

November

STORY PAPER

1991

COLLECTORS

Vol 45

No 539

DIGEST

86

P



Offer from last month: Howard Baker Facsimiles, GEM series and HOLIDAY ANNUALS, from 1973 on, second-hand, in fine condition **£2 each**, with dust-jackets, or **£35 for 20!** Postage extra.

MAGNET facsimiles and Book Club editions at usual prices, and second-hand bound MAGNET and GEMS.

Various Bindings, half-year's: MAGNETS (mostly in half year's or more): 1168-1193, 541-580, 1090-1115, 1377-1402, 1481-1506, 1403-1428, 1507-1534, 1559-1584, 1637-1663, 1220-1245, 1011-1037, 1533-1558, 1324-1350, 1533-1558, 1507-1532, 1612-1636, 1637-1663, 1559-1584, 1664-1683, 1351-1376, 1664-1683, 1324-1350, 1612-1636, 1479-1509, 1299-1323, 621-660, 1533-1559, 1272-1298, 1194-1219, 1116-1141, 1299-1323, 1585-1611, 1220-1245, 1246-1271, 1598-1623, 1510-1535, 1038-1058, 1138-1168, 1261-1280, 1585-1611, 393-472, 1572-1597, 1401-1421, **1036-1195**, 1183-1207, 581-620, 1247-1270, 1297-1323, 1352-1373, 1374-1400, 1422-1455, 1626-1642, 1440-1449, 1069-1089 (incomplete). In many cases bindings not charged extra, only the cost of the papers.

GEMS - 365-390 V.15, 417-442 V.17, 1246-1271, 1126-1150, 1300-1340, 1585-1611, 1044-1086, 1377-1402, 541-580, 647-672, 1220-1245, 958-994, 1341-1382, 1087-1125, 1521-1556, 1177-1200, 1403-1428, 1485-1520, 391-416, front covers at back, 313-333, 1449-1484, 995-1033, 1220-1245, 339-364, 1151-1176, 501-540, 1272-1293, 1585-1611 699-725, 621-646, 1529-1556, 15-48 damaged (¹/₂d) 581-620, 1246-1271. **Bound volumes** in various covers.

Huge stocks of single issues, also other bound volumes. So many other bargains. Callers very welcome. **Please advise, when you would like to call.** Always in the market for good stock. I spend over £50,000 per annum so there are frequent stock changes. Always in the market for items, so please keep me in mind.

N O R M A N S H A W

84 Belvedere Road, Upper Norwood, London SE19 2HZ
Tel: 081 771 9857. No phoning before 2 p.m. please
Nearest Station: BR Crystal Palace (no tube)

IT'S WORTH A VISIT!

STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Editor: MARY CADOGAN

STORY PAPER COLLECTOR
Founded in 1941 by
W.H. GANDER

COLLECTORS' DIGEST
Founded in 1946 by
HERBERT LECKENBY

S.P.C.D. Edited and Published 1959 - January 1987 by Eric Fayne

VOL. 45

No. 539

NOVEMBER 1991

Price 86p



GIRL - FORTY YEARS ON

Last month I mentioned that our November C.D. would be celebrating an important anniversary, and a milestone in Hamiltonia. The anniversary is the fortieth birthday of GIRL, the attractive sister paper to EAGLE, published by Hulton. Susan Chambers, who knows and loves it, has written a celebratory piece for this month's issue. Browsing through the copies which I possess, I am impressed by the quality of its colour printing and artwork. I very much enjoy dipping into GIRL from time to time, although, when it was first published in 1951, I felt that I was too old for 'childish things', and gave it little attention until I started in adult life to collect children's books. Like so many of the papers which we remember with affection, GIRL provides a feast of good things. Sadly there is no girls' paper remotely like it on the market today.

RE-PUBLICATION OF THE BUNTER BOOKS

The milestone in Hamiltonia which I 'trailed' is the re-publication by Hawk books of four volumes of the Skilton/Cassell Bunter books. If these are well received, it is hoped that the whole series will be reprinted.

The titles now available are BILLY BUNTER OF GREYFRIARS SCHOOL, BUNTER THE BAD LAD, BUNTER DOES HIS BEST and BESSIE BUNTER OF CLIFF HOUSE SCHOOL. I am particularly glad to see the last-named volume available again, as it has been extremely difficult for many collectors to find second-hand copies of this. On re-reading the story, I am struck once again by the compelling way in which 'Hilda Richards' (Charles Hamilton, of course) describes the friendship between Clara Trevlyn and Marjorie Hazeldene. Regrettably the MAGNET never gave him space or scope for this; his girl characters in that illustrious paper verged on being sent-up or, at the other extreme, over-chivalrously treated. BESSIE BUNTER OF CLIFF HOUSE SCHOOL is unique in Hamilton's conveyance of a female friendship; it is a book which I have appreciated over many years.

Of the three titles featuring Greyfriars I would like to comment that it is intriguing to see how Hamilton adapted his writing style and method for the complete, book-length tale, after having for decades produced short stories and serials. Of course, despite the prominence of Bunter's name, the focus is often on other inmates of Greyfriars. I have particularly enjoyed re-reading BUNTER DOES HIS BEST, which chronicles an exciting dual between Harry Wharton and Herbert Vernon-Smith, as rival sports captains. Truly addictive!

THE C.D. ANNUAL

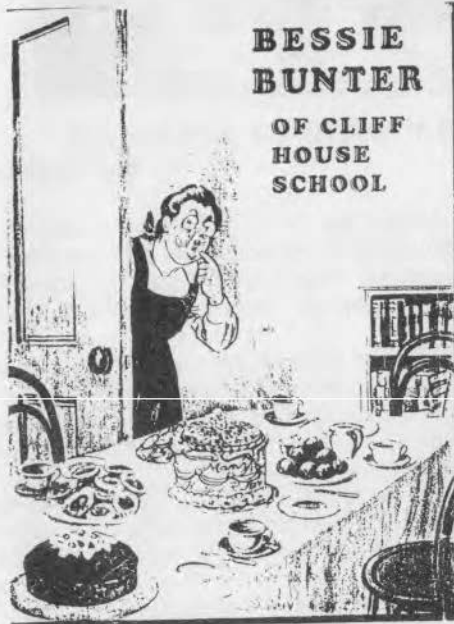
I feel that our own Annual will be another addictive book - and give you now, as promised, trailers of its further contents. (There is still time for you to order copies from me, at £8.50 in the United Kingdom and £10 for anywhere else in the world. Both prices include postage and packing.)

Les Rowley had provided another of his scrumptiously seasonal tales entitled PROLOGUE TO CHRISTMAS; Roger Jenkins contributes an appealing vignette of TOM REDWING; Jennifer Schofield (Piers Williams) writes about what Biggles means to her; Norman Wright reminds us of some of the give-aways that came in our old papers; CHUMS is well represented by Bill Bradford, who writes about stories in the magazine, and Ray Hopkins, who focuses on the 1925 CHUMS ANNUAL. Mark Taha writes on Flashman, Dennis Bird intriguingly explores the theme of SEEING DOUBLE, while Marion Waters and I contribute separate parts to an article which spotlights some Secret Societies.

More next month - but don't forget to order your Annual as soon as possible if you haven't already done so!

With warmest greetings to you all.

MARY CADOGAN



**BESSIE
BUNTER**
OF CLIFF
HOUSE
SCHOOL

HILDA RICHARDS



**BILLY BUNTER
OF GREYFRIARS
SCHOOL**

FRANK RICHARDS

WANTED: by Collector. JOHN HAMILTON: Pre-War hardbacks, any title with or without D/W, including the 'Ace Series', 'Airmans Bookcase', 'Flying Thrillers' Sundial Mystery' and Adventure Library, and Airmans Bookclub editions in dustwrappers. W.E. JOHNS: Any Pre-War hardbacks, with or without D/S and Paperback editions of 'MOSSYFACE' (by William Earle) and any 'BOYS FRIEND LIBRARY' Editions, any condition considered.

JOHN TRENDLER, 7 Park Close, Bushey, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD2 2DE. Tel. (0923) 31608.

WANTED: Modern Boy 324, 335, 337, 338, 339. Any reasonable price paid.

ROY PARSONS, 'Foinaven', Church Hollow, West Winterslow, Salisbury, SP5 1SX.



HOW TO MAKE LOTS OF MONEY WITHOUT ACTUALLY HANDLING ANY AT ALL

by Ray Hopkins

Teddy Long watches with interest as a blind boy of 15, guided by a child of 6, comes through the gates of St. Frank's endeavouring to sell bootlaces. The blind boy is bullied by Fullwood who pushes him to the ground. Nipper and Co. take the part of the blind boy and end up by taking a collection and the two boys leave St. Frank's with thirty shillings.

This episode takes place in the series when the College was burned to the ground and the whole school is moved to a site in Holborn in London while the rebuilding is going on. This explains why a beggar lad could come through the school gates and give Teddy Long a marvellous and totally unscrupulous idea, to put some unearned ready cash into his empty pockets. He, too, plans to become a poor blind boy!

Because matches are easily available from the school storeroom, Long decides that that will be his sales gimmick. As night falls, he goes up to one of the box-rooms, dresses himself in an old overcoat which he tears to make it look more disreputable, covers his head with an old cap and the lower part of his face with a scarf. That part which is still revealed he plasters with soot. He cannot possibly be recognised, disguised thus, he feels. The matches he places in a cardboard box which he fixes around his neck with string. Behind the matches he sticks a notice guaranteed to cause a lump to rise in the throat of any beholder: "Totally Blind! Homeless and Starving!". If his ruse is successful, Teddy Long envisages himself pulling the same trick again before the school leaves London, possibly more than once.

He manages to get downstairs and into the courtyard unobserved, then he enhances his characterization by hobbling as though lame and using a stick to tap the ground in front of him. His first customer is Tregellis-West who, emerging into the courtyard for some fresh air, sees another blind boy and is moved to drop a coin into the box. But it misses and falls to the ground. Long remembers in time that he is blind and must not move his head to look for it. Tregellis-West tells him the coin is a penny. Long feels a penny is hardly worth all the trouble he went to over the elaborate disguise. Fortunately, a group of Removites surge out of the building and surround him. Unfortunately, Teddy has not been able to make himself painfully thin and cadaverous. His chunky build forbids it. De Valerie makes the observation upon reading the placard that he supposes it is possible to starve and "still look pretty solid". De Valerie rustles a slip of paper from his pocket and places it in the box. Pitt follows with another slip of paper (Teddy envisages ten-shilling notes) and then the crowd of Removites drop lots of coins into the box until it is full to overflowing. Teddy can't believe the weight of good fortune he is carrying slung around his neck. He allows the juniors to usher him

through the gates but manages to slip back inside when the juniors have returned to the house and just before Warren emerges to lock the gates.

Another miracle occurs when is is able to slip into the school by a side door and, still unobserved, manages to get back to the boxroom to remove his disguise. He can hardly wait to count up his ill-gotten gains, ten-shilling notes, pound notes, and coins too numerous to mention. How decent the fellows have been and what will he do with it all? He is rich beyond the dreams of avarice. Or he is for a brief moment until his heart almost stops as he realises that he is holding crisp paper cut to the proper size but definitely not bank notes. An outfitter's catalogue had come in most useful to the "decent" fellows. The coins, too, are all fakes: metal buttons, card counters, all except the penny dropped in the box by Tregellis-West. That is a genuine Coin of the Realm: one copper Penny. Indignant and upset, Long ruminates on the cruelty of those who would diddle a poor blind boy in this heartless manner. It was impossible, he thought, that his brilliant disguise had been seen through.

No. 225.—GRAND NEW SERIAL JUST STARTED!
 1½^d. THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY 1½^d.



Montie jumped! Failing to clear the chasm he would be dashed to the ground far below.

SIR MONTIE'S ORDEAL

A Story of School Life and Detective Adventure in LONDON CITY, introducing NELSON LEE and NIPPER and the Boys of St. Frank's. By the Author of "The Great Fire at St. Frank's," "St. Frank's in London," "The Yellow Band," etc. Sept. 27 1919.

Teddy whistles his way into the Common-room. Pitt tells him he's forgotten to wipe the soot off his neck and can he borrow ten bob. When Long says he's stony, Pitt tells him he hasn't had time to spend all that money already. What money? Why, all that money the decent fellows put in his box.

Teddy tries to run from the Common-room, but is collared by Nipper and Co. Nipper tells him he should be taken to the Head for a flogging for pulling such an unscrupulous trick. Long swears he's been in the Library for the past two hours but to no avail. The Juniors bump him all round the Common-room floor. Injury to insult, as it were!

The above episode is taken from NLL, Old Series 225, 27 Sep 1919, entitled "Sir Montie's Ordeal".



SEXTON BLAKE AND DETECTIVE WEEKLY
Number 9

by J.E.M.

As I wrote earlier in this series, Rex Hardinge was an excellent storyteller when he left his beloved African settings. *The Music-Hall Murder Mystery* (DW 42), for example, has a very English background and is a winner.

This is a genuine puzzle story with real clues and, much rarer in crime tales, convincing human relationships. There is also some novelty of presentation. Each chapter is an account by one of the principal characters, written in an appropriate style. Doctors and police, for instance, write as one would expect - a sort of officialese, cunningly shaped by the author to hold our interest. Tinker, of course, writes in the racy style you would also expect and Blake's own contributions strike just the right note.

The copy of the DW in which I recently re-read this yarn had a couple of pages missing, but so impressed had I been by my original reading many years ago, that I could easily recall the lost material. I must say that I have read many modern hard-back detective stories not nearly as good as this. And how well the story is served by Eric Parker's illustrations. This one, I'm sure you will agree, is a little gem.



Arthur Wontner, the celebrated actor of stage and screen, achieved a remarkable double when in 1930 he portrayed Sexton Blake at the Prince Edwards Theatre, London, and followed this up two years later by starring as Sherlock Holmes on the screen.

Wontner appeared in many British films in the Thirties, including *The Missing Rembrandt* which was produced by Julius Hagen at his Twickenham studio in 1932, with Wontner as Holmes and Ian Fleming as Dr. Watson. This tale of blackmail involving a lady's (Jane Welsh's) honour was based on the story Charles Augustus Milverton by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

SEXTON BLAKE PLAY!

AT THE
PRINCE EDWARD THEATRE
(OLD COMPTON STREET, LONDON, W.)

The event all keen followers of the world's most popular detective have been waiting for—a first-class stage play by first-class artists in a first-class theatre. Look out for—



Arthur Wontner, who plays Sexton Blake.

ARTHUR WONTNER
IN
"SEXTON BLAKE"

A brilliant detective drama in 4 Acts.
by

DONALD STUART
(Author of 'The Green Fester,' etc.)
No lover of Sexton Blake should miss this splendid play which opens on Thursday, September 18th, at the Prince Edward Theatre. The cast includes Arthur Wontner, Dora Gregory, Eirene Miller, Pauline Loring, etc.

Evenings at 8-15 : Matinees, Wed., and Sat., at 2-30.

ALL SEATS BOOKABLE AT POPULAR PRICES.



NORMAN AND HENRY BONES

by Gordon Hudson

One of my favourite detective series was not from a magazine but from the wireless. Norman and Henry Bones featured in a number of plays on Children's Hour during the 1950s. They were extremely popular, and the stories were heard at irregular intervals over a number of years.

Norman and Henry Bones were two brothers aged sixteen and fourteen respectively. The stories were full of action, and there were plenty of crooks to keep them busy, with ever changing locations - old houses - secret tunnels - to keep one's imagination going. One of the brothers (I think Henry) was played by the character actress Patricia Hayes.

The stories were written by Anthony Wilson who had been a teacher at a prep school, and it has been suggested that they were based on tales he told to his pupils.

The Bones also appeared in a number of books published from the late 1940s, including "Norman and Henry Bones the Boy Detectives" and "Norman and Henry Bones Investigate". I do not know which came first, the plays or the books.

Although there have in recent years been plenty of reminiscences about Children's Hour, few people seem to mention the interesting and at times exciting plays which were regularly featured. I can certainly remember some happy Saturday afternoons listening to the adventures of Norman and Henry Bones and of other favourites, such as Jennings and Derbyshire.

I have been trying to recollect whether I ever saw the Bones in a strip series. I can only remember reading one of the books, which I wish could be re-issued. There have been plenty of re-issues of the American brothers, the Hardy Boys, and I feel that some home-grown juvenile detective stories would make a nice change.

ROSE LAWN REMEMBERED III

by Una Hamilton Wright

A Wind in the East

The Thanet coast, although enjoying gloriously hot, dry summer weather, was also subject to bitter, rough winds from the east. These blew fiercely at Easter, and later, and raged along the beaches at the end of September at the close of the summer holidays. Winds from the east always upset uncle and made him feel ill. The neuralgia from which he suffered became worse and he would hug the fire - even in summer - his head swathed in white flannel mufflers. Other members of the household were not particularly troubled by these winds but we all knew that they were a signal for him to be most dreadfully depressed. He suffered from the 'east wind' right up to the end of his life, as the letters to my mother reveal. He would always prophesy that he would feel better as soon as the wind shifted.

This recurring depression was my first experience of gloom; apart from that my uncle had created a haven of happiness for me from which all pain and anxiety had been excluded. Death was never mentioned in my presence, various euphemisms were used but not explained. There was a strict code regarding what was and what was not mentionable.

So the situation was embarrassing when uncle fell ill with incipient kidney or bladder stones. He suffered terrible pain and had to stop work for a whole week, on doctor's orders. But in my presence the details were never mentioned because of the taboo. On his recovery bottles of Lenley's Distilled Water from Dover and tins of charcoal biscuits became permanent items in the catering. I found uncle's illness very disturbing as it proved that he was, after all, only human.

The concept of what was **good** for me, now entered my life and began to take a different course from what I liked doing. Hitherto they had coincided. Before I was ten I used to be promised a great treat, that I should learn Latin as soon as I was old enough. Sure enough during my tenth summer I began Latin first with uncle and then with two

elderly ladies who had just opened a little school between Rose Lawn and the sea. I quite enjoyed it at the 'amo, amas' stage and felt very confident when I started school Latin the following autumn. With uncle's encouragement I made up a Latin Crossword Puzzle which was published in one of the papers and for which I was handed the cheque. But I never got any thrill from the endeavour, only the pleasure of pleasing uncle. So the last years at Rose Lawn were overshadowed by a little cloud no bigger than Smith's Latin Dictionary (pocket edition), doubtless propelled by an east wind! Uncle felt he would like to take over all my education and proposed to my parents that he should adopt me and send me to the two old ladies' school while he actually taught me at home. I was never told anything of this at the time. Needless to say, my parents objected and entered me for a Hampstead school. I remember overhearing uncle complain "Dolly, why are you trying to take Una away from me?" I was puzzled but passive.

During the last years I had my first two trips abroad, the first to Paris and the second to Geneva with a school party, under the auspices of the League of Nations. A new pattern was emerging reflecting the fact that I was growing up. I was encouraged to do things which would lead me away from uncle, but I was expected to report back to Rose Lawn and retail my experiences. So I never lost the feeling of his support and interest; he would write to me while I was away, doubtless reliving his pre-war travels. He longed to go abroad again himself but somehow lacked the energy. So he derived great vicarious pleasure from hearing about my travels. A natural consequence of this was his encouraging me to work hard at French and later German. Mealtime conversations were peppered with snatches of these languages and Italian was added for good measure. It all helped me very much in that it made me realise that modern languages were actually being spoken by living people. A happy memory of the last Kingsgate holiday is of being curled up in a big armchair with novels in three languages and wondering which to tackle first.



Picture by Bob Whiter

In that last summer holiday in 1939 other winds were blowing from the east, but none of us suspected their catastrophic power. On 2nd September, Mother and I and my godmother, Grace Hancock who was staying with us, were driven direct to Cheltenham, whither my parents had moved on account of my education. My father joined us there from London. Uncle stayed behind in Thanet and separately we all listened to the fateful news on 3rd September. War was declared on Germany and everything would change but none of us realised it. Memories of Rose Lawn inevitably began to fade to a beautiful dream. Never again was I to attain the perfect freedom that I had experienced there. Real life still seemed to be with uncle. Holidays stood out as more important than the slog of term-time in between.

The evil wind from the east not only brought my childhood to a close but it blew uncle out of his holiday home at Kingsgate and it blew away the paper on which his life's work was printed, thus depriving him of his habitual source of income. In less than a year from the declaration of war he had been ordered off the coast and the Magnet had stopped publication. Rose Lawn was closed down, its contents hurriedly removed to a little house in Hampstead Garden Suburb in Northwest London, near to where uncle had weathered the first world war. Panic seized him and his weekly letter to me and his three letters a week to my mother showed how worried he was for our safety. My education loomed ever larger in his advice to me and the caring uncle-playmate developed into the concerned uncle-domini. Latin, that unlocked the doors to universities, was dwelt on at length and in his newfound freedom from his daily stint at the typewriter he was revelling in Latin authors as he had never been able to do before. The scholarly schoolboy that lurked within him was indulging himself and enjoying his classical 'treat' in a way that his niece could not appreciate, try how she would.

To give a balanced picture of the Rose Lawn years it must be said that uncle encouraged me to do the things that I did like doing as well as the less appealing hobbies. Along with the tennis and the riding over stubble fields, neither of which I cared for very much, I was encouraged to do well at Art, which I loved, and at Music - I was coming along very promisingly at both of these subjects at school. In fact, by the end of the Rose Lawn period I was beginning to work out for myself that there wouldn't be time in one life to do well all the things that I was encouraged to do. Rose Lawn was a kind of cornucopia all of whose contents were for my delight had I but world enough and time.

In the years preceding the war I began to want to see other parts of Britain, but as uncle would not travel this was not to be, except for a week at Lynton with mother as a reward for passing the Cheltenham entrance examination. It was travel or uncle. Uncle won. He was becoming more of a recluse, entirely satisfied with his family and no one else and also afraid of upsetting his housekeepers who did not like travelling.

In retrospect Rose Lawn appears to have been abuzz with wit, with fun, with laughter, with creative activity. A perfect place in which to ease growing pains and to plant small feet on the right road. Such, I am sure, was the intention of its owner which he ably carried out. I feel that all human beings have their own private 'summer place' in the backs of their minds to which they can retreat when life grows difficult. Rose Lawn is mine. Uncle wrote some of his best work during his Rose Lawn period and I am sure the happiness and fulfilment he experienced in his family life overflowed into his work. East winds brought their sinister chills from time to time and eventually catastrophe, but they could not erase the memory of the happiness that Charles Hamilton created at Rose Lawn.

GIRL - FORTIETH BIRTHDAY REFLECTIONS

by Susan Chambers

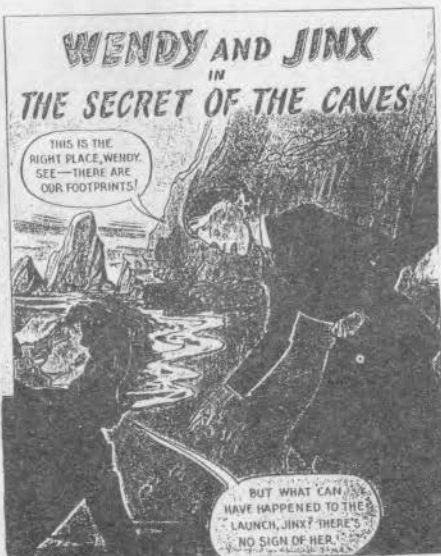
"Most of you will have seen the Golden Girl cars which have been touring the country", so said Editor Marcus Morris in the second number of GIRL in November, 1951. Letters were soon received confirming that some had, one girl reporting the appearance of said car at her school! Bold advertising for the times! Would Education Authorities permit such commercialism today? Perhaps on reflection they might, when one considers local management of Schools and sponsorship, etc.

EAGLE had also been heralding the arrival of GIRL. As part of this promotion EAGLE had held a competition to ascertain, from a select list, the favourite girl's name. As magazine competitions are often held to discover opinions and float ideas, had there been an intention to call this new girls' weekly by a girl's forename? I have often wondered why GIRL was not given a bird's name like her famous brother paper and subsequent siblings SWIFT and ROBIN, though even now nothing springs readily to mind that is snappy enough, or does not sound like a joke, 'Lark', or a medical instruction, 'Swallow'.

Reading those first issues of GIRL which were 16 pages long including 8 in colour, it is apparent that the editors were appealing to girls interested in action and adventure. The writers had created in full colour a clutch of enterprising heroines Kitty Hawke, Anne Mullen and Captain Starling, who respectively tackled skyjacking and revolution, foiled 18th century smugglers, and sailed the Atlantic to rescue a father from the Incas.



One of the hallmarks of the paper was the full colour back page biography which over the years was to feature Saints, Martyrs and Missionaries, amongst others. That first year featured Miriam "Daughter of the Nile" and "St. Margaret of Scotland": Royal Margaret, who as the title suggests had the added bonus of also being a Princess. In an entertaining and often humorous way, these serials informed us of the lives of Mary Slessor, Gladys Aylward, Joan of Arc, Florence Nightingale et al, and tried to teach us the value of service to others. From "Royal Margaret" onwards Chad Varah wrote the stories, and illustrators included Alfred Sindall, Chris Garvey and Gerald Haylock.



WELL, HERE WE ARE AGAIN, GANG, WITH ONE MORE JOB CHALKED UP TO THE ALL-GIRL CREW — TO PROVE TO DAD THAT WE CAN OPERATE HIS PLANES AS EFFICIENTLY AS THE GLORIOUS MALES.



No. 1, 2nd November 1951
Kitty Hawke



WHAT'S THIS I HEAR ABOUT YOU — UNCLE JOHN — CHASING SMUGGLERS? IT SOUNDS EXCITING — YOU MUST LET ME HELP YOU.

No. 1
Anne Mullen



NOW, WILL YOU GET OFF MY BOAT?

No. 1
Captain Starling

**WHITE QUEEN
of CALABAR**

The story of **MARY SLESSOR**,
a brave missionary.

Told by **CHAD YARAH**
Drawn by **GERALD HAYLOCK**

Lettice Leefe

**The Greenest
Girl in School.**

The same virtue was reflected in the paper's Adventure Club, which not only took girls on challenging holidays but was to feature a Star Adventurer each week who was so posted for good deeds, or cheerfulness in adversity.

From the sublime to the ridiculous, the comic-strip "Lettice Leafe - the greenest girl in school", was one of the most enduring features of GIRL. Lettice was well intentioned, but adept at misinterpreting any instruction given to her, or any situation she found herself in, with the result that weekly she left behind her a trail of shredded clothes, broken glass, crashed vehicles and burnt schools. She was the bane of her teachers' lives; Miss Tantrum, whose spare frame was never clothed in anything but a black frock; and the Head, Miss Froth, whose rotund form never wore the same creation twice, so John Ryan the strip's creator told readers. Lettice appeared in issue 1 and was still there in 1963.

It was soon evident that attention was being paid to readers' ideas regarding the format of the paper. Within six months the Picture Gallery was established with full page, full colour portraits of royalty, wildlife, famous paintings, sportswomen, ballerinas, etc.

Perhaps more important was the elevation of a school story to the front colour pages introducing us to Wendy and Jinx, the inseparable pals from Manor School. Drawn by Ray Bailey (later with Philip Townsend) and written by Val Hastings (later Stephen James), Wendy and Jinx would, over the years, expose forgers in "The Million Pound Mystery", seek "The Treasure of the Legions", be in the thick of interhouse rivalry in "Rivals of the Fourth Form" and interschool rivalry in "The Fairbridge Feud", thus living up to the best traditions of the girls' school story.

Another six months would see the arrival of "Belle of the Ballet". It must not, however, be thought that the popular arrival of school and ballet stories meant the departure of resourceful and vigorous heroines or the demise of action and excitement in exotic locations. Anne Mullen was succeeded by a series of dauntless girls adventuring in the South Seas or the desert, until in 1954 Vicky Curtis, with flaming hair and flashing green eyes, appeared. With her Professor father she spent the next four years seeking the "Valley of the Moon" in the Himalayas, escaping the "Vengeance of the Incas" and searching Africa for "The Phantom Lake", until after a final foray in Australia Vicky decided that a settled home would make a pleasant change, and give her the opportunity to study science.

Space precludes a comprehensive catalogue of all GIRL'S characters, fiction and features. The above is a flavour only of the first years, for the paper was nothing if not diverse and its scope wide. Barbara Woodhouse was responsible for a series on dog training; the classic "Black Beauty" was serialised in picture-strip in that first year, and later the Gas Board would sponsor a cookery strip.

Throughout the fifties and until 1964 when GIRL ceased publication, fresh ideas, often from readers, were continually being sought, whilst the paper encouraged girls to be thoughtful, caring and strong-minded.

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.

SIX OF THE BEST

The following extracts from the Magnet are in chronological sequence. The first competitor to send the six correct Magnet numbers from which these extracts are taken will receive a £5 book token. Entries to Roger Jenkins, 8 Russell Road, Havant, Hants., PO9 2DG.

1. "If you were not the most crassly obtuse and stupid boy at Greyfriars, I should take you to the Head and request him to expel you from the school. I am treating you very leniently in sentencing you to only twenty strokes of the cane. Bend over that chair, Bunter!"
2. "I wegard you as a toad, Buntah! That is to say", added Arthur Augustus hastily, "if I were not a visitah heah I should wegard you as a toad."
3. "Insolence is a matter with which I am quite capable of dealing", said Mr. Quelch grimly "Hand me the cane from the shelf - the stoutest cane! I think there are three - give me the stoutest."
4. Bunter drank tea till all the milk was gone. Then he ate the sugar, lump by lump. Being short-sighted, he left a lump and Fishy hoped that that lump, at least, would escape. But Bunter took another blink, and the last lump vanished.
5. "I haven't come to tea", said Bunter, with dignity. "I'm going to tea with Mauily. Only I can't find him."
6. "Place the key on the table at once, Bunter!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "I-I can't sir as - as I haven't got it!" groaned Bunter "Perhaps you've got it in your pocket all the time, sir - "
"Bunter!"
"I mean to say, you might forget putting it back in your pocket", said Bunter hopefully. "Very old people do forget what they do with things, sir. My great grandfather -"

ANSWERS TO KEITH ATKINSON'S HAMILTONIAN CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1. Punishment Room
7. Powser
8. Pointer
9. Rien
10. Flog
12. Pearmain
15. Koumi Rao
17. Pant
18. Tor
21. Collinson
24. Bear
25. Ali
26. Doped
28. Crocker
29. Cruise
30. Secret Passages

DOWN

1. Pop of the Circus
2. New York
3. Harry
4. Noon
5. Ransom
6. Morning prayers
8. Peter Todd
11. Pupil
12. Pins
13. A.A.
14. Rot
16. Manifest
19. O.B.E.
20. Redwing
22. Lancer
23. No
27. Paris

OUR BOOKSHELVES



"THE BEANO DIARIES" by RAY MOORE. Published by British Comic World at £18.95. Reviewed by Norman Wright.

At first glance it may seem rather expensive to pay getting on for twenty pounds for a staple stitched card covered book of 200 pages. Yet as anyone will tell you it's what's in a cake that counts, and this particular cake is cram-full of good things. It would not be an exaggeration to say that for anyone interested in THE BEANO this should be a compulsory reference book.

I often enthuse about books that I review (after all life is too short to bother reading books that one knows at the outset are going to be uninteresting or of little use) but this must be one of the most comprehensive publications ever to appear on a British comic or story paper. Ray Moore has long established himself as the leading authority on the Thomson comics, and this work is his masterpiece.

From beginning to end it is packed with information. Unlike some reference books, that give you a taste for information and then worm their way out of being exhaustive, Ray Moore has given every scrap of information that anyone is ever likely to want to know about THE BEANO and all of its spin-off publications. Every year of the comic's life is covered in detail. Every story, adventure-strip and comic-strip is noted, with the dates of its appearance in the comic and the name of the artist who drew the strip or illustrations. Every adventure strip is given a short synopsis and a cross reference to other appearances in annuals and holiday specials. The contents of all the BEANO BOOKS are noted together with details of reprints etc. At the beginning of each year section there is a summary of important events of the year including first and last appearances of particular artists and characters. As if all this was not enough there are 5 'special sections' devoted to specific characters and publications: Lord Snooty, Jimmy and his Magic Patch, Dennis the Menace, The Bash Street Kids and Beano Comic Library. Within these sections there is information on every strip, together with a note on its source. The sheer amount of time required in locating where every strip in all the DENNIS THE MENACE BOOKS came from is mind-boggling!!

There is no doubt that this is a labour of love that must have taken Ray Moore years to complete. As a tool for anyone interested in THE BEANO it is indispensable and worth every penny that it costs.

WANTED: The Gem No. 57, The Ranger - 1931, The Thriller 1937-38, The Champion 1940, The Triumph 1940, Girls Own Paper 1940-1947, Collins Magazine for Boys and Girls 1950, The Junior Mirror 1954-1956.
PAUL MARRIOTT, 8 The Heath, Leighton Buzzard, Beds., LU7 7HL.
Tel. 0525 382669.

Troublesome Tom!



Popular Tom Merry, whose adventures at St. Jim's have for many years delighted thousands of young readers, actually began his career at Clavering—before that school became part of St. Jim's. This story of his early days at Clavering will therefore have a special interest to all HOLIDAY ANNUAL readers.

By
MARTIN
CLIFFORD.

We all make mistakes!

That sounds like a whining excuse - and it is! Mr. Buddle, as an English Master, might be offended at the grammar if I say "Some of us make mistakes as shouldn't!"

Certainly a chap who pretends to be a kind of minor expert on Hamiltoniana jolly well shouldn't!

I'm red in the face, covered with confusion, and shaking like a jelly. Shamefully, in the September C.D. I made

the following comment in a little article on the Clavering stories:-

"The second Clavering tale, in Gem No. 5, was 'Troublesome Tom'. It was only reprinted once - in PENNY POPULAR No. 2, in 1912, when that paper started and reprinted the old Gem tales. IN 1931, much, much later, when the Gem itself went back to the beginning, they omitted 'Troublesome Tom'. Just why, we don't know. Probably they did not want to waste too much time before St. Jim's was back in the star slot in the Gem."

A few days after that issue of C.D. went out I received the following in a letter from Roger Jenkins:-

"I was interested in your latest contribution to the C.D. 'Troublesome Tom' was reprinted in the 1931 HOLIDAY ANNUAL, published, of course, in September 1930. This must be the reason why it was omitted from the Gem reprints. I often wondered if it was testing the water for the possibility of reprinting very old Gem stories."

And in "The Postman Called" section of C.D. in October, Philip Tierney wrote:

"I think I know why 'Troublesome Tom' was omitted from the Gem reprints which began in 1931 - on Eric's good advice to the Editor. 'Troublesome Tom' had already appeared in the 1931 Holiday Annual (published in 1930), so many Gem readers would have only recently read it. Incidentally it was the first Tom Merry story I ever read."

I have no excuse to offer. In a long line in one of my bookcases nestles every one of the Holiday Annuals. To my shame, it is a long time since I took one of them out for a read.

Obviously Messrs. Jenkins and Tierney have hit on the correct reason why "Troublesome Tom" was omitted from the reprints in the Gem in 1931. It seems quite likely, too, that Roger may be right when he muses on the possibility that they were "testing the water" with this single reprint in the good old Holiday Annual.

At the time, all those years ago, I see that my letters from Editor Down were dated between mid-summer 1930 and March 1931.

Desperate at the long, long run of "substitute" stories in the Gem, with no sign that the original writer was ever coming back, I suggested that they should reprint the old tales from the very beginning. And that they should name the first story "Tom Merry - New Boy!"

In a few days Mr. Down replied. He was very kind but very definite. The Gem was more popular than it had ever been. It was not a paper for reprinted stories. But he thanked me for the suggestion and for my interest.

I did not take "No" for an answer. Shortly I wrote again, stressing my belief that a good future for the Gem was waiting in the reprinting of the early tales, etc.

Mr. Down replied with a pleasant letter in which he says that he could promise nothing, but my suggestion was being considered.

And then, in 1931, is his letter in which he tells me that my suggestion is being adopted for a trial period. He told me to look out for forthcoming announcements in the Gem. And added that, as I had suggested, the first story of the series would be entitled "Tom Merry - New Boy".

Naturally, I was delighted. The title of that first tale was not really mine. It had been used in the very first issue of the PENNY POPULAR in 1912, and it had always remained in my memory as an excellent and striking one.

It seems quite probable, as Roger surmised, that they may have placed "Troublesome Tom" in the 1931 Holiday Annual to see what the response would be. Obviously the response was tip-top.

A moment on the lovely old Holiday Annuals. For the first year or two my older sister gave me the new edition of the Annual, each year, as a Christmas present. After that, I always bought it for myself.

Just now, taking down the 1931 Annual from my packed shelves, to re-read and enjoy "Troublesome Tom", I found, loose between the pages, the bill presented to me when I bought it. I wonder how I came to retain that bill. (Nowadays we are given "till receipts" which are often illegible.)

It is headed M. Clarke & Co., 7 Milton Road, Gravesend. (Commercial and Fancy Stationers; Printers; Booksellers; etc.)

It is dated 24/12/30. So I evidently left it till the verge of Christmas before I visited Mr. Clarke. Maybe the cash in my pocket was running out.

The bill reads: Annual 6/-. Book 2/6 (I wonder what the "book" was?). Diary 9d. Total: 9/3. Paid with thanks.

That was in real money, of course. Today it would be about 46 pence.

I wonder how many Holiday Annuals, Diaries, and Books I could get for 46 pence now.

WANTED: ENID BLYTON/W.E. JOHNS/CROMPTON. First editions in wrappers, all pre 1960 ephemera. £20 each offered for Biggles "Boys Friend Libraries". £5 each offered for "Thriller" nos. 88,116,157,176,280,286,392,393,469,583,586.

NORMAN WRIGHT, 60 EASTBURY ROAD, WATFORD, WD1 4JL. Tel: 0923 32383.

CLIFF HOUSE IN NEW GUISES

Could I please add a few comments to our editor's notes on the weekly paper 'School Days' in the October issue of 'CD'. In the course of my researches in the British Library I examined the file of this paper. It was a first class publication, but somehow lacked the 'sparkle' of the more popular girls' papers. I think it was an attempt by the A.P. to produce a rival to the up-market 'Girls Own Paper'. It is worth mentioning that 'School Days' was edited by an all-female team, in contrast to Fleetway House's usual policy of employing men. School Days was the first story paper to feature art work by Evelyn Flinders (of 'Silent Three' fame). Her first task for it was to illustrate the series on careers for girls.

Looking through the old papers one is amazed at the versatility of Miss Flinders' work. Besides illustrating numerous stories in 'Schoolgirls Weekly' and 'Girls' Crystal' during the 1930s, she also on occasion produced illustrations for 'Cliff House', 'Morcove' and 'Noel Raymond'. I think she only illustrated one pre-war episode of Noel's adventures but, during the post-war era when attention was focussed on Noel's niece, Miss Flinders produced many illustrations.

by Marion Waters

VIVIENNE VERE WAS AN ODD, BRAINY GIRL. A TWINKLE IN HER EYE, SHE SUGGESTED A PLAN...



I HAPPEN TO KNOW WYN IS FOND OF POETRY. THEREFORE THE BEST WAY TO MAKE HER REMEMBER IS TO TURN SOME OF THESE NOTES INTO VERSE. THAT'S LOGIC, CHEERUPS, A

CRAZIEST GIRL AT SPRINGCLIFFE



IT'S MY TREAT GIRLS, AUNT ANNIE, WHO'S HERE FROM AUSTRALIA, HAS GIVEN ME TWO WHOLE POUNDS, YOU KNOW

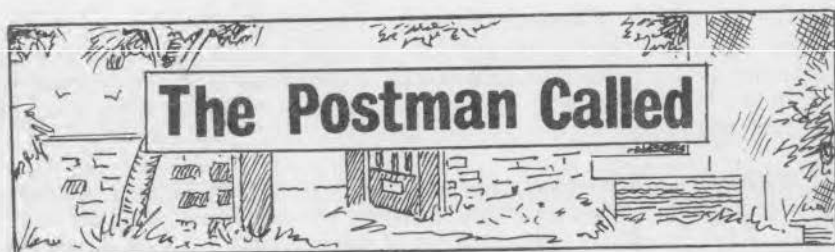
IT WAS EARLY JANUARY, THE BEGINNING OF TERM AT SPRINGCLIFFE SCHOOL, AND PLUMP DUFFER TILLY TUFFIN HAD DECIDED TO SPEND THE FIRST HALF HOLIDAY LIVING IT UP AT THE BEEHIVE TEASHOP WITH HER TWO CLOSEST CHUMS, JILL COTTRILL AND TRACEY PITT.

JOLLY GOOD, TILLY, LET'S HAVE YOUR COAT AND SCARF TO PUT IN THE CLOAKROOM WHILE YOU GIVE YOUR ORDER

Turning to Mary's comments on the last stories of Cliff House in the 1940 'Schoolgirl' I wonder if many readers are aware that Cliff House was revived, after a fashion, in the 1950s? The monthly 'Schoolgirls Own Library' regularly featured stories about a school named 'Manorcliff' written by 'Hazel Armitage' (John Wheway). Many of the school's scholars were closely based on Cliff House characters. The fat duffer was named 'Dolly Potter', but was closely based on Bessie Bunter. The fourth form captain, Jane Heatherly, was obviously based on Barbara Redfern; other girls had similarities with Clara and Marjorie. The 'spoilt brat' of the form was named 'Dinah Clarke', clearly based on a pre-war prototype. I don't think 'Manor Cliffe' had a Jemima Carstairs, but a version of this likeable character re-appeared

in 'School Friend' weekly in 1954 in 'The Riding Mystery at Moorland School'. She was named 'Vivienne Vere', looked like Jemima, wore a monocle, and possessed her rather affected style of speech. She was also both clever and kind. Evelyn Flinders, who had occasionally drawn the original Jemima and other Cliff House girls when substituting for T.E. Laidler in the '30s, also illustrated the Moorland School strip.

Editor's Note: John Wheway also produced a variation as Cliff House School in *Princess*, the 1960s weekly. Matilda ("Tilly") Tuffin was a "plump and lovable duffer" very much in the Bessie Bunter mould. She and her chums Jill Cottrill, Gail Brookland, Tracey Pitt and Petunia Leicester are fourth-form chums at Springcliffe School. Tilly's exploits were also featured in several *Princess Picture Library* volumes. These were drawn by T.E. Laidler, who had, of course, illustrated the Cliff House stories in *The Schoolgirl* for most of the 1930s. His Tilly Tuffin could well be Bessie Bunter with her plaits cut off. She even has an "Aunt Annie" (who was one of Bessie's few relatives ever to produce the remittances for tuck which she longed for!).



BILL LOFTS (London): I enjoyed our editor's short piece in the October C.D., a Lament for Lost Schoolgirls. Apart from 'The Feud Between the Prefects' which would have been published in No. 565, there were actually three others in hand. 'Miss Bullivant's Secret Sorrow', 'Diann's Terriers Star Cousin' - which was changed editorially to 'Schoolgirl Circus Star', and 'Her Pet from the Past'. The last two look like a small series. All were written by John Wheway. 'Schoolgirl Circus Star' according to a stock book was going to be used in School Friend Annual 1942, but according to the late Derek Adley there was no trace of it.

Roger Jenkins' appraisal of The Bunter Court series was, I thought, quite fair and accurate. I understand that a large quantity of the first batch of the series delivered to the late Howard Baker firm were found to be imperfect with the covers very poorly printed, so that the usual bright orange and blue had a washed out look. Consequently they were rejected and sent back to be replaced. Some time afterwards these reject issues were apparently on sale in some book shops at a remainder price - without Bill Baker's knowledge. This probably affected his sales of this series. They never went out of print.

STEVEN DEARDEN (Wallasey): I was interested in Roger Jenkins' comment that the Bunter Court volume was the least successful in terms of sales. I think that this volume was more successful than perhaps Howard Baker realised. Remained very

cheaply in local shops, this was my introduction to the reprints at a time when there was nothing else available by Frank Richards in the shops (only Foyle's ever had a display of the full-price volumes). I went on to buy all the others and would be surprised if I was the only one 'hooked' in this way!

JOHN LEWIS (Uttoxeter): I don't know whether the following information is of momentous importance or not? But I have discovered Gosling's correct age. It is not 100 plus, as averred by one R. Cherry, but a mere 65, therefore making Gosling just eligible for the Old Age Pension. This intelligence is given by Hamilton himself in Magnet NO. 983 of 1926 (p.13, col. 2) viz ".....scarcely believe the evidence of the optical organs which had served him [Gosling] faithfully for SIXTY-FIVE years".

For many years I have been perplexed as to which age group the boys of the Greyfriars Shell Form belong? From evidence in the stories the Remove are in the 14/15 bracket and the Sixth Form range between 17/18, which should place the Fifth at 16/17 and the Upper Fourth at around 15/16. However, as the Shell is described as being senior to the Upper Fourth, I am totally mystified about the ages of Mr. Hacker's boys.

GORDON HUDSON (Chester-le-Street): I was extremely interested to read the late Derek Adley's article on Colwyn Dane. So far as I can remember these were the first detective stories I ever read, followed by Sexton Blake (that is excluding the SB picture stories in *The Knockout*). It has encouraged me to get out some of my earlier copies (1946 and 1947).

DON WEBSTER (Richmond, Surrey): In reply to Eric Fayne's comments on 'King Cricket', I was fortunate enough to borrow and read the original instalments in the BOYS' REALM which - as a cricket fan - I enjoyed, but I was most disappointed to read the abridged version in the B.F.L. On talking to Charles Hamilton about this, he admitted he was not conversant with the finer points of the game, but he tried to convey atmosphere or suspense (which, in my humble opinion, he did effectively).

Some examples of his anomalies are as follows:

- 1) THE MAGNET: Bertie Vernon takes six wickets in six balls. Almost impossible!
- 2) THE GEM: D'Arcy 'cut' the ball to leg. A 'cut' is on the off side of the wicket.
- 3) THE MAGNET: Nugent succeeded in THROWING out Trumper. Surely, RUNNING out!

Perhaps I'm too much of a purist.

IDEAL COMPANIONS

Mr. Holman's article in last month's C.D. on the friends he would choose for himself from the stories in the old papers has sparked off the following replies:

Clarice Harding (Sidmouth): I have felt a special admiration for Mauly who behaved so admirably towards poor Bob Cherry during his dilemma.

Mark Taha (London): My choice of friend would be Cardew of St. Jim's, always my favourite Hamilton character: my choice from Greyfriars would be Vernon-Smith, and from Cliff House Diana Royston-Clarke. I've always wanted a girl-friend like her - whatever life was like it certainly wouldn't be dull! In fact, as a *Coronation Street* fan, I

must say that she reminds me of Jenny Bradley - beautiful, passionate, dynamic and determined.

Ted Baldock (Cambridge): My choice would, with little hesitation, be the junior with the 'Largish and shuffling feet', Robert Cherry of the Remove form at Greyfriars school. His cheery thrice repeated 'Hallo' would soon dispel any gloom or ill humour. On grey days, which most of us sometimes experience, I think I would like to have Bob standing by. His jolly, open nature and strongly developed sense of humour would surely extinguish any 'blues' which might be attempting to engulf me. He would, I feel, be the ideal fellow swiftly to reduce a grey mood to its correct perspective. There is about him a breezy, open air 'Come on old man, buck up' aspect, which for me would prove irresistible. Should one be dejected to such a degree as to be unable to respond to his overtures I would in Greyfriars parlance 'Eat my hat', upon which no doubt Bob would clap me on the shoulder and wish me happy eating, thus turning the whole episode into a lark, and so re-establishing my equilibrium.

THE SCHOOLGIRLS' WEEKLY'S GREATEST STAR

by Margery Woods

Drew, Valerie, criminal investigator; b. January 7th, 1915, London, England. Daughter of Commissioner John Drew, rd., of Scotland Yard, Educated....

So might begin an entry in *Who's Who* concerning one of the most popular characters ever created in schoolgirl fiction. Except that Valerie Drew was no schoolgirl. At eighteen she was already acknowledged by her father's colleagues at the Yard to be an expert on fingerprint science, and her list of successfully concluded cases was impressive.

There had been other girl detectives before the advent of Valerie and there were others to follow, but for many devoted readers during the thirties the beautiful eighteen-year-old investigator with rich auburn tresses and intelligent eyes veiled with enigmatic violet became the favourite inspiration of their youthful fantasies ---- a vital reader-identification factor well known by the authors of popular fiction; this was the ploy that ensured the reader kept turning the page. And this was during the era of the heyday of Hollywood glamour, when every adolescent yearned to look like her favourite movie star, when poverty stalked the big cities and rural areas alike, and the silver screen glowing with dream life provided a brief respite from the hard reality in the cold outside. Cinema and novel fed escapism to the hearts of adults, and the comics and storypapers did not fail the younger readers. Valerie's adventures took her to strange and sinister places, into perilous situations and involved her in the pitting of wits against arch criminals who could be described as the international jet set of the felon's fraternity. (Witness Marcelle Dauphine and the evil Colonel Mars, to name only two of Valerie's great protagonists.) However, the main run of them rarely proved to be gifted with the high levels of intelligence and skill possessed by the deceptively dainty and fashionably clad Valerie, nor did they have the advantage of a sagacious, loyal and virtually human dog assistant. But assistant is not really the right word to describe the redoubtable Alsatian; Flash was definitely a partner. As the characters developed Valerie and Flash obviously shared a kind of ESP, against which the thick skulduggery of their opponents stood little chance.

The readers simply lapped it all up and demanded more.

The story that introduced Valerie Drew and Flash to SCHOOLGIRLS' WEEKLY readers appeared in the issue of January 7th, 1933. Entitled THAT AMAZING ROOM OF CLOCKS, it moved at a cracking pace which could scarcely fail to hook the reader's interest. The author, John W. Bobin, writing as Adelle Ascott, was already well established as a writer of both boys' and girls' fiction. Perhaps his style was not quite as polished or sophisticated as that of the later author, Isobel Norton, but he had a tremendous gift for conveying the setting and completely involving the emotions of the

reader. With Bobin you were there, sharing it all, experiencing the perils and excitement and heartache with Valerie. Right from the start of the Valerie Drew saga you believed in her. You felt the lashing rain, heard the howling gale and clung on to life itself with Valerie as the mountainous waves pounded her speedboat and flung her out on to the rocks. You could almost feel Flash's drenched fur and sense his anxiety until his mistress shook the storm from her dazed senses and spoke to him. But there was no time to ponder on an author's method of hooking his reader: everything was waiting; the dark old house, the frightened girl, the injured boy and the woman in grey, and the ghostly ticking of all those clocks. The young reader never had a chance to escape!

SCHOOLGIRLS' WEEKLY.

507

September 22, 1933
As You Will See On Reading This Thrilling LONG Complete Girl Detective Story--The Most Unusual Mystery-Figure Valerie Drew Had Ever Met Was



LADY O' THE CRINOLINE

By
ADELIE ASCOTT Illustrated by
C. PERCIVAL

Looking out of the arched doorway, Valerie Drew, the young heroine, catches the ground below as the "Lady O' the Crinoline."

Valerie was tender-hearted, always compassionate towards the more unfortunate victims of life, but she was also tough.

In VALERIE DREW'S DILEMMA, S.W. June 24th, 1933, she struggles with the Italian villainess, bogus countess Rosa Biretti, who, with her accomplices, has kidnapped Valerie's father in revenge for his getting her sent to prison several years previously. Rosa had at that time concealed a vital letter in the lining of a somewhat venerable suitcase belonging to the Commissioner (surely a most audacious hiding place!). This letter tells of the hiding place of the famous Blainworth tiara, stolen by Rosa. During this fierce struggle the bannister rails give way and Valerie crashes down into the hall below, in the best tradition of B movie thrillers. Despite being stunned, during which time Rosa makes her getaway with the vital suitcase, in no time Valerie is aboard the Devon Express hot on the trail of Rosa and the missing Commissioner Drew. A cousin of Valerie's is also in the story, and present throughout the adventure, but allowed only to hover worriedly and rather uselessly in the background.

While successive stories kept plenty of action going they also developed more deductive content. Trails of columbines, walnut shells, pieces of gold, oriental beads and whatever were followed to their satisfying conclusions, and a good balance of phantoms, creepy old ruins, missing art treasures and mysteries involving the ever fascinating world of the entertaining arts kept the weekly trail of intrigue ever beckoning.

Flash was superb, endearing, lovable, and irresistible to his legion of admirers. Time and again he foiled the plotters, rescuing his mistress at least once a week, as well as the various characters who after all couldn't help it if they were not bright enough to keep out of trouble. His doggy genius was on top form in **DETECTIVE FLASH, S.W.** April 24th, 1934, when, after answering an appeal for help which led to Flash being in danger of drowning, Valerie was injured while rescuing him and regained consciousness to find herself in a nursing home. From then onward Flash was on his own. He made the most of it, hogging the story quite shamelessly, much to the delight of the readers. It did not take him long to locate Valerie, receive her instructions, and set out to clear up the case to everyone's satisfaction. He paused once for nourishment, deciding that one of the villainesses certainly did not deserve the succulent chop she had grilled for herself. Flash always believed in

looking after the inner man ----- or rather, dog ----- and so, compliments to the villainess for her cooking, if nothing else, and Flash got on with the main job. There was never any doubt about the outcome; another bunch of no-goods foiled, another heiress restored to her rightful fortune, and another case successfully concluded ----- by Detective Flash and his beautiful red-haired assistant!

It seems fitting that this sophisticated solver of mysteries should in her turn leave us with several enigmas which may never be solved.

Her authorship after the death of her creator Bobin in 1935 is still the subject of speculation among researchers. No author credits were given for nearly two years before the name of Isobel Norton appeared and remained until Valerie disappeared (perhaps on the most secret of war missions?) in 1940.

Norton was a pseudonym new to readers, and while it could have cloaked the identity of a new writer or even one already established in another genre, it was more likely to be yet another alias of the regular team of A.P. authors. Bill Lofts, after some more of his invaluable and patient research, tells us that it is now known that Lewis Carlton and Reg Kirkham contributed a number of the Norton/Drew tales.

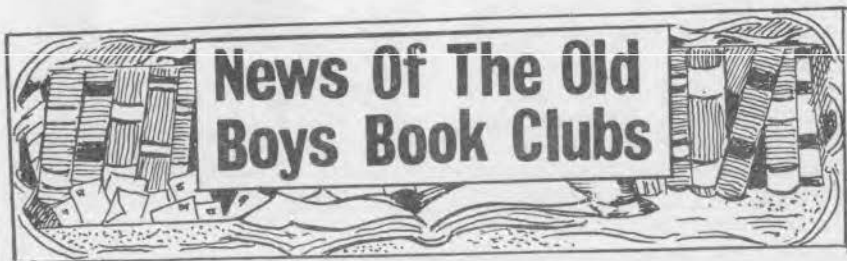
But the Edwin Droad shadow still hangs over Valerie's last days. The serial, **VALERIE DREW AND THE AVENGING THREE**, took Valerie back to college, under an alias, naturally, to solve another version of the well-tried old plot concerning the efforts of persons unknown to ruin the reputation of the college. The serial began on March 9th, 1940, but after eleven instalments **THE SCHOOLGIRL** ceased publication after only a week's notice, leaving Valerie, Flash and a myriad readers entombed in a



limbo of mystery, where, sadly, this particular mystery seems doomed to languish for ever.

Valerie left one more mystery unsolved: the disappearance of her recorded case book.

Of all the storypapers the SCHOOLGIRLS' WEEKLY seems the most elusive. SCHOOL FRIEND, SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN, SCHOOLGIRL and GIRL'S CRYSTAL can all be tracked down, given enough patience and determination, but wants lists, requests and adverts for the Weekly meet either blank looks, negatives, or no response at all. One theory advanced to me was that the issues containing Valerie Drew material were sought by collectors of detective fiction, adult or otherwise, and there may be something in this idea as most of the Weeklies I have managed to obtain are those dated prior to the advent of Valerie. So, should anyone succeed in solving the final mystery of the vanished girl detective of the red hair, violet eyes and the one and only Flash, this collector would dearly love to hear the solution!



LONDON O.B.B.C.

Our October meeting was held at St. Luke's House, Kew.

Brian Doyle recalled his thirty-five years as a film publicist in a presentation that fascinated all members present. During that time Brian has worked on eighty-five feature films, travelled to twenty-two different countries and written some three and a half million words. Brian is a mine of information and entertaining anecdotes about the cinema, and we look forward eagerly to some more of the same.

Bill Bradford's novel quiz centred upon the names of twenty-nine schoolboy characters concealed in a short piece of prose. Joint winners were Roger Jenkins, Mark Taha and Alan Pratt who all spotted twenty-five. Bill carried on to read from the newsletter of October 1971, a Cliff House and Morcove meeting held at Beckenham.

Alan Pratt then spoke about the football stories of yesteryear such as Limp Along Leslie, Bouncing Bernard Briggs and The Fastest Winger in Football, all playing in the days when Roy of the Rovers was but a twinkle in Frank Pepper's eye.

Next meeting will be held on Sunday, 10th November, at Chingford Horticultural Society Hall.

ALAN PRATT

NORTHERN O.B.B.C.

A very convivial party of twenty three sat down to lunch at The White Horse in Wakefield in the presence of honoured guests: our President, Mary Cadogan; our Vice-President Anthony Buckeridge (along with Mrs. Buckeridge) and our own famous member, author and playwright Willis Hall.

We spent the afternoon at the delightful vicarage home of our Secretary, where Vera made us as welcome as always, providing afternoon tea to those who required it. Seeing Geoffrey's splendid library was as always a treat.

At our evening meeting Chairman Joan welcomed the twenty five people assembled. It was good to see one or two new faces.

Anthony Buckeridge enthralled us all with details of his writing career: how he began by being a teacher and, to "bribe" the boys to eat up their meals quickly or to get to the dormitory on time, he would tell them a story. Everyone enjoyed the excerpts he read from the Jennings books and he explained that a theme ran through them - ecology being that of the latest, just published book.

After refreshments, Mary produced the goods! Her talk concentrated on artwork, she brought along many samples of her collection, with related comics and papers, including work by the Parletts, Margaret Tarrant, the Wakefields, Chapman and Shields. All too quickly it was time to conclude but members were able to chat with Mary about her wonderful collection.

A day to be remembered in all ways and one that must be repeated. Next meeting: at our normal venue, is to be the A.G.M. on Saturday evening, 9th November.

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

KING OF THE ISLANDS

Pete Hanger sends the following helpful details about the Ken King Stories in the MODERN BOY and B.F.L. He reminds Mr. Ian Scales, who enquired in the C.D. about these, and other readers that the B.F.L.s can be borrowed from Mr. Roger Jenkins, the London O.B.B.C. Hamiltonian Librarian (whose address was displayed in last month's C.D.)

Modern Boy containing "King of the Island" stories

1-80, 103-108, 155-162, 186-193, 218-224, 236-248, 277-286, 302-323, 347-356, 413-427. (New Series) 6-26, 48-54 (Rio Kid 503-523)

B.F.L. 577 1-20 (very much abridged); 489 21-25, 39-43; 365 47-49, 29-34; 594 35-38, 50-55; 582 218-224, 56-58; 355 60-68; 406 70-75, 26-29; 623 103-108, 76-79; 434 155-162, 190-192; 681 236-247; 442 277-286; 481 302-323 (much abridged); 545 347-358; 585 413-427 (abridged); 673 (new series) 6-16; 660 (new series) 17-26.

Two Series of B.F.L. were published. The second was a reprint of the first but I have no information on the actual serial numbers (I think the titles were identical). I am almost certain that stories in post-war publications were original and not reprints.

MERCI BEAUCOUP AND VIELEN DANK TO MARTIN - ALSO KNOWN AS FRANK!

by Laurie Sutton

Like Charles Hamilton, I am an opera lover. I have more than 80 complete operas on video, and for some of the most recent I am indebted to a fellow CD reader, who has satellite TV and has recorded operas for me from a German channel.

Which makes me regret that no foreign language was taught at St. Francis R.C. elementary school, Peckham, south-east London in the 1930s. That is, unless you include some of my schoolfellows' typical utterances: "I fink 'e fought it was me what done it".

We didn't even have a smattering of French. I have since picked up a number of words from Linguaphone and Hugo. But "Les Huguenots" sent by my collector friend was interesting, being broadcast in French, with German sub-titles. With the aid of my son's German dictionary I could roughly follow the sub-titles. But how much easier if I'd gone to Greyfriars or St. Jim's, instead of St. Francis.

I left school at the age of 14 at the end of the 1936 summer term (probably before my 14th birthday, which was on 20th July). I knew a few foreign words whilst still at school, thanks to Herr Schneider and Mossos, and the various holiday series. I probably knew "au revoir" as "aw rev war", but I did know how to pronounce "rendezvous" (I must have heard the word somewhere). Thus it was that I could indulge a superior smirk when Fatty Whittaker called across the classroom to his mate one afternoon as we awaited the master's entrance: "There's a good film on at the Gormont this week! It's called Renn-dezz vooz!".

POSTSCRIPT from Mr. Naveed Haque, Canada, regarding Leonard Shields:

Further to Mr. Len Hawkey's comment that Leonard Shields was, perhaps, never employed doing poster work - I can verify that the famous Magnet artist was responsible for at least one.

The First World War poster, asking the population to eat less bread - and depicting a sheaf of wheat and soldiers in the background - was drawn by Shields. Readers are recommended to C.D. Annual for 1966 and Mr. W.O.G. Loft's article therein for verification.

WANTED: 'THE SCHOOLGIRL'. Any copies 1930s - any condition. Also SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN LIBRARY - any number featuring Cliff House School. Also required 'VOGUE' and 'HARPERS BAZAAR' 1916-1945 only. Any condition - even without covers. Good prices paid.

B. CHOLMONDELEY, The Laurels, Queen Street, Yetminster, Dorset, DT9 6LL.

A BACKWARD GLANCE

by E. Baldock

Frank Richards of the golden days,
 The immortal 'Famous Five',
 Of schoolboy fun and Greyfriars ways,
 Long may the joy survive.
 We'll take a stroll down Friardale Lane
 As in the days of old
 And find the landmarks just the same,
 What stories could be told.
 Here's Bunter plugging red and warm
 Towards the old school gates,
 And Smithy with his glance of scorn
 Not worried if he's late.
 Coker, Potter, Green stroll by
 With flushed and weary faces,
 There is one voice in cadence high,
 Old Horace of the 'graces'.
 Hacker, Capper, Twigg and Prout,
 All masters on the staff,
 Splendid fellows they, no doubt,
 Yet juniors tend to laugh.
 Mr. Quelch of crusty mein,
 And dear old Dr. Locke,
 Across the quad in company seen
 True guardians of the flock.
 All part of the Greyfriars scene,
 British through and through,
 For decades has it always been,
 So old - yet always new.

**WELL-KNOWN PEOPLE, PAST AND PRESENT, WHO HAVE SAID
 THAT THEY LIKE (OR LIKED) THE GREYFRIARS AND/OR ST. JIM'S
 STORIES OF CHARLES HAMILTON**

by Brian Doyle

Colin Wilson (Author and critic); Alan Gibson (Cricket commentator and author); Kenneth Allsop (One-time author, journalist, critic and TV presenter); Nancy Spain (One-time leading journalist on 'Daily Express' and author, she once described Bunter as one of the three major fictional characters of our time (this was in 1953), the others being Peter Pan and Sherlock Holmes); Aneurin Bevan (prominent Labour minister and politician: he was said to have an encyclopedic knowledge of all Greyfriars characters); Benny Green (Contemporary author, critic and broadcaster); Gyles Brandreth (ditto); Noel Coward (he mentioned reading stories in his autobiography); Emlyn Williams (ditto); Peter Black (once the most distinguished TV critic in Britain); Bob Monkhouse (top comedian); Peter Cushing (distinguished film and TV star); John Arlott (cricket commentator and author); Dan O'Herlihy (leading Hollywood star and possessor of complete sets of both 'Magnet' and 'Gem'); Hubert Gregg (broadcaster, composer, actor); Edith Summerskill (Labour Government minister).

Great Days at Greyfriars

By Dick Penfold

Guy Fawkes' Day



A day of flame and fury this,
When bonfires blaze right merrily ;
A day of happiness and bliss
For all concerned ; yea, verily.
When lads and lassies all unite
In Guy Fawkes' celebrations ;
They set their effigies alight
And cheer the conflagrations.

Long years have passed away since Guy,
A scoundrel sleek and sinister,
Plotted a plot to blow sky-high,
The King and every Minister.
But year by year we celebrate
That great event of history ;
And then retire to bed quite late
With fingers scorched and blistered !

Rockets are screaming overhead
And crackers dancing under us ;
The din's enough to wake the dead,
So loud it is and thunderous.
O never were such lively scenes
Of rapture and of revelry !
Big fires on all the village greens
Commemorate Guy's devilry.

The Greyfriars fellows all enjoy
This gay and gladsome holiday ;
I've never heard a British boy
Call it a melancholy day.
When it comes round again, what larks !
We'll celebrate it mirthfully ;
It is (as Hurree Singh remarks)
The happiest day on earthlily !

HILDA RICHARDS

WRITES—

those simply marvellous stories about
Barbara Redfern and Co.—you know,
the famous chums of Cliff House
School—which appear every week in

THE SCHOOLGIRL

In them you'll meet such fascinating
characters as Babs herself, the popu-
lar, resourceful leader of the Fourth
Form ; Mabs, her loyal best-friend ;
tomboy Clara Trevlyn ; fat and lov-
able duffer, Bessie Bunter ; that
strange, monocled Fourth Former,
Jemima Carstairs ; hot-headed Diana
Royston-Clarke, the " Firebrand " of
the Form, together with a host of
other sparkling personalities.

"The Schoolgirl" also contains other lovely stories, as well as special
article pages edited by Patricia. It costs but twopence, and is published
every Saturday. Just buy a copy now, and you'll never miss it in future.

The Ideal Paper for Every Schoolgirl!



SOME BOOKS FOR YOUR AUTUMN AND
WINTER READING

GREYFRIARS IS BACK!

The imaginative publisher Hawk Books has now produced facsimile copies of the famous yellow-jacket BUNTER BOOKS originally published by Charles Skilton and Cassell. These books are faithful reproductions with the illustrations by Macdonald and Chapman with coloured frontispiece. The first four titles in this new series are now available:

BILLY BUNTER OF GREYFRIARS SCHOOL
BUNTER DOES HIS BEST
BUNTER THE BAD LAD
BESSIE BUNTER OF CLIFF HOUSE SCHOOL

All complete and unabridged with original text.

£7.50 each.

NOSTALGIA ABOUT COMICS

Compiled by Phil Clarke and Mike Higgs.

Sixty-eight pages of days gone by - coloured reproductions of the comics we remember from the '40s and '50s. Also, sample story strips and text.

£6.99 A4 size paperback.

All postage extra - do not send money with order, we will invoice you.

HAPPY HOURS UNLIMITED

37 Tinchill Lane - Leeds LS16 6BU

COLLECTORS' DIGEST ANNUAL



**ORDER YOUR
C.D. ANNUAL NOW!**

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

Editor: Mary Cadogan, 46 Overbury Avenue, Beckenham, Kent, BR3 2PY.
Printed by Quacks Printers, 7 Grape Lane, Petergate, York, YO1 2HU. Tel. 635967