforth, Reggie Pitt, Ralph Leslie Fulwood, and immediately life-like characters appear before me, as vivid as on the first day I ever read of them. Though for me, there is one above all other, all the more surprising because he only appeared in a few copies of the "Nelson Lee" in all the years of its existence. I refer to the unforgettable "Ezra Quirke". Of all the St. Frank's tale I have read, I would class the Ezra Quirke series as Brooks' masterpiece. Good as his tales are, here we have something a little unusual, a little above the ordinary run of school-tales. I would go so far as to say that the majority of St. Frank's fans will agree with me.

I see that the introduction to the Howard Baker omnibus of edition of these tales, "The Haunted School", states that undoubtedly this is the best series which ever flowed from the pen of Edwy Searles Brooks (approx. 300,000 words in all). This is where I came in when I ask how many words do we read in a year, or a life-time? For my own part it is a question I could never dare to answer, but whatever the answer is, I can truthfully say this series accounts for 300,000 of them, and I have read these stories more than once.

Allow me just one criticism. The Howard Baker volume refers to it as the best series that ever flowed from Brooks' facile pen. I would prefer to say that this series reads as if it just flowed from the pen of E.S.B. But then, anyone who has ever attempted writing for publication would know that even if his plot inspired him, he would

not be able to escape the drudgery of revising page after page before it appeared in print. Thank you Mr. Brooks for all the hard work you put in, to bring to us the unforgettable Ezra Quirke.

* * * * *

A LETTER FROM ST. FRANK'S

By Jim Cook

The atmosphere that is St. Frank's tends to evoke questions not too readily answered. Questions like Top Hats, 'Fags' and Sardines. Why do the boys wear top hats on Sundays, I wanted to know. Why are 'Fags' permitted at boys' schools and not at girls' colleges? And why are sardines usually on the menu at tea in the studies at St. Frank's.

There's a story of one James Heatherington who in 1897 was fined £50 in London for what the court described as "appearing on the public highway wearing upon his head a tall structure having a shiny lustre and calculated to frighten timid people". Turns out he was wearing the world's first top hat! Which doesn't answer my question. Fags at St. Frank's is a time honoured perquisite for the senior boys, but as far as I know this privilege does not extend to girls in our fictional schools.

Indigestible squiffy sardines that have suddenly been discovered in study cupboards at tea-time did not pass on to Mrs. Poulter's cat but were eaten in much the same way as an epicure would devour his favoured piece de resistance. Which leads me to ask, what are sardines called before they go into tins? Even Nipper couldn't answer that.

But these minor disturbances do not overshadow the joy of reading about life at this most famous college in West Sussex. The seasons are well represented with the appropriate sport dominant in the right period and holidays sometimes tell of Lord Dorrimore's famous adventures abroad with the juniors. Christmas is well represented, and, best of all, the boys and girls do not grow old as we grow old, and because of that we can stay young at heart.

We didn't get to know much about the domestics although they once went on strike for higher wages - and got them. Sometimes we learned a little more about the Head's staff... of the time Mr. Crowell, the master of the Remove, studied astronomy not wisely but too well, and had a breakdown. Many events at St. Frank's stay in the mind for years, sometimes with remarkable, prophetic accuracy.

But to return to Top Hats. It is difficult to discover what life would be like at the school today, for so much has changed.

So cherish those stories about St. Frank's for you will never see their like again. Look after those ripping yarns with the same devotion that Jane Austen had when she ironed out pages of THE TIMES when they were damp.

For surely reading about St. Frank's is the one road that leads to Paradise Regained!



MULTI MEDIA BLAKE

By Norman Wright

Part two - into the 30's

If Blake was behind his Baker St. rival in making it to the silver screen he was well ahead in other ways. "Murder on the Portsmouth Road", a 78rpm record, was issued by H.M.V., probably in the early 1930's. The disc, number c2044, was undated. The credit reads simply, D. Stuart, but it would be too much of a coincidence if it were not Donald Stuart who was responsible for the simple story. Blake was portrayed by Arthur Wontner, star of several British Sherlock Holmes films including, "Sign of Four" (1934) and "Sherlock Holmes Triumph" (1935), recently shown on Channel 4. His profile bore an uncanny resemblance to Sydney Paget's famous illustrations of Holmes. Seven minutes is a very short time in which to enact a detective story, but the cast of "Murder on the Portsmouth Road" made a valiant effort and the result is passably entertaining. Their enthusiasm is reminiscent of a band of amateur dramatists determined at all costs to give their audience value for money. Of the cast of five, not including the dead body, only Wontner is credited. The sketch opens with Blake and Tinker driving through a storm. Such is the quality of the thunder that the listener can almost see the sheet of tin being shaken in front of the microphone.

A shot rings out in the darkness, and soon Blake and the local bobby are standing over the corpse. The dead man's brother-in-law, who is also number one suspect, has the best lines in the playlet. Needless to say his innocence is proved thanks to Sexton Blake's sharp powers of observation. The story is neatly rounded off when the real murderer shoots himself, allowing Blake and Tinker to continue on their way. "Murder on the Portsmouth Road" is a unique item of Blake whimsy predating any commercially available Sherlock Holmes gramophone record by over twenty years!

George Curzon portrayed Blake in two films. "The Mademoiselle" (1836) and "Sexton Blake and the Hooded Terror" (1938) were cheaply made 'Quota Quickies'. Blake enthusiasts had the opportunity to assess Curzon's impersonation of the detective when the latter film was shown recently on Channel 4. The screenplay was credited to A. R. Rawlinson from a story by Pierre Quiroule (pen name of W. W. Sayer). It was directed by George King. The persona were fairly well portrayed. Mrs. Bardell was less ample than Eric Parker's illustrations depicted her, but equally long suffering and lapsing into malapropisms in true Blakian tradition. Tinker, as portrayed by Tony Sympson, was made to provide light relief in a way totally foreign to the stories in "Detective Weekly" and "S.B.L." It seems that film-makers of the thirties and forties were incapable of making detective films without harping back to the 'sidekick' roles as portrayed in westerns. A similar character change was made in the series of Sherlock Holmes films with Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce. Bruce's Watson was a bimbly fool, totally unlike the character in Doyle's stories.

Curzon was adequate as Blake. He appeared authoritative, though rather lacking in vitality. Mme. Julie was played by Greta Gynt. The villain of the piece was played by that master of ham acting, Todd Slaughter. He revelled in and relished such roles. On viewing the film today it is difficult to believe that it was made in the late 1930's. Its overt melo-dramatics must have made it appear dated at the time of its initial release. Yet for all its faults it had its moments and some of the scenes in Baker St. with Pedro (played by himself!) curled up in front of the fire are truly Blakian.

The late 1930's were, perhaps, Blake's finest hours. His exploits were not only appearing in "Detective Weekly" and four issues of "SBL" each month, but also in the "Sexton Blake Annual". Unlike other A.P. annuals, the "Sexton Blake Annual" was published as a large soft backed book. Originally issued with a semi-

transparent dustwrapper its 160 pages comprised reprinted and specially written stories. Many artists, including Arthur Jones, Fred Bennett, Eric Parker and J.H. Valda provided illustrations. The first issue had an atmospheric Arthur Jones cover. That interesting cover was made up of two illustrations. Long standing detective story fans would have recognised the lower illustration as having appeared as a coloured plate in the first "Champion Annual", more than a decade before. At that time it portrayed Panther Grayle! The remaining three annuals had covers painted by Eric Parker.

At about the same time a Sexton Blake card game was issued by Waddy Productions. The side proclaimed "You've read the story, now play the game". The sixty cards portrayed Blake, Tinker, an assortment of ten police officials and forty assorted villains like Major Berner (fire raiser) Framer Man (blackmailing agent) and Caesar Bomski (assassin). None of the characters depicted on the cards, with the exception of Blake and Tinker, had ever appeared in the stories. Waddy productions would have done well to have engaged Eric Parker to produce the artwork for the cards; as it was they were produced by an unskilled hand.



CLIFF HOUSE
and
GREYFRIARS
HOLIDAY QUIZ



By MARGERY WOODS

1. Who thought girls would improve Greyfriars?
Who---surprisingly---held a rather more chauvinist view and disagreed?
2. Who stranded four Cliff House girls on Popper's Island?
Who was the somewhat unlikely knight errant who rescued them?
Who got the blame?
Who took what seemed an apt revenge?
And what ensued?

-
3. Who was Poker Pike?
What was his job at Greyfriars?
4. Fill in the missing names
- a) Elizabeth,..... Bunter
 - b) Sampson Field
 - c) Marjorie Hazeldene
 - d) Cecil Temple
 - e) Phyllis Howell
 - f) Paul Prout
 - g) Clara Trevlyn
 - h) Fisher, Fish
 - i) Philippa, Derwent
 - j) Henry Quelch
 - k) Barbara Redfern
 - i) William Bunter
5. What was the "milk name" of Wun Lung?
6. Master Trouble
Who: Expelled seven boys?
Hired eight tramps?
Sacked Prout?
Tried to cane Wingate?
Whom else did he thrash?
Who thrashed him?
From which famous Gilbert and Sullivan opera did Bob Cherry quote?
7. Identify the girls behind the following nicknames:
- a) Jimmy
 - b) The Icicle
 - c) The Ferret
 - d) The Stormy Petrel
 - e) Fudge
 - f) The Firebrand
 - g) Flap
 - h) Birdie
 - i) The Tomboy
8. Who thought he could break the bank?
And was rescued by Bunter?
And was threatened with prison?
And was japed by Wibley?
Where?
-

9. More Master Trouble

Who was the worst master at Greyfriars?

What was his real name?

Which Remove boy did he set out to disgrace?

And why?

Who threw a vital letter in the Sark?

Why was this master afraid of Prout?

Which other Greyfriars master unwittingly returned a good turn and helped save the victim?

10. LURED OFFICIAL TARRED!

Is this the latest headline depicting one of the Bounder's japes?

Or does it have other associations? (Two words)

Happy Hols, Chums. (And answers next month!)

MORCOVE MINIATURES



Tess Trelawney

By TOMMY KEEN



TESS TRELAWNEY was to become known as the artistic genius of Morcove. As mentioned in 'Morcove Miniatures' No. 2 (Dolly Delane), Tess first made her presence known in the Morcove stories by being the one girl left in Study 12 (the study shared by Betty Barton and Polly Linton) when a blazing fire had broken out, from which she was duly rescued by Dolly Delane.

From then on, Tess became one of Betty's closest chums, but did not play too prominent a part in the stories for quite a while, and no mention of her artistic ability arose until a series in late 1921, featuring a new girl, Olive Owen. Olive had ambitions to be an artist, and had decided to enter a picture at an Exhibition to be held in Barncombe, Morcove's nearest town. The only other entrant from Morcove was Tess Trelawney, and this was the first indication that Tess had a talent for painting. Tess won the first prize, and Olive, at the end of the series, left Morcove.

Tess became the close friend of Madge Minden, after the two girls were kidnapped whilst spending a Christmas holiday at Linton Hall (the home of Polly Linton), and whisked off to Morocco. From then on, after being rescued by their intrepid friends from England and returning to Morcove, Tess and Madge shared the same study.

From pleasant seaside or country landscapes, Tess's paintings became more professional. A gypsy girl, named Zonia, had her portrait painted by the budding genius, the completed picture playing an essential part in the series. Later Zonia was adopted by Betty Barton's parents, until eventually she found her real mother.

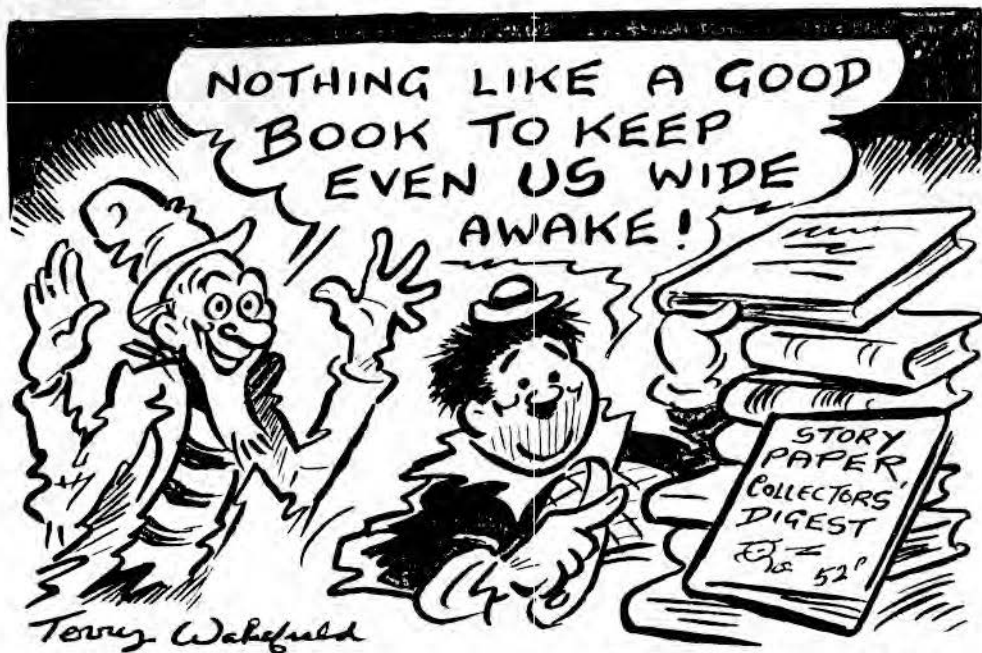
In 1924 came a series beginning with the story "The Mysterious Three" (a series which I, personally, do not consider to be from the pen of Marjorie Stanton). Many mysterious incidents happened, and Tess, Madge Minden and Trixie Hope were suspected of being 'The Three', when a handkerchief with the initials T.T. was found at the scene of one of the crimes! This made Tess the chief suspect. However, after some subtle detective work by Tess (S.G.O. No. 195 - "Detected by Tess"), one of the housemaids was revealed as the culprit.

In another series Tess has to leave Morcove because of her parents' financial troubles, but, nothing daunted, she finds work in Barncombe as a commercial artist, and to the delight of Naomer Nakara, whilst in Barncombe with Betty & Co., a huge poster is discovered on some hoardings of the dusky schoolgirl, advertising a certain dentifrice, with the slogan "Dare You Smile Like This"? Mr. Trelawney's fortunes are regained, and Tess returns to Morcove. Several years later, a brother, Tom, is brought into a series, and like so many others, he had been wrongly accused of some minor crime. He had run away from home (presumably), to be discovered by Tess and her chums, working with Dolly Delane's father at his small-holding on the Barncombe Road. Tom is of course cleared, and heard of no more.



Through the years, Tess became more temperamental and moody over her paintings (Madge Minden was the moody girl in the early days), but at the drop of a hat, stage decor with magnificent back-cloths would be completed, single-handed, by Tess. Even 'Drury Lane' would not have daunted this brilliant fourteen year old school-girl. Maybe, in their time, she would have been serious rival to Romney and Gainsborough!

Tess Trelawney was another of Marjorie Stanton's well drawn characters: popular, a good all rounder at sports, but mostly remembered for her amazing talent as an artist.



REVIEWS BY (Old Favourites, Weary Willie and Tired Tim.)

MARY CADOGAN

Bunter By Appointment by Daniel Green (Hodder & Stoughton £10.95)

The first thing which must be said about this larger and more lurid than life novel is that it is not set in the cosy confines of the Greyfriars Remove. Its outrageous anti-hero is not the gluttonous grub-grabbing Removite Billy Bunter, but one of his early nineteenth-century ancestors - William Frederick Augustus Bunter.

Daniel Green takes up his adventures more or less at the point where Bunter Sahib - of which this new book is the sequel - ended. Bunter is in India, engineering his escape from the male seraglio of the Begum of Sumroo. He does so in the guise of a veiled and swathed Muslim woman, and with the help of Gurmakh Singh, a servant who is as rascally and as resourceful as his oversized master.

The thread that runs throughout William Frederick Augustus Bunter's adventures and intrigues is the theme of low cunning and cowardly expediency succeeding where integrity and intelligence might fail. Bunter arrives in England, makes a marriage of convenience and, with the help of the wily Singh, establishes not only a wildly successful Indian restaurant for the rich and famous, but a series of Cart-a-Curry stalls throughout the country for the poor and hungry. Nevertheless he ends up in Newgate Gaol - writing his memoirs and, one imagines, being primed for a further volume of adult cavorting. But surely the joke is already wearing a bit thin (if such a word can ever be applied to a Bunter!) For all of us the authentic Fat Owl of the Remove is unique: Bunter grown-up is nothing more than a gimmick - and one which lacks the hand of 'the master' - Charles Hamilton.

* * * *

THE BIG PINK by Ann Pilling (Viking £6.95), with its action taking place in the 1980s, harks firmly back to the traditional school story. It is a children's tale set in a girls' boarding-school run on old established lines. The heroine, Angela (an evocative schoolgirl name if ever there was one!) is catapulted from her 'friendly local comprehensive' (when her parents go to work in Pakistan) into The Moat, where she is at first not accepted by her fellow pupils. This is a compelling re-working of the well-worn but still addictive theme of the outsider gradually making good in the challenging world of a closed community which initially rejects her. Shades of Angela Brazil's 'For the Sake of the School'; of Betty Barton's ostracism when she first faces the snobs at Morcove, and of the scholarship girl - Peggy Preston - who had so many early struggles at Cliff House! It is good to see the school story (which contrary to all predictions has not died out) so intelligently treated.

* * * *

THE SPY WHO NEVER WAS by Julia Keay (Michael Joseph £12.95) also stirs echoes from the old papers. Vali-Mata-Vali, the exotic Indonesian dancer who became one of Sexton Blake's female-spy sparring partners, must surely have owed her creation in the 1920's to the real-life Mata-Hari who is the subject of this new book. Whatever the facts of her life, Mata Hari has become a symbol of vampish betrayal, and of the woman who is willing to sell her services to the highest bidder. This biography attempts to create a more sympathetic picture of the surprisingly stolid-looking Dutch woman whose sensual and pseudo-oriental dancing took most of Europe by storm even before her exploits in the minefield of espionage made her internationally notorious. It unravels details about her very unhappy marriage and her subsequent loneliness, and suggests that Mata Hari was more of a victim than a vampire.

Although the author is persuasive, it is difficult to accept all her conclusions. One is reminded of Arthur Marshall's comments on Mata Hari when he reviewed an earlier book about her: 'Priestess, dancer, Lady? ...We now know the answers and they are "never, certainly not, and, alas, no."'

* * * *

THE LORD'S COMPANION, edited by Benny Green (Pavilion Books £16.95) is a bumper collection of snippings from memoirs, newspapers, magazines letters and novels, and from Wisden, in celebration of Lord's, which, apparently is 'not just cricket's headquarters but also its spiritual home'. Luminaries like Conan-Doyle and P.G. Wodehouse are represented, with many other distinguished authors, as well as connoisseurs of the game like 'Messrs. Swanton, Arlott, Moorhouse and Heald'. A far cry from the schoolboy cricket matches of Harry Wharton & Co., and our other fictional heroes, but none the less intriguing.

* * * * *

WANTED: Footsteps of death, Ironsides smashes through, Ironsides' lone hand, Ironsides on the spot, Dead man's warning, Alias the hangman, Borgia head mystery, Whistling key, Crooked staircase, Painted dog, Dead in a ditch, All change for murder, Body in the oot, Murder with a kiss, Black cap murders, Petticoat lane murders, Murder on whispering sands. (All by Victor Gunn). (No Large Print Editions).

Phil Griffiths, 21 Harcourt Field, Wallington, Surrey, SM6 8BA.

* * * * *

WANTED: BFL (First series) by Horace Phillips. Nos. 210, The Worst House at Ravenshill, 247 The Worst Fellow at Burnside; 309 The Honour of a Scout.

Ray Hopkins, 18 Foxhunter Drive, Oadby, Leics. LE2 5FE.

* * * * *

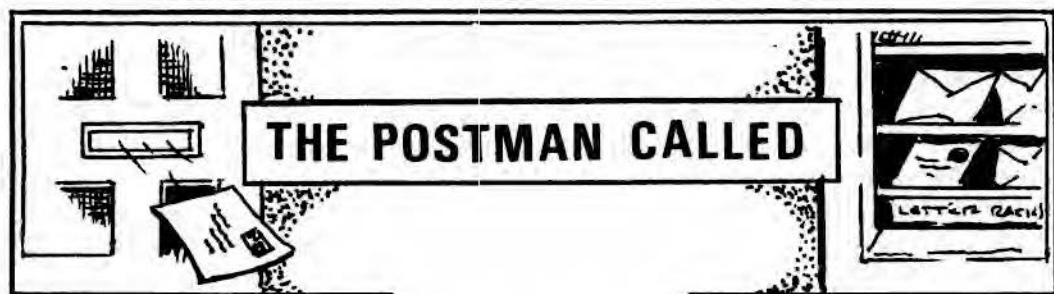
FOR SALE: Run of C.D. monthlies in mint condition, 194-341 (260 missing), 194 - 413, 417-423, 415, 433, 444. Offers to: Robert W. Story, 7 Barra Lane, Broomlands, Irvine, Ayrshire, KA11 1DA.

* * * * *

BOYS' AND ADULT SCHOOL FICTION - Summer catalogue available now from Robert Kirkpatrick, 244 Latimer Road, London W10 - SAE appreciated. Wants Lists welcome. Boys' and adult school fiction also wanted - please offer anything in this field.

* * * * *

WANTED URGENTLY: Thrillers Nos. 530 - 531. Harry Pemberton, 63A Parkend Road, Newall Green, Manchester, M238 8QP.



BILL LOFTS (London) In answer to Ray Hopkins' interesting piece on Valerie Drew the schoolgirl detective. I must confess that I have always believed that it was based on the enormously popular 'Nancy Drew' detective series in book form in America. At a lastcount they have been reputed to have sold a staggering hundred million copies! As the series started at least a year before John W. Bobin's creation, the question of who started first cannot be disputed.

Donald Bobin died in 1983 when it was reported in the C.D. by Brian Doyle. Personally I doubt very much if he wrote any of his father's creation, as he was never up to the standard of many of the girls' writers. Incidentally John Bobin died when he was only 45, and in his prime. It is correct that George Lewis Carlton took over the characters when Bobin died, and true that he 'disappeared' from the scene at A.P.

Whether the pen-name of 'Isobel Norton' hid several authors I don't know, but certainly there has never been any evidence that John G. Brandon wrote in the girls' papers - he wrote in the main detective fiction of adult vintage. Perusing old note-books does however indicate that in the Schoolgirl Nos. 554-564, 1940, "Valerie Drew and The Avenging Three" was penned by Reginald Kirkham. In looking up the issues in question they appear under the 'Isobel Norton' by-line. It is hoped in the near future perhaps to elucidate the authorship of the earlier Valarie Drew tales to see if they were by the same author.

DARRELL SWIFT (Leeds) "The Monsters of St. Frank's" article by Ernest Holman in the May C.D., prompts me to mention that Alf Hanson spent many an hour, over a period of years, speaking to Keith Smith and me at our "Happy Hours" bookstall at the Manchester Book Fair. Alf had a great love for Nelson Lee stories

and a terrific affection for the MONSTER LIBRARY for which he had made some illustrations. On one of the last visits before his death, he told us that he wanted just 2 copies of MONSTER LIBRARY for his collection: he had 17 out of the series and had been searching for the remaining two for years. We told him that we had two copies only on the stall, and we were absolutely astonished when Alf, on viewing them, stated that they were the two copies he had been seeking for such a long time! Alf's day was really made - and so was ours. We only saw Alf once more after that. Alf had close connections with Northern Club: for many years, he drew the Club Christmas card, which was always a popular item.

JUNE ARDEN (Leeds) I am quite wedded to Greyfriars and Bob Cherry! BUT I do enjoy the articles about the girls, and the drawings, also the Book Reviews.

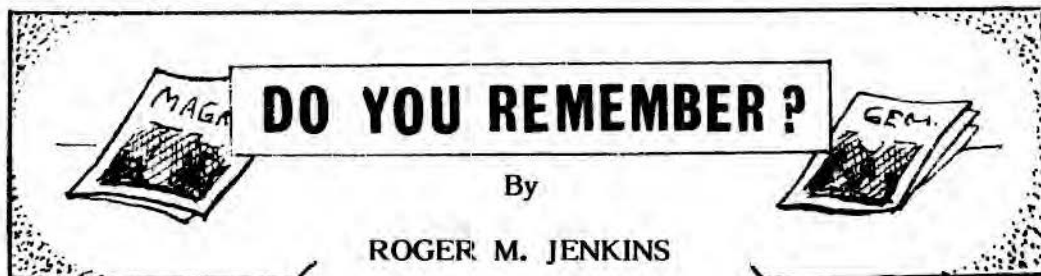
M. Gibson (Western Australia): I appreciate the schoolgirl articles you have included recently as I enjoyed Betty Barton and Barbara Redfern for so many years, and having a number of volumes of both, still do.

(Editor's Note: We have received many letters of appreciation about our features on the girls. We also continue to receive many tributes and expressions of thanks to Eric Fayne, whose editorship is described by several readers as giving them 'years of pleasure'. There is also much appreciation of Terry Wakefield's drawings for the C.D., and our books features.)

BOB WHITER (Los Angeles): I was a little surprised to hear Danny found "Land Without Music" rather heavy going. I suppose I was about thirteen when my brother Douglas and I saw this sparkling little gem. Even now whenever we get together we often speak about some of the amusing sequences - how a boy is practising on his flute - when suddenly a hand snatches it away - leaving him with a surprised look on his face and his fingers still pressing on invisible finger-holes! Finally when Tauber returns after an absence to the "land", he leads the people to storm the palace. What amazing places they have hidden their forbidden instruments in - i.e. a double bass up the chimney, to name one. I loved it, and of course you had Tauber's glorious tenor voice into the bargain!

LAURENCE ELLIOTT (London): Re. Bill Lofts' article (page 11, May C.D.), Alfred Edgar could not have been transferred to Pluck in 1930, as it finished in 1924. This was the companion paper to

Champion until 1924 - two fine strong papers. Then Pluck became Triumph and the whole character of the two papers changed to the new, up and coming Thomson papers type, Adventure, Rover, Wizard, etc., to compete.... There was another paper of the Champion/Pluck type, the Rocket, but this only lasted from 17.2.23 to 11.10.24.



No. 224 - POPULAR (NEW SERIES) No. 258.

The Christmas number of the Popular for 1923 presented its usual wide range of stories, nearly all being Hamiltonian reprints, though Morton Pike's serial about the highwayman Claud Duval was in fact given star billing with a cover picture and pride of place in the paper. Even if the story had echoes of blood and thunder, it nevertheless went with a swing and had plenty of excitement with, of course, a background of snow.

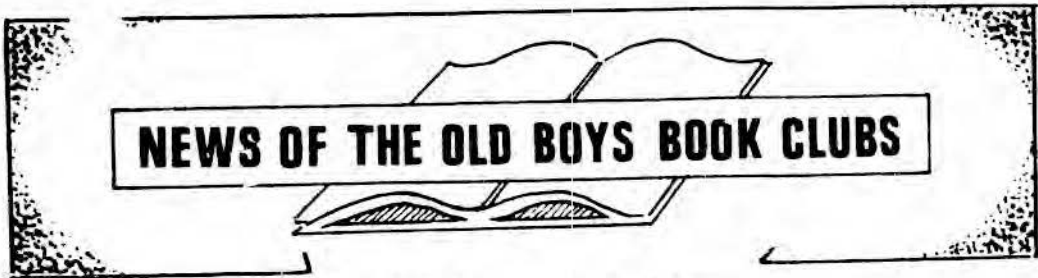
There was nothing seasonable about the Greyfriars story, which was an edited first half of Magnet 367 about Falke, the treacherous secretary of Mr. Bull, who was blackmailing Vernon-Smith into helping him plot Johnny Bull's disgrace. There was a good deal of drama in this story that survived its ruthless cutting. The St. Jim's story, on the other hand, was a Christmas number, constituting the final chapters of Gem 197 about the ghost of the White Monk and Mr. Selby's curious guest, Mr. Wynde. This was a fine old tale that was not happily cut up into small segments.

Rookwood stories, however, could always be reprinted in full, and "The Phantom Abbot" was by far and away the most satisfactory item in this issue of the Popular. The school was very proud of its ghost that dated back to the Wars of the Roses, and stories about its appearance had always been second or third-hand evidence until this occasion. It must be admitted that there was often poor motivation for those who masqueraded as ghosts in Hamiltonian stories but now it was all part of a very rational scheme, and no doubt

would have succeeded if Jimmy Silver had not worked it out, and indeed the evidence for his conclusions was all presented very fairly to the reader.

The remaining items comprised a Cedar Creek tale and Billy Bunter's weekly, in the centre pages and very uninspired. Cedar Creek was far more entertaining with its story about Chunky Todgers bribing a rogue to say that Chunky had saved him from drowning in the river, and then the rogue began to blackmail his so-called rescuer. But perhaps the most interesting item of all was an advertisement on the back page for Billy Bunter lantern slides. Of course, Charles Hamilton never sold the copyright of Billy Bunter, and so the Amalgamated Press could claim no royalties for this, and presumably Charles Hamilton never got to know about it at all. It would be fascinating to know if any of these lantern slides still exist.

* * * * *



MIDLAND O.B.B.C.

Nine members turned up for what should have been the A.G.M. in May, but several items were left, to be dealt with later. Tom Porter is still not well enough to attend and we miss our chairman badly.

The same officials were re-elected 'en bloc' for the simple reason that the number of regular attenders is so small (because of distance, illness and so on), although we have 38 members on the books. The refreshments were provided as usual by Betty Hopton, with Ivan Webster brewing tea and coffee. We are very grateful to them both for their generosity.

There then followed a rather difficult quiz given by your correspondent, and Ron Gardner won the prize (a 'Magnet Companion 1977'). The final item was a game, 'Take a Letter', given by the acting chairman Geoff Lardner, based on titles of some Howard Baker

volumes. Winners were Betty Hopton and Ron Gardner. Next meeting will be on June 30th.

JACK BELLFIELD

LONDON O.B.B.C.

Indispositions and holidays were the two main causes of a depleted attendance at the June Walthamstow meeting, there being only a baker's dozen members present. But the latter did have their reward as there were two excellent items for their enjoyment. Phil Griffiths' choice of three Desert Island books was as follows: Howard Baker Volume - Crime at Christmas, which includes the Pengarth Castle series by Edwy Searles Brooks, Union Jacks 1, 131 and 1,132. Six Feet of Dynamite, Berkeley Gray, 1942. This should have appeared as 'One Man Blitzkreig' in No. 500 of The Thriller in May 1940, but this issue was never published. Biggles in Spain, Captain Johns, 1939 (originally serialised in The Modern Boy, 21 January to 11 April, 1939).

After the tea break, Bill Lofts gave a very fine talk entitled 'What's in a Title'. The titles of old boys' and girls' papers mentioned were legion, and the talk was followed by a lively and long discussion, in which all present participated. Both Phil Griffiths and Bill Lofts were suitably thanked for two excellent talks. Also thanked were Chris and Duncan Harper (who made the tea, as this meeting was unique in the history of the Club, there being no ladies present). Next meeting at the Harper's residence at Loughton on Sunday, 12th July. A full tea will be provided: notify if attending.

BEN WHITER

NORTHERN O.B.B.C.

During the assemble and chat session of the June 13th meeting, welcoming cups of coffee were served to the fifteen members present. Newspaper cuttings referring to the Ealing Exhibition of the works of Charles Hamilton were available. Nine members had recently been to see 'Daisy Pulls It Off' and voted

it most successful and very well produced. Arrangements were made for our dinner, to be held at the end of June.

David Bradley, reporting on the W.E. Johns Meeting to be held in Nottingham, confirmed its revised date of 17th October. Reporting on the Club Library, Paul Galvin said he had now catalogued all the items, and it was proposed that a catalogue/list be made as soon as possible. It was our intention to re-instate the postal library service as quickly as we could.

A change in our published programme was announced: Bill Lofts would visit the Club on October 10th, and not in September. Members and visitors, please note.

Keith Smith brought along an item from the December 1951 STORY PAPER COLLECTOR, 'A Country Morning Ramble', composed by the late Gerry Allison. This was a short story with spaces which had to be filled, to make sense, by the insertion of Greyfriars names. Bill Williamson was the winner, with 19 correct answers out of 20. After refreshments, Keith presented his second item. With the aid of some fine examples of very old books from his collection and the use of film slides, he gave a quick history of the progress of early children's books and illustrations. We were amazed at the quality of the colour printing of the superb illustrations. Keith also showed early forms of producing illustrations - from woodcuts. This item proved to be a new and most enjoyable aspect of our interest. Our July meeting will be on the 11th, taking the form of an informal Summer Break at the home of our Secretary: Revd. Geoffrey Good, Thornes Vicarage, Denby Dale Road, Wakefield. All welcome - assemble 6 - 7 p.m.

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

WANTED: The Boys Friend Library (2nd) series.

Biggles Learns to Fly	No. 469	The Cruise of the Condor	No. 617
Biggles in France	No. 501	Biggles Flies East	No. 621
Biggles Goest To War	No. 610	The Spy Flyers	No. 625
The Camels are Coming	No. 614	Biggles Flies Again	No. 630

Top price paid, will purchase bound volumes, including above titles. P. Galvin,

2 The Lindales, Pogmoor, Barnsley, S. Yorks. Tel. 0226 295613.

BUY SELL OR SWOPS OLD BOYS' STORY PAPERS, COMICS AND BOOKS

BOOKS:- Bunters, William, Biggles, Jennings, Henty, Brent-Dyer Oxenham, Magnet volumes. COMICS:- Beano, Dandy, Radio Fun, Knockout Film-Fun Rainbow etc.

STORY PAPERS:- Magnet, Gem, S.O.L., Champion, Hotspur, Rover, Skipper, Adventure, Wizard etc. ANNUALS:- Holiday Annual, Tiger Tim, Rainbow, Champion, Film-Fun, Radio Fun, Schoolgirls' Own, Beano, Dandy etc.

No lists at present but do let me know what you need or have for disposal.

Contact:- Colin Crewe, 12B Westwood Road, Canvey Island, Essex. Tel. 0268-693735.

Evenings: 7.15 - 9.30 p.m.



YOUR EDITORS WERE CALLING YOU

By

LESLIE S. LASKEY

"Come into the Office, Boys and Girls" was the invitation from the Editor of "The Magnet", and so, in our imaginations, we trooped into the "Magnet" Office to discover what our Editor had to tell us.

All the Fleetway House juvenile weeklies featured Editorials more or less regularly. D.C. Thomson & Co. appear to have bothered little with Editorials in their boys' papers. I cannot remember any myself, and there are none in the few Thomson papers which I have in my possession. New stories were announced in a panel from time to time but there was no link between reader and editor to encourage correspondence.

The "Gem's" Editorial was headed "The Editor's Chat". Both "Magnet" and "Gem" Editorials were generally comprehensive and worthwhile for, in addition to some preview of next week's stories, information was often supplied concerning companion papers and annuals, and the monthly Libraries. The "Magnet" Editor's "Rapid-Fire Replies" answered many queries from readers about the Greyfriars characters and about the history of "The Magnet".

The one-thousandth numbers of both "Magnet" and "Gem" were celebrated by double-page Editorial features in the centre pages of both papers. The Editor of "The Gem" pointed out that this was, in fact, the 1048th issue of the paper, and he went on to explain how there had been a first series which had run to only forty-eight issues. A photograph of Frank Richards in "The Magnet" must have been twenty years or so out of date. Presumably, like the characters in his stories, he was supposed never to grow any older.

The Editorials in the other Papers varied a good deal in their size and scope. The "Champion's" Editorial occupied a prominent position on page two and was chatty and breezy, with frequent references to the exploits of 'Orace, the Office-boy, and that youth's rivalry with Cuthbert who worked as office-boy for "The Triumph" next door.

The Editor of "The Triumph" addressed his readers from a modest little space at the foot of page ten, even when, in September 1936, he had a special announcement to make. After a week of suspense, the readers learned that free gifts were coming in the shape of a set of coloured postcards of "Speed Marvels of 1936", i.e. racing cars, 'planes, railway locomotives etc.

The "Triumph" Editor related, one Tuesday, how he returned from his lunch-break one day to find 'Orace and Cuthbert, together with the office-boy from the monthly "Champion Library" Office, engaged in playing a game of indoor cricket in one of the offices. He saw the ball flying towards him and he claimed that he put out a hand and caught it deftly.

The "ball" turned out to be a stale doughnut.

No doubt these little editorial tales were lapped up by the readers. They suggested that Fleetway House would be an entertaining place in which to work. One wonders whether some of the older boy readers possibly wrote in to enquire whether there were any vacancies for office-boys.

In "Modern Boy" the Editorial was entitled "The Editor Talks". In "The Schoolgirl" it was "Between Ourselves". "Eoy's Cinema's Editorial was called "The News Reel".

"The Sexton Blake Library" began to feature an editorial only in 1934, under the heading "Consulting Room Chat", which enabled the Editor to discuss in some detail current stories, and to make observations about his authors and their work.

The disastrous May of 1940 saw the end of most of our story papers, both weekly and monthly. The A.P. and D.C. Thomson & Co. adopted quite different tactics in the face of the acute paper crisis. Most of the A.P. papers were promptly shut down. Thomsons' kept all their "Big Five" boys' papers going by reducing the frequency of issue to fortnightly only, in addition to curtailing the number of pages. However, in February 1941. Thomsons' found themselves obliged to dispense with "The Skipper". In the final issue of that paper the Editor made an announcement of closure, adding the promise "The Skipper will come out again".

But it never did. Neither did any of the lost Fleetway papers re-appear after the War with the solitary exception of the monthly "Schoolgirls' Own Library".

In 1940 the "Sexton Blake Library's" Editorial disappeared, to be replaced by wartime notices appealing to readers to give waste paper to salvage.

A 1942 number of "The Wizard" had an editorial inset which showed a picture of a boy handing a large bale of paper to a girl across a counter. Underneath, a second picture showed the same boy handing a shell to a gunner. The message was that the two gestures were synonymous - "Every bundle of waste-paper taken to a salvage depot means more shells for the Army because paper has become a vital raw material in the production of fuses and components, and the Forces are counting on the shells YOU can help to make".

No doubt many copies of the wartime boys' and girls' papers disappeared in this way, which would explain why copies are so scarce today, particularly those for the years 1941-1944, the peak years of the salvage drive.

In the final issue of "The Magnet", in May 1940, the Editor told us that the Old Paper would continue to play its part, just as it had done during the Great War. He then went on to mention a Canadian reader who had a display of "Magnets" in his shop window in Manitoba, including a copy of the very first issue.

The name of that reader was William Gander.

A poignant final Editorial

The hopes of an Editor for the future of his Paper, hopes that were so soon to be cruelly dashed by the rapidly escalating war situation; and the first mention of a man who was destined to launch a new venture that would keep the memories of the Old Papers alive and bright for many decades into the future.

IS THAT YOU, SYLVIA MARSTON?

By Ray Hopkins

Thanks to Margery Woods in the 1985 CD Annual we can now put a real name to that of Muriel Holden. Hallo, Roland Jameson! And now, thanks to Bill Lofts in the 1986 CD Annual, another clue to a further pseudonym used by Roland Jameson appears.

The four titles given by Bill as stories never read, because they were left in manuscript form when the Schoolgirls' Own Library closed in 1940, were already in print as serials in the Schoolgirls' Weekly as follows: (words in Caps where they differ from Bill's) 'The Feud in HER Family by Muriel Holden: SW 795-806, Jan-Apr 38; 'The Mystery of MARLHAM GRANGE' by Muriel Holden: 823-834, Jul-Oct 38; 'Their Foe in the Film CITY' by Sylvia Marston: 835-847, Oct 38-Jan 39; 'They Dare Not Tell the School' by Sylvia Marston: 858-865, Apr-May 39.

From the above it seems that Sylvia Marston can be considered another pen-name of Roland Jameson.

It would appear from the above serial dates that there was no likelihood of any of these serials already being reprinted in the SGOL because serials, in general, seemed to take two years to be cut down to the 64 or 96 page size SGOL. However, the title of SGOL 719, Feb 40 'Her Mystery Foe in Screenland' by Sylvia Marston bears a very close resemblance to 'Their Foe in the Film City'. A comparison of the SW serial and SGOL 719 would reveal the truth. Unfortunately, both copies are locked away in the British Museum Reading Room. But maybe, one day, an investigator will be able to spot the difference, or not, as the case may be.

* * * * *

MEMORIES ARE MADE OF 'MAGNETS'

By E. Baldock

Our Editor's reference in the May C.D. to associations of certain months and years with specific events stirred many long dormant memories. It is quite amazing how, when one sits quietly and allows the mind to range at will, how vividly some of those long ago episodes re-assert themselves and spring into clear focus once again. Little doors open and reveal their treasures, which have long been stored and forgotten until some word or scene sets them in motion.

Indelibly etched upon my memory is a camping expedition undertaken by a friend and myself in the mid nineteen-thirties. It was not a terribly ambitious affair. A small tent, a few miles only from home (I believe we could not afford to be more opulent) on

the banks of the Rhee a little up river beyond the village of Grantchester - an idyllic spot, a bosky wonderland. BUT - I recall with amusement now - it rained almost continuously for three days, an endless period in youth. We were confined to the narrow limits of our streaming tent for much of the time, and but for my (I now feel) amazing forethought it could have been a complete disaster. I had packed together with the camping gear a few copies of the 'Magnet' for reading while sun-bathing on the river bank. These were issues containing the story of Warren of the Fifth, which dates the occasion during the summer of 1935, I think. They proved to be life-savers! Confined beneath the weeping canvas we lay and read, dreamt, and discussed the merits of these stories. I believe we argued vehemently yet amicably, as fellows will, as to which of us more closely resembled Warren (a very decent chap in the series). Naturally I claimed that distinction and offered many (to me) sound and watertight reasons for so doing. My friend advanced equally powerful arguments for himself. Quite clearly the character of Warren made a great impression on our minds. I recall that camp and those discussions as though they occurred last year. Such was the impact of the writings of Charles Hamilton upon two fellows who, surrounded by so many other jolly activities - including a rainswept landscape! - always returned to them at the end of the day.

WANTED: Magnets, Nos. 349, 388, 607, any condition or even in bound volumes if single copies not available. E. Connolley, Dunstan Lodge, 25 Paynes Pitch, Churchdown, Glos. GL3 2NT.

WANTED: Any issues of "Everybody's" 1940/1 containing the Buck Rogers picture strip - any condition. M. Follows, 60 Hipwell Crescent, Stocking Farm, Leicester, LE4 2DL.

WANTED: Leave it to Conquest, Conquest takes all, Convict 1066, Meet the Don, Follow the Lady, Conquest after midnight, Get ready to die, Count down for Conquest, Conquest calls the tune. (All by Berkeley Gray) (No large Print Editions).

Phil Griffiths, 21 Harcourt Field, Wallington, Surrey, SM6 8BA.

WANTED: Strange case of the antlered man, The Grouser investigates, (E.S.B.) The black skull murders, Racketeers of the turf, (Carleton Ross)

Phil Griffiths, 21 Harcourt Field, Wallington, Surrey, SM6 8BA.