

# The Collectors' Digest

## ANNUAL



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- Contents -

	<u>Pages</u>
Contents.. .. .	1
Foreword.. .. .	2
"...And every Story a Gem...."	1 - 10
"The Long Arm". .. .	11 - 20
"Harry Wharton, Captain of the Remove" .. .	21 - 26
The Greyfriars Herald (First Series) .. .	26
"The Hero of the Shell" .. .	27 - 29
"In the Beginning" .. .	30 - 35
"The Decline of Jack, Sam and Pete" .. .	36 - 38
Sexton Blake Stories in Boys' Friend Library.	38
"St. Frank's - Success or Failure?" .. .	39 - 48
"Monograph on Yvonne Cartier". .. .	49 - 62
Pre - Sexton Black Stories in ld "Union Jack".	62
"A Christmas Adventure in Baker Street". .. .	63 - 64
"That Enduring Magic" .. .	65 - 71
"The Remove Form at Greyfriars .. .	72 - 87
"The Dead Man Laughs" .. .	88 - 89
"Grandfather liked them Fierce" .. .	90 - 95
The Monster Library. .. .	95
"Inside Fleetway House" .. .	96 - 103
"St. Franks' Reprints - in the "Schoolboys' Pocket Library". .. .	104-108
"The Collectors' Who's Who" .. .	109-126

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# Collectors' Digest Annual

Christmas 1951

No 5.

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## Foreword

Dear Fellow Collectors,

We thankfully present our fifth Annual. There were times during the year when we wondered if we should be able to say it, faced as we were with those far too familiar phrases - "in short supply", "purchase tax", "increase in cost of production".

However, as always, you stood loyally by us, enabling us to give you very much the same substantial volume we gave you for last year, and when you have digested it we hope you will feel like saying "Worth a guinea - and not half!"

The Voting Forms will be found again enclosed - send them in as soon as you can, so that we can start planning for Christmas 1952.

And, our sincere thanks to the grand lot of fellows who, without thought of gain, have contributed such a splendid assortment of articles and sketches.

In conclusion, to all who will read it - at home and overseas - a very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

Yours sincerely,

Herbert Leckenby.

H. Maurice Bond.



# " - - And every Story a Gem - - "

By Eric Fayne

To compile a list of the series of stories which appeared in the Gem is a rather more difficult task than in the case of the companion paper, the Magnet. In a great many instances, the series are not nearly so clearly defined at St. Jim's as at Greyfriars. As an example, the stories from No. 129 to No. 142 were mainly of Lumley-Lumley but during this run there were several stories which were not connected with the Lumley-Lumley series. In the "Tom Merry in France" series of 1909, the first story, No. 89, opened the series. No. 90 was of something entirely different. No. 91 carried on with the plot of No. 89.

In the case of the Sports Contest series, - a feeble lot of yarns published in 1918, - 24 issues went by between the opening story and the final one. The main series was by Pentelow, but stories by Mr. Hamilton appeared here and there during the run.

From the beginning of 1926, a large percentage of the stories were written by substitute writers, - mostly, I believe, by Mr. E. S. Brooks. For the next two years Mr. Hamilton's Gem output grew less and less, and after the Victor Cleeve series of 1928 there was no further new series from his pen in the Gem until 1939, although one or two single stories were published in the intervening years before the re-prints began.

Mr. Brooks was a genius in his own particular sphere, - St. Franks, - but he never obtained the atmosphere of St. Jim's, and to most Gem enthusiasts, the period between 1927 and 1931 was just a blank. From 1931 until early 1939, the Gem was presenting entirely re-print stories of St. Jim's, and I feel that nothing can be gained by listing the various series re-printed. Later in this article, I shall have a few comments to make on the re-print period.

I have for the most part, in the list which follows, considered only those plots which ran to three stories or more, though there are one or two exceptions. Here then are the main series which appeared in the Gem.

## 1908

27-32. THE FLOATING SCHOOL. St. Jim's becomes a floating school on the steamship "Condor", with Mr. Ratcliffe as Headmaster. A fine series.

## 1909

46-51. TOM MERRY IN THE UNITED STATES. Tom Merry & Co., and Wally, go to the Wild West, via New York, Chicago, and the Rockies. The very first of all the Travel Series, - and grand reading.

89-94. TOM MERRY IN FRANCE. Amusing adventures across the Channel, with a thrilling Xmas adventure in the Chateau Chernay.

## 1910

129-142. THE COMING OF LUMLEY-LUMLEY. The Millionaire's son arrived in No. 129, and stories about him appeared, with exceptions, until he temporarily left the school in No. 142. Not all by Mr. Hamilton, I think. Interesting stories but a trifle melodramatic by modern standards. Useful character, Lumley-Lumley! Why did Mr. Hamilton neglect him after the early years?



1910 (contd.)

148-153. TOM MERRY PENNILESS IN LONDON. Very fine dramatic series, with Tom seeking his fortune in London, and eventually returning to St. Jim's as a master, Mr. Merry. This series ran over Christmas 1910.

1911

154-156. NO CLASS. Tom Merry, back from his wanderings in London, brings with him his pal, Joe Frayne. Strong human interest tales.

158-161. LUMLEY'S RETURN. Lumley-Lumley comes back to St. Jim's and disgraces Tom Merry. Notable for a fight between Tom Merry and Jack Blake. Wally and Joe Frayne stand by Tom when his other pals desert him.

1912

173-175. PETER RAFF'S TREASURE. Treasure-hunting in the South Seas and shipwreck in the Pacific. Tip+top travel series.

(NOTE. With the money obtained from the treasure, Tom Merry and Co. paid for their Coronation celebrations. The Coronation story was re-printed in the Gem as a Jubilee story in the middle of the Thirties. This series appeared in the Boys' Friend Library in the early twenties, under the title of "The Schoolboy Treasure Seekers".)

190-192. TOM MERRY ON THE CONGO. Exciting adventures in Africa, from which Tom Merry brought home "A Schoolboy's Slave", the black man M'Pong.

(NOTE. This series appeared in the Boys' Friend Library in the early twenties under the title of "Under Sealed Orders".)

247-248. THE MYSTERIOUS "X". The Head&s Rembrandt is stolen. The very first of the School Cracksman series, introducing Ferrers Locke. Two stories, entitled "Baffled" and "Caught Red-handed". Nothing better ever appeared in the Gem, - or anywhere else.

1913

251-252. GRIMES AT ST. JIM'S. Grimes, the grocer's boy, becomes a fourth-former, his fees paid by Mr. Lumley-Lumley. The friendship between Grimes and the Millionaire's-son was one of the delightful human touches, so characteristic of Mr. Hamilton.

274-275. TOM MERRY IN ITALY. In search of Marco Frulo's treasure on an Adriatic island. Exciting stuff. When these stories were re-printed, they gave Marco Frulo another name. Why?

297-299. THE COMING OF KOUMI RAO. The hot-tempered Indian falls foul of Tom Merry. Splendid series. Why Mr. Hamilton did not use Koumi Rao in other series is one of the mysteries of the Gem.

304-305. A COCKNEY AT ST. JIM'S. Harry Hammond comes to the School and makes a pal of Gussy. Fine character painting, reminiscent of the Crum series in the Magnet.

1914

317-318. TOM MERRY - SCHOOL CAPTAIN. Tom Merry becomes Captain of the School, and finds the responsibilities too great. Good tales.

323-325. TOM MERRY'S DOUBLE. Reggie Clavering takes the place of the kidnapped Tom Merry. Tense and thrilling series.

334-337. THE TOFF. Talbot, the Schoolboy Cracksman, joins the School. Very popular series.



1914 (contd.)

351-353. THE KING'S PARDON. Talbot earns official pardon for his wrong-doing, and returns to St. Jim's. Outstanding human interest series.

361-364. JOHN RIVERS. Another Talbot series, introducing Marie's father, and Mr. Railton as an army officer.

1915

381-384. UNITED KINGDOM SERIES. "Kildare for Ireland", "Kerr for Scotland", "Patty Wynn for Wales", "Tom Merry for England". Rather sub-standard stuff.

1916.

421-422. MANNERS MINOR. The coming of Reggie Manners. Good Tales.

436-437. THE OUTRAM SERIES. The story of Valentine Outram, - magnificent reading. Really powerful writing.

(NOTE. With No. 437 the Gem said "Good-bye to the old Blue Cover." Outram appeared in the Gem Christmas Number for 1917, - the last of the Double Numbers.)

451-466. LEVISON'S REFORM. Levison Minor comes to St. Jim's, and Levison Major reforms. Well written, but not consistent with what old Gem readers knew of the Levison family.

1917

475-477. THE COMING OF CARDEW. Good tales of their class.

494-496. HIS BROTHER'S KEEPER. A very fine series, with outstanding powerful characterisation, telling of Manners' sacrifice for his wayward brother.

1918

527-551. GREAT SPORTS CONTEST. Chiefly Pentelow stories. The "Contest" may have been great, but the stories were tedious.

1919.

571-585. BUNTER AT ST. JIM'S. Bunter comes to St. Jim's and his cousin Wally goes to Greyfriars. Good series of the lighter type.

586-589. RATTY JUNIOR. Mr. Ratcliff's nephew at St. Jim's. Moderate series.

595-605. CARAVANNING WITH CHARLEY. Tip-top holiday series.

(NOTE. When this series was re-printed, one story telling of food-hoarding was omitted for obvious reasons.)

1920

657-661. THE DIRK POWER SERIES. The Levisons fleeing to Alaska from Dirk Power, the madman. Too far-fetched and theatrical to be Mr. Hamilton at his best.

1921

677-679. WILDRAKE. Several moderate stories introducing Wildrake, the boy from the Wild West.

698-701. SEVEN SCHOOLBOYS AND SOLOMON. Excellent holiday series.

708-710. SANKEY'S CIRCUS. A circus comes near St. Jim's and a lion escapes. Moderate fare.

713-715. SCHOOL HOUSE v. NEW HOUSE. Moderate japing series.

720-722. NEW HOUSE BARRING-OUT. Not outstanding barring-out series.



1922

- 729-732. GRAMMAR SCHOOL RIVALRY. Various juniors try to work japes on the Grammar School. Amusing series.
- 733-735. RACKE, HERO. The best series Racke featured in. He, with the aid of Trimble, poses as a hero.
- 737-739. CUTTS v. DARRELL. Excellent series, with unusual plot. Darrell, the victim of Cutts' cunning, is cleared by Wildrake.
- 742-747. KIDNAPPING SERIES. Tom Merry, and other boys, are kidnapped, until Wildrake eventually exposes Rogue Rackstraw. Grand set of stories.
- 749-751. RAISING THE WIND. Rib-tickling set of stories in which the hard-up Co. try to raise money, Gussy even trying to "pop his tickah". Martin Clifford at his humorous best.
- 752-758. GUSSY, THE RUNAWAY. Gussy runs away from St. Jim's, taking temporary refuge at Greyfriars, Highcliffe, Cliff House, and Rookwood. Every story a Gem.
- 759-764. LEVISON'S PAST. Trimble spreads the tale that Levison was expelled from Greyfriars. Good serious series.
- 768-772. THE CARDEW CUP. Good reading, with typical Cardew whimsicalities. (NOTE. The first series in the 2d enlarged Gem.)
- 776-784. X.M.S BARRING-OUT. The juniors bar-out over the Christmas vac, in support of Tom Merry, who has been expelled for theft. Real good stuff for barring-out fans.

1923

- 788-791. THE SCHOOLBOY PUG. Magnificent series about Oliver Lynn, the ex-pug. Superb character pictures. One of the best series of all time.
- 812-818. THE OLD BUS. Tom Merry and Co. on a river trip up the Thames from Kingston to Oxford. Splendid Holiday series.
- 824-831. TOM MERRY v. CARDEW. Cardew, by trickery, takes the Captaincy from Tom Merry. Fine series, running over Christmas 1923.

1924

- 836-839. THE LEN LEE SERIES. Len Lee comes to the School as Pomfret, but is recognised by Cardew. Excellent reading.
- 859-961. CAMPING SERIES. Sub-written and sub-standard.
- 864-867. CARAVANNING SERIES. Tom Merry and Co go caravanning, and finally go abroad. Tip-top tales.

1925

- 897-898. ELSTER AT HOLLY LODGE. The Terrible Three and Gussy at the home of Lowther's uncle. Thrilling reading.
- 906-908. MR. SELBY'S BANKNOTE. Levison Minor accused of stealing a French banknote belonging to Mr. Selby. Excellent powerful series.
- 911-912. MOTOR CARAVAN SERIES. By a sub writer. Feeble series.
- 919-921. SIDNEY TROOPE. Good series of Troope, the boy who owned a famous race horse.



1925 (contd.)

923-924. SNEATH. Mr. Selby blackmailed by a rascally lawyer named Sneath. Good stories.

927-928. TRUTHFUL TRIMBLE. Trimble was a weakness in the St. Jim's story, and he seldom appeared in an attractive series. This was the exception. Real good fun.

930-931. XMAS AT HOLLY LODGE. Another thrilling plot with the Terrible Three at the home of Lowther's uncle.

1926

965-969. MOTOR BOAT SERIES. Not a Hamilton series. Rather futile business.

972-974. ANGELO LEE. Pleasant series of the boy who wanted to be an airman.

1927

1001-1003. THE CRANKY HEADMASTER. Dr. Crankley becomes temporary Head of St. Jim's. Stupid affair.

1014-1021. WILD WEST SERIES. One of the few Hamilton series of this period. The chums go to Wildrake's home in Canada. Slightly hackneyed, but pleasant reading.

1022-1025. THE CASTLETON TWINS. One twin at St. Jim's, while the other goes to St. Frank's. From 1926 till 1931, most of the Gem stories were by Mr. E. S. Brooks.

1928

1059-1072. HANDFORTH AT ST. JIM'S. The "Coker" of St. Frank's comes to St. Jim's for a time.

1069-1072. VICTOR CLEEVE. An excellent series, telling of Mr. Railton's nephew, who was an unwilling pupil at St. Jim's.

(NOTE. This series was the last new one by Mr. Hamilton to appear in the Gem until he resumed writing of St. Jim's in 1939. A very occasional single story appeared by Mr. Hamilton during the next few years before the re-prints commenced.)

1073-1080. WHO SHALL BE CAPTAIN? Tom Merry resigns the junior captaincy, and the post is held successively by Skimpole, Mellish, Grundy, Fatty Wynn, and Tompkins.

1087-1089. CURSE OF THE D'ARCY'S. Christmas story set at Eastwood House.

1929

1105-1107. CAPTAIN TOM MERRY. Tom Merry becomes the Captain of the School for a time. This series was by Mr. Brooks, and is not the same one as that by Mr. Hamilton in 1914.

1108-1110. GORDON GAY AT ST. JIM'S. The leader of the Rylcombe Grammar School becomes an unwilling pupil in the St. Jim's Shell.

1120-1123. HOLIDAY'S IN CORNWALL. Tom Merry and Co. spend a hectic time in the West Country.

1138-1141. THE WOLF. An unpleasant character, who gives Tom Merry and Co. an exciting Christmas.

1930

1152-1154. BULLY BURKETT. An overgrown cowardly bully terrorises the juniors of St. Jim's, until Tom Merry manages to defeat him. Quite good in its own way.



1930 (contd.)

1171-1172. HANDCOCK. An irritating American, Cyrus P. Handcock, becomes a pupil at St. Jim's,- and unfortunately stayed on as an intimate pal of the Terrible Three after the series ended.

1181-1182. THE BOY GIRL. Mr. Brooks had invented a new School for girls near St. Jim's,- Spalding Hall,- which was attended by Cousin Ethel and Doris Levison among others. This series told of a boy who joined the girls' school,- disguised as a girl.

1187-1191. WORLD TOUR. Tom Merry and Co. go on a world tour to weird and wonderful places, in a giant airship. Rather a preposterous affair.

1931

1210-1212. MR. LINTON LEAVES ST. JIM'S. Mr. Linton comes into a fortune, after adventures with gangsters. He leaves St. Jim's,- retired,- and his place in the St. Jim's scene is taken by a Mr. Pilbeam.

NOTE

As stated earlier, most of the St. Jim's stories from 1927 onwards were by Mr. Brooks. Personally I did not like them, but I feel it is only fair to a popular writer to say that this was due to the fact that he did not capture the Gem atmosphere in my opinion. The substitute writers, as we call them, who wrote stories under the names of Martin Clifford and Frank Richards in the Gem and the Magnet, have come in for a great deal of criticism,- and indeed, abuse. Much of their work was undoubtedly very bad. There were, however, at least two writers who failed in the Gem as far as the older readers, or, at least, the more thoughtful readers,- were concerned, not because their writing was bad, but because their style was so out of keeping with the main Gem or Magnet story which we knew so well. I refer to Messrs. Pentelow and Brooks. Both did fine work in their own particular sphere. Our Editor, who should know, tells us that Pentelow's stories of Wycliffe School were excellent, and Mr. Brooks' stories of St. Frank's have an immense following which can only have been earned by their appeal.

The point was that nobody could write convincingly of St. Jim's or Greyfriars except their creator, Mr. Hamilton. But Clifton Dane was the invention of an early substitute writer, and Mr. Hamilton considered him a sufficiently good character to keep him on the St. Jim's stage.

The RE-PRINTS

Early in 1931, it seemed clear to me that there was little hope of Mr. Hamilton resuming his regular writing for the Gem. I was completely weary of Spalding Hall, and the interloper, Handcock. I commenced a campaign of pestering the Fleetway House to re-publish the old Gem stories. I asked them to start at the beginning, and to call the first story "TOM MERRY - NEW BOY",-- the title which had been given to the first Gem story "Tom Merry's Schooldays", when it was re-published in the Penny Popular in 1912. I felt at first that there was little hope of the suggestion being adopted, but I persisted, and eventually I heard from the Fleetway House that the idea would be tried for a trial period. So, in July 1931, the first story of the re-prints, "TOM MERRY - NEW BOY" appeared. The new policy was obviously a success, for the re-prints continued until early 1939.



It is interesting to look over the way those fine old stories were represented for the new generation of Gem readers. For a time the stories appeared in the same order as originally and in full. Later, however, stories and series were selected far out of sequence, and drastic abridgment was carried out. Probably cutting was necessary, for large numbers of those old stories were very long indeed. In the Blue Cover days the Gem had consisted of 32 pages, smaller print, fewer advertisements, fewer illustrations, and only a serial story and a chat page apart from the main story. Unfortunately, the abridging was very badly done, entire chapters being omitted, and, often, the plot ruined. In the case of that old Gem tale, "The Tell-tale", in which Mellish acted as a mischief-maker, the cutting was done in such a way that the story hardly made sense.

In the case of the Clavering stories, for obvious reasons, Mr. Quelch became Mr. Welch, and Wingate, the captain of Clavering, was changed to Felgate.

Very few of the substitute writers' stories were included in the re-prints, but there were one or two. Certain stories by Mr. Hamilton were omitted for some reason or other. To select one or two instances, "The Diabolists", a story of the Diabolo craze of the first decade of the century, did not appear.

The 1909 series of Tom Merry in France was left over for a number of years. It actually appeared in 1937, being the last series in the Gem of the old size. This delay in publication was due to the fact that the series had appeared in the Schoolboys' Own Library in the early Thirties.

Skimpole's Socialism was omitted for the most part, or heavily modified. In the early days of the Gem, Socialism was regarded as a crank craze, but it could not be treated as such in the nineteen-thirties.

In one of the series in the Tom Merry in London series of 1910, there was an episode introducing Skimpole and his Socialism. When the story was re-printed, this episode was omitted, and the Gem office-boy apparently wrote in a new portion. In the same series, Tom originally met those famous characters, Jack, Sam, and Pete. But in the reprints for some reason, the names of these characters were altered, Pete being called Rastus. Actually, about this time, a few old Jack, Sam, and Pete stories were re-printed in The Ranger, with the same alteration of names.

As I mentioned earlier, the old story of the Coronation of King George the Fifth was used in the middle thirties as a Jubilee story. I may modestly add that this was done at my own suggestion.

Fearing to see that grand old yarn "The Mystery of the Painted Room" ruined by abridgment, I suggested to the Editor that it should occupy two issues of the Gem. This was done, but it was now apparently too short, and the office-boy once again obliged by writing in a sequence.

Stories of the Franco-British Exhibition and of Nihilism were omitted for clear reasons. Another story omitted, less understandably, was one in which Levison arranged a cord to trip up Monteith, who was sprinting in running garb. Levison placed broken glass for the prefect to fall in, with shattering results. It was a good yarn, but maybe the Editor thought it too gruesome for the stomachs of the boys of the riotous Thirties.

A story in which Tom Merry attended a Fancy Dress Party as a convict was omitted, on account of the fact that a similar convict story, with Loder understudying the convict, appeared in the Magnet about the time that it was due.



Two other good tales, "Held to Ransom" and "The Rally of the Rival Co's" were left out for a long time. I discovered this when looking over my old collection. I pestered the Editor about these, and eventually he wrote me that they were to appear, - many years late. The second story was re-named "The Laugh's on the First Eleven".

Though many of the good old titles were used, the stories were often given bileous new names.

An interesting factor in the re-prints was the delay in introducing Levison under his own name. A number of stories were jumped over, and the acts and remarks of Levison were attributed to one, Snipe. So Levison appeared under the dreadful name of Snipe for quite a time. Eventually Levison did join St. Jim's, and then came that fine story where he rescued Lumley-Lumley from being buried alive while in a trance.

No doubt it was impossible for the stories to be published in their original sequence. As a good many tales were omitted, either on account of being dated or because they were not by Mr. Hamilton, the Editor must have found the seasons in the stories creeping up upon him with alarming speed.

It has always been rather a puzzle to me as to why the original Eric Lorne was re-named Eric Page in the re-prints. I suppose there must have been a reason. I remember being amused at the time, as I had a real life pal named Eric Page. Here and there, one or two other names were altered, too.

By late 1938 the re-prints had reached the stage when Grundy and Trimble had come on the scene, and, if the re-prints were to continue, a long list of rather unattractive series would fall to the lot of the Gem, unless a big jump were made. So at the end of 1938, I began to pester the Fleetway House to ask Mr. Hamilton to write some new stories for the Gem. Maybe they would have done so in any case, but I always take some modest credit to myself for the fact that in 1939 Mr. Hamilton was persuaded to take over the Gem stories once again. And here are the final series in the Gem, all written by Mr. Hamilton in his own inimitable style:-

#### 1939

1625-1634. THE SILVER SWALLOW SERIES. Tom Merry and Co touring Europe in a giant plane, with a mysterious black box to add to the excitement. Excellent reading.

1635-1640. THE SECRET PASSAGE. The New House Co find a secret way into the School House. Fatty Wynn played a big part in this grand series. Fatty, unique in the stories as a decent fat boy, would seem to have offered opportunities for the writer. But he was neglected after early days.

1641-1646. THE BRAZIL SERIES. Rather hackneyed travel series.

1647-1663. THE SILVERSON SERIES. The longest series on one character, ever to appear in the Gem, - and very fine too. Notable for having Tom Merry in the lead, - practically the first new Tom Merry series which Mr. Hamilton had written since Blue Cover days. And the final Gem story was located at Huckleberry Heath.

-----As it was in the beginning-----.

(Readers will note that one of our own circle first suggested the re-publishing of the Gem stories from the very beginning. - Ed.)

-----oOo-----



# "The Long Arm"

## FOREWORD

By Herbert Leckenby

Way back in May I had an idea for an Annual article - a comparison of the famine in boys' weeklies in the six years following the last war, with the activity in a similar period after the first one. I got to work and had nearly completed it when a letter from Tom Hopperton told me of an article he was also busy with for the Annual. I set up and took notice for it was evident from his description that he had been struck with a very similar idea. I urged him to carry on, and awaited its coming with no little curiosity. Knowing his pungent, forthright style, I thought it more than likely I should feel inclined to scrap mine.

When it did come along I saw at once that the two articles together formed a real curiosity, so much so, that with a few cuts in mine, it wouldn't be a bad idea to run the two side by side. It was indeed a case of two minds thinking alike. Note, for instance, how we confess we should not have made successful editors because we both considered the Thomson papers far inferior to others which actually were less successful, and shorter-lived, except where they changed to the Thomson style. Again, Tom suspected that Jack North was responsible for the whole of "Sport and Adventure". I was sure that was so.

On the other hand, Tom concentrated mainly on No. 1's, whereas I usually reveal the end of the story, and also bring in some papers he does not mention. So, seeing that those years immediately following the First Great War can be remembered by a good many of us, and many interesting events happened then it would be worth while to run both articles under the titles we had given them. When you have read them I am confident you will agree.

---

### THEM WAS THE DAYS!

By Tom Hopperton

The diction of the title is borrowed from William Gosling: the sentiment is my own, and I emphatically repeat: "Them there was the days." Indeed, when reviewing the days in question - those which followed the "War to End War" - I am surprised to find what an important chap I was, and the number of influential gentlemen in London and Scotland who interested themselves in me -- and my meagre pocket money. Their solicitude that I should have enough to read was a positive embarrassment at times, but the primitive institution of barter has relieved

### WHEN THE WAR IS OVER

By Herbert Leckenby

Oft times in the midst of the late war we who used to correspond on the topic evergreen would say optimistically "When the war is over, give a little time for things to settle down, then we shall have back the Magnet, the Gem, the Detective Weekly, the Thriller and other old favourites which let's hope did not die but went only into a state of coma in that fateful month of May, 1940, or a little earlier."

Alas for our hopes! Six years and more have sped on, and the book-stalls where we are concerned are as bare as Mother Hubbard's cupboard. Not a single old favourite back, not a



more than one crisis in civilised society, including mine. The first issues of their numerous ventures make a brave show as now spread before me and make me feel vaguely sorry for the youth of these post-war days.

What, for example, have they to compare with the "Penny Popular" (25-1-1919)? "Billy Bunter's Postal Order" reprinted a pre-Johnny Bull story from the "Magnet", with Bulstrdde japing the Owl with a series of small P.O's made payable all over the district. Jimmy Silver started all over again as a new boy, while Gussy once again mystified St.Jim's by coming home laden with cigars, cigarettes and tobacco. Arthur Clarke's cover was presumably a reprint, although Chapman did the Bunter presentation plate. His W.G.B., if good, was not quite what we were later to become accustomed to, but the same could be said of Frank Richards' Bunter. But where on earth came the idea for Mrs.Mimble's "hair-do"? From the Widow Twankey? And what matter if I can now see where some Sweeney Todd of a sub-editor mangled his quivering victim with no regard for the anatomy of the story. Greyfriars PLUS St.Jim's PLUS Rookwood for 1½d was not to be sneezed at, even in 1919.

My leading contender for pride of place is the pink "Boy's Realm" (5-4-1919), the front page of which rightly featured Arthur S.Hardy's "Blake of the Blue Crusaders". The Blues really were the Blues then, all unsuspecting of the degradation to fall on them in the 3rd Series, when the club was actually to be owned by a St.Frank's Junior. Henry St.John, getting a little mixed in his chronology, started himself off as a Fourth-former at St.Basil's, and his gag about "Can you pronounce 'Nockmeatoff' wrought havoc with the caps of the period -- and not a few of the heads. Cecil Hayter had a

single new-comer, reminiscent of those of yore. What's the reason? Paper shortage? A belief on the part of the publishers that boys' tastes have changed? A conviction that wooing the female of the species pays better dividends? Whatever the answer, a mournful state of affairs.

What a contrast after the Kaiser war. Then no sooner had the thunder of the guns died away than some of the old favourites were being roused from sleep, and "proofs" of new companions were being read in publishing houses round about the Street of Ink. Let us recall what happened, for in the memory there is sweet nostalgia, especially for those of us who are not so very young. And in passing it must be remembered that in that first great conflict there were not so many casualties in the army of boys' weeklies. Most of them struggled through if a little thinner and with dress less smart looking. There were even new-comers at the height of the struggle - the Nelson Lee and the Sexton Blake Library, for instance.

First to be back on New Year's Day, 1919, was the "Greyfriars Herald" (suspended in 1916). For its second run it was "Magnet" size, but apart from that it tried to carry on from where it had left off. After a time, however, its name was changed to "Boys' Herald" with stories on orthodox lines. Altogether, it ran about three years, but somehow it never seemed to find a place and is certainly not remembered as is the "Hamilton Edwards" Boys' Herald of the century's first decade.

Then came the "Penny Popular" on Friday January 24th, 1919 - ten weeks after the Armistice, and about ten months after its temporary retirement. It hadn't changed much though its name was now a misnomer, for its price was 1½d. That was later put right - by just calling it "The Popular". In its second existence it lived much longer



Sexton Blake serial, "The Brass Disc", and "From Chopping Block to Champion" would be hard to improve on as a boxing serial. The only weak spot in the paper was the St. Frank's series, which, whether by E.S. Brooks or not, had all earmarks of those interminable sporting contest stories which were "subbed" into the "Gem" and "Magnet".

By contrast, the "Greyfriars Herald" (1-11-1919) was disappointing. Although still "staffed" by Harry Wharton and Co., the second run never captured the atmosphere that pervaded the original series. Owen Conquest began the stories of Jack Drake at St. Winifred's, while the "boys", aided by Mr. Prout, filled up the remainder of the now full-sized paper. There was an odd contrast in illustrations. Briscoe did the cover and the Drake illustrations in his usual style of making an extremely painstaking attempt to copy a photograph, while - for some unimaginable reason - Wakefield was put on to draw Greyfriars. Strange that he should match his not unattractive Tubby Muffin with a Bunter like nothing on God's earth, and that with so many examples of Coker to guide him, he should produce a repellent grotesque with the physical proportions of a tadpole.

Pearson's made quite a reputation with the "Big Budget". Presumably that was all they did make, because they carefully avoided any chance of comparison with their "Jack's Paper" (31-10-1922). The most striking things about it were the title ("Why was it so named?" should be in the next Club quiz) and the choice of "Fighting Sports" presentation plates - gladiators v lions, matadors v bulls, etc. Farrington, "the super-sleuth, the Man Who Never Lost a Case" tried to make the best of two worlds. He palpably derived from Sherlock Holmes as he slopped about in a dressing-gown yapping to his M.D. stooge, but, once he got into action, his adventures

than in its first, for its weeks were 628 against 276, so it can be said that its return was justified. However, Eric Fayne told you all about it in last year's Annual, so there I will leave it.

Close on the heels of "The Popular" came "The Boys' Realm" week ending April 5th, 1919. It had been "resting" a week or two short of three years. Its page size was the same as of old, and the same familiar pink. Moreover, old favourites came back too for one of the serials was entitled "Blake of the Blue Crusaders" telling of that famous football club created by Arthur S. Hardy, king of sport story writers, some 14 years earlier. There were also stories of Sexton Blake and the boys of St. Frank's. Henry St. John returned with an up-to-date story of his own trials and tribulations as a fag at St. Basil's, the school he had first written about a score of years earlier and many times afterwards. A quaint idea, still the world had been in a state of upheaval, so why shouldn't Henry St. John play tricks with time?

The Realm as of yore specialised in stories of football and cricket and some splendid ones appeared during its second life. C. Malcolm Hincks and Robert Murray were among those who contributed serials concerning the big ball. John Nix Pentelow, writing as Richard Randolph, wrote several splendid cricket stories, including "Smith of Rocklandshire"; "Boy Bayley, Professional", and "Young Yardley". Opinions about him as a writer of St. Jim's and Greyfriars stories differ, but when he came to writing of the summer game in his true identity no one will challenge his supremacy. Proof that he was an expert on the game came in many articles which were a fascinating record of facts and figures.

Another memory of that Boys' Realm at that period was an attempt to revive the once popular trio "Jack, Sam & Pete".



would have sent the eminent Victorian into screaming hysterics. He took up half the paper, a couple of mediocre adventure stories accounting for the rest.

"Pluck" (28-10-1922) bore no resemblance to its famous predecessor, but was frankly an attempt to duplicate the "Champion". Like most imitations, it failed, even if the reason is not particularly obvious. The star attraction was a detachable eight page supplement, "The Star Library", a piece of hokum presumably to convince the credulous reader that he got a book thrown in with the paper. But the editor numbered the pages straight through, and they still amounted to the usual 28. "Pluck" had the commendable habit of naming both authors and artists, who were headed by the ubiquitous Briscoe, Valde, and Fred Holmes. Arthur S. Hardy created the Red Star Albion for the first supplement, Paul Quinton began "The School in the Air", and three other serials covered boxing, football, and "The Crimson Secret".

Rewrites of film plots and biographies of film stars were the only fiction in the "Boy's Cinema" (13-12-1919) - except a single short story reputedly by Stewart Rome - so it is not strictly within our orbit. But its popularity was only eclipsed by Hitler, and as a memory-rouser it is second to none. Who, without its stimulus, would now think of Big Bill Hart, the first of the "dead-pan" gunmen, of Charles Ray, of Larry Semon, of Ruth Roland, the Serial Queen, and of Elmo Lincoln or Eddie Polo? And who on earth was "that great star" Carol Holloway? Omar's magic shadow show is not nearly as ephemeral as that whose candle is the electric arc. And why did I not clutch the fame and fortune of stardom that the A.1 Cinema College offered me for a nominal sum? Probably because, no matter how nominal, I hadn't the sum.

Their creator, S. Clarke Hook, was dead, and they appeared under the name Charles Malcolm. The stories had a fairly long run but Pete was Clarke Hook's child and no one else could adopt him and make him behave the same, so those stories have been forgotten, whilst the much older ones are still sought after.

It would appear that the revived Boys' Realm was another success, for it ran in its large pink-paged form for 432 weeks. Doubtless it had for some time been finding heavy weather, for it was then changed to Magnet size with a two-column cover. One who vividly recalled the coming of the original No.1 on a Saturday morning way back in June 1901, looked at the new effort, shook his head and said mournfully, "The Boys' Realm is dead." Possibly the powers that be did not agree with him, the paper masquerading under the time-honoured title did struggle on for a time, but with No.80 another change was made. The publishers still obstinately tried to play up the old name, for it was called "Boys' Realm of Sport and Fiction", but obviously it wasn't intended to carry on long with a name like that. I am uncertain what its fate really was, but I have an idea it was supposed to be merged with the "Boys' Favourite" which started a short career May 4th, 1929. As we know, old papers never die, they are simply amalgamated. Of the best forgotten Boys' Realm (small series) I'll comment only on one series of stories. They concerned the Blue Crusaders. They were written not by A. S. Hardy but by Edwy Searles Brooks. With all respect to the gifted creator of St. Franks, they made one who could remember the first story of Harry Ewing, Foulkes and Silwood Harborough feel very sad. Once again it proved that no author, no matter how brilliant, can adopt successfully the characters of another.

A few weeks after the reappearance



E. Hulton and Co. Ltd, were then a powerful combine controlling the "Daily Sketch" "Ideas" (do you remember Thomas Maybank's Imps?) and a chain of provincial papers, and they made quite a good job of their "Boys' Magazine" (27-2-1922). Top of the bill was Falcon Swift, the Sporting Detective, whose name was evidently intended to remain a Hulton copyright as the stories were unsigned. From the internal evidence, I fancy the authorship varied. Stanton Doyle's serial, "Dare-Devil Trent", mixed League football with film stars, while Mr. Edward Carter's father, John Hunter, began "The Lure of the Lost Land", which was then something super-colossal in the fantastic. It introduced a flying submarine which was tracked like a tank for land work and - no kidding! - could achieve a full 80 miles an hour in the air. The small pink paper evidently caught on, for eight months later Hulton's introduced its running-mate, "Pals".

I have a good reason for remembering this, because I had used the title a few weeks before for a hectographed school magazine I tried to produce. For one of the feature stories I unblushingly appropriated a detective with a super-normal sense of smell from, I think, the "Scout", while my chief aide concocted a nightmare of a boarding school, the denizens of which "lived and breathed and had their being" in a world of itching powder, sneezing powder, ink squirts, booby traps and bloody noses. There was something wrong with my boiling of the gelatine mixture: the top skin kept peeling and William Caxton had considerably less trouble with "The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye" than I had with "Pals". I was evidently no budding Bill Gander, for I was so disgusted with the arduous of production that I delayed work on No.2, and before I got round to it Hulton's pinched my title - not that it did them much good!

of the "Boys' Realm" came two new publications. "The Prairie Library" and "The Robin Hood Library", both published by the Amalgamated Press. At first, if memory serves me, they each appeared with two numbers at intervals of a fortnight, but soon became weeklies. They were pocket size at 1½d and all the illustrations were in colour. As examples of colour printing, however, they compared very unfavourably with the picturesque Aldine "Dick Turpin" and "Claude Duval" covers of many years earlier. These two were under the editorship of J.N. Pentelow, and one could discern his hand in some of the stories. A veritable whale for work, Pentelow. (Our Jim Southway must have been taught in his school.)

Shortly afterwards these two were joined by the "Detective Library" slightly larger in size, and with the same crude colour printing. It had an array of detectives, including Sexton Blake, Nelson Lee, Dere Clyde, and Gordon Gray, the latter a reborn Maxwell Scott sleuth of the '90's. Even these popular favourites could not give it long life, for it died when exactly a year old. At the same time, the twins, the Prairie and the Robin Hood Libraries accompanied it into the densely populated graveyard of boys' weeklies. Once again, though there was no funeral note, instead the heralding of "Nugget Weekly" a trio of papers at the price of one. Alas! the blood didn't mix, for despite trying a change in size, it lasted only 34 weeks. What did they say this time? Amalgamation with the Marvel, a veteran of eighteen years, but fated to die in a little over a year.

Turning back the pages I find that on May 17, 1919, just a little before the advent of the Prairie and the Robin Hood, came "Cheerio". Now, this one has me beaten, for though I probably saw it during its run I have not seen one since. I have a dim recollection



"Pals" (9-10-1922) was the same size as "Ideas" and, therefore, the largest of the covered weeklies of the period, but it was bottled from the same cask as the "Boys' Mag." It gave potted biographies and photographs of its authors, although it did not think its artists, among whom was Fred Bennett, worth mentioning. John Hunter, Robert Blake, Jack Crichton and Derry Sweden were from the "B.M." stable, but there was an interloper. There was a surprising outbreak of literacy among professional footballers and film stars in the early 'twenties. I know that John Hunter ghosted a story for Jock Rutherford of the Arsenal, but nothing except my low, suspicious nature prompts my feeling that "The Adventures of Tom Mix" were not, as claimed, "By Himself." Fleet Street was so cluttered up with fictional detectives that striking a new note must have been quite a problem. Nevertheless, Robert Blake produced Doctor Sinister, a malaria-ravaged pathologist, aided by the usual boy and a dumb Semitic with a disconcerting habit of jumping three floors down a staircase well in his haste to answer his master's whistle. I don't mean he was dumb to be so keen to get to work: his tongue had been removed in an Eastern temple. John Hunter can point forward to Korea and say: "I told you so in 1922!" for his "Wolves of Doom" dealt with a Yellow Plot to Subdue the Earth" - although an unkind finger could possibly point back to that earlier Yellow Peril scare which seems to be remembered only in connection with Gold Flake cigarettes.

Confirmation that I should not make a successful boys' editor is afforded by "Adventure" (17-9-1921), the "Rover" (4-3-1922) and the "Wizard" (23-9-1922). I read them, although not for long, and they made so little impression that my only memory was of the "real glossy photos" they presented. They were not so greatly different to the average paper of the times, although

of a serial with a quaint title something like "He Fell in Love with Violet Hopson." Violet, I might mention for the benefit of the younger generation, being the Margaret Lockwood of her day. If that story was typical of the contents of "Cheerio" maybe it wasn't really a paper for boys. Anyway, I don't think it brought much cheer to its publishers, for its pretty certain it was another of the short-lived ones.

"Young Britain" was still another new paper which saw the light before half of 1919 had run its course. No.1 appeared June 11th. Magnet-size it was for most of its run a rather sedate sort of paper, something akin to "Chums". Some of its stories were reprints, one appearing as "Just Boys and Girls", having previously been in "Chips" under the title "The School Bell". Its author was H. J. Garrish, who in his more than 50 years with the A.P. has written stories under many names.

"Young Britain", though it had a run of 232 numbers in a first series, and 33 in a second, never seemed to make much of a stir.

Just before the close of the same year came the Boys' Cinema, on December 13th. A decided success this, for it ran on unperturbed, and very little changed in appearance, until the calamity of May 1940 when it was mowed down after 1063 appearances.

1920 would appear to have been a quiet year, for, apart from Nugget Weekly, already mentioned, I have only a note of "Sports for Boys", another which quickly passed into obscurity.

September 17, 1921, saw the start of a war from across the border. At the start it did not cause such a stir as did the stealing of the Coronation Stone near 30 years later, but in the little world of boys' weeklies it was destined to rock the foundations of Fleetway House. The "secret weapon" came in the form of a paper called



the seeds of that development into the crudely sensational and fantastic were present even then. Certainly I did not guess that they would outsell the older papers, or that when the "Magnet", "Gem", "Boy's Friend" and "Boy's Realm" were mere memories they would remain as virtual monopolists. Without descending into cynicism, I cannot explain it, while Orwell's claim that their later issues were technically superior to the "Magnet" will never cease to amaze me. The peak age for reading them is twelve, and any psychologist will agree that their continual harping on the magical and supernatural is thoroughly pernicious to what should be the developing minds of their readers. However, as G.W.M. Reynolds used to put it, to proceed. Dixon Hawke was a "natural" to be the main feature of "Adventure", while the "Rover" provided possibly the only exception to the Thomson rule of not naming authors with Arthur Grimsdell, another of those literary footballers, aided by Charles Marviss, given as being responsible for "The Traitors of the Team". "Invisible Dick" felt strange sensations after sniffing a 2000 year old bottle and said: "Looks as if I had become invisible - but that's all bosh." It was! - and shocking English, too! A centre-spread of comic strips was featured in the "Wizard" which otherwise ran in the same groove.

For about 150 years the two trump cards in crime were Dick Turpin and Jack Sheppard. Newnes decided to play them both together in the "Black Bess Library", perhaps not realising that the world had moved on from picquet to bridge. "The Headless Horseman", the Turpin main story, was a reprint from an old Aldine, somewhat "mucked about", I believe. It is still quite a good story, but the serial, "The Adventures of Jack Sheppard" bristles with ridiculous and unnecessary liberties with fact. Diminutive Jack becomes tall; his master, Owen Wood, is displaced by

"Adventure" fired by D.C.Thomson & Co. Other "rockets" were to come at regular intervals. Hitherto, the organisation built up by Alfred Harmsworth had been all powerful. Many a rival had dared to throw down the gauntlet only to fail dismally, but here at long last was a challenge it wasn't going to be easy to repel.

"Adventure" wasn't my idea of a boys' weekly. The stories might have been excellent, but, in my opinion, one wants more than merely stories. Brought up on the Boys' Friend and papers of a similar calibre, a paper should have a friendly editor, interesting articles, and plenty of intimate information about the authors and the artists. What should we have to talk and write about if we knew nothing about the contributors to our own particular favourites? Just fancy if we had never heard of Henry St. John, Maxwell Scott and David Goodwin. How much less interesting life would have been if we had never known so intimately Frank Richards, Edwy Searles Brooks, C. H. Chapman and others who mean so much to us. No Old Boys' Book Club, no magazines, no friendships formed, wouldn't that have been largely the position if all the publishers had insisted on the cloak of anonymity demanded by the House of D.C.Thomson. But doubtless they could afford to smile at my sentiment, seeing "Adventure" and others from the same stable are still running whilst several of the kind I defend didn't travel far from the starting post. Nevertheless, I'm unrepentant.

Now just three months after the launching of "Adventure" came "School and Sport", that disastrous venture of H. A. Hinton's. Another challenge to Fleetway House here and particularly the papers he used to control, the Gem and the Magnet. What a hope! It was doomed from the start. Not even the generous help of Frank Richards could keep it going more than seven weeks.



a John Roots; the author achieves the considerable feat of lifting Wild's house clear across the Old Bailey; Jonathan became "the official head of the police force"!!!! and the author's delusions of grandeur elevate both Wild and Blueskin into gigantic figures. Such liberties with a folk hero's saga should have been punished by the pillory. In any case, highwaymen were following the once popular historical, military and sea stories into oblivion. The atomic age was dawning, with the manifold mysteries of wireless, flight and inter-planetary journeys to divert the rising generation. Newnes soon found that the horse-pistol could not compete with the death ray.

The A.P. had two further ventures in the shape of "Sports for Boys" (9-10-1920) and "Sport and Adventure" (29-4-1922) which I find more interesting now than I did then. The first was hardly a story paper, as the fiction was limited to "Lords and Rats; A Tale of an Old School and a New One", by R.S. Warren Bell, the former editor of the "Captain". Instructional articles on running by A. G. Hill, boxing by Georges Carpentier and football by Sam Hardy, with a life of Jack Dempsey and a couple of pages on Scouting accounted for most of the space. The second was a Pentelow beanfeast, as J.N.P. reviewed the cricket season of 1922, "Jack North" had a long-complete titled "Football Foes", and "Richard Randolph" kicked off a series on "Young Sheriff Fist-Fight". All these received a hearty boost in the Editorial and, remembering what happened with the "Gem" and the "Magnet", it makes me wonder if he was the editor. Eric W. Townsend had one of his Yukon series and the greatest surprise of the lot was to find Booth Tarkington's "Penrod" being serialised in a paper with such a title.

So near the tail-end of my period that I am not even aware that I then read it was "the biggest story weekly in the

Guy Rayner, had he been living, would have been inclined to sympathise.

Odhams also had a go in October with a short-lived "Boys Pictorial", a very undistinguished effort; and one completely forgotten to-day.

Came 1922 and "The Champion" on January 28th. Now here was my ideal boys' weekly - adventure stories, packed with thrills, school stories, off the trail stories but not too fantastic, articles, competitions, credit for authors and artists, intimate chat page by a real live friendly editor. As has been told in our pages by that editor himself, the paper made a sensational debut, and all was well in the "Champion" section of Fleetway House.

Quickly, however, Thomsons struck again, for on March 4th they gave "Adventure" a companion, the "Rover". It was almost identical in format, and, well, it's still running.

Things were indeed lively about this time, for a few weeks later Fleetway House hit back with Sport and Adventure (April 29th). It was stated to be a successor to the long-lived Marvel. Pentelow was in control, and once again he was not content to merely occupy the editorial chair, for he wrote almost every story in No.1. Alas! apparently his leisurely style, with its character drawing, did not appeal, for the paper lived only six months.

Here I must go back a little, for I find that it was at the end of February that another competitor had entered the field - E. Hulston & Co. They added to the boys' weeklies "Boys' Magazine". It was smaller in page size and had a not very attractive pink cover. The majority of the stories during its run were of the quick fire fantastic type. It lasted about seven years, part of it in the hands of Fleetway House.

In October, 1922, Fleetway House came again with "Pluck". A paper



world" - "The Rocket" (17-2-1923). It was obviously a reply to the Thomson competition, and while it named both authors and artists, most of them were strangers, although the editor made quite a splash that he was employing professionals only and not working off contributions by film stars or footballers. He had a tilt, too, at the invisible men, mesmerists and "world-famous detectives" of school age who infested the rival papers and laid down a commendable programme for himself. Nevertheless, the influence of the rising threat was plain to see, and the programme was not adhered to. Not that it mattered to me. By the time the short-lived "Rocket" had burned out, I had passed on from boys' papers.

There are gaps in my gallery of No.1's, notably those of the "Champion", "School and Sport" and "Young Britain", but the one that puzzles me may not even exist. A suspicion keeps nagging at my memory that there was another paper which is not shown in the list in the 1947 "Annual". When "Fun and Fiction" was running, my staple fictional fare was Homeless Hector and Constable Cuddlecock: when the "Fun and Fiction" stories were reprinted in the "Bullseye", I know quite well that I did not read them. Yet I have a clear recollection of such stories as "The Phantom of Cursitor Fields", "The House of Thrills" and "Secrets of Stonemoor", and an even clearer recollection of Wakefield's illustrations. Indeed, when I saw "Bullseye" for the first time a few months ago, I was astonished to find how vividly some of the pictures had been imprinted on my mind's eye. If I could only clear up my suspicion that there was a paper which used the same material over again in the 1919-22 period, I should have satisfactorily rounded off my post-war parade.

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of the same name had passed out during the war, after a healthy existence, but this new paper was in no way like its namesake. Actually it came because of the success of the "Champion". It had the same editor, and the stories were on similar lines. Later, however, it cashed in on the new wonder - broadcasting. It also changed all its pages to brown.

The same month saw Jack's Paper. This made very little stir, very few can remember what it was like, and only a handful of copies remain in existence. This is not surprising as it lived less than six months. A real gamble, running a boys' weekly.

February 14th, 1933, brought the Rocket as a companion to the Champion and Pluck. The page size was slightly longer, and the stories rather more fantastic. About the same time "Young Britain" came under the same dynamic editorial control of F. Addington Symonds. On the surface it would appear that all was well at Fleetway House.

But wait a moment. In October Thomson's retaliated with the "Vanguard" to range alongside "Adventure" and the "Rover". Then strange things began to happen. Within a few months "Pluck", the "Rocket" and "Young Britain" were dead, and where the "Champion" was concerned the order had apparently gone forth, "Model it on the lines of those Thomson papers." This was too much for Addington Symonds who was proud of his first-born. He left the editorial chair and Fleetway House.

Well, the Champion is still in existence and almost a carbon copy of its rivals, so I suppose the policy paid dividends, and well, maybe I shouldn't have made a successful editor seeing I thought that the Champion as it was in the beginning was everything a paper for boys should be.

Just one more paper I'll mention before I close this survey. September 6th, 1924, just short of five years



after the armistice, Fleetway House brought out the "Triumph". There was some justification for this title for it ran until that unlucky month of May of 1940, 814 numbers in all. It can perhaps be best described as "in-between" the Champion as it was in the beginning, and the Thomsons. It did give the authors' names. That was something to its credit, even though it didn't give much news about them.

Well, there's a review, in no way complete, of the activity in the first few years after the first war. It's a story of successful venture, some failures, and one or two fiascoes. At anyrate, the publishers did try to give the boy of the period something worth while to look forward to each week. Which is more than can be said in these days of lurid, storyless, absurdly-named American "comics".

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PRE-SEXTON BLAKE STORIES (Cont'd from p.62)

<u>Story</u>	<u>Author</u>
21. Foes of the Czar	Singleton Pound
22. Under the Northern Lights	Alec G. Pearson
23. On Strike!	T. G. Dowling Maitland
24. Board School to Varsity	Tristram K. Monck
25. The Skull Orchid	T. C. Bridges
26. A Marked Man	Arthur S. Hardy
27. The Black Mask	Herbert Maxwell
28. Cock of the School	Reginald Wray
29. Bugler Bob, V.C.	R. Winter-Gale
30. The Sunken Island	Fenton Ash
31. The Hunter Scouts	Mark Darran
32. The Path of Honour	S. Clarke Hook
33. On the Trail	Ellis Ellsen
34. Jim the Axeman	T. C. Bridges
35. King of the Wrestlers	Peter Pengarth
36. Ice Island	T. C. Bridges
37. Quarrymen All	Dudley Brand
38. Running the Gauntlet	Cecil Hayter
39. Chums of the Neptune	Alec G. Pearson
40. The Burning Valley	John Stanton
41. The Pirates of Algiers	Edgar Pickering
42. The Trumpet Call	Alec G. Pearson
43. Cold Steel	Mark Darran
44. A Tyrant and a Bully	-
45. The Spy	Cecil Hayter
46. Diver Dick	Herbert Chandos
47. The Black Jaguar	T. C. Bridges
48. The Circle of Silence	Cecil Hayter
49. £500 Reward	T. C. Bridges
50. The Hidden Peril	Max Hamilton
52. The Bandit Chief	Edgar Pickering
54. Dave's Double	Reginald Wray
55. The Black Knight	John Stanton (Con'd on p.
56. Bold Buccaneers	W. Murray Graydon (Contd. on p.29)





Harry Wharton

Robert Whiter 51



## "Harry Wharton, Captain of the Remove"

By Roger M. Jenkins

The Magnet and the Gem were such remarkable papers, unique in so many ways, that they may perhaps seem at times more fitting to be objects of veneration than of criticism. Nevertheless, as Greyfriars and St. Jim's were such close rivals of each other, a comparison of the two schools becomes a fascinating subject to embark upon. It is not difficult to perceive that there was a different atmosphere at each school. This distinction came about, not by chance, but by the deliberate intention of the author, Charles Hamilton, and it was accomplished by a scrupulous care in characterisation. As an instance of this, it is only necessary to compare the characters of Tom Merry and Harry Wharton.

It would have been inconceivable to have interchanged these two characters. They would just not have fitted in at each other's school. Tom Merry, the foundation stone of the Gem, as it were, was a bright, genial, open-hearted lad whose only fault was that he was too easy-going. It is impossible not to like him, and it is equally impossible not to be able to see why he was such a great attraction in the early days of the paper. The editor once comforted a reader by advising him not to be too worried if he could not achieve everything that Tom Merry had achieved, but suggested he made a resolve not to do anything that Tom Merry wouldn't have done. This was excellent advice, yet when all was said and done one could not help wondering whether Tom Merry's character had not been delineated in that single sentence, and that there was now nothing more to be said. He was, in short, a model.

Certainly no editor ever commended his readers to emulate Harry Wharton! Yet there can be no doubt that his character was drawn the more truly to life. From No. 1 of the Magnet to No. 1683 one is continually confronted by him, sometimes a rebel, more often upholding authority, but never for one instant anything either disreputable or priggish. Though he was not always the centre of attraction, his character never once failed to ring the bell. In short, he was a real boy. There can be no higher praise for an author.

The first description we have of Harry Wharton occurs in Magnet No. 1. - "He was a well-built lad, firmly developed, strong, and active. Handsome indeed was the face, with its well marked features and dark eyes. But there was a cloud upon it, and in the dark eyes was a glint of suspicion and defiance." His uncle and guardian, Colonel Wharton, having arrived home from India and found his nephew running wild, had decided he must go to school at Greyfriars, the Colonel's old school. The boy declared passionately he would never go, but with a characteristic touch the Colonel said he would not escort him there if Harry gave his word that he would proceed there on his own. (Even in the first chapter of the Magnet, his character is finely sketched; whatever else his faults, he has a high sense of honour). The rest of the early story is well-known to most Magnet readers: Wharton met Nugent on the train, and had a fight with him - an episode which Billy Bunter subsequently always delighted to recall; Wharton later pulled Nugent out of the Sark, but repulsed his offer of friendship; he shared Study No. 1 with Nugent, Bunter, and Bulstrode; Nugent then rescued Wharton from a footpad and they struck up a friendship; Bob Cherry arrived and, when challenged, thrashed Harry Wharton in a boxing-match;



and eventually they became the best of friends, and Wharton wrested the captaincy of the Remove from Bulstrode. He was indeed a novel hero.

The decision to create a hero of this calibre was an astonishing one, certainly one which does not appear to have been risked by any author of boys' stories before or since. As Charles Hamilton himself says, "Harry Wharton's character was drawn from life: and to tell you the truth, I was a little dubious about it at first, but finally decided to depict him just as he was: for after all, there were plenty of faultless heroes about, and real human nature has an appeal. It is certainly possible to be very much attached to a friend who may have quite serious faults which may sometimes cause rifts in the lute. Moreover, there was, in Wharton's character, one of those moral lessons which Frank Richards couldn't help passing on to his younger readers. Everybody, I suppose, has known a fellow who has a slight disposition to sulk, and mistake it for righteousness. This tendency can be cured if taken early enough: and it seemed to me that Wharton's little weaknesses might be more instructive than complete goodness which, I fear, generally fails to ring the bell."

Here lies one of the main secrets of success of a writer of school stories - to have a well-defined moral code, combined with human characters who do not always manage to live up to it; the reader can thus easily associate himself with the characters. To quote Charles Hamilton again, "It has always seemed to me that a man ought not to write a story at all unless he feels that it may be to some extent useful, as well as entertaining to young readers whose characters are in the process of formation." It was the use of this formula that was directly responsible for the three greatest series in the whole of the Magnet's thirty-two year run. And, as was only fitting, they all centred upon Harry Wharton.

The first of these was published in 1925 in Magnets Nos. 879 - 888, and was reprinted in Schoolboys' Owns Nos. 287, 259, & 261. Mr. Quelch set the keynote of the series when he remarked: "I have always been somewhat interested in you, Wharton, because you are a boy with a strong and very decided character, whether for good or evil. In your nature, the good predominates - I am sure of that. But you must be very careful, Wharton. You are liable to be hasty, hot-headed, self-willed, and having recklessly taken the wrong path, to persist in it from sheer wilful obstinacy." The occasion of this solemn warning was the beginning of Harry Wharton's first fall from grace. There was nothing new in the theme of a hero's finding himself in disfavour through being falsely accused; but this series rose far above that. Step by step, we are shown exactly how Harry Wharton, through the defects in his own character, lost the esteem of the Remove and the masters. This was indeed tragedy of a high order, and marked a startling advance over any school stories that had hitherto been written by Charles Hamilton or any other author.

Billy Bunter was the mischief-maker, and it was his unpleasant habit of prying that began the trouble\*. He read a letter from Colonel Wharton which

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\*FOOTNOTE. It is interesting to note how radically Billy Bunter changed. In the early days of the Magnet, he was practically inoffensive, his chief attribute being short-sightedness, not culpance. His favourite remark was "I'm sincerely sorry." Later, he became grosser in all respects, and during the 'twenties he was at his most unpleasant stage. In the 'thirties, he was almost likeable and certainly at his most amusing.



Harry had shewn in confidence to his friends, and accordingly when the subject matter of the letter became known in the Remove, Harry blamed his friends unjustly for revealing a confidence. Through various incidents, the split was complete, and he spent part of his Christmas holidays with the Bounder in France, and the remainder with Jimmy Silver. Bunter continued the bad work by destroying a conciliatory telegram from Harry Wharton to Frank Nugent, and later, when they all returned to school, he destroyed one of Wharton's impositions, thus causing Mr. Quelch to think it had never been written. The fact that Bunter was responsible for all these misdeeds eventually became known, but it was then too late to repair the damage they had caused. Such was Harry Wharton's stubborn nature that, although the truth was nearly always revealed, by that time he had usually committed himself too far, and was too proud to withdraw. These incidents illustrate clearly the maxim that it is not events that mould our future, but our reactions to those events.

When his last friend, Meuleverer, had turned against him, Harry Wharton found some solace in frequenting low resorts to play billiards, but it was inevitable that he would be caught, since he disdained to use caution; the inevitable happened, and Mr. Quelch requested his expulsion. The Head agreed, but when he later visited Wharton in the punishment-room, he decided to give him a second chance, for he had shrewdly divined that Wharton had come to see the stupidity of his folly and the effect his expulsion would have on his aunt and uncle. The Head had not been troubled so greatly by Wharton's misdemeanours, but Mr. Quelch, who perhaps also lacked the touch of penetrating wisdom that his chief possessed, found he could only acquiesce in silent rage, and Wharton discovered that he had to win his form-master's respect anew. Needless to say, he did, and this remarkable series ended on a note of restored harmony. Not since the Magnet began had its readers been treated to such a brilliant character-study, not only of Wharton himself, but of his friends and masters as well. This series is also noteworthy in another respect; it is the forerunner of the Golden Age of the Magnet. The ingenuous early stories with their indefinable charm are now replaced by more dynamic stories, with much greater emphasis on character and plot-construction.

It is sometimes alleged that Charles Hamilton's plots are too often repeated. It is true that one can trace the same theme in many of his stories, but what is usually overlooked is the fact that the repetition generally involved a different school; and most of the time the interval between the first and second use of the plot was such that another generation had come along to take the place of the former readers. Be this as it may, however, the year 1932 saw the publication of another series featuring Harry Wharton as a rebel. This series was published in Magnets Nos. 1285 to 1296, and was reprinted in Nos. 331, 334, 337, & 340 of the Schoolboys' Own Library (though collectors who have the reprinted version should be warned that the conclusion therein is entirely different from the original version, and was presumably written by the editor in order not to exceed the limited space available).

There is no need to trace in any detail the incidents in the second series. If anything, we are made to see even more clearly here that the tragedy came about through Wharton's pride, hasty temper, and self-righteousness. There was a good deal of truth in Skinner's jibe that Wharton considered himself to be the Great Panjandrum of the Remove. As the author himself remarks in this connection: "Are there not many fellows who, being assured that they know best,



are liable to become a little overbearing?"<sup>3</sup> The truth of this is clearly shown. Loder sent Bunter down to the Cross Keys with a message, and when Bunter was caught the prefect advised him to keep silent on the whole matter. Accordingly, Bunter, knowing full well that Loder would deny everything, held his peace. When the Head was about to administer a public flogging, however, Wharton stepped forward and declared that Bunter was only a tool in the affair. Bunter was too terrified to tell the truth, and he was accordingly flogged. But Wharton had earned the enmity of Loder, and the stern disapproval of Mr. Quelch for making what he considered a baseless accusation. Once again, Harry Wharton lost the respect of his friends, he goaded Mr. Quelch beyond endurance, and found Loder bent on getting him expelled. In one respect, however, as Eric Fayne has pointed out, there is a difference, and that is that in this series Wharton was unjustly suspected of being a blackguard, whereas in the first series he actually went pub-haunting. This series therefore presents Wharton's character more truly than the earlier one; it is also extremely well-written, and technically far superior to the other. Yet in spite of these advantages, it is difficult not to prefer the earlier series, mainly, perhaps, because it had a really fine conclusion that was not at all artificial or forced, whereas the later series concluded with a reconciliation between Mr. Quelch and Wharton when they were both in danger of being drowned after having been cut off by the tide. There is an impression that the problem was too easily resolved by this fortuitous occurrence, whereas in the earlier series Harry Wharton's restoration to favour was not brought about by chance at all. Still, there is no need to be hypercritical in comparing the two; let it suffice to say that there was only one other series in the Magnet of sufficient merit to rival either of them.

One may unhesitatingly declare that this third series was the greatest of them all. It appeared in 1935, in Magnets Nos. 1422 to 1433. Here we were introduced to Ralph Stacey, a distant relative of Wharton's, and exactly like him in appearance. Stacey was an excellent cricketer, and a good scholar, but he was a thorough hypocrite in that he indulged in such forbidden pastimes as gambling and smoking in secret, whilst pretending to disapprove of them. He was seen from time to time entering such resorts as "The Three Fishers", but it was always impossible for the Head to decide which of the doubles was the culprit. Once again, Harry Wharton lost favour with Mr. Quelch, though Stacey was not entirely to blame for this, but in this series the Famous Five stuck together for most of the time, and Wharton never became the outcast he had been in the other two series. This was an advantage in that it made the story seem more restrained, and the reader was thus enabled to revel in the ramifications of the plot without the feelings of intense pity and poignant regret that the two earlier series aroused. One need hardly add that Stacey was eventually shown up, and he left Greyfriars.

Charles Hamilton, mentioning the Stacey series, writes: "The idea was to impress on the youthful mind the lesson that even an attractive fellow with considerable physical and mental gifts just comes to grief if he cannot keep straight. Harry Wharton in the same series has many faults of temper which

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<sup>3</sup>FOOTNOTE: The author also states that he worked out the same idea, though in a very different form, in the character of Lovell at Rookwood.



often place him at a disadvantage. but he is always decent at heart and that pulls him through all his troubles in the end. I have never liked the idea of sermonizing young people: but it has always seemed to me that a writer for youth should merge some moral hints imperceptibly into his story..... though certainly not to the extent of making it unreadable, as many writers in my own boyhood unhappily did."

There need have been no anxiety that the stories about Stacey might prove unreadable. During this series, the desire in our household to read the next instalment was so great that my sister was regularly despatched to the news-agents on Fridays to prevail upon them to let us have our copy in advance of publication. She then returned triumphantly with the Magnet, and proceeded to read it, tearing off the pages and handing them to my brother as she read them, and he in his turn handed them to me when he had finished with them. Even then, it had not always completed its rounds, for later in the day my father could sometimes be seen impatiently attempting to re-arrange the dissected fragments, and reproachfully suggesting that as he paid the newsagents' bills we might manage to leave the periodicals intact upon future occasions. I regret to add that we were not able to comply with this suggestion until the Stacey series had ended.

Such, then, were the three finest series in the Magnet. Perhaps one of the greatest tributes to the author was his ability to make us recognise the depravity of Wharton's conduct, whilst at the same time letting us see that he was still the hero of the story and that our sympathies still lay with him. Charles Hamilton, more than any other writer of his kind, had the ability to pose moral questions like these in an interesting and compelling manner. It would, however, be very misleading to imply that all series starring Harry Wharton portrayed him as rebellious and intractable as these three series did at times. As instances of other topics, older readers may prefer that famous occasion when it was finally decided that the Remove did not have to fag for the Sixth; younger readers may prefer the de Costa series, in which Harry Wharton showed the pleasanter and more accustomed side of his nature (Magnets Nos.1059 to 1067; Schoolboys' Own Nos.195,197, & 199); whilst readers of my generation probably prefer the stories about Harry Wharton as the Swot of the Remove (Magnets Nos. 1255 to 1259; Schoolboys' Owns Nos.289 & 292).

Greyfriars had many advantages over St.Jim's; it had a single hero on whom we could focus all our attention instead of having to divide it between the triumvirate composed of Tom Merry, Blake, and Figgins; there were far fewer imitation stories in the Magnet than in the Gem; the minor characters at Greyfriars were far better presented than were their counterparts at St.Jim's, e.g. compare Skinner and Haze;dene with Mellish and Gore; the author wrote most of his best Greyfriars stories after 1931, after which time he virtually ceased to write St.Jim's stories; but above all, Greyfriars had a hero with failings, a boy whose character seemed so true to life.

Let there be no mistake, Harry Wharton was the secret of the Magnet's success, not Billy Bunter. Bunter attracted the younger readers, and indeed a great many of his antics are calculated to make even adults laugh aloud, but he was very seldom the star of the story. Sometimes he was the mischief-maker, sometimes his habits of peeping and prying were used to further the machinery of the plot, but he was in any case seldom more than an accessory. Harry Wharton was the pivot on which the Magnet turned, and there is not a Greyfriars



story in which he fails to command our attention. He was undoubtedly the greatest character ever drawn by Charles Hamilton, and it is pleasing to reflect that the vicissitudes of his career formed the main topic of his author's finest work. Certainly no character in the Magnet was so consistently the favourite of so many readers in each generation as Harry Wharton, the Captain of the Remove.

THE GREYFRIARS HERALD (FIRST SERIES)

Notes: - 18 issues only all at  $\frac{1}{2}$ d each. White covers. Contents 20 pages.

- No.1. 20.11.15. The Pride of the Ring (Serial) by Mark Linley.  
Adventures of Herlock Sholmes by Peter Todd.  
No.1. The Adventure of the Diamond Pins.  
The Swindled Schoolboy (St.Jim's) by Harry Wharton
- No.2. 27.11.15. The Pride of the Ring (Serial) by Mark Linley.  
Adventures of Herlock Sholmes by Peter Todd.  
No.2. The Case of the Biscuit Tin.  
Catching Fish (Greyfriars) by Geo. Bulstrode.
- No.3. 4.12.15. The Pride of the Ring (Serial) by Mark Linley.  
Adventures of Herlock Sholmes by Peter Todd.  
No.3. The Bound of the Haskervilles.  
Playing a Part (Greyfriars) by Dick Rake.
- No.4. 11.12.15. The Pride of the Ring (Serial) by Mark Linley  
Adventures of Herlock Sholmes by Peter Todd  
No.4. The Freckled Hand.  
Police Constable Wibley (Greyfriars) by Johnny Bull.
- No.5. 18.12.15. The Pride of the Ring (Serial) by Mark Linley.  
Adventures of Herlock Sholmes by Peter Todd.  
No.5. The Sign of Forty-Four.  
Fishy's Cat Colony (Greyfriars) by Dick Russell.  
The Cliff House Match (Greyfriars) by Clara Trevlyn.
- No.6. 25.12.15. The Pride of the Ring (Serial) by Mark Linley.  
Adventures of Herlock Sholmes by Peter Todd.  
No.6. The Death of Sholmes.  
Blinker's Reformation (Greyfriars) by Bob Cherry.
- No.7. 1. 1.16. The Pride of the Ring (Serial) by Mark Linley.  
Adventures of Herlock Sholmes by Peter Todd.  
No.7. The Return of Herlock Sholmes.  
The Box for Bunter (Greyfriars) by Dick Russell.  
Squiff's Snap-Shot (Greyfriars) by Frank Nugent.
- No.8. 8. 1.16. The Pride of the Ring (Serial) by Mark Linley.  
Adventures of Herlock Sholmes by Peter Todd.  
No.8. The Missing Mother-in-Law.  
The Stunt of the Season (Greyfriars) by Dick Rake.

(Contd. on p.35)



# "The Hero of the Shell"

By Eric Fayne

TOM MERRY was the first of the great schoolboy heroes who were destined to remain young for ever while the men and women who admired them grew older and older. Long before Harry Wharton arrived sulky and spoiled at Greyfriars; ages before Jimmy Silver advised his pals to "Keep Smiling"; many moons before Nipper went to St. Frank's; twenty-five years before the Rio Kid rode the ranges or King of the Islands sailed the seas, Tom Merry arrived at Clavering School in his velvet suit, accompanied by his doting guardian, Miss Fawcett. True, Jack Blake, Figgins, and Gussy were on the scene at St. Jim's some months before Tommy put in an appearance, but none of these was in the same schoolboy leader class as Tom Merry.

## CHARACTER

Critics of Tom Merry have suggested that he was too perfect,— that a fellow who was honest, straightforward, unselfish, and truthful just did not exist outside the pages of the "Gem". If that is the case, it is a wicked world indeed. "Yes," add the critics, "It IS a wicked world!"

Do you remember that fine story "Shoulder to Shoulder", in which Tom Merry and Gussy stood by the latter's brother, Wally, when he was persecuted by Mr. Selby? Tom Merry told a lie to save Wally. Martin Clifford wrote "It was a lie! The first that Tom Merry of St. Jim's had ever told! But though he was wrong, the blame was heavier upon the man who had driven him to it!"

Maybe that was piling it on a little thickly. At any rate, when the story was re-printed later on, the line was omitted.

But was the sentiment so exaggerated, after all? There are, of course, a great many liars about in the world. Some understudy the old cynic who regarded a lie as "an abomination unto the Lord, but a very present help in time of trouble." Some people roll lies out "en masse". Some people brag, and do not realise that they are lying.

But I have known boys who just do not lie. They have been brought up to tell the truth, and they never think of doing otherwise. They are almost obstinate in their determination to tell the truth.

## AN IDEAL

Tom Merry was an ideal to the boys of the day when he first came upon the scene. That was part of the reason for the tremendous success of the "Gem" in its early days. Boys, perhaps of a simpler age, tried to model themselves on Tom Merry. I know I did, though he was playing his part a good many years before I was old enough to become acquainted with him. I must admit that I was not very successful in understudying Tom Merry, but I think he curbed the "old Adam" in me to some extent.

## HIS ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE "NUTS"

A fairly early Gem reader once sent the editor a poem which started like this:—

"Tom Merry, oh, Tom Merry, how I love your cheerful face

And how you try to influence the nuts who go the pace."

A good deal of the criticism of the Gem leader was due to his attitude to the rotters and the bullies. Readers seem to have acquirmed a little when Tom



called Gore "you cowardly cur", or when he addressed Levison as "you unmitigated scoundrel". But to my way of thinking, the mistake was not that Tom Merry was too heavily whitewashed, but that the villains were painted too black. For years, the villains of St. Jim's had no redeeming points at all. Levison was a liar, cheat, thief, and scoundrel, - so black that the Hero of Borstal might have said to him "you unmitigated villain", let alone the Hero of the Shell. Mellish was a type who would make any even moderately decent fellow shiver. Racke could hardly have remained at any school unless the masters were completely asleep. It is obvious that, side by side with characters so black, the decent fellows were thrown into sharp relief.

#### EARLY DAYS

For the first six years of the Gem, Tom Merry played the leading part in the greater proportion of the stories. He became Junior Captain, a position which, in those days, did not seem to lay such a heavy weight of responsibility upon him as in later years. He was Ferrers Locke's assistant in many stories, before Dr. Locke of Greyfriars was known, and long before Jack Drake came on the scene. He defied Mr. Ratcliff when St. Jim's went to sea on the S.S. Condor. He led his chums out to the Rocky Mountains in that very first of all the travel series. He did heroic things on the Congo, and brought home a ~~black slave~~. He led the party who went to the South Seas in search of treasure. He was the victim of the plot of the prefect, Bingham. He lost all his money, and wandered in London, even coming back to St. Jim's as a junior master. The latter adventures were in a fine set of stories, and we found Tom Merry at his very best in his dealings with the waif, Joe Frayne. He dived in to save Mr. Selby when St. Jim's was flooded. He became Captain of St. Jim's, and found the job too big for him. He fought a prize-fighter - and won - to regain the money which Cutts had stolen from him. One could go on indefinitely, but the Editor would use his blue-pencil.

In those early yarns, Tom Merry was a happy-go-lucky, light-hearted leader, rather different from the slightly too mature fellow we met in later years.

#### NEGLECT

But after 1914, Tom Merry was rather sadly neglected, for some reason unknown. It is a remarkable thing that, although he hardly ever played the lead after this date, he was, nevertheless, the king-pin of the stories. The yarns revolved around him. The Gem was Tom Merry, and Tom Merry was the Gem.

In the Talbot stories, though Tom was given a minor part to play, his friendship with the Toff was one of the highlights of Gem history. Tom Merry was undoubtedly Talbot's closest pal. Years later, when Cardew wrested the captaincy from Tom, Talbot refused to be a candidate in the election. "I'm not going to put up," said Talbot, briefly. "And if Tom does not do so, I shall not vote."

Tom was the centre of a barring-out one Christmas, but it was a typical barring-out series. Once we found the Shell fellow, dared by Cardew, attempting to swim the Channel. But it was really a Cardew story. In the series, already mentioned, of the feud between Tom Merry and Cardew, it was really the latter who played the lead. Tom Merry was kidnapped on one occasion, by Rogue Rackstraw, but in this case the chief player was Wildrake.

So the years went by, with Tom Merry always the central character, yet never being the chief character in a story. Until the reprints began, and the led from Huckleberry heath turned up again at Clavering wearing his velvet suit and bow.



And yet, at the finish, in that long last series to appear in the Gem, Martin Clifford brought his first-love into the limelight again, and the Gem story ended with Tom Merry at Huckleberry Heath, just as it had started nearly 33 years before.

COMPARISONS

Close students of the old stories may have noticed that there was, usually, a slight pedantry in Tom Merry's conversation. He would say, "I will not" rather than "I won't", and "I did not" when others would have said "I didn't". This was explained in the first story as being due to the careful training which Tom had received at the hands of Miss Priscilla.

As a matter of fact, however, the same characteristic was found in Harry Wharton on many occasions, particularly when he was on the "high horse".

Jimmy Silver was very like Tom Merry in many ways. He had a similar sunny disposition, and was just as down on the "nuts". Yet he was never criticised as "too perfect". Probably because he was not so important a character, though he had his followers.

Tom's character was such that it was but very rarely that we ever found him called by his surname alone. It was almost always Tom Merry, or just Tom, or even Tommy. We would not have had it otherwise. His age varied, though. At the beginning he was 15; later it dropped to 14½; in the middle years he was 16, and feeling his advanced years; and then we found him at 15 again. I always like to think of him as about 15½, I think.

And though I love Harry Wharton, the Bounder, Gussy, Lowther, Jimmy Silver, the Rio Kid, and many others, I reserve, if I may finish on a personal note, the softest spot in my sentimental heart for TOM MERRY, the first of the Great Schoolboys.

PRE-SEXTON BLAKE STORIES (contd. from p. 20)

<u>Story</u>	<u>Author</u>
57. The Bully of St.Oswald's.	T. C. Bridges.
58. To the Spanish Main.	Singleton Pound.
59. The Mark of the Thumb.	
60. The Golden Alligator.	Tanton Ash.
61. Through Trackless Space.	R. W. Comrade.
62. Mystery of Hilton Royal (Sexton Blake) Black James	Xmas Double Number Herbert Chandos.
63. Trooper Watson.	Beverley Kent.
64. With Sahib and Sepoy.	W. Murray Graydon.
65. The Plume Hunters.	T. C. Bridges.
66. The Silent Witness.	Max Hamilton.
67. Into the Corsair's City.	Douglas Grant.
70. The Night Hawks.	T. G. Dowling Maitland.
72. Snatched from the Sea.	Edgar Pickering.
74. The Captured Cruiser.	Reginald Wray.
75. Master and Man.	Mark Derran.
76. The Secret of the School.	Charles Hamilton.
77. On the Track.	
78. On the Lone Trail.	W. Murray Graydon.
80. The Cotton King.	Max Hamilton.
82. The Three Captains.	Herbert Maxwell.

(Contd. on p.71)



## "In the Beginning"

By Robert Blythe

Broadly speaking, the Nelson Lee can be divided, like Gaul, into three parts; the detective stories in the early days, the school stories that followed, and the mixture of detective, school and short stories that made up the 2nd New Series of the '30's.

Possibly the least known, and certainly the least written about, were the detective yarns prior to the introduction of St. Franks in O.S. 112. So let's leave St. Franks and its inhabitants this time, and concentrate on the activities of Nelson Lee and Nipper in their battle of wits with the denizens of the underworld.

Nelson Lee and Nipper were by no means strangers to the youth of 1915. (The year in which the N.L.L. first saw the light.) They were, and had been for years, Sexton Blake & Tinker's biggest rivals in popularity, but whereas S.B. and his assistant had a home of their own within the pages of the Union Jack, Nelson Lee and Nipper were free-lances, liable to pop up in all sorts of journals.

By 1915, however, the A.P. decided that Lee's popularity entitled him to a paper of his own and so the Nelson Lee Library was born.

It seems a pity that Maxwell Scott, who originated the characters of Nelson Lee and Nipper, nearly 25 years earlier, was not given the privilege of launching the new paper. After all, had he not relinquished the copyright for the sum of £50 so that the A.P. might call upon any author they saw fit to enable them to provide a new adventure each week?

Whatever the reason, the first story was entrusted to an author whose name, unfortunately, no-one has yet been able to discover. At first it was thought to be William Murray Graydon, but that theory has been disproved. Whoever it was didn't make an especially good job of it, as it was rather a melodramatic effort about low life among the sailors frequenting London's dockland. The title was "The Mystery of Limehouse Reach."

Two stories by Maxwell Scott appeared in numbers 7 and 8 which more than justified the author's reputation. The first, "A Miscarriage of Justice", told how a young stockbroker, falsely accused of murder, is tried, found guilty, and sentenced to life imprisonment. The sequel, "A convict's Vendetta", unlike most sequels, is better than the first story. This tells how, after some years, the real murderer is fatally injured in an accident. Before he dies he confesses and the wrongly-accused is released from prison. On his release he swears vengeance on all who have been instrumental in sending him to prison. He kidnaps them one by one and puts them in a prison of his own making, where they are forced, at the point of a gun, to endure hard labour.

There is a girl in this story, of course. He had thought that she had discarded him when he went to prison, but when he finally learned that she had, in fact, waited for him, he forgot his vengeance, released everybody and offered to go to prison again as a sort of penance. However, everyone decided to forgive and forget - which was very noble of everybody all round, I thought!

More melodramatic perhaps were the stories by William Murray Graydon. They were readable enough, with a fair element of mystery, but his plots were



basically the same - that of the wrongfully accused young hero and the tearful but ever-loving sweetheart who remained faithful to the happy end. His heroes shed manly tears and the heroines wept buckets. Even Nelson Lee has to stifle a groan on occasion!

From No's 15 to 108, with the exception of three stories, (one by A.S. Hardy) all the yarns were shared by G. H. Teed and our old friend Edwy Searles Brooks, (who of course took over completely from No.109).

Some of Teed's best stories concerned Mlle. Miton, otherwise known as the Black Wolf. From Teed's description one gathers that she wouldn't have had much bother obtaining lifts had she decided to go in for hitch-hiking. Just listen, "----- he knew she was petite. Her features were small. Her eyes were deep liquid brown, soft as woodland pools, her nose was deliciously small and straight, and her lips were like twin bows of blood red coral. Her skin gleamed softly white and beneath the dark masses of her hair Lee could just catch sight of two exquisitely formed ears." Whoopee!! Its not surprising that Lee felt a soft spot for her in their numerous encounters.

Theirs was a very chivalrous campaign. On more than one occasion after the successful conclusion of a case, he would give her time to get clear before the police were informed, although, more often than not, she would have seen that the game was up and would have faded out of the picture. At other times when the Black Wolf had Lee in her power she preferred to give him a few knock-out drops rather than dispose of him for good. They were fond of sending each other warning notes too, for M'ille Miton certainly had a soft spot for Lee, and he, in return was always pleased when she eluded capture.

It was more a battle of wits with them rather than downright skullduggery, and it was a pity that the series did not end more conclusively than it did, for in that story she neither dies, gets captured, nor reforms. She simply disappears. The probable reason is that the way was left open for other "Black Wolf" stories, but after this Teed ceased to write for the N.L. Of course, at this time the ground was being prepared for school stories, and there being no future in it for him, he sensibly concentrated his energies upon Sexton Blake.

Teed wrote 29 stories in the N.L.L. of which those concerning the Black Wolf were 13.

Another and perhaps lesser known character that Teed created in these early stories was Dr. Mortimer Crane, known as "the Man with Four Identities".

Dr. Crane was a man who, a Harley Street specialist and much respected by all and sundry, nevertheless had a criminal twist to his nature. Although provided, through his practice, with an ample income, he preferred to resort to crime, whilst maintaining an outward semblance of respectability, and would stop at nothing, murder included, to achieve his purpose. He had a natural aptitude for disguises and the ability to alter his whole nature to each of the characters he adopted. Teed wrote only six stories about Dr. Mortimer Crane, but during that time he (Crane) certainly did not have things all his own way. In spite of all the confusion caused by the four identities he assumed, Lee manages to trace them to their originator, and Crane is forced to abandon his medical world. At last he is reduced to living in a slum in the foreign quarter of London. It is then that he embarks on his last impersonation from which he comes well and truly unstuck, for Lee foils him again. To avoid capture, or possibly in sheer disgust at the way things are going, he poisons himself. Which was rather short-sighted of him, for had he allowed himself to be captured he would probably have escaped later on and would have been able to start all



over again. Possibly Teed tired of him, for as I said, his career only lasted for six episodes. However, whilst he lasted he certainly made things hot for Nelson Lee and Nipper and in the true Teed manner took them to many out of the way places of the world.

As was usual with Teed, he always wrote a good yarn and one could usually expect to find his characters fighting it out in almost any quarter of the globe. Arctic or Equator, Tibet or Cuba, it was all the same to him, he took them all in his stride and the reader always got full value for his money.

We now come to the work of the man who was destined to make the Nelson Lee Library famous. A man who to-day is second only in popularity to the immortal Charles Hamilton - Edwy Searles Brooks.

Most of you know how Brooks came to be connected with the N.L., as I have written of it at length elsewhere. Suffice it to say that since his first story, "The Iron Island", written at the age of eighteen, was accepted for the "Gem" in 1910, he had been gaining experience through writing for the "Gem", "Magnet" and Union Jack and possibly other papers.

His first story in the N.L. appeared the week after Teed's first contribution, in No.16. It was called "20 Fathoms Deep".

For the benefit of those who would like to know what this first story was about, here is a short summary.

Certain plans and a model of an improved war weapon have been sunk in a bay off the East Coast in 20 fathoms of water. Four enemy agents attempt to recover them. There is plenty of excitement on the occasions when Lee and Nipper get to grips with them. Nipper is placed, unconscious, on railway lines in the path of an oncoming train and is rescued, within seconds of death, by Nelson Lee. (Real Pearl White stuff, this!) There was a German midget submarine (probably not invented at that time, but it is indicative of Brooks' lively imagination) in which Lee is trapped, and a fight with two Germans with the sub out of control, and finally a hectic chase through the night in a car, flat out, at the breathless speed of 30 miles an hour! A crash - and the spies have had it!

Not a classic of literature perhaps, but an exciting and absorbing tale that holds the interest from beginning to end and certainly a good sample of what was to come.

Incidentally, those who think that Jones was a bad artist, should see the cover. An excellent picture in shades of blue and black of a diver walking towards the wreck on the shadowy and distorted depths of the sea bed.

One of the three main characters created by Brooks was Eileen Dare. Her campaign against the "Combine" was a series remembered to this day by those who read them in 1916-19. Some can even recall the incidents portrayed on the covers, such as impression did they make.

To get to the crux of the matter quickly, Eileen's father is falsely accused of being in the pay of the Germans, is taken to prison and after a trial is found guilty and sentenced to be shot. He dies of heart-failure before the sentence can be carried out. His daughter swears that she will never rest until those who engineered the plot have paid the penalty for their treachery. These men were a group of business men and financiers who called themselves "The Combine".

Eileen was not exactly vindictive, but she certainly believed in the old saying "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth". Listen to how she, with the help of Nelson Lee, drove them, one by one, to death or ruin.



Sir Andrew Shore, Bart. Socially and financially ruined. Sent to prison for being instrumental in a kidnapping, where he dies of apoplexy.

Martin Hellton, stockbroker, sentenced to 7 years penal servitude.

Basil Illingford, mining engineer. Penal servitude for attempted murder.

Jonathan Bridges, company promoter. For arson, fraud and attempted murder - 10 years penal servitude.

Randolph Stebbing, solicitor. Killed in a fall from a factory chimney after being ruined financially.

Ransome Wilmore, moneylender. The fate of this chap was particularly grim. After being brought to book he has a stroke and become paralysed from head to foot for the remainder of his life!

Sir Caleb Hurst, financier. Ruined and sent to prison.

Dr. Munroe Taggart, Harley Street specialist. Trampled to death by an elephant after trying to escape from the police.

Melville Ross, American business man. Convicted of fraud, kidnapping and attempted murder - penal servitude.

Herbert Vickerson, man about town. Attempted murder. Prison.

Rufus Tollman, mining engineer. Fraud. Penal servitude.

Fred Abercorn. Kidnapping. Imprisonment.

Stanton Reading. Suicide.

Lord Max Roper and Sydney Bradford. Imprisonment.

The final member of the "Combine" was reserved for a particularly nasty fate. This was Roger Haverfield, who, whilst trying to escape from justice, falls into a casting pit full of white hot steel. He wasn't sent for trial. In fact, they didn't even bury him!

It will be of interest to some of you to learn that the series ended with the intimation that Eileen was all set to marry a Capt. Masters, but as late as 1929, 22 years later, we find that she is still free, white and twenty-one (or thereabouts), so presumably she still hadn't named the day!

The next of Brooks' great characters to oppose Nelson Lee was Douglas James Sutcliffe, otherwise known as Jim the Penman.

Sutcliffe was originally a solicitor, but he had a habit of signing cheques with other people's names, which made him a much sought after person - by the police.

He was eventually exposed by Lee and was forced to abandon his profession. To avoid tripping over the wolf that had taken up permanent residence on his doorstep he turns to forgery as a full-time occupation. He didn't do too badly at first, getting away with such sums as £20,000 on one occasion, and £15,000 on another. But, of course, as will be realised, this was only **pin money** and he soon came back for more. From then on his record is one of failure all along the line.

Many and various were the schemes he thinks up only to be dished in the end by Lee and Nipper. Naturally he became rather incensed at this as time went on, and on more than one occasion Lee manages to escape death at Jim's hands by inches - or by Nipper.

In spite of this homicidal streak in his nature, Jim the Penman was capable of feats of bravery. On one occasion Lee was so impressed that in spite of having captured him, he allowed him to escape.

Although he generally preferred to work on his own, he sometimes joined forces with Professor Zingrave, although he was no more successful working with Zingrave than he had been on his own.



In the last of the stories before St. Franks came on the scene, he was severely injured in a plane crash and thus enabled the police to hold on to him long enough to make him stand trial. That was the last to be heard of Jim the Penman until nearly a year later, when he was helped to escape by Professor Zingrave's newly created criminal organisation, the Circle of Terror. However, his escape was of brief duration, and he was soon captured and sent back to prison.

We now come to perhaps the most famous of Brooks' criminal characters - Professor Cyrus Zingrave.

The story starts five years before Lee's first brush with the Green Triangle, when a young man called Douglas Clifford was imprisoned by Zingrave. This is told in a prologue. He escapes and joins forces with Lee. By this time the Green Triangle has grown to a world-wide criminal organisation. Wholesale robbery with murder thrown in as a sideline has Scotland Yard beaten on all sides, mainly because no-one knows who the ringleaders are. With the advent of Clifford and the help he is able to give, Lee starts his campaign.

In some respects the growth and downfall of the League is reminiscent of the Criminals Confederation, the story of which was so ably related by Harry Homer last year. However, to forestall the obvious criticism, let me hasten to add that Brooks' stories preceded those of the Confederation by three years.

In the last story in this series, the League is wiped out completely, but Zingrave escapes. However, in the story "Zingrave's Last Card", the action of which takes Lee, Nipper and Clifford to Java, Zingrave is finally killed in a volcanic eruption. I don't know if they have volcanoes in Java, but anyway, there was one at this particular time, and Zingrave was killed by it!

Whether Brooks, like Conan Doyle with Sherlock Holmes, considered that Zingrave and the Green Triangle had served their purpose and therefore pensioned them off, I don't know, but whatever the reason, again like Conan Doyle, his character proved so popular that he was forced to resuscitate him. This was in the first Christmas No. "A Christmas of Peril", a well-remembered story in which Zingrave reappears, having joined forces with Jim the Penman as related earlier. In this story too, are Eileen Dare and Douglas Clifford as well as Lee and Nipper. A sort of gathering of the clans, as it were.

By the way, it may surprise those of you who have only read the later stories of Zingrave, that he had a step-daughter, Vera, who, needless to say, was unaware of her step-father's shady doings. Douglas Clifford, who had helped Lee in all his activities against the League, celebrated its downfall by marrying Vera.

A few weeks later, Zingrave brings into being another organization known as the "Circle of Terror", which was modelled on the lines of the first, but, if anything, more ruthless. It did differ somewhat, inasmuch as Zingrave, its ringleader, remained unknown for the first three or four stories.

This series carried on well into the period of the school stories, in fact, at the end the action takes place in the St. Frank's locality. This being so, it takes us out of the scope of this article.

Although I haven't been able to deal at any great length with the careers of Brooks' three main characters, (space prevents that), I hope I've said enough to whet the appetites of those who like a good detective yarn. There is of course, a great deal of controversy about Nelson Lee as a schoolmaster-detective. Some go so far as to say that they can't get interested in stories which are neither detective nor school stories. That is purely a matter of opinion.



However, there can be no doubt that Brooks knew how to write a rattling good detective yarn, and for those who prefer that type of story, they can do no better than try to get hold of these, admittedly, rather scarce pre-St. Franks yarns.

The same can be said of Teed's works. Those of you who know only his stories in the U.J. and Sexton Blake Libraries will discover a whole new field of interest in these Nelson-Lee stories which appeared in the beginning.

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THE GREYFRIARS HERALD (Contd. from p.26)

- No.9. 10. 1.16. The Pride of the Ring (Serial) by Mark Linley.  
Adventures of Herlock Sholmes by Peter Todd.  
No.9. The Adventure of the Brixton Builder.  
Bad for Bunter (Greyfriars) by D. L Morgan.  
Tom Brown's Treasure (Greyfriars) by R. Ogilvy.
- No.10. 22. 1.16. The Pride of the Ring (Serial) by Mark Linley.  
Adventures of Herlock Sholmes by Peter Todd.  
No.10. The Case of the American Millionaire.  
Fishy the Detective (Greyfriars) by Geo. Bulstrode.
- No.11. 29. 1.16. The Pride of the Ring (Serial) by Mark Linley.  
Adventures of Herlock Sholmes by Peter Todd.  
No.11. The Foreign Spy.  
The Awful Threshfulness (Greyfriars) by Hurree Singh.
- No.12. 5. 2.16. The Pride of the Ring (Serial) by Mark Linley.  
Adventures of Herlock Sholmes by Peter Todd.  
No.12. The Case of the Pipeclay Department.  
The Misadventures of Mobby (Highcliffe) by Rupert de Courcey.  
Fagging for Loder. (Greyfriars) by Wun Lung.
- No.13. 12. 2.16. The Pride of the Ring (Serial) by Mark Linley.  
Adventures of Herlock Sholmes by Peter Todd.  
No.13. The Case of the Pawned Pickled Jar.  
Rake's Ruse (Greyfriars) by Peter Hazeldene.
- No.14. 19. 2.16. The Pride of the Ring (Serial) by Mark Linley.  
Adventures of Herlock Sholmes by Peter Todd.  
No.14. The Munition Mystery.  
Snakes for Smythe (Rookwood) by Harry Wharton.  
Bunter's Prisoner (Greyfriars) by Johnny Bull.
- No.15. 26. 2.16. The Pride of the Ring (Serial) by Mark Linley.  
Adventures of Herlock Sholmes by Peter Todd.  
No.15. The Captured Submarine.  
The Rat Catchers (St. Jim's) by Monty Lowther.  
Halves for Bunter (Greyfriars) by Herbert Vernon-Smith.
- No.16. 4. 3.16. The Pride of the Ring (Serial) by Mark Linley.  
Adventures of Herlock Sholmes by Peter Todd.  
No.16. The Sham Huns.  
Rough on Coker (Greyfriars) by S.Q.I. Field.

(Contd. on p.87)



## "The Decline of Jack, Sam & Pete"

By W. T. Thurbon

In the course of the second of his interesting articles in the recent issues of the "Miscellany" the late Mr. John Medcraft (whose untimely death will be mourned by all interested in our hobby) states that the coming of "Algy" marked the end of the interest of the Clark Hook series of "Jack, Sam and Pete" tales in the "Marvel". There is much truth in this contention.

Kenneth Allott, in his book on Jules Verne, points out that a persistent pattern runs through Verne's books; the use of a trio of characters representing three possible, and contrasting yet complementary, attitudes to experience; the rational, intelligent, planning mind; the mind seeking an outlet in action; and the ironic, cheerful, humorous mind. This pattern can be easily discerned in all Verne's major works: "Three Weeks in a Balloon", "Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea", etc. Other writers have used this pattern, for example, Rider Haggard in "King Solomon's Mines". It was a pattern that Clerk Hook used in the early J.S. & P. stories, and what fine ones they were (whether read in the originals or in the "Popular" abbreviations). The rational, intelligent, leader Jack; the hunter, the man of action, Sam; and the humorous, cheerful Pete. In the early stories Clerk Hook kept a close balance between his characters. Jack, not only the leader, but as strong a man as Pete. Sam the ready tracker and hunter, and the master shot; and while Pete's strength is emphasised, and he leads in the humorous role, he does not dominate them, or provide such an element of farce as came into the later stories.

Even before the coming of Algy, Clerk Hook had begun to write up Pete to the detriment of Jack and Sam. Anyone who compares the Jack and Sam of 1902 with the same characters in 1912, not to mention 1920, will see how they have deteriorated into lay figures as a background to Pete and Algy - the coming of the latter finally and irretrievably upsetting the balance of the stories. The change of emphasis can be noticed in the change of titles. In the earlier tales it is Jack, Sam and Pete who appear in the title ("Jack, Sam and Pete's Adventures in Africa" etc.); in the later ones it is Pete alone ("Pete's Great Plot", "Pete's Circus", etc.). And while Algy did not appear in the title he came in the later stories to play almost as prominent a part as does D'Artagnan in the "Three Musketeers".

But there was a second element also at work affecting the series and playing its part in the slow decline of the famous characters, and incidentally of the "Marvel" itself. The favourite settings in which Clerk Hook excelled, the mining camps in the Rockies or in South America, the Red Indian haunted prairies and forests of the West, were already anachronisms in 1900. But the period of the Frontiersman was still fresh in the memory of many of his readers and the boys of the period were not likely to notice that his settings dated. But by 1912 the situation had changed. A new generation of boys was growing up in whose minds even the African frontier of the Nineties was no longer real and vivid. They probably knew more of the contemporary world than had the generation that preceded them. By 1920, after the experiences of the 1914-18 war, the anachronisms of Clerk Hook's best settings were not only obvious but absurd. His dilemma, and it was an insoluble one, was to reconcile J.S. & P. as characters living in the contemporary time with the settings of his heyday



which belonged to a period of time forty years earlier. So in the later stories there was always this uneasy tension. If he set the comrades in a contemporary setting it was in civilisation. If he took them into the wilds where he excelled, then the old dated settings reappeared. Occasionally he would recapture the old magic, sweeping his readers along in a swiftly moving narrative in which the flow of events masked the blending of past and present. More often, however, the adventure story became flat and dated, and the element of farce became more and more dominant.

It is now that we begin to find such titles as "Pete's Steamer", "Pete's Picture Palace", "Pete's Pantomime", "Pete's Garage", and we find him as Pigeon Fancier, Swimming Instructor, long distance runner, cinema actor. At regular intervals Clark Hook returned the comrades to the wilds, but never for long with the old mastery. In 1913 a "grand new series" was much boosted, set in Australia, but the bushranger theme was by then outdated. When the story of Scott's Last Expedition became known we had a spate of arctic and antarctic stories, and Pete joined in, but the series, though starting promisingly, soon petered out. As the years passed we got flashes of Clark Hook's old form; one particularly good tale was in No.603, "The Death Pool Fisheries"; (Nos.613 and 619 were also in the old tradition. In the summer of 1916 (Nos. 655 et seq.) a series began in which the comrades were in Arabia, fighting the Turks, and the first two or three of these were in Clark Hook's best style. Later we had a very weak series in which Pete figures as headmaster of a school for unruly boys. There came a short revival from No. 740 onwards in which the three comrades were pursuing an international outlaw round the world - this included several first class yarns.

And now Tom Sayers at last disappeared from the Marvel; we found occasional school stories appearing, much the best of which were a series of tales of Calcroft School by Sidney Drew. Occasionally J.S. & P. missed a week, alternating in full length tales with Sidney Drew's Ferrers Lord and Ching Lung, or school tales.

Then the Marvel received its real death blow. In No.803, dated 14 June 1919, appeared the obituary notice of J. Abney Commings. Throughout the long period from about No.20 until his death he had illustrated J.S. & P. tales - he really created the characters in picture form, gave them definite characterisation and individuality - and his illustrations went far to make up for the decline in the writing. After one or two experiments H.M. Lewis became his successor. Lewis seemed to base his figures on the Michelin Tyre advertisement; his hulking, clumsy figures were not the J.S. & P. we had known and loved, and he could not create that atmosphere of "far away places with strange sounding names" that was the charm of so much of Abney Cumming's work. And with the illustrations, so with the stories. They suddenly seemed to become as flat and pedestrian as the drawings. Very occasionally a story would show glimpses of the old form, but even then the pictures failed. From Nos. 804 to 878 the readable tales can be counted on one's fingers. Jack and Sam had long become lay figures, though Sam for a moment revived in No.851 with a piece of Sherlock Holmes-like deduction from tracks he was following - had someone lent Clark Hook "Scputing for Boys"? Clark Hook must have been written out, as well he might be. His work appeared in the first 1/2d Marvel in 1893 and he was an established writer then; while J.S. & P. appeared regularly with scarcely a miss from No.20 of the 1d series until about 800. The whole Marvel now steadily declined. The supporting tales were short and trashy - some of



the writing would have disgraced a schoolboy. The last series in the wilds ended in No.877, "Homeward Bound". The following week appeared the first of a new series, "Pete's Football Club". A far cry from the virile figures of the "Eagle of Death" to the conventional soccer story. And finally J.S. & P. fizzled out in a serial "Pete's Circus" which rambled aimlessly on without even being funny, and the "Marvel" ended its long career, mourned by those who had known and loved it in its heyday but unwept for what it had at last become.

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SEXTON BLAKE STORIES IN BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY

No.10, Sexton Blake Honour. 27, A Woolwich Arsenal Mystery.  
39, Sexton Blake in Siberia. 49, The Sleepwalker. 54, Tiller and Tideway.  
57, Sexton Blake Clerk. 68, Sexton Blake Trust. 72, The Coster King.  
96, The Merryn Mystery. 102, Sexton Blake at School. 105, Sexton Blake  
in the Sixth. 107, Sexton Blake at Oxford. 123, Sexton Blake in the Congo.  
124, Across the Equator. 131, Detectives Ltd. 134, The Millmaster's  
Secret. 155, Ten Years Penal Servitude. 165, Sexton Blake Quest.  
172, Sexton Blake Foreman. 177, Sexton Blake Steward. 199, Sexton Blake  
Spy. 228, The Great Mining Swindle. 229, Tinker's Schooldays. ~~246~~,  
246, Sexton Blake Zulu. 248, The Ghost of Rupert Forbes. 302, The Mystery  
of the Diamond Belt. 433, In the Hands of the Head Hunters.

Second Series

Sexton Blake's Schooldays. 392, Sexton Blake Sixth Former.  
396, Sexton Blake at the Varsity. 655, They Came to Spy. 671, The Flaming  
Frontier. 687, The Station Master's Secret. 691, The Mystery of the Dope  
Den. 698, The Secret of the Missing Convict.

I honestly believe this is a complete list (35), but of course cannot  
prove.

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The Monster Library (Contd. from p.95)

No.4. 20.2.26. The Boy from Bermondsey. (Reprint of Nelson Lee Library,  
Small Series Nos:- 178, The Boy from Bermondsey. 179, The Remove Against Him.  
180, The Golden Locket. 181, Going to the Bed. 182, The Ancient House Burglary.  
183, The Arabs of El Safra. 184, The Secret of the Gold Locket. 185, Jack  
Mason's Luck.

No.5. 20.3.26. The Bullies of St.Frank's. (Reprint of Nelson Lee Library,  
Small Series Nos:- 195, The Mysterious X. 196, The College House Martyrs.  
197, Schemers of the Sixth. 198, The Bullies League. 199, The Breaking Point.  
200, The Council of Eight. 201, The Spy of the Remove. 202, The Treachery of  
Study A. 203, The Rascal of the Sixth. 204, Freed from Bondage.

No.6. 20.4.26. Expelled! (Reprint of Nelson Lee Library, Small Series Nos:-  
205, Faked Evidence. 206, Expelled from St.Drank's. 207, Under False  
Colours. 208, The Mystery of the Blue-Grey Car. 209, The Differ of St.Frank's.  
210, Bowled Out. 211, The Trapping of Starke. 212, The Prefect's Revenge.

(Contd. on p.103)



## St. Frank's - Success or Failure?

### A discussion between Bob Blythe and Roger Jenkins

The cheery log fire crackled in the grate, and the leaping flames made the decorations appear even more festive as Christmas afternoon drew to a close. In armchairs by the fire sat two collectors, and between them, on the table, lay a small mountain of Nelson Lees which Roger was glancing through. Eventually, he put the last one down, and leaned back in his chair.

"It's no use, Bob," he declared. "I can't even pretend to like these stories. What's more, I can't help feeling that my view was shared by a lot of other people who were schoolboys when the 'Nelson Lee' was being published. I just don't believe that a paper which had to make four separate beginnings - each less successful than the last - could possibly be anything but a failure."

Bob breathed deeply.

"D'you know, Roger, I can only guess at the reason for your dislike of the St. Frank's stories, for, judging from what you have just said, it's pretty obvious that you haven't read many. F'r instance, the 'Nelson Lee' didn't suffer because of the first change. On the contrary, at the time of the first alteration, in 1926, the Old Paper was at the height of its popularity, and the only reason for it was because - wait a moment, let me refer you to what I wrote in one of the 'C.D.'s."

He reached behind him to the bookcase, and brought down a pile of "Digests".

"Ah! Here it is, in No.35, Listen! 'In 1926 it was found necessary to move the printing works elsewhere, and as the new premises did not possess the machinery to produce the 'Nelson Lee' in its old format, it was decided to increase the size of the paper to suit the new circumstances, thus making a virtue of a necessity.' What's more," he said, looking up, "The paper was considerably improved by the new size. Certainly the print was easier to read, apart from the fact that they were able to reproduce larger drawings. What's more, the stories were, if anything, even better than before. No, I don't think you have a leg to stand on there. However, I'm not going to argue about the other two beginnings, as you call 'em, simply because I agree with you."

Roger looked surprised, and smiled.

"But not for your reasons," continued Bob. "The second New Series was one of the editor's bright ideas, and one which was the fundamental reason for the 'Nelson Lee's' collapse. Brooks began to lose interest after this, and this loss of interest is reflected in his stories which, although quite readable, weren't of the same high standard. The third New Series was, of course, a direct result of the editor's policy, an effort to regain lost readers by reprints of the earlier stories. But of course the damage was done, and it was too late."

"I grant you, I haven't read as many St. Frank's stories as you have, Bob," replied Roger as he peeled an orange. "Certainly not more than a hundred. And, of course, I never supposed that Brooks wanted the paper to keep starting new series. But surely the whole point at issue is, how did the editor come to be in such a position that he could play ducks and drakes with the 'Nelson Lee'? After all, these experiments - like beginning new series, and making the juniors have fantastic holidays in imaginary foreign countries - must have



been tried only because the earlier stories, which you say were the best, were still not good enough for the paper's readers."

"As to the editor doing what he liked," remarked Bob, "well, I'm afraid you've got me there, because if there was an editorial policy, it was the pottiest one I've ever seen. I do know this, though, that during the second New Series the 'Nelson Lee' became the training ground for new and young editors, each one with some pet theory of his own. Can you wonder that Brooks became fed up? After all, could, or would you give of your best at your work if you had a succession of bosses who were learning the trade, as it were?"

The 'Nelson Lee's' popularity was built up on two things - a wise editorial policy and the excellence of Brooks' writing. With the editor, who had the paper's interest at heart, gone and Brooks losing interest as a result of the new regime, it's a wonder the paper didn't collapse long before it did. I'm firmly convinced that the sole reason the 'Nelson Lee' survived this disastrous series was because of the loyalty of the readers, engendered partly because of the enjoyment they had received from the stories prior to the second New Series, and partly because of the feeling that they were the friends of the author. Brooks had always encouraged this feeling, and you have only to read some of his 'Between Ourselves' columns to realise the friendly spirit that existed between author and reader."

Bob paused to light a cigarette.

"Now that bring me to your other remark about 'fantastic holidays'," he continued. "If you'd read many of these 'Between Ourselves' you would find that Brooks was always ready to listen to suggestions from readers. He didn't write what he thought they ought to read but tried, where he could, to fall in with their wishes. That is the main reason for those 'fantastic holidays', as you call 'em. The readers wanted them."

"While I'm on the subject, you know an awful lot of tripe has been written about those series. One would think, from what has been written, or said, that the whole of the St. Frank's stories alternated between detective and visiting mythical countries. D'you know that during the whole 18 years run of the 'Nelson Lee' only seven such series appeared? And of these, two don't really qualify, as in one the action takes place in a fictitious but otherwise quite normal Balkan country, and the other (in the second New Series) did not feature the boys of St. Frank's as a whole, only Nipper and Handforth. In any case, why condemn them because Brooks did create such mythical races as the Arzacs, Northestrians, and New Anglians? The stories were very readable and their existence plausibly explained. Why condemn them and praise Wells for his 'First Men on the Moon', to say nothing of Verne and other well known writers? No! I'm afraid, old sport, that it's pure prejudice on your part. I feel that you, like so many others, are too prone to compare Brooks' stories with those of Hamilton, and because you feel that Hamilton is the best, refuse to believe that there could possibly be another author as good."

Roger did not reply at once, but sat back in his chair, looking up at the ceiling for a short while.

"You've raised so many points, Bob, that I hardly know where to begin," he said. "But I may as well deal with your last point first. I didn't intend to bring Hamilton into the discussion, but, on the other hand, as St. Frank's was virtually the only rival of the Hamilton schools, I suppose one can't really avoid the comparison. But I don't see why, because I like



Hamilton's work and not Brooks', I should be called prejudiced. I have never heard of a collector of school stories who disliked the Hamilton schools, though I know of several who dislike St. Frank's. This universal popularity of the Hamilton stories, as compared with the partial popularity of the St. Frank's ones, might mean, you know, that the supporters of the 'Nelson Lee' put that paper first merely for sentimental reasons, whereas the Hamiltonians, who like the work of only one author of school stories, are not prejudiced but only discriminating."

Bob stubbed his cigarette in the ashtray with an expressive look on his face, and Roger continued,

"Still, let's return from theory to facts. I agree that the incidence of the fantastic holidays has probably been exaggerated, but you must admit that they and the detective tales comprised the whole of the St. Frank's serials in the 'Gem' and the vast majority of St. Frank's stories in the 'Schoolboys' Own Library', in which, incidentally, the usual practice was to reprint the best stories about each school. So it's not very surprising that they've received such wide publicity. But I'm still not convinced about the reason these later stories were written. You said first of all that the editor was responsible for the second New Series in which these lesser liked stories appeared, later on you remarked that the readers demanded the fantastic holidays, some of which were published in the second New Series, but elsewhere you say that the readers continued to buy the 'Nelson Lee' during this period only through loyalty. You may feel that I'm harping unduly about these stories, but they are, after all, the St. Frank's tales that have been most widely read, thanks to the reprints, and I do feel that an author's work ought to improve as time goes by, in spite of set-backs. If the early work of a writer is preferred to his later work, it must mean that he has failed to live up to the early promise he showed.

"I don't condemn Brooks' stories about mythical races just because Hamilton never invented any," went on Roger. "Pure fantasy, like 'Alice in Wonderland' can be superb, but that was only a dream, and Alice never pretended to be a detective's assistant when she woke up. The scientific romances of Wells and Verne, though readable, are not great literature - Wells is esteemed mainly for 'Kipps' and 'Mr. Polly'. But in school stories, which are published in weekly papers, fantasy and scientific romance are out of place. The author should attempt to create an air of permanence and plausibility. Instead, towards the end, Brooks plumped for an atmosphere of impermanence and implausibility. For instance, the school was gutted once by fire and once by flooding; there were at least four headmasters; and do you remember the time Dr. Stafford was drugged and acted like a wild beast? I feel that it was this atmosphere of change and unrest that destroyed the illusion, and once that went, the fate of the 'Nelson Lee' was sealed?"

Bob, who had been smiling to himself, suddenly burst out laughing. "I like arguing with you," he chuckled, "because you make such wild statements which can so easily be disproved. Now take what you've just said about the reprints in the 'Gem' and the 'Schoolboys' Own'. If I remember aright, and correct me if I'm wrong, you said that fantasy and detective stories comprised the whole of the 'Gem' reprints and the vast majority of those in the 'Schoolboys' Owns'. Also that I had to admit it. Well, I'm sorry, but I don't, and



here's why. I can't be bothered to go all through those again -" pointing to the pile of C.D.'s - "so you'll have to take my word for it, but if you care at some time or another you will find out that of about ten serials in the 'Gem' only two were 'fantastic holidays' and three had a detective element. As to the 'Schoolboys' Owns', I can only refer you to what I wrote in the September number of this year - the one I wrote in answer to your article in the S.P.C., remember? Incidentally, I still get hot under the collar when I think of it, but as it's Christmas, and as I'm full of Christmas pudding and goodwill to all, I'll try to forget it! However, that's beside the point.

"I'm glad you admit that all this talk about fantastic holidays is probably exaggerated. Roger, I feel I ought to chalk that up, because, coming from you, that's quite a reversal of one of your pet theories. Who knows, if we argue long enough, I may be able to prove to you that Brooks wrote some really fine stories! For example, that series you mentioned about Dr. Stafford being drugged and acting like a madman. You obviously don't think much of the idea. But it's quite feasible. Remember the case in the papers last August concerning the bread eaten in a French village? That actually happened, but because Brooks invented such a poison, you regard it as implausible. After all, wasn't Hamilton just as implausible when he invented a mysterious fluid that made Alonzo Todd and Billy Bunter the strongest men in the Remove? Personally, I enjoyed both series. But my liking for the Brooks story doesn't blind me to the merits of Hamilton, and vice versa - which is my whole argument. Brooks is worth reading. Apart from the two types of story we've been talking about, you can find practically every other type if you care to look. And what's more, he didn't repeat his plots three or four times, neither did he use lashings of padding to spin the story out!"

"Oh! and before I forget it," he said, interrupting Roger, who was about to speak. "That bit, where you were talking about the second New Series, about the St. Frank's stories in them being widely read, thanks to the reprints. It's all wrong, you know. None of the second New Series was ever reprinted."

"Well, if I may reciprocate the compliment you paid me a few minutes ago, Bob, I like arguing with you," replied Roger with a smile. "You certainly hand me things on a platter. I'd thought up to this moment that all the St. Frank's stories which I'd read and which I'd particularly objected to - like that one about Dr. Stafford being drugged, for instance, - had first appeared in the second New Series which you advised people not to read. If in fact none of them were reprinted, then I've certainly never read any, and my imagination boggles at the thought of them.

"But I must take up the point about those Greyfriars stories concerning the Strong Men of the Remove," Roger went on. "Now, unlike St. Frank's fans, I have usually noticed that Hamiltonians tend to state in no uncertain manner what they dislike in the work of their favourite author. I think that this series was out of keeping with all the Magnet stories of that decade, and I have expressed this opinion before. No doubt it was written at the express request of the editor, for Hamilton, like Brooks, was not always a free agent. But, assuming such a drug did exist, one can (by taking the series out of context and disregarding all other Greyfriars stories) enjoy this series because all the drug-takers acted true to character - Alonzo Todd becoming



officious, and Billy Bunter becoming even more obnoxious. But the transformation of kindly Dr. Stafford into a savage brute was so out of keeping with his normal character that it represents a far greater deviation from the normal than did the Greyfriars series in question. Again, the Strong Men series was an isolated episode, whilst Dr. Stafford's transformation, though biologically possibly, I expect, was only one of the many strange and tempestuous events which destroyed what tranquillity there was at St. Frank's.

"Now there was another point - oh! yes, you said that Brooks never repeated his plots three or four times. Well, I've quite the contrary impression. For instance, the story about the White Giants in the 'Gem' was a rehash, not a reprint of a Nelson Lee story."

Roger turned to the bookcase, and extracted the 1947 C.D. Annual.

"Yes, here it is, in Jack Murtagh's article. He states in connexion with five of these 'Gem' serials that 'it is believed that these are original stories, although there were some with similar plots which appeared in the 'Nelson Lee'. I must also take you up about the stories with a detective element. In the 'Gem', for instance, Nelson Lee pursued Foo Chow, Diamond Eye at the Ghost River Ranch, the imposter at the School from Down Under, the Tibetan priests in the Ten Talons of Taaz, and Zengari in the Black Hand at St. Frank's, whilst the White Giants, Treasure Isle, and the Secret World seem to me to be holidays in imaginary foreign countries. I'm fairly sure Nelson Lee worked pretty hard all through those 'Schoolboys' Owns' as well, but I think the trouble is that you and I do not agree on the definition of a story with a detective element." Roger consulted his notebook. "You may be interested to see what Brooks has to say in 'Gem' No. 1375 - 'You're not the only reader, by a long chalk, Bob Fyfe of Greenock, who tells me he would prefer a serial with a school setting.' There follows a promise of a serial with cricket, japes, etc., but when it materialised in 'The School From Down Under' the jokes soon turned sour.

"This brings me to another point. Do you know, I don't remember ever having read a St. Frank's story without a villain in it somewhere. I've always felt that this insistence on painting all characters as black or white shows that Brooks never advanced in the art of character-presentation. He never gave us a rotter with redeeming virtues, like Cardew or Vernon-Smith, or a hero with failings, like Harry Wharton. Admittedly, cads like Pitt and Fullwood reformed, but they only turned from black to white, as it were. Apart from heroes and rotters, the only other boys at St. Frank's were oddities or eccentrics like William Napoleon Browne, Archie Glenthorne, Clarence Fellowe, and Timothy Tucker. This defect in characterisation produced another defect in its turn. There seems a great lack of humour in the St. Frank's stories. Plenty of strange things happened, but I never once set back in my chair and roared with laughter at any of them. This was partly because St. Frank's had no truly comic characters, and partly because the author revised his work so carefully that it lacked the spontaneity from which all true humour is born."

"It beats me," replied Bob, "how you can make such statements on the basis of having read a mere hundred 'Nelson Lees' and all of them reprints in the 'Schoolboys' Own Library' (which, as even you must agree, was not the best medium).



"Take that statement of yours about there being no humour in the stories. My dear chap! The stories are full of humour. For example, take the time Handforth was elected skipper of the Remove and proceeded to rule things with an iron hand. That was one long laugh from the beginning of the series to the end. Apart from series like this, humorous episodes abounded. Obviously, I can't mention even a fraction of them, but later on I'll lend you a few to read and if they don't convince you, I'll give up! However, I'll mention one.

"You weren't there at the time, but on one occasion I read to the chaps in the club an excerpt of about four pages from "Handforth's Ghost Hunt", one of the first New Series. There was a representative gathering, the majority being die-hard Hamiltonians. Well, although you may not have even smiled, I can assure you that there were a good many roars of laughter. Later that evening one of the chaps came up to me and said, "I didn't know that Brooks wrote such good stuff. I was under the impression that all the 'Nelson Lee's' were detective stories." There's a moral there if only you can see it!

"You've said more than once that Brooks never advanced in the art of character representation. But in all fairness, how can you know? You've admitted that all you've read are reprints in the 'Schoolboys' Own Library'. I don't know how many of these you've read, but the reprints finished about two-thirds of the way through the Old Series. By that time, I maintain, Brooks was really proving that he was in the front rank as a writer. So you see it's no good you harping on the reprints in the 'Schoolboys' Own Library' and the serials in the 'Gem'. Read the later Old Series, and the first New Series, and then repeat your criticism if you can. And don't say that the 'Gem' stories should represent the best of his efforts, because they're not, for the reasons I've stated and which you constantly ignore.

"Now I said just now that Brooks never repeated his plots. I'll say it again because I don't consider the one isolated series you mention worth considering as an argument, mainly because it was in the 'Gem' and I was referring to the 'Nelson Lee' itself. Again, you haven't denied what I said about padding.

"Now just a few more words about the second New Series. I have never advised people not to read them. What I did say, in the passage you are obviously misquoting, was - wait a moment, let's get it right." Here Bob picked up the September C.D. Turning to the 'Nelson Lee Column' he read: "'Do not for a start read any later than 1929.' I needn't read any more because you know why I said it. Just one more thing and you can have your say. According to you, Brooks had no gift at characterisation, and yet you say, concerning Dr. Stafford, that his transformation from a kindly person into a savage brute was so much out of his normal character etc.etc. Talk about bending over backward to prove a theory! Brooks must have had enough gift of character delineation to impress upon you what his normal character was."

Bob leaned back in his chair and lighted a cigarette triumphantly.

"Well, now I think it's you who are misquoting me," said Roger. "I never said that Brooks had no gift ~~for~~ characterisation. What I did say was that he never advanced in the art of character-presentation, because he insisted on painting all characters as black or white. Dr. Stafford was, of course, one of the latter type just as, say, Mr. Pycraft would be considered to be one of the former. It doesn't require much skill to depict a kind person



or an unpleasant person, but it requires a tremendous amount of skill to depict someone who is neither wholly good nor wholly bad, and that, after all, includes most of the people in the world today. For instance, when I was at school I never came across anybody like Nipper, but I came across several who were something like Harry Wharton or Vernon-Smith. You just don't meet anyone like them in the St. Frank's stories. The impression I've got of Nipper is of someone who is horribly smug, self-satisfied, and virtuous. In spite of the fact that he relates many stories in the first person, he seems very inhuman. Perhaps he is too good to be true!"

Roger paused to poke the fire, which was burning low, and continued:

"Now, with regard to your contention that the plots weren't repeated, I can't let you slur over those 'Gem' serials as easily as that. Jack Murtagh found repetitions in five different serials, not merely in one. And what about the barrings-out? There were seven of these in the 'Nelson Lee' - the same number as there were in the 'Magnet', which ran for nearly twice as long! I don't say that to have seven was necessarily overdoing it in the 'Nelson Lee', but I don't think you can claim with any justification that that paper was free from repetition of plots.

"And incidentally, I don't see why Brooks' 'Gem' serials shouldn't have been his best work. You've told me he was hampered by unco-operative editors before the 'Nelson Lee' came to an end, though I think most of this is an evasion of the unpalatable truth that by the time he'd reached his maturity as a writer, the standard of his work had gone down with a wallop. I consider that if you blame the editors for this, you may be putting the cart before the horse; it may be, you know, that the circulation of the 'Nelson Lee' was going down, even during the first New Series, that you admire so much, and that these experiments that came later were only attempts to increase the circulation and so save the paper. If all this is wrong, and you are right, why didn't Brooks put his foot down and refuse to write the type of story that appeared in the second New Series? After all, Hamilton successfully put his foot down in 1931, after which date no other author wrote about his schools. Was Brooks afraid that he would be told that the 'Nelson Lee' might just as well close down?

"Anyway, once the 'Nelson Lee' had packed up, there was nothing to stop him putting all he'd got into these 'Gem' serials, instead of rehashing five old plots. After all, Hamilton wrote a few good Rookwood yarns for some years after the Boys' Friend ceased. And Rookwood was only a sideline, not his main interest at all. I'd already noted what you'd said about padding, but I took this to be a sly dig at the Bunter episodes in the Greyfriars stories, and to discuss them here would be a little off the point. Still, as you've repeated it, I may as well give my opinion. I think that the Bunter episodes and the frequency of so-called padding in the Greyfriars stories is often exaggerated. An incident concerning Bunter sometimes seems at first to have no connexion with the story, but when you have read on a bit, it usually turns out that his antics have a lot of bearing on the plot. The only occasions where this is not so are where a little light relief is deliberately provided in dramatic stories.

"Some of Brooks' stories could have done with a little light relief, like the series I'm reading now," declared Roger as he consulted his notebook



again. It deals with the coming of Reggie Pitt. I'm not impressed. The way in which Pitt set out to get all his enemies expelled is too reminiscent of the early Vernon-Smith series when he got the Famous Five sacked (Magnets Nos. 247-254) to be a coincidence. And this Greyfriars series appeared before the 'Nelson Lee' began, remember. Moreover, Brooks wrote a few Greyfriars stories himself at this period, e.g. Magnets Nos. 260 & 313. So I don't think he can have been ignorant of this series, which is one of the most famous in the early 'Magnets'. Of course, it may not have been deliberate plagiarism, but only unconscious imitation. But whatever it was, it shows a decided lack of originality."

"Before I say any more," said Bob, "what do you make the time?"

"Five minutes to five," replied Roger, looking at his watch.

"Good heavens! Is it as late as that," exclaimed Bob, getting up to wind the clock. "Tea will be ready in a moment. I hope I shall be able to get in what I want to say before we're told to 'come and get it!'"

Resuming his seat, he went on: "According to you the hallmark of a skilful author is his ability to depict characters who are neither pure black nor pure white, but a bit of each. Sort of grey, in other words. But surely a character doesn't have to be like that before it can be termed a skilful creation? You say that all of Brooks' people were either black or white, good or bad. Well, I might point out one, at least, who was certainly a bit of both - Vivian Travers. But he wasn't the best of Brooks' creations in my opinion. Where Brooks excelled was in presenting very human characters you term 'White' because they had no shady side.

"Take Edward Oswald Handforth, for example. Here we have someone with a lot of very human traits. Handy was as straight as a die, but he could be as obstinate as a mule. He was capable of great self-sacrifice, of loyalty, and was generous to a fault. His feelings towards his particular friends Church and McClure were well illustrated in a very fine series wherein Church is presumed dead. I'd like you to read this series and if after reading it you still think that Brooks had not 'reached his maturity as a writer', I'll - I'll - well, I'll wait until you've passed an opinion.

"However, apart from Handy, I maintain that it requires as much skill to portray a 'black' or 'white' character (to use your terms), if they are to be believable and true to life, and the St. Frank's gallery is full of people with very human qualities.

"Now about this repeating of plots business. You're not trying to tell me, Roger, that because there were seven barrings-out at St. Frank's they therefore represented a repetition of plots! If that's the case you might as well say that the summer and Christmas holiday series were repetitions. The word 'barring-out' doesn't represent a plot. If it does, then the words 'summer holiday series' do too! In which case Brooks repeated it about sixteen times and Hamilton about thirty!!! Which, of course, is too potty for words! No, I'm afraid you'll have to think up a better argument than that. I think you're distorting things a bit as well, when you compare Hamilton's Rookwood stories with Brooks. Brooks was the 'Nelson Lee', and to have to write serials in a rival paper after his own had been so summarily dealt with was adding insult to injury. Why he did so I can't say, but in any case it need not concern us as it was a purely personal matter. Maybe there was a



contract or something. With Hamilton, the ending of the 'Boys' Friend' didn't affect him in the least. He had the 'Magnet', 'Gem', and 'Popular' with possibly a few others thrown in. With him, there was every encouragement to give of his best. Not so with poor old Brooks.

"Well, old sport, I don't know about you, but my throat's getting dry after all this talking. Hold everything while I find out what's happening."

He got up and went to the door. Opening it and putting his head out, he called, "Any chance for a couple of thirsty orators getting some tea yet?"

Through the open door came the sound of crockery and a murmur of voices.

"It seems that everything's ready," said Bob, coming back and standing by the fireplace, "but we've got a couple of minutes yet, so what were you going to say?"

"Well," said Roger, "I think you've been a bit too slick over this business of repetition of plots. I grant you that to have three holiday series every year isn't repetition (unless, of course, each one is the same, e.g. a foreign holiday). But to repeat a particular theme, like a barring-out, which is so sensational, must be plot-repetition, even though the incidents in it are different. When all is said and done, it is only a single basic idea -- a prolonged and united defiance of authority. It always made a good theme so long as it wasn't used too often -- indeed the Amalgamated Press used to advise authors when they were in doubt about a plot to have a barring-out. To them, as I should think it would be to most people, a barring-out was a plot as much as the idea of, say, introducing a crook schoolmaster would be. The plot is, after all, the skeleton of the story, and you can pad out your skeletons with different incidents if you like, but it doesn't stop them being the same skeleton.

"As for characterisation, I always had the feeling that Travers was erratic, and that Brooks never really had a fixed conception of his character. Handforth was a different kettle of fish altogether. I grant you he was honest, loyal, generous, and obstinate -- thus far like Coker. If Brooks had been content to leave it at that, it might have been all right. But Handforth's relations with Church and McClure spoilt the whole thing. They were not intended to be hangers-on like Potter and Greene; so why were they depicted as spineless creatures who were content to be continually knocked about by Handforth? I remember one occasion (when Handforth's sister had eloped) that Handforth battered and bruised his two 'friends' so badly that Nelson Lee had to intervene. The whole thing seemed so unreal that it gave the impression Brooks didn't know what he was going to write but just set down at the typewriter and hoped for the best. That's why I once said his characters seldom came to life. I suppose the basic difference in our outlooks is caused by the fact that you read the 'Nelson Lee' in its heyday, and I didn't," continued Roger. "You regard it with affection, and I don't. I can understand that, but I can't understand why you let your affection cloud your judgment to the extent that you refuse to see anything wrong with any of Brooks' work. Still, it would be a dull world indeed if we all thought the same! Personally, I think that an author's work should be judged on three points -- characterisation, plot construction, and style of writing. I think that Brooks' work may be considered a failure on all three counts."



"That bit about Travers being erratic," replied Bob, "is quite revealing, because it shows up your hole attitude of mind regarding the St. Frank's stories. Earlier on you said that characters such as Vernon-Smith needed great skill to portray. Now - when I give you a parallel in the case of Travers, you say he was erratic! Yet they both had the same characteristics, tempered, of course, by the author's conception of his character.

"Again, Handforth, you say, had certain of Coker's ways, and whilst he remained Cokerish, or a carbon copy of Hamilton's fifth-form chump, that was O.K. with you. However, when Brooks developed him into the Handy we knew in later years, in other words, pure Brooks, you object. As to Handforth's chums being spineless, nothing could be further from the truth. There were many occasions when Handforth found that he had tried his chums' patience just a little too much, and suffered for it. It was because they thoroughly understood his little ways and made allowances that they remained friends. It wasn't Handy that ruled the roost in Study D, but Church and McClure. Without them he was lost. With regard to my affection for the 'Nelson Lee' clouding my judgment, well, pardon my laughter, but hark who's talking! In my opinion, the whole trouble with you old man, is that your affection for Hamilton's writings has biased you in his favour so much that you positively resent anyone being placed on the same level. It's my belief that all this violent anti-Brooks stuff is part and parcel of this bias, to such an extent as to cloud your judgment.

"Now I'm an admirer of Hamilton's Greyfriars yarns, Roger, but I don't read them with the sole object of finding fault with them. If I did, I probably wouldn't enjoy them half so much. And that I'm convinced is another reason for your dislike of the St. Frank's tales. If only you could forget Hamilton and his schools, and approach the 'Nelson Lee' with an open mind, reading, not to criticise and to find fault, but just with the intention of getting the best out of them. In other words, look for all the many good points and not for the infrequent bad ones. What's more, read 'em in the 'Nelson Lee', not in the chopped-up state that you have been reading them, in the 'Schoolboys' Own Library'. Even Hamilton's stories are not so good in that condition.

"However, whatever your views are on his capabilities as a writer, there is no doubt whatever that he is doing pretty well at the moment, and if all those choice epithets you used in your S.P.C. article are true, then Messrs. Collins, the publishers, employ some pretty low grade Readers to pass for publication the thirty-five to forty novels that he's written. Now them's fighting words where I come from, and I don't doubt that you're preparing to discharge a whole broadside in your defence, but before you do I feel I've got to take on a few supplies, otherwise I shan't last the night out. So what say we toddle along to the dining-room and find out what's been laid on for tea?"

As Bob stopped speaking, the fire subsided in the grate, and they both noticed for the first time how low it had burnt. Roger frivolously suggested that it be rekindled with 'Nelson Lees', but Bob treated this remark with the disdain it deserved, and proceeded to shovel on some more coal.

The clink of china in the neighbouring room was now too insistent to be ignored any longer. The two collectors looked at each other, smiled, and went in to tea. Though neither had really succeeded in convincing the other of the error of his ways, both felt that they had at least succeeded in establishing a point of view. In short, Christmas afternoon had been well spent.



# "Monograph on Yvonne Cartier"

By Harry Homer

## PREFACE

We were chatting over a dish of tea at John Robyns' house in Hove. Herbert Leckenby asked me what I was going to write for the next 'Annual'. "What about a monograph on Roxene Herfield, I have a full set?" I suggested, and Herbert looked at me in that direct Yorkshire way of his:-

"Why don't you choose Yvonne Cartier and be done with it?"

So here it is.

But the earliest story I had was 542, and the start of Yvonne was in 485, so it was clear that a full list of titles was the first thing I had to compile, and then I should have to beg, borrow or steal a full set of the stories - I'd been trying to buy them long enough without much success. So I wrote a begging letter to the "C.D." with wonderful results and I would like first to thank all who wrote offering me their stories of Yvonne on indefinite loan. Eventually I worked out that if Maurice Bond sent his, plus my own, and a parcel from friend Bradshaw in far-off Chicago, it would be the least complicated method. This has been done with every success and my sincere gratitude is due to both of them. Lastly a word of thanks to Len Packman, Charlie Wright and Bill Colcombe for invaluable work in compiling the list of titles at the very start.

Now to our subject.

## Introduction

The first story featuring Yvonne Cartier ('The Adventuress') appeared in "The Union Jack" dated 15th March, 1912, while the last issue in which she appeared was one of the Nirvana series, the final one, dated 11th December, 1926. Numbers and titles will be found in a separate and complete list, but please note that lack of space forbids me to cross-index the various series in which Yvonne makes her mark but does not play the chief role in every story. For example, she appeared in many but by no means all of the Dr. Huxton Rymer, Prince Wu Ling, Criminals' Confederation and Nirvana stories. Those mentioned in my list then are only those in which Yvonne played a part.

So two facts emerge from a glance at our first piece of data:-

- a) The publication of her career side by side with that of Sexton Blake covers a long period - almost fourteen years.
- b) The period, 1913 to 1926/7, saw many world changes including the virtual emancipation of women, a world war and a social revolution - in many countries a very violent one.

Looked at from quite a different angle we note that G.H. Teed was in full literary flower at the start of this period - Doctor Huxton Rymer had made his debut not long before Yvonne, shortly afterwards Prince Wu Ling was to come upon the scene. Apart from these giants we find a series featuring The Council of Eleven and stories of such characters as Jim Potter and Hammerton Palmer to mention but a couple.



Therefore it is plain for all to see that any poor wretch attempting a monograph, which has to be fairly comprehensive to be of any use at all, on Mademoiselle Cartier has to perform the old trick of compressing several quarts into a single pint pot.

However, we will try - and let us hope that the beer tastes good!  
First then -- that always-important List of Numbers, Titles and Dates.

Stories featuring YVONNE CARTIER, the Adventuress, in the "Union Jack"

'U.J.' No:

- |          |     |  |
|----------|-----|--|
| 25. 1.13 | 485 | Beyond Reach of the Law.   |
| 15. 2.13 | 488 | When Greek Meets Greek. (First meeting with Dr. Huxton Rymer).                           |
| 15. 3.13 | 492 | On the Brink of Ruin.  |
| 5. 4.13  | 495 | Settling Day.  |
| 26. 4.13 | 498 | A Minister of the Crown.   |
| 17. 5.13 | 501 | The Detective Airmen. (Introducing the Grey Panther - Monoplain).                        |
| 14. 6.13 | 505 | The Missing Guests.  |
| 12. 7.13 | 509 | By Right of Possession. (Last of the Vengeance Series).                                  |
| 2. 8.13  | 512 | The Yellow Sphinx. (Wu Ling)   |
| 13. 9.13 | 518 | The Black Jewel Case. (Yvonne outside the Law.)  |
| 22.11.13 | 528 | The Mystery of Walla Walla. (On Holiday in Australia.)                                   |
| 29.11.13 | 529 | The Sacred Sphere. (Dr. Huxton Rymer and Wu Ling.)                                       |
| 1. 3.14  | 543 | The Grey Domino. (On the side of Sexton Blake.)  |
| 11. 4.14 | 548 | The Case of the Radium Patient. (On Sexton Blake's side v<br>Dr. Huxton Rymer.)          |
| 20. 6.14 | 558 | The Death Club. (Introduction of Hammerton Palmer.)                                      |
| 1. 8.14  | 564 | The Crimson Pearl. (Dr. Huxton Rymer and San of the Brotherhood<br>of the Yellow Beetle) |
| 3.10. 14 | 573 | The Sweater's Punishment. (On the side of Sexton Blake.)                                 |
| 5.12.14  | 582 | The Great Cigarette Mystery.   |
| 19.12.14 | 584 | A Soldier - and a Men. (A Client of Sexton Blake)  |
| 20. 3.15 | 597 | The Army Contract Scandal. (On the side of Sexton Blake)                                 |
| 17. 7.15 | 614 | The Secret of Kilchester Towers. (On the side of Sexton Blake)                           |
| 13.11.15 | 631 | The Man with the Scarred Neck. (Introduction of Bob Cartier)                             |
| 27.11.15 | 633 | Fugitives from Justice. (Establishment of the Island Colony)                             |
| 8. 1.16  | 639 | At the Turn of the Hour.   |
| 6. 5.16  | 656 | The Island of Fear. (The end of the Island Colony)                                       |
| 5. 8.16  | 669 | A "Corner" in Vanilla. (On the side of Sexton Blake)                                     |
| 25.11.16 | 685 | The Blue God. (Dr. Huxton Rymer and Hammerton Palmer.)                                   |
| 13. 1.17 | 692 | The Sunken Schooner. (Dr. Huxton Rymer)  |
| 17. 2.17 | 697 | The Broken Span. (Introducing Jim Potter.)   |
| 17. 3.17 | 701 | The Black Rat. (Introducing the Black Rat.)  |
| 21. 4.17 | 706 | The Crest of the Flood. (Jim Potter.)  |
| 16. 6.17 | 714 | The Three Millionaires.  |
|          | 841 |  |
|          | 858 |  |
|          | 868 | Stories of the Criminals' Confederation by Robert Murray.                                |
|          | 893 |  |
|          | 927 |  |
| 25. 2.22 | 959 | The Case of the Polish Refugee. (On the side of Sexton Blake)                            |



25. 3.22 963 The Affairs of the Patagonian Devil. (The first Consultant story.)
1. 4.22 964 A Chinese Puzzle. (Consultant)
8. 4.22 965 The Black Vendetta. (Consultant)
20. 5.22 971 Count Flamert's Crime. (Consultant)
29. 7.22 981 Sexton Blake's Blunder. (Return of Dr. Huxton Rymer - see also 980 and 982)
30. 9.22 990 The Broken Circle. (Consultant, sailing near the wind and v Sexton Blake)
- 28.10.22 994 The Soap Salvors. (Consultant with Sexton Blake v Dr. Huxton Rymer)
- 9.12.22 1000 The Thousandth Chance. (The great Crooks' Convention at Abbey Towers)
31. 3.23 1016 The Brand of the I.D.B.
- 6.10.23 1043 The Case of the Golden Pebble. (Early days in Australia)
1. 3.24 1064 The Street of Many Lanterns. (Early days; v Sexton Blake and Wu Ling)
- 11.10.24 1096 The Affair of the Yellow Bricks. ("Flash" Brady)
- 13.12.24 1105 Sexton Blake's Christmas Truce (Dr. Huxton Rymer, Mary Trent & George Marsden Plummer)
10. 1.25 1109 The Affair of the Tartan Box. (Early days v Sexton Blake)
31. 1.25 1112 The Adventures of the Blue Bowl. (With Sexton Blake v Prince Menes)
7. 2.25 1113 The House on the Cliff. (Sequel to 1112)
- 10.10.25 1148 The Green Rose. (Early Days in Australia)

S.B.L. (First Series)

1. The Yellow Tiger. (Wu Ling and Baron Beuremon of the Council of Eleven)

325. The Great Ivory Swindle. (Hammerton Palmer)

Detective Weekly - Reprints ===== U.J.485 - 492 - 498 - 488 - 518.  
D.W.351 - 354 - 362 - 366 - 371.

Boy's Journal - October, 1914. Early Days Series - Prior to 'U.J.' No.485.

Nirvana series in the "U.J." - No's:- 1198, 1199, 1200, 1201, 1202, 1203, & 1208.

P A R T O N E

A glance at the overall picture soon shows us that it is far from easy to tabulate the history of Yvonne Cartier. One may perhaps classify the tales into five types or groups.

First of course the initial Vengeance Series which was carbon copied so very closely many years later with the Roxane Harfield stories and, much later still, reprinted in the dying "Detective Weekly".

Then came a run of Double Numbers celebrating Spring, Easter, Summer Holiday and, of course, Christmas. In many of these she was coupled with other characters such as Dr. Huxton Rymer, Wu Ling-Hammerton Palmer, George Marsden Plummer, Mary Trent, Prince Menes and others, to say nothing of a brief but important part in Blake's struggle against the Criminals' Confederation as chronicled by Robert Murray<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> See the Author's Monograph on the Criminals' Confederation. (1950 Annual)



Next, after a few indifferent tales soon after the outbreak of the 1914 War, we get the interesting Island Colony series.

More isolated tales, the introduction of Jim Potter and The Black Rat - and G.H. Teed's four and a half years absence from the "Union Jack".

He came back with "Mademoiselle Yvonne, Consultant" some time before creating the big come-back of Rymer and Plummer, but although I personally liked the tales, he somehow failed to ring the bell in her case. There was without doubt a demand for her presence in the paper but nothing after 1916 can be said to have the classic touch. He even tried stories of her "Early Days", but apart from a small part in some of the Nirvana series, her last appearance in the "Union Jack" as a major character was as early as 1148, "The Green Rose", (10.10.25)

She was become a legend and legends belong to the past.

Although a comfort to many a fellow during the long years of trench warfare, 1914-1918, the glamour of her personality was lost on the following generation.

But in 1951 the glamour of the past flares bright once more and it is in order for us to look a little more closely back to those great days when England was proud of her glorious Empire and one Englishman reckoned he was as good and better than any five "furriners".

So then - to the "Vengeance" series.

"Union Jack", No.485 - 25/January/1913.

#### "Beyond Reach of the Law"

Introducing the Great Princess of Mystery, this is the first of the Vengeance Series and is the initial story of the family ruin of the Cartiers by eight unscrupulous financiers. We see Yvonne the jockey cheating her way to make a fortune on the turf, bringing her first vengeance victim to suicide and making Sexton Blake an offer of marriage. Incidentally the South Pacific island refuge is first mentioned in this story.

488 - 15/2/13. "When Greek Meets Greek"

Dr. Huxton Rymer joins her circle on the second trail of vengeance (and profit), falls in love with her, arouses the jealousy of Sexton Blake but is thrown out of her party through his murderous designs and over-zealous attentions.

492 - 15/3/13. - "On the Brink of Ruin"

Vengeance here brings her to arrest, but Blake has to ask Inspector Thomas to make the actual apprehension. Yvonne gets five years in broad arrows but yet bears him no ill-will while Blake ruminates on scientific criminals.

495 - 5/4/13. - "Settling Day"

As Convict No.1111, Yvonne spends six winter months in Dalemoor Prison, but escapes in February through Graves and Hendricks, mate of the Fleur de Lys, to Egypt where she plans and carries out a £200,000 gold robbery before claiming yet another victim of her vengeance.

498 - 26/4/13. - "A Minister of the Crown"

The ruin and mental collapse of yet another victim - love interest sustained by written notes.



501 - 17/5/13. - "The Detective Airmen"

Enormous topicality of the Adventuress Yvonne and a Blake all grease and goggles flying races land to ship and ship to ship. The Grey Panther, a monoplane, and the great Hendon - Paris air race/chase. Yvonne both with and against Blake in her unmasking of yet another vengeance victim.

505. - 14/6/13. - "The Missing Guests"

A further mention of the island refuge/home in the South Pacific. Use of the wireless telephone (It has a future - Editor's note). Yvonne saves Tinker and the smitten Blake lets her go free.

509. - 12/7/13. - "By Right of Possession"

Last act of vengeance. She is very close now to Blake - "Some day - Some day, he must yield."

Now I sense that George Hamilton Teed found himself in a bit of a fix. At a time when barely a month passed without the breaking of another Victorian or Edwardian feminine shackle in the world about him, he had created his adventuress. She was Australian by birth - perhaps for reasons of circulation; a Mademoiselle to denote sophistication - can we imagine a Miss Evelyn Carter having such an effect on the great detective or indulging in such deeds of daring?

"Yvonne the Adventuress", ran the headlines in every issue.

A woman who, in 1913 remember, played golf alone with a man; who smoked, and carried her own cigarette case and went alone to a ball in a South American seaport.

No wonder the series was a hit; no wonder The Skipper wanted more; his post-bag was ever fatter and many of the letters came from new readers not a few of whom were of the weaker sex. The entire idea of such a character at such a time, when such social reformers as H. G. Wells and G. B. Shaw - to say nothing of Mrs. Pankhurst, were at their most sensational peak, must have created a great success from the start.

The Skipper headlines his chat in No. 541 (21/2/14) :-

"However I am going to deal with a growl that is deserving. WHAT'S HAPPENED TO CHARMING YVONNE?" He promises more stories of her and prints letters from enthusiastic readers.

Then in March, 1914, came the film - "The Clue of the Wax Vesta".

Half-page photographs and a form to fill up and send to "The Manager of your local picture palace." In it you asked him to show "the great Sexton Blake Detective Drama in three parts - at your hall. I should esteem it a favour if you would book it soon, and oblige ..."

Yvonne was played by a rather attractive girl who badly needed a hair-do and was of course dressed in the appalling style of pre-August 1914. Poor Blake was a portly gentleman with a monocle who seemed to wear either knickerbockers or morning coat, stripe trousers and stiff butterfly collar. However, the film too seemed to have caused quite a stir. There was plenty of action with Yvonne preparing the drug, abducting the Baroness and falling into the sea at least once. But Blake was never without his pipe - even when pulling her out of the water!

But we're getting a little ahead of events in so far as the stories go for we left Teed in what seemed might be a bit of a fix.



The trouble may have been that an Yvonne in love with Blake but dedicated to her campaign of vengeance was one thing but an Yvonne without that over-mastering drive for revenge to quiet her conscience was quite another - after all to gain her ends she had thought nothing of robbing, lies, cheating and deceit, but now that she had gained them what was to become of her? The time was not yet come for a female crook to appear on the scene - Broadway Kate was a war-time product and not Teed's anyway, nor was she a sympathetic character, while Marie Galante and Mary Trent were creations of the future - and to reform her utterly would be to make her a bore.

Now the strongest critic of George Hamilton Teed cannot deny that when he did a thing he did it properly, there were no half measures for him. So we next find our beloved Yvonne in a Special Summer Double Number (512. - "The Yellow Sphinx"). This time she can still claim to be an adventuress but she is lined up on the side of Sexton Blake against such formidable opposition as Prince Wu Ling, the Brotherhood of the Yellow Beetle and Dr. Huxton Rymer, and much can be forgiven a woman who has the courage to face that lot!

Any short list of Teed's "best ever" must have this one on it.

Here is a Rymer sunk so low with drugs and dissipation that he is a very slave of Wu Ling's will who alone has a medicine which can cure the craving for opium. Here is a story tremendous in melodrama with impersonations, kidnapping, torture and rescue. No wonder that both Yvonne and Rymer added a deep respect to their other feelings for Blake. Almost to the end of this case Wu Ling seemed to hold all the cards, for if Rymer was his slave, Yvonne was to be his wife - and Sexton Blake stood alone against him.

Surely the "Union Jack" and G.H. Teed were in top form during this period - Teed ran these three great characters in separate series but would put two or all of them together when it suited his purpose - such as in the Spring, Easter, Summer or Christmas Double Numbers.

In the ordinary issues he seemed still to be trying to find a regular formula for Yvonne - we find one described in sub-titles as a "charming Romance", another as a "Breezy Story", yet another a "dramatic Episode", etc....

In the first mentioned (518) Blake finds the flat at Queen Anne's Gate with the picture of himself hanging on the wall; the second sees Yvonne (riding astride) on holiday at Bingsong Station (528) whilst the third (543) finds Blake in full evening dress setting off to a date with Yvonne at a mask ball and being driven in a big limousine by his chauffeur, Forbes!

But this has taken us past a very important Double Number, that for Christmas, 1913, "The Sacred Sphere", (529). This is another Rymer, Wu Ling all-star thriller which moves from Canafa to Cardiff. Yvonne and Graves are by now well established at Queen Anne's Gate with Blake and Tinker as frequent social visitors. He is still trying to make her line up four-square with the law and she is now hiding her love but nursing it with the aid of his portrait sketch and miniature. It is worthy of note that Dr. Huxton Rymer is still in love with her even to the extent of double-crossing the redoubtable Wu Ling. Incidentally it is in this story that he writes, when an ordinary seaman aboard the cargo ship, "Eastern Queen", in Cardiff Docks over Christmas, none other than that immortal treatise "On the Emanations of Radium in Relation to their Action on Cancer and the Curative Power Thereof".

The great power in these stories lies much in the way the characters live and develop tale by tale, Wu Ling is not just a Chinese villain and we learn not just what he is after but the very important WHY he is after it. Rymer



writes his treatise and later, in the Spring Double Number of 1914, "The Case of the Radium Patient" (548), is given a chance of putting his theory to the test. In this he has every success but not in the criminal scheme which goes with it. This is broken up by Blake and Yvonne, to say nothing of Tinker and Graves. There is no longer mention of Rymer loving Yvonne and the fee of ten thousand pounds is evenly shared by the other two.

Even the minor characters in those days gained in stature story by story - first the grey car, then the chauffeur, then Forbes the chauffeur, then the Grey Panther. It is the same with the Hotel Venetia and its staff - first a mention, then a name and after a few stories a minor character is created - Rex, the Head Waiter, Kelly, the Commissionaire, Harry the Barman and Browning the Manager. There is plenty of room for research work on the subject of Teed's minor characters - and interesting work too.

In fact, every time I look at my copy of "U.J." No.1000 and cast my mind back from 1923 to 1913 and then forward to the end of the "U.J." in 1933, I wonder whether there should not be a few specialist Blake collectors who would raise themselves above their fellows and study only the works of George Hamilton Teed.

But revenons a nos moutons. After all, we have as yet only reached 1914.

Now we find that if Teed had reached a new level with his detective-adventure formula, roving the whole world as a province for his flights of imagination and fictional fancy, yet did disaster lie ahead.

The subsequent chaos consequent on the outbreak of the First World War was to start only three days after publication of the third of three of those grand Double Numbers of which we have already looked at the first. The second was only ten issues later, a Summer one, "The Death Club", (558), in which Hammerton Palmer makes his bow and Blake and Yvonne again work together. The third, for August Bank Holiday this time, was "The Crimson Pearl" with Rymer back again and was dated August 1st, 1914.

And on the fatal fourth a way of life was ended, although few knew it at the time. Brave or sapient indeed was he who could foretell with any accuracy just what the future might hold . . . .

But the papers had to come out, war or no war, and by the same token, the stories had to be written.

It was not until October 3rd, (573), "The Sweater's Punishment", that a Teed tale appeared in the wartime "U.J.", and that was most likely written before the outbreak. Yvonne is now protecting the working poor against the wicked rich!

Then we go into three stories the titles of which give enough clue to the contents - "The Great Cigarette Mystery", (582), sub-titles "a terrible plot against our brave Tommies"; the 1914 Christmas Double Number, (584) "A Soldier and a Man", and (597) "The Army Contract Scandal".

The next story (614) "The Secret of Kilchester Towers" shows a change. We are now in July of 1915 with trench warfare well established, the papers are much read by the Tommies it would seem and they didn't want to sit out there and read of scandals at home, so Teed came out with a straight detective story. But this was not his medium, the scope was not wide enough for characterisations or geographical situations of unusual interest.

Now we have already noted during the Vengeance series more than one mention of a retreat, home or refuge on a remote and unknown island deep in the South Pacific Ocean. It is an age-old axiom that soldiers in wartime do



not want to read of war and the letters from serving men show that the paper was being sent regularly to a large number in France.

So Teed reverted to the far places of the earth in a splendid little series of four stories which I will call the "Island Colony Series".

These are important for various reasons but mainly because they mark a new point in the relations between Blake and Yvonne and also because we meet for the first time her brother, Bob Cartier, otherwise Spike Carter. In fact, the first of these, "The Man with the Scarred Neck" (633), is mainly concerned with his adventures and wrongful accusation of murder. The finish sees Blake tear up the warrant for his arrest and informing Inspector Thomas that he (Blake) is withdrawing from the case. It would seem at this time that Blake admits her influence by the several occasions, as instanced by the one above, when he puts his feelings of the heart before those of reason and cold justice or letter of the law. But he is adamant, despite repeated occasions of weakness, in holding to the supreme isolation of his very personal ego which he fully shares with no person alive save only Tinker. Truly does he strive always to be "the captain of his soul". As you will see, he must have had a real fright in "The Yellow Tiger" affair! Yvonne by now fully recognises this fact and has given up all hopes of conquest, although she still nurses an illimitable depth of love and passion for him. Those warm, deep and lasting roots of affectionate friendship between them are in process of formation but only come to full flower long after this period, say between the Jim Potter era (697 - 714) and the Consultant period (959 - 963 to Nirvana) which was of course the time when G.H. Teed had no work published in the "U.J."!

Now the Island Colony was a most quixotic project on the part of Yvonne which had as much chance of widespread success in practice as the rainbow-hued policy of theory preached by our rulers of today. All men are not, never have been and never will be equal one to the other - save only in rights. The one who works all the week with an eye on the clock and a mind on Saturday night will not get, or should not get, such a great reward as he who works on until the job is finished, and has his mind set on self-improvement and future advancement. Indeed may Justice err but on the whole the scales fall even. So Yvonne's idea of an island paradise run on communal or socialistic (I am purposefully avoiding words tinged with any shade of political meaning!), lines was doomed to failure from the start (as Blake told her at the finish), unless she could find some method of changing human nature so that gratitude and self-discipline could take the place of vanity, greed and selfishness.

No need to give details of the stories here except perhaps to note that one (633) was a Christmas Double Number (1915) and one introduced Baron Beuremon (639) without his Council of Eleven. Enough to say that the quartet represent Teed at his best.

Now again we encounter a hiatus - a flowering period is coming to its end.

In almost six months we find but three unrelated stories - "A Corner in Vanilla" or "In the Hands of the Mexicans" (669); "The Blue God" or "The Third Christmas" and "The Sunken Schooner" or "John Baxter's Secret".

The first is a neat little story with Blake and Yvonne acting together in a financial partnership which nets them a clear profit of £70,000 between them which they agree, in the last paragraph, to pool in an endeavour to make themselves a million. The second is another all-star Christmas Double Number with parts for Dr. Huxton Rymer and Hammerton Palmer to say nothing of the



"Chinese Hoo Feng Tong of Sandekan", and the third is another episode set in far places where Rymer turns up once more and Blake with Tinker is found cruising the South Seas on holiday with Yvonne, Graves and Bob Cartier in the Fleur-de-Lys.

But Teed must have been stuck again - here he was with a heroine popular both with Editor and public, but I should imagine most unpopular with his fellow writers - look how many of them later imitated her, even Teed himself when he carbon-copies her with Roxane Harfield! Without research I can call to mind Lewis Jackson's Olga Nasmyth, Anthony Skene's Julia Fortune, Robert Murray's almost impertinent use of Yvonne herself, Gilbert Chester's Eileen Hale (although she was married to Gilbert), Teed again with the pallid June Severance and lastly, the sickly sentiment of poor Tinker's flame, Nirvana. This name I have always been told in the East stands for the Buddhist Heaven, although The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines it as "Buddhist beatitude, i.e. state of extinction of individuality and absorption into the supreme spirit". I will say no more.

So Jim Potter appears upon the scene - a young and attractive man this time full bent on family vengeance. A Canadian, he does not meet Yvonne until the second story of three: - "The Broken Swan" (697), "The Crest of the Flood" (706), and "The Three Millionaires" (714). In between the first two, we find "The Black Rat" (701), headlined "Magnificent New Yvonne Series Starts Inside!"

It can easily be seen that this period is rather confusing but we must remember that the war was in a very bad stage, the paper shortage had arrived and the old life had already broken down. The paper and print had become abominable and I can now quite realise, and agree with, my Mother's extreme disapproval of the paper, not on account of its contents, but of the very small print. In fact, I wonder to this day at times, I am forty-five this year, how much of my short sight is due to the 1914-18 vitamin deficiency, and how much to the small print of the "Union Jack". Che sara sara!

But "The Three Millionaires" (714) marks the end of an era as plainly as does the last "U.J." after it, or the first George Marsden Plummer story before it, an era that is in the work of G.H. Teed apropos Middle Yvonne Cartier.

I agree, and am thankful, that Robert Murray gives us five glimpses of her career during the next few years in his Confederation saga, but apart from these she leaves the pages of the "U.J." until 1922 - a space of some four and a half years.

So our heroine, created in 1913, a furore in 1914, declining a little in 1915 and 1916, takes a bow and slips from the scene in the summer of 1917.

Was she taken prisoner perhaps during some Secret Service effort on behalf of the Allies? Was she ill or wounded and maybe languishing in some foreign or oriental hospital or lonely bed in some faraway place? Did she withdraw herself from contact with her fellows until the growing pain of her love and passion for Sexton Blake had died away with the passage of time until she felt able to face the world once more?

Whatever the reason we shall never know it now, for as I have said, an era was closed and when the next one opened the world had changed - and so had Yvonne!

So perhaps it is as well if I set a period just here so that the patient reader can sit and look back on the glories of that closed past in a glow of happy retrospect before taking a deep breath and venturing into the next period of the relations between Sexton Blake, Detective, and Mademoiselle Yvonne Cartier the Adventuress.

END OF PART ONE



MERIDIAN

Being an estimate of the place held in Blakiana of Sexton Blake Library (First Series) Number One, "The Yellow Tiger" by George Hamilton Teed.

There is no possibility of over-estimating the extreme importance of this story, no matter from which point of view the approach be made.

Like most things it must have been the product of its period. It is for example impossible to envisage the contemporary cacophony which goes under the heading of music being either composed or listened to in those days of Victorian security when Britons were proud of their heritage and not ashamed to strike a blow in their own defence.

The Number One was published on Monday, 20th September, 1915. By this time all hopes of a quick finish to the German conflict were dead and the main struggle was bogged down in the filth and mud of the Flanders trenches. The "Union Jacks" of that period bore a label on the back page so that the copy could be sent out to somebody at the front. After Name, Company, Regiment, B.E.F. came the brief note "Or if missing to Company Commander" followed by an even grimmer one:- N.B. If the Addressee cannot be found will the Company Commander kindly see that this book is NOT returned to sender but handed to the Addressee's companions to read.

Stark realism had struck deep into everybody's individual life and the restful tinkling of the waltz was forever stilled.

So a new era was born and "The Yellow Tiger" may well be called the bridge between it and the old one. This is an adult story - no tale for children or even for what are now known as teenagers. It also fits the pocket of suit or uniform.

For students of Teed's work it may well be classified as his meridian, the very high noon of his prime.

Detective Story? Yes. Adventure Story? Without doubt. Love Story? Indubitably.

Here we find Prince Wu Ling and his infamous Brotherhood of the Yellow Beetle lined up with Germany and operating through the Chinese quarter of the Cardiff dock area. On his side at the start is Baron Robert de Beauremon and The Council of Eleven. The struggle against Blake becomes so bitter that even Beauremon becomes sickened and changes sides toward the finish.

Yvonne is well to the fore and has seldom played a finer part, while any who may still doubt that she was the one and only woman whom Blake really loved are referred to page 101 of "The Yellow Tiger". The Harfields and the Guises may have aroused varying degrees of passion in him at different times but these are mere candle flames compared to his feelings for Yvonne Cartier. I merely stress this point for the benefit of those who wrote to me saying that the Yvonne Cartier tales were not of such importance as those of Roxane Harfield and suggested that my monograph should deal with this latter as the most important woman ever to enter the life of the great detective.

No, there was only one and that was our fair Yvonne and it might have been for her that Lord Byron wrote his lines:- "Alas! The love of women! It is known

To be a lovely and a fearful thing!"



It was after this experience on the Island of Kaitu that she vanished from civilised ken to her Pacific Island retreat and tried to forget and lose herself in the business of creating the Island Colony. (U.J. 631, 633 et seq.). As for Blake he too had gone through the fire and well for him that he had the love of Tinker to sustain him.

Chronologists may be interested to note that I place "The Yellow Tiger" after "U.J." 607, "The Quest of the Grey Panther" for Wu Ling; 613 "Scoundrels All" for Beuremon and 614 "The Secret of Kilchester Towers" for Yvonne.

Also that the only reason that Beuremon took the place of Dr. Huxton Rymer in such an important story is that (to the best of my knowledge) Rymer was never a traitor to his country - in fact S.B.L. (First Series) No.11, "The Two Mysteries" shows that he served as a medical officer in the French Army, won a Legion of Honour for his work at an emergency field hospital almost in the front line and held the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel.

But I digress... ..

We must now, having seen the Yvonne saga reach from inception to pinnacle, cast our eyes forward to her modern period which began with the pleasant but never overwhelmingly popular "Consultant" series.

We have passed the meridian.

## P A R T   T W O

"What's not destroyed by Time's devouring hand?"

(Rev. James Bramston)

The gap in Teed's "U.J." work extends, according to my calculations, from the end of 1917 until the start of 1922 - about four and a half years.

We have already speculated as to the fortunes of our heroine during this period and the pity is that there is little or no speculation as to the manner of her return.

If Yvonne Cartier was a daring riot in 1913, she seemed almost middle-aged in the flapper-jazz-cocktail age of the Roaring Twenties. The whole situation may well be summed up in Val's cover picture to 963 - "Mademoiselle Yvonne, Consultant". Verily a sombre sober scene which shows a youngish Blake, an almost adult Tinker and a most matronly Yvonne - very different from the old days!

Her actual return was in 959 "The Case of the Polish Refugee" which has what must be one of the worst-drawn covers ever worn by the old paper. There is an introductory note before the start of the first chapter which gives a very guarded version of the past relations between the two, and holds out an obviously mendacious hint of what might happen between them in the future. The story is a good Teed Paris one and the illustrations excellent - the very best Reading. On page 15 is the strange announcement concerning the forthcoming debut of Yvonne as a detective and this idea, as mentioned above, started in 963 and the two following numbers; all stories which may be described as good sound Teed. But in 971 a soft pedal is applied, there is no mention of the Consultant side, the characters being sub-titled as "the famous trio". So we find Blake and Tinker cruising as Yvonne's guests on the Fleur-de-Lys in (of course) Far Eastern waters. Note here that Blake "had turned over the rest to Gordon Lindsey, his Montreal correspondent, who had come across to England to carry on at Baker Street during Blake's absence."



The next tale shows a flash of the old Teed - Rymer is back with a bang. He rates a three-column half-page Introductory and asterisk explanatory references to "The Mystery of Walla Walla", wrongly given as "U.J." 509 when it is of course 528, and S.B.L.'s 219 and 229. 980, 981 and 982 held three cracking yarns which carry the action half across the world and form a really fine trilogy. In the third episode it is of interest to note that Wu Ling is featured in a minor role and (so far as I know) Sir Gordon Sadler, the fabulous Hsui-Fai, makes his bow. It is not, however, his first meeting with Blake and there is a mention that on two previous occasions they had worked together, but I have been unable to trace any record of them. In any case, this number may be taken as the precursor of the wonderful modern run of Wu Ling tales in the "U.J.", which started with No.1000 and ended with the Manchurian series in 1933 (1494/5/6).

But if Rymer had returned with a blare of success, the same cannot be said of our heroine who next appears in 990 and sails very near the wind. Two weeks later finds her again with Rymer in "The Soap Salvagers" and then of course that very special story, "The Thousandth Chance" in "U.J." No.1000, the nearest "modern" number to be compared with the old "Doubles" - and I include the Gwyn Evans Christmas ones with all due deference to Rex Dolphin!

The truth often hurts, but I am afraid that we must now face up to the idea that Teed just did not know what to do with Yvonne at this juncture. She could not be fitted into the scheme of things in a major role with any real sense of satisfaction. Her sex had gained such a full measure of emancipation during and after the war with Germany that what had been sensational was now become merely a very little out of the ordinary. After all, Pearl White, Amy Johnson and Suzanne Lenglen had come or were soon to come, into the daily headlines; Nurse Cavell had died in defiance of the German might, and women had been elected to Parliament. They even tried to play football!

So Teed went back to the past as the best means of escape, and of the last nine stories (excepting the Nirvana series) five were of the "Old Days", one was a Christmas number, two formed one story featuring Prince Menes and the other was "Consultant".

And that about brings us to the end.

As with Yvonne so was Nirvana a product of her age; as with Yvonne the idea was a grand one at first. In real life, however, when two people fall in love something has to be done about it sooner or later, and this generally resolves into either a parting for good or a mating for the same period.

So we come back to the old, old query of whether or not Blake (and Tinker too, I suppose) should ever get himself a wife.

There is no place for that discussion here, but I sometimes think that, even if Tinker never tumbled to anything, old Graves might throw quite a light on the exact relations between Sexton Blake and Yvonne Cartier - and jolly good luck to both of them, says I!

#### E P I L O G U E

There remain now but a few loose threads to fill in the general outline of our survey.

One of the most difficult problems seems to resolve itself into a matter of individual taste - I refer to that of Yvonne's best picture. Most of the "U.J." artists had an attempt at her.



Making all allowances for changes of time and fashion, I pick two - rather perhaps at random but at least they stick most in my mind.

One is dated 1913 by Val and she is shown riding astride but skirted and cracking a stockwhip. This is from "U.J." 485, and is used again in 528. It is a most graceful action picture and typical of the early Yvonne. The other (1924) strangely enough, shows her as a brunette and is by Eric Parker in "U.J." 1064. She is in evening dress, wearing a short jacket-coat, and is about to be strangled by a Chinaman! By 1939 the same artist had her, in the "D.W." reprints, as a hard-faced platinum blonde in slacks! This, I feel is a pity, but as I said before, the whole subject is largely a matter of individual taste.

The same applies to the fashions, concerning which I have but one thing to say, and that is to any who feel inclined to laugh at the styles of 1913 and, say, 1923 or even 1933. Before you laugh pick up a copy of a 1951 newspaper and try to imagine what today's fashions will look like in twenty-thirty or forty years' time! So rather than laugh, give those old-time artists credit for some very fine work - in particular - Val.

But our sage shows us that other things change as well as clothes. I can call to mind at least three.

The pledged word and the honoured truce are two of them, the third concerns the modern habit of shooting a revolver from the hip or through the coat pocket. In the old days all revolvers were featured as being pointed straight at the victim's face with the arm of the holder almost at full stretch - so most easy to knock up. Also, as Bob Whiter so aptly pointed out in his excellent article on the subject<sup>\*</sup>, it was rare to come across a properly delineated revolver in many of the artists' drawings.

Now to a mention of the reprints. No more than five have been brought to my notice and I think it will suffice to catalogue them without comment. We find then that "U.J." 485 becomes "D.W.351, "The Girl Who Made Pearls"; "U.J." 492 becomes "D.W." 354, "The Case of the Purple Cotton"; "U.J." 498 becomes "D.W.362, "The Case of the Secret Courier", then we go back to "U.J." 488, which becomes "D.W.366, "The Vengeance of Yvonne", and lastly, "U.J." 518 becomes "D.W." 371, "A Riddle in Red Leather". There may of course be others, so please do not take this list to be a complete one.

A last point to note about these reprints involves mention of an article in the second "Sexton Blake Annual" (1941) by a certain Donald Robin entitled "Glamour Girl Crook, the Blonde and Beautiful Yvonne". This gentleman quotes the reprints as if they were the originals and makes the amazing statement that Sexton Blake obtained for her a free pardon, "Which cancelled the prison sentence she still had to serve after her dramatic escape from Dalemoor in recognition of her services against "The Brotherhood of the Yellow Beetle," a vicious and powerful international crime ring".

Once again I think it better to add no comment!

Lastly I wish to record the existence of an "Early Days" series of Yvonne Carrier stories which started in the "Boys' Journal", October '14. They were written as having taken place prior to "U.J." 485 so Blake and Tinker could have played no part in them.

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\*"Collectors' Digest", Vol.3, No.30.



And my final paragraphs bring us once more to that marriage controversy - details are in "A Word from the Skipper" from "U.J."s 541, 588/590 - but no solution is found either by the Editor or his readers.

Perhaps the greatest charm of this most fascinating of characters is that her greatest problem will forever remain her greatest mystery.

If only we could stand Graves a really bumper dinner at the Venetia, I think, by the time the cigars and brandy were going the rounds, that the wily old fox could tell us a lot.

## F I N I S

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### THE PRE-SEXTON BLAKE STORIES IN THE PENNY "UNION JACK"

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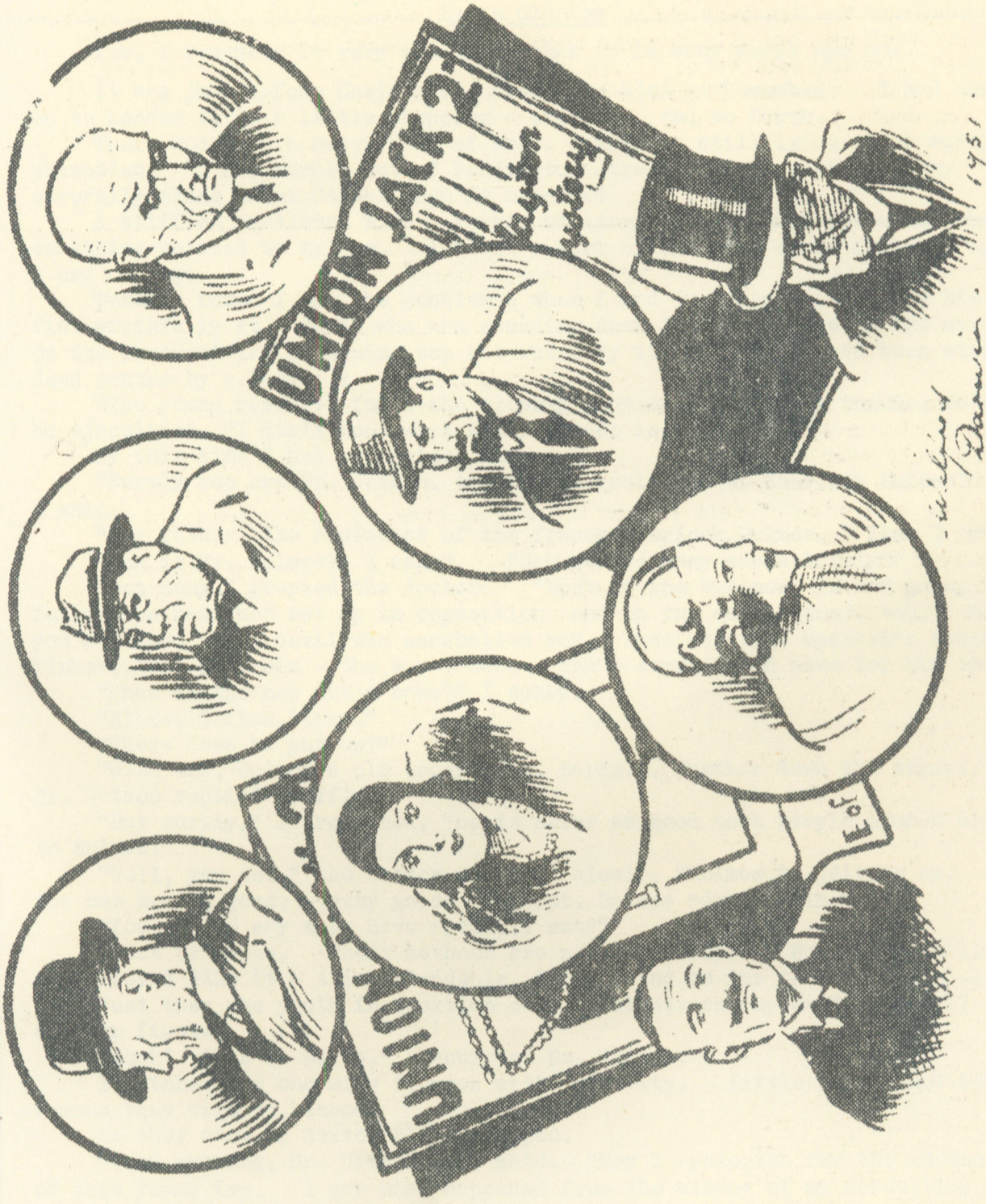
By Herbert Leckenby

For about two years after the price of the Union Jack was raised to a penny (October 17th, 1903) the long complete stories were mainly of a varied type - only very occasionally did Sexton Blake appear. The stories were of considerable length and carried the slogan "A 3/6 Boys' Story Book for 1d." This was something of an exaggeration at the time, of course, but put them between stiff covers to-day and it would have a good deal of truth in it. They were written by some of the best boys' authors of the day, appeared on good paper, and were well illustrated. They deserve to be recorded, so here they are. Where a number is omitted it is because it was a Sexton Blake story.

<u>Story</u>	<u>Author</u>
1. With Pick and Lamp.	T. C. Bridges.
2. Captain Martin's Secret.	John Stanton.
3. Held by the Enemy.	William Murray Graydon.
4. Hunting Gold.	Cecil Hayter.
5. For Liberty.	T. G. Dowling-Maitland.
6. Son of the Regiment.	Alec G. Pearson
7. The Squatter's Revenge.	Mark Darren.
8. The Sea Rovers.	Arthur S. Hardy.
9. Through Peril to Fortune.	W. Sapte.
10. The Phantom of Tregenna.	<del>Max Hamilton</del>
11. Tried and True.	Captain Arthur Leigh.
12. Britons All.	Reginald Wray.
13. Swordsmen Three.	Mark Darren.
14. Bravo! Little Japan!	Reginald Wray.
15. Sons of Canada.	Paul Herring.
16. The Train Robbers.	Herbert Maxwell.
17. The Young Hussar.	Alec G. Pearson.
18. The Forbidden City.	Mark Darren.
19. Frank Ferret, Detective.	Cecil Hayter.
20. The Great Mutiny.	W. Murray Graydon.

(cont'd. p. 20)







# "A Christmas Adventure in Baker Street"

By an Old Boy

Yes, I remember it very well, although it is many years ago now.

It was just before Christmas - about the 23rd of December. I had come up to London to do a little shopping - presents, and so forth.

There had been a heavy fall of snow, which was still lying about mostly untrodden. I had turned out of Paddington Street and was making my way carefully along Baker Street when it happened.

A stiffish gentleman with a rather military air had just passed me when something whizzed by my ear. I heard a sort of smacking sound followed by a cry of rage.

Turning round I saw the gentleman whom I had just passed, shaking his fist wrathfully at a youth who was scudding down the other side of the street. On the pavement lay a shining top hat which by its appearance had been struck dead centre by a snowball.

"The young rascal!" fumed the elderly gentleman, and then turning to me he ejaculated, "I don't know what Baker Street is coming to."

By this time I had recognised him.

"Surely you are Dr. Watson, the famous assistant of Sherlock Holmes?" I said.

"Say rather, the assistant of the famous Sherlock Holmes. Yes, I am he."

"How is Mr. Holmes?" I asked. "Has he had many cases lately?"

"Not many," grunted the doctor. "Most of the business is now going to a fellow who has just set up in opposition, and in the same street, too. Did you see that young devil who snowballed me? That was this upstart's assistant. Tinker, they call him - the boy I mean - and a damned good name for him too."

"What is the new man's name?" I asked.

"Blake, Sexton Blake."

"Where does he put up?"

"With Mrs. Hudson's old crony, Mrs. Bardell, further down the street," Dr. Watson replied gruffly.

"But surely," I protested, "he is never so good that people prefer him to Holmes!"

"Well, you see," the doctor answered slowly, "Holmes is getting on. And the new man is good, - very good; in fact, Holmes admires him."

"You mean to say they have actually met?"

"Once or twice. Their methods are not dissimilar. But I personally can't say I like it - this friendship, I mean, and as for that 'Tinker' --!"

Just then the youth in question came in sight, accompanied by a tall slender figure.

"Look! this is Blake," ejaculated Dr. Watson.

I watched the oncoming figures with curiosity. Little did I know how famous they were to become.

As they came up Sexton Blake stopped.

"Good evening, Dr. Watson," he said. "May I apologize for the rudeness of this young imp. I saw what happened from the window of my consulting room."

Dr. Watson's face reddened.



"Well, Mr. Blake," he replied, "I accept your apology, and trust your young - er - friend will try to restrain his exuberance in future."

Here Tinker chipped in. "Sorry, sir," he said, "It shan't occur again, but really your topper presented such a perfect target."

"That's all right, lad," the doctor said, "I was young myself once - though you might not believe it."

"Well, doctor," said Sexton Blake, "and how is my honoured rival, Mr. Holmes?"

"Holmes is here to speak for himself," broke in another voice.

We all turned at the sound, and there was the lean ascetic figure of Sherlock Holmes himself. Elderly now, but as upright as ever, and with a twinkle of humour in his keen grey eyes.

He and Sexton Blake shook hands warmly, and the younger of the two renowned detectives who were to make Baker Street famous throughout the world repeated his question.

"Very well, indeed, Mr. Blake," was the reply, "and I hope you are the same."

The two men, so much alike in many things, chatted warmly, whilst Tinker and Dr. Watson regarded each other with an odd mixture of respect and suspicion.

It was a unique scene, and I only wish it could have been photographed for the edification and pleasure of the generation of to-day.

Sexton Blake spoke:-

"So your 'Illustrious Client' decided not to prosecute you for burglary after all, Holmes," he said.

"No," laughed Sherlock Holmes, "I shall have my Christmas dinner in Baker Street, and not in Pentonville!"

"Speaking of Christmas," said Blake, "are you engaged for Christmas Day? If not, I wonder if you would honour me by dining with me. And you too, Doctor, of course," he added, turning to Dr. Watson.

"Well, strangely enough, I was just going to invite you to No. 221B for the same day," said Sherlock Holmes, "but you have got your blow in first! What do you say, Watson?"

Dr. Watson nodded assent - he seemed to have calmed down very considerably during the last few minutes.

"Mrs. Bardell will certainly do her best on such an occasion," said Tinker, and his eyes sparkled in anticipation. "I say, Guv'nor, this will be a red-letter day in the history of Baker Street."

Sexton Blake nodded. "It certainly will," he said. "I have a very curious case on at the moment, which I think will interest you, Holmes."

"I shall be delighted to hear all about it," said Sherlock Holmes, "and perhaps Watson and I may be able to help you a little, Blake."

Blake chuckled. "We should make a good combination, you and I, Holmes," he said.

The two detectives again shook hands warmly and went opposite ways, each accompanied by his assistant.

The last thing I saw was Tinker making another snowball, and looking wistfully at Dr. Watson's top hat!

I wish I could have been present at that dinner party a couple of days later, to hear those two great men discussing their cases over the wine and nuts, after one of Mrs. Bardell's special Christmas dinners!

--oOo--



## "That Enduring Magic"

By Tom Hopperton

One result of the better organisation of collecting during recent years is that, even if the pastime is more expensive, we are in the paradoxical position that the increased demand has made it easier to obtain material. Even so, securing a substantial sequence of one of the old weeklies is still an event to be marked with a white stone, and when I recently obtained a long run of early numbers of "The Boy's Magazine" (a paper I read with relish at its inception) I settled down with them in keen anticipation. After ploughing on with increasing grimness for a couple of hours, I gave vent to one of Bill Lodgey's "muttered oaths" and pushed the pink pile to one side. The "Boy's Mag", like only too many of my former favourites, now bores me.

There is nothing strange in outgrowing one's youthful tastes -- in fact, it would be abnormal not to. But the incident came as a forcible reminder that at fourteen or forty I have never failed to find interest and entertainment in the school stories of Charles Hamilton, which were the prime mover in turning me to collecting. I like to have an explanation for any taste or preference of mine, even if that explanation satisfied no-one but myself, and this article attempts to elucidate what I believe to be the reasons for the persistence of the magic shed by Greyfriars, by St. Jim's, and by Rookwood.

One General Knowledge test I had at school contained the question: "What was the most striking feature of the Pyramids?" and a form-mate convulsed us by giving as his answer: "They were built from the top down". I now proposed a similar inverted approach. Criticism is generally more illuminating than adulation and must, in any case, be met. The general objections levelled at the stories appear to be that they are unoriginal, old fashioned, repetitive in plot and "impossible". (I deliberately avoid the social content of the tales. It is adequately covered in George Orwell's "Boys' Papers", available in Public Libraries in "Inside the Whale" and his "Collected Essays", and in Frank Richards' reply in the May, 1940, "Horizon".)

If "unoriginal" means that the school story is no Minerva springing fully armed from the head of a Hamiltonian Jupiter, one can concede that the limited terrain of the public school has been well explored. It is over 90 years since "Tom Brown's Schooldays" appeared, with "Eric; or Little by Little" treading on its heels, and from the 'seventies on the writing of school stories was almost a major industry. But it can be reasonably countered that since the days of Boccaccio the only writer to introduce an "original" note into the love story has been de Sade, and no-one objects to further romances being written on that ground. Taking one voice among dozens, the Editor of "The Scout", said: "Original plots are made by authors of 'new' themes". Why! shortly after the passing of the 1945 Education Act, Gunby Hadath was congratulated on his originality in tackling the theme of the assimilation of a secondary school boy into a public school. Shades of Linley and Redfern!

It is quite easy to natter round picking minute holes in the fabric. Prout was a master in "Stalky and Co", which appears also to be the first use of the "....and Co" label. Tom Merry went to school in the Aldine "British Boys' Paper". Two Wildrakes were famous Victorian schoolboys: another turned up



at St. Jim's. The long extinct family of the Regicide were the only historical Mouleeverers, and our Mauly probably derived his patent from the character in "Paul Clifford". A long Rookwood series has the same key situation (a crook exposing himself by opening a safe to save someone trapped inside from suffocation) as "Alias Jimmy Valentine", famous as play and film, while Jimmy Valentine himself graced ten issues of the 1933 "Magnet". There was even a Billy Bunter at Blackminster School in "The Vanguard" some weeks before William George rolled on the scene. It would be easy, tedious and inutile to continue.

Old fashioned? George Orwell made great play with this, and I cannot help but think it was the "Gem" reprints that most influenced him. Grand as the stories were and are, they were a quarter of a century old and the fact kept leaking out in perhaps small but jarring anachronisms. Tom Merry's velvet suit was fanny in 1907, when unfortunate youngsters were still dressed in imitation of Little Lord Fauntleroy. The boy of 1930 probably found it simply bizarre, while he had never seen anything like Miss Fawcett's rig-out except on a poster for "Charley's Aunt", but the adult critic would pounce on such details with a whoop of "Old fashioned!" The "greasy fur cap" of one of the rustic villains, the dress and speech of the newsboy who fought the "one and only" when Gussy went seeking Tom Merry in London -- these were as revealing as the mistaken revival of Skimpole. Skimmy was amusing as originally conceived - the schoolboy "intellectual" whose intellect doesn't function too well in such mundane matters as lessons, but who devotes a wealth of effort to mastering (to him) abstruse "isms". He might still have passed muster if left alone. But the Labour Party had become too popular for Herbert to repel likely customers by blathering about Socialism, and the sub-editing made actions which were logical when actuated by Skimpole's "socialism" (e.g. feeding a mob of tramps) simply fantastic when the motive was rewritten as Determinism. Skimmy was by no means so prominently figured during his second run, and as Determinism and Evolution had come to be so widely accepted, it would have been better to have quietly dumped their St. Jim's exponent altogether than to have re-hashed in such a manner as to arouse unfavourable comparisons with the inanities of William Jennings Bryant at the "Monkeyville" trial.

Still, the A.P. reprint policy should not be allowed to obscure the current work of the author, as it undoubtedly did. As a proletarian, I can't say at first hand how far the schools lag behind the modern Eton or Winchester -- if at all! Except for a little freedom in handing out "sixes", they don't seem particularly different to the institutions featured in the 1951 stories, which share also in that peculiar perspective recently denounced by a Headmistress. The good lady attacked the "distorted picture" on the grounds that the Fourth Form does not run any school. There is an adequate reply to this, but it is a rude one!

Nearly as bad is Mrs. Naomi Mitchison, who told the 1951 Library Association Conference: "... the silliest of juvenile fiction are the school stories. Stories with a moral are a preparation for adult life. But stories with no morals, such as the school stories, are no help at all. Much of one's best preparation for life comes from fairy tales." It would astonish Tom Brown and Eric to learn that they purveyed no moral (how I long to digress into a discussion of the lady's last sentence!) and while my ethical standards may be cock-eyed, of course, I am under the distinct impression that Mr. Hamilton's stories conveyed without the blatancy which defeats its own object a code of behaviour which any boy could follow with advantage.



The critics carry a very smoky torch: fortunately, we can shed a little more light by examining the structure of the stories for ourselves. Dissection implies cutting-up, but it might be as well to stress at the start that in breaking the yarns down into their component parts the divisions such as characterisation, plot, style and atmosphere are largely artificial, as one merges into and influences the others. As an illustration, one reason why Charles Hamilton's work is superior to that of E.S. Brooks is that in his better stories Hamilton's plot stems naturally from the well-defined characteristics of his leading players to make a coherent whole - as in the Wharton versus Quelch series - and even in the weaker stories where visiting criminals are employed the plot is still strongly modified by the same factors. Against this, E.S.B. subordinates everything to the plot, more or less shovelling in the characters to be swept away in its swift - often torrential - stream.

One meets strange things in books of advice. Consider this from Christine Chaundler's "The Children's Author": "As for character-drawing, you have only to make your protagonist a HERO in capital letters, your comic characters figures of fun, and dip your villains in the deepest possible shade of dye, and you will have done all that the boy requires." Indeed! If this advice had been applied to the "Gem" and "Magnet", they would have lasted about as long as one of Guy Rayner's numerous ventures. That acute critic, Orwell, paid tribute to the diversity and subtlety of the characterisation thus: "By a debasement of the Dickens technique a series of stereotyped 'characters' has been built up, in several cases very successfully."

We can accept the tribute, but the reasoning does not sound so impressive when we turn up Orwell's "Charles Dickens" and read: "Even by the standard of his time, Dickens was an exceptionally artificial writer...His characters are even more distorted and simplified than Smollett's....There is only one test worth bothering about - survival. By this test, Dickens' characters have succeeded." This leaves us hanging in the air. If you debase something distorted and simplified, you can only get a caricature in the vein of Rowlandson's old women. And if, by the survival test, Wharton, Merry and Silver have succeeded, so have Ambrosio, Sweeney Todd, Buffalo Bill and Maria Monk. The juniors we know so well have nothing in common with these others, and with the possible exception of two or three of the "comics" they are far from being caricatures. There are 38 boys in the Greyfriars Remove, over 50 in the Fourth and Shell at St. Jim's, and 32 in the Rookwood Fourth. Some rarely if ever emerged from the background, but in any instances where the boy played even minor roles, it is difficult to point to one who could be confused with another in the same school. Indeed, even where similar types are met in the different schools, I think the accusing finger can only be directed at Gunner and Grundy and Trimble and Muffin as being rubber stamps. In the main the credible characteristics are so sharply etched that the reader for a year or so probably knew the characters of, say, Wharton, Bull, Lovell and Lowther more accurately than he did those of his own cousins.

Everyone, boy or man, readers for compensation and experience, and, particularly in the case of the boy, compensation is arrived at by identification with one or another of the characters in the story. No boy, be his tastes or hobbies what they may, be he quiet or rowdy, studious or rebellious, "pie" or what Bunter called "rorty", could fail to find somewhere among the juniors one who seemed an idealised type of himself. Orwell, indeed, complained bitterly that many of the readers identified to the point of leading complete fantasy



lives, He meant it as an objection to the papers: if I were Charles Hamilton, I should take the complaint as the greatest compliment ever paid to me, implying as it does that the stories exert so magical an influence over the readers.

This question of characterisation raises a peculiar point. The "Gem" characters were at their inception superior to those of the "Magnet" - or so I think - yet they remained static while the others developed so much that the Remove boys of 1908 look like pencil sketches for the oil paintings of the 'thirties. There is no difference in characterisation which is readily noticeable between the early stories and the new ones which brought the "Gem" to a close. (There was a great difference in the power of the writing and the mastery of the series, as a comparison of the two Mr. Keene stories of the 2d "Gem" and the thirteen Silverston tales which cover a similar theme will show.) Certainly, there were no original stories turned out during the eight years' reprinting and there had been periods of six and seven months previously when Martin Clifford did not touch the paper. But, vide Mr. Shaw, he wrote about 740 of the original stories - which condenses into fifteen solid years of work - and I am reluctant to believe that there was no development during that period because of the intrusion of the "sub" writers. Frank Richards blandly ignored characters and deviations introduced into Greyfriars by his unwelcome co-tenants and went his own way. Martin Clifford would presumably do the same.

The course of events was, I believe, dictated by the original structure of the schools. There was conflict everywhere at St.Jim's -- the Fourth v the Shell, the New House v the School House, the juniors v the Fifth, St.Jim's v Rylcombe Grammar School, the Third v Selby, the New House v Ratcliffe, and so on. When the stories with extraneous interest (travel, intruding criminals, etc.) are ignored, it is apparent that it was fatally easy when brewing the plot for the next story to seize on a row between one and another of the factions as the way out. Greyfriars began with something of the same conflict, but the Upper Fourth, the Foreign Academy and Highcliffe receded into the background and Frank Richards settled down to stories which evolved themselves from the increasingly complex and lifelike characters he developed. There was of course, no house division, and the external feuds played so little a part that they only figured in three of the 114 series which ran after 1917. Nor were there masters as crude as Ratcliffe and Selby, although odd ones were imported on occasion. The external conflicts could have been dropped at St.Jim's: the internal divisions were part of the very structure and were bound to persist. It is certain that this was done deliberately to give two different types of school. It succeeded - perhaps better than was expected - because of the evolution which resulted from it.

Rookwood was again in a different category. The stories ran for eleven years, but they were shorts and no matter how much clever use of the series offset this any wide general development was hindered. Attention was necessarily concentrated on a smaller group of central figures but, even so, the Modern versus Classical conflict affords a minor confirmation of what has been said of St.Jim's. Incidentally, it was only at Rookwood that the nominal leading man retained control. Jimmy Silver remained the pivot about which the stories turned, but Bunter hogged more and more of the limelight at Greyfriars, while St.Jim's, after the first few years, became a much more co-operative effort.

Any attempt to classify the plots of the stories leads to bewilderment, as the ingredients were lavishly employed. Try and sort out the 114 post-1917



"Magnet" series I mentioned. Is "Muccolini's Circus" a holiday story, or a circus story, or a pure Bunterism on the lines of "Bunter Court"? And how about the Dick Lancaster series? Do we file that as about a new boy, as a crime story or what? Holding my breath as I do so, I tentatively offer as divisions: holiday and travel, 20; crime, 19; "personalities", 19; new boys, 14; new boys sent to sabotage old boys, 7; barring out, 6; Bunterisms, 6; circus, 4; external feuds, 3. In other words, the great majority of the series have as their main factor something which is not an integral part of Greyfriars, which I had not realised myself until I started to count them.

This was conditioned, I suppose, by the peculiar demands made upon Frank Richards. He had to provide variety, which could be only found by resorting to external aids, just as flour (the standard cast and place) is found in every cake, but there are dozens of different cakes available to those who make a wise choice of flavourings. He had to conform to the fiction that each week's story was complete and at the same time instil into the new reader what had happened previously in the series. Further, he had to familiarize the newcomer with the wide range of characters and soak them in the Greyfriars atmosphere. All this had a profound effect upon both his plotting and his style.

It is impossible to carry on a series of anything up to thirteen or fourteen 30,000 word instalments with a straightforward tale and even if it were the thing would be obviously a serial broken off when space ran out. Sub-plotting is essential, and that provides difficulties when writing for boys. G.W.M. Reynolds may seem a peculiar comparison to bring to Frank Richards, but they shared these difficulties of prolixity. Reynolds got over his by keeping six or seven plots of practically equal importance neatly interwoven, although the reader who consumed the yarn in eight-page penny weekly numbers must have often gone scouting through the early issues reviving landmarks once the story reached the six or seventh hundred page. This is clearly as impossible as the straightaway story when dealing with boys, and Frank Richards evolved a highly successful solution. Each week saw the main story carried a little further along, and if the series was to last twelve weeks, there were twelve sub-plots. Are the Famous Five on tour? Then the first week sees them becoming saddled with Bunter; the second is devoted to "doing Coker in the eye"; the third to rescuing Hazeldine from some piece of dingy folly, and so on. It is, when analysed, remarkably clever. The device lends so much variety to the instalments that each can pass muster as a complete story, and yet it keeps the reader hanging on for up to three months to find out what the end is going to be.

The plotting is modified, too, in a way which makes it hard to disentangle plot from atmosphere. A not uncommon opening is one in which Coker or (more often) Bunter is bumped, kicked or maltreated in some way. It seems at first that it is only a comic incident, thrown in for the humour or to pad the story, and that like the theme in the first movement of Tchaikovsky's Concerto No. 1 it will be heard of no more. But no! Sooner or later, whether by lying awake in pain or by skulking around for revenge, the victim will become the key figure in the denouement of the story. "The Writer" and similar papers are studded with adverts of books, courses, charts, roulette wheels and innumerable gadgets designed to teach embryo authors the difficult art of plotting. I'm pretty sure a course of reading in Frank Richards would do them more good.



His stories abound with examples of perfect craftsmanship in plotting. He had to meet certain requirements - the weekly format, the introduction of a mass of characters into every story, the exploitation of his comic leads as well as his serious characters - and it is fascinating to trace in a selection of "Magnets" culled from, say, twenty years of the paper's life, how the technique of dealing with each problem was mastered until the whole thing seemed so simple as to be merely, as Orwell seemed to think, sawing off lengths mechanically extruded from any hack who cared to engage in the work. Being no mean writer himself, he should have known better.

The distinctive feature of Hamilton's style is that he writes English -- which is not so trite a statement as it may seem. The Thomson papers, for example, specialise in "strong" (read: "fantastic") plots, recounted in head-long style and staccato sentences which reach back to the extreme simplification of those of the Victorian "dreadfuls" which sought as customers all who were not absolutely illiterate. Superficially, and in contrast with this word-cobbling, Hamilton may seem - as charged - "slow", "discursive", and "repetitive". But read carefully through a "Wizerd" and follow it just as carefully with a "Magnet": it is like a glass of old port after a mouthful of methylated spirits. Mere economy of words is no criterion: if it were, then the breathlessly exuberant piling up of detail in Dickens' comic scenes and Rabelais's crushing lists of adjectives would be sheer blemishes. Apart from its other purpose, Hamilton's "leisurely" style has a smooth gracefulness rare among boys' writers. Frank-Martin-Owen treated us, not as morons incapable of grasping a three-syllable word or a compound sentence, but as persons of understanding and education, and his agreeably flattering habit of sprinkling his pages with quotations and classical allusions did at least drive us to the tag books.

In any case much of the apparent redundancy of detail is deliberate, and without it there could not have been created that atmosphere which pervaded the stories and saturated the mind of the readers. The schools were little, self-contained worlds of their own, of which the reader in a remarkably short time became a sort of supernumerary inhabitant. This detail gave him every help in his apotheosis. The tales could have been told just as well with half the cast actually introduced, but the familiarisation process demanded that boys step forward to say only one sentence. Similarly, it was never a simple crowd of juniors which tramped into Study No.10 to demand news of the team. It was Pons and Higgs and Jones Minor and Grace and Errol and Dickinson and Rawson et al. These names, which were being repeatedly impressed on the reader, provide an interesting study in themselves. We all have ingrained ideas on nomenclature, without being at all sure why we have them. Thus, a real-life Percy Bloggs might well be heroic, but we should jib at a fictional hero dubbed Percy, and would revolt altogether at a Bloggs. Most authors conform to convention in this, but Charles Hamilton has always shown an exceptional facility in his naming. From his earliest days - with the exception of Tom Merry and Gordon Gay - he has avoided the evocative names which delighted the Victorians (Ned Nimble, Tom Torment), yet each character is titled with absolute appropriateness -- save possibly that his labelling of the plebeians in such forms as Bunn and Crump savours a little too much of the Shakespearian approach. In the cases of Wharton, Lowther, Talkot, the effect is no doubt produced by aristocratic associations: with the Scrope-Racke-Snoop-Gunter group, consideration of the aptness provides an entertaining excursion in onomatopoeia.



Charles Hamilton was aware of the significance of catch-words forty years before radio comedians exploited them to the point of nausea. The modern kid seems to be able to raise a laugh among his mates by bawling: "He's lurrvvly, Mrs. Hoskins." In my day, the stock-in-trade of the school comedians was a more or less rendering in Gussy's priceless accent of Gussy's pet sayings. Turn where you will, the technique is excellent. There is a crisply masculine air about the stories, which steer undeviatingly between the sticky sentiment in which J.N. Pentelow frequently bogs down and that streak of brutality which is most noticeable in Bracebridge Hemyng and his contemporaries, but persisted into the 'twenties with Henry T. Johnson and others. Levison's resuscitation of Lumley-Lumley from his coffin in the vaults is the only instance I can recall of an excursion into the macabre and the few such stories as the Strong Alonzo series were minor transgressions in the direction of such Thomsonian fatuity as "Mike Turned Green At Twelve-Thirteen".

It was a make-believe world, yes, but it was a healthy world and it was extraordinarily convincing. Superb literary craftsmanship created and peopled it, but there was something behind that is not easy to define. It was the personality of the author. Here was no "flogging of dead horses", but a zest in the writing and a belief in it. In No.1,000 of "The Magnet", Frank Richards related how Martin Clifford had told him that the only stories which were better than the Greyfriars series were ----- those of St.Jim's! I fancy that Martin really believed this, and that the only amendment Frank would have made would have been to have reversed the order. This enjoyment illuminated the yarns and communicated itself to the reader so that there was built up an affectionate link between the reader and the tales which has endured for over forty years and which is unprecedented in boys' fiction. For the last ten years, our increasing knowledge has meant that we now know just where to direct our admiration and gratitude --- to Charles Hamilton of the magical pen -- and we extend both in brimming measure.

SEXTON BLAKE STORIES (Contd. from p.29)

<u>Story</u>	<u>Author</u>
84. Mystery of the North Tower.	Reginald Wray.
85. The Aztec's Treasure.	Cecil Hayter.
86. Fergus O'Flynn's Schooldays.	T. C. Bridges.
88. Plot and Peril.	Max Hamilton.
90. The Secret of the Inca's Palace.	Edgar Pickering.
92. The Sea of Death.	
94. Staunch and True.	Beverley Kent.
106. Fifth Form at Fernley.	Charles Hamilton.
114. Sexton Blake's Christmas	John Stanton.
)Xmas	
)Double	
Terror Island	)Number

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# The Remove Form at Greyfriars

By J. Breeze Bentley

The Remove Form is by far the largest of the seven forms at Greyfriars, and contains the impossibly-large number of nearly forty boys. Originally, they shared twelve studies, but subsequently a thirteenth and later a fourteenth study were brought into use.

## Study One: Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent

The first study - at the top of the staircase - is No.1, the most famous of them all. Although at one time it had no less than five members - Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent, Bob Cherry, Hurree Singh, and Billy Bunter - for a long time only the first two have occupied it.

Harry Wharton arrived at Greyfriars in the first issue of the MAGNET, a sulky, spoilt, bad-tempered boy, who quickly got at loggerheads with the rest of the Form. The story of his rise from Outcast of the Form to Form-Captain was the main theme of the earliest MAGNET stories and for a long time Harry Wharton was without doubt the central figure in nearly all the yarns.

Wharton is a complex character: honest, truthful, generous, self-sacrificing, cool in an emergency, courageous and loyal, yet rather proud, touchy, hasty-tempered and at times wilful - a boy about whom much could be written. As time went on, others held the stage for short periods, but Wharton has been, in large measure, the principal character. His adventures are too numerous to recount here. Suffice it to say that he has proved to be a good Head Boy and a successful captain of cricket and football, and that at no time has any serious rival presented himself.

Frank Nugent, the only other occupant of Study No.1, was one of the "original" characters, i.e. a boy already in the Remove when Wharton arrived. Like Wharton, he has always been in Study No.1. In the earliest tales, he was Wharton's only friend, and his patience and loyalty did much to improve Wharton and help him to appreciate the pleasanter side of boarding-school life.

In the earliest Magnet stories, Nugent was rated as one of the best boxers in the Form, but that day has long since gone. Nowadays he ranks 12th in the Form, and has the weakest punch of the Famous Five. He is also fated to be the only member of the Co. without regular place in the Form teams, but that dismaying fact does not trouble him. He appreciates that Harry Wharton must put skill before friendship when choosing a team.

Nugent is the only member of the Co. to have a younger brother - the wayward Dicky Nugent of the Second Form, who has caused him much trouble - borne, as ever, with patience.

A pleasant lad, Frank Nugent.

## Study Two: George Bulstrode, Peter Hazeldene (Ernest Levison), Tom Brown

Study No.2 has three boys in it: George Bulstrode, Peter Hazeldene and Tom Brown - an ill-assorted trio.

George Bulstrode was the leader of the Remove when Wharton arrived - a leader not by moral force, but by virtue of his fists and the richness of his pocket. Though a few fellows, such as Nugent, Ogilvy and Morgan, were not



pleased by this state of affairs, most of the Form accepted it with apparent willingness. They preferred a comparatively quiet life to the challenge of Bulstrode's arms.

When Wharton's personality led to the overthrow of Bulstrode, the bully gathered together the worst elements of the Form and fought a losing rearguard action, mean and backbiting, with employment of all sorts of despicable tricks.

Bulstrode's snobbery vented its spleen against Mark Linley - a scholarship boy - and even extended to ill-natured behaviour towards Linley's sister Mabel. Bulstrode tried to ill-treat Wun Lung, and, later, supported Vernon-Smith against Wharton.

As time went on, Bulstrode became less unpleasant and overbearing. Nowadays he plays football for the Remove, but otherwise seldom comes into the picture.

Bulstrode was at first in Study No.1 but in Magnet No.6 he fought Wharton and was beaten, and he moved to Study No.4. In Magnet No.75 he stated that his study was "next to No.1", i.e. No.2 and he has been there ever since.

Peter Hazeldene was another of the original characters. In the earliest days, he was nicknamed Vaseline, and this aptly described him - untruthful, unscrupulous, the oily toady of Bulstrode, and Cad of the Remove. His saving grace has been his sister, the fair Marjorie, whose friendship with Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry led to a gradual improvement in Peter, who lost some of his worst traits, and has actually figured as reserve goalkeeper for the Remove.

For all his reform, Hazeldene is still wayward, weak, and craven-hearted. Many have been the occasions when he has dabbled in gambling or frequented the Three Fishers, and on as many occasions has he burned his fingers and then tried - usually with success - to transfer his worries to another's conscience, sometimes Wharton's, often Cherry's, even that of his sister, Marjorie.

Undependable Hazel, not a pleasant fellow, but useful material for the author to write about.

Ernest Levison occupied the same study as Bulstrode and Hazeldene during his stay at Greyfriars. He arrived in Magnet No.18, a mistrustful, very suspicious boy, of carping spirit. He appeared in many stories and, contrary to the impression given in after-years, was quite good at games, being goalkeeper for the Remove. He shewed no vicious side until Magnet No.46 when, mainly as the result of inferiority complex, he went down rapidly, and began to break bounds to visit the Red Cow in Friardale. He was caught there in company with Wharton, who had gone out to warn him, and was expelled. His membership of the Remove thus lasted only seven months.

Tom Brown, from the province of Taranaki, North Island, New Zealand, arrived in Magnet No.26 and was at first placed in Study No.13, but on the very first day, a game of Rugger in the study brought down one of the walls - a wooden affair - and resulted in the temporary closure of No.13 and the transfer of Tom to No.2, where he has been ever since.

Tom Brown is quite different from his study-mates, being a thoroughly good sort. He has always stood up for justice and fair play and in the earliest stories came into conflict with Bulstrode and Stott, to the discomfiture of those worthies.

Nowadays he is occasionally troubled by Hazeldene's woes, but his chief claim to glory these days is the possession of a wireless set - the only one in the Remove.



### Study Three: Richard Russell and Robert Donald Ogilvy

Two boys live in Study No.3: Richard Russell and Robert Donald Ogilvy. Both are original members of the Form, and good fellows, having no truck with bullying and snobbery, and being supporters of Harry Wharton.

Dick Russell was mentioned in the first Magnet story. He is handy with his fists (ranking 4th in the Form) and is an "average" footballer and cricketer. Rather sensitive by nature.

Russell has not got much cash, and at one time his place at Greyfriars depended on his winning the £100 Founder's Prize. Quelch coached him, and by chance he was able to get a pre-view of one of the papers. The temptation was too great, he looked at the paper, and was much troubled by conscience. He owned up to his wrong-doing, and was forgiven. The paper, incidentally, turned out to have been a past number.

Robert Donald Ogilvy, who was first mentioned in Magnet No.44, is a Highland Scot. He is a pretty good cricketer, footballer and boxer, though not in Form teams, and is possessed of Scots' dry humour. He once rifled Loder's study to secure dress clothes in which Alonzo Todd might wear to go to tea with the Head, and has taken a minor role in other stories. His stock of butterscotch is constantly raided by Bunter, much to his annoyance.

### Study Four: Herbert Tudor Vernon-Smith and Tom Redwing

Study No.4 also has only two boys in it, Herbert Tudor Vernon-Smith and Tom Redwing.

Herbert Vernon-Smith is one of the greatest of Greyfriars characters. His father, Samuel Vernon-Smith is a self-made millionaire, who sadly neglected the moral education of his son during his pursuit of the immortal dollar, and Herbert came to the School (in Magnet No.119) as a thoroughly depraved character. On the journey, he had indulged himself with champagne and arrived in a rather tipsy condition, yet was not thrown out because his father was owed a considerable sum of money by Dr. Locke, who was in financial difficulty at that time.

From the first, Vernon-Smith gambled and betted, and so became the leader of the "gay dogs" in the Remove. He came up against Harry Wharton at once, and quickly realised that to oust him, he would need a large following in the Form. Vernon-Smith therefore began to play cricket and football, for both of which he shewed marked ability. When the trial of strength came, he nearly wrested the captaincy from Wharton.

After this failure, the Bounder determined to secure the expulsion of the Famous Five and of Mark Linley, for whom he had a snobbish dislike. Frank Nugent was caught at the Cross Keys, which he had visited in search of the erring Dicky, Johnny Bull was expelled for repeated fighting with Bulstrode, after being egged on by Vernon-Smith; Mark Linley was tricked into leaving by a faked telegram from home, Harry Wharton was falsely accused of a cowardly attack on the Bounder. Bob Cherry also received sentence of expulsion, but refused to go and barred out with Hurree Singh. During this rebellion, the real assailant boasted to Vernon-Smith's father that he had beaten up the son, and Mr. Vernon-Smith came post-haste to the School, and so revealed the Bounder's duplicity and the whole plot came to naught.



A period of reform followed, but could not last, and the final stage was the Bounder as we know him now - vice-captain of the cricket and football teams, and a skilful player, a good sportsman most of the time, but still a frequenter of the Cross Keys and the Three Fishers. Gambler, punter at race-meetings, and wilful tilter against authority, Vernon-Smith has had a wonderful run of luck on his many escapades, and his sardonic humour has led him to take unnecessary risks in the company of Skinner or Hazeldene for the pleasure of watching them quake in their shoes.

Headstrong and wilful, and implacable when roused, Vernon-Smith is cool-headed as a schemer, and probably the shrewdest fellow in the Four. Some of the finest stories about him are his association with Wharton on a bounds-breaking expedition.

Vernon-Smith is certainly unique; he has no parallel at St.Jim's or Rookwood.

On arrival, he was placed in Study No.9, which he shared with Skinner. Subsequently (Magnet No. ) they moved to No.4, and the Bounder has been there ever since.

Tom Redwing was one of the last of the permanent members of the Remove to come to Greyfriars; he arrived in Magnet No.517 and in that story he saved the life of Vernon-Smith, thereby beginning a life-long friendship. Redwing is the son of a fisherman living at Hawkscliff, a coastal village beyond Pegg. He came to Greyfriars in place of Leonard Clavering - who wished to join the Army. The two met as Clavering was on his way to Greyfriars. Naturally, as Redwing came from a nearby village, difficulties arose, and Cecil Ponsonby of Highcliffe (who recognised him) was a real trouble. Ultimately, the truth came out, and Redwing had to go.

Later, Vernon-Smith secured his return, under his own name, as a scholarship boy.

At first, Redwing shared the study of Snoop and Stott (No.11) and soon shewed those unsavoury fellows how little he liked their little ways. Later (Magnet No. ) he exchanged studies with Skinner and so joined Vernon-Smith in No.4, where he still is.

Redwing has always been closely associated with the Bounder in the Greyfriars stories. Outwardly an ill-assorted pair, they have stuck together through thick and thin. Vernon-Smith to Redwing when troubled by ill-fate or the animosity of snobs such as Snoop, Bulstrode, and Ponsonby; Redwing to Smithy when the latter has become almost friendless by kicking over the traces or other headstrong action. In later numbers, they were together on certain holidays, and in the Vernon-Smith Double series, it was Redwing's loyalty that finally ruined the plot against the Bounder.

#### Study Five: Oliver Kipps and Richard Hillary

There are two boys in Study No.5: Oliver Kipps and Dick Hillary.

Oliver Kipps arrived in Magnet No.268. His father had made a good income as a professional conjuror, and sent Oliver to Greyfriars to give him a good start in the world. He readily proved to be intelligent and shrewd, as when Vernon-Smith, Bolsover major and Snoop tried to lure him into the London express at Courtfield, to find themselves in the train while Kipps mysteriously regained the platform. He regaled Greyfriars with conjuring tricks, and later proved to be expert in slight of hand - a dangerous faculty. Kipps, however, is a straight and honest sort of chap, so it has never led him into trouble.



Kipps was at first placed in Study No.14, but moved to No.5 in Magnet No. Nowadays he seldom plays a part in any story.

Dick Hilary, who arrived in Magnet No.559, was the last new boy to become a permanent member of the Remove. Since that date, many have come, but all have proved to be "birds of passage".

Dick's father was a conscientious objector, and the son had a rough time as he refused to fight anyone until goaded by Percy Bolsover, he accepted the challenge. Though beaten, this fight earned him the respect of the Form.

In the next story, news came that Mr. Hilary had changed his views and joined up, and from that time Dick has never appeared in the stories, except incidentally.

He has always been in Study No.5.

Study Six: Michael Patrick Shamus Desmond, David Morgan, Richard Rake and William Ernest Wibley.

Study No.6 has four members: Michael Patrick Shamus Desmond, David Morgan, Dick Rake and William Ernest Wibley.

Micky Desmond, an original member of the Form, was first mentioned in Magnet No.15. He hails from Tipperary in Ireland, and speaks a rich Irish brogue. Micky provided some of the humour in the earliest stories, took girls' parts in the operas staged by the Wharton Operatic Co. of that period, and even played cricket and football for the Remove, but gradually faded out as better players arrived.

Micky's hobby is stamp-collecting, which brought him into prominence in Magnet No.425, "Micky Desmond's Luck".

David Morgan from Wales is another original member of the Form, being first mentioned in Magnet No.8. A quiet, decent chap, he has always been merely "one of the crowd" and I know of no story in which he has played a prominent part.

Dick Rake came in Magnet No.258. He is a cheery soul and on arrival shewed no sign of the nervousness usually attributed to new boys, and was resolutely unwilling to accept a minor position in the Form. Unable to secure a place in the Form football team, he started a rival eleven called "Rake's Rebels" which wound up early only after being beaten by the Junior Eleven dressed up as girls.

Rake is handy with his fists and ranks 19th in the Remove boxing list.

He has no patience with slinks. At first, he was in Study No.14 with Johnny Bull and Fisher T. Fish, and he and Bull took quite a lot of trouble trying to educate Fishy. Rake moved to No.6 in Magnet No.

Nowadays we seldom hear of him except as temporary Editor of the Greyfriars Herald when Harry Wharton & Co. are away on some trip to the other side of the world.

William Wibley arrived in Magnet No.323. He is a born actor, and very little use as anything else. Many are the people whom he has impersonated, and much woe has befallen him for doing it. From time to time he has played a big part in a story, right up to the end of the Magnet. He is an incorrigible joker and has no time for bad habits: acting occupies all his leisure.

Study Seven: William George Bunter, Alonzo Theophilus Todd, Tom Dutton, Peter Todd.

Study No.7 is one of the more celebrated apartments in the Remove passage, as its members are the Four Freaks: William George Bunter, Alonzo Theophilus Todd, Tom Dutton, and Peter Todd.



William George Bunter was one of the original characters. He first lived in Study No.1 as a timid, apologetic, short-sighted, rather stout boy incompetent at games but very ready to try some new activity, and always ready to prepare food or go to the tuckshop for it. He had the tedious habit of never coming to the point of a story when telling one, and was the butt of the Form.

Alone among Greyfriars boys, he has steadily become less and less attractive. He has grown lazier and lazier, becoming more and more reluctant to walk, till now a few hundred yards "wind" him; and becoming a regular slacker: he even dislikes preparing a meal in these days. Always a "dud" in class, he could at least spell correctly, but that became too much effort; his spelling is now fantastic.

Timidity has given place to boasting which on test always proves to be unwarranted, for he is a rank coward, though on occasion he has screwed up his courage and done the right thing.

At first he was actually truthful, but he gradually fell from grace, telling little fibs, then bigger untruths and finally great "whoppers". At the same time, mere longwindedness gave place to self-contradiction and by Magnet No.77 he tied himself in knots when trying to deceive Dr.Locke.

The celebrated postal order was first mentioned in Magnet No.2, when he tried it on Bob Cherry and has been coming ever since - though once, when Bunter competed for a £20 bicycle, and sent in the correct solution, he did receive a P.O. for 6d, because 799 other people were successful as well!

Bunter has become increasingly inquisitive; in later years this has been put to good use, as on many occasions it has made him the unexpected and often unseen witness of knavish tricks.

One thing Bunter can do well - ventriloquise. There was no sign of this in the earliest stories, but after many unsuccessful attempts, Bunter succeeded in Magnet No.47 and he has made good use of it ever since.

Bunter moved from Study No.1 to No.14 when that Study came into use in Magnet No.141, and later (Magnet No. ) moved to Study No.7, which he had to himself until Magnet No.271.

The gentle, mild-mannered Alonzo Todd, so well-meaning, and so exasperatingly ineffectual, so gullible and so clumsy, arrived in Magnet No.125, on the back of a donkey. He was placed in Study No.9 with Skinner and Vernon-Smith - dreadful companions for such a simple-minded youth - but moved with Bunter to No.14 in Magnet No.141, where he stayed until Magnet No.271, when Quelch transferred him to Study No.7.

Alonzo played a big part in the earlier stories, when his attempted good deeds caused chaos and confusion. Thus: (a) he dug up the Head's garden to plant potatoes in it; (b) swept Mr. Quelch's chimney to prevent it from smoking; (c) minded a horse, that of course ran away; (d) cut off Wun Lung's pigtail to relieve him of headache; and (e) tried to reform everyone he met.

If anything, Alonzo was over-drawn, too much of a caricature to last, and ultimately somewhere about 1930 (in Magnet No. ) he left, ill-health being given as the reason. On rare occasions (for example, Magnet 1344 - the "Strong Alonzo" series) he visited the School, and for some unknown reason, his name was never withdrawn from the official form-list.

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\*Actually, he moved out in No.143, presumably to Study No.9, but he was back in Study No.14 at the beginning of the next term (No.153).



Tom Dutton arrived in Magnet No.128, just after Alonzo Todd. He is very deaf, and it is a pity that this affliction should play so large a part when he appears in the stories, as it overshadows other points about him. Tom is handy with his fists, and quite ready to use them, as many have discovered to their cost when his deafness has caused a misunderstanding. He is fond of riding, is a skater of speed and skill, and a fairly good footballer and cricketer, though not a member of the teams.

Peter Todd is undoubtedly the leader of Study No.7. He is Alonzo's cousin, in looks almost his twin, and like him honest and straight. There the resemblance ends. Peter is clever, resourceful, decisive, shrewd: a born leader. While Alonzo dithers and trusts that good will result, Peter acts and ensures that it does.

Peter Todd first appeared in Magnet No.205, when he came to Greyfriars for one day, as a visitor. He was going to see an Aunt - one who appealed to Alonzo far more than to him - and arranged that his cousin should visit the Aunt while Peter took Alonzo's place at the School. You can well imagine the results of this when bullies and raggers came up against the wiry and fistical Peter instead of the puny Alonzo! Peter undoubtedly enjoyed himself on that afternoon.

Later, in Magnet No.271, Peter joined the Greyfriars Remove as a new boy, and at once set out to make Study No.7 the "top study" in the passage. A courageous attempt with the poor material available - the lazy Billy Bunter, the deaf and misunderstanding Tom Dutton, and the feeble though willing Alonzo. It was doomed to failure, but good fun while it lasted.

Peter Todd is a mighty man with his fists, and actually beat Bob Cherry on one notable occasion. He keeps his right arm in trim by tanning Bunter's hide from time to time with a cricket stump in an effort to improve the youth.

Toddy's ambition is to follow in his Father's footsteps and become a solicitor. His study houses many musty tomes from which he culls information. This knowledge has on occasion proved useful - as certain of the villagers have found out, but his legal arguments with prefects, Loder in particular, have sometimes caused his rather prominent nose to be pulled.

Peter Todd is an all-round sportsman and plays both cricket and football for the Remove. He is, in fact, one of the best-liked and most capable fellows in the Form.

Study Eight: Robert Fortesque Smith.

Robert Fortesque Smith, (Smith minor) has study No.8 to himself. He has been in the Remove since the beginning of the Magnet, and was mentioned quite early (Magnet No.27) but has not taken a prominent part in any of the stories. He is a retiring, well-meaning boy, rather younger than most of the Form, and has an elder brother, Edward William, in the Fifth, and a younger brother, Harry, in the Second. Beyond this, we can say nought about him.

Study Nine: Herbert Trevor, Anthony Treluce, Richard Penfold and Montague Newland.

Study No.9 has four members: Herbert Trevor, Anthony Treluce, Richard Penfold and Montague Newland.

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\* Age 14 years 8 months. Average age: 15 y 2 m; eldest Percy Bolsover 16 y 2m  
youngest Wan Lung 14 y 2m



Herbert Trevor was one of the original characters, being first mentioned in Magnet No.2. He hails from Lancashire, where his father is a wealthy manufacturer. Trevor is not really a bad sort, but he has no strength of character and so drifts towards the smoky set in the form. In the early days he played football for the Remove, but is only a mediocre player and soon lost his place. Although he was mentioned in many of the earlier stories, he has never taken a prominent part in them.

Anthony Treluce, another of the original characters, was the last to make his appearance in a story. He was first mentioned in Magnet No.116, in a story by a substitute writer. He comes from Cornwall. Like Trevor, he is a rather weak character, inclined to associate with the worst elements in the Form. He has represented the Form at football, but that was a long time ago. Nowadays we seldom hear of him.

Dick Penfold came to Greyfriars in Magnet No.194. Cornish by birth, his home is in Friardale, where his father is the cobbler. Unlike Brooke of the St.Jim's Fourth, who is a day-boy, Penfold has always lived in at the School. At first he encountered violent opposition from the snobs, and his position was made uncomfortable by his having to share the study with Vernon-Smith and Skinner (who lived in No.9 at that time).

Grinding poverty has dogged Penfold, and this has been the theme of many stories. Perhaps the best yarn was the one in which Peter Todd secured a £5 reward for Dick by getting him, quite unwittingly, to name Toddy as a culprit to Sir Hilton Popper. Peter got a birching during which he yelled convincingly, but he wasn't hurt, as he wore a leather pad under his vest!

Dick Penfold is a good, steady lad with his feet firmly planted on the straight and narrow path - though a substitute-writer once made him tread the primrose path for three stories (Magnet 720 to 722). He has played a good game of cricket in his time - he once helped Wharton to put on 76 for the last wicket to win the match against the Shell, and he is no mean photographer, but he is best known as a poet - a rather doggeral poet in my opinion. Many pages of the Greyfriars Herald have been filled with his compositions, and in the last years of the Magnet a poem by Penfold appeared in most of the issues.

Monty Newland arrived in Magnet No.216. He is a Jew, and ran into a lot of trouble because his relatives were believed to be grasping money-grubbers. This turned out to be false, and Newland proved to be quite a decent fellow. He has piles of cash, but soon shewed Loder & Co. that he was no pigeon to be plucked. He once saved Billy Bunter from the clutches of a moneylender, and has done other people good turns.

For years now, he has seldom appeared in the stories, but this is also true of nearly all the boys whose main purpose was to add racial interest to the stories, e.g. Tom Brown, Piet Delarey, Micky Desmond, Napoleon Dupont, David Morgan and Robert Donald Ogilvy.

Study Ten: (Ninian Elliott), Percy Bolsover, and Napoleon Dupont.

Study No.10 is nowadays tenanted by Percy Bolsover and Napoleon Dupont.

Ninian Elliott, a Border Scot from Teviotdale, used to be in the study. He was one of the original characters, being first mentioned in Magnet No.41.

Elliott was a weak character who supported first Bulstrode and later Vernon-Smith in their campaigns against Harry Wharton. He took a prominent



part in only one story - Magnet No.539 - where a kindly uncle offered him the chance to go to Canada. Elliott found himself up against it, as he owed money to a card-sharper who threatened to inform the uncle, unless paid. Wharton tried to help, but failed. He received no thanks for his efforts. Then Bolsover major settled the matter by thrashing the men. So Elliott went to Canada. He was no loss to Greyfriars.

Percy Bolsover, Bolsover major, arrived in Magnet No.182. He was a big, burly fellow, rather older than anyone else in the Form, and he boasted of having spent so many terms in the Lower Fourth at his old school that his father had removed him in the hope that he would do better at Greyfriars. On arrival, Bolsover began to throw his weight about and actually overwhelmed the Famous Five, one by one as they arrived at Study No.1, tied them up, and proceeded to eat the study tea! This sort of thing could not be tolerated, and Bob Cherry underwent careful training and then defeated Percy Bolsover in a tremendous fight. The rise of Bob Cherry to the rank of champion boxer of the Remove dates from this time.

Bolsover long continued to oppress the weak and the timid, and his conduct towards his younger brother, Hubert, of the Third was disgraceful.

Time has mellowed him to some extent, until now he is a rather dull-witted fellow, who acts as catspaw for Skinner or Vernon-Smith in some of their mischiefs. We cannot, however, dismiss him as anything but unpleasant.

Napoléon Dupont arrived in Magnet No.540 - the story after the departure of Elliott - and was put into Study No.10 where Bolsover made him very miserable. After some time, however, an uneasy peace obtained. Dupont is a quiet little fellow, noted as a cook.

Like Dick Hilary he is a nonentity in the Form and doubtless, had they arrived a little later in the history of the Magnet, both would have departed after a few weeks' stay.

Study Eleven: Harold Skinner, Sidney James Snoop, and William Stott.

Study No.11 is the Cads' Study, as its three members, Harold Skinner, Sidney James Snoop, and William Stott, are all "bad hats". All have been in the Form since the Magnet began.

Harold Skinner, who was mentioned in Magnet No.1, was at first the humorist of the Remove, but after the improvement of Hazeldene and the expulsion of Levison, he gradually developed into being the Cad of the Form.

He is a snob of the first water, and was one of the leaders of the persecution of Mark Linley.

He likes to break bounds and play the giddy goat, but at heart is a coward, and many have been the times when he has quaked in his shoes while his companion in crime - the Bounder - has coolly watched danger pass by.

Skinner's humour is spiteful, never good-natured, and in the cartoons that he draws, there is always a touch of malevolence.

Skinner is no fool and it is a pity that his nature is so mean. He remains an evil influence, leading the weak astray and is unfaithful to all save himself.



Sidney James Snoop, who was first mentioned in Magnet No.47, is the Sneak of the Remove and probably the meanest character at Greyfriars. In the earliest days he tosdied to Bulstrode, then he followed Vernon-Smith in the Bounder's worst days; nowadays he is the crony of Harold Skinner.

A thorough snob, he looks down on all scholarship boys and tries to vent his spleen on them.

A slacker of the worst type, he has about as much backbone as a jellyfish. He will literally do anything to save his skin, and none of his friends is safe when Snoop is trying to wriggle out of trouble, for he will lie unblushingly, or if cornered, will sneak about any and everyone.

Snoop is almost unique in that he has no redeeming virtue.

William Stott, the third member of this unsavoury trio, was first mentioned in Magnet No.47. He is a rather dull, unthinking fellow, who would rather follow another's lead than strike out for himself. Marjorie Hazeldene once summed him up, very aptly, as "that stupid boy, Stott." His tastes are mildly vicious, and he has been mixed up in many shady exploits, but he is not quite so blackly tarred as his study mates for on rare occasions Skinner's villainy has been too much for Stott and he has stood out from it.

Study Twelve: Herbert Plantagenet Mauleverer, Piet Delarey, Sir Jimmy Vivian.

The next study, No.12, has three occupants, Herbert Plantagenet Mauleverer (Lprd ?auleverer), Piet Delarey, and Sir James Vivian.

Lord Mauleverer is a complete change from his neighbours in Study No.11. He arrived at Greyfriars in Magnet No.184, driving a four-in-hand, and was given a study to himself, which he furnished in the grand style, with an especially comfortable sofa on which Mauly has dozed for most of his leisure time.

Mauleverer is one of the richest fellows at Greyfriars, and one of the most absent-minded and careless. Many have been the times when he has used a "fiver" as a book-mark - often with unfortunate consequences.

He has many excellent qualities. His temperament is urbane, his manners Chesterfieldian and he is incapable of seeing any but the better side of his fellows. When Harry Wharton fell out with the Remove, disrupted the Famous Five, and quarrelled even with Nugent, Mauleverer could still see good in him. He is, naturally, devoid of all trace of snobbery. While W.G.B. hopes to make the "lower classes" think that he is a gentleman, Lord Mauleverer is one, the personification of "noblesse oblige".

Lazy to a degree, Mauly has been known to act with resolution and energy when occasion demanded it. He was, perhaps, seen at his best in Magnet No.958, "The Slacker's Awakening" in which the Famous Five, Lord Mauleverer and Marjorie Hazeldene were trapped in the vaults below the old Priory near Greyfriars.

Mauly is a splendid fellow in the eyes of all except Mr. Quelch, who has to try to teach him on hot, drowsy afternoons.

Piet Delarey arrived in Magnet No.432. He comes from South Africa and is of Boer parentage. A splendid fellow, he appeared in the stories from time to time, but, like Treluce, was introduced by a substitute-writer - in this case, Pentelow. After Pentelow stopped writing Greyfriars stories, Delarey



was quietly dropped. He was last mentioned in Magnet No.952, but has since been given in Form lists.

Sir Jimmy Vivian, baronet, was dragged up in a disreputable tenement called Carker's Rents, where he learned to mispronounce the English language but failed to master table-manners. He was found by Sir Reginald Brooke - Mauly's guardian - and transferred to Greyfriars. When he arrived, in Magnet No.471, he created a sensation, and inevitably landed in trouble, especially at the hands of Skinner and Snoop, who toadied to him as a baronet until they found that he was a penniless orphan. Sir Jimmy has not lost his Cockney accent in spite of his stay at Greyfriars, but he has proved himself to be a decent lad.

Study Thirteen: Robert Cherry, Hurree Janset Ram Singh, Wun Lung, Mark Linley.

Study No.13 was brought into use in Magnet No.75. Bob Cherry, Wun Lung and Mark Linley were moved into it at that time. Hurree Singh became a member, much later, in Magnet 211.

Bob Cherry, who arrived in Magnet No.2, is a universal favourite and probably the most popular of all the Greyfriars characters. Happy and cheerful, full of good humour, a practical joker of no mean ability, a first-rate cricketer, footballer and swimmer, the best boxer in the Remove, and utterly devoid of "side" or malice, there is little wonder that he is well liked. Bob Cherry does not aspire to be a scholar; his "prep" is of mediocre quality, and often rather scamped - it must be confessed that he is helped by Mark Linley - and he is not cut out to be a leader such as Harry Wharton, for he is rather thoughtless and impulsive, acting first and thinking (if at all) afterwards. He is a good friend of Harry Wharton, and undoubtedly did much to make him the fine fellow that he is.

When he arrived, Bob was placed in Study No.4, but after Bulstrode had been out-boxed by Wharton, in Magnet No.6, they exchanged studies, and Bob moved into Study No.1. He stayed there until Magnet No.75 when Mr.Quelch transferred him to Study No.13 on the ground that No.1 was far too noisy and that Bob Cherry was the chief culprit.

Bob Cherry is a tender-hearted fellow, and his loyalty to and affection for Marjorie Hazeldene are well-known. It may be illustrated by the following episode, taken from Magnet No.71. Marjorie had visited Greyfriars to see her brother, and called in Study No.1 on her way out. The Co. had accompanied her to the school gate.

"Bob Cherry came running up with the bicycle::: Wharton lit the lamp and held the machine for Marjorie to mount. Bob Cherry had another machine in his other hand, and he lit the lamp for that also.

"'Hazel is riding back with me," said Marjorie, with a smile. 'He has permission'.

"'The roads aren't very safe...' said Bob Cherry. 'I'd better come and then I can look after Hazel on the way back.'

"'Thank you," said Hazeldene, as he wheeled his machine up. 'I can look after myself all right.'

"'Hallo, hallo, hallo! Is that you, old chap?' said Bob Cherry, quite



affectionately though, as a rule, he was not fond of Hazeldene. 'We'll have a jolly spin back.'

"'Oh! rats,' said Hazeldene.

"'Or, I'll tell you what,' said Bob with the same heartiness, 'I'll see Marjorie back to Cliff House, and you needn't bother to come out at all.'

"'More rats,' said Hazel.

"They wheeled their machines out of the gate. Gosling had come out to lock up and Wingate of the Sixth had come in just in time.

"'You kids going out?' he asked.

"'I am,' said Hazeldene, 'I've got a pass from Mr. Quelch.

"'And you, Cherry?'

"'Nice warm evening, isn't it?' said Bob Cherry, trying to wheel his machine past Wingate without answering the question.

"The big Sixth-former caught him by the shoulder.

"'Have you a pass, Cherry?'

"'A - a pass! Can't you give me one, Wingate?'

"'Then you haven't one?'

"'Well - no - not exactly.'

"'You young rascal, go in!'

"'Oh! Wingate!'

"The distress in Bob Cherry's face was so keen that the Greyfriars captain melted. He wrote on a leaf of his pocket-book, and tore it out.

"'Mind, back in half an hour,' he said.

"'Oh, thanks, Wingate. You are a sport.'

"'Oh, get off.'

"And the three cyclists disappeared in the dusk.

.....

Later, Bob Cherry gets back, and is greeted thus.

"'Did Marjorie get home all right?' grinned Nugent.

"'Of course she did,' said Bob. 'It was a lovely ride. I had to scorch back from Cliff House, and nearly fagged Hazeldene off his bike.'"

You can guess how much of the half-hour had been spent on the outward journey.

Hurree Janset Ram Singh, Nabob of Bhanipur, arrived at Greyfriars in Magnet No.6 when the boys of the Beechwood Academy came to stay at the School. When they moved out (in the following story), Hurree Singh came back, and hid behind the box room, in a passage that led to the disused wing. When discovered he was allowed to change schools, and was placed in Study No.1. Wharton, Nugent, Cherry and Hurree Singh thereupon became known to Magnet readers as the "Famous Four", the term being used in Magnet No.9.

Hurree Singh remained in Study No.1 until Magnet No.170 when he visited India for the Delhi Durbar held in honour of the coronation of King George V. When he returned to the School, nearly a year later, Magnet No.211, he was put in Study No.13, which has been his room ever since.\*

Hurree Singh's chief claim to glory is his wonderful variety of English, learned of his native tutor in Bhanipur, Mook Mookerjee.

In the earliest stories he was a rather trusting and guileless character, but later became quick-witted and shrewd. When Harry Wharton & Co. went

\* This fact is stated in Magnet No.213



with him to India to save his throne - Magnet 960-970 - he displayed a hardness of behaviour quite unusual to him, and was merciless to his rival.

Hurree Singh is a good wing-forward, and the demon bowler of the cricket team.

Wun Lung, the Chinese boy, arrived in Magnet No.36, and was placed in Study No.12. He was transferred to No.13 when that study opened in Magnet No.75, and changed to Study No.14 in Magnet No.141, but could not bear Billy Bunter and moved back to No.13 in Magnet No.143, and he has remained in No.13 ever since.

Wun Lung has always been rather a caricature, wearing Oriental robes, and speaking pidgin English. He had a pigtail until Magnet No.128, when Alonzo Todd cut it off.

Wun Lung has an impish sense of humour, and provided much of the light relief in the early stories. He has the Chinese passion for fireworks and for kites of weird design, and has entertained the Removites to wonderful dishes such as rat-pie and cat-soup, with disastrous results for the partakers.

Wun Lung has a bland and innocent expression which has enabled him to escape punishment from the masters, and he has off-set his diminutive stature and lack of boxing ability by the use of ju-jitsu.

His favourite in the Remove is Bob Cherry, who has often rescued him from the bullies.

Mark Linley worked in a cotton mill in Lancashire until he won the Bishop Mowbray Scholarship, which brought him to Greyfriars in Magnet No.45. He was the first scholarship boy to be mentioned in the stories - the later scholars being Dick Penfold and Tom Redwing - and he came right up against the snobbish and purse-proud elements in the Form. Bulstrode, Snoop, Vernon-Smith and Bolsover major, in succession, wrought evil by him, and he came through it all with flying colours.

Mark is, indeed, a fine fellow: clever, industrious, thrifty, chivalrous, the soul of honour. He is a good sportsman, plays football and cricket for the form, and is a capable boxer. On the rare occasions when Harry Wharton has fallen foul of Mr. Quelch, Mark Linley has acted as Head Boy of the Form.

In recent years, he has not taken a prominent part in the stories. There are several reasons for this. Bullying is not so evident as formerly. Secondly, Linley is studious and so does not get mixed up in many "rags", and thirdly, as he is chronically hard up, he cannot afford to go with the wealthier boys on holidays in the uttermost parts of the earth.

Mark Linley was in Study No.12 until Magnet No.75; thereafter he has been in Study No.13.

Study Fourteen: Fisher Tarleton Fish, Johnny Bull, and Sampson Quincy Iffley Field.

Study No.14 has three members, all of whom have been in it ever since they came to Greyfriars. They are: Fisher Tarleton Fish, Johnny Bull and Sampson Quincy Iffley Field.

Fisher T. Fish comes from New York in the United States of America, and thinks that he is a spry American business man. Actually, he is an



incompetent braggart. When he arrived, in Magnet No.150, he boasted that "football was easy", but what a mess he made of it! He subsequently claimed prowess in all athletic pursuits, but could never substantiate his claims.

But it was not his bragging that incensed and nauseated the Remove; it was his stinginess. Fishy is the meanest money-grubber imaginable, unwilling to part with a penny if he can help it. He does not have tea in his own study - unless someone else pays - because the school provides a meal of sorts that his father is charged for, and if he did not eat it, the money would be lost! He is always trying out some astute gag to separate his schoolfellows from their cash, and invariably coming a cropper. It was Fishy who (a) set up an agency to provide fags for the lazy - at a rake-off for himself; (b) started an Insurance Society to assure against school punishments; (c) ran a debt-collecting agency; (d) tried to lend money to Fags at high rates of interest; and (e) attempted to corner food during World War II. Bunter found the hoard, and swiped the lot.

Only Fisher T. Fish would possess a bunch of keys to be hired out to all and sundry with no questions asked, - at a small fee.

Dearly would Fishy like to be a gay dog, but money might be lost, so he refrains. He will, however, smoke a cigarette - if offered one. He hasn't any of his own.

That miserable and despicable miser, toady and funk: Fisher T. Fish.

Johnny Bull came in Magnet No.151, the week after Fishy. He was the last of the Co. to arrive, and his admission changed the Famous Four into the Famous Five.

Johnny Bull comes from Yorkshire, and his outstanding characteristics are bluntness of speech, fixed ideas of what is right and what is wrong, a good measure of obstinacy, and a wholesome regard for honest dealing and truthful words. Yet he is not disloyal to the Co. He has his say and then, finding himself a minority of one, he goes with the rest, remarking "one fool makes many". When the disregard of his counsel has led to disaster, tactless Johnny points out the fact - at great length, and often gets bumped by his exasperated pals to shew how much they appreciate his being right. In spite of his forthrightness, he is well liked. He is, of course, quite different from any other boy in the School.

In his earliest days, Johnny Bull played the concertina, appallingly. Fortunately it got smashed, and he did not get it repaired.

Johnny Bull was the originator of the Remove Form magazine (Magnet No.158) which became the Greyfriars Herald. Actually, Billy Bunter tried to copy the idea from Tom Merry's Weekly, in Magnet No.76, and Bob Cherry essayed to bring out a rival magazine at that time, but neither reached publication stage.

Johnny Bull plays back for the Remove, and is a member of the cricket team. Altogether, he is a good fellow.

Sampson Quincy Iffley Field, the boy from New South Wales, arrived in Magnet No.343, and was immediately nicknamed "Squiff" by Bob Cherry, who noticed the initials on his bag at Lantham Junction. He has been known by this name ever since.

Squiff is a first-rate sportsman and a born jeper. He pretended to know little about cricket, gravely accepted advice and then proved his ability in a



match he played for Courtfield Council School against the Remove. Since that day he has played in the Form team. He is also the regular goal-keeper in the winter.

Handy with his fists, Squiff knocked out Percy Bolsover in a fight.

A japer, he brought off a great rag when he visited Highcliffe, as a new boy and caned Mr. Mobbs.

The proof of the sportsmanship of Squiff is afforded by the fact that when Johnny Bull set off to Australia with an Aunt and Uncle, he asked that Field should take his place in the Co. which he did until Johnny came back, some weeks later.

#### Horace Henry Samuel Quelch, M.A.

We must not take leave of the Remove without mentioning the Master of that Form: Horace Henry Samuel Quelch, M.A., who appeared in the first Magnet story.

Of the Greyfriars masters, only Dr. Locke is married and lives at home with his wife and family. The assistant masters are unmarried and lead a monastic life, their accommodation being a study, a bedroom, and the communal common-room, where the fruity voice of Mr. Prout holds sway.

Mr. Quelch is a confirmed bachelor and his few relatives are seldom mentioned, but a niece - the plump Miss Cora Quelch, who captivated the heart of Billy Bunter and, like him, has an enormous appetite - has visited the school on two occasions, and a cousin - the rascally Ulick Ferrers - once turned up to cause trouble.

Mr. Quelch is a skilful and versatile schoolmaster, teaching English language and literature, History, Geography and Latin to the Remove, and giving tuition in Greek to Mark Linley and the few other boys who take that subject as an "extra". Discipline in the classroom gives him little trouble - his "gimlet eye" roves over the Form and malefactors quake. Not for him the "rags" that trouble Mossoo or the easy excuses that get past Capper; Quelch is too keen for such tricks. He can handle his Form, and the Remove know it, and respect him for it. Though strict, he is just, and he can temper justice with mercy, as Vernon-Smith, Bunter, and others have found. And he is very jealous of the good name of his Form. A hostile remark by Prout or Hacker, and Quelch's ire is roused. Many have been the occasions when the Remove have escaped lightly or even scot-free when injudicious interference by another "beak" has got Quelch's back up. Further, he has resigned on occasion, in protest against injustice, and has been dismissed by more than one tyrant Headmaster who had usurped Dr. Locke's position. All these episodes ended, of course, in the reinstatement of the intrepid Master of the Remove.

Mr. Quelch works his form hard, and himself too. Often are we told that much of his scanty leisure is spent in marking the exercises of his numerous Form - in winter, in his study; in summer, under a shady elm. He is often to be found in the Library, poring over dusty manuscripts in search of data for his celebrated "History of Greyfriars" - that many-volumed work which, alas, is doomed never to be completed. Mr. Quelch has never been an athlete, but he enjoys his game of chess with Mr. Lambe, the Vicar of Friardale, and, armed with his walking-stick, he often walks the portly Prout "off his legs"



in the country lanes around the School. On occasion, the stick has proved very handy, as when he hooked the smash-and-grab raider Mickey the Sprat off the pillion-seat of a motor-bike in Courtfield High Street, and when he drove off the armed gangster who tried to kidnap the American boy, Putnam van Duck.

Mr. Quelch's age is uncertain. Probably he is in the fifties. On the whole, his health is good, but twinges of rheumatism sometimes trouble him - to the distress of the Remove - and he is susceptible to chills. More than once, a fall in the River Sark has caused his temporary withdrawal from the Form-room, with disastrous results, as the locum tenens always proved a queer customer.

Yet it is certain that Mr. Quelch will never retire, but will continue to live a frugal and austere life devoid of such luxuries as a motor-car or even a wireless set, and to enjoy the confidence of his Chief, with whom he wrestles to solve the obscurities of those ancient classical authors, Sophocles and Sempronius.

NOTE: In certain cases the author has been unable to trace the Magnet stories in which boys were transferred to certain studies.

In such cases space has been left to enable the reader to insert the number if they can discover it.

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GREYFRIARS HERALD (Cont'd from p.35)

- No.17 11. 3.16. The Pride of the Ring (Serial) by Mark Linley.  
Adventures of Herlock Sholmes by Peter Todd.  
No.17. The Kaiser's Code.  
Dick Rake's Bulldog (Greyfriars) by Geo. Bulstrode.  
How Tom Brown Captured the Kaiser (Greyfriars) by J. Bull.
- No.18. 18. 3.16. The Pride of the Ring (Serial) by Mark Linley.  
Adventures of Herlock Sholmes by Peter Todd.  
No.18. The Yellow Phiz.  
Calling on Coker (Greyfriars) by S.Q.I.Field.

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# The Dead Man Laughs

By J. P. Wood

"The Dead Man Laughs" is the title of one of the excellent thrillers from Victor Gunn in which Ironsides Cromwell and his assistant, Sgt. Johnny Lister, solve another crime in their familiar style. I chose it as the title for this article, too, because I felt it was singularly appropriate to the story I have to tell.

It has been known for some time, of course, that Edwy Searles Brooks, Berkeley Gray, Victor Gunn, Robert W. Comrade, Reginald Browne and Edward Thornton are one and the same person.

The reprints of St. Frank's stories under the names of Browne and Thornton have been dealt with elsewhere, but here I propose to show how, Sexton Blake, Waldo, Nelson Lee, "The Grouser" (Insp. Blake) and Eustace Cavendish are not quite so dead so far as Mr. Brooks is concerned. Under the new guise of Norman Conquest, Insp. Ironsides Cromwell and Johnny Lister, they are, in fact, very much alive and kicking.

Broadly speaking - there are exceptions to which I will refer later - the Norman Conquest stories by Berkeley Gray largely comprise re-hashed Blake and Waldo stories. Gunn's Cromwell yarns are largely reprints of "Grouser" stories.

No student of Blakiana will fail to see the tie-up, but I hasten to add that for those of us who have not read the originals, the Gray and Gunn novels are vastly entertaining reading. Even if one has read the originals, the new novels are by no means devoid of merit and are well worth adding to the library.

As the reprints fall into two main parts, I am setting them out in that fashion. As Berkeley Gray and Victor Gunn, Mr. Brooks has written other books for which I can find no Blakiana: presumably, therefore, they are original novels. Here, then, so far as I can, is a full list of reprints:

Berkeley Gray: Duel Murder (Detective Weeklies 19 and 28, Tree Top Murder and The Hired Avenger, July and September 1933); Killer Conquest (Affair of the Roman Relics, Union Jack 1118, 14/3/28, and Once a Crook, Union Jack 1499, July 1932); Spot Marked X (Mystery of the Man in Mail, Detective Weekly, 30/1/35, Ten Minute Trap, Detective Weekly 201, dated 26/12/36); The Conquest Touch (From Information Received, Detective Weekly 48, dated 20/1/34); Blonde for Danger (Sexton Blake 4d. Library, The Midnight Lorry Crime, January 1937); Bell of Fire (Black Hand at St. Frank's, serial in Gem after amalgamation with Nelson Lee Library).

Victor Gunn: - The Borgia Head Mystery (The Two-Headed Viper, by R. W. Comrade, Nelson Lee Library 2nd N.S. 9, dated 22/3/30); Ironsides Sees Red (Cyclists' Rest, Detective Weekly 179, 25/7/36; The Holiday Camp, Detective Weekly 235, 21/8/37; and the Fantastic Affair at Cloon Castle, Detective Weekly 252, 18/12/37); Dead Man's Warning (Dacca the Dwarf, Nelson Lee Library, 2nd N.S.); Road to Murder (A Secret from The Thames, Detective Weekly 93, 1/12/34); The Dead Man Laughs (Frozen Man Mystery, Union Jack 1364, 7/12/29); Three Bates with Death (Murder on the Midnight Coach, Detective Weekly 99, 12/1/35, and Quivering Steel, Union Jack 1384, 26/4/30); Ironsides Smells Blood (Mystery of the Weiling Pool, Detective Weekly 210, 27/2/37; Pool of Escape, Detective Weekly 33, 7/10/33; and Girl with the Frightened Eyes,



Detective Weekly 110, 30/3/35); Ironsides on the Spot (Waldo and Blake in Red Hot Racketeers, U.J. 1425, 7/2/31, and Sexton Blake on the Spot, J.J. 1433, 4/4/31).

In addition, Berkeley Gray's first Sexton Blake radio play, Enter Sexton Blake, re-appears as the Victor Gunn novel Mad Hatter's Rock. It was originally serialised with the Paul-Cynos stories in the Union Jack.

On the question of reprints, compare these: "I promised her I'd give up this hanging, but as God is my witness, I swear I'll hang one more man - the man who murdered my daughter." (John Norris in Jeffrey Gaunt's serial, "Wrong'Un in the Force" beginning in Detective Weekly 179, dated 25 July 1936. And: "I will do one more hanging - and one more only!" vowed John Shand, the hangman. "And that will be the man who murdered my daughter." (Advertisement in the same D.W. for Walter Tyrer's The Hangman's Daughter, published as No.3 of the 2d Broadsheet Novels. Coincidence?

The Monster Library (Contd. from p.103)

No.12. 20.10.26 The Mystery Master. (Reprint of Nelson Lee Library, Small Series Nos: 256, The Remove-Master's Delusion. 257, The Master of Mystery. 258, Handforth's Handful. 259, The Riddle of Bellton Wood. 260, The Diamond of Fate. 261, The Split in Study D. 262, The Spy of St.Frank's. 263, The Claws of the Count.

No.13. 20.11.26. The Voyage of the Wanderer. (Reprint of Nelson Lee Library, Small Series Nos: 264, Lord Dorriemore's Quest. 265, Bound for Brazil. 266, The River of Wonders. 267, The Dream City. 268, The White Giants. 269, The Modern El Dorado. 270, Abandoned Among the Arzacs. 271, The Traitor King. 272, The Battle of the Giants. 273, The Lake of Gold. 274, The Return of the Wanderers.

No.14. 20.12.26. The Ghost of Bannington Grange. (Reprint of Nelson Lee Library, Small Series Nos: 285, The Jew of St.Franks, 286, Barred by the Head. 287, Something Like an Idea. 288, The Schoolboy Cinema-Owners. 289, The Haunted House. 290, The Christmas Plot. 291, The Schoolboy Builders. 292, The Cinema Strikers. 293, Solomon Levi's Triumph.

No.15. 20.1.27. The Boy Who Vanished. (Reprint of N.L. Library Small Series Nos: 275, The Study of Mystery. 276, The Lancashire Led. 277, The Secret of the North Tower. 278, Missing from School. 279, The Clue of the Oil Trail. 280, The Ruined Lighthouse. 281, The Schoolboy's Patient. 282, Nipper & Co. in Lancashire. 283, Handforth's Great Triumph.

No.16. 19.2.27. St.Franks on the Spree. (Reprint of Nelson Lee Library, Small Series Nos: - 294, The College House Mystery. 295, The Schoolboy Lightweight. 296, The Blackmailed Schoolboy. 297, The Housemaster's Double. 298, The Lure of the Ring. 299, The Housemaster's Hate. 300, The Beginning of the Rot. 301, The Secret Tribunal. 302, The Schoolboy Professional. 303, On the Track of the Schemer. 304, Fooled at the Finish.

No.17. 19.3.27. Prisoners of the Mountains. (Reprint of N.L. Library, Small Series Nos: 305, Adrift in Mid-Air. 306, The Ship of Mystery. 307, The Mountain Stronghold. 308, In the Brigand's Lair. 309, The Saving of the Capital. 310, The Sign of the Flaming Torch. 311, The Hounds of the Tagosse.

No.18. 20.4.27. The Remove in the Wild West. (Reprint of N.L. Library, Small Series Nos: 320, The Montana Mystery. 321, The Terror of Roaring Z. 322, The Rustler's Secret. 323, Up the Ghost River. 324, Redskin Courage. 325, The Valley of Gold. 326, The Traitors of Caribou Pass. 327, The Fury of Thunder Rapids.

No.19. 20.5.27. Rebels of the Remove. (Reprint of Nelson Lee Library, Small Series Nos: 328, The Head's Other Self. 329, Shunned by His Schoolboys. 340, Loyalists and Rebels. 341, The Schoolboys' Union. 342, The Christmas Plotters. 343, The Schoolboy Soviet. 344, The Communist School. 345, Staunch to the School. 346, The Supreme Council. 347, The Dismissal of Nelson Lee. 348, The Downfall of the Snake.



## Grandfather liked them Fierce!

By J.V.B. Stewart Hunter

"As we turn over the pages, we very quickly discover into what sort of scenes we are likely to be conducted. Here we see men dogging each other on dark nights, lurking behind trees and looking round corners; gipsies in woods are entering into mysterious compacts with gentlemen disguised in huge cloaks; burglars with dark lanterns are prowling in houses; assassins are aiming blows at the backs of unconscious victims; murderers steel into the chambers of sick men; women wake up startled in their beds and listen; ladies listen at doors; young girls are seen flying on the tops of houses from highly-impassioned pursurers; ladies elope with lovers in the dead of night; post-chaises are driven at the gallop in thunder, lightning, and rain over lonely moors; women are stabbing women, and offering to shoot men; men hurl each other down trap doors; dead men are carried to the doctor; ladies are oppressed with awful secrets, and faint before the altar at the sight of gentlemen; houses are on fire; duels are a standing institution; mask balls are the order of the day and night; ladies are carried away by force; horses are ever in readiness; there is much drinking, eternal embraces, and ever and everywhere we see hair flying wild and dishevelled in the wind."

That was a real penn'orth, that was!

(The quotation, by the way, comes from a hundred-year-old review of the penny number romances of George William Macarthur Reynolds, who was one of the more restrained writers of the Victorian "blood".)

Thumbing through my ANNALS, I observe that an ANNUAL article should be scholarly and authoritative, written by an expert for experts, and carefully non-controversial.

Life can be very difficult! I am neither scholar nor authority, this article on the Victorian "penny dreadful" is intended for those who know little or nothing about the subject, and, as it is frankly propagandist, it can scarcely avoid being controversial.

Nevertheless, I hope that you "moderns" — the Blakes, the Hamiltonians, the Leeites — will read it, because I honestly believe that you have something to gain by diverting a little of your interest to the "elder brother" of the hobby.

Perhaps I should explain what the early "penny dreadfuls" were. Around the mid-century the masses of the working-classes were just emerging from illiteracy, and clamouring for "something to read". The demand was largely supplied by semi-religious bodies, and, naturally, their offerings were edifying and elevating enough, but rather light on the entertainment side. The price of the three-decker novel was away beyond the capacity of the ordinary wage-earner; even the shilling monthly Dickens parts were too dear. The cheap publishers were quickly alive to the situation, and commenced to issue novels — highly dramatic stuff — in weekly parts costing a penny each. The weekly part consisted usually of eight pages illustrated by a crude wood-cut, and quite commonly ended in the middle of a sentence. The reader who wanted to have the complete novel had to save the parts and have them bound on the completion of the story.



The success of a story can be judged, in most cases, by its length. If the weekly parts were selling well, the author kept on writing, padding it, with a careless abandon, with anything he could lay his hands on; if they were hanging fire, he hastily inveigled all his characters on to a ship in a tempest, or arranged a volcanic eruption, so bringing the story to a speedy conclusion.

Are there any reasons why you should collect them?

I would suggest that a knowledge of the older "penny number" stories would make you a more considerable authority in your own specialty. All too frequently the term "specialist" is very loosely used, overlooking the simple fact that no-one can be considered a specialist who has not more than a nodding acquaintance with the general field in which he is working. Since, consciously or unconsciously, all art is derivative, it is particularly necessary for the book-collecting specialist to know the general background of his subject.

For instance, a Blake collector who does not know how much his favourite character derives from earlier fictional detectives, or what the Blake authors have learned from their forerunners, may be a "devotee" or "fan" or "what-have-you". but he is certainly not a Blake specialist. To him, the penny number can be particularly helpful. Even to those who know their Hayward by heart, it can present an unknown world of detectives, ranging from contemporaries of the stolid Sergeant Cuff, through imitation Vidocqs, to the astonishing array of "private eyes" that the ALDINES presented to the British reader. And not only the detectives, but their antagonists, the highwaymen, the burglars, the Spring-heeled Jacks, prototypes of the present-day gangsters — with the added advantage that they are the British variety, and did not have to be imported from America.

The argument applies with equal force to the Hamiltonians. Charles Hamilton "fans" will recall that, answering George Orwell, he disclaimed all knowledge of the work of Gunby Hadath. Since there is a school of thought which advocates a writer's complete disregard of the work of his competitors, there is nothing detrimental to Mr. Hamilton in his disclaimer — but a similar admission on the part of a Hamilton collector would automatically rule him out of consideration as a Hamilton specialist. I use this purely as an illustration, of course — I have no doubt that every Hamiltonian is familiar not only with Hadath, but with his predecessors, Kipling, Dean Farrer, Hughes, T.B. Read, and the host of others. Even then, the world of the "penny number" can offer an extra-curricular course in a varied range of schools and schoolboys, from the Dotheboys Hall type through the incredible public schools of the Brett and Hogarth era to the turn-of-the-century academies, trending closer to the earlier Greyfriars and St. Jim's.

Ambition is not in all of us, so perhaps you do not want to be a specialist. Can I offer you a financial inducement? I would be the last person in the world to suggest the profit motive as the primary object in selecting a collecting activity. Yet there is much to be said for the old Yorkshire advice: "Doñt thou marry for munny, but goñ wheer munny is." In other words, if you can find an interest in a branch of book-collecting where values are likely to appreciate, so much the better. In my opinion, the collecting of the old "penny numbers" does fall into that category, whereas the collecting of the "moderns" certainly does not. Ten, twenty, thirty, forty (I hope, for you!) years on, think what a comfort it would be to your sorrowing relict, as she regretfully lines the bottom of the parrot's cage with a couple of red MAGNETS, to know that there are a few pounds locked up in the musty old volumes you bought as a sideline!



There will be many to protest my assessment of the likely market trend in "moderns", so I may be forgiven for elaborating my reasons for believing so. They have nothing in them of disparagement of the merits of these periodicals, either as literature of entertainment. Indeed I have a warm affection for Mr. Hamilton, who gave me so many happy boyhood hours; a modest collection attests my admiration of the craftsmanship of many of the BLAKE authors; my sympathy goes out to E.S. Brooks as an able writer who had the melancholy fortune to fall between two stools.

I build my argument, firstly, on the belief that the basic reason for the collecting of GEMS, MAGNETS, LEES, and BLAKES is a simple nostalgia, a desire to recapture the reading delights of boyhood. It is a very good reason -- who would not want to recapture these happy days? But it is now eleven years and more since the three first-named periodicals ceased publication; there is a new generation growing up who have never read a GEM, MAGNET, or LEE, and consequently have not that initial impetus towards collecting them. Check the average age of collectors in the WHO'S WHO, and the number of teen-agers for confirmation. With sorrow for the deplorable taste of the new generation, I must go further and say that it does not want to read any school stories. Although the bookstalls are loaded with SUPERMANS and CAPTAIN MARVELS and mis-named COMICS, post-war publishing is strewn with the wrecks of school-tale periodicals. (Since someone is bound to quote the Hamilton bound books, may I say here that a check with local booksellers confirms my belief that, like the old B.O.P., they are bought for boys and not by boys). It follows, then, that when the present generation of collectors dies out, so too will the demand for these periodicals. Not entirely, of course, since there will be students of the juvenile story for whom Charles Hamilton will be "required reading", and sociologists to puzzle over the paradox of a public-school theme and a pre-dominantly Council school readership. But their requirements will be pitifully small, compared with the large amount of material available. (It would be interesting to know how much Hamiltonia Mr. Turner needed to read in order to write his very competent chapter in BOYS WILL BE BOYS). The slump in values is inevitable.

On the surface it would seem that the SEXTON BLAKE position is different, inasmuch as that the series is still running. It is, unfortunately, only a surface difference because the Sexton Blake of today's series bears little or no resemblance to the earlier character. The real Blake died with the War years, and if another name should be substituted for Blake it would not make a scrap of difference to the story. Why then should the present readership want to collect them when they are indistinguishable from the ruck of paper-backed crime books that litters the bookstalls? And, since they are obviously content with this state of affairs, they have no impetus to research into the earlier series to find an individual Sexton Blake. So we march, inevitably, to the same melancholy destination -- the present collectors die out, and the demand will come from students and general detective-story collectors who will require only a few examples.

Now dry your eyes while I reverse the medal, and tell you, very briefly, why the "penny numbers" will continue to be collected, and to appreciate in value. There are three main reasons. Firstly, there are comparatively few complete copies available. Anyone who has tried to save part issues of encyclopaedias and things like that knows, when the time for binding arrives,



the dismay of discovering one or two parts missing. Secondly, the demand comes from many overlapping groups -- the "Penny Dreadful" collector, the historian, the sociologist, the crime collector, the student of Victorian fiction, and many more. I can illustrate this by an incident coming within my knowledge. A bookseller I know had four copies of THE SEAMSTRESS, or THE WHITE SLAVE OF ENGLAND. I bought the first copy, the second was sold to a collector of Victorian fiction, the third to a trade union official interested in the dress-making trade, and the last, on the strength of its misleading sub-title, to a collector of erotica. Lastly, anyone who reads a literary magazine, or looks at the publishers' announcements, must be aware of the steadily increasing interest in all Victorian subjects, and particularly in Victorian literature. This is evidenced by the large numbers of reprints, and biographical studies of little-known writers. The "penny number" will certainly come in for its share of attention.

I have offered two inducements, and I would add to them the major one that the collecting of the "old-timers" can bring a good deal of interest and amusement -- and that is something in this rather cheerless epoch. Interest, because the "penny number" covers such a wide variety of subjects. There are sea and war stories, tales of highwaymen, studies of contemporary high and low life, fictionalised accounts of famous crimes, historical narratives covering every period from the Crusades to the Regency, even the early "scientifiction". Amusement, too, in the highly stylised illustrations, the glaring anachronisms, and the "purple passages". There are no pastel shades in the "penny number"!

Won't you try a sample? It will not cost much. I would like to suggest a few titles from which you could make a trial essay. They are a personal selection, and there are many "penny number" items that would do equally well although I have chosen this short list for their readability, reasonable cost, and availability. Most of them can be obtained through diligent enquiries of the booksellers, or, since booksellers are inclined to overprice the commoner numbers, by buying collectors' duplicates. (Please do not ask me; I only wish I had duplicates -- they would be a support for my declining years!)

My first item is a particular favourite of mine, because I think that, as a "penny number", it has everything. It is the First Series of THE MYSTERIES OF LONDON which, with its successor THE MYSTERIES OF THE COURT, ran interruptedly for twelve years, the combined series containing as much reading matter as fifty modern novels. There are two series in the MYSTERIES OF LONDON, and four in the MYSTERIES OF THE COURT, and each series consists of one complete story. A series has 104 weekly parts each with an exciting wood-cut illustration, and covers 800 large double-columns of small type. It would provide you with ample winter reading. The main plot is the usual Victorian "missing heir" one, but there are dozens of intricate sub-plots. Reynolds, the author, was a prominent Chartist as well as a bigger "best-seller" than Dickens, and there are fascinating details of the "low life" of the period; the poor are white as the driven snow, and the titled are no better than they should be. At a cost of less than a guinea it is value for money.

Next, for a historical example, is ROBIN HOOD AND LITTLE JOHN, or THE MERRY MEN OF SHIRWOOD FOREST, by Pierce Egan. Pierce Egan was the editor of the HOME CIRCLE, a rather staid family magazine, and accordingly, his story keeps well inside the bounds of Victorian decorum. Despite a rather turgid style, he tells a good historical story, and the reader will find in this volume some of the "source material" of the later Robin Hood stories. There are



several editions of this volume; my copy is the Author's Own Edition of 35 weekly numbers, 280 pages, with the usual illustration to each part. It should cost around half a guinea.

The Highwayman stories are legion, probably the best known of them being BLACK BESS, and BLUESKIN. The former is a massive volume of 254 weekly numbers, over 2000 pages of "closely set double-column type. BLUESKIN is about a hundred numbers shorter. Although both are "musts" for the Penny Number collector, I would hesitate to recommend them to the beginner. To settle down to reading them would be a formidable task, and the price is considerable. I prefer to recommend a later issue of the 'seventies' — THE BLUE DWARF, by Percy St. John. This was issued by Hogarth House in 35 weekly numbers, and is generally found in three volumes with coloured covers. (Incidentally, if you buy Hogarth House, or Brett novels in bound form, see that the coloured covers are bound in). This is a tale of Dick Turpin, which bears little resemblance to the actual career of this malefactor — in this story Dick's adventures include fighting with Rob Roy in Scotland, with the insurgents in Ireland, and against Red Indians in America! It is shockingly badly written, for this was St. John in his decline, but the fifteen folding plates in full colour are a delight. You may have to go beyond a guinea for this item, but it is worth it as a decorative piece.

It is embarrassing to have to make a selection from the school stories because there are so many to choose from. The early examples bear a very close resemblance to those Belsen-like institutions portrayed by Dickens and Mrs. Trollope, so I will make my selection from the Birchem and Swishem academies of the Brett and Hogarth era. There was one vital difference between the heroes of that time and the Frank Richards boys — the former grew up! So we have the long JACK HARKAWAY and TOM WILDRAKE series, where only the first volume deals with the schooldays of the hero, subsequent volumes detailing his adventures all over the world. Further school stories were arranged for by sending the hero's son — and in the Harkaway case, grandson — to continue the process! There are, of course, many single volume school stories, but my own opinion is that they are not up to the standard of the series stories. So, I will plump for a Brett issue: THE SCAPEGRACE OF THE SCHOOL, or THE ADVENTURES OF DICK LIGHTHEART in 26 numbers, or two coloured-cover volumes. Those who find interest in Dick's schooldays can follow his further adventures in the subsequent four volumes of AT SEA, and OF LONDON. The first two volumes should cost around half-a-guinea.

Bow Street runners, the top-hatted detective sergeants, and the private investigators appear in the 'fifties, 'sixties, and 'seventies, but I am going to the turn of the century for my detective selection, to the ALDINE DETECTIVE, mainly because they are so reasonably priced. For a shilling or two one can obtain these small-size 80 page volumes with their melodramatic coloured covers. Between these covers parades the oddest selection of detectives ever to appear in print. The volume before me is typical: PITILESS AS DEATH; CROWINGSHELD THE DETECTIVE, JOE PHOENIX'S DOUBLE DEL (Joe was a favourite character of this series); BEAUTIFUL JACK, THE DOUBLE-EDGED DETECTIVE; THE DANDY DETECTIVE, and so on. There are over three hundred numbers in the series, so the choice is wide.

I cannot close my selection without mentioning a Lloyd, that pioneer of the "blood". To most collectors the name of Lloyd means SWEENEY TODD and VARNNEY THE VAMPIRE, and the much sought after highwaymen tales like PAUL CLIFFORD and



CLAUDE DUVALL. But in the two hundred odd (and "odd" is apt!) romances appearing with the Lloyd imprint there are a considerable number aimed at a female readership. "Domestic Romances" he called them, but they were far from being humdrum -- MERTHA WILLIS: THE MAID, THE PROFLIGATE, AND THE FELON tells its story in the sub-title; HELEN PORTER, A SECRET OF THE SEWERS OF LONDON promises a somewhat undomestic locale; PEDLAR'S ACRE, or THE WIFE OF SEVEN HUSBANDS lives up to the sub-title. The woodcuts which adorn each part are a delight -- the wood-chopper which figures as a lethal weapon in many of the stories seems to have been the tool used for the wood-cuts as well! Lloyd novels are scarce, and many of them run into quite high figures, so I will choose one which is not too expensive, and recommend ADELINE, or THE GRAVE OF THE FORSAKEN as a typical example of the "domestic romance". It consists of 52 penny numbers. My copy cost fifteen shillings, and it should be procurable around that price.

And so ends this tentative reading list. It may be wondered why I have made no mention of the numerous periodicals of the Victorian era. Principally because this is another subject, and I would prefer to see it handled by an abler pen than mine, but also because I am doubtful if values, in this branch of collecting, will show the same tendency to increase. But from the viewpoint of interest, I would certainly recommend anyone to buy a volume of, say, BOYS OF ENGLAND which are still procurable at less than a guinea a volume, and are, at that price, amazingly good value for money.

I hope that this brief article may tempt one or two of you into this field of collecting. It is very largely uncharted country, with many intriguing byways yet to be explored. Come along and stick up a few sign-posts for those who will follow after us.

#### THE MONSTER LIBRARY

##### Notes:

A monthly library of 19 issues only, from November 1925 to May 1927 inclusive. 1/- each with Yellow, Red and Blue covers. All were reprints of stories first appearing in the NELSON LEE LIBRARY, and all were written by Edwy Searles Brooks.

No.1. 20.11.1925. The Schoolboy Treasure-Seekers. (Reprints of Nelson Lee Library, Small Series Nos:- 158, Captain Burton's Quest. 159, The Schoolboy Stowaways. 160, S.O.S. or Tricked by Wireless. 161, The Island of Fire. 162, The Valley of the Unknown. 163, Marooned. 164, The Fight for Mastery. 165, A Bid for Gold.

No.2. 19.12.1925. The Black Sheep of the Remove. (Reprint of Nelson Lee Library, Small Series Nos:- 170, The Coming of the Serpent. 171, The Boat-Race Mystery. 172, Nipper in Disgrace, 173, Expelled from St.Frank's. 174, The Remove on Strike. 175, Poor Old Handforth. 176, The Closing of the Net. 177, The Serpent's Redemption.

No.3. 20.1.1926. The Tyrant of St.Frank's. (Reprint of Nelson Lee Library, Small Series Nos:- 187, The Soldier Housemaster. 188, The Freak of St.Frank's. 189, Discipline Let Loose. 190, Under the Heel. 191, Dr.Stafford's Ordeal. 192, Who Killed the Colonel? 193, The Schoolboy Sleuth. 194, The Colonel's Secret.

(Cont'd . page 38)



## Inside Fleetway House

Information supplied by Tom Hopperton, Ernest Carter,  
J.R. Hurtagh, James D. Merralls, and Rev. A. G. Pound,  
with comments by Herbert Leckenby.

During the year several members of the clan have been in contact with men who used to write the stories in which we are so much interested. From them they succeeded in getting some real inside news, the sort of news we revel in. This information has been assembled here, with the result that we have an article as useful and interesting as any that have appeared in our pages.

First of our sleuths was Tom Hopperton. Now, when Tom gets on the hunt, he is like unto a football "scout" in search of a £30,000 centre forward necessary to save the team from relegation. In the beginning he tracked down Michael Poole; from there on to Stanley Austin, Clive R. Fenn, and Maurice Down, (for long editor of the Magnet and Gem) a nice bag nearly a forward line. If he had got G. R. Samways, as he tried to do, he would have had one.

The case of Stanley Austin was particularly interesting. His name was a new one to, I believe, all of us, yet we found that he was one of the most prolific of the "imitation" Gem and Magnet authors. Anyway he proved a most useful discovery, for he told us quite a lot we didn't know before.

However, I will now let Tom Hopperton give you the result of his labours, then I will take up the story again.

### T. Hopperton

When drafting an article lately on Hulton's BOYS' MAG ZINE a thought struck me which halted my fingers at the following passage:

"Michael Poole, who could always be relied on for a good story, impresses me as being pre-eminently the A.P. writer who could - given the same or similar circumstances - have given Charles Hamilton a run for his money. He had the essentials of a smooth style, fertility without wandering into the fantastic to eke out his plots, easy humour and convincing characterisation. In "The Blott of Berrisford" he produced the best school series of the many in the pink paper....."

I began to wonder if those opportunities had not existed, at least in part. Mr. Poole went to the A.P. in 1910, was Editor of ANSWERS by 1912, and a prolific contributor. He had taken over Sexton Blake for five numbers of that Library and for a number of UNION JACKS. Above all, he was a specialist in school stories and the odds seemed long that he would have contributed some of the stories to the GEM and MAGNET. I rolled out the sheet of paper and fed in another for a letter. Back came a friendly and informative reply which showed that while my guess had not been correct we had certainly read much more of Michael Poole than we had suspected. "The Prince of Altenburgh" in the 1917 MAGNET and "Quinton's Heritage" in the GEM -- remember them?



Of course, and as "Anthony Thomas" was Michael Poole we can now give credit in its proper place. Mr. Poole confirmed too what we have been only vaguely aware of - that the Blakian writers, himself among them, had a hand in the Dixon Bretts, Dixon Hawkes and Tubby Haigs which flourished in the early 'twenties. Bill Gander was wondering in S.P.C. about the origin of the short Blake stories which appeared in the POPULAR and which were so much at variance with the accepted tradition. Thanks to Herbert Leckenby it was possible to ascertain that they came from THE PENNY PICTORIAL and Herbert could produce copies going back to 1908 (from the adverts in the 3d GEM they were running in 1907, if not earlier) but without Mr. Poole, who consulted old colleagues at the A.P., we should not have known that the chief author of both this series and similar Blakes in ANSWERS was Andrew Murray, although others, again including himself, had made lesser contributions to the series. But chief among the surprises was his disclosure that one of the leading hands in the GEM and MAGNET substitute writers' circle had been Stanley Austin.

Stanley Austin! A man who had written between two and three hundred St. Jim's and Greyfriars stories and whose partial identity with Frank Richards and Martin Clifford seemed to have remained within the professional circle associated with Fleetway House! If so substantial a figure in the saga had remained unknown, what chance is there of securing a reasonably complete list of all who had stories printed? The famous entry in the WRITERS' AND ARTISTS' YEAR BOOK had solicited contributions for years: how many hundreds of free-lances hopefully ground out stories and how many saw those stories in print is something that would tax Sexton Blake to solve. Off went a further letter to Mr. Austin, and on the same day I learned that Stanton Hope, now in Australia, had added yet another to the list by his admission that he had written several of the yarns, and with the following strokes of his pen, apparently deleted one by an emphatic statement that Clive R. Fenn had not written any. Coming almost immediately after Mr. S. F. Jones' article on "Clive R. Fenn as an Imitator of Charles Hamilton" in the COLLECTORS' DIGEST, this was indeed food for thought. Mr. Poole had already expressed surprise to hear of Mr. Fenn being among the subs: now came a second letter in which he said that the article had considerably puzzled him, R.T. Eves, who conducts the A.P. girls' papers, and Horace Hazeldine the chief literary cashier during a reminiscent conclave over the DIGEST, and that these three old-stagers were "even more definite that Fenn had never done any of the stories -- unless they were in the very, very early days of the papers."

Now came the reply from Mr. Austin, which was a model of all that an enquiring collector could hope for -- and completely surprising. He gave so much information, indeed, that it has not yet been possible to sort all of it out, but starting with "The Feg's Honour" for the GEM in about 1919, he carried on until about 1935 to a total of, as I said, between two and three hundred stories of St. Jim's and Greyfriars. Among the titles were: "The Sacred Idol", "Malcolm's Secret", "Grundy's Delusion", "Fifty Pounds Reward", "Top of the River", "Rowing to Win", "Grundy, Ventriloquist", "St. Jim's Guy", "In Another's Name" and its sequel, "The Lightning Shaft" and sequel, and a number of holiday series -- those dealing with the motor caravan, the motor cruiser and the Norfolk Broads. All these were in the GEM, for which Mr. Austin's last long series was the eight cricket yarns under the general title of "Who Shall be



Captain". It will be noticed that the foregoing contains the 1925 "Nippy" yarns which had been ascribed to Clive R. Fenn and which formed the basis of Mr. Jones' article. Mr. Austin was not in a position to consult his records at the time of writing, but he did mention "The Secret of Shark's Tooth Island" and "The Supreme Sacrifice" as two of his MAGNET stories. He had also done a lot of shorts for the PENNY POPULAR and the HOLIDAY ANNUAL, covering not only Tom Merry and Harry Wharton but even the third member of the trinity -- in shorts, long-completes and a full Rookwood serial for the GEM, "His Own Enemy". The record goes a long way back: his first story appeared in the BOY'S HERALD in 1910, and was followed by contributions to the BOYS' FRIEND, BOYS' REALM, and many others.

Now if there is anyone who can fit the missing pieces to the puzzle, it is Mr. C. M. Down, who was H.A. Hinton's assistant and, when Hinton left the A.P. in 1921, succeeded him as Editor of the Companion Papers, to which was later added MODERN BOY. He was a little surprised and, I think rather gratified, to find so much interest being taken in his former charges after so many years, and he was kind enough to swell the information at our disposal, by corroborating that among the authors had been Clarke Hooke, that elusive Mr. Cook, and the more familiar names such as E. S. Brooks. He denied categorically, though, that Ernest Brindle had been one, which seems to brand as a myth the belief that Brindle was the first of the subs, and it was significant that while I had mentioned Clive Fenn, he did not. He believed, moreover, that the majority of the later non-Hamilton tales had been the work of G. R. Samways, who had familiarised himself with the general atmosphere when he had been on the editorial staff for a period after the 1914 War.

From Mr. Down came also an expression of opinion on what was, at all events, the later editorial policy regarding the vexed question of substitute authors, which he agreed had been a headache, as it was obviously necessary to have some trained writers who could have carried on in place of Mr. Hamilton in case of emergency. When he became Editor, it was his policy to train one or two, but to use the maximum number of genuine Hamilton stories, to which he gives unstinted praise.

It had now become clear that the only way to resolve the contradictory opinions and recollections about Clive Fenn's work was to appeal to Mr. Fenn himself, and a charming reply proved at last that we had been under a misapprehension. Mr. Fenn was certainly on the staff of the Companion papers but it was in connection with the correspondence (although he did many special articles for them) and his very long career as a fiction writer was centred on other papers. He does relate an amusing incident of J. N. Pentelow, during his editorship, putting him on to do a MAGNET yarn, buying it for five guineas as "the style was miles off" and then proceeding to carve himself five weekly numbers out of Mr. Fenn's plot. Incidentally, after the lapse of thirty years, he is at one with Mr. Hamilton in speaking in the warmest terms of H. A. Hinton, and I should like to think that there was someone in the world who would speak of me as glowingly as Clive Fenn does of Charles Hamilton.

There have been asides and gleams of information along the way that I am reluctant to forego, such as more of Mr. Fenn's work, but space and a strict attention to relevance exclude them. But, from Mr. Poole, did come one



further item which is right on our doorstep. Long after Ferrers Locke made his bow in, I believe the  $\frac{1}{2}$ d Gem No.16, he was featured in a series of serials for the MAGNET credited to Hedley Scott. It now appears that Scott was really Hedley O'Mant, for long a sub-editor for that paper, and of him Charles Hamilton dryly observes. "Yes, O'Mant was Hedley Scott, and he had the nerve to appropriate my detective --- Locke, stock and barrel, as it were!"

NOTE: To avoid any possible misrepresentation, most of the words, even in not in quotation marks, are those of the writers.

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Well, that will have given you something to ponder over, but before I pass on, just a word or two about that Clive Fenn error. When Stanley Austin's letter came along I let John Shaw have a look at it. He, authority No.1 on the "imitation" stories, instantly pointed out that Mr. Austin claimed the "Motor Caravan" series. Now these were what we usually call the "Nippy from Nowhere" stories, and in an article which appeared in the C.D. these had been credited to Clive Fenn. All I can say in excuse is that at the time several of us were under the impression that they were Clive Fenn's work. As they are usually considered to be some of the best of the "imitation" stories it is only right that Mr. Austin should be given his due.

Now to "Down-Under"

We'll now travel across the world - to Australia. There the eagle eye of Ernest Carter had spotted the name of Stanton Hope in the news. He wondered if it was the same Stanton Hope who was one of the great army of Sexton Blake authors. He wrote to him and soon found that he surely was. Followed some happy meetings wherein several of the fellows in the vicinity of Sydney took part. Out there he is running "The Stanton Hope College of Journalism" and a pamphlet in connection with it gives us much interesting information about him. His full name is W. E. Stanton-Hope, and he is a F.R.G.S. He has many important books to his credit including "Ocean Odyssey" (a copy of this is in the King's personal library); "Gallipoli Revisited"; "Richer Dust" a novel publicly recommended by Winston Churchill); "Tanker Fleet"; "Burton of the Bazaars" and "Gold Patrol".

He was naval features writer for the London "Evening News" and author of all the Merchant Navy sections in the New Universal Encyclopedia.

To come to the field in which we are particularly interested we find that Stanton Hope's output was prodigious. Listen to this: "He wrote many full length novels of the world-famous detective, Sexton Blake. He has written over 30,000,000 published words in more than 20,000 serial instalments, short story series, short stories and articles. His work has appeared in hundreds of the foremost newspapers, magazines and periodicals in Great Britain, the United States, Commonwealth and Dominions."

Evidently a very versatile fellow, Stanton Hope, and before we leave him I will repeat what was stated in the August 1951 Collectors' Digest that some of his stories were written under the pen names, William Stanton, Donald Dean, and Rhoda Dean.

Now, whilst Ernie Carter and Co. were meeting Stanton Hope, another



Australian chum was at work for the good of the cause, to wit, James D. Merralls. He was corresponding with Lewis Jackson, remembered by so many with affection as the creator of Leon Kestrel, one of Sexton Blake's greatest adversaries. Jim, you will agree when you have read it, collected some really valuable information; you will be surprised to hear, too, that he is only fifteen. This perhaps should have appeared in the Sexton Blake section, but as it is surely something from inside Fleetway House I thought it appropriate to place it here. So here it is just as young Jim Merralls wrote it.

THE STORY OF LEWIS JACKSON by James D. Merralls.

Living in a state of semi-retirement in a small Sussex town near Newhaven is a man, almost forgotten now, but who, during the boom period of boys' periodicals in the years 1915-30, captured the imagination of countless boys throughout the British Empire. He is Jack Lewis, better known to the legion of old boys' paper collectors as Lewis Jackson. Perhaps it is rather misleading to state that Jackson (I will refer to him as this for the sake of convenience) is almost forgotten now; he revealed to me that he rarely received "fan mail" in the days that a story of Sexton Blake was penned by him almost every week. Perhaps the Amalgamated thought that increased popularity might induce a contributor to ask for higher rates.

Lewis Jackson began writing in 1911 as a sub with Harmsworths'; he cut his literary teeth writing short stories and verse for "Answers". I wonder how many Blake authors began with this journal! Quite a few, I should say. He graduated to the companion papers, "Boys' Friend", "Boys' Realm", and "Boys' Herald", and to the "Marvel" and "Pluck Library". Later, a proved author of boys' fiction, he was allowed to ascend to the lofty heights of the "Union Jack". Most of these papers were under the editorship of W. H. Back, whom Jackson describes as "a grand chap". However, this great Editor, who was responsible for the revival of Sexton Blake in the "Union Jack", died around about 1924. After being taken under Back's wing, the new author achieved quick popularity and was soon established as a regular chronicler of the Baker Street detective. This was no mean feat because he was competing against such seasoned veterans as William Murray Graydon, Alec G. Pearson, and a host of others. Often earlier stories by popular authors of the past were re-printed.

Lewis Jackson has most emphatically denied that he ever used the name of H.G.Hill in writing for the Union Jack or any other journal. Thus the mystery surrounding U.J. 833, "The Riddle of the Rector's Wife", remains unsolved. This number is advertised as being by H.G.Hill, yet it has Leon Kestrel as Blake's opponent. Jackson denies ever having lent the use of Kestrel to another author and says that it was unwritten law among the authors of Sexton Blake fiction not to use each others' stock characters. Before he became a free-lance, Jackson knew Harry Hill as a writer for the "Family Journal". He confirms the theory that Hill sometimes used the nom-de-plume of Hylton Gregory when writing boys' stories.

Jackson knew most of the old brigade of Sexton Blake writers, and with them had many a gay evening. The most memorable were Michael Storm, G.Hamilton Teed (who was a Canadian by birth, had travelled extensively, and,



at one time was a sheep-farmer here in Australia), the two Graydons (W.M.Graydon, and his son, Robert Murray), Jack Bobin, Donald Stuart (who worked in a laundry, and submitted his first story, when down and out, in handwriting on paper torn from an exercise book), and Walter Shute (Walter Edwards). All these, alas, are not with us now, but Lewis Jackson still has some of his old writer friends with whom to yarn — Len Pratt, the present Editor of the Sexton Blake Library — Anthony Skene, now working as a surveyor in Wales, and writing but little, and then not for the Amalgamated Press — Lewis Carlton, Editor of the "Union Jack" and "Boys' Journal" in 1915, who now keeps a small hotel in Devon.

Together with the late Gwyn Evans, Jackson has told us the most about the private life of Sexton Blake. In the Nigel Blake series which appeared in the opening numbers of the "Detective Weekly", many hitherto unknown facts about his family are revealed. We are told of his father, Berkley Blake of Harley Street, even his mother gets a mention, and, of course, the no good Nigel, his brother. In the course of relating many Blake adventures, Jackson has described much of the interior of the Baker Street house. His mark is also stamped upon his "Yard" man, Harker. This gentleman is one of the more bearable of Scotland Yard officers, pig-headed at times, but not as vain as the self-righteous Venner, nor as bad-tempered as John Hunter's Pike.

Many series of Blake stories penned by Jackson appeared in the "Union Jack" and "Sexton Blake Library"; most famous are the Olga Nasmyth and Leon Kestrel series. The former comprise a series in the true sense of the word... they all appeared around the same time and a conclusion was provided. The Kestrel series, however, have been terminated temporarily, but have never actually been concluded. They probably never will be, for Jackson reveals that the Amalgamated Press, since they have converted the Sexton Blake Library from a boys' mag. into an adult whodunnit, do not feel inclined to revive the murky past of the paper by reviving a character more at home in the detective adventure stories of the period roughly bounded by the years of the reign of George V. So, it appears that Sexton Blake Library (3rd series) number 65, which I have beside me now, provides the swan song of the "master mummer". For it has been suggested to the author that he revive Kestrel in another firm's publication, but he feels that the arch-crook would lose most of his appeal minus Blake. Perhaps he had in mind the ghastly failure of his great friend Anthony Skene, who tried to resurrect his famous character Monsieur Zenith, minus Blake. It is only when he is absent that we can realize to the full the dominating influence of the presence of the Baker Street tec. He made the stories what they were; the subsidiary characters only increased the quality of the yarns. Another suggestion was that Jackson should revive Kestrel in the picture strips currently appearing in the "Knockout" comic. This would have been the height of degradation. The "powers what be" in the Amalgamated Press threw out the idea saying that "he lacks movement and pictorial quality".

I am not certain when Leon Kestrel first appeared in Sexton Blake fiction, but my records reveal that he was well established by 1915, and in the twenties, with his fantastic War Profits Liquidation Syndicate, he certainly kept Blake occupied. What with him fighting the Syndicate one week, and another powerful body of criminals, the Criminals' confederation the next, the odds were stacked against Blake! Jackson's own favourite stories were both in the



Kestrel series; "The Case of the Cataleptic" and the "Mist of Sleep". I stated above that it is not strictly true to call the Kestrel stories a series. This is because it was spread over a period of over twenty years and included many sub-series and minor adventures. The characters of the Mummer, Lessing, Beaudelaire etc. were all Lewis Jackson's own. They were not even suggested to him by the Editor at the time that the first stories were published. The Amalgamated Press do not own the characters, as they do Blake and Tinker.

Lewis Jackson does little work for the A.P. now, and most of his writing is confined to women's periodicals. To conclude, I would like to quote what he has to say about the Edward Carter affair, "I can't understand this. Pratt must have known that he was 'Tinker Smith'." Why then in S.B.L. (3rd series) No.206, "The Man Who Left Home", written by Jackson himself, does Tinker introduce himself as "Mr. Carter"?

I must add this last bit, again quoting Jackson: "In my opinion only one or two of the present writers (like Parsons and Tyrer - who is essentially a woman's author) are worth their salt. To my mind, Blake and Tinker have become almost non-existent. I think, too, that the paper lost pull when they cut out the established crook. It was around the crook that the author of past days built up his romantic interest and gave the story the stamp of his personality. All this, now, has gone by the board."

I can almost hear a spontaneous "Hear, hear" coming from the lips of every collector when they read these words, expressing the view of practically all who have an interest in Sexton Blake.

Truly I can say, hats off to Lewis Jackson, one of the really greats on the honour roll of boys' fiction.

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Yes, as Jim so truly says, all Blake fans will cordially endorse Lewis Jackson's concluding remarks, and, in winding up, I myself feel I can safely say that seeing what fifteen-year old Jim Merralls can do, there will always be someone to work for the hobby which is second to none when some of us have grown too old to write or have passed on.

#### C. H. Chapman Chats

Now back to old England again, for 'inside news' from another prominent personality, an artist this time, C. H. Chapman. As readers of the monthly C.D. know, thanks to Bob Whiter who found him, members of the London and Midland O.B.B.C's have had the pleasure of meeting him. Whilst in Birmingham he was the guest of the Rev. A. G. Pound, and Mr. Pound kindly passed on several interesting tit-bits of information he was given. For instance, Mr. Chapman said the death of the Magnet came about in this way. The A.P. lost, through enemy action, one of their own boats which was carrying a huge consignment of paper. The paper situation was acute enough at the time; this brought it to a crisis and the Magnet along with other papers had to go instantly. When the news was broken to those intimately connected with the venerable yet ever young paper, everyone from the editor down to the youngest typist mourned it as they would the passing of a dear and familiar friend. Mr. Chapman and other staff members were given six months holiday, but have never returned to Fleetway House.



Mr. Chapman also said that the four chief illustrators of the Gem and Magnet, himself, Leonard Shields, Warwick Reynolds and R. J. Macdonald, worked together as a happy team (this, of course, would be after the death of Clark). Leonard Shields was the recognised head, and they took a boyish delight in their work. They often finished off and touched up each others' drawings. Mr. Chapman's home was at Reading where he had a wife and three sons and three daughters to support, but he went to Fleetway House frequently, staying in London for about a month.

He also made the interesting revelation that in those pre-war days when one could travel at will, Frank Richards lived a good deal in the south of France. Quite often he would send his manuscript direct to Mr. Chapman without even the editor seeing it, and it was so carefully typed that it could be passed on to the printers needing no scrutiny or revision.

Mr. Chapman thinks that the quality of boys' literature from 1910 to 1940 was the best ever. He has a very poor opinion of the stuff produced for juveniles today.

He has boundless admiration for Frank Richards, whom he has not seen for about ten years. He considers he was the genius of the A.P. He believes that if he had not become a successful boys' writer he would probably have been a person.

Mr. Chapman is himself a keen churchman. He has served as a Church Warden, and is still a chorister at St. Andrew's, Reading.

And with that we must say farewell to Fleetway House.

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#### The Monster Library (Contd. from p. 38)

No.7. 20.5.26. 'Neath African Skies. (Reprint of Nelson Lee Library, Small Series Nos:- 213, The Schoolboy Adventurers. 214, 'Neath African Skies. 215, Into the Arid Desert. 216, The Treasure of El Safra. 217, The River of Fire. 218, Castaway Island. 219, The Prisoners of the Cavern. 220, The Sea of Doom.

No.8. 19.6.26. St. Frank's in London. (Reprint of Nelson Lee Library, Small Series Nos:- 221, Alexis the Mysterious. 222, The Great Fire at St. Frank's. 223, St. Frank's in London. 224, The Yellow Band. 225, Sir Montie's Ordeal. 226, The Mystery of Reed's Wharf. 227, The Haunted School. 228, The Fat Boy of St. Frank's.)

No.9. 19.7.26. The Boy from the Bush. (Reprint of Nelson Lee Library, Small Series Nos:- 312, The Australian Wonder. 313, The Golden Image. 314, The Demon Cricketer. 315, The Mystery Men of the East. 316, The Match of Destiny. 317, The Fateful Fifteenth. 318, The Brand of the Twin Stars. 319, The Test-Match Triumph.

No.10. 20.8.26. The Spendthrift of St. Frank's. (Reprint of Nelson Lee Library, Small Series Nos:- 240, The Spendthrift of St. Frank's. 241, On the Downward Grade. 242, The Waster's Progress. 243, Singleton in London. 244, Deeper in the Mire. 245, Up Against the Head. 246, Singleton's Rival School. 247, Taking the Plunge. 248, On His Uppers. 249, A Lesson Well Learnt.

No.11. 20.9.26. The Barring-Out at St. Frank's. (Reprint of Nelson Lee Library, Small Series Nos:- 229, Back to the Old School. 230, The Sack for Nelson Lee. 231, The Tyrant's Understudy. 232, The St. Frank's Rebellion. 233, Barring-Out the Bully. 234, The Siege of the West Wing. 235, Victory for the Rebels. 236, Exit the Tyrant.

(Contd. on p.89 )



# St. Franks Reprints in the "Schoolboys' Pocket Library"

By J. R. Cook

During the war years Mr. E. S. Brooks wrote a certain number of school yarns for the publishing firm of G. G. Swen Ltd. He has already told us that these tales were based on his earlier St. Franks series. The Editor had given him a free hand, and the result was an interesting new series - St. Franks was reborn as it were: though it became two schools: Whitelands and Westchester.

The former famous characters reappeared in new guise but with the same predominant character traits as of yore. At Whitelands we found a certain obstinate, ram-headed youth with untidy hair. He was named Stanley Horatio Goodman, in other words our old friend Edward Oswald Handforth. Goodman's two study mates were Davis and Hunt - and just as long-suffering as Church and MacClure had been. For economy let us refer to the Schoolboys' Pocket Lib. as the S.P.L. In No. 1 of the S.P.L. "The Rival Schools", we found rivalry between Whitelands and Greendale - Greendale being the equivalent of the River House School. Instead of Hal Brewster and Co. we find Roddy Mitchell and Co. To assist the student of reprints the following lists will prove of great value for instance, Handforth became Goodman of Whitelands,

<u>St. Franks</u>	<u>Whitelands</u>	<u>Westchester</u>
Dick Hamilton (Nipper)	Dick Sylvester	Dick Appleton
Ed. Oswald Handforth	Stanley Horatio Goodman	Pills Beecham
Church & MacClure	Bob Davis & Ch. Hunt	Jim Denton & Ken Jones
Archie Glenthorne	(Kenneth Pyne) see	Sofa Davenport
Vivian Travers	(Kenneth Pyne) notes.	Bill Smith
Watson & Tregellis West	Tim Charters &	
	Will Osborne	Sten Wilson
Reggie Pitt	Reg. G. Fortescue	Freddie Wood
Jack Grey	Pet Warren	Jim Benson
Tom Burton	Tom Pettit	Tom Herdy
Bernard Forrest	Hugh Deveraux	Innes
Merrel & Marriot	Claude Hepworth	-
Teddy Long	Enoch Wicks	Albert (Spongy) Briggs
Arthur Hubbard	Oswald Crocker	-
Jimmy Potts	Sam Kennedy	-
K. K. Parkington	Don Cummings (S)	-
Buster Boots	Morgan	-
Castleton twins	-	Peter, Phil Truscott.
Willy Handforth	Sammy Holt	Andy MacTavish
Fullerton	Bart Chignall	Clarence Ibbott
Chubby Heath	Stink Ryder	Chris Waters
Juicy Lemon	Freddy Weaver	Micky Foot
Simon Kenmore	Carstairs	Oswald Blore
Cuthbert Chambers	Carlton	Edgar Innes
Fenton (6th)	David Baker	Anthony Turner
Wm. Nap. Browne	Alan Wilkins	Nicholson



St FranksWhitelandsWestchester

Horace Stevens  
 Mr. Suncliffe (3rd)  
 Mr. Pyecraft  
 Mr. Crowell  
 Dr. Brett  
 Dr. Stafford  
 Nelson Lee  
 P.C. Sparrow

Len Bradford  
 Mr. Mottram  
 Mr. Adam Selby  
 Mr. Mickie  
 Dr. Applejohn  
 Dr. John Chesterton  
 Mr. Mortimer

Draycott  
 Mr. Enoch Carpenter  
 Dr. Noel Goodger  
 Dr. Woodbridge  
 Mr. Gilbert Marlowe  
 P.C. Whiffen

River House SchoolGreendaleFernley

Hal Brewster  
 Geo. Glynne  
 Dave Ascott  
 Leighton  
 Kingswood  
 Hon. A. De Vere Wellborne  
 " Bertram Carstairs  
 Hawke & Brampton  
 Cyril Graham  
 Mr. Wragg  
 Mr. Marshall

Roddy Mitchell  
 Simmons  
 Ellis  
 Verner  
 Tunstall  
 Geoffrey Drake  
 Horace Ellwood  
 Ditchling & Lockley  
 Denis Langley  
 Mr. Scalesby  
 Mr. Fletcher

Before we go on to the list of reprints of the old yarns, a few words on the various characters and their character traits are necessary. We find here and there what is termed in writing jargon as a composite character - and in some cases even a composite plot! In some of the reprints we find two characters taking the place of one of the former St. Franks personalities.

For instance, instead of popular Dr. Brett, friend of Nelson Lee, at Whitelands there were two doctors - Dr. Applejohn and Dr. Galloway. The characterization was identical with the former Dr. Brett.

Then too, some stories bear the imprint of not one former favourite but of two or even three. I found, after reading and re-reading over a long period that I could fit a Whitelands or Westchester tale to a number of former Lee stories. We will come to this aspect in the story analysis that follows. I have given, as near as possible, the Lee tale or tales with the almost identical Whitelands/Westchester story. These are in rotation from No. 1 of the Schoolboys' Pocket Library as published by G.G. Swen, Ltd.

Returning to characterization, the S.P.L. characters were rather sketchy as compared with the clear cut personalities of yesteryear - there was only one Handforth; his modern counterparts, Goodman of Whitelands and Pills Beecham of Westchester were poor imitations.

We must not blame Mr. Brooks for this, as the modern trend is for constant action; the character once sketched in remains thus for the full length of the tale. In the old days an author could dwell on his characters, repeat their little idiosyncrasies, their appearance, their habits, their reactions in full. Today, owing to the severe paper shortage, he has to cut down to a



minimum. What took 3-4,000 words to say, has now to be said in less than half this number of words. Economy!

Some critics have pointed out that the S.P.L. stories were approximately 27 - 29,000 words in length as compared with the former Lee tales of 25,000 words.

Here enters the true skill of a good author, for Mr. Brooks, by adding exciting incidents from other stories - incorporating as it were - made the new tales longer and every bit as exciting as the former ones. There is no padding in the new stories; the old tales suffered from this defect (especially the Old series Lees).

Mr. Brooks himself has said that these new stories are better - I agree, they are! (Now I can expect a storm of protest from ardent Leeites; but if one can put sentimental nostalgia behind for a while and regard the matter in a purely analytical fashion, we will find the statement to be correct.)

We must bear in mind the remarks above - the paper shortage and the direct necessity for cutting down.

The number of characters in the new tales were less than of those at St. Franks. We used to read a story containing as many as twenty characters or more - a modern story would contain only a dozen, perhaps less.

That is why, perhaps, we find Kenneth Pyne of Whitelands taking the place of both Vivian Travers and Archie Glenthorne. Kenneth Pyne is therefore a composite character. He displays the characterization of both Travers and Glenthorne.

A brief account of the setting of the two new schools may be helpful. Studies at both schools were numbered, though I could place few juniors in their right studies. At Whitelands there are two houses: Mortimer's House and Selby's House. The old, familiar mention of spots like West Arch, East Square, the Triangle are missing. Instead of Bannington we proceed to Greendale St. Mary, and the local school is Greendale, the modern equivalent of the River House School.

Westchester is even more bare of setting and description of such is very limited. There is a North House and a South House and there is mention of a "dignified old quadrangle". Local village is Frome Mallet, and the rival schools mentioned are Fernley and Marsham - though these are but names; no characters from these schools enter into the tales.

There are, up to time of writing 25 S.P.L. published. Of these 18 were the work of E. S. Brooks and the others by various writers. Mr. Brooks wrote under the pen names of Reginald Browne (Whitelands) and Edward Thornton (Westchester). There were 10 Whitelands stories and 8 Westchester.

Now I must mention the full length novels, three of which were of Whitelands and only one of Westchester. Here are the details:

"The School in Space". This is not strictly a school tale, as the Whitelands juniors journey by space airship to Venus. Reprinted from the serial "The Planet Schoolboys" which ran in the Boys' Magazine during 1927. (Though those schoolboys came from Castleton School; the characterisation follows in the same old style. One, George Freeman is our old friend, Handforth thinly disguised. It would take a whole article to describe in detail this tale and its characters.



"The Rotters of Whitelands." Obviously from the Boys' Friend Library 435, 2nd series, (1934).

"Fortescue of the 4th." From a Boys' Realm series in 1921.

"Whoopee at Westchester." - similar to the coming of Mr. Allington Wilkes to St. Franks. No.30 New series, 1930. Also quite a dash of the Dr. Scattlebury series Nos. 71-72-73. New series, 1931.

#### List of Reprints

##### S.P.L.

- No.1. "The Rival Schools", reprinted from "The River House Raiders".  
No.124 New series, 1928.
- No.2. "Schoolboy Home Guard" - "Mystery of the Poisoned River".  
New series 102, 1928.
- No.3. "Ghost of Whitelands" - "Mystery of the Monastery Ruins".  
New series No.60, 1931.
- No.4. "Bill Smith of Westchester" - "Faked Evidence".  
Old series No.205, 1919.
- No.5. "Rotters of Greendale" - "Capper's Captured Cap".  
New series 59, 1931.  
also - "Hoaxing the Head" New series 27, 1930.
- No.6. "The Prefects' Predicament" - "Mystery of the Blue Grey Car".  
Old series No.208, 1919.
- No.7. "The Trapped Schoolboys" - "Honours Even".  
New series 127, 1928.
- No.8. "The Schoolboy Racketeer" - "U.S.Adams series Nos. 95-96-97, 1931.
- No.9. "Monkey Business at Whitelands" - "Monkey Business at St.Franks" 125, 1928. "All his own fault" 103, 1928. "The St.Franks Menagerie", No.158, 1929. "The Fighting Form at St.Franks", S.O.L. No.4.
- No.10. "Schoolboy with a Bankroll" - "Buying the Remove". S.O. L. No.54.
- No.11. "The Snowed up Schoolboys" - "The Kidnapped Schoolboys".  
New Series No.165, 1929.
- No.12. "Little Tough Guys of Westchester" - "The Fighting Fags".  
New series No.55, 1931.
- No.13. "Comical Coon at St.Barts" by Burleigh Carew (not a reprint).  
This is a tale which has a strange flavour of Greyfriars!
- No.14. "Schoolboys All at Sea" - "All Aboard for the Skylark".  
New series No.108. "Crusoe of Surf Island". B.F.Lib. No.451.  
"Phantom Island" B.F.Lib. No.709. (Later reprinted as:- "The St.Franks Castaways". B.F.Lib. No.447.
- No.15. "Osborn Minimus, Private Detective" by P. Martin.  
Not a reprint. Work of another author.
- No.16. "The Aunt from Bar-Z." - "My Only Sainted Aunt".  
New series No.126, 1928. "Archie's Awful Aunt". No.31, 1930.
- No.17. "The New Boy at Westchester" - Castleton series 1927.  
also similar - B.F.Libs. Nos. 615 - 619. "Imposter of the 4th" and "The League of Bullies", same theme of twins changing places.
- No.18. "Snob of the 5th" - this is the only story I cannot trace. It appears to be original as no story of car wrecking appeared in any Lee - not to my knowledge, but perhaps the reader can place it?



- No.19, "Smith Minor on the Moon" by P. Hardy. Not a reprint.  
 No.20. "The Ghost Boat" by D. Ellison. Not a reprint.  
 No.21. "The Borrowed Caravan" by E. L. Peppercorn. Not a reprint.  
 No.22. "Wally Davenport's Dizzy Blonde" - "K.K's Secret".

New series No. 33, 1930.

- No.23. "Mr. Fix-It of the 4th" - "K.K's Kompany". New series No.35, 1930.  
 No.24. "Blackbird's Nest" by L. J.Newman. Not a reprint.

Finally we come to the "shorts". There were few of these and they were published in a separate Swan publication: Schoolboys' Short Stories. There was a 1st - 2nd - and 3rd Collection.

In the 2nd Collection we find the following:

"Bill Smith's Birthday" by Ed. Thornton. We trace this to: "Safety Last". New series No.40, 1930.

3rd Collection has this tale: "Old Motty Sees Red" from: "The Jazz Japers". New series No.18, 1930.

This practically completes this survey of the St.Franks reprints in the S.P.L. There were other shorts of Whitelands and Westchester which appeared in Schoolboys Annual, Scramble Annual and the paper back Scramble. One of these, Scramble No.47 contains "The Kidnapped Professor" by Reg. Browne, but this is not a school tale or even the faintest reprint.

Why doesn't Mr. Brooks write more of Whitelands and Westchester? Better still, why not a full length St.Franks? (Do I hear a storm of cheering?)

Well, Mr. Brooks - how about it? I know that dare-devil Norman Conquest and old Ironsides take up the entire field, but if ever there should be a breathing space - think of dear old St.Franks - and think of all we old'uns patiently waiting - ah, me - .

#### ESPECIALLY REQUIRED

'Union Jack' - Nos. 485, 488, 507, 509, 512, 518, 526, 529, 558, 591, 614, 631, 633, 639, 701.  
 1007, 1019, 1025, 1130, 1152.

'Sexton Blake Library' (First Series) Nos. 219, 229, 233, 325.

'Detective Weekly' - Nos. 351, 354, 362, 366, 371.

'Boys' Journal' - October to December 1914.

'Pluck' for 1915.

Harry Homer, Yulden Farm, Heathfield, East Sussex.

WANTED: Aldine Turpins, and Black Bess. Boys' Comic Lib. Kettle series, Diamond Lib., Nugget Lib., Peter Flint Series, Boys' Friend 3d. Calcroft and Ferrars Lord Stories. Lot-o-Fun. For Disposal, Boys Own Lib.3d. W. Clough, 3 Fonthill Grove, Sale, Manchester.

#### PARTICULARLY WANTED

Any copies of Lot-o-Fun in the first hundred published by James Henderson. Magnet 279, 280, 281, 282, 293, 294, 297, 299, Gem 641.



# The Collectors' Who's Who

Compiled by Herbert Leckenby

More new names in this "must be in" feature, once more quite a few from distant lands. There was one, however, which to our very deep regret we had to withdraw just as we were preparing for press, that of one who had played no small part in previous "Who's Whos" - the late John Medcraft. The list does not appear quite the same with his name omitted.

As usual collectors' favourites appear in order of preference.

The Old Boys' Book Clubs grow and are now indicated thus: London (L); Northern (N); Midland (M); Merseyside, Liverpool (Mer.); Melbourne, Australia (Mel.).

Here are the Groups:

1. Victorian Papers.
2. Early 20th Century.
3. Aldines.
4. Captain, Boys' Own Paper, Chums and similar papers.
5. "Hamilton" Papers, (a) Magnet, (b) Gem, (c) Penny Popular,  
(d) Schoolboys' Own, (e) Holiday Annual.
6. Sexton Blake. (a) Union Jack; (b) Sexton Blake Library;  
(c) Detective Weekly.
7. (a) Nelson Lee Library; (b) Monster Library.
8. Between Two Wars (Champion, Thriller, Ranger, etc.
9. Comics.
10. Schoolgirls' Own, School Friend, Schoolgirls' Weekly, etc.

\* Denotes Collector's first appearance in Who's Who.

\* ADDISON, JOHN R., 319 Long Lane, East Finchley, London, N.2. (L)  
Group 5.

ADSLEY, G. R., 17 Abergarw Road, Brynmynyn, Nr. Bridgend, Glam.  
Age 28. Group (a) (b)

Also deals in all types of books.

ADLEY, DEREK JOHN, 19 Braithwaite Gardens, Stanmore, Middlesex.  
Age 24 Groups 5(a) (b); 7(a); 5(e) (d) (c)  
6(b) (a) (c); 7(b); 2; 3; 8; 10.

Would like to correspond with anyone who can help in compiling lists of the scarcer papers: Chuckles, Vanguard, Dreadnought, Boys' Herald.

ALLEN, LEONARD N., 3 Montgomery Drive, Sheffield, 7. (N)  
Age 45. Groups 4; 7(a); 6(a); 9; 2.

Occupation: Civil Servant.

Interested to learn of any comics, Nelson Lee, old series, and Chums for sale.

ALLISON, GERALD, 7 Summerfield Gardens, Bramley, Leeds. (N)  
Age 46. Groups 5(b) (a) (d);  
2 (Young Folks Tales) 9 (Lot o'Fun)

Occupation: Buyer, Wool Trade. (Librarian Northern Section O.B.B.C.)

Requests anyone with surplus books to sell them to the Library. It would be doing the hobby a good turn.



ANDERSON, L. T., 51 Holmewood Gardens, Brixton Hill, London, S.W.2.  
Age 40. Group 5 (all)

\* ARMITAGE, S. F., 8 The Orchard, Ossett, Yorkshire. (N)  
Group 5 (a) (b)

MUCKLAND, CHARLES K., 67 Hemsworth Road, Sheffield, S.8.  
Groups 7 (a); 5(e) (b) (e). (N)

Anxious to obtain Christmas number of Magnet "Four From the East" and  
"The House on the Heath". Also Nelson Lee No.499 "The Secret of the Panel".  
Possesses every Christmas number of the Magnet and Gem from 1926 to the end.  
Also Nelson Lee Christmas numbers for 1919-20-21-24-27-28-29-32.  
Collects English coins, and cigarette cards dealing with boxing and cricket.

\* BAKER, ANTHONY P. Christ Church Vicarage, St. Albans Road, High Barnet, Herts.  
Age 13. Groups 5(e) (e) (b)

Our youngest member. Was introduced to Greyfriars when his father, who was an  
old Magnet fan, bought him "Billy Bunter of Greyfriars School, and to St.Jims  
by his mother, an old Gem reader. Started collecting Magnets and Gems Feb.  
1951 and thanks to the aid of C.D. readers has over 100 Magnets, a few Gems,  
and four Holiday Annuals.

BAKER, CHARLES. 7 Marine Terrace, Waterloo Port, Caernarvon.  
Groups 5 (all); 6 (all); 3; 2.

Anxious to obtain Boys' Friend 3d Libraries, Boys' Heralds, Realms, "Red"  
Magnets, Gems 148-154; 334-336; 351-353; 355, 363, 364 and 393.

\* BANKS, CYRIL. 42 Rose Terrace, Calton Street, Huddersfield, Yorkshire.  
Age 42 Groups 7(a); 5(a) (b) (c); 10. (N)

Only been collecting a few months. Has a few Magnets and Gems, and 37 Nelson  
Lees. Would like more, also a few Populars. Also School Friends for wife  
and daughter, both keen fans of Bessie and Billy.

Finds the hobby most fascinating and the Club meetings extremely enjoyable.

BARTLETT, C.J. 20 Broomfield Road, Beckenham, Kent.  
Age 20. Group 5 (all)

BARTLETT, HENRY J. H. Shipton Gorge, Bridport, Dorset.  
Group 2; 5(a) (b) (d) (e)

Urgently requires Vol.1 Dreadnought.

BEARDSELL, FREDERICK CLIFFORD. "Plymstock", Ross Avenue, Davenport, Stockport,  
Age 47 Groups 5(a) (d) (c) (N) Cheshire.  
Occupation - Master Window Cleaner.

BENNETT, RYMOND V. 64 Dudley Road, Tipton, Staff.  
Age 35. Groups 5(a); 7(a); 6(b); 5(b). (L) (N)

BENTLEY, J. BREEZE. 4 Grenfell Drive, Bradford Moor, Bradford, Yorkshire. (N)  
Group 5(c) (b) (d) Hamilton stories only.

Collection now consists of over 1450 Magnets (including run 932-1683;  
Gems 450 (nearly all numbers over 1200); S.O.L's over 200.  
No.1 Magnet. No.1 S.O.L.



- BLIGHT, EDWARD. "Sandhills", Constantine Bay, St.Marryn, Padstow, Cornwall. (L)  
 Age 51. Groups 6(a) 5(a) (b) (c)  
 Retired Engineer. 8 (Thriller); 6(c); 7(a);  
 3; 6(b); 7(b)  
 Collection includes Cheer Boys Cheer, Boys' Journal, Wild West, Complete issues.
- BLUNDEN, ANTHONY. 43 Elmfield Avenue, Teddington, Middlesex. (L)  
 Age 16. Group 5 (all); 7(b) (a)
- BLYTHE, ROBERT. 64 Carleton Road, Holloway, London, N.7. (L)  
 Age 36. Group 7; 5(a)
- BOLAND, JOHN A. College Historical Society, Trinity College, Dublin University.  
 Age 20. Groups 5(a) (b) (L)  
 Interest in the hobby has been somewhat submerged for the past year due to activities in other spheres. In consequence collection has remained static.
- BOND, HERBERT MAURICE. 10 Erw<sup>Wen</sup>/Rhiwbina, Cardiff.  
 Age 39. Group 6 (all)
- BOTTOMLEY, FRED A. 48 Downhills Park Road, Tottenham, London, N.17.  
 Age 44. Group 5(all); 7(a) (b); 6(all)
- BRIDSHAW, W. H. 3644 N. Oakley Avenue, Chicago, 18, Ill., U.S.A.  
 Group 6 (all)
- BRANDON, W. LESLIE. 63 Thoresby Street, Hull. (L)  
 Group 5(a) (c)
- BRETHERTON, T.P. Heskin, Nr. Chorley, Lancs.  
 Group 2; 1; 9.
- BROWN, RAYMOND E. 54 Longreach Road, Dovecot, Liverpool 14. (L)Mer.)  
 Age 24. Groups 5(all); 6(b)(a)(c)  
 7(b) (a); 8.
- BURROW, RONALD. 1 Albert Square, Yeadon, Leeds.  
 Age 40. Groups 7(a); 8; 5(b)  
 Wants Nelson Lee (old series) 17; 30; 78; 107; 114. Boys' Friend Lib. (Old series) 514. Schoolboys' Own Lib. 4; 120; Gem 1023, 1024.
- CALDWELL, RAYMOND L., P.O. Box 515, Lancaster, Pa., U.S.A.  
 Age 57. Groups 1; 2; 3; 6.
- CARTER, ERNEST CHARLES. 2 Cooper Street, Kingsford, N.S.W., Australia.  
 Age 40. Groups 7(a) (b); 5(a); 6(a) (b); 5(b).  
 Occupation, Clerk, Telephone Accounts, G.P.O.  
 Has over 600 Nelson Lees, bound in series. Urgently wanted years 1915, 1917.  
 Collection also includes 17 Monster Libraries and 200 Magnets.  
 Wishes to obtain pink Union Jacks and Sexton Blake Libraries, first series.
- CASE, FRANCIS. 4 Dee Street, Liverpool, 6. (N: Mer.)  
 Anxious to obtain pre-war comics, particularly Lot o'Funs, condition unimportant if readable. Would be pleased to hear from others interested in above.  
 Replies assured.



- \* CHAMBERS, W. E. 83 Orme Road, Bangor, North Wales.  
 Age 33. Groups 1; 4; 5(all); 6 (b) (c);  
 7(a); 8 (Modern Boy)  
 Started re-collecting in 1948. Has over 100 S.B.L's; 120 Detective Weeklies;  
 120 Magnets; 60 Gems, and a considerable varied collection of Victorian and  
 early 20th century papers. Also many round about 1948, Hotspurs, Adventures,  
 etc. Considers it the best of all hobbies.
- CHECKLEY, PETER J., 18 Tarleton Road, Coundon, Coventry.  
 Age 17. Groups 8 (Bullseye, Surprise); 5(b) (d) (a);  
 6(a); 7(a)  
 Occupation: Printer's apprentice.  
 Urgently required: Any copies "Fun and Fiction"; "Firefly"; "Surprise";  
 "Bullseyes"; "Scoops"; and "Wild West Weekly".
- CHILD, A. C., 64 Gilbertstone Avenue, Birmingham, 26.  
 Group 7.
- \* CHURCHILL, CHARLES H., "Highfield", 123 Pinhoe Road, Exeter, Devon.  
 Age 42. Groups 7(a) (b); 6(a).  
 Collection consists of about 300 Nelson Lees, Monsters and S.O.L. St.Franks  
 stories. Included are 45 of the first 50 Nelson Lee, old series, one being  
 the very scarce No.1, "Mystery of Limehouse Reach". Collection is very thin  
 between No's 60 and 166, so would be grateful of any help. Particularly  
 required, 186, 229, and 232.  
 Vast majority of collection was bought at time of publication, and  
 retained since. Has often been chaffed for keeping them, but considers he  
 has now the last laugh!
- CLOUGH, W. H., 3 Fonthill Grove, Sale, Manchester.  
 Age 50. Groups 3; 2; 4 (Captain); 6(a); 9.
- \* COATES, VERA, 33 Blenheim Place, Blackman Lane, Leeds, 2. (N)  
 Groups 10; 5(a); 6(a); 7(a).  
 Collection consists of about 100 Schoolgirls' Owns, 5 Annuals, a few Magnets,  
 Union Jacks, and Nelson Lees.  
 Anxious to obtain information about Marjorie Stanton, and keen to add  
 further copies to collection of Schoolgirls' Own.
- COLCOMBE, WILLIAM HENRY, 256 South Avenue, Southend-on-Sea, Essex.  
 Age 29. Groups 6(b) (a) (c); 5(a) (d)
- COOK, JACK, 178 Maria Street, Benwell, Newcastle-on-Tyne.  
 Groups 7(a) (b); 5(a) (a) (b); 6(a) (c)  
 Still needs certain Lees and S.O.L's. All letters welcomed and sure of a  
 reply. Would welcome odd copies of various comics - Lot O'Fun, Butterfly,  
 Firefly, Playtime, etc.
- COOK, JAMES W., 4 Swenston Path, Oxhey Estate, Watford, Herts.  
 Age 43. Groups 7; 5(a) (c)
- COOK, RONALD, 30 Lucien Road, Tooting Bec, London, S.W.17.  
 Age 29. Groups 5 (all); 8 (Ranger)  
 Collection now consists of 736 Magnets, 36 Gems, 62 S.O.Ls and 3 Holiday Annuals.  
 Requires Rangers 1 and 29-47. Populars 626-8, Magnets 893, 896, 900, 903, 906-918,  
 920-21, 923, 925-7, 929-934, 936-44, 946-50, 952-7, 959. 960, 962-3, 965, 968-72,  
 974, 977, 982, 986, 987, 990, 1152.



- CORBETT, JACK,** 49 Glyn Farm Road, Quinton, Birmingham, 3. (M)  
Group 5 (all)  
Requires urgently a few ½d. and 1d. Magnets and Gems.  
Chairman of Midland O.B.B.C. As a link between meetings has a monthly circular - either a suitable article, poem or "newsy" items.
- COX, EDWARD D.,** 29 Carisbrooke Drive, Bitterne, Southampton. (L)  
Age 23 Groups 5(a) (b) (d) (e); 9; 10;  
6 (all); 7(a) (b).  
Collection at present consists of 710 Magnets, 130 Gems, 100 S.O.Ls, 8 Holiday Annuals, 500 Comics, and 300 "oddments".  
Following Magnet numbers urgently required: 994, 995, 998-1000; 1006, 1007, 1009, 1013, 1024, 1030, 1146, 1148, 1157-1159, 1266, 1270.
- CROLLIE, RONALD,** 8 Lytton Road, Romford, Essex. (L)  
Age 23 Groups 5(a) (b) (d); 7(a); 5(e).
- DAINES, COLIN,** 209 Mile X Lane, Norwich, Norfolk.  
Age 41. Groups 7; 5(a) (b).
- DARWIN, WILFRED,** 76 Western Road, East Dene, Rotherham, Yorkshire.  
Occupation: Gardener. Groups 6(a); 8 (Hulton's Boys' Magazine).  
Wishes to obtain any early coloured covers of The Three Musketeers.
- \* **DAVEY, E.J.,** 26 Bourton Road, Olton, Birmingham, 27. (M)  
Group 5 (a).  
Says his wife and son (16) are both ardent Magnet fans, and derive great enjoyment from the 170 copies he possesses.
- \* **DAVIES, GRAHAM C.,** 54 Newton Road, Mumbles, Swansea.  
Age 32 Group 6 (all)  
Possessed a large collection of Sexton Blakes, Union Jacks and Dixon Hawkes which were unfortunately lost during the war. Anxious to obtain S.B.L's 1930-1938, and Dixon Hawke Libraries.
- DEASEY, JAMES C.,** 11 Sallymount Gardens, Ranelagh, Dublin, Ireland.  
Age 19 Groups 5(a) (b)  
Occupation: Clerk in Air Lingus.  
Possesses 200 Magnets and Gems. Also interested in Meccano Magazine (but not in Meccano).
- DOBSON, TOM A.,** 30 McLean Avenue, Bentleigh, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.  
Age 46. "Phone XU 2429."  
Occupation, Postal Employee. Groups 5(a) (b) (d) (e) (c).  
Regards Nos. 200-400 the best period of the Magnet and Gem. Best characters, Vernon Smith and Talbot. Best Magnet, No. 239, "The Hidden Horror".
- DOLPHIN, REX C.,** 13 Meadow Way, Hyde Heath, Amersham, Bucks.  
Age 36. Groups 6 (c) (b) (a).
- DOWLER, HARRY,** 86 Hamilton Road, Longsight, Manchester, 13.  
Age 61. Groups 2; 4.  
Occupation: Commercial and Shorthand Teacher.  
Is a Sherlock Holmes fan, keen active cyclist and bowler. Sports enthusiast, especially track cycling and athletics. Keenly interested in films, the stage and acting in general.



- DOW, JAMES, Junr., 73 King Street, Aberdeen.  
Age 37 Groups 5(a); 7; 5(c) (b).
- DRYDEN, WHEELER, Box 2647, Hollywood 28, California, U.S.A.  
Group 5 (all)
- EDGLEY, BRIAN R., 9 Southway, Carshalton Beeches, Surrey.  
Age 17 Group 5(b)  
Requires S.B.L's (3rd series). Pen friends invited. Is also interested in films and horses (racing).
- EGAN, BERNARD, 1 Dartmouth Terrace, Renelagh, Dublin, Eire.  
Age 29 Groups 5(a) (b) (d); 6(a); 5(c) (e);  
6(c); 7(a).
- Magnets wanted 1332, 1285-1296, 1177-1185, 1373, 1375, 1378, 1298, 1299, 1304, 1305, 1245, 1247, 1214, 1216, 1217, 1383-1389. Would exchange for Gems.
- EVERETT, C.A., P.O. Box 7, Brinkworth/<sup>South</sup>Australia.  
Age 36 Group 5(a) (b) (d) (e).
- \* FARISH, ROBERT, 24 English Street, Longtown, Cumberland.  
Age 50 Group 5(a) (b) (d) (c) (e)  
Has a few favourites, carefully saved, some since 1915. These include Gems. 375, 393, 407, B.F.L's 1st series, 383, 509, 517, S.A.L's 2, 8, 14, 22. Holiday Annuals 1920, 1921. Wanted: Early Talbot Gems at reasonable prices. Is a Member of the Infantile Paralysis Fellowship; Member of the Lakeland Dialect Society and Chairman of Longtown Branch of Toc H.
- FAYNE, ERIC, The Modern School, Grove Road, Surbiton, Surrey. (L)  
Groups 5(all); 6; 8.
- FENNELL, HUGH W., 4 Dixon Road, South Norwood, London, S.E.25.  
Groups 1; 2; 3; and all others.  
Wants "Wild Boys of London", "Scoops", "Frank Reades", Fantasy and Science Fiction. Sherlock Holmes and detective first editions. Odd numbers "Skeleton Horseman" and "Boy Detective". Out of the way books.
- FENN, WILLIAM H., P.O. Box 127, Auckland, C.I., New Zealand. (L)  
Age 49 Groups 1; 9.
- \* FLITMAN, Hylton, 8 Leinster Square, London, W.2. (L)  
Occupation, Actor. Groups 7(a) (b); 5(a)
- FLINDERS, Evelyn B. (Miss), "Roseview", Gosmore Road, Nr. Hitchin, Herts. (L)  
Group 5(b) (a) (d) (c)
- FORD, Derek, 42 West Bond Street, Macclesfield, Cheshire.  
Group 6 (all)  
Still seeking "Detective Weeklies" 219, 223 and 319 to complete collection. List S.B.L. and Union Jack wants sent to those interested.
- \* FULLER, George W., 10 Court Close, Patcham, Brighton, 6. (L)  
Age 17. Group 5 (all)  
Occupation: Carpet Salesman.  
Is interested in old boys' books generally but particularly the Hamilton group. Is anxious to obtain Magnets and Gems prior to 1920.



- GANDER, WILLIAM HENRY, P.O. Box 60, Transcona, Manitoba, Canada. (L)  
 Age 53 Groups 5(a); 2.  
 Still requires a few Magnets to complete set. Also various Boys' Friends,
- GARRITT, ANTHONY WHITAKER, 275 Chester Road, Little Sutton, Wirrall, Cheshire.  
 Age 30 Group 5(a) (e) (d)
- GEAL, JOHN W., 277 Kings Road, Kingston-on-Thames, Surrey. (L)  
 Age 30 Groups 5(a); 8 (Modern Boy) 1 5(b) (e)  
 Occupation: 7(a) 1 6(b).  
 Scientific Instrument Maker.  
 Particularly wants "Modern Boy" and Boys' Friend Libraries with Captain Justice yarns. Also "Scoops" (Science fiction 2d. 1934).
- GILES, F. VICTOR, 6 St. Paul's Road, Barking, Essex.  
 Group 5
- GOCHER, JOHN WOODWARD, Constitution Hill, Sudbury, Suffolk.  
 Age 30 Groups 8; 6(all); 5(all); 4; 3; 2;  
 Occupation: Ironmonger. 9; 10; 1.  
 Interested in Sexton Blakes by John Hunter, Thrillers (especially by Murdock Duncan) and Triumphs (Oct. 1937 to end). Also Triumphs containing serials by Herbert Macrae. Wanted: Boys' Wonder Libs., Triumph, Thrillers and Champions.
- GODSAVE, REUBEN JAMES, 35 Woodhouse Road, Leytonstone, London, E.11. (L)  
 Age 41. Groups 7(e) (b); 5(a).
- GOODHELD, W. H., 50 Porter Road, Derby. (L)  
 Age 36 Groups 5(a) (d); 6(a).  
 Is anxious to obtain Union Jacks featuring the Criminals Confederation or the Master Brooks Messenger.
- GRAINGER, GEORGE P., Alexandra Road, Paynters Lane End, Redruth, Cornwall.  
 Groups 1; 2; 3; 4 1 6(a).  
 Special Wants: 2d Aldine Detective Library Nos. 10, 17, 18. Aldine Tip Top Library Nos. 9, 11, 25, 55, 59. Aldine 1d. First Rate Library, Nos. 34, 35. Aldine O'er Land and Sea Library, Nos. 1, 2, 4. Union Jack 1d. 611, 613.
- \* GREGORY, NORMAN, 6 Metfield Croft, Harbourne, Birmingham, 17. (M)  
 Groups 5(a) (b); 6(a); 4; 3; 8;  
 Occupation: 5(a) (d) (e); 7(a) (b);  
 Professional Accountant and Auditor. 6(b); 1; 2; 6(c).  
 Has been collecting about a year and already possesses 250 Nelson Lees, 125 Magnets, 100 Gems, 40 Union Jacks, and odd numbers of Populars, Thrillers, Vanguard, etc. Is very keen on the hobby and in making Midland Club the best in the country.
- \* GRIFFITHS, HAROLD F., 484 North Road, Normanby, Dunedin, New Zealand.  
 Age 43 Groups 4 (Chums); 9; 2; 1.  
 Has collected Chums volumes for several years, but still requires those prior to 1900. Also 1903, 1908 and 1915. Would also like "Chuckles" 1917 (Adventure Island), Comic Life, and Lot O'Fun (same period). Also interested in books illustrated by Paul Hardy, Stanley L. Wood, R. Caton Woodville, Gordon Browne. Interest reawakened by reading "Boys Will Be Boys". Has a good library of books on travel, ships, piracy, highwaymen, and bushrangers.



- GROOMBRIDGE, CEDRIC J., 3 Witham Green, Kings Heath, Northampton. (N)  
Age 29 Groups 5; 7.
- GUNN, JOHN, Elm Lodge, 42 Elm Avenue, Nottingham.  
Groups 7(a) (b); 4.
- \* HARRISON, WILLIAM, 54 Chandos Avenue, Leeds 8. (N)  
Age 49 Groups 5(a) (b) (d); 9(e)  
Occupation: Chiropedist.  
Particularly interested in Magnets between 1914-1920 for nostalgic reasons.
- HARRIS, A. K., 6 Boughton Close, St.Johns, Worcester.  
Group 5 (b)
- HARVEY (Mrs.), 123 Penydre, Rhiwbina, Cardiff.  
Group 5(a) (b)
- HEPBURN, JIM, 1 Sixth Avenue, Blyth, Northumberland. (N)  
Age 46 Groups 4; 6(b); 5(a).  
Occupation: Grocery Manager.  
Not a very active collector, but has a small, mixed one. Likes to read the old papers, and read about them.
- HESS, GEORGE H.(Junr.), 40 North Mississippi River Blvd, St.Paul 4, Miss,U.S.A.  
Groups 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8.
- HOCKLEY, GEOFFREY, 308 Keyes Road, New Brighton, Christchurch, New Zealand.  
Age 50 Groups 2; 4; 3; 5(a) (c); 6(a); 7(a) (b).  
Occupation, Motor Cycle Dealer.  
Has only been actively collecting about twelve months, but has been intensely interested in the hobby for years. At present has several Chums Annuals, pre-1915 Boys Friends, Boys Realms, Drednoughts, Jesters, Football and Sports Libraries, Nugget Libraries, Plucks and Boys Best Story Papers. Says of the hobby, "Well, apart from the intense interest of the hobby itself, I think the greatest thing about it is the number of swell people one contacts both personally and by correspondence. Have come to the conclusion that the average O.B.B. fan is a great guy."  
Hasn't any partiular preference regarding items required - they're all grist to the mill. But is always particularly pleased to hear from any old-time Chums fans.
- HOLGATE, A., 169 The Grampians, Western Gate, Shepherds Bush, London, W.6.  
Age 41 Groups 3; 5(a) (b) (d); 6(a).
- HOLT, BRIAN D., British Legation, Reykjavik, Iceland.  
Age 30 Groups 7(a); 5(b) (d) (a).
- HOMER, HARRY, Yulden Farm, Heathfield, Sussex. (L)  
Age 45 Groups 6(a) (b); 5(d); 7(a)  
9; 2.
- HONEYSETT, BRIAN, 65 Orchard Road, St.Annes-on-Sea, Lancs. (N)  
Age 17 Groups 1; 5(a) (d) (b);  
6(a) (b); 7 (a)  
2; 3; 5 (a) (e)



- \* HOPPERTON, TOM, Courtlands, Fulford Road, Scarborough. 'Phone 4310. (N)  
 Age 44 Groups 5(a) (b) (d) (c); 1.  
 Though above main favourites is interested in the papers as a whole. Has about 1500 in all, a representative sprinkling of early dreadfuls including Miles' "Dick Turpin" and Lindrage's "Jack Rann", and a number of the Bretts and Hogarth House bloods (including "The Blue Dwarf"), and school tales. 12 vols of "Jack Harkaway" series. The main strength is in Hamilton papers; 300 Magnets; 300 Gems (including practically the whole of the first 100); 170 S.O.L's, and 60 Penny Populars. Also has a complete run of "Jack's Paper"; 300 Nelson Lees; 120 1st series S.B.L's; and about 100 early B.F.L's. A complete run of S.P.C, to date, 24 No. 1's, including  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. and 1d. Gem; 3d. S.B.L's, and Penny Popular. Is seeking more Magnets, Gems and Penny Populars, but is particularly keen on building up his S.O.L's with numbers before 200. Has a number for exchange.
- HUBBARD, ERNEST ALEXANDER, 50 South View Crescent, Sheffield, 7. (N)  
 Age 45 Groups 5(a) (b) (c) (d); 7(a) (b); 9; 2; 5(e); 6(a)
- HUDSON, REGINALD A., 57 York House, Quarry Hill Flats, Leeds. (N)  
 Groups 5 (b) (a).
- HUGHES, E. V., "Caswell", 25 Hillsboro' Road, Bognor Regis, Sussex. (N)  
 Age 47 Groups 9; 2; 5(a) (b) (c); 1; 6(a).  
 Occupation: Newspaper Reporter.  
 Interested in almost anything before 1920. Particularly anxious to obtain specimens of "Winged Man" serial that appeared about 1931, probably in "Firefly".
- HUMPHREYS, ERIC, Oak Dene, Boat Lane, Higher Irlam, Nr. Manchester. (N)  
 Age 37 Group 5 (all)
- HUMPHRIES, KENNETH, 61 Long Hill Rise, Hucknall, Notts. (N)  
 Groups 5; 7.
- HUNTER, J. V. B. STEWART, 4 Lulworth Road, Mottingham, London, S.E.9. (N)  
 Age 52 Groups 1; 3; 2.
- HUNTER, RONALD H., Avenida Atlantica 2806, Apartamento 901, Copacabana, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. (N)  
 Age 38 5 (all)  
 Collection now includes 1400 Magnets with a complete run from 1917 to 1940. Prefers the serious character stories to those about Bunter.
- HURRELL, JAMES W., "Glenisle", 10 Ilfracombe Gardens, Chadwell Heath, Romford, Essex. (L)  
 Group 7(a) (b); 5 (all); 6 (all).  
 Would like to see the "Library" idea extended, owing to the diminishing source of supply.
- LIMPSON, STANLEY A., "Stanfield", Jerningham Road, New Costessey, Nr. Norwich, Norfolk. (L)  
 Age 54 5(a) (b); 4; 5(a) (d); 6(a); 7(a); 2; 5(c); 6(b); 8; 3; 1; 9; 10.
- IRALDI, JAMES C., 14 West 82nd Street, New York, 24, N.Y., U.S.A. (L)  
 Age 44 Group 5 (all)



- JAMISON, WILLIAM, Lisnacree, Co. Down, N. Ireland.  
 Age 49 Groups 5(a) (c)  
 Occupation: Gardener.
- \* JARDINE, WILLIAM (BILL) WAITER, 52 Kipling Avenue, Woodingdean, Brighton,  
 Sussex. (L)  
 Age 36 Groups 5(a) (b); 7(a); 5(d); 6(b); 7(b).  
 Occupation: Engineering Sales Correspondent.  
 Although an old reader of the Charles Hamilton stories is just beginning as a  
 collector. Wishes to obtain any copies of the Magnet, Gem, etc.
- JENKINS, ROGER MICHAEL, "Strathmore", 3 Town Hall Road, Havant, Hants. (L)  
 Age 26 Group 5(a) (b) (d) (e) (c).  
 Occupation: Civil Servant.
- JEYES, JAMES A., 108 Adnett Road, Northampton.  
 Age 55 Group 2.  
 Wishes to obtain early Boys' Friend 3d. Libraries.
- JONES, S. P., High School, Penrith, New South Wales, Australia.  
 Group 5(b) (e)
- JONES, RAYMOND, Melrose, 39 Mill Hill Road, Cowes, Isle of Wight.  
 Age 22 Group 5(a) (d) (b) (e) (c).
- KEELING, FRANK, 107 Dolphins Road, Folkstone, Kent. (N)  
 Age 44 Groups 7; 5(a).
- KELSHAW, L. G., 41 Selby Avenue, South Shore, Blackpool.  
 Group 5(e)
- KNIGHT, STANLEY, 50 Browning Street, Bradford, Yorks. (N)  
 Group 5 (all)
- KIRBY, GORDON J., C/o Public Library, Swanston Street, Melbourne, Victoria,  
 Australia. (Vic.)  
 Age 26 Group 5 (all)  
 Also interested in Schoolgirls' Own, School Friend, etc.
- KNASTER, R. M. J., 4 Elm Place, Onslow Gardens, London, S.W.7.  
 Group 5(a)
- \* KNOTT, FRANK L., 67 Richmond Street, Petone, New Zealand.  
 Group 5.
- \* KUTNER, MAURICE, 4 New North Place, Scrutton Street, Finsbury, London, E.C.2.  
 Age 44 Group 5(b) (a)  
 Occupation: Wood Carver.  
 Anxious to obtain Gems 504-7; 509-11; 513, 514, 516, 518, 519, 522, 524-26;  
 528, 533, 541, 545, 562-65; 568, 569, 581, 582, 585, 588, 592.  
 Collection consists of 500 Gems, 230 Magnets, 4 Holiday Annuals.  
 Is particularly interested in Gems illustrated by Warwick Reynolds.
- LINDY, ERIC R., 4 Nuneston Road, Dagenham, Essex.  
 Age 48 Groups 3; 1.  
 Still on the look-out for certain Aldines.



- LAWSON, ARTHUR W., 1 Charles Square, Hoxton, N.1. (L)  
 Group 1  
 Requires certain vols. Bow Bells; Family Herald; Boys of England; Young Men of Great Britain; London Reader; London Journal; Young Ladies Journal.  
 List on application.
- LECKENBY, HERBERT, Telephone Exchange, C/o Central Registry, Northern Command, York.  
 Age 61 Groups (All) (L), (N)  
 Occupation: Military Telephone Switchboard Operator.
- \* LEWIS, MERVYN D., 10 Dudley Road, Folkestone, Kent. (N)  
 Age 29 Group 5 (a)  
 First made the acquaintance of the Magnet when loaned a copy by a friend whilst ill in bed. It was one of the Circus series 1936. When the paper ceased publication had a collection of about 300.  
 A paragraph in the Daily Mail gave him a longing to start collecting again. Is employed on Cross Channel boats.
- MACHIN, HUBERT, 38 St. Thomas Road, Moor Park, Preston, Lancs.  
 Group 5 (a)
- McCABE, ROBERT J., 74 Ann Street, Dundee, Angus, Scotland.  
 Age 33 Group 5 (all)  
 Occupation: Reed Maker (Part of a loom for weaving).  
 Would like to obtain Biggles stories in Boys Friend Library.
- \* McGARVA, R. A. (Tony), 220 Sissons Road, Leeds, 10.  
 Age 27  
 Occupation: Salesman.  
 Collector of G. A. Henty first editions. Also Schoolboy Annuals.
- McPHERSON, E., 60 Benedict Street, Glastonbury, Somerset.  
 Age 35 Groups 7 (a) (b); 5(a) (d)
- McROBERTS, GEORGE, 31 Ardenlee Drive, Cregagh, Belfast, N. Ireland.  
 Age 49 Groups 5 (all); 7(a); 6(a) (b).
- MARTIN, WILLIAM, 93 Hillside, Stonebridge Park, London, N.W.10.  
 5 (all); 6 (all); 7(a) (b); 3; 2.  
 Specially wanted B.F.L. 3d. "Boy Without a Name", "Through Thick and Thin" or any of Frank Richards, Martin Clifford etc. Also any other early B.F.L. 3d.
- MATHEWS, CHARLES RACE THORSON, 8 Barnett Street, Hampton, S.7, Victoria, Australia.  
 Age 16. Groups 7(a); 6(b); 5(a) (c). (L) (Vic)
- \* MATHESON, ALEXANDER S., 11 Ackergill Street, Wick, Caithness, Scotland. (L)  
 Age 20 Groups 5(b); 8; 4; 7(a)  
 Occupation: Meteorological Assistant.  
 Wanted Boys' Realm (new series) 1, 7, 13, 40 onwards.  
 Recently started collecting. To date has a fair collection of Chums (prefers Cassell's); a few Gems and Boys' Realm, and oddments of others.
- \* MELL, GEORGE, 41 Woodland Road, Darlington.  
 Group 5(a) (b)



- \* MERRALLS, JAMES D., 13a Campbell Road, Balwyn E8, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.  
Age 15 Groups 1; 2 (Sexton Blake stories only);  
6 (all); 4 (Boys' Own Paper) (Vic)  
Has been collecting about two years and possesses about 60 papers. Is keenly interested in Sexton Blake stories of all periods.  
Other interests: Cricket, Australian football, books by Charles Dickens, Stamps and Politics.
- \* MERVYN, EDNA, 21 Fielding Street, Kensington, Liverpool, 6. (N) (Mer.)  
Group 5(a)
- \* MILLER, PETER LODGE, 19 Collingwood Drive, Great Barr, Birmingham. (M)  
Age 29 Groups 5(a) (d); 1; 2; 3; 4; 5(b) (c) (e)  
6 (all); 7(a) (b); 8; 9.  
Recently started collecting and has at present a modest number of Magnets, Holiday Annuals and the Skilton and Mandeville books.  
Is an engineer by profession, and during the war a voluntary Bevin boy.  
Is secretary of the O.B.B.C. Midland Section. Also interested in model railways and stamps.
- MORTIMER, ROBERT VICTOR, 115 Welton Road, East Molesey, Surrey. (L)  
Age 50 Group 5(a) (d)  
Started reading the Magnet and Gem in 1912 and continued until the end.  
Finds them as interesting to-day as in his youth. Started recollecting in 1941, mostly Magnets and S.O.L's.  
Works in a big Departmental Store in Kingston writing showcards and posters for shop and window display.  
Is a keen cinema fan and hopes to see Harry Wharton & Co. on the screen some day.
- MURTAGH, JOHN R. 509 Selwood Road, Hastings, New Zealand.  
Age 38 Group 7; 5(all); 6(all); 8 (Boys' Realm)  
Requires Nelson Lee Libraries, Old Series 1915-1920 Nos. 1, 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, 14-17, 22, 27, 30, 31, 34, 40, 42, 46, 49, 50, 51, 53, 59, 60, 62, 64-69, 71-73, 75, 76, 78, 82, 84-86, 88, 92, 102, 103.  
Offers three copies of old series for each of above. See Advertisement elsewhere in this Annual.
- NICHOLLS, RONALD ALICK, The Grey House, Whitchurch, Bristol, 4. (L)  
Age 37 Groups 4 (B.O.P., Chums)  
5(a) (b) (e); 6(a) (b)  
Wishes to obtain Magnets and Gems from 1924 to end. Must be in good condition. Will gladly pay for loan of papers. Greatest care taken of same. Correspondence with other members welcomed.
- \* ORME, S. J., "North Dene", 37 New Road, Uttoxeter, Staffs. (L)  
Age 37 Groups 7(a); 6(a); 5(a).  
Concentrates on Nelson Lees (1920-26) and Union Jacks (1922-28). Hopes to complete runs for binding.  
Interest is nostalgic only where the papers read in his youth are concerned.
- ORR, W. S., 3 Hartfield Terrace, Dumbarton, Scotland.  
Age 49 Groups 5(a) (b) (c); 6(a); 2; 8(Boys Friend)



- OSBORN, FRANK, 24 Harpur Street, Bedford.  
Age 55 Groups 2; 3; 4 (Chums); 5(a); 1.
- PACKMAN, JOSEPHINE, 27 Archdale Road, East Dulwich, London, S.E.22. (L)  
Groups 5(b); 6(a) (b)  
Occupation: Civil Servant.  
Anxious to obtain Gem No.946. Also to complete a long Union Jack run, the following are needed: 1292, 1042, 991, 989, 988, 985, 984, 977, 974, 972, 969, 966, 953, 919, 902, 898, 896, 890.
- PACKMAN, LEONARD, 27 Archdale Road, East Dulwich, London, S.E.22. (L)  
Age 46 Groups 6(a); 5(b); 7(a); 5(c);  
6(b); 5(a); 10; 9.  
Occupation: Civil Servant.  
Anxious to obtain any Union Jacks for the years 1914 and 1915; also any of the first 50 Schoolgirls' Own.
- PAGE, VINCENT A., The Modern School, Surbiton Road, Kingston, Surrey. (L)  
Age 16. Groups 5(a) (b) (d) (e) (c); 6(b)
- PARKS, JOSEPH, 2 Irvin Avenue, Saltburn-by-Sea, Yorkshire.  
Age 59 Groups 2: 1; 3; 5(a); 5(c).  
Occupation: Master Printer and Publisher. "Collectors' Miscellany".
- PARRATT, C. JAMES, 99 Compton Buildings, Goswell Road, London, E.C.1. (L)  
Groups 7(a) (b); 5(all); 8 (Thrillers).
- PICK, ROBERT, 3 Stonegate Grove, Leeds, 7. (N)  
Age 52 Group 5(b) (a) (d) (c) (e)  
Occupation: Master Tailor.
- POUND, Rev. ARTHUR GILBERT, St. Paul's Vicarage, 68 Finmore Road,  
Birmingham, 9. (M)  
Age 49 Groups 5(a) (b) (d) (e).
- PRICE, H. C. NORTON, 22 Northdown Road, Margate, Kent. (L)  
Group 6 (b)  
Also collects Boys Friend 3d and 4d Libraries.
- RAMSBOTTOM, GEORGE, 15 Ash Street, Fleetwood, Lancs. (N)  
Age 50 Groups 5(a) (b) (c); 6(a) (b).  
Has a few Gem and Magnets to exchange on level terms. Also open to buy some. In addition interested in Health and Strength magazine, and "Iron Man", American physical culture magazine. Can any American reader oblige?
- RAYNER, W. J, Albion, Clarence Road, Sudbury, Suffolk.  
Group 5 (all).
- RENEN, CHARLES van P.O. Box 50, Uitenhage, Cape Province, South Africa.  
Age 39 Group 5 (all).  
Still requires many copies of the Magnet between Nos. 725 and 960, and Gems between 830 and 935. Also 1924 Populiers.
- \* RHODES, A. WRIGHT, H.Q. Intelligence Division, Herford, B.A.O.R. 15.  
Group 5(a) (b)
- RICHARDSON, ARTHUR, 49 Ashburnham Mansions, Chelsea S.A.10. (L)  
Groups 2; 1; 3.



- ROBYNS, JOHN, Trewellard, 13 Raphael Road, Hove, 3, Sussex. (L)  
Group 5(a) (d)  
Always on the look-out for red-covered Magnets.
- ROUSE, RONALD E. J., 3 St. Leonards Terrace, Gas Hill, Norwich, Norfolk.  
Age 29 Groups 6 (all); 7(a) (Detective stories only);  
8; 1; 2. 5.  
Interested mainly in detective and crime stories. Would like to obtain  
Dixon Hawkes; Nelson Lee Libraries (1915-17); 1st 20 Numbers Union Jack  
1st series and Sexton Blake Libraries 1st series, 6, 21, 24, 35 and 37 to  
complete set.  
Also interested in "Famous Crimes" and "Police Budgets".
- SATCHELL, T., 84 Ankerdine Crescent, Woolwich, London, S.E.18.  
Age 48 Group 5(a) (b)  
Occupation: Butcher's Manager.
- SHAW, JOHN R., 4 Brunswick Park, Camberwell, London, S.E. 5.  
Age 33 5(b) (a) (e) (d); 6(e).  
Requires certain Plucks dated 1906-10 containing St. Jims stories and stories  
of Tomsonio's Circus by Harry Dorrian. Also Magnet Water Lily series in  
mint condition.
- \* SHARPE, HOWARD, C/o Wright, Stephenson & Co., Box 4339, Melbourne G.P.O.,  
Australia.  
Groups 7(a) (b); 5(d) (a); 6 (all)  
Collection mainly consists of Schoolboys Own Libraries and prefers these to  
any others. Also interested in Captain Justice stories.
- SHEPHERD, JAMES, 1 Athelstan Close, Handsworth, Sheffield, 9.  
Group 5(a) (b)  
Particularly interested in early Magnets and Gems.
- SIDAWAY (Mrs.), The Rise, 84 Wenel Road, Rhiwbina, Cardiff.  
Group 5 (b) (e)
- \* SIDEBOTTOM, HERBERT G., 79 Headingley Avenue, Leeds. (N)  
Group 5(a)
- SINCLAIR, TOM, 18 Lenshaw Terrace, Belle Isle, Leeds 10. (N)  
Group 5 (all)
- SMITH, CLIFF, 5 Sharman Avenue, St. Annes, Lancs. (N)  
Age 34 Group 5(a)  
Occupation: Local Government Officer.  
Is anxious to obtain Indian series (Magnet) Nos. 961-970 inclusive.  
Will pay good price.
- SMITH, JOSEPH, 36 Langham Road, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 5.  
Group 5(a) (b) (d)  
Would like to obtain Magnets and Gems prior to 1931.
- SMITH, NORMAN J., 34 Weincliffe Mount, Beeston, Leeds, 11. (N)  
Occupation: Sales Manager. Group 5(a) (b) (d) (e)
- SMITH, PERCY, The Stores, Mumby, Nr. Alford, Lincs.  
Age 50 Group 3; 2; 5(b); 7; 5(c).



- SMITH, WILLIAM DAVID OWEN, 57 Barkby Road, Syston, Nr. Leicester. (L)  
Age 26 Group 6(b)
- SMYTH, SYDNEY, 1 Brandon Street, Clovelly, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.  
Groups 5(a) (b); 7(a); 5(d).
- SNELL, FRANK, Rathcar, 6 Chingswell Street, Bideford, Devon.  
Group 5 (all)
- SOUTHWAY, ARTHUR JAMES, P.O. Box 3, Beaconsfield, Cape Province, South Africa.  
Age 41 Groups: All. For statistical (L) (N)  
purposes.
- Would like correspondence with any members to help complete catalogues in detail of papers in all groups, especially the girls' papers.
- SOUTHWOOD, ROGER, 3 Spring Villas, Farnborough Road, Farnborough, Hants. (L)  
Age 16 Groups 5 (a) (b) (d); 3; 4; 2.
- STABLES, HENRY, 44 Hewes Road, Little Horton, Bradford, Yorkshire. (N)  
Age 64 Groups 4; 1; 2; 3; 8; 9; 6(b); 5(d).  
Occupation: Printer's Cutter.
- Would like to obtain the two following: Aldine First Rate Libraries to complete a set of Deadwood Dick Outlaw; No. 416, Deadwood Dick in Danger; No. 464, Deadwood Dick in Dead City.
- STEVENS, SHEILA, 783 Rathdown Street, North Carlton, N.4., Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.  
Age 37 Group 5(a) (e) (d) (b) (c); 10; 4;  
7(a) (b); 8; 2; 1; 3; 6 (all).
- Collection mainly consists of Magnets, Gems and S.O.L's of 1930 and some Populars. Requires Magnets 511, 517-19; 1373; S.O.L's, 232, 220; P<sub>o</sub>pulars (new series) 122, 123, 125-127.
- STEWART, ALAN, 290 Archway Road, London, N.6. (L)  
Age 41 Groups 7(a); 5(a) (b).  
Occupation: Dance Musician.
- STONE, LEON, Elgin Street, Gordon, N.S.W., Australia.  
Group 5 (all)
- STOREY (Senr.) ROWLAND M., 8 Eskdale Terrace, Jesmond, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 2.  
Groups 2; 3; 4; 6(a) (c).  
Says "Thanks to old friends and new my collection now assumes quite a figure, but the "Big Budget" still eludes me."
- STURDY, F., 8 Watson Street, Middlesbrough, Yorkshire.  
Group 5 (all)
- STRYPE, TOM S., 21 Cann Hall Road, Leytonstone, London, E.11. (L)  
Groups 2; 3; 4; 1.  
Occupation: Corrector of the Press.  
Requires True Blues 1d. and 1d.
- SUDBOROUGH, ROY WALTER, 27 Milton Street, Higham Ferrers, Northants.  
Age 33. Groups 5 (all); 6; 7; 8.



- SUTHERLAND, PEARL, 3930 W. 35th Avenue, Vancouver 13, B.C. Canada.  
 Age 4: Groups 4 (Chums; Scout)  
 5 (b) (e) (c); 6(a);  
 3 (Buffalo Bills, Dick Turpins, Robin Hoods)
- Needs Chums, vols. 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6. Has all others. Also wants Scouts 1908 to 1911, 1915 and 1917, and Gems and Magnets, mainly between 400 and 600.
- \* SWAN, J.R., 3 Fifth Avenue, Paddington, London, W.10. (L)  
 Group 5.
- TAYLOR, RAYMOND, 22 Pembroke Avenue, Ettingshall, Wolverhampton.  
 Age 62 Groups 1; 2.  
 Still looking for Henderson's "Young Folks Budget"; "Nuggets" and "Varieties".
- THOMPSON, GORDON, 85 Deerpark Road, Belfast, Northern Ireland.  
 Age 37 Groups 5(a) (d) (c) (b) (e)  
 7(c) (b)
- Possesses 700 Magnets and all Nelson Lees from 112 except 141, 169, 230 and 233. Is looking for Nugget Lib. St. Franks stories, and Rookwood Schoolboys Own.
- THURBON, WILLIAM THOMAS, 47 Cromwell Road, Cambridge.  
 Age 48 Groups 2; 3; 4; 6(a)
- Wanted: Boys' Friend Libraries, 1st series, 92, 95, 246. Marvels 3, 7, 9. Union Jacks, 201, 244, 404, 565, 592, 122, 134, 141, 218, 220, 234-7, 239-245, 302-311.
- TRAYNOR, J. RICHARD, BCM/Adventures, London, W.C.1.  
 Age 45 Groups 7(a); 5(a); 6(a); 10.
- Would be extremely grateful if anyone could supply Nelson Lee 17, old series, "The Black Wolf". Wanted for sentimental reasons. Would gladly pay 10/-.
- TWELLS, J., 32 Bridgett Street, Rugby.  
 Age 44 Group 7(a)
- Considers Edwy Searles Brooks the best school story author ever. His humorous writings are far in advance of any other, including Duncan Storm.
- TWINHAM, HORACE E., 25 Haselden Road, Lupset, Wakefield, Yorkshire. (N)  
 Age 43 Groups 5 (all); 6(all); 9; 8.  
 Occupation: Window cleaner.  
 Requires any Holiday Annual except 1925 and 1929.
- VENNIMORE, CHARLES E. F., 25 Byron Avenue, West Hounslow, Middlesex.  
 Still has a huge collection of periodicals of all types. Adult and juvenile. All in mint condition.
- WLINE, GRANVILLE T., 6 Burnham Road, Westcott, Nr. Aylesbury, Bucks.  
 Age 48 Groups 5; 6; 7; 8.  
 Is always open to buy Double Numbers of any paper.
- WALKER, THOMAS WILLIAM, 387 Liverpool Road, Hough Green, Widnes, Lancs.  
 Group 5 (all)
- WALKER, PETER A., Chelsea House, Wick, Bristol.  
 Groups 5(a) (b); 7(a); 5(c) (d); 4.



- WALLIS, CLIFFORD, 64 Oakwood Park Road, Southgate, London, N.14. (L)  
Age 31 Groups 5(a); 7(a); 8; 5(b) (d)
- WALSH, JAMES, 345 Stanley Road, Kirkdale, Liverpool. (Mer.)  
Age 42 Groups 5(a) (b) (c) (d)
- WARREN, PHILIP, 30 Newton Road, Urmston, Lancs. (N)  
Group 5
- WEBB, WALTER, 84 Park Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham, 11.  
Age 42 Group 6(a) (b)
- \* WEBSTER, DONALD B., Waterloo House, 7 Crosby Road South, Liverpool, 22. (N) (Mer.)  
Age 45 Groups 5(b) (a) (e) (d) (c);  
4 (Chums); 7(a).  
Occupation: Welfare Officer.  
Started as a reader in 1912, and had a collection until 1930. Career intervened and on returning home two years later found to his dismay that all his papers had been destroyed with the exception of 1920 Holiday Annual which he still possesses.  
A year ago saw a copy of "Tom Merry's Own" and as a result got in touch with Frank Richards and the C.D.  
His son aged 10 is following in his footsteps.  
Wishes to obtain "Boy Without a Name" and "School and Sport".
- WHITER, BENJAMIN GEORGE, Cherry Place, 706 Lordship Lane, Wood Green, London, N.22. (L)  
Age 46 Groups 5(all); 6(all); 7; 4. 8. 9; 3.  
Says thoroughly enjoys being secretary of the London Club as it has been the means of getting in touch with stout fellows all over the world. Present small collection consists of Sexton Blake Libraries.
- WHITER, ROBERT H., 706 Lordship Lane, Wood Green, London, N.22. (L)  
Age 27 Groups 5(all); 8; 4.  
Has now complete set Holiday Annuals, complete set Bullseyes, 900 Magnets, 900 Gems, 15 vols. Captains, 3 vols. Chums, 3 vols. Young England, 200 Populars, 250 Modern Boys, 1 vol. S.P.C.
- WHITMORE, IAN, 3 South Bank Lodge, Surbiton, Surrey.  
Age 17 Group 5(a) (b) (d) (c) (e).  
Occupation: Bank Clerk.
- WHORWELL, RICHARD, 29 Aspinden Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.16.  
Age 53 Groups 5(all); 4; 8; 6(all).
- WICKS, DONALD F., 13, Essex Road, Surrey Hills, E.10, Victoria, Australia. (Vic)  
Age 29 Groups 5 (a) (d) (e) (b) (c);  
7 (a) (b); 8; 6 (all).
- WILLETT, E. P. K., Church Cottage, Laleham-on-Thames, Nr. Staines, Middlesex. (L)  
Groups 5; 6; 7.



- \* WILLISON, FRANK A., 6 Meredith Street, Cradley Heath, Staff. (M)  
 Age 50 Groups 5(a) (b) (c); 8 (Boys' Friend)  
 Occupation. Engineer.  
 Started reading the Magnet and Gem in 1908 and never missed a copy until 1932.  
 Renewed acquaintance when the Midland O.B.B.C. was formed and soon afterwards  
 had 47 Gems 1934-38 and 67 Magnets 1934-40.  
 Would like to get Populars any date. Gems and Magnets 1939-40.
- WILLIAMSON, WILLIAM L., 410 Oakwood Lane, Roundhay, Leeds 8. (N)  
 Age 49 Groups 6(a); 5(all); 2.  
 Occupation: Warehouseman.  
 Anxious to obtain Union Jack 586.
- WILSON, ROBERT, 100 Broomfield Road, Glasgow, N.  
 Age over 50. Groups 5(a) (b) (d) (e) (c); 6(a)  
 Collection (July 1951) Over 1000 Magnets, 600 Gems, 300 S.O.L's, Complete  
 "Monster" Library, All Holiday Annuals, 100 Populars, 300 Union Jacks,  
 150 Boys' Friend Libraries, Complete C.D's to date. All C.D. Annuals,  
 100 Thrillers. These include 60 bound volumes.  
 Is still looking for Thrillers Nos. 48, 49, 50, 51 (1930) to complete  
 volume for binding.
- WINDOVER, EILEEN I. M., 55 Avondale Road, Gorleston-on-Sea Norfolk. (L)  
 Group 10.
- WOOD, JOHN PETER, Nostaw, Stockton Lane, York. (N)  
 Age 37 Groups 7(a); 5(a) (b) (d)  
 (e. 1920 only); 6 (all).  
 Occupation: Journalist.
- WRIGHT, CHARLES, 12 Ashburham Place, Greenwich, London, S.E.10. (L)  
 Age 46. Groups 3; 6(a) (b) (c); 7(a)  
 Occupation: Hospital attendant.
- WRIGHT, OLIVE, 12 Ashburnham Place, Greenwich, London, S.E.10. (L)  
 Group 6(a) (b)  
 Occupation: Counter Hand.
- YOUNG, J., 81 Alsen Road, Holloway, London, N.7.  
 Groups 7; 5.

URGENTLY WANTED: Nelson Lee Libraries Old Series 1915-1920 Numbers 1, 4, 6,  
 7, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 22, 27, 30, 31, 34, 40, 42, 46, 49, 50, 51, 53, 60,  
 62, 64, 65, 67, 68, 69, 71, 72, 73, 75, 76, 78, 82, 84, 85, 86, 88, 92, 102,  
 103. I am willing to pay any price for these or will exchange Old Series  
 Nelson Lees at the rate of 3 issues for each one of above Nos. I have some  
 400 issues for exchange; also am prepared to exchange Union Jacks, before 1925,  
 and first old series Sexton Blakes from my own collection for any of above  
 issues. J. R. Murtagh, 509 Selwood Road, Hastings, New Zealand.

WANTED: Nelson Lees Old series Nos. 80-150, 166, 186, 229, 232, 239, and  
 328-337. C. Churchill, 123 Pinnoe Road, Exeter.



# The Billy Bunter Books

- by -

Frank Richards

We have no need to recommend this famous series to readers of the "Collectors' Digest" - who are not alone in their appreciation of Frank Richards' books, for over 100,000 have been sold.

BILLY BUNTER BUTTS IN has just been published, and in 1952 will appear - BILLY BUNTER AND THE BLUE MAURITIUS (Easter), and BILLY BUNTER'S BEANFEAST (in September). With the exception of BILLY BUNTER'S CHRISTMAS PARTY, and BILLY BUNTER IN BRAZIL, now out of stock - the other titles which have previously appeared are still available. These comprise BILLY BUNTER OF GREYFRIARS SCHOOL, BILLY BUNTER'S BANKNOTE, BILLY BUNTER'S BARRING OUT, BILLY BUNTER'S BENEFIT, BILLY BUNTER AMONG THE CANNIBALS, BILLY BUNTER'S POSTAL ORDER, BESSIE BUNTER OF CLIFF HOUSE SCHOOL. Each book is fully illustrated by R. J. Macdonald, and the price, in spite of constantly increasing production costs, remains at 7s.6d.

We had been hoping to publish THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF FRANK RICHARDS during the Autumn but - owing to paper difficulties, it has had to be postponed until February. It will be illustrated with eight interesting plates and the price is 10s.6d. We know that every follower of Frank Richards will be eagerly awaiting this unique volume.

Charles Skilton Limited

50, Alexandra Road, London, S.W.19.

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