

STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Vol. 58

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JOHN HUNTER'S THRILLING STORY OF THE GUNMAN GANGS

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STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Editor: MARY CADOGAN

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COLLECTORS' DIGEST

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The Editor's Chat



As I write this Editorial for our Spring edition, the weather is bitterly cold, and snowflakes are falling - suggesting the background for a traditional Christmas number rather than an Easter one!

However, at this time of year there is always, somehow, a lift in the air, which is, I suppose, the sign that Spring is not far away. New life and youth and freshness typify the season, and it often seems to me that our CD, despite its long-running nature and nostalgic quality, also embodies this spirit of young life and promise. Many of us - its readers - are, despite external signs of ageing, still young at

heart, and surely the heroes and heroines of our beloved childhood books and story-papers help to keep us so. I think you will agree that this edition of the CD covers a wonderfully wide range of comment about favourite, and lesser-known, old books and stories.

Over the decades the CD has brimmed to over-flowing with facts, figures and memories. Often a half-remembered article comes to mind, and we wish we could recall exactly when it appeared so that we could re-read it. This prompts me to recommend again to you the extremely comprehensive Indexes (or Indices) which Peter McCall has produced for the monthly CD and for the Annual (see the announcement on page 2). With this you will be saved the frustration of being unable to find long-ago published articles and features.

Happy Browsing!

MARY CADOGAN.

FRANK RICHARDS AND THE SUFFRAGETTES

by Jack Wilson

The First World War had actually started when Magnet 341 was published on 22nd August 1914. The story was entitled "Wild Women at Greyfriars", and featured the militant antics of a Suffragette, Miss Zenobia Boxer and her colleagues, who blew up part of the old tower and ruined both the senior and junior cricket pitches at Greyfriars. In actual fact the real Suffragettes, under the leadership of the Pankhursts, abandoned their campaign and threw their weight behind the war-effort, which ironically earned women the vote after the war.

What struck me about the story was Charles Hamilton's obvious hostility to the Suffragettes, which led me to consult Mary Cadogan's excellent "Frank Richards - The Chap Behind The Chums". I found that Mary had devoted a whole chapter to Charles Hamilton's treatment of women in his stories, entitled "Sweet Heroines and Shrieking Suffragettes". The sweet heroines were Gussy's Cousin Ethel in the Gem, and Marjorie Hazeldene and chums from Cliff House in the Magnet. The Shrieking Suffragettes fell into his treatment of older women, who were inevitably portrayed as silly and simpering, or right battleaxes!! We must remember that he remained a bachelor all his life.

Mary states that the campaign for women's suffrage is given a far more sympathetic voice in the Magnet than in the Gem, almost certainly because the Magnet stories were written before the peak of militancy had been reached. Magnet 341 is obviously the exception to the rule, as Miss Boxer and her friends were very militant!! The story opens with Harry Wharton and his pals saving Miss Boxer from a mob who were about to throw her in the river. Upon returning to school, in a dishevelled state, the boys bump into the Head, who is about to cane them for fighting with the locals, only to be saved by the intervention of Mr Quelch, who witnessed the saving of Miss Boxer. Her thanks is to spread her militant tactics into the grounds of Greyfriars.

Whilst most of the school is out suffragette watching, Billy Bunter takes advantage of the fact that the studies are deserted to go on the raid to end all raids. He eats so much that upon their return, the juniors find the larders are bare, and Bunter has eaten so much that he is ill and unable to eat any more. The punishment is in keeping with the thrust of the suffragette story, he is forced fed. In practice I suppose there would have been a real fear of choking him to death!

Loder, the bullying prefect comes across the scene, and confiscates the remaining tuck. Loder's uncle is a Member of Parliament, and so Loder is judged a fair target for the suffragettes. His novel punishment takes the form of a ragging by three of the juniors skilfully made up as suffragettes attacking him in his study.

Fresh from this triumph, the juniors decide to use Billy Bunter's gift of ventriloquism to disrupt Miss Boxer's "Votes For Women" public meeting in the Assembly Rooms, with hilarious results.

But what led to my view that Charles Hamilton did not have a high opinion of the suffragettes? The following passages:-



"Dear me! I assure you——!" said Mr. Quelch, feebly. "Away!" Miss Bunkhurst made a lunge with the tongs, and Mr. Quelch sprang back. "Base tyrant! Away!" cried the wild woman. (See Chapter 2.)

"Miss Boxer was resolute. It needed only one glance at her square jaw to see how resolute she was. It was a bold man indeed who would have ventured to oppose Miss Boxer in anything. Perhaps that was one reason why she was still Miss Boxer".

The crowd responded to her speech with:-

"Go and look arter yer old man" and

"Who's mindin' the bloomin' baby?"

The Greyfriars fellows "had read and heard of the peculiar activities of the gentle ladies who burn houses and blow up churches by way of demonstrating their fitness for the franchise".

At the public meeting the police were there to protect the suffragettes. "These slaves of a corrupt and cowardly Government, as Miss Boxer described them, had their uses after all". The women were "dressed in weird colours, and all of them

hampered in their movements by uncomfortably tight skirts (? hobble skirts) - that last and crowning proof of the superiority of feminine intelligence".

Despite its political overtones I found it an unusual, but highly enjoyable story.

A Slight Sense of déjà vu!

by

Margery Woods

When the wartime paper shortage of the forties spelled the doom of so many magazines and comics the A.P. team of writers must have been hit by loss of what had been a regular income. The profession of authorship can be precarious, and the upheaval of war made all plans very uncertain. Yet despite the paper shortage a number of new pocket-size libraries began to make their appearance; an anomaly of supply meant that any tiny publisher who had put out a few publications could apply for a ration of newsprint while the major presses were very badly hit. And several small publishers took note of the gap in the market left by the demise of so many major magazines and paperbacks; after all, people young or old still needed reading matter for their few leisure moments. And one or two very familiar names began to pop up within unfamiliar covers.

John Matthew (Publishers) Limited aimed at the young with their Mascot Schoolgirl Series just after the war ended. Number 1 was entitled PAMELA OF ST. OLIVE'S, by Hilda Richards, Authoress of Bessie Bunter. A complete "Pam Duncan & Co" story.

It commences in true Richards style with Peg Pipping, plump, lazy—described by her form mistress as "the most untruthful and idlest girl in the school"—asleep during a French lesson with Mademoiselle



Monceau.

The hilarity of Peg's attempts at translation has only one equal, that of Bessie Bunter's efforts in *BESSIE BUNTER OF CLIFF HOUSE SCHOOL*. But Mamzelle is not amused. Peg is given an impot and instructed to bring it to Mamzelle's study after tea. Unable to persuade any of her form-mates to assist with the impot, Peg arrives at the study with a bandaged thumb instead. Mamzelle is not there and Peg is annoyed. She looks inquisitively round the study and notices a postal order on the desk, value a pound. A spot of revenge suggests itself and Peg hides the postal order under the mantel clock, then departs in satisfaction at the prospect of the French mistress's concern, little realising that her action will lead to Pamela, sweetest and most popular girl in the school, being accused of stealing Mamzelle's postal order.

All done before, of course, but still as entertaining as ever.

Beside the tricks she liked to play on anyone who annoyed her, Peg had several other little habits, like finding her shoe-lace undone or dropping something outside a doorway wherein an interesting conversation is taking place, and boasting about her magnificent home, Pipping Park, from which magnificent hampers are sent to her but don't seem to arrive at St. Olive's. However, another little failing of hers, (instantly recognisable to any Bunter fan), that of protesting she never went to Mamzelle's study, never saw a postal order there and would never dream of hiding the postal order under the mantel clock, gives her away to Miss Ducat, the long-suffering mistress of the Fourth. Miss Ducat knew Peg Pipping very well.

In issue 3 of the Mascot series, *THE JAPE OF THE TERM*, Peg was responsible for another mystery. This time her victim was Miss Moon, the maths mistress, who had taken quite an unreasonable view of Peg's eating a large apple in class: she didn't seem to realise that maths—any lessons—made Peg even more peckish than usual. Peg had suffered another impot. Most unfair, and Miss Moon should suffer for it; Miss Moon should have apples, lots of them.

Peg's form-mates, as usual, refuse to help, so Peg sneaks into Miss Ducat's study and telephones the three greengrocers in Oscombe. From each she orders six bushels of apples to be delivered to Miss Moon, to be paid for on delivery.

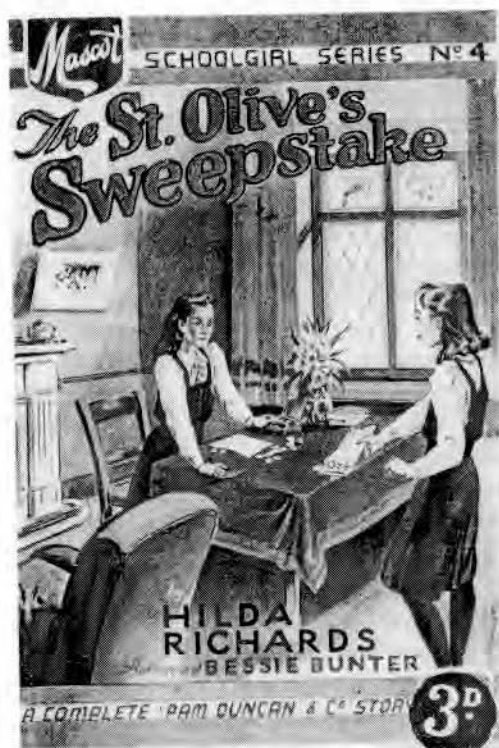
The success of Peg's brainwave even had staff and mistresses smiling in secret. Miss Moon was almost snowed under with apples, and errand boys demanding the money. A girl called Clara observed that an apple a day kept the doctor away; Miss Moon had ordered enough to keep the entire medical profession away for the rest of her life. After the mirth, the anger and the investigation, Peg had remained undetected, until Miss Ducat needed to make a phone call. She frowned at the large lump of sticky toffee on the table by the phone. Miss Ducat did not indulge in toffee but she knew someone who did; someone whose mouth was too full to talk had used her phone and, in a hurry to escape the study, had forgotten to replace the lump of toffee where it came from.

Summoned and escorted to the Head, Peg was baffled. However had Miss Ducat found out?

These small paperbacks had only twenty pages, which set limits on space and

scope for characterization, description and plotting. It is surprising how much humour the author managed to enclose as well. Humour and repartee tend to take space, it loses effect if it has to be compressed into one or two sentences of encapsulation. This last is saved for the final punch line.

Although the paper was thin and poor the publisher managed a two tone cover of red and green and the small print was clear. I've found only four titles. The other



two are THE ST. OLIVE'S SWEEPSTAKE and THE STRANDED SCHOOLGIRLS, a more serious adventure featuring Pamela Duncan and her chum May Carhew. Peg did not feature in this title, and the Sweepstake title involved most of the Fourth Form—shades of Skinner and Co. This must have been a first for a reputable girls' school.

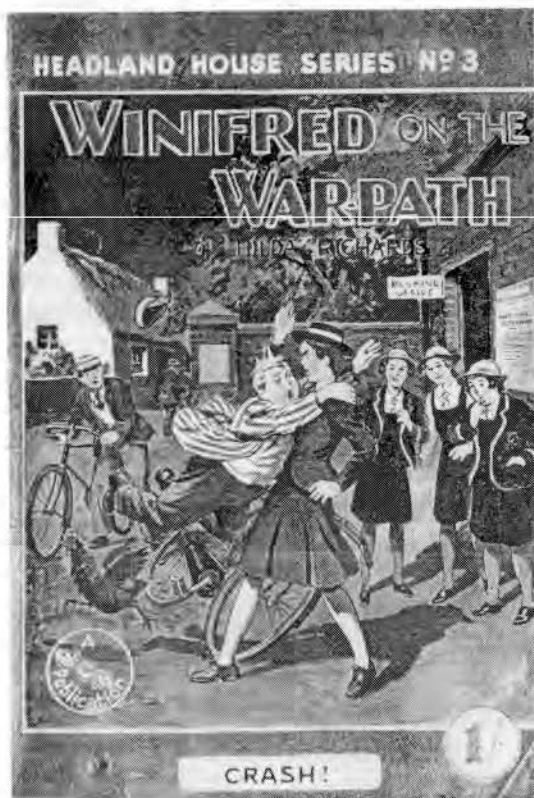
Frank Richards also created a boys' school called Sparshott in a series of six published by W. C. Merrett, and a neighbouring girls' school called Headland House by the same publisher. Number 3 of this series, entitled WINIFRED ON THE WARPETH, by Hilda Richards, is slangy, wacky and very funny, possibly every schoolgirl's wishful dream and every mistress's nightmare, and far removed from any atmosphere of Cliff House.

There is the requisite character of limited spelling skills in people whose artistic talents are likened to the ancient artist who wrote under his picture: "This is an ox," to banish any viewer's doubts, and who is not over fond of washing. There is a mistress who could have been Miss Bullivant's clone, a rather masculine lady, tall, strong, powerful, who has been known to take a pilfering tramp by the collar and march him to the nearest police station. This lady's name is Miss Gadsby.

After the not very bright Becky draws an unflattering portrait of Miss Gadsby, endowing her with a moustache, Becky is awaiting her doom in Miss Gadsby's study when the phone rings. Becky decides to answer it and hears a very strange message.....

Seven years previously a wild, outrageous pupil called Winifred Whishaw was expelled. Now grown up, just out of the army and as wild as ever, Winifred is coming back to smack the Head's face for daring to expel her all those years ago.

Becky's eavesdropping is soon public knowledge in the school and the cause of



great shock. Incidentally, the Head of the school has the endearing name of Miss Aspasia Beetle. Her prime dislike in life is scenes. Staff and pupils are bidden to be calm, serene; and the sight of Miss Gadsby angrily pursuing the artistic author of the moustache is anathema to Aspasia Beetle. Miss Gadsby is soundly told off—having her hair combed, as the girls gleefully express it.

Some of the girls, meeting a brother and some Sparshott boys in the village, encounter Miss Winifred Whishaw as she emerges from the station. The meeting is not auspicious, nor is Winifred's arrival at the school. She is tough, insolent and aggressive. Another mistress, Miss Trollope, recognises the visitor instantly; Winifred had once bitten her. Miss Trollope does not relish being dispatched

to tell the visitor to leave the school premises at once, nor is she successful. Next, the prefects were told to evict Miss Whishaw; they retire with various scars. Then Miss Gadsby is summoned to see the wild Whishaw out of the school and Miss Gadsby gets her own back. She informs Miss Beetle that she couldn't possibly risk creating a scene, not after so recently being told that she must remain serene at all times.

So Miss Beetle calls the police, in the shape of P.O. Boxer, the village bobby. The school waits, in anticipation; surely the Wild Whishaw will retreat from the majesty of the law. Alas, the majesty of the law retreated from her, smiting the earth with a resounding thump. Winifred then calmly climbed through the window of Miss Beetle's study. Miss Beetle has gone, to eat humble pie and beg Miss Gadsby to deal with the matter once and for all.

Miss Gadsby forgives, and Winifred meets more than her match, Whishaw might be tough and pugnacious but Gaddy was bigger and stronger and tougher. Boxer was recovering his equilibrium and, with Gaddy's aid, Winifred was marched out of the school gates. There, Winifred decided to accept defeat and promised to make no more trouble if they'd let her go and Gaddy would stop trying to break her wrists.

Peace descended again on Headland House while the girls decided it had been

the best half holiday ever. Better than a circus;

(Does any reader know where the rest of the Headland House series might be obtained?)

Meanwhile A.P. had got going again with the second series of the Schoolgirls' Own Library and the favourite authors began reappearing. Sheila Austin, Ida Melbourne, Elise Probyn, Renee Frazer, Margery Marriott, and other newer authors (or new pseudonyms) but sadly no Marjorie Stanton or Hilda Richards. However, John Wheway was writing regularly under at least two names. Hazel Armitage and Anne Gilmore, and the old Cliff House format still underlined his school stories, even though he introduced Co-eds and his girls were of the newer times while maintaining much of the tradition of the Cliff House days.

It has been said that Diana Royston-Clarke was his favourite girl character so it was not long before the new 'Diana' made her appearance in his Manorcliff School series. She was stormy, self-willed, rich and beautiful with a name to match! Veronica Vanda de Vere! Too many Vs, perhaps? The name Veronica doesn't quite have the glamour ring of Diana. But she had all Diana's little ways.

When she brought her cousin Dinah, poor and a scholarship girl, to Manor Cliff, the generous charm soon gave way to petulance and spite when the school play was cast. Dinah proved herself a very talented actress, better than Veronica, who had plenty of self-assurance in that line. Veronica didn't bother to attend the first reading and casting rehearsal, and Dinah was instantly liked by the head mistress, who knew that the play was important to the school this time and could be chosen to be part of a London production. When Veronica discovered this, the feud began between the cousins, with Dinah longing to play the lead as the head mistress wished but hating to upset Veronica. So Veronica arranged to take special coaching from an



elderly lady who had been a famous acting coach and would teach Veronica professional skills. Veronica is determined that Dinah shall not have that leading role. And even after a breaking-bounds episode, when Dinah manages to save her from discovery (shades of Smithy and Redwing) before the Head arrives to inspect the dorm for missing bodies in beds, Veronica ceases to be the charming generous girl she can be and allows spite its way.

Jane, the junior sports captain, is as outspoken, as Clara Trevlyn. After hearing someone remark that Veronica does have her good points she bluntly sums up Veronica: "Maybe, but the good points are so blunted by the bad that it's difficult to see them most of the time."

During one of Veronica's coaching lessons, the old lady, Miss Burnward, mentions an unidentified girl who had saved her from a fire the previous summer, but Veronica takes little notice of this confidence, never guessing that the unknown girl was Dinah while on a cycling holiday the previous year. It is inevitable that Miss Burnward, the acting coach, is invited to visit a rehearsal and sees Dinah, instantly to recognise her. Miss Burnward, doubtless well experienced in the jealousies of young would-be stars, has also realised that Veronica, furious at being relegated to understudy, is planning mischief.

Miss Burnward plans her own mischief and Veronica's plot to keep Dinah away from the performance fails. The school's performance wins the competition and Dinah also wins an award. Glamour girl Veronica storms out of the theatre, and then has a pure Diana volte-face (as actually happened in a Diana story years previously). She returns to the theatre bearing a gorgeous bouquet for Dinah.

For once Veronica was content to share the limelight—and welcome her cousin back to share her study, Harmony was restored—but for how long?

There are many flashes of *déjà vu*, ghosts of the great Firebrand of Cliff House, to be found in the Manorcliff tales, but older readers recalling Diana may sigh. No matter how appealing the stories, it could never be quite the same. Diana of Cliff House was a true star of schoolgirl fiction.

Ah, nostalgia. Or is it just *déjà vu*?

WANTED: Schoolboys' Own Library - in particular number 170.

Please ring Jack Wilson on 0151 426 2046.

FOR SALE: Greyfriars Holiday Annuals for 1925-26-27 in very good condition.

Peter Walton. Tel. 01280 824464.

Email: peterwalton@whsmithnet.co.uk.

BLAKIANA

P.O. girl 'fancied she was Sexton Blake on the trail'

EXPLAINING why she took home a registered letter from the Post Office where she worked, Miss Edith Westhead, 21, a counter assistant, of Wykesdale-road, Liverpool, said that she believed the man who handed in the letter was planning a hold-up, and she decided to act as a detective.

She pleaded not guilty at Liverpool yesterday to a charge of stealing the letter, which contained £7.

Miss Westhead said that the man with the letter asked many questions about her work and what was the busiest hour at the post office.

"I took the letter away to see if there was money in the envelope or a blank sheet," she said.

Mr. M. A. Reece, defending, said: "This girl's defence may sound like a Sexton Blake story.

"But it does not follow because her story appears to be fanciful that it is not true: She was acting as an amateur detective."

It was stated that when the police called Miss Westhead handed over the £7.

The magistrate, Mr. J. Cleary, pointed out that she had not reported her suspicions of the man and the possibility of a hold-up. She was fined £20.

3/1/1948

LIBRARY CHAT by Derek Ford

Back in those austere days of 1948 the editor of the Mirror found a spot on his fifth page of eight for this story. That month the contributors to the SBL were Lewis Jackson and Rex Hardinge.

In November 1955 W. Howard Baker contributed his first case-book to the SBL, prophetically called *Without Warning* and ushered in a new "Blake" to a generation who I will, I think, have little nostalgic memory of him today. A judge would want today to know who Sexton Blake was, and any quotation in a newspaper would be remote.

Yet there was life before Baker's bludgeon, as Ray Hopkins found in his December 2002 CD appreciation of Anthony Parsons *The Euston Road Mystery* from July 1947. And there are lots more to be discovered, for Anthony Parsons was a prolific principal contributor for many years, his first in 1937. When Baker signed off Parsons the SBL was at an end. It was an unfair burden for him to carry when editor, Leonard Pratt, passed so many inferior books months after month. (Newnes had closed their Strand Magazine in 1950, still with a circulation of over 100,000).

Howard Baker's 'prentice' piece was *Without Warning*, in which Blake nearly died on page ten. (He was never the same!). It was followed by *The Man Who Knew Too*

Much and I looked forward to seeing more from this 'W. Howard Baker' but I never did. For back he was with his recipe *Danger Ahead*, a substitute for Parsons *The Mystery of the Dance Hostess*, and proving that he could never have written it. One got the feeling that Baker was getting more fun out of these stories than his readers.

Of course, Sherlock Holmes suffered from a deluge of further stories by an industry of authors, as summarised in the *Book Collector* for December 1998. There was even *Sherlock Holmes and the Greyfriars School Mystery* (Breese Books 1997). Dr. Watson writing - "It was in the spring of 1912 that my old headmaster, Dr. Locke of Greyfriars School in Kent (my own old seat of learning), wrote to enlist my aid concerning a missing manuscript (Mr. Quelch's *History of Greyfriars*)". And it reveals that Messrs. Richards, Clifford and Conquest are the pen-names of Quelch!

Colin Crewe had an amazing 4-page catalogue of Sherlockiana, the property of Thomas Carney of Manchester, in the March 2003 C.D. Sexton Blake seemed ill-served by the rummagers after all that. Especially considering that there were only four books and 56 short stories about Holmes.

Blakiana readers are recommended to the *Book Collector* for May 2002 which carries a splendid appreciation of Eric Parker. Also the December 2003 issue on Roland Davies, who drew the Sexton Blake strips in the Knockout from 1949 to 1952; in 1961 and 1962, three of these strips were reprinted as the adventures of 'Pete Madden'.

Finally, the SBL controversy is nearly half a century old, the authors departed, never again a monthly thriller, so there's more time for the real thing, in 2004. Peter Lovesey sums it up in his latest thriller as "The Sherlock Holmes school of detection had long since been superseded by computers and people in zip-suits looking for DNA samples."

No. 252 BAKER STREET

by Derek Hinrich

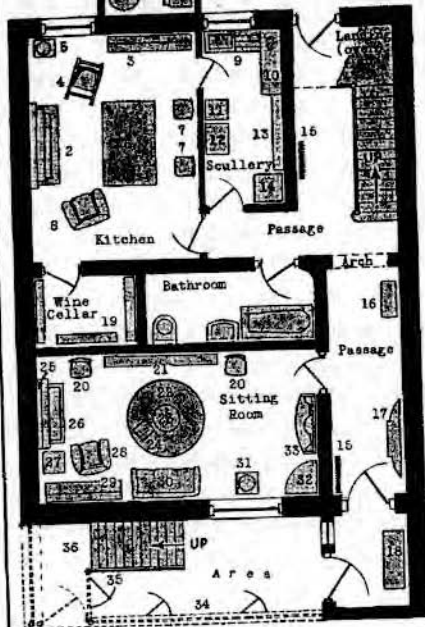
This I understand, was partly the address of Sexton Blake. The obviously missing part is London and the Postal District, but was it W1 or NW1? Number 252 would suggest the upper reaches of Baker Street, above the junction with the Marylebone Road which would make the appropriate District NW1, but in fact the highest number in Baker Street - as far as I could discover by strolling up it - is 240. Obviously the exact number has been disguised for reasons of security, as was presumably the case with Mr. Holmes, just down the road and on the opposite side at 221B.

The problem is of course compounded by the fact that Sexton Blake moved to Baker Street from his previous lodgings shortly before October 1903¹ just as Mr. Holmes was retiring to a cottage on the South Downs. In 1903, what is now Baker Street consisted of three separately named thoroughfares: Baker Street, York Place, and Upper Baker Street. In 1921 Baker Street was renumbered. Previously the num-

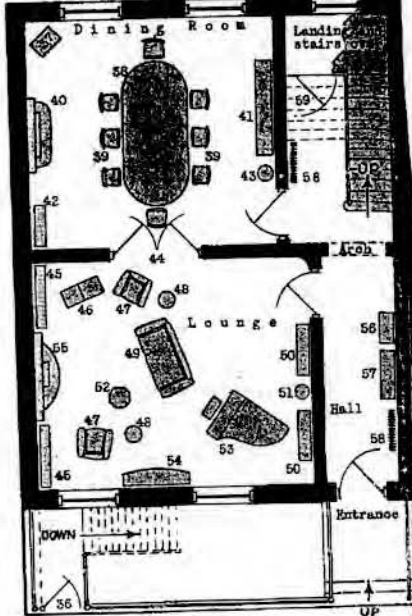
¹ See "The Mystery of Hilton Royal" in *Union Jack* 2/62 of Christmas 1904.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Boilers & Air
Compression
Plant



BASEMENT



GROUND FLOOR

KEY TO FURNISHINGS:

BASEMENT

Lean-to at Rear

1. Boilers, and Laboratory Air-compression plant

Kitchen

2. Coal Range
3. Dresser
4. Rocking Chair
5. Radio Set (aspidistra over)
6. Table
7. Chairs
8. Easy Chair

Scullery

9. Sink
10. Larder
11. Gas Stove
12. Table
13. Shelves
14. Refrigerator

Passage

15. Radiator
16. Chest
17. Hall-stand
18. Table

Wine Cellar

19. Wine Bins

Mrs. Bardell's Sitting-room

20. Chair
21. Case Stuffed Birds
22. Circular Table
23. Parrot Cage (empty)
24. Family Album
25. Overmantel
26. Grate
27. Presentation Musical Box
28. Easy Chair
29. Upright Piano
30. Sofa
31. Occasional Table, with Aspidistra
32. Bric-à-brac Whatnot
33. Chiffonier

Area

34. Coal Cellars (under sidewalk)
35. Store
36. Tradesmen's Entrance

GROUND FLOOR

Dining Room

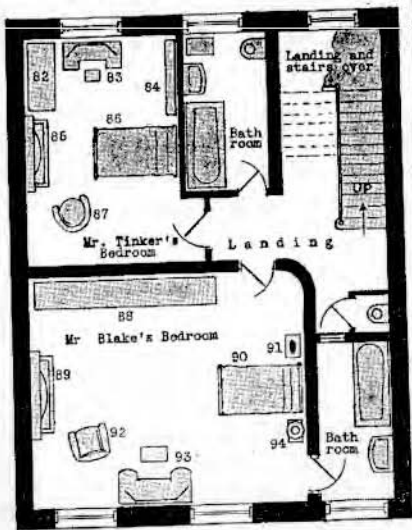
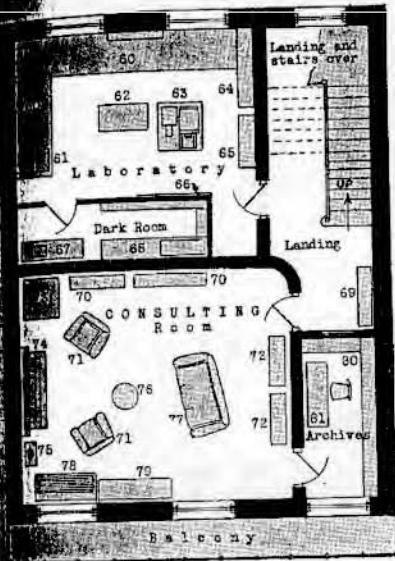
37. Radio Set
38. Dining Table
39. Dining Chairs
40. Grate
41. Sideboard
42. Cigar and Tobacco Cabinet
43. Wine Cooler
44. Three-leaf Folding Doors

Lounge

45. Bookcases
46. Radio-Gramophone
47. Easy Chair
48. Standard Lamp
49. Settee
50. Cabinets (Trophies, etc.)

BAKER STREET

WHAT IT'S LIKE INSIDE SEXTON BLAKE'S HOUSE



FIRST FLOOR

SECOND FLOOR

KEY TO FURNISHINGS—(continued):

- 1. Marble Bust of Berkeley Blake, M.D., on pedestal
- 2. Coffee Table
- 3. Grand Piano
- 4. Cocktail Cabinet
- 5. Grate
- 6. Table
- 7. Hanging Cupboard
- 8. Radiators
- 9. Door to Basement

FIRST FLOOR

- Laboratory**
- 60. Bench (shelves over)
- 61. Bench Sink
- 62. Table
- 63. Table, with Epidiascope and Copying Camera
- 64. Cabinet (Chemicals)

- 65. Bookcase (Chemical and Physics Library)
- 66. Projection Screen
- Dark Room**
- 67. Table, with Ultra-violet Ray Apparatus
- 68. Bench, Sink, Drying Racks, Shelves, etc.
- Landing**
- 69. Cabinet (Crime Museum)
- Consulting Room**
- 70. Bookcases
- 71. Easy Chair
- 72. Cabinets (Firearms collection)
- 73. Safe
- 74. Grate
- 75. Telephone Table
- 76. Coffee Table
- 77. Settee
- 78. Roll-top Desk
- 79. Sideboard

- Archives**
- 80. Bookshelves (Baker Street Index and Case-books)
- 81. Work Table
- SECOND FLOOR**
- Mr. Tinker's Bedroom**
- 82. Wardrobe
- 83. Dressing Table
- 84. Dwarf Bookcase
- 85. Grate
- 86. Bed
- 87. Chair

- Mr. Blake's Bedroom**
- 88. Wardrobe
- 89. Grate
- 90. Bed
- 91. Bedside Table and Telephone
- 92. Easy Chair
- 93. Dressing Table
- 94. Bedside Table and Lamp

(Architect's Plan Drawn Specially for SEXTON BLAKE ANNUAL)

bers had run sequentially along one side and then back down the other. Alternate numbering across the street was then introduced. In 1930, however, as a further complication the LCC regrouped all the three streets aforementioned as Baker Street, and renumbered them as an entity.

Over the years there has been intense discussion amongst Sherlockians as to which house was disguised as 221B. Ten different scholars have each suggested their own separate candidate for the honour. They all agree, however, that the house must be on the west side of Baker Street.

I am not going to hazard an identification of the "real" Number 252.

There is, however, an admirable sketch of its front elevation, just as Blake, Tinker, and Pedro are leaving, in *The Sexton Blake Annual* of 1939. This shows the house to be on the east side of Baker Street and it is clearly a typical Georgian terraced house of a basement with railed area,

a ground, and two upper floors with the standard fenestration of such a building. It does have a narrow balcony at the first floor level, but this was not an entirely unusual feature in such houses (see Osbert Lancaster's *Delightful informal history of architectural styles, Pillar To Post or The Pocket-Lamp of Architecture*).

The same issue of *The Sexton Blake Annual* also included architectural drawings of the interior of the house. These illustrate the typical layout of such a building. Some modifications have obviously been made since its erection in the late 18th Century in the matter of bathrooms (oddly, Tinker has a lavatory in his bathroom but Blake's is not *en suite*, but on the landing) and partial central heating; the latter must have been something of a novelty in a private house before the Second World War.

One curious fact emerges from these plans about the domestic arrangements of the Baker Street *menage*. The basement, as we are always told, was Mrs. Bardell's domain and, while she has, besides the kitchen and scullery, her own sitting room and washing facilities, she apparently has no bedroom. Rather an oversight don't you think? Surely she didn't curl up at night on her sofa? After all, she always lived "in", whatever were the arrangements for the occasional "slavey" she might have to assist



her.

Another odd thought occurs to me. When Blake became an Organisation with offices in Berkeley Square, he also changed his domestic arrangements. We are told that he demolished his house and replaced it with a block of offices surmounted by two penthouse flats. We do not know where he lived while the work was going on, but when it was finished we are told the occupants of the various suites of offices were:

- Pettigrew & Quince, Lorriners
- Q.Z. (Enterprises) Ltd
- Farfarol & Dudley (Hong Kong)
- Potts, Mckinley, Boddy & Potts (Bespoke Gunsmiths)
- Eastern Breezes
- The Purfleet Shipping Company

And Tinker (his junior partner, Edward Carter's nickname)² and Sexton Blake each occupied a penthouse flat.

It must have been rather a squeeze for everyone if that stood on the site of just one Georgian terraced house.

² But in 1939 on the plans he is "Mr Tinker", and Lewis Jackson once named him "Tinker" Smith.

BRIEF ENCOUNTERS

by Brian Doyle

A few random memories of notable people in several fields I have met fairly briefly, including some movie stars I have worked with for only a day or so, as opposed to my usual stint of several weeks or months during the production of a film. So here are writers, musicians, artists, a Nobel Prize-winner and others, as well as actors and glamorous ladies...!

Adrian Conan Doyle: Son of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. I met him when he came to Pinewood Studios to visit the set of Billy Wilder's major film *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes*, on which I worked as Publicist in the summer and autumn of 1969. He was then 59, a handsome, charming, elegant, silver-haired man who brought with him an attractive young French film actress, Aude, with whom he was obviously quite close. I was lucky enough to be invited to join the pair, plus Wilder and his co-writer and associate producer, I.A.L. Diamond (who rarely spoke a word, reserving most of them for his type-writer!) for lunch. Adrian was friendly and chatty and seemed to like what he saw of Robert (later Sir Robert) Stephens as Sherlock Holmes and Colin Blakely as Dr. Watson. After lunch and another visit to the set, Adrian came back to my office and sat talking over a cup of coffee; his pretty French lady-friend sat demurely nearby, smiling but saying little. He willingly signed at least three Sherlockian



Robert Stephens, Aude, Adrian Conan Doyle and Brian Doyle in 1969

books I happened to have on my office bookshelves. Adrian, of course, had co-written (with John Dickson Carr) a book called *The Exploits of Sherlock Holmes*. The twelve new stories were inspired by those 'titles' mentioned by Dr. Watson, but never 'written up' by him (four were written by Carr and eight by Adrian Conan Doyle). When I took Adrian and Aude for a final movie-set visit, Billy Wilder greeted us with the words: 'Ah, the two Mr. Doyles return to Baker Street - this must be a three-pipe problem...!'. I'm glad I met and spent a few hours with Adrian Conan Doyle, son of Sir Arthur - a fine link with a great author...

Godfrey Winn: One of the most popular British journalists of the mid-20th century with a huge readership of 'fans' who wrote to him in their thousands. He wrote successful 'gossip' columns and features for several magazines and newspapers, including the *Daily Mirror* and was especially popular during the 1930s-1950s. He particularly appealed to women readers as he wrote prolifically for magazines aimed at them. He also wrote novels and an autobiography. He came to Dublin in 1968 to interview Tommy Steele and Stanley Baker on the Paramount film *Where's Jack?*, an historical romp about the adventures of the 18th century highwayman and prison-breaker, Jack Sheppard, who became a people's hero at the time. The director was

James Clavell, later to become a hugely-successful best-selling novelist ('Tai-Pan', 'Sho-Gun', etc.) I met Winn at Dublin Airport and as soon as we were settled in the back of my publicity car he turned to me and announced without formality: 'I'm the most highly-paid journalist in Britain, and possibly the whole of Europe - did you know that?'. I replied that I wasn't surprised and that my mother had been a great admirer of his for many years, especially his writings about *his* mother and his beloved dog 'Mr. Sponge'. 'She has very good taste - I'll sign a nice photograph of me especially for her, if you like.' I thanked him without tears in my eyes and he then sat back and told me the story of his life to date, his ups-and-downs (mainly ups, I noticed), his triumphs and disasters (not many of those either apparently), about his enormous fan-mail, and about all the famous people he either knew or had interviewed, or both, from Royalty down to a Cockney pick-pocket. All this fascinating stuff continued over a long and slap-up lunch at Dublin's famous Russell Hotel (I was glad I was on expenses!).

In fact, Winn improved upon acquaintance and had many fascinating stories to tell. He had, for example, been a junior tennis champion at Wimbledon and had taught W. Somerset Maugham to play. He and 'Willy' had become close friends. Very close, apparently. Eventually, I took Godfrey Winn off to that evening's film locations in a country area just outside Dublin's fair city (a city which had, in my humble opinion, by the way, the most beautiful girls in the world... This correspondence is now closed, even before it's started...) Before I arranged his interviews, Winn excused himself and went behind a large tree. 'It's all right, the toilets are over there. Godfrey.' I called after him, but his head appeared from behind the tree-trunk and he beckoned me over. Somewhat suspiciously, I joined him behind the tree, where he suddenly produced a small silver box in which lay a toupée or hairpiece. He proceeded to arrange this expertly upon his head (where else?) and asked me to hold up a small silver-framed mirror, which he extracted from an inside pocket. As he gazed at his reflection with some satisfaction, he giggled slightly. 'Must look my best for the photographs, Brian dear.' I duly set up photographs of him with Steele, Baker, a horse and others and he chatted away quite happily to them (the stars not the horse). His article later appeared in one of his women's magazine over about three pages and made excellent publicity for the film. There were three photographs to illustrate it. In them, his silver hair looked terrific.

Vivien Leigh: When I was working as Press Officer at Columbia Pictures in London in 1965, my boss, Patrick Williamson (a bit of a whiz-kid who later became President of Columbia Pictures International, based in New York) called me into his office and said casually: 'Will you pick up Vivien Leigh tomorrow morning, take her to Heathrow and see her off safely to Los Angeles?' She was off to star in a new Columbia picture, *Ship of Fools*. 'Right, Pat.' I answered cheerfully - and it *was* right as far as I was concerned. Very right. For I had adored Vivien Leigh, as so many had done, ever since *Gone With The Wind* and later in many stage and screen roles, including *Waterloo Bridge* and *A Streetcar Named Desire* (I had seen the West End stage

production of the latter, starring Leigh, two days before I entered the R.A.F. for National Service in 1949 and even obtained her autograph on my programme afterwards!). I arranged transport - a Rolls for Vivien Leigh and myself and a large Austin Princess for her luggage (which, I had been warned, was large and numerous). I rang the bell at her flat in Eaton Square and was welcomed in by her long-time companion, one-time actor John Merrivale, handsome and charming (well, he would be, wouldn't he?).

We chatted until Miss Leigh came out of her bedroom looking fabulous and somehow younger than her 52 years. Her luggage had been safely loaded into the Austin and I went down and waited by the Rolls as Miss Leigh said her presumably fond farewells to Mr. Merrivale. When we were settled into the back of the car we exchanged a few pleasantries, then I offered her a cigarette (I smoked in those days - most people did, I'm afraid). I smoked Oliviers. She glanced at the packet and said somewhat icily: 'No thanks - and especially not *those...*!' (She had been divorced from Laurence Olivier, of course.) She caught my eye and giggled in a rather delicious and ladylike manner, looking for a moment for all the world like the young Scarlett O'Hara. It broke the ice and we went on to chat non-stop about her forthcoming picture in Hollywood (in which she was to appear with a host of stars, including José Ferrer, Lee Marvin, Simone Signoret and George Segal) and then about a particular favourite of mine, her role as 'Cleopatra' in the film version of Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra*, which I'd also seen her do on stage too. She recalled a few hilarious happenings during the making of Pascall's 1945 film and I even quoted a few lines of Caesar's (Claude Rains) when he first meets Cleopatra in the desert. I was delighted when she responded with *her* speech, which she forgot half-way through and giggled again: 'You know it better than I do!' At Heathrow, I saw her off (that part was easy, especially when she kissed me on the cheek and revived a thousand teen-aged fantasies!) and supervised the off-loading of her luggage (around 21 pieces, I seem to recall). Then Vivien Leigh, possibly the most beautiful screen actress (together with the younger Elizabeth Taylor) of them all, was away. *Ship of Fools* was her last film. Two years later she was dead.

Pietro Annigoni: I met the renowned Italian painter - probably best-known for his stunning portrait of Queen Elizabeth II (with a lake in the background and a man fishing from a small boat on it (Annigoni himself!)), exhibited at London's Royal Academy in 1955 - when I was in Florence in 1959 for several weeks working on the film *Conspiracy of Hearts* which starred Lilli Palmer, Sylvia Syms and Yvonne Mitchell as nuns. A young local Count, Roberto, with whom I had become friendly and who was fascinated by movie-making, said he knew Annigoni and would I like to meet him? Of course, I said yes - apart from anything else it was a publicity 'natural' (and I was the Publicist on the film!) - and I took Yvonne Mitchell, then a famous and distinguished stage and screen actress, and our stills photographer, Norman, along too. The great artist escorted us around his large studio in the centre of Florence, looking every inch the world-famous painter in a long, flowing 'smock' (complete with the odd artistic splodge of paint!) and we saw several of his students working on pictures. My friend,



Count Roberto, Annigoni, Brian Doyle, Yvonne Mitchell in Florence in 1959

the Count, Roberto, interpreted for us and we took tea with the artist in his picturesque roof-top garden. 'Do you ever see pictures?' I asked him (meaning the cinematic kind). He laughed. 'Only my own,' he said smiling. Through Roberto, I daringly asked if he would perhaps sketch a portrait of Yvonne Mitchell as we took a few photographs. He agreed quite cheerfully and we soon left with warm 'Arrivederci' all round. I placed three of the photographs with the *Daily Express* (then the best newspaper to get movie publicity into!) and the result was a big spread taking up a whole page (and the paper was a 'broadsheet' in those days) with appropriate mentions of our film. Great for me, as Publicist, good for Yvonne, since she ended up with an original Annigoni sketch of herself, and also good for Annigoni, as the pix were syndicated throughout the world and it all made excellent publicity for himself (and I sensed that he rather liked publicity!). Annigoni died in 1988 aged 78 and painted many fine pictures during his career. As a film man it was a pleasure to meet a producer of good pictures - though of a very different kind!

Francis Crick: Dr. Crick was the joint-winner of the Nobel Prize (with James Watson) for discovering 'D.N.A.'. He worked in the exacting field of molecular biology - and D.N.A. was one of the most important and far-reaching landmarks in sci-

ence; this was in 1953. I'm not a scientist so I can't go into details but, put simply, D.N.A. is what makes humans, animals, plants and pretty well everything, 'tick'. I met Crick in 1975 when I worked in Marrakech, Morocco, for four months on the great John Huston film *The Man Who Would Be King*, based on a Rudyard Kipling story and starring Sean Connery, Michael Caine and Christopher Plummer. I was assigned a local male secretary-assistant named James, an extremely nice and highly-efficient chap who lived by himself in some style in the *Medina* (the Old City of Marrakech) in what had once been a Sultan's Palace. James occasionally sub-let his luxurious quarters and he told me that on a certain date Francis Crick would be arriving to stay for a week. Then, as it turned out, James was arrested by the local police and thrown into jail! He was innocent of the charges and things were eventually sorted out, but not for some weeks and, when I visited James as he languished in jail in very nasty conditions. (I took him a paperback book, but a fellow inmate snatched it away and ate it, things were that bad.) Anyway, he reminded me about Crick's visit, due in a few days, and asked me to meet him at the airport and see him safely into his quarters, also explaining why James had been unavoidably (and literally) detained. I did so and had tea with Crick when he arrived at James' 'Palace'. Crick seemed a nice, agreeable man, but rather quiet. When I ventured to mention his D.N.A. discovery he said, rather shortly, that he'd rather not talk about all that and that it was all people seemed to talk to him about. Hardly surprising, I commented and he just replied: 'No, I suppose not,' and turned the conversation to Marrakech and asked me about the film we were making. He stayed for his week, never visited poor James in jail, and made his own way to the airport on his departure, making one brief telephone call to me before he disappeared back into the world of Nobel-winning scientific discovery. But it was good to meet, however briefly, a man whose name will be in all the history books of the future. And, although his name means 'a pain in the neck', he didn't really come across like that at all - just a rather quiet, slightly dull man.

(To be continued)

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YOUNG DETECTIVES IN THE MAKING

by Dawn Marler

These young detectives appear to be mainly girls. Josephine Leonides was the child detective in Agatha Christie's *Crooked House*, and she is one of the few girl detectives in the mainstream sleuthing stories of twentieth-century.

It was at the time when the Detective Genre was widening and growing, and having its Golden Age, between the two World Wars. At this time there was much rivalry, and more and more authors were jumping on to the bandwagon with their detective and mystery stories. Not only was the genre spreading into adult readership, it was also spreading more into children's literature.

The first girl sleuth to feature in magazines in Britain seems to have been John William Bobin's " Sylvia Silence " who appeared in the *Schoolgirls' Weekly* in 1922 under the pseudonymous byline of Katherine Greenhalgh. This magazine was a publication of the Amalgamated Press, along with the *Girls' Crystal*, *School Friend*, the *Schoolgirls' Own Library*, and their respective annuals. Following Sylvia Silence came Lila Lisle, another Bobin creation in *Schoolgirls' Own* in 1930. Then Valerie Drew was featured from 1933 in the *Schoolgirls' Weekly* with her assistant 'Flash', an Alsatian Dog. Valerie starred in such stories as 'That Amazing Room of Clocks' and 'Valerie Drew And The Avenging Three'. 'Valerie Drew's Holiday Mystery', ran in *The Schoolgirl*, and later in the *Schoolgirls' Own Library* (Second Series, Number 47). Valerie appeared in numerous stories (218 short stories as well as eight serials). With her violet eyes and redgold hair, she was the creation of Adelle Ascott (one of Bobin's pen-names), and was first featured in the *Schoolgirls' Weekly* 7 January, 1933. She was then described as an "18-year-old" who had earned the title of detective by "helping her father..... before his recent retirement". He is described as "Chief Commissioner of Police at Scotland Yard". Valerie Drew's original creator died in 1935, and for two years the stories appeared anonymously. Then, in 1937, another author took over the stories; the author's name was given as 'Isobel Norton', she was the author of 'Valerie Drew's Holiday Mystery'. Valerie and her partner Flash are among the most vivid personalities in the pre-war story papers (those between the two World Wars) during the Golden Age of the Detective Genre. Valerie also flew her own de Havilland Puss Moth.

Young girl detectives also appeared in the *Schoolgirls' Own Library*, in such stories as 'Detective June's Strangest Case' (121, 1950). In this story she was assigned to investigate and expose some criminals at Knoll Castle, who were set on destroying the making of a film there. June Gaynor originally appeared in the *Girls' Crystal* as the young assistant detective to her uncle, Noel Raymond, but she is featured as a much stronger character than her uncle. Created by Peter Langley (Ronald Fleming) she is also in the story 'Detective June's Most Thrilling Case' (26: GC, 1945), and again in the 'Mystery at the Haunted School' (GC, 1948). A Jo Kirby was a Fourth Former and amateur sleuth at Maitland House School in 'Elain the Elusive' (SGOL 306). There were other stories in the *Schoolgirls' Weekly*; *Girls'*

DETECTIVE JUNE'S STRANGEST CASE

BY Peter Langley



ELAINE THE ELUSIVE

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Crystal, and the *Schoolgirls' Own Library*, such as 'The Schoolgirl Detective' (18, 1941); 'The Girl Detective's First Case' (175, 1954); 'Her Detective Task at St. Clares' (148). Then there were, 'Jancy's First Case' (402). Jancy also features in the 'Case of the Siamese Cat' (403), and 'The Case of the Old Clock' (410), the last *Schoolgirls' Own Library* to be published. In the story 'The Hooded Phantom of St. Kits' (*SGOL* 198), we have a girl called Stella Mancroft who turns detective to solve the mystery of the hooded phantom. Girl Detectives also appeared in picture scripts, such as 'Shirley's Detective Schooldays' (*GC*, 1954). The respective Annuals of the Story Papers also carry stories of young girl detectives, such as, 'Detective Shirley and Her Boy Rival', by Rhoda Fleming, (*SF* Annual 1945); 'The Rival Detectives of Abbey School', by Heather Granger (John Wheway) (*GC* Annual 1953). In this interesting story, school-girl Hazel Dean was determined to solve the mystery of a baffling series of thefts. However, a rival detective was just as determined that Hazel should not succeed. In 'Detective Sally', by Daphne Grayson, Sally seemed to be getting herself into deep water when she tried to solve the mystery of some stolen pearls aboard a cruising liner, and, to make it worse, her friends do not show a lot of sympathy (*GC* Annual 1957). One should not forget Jemima Carstairs, with the Eton Crop and polished monocle, who attended Cliff House School, and there frequently acted as a Detective.

Nancy Drew was another charismatic girl detective who should not be overlooked. Her stories are mainly set in America, which might not appeal to all readers but nevertheless they are good strong stories. She was originally created in 1929 by the prolific 'Edward Stratemeyer', writer and publisher. By 1915 he had officially founded the Stratemeyer Writing Syndicate; by 1930, 150 highly popular series, under 100 pennames, were in various stages of production. Among these were THE ROVER BOYS, THE HARDY BOYS, THE BOBBSEY, BOMBA THE JUNGLE BOY, TOM SWIFT, RUTH FIELDING THE BARTON BOOKS FOR GIRLS and THE OUTDOOR ADVENTURE GIRLS. Edward Stratemeyer provided an outline for the first Nancy Drew Mystery, which is called 'The Secret of Shadow Ranch'. Stratemeyer died in 1930 and the other stories were written by other authors for the Stratemeyer Syndicate. All were published under the pseudonym Carolyn Keene. Nancy's age was the same as Valerie Drew, after advancing from the age of sixteen. She had a steady boyfriend, Nick Nickerson, and she could drive a car, in fact she had one of her own, which was useful in her detective work. New titles have since expanded the series to over 350 mystery stories, and she has become the most popular girl sleuth to the present day, in fact one may gather from the Internet, that she is the most popular girl-detective of all time.

Girl sleuths in these stories may be traced back to their distant ancestor in the nineteenth century, the first lady detective in detective fiction, Mrs. Paschal who made her debut in 1861 in "The Revelations of a Lady Detective", in the righting of a wrong-doing, and the solving of an intriguing mystery. However, the authors of these stories were not only following the line of Mrs. Paschal, they were also influenced by the Gothic writers of the time.

Now let us return to Josephine Leonides, the child detective in Agatha Christie's

'Crooked House'. She is the youngest of the girl detectives. A twelve-year-old, she is the youngest child of Magda and Philip Leonides. Josephine considers herself as a first-class sleuth, and boasts that she knows all about her troubled family secrets. She has the habit of eaves-dropping and writing down what she hears in her little black book.

Aristide Leonides, the grandfather of Josephine, has been murdered. His insulin injection, which was given to him each day by his young wife Brenda, had been tampered with. It was replaced by eye-drops called Eserine, and it was this that had killed him. But who did it and why? All the family, of course, were under suspicion.

The Leonides family had a nannie, now the servant of all trades. Shortage of servants, due to the Second World War, often meant the nannie of the family would go into the kitchen and do everything. The nannie in the Leonides family in that crooked house was also murdered. Why, and by whom?

Charles Hayward, whose father was a high-ranking Scotland Yard detective, was acting as a clear-headed and sensitive investigator. It was to him that Josephine talked the most. She hinted more than once to Charles that she knew who the murderer was, and she thought that the police did not know really anything. Josephine also said to him, "Do you know about Edith Thompson? She was married, but she didn't like her husband. She was in love with a young man called Bywaters who came off a ship and he went down a different street after the theatre and stabbed him in the back". Josephine either read about this or heard about it from some other source. She was referring to the affair between Edith Thompson and Frederick Bywaters which ended in the murder of Edith's husband, Percy, on 3 October 1922, known as the Crime of Passion.

Josephine is not how she seems. She is not quite the ordinary child. She knows a good deal about people, too much to be good for her, and she does not appear to be fond of anybody, except her Aunt Edith de Haviland, the unmarried sister of Aristide's first wife. Josephine told Clemency "I love Aunt Edith", "I love Aunt Edith very much", but Edith was the only person she did love. Josephine was warned by Charles that it was not safe for her to find out any more, but she claimed that she did not need to. She said, "I know". There is something almost evil in her detecting.

It would appear that attempts were made on Josephine's life. Was it because she knew too much? Charles was concerned for her safety, hence his warnings; even the family were concerned and they wanted to send her to Switzerland. Charles tackled Josephine again, he wanted her to tell the police anything or everything she knew, but she refused, saying that they were stupid; "They thought Brenda had done it - or Laurence... I knew jolly well they hadn't done it". She was adamant that she knew who was guilty. Why was Josephine, the girl detective, so sure she knew who the murderer was? Because, it was Josephine herself. She was not only the girl detective, she was a child murderer, who had been detecting her own murders.

Any attempt there appeared to be on her own life, Josephine arranged herself. Such attempts were to make it look as if someone else in the family was the killer. However, there was one in the family who knew it was Josephine from things she

perhaps, had overheard. This was Aunt Edith de Haviland, whom Josephine loved. They were both killed in a car accident, intended, at the end of the story. Edith had left two letters for the family. It was then that Charles saw the truth.

Charles could now see clearly how Josephine had fitted in, and she had all the qualifications. She had vanity, and persistent self-importance, she boasted about how clever she was "and how stupid the police were". Charles had never considered her as a murderer, but children *had* committed murders. Christie was thinking here of real cases of child murderers she had read about.

Josephine had killed her grandfather. She changed the insulin with the eye drops and made sure she left no finger-prints. Knowledge from reading detective fiction helped her. Her little black book, the sleuthing, her pretended suspicions, and her insistence that she was not saying anything until she was sure, were all a sham, because she knew the grisly answer all the time. Then she attacked herself, a dramatic performance, that could have killed her. It had been a perfect set-up. Later she murdered the nannie, she put DIGITALIN in her own cocoa and let the cup on the hall table, untouched, pretending she did not want it. Somehow she knew Nannie would drink it, and she did. What was Josephine's motive for these murders which she was supposed to be investigating?

She had resented Nannie's criticisms of her. "Did Nannie, perhaps, wise from a life-time of experience with children suspect?" Nannie probably knew, and "had always known, that Josephine was not normal." Josephine sensed this, and hated her nannie for it. She did not like what nannie said to her, that she was a show-off, and was making her mother send her abroad, so she killed her. Josephine's grandfather would not let her take up ballet-dancing, so she made up her mind to kill him too. Then she would go to London and live with her mother, and take up ballet. Josephine tells all in her little black book, including how she did the murders. She was the most crooked character of all the family in that crooked house. A detective of her own crime, she was the most unusual sleuth, and the odd one out, in all the girl detective stories.

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Billy Bunter's Christmas Party. Skilton 1st edition 1949. Vg copy in enhanced d/w.	£38
Billy Bunter's Christmas Party. Cassell 3rd edition 1957. Vg copy in enhanced d/w.	£22
Billy Bunter In Brazil. Cassell 2nd edition 1952. Vg copy in bright near vg d/w.	£28
Billy Bunter In Brazil. Skilton 1st edition 1949. Good copy in enhanced d/w.	£38
Billy Bunter In Brazil. Cassell 2nd edition 1952. Vg copy in enhanced d/w.	£24
Billy Bunter In Brazil. Cassell 3rd edition 1957. Vg copy in enhanced d/w.	£20
Billy Bunter's Benefit. 2nd edition 1953. Vg copy in near vg d/w.	£28
Billy Bunter's Benefit. 2nd edition 1953. Vg copy in good d/w.	£24
Billy Bunter's Benefit. 3rd edition 1960. Fine copy in vg d/w.	£28
Billy Bunter's Benefit. 1st edition 1950. Vg copy in enhanced d/w.	£45
Billy Bunter's Benefit. 1st edition 1950. Good copy in enhanced d/w.	£35
Billy Bunter's Benefit. 2nd edition 1952. Vg copy in enhanced d/w.	£24
Billy Bunter Among the Cannibals. Skilton 1st ed 1950. Vg copy, bright d/w stuck down	£42
Billy Bunter Among the Cannibals. Cassell 2nd edition 1953. Vg copy near vg d/w.	£28
Billy Bunter Among the Cannibals. Cassell 3rd edition 1959. Almost mint in d/w.	£35
Billy Bunter Among the Cannibals. 4th edition 1963. Vg copy near vg d/w.	£22
Billy Bunter Among the Cannibals. Skilton 1st ed 1950. Vg copy in enh later d/w.	£38
Billy Bunter Among the Cannibals. Cassell 2nd edition 1953. Vg copy in enhanced d/w.	£24
Billy Bunter's First Case. Cassell 1st edition 1953. Vg copy in vg d/w.	£42
Billy Bunter's First Case. Cassell 1st edition 1953. Vg copy in vg slightly trimmed d/w.	£38
Billy Bunter's Brain-Wave. Cassell 2nd edition 1953. Vg copy in vg later d/w.	£28
Billy Bunter's Brain-Wave. Cassell 2nd edition 1953. Vg copy in enhanced d/w.	£20

Billy Bunter's Beanfeast. Cassell 1st Edition 1952. Near fine copy in vg plus d/w.	£60
Billy Bunter's Beanfeast. Cassell 1st edition 1952. Vg copy in lightly trimmed d/w.	£42
Billy Bunter The Caravannar. Cassell 1st edition 1962. Vg copy in vg d/w.	£45
Billy Bunter's Double. Cassell 1st edition 1955. Vg copy in vg d/w.	£42
Billy Bunter's Double. Cassell 2nd edition 1955. Vg copy in vg d/w.	£32
Billy Bunter's Double Cassell 3rd edition 1956. Vg in near vg d/w.	£22
Billy Bunter's Double Cassell 2nd edition 1955. Vg copy in enhanced d/w.	£20
Billy Bunter's Double. Cassell 3rd edition 1956. Vg copy in enhanced d/w.	£18
Billy Bunter's Bodyguard. Cassell 1st edition 1962. Vg copy in vg d/w.	£48
Billy Bunter's Bodyguard. Cassell 1st edition 1962. Vg copy in good plus d/w.	£38
Bunter Comes for Christmas. Cassell 1st edition 1959. Vg copy in vg d/w.	£50
Bunter Comes for Christmas. Cassell 1st edition 1959. Vg copy in near vg d/w.	£42
Bunter Comes for Christmas. Cassell 1st edition 1959. Vg copy in enhanced d/w.	£32
Billy Bunter Afloat. Cassell 1st edition 1957. Vg copy in vg d/w.	£45
Billy Bunter Afloat. Cassell 1st edition 1957. Vg copy in enhanced d/w.	£34
Billy Bunter Afloat. Cassell 2nd edition 1961. Vg X/library copy. D/w laminated.	£18
Billy Bunter's Bargain. Cassell 1st edition 1958. Vg copy in good d/w.	£35
Billy Bunter's Bargain. Cassell 1st edition 1958. Vg copy in enhanced d/w.	£28
Bunter the Bad Lad. Cassell 1st edition 1960. Vg copy in near vg d/w.	£42
Bunter the Bad Lad. Cassell 1st edition 1960. Vg copy in good d/w.	£35
Bunter Does His Best. Cassell 5th edition 1963. Vg copy in vg d/w.	£25
Bunter Does His Best. Cassell 2nd edition 1955. Vg copy in enhanced d/w.	£30
Bunter Does His Best. Cassell 4th edition 1957. Vg copy in enhanced d/w.	£22
Billy Bunter the Hiker. Cassell 1st edition 1958. Vg copy in near vg d/w.	£38
Billy Bunter the Hiker Cassell 2nd edition 1964. Vg copy in poor d/w.	£16
Backing up Billy Bunter Cassell 3rd edition 1958. Fine copy in fine d/w.	£40
Backing Up Billy Bunter Cassell 4th edition 1966. Mint copy in mint d/w.	£55
Backing Up Billy Bunter. Cassell 1st edition 1955. Vg copy in enhanced d/w.	£35
Backing Up Billy Bunter. Cassell 2nd edition 1955. Vg copy in enhanced d/w.	£24
Big Chief Bunter. Cassell 1st edition 1963. Vg copy in vg d/w.	£55
The Banishing of Billy Bunter. Cassell 3rd edition 1966. Vg copy in near vg d/w.	£35
Bunter the Stowaway. Cassell 1st edition 1964. Near fine copy in near fine d/w.	£60
Bunter the Sportsman. Cassell 1st edition 1965. Vg copy in vg d/w.	£48
Just Like Bunter Cassell First Edition 1963. Fine copy in near fine d/w.	£60
Just Like Bunter. Cassell 1st edition 1963. Vg copy in near vg d/w.	£48
Thanks to Bunter. Cassell 1st edition 1964. Vg copy in vg d/w.	£52
Bunter Keeps It Dark. Cassell 1st edition 1960. Near fine copy in near fine d/w.	£58
Bunter Keeps It Dark. Cassell 1st edition 1960. Vg copy in vg d/w.	£48
Bunter's Last Fling. Cassell 1st edition 1965. Mint copy in mint d/w.	£65
Bunter's Last Fling. Cassell 1st edition 1965. Vg copy in vg d/w.	£55
Greyfriars School - A Prospectus. Published by Cassell to mark the end of the famous 38 titles of the Skilton-Cassell Bunter Book series. Vg in dw.	£18
The Autobiography of Frank Richards. Skilton 1st edition 1952. Vg in dw.	£42
The Autobiography of Frank Richards. Skilton Memorial Edition 1962. Vg in d/w.	£30
Frank Richards - The Chap behind the Chums. 2nd edition. Swallowtail 2000. Mint p/b.	£12.95
Frank Richards - The Chap Behind the Chums. A chance to own a first edition of Mary Cadogan's wonderful book on the great man. Mint in dustwrapper.	£25
I Say You Fellows the book about Charles Hamilton by Maurice Hall, the 1990 very scarce 1st edition published by Wharton Press. A mint copy in d/w.	£35

TERMS: PAYMENT ON YOUR SATISFACTORY RECEIPT OF GOODS PLUS POSTAGE AT COST. 4 ROOMS OF STOCK. VISITORS MOST WELCOME BY APPOINTMENT. YOU WILL BE AMAZED.

TOMMY KEEN

(Remembered by Bill Bradford)

Biographical Notes

Born Aylesbury, Bucks, 11th March 1913. Died December, 2003.

Happy schooldays, then in the Army, 1940-1946.

He was married during an early leave, but the marriage was very short-lived though he was not divorced for many years. Moved to London after the War. Later (1960s?) Tommy went to live in Thames Ditton with a friend and the latter's mother. He lived alone since 1976 when his friend died.

Joined OBBC about 1975/6 but could not attend meetings regularly (no car). He contributed to *CD* for some 20 years.

Apart from Gracie Fields (Tommy was a fan and later her friend), his main interest was Charles Hamilton, and especially *The Gem*. He gave talks on Gracie until three weeks before his death. He was admitted to Kingston Hospital a few days before he died. The funeral was at Leatherhead on 22nd December, attended by some 30 people, including a nephew and a niece.

* * * * *

I met Tommy soon after joining the OBBC in 1976. My wife and I often took him by car to his beloved Buckinghamshire. Since 1987 I visited him every 2 to 3 weeks. Mainly for shopping and a run in the country, and probably knew him better than most of his acquaintances. I did not share his enthusiasm for Gracie Fields but we could talk for hours about the old papers. His memory was unequalled, and phenomenal. Latterly he was almost blind and his hearing was seriously impaired. I would come home hoarse!! His courage in coping with these and other difficulties was incredible, and admired by all. Despite everything he was fully lucid until the last few days. The last thing he said to me, directly before going to hospital, was "I dreamt last night that I had died - I wish I had!". So I write with sadness but not deep regret.

Tommy was a most unusual character with a capacity to retain friends over decades. Although he was not always the easiest person to cope with, all those who really knew him will miss Tommy. I certainly shall.

Skinner's Shady Scheme

by D.D. Ball

Chapter 1

Penfold Has A Problem

Dick Penfold, the scholarship boy of the Remove Form of Greyfriars, was walking along the Elm Walk in the Quad.

Penfold failed to see the glory of the elms foliage that bright October morning. He stared at the ground.

"What am I going to do?" he muttered.

There was a heavy footstep behind him and a hand tapped him on the shoulder. "Steady on, you clumsy ass!" snapped Penfold. It was Bob Cherry, the popular member of the Famous Five. Bob, not one of the most observant, could see Dick was up against it and said mildly, "Sorry but if there is anything I can do?"

"Not really, unless you have a fiver handy."

Bob drew a humble sixpence from his pocket.

"All my worldly wealth", he said. "What's the trouble?"

When Dick hesitated, Bob said hastily, "I don't want to pry. I'm not Bunter!" "I know you're not, Bob, but it's Dad I'm worried about. He's behind with the rent and business isn't what it was."

"Why don't you ask Mauly? He would lend you a fiver like a shot."

"I know he would Bob, but I can't accept charity and it would amount to that", said Dick.

Just then the bell rang for third school and they repaired to the Remove Form Room.

Chapter 2

Bunter is Curious

After third school Bob Cherry tapped on the door of study number 12. An elegant form was reclining on the settee. All the furnishings in the study were expensive as befitted the wealthy Lord Mauleverer.

"Oh, it's you Bob. Take a pew."

"Thanks", said Bob, then he coughed.

"What's the row," asked Mauly. "Short of tin?"

"Well I am, but I'm used to that. No, it's Dick Penfold. I had a chat with him this morning and he's worried about his pater who is up against it." Bob then gave the gist of what Penfold had told him. "There must be something one can do to help Old Dick. He's a clever fellow, and it would be awful if he had to leave Greyfriars."

Billy Bunter, the fat owl of the Remove, saw Bob enter Mauly's study, and his curiosity was aroused. Minding others' business was Bunter's besetting sin: he had to know and he applied his ear to the keyhole. Bob and Mauly were discussing

Penfold. So that scholarship cad is up against it, thought Bunter. Serve him right, he had no business being a pupil of Greyfriars. It was a let-down for the school having the local cobbler's son there.

Fortunately, of course, except for a few, most fellows liked Penfold and wished him well. The sound of footsteps warned Bunter to leave the spot. The approaching feet belonged to Skinner, who enquired, "What have you been up to, Bunter?"

"Oh really, Skinner, someone has to keep up the good name of Greyfriars", said Bunter righteously.

Skinner went into his study followed by Bunter, "What do you want bluebottle?" growled Skinner. "Thought you might like to hear about Penfold, he's getting the push."

"How do you mean, you fat ass?", said Skinner, who although feigning indifference was sufficiently interested to want to push a lame duck further into the mire if it was in his power.

"I know what I know", said Bunter mysteriously. "Penfold's father can't pay the rent, and his business is on the rocks."

"How do you know?" asked Skinner.

"I heard Cherry and Mauly talking about it. By the way, any bull's-eyes about? I'm getting peckish", said Bunter.

"There's a few left in this tin that you can have", said Skinner ungraciously. Bunter left the study.

Chapter 3 Skinner Draws A Picture

Snoop, the sneak of the Remove, entered Study 11 which he shared with Skinner and Stott.

"Come with me, I want you, Snoopy", said Skinner.

"What for," asked Snoop, puzzled.

"I want you to keep cave while I'm in the Form Room", said Skinner.

"What are you going to do in the Form Room?"

"Let me know when it's safe to clear. You will know what I've done soon enough", said Skinner enigmatically.

The precious pair made their way to the quad which gave them access to the Form Room windows.

These were the only means of access because Mr. Quelch always locked the Form Room door.

No one at that time was in the offing. Skinner clambered into the Form Room and taking a piece of chalk drew a picture on the blackboard. He was a clever artist, but unfortunately his art was usually of an unkind nature, resulting in dire consequences for him.

There, that will do, thought Skinner eventually, as he vacated the Form Room. Snoop having given a signal that the coast was clear.

Mr. Quelch unlocked the Form Room door and his pupils followed him in. After

they took their places, there were several gasps and a titter. Mr. Quelch was a strict Form Master. "There is whispering in the class," he snapped.

Quelch, who was very sharp, was not long in ascertaining the cause.

"Bunter!" he said in a grinding voice.

Quelch stepped forward a couple of paces and then saw what was on the blackboard.

"Silence in the Form!" snapped Quelch. Skinner quaked, and began to realize that perhaps he had overstepped the mark. The picture was of a man wearing a leather apron seated at a bench mending a pair of boots. But that was not all that the picture showed. The window was heavily barred and one could only reach the conclusion that the cobbler was in prison.

Bob Cherry looked across at Penfold. Their eyes met, and Penfold's look spoke volumes.

Bob's cheeks burned.

Chapter 4

Skinner's Nerve Fails

"So, Bunter, you find the picture on the blackboard amusing", said Quelch.

"Oh no, Sir", said Bunter hastily. "I didn't say to Skinner I think it's disgraceful Penfold being here."

"Skinner, did you draw this picture?"

"Oh no, Sir, I couldn't. The door was locked."

"I'm aware of that, but there is the window. Bunter, what prompted you to state what you did about Penfold? Can any boy shed any light on this matter?"

Bob Cherry hesitated, and then said, "Perhaps I can Sir, I was talking with Mauly - I mean Mauleverer - about Penfold". He coloured with embarrassment.

"Where did this conversation take place?"

"In Mauleverer's study, Sir."

"Bunter, have you anything further to add?"

"Oh no Sir, I never heard Cherry say to Mauly through the door anything about Penfold. I mean, Sir, I think to eavesdrop is low, not my style at all."

"Bunter, it's obvious to me you have been lying, and I shall cane you severely."

"Oh lor" groaned Bunter.

"Stand out before the form."

Bunter crawled out. The cane rose and fell six times. "Go back to your place Bunter."

"Skinner, I shall ask you once more, and think well before you answer. Should you still deny you did so, and it is subsequently proved you *did*, I shall recommend Dr. Locke to expel you."

Skinner quaked; his nerve failed him. "I did it, Sir", he quavered. It was only a joke."

"We will see if Dr. Locke considers it a joke. Skinner you will see me after school."

Mr. Quelch turned to Penfold. "Penfold, if you would care to go home to see your

father you are free to do so and I regret there is one member of this form mean-spirited enough to cause you distress."

"Excuse me sir, you are kind to allow me to go home this afternoon, I should like to see my father, and I should also like to apologize to Cherry for thinking him capable of betraying a trust. I'm sorry Bob I should have known better."

"That's alright, Dick, I hope you find things not as bad as you fear when you reach home."

Mr. Quelch coughed. "I think we have wasted much time this afternoon. We will now commence the lesson."

Chapter 5 Mauly Outlines a Plan

"Oh listen to the Band", said Bob Cherry. Harold Skinner's face was ashen.

"Had it bad", asked Snoop. "No, I enjoyed it," said Skinner, sarcastically.

"Gosh, where does old Locke store it?"

"Serve you right! You did a very mean thing," said Wharton. "Trust you to be self-righteous," snarled Skinner, and he went into his study and slammed the door.

"I'll get even with Penfold", muttered Skinner. "I don't know! It was hardly his fault", said Snoop mildly.

"If he'd never come to Greyfriars this would never have happened", snarled Skinner, who refused to view things in a fair light at the best of times.

Mauleverer knocked on the door of study 1, belonging to Wharton and Nugent. "Come in", said Bob Cherry, cheerily. "Oh, I've been looking for you Bob, been thinking about Penfold", said Mauly.

"Come in. I don't see why we shouldn't all be in on this", said Bob.

The other members of the Famous Five who were also present were Johnny Bull, who hailed from Yorkshire, and Hurree Janset Ram Singh known by his pals as Inky.

Bob briefly told the others the problem facing Penfold. "I've given it some thought", said Mauly. "Gosh, you must be tired!" said Bull.

"I am", said Mauly who could be blind to sarcasm.

"Well the upshot of it is", resumed his lordship urbanely. "We have to approach this rather tactfully, I wouldn't offend old Dick for the world. I gather from what he told Bob that lack of work is the root of the problem. This poses the query, if one halved the price, would it attract more work?"

"But can Dick's pater afford to work for half-price" asked Bull bluntly. "No, I don't think he can, and that is where I come in", replied Mauly.

"The come infulness will have to be terrific, my esteemed Mauly", said Inky.

"Supposing I put an advert in a Courtfield paper under a Box Number. What would be the result of my offering to repair footwear at half price", asked Mauly.

You'd be inundated with work, I should say", suggested Wharton.

"But wouldn't that make Penfold's problem worse instead of better?" asked Bull slowly.

Inky, quicker on the uptake, smiled and said, "Not at all, my ridiculous Johnny, as Mauly's scheme is to get Penfold's pater to do the work and the ridiculous Mauly will in effect be paying for half the work done by him."

"Yes, I've thought of that, shall have to keep a low profile", said Mauly.

"That means paying half for all work done, and employing an agent", said Johnny.

"Yaaas, I expect it does", replied Mauly. "On Saturday I'll go to Courtfield. There's a man there who does footwear, his name is Carding I believe. If he will play ball and advertise the repair of footwear at half price. I shouldn't think he would worry if Penfold's pater does some of the work. If he proves awkward, I'll mention I might set up in opposition."

"You can but try" said Wharton, and so the meeting broke up.

Chapter 6

Mauly Arranges a Contract

On Saturday Mauly made his way to Courtfield and decided to cycle. It was a pleasant ride as the weather remained dry with just a hint of overnight frost. Perhaps it was a portent of severe weather to come. He arrived at the shop of Mr. Carding, a tall man, aged about thirty. Stating his business, Mauly was shown into a room behind the shop. "This is an unusual proposition", mused Carding.

"You see, Mr. Carding, Penfold is up against it and, as his son Dick is a form fellow of mine at Greyfriars, I would like to help him and his pater."

"You see, your lordship I'm having a tough time myself and am thinking of laying off a man who has been with us since right back in my father's time. However, as it happens, you may have come along just at the right time as I've been offered a job connected with the footwear trade, which involves travelling."

"Will you consider it Mr. Carding? You could then take on this new job. I appreciate that the proposition I've suggested hinges on extra trade being attracted. If it's successful you may find your trade picks up to the extent you will be glad Penfold is available to help you out. It may even mean you'll be able to keep on the man you are thinking of laying-off."

"I'll consider it, and will go to see Penfold on Monday to find out how much work he can undertake. I'll keep you posted", said Carding. "There is a snag about you having to reimburse me in my business, but I'll be square with you. I will only expect you to pay me up to the point my business is paying now. My accountant can work out the details, your lordship". The two shook hands, and Mauly made his way to the bun-shop.

After call-over Wharton met him, and they made their way to study number one.

"Well, how did you get on, Mauly", enquired Wharton.

"All right, I saw Carding, and he is seeing Penfold on Monday."

"Let's hope everything turns out all right", said Wharton, and Mauly left the study.

Chapter 7

Dick Penfold is Happier

The following Tuesday there was a letter for Mauly, and opening it he read:

Dear Lord Mauleverer,

I saw Penfold yesterday and he is prepared to undertake the repair of footwear at the standard price. He seemed to be happy to receive this offer, and promised to forward a formal contract as soon as possible. I have also had an interview with my accountant and likewise will be in touch regarding this matter. I will keep you informed of further developments.

I remain,

Yours faithfully,

J.C. Carding.

That same evening there was a tap on the door of Mauly's study. The slim form of Dick Penfold entered. "Trot in old man and take a pew", said Mauly. "I've not seen you for a day or two, I must say you look better".

"Yes, I am Mauly. Dad's had an order to repair footwear from a Courtfield firm named Carding and it's bucked him up no end." "Glad to hear it", said Mauly.

"Apparently Carding has taken a job travelling for a Footwear firm and can't cope with the work he has in hand." Penfold stayed a little longer, and then left Mauly to his repose, something his lazy lordship enjoyed. After a long rest he decided to write a letter to his Guardian, Sir Rupert Booke. In this, he outlined his plan for Mr. Penfold, confident his Guardian would approve. The letter completed, Mauly made his way to the letter-box sited in the quad.

Chapter 8

Skinner Learns Something to His Advantage

A couple of days later there were two more letters for Mauly from Carding, one stating he had come to terms with Penfold on the advice of his accountant.

The other letter, posted a few hours later, was to Carding from his accountant. This was a formal contract which Carding was forwarding to Mauly for signature.

Mauly signed, adding a brief note and posted it.

Next day was a half holiday for Greyfriars and also for Highcliffe School.

Cecil Ponsonby of the Fourth Form of Highcliffe cycled to Courtfield in order to collect a pair of shoes he had left for repair at Cardings.

Entering the shop he asked the assistant if his shoes had been repaired. Yes they were, and while waiting for them to be parcelled Pon glanced around the shop and read a notice which said that from a week hence all repairs would be carried at half price until further notice.

The assistant assured him the work would be of the same high quality.

Pon paid his bill and made his way to the Courtfield Bunshop. Entering the premises he took a seat near a window. The waitress approached and took his order.

Whilst waiting for his tea Pon looked out of the window and saw Skinner, Snoop and Stott. The cads of the Remove entered the shop and he invited them to join him. Shortly afterwards Pon's tea arrived, and Skinner ordered tea and buns for three.

Skinner's sharp eyes alighted on Pon's parcel and he guessed its contents. "Had the old hoofs repaired", volunteered Pon, guessing the meaning of Skinner's inquiring look.

"By the way, Cardings are reducing their charges for repairs by half from next week." "There must be a catch somewhere", said Stott.

"I was thinking about old Penfold", replied Skinner.

"This will finish him", he added with a grin. "And exit son Dick", sniggered Snoop.

The waitress then brought their tea and the subject changed to the absorbing one of those interesting animals, the gees gees.

Chapter 9 The Plots Thicken!

The rag was crowded that evening after prep. when Skinner, Snoop and Stott lounged in. Most of the Remove were present, as well as other members of the Lower School.

"Did you know Cardings are offering to repair footwear at half price from next week?" said Skinner. "It's a fact Pon saw it in Carding's shop", chimed in Stott. "You don't want to believe all that cad says", said Bob Cherry, giving Wharton a wink. "Let's ask Penfold if he knows anything about it", suggested Snoop.

Penfold was seated by the fire, writing a poem, and hearing his name mentioned he looked up. "I haven't been to Courtfield so I wouldn't know", he said quietly. "I shall take my footwear to Courtfield in future" said Skinner. "And I," said a half a dozen other voices.

"Yes, a good idea", said Mauly urbane. "You've always backed the Penfolds, Mauleverer, why this turnabout?" asked Skinner. "Well, you will have to take your footwear to Courtfield, I thought the exercise would do you good",

"Ha ha ha" roared the crowd in the Rag.

"Oh rats", said Skinner, and he walked out.

"Next morning after first school Mauly said to Wharton, "Can you get the Co together in the cloisters." Wharton agreed, and five minutes later the six in question were gathered there. But, unbeknown to them, Skinner was enjoying a smoke behind one of the pillars.

"Now you men I just wanted a word with you, things are agreed between Penfold and Carding, I'm also pleased to tell you between Carding and myself.

"Carding's agreed with Penfold to give him repairs of footwear at usual rates, and I've agreed with Carding that as he's prepared to repair footwear at half rates I'll make up the difference", said Mauly.

"But won't Penfold wonder how Carding can afford to carry out work at half price and yet pay him the full rate", said Johnny Bull bluntly.

"Well, Carding has already told Penfold that he's going to undertake repairs at half price as he is hoping to increase business, and in the meantime he has taken a job with a firm to augment his income."

"I see, said Johnny Bull quietly.

"It's nice to be a millionaire, Mauly", said Frank Nugent. "The nicefulness is terrific my esteemed chum", said Inky.

"So that's it, only be careful, you men, not to mention this in the studies. If someone like Bunter hears, I'd hate Penfold to learn about it. He's a sensitive fellow and he may feel cup up." And with that caution Mauly ambled away and the Co followed him.

Skinner lingered behind the pillar. He was rather knocked over and that was putting it mildly.

(to be concluded)

MORE WALKS IN THE WONDERFUL GARDENS by Laurence Price

Oscar Wilde

Although Oscar Wilde is primarily remembered for his epigrams and wit and for such famous plays as *The Importance of Being Earnest* he also wrote some haunting fairy tales including a collection entitled *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* first published in 1888. Some of these feature a garden and include "The Nightingale and the Rose", "The Selfish Giant" and "The Devoted Friend". All the stories have a real charm and a moral but the one of these I love the best is "The Selfish Giant". This is a very beautiful story which I would be happy to read to any child, or be very happy for them to read.

The story, fairy tale, fable, even parable, call it what you will, takes place in 'a large, lovely garden' where 'there were twelve peach trees that in the springtime broke out into delicate blossoms of pink and pearl, and in the autumn bore rich fruit...' 'Here the children loved to play. 'How happy we are here!' they cried to each other.'

But after a seven year absence, when the giant visited a Cornish ogre, he returned and turned the children out of his garden.

'My own garden is my own garden,' said the Giant; 'anyone can understand that, and I will allow nobody to play in it but myself.' So he built a high wall all round and put up a notice-board:

TRESPASSERS
will be
PROSECUTED

Then, to the giant's dismay, it is always winter in the garden. Nothing blooms, nothing blossoms. And the frost and the snow, and later the north wind and the hail come to reside there in the cold, white garden. *'Spring has forgotten this garden,' they cried, 'so we will live here all the year round.'*

The poor children had now nowhere to play. 'How happy we were there!' they said to each other.

And so, because of his selfishness, it is always winter in the giant's garden. But one morning the selfish giant hears a linnnet singing and to his delight he sees a wonderful sight. The children have returned through a little hole in the wall. And in each tree in which they sit, the trees are covered in blossoms. The birds and the flowers and the green grass have returned.

Yet in the furthest comer of the garden it is still winter; a little boy, so small he cannot reach the branches of the tree above him, is crying bitterly. And the giant's heart melted at the sight.

'How selfish I have been!' he said; 'now I know why the spring would not come here. I will put that poor little boy on the top of the tree, and then I will knock down the wall, and my garden shall be the children's playground for ever and ever.'

But when he went out into the garden the children saw him and were frightened and they all ran away and the garden became winter again. Only the little boy did not run for his eyes were so full of tears that he did not see the giant coming. The giant gently placed him in the tree and it at once broke into blossom and the birds came and sang on it, and the little boy flung his arms around the giant's neck and kissed him. And the children, seeing how changed the giant now was, came running back into the garden. And the little boy then went away.

Although he grew to love all the children he was sad that the little boy, whom he loved the most because he had kissed him, never returned. The years passed until, at last, the giant grew old and feeble. He did not hate the winter now, because he knew it was only the spring asleep. Then one winter morning he saw a beautiful sight.

In the farthest comer of the garden was *'a tree quite covered with lovely white blossoms. Its branches were golden and silver fruit hung down from them, and underneath it stood the little boy he had loved.'* The giant ran to meet the little child with great joy. *And here is how this lovely fairy tale ends:*

He hastened across the grass, and came near to the child. And when he came quite close his face grew red with anger, and he said, 'Who hath dared to wound thee?' For on the palms of the child's hands were the prints of two nails, and the prints of two nails were on the little feet.

'Who hath dared to wound thee?' cried the giant; 'tell me, that I may take my big sword and slay him.'

'Nay!' answered the child, 'but these are the wounds of love.'

'Who art thou?' said the giant, and a strange awe fell on him, and he knelt before the little child.

And the child smiled on the giant, and said to him, 'You let me play once in your garden, today you shall come with me to my garden, which is Paradise.'

And when the children ran in that afternoon, they found the giant lying dead under the tree, all covered with white blossoms.

This is a beautiful story. The small child as a Christ figure demonstrates the power of redemptive love and paraphrases Christ's own promise to the redeemed thief on the cross in Luke 23:43 - 'I tell you the truth, today, you will be with me in Paradise.'

With the giant's death there is, therefore, no need for sadness. The story is, indeed, life-affirming and though we will meet other selfish characters in Wilde's delightful fairy tales, such as Hugh the Miller in "The Devoted Friend", it is only the giant who disowns his selfishness and redeems himself through the little child with the 'wounds of love', whom he meets in that wonderful garden of Wilde's imagination, in this loveliest and most heart-warming of fables.

(Editor's Note: If my memory serves me correctly, when the BBC axed *Children's Hour*, so beloved by many, David Davies read *The Selfish Giant* on the last programme of all. We can read into that whatever meaning we like!)

BOOK REVIEW FROM ROBERT KIRKPATRICK

***MANLINESS AND THE BOYS' STORY PAPER IN BRITAIN: A CULTURAL HISTORY, 1855-1940* by Kelly Boyd. Palgrave Macmillan 2003 £55**

It has long been possible to build up a substantial collection of books about children's literature, with studies of fiction for boys well-represented. However, one area of boys' literature which has only been marginally studied (outside the pages of the CD, of course!) is the boys' story paper. Previous studies, such as E.S. Turner's *Boys Will Be Boys* and Kevin Carpenter's *Penny Dreadfuls and Comics*, have been useful introductions, with Turner concentrating on the characters in popular boys' fiction, and Carpenter providing a chronological survey to accompany an exhibition at the Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood in 1983. Kirstern Drotner's *English Children and Their Magazines* was much more detailed, and covered periodicals for girls as well as boys.

Now we have a substantial volume devoted solely to the heyday of the boys' periodical, albeit a book devoted largely to examining the ideals of "manliness" and how this changed over the decades from 1855 onwards.

The book deliberately shys away from looking at the better-known periodicals such as the *Boy's Own Paper*, *Chums* and *The Captain*, arguing that these were aimed at an elitist market (public schoolboys etc.). Instead, it looks at the role of the mass-market story paper, from Samuel O. Beeton's *Boy's Own Magazine* (launched in 1855), through the era of the "penny dreadful", the era of the *Magnet* and *Gem*, and ending up with the D.C. Thomson papers such as *Hotspur* and *Wizard*.

Not surprisingly, with a brief as wide as this much is left out, and you are left wondering why the author chose one particular periodical and not another. There are also several minor errors and debateable conclusions, although again this is perhaps inevitable in such an ambitious project. Nevertheless, it is still a hugely entertaining and enjoyable read, by no means as “academic” as its title suggests, and full of fascinating detail and insight.

It begins with a brief look at boys as readers, with an emphasis on the growth of education in the 19th century and the way that reading provided an escape from the drudgery of school and work. The next chapter looks at the various publishers who became involved in what was often a cut-throat business - Beeton, Edwin J. Brett, Alfred Harmsworth and D.C. Thomson in particular - followed by two chapters looking at the ideals of manliness and the depiction of the hero in the Victorian era and the way these were subtly (or not-so-subtly) altered in the years immediately before and after the First World War.

The author’s choice of material to illustrate her points is often surprising and refreshing. With over 200 Victorian boys’ periodicals to choose from, she focuses on just a handful - *Boys of England*, published by Edwin J. Brett and which ran from 1866 to 1899, for example, and in particular some of its serial stories such as *Jack Harkaway, after Schooldays; His Adventures Afloat and Ashore*; and *Boys of the Empire*, also published by Brett but only surviving for a year.

Alfred Harmsworth’s publications, such as the *Magnet* and *Gem*, are seen very much as bridging the gap between the Victorian idea of the manly hero, whose attributes are rooted in the ethos of the British Empire, and the more modern hero of the 1920s and 1930s. The early school stories of Frank Richards are briefly but succinctly analysed, along with stories of young boys at work – in coal mines, factories and so on, enlivened with improbable plots yet still centring on their heroes proving their mettle against the odds.

Detective stories, such as Sexton Blake, get a brief look-in, as well as characters such as “The Big Stiff” from *The Hotspur* (a surprisingly modern schoolmaster from the 1930s), “The Schoolboy Cannibal Earl” (who appeared in the first 15 issues of the *Pilot* in 1935, and then later in the *Boys’ Friend Library*), and Jack, Sam and Pete, three young men whose exploits were relayed in the *Marvel* for many years in the early 1900s. These last three characters are explored in some depth in a chapter headed “Imperialism, Racism and Manliness”, and which takes a close and revealing look at how boys’ papers treated and portrayed johnny foreigner, with a mixture of affection and an attitude which would now be regarded as unacceptable.

The book closes with a lengthy chapter on “Images of Women in the Boys’ Story Paper”, which takes a breathless gallop through stories of helpless kidnap victims from penny dreadfuls (always rescued by the story’s manly hero, of course) through to the suffragettes and beyond.

While the book emerged from the author’s doctoral thesis, it is, as I have already suggested, not dry and academic. Rather, it is eminently readable, full of fascinating detail, and in many places very thought-provoking. Of course, it has its faults, and

not everyone will agree with its choice of material and some of its conclusions. There is, for example, hardly any reference to stories about orphans and waifs, a popular staple in many Victorian periodicals. But it is not often that someone sets out to tackle a subject as vast as this, and while this is a very selective study it is still stimulating, enlightening, and huge fun.

N.B. Whilst it is very pricey, if you have access to the internet you should be able to track down copies at somewhat discounted prices. Or you could, of course, borrow a copy from your local library.

RUPERT AT(almost) 84

by Roger Coombes

The publication of Caroline Bott's excellent biography of Alfred Bestall, so well reviewed in *Nutwood Newsletter* and the *CD*, by Mary Cadogan, has prompted me to dry out and dust off this article which I first drafted in 2000 to coincide with Rupert's 80th birthday. I seemed to spend ages altering it and never felt sufficiently satisfied to submit it. An article of this length cannot tell the whole story - for that you would need to consult several books and a multitude of other published articles, but I hope that it gives a broad picture for those of you who know little of Rupert's background and development.

Rupert's first appearance was in a single frame drawing (titled Little Lost Bear) in the *Daily Express* of 8th November 1920, and he has featured continuously since, apart from short breaks in the early years and on occasions during the Second World War, although for most of the War even when rationing reduced the *Express* to a single sheet its proprietor Lord Beaverbrook insisted that room be found for Rupert. This makes him the longest running feature in the *Express*, indeed in any British national newspaper, and he may now be heading for a world record.

During the first fifteen years the format varied considerably, including a short-lived experiment when the stories were told with photographed toys rather than drawings, before settling down to the now familiar two frame daily episode in stories which average four to five weeks in length.

In the beginning, there was a circulation battle between the popular press titles and part of this reflected a bid for child readership and the introduction of stories about anthropomorphic animals. The *Daily Mail* began "Teddy Tail" in 1915, followed by the *Daily Sketch* with "Uncle Oojah" and the *Daily Mirror's* "Pip and Squeak" in 1919. The popularity of these animal characters with children inspired spin-off books, which sold well, and clubs, which generated charitable appeals among their members - and thereby worthy coverage in the adult sections of the papers. A prime example is the Wilfredian League of Gugnuncs, centred on the little rabbit who had joined Pip (the dog) and Squeak (the penguin) in the *Mirror*. A rally held at the Royal Albert Hall

in 1928 was attended by 90,000 people. Would *any* children's fictional character possess such pulling power today? Could Harry Potter cast such a spell?

The exact origins of Rupert are a little blurred, with alternative versions in existence, but the widely held view is that Beaverbrook ordered his editor, R.D. Blumenfeld, to find a character for the *Express* to rival and surpass the success of the opponents' story strips. Blumenfeld's search was proving fruitless until the night news editor, Herbert Tourtel, set the challenge to his wife Mary, an established illustrator of children's books. Mary Tourtel came up with Rupert, who as we all know was successful not only in rivalling the contemporary characters, but outliving all of them and in showing no signs of old age in the 21st century, after 83 years.

Rupert's first appearance established his general look - sweater, scarf and checked trousers - although almost 84 years and four main artists later there have been refinements. Of course he has always been printed in black and white in the pages of the *Express*. The first reprints or adaptations of these stories in book form in the 1920s made colour possible, albeit often only on the covers. Initially, his sweater was blue and his trousers were white, but these soon changed to red and yellow respectively - the more familiar image. Mary Tourtel also determined that this bear, and most of his animal chums, should stand upright like a small boy. His face was more ursine and furrier than it is now, but his hands have always been human, unlike those of Edward Trunk, which are clearly elephant's "feet" - yet he manages to hold things with no difficulty! Mary introduced the core of Rupert's chums early on: Edward Trunk, Bill Badger, and Algy Pug. In those days he had a human friend, the little girl Margot. Like some other characters she has been forgotten, except in reprints, and new characters have been introduced by Mary's immediate successor, Alfred Bestall, and the current artist, John Harrold.

Mary Tourtel's stories reflected her interest in, and, through her illustrating of children's books, her knowledge of the traditions of fairy tales and medieval fantasy populated with kings, queens, ogres, dwarves and witches, in storytelling. It is possible to detect the influence of Hans Christian Andersen, the Brothers Grimm and others in her work. An example of this is in "Rupert in Dreamland", which appeared in the *Express* in 1923. In the reprint published for their members by the Followers of Rupert in 1999, Roger Allen, also a keen member of the Lewis Carroll Society, draws attention to the similarities between Carroll's famous Alice creation and the plot and characters in this particular Rupert story.

Rupert's home is Nutwood - a quintessential English village, set somewhere between the wars, judging by the 1920s and 1930s styles of clothes and transport (although this impression became more deeply rooted once Alfred Bestall took over the drawing and writing). Nutwood is populated by a mixture of humans and humanoid animals going about their daily lives, delivering post, shopping, going to school, gardening and, less conspicuously, farming. Religion is conspicuous by its absence. Amongst all these normal 'people' are a few extraordinary ones, such as the Wise Old Goat, the Conjurer (a tall Chinaman, looking like an exiled mandarin) and the bald, bespectacled Professor who is always inventing things which invariably go wrong or

Little Lost Bear.

By MARY
TOURTEL

No. 1.—Mrs. Bear sends her little son Rupert to market.



Two jolly bears once lived in a wood;
Their little son lived there too.
One day his mother sent him off
The marketing to do.

She wanted honey, fruit, and eggs,
And told him not to stray,
For many things might happen to
Small bears who lost the way.

Rupert's first appearance, drawn by Mary Tourtel, on 8th November 1920

have unfortunate side-effects and repercussions.

These extraordinary people often create unusual situations for Rupert, who must also be considered extraordinary, if only for the number and range of adventures which he has each year, some of which take place in Nutwood, which is periodically (and seasonably) visited by elves, Jack Frost and Santa Claus, amongst others, but other adventures frequently take him away to familiar and unfamiliar places like the North Pole, the Kingdom of the Birds, enchanted forests and exotic islands (once populated by politically incorrect black people) and to a never-ending catalogue of strange and wonderful new locations. It is a tribute to the writers and artists that they can devise new and continually more varied situations for Rupert and his chums, such as the story in which Rupert travelled back in time (and through a different

RUPERT AND HIS MONKEY PET :: By MARY TOURTEL.

No. 1.—Rupert Wants Beppo Back.



Mrs. Bear was in her garden
With Rupert one fine day,
When he said to her how much he
wished
For some one with whom to play.

He thought of the Monkey, once his pet.
Said he: "Oh, Mummy, do
Ask Daddy to get Beppo back
From the people at the Zoo."

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*By 31st July 1928 the style had matured and the characters are more
recognisable to modern readers.*

fiction interface - the phrase is mine!) to meet Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson and help solve a mystery.

Mary Tourtel's stories were a times quite disturbing, and her Rupert was not always a character with whom the reader could empathise - sometimes he was downright naughty and when in a tight fix he could cry and whinge. Magic was frequently used to get him out of difficult situations, something which Mary's successors have avoided. They have also made the situations less sinister and dispensed with the grotesque characters without losing any of the excitement. As an artist, Mary Tourtel is admired by many Followers of Rupert, and her work is collected,

although critics point to lack of background detail and the tendency for repetitive composition of frames in many sequences, despite her scholarly style which answered the accuracy of historic detail in costumes for example. Such criticism can only really be made by comparison with Mary's successor, Alfred Bestall.

Mary Tourtel had to give up writing and drawing the adventures of Rupert in 1935 when her eyesight began to fail her badly. She had always been helped and supported by Herbert, who composed most of the rhyming couplets which accompanied her stories (these were generally acceptable but some were atrocious), and his death in 1931 had removed a lot of her spirit. Management at the *Express* was desperate for Rupert to continue. Aside from his success in the daily paper, book sales were good - reprints and re-tellings of stories had begun as early as 1921, with annual-sized books published by Sampson Low and smaller, novel-sized "Little Bear Adventures" published by Thomas Nelson, recognisable by their yellow covers. Rupert had also become a regular feature in the *Express's* own Children's Annual from 1930. In 1932 the Rupert League was formed. This was NOT, therefore, the time to drop the character.

The search for a replacement for Mary found Alfred Bestall, a noted book and magazine illustrator. Eighteen years younger than Mary, he had built up an impressive portfolio of book illustrations in a wide range of historical and romantic fiction, educational and children's books, as well as in magazines such as *Punch*, *Tatler* and *The Passing Show*, demonstrating that he could turn his hand to any subject, although he had a special skill, not given to many, for depicting children. When he was approached to take on Rupert, Alfred assumed that he was required just to draw the pictures. He soon found, to his initial surprise, that he was expected to write the stories as well. He agreed to try his hand at this, and once started never looked back for thirty years. The only guidelines for shaping the stories were to keep off fairies, magic and horrific characters. It was felt by Arthur Christiansen, the *Express* editor, and other senior staff, that the wave of a magic wand had been over-used as a device to get Rupert out of scrapes in the past, and there had been some parental complaints that some of Mary's bad characters had been giving children nightmares.

Alfred followed these "rules" as he saw fit. Certainly, the evolution of Rupert in his care witnessed the stories becoming imbued with more fantasy and less magic, through the introduction of more varied regular and semi-regular characters such as Bingo the Brainy Pup, Pong-Ping the Pekinese, Willy Mouse and Sailor Sam, although the arrival of Tigerlily and her Chinese conjurer father ensured that magic (usually in the form of spells that go wrong) was not removed entirely.

At first, Alfred followed Mary's style of drawing the characters to a degree, but slowly his own style shone through, as the perspectives became more cinematic, using different angles to view the same scenes and thereby creating more variety and interest, and the backgrounds became more detailed than Mary's had been, giving a more familiar and consistent awareness of Nutwood. The character of Rupert himself also evolved. He was more resourceful and no longer a wimp. All in all, he became a nicer "boy" (opinions on his age are divided, but I see him as 9 or 10) with whom

RUPERT and the Sea Serpent—30



Rupert holds his breath until he feels he must burst. Then he is shot to the surface again and finds himself in a large cavern glowing with phosphorescent light. He clings gasping to a rock to recover himself, when there is a sudden shout of



"Rupert," and as he scrambles out he is amazed to see his friend Algy running to him. "You are a wonder!" says the little Pug. "Fancy you finding me here. Oh dear, I never thought I should get to this extraordinary place just because I said I wanted to get to the seaside!"

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Alfred Bestall took over the drawing (and writing) in 1936. This September 1939 example shows both his style and the familiar 2 frame format mostly associated with Rupert.

readers, girls and boys alike, could identify. At times, Mary Tourtel's Nutwood seemed to be medieval, but Alfred rooted Rupert's world quite firmly in the years between the world wars, although this is not to say that he would not meet characters from other periods of time, especially on his travels beyond Nutwood. Showing respect for Mary, who died in 1948, Alfred did not sign his work for a long while. Eventually, the keen observer, like Terry Jones who made a television documentary on Alfred in the early 1980s, would notice "Bestall" or simply "B" tucked away in the corner of a frame.

Soon after he took over, the official *Daily Express* Rupert annuals began their unbroken run in 1936. The latest is number 68. They have been, in general, reprints, albeit sometimes abridged, of stories which have appeared in the *Express*, moving first to two-tone and then from 1940 to complete colouring. They also have specially painted covers, endpapers and title pages. Between 1941 and 1949 wartime economy dictated that they should be soft-covers, and in the 1980s and 1990s the page size increased to take up a more prominent position on the bookshop stands before Christmas. Early annuals, scarce by the 1980s, became very collectable, especially following Terry Jones's documentary, and prices soared on the second-hand market. The *Express* began publishing facsimiles, in order, starting with the 1936 book. They have now reached 1953, although 1946 and 1947 have been by-passed and some of the others have been edited on the grounds of racial political correctness. This contentious issue has been debated within the pages of the *Nutwood Newsletter*, the

Rupert and Odmedod—9



Rupert is astonished at what Constable Growler has said, but there seems to be nothing he can do to help, so they separate, the constable to continue his beat and the little bear to go on looking for Algy. For a long time he searches and calls, but there is no sign of the little pug. Rupert is getting very worried when suddenly in the distance he sees a little figure outlined against the sky. "That must be Algy," he cries, and with new hope he hurries on.

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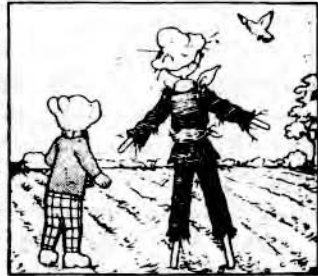
War-time rationing caused a shrinkage of the space Rupert occupied in the paper. Back to a single frame and smaller, but he's still there, considered important for morale, in April 1940.

Rupert and the Scared Crows—7



"What do you mean, scarecrows don't scare crows?" Rupert asks. "It's a secret," Odmedod says. "But it is true. You see, the birds never have been frightened of us. They know we're not people and can't harm them." "Then why don't they eat more of the farmers' seeds and crops?" asks Rupert. "Because if they did the farmers would see that scarecrows are no good and use something really frightening instead," is the reply. Just then a little bird who has been listening pipes up, "I know what did scare the crows!"

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Forty-seven years later (April 1987) Rupert is still going (as as Odmedod the scarecrow), now drawn by John Harrold, who has been the official artist for almost as long as Alfred Bestall.

journal of the Followers of Rupert.

Alfred Bestall officially retired in 1965, having almost burnt himself out on a number of occasions, especially when *Express* management launched the Rupert "Adventure Series" in the 1950s. These booklets were produced quarterly for a decade and Alfred was expected to be responsible for them. He had managed, by producing three panels a day, to get himself comfortably ahead of publication in the daily paper, to allow for short holidays, but this new demand jeopardised that. After working on the first few of the "Adventure Series" it became too much for him and, under doctor's orders had had to give them up. Other artists, such as Alex Cubie, were found, but as happened when Alfred "retired" in 1965, they had difficulty with the heads and faces, particularly Ruperts, so a system was devised whereby Alfred completed the drawings of others by adding the heads to their figures.

Alfred's parting of the ways with the *Express* came quite dramatically with the 1973 Annual. He had continued painting annual covers and endpapers into retirement, maintaining the tradition begun by Mary Tourtel that Rupert's face on covers, despite being white inside, should be brown. Regardless of any lack of logic for this, it was Alfred's prerogative as artist to continue in this way, and so far as we know, he had never been directed to do otherwise. On this occasion, however, Max Aitkin, son of Beaverbrook, on seeing the mock-up for the 1973 book ordered that the colour be changed, by another artist, from brown to white. Alfred, normally mild-mannered, was incensed by this violation of his work and said so. An apology was offered but the printing went ahead with the white-faced cover, although in subsequent years Alfred's successors have maintained the brown-faced tradition. Alfred severed his working relationship with *Express* newspapers. By the mid 1980s, with Terry Jones's documentary, the formation of "The Followers of Rupert", the award of his MBE accompanied by a tribute from Prince Charles, and Paul McCartney's "Frog Chorus" record and video, Alfred was something of a celebrity. He died in 1986, aged 93.

Among the artists used to assist Alfred with the Adventure Series was Alex Cubie, an *Express* staff illustrator from 1951. He reproduced many of the stories in the daily paper in 1965 and did the covers and endpapers for the Annuals from 1974 to 1977. The task of writing the stories was taken on by others, notably James Henderson who compiled the annuals, as others had done before him. The production of the rhyming couplets had never been done by Alfred, so others too had contributed to these. This left Alex Cubie to concentrate on drawing Rupert as the main artist for the next decade. Although some critics find his linework thick, compared with the delicacy of Alfred's, Alex's work nevertheless has an appreciative audience, grateful for the continuation of Rupert in a somewhat cynical decade when old values were swept away in the role of punk rock and drugs. James Henderson, writing the stories which Alex drew, comments "His misfortune was to succeed Alfred Bestall with whom, inevitably, he was compared by Bestall fans" (quoted from *The Rupert Bear Dossier*). Other artists who contributed Rupert drawings in the 1960s and 70s included Jenny Kisler and Lucy Matthews. Until recently, little has been known about them and they are currently contributing to the research being done by the Followers to identify the

artists in the post-Bestall era. (See Editor's Note at the end of this article.)

Alex Cubie was not a young man when he took over from Bestall and ten years later he was looking to retire. He died in 1995 aged 84.

In 1976 the current artist was found. In John Harold, *Express* had found at 28 a much younger man who has demonstrated commitment to the continuation and development of Rupert's adventures. He has now been illustrating Rupert for over a quarter of a century, delighting more generations of children *and* adults, especially those who gather at meetings and fairs organised by the Followers. Each year in Canterbury (the home of Mary Tourtel) he spends a day, close to Rupert's "birthday" in November, signing the current annual. Like Bestall before him, he has made Rupert his own. Mary Tourtel's blueprint is still there, as are Bestall's characters and inventiveness, and John's style, whilst reflecting his predecessors, is unique and equally appealing. I have noted particularly the individuality of expression in the faces of his human characters.

Since Alfred's retirement, the writing and drawing responsibilities have been separated. Although editors had occasionally used other writers when Bestall was ill or overworked, James Henderson was, as already mentioned, the main writer as well as editor in the 1970s and '80s. Since 1990 Rupert's adventures have been written by Ian Robinson who has maintained Rupert's evolution into the 21st century. He and John have introduced new characters such as Ottoline and the Sage of Um, and the plots are as inventive as ever. The team is completed by Gina Hart who has been colouring John's fine line work for the Annual and for occasional colour appearances in the newspaper since 1993, taking over from Doris Campbell who had been colouring since 1945. John, like Alfred, paints his covers and endpapers himself. For several years, the daily paper has printed occasional and random episodes in colour, apparently when the use of colour advertisements on the same sheet has made this possible. We have not as yet seen a whole story in colour in the daily paper, although reprints and specially written stories for Rupert's short-lived appearances in the *Sunday Express Magazine* have been in colour.

The Express celebrated Rupert's 80th birthday in 2000 with a full page tribute. With over a thousand Followers in the Society, which is supported by the *Express*, and the new annuals and fascimiles in the best-selling list at Christmas, we can be confident that Rupert will receive his telegram in 2020, although with the *Express* again in new ownership and no new stories published for over a year the Followers are beginning to wonder what he will look like. Recent rumours of 'updating' him into the 21st Century have resurrected fears of a transformation. We can but wait and see.

(Editor's Note: I am working with Jenny Kisler on a publication to be called *Rupert, and the Women in His World*. M.C.)

GIRLS GONE BY PUBLISHERS

by Mary Cadogan

Girls Gone By Publishers are continuing their remarkably prolific output of great school-stories - stories intended mainly for girls (and women) it has to be said, but some of their classic titles would be appreciated by male readers of the *CD* who feel starved of good school stories. If you haven't yet sampled any of the books written by Dorita Fairlie Bruce, Elsie Jeanette Oxenham or Elinor Brent-Dyer, these publishers now provide you with a unique opportunity to acquire many of their books, at reasonable prices, in excellent quality paperback editions. These retain the illustrations of the original hardbacks, and the full-colour card-covers of the new editions are usually taken from dust-jackets of the first editions. And there is never any alteration to, or "updating" of, the texts.

As well as publishing stories by the above mentioned giants of the genre, *Girls Gone By* are publishing titles by Lorna Hill, Antonia Forest and others (and, I'm glad to say by Mary Cadogan and Patricia Craig: "You're a Brick, Angela!" was republished last year, and my "Chin Up, Chest Out, Jemima!" is promised for publication this summer!).

Full details of their publishing programme can be obtained from Girls Gone By Publishers, 4 Rock Terrace, Coleford, Bath, BA3 5NF (Tel: 01373 812705) or from their website: <http://www.rockterrace.demon.co.uk/GGBP>

Girls Gone By Publishers



WANTED: The Schoolgirls' Own (weekly magazine). Schoolgirl's Own Library first series - Morcove stories - Nos. 36, 46, 58, 77, 85, 91, 92, 103, 109, 121, 127, 133, 145, 151, 163, 169, 178, 184, 191, 192, 201, 209, 219, 220, 243, 244, 259, 279, 295, 307, 319, 342, 355, 367, 379, 403, 439, 463, 471, 487, 499, 507, 515, 521, 529, 537, 546, 563, 579, 587, 595, 611, 615, 617, 623, 627, 635, 639, 643, 669. SYLVIA READ, 8 Goline Court, Hillman 6168, Western Australia. Tel: +61 8 9527 3534. Email: diamond2@iinet.net.au

JOHN HUNTER 1891-1961

by Bill Bradford

Alfred John Hunter began writing while still in his teens. Over the years he used many pen-names, including Peter Meriton, Anthony Drummond, L.H. Brenning, Anthony Dax, John Addiscombe, Jean Hunter (his daughter's name) but for the vast majority of stories as John Hunter. First published in CHUMS, on January 11th 1913, was A RACE WITH DEATH, a story of motor-cycle racing. He saw service in World War I which is probably why I cannot trace anything written between 1916 and 1919.

He wrote both juvenile and adult fiction, the latter almost entirely crime stories, and was one of the few authors of the period who was apparently happy in both fields.

His work appeared in many publications, including CHUMS, BOYS' HERALD (2nd) BRITISH BOY, FOOTBALL & SPORTS, FLAG LIBRARY, MODERN BOY, THRILLER, THRILLER LIBRARY, RANGER, BOXING NOVELS, DETECTIVE WEEKLY, BOYS' WONDER LIBRARY, KNOCKOUT, SUN and WESTERN LIBRARY. In BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY there were 4 issues in 1st Series and at least 15 in the 2nd, probably all reprints. In the SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY he had 10 issues in the 2nd Series and 45 in the 3rd/4th series, plus a story in each of the 3rd and 4th SEXTON BLAKE ANNUALS. Publishers in hardback included Cassells, Newnes, Hurst, Gramol and Victory Press who published (I think) his last 2 books, MICHAEL GRAHAM, POLICE CADET (1960) and MICHAEL GRAHAM, POLICE CONSTABLE (1962).

His work was wide-ranging, with a penchant for sporting themes, but he was equally at home with Thrillers, Westerns, Pirates and futuristic tales... there was a memorable series in BOYS' MAGAZINE entitled THE MENACE OF THE MONSTERS, in which Britain was invaded by prehistoric creatures from outer space. Hunter wrote so much for this paper, including the first and last issues, that it might well have been published as JOHN HUNTER WEEKLY! Those of us who do remember him, think immediately of Captain James Dack and Lucky Lannagan.

Captain Dack was a tough seagoer without too many scruples, and Skipper of the Mary Ann Trinder, a tramp steamer mentioned by name in several yarns prior to advent of Dack. I think he first appeared in THRILLER No. 191 dated 1.10.1932. In all, he wrote 35 stories for this paper, 5 featuring Dack, the last in No. 498, 20.12.1938. In DETECTIVE WEEKLY Hunter had a total of 6 stories, of which 3 featured Dack. In SEXTON BLAKE ANNUAL, No. 3, *The Secret of the Hold* is a Dack story, as is *Under Sexton Blake's Orders* in the 4th Annual. The latter was included in *Sexton Blake Wins*, the anthology edited by Jack Adrian (1986) in which he credits Hunter with some 20 million words over the years.

Lucky Lannagan will probably be familiar to many CD readers, appearing in 17 issues of Western Library published by Amalgamated Press 1950-1954 (110 in all). The first Hunter, No. 2, is entitled *Quick on the Draw*, the other 16 all include the name Lannagan in the title. He is a fast shooting, wandering cowboy, and although I am not an avid reader of Westerns, I find the stories very readable. I am told that there was an

YOU MUST MEET YOUR FAVOURITES!

No. 19. JOHN HUNTER

I WONDER if the peaceful inhabitants of Worthing realize that the slim, fair man, with the pleasant face and the twinkling eyes, who occasionally stands on the Worthing front, breathing in the ozone, is one who is constantly doing murder most foul—on paper?

John Hunter, whose story "Riders of the Storm!" is one of the finest we have ever had from his talented pen. There's punch in every line of a Hunter story. He assembles a gallant, but very credible, hero, puts him up against a most villainous villain, and the result is a yarn that makes you hold your breath. John Hunter is very versatile, but he is at his best with motor-racing yarns or detective thrillers.

His first literary crime was perpetrated at school and was known as "The Fourth Form Magazine." Like most schoolboy magazines, it came to an untimely and sticky end, and not even the British Museum preserves a copy to remind us of Mr. Hunter's early talent! Then he went into an engineering works and decided to write a story, one evening. Just like that . . .

Called it "A Race With Death," and sent it to "Chums" some years ago. It was accepted and, on and off, he has been writing for the paper ever since. After the War ended and of his adventures in that Big Job he keeps modestly quiet, he abandoned engineering and started writing for a living. Since then he has written novels, serials, short stories, film plays—a whole mass of stuff—all of which sprang from that first story submitted so tremblingly to the Old Paper.



When younger, he was keenly active at football, boxing, cricket, and running—sports in which he is still very interested. Nowadays, he loves driving speedy cars and playing snooker and billiards. But his great hobbies are archaeology and the study of history.

Kindly, and very charming, and with a sense of humour of Grade "A" calibre, John Hunter is one of the most popular men ever to be connected with our paper.

H. R.

BOYS' MAGAZINE.

PIRATES! BURIED TREASURE! GLAMOROUS ADVENTURES UNDER THE SKULL AND CROSSBONES FLAG! Begin Reading To-day, Boys!





Stolen Gold! An airship commandeered by gangsters! A gunfight thousands of feet above the sea! All these things go to make a yarn full of thrills and adventure. What happens when the airship breaks in half during a storm and drops earthward like a stone? You will find the answer in this long complete story.



American writer of the West, also called John Hunter. This gave me food for thought, but after some research and reading some Western serials in Chums, I am satisfied that the Lannagan stories are by *our* John Hunter.

Unfortunately little is known of the man himself, although he was married, with a son and daughter. Sadly, he is now a very neglected author and I cannot find any references to him within the CD. No doubt somebody will correct me on this point! Since starting this project I have unearthed a CHERRY TREE paperback No. 177, DEAD MAN'S GATE by Hunter, which appears to be an original story. He may have written others for this publication but I cannot put my hands on a list which I once acquired from somebody.

STOP PRESS. I have just learnt from my good friend Norman Wright that Lucky Lannagan was featured in at least 6 issues of Cowboy Comics, the first, No. 115 issued 4.11.1954, and that John Hunter's name appears on 2 of the publications.

MY CHILDHOOD READING: KING ARTHUR'S ANCESTORS

by Mark Taha

One of the best things my late mother did was introduce me to the public library on April 12, 1966. This article deals with one of the first books I borrowed.

There must have been thousands of books written about King Arthur. There have been at least four written about his ancestors-the Artor series, by American writer Paul Capon and published in the early 60s. I must confess to not having realised that until I researched this article!

The first, "Warriors' Moon", is set in about 1,000 BC in the land of Sarm, around Salisbury plain. The land is ruled by Utta, the paramount chief, known as the Pendragon (remember Arthur's father?). He's not absolute ruler but is assisted by a Council of nobles who meet seasonally in a circle of stone pillars to decide the laws and policies. He does, however, have the right to nominate his own successor, a choice known only to his "remembrancers" - "living books", as writing hasn't been invented yet. As Utta puts it, "As long as one remembrancer lives, Sarum lives!" His favourite grandson Artor is a teenager-too young to be a warrior, he's nevertheless a "fair shot, skilled with quarterstaff, good wrestler". He and his sister Morva meet a wounded stranger whom they bring to the Council - it's bad news. There are enemy invaders on the attack.

Sarm's warriors are pleased at this-there hasn't been a war for thirty years. Their pleasure is, like many of them, short-lived - the invasion succeeds. Utta is killed but has nominated Artor as his successor; he, Morva, and the wounded Trist from the nearby land of Dort flee to Utta's exiled adviser Morwen (Merlyn?), from "a hot dry land further to the South than thought can reach". They meet Prince Aysedo from

Rhosmena, a dandy who wears "little leather boxes" tied on his feet. Artor's treacherous cousin Dok is serving as puppet Pendragon for the invaders-Aysedo has a similar plan for Artor. It turns out that Rhosmena needs Sarm's help, too - a fact Artor discovers after his first sea voyage, in a boat with "great sheets of cloth... shipmen call them sails". Fortunately, Rhosmena has a brilliant high commander, a shrewd and meticulous old man known as "Birdie". Regaining the throne turns out to be fairly easy-Dok's troops are a "rabble of renegades" and Artor beats him in single combat. He plans to "reconsecrate the stone pillars" - sounds like Stonehenge to me!

The sequel, "the Kingdom of the Bulls", is set twenty-two years later. Artor's reign as Pendragon has been one of peace, plenty, and freedom from pestilence. He is, however, "rather fond of the sound of his own voice". Morwen, now over 90, has decided that the earth isn't flat.

Artor junior is the hero this time; his cousin Alayne, a "singularly beautiful girl", has been kidnapped by traders and taken to the land of Knossos(Crete). Young Artor leads an expedition to rescue her-one that invades transporting ships overland, as the Knossans control the Mediterranean straits. Ironically, Alayne is being well treated and educated as one of the King's Maidens. There are a couple of drawbacks - apart from being caught up in an earthquake, the annual Winter Festival features their being sacrificed to the bull!

She is, of course, rescued in the nick of time. There are references to lands with "animals as big as bulls, tame as dogs-on which men can sit and be carried about" and things "like ships that travel on land by round pieces of wood fixed to their sides" and "little squares of soft clay or wax...words or thoughts appear as markings".

The third, "Lord of the Chariots", was the first one I read. It's set two hundred years later; young Artor stayed in Knossos, eventually returning to Sarm in old age. The country was last heard of many years ago, in a state of anarchy after being attacked by Rhosmena.

"Artor three" is an eighteen-year-old archer, swordsman, and athlete. His father had had the "Sarm ring" entitling him to rule a land "once known, since forgotten", on an island once famous for its tin mines-unfortunately, men now preferred iron. Artor's beautiful mother lives for pleasure; his stepfather's governor of Western Crete and his two elder stepbrothers don't like him. Caught with fake gold coins won from one of them, he and his veteran mentor Polydorus are forced to sell themselves into slavery. They meet the Skygazers, who buy slaves to free them and believe in only one god who 'live somewhere above the sky'. Artor is rescued by his elderly great aunt Morva, a reputed prophetess who gives him the Sarm ring He joins Brutus, a descendant of Aeneas and rogue who rules a "new Troy", the island of Laogecia. They go to England together, Artor to reconquer Sarm and Brutus to found a new Troy at a settlement by the river. This refers to the legend that London was founded by Trojan exiles.

The last book "The Golden Cloak", is set centuries later. This Artor is 18 and will become Pendragon at 21 .His problems include a stick in the mud council-no new knights have been trained for years: a treacherous guardian who wants the throne for

himself; an ungrateful archery captain with similar ambitions; and a tightfisted treasurer. Artor's ambitions include forming mounted archers and learning to write.

As so often happens, the belief that "we can neglect our defences because there'll be no war" is mistaken; the Romans, led by "Bushy" (Julius Caesar) do invade twice. The Britons probably could beat them if united but are too divided among themselves, some of the tribes being more willing to make peace than others. The second invasion ends in a peace agreement after more hard fighting; it's cynically surmised that the Romans won't bother to collect the tribute and that if they were badly beaten they'd have to come back in greater force. However, Caesar's account will be accepted as the truth and everybody's happy! Artor returns to crush his enemies in Sarm - the last words of the book are "Long live Artor! And may he reign for ever!"

The books are all well-written, action-packed, and never dull. Although they're children's books, the plots are neither oversimplified or too complicated. To put it succinctly - I recommend reading, republishing, and filming them!

MOVING SHADOWS

by Ted Baldock

Within the Master's seat is seen,
Deep scarred by raps official;
The warping floor, the battered seats,
The Jack-knife's carved initial

J. Greenleaf Whittier

It all happened so long ago that it seems more akin to a dream than to reality.

Comfortably ensconced in an armchair by the fireside, with the satisfaction of having completed the following day's home-work, the magic moment had arrived. Now I could gaze upon and give all my attention to the current number of the *Magnet* which I had manfully refrained from examining until this moment.

Here it was with its familiar coloured cover; on the first page the title of the week's story together with an illustration of an incident in it. There were the Greyfriars fellows with the fat features of William George Bunter well to the fore. Also to be seen were the crusty features of Henry Samuel Quelch, the Master of the Remove upon whose eminently capable shoulders rested the responsibility of maintaining discipline and order, and instilling knowledge into the heads of that rumbustious form.

That dim old formroom scene of so many dramatic and hilarious episodes throughout the years! It was as familiar to us as our own 'citadel of learning'. One recalls the many verbal confrontations between Mr. Quelch and Billy Bunter, rhetorical battles which usually terminated with the Remove master reaching for his cane, ever ready upon his desk for instant use. Mr. Quelch, with his vast accumulation of

classical knowledge, was seldom able to penetrate the obtuse defences of the Fat Owl. He would resort finally to the only method possible of making some impression - an impression which remained in Bunter's memory just so long as the stinging sensation remained on his fat person.

The afternoon heat combined with the drone of the Remove master's voice, the sleep inducing effects of a substantial lunch, the persistent humming of a stray bee which, having found its way through the open window seemed to find a fascination in Bunter's head and ears, were all conducive to slumber. This would prove too much for the Owl, whose eyelids began to droop and, finally admitting defeat, stayed down so that the fat head drooped forward, the breathing became heavy, and following a faint grunt, even more measured.

Billy Bunter had - as it were - thrown in the towel. Morpheus had triumphed. A faint snore indicated that Bunter had parted company with the subject in hand, and the droning with which it was accompanied. His plump figure sagged over the desk as he drifted into the realms of dreams. There would, of course, be a rude awakening. It was always so. Quelch was just that kind of beast, he would not tolerate a fellow enjoying an afternoon nap, an objection which the Owl could never understand.

Standing at his study window enjoying the early Spring sunshine, and gazing out over the quad with its splendid old elms - now in early leaf - and the ancient surrounding buildings, Mr. Quelch had a visual microcosm of school life as it flowed on that quiet Spring afternoon.

He stood there, an elderly and well satisfied gentleman, gazing over the familiar scene which had been a part of his life for many years. A life which had progressed in very smooth and pleasant waters. He was extremely aware of this and his appreciation was felt in due measure. There were, of course, snags; there was for example Mr. Prout, master and guardian of the destinies of the fifth form.

Over by the school gates, Gosling the ancient porter could be seen standing motionless with a broom over his shoulder, rather like a soldier with his rifle. He was gazing out on the leafy recesses of Friardale lane. He was often to be seen standing thus. As a variation, there were occasions when he would be leaning upon that instrument of toil. More rarely was he seen to be manipulating it in the manner for which it was designed. Physical effort had never been one of Gossy's strong points.

Beneath the shade of the old elms a noisy group of second-form 'fags' were disputing over their respective rights to occupy the seats surrounding the boles of those ancient giants. Approaching the scene of conflict was the small figure of Mr. Twigg, their form-master, clutching his gown as he hurried forward to the scene of action. Mr. Twigg was not in any sense a strict disciplinarian although it gave him much pleasure to assume that role upon occasion. Like most gentlemen small in stature, he had his dreams and ambitions chiefly based upon the activities of historical figures of similar stature.

To restore order and a seemly degree of silence was difficult enough in the form

room; outside, in the wider aspect of the quadrangle, it was doubly difficult. Observing his approaching, the young heroes of the second form, forgetting their respective seating rights, scattered and fled to the four winds.

The gimlet-eyed watcher at the window, observing this little comedy from afar, smiled to himself. It was at that moment that he saw approaching the scene of action the billowing figure of Mr. Prout sweeping along, not without a certain grandeur. As he caught up with his somewhat flustered college a distant booming was heard.

"Discipline, Twigg, discipline is required my dear fellow." Old Pompous had found a victim and was launching forth into one of his traditional broadsides, one of the little homilies so beloved by himself and in like degree so distressful to their recipients. Mr. Quelch felt a twinge of sympathy for the second-form master who lacked the courage to request his fifth-form colleague to attend to his own business!

Turning from the window he glanced at a neatly piled set of papers on his desk. Here was work, and he was soon busy wielding a very critical pencil among them. Some essays handed in by his form caused his eyebrows to raise and his crusty features to harden. Upon these occasions his pencil was transformed into a veritable spear. It became obvious that certain members of his form were booked for quite an exciting - and a possibly painful - time.

Mr. Quelch was a whale on duty. Never had he been known to turn his back on a challenge. His marking seemed to latch up a degree or so as he proceeded. The paper under scrutiny at the moment presented an ink-stained and copiously blotted appearance, and his brow contracted. "Bless my soul", he murmured to himself. "Really, Bunter..."

Meanwhile the author of that paper causing the remove master's concern was exercising his by no means inferior persuasive powers on Harry Wharton and Co. in Study No. 1.

"I say, you fellows..."

"Shut the door after you, old fat man."

It was hardly a promising start to negotiations which the Owl hoped would finally blossom into a loan until happier times arrived.

"The post has arrived and there's nothing for me ... I was expecting a postal order, you know...". All of which, for the faithful has a very familiar ring.

Official duties attended to, Mr. Quelch is to a certain degree his own man, at least for the immediate present. Thoughts of below par essay papers, of possible interruptions from all sources, masters or boys, are for the present non-existent.

It may be said that Mr. Quelch had reached that desirable condition known as the 'Seventh Heaven'. Mundane routine matters of every day existence fade into the background of his mind as he becomes more deeply immersed. At times such as these, William George Bunter might never have existed. A stray fly droning tirelessly round his head attracted doubtless by the aroma of musty documents might have found more productive fields of exploration for all the attention it received.

Once committed to his first love, Quelch is a lost man to all else for a brief period. A summer day, silence (save for the occasional subdued clicking of the Remington) leisure, peace, calm, all conducive to tranquillity and quiet study. In these circumstances one may observe a contented and happy Master of the Remove. So, let us leave him, his features composed and relaxed, lost in a haze of dusty, musty vellum, old English script, ancient Friars, Monks and all things monastic appertaining to Greyfriars School.

In such moments it is highly probable that overtures from Dr. Locke himself would have been received, though with becoming courtesy, with less than cordiality. And should Mr. Prout have had the temerity to intrude at such a time it is quite certain that he would have received very short shrift indeed, nothing less than a dismissal of an unprecedented nature.

Such are a modicum of the memories stirred by the weekly arrival of, "Billy Bunter's Own" - the *Magnet*. That they should possess the power to impinge so strongly upon the mind over so many years is, to state the case mildly - unique.

BOOK REVIEW

from Mark Taha

ERIC MORECAMBE by Gary Morecambe (BBC Books, 2003).

Our most beloved comedian, half of our greatest comedy team - but what was he like as a person?

His son's biography is not "Mommie Dearest" with a sex change. I do find it hard to accept Gary's claim that his upbringing was "stultifyingly normal" - I doubt if most fathers are like Eric! He was old-fashioned in his attitudes - he insisted on his children behaving well in public and not swearing. He was undoubtedly a nice guy who liked to live in a happy atmosphere and "never thought there was a downside to fame". However, the same qualities that made him a great comedian made him overdo it - he was a workaholic, which led to two heart attacks, a born worrier, and had a fiercely competitive streak, even while playing games.

According to Gary, Eric at home was very like his screen character; while this delighted visitors who got a free Eric Morecambe performance, they didn't have to live with him. His kids were often the butts of his humour, even with guests present - hardly comforting for shy, sensitive teenagers. He was unpredictable, a man of moods, "not the best of fathers to have around when you were a teenager with conflicting ideas and emotion". There was no malice in him. He genuinely liked to mix with his kids' friends.

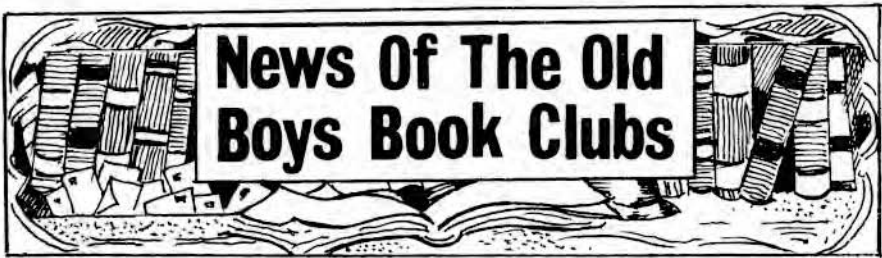
In short, Eric was a human being. Might one say that he had an unfortunate tendency to treat his family like Ernie Wise?

He doesn't appear much, by the way, since Eric and Ernie didn't mix often outside of their work, Gary didn't see much of him. Ernie was "always very welcoming" when

they did meet. It seems that, by the end of 1983, Eric was ready to retire; the problem was the effect on Ernie, who was wasn't. Gary thinks that if they'd carried on, "the standard would have dropped to a catastrophic low". One gets the idea that, had Eric's health matched Ernie's, they'd probably have just done Christmas specials while Eric would have semi-retired to personal appearances and panel games, "just happy to be himself".

Gary writes about his own life, not in as much detail. He was happy at home but not at school, he used to amuse everyone but his father by pinching his punch lines! He pursued a career as a writer after working for Eric's agent, who once introduced him to Des O'Connor (without a hidden camera, unfortunately!). He tried running a hotel; yes, it does sound a bit like Fawty Towers! He gave it up when he started holding Basilian views on the guests!

Gary goes into details about "The Play What I Wrote", the Morecambe and Wise "tribute" play. I highly recommend this if it comes your way. I also recommend this book.



THE CAMBRIDGE STORY & COMIC PAPER CLUB

The meeting was held on Sunday, December 7 at 19 Wolsey Way, the home of Adrian Perkins, with six members present. Our normal custom every Christmas is for as many members, as are able, to present a short talk on some aspect of Christmas memories.

Members' Christmas Presentations:

1. **Howard** presented 10 different recordings of the song 'White Christmas', and as a quiz, asked members to identify the performers or orchestra.
2. **Sid** showed members an 'Eagle' item - a 'Happy Box' which contained a variety of playthings, among them such things as a 'Dan Dare Puzzle', a 'Wonder Disc', an 'Aircraft Controller', a 'Dan Dare aircraft identification scanner' etc etc. He also showed envelopes with Dan Dare postmarks, and a Frank Hampson picture strip in the book 'History of Bovril Advertising'.
3. **Roy** presented his usual review of Christmas issues of Magazines such as 'Navy &

Army Review, 'Thriller', 'Gem' (1935), 'Magnet' (1935), 'Girls Own Paper' (1942), 'The New Beat' (1949) a music magazine, 'Reg Carter-Soccer Star' (1953), 'Swift' (1955) New Year Issue, 'Musical Express' (2 issues on Christmas Songs).

4. **Adrian** described an item written by him after he had attended an 'Eagle Christmas Party' when he was 8 years old.

5. **Keith** showed some seasonal film items - some examples of Christmas Greetings (and New Year) from the Cinema Management (1948/49), then the trailer for the 1954 musical 'White Christmas', then a 1932 early Technicolor Walt Disney Silly Symphony Cartoon 'Santa's Workshop'.

As there was time left he went away from Christmas for a last 'fill-in' item - 18 minutes of highlights from the 1957 British thriller 'Hell Drivers' with Stanley Baker and practically every male actor on the J. Arthur Rank payroll.

KEITH HODKINSON

LONDON O.B.B.C.

New Chairman Len Cooper welcomed members to the February meeting at Chingford.

Details of forthcoming venues for meetings were given. Ken Ellis then entertained the Club with an excellent Punch and Judy Show, followed by a behind the scenes demonstration of how it was all done. Len recounted a stirring scene from *The Banishing of Billy Bunter*, and then presented a tricky two-part word puzzle about radio shows and the middle names of Greyfriars characters.

Alan Pratt gave an interesting talk on the Toff books by John Creasey, which was followed by Bill Bradford taking us on our regular trip down "Memory Lane", via the Club's old newsletters.

Tony and Audrey Potts were warmly thanked for their splendid refreshments and hospitality.

VIC PRATT

WANTED: Collectors' Digest monthlies 1-200. Also 500-600. Collectors' Digest Annuals, most years. P. GALVIN, 2 The Lindales, Pogmoor, Barnsley, S. Yorks, S75 2DT. Tel: 01226 295613.

Harry Wharton & Co. at the Cliff House Party.

THE
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2

LIBRARY VOLUME 3. NUMBER 70.

Complete Story for All.

A Grand School Tale of
GREYFRIARS COLLEGE.

By Frank Richards.



A SURPRISE FOR BUNTER!

"You untruthful little wretch!" gasped Miss Clara, breathless with her exertions. "Take that, and that!"

Bob Cherry

of Greyfriars



ONE OF THE FAMOUS FIVE.
THE GENIAL BOB
IS ONE OF THE BEST ALL-
ROUND SCHOOLBOY SPORTSMEN.

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