

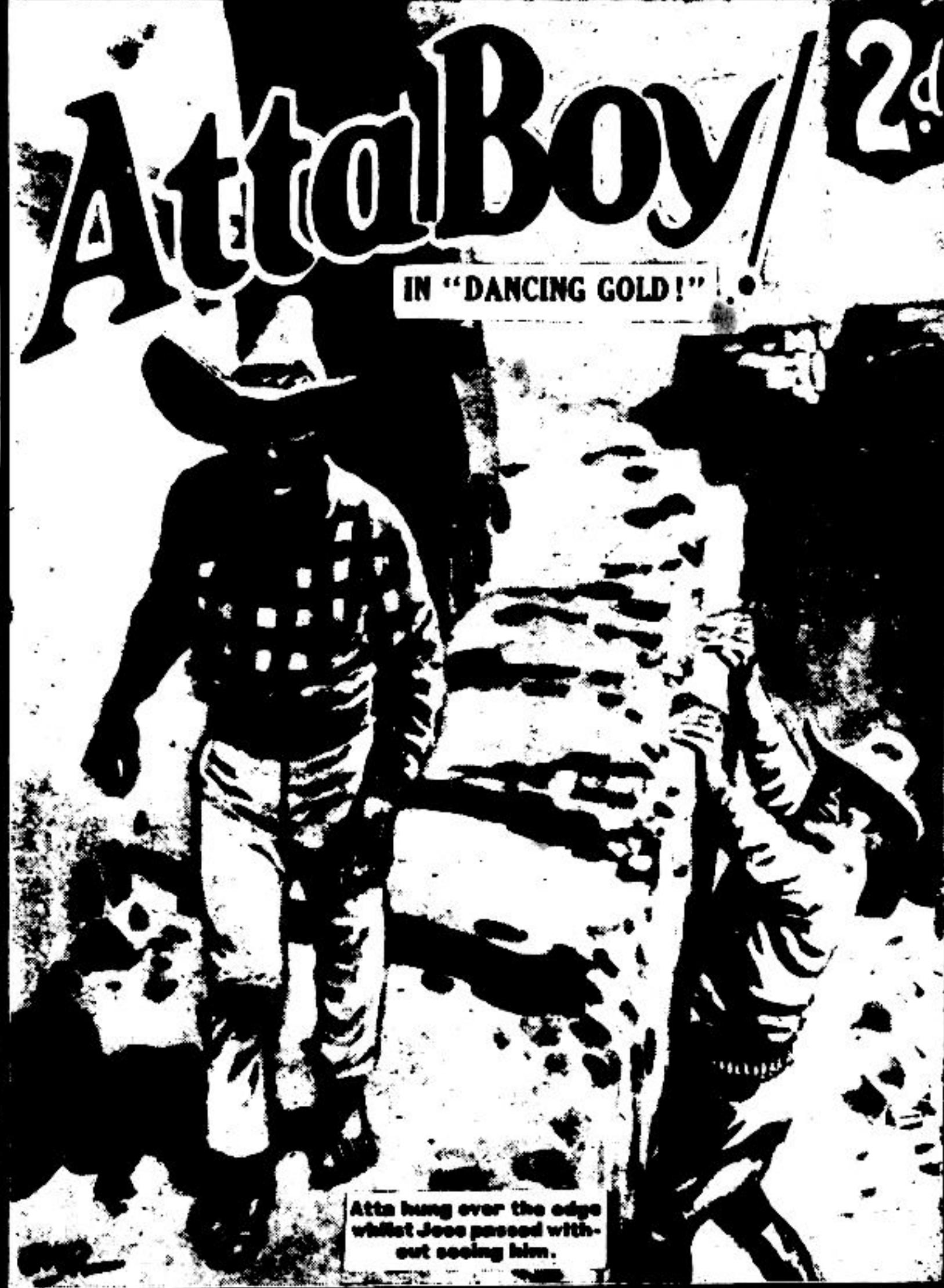
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COLLECTORS' DIGEST

VOL.
23

No
274

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Atta hung over the edge
whilst Jess passed without seeing him.

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OCTOBER 1909

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STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

Founded in 1941 by
W. H. GANDER

COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Founded in 1946 by
HERBERT LECKENBY

Vol. 23

No. 274

OCTOBER 1969

Price 2s 3d



HE SQUEAKED, SHE SQUEELED,
THEY BELLOWED.

Last month Gerry Allison was quite certain that Charles Hamilton did not write the Magnet's Love Story of 1920, and, to prove his point, he listed a great many synonyms used by the author of the series for the verb "said." For instance: Hissed Wharton; Breathed Wharton; Grinned Carson; Grunted Johnny Bull; Sneered Carson; Shrieked Elsie; Assured Bunter; Roared Squiff; Bawled Squiff, and many more. Of "'Then ---' almost groaned Mr. Quelch,' Gerry enquired pertinently how one "almost groans" one word.

Naturally, a writer tries to avoid monotony by varying his verbs of speech, but there is a limit. There is no doubt that indifferent writers give away their lack of skill by the use of extravagant verbs. A year or two ago, one of our literary critics drew attention to two rare verbs used in a Sexton Blake Library, when one man "gritted" and another one "gloomed." A verb which I, personally, detest is "rasp,"

used to denote speech.

One must, of course, accept as something apart the use of an occasional unusual verb - employed especially for the sake of humour or other effect. Charles Hamilton certainly used two successfully in later years: "yapped" for Bunter's shrill, excited speech in isolated sequences, and "boomed" to denote the voice of Prout at his most pompous.

I seem to recall one writer who went from the sublime to the ridiculous by penning long sections of dialogue without any indication at all as to who was speaking. That sort of thing, reminiscent of some of the lesser writers of American "private eye" fiction, is irritating to plenty of readers.

THE PEOPLE'S FRIEND

Still with Gerry Allison, he has drawn our attention to the fact that the Scotch periodical "The People's Friend" reaches its 5200th issue on September 19th - that is, 100 years of publication. A wonderful record, and one that deserves recognition here. Myra Allison takes the P.F. regularly, and wondered whether my ladies at Excelsior House are acquainted with the paper. Very surely they are! My ladies have had the People's Friend, and its stable companion, My Weekly, for many years, and love them both. And every year without fail I buy them the People's Friend Annual at Christmas. All of these publications have a charm which a great many other weekly magazines seem to have lost.

They are not old-fashioned, but they have none of the blatant modernity which disfigures some of the others. And they have seen no reason, bless them, to discontinue serial numbers, week by week.

If Mrs. C. D. Reader has not yet met with any of this delightful trio, I strongly advise Mr. C. D. Reader to order them without delay, and be the perfect husband. Any newsagent can get them for you on publication day, and they are most reasonably priced. Put in a regular order for them right away. Your ladies will bless you.

OUR ANNUAL

Last month I mentioned that this year's Annual will contain some articles with unusual qualities, and I promised to give you an insight into some of them. What I believe you will find an interlude of unusual charm comes from Lawrence Morley, and we have called it "A

Derbyshire Boy Remembers." Larry would be the last to claim that he is a gifted writer, but he tells his story simply and naturally - the story of a boy who had few of the opportunities which are the lot of so many boys now, yet he had within him the contentment of mind which enabled him to enjoy his boyhood, delighting in the old papers, the weekly visits to the cinema, and so on. It was a time when lads had so much less, but were so much more contented. I find the article strangely touching, and I believe you will, also.

Hamilton and Greyfriars are two peculiarly British institutions. It might be an exaggeration to say that the Battle of Britain was won on the playing-fields of Greyfriars, but there is no doubt that for 40 years it would have been hard to find men who were not acquainted in some way with the Magnet. How does an American react to something which is as British as roast beef and Yorkshire pudding?

One of our most loyal readers is Mr. J. Randolph Cox of Minnesota. He is now a keen Hamiltonian. You will find his article - "An American Meets Hamiltonia" - quite intriguing. In passing, Mr. Cox first went to Greyfriars by way of a story which Hamilton did not write. As Mr. Cox says, this is proof of the enduring and endearing nature of the characters which Hamilton created.

Our star writer, Roger Jenkins, is at his brilliant best with a fascinating review of the part that Highcliffe played in the Magnet. Last year, a great many readers were sad that Mr. Buddle was conspicuous only by his absence from the Annual. This year he is back in "A Mystery at Slade."

Next month I hope to let you into the secret of a few more treasures you will find in the 1969 Annual.

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THE EDITOR

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DANNY'S DIARY



Another of the posters Danny saw outside the cinemas 50 years ago.

— — — — —
though, isn't very nice. In fact, it's rank. Luckily there is a new margarine called Blueband, which is far nicer than the present-day butter, and Maypole margarine, though it has now gone up to 7d. a

OCTOBER 1919

There has been a very bad harvest this year. This was due to a very wet and cool August and a dull, dampish early September. It's disappointing, really, for the early summer was lovely. From mid-May till mid-July it was hot and dry - no rain fell in the south for many weeks - and then, suddenly, the summer was over. The weather broke down and it never recovered.

Eggs have been very dear and scarce, but the price is dropping a bit now - they are down to $4\frac{1}{4}$ d. each. But that's quite a lot to pay. Meat rationing has ended at the end of this month, which is a step in the right direction. But butter is still very short, and the ration for one person is now reduced to one ounce per week. The present butter,

pound, is very nice indeed. Mum says that Maypole did more than anyone, during the war, to keep prices down and to make sure everyone got a fair share.

Speaking of harvests, it has been a poor crop of tales for the most part in my papers this month. However, the Greyfriars Herald has come out again at the end of the month, and I like it, though it's not as good as the old one was. The new one is 1½d. It contains stories of the Benbow, by Owen Conquest, about Jack Drake, Daubeny, Tuckey Toodles and Rodney. The first tale of this series was "Jack Drake's Resolve," and I liked it. There is also a serial "The Red Man's Trail" by Mr. Prout, and a tuck hamper competition. But why are things never quite so good as they used to be?

There is a big book out this month, containing stories of all the schools. It costs 5/-, and Doug has promised to buy me it for Christmas, so I must wait patiently. It is called The Holiday Annual.

I think the best tale of the month was in the Gem. This was called "The Amateur Advertiser," and it was delicious. Gussy learned that the circulation of the Gem was falling, so he set about bucking things up. He went to see the Gem editor, and also called on Martin Clifford, who had Frank Richards and his sister Hilda staying with him. The author wrote a chapter in the first person, and it was all great fun.

Then the size of the Gem was increased to 20 pages. There were two tales called "Talbot's Girl Chum" and "In Search of Marie" in which a scoundrel named Jim Dawlish caused Marie Rivers to leave St. Jim's, and Talbot went after her.

Finally came "Rivals on the Warpath" which was a very ordinary ragging tale. There is a new serial in the Gem called "The Treasure Seekers," by Reginald Wray.

The Magnet has hardly been worth spending 1½d. on. "The Secret of the Wires" told how Bob Cherry got strange messages on his wireless set. "The Greyfriars Detectives" were Ferrers Lock and Inky. "The Mystery of Mr. Quelch" was that he had a nervous breakdown - and the Magnet went up to 20 pages to soothe readers who were on the verge of a nervous breakdown, too. Finally, "Hurree Singh's Prize-Packet" was a grim tale about pet snakes.

There is, however, one bright spot. The Penny Popular which costs 1½d. is also increased to 20 pages, and, perhaps to celebrate it all, they have stopped putting in new tales of Rookwood, and have gone back to the old tales which once appeared in the Boys' Friend. The opening series is the one where Dick Oswald came as a new boy. It is a big improvement, and I think I may start taking the Pop again. There are still new stories about Greyfriars (someone named Dennis Carr has come on the scene) and St. Jim's. But the old Rookwood tale is worth the money.

I read in the paper that there are now 4,000 cinemas in the United Kingdom, but nothing much in the cinema line in the West End. In the Strand there is Terry's, but I think it is only a small place. When there is a very big picture made, the producers take over a large theatre and show it for a few weeks.

For instance, there is a big new film named "Auction of Souls." It is about "ravished Armenia" and nobody under 17 is allowed to see it. This picture is now being shown at the Royal Albert Hall, with a big orchestra to accompany it. The film will not be shown outside London till next year, when it will be For Adults Only.

At one of our local cinemas, the new Pearl White serial "The Lightning Raider" is showing. A very exciting and eerie film we went to see was Frank Keenhan in "The Bells." I think I dreamed about this one.

Dorothy Gish was tip-top in "Boots." Wallace Reid was good in "The Dub." W. S. Hart was good, as he always is, in "The Poppy-girl's Husband." I like Jack Pickford, and he was fine in "Bill Apperson's Boy." Charlie Chaplin is going round again in his 3-reeler "Sunnyside." And Stoll Films offered "The Romance of Tarzan" which I liked a lot.

Cedar Creek has been very readable all the month, but I have not been all that keen on the tales. The series tells of Beauclerc's cousin, Algernon Beauclerc, coming to the backwoods and going to Cedar Creek school. It's not really very original. The tales were "The Honourable Algernon," "A Babe in the Wood," "The Dandy of Cedar Creek," and "Rough on Algernon."

Also in the Boy's Friend has, of course, been Rookwood. The

Mornington-Captain series ended with "A Surprise for the School," in which Morny resigned and Jimmy Silver became captain again. The next story was so silly. It was about Tubby Muffin. Called "Lying Low," it was not by the regular writer.

The next pair were by the real Owen Conquest, but they were only so-so. "Rookwood to the Rescue" and "A Dual Secret" they were called, and they told of Mrs. Wickers being put out of her cottage by the wicked landlord, Mr. Grubb, and Jimmy Silver and Tommy Dodd got up rival concerts to make money for the widow. A bit stale, like our ounce of butter.

IN MEMORY of HERBERT LECKENBY who left us on October 21st, 1959, but is not forgotten.

Leonard, Josephine and Eleanor Packman.

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THE PROBLEM OF THE AUTHOR WHO NEVER WAS

By Walter Webb

Taking them decade by decade, from the naive, unsophisticated days of the Graydon-Goddard regime, via the palmy days of Lewis, Teed and Parsons, to the abrupt, fast-moving narratives of the Baker-Story group, the average quality of the Sexton Blake story is a high one, and in parading their individual talents for the enjoyment of the Blake fan, those hundred or so authors have left behind them a wealth of fine reading about characters who will long be remembered by those who followed their exploits in the days of their youth. Thanks to the publication of the SEXTON BLAKE CATALOGUE, all those interested in the cases of Sexton Blake have ready reference to the large number of authors who have been engaged in turning out stories of the detective from the beginning, in 1893; but it is well to state that among those listed one name should not be there at all.

It is one thing to give an author credit for a story he did not write yet to be in possession of the ability necessary of having been able to have done so; but it is quite another matter to give a man credit for a whole string of stories he could not possibly have written due to his strict limitations in authorship. That name is a blot on the records I was at pains to remove from my own lists many years ago, for I am positive that the man in question never penned the 14 Blake stories credited to him in the catalogue. These stories are said to have been written by Leonard Brooks, brother of Edwy Searles Brooks; but it is very doubtful if Leonard wrote even a line of them, for, from both the style and tempo in which they were published, it is obvious that Edwy wrote them all. True, there is evidence of a thinly disguised attempt on Edwy's part to hide the fact that he wrote them by introducing a Scotland Yard official named Dickson instead of his usual character, Chief Detective-Inspector Lennard; but any reader of

the NELSON LEE LIBRARY, or of the Waldo stories in the UNION JACK, cannot be deceived by that effervescent style, so typical of all Edwy's work.

This deception practised by the brothers resulted in no little confusion at Fleetway House, which a glance through some of the volumes of the S.B.L. published in the early twenties will testify, and at the same time prove that Edwy - not Leonard - wrote the novels credited to the latter. Let us take No. 250, published Sept. '22, under the title of "Fingerprints of Fate." According to the S. B. CATALOGUE, this novel was written by L. H. Brooks, as was "The House of Ghosts," (No. 244). Now to No. 265, entitled "On The Bed Of The Ocean," correctly given in the S.B.C. as being by E. S. Brooks, but marking the first discrepancy in the catalogue's claim of authorship, for under the title of this book it says it was written by the author of "Fingerprints of Fate." It follows, therefore, that since this novel was written by Edwy, then all those preceding, with L. H. Brooks given as originator, must have been by Edwy too. And the inconsistencies which follow prove this to be the case. For instance, No. 274, which was published under the title of "The Green Eyes," is listed in the S.B.C. as being by Edwy. But, according to what we are told in the book itself, it was written by the author of "Fingerprints of Fate" and "The Mystery of Glyn Castle," (No. 269), both written, according to the catalogue, by Leonard. Now to No. 282, entitled "The House At Waterloo." The S.B.C. gives - and rightly so - Edwy as the originator of this one, and it is interesting to note that he introduced Dickson and not Lennard here. Was it the original intention of the brothers that Leonard should produce this one? No less interesting is that, according to the book, the same author penned "The Mystery of Glynn Castle," and, as already stated, the S.B.C. has credited Leonard with this one. Finally, there is No. 324, published under the title of "The Mystery of Rodney's Cove." The S.B.C. correctly names Edwy as author. The book - equally correct - claims that it was written by the author of "The Secret of Thurlston Towers," (No. 286). But, sad to relate, the S.B.C. gives Leonard the credit for this work.

All this has probably read confusingly, but what it all boils down to is that on at least five occasions data in the S.B.C. has differed

from that given in five volumes of the S.B.L., and what has to be resolved is which publication has furnished the correct details.

Information of authorship given in the book itself must be regarded as official, and although it is recognised that a mistake will sometimes arise over a name, is it likely that it would occur in the case of one particular author five times over?

Of the actual works - if any - of L. H. Brooks, what is known about them? In not a single old boys' book that has passed through my hands have I seen his name mentioned. He may possibly have had work accepted through pen-names, but, if so, no editor I have contacted knows anything about them. Not much doubt but that, after all, he is fitted to be known as the author who never was.

* * *

SEXTON BLAKE IN THE BIG THREE

By S. Gordon Swan

IN THE early part of the century Sexton Blake appeared in all three of the companion papers: The Boys' Friend, The Boys' Realm and The Boys' Herald. It is not claimed that the following list of stories which appeared in those books is complete — one would have to examine every issue of the three periodicals to achieve that end and the present writer does not possess all those items. But some attempt has been made to give an idea of the Blake material which was published in this famous trio of papers.

There is not much to be found in The Boys' Realm as it concentrated mainly on sporting yarns, but in 1906 commenced a series of short stories dealing with the adventures of the master detective. Those which I have read were by W. Murray Graydon the indefatigable, so presumably he wrote the lot. I cannot vouch for any further stories until The Boys' Realm was revived after the Great War, when issue No. 1 of the new series contained the opening instalment of a short serial, The Brass Disc, which must have been by Cecil Hayter as it introduced Sir Richard Losely.

The Boys' Herald devoted more space to Blake's career. About 1906 it published a serial by E. W. Alais entitled The Coster King, an

unusual story which dealt with an assortment of London characters. This afterwards figured as a unit of The Boys' Friend Library. Later were to appear the three tales which covered the detective's early days at school and university — Sexton Blake at School, Sexton Blake in the Sixth and Sexton Blake at Oxford. These were by Cecil Hayter and were destined to be published in The Boys' Friend Library, first series, and again, in an amended form, in the second series. In the first version Blake's parentage was left in doubt but suggested a noble origin; in the second we learned that his father was Dr. Berkeley Blake, a character who had appeared in the opening numbers of The Detective Weekly. In the first version of the Oxford episode, Tinker made his alleged first appearance, while in the second version, Tinker had been transmuted into another urchin named Ginger.

Then, of course, there was the Maxwell Scott serial, The Winged Terror, in which Blake and Tinker combined forces with Nelson Lee and Nipper. Was this the first instance of such a formidable combine? Another short serial, The Ticket-of-Leave Man, was by our old friend Murray Graydon. That would seem to be the lot as far as The Boys' Herald was concerned; quite a respectable tally of six serials.

The Boys' Friend gave the detective and his assistant a really good show. To the best of my belief they made their début in this paper in three consecutive serials, the first of which began in No. 230, dated November 4th, 1905, while the last instalment of the third was included in issue No. 268. The stories were, respectively, The Schoolmaster Detective, Sexton Blake On the Railway, and Sexton Blake in America. In this connection the Amalgamated Press revealed a contradiction to their usual policy — an author's name was appended to these tales: Herbert Maxwell. It is a mystery why he was accorded the honour of having his name displayed under the titles when all other Blake yarns were anonymous, including Herbert Maxwell's own contributions to the Union Jack.

There were to be three Murray Graydon serials, all of which were reprinted in The Boys' Friend Library (I don't think Herbert Maxwell's ever were). These were Sexton Blake, Spy, a tale of Blake and Tinker on espionage work in pre-Great War Berlin, and up against

a lady spy; Sexton Blake in the Congo and its sequel, Across the Equator. Murray Graydon was at his best in this sort of thing, when he got away from his belted earls and swooning maidens.

I think a Boys' Friend Library by E. W. Alais, Tiller and Tideway, was a serial in the Boys' Friend Weekly, though I have no instalments to prove it. Certainly another tale, Sexton Blake Foreman, did run through its pages, and this was a particularly good story, far more so than the title implies — one of the best of the old tales. It dealt with a big construction project and worked up through exciting events to a stirring climax.

Now we come to four stories dealing mainly with Tinker, although Blake featured in some of them. The titles of these were Tinker's Schooldays, The Four Musketeers, Tinker's Boyhood and Tinker Abroad. These were all by Cecil Hayter and the first two were published in an abridged form in the Boys' Friend Library. The other two, as far as I can trace, were never reproduced in book form, but Tinker's Boyhood was reprinted as a serial in the Union Jack some years later.

In addition to all these serials, an occasional short story of Blake was printed. Then came a series of stories dealing with Tinker's further adventures at school. At this point reference must be made to Mrs. Bardell. The worthy landlady is scarcely mentioned, if at all, in any of the foregoing stories. There is no doubt her happy hunting ground was in the Union Jack, especially in the nineteen twenties, when Gwyn Evans presented her in her heyday.

But attention must be accorded to a short story which was included in Boys' Friend No. 650, dated November 22nd, 1913 — "Little Tinker's Visitor." In this tale, Mrs. Bardell definitely makes an appearance — or does she? She writes to Tinker telling him that as Blake is away she intends to visit Telford College to find out how Tinker is getting on. Eventually she turns up, dressed in flamboyant fashion, and has an encounter with a master, Mr. Rose, during which she misinterprets his conversation as a proposal of marriage. After which she embarrasses Tinker and his studymates by producing a toy train for them to play with. It is only after her welcome departure that Tinker finds a note from Sexton Blake saying how much he had enjoyed his

visit!

This must have been a great era in the Sexton Blake saga, for while some of these stories were running in the companion papers, Blake was featured regularly in the Union Jack, Answers and the Penny Pictorial. Those were golden days indeed.

BY-WAYS

By 'Soton'

For most of the time we can be content to travel along the mainstream of Hamiltoniana - Greyfriars, St. Jims and Rookwood. Because these are the mainstream and there is such a volume of material available most articles have been written about those three schools. There are, however, a host of other creations of Charles Hamilton which, quite naturally, have received less attention. To change the analogy slightly they represent, as it were, the by-ways. There are minor by-ways and major by-ways and there has been discussion in the past in Collectors' Digest on whether their existence detracted from the quality of Hamilton's main work and, if so, whether this detraction is compensated for by the interest and quality of the extra work.

To me the by-ways have a great interest of their own. Some are obviously of much more interest than others - Cedar Creek and the Rio Kid come immediately to mind, but there are many more. As Charles Hamilton said in his autobiography, "Frank was always happy to invent another school." One for which I have a particular affection is Oakshott, featured in the Len Lex series. These two series of stories were first published in the 'Modern Boy' to a total of 24 stories in 1935/6. Most were reprinted in two S.O.L's, 353 'The Schoolboy 'Tec' and 371 'Asking for the Sack.' Eric Fayne in his excellent and comprehensive study of Hamilton's work in the 'Modern Boy' says "There was nothing very outstanding in the Len Lex series they were typical Hamilton mystery yarns and, as such, were charming and very pleasant reading."

I agree wholeheartedly with the second part of that comment, but I am not in complete agreement with the first part, at least for

the first Oakshott series. These were the stories reprinted in S.O.L. 353 and introduce Len Lex who is sent to Oakshott by his uncle, a Scotland Yard detective, to help catch a cracksman known as the Sussex Man. (Yes, Oakshott, almost predictably, is in Sussex.) Hamilton was not, of course, primarily a mystery writer but he wrote a fair number of yarns with a mystery element and the Len Lex series is among the best I have read. Until nearly the end of the story there are 3 quite possible suspects and few of Hamilton's plots kept the suspense so well. There is, also, a greater degree of plausibility in making Len Lex a fifth-former rather than a junior. It seems more likely to me that the detecting could have been carried out by a boy of that age rather than a Removite (even Nipper!).

Of the remaining Oakshott stories I would not speak so highly. The plots were used by Charles Hamilton on other occasions - one of them several times. Pleasant stories, but not outstanding ones.

There was little or no chance for character development in such a short run. Apart from Len Lex, only Porringer, a kind of good-natured Coker, is more than a shadow. None of the remainder seems capable of development - which they would have needed if Hamilton had tried to extend the run of stories. By-ways must end somewhere and this one seems to have been about the right length.

One final thought. I have tried to set out why I have some regard for this small corner of Hamiltoniana. There may, however, be another reason. 'The Schoolboy 'Tec' is the only Hamilton story which my wife could be persuaded to read. As she is no enthusiast for the hobby, maybe that proves something.

FOR SALE: BFL No. 717 (excellent copy) "Brother Pros," cricket story by Richard Randolph 12/6. Blue Gem "Mason's Last Match" 12/6. Gems 793, 798, 857: 8/6 each. Gems 471, 483, 490, 1099, 1101: 7/6 each. Popular 474: 10/-. Postage extra on all items.
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LET'S BE CONTROVERSIAL

No. 139. UNFINISHED SYMPHONY

It is an unwritten law in the publishing trade that a paper which shuts down without previous notice - that is, one which breaks faith with its readers - will never appear again. Among all the great papers with which we are interested, only one broke faith with its readers. The Magnet!

Most of us remember how, though a new series had just started and the editor had been announcing pleasant surprises to come, the Magnet suddenly ceased publication and even our newsagents were puzzled and could not tell us why the paper had not turned up as usual.

At the time, we put it all down unhappily to the war and the paper shortage, and, in fact, the default of the Magnet has, ever since, been assumed as due to the paper shortage.

Looking back on that remarkable happening from the calmer, cooler atmosphere of nearly 30 years later, it is obvious that the sudden end of the Magnet can only have been indirectly due to the paper shortage. No other paper shut down in this astonishing manner. Other papers were amalgamated one with another while some continued at fortnightly instead of weekly intervals. If something very unusual had not occurred at the Magnet office at that time, the Magnet would have done the same, passing out honourably after due notice had been given or carrying on with greater intervals between publication dates. Yet, with stunning suddenness, the lights were turned out, and we were all left groping in darkness.

My information was that, in the Spring of 1940, a dispute arose between Charles Hamilton and his publishers. In normal times, no doubt, the publishers would have climbed down. With things as they were, they shut down the paper immediately, even though a new Greyfriars series had just started.

I have never really doubted that this was true. It accounts for the astounding cessation of the Magnet without notice. It accounts for the bitterness which existed for a few years between the author and his old publishers. It accounts for the apparently petty, dog-in-the-manger

attitude of the publishers, in the couple of years after the war, when they did not wish to use the Greyfriars characters themselves and refused to permit the creator of those characters to use them either.

The whole set-up accounts for the deep anger of Charles Hamilton against the Amalgamated Press and the substitute writers, soon after the war. There had been mention of him in the national press and in magazine articles, and his old readers had started to write to him in fair numbers. Some of those readers referred to their puzzlement over the substitute tales of earlier times, and it is possible that they caused the author to see wrongs, or supposed wrongs, which he had never recognised before. And WE fanned the flames!

As I write now, I have letters before me which Charles Hamilton sent over twenty years ago. At the time, like everyone else, I was indignant with the publishers and sympathetic with the badly-used author. John Shaw, in an early Annual, was expressing the views of most of us when he wrote: "The imitations were printed for reasons known only to the editors, and without the permission of Mr. Hamilton, who strongly objected to the inferior work of hack writers appearing under his pen-names. All are very unsatisfactory as stories of Greyfriars and St. Jim's . . . The worst of these imitations were printed in both papers during the years 1916 to 1921, and in the Gem during 1928 to 1931."

Those sentiments have been echoed and re-echoed many times in articles - my own included - down the years.

Reading old letters from Charles Hamilton now, one cannot help feeling a little sorry that he wrote to so many people in the manner he did. He refers to his old publishers as rogues. He calls the substitute writers "toads," "hacks," "nameless scribblers," "dud scribes." It occurred to me, even when I first read the letters, that no man, especially one with the great gifts of Charles Hamilton, would work for nearly forty years for rogues, in unsatisfactory conditions.

Hamilton wrote: "I forget how many Magnet stories were interpolated by the toads. I think something between 30 and 50." Actually there were more than 300 substitute tales in the Magnet, and he must have known it. He must have known that in both the years 1920 and 1921, for instance, he was almost non-existent in the Magnet.

In 1945, Charles Hamilton was an elderly man. One can understand the disappointment, the frustration, the bitterness he endured when a wide, wonderful new career was opening its arms to him, and, because of the A.P., he could not respond. Only a year or two after the war, the A.P. relented, and Charles Hamilton was able to go ahead and write Greyfriars tales to his heart's content.

From that time onwards, there were no more diatribes against his old publishers or the sub-writers. The red-hot chapter about the subs which was supposed to have formed part of the Autobiography was put on one side and the spirit of good will rode triumphant. In fact, in mainly ignoring the question of the stand-in writers, he left his Autobiography singularly deficient.

Charles Hamilton himself supplied Herbert Leckenby with the titles of the four stories which were supposed to follow "The Shadow of the Sack," and mentioned that the A.P. had one or two other manuscripts in hand. This was a pointer, perhaps, to show that the Magnet actually died from the paper shortage and for no other reason.

I have long doubted whether these stories ever existed. If the Amalgamated Press had bought them, with a considerable outlay of cash, surely they or their successors would have used them in the 30 years which have passed since the Magnet ended. Surely they would have serialised them in the papers which carried on. Surely they would have used them in preference to reprinting old stories in various papers as the years have passed. With the post-war demand for Greyfriars, surely the owners, who paid for the manuscripts, would have found some method of recouping their outlay. Surely they would have sold them to Cassell's or, more recently, to Mr. Howard Baker. We can assure Mr. Baker that the publication of this lost series would be even more welcome than the Magnet reprints.

If the A.P. did not buy them in 1940, then Charles Hamilton must have had them. Surely, if they existed, he would have used them in some way or another, but he didn't. There is no sign of a Bandy Bunter anywhere in the post-war Bunter tales, nor is there even a hint of a battle of the beaks.

If Charles Hamilton tucked them away, for some obscure reason, his heirs would have found them, and there is no doubt whatever that

they would have used them.

It would be a convenient but unconvincing solution and a strange coincidence if these manuscripts were lost through enemy action. "Official records" and files seem to have survived. But in any case, every professional author safeguards his work by using carbons. Charles Hamilton would have done his stories in duplicate and probably in triplicate. Even if the A.P. manuscripts were destroyed, Hamilton would still have had his own copy or copies.

All these years later, everybody knows the titles, but nobody in the wide world has ever breathed a hint as to what the stories were about. They might just as well never have been written. In my view, the probability is that they never were.

* * *

CRICKET ECHOES

JOHN McMAHON: The "King Cricket" Controversial was most entertaining, but, as a barbarian from north of the border, I have never been a cricket enthusiast. I can't stand the stuff. The Thomson papers all had a profusion of cricket yarns. I always skipped them as they bored me to tears. But in the Gem and Magnet, the cricket stories rolled off me harmlessly. Hamilton's characters were so strong that it didn't matter whether Harry Wharton & Co. were playing cricket, football or marbles. The characterisation overshadowed any sport. I say "Ban cricket!"

FRANK UNWIN: I agree with the statement in 'Let's be Controversial' that those who knock Britain are a slimey lot who gain attention far beyond their merits. Also, how very true about the cricket knockers who are writing the game off season after season. Of course, the game of cricket is far too clean and wholesome for most of these people. Where there is no filth and pornography, there is no entertainment! The same goes for television plays. I think the Sunday League has proved these people wrong. Given a fine day and the promise of a result, and cricket in the years to come will be as popular as in the days when Hamilton wrote 'King Cricket.' Long live the King!

MAURICE KUTNER: You mention that Charles Hamilton was reputed not to be good at writing about cricket and soccer, and you "don't know how it came about."

May I remind you of one incident only of what he considered to be the duties of a goalkeeper? In Gem No. 468 (not a "sub" story) in chapter three:-

"Suddenly the School House forward line got away, bringing the leather down to Fatty Wynn's goal in great style. The Welsh junior drove it out with a fat fist; and it came in again to meet his head, and shoot forth like a pip from an orange."

Two paragraphs later:- "It was a splendid shot, that would have beaten anybody but Fatty Wynn; but the goalkeeper sprawled through the air, and headed it out."

In Hamiltonia we are used to goalkeepers "punching the ball out" instead of attempting to catch it cleanly and safely, but goalkeepers heading the ball off the line would make any sporting journalist tremble with disbelief.

However, Charles Hamilton was not a sporting journalist, but was the finest of school-story writers.

PHILIP TIERNEY: I was surprised to read that "Redfern Minor" and "Arthur Redfern's Vow" were not revived in the 1930's because I am almost sure they re-appeared in the "Schoolboys' Own Library" (Nos. 192 and 194) in March and April, 1933, renamed "For His Brother's Sake" and "The Captain's Enemy." They were amongst the first S.O.L's which I bought as a child and still possess.

I have not of course read the originals, but think I am correct in saying that Charles Hamilton only wrote two St. Dorothy's stories.

(Mr. Tierney is right. — ED.)

LAURIE SUTTON (on an earlier theme): It would appear obvious to me that the 1920 series was written to order - and I don't think any creative writer is completely himself under such circumstances. But as you mention the Gem Dirk Power series, surely this was just as much off the normal Hamilton track, and the melodramatic style could just as easily be put down to a sub-writer; likewise the strange pair of Hamilton

stories in the Gem of 1925, "Shadowed From School" and "Hunted Down."

Another point is that from years of detailed research and statistical extracts on the substitute writers I know the phraseology and style of the regular sub-writers, and it certainly bears not the faintest resemblance to any of them. The series was definitely not written by G. R. Samways, F. G. Cook or J. N. Pentelow, although the theme could admittedly suggest either of the first two.

Mr. Sutton in a later letter wrote:

I feel now that I would like to come back to the cinema series and read it again when I have more time, as I'm having second thoughts on it. At the moment I think I'll change my judgment to a temporary one of "not proven."

THE LION LIBRARY

Referring to O. W. Wadham's comments on the LION LIBRARY, this periodical did get beyond number 16, at least as far as No. 20. In No. 150 of the Nugget Library (containing "The Silver Shadow" by Stephen Agnew) there is an advertisement for the latest numbers of the LION LIBRARY:

No. 17	The Ghost of Dartle House The Yelping Crew	(Detective) (Adventure)
No. 18	The Strange Case of Peter Weston The Mystery of the Black Mustang	(Detective) (Wild West)
No. 19	The Crown Diamond Case Little Buffalo Bill	(Maxwell Kean, Detective) (Adventure)
No. 20	Maxwell Kean, Schoolmaster The Masked Rider	(Detective) (Adventure)

There is no appropriate date on this Nugget Library. There is a considerable gap in my collection after this issue, so it is possible that the LION LIBRARY did not stop even at No. 20. A previous issue of the Nugget Library lists all the stories in the LION LIBRARY from No. 1 to No. 16. Maxwell Kean and Buffalo Bill appear to have been the main characters featured in this periodical.

NELSON LEE COLUMN

EDWY SEARLES BROOKS
AS A BAD INFLUENCE!

By Bob Blythe

Among Brooks' correspondence for 1911 is the following letter addressed to Percy Griffith, editor of the "Gem."

Percy Griffith, Esq.,
"The Gem Library,"
Bouverie St., E.C.

Dear Mr. Griffith,

With reference to the report in a Hull newspaper, I cannot quite see why my story, THE IRON ISLAND, should have been mentioned in a disparaging manner. There is nothing whatever in the tale to incite a boy to act in the way mentioned, and, as a matter of fact, I have always tried to make the yarn fit to enter any home. As to "Villain's Deeds" I am sure the words never appeared in THE IRON ISLAND.

I think it extremely unfair that a story of mine should be held up as a pernicious example of "penny dreadful" literature - in which category none who know can justly include any of the Harmsworth publications - when it has been, as you know, my sincere endeavour, in common with your own, to create a high moral tone at all times. If you can do anything to set matters right I shall be very much obliged.

Yours sincerely,
E.S.B.

("Robert W. Comrade.")

This intrigued me so much that I decided to see if I could track it down, and find out why Edwy was getting so hot under the collar! The obvious place to start was the British Museum Newspaper Library at Colindale. However it was a bit of a facer to find that there were over a dozen newspapers circulating in Hull at that period, and that some of them (for the 1911 period) had been destroyed during the war. It took some time, but I eventually found what Edwy had been referring to. Incidentally, it's interesting to speculate how E.S.B. had seen the report in

the first place.

What Edwy had been complaining about was a report of the police court proceedings concerning a charge of theft. It occupied two full columns so I shall only quote the part that is of interest to us.

Cast is as follows:-

Godson	..	Prisoner
Duguid	..	Police Officer
Mr. Payne	..	Clerk of the Court
Mr. Wray	..	Magistrate
Mr. Heap	..	The Injured Party

Extract from a report of the proceedings in the

HULL DAILY NEWS dated TUES., FEB. 14, 1911

"READING PENNY DREADFUL WHEN ARRESTED"

Mr. Payne: "I think the prisoner, Godson, was reading a penny dreadful when you arrested him?"

Duguid: "Yes. It was the "Gem Library" called "Villains Deeds."

Mr. Payne: "Rather appropriate?"

Duguid: "Yes."

Mr. Payne: "In another instance the nose of a man in a picture on a beer advertisement was reddened, and the name 'Mr. Heap' inscribed."

Mr. Wray: "I see the penny dreadful is described as the 'Boy's Friend.'"

Mr. Payne: "It is 'The Boy's Gem.'"

Mr. Wray: "It seems to be a thrilling story about an Iron Island, I don't know whether it is very serious. It does not seem so bad."

Mr. Wray seemed to be an intelligent individual! I wonder if Mr. Griffith took the matter up?

* * *

A LETTER FROM ST. FRANK'S

By Jim Cook

I've been looking through some old St. Frank's magazine contributions which Nipper had brought down from a box-room to show

me. The afternoon was one of those quiet and peaceful times when rain prevented any sport and it was better to sit by the fire and read or, as Nipper had suggested, talk about old times.

... Well, we talked and the subject of those famous magazines which the juniors ran for a time cropped up. As a result, Nipper brought some to show me. I never realised he stored every edition. And like most collectors he preferred to show me himself rather than let me handle the papers.

One article by Jack Grey fascinated me to such an extent that I asked Nipper if I be allowed to reproduce it for Collectors' Digest. Permission being granted here it is —

IN THIRTY YEARS' TIME ...

A Glimpse Into The Future As Imagined By Jack Grey

Visitors' Day 1992

St. Frank's looked splendid in the glorious sunlight of the May afternoon. Fellows were moving about leisurely. The old walls of the Ancient House and the College House were ivy-covered and picturesque. The New Modern House, nearly as large as the old school itself, reared itself up in great masses of white stone architecture, surmounted by the great glass dome. This was the school observatory. A little further afield towered the tremendous aerials of the St. Frank's wireless.

... It was visitors' day, and a great number of Old Boys had come down to watch the sports. The chief event of the day would be the Flying Race, between the Lower School and the Upper School. Twenty of the man-power aeroplanes were being used for this race. Engined machines were not allowed.

... A luxurious limousine areoplane came into sight, dropped like a feather, and alighted vertically in the old Triangle. The chauffeur jumped down, opened the door, and three Old Boys stepped out.

One was big, rugged, and aggressive. This was Edward Oswald Handforth, the world-famous fight promoter. Prosperity had made him somewhat stout, but all his old power remained. He glared round and sniffed.

"Huh! Nothing new!" he said, sticking his hands into his pockets. "Almost the same as when we were here as boys. Remember

the time when we were all in Study D together, Church?"

Mr. Walter Church, staid and slightly grey, nodded.

"I do!" he replied. "Good old days, Handforth, although you were somewhat self-willed in those times, eh, McClure?"

Mr. Arnold McClure, the celebrated engineer, smiled.

"I don't think Handforth has changed much," he said. "We meet fairly often nowadays, and he always strikes me as being the same. Personally, I think the old school has altered a good deal ---"

"Nonsense!" snapped Mr. Handforth. "Utter nonsense!"

"But, really ---"

"Don't argue!" broke in Mr. Handforth. "Why, don't I know? All you can do is to argue. Hallo! Who's that coming along? Why, I'm hanged if it isn't Mr. Levy! Looking more prosperous than ever, isn't he?"

Mr. Solomon Levi, the City financier, was chatting with Professor Timothy Tucker, the authority on anthropology. Professor Tucker had long hair, a decided stoop, a wispy beard, and he was attired in a rusty black suit and a wide-brimmed hat. The professor was very poor. His walk in life was not a lucrative one. Mr. Levi was very different in contrast. Stout, well-dressed, with a great diamond sparkling in his neck-tie, and a fat cigar between his teeth.

"Why, hallo, Handforth!" said Mr. Levi cheerfully. "Looking as well as ever, believe me! Just having a chat with Tucker. He's dropped all his old-fashioned Communist nonsense. That sort of thing is dead nowadays."

Before he could say anything further, a mountainous man waddled into sight. He could easily be recognised as Mr. James Little, the owner of the luxurious Hotel Superbe, in Piccadilly. This was the greatest hotel in Europe, towering higher than any New York skyscraper, and containing thousands of rooms.

A little way behind Mr. Little came Lord Pittacre, chatting with Sir Cecil DeValerie, M.P. The latter was a member of Lord Pittacre's Cabinet.

Few would have realised that the Prime Minister had been one of the most mischievous boys in the Remove of St. Frank's - he was then known as Reginald Pitt. He had progressed wonderfully after

taking up a political career.

Major-General Thomas Watson was talking earnestly with Sir Montgomery Tregellis-West, Bart., the well-known big-game hunter.

They all collected together in a group and talked about old times, when they were all at St. Frank's together. Those times seemed far off now. Lord Christine, the great judge, appeared with Sir Charles Talmadge, K.C.

And, standing quite alone, were two weedy, miserable looking men, prematurely aged, who could have been recognised as Mr. Edward Long and Mr. Enoch Snipe. They were seedy, too, for they had never succeeded in life. Growing older, they were both ill-tempered and sour.

And it was just at this point, when Mr. Richard Goodwin and Lord Glenthorne were entering the main gateway, that everything seemed to grow dark. Mr. Justin B. Farman, the American millionaire, faded out as he was approaching Sir Edgar Fenton, the Harley Street physician.

And then I discovered that that silly ass, Reginald Pitt, was shaking my shoulder. And I woke up to find that I was in Study E, and that the year was still 1962 after all.

It was a tremendous pity, because I had wanted to see a few other fellows as they would be in thirty year's time. But, unfortunately, you can't doze off again and finish a dream - particularly if it's an interesting one.

NEWS OF THE CLUBS

MIDLAND

Meeting 26th August, 1969.

As Inky would say, it is a longful lane which has no esteemed and ridiculous turnings, and so our long run of five meetings in succession with the attendance eleven was broken tonight when 13 members were present. Superstitious fags may think this number unlucky, but all present had a very enjoyable time.

It was very pleasant seeing Mr. and Mrs. Fleming, who are both members, present again after an interval. They kindly presented us with an impressive looking china ash-tray, received with grateful thanks.

Tonight's anniversary number was Nelson Lee Library. (Old Series) No. 64, dated 26th August, 1916.

There were two special items. Firstly Collectors' item Schoolboys' Own Library No. 1. A post-war publication, the story "Pirate's Cove" by Reginald Browne a pseudonym of Edwy Searles Brooks. The other item was an attractive house magazine of the Round Oak Steel Works. Our Vice-Chairman, George Chatham is Editor of this admirable example

of a good house magazine.

Being holiday time it was an informal evening tonight, and after we had disposed of the usual business, we proceeded to enjoy three rounds of Greyfriars Bingo. Certainly both interesting and exciting.

The evening concluded with a short, informal talk by Tom Porter in which he attempted to answer an interesting but very difficult question as to whether the present day comics and other juvenile literature will be as attractive to collectors of the future as the pre-war comics and other papers are to us today.

Whilst it is very difficult and one can only indicate possibilities of the next twenty or thirty years, it does seem to the writer that past experience is likely to repeat itself. Old things tend to be collected because they are both scarce and old. Thus today vintage cars, steamrollers and the old periodicals are all of much interest. Clearly only a small percentage survive the ravages of time. Probably therefore they will be of considerable interest to future generations; always assuming that the world does not come to a sudden, sticky end!

Several members took part in the discussion, Jack Bellfield, Ian Bennett, Bill Morgan and the present writer. Very soon another pleasant evening had gone.

EDWARD DAVEY

Chairman and Secretary.

* * *

NORTHERN

Meeting held Saturday, 13th September, 1969.

There was an Autumn feeling in the air as a dozen members were arriving at 239 Hyde Park Road last Saturday. As the Chairman was unable to be there, Vice-Chairman, Jack Wood presided, after the Library was cleared away. The Minutes were read by the Secretary and Gerry Allison gave his Treasurer's report and then continued with postal news. We were all distressed by the death of Otto Maurer who (with his wife - who died so tragically while on holiday) had visited Gerry and Myra Allison at Menston. His writings will always be remembered and his generosity to our library also.

Letters had been received from Roger Jenkins and Ben Whiter of London, the former back from his Welsh holiday with Northern friends, and Ben had sent a copy of the Sunday paper featuring outstanding personalities of the 20th Century. Jack Wood read about Frank Richards. Interesting to note that he had been listed under his most famous pen name, and not his real one.

We are always interested in Magazine runs, and, though neither belonged to the 'hobby' properly, we noted that "The People's Friend" of Scotland had reached 5200 issues - 100 years, and the "Methodist Magazine" had just ended. It dated from John Wesley's days and had been in existence 200 years!

Now all settled down to hear the final episode from Magnet 1683 read by Geoffrey Good, whose rendering brought all the characters to life before us - especially at the end when Yorkshire Johnnie is being at his most tactless and blundering!

An elimination competition on the name "Smith" followed. Refreshments were eaten during this time, and then we all called out our entries - ruling out duplicates. The winner was Jack Wood with 15, Gerry Allison second with 11 and Harry Lavender had 6. The rest - also ran.

So - once more time to take leave for four weeks.

Next Meeting: Saturday, 11th October, 1969.

M. L. ALLISON

Hon. Secretary.

* * *

LONDON

The Richmond "Gem" meeting was a great success, held in the spacious bar at the Community Centre. The highlight of the meeting was Len Packman's framed Map of Greyfriars and its environs, which has been published by Howard Baker at 21/- . Both he and Bill Lofts explained the map. Orders to Frank Lay, with remittance plus postage.

Ray Hopkins read an article from "Leicester Chronicle" dealing with Mike Follows of the Midland Club and his collection.

Roger Jenkins read the account of the frauds and swindles reported in the famous emergency number 3A of "Collectors' Digest." Now that time has passed since those happenings, the reading caused quite a few laughs, especially about the names used by the rogues.

More laughs when Millicent Lyle read a couple of chapters from the Bunter Court series.

Newsletter number 16 of October 1953 was the one selected by Len Packman for his reading. It dealt with the meeting at Raphael Road, Hove, with the hosts Robbie and Kay. Also the pre-meeting luncheon part given by Bill Jardine at his home.

In the absence of Tom Wright, Winifred Moss read the St. Sam's Adventure entitled "High Jinks Hiking."

Finally a discussion on a recent talk by Bill Lofts entitled "We do not know it all," and nearly everyone present expressed views.

With thanks to host, Don Webster, and to Brian Doyle, for getting the Frank Richards' piece in the "Sunday Times" recently, it was homeward bound once again.

Next meeting at 35 Woodhouse Road, Leytonstone, on Sunday, October 19th.

UNCLE BENJAMIN

THE ALL FOOTBALL STORY PAPER

By O. W. Wadham

1907 to about 1914 might well have been the Golden Age of the old BOYS' REALM. Stories of sport were the principal contents of the paper, which was never as popular as the BOYS' FRIEND. No doubt the REALM people knew this, and in September, 1909, they started a green-covered weekly called THE BOYS' REALM FOOTBALL WEEKLY. Eight inches by six inches, it boasted 20 pages. Twelve pages were the complete weekly adventures of Jack Noble & Co. of Pelham School. Then followed a football serial, "The Blue Crusaders," by A. S. Hardy. The paper sold for one half-penny, and the same characters ran their course for about three years. In 1913, it became THE SPORTS LIBRARY; became three inches longer and half-an-inch wider, and featured yarns about jockeys, wrestlers, circus stars, etc.

First number of THE SPORTS LIBRARY is interesting for a Nelson Lee serial "The Football Detective." Henry St. John was a regular contributor, so was Clement Hale and Charles C. Bartlett. David Goodwin had a serial "Two Lancashire Lads" running for a long time. The Kaiser's War killed THE SPORTS LIBRARY, and not many more years were to pass before big brother BOYS' REALM was to take the count, too. Between them they must have printed more stories of the football field than any other boys' publications of that period.

The Postman Called

(Interesting items from the
Editor's letter-bag)

FRANK UNWIN (Liverpool): I thoroughly enjoyed the September C.D., and what a wonderful cover picture of Norma Shearer and Leslie Howard in "Romeo and Juliet." This was absolutely superb.

(Many readers have expressed their pleasure in that cover. Many thanks to all who wrote. — ED.)

Miss I. M. LEES (Canterbury): One of the nicest things about beginning a new month is the arrival of another Collectors' Digest. I love Danny's Diary. How it brings back old times, and my own film favourites - Henry Edwards, Alma Taylor, Chrissie White and Violet Hopson. That was the time when schoolgirls collected postcards of Gladys Cooper. Some of my friends had hundreds. I preferred postcards of Owen Nares and Fred Groves (now, who was he?).

PHILIP TIERNEY (Grimsby): Whilst reading the re-printed Egypt serial, which was first published before I became a "Magnet" reader, I have of course read the "Greyfriars Herald" pages as well, and chuckled at Dr. Birchemall's adventures.

But I was surprised to be informed - or rather misinformed - amongst the illustrated "Greyfriars Facts" that "Wingate's first chum was Arthur Courtney who died of burns in rescuing a fag from a blazing dormitory."

I cannot understand why this horribly morbid Greyfriars episode should have been brought to the attention of a generation of readers who knew nothing about it.

But if it had to be brought up at all why were not the facts right?

Miss E. MAGOVENY (Belfast): I never read the school stories by Henry St. John. The late Herbert Leckenby didn't think much of them, maybe because they were not in the Hamilton style. But I read some of St. John's stories in the girls' papers - "The Gipsy Schoolgirl" and the Polly Green series, etc. I wonder whether any were ever printed in book form. I used to see them under the names of H. T. Johnson and also Henry St. John Cooper.

DEREK VAUGHAN (Barmouth): I strongly endorse your remarks in

the August editorial. As a country we are supposed to be pulling up our socks, and yet the waste of money is prodigious. And how I agree with you in seeing so much of our English way of life being thrown overboard to bring us "in line" with the rest of the world.

GEOFFREY GOOD (Batley): As a suggestion for an article in Collectors Digest (or the C.D. Annual) may I propose one on the repair of old Magnets?

A number of the Magnets that I acquire are in poor condition - the pins rusted and the paper around brittled with the iron. Sellotape has often been used by well-meaning but unadvised previous owners - and the sellotape has inevitably shrunk, leaving a sticky surround which has collected dirt. Perhaps a word to the effect that sellotape should not be used would not be amiss? Or perhaps a word of advice as to how to remove the stuff thus applied?

I have been told that 'Butterfly tape' is useful stuff with which to repair - but then 'Butterfly tape' is simply a trade name. Are the other transparent sticky tapes which appear similar just as good? And 'Sellotape' too is a trade name - it seems from looking at my own Magnet collection that something similar has been used on some without the disastrous effects previously referred to.

Then again I have others which someone has covered with a transparent plastic sheet of some sort - is it called polyurethane? - and if this were neatly done then it would seem to make a really durable job and in no way detract from the appearance of the original book.

Many of us who learn by trial and error, I am sure, would welcome the advice of someone who can speak from a long experience of this work.

LEN WORMULL (Romford): Sorry my little attempt at humour mis-fired with reader L. S. Elliott. I was hardly to know that the item in question originated from a member of our own circle. It was of course the allusion to "dusky merchants" which I saw amusing - in the light of today's hyper-sensitivity. Examples: The harmless and long-running Black and White Minstrel Show suddenly assumes a "prejudicial" image, and Christie's play, Ten Little Niggers, is given a new name. Incidentally, I was myself the recipient of a letter from this quarter many years ago as a result of a letter of mine in a film magazine. It was

from a girl reader, and couched in the most affectionate terms. Shall we draw a veil - er, sorry!

THE MAP OF GREYFRIARS

From time to time, down the years, there have been maps of Greyfriars. They featured in the Magnet and the Holiday Annual and they did not please everybody. How could they?

The latest Map of Greyfriars must be the very Map of Greyfriars to end all Maps of Greyfriars. It is the work of Basil Reynolds, nephew of the artist who illustrated the Gem from 1916 till 1919.

It is beautifully drawn, beautifully coloured, and beautifully produced on a durable type of chart-linen. Well-framed, it would not look out of place in the most luxurious of lounges, and should not offend the most fastidious lady-of-the-house. Or if you have a private den - well, this Map is just the thing for it.

Life was lived very much from story to story at Greyfriars. The author was never consistent with the topographical setting, and, for this reason, a reader filled in all the details from his own imagination. In Mr. Reynolds' drawing, one can find almost all the well-known landmarks of the passing years. I myself am a bit of a Greyfriars connoisseur, but I can find nothing to offend me in the map. Perhaps I am surprised to find Greyfriars between Friardale and Courtfield. I always assumed that one travelled on a branch line from Friardale to Courtfield where one joined the main line. The map seems to show Friardale as a junction of the local line with the line to Dover. However, half the fun of a map like this is trying to find surprises.

The most remarkable thing is that anything of the sort should be professionally produced and published in this hard-headed age. What an amazing tribute to any fictional school and any periodical! Frank Richards would have chuckled with delight and said "Well, I never!"

The map is only obtainable direct from Howard Baker, Publishers, and the cost is one guinea plus 1/6 post and packing.

WHY NOT ADVERTISE IN THE ANNUAL?