

A Happy New Year



59P

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HERBERT LECKENBY

STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST: Edited and Published  
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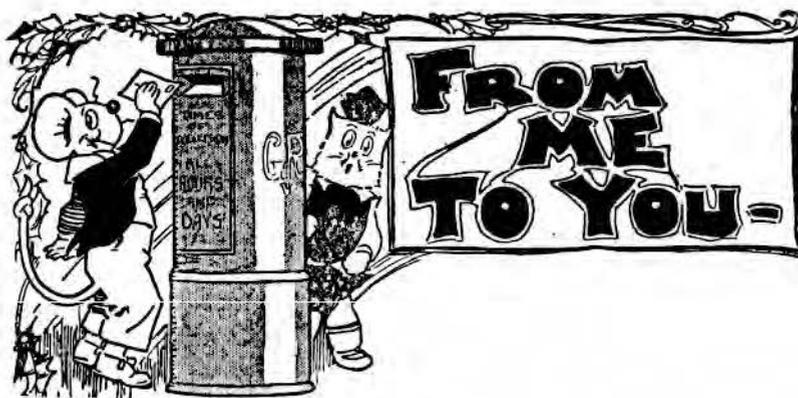
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## OUT WITH THE OLD, IN WITH THE NEW

I hope that when you read this edition of the C.D. a Christ-massy glow will still be upon you all, even though you may be in the grip of New Year's resolutions, and looking forward uneasily to the extremes of winter weather that so often come upon us in January and February. I send my warmest greetings to you for the New Year, and hope that 1988 will be truly peaceful, harmonious and prosperous in every way. I hope you will like our New Year's cover; readers with long memories may recognise the Chapman illustration which graced an issue of the C.D. no less than 33 years ago when it heralded the New Year of 1955! Our artist

Henry Webb has enhanced it with a finely lettered wish for us all for 1988.

### THE NEW YEAR IN THE OLD PAPERS

Christmas series, of course, often continued well into the New Year so that readers could linger in the appealing environment of Wharton Lodge, Tregellis Castle, Holly Hall and other similarly fascinating great houses. And, when the hols came to their triumphant finale, with all mysteries solved and misunderstandings cleared up, we were able to enjoy those back to school episodes which were so happily prefaced by innocent high jinks at railway stations or on the trains. In a memorable moment from the Magnet, Colonel Wharton suggests that one of Harry's New Year resolutions should be to try to make a better man of Bunter! His reply is that he and his chums have already tried long and hard, but without success, in this direction - but that he will try again. Fortunately for us, perhaps, this particular resolution was destined never to achieve results; a reformed Bunter would soon have lost his 'charm' (if that word can be considered appropriate for the Fat Owl).

### AN EDITOR'S YEAR

My first year as Editor of our little magazine is completed with this issue, and it has certainly been for me a year of great warmth and friendliness from readers. My husband and I enjoyed gazing at the shoals of Christmas cards which you sent, and it was a joy to receive so many wonderfully appreciative letters. Thank you once again for all your good wishes and kind greetings, and I hope that throughout 1988 the C.D. will continue to be top of your nostalgic pops!

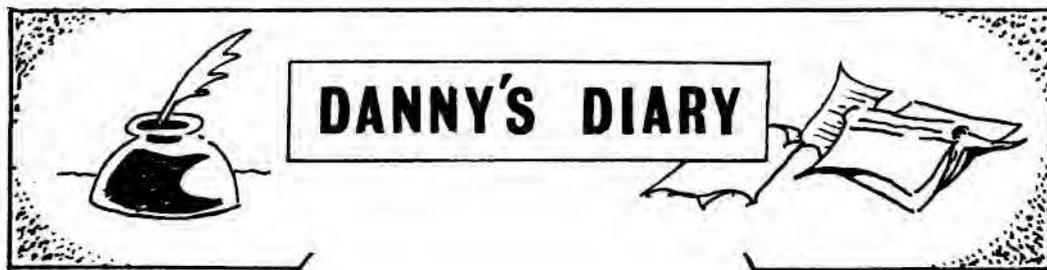
MARY CADOGAN

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**FOR SALE:** Union Jack Christmas Double Number for the year 1911: £3.00. Halfpenny Union Jack No. 354 (rather rough copy) £1.00; Union Jacks 552, 554, 560, 563 (John Lawliss Blake tale) - year 1914; £1.50 each; 594, 629 (Humble Begge Story), 631 (Yvonne story) - (year 1915); 646 (year 1916) £1.50 each. School Friend (1919-1920) Nos. 18, 19, 20, 32, 40: £2.00 each. (No. 20 contains Cliff House Weekly No. 1). Boys' Friend Lib. No. 193, "Chief Constable Pete" by Clarke Hook, sellotaped cover, but nice copy: £3.00. S.O.L. No. 307 "Coker, the Champion Chump" (nice copy) £2.00.

P. & P. extra on all items. Write ERIC FAYNE, Excelsior House, 113 Crookham Road, Church Crookham, Nr. Aldershot, Hants.

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## January 1938

Another New Year. How the time flies past! I don't seem to see it go. I wonder what 1938 has in store for us in the old papers that I love so much. 1937 saw the Magnet lose its cover and go into a plain pink overall, and it saw the Gem lose its shape as well as its cover. I only hope that they aren't going to go on making changes. I don't like Changes.

It has been a good month in the Fourpennies. Not quite so good as the last two months, maybe, but still - pretty good. The Greyfriars Schoolboys' Own Library is "The Terror of the Form". It carries on from the Christmas at Mauleverer Towers. Bunter, still on holiday there, befriends a waif whose name is Flip. And as the result of the kindness of Bunter and Lord Mauleverer Flip goes to Greyfriars for the new term, and soon becomes the terror of the title. The second S.O.L. is "The Six-Gun Schoolmaster" which is a story of the boys of Packsaddle school and their master, Bill Sampson in the Wild West. The Packsaddle tales are a bit too farcical for my liking.

The St. Frank's S.O.L. is "The Schoolboy House-Breakers". A new cinema is being built on the site of a haunted house, and startling things are happening to the demolition workers. So the St. Frank's chums take on the job. Very out of the ordinary, this one.

Two lovely tales in the Boys' Friend Library. First there is "Chums of the South Seas", a collection of yarns about Ken King, the boy skipper of the South Seas, and his pal, Kit Hudson. And "The Rio Kid - Sheriff!" which sees the Kid joining the hunters instead of being hunted himself. But, at the end, he goes back to the trail.

A lovely Pierre Quirouke story "The Three Lepers' Heads" in the Sexton Blake Library. A magnificent novel which brings in Granite Grant and Mlle. Julie. Another S.B.L. I had this month is "The Bailiff's Secret", by G.H. Teed. This brings back the crook, Dr. Huxton Rymer, after a long absence. It is very good.

In Australia they have been having high old times. There have been lots of celebrations in Sydney to mark the 150th Anniversary of the first Aussie colony.

Modern Boy has been worth my tuppence all the month with the main attractions being the Rio Kid plus the Captain Justice stories. The Rio Kid is in

Hollywood, preparing to be a talkie star, where they are planning to make a film of the famous and notorious outlaw, the Rio Kid, without dreaming that the young man they have selected to play the part is actually the Kid himself. And as a sideline he has adventures with the bandit, Spanish John, and the conceited and unscrupulous film star. Brian Bennett. The Kid, calling himself Boy Carfax, is now a rival to Bennett for the part. This month's stories are "Rio Kid, Talkie Star", "Just Like a Movie", "One Throw of the Lariat", "The Death Ride" (in which the Kid performs a great riding stunt), and "They Called Him a Quitter". The series in Hollywood continues next month. Great stuff.

The Capt. Justice stories continued the long series about our heroes' adventures with the runaway planet Nuvius. The titles of this month's Justice tales are "The Dead Planet", "Two Hundred Below Zero", "Out Into Space", "The Earth Gets Through", and "The Wrecker Plane". This series also continues next month.

Here in Great Britain there is much concern that our film industry is in a bad way. Of the 17 big studios in the country, only 4 are working, and the rest will be empty for some time to come.

The new boy, Baggy Trimble, has been very much to the fore in the Gem this month. The opening tale is "Trimble Tries It On!". He runs a flag day in aid of the waifs and strays, but the main one to benefit is Trimble himself. Next, "Tom Merry - Expelled!"; Tom Merry leaves St. Jim's in disgrace, judged guilty of theft. The cause of the trouble is Trimble, but it all comes right at the end. Then came "The Wreckers!" Everything in Study No. 6 gets smashed up, but Blake & Co. can't catch the culprits. However, Levison and his friends are brought to book at the finish.

Best tale of the month is "Gussy Says 'No'!": Gussy backs up his minor against Mr. Selby, but even the Head can't make Gussy apologise. At the end Mr. Selby goes through the ice, and Gussy saves him. Finally "The Ragging of Reggie". Reggie Manners is the spoilt darling of over-indulgent parents. He comes into the Third at St. Jim's, and proves a big handful for his Major, Manners of the Terrible Three. They seem to be trying to make St. Jim's into another Greyfriars, with Trimble, a copy of Bunter, and Reggie Manners, a copy of Dicky Nugent. Which I think is a pity. For St. Jim's was a treat school in its own right, and had no need to ape Greyfriars.

Things may not be too hot in the British Film Industry, but the local cinemas have been doing big business with big queues every evening. First film I saw this month was "Wee Willie Winkie". Normally I don't care a lot for Shirley Temple, but I enjoyed this one which is her most sumptuous one to date. She is a little girl who becomes the mascot of a British regiment in India. Victor McLaglen is also in this one. "Vogues of 1938", in Technicolour, sounded bang up to date, starring Joan Bennett. Not for me, though ladies like it; it's really a fashion show with a thin plot and a few tunes. "The Good Earth" with Paul Muni and Luise Rainer, was very long - over 2 hours - and strong drama, about a Chinese peasant who got very rich but lost his wife in the process. It was too heavy for me, but the attack of locusts at the end was terrific and worth waiting for. "Captains Courageous" which I saw last year at the Empire, Leicester Square, was worth seeing again - one of the loveliest pictures I have ever seen, with Spencer Tracey, Freddie Bartholomew, and Micky Rooney. Truly great.

And this month we had "Way Out West", a magnificent film - not only the very best one ever made by Laurel & Hardy, but also, I reckon, the best comedy ever made - with 2 lovely catchy songs thrown in. Gracie Fields in "Looking on the Bright Side" was good, with some rousing songs and singing. And finally a dull one entitled "The Go-Getter" starring George Brent, about a one-legged navy war hero who was determined not to be handicapped by his shortage.

Another wonderful month in the Magnet. The year opened with the last story of the series about Bunter taking the place of Lord Reynham - the Christmas series - and a good one - about Reynham Castle. Entitled "Lord Bunter's Body-guard", it was dated January 1st, but it was actually in the shops just before Christmas.

Next came a tip-top single tale entitled "Bunter's Big Blunder." Dr. Locke has been snowballed, and the snowballer wore the cap and gown of a Greyfriars master. Bunter saw it happen, and spread the news that Mr. Quelch had snowballed the Head.

Then came another new series, - starting off with "Billy Bunter's Rich Relation". He is Arthur Carter who is the heir to the wealth of Uncle Joseph. But Carter has been kicked out of his previous school. He is placed at Greyfriars, and unless he gets good reports there, he may be replaced by Billy Bunter as the heir to Uncle Carter's wealth. This was followed by "Bunter the Bragger" (clumsy title). Mr. Quelch was the victim of a big rag, and Bunter brags that he was the guilty person. Final of the month is "Rivals for Riches". Arthur Carter is trying to make good at Greyfriars, but he is also working hard to "dish" Bunter who is his rival as Uncle Carter's heir. I am enjoying this new series muchly. Roll on February for some more of it.

A special treat for me. My Gran found an old copy of the Union Jack at the bottom of a case which hasn't been opened for years. She sent it to me. It contains a Sexton Blake tale called "The Publisher's Secret", and I am enjoying reading it.

### THREE OF SEXTON BLAKE'S ASSISTANTS

Over the page a rare picture of 3 of Sexton Blake's assistants together. From the Union Jack of January 1912. The story: "The Publisher's Secret." The author: W.M. Graydon. The artist: E.E. Briscoe.



**Tinker nearly exploded. There was Mrs. Bardell, with the rolling-pin in her left hand, dramatically reading aloud from some dirty pieces of paper, while Pedro howled.**

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### ERIC FAYNE Comments on This Month's DANNY'S DIARY

S.O.L. No. 322 "The Terror of the Form" comprised the opening 3 stories of the 8-story Flip series of the Magnet of the start of the year 1932. S.O.L. No. 323 "The Six-Gun Schoolmaster" comprised a few of the Packsaddle stories by Frank Richards which had been a supporting feature for a time, in the early thirties, in the Gem.

The S.B.L. "The Three Lepers' Heads" was a new novel written by Pierre Quiroule. As readers know, it was as a result of my efforts that the Granite Grant Stories returned to the S.B.L., the early tales being reprinted for some years and then, finally, the author obliged with a handful of brand new ones. I had a lot of correspondence with Pierre Quiroule for some years before his death.

The B.F.L. "The Rio Kid - Sheriff" had been the final Rio Kid series published in the Popular. It had been reprinted before in the B.F.L. So this month Danny was reading the final Kid series from the Popular in the B.F.L., and, though he didn't know it, he was reading what was to be the final Rio Kid series of all - the Hollywood series - in Modern Boy.

"Trimble Tries It On" in the 1937 Gem had been "Barred by the Study" in early 1916. "Tom Merry - Expelled" had been "Trouble for Trimble" in the next week but one in 1916. (The omitted tale was very much a war story. The war

flavour was presenting problems for the Gem's reprint department.) "The Wreckers" had been "The Study Wreckers" in the next week but one in early 1916. (The story omitted was a sub dreadful.) "Gussy Says 'No.'" had been "D'Arcy's Daring" some weeks earlier at the very start of 1916. "The Ragging of Reggie" had been "Manners Minor" in the Spring of 1916.

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## A BLAKE'S DOZEN

By J.E.M.

PART II

Another Rupert Waldo adventure provides my seventh choice. The House of Light by E.S. Brooks (UJ 1528). A delightful, pacey story with the swashbuckling Waldo as endearing as ever. Parker's illustrations of the mysterious mansion of the title are a delight.

Eighth on my list and my final UJ choice is, in fact, the last issue of the story-paper itself. The Land of Lost Men by Rex Hardinge (UJ 1531) is a story not entirely without relevance to Arica today. Hardinge not only knew but had a real feel for the Dark Continent which made his stories so especially exciting. This tale, again beautifully illustrated, marked a fine, if rather sad, end to Sexton Blake's longest-running weekly.

From its successor, Detective Weekly, I have chosen Perilous Pearls by G.H. Teed (DW 12), one of the Baron von Kravitch series. This is a fast moving and highly entertaining story, with Teed on full throttle as it were. Parker, too, is in cracking form and gives us several highly dramatic drawings, including one which shows Tinker (with motor-bike!) going over the parapet of Vauxhall Bridge into the Thames!

No favourite Blake list could be complete without a Zenith story so I have made my tenth choice The Crime Zone by Anthony Skene (DW 26). This records one of the most exciting encounters between Blake and the albino who, not for the first time, enlists some fantastic sci-fic gadgetry in his flight against the law.

My penultimate choice is The Panic Liner Plot by Lewis Jackson (DW 73), chiefly because it marked my introduction to the brilliant Leon Kestrel, the Master Mummer, and his accomplice Fifette Bierce, two of the most memorable characters in the Sexton Blake case-book. But this is an entertaining yarn by



**WALDO IN ACTION**  
(The House of Light, UJ 1528)

any standards and, as ever, beautifully visualised by Eric Parker.

Last of all, The Affair of the Missing Financier by G.H. Teed (DW 46). This marked the final appearance in the weeklies of the glamorous Mlle Roxane, and both her creator and her illustrator did her proud. Parker's cover drawing, a montage of incidents from the story, raises excitement and expectations which are not disappointed by the story itself. A fond farewell to a famous Blakian lady.

Having made my list, I can, of course, think of dozens of other stories I might have chosen for a 'desert island' dozen. Just think of all those great characters I have missed out on: Huxton Rymer, Marsden Plummer, Wu Ling, The Double Four, Count Carlac, Miss Death, the Hales and many, many more. But of course this simply shows how vast and rich the great case-book was.



**BLAKE IN THE HANDS OF AN AFRICAN DICTATOR**  
(The Land of Lost Men, UJ 1531)

You will also have noticed that none of my favourites comes from the Sexton Blake Library. This is because, as I've said, Parker's work has always counted so much for me, and the SBL, apart from its cover, carried next to no illustration at all. The Union Jack and Detective Weekly were also more exciting for other reasons - Editor's chat, Tinker's notebook, famous serial stories and many other features which gave these weeklies a character and attractiveness which, at least for me, the SBL somehow lacked.

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"What's the meaning of this?" shouted the raging Devril. "That cheque's good! If you want the money I've got plenty at my villa!" "You fool!" whipped out Roxane. She knew it was a trap.

(The Affair of the Missing Financier, DW46)

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**SALE:** Answers and Tit-bits with Saxton Blake - Comics 1912 to 1978 - Bairnsfather magazines - Greyfriars "Guide", "For Grown-ups" - Magnet Companion - Bunter Annual 1967 - All Association of Comics Enthusiasts monthly up to 1986 - British Film Catalogue - 20 Story Magazines - Cigarette Cards - old Wireles Worlds, etc. S.A.E. list/offers - Bridgwater, 5A Saulfland Place, Highcliffe, Christchurch, BH23 4QP.



### "THAT IDOL AGAIN."

by C.H. CHURCHILL

I was interested to see in November C.D. Nelson Lee column Bill Lofts' remarks about the old favourite enigma story "The Idol of St. Frank's", which appeared in B.F.4d. Library No. 633 in late 1922, and who wrote it.

As Bill said, this subject arose several years ago and I seem to remember writing about it in the C.D. Lee column. It seems that nothing new has arisen since and the matter is still clouded in mystery.

For myself, however, I can only repeat my previous view that Mr. Brooks supplied the plot and someone else (B.F. editor, Balfour Richie?) wrote up a story. I will never accept that E.S.B. made such errors as having Archie and Fullwood & Co. in the Fifth form and Archie being able to hit boundary after boundary on the cricket field. Remember this! It appeared late 1922 and Archie was only introduced into the Lee in March that year. He was shown as having no knowledge of cricket at all, even falling down when attempting to hit a ball bowled gently to him. If E.S.B. had intended Archie to become a decent player how is it that this was never shewn in the subsequent Lee stories? The B.F.Lib. story must have been written AFTER Archie arrived and E.S.B. would never have made such an awful "Bloomer" as this.

Bill says "on the evidence he has" his opinion is opposite to mine, namely that E.S.B. wrote up the story from the plot given him by editor Richie. I ask you, can anyone imagine Brooks agreeing to do a thing like that?

As to all authors writing a poor story from time to time, yes I agree. Brooks did of course, and I could point out several of these appearing over the years but they did not contain such awful errors as were in "The Idol".

Mr. Brooks may have said verbally that he wrote it, but I understand that he also said ALL stories in the Lee under his name were his own work. Since this it has come to light that one story in the Lee in the later years was not his work but that of a sub writer. The title escapes me at the moment. I feel that E.S.B. did not recollect what happened so many years after the event.

Bill ended his article by saying neither Hamilton nor Brooks ever needed any assistance to write a story and I think this decides the issue. I suggest Mr. Richie wanted to write a story and got Mr. Brooks to think up a plot.

### MORE MONSTER RECOLLECTIONS

by JIM SUTCLIFFE

Recent mention of the Monster Library by Jack Murtagh made me think that the story of how I became the possessor of a complete set of Monsters in mint collection would be of interest. Way back in 1931, when I was 14 years old, at which time I had been reading the Nelson Lee for three years, I wrote a letter to Edwy Searles Brooks, c/o the Editor, telling him of my longing to obtain any Monsters so that I could read of the earlier adventures of the St. Frank's juniors. Well, some weeks passed and I had given up hope of getting a reply, thinking that my letter had probably gone into the Editor's waste paper basket, when, one morning a letter came, actually from Edwy's home address at Halstead in Essex. Imagine my delight that morning when I discovered that my idol lived in the same county as I did, and, what was more amazing, he was actually offering to let me have a complete set of Monsters at their face value of 1/- (5p) each! I think it took the rest of the day for this to sink in. The only snag so far as I was concerned was that I had just started work at 5/- (25p) a week and would only have 2/6 of my own to spend -- times were hard in those far off days, although happy, how different from these days.

Well my worry was would Edwy agree to my having two copies a week, involving him in a lot of extra work? I anxiously awaited his reply -- no, he did not mind. To quote his own words, "I don't mind the extra trouble - I'll get somebody else to do it for me anyway" (I expect that Mrs. Brooks did it).

So that's how I became the proud owner of a set of Monsters which I still have today. Why Edwy favoured me I never found out--could it have been because my name happened to be the same as one of his famous characters - Jim the Penman? During the time the transaction took I had a number of letters from Edwy, now some-

what faded, which Bob Blythe saw and also Jim Cook has seen. I'm afraid I gave Edwy a lot of trouble by asking for Nelson Lee titles in my letters, never dreaming that many many years afterwards the late Bob Blythe would produce such a masterpiece as his Guide to the Nelson Lee and E.S.B.'s writings -- a real mine of information for which Lee fans will be everlastingly grateful.

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## DO YOU REMEMBER?

by Roger M. Jenkins

### No. 226 - Gems Nos. 773-774 - Trimble's Articles

The Gem sported a coloured cover regularly from the end of 1922 and, though there was a promising look which seemed to augur well, the St. Jim's story was still only nine or ten chapters each week, filling half the paper. The remainder of the Gem, in much smaller print, was occupied by two serials a short story. The only consolation was that in 1922 practically all the St. Jim's stories were written by Charles Hamilton himself, a record not equalled again until the new stories were resumed after the reprints in 1939.

This pair of stories concerned some articles that Trimble had purchased from Shonkey & Co. in Houndsditch for £1 and which he hoped to peddle in the school for a good profit. The articles were of very dubious quality and he was frequently reproached for selling German goods. Memories of the first World War were still fresh in people's minds, and German manufactures were thought to be always inferior (as, later, Japanese goods were). Trimble, of course, had an answer:

"Jevver read the papers?" he demanded. "If you did you'd see that the politicians are all busy with schemes to put Germany on her feet again. Well, buying German goods will help."

The St. Jim's juniors did not seem to be much influenced either by the politicians or by Trimble's salesmanship.

It was D'Arcy who was caught up in the dramatic side of the plot. Trimble conned him into buying a silver penknife for half a crown. Its blades were blunt and one soon snapped, and he grew quite tired of the jokes that were made at his expense so that he hurled it out of the study window one dark night. When Mr. Lathom's prized leather-bound volume of Virgil was found slashed and damaged with the silver penknife beside it, the evidence against D'Arcy was overwhelming and he was sentenced to be flogged. The second issue of the series was entitled "Cousin Ethel

to the Rescue" which rather overstated her role because in fact all she did was to ask Figgins to persuade Kerr to investigate the matter, which he did with convincing success.

One curious feature of the Gems of this period - and it also applies to the Christmas Barring-out series which followed soon after - was the detective element involved. The real culprit was revealed only at the end, as a result of an investigation, whereas in the Magnet if, for example, incriminating evidence was being planted in study No. 1 by Ponsonby, all his actions were described and the reader was kept fully in the picture. In the Gem, the question was "Who was the culprit?" whereas in the Magnet the question was "How will the culprit be caught?"

This particular series was not without its amusing touches, but Hamiltonian devotees had to wait until the Valentine series in the Magnet before full advantage was taken of the theme about the tray of goods for sale, when they were able to delight in the story of Bunter's articles in the Valentine series. As was so often the case, the second working of the theme far outshone the first trial attempt.

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## Cliff House Corner

by Margery Woods

### THE FIRST --- AND THE LAST.

When Christmas was over the Cliff House girls were certainly not allowed to have a relaxing New Year in which to recuperate from the Christmas excesses before returning to the scholastic pressures of Cliff House --- although once back there they tended to have so many adventures, feuds, crises and other assorted capers that one could be forgiven for wondering when they actually found time to learn anything.

Christmas out of the way, the Hilda Richards dynasty of distinguished authors plunged their intrepid schoolgirls straight into fresh perils and mystery, invariably complicated by those useful natural elements of gale, blizzard, ice and snow darkness, not without the requisite quota of fun.

Their first New Year (SCHOOL FRIEND 34, Jan. 1920) and their final one (SCHOOLGIRL 546 Jan. 1940) exactly twenty years later, both featured wilful, spoilt and troublesome heroines of great courage and spirit who were otherwise different in all other respects.

That first New Year story was quite a serious affair, following the previous week's Christmas high jinks at Holly Hall. Doris Redfern, Babs' young sister, was kidnapped, her beloved dog shot at, and Babs herself in peril of drowning

after being struck down on the ice by the villainous Jake, whose mean heart longed for revenge on Babs' father, who had been responsible for sending Jake to prison.

Doris, the star of the story, was strongly characterised in her debut, preceding her advent at Cliff House for the new term to follow. Naughty, obstinate and outspoken, Doris was also unmerciful in her teasing of Bessie. The chums go skating, and when the law of gravity becomes too much for the fat one, Doris volunteers assistance, much to Bessie's grateful surprise. But Doris's assistance takes the form of towing poor Bess across the ice by her pigtail. Doris then proceeds to pelt the duffer of the Fourth with snowballs.

It is this incident that leads to the drama. For one of the snowballs contains a stone, at which, naturally, Bessie protests long and loud. Doris, also protesting, swears she is innocent of doctoring the offending snowball and departs in a huff, determined to find the culprit who has caused her to be blamed. And so she walks right into the lair of the beastly Jake and his harridan of a wife.

It is doubtful if Jake would have had the brains to work out a well-planned scheme for revenge on Mr. Redfern: Doris, so to speak, almost does it for him. The reaction of Mr. Redfern when he finds Doris missing is immediately to offer a £50 reward for information leading to her return. Jake rubs his hands with glee: it's all happening without any effort on his part.

They imprison Doris in an outhouse, from where she hears them saying they must get rid of her dog, then she hears a shot. Doris is frantic. Only the previous week she had rescued a pathetic mongrel stray whom she christens Jumbo, and who now follows her adoringly everywhere. Then Jumbo returns, braving his fear of the gun, and Doris is able to slip a rough message through a crack in the shed wall. Jumbo hares off to Holly Hall in search of the cavalry.

Joyous reunions all round --- except for Jake's with the local constabulary.

After this introduction to young Doris we suspect that her waywardness is to land her in a whole lot more trouble before her schooldays at Cliff House are over.

Twenty years on, the last New Year of the chums was a somewhat more sophisticated affair, when the wilful bundle of contradictions playing the lead was, of course, Diana Royston-Clarke.

The chums were not expecting to bump into their glamorous form-mate when they journeyed up to Derbyshire, after Christmas at Trevlyn Towers, home of Tomboy Clara, to spend a week at the new Alpine Chalet Hotel, in the construction of which Clara's father has been involved. But Diana's father is also concerned, having a heavy financial interest in this brand new luxurious winter playground.

The chums are excited to learn that there is to be an ice fete with lots of competitions, and very soon they befriend Joyce, a young skating instructor, only to discover that Joyce's ice-dance partner is none other than the Firebrand. Diana, however, is as usual thinking only of her own interests, which centre on Mr. Paul Pettifer, a theatrical impressario who is coming to the ice fete in search of talent for his latest show. Diana is not pleased when Joyce -- because of Diana's own bad behaviour -- decides to have Babs for her partner



**JUMBO TO THE RESCUE!** Doris Redfern thrust her hand through the hole in the wall, and threaded one twisted corner of the handkerchief into the brass ring of Jumbo's collar. "Now, doggie—home!" she called out.

at the fete.

Of course there is the impoverished young waif-type character requisite to all Diana stories whom Diana takes under her wing and who is, naturally, a wonderfully talented skater. Now the omens look distinctly hopeful for Diana's plan to oust Joyce and Babs from the competition and clear the way for her own triumphant appearance with her latest protégée.

The chums, however, have something to say about this, especially Leila, and there is also a small, unpleasant spanner in the works who rejoices in the name of Eric Lancelot Havering-Jones, accompanied by an extra large spanner in the shape of his mother. Among Eric's endearing little attempts to enliven life at the Alpine Chalet are the loosening of skate blades and the filling of Diana's expensive new white elk skating boots with red ink.

Fortunately, Diana's plans do not succeed and Babs and Joyce have a great success, but as we know of old Diana has a way of falling on her feet when she

herself least expects to, and this occasion is no exception. When she arrives, after a delaying mishap, and introduces her new protégée she meets praise, joyous thanks, and general adulation all round. For unwittingly she has reunited two long estranged friends, restored Joyce's former skating partner to her and delighted the great impressario. So once again, Diana steals the limelight, everyone is happy --- and for Diana there is always the next crossing of swords with Babs to look forward to...

Exactly what retribution fell on Master Eric Lancelot Havering-Jones is, alas, not recounted!



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## DRAKE OF BENBOW

by Ernest Holman

From time to time past members of Greyfriars pop up in stories. One who frequently does so is Jack Drake. This character - usually described in serial preambles or under sketches as "Ferrers Locke's clever young assistant" has set my thoughts going; purely on the strength of a St. Jim's story I have recently been reading! Yes, I do mean St. Jim's.

The story itself is of no great moment - briefly, Gussy is friendly with Jack Drake of St. Winifred's School, at present situated in an old Warship named Benbow. Tom Merry has accepted a cricket challenge from St. Winifred's - only to discover that the game as played by Vernon Daubeny and his team is of considerably inferior quality. On Gussy's suggestion, Wally & Co. of The Third are given the match as the St. Jim's Junior Eleven. When the visiting cricketers arrive, however, Drake and his friends have hi-jacked the official team and taken their place. They proceed to beat Wally & Co. but are thwarted from claiming an official victory when Tom Merry receives an explanatory telegram from Daubeny. There is, of course, more to the story than these 'bare bones' - in fact, it ran to nineteen chapters. More about the story later, however.

It was after reading this story that I attempted to trace the history of Jack Drake. Unfortunately, I was handicapped by having read only a few of the early stories and many of those were reprints, several years after actual events. The most I could unearth was the following. Stories of St. Winifred's first appeared in a new Edition of Greyfriars Herald, which ran from November 1919 to March 1922. Hamilton wrote the stories of Drake and Co. under his 'Owen Conquest' name. After several stories, Jack Drake, Dick Rodney, Vernon Daubeny, Tuckey Toodles, etc. moved with the school into the Benbow, situated in a Thames 'feeder' somewhere in Sussex. Eventually, the Benbow put to sea and a sequence

of adventures in the West Indies followed. On return, the boys were distributed to other schools, Drake and Rodney going to Greyfriars.

Separate stories of Greyfriars, with the two newcomers doubling up the occupants in Russell and Ogilvy's study, now appeared. The stories apparently petered out when Drake joined Ferrers Locke - but on odd occasions - e.g. in Holiday Annuals - a hitherto unpublished yarn of Drake at Greyfriars would appear. By those times, however, Drake had long left the school.

I first read the story of Drake's leaving to join Ferrers Locke in the second half of the Twenties, in one of the reprint stories in the Popular. How many stories after that that Hamilton penned of the two detectives I do not know - but probably not a lot. Subsequently, stories of Locke and Drake appeared as Serials in one or two publications, under the authorship of either Owen Conquest or Hedley Scott. They are, I understand, mostly credited to Hamilton's Fleetway House 'non-friend', Hedley O'Mant. The only other stories I can recall having read of Drake were reprints of early St. Winifred's stories at the back of the later Gem.

There is someone in the Hobby, I am sure, who can detail the true sequence of Jack Drake - but whether it would be considered of sufficient importance to 'ferret out' is another matter. (Drake, of course, appeared at times in Greyfriars yarns - even as late as the 1939/40 Lamb series) There is, especially, one thing I would like to know. That St. Jim's story mentioned earlier. It was entitled "All Gussy's Fault" and appeared in the Holiday Annual for 1921 (i.e. published 1st September, 1920). It was not shown as 'new and original', nor did it appear to be a reprint. It was, also too long for a single Gem issue.

So just when did Hamilton write it? For which publication was it intended? Why was its publication delayed? It must have been written some time before, because by March 1921 Drake and Rodney were featured in 'Thin Bunter' (Magnet 682) - and in the coming Summer Holidays the Greyfriars Caravanners of 1921 met up with Drake. We were told, in fact, that Drake had left to become Locke's assistant at the end of the previous term.

Come on, somebody - Locke's clever young assistant wouldn't approve of all these loose ends!

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**WANTED:** The Modern Boy Nos. 368, 369, 372, 373, 375, 379, 380, 384, 388, 389, 391, 402 to 405, 410, 413, 493, 501. New Series 23 to 26, 28, 30, 31, 33, 35 to 42, 54, 55, 57 to 59 all inclusive.

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# MORCOVE MINIATURES



TRIXIE HOPE

By TOMMY KEEN



To the readers of the SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN in the 1930s, the name of Trixie Hope would mean little or nothing. Trixie, by then, had somehow vanished from the scene, yet, as older readers would remember, Trixie became a staunch friend to Betty Barton during the latter's early days at Morcove. Trixie Hope was first mentioned in SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN No. 11, and was the study mate of Madge Minden, a girl who had become on friendly terms with Betty Barton (and Polly Linton), and so Trixie decided that she had stood enough of Cora Grandways & Co. Therefore, until Dolly Delane and Tess Trelawney joined Betty's set, Trixie, Madge, Betty, and Polly made a splendid quartet.

Trixie had one failing. She would insist on talking French whenever possible, and, according to her chums' mirth each time she addressed them in this language, it was not French as spoken by the natives. But Trixie persevered. For three years, she was one of the group known as Betty & Co., and until the arrival of Helen Craig always spent the holidays with Betty, Polly, Paula Creel, Madge and Tess. During the Christmas holidays of 1922, she came into prominence by mysteriously vanishing, when the girls were searching for secret panels. Suddenly they were in darkness, and when light was restored, Trixie had gone. Missing for a day or two, she then returned.

She featured in a strong series in early 1925, sharing at that time a study with Madge and Tess. Tess Trelawney's wrist-watch disappears, and theft is suspected, but Tess leaves Morcove, thinking her parents have lost all their money. She finds work in Barncombe as an artist. Ursula Wade, the sly girl of the Fourth, finds a pawn ticket for a watch, in the name of a French girl (the heroine of a book Trixie is reading), and Trixie is suspected of stealing, and pawning the watch. But it is all cleared up; Tess returns, and she explains that she pawned her own watch for money to help at home.

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Then, for two years, Trixie Hope seemed to be forgotten. She seldom appeared with the Study 12 girls; Helen Craig and Naomer Nakara now belonged to that select circle. But back Trixie came, with a bang, featuring in two consecutive series, one with Polly Linton, and the second on holiday in France with Betty & Co. Trixie was at last in her beloved France.

Things had been difficult though. Trixie was studying hard for an exam which would enable the winner to have six months education in France, with a French girl to visit England in exchange. By 1927, Grangemoor School for Boys has materialised, not too far away from Morcove, and Polly Linton's brother Jack is a scholar there. So is Trixie's cousin Steve, an absolute bounder. Jack is expelled, for a 'crime' committed by Steve Hope, but Trixie, with the rest of the Study 12 coterie, believes in Jack's innocence. Polly and Trixie later have suspicions that Steve is the culprit, but the worry hinders Trixie's studying. However, all ends well, Steve confesses, but leaves Grangemoor, vowing to change his past wretched ways. Trixie wins the exam, (not just from Morcove entries but all England), and off she goes to France.

The new girl from France arrives, a charming girl called Rosalie Duval, and, with the summer holidays almost due, plus an invitation from Trixie Hope to Betty & Co. to spend their holidays at a lovely old chateau in France, the scene is set for holiday adventures.

Six months pass, and Trixie returns to England in time for Christmas. Her parents have bought a fresh residence, Moatby Grange, and again the girls are Trixie's guests. But alas, Steve Hope also is at Moatby Grange, definitely not reformed, and becomes "The Boy Who Marred Morcove's Christmas".

Trixie returns to Morcove for the new term, new studies have been arranged, and she is to share a study with Helen Craig



**AFTER THE ORDEAL.** When Trixie appeared from the examination room her chums clustered round her. "Bravo, Trix, you've got it!" they cheered her. "Run and get your ticket for France!" joked others.

and Dolly Delane. And that was the end of Trixie Hope. She was heard of no more, apart from perhaps a few references in the SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN ANNUAL. Maybe 'Marjorie Stanton' had run out of French phrases!

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## B O O K S

### BILLY BUNTER'S UNCLE

Reviewed by Eric Fayne

Frank Richards  
(Howard Baker Book Club  
Special: £18.00)

In all his long lifetime, in his wildest dreams, Frank Richards can never have foreseen that, one day, his work would be preserved for posterity in these beautiful bindings. In that special Heaven, to which all good authors go, he must be smiling happily. This treasure of a volume comprises five Magnets from the final weeks of the year 1914. One of them is the Christmas Double Number for 1914.

There is no Greyfriars "classic" here. Not one of the stories is well-known. Possibly the mild wartime flavour ruled them out, in their day, from a second appearance. For that reason each one - and they are all "single" stories - has a pleasant freshness. The Double Number contains "The Return of the Prodigal", which is probably the best tale in the group. The Prodigal of the title is Percy Locke, the young nephew of the Headmaster and a real rake in his time, and the memory of Percy causes the Head, rather uncharacteristically, to burst into tears. Maybe the plot is rather scattily involved, but, that apart, it provides nostalgic reading for the non-carping. In passing, the cover for this issue came from Hayward who was responsible for so many covers for Doubles in those days.

"Fagging For Coker" provides much typical Coker hilarity. Two prefects, Walker and Courtney, are temporarily away from school, so the Head makes the rather unlikely choice of Coker as a new prefect to replace them. It's great tongue-in-cheek fun for the Coker fan. Then comes "The Snob of the Remove", not a very pleasant tale of an upstart. In this case he is a German, and one is astonished that a boy named Von Limburg should be accepted into the Remove in December 1914. He is the snob who objects to associating with certain Removites. But Skinner remembers the new boy from an hotel in Brighton, where he was not named Von Limburg but was the son of a German waiter named

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Klein - and the boy also "waited". At Greyfriars he gives himself away when Skinner calls out "Waiter!" Down the years Greyfriars was landed with a number of different "upstarts" - none of them providing very pleasant reading. Von Limburg was one of the earliest - and the least likely or likeable.

"Billy Bunter's Uncle" concerns a press report that a Captain Bunter is among the war wounded, so Bunter proceeds to reap some cheap glory. Then Captain Bunter turns up. To add that Wibley plays a part in the tale is, perhaps, to give away the climax. Finally, a period piece, "The Patriotic Schoolmaster". Mr Lascelles takes part in a fight to make money for the Belgian refugees - and Skinner tries to make mischief.

A volume that is delightful to handle, splendid to look at, and full of interest for the Greyfriars historian. Note how Chapman, the artist, depicts the burly Bolsover in frockcoat while the rest of the Remove wear Etons. A lovely delve into the past.

### HAINING ON HORROR - AND ON NONSENSE

Reviewed by Mary Cadogan

Peter Haining's many books on popular culture now include THE DRACULA CENTENARY BOOK (Souvenir Press, £10.95) which vividly charts the exploits of the famous aristocratic vampire who stalked from his Transylvanian castle to the streets of London a hundred years ago. Apparently Bram Stoker's novel (first published ninety years ago) has never been out of print. Peter Haining gives a great deal of interesting information about how Bram Stoker developed and researched his celebrated story; how this has been adapted for stage, cinema, radio and television presentations, and inspired many other books and films on the Dracula theme. There is also a feature about real-life cases of vampirism, actual or suspected, from the thirteenth century to the present day. As well as a very informative text, THE DRACULA CENTENARY BOOK provides a lavish selection of black and white pictures.

In complete contrast, Peter Haining has edited A BOOK OF LEARNED NONSENSE, which is another centenary publication (this time of an author's death). The works of Edward Lear are being celebrated; the publisher is W.H. Allen and the price is £9.95. The book includes many of Lear's inimitable drawings, rhymes which were not included in his original books of verse, and a selection of his very amusing letters. Dipping into it, I appreciated what Charles Hamilton said, when approaching his eightieth birthday, about Lear (and Lewis Carroll) being 'eternal'.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITRESS!



TED BALDOCK (Cambridge) I was much impressed by the sentiments expressed by Terry Jones in the Nov. issue of Collectors Digest, in his unswerving allegiance to the "Magnet" and "Gem". His remarks struck an immediate chord in my own experience; although happily I do not live alone, I fully understand and appreciate the wonderful "escape" route provided by the two companion papers. There is an endearing and timeless quality pervading those early school stories which in some indefinable way seems to defy adequate terms of description. Perhaps it is because we are "forging ahead somewhat" that we tend to cling to the old and proven delights rather than flounder - sometimes unhappily - in the fresher fields of literature. Given the choice of an evening reading by a winter fireside I would unerringly select the world of Greyfriars and St. Jim's wherein to seek - and always find - laughter, thrills and complete fulfillment. My own forays into contemporary literature have, on the whole, proved somewhat dismal - much rather would I join the Famous Five in ragging Horace Coker or "shipping" Loder's study, even though I am aware that by virtue of seniority I should be setting a rather more dignified example!

REV. J.P.H. HOBSON (Woodhall Spa, Lincs.) I do enjoy Danny's Diary, and he is usually very accurate. However, in the October C.D. he refers to the film "Wings of the Morning", which was the very first British Technicolour 3 film. (I keep hoping we shall see it again one day on TV.) He said it stars Henry Fonda and "Anne Neagle" but in fact it was Anabella. The English male star was my father's old college friend and mine too from Oxford days,

Leslie Banks. We saw him recently on TV as "Sanders of the River" and he did the prologue in the film Henry V. He died in 1955.

In the August C.D. Danny said that from December '37 "the Irish Republic will be known as Eire". From 1921 Southern Ireland became the Irish Free State, with Dominion Status. "In 1937 it was renamed Eire and in 1949 it became completely independent as the Republic of Ireland". I quote from The Penguin Book of Places.

CHARLIE DAY (Keighley) I was very interested in the Report of the Northern O.B.B.C. dealing with Dr. Fu Manchu, and its author Sax Rohmer, whose real name is given as Arthur Henry Wood; surely it should be Arthur Sansfield Ward. A good few years ago, through the courtesy of Mr. Lofts, I was able to exchange letters with Mr. Robert Briney of Salem, America, who was the Editor of the Sax Rohmer Review Magazine. I was able to tell him about the British Film Serial, "The Mystery of Dr. Fu-Manchu. My sister, in the twenties, was a pianist in a Cinema Pit Orchestra, and as a youngster I became an avid fan of Dr. Fu Manchu and his creator, and still am, at nearly 80 years of age.

E. G. HAMMOND (Upminster) Having read my good friend Norman Wright's comprehensive review of "The Dandy and The Beano: 50 Golden Years", and having read the said volume, I would like to add a couple of comments. I think it a pity that credit was not given in the book to any contributor of the comics. Dudley Watkins, Ken Reid, David Law, Leo Baxendale and many others were not even mentioned. Without them I doubt there would be any celebrations. It seems archaic that D.C. Thomson still adhere to this Masonic-like secrecy in this day and age. Having made this minor criticism, I agree with Norman that it is a well produced volume, giving excellent value for money.

J.E.M. (Brighton) The Rev. Hobson's delightful article 'The Flicks in the Sticks' suggests that the Woodhall Spa Kinema was the only cinema in Britain to have back-screen projection. Around 1930, there was a similarly equipped cinema in the seaside resort of Whitley Bay. Alas, I cannot recall the name of this picture palace and have no idea how long its use of back projection lasted. Can some reader from the North help? Anyway, many thanks, Mr. Hobson, for taking me back to a memorable moment of my tenderest years!

Regarding Father Francis' reference to East and West Sussex, these have been separate official administrative areas since the

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re-organisation of local government in 1974, though of course the description East and West, used in the simple geographical sense, must be as old as the county itself.

JOHN A.C. BRIDGWATER (Christchurch) I am particularly interested in the recent revival of interest in BFL which has been rather neglected. The catalogue just published by Lofts/Adley is a splendid piece of work. Up till now there has only been the list of BFL first series which I photocopied for Josie Packman several years ago. The second series which I read as a boy in the late 1920s and early 30s has been uncharted territory until now. I also enjoyed J.E.M.s "All for Sixpence" as I have great affection for Woolworth's Readers Library. The first hardback I read was "Robinson Crusoe" in this series. I still have a nice little collection of these splendid little books, in particular a mint copy of "Metropolis", with dust jacket, which I purchased back in 1930 something and kept wrapped in thick brown paper ever since. I missed the film at that time and was delighted when it was shown on TV some time ago. The various little pieces about 1920s/30s films which appear now and again in CD are of very special interest to me as I was a keen film fan, and although I thoroughly enjoyed the many excellent American films of that time my real joys were the British films - even the "B" films and "quota quickies", and the few French and German films which managed to get distributed to local cinemas.

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## *The Greyfriars Book Club*

**HOWARD BAKER PRESS LIMITED**

27a Arterberry Rd., Wimbledon, London, SW20  
Tel: 01-947 5482 Cables: Bakerbook London

**'STALKY & CO.' (RUDYARD KIPLING 1899)**

by Barrie Stark

Stalky & Co. being Corkran, McTurk (Turkey), Beetle and Stalky, the leader in PROUT'S HOUSE and (eventually) No. 5 Study at College (not named), though at the beginning they don't have a Study; and then through six years when they reach the Fifth, but are not prefects, and then Queen Victoria's Army, and India.

We follow their escapades through school when they cleverly, but with much humour, take on the masters who never seem to be able to be in charge or control of Stalky & Co., except the Head. All this in the masterly style of Kipling. The prose is smooth and impeccable, with nothing to outrage the reader except a dead cat which was used to stink out the obnoxious King's House.

No Bunter here; indeed he is not necessary, Stalky & Co. being sufficient in themselves, as when McTurk convinces the local land-owner (Col. Dubney) that they are equals, and when once again the masters and 'Foxy' the school sergeant are defeated.

Page 1 introduces Mr. Prout; page 18 has Stalky saying "But what's the odds, as long as we're 'appy'" (shades of Bob Cherry), and page 50 gives us "... now my dearly beloved 'earers", which also points to the later Frank Richards. Fags are held in contempt, there are fights, and inkpots fly, but not to the same outrageous extent as at Greyfriars.

Eventually Stalky & Co. go off to the army, Victoria's India and the wars - though intervening details are not given, the atmosphere is all very Army and Empire. Sufficient information is provided to picture the terrain, and the action with Stalky again taking the lead. But there are no gory details, objectionable items of language, or descriptions to bolster a weak prose - after all, Kipling is the author!

McTurk and other old boys end the story, but without Stalky who was last heard of "out there" and still in the lead, seemingly having "gone native".

A book not to be thought of as a "boys' story" but rather as a period piece straight out of the late Victorian era by one who was there, and thus very well worth reading.

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**GRANGE BINDERS:-** Rose Villa, Inkerson Fen, Throckenholt, Nr. Spalding, Lincs. We are currently running a 20% discount offer for the next two months. If you wish to find out more about this very special offer, phone John Naish on Wisbech (0905) 700758.

## CAMBRIDGE CLUB

Our December meeting took place at the home of Vic Hearn at Trumpington on the 6th December, 1987.

Monthly business completed, Howard Corn discussed "The Early Years of the 'TV Comic'". For example he provided his bound volumes of the first four years of this comic, whose publishers were, strangely, 'The News of the World'. Launched in November, 1951, the all-colour 8 page comic was printed by the then quality photogravure user, Eric Bemrose of Liverpool.

The TV characters all came from the BBC, and it was pointed out that the very possession of a scarce TV set in that era meant a degree of affluence. The cover strip was 'Muffin the Mule', and 'Hank the Cowboy' was on the back cover strip. Soon after launch, the comic began to incorporate some B. & W. pages carrying, in part, the American import, 'Prince Valiant' and, later, Roy Rogers.

Despite its title, the publication carried both TV and radio characters; for example, Children's Hour provided 'Toytown' and Norman & Henry Bones, the boy detectives' (text, then strips) and TV gave 'Sooty' and 'Mr. Turnip'. Amazingly the BBC sold the copyrights of their popular 'Andy Pandy' and 'The Flowerpot Men' to Hultons for their 'Robin' comic.

After tea we had Vic's musical excerpts quiz, followed by some seasonal ghostly reminiscences from Bill Lofts.

**ADRIAN PERKINS**

## LONDON O.B.B.C.

Don Webster, deputising for Chairman Norman Wright, welcomed thirty two members to the December meeting held at the Ealing Liberal Centre on the 13th of December. The formal opening over, a full and entertaining programme followed, including a talk by Brian Doyle entitled "A Merry Christmas To All Our Readers" that took us all back to the wonderful Christmas numbers of our favourite comics of old. Continuing in the Christmas vein came a reading by Roger Jenkins of an excerpt from Magnet No. 1351 about Bunter as an uninvited and unsuspected guest at Wharton Lodge. This was followed by an ingenious Quiz set by Arthur Bruning and won by Mark Taha.

A lavish spread, organised by Bill and provisioned by kind ladies from the Liberal Centre, allowed us to sit back comfortably and enjoy a talk by Bill Bradford on Geo. E. Rochester. A "Character Test" by Roy Parsons followed, giving us more than pause for thought, which was won by Eric Lawrence whose I.Q. must be well in advance of my own! Phil Griffiths transported us to that haunted ancestral pile, Dorriemore Castle, and it was left to Duncan Harper to bring us back to earth with a seasonal reading of Sexton Blake, Tinker, and friends enjoying a get-together over a meal provided by Mrs. Bardell.

Next meeting will take place at the Liberal Centre, Ealing on 10th January, 1988. This will be the A.G.M. Tea will be provided, but please bring your own food, and notify Bill Bradford (01) 579 4670 if you are attending.

**LESLIE ROWLEY**

## NORTHERN O.B.B.C.

Despite the fact that a number of members were unable to be with us owing to illness and commitments, it was a cheery party of fourteen which assembled for our December 12th, Christmas Party. Members had brought along a wonderful selection of provender, and there was enthusiastic tucking into the splendid 'study tea' with beverages of tea and wine (the latter, we noted, was not featured in study teas at Greyfriars!)

We were pleased to hear that Arthur Fortune was on the road to recovery and hoped to be back with us soon. We were sorry to learn of John Lamb's sudden illness, and that Mollie Allison was still not well, though hoping to be with us in the New Year. We also discussed our club New Year Dinner to be held on 16th January 1988 at the Stansfield Arms, Apperley Bridge. All welcome: our Secretary, Geoffrey Good, will be pleased to supply details.

Geoffrey then read a much appreciated hilarious episode from the Magnet, featuring Bunter en route to Mauleverer Towers and the subsequent 'bilking' of the taxi driver. A number of members astounded us by admitting they had never played in a Beetle Drive, so it was not to be expected that they could be involved in a 'Bunter Drive'. However the rules were explained, and that game was won by Joan Colman.

Geoffrey proposed a toast to the hobby, the Club members past and present, and to our favourite authors. Joan Coleman had iced a superb Christmas cake, the top of which was adorned with the words 'Happy Christmas O.B.B.C.', and excellent iced figures of William, Rupert and Worrals. At the front was an iced 'Magnet' cover, featuring Bunter. Round the cake in silver icing were the names of the papers we all love; Magnet, Gem, Rover, School Friend; and Thomson comics Dandy and Beano. Joan was warmly applauded for her wonderful creation.

In conclusion, Geoffrey read another Magnet excerpt, this time from the Courtfield Cracksman about Coker's encounter with Barnes, the chauffeur.

We look forward to a full and entertaining programme for 1988 which we plan to be the best ever in the history of the club, and we wish everyone a Very Happy New Year.

### JOHNNY BULL MINOR

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 FOR SALE:- 371 Magnets, 75 Gems, 5 Dreadnoughts, 52 Nelson Lees, 5 Union Jacks, 1 Modern Boy, 78 Books by Hadath, Oxenham, Judd, Reed etc, etc. Four original Boy's Own Papers 1897, one original Girl's Own Paper 1886. ERIC WAFER, 1 Marine View, Newcastle, N.S.W. 2300, AUSTRALIA.

\*\*\*\*\*  
 FOR SALE: No. 42 H.B. "The Greyfriars Secret Society", also No. 43 H.B. Ending the above series. Also the Dr. Syn series. Condition as new. O.O.P. Offers to H. Blowers, 25 Churchfield Road, Rothwell, Leeds, LS26 0EJ.

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 Boys' and adult school fiction. Bumper Spring catalogue available now from Robert Kirkpatrick, 244 Latimer Road, London, W10 6QY.  
 Largeish S.A.E. appreciated.

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

I am grateful to readers for the many congratulatory messages I have received both on the Christmas number of the C.D., and the Annual. It is truly heart-warming to know that the efforts of our enthusiastic contributors, and of your editor, are so much appreciated. Thank you for all the kind things you have written.

Mr. R.F. Acraman has asked if we would correct the following small errors which occurred on page 119 of the Annual. His telephone number at Kingsgate Castle should have been shown as 0843 64460. The last line of paragraph one on page 119 should read as follows: C.D.A. 1986/5 pages 112/128. C.D. March 1980 page 24 etc.

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"DAN DARE PILOT OF THE FUTURE" deluxe collectors edition.  
Published by Patrick Hawkey Publishing Ltd. Price £16.95.

Reviewed by Norman Wright

The last decade has seen several attempts at reprinting some of Frank Hampson's 'Dan Dare' strips from "Eagle". This is the only one which has succeeded. As the compiler notes in his introduction, the pages have been reprinted exactly as they appeared in the comic. No attempts have been made to tamper with the sequence or frame size. Glancing through the book is like picking up a volume made up of pages one and two of "Eagle" - and those of us brought up on Hampson's space hero often emulated the present compiler and thereby spoiled the rest of our comics forever!

The present volume reprints the very first 'Dan Dare' adventure which ran through all fifty two issues of volume one and the first twenty-five of volume two. It was the only one of his adventures not to have a serial title, being simply called "Dan Dare pilot of the Future". Most collectors refer to it as 'The first Venus series'. Dan and his companions travel to Venus in an attempt to find an alternative food source to replenish the Earth's dwindling resources. They encounter the friendly Therons as well as the totally evil Mekon, totalitarian ruler of the Treens.

The colour reproduction compares favourably with the original "Eagle" pages. Colour saturation in the first few months of "Eagle" was rather variable; legend has it that the new colour printing presses took some time to bed themselves in. Those slight imperfections are reproduced in the present volume, but that's how it was in those early days, and this book captures all the magic of that first adventure. As a 'Dan Dare' aficionado I can only hope that Patrick Hawkey Publishing Ltd. will bring out another volume in time for next Christmas.

\* \* \* \* \*  
 Jack Hughes, P.O. Box 92, Home Hill 4806 Queensland, AUSTRALIA. WANTS COLLECTORS' DIGEST 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 and April, 1949.

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**FREE GIFTS**

by D.V. Withers

Turning out the loft the other day, I came across some cigarette card albums. On perusing the contents I discovered a number of glossy black and white cards on varying subjects which had been given away by the Gem, Champion, Triumph, etc. Being a soccer fan the following caught my eye. Charlie Buchan, Sunderland; Alan Morton, Rangers; Jimmy Seddon, Bolton. These were 'Gods' whom I worshipped from afar. All were dated 1922. Did I really read the Gem at seven years of age? I remember the Great War cards given in Champion and Triumph in 1926-27, the Tricks and Teasers from the 1927 Champion, and the Speedway riders from Triumph, vintage 1929.

I suppose they were a good sales gimmick, as I did not normally take the Triumph.

I remember the Foreign stamps of the Nelson Lee which I also collected. The last I remember were coupons in the Gem and Magnet. If you collected enough, you received a free copy of a Holiday Annual. Was this in the early thirties? I would be interested to learn if any other readers also still have memories of the free gifts from those far off nostalgic days.

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52 Magnets from 1932 to 1936 £1.20 each or £50 the lot. 21 Salmon Magnets £1 each or £16 the lot. 31 taped Magnets £10. Picturegoer 1939 £3.00. Film Fun 1934 £3.00. 6 S.O.L., taped 50p each. S.B.L. Woman's World Library I - £1.00. Tarzan and the Leopard Men £1.00. Billy Bunter Picture Book £3.00. 4 Gems taped 40p each. Hotspur 1945 50p. 6 S.B.L. 70p each. Original Greyfriars Holiday Annuals 1927, 1928 £9.00 each. Mickey Mouse Annual 1940s £3.00. Champion Annual 1949, 1952 £2.00 each. 2 Billy Bunter's Own £2.00. Goes Sailing. Magnet First Issue Facsimile £1.00. Howard Baker Magnet Vol. No. 6 Downfall of Harry Wharton. 4 Gems 50p each. Woman's World Library No. 456 £1.00. S.B.L. No. 374. World Greatest Detective Stories 1934 including Sexton Blake. Sherlock Holmes, many others £5.00. Please enclose S.A.E. Watson, 1 Cartbridge Close, Walton-on-Naze, Essex CO14 8QJ.

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