

STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

VOL. 40

MAY 1986

No. 473

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THE BAD HATS

Exactly 50 years ago, in May 1936, Danny was reading a School-boys' Own Library entitled "The Rookwood Barring-In.". Danny noticed that Mornington, who starred in that Rookwood story, was a very different character from the "Morny" he had known from other Rookwood stories. In fact, Morny was a very bad hat indeed.

That story comprised a series which had actually been published in the Boys' Friend exactly 20 years earlier still - in the summer of 1916 to be precise. So looking back from these advanced days of 1986 we realise that it was 70 years ago that Mornington was created and arrived at Rookwood as a very bad lad.

Mornington and Vernon-Smith of Greyfriars were very similar creations. With the passing of time, both reformed, and each became one of the most interesting characters at his respective school.

All of Hamilton's major junior "bad hats" reformed - the Bounder of Greyfriars, Mornington of Rookwood, and Levison of St. Jim's. The reforms of Morny and the Bounder were immensely successful. The reform of Levison was less so.

This was because the reform was too wholesale in the case of Levison. Levison had been the most truly evil of the three. He reformed with amazing speed, on account of the arrival at St. Jim's of a younger brother. He became a paragon of a youth - one of the truly "good" lads - too good to be believable. He had none of the traces of badness which remained to make Morny and Vernon-Smith so attractive.

The Gem, which had been the most popular boys' paper in the country, lost its appeal with the passing of the blue cover. And one reason for the fading - there were several others - was the unbelievably sweeping reform of Levison, in my opinion.

Boys are conservative - and there were too many changes at St. Jim's - changes for the sake of change - to suit a lot of them.

I myself never thought that the Gem was quite the same again after the reform of Levison. The good Levison blotted the Gem. Vernon-Smith and Mornington, with much of the old Adam remaining, embellished every story in which they appeared. Such was the difference.

ANOTHER SLANT FROM DOWN UNDER

We have commented previously on a newly-published book entitled "From Brown to Bunter" by Professor Peter Musgrave. Our Australian reader, Mr. Race Matthews, has sent me a review of this same book - a view from Australia. I thought I might be forgiven for giving here one or two extracts from that review. Here they are:

"For Australians past 50, the phrase "boys' school stories" arouses deep nostalgia for the Magnet and Gem, published in England for more than 30 years up to the beginning of the last war. They were weekly papers, surely superior to 'comics'. Probably nothing we have met since in print has given us so much simple fun.

For us Magnet and Gem buffs, with out treasured memories, Professor Musgrave has a chastening message. Those stories, far from being at the height of the art, and central to the genre, were

rather on the faded side, at the dying end of things. And although their creator, Charles Hamilton, was an amazing man who turned out more than 7000 stories under 28 names, he hardly ranks in fame or achievement with other creators."

As I said in these columns only a month or two back, so far as I am concerned, Hamilton was the greatest of them all, turning out, in his time, stories which were far superior to Tom Brown and the rest. I shouldn't be surprised if that Australian reviewer agrees with me, as the majority of my readers do.

And if such stories as the Rebel series had appeared between stiff covers at 7/6 a time instead of in weekly papers at tuppence, then all those who seek to correct our outlook would have agreed with me. There's a wee bit of gentle snobbery among those who decry the greatest school story writer of all time.

JAMES CAGNEY

The first James Cagney film I saw was "Larceny Lane" (released in the States under the title "Blonde Crazy"). It was at the magnificent Trocadero at Elephant & Castle, a house which the American artist Sophie Tucker called "This beautiful, beautiful theatre". Sophie did not exaggerate. The Trocadero was unique as a place of entertainment. With its immense seating capacity of 3500 it was able to put on cinema and accompanying stage shows which no other theatre could hope to equal.

It was in the early thirties that I saw "Larceny Lane" which was actually Cagney's second starring role. It was one of those stories in which the audience is invited to be on the side of the law-breaker. Cagney and Joan Blondell played, respectively, a bellhop and a chambermaid who went in for petty thefts until the law caught up with them at the finish.

It was a joy to watch, Cagney being at his effervescent best, and I enjoyed it immensely. I went straight home and booked it for the "Small Cinema". After that, for the next twenty years, we played every Cagney film as it came on release.

With the passing of James Cagney another link with the grand old days is broken.

THE EDITOR

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Danny's Diary



MAY 1936

Edwy Searles Brooks has come into Modern Boy. He has written a new serial entitled "The Hidden World of Everest" for the paper. It is about the great mountain which has never been fully climbed. Three climbers, headed by Captain Jim Gordon, stumble, by sheer accident, upon an amazing secret, and find themselves looking down into the very interior of mighty Everest. A hidden world in the heart of Everest.

Captain Justice has carried on throughout the month. First of the month is "Midge the Unconquerable". Midge is a helpless prisoner inside Garth Leopold's monster Robot. Midge is the youngest member of Captain Justice's team. Next "The Vanished Robot". On the trail of the Robot which has kidnapped Midge, Justice runs the gauntlet of depth-charges and bombs. Whew!

Then came "The Headless Robot". With Midge inside it, the gigantic Metal-Man's head has come adrift. Midge separates the head from the body. Next, "The Strong Man of Maraboca". The lives of multitudes are threatened. They look to Captain Justice to save them. Final of the month is "Monster Metal Men". Captain Justice marches to raid the secret factory where the Robots are made. It's all exciting and pretty far-fetched.

A new series has just started in Modern Boy entitled "Jaggers of the Air Police!" by John Templer. More flying stories.

The Aga Khan has won his third Derby. His horse "Mahmoud" galloped home the winner by 3 lengths. My brother Doug had five

bob on Mahmoud. He is getting to be a real Loder. Quite a rake.

Amy Mollison flew from England to Cape Town in 3 days 6 hours and so beat Flt. Lieut. Rose's record by 11 hours. Amy is quite a girl.

All month the Putnam Van Duck series has continued in the Magnet. Putnam is the son of an American millionaire, the gangsters are planning to kidnap him. But when the Gangster's come to Greyfriars in the opening tale "Gun Play at Greyfriars", they find Putnam's bodyguard, Poker Pike, is ready for them. The next tale is "Horace Coker's Dark Deed". Some person unknown has drenched the Headmaster with ink, and the question everybody in the school is asking is "Who did it?".

Next came "The Gangsters' Swoop". Poker Pike is finding it a hard job to protect Putnam Van Duck. The gangsters are all set to kidnap the American boy during a paper-chase. This is followed by "Ordered to Quit". It is Mr. Quelch who thinks it high time to give Poker Pike his marching orders when the bodyguard wants to sit in class with Putnam. Final of the month is "Bunter Beats the Gangsters". The series continues next month.

It is a lively and an original series, but it all borders closely on farce. So, though I am enjoying it to some extent, it is by no means my favourite Magnet series.

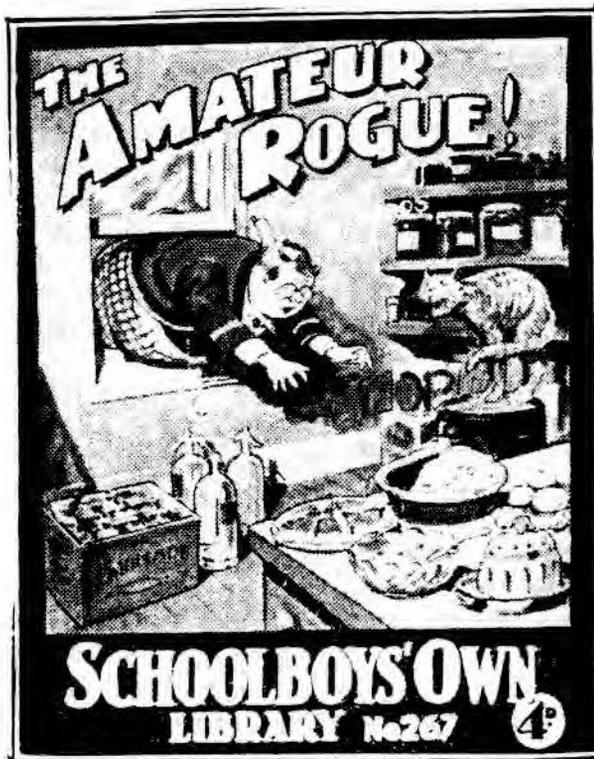
The City of London Airport at Fairlop near Ilford in Essex has opened. It has cost £500,000 to build.

The Queen Mary this month left Southampton on her maiden voyage with two thousand people on board. She is now on her way to New York.

The Greyfriars story in the Schoolboys' Own Library is "The Amateur Rogue". It is the final novel about "Tatters", the one-time tinker's boy. It tells of a deep plot to ruin him in the eyes of the wealthy baronet who has made Tatters his heir. It has been an excellent series.

The other S.O.L. is "The Rookwood Barring-In!". Actually the "barring-in" doesn't happen till half-way through the story. It is about the rascally new boy Lord Mornington. He gets a flogging from Dr. Chisholm for his rascality, and Mornington persuades his guardian, Sir Rupert Stacpoole, to cause Dr. Chisholm to resign. A new Head, Mr. Scroop, takes over, and soon has the school in a riot.

It is a fine yarn, but, being a very early Rookwood tale,



If Billy Bunter can't quite get that ripping feed, you *can* get the magnificent book-length yarn of the exciting adventures of Harry Wharton & Co. which is out now! The story features "Tatters," the one-time tinker's boy of Greyfriars, and tells of a deep plot to ruin him in the eyes of the wealthy baronet who has made "Tatters" his heir! You simply mustn't miss this yarn.

I've seen better. Another night Doug took me to Holborn Empire where we saw a marvellous variety show which included Geraldo and his Gaucho Tango Orchestra plus Elsie and Doris Waters, Donald Peers, and Wee Georgie Wood. Georgie Wood is a midget. He appears as a schoolboy and his Mum is Dolly Harmer.

Dad took Mum and me to Wimbledon Theatre which has an enormous stage. We saw a good drama "The Shining Hour" which starred Gladys Cooper and Raymond Massey.

Some good films at the local cinemas. I liked "The Guv'nor" which starred George Arliss. He is a tramp who, by chance, becomes

Mornington is very different from the "Morny" I remember. And in later days Morny was not a "Lord". Still, it's great reading.

Not much in the Boys' Friend Library this month - nothing to tempt me to spend fourpence. But in the Sexton Blake Library I had "The Old Bailey Mystery" which is by Allan Blair, and it's pretty good.

There has been a mine disaster in Pembrokeshire. A sudden rush of water in a mine killed seven miners. A terrible thing to happen.

Mum and I went to see a musical comedy on the stage at Kingston Empire. It was called "Mr. Tower of London", and it is well-known as the show which made Gracie Fields famous years ago. This new version stars Betty Driver, Billy Rego, and Norman Evans. It has its moments, but

a bank director. Arliss is a bit miscast as a tramp, though. Lionel Barrymore is in "Public Hero Number One" in which a G-man goes under cover to bring the Purple Gang to justice.

Claudette Colbert is excellent in "She Married Her Boss", and I liked Marion Davies in her first Warner picture "Page Miss Glory". Edward G. Robinson stars in "Barbary Coast" and Richard Dix stars in "The Tunnel", which is about a scheme to build a trans-Atlantic tunnel to link England with America. (I can't see that happening in real life. They haven't even built a Channel Tunnel, thank goodness. I like my homeland as an island.)

Finally "The Last Days of Pompeii" which stars Basil Rathbone. It's a bit slow, but the disaster scenes at the end are magnificent.

In real life, the papers had a day or two reporting the trial of an Aircraftman named Field who was sentenced to death for murdering a woman. Mum doesn't like me to read those things in the papers, but I usually do.

A great month in the gorgeous Gem. The opening tale is "Ginger for Pluck". A red-headed boy named Arthur Rook comes to St. Jim's and there is a strong feud between him and Monty Lowther for a time. Next came "Wally on the Warpath". Tom Merry has flatly refused to give Wally D'Arcy a place in the junior cricket eleven, so Wally goes on the warpath with all sorts of tricks to get his own way.

Next, "Fatty Wynn's Hunger-Strike". When Fatty incurred the wrath of Mr. Ratcliff he was given solitary confinement and a bread-and-water diet. So Fatty goes on hunger-strike. But that hunger-strike is not all it seems. Then, in "The Boy Who Knew Everything", Fisher T. Fish visited St. Jim's, and provided a week of real fun. Final of the month is "The Signof Three", an excellent thriller. Tom Merry receives a strange message - just a slip of paper on which are three dots. A Hindu, Hurree Das, has vowed vengeance on General Merry, and decides to carry out his vengeance by murdering the General's nephew at St. Jim's. A very fine tale.

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

S.O.L. No. 257 "The Amateur Rogue" comprised the final three stories of the Tatters, "Chumley for Short", series of early 1931 in the Magnet. A 9-story series in all, it fitted beautifully into the S.O.L. medium. S.O.L. No. 268 "The Rookwood Barring-In" comprised 7 consecutive stories from the Boys' Friend of the summer of 1916. The Rookwood tales, in 1916, were a good deal longer

than they became later on.

"Ginger for Pluck" of the 1936 Gem had been "Friends Divided" in the summer of 1913. A neat story of Lowther's misplaced humour over the new boy's red hair, with what became later on the rather familiar contrived ending with the rescue in the quarry. "Fatty Wynn's Hunger-Strike" had the same title in 1913. "Wally on the Warpath" also had the same title in 1913.

"The Boy Who Knew Everything" which introduced Fishy from Greyfriars (a delicious touch for readers of both Gem and Magnet) had been "Gussy's Guest" in 1913. "The Sign of Three", a tip-top thriller, had been "A Message of Mystery", a great favourite in far-off 1913. All these 1936 Gem stories came from the summer of 1913, but, for some weird reason, they were published in a different order in 1936. It was rather curious that Martin Clifford named his Hindu in the last named tale Hurree Das. One would have thought that a name other than Hurree would have been selected, but Hamilton had a weakness for repeating names.

In the Gem at this time in 1936, the serialisation of the first two Magnet stories, under the title "The Making of Harry Wharton" was being carried out. The Gem was particularly attractive at that time.

* * * * *



PIPE DREAMS

by Edward Baldock

Collectors' Digest is full of good things - full of thought-provoking comments and echoes of other days which for me is one of its most endearing qualities. I was particularly interested in the editorial remarks 'Detectives Parodied'. I chiefly remember 1929 as being the year in which I discovered, with mixed feelings, that I was growing up.

Never an avid reader of detective stories, I followed the adventures of Sexton Blake spasmodically in the old 'Union Jack' and was, I recall, less than impressed when this journal suddenly metamorphosed into the 'Thriller'. It was at this point that we parted

company - I had the feeling (probably quite wrongly) that it had become too Americanised, gangsters seemed to predominate at the expense of scientific deduction.

It was during this year (1929), I believe, that I made the acquaintance of the writings of S. Van Dine and his detective creation Philo Vance through the medium of those little sixpenny volumes one was able to purchase only at the Woolworth stores - they appeared to have enjoyed the monopoly. The 'Readers Library' I think they were called. I see them yet, small red cloth or rexine volumes with gold-coloured decoration and titles (all for sixpence!!). One comes upon them occasionally today at Church book sales and second-hand book shops. These little tomes are always in an advanced state of dilapidation - to me evidence of their being well perused over the years. What memories they always stir when one comes across them. It is interesting to note that in many cases titles were issued to coincide with film versions of the book enabling one to 'jump the gun', as it were, in either direction. I recall 'Ben Hur', 'The Trail of '98' (John Ford's version), 'Smoke Bellew' and 'The Phantom of the Opera' among others. Many had a series of stills from the film bound into the text in blue or sepia. We thought them wonderful in their coloured illustrated dust-wrappers. Anyone having the extraordinary foresight to collect these wrappers would today have a most interesting collection. I am sure many senior readers will recall these little editions with pleasure. I remember we had quite a 'whack' of them on our shelves (I suspect the price may have had something to do with this).

In the 'Strand' magazine, which was a regular feature at home, I remember a lengthy series by 'Ashton Wolfe' (this may have been a pseudonym) dealing with the Parisian underworld. These articles were illustrated with real photographs of fearful-looking characters and recounted the perpetration of equally fearful crimes details of which were supposedly taken from the Paris Police records.

WHAT THEY SAID writes Harold Truscott

Miss Evelyn Flinders suggests that the first Reggie Fortune stories came about 1927. The first volume appeared in 1920. In fact, in A. C. Ward's book Aspects of the Modern Short Story, published in 1924, H. C. Bailey was cited, because of his Fortune stories, as one of the contemporary masters of the short story. There are eleven volumes of these stories, appearing at intervals from 1920 to 1948, with contents ranging from six to nine stories.

There are also eight full length Fortune novels. Bailey started his career as a writer of historical novels, with a distinct style. In his detective stories he developed a totally different style.

J. E. M. states that "the old detective stories don't seem to have the unflagging support enjoyed by the school sagas". I wonder where he got that information. Obviously, one is not going to find Austin Freeman, Bailey, Dorothy Sayers, etc., advertised where the works of Hamilton, Brooks, etc., appear - so to J. E. M. they might seem to be absent from the scene. A similar result would be obtained by looking for Hamilton and his colleagues in catalogues of detective fiction. But if he were to consult secondhand book-sellers who deal primarily in detective and crime fiction, such as Greyhouse Books in Chelsea or Post Mortem Books in Hassocks, Sussex, he would find that these older detective story writers are every bit as much to the fore and sought after as the school story writers in their milieu; and that they are snapped up almost as soon as they appear in a catalogue.

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"GREAT EXPECTATIONS, BUT ALAS!"

by C. H. Churchill

I have always been intrigued by the fact that E. S. Brooks, after the Nelson Lee finished, wrote a serial for the GEM about the white giants of El Dorado. He wrote that a St. Frank's party, including Lord Dorrimore and Umlosi, made a return visit to Arzac-land across the swamps of interior Brazil.

The first visit was described in N.L. old series Nos. 264/274 dated June/September 1920. The theme was Dorrie's quest to discover what had happened to Colonel Kerrigan and rescue him if still alive. This naturally took place in a marvellous series of stories. At the

end of the series the St. Frank's party fled from Arzacland which was being systematically destroyed in a volcanic eruption. Nothing more was heard of the Arzacs or the wonderful city of El Dorado again until this new serial in the Gem in November 1933 until January 1934, in Nos. 1344/1354.

The first thing remarkable is that only once before in the N.L. had Mr. Brooks written two series about the same holiday location, the other being the two Northestria ones in 1927 and 1931. Why he chose to do this Arzac one eludes me as I consider it a big disappointment.

The first series in the Lee comprised eleven Lees and now this second effort is confined to about four chapters in each of ten Gems. The result is that the events are too condensed and the whole thing consists of one colossal adventure after another with scarcely time to take a breath between each. Some padding would have been welcome but I presume Brooks had not much space to expand. It seemed as if he had to get as many incidents squeezed in as possible, and never mind room for conversations. Other things irked one, such as Zingrave being found to be "King" of the Arzacs. We were told he had caused his predecessor, the Comte De Plessigny, to be executed whereas in the original series in the Lee we were told he met his death in the swamp. These pinpricks, if I may describe them as such, gives one to think that it was true that E. S. B. had lost interest in St. Frank's as he more or less hinted at one time.

I have often wished to read this serial and have been enabled to do so through the kindness of a fellow Leeite who has lent me photocopies of the Gems in question but Oh! My disappointment when I did read them.

REFLECTIONS ON OUR HOBBY - A PASTICHE

by J.W.C.

It is many, many years since my schooldays when I used to look forward to the publishing days of our favourite books and papers. But memories remain firm and strong today as I browse through those books and papers forever reminding me of school life... "To perfect the technique of reading aloud... 'raise the voice at a comma; count two at a full stop'" -- "Talking is forbidden" -- "Your shoes must be clean each morning" -- how can one forget such good advice!

Comparisons are not always odious... the boys in our school yarns did exactly the same as they did at my school when they

spilled in the Triangle or Quad... "with the ululation of hostages freed from a fearful dungeon".

The characters then had their counterparts today... but I still retain the impression that boys like Coker and Handforth will always have two tall men in white lab coats waiting for them.

Although some boys arrived at St. Frank's in bizarre circumstances it made enthralling reading, and when there were dull moments there was always Billy Bunter and his shady ways.

But there was a great divide between school life and Sexton Blake. There was no humour from Baker Street, only villains and detection. Yet Blake today is still very readable. The pattern hasn't changed much in crime except perhaps in the tools available to modern crime writers.

I will always present Jimmy Silver of Rookwood as the most effective schoolboy surrounded by a real sense of school life. And I cannot explain why Rookwood has this effect on me. Other schools like St. Frank's, Greyfriars and St. Jim's were erected, it seems, to provide excitement for the reader at the expense of curriculum.

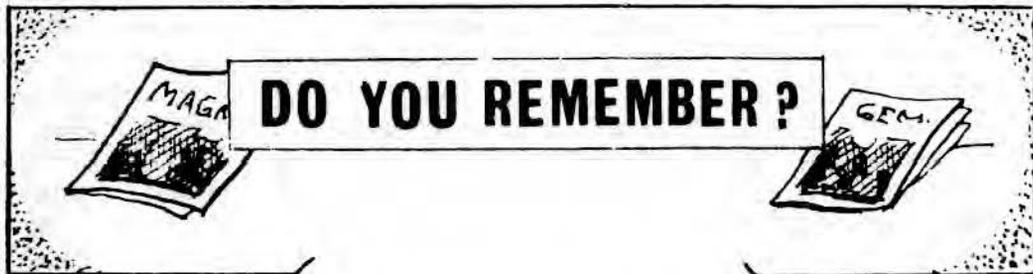
Whether we minded or not is debatable, but we did continue to buy the papers each week and as we today still enjoy reading them they must have suited us.

Perhaps we can forgive the authors for the very odd characters they mixed in with the normal. We have the same mixture extant today. School life in those old books had by necessity to be other than normal where something happened each week to maintain the selling power. As we advance in our years I feel quite sure we would buy them today if they were published although the format might not be to our liking.

Although the GEM was a very popular paper yet in my circle Tom Merry didn't have the same appeal as Harry Wharton or Nipper. I do think the GEM had the best of covers and this was maintained till the end. It was always arresting and evidently had the best of the artists. The Nelson Lee suffered from poor artistry mostly although this strangely didn't affect the quality of the stories; a poor artist can ruin a story. The Sexton Blake Library was very fortunate in having a first class artist in E. R. Parker.

The addition of girl characters made a great difference at least in the Nelson Lee Library. But girls seem to be very scarce at Rookwood and plentiful in the Greyfriars tales.

Yes, I'm certain we would still buy these grand old stories if they came out today.



No. 214 - Magnets 1518-21 - Quelch's Gold Chain Series

by Roger M. Jenkins

It is a matter of debate whether the cover-to-cover stories in the later Magnets were slightly over-long. Some think that they were no more than ordinary length stories pulled out to fit the whole of each issue. Charles Hamilton had a poor opinion of the serials at the back of the Magnet and Gem (he tore out these pages from his voucher copies in order to make spills for his pipe) and he always maintained that the cover-to-cover stories allowed him more elbow room and thus more plot development. Certainly the series about Quelch's gold chain never seemed tedious or repetitive.

Mr. Quelch was too old-fashioned to wear a wrist-watch and he had for thirty years kept his pocket watch on a chain that his father had worn for forty years before him. Perhaps it was not surprising that even a thick gold chain should snap after seventy years' continual wear. Accordingly, he put this chain in the drawer of his study desk in order to get it repaired at a later date. Bunter had the bright idea of abstracting the chain with a view to hiding it, in order to make Quelch sit up. When Ponsonby was ragging Bunter, the chain fell from his pocket and Ponsonby picked it up, eventually to use it later as a vital part of his plot to get Courtenay expelled.

Highcliffe played a large part in this series. It featured on two of the four cover pictures, and nearly half the scenes were at that school or featured Highcliffe characters out of school. The unscrupulous Ponsonby (who even shocked his own pals) and the sychophantic Mr. Mobbs were displayed in all their true colours. The exchanges between Mr. Quelch and Mr. Mobbs were, as always, a delight and a fascination. Perhaps the only defect was in the last number when Mr. Mobbs seemed unaware of events that were

related in full when he visited Greyfriars a fortnight earlier. This apart, the plot was cleverly worked out and each Magnet saw a fresh turn of events. The varying aspects of Bunter's character were clearly shown, including some amusingly outrageous ideas. More importantly, the denouement both at Greyfriars and Highcliffe was handled with consummate skill, which left the reader riveted by the sheer power of description and conversation. All in all, this 1937 series represents one of Charles Hamilton's latter-day successes in the Magnet.

* * * * *

THE FOREIGN SPY!

Another Grand Story dealing with the Amazing Adventures of **HERLOCK SHOLMES**, Detective.

OUR CLASSIC STORY FROM
70 YEARS AGO

CHAPTER ONE

In the course of his varied professional experiences, Herlock Sholmes has met, and mingled freely with, members of every rank in Society. His famous dressing-gown has been in the lounges of the titled and the wealthy as often as in the haunts of vice and purlieus of crime. Kings and Princes have visited our humble quarters in Shaker Street, rubbing shoulders with butchers, bakers, and candlestick-makers. But, though accustomed to visits from personages of the highest



station, I confess to feeling something of a thrill when, one morning, our landlady, Mrs. Spudson, announced the name of Sir Obviously Hardley-Sain.

For that name, at that moment, was in everybody's mouth. The great diplomat of the age, the untiring Minister, who was regarded with

limitless admiration by everyone who did not judge merely by results, entered out apartment, and even Sholmes was a little impressed. At least, I judged so by the fact that he removed his feet from the table, and took both his pipes from his mouth.

"You know me, Mr. Sholmes?" said the great Minister abruptly.

Herlock Sholmes nodded.

"Everyone knows Sir Obviously Hardley-Sain!" he replied gracefully. "If my humble services can be of use to you ---"

"That is why I have come to you, Mr. Sholmes. But ---"

Sir Obviously paused, and glanced at me. I rose.

"Do not go, my dear Jotson", said Herlock Sholmes quietly. "You may speak quite freely before my friend Jotson, Sir Obviously. Dr. Jotson is kind enough to assist me in my work."

"Very well, Mr. Sholmes. But you will understand that the matter is of the first importance, and must be kept strictly secret. Mr. Sholmes, there is a spy in the Red-Tape and Sealing-Wax Department, of which I am the head."

Sholmes smiled.

"You have just discovered that, sir?"

"At least, I have the strongest suspicion that such is the case", replied Sir Obviously. "I do not understand that smile, Mr. Sholmes."

"Pray excuse me. But I could have given you the information you have just given me a considerable time ago", explained Sholmes. "The course of political events during the past year points indubitably to the conclusion that there is

an enemy influence at work in the Red-Tape and Sealing-Wax Department."

Sir Obviously Hardley-Sain frowned. It was quite evident that he did not relish my friend's remark.

I can hardly agree with you, Mr. Sholmes. Of course, as a Minister, I cannot be expected to see what is obvious to every man in the street, neither should I desire to do so - I trust I understand too well the traditions of my high office. It may, therefore, be as you say. However, to come to the point. Are you prepared to undertake to discover this secret and malign influence in the Red-Tape and Sealing-Wax Department?"

"Undoubtedly. Pray give me a few details." Herlock Sholmes stretched himself in the armchair, scratching his left ear in a way I knew so well. "What has given rise to your suspicions?"

"The fact that every political move for some time past has been discounted in advance by our enemies. I have even been attacked in some newspapers on that account, as if the conduct of the Red-Tape Department was not my own particular business!" said the baronet, with a touch of natural indignation.

"Has any search been made for the supposed spy?"

"Certainly. Every morning I make it a point to look carefully into the coal-box, under the paper-weight on my desk, and into the receiver of the telephone. So far I have discovered nothing. The and of the police was invoked, and plain-clothes officers have, for weeks, kept a careful watch upon the taxi-stand at the corner and upon the telegraph-poles at a short

distance from my official residence. But the result has been the same."

"You suspect no particular person?"

Sir Obviously Hardley-Sain made a haughty gesture.

"Personal suspicions would be scarcely becoming to the head of the Red-Tape and Sealing-Wax Department, Mr. Sholmes. I am surprised at the question!"

"Your pardon!" said Herlock Sholmes gracefully. "You have, probably, some confidential secretary in whom you repose the most absolute confidence?"

"Certainly; his name is Heinrich Speistein."

"One of our old British names!" said Sholmes musingly.

"A gentleman, sir, whom I trust implicitly!" said the baronet, with emphasis.

"Naturally. His name answers for him", said Sholmes. "The Red-Tape and Sealing-Wax Department would scarcely be expected to repose trust in a Smith, a Brown, or a Robinson. But a Speistein is above suspicion."

"Exactly!"

Sholmes appeared lost in thought.

"Well, Mr. Sholmes?"

"Pray leave the case in my hands", said Herlock Sholmes. "I will make my report in the course of a day or so."

Sir Obviously Hardley-Sain was shown out.

I looked at Sholmes inquiringly.

He lighted both his pipes, and rested his feet on the table, and seemed plunged in thought.

"You have formed a theory, Sholmes?" I asked, at last.

He made an irritated gesture.

"How often have I told you, Jotson, that I never form theories? My business is with the facts. But I confess, Jotson, that at present I see no clue. All is darkness. Sir Obviously's precautions are all very well, so far as they go, but I hardly believe that the spy and traitor will be found in the coal-box or in the telephone receiver, or even under the paper-weight on the honourable baronet's desk. The search must go deeper."

"But the police ---"

"I admit, Jotson, that the police have shown unusually keen intuition. It was a cunning move to watch the taxi-stand. It was a clever stroke to set a watch upon the telegraph poles. For it is extremely unlikely that the spy would hide under a taxi, which might be set in motion at any moment, and highly improbably that he would climb a telegraph pole for concealment. Being unlikely, it was therefore the thing that was most probable to happen. You know my system, Jotson?"

"Quite to. But in this case ---"

"In this case it has failed."

Herlock Sholmes knitted his brows. "Jotson, I confess that I am quite at sea. If the most unlikely theory proves to be incorrect, how can I even grasp at a clue?"

"You will never be beaten, Sholmes", I said confidently. "Am I permitted to make a suggestion?"

He laughed.

"Certainly, my faithful Jotson!"

"The most unlikely theory having proved incorrect, how would it do to test the most likely one?"

Sholmes started.

I saw a glitter come into his eyes. He rose and paced the room hurriedly, his dressing-gown whisking behind him.

"Jotson!" His voice trembled. "You have benefited by your study of my methods. Jotson, you have given me the clue to the mystery!"

"Sholmes!"

He grasped me by the shoulder.

"Come!" he exclaimed.

"But ----"

"Not a word - come!"

A few minutes later we were seated in a taxi-cab, and whirling across London. Shaker Street was left behind.

"Where are we going, Sholmes?" I gasped.

"To the Red-Tape and Sealing-Wax Department."

"But - but for what ----"

Herlock Sholmes' reply astounded me.

"To arrest the spy!"

* * *

CHAPTER TWO

Sholmes did not speak another word till the taxi had stopped at the palatial official residence of Sir Obviously Hardley-Sain, and we were shown into that great statesman's private office. The baronet was evidently surprised to see us, after taking leave of us so short a time before in Shaker Street. But his manner was courteous and polished as he greeted us.

"Mr. Sholmes, you have surely made no discovery, so far?"

"My visit, sir, is in connection with your confidential secretary, who can materially assist us in this case. Kindly send for him."

The Minister touched a bell,

and a stout and florid gentleman, with a spiked blonde moustache, entered the room.

"Mr. Speistein - Mr. Herlock Sholmes!" said Sir Obviously.

The secretary bowed.

Herlock Sholmes' next action was amazing. With the spring of a tiger he was upon Mr. Speistein; there was a click, and the handcuffs jingled upon the wrists of the confidential secretary of the Minister of the Red-Tape and Sealing-Wax Office.

The surprise was complete.

"Mr. Sholmes!" ejaculated the baronet. Sholmes yawned.

"There is the spy, Sir Obviously. Look!"

He turned out the pockets of the shrinking scoundrel. German banknotes, plans of fortifications, and naval and military lists rolled upon the rich carpet.

Sir Obviously Hardley-Sain stood dumb-founded

"Mein Gott!" murmured his secretary.

"You may call in the police", said Herlock Sholmes, with a ring of exultation in his voice. "They may leave the taxi-stand, they may cease to watch the telegraph poles. There is your prisoner."

.

"Sholmes, this is wonderful!"

Sholmes smiled as he leaned back in the taxi and hung his feet negligently out of the window.

"Elementary, my dear Jotson! The suggestion came from yourself, though you were hardly aware of it."

"From me, Sholmes?"

"Undoubtedly. Did you not

suggest that, the unlikeliest theory having failed, the likeliest one should be tried?"

"True, but ---"

"It was all I needed, Jotson.

For, granted that there was a foreign spy in a high and important office, where was he likeliest to be found? Evidently in a high position, and enjoying the fullest faith and confidence of the Minister concerned. Voila tout!"

I could not help but agree. And, proud as I was of having contributed, in ever so humble a degree, to the success of my amazing friend, I acknowledged that it was the simplest case Herlock Sholmes has ever handled.

THE END

* * * * *

REVIEW

YOU'RE A BRICK ANGELA!

Mary Cadogan & Patricia Craig
(Victor Gollancz: £4.95)

Originally published ten years ago, this is the work which brought fame and fortune to our own two lady writers. It is now deservedly published in paperback, and should add to its initial success. It takes an entertainingly irreverent look at girls' stories in novels and magazines, and illuminates how female heroines mirror the changing attitudes of the passing years.

Beautifully researched, it is entirely lacking in pomposity of any sort, and weighs in the balance, without a trace of snobbery, the values of the heroines of the stiff covers and their more widely read sisters of the often maligned weekly papers.

If you didn't get it first time round, here is your chance to catch up with it now.

* * * * *

I will pay your price plus postage for the three Collectors' Digests Nos. 461, 465, 466, of May, September, October, 1985. Please contact before sending (in case there's a rush!!)

J. P. FITZGERALD, 324 BARLOW MOOR ROAD, MANCHESTER, M21 2AY.

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H.B. Magnet Vols. - Complete Holiday Series. G.B.C. 4 - India (1926), G.B.C.8 - Sahara (1924), G.B.C. 12 - (1st Africa (1922), H.B. Vol. 25a China (1930). ALL MINT. £11.50 each. H.B. Vol. 34 - Porterclyffe Hall, Ex. Cond. £5.50. Prices INCLUDE postage. Ring (01) 979 4141 to reserve. JOHN GEAL, 11 COTSWOLD ROAD, HAMPTON, MIDDX., TW12 3JQ.



NEWS OF THE OLD BOYS BOOK CLUBS

MIDLAND

The attendance of 10 for our March meeting was an improvement on recent months, but we could do with more. Many of our members have long journeys to make, and it speaks volumes for their enthusiasm that they come at all. The continued absence of our popular chairman, Tom Porter, is a worry to us. His programmes were worked out to the last detail, and now, with our vice-chairman, Vin Loveday, not attending, it falls on your correspondent to take the chair. I can only say that it reminds me of a remark on a schoolboy's report: "I am sure he does his best".

Ivan Webster and I have visited Tom regularly since he went into hospital. He keeps cheerful and his courage is quite admirable.

Betty Hopton prepared a good quiz of 27 questions, all beautifully typed, and there were two winners, Ivan Webster and Geoff Lardner.

Refreshments provided by Joan Golen, Betty and Johnny Hopton, with Ivan Webster paying for the tea and coffee, were splendid.

An orally dictated quiz by your correspondent followed. I usually include a Latin quotation, not because I am any good at Latin, but Charles Hamilton was always very apt when he used them in his stories: "Magna est veritas et praevalabit". Great is truth and it will prevail. Betty Hopton and David Packwood were among the winners.

Our next meeting will be on 29th April with guest speaker Bill Lofts. Good wishes to all O.B.B.C. members everywhere.

JACK BELLFIELD

CAMBRIDGE

The Club met at the home of Keith Hodkinson on Sunday, 5th April, 1986. Eight members were present, illness and weather

still taking it's toll. Bill Lofts gave an entertaining talk on Mickey Mouse, and "Mickey Mouse Weekly". Bill began with the 1930's, the pre-World War period, when, as he pointed out, there were about ten times more cinemas than now, with twice weekly changes of programmes. Bill recalled the first cartoon films, beginning with Felix the Cat. Then in the 1930's Mickey Mouse took over. Bill explained how Walt Disney's first studio was over run with mice, and sometimes Disney would amuse himself by drawing these. From these first rough drawings Mickey Mouse evolved, and Disney, not himself an outstanding artist, gathered a team of animators and evolved the Mickey Mouse cartoons, and then strips in various papers. England was slow to catch on Mickey, and rather surprisingly Mickey appeared in "Modern Boy" quite early. Various artists and authors were recruited, and then came "Mickey Mouse Weekly"; history was made when this proved to be the first coloured comic appearing in photogravure. Mickey Mouse was one of the greatest cartoon characters of all time. Bill was warmly applauded for his entertaining talk.

After enjoying Mrs. Hodkinson's delightful tea, Keith ran a programme of Mickey Mouse films which entertained the members, bringing forth peals of laughter.

Finally the meeting came to a close with hearty votes of thanks to Bill and Keith and to Mrs. Hodkinson for her hospitality.

LONDON

A happy meeting with very good hospitality was enjoyed by a good attendance of members who had made the journey to the Bisley home of Roy, Gwen and Sally Parsons.

Bill Bradford read the Memory Lane extract from newsletter number 216 and this dealt with the Rembrandt luncheon party of 1970.

Roger Jenkins read some amusing chapters from Magnet 1019 which dealt with Bunter family at their villa home.

Roy Parsons conducted a quiz on the S.O.L. The winner was Chris Harper. Roy also gave out copies of an Anagram quiz for those present to solve whilst enjoying a very excellent tea. Eric Lawrence was the winner and prizes were awarded to those who occupied the first four places.

Bill Lofts surpassed himself with a fine dissertation on "The History of the Hobby. He discoursed on a large list of dealers and

went right back into history of the first collectors and illustrated his talk with specimens of papers that were published where anyone present was born. Our colleagues of the other clubs are in for a treat when Bill gets round to visit them.

Votes of thanks were accorded to the Parsons family and we departed home with happy memories.

BEN WHITER

NORTHERN

Meeting held: Saturday, 12th April, 1986

We were delighted to welcome David and Elfreda Bradley as official members and to have Paul Galvin with us for the evening from Barnsley.

We were sorry to hear that Jack Allison is far from well and is waiting to be admitted to a hospice. The Club thought it fitting that some appropriate tribute be sent to Jack, as an acknowledgement of the hard work and splendid presentations he has made to our Club programmes in the past.

This meeting was our A.G.M. and although votes were taken on each position, all the Officers agreed to stand for one more year.

New books on show were NOSTALGIA an essay on the Thomson "big five"; MONSTER DANDY INDEX a superb detailed work and a must for all devotees of THE DANDY; WITH REFERENCE TO W.E. JOHNS a new bibliography for the followers of Johns' writings; SWEET WILLIAM and WILLIAM THE DETECTIVE, the latest in the William saga published by Macmillan.

Paul gave us a brief run-down of his hobby interests.

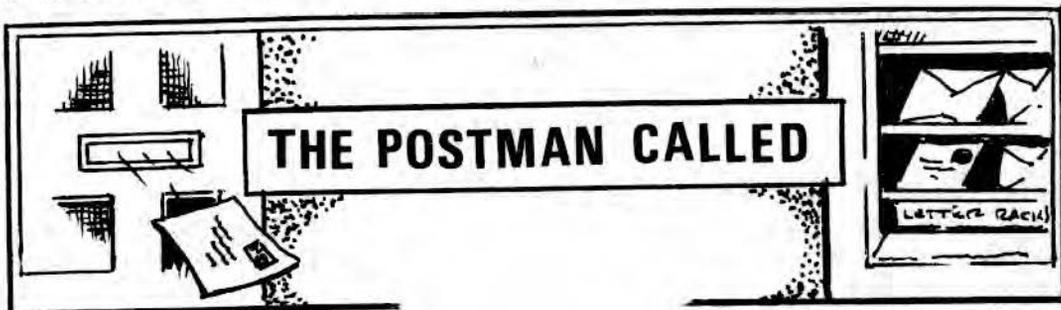
Keith Atkinson presented us with a quiz using twenty titles of MAGNETS and we had to specify to whom the title was referring. Bill Williamson our staunch Magnet reader, was the winner.

"IT HAPPENED FIFTY YEARS AGO" was the item presented by Keith Smith showing us the kind of things he read as a boy and bringing many samples of comics and story papers in beautiful condition, from his vast collection. Keith's main delight is crime fiction and at one time got through 3 or 4 novels per week. Keith defended some of the stories in THE HOTSPUR and related Red Circle School to his own seat of learning - mainly because the school cap in the fictional school, was similar to the one used at his own educational establishment! Keith was given a round of applause for his interest-

ing insight of the development of children's literature over the past fifty years.

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

* * * * *



J.E.M. (Brighton): Your unhappy experience certainly did not impair the quality of April's C.D. which contained some outstandingly enjoyable features. May I mention just three of these?

W.O.G. Lofts' piece on Nelson Lee cleverly elucidates why so many saw the NL as a "second eleven" performer against the "firsts" of the Hamilton Schools.

Edward Baldock's essay on the domestic staff of Greyfriars was delightful - a true collectors' piece, this! Finally, Jack Adrian's brilliant and trenchant review of the W. E. Johns bibliography by Clinton Stacey reminded us yet again that much "research into popular literature is often far from adequate or even trustworthy. For expert guidance on the reading of our youth we would be foolish to look far beyond C.D. circles which boasts a brilliant band of historians and critics.

ESMOND KADISH (Hendon): As it was probably I who referred to Phyllis Howell and Philippa Derwent as "Flip and Flap", I thereby apologise for the slip! As both the SCHOOLFRIEND and SCHOOL-GIRL referred to Philippa as "Flap", I must have simply assumed that her great pal, Phyllis Howell was "Flip", whereas it appears this was the name given to Philippa's brother as Tommy Keen says.

Given that it was absolutely necessary to have a boys' school near Cliff House - and it was, of course! - I can't honestly see that Highcliffe would have been a good choice for Mr. Ransome or Mr. Wheway, as Philip Tierney suggests. Apart from the fact that the same objections to including the Greyfriars boys in the

Cliff House tales would certainly have applied to using Highcliffe, I doubt whether the Cliff House writers would have considered Pon and Co. a suitable schoolboy chums for Babs and Co! And would that marvellous character, the Caterpillar, have fitted in either? As for St. Jude's and Redcliffe, were there any characters mentioned from these establishments? I certainly can't remember any from the MAGNET of the 1930's - their main function appeared to be to provide sporting fixtures for Greyfriars. Given these circumstances it seems sensible to me for Messrs Ransome and Wheway to create their own boys' schools - Lanchester and Friardale - although they were, I agree, rather lacking in character.

(EDITORIAL COMMENT: Flip and Flap Derwent made their initial appearance in a serial "The Twins from Tasmania" in the Gem. I remember, as a lad, reading a few instalments and thinking it awful.)

RAY BENNETT (Codsall): I write to say how much I liked the first part of the April editorial. That April issue made excellent reading with original views on familiar subjects. I particularly liked the cover of 4 sketches "around Greyfriars", the N. Lee Column, and "Domestic Staff at Greyfriars".

MRS. BETTY HOPTON (Burton-on-Trent): I did enjoy "A Little Prayer" in the April C.D. A simple little prayer does really work wonders in this day and age when so many people have forgotten how to pray.

THERE IS A WEALTH of fine Sexton Blake reading material available from the London Club's Sexton Blake Lending Library. Any C.D. reader can take advantage of it. A large stock of Sexton Blake Libraries and Union Jacks, and at absurdly low borrowing charges. Send 10p plus a S.A.E. to THE HON. LIBRARIAN, CHRIS HARPER, "SYDNEY HOUSE", 23 ALGERS ROAD, LOUGHTON, ESSEX, IG10 4NG, for a catalogue.

OFFERS INVITED for the following Lots: Magnets 1533 to 1683, complete run of salmon covers. All good condition; Lot 1. Gems 1557 to 1633 complete run of buff and blue. All good copies; Lots 2. Bound Vols. Strand Magazine 3, 4, 5, 6, 16. Conan Doyle original, Sherlock Holmes, etc. Lot 3. 30 C.D. Annuals 1949 to 1984; Lot 4. Postage extra. GEORGE LONGMAN, 8 PATHFINDER TERRACE, COLLEY LANE, BRIDGWATER, SOMERSET.

THE SHOPPING LIST

by Eric Lawrence

At the moment when the March 1986 copy of Story Paper Collectors' Digest dropped through my letterbox, I had just finished reading one of the Sanders of the River books written by Francis Gerard and using the characters created by Edgar Wallace. As far as my limited knowledge goes, this is one of the very few cases of an author taking over from another and being successful in a faithful reproduction of the original writer's style. In my opinion, the writings by Gerard Fairlie in continuing Sapper's "Bulldog Drummond" stories, and by Tex Burns in writing about Clarence E. Mulford's "Hopalong Cassidy" are disappointing failures. Indeed, Tex Burns' "Cassidy" is unrecognisable as the original character as Burns modelled him on Bill Boyd who played the part in many films - only the name remained. Furthermore, the many articles published over the years in the C.D. on the subject of the substitute writers in the Magnet and Gem speak for themselves. However, I digress -

I started to read C.D. No. 471 and was very interested in the first two paragraphs of Danny's Diary which concerned Danny going shopping to such places as the Home & Colonial, Maypole and David Greig. Back I went to the Francis Gerard.

Now this book, which I had picked up on a second hand book-stall, was an ex-library book and had been the property of The Metropolitan Library, 16 King Street, London, E.C.2. The borrowing charges and other information were stamped on the flyleaf. They announced that the charge was 2d per week and that a further charge of 2d would be made if the book was retained after the last datestamp. The fly was covered in dates started at 16th. May 1938 and finishing on 16th August 1940. There were two successive stamps for 25th and 26th May, 1939, so someone was a quick reader.

It was on the rear endpaper that the link with Danny's Diary appeared. There was a pencilled shopping list still easily decipherable. It ran thus -

Paper	1/-	Hair	5/6
Card	4d	Flowers	2/6
Stamps	2d	Fares	1/3
Wire	9d	Rations	1/1
Sent J.	£1 - -	Lunch	11d
		Wood	<u>6d</u>

£1-14-0

Sweets	2d
Book	2d
Wool	2/11d
	<u>£1-17-3</u>

It was obviously not a newspaper for a shilling. And doesn't it seem ages since one could buy stamps (in the plural) for twopence? J was a lucky person as he or she was going to receive a pound, presumably by post - perhaps one of the twopenn-orth of stamps had been used. Hair at 5/6 suggests that the shopper was one of the fair sex - very few men of my acquaintance would have spent that much in the barbershop in the late 1930s. Flowers too were probably more likely to be bought by a lady. One could travel quite a long way for 1/3 on bus, tram or tube train in those days. Just imagine when one could get lunch for less than 1/- (5 pence in todays coinage).

So Danny's opening paragraphs and a shopping list written more than 45 years ago started a train of thought which lasted quite a long while. Gone are the times when one could obtain all those items and travel a long distance for what would be £1.86 today.

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ANGEL ALLEY AGAIN

by Ernest Holman

The mixture as before - probably a summing-up of later Talbot stories; or, as stated in the republished Controversial, a theme overplayed.

It was so in the post-war St. Jim's yarns. In the period 1951-53, three stories of the Toff appeared. It would seem that the author must have had a fondness for the character, even if nothing new appeared in those stories. They were good stories, though - let there be no doubt about that.

The first was 'Talbot's Secret', the last of the five Mandeville St. Jim's hard backs. A chance meeting with a former resident of Murderers' Row soon found Tom Merry having to confront a black mood in his chum from the next study. The story, as with many Hamilton narratives, has two themes; Jimmy the Cat appearing as a temporary Master and Gussy's persistent and disastrous campaign against Gerald Cutts. All incidents nicely dove-tail; the window-tapping sequences at the climax make good reading.

When the Goldhawk paper backs appeared, the third featured

Talbot. 'The Man from the Past' was Light-Fingered Jack and he appeared as Railton's guest. A secondary theme featured D'Arcy and his watch with a loose strap. 'I arrest you' echoes across the cricket field when the pickpocket is finally identified.

After the disappearance of the Goldhawks, Spring Books took up the St. Jim's hard backs and pretty soon appeared 'Through Thick and Thin'. It was the Terrible Three who stuck to Talbot throughout the affair of the midnight prowler and the stolen money. It is interesting in this yarn to note that it was Inspector Skeat who had faith in the Toff, when Railton failed in that respect.

Perhaps NOT quite the mixture as before, in all cases. Railton does not come across so sympathetically as in the past; Dr. Holmes, other than by mention, does not appear as Talbot's friend at any time; mention is made of Hookey Walker, the Professor, Angel Alley and the King's Pardon. Joe Frayne and Marie Rivers do not rate even that.

No doubt had any further stories of Talbot appeared, they would have conformed to the 'Trouble for the Toff' theme. Nevertheless, the three stories that were written in those early Fifties are worthy of mention - and reading.

* * * * *

WANTED: Magnets 1012 - 1013. S.O.L.'s: 94, 258, 283, 308. Any readable condition. SALE: S.O.L. 228. MAURICE KING, 27 CELTIC CRESCENT, DORCHESTER, DORSET, DT1 2TR. (0305 - 69026).

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WILL TRADE, 3 for 1, C.D. Annuals 1963 through 1975 (missing 1972) for 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983 Annuals. R. L. WENSTRUP, 1045 TEN MILE ROAD, NEW RICHMOND, OHIO, 45157, U.S.A.

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Sherlock Holmes Commentary, fascinating detailed notes on all the cases. Mint in dustwrapper, signed and dedicated by author. £3 and £1 postage. ROOTS, 48 SHALMARSH, HIGHER BEBINGTON, WIRRAL, CHESHIRE.

* * * * *

Mr. J. Gall, 49 Anderson Avenue, Aberdeen, Scotland, AB2 2LR. Telephone: Aberdeen 0224-491716. WANTED: Magnets year 1912, Nos. 204 to 231; Nos. 256 to 281 of year 1913. Also bound volumes of Magnets; Monsters, any; Bunter Books with d.w.'s.

FOR EVERY AILMENT TAKE GREYFRIARS AND ST. JIMS

by Terry Jones

A recent spell of illness put me in bed for a day but, as usual, the situation took me to Greyfriars or St. Jims. I wonder if others among us do the same thing. Quite frankly I cannot contemplate ever being ill in bed without a visit to the Shell of St. Jim's or the Remove at Greyfriars.

It's always been that way. As long as I can remember, especially during my childhood days when periods in bed could be counted in weeks sometimes, I have usually pushed the aches and pains into the background once the magic of the country's leading schools take over. What remarkable therapeutic value Charles Hamilton's writings have on one when not feeling well.

After all, when one joins the noisy mob in Study Number 10 for a real slap-up feed due to the arrival of yet another fiver for the celebrated Arthur Augustus one is fit and well naturally. Again, if one is invited over to tea with Wharton and Co. by Marjorie Hazeldene and her friends then it's away down the lane on the "Jigger" with the fresh frosty air on your cheeks and full speed to Cliff House. You haven't got a trace of Arthritis on that trip. Yes, it used to be measles or mumps but now it's arthritis. The years have sped by for us all but not for our "Peter Pans" in those wonderful schools. Old or Young the same magic helps me through those periods of confinement.

As children, my brother and I used to wait anxiously, when ill in bed, for the sound of the local bus stopping outside the house - around teatime. Mother would be back from town.

The delay was dreadful. But at last! Her steps up the stairs. Toast and tea for the invalid. But - surely she hadn't forgotten! Never! We had a most reliable Mum. Hadn't she read all about the World's most famous schoolboys herself when a young girl before the First World War? "There you are then and I hope you'll be quiet for a couple of hours." A blue and white "Gem" and a blue and gold "Magnet". To this day I can never match the joy I felt as those two magazines were handed to me.

Toast, tea, Greyfriars and St. Jims. Now a fellow could cope with anything that came along. Measles, Mumps or just the wheezy chest. The medicine had arrived and the bottles by the bedside were soon put into the background.

Then if you fell ill at the beginning of the month an extra bonus

to be sure. The heavy tread of our policeman father up the stairs. "Here's a couple of Schoolboys' Owns for you m'lad. Hurry up and read them. Your Dad rather fancies a read himself."

Yes, big policemen lost themselves at Greyfriars and St. Jim's as well as small boys.

When I went into hospital once for a small operation I took with me the Bible and a blue and yellow magazine. I placed them so I could see them as soon as I woke up after the operation. I'll always remember the comfort of the sight of the Good Book and a fat schoolboy with a severe looking form master on the magazine cover. "The Magnet" came into focus. I was back for "New Terms" again.

* * * * *

FOR SALE: The final batch of Gems: 477, 500, 513, 526, 527, 532, 533, 534, 539, 654, 707: £1 each plus postage; 243 "Wrong Team", 225 "St. Jim's Picture Palace": (rather rough, £1 each plus postage); New series Nos. 1 and 2 £1.50 each plus postage; Halfpenny blue cover copies: 29, 30, 31, 33, 35, 39, 40, 41, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48: £1.50 each plus postage. The following without covers at 80p each: 5, 12, 14, 15, 16, 24, 27, 34, 38. Rough copies at 40p each: 408, 434, 541, 593, 708. Christmas Double No. without cover No. 407: 75p plus postage; rough halfpenny copies 32, 36: 40p each plus postage. Howard Baker book "Tales of Bendover College" (Frank Richards): brand new £2 plus postage; Wodehouse's "Head of Kay's" (brand new) 75p plus postage. Magnets 1554, 1661: £1 each plus postage. Marvel No. 214 (Christmas 1907 Double Number) £1. Pluck No. 268, containing a "Harry Dorrian" circus story: £1.25. Greyfriars Boys' Herald: Nos. 64 (1921), 76, 478 (the latter containing Greyfriars story): £1 each. N.L.L. No. 549: 75p. Postage extra on all items. Write ERIC FAYNE. (No reply if items already sold.)

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STILL WANTED: Sexton Blake Second Series Numbers 453 "On the Midnight Beat" and 572 "The Crime in the Kiosk" both by John G. Brandon.
J. ASHLEY, 46 NICHOLAS CRESCENT, FAREHAM, HANTS., PO15 5AH. Tel.: Fareham 234489.

ENTHUSIAST wishes to purchase SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY books (1st and 2nd Series). Collections or only a few welcomed. Best prices paid for books in good condition. Postage refunded. TERRY BEENHAM, 20 LONGSHOTS CLOSE, BROOMFIELD, CHELMSFORD, ESSEX, CM1 5DX. TELEPHONE 0245-443059.

* * * * *

DEATH OF JACK ALLISON

With deep sadness we learn of the death of Jack Allison in hospital after a long illness. We send our profound sympathy to Mollie in her great loss, and to our Northern Club. The hobby can ill spare the likes of Jack.

* * * * *

WANTED: Pre-War Thomsons. I have exchanges or cash. Will exchange my Pre-War Cigarette Cards for Comics or Mags with collectors with similar interests. G. H. CUNLIFFE, 21 MILLWOOD AVE., ECCLESTON, ST. HELENS, MERSEYSIDE, WA10 5BE.

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J. F. BURRELL WRITES:

I refer to the interesting article on Greyfriars Domestic Staff. Mimble is referred to in the Butcher Prospectus as Gardener and Groundsman but there would seem to be no record of him preparing wickets. In the Stacey series there is mention of Wharton getting "a groundsman" to bowl at him. There is one story of a cricket professional but cricket is secondary to the plot as he has come to the school to look for treasure.

As far as indoor staff are concerned both Butcher and D. R. Spiers's guide to the school show a limited number of rooms for servants. This would not be enough accommodation for all of them and perhaps they lived in Friardale which was within reasonable walking distance. In more modern times a coach would collect them from Courtfield but even in the 1930s CH was still thinking in terms of horse brakes.

In no maps are any cottages within the school precincts shown. It would seem that the Mimbles live over the tuckshop but Gosling's lodge would barely seem to be a "One up and one down".

* * * * *

Further springtime reading:

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