

The STORY  
PAPER

# Collectors' Digest

£1.03



Schemers of  
No 7 Study

VOL. 48

No. 567

MARCH 1994



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# STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Editor: MARY CADOGAN

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## THE EDITOR'S CHAT

Life, as we know, is rich in coincidences - but it sometimes seems to me that something more than this is at work in our collecting hobby. I often find that a particular book or author suddenly comes to my attention, and then, within days or even hours, that same book or author crops up again. Browsing through my collection recently I was intrigued by the back sections of several books which carry publishers' announcements of other publications, sometimes with quotations from reviews, sometimes with their

own 'blurbs', and sometimes carrying pictures of covers and illustrations. Soon after this Ted Baldock's article (now published in this issue) arrived and, as you will see, he takes up this subject. Furthermore he mentions *Margery Merton's Girlhood* by Alice Corkran which another friend had recently been telling me about, and which was the inspiration of a very attractive recently issued illustrated book-mark. Alice Corkran was, of course, a popular author and editor of girls' stories and magazines in late-Victorian and Edwardian times. I think my favourite of her books is *Down the Snow Stairs* which, published in 1887, is sometimes seen as a pastiche of Lewis Carroll's *Alice* books. It is highly allegorical, with Kitty, the heroine, setting out on a



journey to find the blue rose that will cure her sick small brother. She does so at the behest of the snowman she has made, who comes to life and accompanies her down the snow stairs for the first part of her journey - presaging Raymond Briggs' delightful *The Snowman* by ninety years or so. One of Gordon Browne's illustrations from Alice Corkran's book is shown here.

I should like to apologise for the lateness of last month's C.D. due to circumstances beyond my control and also that of our ever helpful printers. It was held up by a few days because of my brief visit to one of my favourite resorts in the Bernese Oberland, but the main delay was caused through break-downs of the printers' stapling machine. I must also draw your attention to the omission of the author's name of last month's Greyfriars poem; it was

written by Keith Atkinson, who has provided us with several attractive verse items over the last two years.

Once again I should say how much I enjoy receiving your letters, and how helpful your comments about contributions are for me when I plan the contents of the C.D.

Happy browsing!

MARY CADOGAN

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**WANTED:** ENID BLYTON, W.E. JOHNS, CROMPTON. First editions in wrappers, and ALL ephemera related to these authors. ANY original artwork related to Bunter, Blyton, Biggles, Eagle or other British comics and boys papers. ALL Boys Friend Libraries by W.E. Johns and Rochester. Many "Thriller" issues and first editions in wrappers by Charteris required. NORMAN WRIGHT, 60 Eastbury Rd., Watford, WD1 4JL. Tel.(0923) 232383.  
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**WANTED:** "Pocket Library" boys' school stories especially S.O.L., B.F.L., Diamond Library, Nugget Library, Lloyd's School Yarns. Also wanted: Monster Library, Kay King "Billy Bunter" novels (must be VG in dustwrapper), and a whole host of adult public school novels (detailed wants list on request). Immediate reply promised: Robert Kirkpatrick, 244 Latimer Road, London, W10 6QY. Tel. 081 968 9033 (evenings).  
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Every so often in the Greyfriars' saga, consisting mainly of series, there would come along a single story. What I liked about some of these was that they featured characters from other forms, not always mentioned in the normal run.

In the cover drawing, I have tried to give my interpretation of the three occupants of Remove Study No. 7, who feature in the single story Magnet, 1492, Vol. L, September 19, 1936. This was entitled "Schemers of Study No. 7". Originally, as most Magnet buffs know, Study No. 7 boasted four occupants: William George Bunter, Thomas Dutton, Peter Todd and Alonzo, Peter's cousin, making up the fourth member. If my memory serves me correctly, the last time we heard of Alonzo was in the Portercliffe series; we assume he left Greyfriars on account of poor health.

To return to "Schemers of Study No. 7", as I have said, I liked stories that brought in other forms. Here we are treated to glimpses of members of the upper fourth form, together with their master, Mr. Algernon Jasper Capper, M.A. (We also have a passing reference to Hobson and his friends of the shell.) I have always thought that Mr. Capper could have been worked up into a really first-rate character. In earlier stories we were told he suffered from asthma and smoked herbal cigarettes to obtain relief from his affliction. On one amusing occasion, the Bounder affected a cough and Mr. Capper gave him some asthma cigarettes. This was done, of course, to spoof and make fun of Mr. Smedley when he was seen smoking one of Dr. Didlum's Asthma Cigarettes (Magnet 1369).

We also know Mr. Capper was forgetful. Usually he was a very mild master whom Temple & Co. would artfully steer into telling of his "hols" in Switzerland when the lesson was supposed to be geography and of that country. Mr. Capper is suddenly changed into a near carbon copy of Mr. Hacker, much to the dismay of his form! This is brought about when the master has his nose tweaked in the dark. Suspicion naturally falls upon his form. Cecil Temple, fancying himself in the role of Sherlock Holmes, endeavours to find the culprit. Unfortunately, he only succeeds in placing the blame on himself (he apparently being the only one who had been given lines). The rest of the form, especially Wilkinson, gang up on him in an effort to make him own up. Even his bosom pals Dabney and Fry are dubious!

All this came about when Peter Todd refused to allow Gerald Loder of the Sixth entry into the already-crowded compartment of the local train. The prefect pulls Peter's rather prominent nose and ejects him on to the platform into the bargain. When Peter's normally sound legal reasoning fails him - Wingate refuses to take action against Loder, but gives Peter "six" to boot - Peter vows vengeance!

With his usual skill in making each incident dovetail into the next, Frank Richards has already brought Mr. Capper into the story. The cake he had asked Temple to take to his study disappears, the form captain having dropped it when he has his hat knocked off. Bunter, who happens to be in the offing, and unseen by Temple, snaps it up and shares it with some of the Remove boys. Of course, he assures them that it came from Bunter Court, even though it has a Courtfield shop label attached! When it is discovered that Bunter is the culprit and he has been severely punished for his sins, he still has to reimburse Mr. Capper for the cost of the cake - seven shillings and sixpence!

After "blueing" the money that the famous five had advanced him to pay the master of the Upper Fourth, Bunter makes out that he has paid him, but that Mr. Capper has forgotten. This earns him another caning from Mr. Quelch. This makes the fat owl doubly anxious to get his own back on Mr. Capper; so much so that, when he hears Mr. Capper tell Mr. Prout he is going to his form room to fetch his "Seneca" to prove that the word



Proximior appears in that volume, Bunter lets him go. He (Bunter) was supposed to imitate the Headmaster's voice and request Loder to follow him to the Sixth form room. To get there, he would have to pass through the form room passage.

It is here that Peter Todd and Tom Dutton were lying in wait. Peter Todd, the leader of the "Schemers of Study No 7," had it all cut and dried. He had removed the single light bulb from its socket, leaving the passage in darkness. Thinking Bunter has done his duty, the two juniors jump on the figure coming towards them, Peter Todd giving the person's nose an almighty tweak! They get clean away in the dark without suspicion falling on them. Even when they realise, through Bunter's failure to do his part, that they had "tweaked" the wrong nose, they keep mum. It is only when Temple has been up before the Headmaster and is in danger of being expelled, that Toddy and Dutton confess, telling their form master and Mr. Capper quite truthfully that they had mistaken the Upper fourth master in the dark for someone else. Mr. Capper is so pleased that it wasn't one of his boys and, together with the fact that he thinks the pair are "mainly boys" for owning up, he begs Mr. Quelch to deal with them leniently. The Remove master does just this, giving the two occupants of Study No. 7 a severe lecture, a severe warning, and lines!

The story is quite well told, the only faults readers and collectors might find is in the verbal exchanges between Tom Dutton (the deaf junior) and the other boys. It all depends, I suppose, on one's sense of humour, whether or not you find using a deaf person's affliction as a subject for amusement. Personally, I tend to skip over such interchanges, finding them a little tedious.

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## SEXTON BLAKE - JACK OF ALL TRADES

by Victor Colby

The 100th Anniversary of Sexton Blake, conjured up memories of the early days of his saga.

One of the very interesting facets of the period of the Union Jack between 1905 and 1913, was the tendency of the authors to imbue Blake with many qualifications both professional and practical.

It is generally known that Blake qualified as a doctor of medicine, though not normally practising this profession, but how many know that he was also "Sexton Blake K.C."? (Union Jack 135). Blake appeared in court on behalf of a client, but was told by his sneering opponent that he had no right to do so, as he was a non-professional. Blake asserted that he had in fact been called to the Bar some years before, so had every right to appear.

The following is a list of the many roles of Sexton Blake as indicated by the titles or sub-titles of the relevant Union Jacks.

<u>UJ</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>UJ</u>	<u>Title</u>
91	The Warder Detective	173	Sexton Blake, Member of Parliament
93	The Army Detective	175	Sexton Blake Shopwalker
98	The Railway Detective	177	Salvation Army Blake
102	The Navy Detective	189	The Dockyard Detective
103	The Fireman Detective	206	Sexton Blake - Whaler
105	Sexton Blake, Police Constable	207	" " - Lumberman
107	The Cab-Driver Detective	208	" " - Private Secretary
109	The Mechanic Detective	220	" " - Chemist
111	The Actor Detective	246	" " - Ambassador
116	The River Police Detective	248	" " - Longshoreman
117	The Reporter Detective	256	" " - Chef
118	Sexton Blake - Indian Chief	265	" " - Gypsy
120	" " - Beefeater	313	" " - Consul
121	" " - Gamekeeper	320	" " - Squire
123	" " - Convict	332	" " - Juryman
124	The Diver Detective	338	" " - French Gardener
129	The Disguise Detective (as Tramp, Plumber, Coalheaver, Chinaman, Cabman, German, American)	340	" " - Postmaster
		343	" " - Racehorse Trainer
		359	" " - Territorial
130	The Circus Detective	379	" " - Bandsman
133	Sexton Blake Aeronaut (Balloon)	394	" " - Stationmaster
135	Sexton Blake K.C.	408	" " - Yachtsman
137	The Camera Detective	424	" " - Hawker
140	Sexton Blake, King's Messenger	440	" " - Music Hall Manager
141	The Fisherman Detective	467	" " - Laundryman
143	The Collier Detective	501	" " - Airman
152	The Steward Detective	513	The Cowboy Detective
159	The Watchman Detective		

In addition to the foregoing, we meet:

"SEXTON BLAKE - SCHOOLMASTER" in the Detective Library (No. 32 6/3/1920) at the beginning of a new series entitled "The Boys of Kingsmere College" written by S.G. Shaw.

Sexton Blake and Tinker join the staff of the college as fifth form-master Mr. Gresham and the Head's new secretary James Hargreaves respectively. It is their task to safeguard the lives of two boys who attend the college, and who are under threat from a criminal gang.

This series continued until No. 50 (10/7/1920) when Blake and Tinker say goodbye to Kingsmere after many exciting and triumphant adventures.

There is a saying "Jack of all trades, master of none".

In Blake's case, however, it was "Master of all", for it was Blake's philosophy that "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might". Is it any wonder then, that his exploits should be revered for 100 years?

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## DO DREAMS COME TRUE?

by Mark Caldicott

At the age of 13 I picked up "Conquest In Command", then recently published in Fontana books and on loan to my father. I read the first chapter.

That was it.

Norman Conquest's supreme confidence, and his bantering put-down of the powerful millionaire Oskar Martenscu, held me enthralled through that chapter and on through the book. By the time Conquest's thrilling escape from a Welsh Castle was concluded, and Martenscu delivered to justice, I was sold.

Up until then I had been The Range Rider, risking my limbs in emulation of Jack Mahoney's athletic stunts in the television programme of that name. Now I was Norman Conquest, and, lurking in some corner of preserved boyhood, I still am today.

For the next two years, following that first experience, I searched libraries, bookshops and market stalls for more. Somehow I also discovered Ironsides Cromwell on the way, and eventually through the British Museum Catalogue, the fact that Berkeley Gray had a 'real' name - Edwy Searles Brooks. Not very snappy, I thought, no wonder he didn't use it to write with! Now here I was Severely Misled by the British Museum Catalogue, for although it gave me the full chronological list of Conquest and Cromwell titles, it led me to believe that apart from a couple of books under his real name, and another under the name of Robert W. Comrade, ESB's output was limited to those two series. Of course I did not know that although story-papers are collected in the British Museum Library the authors of the stories are not indexed. And so I read and re-read the Berkeley Gray and Victor Gunn titles I had found until I could almost quote passages from them. A new title was absolutely a prized possession to be savoured for several weeks, even months, before reading.

One night, during this period, I dreamed that I was in a book-shop. There in the shelves I saw a whole row of Conquest and Ironsides titles I had never seen before. Such a disappointment when I woke up, for I knew the dream to be impossible - after all didn't I know all the titles by heart, and didn't the British Museum hold a copy of every book published?

It was ten years before the truth dawned, with the publication of 'The Barring Out At St. Frank's' by Howard Baker. Although I bought and read avidly the ESB reprints, by this time ESB was taking a back seat to courtship and academia. It has only been in the last two or three years that I have discovered that the full range of the great man's writing is lovingly preserved by his followers, and available to other collectors. My good fortune is that the writer whose work I return to again and again was also one of the most prolific in the history of literature, but also consistent in the quality of his output.

Some time ago, through the good services of the late Mr. Norman Shaw, I came into the possession of all the E.S. Brooks Nelson Lee stories between OS 38-106. What an array of titles met my gaze as I leafed through all those early Nelson Lees. Detective story



upon detective story by the man himself. It was as I looked in keen anticipation at this seemingly endless pile of wonderful unread stories that I remembered the dream. And here was that impossible dream come true - a whole shelf of new titles to read, not Conquest or Ironsides, but still carrying all the magic of ESB. And the knowledge that there are so many other stories to be enjoyed, all more or less assured of the touch of the master craftsman, which may take a lifetime. Perhaps I had learned a lesson of life:- Dreams do come true, even impossible ones.

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## THE REWARD

by Ray Hopkins

My first school prize wasn't quite what I expected. One imagined prizes, at least I did, aged 9, as being books of sternly moral uplift written by "classical" authors beloved of headmasters. Mine, unusually, if the above be true, was a boys' adventure story written by a J.H. Yoxall, entitled "Nutbrown Roger and I", Nutbrown being a highwayman who stains his face; a strange thief who does not steal money and jewels, only bags containing letters which are found intact on the roadside the following day.

J.H. who? you will say, as I did when the book materialised recently from a box in the loft, the surname not being that which one encounters very frequently, if ever. So I hid me to the Reference Section of one of my local libraries - I noted with amusement that this section is now called "Information Books", the former name "Reference" evidently being too hard for today's tender intellects - and, in a set of books of "Who Was Who" I found that J.H. Yoxall was, in fact, Sir James Henry Yoxall, educationist! Born in Redditch, Worcs, 18th July 1857, thirty years later he became Headmaster of Sharron Lane Board School in Sheffield. He stood for Parliament as a Liberal in 1892. In 1911 he was Knighted for "Services to Education," the first certified teacher to receive that honour. He retired in 1918. The British Library Catalogue shows that he produced 38 publications including books on education, adult novels, abridgements of three Dickens' works and three stories for boys: "Nutbrown Roger and I" (1891), "The Lonely Pyramid, a tale of adventures" (1892), and "The Doings of Dick and Dan" (1911). He died on 2nd February 1925 at Kew, aged 68, leaving quite a respectable body of work for someone involved in teaching and parliamentarianism.

"Nutbrown Roger and I" has a plot device we avid readers of old boys' books have met before: the boy and the older man joining forces together, although, in this case, the man



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"SAV YOUR LAST PRAYER, OR TAKE THE VOW!"

has a wrong to right, but the boy, at the moment their paths cross, has no idea that he himself has a problem to overcome. In a word, to combat evil. Hello there, Sexton Blake and Tinker, Nelson Lee and Nipper and, dare one introduce characters not to be taken seriously (chuckle) from American Comic Books, that 'Dynamic Duo', Batman and Robin.

The story is a first person narrative by Harry Solway who lives with and is frequently beaten by his grand-uncle, a Reverend gentleman who is Rector and Squire of Beolea, which is a good reason for Harry to run away and fall in with the very gentlemanly highwayman. There are two paradoxes for the reader to mull over: a Minister of the Cloth who is not pious and kindly, and a highwayman who is not a rough lout!

The Nutbrown highwayman is really Roger Belsize, the Earl of Thirsk. Just fancy, a peer of the Realm a highwayman! Echoes of Margaret Lockwood's celebrated role as the wicked Lady Skelton! The business of robbing the mail coach is that he is trying to intercept letters from a Captain Crawley, the tenant of Beolea Grange, in order to discover the Captain's plans regarding his ward, Marjorie Vane, who is Roger's fiancée. Crawley has forbidden their marriage so that he can marry her off to a gambling crony, Larry Beamish, from whom he hopes to swindle vast sums of money. From information in the letters Roger is able to hold up the coach in which Beamish is travelling to Beolea and makes him swear an oath that he will not marry Miss Vane. This scene is graphically illustrated in the book's frontispiece.

By this time, Harry is now kitted out in highwayman's clothes, complete with black mask, and is now a junior edition of Nutbrown. This is very reminiscent of Batman and Robin but their transportation, a Batmobile, being an impossibility in the 18th century. Harry has a jet black pony called Jill while the Nutbrown's steed is a beautiful mare whose name is - you'll never guess - Bess! Shades of Dick Turpin?

Roger and Harry rescue Miss Vane by breaking into Beolea Grange, unsuspected by Crawley who shoots Beamish when he is accused of cheating at cards and breaks his neck when he jumps through the window to evade Roger's rapier.

The Bow Street Runners who are in pursuit of both Roger and Harry, the latter for being a vagrant and consorting with a highwayman, tell Harry's grand-uncle he can buy the boy off for forty guineas. The Rev. Solway, however, offers to give them one hundred guineas to make sure that Harry is hung as a felon! The reason for such wickedness becomes clear when Roger and Harry go to his grand-uncle to tell him his tenant at the Grange is dead and he must seal it up, and to inform the coroner and lawyers. They surprise him in the vault of the church where the Rev. Solway is gleefully counting the contents of bags of gold: his hidden hoard. When they make their presence known, the Rector falls dead from shock. Harry is now rich and assumes his rightful place as the Squire of Beolea.

Years later, Harry is surrounded by a group of eagerly listening children who are his friends, relating the above adventures. They are eager to know what happened to Roger and Marjorie. The children are amazed, charmed and delighted to know that the romantic couple, the dashing highwayman and his imprisoned betrothed are none other than their "farver and muvver."

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**Part 8: Herbert Vernon-Smith**

The most inflammable of Hamilton's 'brands' was undoubtedly Herbert Vernon-Smith. His nickname - the Bounder of Greyfriars - was very apt. Arrogant, wilful, insolent, unscrupulous, untruthful, blackguardly, ostentatiously extravagant, contemptuous of decent fellows, and possessed of an unyieldingly vicious temper, 'Smithy' was, particularly in the early stories, utterly reprehensible. Over the years, he mellowed, and better traits - courage, loyalty, generosity, concern for others - emerged, but he was quick to revert to type if his worst feelings were aroused.

The Bounder's importance in the Greyfriars' saga is clearly shown by the frequency with which he plays a leading role. He 'starred' in 20 major series - mostly after Tom Redwing's advert (Magnet 517) - and was the major character in more than 200 of the 1391 Magnets written by Charles Hamilton. Smithy also figured prominently in other series - the several barrings-out, for example - and was generally wheeled into a story when keen-witted (and not too scrupulous!) solutions were needed for knotty problems. Only Billy Bunter and Harry Wharton received more attention from Hamilton's pen - and with Wharton it was a very close contest.

Vernon-Smith arrived at Greyfriars (Magnet 119, May 1910) 'squiffy'. Quelch wheeled him straight into the Head and was astonished to find that Dr. Locke proposed to let him stay. Bulstrode and Co. ragged the Bounder, who promptly sneaked; Quelch, already unfavourably impressed, took only token notice of the complaint. Smithy then kicked over the traces - rising late for breakfast, refusing to work in class, refusing to be caned, dodging games practice, etc. Loder rounded him up for cricket and boxed his ears for insolence. The Bounder shied a cricket ball at Loder's head and stunned him. He then bunked and when Quelch captured him he hacked the master's shins. Hauled before the Head, he was ordered to apologise to Quelch but no punishment was inflicted. Quelch, outraged, resigned; and then Dr. Locke revealed the truth. He had agreed with Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith to keep his son at Greyfriars, whatever his conduct might be. The millionaire financier had a 'hold' over Dr. Locke, so Smithy was virtually unexpellable. Quelch, concerned for his principal, withdrew his resignation and proceeded to tolerate the Bounder. The Remove, however, didn't.

Every time the Bounder transgressed, Wharton & Co. dealt with him - drastically. His smokes, cards, racing papers, etc. were burned; he was hauled out of bed by Wharton and licked into dressing himself in time for breakfast; he was drenched in his own champagne; then Loder and Carne gave him a bath, fully dressed, to rectify his 'unclean' condition. All in all, Smithy had a torrid time and he began to toe the line for sheer self-preservation.

Reformation was a long way off, however. Vernon-Smith realised that Wharton & Co. were keeping an eye on Hazeldene. He befriended the scapegrace, who was soon 'blagging' again. Smithy's interest was two-fold: by leading Hazel astray, he was annoying Wharton; by befriending Hazel he hoped to get to know Marjorie, to whom he had 'taken a shine'. It is interesting to note that about 10 weeks later in the Gem Hamilton repeated this plot with Lumley-Lumley - the Outsider, also unexpellable, who made himself obnoxious to Ethel Cleveland. Reading the stories together, one has the feeling that Hamilton did it rather better the second time round. Lumley's background and character are better drawn than Smithy's. The Bounder was a bit one-dimensional at this stage.

Vernon-Smith defeated his own ends with Hazeldene. He encouraged the scapegrace to gamble at a casino (they were all holidaying in Switzerland). Hazeldene, short of money as usual, stole £100 to finance his plunging. Wharton & Co. came to the rescue; the Bounder got the cold shoulder from Marjorie.

Smithy's next ploy was more subtle. Mark Linley, whose family was in financial straits, entered for a prize exam. Smithy, keen to upset the Wharton gang, entered as well. When he cared to work, the Bounder was a capable scholar. Linley, worried and nervy, submitted a patchy paper: Vernon-Smith, over-confident, planned a rorty party to celebrate his success. Neither the success, nor the party, came off. Wingate caught the 'blades' breaking bounds; and Linley took the prize anyway. Again, Smithy avoided expulsion.

By this time, Hamilton had milked the 'no sacking' ploy to the full. Vernon-Smith had learned to subdue his headstrong arrogance and was beginning to defy authority by cunning and stealth. The old head-on collisions with Mr. Quelch and the prefects were being avoided: it was time for Hamilton to get Dr. Locke 'off the hook'. He accomplished this in credible style in Magnet 181 (July 1911).

Vernon-Smith had been drinking again. P.C. Tozer brought him home 'under the influence' and Dr. Locke had to screw his courage to the sticking-point and expel the Bounder. Smithy refused to leave, confident in his father's 'hold' over the Head. Wingate had to see him off the premises. Within twenty-four hours, Smithy was back - with his father in tow. In a dramatic interview, Samuel Vernon-Smith demanded that his son should be reinstated - otherwise he would foreclose a loan of £5000 which he had made to Dr. Locke. Giving the hapless Head an hour to think it over, the Vernon-Smiths went for a run in their car. They lunched at the Courtfield Arms - where Smithy got at the booze again. Mr. Vernon-Smith ordered his chauffeur to 'let her rip' on the way back to Greyfriars. The car crashed into the gates of a level-crossing; the Vernon-Smiths were thrown onto the railway track.

By sheer good luck Bob Cherry, on the Greyfriars side of the crossing, saw the accident. At some risk to himself, he stopped the oncoming train and the Vernon-Smiths were saved. Mr. Vernon-Smith told Bob to 'name your own reward'. Bob refused and went on to Courtfield to visit Solly Lazarus. The wily Solly, having heard the story, advised Bob to hold Mr. Vernon-Smith to his offer - the reward to be that he should give up *his* hold on Dr. Locke! Confronted with this request, the incredulous Mr. Vernon-Smith kept his word and released the Head from his contract. Locke, in his turn, gave Vernon-Smith another chance - this time to stand or fall by his own merits. From this point onwards, the reckless Bounder became much more careful.

Even so, the depravity was still there. At Blackpool (Magnet 234), Smithy and Bolsover got tipsy and the Bounder deserted his crony. Linley and Wharton had to 'dry out' the incapable Bolsover. Then (Magnet 242) Fishy was on the make with an insurance scheme against broken study windows. Fish clandestinely broke the windows of juniors who refused to take out policies. Faced with large bills for the damage, the Removites were forced to insure with F.T.F. Smithy solved the problem by clandestinely breaking all the *insured* windows. Fish had to make massive pay-outs and his business went broke! Smithy, temporarily, was popular in the Remove.

The Bounder, now with a following (of sorts), set out to challenge Wharton & Co. for the leadership of the Remove. By a series of dubious tricks - using Bunter's ventriloquism, enlisting the aid of Ponsonby & Co.; bribing Loder for protection against retribution, etc. - Smithy scored heavily off the Famous Five. He even inveigled Marjorie and Clara into helping his stall at the Church bazaar. The next move was to make trouble over football

selection. Wharton, of course, rose to the bait and refused to include Smithy and Bolsover in the Remove side. Other malcontents joined the Bounder in forming the "Greyfriars Crusaders" - a rebel XI. He challenged the Remove; Wharton rejected it; Wingate stepped in and ordered them to play. Wharton put Wingate's back up by getting on his 'high horse'. Smithy, of course, played on Wharton's uncertain temper and, having got him detained, put him under an obligation by asking Wingate to 'let him off for the sale of his side'. Wharton was not grateful; Smithy's stock rose even further in the Remove. The Bounder seized his chance and persuaded some of the 'fringe' players - Hazeldene, Ogilvy - to join the "Crusaders". He then brought in a 'ringer' to make up his side and the Remove were beaten 6-3. Wharton & Co. could not complain without appearing unsporting.

With matters going his way, Vernon-Smith turned his attention to the individual members of Wharton's clan. He landed Nugent in trouble with Quelch by the simple means of 'taking up' Nugent Minor. Nugent fought Smithy and lost; then the Bounder framed him as a 'pub-haunter'. (Nugent thought Dicky had gone to the Cross Keys with Smithy. They hadn't, but the prefects caught Nugent there.) Frank was sacked.

Next on the list was Johnny Bull. Smithy duped Bulstrode, Russell and Morgan into resigning from the Remove team. Wharton's replacements were not up to playing the Fifth; Blundell & Co. beat the Remove 5-1. The Remove were after Wharton's blood: Johnny Bull fought with Bulstrode. The Head put a stop to it, deciding that Bull was in the wrong and threatening him with a flogging if he were caught fighting again. That night Snoop and Smithy baited Bull in the dormitory; he was just preparing to attack the Bounder when the Head appeared. This time the warning was 'the sack'. Next day, in the 'Rag' Bulstrode, egged on by Smithy, forced Bull into a fight. Dr. Locke turned up: Bull was expelled. Smithy's plan - to eliminate the Famous Five - was well on its way.

Once again the Linley family was hard-up. The usual resource - for Mark to bag a money prize - was available, but Vernon-Smith engineered a spoof telegram which sent Linley racing home on the day of the exam. By the time the spoof was discovered, it was too late. Linley had to leave Greyfriars to support his family. In the meantime, Trumper & Co. of Courtfield beat the Remove 4-3. Wharton was collecting defeat after defeat.

The neat ploy was even more devious. Wharton steadfastly refused to select the Bounder for the team. The team complained to Wingate, who ordered Wharton to play Vernon-Smith, Bulstrode and Bolsover against Redclyffe. Wharton refused; then resigned. Bulstrode took over and selected Smithy and Bolsover. Wharton declined to play; Smithy scored the winning goal. Wharton picked a fight with Vernon Smith; gave him a pasting; and left him hors de combat in Friardale Lane. Unfortunately for both of them, Diaz, an aggrieved creditor of Mr. Vernon-Smith, came across the battered Bounder and attacked him with a cudgel. Smith was badly injured; Wharton was accused of the attack; the Bounder openly averred that Wharton had used the cudgel. Another expulsion!

Last of this great series was 'Bob Cherry's Barring-Out' (Magnet 254). Vernon-Smith, recovered from his beating, threatened Bob with expulsion. (The success of his duplicity really had gone to Smithy's head.) Bob thrashed him; Quelch intervened; Dr. Locke expelled Bob. Bob, however, refused to go (taking a leaf out of the early Smithy's book). With Hurree Singh's help, Cherry barricaded himself in the old tower. His defiance of authority and his insistence on Vernon-Smith's villainy set Dr. Locke thinking. Smithy was questioned and stuck to his lies. Wharton, Bull and Nugent returned to assist in the barring-out. Things were at an *impasse*, when Mr. Vernon-Smith arrived post-haste from London. Diaz had forced his way into the millionaire's office and caused a disturbance. On being arrested, Diaz had confessed to the assault in Friardale Lane. Faced with exposure, the Bounder made a clean breast of the whole affair. Because his father had inadvertently



disclosed his guilt, Dr. Locke only sentenced Vernon-Smith to a public flogging. (This was almost the only 'thin' piece in a superb series.) Everyone was reinstated and the thick-skinned Bounder clung on to his place in the Remove. But he was never quite the same deep-dyed villain again.

(To be continued)

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## SOME OF OUR FAVOURITE AUTHORS

by Margery Woods

### A Tribute to REGINALD S. KIRKHAM

Traditionally comedy is the most difficult of all the art forms to achieve successfully, whether in literature, theatre, film --- or stand-up at the local club. The difficulty is increased by the fact that while one man may be rolling in the aisle his neighbour may be sitting with a face that could have been carved from stone, and to make children laugh is one of the trickiest tasks of all, particularly in the written word where the youthfulness and directness of the reader precludes the kind of subtle and witty wordplay which amuses the adult.

The A.P. team were all pretty good all-rounders, able to turn their pens to school, home-life, mystery, foreign adventure and most other themes their editors might choose to throw at them, but in one respect they tended to divide into two camps, that of the emotionally dramatic and the humorous. Horace Phillips, Draycot M. Dell and others veered to the first, Phillips in particular producing a strong emotional tension in his stories. Of the fewer number of authors excelling in comedy, one, a man described as being of small physical stature, stood head and shoulders above any rivals in the comedy field. His name was Reginald S. Kirkham.

Kirkham's output was by no means limited to comedy. He began his career in schoolgirl fiction right at the start of schoolgirl storypaper boom which took off in 1919 with the launch of SCHOOL FRIEND and a couple of years later with THE SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN. At first his serials followed the more serious trend of his fellow writers at A.P. and under the pen-name of Joan Vincent, and later that of Pauline Stewart, he penned a succession of titles: HER BROTHERS WERE DIFFERENT; HER SCHOOLDAYS MEANT SO MUCH; IN SEARCH OF HER FATHER and many more. One early example was WHEN PLEASURES CAME HER WAY, depicting the old well-tried theme of two sisters, one petulant and easily tempted by the promises of wealth, and the other sister unselfishly prepared to subdue her own longings for education so that her sister might have her chance. There are the back-up sub plots, the gradually emerging character of the older girl with the final realisation that all that glisters is not gold, until family love and loyalty help resolve all and happiness returns. The characters are well drawn, the emotional twists and turns of the plot competently worked out with dramatic intensity, much as were the many similar tales in the plethora issuing from A.P. by then, and as yet there was little hint of the irresistible wellspring of humour that must have been struggling to burst forth from Reg Kirkham.

He had already become one of the earliest, if not the first substitute Hilda Richards after Hamilton. In SCHOOL FRIEND No. 5, of June 14th, 1919, appeared the title, THE FOURTH FORM MAGAZINE, credited to Kirkham, in which the Cliff House girls are bitten by the journalism bug and decide to issue a magazine. In those early days the whole plan of Cliff House was still evolving and the characters of the girls and their particular

**BONNIE HAD SUCH BRIGHT IDEAS!**  
*by* **JOAN VINCENT**

*A*  
 WONDERFUL  
 HUMOROUS  
 STORY

**THE SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN LIBRARY N° 441**

3·5·34

**4<sup>D</sup>**

**MAY AND JUNE AT SCHOOL**  
 BY **HILARY MARLOW**

*A New and Original Story*

**4<sup>D</sup>**

*The Schoolgirls' Own Library N° 380*

**THOSE TIRESOME TWINS**  
 A  
 SPLENDID  
 LAUGHTER-  
 STORY *by*  
**Joan Vincent**

**4<sup>D</sup>**

*The Schoolgirls' Own Library N° 141*

**DELIA'S QUEST for the GOLDEN KEYS**  
*A Thrilling Desert Adventure Story*  
 BY **PAULINE STEWART**

*The SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN LIBRARY*

6·8·36 **4<sup>D</sup>** N° 549

loyalties were not yet as fully delineated as they would later become. Great rivalry exists between studies, and Bessie is still more of a caricature than real schoolgirl.

Schoolgirl fiction as depicted by male writers was still new (as well as a well-kept secret) and the art of investing it with the fun and vitality of boys' fiction while eliminating much the somewhat wishy-washy and highly sentimentalised atmosphere of much of the output of women writers at that time, who had had it all their own way, was still in the process of evolution. It was dangerously easy for the new male team to supply lots of action, banter and ragging as per the inimitable style of the Frank Richards master hand, and simply substituting gym tunics and girls' names to dress their characters. During the formative years mistakes were made and by all accounts the readers were not slow in pointing these out.

In THE FOURTH FORM MAGAZINE a flavour of the time may be found in the limericks of Clara Tomboy:

There was a young lady named Lynn,  
Whose pose was a trifle too thin,  
Her efforts at dress  
Were a horrible mess,  
And made all the onlookers grin.

and another:

To go to the Zoo is a bore,  
And waste of a sixpence of more,  
If freaks you would see,  
Performing --- and free,  
Just look in the Study marked 4.

Needless to say, suitably scurrilous replacements were substituted by Barbara and Mabel and printed in Clara and Marjorie's rival magazine, fully avenging the honour of Study 4.

To later devotees of Cliff House, when the coterie was formed and these early rivalries vanished, these first stories must read like anarchy, yet this sheer anarchy pulled in thousands of new readers and must have nurtured a new wave of rebellion and desire for independence in many young female hearts before schooldays ended and the system placed them firmly back in their places. But at least they could laugh. And how they must have chortled when Kirkham's true talent was released. In 1923 the Twins made their debut.

Still wearing his Joan Vincent hat and contributing more serious stories in SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN under that name, he introduced the irrepressible Jill and Phyl in THE SCHOOLGIRL'S WEEKLY, which was to be the launching pad for at least another half dozen serials featuring these amusing girls, all to be reprinted later in pocket form in THE SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN Library. At this time, the early to mid twenties, Kirks was writing regularly as Hilda Richards in SCHOOL FRIEND as well as all these serials for the sister mags. Then comes 1924 and a new author's name sparkles onto the pages of SCHOOLGIRLS' WEEKLY: our old friend, now to be known as Hilary Marlow.

During the following eight or nine years a wealth of comedy flowed from his pen. As Marlow he created another pair of twins, May and June, who proceeded gaily along the well tested path laid by Jill and Phyl. The basic plotline was always the same, an innocent made victim of a family of schemers, who were taught the errors of their ways by the resourceful twins in a series of hilarious incidents in which the exchange of twin identity was exploited to the hilt, ideal for serial purposes yet equally enjoyable in the form of a novel length story. Although the reader must have known exactly what was coming --- the gleeful anticipation was part of the charm --- he kept the freshness and an endless originality which it must have been hard work at times to maintain in such a prolific output.

As well as the twins he created Pen Halliday, the daughter of a theatrical illusionist, whose own skills are not inconsiderable, and another regular favourite, Laughing Lily, who remained unfazed by the most dastardly of plotters.

Meanwhile, drama was not forgotten. He still turned out the occasional exotic adventure mystery under the hat of Pauline Stewart, a later one being DELIA'S QUEST FOR THE GOLDEN KEYS, set in the desert and hung on the old favourite theme of a set of items linking up the story, in this case the stolen set of keys. But of all his delightful tales, three in particular stand out and well deserve to be thought of as true classics. They are BONNIE HAD SUCH BRIGHT IDEAS; JOHNNIE, HER FEUD WITH THE ARTFUL THREE, and THAT JOYOUS ADVENTURE OF TRIXIE'S, in which he created one of the funniest characters to be found in any fiction, adult or juvenile, Lulo Loofa, the crafty yet hapless side kick to the villain, and husband to the domineering Karmel, whose command of the English language is a barrel of laughs from start to finish.

Kirkham was one of the greats; they just don't make 'em like that any more. More is the pity.

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## FASCINATION OF CATALOGUES

by Ted Baldock

A good book is the precious life-blood of  
a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up  
on purpose to a life beyond life.

Milton. *Areopagitica*

Who has not, at some time or another, been arrested and charmed by the inclusion of a catalogue bound into the back of a favourite school or adventure story, listing further works by current authors. These catalogues have a fascination all their own. Much care was taken to promote individual books. Included with a short résumé of the contents and a brief description of the hero - or heroine - would be a short outline of the plot and usually several critical press comments on the story and its suitability for the prospective reader.

The 'British Weekly' enthusing over 'When London Burned', a new work by the ever popular G.A. Henty, wrote, "No boy needs to have any story of Henty's recommended to him, and parents who do not know and buy him for their boys should be ashamed of themselves. Those to whom he is yet unknown could not make a better beginning than with 'When London Burned'". A pointed rebuke for those parents as yet unaware of the great man. The 'Saturday Review' had no inhibitions when it wrote of 'Margery Merton's Girlhood' by Alice Corkran. "Another book for girls we can warmly recommend. There is a delightful piquancy in the experiences and trials of a young English girl in Paris."

Who could resist the accolades of the 'Newcastle Journal' commenting on 'Dr. Jolliffe's Boys' by Lewis Hough. "Young people who appreciate 'Tom Brown's Schooldays' will find this story a worthy companion to that fascinating book. There is the same manliness of tone, truthfulness of outline, avoidance of exaggeration and caricature, and healthy morality as characterised the masterpiece of Mr. Hughes."

The house of Blackie were pre-eminent in this particular method of bringing their publications to the eye of the public. Did those early compilers have any idea what a charming service they were perpetuating and offering to a certain coterie of readers almost

a century hence? These lists would stir the interest of the most exacting among us, especially those who have yet some rudiments of youth in their make-up.

Thomas Nelson, in his list of the 'Young Lady's Library' included the following comments from the 'Saturday Review' referring to 'The Heiress of Wylmington' by Evelyn Everett-Green, "There are some remarks in its pages with which sensible people of every creed and every shade of opinion can scarcely fail to sympathise ... it is pleasantly and prettily told." Surely these veiled hints of joys to be encountered must have whetted the reading appetites of the most fastidious.

The 'Scottish Educational Journal' had this to say of R.A.H. Goodyear's 'Fifth Form at Beck House' "This is easily the best of the season's crop of school stories ... makes jolly good reading." How strange sound the sentiments today of the 'Hull Daily Mail' commenting on the same author's 'Up Against the School', "A Wholesome story of school life, embodying the principles of ideal British manhood." Another Goodyear story 'The Captain and the Kings' prompted the 'Daily Graphic' to comment "...a thoroughly wholesome story, with just the right emphasis on the innate manliness of the average boy of today." These particular tales appeared between 1926-28 which may perhaps be regarded as the beginning of the long golden afternoon of the public school story.

Doors held invitingly open to the lover of good junior literature. One finds the fascination as strong today as ever it was. It is probable that these catalogues are studied more avidly now than was the case when they were current. The only shadow to fall on this sunlit scene is the fact that so many of these 'gems' are unobtainable today. They reflect faithfully a fast receding era which well warrants study - and perpetuation. Cowper has it that "A tale should be judicious, clear, succinct; the language plain, and incidents well linked." That these precepts are adhered to is very evident as one reads these stirring tales of our youth, and the laudatory fanfares with which they were received, one must admit, were well deserved.

Charles Hamilton states the point to perfection in his lines.

Who would not love to wander  
With Keats in realms of gold,  
With Wordsworth muse and ponder  
Upon the lonesome wold?  
With Milton at the portals  
Of heaven itself to sing  
To soar above the mortals  
On Shakespeare's mighty wing?

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### **WANTED - URGENTLY**

Schoolboys Own Library No. 207 'Who Punched Prout', issued Nov/Dec 1933.  
Contact: E.P.H. CLUTTERBUCK,, 18 Old Road, Rowtown, Addlestone,  
Weybridge, Surrey, KT15 1EW. Tel: 0932 846302.

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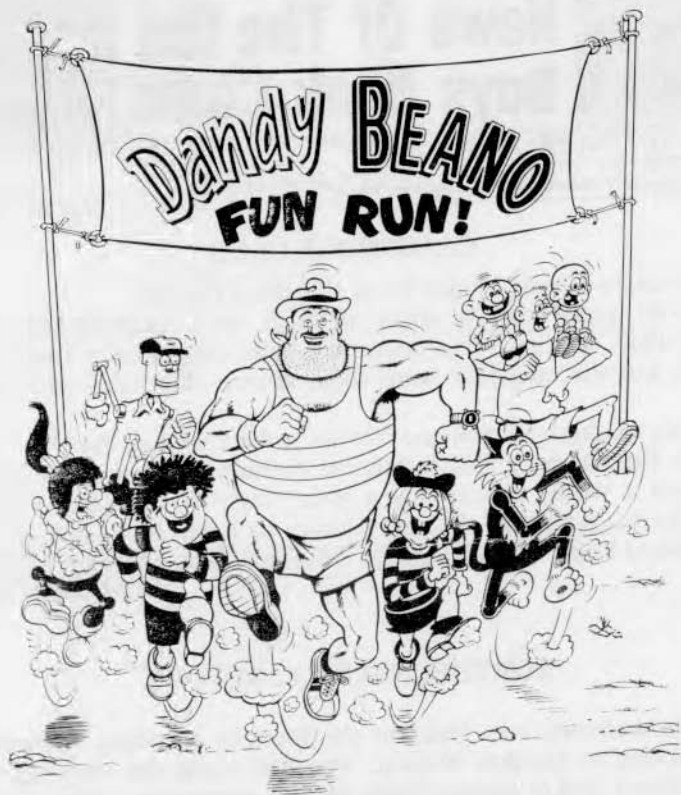
## DANDY BEANO - MAGIC MOMENTS

Published by D.C. Thomson & Co. Ltd at £6.50

Reviewed by Norman Wright

This is the sixth volume of classic images drawn from files of D.C. Thomson and Co. and, like all of its predecessors, it is a delight. Throughout the book numerous themes are covered in sections, including New Year, Easter Funnies, April Fools, etc. Each section contains a mix of items taken from *Beano*, *Dandy* and other Thomson comics. Most of the favourite characters get a look in and there are classic episodes featuring Dennis the Menace, Biff the Bear, Big Eggo, Jimmy and his Magic Patch and almost every other memorable character who has featured down the years. The section entitled First Impressions will be a joy to those who do not have copies of the actual comics containing the first appearances of Minnie the Mix, Roger the Dodger, etc.

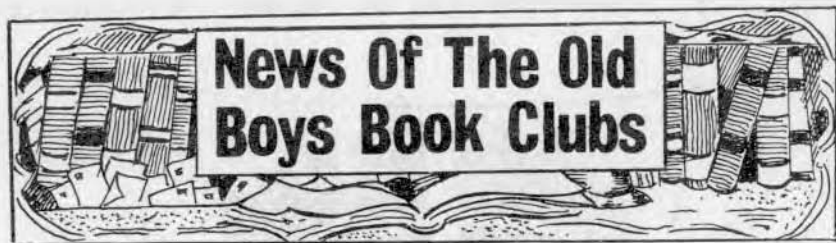
As usual most of the great Thomson artists are represented in the collection. Dudley Watkins is well to the fore with about a dozen pages of his



work from various stages in his career and for those who like the zany drawings of Leo Baxendale there are half a dozen of his strips to savour. Ken Read is well represented with examples of his Ali Ha-Ha, Big Head and Thick Head, Roger the Dodger and, of course, Jonah, the terror of the seven seas. Dennis the Menace and Corporal Clott, from the pen of that other talented artist, David Law, are both to be found creating their usual mayhem.

As with the previous books in the series most of the strips that were originally printed in black and white have been coloured for inclusion in this volume, but this has been done with care and taste and is even fairly acceptable to a purist like myself! This series of classic reprints seems to be going from strength to strength and Christmas just would not be the same now without one - I look forward to each volume in the same way as I used to await with eager anticipation my yearly Beano Book. And at £6.50 for such a bumper, full colour book it offers equally good value for money.

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### CAMBRIDGE CLUB

We met at the Cherry Hinton home of Adrian Perkins.

After our usual short business meeting, we all participated in a quiz devised by Paul Wilkins. This concerned radio programmes from the forties and fifties, and the questions were about actors, characters and programme titles.

After tea we enjoyed 'Science Fiction in the Cinema', Part 8, a film show from Keith Hodkinson. This instalment considered films from 1950 to the eighties, and it would appear that a great many of the films in this genre contain robots or androids. Excerpts shown included films such as 'The Day the Earth Stood Still', 'Silent Running', 'The Time Machine' and 'Aliens'.

ADRIAN PERKINS

### NORTHERN O.B.B.C. REPORT

A warm welcome was given to the fourteen members presents, and a special welcome to Gordon Hudson, who had made the long journey from Chester-le-Street, and to Eleanor Caldicott, our newest and youngest member.

Arrangements were made for those who wished to attend the lecture by Enid Blyton's eldest daughter who would be speaking at a meeting in Leeds at the end of February.

"Find the Author" was another of Keith's extremely clever compilations. We were each given a "letter" in which were hidden the names of one hundred authors. This was really a test of one's knowledge of the literary world! The air was heavy with concentration! Mark Caldicott was the winner, finding 80 names.


Margaret provided some of her home baking for refreshments: always a hit.

"Percy F. Westerman" was the item presented by David Bradley who gave an interesting insight into one of his favourite writers. Percy Francis Westerman was born in 1876; he was a balance clerk on the dockyard and, because of his love of the sea, bought a yacht. He began writing for sailing magazines in 1906. His first book was published in 1908. He wrote for "This England", "The Champion" and "Boy's Own Paper". In the 1930s he wrote many features for "The Boys' Own". He also wrote some air stories for boys, being influenced by W.E. Johns' writings. He was quite friendly with Baden Powell. He was a member of the Home Guard in the second world war and became a bit of a recluse.

Our next meeting is 12th March when a local publisher will be talking about modern day children's publishing.


JOHNNY BULL MINOR

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## REMEMBER THOSE 'OTHER-HOBBY' PAPERS?

by John Bridgwater

Browsing through back numbers of the SPCD I came across an old article of mine in No. 440 of August 1983 about one of the 'other-hobby' papers called "Hobbies". For those unacquainted with that weekly it dealt mainly with fretwork and other activities associated with working in wood which were very popular back in the 1930s and probably earlier too.

This set my memory ticking over and I recalled that we did not spend all our reading time with the Companion Papers, Union Jack, Wizard or Rover or whatever our favourite happened to be. Some of us went through phases when other papers and magazines displaced them for a while, though we always came back to the old favourites in the end.

Some of those other papers which gave me a lot of enjoyment and instruction were "Popular Wireless", "Amateur Wireless", "Practical Wireless", "Wireless World", "Wireless Magazine", and "Wireless Constructor". The subject fascinated me from a very early age and I well remember the happy hours spent in laboriously constructing a one-valve receiver with reaction control and headphone output. The large aerial required presented the biggest problem and I had to make do with some wire pegged to the wall outside my bedroom window. In my ignorance I thought a flower pot full of soil stood by my window with the end of the earthing wire pushed into it would do for the Earth connection. I could not understand why howls and whistles were produced in the headphones by moving my foot whilst listening in bed. This did not happen with Dad's set downstairs. "Practical Wireless" gave the granddaddy of all free gifts with No. 1. It was a wireless constructors pocket tool kit in a fitted metal case 6 inches by 4 inches containing screwdriver, spanners, dental mirror, scribe, circle cutter, ruler, test prods, etc., twelve items in all, and all for 2d. I still have mine almost as good as new - what value!

One of those 'other-hobby' papers is still running today "The Amateur Photographer" is as healthy now as ever it was though rather different in format and content from those far off days. The AP taught us how to use our cameras and process our films; do you remember to watch our for telegraph poles 'growing' out of peoples heads and to "always move in close"? Do you remember the aching arms after 'rocking' a roll of 120 film through the dish of developer? Then the joy of seeing the slowly emerging image on the printing paper as the developer gently washes over it? And all in the rosy glow of the red Safe Light.

Another much loved paper was the "Meccano Magazine". Who could forget those wonderful engineering models it helped us to build? The cranes, dredgers, trolleys, pithead gear, those ingenious gear trains powered by electric and clockwork motors, that oddity the Diploduc (who ever heard of a metal dinosaur full of holes?) and a cute little toy called The Cumbak. This was a small cylinder which would return when you rolled it away from you - all done



by weights and springs. As well as the model instructions there were photographs of Hornby train layouts, engineering articles, a page of jokes (some of the youthful rib-tickers still turn up occasionally) and advertisements. It was the latter which stimulated my young imagination - clockwork, electric and steam trains, everything for the complete railway system; but it was the steam launch advertisement to which I returned to read over and over again, a launch which cut through the water "with a realistic chuff-chuff" for only 22/6d (£1.25).

And finally, as they say after the TV news, memory recalls a much loved weekly called "John 'o London's Weekly". It was a literary review which had a flavour all its own and a close relationship with its readers. It sadly ceased in 1954 but was revived as "John 'o London's" towards the end of 1959. It only managed to run into the early 60s and again ceased. The first "J 'o L" had contributions from authors such as H.E. Bates (of Larkins fame), John Steinbeck, Henry Williamson and J.C. Trewin. The revived paper printed articles by Sir Herbert Read, John Creasey, Pat Wallace, Phyllis Bentley, Alan Dent and many others. A really good quality weekly. There is nothing to match it today. Is that a reflection on modern publishers or readers?

Tail piece. Does anyone remember "Ralph Stranger's Science Review"? A very short lived magazine of but a few issues of the simplifying science sort. It ranged very widely. I particularly remember the chemistry articles which I enjoyed. They must have been good as I had no interest in chemistry before reading them. Ralph Stranger was an excellent author who specialised in explaining how things worked and did it extremely well. He also wrote for "Wireless World" and published several books.

Thinking over these memories makes me realise how lucky we were to be young at that time and in at the beginning of so many new technical developments.

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## THE MYSTERIOUS CASE OF THE 'MISSING' WILLIAM TV SERIES

**It ran on ITV for 13 weeks 37 years ago - but does anyone remember it?**

**If not, why not? Did you see it?**

**Asks BRIAN DOYLE**

In my Book Reviews in the July 1993 SPCD, I mentioned in passing 'the four William TV series'. In fact, I should have mentioned the *five* William TV series. For, hardly surprisingly, I omitted the 'missing' William TV series...

No one ever seems to recall that 'missing' series of 1956. It's something of a 'ghost' series. Nobody I've ever discussed William with has ever remembered it with affection, or even dislike, as they have done all the other TV series (not to mention the several BIC radio series). I didn't see it myself, but I have the strongest of excuses: I had recently been married and, apart from the fact that we didn't then possess a TV set, we didn't have any inclination to watch television at that time...

It was only a very brief comment on 'the 1956 ITV William series' made by Denis Gifford in his regular 'Comic Cuts' newsletter in early-1990 that first aroused my interest. What William series was this? Who was in it? Who knows? What's it all about, Alfie?

So I started to research this series and, initially, drew a blank. Several blanks, in fact. The 1956 William TV series was listed in no appropriate reference books on my shelves (and I have hundreds), or in any Press cuttings in my own massive 250-page William scrapbook.

A pause here, I think, for recollection and information. As I made clear in my first paragraph, I knew of only four William TV series (apart from a 'one-off' William debut TV play in 1951, starring Robert Sandford): a BBC TV 6-episode series in 1962, with Dennis Waterman as William; a further 6-episode series in 1963, in which Denis Gilmore took over as William; and, of course, the two London Weekend TV series starring Adrian Dannatt - 13 episodes in early-1977, followed by 14 episodes from late-1977 to early-1978. Full details of these latter programmes can be found in my article "William's Television Show" in the 1989 'Collectors' Digest Annual'.

I finally decided that there was only one true source for the details I was seeking, so off I went to the admirable Westminster Reference Library, just off Leicester Square, London, to delve into the back volumes of "TV Times" magazine for 1956. Here now, for the first time, I believe, are the details of that elusive William TV series...

The general over-all title for the series was "Over to William", with each weekly episode having a separate title. The billing ran 'from the series by Richmal Crompton, adapted for television by Donald Wilson.' Wilson, apart from writing and producing many dramas and series over the years, is today probably best-remembered as the distinguished producer of the 26-part BBC TV series of "The Forsyte Saga" that won so much acclaim in the late-1960s. But this, of course, was pre- 'Forsyte' Wilson.

Episode One, titled 'Violet Elizabeth Wins' (in which the Outlaws, aided by Violet Elizabeth, foil a thief) went out on Thursday, September 20th, 1956, from 5.30 to 6 p.m., was presented by Associated Rediffusion and produced (as was the whole series) by Cecil Petty. There were no fanfares or introductory articles or news paragraphs in that week's "TV Times". It just began quietly and unobtrusively, not like William at all! It was an ATV Network Production from Birmingham and, apart from that first episode, was transmitted between 5 and 5.30 p.m. in the Thursday afternoon children's slot.

The series ran until December 13th, 1956 - a total of 13 half-hour episodes and each story was complete in itself. I list here the basic leading cast (though they didn't all feature in every episode) for interest and information:

William	- Keith Crane
Ginger	- Meurig Wyn-Jones (Brian Franklin in Episode One)
Douglas	- Michael Saunders
Henry	- John Symonds
Mr. Brown	- Frank Sieman
Mrs. Brown	- Sylvia Marriott
Robert	- Cavan Malone
Ethel	- Shirley Lawrence
Violet Elizabeth	- Margaret Sawyer (1st Episode) Janet (also spelt 'Jeanette') Phillips in other episodes.
Hubert Lane	- Keith Davis

13-year-old Keith Crane (pictured in one issue of 'TV Times' shooting a catapult and looking reasonably like William) was apparently the son of character actor Frank Crane. I

regret that I can track down no information on either in any of my reference books. In fact, I don't recognise any names in the cast apart from Frank Sieman, at the time a busy and burly character actor, and Cavan Malone, who had been quite a well-known child and teenage actor and whose mother, Hazel Malone, ran the famous Corona Stage Academy for children, in London for many years. Even William himself, Keith Crane, seems to have been a 'one-part actor'; to my knowledge he has never been heard of before or since this TV series.

There was a full-page interview-feature on Richmal Crompton, by Dorothy Cannell, in the 'TV Times' for October 26th, 1956, but, while no doubt interesting to readers in those days, it told us nothing that we don't know today.

In another issue of the magazine (5.10.56) was a gossip item: 'Richmal Crompton, the charming 65-year-old creator of William, was delighted when she met the cast of 'Over to William'. "They're all exactly as I would have liked them," she said.

Richmal Crompton said: "A few years ago I lectured at Maidstone Jail. The lady who introduced me asked how many there had read my books. A sea of hands went up. She looked delighted, but I wasn't so sure how I should take it!"

I can't say what "Over to William" was like because, as I said, I never saw an episode. But the respectable run of 13 shows speaks for itself; it must have been reasonably successful, otherwise it would have been taken off. Do any readers recall this William series of 1956, I wonder?

"Over to William"? Over to you...'

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## FORUM

### For the exchange of Readers' views

#### From LESLIE LASKEY

I agree with the view of Colin Cole that it would have been a mistake for Harry Wharton to have remained a "rebel" against authority. Had he continued on the same path as described in the 1932 "MAGNET" series he would have had to be expelled eventually. No headmaster could have tolerated such persistent defiance for very long. Wharton would then have disappeared from the "MAGNET". In any case, such a sudden - and permanent - change in a boy's personality would not have been credible. He was the leader of the "Co." and also of the Remove. His was the character around which the early narratives of Greyfriars were built. Wharton's complex personality gave the author a good deal more scope than was the case with the uncomplicated Tom Merry and Jimmy Silver. Moods of stubborn pride would always pass, but they would provide the author with the ingredients for further fascinating character studies. Harry Wharton could never have been sacrificed.

In the earliest years of Greyfriars, Charles Hamilton could never have dreamed that he would be writing of it for half a century. He expelled Carberry, but then had to create Loder to replace him. He expelled Skinner. Later he contrived Skinner's return to the school. By the time of the Great War Hamilton must have realised that Greyfriars was now so well established that it

might continue for a long time. He could not afford to sacrifice interesting characters, for they would only have to be replaced with others. After the War characters such as Bulstrode and Rake, who had no more to offer, were quietly dropped. Nonentities like Trevor and Treluce were simply forgotten. The ample cast of interesting characters then remained unchanged over four decades.

Even the Editor did not always know who was at Greyfriars and who wasn't. Answering a reader's query in his Editorial in "MAGNET" No. 252 he replied that Vane had now left Greyfriars. The very next week, in No. 253, Vane was still there, playing half-back for the Remove football team in the match with Redclyffe!

### **From J.E.M.**

I was surprised and, I have to say, not a little dismayed to read John Springhall's piece on the 1950s horror comics (in the February C.D.). His account appears to suggest that there was too much fuss made about these vile publications. Peter Mauger's *Picture Post* article is accused of exaggeration, the Government of the day of panic reaction!!

The idea of Communists playing a leading role in the campaign against these terrible 'comics' is also both farcical and pernicious: farcical because Communists in this country have had little real influence in *any* field (scare stories to the contrary); pernicious because by smearing the anti-horror campaign with the Communist label, Mr. Springhall reinforces his argument that the whole affair was a storm in a teacup. Indeed, the *tone* of his article comes far too close for comfort to a covert defence of these awful publications.

At the very least, he is dismissive of public concern about such degenerate trash. Perhaps he would tell us whether he thinks the present concern over video nasties is also an over-reaction and a panic response?

### **From DESMOND O'LEARY**

The February C.D. is another fine issue. The cover and inside illustrations were particularly good, I thought. I especially liked the article by John Springhall on the horror comics affair...

### **From JANET SMITH**

I was interested in the article in the December C.D. on ladies who wear black costumes for their undercover activities. Marion Waters mentions that the black costumes worn by 'Heather Eastwood' and her friends resemble the dress of a medieval executioner. I have always enjoyed films and plays set in days gone by which feature historical costumes. Such productions often have scenes on the scaffold, and I have often wondered about the costumes worn by the executioners in such scenes.

Were they required to be masked to conceal their identities in cases of reprisals by the friends of the victim? Or was it considered that being an executioner was a rather shameful affair, hence the need for anonymity?

Oddly enough I have noticed that in contemporary illustrations of old time executions, the executions are *not* masked. I wonder therefore if the 'hooded executioner' is a creation of Victorian artists or Hollywood film producers.

Can any readers of CD set me right on this matter, which has puzzled me for many years.

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THE DETECTIVE MAGAZINE

by Len Hawkey

It is surprising to find that in the past twenty years or so - maybe for much longer - there has been no reference in the pages of *Collectors' Digest* to the above publication, which, although aimed primarily at the adult market,

### £500 MYSTERY STORY.



## “Flat 2”

A NEW short serial with  
a thrill on every page.

By Edgar Wallace,

From *Detective Magazine*, 1922, artist - R.T. Cooper



featured many writers and artists familiar to readers of *The Union Jack*, *Nugget Weekly* and similar papers.

One of the innumerable magazines launched by the Amalgamated Press in the aftermath of the Great War, *The Detective Magazine* was relatively short-lived, but even in those days it represented wonderful value, issued fortnightly, with over 100 pages for only 7d - and no expense spared as regards top-quality authors and artists. I feel I was most lucky when, a year or so back, I acquired a complete run, which started in November 1922 and ended, with little warning, in May 1925

Their initial scoop was to start off with a serial by Edgar Wallace, easily Britain's best-selling and most popular writer at that time. Moreover the serialisation of "Flat 2" preceded the release of the book itself. The illustrations were by a first-class artist, R.T. Cooper - one, however, who strangely enough, never featured in any of the periodicals for younger readers. "Flat 2" covered about six issues, and was followed a bit later on by one of E.W.'s most famous works, "The Green Archer". Warwick Reynolds, possibly the A.P.'s top artist at that time, supplied the artwork - *The Detective Magazine* used his splendid talents a lot over the first year or so - as they used Leonard Shields also, both "disappearing" from around mid-1924. Perhaps at that time, sales were already decreasing - who knows?

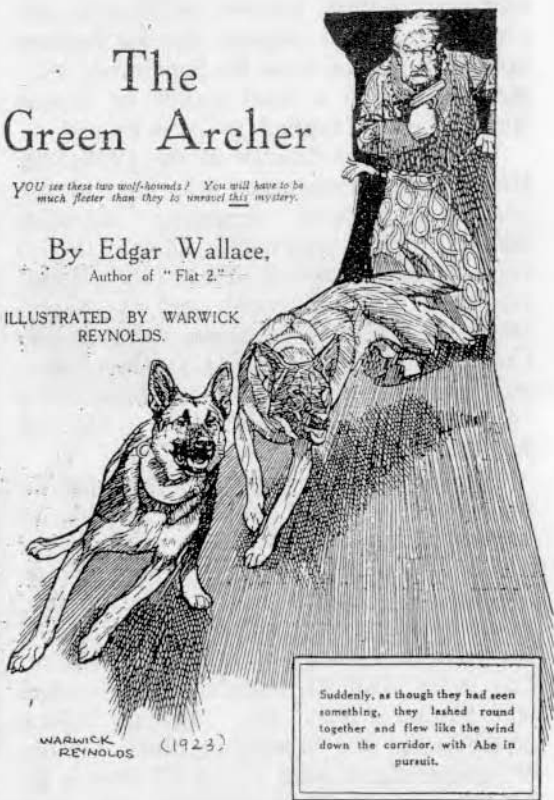
Over the 30 months of its lifetime the magazine featured many prominent authors - Sydney Horler, Valentine Williams, J.J. Bell, K.R.G. Browne, and quite a few familiar, in later years, to readers of *The Thriller* and *Detective Weekly* - Gwyn Evans, Edmund Snell, Alfred Edgar, Douglas Newton, etc. A prolific contributor was that doyen of the Amalgamated Press - H.W. Twyman. Was he, in fact, the Editor? Although only in his early twenties, he had already been Editor of both the *Detective Library* and *The Nugget Weekly*

## The Green Archer

YOU see these two wolf-hounds? You will have to be much faster than they to unravel this mystery.

By Edgar Wallace,  
Author of "Flat 2."

ILLUSTRATED BY WARWICK REYNOLDS.



WARWICK REYNOLDS (1923)

Suddenly, as though they had seen something, they leaped round together and flew like the wind down the corridor, with Abe in pursuit.

throughout their short existence, and was currently Editor of the more prestigious *Union Jack*.

THE SHADOW OF YESTERDAY.

As well as competitions, cross-word puzzles, etc. there were a profusion of articles dealing with every aspect of crime and detection - famous trials, the latest police procedures, and it sometimes seemed every retired Chief Detective-Inspector from Scotland Yard was contributing, as well as prominent judges, lawyers, politicians, and even great forensic experts, like Sir Bernard Spilsbury. In the issue for September 1923 there was even a short survey of Sexton Blake's career, supplied by Gwyn Evans!

As with *The Thriller* in the 1930s, the Harmsworth organisation was able to use numerous popular American detective authors to supplement their British counterparts. Arthur B. Reeve (1880-1936) creator of Craig Kennedy, and as sought-after over here as in the States, Octavus Roy Cohen, Clarence B. Kelland, J. Allen Dunn, etc., and even the famous - or infamous - "Amazing Web" author, Harry Stephen Keeler.

Readers of old boys' papers would be familiar with most of the artists. As well as Reynolds and Shields there were Harry Lane, Arthur Jones, E.E. Briscoe, Ambler, Thomas Somerfield, Radcliffe Wilson, Thomas Henry, etc., with other illustrations by Thomas Heath-Robinson, H.R. Millar, Leo Bates, Jack M. Faulks, W.W. Lendon and Joseph Abbey, etc. The publishers certainly did not "scamp" on either authors or artists: there were 12 to 15 stories in every issue, plus shorter articles, and some 40 or more illustrations.

What might have caused the downfall of such an attractive magazine? Was it perhaps the lack of any central character, whose exploits readers could identify with in each issue? With hindsight, it seems surprising that, apart from in the brief piece by Gwyn Evans, Sexton Blake never appeared. Perhaps it was thought that Blake might reach saturation point, as the *Union Jack* and the several *Sexton Blake Library* issues were at their peak in the early 1920s. Also they were aimed at a slightly lower age group; but, on the other hand,



I smashed him  
again and  
again, till he  
lay at my feet.

Artist - C. Gifford Ambler (1923)  
Several years later he took over  
Nelson Lee illustrations from A. Jones

Blake had figured successfully in "adult" papers before - e.g. *Penny Pictorial* and *Answers* - indeed some of the stories from these papers might have been up-dated and used again - a practice the A.P. was not a stranger to!

As it was, sales must have decreased dangerously, for in the issue for May 8th 1925, it was sadly announced that *The Detective Magazine* would be incorporated in the monthly *Premier Magazine*, as from the June issue. The *Premier Magazine* (price 1/- monthly) had started in May 1914, combining tales of Adventure and Romance - and now - Detection. It carried on until it vanished like so many periodicals in 1940, but how long the poor old *Detective Magazine* was even mentioned in it the writer cannot say.

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## KEEP IN TOUCH WITH THE DUTCH !



The I.B.A. is the only official organization in the world of people interested in, or collecting, the works of Captain W.E. Johns. It exists some seven years now. In Holland we have over 200 members, and more in other countries. Our "Biggles News Magazine", mostly in Dutch, is published every two months and members can place a free advertisement in it concerning their collections. If you are interested in membership of the I.B.A. please send your full name, address, date of birth and signature, together with £10,00 in cash to:

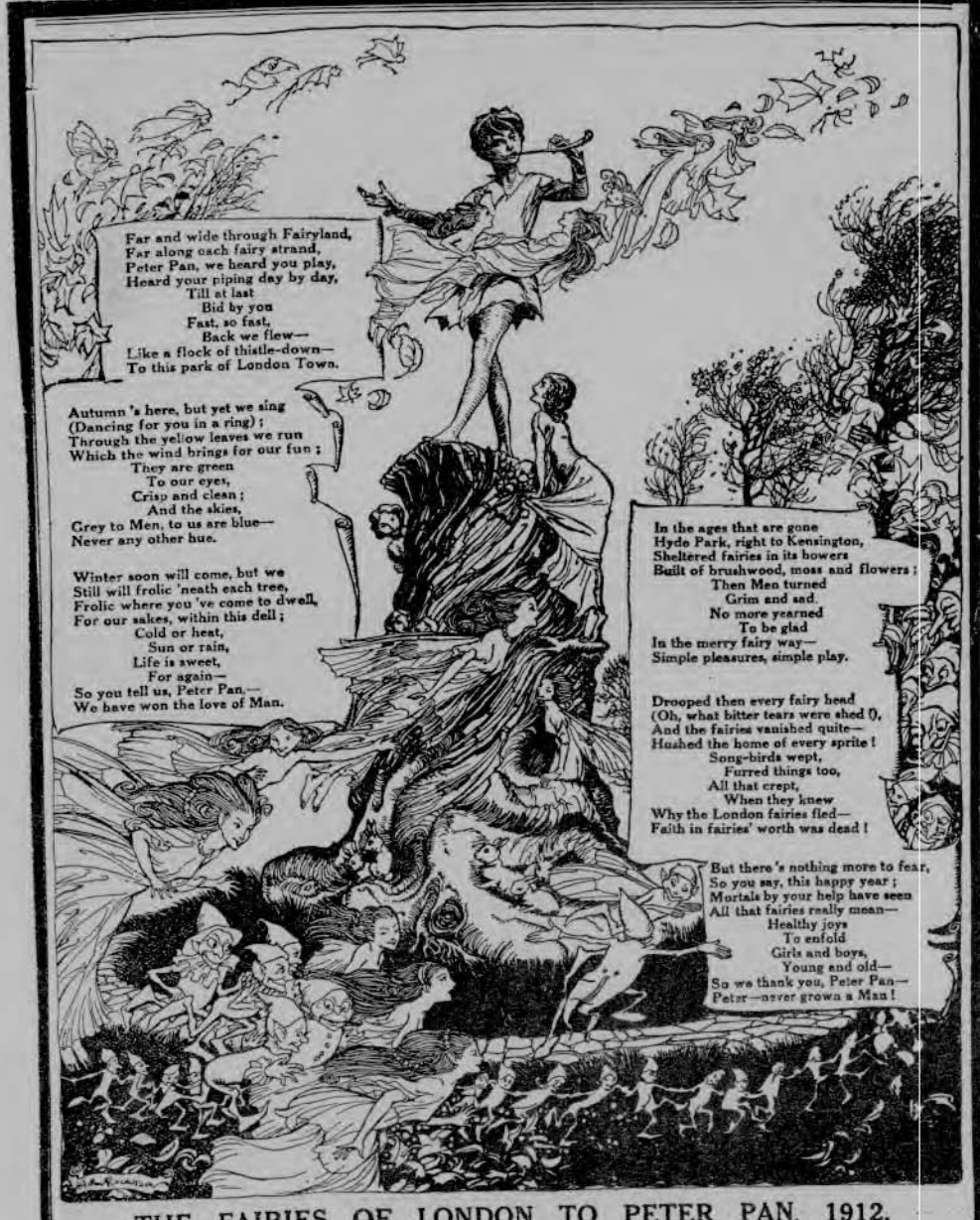
I.B.A. Treasurer, Mr. W. Blok,  
Weth. Berbeelaan 67,  
1761 GP Anna Paulowna,  
The Netherlands.

You will receive your membership card and this year's issues of "Biggles News Magazine". The fee for renewing your subscription is £8,00, payable in cash in January each year.

Public Relations:

Marvel M. Wagenaar-Wilm,  
I.B.A. vice president,  
Johan Wagenaarstraat 61,  
1443 LR Purmerend,  
The Netherlands.  
tel. 01031-2990-34696

## International BIGGLES Association



Far and wide through Fairyland,  
Far along each fairy strand,  
Peter Pan, we heard you play,  
Heard your piping day by day,  
Till at last  
Bid by you  
Fast, so fast,  
Back we flew—  
Like a flock of thistle-down—  
To this park of London Town.

Autumn's here, but yet we sing  
(Dancing for you in a ring);  
Through the yellow leaves we run  
Which the wind brings for our fun;  
They are green  
To our eyes,  
Crisp and clean;  
And the skies,  
Grey to Men, to us are blue—  
Never any other hue.

Winter soon will come, but we  
Still will frolic 'neath each tree,  
Frolic where you've come to dwell,  
For our sakes, within this dell;  
Cold or heat,  
Sun or rain,  
Life is sweet,  
For again—  
So you tell us, Peter Pan—  
We have won the love of Man.

In the ages that are gone  
Hyde Park, right to Kensington,  
Sheltered fairies in its bowers  
Built of brushwood, moss and flowers;  
Then Men turned  
Grim and sad,  
No more yearned  
To be glad  
In the merry fairy way—  
Simple pleasures, simple play.

Drooped then every fairy head  
(Oh, what bitter tears were shed!),  
And the fairies vanished quite—  
Hushed the home of every sprite!  
Song-birds wept,  
Furred things too,  
All that crept,  
When they knew  
Why the London fairies fled—  
Faith in fairies' worth was dead!

But there's nothing more to fear,  
So you say, this happy year;  
Mortals by your help have seen  
All that fairies really mean—  
Healthy joys  
To enfold  
Girls and boys,  
Young and old—  
So we thank you, Peter Pan—  
Peter—never grows a Man!

## THE FAIRIES OF LONDON TO PETER PAN, 1912.

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Editor: Mary Cadogan, 46 Overbury Avenue, Beckenham, Kent, BR3 2PY.

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