

STORY PAPER
COLLECTORS' DIGEST

VOL. 41

No. 488

AUGUST 1987

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STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

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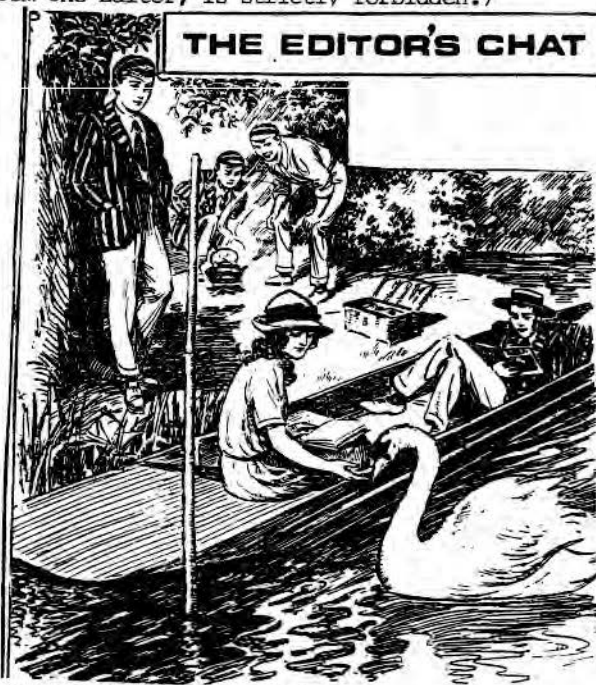
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SUMMER'S GOLDEN DAYS

The picture above from the old papers sums up so much of the best of summer, and relaxation and holidays. It was sent to me by our regular contributor, Tommy Keen, and it reminded me of Frank Richards' frequently mentioned passion for boats. In his autobiography he stated that he liked, when considering a knotty problem, to do so in a boat, and river themes gave sparkle to many of his stories throughout his long writing career. In a 1957 C.D.

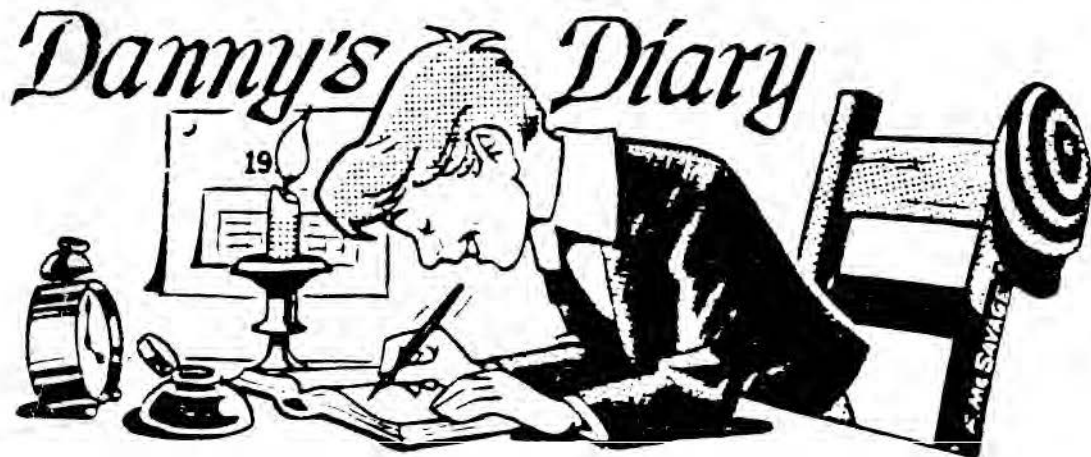
he mentions his new Bunter book (Billy Bunter Afloat, whose Thames boating holiday theme evokes echoes of the Water Lily series) and remarks that boating makes him feel like a teen-ager when he writes of it - 'bringing back to mind lovely old days when the water rippled under the willows - as no doubt it still does! Who wouldn't like to be sixteen again, just for a day in a boat!' On the same theme Larry Morley, one of our readers who wants to preserve his recently acquired holiday tan, writes 'Think I will take a boat out on the Sark this afternoon: hope I don't meet Ponsonby & Co.'

There is no doubt that favourite characters from the papers travel with us when we go out and about on our holidays. I have had a busy summer, visiting Sweden in May, Italy in June and Switzerland in July. Magnets, Gems, Schoolgirls and Schoolgirls' Owns have gone with me, and I must say that I have often been impressed by the accuracy of their authors in describing various European locations. My husband and I went south of Rome for the first time this year; from the window of our hotel bedroom in Sorrento we looked out upon Vesuvius, at a distance but always clearly silhouetted, and I was reminded of Hamilton's own travels in Italy, and of his thoughts when looking into the volcano. These are expressed by the Famous Five in Magnet 1278 when they are exploring the ruins of Pompeii, and I must say I had similar thoughts whilst I was there about the possibility of Vesuvius erupting again. I was rather less enthusiastic, however, than Johnny Bull who said: 'Rather a catch if we happened to be here in an eruption ... Something to tell the fellows about at Greyfriars next term.'

In spite of all the changes which have taken place since the days when Charles Hamilton was there, I still found Italy, as he did, 'a land of dreamy beauty'. And in the ruins of Pompeii I thought of Harry Wharton being set upon by the henchmen of the dastardly Greek, Konstantinos Kalizelos, while he was looking at some 'giddy atrium' and temporarily separated from his friends. The Greek, of course, was after the scarab which Mauleverer had entrusted to the Captain of the Remove whilst they were en route for Egypt, and many adventures there.

May your own holidays be as happy as mine, and as fulfilling (if perhaps not quite so adventurous!) as those of our story-paper heroes and heroines.

MARY CADOGAN.



AUGUST 1937

With the month's first issue of Modern Boy we reach the final story of the present Captain Justice series. It is entitled "Explosion!" - what a terse title! and it brings to a close the long series about the salvage rivals. I hope that Captain Justice will be back before long.

The Modern Boy these days is all adventure, comprising Sea, Air, War, and Railways tales. There is a new series of "Don of the Submarines" which is out of the ordinary. There is also a page of pictures of the Hopalong Cassidy film "Hills of Old Wyoming", but stories in pictures leave me cold.

In a paper called the Pilot there is a series of tales about Will Hay as a comic schoolmaster, and one of my pals says they are good fun. But I think I shall preserve my tuppence.

There is a lot in the papers just now about the progress being made by Television, which is wireless with pictures. It seems there is no doubt that Britain is leading the world in the research on this new invention, and the pictures of the recent Coronation are said to have been remarkable.

The cinemas are following events closely, because it seems likely that if Television becomes general, people may stop going to the pictures at all but will watch films in their own homes. I don't much care for the idea; nor does Mum. Half of the joy of going to the pictures is actually, well, "going" to the pictures. They can keep their old Television boxes.

And, speaking of films, I've seen some lovely ones at the local cinemas this month. Ida Lupino was in "The Gay Desperado" about an heiress who is held to ransom by a romantic bandit. Fairly good was "Beloved Enemy" about the British rising in 1921, in which a revolutionary falls in love with the sweetheart of an English army officer. This one starred Merle Oberon and David Niven.

We all greatly enjoyed "Three Smart Girls" starring the new singing star, Deanna Durbin. It is about 3 sisters who work to bring their estranged parents together again. Claudette Colbert was in "Maid of Salem", which I found rather heavy-going. It was set several hundred years ago with a girl accused of witchcraft being saved by her lover. Joe E. Brown was noisy and good fun in "Polo Joe".

A lovely eerie thriller, from a story by Agatha Christie, was "Love From a Stranger." It stars Ann Harding and Basil Rathbone. Bobby Howes was in "Please", "Teacher", and "Fire Over England" was a big British film starring Flora Robson, Laurence Olivier, and Vivienne Leigh, all about the British Navy licking the Armada in Elizabeth's time.

Finally, another good one was "Labelled Lady" about an heiress who sues a newspaper. The stars in this were Spencer Tracy, Jean Harlow, and William Powell.

Not an exceptionally good month in the Gem, but not too bad. By far the best tale of the month is the first one, "Rival Caravanners". I have never before known a single tale devoted to a particular form of holiday. In this one, early in the autumn term, Tom Merry & Co. go for a week-end caravanning, and Figgins & Co. try to bag their van. I liked this one a lot, but it seemed a shame not to extend it into a series.

The next tale was "Tom Merry's Minor", and this also is enjoyable. Tom Merry rescues a monkey which is being ill-treated by its master. Tom takes the monkey to St. Jim's, and its monkey tricks cause all sorts of problems. Real good fun.

Next tale starred the new bore Grundy. It was called "Editor Grundy" in which Grundy gets the idea of starting a new school mag to compete with Tom Merry's Weekly. He makes a real fool of himself. Quite good reading if you can put up with Grundy.

Final tale of the month is "The Boy who Spoofed St. Jim's". This is rather an involved affair, and I am sure it is not by the real Martin Clifford. Kerr disguises himself as a friend of the father of Knox, the prefect, with the idea of embarrassing Knox. Then, suddenly, the disguised Kerr finds himself arrested on a charge of stealing Knox's gold watch. Not too bad, really, but a mix-up.

The early Greyfriars tale running at the back of the Gem now concerns the first weeks at Greyfriars of the new Chinese boy, Wun Lung.

This month I am pleased to say it has been a grand time in the 4d Monthlies. The Greyfriars tale "Coker the Champion Chump" is the first book in what is clearly going to be an excellent series. It is the tail end of the Easter holidays. The boys are at Wharton Lodge, and, nearby, on a walking tour, and staying pro tem at the Bunch of Grapes are Coker and his friends. There is a lot about a skilful young burgler named the Wizard, and a sleazy character named the Weazel. Wharton Lodge is burgled and, at first, Coker suspects a young fellow named Lancaster who is also staying at the inn. But Lancaster rescues Coker from a watery grave, and then Coker decides that Lancaster is a splendid fellow. And, at the end of the story, Lancaster arrives as a new Sixth-former at Greyfriars. A marvellous tale, so well written.

The second S.O.L. is "Jimmy Silver Resigns" and this also is obviously the first book in a series. Jimmy Silver resigns from the captaincy and Mornington

JIMMY SILVER RESIGNS!

BY OWEN CONQUEST



When VALENTINE MORNINGTON takes over the junior captaincy of Rookwood from JIMMY SILVER, he does not find his new job all honey!

takes on the job. And Morny soon finds out that the job is not all honey.

The third S.O.L. is a St. Frank's tale "The Lost Land." Nelson Lee and the St. Frank's boys penetrate into the wilds of Brazil in search of a missing explorer - to discover a lost world inhabited by white giants and strange prehistoric monsters. Full of thrills if you like your reading a bit far-fetched.

In the B.F.L. there is "The Rio Kid at Bay" which is absolutely tip-top, as the Rio Kid yarns always are.

In the Sexton Blake Library I had "The Masked Man of the Desert" by Coutts Brisbane, set in England and India, and introducing Gunga Dass, a mixture of many races and a ruthless crook.

In real life the government of the Irish Republic has made a decision that, starting from next December, the Irish Republic will be known as Eire.

The Magnet this month has been just terrific - as always. What a lovely paper it is! For three weeks we continued with the Wibley series. To the Headmaster, Formmasters, and juniors generally the new boy at Greyfriars is Algernon Popper, nephew of Sir Hilton Popper, a school governor. To the Famous Five he is known in his own name and identity - as William Wibley, lately expelled from the Remove for guying the French master. The three stories which brought this series to a close are "The Invisible Schoolboy", "The Boy Behind the Scenes", and "Wibley Wins Through". It has all been far-fetched, of course, but great reading.

With the last tale of August the Magnet started a new series for the holidays. The opening tale has the eerie title of "The Sinister Doctor Sin." Who was the mysterious figure that crept into the Remove dormitory at midnight, intent on kidnapping the Chinese boy, Wun Lung? Ah-ha, malignant enmity is evident.

The best Christmas holiday tale I ever read was a Wun Lung adventure, set in China. It looks as though history is going to repeat itself. I hope so.

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

S.O.L. No. 307 "Coker, the Champion Champ" comprised the first three stories of the Magnet's 11 story Lancaster series which ran through the summer of 1931.

Incidentally, this reprinting of the Lancaster series was to prove exceedingly well done, fitting into the medium beautifully.

Also excellent was S.O.L. No. 308 "Jimmy Silver Resigns". This comprised the first 6 stories of a long series in which Mornington replaced Jimmy Silver as junior captain. The series ran through the summer of 1919 in the Boys' Friend. For some reason they tacked on at the start of the book a single little tale in Jimmy Silver got "even with Carthew", though I have been unable to trace from whence this single tale came.

All the Hamilton schools played this theme of the junior captain being supplanted by a rival - Vernon-Smith replacing Wharton, and Cardew replacing Tom Merry. But this Rookwood example was probably the most varied and most successful of them all.

The 1937 Gem story "Rival Carvanners" had been "The St. Jim's Caravanners" in the late summer of 1914. This must be the only Hamilton example of a single story devoted to caravanning, in this case a week-end holiday allowed by Dr. Holmes early in the autumn term.

For the next story in 1937 they had gone back nearly a year to pick up "Tom Merry's Minor", entitled "Tom Merry Minor" in the autumn of 1913. The 1937 story "Editor Grundy" had been "The Rival Weekly" in the summer of 1915.

"The Boy Who Spoofed St. Jim's" was a substitute tale which had been entitled "A Captured Chum" immediately after the Grundy tale in the summer of 1915. It was an absurdity that a few sub tales were reprinted while a few genuine tales were omitted. Presumably the Editor could not tell marge from butter.

The 1937 film "Love from a Stranger" was one of the few occasions when Agatha Christie was really well-treated by the cinema. A tip-top thriller. It is taken from a magnificent Christie short story which originally appeared in a collection under the overall title of "The Listerdale Mystery". "Love from a Stranger" appeared as play on stage in 1936. It was actually dramatised by Frank Vosper who kept closely to the Christie original. A year or two later Vosper disappeared mysteriously from an ocean liner, and it has generally been believed that he committed suicide. The film of "Love from a Stranger" was released by United Artists. Some ten years later it was re-made by Eagle Lion, a much inferior version. This re-make was released in Britain under the title "A Stranger Walked In", probably because the first film was still being played on Television - and it still turns up occasionally.



THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY

By W.O.G. LOFTS

(Final Instalment)

In the early thirties, The Nelson Lee Library was handed over to the Magnet/Gem department, and the circumstances surrounding this was told to me by C.M. Down the editor, whom I met several times in the sixties at his home in Harpenden.

Our talk had somehow switched to the merit of the substitute writers on the Magnet and Gem, when I had suggested that Stanley Austin and E.S. Brooks were to be commended - the latter due to his early story of St. Jim's, 'Misunderstood' which even the severe critics of these 'sub' stories had praised.

I must admit that even I was shaken at his attitude to E.S. Brooks, as it was not friendly at all, but hostile, as he did not like his efforts in Charles Hamilton schools. He did agree that Stanley Austin was excellent, but thought that Edwy should have struck to his detective story writing. Seemingly this animosity had stemmed from his early days, when E.S.B's demand for more payment for stories every time they met would have meant that Brooks, in time, would have got more payment than the creator, which was absurd. C.M. Down also did not like the St. Frank's stories at all, considering them rivals to Greyfriars/ St. Jim's/ Rookwood. In the early thirties he had problems of his own with the Gem, and when Montague Haydon, the Managing Editor had asked him to take over the ailing Nelson Lee Library, his thoughts were far from happy.

He however solved this problem quite quickly, but simply passing the Nelson Lee Library on to his chief sub-editor Hedley O'Mant who was then mainly in charge of The Gem. O'Mant who has been

mentioned a great deal in the hobby, promptly passed the 'buck' as it were on to his sub-editor Cecil Graveny, who curiously had been on the Library before when it was under Alfred Edgar. The Nelson Lee Library was then in what was known as The Boys' Realm group of papers.

Cecil Graveny I knew fairly well on my visits to the old Fleetway House. He was a smallish man with rather grey features, but quite a friendly sort, and was still alive in 1986 when last I heard of him. In the seventies he was working on a Library. He told me that he rather liked the St. Frank's stories, and used to read through the manuscripts brought in by E.S. Brooks with some enjoyment. Brooks then had fair hair, and he always had a chat with him about the old days when the Library was at its peak. Cecil and his wife Doris did pen a great many girls' stories, and only recently did I discover that a number were in the Cliff House saga.

The Nelson Lee Library finally died on August, 23rd 1933, and the stories continued in the Gem - some reprints, but the last one an original.

What was surprising is that, although St. Frank's was regarded as dead, they continued to reprint the St. Frank's stories in the Schoolboys Own Library right up to the end in 1940, which brought many new readers and enthusiasts to this famous school. One correspondent told me, not all that long ago, that he often wondered as a boy why St. Frank's school did not have a paper of its own. He was enthusiastic about Nipper & Co. tales in the S.O.L. but completely ignorant of the fact that they were reprints, and from a fairly longish Library run.

But the Nelson Lee Library and especially St. Frank's School lives on in many memories - long may it continue.

THE FIRST LADY OF ST. FRANK'S

By Jim Cook

Edwy Searles Brooks had an extraordinary way of fitting in characters and scenes. When the headmaster, Dr. Stafford, accompanied Sir Crawford Grey's expedition to Africa, a temporary Head was found: he was Dr. Beverley Stokes, M.A., a rather young man for the position, but times were changing, and young men from the 'Varsities were taking up posts hitherto available for older men. But when Barry Stokes brought his wife with him it created something of a bomb-shell, since the masters until then were expected to be celibates as a condition of service. As far as the history of St. Frank's went this was the first time a master was married. But Stokes was a very popular young man, and his marriage wife did make a lot of difference to the atmosphere of the old school.

But it wasn't long before Mrs. Stokes disclosed her problem. It is very widespread today, yet to those who read of it at the time it was unbelievable. That the Head's young wife was a drug-taker was found out by accidentor rather from the prying habits of Teddy Long. Barry Stokes was seen to be beating his wife, and the news soon became public, as Long's propensity for spreading rumours was well known. Later the Moor View girls became involved, when they found a Chinese peddling drugs, and Joyce Stokes was compelled to hold the girls to secrecy on their word of honour. By the way, Mary Summers of this school is niece to Mrs. Stokes, and, incidentally, Nipper's special chum. (Editor's note: My maiden name was Mary Summersby - so this Moor View schoolgirl always intrigues me!)

A rather dramatic cover illustration in no. 473, June 1924, depicts the new Head struggling with his wife in the Triangle: it makes a very interesting story, for all this and a few later events are leading up to the famous SAHARA series. It has often been suggested to me that this period in the saga of St. Frank's was the very best. For not only were we being introduced to schoolgirls from a nearby school, but the brand new characters of the extremely sporting Barry Stokes and his beautiful young wife. Brooks was often introducing new characters, and able to maintain the interest in them for long afterwards. Some leading lights were perforce swept to the background and Edwy was sometimes upbraided because of it. But he had such a huge cast that we wondered why he brought in so many additions. However the new characters had special talents in one way or another, and I think the addition of the girls and Barry's wife raised the stories to greater heights.

We shall never know whether the coming of Joyce Stokes might have sparked off a trend for schoolmasters at St. Frank's ...but wouldn't it be nice to know that Nelson Lee really married Eileen Dare, and lived happily ever after!

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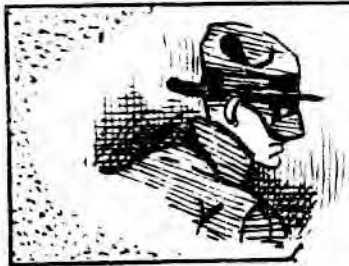
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BLAKIANA



MULTI MEDIA BLAKE

by Norman Wright

Part Three

The first Sexton Blake radio serial began on 26th of January, 1939. It was adapted from Berkeley Gray's (E.S. Brooks) Sexton Blake novel "Three frightened Men" which had been published in October 1938. A blurb on the title page explained "This story is specially written for the great Sexton Blake radio serial. Do not miss it." Readers could easily have missed that brief note, tucked away as it was under the author's name. They could not, however, have helped but notice that the story was 'on the radio' when it was serialised in "Detective Weekly" a few months later. 'Enter Sexton Blake' - story of the radio play begins inside,' proclaimed the cover. "Detective Weekly" made the most of Sexton Blake's radio debut. Much of the editorial was taken up with it. ".....now however comes a new venture which will bring him (Blake) countless new friends who, though they will almost surely have heard of him, have not before actually sampled the excitement of following his gripping adventures. This week Sexton Blake goes on the air! Commencing this Thursday the B.B.C. are broadcasting a specially adapted serial play.....

.....'Enter Sexton Blake' featuring George Curzon in the role of Blake and Brian Lawrance as Tinker, will be broadcast in twelve instalments in a new feature entitled 'Lucky Dip'.....make sure to listen to this grand entertainment! And make sure too, to follow the story of the play week by week in "Detective Weekly"....." Page four carried a photograph of George Curzon, looking reasonably Blakish!

The following week's issue of "Detective Weekly" continued to plug the radio serial. "Sexton Blake on the air" screamed the cover, which depicted Blake and Tinker in front of an enormous

microphone. The editor gleefully informed readers that the circulation had gone up sharply due to the radio show, but that readers still had to do their bit by passing on their copy of the paper to a friend who had not yet made its acquaintance.

Readers were able to follow the story week by week on both the radio and in "Detective Weekly" for the serial's twelve week duration. The adaptation for radio was by Ernest Dudley, who also wrote an article on Blake for the "Radio Times". A couple of his Sexton Blake stories appeared in "Detective Weekly" in the late 1930's. Ernest Dudley became well known to radio listeners in 1942 when his "Armchair Detective" serial began.

It is sad fact that, until recently, the BBC sound archive had little regard for popular drama productions, and very little material from before 1960 survives. As someone once said - they have every boat-race commentary, which nobody ever wants to hear, but very little else! Only the memories of those who heard it at the time remain of those early Sexton Blake broadcasts. The story is, fortunately, quite readily available as it was adapted by Brooks into the novel "Mad Hatters Rock" (1942) one of the most frequently reprinted of his "Ironsides" novels. Copies of the cheap, blue bound edition turn up with monotonous regularity at jumble sales. It was also published as a Collins "White Circle" paperback.

The second Blake radio serial began on 12th March, 1940. It was entitled "A Case for Sexton Blake" and formed part of a magazine programme entitled "Crime Magazine". The story was serialised in four issues of "Detective Weekly" beginning in issue 371 on March 30th 1940. The only mention of the radio serial was a line above the paper's title reading "Sexton Blake on the air-story of the radio play starts inside".

Edward Holmes' story was set in a castle on an island in a remote part of Northumberland. There were plenty of suspects, most of whom could have been the murderer who stalked the secret passages wearing the legendary Iron Mask, made famous by Dumas. '...It is a mask of iron. Black with age, its surface holds still the marks of the hammers that wrought it - wrought it in the profane image of a human face.

Crooked fingers curl about the head of iron, lift it, until its basilisk stare meets the returning glare of the one in black.

"Beautiful - powerful - terrible mask! Now again shall you walk in the night - walk with me and bring death to the house of Marthioly."

The tale had plenty of spooky atmosphere, precipitating Blake and Tinker into many close shaves before the identity of 'The Man in the Iron mask' was revealed.

The radio adaptation was by Francis Durbridge, whose own famous creation, Paul Temple, had made his radio debut just 2 years before, in April, 1938.

The second Blake serial featured Arthur Young as Sexton Blake and Clive Baxter as Tinker. Arthur Young appeared in many radio and T.V. plays before his death in 1959. "A Case for Sexton Blake" was never, as far as I know, reprinted.

The popularity of Blake was at an all time high in the late 1930's. If it had not been, it is doubtful whether the B.B.C. would have featured him in two serials. When it came to detective serials the B.B.C. was way behind the U.S.A. and Radio Luxembourg. Weekly Sherlock Holmes dramatisations had started late in 1930 in the U.S.A. Listeners who tuned into Luxembourg could regularly hear the adventures of the evil "Fu Manchu" from 1936. The first B.B.C. Sherlock Holmes play did not go on the air until 3rd July, 1943, when "The Boscombe Valley Mystery" was dramatised on Saturday Night Theatre. Once again Blake was first off the mark!

"Detective Weekly" ended in May 1940, but, thanks to Edward Holmes, Blake had been transferred to yet another medium.

* * * * *

FOR SALE:

The Billy Bunter Picture Book £5. Billy Bunter's Own £3.00 Mickey Mouse Annual £5. Howard Baker Volumes: (Bully of Greyfriars £3.00 Downfall of Harry Wharton £3.00. Land of Pyramids. Bunter Court £3.00.)

Tom Merry's Own £2.00. Reprint Magnet 1079 £1.00 and First Issue £3.00. Hit or Myth £3.00. Official Souvenir Programme The Coronation of Their Majesties King George VI and Queen Elizabeth £20.00. Official Programme of the Jubilee Procession £20.00.

Greyfriars School A Prospectus £5.00. Good condition Magnets from 1933 £1.50 each. WATSON, 1 Cartbridge Close, Walton on Naze, Essex, CO14 8QJ.

* * * * *

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* * * * *

SONG TITLE QUIZby Eric Lawrence

The following are short extracts from the words of songs published between 1899 and 1948. Can you give the correct titles? The dates quoted are the copyright dates as taken from my own music.

- 1) Do you remember the nights we used to linger in the hall? (1938)
- 2) Some letters tied with blue, a photograph or two (1927)
- 3) They will light my way tonight (1924)
- 4) Come and feast your tear-dimmed eyes on tomorrow's clear blue skies (1940)
- 5) And when you go fishin' I bet you keep wishin' the fish won't grab at your line (1933)
- 6) Just like the strain of a haunting refrain (1919)
- 7) They were gentlemen then in the palmy old days, such as we only read of, or see in the plays (1899)
- 8) I heard somebody whisper "Please adore me" (1934)
- 9) Though you're gone your love lives on when moonlight beams (1934)
- 10) You might be quite a fickle hearted rover (1948)
- 11) Let the stormy clouds chase ev'ry one from the place (1929)
- 12) The melody haunts my reverie (1929)
- 13) A pair of eyes, that are bluer than the summer skies (1928)
- 14) An airline ticket to romantic places (1936)
- 15) So kiss me my sweet and so let us part (1934)
- 16) I mind a dainty little lass whose cheeks were all aglow (1907)
- 17) Let this be the anthem to our future years (1941)
- 18) In olden days a glimpse of stocking was looked on as something shocking (1934)
- 19) You are the angel glow that lights a star (1939)
- 20) From a whip-poor-will out on a hill (1926)
- 21) You and you alone bring out the gipsy in me (1930)
- 22) And I hope you're satisfied you rascal you (1936)
- 23) The British Museum had lost it's charm (1937)
- 24) This sweet memory across the years will come to me (1929)

(Editor's Note: Mr. Lawrence has kindly offered a prize for the first winning entry to be opened. Closing date for sending your entries to me: September 15th.)

* * * * *

THINGS TO COME: Next month's C.D. will contain good news about our forthcoming ANNUAL, and also of that previously mentioned BOYS' FRIEND catalogue.

* * * *

MORCOVE MINIATURES



Betty Barton

By TOMMY KEEN



Betty Barton, the popular Captain of the Fourth Form at Morcove School, arrived at that famous edifice in February 1921, a new girl from a very poor family living in the mill town of Ribbleton, in Lancashire. From a life of sheer hardship and poverty, the Barton family fortunes seem to turn through the unexpected arrival of a rich relative - Betty's Uncle George - from America. Uncle George promptly decides that Betty's education at the local Council School should cease immediately, and, with little or no warning, she is whisked off to Morcove School in North Devon.

Betty's early days at Morcove were, however, far from happy. The Fourth Form consisted of a crowd of snobbish "young ladies" under the leadership of two sisters, Cora and Judith Grandways, from, of all places, Betty's home town of Ribbleton. The Captain of the Fourth was the languid and inefficient Paula Creel, who, though not as cruel to Betty as the Grandways sisters, was their chief crony. Everything was done by Cora & Co. to make poor Betty's life unbearable. Tormented, ragged, and even accused of theft, she found herself friendless and alone, until, in No. 3 of the SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN, a Fourth Former named Polly Linton was introduced, and from then until the end of the Morcove saga, Betty and Polly remained devoted friends.

In spite of her unhappy introduction to Morcove, Betty soon became popular enough to be elected Captain of the Fourth in issue No. 14, Paula Creel losing this exalted position through laziness and utter inefficiency. Betty was now acquiring her own circle of friends Polly, Madge Minden, Trixie Hope, Tess Trelawney, and Dolly Delane. Even Paula Creel became a staunch friend, after being carried back injured to Morcove by the intrepid Betty through a terrible thunder-storm.

Through the long run of the Morcove stories, Betty remained a perfectly stable, but never dull, character. Various venomous new

girls arrived (and usually left), and took instant dislike to Betty. Occasionally she was ousted from the captancy. The spiteful Cora Grandways was always her bitter enemy, and was, for a brief period, captain of the form in the early days (Judith, her sister, reformed). However, it was a certain new girl, a Miss Audrey Blain, who was to become the bane of poor Betty's life. Audrey was rich, clever, and beautiful, and absolutely loathed our heroine, Betty Barton. How she suffered at Audrey's hands! With the exception of Polly Linton, the rest of her chums (known as the Study 12 coterie) were all bewitched by the fascinating Audrey, but, needless to say, in time, through her evil misdeeds, Audrey was expelled. She leaves the school, vowing eternal vengeance against Betty. Within a few months, Audrey crops up again at another school, the nearby Stormwood. Again she is expelled - good going, two expulsions within six months! However, enough of Audrey; she needs an article to herself.



Betty Barton

Betty Barton was a splendid leader, never priggish, described as very pretty, with brown hair (bobbed in 1927), and loyal. She was always admired by the various form mistresses who came, and went (usually to be married). Without being exceptional, she was a good scholar, and sportsgirl. Her motto, when she first arrived, was "I'll manage", and she certainly did, right until the time when the delightful girls of Morcove School were heard of no more.

* * * * *

NO WHOPPING FOR COKER!

By Les Rowley

Grunt!

Anyone passing along Masters' Corridor could be excused for thinking that a hippopotamus had taken up residence at Greyfriars School.

Others, more closely acquainted with the denizens of those hallowed precincts, would have smiled and rightly conjectured that it was only Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, expressing himself in his own peculiar way.

Expression there certainly was in that most emphatic of grunts! Incorporated in that grunt were impatience, irritability, and the emotions of a form master who truly felt that he was worth more than he was paid!

Twenty minutes ago, Prout had despatched Trotter to summon Horace Coker to his presence. In that time, Prout's temper, unlike the wine, had not improved with the keeping. Coker generally had that effect on Prout's temper in form; now he had the same effect on Prout as he waited in his study. Prout was angry and, like the Biblical gentleman of old, felt that he did right to be angry. Lines of Olympian wrath were gathering on the Proutillian brow, when the object of that wrath eventually tapped on the study door and entered the study.

"Coker, what is the meaning of this? I sent Trotter for you over twenty minutes ago. You have kept your form master waiting. Explain yourself!"

Coker regarded his form master with a look of puzzlement on his rugged features. Why Prout should look, and sound, so waxy Coker could not imagine. Still, as his form master had asked for an explanation, Coker proceeded to give him one.

"I have been rather busy this afternoon, and I am sure that you will appreciate, sir, that my time is of value," he began.

It has been said of old that the gentle answer turneth away wrath, but Coker's answer, gentle though it was, failed to have that effect upon Prout. The master of the Fifth glared at that member of his form, his wrath - far from abating - had intensified.

"It is gratifying, Coker," he said with pompous sarcasm that was a sheer waste on the Fool of the Fifth, "it is gratifying," Prout repeated for he liked the sound of his own voice, "that you have managed to accord your form master a few moments of your valuable time. Doubtless you feel, Coker, that your time can be more properly spent on personal matters than in responding to the instructions of those in authority over you. I regret, Coker," he continued, in a tone



of mock apologia, "that I find it quite impossible to accommodate you in agreeing with your laudable surmise that your personal considerations outweigh those of your form-master. You will take a Georgic, Coker, and I urge you to lay aside all other considerations - more important though they will doubtless seem. I now come to the reason that prompted me to send for you," Prout paused, but not for reply. Prout could carry on very well without any interjections from lesser mortals. "I have received a request from your aunt, Miss Judith Coker, that you be excused lessons tomorrow in order that you may spend the day with her in Canterbury. Normally, Coker, I would be only too pleased to accede to such a request from the parent or close relative of one of my boys, but you, Coker, the most backward boy in my form; a boy who is the epitome of unparalleled obtuseness; a boy who is-----"

"Here, I say, sir, that's a bit thick. Surely you mean-----"

"A boy," continued Prout relentlessly, "whose crass stupidity I find unprecedented in all my years as a schoolmaster, can hardly be spared from attendance in class. I shall, therefore, reply to Miss Coker, explaining why I am unable to accede to her request. That is all, Coker. You may go!"

Coker looked at his form-master indignantly. Having been awarded an imposition the size of which he estimated would keep Potter and Green busy for several hours, he - Coker - was being dismissed by that fool, Prout, as though he was some inky fag in the Third. Prout had said 'that was all' but there Prout was wrong, it was far from all.

"I think, sir," he said, as Prout looked irritably up having realised that Coker was not yet gone, as he had been bidden. "I think, sir, that on reflection you will agree that giving me that Georgic is rather unfair. A fellow has a right to expect his beak - that is, his form-master to be fair, and that-----"

The master of the Fifth looked at that prize pupil of his form as though he couldn't believe his podgy ears. He was accustomed to the mysterious ways in which Coker's mind moved, but this out Cokered Coker, so to speak.

"Do I hear aright, Coker?" he enquired, incredulously. "Are you daring to cast doubt on your form-master's judgement. Are you, a fifth form boy, a boy of my form, so lost to propriety that you dare to impugn-----"

"I rather thought you would be glad of my opinion, sir," explained Coker brightly. "You see, sir, if I cannot meet my Aunt Judy in Canterbury, then the old dear will come on here, and she will be rather upset if I am unable to see her because of the impot that you have given me. Of course, you will no doubt explain to her -----"

Prout, who had been looking speculatively at a cane that lay on a nearby side table, resisted an over-powering desire to give that cane - and his plump arm - some unaccustomed exercise. By tradition, men in the Fifth were never caned. But there could always be a break with tradition. Yet, much as he would have wished to have brought that cane into play on Coker's trousers, Prout put aside the temptation. He knew Coker's Aunt Judy of old. He knew that, in that lady's eyes, her nephew could do no wrong. He knew from previous experience that it would be he, Paul Pontifex Prout, who would suffer the lash of that lady's tongue. On a previous occasion he had tried to discuss Coker's sad performance in form with Miss Coker, and he shuddered as he recalled her agitated reaction.

She had left Prout feeling as though life was not really worth living. It had been a performance which he had no wish to see repeated, and the mere thought of what could happen on the morrow if Miss Coker visited Greyfriars sent a cold chill down his portly spine. It was useless, too, to contemplate absenting himself from the school on some pretext or the other. Miss Coker was a very resolute lady and would lie in wait for his return. Prout looked again at Coker of his form. Much as it went against the grain to see Coker escape just punishment, there was no other way out.

"In the circumstances, Coker", he said reluctantly, "I shall excuse you both the Georgic and attendance in form tomorrow. You may go to Canterbury to meet Miss Coker. I have made this decision because I have no reason to inconvenience your aunt. It should not be taken as exonerating your own conduct! You may go."

This time Coker went, and he didn't grin until he had quitted the study. Behind him he had left Prout mopping a perspiring and extensive brow.

THE ERIC FAYNE COLUMN

I have received an interesting letter from Mr. T. Hopkinson of Hyde, Cheshire. He writes as follows:

"I found your June "Controversial" most interesting. The double stories have always fascinated me, as they so obviously did Mr. Hamilton.

A great favourite of mine is the Vernon series. His writing style was absolutely superb. Just read, for example, the seventeenth chapter in Magnet 1632 "THE BOUNDER'S DOUBLE", and the fifteenth in Magnet 1635 "ROUGH ON HIS RIVAL", C.H. was in great form here. Then again, any Magnet featuring Smithy must always be a success. I will admit that the series begins a trifle slowly, but apart from that, it cannot be faulted. Don't you agree?"

The Bertie Vernon series was without any doubt the highlight of the last couple of years of the Magnet. It was superbly plotted and balanced, and characterisation was striking.

It was not a series in which the average reader would have much sympathy for the Bounder. It reminds one faintly of a long ago red-cover series when the Bounder plotted to get all the Famous Five expelled from Greyfriars until he met his match in that classic tale "Bob Cherry's Barring-Out." But in the middle years, when his reformation was shown to be slightly less wholesale, and more believable, there was never a Bounder series in which the Bounder did not win a sneaking sympathy from readers.

But in the Bertie Vernon series, Vernon-Smith was too harsh and callous for him to win any sympathy, which was a pity. But it was, nevertheless, a superb series, and this was largely due to the excellent character study of Redwing. Memorable, in this latter-day series, was the sequence where Redwing, in spite of the fact that his chum became less "bounderish" and more "decent", still found that he did not like his chum so much as in times of yore. So far, Redwing did not realise that his old chum was not his old chum at all - yet, for some reason that worried Redwing, he no longer liked him.

CHILDHOOD
REVISITED



REVIEWS BY

MARY CADOGAN

MARE'S MILK AND WILD HONEY by Peter Davies (André Deutsch £9.95) is subtitled 'A Shropshire Boyhood', and it provides a wonderfully nostalgic and vivid real-life picture of the author's experiences in and after 1939, when the Second World War began. He was then eleven - and so was I, which is perhaps why I feel a special affinity with this book, although my own childhood was a suburban rather than a country one. Peter Davies's world was tougher than mine - running wild with gypsies raiding a kestrel's nest, and even drinking mare's milk! But this delightful book captures the quintessential expansiveness that many of us who were children during this period so well remember. Tim Jacques's line drawings add piquance to the book's mood. (The author, by the way, is now a retired Headmaster.)

SECRET GARDENS by Humphrey Carpenter (Unwin paperbacks, £5.95), is a compelling, witty and affectionate exploration of what the author calls The Golden Age of Children's Literature. It mainly covers the 'classics' - from Kingsley's The Water Babies and Carroll's Alice books to the cosier enchantments of Beatrix Potter, Kenneth Grahame and A.A. Milne. The theme running through this extremely well researched study is the search for Arcadia in children's books, and it is fascinating to linger in the many Secret Gardens to which Humphrey Carpenter directs us. We may not agree with all of his assessments (he is, for example, unbelievably dismissive of those two story-spinners par excellence - Louisa M. Alcott and Frances Hodgson Burnett), but he has produced a book which is full of treasures for dipping into now, and many times in the future.

STAMP ALBUM (Bloomsbury £11.95), the first volume of autobiography from movie-star Terence Stamp, is a colourful evocation of his East End childhood, beginning with bombs over Bow Cemetery in his baby days and ending with him just grown up, and the feeling that something special will soon be coming his way. He mentions the delights of his early reading, including the wonderfully resilient Rupert Bear saga, his fascination with Dimsie, the charismatic schoolgirl heroine created by Dorita Fairlie Bruce, and his passing interest in the 'hair on the chest' fiction provided by Hotspur, Wizard and the Biggles stories by W.E. Johns.

THE WONDERFUL WIZARD OF OZ by L. Frank Baum, first published in 1900, has now been produced in a splendid facsimile version of the original edition, lavishly illustrated in line and colour by W.W. Denslow. I must admit that my images of Oz are generally inspired by the Judy Garland film of 1939, so it is good to go back to the real and remarkably imaginative creation of Baum in this sumptuous book (Pavilion, £9.95).

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 Editor says—



It helps the C.D. if readers advertise their WANTS and FOR SALE book and story-paper items, etc. in it. The rates are 4p per word; a boxed, displayed ad. costs £20.00 for a whole page, £10 for a half page or £5 for a quarter page.

CRICKET, LOVELY CRICKET!

Reviews

by Eric Lawrence

The following are reviews of paperback reprints published in the Pavilion Library series. Each is priced at £5.95.

LORD'S 1787 - 1945 by Sir Pelham Warner

LORD'S 1946 - 1970 by Diana Rait-Kerr and Ian Peebles

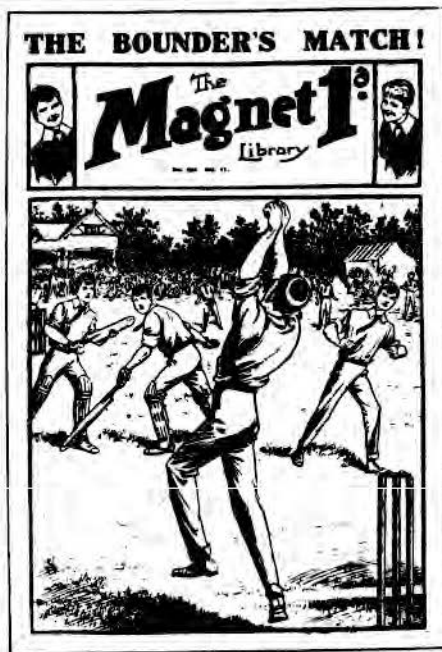
The name Lord's is a shortening of Thomas Lord's Cricket Ground - hence the apostrophe which is sometimes omitted in press reports because of a mistaken belief that the name has some connection with the peerage.

It is appropriate that in the 200th year since the founding of the Marylebone Cricket Club and the creation of Lord's, that we should have reissues of the two books which together cover the history of 183 of those years. In May, 1787, Lord opened his first cricket ground on what is now Dorset Square but when his lease ran out, he took the turf to a new site on the St. John's Wood Estate in 1809. By 1813 another move was required, as the route of the Regent's Park Canal would have cut the ground in two. So he took up the turf again and transferred it to its present site in time for the opening of the 1814 season.

A large part of Lord's 1787 - 1945 (originally published in 1946) covers the history of the ground and the M.C.C., the changes in the laws and general administration of the game. Warner also records great events, important matches and feats, and the foremost personalities who appeared over nearly 16 decades. He had a wealth of experience as captain of England and Middlesex, Test selector and administrator. In addition, he possessed an immense affection for and unrivalled knowledge of the game, and he drew on all this in writing the history of cricket's greatest institution up to the end of the second World War.

For a continuation of this history, we can turn to Lord's 1946 - 1970 (originally published in 1971).

Ian Peebles was one of the best leg-break and googly bowlers ever to play for Middlesex and England and I remember seeing him in action from time to time when I visited Lord's as a schoolboy in the 1930s. The shoulder injury which cut short his active cricket career was a harsh blow to England as he was one of the very few bowlers who, given the right conditions, could baffle the great Don Bradman. After the second World War, he turned to journalism to which he



brought writing talent and a shrewd cricket brain. He confines his chapters of the book to the games and the players, recording memorable feats and dealing with each season in succession.

Diana Rait-Kerr was Curator of the Museum and Library of the M.C.C. from 1945 to the late 1960's. She writes of the growth and progress of the administration at Lord's, and covers several controversial problems including the strong feelings aroused by apartheid and the South African Cricket association. Together, the two books present 672 pages to cover 183 years at cricket's headquarters. For anyone who wishes to learn the administrative and playing histories of the English summer game, they are recommended.

In closing, I must remark on the cover drawing of the Rait-Kerr/Peebles book. It shows four cricketers sitting on the balcony at Lord's clad in their whites. Tom Graveney is shown with three chins! A little unkind to Tom in his playing days I think - even now when I see him on television commentary during Test matches, he doesn't have that many chins.

BOWLER'S TURN by Ian Peebles

Described by the author as a "further ramble round the realms of cricket", this book (originally published in 1960) continues the theme which proved popular in his "Batter's Castle" (published 1958) of general cricketing reminiscence. He was particularly well suited to hold forth on the subtleties of a breed of spin bowler which has sadly vanished from our first class game. The leg break type of delivery has been submerged under a barrage of fast, intimidatory bowling and negative style seam and swing. Luckily, Peebles is writing here of the times before such changes took place. So we have a wide variety of serious, humorous and entertaining wanderings along the cricketing highways and lanes of the 1930's, 40s and 50s. It is a fascinating read and highly recommended.

LETTERS TO THE EDITRESS!

ANNE CLARKE (London): Re JEM'S list in the May C.D. of Sexton Blake's ladies, I'm surprised at the omission of more recent ladies - Paula Dane, Marion Lang and Louise Pringle (and don't forget Millie!) There was also, earlier, the sinister and repulsive Frau Kranz in some of the Zenith stories. I've never even heard of some of the names on his list - can anyone give any info about them? I believe Thirza von Otto appeared in "The Kaiser's Mistake" (pre-1914). I don't remember the details but I think she was half-Turkish, and her uncle was a German agent.

I like your picture of Jemima Carstairs. I think she's my favourite Cliff House character, but I've read very little about her - wish I could find more.

(Editor's Note: Doubtless we shall be featuring Jemima more fully in these pages in the near future.)

RAY HOPKINS (Oadby) and ESMOND KADISH (Hendon) have both written in response to Margery Wood's article on the Shaw Dennis series (in the June C.D.). They list the stories in weekly Schoolgirl, from which the S.G.O.L. reprint was made up, as follows: No. 293, 9/3/1935 New Rule at Cliff House: 294, 16/3/'35 When the Form Rebelled: 295, 23/3/'35 Rosa Rodworth's Bargain: 296, 30/3/'35 Their Peril on Belwin Island: 297, 6/4/'35 When Bessie Bunter Blundered. Messrs. Hopkins and Kadish both think that this excellent series must have been written by John Wheway.

GEORGE B. SEWELL (Cambridge) is trying to locate a girls' story featuring a heroine called Jane Hirst (or Hurst), which refers to a cottage called Windlehatch, somewhere in the story. Can anybody throw a light on this?

D. J. HARDMAN (N.S.W., Australia) wants to track down an old boys' school story entitled 'Cousins at Carsdale' (circa 1930s), author forgotten? Can any reader give details?



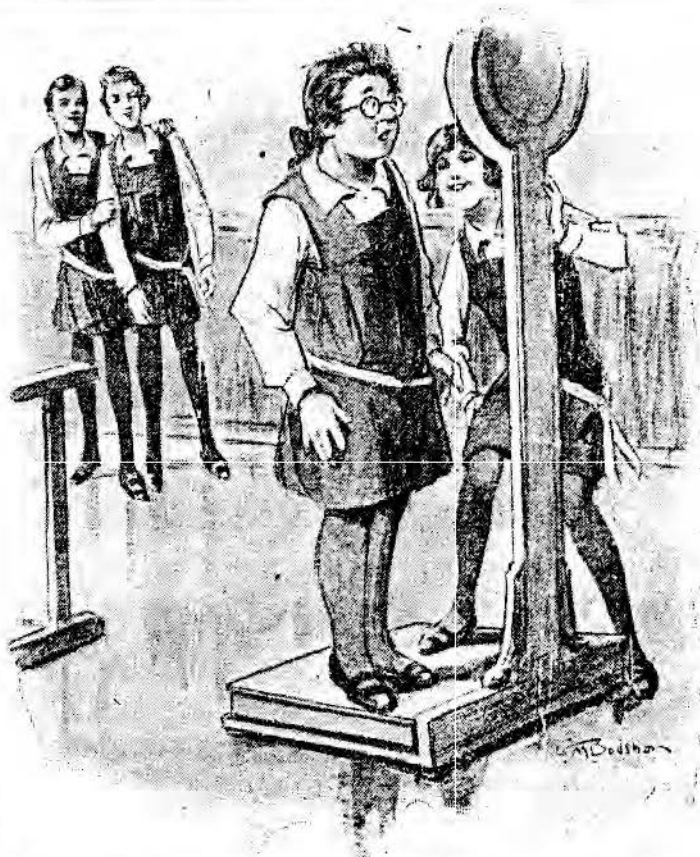
CLIFF HOUSE CORNER

By MARGERY WOODS

THE BANTING OF BESSIE BUNTER?

Come summer and the thoughts of those more generously endowed in the curves department turn wistfully to dreams of the sylph-like shape reputed to be ever striving to escape the outer wrappings of podge. How wonderful to sport one's true self in a natty bather on a sunny beach, acquiring a glorious golden skin in the process.

Bessie Bunter of the abundant curves was made of rather stronger stuff, however. (Indisputably, says Jemima.) Bessie was firmly convinced that Big Is Beautiful. For Bessie the words food and temptation were synonymous---like Oscar Wilde, she could resist anything but temptation. But Bessie did once make a tremendous effort to slim.



Bessie Bunter regarded the weighing machine in horror. She did not notice that Freda was pressing with her foot on the scale, thus adding to the weight!

It all began one sad day when some mischievous urchin drew a cruel caricature of our Duffer, with a caption to make sure identification would be complete, on a wall near the school. At any other time Bessie would probably have waxed indignant in defence of her fine figure and sought consolation at the Tuck Shop. But her father, concerned about his daughter's weight, had offered her a reward to the extent of five pounds if she succeeded in shedding some unnecessary poundage. Bessie, being a true Bunter, naturally interpreted this as pound for pound—or rather sterling for avoidupois. And farther down the lane from the insulting caricature stood a large hoarding which displayed a poster of the before and after variety. The "before" lady's contours sadly resembled Bessie's: the "after" lady's were slim and graceful, befitting the winner of a beauty prize, a crossword puzzle competition(!) and a now successful model. And this miraculous transformation was entirely due to Mrs. Mullins' Marvellous Mixture!

Poor Bessie. She was not the first---nor the last---to fall victim to fraudsters' unscrupulous claims. Although the Marvellous Mixture did seem to succeed in turning her off food. She swallowed double doses---the second one to ensure the first one got there, so to speak---of this dubious disperser of unwanted fat, and indulged in delightful fantasies of a lithe, slender Bessie who would show the school how to play hockey. She could quite easily become Captain!

It was unfortunate for Bessie that her slimming regime coincided with a mysterious raid on the Tuck Shop for which Bessie fell under suspicion. And who could blame Cliff House for such suspicion? Bessie refusing meals! It was unheard of. What else were they to suppose than that Bessie must have a secret hoard somewhere? Certainly Cliff House would not forget Bessie's slimming antics in a hurry.

Not Miss Bullivant, after Bessie, exercising with stone ginger beer bottles in lieu of indian clubs, managed to sling one of them through the Bull's window.

Not Clara, who when investigating the missing tuckshop goodies, ran into hilarious trouble and was pursued by the Bull, who promptly fell into a suitably muddy marsh.

And certainly not Mrs. Mullins, who was arrested for fraud but managed to escape for a while by pinching poor old Pe Tozer's bike.

One of the scenes, at Mrs. Mullins' "clinic" is reminiscent of William during a similar situation. And so is the episode when Bessie takes to springcleaning, regardless of the fact that it is autumn. "Work makes you slim," she announces to the unfortunate sharers of the study when they survey the disaster area left after Bessie's efforts.

There was relief and general hilarity all round when it was over and Bessie announced she was hungry. Jam tarts and doughnuts disappeared at record speed, to fill in the odd spaces left after double helpings of lunch. Cliff House gathered round to watch: Bessie had a lot of leeway to make up. Bessie was back to normal!

(Three-story series Schoolfriend 189, 190, 191 Oct/Nov 1928)

WANTED: GOOD PRICES PAID.

Hit for Six by T.H. Scott (published Warne)

Biddy's Secret/Maidlin to the Rescue by Elsie Oxenham

Mistress Mariner by Dorita Fairlie Bruce

The Chalet School and Rosalie by Elinor Brent-Dyer

Girls' Crystal Annual 1940

Popular Book of Girls' Stories 1935, 1936, 1941

MARY CADOGAN, 46 Overbury Avenue, Beckenham, Kent.
BR3 2PY.

CLIFF HOUSE AND GREYFRIARS QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Vernon-Smith
Harry Wharton (Greyfriars Herald 242 1937)
 2. Ponsonby
Coker
Cherry
Clara Trevlyn
The Feud With Cliff House (Magnet 1528)
 3. A hired gunman
Minder to American millionaire's son Putnam van Duck.
(Gunmen at Greyfriars series)
 4. a) Gertrude g) Marian
b) Quincy Iffley h) Tarleton
c) Alice i) Beatrice
d) Reginald j) Samuel
e) Joan k) Hilda
f) Pontifex l) George
 5. Little Pink Toad
 6. Hacker
Mauleverer
Vernon-Smith
The Gondoliers
 7. a) Jemima Carstairs f) Diana Royston-Clarke
b) Francis Frost g) Philippa Derwent
c) Freda Ferriers h) Eleanor Storke
d) Rosa Rodworth i) Clara Trevlyn
e) Elsie Effingham
 8. Horace Coker
Gibraltar and Monte Carlo (The Schoolboy Tourists series)
 9. Mr. Smedley
Lucius Teggers
Vernon-Smith
To inherit a fortune if he could displace the Bounder from Mr. Vernon-Smith's affections.
Bunter
Because Prout knew the real Mr. Smedley
Monsieur Charpentier
 10. Friardale. Courtfield.
-

Those All-Singing, All-Dancing Schoolgirl Stories'

by ESMOND KADISH

Like Ray Hopkins, I too, wondered whether the SGOL tale "Her Mystery Foe in Screenland", by Sylvia Marston (Roland Jameson), which appeared in Feb. 1940, might not be a reprint of the SCHOOLGIRLS' WEEKLY serial, "Their Foe in the Film City", Oct '38 - Jan 39. The titles are certainly confusingly similar, and both stories featured the same character, "Denise the Dancer", but, as Ray correctly surmises, they are two different yarns.

"Her Mystery Foe in Screenland", SGOL No. 719, is presumably a reprint of an earlier SCHOOLGIRLS' WEEKLY serial, at the close of which, Denise Laxton, who has taken on the post of "dancing mistress" at St. Adrian's where her twelve-year-old sister, Maureen, is a pupil, marries Ray Faulkner, former "Light comedian" of the "Masked Merrymakers", the concert party to which both performers belonged. (No connection with the "Cruising Merrymakers", who were featured for so many years in the GIRLS' CRYSTAL). Ray and his bride take a trip on the Golden Arrow express, en route to Paris:

"Happy, sweetheart?" Ray murmured, clasping his wife's hand, and looking into her eyes.

She smiled as she returned his ardent gaze.

Denise should, of course, have replied, "M-m-m-m" in true Hollywood movie style, but no doubt she was feeling tired, after having had to cope with the scheming of the "Head's secretary", Norah Lawrance at St. Adrian's. Miss Lawrance, it seems, "often roamed round the school, as if watching points, and was, in consequence, none too popular with the staff." (I'll bet!)

"Their Foe in the Film City", the SCHOOLGIRLS' WEEKLY serial which was scheduled for reprinting in the SGOL, but never materialised, was, however, set in Hollywood, and Denise's husband, Ray, was the victim of some plotting in the film colony. Denise helps to clear his name, of course. "Sylvia Marston" introduced the character of "Denise the Dancer" in the WEEKLY, in August 1936, (no. 722), in a tale entitled, "Mystery Amid the Motley". Denise's tap-dancing was described as "a marvel of precision and skill". Clearly, she was a combination by Ginger Rogers, Eleanor Powell, and Ann Miller, and a character tailor-made for school

EXCHANGE: SIX Magnets from 1599, 1606, 1610, 1616, 1637, 1645, 1653, 1655, 1661, 1667, 1670, 1675, 1678, 1679, 1683, offered in exchange for any ONE Schoolgirl's Own Annual for 1931, 1932, 1934, 1935, 1938. PAYNE, 69 HIGH STREET, HEADCORN, KENT.



NEWS OF THE OLD BOYS BOOK CLUBS

MIDLAND O.B.B.C.

11 members attended our June meeting to welcome Bill Lofts, who gave us a splendid talk on the very popular Water Lily series, by Charles Hamilton. Bill, with Darrell Swift, Brian Simmonds, Maurice Hall and Graham McDermott, fairly recently undertook to imitate the Famous Five on their journey on the River Thames.

It was good to see Vin Loveday and his wife Joan. They had a hand in the excellent refreshments provided, as did Betty and John Hopton, and Ivan Webster. There followed 3 quizzes from our acting chairman, the winners being Betty Hopton and Ivan Webster. Vin Loveday also gave us a beautifully typed quiz.

We shall miss out on July and August, which are holiday months, and meet again on September 29th. In the meantime, we wish happy holidays to O.B.B.C. members everywhere.

JACK BELLFIELD

CAMBRIDGE

The June meeting, the final gathering in our current season, consisted of the A.G.M. and a talk by our Club President, Bill Lofts. This celebrated - Sherlock Holmes. No other character in fiction has achieved such worldwide devotion and cult status. His name has become part of the English language. Bill mentioned just a few of the vast number of publications associated with Holmes - books, magazines, films, theatre and T.V. presentations, and some really ephemeral publications like cigarette cards. He concluded his talk by mentioning the Sherlock Holmes titles not written by Arthur Conan Doyle, many of which were flawed by poor research into such things as geographical locations around Baker Street.

ADRIAN PERKINS

LONDON O.B.B.C.

High summer at Loughton and a very happy and successful gathering. Roger Jenkins read a very amusing extract from a 1915 issue of the Magnet which was entitled 'The Jape of the Season'. Bob Whiter compiled an excellent quiz during the train journey to the meeting, and places one, two and three went to Roger Jenkins, Mark Taha and Winifred Morss. The prizes presented were cut-out figures of Prout, Quelch and Locke.

Norman Wright read his article which had appeared in the St. Frank's Jubilee Companion, and followed this by playing a tape recording of Marjorie Bilbow interviewing Edwy Searles Brooks shortly before his death. Duncan Harper then conducted a competition in which participants had to use the letters from 'Edwy Searles Brooks created St. Frank's to form St. Frank's characters' names. Duncan awarded book prizes to Mark Taha, the winner, and to Norman Wright and Don Webster in second and third place respectively.

Stephen Goddard mentioned the proposed plaque to be erected near the sight of Frank Richards' birthplace.

Despite a water shortage, the hospitable Harper family put on a very fine study feed, and everyone present expressed grateful thanks. There was an excellent attendance. Next meeting: Sunday 9th August, at the Chingford Horticultural Hall, North Chingford, with Tony Potts as host. Please telephone 529 1317 if intending to be present.

BEN WHITER

NORTHERN O.B.B.C.

Our Secretary, Geoffrey Good, welcomed the fourteen members present to his splendid vicarage home and grounds on the pleasant summer's evening of July 11th. The main feature of this informal summer 'break' was the opportunity to view our large and excellent club library containing not only hobby reading but books of all natures.

We were sorry that Arthur Fortune, recovering from an operation, was not with us, and our oldest member, Bill Williamson was also missed. Throughout the evening most inviting comestibles were available, supplemented by beverages of tea and wine!

Everyone agreed that our June dinner at the 'Stansfield Arms', Apperley Bridge, had been most successful, and a further dinner there was planned for the end of January 1988. As our usual venue for the 12th September meeting would not be available, it was decided to bring that month's meeting forward to 5th September, to take place at S.P.C.K. Bookshop/Cafe, Holy Trinity Church, Leeds 1.

Geoffrey had samples of boxes suitable for storing the old papers. He explained that the action of air on the paper of old books causes disintegration over the years, but the acid-free card used in these boxes helps to prevent this. (Details may be obtained from our Secretary.)

Paul Galvin reported that arrangements for the Biggles Meeting on 17th October were progressing well. He displayed a magazine 'Biggles News' sent by a gentleman from Holland, but as this excellent production was all in Dutch, it produced some rather puzzled faces! David showed extracts from the video recording of 'Biggles' the film.

The next item was a cassette recording of a 1980 Women's Hour broadcast featuring Mary Cadogan in discussion with Arthur Marshall, and its hilarious moments were much appreciated. Geoffrey then read a superb extract from Magnet 1232, involving Gosling and the Headmaster discussing a 'stole sovereign - wot had been nicked and pinched'. Geoffrey's first-class rendition showed Frank Richards at his most humorous. A most successful and enjoyable evening. Our August meeting will be at our normal venue on the 8th.

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

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FISHY VOCABULARY

By Barrie Stark

FISHER T. FISH is one on his own and not everyone's favourite. Charm is not one of his strongest points as is often shown in his language such as "now, you galoots" and "you slab sided jay" (Magnet 1118), and if he wants anyone to 'vamoose', it's not please or thank you, but "ABSQUATULATE".

Not having come across the word elsewhere, I was interested to see it mentioned by Molly Hughes in her charming and well written VIVIAN'S (O.U.P. 1984), the biographical story of her family in Victorian Cornwall. Molly tells of her mother, Mary, and when "...Their father went off to the City every morning by train, and the line passed close enough for Mary to take them (the children) to wave to him. After this she would dismiss the boys with her favourite command "ABSQUATULATE" (a word that William had brought to her from his visit to America)".

The book cover 'blurb' says that "Mary was the charmer of the family. Beautiful, intelligent and mischievous" and thus quite unlike Fish in personality. Her 'absquatulate' would be authoritative and tolerable also.