

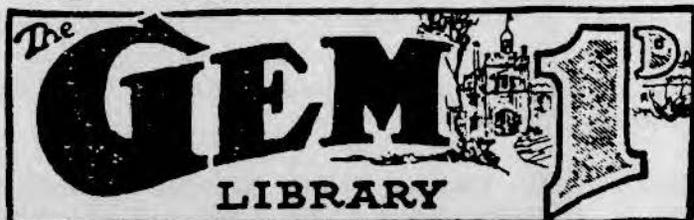
STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

VOL. 39

No. 467

NOVEMBER 1985

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COLLECTORS' DIGEST

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Founded in 1941 by
W. H. GANDER

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HERBERT LECKENBY

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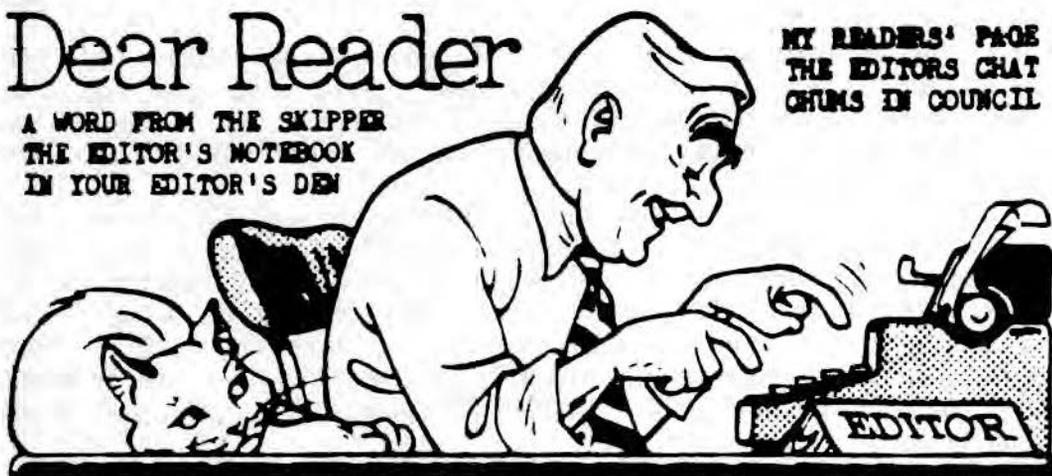
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Dear Reader

A WORD FROM THE SKIPPER
THE EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK
IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN

MY READERS' PAGE
THE EDITORS' CHAT
GUMS IN COUNCIL

THE WODEHOUSE SCHOOL STORIES

In a recent Editorial I discussed the school stories which P.G. Wodehouse wrote in the early years of his career, with particular reference to his book "The Head of Kay's".

Our reader, Mr. Nick Godfrey of Leamington Spa, has sent me an extract from "The Authorised Biography of Wodehouse" by Francis Donaldson. The biographer quoted a letter that Wodehouse wrote to Richard Usbourne in 1955. It gives a good account of how Wodehouse came to write his famous school yarns. I feel sure that it will be of interest to our readers, so here is the extract

from Wodehouse's own letter:-

"When was the first number of Chums? Was it 1892? Anyway, it contained - in addition to Max Pemberton's 'Iron Pirate' - a school story by Barry Pain called 'Two' (published in book form as "Graeme and Cyril"). It made an enormous impression on me. It had practically no plot but the atmosphere was wonderful. I was re-reading it only the other day and it's great stuff.

Then - in 1900 - the Captain appeared, and in the first number was a serial by Fred Swainson called "Acton's Feud". It began, I remember, 'Shannon, the old international, had brought down a hot side to play the school...' and if there has ever been a better opening line than that, I have never come across it. It was something entirely new in school stories - the real thing - and it inflamed me to do something in that line myself. If it hadn't been for "Acton's Feud". I doubt if I would ever have written a school story.

As a child, of course, I read "Eric" and "St. Winifreds" and the Talbot Baines Reed stories in the B.O.P.. I loved them all. I think it is only later that one grows critical of "Eric" and "St. W's"... "Tom Brown", fine. But Acton's Feud was the best of the lot."

It is fascinating to see that Wodehouse was hugely influenced by earlier writers of school stories, and I have never had any doubt that Charles Hamilton was affected in the same way. One can see the influence of Reed particularly, in the earlier Gem tales from Hamilton.

But what especially captures my interest in this Wodehouse letter is his reference to the yarn "Acton's Feud." For many, many years "Acton's Feud" has had its place, amid my vast collection, in my bookcases. I have often come on it, and thought to myself "What is this old book - an unknown story by an unknown writer, - doing here, taking my book space which I can ill afford?" And I decide, pro tem, to chuck it in the dustbin or to give it to the next Scouts Jumble Sale.

But the book is still there, I am thankful to say, and I am almost ashamed to admit that, so far as I can remember, I have never read it during my over-long life. I wonder why I have kept it. Surely, by accident - or maybe because your Editor is a sentimental cuss and it has nestled in the collection for so long - or possibly, because it is a gorgeous reminder of other days with its heavy binding, its cover embossed with the title, large, in gold leaf, and the pages have gold-bevelled edges all the way round.

Clearly, I have been missing a diamond among plenty of costume jewellery as well as plenty of priceless gems. Long years ago, a C.D. reader - I have a feeling it was the late Gerry Allison - used to write me glowing letters extolling the work of Fred Swainson. Yet I have never bothered to read "Acton's Feud". I must set about setting that right, as soon as I get the time.

My book is well illustrated. The story - my book - was published in book form in 1901 by George Newnes of Southampton St., Strand, but the name of the artist is not mentioned.

In passing, tacked on at the end of the main story, in my volume, is a short tale entitled "Acton's Christmas". It makes one think that the Acton stories may have featured as a series in the Captain.

I would not quite agree with the comments of Wodehouse at the end of his letter. "Eric" was over-sentimental, but it is a great story, full of action. "St. Winifred's" I always found so stodgy as to be almost unreadable, and, personally, I was never very enamoured of Tom Brown. I regard "Eric" as much superior to "Tom Brown", but that, I am sure, is not the general view.

THAT LETTER BAG!

My letter-bag has been bulging this month. It sometimes happens that, as the result of one particular item in C.D., the "Postman Calls" - with a vengeance. This time it was the little piece I tacked on at the end of Danny's Diary concerning the Rogers-Astaire films. The letters just rained in to put me right concerning the film "Roberta". Last month we published the first one received of these letters - it came from Mr. Hodge of Bristol - but there was no space for the others which repeated the information. But I thank everyone who wrote. It goes to show how well-up readers are on those much-loved films of the thirties.

Considering how close I was to the film world over nearly 30 years, it was surprising that I was so ignorant, but, as I explained in the Biography of a Small Cinema - the series ran in C.D. over a couple of years or more and was intensely popular - we only played one of those Rogers-Astaire favourites - "The Barkeleys of Broadway." This one came along quite a few years after the main series, and was released by M.G.M. most of whose product played the Small Cinema.

All the others had been R.K.O. productions, released by Radio Pictures. To the best of my belief we played films from every renter in London, but in later days it proved more beneficial to give our business mainly to three firms - M.G.M., Warner Bros., and the General Film Co. which released Universal and Gaumont British products. We certainly played a few Radio films in earlier days. But that was before Fred and Ginger's heyday.

One interesting point I noticed is that some readers referred to "The Gay Divorce" and others to "The Gay Divorcee". No doubt

the reason for this was that the first was the title of the film over here and the second was its title in the States.

OUR RUBY YEAR

An idle thought with which to close. With next month's issue we shall be entering into our fortieth year of publication - with never one single issue missed down the rolling, tumbling years. And, if we are spared, and if Fate is kind, come next November, C.D. will be celebrating its Ruby Jubilee.

It makes one feel a bit proud - and a little humble. One could not do it alone. It takes a wonderful coterie. It is due to the enthusiasm of our band of untiring contributors, and to the loyalty of the most splendid little band of readers in the wide, wide world.

An idle - IDLE! - thought with which to close.

THE EDITOR

Danny's Diary



November 1935

There has been a Royal Variety Show at the London Palladium, attended by the King and Queen. It raised a record sum - no less than £5,000 - for the Variety Artists' Charities which is splendid. Previously the record was in 1924, eleven years ago, when they made £4,000.

There was a lot of the new Jazz music in the show, and it seems to have been brilliantly colourful. A big turn on the programme was "Cavalcade of Variety" in which a lot of the old-time variety stars each played a part. Among the old stars were Arthur Reece, Kate Carney, Gus Ellen, Florrie Forde and Harry

Champion. Harry Champion sang "Any Old Iron", and Florrie Forde sang "Are we to part like this, Bill?" and "Down at the Old Bull and Bush".

Another rare pair, earlier in the show, were the Western Brothers, who had a lot to say about "Play the game, you cads", but this time did not sing about "Britishers in bowlers on the Road to Mandalay". Another artist was Stanley Holloway who introduced the Ramsbottom family in a monologue about a swallowed sovereign.

But it was an American act - I forget his name - who got the loudest and longest applause though he did not speak a word. He did some wonderful dancing, and ended his act dancing on a xylophone, giving a superb dance and luscious music.

While on the subject of theatres there are some good ones in London now. I hope that Doug may be moved to take me to one or more of them. At Drury Lane there is Ivor Novello and Mary Ellis in "Glamorous Night". At the Duchess, Emlyn Williams is in his own play "Night Must Fall", which also stars Angela Baddeley and May Whitty. This one is very gruesome, I believe.

At the Strand there is a Revue called "1066 and All That". Another Revue they say is very good is the Charlot production "Stop - Go!" It stars Mary Brian, Douglas Byng, and Dorothy Ward.

Some very good stories in the monthly Libraries this month. In the Schoolboys' Own Library the Greyfriars offering is "The Star of the Circus." Frank Richards must have loved circuses. This one is Zorro's Circus and the "star" is Pedrillo, who comes from the circus into the Remove at Greyfriars. And he had a mysterious link with Hobson of the Upper Fourth. Not all that original, I think, but a rattling good yarn. The other S.O.L. is "The Grimslade Crusoes" Stranded on a desert isle in the Atlantic, the chums of Grimslade and their Headmaster, Sammy Sparshott, are having more adventures. They have had a glut of Grimslade in the S.O.L. of late.

In the Boys' Friend Library there is what they call a "starred" issue. It is "Biggles in France" by Flying Officer W.E. Johns. I expect it is a reprint from a serial in Modern Boy. Another B.F.L. is "The Tough Guy at Croft", about an under-dog at school. It is by a writer called Vernon Neilson, but that is a new name to me.

A gorgeous Pierre Quiroule story in the Sexton Blake Library is "The Havana Mystery" which starts in Baker Street, when a husband rushes to tell Blake that his wife has disappeared under mysterious circumstances, and then the action transfers to Cuba. First tale I ever remember set in Cuba.

The other S.B.L's are "The Case of the Stolen Test Tube" which features the characters Dearth Tallon, adventurer, and Sandra Sylvester, his girl partner. This one is by Warwick Jardine. "The Secret of the Glen" by Coutts Brisbane is set mainly in the Highlands of Scotland, while "The Truth About Lord Trench" marks the return of Donald Stewart who hasn't written much lately.

Jolly good month.

There have been several railway accidents this month, but luckily not fatal ones. Two different landslides caused derailments at Winchfield, in Hampshire, and at Well Hall in Kent. The worst accident was at Castle Douglas in Scotland, where the express mail train jumped the tracks, and three women were injured.

There has been a big fire in a house in Wimpole Street in London, and in this several women lost their lives.

The funeral has taken place of Earl Jellicoe, the naval hero of the War, and the Prince of Wales attended the service at St. Paul's.

In Modern Boy, Captain Justice has been going strong all the month. In "Robots of the Secret City" the amazing Ambani people hold the whip hand over the scientists whom they have enslaved in their wonder-city. But Justice is on the trail.

In the next tale "Roadway of Mystery" the youngest of Justice's companions is missing - in the wild and unexplored country. But his footprints lead the gallant Captain on the trail. Then "Maze of a Million Traps", the Captain is on his way to rescue the enslaved white scientists and to find the missing Midge.

Next, "Slave of the Mesmer Ray", with red-headed young Midge fighting his own battles while Justice seeks for him in the stone-walled maze of death-traps encircling the eerie Science City. Finally "The Glaring Eye" - a strange circle of light guiding Justice to a thrilling meeting in the City. This very long - and a bit frantic - Captain Justice series will carry on next month.

Along with the Justice tales, the Jungle Railway series by John Brearley and the Motor-racing series by Kaye Campson have gone on all through the month. I wish they would have a new school series and some more King of the Islands yarns.

There has been an Election this month, and the result has been a big win for the Tories, and especially for Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin. Over in New Zealand they, too, have had an Election, and N.Z. now has a Labour Government for the first time in its history.

A lovely month in the local cinemas. A terrific spectacle is "Les Miserables", about an unjustly imprisoned man who is hounded by a very determined police official. Frederic March plays the nice convict, Jean Valjean, and Charles Laughton is the hard-hearted policeman. Lovely.

A great favourite of mine was Will Hay in "Boys Will Be Boys", a British film. Another good British film, a patriotic one, is "Forever England" starring John Mills and Betty Balfour. A good historical film is "Becky Sharp" starring Miriam Hopkins, and this one is in Technicolour.

A romantic tale is "Shanghai" starring Charles Boyer and Loretta Young. An American high society lady falls in love with a mulatto.

A good musical, partly in Technicolour, is "Kid Millions" featuring Eddie Cantor, Ethel Merman, and Ann Southern. It has some nice new songs.

The Gem has been a bit patchy this month, but good on the whole as always. "The Boy Who Defied His Form" (what a clumsy title!) tells of a new boy, Eric Page, who is a friend of Cousin Ethel. He is a cocky little bounder, but Tom Merry & Co bring him to heel.

Quite gorgeous is "D'Arcy, the 'Tec", when Arthur Augustus is short of money, and tries to make some by setting himself up as a detective, Mr. Sleuth. "The New Boy's Secret" tells of Philip Denton who comes to the school with a secret worth unlimited gold. Two crooks, with the help of Levison, set out to rob the new boy. With this issue the St. Frank's serial in the Gem came to an end. St. Frank's is to be replaced by some Rookwood tales.

Next came "Under Suspicion". When Tom Merry starts breaking bounds at night, it looks bad, and his chums feel he may be on the road to ruin.

The first of the new Rookwood tales is "Jimmy Silver & Co's New Chum". A new boy named Dudley Vane comes on the scene at the school.

Final St. Jim's tale of the month is "The Masked Trio" which is quite good fun. Cutts & Co of the Fifth decide to run a concert to swell the funds of their football club. But when the juniors take a hand, the fur flies. Good fun.

The new Rookwood tale is "Who Wrecked Dalton's Study?" Another bit featuring the new bloke, Dudley Vane.

A lorry driver, Mr. Miles, and his wife, have presented the country with Quads - three boys and one girl. Their name is Miles and they live at St. Neots.

In York another tramway service has been scrapped, to be replaced with buses.

The Jim Warren stories have continued in the Magnet, and jolly good they are, too. Opening one of the month is "The Fifth-Former's Secret". Stephen Price has done his best to "down" Jim Warren, but the strange new Fifth-Former comes to the rescue of his enemy - and so makes a friend. Next came "Guyed on the Fifth". Warren has a narrow squeak on the Fifth of November. Then came "Football Foes", and Jim Warren, friendly now with Price of the Fifth, comes up against a more spiteful and powerful enemy in Loder of the Sixth.

Next yarn in this tip-top series is "Bunter Gets His Own Back". Mr. Hacker has pulled Bunter's ear, and Bunter, in the fog, gets the chance to have his revenge. And Warren plays a big part in the tale. Superb stuff. Then, the final of the month, is "Blackmail". And it is Warren who is blackmailed - while Loder, the spy, looks on from a distance.

This lovely series goes on next month.

NOTES ON THIS MONTH'S "DANNY'S DIARY".

S.O.L. No. 255 "Star of the Circus" comprised the 4-story Magnet series from the summer of 1926. It lost a good many chapters, but reads well enough for those not acquainted with the original. The Sexton Blake novel "The Havana Mystery" had been "The Mystery of the Lost Battleship" in January 1925, an exceptionally good Pierre Quiroule tale.

Absurdly enough, there were two substitute stories reprinted in the Gem in November 1935. "The Boy Who Defied His Form", a genuine tale, had been "The Sentence of the House" in the autumn of 1911. The central character was originally Eric Lorne. For no apparent reason, the name was changed to Eric Page in 1935. "D'Arcy the 'Tec' had been "Hard Times" in November 1911. It showed Hamilton at his most hilarious. I seem to recall that Mr. Buddleonce came up with "Hard Times" but I can't recall which Buddle story it was in.

"The New Boy's Secret" was a sub tale which had the same title in January 1912. "Under Suspicion" had been "Tom Merry's Promise" in early 1912, another sub story, this one by E.S. Brooks, I fancy.

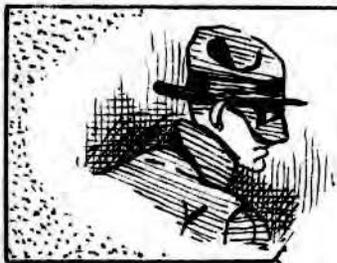
"The Masked Trio" had been "The Masked Entertainers" in early 1912. This one was genuine.

The new Rookwood series in the Gem were sub stories.

THE PRINCESS SNOWEE'S CORNER

Score of readers, every month, send their greetings to me and their enquiries as to my well-being, via the old Editor. In reply to the enquiries, I'm bouncing fit, thank you. I eat well and a lot, and I sleep well and a lot.

I still miss my dear Mum, but my man looks after me pretty well. There is a real bond between us. We're great pals, you might say. Thanks for asking!



BLAKIANA



"CROSS MY PALM WITH SILVER"

by RAYMOND CURE

It was all good fun. Nobody took it seriously. Whether it was your fortune in a tea-cup, or the cards, or the lines on the palm of your hand, or the crystal or the daddy of them all, your own personal horoscope.

At least nobody was supposed to take it seriously, trouble is, some people do.

Just as some people take their wireless and television serious enough to send wreaths or condolences to the B.B.C. or I.T.V. when an actor pretends to die. It is nothing new. When A. Conan-Doyle killed off his star creation, Sherlock Holmes, there was such a commotion that he had to revive him.

So as long as you get people who try to peep into the future, you will get people who will help you to peep into the future.

Fiction is replete with gypsy warnings, the women's papers of the late twenties and early thirties, "Red Star", "Pam's Paper" etc., kept fires burning.

Even Sexton Blake found himself involved with fortune-tellers, astrologers and re-incarnated mystics on various occasions.

Have you ever met ZULAIKA, the Clairvoyant? She has been around sometime, as far back as 1923 in fact.

However, I only made her acquaintance recently. She appears as one of the stars of an all-star cast in "The Case of the Clairvoyants Ruse" S.B.L.358(4d).

One of the "Stars" did I say? There are at least seven and for the benefit of late-comers I will give you the full cast as I see it on the cover (after all, it was published in 1923).

Sexton Blake - Tinker - Dr. Huxton Rymer - Mary Trent - Sapphire Jim - Flash Brady and ZULAIKA, the clairvoyant. How's that for fourpence? And not new-pence either, but back to our ZULAIKA.

I came across her while she was travelling aboard ship, under

the name of Miss Thurston and telling fortunes for the fun of it, so to speak, when bingo! She lands a customer name of Matt Hammond, a chappie worth fifteen thousand pounds; a nice slice in those days.

Now Matt would take this lark seriously, such tabs as "For amusement only" or "Have Fun" were not for him, and this was to cost him half of his fortune, when our Zulaika contacted her good friends Mary Trent and Dr. Huxton Rymer, with certain inside information.

I don't want my customers to be too hard on poor old Matt; such expression as "Tut-tut" and "Silly fellow" "He deserves to be done" ill-become you. After all film stars, politicians and even Adolph Hitler fell by the wayside, who are we to judge?

Come with me a little further back in 1923 where I later traced the earlier "doings" of our clairvoyant.

"The Orloff Diamond" S.B.O. 312, while the authors name is not mentioned, Josie Packman informed me that we are indebted to G.H. Teed for the following peep behind the scenes.

"If the place had an atmosphere, so did Madame ZULAIKA her coal-black hair surmounted by a golden coronet formed of two entwined snakes. Against her white throat gleamed a large crystal Her eyes gleamed dark and mystical.

Madame ZULAIKA was the latest craze among clairvoyants, she had been taken up by society.

In fact there were many hard-headed business men who were known to go to her and it was an open secret that more than one prominent politician sought her advice on the eve of the city elections".

So you see, poor old Matt Hammond was not the only one, and, as I say, he fell under her spell some time later, when devoid of her glad-rags she was plain Miss Thurston, fellow-traveller. He knew nothing at all about the fast one she had pulled with her fortune telling act and the aid of Dr. Huxton Rymer and Mary Trent.

So Matt falls for it and bang goes half his fifteen thousand pounds.

And at this point - enter Sexton Blake and Tinker, so wipe the falling tear from your eye, dear reader. Before you can say "ZULAIKA" our pair of detectives have chisled this cash out of the crooks' pockets and back where it belongs, in Matt Hammonds pocket. Nice work!

Let me put in a good word for the fortune-telling fraternity, in case anyone runs away with the idea they are all bad. Most

of these good folk are merely seeking a living (aren't we all!).

My Mother became one, way back in the twenties and early thirties, when left a widow, with a thirteen year old son and a caravan home, and no outside help, we knew hunger.

Mother assumed the name of Madame Elliott and was to make it a name that drew visitors back to her tent in Blackpool season after season.

As a church deacon, some young people recently asked me what I thought of fortune telling.

Personally, I think it was good for a meal-ticket, and for putting clothes on our backs and for removing from a small wooden caravan to our own brick built house. And all by "cross my palm with silver" 6d your palm 1/- the cards, 2/- the crystal.

But I replied "So long as you keep in mind that it is for amusement only, have fun, don't take it serious".

But somehow you know that some will take it serious.

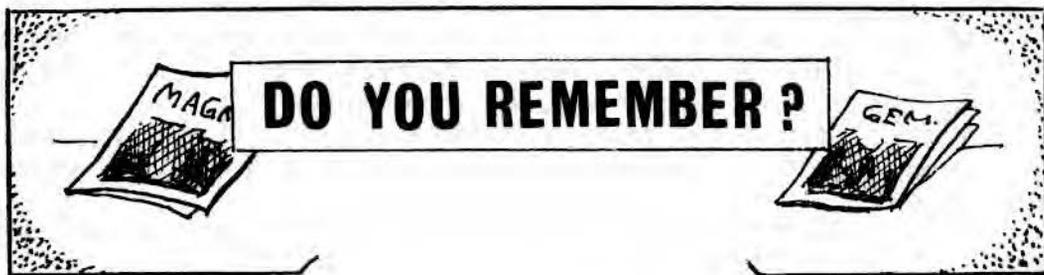
That's why I know my readers are waiting to ask where they can get in touch with ZULAIKA.

Go back to the beginning of this article, check the title and number mentioned, and then contact the Club's Sexton Blake Library: From there on it's all yours.

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Colin Crewe, 12b, Westwood Rd, Canvey Island, Essex.



No. 208 - Sexton Blake Library (5th series) - No. 28 The Case of the Bismarck Memoirs. By Roger M. Jenkins

The Amalgamated Press were credited with the remark that Sexton Blake was the poor man's Sherlock Holmes. In 1928, Dorothy Sayers declared that Blake was "in the Holmes tradition, adapted for the reading of the board-school boy and crossed with Buffalo Bill adventure type." After this somewhat disparaging opening, she went on to make some perceptive comments about the varying abilities of the Blake authors, and stated that, compared with Holmes, Blake was less intuitive but more careless and reckless, showing personal heroism and engaging in pugilism, but he was more simple and human in his emotions. She likened the stories to a national folk-lore, having loosely connected romances in the Arthurian manner.

Some thirty years later, the Blakiana section of the C.D. was full of heated discussions about the relative merits of the old and new Sexton Blake stories. Older readers resented the appearance of Paula Dane and Sexton Blake's removal from Blake Street. Perhaps to satisfy the vociferous critics, the 1920 story by Pierre Quiroule (W.M. Sayer) entitled "The Mystery Box" was reprinted in 1966 as "The Case of the Bismarck Memoirs", which was certainly a more intriguing title, and it featured Tinker and Mrs. Bardell, of course. Granite Grant and Mademoiselle Julie had walking-on parts towards the end of the tale.

The main title page of this Mayflower/Dell paperback credited the story to Desmond Reid, although Pierre Quiroule was listed as the author on the cover and first page. Desmond Reid seems to have been rather a shadowy figure in those days, and "the Desmond Reid treatment" usually consisted of revising the work of other authors, no matter how illustrious they might have been, in order to bring them up to date. Nevertheless, some entire stories were credited

to Desmond Reid himself, which adds another puzzling element to the whole affair. Pierre Quiroule's story seems to have occasioned Desmond Reid little trouble and was limited to a sentence or two about the change in social customs between 1920 and 1966.

To someone coming fresh to the story, the first reaction is to feel surprised at the leisurely pace. The Prologue, dealing with events in 1890, contains some extended descriptions of the weather and background, with an attempt to enlist the sympathy of the reader. Once Sexton Blake enters in 1920, however, the story livens up and events move more swiftly. Blake is presented as a legend in his time, and the rogues who kidnap him are more concerned to cover their tracks than dare to eliminate him. Blake lacks the charisma of Holmes, though, like him, he is clever and makes Scotland Yard detectives look inept bunglers. Tinker seems to spend his time admiring Blake's astuteness and he plays little part in the story.

In 1920 Blake was yet to reach the height of his powers and popularity, and it may be unjust to judge him by an early story by a single writer. Still, it must be said that the Holmes stories can be read again and again because of the personalities concerned and the intellectual thrust of the reasoning, and one cannot help wondering who would wish to re-read this particular story with its cardboard cast of extras. Incidentally, in this story Tinker enters the service of Lord Vavasour as Binks. I wonder if Pierre Quiroule read the Magnet and Gem.

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"A REPLY TO J.E.M."

By C.H. Churchill

In the Lee column of the October C.D. "J.E.M." asks the question "What is the best part of the St. Frank's Saga at which to start reading?" as he feels he really ought to get to know the Nelson Lee Library better. I am sure that if friend "J.E.M." does have a good read of the St. Frank's stories he will never regret it. Who knows, he might become a regular contributor to the Lee Column! We need some more of these!

The only true answer to his question, of course, is to read from the beginning and go on to the end. This, however, would be a gargantuan task on which to embark so I venture to offer a somewhat smaller effort.

As I commenced reading the Lee in 1919 during the old "small" series I somewhat naturally prefer the older tales to those of the very later years. This maybe a matter of taste as I quite realise that anyone commencing the stories in the late twenties might like those better. As the majority of the St. Frank's characters were introduced in the early stories I hold to my view that these were the best.

I can suggest, however, that "J.E.M." might make a start with Lee No. 221 dated 1919 and go on until about No. 80 of the first new series in early 1927. The majority of stories or series in this period were, in my opinion, the best of the bunch. There were, of course, good series before No. 221 and a few after 1927 but on the whole the period I have selected contains the vast majority of the cream of Mr. Brooks' writings.

Before 1919 his stories were at times I consider a little stilted but after this they just flowed along with easy grace and style.

Which were the best series? Almost impossible to say as different readers would prefer different themes such as Barring out series, mysterious New Boy ones or fantastic ones such as that one about Dr. Karnak. Then there were the famous holiday adventures. Anyway, the period I have mentioned would cover the whole gamut and the reader would end up with a marvellous appreciation of the history of St. Frank's and its inhabitants.

Good luck to you Mr. J.E.M.

HISTORY FROM THE LEE

By R.J. Godsave

Had the Servants' Strike series o.s. 250-255 been of the usual eight Nelson Lees instead of just six it would have, no doubt, been re-printed in the Monster Library. The Singleton series which preceded the Servants' Strike series comprised often Nelson Lees. In order to reduce this series to the usual eight the two Lees relating to Singleton's stay in London were not reprinted. As his London adventures were a story on their own no damage was done by the exclusion.

It is interesting to compare the cost of living in 1920, when the Strike series was published, with that of today. The Great War of 1914-18 caused an aftermath of high prices which was the cause of the St. Frank's strike. Sir Roger Stone, Chairman of the St. Frank's Board of Governors, had only made an offer to the strikers of an increase of 25%, whereas prices had risen 100%.

For those of us who lived in the 1920's and 1930's are well aware that towards the end of the '20's and until the outbreak of the second World War that prices gradually came down and the 1930's really saw prices fall. Many problems that exist today did not then exist. The serious employment question that existed in the early 1930's is very much with us today.

The point is that after nearly 40 years after the second World War prices have not fallen, and strikes do not have the same effect as in the 1920's and 1930's.

Apart from the Servants' Strike, in which Timothy Tucker had quite a lot to say on behalf of the strikers, as did the whole of the scholars of St. Frank's, there was a detective element running through the series. It proved that the old staff were much more honest and the new servants imported were far less efficient than the old staff.

It is nice to know that one can learn something from history of that period from the Nelson Lee Library.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY

By EDWARD BALDOCK

Chaucer, in the quaint English of his day has left us this definition of a gentlemen: 'He is gentil that doth gentil dedis.' Spenser, some centuries later put it in somewhat more recognisable prose: 'The gentle minde by gentle deeds is knowne.' Times change but definitions remain much the same. Here are two ways of making an identical point, and there is nothing in the nature or character of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the fourth form at St. Jim's which would in any way conflict with this definition.

Arthur Augustus or 'Gussy' to his, oft-times sorely tried, friends comes of that degree of sterling quality and true-blue loyalty to a caste encountered not too frequently in the rough and tumble of school life. Certainly St. Jim's can produce no other remotely comparable fellow. We know that when Gussy adjusts his monocle and fixes his friends with a severe gleam in his noble eye that circumstances are developing favourably, and in all probability he will shortly be threatening to 'administah a fearful thwashing' to one or other of them. For sadly with all the dignity which cries aloud the caste of Vere de Vere, Arthur Augustus is scarcely ever accepted with the seriousness he feels to be his natural due. 'The fashion plate', 'the ornament', 'the one and only' are but three of the titles accorded to him, but as he loftily informs his friends: 'apperances deah boys are weally everywhere.'

That Arthur Augustus has a predilection for young ladies is an established fact and it has been the cause of endless amusement to his friends and to St. Jim's at large over the years. The 'love-lorn' Gussy was an irresistible source of joy to his school fellows and also to the countless admirers who followed the St. Jim's story from week to week. Just how many times he lost his heart to members of the fair sex would be difficult to assess; he certainly has a pronounced weakness (if it may be so called) for the feminine gender. Yet there is a steel-like resilience in his make-up. A refined toughness, certainly not apparent physically but very evident should the occasion arise. Gussy has no second thoughts on to which side of the scales to throw his weight when right or wrong, indeed any shade of wrong, is in question. Open as the day, his eyeglass gleams along one path only and this inevitably turns out to be the correct one. There beats beneath his fancy waistcoat (itself a joy to behold) a heart not merely romantic but a heart ready for any vicissitude, which is always open and receptive to any just call that may be

made upon it, while his immaculate trousering covers a pair of aristocratic legs designed by nature to be pulled and pulled again. Mercilessly his chums avail themselves of this facet in his character despite the countless 'thwashings' constantly being threatened. Such are the endearing qualities of Gussy; he is never out of humour for long.

'I am inkay all over--'

'Ha, ha, ha!'

'I shall have to go and change my clobbah - Bai Jove, I will kick Twimble - I am smothahed with ink - I - I! Oh, cwumbs! Oh, Cwikey! My jacket's wuined! Look at my waistcoat! If you fellows think this is funny-----'

Life was not always a bed of roses for Gussy at St. Jim's. Sensitive to a degree one may imagine his feelings of outrage following such incidents quoted above. Yet for all the catastrophies and disasters which seemed quite naturally to befall him, Gussy would always, after initial wrath, rise to the occasion and to his old noble self again - a true sportsman. The topper, the eyeglass, the fancy waistcoat and immaculately creased trousers are all outward manifestations of the swell of St. Jim's. This fastidiousness and preoccupation with outward appearances is reflected in no small way by his insistance in 'doing the right thing', and on every occasion being the epitome of tact, (although this is inclined to misfire at times), being diplomatic and observing all the tenets of a gentleman. In short, as he would observe: 'noblesse oblige deah boy'. One might be forgiven for assuming, on hearing the epithets 'Bai Jove' and 'Deah boy' interspersed into his speech, that one was dealing with a monocled ass. How very far from the fact one would be in the case of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. For all his quaint mannerisms of behaviour and peculiarities of speech, he possesses a sterling quality found all too infrequently in one's associates. But as Tom Merry and Co. would probably say 'Don't breathe a word to the ornament or his best topper will cease to be of any use.'

From the tips of his immaculately polished shoes, mirror-like in their brilliance to the crown of his faultlessly burnished topper, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy is a sight to behold, a character to cherish, an ornament to be carefully preserved in phrase and story for posterity. As Monty Lowther has frequently said: 'He will be the death of us yet'. The important consideration is that we must look to it and assure our Gussy a niche for all time in the annals of boys' literature.

REVIEWS

"THE MYSTERY OF EASTWOOD HOUSE."

Martin Clifford
(Howard Baker: £9.95)

Here is a very welcome Gem collection from the reprint period of 1932. It comprises seven issues, in chronological order but not consecutive.

It is not the slightest disparagement to say that the book includes none of the most famous St. Jim's stories. They are delightful inconsequential stories from the earlier period which is little known except by the older fans, and the very tales which helped to make the blue Gem, in its day, the most popular boys' school story paper in the land.

The opening tale in the volume is a historical novelty being a hybrid of 2 tales which had originally appeared early in 1908. In February 1908, the Gem had doubled its size and became a penny paper.

There were some weeks of double length stories and then they reverted to the original shorter story for a while. It is quite obvious that the decision to double the size of the Gem was taken hastily, and they still had in hand a few of the shorter Martin Clifford tales. The space was filled with an adventure series featuring one, Alan Wayward, in the 1908 Gem.

In 1932 they took two of these shorter St. Jim's tales - "Tom Merry's Struggle" and "St. Jim's Leads" - and joined them together under the title "The Kidnapped Cricketers". The second story was heavily pruned. It seemed quite pointless and a stupid editorial decision, for the shorter 1908 tales were of ideal length for the 1932 Gem, while the tales were rollicking affairs of rivalry with the Grammar School.

Next in the book comes "Cousin Ethel's Champion" which had been "Skimpole's Fancies" in 1908. A hilarious affair in which Skimmy falls in love with Ethel, till he decides at the end that half-baked Socialism is more important than hard-baked Romance.

Then "The Mystery of the Missing Heir" which had been "Tom's Terrible Time" in 1908. Tom Merry disappears in this lovely period piece, the victim of kid-nappers who, mistake him for someone else.

"Skimpole the Inventor" come next, having originally been "Skimpole's Airship." Skimpole featured a great deal in those early days, and he was always good fun (not, perhaps, such an "acquired taste" as the Greyfriars Coker often proved to be).

"Detectives of St. Jim's" had been "The Boy Detectives" in 1908. Typical form rivalry, with the different sets of chums on the trail of burglars.

The finest tale of all is, probably, "The Fighting Fag", which, under the same title in 1908, had introduced Wally D'Arcy to the school and to readers. Wally was always an attractive character, well ahead of any other of the Hamilton "Minors".

This joyful feast winds up with "The Mystery of Eastwood House", originally "Tom Merry's Week-end" in 1908. The chums meet with an exciting adventure on their week-end at the D'Arcy's home.

A gorgeous book of immortal stories to entertain you for hours on end. A "must" for anyone who loves Tom Merry and St. Jim's.

THE SPORTS OF THE SCHOOL.

Frank Richards
 (Howard Baker Book Club
 Special: £18)

This superb volume is worth its weight in gold. In fact, it is pure gold, right up to its gold-bevelled edges on its pages. It comprises 6 Magnets, one of them a Summer Double Number, from the Red Magnet period of 1913. The copies are consecutive.

Though there is no outstandingly famous tale in this collection, each story is a diamond of its day. The opening story "The False Form Master" is mildly familiar, lingering in the memory from those distant, splendid days. This is the one in which Ulick Ferrers, Mr. Quelch's ne'er-do-well cousin, kidnaps his uncle and takes his place as master of the Remove for a time. A glorious period piece.

"The Sports of the School" introduces an unusual sport for Greyfriars - pony-trap racing. It stars Dutton, who shines at the sport if not in the hearing department.

"Self-Denial Week at Greyfriars" provides gentle, nostalgic, if unexciting reading. The chums are out to aid the new cottage Hospital at Friardale which has been built and endowed by Lord Mauleverer's uncle.

Then comes the Summer Double Number, with a cover drawn by Philip Hayward, an artist who seemed to specialise in the covers of Magnet "Specials". The story, "Shunned by the Form" introduces a mild-mannered new boy in the Remove, named Brandreth. His father, who worked for the same firm as Snoop's father, has been arrested for embezzlement. In the end it was Mr. Snoop who was the embezzler, and the tables are turned on the slimy Snoop of the Remove. A sentimental little piece, immensely readable, and typical of its day. At the end, the mild Brandreth remains on the scene, though I think he was never starred again. He remained as dead wood to provide fodder for those who, years later, amused themselves by collecting together the Remove's long-forgotten members.

Next comes "The 'Nut' of Greyfriars". The Remove (along with Rookwood) had an astonishing number of weird masters in its time - and Mr. Knutt is one of the earliest. The new master becomes popular, especially when he squares up to Loder of the Sixth, but he is not the real Mr. Knutt at all. He is Lord Charles, who has taken his tutor's place at the school in order to avoid having to face up to moneylenders. All good fun.

Finally, another comedy diamond "The Schoolboy Shopkeepers". The Remove attempts to run a school shop, and all goes well till Fishy introduces American methods of trading - or, at least, the Fish version of them.

The volume is beautifully illustrated by C.H. Chapman at his best. Clearly he was carefully imitating the late Arthur Clarke, and it's a pity he didn't go on doing so. In my humble view, he was never so good in later years as he was at this time.

A gorgeous "Special", this volume, from all points of the compass.

MOUTHWATERING!

GOOD BOOKS — BUT CHEAP — FOR THE HOLIDAYS

3 NEW ADDITIONS TO "THE BOYS' FRIEND" 3rd. COMPLETE LIBRARY.

Specially Published for
the Summer Holidays.

No. 235. "THE SCHOOL UNDER CANVAS!"

A Splendid, Complete Tale of Gordon Gay & Co.
By PROSPER HOWARD.

No. 236. "THE FLYING ARMADA!"

A Magnificent Complete Story of War in the Air.
By JOHN TREGELLIS.

No. 237. "KING CRICKET!"

A Grand Tale of the Great Summer Game.
By CHARLES HAMILTON.

PLEASE ASK ALWAYS FOR "THE BOYS'
FRIEND" 3rd. COMPLETE LIBRARY.

On Sale Everywhere. Price 3d. Each.

To modern eyes, at least, this advertisement which appeared in the summer of 1913 is indeed mouthwatering.

Two full-length Hamilton stories in the Boys' Friend Library in one month, to Hamilton fans, seems like a dream come true.

"The School Under Canvas" had been written as a serial originally for the Empire Library, but as that paper gave up the ghost before the story was published, it appeared as a serial in the Gem, running in that paper throughout the summer of 1912. It never appeared again, though it would have been ideal for the S.O.L. twenty years on.

Charles Hamilton told me that it was the only story he wrote under the pen-name of Prosper Howard, though I am sure, personally, that he wrote one or two more short stories under the name.

"King Cricket" had been a serial in the Boys' Realm of 1907 (I have both stories in both versions in my vast collection). The cricket tale, pruned somewhat for the B.F.L. for it had been of great length as a serial. This, too, never appeared again, though it is more understandable in this case, as real life cricketers of the time were introduced.

The third tale, so delectably advertised, was one of John Tregellis' remarkable tales concerning war with Germany. Mr. Tregellis seems to have been more foreseeing than most writers of the day.

WANTED Magnets, Nos. 204 to 231, Nos. 256 to 281. Bunter Hardbacks, 1st Editions, with D.W.s. Cromptons 'William the Lawless', other 'Williams', 1st Editions. Dr. Who. Annuals. Sale original Greyfriars Holiday Annuals, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1930, 1931, 1935, 1940 - James Gall, 49 Anderson Avenue, Aberdeen, Scotland. Tel. Aberdeen, 0224-491716.



NEWS OF THE OLD BOYS BOOK CLUBS

MIDLAND

There was an attendance of 10 at our late September meeting, commencing the new term; a disappointing turn-out as Bill Lofts was our guest speaker.

Geoff Lardner produced some cuttings from the "Guardian" in which the writer claimed that readers of Old Boys' Books were people who had never grown up and still lived in 1910 - and that Charles Hamilton's stories "lacked realism". It struck me that it was the writer of the items who was the one who had never grown up, as they did not realise the difference between life and literature. One might as well say that those who enjoy murder mystery tales should be locked up as dangerous persons. Laurie Sutton had written in a spirited defence.

Refreshments were provided by Betty and Johnny Hopton, and were enjoyed by all.

The greater part of the evening was given over to Bill Lofts who began by showing some beautifully framed drawings from the Magnet. The work of Howard Baker was the focus point of Bill's address. When Mr. Baker published "The Land of the Pyramids" in 1969, 10,000 copies were printed; he had no idea that he would still be bringing out similar publications 16 years later. The St. Jim's, St. Frank's and Union Jack reprints were a financial failure. Everybody wanted the Magnet.

The question of what happened to the Battle of the Beaks series when the Magnet stopped in 1940 was guessed at, and interested all. It is Bill's belief that Charles Hamilton was so indifferent that he quite probably tore them up for pipe lighters. That is what is generally believed.

Bill received enthusiastic applause at the end of his talk. We hope he will visit us again.

Our next meeting is on November 26th. All good wishes to O.B.B.C. members everywhere.

JACK BELLFIELD (Correspondent)

SOUTH WEST

On a warm, sunny, September Sunday, ten members met at Tim Salisbury's home to hear more of Bill Loft's interesting talks and enjoy our hobby together. We were pleased to welcome Eric Shepherd, a new member, and to have Charles Skilton join us again.

Bill started talking about two Greyfriars pictures he had brought along. These had been painted by enthusiasts of Frank Richards.

Next came a talk on Film Fun Comic 1920-1962 which, for many years, featured Laurel and Hardy and many other film comedians. Jack Parkhouse brought some copies of Film Fun to illustrate it.

Bill's third talk was on The Cockney which was amusing as well as informative.

After a good tea and plenty of gossip Bill gave us his last item which was on the Howard Baker Magnet facsimilies from the day they began to the 100th volume soon to be published.

Time came for us to close the meeting. We left with the exciting news that our next gathering will be held in a Castle in Somerset.

CAMBRIDGE

There was a bumper attendance when the Club met at the home of Malcolm Pratt on Sunday, October 6th, and members were glad to welcome Howard Corn to the meeting.

Bill Lofts talked about the black and white Comic, Film Fun. Film Fun had a very long run, beginning in 1920, with star of the silent screen and continuing until 1962. A leading artist for this paper was G.W. Wakefield. Film Fun was very successful with the coming of Laurel and Hardy. Unlike today, Film Fun never paid any fees to the artistes it used in its pages, since then the artists were glad of the publicity. Arthur Askey was said to have been very upset when demoted from front page to the back. Bill surprised the meeting with the huge circulation the comics had, as compared with boys' papers. Bill thought the decline of "Film Fun" came when they dropped Laurel and Hardy.

Malcolm Pratt followed with a talk and a tape of "Dads Army" He talked about the origin of the Home Guard (originally Local Defence Volunteers) after the fall of France, and their development during the War.

After enjoying Malcolm's teas we settled down to one of Edward's quizzes.

The meeting closed with a warm vote of thanks to Malcolm for his hospitality and entertainment.

LONDON

There was a bumper attendances of 37 members at the Ealing meeting on Sunday, 13th October. Mike Jarvis, in the chair, paid tribute to the late Millicent Lyle, who died last month. A minute's silence was observed to her memory.

Good library reports were given by the respective librarians. Some more blue Gems have been added to the Hamilton Library, and a supplement of these issues will be available.

The forthcoming Mastermind contest was discussed. Laurie Sutton's letter to the "Guardian" was discussed and there was a lively debate. Basil Amps recently had a good article published in the Reading Evening Post, and Eric Lawrence read this aloud. Roger Jenkins read some humorous chapters from Magnet 1150 which was entitled "The Greyfriars Cracksman."

Arthur Bruning won Don Webster's short story contest. A "Quote, Unquote" competition conducted by Roy Parsons was won by new member Mark Taka.

Don Webster talked on "The influence the old papers had on members". Then the discussion; it was generally agreed that it was a good influence.

Bill and Thelma Bradford were thanked for arranging the venue of the meeting, and the latter for making the tea. Next gathering will be at the Walthamstow rendezvous on 10th November. Tea will be provided, but bring your own tuck.

BEN WHITER

NORTHERN

Meeting held: Saturday, 12th October, 1985

We had ten members present: best wishes were sent to Bill Williamson our oldest member, who was having a spell in hospital.

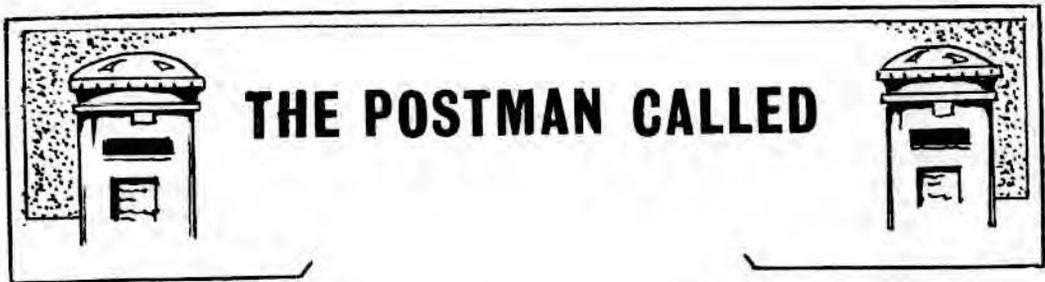
The latest London O.B.B.C. Hamiltonia Library Catalogue was passed round for inspection and comment was made on its fine production.

After discussion, it was decided that we should shortly publish a full year's programme in advance for our meetings to all who require a copy. This would enable intending visitors to identify any specialist subject or speaker we were to have on any particular evening.

Harry Blowers presented a general hobby quiz - Geoffrey Good and Darrell Swift tied for first place.

Keith Smith read some excerpts from BUT FOR BUNTER by David Hughes. It was obvious that the author was himself a Greyfriars fan. Writing the book as a reporter for the Ministry of Culture he stresses how the great literature merits of the MAGNET should be preserved and it is on this score that he locates the original "Billy Bunter". Keith said the idea was a novel one and the author obviously had a lot of sympathy and understanding of the subject. The sub-writers of the MAGNET and the writers of post war articles on Greyfriars (often tongue in cheek or even send-ups) were often criticised, but this book should at least be given a fair hearing.

JOHNNY BULL MINOR



Mrs. MARY CADOGAN (Beckenham) In answer to one or two points raised in the September issue, yes, I agree that the Blakiana section would be better if widened somewhat to include other detective stories. It seems silly to be tied to Blake, if the supply of articles is drying up, especially when there are so many excellent detective books to consider.

Re: "The Woman with the Black Heart": Last week I had lunch with Terry Wakefield and his wife. I showed him the article and picture and he said that the illustration was by his father, George Wakefield, as had been surmised.

GEOFFREY LARDNER (Littledean) I am moved to write by your reference to Ripley's "Believe it or Not" in the current C.D. As I recall, Ripley was an American who made a great deal of money from collecting strange facts and figures. He presented them in cartoon style - that is, a rectangular frame containing line drawings and text, including perhaps six to eight such items in each frame. In appearance, though not in content, they were not unlike Tom Webster's sporting cartoons, but contained a much greater ratio or text to drawings.

The cartoons were syndicated world-wide, and, I am virtually certain, appeared not in the Daily Express but the Sunday Express.

JOHN JARMAN (Mensfield) The Famous Five (with Bunter, of course) roamed the whole world at holiday times. Nipper & Co did the same. Jack Drake and his friends explored the Orinoco. The Boys of the Bombay Castle got away to wondrous adventures, despite the presence of German U-Boats.

But the sweetest and least expensive of all was the unforgettable one spent by Frank Richards, Bob Lawless, and the Cherub in the Cascade Mountains, the foothills of the Rockies, in 1918. In spirit I was with them all the way. Would that it could be republished!

STAN KNIGHT (Cheltenham) How Marvellous that yet once again we have the privilege of being able to look forward with keen anticipation to our own special Annual!

JACK OVERHILL (Cambridge) Glad to know you are providing the clan with CDA for Christmas. Yearly, it contains all we looked so eagerly forward to in our youth with an adult air suitable to our years.

Bless you for carrying on so sturdily year after year.

Fr. FRANCIS HERTZBERG (Higher Bebington) You ask about "The Greek Interpreter." Yes, it is genuine Doyle. First published in the Strand Magazine in September, 1893, also in America in Harper's Weekly in the same month. First book edition was in "The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes" Newnes 1894. In 1964 the 34-page manuscript was sold for the highest figure ever previously realised for a 20th century author - 12,600 dollars.

The date of the adventures is uncertain - Brend has it as early as the summer of 1882, Baring-Gould as late as September 1888; Dakin plumps for an intermediate August 1884.

BRIAN DOYLE (Putney) The latest Sherlock Holmes TV series has proved so popular that a new third, series is being prepared for transmission later next year. Jeremy Brett will again be Holmes but David Burke, who has played Watson in the first two series, is leaving to return to the Royal Shakespeare Company, on stage and the new Watson will be Edward Hardwicke (seen in many TV productions, most recently in the series DRUMMOND'S, set in a prep school, and the son of the late actor, Sir Cedric Hardwicke)

ESMOND KADISH (Hendon) 'I reckon that the motor car has a lot to answer for in the deterioration of standards, behaviour and manners and sympathize with all the points raised in "Inex-queue-sable". It has all happened to me, too, and I daresay to many others. What we need is a D'arcy, to jam his monocle firmly into his eye, and say: "I uttally refuse to queue deah boy!" Still, I suppose it means we're all more "democratic" these days - or are we?

I am agog - well interested anyway to know what will be the fate of the BLAKIANA section in the DIGEST. No doubt our Sexton Blake enthusiasts will rush to preserve its existence, although, personally I thought your suggestion of a general "detective" section rather a nice idea!

HAROLD TRUSCOTT (Deal) You are by no means in a minority of one, although you may be in a minority of two. I loathe attempts to write about other characters, and will have nothing to do with it; just as I loathe attempted remakes of great films, especially when the original is put out of circulation because of the remake. To try to re-do anything which has become, because of its merit, a classic, is like trying to re-write Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. Such things can only be done once. Not one of the substitute writers, so far as I have read them, had anything like the insight into Hamilton's characters that he had; and there can certainly be no one today. I write as one who, for his own amusement and instruction, has written a Greyfriars story - but it is for private consumption only. I learned from that effort that he is, like all great artists, inimitable.

In the current notes of the Northern Club Geoffrey Good is reported as saying that the story of Judith and Holofernes had all the elements of an 'X' certificate film, and would lend itself to a marvellous cinematic spectacle. It already has. D. W. Griffith's first feature film (four reels) was called Judith of Bethulia. It was made in 1913, just after The Battle of Elderbush Gulch, and released in 1914. Two of his company of stalwarts had the leads: Blanche Sweet as Judith and Henry B. Walthall as Holofernes. The sets were magnificent, and almost equalled the superb sets of Intolerance, of three years later. The film was a tremendous success, and an eye-opener for those who still saw film as a weak substitute for the theatre. Film really took off with this production.

JAMES HODGE (Bristol) "The Greek Interpreter" absolutely 100% genuine Conan Doyle. It is ninth in the series of eleven stories under heading "Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes", commencing with "The Final Problem".

ERNEST HOLMAN (Leigh-on-Sea) Reference 'The Greek Interpreter'. It was the first introduction to Mycroft Holmes. Speaking personally, I had difficulty in 'taking' Mycroft - and if I read an odd selection from Holmes, I don't usually read the 'Interpreter'.

For Holmes fans who delve into the chronology of the stories (well, we can't all be ordinary, can we?) an interesting point occurs when, on being presented to Watson, Mycroft says "I hear of Sherlock everywhere since you became his chronicler." As the adventure took place before Watson's marriage, "Study in Scarlet" was Watson's only offering up to then. Now I may be doing Mycroft an injustice in not caring too much for him - perhaps he had insight into the coming Strand Magazine epics!

BILL LOFTS (London) I quite agree with our editor that the comic CHUCKLES was an unusual paper. Starting off for the most adult boy and girl, through the years its contents changed until towards the end it was almost of the Chicks Own or Tiny Tots variety. All the same it was an interesting paper due to its many links with Greyfriars. Its editor, Greyfriars yarns, and the Greyfriars model cutouts. Many years ago I was told that 'Harry Clifton' was a pen-name of Charles Hamilton by some good authority, and in writing to the author about Chuckles he confirmed that he wrote a few of the Greyfriars stories, but did not write the Claremont School yarns by 'Prosper Howard' - and completely ignored the Bellminster query, as if he did not wish to answer. It is possible that he created the school (like Pelham and Ryecombe) and then the tales were penned editorially. My own impression was that the artist was Arthur Clarke though they could have been very early Chapman. Apart from being one page efforts they even went down to just one column in the end! The Sexton Blake serial in the New Zealand Chums was originally published in The Pilot I believe, about the exploits of Blake in India.

PAUL GALVIN (Barnsley) Thanks for the latest C.D. Really enjoyed the article and illustration on the Mayard's Greyfriars Trade Cards by Mr. Whiter. It started me wondering if there were any other cigarette or trade card sets which feature characters from our hobby.

After a browse through a number of catalogues I came across a set issued in 1922 by the Periodical 'The School Friend' named 'Popular Girls of Cliff House School. The sets consists of 10 extra large cards but would cost £40 to complete today. Perhaps somebody has a set and would like to write an article about them?

LESLIE LASKEY (Brighton) I was interested to read, in the current issue, that Danny was not particularly impressed by "The Pilot" when it made its appearance in 1935.

This paper made little impact on me, either, and I never bought it regularly. Looking back, one wonders why the A.P. launched another adventure story paper at that time when they already had the "Triumph", "Champion" and "Modern Boy". Possibly the sole purpose was to attempt to wean readers away from the D.C. Thomson papers. If so, the venture seems to have been rather unsuccessful. "The Pilot" had a short life. It took a world war to close down even one of the Thomson papers. Whatever some of us thought of them, they appear always to have sold like hot cakes.

MILLICENT LYLE

(An Obituary by Bill Bradford)

It is with the utmost regret that we report the tragic death of Miss Millicent Lyle on 23rd September as a result of a fatal accident at her Twickenham home. A member of the London club since 1957, Miss Lyle missed few meetings, and her original contributions at these were always quite outstanding.

Born in Northern Ireland, her real name was Doris Lamb. Fascinated by the stage since childhood, it was not surprising that this was her chosen career and where she adopted the name of Millicent Lyle. Unfortunately it was eventually necessary to leave the stage in order to nurse her Mother upon whose death some years later, she returned to the theatre as a dresser. Her scrapbooks and autographed photographs show how much she was appreciated by many famous stars.

The early death of her brother Frank was a loss from which she never quite recovered, and her flat was crowded with mementoes of him and her parents. Over the years she wrote upwards of a dozen historical plays, at least one of which received much acclaim and a coveted prize. Indeed, her knowledge of history was really quite phenomenal. Another love was ballet and she practised her steps until quite recently.

In reading, the Magnet was her chief delight, with William a close second. Dogged by ill health the last two or three years and the gradual loss of sight, her one complaint was her inability to read her beloved books. The London club were planning to tape some readings for her, but fate intervened. Her only pleasure in recent months was to attend O.B.B.C. meetings, and from these she will be sorely missed.

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A TASTE OF "JELLY"

By ESMOND KADISH

I first encountered the name of "Angelica Jelly" when dipping into the *SCHOOLGIRL*, in the early thirties, and can still recall being both amused and incredulous. Surely no parents would saddle their offspring with a name like that? On the other hand, it does have that trip-off-the-tongue quality which most youngsters hugely enjoy:- "AN-GEL-I-CA JEL-LY!" Can't you just hear the little horror chanting it at the poor girl during "break"?

John Whewy - who was writing the Cliff House tales at the time - had retained her as a background character, and occasionally mentioned her when the Fifth Form, to which she belonged, was featured. She also rated an entry in the *CLIFF HOUSE ENCYCLOPEDIA*, which appeared in the *SCHOOLGIRL*, (no. 219), of 1933 and 34, in which her full name was given as ANGELICA JASMIN FARREN JELLY. She is described as a "thinly-built girl of sixteen years, "whose chief hobby was going in for newspaper competitions, and who had "never won anything save a free entry form for another competition."

She was, of course, created in the twenties for the early *SCHOOLFRIEND* - perhaps by Reginald Kirkham - and was very much an "also-ran" even then in the Cliff House stories, although she figures quite frequently in the *CLIFF HOUSE WEEKLY*, a four-page schoolgirl counterpart to the *GREYFRIARS HERALD*, which appeared in the *SCHOOL FRIEND* until 1925. Rarely, however, does the limelight shine on poor Angelica. As her name suggests, she is fated to be a figure of fun, a good-natured duffer, known variously, to Barbara Redfern and Co by such nicknames as "Jellyfish" or "Lemon Jelly".

However, in a 1923 tale, *THE TRIUMPH OF THE DUFFER*, (*SCHOOL FRIEND*, no. 194), she does achieve a brief moment of glory, when an entire, complete story is devoted to her. Aided by Babs and Co., the normally spineless "Jellyfish" develops sufficient backbone to assist her brother - a youth who rejoices in the name of Charlie Jelly - to escape the clutches of an unscrupulous moneyleader named Johnson. Angelica is described as a "hobbyist", her study crammed to the brim with unfinished articles of basketwork, fretwork, and "poker-work", which she has started with enthusiasm, but never properly finished. Angelica tries to sell off her "works of art" to help her brother repay the five pounds he owes to the blackmailing Mr. Johnson, but, in the end, it is Babs and Co. who have

to come to the rescue and extricate Charlie Jelly from his predicament.

I must say I have a sneaking sympathy for the well-meaning Jellyfish, whose craftwork never quite turned out as she intended. I remember spending several weeks in the metalwork class at school trying to construct a modest tintray. By the time I'd soldered the parts together, it looked - well, "unsymmetrical" is the best way I can describe it'. "No aptitude", was the terse, perfectly truthful, comment on my term report. But - like Angelica - I really had tried!

EIN BUNTER BILLY

Nick Godfrey & Brigitte Fahje

As W.O.G. Lofts stated in the September '85 C.D., the word bunter is of German origin - it is pronounced buhnter. It does not however seem to be in use as a surname in Germany. The closest seems to be Bunte, for which there are thirty entries in the Hamburg telephone directory - this includes a certain Wilhelm Bunte! There are also about ten Bunte's and one Bunten - but no Bunter....

There are two ways of explaining the word bunter:

- i. The German word bunt means colourful. The comparative form of bunt is bunter, meaning more colourful.
- ii. Three different sexes are used in German - male, female and neuter. The ending given to an adjective depends on the sex of the noun that it relates to. Take for example, "ein bunter Hund" (in English "a colourful dog"): the adjective bunt changes into bunter, because the noun for dog is male in German. When connected with the indefinite article "a", bunt becomes bunter.

If you reverse Billy Bunter into "(ein) bunter Billy", you'd end up with "(a) colourful Billy" - certainly an apt description. Bunter, however, would probably prefer to hear himself referred to as "as a colourful dog".

footnote: even Bunter's forenames are of German leaning. William derives from the Old German name Willahelm. This became Guilielm and the Guillaume in French, and was introduced into England by the Normans in the Eleventh Century. George comes from the Romans, but became popular in England due to the Hannoverian Kings.

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