

The Collectors' DIGEST ANNUAL

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The Collectors' Digest Annual

ELEVENTH YEAR Christmas 1957 ELEVENTH YEAR

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Editor: HERBERT LECKENBY
12, Herbert Street, Hull Road, York, England.
OR
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FOREWORD

Dear Fellow Collectors,

Once again it's my great pleasure to greet you with a Collectors' Digest Annual: once again one hundred thousand words on that fascinating hobby of ours.

The "Who's Who" is back again; it was certainly missed last year, judging by the letters I have had appealing for its reappearance.

As always there's been no shortage of copy. In fact two articles "The St. Jim's Who's Who" by W.J.A. Hubbard and Bernard Thorne and "The Career of the Boys Realm" by myself, have had to be held over until next year.

Moreover, that dynamic New Zealander Geoff. Hockley is already busy on his next in that breezy, full of quips style of his. He is dealing with Buffalo Bill hero of thousands of stories for boys. J. Breeze Bentley will also be contributing "The Fourth Form at Rookwood". Nothing like taking time by the forelock.

To the grand, loyal band of contributors who by their hours of labour have produced another thrill-packed Annual I am more grateful than I can adequately express.

In conclusion, the old, old wish - "A very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year" to my ever growing band of friends at home and overseas.

Yours very sincerely,

Herbert Leckenby

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Lord Mauleverer

By J. BREEZE BENTLEY

* * *

Every important Hamilton school was blessed with at least one boy who was well-connected with the Upper Ten and richly endowed with money. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and his distant relative Ralph Reckness Cardew at St. Jin's; Valentine Mornington at Rookwood; Rupert de Courcy and Cecil Ponsonby at Highcliffe; and Vernon Daubeny at St. Winifred's; but one, and only one, was himself a peer of the realm: Herbert Plantagenet Mauleverer, Earl Mauleverer of Mauleverer Towers in Hampshire, a magnificent residence about ten miles from Winchester.*

Mauleverer was an orphan who had two guardians, his uncles Sir Harry Braithwayt and Sir Reginald Brooke. Sir Harry figured only in MAGNET No. 184, when Mauly arrived at the school. Sir Reginald was first mentioned in MAGNET No. 270, but appeared frequently from that time onwards. Both baronets were cheerful, kind and indulgent. They exercised little control over their charge, but faithfully observed their obligation under the late Earl's will, that he be supplied with unlimited cash. In those glorious days of 1912 death duties had not laid their heavy hand on estates, and Mauly was to inherit an income of £500,000 a year when he came of age. In such circumstances every opportunity was afforded for a reckless and extravagant way of living and every temptation to tread the primrose path to disgrace and destruction. That nothing went amiss was a tribute to the innate good sense and character of Mauleverer, who proved to be one of the best-natured, loyal and trusted members of his school and yet was a most interesting and well-liked Greyfriars character.

Inevitably, his arrival at Greyfriars was unusual and dramatic.+ We first saw him at Friardale Station, asking a bewildered porter for his carriage. The porter suggested that he take the station hack or walk - prospects that made Mauly shudder. Just then Bob Cherry and Harry Wharton turned up, and were told of Mauly's "terrible predicament" - no private carriage and the alternatives of a fifteen minutes' walk or a ride in the hack! Bob Cherry cheerily pulled his leg and was asserting that they, too, were in like trouble - awaiting a coach and four - when, to the juniors' astonishment, the coach arrived. Mauly graciously offered them a lift, and drove off to Greyfriars, leaving his coachman, Peters, to deal with the luggage. The drive was a wild one - Mauly drove at high speed, scattered P.C. Tozer, avoided by inches a lumbering waggon, then swung through the gateway of Greyfriars and drove right up to the main door of the School House, just as Dr. Locke stepped out. He drew the horses to a halt, jumped down, and swept off his silk topper with a courtly bow. Needless to say, Dr. Locke was not amused.

The arrival of a real, live earl with "pots of money" naturally attracted the attention of the baser set at Greyfriars and Bulstrode, Skinner, Snoop, Hazeldene and Bolsover major all tried to get him to share their study, but were turned down. Mauly disappointed them all by getting a study all to himself - a room "larger than most" and numbered 15, according to the text, but it later became 12 and the erstwhile No. 15 disappeared from the list.

* Magnet No. 1245.

+ Magnet No. 184.

Coker and Co. and Loder and his cronies tried to win Mauly into their respective sets. Coker was soon discouraged by the Remove but Loder (later on) nearly scored a success, for in MAGNET No. 203 he wheedled Mauly into acceptance of an invitation to play bridge. In Loder's study Mauly - ever rather easy-going - diffidently accepted a cigarette and reluctantly lit it, then just let it go out and would not relight it; and began to play cards 'for nominal stakes, you know' without enthusiasm being quick enough to see that the other three players always played skilfully against him and clumsily with him. He was quite relieved when the Remove intervened and broke up the meeting. But his punishment was severe: he was made to endure a moral lecture by Alonzo Todd. This bored him so unutterably that he rose in despair and hurled Alonzo out of the study. Thus ended Mauly's one and only slip.

Mauly's study was magnificently furnished - by Liberty's of London, who sent down a van piled high with good things: silks and velvets, satins and costly rugs that made the juniors gasp as they saw them carried in. There was a clock valued at £30 (a fantastic figure in 1912), armchairs, cushions, and a magnificent sofa upon which its owner was destined to laze away in idleness many an afternoon. This was really Mauly's besetting sin. Provided with a good brain, he was content to drift along near the bottom of the form, avoiding work and neglecting prep. - very charmingly, no doubt, but in a way most displeasing to Mr. Quelch. And while others exercised in the gym. or toiled on the football field, Mauly would slumber in Study No. 12. Many were the occasions when Bob Cherry would root him out - dashing into the study, upending the sofa, and marching off his victim for some energetic pursuit. Once indeed, in MAGNET No. 243, Bob actually made Mauly go into training, but the result was disastrous: he became a sleepwalker and stole and hid away his own money, causing no end of a pother.

Mauly's inherent laziness made him an easy victim when Fisher T. Fish launched his Fag Agency.* For a beggarly eight shillings a week, Fishy provided him with eight fags: Gatty, Myers, Dicky Nugent and Sammy Bunter of the Second, Tubb and Paget of the Third, and Leigh and Billy Bunter of the Remove. For a short time they got on with the job, while Mauly dozed peacefully on the sofa, but in the long run it did not work. The fags were more ready to eat at their lord's expense than to work for him, and the climax came when the lazy earl ventured to save his tired legs by being pushed into Friardale in a rickety bath-chair! A wheel soon came off, nearly throwing him into the road. After refitting, the fags pushed the chair to the top of a rise - and let go. The chair shot into Friardale at great speed, cannoned into P.C. Tozer and threw Mauly into a muddy ditch so that he had to RUN back to Greyfriars in a state of utter ruin.

Mauly's fantastic wealth quite naturally enabled him to do many things beyond the power of common mortals. Thus, when Coker and Co. wrecked a Remove pantomime by running off with the costumes,† Mauly stepped in and saved the day by bringing in a real professional company at his own expense.

Again, when Bob Cherry's rascally cousin, Paul Tyrrell, stole £200 from Mauly and fled to Monte Carlo, Mauly gave chase and took the Famous Five with him.‡ (This, incidentally, was one of the rare occasions when Billy Bunter failed to wedge himself into the party: they stranded him on the platform at Friardale Station.) The six lodged at Sir Reginald's villa at Cap Martin, tracked down Tyrrell, and made him pay up. But Mauly - ever compassionate - took

* Magnet No. 257.

+ Magnet No. 256.

‡ Magnet No. 270.

pity on the foolish fellow and let him have £50 with which to try out his wonderful system at the tables. It went in no time, of course.

In the later stories, there were many visits to Mauleverer Towers* and holidays afloat, including the trip on the yacht "The Silver Scud" + and a celebrated voyage to the South Seas, / where the Removites ran across Mauly's beachcombing cousin. One remarkable feature of these visits and trips was the way in which they attracted malefactors who caused a heap of trouble, but were, of course, inevitably tracked down and exposed.

Mauly was, unfortunately, extremely careless in money-matters and many were the occasions when this caused trouble. Sometimes he mislaid a note by using it as a bookmark! At other times he merely lost one. He did this in MAGNET No. 193 when he stuffed a banknote into a waistcoat pocket, and let it fall out. This put Frank Nugent nastily on the spot - but in the end Vernon-Smith got Bunter to own up that he had found it, and was hanging on to it in the hope of a reward.

Great wealth brought with it no trace of snobbery and, indeed, Mauly was repelled by and contemptuous of snobs. In MAGNET No. 188, Henry Hopkins, the only son of John Hopkins the innkeeper at Sanford, a village in Essex, came to Greyfriars under the name of Cecil Leigh and made out that his father owned a large estate and was rolling in money. In vain did he court Mauly's favour, only to be kept at arm's length. But when John Hopkins visited the school - much against his son's wish - Mauly befriended him and secreted him in Gosling's lodge till he had sought out Leigh and given him the sound advice "Bring your father into school and shew the fellows that you're not ashamed of him." After much hesitation, Leigh did so and was much taken aback by the way in which his stock went up in the Form.

Similarly, Timothy Perkins the son of an under-footman, who made some lucky speculations on the stock exchange, who came to Greyfriars as Algernon de Vere and was an utter snob, could make no headway with Lord Mauleverer, but was the recipient of his compassion when his fully history came to light. /

In MAGNET No. 194, Dick Penfold arrived. The son of the village shoemaker, a hard-working worthy craftsman who waged a losing battle against mass-production, Dick won the Town Scholarship to Greyfriars. On account of his poverty, Dr. Locke was apprehensive of his successful entry, and offered him the alternative of the monetary value of a year's tuition; but Dick would not be put off and took his place in the Remove. Mr. Quelch, in a rare error of judgment, put him in Vernon-Smith's study (at that time No. 9) and ructions ensued, Smithy trying all manner of dodges to shift "the cobbler" from his study. Mauly ended this by inviting Pen into his study, and when Vernon-Smith still caused trouble, it was Mauly who suggested that they collared him, tied his hands, festooned him with worn-out foot-wear and pushed him into the Remove corridor.

Later, in MAGNET No. 271, Mauly again came to Penfold's rescue when Snooks, the land- and estate-agent, tried to dispossess John Penfold for arrears of rent. Knowing that a gift would be declined, Mauly offered to lend Dick Penfold the money, but he would not agree to this, being aware that repayment would be impossible. Then Peter Todd found out that the landlord was none other than Sir Reginald Brooke; Mauly wired to his uncle and all ended well.

Mauly's greatest test came when Sir Jimmy Vivian came to Greyfriars. / Sir Jimmy was the son of a distant relative of Mauly - a ne'er do well who had wasted

*For example, MAGNETS No. 776, 1244. + MAGNETS No. 755 to 759. / MAGNETS No. 1589 to 1598. / MAGNET Nos. 749 to 752. / MAGNET No. 471.

his money and reduced himself to penury. Dying of wounds in the Great War, he wrote to Sir Reginald, craving that his son be rescued from a dreadful slum - Carker's Rents - situated "at the back of the Euston Road." This Sir Reginald did, and after useful spade-work by a tutor, he sent Sir Jimmy to Greyfriars, to give him a chance. Mauly promised to rally round, took him into his study, and tried to improve his habits and manners. It was an uphill struggle: Sir Jimmy tried to eat with his fingers or his knife, avoided washing, and dropped his aitches all over the place. Poor fastidious Mauly had an awful time, but he stuck to it, and in the long run there was a considerable improvement.

When Harold Skinner and Sidney James Snoop tried to get Sir Jimmy expelled by tempting him with gin* - a common enough commodity in Carker's Rents - Mauly's laziness and indolence fell like a cloak and he refused to let them escape with a Form ragging as punishment.

"Hold on!" Lord Mauleverer chipped in. "Hold my jacket, Wharton! This isn't goin' to be a raggin', it's goin' to be a fight - two blessed fights! Skinner first. Come on, Skinner!"

"Lord Mauleverer was called the slacker of the Remove, and he was popularly supposed to be almost too lazy to live. But during the following ten minutes he did not look much like a slacker. His lordship's noble blood was boiling, and he sailed into Skinner in a way that made the Removites roar applause. The wretched schemer had to go through it. When he threw himself on the floor and refused to rise, Bob Cherry dragged him up by the ears, and after that had happened twice, Skinner fought it out. It was a terrific fight. And when it was all over, Skinner lay on the floor a complete wreck. Then Sidney James Snoop, who had watched the scene with bulging eyes, was called upon to take his turn. He took it. By the time his lordship had finished, Snoop was as great a wreck as Skinner.

"Now kick them out, begad!" gasped his lordship.

"Skinner and Snoop were kicked out. Bob Cherry patted Mauleverer on the back."

"Good old House of Lords," chuckled Bob. "If anybody calls you a slacker again, Mauly, I'll call him a Prussian." +

"Begad, I'm quite tired," gasped his lordship, sinking on the sofa. "Did I give them a good licking?"

"Ha, ha! Terrific."

The time came when Sir Jimmy, Like Piet Delarey who also shared Mauly's study, more or less faded out of the picture, though (officially) both remained in the Remove until the end of the MAGNET.

One other celebrated happening must be mentioned, which occurred in MAGNET No. 958 "The Slacker's Awakening". The Famous Five had arranged a picnic with Peter Hazeldene, Marjorie and Clara at the Old Priory, and rooted out a reluctant Mauly to go with them. He, lazy fellow, when called upon to do his share of carrying dropped his end of the basket and broke the eggs; then later, given Miss Primrose's cake to carry, fell behind, sat down to rest and dozed off. Bunter horned in and ate the cake, but Cecil Ponsonby, arriving just as Mauly awakened, got the blame. Mauly enraged, and not a little alarmed at the prospect of facing Clara without the cake, pushed back his cuffs, and tackled Pon. For three or four minutes they fought hard, then the yellow streak shewed. Pon retreated and then ran.

* MAGNET No. 471. + The time was 1917.

"Oh, gad," gasped Lord Mauleverer. "You rotten funk, come back! Do you think I'm goin' to race after you on a hot afternoon? Come back!"

Pon subsequently used his catapult to annoy the girls and got into further trouble. He got his revenge later, when the Greyfriars party descended into the vaults, by rolling the flagstone cover over the entrance, thereby trapping them below. They tried to make their way to the Greyfriars end of the passage but their torches failed and in the darkness Marjorie and Mauly got lost. Mauly refused to give in or to shew fear and resolutely tried to feel the way back to the main passage. In time the strain told on Marjorie and she fainted. Mauly picked her up and staggered on. Finally, Peter Todd heard the others knocking on the Greyfriars door and got Mr. Quelch to open it. Mauly and Marjorie were found at the last gasp and brought back to the daylight, to the great relief of all, and especially of Bob Cherry.

WANTED: "Chatterbox" Annuals for years 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922. Also copies of "Rainbow" comic. Your price paid if at all reasonable.

W. WESTWATER, 4 BUCKLEY STREET, GLASGOW, N.2.

WANTED: GEMS: Series 334-337, series 351-353, 355, 356, 358, 359, 361, 362, 363, 364, 375, 376-378, 393, 399, 416, 988-991.

S.G.J. WERNHAM, D.O., M.R.O., 5, MUSEUM STREET, MAIDSTONE, KENT.

WANTED: Bound volumes of Magnet 1-1454, Bound Gems 1-1543, Loose Gems 1507-1542, 1579, 1580 and 1584. S.O.Ls. 230, 391. Populars, Boys' Friend Weekly, Holiday Annuals 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1924, 1926, 1927, 1929.

FOR SALE OR EXCHANGE: Magnets, complete run 1554-1683.

S.F. WHITEHEAD, 12 WELLS ROAD, FAKENHAM, NORFOLK.

WANTED ALWAYS:

Bullseyes, Fun & Fiction, Surprise, $\frac{1}{2}$ d Pluck, Marvel, Union Jack, Boys Realm, Boys Herald, Boys Friend, Union Jack, Penny Pictorial, Boys Friend Library, Nelson Lee O.S. only, Victorian "Bloods" Vanguard (A.P.), Pluck, Dreadnought, Magnet, Gem, Chums, Scout. Bound Books bought and sold. New Books obtained to order (including U.S.A.). Science Fiction and Fantasy Mags and Books wanted.

F. VERNON LAY, 167 WATFORD ROAD, HARROW, MIDDLESEX.

WANTED: Triumph (with strips), Magic, Happy Days, Okay, Wags, Bouncer, Funny Wonder, Jester, Jolly 1938-40. (See Who's Who).

SALE/EXCHANGE (Dollars for holiday!) Detective Weekly 1933(26); Modern Wonder 1939(27); Oualtineys Own Comic (111); Scoops (Set); Bound: Merry & Bright 1932 (Jan-June); Butterfly 1927 (Jan-June); Rainbow Jan 1935-May 1936; Eagle 1950-51 (3 vols). Dozens oddments. DENIS GIFFORD, 16, SYDENHAM PARK, LONDON, S.E.26.

PIPPINIANA

by OTTO MAURER

Collop the First: What's in a name?

As long as Golden Apples grow
King Pippin's name shall live.

Tim Pippin, when one comes to consider it, has all along had a grave disadvantage to contend with in establishing for himself a favoured place amongst the great heroes of adventurous fiction: the disadvantage of an inappropriate name. That he has succeeded, in spite of this, in gaining the devotion, often the lifelong devotion of many thousands of readers over a period now of 85 years, is not the least achievement of that indomitable spirit in him, which triumphed over dangers and monsters unnumbered. But the disadvantage of that unfortunate name of his, which nobody who has once been converted to him would dream of wishing to alter, has been more difficult to contend against than all his gigantic adversaries with their redundant heads, magical powers, charmed lives and other extraordinary attributes.

Not that the name is in itself a poor sort of name. It is anything but that. It is arresting, it fixes itself instantly in the memory, there is fascination in it. But is it fascination of the right sort? There is, one must admit, something shrill and piping about those three so slightly differentiated syllables, Tim-Pip-pin, all with the same short, high-pitched vowel. It is a name that, if one knew nothing of the heroic enterprise associated with it, would seem to belong to the category of such nursery rhyme worthies as Tommy Tucker, Simple Simon, Jack Horner and the rest of them, or even of animal favourites like Tiger Tim, Bunny Flopkins or Teddy Tail, rather than to that, say, of King Arthur, Siegfried or Amadis of Gaul. There is something too childlike, too childish even, about the name Tim Pippin, that took a tremendous amount of living down. This becomes clear when one compares it with the more challenging names of the many heroes of fairy-tale bloods, who followed closely in his wake, exploiting his success, such as S. Holland's Dick Daring, Prince Ludo and Winfred, F.C. Thomson's Prince Cole, W. Villiers' Prince Silverspear, Alfred T. Philipps' Prince Goldenwings or Llewellyn Longfellow's Prince Boldwin. That is the kind of name to have. One sees it even within the Tim Pippin stories themselves, when the hero's great rival is called Prince Dreadnought, his grandfather Old Anselm, his uncle Frank the Fearless. R.M.H. Quittenton's own later heroes of the Tim Pippin type have the advantage of robust, full-sounding names: Jack the Valiant and Tor. The long-lost noble kinsmen whom Tim Pippin's son discovers in the later sequels bear such names as King Felix, Prince Constantine and Prince Gustavus, his associates in his final adventures are Orlando and General Paradox, and such names as Prince Honour-Bright and Prince Ferdinand run in his family on the maternal side. What chance would the falsetto name 'Tim Pippin' ever have amongst such sonorous, romantic and Ruritanian names as these, except in the eyes of those who are no outsiders, but have the firm conviction implanted in them

from their tenderest years that this Tim Pippin is the gallantest, his name the finest of them all? The mere outsider cannot and will not take a hero with such a name as Tim Pippin seriously.

How is it to be accounted for that R.M.H. Quittenton, master as he was in the devising of appropriate and magnificent names, should, in the most important case of all, that of his incomparable hero, apparently have blundered? One point to be considered is that the name 'Pippin' in itself might just have passed muster for the purposes of heroism and romance, if the appellation coupled with it had been calculated to neutralize the associations of diminutiveness and oddity inherent in it, instead of reinforcing them, as 'Tim' unfortunately does. This is shown by the title of Eleanor Farjeon's sophisticated 'Martin Pippin in the Apple Orchard' (1921), the hero of which, a wandering minstrel initiated into the secret beauties of nature, is at once felt to have quite the right name, the sufficiently dignified name.

Actually the name 'King Pippin' (and our Tim Pippin acquires the title of 'King' early in his adventures and is often known by it) had been widely current for at least a century before R.M.H. Quittenton made use of it. It goes back, we can be certain, to that King Pepin the Brief, father of Charlemagne and first king of France, who died in 768 A.D. and who figures in some of the old romances of chivalry of the Charlemagne cycle, especially in the late mediaeval story of Valentine and Orson. This story, twice dramatized in the age of Shakespeare, was extremely popular in England down to the beginning of the present century. Thomas Dibdin's Valentine and Orson, produced at Covent Garden in 1804 as 'one continued scene of unmitigated splendour', had probably something of the quality of pantomime - it was largely in dumbshow, and the famous clown Grimaldi appeared prominently in it. Speaight records no fewer than seven different publications of Valentine and Orson for the toy theatre, based on this production or on revivals of it, between 1812 and 1829, apart from Skelt's reprint of 1835. Christmas 1837 there was produced at Drury Lane a pantomime: Harlequin and King Pepin, or Valentine and Orson. But before this date the name of King Pepin or King Pippin had become detached from its original connection with the Valentine and Orson story for pantomime purposes, and for other purposes too. There had been in 1834 a pantomime which was also destined to become a favourite of the toy theatre, entitled: Harlequin Little King Pippin, or the Golden Crown and the Goblin of the Apple, full of political allusions to the Reform Bill and of pictures of London street life. Here Little King Pippin seems to have been a schoolgirl.

The name King Pippin was above all employed teasingly as an ironical term of endearment for the spoilt and self-assertive child, the mother's darling - as a later generation was to speak of 'His Majesty the Child' - and more often than not the epithet 'Little' was prefixed to it. It must have been well established in this sense as early as 1786, as Elizabeth Newbery in that year published a moral booklet for children under the title: 'The History of Little King Pippin'. The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes, from which most of this information is gleaned, gives various examples of the way in which the name of Little King Pippin was used in the later 18th and earlier 19th centuries. There is the rhyme:

Little King Pippin he built a fine hall,
Pie-crust and pastry-crust that was the wall;
The windows were made of black pudding and white,
And slated with pancakes, you ne'er saw the like.

The association of the name 'Pippin' either with apple-pies or with orchards was inevitable; we find it not only here, but also in the 1834 pantomime with the Goblin of the Apple and Pudding Lane and Pie Corner; we find it in Eleanor Farjeon's Martin Pippin in the Apple Orchard, and we find it in the Tim Pippin stories too, where the hero marries the daughter of King Golden-Apple. In some versions of the nursery rhyme here quoted the name is corrupted to Little King Boggen or Bobbin.

In November 1804 Gillray, satirizing Napoleon for proclaiming himself Emperor, produced a caricature with the verse beneath it:

There's a little King Pippin;
He shall have Rattle and Crown.
Bless thy wits, my Baby,
Mind it don't throw itself down.

The present writer owns a little chapbook of about 1820 entitled 'King Pippin's Delight', containing nursery rhymes, the first being:

King Pippin leads
His valiant men
First up the hill,
Then down again.

This is, of course, a variant of the rhyme, familiar to all of us, about the 'brave old Duke of York'. Other versions are recorded, in which the protagonist is the 'mighty King of France', 'Napoleon' and the 'Duke of Cumberland'. Yet another nursery rhyme that has some bearing on our theme begins:

As I was going up Pippen Hill,
Pippen Hill was dirty.

It is clear that the name Pippin was very much in the air all through the years of R.M.H. Quittenton's own childhood - he was born in 1833 - and no doubt it was familiar to him, if not from pantomimes, then from nursery rhymes. It was still popular enough in 1865 for the Drury Lane Christmas pantomime of that year to bear the title: Little King Pippin! or Harlequin Fortunatus and the Magic Purse and Wishing Cap. This brings us down to the very eve of the one and only Tim Pippin's first appearance. We can see well enough where his name must have come from - but we can also see that it had already from the outset, even before Quittenton added 'Tim' to it, quite unheroic, ironical and diminutive associations.

It is to be noted that 'pippin' had also since the middle of the 17th century been a common slang term both of endearment and of abuse, particularly among costermongers, rather like our 'fellow', 'chap' or 'bloke'. It was still popular in this sense in 1847, as is shown by the following passage in Albert Smith's satirical 'Natural History of the Gent' of that year:

The Gent is of comparatively late creation. He has sprung from the original untutored man by combinations of chance and cultivation, in the same manner as the later varieties of fancy pippins have been produced by the devices of artful market-gardeners... The fashion which Gents have of occasionally addressing one another as 'my pippin' favours this analogy; and when they use this figure of speech, they pronounce it as follows, - placing great stress on the first letter, and then waiting awhile for the rest, - 'Ullo, my P-ippin!'

The word 'pippin' was undoubtedly familiar to Quittenton also in this usage, which again, however, has little to commend it from the point of view of heroism and high romance.

All this may help us to understand how Quittenton arrived at the name 'Tim Pippin', but it still does not help us at all to understand how he came to give that name, with its ironical and infantile associations, to a hero of heroes. The explanation for that lies elsewhere. To begin with Tim Pippin was not conceived of quite as the imposing and unrivalled hero that he was later to become - we may even suppose that his author at first intended to treat him somewhat whimsically, even ironically. Quittenton's point of departure had been Grimm's 'Gallant Little Tailor', of which he had written an adaptation with unexpected success under the significant title 'Minikin'. The only readers envisaged to begin with were those under ten years old, and consequently Tim Pippin was conceived of as a kind of Hop o' my Thumb or even Tom Thumb:

The villagers always used to call him 'Little Tim'; for he was a very small boy, although he was nearly sixteen years of age... Tim was a very nice boy, though he was small for his years. Good stuff is often found in little room, and so it was with Tim.

In the earlier chapters of the first story, Giantland, the chief source of interest, more even than Tim's heroism, is the evoking of such fantastic situations as are found in Gulliver's Travels or in Tom Thumb; Tim goes for a swim in a giant's shoe which has become filled with rain-water, taking it for a lake; he finds plenty of room to walk about and go to sleep inside a giant's nightcap; he engages in a fight with a giant flea, which is as large as himself. He is regularly referred to as 'our little hero' or 'little Tim'. So long as he was conceived of in this way, the Tom-Thumb-like name 'Tim Pippin' was quite suitable for him. But very soon this changes - the giants are no longer so vast, and he, who had been no bigger than a giant flea, is now equal in size to a giant rat. One of the curious results of this is that the two first giants he kills are also by far the biggest ones. By the time that he comes out at the other side of Giant-Land to the Granite Castle and the Marble Palace, he is no longer unduly diminutive in proportion to the other human beings, hostile or well-disposed, with whom he comes in contact. He is a pygmy now only from the giant's, but not from the human point of view. Something of the original whimsical and ironical intentions of the author appears still in the names of King Golden-Apple and of his faithful equerry, Lord Fiddlestick, but for the rest the entire royal world in which the hero now moves is invested with dignity and meant to be taken quite seriously, playfulness and humour being reserved for the presentation of the giants and of such occasional members of the humbler classes as the old tailor Snip and his wife, Simon the Sergeant, or Crispin the Cobbler. There are to be no smiles at the expense of the hero. His original diminutiveness is indeed not completely lost sight of, but as little as possible is made of it. At the beginning of the fifth and last of the stories, The Golden Pheasant, Quittenton does his best to sort all this out:

Tim had grown considerably during the last two years, but still he was not very tall, being only five feet four 'in his stocking feet' (later corrected to stockinged), and not likely to grow any taller... There is an old saying 'that good stuff lies in little room', and this aptly applied to Tim. He had a dauntless and fearless spirit, wonderful sagacity, a soul of honour, a determination to crush evildoers, and these good qualities more than atoned for

his smallness of stature.

If Quittenton had foreseen from the outset the full scale of heroic greatness to which his hero was destined to develop, one may safely assume that he would have given him some other, more heroic name. But the mischief had been done. The name once given to him, inappropriate though it in itself was, had endeared him to thousands. It had to be retained - and when the time came for a son to follow in his footsteps, it was impossible that any other name than Tim Pippin should be given to him also, though nothing was indicated one way or the other as to his stature, beyond the words: 'In appearance he is the very model of his Royal father. He is of slender form...'

It is probable that Quittenton had a personal affection for the name 'Tim', which may well have been suggested to him in part, great admirer and personal acquaintance of Charles Dickens as he was, by Tiny Tim in the Christmas Carol (1843). 'We shall continue to call him Tim Pippin', he says, almost defiantly, of his hero, in the first chapter of Monsterland, 'though he was a King, because Primrose always addressed him thus, and she loved the name.' Only twice is the full form 'Timothy' given, and in the second of these cases it was eliminated again in some of the later versions.

Actually Quittenton originally devised the name 'Tim Pippin' for a very different personage from the heroic giant-slayer who was to make it so famous. On January 28th 1865 he had published in Henderson's Household Journal a story entitled Tim Pippin and the Currant Loaf (re-issued in March 1867 in Juvenile Rhymes and Little Stories). It is a story for very small children about a little boy who dreams that he eats his grandmother's currant loaf, to prevent it being taken away by the fairies. It was originally for a greedy little boy of this kind that Quittenton coined the name Tim Pippin - for a little boy who does indeed belong to the category of Tommy Tucker and Simple Simon. In 1910 this story was reprinted in Young Folks Tales No. 164 - but the name of the little boy was now changed from Tim Pippin to Tommy Tucker. It is remarkable that Quittenton, in May 1872, in embarking on the serial story of the youthful giant-killer that was to have such vast success and run on to such immense length, should at first have conceived of his hero in such a way that the name of the greedy little boy with the currant loaf of seven years earlier could be transferred to him.

Quittenton's publishers, Hendersons, certainly found that the name Tim Pippin, attractive though it was to some readers, put many other potential ones off. This is apparent from the way in which they were at pains to keep the name of the hero (especially 'Tim') as much as possible out of the title, or at least out of the main title of the stories, above all when they were published in book-form. The first complete edition in book-form (in 1876) was advertised as 'Giant-Land, being the Complete History of King Pippin'. The adventures of Tim Pippin's son appeared in Story-Nuggets in 1899-1900 under the title 'The Prince of Giant-Land'. One who must have felt particularly strongly on this point was the editor who was responsible for the third serialization of the Tim Pippin stories, in Young Folks Paper 1889-1890 - a task which he certainly engaged upon only under pressure and most reluctantly, as it conflicted with his energetic policy of imposing as adult and highbrow a character as possible on the periodical. In reprinting the King Pippin and Monsterland stories from the 1881 abridgement this editor mercilessly deleted the name 'Tim' with his blue pencil hundreds of times, substituting for it 'our hero', 'King Pippin', 'his Majesty' or whatever else suggested itself to him. Primrose, instead of 'having confidence in Tim's

proWess', was made to have confidence in 'her gallant husband's proWess'. The hippogriff, instead of whinnying: 'I know what I'm about, Master Tim,' was made to whinny: 'I know what I'm about, King Pippin'. The hero himself, instead of saying: 'But I'll kill him yet, or my name's not Tim Pippin', was made to say: '-or my name's not Pippin'. In reply to all of which one might well feel inclined to quote the hero's own defiant words to that mysterious horseman, the Forest Fiend: 'I am not ashamed of my name. It is TIM PIPPIN!'

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BROWSING IN HAMILTON BYWAYS

by JACK WOOD

* * * * *

So much has been said and written in recent years about the main roads of Charles Hamilton creations that I think it might be well for a brief space to forget the familiar figures and surroundings of Greyfriars, St. Jim's, Rookwood, Highcliffe, Cliff House, Cedar Creek, Rylcombe Grammar School, Bagshot, and their immediate neighbours and, instead, to wander down some of the leafier lanes, the picturesque byways, of Hamiltonian scholastic life.

This projected jaunt does not pretend to be fully comprehensive, for the passage of time prevents all but the most avid collector, or the most retentive of memories, achieving such a herculean task. All I hope to do is to recapture from my own reading and from the writings of others something of the Hamilton story which has given pleasure for over 50 years.

I do not claim that I have always read the originals; in many cases I have, but in others it has been reprints which I have read. Nevertheless, I hope my observations will be of interest, and not too familiar.

My own reading begins in 1905 with Charles Hamilton's *The Fifth Form at Fernley*, a short story in *Union Jack* 106, dated October 21. It is not, I believe, Charles Hamilton's earliest work, for I think he had already been writing for other A.P. publications, but it shows signs of the power to come.

It is the story of the rivalry for the goodwill of Squire Geoffrey Lowther, of Lowther Dene, Townley, near Ipswich, of his nephews, Harry Talbot, of the School House Fifth, and Hubert Langley, of the New House Fifth. Langley plots with his friend, Cecil Knowles, also of the New House Fifth, to get Talbot out of the Fernley team to play St. Freda's, which is three miles away. Other characters to whom we are introduced are Helston, Fernley captain; Dick Russell, Talbot's studymate; Caleb Carthew, an odd and elderly character who lives a hermit's existence in Fernley Wood, near the Haunted Pool; Steve Lowe, better known as Seth, the poacher; Lorna Desmond, daughter of the Fernley principal; Jones, the New House goal-keeper; Greene of the School House Sixth; Mr. Tigg, the bookie, who lives at the Golden Lion, Fernley village; Inspector Snipe, stationed at Fernley; Towle, a Fifth-former; Wilkins, the driver of the Fernley school brake; Davenport, the St. Freda's skipper; and the medical men, Dr. Darrel and Dr. Musgrave. As a passing note, it is perhaps worthy of remark that like so many other Hamilton schools, Fernley's colours are blue and white.

Round about 1907, I believe, although I have only read the reprints in later *Holiday Annuals*, there appeared in the *Gem* stories of Clavering and Tom Merry's early days by Martin Clifford.

Even in the brief time the Clavering series lasted, we got a glimpse of the place and its surroundings. The boys playing in the Close; going for cross country runs over Clavering Moor, farmer Oliphant's land, or Sir Alexander's park; visiting High Clavering where the first tram of the day from London arrived at 12-15

p.m.; boxing under the elms behind the boathouse; calling at the old water mill beside the stream at High Clavering; or calling at the lighthouse overlooking the North Sea. We readily recall the personalities of such famous Shellites as Merry, Manners, Lowther, Jimson (who was the joker of the form), Clark, Gore, Phipps and French; Mr. Railton, the youthful "Head" and old friend of Dr. Holmes of St. Jim's, Mr. Quelch, the Shell master, Herr Otto Friedrich Schneider, the German master, Wingate, the school captain, North, his friend, Giles the porter, "Fatty" Daly, another prefect, and Devigne, the captain of the Fifth. In the following year, 1908, which saw the birth of Greyfriars, Charles Hamilton was writing in the Boys' Herald about Cliveden. It was in No. 281, dated Dec. 5, A Mixed Match, that Hamilton first introduced us to the laughable theme of rugby and soccer being played in the same game. This time it was due to a misunderstanding between Micky Flynn, the Irish member of the Cliveden Combine - Dick Neville, junior captain; Flynn; and Lincoln G. Poindexter, son of a corn beef king, of Study No. 4 in the Fourth - and Patrick Sullivan, of the local Muggleton Wanderers. Train is taken from Clivedale to Carbury, thence by Johnny's brake to Muggleton. We are also introduced to redheads Pankhurst and Sid. Price, The Old Firm, of Study 10 in the Fourth; Trevelyan, school capt; Grahame, the school's most unpopular prefect, who has a cousin in the Muggleton team; and Jack Harris, the Muggleton captain. The Cliveden junior team is given as Medway (or Philpott); Green and Price; Gatty Simpson and Flynn; Poindexter, Pankhurst, Neville, Cameron and White.

Cliveden, who played in red shirts and white shorts, scored 8 goals and Muggleton had 52 points. Now, I must jump several years until the early 20's, just after the first World War. The context is Nugget Library 32, The Secret of the School, by Hamilton. Obviously a reprint, as most stories in this Library were, this introduces St. Cynthia's, a school set near Lonsfield station, the Glynhurst estate, and the old priory ruins in Glyndale Wood.

Here again we come up against the familiar story of a missing heir to a title and a fortune. Before the story opened, the yacht Petrel, owned by Francis Glyn, nephew and heir of Sir Arthur Glyn, Bt., of Glynhurst Manor, was lost thanks to the machinations of the present holder of the title, Sir Nevil whose own nephew and heir, Philip Darke, is a bullying prefect at St. Cynthia's.

The story tells of the efforts to prevent the real baronet, Arthur Clare, son of Sir Arthur, finding out the truth. Arthur, a mystery youth, has been placed by an odd character, Gabriel Locke, as a protege of Dr. Bernard Earle, an old friend, who has succeeded Dr. Cranborne as head of St. Cynthia's. Clue to Clare's identity is a black box hidden in the abbey ruins.

In the search for the Secret of the School, we are made familiar with such characters as Sidney Blake, described as the 199th boy at St. Cynthia's; his Lower Fourth Form friends Cecil Langdale and Pat O'Connor; Toggles, the school porter; Mossoo Renaud, the French Master; Langdale, the School's great fighting man; Jim Rice, cad of the Upper Fourth and Darke's fag; Mr. Carton, the Lower Fourth master; Ainger, Clare's Sixth Form chum; Dacre, Darke's pal; Taylor of the Lower Fourth; Wilkinson, of the Sixth and school goal-keeper; Jones, of the Lower Fourth; Hancock, another Darkeite, Perkins, Smith and Norris of the same Form; Brice of the Upper Fifth; Warrington, the captain of Clyffe College; Mr. Keene, the detective; and a curious public school atmosphere of dim gaslight, prepositors, and conversations in which boys are addressed as "chappy".

Round about the same time, Hamilton, as Clifford Clive, had written another story which will recall varied memories for different readers today. It

was all about St. Kits, and the yarn appeared in Hinton's ill-fated School and Sport, was reprinted in the Boy's Friend in 1924, and followed by a sequel in 1925, The Captain of the Fourth.

It was one of Hamilton's "Nameless" stories, and dealt with the adventures of Harry Nameless, later found to be Harry Wilmot, cousin of Aubrey St. Leger. A very similar theme, of course, to the Clare of Highcliffe stories and it was tied in with the Rockwood yarns by Owen Conquest in the Boys' Friend.

Personally, I have read the later reprints in the S.O.L., when they are attributed to Frank Richards. St. Christopher's, better known as St. Kits, where Frank Richards is said to have had his early schooling before going to Cedar Creek, is situated near the Sussex town of Wicke. The School House is an ancient building, much added to over the centuries, and possesses an impressive old grey tower reached across the oak-fringed quad from the ancient stone gateway.

As befits an ancient foundation, the school offers a Foundation Scholarship, a Fortescue Prize for Classics and a Woodford Gold Medal for Mathematics.

Headmaster is Dr. Chenies, who is married, and other members of the staff are Mr. Rawlings (Fourth), Mrs. Brown (housekeeper), Tuckle (page), Old Coote (porter), Mr. Tulke (5th), Mrs. Coote (tuck shop), Mr. Rattrey (Shell), Mr. Sheldon (3rd) and Mrs. Honour (house dame).

The author has sketched in the topography of the school and district with surprising detail. We can, for instance, readily picture the peace and quiet of the Cloisters; the noise of The Glory Hole or junior common room on the lower floor; the grimness of the Rat Trap, the punishment room on the third floor reached by a narrow staircase from the dormitory corridor; the convenient out-house under the boxroom window behind the School House; and the narrow second stairs from landing to the Fourth Form passage, and staircase with an inviting curve to the bannisters. Further afield we have Mrs. Wodger's tuckshop with its two worn steps down to it from Wicke High St.; the swift flowing River Wicke with the deep, dangerous Pool below the bridge in Wicke Lane; Lyncroft School a mile away beyond Lynn Wood; the wood itself, out of bounds because of constant battles with Turkey and Co. of Lyncroft; the town of Lynn, with its picturesque ruins of Lyncroft Castle; Uncle Shrubbs' tuckshop in Wicke; the local hostelries, The Peal of Bells at Lynn; the Red Cow, Wicke; and the Lizard; and a fleeting reference to Lynn racecourse.

Central figure is Harry Nameless, who has been brought up at the seaside village of South Cove (station Southwood) by the Rev. Carew, an old St. Kit's man, and Jack Straw, the old fisherman who rescued him as a baby from a drifting boat.

Harry, who wins the Foundation Scholarship, makes a good start by diving off the bridge into the Pool to rescue the Hon. Algernon Aubrey St. Leger, the dandy of the Fourth and second son of Edward, Earl of Westcourt, an old boy and governor of the School. Harry's brave act is seen by Oliphant, captain of the school, and Rupert Wake, his Sixth Form companion.

Harry, who is then placed with St. Leger and his studymate, Cuthbert Archibald (Bunny) Bootles in Study 5 in the Fourth, has many adventures before he becomes captain of the Fourth and finds that he is the long-lost son of Col. Wilmot, St. Leger's uncle, and an old boy and governor of St. Kit's. His mother, Lucy Wilmot, died in Egypt where the colonel had been stationed, and Harry was

believed drowned in a storm at sea on his way to England.

Outside the main Hamiltonian school stories, few are more comprehensively documented than the St. Kit's series. We are introduced to a host of characters outside the Fourth where the principal action is centred.

There are, in the Sixth, Oliphant; Wake; Gerald Carsdale, the bullying prefect; and Beauchamp, the glass of fashion and mould of form in the Upper School; in the Fifth, Hilton, the captain and a decent type who often referees junior games; Price; and Gunter; in the Shell; Eric Babbie, captain and goalkeeper; Verney major; Scott; and Lister; and in the Third, Fisher (Oliphant's fag); West minor; Judson minimus; and Jones minimus.

In the Fourth we have Vernon Carton, captain until ousted by Wilmot, and richest fellow in the school, Dick Durance, Rex Tracy and Lumley, the Nuts or Goats of Top Study, No. 9; Catesby and Jones minor (No. 1); Wilmot, St. Leger and Bootles (No. 5); Myers and Wheatford (No. 4), Percival Stubbs and Elliott (No. 6); Dugald Scott, a Scot and a swot, and O'Donoghue (No. 7); Handel Mozart (Tinker) Smith, a musician, Lane and Leigh (No. 8); Licke, naturalist and head of Debating Society, Carey, Melton, Howard, and Robert Rake, an Australian newcomer who "swing" an election.

Outside the pupils we have Randolph Carker; Rake V.C. with whom Col. Wilmot once shared Top Study; aunts Georgina and Cordelia St. Leger, Edward's sisters; chauffeur Stimson; Wm. Huggins, the tramp; plump P.C. Bundy of Wicke; solicitor Scupper; Bill Slavey, racing tout; Jim Spadger, racecourse gang; stout Inspector Chater, of Lynn; Mr. Gedge, of the Peal of Bells; Dick Hawke (Turkey), Buster Bunce (goalkeeper), Topford (a forward) and Fowler of Lyncroft School.

St. Kit's colours? Red stripes as a change strip for their normal blue and white. The Fourth, we are told incidentally, have two classes on Sundays, Scripture and Milton with their form-master.

Our next trip into the byways of Hamiltonia brings us to the heart of Warwickshire where Bishop Tunstall founded St. Dorothy's in the reign of King John. St. Dolly's, as the school is more popularly and colloquially known, is situated near the village of Wyndale, and Okeholme is the country railway station for the school.

The school is a strange combination of Hamiltonian atmosphere. It has the one main building of Greyfriars, but on the other hand it has, within the one building the two-house clash of Rockwood or St. Jim's. Here it is Classics, who study Latin and Greek, and the Moderns (or Commercial) who take Chemistry and German.

Dr. Cranston is the headmaster, and other members of the staff are Phipps, the house porter; Mr. Mannering, Sixth form master; Mr. Ford of the Fourth; Herr Rheinberger, or more familiarly, Old Vaterland; Mr. Staines, of the Fifth. The school is so evenly divided that there are 104 pupils in each house, until Charles Hamilton introduces newcomer Sidney Redfern to the Classical Fourth.

Sidney is the younger brother of Arthur Redfern, a Sixth former and prefect, who is trying to break away from the Smart Set, led by Ransome, of Study 4.

Lunsford, a Classical, is school captain, and Knowles is head of the Modern side. Redfern junior soon finds himself at home in Study I with Skelton, Classical 4th captain, (a Yorkshireman) and Lunsford's fag, and Browne III. But at the

same time, he finds himself fagging for Ransome, who is not slow to use him in his schemes to prevent Arthur Redfern becoming a reformed character.

Nevertheless, Redfern minor also finds ample time for inter-house rags against Taffy Morgan, a boxer and a former rucker player, Rake and Vernon, of Study 10, leaders of the Mod. 4th. In fact, young Sidney is also no mean boxer, and in addition to beating Morgan he wins a terrific battle with the local "pro", the Chicken, at the Green Man, Wyndale, a fight instigated by Ransome to win a bet.

Naturally, as always, virtue is triumphant and Ransome oversteps the mark to be expelled. Arthur Redfern becomes skipper, and has no greater champion than his brother.

Classical colours are red; the Moderns' blue. St. Dolly's match of the season is the Lexham game. Fourth form bedtime is 9.30 p.m. We may go to Burford Races.

Other characters in the stories are Ransome, the wealthy Fellowes, Vane (Sixth), Allen and Mills (5th), and Gunter and Wake (4th), who comprise the Smart Set; Mr. Jimmy Cunliffe, landlord, and his friends, Messrs. Norrey, Spooner and Buckle, of the Green Man; Jimmy Crew, the Okeholme bookie; Carne, the Modern goalkeeper, and Sixth former; Price and Courtney, the Classical 6th and house left wing pair, Benson, Miller, Phipps, Fatty Spratt, (Class. Fourth), North (o/right), Kelly (goalkeeper) and Harris (Classical Sixth), Plimsoll and Milward (Class. Fifth), Norton, David Morgan, Harry Rake and Harry Vernon, and Lumsden (Mod. 4th).

Another "character" which may be found wandering in the Close is porter Phipps's mastiff.

The stories ran in the Boys' Realm beginning with No. 370 dated July 3, 1909, and were reprinted in the B.F.L. in the 1920's.

During these inter-war years, Charles Hamilton was developing the Greyfriars, St. Jim's and Rookwood scenes, in addition to these other school stories, and he was also contributing short stories to the Boys Realm from 1909 onwards. One of these latter was Pye's Big Match in which Pye, the best German scholar at Mornington, dreams that he sells his soul to Satan and for reward helps his school to an innings and 177 runs win over their greatest rivals, Underwood. Shades of stories yet to come, one of them even in verse!

But back again to the main byway of Hamiltonia between the wars. This now leads us to the Greyfriars Herald, to yarns subsequently reprinted in the Holiday Annual and in the later Gems.

Charles Hamilton's imagination must surely have been amazingly fertile in the halcyon days between the wars, for in addition to the schools we have already visited he also found time to create as unusual an establishment as I think will be found anywhere in scholastic fiction. This was, of course, St. Winifred's, transferred because of the rebuilding of the school to the Benbow, one of the surviving old wooden walls of Nelson's Navy.

Seamanship amid the masts and shrouds which had seen Trafalgar was an unusual item in the school curriculum. But even more unusual was the fact that Owen Conquest, Martin Clifford and Frank Richards all had a hand in the stories of St. Winny's.

Conquest created the school, Clifford wrote a Holiday Annual story in 1921, and later Frank Richards brought Jack Drake and Dick Rodney from the Benbow to Greyfriars in a Gem series.

The Benbow was anchored on the River Chadway, 15 miles from St. Jim's, and was reached by a pleasant walk through the woods from the village of Chade. Fancy coming out of the woods on to the riverside towpath skirting the playing fields and seeing the masts rising to the sky from the "old tub" as the Benbow was affectionately known. It was old Admiral Plummy, chairman of the governors, who made the board buy the Benbow.

St. Winny's, colours green and white, had Dr. Goring as its headmaster, and a staff including Mr. Packe of the Fourth, Mr. Taight of the Shell, Mr. H. Vavasour of the Fifth, Dr. Pankey, the fat and jolly medical officer, M. Plon, the French master, and Mr. Capps, the keeper of the canteen.

There are no First and Second forms at St. Winny's, and so the stories are centred on a conflict - not of houses or schools this time, but of personalities - in the Fourth and Shell forms. The principal protagonists are Vernon Daubeny, dandy of the Shell and junior leader, and Jack Drake, of the Fourth, later in life to become Ferrers Locke's assistant.

Daubeny, moneyed son of Sir George Daubeny who had spent much of his life in Venezuela, is the leader of The Bucks, who like nothing better than a surreptitious visit to Gentleman Jim at the Lobster Pot Inn. He lodges in Cabin No. 3 in the Shell passage with Egan and Terrence, and his special pals in an evenly divided junior school are Seeley, Chilcot, and Selwyn of the Shell, Steyne and Hubert Ransome of the Sixth and Phipps of the Third.

In the other camp we have Drake, son of a shipowner who has made money in Nigeria tin mines; Rodney, a sailor's son, and their No. 8 cabin-mate, Rupert de Vere (Tuckey) Toodles; Sawyer major (form joker), Estcourt, Newson, Norman, Furley, Rawlings, Hook, Croft, Pierce Raik, and Conway (all of the Fourth), Troope, of the Shell, and Sawyer minor of the 3rd.

Drake, I gather, had reformed and broken with the Bucks, no doubt due to Rodney's influence, and the long Gem series which led to the Benbow sailing for Venezuela and Drake's ultimate arrival at Greyfriars, opened with Drake studying for the Founder's Scholarship in order to stay at St. Winny's for another three years. This, however, proved to be only his father testing the strength of his reformation.

It was a powerful series, and an enjoyable one with some fine writing and characterisation, even in these Gem reprints.

In it we also met, of St. Winny's, Arthur Lovelace, the kindly school captain; Armitage, Oliphant and Royce, his brother prefects; and Cecil Poynings, Poole, Hammesley and Tomlinson, of the Fifth.

Geographically, we learn that Chadport, where the Benbow was refitted for sea, is downstream from Chade, and that Kingsford is the town above Chade.

In an adventurous series before Drake drove the Fifth Form brake from Friardale to Greyfriars at breakneck speed, we saw much of the Spanish Main and the West Indies. We met John Cazalet, former St. Winny's captain, and his son Arthur in Port of Spain, not to mention their major domo, Samuel Pericles Nelson, better known as Sambo; Tin Tacks, the shanghaied ship's carpenter from Barbados,

who attached himself to Jack Drake for the trip; Peg Slaney, the rascally searcher after treasure who lost an eye in a Venezuelan revolution; Capt. Topcastle, commander of the Benbow, and Mr. Piper, the aptly named bosun; and a host of subsidiary characters.

And now, still in the Americas, to a country beloved by Frank Richards, that part of Texas overlooking the Rio Frio and the Staked Plain beyond. A familiar haunt, of course, of the Rio Kid, but for our purpose the home of the famous Packsaddle bunch. Here, set in the grassy prairies of Santanta county, we have the popular cowtown school presided over by the rugged, bearded Six-Gun Bill Sampson, one time Kicking Mule cowpuncher, who uses a quirt on his refractory charges as if he were still riding herd on the range. His assistant, the scholarly, but ineffectual Mr. Small Brown, graduate of a Boston college, who wears the only tail coat in Texas and had his plug hat riddled with bullets on arrival at the school.

Central figure in this Gem series of the thirties is handsome, sturdy, fair-haired Dick Carr, newly arrived from Britain, where his uncle is a Welsh farmer; and son of the store manager of Hard Tack, 20 miles from the cow town of Packsaddle. Dick soon chums up with the lively Slick Poindexter and Mick Kavanagh, and equally quickly he finds himself a pain in the neck to Bill Sampson, as well as to Big Steve Carson, school bully and 16-year-old son of Two Gun Carson, the section bad man, and his pals, Poker Parker and Slim Dixon.

Life at Packsaddle is real and earnest, and there is frequent violent contact with the local gunman and rogues such as Carson; Hair Trigger Pete, the red-bearded bull-whacker; Red Ike, a border thief who also sports a red beard, Snort Jenkins, the horse seller; Jud Judson, gang leader; the rustlers Euchre and Diego; Yuba Pete; Painter Pete, the road agent and Kicking Mule puncher; Yuma Dove, the saloon loafer; Jose Gomez, who runs a saloon for Mexicans; Hawk Walker, the kidnapper; and Pedlar Perkins, the seeker after gold.

Centred on the Red Dog saloon, Job Wash's store, Larsen's big store; Hansen, the fat Dane who keeps an even bigger store; and Marshal Ezra Lick's calaboose, we also meet Rancher Dunwoody of the Kicking Mule; Barney Baily, his foreman, many of his punchers, white and Mexican; Pie Sanders, the day boy from Squaw Mountain; Bud Dunn, Domnigo, Duque (the Mexican), and Hunkey Tutt, other schoolboys; Hank, the hired man, and Tin Lung, the Chinese cook; Andy Butt, the hack driver; Job Wash, the chairman of the school committee; Elias Scadder, the new "Head".

Round about the same period, 1928-1939, just before the last war, when the Pilot, the Ranger and the Modern Boy were claiming our attention, Frank Richards brought us north to yet another fresh school, Grimslade, set amid the grim moors and rocks on the "right" side of the Yorkshire-Lancashire border. What a picture we get of this area, so closely associated with the fortunes of Margaret of Anjou in the Wars of the Roses. "Wide breezy moors and fell rising over fell to the Gt. Grimslade Pike towering against the blue sky in the distance", he writes.

What a sharp contrast to the leafy lanes and rolling downs of Sussex and Kent, or the gales of the Spanish Main amid the rigging and creaking timbers of the Benbow!

Though in this all-too short series we had the inter-house conflict between the red roses of Redmayer's and the white roses of White's, we had more

particularly the sharply-defined battle between Dr. Samuel (Sammy) Sparshott, the boxing and soccer double Blue who holds fast to the motto that Grimslade never expels anyone, and newcomer, James Dainty, "well-made, slim but sturdy, with a handsome face on which the good looks are marred by habitual discontent".

Frank Richards is an adept at this type of series, and as usual our sympathy is never entirely alienated by either of the two central figures. We know, of course, that discipline must prevail, but we know, too, that it will do so with honour and mutual respect. Dainty is the spoiled darling son of an old Grimslade and a Burma ruby miner. He lives 50 miles away at Northminster (Grey Gables).

The series may have been short, but it had the master touch in personal characterisation and geographical deliveration. We can readily picture the ancient oaks surrounding the quad with the old granite fountain in the centre, the tall and narrow clock tower, the vaults in which Queen Margaret sheltered before escaping by an underground passage to the moor, Grimslade Water tumbling from the Pike into the treacherous Grimslade Pool, the journey from the school up the road to the village, or by crossing the road and dropping over the fence to the bleak moors across which lies the manufacturing town of Blackslade.

What a life the juniors must have led their housemasters, Mr. Redmayes and Billy White, or the Fourth Form master, Mr. Peck! Let us look at some of these bright young Grimsladers, and first at those in the Yorkshire White's house.

Dainty, who arrives in an apple hamper for the Head, is housed in Study No. 10 with Dick Dawson, and Friedrich von Splitz, the German fat boy - an odd Hamiltonian character this with no real counterpart anywhere else.

Paget, however, is the junior captain of White's, and other juniors in that distinguished house include Tommy Tucker, the 4th's practical joker; Bates and Pulley, also of the Fourth.

"Billy" White himself, incidentally, teaches maths; has a tiger skin rug, and has an Aberdeen terrier named Snap.

Yorke, appropriately, is head of White's; Cyril Fenwick, later expelled, is the bully and gay dog of the 5th, a form which also includes Jorrocks and Croom. White's Sixth also includes a youth named Carter.

Crossing the quad we find the inhabitants of Redmaye's House, which provides the school captain Trafford, a Lancastrian who plays little part in the main story. For what it is worth, too, we hear of Fenwick's pal Hake in the Fifth, and of Perkins, in the 3rd.

But it is the leaders of the Redmayes' Fourth with whom we are mainly concerned, and we find them in Study 5, which like all studies is on the ground floor. They are three well-drawn and easily recognisable characters - "Ginger" Rawlinson, Sandy Bean, and Bacon.

Rawlinson is a burly lad with a shock of red hair. Bacon is thin and sharp featured with very penetrating eyes and Bean is freckled, has high cheek bones and possesses merry blue eyes.

As the untameable Dainty learns his lesson, we meet up with other personalities in the school life - Mrs. Robins, keeper of the tuckshop at Middlemoor; Old Crabb, the carrier; Elihu Sykes, the ancient school porter; his wife, the school tuck shop keeper, and her parrot, Polly; Bules, the head's man; Sgt.

Starkey, the school sergeant; Monty Moss, the bookie at the Peal of Bells or The Jolly Carters; Tatcham Tyke, the local glove fighter; Insp. Rawson, of Blackmoor; Alice Hawley, 15 yr-old daughter of a local farmer who keeps a dangerous Durham bull; Slim Tim, Timothy Gage, an old Grimslader who escapes from Blackmoor gaol; Puri Din, the rascally Burmese who attacks Dainty's father and is captured by Fritz Splitz in the best Bunter style; Sammy Sparshott's wastrel cousin Stephen, who returns from South America; Mr. Clark, the money lender; Bill Murphy, the Irish sweep; the tramp Henry Horrocks. All pass across the canvas; a fleeting glimpse, but part of the whole picture.

In the Modern Boy we heard of two other Hamilton schools, one which is forgotten (Oakshott) and the other the School for Slackers, High Coombe.

At Oakshott, in series which ran in 1935 and 1936, we are mainly dealing with Len Lex, the Schoolboy Detective, and his uncle Det-Insp. Bill Nixon of Scotland Yard.

Len Lex shared Study 8 in the Oakshott Fifth with Pie Porraine, Cedric Harvey and Banks. Len, was the nephew of Det-Insp. Bill Nixon, and once went to spend Xmas with Harvey, who was the nephew of the missing Sir Lucian Jerningham of Moat House, Jerningham Park, and a cousin of Capt. Cecil Jerningham.

In this short series which was repeated in the 1941 Holiday Annual, we also met Mr. Chowne, master of the Oakshott Shell; Chard, Sir Lucian's rascally secretary and librarian; Whishaw, butler at the Park; Insp. Shute, of the local police; Oliphant, the Oakshott captain; and Root of the Fourth.

More about Len Lex appeared in the 1954 C.D. Annual.

High Coombe, the School for Slackers with its motto Clothes and the Man, is a picturesque old building in Devonshire. Its ivy mantled tower, its mullioned library windows, its stout old oaks, have seen slackness steadily settling in during the 30 years' headmastership of Dr. Chetwode, the Venerable Beak. Small wonder that Col. Compton, a former school captain, and his supporters on the governing body have replaced the old Head with Mr. James McCann, M.A., a sturdy, stocky and ginger-haired young man. A former M.C.C. and Loamshire captain, he is equally at home scholastically and takes the Sixth form in classics.

Small wonder, too, that this new broom, soon nicknamed The Blighter, comes up against strong resistance, albeit passive, from a well-defined staff. "Popularity" Peter Chard, 20 years master of the Fifth, who resents being passed over for the headship; big, aggressive and loud voiced, he is one of Hamilton's shrewdest characterisations. Then there are the septuagenarian Mace, teacher of history; Penge of the Shell; Capes of the Fourth; M. Mouton the French master; Goggs, the sixth form maths and science teacher, and the podgy Bullock, the games master with the red face, jutting jaw and light blue eyes.

The titles speak for themselves and tell the story of McCann's hardly rewarded efforts to stir up a new spirit in the School for Slackers. Though short, the series provided some of the author's most clearly defined personalities, and how neatly the local geography was drawn. We can "see" Big Study, that large handsome room for 1st XI men and prefects only, with its tall windows that look out over the Sixth form green on to the quad, and beyond to a glimpse of the rolling cliffs, the narrow coombes, and the Atlantic Ocean in the distance. We can picture the school field between the library and the clock tower under

which Chard has his study, and Beaks' Grind that walk from the Head's garden to the River Clovey.

We can easily imagine Coombe Lane, the little town of Okeham, the bleak moor with High Tor five miles away in the distance, the Okeham Arms, home of bookie Joe Garger; the sports shop next door in the High Street of Bunchy Bligh, the ex-pug who trains local boxers and spends a lot of his time in gaol; the caves with their dangerous tides near the school.

But, I think it is the people whom we remember most. Aubrey Compton, the elegant Fifth former, who leads the opposition to the new regime, and his odd companions in Study 3 -- Bob Darrell, the one supporter of the new head, and Teddy Seymour, who usually yields to the stronger will of the elegant Aubrey.

Then, filling in the picture as it were, but by no means nonentities, Tredegar, school captain; Arthur Randal, a prefect; Corkran, head prefect; Old Judd, the school porter and Liggins, the house porter; Carew, Coffin, Lacy (2nd XI) and Wall, other prefects; Rogers, the house butler; Tunstall of the Sixth; Burke (head boy), Peverill, Raymond, Edward Carter (the humourist and artist), Durrance, Warren and Haddon of the Fifth; the inhabitants of The Burrow -- Babbie (Shell), John Andrew Ferguson (Compton's fag and form captain), Fatty Pye, (Seymour's fag), "Donkey" Donkin, (Darrell's fag), Loom, and Bunn (Warren's fag), all of the Fourth.

We recall, too, such fleeting glimpses of daily life as the school bus from Okeham; last roll at 9; High Coombe opponents in Okeham School and St. Chad's School; No. 10 classroom above the Head's study; the readily accessible Okeham Theatre Royal; the neighbouring town of Moordale; the use of Fifth and Sixth studies as bedrooms at night.

Incidentally, a High Coombe also crops up in the new Jack of all Trades novels. So far, however, we have only heard of Jack's "twin", Cecil, Lord Cortolvin, Augustus Brown, and Green of the Fourth, and the bullying Bullock of the Fifth. I wonder if it's the same High Coombe? Maybe time will tell!

And so to the end of the inter-wars' period. What of the war, and afterwards?

I think I am right in saying that of this period -- nearly 20 years -- Carcroft and Felgate are the most abiding, so perhaps I may leave them for a moment and speak of two or three schools which came, were seen, but failed to conquer.

They went, so to speak, in pairs. Wm. C. Merrett publications, for instance, introduced us to Sparshott and Headland House; the Mascot Library to Topham and St. Olive's; and, only a year or two ago, J.B. Publications Ltd, now unfortunately defunct, created Lynwood and High Lynn.

The Sparshott series opened with *The Secret of the School*, obviously an experimental effort as it bears no number. The school surroundings were dominated by the massive, moss-covered ruins of the Keep, last remnant of the Norman castle which once occupied the site, and haunted by a ghostly man-at-arms. Apart from the entrance from the school grounds, the Keep can be reached from the Rodwood road.

Geographically, Sparshott is set about half way between Rodmoor military camp and Parsley aerodrome. The sea is not far away beyond the cliffs, and there is a cave under the headland. As the series, all too brief (some half dozen

numbers only) developed we heard of the leafy path through Oke Wood, the convenient muddy pool; the big Oak; Rodwood, the country junction with its long platform and banks of flower beds beyond which the sea can be glimpsed; the woodland tributary of the river Jade, and the Feathers Inn by the river.

The first number told of the unmasking of The Old Bean, a German spy masquerading as Denham Rapstraw, a former master, who has supposedly returned for war time duties. There was, as might be expected, greater character development in the subsequent numbers, including the "resurrection" of Billy Bunter.

Central figures in the Sparshott stories are Eustace Percival Tumpton, better known as Plum, or The Clown of the Fourth; and Valentine Barnes-Paget, Barney, or The Buccaneer.

Plum's chums in Study 3 are Harry Vernon, Captain of the 4th and Tom Rake, the "radio fiend". In No. 5, Barney has Carboy and Root for company. The other leading character is Sir Algernon Lovelace, popularly known as "Lazy", who has Study 7 to himself until the arrival of Michael Egan from Cork who saves his life by stopping his runaway horse.

Dr. Oliphant, the Elephant, is the head of Sparshott; Mrs. Gunn is matron, and Old Charne the porter. Mr. Coote, aged 59, looks after the Shell, while Mr. Lambe, the Little Lamb or the Pet Lamb, has charge of the 4th. Wilmot is captain of the School; Mrs. Charne the tuckshop "Dame". The series was so short that we had little time to get to know anyone outside the Fourth, but of that lively form, often to be found in its leisure moments in the Lair, we meet lesser lights in Cook, Reggie Ridd, Banks, Lennox, Lamb, Hanson, a junior Wilmot, Lane, bully Rufus Scaife, and his pal Gidge and their victim, Louis Merrick, an Anglo-French youth really too weak for the hustle and bustle of a public school, but a good swimmer, fortunately for Bunter. Apart from Snape, the Fifth Form "blade", we hear little more of the school's inhabitants. No. 6 brought Bunter back into print, an historic landmark. I have only one copy of the Headland House series, Winnie on the Warpath, which is No. 3, but in it Hilda Richards is at her best. These are richly drawn character studies, indeed, the two main protagonists Winifred Wishaw, a wild type who was formerly expelled for biting a mistress and who, after wartime service, returns for revenge on the stately Miss Aspasia Beetle, a headmistress noted for repose, but meets her match in the tall, masculine Gadfly, Miss E. Gadsby.

A brief phrase and we have the whole picture of the staff - prim Miss Trollope (Trolley) of the Fourth; finicky Miss Fించ, the head's secretary; the humble and submissive Mdlle. Mouton; and those who warrant no description at all - the Misses Hatch and Phoot!

Of the Sixth we have the stately head girl, Edith Race and her equally composed classmates, Honoria Gale and Florence Gunn. But it is with the Gadfly's Lower Fifth we are especially interested, and here we have Meg and Co. - Margaret Ridd, captain of the form; Ethel Brent and the slangy, tomboyish Dolly Brace; Rebecca (Becky) Bunce, the Bessie Bunter of Headland House, and her study-mate Cora Cook; and the rest, the lisping Corisande Cholmondeley, Jacqueline Herbert, Mary Tredegar and Pamela Hart.

Other characters who have a fleeting appearance are the page boy Weeks, the plump P.C. Boxer of Oke village and farmer Giles, notable only for the temptation of his orchard.

Topham, with its colours of blue and green, is situated among the smiling woods and meadows on the green slopes of the Chilterns in Bucks. It is a mass of red roofed old stone buildings, with bronze gates between its ancient stone gate-posts. Top study in the Topham 4th is No. 8, the largest of the eight in the passage, with its two windows overlooking the quad and across to the playing fields. It has a table, armchair and other chairs, and like other studies has ottoman beds for its occupants as the studies are dorms at night.

School routine includes a 4 p.m. call over before tea, leaving two hours spare for a run into the Chilterns - a surreptitious visit to the Spotted Dog at Combe, or a less secret visit to Aunt Miggs' tuckshop in Combe, and bedtime for Form 4a (Lower 4th or Remove) at 9-40 p.m.

Geographically Topham is a mile from Combe village, which is on the local line for Greenford. Neighbouring places are Hamley and Monksford, and between Combe and the school is Topham Wood with, strange to say, a plank bridge over the tributary of the river Luce.

And now let us look at the denizens of Topham. The head is Dr. Chetwynd; the portly Joseph Carfax, who has been a teacher for 35 years, looks after the Remove; Mr. Spood is responsible for Fourth B, the Upper Fourth; and M.C. Bon is our local M. Charpentier.

Hedley is captain of the school and the only other Sixth Former mentioned is Markham. Of the Fifth we hear, literally, of the loud voiced Brimble, and of Bray who referees junior games; while the Shell is represented by Sutcliffe; and the Upper Fourth by its captain Tunstall.

It is the Remove with whom we are particularly interested, and its leading lights are well-defined. Bob Hood, the ruddy, cheery faced captain with smiling blue eyes and an equable temper; Talbot Howard (Bunny) Binks; new boy Harry Vane (all of Study 8); Randolph Picton-Brown (Dandy Randy), son and heir of a city millionaire, and his studymate in the richly appointed No. 3; Cyril Caffew.

Then we have goalkeeper Tom King, Didcot (Didders) and Terence Flynn of No. 7; Walker, Potts and Green of No. 2; Pink and Jones of No. 5; Hobbs and Albert Smithson (Smithers) of No. 6. At one end of the Remove passage is the inevitable boxroom; at the other the even more inevitable commonroom, known at Topham as The Jungle.

Other characters in the stories are Old Crum the school porter; Troodle, the Combe porter and ticket collector, and Phipps, the house porter.

The opposite girls' school is St. Olive's, near Oscombe, where the stately Miss Buss is in command, Miss Ducat (the Duck) is Fourth Form mistress, Miss Moon is the forgetful maths mistress, Mdlle. Monceau takes French, Mrs. Spandler is the buxom matron and housekeeper, and Thomas the page.

Pamela Duncan captains the Fourth and the "Co" of Pam Duncan and Co. also includes May Carhew, Plump Peg (Plumpers) or Margery Pipping, of "Pipping Park", Gwendoline Page, and some mysterious girls with odd christian names - Millicent, Brenda, Annabel, Yvonne and Lorna.

Wentworth Hall is the stately home of Isolda Wentworth, wealthiest girl at St. Olive's.

Clara Corton, of the Fifth, and Anemone Rance, a prefect, are other girls mentioned.

So far as I know, Hilda Richards' The Girls of High Lynn School never appeared, but two numbers dealing with the Fourth Form at Lynwood were published two or three years ago. It was, however, an abortive attempt to create a new pair of schools, an attempt which with better publicity might have led to a new Magnet or Gem. Chums of Lynwood, indeed, was in more or less Magnet size, while The Fourth Form at Lynwood was nearer the original pocket sized N.L.L. size.

The main characters, however, were firmly established. They were the chubby, ruddy, Christopher Cuthbert "Rag" Hankey, of Study 7; Bob Rawlings, the form captain, and Jimmy Carroll, of No. 5; long, lean, Mr. Prance, the Lynwood "Quelch"; Towle, the short, stubby, photographically inclined master of the Third, Mr. Rand of the Second; Valentine Wilmot Jones, (W.J. or the Dandy of Lynwood), the most reckless junior in Lynwood; Brimble and Rance of the Fifth; Coote and Jenkins of the Third; Dr. Walpole, the head; Compton, head prefect; Baker, Vernon, Banks, of the Fourth; O.M. Bon, the French master; Gibbons, the boatkeeper; Kate Wilton and Gwen Hatch of High Lynn; plump Betty Bunn, of the High Lynn 4th, and Miss Prim, Fourth Form mistress.

Geographically, Lynwood is a mile downstream from Eel Island and its ruined monastery and Lynford Bridge, and half a mile upstream from High Lynn School which is beyond Lynn village; near river Liss with the famous Lynn beeches. The "local" is the Blue Bell. Eel Island, thickly wooded, is part of the Craye estate, and Sir Peter Craye, a governor of both schools, unlike Sir Hilton Popper, allows the pupils to land and picnic there. The junior day room is known as The Lounge. Hockley is the juniors' big match. Lunch or tea can be had at Lynford Rialto, with best seats at the Lynford Picture Palace. Lynn colours - blue; Hockley, red.

In the second Lynwood magazine, there is a short story by Frank Richards dealing with Tipdale School and Buncombe "Bunker" Bates of Study 7 in the Fourth in particular. - Here he is on the warpath against a bullying Fifth Former, Buller, - despite the warnings of his studymates, Tom Ridd and Bob Wake. Mr. Moon is the 4th master. "Bunker", of course, comes unstuck.

Felgate and Carcroft, of the post-war creations - though Carcroft made an exploratory wartime appearance in the Pie magazines - survive. Their history is still being made, so I will say no more of them now except to recall that on his arrival at Carcroft Harry Compton, now captain of the Fourth, distinguished himself, by rescuing a form-mate from a dangerous Pool. Which, perhaps, is where many of us came in; at least it provides a convenient place at which to leave our trip through the byways of Hamiltonia.

Looking through the files we get a timetable something like the following which I think is fairly comprehensive, though more profound Hamiltonians may be able to fill in the many gaps.

- 1902 Best Budget 3rd May. Redcliffe School (Hamilton)
Larks 28th June. Redcliffe.
Best Budget June. The Heart of Africa (Robert Stanley)
- 1905 Boy's Herald. Cliveden (Hamilton)
- 1906 Boy's Realm. Short stories (Hamilton) of St. Hilda's, Carbrocke, Carnforth, St. Egbert's, Clivedale, etc.
Pluck - The First at Lyndale (105 dated 3/11/06).

- 1906 Pluck - Jack Blake of St. Jim's (106 dated 10/11/06).
 1907 Boy's Realm short stories.
 GEM. St. Jim's (Martin Clifford)
- 1908 MAGNET. Frank Richards.
 1909 Pluck. Abbotsdale and Tomsonio's Circus (Harry Dorrian)
 1910 Pluck and Boy's Realm.
 1911 Picture Fun. The Branded Hand (Frank Drake)?
 1915 Boy's Friend Library. Highcliffe (Boy Without a Name).
 Boy's Friend. Rookwood (Owen Conquest).
 1917 Boy's Friend. Cedar Creek and Hillcrest.
 1919 School Friend. Cliff House (Hilda Richards).
 Greyfriars' Herald. St. Winifred's (Owen Conquest).
 1920 Greyfriars Holiday Annual.
 1921 School and Sport. St. Kit's (Clifford Clive). Reprinted in revised
 version in Boy's Friend 1924 by Hamilton.
 Nelson Lee Library. The Corinthian.
 Popular - Billy Bunter's Weekly.
- 1927 Popular. Ferrers Locke reprints from Boy's Herald.
 1928 Popular. Rio Kid. Also Popolaki Patrol.
 Modern Boy. Ken King.
- 1930 Modern Boy. Bunny Hare.
 1931 The Ranger. Grimslade.
 1934 Modern Boy. High Coombe. Will Hay series (Hedley Owen).
 1935 Modern Boy. Len Lex.
 1937 Modern Boy. Rio Kid.

Many of the above stories, of course, were continuous for several years, while reprints appeared in a number of the A.P. papers, weekly, monthly and in the Holiday Annual.

Carcroft began in Pie towards the end of, or just after, the last war and has since appeared in the Australian Silver Jacket and in the Billy Bunter and Tom Merry Christmas publications. Felgate appears annually in Raymond Glendenning's Book of Sport for Boys.

FOR EXCHANGE: I have 100 Penny Populars up to No. 214, Nov. 1916 which I would give at the rate of 3 for 1 for the following Penny Populars (pre 1917):- Nos. 9 and 69 in best available condition, and Nos. 1, 2, 3, 7, 12, 13, 27, 28, 30, 33, 39, 42, 51, 53, 59, 79, 83, 85, 100, 102, 103, 105, 106, 112, 117, 118, 123, 141, 154, 157, 160, 174, 182, 183, 215 in very good condition only. Will also give at a generous rate, the Penny Populars and some S.B.Ls. and U.Js. I have, for S.B.Ls. and U.Js. which I want.

V.E. COLBY, 8 BERESFORD AVENUE, BEVERLY HILLS, N.S.W. AUSTRALIA.

FOR SALE: Hundreds of pre-war Boys' Papers, including; Modern Boys, Boys' Magazines, Buzzers, Champions, Triumphs, Pioneers, Skippers, Union Jacks, Boys Friend Libraries, Detective Weeklies, Startlers, Boys' Cinemas, Sexton Blake Libraries (Third Series), and many others of that vintage. Please write stating numbers.

JAMES SWAN, 3 FIFTH AVENUE, QUEEN'S PARK, LONDON, W.10.

FRANK RICHARDS' SCHOOLDAYS

by GERRY ALLISON

* * *

The story of Frank Richards' schooldays at Cedar Creek in British Columbia, is perhaps the work of Charles Hamilton which has been oftenest reprinted. In the Collectors' Digest Annual No. 7 for Christmas 1953, there was a delightful article on the 'School in the Backwoods' by Len Packman.

I am not going to attempt to repeat what was written by Len, but merely to give some facts and figures which may be of interest and help to collectors.

The stories appeared originally in the "Boy's Friend Weekly", commencing on Aug. 13th, 1917, in No. 845, and running for nearly 4 years to No. 1049, dated July 16th, 1921, or 205 issues in all.

They were reprinted almost in their entirety in the "Penny Popular". From Eric Payne's article "That Popular Popular" in the 1950 C.D. Annual, it appears that they ran from No. 161 to No. 361; a total of 201 stories; only 4 short of the original 205.

Again, selections were re-issued in 9 copies of the "Boys Friend Library" 1st series, and in 3 numbers of the "Schoolboys' Own Library". Details of these are given further on. Also, reprinted stories appeared in "The Holiday Annual" for the years 1924, 1926, 1938 and 1941.

Finally, in "Gem" No. 1588 the series was again reprinted starting at the second story and continuing for 64 weeks, when they were replaced by a Biggles serial by Capt. W.E. Johns. The Editor said it was only a temporary farewell to the chums of Cedar Creek, but soon afterwards the War put an end to the "Gem".

I think therefore that it will be useful if I give a full list of the 205 story titles as they appeared originally in the "Boy's Friend", with a check list of the "Gem" reprints, in most cases the title being changed. And to finish with I will give the B.F.L. and S.O.L. numbers and titles.

The Cedar Creek Stories

Gem Reprints

B.F. 845	Frank Richards' Schooldays!.....	-
846	Westward Ho!.....	1588
847	The School in the Backwoods!.....	1589
848	For Life or Death!.....	1590
849	The Remittance Man!.....	1591
850	Loyal To His Enemy!.....	1592
851	Rounding up the Rustler!.....	1593
852	The Rogue of the School!.....	1594
853	Trouble for Three!.....	1595
854	A Cockney in Canada!.....	1596
855	For His Father's Sake!.....	1597

		<u>Gem Reprints</u>
B.F. 856	The Schoolboy Author!.....	1598
857	A Borrowed Identity!.....	1599
858	Laid By The Heels!.....	1600
859	Saved From a Crime!.....	1601
860	'The "Bad Man" From Boot Leg!.....	1602
861	Done Brown!.....	-
862	Frank Richard's Christmas!.....	1609
863	Gunter's Little Game!.....	1603
864	A Peculiar Persecution!.....	1604
865	Saved by the Sergeant!.....	1605
866	The Outcast of Cedar Creek!.....	1606
867	Gunter's Last Chance.....	1607
868	The "Chow" of Cedar Creek!.....	1608
869	Chunky's Gold-Mine!.....	1610
870	Three on a Trail!.....	1611
871	Striking a Bargain!.....	1612
872	The Horse Hunters!.....	1613
873	Yen Chin on the Warpath!.....	1614
874	A Regular Terror!.....	1615
875	Yen Chin's Reformation!.....	1616
876	Flooded Out!.....	1617
877	The Parting of the Ways!.....	1618
878	The Shadow of Fear!.....	1619
879	An Affair of Mystery!.....	1620
880	The Heir of Trevelyan!.....	1621
881	A Fortune at Stake!.....	1622
882	Saved by his Son!.....	1623
883	Chunky's Secret!.....	-
884	Frank Richards & Co's Cruise!.....	1624
885	Adrift in the Air!.....	1625
886	Dropped from the Clouds!.....	1626
887	The Gentle Shepherd!.....	1627
888	Pluck will Tell!.....	1628
889	Lord Todgers!.....	-
890	The Haunted Mine!.....	1629
891	Bailey's Bonanza!.....	1630
892	The Schoolboy Actors!.....	-
893	In Merciless Hands!.....	1631
894	Tracked by Two!.....	1632
895	In a Borrowed Name!.....	1633
896	The Claim Robber!.....	1634
897	Frank Richards & Co's Holiday!.....	1635
898	Yen Chin's Ruse!.....	1636
899	Foes of the Foothills!.....	1637
900	Danger Ahead!.....	1638
901	Rounded Up!.....	1639
902	The Stranded Schoolboys!.....	1640
903	The Schoolboy Gold-seekers!.....	1641
904	The Claim Jumpers!.....	1642
905	Homeward Bound!.....	1643

B.F. 906	The Order of the Boot!.....	1644
907	The School on Strike!.....	1645
908	The Striker's Triumph!.....	1646
909	Facing the Foe!.....	1647
910	The Siege at Cedar Creek!.....	1648
911	The Rebel's Surrender!.....	1649
912	A Desperate Venture!.....	1650
913	The Rebel's Victory!.....	1651
914	The Stunt of the Season	
915	Rival Schools!	
916	Up against it!	
917	Mr. Peckover's Party	
918	A Schoolboy's Treachery!	
919	The Hero of Hillcrest!	
920	Frank Richards & Co's Predicament!	
921	Gunter on The Warpath!	
922	The Remittance-man's Peril!	
923	Hunting the Road-agents!	
924	The Flour-bag Gang!	
925	Under Arrest!	
926	Lynch Law!	
927	Paying the Penalty!	
928	Chunky's Latest Stunt!	
929	Todgers The Terrible!	
930	Dicky Bird's Bonanza!	
931	Gunter's Gold Mine!	
932	Too Much of a Joke!	
933	Wanted - a Poet!	
934	The New Boy at Cedar Creek!	
935	The Outcast!	
936	The Heathen of Cedar Creek!	
937	Yen Chin's Last Chance!	
938	Condemned by the School!	
939	Cleared!	
940	A Strange Disappearance!	
941	Missing!	
942	The Rescue!	
943	Chunky's Chance!	
944	The Way of the Transgressor!	
945	Warned off!	
946	500 Dollars Reward!	
947	At Close Quarters!	
948	Held Up!	
949	Run Down!	
950	The Stunt that Failed!	
951	Away Westward!	
952	The Man from the Sea!	
953	The Castaway!	
954	Perils of the Pacific!	
955	On the High Seas!	
B.F. 956	The Honorable Algernon!	
957	A Babe in the Wood!	
958	The Dandy of Cedar Creek!	
959	Rough on Algernon!	
960	Foul Play!	
961	Algy's Triumph!	
962	Follow your Leader!	
963	Frank Richard's Rival!	
964	The Cedar Creek Author!	
965	On the Warpath!	
966	The Redskin Raiders!	
967	Chunky Todgers' New Job!	
968	Snow Bound!	
969	Held to Ransom!	
970	Algy's Way!	
971	The Todgers Touch!	
972	The Missing Heir!	
973	Frank Richards' Ghost!	
974	The Rival Editors!	
975	A Friend in Need!	
976	Rival Heroes!	
977	The Scheme that Failed!	
978	The Cedar Creek Poet!	
979	Algy's Farewell!	
980	Frank Richards' Trust!	
981	Bronze Bill's Bonanza!	
982	The Rival Gold Seekers!	
983	The Golden Arroyo!	
984	Well Won!	
985	Todgers the Speculator!	
986	Chunky Todgers, Detective!	
987	Detective Todgers' First Case!	
988	Bob Lawless's Folly!	
989	Bolted!	
990	In Chase of a Chum!	
991	The Outlaw's Return!	
992	Unmasked!	
993	On the Track of the Outlaw!	
994	Frank Richards' Peril!	
995	Run To Earth!	
996	The Hidden Hundred!	
997	The Fire-water Smugglers!	

B.F. 998	Among the Redskins!	B.F. 1031	The Hunting of White Blaze!
999	Rounding up the Bootleggers	1032	Todgers The Terror!
1000	Down on his Luck!	1033	The Robbery at Cedar Creek!
1001	The Luck of the Hopkinses!	1034	Frank Richards' Flight!
1002	The Chum from Chicago!	1035	The Hunted Schoolboy!
1003	Bunker Honk's Bargain!	1036	Fallen among Thieves!
1004	The Cedar Creek Artist!	1037	Frank Richards' New Job!
1005	Chunky Todgers' Masterpiece!	1038	Frank Richards' Partner!
1006	Rival Thespians!	1039	Frank Richards - Rolling- stone!
1007	Frank Richards' Triumph!	1040	At the Gold-diggings!
1008	The Ranch Raiders!	1041	\$100 Reward!
1009	The Schoolboy Hostage!	1042	Dead man's Canyon!
1010	Cornered by Cattle-lifters!	1043	The Gold Thief!
1011	The Cavern of Death!	1044	Frank Richards Makes Good!
1012	Escaping the Cattle Thieves!	1045	Tracked by Rustlers!
1013	Roping in the Rustlers!	1046	The Black Sack Gang!
1014	Judge Lynch!	1047	Frank Richards' Trust!
1015	The Rustler's Vengeance!	1048	Back To Cedar Creek!
1016	The Flight of the Rustlers!	1049	Frank Richards' Choice!
1017	The Schoolboy Mazeppas!	<u>Cedar Creek Stories in B.F.L. (1st</u>	
1018	At the Eleventh Hour!	<u>series) and S.O.L.</u>	
1019	The Cedar Creek Sweepstake!	B.F.L. 417	Frank Richards' Schooldays!
1020	Frank Richards' Christmas Story!	465	The School in the Backwoods!
1021	The Cedar Creek Pantomime!	469	Chums of the Backwoods!
1022	The \$100 Prize!	473	The Parting of the Ways
1023	Set a Thief to Catch a Thief!	481	Dropped from the Clouds
1024	Frank Richards & Co. News- paper Proprietors!	485	The Mountain Adventurers
1025	The Schoolboy Editor!	493	The Schoolboy Rebellion
1026	Frozen Out!	497	Adventure Creek
1027	The Cedar-Creek Ventriloquist!	509	The Schoolboy Castaways
1028	False Witness!	S.O.L. 142	Chums of the Backwoods
1029	The Coming of Mrs. Peckover!	178	The Outcast of Cedar Creek
1030	The Ten Thousand Dollar Trail!	184	On the Western Trail

Postscript: In a talk which I gave at a meeting of the Old Boys Book Club, Northern Section, on Sept. 14th, 1957, I stated that, unlike certain other readers of "The Autobiography of Frank Richards", which book appeared in March 1952, I personally have no complaint to make that the story began when Frank was 17 years of age.

I did not want another story of his schooldays, as I read all about these in the Boys Friend many years ago. Any other account would be a disillusionment!

And as a matter of fact, the Cedar Creek stories contain numerous incidents of genuine autobiography. I illustrated this point fully in my talk. If you don't believe me, compare chapter 6 of the autobiography with "The Cedar Creek Author" in B.F. 964. This is only one of many such instances. You would be surprised.

The Holiday Annual, 1920-1941

By DONALD WEBSTER

It was not without some hesitation that I submitted this article to the Editor, for I had already been forestalled by a detailed list of the contents of the various Holiday Annuals having appeared in earlier editions of the Collectors' Digest Annual, not forgetting a splendid article by Roger Jenkins, which featured in the S.P.C. nearly two years ago. However, there is some truth in the suggestion that another point of view is always a welcome change. It is not my intention to give a full list of the contents, but simply to deal year by year with what I think were the outstanding items.

The youth of today is blissfully unaware of our good fortune of bygone years, but, through the medium of the Holiday Annual he could still share some of our happiness. I remember one member of the O.B.B.C. telling me that he preferred the Holiday Annual as a youth, because during the "silent reading period" at school he could always take a volume and read it under the approving eye of his teacher. On those occasions the "beak" would invariably ask after the health of Tom Merry, or Bob Cherry, or "Gussy", with a twinkle in the eye which denoted a sound background of reading in his more youthful days. But in later years, how attractive it is to take down a copy at random from the bookshelf and glance idly through its pages, bringing back delightful memories of one's youth, in spite of "The Village Blacksmith" having been parodied three or four times and Frank Richards having visited Greyfriars on several occasions. What a treat to the eye were the illustrations of Messrs. Chapman, Macdonald, Warwick Reynolds and Briscoe, portraying boaters and brakes and idyllic summer scenes.

1920:

The first, and in the opinion of many the best. I can see it now - all wrapped in tissue paper, brand new. It took me ages to save the 5/- with which to purchase it. How I looked forward to that day in September 1919.

The contents: Five school stories by The Master; two each of St. Jim's and Greyfriars and one dealing with Rookwood. Furthermore they were not reprints, except in one case. The tale of St. Jim's - "The Wandering Schoolboy" (illustrated by Warwick Reynolds) with Gussy in the role of a runaway victim of "injustice" visiting Greyfriars and Rookwood was a masterpiece. What with cartoons of our favourite characters, the who's who, maps of the schools, the Greyfriars Gallery in verse, and the junior football elevens, practically every taste was catered for.

1921:

Another excellent issue with illustrations by Messrs. Chapman, Macdonald, Briscoe and Wakefield. I was sorry to see it called the Greyfriars Holiday Annual this time, seeing that it covered all the schools. If a change, why not the "Schoolboys' Holiday Annual"? Two St. Jim's stories, one each of Greyfriars and Rookwood. The reprinting of how Tom Merry came to St. Jim's must have

delighted thousands. "Billy Bunter's Butler" was Frank Richards at his best, and Morton Pike was in print again with one of his historical yarns. We had a very comprehensive "Who's Who" of all three schools, and The Editor visited Greyfriars. On the whole not far behind the standard of the previous year.

1922:

The high standard continued to be maintained, but there were 3 St. Jim's stories to Greyfriars one, and no Rookwood yarn. The reprints of a Talbot series entitled "To Save his Honour" took up nearly 100 pages, but included The Professor, Marie Rivers and our old friend Inspector Skeat. To lovers of "The Toff" this was worth the purchase price alone. The Greyfriars tale "Rivals of the Remove" introduced Drake and Rodney at Greyfriars and had a cricket atmosphere. In addition the Who's Who (Greyfriars) appeared again, and also the usual delightful poems, etc.

1923:

One story of each school this year. In my opinion, the one dealing with Rookwood - "The Mystery of the Priory" was the best of the three. It had the Christmas setting which had been missing from the earlier years. Admitted it was a reprint from a Xmas No. of the "Boy's Friend" but it included the St. Jim's and Greyfriars juniors, and was quite exciting. The reprint of "Tom Merry - Captain" reminded me of when I first began to take "The Gem", but the accompanying illustrations by Briscoe seemed out of place. However, Briscoe's drawings of the 3 schools in the issue accompanying the Ballads were really magnificent.

1924:

Still 360 pages, but not to my mind, an interesting volume. One story of each school; the Greyfriars tale describing the visit of Martin Clifford to the old school. St. Jim's was represented by a reprint of early Gems concerning a treasure hunt in the South Seas, ("The Schoolboy Treasure Hunters") and Rookwood was covered by "Morny's Master Stroke", specially written by Owen Conquest, and soccer and Greyfriars formed a part of the story. It was good to see Cedar Creek make an appearance in what I think was the best tale written about it - "How Father Christmas came to White Pine". The famous sleigh ride through the snow brought back memories of the Boy's Friend Xmas No. of 1917. In addition there were many features dealing with the schools and some excellent cartoons. The parodies from the classics (a great favourite with the writer) were as clever as ever.

1925:

Perhaps possessed the most beautiful cover - a football scene as only Macdonald could portray it. A Rookwood reprint this year, but "The Greyfriars Cup" was an excellent story, in which Billy Bunter played for the Remove at football, (seeing that his pater presented the cup). The St. Jim's yarn "The Bishop's Medal" had George Figgins as its hero, and another Duncan Storm tale and one by P.G. Wodehouse were other attractions. Generally speaking quite a good issue. The usual poems and cartoons and information were included.

1926:

Two tales each of St. Jim's and Greyfriars and one of Rookwood. The "Form Master's Substitute" brought in Highcliffe and Mr. Mobbs but "Lucky for Parkinson" was a delightful fantasy in Frank Richards best vein. Of course "The

Scientist of St. Jim's" was Bernard Glyn, but "Grundy's Great Idea" was an excellent Gem reprint and brought in a handwriting expert. The Rookwood yarn "Pulling Carthew's Leg" was first rate fun. There were some beautiful coloured plates in this issue, stories of Cedar Creek and St. Katies, and "Billy Bunter's Annual" (an enlarged version of "Billy Bunter's Weekly"). A very good issue.

1927:

This was a very good year. Quite a feast for Hamilton fans. "Nugent Minor's Bad Start" described how Dicky came to Greyfriars and like most modern youths was thoroughly spoilt beforehand. I rate this as one of Mr. Richards best yarns, although a Xmas 1910 reprint. Greyfriars was well to the fore again in "What Happened to Bunter" a parody of the 1920 St. Jim's yarn describing a runaway visit to the other two Hamilton schools. The St. Jim's story "Lord Eastwood's Experiment" related how Gussy was allowed a cheque book. Rookwood had two short stories, there was Cedar Creek again, and the inimitable P.G. Wodehouse contributed a school story to complete the contents.

1928:

This was the last of the thin paper Annuals, and the modern trend was now evident in the Greyfriars illustrations. In this last Annual of 360 pages all three schools were represented again. Perhaps the most interesting yarn was "How Horace Coker got his Remove" in which the great Horace left the ranks of the Shell to become a Fifth-former, though the persuasion of Aunt Judy had a lot to do with this! "The Arm of the Law" dealt with the one and only Gussy being threatened with legal proceedings, but the Rookwood story seemed strangely different to the "Tea with Manders" I read in the Boys Friend. A Greyfriars story "Battling Bunter" was specially written for the issue and Bunter and Bob Cherry were hilariously funny. The Boys of The Bombay Castle made a very welcome appearance as did "Billy Bunter's Annual" again.

1929:

We now come to the change over. It was printed on thick paper and had less pages. Fortunately all 3 schools were included, and probably the Rookwood one - "A Rift at Rookwood" was the best, with Lovell in the leading role. An old favourite Magnet yarn "When Bunter Forgot" telling of how he lost his memory and a Gem reprint of "Tom Merry's Minor" (a monkey) completed the trio. Morton Pike and Geo. E. Rochester were also contributors to this issue.

1930:

One tale of each school again. The Greyfriars story was a reprint of Bob Cherry in search of his Father (over-rated I think) and the St. Jim's yarn (badly illustrated in some pictures) dealt with Skimpole. It was left to Rookwood to provide the best tale - "Pleasing Dear Thomas" in which Clarence Cuffy took on the role of a practical joker. There were some fine art-plates in this issue, and we had Cedar Creek and G.E. Rochester again, in addition to a portrait gallery of favourites from all 3 schools.

1931:

Not a good number, the only good story being a reprint of "Mark Linley at the Cross-roads" (Red Magnet). The Gem story was also a reprint dealing with Tom Merry at Clavering. The Rookwood tale "French Leave" dealt with a visit to the circus - quite good but too short. Billy Bunter's Annual had disappeared and the

remaining contents were not as good as of yore, although a cross-word puzzle was a welcome change.

1932:

St. Frank's made its first appearance this year. E.S. Brooks tale of "The Rivals of St. Frank's" introduced the Moor View girls, but the story was only a short one. The only long tale was a Greyfriars one called "The Vanished Eleven" (reprint again) and the other school stories consisted of only a few chapters each. This to my mind was the least interesting issue of all, but it was probably well received by the youngsters of that era, for it had a bit of everything.

1933:

An improvement on the previous year. Unfortunately the Greyfriars and St. Jim's stories were reprints, the better of the two being "Saved from the Sea" from an early Magnet. "A Yankee at St. Jim's" was obviously a visit from Fisher T. Fish. There were two short stories dealing with Rookwood, neither being worthy of special mention. Cecil Fanshaw wrote another of his adventure yarns (his work so often appeared in the H.A.) and C. Malcolm Hincks contributed also.

1934:

Quite a good number, but less pages this year. Of the school stories by far the best was "A Schoolboy's Honour" dealing with the old theme of Harry Wharton saving Hazel from expulsion. The St. Jim's tale was entitled "Spoofer" and had that prince of spoofers - Baggy Trimble as its central character. There was not much to commend the Rookwood yarns - they seemed to deteriorate each passing year. It was pleasing to read a story of Ken King by Charles Hamilton - a most welcome change. Another interesting feature was the return of Greyfriars Rhymes and St. Jim's Jingles - reminiscent of earlier halcyon days. There were some fine art-plates also in this issue.

1935:

This, I thought was the best of the thick covered volumes. Each school had a story written about it, and one of Greyfriars - "Billy Bunter's Booby Trap" was a new one. The other Greyfriars yarn - "The Footprint in the Sand" was quite exciting, whilst the St. Jim's yarn entitled "The Stony Seven" was very amusing. Valentine Mornington was the main character in the Rookwood yarn called "The Boy who Wouldn't Budge" giving a grand portrayal of his friendship with Kit Errol. The Greyfriars Rhymes and St. Jim's Jingles were continued, and a telephone directory of the leading characters was another interesting feature.

1936:

St. Frank's made a belated appearance again, but it was only a short story, - "Handforth's Windfall". Greyfriars had two yarns, one specially written dealing with Horace Coker's relegation to the Second Form, and the other a Christmas reprint, - "Billy Bunter's Bust-up". There were also tales of Rookwood and St. Jim's, the latter a reprint of a Baggy Trimble effort to emulate Bunter's deafness. To complete the issue the Rio Kid came into the picture again, plus the usual Greyfriars jingles, etc. A fairly good Annual.

1937:

One tale from each school this year, that of Greyfriar's describing the

arrival of Squiff of the Remove. Rookwood was well served in "Carthew Goes Too Far", one of Owen Conquest's best yarns, but one missed Wakefield's illustrations. St. Jim's had a new story concerning Mr. Ratcliff. Charles Hamilton also contributed the Rio Kid again, plus Packsaddle, which made 1937 one of the best of the thick-page issues.

1938:

A beautiful Macdonald cover, plus an even better frontispiece depicting the Holiday Annual Christmas Party. This was indeed a Charles Hamilton issue with two Greyfriars yarns, one each of St. Jim's and Rookwood, in addition to which we had the Rio Kid again plus Cedar Creek. Perhaps the most popular story was "The Shadow Over Eastwood House", but it was a welcome change to have a Greyfriars yarn concerning Jack Drake. There was the usual Play to complete the issue.

1939:

A very representative year, but what a mixed bag, -- two stories each of St. Jim's and Rookwood, plus one of Greyfriars. Cedar Creek appeared again, and it was nice to have a yarn by Geo. E. Rochester. Perhaps the best tale was the one dealing with Gussy entitled, "They Called Him A Funk", but Bunter's blindness was quite amusing. The Annual this year was spoiled for me by the unfamiliar illustrations in the St. Jim's and Rookwood stories, yet Macdonald was again responsible for a most colourful frontispiece.

1940:

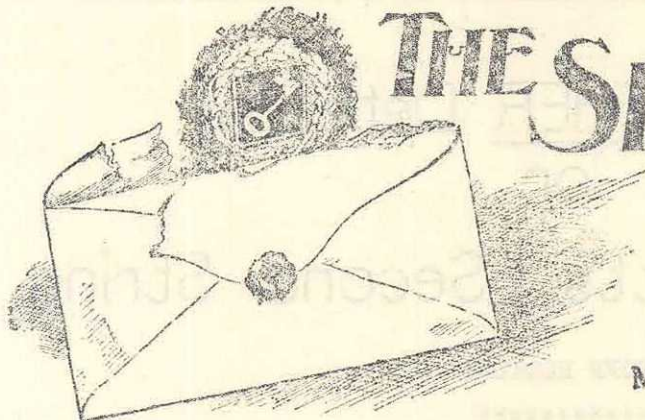
I am afraid I cannot award full marks for this issue. We had three Rookwood tales, and one each of Greyfriars and St. Jim's. The Greyfriar's yarn, "Sir Fulke's Warning", was a reprint of the 1922 Christmas Number of the Magnet, the venue being Mauleverer Towers. It was interesting to see a football story by Charles Hamilton, and the St. Jim's yarn, "The Beak's Black Eye", was specially written. The Greyfriars School Song, by Frank Richards, of course, was a special feature of this Annual.

1941:

Last, but not at all least! The paper shortage maybe was responsible for the end of an era which will never return. Naturally, Charles Hamilton dominated the scene with stories of St. Jim's, Greyfriars, Rookwood and Oakshott. We also had tales of Cedar Creek and the Rio Kid, but to the writer none of these deserve special mention. Whereas the first (1920) cover was the work of Warwick Reynolds, the honour of the final one fell to Macdonald. Comparisons may be odious, but the later Holiday Annuals, the Mandeville Annuals, and the latest "Billy Bunter's Own Annual", can scarce hold a candle to those halcyon years of the 1920-28 Holiday Annuals. Happy days, weren't they?

FOR SALE: Hundreds of pre-war Boys' Papers, including: Modern Boys, Boys' Magazines, Buzzers, Champions, Triumphs, Pioneers, Skippers, Union Jacks, Boys' Friend Libraries, Detective Weeklies, Startlers, Boys' Cinemas, Sexton Blake Libraries (Third Series); and many others of that vintage. Please write stating numbers:-

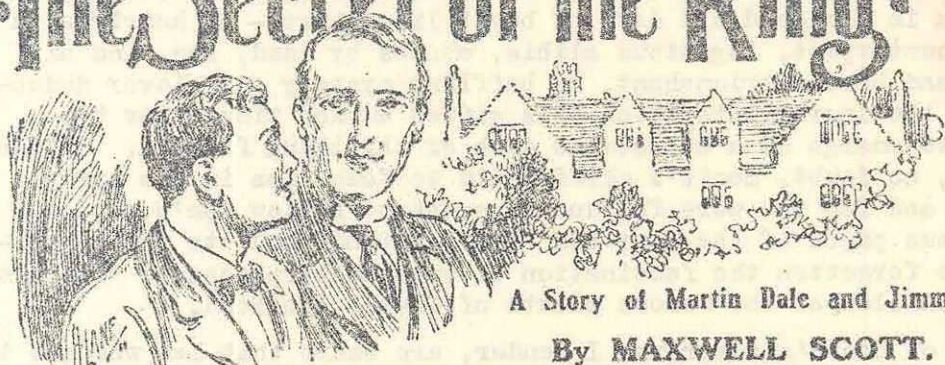
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That OTHER Detective OR

Maxwell Scott's Second String

By GEOFF HOCKLEY

Maxwell Scott! What visions the name conjures up in the minds of lovers of detective fiction in the good old days of boys' literature - of hairbreadth escapes, plot and counterplot, ingenious alibis, chases by land, sea, and air, of villains foiled and heroes triumphant, of baffling mystery and clever deduction - in fact, all the ingredients which this gifted author time after time mixed so skilfully to emerge as a delectable dish of thrilling fiction. In the minds of most of us, no doubt, Scott's chief claim to fame lies in his early Nelson Lee stories, and few who were fortunate enough to follow Lee's exploits through the voluminous pages of the dear old "Boys' Friend" and its two companion papers will have forgotten the fascination of such masterpieces as "The Iron Hand" and other chronicles of the famous sleuth of Gray's Inn Road.

Yet how many of Scott's admirers, I wonder, are aware that Lee was not the only string to the author's bow, and that in the later stages of his writing career he penned no less than five long serial stories of the doings of another campaigner against crime - a character who though perhaps was not destined to become, as his illustrious predecessor, a household word in juvenile detective fiction, was nevertheless one of Scott's most popular creations. Nor were his adventures one whit the less exciting than Lee's most thrilling exploits. Here were all the familiar components of the Scott formula - the tight time schedule, the seemingly unbreakable alibi, the tortuous and complicated plot - yet this later creation of the author's can in no way be branded as an imitation Nelson Lee. In fact, the personalities of Lee and his successor are poles apart - yet we enjoy both characters, neither detracting from the other.

Just what sort of chap was Martin Dale, Scott's new detective, who made his debut in the pages of "CHUMS" in No. 977 on May 31, 1911? To begin with, he always seemed to me a little more human (or shall I say a little less super-human?) than the two giants, Blake and Lee - and also was pleasingly fallible at odd times in the course of his cases. As for his personal appearance, I cannot do better than to quote the impression of Jimmy Brown, the waif of Gun Gutter Alley, when he made Dale's acquaintance on the morning of Coronation Day, 1911, and by his quick and plucky action saved the detective from an anarchist's bullet.

"Jimmy saw a broad-shouldered, athletic-looking young fellow, whose keen, clean-shaven face was lit up by a pair of piercing grey eyes." Dale was also apparently of a modest disposition, for though the author describes him as being "probably the most famous private detective in Europe", in answer to Jimmy's awe-struck query, "Wot! Are yer Martin Dale, the celebrated 'tec?" he

replied laughingly "The 'tec, without the celebrated!" Altogether, then, Dale strikes us, as we previously observed, as rather an unassuming type as compared with some fictional sleuths, but as far as the criminal element was concerned, the velvet glove concealed an iron hand, and beneath his modest mien was a mixture of shrewdness, courage, and bulldog tenacity, as was amply proved during the months which followed, for that chance meeting with Jimmy, the little street arab of Stepney, was destined to lead both the detective and his youthful protege on a trail of mystery, peril and conspiracy through England and far across the seas -- "A PERILOUS QUEST".

Martin Dale's gratitude to the shabby, half-starved, cheeky yet likeable waif was tangibly expressed by pressing a five-shilling piece into the lad's hand and instructing him firstly to go and get a good square meal, and secondly, to call that night at the detective's rooms in Jermyn Street for a discussion on Jimmy's future. Thus briefed, and fairly walking on air, the boy, after satisfying his hunger, made his way to the only home he knew - the hovel in Gun Gutter Alley which he shared with his brutal self-appointed guardian, a drunken ne'er-do-well known as "Lazy Joe" Parkin. Here Jimmy found the second surprise of that eventful morning awaiting him.

We must relate Jimmy's history before proceeding with our tale. His mother had died when he was a baby, and his father had emigrated to New Zealand, leaving him in the care of the motherly Mrs. Wilson who shared the house in the Alley, with the promise to send for both of them as soon as he had established himself in that far-off land. But the years passed, with no letter from him, and finally Mrs. Wilson gave him up as dead. When Jimmy was twelve years old, Mrs. Wilson, in an evil day, married Joseph Parkin. His drunken habits and brutal ill-usage of her gradually broke her health and her spirit, and she grew feebler day by day, until at last, some two months before our story opens, she died, leaving Jimmy to the tender mercies of her drink-sodden husband. Jimmy had vowed that he would not stay another day with Lazy Joe when Mrs. Parkin had passed on, and he would have "done a bunk", as he termed it, without further ado, but for an unprecedented happening. On the very day of Mrs. Parkin's funeral, a letter arrived with a New Zealand postmark, addressed to the former Mrs. Wilson. Lazy Joe, who could not read, handed Jimmy the letter to read for him, but as soon as he had ascertained that it contained nothing of monetary value which might have been good for a couple of pints, he evinced no further interest. But Jimmy read the letter, and scanned the photograph it contained, with bated breath. It was from his long-lost father!

"I am coming back to England" (it ran) "and shall come straight to the house in Gun Gutter Alley, where I hope to find you and young Jimmy well and flourishing. I hope to arrive about the beginning of June. I know how you must have despised me for not writing, but I have had nothing but misfortune since I came here. I have never been able to send you any money, and have been too ashamed to write and tell you so. However, my luck has turned at last, or at least, I hope it has. I will tell you all about it when I see you. I enclose a snapshot of myself taken a few days ago. You will see how I have altered since last you saw me."

Alas! June passed into its fourth week, and still Richard Brown did not arrive, nor any further letter from him. It was on the morning of the 22nd., then, that Jimmy, wandering disconsolately in the slums of Stepney, made the acquaintance of Martin Dale - a chance meeting which was to lead to a culmination

beyond the boy's wildest dreams.

Arriving at 19 Gun Gutter Alley, Jimmy was surprised to find Lazy Joe in conversation with a stranger -- a person who Jimmy mentally labelled a "toff". Mr. Dax bore amazing news. Jimmy's father was in London, but for reasons which could not be disclosed at present, he was unable to come to his old home. However, for reasons which also would be disclosed later, he urgently required the letter and photograph which he had sent a month previously. No, Mr. Dax was sorry that it was not possible for Jimmy to accompany him to see his father -- he could do that later -- but in the meantime, would Jimmy kindly hand over the letter and the photograph, so that Mr. Dax could hurry with them to Mr. Brown?

"Nuffin' doin'!" was Jimmy's verdict -- for with the shrewdness of his kind, he somehow didn't altogether trust the obsequious Mr. Dax, and in spite of the latter's persuasions and the torrent of abuse from Lazy Joe, the resolutely refused to be parted from the treasured document. Finally, with very bad grace, the stranger consented to Jimmy's ultimatum and with the lad still clutching the packet they both set out, Jimmy's heart beating high at the thought of the coming re-union. And yet some second sense seemed to warn him that all was not well. When he entered the dark and lonely house at the end of a road in the Denmark Hill district, his suspicions surged up anew -- but too late! In a flash, the stranger whipped a pistol from his pocket and pointed it at the lad's head.

"Not a sound, as you value your life!" he said fiercely. "You and I are alone in the house!"

"So it's a plant, is it?" said Jimmy coolly. "My father ain't 'ere? Then wot's the idea? What do yer want?"

"I want that letter and the photograph, and I mean to have them!" snarled Dax. "Now, hand them over!"

But Dax had reckoned without Jimmy's native quickness of mind, for in a split second the boy flung his cap over the single candle with which the room was lit. Next instant he had flung himself through the window and was running for dear life down the deserted road, with bullets from Dax's revolver humming past his head. Nor did he relax until, panting and breathless, he had gained the comparative safety of a lighted thoroughfare, and after listening for sounds of pursuit, set off on the long tramp to Jermyn Street, where, nearing midnight, and dishevelled, scratched, and capless, he was admitted and poured forth his story of the evening's events to an astonished Martin Dale.

The complicated and sensational train of events which ensued as a result of Dale's decision to investigate Jimmy Brown's adventure is too long for us to relate in detail, but we will touch upon some of the highlights of the story. Dax, the detective's investigations soon revealed, was in reality a shady solicitor named Varley, who by chance had stumbled across the fact that Jimmy's missing father was actually Ralph Readman, heir to the vast Readman estates. Varley had concocted an ingenious plot to do away with the heir and substitute a claimant in his place, and had left no stone unturned to make the deception as convincing as possible with the aid of the unscrupulous Captain Dalling, skipper of the steamer "Apollo", and the scoundrelly Everard, who was to appear as the Readman heir. After sundry preliminary sparring which included cross-country chases by motor car and aeroplane, decoy messages, an attempt to eliminate Jimmy by slugging him and leaving him on the tracks in the path of an express train, and other murderous attempts, the main bout got under way when the "Apollo" sailed for

the South Pacific with the fake heir concealed in the captain's cabin. Dale had ascertained that the real Ralph Readman had sailed from New Zealand some weeks previously as a passenger in a ship which had foundered in a Pacific hurricane, and the detective's theory was that at an opportune time Captain Dalling would stage a convincing "rescue" of his concealed passenger and produce him as the missing Ralph Readman. Unfortunately for the skipper, Martin Dale and Jimmy were also on board the "Apollo" in disguise. However, events took an unlooked for turn when a tropical storm drove the ship onto a reef from which she slid off into deep water and foundered with the loss of all hands with the exception of Dale and Jimmy - and also, to the dismay of the detective, of Dalling and Everard. The latter recognised Dale, and the unscrupulous pair, in desperation, besieged the unarmed Dale and Jimmy in a cave on the uninhabited island on to which they had struggled after the "Apollo" had foundered. Finally, finding one of the ship's boats, the two conspirators departed in search of rescue, leaving Dale and Jimmy to their fate.

The story then took one of the author's typical surprise twists, for, as Dale and Jimmy watched disconsolately from their refuge at the rapidly disappearing boat bearing the two crooks to safety, a strange, bearded, Robinson Crusoe-like figure appeared at the mouth of the cave. Yes - you guessed it first time! It was the real Ralph Readman -- Jimmy's father -- who had been cast away weeks before, the sole survivor of the wrecked liner on which he had departed from New Zealand.

The eventual rescue of the trio by a passing steamer, and the picking up, by the same ship, of the two rogues Dalling and Everard; the discomfiture of the precious pair when Everard, after announcing himself to the ship's captain to be the supposedly-lost Ralph Readman, was confronted by the real heir, plus Martin Dale and Jimmy, wound up the tale in good style. "A PERILOUS QUEST" was up to the best Maxwell Scott standard -- indeed, I have yet to read any of the author's work which fails to impress the reader as being a really "thorough" job, with every detail nicely dovetailing and the generally somewhat complicated plot gradually unfolding itself as one reads on.

The missing-will-long-lost-heir plot was a favourite of Scott's, but because of his ability to introduce new twists and to dress up well-worn themes in new guises the reader never suffers that "I-have-been-here-before" feeling which often occurs in similar circumstances with the work of less skillful authors. A study of Scott's tales will reveal many stock situations and oft-used gimmicks, but they never become threadbare because of his supreme ability of a story-teller, and instead of creaking, the pieces of his somewhat tenuous plots fall into place like the tumblers of a well-oiled lock.

"THE SECRET OF THE RING", his second "CHUMS" serial, treats us to a dose of, if not "the mixture as before", a very similar prescription, but none the less palatable. As may be imagined, Jimmy's sudden transition from rags to riches was not without its problems, and the former street arab of Gun Gutter Alley, Stepney, found that as the heir of Sir Ralph Readman, Bart., life wasn't quite all beer and skittles. Let's take a peep into the study at Arncliffe Hall, Sir Ralph's country seat, when Jimmy's long-suffering tutor, Dick Irving, is endeavouring to sow the seeds of learning in somewhat stony soil.

"Now, what is an archipelago, and what is the derivation of the word?"

Jimmy scratched his head and wrinkled his brow. He stared up at the ceiling, down at the floor, and out through the window.

"Did I ever tell yer 'ow me an' Martin Dale----" he began.

"We're not talking about Martin Dale," said Mr. Irving coldly. "Please give me your attention. What is an archipelago, and what is the derivation of the word?"

Jimmy made a desperate shot at it.

"A harchipelago----" he began.

"An archipelago, if you please," corrected Mr. Irving.

"A narchipelago," said Jimmy, "is a piece of land wot's almost entirely surrounded by water! It comes from two Latin words -- narchi, nearly; an' pelago, an island!"

Dick Irving gazed at his pupil more in sorrow than in anger, but before he could say anything, the study clock chimed half-past twelve, and Jimmy's books went flying around the room, and he jumped to his feet.

"'Arf-time!" he cried with a sigh of relief. "No more beastly lessons until this afternoon! An' I wish there wasn't never goin' to be no more of 'em! I fair 'ates 'em! Lunch ain't until two. How about comin' for a walk?"

Yes, we can certainly sympathise with Jimmy! But as it happened, he was to be free from the agonies of education for many a long week as a result of that before-lunch saunter, for in the course of it he and Irving succoured a stranger who had been sorely injured in a fall from his horse, and who gasped out a few incoherent words concerning a secret concealed in a ring which he had left in the care of a friend in a distant town. Events moved swiftly from then on, for Martin Dale was drawn into the case when the injured stranger was shot by a mysterious assailant when on the point of revealing the secret of the ring -- and the chase was on! In no time, Dale and Jimmy found themselves battling for their lives in a thieves' kitchen in Limehouse, trapped in a burning building from which they escaped by the skin of their teeth, and then flying to Paris (a somewhat chancy method of travel in the year of grace 1912) in pursuit of the purloiner of the ring -- a flight which ended in a crash from which they emerged unscathed only to find that their quarry had fled to Gibraltar and thence to Tangier. Arriving at the latter salubrious port a bare hop, skip and jump behind the thief, who had struck out for the interior, the two 'tecs followed as fast as camel-power could take them. Finally recovering the ring after a series of hair-raising brushes with crooked Caids, evil Emirs, and the bloodthirsty indigenous natives, Dale and Jimmy made a triumphant return to England, where the secret of the ring was revealed. Concealed under the setting was a micro-photographed document proving that the rightful heir to the vast Quarton estates was none other than Dick Irving, Jimmy's long-suffering tutor! Thus everything ended on a happy note, and though the author did not record if Martin Dale tendered a sizable bill to the new heir for his professional services, we may assume that the latter would cheerfully present Dale with a handsome cheque if only from sheer gratitude at the prospect of in future not being compelled to earn his daily bread by heartbreaking endeavours to instil knowledge in his somewhat unreceptive pupil!

All vacancies for lost heirs having for the moment been filled, and feeling the need of a vacation after their strenuous cross-country peregrinations in the case of the missing ring, Dale and Jimmy decided to treat themselves to a walking tour in the south of England, which strikes one as a somewhat strange choice of relaxation after covering several hundred miles of Moroccan landscape on the hurricane deck of a camel -- one would think that a couple of well-upholstered easy chairs would have been their immediate objective. However, according to the

author, the two sleuths possessed nerves of steel - and it is possible that sundry other portions of their anatomies were composed of the same durable material. Be that as it may, walk they did - right into the strange case of the "Double Six" - as strange and as sinister an affair as any they had encountered. What was the riddle of the words gasped by the dying convict who, a few seconds after being snatched from a working party in the yard of Kilton Prison by means of a rope lowered from an aeroplane, had fallen in a mangled heap almost at the feet of the two detectives? "The rope - cut - they wanted me out of the way - Professor Challenger - the Double Six!" Dale pondered deeply over the strange affair, and on his return to London decided to probe further into it - a resolve which was strengthened when he was beseeched by a client to look into the disappearance of her husband, who had vanished from human ken after taking a position as assistant to - Professor Challenger! The missing man was an engraver by profession - and the dead convict had been serving a sentence for counterfeiting! Was it a link, or coincidence? Waving aside his client's tearful statement that she was unable to pay a large fee ("Let us not talk of money - fees are a secondary consideration with me when I think I can aid the cause of truth and justice") Dale soon found the trail of the missing husband leading him into a perilous labyrinth, and he and his youthful assistant faced death in many forms before the dastardly gang of counterfeiters calling themselves the "Double Six" was brought to justice. Jimmy's greatest thrill, however, came when the judge who presided at the trial called him up to the bench, shook hands with him, and congratulated him. ("Your country is proud of you, my boy. You have shown yourself a worthy pupil of Mr. Martin Dale - and higher praise than that I cannot give.")

High praise, indeed! And one cannot but admire the manner in which Dale loftily waved aside the question of fees, in the best traditions of his illustrious predecessors, Messrs. Holmes, Blake, Lee, et al. I have always wondered if our beloved fictional sleuths possessed large blocks of Woolworth's shares, or an oil well or two, which enabled them to adopt such philanthropic attitudes and still pay the rent. Perhaps it was typical of those gracious days - anyway, it is in pleasing comparison to our modern private eyes, who ask fifty a day and expenses without batting an eyelash and won't even take their feet off their desks without the offer of a roll of the long green as a retainer.

One of the advantages of being a private detective, as compared with your unfortunate professional opposite number at Scotland Yard, who has no sooner finished tidying up all the loose ends in one case than he finds that the Chief Commissioner has dumped another teaser in his lap for "immediate attention", is your ability to hand a "Back In The Spring" notice on your consulting-room door and take off for a rest cure whenever your fancy dictates - always assuming, of course, that the bank balance is reasonably healthy. However, after their strenuous efforts in the "Double Six" case, Dale and Jimmy could hardly be grudging a few weeks relaxation, and so we next find them lazing among sylvan surroundings in the little village of Norchester as the guests of one of Dale's friends. The quietness of this rural retreat palled on Jimmy, however, after a few days. No dying strangers gasping cryptic last words were encountered in the course of his ramblings through the verdant lanes, and finally getting, as he expressed it, "fair desprit", he set out on a bicycle ride, perhaps in the hope of drumming up some business.

However, nothing of interest materialised in the course of Jimmy's spin

until, almost turning into the cottage gate on his return that evening, he was involved in a collision with another youthful cyclist, who, to Jimmy's dismay, lay unconscious on the road after the impact. Happily the youth revived after being carried into the cottage, and Jimmy, after heaving a sigh of relief at the stranger's recovery (though we may perhaps assume that the youthful 'tec sighed inwardly at the lack of incoherent babblings of lost wills or buried treasure) and having seen him comfortably propped up on the parlour sofa, mounted his cycle and set off to Field House to notify the injured youth's guardian, Mr. Atkins, of the mishap to his ward. Little did Jimmy dream, as he pedalled through the gathering dusk, that he was soon to be involved in the strange affair which was to be filed in the Dale case-book as the "Silver Key" mystery! For, dismounting at the gates of Field House, he was pounced upon by two men, gagged, and hustled into a four-wheeler before he could even let go a suitable blast of Gun Gutter Alley invective! If Jimmy was consoling himself, as they rattled along through the dark country side, with the thought that at least somebody considered him of sufficient importance to abduct, his illusion was soon shattered. When his captors finally stopped at a lonely house, and ushered him none too gently into the presence of a third man, this gentleman's immediate reaction upon seeing Jimmy was, as the latter would have put it, to "fly off the 'andle". For the two roughs had abducted Jimmy in mistake for the lad who was even then nursing his bruises as the result of the bicycle accident - Tom Langley, the ward of Mr. Atkins of Field House!

In the confusion that ensued, Jimmy made a dash for liberty, but it was only after strenuous efforts that he managed to elude his pursuers and return, shaken and dishevelled, to tell his story to Martin Dale - and then, as another illustrious sleuth once remarked, "the game was afoot!" What was the object of the attempted kidnapping of young Tom Langley? Mr. Atkins professed complete ignorance, but it was obvious to Dale that he was a badly shaken man. And what was the significance of the badge - a silver key on a red diamond - the sight of which filled the master of Field House with shock and dismay? Who was it who would go to the lengths of murder and abduction to possess the missing half of a torn piece of paper bearing the clue to the secret of Field House? Dale found the riddle of the Silver Key one that taxed his powers to the utmost, and many weeks elapsed, in the course of which both he and his faithful young assistant faced death many times, before the way became clear and the secret was laid bare. "The Silver Key" is one of Scott's best yarns, and though lacking the chases through foreign countries which characterise many of the author's tales, it loses nothing through having an all-English setting.

Breathes there a 'tec with soul so dead who never to himself hath said, "One of these Days, Downing Street will be calling on me to save the country!" Just as all the famous sleuths of fiction, from the original Sage of Baker Street onwards, answered their country's call in times of dire need, so did Martin Dale in the dark days of 1916, when he pitted his skill and courage against a German espionage ring operating in England. "A Scrap of Paper" was the title of this story, and in the writing of it, the author pulled out all the stops - not one single trick in the Scott repertoire was left in the bag, and the pace was swift right from the first chapter. Jimmy Readman, on a cross-country hike to the nearest railway station on the evening of his stealthy departure from Fenmoor College (the aftermath of a somewhat stormy scene with the principal) found himself involved in a perilous intrigue when the dying pilot of a crashed aeroplane entrusted him with a leather jacket, sewn into the lining of which was a document

containing top-secret information pertaining to Germany's naval forces, brought from Cologne by the fatally-injured British secret agent. Space forbids me to relate in detail all the complications which ensued, but that jacket must surely have been the most sought-after article of apparel in history. The two resident German spies finally beat the Dale-Readman combine to the missing jacket (Jimmy had been robbed of it by a tramp) by a short head, but many were the Teutonic oaths which rent the English country air when after jubilantly ripping out the lining the spies brought to light a second-hand clothes dealer's advertisement instead of the precious document - which started things off all over again! After innumerable ramifications, the precious "scrap of paper" was finally run to earth - but both 'tecs and spies dead-headed in its discovery, and but for Jimmy's heroism after his beloved "gov'nor" was disabled by a revolver bullet, the Kaiser's agents might have won the day. However, all ended happily, and our heroes must surely have felt that they had attained the pinnacle of fame when they were personally congratulated by the Prime Minister. Martin Dale felt that Jimmy deserved the lion's share of the credit. ("It's Jimmy you should thank, not me", said the great detective, with characteristic modesty.) However, the P.M. wasn't inclined to argue about it. ("Between you, you have rendered a service to the Empire of which it is impossible to exaggerate the value.")

Here, again (without wishing to appear too mercenary) we hope that Dale tendered a sizable bill to the Treasury for services rendered, for the vicissitudes suffered by him and his youthful assistant in the course of the "Scrap of Paper" affair would have had Superman himself feeling the need of six months in a convalescent home!

And thus, with congratulations from a grateful nation ringing in their ears, Martin Dale and Jimmy fade from the scene, and another saga ends. Re-reading their exploits after a lapse of more than forty years, in the course of compiling this modest monograph, one cannot but conclude that the Martin Dale series contains some of Maxwell Scott's best writing, and even though many stock situations are encountered and characteristic tricks are used and re-used, the stories compare more than favourably with many others of their type. Scott, of course, created other detectives. I am indebted to my good friend Ron Storey, a stalwart of our happy brotherhood, for drawing my attention to this author's "Kenyon Ford" series in the "Big Budget", and still another of Scott's detectives was Vernon Read, who appeared in the "Boy's Leader". Unfortunately I never managed to make the acquaintance of these two papers in my youthful reading days - an omission which I hope to remedy at some future date. However, considering the popularity of "Chums" in its heyday, which was the period in which the Martin Dale series appeared, it is possible that many older members of our fraternity may recall with pleasure the exploits of the detective created by Scott for this once-famous boys' paper - a character who though not destined for a place in sleuthdom's Hall of Fame as was his illustrious predecessor, Nelson Lee, is nevertheless perhaps sufficiently identified with some of the author's finest writing to justify the title of "Maxwell Scott's Second String".

WANTED: S.O.Ls. 9, 16, 40, 58, 157, 264.

T.W. PORTER, OLD FIELDS, CORNGREAVES ROAD, CRADLEY HEATH, STAFFS.

THE MORCOVE STORY

By LEONARD PACKMAN

* * * *

In the Collectors' Digest Annual for 1948, Gordon Kirby wrote an excellent but all too short article on Cliff House and Morcove schools. This was nine years ago and - so far as Morcove is concerned - during the whole of that period no further article on the subject has appeared in the pages of either our monthly magazine or the 'Annual'.

It can, of course, be readily appreciated that only a small percentage of valuable space in our magazine can be set aside for the more obscure papers of our youth; but this cannot be said of the "Schoolgirls' Own", for there are many supporters of that paper in our ranks.

The purpose of this little article, therefore, is twofold; firstly, that Morcove and the "Schoolgirls' Own" shall receive a fitting tribute, and secondly, to bring back happy memories of those dear schoolgirls chums of our youth - "Betty Barton & Co".....

Early in February 1921 the Amalgamated Press launched a new periodical, and one that was destined to become famous for its schoolgirl characters - "The Schoolgirls' Own Weekly" featuring the girls of Morcove School.

It was an attractive-looking paper, in size and format somewhat like the "Nelson Lee Library" (New Series), having a yellow cover with blue artistry.

The first story, entitled "Scorned by the School" featured Betty Barton, a girl from the North of England, on her arrival at Morcove School. Betty had had a hard time of it in her earlier days, having looked after the home while her mother was forced to go out to work; she was, in fact, known as "little mother".

The author of the story was given as "Marjorie Stanton", this being the pen-name of Horace Phillips, one time editor of "Cheer Boys Cheer", who also wrote under the name of "Ida Melbourne".

It was an excellent and well-written 'first' story, and with the passing of the next few weeks the success of the paper was assured. Indeed, not only had it 'caught on' with the girls but had attracted many boys - the writer of this article being one of them.

For those interested in statistics the "Schoolgirls' Own Weekly" ran from 5 February 1921 to 23 May 1936, a total of 798 issues, all of which - to my best knowledge and belief - were written by the 'original' "Marjorie Stanton".

The central characters, "Betty Barton & Co" - the "Co" being Betty's two loyal friends, Polly Linton (The Madcap) and Madge Minden - were well delineated; in fact the same can be said of all the characters, but particularly so in the case of the "Co". Thus, it is not surprising that in a very short space of time Betty Barton & Co were to become as equally well-known as Barbara Redfern & Co of Cliff House.

The plots were many and varied; mystery, vendetta, treasure seeking, expulsion, ghosts - even slavery abroad - are but a few.

Practically every Fourth Former was featured at one time or another during the paper's long run. Here are a few examples: (No. 15) "Betty Barton's Banquet"; (20) "Madge Minden's Folly"; (82) "Paula Creel's Cousin"; (122) "Stella Munro's Choice"; (158) "Polly Linton's Problem"; (164) "The Mystery of Norah Nugent"; (171) "Judith Grandways' Choice"; (177) "The Jewels of Nakara" (Naomer Nakara); (322) "The Silence of Dolly Delane"; (352) "Ella Elgood's Emity"; (403) "Grace Garfield makes Amends"; (511) "Cora Grandways' Chance"; (543) "Madge Minden's Lucky Find"; (645) "Etta Hargrove's Ordeal"; (736) "The Testing of Tess Trelawney".

The mistresses, too, had their share of the limelight, as for instance "The Righting of Ruth Redgrave" (No. 350), this being a series of three issues, numbers 348 to 350.

There were many reasons why these fine stories had such an appeal, but perhaps the greatest factor was their seriousness generally - which was something far more realistic than was the case with the majority of school stories at that time. By this, I do not imply that the stories were not so 'lightly' written as those of other schools; it is just that the 'motif' seemed to be to approach realism as near as possible - within the bounds of fiction.

Toward the end of the year 1922 came the first "Schoolgirls' Own Annual", dated for 1923, and although not containing the amount of Morcove material as had been generally anticipated, the welcome addition of Cliff House stories and articles (illustrated by G.M. Dodshon of "The School Friend") assured the volume of a successful launching. The following year's "Annual" provided similar fare, with perhaps slightly more Morcove material. The "Schoolgirls' Own Annual" carried on (minus Cliff House stories) until 1940 (dated 1921), but no story of Morcove appeared in the final volume.

Meanwhile, in January 1923 came the "Schoolgirls' Own Library". For some little while the stories, which were reprints of the earlier 'weekly' papers, were shared each month between Morcove and Cliff House, although there were times when both issues featured the former. Most regrettably, at a later date, the publishers decided to continue the Library to the complete exclusion of both Cliff House and Morcove. However, for a considerable number of years Morcove was well to the fore.

Then, in 1936, after a run of close on sixteen years, the "Schoolgirls' Own Weekly" was incorporated with "The Schoolgirl", and it was goodbye to the dear old yellow and blue jacket. True, there were serial stories of Morcove in "The Schoolgirl", but it was not the same thing. Fortunately, the 'Library' was still going strong, and continued to do so until 1940, the last Morcove story being entitled "On Trial at Morcove" (No. 730, dated May 1940). In all, there were 94 Morcove stories in the "Schoolgirls' Own Library", all of which were reprints, the date of the first being February 1923, in No. 4 of that paper.

And now for some general information about Morcove School and its inhabitants.

Morcove School stands on the north coast of Devon, facing the sea, and about six miles away from the nearest town of Barncombe. Although the school itself is a fairly new building, it was built on the site of a monastery.

It is a handsome white stone building, with north and south wings. The Form-rooms, the Great Hall, the music-room and dining-room are in the main building.

The dormitories and studies are in the South Wing, while the North Wing consists of the mistresses' studies and rooms, the kitchens and some of the staff's rooms. The maids have their rooms on the top floor of the main building.

The Sixth Formers' studies are on the ground floor of the South Wing, the Fifth Formers' are on the second floor, and the Fourth Form studies are on the third floor.

The Second and Third Forms have no studies, and their dormitories are on the first floor.

Each Form has a Common Room of its own in the main building.

The quadrangle is in front of the main building, and the playing fields stretch to the south, facing the South Wing. The lodge and school gates are directly in front of the main building.

The lodge is occupied by Septimus Steggles, the school porter. His wife, "Dame Steggles", runs the school tuck-shop, which is near the lodge.

THE MISTRESSES: Miss Alice Edith Somerfield, M.A., F.R.G.S. - Headmistress; loved and respected by scholars and mistresses alike; Miss Mildred Massingham, B.A. - At one time mistress of the Fourth Form, but now Fifth Form mistress; Miss Ruth Faith Redgrave, B.A. - Fourth Form mistress; Miss Penelope Potter, B.Sc. - Third Form mistress; Miss Gladys Thelma Norman, B.Sc. - Second Form mistress.

SCHOLARS (With Pen Pictures of the principal characters): Sixth Form:- Ethel May Courtway - Captain of the School and head mistress; Lena Grayson - The most unpopular mistress in the school. Fifth Form:- Connie Carteret - Captain of the Form and a good all-round sportswoman; Maggie Barlow, fond of playing japes; Juanita Baroja, the best tennis player at Morcove. Fourth Form:- Betty Barton - Captain of the Fourth, and an all-round sportswoman. When she first came to Morcove most of the Form were against her, but she soon demonstrated that she was the best girl they could have for a captain, and she has been captain ever since; Polly Linton - Known as "the madcap of the school". A thoroughly jolly girl with a craze for joking and teasing; Paula Creel - The aristocrat of the Form. She is a very pretty girl, with fair hair and blue eyes. She speaks with a slight lisp and cannot pronounce her r's; Dolly Delane - Nicknamed "the Door-mat", because she is so obliging that it is said she would let anyone use her as a door-mat if they really wanted to do so; Naomer Nakara - In her own country Naomer is a queen, but at Morcove she is just a fun-loving, merry little thing; Madge Minden - The musical genius of the Form. Rather sedate, but always ready to join in with anything that is going on. She has beautiful brown hair and eyes; Tess Trelawney - The most artistic girl in the Form. Very fond of sketching and painting and very modest about her talents; Nora Nugent - A pretty girl of Irish descent but who has always lived in England, so she does not speak with an Irish brogue; Helen Craig - The only daughter of a wealthy widower, and a comparative newcomer to Morcove (in 1928); Cora Grandways - The "stormy petrel" of the Form. An avowed enemy of Betty Barton and her chums, and always ready to do them a bad turn; Judith Grandways - Her sister, who did carry out her promise to reform. Now friendly with Betty & Co. and has to put up with a great deal of

spitefulness from her sister as a consequence; Trixie Hope - A pretty, dark girl, small and vivacious; Ursula Wade - A spiteful sneak for whom nobody cares; Grace Garfield - An uncertain type of girl, who changes her mind very quickly; Stella Munro - At one time rather a snob, but now changed for the better; The rest of the Fourth Form: Monica Holden; Mabel Rivers; Jess Lingard; Ella Elgood; Sybil Farlow; Diana Forbes; Kathleen Murray; Eva Merrick; Elsie Drew and Etta Hargrove. Third Form:- Dot Fairfax - The unofficial "captain" of the Third Form and the jolliest of all the youngsters; Beryl Westwood - Dot's great chum; Hermione Merrick - A younger sister of Eva Merrick's, of the Fourth Form; Florence Cook - Also a great chum of Dot Fairfax. The Second Form girls are very young, and are generally referred to as "the Kindergarten".

There are, of course, many other scholars, but these are the ones who figured most prominently throughout the stories. One other Fourth Former, whose name does not appear in the "Schoolgirls' Own Annual" records but whom I remember playing a featured part in some stories round about the year 1926, and later, in the early 'thirties, is Pam Willoughby. Maybe she left... I must confess I cannot recollect. There were others, too, who did come and go, but as this article is only intended to bring back memories of the permanent characters the 'short stayers' are omitted.

Much could be written of the stories themselves; the trials and tribulations of Betty Barton, the scrapes of Polly Linton, the Fourth Formers' adventures abroad with Naomer Nakara in the latter's country, the schemes of Cora Grandways, and so on. Each and every one played her part in the Morcove Saga - and played it admirably. Perhaps at some future date more will be written about the actual stories... and maybe space could be found for the complete list of titles of the "Schoolgirls' Own Weekly" (I have them all).

One thing at least is certain; Betty Barton & Co. and Morcove School will always be remembered by those of us who read of them in our youth. "Long Live Morcove"!

(I tender my grateful appreciation to Vera Nichols and Derek Adley for their help in supplying much useful information. - L.P.)

 WANTED: Bound Volumes of Magnet 1-1,454, Bound "Gems" 1-1,543, Loose "Gems" 1507-1542, 1579, 1580 and 1,584; S.O.Ls. 230, 391; "Populars", "Boy's Friend" weekly; Holiday Annuals - 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1924, 1926, 1927, 1929.

FOR SALE/SWOP: Complete run 1,554-1,683 Magnets.

S.B. WHITEHEAD, 12, WELLS ROAD, FAKENHAM, NORFOLK.

WANTED: "Chatterbox" annuals for years 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, also copies of "Rainbow" comic. Your price paid if at all reasonable.

W. WESTWATER, 4 BUCKLEY STREET, GLASGOW, N.2.

Any 'Old Bloods' complete in orig. editions pre.1870. Esp. Lloyd publications. Also Lloyd periodicals. Good prices paid.

R.A. BRIMBELL, THE GARDEN HOUSE, 'SAXONBURY', ST. MARY'S RD. LONG DITTON, SURREY.

Turn Back The Clock

By ERIC FAYNE

MIDSUMMER, 1931:

The long, long story of Tom Merry's Schooldays was starting again, right from the beginning. The title I had suggested for the first story, - "TOM MERRY - NEW BOY", - had been adopted.

I felt a sense of responsibility. For six months I had persisted with my request that this experiment should be tried, and now it was a reality. Obviously, it was up to me to do all that I could to make it a success. From now on I worked hard to do my small share in building up the circulation of the Gem. My efforts were, of course, a drop in the ocean, but, being in the teaching profession, I was in touch with hundreds of boys and girls, and I did what I could.

My Gem Club was a tremendous hit; I was in a position to make it so. For years we had Gem dances, Gem whist drives, Gem fancy dress galas, Gem outings; everybody attending these countless functions over the years had to carry a current copy of the Gem. I ran competitions of all types in connection with the old paper; when these competitions were of a literary character, the entries were sometimes sent to the Editor, with the request that he would judge them, and he kindly did so. By these and similar methods, I won hundreds of extra readers for the Gem. My boys and girls of the nineteen-thirties were keenly Gem-conscious, and not only the youngsters, - their parents, too, took an immense interest in our various activities, and many wrote to me of their personal recollections of the paper from their own youth.

Mr. R.J. Macdonald sent me a delightful original painting of Tom Merry. Framed, it hung in my senior form-room for nearly twenty years, and today it is one of my most cherished possessions. Sometimes, when a special function was in progress, a telegram with a cheery message, signed Martin Clifford, would arrive. Probably Martin himself knew nothing about it, but my boys and girls thought he did, and that was all that mattered.

Only a few years ago, ten years or more after the Gem had ceased to be, one of my Old Boys came to a fancy dress ball as Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and carried off first prize. I sent a photograph of him, in character, to Mr. Hamilton.

BACK TO 1907:

Reviewing it now, I see that the decision of the Fleetway House to turn back the clock was a momentous one for them to have made. It must have entailed a great deal of consideration. Clearly, it would never have been done at all if the Gem had been in a healthy state in the early months of 1931. The paper was in deep waters, and the drastic measures which I had long advocated were taken, - measures which might kill or cure. The Twilight Years, the masses of substitute stories which had characterised the Gem for so long were left behind, and the clock was turned back.

The clock was turned back a quarter of a century, but the span was really far greater than the period of time suggests. In reality, the clock was turned back to another age, to an earlier, half-forgotten world, - a distance which many would have thought could never successfully be bridged.

"TOM MERRY - NEW BOY" had been written at the commencement of 1907, in a leisurely age of dusty lanes, gas-lighting, horse traffic, muffin-men, zinc milk-cans, cottage loaves, drawing rooms and parlours resplendent with red plush and horsehair sofas; servants, in caps and aprons, were two a penny, like the early Gem; two years were still to pass before Bleriot flew the Channel; ragtime was half a decade away in the future, jazz was awaiting creation; the motor car was in its infancy; the motion picture had hardly started to flicker, let alone to talk; the primitive giant-horned gramophone was just gaining popularity; radio was waiting in the wings. 1907, an age of class distinction, when poverty and wealth existed side by side. Everybody was intensely patriotic, and English people spoke English; the time was still far distant when it would become fashionable for Britons to decry everything British.

Between 1907 and 1931 lay the greatest war the world had ever known. An era had ended in 1914; the habit and thought of Blue Cover days lay trampled far beneath the muddy soil of Flanders. It would seem that the suggestion I made, and upon which the Fleetway House acted, was a daring one, - and so it was, in a way.

AND YET-----

Yet another quarter-century has now gone by since 1931, and, even in 1957, those fifty-year-old Tom Merry stories can be read with keen enjoyment. It could be said that school stories do not date, but that would not really be true. "Eric", "Tom Brown", "Stalky & Co", and many others are heavily dated. It would be more accurate to say that a few writers have the knack of expressing themselves so that their work never dates.

Those two-score $\frac{1}{2}$ d Gem stories have a secret, illusive charm. They are so ingenuous, so full of life, so sparkling with fun; they were written with a boyish enthusiasm which is subtly but surely conveyed to the reader. They have a magic quality which one finds in no other stories, even by the master.

Perhaps "TOM MERRY - NEW BOY" could hardly avoid being something of a period piece, even so long ago as 1931. It was just not believable that a boy of fifteen would arrive at a minor public school like Clavering in a velvet Faunteroy suit, for such attire had surely gone out of fashion before the turn of the century. But, allowing for the vagaries of lovable Miss Fawcett, the story got by, and the reprints were safely launched. A renewed period of prosperity came to the Gem.

But, though the initial stages were safely negotiated, there were still pitfalls ahead. The blue-cover Gems had appeared at a time when publishers gave amazing value for money. The penny Gem of the blue covers had 32 pages, as against the 28 pages of the twopenny Gem of 1931. The print of the early papers had been much smaller, the space allotted to advertisements much less. In consequence, the early stories were much longer than the editor required in the nineteen-thirties.

This difficulty did not present itself while the $\frac{1}{2}$ d series formed the star attractions. Those stories were roughly of the length wanted, and only a little

judicious pruning was necessary. It can, in fact, be admitted that in the early stages of the reprints the abridgment was carried out quite competently.

But with the arrival of the double-length stories, we had another kettle of fish entirely. With a handful of exceptions, the ld blue-cover Gem stories were almost double the length normally required. Again, it can be admitted that some of the tales would have lost nothing at all from careful pruning. With the coming of the long stories in 1908, we find a few of them a trifle stodgy, bogged down at times with padding in the form of facetious dialogue. Stories of this type benefited from pruning.

It is my personal opinion that the period from 1911 till 1913, inclusive of both years, was the Golden Age of the Gem. Masterpiece followed masterpiece, stories which were sometimes equalled but never surpassed in the years to come.

These were the tales which suffered most in the reprinting. As they were too long for the Gem of the thirties, a careful general shrinkage was obviously indicated if they were not to be spoiled. This, unhappily, was not generally done. The abridgment was often careless and clumsy, whole chunks being cut out higgledy-piggledy, the result sometimes being a sorely unbalanced and unsatisfying story.

The delayed arrival of Levison was another factor which marred some of the fine tales of this period. In yarns which should have shown the development of Levison as a cunning and clever young rascal, the actions and remarks of Levison were attributed to the appalling name of Snipe. The arrival of Levison was delayed to coincide with the Lumley-Lumley series. Owing to the complete omission of certain tales for various reasons, the Editor found the seasons passing with greater rapidity than he could cope with. The Lumley-Lumley series had to wait for the propitious time of year when the Outsider should appear, and this meant that Levison had to wait also.

While admitting that this sort of thing was reasonable to some extent, it must be said that the leaping forward to a group of stories, followed by a return to collect some that had been by-passed, seems at times to have been considerably more than was necessary.

I kept a sharp eye on stories which had been skipped, and on many occasions was responsible for the fact that they were eventually reprinted. Owing to the dodging about, and the fact that most of the titles were altered, it was not easy to keep a check on them all.

In the following summary of the years of the reprints, I list at the end of each year the most interesting of the stories which were left out. With a few exceptions, I ignore the stories by substitute writers.

THE YEAR 1931:

At Clavering, Mr. Henry Railton, the Headmaster, became Mr. Victor Railton, - a very necessary correction. Mr. Quelch, the master of the Shell, became Mr. Welch. Wingate, the captain of Clavering, was changed to Felgate; North, the prefect, became South.

Very little pruning was done in the opening story, but one piece is of interest. In the original story was the sentence "Sir Charles Grandison in his boyish days must have been a great deal like Tom at this period of his life". This was a reference to a novel by Richardson in which Grandison, the hero, was

polite and chivalrous to a tedious degree. Whether readers were familiar with the works of Richardson in 1907 is a question, but obviously they were considered as unfamiliar with that writer in 1931.

The national cricket heroes of 1931 were completely different from those who had been in the public eye in 1907. A deleted sentence in the second reprint was "With the hitting of a young Jessop, the pace of a Fry, and the grace and style of a Palaret, Tom Merry was certainly the finest cricketer outside the Sixth". Less necessary was the change from "A budding W.G. Grace" to "A budding Hobbs".

Inspector Skeet of the early stories became Skeat, the spelling of the name with which we were familiar.

"The Schoolboy Tecs" was the very first yarn to introduce Ferrers Locke. Jack Blake, talking of Locke, remarked, "There's a detective here. I don't know whether it's Stanley Dare or Frank Ferrett". Who Dare and Ferrett may have been I have no idea, but in the reprint, the name of Sexton Blake was substituted.

Ferrers Locke was featured in a large number of the earlier Gem tales, usually with Tom Merry as his boy assistant. It was curious that he dropped out of the Gem after the "Mysterious X" series, to reappear in the Magnet.

"Tom Merry - the Boy Tec" gave an example of a correction which should have been made but wasn't. Gussy, travelling by train from St. Jim's in Sussex, arrived at Euston. But a cabman became a taxidriver, and a seller of "Stars" and "Echoes" became a vendor of "Stars" and "Newses".

Martin Clifford does not seem to have decided very early in which part of the country St. Jim's was situated, but by 1931 everybody should have known. About a year later, in "Wally the Runaway", Tom Merry & Co went by train from Rylcombe and, in the original tale, arrived at Charing Cross. In the reprint, the terminus was changed to Waterloo. Both were wrong, for a train from Sussex would arrive at Victoria or London Bridge.

"The St. Jim's Speed Cops" rang a false note in 1931. Tom Merry drove Lord Eastwood's car. As Tom was described as being barely fifteen years old, it is unlikely that he could have held a driving licence in 1931, even if there was no such age restriction in 1907. This was the first story to introduce Cousin Ethel, named Ethel Maynard in the original, and changed to Cleveland in the reprint.

The issue dated Dec. 5th, 1931 brought "St. Jim's for Merrie Christmas" which had appeared as "Tom Merry's Christmas" on Nov. 23rd, 1907, in the Gem's first Christmas Number and first Double Number. Fortunately, the Editor in 1931 ran it as a cover-to-cover story, and this delightful, seasonable frolic thus escaped the mutilation suffered by scores of other fine yarns later on.

OMITTED:

There were 42 Tom Merry stories in the 48 issues of the $\frac{1}{2}$ d Gem. Of these, only four were omitted in the reprinting policy.

"OUR CAPTAIN". As there were only four stories of Tom Merry at Clavering, it seems a pity that this, the second of them, was passed over. Probably the Editor was anxious to get Tom to St. Jim's, in order to bring back on the scene Gussy and the other well-known characters.

"THE ST. JIM'S CURATE". This story introduced Mr. Dodds who featured fairly frequently in the early years. True, it also introduced a Greyfriars whose junior captain was Yorke and whose demon bowler was one, Pensonby, but it was a pleasant cricket story, and the names could have been changed.

"THE DIABOLISTS". Pleasant period piece of the Diabolo craze.

"SKIMPOLE'S LITTLE SCHEME". For a freak character, it would seem that Skimpole was featured far too often in the Gem's early years. A great many Skimpole stories were reprinted, but this one, the first of them all, was not. It concerned Skimpole's craze for Socialism, and brought in a tramp, Bill Bunter. It is a question whether any breath of politics is desirable in a school story, even when, as in this case, the matter is lightly and quite fairly presented. Actually it is a very droll and amusing tale, and most people, reading it today, would be vastly entertained.

THE YEAR 1932:

The $\frac{1}{2}$ d Gem stories continued into 1932, two of them being held over until the summer. These two, "Expelled from St. Jim's" and "Tom Merry's Camp" were joined together, and appeared as a cover-to-cover story under the title "Sacked from St. Jim's". Only very slight abridgment took place, and the welding of the two stories into one was well done, making an extremely good yarn.

The first of the double-length blue cover Gems, "The Gathering of the Clans" appeared at the end of February, under the title "The Treaty of St. Jim's". Running from cover to cover, it was practically unabridged.

A few more from the shorter $\frac{1}{2}$ d series then came up, and at the end of March the second of the longer stories, once more running the full length of the paper, and again very little cut.

At the end of March we had the first example of a good story spoiled by haphazard pruning. "Kellish, the Mischief-Maker" (originally "The Tell-Tale", and once published in the Penny Popular under the far superior title of "Rough Justice") would have suffered nothing from a general shrinkage in the opening and middle chapters, but instead of this a huge chunk was cut wholesale from the final chapter just when a tingling climax was working up. It ruined the story.

By the close of May, the reprints had reached a stage in the early Gem when the stories of Alan Wayward ran side by side with the school tales. The Wayward adventure series appeared for about three months in 1908, and, in consequence, the Tom Merry stories had been much shorter. Two stories, the second of which was drastically pruned, were united in 1932, and appeared as "The Kidnapped Cricketers".

A more unusual state of affairs is evident with the next two reprints. "The St. Jim's Parliament" comprised the combination of "Skimpole's New Idea" with the opening chapters from "The Parliamentary Candidate". Then "Prime Minister of St. Jim's" opened with the closing chapters of "The Parliamentary Candidate" linked with "Told on the Telephone". Thus, three early tales were welded and cut to make two reprints. In my view they were dry, wordy tales, and not worth the trouble.

August brought the reprinting of the Gem's very first summer holiday series, - six tales of a party from St. Jim's aboard the S.S. "Condor". Unabridged, these stories made very satisfying reading. If Martin Clifford had

actually written them in the thirties, there is no doubt that hectic adventure in foreign lands would have been the lot of the boys on the Condor. As it was, schoolboy fun and games, plus a feud with Mr. Ratcliff over the heaving waves, provided a charming holiday interlude, a charm which has never lessened with the passing of the years.

In October, "The Joker of St. Jim's" turned up as "Tom Merry at the Zoo". Typical of so many of the pleasant romps of blue cover days, it is memorable for Gussy's side-splitting efforts to tell a "shaggy dog" story. Wispy as gossamer, this story had a clever humour which I always find convulsing.

Mid-December brought "The Ghost of St. Jim's" which had first appeared in mid-November 1908. This was the story where Binks terrorised the School House by tapping on the walls from the secret passage, and it had appeared in a Xmas Double Number. Although the issue of 1932 was described as "Greatly Enlarged", the four extra pages were utilised for advertisements, and in consequence the story was cut by no less than ten chapters. This classic Christmas tale was, in consequence, a mere ghost of its former self, more's the pity.

The year ended with the commencement of the Gem's first travel series, Tom Merry in America with Gussy, Blake, Skimpole, and Wally D'Arcy. By later standards, these five would seem to make odd travelling companions, but six stories formed an excellent series, and one which compares favourably with the outstanding travel stories in the Gem and Magnet as time went on.

OMITTED:

"SKIMPOLE, DETECTIVE". Skimpole story, introducing Ferrers Locke. There seems no apparent reason why this story was left out, but Skimpole was much overplayed in the early Gems.

"THE DETECTIVE'S PUPILS". Another Skimpole-Ferrers Locke story. Probably omitted because it was very short.

"SKIMPOLE'S CRUSADE". Very short. More about Skimpole and Locke.

"TOM AT THE FRANCO-BRITISH". A dated piece of a visit to a famous Exhibition of 1908.

THE YEAR 1933:

In mid-February came what is apparently the first reprint of a substitute story. It must be admitted that in 1909 it is not so easy to detect the efforts of the substitute writers. Usually the imitation yarns stand out as such, but Martin Clifford was not always at his best, and what is actually a story from his pen may, possibly, be mistaken as coming from elsewhere.

"Hero and Cad", originally "D'Arcy Minor's Chum", is definitely a substitute story, and it is almost certainly the first one that ever appeared in the Gem.

This was followed by "Call of the Sea", which centered around one, James Ballantyne, who was sent to St. Jim's against his will. In the reprint his name was changed to James Raleigh, though why this change was made is a puzzle.

In March, Bernard Glyn came on the scene in "The Schoolboy Inventor". Oddly enough, in 1909, Glyn had first been mentioned as being at St. Jim's in the previous week's story, "The St. Jim's Terriers", which, in my opinion, was a substitute story. I comment further on this point in Omissions at the end of the

review of 1933.

At the end of April came two rather curious stories, "The Rival Schools" and "St. Jim's for Ever", originally published in the Gem as "Tom Merry's Triumph" and "Played Out". These stories are rewritten from "Tom Merry & Co", a long story which Martin Clifford especially wrote for the Boys' Friend Library No. 30, in 1907, when Tom Merry had not long been at St. Jim's. This was the very first story of Rylcombe Grammar School.

"The D'Arcy Cup" in mid-July was a substitute story, concerning water-polo. The early sub writers had a habit of introducing unusual sporting themes into the Gem.

"Tom Merry's Trip" was a peculiar story in October 1909. It was still more peculiar that it was selected for reprinting in July 1933. Tom Merry's uncle invited him to take a party to France. At the end of the tale, when the party was seated in the train, a telegraph boy came along the platform with a telegram stating that the start of the outing was delayed till next week.

There are two possible solutions of this mystery. One, that the star author's copy was not ready to follow on with the series, so the Editor inserted the few lines at the end of the story. More likely, I think, the Editor discovered that the series was to culminate in the double-length Christmas story, bringing the Xmas number earlier than he wanted it. At any rate, in 1909, a substitute story followed "Tom Merry's Trip", and then Tom Merry & Co started off on the journey abroad which was to culminate in the Christmas story at the Chateau Cernay.

In July 1933, "Tom Merry's Trip" appeared as "The Boy with Too Many Friends", closing with the vague lines about the trip being temporarily postponed. But the actual visit to France did not take place in the reprints until more than four years later, when the Chateau Cernay series formed Christmas 1937. No doubt this hold-over was due to the fact that the Chateau Cernay story had been published fairly recently in the Schoolboy's Own Library. But why publish that story in the S.O.L. at that time? And, even more pertinent, why publish the opening story of the series in the Gem of July 1933? Truly the Flectway House moved in a mysterious way its wonders to perform.

At the end of 1909, two stories of Gussy at Tomsonic's Circus had appeared, in connection with a circus series which Charles Hamilton was then writing in Pluck. These two stories were reprinted in August 1933.

In August the Nelson Lee Library gave up the ghost, and was incorporated with the Gem. For a time, stories of St. Frank's occupied the last few pages of the Gem. This, together with the fact that more space was being devoted to advertisements, made necessary still more drastic cutting of the St. Jim's stories. It was a pity, for the yarns of the Gem's Golden Age were approaching.

At the end of September came two tales, very heavily abridged, of Tom Merry in Monte Carlo. Actually, in the early Gem, a year had elapsed between the Cernay series and this one. Possibly the Editor, in 1933, hoped that this Monte Carlo series would link with the abandoned trip of July.

At the close of November commenced the famous series where Tom Merry lost all his money, and became adrift in London, - seven stories spoiled by unskilful and very severe pruning. In one of them, Tom originally met Jack, Sam, and Pete, and the dog Rory. In the reprint, the names were changed, rather sadly, to Jim,

Buck, and Rastus, though the dog remained Rory.

This series included the Christmas number for 1933, entitled "Gussy, the Ghost", originally "Tom Merry's Resolve". The entire original centre of this story was scrapped, and several new chapters were written in by somebody. The portion deleted had told of Skimpole's arrival at Easthorpe to take part in a parliamentary election, - a tedious sequence, the cutting of which was no loss. Unfortunately, the new chapters were very uninspired.

Actually, two years had passed in Gem stories between the Xmas Number of 1932 and that of 1933.

OMITTED:

"THE FEUD OF THE FOURTH". Substitute story in which Clifton Dane made his initial appearance.

"THE ST. JIM'S TERRIERS". Dated story of the Territorial Army, almost certainly by a substitute. Introduced Dane and his weird snakes, and the first story in which Glyn is mentioned as being at St. Jim's. The first genuine story about Glyn appeared the next week, which suggests that the writer of the Terrier story must have read "The Schoolboy Inventor" in script form.

"THE HYPNOTIST OF ST. JIM'S". Sub story about Dane.

"HIP-HIP-HOORAY". Sub story about Dane.

"THE BOY SCOUTS' RIVALS". Seemed to be the first mention of the Curlew patrol. The "Rivals" were Cousin Ethel's girl guides.

"THE ST. JIM'S MOTOR-CYCLIST". Gussy, Glyn, and the Grammarians.

"TOM MERRY ON THE RINK". The substitute story which followed "Tom Merry's Trip".

"THE ST. JIM'S SPORTSMAN". Rather weird story about fox-hunting and steeple-chasing.

"TOM MERRY'S HOMECOMING". The story concerning the Co's return after Christmas at the Chateau Cernay.

"KING OF THE CASTLE". The second early Gem within a year to bear this title. Probably a genuine story, but rather tedious.

"THE ST. JIM'S RINKERIES". Roller-skating and hockey, probably by a substitute.

THE YEAR 1934:

With the New Year, the words "Incorporating the Nelson Lee" were dropped from the Gem title, though the St. Frank's stories continued at the end of the paper for some time longer.

A good deal of dodging about was now being done with the St. Jim's stories, leaping forward and then hopping back to collect yarns which had been passed over. A big backward leap was taken to pick up Albert Clyne, originally "The Cad of St. Jim's" and now "The Worst Boy at St. Jim's". This seems to have been the first tale to refer to Gussy's tenor solos.

In 1907, Martin Clifford had written a long story entitled "Tom Merry's Conquest" for No. 38 of the Boy's Friend Library. In April 1911, this story was divided to make two issues of the Gem under the titles "The Rival Schools" and "Saints versus Grammarians". As, by 1911, Gordon Gay had long been on the scene,

first in a series by Prosper Howard (who invented him) in the Empire Library, and also in the Gem stories, readers must have wondered that he did not appear in these two Gem tales. These were reprinted in 1934 as "Rival Riggers" and "What Price Victory?"

The story which introduced Levison to St. Jim's had been by-passed, and the acts and remarks of Levison in subsequent tales were attributed to Snipe.

The delightful South Seas series from 1911 appeared as an Easter treat for Gem readers in April 1934. Not too heavily abridged, the only fly in the ointment was the change of Levison's name to Snipe in the opening story.

Now we went back a year to collect Lumley-Lumley. In the opening story, Mr. Lumley-Lumley paid three years' fees in advance. The fees at St. Jim's had risen from £30 a term in 1910, to £50 a term in 1934, - far too low on both occasions for a school like St. Jim's. Lumley also featured in the next tale, "The Complete Cad", originally "The Terrible Three's Cricket Match". Then came a jump to another Lumley tale, "A Disgrace to St. Jim's", originally "Lumley-Lumley's Luck". It was an improvement to bring these Lumley stories in sequence.

Oddly enough, the next reprint "The St. Jim's Jockeys", originally "Lumley-Lumley's Rival", was a substitute story. It is really curious how a substitute writer was able to produce a story on a character so recently introduced, and I regard it as another proof that the sub writer must have read the genuine stories in script form.

The next tale, "Towser's Rivals", originally "Herries' First Prize", introduced Lumley and Dane, and has the hallmarks of a substitute story. After this came a certain genuine story, "Outsider and Hero", originally "Lumley-Lumley, Hero". Quite a fascinating study, these early Lumley stories. Puzzling, too!

"Gussy's Cricket Party" and "The Demon Bowler" came next. The end of the first story and the whole of the second had made up "D'Arcy's Cricket Week" for the S.O.L., not so many years before.

In July, "The Mechanical Man" was a substitute story, as was "Tom Merry's Regatta" which followed it. Why these imitation tales were reprinted while some of the master's own were omitted is a matter for wonder.

Now came a big leap forward to two more Lumley stories, "The Marooned School" and "The School Without Masters". Then, back again for that famous story "A Shadow Over St. Jim's" in which Lumley-Lumley "died".

And so at last, in September 1934, Levison was introduced in "The Boy Who Came Back", the title referring to Lumley-Lumley.

November brought that delightful travel series with Tom Merry & Co. on the Congo. Three stories, all much abridged, but excellent reading.

For Christmas we had that classic story "The Ghost of St. Jim's" in which Mr. Selby's guest donned the robes of the mystic and restless spectral monk. This story which had appeared in a double number in 1911 was cut by more than half its original length, and thereby reduced to indifference in 1934.

OMITTED:

"THE TERRIBLE THREE'S TOUR". A dated story in which Tom Merry received a present of a motor-car.

"TOM MERRY'S MASTER-STROKE". A story in which Sir Hilton Pepper forbade the use of the island on the river near St. Jim's. Really, Mr. Clifford!

"TOM MERRY & CO AT THE EXHIBITION". A dated story of a visit to the Japanese-British Exhibition "at a place called Shepherds Bush"!

"LEVISON, THE SCHOOLBOY DETECTIVE". Appeared, most inappropriately, in the Xmas Double Number for 1910. A good story, but quite unseasonable, and of normal length, so that the 1910 Gem had been a mass of short stories to support the main feature. No obvious reason why it was omitted from the reprints.

"SKIMPOLE'S PUPIL". Joe Frayne, and Socialism.

"THE INVENTOR'S RIVAL". Excellent light tale of Glyn's mechanical bowler.

"FIGHTING HIS WAY". The first Dick Brooke story, stickily sentimental and probably omitted for this reason.

"HIS PAST AGAINST HIM". Rather curious story about Gerald Blane, the Toff. Quite well written, but to my mind does not read like a genuine story.

"THE RAIDING OF THE RIVAL SCHOOL". Grammar school rivalry.

"ASHAMED OF HIS SISTER". Story of Bishop of the Fourth. Quite well written, but with the sentiment laid on too thickly for comfort.

"HIS FALSE POSITION". Excellent tale, with fine character work. Had a slightly sadistic sequence in which Levison arranged for Monteith to trip over a rope and fall, clad only in running clothes, into a heap of broken glass. Probably omitted on account of this episode, but I think the omission of a fine story like this was a big mistake.

THE YEAR 1935:

With the issue dated January 19th, 1935, the Packsaddle series, by Frank Richards, joined St. Frank's in the supporting programmes, necessitating further pruning of the St. Jim's tales. The pages were now divided into three columns instead of two, which, according to the Editor, gave him more space to play with. The St. Jim's story told of the arrival of Redfern, Owen, and Lawrence, the scholarship boys.

The first Dick Brooke story had not been reprinted, but the second appeared in April. Less sentimental, and with more action than the first story, it had a sequel in which the juniors took it upon themselves to expel Levison. As usual, many of the original chapters were deleted.

After their return from the South Seas in 1911, Tom Merry & Co had spent their treasure money to celebrate the coronation of King George the Fifth. I suggested to the Editor that this story should be published, twenty-five years later, to celebrate the Jubilee of the great king. This was done, and "Coronation Day at St. Jim's" in 1911, became "Jubilee Day at St. Jim's" in 1935.

Some of the Gem's finest stories appeared that summer of 1935, all of them spoiled by mutilation. "The Whip Hand", "Tom Merry's Concert Party", "Stage Struck", "The Limit", "The Spy of the School", - I quote the original titles, - followed one another with their brilliance dimmed.

At the beginning of August came what I regard as the greatest Gem story of all time, "Bought Honours", in which Levison sat for an examination in Gussy's name. The superb original title was changed to "The Cheat". A beautiful school

story, hacked about and disfigured to make space for a full supporting programme which was nothing to write home about. The Editor should have had his head examined.

The Packsaddle series ended in August, and now, for a time, there was much less abridgment. Such great stories as "The Flooded School", "The Mysterious X" series (the last Gem tales to feature Ferrers Locke, so far as I remember), "The Prefect's Plot", and "The Wrong Team" came on the scene unspoiled.

In mid-October came "The Captain's Rival", a fine Kildare-Monteith story from December 1912, a tale which Martin Clifford had rewritten from a story of his which had first appeared in Pluck. This excellent yarn, very long in 1912, lost several chapters in 1935.

"The Sentence of the House" told originally of Eric Lorne, a friend of Cousin Ethel's. Reprinted as "The Boy who Defied His Form", the boy's name was changed to Eric Page. This may have been due to the fact that an Alec Lorne had appeared in a story some time before.

"The New Boy's Secret" in November was a substitute story. This was followed by another substitute story "Under Suspicion", originally "Tom Merry's Promise", and, St. Frank's now having departed from the Gem, the end pages were occupied by a new Rookwood series.

The Christmas Issue for 1935 contained the famous story "Nobody's Study". Although it ran from cover to cover, it still was drastically cut, an entire sequence concerning an acrostic by Levison for Tom Merry's Weekly being omitted.

OMITTED:

"THE SCHOOLBOY NIHILIST". Period piece.

"TOM MERRY & CO'S MUSIC HALL". Amusing light story, written at the time when music halls were being built all over the country. Seems no reason why it should have been left out.

"TOM MERRY'S MASQUERADE". Story of a Masked Ball and an escaped convict. Probably omitted in 1935 because a story on similar lines had recently appeared in the Magnet.

"FIGGY'S FOLLY". A Figgins-Cousin Ethel story, very sentimental, and rather out of its element in the Gem.

"THE ST. JIM'S PICTURE PALACE". A bit dated, perhaps, but good fun.

"D'ARCY'S LIBEL ACTION". A screamingly funny story, probably passed over on account of a suffragette sequence. With slight pruning, would have made a good rib-tickler in 1935. (Incidentally, the first St. Jim's story that I ever read).

"TOM MERRY & CO IN IRELAND". Good story of an excursion. Could easily have been brought up to date.

"JACK BLAKE ON THE WARPATH". A story rewritten in 1912 by Martin Clifford, based on an old Pluck yarn.

THE YEAR 1936:

At the beginning of February came the two stories introducing Harry Hammond, the Cockney Schoolboy, which had appeared at the end of 1913.

Mid-February, under the rather smug title "They Faced Dishonour" came the

reprint of "Shoulder to Shoulder", a story from early 1913. It was, perhaps, a slightly smug story altogether, which was a pity, for it was a first-class yarn in so many ways. Tom Merry, Gussy, Wally, and others, all told lies. One line - "It was a lie, - the first that Tom Merry of St. Jim's had ever told" was deleted in the reprint. Even in 1913, it had been a mildly priggish tale; in 1936 it just failed to ring the bell for the same reason. Yet, carefully revised, it could have been a masterpiece in school fiction.

Koumi Rao came on the scene in the issue dated February 29th, a fine character with great possibilities which never became facts.

In March, at my request, was reprinted "Hold to Ransom" as "The Kidnapped Headmaster", a story which had first appeared in 1910.

Two fine travel tales of Tom Merry in Venice came in April. The first, originally called "Tom Merry's Discovery" and renamed "Clue to a Fortune", told of a treasure document given to Tom Merry by an Italian named Marco Frulo. In the reprint, his name was changed to Maro Luigi, though goodness knows why. In this issue, Rockwood departed from the Gem.

The second Venice story, and a grand one it was, ran from cover to cover, and suffered only minor pruning.

Next week, at the end of April, "The Making of Harry Wharton" began as a serial, so the first Magnet stories joined the St. Jim's reprints.

In June came a very fine Lumley-Lumley story, "For the Honour of St. Jim's". This was the very first tale to feature the iniquitous and ubiquitous Tickey Tapp with his gambling den. In passing, every story in which Tickey Tapp appeared over the years was first-class.

This was followed by that classic substitute story "Misunderstood" which the Editor thought to improve with the clumsy title "They Called Him a Coward". After this, at my request, came "The Laugh's on the First Eleven", a story published round about 1910 under the title "The Rally of the Rival Co's".

A leap forward now to a famous scouting story "The Curlew Patrol Wins Through". With the reprinting of this story came the chill feeling that the Golden summer of blue cover days was passing. Like the early morning mists and cool breezes which herald the autumn and warn us that winter is near, so this story, published originally a few weeks before the outbreak of the first Great War, told us that the best was past. True, there were a number of fine stories yet to come, but, after the outbreak of war in 1914, the really good yarns were fewer and farther between.

But the next week, in mid-July 1936, we went back and collected another famous story, "Under a Cloud", the first to introduce Reggie Clavering, Tom Merry's Double.

The end of August saw the reprinting of that very fine tale, "The Black Sheep", with Cutts and Digby playing star roles. I cherish this issue, for it contained a photograph of a number of boy members of my own Gem Club.

The following week, a photograph of the girl members of my Gem Club appeared. The Editor referred to it as "a smiling group who 'fell' for Tom Merry, and now read about him regularly". This was true. With this issue came "The Toff", the first Talbot story, which had appeared in the Gem dated July 4th, 1914, exactly one month before the outbreak of war. This first Talbot series covered

four stories.

Firework day was the occasion for a return to 1913 for a remarkably fine tale, "By Whose Hand?", featuring Koumi Rao, the last one about him to be re-printed, and the last but one about him that was ever written. It finished with that classic humorous chapter when Gussy helped Glyn to make fireworks, with disastrous results.

A four-story series now came up concerning Kildare's recall to Ireland. Tom Merry became Captain of the School for two stories, to be succeeded in that exalted position by Cutts for two more stories. When originally published, the series was split by the insertion of a substitute effort half-way through the series.

Christmas 1936 brought that magnificent tale "The Mystery of the Painted Room", from Christmas 1913. With the memory of the mutilation of "Nobody's Study", I asked the Editor that this might be divided and made into two stories, to avoid abridgment. This was done, and the first story (with the intriguing "Painted Room" title changed to the hackneyed one of "The Mystery of Eastwood House") consisted of the first thirteen chapters of the original tale, uncut. In the second story, a couple of new chapters were written by somebody to give, as it were, a synopsis of what had happened so far, after which the original tale carried on unabridged. I felt very happy that my plan had been carried out so successfully.

The year was wound up with "The Ghost of St. Jim's", originally "The Ghost Hunters". Levison was up to his tricks, but it was Prye of the Fifth who was expelled at the end.

OMITTED:

"FIGGINS & CO'S FEUD". A fine Kildare-Monteith story, rewritten by Martin Clifford from an old Pluck yarn.

"FATTY WYNN, PROFESSIONAL". A very long substitute story which was quite famous in its day.

"HONOURS DIVIDED". Story of House rivalry, introducing Cedric Lacy, renowned for his cricket, and bagged for the School House by Tom Merry & Co, who learn that, after all, Lacy is forbidden to play cricket that term.

"D'ARCY, THE SUFFRAGIST". Period piece.

"TOM MERRY'S SPECIAL NUMBER". Good story of its type, about Tom Merry's Weekly.

"COWARD OR HERO?" Quite good tale about newcomer, Roland Ray.

"FIGGINS' FOE". Figgins-Dick Brooke story, with Cousin Ethel.

"THE RACTIME SCHOOLBOYS". Dated.

"HARD PRESSED". Sixth form story.

THE YEAR 1937:

The stories in hand this year were chiefly those published during late 1914, and 1915; they needed a fair amount of revising to make them suitable for the Gem in 1937, for they had a pronounced war flavour. Some had too much war atmosphere for them to be revised at all, and, in consequence, there were many omissions.

At the end of February, "The King's Pardon" was reprinted as "The Return of the Toff". In the original story, Talbot had been pardoned for saving a troop train from being wrecked by a German spy. In the reprint, Elberfeld, the German spy, became Gonzales, a Spanish spy; the troop train was carrying soldiers for the near East; the Great War was changed to the Spanish Civil War. Quite a neat transition.

"Tom Merry's War Fund" of November 1914 became "The St. Jim's Charity Fund" in April 1937.

The fine series concerning Tom Merry's double, Reggie Clavering, came in May. The last story of this series, with much of its suspense lost by drastic pruning, appeared in the Coronation Number of the Gem, May 15th, 1937.

In June came the United Kingdom series from June 1915, with Kildare representing Ireland, Fatty Wynn standing for Wales, Kerr on behalf of Scotland, and Tom Merry for England. There was nothing outstanding in this series.

Grundy arrived in July.

In 1915 the summer holidays were somewhat unusual, the same curious feature being present in 1937. A party spent the holiday at Eastwood House, with Bunter as an unwelcome guest. They returned to St. Jim's to find that Levison & Co had taken possession of Study No. 6. In the next issue they were back on holiday, in a single caravanning story.

This was followed by a leap back over two years to take in "Tom Merry Minor", the story of a pet monkey.

Julian, "The Jew of St. Jim's", arrived in September.

New Gem readers must have been a little puzzled at this time, for Levison was featuring in the early stories of Greyfriars as well as in the St. Jim's tales. At the beginning of October, Levison was expelled from Greyfriars, and older readers must have thought rather wryly of that series in the twenties when we were assured that Levison had not, in fact, been expelled from the Kentish school.

A Talbot series, introducing the Professor and Marie Rivers, was reprinted in November. These tales, in the last of which Tom Merry found Talbot on the Embankment, are regarded by many as being the best of all the many Talbot stories.

For Christmas, we went back to Christmas 1909, for the Chateau Cernay series, temporarily postponed (in this case, the postponement lasted several years). The series occupied three issues of the Gem at the close of 1937, the last story, now called "The Ghost of the Ruined Chateau", running from cover to cover.

This Christmas Number was the last issue of the attractive red, white, and blue covers, and it may be added that throughout the years since the reprints began, the Gem had been perhaps the most enchanting periodical in appearance on the bookstalls. Macdonald, the artist, had given of his very best, and the blending of red, white, and blue, - a Union Jack adorned the top corner for a long time, - had been a delight to the eye.

In the last Gem of 1937, Baggy Trimble arrived on the scene.

OMITTED:

"SECRET OF THE ISLAND". Story of Figgins and some coiners.

"LEVISON'S LAST CHANCE". Levison story introducing Greyfriars, and referring to Levison's expulsion from that school.

"SCOUTS TO THE FORE". Levison story, plus a German spy.

"ST. JIM'S AIRMEN". Period piece, with Tom Merry in a war-stricken Europe.

"ST. JIM'S REFUGEE". Period piece of a Belgian refugee.

"FOES OF ST. JIM'S". Schneider versus the French master.

"ST. JIM'S RECRUIT". Talbot story. Mr. Railton and John Rivers join the army as privates.

"HERR SCHNEIDER'S SECRET". Concerning Mr. Carrington, the master who replaced Mr. Railton.

"PRIDE OF ST. JIM'S". Circus story.

"SPLIT IN THE SCHOOL". Talbot plays for the First Eleven after using his skill as a lockpicker to release Monteith who has been imprisoned by Sefton.

"LOYAL AND TRUE". Kumi Rao in a period piece about Germans trying to incite a rebellion in India.

"AN AFFAIR OF STATE". Gussy claims an audience with the Prime Minister.

"THE HOUSEMASTER'S HOMECOMING". A 60,000-word story which appeared in a Summer Double Number in August 1915. Though many people have considered this a masterpiece, it was never reprinted, and its omission here seems to have left the story of Talbot very incomplete. It told of Mr. Railton's discharge from the army, and of Talbot's discovery that Colonel Lyndon was his uncle and Crooke his cousin.

"YOUR EDITOR AT ST. JIM'S". An odd type of story, the sole object of which seems to have been to advertise the "Boy's Friend".

"HONOUR OF A JEW". Story of Julian and his uncle, Mr. Moses, the moneylender of Wayland.

"SOLDIER OF THE KING". Period Talbot story, about Marie Rivers' father.

"TALBOT'S RESCUE". A splendid story telling of a new boy, Loring, who was kidnapped, an impostor taking his place at St. Jim's. Loring was rescued by Talbot and the Terrible Three. This plot was used in a yellow and black Magnet, which could, possibly, be the reason why "Talbot's Rescue" was omitted from the reprints.

I have at times expressed my personal opinion that Talbot, excellent character though he was, was given far too much prominence in the Gem in the year which followed his introduction. It would seem that the Editor, in 1937-8 took the same view, for many Talbot tales were omitted from the reprints, not all of them, by any means, dated by the war flavour.

THE YEAR 1938:

With the issue dated December 18th, 1937, the Gem came out as a "pocket" weekly, consisting of 36 smaller pages, and with a mustard-coloured cover. The reason for this is uncertain. Usually when a change of this sweeping type occurred, it was a sure sign that a paper was in deep waters. Personally, I do not think that such was the case with the Gem. Other papers, including the Magnet, had abandoned the covers of two-colour printing on white paper. No doubt the new

style was much cheaper, but the mustard colour was unattractive. What a pity that they did not return to the blue cover of the early years.

It may have been that, with far less attractive stories now looming ahead in the reprints, the Editor decided that a bigger supporting programme of stories was essential. Possibly, the smaller pages made it possible to give more reading matter. Whatever the reason, the charm of the Gem had passed. It would never be the same again.

At the end of January, Manners Minor arrived.

In mid-February came "The Artful Dodger", a reprint of "Trimble Tries it On". This was a story from the roaring twenties, and was, in fact, the very latest story to be reprinted in the Gem. After this, we went back to 1915 for "The Thief", a story featuring Gore.

In mid-March, as "Moneybags Minor", Aubrey Racke arrived. At the beginning of April, Sidney Clive turned up.

The two fine Outram stories, -- one had been in the last of the blue-cover Gems, the other in the first of the white covers, -- headed the bill at the end of May. Both tales were heavily abridged.

In July, for some unfathomable reason, two camping stories by a substitute writer, collected from the Twenties, were served up to Gem readers. Greyfriars now left the Gem, and the St. Jim's stories were supported by the Benbow series plus the tales of Frank Richards at Cedar Creek.

To follow the substitute writer's camping tales came a long caravanning series by the genuine Martin, from the year 1919. Two stories, dated by certain factors, were omitted from the series, which still comprised nine tales. Incidentally, they were first-class, and this must have been one of the very longest of all the Gem's scores of series.

After this, at the end of September, a return was made to introduce "LEVISON MINOR", with the resultant reform of Levison in the next few stories. All were drastically abridged.

In mid-November Cardew arrived. This story had originally appeared during the war years, with a definite war background. Much pruning made it suitable for 1938 consumption.

The Christmas 1938 Number contained a substitute writer's story from a much later period, under the title of "Gussy's Christmas Party". The year ended with another substitute story, this time featuring Racke.

THE YEAR 1939:

At the end of January, yet another new boy arrived in the person of Roylance from New Zealand, who figured in a 3-story series concerning a feud with Manners, naturally over Manners Minor.

Another newcomer, Leslie Clampe, was depicted as a snob who was ashamed of his relation, a sailor. Clampe thought his relation a mere jolly jack tar, but the said relation was only testing Clampe, and was really a Lieutenant, R.N.

Clarence York Tompkins turned up in "They Called Him a Duffer" at the end of February, an issue that is only memorable because it carries a picture of our good friend, Robert Whiter.

The last of the reprints was dated April 1st, 1939. It was "The St. Jim's Hunger Striker", and the original of the same name had appeared at the end of November 1920. There was no need to abridge this story, - the St. Jim's tales of 1920 only ran to nine chapters, - and 1920 was anything but a vintage year for the Gem.

R E V E R I E

And so the reprints which started with a fanfare of trumpets and a glowing tunic of red, white, and blue, presenting "TOM MERRY - NEW BOY", joyous, sparkling, evergreen, ended with "THE ST. JIM'S HUNGER STRIKER", an unimpressive and forgotten little pot-boiler selected from one of the worst years of the Gem, in a pathetic pocket edition encased in a mustard-coloured shroud.

That the reprint policy was a success can scarcely be gainsaid. It brought scores of the Gem's finest stories to many thousands of readers who otherwise would never have known them, and it certainly brought renewed prosperity to the grand old paper. The reprinting of four hundred stories in the same paper which had given them birth must be something entirely without precedent in the publishing world. It is a wonderful tribute to the genius of Martin Clifford that the experiment was the unique and unqualified triumph it was.

It is unlikely that Martin Clifford reaped any financial reward from the reprinting of his early stories, but his pride in the knowledge that his great tales lived again to entrance a new generation of boys and girls twenty-five years later must be for him a Gem Beyond Price.

The reprint period, like the whole of the Red, White, and Blue era, was a fascinating, joyful, and sometimes maddening time. The joys of those years, - and they were countless, - are obvious. The infuriating factors are not few, and so often inexplicable. The ruthless pruning, so frequently very badly done, often sank almost to the level of vandalism. That some abridgment was necessary is freely admitted; that those very long stories would have lost nothing by skilful shrinkage has been stressed in this article; but one cannot help feeling that the Fleetway House should have made certain that an expert was put on to so important a task.

In the past, comments have been made to the effect that very few substitute stories were reprinted, and in comparison with the genuine stories, this is true; but in actual fact there were quite a number, as I have discovered while preparing this review. The point is that there was not the remotest necessity for even one of the substitute stories to have been used in the reprints. It seems fantastic that stories by the genuine Clifford should have remained unused, while weak imitation efforts took their place among the reprints.

I have no doubt at all that this was due to accident rather than to editorial design. So much dodging about over the years was done between 1933 and 1939 that the Editor lost track of certain tales. This does not, however, account for the odd miscellany of stories which were reprinted in 1938 and early 1939. For instance, the obvious selection for the Christmas Number, 1938, was the Outram story from Christmas 1917, the Gem's very last Double Number. Yet the Editor published a poor substitute story from a much later date.

I do not hold myself blameless in this matter. As I have said, I was responsible for the appearance of very many stories which would have been lost had I not taken a hand. Invariably, when I asked for a certain story, long after

it had been by-passed, I was told pleasantly that it would be looked up, and it always appeared a few weeks later. There was not one single occasion when a request was refused.

My only excuse is that I, too, lost track of some of these stories, and my collection of the early Gems was not so complete then as it is today. Also, I was a very busy person, and had long periods of time when I could not concentrate on Gem matters.

With all their faults, I revel in the eight reprint years, and rejoice that they replaced the Twilight Years of 1927 - 1930. Of one thing, however, I am quite convinced. The reprints continued too long. They should have ceased at least a year before they did.

I knew, as every keen student of the early Gem must know, that after the outbreak of war in 1914, the general high quality of the stories fell away. I knew the shortcomings of so many of the yarns between the white covers. I knew that after 1914, for some reason on which I will not pass an opinion here, the circulation of the Gem gradually dropped. I saw that the Editor was even ignoring many of the good tales which had appeared between the early white covers, and was dithering with pot-boiler material from a later time. Yet I delayed far too long in putting my views to the Fleetway House.

All through the year 1938 I toyed with the idea of asking for new stories to replace the reprints. I hesitated, simply because I feared a return to the policy of the Twilight Years, which would have been far worse than continuing with the reprints.

It was not until the end of the year, or perhaps the start of 1939, that I suggested to the Fleetway House that, after eight years of old stories, the REAL Martin Clifford should be asked to write new stories for the Gem. This time there was none of the delay in getting my request granted that I had experienced before the reprints began in mid-1931. Within a few weeks, I was informed that "Mr. Martin Clifford is busy with a new series of St. Jim's yarns which will be commencing shortly". Even so, I was uneasy until the first new story appeared, and then, surely in common with every Gem reader, I was happy.

Such then, is the history of the Gem's eight years of reprints, when Tom Merry, the first of the world's great schoolboy leaders, came into his own again, - and the modest part that I played in it. A grand and glorious period which, like life itself, was not without some minor disappointments.

There is little more to tell in the Gem Story, but what there is, is well worth the telling. It must wait for next year's Annual.

FOR EXCHANGE: I have 100 Penny Populars up to No. 214, Nov. 1916, which I would give at the rate of 3 for 1 for the following Penny Populars (pre 1917):- Nos. 9 and 69 in best available condition, and Nos. 1, 2, 3, 7, 12, 13, 27, 28, 30, 33, 39, 42, 51, 53, 59, 79, 83, 85, 100, 102, 103, 105, 106, 112, 117, 118, 123, 141, 154, 157, 160, 174, 182, 183, 215 in very good condition only. Will also give at a generous rate, the Penny Populars and some S.B.Ls. and U.Js. I have, for S.B.Ls. and U.Js. which I want.

V.E. COLBY, 8 BERESFORD AVENUE, BEVERLY HILLS, N.S.W. AUSTRALIA.

1930 - 1934

THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE MAGNET

By ROGER M. JENKINS

* * * * *

The Magnet enjoyed a long and variegated career, and each phase through which it passed had something to commend it. There can be no doubt, however, that the period from 1930 - 1934 was both unsurpassed and unsurpassable, and set a standard that the Gem, for all its remarkably fine stories of the early days and its highlights of the 'twenties, never really equalled. This period, which may be called the Golden Age of the Magnet, came about as the result of a period of sustained writing of Greyfriars stories that fortunately co-incided with the author's attainment of his highest powers.

Charles Hamilton stated in 1943: "Yes, I agree with you that the Magnet was at its best from 1930 or 1931 on. I think it was twice as good after that date as it had ever been earlier. This is rather odd, too, for about that time I had to give up my travels, owing to an accident to my eyesight, which barred me off from many things. Up to that time I had been accustomed to pottering about in many countries, ever since I began to write in the far off year 1890." Perhaps, after all, it was no co-incidence that his writings improved so markedly after an accident to his eyesight that must have eliminated most distractions from his work. At any rate, no matter what the cause, the result was plain: the Magnet had definitely improved.

The improvement in the Magnet was, of course, a gradual process, not a sudden phenomenon. From 1925 - 1927 the stories had been well told, but were rather bare in outline, having no frills at all. In 1928 the style broadened and the humour mellowed, whilst in 1929 the smile had changed to an almost audible chuckle; the author was inviting the reader not just to read on and see what happened but to share some private jokes with him on the way. In short, it was apparent in 1929 that the zenith had been reached, and the series in that year about Methuselah the motor tricycle is the most charming summer holiday series ever to have appeared in the Magnet. Nonetheless, the year 1929 proved to be only a curtain raiser to the magnificent events about to be staged in the next decade.

1930 - The Food of the Gods

Appropriately enough, the Courtfield Cracksman series in Magnets 1138 - 1151 actually started in the beginning of December 1929, as if to emphasise the fact that there was no clear out distinction in Magnet styles from one year to another. The mystery of the cracksman's identity was really no mystery at all, though there were two odd newcomers instead of the usual one, and the series began in a very roundabout manner with a story that might almost be regarded as complete in itself. What really matters of course is not the story but the way it is told, and there is not a single dull page in the whole series, which is

sheer delight from beginning to end.

The 1929 Christmas at Wharton Lodge was the happiest Yuletide of all, with Bunter the usual unwanted guest, but all the incidents were unique and bearing the stamp of genuine novelty - Bunter trying to borrow from the butler, Bunter yarning aloud when Colonel Wharton was telling Dr. Locke a thrilling ghost story, Bunter discussing Christmas presents with the Famous Five - each and every incident is absolutely fascinating.

Back to Greyfriars for the Spring Term in 1930, and Mr. Quelch was missing ("I hear that poor old Quelch's dead - run over by a motor car in the hols", said Bunter. "Awful, aint it? I say, have you fellows got any toffee?") Not only was there a new form master named Steele but a permanent innovation was the introduction of blazers in place of the old Eton jackets. As the term wore on, Vernon-Smith came into prominence in a feud with the new master, whom he suspected of being the Courtfield Cracksman. Finally, just before the Cracksman was arrested, Bunter stumbled upon some awkward knowledge, and was sent home. He returned to Greyfriars without permission, and on the railway platform at Courtfield he met Mr. Quelch who was also returning. The two chapters in No. 1150 describing the meeting of master and pupil are perhaps unequalled for the brilliant exposition of Mr. Quelch's character and for the tragically funny way in which he misinterpreted Bunter's gladness to see him return. The last number of the series saw Bunter esconced at Greyfriars as a stowaway, unaware that he now had permission to return. This final story is typical of the new era which this series introduced, the era of fascinating little side-plots and irrelevancies which are like the decorations on a cake, at once delightful and unnecessary.

The Courtfield Cracksman series was followed by two sub stories, after which came a pair in Nos. 1154-55 featuring Coker's gallant attempt to get a place in the first eleven by getting Potter and Greene stranded at Canterbury en route for Rookwood. As he stated, he did it with the best of motives, but there was quite a rift in the lute until Aunt Judy's next hamper arrived. The next issue, No. 1156, bore the popular title "Who Hacked Hacker?" and revolved around a beautiful cake of Hobson's which had been confiscated.

Nos. 1157-58 related the mystery of a certain silver box which contained Sir Hilton Popper's missing moonstone. The second Magnet, incidentally, represented the whole of the Easter holiday, and No. 1159 saw the juniors back at Greyfriars without the usual scenes at the railway station. No. 1159 was entitled "Bunter, the Prize Hunter", and described how he attempted to win the form Latin prize in order to earn the fiver his uncle had promised. Bunter's entry consisted of a copy of what he thought was a composition of Linley's, but it turned out to be a famous Ode by Horace. As Mr. Quelch said, "You must have imagined that your form master's ignorance was even more abysmal than your own!" Another amusing single story appeared in No. 1160. Bunter had left Greyfriars somewhat hastily (owing to a misunderstanding which had resulted in Mr. Quelch receiving the contents of an ink bottle in his face) and was offered a job at a circus. Bunter was highly elated with his prospects until he discovered he was booked to appear with the Living Skeleton and the Bearded Lady in a turn called "The Wild Weird Freaks".

Fisher T. Fish was not, perhaps, one of the more attractive members of the Greyfriars Remove, but the series in Nos. 1161-65 was certainly very readable and probably constituted the most amusing sequence of stories ever written around the American junior. His father had succeeded in cornering Pork in the United States

and this sudden increase in fortune resulted in Fishy becoming the target for a gang of kidnapers. Although practically every one of Fishy's unpleasant characteristics was well displayed in this series, it was so well written that the story was not spoilt by the close attention which had to be paid to the American junior.

Pop o' the Circus, Sir Hilton's nephew who wished to leave Greyfriars and return to the circus, occupied Magnets 1166-1168 in an agreeable though not outstanding manner. Faint praise will not be sufficient, however, for the magnificent barring-out series in Nos. 1169-1174 which undoubtedly formed the best one of its type which Charles Hamilton ever wrote. The detailed theme was not new - it had been used before both at Greyfriars and Rookwood - and the first story was marred by the excision of two or three chapters to make room for extra advertisements (the title picture of Magnet 1169 relates to an omitted incident) but these are, after all, only minor matters. The whole series was written with such splendid conviction that it represented a tour de force. Particularly compelling were the exchanges between Mr. Brander, the new headmaster, and Mr. Quelch whom he eventually dismissed, only to find the Remove master invoked the statutes of the school which allowed a dismissed master of long standing to remain at the school until the governors had heard his appeal. It need not be added that all came right in the end, and Dr. Locke returned.

The China series in Nos. 1175-85 was not only the greatest of all the foreign travel series but also has many points of interest in it for collectors. The story revolved around the efforts of a certain Chinese tong first to kidnap and later to murder Wun Lung, who, for the first time in the history of the Magnet, changed from a quaint oddity into a living character of flesh and blood. Like the series itself, the nearer we progressed towards the East the more realistic was the presentation. Some of the early incidents in England (like the plane which machine-gunned Wharton Lodge) were too bizarre to be really exciting, but from the moment the juniors set foot in Singapore the series was infused with a new life, and every number was superb. It is interesting to note, too, that some of the author's comments on the state of China still retain their significance despite the upheavals which have taken place in the quarter century since the series was written. There can be no doubt that the story of the escape from the clutches of the mandarin Tang Wang must have remained vividly in the minds of the readers of the time.

The transition from China to Greyfriars was cleverly effected in a single number in No. 1186 which related an incident which occurred on the voyage home: this story acted as a useful buffer between the high drama of the China series and the high comedy of Nos. 1187-88. These two stories were an absolutely delightful pair, starring Mr. Prout as the victim of circumstances: he became suspected of entering into drunken brawls, and in one superb sequence Mr. Capper went to speak to him "as a friend", urging him to tell the truth instead of making lame excuses. Mr. Prout was of course vindicated in the end, but it was impossible not to feel sorry for him in his predicament - which was certainly a change from the usual tolerant amusement with which he was generally regarded.

Passing hastily over the substitute story in No. 1189, we come to No. 1190 which seems almost like something from the pages of a Blue Gen: it dealt with a feud between the Remove and the Fifth, and explained how Harry Wharton nearly lost the captaincy of the form because of the initial lack of success that attended his efforts to put Blundell & Co. in their place. The year ended in grand

style with the Cavendale Abbey series in Nos. 1191-94: this commenced in an unusually inconsequential and interesting manner, and went on to comprise one of the best Magnet Christmases. The identity of the criminal was not perhaps a very great mystery, but it took Ferrers Locke quite a long time to work out all the details, and (more important) the series was extremely well written.

1931 - Ambrosia Still

The main feature of the Spring Term was the series in Nos. 1195-1203 about Tatters the tinker who surprisingly appeared at Greyfriars as Cecil Cholmondeley ("Chumley for Short" as one of the numbers was entitled). Cholmondeley was the victim of a plot by his cousin Rackstraw - a good roguish name, as Gem readers will remember. First Carne and then Ponsonby were used by Rackstraw in attempts to get the tinker expelled, but all the plotting came to naught. Cholmondeley eventually left at the end of a readable though not outstanding series.

A miscellaneous selection followed. "The Champion Chump" in No. 1204 was of course Coker; no-one else could have contrived to lock the Head in the punishment room by mistake. "A Schoolboy's Sacrifice" the following week featured Redwing and Vernon-Smith, but the story seemed rather compressed and the theme would have repaid a longer treatment in a series. "Billy Bunter's Bunk" in No. 1206 was based on the classic fable of the boy who cried "Wolf". He made an attempt to obtain a holiday on the pretext that a parent was ill, and when illness really came he was not believed. The term was rounded off with a pair of stories in Nos. 1207-08, featuring an American swindler who was being pursued by one of his victims. The tale ended with a strange and dramatic climax in a mill near Wharton Lodge.

The highlight of 1931 was undoubtedly the Lancaster series in Nos. 1209 - 1219. Although the theme had been used many years previously for the Talbot series in the Gem, there is no doubt that the Magnet version of this theme was superb. Dick Lancaster was a young man of Sixth Form age, strikingly handsome, an excellent cricketer, well-mannered and winning golden opinions on all sides. He was unfortunately also a cracksman of remarkable ability, known as the Wizard. Sir Hilton Popper (who was in the toils of a money-lender) was forced to sponsor the boy for Greyfriars, and the stage was thus brilliantly set for the struggle that was to ensue between the boy's old life and the influence of his new associates. He was suspected in turn by Coker, Loder, and Wharton, and each one was dealt with in a different manner. This series was more credible than the Talbot series in that the schoolboy cracksman was aged eighteen instead of sixteen, and the author sensibly allowed Lancaster to disappear at the end of the series instead of keeping him on at the school (though Talbot would probably also have disappeared from St. Jim's had the readers been less vociferous: it was a pity that he did not leave in the same manner as Lancaster). The essential attraction of the Lancaster series was the fact the story centred round the senior school for a change: although the Removites were introduced quite naturally into every number, the general atmosphere of the series was on an appreciably higher level than usual. This was unquestionably one of the finest series to appear within the pages of the Magnet.

The Lancaster series was followed by "Speedway Coker" in No. 1220, a story which is famous for another reason - it was the last substitute story to appear in the Magnet. Then came a number of tales of good average quality: "Billy Bunter's Bargain" in No. 1221 consisted in his borrowing money from Price in return for keeping quiet about an incriminating photograph; Nos. 1222 and 1223

related how Vernon-Smith was expelled - and reinstated; and another pair of stories in Nos. 1224 and 1225 dealt with Ponsonby's discovery of the secret passage that led from the hollow Friar's Oak to the Remove box-room, and the entertaining events which followed from this discovery. This miscellaneous selection was concluded with two single numbers - "Billy Bunter's Hat Trick" in No. 1226 (the trick being to hide a banknote of Mr. Quolch's in his Sunday topper) and "A Boy with a Bad Name" which dealt with the way in which Vernon-Smith succeeded in putting Wharton in a false position and so caused a rift in the lute.

The summer holiday series in 1931 was both long and late, running from No. 1228 to 1236 i.e. from August 29th to October 24th. Although the Kenya series was very readable and the last few numbers relating how the juniors were sold into slavery were exciting, it was not one of the really great foreign travel series, and there can be no doubt that the readers echoed Bob Cherry's sentiments when he declared: "Foreign parts are all very well for a trip, you men! I'm not sorry we went to Africa. But for a place to live in, you can't beat jolly old England!"

Back to Greyfriars again in No. 1237 found Mr. Prout rather dissatisfied with old England, since he was being persecuted by an Old Boy who came back to the school to cane the Fifth Form master. It was not an outstanding story, but it was notable for a specially amusing scene in which Capper went to Prout to sympathise with him. After the customary Guy Fawkes Day story in No. 1238, there came a pair of stories dealing with a new boy named Carlow to whom Nugent took an unreasoning dislike - a very readable series which nevertheless did not quite efface memories of a similar series in the Gem six years previously. "Coker's Football Fever" in No. 1241 speaks for itself, but not so "The Bounder's Blunder" the following week which described how he mistakenly suspected the French master of stealing his five pound note. Another serious story was No. 1243 entitled "A Brother's Sacrifice" in which Frank Nugent took on himself the burden of his minor's troubles.

The Christmas series at Mauleverer Towers in Nos. 1244-46 was another delightful set of stories to commemorate the season of goodwill. Bunter excelled himself in his attempts to join the party without an invitation, and the mystery of the Towers provided a touch of seasonable excitement which all in all must have left every reader feeling more than satisfied.

1932 - Harry Wharton's Year

The remarkable point about the Flip series in Nos. 1247-1254 was the manner in which this new Second Form boy looked up to Bunter, whom he regarded as the epitome of courage, generosity, and wisdom. Bunter met Flip near Mauleverer Towers and the waif rendered him a service. Bunter in his turn persuaded Mauleverer to pay Flip's fees at Greyfriars, and the plot took another twist when Flip recognised a temporary Remove master, Mr. Lagden, as a crook from his old haunts. This series was not perhaps in the top rank, but it was crisp and entertaining, and - unlike some later series in the Magnet - it never outstayed its welcome.

Harry Wharton played a big part in the year 1932 and was indeed featured more prominently than at any other time, either before or since. The first sequence of stories described his feud with Vernon-Smith, but it was rather an intermittent tale and really constituted several series in one.

The first series in Nos. 1255-59 was quite outstanding, and dealt with the

manner in which Harry mistakenly thought his uncle had come to look on him as a burden. It transpired that the fortune of which not even da Costa and Captain Marker had been able to deprive him in 1928 had later been lost in a Bombay bank smash. In addition, Colonel Wharton was feeling the pinch of taxation: the car had been sold, the chauffeur dismissed, Wharton Lodge was shut up over Christmas, and the Colonel walked from Courtfield to Greyfriars to save money. As the Colonel remarked, "Taxation has been carried to such lengths that it is practically killing the goose that lays the golden eggs." (One can only guess what he would have said twenty years later!) Against this background, it is not surprising that Wharton should later believe evidence that seemed to suggest his uncle thought him a burden.

This series shewed clearly one of Charles Hamilton's greatest gifts - the power to portray a convincing argument between two people, neither of whom was wholly in the right. Wharton determined to win a Founder's scholarship and maintain himself without help from his uncle. Bob Cherry auctioned his bike for him; Vernon-Smith generously bid more than it was worth, and then was incensed when Wharton threw the money in his face. This was the beginning of the feud, and the Bounder soon became captain of the form. Through Bunter's intervention Wharton's misunderstanding with his uncle was cleared up, and Bunter was for once a welcome guest at Wharton Lodge at Easter. But the feud with Vernon-Smith was not to be settled so easily.

Nos. 1260 and 1261 dealt with the Easter holidays. The Bounder was staying in a bungalow on the river Wyme, and his feud smouldered into flame again, but it was Redwing who became the victim of his plot and the pair of them were late for the new term at Greyfriars as a result. Accordingly the term began with two single stories unconnected with the series: "The Fool of the School" in No. 1262 was of course Coker, whilst "The Vanished Sovereigns" the following week belonged to Gosling, who had decided to sell them at 27/6d each to a jeweller instead of being patriotic and surrendering them for 20/- each at the Post Office.

Vernon-Smith returned in No. 1264 and was sentenced to be expelled, having been caught at the Three Fishers by Sir Hilton Popper, but he was instrumental in exposing an impersonator, and so escaped the just reward of his misdeeds. The feud with Wharton was continued in Nos. 1265-66, a fine pair of stories, though the second one ended rather abruptly. At all events, the hatchet was buried - but Vernon-Smith remained captain.

Bunter's ventriloquism was probably never used to produce such hilarious results as it did in "Coker's Cricket Craze" in No. 1267, in which Coker almost succeeded in wangling himself a place in the first eleven. A story in completely different vein the following week featured Bob Cherry's disreputable cousin, Paul Tyrrell, whose predicament had already been hinted at some weeks earlier (in No. 1259). He was now wanted for forgery, and probably no-one was more surprised than Bob when Vernon-Smith intervened to help his cousin escape abroad. The end of Vernon-Smith's captaincy came with No. 1269, in which he led the team out of detention to play cricket - only to have the game curtailed by the unfortunate arrival of Mr. Quelch. As the master of the Remove remarked, "No-one can command who has not learned to obey." The Bounder's election was quashed, and Harry Wharton at last came into his own again.

"Coker's Camera Clicks" in No. 1270 was followed by two series - the tale of the Green Satchel in Nos. 1271-75 and the Egypt series in Nos. 1277-1284. There is a marked resemblance between these two series despite the difference in

subject matter. Both commenced with a striking number which was full of excitement and development of plot, and then both series tailed off into stories which tended to be somewhat repetitive versions of the original theme - an unscrupulous villain in pursuit of property which did not belong to him. In the first series Dandy Sanders was after the loot from a bank robbery which had been hidden up the chimney of study No. 1, whilst in the second series Konstantinos Kalizelos was pursuing Mauleverer in order to obtain the golden scarab of A-Menah which contained the key to a fortune. The Egypt series was, however, distinguished by fine portraits of two different types of Egyptians - Hilmi Maroudi, the millionaire, and Hassan the dragoman. The scenes describing the power of Hilmi Maroudi were almost sufficient to recall the best of the China series, but the Egypt series could not sustain this high level for long. The two series were separated by a single number entitled "Who Walloped Wiggins?", a story about Loder and Wingate.

Undoubtedly the finest series of all to appear in the Magnet during the years covered by this review was the tale of Harry Wharton the rebel in Nos. 1285-1296. Whether it was superior to the earlier version which ran in the years 1924-25 is a matter open to question, but it was certainly much better written and constitutes a spell-binding narrative, not one chapter of which is superfluous and not one word of which is tedious.

The series opened with the usual first day of term incidents (scenes at the railway station and descriptions of first day chaos at the school) all cunningly interwoven into the story of Harry Wharton's downfall. Loder's unscrupulousness, combined with misunderstandings and Wharton's uncertain temper all contributed in turn to add fuel to the flames. It is interesting to note that Wharton was often unjustly suspected and that his own faults of character operated to prevent such misunderstandings from being cleared up. It is also noteworthy that Mr. Quelch was often depicted as allowing his suspicions to get the better of his judgment. Both master and pupil were shewn at their worst in this series.

Eric Fayne has pointed out that in the earlier series Harry Wharton was actually guilty of unsavoury conduct, whereas in the later series he was really not so black as he was painted, and in this respect this series is more true to character. But although he was not a blackguard he was certainly a rebel, and nearly every number contains an amusing description of how he managed to score off Mr. Quelch or Loder. Yet there was a definite development of plot in each number of the series, and there was no question of there being a repetition of theme merely to spin out the series: each number saw Wharton sinking deeper and deeper into the mire, with Mr. Quelch perceiving more clearly than Dr. Locke the full extent of Wharton's rebelliousness, but with the Head firmly maintaining that Wharton should be given every chance to clear himself on each particular occasion, and that mere suspicion, however strong, was no adequate substitute for actual proof.

How to end a series of this nature is a difficult problem. In the earlier series the Head gave Wharton a second chance, and what might have been an anti-climax in fact turned out to be a realistic portrait of a reformed rebel who had to try to win his form-master's respect anew. The later series ended with Wharton and Mr. Quelch trapped in a cave whilst the tide was coming in, and in a moment of great peril Wharton apprised the Remove master of the true facts and Mr. Quelch unhesitatingly accepted them. The description of master and pupil

trapped by the tide lacks nothing that the master hand could provide in the way of convincing verisimilitude. Yet one is left with just a mite of dissatisfaction that such a magnificent series could not have had a truly magnificent ending.

There are only a few really perfect series in the Magnet - perfect that is from beginning to end, the sort that it is difficult to lay down unfinished. Many, like the South Seas and China series suffered from an indifferent start, but amongst the perfect series one finds the following: the first Wharton the rebel series, the Bunter Court series, Loder's captaincy series, the Courtfield Cracksman series, the Brander series, the Lancaster series, and the Stacey series. In this rarified atmosphere of the very height of Charles Hamilton's achievements the second Wharton the rebel series is assured of an undisputed place in the hall of fame. If Charles Hamilton had written nothing else this series alone would have proved that he fully understood and could perfectly portray the complex workings of human nature as few authors have done before or since.

To shew that the events of the past term had been completely forgotten Mr. Quelch had kindly consented to spend the Christmas holidays at Wharton Lodge, and so was on hand at the very beginning of the Valentine series, which ran from Nos. 1297-1307.

Jim Valentine was one of those characters who make an instant appeal to the reader. His first appearance was sudden and dramatic, right in the very first chapter of No. 1297. He was on a motor-bike, speeding along the icy roads trying to escape from a gang of criminals, and it later transpired that he was in fact Dick the Penman, a renowned forger who had eventually decided to cut free from his past.

Mr. Quelch was wandering, lost, frozen, and utterly weary when he came upon Jim Valentine who guided him to shelter. In a very moving sequence of passages the boy told the Remove master something of his past history and the master decided to enter him at Greyfriars at his own expense.

1933 - Calmer Waters

The remainder of the Valentine series related how the gang attempted by devious means to drive the boy from the school so that he would have no option but to rejoin them. It is not the complicated plot which so enlivens this series but the inimitable touches of characterisation: Mr. Quelch bestowing his frosty kindness upon the boy he had taken under his protection, and Harry Wharton & Co. trying to believe in Valentine when circumstances looked so black against him. There were also pleasing parts for Hoskins the mad musician, and for Bunter who was hawking up and down the Remove a tray of twenty articles at half a crown each.

Valentine's exit was every bit as dramatic as his entrance. The gang was arrested, and Mr. Grimes was just about to lay his hands on Dick the Penman when Valentine managed to elude him and fly to Brazil with his uncle. The series ended with the usual valediction - "The Famous Five made up their minds that, some day or other, they would have a holiday in far off Brazil and see Jim Valentine again." For once the valediction was proved true in the light of subsequent events.

After a fine series the normal type of story seemed to fall a little flat. "Wibley's Wonderful Wheeze" in No. 1308 was to obtain a place in the eleven by

disguising himself whilst "Popper's Unpopular Prize" the next week consisted of £5 for the winner and a caning for the loser! Owing to a mistake in his trickery Bunter discovered that he had won the booby prize which was increased to a flogging for his special benefit. Much better was "The Schoolboy Impersonator" in No. 1310 which dealt with Nugent and his ungrateful brother, whilst "All Bunter's Fault" the following week was one of the funniest single stories to appear in the Magnet: Bunter was determined to annex Wharton's armchair, and was disgusted to learn that Wharton was making out it was his just because his Aunt Amy had sent it to him. What happened as a result of Bunter's curious mental processes constituted a tale which was sheer delight from beginning to end.

The Easter Cruise series in Nos. 1312-16 must have been the last Magnet holiday series which had no connecting link between the various numbers in the series. Nevertheless it was an entertaining story, though Rookwood readers might have remembered a similar tale about fellows who imagined they were being invited as guests and later found out that they were expected to pay for their holiday cruise.

No. 1317 contained a tale about a somnambulist (not a very promising subject), whilst No. 1318 featured Napoleon Dupont in the unusual role of "Taming a Tyrant" (the tyrant in this case being Walker). Two pairs of stories followed: Vernon-Smith succeeded in being sent to Coventry in Nos. 1319-20 as a result of doing Nugent's brother a good turn, and the Bounder also featured largely in the series in Nos. 1321-22 in which Mr. Lascelles mysteriously disappeared from the school after readers had been reminded of his not quite respectable past.

Magnet stories in which the scene moved to Highcliffe always maintained a strong interest, mainly because of the vivid presentation of the unusual and striking characters therein. No. 1323 entitled "The Worst Boy in the School" was no exception, and the passages describing the reaction of Dr. Voysey and Mr. Mobbs to a knavish trick of Ponsonby's make memorable reading. Equally memorable (though in another manner) was "Aunt Judy at Greyfriars" the following week. This seems to have been her first visit since the never-to-be-forgotten occasion when she succeeded in getting Coker his remove from the Shell to the Fifth. On this occasion she was instrumental in saving her nephew from being expelled by mistake.

Charles Hamilton once stated that in his opinion the two funniest Magnet tales were "The Fellow Who Wouldn't Be Caned" and the story of Bunter's £100 Boater Hat. The former number belongs to an earlier era, but the story of the fabulous boater hat may be found in Magnets 1325-26. In those days banknotes of high denominations were current, and Mr. Vernon-Smith had the misfortune to see such a one blown away and picked up by a tramp, who subsequently hid it under the lining of Bunter's straw hat. The hilarious results of this action made a most amusing pair of stories, but collectors might perhaps find in the volumes of the Magnet a tale even funnier, like, for instance, No. 1327 entitled "The Shylock of Greyfriars" which told how a booby trap landed on Fisher T. Fish, resulting in the presentation of a bill amounting to £4.3.0d. for damage to clothes. Another amusing story was "Bunter the Ventriloquist" the following week, a story which is notable for being situate almost entirely at Rookwood. The term ended in fine style with a pair of stories about Vernon-Smith in Nos. 1329-30 which constituted a sequel to some of the events in the Lascelles series earlier in the term. The Bounder was expelled, and his father descended upon

Greyfriars with the intention of discovering the truth for himself, an intention which was fully carried out. Once again the Bounder's proverbial luck stood him in good stead.

The Hiking series in Nos. 1331-40 was undoubtedly the finest English summer holiday series of the 'thirties, and was indeed surpassed only by the tour in 1929. What was so attractive about the Hiking series was its air of freshness and novelty. The connecting link - Ponsonby's pursuit of the Holiday Annual which contained a mysterious secret - never became too insistent or absorbing, and each week the juniors visited a different part of the country and encountered different adventures, ranging from a tithe war in Sussex to a haunted castle in Oxfordshire. This was indeed a model series, and well exemplified the classic formula for art - repetition with a difference. In length and development it represented the high water mark of the English summer holiday series in the Magnet.

A number of single stories followed. "The Ace of Jokers" in No. 1341 was Wibley, who was masquerading as a new master, whilst No. 1342 was given over to the usual Guy Fawkes story. Finally, "Down With The Tyrant" in No. 1342 related the exciting events which occurred when the Remove fell foul of Walker. After this there were no runs of single stories for a very long time indeed.

The reader who purchased the series in Nos. 1344-48 must have wondered whether he had obtained the right paper, since - for the one and only time in its history - the Magnet resorted to fantasy. Yet the result was not so unusual as might have been expected, because Charles Hamilton still subordinated the plot to the characters, and did not repeat the mistake of H.G. Wells whose characters were mere puppets and who often allowed a promising idea to peter out, as in "The Food of the Gods". In the Magnet series the fantasy consisted of a phial of sticky crimson liquid which was the result of Professor Sparkinson's researches, and which magically endowed superhuman strength. The interesting part of the series was not the exhibition of strength but the manner in which the strong men used their new found muscular power. Alonzo Todd becoming fussy and interfering from the best of motives, and Bunter becoming downright tyrannical from the worst of motives. So despite the fantastic element the whole series remained absolutely true to character.

Christmas thus found Bunter even more unwelcome than usual as a holiday guest. His problems were made more difficult by the fact that the Bunter residence was being closed down for the festive season. Aunt Martha took in Bessie on the strict understanding that neither of Bessie's brothers accompanied her, which meant that Uncle George was left with Sammy and Billy. Matters became quite desperate when Billy 'phoned Wharton Lodge and passed some unfortunate comments about the Colonel, only to find that he was speaking to the Colonel himself and not to Harry Wharton. Billy then confided to Sammy just as Uncle George was coming into the room) that he would have to put up with the stingy old codger after all, a remark to which the stingy old codger took the greatest exception.

In the end Bunter was left with nowhere to go at all, and he hit upon the unique plan of stowing away in an attic at Wharton Lodge. This series in Nos. 1349-51 was the last of the really great Christmas holiday series, bubbling over with good humour and high spirits together with an agreeable touch of seasonable mystery.

1934 - A Year of High Drama

The end of the Christmas holidays and the beginning of the new term constituted the background for a pair of stories in Nos. 1352-53 concerning a diamond pin which Billy Bunter acquired for a shilling and which he sold to Fisher T. Fish for fifty shillings. Fishy was upset to learn that he was unable to realise his expected profit after all. There followed in Nos. 1354-58 the Kranz series, which commenced in a somewhat melodramatic manner with Bob Cherry being kidnapped by aeroplane, but which soon settled down to being an engrossing mystery of a more normal type, with Mauloverer playing a leading part in solving the problem. No. 1359 entitled "Who Walloped Wingate?" enjoyed the distinction of being the only single story of the year, and was a neat little piece about Price and his feud with Wingate.

Vernon-Smith encountered constant trouble during his long and hectic career, but never did he face such a calamitous prospect as in the Smedley series in Nos. 1360-73. In order to understand the background to this series it is necessary to know that he had been in constant trouble for many months and had even been expelled in the Kranz series, though the sentence was later rescinded by the Head. Mr. Quelch, who had been in very poor health since the holidays, was becoming progressively more annoyed with the scapegrace of his form, whilst Mr. Vernon-Smith, the millionaire financier, had completely lost patience with his son and threatened to disinherit him in favour of a cousin if the Bounder should be expelled from the school. When it is added that the cousin arrived at Greyfriars as the temporary master of the Remove under the pseudonym of Eustace Smedley, it will be appreciated that all the ingredients for a dramatic series were ready to hand.

Charles Hamilton did not fail to make full use of all the possibilities of the situation. It was a long and varied series, and included the whole of the Easter holidays which were spent partly in France and partly at Wharton Lodge, where - much to Bunter's disgust - Mr. Quelch was an honoured guest. Every facet of the Bounder's character was allowed full play in this fascinating series which despite its length was not a chapter too much. In fact the only blemish was a clumsy interpolation at the end of chapter 11 in No. 1369, the sole purpose of which appears to have been to concoct an unlikely incident to be depicted on the front cover. This was, however, only a minor matter, and there can be no doubt that the series constituted the most authoritative exposition of Vernon-Smith's character to appear during the final decade of the Magnet.

Mr. Prout drenched with ink - Bunter unjustly expelled - the Remove in rebellion. Such was the situation that confronted Mr. Quelch when he eventually returned to Greyfriars in No. 1374, and it was a situation which was destined to deteriorate still further before things returned to normal in No. 1382, for the Remove turned Popper's Island into a fortress and a good barring-out series ensued. Once again Rockwood readers might have had memories of a similar theme in the Boys' Friend, but the Magnet version was treated in much greater detail, and it is interesting to note that Mr. Quelch had a sneaking sympathy for the rebels, a sympathy which caused a certain coldness to arise between the Head and the Remove master. It is pleasing to be able to record in the end the Remove were triumphant, and Mr. Quelch had the personal satisfaction of putting Prout in his place.

The Bunter Court series of 1925 was but a fading dream in 1934, though no doubt many readers still remembered the fabulous mansion which had been

accompanied by a strange lack of the necessary ready money with which to keep running the ancestral home of the Bunters. The series in Magnets 1383-89 (which incidentally ran from cover to cover in each issue) was in a sense complementary to the previous series. Bunter became possessed of a valet named Jarvish who made over to Bunter an immense fortune. How the Famous Five accompanied Bunter the Billionaire on an air trip to France and Italy and how a certain American named Tiger Bronx seemed to make Bunter's inheritance his own particular business all combined to constitute a jolly summer holiday series, even though it lacked the mystique of its more famous predecessor of 1925. Nevertheless it had its moments, perhaps the best of which was the description of D'Arcy in the antique shop in Venice - a delightful cameo which epitomised Gussy in the space of a few paragraphs.

It would be idle to pretend that the Secret Society series in Magnets 1390-1400 had no faults. In No. 1394, for instance, the House page was referred to as Tupper: this was only a minor error, but the scene in No. 1391 when Mr. Quelch laid hands on Loder and a struggle ensued was perhaps a little too exaggerated to ring true. These matters are, however, only slight criticisms of a series which is immensely readable. Dr. Locke and Wingate were involved in an accident, and Mr. Prout became headmaster, making Loder his Head Prefect. The series presented a fascinating character study of Mr. Prout: the reader ceased to regard him with amused tolerance and began to dislike him actively, so well did Charles Hamilton depict this pompous, self-important man who now found, for the first time, that his authority knew no bounds. It was not long before Mr. Quelch departed, his place being taken by the fussy, nervous Mr. Woose (who apparently stayed on as art master when Mr. Quelch returned). The Remove were left with no champion to protect them from Loder's bullying, and accordingly the Secret Society came into being, effectively checking the unscrupulous Head Prefect. An interesting sidelight was the way in which the free gifts being presented to readers at the time (thumbprint recorder, code, and invisible writing pencil) were worked into the series and used by the Secret Society. The series came to a grand climax in No. 1400 when Dr. Locke returned unexpectedly just as Mr. Prout was about to administer some unjust floggings, and the Fifth Form master saw his authority collapse like a pack of cards.

Christmas in 1934 (Magnets 1401-03) was spent at Hilton Hall on the Devonshire moors. By dint of blackmail Bunter secured an invitation for himself and also induced Hilton to invite the Famous Five. It was hardly a jolly Christmas, since an escaped convict was lurking in the neighbourhood, but there was plenty of thrills and excitement by way of compensation - in all, a series which was not outstanding but well up to standard.

Conclusion

What happened to the Magnet after 1934 is one of those mysteries which will probably never be solved. Good stories were to come, and plenty of them, but it is undeniable that the sustained level of 1930-34 was never regained in later years. It is difficult to point to any precise reason for the deterioration except to say that the stories of the final period were often pervaded by a sense of mechanism or contrivance: there was a feeling of repetition, a lack of spontaneity, a suspicion that we had been there before, so to speak. Somehow or other the tinsel had fallen off the Christmas tree and the branches looked bare.

It is only by examining the tales before 1930 and after 1934 that we can arrive at a just estimate of value of the stories of the Golden Age. Only then

can we see how near to perfection the Magnet came for so long, with what sheer delight Charles Hamilton wrote the stories, and how fresh, charming, and ingenious the incidents still appear when read all this time afterwards.

The practically undivided attention which was paid to Greyfriars between 1930 and 1934 yielded other dividends, not the least of which was consistency. Each series was complete in itself but incidents from previous series were recalled from time to time in order to provide a most pleasing air of continuity. The exploits of Vernon-Smith, for instance, from the summer of 1933 to the summer of 1934 form a logical and ordered sequence of events even though they span several different series. Continuity of this kind would have been impossible ten years previously when the substitute writers were playing havoc with all logic and consistency.

It is sometimes claimed by various collectors that, whilst they enjoy stories by Charles Hamilton, they rank substitute stories among their firm favourites. It is difficult to see how a story deliberately written in another author's style and in almost every sense an imitation can actually be considered superior to the real thing, and there can be no doubt that, if the story had been published elsewhere with the characters and background differently named and the illustrations by an artist unconnected with the companion papers, such a story would not be given a moment's thought today. Had Pentelow's very gallant gentleman belonged to one of his own schools, who would think the tale worthy of mention now? The very fact that the imitations are remembered today is actually an indirect tribute to Charles Hamilton, since it is the reflected splendour of his schools and his characters which have given the substitute stories what little attraction they do possess. A story written by Charles Hamilton in the early 'twenties and a substitute story are as unlike as chalk and cheese: it would be as well to remember that the same difference is apparent between his stories of the early 'twenties and those of the next decade.

It is the stories of the early 'thirties which give Greyfriars its superiority over St. Jim's, not because Charles Hamilton wrote more stories (and better ones) for the Magnet than he did for the Gem, but because Greyfriars reached its maturity later, when his powers of writing were at their height and when a continuous sequence of stories had succeeded in creating a set of characters who not only lived but evolved and developed from week to week. Stories about St. Jim's were usually kept in watertight compartments, whereas the Greyfriars tales represented a living saga. Wherever we commence reading in a Magnet volume of the 'thirties we feel we ought to have begun earlier, and whenever the series comes to an end we know that the events therein will not be entirely without significance for the future. Such is the vital force of the Magnet stories at their best.

The most perfect part of the Golden Age was the beginning, comprising the years 1930 and 1931. These two years were absolutely unsurpassed in any other boys' paper, and indicate the immense superiority which Charles Hamilton possessed over all other authors on the staff of the Amalgamated Press. In earlier years he had created at least two schools which were fast becoming a legend, and had endowed them with tradition, character, and mystique. Now, at the beginning of the 'thirties, he raised his most famous creation, Greyfriars, to even greater stature by the fullest exercise of his incomparable literary gifts. It was as though he were seeing the world anew, smiling at its follies and encouraging it to even greater achievements.

We are told that Charles Hamilton has often been asked whether he would not have preferred to have written something better than school stories, an enquiry which has always elicited the emphatic reply that there was nothing better to be written. Those of us who examine the Magnet volumes of the early 'thirties can only feel thankful that he did not attempt to devote his talents to some other purpose. Perfection makes only a rare and fleeting appearance in any form of art. The Magnet had, perhaps, more than its fair share in its fabulous Golden Age.

WANTED: Single copies or Bound Volumes of the following numbers: "Champion" from No. 130 to No. 340; "Triumph" from No. 1 to No. 190; "Pluck" from No. 78 to No. 97 (Last Series); "Rocket" from No. 78 to No. 87; "Triumph Annual" 1938. Please write stating price wanted to:-

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WANTED: Magnets, Gems, all years but pre 1935 preferably; Holiday Annuals; S.O.Ls. (Greyfriars stories). Any condition considered but price must be reasonable.

M. GORDON, 113 NEWINGTON GREEN ROAD, LONDON, N.1.

WANTED: Sexton Blake Libs. 1st and 2nd Series. Any numbers. Reasonable prices paid. Also Union Jacks 1917 to 1933, Boys' Friend Libs. 1st Series No. 669, 2nd Series No. 79.

JOSIE PACKMAN, 27 ARCHDALE ROAD, EAST DULWICH, LONDON, S.E.22.

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FOR SALE: Hundreds of pre-war Boys' Papers, including; Modern Boys, Boys' Magazines, Buzzers, Champions, Triumphs, Pioneers, Skippers, Union Jacks, Boys' Friend Libraries, Detective Weeklies, Startlers, Boys' Cinemas, Sexton Blake Libraries (Third Series); and many others of that vintage. Please write stating numbers:

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T.W. PORTER, OLD FIELDS, CORNGREAVES ROAD, CRADLEY HEATH, STAFFS.

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POPULAR for years 1928, 1929 and 1930.

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BOYS' HERALD for years 1907, 1908, 1909.

- - - - -

Dr. ROBERT WILSON

100, Broomfield Road,
GLASGOW, N.I.

The Dreadnought

Written by Frank Vernon Lay from material in his collection
and information supplied by Derek Adley, Breeze Bentley, Bill
Lofts and Len Packman.

* * * * *

START/STOP DATA

No. 1 Volume 1 March 9th, 1912, Col. Blueish Green
Boys Friend Size

to

No. 12 Volume 1 May 25th, 1912.

No. 1 Volume 2 June 1st, 1912, Greenish colour
Magnet size

to

No. 121 September 19th, 1914.

Title changed to The Dreadnought & War Pictorial

No. 1 Volume 1 September 26th, 1914, Blue & White

2 " 1 October 3rd, 1914, Green Cover

6 Title changed to The Dreadnought & Boys War Weekly

14 December 26th, 1914.

Title changed back to Dreadnought

No. 136 Volume 6 January 2nd, 1915, Green cover

141 February 6th, 1915, White cover

159 June 12th, 1915, - amalgamated with Boys Friend

Sexton Blake Serials in the Dreadnought

The Man from Scotland Yard

The Man of Many Disguises

The Man Who Vanished

The Men Who Changed Places

The Great Conspiracy

The Heir From Nowhere

The Man of Mystery

The Mystery of the Scarlet Thread

The Secret Plotter,

The Merchants Secret

THE STORY

The Dreadnought like the Penny Popular is one of the most interesting of the Amalgamated Press publications. Much of its contents were reprinted from various other papers and provide a varied cross-section of the popular stories

of the day. It first appeared on March 9th, 1912, and carried on until Number 159, June 12th, 1915, when it was amalgamated with the Boys Friend. Owing to the frequent changes of title, colour and numbering it is a difficult paper to collate without having the whole run and therefore a start/stop list is appended which should be useful in placing any particular issue in its correct place.

Sexton Blake serials were a common feature and stories featuring him and George Marsden Plummer were well to the fore. R.W. Comrade (E.S. Brooks) had two serials "Scorned by the School" and "The Cad of the School". Other well known authors to appear were Allan Blair, Lewis Carlton, Andrew Gray, David Goodwin (John Tregellis), Sidney Drew and A.S. Hardy.

Charles Hamilton was well represented with, firstly, stories of Cliveden reprinted from the Boys Herald. These were, in the main of the short humorous type. Secondly, by stories of St. Ethelberts which were very similar and thirdly there appeared twenty-four stories of Greyfriars School reprinted from the early Red Magnets, only Nos. 1, 10, 11, 14 and 27 not being reprinted out of the first 29 Magnets. At first these Greyfriars stories were severely abridged, but, as they became more and more popular, so their length increased until they became the most important and prominent feature of the paper. The abridgement was quite skilfully done and is not easily detected without actual physical comparison with the originals. The Greyfriars reprints appeared in Nos. 136 to the final No. 159, and as they are the most interesting content will be dealt with in detail.

The first Greyfriars story is "Bob Cherry's Triumph", a reprint of Magnet No. 2 "The Taming of Harry". It tells the story of the arrival of Bob Cherry. Hazeldene, alias Vaseline, poses as Harry Wharton and leads Bob up the garden path. In consequence Cherry fights Wharton and beats him. Wharton is very unhappy, hating his life at Greyfriars and Bob Cherry in particular.

The next is "Hazeldene's Treachery" reprinted from Magnet No. 3 "The Mystery of Greyfriars" and is the famous story in which Hazeldene removes a button from Wharton's coat so that he gets flustered and loses the examination. Thanks to Bob Cherry the plot is discovered, the examination is reheld with Wharton winning. Hazeldene receives a severe thrashing from Bob Cherry.

In No. 138 we find "Facing the Music" a reprint of Magnet No. 4 "Chums of the Remove". Hazeldene is extremely unpopular because of his conduct over the examination. Bulstrode finds a photograph of Hazeldene's sister in a locket Hazeldene wore round his neck, and taunts him with it. Hazeldene is so mad he smacks Bulstrode round the face and challenges him to fight. Wharton acts as his second. Hazeldene puts up a plucky fight but is no match for the burly Bulstrode. When Bulstrode still refuses to return the locket and photograph Wharton also fights him and is similarly licked. Then Bob Cherry takes up the cudgels but Bulstrode, perhaps not unnaturally after two gruelling fights, refuses a third fight and flings the locket and photograph on the ground. The chums were going to have a feed but someone unknown (!) had stolen the grub. Hazeldene volunteers to break bounds to get some more and, in spite of their disbelief, does so and the story concludes with the four of them Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, Frank Nugent and Peter Hazeldene together with Billy Bunter having a good tuck in in Study No. One.

The next story is "Captured by Gypsies" a reprint of Magnet No. 5 "Kidnapped". The chums go to the station to meet Hazeldene's sister Marjorie.

She does not appear and they discover she had arrived by an earlier train and should have met them on the road. They remember two gypsy caravans they had passed on the road and a peculiar muffled cry that came from one of them. It looks as though Marjorie has been kidnapped. They chase the caravans and fight the gypsies Melchior and Barengo but are beaten off. They follow on however and eventually find Marjorie in tears by the wayside with bare feet and dressed in rags. Her own clothes and possessions had been taken from her. They leave Marjorie at The Green Man at Ferrydale. On catching up with the gypsies Wharton reconnoitres but is caught and bound up. The other three become alarmed when he doesn't return and arm themselves with cudgels and attack the gypsies, overpower them, release Wharton and take the caravans with the two gypsies to the police station at Ferrydale. Wharton has broken detention in order to meet Marjorie but Quelch is going to let him off because he thought he did it in order to search for Marjorie. Harry confesses that this is not true, he did not know she was missing when he broke bounds. Quelch is very impressed by his truthfulness and lets him off just the same.

Next was "True Blue" from Magnet No. 6 "Aliens at Greyfriars". Beechwood Academy is unsuccessful and its scholars together with Herr Rosenblum are transferred to Greyfriars. Among the scholars is the well-known Inky, who has figured in earlier Hamilton stories of Beechwood Academy and Netherby College. Bulstrode insults Inky by calling him a "nigger" and Inky throws him out of Study No. 1. Bulstrode challenges Inky to a fight, Inky accepts but Wharton deliberately forces one first, the loser to vacate Study No. 1. Previously Bulstrode has twice licked Harry and this time thanks to assiduous practice in the gym with Nugent, Wharton succeeds in knocking out the bully.

This was followed by "The Remove Form's Riot" a reprint of Magnet No. 7 "Rivals of the Remove" and deals with the rivalry between the foreigners from Beechwood and the rest of the Remove. In this story we find the use of "Jampot" as a nickname for Inky. There is considerable japing and even more fighting which culminates with a riot in the Remove classroom which even Quelch is unable to quell. Dr. Locke deals out severe punishment all round and announces the Beechwood foreigners are to return to their own school with Herr Rosenblum. Their departure is preceded by a tip-top feast and they all part very good friends, especially Inky and the chums. As he leaves, Inky presents Harry Wharton with a present as a token of his esteem. It turns out to be a magnificent diamond.

"The Phantom Fugitive" follows, reprinted from Magnet No. 8 "In Hiding". It relates how strange sounds are heard in the ruined wing. Grub is missing from the studies and for once the culprit is not Billy Bunter. A mysterious ghost with a dead-white face frightens Skinner. The chums determine to solve the mystery and after a stern chase in which the fugitive finishes up by hiding under Wharton's bed they find to their astonishment that Inky is the ghost! He had not returned to his old school, merely alighting at the next station, returning after dark to the ruined wing. After representations to Inky's guardian and to Herr Rosenblum, Dr. Locke allows Inky to remain at Greyfriars.

Inky's diamond gift is the theme of the next "Heroes All" a reprint of Magnet No. 9 "The Nabob's Diamond". Melchior and Barengo the gypsies who kidnapped Marjorie Hazeldene have escaped from prison and discovered the secret passage that runs from the ruined chapel to a box-room in Greyfriars. Harry is caught by them and they steal the diamond from him. Harry escapes and with the

help of his chums recovers the diamond. Nadesha, the old gypsy woman companion of the thieves, has been befriended by the chums and having been beaten by Melchior because she refuses to be a party to their thieving she informs against them and Harry & Co. pass on the information to the Head. He allows Nadesha to remain at Greyfriars. The chums lay an ambush for Melchior who walks right into the trap and is promptly returned to police custody.

"Saving His Chum" a reprint of Magnet No. 12 "Harry's Sacrifice" is a fine sentimental story - a typical early Hamilton story of the best type. Hazeldene gets into the grips of Ikey Isaacs, a moneylender from whom he has borrowed in order to buy a bracelet for Marjorie. A half-sovereign is stolen from Inky and Hazeldene admits taking it. Harry finds out why he wanted the money and tries to square Ikey with 30/- Colonel Wharton has sent him for a new cricket outfit. Ikey insists on full payment so Harry pawns his watch as well to pay him off. Hazeldene promises he will go straight in future.

The continuation "Friends At Last" a reprint of Magnet No. 13 "A Jolly Half-Holiday" is equally good, and is an important one in the saga of Harry Wharton, as it deals with his reconciliation with Colonel Wharton. Bunter receives an express letter on which he has to pay 1/6d. He obtains the 1/6 by selling a silver penknife, opens the letter to discover a P.O. for 1/-. Hazeldene finds out how Wharton had squared the debt to Ikey. Colonel Wharton visits the school and Harry tells him what he has done but not the reason and the Colonel is very distressed. Hazeldene confesses to Colonel Wharton. The Colonel arranges an afternoon's holiday for them and takes them out in a brake for a picnic. Whilst they are sky-larking with Bunter, Harry is accidentally pushed in Hayward's Pool, which is named after Hayward Minor who was drowned there when the Colonel was at Greyfriars. Harry is stunned and is drowning. The Colonel dives in after him and saves him with the aid of the chums, and all's well.

We now come to three stories dealing with Remove Dramatics - "Foiling the Fourth", "The Rival Performers" and "The Greyfriars Revellers" reprinted from Magnets 15, 16 and 17, "Wharton's Operatic Company", "Stage Struck - a Dress Rehearsal" and "A Jolly Outing" respectively. In the first Temple & Co. attempt to upset the apple-cart but are not successful. Then they rehearse a play to be performed on their vacation at Wharton Lodge. They have many difficulties with the part of the villain "Colonel Kauffman" and finally at Wharton Lodge after much fun compromise with a performance of Peter Pan. The stories are very slight and only remarkable for the way Bob Cherry loses his heart to Marjorie Hazeldene.

No. 149 is "Bunter the Chef" a reprint of Magnet No. 18 "Roughing It", and is notable for the arrival of Ernest Levison. He does not make a very good impression. The chums are alone in the school due to a breakdown on the line. Bunter acts as cook and Inky adds liquorice powder with the custard, causing them all severe stomach-ache. Gosling gets drunk and has his face blacked with soot and Quelch mistakes him for a negro who, he thinks, has murdered Gosling.

"The Winning Side" a reprint of Magnet No. 19 "The Greyfriars Challenge" heralds the opening of the cricket season. Meunier's cousin Henri Lerouge is visiting England with some French schoolboys and they challenge the Remove at cricket. The French boys idea of cricket differs considerably from that of Greyfriars and with the added complication of the German boy Hoffman the fun waxes fast and furious.

"Bunter's Hush Money" a reprint of Magnet No. 20 "Billy's Treat" is a

continuation of the previous story. The French boys now challenge the Remove at gymnastics. Bulstrode plays a mean trick on Herr Rosenblum and Wharton is suspected. Bunter knows Bulstrode is responsible and extorts money from him but cannot keep quiet about it thus giving the game away.

The next story "The Stolen Schoolboy" a reprint of Magnet No. 21 "The Famous Four" is very good indeed. Levison is captured by gypsies, friends of Melchior's. The Famous Four break bounds and rescue him.

In "Raising the Wind" a reprint of Magnet No. 22 "Fun by the Sea" Wharton receives a "tenner" from his uncle, Colonel Wharton so that he and his friends can celebrate Founder's Day, which is a school holiday. They decide to spend the day at the seaside and together with Bunter, Hazeldene, Hoffman and Meunier they set out for Winklegate-on-Sea. After lunch Harry discovers he has lost his pocket-book containing the remains of the "tenner" and their return tickets. He has to leave his watch, a present from Colonel Wharton, as security for fares the party owes for a brake. Levison who was also at Winklegate, and had been invited by Harry to share the brake, will only contribute one shilling which he calculates is his share and Wharton, losing his temper, throws it in his face. They decide to go busking to raise the wind and pawn Bob Cherry's watch and with the proceeds have a good tea and hire some minstrel clothes, leaving Inky's watch this time as security. Whilst they are singing Bob Cherry spots a pick-pocket in action and collars him. He turns out to be the man who had picked Harry's pocket earlier in the day and the lost wallet is recovered, now alas only containing one sovereign but luckily still with the railway return tickets intact. In the meantime Levison has also had his pocket picked and lost his return ticket and once more Wharton takes pity on him and pays his fare.

Nos. 154, 155 and 156, "Open Rebellion", "The Faddist Form-Master", and "The Schoolboy Strikers", reprints of Magnets 23, 24 and 25, "The Greyfriars Riot", "Four on the Warpath" and "The Triumph of the Remove" are a series dealing with Mr. Chesham who takes Mr. Quelch's place when the latter is indisposed. He has very queer ideas on food, education and sports and the Remove is very severely tried. At first the juniors pull his leg but the tables are very soon turned and they find life under him well nigh impossible and when he orders them to wear sandals open rebellion is their only way out. The return of Mr. Quelch is just in time to prevent any real unpleasantness. Unfortunately Mr. Quelch is unable to continue and Mr. Chesham again has control of the Remove and soon has the Remove skipping in the Close, wearing night-caps, places the tuck-shop out of bounds, and issues them all with tabloids. Goaded beyond endurance the Remove go on strike, starting with passive resistance at the breakfast table, no one eating anything. Temple & Co. come to their relief and purchase food for them and leave it in the box-room. Mr. Chesham finds them locked in the box-room and orders them out. They refuse to open up but Levison and Bulstrode are funky and want to give in. Levison who is being held back by Wharton, struggles free and opens the door and whilst doing so is struck a forcible blow by Harry. This causes him to fall right on Mr. Chesham. Whilst Mr. Chesham is dealing with Levison in his study the rest of the Remove escape. The next night the chums break bounds to Friardale and load up with tuck from Dame Muffins. On the way back, trying to elude Mr. Chesham, who is on the watch they are caught by Dr. Locke, crossing his garden, and, for the first time Dr. Locke is fully informed of the Form-master's fads of which, needless to say, he takes a very poor view. Mr. Chesham promptly leaves Greyfriars, Dr. Locke taking his place pending the return of Mr. Quelch.

Billy Bunter is well to the fore in "Billy Bunter's Peril" a reprint of Magnet No. 26, "The Greyfriars Sleepwalker". Food disappears during the night and strange noises are heard. It turns out to be Billy Bunter, walking in his sleep, and the story concludes with Bunter still asleep climbing the ivy-clad clock-tower. Arriving at the top he sits on the parapet, legs dangling over the side and a sheer drop of fifty feet below him. Harry Wharton climbs after him and lassoes Bunter just in time to prevent him falling. Bunter awakes but without his glasses doesn't realise his danger and is appalled when he does. Nugent climbs up also and with the aid of a ladder Bunter is safely rescued.

"A Test of Chivalry" is the title of No. 158, a reprint of Magnet No. 28 "The Remove Master's Substitute". Miss Locke, the Head's sister takes the place of Mr. Chesham as Mr. Quelch is still not really fit enough to resume his work. The Remove come in for a great deal of chipping from the other forms and as Miss Locke is really a good sort, quite able to handle the boys, the chums do not know what to do. Bulstrode and Levison are all out to get rid of her but the chums side with her and Wharton has several fights in consequence and is finally reported to Dr. Locke. Herr Rosenblum, however, has overheard the reason for the fight and intervenes and Harry is let off.

The final issue of No. 159 "Harry Wharton's Resolve", a reprint of Magnet No. 29 "The Greyfriars Captain", Levison plays several conjuring tricks, some of them in doubtful taste and Bulstrode suggests to him that he plants something on Wharton so that he should appear a thief and be expelled. Bunter overhears. Bunter tells the Famous Four but does not tell them Levison refuses to do it, and there is bad blood until Bunter does tell them. Wharton apologises to Levison but is rebuffed. The story closes with Wharton resolving to take Levison in hand. He remembers his own early days at Greyfriars and how Nugent persevered with him and he determines to do the same for Levison.

And so the Magnet Reprints come to a close and to learn what happened to Harry Wharton's Resolve we must chase those elusive Red Magnets - now worth their weight, almost, in gold.

The Magnet reprints are all illustrated by C.H. Chapman and capture very well the spirit of the stories and are a great improvement on the original illustrations.

The Dreadnought is worthy of a high place in the hierarchy of Old Boys Books but owing to its scarcity it is difficult to build up complete sets and very few are known to be in existence.

WANTED: "Chatterbox" annuals for years 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, also copies of "Rainbow" comic. Your price paid if at all reasonable.

W. WESTWATER, 4 BUCKLEY STREET, GLASGOW, N.2.

Any 'Old Bloods' complete in orig. editions pre.1870. Esp. Lloyd publications. Also Lloyd periodicals. Good prices paid.

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THE MAN FROM BAKER STREET

SB

THE SIXTH ANNUAL FEATURE

compiled and contributed

by

MEMBERS OF THE SEXTON BLAKE CIRCLE

SB

C O N T E N T S

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY THE CHAIRMAN

WALDO LIVES AGAIN..... by Eric Copeman

ROBERT MURRAY..... by Bill Lofts & Frank Vernon Lay

THE WOMEN IN HIS LIFE..... by Walter Webb

A CHRISTMAS FANTASY..... by Bette Pate

* * * * *

It is with great pleasure that the Sexton Blake Circle present this, their sixth "annual feature".

And now a word about the contents.

It will be observed that there are less contributors this year (although the number of pages actually slightly exceeds that of last year which, in itself, was the largest quota we had been accorded), and the reason for this lies in the decision of the "Circle" committee to confine this edition primarily to articles - although not entirely.

Having arrived at this decision the compilation of the feature became largely a question of contributors. At this point I am pleased to tell you that the "Circle" has welcomed several new members since this time last year, one of whom is an exceptionally keen Blake enthusiast. And thus it was, in order to give this "newcomer" a welcome to the pages of our feature (her work has already appeared in "Blakiana"), that several of the usual contributors expressed a wish to "stand down" this year (including Josie Packman, who has a full-time job with "Blakiana" every month).

And so, we have arrived at the above Table of Contents.

The fare is varied to suit all tastes.... Statistics - nostalgic memories - fantasy - ... all these ingredients are served up for your entertainment.

As I type these words my eyes keep glancing at my wife's Sexton Blake bust, and the more I look at it the more I think of the hundreds of happy hours in the past that have been spent in following the many and varied adventures of the beloved creation of fiction to whom this feature is devoted.

And now it only remains for me to express the Sexton Blake Circle's

annual wish to all our readers "A Very Merry Christmas and a Most Happy New Year.

LEN PACKMAN, Chairman,
The Sexton Blake Circle,
East Dulwich, London, S.E.22.

* * * * *

WALDO LIVES AGAIN

By E.V. Copeman

(NOTE: This article was written before Eric Copeman saw Jack Wood's article in the C.D. Annual for 1956 and is presented with Eric's apologies for trespassing on Jack's pastures. - L.P.)

It is many years now since Sexton Blake last crossed swords with that fascinating "friendly-enemy", Rupert Waldo, otherwise known alternately as Wonder Man and Peril Expert.

Yet how many readers of the Blake Saga realise that this reckless devil-may-care adventurer still lives today, albeit in new guise?

It has been said before in the pages of this magazine that Berkeley Gray's popular character, Norman Conquest (now appearing regularly in mystery novels published by Collins), is the present counterpart of Edwy Searles Brooks' Waldo. How true this is I intend doing my best to point out in this article.

Before doing so, however, let me make one important fact quite clear. I am a staunch admirer not only of Sexton Blake but of Edwy Searles Brooks, and that admiration has existed for many years, whether he has written of Blake and Tinker, Leo and Nipper, Norman Conquest and Joy, or Inspector Cromwell and Johnny Lister. The closely-guarded "secret" being a secret no longer to those who have read the "C.D." for some length of time, it can be plainly stated that Mr. Brooks writes these days under the pseudonyms of Berkeley Gray and Victor Gunn. And his writing, like good wine, has improved with the years!

Now, back to Waldo.

To the best of my knowledge the last Blake versus Waldo story was in S.B.L. 744 in 1941 (the last issue of the Second Series). It was, incidentally, a reprint of 1st Series No. 374. A later Blake yarn by Brooks appeared in No. 6 Third Series, but did not feature Waldo, and, as far as I know, no further adventures of the conflict between the pair were recorded.

Yet Waldo is not dead. Far from it. In fact, one might almost be tempted to believe in the possibility of reincarnation!

And here is the amazing evidence of this:-

S.B.L. 559, Second Series (1937) was a Waldo story called THE MIDNIGHT LORRY CRIME and a rattling fine yarn. I wonder, though, just how many old-timers recognised it as it came from the pen of Berkeley Gray through Collins in 1943 under the new title of BLONDE FOR DANGER! (Frankly, much as I admired the original effort, when for the first time the mantle of Waldo fell upon Norman Conquest the result was a decided improvement. Sacrilege? Well, why not be

honest?)

Then there were two old stories in the Union Jack, Nos. 1131 and 1132 which appeared as long ago as 1925, called THE PAUPER OF PENGARTH CASTLE and THE CURSE OF PENGARTH CASTLE. Both once again featured Waldo. Yet strange to say, Norman Conquest had almost identical adventures in 1944 in an excellent book called CAVALIER CONQUEST, though the castle wasn't Pengarth but Glaiswold!

And there was that grand Waldo tale in one of the later U.J.'s (No. 1528 in 1933), THE HOUSE OF LIGHT. In that yarn Waldo began by having fun and games as a salesman at Belfrage's Store in the watch and clock department. Funny thing but, in Berkeley Gray's 1945 novel, ALIAS NORMAN CONQUEST, Norman seemed to have surprisingly identical experiences in the watch and clock department of Dacey's Store! With precisely the same results as well.

Now who of the old Waldo enthusiasts can forget that fine yarn, ONCE A CROOK --- which appeared in U.J. 1499 in 1932 after Brooks' triumphal submission at the close of the famous Proud Tram Series? Yet, fifteen years later, in 1947, there was good old Norman Conquest in Waldo's shoes doing exactly the same things in KILLER CONQUEST! And, having completed those adventures, following on in the second half of the novel with almost an exact duplication of events told originally in U.J. 1118 (1925), THE AFFAIR OF THE ROMAN RELICS.

In Detective Weekly No. 48 (1934) there was a Waldo yarn called FROM INFORMATION RECEIVED. A revised version of this, with Conquest once more playing Waldo's role, was in the first half of Berkeley Gray's THE CONQUEST TOUCH, in 1948. The second half of this novel followed the sequence of the Waldo yarn, VILLAGE VENGEANCE, which appeared in U.J. 1530 in 1933 (which was incidentally the second-last U.J. ever published).

Then in those "bad days" when Blake was sent from the pages of Detective Weekly (in disgrace?) there was a Waldo non-Blake story called THE MYSTERY OF THE MAN IN MAIL (D.W. 145, dated 1935). Norman Conquest covered the same ground in THE SPOT MARKED X, in 1948, once more basking in Waldo's reflected glory.

In 1949 Berkeley Gray brought out a highly-satisfying novel about Conquest called DUEL MURDER. It was actually a rewritten version of D.W. 19 (1933), TREE TOP MURDER, and D.W. 28 (1933), THE HIRED AVENGER.

By this time, Norman Conquest having firmly established himself, his subsequent adventures were entirely his own -- but one still wonders whether Conquest is actually Waldo reincarnated or whether the long arm of coincidence has been stretched to breaking-point!

Seriously, I am not deriding Mr. Brooks for having made use of the same good plots a second time. Rather would I say that, in so doing, he paid a remarkable tribute to the worth of the Sexton Blake originals in that he deemed them worthy enough (even without Blake as the draw-card) to re-present to a completely new set of readers. Nor is Brooks the only one to have done this. Others who readily come to mind as having published novels which have been near-reprints of Blake stories include JOHN G. BRANDON (new books of whose are still being printed, though he died several years ago), GWYN EVANS, ANTHONY PARSONS (one novel recently released in Sydney based on S.B.L. 167, Third Series, THE MYSTERY OF THE RED COCKATOO), and even, I fancy, one or two by our old friend REX HARDINGE. Others too, I am sure, could I but recall them now.

In other words, the Blake yarns are of sufficiently high a standard to

appeal in a wider field to possibly more-discerning (???) members of the reading public.

Reverting to Brooks, his Berkeley Gray character, Norman Conquest, was actually born in the THRILLER dated January 20, 1937, in a yarn called MR. MORTIMER GETS THE JITTERS. It appeared there under his own actual name of Edwy Searles Brooks and was at the time brand-new. All the Conquest yarns subsequently appearing in the THRILLER were specially-written and very good, and later appeared, appropriately grouped, as Collins Mystery Novels. An interesting point is that, when the second Conquest story was announced, the Editor of the THRILLER made the statement that, with his new character, Mr. Brooks had adopted a new name, that of Berkeley Gray, thereby cheerfully spilling the beans good and proper!

As Victor Gunn, however, Mr. Brooks was more shy -- or maybe he warned the Editor first! The first Victor Gunn yarn (Thriller No. 556 dated September 30, 1939) was IRONSIDES OF THE YARD. The Editor carefully recorded that it was by "Victor Gunn -- a name that has never appeared in our pages before". Quite true. The NAME hadn't, though the writer had.

The novelist, Dennis Wheatley, paid a tribute to Sexton Blake on page 4 of Detective Weekly 313 dated February 18, 1939, as part of the publicity being given to the Sexton Blake Radio Play, then running as a serial which kept pace with the radio broadcasts. The play's title: ENTER SEXTON BLAKE. Its author: the same Edwy Searles Brooks.

If ever definite link-up of Mr. Brooks' triple-personality were needed, consider this:

- (a) ENTER SEXTON BLAKE, both as play and serial, appeared under the by-line of Berkeley Gray.
- (b) In S.B.L. 641, Second Series (1938), it appeared again in full as THREE FRIGHTENED MEN. This time also by Berkeley Gray!
- (c) Finally, with minor place and character alteration, it was published by Collins in 1942 as MAD HATTER'S ROCK by Victor Gunn!

Victor Gunn, after initial newly-written yarns (first published in the Thriller and later by Collins), built soundly on Blake adventures, as did Berkeley Gray. Forsaking Waldo, Gunn drew mainly on the straight mysteries and the Eustace Cavendish stories. Just a few examples are as under:

- (a) THREE DATES WITH DEATH, a Victor Gunn novel published by Collins in 1947, was made up of reprints of three Blake yarns, the three "dates" being MURDER ON THE MIDNIGHT COACH (D.W. 99), QUIVERING STEEL (U.J. 1384) and THE CASE OF THE THREE BLACK CATS (U.J. 1354).
- (b) ROAD TO MURDER by Victor Gunn (1949) came from A SECRET FROM THE THAMES (D.W. 93) and THE FIRE TONGS MURDER MYSTERY (D.W. 128).
- (c) IRONSIDES ON THE SPOT, one of the Victor Gunn books for 1948, came from RED-HOT RACKETEERS (U.J. 1425) and SEXTON BLAKE ON THE SPOT (U.J. 1433).

No doubt there are other examples that could be cited but these will suffice. The point I am anxious to make is that the ORIGINAL stories were so good that their writer deemed them worthwhile for inclusion in novels which have since had world-wide popular acclaim. Berkeley Gray and Victor Gunn novels, I am told, have a good following out here in Australia.

What I am wondering rather cynically now is whether the readers who relish

the "mature" adventures of Norman Conquest or Inspector Cromwell realise that many of the stories they have so much enjoyed first appeared as Blake yarns between the pages of a twopenny weekly!

With deference to Hamiltonians, I borrow a phrase from Bob Cherry and say to Mr. Brooks: "More power to your giddy elbow!"

And if anybody wants to learn what the modern and revitalised Waldo is doing, read the latest of Berkeley Gray's Norman Conquest books.

Remember, too, that this is definitely not an advertising plug but a sincere tribute from someone who loves both Waldo and his 1956 counterpart -- as well as their creator, Edwy Searles Brooks.

* * * * *

ROBERT MURRAY

By Bill Lofts and Frank Vernon Lay

* * *

Robert Murray, or Robert Murray Graydon, to give his full name, was the son of William Murray Graydon, who was born in the U.S.A. in 1868. It was through the influence of his father that he became a writer. His work appeared as early as 1909 (Boys' Realm). Before becoming a freelance he was on the staff of the Amalgamated Press, working alongside Walter Shute (more popularly known to Blake enthusiasts as Walter Edwards. Shute eventually became editor of the Union Jack and was succeeded in 1921 in this capacity by H.W. Twyman).

He was the creator of those well-known characters Dr. Satira, Paul Cynos and, of course, the infamous Criminals' Confederation, which, on the authority of H.W. Twyman, was the most popular series of stories ever featured in the Union Jack.

In the words of H.W. Twyman "Robert was far and away a better and more imaginative writer than his father who, even in the 'twenties, was considered sentimental and outdated".

Robert was a heavily built, extremely lethargic individual, always moving with ponderous slowness. He was very quiet and kept himself to himself. Those of his colleagues who are still approachable have great difficulty in remembering much about him. His personality failed to leave any impressions that have lasted over the years. In the 'twenties he lived for a time in Paris, in company with George Hamilton Teed and several other writers.

He was not a prolific writer and was the despair of his editors, having the -- to them -- very irritating habit of seldom keeping to schedule. When the Criminals' Confederation Series became so popular, with the readers clamouring for more, it became so difficult to get copy from him that, at last, H.W. Twyman, the Editor who had control of the Union Jack during what most of us consider its peak period, was forced to have the stories written by a substitute. It has for years been surmised that Gilbert Chester had been responsible for two of the stories and it was thanks to information supplied by H.W. Twyman himself that it became official that the assumption was correct and that, furthermore, all the stories after and including No. 1154 which featured the Criminals' Confederation were written by Gilbert Chester (H.H. Clifford Gibbons). This does not, of

course, include the reprints, one of which, No. 1484, was rewritten by H.W. Twyman.

Robert Murray died in his early fifties during 1940 at Sussex County Hospital, his death being due to a stomach complaint. He had a son who is carrying on the family tradition, being a sports writer and commentator on I.T.V. It is hoped to make contact with him in the near future and perhaps obtain more information concerning his - to us at least - famous father.

We know Robert Murray created the very famous team of Captain Justice & Co. for the Modern Boy, and that these stories also came to be written by other authors.

All in all Robert Murray stands very high in the hierarchy of Blake writers, and as long as Blake is remembered so the name of Robert Murray will be revered.

The Work of Robert Murray in the Union Jack

(List compiled by Frank Vernon Lay and checked by Walter Webb)

No. 675	The Detective's Ordeal	Dirk Dolland
680	The Hidden Hand	" "
686	The Case of the Bogus Detective	" "
688	In Double Harness	Nelson Lee
695	The Mystery of the Missing Manager	
698	A Case of Arson	Dirk Dolland
704	The Mystery of Cell Six	
709	The Two Impostors	Dirk Dolland
736	The Ordeal of Gordon Wood	
747	The Vanished Man	Dirk Dolland
751	The Bogus Bat	" "
753	The Mystery of the Vloao Vase	" "
758	The Amazing Mystery of Frederick Fennell	Mr. Reece
763	A Mid-Ocean Mystery	"
767	The Lost Letter	"
775	The Case of the Clubfooted Man	Dirk Dolland
778	The Vanished Police	Mr. Reece
779	Suspended from Duty	"
780	The Only Clue	
782	The Steel Claw	Mr. Reece
787	The Silent Partner	Dirk Dolland
790	The Amazing Affair at Clammere Mansions	Mr. Reece
791	Dirk Dolland's Redemption	Dirk Dolland
797	The Clue of the Cuff-Link	" "
802	The Case of the Black Feather	Dirk Dolland & Mr. Reece
806	The Missing Crooks	1st Criminals' Confederation
807	Tracked by Wireless	Criminals' Confederation
808	Held as Hostage	" "
812	The White Liner	" "
816	The Case of the Stolen Yacht	" "
820	Dirk Dolland's Ordeal	" "
824	The Diamond of Disaster	" "
829	Sinister Island	" "
830	The Man from the Sea	" "

No. 838	The Trail in the Sand	Criminals' Confederation	
841	Mr. Smith of London	"	"
857	The Mystery of the S.S. Olympic		
858	The Informer	Criminals' Confederation	
860	The Hidden Headquarters	"	"
868	The New President	"	"
869	Dirk Dolland's Dilemma	"	"
873	The Man Who Died	"	"
876	The Shadow	"	"
887	The Dog Detective	"	"
893	A Bid for Billions	"	"
895	The Extreme Penalty	"	"
901	Crooked Evidence	"	"
910	The Black Duchess	"	"
916	The Fourth Witness	"	"
927	Mr. Reece's Million	"	"
946	Diamond Mad	"	"
972	The Confederation's Recruit	"	"
973	The Diamond Clue	"	"
985	The Hunchback of St. Madros	"	"
1056	The Return of Mr. Reece	"	"
1061	The Spider's Web	"	"
1070	The Key-Man of the Confederation	"	"
1085	The Rival Presidents	"	"
1094	Reece on the Run	"	"
1097	The Mandarin's Millions	"	"
1117	Found and Lost	"	"
1119	Reece's Republic	"	"
1125	Condemned to the Mines	"	"
1127	Yellow Vengeance	"	"
1133	Into the Unknown	"	"
1137	The Yellow City	"	"
1206	Lord of the Ape Men		1st Dr. Satira
1207	The Mystery of the Masked Magician		" "
1209	From Information Received		" "
1211	The Quest of the Limping Man		" "
1217	The Lair of the Limping Man		" "
1246	The Adventure of the Dummy's Double		" "
1248	Justice Defied		" "
1249	The Mystery of Marl House		" "
1250	Sexton Blake, Convict		" "
1251	The Trail of the Bandaged Man		" "
1289	The Seven Sons of Cynos		1st Paul Cynos
1297	A Million in Gold		" "
1312	The Mystery of the Black Van		" "
1326	Dead Man's Plunder		Last Dr. Satira
1327	Are You Paul Cynos?		Paul Cynos
1338	I Defy!		" "
1350	King's Evidence		" "
1359	Retribution		Last " "
1394	Framed		
1395	The Unknown		

No. 1407	Twice Dead		The Crime Minister		
1409	Crooks Convention		"	"	"
1414	Sexton Blake, Gangster				
1440	Winning By Wire		The Spider		
1443	The Whisperer		The Whisperer		
1456	Hot Lead		"	"	
1460	The Red Swordsman				
1463	Crooks Hotel				
1469	A Corner in Crooks	Reprint of 806.	Crim.	Con.	
1472	Confederation Calling	" " 807	"	"	
1476	Reece's Recruit	" " 808	"	"	
1480	Wind Blown Blackmail	" " 812	"	"	
1484	Enter the President	" " 816	"	"	
	(Rewritten by H.W. Twyman)				
1492	Dirk Dolland's Ordeal	" " 820	"	"	
1496	The Diamond of Disaster	" " 824	"	"	
1500	Volcano Island	" " 829/830	"	"	
1504	The Trail in the Sand	" " 838/841	"	"	
1508	The Squealer	" " 858/860	"	"	
1512	The Four Guests Mystery				
1513	Crooks Divided	Rewrite of 868/869	Crim.	Con.	
1518	The Shadow	" " 873/876	"	"	
1526	Behind the Fog	" " 887	"	"	
1529	Sexton Blake Wins	" " 893	"	"	

Stories accredited to Robert Murray by A.P. but written by G. Chester

1154	Buried Alive		Crim.	Con.
1155	Homeward Bound		"	"
1158	Landed at Last		"	"
1163	Gone to Earth		"	"
1164	Reece's Hold-Up		"	"
1165	North of 70°		"	"
1175	Reece's Revenge		"	"
1185	The Marriage of Jason Reece		"	"
1191	Dirk Dolland's Crime		"	"
1196	The Great Round-Up		"	"

Stories by Robert Murray in Sexton Blake Library (First Series)

41	The Mysterious Mr. Reece	Mr. Reece
85	The Masquerader	Dirk Dolland

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THE WOMEN IN HIS LIFE

By Walter Webb

In this recapitulation of the feminine characters who appeared with varying degrees of prominence in the Blake saga, the title may give a quite misleading impression of the kind of man Sexton Blake really was. Under a heading perhaps better fitted to describe the amorous enterprises of some Don Juan, whose conquests were featured weekly for the consumption of impressionable teenagers in the pages of papers like the MIRACLE, or ORACLE libraries, it might be supposed

that Blake was a similar type of heart-throb. Nothing could be further from the truth! Blake, easy and relaxed in the company of his fellow men, was rather less sure of himself when faced by a bevy of attractive women at some social gathering, and was generally moved to a mood of secret satisfaction when the opportunity presented itself to him to escape their admiring eyes and coy glances. Such flattery, whilst acting as food and drink to the insatiable conceit of the gods-gift-to-woman type of lounge-lizard, was bane to Blake, and only inspired in him a feeling of acute discomfort and embarrassment.

We are not, at the moment, referring to the modern, wise-cracking and much tougher Blake of the present day libraries, but the Blake as we knew him best -- the ascetic, stern-visaged, yet kindly man, remorseless, yet compassionate, hated and feared, but respected by friend and foe alike as a man who fought with his heart as well as his hands -- who resorted to the use of a weapon only as a means of defence of himself or those dear to him; the character who, in his heyday, enjoyed a popularity quite unique in the history of boys' papers, and, for that matter, of weekly and monthly journals as a whole.

The feminine characters introduced in the Blake papers from time to time have been many and varied; some well known and affectionately remembered, some not so well known; others, having only made rare appearances, have been completely forgotten. Of these latter, only those who justify their resurrection by reason of some unusual and interesting trait in their character, or who appeared in a case or story of particular interest or excellence, will be introduced.

It is always more satisfactory to start at the beginning of things and deal with events in their proper perspective; so back to the early days of the $\frac{1}{2}$ d UNION JACK, when, according to Mr. John G. Rowe, a popular contributor at that period, Ernest Goddard occupied the editorial chair. These days can be touched upon very briefly because, fortunately, femininity was introduced into the stories hardly at all. I say "fortunately" because on inspecting the results of most of the labour put in by the various so-called artists whose atrocious handiwork adorned the pages of the U.J. it is extremely doubtful whether they would have been able to draw a woman with any pretensions to femininity at all!

As the years went by an all round improvement was manifest; production was improved; better artists and authors were introduced, though still the feminine element was practically non-existent.

Then, on 19 August 1905 came one of the best-loved characters of them all -- Mrs. Martha Bardell, much esteemed housekeeper to Sexton Blake, who brought to the sombre atmosphere of the Baker Street residence welcome light relief, which increased to something approaching hilarity when Gwyn Evans came along and elevated her from a mere supporting role to a star billing. The mercurial and quizzical Evans seemed very fond of Mrs. B., and certainly many of we old-timers have eschewed with keen enjoyment the fruits which have materialised from the seeds of that affection. Plump and garrulous, her use of the English language was both weird and wonderful. Fashions changed, but not Mrs. B. As her master clung tenaciously to that familiar and disreputable old red dressing-gown, much bespattered and discoloured with innumerable chemical stains, cigar and cigarette ash, and what not, so the old lady held on to her beloved bombazine dress and old-fashioned elastic-sided boots. Yet the heart that beat beneath the ample bosom of that bombazine dress was a tender one, as witness her devotion to the motherless Tinker and the conscientious pride in the performance of her duties

to her famous master.

It is interesting to recall how some of the principal authors of those halcyon days handled Mrs. B., and the varying degrees of tolerance and courtesy they permitted Blake to reveal when the old soul was in one of her most exasperating moods. Invariably, Gwyn Evans and Robert Murray had Blake showing great patience and good humour in face of Mrs. Bardell's tirade; W. Murray Graydon, whose writings gave rise to the belief that he was lacking entirely in that richest of all natural gifts - a sense of humour - often had Blake irascible, petulant, and completely lacking in courtesy towards her. H. Gregory Hill and Lewis Jackson were similar to Evans and Murray in their treatment of the old dame, but Gilbert Chester tended to follow Graydon, and his oft repeated phrase "my good woman" struck a jarring note. A lack of interest was apparent in the work of G.H. Teed, Andrew Murray, Anthony Skene and E.S. Brooks, for they rarely gave her more than a few lines to speak. Yes; Mrs. Bardell was a grand and lovable character, and gave to the modest little residence in Baker Street much of that atmosphere of comfort and tranquility that at all times infested it.

A brief mention here of that tempestuous and shapely pillar of society, Lady Molly Maxwell, who aspired to become a lady detective with often disastrous results both to herself and to those who were unfortunate enough to solicit her aid. A product of the Edwardian era, she was given a write-up in C.D. No. 113 (May 1956), so apart from reiterating the fact that she only appeared in the short stories in the PENNY PICTORIAL between the years 1908-9, we can pass on to another titled young aristocrat in the personality of Lady Marjorie Dorn.

No doubt, Lady Dorn is completely unknown, but earns mention here by reason of the devastating effect she had on Blake's equanimity. She was beautiful, a born coquette, and the fortunate possessor of unlimited wealth. To endeavour to try and trace this character through issues of U.J., S.B.L., or D.W. would be useless, for she only appeared once, and that was in a very rare old issue of the BOYS' FRIEND 3d LIBRARY, entitled "The Mervyn Mystery" (No. 96), published in January 1910. The change in Blake in this story was something to marvel at! Always a man of action, of course, he seemed imbued with an even greater zest for living; his air of reserve was completely dispelled, as was the rather sombre atmosphere which always seemed to waft elusively about him. For Blake, believe it or not, fell in love with her ladyship!

In those days it was an unheard of thing for Blake to be even attracted to one of the opposite sex, let alone flirt with one, but that is exactly what the rejuvenated Blake did with Lady Marjorie as the following extract from that story proves:

"She poised herself on the arm of Blake's chair, leaned a hand caressingly on his shoulder, and spread the letter beneath his eyes. Blake flashed her a tender glance, then gazed at the letter....."

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...."And I simply love necklaces of pearls and coronets of diamonds", murmured Lady Marjorie, slipping another arm round Blake's neck, and bending close to look into his sombre deepening eyes. "And it is all so mysterious! Isn't it, you man of mystery? Are you cross? What does it all mean?"

Blake looked into the lovely eyes, and with a swift, impulsive, most protecting gesture, drew her abruptly into a close embrace....."

And were Blake's feelings for Lady Marjorie reciprocated? The following

extract not only proves that they were, but gives an excellent idea of the high standard of writing the author - Michael Storm - gave to those early stories he wrote for the UNION JACK, besides providing an interesting pen-picture of Blake. The scene is Hyde Park, and Blake and Lady Dorn, on horseback, are cantering down the Row:

...she had pursued unruffled the serene tenor of her way, till fortune, capricious and wilful as herself had brought into her path the man now gazing into her face this bright June morning. She had been attracted by him at once. His perfect physique, so reposeful, yet so suggestive of force, the harmony and grace of his movements, the statuesque head of him, with its finely chiselled features instinct with strength, determination and restraint, and especially the deep, magnetic agate grey eyes, had all appealed to her, arresting her attention, exciting her curiosity and enthraling her imagination. She had glided insensibly into loving him without being aware of the fact, till now, as she gazed into his face, the sweet clamour of the bird songs, and the gracious joy of the day found a new echo in her heart, and she felt the warm blood dyeing her face, and her eyes fell suddenly away....

Blake proposed, and would have been accepted but for the fact that he found it impossible to give up his profession. Said Blake:

"I believe you chose wisely. I never had any right to ask you to tie your life to a life so strenuous and often dangerous as mine must be. But I can never regret it. It will be a very treasured memory." "And we shall remain the very best of friends?" said the girl, with a certain wistfulness creeping into her eyes. "Always", said Blake.....

This far above the average Blake story featured George Marsden Plummer and Rupert Forbes, and is interesting for another reason. In the hundredth number of the C.D., in the article "The Mystery of Michael Storm", mention was made of a missing UNION JACK story which broke the sequence of events, linking "In Deadly Grip" (No. 302) and "The Swell Mobsman" (No. 315). The latter story began with Plummer just returning to consciousness following an attack upon him by Rupert Forbes after the pair had brought off a coup against the Bank of England and had kidnapped two beautiful society girls (of whom Lady Dorn was one) in the process. "The Mervyn Mystery" was the connecting link between these two stories; but why was it published as a double-length novel in the BOYS' FRIEND 3d LIBRARY? The only explanation which seems feasible is that it was originally two separate U.J. stories which, due to an oversight, were not published in rotation, and thus were joined together as one long, complete novel.

In this story Rupert Forbes was savaged by three mastiffs, and died in Sexton Blake's arms. In his dealings with the rogue there was a strange reluctance on Blake's part to bring him to the justice he so well deserved. Tinker was puzzled, and as they sat in Hyde Park following Lady Marjorie's rejection of Blake's proposal that sentimental streak, which only on very rare occasions the latter permitted himself to reveal, asserted itself briefly, as Tinker said:

"There's a question I'd like to ask you, gov'nor".

"Ask!" replied Blake, with a somewhat ironic emphasis.

"It's this", said Tinker, in a rather embarrassed tone. "I could never understand why it was you always seemed to have a - well, a sort of sneaking regard for Rupert Forbes".

Blake nodded.

"I suppose not", he said. "But the reason is simple. He was at school with me. He was only a nipper then - and a very lovable little nipper - and he was my fag. Once I happened to save his life, and it seemed to create a sort of bond. May God remember the man who first put him on the wrong path! And now, let us never mention his name again."

"They sat in silence till the dusk crept about them and the lights began to twinkle one after the other among the more distant avenues. And when at last they got up to wend their way homeward, Tinker, stealing a glance at his master, noticed that the dew lay as heavy on his eyelids as it did on the sward stretched at their feet."

That was Sexton Blake 1910 vintage, palatable as the rare old wine matured from those sedate old days - a story long forgotten, but portraying Blake as he has never been portrayed before. A novel of the highest class, which only the hand of a master of his craft could have achieved.

Off with the old love - on with the new! Not expressive of Blake's sentiments, perhaps; but that is what happened when Mademoiselle Yvonne Cartier made her bow between the pink covers of the UNION JACK. It was during mid-winter of the year 1913 that she came, a beautiful instrument of vengeance, to exact retribution on eight unscrupulous financiers, who, having ruined her father in Australia and caused his untimely death as a consequence, to be followed soon by her heartbroken mother, were beyond reach of the law. But, by taking it into her own hands, Yvonne eliminated each, one by one - first Ike Vineburg, then Jim Pearson, followed by Mortimer Todd, Gordon Kelly, Carfax Morton (otherwise known as Tin Dish Charlie), Cornelius Patterson, Travers Bentley and Henry Forsythe.

In her role of Miss Nemesis, however, Yvonne came up against Blake, a stern, inexorable figure, whose intention to uphold the law was rigorous and unswerving. But in him the girl found her ideal; Blake appealed to her as she knew no other man could or would ever do. Her love for him was deep, passionate, all-enduring; quite different to Lady Dorn's. Yvonne would have made any sacrifice, and wish nothing in return except that her love be reciprocated. Unlike her ladyship, Yvonne would have been happy to take second place to Blake's profession - would, indeed, have wished nothing better than to have assisted him in it. But, as history has told us, Blake would have nothing of it. It remains one of the most inexplicable decisions he has ever made!

When the then 34 years old George Hamilton Teed brought Yvonne into the stories it was the beginning of an association with the U.J. which was to last until that paper's demise early in 1933, during which period he was to prove himself by far the most popular contributor of all. Unhappily, Teed was to survive it by only six years, before dying in the London Hospital a complete wreck of a human being, unbeknown to, and, therefore, unmourned by the many readers who had so much enjoyed the numerous stories which had appeared in the Blake papers under his name. In issue No. 482 the presiding editor of that time paid Teed the compliment of praising him as "one of the greatest authors living!" An exaggeration, perhaps; but Teed's work at that time did suggest it, although, as in the case of many Blake writers, the man in the editorial sanctum, with the aid of a blue pencil, some trimmings here, some adjustments and corrections there, did improve to a considerable extent the material subjected to him, and in the finished product earned for a contributor more praise than he deserved.

Yvonne certainly brought a new look to the pages of the U.J. No character quite like her had appeared before. Her beauty by no means formed her chief

asset; she was courageous, steadfast and unyielding of purpose, a born leader, a relentless enemy; yet, withal, essentially feminine. In portraying her in a beret on what appears to be a wealth of blonde hair, and in the long, ankle length, form-fitting skirt of the period, there was in artist Val Reading's conception of her a similitude to the illustrations of Pearl White to be found in the various film magazines at that time. Which brings a thought. Was Teed inspired to create Yvonne after witnessing on the cinema screen the sensational and daring stunts of the undisputed Queen of the Serial film? If an image and a substance can be said to have anything in common, then Yvonne Cartier of the one and Pearl White of the other had many things. Each in their respective spheres brought something new in the way of entertainment; both inspired spontaneous admiration by reason of qualities hitherto to be only rarely observed, not only in their own sex but in the opposite number also. Yvonne was never called upon to cheat death as often as Pearl White; not for her the hairbreath escapes as occurred to the serial queen week after week -- such as being bound to a moving platform, which moved slowly, yet surely, towards a circular saw revolving rapidly at the head, with what dire results to Miss White's coiffure can readily be imagined! Nor was she ever subjected to the terrifying ordeal of being tightly bound and deposited across the rails of some railway whilst a snorting, puffing locomotive thundered its way towards her. In the matter of physical strength Yvonne had no more than the average girl; Teed never had her exhibiting superior power to that of the male. On the other hand Pearl White's prowess was quite remarkable. In those old serials she could match any one of the opposing villains, strength for strength, and it generally took two - and sometimes three - of the enemy to overpower her. She spared herself not, as she kicked and squirmed and even bit at the hands that sought to overcome her resistance. Well built and lissom, it was a thrilling spectacle to see the amount of really hard graft she put into those scenes in order to infuse the maximum quantity of realism into them. Alas! the screen today has nothing to offer to compare with the stirring, thrilling exploits of the incredible and amazingly attractive Pearl White.

Both she and Yvonne reached their peak together; both took the inevitable slide together, and vanished from the scene in the middle twenties. Yvonne made her exit in 1925 in a U.J. Christmas story, whilst Pearl White's career ended about a year earlier. It was in 1924 that her last film - "Plunder!" I recollect the title to have been - was shown at the Olympia, a small picture playhouse in Sparkbrook, and I clearly remember hurrying home from work one evening in order not to miss it. It ran to five or six reels, was made by the Fox Film Company - Pearl White had severed her connection with Pathé several years earlier - and was to the best of my recollection a story of a hunt for buried loot. Compared with the old serials she made for Pathé it was a disappointing film. And if Pearl White inspired Teed to create Yvonne it is also possible that a Chinese character who played villain in many of those serials inspired the author to create Prince Wu Ling. The Chinese was played by a character actor named Warner Oland, and in such a role he was the most sinister figure of oriental villainy I have ever seen on either screen or stage, an ever menacing figure hovering around a shrinking, wide-eyed Pearl White. When the latter died in Paris in August 1938 it was by a strange coincidence that Warner Oland passed away on the very day she was taken to her last resting place.

Having dealt with the two women who caused the most tumultuous upheaval ever to occur within Blake, we come to those who, because of that criminal kink in their make-up, gave the criminologist no little trouble in curbing their

activities. Well remembered is Kathleen Maitland, American wife of the American crook, Ezra Q. Maitland, who followed close on the heels of Yvonne. Better known as Broadway Kate, she was a far from endearing type of character, having few redeeming features in her make-up. With an aptitude for disguise she kept her hair cut short in order that she could wear a wig on occasion when a masquerade became necessary for the successful undertaking of some criminal conspiracy hatched by her husband and herself. When Maitland was found guilty of spying for the Germans during the first World War and was duly executed at the Tower for his treachery, Kate endeavoured to persuade Aubrey Dexter to join in harness with her. But the gentleman cracksman, always a lone wolf, preferred to crack his cribs alone, and deprived of masculine aid Broadway Kate dropped right out of the limelight.

Into her shoes stepped Glory Gale, a mischievous girl reporter on the staff of the LONDON NEWS AND ECHO, with an overwhelming air of self-confidence which, allied to remarkably good looks and competence, earned her the youthful Tinker's undying admiration. Glory, whose appearances were confined to the S.B.L. only, figured in six stories for the library. An attractive character, she was the brain-child of John W. Robin.

The year 1921 saw the introduction of the brilliant and unscrupulous Mademoiselle Claire Delisle, a wealthy adventuress, who gave Blake no end of trouble in the many battles of wits they had together. A character built on similar lines was Fifette Bierce, the beautiful lieutenant of Leon Kestrel, the master-mummer, the only woman ever to command the respect of the notorious criminal.

Other characters followed....Mademoiselle Julie of the French Secret Service, who only appeared in the S.B.L., save for a solitary introduction in D.W., and this a reprint..... Ysabel de Ferre (first called "Ferra"), otherwise known as the Black Duchess, who sought to gain the Presidency of the Criminals' Confederation, but met with such strong resistance that she failed in her ambition. Ysabel, it may be mentioned, was the only feminine character of any importance that Robert Murray conceived.

Then there was Mary Trent, the young and pretty girl who fell in love with Dr. Huxton Rymer, a man much older than herself, but for which the gulf in years meant nothing, and detracted not one iota from the affection she had for him. Of all Teed's women characters, I found Mary the most natural and appealing of them all, and for this reason she remains my favourite feminine character in so far as the Sexton Blake stories are concerned.

Julia Fortune, who appeared with Zenith the Albino, was a British Secret Service agent. A product of the twenties she was not a particularly outstanding character. On the other hand, Eileen Hale, who also appeared during that period - it was a few weeks before the Royal Wedding of the late King (then Duke of York) to Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon, at Westminster Abbey - was a character quite original to the pages of the Blake papers and inspired much interest. By 1926 she was a firmly established favourite character, appearing regularly with her ex-Public schoolboy husband and crook in the pages of both the U.J. and S.B.L. It was the age of the Charleston, of jazz, of growing unemployment, and a revolutionary change in women's fashions. As the dolo queues grew longer, skirts grew shorter. As a representative of those days, who wore with elegance and much aplomb, the abbreviated garments which were so much a part of them, Eileen brought upon her dark, shingled head the wrath and contempt of Mrs. Bardell. "A brazen 'ussy!" was the landlady's irrevocable opinion, after a distasteful glance at the

girl crook's much exposed nether limbs, encased in stockings of the finest silk, the only kind her fastidious nature ever permitted her to grace them with. Yes, perhaps Mrs. Bardell was right; but brazen or not, Eileen Hale was a lively, likeable character, with a forceful personality, aeons of pluck, and sex in abundance.

Which brings us to a rather vexed question. What part did sex play in those early stories in the U.J. and S.B. Libraries? A small, yet vitally significant part, it must be admitted, despite a quite mistaken view amongst certain devotees that the subject was considered strictly taboo in the Blake field until just recently when Mr. W. Howard Baker took over the S.B.L. Actually, the policy of introducing a sex element into the stories commenced in the U.J. in 1928, in the Olga Nasmyth series. This comprised three stories concerning the activities of a sultry adventuress, who also passed under the name of Lola de Guise. Was it by chance that on all three covers the beauteous Lola was portrayed in deshabelle, twice in the arms of Sexton Blake; or did artist Eric R. Parker have specific instructions to draw the covers with a view to catching the public eye and obtaining more readers as a consequence? The cover of the first, showing Blake embracing Lola, in a nightdress and wrapper, at the foot of a bed, with, at the door of the bedroom a man with a horsewhip in his hand, presumably with intentions to use it upon the criminologist, must have brought a feeling of shock and disillusionment to those who thought him far above that kind of behaviour. To emphasise this situation, the drawing is practically duplicated on pages 10-11, except that in this instance the man with the whip has not yet put in an appearance and Blake is holding up Lola's falling nightdress, which has slipped with her dressing-gown to reveal her left shoulder. This and similar situations in later stories lifted the U.J. right out of the field of juvenile publications and deposited it into the adult class. No longer was it recognised as being a journal for readers of all ages.

In Mademoiselle Roxane Harfield, Teed introduced a character remarkably like that of Lola de Guise, who was the conception of Jack Lewis, the author of the famous Kestrel stories. Roxane of course was a modernised duplication of Yvonne, with a mission of vengeance against a syndicate of eight men who had swindled her mother out of her possessions and caused her untimely death by reason of the shock. The only difference was that Roxane was a Canadian whilst Yvonne was an Australian. The Roxane stories were more sophisticated and, in accordance with the new policy, included several situations of a nature which can only be construed as being sex inclined: such as in the fourth of the series showing an illustration on page 20 of Roxane lying on a bed with a coloured robe wrapped tightly around her by a solicitous Blake after her clothes had been torn to ribbons in a struggle with one, or more, of the men she had sworn retribution against. Then on page 12 of the fifth story in the series, Blake is seen holding Roxane in his arms, a disordered negligee about her. Again, in the sixth of the series, on page 11. A provocative picture, in all truth, showing Roxane lying unconscious on the bank of a stream, a few scraps of sodden lingerie clinging to her, being covered with a jacket by Blake in the garb of something resembling a cowboy outfit. But the most damaging situations were to come, with Blake's reputation and impeccability in the balance. Caught in a blackmail plot engineered by Felix Dupont, the seventh of the swindlers whom Roxane had sworn should pay the price of his treachery towards her dead mother, Blake found himself in a compromising situation when photographed on Roxane's yacht with the beautiful owner of the vessel, in nightdress and kimono, lying embraced in his arms. It was a

faked reproduction of a situation which had actually taken place, but the superimposed version of the incident which Dupont, with the aid of a beautiful French accomplice, one Sophie Beautemps, turned out, and with which he sought to blackmail Blake, was of a different nature altogether. In this, Blake and Roxane appeared to be caught in a suggestive pose, with the girl's light garb erased to make it appear that she wore hardly anything at all. In defence of his own good name and the honour of the girl of his present affections, Blake completely lost his usual air of sang-froid and went into the fray with the fury of a roaring lion. To his cost did Felix Dupont find it a dangerous practise to attempt to blackmail Sexton Blake! Of all the stories centred around Blake this had by far the strongest sex element. Note then the title, "Blackmail!" published 19 July, 1930, issue No. 1396.

Those who have read Mr. E.S. Turner's enlightening book on the old boys' papers, "BOYS WILL BE BOYS", will have noted his reference to the S.B.L. novel "The Case of the Night Lorry Driver", the story of a crime he compares to something one usually reads weekly in the News of the World. One finds it difficult to conceive how editor L.H. Pratt came to pass this one. One also wonders whether he approved of his artist's drawing of the cover of S.B.L. No. 183, the first of the 1949 issues, entitled "The Mystery of the Woman Overboard", by Walter Tyrer. E.R. Parker's illustration showed a girl in pyjama trousers only jumping from a ship's deck into the sea.

Of the remainder of those feminine characters who appeared at intervals was the exotic Marie Galante, the octoroon, high priestess of the secret rites of Voodooism, who exercised a powerful influence over the whole negro population. Owner of big estates in the interior of Hayti, her income was enormous, her power unquestioned. Her physical appeal was such that only a man of extraordinary will-power could resist her attentions, if directed upon him. By which it can be seen that she was quite a sexy character, indeed. But let her author, G.H. Teed, sum up her attributes in his own words.... "she was more like a nude that had submitted to being draped. Every curve, every line of her perfect form was in sinuous harmony. Every portion of her limbs and body revealed perfect harmony as she walked, swinging her hips. The flame-coloured silk of her draperies - it could not be called a dress - sheathed her like a skin, yet gave her complete freedom of movement...." Further comment here would tend to be superfluous.

Worthy of mention is ValiMata-Vali, mystery girl of origin and nationality, who, as the sensational dancer known as the Bird of Paradise, took Paris by storm, and then on meeting the master-criminal George Marsden Plummer, fell completely in love with him and became his partner in many daring coup. More slave than partner perhaps, for there was little she would not have done at Plummer's bidding. In one S.B.L. she went to the extent of shedding her clothes and becoming an artist's model. Needless to say, she was another of Teed's glamorous creations. As mentioned before, he was far and away the most popular of the Blake contributors. Was it because of his strictly adult style of writing, the appeal of his colourful feminine creations, or his fearless approach to plots which no other author would dare to proceed with, as in some of the Roxane stories, for example?

In ringing down the curtain other names pass fleetingly through my mind... Nirvana, the dancer and one-time sweetheart of Tinker... June Severance....Denise Drew, the carrier-pigeon....Muriel Marl, the blonde gang-girl from Hollywood.... Elsa von Kravitch....Sandra Sylvester, yet another adventuress.... Mademoiselle

Yvonne de Braselieu, French Secret Service agent, and one or two more.

We look back on them as having given us many happy hours of reading in the past, and we look in vain for those who have taken their places. Alas! there are none, excepting Paula Dane. Today the dearth in women characters in the Blake saga is remarkable. As a rule those from an earlier era seldom regain the popularity that was once theirs. Time, with its changes in taste, fashions and various other factors combine to defeat them. But in odd cases, where a character of a less incredulous type is concerned, the gulf in years can be bridged successfully.

With a completely empty stage ready to receive them, might not the experiment of reviving those favourites of the past - Marie Galante, Vali Mata-Vali and Mary Trent pay off? At least, nothing would be lost in making the attempt.

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A CHRISTMAS FANTASY

(In which it is told how Sexton Blake and Tinker met and, later, spent their first Christmas at Baker Street.)

By Elizabeth (Bette) J. Pate

INTRODUCTION

Since my first meeting with our good friends Sexton Blake and Tinker I have been rather curious about one thing, but, to date, my curiosity has not been satisfied. No doubt you, as a fellow Blake enthusiast, have wondered the same thing..... just what were the circumstances surrounding the first meeting of this famous pair? Yes, I know, various authors have given meagre scraps of information, just enough to whet our curiosity without ever satisfying it. Cecil Hayter, when writing "Sexton Blake at Oxford" gave his version of their meeting, but somehow this has never been widely accepted. Various authors, all working on the one theme have told us that Tinker, an orphaned newspaper boy, rendered Blake valuable service in an emergency and, as a result, was later adopted as the detective's assistant. No one, so far as I have been able to ascertain, has ever recorded the actual details of this historic event --- so, in imagination, will you join me as we journey back through time to the London of 1904, when a kindly Fate was drawing Tinker across the path of the man who was to become his beloved "Guv'nor"; London, at the beginning of the 20th century where Sexton Blake, a young man in his late twenties was just establishing himself in his career, whilst Tinker, a bright-eyes cockney waif, earned an honest living selling papers in an East End street.

This is my personal version of that fateful meeting, and I crave your indulgence if, in imagination, I have wandered too far from the path of fact.

To Baker Street then, and let our tale unfold!

CHRISTMAS EVE - 1957

Fully aware at last of what, for the past few moments, had been but a vague irritation, Sexton Blake came back to the present with a start. Laying aside his book he looked up to find Tinker regarding him with a baleful

expression from the top of the step-ladder.

"I say, gov'nor, this is too much! Here have I been calling for the past ten minutes while I've hung by a finger-tip, and you haven't taken the slightest notice of my deadly peril."

"Don't exaggerate, my dear Tinker", Blake said with a quiet laugh. "Exaggeration is the refuge of fools", he added, as he rose and proceeded to fill his pipe with leisurely movements. "Just what crisis has arisen in the decorating department?"

The ladder rocked dangerously as Tinker, forgetting his precarious position, struck a dramatic pose. In tones of outraged hauteur he proclaimed loftily "The artist has been bereft of his tools!"

As Blake looked around to see just what Tinker was babbling about he realised that his assistant was supporting a festoon of silver tinsel with half a dozen glass balls attached, and saw also that if Tinker moved down the ladder the whole scheme of decorations would collapse.

"For Pete's sake hurry, gov'nor!" Tinker added plaintively. "If I drop these glass 'thingummies' I'll really be in trouble with 'Ma' Bardell -- you know she regards them as family heirlooms."

"I always do love to see the place desiccated at Christmas time" Tinker mimicked with a wide grin, his tones a goodly imitation of their garrulous old housekeeper, Mrs. Martha Bardell.

Blake picked up the hammer which had caused all the trouble and passed it up to Tinker. For several moments he stood watching his assistant at work; then, as he climbed down, Blake gave a hand to manoeuvre the ladder beneath the crystal chandelier - which Tinker proceeded to decorate most effectively with silver stars and holly.

The rooms at Baker Street had already assumed a very gay and festive atmosphere, thanks to Tinker's enthusiastic efforts, and as Blake sank back into his saddlebag chair he could not restrain a smile as he caught sight of a sprig of mistletoe placed in a strategic position over the doorway.

"Yes, gov'nor, never miss an opportunity with 'les girls'," Tinker grinned as he followed Blake's glance. "My best girl always enjoys her Christmas kiss under the mistletoe - thrills Mrs. B's girlish heart", he added, chuckling at the vision these words evoked.

Blake reached out with a slippered foot to move Pedro from his favourite spot in front of the fender. "Come on, old fellow, out of the way". Reluctantly the aged bloodhound vacated his cosy spot whilst Blake leaned over for another log; then, when the fire was once more blazing merrily and his pipe going to his satisfaction, Blake leaned back and re-opened his book.

"Must be a good book, gov'nor", Tinker said from his high perch as the detective removed his marker from the page. "You were a million miles away when I called you just now".

Sexton Blake looked across at his assistant, with a quiet smile softening the thoughtful expression on his face. "It is one of my earliest case-books, Tinker; I wanted to compare some details of the ancient Judson-Pryke case of 1903 with a similar judgment given recently", he added, as Tinker's eyebrows shot up in an unspoken query.

"Ah, that takes me back to my carefree youth", Tinker said solemnly as he leaned on the top of the ladder. "I hope those pages are suitably inscribed with the date '1903 - B.T.' ", he said with a twinkle.

"And just what might that cryptic utterance mean?" Blake asked, playing along with Tinker's mood.

"Before Tinker, of course," replied that inimitable young man, with a chuckle in his voice.

Blake sighed loudly. "Ah yes, those were the days! Days of my youth too... before you hit Baker Street like an atom bomb and brought my grey hairs". He ducked swiftly as Tinker, incensed by this slanderous statement, retaliated with a well-aimed paper bell.

Pedro let out a yelp of protest as Blake's book, dislodged by the swift movement, fell on top of him. He turned mournful eyes with a look of reproach on the master who had so rudely disturbed his slumbers..... he too had been romping in the Elysian fields of his youth, as one does in dreams, and instead of an aged hound he had been a frolicsome pup, chasing butterflies in the fields, a favourite pastime before he had grown wise and sober with the years.

For the next quarter of an hour all was quiet in the Baker Street menage as Tinker put the finishing touches to the decorations, whilst Blake, deeply immersed in his book, read on, oblivious to the present.

As Tinker re-entered the cosy room after stowing away the ladder he stopped, head on one side, listening. "I say, I could have sworn then that I heard carol singers!"

Crossing to the windows he lifted the heavy crimson drapes and peered down into the street. "Looks as though we are going to have a real old-fashioned 'White Christmas', guv'nor", he said as he noticed the light snow which was falling. Noiselessly, in a million dancing flakes, it fell, powdering the ground and giving to the usually dingy roadway and buildings a picture-postcard loveliness.

And there, under the modern electric light standard, clustered a little band of youngsters in an old world tableau. Their fresh young voices, more eager than tuneful, were lifted in that ageless Christmas hymn "Oh, Come All Ye Faithful" as children have done through the ages and their singing echoed in Baker Street, filling that prosaic thoroughfare with all the wonder that is Christmas.

For several moments Tinker stood gazing down at the little band, then, as the carol drew to a close, he turned to Sexton Blake. "Guv'nor, come over here and have a look", he said softly, still under the spell of the singing. "Always makes me think of 'Merrie England' when I hear carol singers.....you know, blazing fire logs in ye olde manor house, a whole ox roasting on the hearth, with a jester of course, and perhaps an organ-grinder and all the ordinary folk joining in the fun of the fair.....a real old-fashioned Christmas, not the poor imitation most people have today".

Blake joined his assistant at the window and stood gazing down at the singers as the strains of "Good King Wenceslas" came floating up to them.....one of Mrs. Bardell's favourites, this, as she always had had a soft spot for "Good King Wencie's Lass, the poor wee mite" as the worthy old soul insisted, despite many attempts on Tinker's part to explain the carol to her.

Carried away on a wave of nostalgic memories the detective gazed down at this anachronism in modern London. He was seeing now, not the gleaming cars or taxicabs, the shiny red buses of today, but a London street of hansom cabs and horse-buses.....London in the days when, as a young man, he was struggling to establish himself in his unusual profession - when the name of Sexton Blake was known only to one or two police officers as a rather promising young detective - a detective who was most unorthodox in his methods - a man who was yet to taste the fruits of success and know the meaning of fame.

The singers, having finished-off the good king in fine style, raised their voices in the opening bars of "The First Noel", but now Blake was hearing

another voice, a cheery young cockney voice.....seeing a freckle-faced lad looking up at him, saying "That was a bit of orl'right, gov'nor -- first Christmas I've ever 'ad!"

He looked across at Tinker, standing at the other side of the window, and there was a far-away expression in the great detective's eyes.....he was seeing the young lad through the eyes of memory, not as the presentable young man who was now his valued assistant and loyal friend but as the youngster who, little more than a child, had come to Baker Street -- a waif of the streets, bright-eyed and alert, his natural cockney shrewdness sharpened by his battle for existence amongst the riff-raff of London's East End slums. A kindly destiny had brought them together in that eventful meeting on that distant December night - eventful for both of them - and on many occasions Blake had had good cause to bless that Fate, for he had often realised how empty his life would have been without the warm companionship and unswerving loyalty of the lad who had grown to be more than a son to him.

THAT FIRST CHRISTMAS

Wraiths of fog, like spectral figures from the nether regions swirled in macabre dance around the street lamp. In the dim patch of light cast by the flickering gas, a diminutive figure stood deeply engrossed in counting his small stock of newspapers.

On that bleak December night few were abroad at that late hour. The pitch at the terminus was a good one, but tonight business was slow and the youngster was half inclined to pack up.

At the sound of wheels rumbling on the cobbled street he looked up, hopeful of a few customers. But instead of the high-stepping team of bays he knew so well and the brightly lit bus behind, two hansom cabs, one well behind the other, had turned into the street.

The first cab passed the newsboy to draw up in the shadows beyond the radius of the street light. The heavily muffled passenger alighted swiftly, thrust a coin into the cabby's receptive hand, and with a furtive backward glance stepped on to the pavement.

"'Ere yer are, gov"; the urchin thrust a paper towards the prospective customer, only to be pushed roughly aside with a muttered curse. The stranger glanced up and down and noted another cab drawing level with him, but when this vehicle continued on at a fast pace he crossed the street, satisfied he had not been followed.

However, if he had seen the lithe figure which had slipped from the off-side of the second cab at the moment his had stopped, he would not have been so easy in mind. This figure had melted with silent speed into the enveloping fog and was now an invisible watcher.

"Thinks he's the bloomin' Rajah of Bong, he does," the newsboy muttered angrily, as he straightened his stock of papers and stepped back on to the pavement. He turned to watch the object of his indignation, and saw the furtive figure slip through the side entrance of a dingy residence.

With a knowing shake of his head the youngster turned his attention back to his pitch, stamping his feet in an effort to restore the circulation. The house in question had a bad reputation and the lad knew that many odd characters frequented its dingy rooms.

The sound of approaching footsteps showed that some other hardy soul was braving the elements. Alert for another customer the newsboy looked about him as the footsteps ceased abruptly, but he could see no one.

"That was a queer bloke", he muttered to himself, still thinking about the furtive stranger. He stared intently into the fog, his natural curiosity aroused, and then, after several moments, he realised that the darkest patch of shadow just beyond the radius of the light betrayed the presence of another human being; but as the youngster stood gazing intently at the spot, there was no movement to betray the watcher.

"Wonder if 'e's a copper?" the youngster asked himself. Hitching his bundle of papers under his arm he sauntered casually along the pavement in the direction of the watcher, the enveloping fog hiding his approach.

"Yer wants ter watch out, mister!" said a voice, and the figure in the shadows swung round to find a young lad regarding him with an intent look. "Them coves is dang'rous if they know yer on to their lay" he added, with a warning shake of his head which made him appear far older than his years.

Startled, the stranger turned to look down at his informant. "And just what makes you think I'm.....ahem....on to their 'lay' as you call it?" he asked, striving to hide his astonishment.

"If yer're after that cove what went into that 'ouse across the street, yer wants ter watch yer step". The youngster added, earnestly, "I sees a lot of comin's and goin's in that there place - keeps me eyes open when I'm sellin' me pipers 'ere on me pitch. I can tell a wrong'n a mile orf.....you're a gent for sure", he ended up, gratuitously, and with an engaging grin on his freckled face.

Amused at the youngster's turn of speech the watcher was also attracted by his keen-wittedness.

"Tell me this", he said quietly, still glancing across at the house in question, "these comings and goings you mentioned - how long have they been going on?"

"About two weeks, guv', and there've been some choice lags gathered there", the lad replied, with a knowing grin.

His questioner made as if to ask him something further but stopped abruptly. The front door of the house had opened, and even in the fog the watcher could make out two figures silhouetted against the faint light as they closed the door behind them and stood engaged in argument.

One, taller than the other, appeared to be the watcher's original quarry, but the other figure, muffled in a long ulster which effectively disguised his height and size was an unknown quantity.

For a long moment the watcher hesitated, unable to make up his mind - then, as the pair opposite settled their argument and shook hands in evidence of parting, he turned to the newspaper boy beside him.

In swift, urgent tones he spoke. "I'm a private detective.....my name is Sexton Blake and I'm following that chap. Now that the other one has come on the scene I'm curious as to what part he plays in the matter. Will you see if you can follow my man whilst I take up this fresh trail?"

It was a lightning decision and even as he spoke Blake regretted his impetuous action, but it was to prove one of the most fateful decisions of his life.

"I'm yer man, guv'nor", the young cockney said eagerly, and as Blake grasped his hand to seal the bargain he was conscious of some elusive quality about the lad which he found attracted him strongly.

Without further hesitation he pushed his visiting card and a sovereign into the youngster's hand. "Report to me at that address", he said quickly. "Take note of the street and house where he goes, and then come straight back to me...."

and he careful, laddie", this, with a quick pat on the shoulder, and then he was hurrying silently across the street to where his new quarry was fast disappearing into the dimly lit railway terminus.

The newsboy, known to his customers as Tinker, dumped his papers over an area railing and melted into the darkness in the direction of the cab rank towards which the other man had been heading. And when that 'gentleman's' cab bowled down the street a few minutes later it carried an unsuspected passengerTinker had struck his first trail!

.....

Late the following night, weary and dispirited after a fruitless journey north, Blake climbed the stairs of his Baker Street flat with lagging steps. Entering the cosy sitting-room he crossed to the open fire-place, and shedding his heavy coat he stood warming his chilled fingers by the welcome blaze.

His landlady came into the room, and in response to his enquiry as to whether there had been any messages for him during the day she shook her head negatively. Then, grumbling at "them there dratted stairs" the worthy woman departed to the kitchen regions to prepare a meal for Blake.

He, however, had little appetite for food, and having pushed aside his half eaten supper he got his pipe going to his satisfaction and settled himself in one of the deep fireside chairs. But he was restless and uneasy, and despite his weariness he got up again and began to pace the floor with agitated strides.

Blake had been strangely attracted toward the little waif, and now he was filled with vague forebodings on his behalf.

In the years to come he was to discover that Tinker was wise beyond his age, but as yet Blake was only on the threshold of that wonderful friendship which was to make such a difference in both their lives.

Vaguely he was aware that something was intruding on the quietness of the flat, and he suddenly realised that voices were raised in altercation beneath his window in Baker Street. He crossed over to the window, and as he peered down into the darkness he saw the fog had cleared and that the streak of light was coming from his own front door, whilst the loudest voice was that of his landlady. Then the door was slammed with an angry thud and all was darkness again. A sudden suspicion crossed Blake's mind - could it be a message from the lad?

With three long strides he crossed the room and flung open the door, to come face to face with his landlady still puffing and snorting with her combined exertion and indignation.

"What is it, my good woman?" Sexton Blake asked, impatiently.

"Which as there is a cheeky young varmint on your doorstep, Mr. Blake - wants to see you, his 'lordship' does", she snorted, with a toss of her head. "I'd 'ave sent 'im about his bus'ness with a good cuff on the ear, only he 'ad this 'ere card of yors....impudent young --" Her words were cut off abruptly as Blake grasped her by the arm.

"Is he still there?" he asked quickly, and as the landlady, bereft of speech by her indignation, nodded an affirmative, he brushed past her with a brief word of thanks to take the stairs three at a time.

He flung open the front door, and through the flakes of snow now beginning to fall he discerned a ragged bundle on the step. At the sound of the door being opened the bundle moved, and with a sudden sense of shock Blake realised that the bundle was a human body....it was the little urchin he had been waiting for; but now his clothes were torn and dirty, his face pinched and blue with cold.

As the lad stood there blinking in the light, Blake reached out a steadying hand to grasp him by the shoulder. He felt the lad wince beneath his touch; then the thin shoulders straightened, and in a voice which was far from steady the youngster spoke.

"Didn't think I'd make it, mister.....then when I gets 'ere I meets the old battle-axe - wouldn't let me in, she wouldn't", and then added, with a fleeting grin "didn't trust me with the gold plate".

Gently, Blake drew him inside and shepherded him upstairs whilst he shoed the open-mouthed landlady to the kitchen for some hot broth for the half frozen lad.

And not until the youngster had warmed himself at the fire and had eaten his fill of the broth did Blake permit him to make his report.

"That cove yer wanted follow'd, guv'nor", he began, "he caught a cab..... didn't know I was on the back of it.....took me right to the door, all free" he added, with a touch of cockney humour. "I waited about a bit and 'e came out again - 'ad a 'toff' with 'im this time. They went down to the docks with 'yors truly' on their tail - they made for Old Sol's warehouse in Wells Street - stayed there till after midnight. I crawled in through a winder and listened to 'em....." And so he continued his report, giving Blake the clue he needed to shed light on the one facet of the case which so far had eluded him.

"Would've been 'ere sooner", Tinker concluded, "only them there coves left a 'lock-out', and when I comes down from the winder 'e caught me - thought I was sneakin' around to pinch somethin', he did - beat me up and pinched the Jimmy o' Goblin you give me, guv'nor, but I 'ad yer card 'idden in me cap so 'e didn't see that. Then 'e shuts me up in a store-room, in case I squeaked to the cops about what was in them bundles and cases. When I woke up it was dark, and it took me hours to get out of that rotten place. Then I reckons you'd be waitin' to 'ear from me, so I 'oofted it back 'ere".

With his money gone it had taken quite a bit of ingenuity and not a little pluck to reach Baker Street so quickly in that weather, but the obstinate streak in his nature, which was to stand him in good stead in later years, had forced Tinker to keep on.

"An' that's all", he finished, with a yawn of weariness. "Be gettin' back to me 'digs' now, guv'nor".

Blake rose and held out his hand. "You know, lad, you've done a really first class job for me, and I don't even know your name".

"They call me 'Tinker', guv'nor", the youngster said quietly.

"Your folks call you 'Tinker'? Blake queried politely.

"I ain't got no folks. I 'kips' with Ma Smith down 'Ammersmith way but she ain't exactly family - got eleven kids 'erself, so she don't worry none over me".

Tinker slid out of the big saddlebag chair and stood up, swaying uncertainly. With an effort of will he straightened his thin shoulders, and with a quaint dignity held out his hand to the detective.

"Be on me way now.....thanks for the meal - the old lady is a good 'babblin' brook'" he added, with a quick grin.

Blake grasped the youngster's hand in a firm grip - for a long moment he stood looking down into that frank and open young face, feeling again the same strange attraction he had experienced at their first meeting.

"Tinker", he said earnestly, "you've no folks to worry if you don't go home. It's late now, so why not spend the night here.....there's a bed to spare if you'd like to stay".

For a long, fateful moment the lad stood silent, then "I said yer were a

gent, and I reckon I was dead right, guv'nor".

And so Tinker came to Baker Street!

A swift call to Scotland Yard put Blake in touch with his good friend Will Spearing, and a successful raid was made on Old Sol's warehouse. And Tinker, blissfully unaware of the last act of the drama in which he had played an important role, slept the sleep of exhaustion.

At a late breakfast the following morning, Blake watched with an amused smile whilst his young guest waded through an enormous meal.

At last Tinker pushed his plate away and sighed contentedly. "The old girl does yer well" - this with a grin, which somehow took away any hint of disrespect from his remark.

Blake laughed, finding the youngster's grin infectious, then his features became serious. "Tinker", he said earnestly, "what do you plan to do in the future?"

The lad looked at Blake, puzzled at the sudden turn of the conversation. "Dunno rightly, mister, but I don't aim to sell papers all me life".

Then Blake took the plunge and voiced the thought which had been at the back of his mind since their first meeting. "How would you like to work with me, Tinker - there's a place for you here, as my assistant, if you want to stay!"

"Coo, lummie, guv'nor.....me a real live 'tec!" the youngster breathed in amazement. "Yer don't really mean it, do yer, mister?"

"I've never been more serious in my life". Blake regarded the lad steadily as he spoke.

There was a long moment of silence, pregnant with potentialities.

Then..... "If yer're sure yer wants it that way, it's a deal, guv'nor", Tinker said, and he extended his hand to seal the bargain, still rather breathless at the way his whole existence had suddenly turned topsy-turvy.

Blake gripped his outstretched hand. "It's a deal, Tinker", he said, solemnly. "From now on we are partners!"

The next day, whilst everyone rushed about in frantic haste to finish their Christmas shopping, Blake started his all over again - this time with Tinker - recapturing through him the joyousness of Christmas which is found in the very young (and the young at heart).

Wide-eyed with wonder at the splendour of the West End shops Tinker returned to Baker Street with Blake, both laden with the many gifts the detective had chosen for the lad. Tinker's own possessions, collected from his 'digs', had proved to be very meagre, and so, as befitted his new position, Blake had outfitted him completely.

And that night, whilst the bells of nearby St. George's Church were pealing in joyful celebration of the Eve of Christmas, Tinker, arrayed in some of his new finery, presented himself for Blake's inspection.

With a critical eye the detective surveyed the lad..... the transformation had been almost miraculous..... and as Tinker looked at himself in the mirror he said, over his shoulder, to Blake, "Reg'lar 'andy-pandy, ain't I, guv'nor - fit to bow to 'Is Majesty, I am". His eyes twinkled as he spoke, and then he joined in Blake's laughter at his quaint cockney idiom.

As they chatted in front of the fire Blake learned a little of Tinker's early life, and - more by what the lad left unsaid than otherwise - he came to understand the hardship and loneliness of his existence.

And it was of those lonely years that Blake was thinking when, later that night, he entered Tinker's room to bid him good-night.

He crossed to the window, where the lad was standing, and with his hand on

the youngster's shoulder gazed down at the little band of carol singers in Baker Street. Then, as they stood there together in unspoken companionship, listening to those ageless hymns of goodwill, Blake made a silent vow that in the years to come he would do all in his power to make up for those lost years of Tinker's childhood.

At luncheon on Christmas Day Blake watched, silently amused, as Tinker - with innate good manners - unfolded his table napkin, and with great aplomb faced up to the rather daunting array of cutlery which the landlady had laid out in really grand style. The youngster's enjoyment of the rich food was most gratifying, and even Blake's landlady thawed a little at the sight of his happy young face and the infectious sound of his laughter. When, at the end of the meal, he turned to Blake with a satisfied sigh and said "That was a bit of orl right..... it's the first Christmas I've ever had, gov'nor", Blake laughed with him; but there was a lump in the detective's throat and a suspicious moisture in his eyes.

And later that day, when several of the detective's old friends arrived for dinner, Blake introduced his new assistant and watched approvingly as the lad acknowledged the introductions with a quaintly dignified little bow before shaking hands.

That first Christmas together at Baker Street was very different to the many they were to share in later years, but to both of them it was to be their best remembered..... for on that occasion each received the gift they were to value above all others - for Blake, it meant the beginning of the wonderful devotion and loyalty which Tinker was to give to him in the years ahead, and for the lad, the beginning of the rich, full relationship with the man who was to become more than a father to him.

* * * * *

F. ADDINGTON SYMONDS

An article will appear in *Blakiana* (C.D.) in the New Year describing an evening spent (in company with Josie and Herbert Lockenby) with this well-known, late A. Press editor and Blake author.

Meanwhile, for those who have been seeking the information and others who desire accurate details of Mr. F. Addington Symonds' work in the S.B.L., both in his own name and his equally well-known pen-name "Earle Danesford", here is the information taken from the author's file copies:

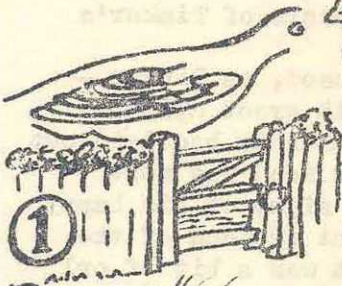
<u>By F. Addington Symonds:</u>	1st Series	164	"The Golden Casket"
	" "	176	"The Iron Claw"
	" "	190	"The Valley of Fear"
	" "	211	"The Red Dwarf"
	" "	215	"The Case of the Twisted Trail"
<u>By "Earle Danesford":</u>	1st Series	372	"By Order of the Soviet"
	" "	378	"The Case of the Golden Stool"
	2nd "	47	"Out of the Fog!"
	" "	96	"The Case of the Hold-Up King"
	" "	137	"The Man from Australia"

Note: It is regretted that in the C.D. Annual for 1953 the story "The Case of the Hold-Up King" was wrongly accredited to Gwyn Evans.

Leonard Packman.

Picture Quiz of Some Greyfriars Characters

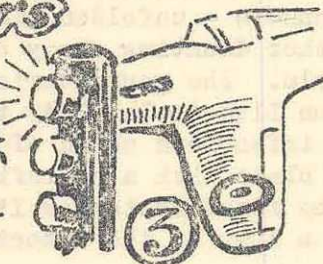
By Bob Whiter



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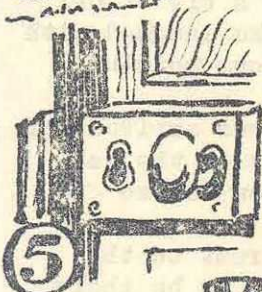
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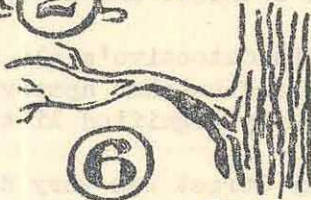
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PAST TENSE OF KNOW



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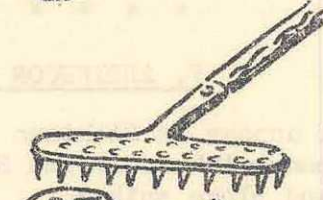


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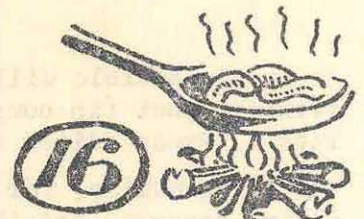


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Make Mine



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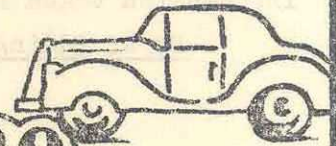


18



Captain

19 RUM



20

Answers on page 118

JIM THE PENMAN

the story of one of the most outstanding characters in schoolboy fiction.

By CHARLES CHURCHILL

* * *

Of the many and various characters invented by E.S. Brooks, Douglas James Sutcliffe, ex solicitor, must surely rank as one of the most outstanding. He was obviously well educated, as he was a practising solicitor until he turned to forgery and was unmasked by Nelson Lee. He had the unfortunate (for him) gift of being able to copy exactly any handwriting at first sight, and all of his attempts at fraud were carried through with supreme confidence, colossal nerve and utter ruthlessness. Nelson Lee and Nipper, ably supported by Inspector Morley, fought many bitter rounds with Jim before he was finally put under "restraint".

In the pre-St. Franks days of the "Nelson Lee Library", we had campaigns against various criminals and criminal organisations - The Green Triangle and The Circle of Terror, Mortimer Crane, the Mystery Man of Lhasa, The Black Wolf, and the Eileen Dare series. I think, however, that the Jim the Penman stories rank at the top because the plots were more ingenious and imaginative. For instance, in the Eileen Dare series, the girl detective frequently became involved in a plot by chance, but in the "Jim" stories, cases were usually brought to Nelson Lee for investigation and thus commenced in a more acceptable way to the reader.

After Jim was finally incarcerated, Nelson Lee and Nipper were installed at St. Frank's. Some little while after this event, Inspector Jameson called to see Nelson Lee, who, however, was out, so Nipper told him. This takes place in N.L. old series No. 168, and to show Nipper's opinion of Jim, let me quote verbatim the conversation that ensued.

"Well, the fact is, Nipper, I have a piece of news for him - news that will be particularly interesting, I believe," said Inspector Jameson. "I was passing this way, and I thought I would call. A convict has escaped from the prison on the other side of Bannington Moor -".

"Phew!" whistled Watson. "Is he prowling about this neighbourhood, sir? When did he escape?"

"Last night, my boy."

"Then it's queer we haven't heard of it," I remarked.

"Not at all," replied Jameson. "The news has not been publicly made known, owing to the extraordinary circumstances of the escape. The authorities do not intend to publish the fact until all hope of recovering the convict has passed. I'm not at all sure that I ought to have told you, but if Mr. Lee can trust you, I suppose I can."

"That's logic, sir!" I grinned. "But why should the escape of a giddy convict interest my gov'nor?"

"Because he was the cause of the fellow being arrested," replied the

inspector. "The man is, I believe, one of your chief enemies, Nipper."

"Oh!" I exclaimed, interested. "What's his name?"

"Sutcliffe - "

"Sutcliffe!" I yelled. "You - you don't mean Jim - "

Inspector Jameson nodded.

"Exactly!" he agreed. "Jim the Penman is at liberty!"

"Jim the Penman!" I echoed, startled.

"Bogad! Who is he anyhow?" asked Sir Montie, mildly.

"Who is he?" I repeated. "Why, you ass, Douglas James Sutcliffe is the cleverest forger in the world - bar none! The gov'nor and I had a tremendous job with Jim the Penman. We collared him two or three times, but he always managed to escape."

"He was badly injured when he fell into the hands of the police on the last occasion," said the inspector. "Just recently, however, he has recovered his full strength, and last night managed to get away."

"Without help?" I asked.

"Oh, no!" said Jameson. "He was helped considerably, Nipper. It is only too clear that outside confederates prepared everything to the last detail. But we can't trace him, although the whole country is being scoured. Tell Mr. Lee when you see him - he will be interested."

The inspector continued on his way, and we stood in the lane looking at one another, more than startled by this item of news. At least, I was startled. Tregellis-West and Watson knew practically nothing about Jim the Penman.

"Did Mr. Lee really collar him?" asked Watson.

"Of course he did," I replied. "It was a near thing, even then. Jim tried to escape in an aeroplane, but he crashed down and half killed himself. The gov'nor and I have had our most exciting adventures fighting Jim the Penman."

This last sentence just about sums up the picture in a nutshell. Space forbids me discussing all the stories fully, but I am giving a brief resumé of most of them with a larger account of those I consider to be the best. My descriptions are necessarily short and cannot do full justice as each story runs for anything between 30 and 50 pages in the Nelson Lee Library, so I have only been able to give bare outlines of the plots in most cases. I would like, here, to thank Jack Wood for kindly lending me several Penman stories missing from my collection, to enable me to make the story as complete as possible. Between the two of us, we have all except two of the Penman stories in the Nelson Lee so now for the factual history.

Jim first appeared in old series No. 39 dated 4/3/16 - "The Lightning Clue". Although the disclosure of the real identity of the forger was not until the last chapter, he actually appears in the first. He calls on Nelson Lee in his real character of Sutcliffe, a solicitor, to obtain the great detective's assistance for his employer, Sir Stephen Trundle, who has been the victim of an audacious forgery. In due course Nelson Lee discovers the identity of the forger (to the great amazement of the baronet who never dreamt of suspecting his own solicitor) through a flash of lightning imprinting the forger's likeness on a pane of glass. This, as the author points out, is a scientific possibility. Jim then shows his ruthlessness by endeavouring to finish off Nelson Lee and Nipper by hanging, with a forged "farewell" note pinned to Lee's coat, implying suicide. However, the two escape this fate only to find that Jim has disappeared. This is quite a good yarn, but as in so many series of stories, the best was to follow.

In No. 42 we find Jim forging a will and all the necessary signatures.

No. 45 shews Jim forging marriage lines in an attempt to steal £20,000. Lee captures him, but he escapes from prison.

No. 49 gives us Jim in an unusual role. It is in 1916, the first World War of course, and Jim forges some war orders which hand over to German spies a supply of new super machine guns. However, at the eleventh hour, Jim gives way to patriotic qualms and by a further piece of forgery, saves the guns from the enemy, and, incidentally, Nelson Lee and Nipper as well.

In No. 51 is an unusual plot. Old Peter Gerrard had two sons, Robert and Vincent. Some years earlier, Robert had been charged with a murder and found guilty, but was supposed to have been killed in a railway accident on his way to prison after having been reprieved from the death sentence. His father, overcome by the disgrace, moves to a remote cottage on the Yorkshire Moors and lives the life of a hermit, with only one old manservant, his wife having died earlier. The other son, Vincent, he refuses to acknowledge, blaming him for leading Robert astray. The old man is reputed to have a large fortune kept in the cottage, and our old friend, Sutcliffe, gets to hear of it. He decoys the old man away and endeavours to impersonate him and take his place at the cottage with the obvious intentions. The old manservant, Jakes, however, becomes suspicious, and thinking all is not well, calls in Nelson Lee. The Penman is soon unmasked, but escapes, and then Lee finds the son, Robert, who is supposed to be dead, hidden upstairs in the cottage. He had not died in the railway accident, but had changed clothes and identity with another man who had been killed in the accident. His father had, since, kept him hidden. Just then a message arrives saying his brother, Vincent, had died in America leaving behind a confession that he was the murderer, thus clearing Robert. Jim does not play a very large part in this episode, but the story is quite a good one.

No. 59 shows Jim in his most callous and ruthless mood. He manages to trap Lee and Nipper and leaves them tied to the rails in a disused tube train sector, all set to be electrocuted when the current is turned on. The two are saved in the nick of time but Jim escapes with a large sum of money.

No. 54. By wholesale forgery, Jim arranges for a large quantity of gold bullion to be unshipped from a liner at Southampton and loaded in a bogus mail van. This plan comes off as also does a plan to decoy Nelson Lee elsewhere at the vital time. However, Nipper while on a motor boat run, spots Jim dumping the cases of bullion in the sea, and brings Lee and the police on the scene, but Jim just escapes capture.

No. 62, I consider, contains one of the best of all the Penman stories - "The Amazing Case of the Lost Explorer". Incidentally the front cover of this number is, I think, one of the best of the first hundred Lees at least. It is a splendid drawing of Nelson Lee in full evening dress, carrying his "topper", listening at a doorway. The cover is printed in orange and black and is very effective. It is really quite outstanding as many of the Lees in the early days and indeed much later, had quite poorish drawings on the front cover. As to the story, it concerns one, Arnold Collingwood, an explorer. This gentleman had disappeared some seven years previously while on an expedition into the remote interior of central South America. As the years passed and no news came of the expedition, it was assumed that all had perished. Then, out of the blue, Professor Alexander Collingwood, the explorer's brother, receives a letter saying

that he and two of his party had returned from the wilds and would shortly be home. In due course the three turned up and then the explorer held public meetings to endeavour to raise funds for a new expedition to South America, where he said he had found very rich territory and where the rest of his original party were imprisoned by natives. He wished to rescue them and then by forming a company, develop the territory and so bring rich dividends to anyone who cared to take up shares. He offered 250,000 shares at £1 each. Of course, in reality, this gentleman is actually our old friend, Jim the Penman, in one of his most elaborate deceptions. Professor Collingwood, incidently, being entirely ignorant of the fact that he has a "bogus" brother, as he had not seen him for over ten years. Unfortunately for Jim, Nelson Lee attends one of his "share pushing" meetings, and, interested, calls on him afterwards to take up some shares. Unknown to Jim, Lee had met the real Arnold Collingwood, years earlier, so in the course of conversation, discovers a discrepancy in Jim's answers. Being suspicious, but not guessing the identity of the "fake" explorer, Lee listens to a conversation between Jim and his accomplice and discovers the truth. This is the incident portrayed on the front cover. Lee, on his way to report to Inspector Morley at Scotland Yard, is poisoned by means of a blowpipe operated by one of Jim's men and is taken to hospital. Nipper's prompt action in bringing Professor Collingwood with the necessary antidote in time, saves the situation. The story ends here, with Jim disappearing with about £150,000, having been accidently warned of his danger by Professor Collingwood.

The sequel to all this is in No. 64 - "The Plague Ship" in which Jim kidnaps Lee and Nipper and leaves them imprisoned in an empty ship in the North Sea. A contrivance is left by him which is timed to release a deadly active microbe of plague. Before this could happen, however, up comes a German submarine and sinks the ship. Lee and Nipper manage to swim for it, and then get on a large wooden grating floating in the sea. Just then a British destroyer turns up, sinks the sub and rescues them. Lee then traces Jim to a lighthouse but the Penman again evades him by diving into the sea and making off in a boat. Most of the missing £150,000 is discovered in the lighthouse plus some other loot Jim had stored there.

These two well written and interesting yarns show Jim's persuasive eloquence and cool cheek beguiling whole audiences of prominent people into buying bogus shares and his ruthlessness in planning for Lee and Nipper to be left helpless on a plague ridden ship.

(continued on page 119)

ANSWERS TO PICTURE QUIZ (Page 114)

- | | |
|------------|------------|
| 1. Wingate | 11. Fish |
| 2. Loder | 12. Tubb |
| 3. Redwing | 13. Walker |
| 4. Potter | 14. Scott |
| 5. Locke | 15. Rako |
| 6. Twigg | 16. Fry |
| 7. Hilton | 17. Dabney |
| 8. Price | 18. Myers |
| 9. Nugent | 19. Morgan |
| 10. Singh | 20. Carr |

In No. 66 a sample of Jim's cruelty has Nelson Lee tied to the sails of an old windmill, which, when turned, would crash him against a large rock. Nipper comes to the rescue at the critical moment but Jim escapes, again minus the loot.

Another very good tale with a really amusing opening chapter is in No. 72. Jim hears of a supposed treasure buried under an old Martello tower, and to get Nelson Lee out of the way, sends him a parcel bomb. However, dog chasing cat causing postman to slip on housemaid's soapy floor, sends said parcel into housemaid's bucket of water, so all's well. Later, Jim, losing his temper for once attacks Lee with knife, but is thwarted by Nipper. We then have a miniature naval battle, a seaplane chase, Jim making off by car, same car crashing and Jim escaping but once more minus loot.

No. 74 has another unique plot. Jim kidnaps Sir Oswald Mastin, a wealthy man, impersonates him and then "dies" to all appearances, by means of a drug, leaving a forged will in which the Mastin jewels are bequeathed to a confederate. Lee traces Jim to the St. Clement's Caves near Hastings and after being left helpless to die in the caves, escapes by Nipper's aid and manages to arrive at the safe deposit just as Jim and his confederate emerge with the jewels. Result - Jim is clapped into gaol once more, only to escape later. (The caves are still there - J.W.).

No. 78 marks a milestone in the story of Jim the Penman, for, in this, he teams up with Professor Zingrave for the first time. We have a host of other characters including Eileen Dare, Douglas Clifford and his wife, (Zingrave's daughter) and Sidney Bradford, the crooked solicitor featured in the Eileen Dare stories. It is the first Xmas number of the Nelson Lee and runs for 64 pages (all for 2d.). Space prevents me from giving full details of the story but the two arch crooks only just escape retribution in the end.

No. 80. In this Jim turns pirate. He steals, of all things, a yacht, and holds up a cargo boat in the Atlantic and "lifts" a load of valuable minerals. Lee sets out in chase in a submarine, overtakes the stolen yacht and captures Jim and the loot. The Penman manages to escape once more, by getting through a porthole and diving into the sea. (This porthole must have been larger than the ones I have seen - and I've seen a few!!). I cannot say how he was rescued as the next story in No. 84, "Tracked to the Trenches", is one I have, unfortunately, never managed to obtain.

In No. 94 Jim appears again, this time in the role of the Pantom Monk of Montessor. He plans to get hold of a valuable collection of gold ornaments and plate, almost priceless. After many adventures, one of which resulted in Lee being cast into a deadly mire, and rescued by Nipper, and another where Nipper is buried in a tunnel and is released by Lee, Jim escapes again, but this time with the loot.

No. 99, the last of the original Jim the Penman series, gives us his most ambitious scheme of all, but which fails and leads to his downfall. Jim sells the Montessor gold to fellow crooks, but while attempting to melt it down, one of them gets badly burnt. They kidnap a Dr. Mellborne to attend to him, but the doctor after this, escapes and enlists Nelson Lee's aid to solve the mystery. Lee traces the thieves den and so recovers the treasure. Jim then enters the scene and manages to decoy Lee and Nipper to a cottage on the fringe of Hendon aerodrome. He then casts them into a well filled with ten feet of water and sets fire to the cottage overhead. Just a further sample of his callous ruthlessness.

He then sets off to steal a million pounds worth of bullion which is on a train to Liverpool en route to the U.S.A. By means of forgery right and left, Jim manages to get the train sent to Liverpool six hours earlier than it should have done, and put into a siding. He then turns up and covered by further forged authority, commences to unload the gold. However, Lee and Nipper are released from their predicament by local cottagers and by flying to Liverpool in Lee's own plane, arrive at the siding at the crucial moment. Jim makes a run for it and manages to get in Lee's plane and take off. Being too hurried, he stalls the plane and crashes. When the wreck is examined, the Penman is found badly injured and helpless. So, at last, he is safely in the hands of retribution, and we come to the end of a really splendid series.

The second part, as it were, of the Penman story is, in my opinion, not nearly so good, being treated piecemeal. In Nos. 167/169, we read how Zingrave's Circle of Terror engineer Jim's escape from a prison near St. Frank's. He shelters, disguised, in a cottage on Bannington Moor, but Nelson Lee gets on the track and Jim is ultimately recaptured. In No. 169, by the way, we read of the famous Handforth in his first exploit as amateur detective.

In Nos. 489 to 496 are short stories featuring the Penman. He escapes from prison again and enters on a campaign of revenge against those who were concerned in his sentence and imprisonment. Mr. Justice Dornington who was the judge at his trial, the prosecuting counsel, Sir Rodney Marshall, K.C., Col. Millbank, governor, and chief warder Hulton of Portmoor prison, also Chief Detective Inspector Lennard of the Yard are all the butt of Jim's enmity. Why Lennard should appear, I don't know, because in the original series it was usually Inspector Morley who was involved.

The above appeared in 1924 and eight years were to pass before we heard of Jim again. In the second new series 102/105 he appears, again allied with Zingrave, but after only four weeks is again captured. As I said before, the later stories never reached the standard of those early ones.

On consideration, I think E.S. Brooks created a very notable character in Douglas James Sutcliffe, who, without doubt, was one of the most amazing rogues in schoolboy fiction.

I would like to say that I hope my notes on Jim the Penman have proved of interest to all Nelson Lee fans. The early numbers are, I know, very scarce and probably very few people have read any Jim stories since the time of publication, so I trust my little effort has succeeded in recalling some long forgotten stories to those who took the Nelson Lee in the early days. May it also remind "St. Frank's" fans that the Nelson Lee was a jolly good paper long before that famous seat of learning was thought of. Should any Sexton Blake supporters have deigned to read these notes, perhaps they, too, will appreciate that the early Nelson Lee detective stories were quite on a par with those in the Union Jack and Sexton Blake Library, as they should be, considering more than one author wrote for all these publications.

I append here a list of all papers in which appeared stories featuring the Penman. I have been unable to give any notes on those in the Nugget and Detective Library as I have never seen any of them, but our thanks are due to Jack Murtagh of New Zealand for kindly turning up and supplying the information shewn.

Nelson Lee Library stories featuring "Jim the Penman"

(checked by Jack Wood)

Old "small" Series

- | | |
|---|---|
| No. 39 "The Lightning Clue" | No. 66 "The Mystery of the 10-20 Express" |
| No. 42 "The Great Will Forgery" | No. 72 "The Secret of the Martello Tower" |
| No. 45 "The Forged Marriage Lines" | No. 74 "The Caves of Silence" |
| No. 49 "The Forged War Orders" | No. 76 "The Affair of the Nabob's Jewels" |
| No. 51 "The Mystery of the Moor" | No. 78 "A Christmas of Peril" |
| No. 54 "The Mystery of the Mail Van" | No. 80 "A Mid-Atlantic Mystery" |
| No. 59 "The Ribbon of Light" | No. 84 "Tracked to the Trenches" |
| No. 62 "The Amazing Case of the Lost
Explorer" | No. 90 "Momm the Miser" |
| No. 64 "The Plague Ship" | No. 94 "The Monk of Montessoro" |
| | No. 99 "The Mystery of the Grey Car" |

Featuring St. Frank's and Jim the Penman

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| No. 167 "The Moor House Mystery" | No. 168 "The Cottage on the Moor" |
| No. 169 "Handforth - Detective" | |

Short stories featuring Jim but not St. Frank's

- | | |
|--|--|
| No. 489 "The Green Flash" | No. 493 "The Man from Headquarters" |
| No. 490 "Professor Zingrave's Last Card" | No. 494 "The Scotland Yard Man's Ordeal" |
| No. 491 "The Return of Jim the Penman" | No. 495 "Jim the Penman's Great Coup" |
| No. 492 "The Case of the Vanished K.C." | No. 496 "Nipper v. Jim the Penman" |

Featuring Jim the Penman, Professor Zingrave and St. Frank'sSecond New Series

- | | |
|---|--|
| No. 102 "The House of Secrets" | No. 104 "The Return of Professor Zingrave" |
| No. 103 "The Mystery of the Smuggler's
Cave" | No. 105 "The Captives of Crag House" |

The Boys' Friend Library (4d.)Featuring Jim the Penman and Professor Zingrave (not St. Frank's)

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| No. 649 "The Green Triangle" | No. 656 "The Return of Zingrave" |
| (these were published in 1923) | |
| (Reprints of Nugget Weekly series - J.W.) | |

The Nugget Weekly (1920-21)

(Information supplied by Jack Murtagh)

- | |
|--|
| No. 24 "Zingrave's New Ally" |
| No. 25 "Blue Glass and a Bootlace" |
| No. 26 "The Exploit of Zingrave's Army" |
| No. 27 "The Adventure at Henford Grange" |

The Detective Library (1920)

(Details supplied by Jack Murtagh)

- No. 29 "The Return of Jim the Penman
- The Sealed Room"
- No. 30 "The Forged Treaty"
- No. 31 "The Death Chair"
- No. 32 "Nelson Lee in the Potteries"
- No. 33 "The Affair of the £10,000
Platinum Theft"

- No. 34 "The Golden Football Casket"
- No. 35 "Nelson Lee in Lancashire"
- No. 36 "Nipper's Coup"
- No. 37 "Jim the Penman's Paris Coup"
- No. 38 "The Last Bout"

And there, as far as I know, are all the stories where Jim was featured.

In conclusion may I wish all those who have kindly waded through my screed, the compliments of the season, and good luck in 1958.

I will sign off by quoting Jim the Penman's own words to Nelson Lee in No. 99 old series Nelson Lee Library - Page 22, relative to himself -

"Cheek for the most part - sheer audacity. Audacity, my dear Lee, has been my strong point. I have cheek enough for anything."

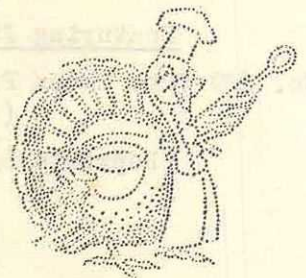


TO ALL C.D. READERS ~



*Christmas Greetings
and Best Wishes*

from



THE PROPRIETOR AND STAFF

o f

YORK DUPLICATING SERVICES



THE JOHN CREASEY STORY

By JACK WOOD

* * *

Recently I picked up two new paper-backed Jay Books in which the later pages contained advertisements for future publications. Among them were several by John Creasey, one of my favourite authors and the writer of the particular books I was reading, but two names, Jeremy York and Norman Deane struck me as most unfamiliar in their context. I therefore decided to put the matter to the test, and, at the same time, to solve a long-standing problem of my own - did Mr. Creasey write the Nighthawk series attributed to John Brearley in the Nelson Lee Library? I may add that the editor of the N.L.L. stated that John Brearley was not Edwy Searles Brooks.

However, by return of post came a most charming letter from Mr. Creasey, who says, "No, I didn't reach the heights of Nelson Lee. And it must be fifteen years since I did a Blake, but how valuable they were in those days when bread and butter was the first objective."

"I get as much kick out of writing today as I did years ago. And just as much kick out of hearing from readers, too."

Even more interesting, however, are Mr. Creasey's enclosures. First, a complete list of books written under his various pen-names, which he writes "will amuse you". Personally, I think the verb should be "amaze". Here is the summarised list:-

As John Creasey - 36 Toff stories; 21 of Inspector West; 30 Dept. Z novels; and 19 Dr. Falfrey yarns.

As Michael Halliday - 33 novels.

As Anthony Morton - 31 stories of The Baron.

As Jeremy York - 19 mystery novels.

As Gordon Ashe - 33 stories of "Rock" Dawlish.

As Norman Deane - 21 mystery stories.

As Peter Manton - 12 thrillers.

As Richard Martin - 2 mysteries.

As J.J. Maric - 3 "Gideon of the Yard" stories.

As Tex Riley - 14 Westerns.

As William K. Reilly - 13 Westerns.

and As Ken Ranger - 2 Westerns.

Press comment on some of these works by "other authors" includes "Since he won £1,500 with the first Baron book, Anthony Morton's stories of this great character have been translated into nine different languages"; Jeremy York was once declared "to have beaten the field when Agatha Christie was a runner";

"Patrick Dawlish now known as Rock, is one of the greatest British thriller heroes, in direct line of descent from Bulldog Drummond"; Michael Halliday "is an impossible bedfellow for depression"; Peter Manton is the "nearest approach I've met to Edgar Wallace"; and "another tribute to Mr. Dean's imagination and dexterity".

Truly, as his motto says, Creasey books are on top of the world, and this former Sexton Blake author has gone a very long way since the Toff (no relation to Talbot) established his name as a novelist.

He was born in Surrey in 1908, the year which also witnessed the birth of Billy Bunter, and left a London school at 14 with the ambition to write for a living; his family told him not to waste his time!

In 1932, 700 rejection slips of everything from books to blank verse later, his first book was published. It sold 518 copies. To date he has had published over $2\frac{1}{2}$ times as many books as Edgar Wallace, with nearly 2,000 different editions in French, Italian, German, Dutch, Norwegian, Swedish, Spanish, Portuguese, Afrikaans, Polish, Czech, Russian and Rounanian.

He travels three months in every year, and spends six months every third or fourth year in America where he is the first Englishman to be elected to the Board of Mystery Writers of America and the only English member of Western Writers of America. He was the founder-chairman of the Crime Writers' Association in this country.

Now he owns a literary agency, publishes a monthly mystery magazine, and a firm devoted chiefly to paper-back editions of his books.

When not working (!) he is completely relaxed. He weighs 240 pounds, doesn't drink alcohol, gave up smoking five years ago (his daily cigareete ration was at one time 65), and loves family, photography, motoring, travel, people who read thrillers, cricket, the films - and work!

Mr. Creasey, who recently came sixth out of 137 in a national popularity contest among crime writers, began writing thrillers because he enjoyed reading them, and still enjoys the reading and the writing.

The original reason for using several pen names, he writes in one of his monthly magazines, was one of hunger. He couldn't sell enough books under his own name, but publishers were happy to take others under pseudonyms. Soon he began to find other great advantages. He could attempt to write in different styles and different types of story. The Baron books by Anthony Morton became a much greater success in the first few years than the Toff, although the Toff has overhauled the Baron today.

"I'm sure of one thing: the use of my pen names has helped me to keep a fresh outlook, which is vital in writing stories of incident and action".

Yet the same advantages bring their own problems, for novels are not usually written in a few odd moments. They take time. In reply to a recent query about spy stories, Mr. Creasey suggested that the lack of concentration by modern writers on the spy story was not because it had lost its appeal. His own Department Z stories sell as many as the Toff and Inspector West, but world events move very swiftly, and the author is never sure that his theme may not be "dated" by publication time.

When his Dept. Z story The Black Spiders was published 15 months after he wrote it, the troubles in Cyprus, where the story is set, were still unsolved; if they had been the story's topicality would have been lost. Nevertheless, Mr. Creasey echoes my own opinion that "a good spy yarn takes a lot of beating".

Mr. Creasey writes, too, that he does not draw his characters from life. For one thing there is a law of libel! The secret of character drawing is not, he feels, in writing about people one knows, but in making the characters do the kind of thing which one's friends do. "Have them say the same kind of thing, suffer the same kind of reaction in emergency, be scared, elated, have a cold in the nose, get irritable, even pig-headed. Inspector West was born because I wanted a working hero rather than a glamour boy. I've a strong feeling that the day of the much larger than life hero is ending, but I hope it will survive at least as long as the Toff".

To anyone who would like to delve more deeply than my space allows into the motives and aims of Mr. Creasey's stories, I would refer him or her to the admirable foreword to the author's omnibus volume, Four of the Best. There, clearly and unequivocally, Mr. Creasey sets out his own testament. He ends, "I don't know whether its born in us, or whether it is created through our job, but I am quite sure that many crime writers - scoffed at and scorned though the idea may be - find the crime story a highly moral one, of right against wrong with right triumphant, and all exactly as it should be in the end".

A fitting end to the early chapters of The Creasey Story, I feel. May the future chapters be equally fascinating.

WANTED: Single copies or Bound Volumes of the following numbers:- "Champion" from No. 130 to No. 340; "Triumph" from No. 1 to No. 190; "Pluck" from No. 78 to 97 (Last Series); "Rocket" from No. 78 to No. 87; "Triumph Annual" 1938. Please write stating price wanted to:-

R.J. MCCARTHY, WETLANDS, AUGATHELLA, QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA.

WANTED: Magnets, Gems, all years but pre 1935 preferably; Holiday Annuals, S.O.Ls. (Greyfriars stories). Any condition considered but price must be reasonable.

M. GORDON, 113 NEWINGTON GREEN ROAD, LONDON, N.1.

WANTED: Sexton Blake Libs. 1st and 2nd Series. Any numbers. Reasonable prices paid. Also Union Jacks 1917 to 1933; Boys' Friend Libs. 1st Series No. 669 2nd Series No. 79.

JOSIE PACKMAN, 27 ARCHDALE ROAD, EAST DULWICH, LONDON, S.E.22.

WANTED: S.O.Ls. 9, 16, 40, 58, 157, 264.

T.W. POMER, OLD FIELDS, CORNGREAVES ROAD, CRADLEY HEATH, STAFFS.

THE PREFECTS OF ST. FRANK'S

By JACK WOOD

I first got the idea for this article from reading a C.D. article some time ago on the prefects of Greyfriars; so far as I know the subject in so far as it relates to St. Jim's or Rookwood has not been tackled. At the risk of bringing down upon me the wrath of the Hamiltonians at my ignorance, I am going to suggest that anyone trying to deal with the subject of the prefects of St. Frank's has got a much harder task than the writer about the Hamiltonian equivalent. Not because Edwy Searles Brooks painted on a much broader canvas, but because he did over the years picture the St. Frank's Sixth Formers, and especially the prefects, in a far greater detail.

I contend that any reader of the Nelson Lee Library over a period - naturally more so in the case of the reader of the whole Library - had a much deeper sense of what the lesser lights of the St. Frank's prefects' rooms, such as Wilson, Conroy major, Payne, Biggleswade, Frinton, Carlile, and Parkin looked like, and how they behaved, than they had of Sykes, Bancroft, Gray, Webb, Faulkner, Hammersley, Tremaine, Baker, Dickinson, Brayne and Tresham from Greyfriars, St. Jim's and Rookwood.

So far as I know, only one St. Frank's prefect was ever sacked, namely Walter Starke, though Guy Sinclair was once "on the way" but was pardoned at the last moment. Certainly, no St. Frank's prefect was ever killed off. No, I think quite sincerely that the delineation of the St. Frank's prefectorial body was effectively done, not just in a special series, but during the stories as a whole - and that, again, is what the Nelson Lee Library was; a comprehensive history of St. Frank's in which the various series were closely interwoven in the general pattern.

Though Nipper and Co, and the Remove generally, played the leading roles, as they had to do to meet publishers' demands, the reader was always conscious of the teeming life of a great public school going on outside the Remove. The Fourth, the Fifth, the Third, and also the Sixth were always coming into the stories by design or by implication, and as the non-commissioned officers of this vast army of schoolboys the prefects were never very far away, even after the expansion of St. Frank's from two to four residential Houses.

From the prefects, who took their own cue from the Housemasters, the juniors took their example. The Houses took their tone, as they do in any real life school, from their rulers. Thus the Ancient and West Houses were the liveliest and most progressive, because in their Housemasters and House prefects they had the active guidance; the Modern House was less lively because its leaders, though able, were less distinguished; while the East House was a poor specimen as a result of the weak lead given by its Housemaster and prefects.

Let us, then, examine the position in more detail.

First, and this is, perhaps, not an unimportant factor, a nominal roll

shows that all the prefects of St. Frank's made their first appearance in the stories BEFORE the enlargement of the school into four main houses. Edgar Fenton, Arthur Morrow, Simon Kenmore, Hobart Conroy and George Wilson were all there from the start and were mentioned in the first score or so Nelson Lee Libraries; all were in the Ancient House, though Fenton was originally spoken of in the first St. Frank's story as being in the College House and as school captain.

It was in No. 187 that the first College House prefects are mentioned - Walter Reynolds, Harold Carlile, Cyril Jesson, and Percival Mills. Harold Frinton (Ancient House) came along in 196, and after that there is a break until 485 when Augustus Parkin (College House) is mentioned, and 516 when Guy Sinclair (Modern House) appears for the first time. Charles Payne (Modern) and David Biggleswade (Ancient) appear in 523 and 524 respectively.

Walter Starke, the Ancient House prefect, was an "original", being mentioned with Kenmore in 114, but he was expelled in 211 when his villainy came home to roost.

In the early stories, Starke and Venmore were the leading rotters and bullies, and it was in the famous Mysterious X series that we had the "second feature" of the battle for moral supremacy between the juniors and the Bullies' League. Starke, Kenmore, Jesson and Mills were the leaders of the bullies, and it is interesting to note that Wilson was one of the weaker-minded seniors who went "along with the crowd"; Frinton was another, and, indeed, narrowly escaped expulsion for his role in the major theme of the stories. Later Wilson and Frinton were to become "decent types" who could claim a regular place in the first team.

Arthur Morrow was something more than a Gwynne to Fenton's Wingate, a Darrell to his Kildare, or a Neville to his Bulkeley. He was a strongly delineated personality, capable of very decisive action when it was demanded. If anyone doubts this let him read the very powerful series in which Morrow is at loggerheads with Guy Sinclair after being deposed from his captaincy of the West House by Sinclair, who has successfully blackmailed Mr. Stokes into agreeing to Sinclair's transfer from the East House. Those were stirring times, but they were not Sinclair's first leading role. He had taken the leading part some time earlier, just after the arrival of the famous William Napoleon Browne who had promptly proceeded to interest Fenton and Morrow in the desirability of making the cricket elevens more representative by the inclusion of juniors who were good enough to play.

In this battle to bring St. Frank's into line with modern thought by the provision of three new elevens, Sinclair was dropped by Fenton who caught him swigging whisky before a match. Before we knew where we were, the seniors were involved in a first class House battle, all the Modern House seniors, unaware of the real reason for Fenton's action, backing up Sinclair and refusing to play in the team. The row, of course, spread to the rank and file of the two Houses with disastrous results.

In the two series I've just mentioned, the characters of the three leading figures, Fenton, Morrow and Sinclair are drawn with skill and conviction. There is depth, and a real knowledge of the character of senior boys.

In later series, of course, Kenmore had a leading role again when he was involved with the Blue Crusaders and posed as his own brother after the enforced

disappearance of Fatty Fowkes, the Blues' goalie who was thought to have killed Kenmore. Afterwards, Kenmore was a much more restrained character.

Yet while first one prefect and then another is taking the lead, the supporting cast is never neglected. Often the others are mentioned in circumstances which underline their already established characters. More than once Fenton and other prefects go on the holiday trips with Lord Dorrimore to provide more "elderly" solidity and balance in adventurous situations; often the good-natured Biggy or "Fatty" Payne are taken advantage of by juniors in detention or left in their charge; and it was Fenton, Morrow and Biggleswade who went to the Detective Academy as junior masters.

I suppose, however, that Fenton was never, if ever, better portrayed than he was in the celebrated Prefect's Uncle series when his youthful uncle, Robert Chester, came into the Remove and proved to be a fitting companion for the giddy "blades", with disastrous results for nephew Edgar. The basic theme, of course, derived from a famous Wodehouse novel, which I once cherished among my favourite possessions, but now, unfortunately, cannot find. The development, however, was pure Brooks, and mystery and adventure, even a little deftly-handled romance, all had their share before Fenton's honour was vindicated and he was saved from expulsion.

That series brought the first New Series to a close and paved the way to the rapid disintegration of St. Frank's as we had known it in its heyday. In the four House days, of course, the prefects were divided into smaller groups than they had been in the two House period. Fenton, Wilson, Conroy and Biggleswade remained in the Ancient House, while Morrow (captain) and Frinton moved next door to the West House.

Reynolds, who had apparently "disappeared" in mid-stream, reappeared as Modern House captain, retaining the services of Carlile, Jesson and Mills. Kenmore moved to the new East House of which Sinclair became captain, and Parkin and Payne, an ill-assorted pair - the former a "gay dog" and the latter an amiable, corpulent specimen - were their prefectorial supporters.

From time to time portrait galleries and who's who appeared in the Library. From their more succinct information we glean the following about the Sixth, whose average age was given as 18.

Edgar Fenton - The captain of St. Frank's and popular with everybody. A thorough sportsman to his finger-tips, with scarcely an enemy in the entire school. Firm and resolute by nature, but absolutely just in all things. Has a younger sister, Margaret, who is plump and jolly, and a regular member of the cruising holiday parties. Takes life seriously, especially sport. Most handsome senior. Mother's maiden name Chester; family hail from Shropshire. Eldest of family of 14, of which Robert Chester is youngest. Fenton is sturdy and well set-up.

George Wilson - A learned sort of fellow, and a terror to all fags owing to his passion for orderliness. Everything must be "just so" with Wilson, and any kind of disorder makes him thoroughly unhappy and miserable. A really decent fellow, a good all-round sportsman, and very popular. A credit to St. Frank's.

Walter Reynolds - An easy-going senior with a mania for chemicals. Is generally to be found in the "Lab" making the most dangerous experiments, and it is generally believed in the school that he will end up by blowing himself to fragments. Sports, though he is good, and prefect's duties disliked as they keep him away

from chemistry.

Percival Mills - One of the lesser lights of the Sixth. A senior who keeps very much to himself and is so unobtrusive that people are liable to forget that he exists. But he is quite a decent fellow in his own quiet way. (Note - This was in O.S. 521, so he had changed a lot from the early days - J.W.)

Arthur Morrow - Fenton's closest friend, and one of the most popular seniors in the school. Morrow is a genuine brick, good-natured, kindly and a sound sportsman. He possesses a rare gift of understanding, and hasn't an enemy.

Simon Kenmore - Morrow's opposite in almost every respect. The most unpopular senior in the school. A genuine rotter, ill-natured, cunning and cruel. He is resentful and malicious, and takes a keen delight in torturing the juniors. Reformed to some extent for a time, but later resumed former bad habits.

Harold Carlile - An ordinary sort of senior, neither brilliant nor dull. But he is inclined to be easily swayed, and can be readily talked into doing things which his real nature rebels against. Usually he is thoroughly decent. Well set-up and inclined to be handsome.

Guy Sinclair - One of the dandies of the Sixth, but with a taste for flashiness. A supercilious fellow with a mean, vindictive nature. Unpopular generally, and hated by all fags. Curiously enough, he is excellent at most sports, especially cricket.

Hobart Conroy - An easy-going kind of senior, again neither brilliant nor dull. Fair at most sports, and popular in both senior and junior schools. Chief hobby is avoiding two younger brothers. Studious, particularly clever at maths. Fair at sports.

Harold Frinton - A good-looking fellow, with a mistaken impression that he is irresistible to the ladies. He has a passion for having his photograph taken, and is always presenting them to his friends, whether they want them or not. Not very bright so far as brains go, but good-tempered.

Charles Payne - The fattest fellow in the senior school. Always happy and smiling, he is exceedingly popular when any social gathering is on the board. A thoroughly good sort in every way. Excellent amateur entertainer.

Augustus Parkin - Kenmore's particular friend, and therefore a most unpleasant fellow. Ugly and coarse, he seems quite out of place among the other Sixth-formers. Unpopular with everybody - even Kenmore's other friends. Hulking, brawny senior. Uncouth and ill-mannered.

David Biggleswade - The comedian of the Sixth and the butt of everybody's pleasantries. Being excessively good-natured he never minds. Is particularly popular in the Third as he always tips his fags well, and has never been known to grumble. Keen on all sports. Tall and inclined to be loose jointed.

Cyril Jesson - Usually omitted from the Portrait Galleries. A member of the Kenmore fraternity, a bully and a "gay dog". Unpopular with the juniors because of his high-handed ways and tale-bearing habits.

Yes, indeed, I think it may be justly said that individually and collectively the Prefects of St. Frank's were a human crowd, possessing all the foibles and failings of the older teenager, yet speaking with authority, and, all in all, as representative a body of prefects as can be met with anywhere in schoolboy fiction.

The Collectors' WHO'S WHO

Compiled by HERBERT LECKENBY

Here's the "Who's Who" back again after a year's absence. It includes quite a number of new chums and several changes of address.

* * * * *

Old Boy's Book Club Branches: London (L); Northern (N); Midland (Mid.); Merseyside (Mer.).

* * * * *

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 Lib., (e) Holiday Annual; 6. Sexton Blake, (a) Union Jack, (b) Sexton Blake Library, (c) Detective Weekly; 7. Nelson Lee, (a) Nelson Lee Library, (b) Monster Library; 8. Between Two Wars, (Champion, Thriller, Ranger, etc.); 9. Comics; 10. Schoolgirls' Own Library, School Friend, Schoolgirls' Weekly, etc.

Collectors' favourites appear in order of preference.

* denotes new member.

ADAM, BASIL, 28, Derwent St., Newcastle-on-Tyne, 5. Age 40. Laboratory Assistant. Group 5 (a),(d),(e). Has approximately 500 bound copies of the Magnet.

ADLEY, DEREK JOHN, 100, Coles Crescent, South Harrow, Middlesex. (L). (Age 30). Accounts Stock Controller. Groups 5 (a),(b); 7 (a); 6(b); 5 (d),(c); 6 (a); 5 (e); 10; 7 (b).

ALLEN, LEONARD M., 13, Viking Close, Southbourne, Bournemouth. (Age 51).

Groups 4; 7 (a); 9.

ALLISON, GERALD, 7, Summerfield Gardens, Bramley, Leeds, 13. (N). Age 52.

Groups 5 (a),(b),(d); 6 (b); 9. Would like correspondence on Young Folks Tales (King Pippin), St. George's Magazine, Cheerio, The Scout, Chatterbox and Playbox Annuals. Wanted for Northern O.B.B.C. Library, Magnet No. 1393.

ALLISON, MARY, 29, Eden Crescent, Leeds, 4. (N). (Age 40). Bank Clerk. Groups 5 (a),(d),(e),(b); 10.

AUCKLAND, CHARLES K., 20, Chiltern Rd., Sheffield, 6. (N). Groups 7 (a); 5 (a), (b),(d),(c); 7 (b).

ARMITAGE, TOM, 205 Batley Road, Alverthorpe, Wakefield, Yorks. Groups 7 (a); 5 (b); 9; 5 (a),(c); 6 (a),(b); 5 (d); 7 (b); 6 (c); 5 (e). Interested in anything of the 1920 period. Has a special liking for Pentelov's Twins from Tasmania in Gems. Also stories by John Edmund Fordwych.

BAKER, ANTHONY P., The Vicarage, Reigate, Surrey.

(L). Age 19. Groups

4; 5 (a).

- BAKER, CHARLES, 7 Marine Drive, Waterloo Port, Caernarvon, North Wales. Groups 5 (b),(a),(c); 2; 3. Is anxious to obtain Boys Herald Vol. 6.
- BANKS, CYRIL, 14 Felcote Ave., Dalton, Huddersfield, Yorks. (N). (Age 48). Wages Clerk. Groups 7 (a); 5 (b),(c); 6 (b),(a).
- BANKS, GERTRUDE, 14 Felcote Ave., Dalton, Huddersfield, Yorks. Housewife. Group 6 (b),(a).
- BARLOW, HARRY, 37 Crestfield Crescent, Elland, Halifax, Yorkshire. (Age 47). Printer. Group 5 (a).
- BEARDSSELL, FREDERICK CLIFFORD, "Flystock," Ross Ave., Davenport, Stockport, Cheshire. (N). (Age 53). Master Window Cleaner. Group 5 (a),(d),(b).
- BELLFIELD, J.F., 24 Grainger's Lane, Cradley Heath, Staffs. Groups 5 (a),(b),(d),(e),(c); 7 (b).
- BENNETT, RAYMOND, 64 Dudley Road, Tipton, Staffs. (L). (Mid.) (Age 41). Chief Clerk. Groups 5 (a); 7 (a); 6 (a).
- BENTLEY, J. BREEZE, "Wyvern," Hawkesworth Lane, Guiseley, Leeds. (N). Group 5 (a),(b),(d).
- BILHAM, WILFRED, 20 Appleby Place, Halton Moor, Leeds, 15. (N). Age 43. Machinist. Groups 5 (a),(b),(e),(d); 4; 6 (b); 7 (a); 9.
- BLIGHT, EDWARD, "Treneglos," 12 Trevarthian Rd., St. Austell, Cornwall. (L). (Age 56). Engineer, Retired. Groups 3; 5 (a),(b),(e); 6 (a),(c); 7; 8 (Thriller).
- BLYTHE, ROBERT CHARLES, 2 Oxford Place, Press Rd., Neasden, London, N.W.10. (L). (Age 43). Asst. Stock-keeper. Groups 7 (a). 5 (a); 6 (E.S. Brooks stories only).
- BOND, H. MAURICE, 31 St. Isan Rd., Heath, Cardiff. (Age 45). Commercial Librarian. Groups 6 (all); 5 (a).
- BRADSHAW, W.H., 227 W. 88th St., Los Angeles, 3, Calif., U.S.A. Group 6 (all). Particularly interested in early pink cover U.Js.
- BRANTON, W. LESLIE, 63 Thoresby St., Hull. (L). Commercial Artist. Group 5 (a),(e).
- BRETHEERTON, T.P., Hoskin, Chorley, Lancs. Groups 2; 1; 9.
- BRIGGS, GODFREY, The Dispensary, Public Hospital, Rotorua, New Zealand. (Age 62). Hospital Dispenser. Groups 5 (b); 2 (Boys' Friend, Boys' Realm); 6 (a); 9 (Chips).
- *BRIMMELL, RONALD ARTHUR, "The Garden House," "Saxonbury," St. Mary's Rd., Long Ditton, Surrey. (Age 40). Antiquarian Bookseller. Groups 1; 4. Permanent Wants: original editions of "Old Bloods" pre-1870. Especially Lloyd publications. Any runs magazines published by Lloyd. Any annuals in, or bindings containing works by G.A. Henty. Any Nister's Holiday Annuals.
- BROMLEY, GEORGE, "Holeywell," Estoria Ave., Wigston Magna, Leicester. (Age 36). Trade Union Officer. Groups 5 (a),(b),(d),(c),(e); 7 (a),(b).
- BROWN, RAYMOND E., 54 Longreach Road, Liverpool, 14. (Mer.) (Age 29). Groups 5 (all); 6 (all); 8; 9.
- BROSTER, WILLIAM HENRY, Primrose Cottage, Stone Lane, Kinver, Stourbridge, Worcs. (Mid.) (Age 51). Proprietor Sheet Metal Works. Groups 8 (Boys Realm); 5 (b); 6 (a),(b); 10 (School Friend). To complete collection of Pentelov's Wycliffe and Haygarth stories requires B.F.Ls. 141, 207, 518, 550, 555, 558, 593, 598, 670, 721. Also anxious to obtain the Mapleton Rovers series B.F.L. 745, 753, 757, 761. Also B.F.L. 562.
- BROYD, DENNIS, 10 Bean Rd., Bexley Heath, Kent. (Age 31). Information Officer. Groups 5 (a),(b),(d). Is particularly anxious to obtain certain numbers of the Magnet between 1000 and 1300. Also early numbers S.O.L.

- BURROW, RONALD, "Burrowmede," 164 High St., Yeadon, Leeds. (Age 47). Market Gardener. Groups 7 (a); 8; 5 (b); 2. Required: Nelson Leeds (old series), 17,30,78,107,114. Gems, 1023,1024; S.O.L. 4; Boys Realms (dated 1921) 127 (dated 1928) 76 to 82; Pluck (dated 1923) 26 to 41.
- BUSH, JOHN WILLIAM ALFRED, 32 Walden Ave., Chislehurst, Kent. (Age 46). G.P.O. Technician. Groups 7 (a); 6 (a), (b); 5 (a); 8.
- BYRNE, F.G., 33 Roles Grove, Chadwell Heath, Romford, Essex. (L). (Age 32). Schoolmaster. Groups 5 (a), (d), (b), (e), (c); 4; 6 (c), (a), (b). Wanted: Magnets 1644, 1645, 1646, 1648 and 1650. S.P.C. 1 to 36 and 38, 39, 40. Chums and B.O.P. 1935 to 1940 with long school serials. Thanks to London Club and Library.
- CARBIN, ARTHUR IDRIS, 22 Wentworth Rd., Overslade Estate, Rugby, Warwicks. (Age 37). M/C Tool Setter. Groups 5 (a), (b), (d), (c), (e); 6 (b), (a), (c); 7 (a), (b); 8; 10.
- CAREY, JOHN ROBERT, 41 Aberdeen Rd., West Hartlepool, Co. Durham. Joiner. Group 5 (a), (b), (d), (c), (e).
- CARTER, ERNEST CHARLES, 2 Cooper St., Kingsford, N.S.W., Australia. (Age 46). Clerk, Dept. of Army, E. Command, N.S.W. Australia. Groups 7 (a), (b); 5 (a), (b); 6 (all); 5 (e), (c), (d); 4; 8 (Thriller, Nugget Lib., Nugget Weekly). Requires Nelson Lees for years 1915-1916 to complete set. Also Chums 1892-3-4-5; 1906, 1911, 1915, 1916. Good prices paid.
- CASE, FRANK, 4 Dee St., Liverpool, 6. (Mer.) (Age 51). Groups 5 (a); 1; 5 (b), (c); 2; 3.
- *CHADWICK, WALLACE, 27 Holyoake Terr., Ulverston, Lancs. (Age 29). Laboratory Technician. Group 5 (a), (d). Has always been interested in the Magnet but only been collecting about a year. Has about 100 Magnets and 10 S.O.Ls. Is anxious to obtain more Magnets (1930-40) and Greyfriars S.O.Ls. Collects English coins, and antiques generally. Is a member of the Round Table.
- CHAMBERS, W.E., 83 Orme Rd., Bangor, North Wales. (Age 38). Porter. Groups - All.
- CHAMPION, WILLIAM, 13 Drayton Rd., Reading, Berks. (Age 48). Manager, Engineering Works. Groups 5 (b); 7 (a); 5 (a).
- CHECKLEY, PETER J., 18 Tarlington Rd., Coundon, Coventry. (Age 23). Group 8 (Bullseye, Surprise); 5 (b), (d), (c); 6 (a); 7 (a).
- CHURCHILL, CHARLES H., 103 Sidwell St., Exeter. (Age 48). Tobacconist and Confectioner. Groups 7 (a), (b); 6 (a). Still needs Nelson Lees (old series) 15, 16, 27, 31/3, 73, 76/7, 80/1, 84/6, 88/90, 92/5, 98, 102, 113, 130.
- CLOUGH, WILLIAM H., 3 Fonthill Grove, Sale, Manchester. (Age 56). Telephone Engineer. Groups 3; 2; 6 (a); 4.
- COLBY, VICTOR EDWARD, 8 Beresford Ave., Beverly Hills, N.S.W., Australia. (Age 40). Chartered Engineer. Group 6 (all). Seeks all papers, bound or loose, with Sexton Blake stories, articles or serial instalments, particularly S.B.L. 2nd series, 243, Penny Populars, 1st series 3, 9, 13, 27, 30, 51 and 69.
- COOK, JACK, 178 Maria St., Benwell, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 4. Groups 7 (a); 5 (d), (a); 9. Requires Greyfriars and St. Jim's S.O.Ls. Also Rockwoods, 4 numbers only. Nelson Lees, offers two Magnets for one S.O.L. Has Magnets, B.F.L. 4d's, Aldines, Holiday Annuals for exchange for S.O.Ls. S.A.E. please.
- COOK, JAMES W., 32 Pilgrims Way, Wembley, Middlesex. (Age 49). Film Records Clerk. Group 7 (a), (b).
- COOK, RONALD, 190 Crowborough Rd., Tooting Bec, London, S.W.17. (Age 35). Groups 5 (a), (b), (d), (c), (e); 8 (Ranger, Surprise, Bullseye).

- *COOKE, MARGARET E., 10 Ashdene Rd., Withington, Manchester, 20. (N).
Group 6 (b),(a).
- COPEMAN, ERIC VICTOR, 50 Ruby St., Marrickville, N.S.W., Australia. (Age 40).
Groups 6 (b),(a),(c); 8 (Thriller); 7 (a); 5 (a),(c),(b),(e),(d).
- COPPING, GEORGE, 104 Mayfield Rd., Swaythling, Southampton. Hairdresser.
Groups 2; 5 (b),(c); Specially wants Jack, Sam & Pete stories in $\frac{1}{2}$ d. Marvel.
- CORBETT, JACK, 49 Glyn Farm Rd., Quinton, Birmingham, 32. (Mid.) (Age 46).
Group 5 (a),(b),(e).
- CORBETT, MADGE, 49 Glyn Farm Rd., Quinton, Birmingham, 32. (Mid.)
Group 5 (a),(b),(e); 6 (b).
- COX, EDMUND, W., 29 Carisbrooke Drive, Bitterne, Southampton. (L). (Age 29).
Insurance Clerk. Groups 5 (a),(b),(d),(e); 9; 10; 7 (a),(b); 4; 6 (all).
- CROLLIE, RONALD J., 17 Osborne Rd., Hornchurch, Essex. (L). (Age 40). Company
Director (Engineering). Groups 5 (a),(b),(d),(e); 6 (a); 7 (a).
- DAINES, COLIN, 209 Mile Cross Lane, Norwich, Norfolk. (Age 47). Electrical
Draughtsman. Groups 7 (a); 5 (a),(b).
- DARWIN, WILFRED, 76 Western Rd., East Dene, Rotherham, Yorks. Gardener.
Groups 6 (a); 8 (Hulton's Boys' Magazine).
- DAVEY, EDWARD JOHN, 26 Bourton Rd., Olton, Solihull, Warwicks. (Mid.) (Age 53).
Company Registrar (Assistant). Groups 5 (a); 4.
- DAWKINS, CHARLES D., 5 Kingsbury Drive, Aspley Park, Nottingham. (Age 33).
Group 5 (a).
- DEASY, JAMES C., 11 Sallymount Gardens, Ranelagh, Dublin, Ireland. (Age 25).
Group 5 (a),(b).
- DICKENS, RONALD, 10 Petersfield Drive, Whiteheath, Blackheath, Birmingham. (L).
(Mid.) (Age 45). Groups 5 (all); 6 (b).
- DOBSON, TOM, P.O. Staff, Brighton, Victoria, Australia. (Age 52). Federal Public
Servant (P.M.G. Dept.) Groups 5 (b),(a),(e),(d),(c); 6 (all); 7 (a),(b).
- DOWNER, HARRY, 86 Hamilton Rd., Longsight, Manchester, 13. (Age 65). Commercial
Teacher. Groups 2; 4; 6.
- DOW, JAMES (Junr.), "Romba," Kingswell, Aberdeenshire. (Age 43). Shopkeeper.
Groups 5 (all); 7 (a),(b).
- EAMES, ELIZABETH, PAMELA, 14 Stonehouse Lane, Combe Down, Bath, Somerset. (L).
(Age 28). Civil Servant. Groups 5 (a),(b),(e),(d); 10; 8 (Champion); 6 (b).
Still greatly interested in Magnets and Gems. Wishes a full length film could
be made about Greyfriars and St. Jim's.
- EVERETT, C.A., P.O. Box 7, Brinkworth, South Australia. (Age 53). Farmer.
Groups 5 (a),(c),(d); 7 (a).
- FARISH, ROBERT, 24 English St., Longtown, Cumberland. (Age 56). Group 5 (b),(c),
(a),(d),(e).
- FAYNE, ERIC, Excelsior House, 23 Grove Rd., Surbiton, Surrey. (L). Groups 5 (all);
6; 8.
- FLEMING, WALTER, 58 Boardman Ave., Chingford, London, E.4. (L). (Age 40). Shoe
Clicker. Groups 7 (a); 5 (a); 6 (a); 5 (b); 6 (b),(c); 5 (c). Requires Nelson
Lees 1927-28. Particularly series dealing with the Deluge at St. Frank's.
- FLINDERS, (Miss) E.B., 18 Conquest Close, Stevenage Rd., Hitchin, Herts. (L).
Artist. Group 5 (b),(a),(c),(d),(e).
- FORD, DEREK, 43 West Bond St., Macclesfield, Cheshire. Group 6 (all).
- GANDER, WILLIAM H., Box 60, Transcona, Manitoba, Canada. (L). (Age 59). Retail
Newsdealer. Groups 5 (a); 2 (Boys' Friend).

- GEAL, JOHN, 277 Kings Rd., Kingston-on-Thames, Surrey. (Age 36). Civil Servant.
Groups 5 (a); 8 (Ranger and Modern Boy); 5 (c); 3. Wants B.F.L. 4th Libs. with
Captain Justice stories. Also Wycliffe stories by Pentelow.
- GILES, F. VICTOR, 6 St. Pauls Rd., Barking, Essex. Group 5 (all).
- GOCHER, JOHN WOODWARD, Benevenagh, Abbey Rd., Sudbury, Suffolk. (Age 36).
Ironmonger. Groups 8; 6 (all); 5 (all); 4; 3; 2; 9; 1.
- GODSAVE, REUBEN JAMES, 35 Woodhouse Rd., Leytonstone, London, E.11. (Age 47).
Commercial Traveller. Groups 7 (a),(b); 5 (a).
- GOODHEAD, WILLIAM HENRY, 50 Porter Rd., Derby. (Age 41). Groups 5 (a); 6 (all);
7 (a); 5 (d); 3.
- *GORDON, M., 113 Newington Green Rd., London, N.1. (Age 36). Sales Executive.
Group 5 (a),(d),(e),(b),(c). Started collecting only recently, but has been
interested in Hamilton papers for many years, especially Magnets. Collection
at present small, and is anxious to increase it.
- GORFAIN, ARTHUR, 66 Beaconsfield St., Newport Beach, N.S.W. Australia. (L).
(Age 45). Groups 5 (a); 7 (a).
- GOURLAY, NEIL C., 54 Grosvenor Drive, Whitley Bay, Northumberland. (Age 31).
Groups 5 (a),(b),(d); 7 (a); 6 (a),(b).
- GRAY, BOB, "Pennsylvania," Church Stretton, Salop. (Age 53). Nurseryman.
Groups 5 (a),(c),(b),(e),(d); 6 (b),(a); 7 (a).
- GREGORY, NORMAN, 11 Emerson Rd., Harborne, Birmingham, 17. (Mid.) (Age 41).
Accountant and Auditor. Groups - All.
- GREENWOOD, ROLAND RICHARD, 63 Griffiths Drive, Ashmore Estate, Wednesfield,
Staffs. (Age 31). Fitter and Machinist. Groups 5 (a),(b),(d); 6 (a); 8; 9.
- GRIFFIN, FRED, 2558 Grand Concourse, Bronx, New York, U.S.A. (L). Groups 7 (a),
(b); 5 (d).
- GUNN, JOHN, A.M.H.C.I., Gunn's Hotel, Stratford Sq., Shakespeare St., Nottingham.
Hotelier. Groups - All. Urgently requires Chums Annuals No. 1 (1892-3);
No. 20 (1912); No. 21 (1913) and No. 30 (1921-2) to complete set.
- HALL, ALFRED L., 34 Compton Cres., Leeds, 9. (N). Clerk. Groups 3; 2; 6 (a),(b).
- HALL, LESLIE, 35 Broadlea Hill, Sandford, Bramley, Leeds, 13. (N). Clerk.
Groups 5 (a),(b); 3; 5 (d),(c); 7 (a).
- HALL, WILLIAM, 46 Walder Rd., Hammondville, via Liverpool, N.S.W., Australia.
(Age 52). Carpenter. Groups 7 (a); 5 (a),(b); 9; 3.
- HARRISON, DAVID, Flat 6, Pembroke Gardens, London, W.8. (L). (Age 28). Economist.
Groups 5 (a),(d),(e); 4.
- HARRISON, WILLIAM, 257 Hyde Park Rd., Leeds. (N). (Age 54). Groups 5 (a),(b),
(c),(d); 9.
- HARRIS, ARTHUR, "Caynton," Llanrhos Rd., Penrhyn Bay, Llandudno. Group 9
(Comic Cuts 1890 to Chuckles 1914).
- HOCKLEY, GEOFFREY W., 308 Keyes Rd., New Brighton, Christchurch, New Zealand.
(Age 56). Motor Cycle Dealer. Not actually collecting but interested
generally.
- HODGSON, RONALD, 5 Silver St., Newton Hill, Wakefield, Yorks. (N). (Age 32).
Chief Clerk. Groups 5 (b),(a).
- *HOLMES, HERBERT, 13 St. Luke's St., Barrow-in-Furness, Lancs. Group 5 (a),(b).
- HOLT, BRIAN D., British Legation, Reykjavik, Iceland. (L). (Age 36). H.B.M. Vice
Consul. Groups 7 (a); 5 (d),(b),(a).
- HOPKINS, RAYMOND H., c/o 129 Shardeloes Rd., New Cross, London, S.E. 14. (L).
(Age 38). Clerk. Group 5 (all).
- HORTON, WILLIAM, 4 Willoughby Rd., Liverpool, 14. (Mer.). Group 4.

- HUBBARD, ERNEST ALEXANDER, 58 South Bank Cres., Sheffield, 7. (N). (Age 51).
Groups (all).
- HUBBARD, WILLIAM JOSEPH ALFRED, c/o Department of Agriculture, P.O. Box 30028,
Nairobi, Kenya Colony, B.E.A. (L). (Age 37). Groups 7 (a); 5 (b),(a); 7 (b).
- HUGHES, E.V., 2 East Front Rd., Pagham Beach, Bognor Regis, Sussex. (Age 53).
Provincial Newspaper Reporter. Groups 2; 5 (a),(b),(c); 6 (a),(b); 9.
- HUGHES, (Rev.) JACK SHERWOOD, 22 Herbert St., Gladstone, Queensland, Australia.
(Age 34). Minister of Religion. Groups 5 (all); 7.
- HUMPHREYS, ERIC, "Oakdene," Boat Lane, Higher Irlam, Manchester. (N). (Age 43).
Clerk. Group 5 (a),(b),(d),(e),(c).
- HUNTER, J.V.B. STEWART, 4 Lulworth Rd., Mottingham, London, S.E.9. (Age 58).
Groups 1; 3; 2.
- HUNTER, RONALD HENRY, c/o Royal Mail Agencies (Brazil) Ltd., Caixa Postal No.366,
Santos, Brazil. (L). (Age 44). Assistant Manager, Shipping Agency. Groups
5 (a),(e),(d),(c),(b).
- HURRELL, JAMES W., "Glenisle," 10 Ilfracombe Gardens, Chadwell Heath, Romford,
Essex. (Age 47). Groups 7 (a),(b); 5 (a),(c),(d),(e),(b); 6 (a),(b).
- IMPSON, STANLEY, "Stanfield," Jerningham Rd., New Costessey, Norwich, Norfolk.
(Age 60). Master Upholsterer. Groups 5 (a),(b),(e),(d); 4; 5 (c); 7 (a);
8; 6 (all); 2; 7 (b); 1; 3; 9; 10.
- INGRAM, ARTHUR JOHN, 97 Tettenhall Road, Wolverhampton. (Mid.) (Age 50). Head-
master. Group 5 (all). Chairman, Midland O.B.B.C.
- IRALDI, JAMES C., 28-13 33rd St., Astoria, Long Island, U.S.A. (L). (Age 50).
Group 5 (all).
- JACK, JOHN, "Greyfriars," 5A Union Ave., Ayr, Scotland. (Age 36). Clerk.
Group 5 (a),(b),(d).
- JAMISON, WILLIAM, Lisnacree, Newry, Co. Down, Northern Ireland. (Age 55).
Gardener. Groups 5 (all); 4 (Captain).
- JARDINE, WILLIAM W., 20 Spencer Rd., Caterham, Surrey. (L). (Age 42). Civil
Servant. Groups 5 (a),(c); 7 (a); 6 (a) (Gwyn Evans stories only).
- JENKINS, ROGER MICHAEL, "The Firs," Eastern Rd., Havant, Hants. (L). (Age 32).
Civil Servant. Group 5 (a),(d),(c),(e),(c).
- JEYES, JAMES A., 108 Admitt Rd., Northampton. (Age 61). Group 2.
- JOHNSON, MARCUS, 164 Amesbury Ave., Streatham Hill, London, S.W.2. (L). (Age 50).
Accountancy. Groups 8 (Boys' Friend); 7 (a); 5 (a),(b),(e),(d).
- JUKES, JOHN LESLIE, 3 Stafford Lodge, Crosby Rd., Westbourne, Bournemouth.
(Age 56). Black and White Artist. Groups 5 (a),(b),(c); 6 (a); 9 (all kinds).
- KEELING, FRANK, 107 Dolphins Rd., Folkestone, Kent. (L). (Age 50). Electrical
Instrument Maker. Groups 7 (a); 10; 5 (a).
- *KEELING, RALPH BERESFORD, 312 Mather Ave., Liverpool, 18. (Mer.) (Age 40). Life
Insurance Underwriter. Groups 7 (a),(b); 4 (Chums); 5 (a); 8 (Thriller, Boys
Realm, Bullseye); 5 (e); 9; 6 (a). Started re-collecting recently. Already
has 10 vols. Chums; 12 vols. Captains (1900-6, for exchange); 5 Chatterbox
Annuals (1917-22, for exchange); 24 S.O.Ls.; 50 Magnets; 100 Nelson Lees; 70
Boys' Magazines in fine condition; would especially like to obtain copies of
Bullseye and Monster Library.
- *KEENA, ARNOLD, 11 Pearl Ave., Epping, N.S.W., Australia. (Age 41). P.M.G. Senior
Technician. Groups 9; 7 (a); 5 (a); 6 (b); 8; 3. Interested in most publica-
tions of the 1925s; considers it the Golden Age. Collection consists of 500

- comics, 100 Nelson Lees, 60 Magnets, and a mixed bag of Sexton Blakes, Boys Cinema, Picture Show, Gems, etc. Would like to obtain by exchange or purchase Comics, 1920-35; Triumphs and Champions 1925-30; Buffalo Bill Lib., 1928, Magnets 1920-30; Nelson Lees 1920-30 and many others 1920-30. Enjoys correspondence.
- KINGSTON, JACK, 3 Gawen Terr., Torpoint, Cornwall. (Age 38). Electrical Fitter. Group 5 (c),(a),(b),(e). Is anxious to obtain Holiday Annuals 1920-21-22.
- KIRBY, GORDON J., c/o Public Library, Swanston St., Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. Groups 5 (all); 10.
- *KNIGHT, FREDERICK STANLEY, c/o Halon & Co. Ltd., 288 High St., Cheltenham, Glos. (Age 43). Shop Manager. Groups 7 (a); 5 (a),(b),(d). Wishes to obtain S.O.Ls. 4, 27, 54, 56, 120, 216, 291, 309, 318, 399, 402. Gems 1933 issues Nos. 1331-2; 1335-6-7; 1340; 1342-3.
- KUTNER, MAURICE, 4 New North Place, Scrutton St., Finsbury, London, E.C.2. (L). (Age 50). Wood Carver. Group 5 (b),(a),(c). Is interested in the illustrations, particularly Warwick Reynolds. Needs Gem No. 1283 to complete long run.
- LACK, HAROLD HERBERT, 4 Rushmere Rd., Northampton, 'phone Northampton 4792. (Age 45). Groups 10; 5 (a),(b),(c),(c),(d). Requires various School Friends 1919-20; School Friend Annuals; Schoolgirl Own Libraries, any period. Holiday Annuals 1920, 1921, 1922. Any books and magazines on early days of the Cinema (pre 1925).
- LANDY, ERIC R., 4 Nuneaton Rd., Dagenham, Essex. (Age 54). Commercial Traveller. Group 3. Still requires certain Jack Sheppards and Red Rovers.
- *LAWRENCE, ERIC S., 10 Claremont Ave., Sunbury-on-Thames, Middlesex. (L). (Age 35). Development Engineer. Group 5 (a),(d),(b). Has been interested in Magnets etc. since schooldays. Most of collection destroyed during last war but now has about 125 S.O.Ls., 200 Magnets and 60 Gems. Also complete set Holiday Annuals and all post-war books. Is very pleased to have discovered existence of O.B.B.C's. Anxious to obtain Magnets 1171, 1172, 1173 and on to end of that year. S.O.Ls. 251, 318, 333, 411.
- LAWSON, ARTHUR W., 13 Charles Sq., London, N.1. (L). Retired. Groups 1; 2; 3.
- LAY, FRANK VERNON, 167 Watford Rd., Harrow, Middlesex. (L). (Age 44). Co. Director, Clothing Manufacturers. 7 (a); 6 (a); 2; 1; 5 (a),(b); 4; 6 (c); 7 (b); 6 (b); 8.
- LAY, CHRISTOPHER JAMES, 167 Watford Rd., Harrow, Middlesex. (Age 15). College Student. Group 5 (a),(b).
- LE BLANC, EDWARD T., 87 School St., Fall River, Mass., U.S.A. (Age 37). Position Classifier, Navy Dept., Naval Station, Newport, Rhode Island, U.S.A. (Age 37). Groups 1; 3; 2; 6 (a). Has been collecting American Dime Novels since 1935; before that his father was from the early 1920s. Soon found himself interested in the English counterparts. Is mainly interested in obtaining one of each paper and library published in the Victorian era and up to around 1914.
- LECKENBY, HERBERT, 12 Herbert St., Hull Rd., York. (Age 68). Retired Civil Servant. Groups - All.
- LETTEY, CLIFFORD LESLIE, 27 Heather Close, Kingswood, Bristol. (L). Group 5 (all). Still interested in buying volumes of Magnets, particularly one of 1925. Also wants S.O.Ls. Exchanges welcomed.
- *LITVAK, I.B., 70 Cranford Ave., Ashford, Middlesex. (L). (Age 54). Tailor. Group 5 (a),(b). Has been collecting about three years. Has 500 Magnets and 600 Gems. Says he has discovered the Elixir of Youth in the hobby.

- LOFTS, W.O.G., 56 Sheringham House, Lisson St., London, N.W.1. (L). (Age 34).
Carburettor Engineer. Groups 6 (b); 5 (a); 9; 1; and all other groups.
- MACHIN, HUBERT F., 38 St. Thomas Rd., Preston, Lancs. School Teacher. Groups
5 (a); 8 (Boys' Friend); 5 (b),(c),(d); 6 (a),(b); 3; 7 (a),(b); 9; 4.
- MAGOVENY, EDITH, 65 Benthams St., Belfast. (Age 47). Groups 5 (a),(d),(c),(c);
7 (a),(b); 6 (b).
- MARTIN, BILL, 93 Hillside, Stonebridge Park, London, N.W. 10. Dairyman. Groups
5 (all); 6 (all); Always has books on offer.
- MCCABE, ROBERT JACKSON, 16 St. Boswell's Terr., Dundee, Scotland. (Age 39).
Reed Maker. Groups 5 (a),(b),(d),(e),(b); 6 (all); Would like to obtain some
Football and Sport Libraries.
- *MCCARTHY, RICHARD, Wetlands, Augathella, Queensland, Australia. (Age 39).
Grazier. Groups 8 (Main interest Champion and Triumphs; and papers edited by
F. Addington Symonds); 5 (a),(b). Is the proud owner of F. Addington Symonds
own collection of papers edited by him. Is anxious to obtain other Champions
to complete set, also Triumphs, Rockets, etc. Has been collecting since 1928.
Has Champion Library complete, Lion and Tiger complete to date and many others.
- MCFARLANE, 102 Beith St., Glasgow, W.1. (Age 55). Groups 5 (a),(b),(d); 6 (b);
(a); 5 (c); 10. Collection consists of 211 S.B.Ls., 88 S.O.Ls., 53 B.F.Ls.,
48 Magnets and 40 Gems. Hopes to add to the numbers of Magnets and Gems.
- MCKIM, WILLIAM, Coxwold, York. Medical Practitioner. Groups 1; 2; 3; 4.
- MCPHERSON, E., 80 Benedict St., Glastonbury, Somerset. (Age 41). Groups 7 (a),
(b); 5 (a),(d).
- MCRBERTS, GEORGE, 31 Ardenlee Drive, Cregagh, Belfast, Northern Ireland.
(Age 56). Health Official. Groups 5 (all); 7 (a).
- MATTHEWS, H.G., 64 Thorofare, Woodbridge, Suffolk. (Age 45). Dispensing Chemist.
Groups 5 (a),(b); 4; 5 (c); 6 (b); 8; 7 (a). Requires Sax Rohmer's Rider
Haggard's, Edgar Rice 'Burroughs' H.G. Well's (Science Fantasies like "The
First Man on the Moon").
- MELL, GEORGE, 49 Gracefield Gardens, Streatham, London, S.W.16. (L). (Age 45).
Journalist. Groups 5 (all); 4; 2; 7 (a).
- MORPIMER, ROBERT, 115 Walton Rd., East Molesey, Surrey. (L). (Age 45).
Commercial Artist. Group 5 (a),(b),(d).
- MORGAN, JOHN K., 58 Moorfield Rd., Great Crosby, Liverpool. (Mer.) (Age 48).
Groups 5 (all); 7 (a),(b); 9.
- MORLEY, Lawrence, 147 Nr. Mills, Leabrooks, Alfreton, Derbyshire. (Age 31).
Machine Plant Operator. Groups 5 (a),(b),(e); 8 (Pilots); 6 (b). Would like
to obtain Double Numbers Magnets and Gems. Recently realised an ambition when
he obtained complete set Wild West Weekly (A.P.) beautifully bound.
- MURTAGH, JOHN R., 509 Selwood Rd., Hastings, New Zealand. (Age 44). Entertainer
and Theatre Projectionist. Groups 7 (a),(b); 5 (all); 6 (all).
- NICHOLLS, (Mrs.) VERA, 44 Grosvenor Place, Leeds, 7. (N). Groups 10; 5 (a);
7 (a); 6 (b). Would like to add to her few copies of Schoolgirls Own Libraries
featuring Morecove School.
- NICHOLLS, RONALD ALICK, The Grey House, Staunton Lane, Whitechurch, Bristol, 4.
(Age 42). Groups 5 (a),(b),(d); 4 (Chums, B.O.P.), Wishes to obtain Magnets
1924-40. Good condition essential. Correspondence welcomed.
- O'HERLIHY, D.P. (DAN). 17220 Gresham St., Northridge, Calif., U.S.A. Film Actor.
Group 5 (a),(b),(d),(e),(c).

- O'SHEA, R.J., 8 Eve Rd., Leytonstone, London, E.11. (Age 42). Turf Accountant. Group 5 (a),(b),(d).
- PACKMAN, JOSEPHINE, 27 Archdale Rd., East Dulwich, London, S.E.22. (L). Civil Servant. Groups 6 (b),(a); 5 (a); 7 (a).
- PACKMAN, LEONARD, 27 Archdale Rd., East Dulwich, London, S.E.22. (L). (Age 52). Civil Servant. Groups - All. Seeking copies of "Chips"; any issues between Jan. and Oct. 1916 (serial numbers 1322 to 1365). Will pay 5/- each. Odd numbers in this period welcomed.
- PARRATT, C. JAMES, 188 Compton Buildings, Goswell Rd., London, E.C.1. (L). Groups 7 (a),(b); 5 (all); 8 (Thrillers).
- PATE (Miss) ELIZABETH JEAN, 8 Day St., Drummoyne, N.S.W., Australia. Life Insurance Clerk. Group 6 (b),(a),(c).
- PAYNE, RONALD WILLIAM, 3 Britain Cottages, Gayton, Northants. (L). (Age 37). Clock and Instrument Mechanician. Groups 7 (a),(b); 5 (a).
- PORTER, T.W., Old Fields, Corngreaves Rd., Cradley Heath, Staffs. Groups 7 (a),(b); 5 (c),(a),(b),(d),(e).
- FOUND, A.G., St. Paul's Vicarage, 68 Finmore Rd., Birmingham, 9. (Age 55). Minister of Religion. Groups 5 (a),(b),(e),(d); 1; 2.
- PRAGNELL, NORMAN, 33 Brae St., Liverpool, 7. (Mer.) (Age 42). Groups 7 (a),(b); 5 (d) (St. Frank's stories only); 8 (Boys' Magazines, Boys Realm). Strong Nelson Lee enthusiast. Has over 300 Nelson Lees and a number of St. Frank's S.O.Ls. A keen Gramophile and Everton supporter.
- PRICE, H.C. NORTON, 22 Northdown Rd., Margate, Kent. (L). Master Grocer. Group 6 (b). Still requires many Boys' Friend Libraries.
- PRIME, BERNARD, 43 Mayfield Rd., Sanderstead, Surrey. (Age 56). Group 5 (b),(b),(e). Collection consists of Magnets, Gems, Bunter Books, Tom Merry Books and a complete set of School Caps.
- RANSOM, G.H., 207 Basingstoke Rd., Reading, Berks. (Age 54). Independent. Groups 5 (a),(b); 6 (a); 7 (a).
- RAYNER, WILLIAM JOHN, Bank House, Clare, Suffolk. (Age 45). General Manager, Cinema Company. Group 5 (all). Is anxious to obtain 1920 Holiday Annual.
- RENEN, CHARLES VAN, "Retreat," 41 Alberti Circle, Uitenhage, South Africa. (Age 45). Bank Official. Group 5 (a),(b),(d),(e). Wishes to purchase bound vols. of Magnets, pre-1932 and Gems pre-1936.
- RHODES, A.W., Chancery, British Embassy, Bonn, Freidrich, Ebert, Allee, Germany. (Age 43). Diplomat. Groups 5 (all); 6 (all).
- RICHARDSON, ARTHUR, 17 Devon Crescent, Redhill, Surrey. (Age 63). Civil Servant. Groups 2; 6 (a); 7 (a); 4.
- RICHARDSON, L.H.S., White House, 58 Southborough Rd., Bickley, Kent. Group 5 (b),(a),(d).
- RILEY, GEORGE JAMES, 18 Adelaide St., Poulton, Wallasey, Cheshire. (Mer.) (Age 20). Junior Clerk. Groups 5 (a),(b),(e),(d),(c). Would like to obtain at least one copy of all the old favourite papers. Ambition is to have complete set of Holiday Annuals. At present still needs those for 1920,1922, 1923,1925,1929,1930,1933,1935,1936,1938.
- ROBERTS, HORACE, VICTOR, 12 Clairview Rd., Streatham, London, S.W.16. (L). Secretary L.C.C. Evening Institutes. Group 5 (a).
- ROUSE, RONALD E.J., 3 St. Leonard's Terr., Gas Hill, Norwich, Norfolk. (Age 35). Groups 6 (b); 1; 7 (a) (1915-1918 only); 6 (a),(c); 2; 8; 9; 3. Has all types of books for sale and exchange.

- ROWLEY, LESLIE VICTOR, British Political Agency, Kuwait, Persian Gulf. (L).
(Age 40). Foreign Service Officer. Group 5 (a),(b),(d),(e). Is anxious to obtain Holiday Annual for 1921 and either Magnets or S.O.Ls. containing the "Brander Rebellion" stories. Correspondence by airmail, please.
- RUSSELL, BERYL, 4 Ashgrove Rd., off Shady Lane, Great Barr, Birmingham, 22A.
(Mid.) Groups 5 (d),(a),(b),(e),(c); 7 (b),(a); 6 (b).
- RUTHERFORD, FREDERICK G., Herbert Lodge, 3 Cotham Park North, Bristol, 6. (L).
(Age 53). Co. Director and Engineer. Groups 5 (a),(b),(d),(e); 7 (a),(b).
- SALMON, HAYDN EDWARD, 38 Warwick Rd., Ipswich, Suffolk. (Age 52). Established Civil Servant. Groups 7 (a); 9; 5 (a),(b). Requires Nelson Lees subsequent to Fullwoods reform series. B.F.L. school stories by Henry St. John and Henry I. Johnson, 1920 on. Comics: Butterfly, Comic Cuts, Comic Life, Chuckles, Firefly, 1918 on.
- SATCHELL, THOMAS G., 63 Cantwell Rd., Plumstead, London, S.E.18. (Age 54).
Butcher's Manager. Group 5 (a),(b). Is still seeking blue covered Gem entitled "The Toff" for which I would exchange three Annuals and a long run of C.Ds. in perfect condition.
- SELLARS, GEORGE, 1 Hesley Rd., Shiregreen, Sheffield, 5. (Age 56). Group 5 (a),
(b),(c).
- SHAW, JOHN R., 4 Brunswick Park, London, S.E.5. Assistant Works Manager. Groups
5 (b),(a),(e); 6 (a),(b); 7 (a). Is interested in all periods of Charles Hamilton's work. Desires to obtain certain Plucks dated 1909-10 containing stories of Tomsonio's Circus by Harry Dorrian.
- SHEPHERD, JAMES, 43 Station Rd., Killamarsh, Sheffield. Group 5 (b),(a).
Particularly interested in early issues.
- SMITH, CLIFFORD, 104 Headroomgate Rd., St. Annes, Lancs. (Age 40). Local
Government Officer. Group 5 (a),(d),(b),(e),(c). Considers it grand to be able to relax with Harry Wharton & Co.
- SMITH, DEREK, 14 Crescent Lane, Clapham Park, London, S.W.4. (Age 31). Writer.
Groups 5 (a),(b); 7 (a); 5 (d),(e).
- SMITH, J., 36 Langham Rd., Newcastle-on-Tyne, 5. Group 5 (a),(b),(d),(e).
- SMITH, PERCY, The Stores, Mumby, Alford, Lincs. (Age 56). Groups 3; 2; 5 (b);
7 (a),(b); 5 (c).
- SMITH, STANLEY, 13 Percy St., Bootham, York. (N). Groups 5 (all); 7 (a); 10; 8.
- SMITH, T.G., 10 Darley Dale Ave., Great Barr, Birmingham, 22A. (Mid.) (Age 38).
Salesman. Group 5 (a),(d).
- SMYTH, SYDNEY, 1 Brandon St., Clovelly, N.S.W., Australia. Groups 5 (all); 8; 7.
- SNELL, FRANK, 24 The Strand, Bideford, Devon. Group 5 (all).
- SOUTHWAY, ARTHUR JAMES, Box 4, Beaconsfield, Cape Province, South Africa. (L).
(Age 48). Asst. Secretary (Mineral Water Factory). Groups - All.
- SOYSA, A.C.H. De, 4 Boyd Place, Colombo, 3. Ceylon. (L). (Age 40). Company
Director. Group 5 (a),(e).
- SPACEY, ROGER FRAYN, 60 Esmond Rd., London, W.4. (L). (Age 30). Groups 5 (a),
(d),(b),(e); 8.
- *STAFFORD, DENIS, 16 Sydenham Park, Sydenham, London, S.E.26. 'phone Forest Hill
1521. (Age 30). Comic Strip Artist, Radio and T.V. Comedy Writer. Groups 9;
8; 5 (a). Says his comics collecting certainly influenced his life - he became a comic artist! Produced weekly hektographed comics at Dulwich College; sold his first strip to Comic Capers at 14, beating friendly rival Bob Monkhouse by several issues. After school worked with Bob on comics, later on radio - to scripts. Free lance artist on Beano (Pansy Potter), Knockout (Our Ernie, Stonehenge Kit), Telestrip (Evening News) etc. Lately supplying Hylde Baker

- strip, Northern "Daily Mirror". Needs Kinematograph Weekly 1927-1949; Picture Show 1927-Apr. 23, 1932; 1941, 1146, 1149, 1160. Boys' Cinema 1927 - May 1935, 810, 828, 873, 890, 975, 1050 and several other cinema mags.
- STANDEN, A.G., 33 Grasmere Ave., Heaton Chapel, Stockport, Cheshire. Group 8 (Jesters).
- STEVENS, SHEILA, 783 Rathdown St., North Carlton, N.4., Victoria, Australia. (Age 43). Groups 5 (d),(e),(c),(a),(b).
- STEWART, ALAN, Orchestra, British Colonial Hotel, Nassau, Bahamas. (L). (Age 47). Dance Musician. Groups 7 (a); 5 (a),(b).
- STOKES, JOHN C., 6 Temple Gardens, Rathmines, Dublin, Eire. Group 5 (all).
- STONE, LEON, 28 Elgin St., Gordon, N.S.W., Australia. Journalist. Groups 5 (a),(b),(c); 1; 3; 2.
- STOREY, ROWLAND H., 4 Byron St., Shieldfield, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 2. Store Keeper. Groups 2; 4.
- STURDY, F., 8 Watson St., Middlesbrough, Yorkshire. (N). Group 5 (all).
- SUTCLIFFE, HERBERT JAMES, 38 Victoria Ave., Wickford, Essex. (L). (Age 40). Estimating Clerk (Builders' Merchants). Groups 7 (a),(b); 6 (c) (E.S. Brooks only); 6 (a) (E.S. Brooks only); 5 (all); 8 (Modern Boy only). Novels wanted: "The Grouser's Last Card" by E.S. Brooks and "Footsteps of Death" by Victor Gunn.
- SUTTON, LAURIE, 112 Repton Rd., Orpington, Kent. (L). (Age 35). Group 5 (b),(a),(d).
- SWAN, JAMES R., 3 Fifth Ave., Paddington, London, W.10. (Age 41). Welder. Groups 5 (a),(b); 7 (a); 8; 4; 6 (all); 9. After trying for years has now a complete run of $\frac{1}{2}$ d Gems and splendidly bound by Mr. Ashley.
- SWITZER, H.W., 27 St. Paul's Rd., Wallasey, Cheshire. (Mer.) (Age 76). Groups 3. 4. 6 (b); 7 (a). Keen Dick Turpin (Aldine) fan.
- TAYLOR, RAYMOND, 22 Pembroke Ave., Eттingshall, Wolverhampton. (Age 62). Stoker. Groups 2; 8; 4; 1. Particularly interested in pre-1914 Boys' Friends $\frac{1}{2}$ d and 1d, Boys' Realms and Boys' Heralds.
- THOMPSON, GORDON, 53 Wallasey Park, Old Park, Belfast, Northern Ireland. Groups 5 (a); 7 (a).
- THORNE, BERNARD ROBERT and BERENICE, 220 Galloway Rd., West Hill, Ontario, Canada. (L). (Ages 43 and 17). Federal Government Aircraft Inspector, High School Student. Groups 7 (a); 5 (a),(b); 7 (b); 5 (d),(e).
- THROCKMORTON, NICHOLAS, 230 Latymer Court, London, W.6. (L). (Age 43). Civil Servant. Groups 5 (a),(e). Wishes to purchase Magnets between 1920-30. Must be in perfect condition.
- THURBON, WILLIAM THOMAS, 47 Cromwell Rd., Cambridge. (N). (Age 54). Bursar's Clerk. Groups 2; 4; 6 (a) (Lobanga only). Wanted: Marvels 13,274,283,284,285,298; Union Jacks 201,244,565; B.F.Ls. 1st series 32,142,231,233,218,222,528; Plucks years 1912-13.
- TOMLINSON, JOHN, 58 Scalpcliffe Rd., Burton-on-Trent, Staffs. (Age 49). Storeman, Rubber Factory. Groups 4; 7 (a); 5 (b),(c),(d),(e),(a); 7 (b); 6 (b). Wishes to obtain Chums 1919; Holiday Annual 1923; in good condition; a book of complete school stories "Tales of St. Cedric's" by L.C. Douthwaite.
- TWELLS, J., 39 Rosewood Ave., Rugby. (Age 49). Group 7 (a). Considers no other author has approached the standard of E.S. Brooks' St. Frank's school stories. That for humour especially he was supreme.
- Liverpool
UNWIN, FRANK, 5 Thorndale Rd., Waterloo, 22. (Mer.) (Age 40). Schoolmaster. Groups 7 (a); 5 (a),(b).

- VENNIMORE, CHARLES E.F., 25 Byron Ave., West Hounslow, Middlesex. Still has for sale a huge quantity of periodicals of all types.
- WAINE, GRANVILLE T., 10 Femar Rd., Parcellyn, Aberporth, Cardiganshire. Groups 5 (all); 6 (all); 7 (a),(b); 8; Particularly interested in Christmas numbers.
- WALKER, PETER A., 16 Thorncliffe Rd., Mapperley Park, Nottingham. Groups 5 (b), (a); 7 (a); 4; 5 (d),(c).
- WALLIS, CLIFFORD, 64 Oakwood Park Rd., Southgate, N.14. (L). (Age 37). Groups 5 (a),(b); 7 (a); 8.
- WEBSTER, DONALD B., c/o 59 Mortlake Rd., Kew, Surrey (or 11 Neville Rd., Liverpool, 22.) 'phone Waterloo 3429. (Mer.) Group 5 (all). Chairman Merseyside O.B.B.C. Has not missed a meeting from Sept. 1951 to date. Still seeking Magnet No. 382 "The Slacker's Eleven", also Magnet 223.
- WEBSTER, PETER, 11 Neville Rd., Liverpool, 22. (Mer.) (Age 16). Youngest Club Member. At present attending Merchant Taylor's School. An avid reader of the Companion Papers. Has good collection of pre-war Comics.
- *WERNHAM, JOHN, 5 Museum St., Maidstone, Kent. (Age 50). Osteopath. Group 5 (b), (a),(c). Would like to obtain Green Gems especially those published during 1911-16, most particularly early Talbot stories. Also Red Magnets of same period; Penny Populars 1914-17. Only started collecting recently and at present has about 60 assorted copies of above. Other hobbies are photography and letterpress printing.
- WESTWATER, W., 4 Buckley St. Glasgow, N.2. Structural Engineering Draughtsman. Group 5 (a),(c),(d).
- *WHITEHEAD, STUART BUCKLEY, "Borrisokane," 12 Wells Rd., Fakenham, Norfolk. (Age 30). Ophthalmic Optician. Groups 5 (a),(b),(d),(c),(e); 7 (a),(b); 8; 4; 3; 2. Has been interested in the Hamilton papers and a lesser degree St. Frank's since he bought them as a boy in the 1930's. In the last five years has managed to obtain bound vols. of Magnets from 1936 to the end. Also has 15 Holiday Annuals.
- WHITER, BENJAMIN GEORGE, 36 Newcourt House, Horwell Estate, Bethnal Green, London, E.2. (L). (Age 52). Storeman (Printers). Groups 5 (all); 6 (all); 7 (a),(b); 4; 3; 9; 10; 8. Says our hobby has led to great help in others, such as philately, photography, railways, amateur magazines, and one or two others.
- WHITER, ROBERT H., 706 Lordship Lane, Wood Green, London, N.22.(L). (Age 33). Cycle Dealer. Groups 5 (all); 8; 4.
- WHORWELL, RICHARD, 29 Aspinden Rd., Rotherhithe, London, S.E.16. (Age 60). Street Orderly. Groups 2; 3; 5 (b),(a),(d),(c); 6 (a),(b); 7 (a),(b). Wants Jack North "Plucks" about 1907; St. Jim's "Plucks"; Early 1d Magnets and Double Christmas Numbers. Also Christmas Double Numbers - Gems, Union Jacks, Plucks, Marvels, etc.
- WILLETT, E.P.K., Church Cottage, Laleham-on-Thames, Staines, Middlesex. (L). Groups 5 (all); 4 (Captains and B.O.P. Annuals only); 8.
- WILLIAMS, J.S., 99 Smyth Rd., Bristol, 3. (Age 41). Technical College Lecturer. Groups 5 (a),(d),(e); 7 (a),(b); 5 (c),(b); 9.
- WILLIAMSON, WILLIAM L., 410 Oakwood Lane, Roundhay, Leeds, 8. (N). (Age 56). Warehouseman. Groups 5 (all); 6 (a); 2; 7 (a); 9.
- WILLISON, FRANK A., 49 Longmoor Rd., Halesowen, Nr. Birmingham. (Age 56). Tool Progress Chaser. Groups 2; 4; 6 (b).
- WILSON, ROBERT, 100 Broomfield Rd., Glasgow, N.1. (Age 58). Medical Practitioner. Groups 5 (a),(b),(d),(e),(c); 6 (a); 8.

WOOD, JOHN PETER, Nostaw, 328 Stockton Lane, York. (N). (Age 43). Journalist.

Groups 7 (a); 6 (b); 5 (a).

WRIGHT, CHARLES, 12 Ashburnham Place, Greenwich, London, S.E.10. (L). (Age 52).

Hospital Attendant. Groups 5 (b); 6 (a); 3; 2; 7 (a); 9.

WRIGHT, OLIVE, 12 Ashburnham Place, Greenwich, London, S.E. 10. (L). Group

6 (all).

*YORKE-ROBINSON, JAMES, "Cliff Pavilion," Caravan Site, Beltinge, Herne Bay, Kent. (Age 51). Caravan Site Proprietor. Groups 5 (all); 10. Is anxious to obtain Holiday Annuals 1925-26-27-29-30-31-32-35-36-37. Is collecting for young daughter, but confesses he enjoys them himself. Owner of 120 caravan site.

WANTED: Single copies or Bound Volumes of the following numbers:- "Champion" from No. 130 to No. 340; "Triumph" from No. 1 to No. 190; "Pluck" from No. 78 to No. 97 (Last Series); "Rocket" from No. 78 to No. 87; "Triumph Annual" 1938. Please write stating price wanted to:-

R.J. MCCARTHY, WETLANDS, AUGATHELLA, QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA.

WANTED: Bound volumes of Magnet 1-1,454; Bound "Gems" 1-1,543; Loose "Gems" 1507-1542, 1,579, 1,580 and 1,584; S.O.Ls. 230,391; "Populars"; "Boy's Friend" weekly; Holiday Annuals - 1919,1920,1921,1922,1924,1926,1927,1929.

FOR SALE/SWOP: Complete run 1,554-1,683 Magnets.

S.B. WHITEHEAD, 12 WELLS ROAD, FAKENHAM, NORFOLK.

WANTED: "Chatterbox" annuals for years 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, also copies of "Rainbow" comic. Your price paid if at all reasonable.

W. WESTWATER, 4 BUCKLEY STREET, GLASGOW, N.2.

FOR SALE: Hundreds of pre-war Boys' Papers, including: Modern Boys, Boys' Magazines, Buzzers, Champions, Triumphs, Pioneers, Skippers, Union Jacks, Boys Friend Libraries, Detective Weeklies, Startlers, Boys' Cinemas, Sexton Blake Libraries (Third Series); and many others of that vintage. Please write stating numbers:-

JAMES SWAN, 3 FIFTH AVENUE, QUEEN'S PARK, LONDON, W.10.

WANTED: Sexton Blake Libs., 1st and 2nd Series. Any numbers. Reasonable prices paid. Also Union Jacks 1917 to 1933, Boys' Friend Libs., 1st Series No. 669, 2nd Series No. 79.

JOSIE PACKMAN, 27 ARCHDALE ROAD, EAST DULWICH, LONDON, S.E.22.

WANTED: S.O.Ls. 9, 16, 40, 58, 127, 264.

T.W. PORTER, OLD FIELDS, CORNGREAVES ROAD, CRADLEY HEATH, STAFFS.