

STORY PAPER
COLLECTORS DIGEST

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THE GOOD OLD DAYS. Gussy watches Figgins and Cousin Ethel in 1908.
Artist: Hutton Mitchell.

D'Arcy fixed his monocle in his eye, and stared after Figgins and Cousin Ethel as they strolled away. "Well, bal Jove!" he murmured.

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STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

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THE AMALGAMATIONS

Recently in our Nelson Lee Column we ran a feature concerning the sad time when the Nelson Lee Library was amalgamated with the Gem. A correspondent, whose letter appeared last month, commented: "These amalgamations never seemed to work; they probably were never intended to".

That was an apt comment. Probably the earliest amalgamation we know of in boys' literature was when Every Boys' Paper was joined

with Boys' Own Paper in 1888, and why that happened I suppose nobody knows nearly a century later. As a rule, an amalgamation took place because a paper was failing, and, for the most part, there had been indications for some time as to how the wind was blowing. Our Nelson Lee experts had seen for some time that the Lee was getting into deep waters, as the editorial policy swung between school stories, school and tec stories, and unvarnished tec stories.

The same thing applied to Modern Boy which, for a year or more before the end, had made several changes in its format, and seemed not to know whether it was coming or going. The amalgamation with Boys' Cinema seemed an odd choice. It was very early in the second world war, - so early that the war can have nothing to do with it. The Modern Boy just failed and packed up.

Early in the first World War the Dreadnought was amalgamated with the Boys' Friend. It was nothing to do with the paper shortage, for in mid-1915 the periodicals were still giving big value for money, and, in fact, new papers - for instance the Nelson Lee and the Sexton Blake Library - were being newly launched. The Dreadnought just lacked appeal, in spite of the editor having introduced the early Greyfriars tales into it six months earlier. Which is satisfactory proof for most of us that St. Jim's was more popular than Greyfriars in those long ago days.

"Young Britain" was another which just disappeared, after changing around in its death throes some eight months earlier; finally it was amalgamated with the Champion.

Offhand, I can only think of two papers which were clearly and truly war casualties. One was the Firefly, a delightful comic paper which, in 1917, was amalgamated with the similar and equally charming "Butterfly". For a considerable time, "Butterfly & Firefly" was the name of the paper, with equal prominence given to both titles. The Firefly had a strange history. It started off as Fun & Fiction. In the wake of the success of Fun and Fiction came the large-sheeted Dreadnought, and another sister paper "The Firefly" was announced. However, something changed the plan, and Fun & Fiction itself became the Firefly, at half the price. Eventually Firefly became the charming comic paper which was to be amalgamated in 1917 with Butterfly.

The other paper whose amalgamation was due to the war was the Gem, which was married to the Triumph at the end of 1939. The paper shortage came much earlier in the second war. St. Jim's was transferred to the Triumph, though the St. Jim's stories printed were old sub tales from the first war period. Whoever planned that curious choice? But, in any case, within a short time, the Triumph was amalgamated itself with the Champion. Both Gem and Triumph were war casualties, though obviously the weaker fell to the stronger.

Perhaps even more curious was the reason - presumably there was a reason - when one paper changed its name, and carried on, though usually not for long, under a new name. As we have observed, Fun & Fiction became the Firefly. Hamilton Edwards' Boys' Herald changed its name to "Cheer, Boys, Cheer", an odd name indeed, in 1912, but that only lasted about 15 months when the name was changed yet again to Boys' Journal which lasted just over another year when it was amalgamated with the Dreadnought. A strange history.

In the memory of plenty of us, the Greyfriars Herald became the Boys' Herald (2nd spasm of both names), and the Popular became the Ranger.

Perhaps the saddest, and most inexplicable change of all, was when the famous Union Jack, surely almost an institution among boys' papers, changed its name to Detective Weekly. Why that was done, and who planned it, has always been a mystery to me, for the paper was never the same again. Surely Union Jack did not sound too patriotic in those pre-war days? In recent years, patriotism has become unfashionable, but that can hardly have been the case in 1933.

"Those amalgamations never seemed to work, they probably were never intended to!" wrote our correspondent. I think he was right. They never did work. The idea, pretty clearly, was to carry some part of the readership from one ailing paper to another which may have been a little less ailing. Personally, I doubt whether the old love and loyalty ever lasted under those circumstances.

THAT PUFFER GIRL

A number of readers have written to me with their long memories of Helen Holmes, the film star who shone, long ago, in railway serials.

Particularly welcome has been a letter from Mr. Brian Doyle who sent me full particulars concerning Helen, which were given fully in the International Film Encyclopaedia of 1980.

It is interesting to note that she retired from the silent screen in 1926. The entry says that for several years she had enjoyed a huge following, trailing only Pearl White and Ruth Rowland as the screen's "serial queen", and adds that her speciality was chasing villains along the top of a moving train, and leaping from train to horse or horse to train with both in motion.

It seems that the serial "The Hazards of Helen" to which I referred last week ran to 119 episodes (the mind boggles), though in the later chapters Helen's part was played by other actresses.

Helen Holmes returned to the talking screen, and played supporting parts in a great many films. Her last picture was in 1941. Helen Holmes died in 1950.

Many thanks to Mr. Doyle for adding such fascinating details to our item of last month.

THE PRINCESS SNOWEE'S COLUMN

We cannot find space for our pets every month, and when the Snowee Corner is missing, readers write and ask: "What's happened to the Princess Snowee?" She seems in the pink, thank you, and will, no doubt, be making some more of her own observations ere long. Readers often send along particulars of their own owners, and it always delights me to read about them. This month we give over the Princess corner to an Australian reader who has sent along a little story about her ageing and much-loved pussy-cat. We think you will like it. Here it is:

FIZZ

by Mrs. M. Gibson

He is big, black and powerful, with dangerous claws and wicked golden eyes, a very devil of a cat, so I named him Mephistopheles - Fizz for short - but behind the gleaming eyes lurks an ironic sense of humour. We understand each other.

"Where are you going?" I enquired one quiet morning as he started off towards the tangle at the bottom of the garden.

"Snake hunting," he said over his shoulder.

"Take care," I warned.

"Huh!" he sneered, "that'll be the day when a wriggly can outwit me."

I wasn't worried; I knew he was right. A few hours later he returned demanding milk. "Where's the snake?" I teased. He gave me a wink and belched. He got his milk.

I decided to plant some petunia seedlings. Carefully and lovingly I pushed the tiny living things into the warm earth, then sat back on my heels to contemplate with pleasure my good work, but only two small seedlings remained, elsewhere only scratched earth and one fat, satisfied cat, calmly surveying the horizon.

"Wretch," I yelled at him, "villain, despoiler of beauty, where are my petunias?"

He grinned happily, so I threw a handful of plucked weeds at his face and with a dignified flick of his tail, he stalked away.

He wouldn't eat. I thought he was sulking, but by the end of the day was a little worried.

"What's wrong with you?" I asked.

"Toothache," he snarled. "Go away and leave me alone."

I looked carefully and noticed the swelling on one side of his face. "It's the Vet for you my lad."

He looked alarmed. "Not on your sweet Nelly," he said, rising hastily, but for once I was too quick for him. With extended claws, spitting violence, he told me just what he thought of me. I wasn't impressed, I'd heard it all before. Swiftly I popped him into the carrier carton and closed the lid. Immediately it shot open, and a furious head burst through. Firmly I pushed it back and managed to bolt it down. Fury and movement issued therefrom.

"I'll scratch him to ribbons," he threatened. "Tear the place apart. He'll be sorry."

I wavered - I knew he not only could, but would, carry out his threat, but also that until that aching tooth was extracted, life would be intolerable for both of us. "It's not a him," I said, "it's a her."

Cessation of noise and movement. Then a gleaming eye found one of the large air holes and regarded me thoughtfully. He really is quite quick on the uptake.

"Uh huh!" he said, and I hurried him into the car. Instant panic and unending obscenities until I put the carton onto the surgery table and opened the lid. I felt a faint pang. He looked smaller somehow and very vulnerable.

His eyes slid past me and looked sorrowfully at the Vet, pleading for mercy and understanding. She stroked him gently. "And what can I do for this elderly gentleman?" she queried.

"Toothache," I said coldly.

Carefully she opened his mouth. "Ah, yes. It will have to be removed, and several others also." My heart sank a little. "He is very old," I said. "Will he be all right?"

He gave me a furious look and said under his breath, "Old yourself."

"I think it is worth a chance. Come back for him tomorrow."

He was sitting placidly in his carton when I collected him, and when the Vet stroked him softly and said he had been a perfect gentleman, he flirted with her shamelessly. I snatched him up, and hurried home.

"Well," I jeered, opening the lid. "So you were going to scratch her to ribbons, tear the place apart - softie."

The missing teeth had given his mouth a lopsided look, rather like a drunken old pirate.

"Yah!" he leered at me. "She was a lady."

"Meaning I'm not?"

He grinned, stepping carefully out of the box and moving with dignity towards the door.

"And I'm the perfect gentleman," he emphasised strolling out into the garden.

"Goodo!" I thought. "He's back to normal."

* * * * *

OBITUARIES

We deeply regret to learn of the passing of Bill Hubbard, who was well-known in London hobby circles years ago. Mr. Hubbard wrote many useful articles for this magazine and for the C.D. Annual, his main interest being in the hard-back school stories. He had a deep love for cricket, and recently became a member of the M. C. C.

Also with much sadness we learn of the passing of Bert Staples, who was a loyal reader of C.D. for many years, and who attended some London club meetings.

Danny's Diary

JUNE 1932

Jack Hobbs, the great Surrey and England cricketer - the only cricketer who has scored 185 centuries in first-class cricket - says that he is going to retire at the end of the present season.

Modern Boy has started a series of articles covering Hobbs' career, and they are to appear through the summer months.

Unfortunately, King of the Islands is no longer in the paper. The farcical series about Horatio Hayweed, the Catchem's Correspondence Course cowboy, by Sidney Hargrave, goes on, but I don't like these much. A new series about Jan of the Jungle, by Gerald Magnus, is obviously based on the Tarzan stories, and it is not too bad if you like that sort of thing.

There is a motor-racing series by Alfred Edgar, and John Allan's serial "The Flying Tramps" continues.

The Derby was won this year by "April the Fifth", a horse owned by Tom Walls, the famous British actor. The King and Queen were at Epsom to see the race.

I love Alexandra Rose Day. Everybody buys a rose for the hospitals, and you hardly see anyone not wearing one. This year's Rose Day in London and the Home Counties fetched £53,000 for the hospitals. It was started by Queen Alexandra, and is a great British institution. Nobody ever dodges a rose seller.

Two good Schoolboys' Own Libraries this month. "The Bounder's Lesson" is the second and final part of the story about Vernon-Smith's feud with Paul Dallas. The Bounder is shown at his most treacherous, but things are cleared up at the end in a splendid climax.

The second S.O.L., "Living a Lie", is about George Huggins, one-time page-boy to a baronet who comes to Rookwood as Cecil Cuthbert Montmorency, and turns out to be the biggest snob of all time. He tries to hide his early life, but eventually Montmorency gets the biggest shock in his life. I don't really like snob tales.

Some lovely programmes at the pictures this month. Gary

Cooper and Claudette Colbert in "His Woman". Kay Francis and William Boyd in "The False Idol". Bessie Love, Charles King, and Anita Paige in "The Broadway Melody" in colour; I had seen this one before, but it was good to see it again. A lovely musical "Viennese Nights" in Technicolor starring Walter Pidgeon, Vivienne Segal, and Louise Fazenda. A great film, this one. Richard Dix in "The Public Defender". And finally Tom Walls, Ralph Lynn, and Robertson Hare in "Rookery Nook", a good English comedy. Doug says it is not so brilliant as the stage show at the Aldwych, but it is still very good.

The Nelson Lee Library seems to be concentrating on detective thrillers at the present time. The first of the month is "Mystery Island" which has Professor Zingrave back on the lawless scene, with Nelson Lee and Nipper and a few St. Frank's boys up against the master criminal. Then "The Pirate Submarine", another story about Zingrave versus Lee, Nipper, and Handforth & Co.

The following week brought "Plunder Ltd!" which drops the schoolboys and just features Lee and Nipper. Jack Longford, an inventor, finds himself attacked by the world's biggest criminal organisation, but he has Lee to help him. The next week brought "The Peril Trail" with Lee and Nipper head on against the same gang. The tales are exciting enough, but I'd rather have St. Frank's.

Still in the realm of crime, I had some Union Jack's this month. The two opening yarns of the month are by G. H. Teed, and have Sexton Blake up against Wu Ling in the Far East. "Sexton Blake in Manchuria" is the first one, and the second one is "Arms to Wu Ling", which also introduces Mlle. Roxane, who is on the side of the Manchu war-lord. Then came a good tale by Robert Murray entitled "The Diamond of Disaster", which is the latest story of the Criminals' Confederation and its slimy leader, Mr. Reece.

In the Union Jack there is a new serial, written by Margery Allingham, entitled "The Gyrth Chalice Mystery".

An express on the Great Western Railway had broken all world railway speed records, doing the journey from Swindon to Paddington, 78 miles, in 56 minutes. A speed of 82 miles an hour average.

All light stuff in the Gem this month, but full of fun and great

entertainment. "Prime Minister of St. Jim's" is a sequel to last month's tale about the St. Jim's parliament. Several fellows want to be Prime Minister", and the choice lies between Tom Merry, Blake, Figgins, and Skimpole. There is an amusing chapter in which Miss Priscilla arrives, after hearing that Tom Merry is getting attention from the "whips".

Next week "Detective D'Arcy - DUD!" The son of Sir James Jukes is missing, and £100 is offered for any information leading to his recovery. Gussy and Skimpole become detectives to find the missing boy, and they link up with a rogue named Jimmy Jex.

Next "The Night Raiders" in which Blake receives a mysterious hamper from America. The hamper comes from Blake's uncle. At the end, they open the hamper. It contains complete outfits of redskin apparel - wampum and coloured serapes, mocassins, and feathers for head-dress, tomahawks, and bows and arrows.

Finally, a sequel, "Redskins of St. Jim's". Blake and Co. become the Blackfoot Braves of Rylcombe Woods. People in Sussex don't expect to see Red Indians on the Warpath, especially when one of them wears an eyeglass. All light, but novel little plots, and happy-go-lucky reading.

In real life, a 51-year's old Dutchman has crossed the Channel on a hydrocycle. A cyclist on the sea must have been as unusual as a Redskin in Sussex.

The Magnet has been just splendid again this month, with some of the best stories ever written about the Bounder of Greyfriars. The opening tale of the month is "The Secret of the Priory". This one re-introduces Paul Tyrrell, Bob Cherry's cousin, whom we have not heard about for a long time. Tyrrell has committed the crime of forgery, he escapes from the police, hides in the old Priory near Greyfriars, and asks Bob Cherry for help. It is a poser for Robert, but help comes from an unexpected quarter - from Vernon-Smith, the Bounder. A lovely single tale, full of incident.

Then "Tyrants of the Remove". The Bounder leads the Remove into great trouble. They all break detention - or the cricket eleven does - to play cricket against St. Jude's. At the end of this story, the Bounder resigns the junior captaincy, and Harry Wharton gets the job again. Another lovely single tale.

In "Coker's Camera Clicks", Coker's latest craze is photography, and by sheer luck he gets a picture of Skinner throwing a cricket ball at Carne from a study window, a deed for which Bunter had been expelled.

Final of the month is "The Mystery of Number One Study". Somewhere in Greyfriars lies hidden the valuable plunder of the burglar "Jimmy the Rat". This strange affair remains a mystery until next month when the series will continue.

Most weeks there is a short story of St. Sam's in the Magnet these days. Awful rot, but you can't help laughing.

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: S.O.L. No. 171, "The Bounder's Lesson" is the second and final half of the Paul Dallas series of the Magnet in the Spring of 1927. S.O.L. No. 172, "Living a Lie" comprised the 9-story series concerning Montmorency, from the Boys' Friend of the summer of 1921. One of Hamilton's "upstart" series, which was entertaining enough unless "upstart" stories were one of your pet aversions, as they were mine. The same theme was used in the Magnet's De Vere series.

Of the Gem's June 1932 stories read by Danny, "Prime Minister of St. Jim's" had been entitled "Told on the Telephone" in 1908. There had been three stories on the St. Jim's parliament in 1908. They were printed as two longer tales in 1932. So the Prime Minister story was really one tale and a half.

"Detective D'Arcy - DUD" had been "D'Arcy's Misadventure" in 1908. "The Night Raiders" had been "The Mysterious Hamper" in 1908, and its sequel "Redskins of St. Jim's" had originally been entitled "Blake & Co's Triumph".

An interesting point, is that two stories were omitted entirely from this period of the 1908 Gem. "The Detective's Pupils" had introduced Ferrers Locke, who was invited by Mr. Railton to set a kind of detection competition for the boys. There seems no obvious reason why it was not printed again, especially as the story "Detective D'Arcy - DUD" was something of a sequel to it.

The other yarn omitted was "Skimpole's Crusade" in which Skimpole wrote a book on Socialism which he hoped to get published. It is obvious why this one was left out, though it is really very amusing, though I suppose it might offend a Socialist. In the reprints, Skimpole's Socialism became Determinism, which had no possible political overtures. I believe the doctrine of the Determinist is that there is a reason for everything, and most readers would not get hot under the collar over that.

Hamilton never bothered about making fun of politics and politicians. It is likely that he thought the only man who went into the Houses of Parliament with good intentions was Guy Fawkes.)

* * * * *
WANTED: Adventures from Sept. 23rd, 1933 to March 3rd, 1934.

L. HAYDEN, 1 NORTH DRIVE, HANDSWORTH, BIRMINGHAM, B20 3SY.

BLAKIANA

Conducted by JOSIE PACKMAN

I am sorry for the shortage of Blakiana this month, but I do not have any more material in hand. If someone could send me any articles soon I would be most obliged, otherwise I shall have to revert to reprints. There is also the Annual to think of very soon, so will you please get down to writing something very soon. I should like to thank everyone for their past efforts and look forward to receiving further items. For those who may be interested, my cat Bebe is now recovering after a prolonged bout of tummy trouble. I hope all your cats are doing well.

SPARE A THOUGHT FOR THE ARTIST

by W. Lister

Supposing, just supposing you were back in the early thirties. Travelling players have arrived for a short season, maybe, if you lived in Blackpool; Tod Slaughter and his players with three shows a week. "East Lynn" Monday and Tuesday, Maria Marten or The Murder in the red Barn, Wednesday or Thursday, the big thriller (at 6 pence a seat you fought for a place) on Friday and Saturday Sweeny Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street. Great stuff! I can't say the same for the background scenery, that was thrown together, I think at 6d. a seat it would not run to anything better. By this you will gather that we were a bit short of background scenery.

Now, turn the pages of the Union Jack for 23rd January, 1933, No. 1529 under the title of "The House of Light" and E. R. Parker who is responsible for the illustrations (or background scenery to the tale) goes to town.

A large spread across two pages meets the eye; wide screen stuff indeed. Lavish. A large room, high ceiling, gigantic wall-to-wall bookcase crammed with books from top to bottom. Tremendous windows heavily curtained. A huge chandelier surrounded with multi-lamps. Heavily upholstered chairs surrounding a big, beautifully carved desk. So far, so good, you have a scene to remind you of a hymn that speaks of the perfection of God. However, the artist has not finished yet, he will add to it the human element, the same hymn says 'and only man is vile'. A few deft marks with his pencil and E. R. Parker transforms

our peaceful room into a madhouse. Behind the desk a fat prosperous looking, bald-headed villain stands amazed at what he sees, one man writhing on the floor in pain while a muscular fellow has thrown someone through one of the large windows. I have spent a little time with Mr. Parker. He has done a good cover too. I think when we were young we did not realise the tremendous backing the illustrations of our magazines gave to the stories. Never take anything for granted and don't forget you got the lot for 2d.

At this point Edwy Searles Brooks takes over, drawing his pictures in words. First a word from the editor! "The House of Light". Here's a yarn for those jaded with commonplace. Let's get down to it.

Being an Edwy Searles Brooks fan I do not need the editor to tell me that, whenever you are jaded with commonplace detective tales turn to E. S. Brooks, in short, whenever you are jaded turn to Edwy Searles Brooks.

I don't propose to consider giving a story outline. Sufficient to say it is a great tale and to notice two pungent statements therein: Both statements are put into the mouth of fiction character Waldo; "What journalists do not know they invent" and "Doctors are not half as clever as they pretend to be". They are the world's greatest guessers. With a conscious patient they consider themselves to be on safe ground, but with an unconscious patient they are left to their own resources and more often than not they come a cropper. These are no doubt the thoughts of E. S. Brooks in 1933. The first statement is still true today, the second I am not so sure in 1982, my doctor has always sorted out my complaints, but so far only when I am conscious.

One other point, to close, supports my theory that the best artists read the whole story through to choose a certain word picture and transfer it accurately into a drawing. I commenced with E. R. Parker's leading illustration, I will close with Edwy Searles Brooks word picture on page 17. You will see that E. R. Parker is 'spot on'. "This transformed old mansion was now really gaudy, gold, silk and many colours. The home of a man out for every bit of a show he could get for his money, containing the finest library in England, every book bound in costliest leather and ornamented in pure gold."

From this description Mr. Parker produced a picture of the main interior room, while on the cover he gives you a view of the exterior.

Truly a magnificent Union Jack: The House of Light.

* * * * *

Nelson Lee Column

I WELL REMEMBER

writes Bob Blythe

I well remember my feelings when I saw the announcement in the final copy of the Nelson Lee that from then on I was to ask for the Gem as the Nelson Lee was discontinued from that week.

My first reaction was one of shock. Here was a much-loved paper that I had grown up with (I bought my first copy in 1925) being discontinued in the most cavalier fashion, and I was being asked to buy, in future, a rival paper in which I had no interest. It was like asking an Eton man, in an Eton and Harrow match, to cheer Harrow to victory.

After the shock had worn off came indignation that the A.P. could do this to those of us who had supported the N.L. so consistently over the years.

The final insult, of course, that on buying the Gem one found that St. Frank's was relegated to the position of a serial occupying five of the back pages where it stayed for the remainder of its existence. Goodness knows what Brooks thought of it all! We know, of course, as he told us that during the last years of the Lee he felt that he was flogging a dead horse. Indeed, with hindsight, as the story has been told before, it was muddled editorial policy, beginning with Alfred Edgar that was the cause of the Lee's downfall.

Even I, staunch supporter that I was, had little interest in the type of story that was being offered during the 2nd New Series, although there were one or two outstanding series during the period; the majority of yarns, particularly the detective stories, were of no great interest. Incidentally, the most boring stories I ever read in the Lee were the four stories written by Maxwell Scott - "The Silver Dwarf" and "The Missing Heir".

However, one good thing came out of this sorry affair. It was through the closure of the Lee that I obtained an introduction to Mr. Brooks, and so was enabled to keep in personal touch with him, and his wife, Frances, over the years, two products of which were his attendance at a couple of club meetings, and eventually the E. S. Brooks Bibliography.

So it was an ill wind ----

I REMEMBER, TOO --

writes Reg Moss

I was annoyed at the Gem and Lee marriage! Very annoyed! The Gem was St. Jim's - the Lee was St. Frank's - and that was that.

Both papers were not equal on my reading scale. Gem ranked number two and Lee number six. Before the passing of the Popular the Lee ranked number seven. In those depression days co-operative buying ensured ample reading for all.

However I enjoyed the Lee stories, even if I did not classify them as "school" stories in the Magnet sense or even the Gem. I could not identify with St. Frank's as a "real" school. Of all the "paper" schools, Greyfriars seemed closest to the real thing.

After the marriage the Lee stories did not seem the same. They lost the urgency and the appeal of commencing a story at the beginning of a paper. They suffered from relegation to the back pages as a "filler". I did not think of a reduction of space for St. Jim's. Greyfriar's and St. Jim's seemed sacrosanct to that extent. But what of those who lost their number one paper? Like our Lee man in the co-operative. He no longer had first call on his favourite reading.

Only one other alteration to the papers over the years annoyed me more, and that was the Magnet cover change with issue 1159. It never seemed right. In fact it still annoys me. It lost eye-appeal, the attractiveness of the earlier coloured covers. I did not know of Editor problems. But looking back - did their changes always have to be, or seem to be - for the worse.

Yes! The Lee was good reading. But as a filler to the Gem it lost much of its appeal. The urgency to start at the beginning of another paper no longer existed, apart from ardent Lee fans.

A LETTER FROM ST. FRANK'S ...

by Jim Cook

I think it was Cicero who said ... The greater the difficulty, the greater the glory. Well, be that as it may it certainly doesn't help Vivian Travers of Study H at St. Frank's. He has real difficulty in speaking to girls ... especially Phyllis Palmer of the Moor View School. The cool, level-headed, self-possessed Vivian gets thoroughly frightened whenever Phyllis is near. He wants to hide himself on these occasions; he flushes deeply and his whole demeanour shrinks.

The Moor View schoolgirl is certainly worth a second glance; her blue eyes, slim and graceful figure, she abounds with the joy of life. All combining to make Travers ill at ease. Still, after all, many of us have behaved in this fashion in the past. **When did you last blush, dear reader?**

After an exciting game of football in which St. Frank's beat Helmsford away, Nelson Lee, who had travelled to watch the match, was so pleased at the outcome that he offered Nipper to pay expenses for a grand Tea after the game.

And so Nipper decided to select six to celebrate the important fixture to be held in Study C.

For the purposes of this Letter the six chosen are immaterial, but it does give me an idea about picking six of your favourite characters at St. Frank's and perhaps the Moor View.

Just whom would you select six to dinner? My own choice would be Nelson Lee, Nipper, Archie Glenthorne, Marjorie Temple, Irene Manners and Doris Berkeley. The three Moor View girls would even things up as it were for I am sure Mr. Lee would feel honoured. But perhaps your six would differ greatly from that of mine.

* * * * *

WANTED: Index of Annuals by W. O. G. Lofts and Derek J. Adley. Good price paid. Also early Thompsons.

MARRIOTT, 27 GREENVIEW DRIVE, LINKS VIEW, NORTHAMPTON

(Telephone (0604) 711874)

* * * * *

WANTED: Books by Richard Essex or Starr; any condition.

MAGOVENY, 65 BENTHAM ST., BELFAST 12.

DO YOU REMEMBER?

by Roger M. Jenkins

No. 177 - "Stalky & Co."

Kipling was educated at the United Services College, Westward Ho! and there seems little doubt that "Stalky & Co." was based on that establishment and that the bespectacled Beetle was a representation of Kipling himself as a boy.

Dean Farrar's "Eric: or Little by Little" received more than its due share of mockery in this story, and it seems clear that Kipling was attempting to provide an accurate account of school life based on realism, with all sentimental didacticism removed. The trouble was that the realism was founded on a somewhat dubious morality: Stalky & Co. regularly smoked pipes on the quiet, and once made themselves sick on a cigar; it was common practice to raise funds by selling or pawning your friend's watch or clothing; and the livestock of neighbouring farmers was appropriated when required. It all suggests that public school life in Victorian times was conducted without much regard to common honesty. Even more disturbing to read is the chapter on bullying, which Stalky & Co. put down by torturing the bullies themselves. The nearest Hamilton came to this was the case of Clyne in Gem No. 56.

There were, of course, other episodes that were light-hearted and not unlike Hamiltoniana. For instance, two masters were placed in a situation when they were accused of poaching, and another form of revenge was burying a dead cat beneath the floorboards of the dormitory in a rival house. The vocabulary used by the two authors had much in common, and George Orwell accused Hamilton of lifting this vocabulary, but Hamilton had wit enough to reply by pointing out that "Jape" comes from Chaucer and that most of the other words quoted were in Lewis Carroll. Other similarities to be observed are "My beloved 'earers'" and "a downy bird", both current in the nineteenth century.

Orwell also accused Hamilton of lifting Mr. Prout from "Stalky & Co.". No-one could deny that the name was the same, but in temperament the two masters were completely different. In point of fact, the masters in Kipling's story were, on the whole, not very clearly drawn: Mr. King's scholarly sarcasm and Mr. Prout's nervous

anxieties left no vivid picture in the reader's mind. The Rev. John Gillett is memorable for his reluctance to cross the paths of Number Five study, and the Headmaster stands out unforgettably as a real character prepared to cane Stalky & Co. even when they were technically right. Also noteworthy is the fact that the boys grow older and leave, and there is a rather confusing re-union at the end when they recount the military exploits of themselves and other former pupils in the Indian sub-continent.

Kipling deserves full credit for his realistic and lively approach to school life, even if the schoolboys considered themselves above the law rather frequently, but Hamilton's approach was radically different from his, and it is surprising that so acute a critic as George Orwell should have imagined that it was not. Hamilton once said that Greyfriars represented life as it should be, not as it really was. If the world of Kipling was the real world, then the world of Hamilton was the ideal one.

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F.R. OR NOT F.R. - THAT IS THE
QUESTION?

by Tommy Keen

Recently, in exchange for a cassette of Gracie Fields recordings, I received a copy of the 1926 Holiday Annual, in which a very odd Greyfriars story appeared, "Lucky for Parkinson". When I first read this story many years ago, I was fascinated by the theme, and in fact found it rather scaring. Now after reading the story again (and still fascinated by it), I am wondering if this is a Frank Richards original, or could it possibly have been written by a sub-writer?

Parkinson, we are informed, was rather new at Greyfriars, and although Frank Richards was a fiend for introducing new boys, at least they usually merited a series in the Magnet, or at least, as in the very early days, a single story. Also, from the sub-writers, a steady stream of arrivals made their brief appearance, (generally departing in the same issue). Therefore, to write a story about a character we did not know existed, seems quite unlike our revered author.

"Lucky for Parkinson" is a dream story, remotely similar to the legend of Faust signing his soul away to Mephistopholes, but in our

tale, Parkinson becomes involved with the Man in the Grey Coat, from a story he was reading of Peter Schlemihl, the shadowless man. (Is there such a story?)

But WHO was Parkinson? We do not know his Christian name, his study number is not stated, we only read that he shares a study with Trevor (a rather lost along the way character), but according to the Who's Who at Greyfriars, Trevor, with another nonentity, Treluce, shared Study No. 9 with Penfold and Newland. At the conclusion of the story, one is left with the impression that Parkinson is still at Greyfriars.

With the exception of Alice in Wonderland, stories which turn out to be dreams, are not really satisfactory. We feel we have been taken for a ride, and although under the title, it states 'an unusual story of Greyfriars School, specially written for "The Holiday Annual", by Frank Richards', I wonder if this was the work of a sub-writer, as in 1925, many of the stories in the Magnet and Gem were not from the brain of Frank Richards. If he could not supply the weekly stories, why do a story for the Annual?

Who knows the answer? And let's call the character Michael!

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LET'S BE CONTROVERSIAL

No. 234. SECOND OPINION

Mr. Keen's article on the Parkinson story breaks new ground, and gives us something to think about. It never occurred to me that "Lucky for Parkinson" was anything but a genuine story. I still have no doubt that it was real Hamilton. I regard it as a very jolly and unusual story.

It is reminiscent of Harold Avery's short story "The Enchanted Bat", which was no doubt written a good many years earlier, and the Avery yarn could have given Hamilton the idea.

Parkinson would have been out of place in the Magnet. It was just the ticket for the Holiday Annual, and I reckon that most of the boys of the day loved it.

Dream tales were not exactly unknown to Hamilton. Also in a Holiday Annual there was a delightful (and possibly better) romp

entitled "Glyn's Greatest". In that case it was Arthur Augustus who was dreaming.

It is unlikely that the Parkinson story took Hamilton long to dash off on his Remington. It is, of course, true that the sub writers were very much in evidence in the Magnet and the Gem in 1925, but it was the year of six stories of the first Rebel series, the Ragged Dick series, the Bunter Court series, and the Loder as Captain series, so the star writer was not exactly absent from the Magnet. In the Gem there was the Holly Lodge series; a series where Levison Minor ran away from school, a Wildrake series, a pair where Mr. Selby was blackmailed by Sneath, and the gorgeous twosome when Trimble was "Too Good for St. Jim's". So Hamilton was not exactly playing truant from the A.P.

As to who Parkinson was, it just didn't matter. His christian name didn't matter. The great school stories from Wodehouse and Coke made but little reference to any christian names for the boys. At our own schools, in those days, christian names were rarely used. Down the years, Hamilton certainly used plenty, but it was only with Tom Merry that he seemed to feel that the first name was essential.

The boy who was apparently permanent at the school, but appeared in only one story, was not peculiar to the Parkinson tale. There was Sturgis of the Sixth in that happy little tale which told of "Trimble's Auction", and I have a feeling that Bingham, who starred in "The Prefect's Plot" in blue cover days, had never been heard of before and was never referred to again.

The more starry-eyed among us, I daresay, just love Who's Whos! Where we are told, for instance: James Protheroe Mullins; Shell Form; study 12; aged 15 years $2\frac{1}{2}$ mths.; green eyes; black hair; weight 8 stone 7 lbs.; height 5ft. 4ins.; lucky colour pink - and so on. And, in his heyday, Hamilton had nothing to do with the compilation of such details.

Some of our readers like to decide, by literary analysis, whether a tale is genuine or imitation. I, personally, follow the precept of the late Gerry Allison, who maintained, quite rightly, that you could "feel", after a bit of reading, whether it was by Hamilton or not. All the same, literary analysis plays its part. The 1920 Magnet series

about the schoolboy film stars "felt" counterfeit all the way through, but I remember drawing attention to Mr. Quelch speaking "haughtily" in it.

Have you any ideas about Parkinson?

* * * * *

REVIEW

BRITISH COMICS & STORY-PAPER

Denis Gifford: £3.50

PRICE GUIDE

(See ad. in May C.D.)

Denis Gifford's new Price Guide is essentially the bones of his British Comic Catalogue 1874-1974 (at a more accessible price - allowing for depreciation, only a twentieth of the original), with the welcome addition of details of story papers, and price indications,

It goes from details of the 1878 issue run of Thomson's Adventure (ending in 1961) to the one year fling of A. P's Youthful Days (1907 to 1908) among the story papers, to the Al Comic (3 appearances in 1946) and its other end of the alphabet equivalent the six 1955 printings of Zorro; with Aldine Boxing Novels, Betty's Weekly, Champion Journal for Boys ... Union Jack, Vanguard, War Thriller coming between among the text papers, and Butterfly, Carnival Comic, Debbie Picture Library ... Tiger Tim's Weekly, Ups & Downs of Ally Sloper & Victor among the picture strips work, dedication, and small audiences are the common lot of those who produce such works, and it is too easy to be unaware of the tremendous amount of research involved in this small paperback. It is only with use that just how much information it contains becomes apparent.

Errors are inevitable, but here they are kept largely to those of omission.

Although probably not amongst most readers of Collector's Digest, comparison with this Guide's American equivalent will be unavoidable. The Gifford version has an unpretentious charm which the high-powered Overstreet has long lacked. It cannot be expected to compete with a volume in its twelfth year, produced for a vast market, and subsidised by the advertising of rich dealers. But some of the Overstreet features would be worth incorporating - not 40 pages of full colour cover reproductions, but some black and white ones would add greatly to the interest and little to the cost, as would an English version of the 8,000 word introductions on collecting and history (and who better to write them?).

It is a sad truth that a 'price guide' has more attractions than the most thorough 'catalogue': 'sad' because it encourages journalists and others who know the price of everything and the value of nothing. It is a paradox, because, whereas a Catalogue has a lasting value, a price guide is really out-of-date at the time of its publication (the pricing part; the other information remaining of value as would a catalogue). Even in a stable market such as the American an annual reprinting is essential. The English market is so unstable as not really to be amenable to such price indicating. Apart from a few collected areas, material is sparse, and collectors thereof or dealers equally so, with the result that most titles are literally valueless except when fortuitously collector and dealer come together, when those same titles

are suddenly worth any price within reason. In addition, whereas few issues in the American guide (officially the Overstreet Price Guide, colloquially The Overprice Street Guide!) are accorded a speculative price because there are no records of their previous sale, this would apply perhaps to the majority of English publications. Gifford has made a deliberate effort to avoid high prices, and it is to be hoped that this will not militate against the use of his Guide by dealers. It may also be hoped that any further issue will use the American system of providing three separate prices for each item, according to condition, rather than two widely differing ones regardless of condition and, in most cases, year.

- FRANCIS HERTZBERG

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News of the Old Boys' Book Clubs

MIDLAND

12 members were present at our April meeting. Terry Jones of Gloucester was making his first visit and was warmly welcomed.

He was invited to address the meeting. Terry speaks on radio at 2.30 on Wednesdays.

Our usual features - Anniversary Number and Collectors' Items were on display. The A.N. was Gem No. 533 published on the 27th April, 1918. The Title was "Spoofing the Shell" and the story is about House rivalry. There were two C.I's: No. 1 of "The Vanguard" dated 4th May, 1907, a very early story by Charles Hamilton, which was brought by Tom Porter and a bound volume of "The Sun" comic which contains "inter alia", The Schooldays of Tom Merry - reprints from very early Gems.

Next month we intend to hold a Bring-and-Buy Sale and we hope this time it will bring in much-needed funds.

An original quiz was designed by Vince Loveday. A piece of paper with columns was supplied and three blanks had to be filled in by the approximate character in the other schools, i.e. Bunter, Baggy Trimble, Tubby Muffin. I need hardly mention Geoff Lardner was the winner.

A reading by your correspondent showed Bunter for once in a good light. He has a lucky windfall, but Mrs. Bunter has had "flu" and needs a seaside holiday to recuperate. For once Bunter does not give a thought

to himself.

There was time for five rounds of a game by Tom Porter, "Take a Letter". Geoff Lardner and Vince Loveday won two each and Joan Golen one.

We had yet another new member join the club, Mrs. Beryl Matthews, bringing the number to 39.

A full programme ran us right up to 9.30.

Good wishes to all O.B.B.C. enthusiasts everywhere.

JACK BELLFIELD - Correspondent.

SOUTH WEST

Thirteen is supposed to be an unlucky number, but in the case of our meeting on Sunday, 2nd May, at Tim Salisbury's home, it proved to be the opposite. There were thirteen members to hear Bill Lofts give us his interesting talk on Magnet No. 1 (Fleetway reprint). The Nelson Lee enthusiasts were also in luck as Bill read his article from the Fleetway House Magazine on Nelson Lee, and after this Bob Blythe spoke on E. S. Brooks.

There was a full tea accompanied by plenty of chatter, after which Terry Jones gave us an amusing reading on Mr. Prout from the "Courtfield Cracksman".

To end the meeting the members remaining took part in an elimination Quiz.

We now look forward to our next gathering in the Autumn.

LONDON

Vintage Hamiltonia at its best was in evidence with the amusing chapter that Roy Parsons read from the Goldhawk paperback "Skimpole's Snapshot". This item, one of many, that was enjoyed by another good attendance at the home of Isaac Litvak, on the occasion of the May gathering. The ever popular Elimination Competition was held prior to the excellent tea which the host had provided. Roger Jenkins was an easy winner. Roger conducted A Synonym Greyfriars Quiz. Chris Harper was the winner with most correct answers.

It was pleasing to see Jim Robinson once more in attendance and

it was he who won the difficult Anagrams Quiz which brought in characters from Carcroft, St. Frank's, Cliff House, Rookwood, Cedar Creek, Sexton Blake and Greyfriars.

Norman Wright recently met Sheila Harris, daughter of the famous Sexton Blake artist, Eric Parker, and stated that she would like to attend one of our club meetings. There was a hearty vote of thanks to the host, Isaac Litvak and his family of helpers.

Next meeting provisionally fixed for Greyfriars, Wokingham, but due to indisposition by Eric Lawrence this venue may be changed. Full details in June newsletter.

BEN WHITER

CAMBRIDGE

The Club met at the home of Jack Overhill on 9 May, 1982. Eleven members were present.

It was agreed that the postal membership subscription should be raised to £2 for the forthcoming year in view of the increased cost of postage. The Secretary was congratulated on his work in getting the postal scheme under way so successfully. The Treasurer reported that club finances were in a healthy position and it was agreed that the annual subscription should remain at £3.00. All the officers were re-elected, with the exception that Vic Hearne asked to be relieved of the librarianship, which Mike Rouse agreed to take on.

The Secretary reported that the June meeting would be held at the home of Ruth and Neville Wood; after the summer break the first meeting would be at the home of Malcolm Pratt, who would talk on Biggles, and Roy Whiskin would talk on Anthony Buckden.

Bill Thurbon followed on Keith Hodkinson's talk on Robin Hood stories with a survey of the result of historic and literary research on the Robin Hood legend during the past twenty years. These researches showed the impossibility of tracing a real Robin Hood. Study of medieval archives had shown that the name Hood was very common during that period, and that Robert, or Robin, was among the six most common Christian names in England after the Norman conquest. The original ballads were based on oral tradition. The first written mention of Robin Hood was in the 1377 edition of "Piers Plowman" where Sloth, the bad priest says he can not say his pater noster, but

knows "Rymes of Robyn Hode and Ranulf erle of Chestre". There could possibly have been a real outlaw named Hood, but if there was he was not of sufficient importance to make any impression on any contemporary chronicler or writer. Many tales of Robin Hood were also told about Hereward, Eustace the Monk, Fulk Fitzwarin and others. No satisfactory evidence of the existence of Robin Hood had so far been found.

After enjoying Mrs. Overhill's wonderful tea, Mike Rouse talked about Cigarette cards, and produced a fine display from his collection. He spoke of collecting when he was a small boy. He said that cigarette card collections now had an investment value. His own collection included some 405 different sets and about 18,000 cards. Many of these were displayed in a fascinating and ingenious cabinet, that had once belonged to his mother.

Jack Overhill produced a wonderful "collector's piece", a pocket watch, which he had bought in 1911, as a small boy of eight, by saving one halfpenny per week until he reached its price of 3/6d. The watch was still working, and still keeping perfect time.

Jack showed the partly completed typescript of his latest book, which he was writing at the request of the Librarian of the Cambridge Collection, on the history of swimming in Cambridge.

The meeting closed with thanks to the various speakers, and a very warm vote of thanks to Jack, and his wife and daughter for their hospitality.

NORTHERN

Twelve members were present for our meeting held on Saturday evening, 8th May.

Michael Bentley, Keith Smith and Darrell Swift, had just returned from a Book Fair held that day in Manchester. A stall had been hired and a display of old boys' and girls' material had been set up, with advertising matter for our own club. A great deal of interest had been shown from the many enquiries that had been received.

Darrell gave a talk on "My Collection". From first discovering the Cassell Bunter books in the school library, he had bought the books

as they were published, until he had a collection of about 15. After leaving school, and thinking that he was a little too old for "boys' " books, he tucked them all away in a box and indeed gave some away. It was not until 1973 that he found out that the Howard Baker books were on the market, and then he was able to discover the true genius of Hamilton's writing. From buying all the books published, he was then able to find out about the Old Boys' Book Club and through the generosity of the Leeds Members was able to build up his collection of the Bunter books. He had now formed a large collection of original "Magnets" amongst other rare items.

After refreshments, Keith Smith presented a novel quiz entitled "Demons, Desperados and Detectives", it was based on some of the characters in old and modern fiction - who were in fact, pertaining to the title of his quiz. It certainly was not easy, but it presented a lot of fun and from a total of a possible 33 points, Michael Bentley and Bill Williamson tied with a score of 16. The prize, by mutual agreement, went to Bill - very appropriately, a "detective" kit consisting of a magnifying glass, false moustache - and a copy of "Detective Weekly"!

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

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WANTED: Boys' Friend Libs.; O/S Lees Nos. 124, 129, 407; Swans Schoolboys' Pocket Libs.; some Gems between 1350 to 1400. Have Lees and Magnets for exchange or would buy.

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ENID BLYTON paper-backs and hard-backs; 1950's to 1970's; 50p each; Bulldog Drummond 1935, £1 each; Just William, Biggles, £1 each; Mickey Mouse Annual £4; Rainbow Annual £4. Many pre-war school story books, 80p each.

OLYMPUS, SANDFORD MILL RD., CHELMSFORD, ESSEX.

The Postman Called

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

BOB WHITER (Los Angeles): Bill Lofts' article evoked several memories. Although the A.P. papers always came first with me, I did read the Thomson papers, and remember with some affection characters such as Trigg McFee and the Lost Ten Thousand, The Master in the Purple Mask, Tiger Jake's Academy, Thruster John, Liverpool Red, Lion-Heart Logan, Kargo the Clutcher to name a few. I remember having a delightful chat with Mr. Low, the Art Editor and his staff, just before I left England for the States.

R. CUSHING (Harpenden): I wonder if any of my fellow C.D. readers have had the pleasure, as I have, of reading 'A. J. Wentworth BA', a study, often hilarious of a dotty schoolmaster which evokes few memories of either Greyfriars, St. Jim's or Rookwood. In short, A.J.W., disaster-prone and long-suffering, is a delightful 'original', written with style and wit by H. F. Ellis. Certainly Mr. Quelch would have quelled the rebellious factions that abound at Burgrove School, but then we shall never see his like again.

Mr. Prout's pomposity would have been pricked at every turn at 'the Seat of Learning' (in its widest possible sense), known - and not altogether respected as 'Burgrove School'. I unreservedly recommend it to your good self and many readers, but possibly you have read and enjoyed it in company with some of the C.D. enthusiasts with whom I share a common interest.

CYRIL ROWE (Church Crookham): The author Ennis Hael (Ennis Hale, to be correct) was the well-known difficult character, Michael Storm, of whom so much has been speculated over the years as to whom he was and where he ended up. The tale "The Death Drums" in B.F.L. 2nd series 194, which had no author ascribed to it, was by Ennis Hale, it appears; and which later appeared as a hardback published by Blackie's as "The Grey Messengers" by Michael Storm. This is a good adventure story which I possess.

Re J. H. Valda; he did a lot of good work for "Young Britain"

and in the early Champion Annuals.

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: The first three Wayward stories in the Gem appeared under the name of Ennis Hael; the remaining stories in the series were published anonymously.)

W. O. G. LOFTS (London): Regarding your editorial on the Union Jack Tram series, this has certainly been done in the past, but many years ago now. I can well remember H. W. Twyman the U.J. editor telling me that the idea was original - but it was not. It was done in a National Newspaper, as well as in an early Union Jack, the latter being a swizzle as S. Clarke Hook under his pen-names obviously wrote the lot! Robert Murray was dropped simply because he was unreliable with copy and was in one of his 'lazy' spells. Twy always maintained that the results of the competition would be exactly as he predicted. The winner being in the reverse order of publication, as the last writer's work would be the best remembered. The results proved him right.

J. H. Valda, the artist, died in June 1942 aged 68 at Croydon. My information was that he had fallen on hard times with boys' papers closing down due to the war.

TOM PEED (Birmingham): I wonder if you or any of your remarkable readers in the world of old comics and papers can help me in seeking information about my own special favourite artist "Hugh McNeil" of the "Knockout" comic of the 1940's? He drew "Deed-a-day-Danny" - "Stonehenge Kit", etc., in fact he illustrated most of this great comic including the immortal "Our Ernie" whose father always passed the same final comment on Ernie's amazing adventures, "Daft I call it!" Can anybody recall the fantastic full-page sets he created, including that memorable run in 1947 when the whole front page of the "Knockout" was given over to the "doings" of the citizens of Little-Wallop (on the Sands)?

F. J. OAK (London): I take this opportunity to say how much this "Old Boy" looks forward to C.D. Reading through the nostalgic pages is sheer joy.

L. HAWKEY (Leigh-on-Sea): Recently I picked up quite a few 1938 "Passing Shows" (shades of A. A. Thomson). 48 big pages, several in

full colour - for 2d. What would the same thing cost nowadays?

Miss E. KEYLOCK (Liverpool): I was so interested to read the comments on A. A. Thomson's "The Exquisite Burden", which I read and enjoyed several times in the thirties. Has anybody mentioned "Bijou Merle" to you? This is the story told from the Heroine's point of view, and much shorter, but still charming if rather sad. Other Thompson titles I remember are "Trust Tilty" and "Steeple Thatchley". The latter contains a typical Thompsonism; it tells how a workman repairing the author's cottage undertakes to paint the front door. The owners are furious since he spoils it by using creosote. In indignation they confront the workman, and, before Thompson can begin, his wife bursts in with indignant reproof, spoiling her husband's chance of using a telling bon-mot; "Go, and never darken my door again!"

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INNIS OF THE STORM COUNTRY

by Christopher Lowder

The writer of the Alan Wayward stories in the early 1d. Gems, Innis Hael (Comment to "Danny's Diary", last issue) was in fact none other than the man who was known as 'Michael Storm', and whose real name was almost certainly Ernest Sempill.

Sempill seems to have been rather keen on pseudonyms that smacked of the elements, and the more aggressive the better -- Storm, Hale (or Hael), Gale -- and Bill Lofts and I once made the astonishing discovery that in fact the mysterious Mr. Sempill had been rather more prolific than even we had imagined, as it was perfectly clear that such obvious pen-names as Charles H. Snow, H. Winter Gale, C. Vernon Frost and a score of others all hid the identity of this one man. I must confess we did balk slightly at Claude Rains, but then decided that any man as talented as Sempill ought to have been able to have knocked off a bit of acting on the side. What else could one expect from a natural son of Edward VII, after all?

On a slightly more serious note, it is, as you say, curious that the Gem should suddenly change to a double-feature programme in the style of Pluck and Marvel. One gets the strong impression that Sempill had a certain amount of clout in the very short period during which he

was writing for the AP (1907-1910), and it may well have been that Griffith (the Gem's editor) was forced to use the stories, for one reason or another. They are excellent tales, and very adult in tone, but they sit uneasily beside St. Jim's. Perhaps that is why only seven were published in the Gem. The remaining two stories were published as very long drawn out serials in Pluck a year later (1909).

The name 'Innis Hale' (as spelt) did occur again -- as the author of a Boys' Friend Library, The Death Drums, in the 1920's. This story then appeared as a hardback, The Grey Messengers, published by Blackie in 1940, but with its author's name changed to -- yes, you've guessed it, Michael Storm.

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BULLY BUNTER

by Roy Whiskin

I recently purchased a book called "52 stories of Duty and Daring for Boys" published by Hutchinson & Co. in 1897. The volume is apparently the 23rd in the series and is edited by Alfred H. Miles, a friend of G. A. Henty and George Manville Fenn.

The book contains stories by many different authors including Henty, Fenn, David Ker and Edgar Allan Poe. However, one particular story caught my eye, "Bully Bunters Revenge" by Alice F. Jackson. Apart from the title, odd sentences seemed to have faint overtones of Greyfriars. "I wonder if you fellows have forgotten how we caught Bully Bunter", "Bob suddenly cried out, 'Hullo' and 'Wake up old man'."

I'm probably reading too much into all this and no doubt it's one of those interesting coincidences. Has the story ever been mentioned in the 'C.D.' before? It is not a school story by the way and may be a sequel to a previous short story. Bully Bunter is the local ruffian who sponges on his wife. She keeps the green-grocers shop in the village. The three heros catch Bunter stealing gooseberries from their garden (shades of the other Bunter!) and he gets three months' hard labour for his trouble. On his release Bunter returns to the village and is caught red-handed by one of the boys when he tries his hand at poaching. Bunter attacks the boy and ties him up. In the process Bunter accidentally releases the boy's carrier pigeon, as a result of which the

other two boys come to the rescue. Bunter sets about the boys (reminiscent of the tramps in the Greyfriars stories) and a carter helps them overpower him. This time Bunter gets three years in prison.

It's not one of the best boys' stories I have read. It would be interesting to know if it was ever read by Charles Hamilton.

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Well-taped Magnets 1922, 1930, 1935, 1937; 18 in all, 60p each post extra. Bound vol. of 1957 small comics of Whiplash, Buck Jones, Kit Carson, Davy Crockett, Kansas Kid, £10. The Wonder Book of Railways - Ward Lock pre-war, £5. Many 1914 and 1939 war magazines, 100 in all: offers.

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C.D. TO COST 2p MORE

Costs in the production and distribution of this magazine continue to creep up, and it is necessary, to our regret, that the price of C.D. will rise by 2p to 34p next month.

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