

STORY PAPER
COLLECTORS' DIGEST

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No.615

MARCH 1998

WILD WEST WEEKLY

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Vol. 1, No. 17, 2-7-38

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STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Editor: MARY CADOGAN

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DAYS TO REMEMBER

As I have mentioned before, several important literary anniversaries occur in 1998, and two of these (the 60 years-ago launch of *Wild West Weekly* and the centenary of Lewis Carroll's death) are detailed in articles in this month's C.D. by Bill Bradford and Laurence Price respectively. Peter Mahony continues to celebrate 90 years of the *Magnet* with the second part of his study of Frank Nugent, and his similar in-depth assessments of the other members of the Famous Five will follow in the course of the year, while Bob Whiter, Founder-Member of the London O.B.B.C, sends all the Clubs a fifty-year message.

I feel sure that C.D. readers will also be pleased to have details of the following one-day meetings, to celebrate various authors' works, which are planned for the second quarter of 1998:

- | | | |
|------------|--|--|
| 25th April | BIGGLES & CO. MEETING
at Watersmeet Theatre,
Rickmansworth, Herts. | (Contact: Paul Marriott
8 The Heath, Leighton Buzzard,
Beds. LU7 7HL) |
| 25th April | JUST WILLIAM DAY
at St. Elphin's School
Darley Dale, Derbyshire | (Contact: Charles Wilson
18 Colthill Crescent
Milltimber, Aberdeen AB13 0EG) |
| 2nd May | SCHOOL STORIES: FROM
BUNTER TO BUCKERIDGE
Roehampton Institute
London | (Contact: Maureen Murdock
NCRCL, Roehampton Institute,
Downshire House, Roehampton Lane
London SW15 4HRT) |

The Editor's Chat



- | | | |
|-----------|--|---|
| 9th May | ENID BLYTON LITERARY SOCIETY DAY
Gade Theatre, Watersmeet,
High St., Rickmansworth, Herts. | (Contact: Tony Summerfield
93 Milford Hill
Salisbury, Wilts. SP1 2QL) |
| 20th June | JENNINGS MEETING
White Hart Hotel
Lewes, Sussex, BN7 1XE | (Contact: Darrell Swift
37 Tinshill Lane
Leeds LS16 6BU) |

Appropriately in this 50th year of Jennings' adventures, Anthony Buckeridge will be the special guest at both the BUNTER TO BUCKERIDGE and the JENNINGS days. I will also be one of the speakers on 2nd May (when my subject will be 'The Influence of Frank Richards') and Jeffrey Richards, whose work is well known to many hobbyists, will be another of the plenary speakers at this Roehampton conference. (Also Anthony Buckeridge, Jeffrey Richards and I all took part in a series of programmes on school stories transmitted by the BBC's Radio Four between 23rd and 28th February.)

Of course, as well as all the events mentioned above, the Old Boys Book Clubs in different parts of the country hold regular meetings - as they have been doing for decades. It seems that our hobby is not only alive but very well indeed.

MARY CADOGAN

I REALLY CAN'T BELIEVE 50 years have elapsed since that first meeting at Len Packman's home in Dulwich. I still have my original subscription card and I see I was number 3 on the list of members. How sad to realise that to the best of my knowledge I'm the only surviving founder-member! But what a lot of wonderful people and friends I have made over the years - again, sadly some have left us, but happily a goodly number are still with us, and although the pond separates us - in flesh - in spirit I still feel very close, and every year eagerly look forward to the Christmas cards and to renewing old and happy memories! I would like to take this opportunity of wishing all branches of our club the very best of everything, and good collecting now and in the future!

See you in the 'Rag'!

BOB WHITER

WANTED: Howard Bakers, £4 d/w £7 slipcase.

W.E. Johns 1st editions, all magazines, *Modern Boys*, ephemera, books in d/w published by John Hamilton.

Bunter, Jennings, Blyton, Saville 1sts in d/w.

Please offer other hobby related items.

P. Galvin, 2 The Lindales, Pogmoor, Barnsley, S. Yorks S75 2DT.

On the 12th March 1938, a new paper appeared, mainly unheralded, on newsagents' counters . . . The large full-coloured cover immediately caught the eye. This was *Wild West Weekly*, priced two pence, approximately 12" x 10" and published by Amalgamated Press. The only advance publicity I can trace was in the *Thriller*, and it was destined to run for just 50 weeks.

It was presumably aimed at maturing teenagers as it was a little adult for the average schoolboy but not quite up to older readers. This is rather confirmed by an advert by the Civil Service for staff between the ages of 15-16, plus booklets on 'Are you smoking too much?' Initially the paper had 32 pages; this was reduced to 28 by No. 13.

The illustrations within were by Eric Parker, D.C Eyles, Fred Bennett, G. Wakefield, S.H. Chapman and others. The majority of the covers were by Parker and Eyles, all quite outstanding and, in my opinion, the main attraction of the paper. Most issues contained two serials and five short stories. Page 2 was always devoted to picture stories of Western history and, later, to profiles of film-stars such as Ken Maynard, Buck Jones, William Boyd, Tex Ritter and even John Wayne, then still a very minor film actor.

THE FIFTH NAPOLEON UNMASKED! . . . BIG THRILLS WHEN WESTERN LAWMAN ROUNDS UP BIG CITY'S SLICKEST RACKETEER!

The PHANTOM SHERIFF GOES EAST



THE STORY
EVERYBODY
IS TALKING
ABOUT!



No. 1 began with the serialisation of *Wells Fargo*, based on the current Paramount film. Another serial was *The Fatal '45* by James Ronald, an established writer of crime fiction. This was set in Chicago in the 1930s, indeed numerous stories over the months took place in modern times and not always in the West. Even the Phantom Sheriff tales, from No.12 onwards, were set in New York or the East Coast. Indeed, in the last three issues, this character is allied with Sexton Blake, a series which was continued into the *Thriller*, with which the paper was merged (almost sunk without trace) on 20th February 1939.

- Free gifts, much a feature of the times, were as follows:
- No.1 Two booklets, *The Hilly-Billy Round-Up Song Book* and *Half a Million Redskins on the Warpath*.
 - No.2 Two more, *Gold Trails of the Roaring 40s* and *Thundering Herds of the West*.
 - Nos. 17-22 Six photos of Ken Maynard, Ginger Rogers, Tex Ritter, Gene Autrey, Alice Faye and Wallace Beery. The first two framed, but four more frames available for a 6d. P.O.
 - No. 34 Phantom Sheriff six-gun and roller skates for 2s/3d, plus 6 tokens from issues.
 - No. 35 Fingerprint card and mask.
 - No. 36 Secret code constructor and gang smasher star. If you could read the Phantom Sheriff's coded message and comment on the stories, the first hundred entrants would have the choice of roller skates, dart-board, stamp-album or wrist-watch. Much earlier, a standing order to your newsagent, plus ten weekly gift tokens, was rewarded by a dart- or shove-halfpenny board.

Looking through the volumes, purchased many years ago from the late and much missed Norman Shaw, one or two stories take me back to my (very) distant youth! Issue No. 4, now incorporating the *Pilot*, began a series, *The Whistling Kid*, with the hero, Ken Prentiss, depicted as Ken Maynard, presumably a character Maynard had portrayed on the screen. No. 6 had *Badman of Brimstone*, a recent film starring Wallace Beery. From No. 29 a short series *You Can't Catch a Shadow* was obviously by Geo. E. Rochester and a rewrite of some of his Grey Shadow stories in the *Modern Boy* (and hardbacks). No. 38, *The Trail of the Flying Bomb*, was almost prophetic of things to come. Unfortunately few authors were credited, although two serials were attributed to E.R. Home-Gall, namely *The Mounties Kicked Him Out* and *Rod Mason's Round The World Trail*. About nine stories made it to the *Boys' Friend Library*.

It would appear that large format papers were not very successful at the time (or with today's collectors - oh those folds!) *The Buzzer* (Newnes) only ran to 36 issues (1937/38) and the second series of *Modern Boy*, with an even larger format, survived for only 24 weeks (1938).

Wild West Weekly, in my opinion, then and now, never seemed to live up to its potential. The kindest thing I can say about it is, "lovely covers".

IN THIS ISSUE! THE ALL-ACTION STORY OF WALLACE BEERY'S LATEST SCREEN TRIUMPH!





SHERLOCK HOLMES - THE CAD!

by J.E.M.

Maybe it's true that comparisons are odious but sometimes they just can't be resisted; certainly not in the case of the two best-known private detectives in Baker Street. How can we avoid comparing them? For a start, just look at all those glaring similarities: the hawk-like features, the pipe-smoking, the dressing-gowned thinking sessions, the home laboratory - to say nothing of that famous address itself.

Some of the differences between them are also fascinating. While Sherlock Holmes had an even cleverer brother (Mycroft) who could solve mysteries without moving from his armchair - and, apparently, without pipe or dressing-gown - Sexton Blake's only sibling (Nigel) was good for nothing and simply went to the dogs. There was also a sharp contrast in attitudes to the opposite sex. Holmes was, in general, a dyed-in-the-wool misogynist, his famous encounter with Irene Adler leaving him enchanted not by her physical charms but by her brilliant mind. Blake on the other hand, as we all know, had many amorous encounters, though he always behaved honourably, indeed gallantly, a point to which we shall return.

Other and rather more memorable differences between Sherlock Holmes and Sexton Blake are revealed in one of the oddest of all the Holmes short stories: *The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton*. The eponymous Milverton is a ruthless blackmailer of high society women and, in Holmes' view, "the worst man in London". The only way to end his nasty career is to get hold of the evidence of his victims' indiscretions and destroy it; and, to this end, Holmes plans to burgle the blackmailer's house and empty his safe. His friend and chronicler, the good Dr. Watson, scarcely bats an eyelid at this proposal, telling us that "opening safes was a particular hobby" of Holmes, a revelation which must surely have raised a good many eyebrows at the time.

As the story makes clear, Sherlock is indeed well-equipped for his "hobby", owning an impressive kit of burglars' tools: diamond-tipped drills, nickel-coated jemmy, skeleton keys and so on. Mind you, Sexton Blake too had some pretty impressive housebreaking equipment, namely a magnetic picklock which he had designed himself. However, we can find no evidence of its frequent use; burglary was certainly not "a particular hobby" of his.

But back to the Milverton affair. Assisted by the ever-faithful Watson as co-burglar (who shows his enthusiasm for the enterprise by making face-masks for Holmes and himself), Holmes succeeds in cracking the Milverton crib but, unfortunately, has no sooner opened the safe door than the blackmailer himself approaches. The two intruders make themselves scarce behind heavy curtains, from which cover they witness a remarkable, not to say horrific, scene.

A heavily-veiled blackmail victim appears and, after a brief angry exchange, shoots the nasty Milverton dead (“‘You’ve done me’, he cried”), after which the veiled one grinds her heel in the dead - or dying - man’s face and departs. Watson is about to intervene but is restrained by Holmes and is reluctantly persuaded that “it was no affair of ours . . . justice had overtaken a villain . . .”

Are we being too “politically correct” to feel a little uneasy about this high-born lady killing someone in cold - or even hot - blood and additionally behaving like an underworld thug? (That heel-grinding bit could have come straight from any modern hard-boiled gangster tale.) Did Sexton Blake ever look so coolly on such a savage revenge? But that’s not the end of our Holmes-Blake comparison.

In order to learn the layout of Milverton’s house and the whereabouts of his safe, Holmes has posed as a workman so that he can gain the confidence of the housemaid. As he cheerfully boasts to Watson, he has even (falsely) promised to marry the girl! Perhaps not surprisingly, the good doctor is more disturbed by this development than the prospect of burglary. “Surely you have gone too far” he protests, but Holmes dismisses such scruples. He has acquired the information he needs from the unsuspecting innocent and, in any case, “I rejoice to say I have a hated rival [for the girl’s hand] who will certainly cut me out the instant my back is turned.” So that’s all right then! It is clearly implied that the feelings of the low-born young maid are fickle and, in any case, of minor consequence.

We can surely acquit Sexton Blake of any such conduct. I cannot recall - or even imagine - him behaving towards a member of the fair sex, whatever her status, as Holmes behaved towards that humble young servitor who, incidentally, is not even given a name!

At the end of this disturbing story, Holmes smugly shows Watson a portrait of the killer unveiled. She is revealed as “a regal and stately lady in Court dress, with a high diamond tiara upon her noble head”.

So what are we left with? Holmes the caddish seducer; Holmes the cracksman; Holmes the accessory to a very brutal murder; and - dare I say it - Holmes the social snob? On all these counts the verdict in the Holmes-versus-Blake case must be yours but, for my own part, I have no hesitation in saying - Long live Sexton Blake, gentleman!

AFTERTHOUGHT: Any Sherlockians who object to their hero being taken down a peg or two will surely find solace in the words of the wag who famously said: “Though he might be more humble there’s no police like Holmes”.

WANTED: All pre-war Sexton Blake Libraries. All Boys Friend Libraries. All comics/papers etc with stories by W.E. Johns, Leslie Charteris & Enid Blyton. Original artwork from Magnet, Gem, Sexton Blake Library etc. also wanted. I will pay £150.00 for original Magnet cover artwork, £75.00 for original Sexton Blake Library cover artwork. NORMAN WRIGHT, 60 EASTBURY ROAD, WATFORD, WD1 4JL.
Tel: 01923-232383.

WANTED: *Boys Favourite Library* by E.R. Home-Gall, single issues or complete set of 20. Can offer very good price for numbers 2 and 13. Also required *Boys Favourite* (2nd series), single issues or complete set of 7. Anything else by or about E.R. HOME-GALL also required.
REG WHITE, 66 ST. JAMES ROAD, CARLISLE, CA2 5PD. TEL: 01228-522190.



BLACK, WHITE AND GRAY
Part Three - Fullwood the Cad

by Mark Caldicott

It was not surprising that the major stumbling block to Augustus Hart's reformation was Ralph Leslie Fullwood, for from the earliest recounted adventures of St. Frank's he is the arch bounder of the Remove.

Nipper (assuming the name of Dick Bennett) makes his very first appearance at St. Frank's in the company of Bob Christine, of College House, whom he has met on his way to the school ("Nipper at St. Frank's", *Nelson Lee Library*, Old Series 112, 28-Jul-17). Christine warns him to steer clear of Ancient House, it being run by Fullwood and Co., but "Bennett" does just the opposite. Having heard that Ancient House is in decline, is in the charge of a dishonourable master, is dominated by Fullwood and his cronies, is characterised by "smoking, gambling and breaking bounds at night", and does not partake in sport, Nipper sees Ancient House as a challenge and announces to Christine that he is going to join Ancient House and "whip it into shape".

The battle for supremacy of Ancient House between Fullwood and Nipper is an ongoing theme which intertwines itself through the early annals of St. Frank's.

Ralph Leslie Fullwood is described as being a burly fellow, dandified in dress and in speech. He looks "gaudy and vulgar. His fancy waistcoat wasn't merely loud; it shrieked". To add to his affected appearance he wears a monocle, and on occasion a top hat. His first encounter with Nipper is a surprise - to Fullwood - since Fullwood finds his authority challenged immediately by the newcomer. Nipper had to suffer a cruel and painful ragging as a result, but, rather than being subdued by this experience, raids Fullwood's study with the assistance of Tregellis-West, the only fellow brave enough to accompany him. The pair are able, by a trick, to seize the cards, cigarettes and champagne which are the symbols of Fullwood's Study A habits. In order to put the newcomer in his place, Fullwood challenges Nipper to a boxing match. After initially getting the upper hand, Fullwood is floored. When he leaps to his feet he lashes out for all he is worth, revealing that he has a fierce and savage temper. Nipper delivers the knockout and, for the moment, is the victor, taking over as leader of Ancient House.

When the American boy Justin B. Farman is thought to have cut up Teddy Long's Eton jacket, Nipper sets out after Farman to express his repugnance at such an act of vandalism. However, he is in time to see two strange men attack Farman, one of the men hitting Farman with a cudgel. Nipper rescues Farman from what transpires is a kidnap attempt, but is discovered by Fullwood and Co. with the cudgel in his hand and Farman at his feet. The nuts of the Remove believe Nipper has attacked Farman in anger, and Fullwood takes advantage of the school's revulsion to denigrate Nipper. His influence forces Nipper to be tried by his fellows, and Fullwood makes himself prosecuting counsellor, stating the prosecution case in such a clever and cunning way that the Remove

are convinced Nipper has not only attacked Farman, but has threatened more violence if Farman gives him away. This has caused Farman - according to Fullwood's argument - to lie to the Head when he stated that Nipper was innocent. In spite of the revelation that Fullwood had paid Long to cut his own coat in order to falsely incriminate Farman, Fullwood still manages to convince the school of Nipper's guilt ("Fullwood's Victory", *NLL OS 116, 25-Aug-17*).

Fullwood is able to capitalise further on this state of affairs when he, along with his cronies Gulliver and Bell, witnesses Nipper coming out of the King's Arms, which, being a public house, is out of bounds ("The Verdict of the School", *NLL OS 118, 08-Sep-17*). Nipper, who had visited the place on the instructions of Nelson Lee for the legitimate purpose of meeting with their old friend Detective Inspector Morley, is nevertheless unable either to tell the truth - which may lead to the revelation of his and Lee's true identity - or to deny that Fullwood had indeed witnessed his exit from a public house. Fullwood accuses Nipper of hypocrisy, and the school is convinced enough to dump Nipper in the school fountain. However, the resolution of the Justin B. Farman mystery and the discovery of the real attackers is announced by the Head to an assembled school. The clearing of Nipper's name and the revelation of his heroic part in capturing the villains leads to his acclamation by the school; and Fullwood is beaten once again.

Fullwood himself suffers from a wrongful accusation when he is believed to be the author of a threatening message on the steps of Ancient House, and receives instant "justice" ("The Messages of Mystery", *NLL OS 120, 22-Sep-17*). His revenge on Nipper and Watson is, however, cruel and vindictive, when he catches them by surprise and, outnumbered, they are tarred and feathered. Although Fullwood is no coward, and is not afraid to stand his ground, nevertheless he prefers to outnumber his opponents before commencing his attack.

In order to regain his leadership of Ancient House, Ralph Leslie is always looking for an opportunity to do harm to Nipper and his companions. In "The Mystery of the Bridge House" (*NLL OS 122, 06-Oct-17*) he imprisons Nipper and Tregellis-West in a hollow tree, hoping their failure to return before time will get them into trouble. Nipper's revenge in this instance is to take Fullwood's photograph, but only after significant adjustments to Ralph Leslie's personal appearance have been made, such that he has the appearance of a scarecrow. Fullwood steals the film from Nipper's camera, but his ensuing arrogance is short-lived when he discovers it is the wrong film, and the photographs have been successfully developed.

However, it is the battle between Fullwood and Farman which leads to the most significant event for Fullwood. Fullwood is constantly trying to entice the American junior Farman into his card games in order to relieve Farman's wallet of its bulging burden of banknotes. Farman, finding himself being pressed into a visit to the White Harp, a dubious public house, has had enough of Fullwood and punches his nose ("The Problem of the Copper Frog", *NLL OS 126, 03-Nov-17*). The antagonism between Fullwood and Farman is exacerbated when an event occurs which is precipitated by Handforth ("Fullwood's Cunning", *NLL OS 129, 24-Nov-17*). Edward Oswald spots Farman enter Study A and soon afterwards hears the chink of money. Believing that Farman has weakened and is engaged in a card game, Handforth characteristically barges in and drags Farman out of the study. Farman explains that he was only innocently swapping his change for a banknote.

The problem is that whereas Farman had handed over the change, he was dragged out before Fullwood handed over the note. When Farman goes back to demand his dues Fullwood, of course, claims that he has given the note already, and that Farman is trying to trick him. Farman has only one course of action, to beat the truth out of Fullwood and to extract the outstanding amount by force. This Farman does, and Fullwood is much damaged in the process. Fullwood's revenge is typical in its caddishness. Handforth receives a note purporting to be from Farman which requests a meeting behind the gym in order to settle a difference of opinion. Some time later Handforth is discovered gagged and bound, abandoned in the snow. Handforth's life has been put at risk, and the affair is considered serious. Handforth claims it is Farman who is the culprit since not only was it his name on the note, but Handforth was lassoed and



Fullwood and Co. wait for their victim.

was spoken to in a voice with an American accent. When challenged on his absence during the vital time Farman claims he himself received a note - from Handforth - asking him to meet him on the playing fields. Further investigation reveals that the note has been forged and that the paper has come from Farman's own notepad. Farman is booked for a flogging, and the school assembles in the Great Hall to hear the Head's verdict. Fullwood is in gleeful anticipation of Farman's flogging and expulsion. Nipper, anticipating the Head's denouncement of Farman, whilst at the same time convinced of his innocence, describes the scene which followed:

The Head looked around him sternly.

"The boy who is responsible will now be called upon to step forward," he went on, his voice taking a hard note. "He will receive a flogging, and will be afterwards sent from the school in disgrace."

I nearly groaned, but my decision was unaltered.

"Fullwood!" said Dr. Stafford sharply.

A queer kind of thrill seemed to run right through the school. I wondered if I was dreaming; I wondered if I had heard the Head pronounce the name aright. Fullwood! I stared round in sheer amazement.

Fullwood had been grinning, but now, quite suddenly, he turned a deathly white, and shivered as he stood. But he made not attempt to stand forward. Justin B.

Farman was looking completely bewildered. And a thousand eyes were on Ralph Leslie Fullwood.

It is Nelson Lee, of course, who has used his detective skill to uncover Fullwood's carefully-laid, but despicable, plot. And this is the end of Fullwood's challenge for the leadership of Ancient House. He is spared expulsion by the intervention of Handforth and Farman, who request a stay of execution, but his domination of Ancient House is at an end.

Thereafter Fullwood settles into a role as the bounder of the Remove, with all the hallmarks of this activity previously delineated. And we have seen him at his typical worst in his dealings with Augustus Hart.

But then, things began to change . . .

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FORUM

J.D. Price, Sheffield:

I was interested to read the article "His Master's Voice" in the December issue of the C.D. In particular the origin of the name Bunter.

I do in fact have a sample of the original Bunter's Nervine toothache cure and I enclose a copy of part of the leaflet that accompanies the bottle. The inventor was a George Bullock Bunter, Surgeon-Dentist of 4 Clarendon Place Maidstone. He was in practice from about 1878 to 1915.

Arthur F.G. Edwards, London:

I know that contributors to the C.D. have wider interests than the papers on which it concentrates. It is in the hope that one of them can clear up a mystery which causes me some concern, that I write.

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Camph.	-	-	4.25%
Chlorof.	-	-	9.8%

Ten drops of a small piece of lump sugar, every two or three hours

JOHN PEPPER & CO. LTD.
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Often films that I enjoyed in my youth are shown on TV in the early hours of the morning so I record them to be shown at a convenient time. One such film was *Boys Will Be Boys*. Will Hay was the star and in it he contrived to be appointed headmaster of a 'public' school - Narkover. Old Boys of Narkover were invariably criminals and the boys in the school were determined to follow in their footsteps. No doubt devotees of the cinema in 1998 would consider the plot puerile, the production no better. I make no apology for saying I enjoyed it as a boy and enjoyed it again in 1998.

I was not alone in enjoying the film when it was first released because there arose a Narkover cult among youths and young men. There were Narkover button-hole badges, Narkover school-ties and we sang the school song 'Up the Old Narkovians'. Therein lies

the mystery. I joined a local youth club in September 1937 and formed close friendships until the outbreak of war in September 1939. Four of us were inseparable and one friend was a Narkover devotee. In the advertisement for the film it was said to have been produced in 1935, yet we almost certainly saw it in 1938, if not a very few months earlier or later.

Is any reader of SPCD able to say when the film was generally released?

Colin Morgan Comments:

Thank you very much for the latest issue (No. 614) of the CD and its fine contents. The piece that caught my eye the most this time out is the small feature (and illustration) from Dawn Marler about "That Dutch Holiday of Surprises" by Elise Probyn.

I have a few copies of *Girls' Crystal* from 1944 to 1950 and have found three episodes of this story printed in the paper in early 1950. The interesting point seems to be the printing in the S.O.L. 138 which followed in June 1952. I am aware that a lot of the serials which appeared in G.C. did turn up again in the S.O.L. but I have never checked through to see if the stories were edited when in the Library series. It is also interesting to note that Elise Probyn (J.E. McKibbin) contributed a lot of 'travel' stories at that time, with characters in the stories coming from Switzerland, Canada, Italy plus several set in British holiday camps. There was

another set in Holland - Dawn might like to look out for No. 171: "Their Strange Task in Holland". This story was published in November 1953 so could have been in G.C. in 1951!

Further to the fascinating article by Des O'Leary On Red Circle's tyrant master, Mr Smugg (in the August 1997 C.D.), readers may be interested in the 'ancestry' of the character in the Thomson papers. A teacher named Smugg appeared in a long complete story in *The Rover* No. 543 (September 10th 1932), almost exactly a year to the day before

"DETECTIVE JUNE'S STRANGEST CASE" One of the 6 Thrilling Stories Inside.
No. 747. Vol. 29. EVERY FRIDAY. Week Ending February 11th, 1950



Cover picture, *Girls' Crystal* 747, 11th February 1950

The HUMAN BLOODHOUND of ALSOPP ACADEMY



On hands and knees Mr Smugg followed the trail of footprints up to the bush behind which Digger and Springsnak were hiding. The Wenglers knew that Smugg was following them—as they had laid a false trail to kid the master.

(Illustration © D.C. Thomson & Co. Ltd.)

boys from Australia and South Africa, just as Red Circle did as members of the Colonial House. For reference, the title of the story in *Rover* was "The Human Bloodhound of Alsopp Academy".

BOUND TO BE LOVED

by Brian Sayer

Part 2: A Very Sticky Business

Some of the old papers have survived in amazingly good conditions and have weathered the years better than many of those of us who have loved them. There are, alas, papers which have been so well read that they have become badly damaged. Really a case of ripping yarns.

First casualties have been the folds of the covers. As I mentioned in my introduction, the remedy of some readers/collectors has been to reach for brown parcel tape. Transparent adhesive tape - especially the type with a brown, treacle-like glue - often clings lovingly to the old papers. Worst of all, is a fabric type of tape.

So shall we remove it or leave well alone?

Firstly, anyone who has never attempted restoration should be aware that it is very time-consuming and that much patience is required. Some pleasant music, a story tape, or even a rare decent play on BBC Radio will make a welcome background to the job.

Secondly, a librarian told me, when I requested advice on restoration, that no tape whatever should be used because of the chemical changes made to the paper. There was no answer to my observation that a tear in a paper could become worse and that something had to be done to prevent further deterioration.

There is a special bookbinder's tape recommended by DIY *How To Fix Just About Anything* but I have not been able to track it down. There is also a method of making repairs with pasted tissue paper but I do not find this satisfactory.

Where we usually go wrong is to slice off strips of transparent tape, regardless of width or length, and stick it on. The answer is to be meaner than the meanest miser: treat that role of tape as if it cost a fortune.

YOU NEED: One sharp pair of scissors. A pair of tweezers. A good light (preferably an angle-poise lamp). A large roll of the clearest possible transparent tape in a large dispenser. One penknife. (Well, all right, that's what I use but you will adapt to circumstances.)

So let's look at one of the lesser problems. Page three of *The Circus Schoolboy* has a two-inch rip. Press the edges together so, of course, that the lettering is matched. Smooth carefully with the blade of the knife. Snip a thin piece of tape - just enough to bridge the tear. Use the tweezers to place this over the rip. "Scrape" down with the blade. Repeat the process to complete repair, again using the minimum tape necessary.

For a longer rip, I cut off three or four inches of tape and then snip off a sliver. More care, however, is needed to position a long strip so that the torn lettering is joined.

Tiny slivers of tape can be 'held' on the forefinger or left on the blades of the scissors and picked off with the tweezers.

There remains, alas, the problems of earlier repair jobs and ripped cover joins. Next month, like Holmes, I will divulge my methods - a journey for none but the brave . . .

(Some weeks after setting out this restoration piece I was browsing through some back numbers of CD and using that so useful Eric Fayne series *Danny's Diary* to find information about the Popular when I noticed an item headed "New *Magnets* for Old - A Guide to Restoration".

Written by Duncan Langford, it is on page 21 of issue 379 July 1978.

I found the most interesting advice to be the use of a cotton wool pad soaked in carbon tetrachloride to remove sticky tape. For anyone who does not have the CD edition, Mr Langford writes: "Put the *Magnet* onto a thick pad of clean white blotting paper, and slowly dab at the tape (grease stain). Don't worry if your *Magnet* suddenly becomes transparent - it will return to normal when dry. As the tape pulls away, constantly refresh your cotton wool pad. DON'T work in an unventilated room and take great care with coloured covers, as on red *Magnets* the colour runs if you use too much solution."

I have not tried this method yet but it seems an excellent alternative to steaming off the tape.

I agree wholeheartedly with Mr Langford's 1978 observation that "restoration becomes a fascinating part of collecting".)

(To be continued.)

THE WONDERLAND OF LEWIS CARROLL

by Laurence Price

*Ever drifting down the stream -
Lingering in the golden gleam -
Life, what is it but a dream?*

These were the final words of the final verse that concluded the curious adventures of the dream-child Alice in *Through the Looking Glass* (1872) that had commenced in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* in 1865.

One hundred years ago, on January 14th, 1898, the author of these two immortal books, Lewis Carroll, died, aged 65, of a bronchial infection in the family home at Guildford.

Despite his comparatively early death, in many ways the life of Lewis Carroll had seemed to have a charmed and dreamlike quality of its own, that perhaps could only have taken place in the Victorian age.

Lewis Carroll was born Charles Ludwidge Dodgson on January 27th, 1832, in the parsonage of Daresbury in Cheshire. His father, Charles Dodgson, was the curate there, a brilliant academic and cleric, who had taken double firsts in the classics and mathematics at Christ Church, Oxford, and who would later become canon of Ripon and later archdeacon of Richmond. Charles Dodgson had married his first cousin, Frances (Fanny) Lutwidge, who had a patient and gentle nature. She gave birth to eleven children, seven girls and four boys, all of whom would live long lives, of which Charles was the third child and the first son.

The household in which Charles grew up was a genuinely happy one and at times, seemingly idyllic. He later referred to Daresbury in verse as "An island farm, mid seas of corn . . . The happy spot where I was born".

Charles was much loved by his brothers and sisters; it was the warmth he clearly enjoyed with his sisters that surely influenced his choice of girl child friends in his adult years, with one particular friendship that would lead to the glorious books that bear his pen-name.

When Charles was eleven the family moved to Croft in Yorkshire. A year later he boarded at Richmond School, only ten miles away, where he excelled at mathematics and the classics. In January 1846 he went to Rugby where mathematics and divinity were his strong subjects, although his stay there may not have been a particularly happy one, Charles being of a gentle and sensitive nature. In addition, Charles had a stammer and this may have been the subject of ridicule.

During these years the first signs of his literary talents, his poetry and his wit were revealed in various family magazines Charles edited and produced for the amusement of the family. In the last one, *Mischmasch*, which he produced as a young adult between 1855 and 1862, appeared a "Stanza of Anglo-Saxon Poetry" which was an early version of his famous poem "Jabberwocky".

In January 1851, Charles followed in his father's footsteps, and began his studies at Christ Church, Oxford, where, gaining first class honours in mathematics in 1852, he was awarded a Studentship, which allowed him a small stipend and the right to remain in residence at Christ Church all his life, as long as he remained a bachelor. This he did as the Rev. Charles Dodgson, a deacon and a mathematics lecturer. His entry there was, however, marred by family tragedy when his beloved mother suddenly died two days after his arrival.

From 1853 Charles began to keep a diary in which, if the day was a particularly favourable one, he would mark it with a 'white stone' following the habit of the Roman poet, Catullus. On July 4th, 1862, would take place an event that would forever become a 'white stone day' in the annals of English children's literature.

Earlier, during 1855, the new Dean of Christ Church, Henry George Liddell arrived with his family comprised of his formidable wife, Lorina, and their four children, Harry, Lorina, Alice and Edith. In this same year Charles first adopted the name of Lewis Carroll when publishing some poetry, and one year later bought his first camera. His skills with the camera would also establish him as one of the most eminent of Victorian photographers; it was also his passport to meet the little dark-haired Alice Liddell while taking photographs in the Deanery on April 25th, 1856, a day he marked with a white stone in his diary.

From this time on a friendship flourished with the Liddell children, always under the watchful and critical eye of Mrs Liddell, comprising picture-taking, including a charming study of Alice as a 'beggar child', parlour games, stories and boating picnics on the river.

At last came the memorable day of July 4th, 1862; Charles went on a boating trip with the three Liddell girls and his friend, Robinson Duckworth, and ten-year-old Alice demanded that Charles "Tell us a story" on that golden afternoon.

Inventing and composing the story as they rowed along, Charles began: "Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and of having nothing to do...." So was born, as *Alice's Adventures Under Ground*, a personal copy of which was handwritten and illustrated by Charles for Alice, the story that would later be developed and published in July 1865 as the immortal *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, famously illustrated by the great *Punch* artist, Sir John Tenniel. Many trials and tribulations took place over the publishing of the book but that is another story.

What is most important is that through the edicts of that 'Imperious Prima', Alice, Charles Dodgson has given countless generations of children and adults alike a Wonderland of immortal characters and quotations which are in our national psyche, from the White Rabbit to the Hatter and the March Hare; from the Cheshire-Cat and the Duchess to the Queen of Hearts.

The two extracts that follow show how different was Charles's approach to writing a story for children. He subverts, satirises and subtly undermines the type of children's books that boys and girls would have been accustomed to at the time, with their strict morality and stern rules of conduct, full of sermonising, warnings and instructions.

from Chapter 1 - DOWN THE RABBIT-HOLE

There seemed to be no use in waiting by the little door, so she went back to the table, half hoping she might find another key on it, or at any rate a book of rules for shutting people up like telescopes; this time she found a little bottle on it ("which certainly was not here before," said Alice), and tied round the neck of the bottle was a paper label, with the words "DRINK ME" beautifully printed in large letters.

It was all very well to say "Drink me," but the wise little Alice was not going to do *that* in a hurry. "No, I'll look first," she said, "and see whether it's marked '*poison*' or not;" for she had read several nice little stories about children who had got burnt, and eaten up by wild beasts, and other unpleasant things, all because they *would* not remember the simple rules their friends had taught them: such as, that a red-hot poker will burn you if you hold it too long; and that, if you cut your finger *very* deeply with a knife, it usually bleeds; and she had never forgotten that, if you drink much from a bottle marked '*poison*', it is almost sure to disagree with you, sooner or later.

However, this bottle was *not* marked '*poison*', so Alice ventured to taste it, and finding it very nice (it had, in fact, a sort of mixed flavour of cherry-tart, custard, pineapple, roast turkey, toffy, and hot buttered toast), she very soon finished it off . . ."

from Chapter IX - THE MOCK TURTLE'S STORY

"When we were little", the Mock Turtle went on at last, more calmly, though still sobbing a little now and then, "we went to school in the sea. The master was an old Turtle - we used to call him Tortoise -"

"Why did you call him Tortoise, if he wasn't one?" Alice asked.

"We called him Tortoise because he taught us," said the Mock Turtle angrily: "really you are very dull."

“And how many hours a day did you do lessons?” said Alice, in a hurry to change the subject.

“Ten hours the first day,” said the Mock Turtle, “nine the next, and so on.”

“What a curious plan!” exclaimed Alice.

“That’s the reason they’re called lessons,” the Gryphon remarked; “because they lessen from day to day.”

This was quite a new idea to Alice, and she thought it over a little before she made her next remark. “Then the eleventh day must have been a holiday?”

“Of course it was,” said the Mock Turtle.

“And how did you manage on the twelfth?” Alice went on eagerly.

“That’s enough about lessons,” the Gryphon interrupted in a very decided tone; “tell her something about the games now.”

Although we can be misled by film adaptations of *Alice - Tweedledum* or *Tweedledee*, ‘contrariwise’ only appear in *Through the Looking Glass* published in 1872. Like the real Alice, the fictional Alice was growing up in this sequel, and by the time it appeared Charles and Alice, and the other Liddell children, had naturally distanced themselves from each other. One of the most touching aspects of *Looking Glass*, however, is that the delightful character of the White Knight was intended to be Charles himself, escorting Alice until she grew out of childhood. This she does symbolically in the book when she is crowned ‘Queen Alice’ immediately after her meeting with the White Knight. Because of this the words of his farewell to her are immensely touching and full of pathos.



“You’ve only a few yards to go,” he said, “down the hill and over that little brook, and then you’ll be a Queen - but you’ll stay and see me off first?” he added, as Alice turned with an eager look in the direction to which he pointed. “I shan’t be long. You’ll wait and wave your handkerchief when I get to that turn in the road! I think it’ll encourage me, you see.”

On April Fool’s Day in 1876, Charles published his great nonsense poem *The Hunting of the Snark* which recounts the extraordinary adventures of the Bellman and his odd companions on their voyage to discover the Snark. Far less successful were the later books *Sylvie and Bruno* (1889) and *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded* (1893) which, although quite charmingly illustrated by Harry Furniss, lack the intrinsic charm and wit of the *Alice* books and are sadly

regarded by many as almost unreadable today. He also published serious verse and several books on mathematics and logic. As previously mentioned, he has retained his position as a great pioneer photographer, mainly of portraits and children, although he suddenly gave up taking photographs in 1880.

Both by residing at Christ Church and being an accomplished photographer Charles had many opportunities to meet and mingle with both the famous and the celebrities of his time. These included such notables as Tennyson and members of the Pre-Raphaelite circle including John Everett Millais, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Christina Rossetti; also the Scottish author, George MacDonald, and the actress, Ellen Terry. Mark Twain even met him once. Amongst the members of the Royal Family, he interviewed the Prince of Wales and succeeded in photographing Queen Victoria's youngest son, Prince Leopold, and Frederick, the Crown Prince of Denmark. He sent a bound presentation copy of *Alice* to Princess Beatrice, the Queen's youngest daughter.

Although a very sensitive man, Charles could, on occasion, be insensitive to others and make himself unpopular. He had first met Tennyson in 1857 but in 1870 he succeeded in slighting the poet over a poem Tennyson wished withheld and, despite Charles sending him a copy of *Looking Glass* as a 'peace offering', the breach was never healed. For circumstances never exactly specified this would also sadly be the case with Alice and the other Liddell children, all visits, photography and outings ceasing abruptly at the end of June 1863, probably on the insistence of Mrs Liddell.

One aspect of Charles that never failed to charm, however, were his delightful letters to his child-friends; many are on a par with the *Alice* books.

To Mary MacDonald

May 23, 1864

My Dear Child,

It's been so frightfully hot here that I've been almost too weak to hold a pen, and even if I had been able, there was no ink - it had all evaporated into a cloud of black steam, and in that state it has been floating about the room, inking the walls and ceiling until they're hardly fit to be seen: to-day it is cooler, and a little has come back into the ink-bottle in the form of black snow - there will soon be enough for me to write and order those photographs your Mamma wants.....

To Edith Blackmore

January 27, 1882

My Dear Edith,

Many thanks for your letter, and painted crocus, and paper-rack. I am very sorry your father is no better: when the summer comes, I think it would be a good thing if you advise him (you know how much he depends on your advice) to come to Eastbourne. Then sometimes I shall have the pleasure of seeing you, with my opera-glass, at the other end of the beach: and I shall be able to say "There's Edith: I can see *her*: but I shall go home again if she looks this way, for fear of her seeing *me*." And what do you think I am going to do for my birthday treat? *A whole plum-pudding!* It is to be about the size of four people to eat: and I shall eat it in my room, *all by myself!* The doctor says he is afraid I shall be ill: but I simply say "*Nonsense!*"

This letter displays one of the many paradoxes of Charles Dodgson; he had a personal wish for privacy and yet would sometimes hound others for attention. He liked to obtain autographs of the famous but would ignore letters addressed to 'Lewis Carroll'; he got

over this sensitive matter with his important child friends who wrote to Lewis Carroll by referring to him impersonally or as 'my friend'. He always signed his letters with his real name or his initials.

In a letter to Gaynor Simpson on December 27, 1873, he reminded her that his 'name was spelt with a "G", that is to say "Dodgson" . . .' and that 'if you do it again, I shall call you "'aynor.'" Could you live happy with such a name . . . ?'

All written in good spirit, of course, and the children he wrote to loved and cherished his letters. In the same way, I believe, we continue to love and cherish his *Alice* books today.

Charles had many child friends throughout his life but there truly was never so close a bond as between that remarkable little girl, Alice Liddell, and the shy Oxford don, and never so wonderful a 'white stone day' as that July boat trip on a golden afternoon in 1862.

*Alice! A childish story take,
And, with a gentle hand
Lay it where Childhood's dreams are twined
In Memory's mystic band,
Like pilgrim's wither'd wreath of flowers
Pluck'd in a far-off land.*

FRANK NUGENT Part II

by Peter Mahony

From 1918 onwards, Frank Nugent's role became increasingly 'second fiddle'. Wharton's leadership qualities - and his displays of temperament - made him the 'star'; Cherry's boisterousness instigated most of the fun; Bull's solid common-sense was a great leveller - though sometimes causing friction; while the self-effacing Hurree Singh tended to 'come out strong' when knotty problems required hard-thought solutions. Poor old Nugent had little to do but tag along as 'one of the gang'. Indeed, he could have become a complete nonentity - but for two recurring factors.

These were brother Dicky and bosom chum Harry Wharton. Dicky's escapades regularly presented Frank with difficulties: less often, Wharton's temperament created some very trying episodes.

Frank 'protected' Dicky too much, shielding him from the just consequences of his peccadilloes. In this, he took his cue from his parents - particularly his mother. If Johnny Bull's frequently offered advice - to give Dicky a good licking - had been taken by Frank, his minor could well have been less troublesome. Frank, however, was probably afraid of parental disapproval, for Master Richard was always ready to gripe to Mummy about his unkind major.

This easy-going streak of Frank's also allowed Wharton & Co. to exploit him. Though he may not have consciously done so, Harry regularly solved problems of team selection by 'dropping' Nugent in favour of the Remove's latest 'star' acquisition. Da Costa and Stacey at cricket; Carter, Tracy and Wilmot at football; all put Frank's place in jeopardy. By excluding Frank, Wharton avoided clashes with Ogilvy, Russell, Penfold etc. about the rights and wrongs of his choices. Most people prefer a quiet life and Wharton, perhaps subconsciously, traded on Nugent's good nature in this respect.

Another indication of Nugent's 'doormat' qualities was his acceptance of the secretary/treasurer post for the Remove clubs. Most organisations depend on good-tempered, painstaking members to shoulder the responsibilities. Star players like Wharton

(who expect to captain the teams) and Cherry (who 'haven't the head' for correspondence and collecting 'subs') are often adept at persuading mild-mannered friends to assume the administrative chores. The Famous Five were 'power-conscious' enough not to let this vital role be filled by another Removite. The rather tactless Bull and the quaintly-spoken 'Inky' were not really suitable - so Frank had to do it to keep it 'in the Co.' His reward should have been a regular place in the teams, but circumstances often made it precarious.

Skinner and others were ever ready to pick holes in Wharton's teams. The omission of Bolsover Major from the football was always a bone of contention. Vernon-Smith would occasionally push Tom Redwing's claims. The

regulars in the Remove XIs were Wharton, Cherry, Vernon-Smith, Todd, Field, Brown, Linley, Bull and Singh. That left two places to be contested by Nugent, Ogilvy, Russell, Penfold, Redwing, Bolsover, Hazeldene etc. As a cricketer, Nugent was probably the best of these, but Penfold, Ogilvy, Bolsover and Redwing must have been more robust footballers. Wharton probably wished that Frank's form was not quite so border-line: it would have made life easier all round.

(Charles Hamilton missed a trick or two here. Bull, at cricket, and Singh, at football, strike me as fringe players like Nugent & Co. If each had been occasionally omitted in favour of Nugent, the rifts in the Co. could have been more varied and interesting.)

Patient acquiescence does not always command the respect of one's friends. Frank Nugent was, to a fair extent, 'put upon' by Wharton, Cherry and Bull. Hurree Singh, wiser and more perceptive than the others, was more in tune with Nugent.

Another drawback of Frank's was his lack of physique. In his first encounter with Wharton, his frailty as a swimmer left him obligated to his rescuer. The odd fights in which he engaged generally found him wanting. At various times he was 'let off' by Wharton and Vernon-Smith - a humiliating experience for a fellow set upon scrapping. He certainly could not handle Bolsover and Bulstrode, and may have had trouble tackling someone like Russell or Newland.



Specially drawn by C.H. Chapman for C.D. 191, November 1962

In *Magnet* 470, Frank did win a fight - against Fisher T. Fish! The Yankee thought he was 'on to a good thing' because Nugent had run away from a scrap with Highcliffe. Challenging a funk to a fight seemed a good way for Fishy to acquire kudos. Unfortunately, Nugent, incensed by his form-mates' contempt, was only too keen to vindicate himself. Poor old Fishy collected a severe hiding.

Actually, the whole affair arose from a misunderstanding. Nugent had run off to assist Dick Trumper who had been separately attached by Pon & Co. Even his friends thought he had funked and Frank got on the 'high horse' in true Wharton style. Apologies all round set matters right, though Bolsover uttered some blunt home truths in the process, viz:

"Well, I'm sorry," said Bolsover Major. "I'll tell Nugent so. I don't see why he couldn't have explained, all the same."

"Because you put his back up at the start!" growled Wharton. "I'd have done the same in his place."

"Yes, you would; you're a touchy ass!" said Bolsover. "But I should have expected more sense from Nugent."

Even the blustering Bolsover respected Frank's customary serenity!

An episode which exposed Frank's lack of strength came in the Gideon Gaunt series (*Magnets* 755-759). Cruising on the "Silver Scud", Lord Mauleverer received a demand for £10,000. Gaunt threatened the lives of Mauly's friends if the cash was not forthcoming. First, Sir Jimmy Vivian was chloroformed almost to death - he had to be put ashore for treatment. Nugent was the next victim - apparently by mistake.

A midnight jape on Billy Bunter was planned. It fell to Frank to carry it out. In the dark, he encountered a shadowy figure near the door of Mauleverer's cabin. He was seized by the throat and throttled unconscious. Gaunt was a powerful ruffian, but anyone else on the cruise - even Bunter - would have made a noisy resistance. Poor old Nugent succumbed with hardly a squeak.

Frank's courage, however, was never lacking - especially when Dicky needed 'protection'. In *Magnet* 808 ("A Split in the Co.") Nugent took drastic action against Aubrey Angel. Aubrey had given Dicky a cigarette. Nugent made Aubrey eat it!

Temple & Co. took a dim view of Angel's capitulation - though what he could have done against the Famous Five together is difficult to surmise. 'Encouraged' by his form-mates Angel challenged Frank to a scrap. Bigger and heavier, Aubrey got lucky, dropping Nugent in the second round. Frank recovered and retaliated in the third - Angel quickly lost interest. Nevertheless, Nugent had been floored by a weedy coward - scrapping was not really his *forte*.

This was humiliatingly brought home in the first "Wharton's Downfall" series (*Magnets* 879-888). A rift in the Co. - entirely due to Wharton's vagaries - parted them at Christmas-time. A telegram from Harry to Frank, extending the olive branch, fell into Bunter's hands and was never delivered. Wharton, at an inn near Nugent's home, waited for a reply which never came. When they did inadvertently meet, Wharton snubbed the Co.

Frank took exception to this; tackled Wharton in a secluded spot and struck the first blow. He was floored twice, then Wharton, unwilling to hammer a weak adversary, contented himself with defence until Nugent was exhausted. Humiliated, Frank had to concede defeat: and he refused to make it up when Bunter's interference was discovered.

"Do you think a few words will set it right, as soon as it occurs to you that you've been a hasty, hot-tempered fool?"

The punching of Nugent's head had deprived him of his usual tolerance.

Back at Greyfriars, Frank moved into Study No. 14 with Johnny Bull & Co. The rift widened, with Wharton venting his resentment through football team selection. As Harry went from bad to worse, Nugent, having had time to reflect, began to worry about his erstwhile chum. When Wharton neglected an imposition from Mr. Quelch, Frank wrote the lines and saved him from punishment. He was not thanked for his pains!

Eventually the rift was healed, but it was Frank who had to extend the olive branch. The friendship in Study No. 1 revived because of Nugent's almost womanly understanding. Wharton never really appreciated Frank's good-nature.

In *Magnets* 1239-40, Dicky Nugent kicked over the traces again. Eric Carlow, a new boy, was accidentally knocked flat by the young rascal as he fled from Horace Coker. Expecting an apology, all Carlow got was a lot of 'lip', so he decided to teach the fag a lesson. Frank arrived during the fracas and jumped to the conclusion that 'poor Dicky' was being bullied. He went for Carlow and a scrap ensued.

Yet again, Nugent had bitten off too much. Carlow gave him a pasting. Frank, desperate not to lose in front of his jeering minor ("You're not much of a scrapper old chap, but go it!"), strove beyond his capacity - and paid the price. Dicky's brotherly love did not extend to helping his stricken major home. Why did Frank ever bother with the young rascal?

A feud developed. (Echoes of the Manners/Roylance feud at St. Jim's!) Carlow was billeted in Study No. 1. The rest of the Co. found him affable. Nugent resented him bitterly.

Matters got worse when Carlow helped Dicky with his form work. Nugent rebuked Dicky for seeking help from a 'rotter'. Dicky's response was disconcerting:

"You had to butt in. I never asked you to. I barged the chap over and banged his napper on the ground. He was wild, and so would any fellow have been. But you had to butt in, without knowing anything, making out I was a poor little kid being bullied, and his big brother coming to the rescue. YAH!"

So much for filial gratitude.

Instead of burying the hatchet, Nugent intensified his animosity. Carlow's background - he had been a hotel boot-boy - became known to Nugent and he ordered the 'impostor' from his study. This petty act became gossip and Carlow had a rough time from the Remove's malicious section. This brought some more plain speaking for Frank, first from Johnny Bull:

"You pitched into him over your minor; Dicky was to blame; and you can't stand having made an ass of yourself!"

Then from Smithy:

"What's the good of being a silly snob? If Nugent was down on him for cleaning boots for a living, Nugent is a silly ass and ought to be jolly well ashamed of himself!"

"It was nothing of the kind! Do you think I care two straws about such rot?"

"All serene," grinned the Bounder. "It wasn't the boot-cleaning. It was the licking you couldn't get over."

Nugent found himself backed by fellows like Bunter and Skinner - not a pleasant experience for a normally straight guy!

The enmity was healed by heroism. Dicky, his recklessness working overtime, fell in the river. Carlow went to his rescue, but both would have drowned in the weir if Frank, fetched by Gatty and Myers, had not dived in with a rope. The three were hauled to the bank - and the feud was over.

The corrupting influence of Dicky was beginning to affect Frank. He had been rather severe on Aubrey Angel - which perhaps did not matter; his reaction towards Carlow had been petty and childish. Some of Dicky's traits were appearing in the older Nugent.

In a very short time, Master Richard was in trouble again. (*Magnet* 1243 "A Brother's Sacrifice".) Mr Twigg, pleasantly surprised by an excellent Latin exercise from Dicky, investigated and found that Frank had done it for him. (As usual, Frank had lacked the moral fibre to make Dicky work the exercise with him.) Both Nugents were caned for "cheating".

Dicky went on the vengeance trail. He collected a bag of soot to bonnet Mr Twigg. Frank intervened, took the soot away, and, for once, gave Dicky a deserved thumping.

Enter W.G. Bunter, also bent on revenge. Nugent had banged his head on the wall for tuck-raiding. Bunter bagged the soot and went hunting in the dark quad for Nugent. Being Bunter, he got the wrong man - Mr Twigg!

Both Nugents were hauled before the Head. Mr Twigg accused Dicky, whose threats of vengeance had been too vocal. Dicky's defence was that Frank had taken the soot away, so suspicion shifted to Nugent major. He too had an apparent grudge against Twigg. Dicky, terrified by the prospect of expulsion, ran true to 'spoilt brat' form:

"You're trying to put it on me, and you did it - you did it, and you know you did!"

Nugent, flabbergasted, reacted insanely. Rather than rebut the accusation, he admitted it! The emotional influence of Mrs Nugent - any sacrifice must be made to protect Dicky - prevailed. Why the Nugents should be less distressed by Frank's expulsion rather than Dicky's is hard to understand - but Frank certainly believed that would be the case. So he told lies and went to the punishment-room. The only satisfactory outcome was a severe thrashing for Dicky for planning the assault in the first place.

Fortunately for Frank, Hurree Singh investigated - and brought the offence home to Bunter. William George, under duress, made a clean breast of it to Dr Locke. Frank was exonerated; Bunter got 'six'; Dicky was shame-facedly apologetic.

This episode was the least savoury of all the 'Dicky Nugent' ones. After this callous piece of selfishness, Frank had every justification in washing his hands of the young reprobate. Perhaps his 'confession' had been a subconscious attempt to get shot of Dicky. Expulsion may have been a price worth paying to be relieved of the 'older brother' responsibility. If the Famous Five 'put upon' Frank from time to time, his parents certainly did it continually.

More trouble arose during the second "Wharton's Downfall" series (*Magnets* 1294-95). Wharton's arrogant trouble-making had already created a rift - Frank was no longer residing in No. 1. Dicky, believing gossip about Wharton's 'rorty' behaviour, asked Harry to lend him a pound to back Bonny Bunion. As the dear child had been smoking in Study No. 1 when Wharton came in to tea, Harry refused to lend him the money. Instead he gave him a shaking - and had his shin hacked. Frank arrived - late, as usual - and jumped to his customary mistaken conclusion.

This time the proceedings were rather different. Nugent thrashed Dicky with a fives bat for possessing cigarettes and a sporting paper - quite a new departure for 'Nanny' Frank. Then, he spoiled it all by accusing Wharton of leading "a silly kid" astray. Ordered to "Put up your hands", Harry refused - and Frank slapped his face.

Wharton, though at odds with the Co., jibbed at fighting his former best friend - especially over a misapprehension. He stubbornly refused to fight - and Frank uttered some unworthy taunts. For a fellow ill-equipped for scrapping, Nugent had an unhappy knack of picking fights with formidable opponents.

While the nastier elements of the Remove were calling Wharton a funk, Dicky helped himself to a pound from Wingate's desk. (Of course, he was only 'borrowing' it!) He plunged on Bonny Bunion - and lost. After failing to raise the wind from Frank, the dear boy went to Wharton. Scandalised, Harry paid up to save the young reprobate: the £1 was restored to Wingate's desk.

Catching Dicky in Study No. 1 again, Frank proposed to take him to the Head and complain of Wharton's 'evil influence'. Terrified, the fag blurted out the sorry tale. Nugent, reproaching himself for his unworthy suspicions, apologised to Wharton - and got short shrift. The rift dragged on - but really it was more Nugent's fault this time. His sense of right and wrong always became blurred when Dicky was involved - and he never seemed to learn.

An almost identical clash arose with Vernon-Smith (*Magnets* 1319-20). The original issue was a selection squabble. Smithy, pushing Redwing's cricketing claims, rated Nugent as 'no good'. Wharton did not agree. The Bounder stamped out of Study No. 1 to find Dicky grinning at him in the passage. He smacked the fag's head. Nugent, rushing to the rescue, floored Smithy. Wharton and Cherry prevented a full-scale scrap - but the seed was sown.

Later, in the Rag, Vernon-Smith loudly proclaimed: "He's squeezed into the team, and squeezed a better man out, because he happens to be Wharton's pal . . ." Frank called Smithy a liar - then punched his nose. Furious, the Bounder went for the 'milksop'. A chance remark from Wibley, opining that Smithy intended to 'crock' Nugent for the match, caused the Bounder to haul off - but Nugent was not to be denied.

Vernon-Smith, concentrating on defence, outboxed Nugent. Exhausted by futile attacking, Frank gave up the ridiculous contest and quitted the Rag amid sardonic guffaws.

Meanwhile, Dicky hit trouble again. £1, sent to him by an indulgent uncle, was confiscated by Mr Twigg, as too large a sum for a fag to have as pocket-money. (What was it about Dicky that made his relatives spoil him so? He must have been a charmer to remain so popular in his family circle. Frank never seemed to get a fraction of the attention showered on Dicky.)

The sweet lad burgled Twigg's desk, found only a fiver - and took it in lieu of his £1. His intention was to change it and return £4 to the desk. Unfortunately the fiver blew away out of the window - and Dicky panicked.

Smithy spotted an ashen-faced Dicky leaving Study No. 1. Investigating, he discovered a letter to Frank, telling the story. Dicky's solution was to run away from school! Smithy followed him, turned him back and gave him a fiver to restore to Twigg's desk.

This emergency caused Smithy to miss the final stages of the St. Jude's match. Greyfriars lost and Smithy was sent to Coventry for deserting his side. The subsequent proceedings involved Nugent lecturing Dicky about consorting with a 'bounder in Coventry'! Dicky, as usual, taunted his brother by telling the full story. Frank had to apologise to Smithy. Yet again his judgement in a 'Dicky' situation had been faulty.

The last variation on the 'Dicky' theme came in *Magnet* 1497 ("His Scapegrace Brother"). Price of the Fifth 'took up' Master Richard - really to use him as a go-between to the Cross Keys and the Three Fishers. Frank became aware of the situation and, for once, took drastic action.

Dicky was given a hefty smacking until he surrendered a pack of smuggled cigarettes. Then Frank paid Price a visit - and, after a forthright slanging match, was whacked by Price with a cane. Hilton, Price's studymate, had to chip in to rescue Nugent.

Seething, Frank told his friends and the Co. paid Price a visit. While the others held Hilton and Price, Nugent searched Price's papers and impounded a gambling 'system'. His grim intention was to blackmail Price into leaving Dicky alone.

The fag, furious at his major's interference with his 'friend in the Fifth', called his major a 'thief'. (Seeing that Dicky on at least three occasions had helped himself to other people's money, this was pretty rich!) Frank, cut to the quick, gave Dicky a thorough licking - the worm was really turning in this yarn.

Determined to bring Price to heel, Frank spread himself. He publicly humiliated Price, who believed that Nugent would expose the 'system' to Mr Prout if he did not toe the line. Bob Cherry, an embarrassed witness, told Frank: "This won't do." - and was sneered at in reply. Nugent's determination to 'save' Dicky was leading him into corrupt practices.

Coker, another witness of Price's humiliation, took a hand - with Price. He gave the waster a hammering for 'kow-towing to juniors'. The ill-used Price vented his spleen on Dicky! That young gentleman complained to Frank - and asked him for the 'system' so that he could 'shop' Price to Prout.

Nugent, whose conscience was pricking, threatened Dicky with another licking. Then he restored the paper to Price - and Dicky lost his 'friend in the Fifth'. The drastic measures used in this yarn worked much better than all Nugent's pussy-footing of previous episodes. Never again did Nugent minor kick over the traces. Johnny Bull's 'give him a licking' solution had been vindicated.

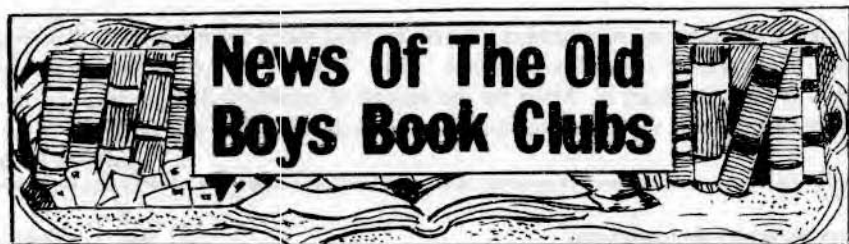
So there we have it - the Frank Nugent saga. Cheerful and humorous in the early *Magnet* days, he became increasingly careworn and introverted as the stories progressed. Buttering Wharton's ego; keeping the peace in the Co.; doing penance for Dicky's sins; suffering disappointments at games; enduring defeats in stand-up fights - all these blighted his young life. Surprisingly, Frank retained his easy-going nature most of the time.

Many friendships depend on one person working hard to keep them going. The Famous Five could have foundered altogether, if Frank had not kept Wharton and Bull in check. Bob Cherry and Hurree Singh were always affable, but the other two made regular waves. Charles Hamilton relied heavily on the Nugent character to keep the balance in the Co. Ever-present from *Magnet* No. 1, Frank Nugent was essential to the consistency and the continuity of the Greyfriars saga.

Postscript

An interesting comparison can be made between Frank Nugent and Marjorie Hazeldene. Both 'nannied' wastrel brothers. Both expected the stronger Harry Wharton to be as keen as they were to 'save the sinners'. Neither considered their brother blameworthy. As a polite young gentleman, Harry could not tell Marjorie what he really thought of Peter Hazeldene (though I'll bet Tom Merry would have done!). With Frank, Harry was very tolerant, but the urge to make him confront Dicky's iniquity must have been overwhelming at times.

Hamilton really knew his Nugents and Hazeldenes. There are mothers - and fathers - who prefer one of their offspring to the others; who refused to credit adverse reports about their favourites; and who expect everyone else to place the same value on their darlings. They are almost impossible to convince otherwise - as a retired schoolmaster, I know!



NORTHERN O.B.B.C.

The February meeting was devoted to members reading from and speaking about their favourite books. As expected the twelve present brought a varied selection which included Alison Utley's *Sam Pig* stories, *The Diary of a Nobody*, Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, Tennyson, Richard Jefferies etc. The time passed so quickly that not everybody could present their item but we may hold a similar meeting in the future. **Paul Galvin**

LONDON O.B.B.C.

The February meeting took place on Sunday 8th at the Chingford Horticultural Society Hall.

Members were treated to a packed programme, which began with another of Cliff Maddock's interesting and distinctly personal talks on collecting. This time, he spoke about his collection of picture postcards and members were able to peruse them at their leisure.

An excellent tea was made particularly memorable by a superlative raspberry and jelly dessert which met with the full approval of the assembled throng. It would surely have earned the William George Bunter seal of approval!

Following Bill Bradford's Memory Lane reading, members were treated to a Hamiltonian charivari featuring Roger Jenkins discussing the Greyfriars Fifth Form, Mark Taha's Greyfriars Quiz and Roy Parsons reading from *The Magnet*.

Armchair detective Ernest Dudley will be joining us at the home of Duncan Harper in Acton on March 8th. **Vic Pratt**

CAMBRIDGE CLUB

For our February meeting we met at the Linton village home of our chairman, Roy Whiskin.

After our usual short business meeting, Roy talked about the Amalgamated Press's booklet comics of the early 1950s - *Cowboy Comics* and *Thriller Comics*. These were monthly, 64 page, picture strip pocket books. The 468 cowboy stories published starred such characters as Kit Carson, Buck Jones, Tim Holt, Davy Crockett and Lucky Lannagan, and in the main by artists such as Geoff Champion and Eric Parker.

The monthly *Cowboy* publication was accompanied by an Annual for seven years, although these were all typical AP compilations, in this case consisting of material culled from *Knockout*.

The similarly styled booklet *Thriller Comics Library* began in 1951. These featured historical swashbuckling yarns, which metamorphosed into the *War Picture Library* in 1963. Both titles benefited from AP's takeover of the *Sun/Comet* comics. The pocket book format for juvenile publications survives to this day.

Later, Keith Hodkinson presented a recent location video recording he had been able to make at *Heartbeat's* Goathland village. This was intercut with the scenes being recorded as ITV broadcast it. More for the interest of members than nostalgia about the 1960s North Yorkshire village bobby, this item was enthusiastically received.

Adrian Perkins

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

by Mary Cadogan

Thrones, Dominations by Dorothy L. Sayers & Jill Paton Walsh (Hodder & Stoughton £14.99)

Biggles Does Some Homework by Captain W.E. Johns (Published by Norman Wright and Jennifer Schofield, £20.50 inc. p. & p.)

It is a sad and tantalizing fact that several of our favourite authors have died without being able to finish some work of fiction on which they had embarked. We now have access to two incomplete novels from immensely popular authors - Dorothy L. Sayers and Captain W.E. Johns.

The question of what to do with such uncompleted manuscripts is a tricky one. Works 'by other hands' can at best be uninspiring, and at worst travesties. However, *Thrones, Dominations* and *Biggles Does Some Homework* both offer unsullied satisfactions.

A few unrevised chapters of Sayers' *Thrones, Dominations* apparently remained in the safe of her agents from the end of the 1930s until fairly recently when they were discovered. Two reasons why the author abandoned the work are given. The book is set in 1936, and includes more than passing reference to public and royal events and their impact; at the end of that year came the abdication of Edward VIII which not only disturbed the thrust of the story but, if Sayers were then to complete it, might have involved her in political comment and controversy which she considered unacceptable. Leaving the manuscript aside, at least for the time being, she became absorbed in writing religious drama (many of us remember the 1940s radio production of her *The Man Born To Be King*) and then, over several years, to translating Dante's *Divina Commedia*.

She died in 1957, with the chapters still buried in that safe. Fortunately these were accompanied by Sayers' notes indicating 'whodunit' and a 'somewhat runic' plot-diagram. From all this Jill Paton Walsh, a distinguished writer of children's books as well as of historical and detective novels for adults, has produced a triumph; a beautifully crafted murder mystery which is enriched by a wealth of literary allusion and intelligent development of characters and relationships worthy of Dorothy L. Sayers herself. Above all, in re-activating the romance and true partnership of Lord Peter Wimsey and Harriet Vane, Jill Paton Walsh has been totally true to the spirit of Sayers' previous books in the saga. This is indeed a volume to buy, beg or borrow.

As a further indulgence, why not treat yourselves to Hodder's double-cassette recording of the story, read by Edward Petherbridge (who played Lord Peter in the most recently televised television version of one or two of the books). Petherbridge is a sensitive reader and an excellent Wimsey. I enjoyed comparing his performance with that of Ian

Carmichael, whose unabridged readings of several Lord Peter stories (issued by Chivers Audio Books) are amongst my regular delights.

In publishing W.E. Johns' incomplete final book *Biggles Does Some Homework*, Norman Wright and Jennifer Schofield have not attempted to finish the story which, on Johns' sudden death in 1968, was abandoned in mid-sentence in Chapter 12. They have, however, published their own outline of how the adventure might have developed and ended. In addition they include some notes left by Johns with the manuscript which provide insights into how he wrote and revised his work. As the publishers say in their Introduction: 'We lean over Johns' shoulder and watch him playing with different names for his characters, and joking at his own lack of decision . . .'

An additional bonus is the publication of the first and last pages of the story in facsimile. To see Johns' own handwritten version of that cut-off-in-mid-sentence final page is indeed touching.

It would be inappropriate here to give away details of either Johns' narrative, or of Norman and Jennifer's suggested ending. This book is an undoubted collectors' item which includes wonderfully atmospheric illustrations by Andrew Skilleter. Unfortunately I have to strike a warning note. This limited edition is fast selling out - so before ordering and sending remittances please check first with Norman Wright (telephone number 01923-232383) that the book is still available. (If it is not I do hope that it may at least find its way into one or other of the O.B.B.C. libraries.)

Jennifer Schofield, as well as being Johns' biographer, also edits the twice-yearly *Biggles Flies Again*. Details of how to obtain this magazine are obtainable from Marie Scofield, 3 Hunters Way, Springfield, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 6FL.

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(Anglo American magazine Co.

London) nd circa early 50s. No.4

Judy The Guide. VG- £3.00

Schoolboys Own LibraryIssues by Owen Conquest**278** Follow Uncle James. Taped

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347 Chums of the Open Rd.

Spine/edge taped else VG £4.50.

368 Rookwood Calling. Spine

taped else VG+ £5.50.

380 Rookwood Ragers. Spine

taped, cover chip. £4.50

389 Rival Guys of Rookwood.

Spine taped else VG £5.50

389 Rival Guys of Rookwood.

Covers ragged at edges, spine

taped. £3.00.

**The Enid Blyton Literary Society Day:
May 9th 1998**
at
**The Gade Theatre, Watersmeet, High Street,
Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire**

For the Sixth Annual Enid Blyton Day we believe we have put together a great programme every bit as entertaining and interesting as that at last year's Centenary Enid Blyton Day. Our speakers include **Imogen Smallwood** (Enid Blyton's younger daughter) **Pam Ally** (from The Enid Blyton Company) **Robert Tyndall** ((The Noddy artist who took over from Beek), **George Greenfield** (Enid's Literary Agent) and **Gary Russell** (who played Dick in the 1978 TV series). In addition we have six major dealers in children's books and ephemera who will be displaying a huge range of collectables - so if you want to add to your collection the Day is a must.

The Day will offer the usual mix of talks with plenty of time to chat to fellow enthusiasts and browse the dealers' stalls. As usual there will be a display of Blyton related items.

The Gade Theatre is a comfortable, modern venue with good acoustics and air-conditioning situated in the small Hertfordshire town of Rickmansworth within easy access from both the M25 and the M1. There is plenty of free parking available on Saturdays.

Tickets for the 1998 Enid Blyton Literary Society Day cost £8.00 which includes the special programme booklet as well as morning and afternoon tea or coffee.

To obtain your tickets send a cheque, made payable to: The Enid Blyton Literary Society, to:

Tony Summerfield, 93 Milford Hill, Salisbury, Wilts SP1 2QL

The Society also publishes a bi-annual Journal of some 44 pages. For a subscription to numbers 4 and 5 send a cheque for £3.50 to the above address.

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