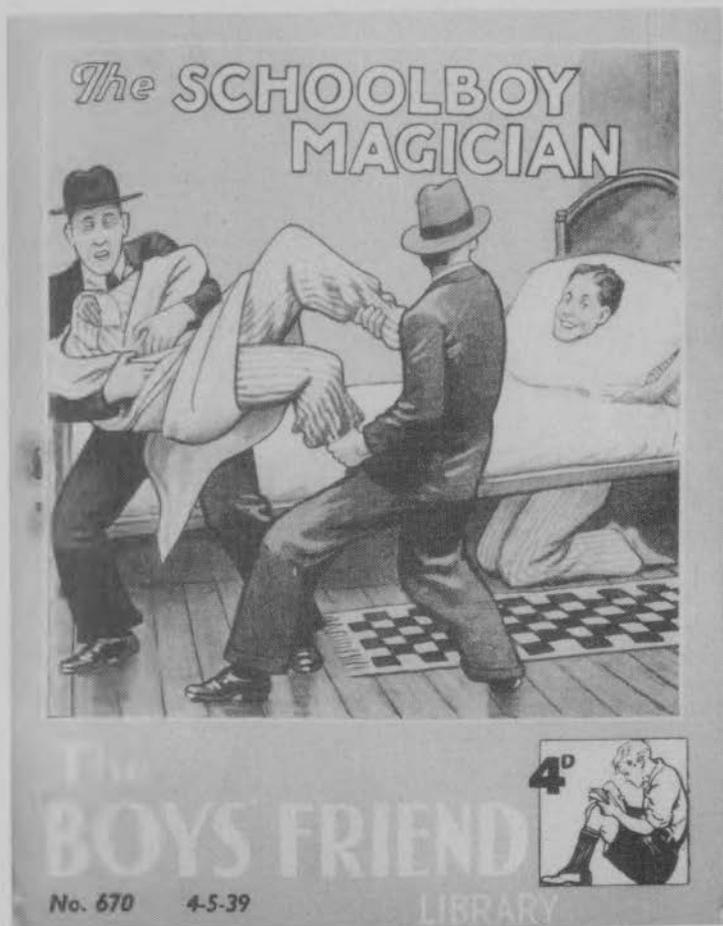


STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST



VOL. 43

No. 512

AUGUST 1989

Price 72p

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I still have very good stocks of NELSON LEES, all series; UNION JACKS; MAGNETS and GEMS, large numbers of bound volumes.

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STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Editor: MARY CADOGAN

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The Editor's Chat



FIFTY YEARS ON

I passed the scholarship (as we used to say) in 1939, and my first days at grammar school co-incided with the declaration of the Second World War. Despite the inevitable restrictions caused by this, I was thrilled from the beginning with my new school which, apart from not being by the sea, or taking boarders, seemed very much to resemble Cliff House which up to then had been my favoured alma mater. I revisited the school a little while ago, sadly to see it for perhaps the last time. Apparently, because the school-age population has become so reduced, there is now no need for the locality to have the two separate boys' and girls' schools once attended by my brother and myself. They are to be merged, and it is the larger school - the boys' - which will henceforth house students of both sexes. My school, changed some years ago into a Comprehensive, will not be pulled down, which is some comfort. Its fine buildings, gardens and playing-fields will still be used for as yet unspecified educational purposes, but they will no longer be the setting for schoolgirlish aspiration and endeavour.

Revisiting the school was an extraordinarily nostalgic experience; I had, of course, been back once or twice before, but not for some years. I was impressed by the fact that so much had changed, and yet so much

seemed just as it was all those decades ago. I wouldn't have felt surprised if my old Headmistress had billowed onto the platform in the hall in her gown, to take the morning assembly; it wouldn't have seemed strange if, amongst the several hundred voices of the girls there today, I had heard the familiar tones of my own school friends. There are some magnificent new buildings, such as the huge gym which is big enough for indoor netball, badminton and tennis, but the old gym remains (complete with those horrible, hard wooden horses over which we had to hurl ourselves, and the parallel bars and ropes up which we were forced to shin). The changes include far better science and 'domestic economy' equipment, and language facilities. On the negative side, the girls no longer play cricket, and the old hopscotch courts (a lovely feature for the younger pupils) long ago had to be dismantled to make room for the new science blocks. But the overall atmosphere - even the compounded smell of polished linoleum and rubbery gym-shoes - remained very much as I remembered it from my own schooldays. And now all this is to end. However, as Frank (or, more appropriately, Hilda) Richards might say, there is still balm in Gilead: the retiring deputy Head has undertaken the writing of a full history of the school, so at least it will not sink without trace. She has asked me to dredge up as many memories as possible, and it is simply amazing how rapidly these have come into full flood! At least we have the consolation that, even when real-life schools change or cease to function, our fictional educational establishments remain evergreen and constant.

GUGNUNCS ON SHOW

C.D. readers may like to know that a Pip, Squeak and Wilfred Exhibition is now showing at the Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood in London until 24th September. This strangely assorted and enormously popular trio of a dog, a penguin and a rabbit inspired (as well as comic-strips) toys, games books and other memorabilia much of which, apparently, is now on display. I look forward very much to seeing the exhibition, which I'm sure will be extremely enjoyable.



THE OUTLAWS CLUB

Referring to Thomas Penn's William story, the June C.D. mentioned Macmillan's Outlaws Club. Several readers have asked for details of this, so the invitation below (reprinted from the current editions of the William books) may be helpful.

MARY CADOGAN

An invitation from William



Join my club and become
a outlaw 
William Brown

You can join the Outlaws Club!

You will receive

- * a special Outlaws wallet containing
your own Outlaws badge
the Club Rules
and

a letter from William giving you the secret password

To join the Club send a letter with your name and address written in block capitals telling us you want to join the Outlaws, and a postal order for 45p, to

The Outlaws Club
577 Kingston Road
Raynes Park
LONDON SW20 8SA

You must live in the United Kingdom or the Republic of Ireland in order to join.

ALWAYS WANTED: Singles-collections: SOL's, SBL's, Beans. Dustwrapped Biggles, Bunters, Williams, Enid Blyton, Malcolm Saville. ALL original artwork. NORMAN WRIGHT, 60 Eastbury Road, Watford, Hertfordshire.

WANTED: 1900's 1/2d/1d Marvel, singles/complete years. Also 1940/50's Captain Marvels. DAVE WESTAWAY, 96 Ashleigh Road, Exmouth, Devon. Tel: Exmouth 275734.



WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE!

by Esmond Kadish

No doubt it's my age, but, somehow, post-war "disaster moves" on T.V. don't interest me like the pre-war variety. "Towering infernos" don't set me ablaze, earthquakes fail to register on my personal Richter scale, monstrous sharks merely remind me to get my check-up at the dentist, and killer bees swarming only send me to buy insecticide for the roses - although I must admit that Hitchcock's film, "The Birds", is still capable of giving me a frisson. I much prefer to watch the panic-stricken horses careering round a corner, dragging a driverless van behind them, after the earthquake in "San Francisco"; or the tidal wave washing Dorothy Lamour off the set in "The Hurricane"; or the fire destroying the city in "In Old Chicago", after Mrs. O'Leary's cow had knocked over the lamp. All pre-war "disasters", and all filmed with much more style!

In our fictional schools, it's St. Frank's which seems to hold the record for cataclysmic events - gutted by fire, inundated by flood water, bombs exploding within its precincts, giant airships nosediving into its turrets, and so on. The Great Flood series of 1927 (1st N.S., 44/48, with two more yarns, 49 and 50, tacked on) is a favourite of mine. The usual prelude to a flood disaster, incessant rain, is taking its toll - Little Side is under water, and the River Stowe runs "bloated and swollen". On their way to Bannington, Handforth and Co. and Archie Glenthorne, in Handy's famous Austin 7, (which - dare I say it? - often shows more personality than some of the juniors), pass the gigantic Pine Hill Reservoir. This is on the brink of bursting asunder, and St. Frank's is right in the path of the flood waters. Handy tries to give warning, but Dr. Stafford considers it an "insane rumour".

When the waters do reach the school, the effect is dramatic. At one moment, in the Ancient House, there is "the cheerful blaze" from a study fire "flickering upon the opposite side of the passage wall" - the next:

"a giant wave came sweeping along, foaming, splashing and swirling with irresistible strength.

.....the flood poured triumphantly into the open study, extinguished the fire in one explosive burst of steam, and splashed, with savage impotence, against the walls."

By this time, St. Frank's is minus its Head, masters, and prefects, they having gone to help "save the reservoir". Left to their own devices, the boys seek refuge on the upper floors. Willy Handforth organises the rescue of his pals from the bicycle shed: "Marmaduke the Monkey, Septimus the Squirrel, Rupert the Rat", etc., using an overturned table as a raft. A Morse signal, from the direction of the Moor View School, alerts Nipper and Co. to the need to rescue Irene Manners and Co., who are similarly marooned by the flood waters. (It comes as something of a shock to realise that the Moor View School is not a large building like Cliff House, but "just an ordinary house", and that the number of girls resident does not exceed thirty-five. Our cherished illusions shattered, alas!) The girls are safely ferried to St. Frank's, but in the absence of the headmistress, Miss Bond, the senior mistress Miss Broome, (a lady who is a bit of a battleaxe!), tries to take control of the school.



Willy Handforth and his chums strapped on to the overturned table, which floated like a raft on the waters of the flooded lot by. "Push her off, you chaps!" cried Willy.

Nipper's ingenuity later results in an "Ark" being constructed. Two large river barges, which have drifted into the grounds, form the base, and the superstructure consists of an old wooden barn, which had once stood at the corner of the school's playing fields. Not being the practical sort, technical descriptions in our school stories tend to make my eyes glaze over very rapidly, but I must say Brooks' account of the building of "Handforth's Ark" is very clear, and even had me absorbed. The "Ark" finished, practically "the entire Remove and Fourth Form", and the Moor View girls, set out on the flood waters in quest of dry land. At one point, they accidentally drift out to sea.

Altogether, it's a most enjoyable series. The two final tales, "The Schoolboy Bargees, and "Spring-Cleaning at St. Frank's!" (nos. 49 and 50), seem to have been added to get maximum advantage from the flood theme, and are, perhaps, not

strictly necessary to the plot's development. Reverting to disaster movies. I should have loved to see just such a yarn as "The Deluge at St. Frank's" filmed, when I was a schoolboy.

The only problem is - who on earth would have played Handy?



DID THEY WRITE OF SEXTON BLAKE? - Part Three by W.O.G. Lofts

A reverse case of an author telling me he had not penned a Sexton Blake story, but much later official records pointing out that he had! Concerns John Wheway the popular writer of the majority of Cliff House stories in the thirties. I used to meet John at his office in Fleetway House that he shared with E.L. MacKeag, another prolific writer of boys and girls stories, and who will be mentioned in a later instalment. John, who was small in stature, was then editing, I think, 'Pets Annual'.

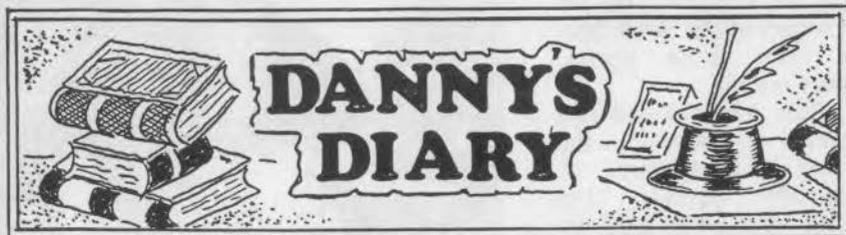
When I refreshed his memory of his Sexton Blake yarn in The Union Jack in 1924, he confessed that until I reminded him it had gone clean out of his mind, but he now remembered the circumstances of this event, and it was never repeated! At that time he was a sub-editor working on a group of papers, being engaged in helping out on the Union Jack edited by H.W. Twyman. A story had been scheduled as well as advertised as being a Lobangu yarn, although anonymous by the creator Cecil Hayer. For some reason now unknown the manuscript could not be found, so he volunteered to write a yarn using same title and character. Not being a detective writer he found this extremely difficult to say the least, never penning another yarn in the Blake saga.

In the early sixties a famous Irish writer by the name of Flan O'Brien was being interviewed at his home in Dublin, and shown on B.B.C. in London. During the interview he revealed tht he had once written five Sexton Blake stories, which caused, of course, a great interest in our circle. I think that Brian Doyle brought it to the attention of Blakania, but I was not able to solve the mystery of where he wrote them.

In writing to Mr. O'Brien, c/o The B.B.C. I never really expected to get an answer, but to my surprise I received a most charming letter from him. This described how the cameras were at his home all day and they only showed in the end a few minutes of him, an unrelated jigsaw of shots and remarks. He gave me his explanation of penning five Blake stories. In his career he never then had once used his own name, writing in a great diversity of planes, as well as in pseudonyms handled mainly by agents. He also at times thought it necessary to mislead publishers.

Now in the first place he never wrote the stories in 'the new look' Blakes. The only stories he could have written were around the 1952 period when three yarns appeared by 'Stephen Blakesley' official records giving the extra data that they were paid to a mysterious 'F. Bond' who might have been the agent. But then Flan O'Brien claimed to have penned five, so the mystery remains.

Flan O'Brien (his real name may have been Brian Nolan) died in 1966 aged only 55, and since that date quite a cult has sprung up about his writings. At regular intervals I get queries from fans of this gifted writer, about the Sexton Blake stories he had written. He might have been 'Stephen Blakesley' or they could have been rewritten up by another author. Who knows?



AUGUST 1939

The Holidays are on, but somehow there is a bit of an uneasy cloud over everything. Everybody is wondering whether there is going to be a war with Germany. Some people are sure of it, and say it is only a matter of time before old Adlof Hitler and his Nazis go too far. Others say that Hitler would never risk a war against Britain and the British Empire. Britain and France promised Poland support if Hitler invaded that country, but he's such a greedy old madman that we don't know what he will do next. And now things look even less promising. Von Ribentrop of Germany and Molotov of Russia have signed a pact in Moscow - the Russo-German pact, so now Germany and Russia are allies. And there is not much doubt that the pact will encourage Adolf.

So much for the grim news. Now for the worth while stuff. The fourpenny libraries have been grand this month. A good job my Gran visited us or I couldn't have afforded all I wanted.

The Greyfriars Schoolboys' Own Library is "The Kidnapped Hiker", carrying on with the hiking holiday which started last month. Ponsonby & Co. of Highcliff are touring in a car with a chauffeur and they almost haunt the Greyfriars party. Actually Pon is anxious to get hold of Bob Cerry's Holiday Annual. Also dogging the party is a smash and grab raider from Courtfield. The story is set in Oxfordshire where Pon's home is. A haunted castle comes into this tale, and Mauly turns up and plays a big part. Stunning stuff.

The second S.O.L. is "The Rookwood Ragers". It's very enjoyable, all ragging and fun. No long theme in it, though there are episodes about Gunner and about Tubby Muffin, and then a longish bit with the rivalry between the Classics and the Moderns.

The St. Frank's S.O.L. is "The Cannibal Invaders". The St. Frank's fellows are cast away on an island in the South Seas, and they enjoy living like Robinson Crusoe - till cannibals invade the island. Some splendid thrills in this one.

In the Boys' Friend Library I have "The Lost Lagoon". This is a long King of the Islands story which I well remember from Modern Boy. A wonderful cache of pearls is hidden in a lagoon and the only one who knows its whereabouts is a castaway who is befriended by Ken King and his crew. But all the rogues of the South Seas are after those pearls. Lovely reading.

This month I had two splendid new stories in the Sexton Blake Library. A wonderful novel is "The Riddle of the Evil Eye" by Pierre Quiroule, which introduces Granite Grant and Mlle. Julie. It is a Secret Service tale, and starts

off with Grant helping a comrade to escape from Tibet while Blake and Tinker are called in to investigate a strange crime in a large house in Esher in Surrey. And the two themes unite in intriguing fashion. The other S.B.L. is "The Impersonators" by Edwy S. Brooks, a fine yarn which introduces Waldo, the Wonder Man. In this one a Captain Payne, a retired army man, down on his luck, is approached by an apparently wealthy gentleman who offers Payne £100 in return for a service. As a result, Payne finds himself accused of a murder of which he had no previous knowledge. Gripping yarn!

Great Britain has started a new service called Air Mail. Britain is the first country to take letters across the Atlantic by aeroplane. You have to put extra stamps on your letters for this service, and you have to stick a blue label, bearing the

No. 684 (New Series)—SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY.

THE LEADING DETECTIVE-STORY MAGAZINE. Four New Volumes appear on the first Thursday of next month. Order them NOW!

THE RIDDLE OF THE EVIL EYE



By PIERRE QUIROULE.

A wonderful adventure novel dealing with an escape from Tibet, across the Himalayan mountains to India. Introducing GRANITE GRANT (King's Spy), Mlle. JULIE (of the French Secret Service), SEXTON BLAKE, and his assistant TINKER.

words "Air Mail", on the envelope. In the very first flight the plane left with 40,000 letters on board.

With our weekly papers I ought really never to be surprised at anything. But a most astounding thing has happened. With the second issue of this month, Modern Boy has changed its format yet again. When I first bought it, it was Magnet size. Then, after a long run, it changed to Boy's Friend size. Then, about 6 months ago it changed to something between the two. And now this month it has gone back to Magnet size. And the colours have gone out of the covers. The new look is blue ink on buff paper, like the present-day Gem. The Captain Justice series has continued all month with the series about Kolensky, that ambitious type (like old Adolf in Germany) who wants to rule the world, and to bring down the British Empire. But Kolensky has Justice to contend with. The first story is "Shanghaied" (in the last issue of the half-way size we have got used to). Next, "Flaming Freedom" with Capt. Justice in action against Britian's enemies. (Let's hope Adolf reads Modern Boy.) Then "Sky Hunt" with Justice on the trail of World Enemy No. 1. (Look out, Adolf!) Final of the month, carrying on with the theme, is "Into the Stronghold". With the month's second issue (the first in the new size Modern Boy) there started a new Biggles serial, "Castle Sinister" by Flying-Officer W.E. Johns. One thing I have noticed; there are nothing like so many advertisements in Modern Boy as there used to be.

Some nice evenings at the cinemas this month. At the Regal we saw "Bride of Frankenstein" which was great - very funny in parts and sometimes creepy. Baron Frankenstein was made to revive his old monster and then to create a mate for it. At the Majestic we saw "Stand Up and Fight" which starred Robert Taylor and Wallace Beery, a kind of western with lots of brawls in it. I enjoyed it. At the Plaza we saw a pleasant family film "Out West With the Hardys" starring Mickey Rooney and Lewis Stone. At the Popular we saw "Four Daughters" which was a quiet delight. The four daughters were played by Priscilla Lane, Rosemary Lane, Lola Lane, and Gale Page, but the film was really stolen by John Garfield, for all the ladies are swooning about him so it looks as though he has a great future. Finally, there was great fun in "Blondie" which stars Arthur Lake and Penny Singleton, all about a worried family man named Dagwood Bumstead. The cartoons about Dagwood appear every day in our newspaper, the Daily Sketch, where they are called "The Newlyweds". I fancy these picture strips in the Sketch are bought from an American newspaper.

With the month's first issue of the Magnet we came to the end of the series about Vernon-Smith and his double, Bertie Vernon. It has been a very long series,

No. 379.—THE SCHOOLBOYS' OWN LIBRARY.

THE KIDNAPPED HIKER!

By FRANK RICHARDS.



Mystery, fun and adventure—the Greyfriars hikers meet with them all as they tramp along the highways and byways of the countryside.

running to 12 stories, and it has been a rattling good one with all sorts of twists and unexpected turns. The last story is "The Plot that Failed". And it is Bertie Vernon, who is really a better fellow at heart than his rival, who saves Vernon-Smith and Redwing from their kidnapper and brings his uncle's plot down in ruins.

Then came the start of a new holiday series, and now Harry Wharton & Co., with Bunter, are sailing on the Thames in a boat called the "Water Lily". This series, so far, reminds me very much of the hiking stories which I am getting in the S.O.L. It is set in England, Pon & Co. are stalking the party, and there is a frowsty criminal called Shifty Spooner who is also dogging the party, obviously wanting something of mystery in the boat. Yes, very reminiscent of the hiking stories, and just as good. I recalled that Tom Merry & Co. once went boating on the Thames one holiday.

The three stories this month, in this new series about the Water Lily, are "The Greyfriars Stowaway", "Ructions on the River", and "Six Boys in a Boat". I expect it will go on a good long time, and it promises to be good.

There has been a terrible happening in the Midlands. A bomb was left in a bicycle beside the kerb in a busy shopping street in Coventry. It exploded, and 6 people have been killed and 50 injured. The I.R.A. are responsible for this terrible affair.

The Gem, as always, has been packed with good things from cover to cover. Tom Merry & Co. are in South America, searching for the lost Lord Conway in the blacklands of Brazil. A young Frenchman named Monsieur Moutarde has now joined the party, and the month's first yarn is "The Bandit of the Forest". In the next tale "The St. Jim's Explorers" Gussy saves a native from the jaws of a crocodile. It all carries on, packed with wild beasts and thrills, in "The River of Death". Last of the month is "Trail of Peril" and the boys on the River Preto, the black river of Brazil, come up against savage Indians, ruthless bandits, and wild beasts. They will go on searching for Lord Conway next month.

The Cedar Creek chums are still on holiday, where they have struck gold and registered their claim. They have some excitement with "The Claim-Jumpers". Next week in "Stolen Gold" the gold is stolen by Gunten and his little clique who have been following the party. But Frank Richards & Co. deal with them, get their gold back, and the head for home with their holiday over. Back at Cedar Creek, in "Gunten Gets the Boot", Miss Meadows, the Head of Cedar Creek, comes on Gunten & Co. gambling. Gunten is expelled, but his father is on the board of governors, and he won't allow his son to be sacked. So Miss Meadows, who refuses to resign, is sacked from her job. In the final tale of the month, "The School on Strike", a new Headmaster, Mr. Peckover, is appointed at Cedar Creek, and Frank Richards & Co. start a rebellion in support of Miss Meadows. Good stuff. It goes on next month.

The Benbow month opens with "The Loser Pays" with Daubeny in debt, and on the verge of disgrace. Next came "The Treasure Clue" with the Bucks of the Benbow trying to get their hands on a map showing the whereabouts of a hidden treasure. Next came "French Leave" with Daubeny & Co. clearing off from the school ship in search of the treasure. And, finally, "The Benbow Adventurers" with Jack Drake & Co., in their turn, clearing off from the ship in search of those Bucks who have gone ahead of them. All good reading, which carries on next month.

ERIC FAYNE comments on this month's DANNY'S DIARY

S.O.L. No. 379 "The Kidnapped Hiker" comprised the 3 central stories of the Magnet's Hiking Series of late summer 1933, one of the stories being originally entitled "The Spectre of Hoad Castle".

S.O.L. No. 380 "The Rookwood Raggers" is just a trifle scrappy, with selected stories of ragging and rivalry. It comprises five Rookwood tales, two connected ones from the summer of 1925 in the Boys' Friend, plus three further similar tales from later the same year.

The S.B.L. novel "The Riddle of the Evil Eye" is one of the handful of new Granite Grant stories from Pierre Quiroule, following his return to the S.B.L.

So Danny saw the first Blondie film in the summer of 1939. There were more than a couple of dozen more Blondie films in the next 10 years or so, and they were pleasant little family films with plenty of harmless fun. I believe that, later on, there was a Blondie TV series which, apparently, did not prove too popular.

As Danny comments, the four changes of format of Modern Boy during its eleven year run is quite remarkable. It does not suggest that the paper was too successful.

The Cedar Creek stories which Danny read in his August 1939 Gem comprised four consecutive stories from the Boys' Friend from early October 1918. "The Claim Jumpers" had the same title in 1918. "Stolen Gold" was originally "Homeward Bound"; "Gunten Gets the Boot" was "The Order of the Boot" in 1918; and "The School on Strike" had the same title on each occasion.

The Benbow tales in Danny's Gem had originally appeared consecutively in the Greyfriars Herald from early November 1920. "The Loser Pays" and "The Treasure Clue" had the same title on both occasions. "French Leave" had been "French Leave on the Orinoco" in 1920, and "The Benbow Adventurers" had been "The Treasure Seekers" on its original appearance.

HOLIDAY ANNUAL HOSPITAL: Wanted, Holiday Annuals in both good and poor condition. Incomplete copies required for spare part surgery. Early editions of this Annual are now O.A.P.s and, like some of us, need a little help! A good home assured. Also vacancies for Magnets, Bunter Books, etc. Contact COLIN CREWE, 12B Westwood Road, Canvey Island, Essex.

COLLECTOR wishes to purchase William, Bunter, W.E. Johns Jennings, First Editions in dustwrappers. Also bound volumes of The Modern Boy. Also will pay £3.50 for H. Baker Press volumes, £7.00 for Club volumes, many numbers required. MR. P. GALVIN, 2 The Lindales, Pogmoor, Barnsley, S. Yorks., SY5 2DT. Tel. (0226) 295613.

The moving-van drove away. He closed the door of his newly acquired house. "Let's have a cup of tea", Ted said to his son.

"It will be an experience living in the same place again".

"I'll have to find a name for it. So many years have passed since our first move."

He had travelled very far since our first move. He had travelled very far since his childhood in this house. First with his parents, sister and brother, later in the Army and closing his career with many years at different Embassies. Now maybe, he had come to roost. "Tomorrow, I'll have a look round." He thanked his son for his help, and bade him goodbye, sending his wishes to his daughter-in-law and grandchildren. The next day was very busy with people coming, things to be fixed, and he only went out late in the afternoon, not really aware of the changes in the district of his childhood. The house was so full of memories, not only of his childhood, which he felt so strongly, but all the homes he had ever had in his married life, and all the mementoes from all over the World.

He was pleased to have seen this house up for sale, although it was rather big for him, but not for all the beautiful furniture he and his wife had bought over many years. Getting the piano tuned was high on his list. Walking around the district in the part of London he knew so well was surprisingly different. There were no "tea-rooms" any more, to stop and have a break while shopping, or where sometimes he had met friends. He remembered how he had taken his wife into the tea rooms so often. He just kept walking today.

The Park looked much as he remembered; it was very pleasant, most people looked relaxed. Suddenly a woman ran out, calling. Her bright sari made her easy to see. People were trying to help, but they could not understand her.

Ted went over, and at once understood her, and that she could not find her children. He was able to speak to her in her own language. On finding out some details, he told the other people around what had happened and they went looking for them, and soon there was a happy and thankful reunion; the children had been in the glass conservatory and could not get the door open.

On the way home, Ted saw a sign in the Library, and went in to enquire. He found out about people wanting to learn English, and realised how many languages he knew. He decided to teach languages several mornings a week. He would not have much time left to wallow in quite so much sentiment. Walking home, the sun was shining, and the house looked magnificent again.

*(SENT FOR PUBLICATION FOR THE BIRTHDAY OF DOROTHY COLE -
11th July, 1989, with best wishes from Christopher and Colin Cole).*

(EDITORIAL NOTE: We regret that this interesting article, referring to an item in C.D. several months ago, was mis-filed, and therefore not published before this.)

DIXON HAWKE LIVES

by Victor H. Brown

Like R.J. Drummond-Smith (C.D. Sept. 1988) I was a great fan of Dixon Hawke and his young assistant, Tommy Burke.

I was introduced to this pair of 'tecs when I bought my first copy of Adventure in 1951. The first case I remember them investigating was 'The City of Sinister Slaves'.

I recall that 'Beware of The Black Terror' and 'The Mystery of The Faceless Men' were particularly gripping.

Hawke and Burke immediately replaced Jack Keen and Bob Trotter of Film Fun fame as my top Crime Fighters.

I suspect, however, that they were very similar and that the length of story and the fact that Hawke was serialised were what appealed most.

I have seen the very small, and now very expensive, Dixon Hawke Casebooks. I think they were probably given away free with copies of the Adventure.

Readers South of the Border might be surprised to learn that Dixon Hawke still lives on in the Dundee Sporting Post, where his rivalry with Detective Chief Insp. Baxter of New Scotland Yard continues in 3,000 to 3,500 word long stories each Saturday evening.

He still retains his outstanding talent of having a photographic memory and his interest in music is undiminished.

Should any C.D. member fancy adding to the casebook of Dixon Hawke, a S.A.E. to Moira Gee, Central Fiction Dept., D.C. Thomson & Co., Albert Square, Dundee, DD1 9QJ, will result in a fact sheet on Dixon Hawke and information on what the publishers are looking for in the stories.

If you're lucky she'll also enclose a couple of tearsheets of recent stories of our old hero.

HAMILTONIA ALL TYPES: Swops, sales and purchases; or maybe just a jolly good chat about the hobby. Lots of Holiday Annuals for my Holiday Annual Hospital wanted in 1989/90. Generous prices paid. Contact: COLIN CREWE, 12b Westwood Road, Canvey Island, Essex, Tel. 0268 693735, Evenings 7.15 - 9.30 p.m. and weekends.

It was Biggles' and Algy's day off and they sat in front of a roaring fire reading the latest edition of 'Collector's Digest'.

"I really enjoy these tales about the old schools", said Biggles, slowly turning another page and savouring the delights that awaited him.

"So do I, especially those about Greyfriars, St. Jim's and Cliff House", murmured Algy who was too engrossed even to look up from his copy of the magazine.

"Do you know something Biggles", said Algy, "you've never told me much about your schooldays".

"Well", replied Biggles, "If you can tear yourself away from the C.D. for just a minute I'll spill the beans... You know I was born and spent my early years in India, my father being an official of the Indian Civil Service?"

Algy nodded.

"When I was just gone 14 I was sent across to England to recover from fever. The climate in India had never really suited me. I stayed at my uncle's a while and was then sent to Malton Hall Boarding School. I remember just as if it was yesterday my first meeting with the headmaster, Colonel Horace Chase, M.A., who was known to us as "Chevy". I remember him as a man of medium build, gowned in black, clean shaven with closed cropped, iron grey hair. He was about sixty. He had little lines at the corners of a tight lipped mouth which helped to soften an otherwise severe expression. My uncle, Brigadier General Bigglesworth, had been at the school 25 years ago, and my brother, Major Charles Bigglesworth, had been Head Boy the year before I started."

"He was killed in action wasn't he?" asked Algy.

"Yes", said Biggles thoughtfully.

"He was killed in 1918. He received a D.S.O. and M.C."

"Did you have many adventures then?" said Algy, wanting to change the subject as quickly as possible.

"Yes, a few" returned Biggles, studying as if to bring a few to mind. "I soon made friends with a boy named Smith, or Smith tertius as he was known to the rest of the class. At first the only thing we had in common was that we were both terrorised by the school bully, Hervey, and his side kick, Brickwell. I remember especially one practical joke I played which nearly went so wrong. Smith and I bought a cannon-ball from an old antique shop in nearby Hertbury. We painted it grey to look like a tennis ball and placed it on a path at a time when our



arch enemies Hervey and Brickwell usually passed. However, the first person to pass was Mr. Bruce, one of the masters we didn't really see eye to eye with. As Mr. Bruce's eyes fell on the ball his usual sour expression turned to one of interest. Like a cat stalking a mouse, he lined up with it. After a quick glance to make sure that he had not been observed, in a display of light hearted abandon he hopped, took a short run, and kicked. The result was a horrid thud and the ball barely moved.

I remember Mr. Bruce's face twisting into a horrible grimace. His mortar board fell off, and a deep groan fell from his lips. We both were hiding behind a tree at the time, and we dare not move until Mr. Bruce had picked up his cap, and, with tears in his eyes, limped painfully back through the school gates."

Algy laughed out aloud. "Any other stories like that?"

Biggles carried on. "I do remember capturing an escaped bear one day, which helped no end in improving my standing amongst my classmates."

"How did you manage that", said Algy, looking astonished.

"Well I was fairly used to seeing bears in India, and it was only a tame dancing bear. I just gave it a few buns and led it back to its worried owner, if I remember correctly."

"Anything else", said Algy now eager for more revelations.

"Oh, yes, many!" replied Biggles. "There was the time I showed a little too much initiative during a war game exercise with the territorials, and the incident at the fairground when I was cheated out of a prize which ended with the stallholder fighting with a soldier. There was also the day when I saw my first aircraft. An old boy of the school had joined the R.F.C., Morris, I think, was his name, and he landed the plane on the school field. I suppose that's when I first thought I wanted to fly. Sad really, though. Later that day the Head told us that Morris had been killed when his plane had fallen out of control in a wood... I suppose the most memorable incident was when I was involved in finding the murderer of Mr. Barnes, the gamekeeper."

Algy sat upright and moved to the end of his seat. "Come on Biggles. You're kidding, surely."

"No laddie", said Biggles, "It all began like this."

Just at that moment the door opened and Mrs. Symes, the housekeeper, walked in. "Air Commodore Raymond to see you sir", she said.

"Thank you Mrs. Symes", said Raymond. "Could you see to it that we are not disturbed. Sit down you two, and have a cigarette. I've a little job for you..."

N.B. Anyone who wishes to read the adventures of the Schoolboy Biggles will have to get hold of a copy of "Biggles Goes to School", first published in 1951 by Hodder and Stoughton.

(Editor's Note: We understand that the next W.E. JOHNS DAY, organised by members of the Northern Old Boys' Book Club, will take place at the Royal Moat House Hotel, Nottingham, on 28th October. Details are available from Paul Galvin (Tel. 0226 295613).



E.C. POPE (Harrow-on-the-Hill): For some time now I have been trying - without success - to discover the author and publisher of a favourite childhood book of mine called *SALE'S SHARPSHOOTERS*. Mind you, I am going back as far as the early 1930s without getting even remotely close to tracking it down...

JIM HODGE (Bristol): During the recent re-run of Granada T.V.'s Sherlock Holmes series I noticed that in "The Adventure of the Dancing Men" the following credit was given - "Dramatized by Anthony Skene". The 'Anthony Skene' (r.n. George N. Phillips 1884 - 1972) of U.J., Thriller and S.B.L., and this later Anthony Skene represent the coinciding of a real (?) name with an earlier pen-name, each concerned with our two most well-known fictional sleuths. I do not know from where either writer hailed but 'Skene' does not seem to be a particularly common surname, at least not in North Somerset where I can find only one listed in the 'phone book, although there could be others ex-directory. Does anyone know anything about this 'modern' Anthony?

BILL THURBON (Cambridge): I noticed in the June issue - on page 8 - the drawing of Captain Justice. This reminds me very much of the drawings of Captain Kettle, who appeared on very many occasions in either Pearsons Magazine or the "Strand"; I wonder whether the artist of Captain Justice either drew, or knew the Captain Kettle drawings. The moustache and the pointed beard are very similar to Kettle. Cutcliffe Haine also wrote a serial about Atlantis in Pearson's Magazine. This was later published as a book, and I still have a copy of this, on my bookshelves.

To turn to "The Scarlet Pimpernel" in this year of the 200th anniversary of the "Terror", I can vaguely remember that in a "Chums" of many years ago there was a "Pimpernel" character, though not a woman. I also vaguely recall that in an early (either "Strand" or "Pearsons") there was also a further series of Orczy stories called "Lady Molly of Scotland Yard". These are very vague memories, but I am pretty sure about the title of "Lady Molly".

(Editor's note: I didn't know that Lady Molly's adventures had been serialized. They were published in book form under the title "Lady Molly of Scotland Yard" in 1910. Lady Molly became a detective mainly to clear the name of her husband,

Captain Hubert de Mazareen, who had been wrongfully found guilty of murder. Lady Molly had several adventures on the way, before vindicating her husband. She was a charismatic character, but nowhere near so appealing as the same author's Scarlet Pimpernel - Sir Percy Blakeney).

ESMOND KADISH (Hendon): The July Digest is absorbing as ever. I remember the S.G.O.L., THE GIRL WHO SEARCHED IN SECRET, and agree with Dennis L. Bird - it's one of "Renee Frazer's" best-written tales. The song-title quoted therein, "Miss Mystery from Nowhere", is almost certainly non-existent (sounds like a title for a prospective number of the S.G.O.L.!) Incidentally, the Selznick production of "The Prisoner of Zenda", which the young Dennis saw in 1939, was made in 1937, so it must have been reissued.

I enjoyed the July feature by Margery Woods, too - but why is the unpopular prefect, Sarah Harrigan, spelling her name as "Sara" now? I hope she's not trying to be trendy - doesn't suit her!

Terry Jones' comment that he "never had the nerve to buy the girls' mags when a lad" was interesting. It was always easier for schoolgirls to buy the boys' papers of course, but boys who read the girls' might well come in for some chaffing - usually good-humoured, but not invariably so. A point worth going into, perhaps?

I was very sorry to hear of the passing of Norman Shaw's mother. Mr. Shaw told us of the fall his mother had had, when my brother, Norman, and I visited him last September, on our last trip together. We were both struck then by Norman Shaw's obvious devotion to his mother.

THEIR HOLIDAY MYSTERY AT BLACKWATER PELE by Margery Woods

CHAPTER 1

"Time to go, I'm afraid."

Colonel Carstairs gulped a last mouthful of coffee and rose from the breakfast table. "I'm sorry about this, girls."

"You shouldn't be so popular, Guv'nor." Jemima had his briefcase ready. "The car's there now."

"Thanks, Jimmy." There was a trace of anxiety in the Colonel's keen gaze as he regarded his daughter and her friends of the Fourth Form at Cliff House, Clara Trevlyn, Marjorie Hazeldene and the American junior, Leila Carroll, who had been his guests at Delma Castle all that week. "Are you sure you're going to manage this trip on your own?"

"Yes, Colonel." Clara spoke for them all. "Please don't worry --- after all, everythings organised and we'll be meeting up with Babs and the others this afternoon. And thanks for having us here."

"Yes, thank you", added Marjorie shyly.

They saw him out to the car, and Leila said merrily over the parting handshake: "Bye, Colonel. Have a nice day --- and give my love to Washington!"

Colonel Carstairs smiled, touched Jemima's shoulder and said briefly, "Take care of anything that might crop up, Jimmy", and got into the car. The girls watched until it was out of sight before they turned to go back indoors. In a couple of hours time they would be departing themselves, en route for Northumberland and the final week of their summer vacation, which was to be devoted to an exciting project. There was to be a national photographic competition for schools that autumn, the theme of which could be set anywhere within the British Isles, but had to represent past and present, be researched and written up as well as photographed. The prizes were extremely desirable, apart from the tremendous prestige of winning for Cliff House. After endless discussions during the last week of term Babs and Co. had chosen Northumberland as their setting and mapped out a pattern of places and events which they were convinced would provide the foundation for a winning photographic display. None of them really knew the rugged northern county which had seen centuries of warfare across its famed border but they had done the homework and become more and more afired with enthusiasm as they delved into history. The Colonel had been able to arrange accommodation for the girls at a country house owned by a colleague of his at present abroad. Part of the property was an historic old pele tower, which promised pictorial material and history right on their doorstep, so to speak, and Colonel Carstairs had planned to escort the girls north and see them settled safely before returning to London. And now had come this urgent summons which called him to the States immediately. But as Clara said, all they had to do was follow the plan and go!

Gleefully they scampered to their rooms to complete last minute packing. Sturdy practical togs, strong shoes and weather-proofs in case the weather didn't play fair, and, most important of all, their cameras. The taxi which was to take them to Leeds station arrived promptly and they piled in, waving goodbye to the faithful Parkins and Mrs. Pound. Only Clara betrayed a sudden wistful shadow across her face.

"Cheer up!" exclaimed Leila.

"No --- I was just missing Pluto", Clara sigh. "He would have adored lots of long walks over the moors."

"But it wouldn't have been practical, dear", Marjorie tried to console. "You said so yourself, as we plan to do lots of long cycle rides."

"I know." Clara stared out of the window, then cried, "Look, Jimmy, isn't that the post going up to the castle?"

Jemima craned round to look through the rear window, just in time to see the red van disappear up the drive. To the surprise of the others she leaned forward and spoke to the driver. "We'd better go back. It might be something important for the Guv'nor."

"But can't Parkins or Mrs. Pound...?" Leila stared, and Jemima simply shook her head, affixing her monocle more securely.

"Sorry old spartans, but must know. The old brainbox would only fray to a frazzle for the rest of the hols instead of snapping snaps, what?"

The surprised Parkins had just accepted a handful of mail as the car returned with the girls. Relief chased surprise as he handed over the letters and a brown packet. "I had to sign for this one, Miss Jemima."

She skimmed through them, putting the letters aside as less important and weighed the brown packet in her hand.

"Well", said Clara, "you can't open your father's post."

"It has a Northumberland postmark", Jemima said slowly, "and I've a hunch it might concern us."

Jemima's hunch proved accurate as they so often did. The packet contained a letter, a currency note and some coinage, and two keys, one of which was large and heavy and of impressively ancient appearance. Anxious now, the girls watched Jemima's face as she read the sheet of lined blue notepaper then passed it to Clara. Over the Tomboy's shoulder they scanned the letter.

"Dear Sir, After getting your message cancelling the arrangement I thought I'd better post the keys back to you and the change left from the money you sent for the groceries, but I didn't know what to do about the bicycles so I shut them in the garage. They'll be all right there until somebody comes to collect them. Yours truly, Millicent Jones. (Mrs.)"

"Cancelled!" gasped Clara. "But what does it mean?"

"I thought everything was fixed", cried Leila.

"Does this mean we --- we can't go there?" asked Marjorie.

Jemima frowned. "I don't understand." She read the letter again. "This must be the housekeeper the Guv'nor engaged to cook for us and see to the place. But he can't have sent any message."

"Someone jolly well has", stated Clara.

"But who?"

"Search me."

"The owners?" hazarded Leila.

"The owners are at present on holiday in France, relaxing before taking up a new posting to the Middle East. The message didn't come from them, I'm certain. They don't even live at Blackwater Pele at all. They inherited it a few months ago from a distant cousin on Mrs. Newton's side of the family and haven't yet made up their minds whether to keep it as a holiday and retirement home or sell it. They told the Guv'nor he could borrow it any time he liked, and that the keys were with a friend in London, from whom the Guv'nor collected them. And that this Mrs. Jones used to be housekeeper to the old lady before she died, and would look after us if we got in touch with her. Which the Guv'nor did."

Leila waved the letter. "Yes, and according to this --- the message to cancel came from your father, Jimmy."

The girls looked at Jemima, wating, wondering. What were they going to do? Was this the end of the eagerly awaited trip to Northumberland? The end of their hopes of a wonderful winning entry in the Photographic competition?

CHAPTER 2

"I sus-say, Babs..."

"Yes, Bessie", Barbara Redfern's blue eyes held a light of worry as she turned to the plump duffer of the fourth. "What's the matter now?"

Bessie looked hurt at the distracted note of impatience in Babs' voice. "Kik can't we go for a snack? I'm hungry and I'm tut-tired."

"How unusual!" laughed golden-haired Mabel Lynn. "Bessie's hungry and tired"
"Well, we've been in this blessed station for hours", Bessie grumbled.

This blessed station was the Central at Newcastle-upn-Tyne, a great echoing cavern of a railway station, in which the chums of the fourth had been waiting for well over an hour since disembarking from the Kings Cross to Edinburgh express. Bessie had already sought renewal of inner strength with two ices, a packet of biscuits and a bag of toffees. She crumpled the paper bag disconsolately and looked longingly towards the cafeteria.

"We have to wait for the others, here under the clock", Babs repeated.

"And it looks as if they've missed the train", said Janet Jordan. Bessie's expression showed all too clearly her opinion of people who missed trains. Another bar of chocolate would help while away the waiting, but she'd spent all her travelling pocket money already, and knew there wasn't any hope of persuading Babs to dole out any more of Bessie's holiday money until they reached their destination. Her own money, indeed! Bessie glowered again, then looked up as Mabs exclaimed: "The Leeds train has just gone up on the indicator --- it's due in four minutes."

They brightened. Surely Jemima and Clara and Marjorie and Leila would be on this one. They crowded along towards the gate, watching eagerly as the train pulled in and drew to a slow halt. Lots of people emerged, and Babs held her breath, not for the first time wondering what had happened and what they would do if the rest of their holiday party failed to arrive. Then Janet gave a whoop of joy and they saw their form mates hurrying along the platform. But smiles faded as they saw immediately that something indeed had gone wrong.

Greetings over, and, to Bessie's great joy, Jemima was suggesting refreshments and leading the way to the cafeteria. There, she explained quickly and concisely the shock they had had at Delma Castle.

"And to think we went back for it!" said Clara disgustedly.

"And so, dear spartans", Jemima went on, "we have to make a decision. We can write it off and go back to Delma; or we can go back to wherever we can find a resting place for weary old heads. Or..."

"Or?" they breathed.

"We can take a chance on getting stranded up on the wild and woolly Border and go on as planned."

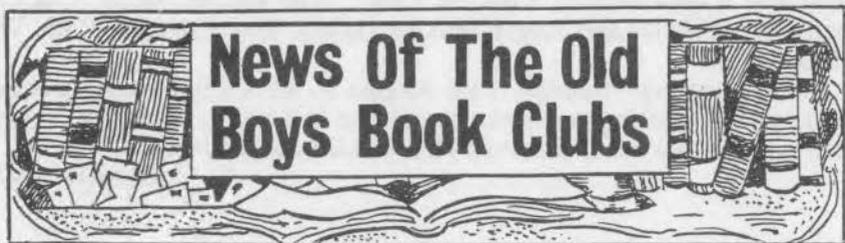
"Find out what it's all about and where that message came from", Babs said eagerly.

"We have to take a vote", insisted Jemima, "and reckon up our resources in case we have to fall back on hotels." The circle of faces, excepting that of Bessie, made a vote unnecessary. They were all eager, scenting a mystery and unwilling to be deterred by a strange setback of which they might yet have remained in ignorance.

"And after all", said Jemima, slovenly stretching her hand across the table, "we have this trump card."

On her open palm lay the tantalising old key. Would it prove the key simply to misunderstanding --- or mystery?

(TO BE CONTINUED)



O.B.B.C. MIDLAND SECTION

Eleven members turned up for our June meeting, a good attendance after recent disappointing ones. Future plans were discussed. There will be monthly meetings (except in November) until the end of 1989, and then only three meetings a year, which we hope to make bigger and better. The first of these will be on 28th April 1990, in Blackheath Library (about 10 miles from Birmingham and easily reached by bus or train).

Geoff Lardner then took several rounds of a game 'Take a Letter'. I contributed a quiz of 20 Questions, with a Perry Mason hardback as the prize (won by Christine Brettell). We thank Betty and Johnny Hopton, Christine Brettell and Ivan Webster for providing excellent refreshments. The next meeting will be on 26th September.

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

JACK BELLFIELD

LONDON O.B.B.C.

A good attendance of twenty met at the beautiful Burnham on Crouch home of Alan and Myra Stewart for the July meeting. Chairman Roger Jenkins extended a warm welcome to all. Roy Parsons began the entertainment with a recent Times leader dealing with the subject of schools opting out of local authority control, but written in the style of a Richmal Crompton parody. Mark Taha presented a general quiz which even involved him in singing! Winners were Don Webster; Norman Wright; Roger Jenkins and Alan Wright - who tied; Roy Parsons and Chris Harper, who also tied!

Roger Jenkins read from S.O.L. 175, 'One Against the School', an unusual tale showing Vernon Smith and Mr. Quelch pitting their wits against each other, and the form-master not emerging as his usual just self. Bill Bradford took us down memory lane to the July 1969 meeting. After the sumptuous repast provided by our hosts, Norman Wright gave details of some forthcoming publications of Hawk Books. Alan Stewart

presented a quiz entitled 'Find the Link'. The winners were Alan Pratt; then Don Webster and Roger Jenkins (joint); Roy Parsons, Mark Taha, Mark Jarvis.

Next meeting: Sunday, 13th August at the Chingford Horticultural Society Hall, starting at 4 p.m., though the hall will be open from around 3.13 p.m. for the usual convivial chat and library facilities.

MARK JARVIS

CAMBRIDGE CLUB

The well-attended "Summer visit" meeting - or as much of it as possible - took place outdoors in the glorious sunshine, at the Northampton home of Howard Corn.

After a short business session, the members present watched as a lettering artist, David Gould of Fleetway Publications and working on 'Whizzer and Chips' and 'Roy of the Rovers', demonstrated his art. He showed us examples of the completed artwork (black and white, and colour) demonstrating the various stages involved in the task of lettering. The script occasionally called for minor changes at the lettering stage to match the speech balloons and captions into the format set by the completed artwork and that set by the printing method.

Later, Howard conducted us around his extensive hobby - archives of books, magazines and comics, which as expected from a co-editor of 'Eagle Times', was very Hulton Press publications orientated.

ADRIAN PERKINS

NORTHERN O.B.B.C.

The informal summer meeting took place at the spacious home and library of our Secretary, the Rev. Geoffrey Good, at Wakefield. There was no formal meeting in July to report.

LETTER FROM THE GREYFRIARS ARCHIVE

(From Leslie Rowley)

From the Headmaster's Secretary to The Administrator,
Stonemoor House of Correction

Dear Administrator,

Re: Meyer Brander Esq.,

Dr. Locke has asked me to reply to your recent enquiry regarding the above gentleman and the following is given without prejudice.

The curriculum followed at Greyfriars is, presumably, more academic and less disciplinarian than that followed at the institution which you administer. At this School most offences are awarded impositions, detentions and canings; only those of a most serious nature qualify for a flogging. Expulsions are rare and have been made only in cases of theft, gambling and the nocturnal breaking of bounds.

Under the temporary Headmastership of Mr. Brander punishments at this School increased both in number and in severity, flogging becoming the general rule rather than the isolated incident. Such draconian measures equalled and sometimes surpassed the tyranny endured in the public schools of a century ago. Such a sequence of events culminated in Mr. Brander's appointment being somewhat dramatically and suddenly terminated. It was at the time a point for consideration as to whether legal action should be taken against him; consideration that was finally influenced by the good name of the School being paramount to the possible scandal that the action would arouse.

Dr. Locke consequently feels that he is unable to recommend Mr. Brander for a post on your Staff, and a senior master, Mr. Prout, who served under Mr. Brander's temporary headmastership, suggests that Mr. Brander should be reported to the Home Office for deportation procedure.

I trust that the foregoing will be of use in your decisions regarding this gentleman. I need hardly stress that what I have written should be treated in confidence.

I am, Sir
Yours
Secretary to the Headmaster



DENISE'S DIARY

AUGUST 1939

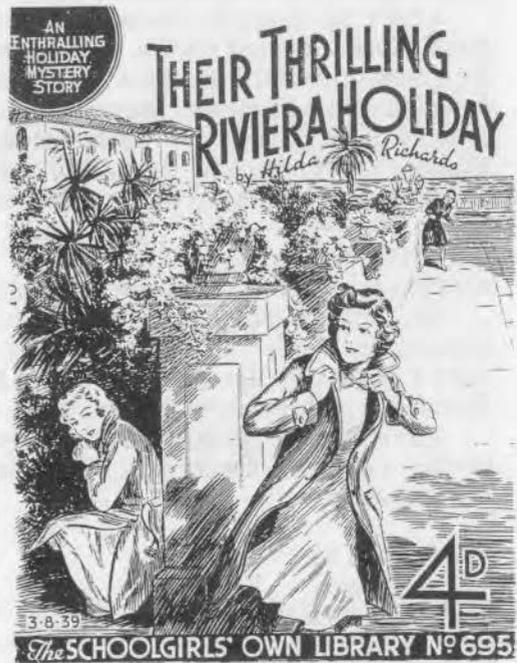
by Dennis L. Bird

This was the last month of peace for six years. Everyone knew something dreadful was about to happen - even an 8 year-old like me. During the month, Germany's Foreign Minister signed the non-aggression pack with Soviet Russia; the last constraint on Hitler's mad ambitions was removed and the attack on Poland was about to begin.

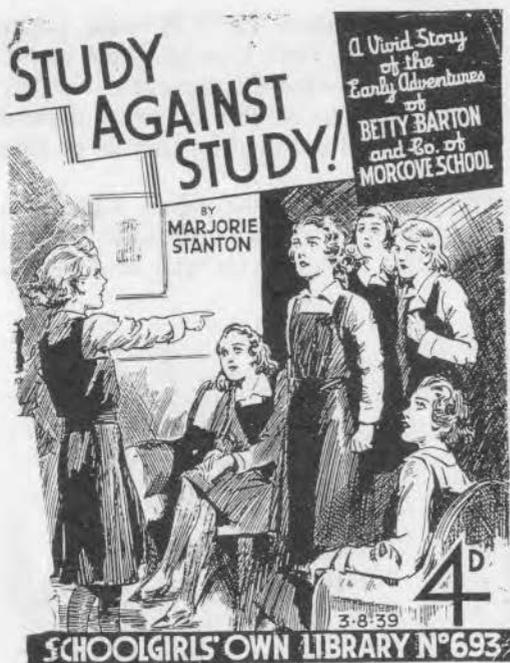
But in England the S.G.O.L. books continued to appear just as usual, and August 3rd saw another four on the book-stalls. The Cliff House Adventure was "*Babs and Co. in the Secret City*" (No. 692). I have never been able to get it, and know only that the cover picture showed Barbara and her friends with an African tribe. Another August book was "*On Secret Service at School*" (No. 694 by Joan Inglesant. This was a rather routine story specially written for the Library, about the daughter of a Secret Service man who improbably is sent as a pupil to a school where spies are known to be operating.

The other two books are far more interesting. One is unique, so far as I know (perhaps our Editor can tell us different?). It is by "Hilda Richards" (John Wheway), and is not about Cliff House. Did he ever, under the Richards pen-name, write another story not featuring Barbara Redfern? This tale is "*Their Thrilling Riviera Holiday*" (No. 695), which concerns Linda Gay and her friends Queenie Pelham and duffer Evelyn Clavering. On page 1, Eve comes out with a classic 1930s line: "I say, the bathing's going to be just spiffing!". Pupils at Whitechester School, they are far from their scholastic haunts; they are on holiday in the South of France with Linda's wealthy Aunt, Mrs. Eunice Gay. Curiously, on and from page 40 this Aunt apparently mislays her husband to become Miss Gay; we are never told the reason for this confusing change in her marital status.

The story-line concerns a likeable but mysterious English girl, Hazel Brent, whom Linda & Co. befriend. She is always disappearing for unexplained meetings with unknown men and women. Half-way through, a new character appears - "a frank, charming-looking girl"; but you can tell she is the villain because her name is Olga. The final explanation is an unconvincing plot to pin a jewel robbery on Hazel's brother. But the plot is not important; what attracts me to the book is its



setting. Unusually for the S.G.O.L., it is situated in real places: Antibes, Juan-les-Pins, Nice, Mentone, Cannes. These are brought vividly to life - a battle of flowers in Nice, carnival in Cannes, the perfume factories in Grasse. There is a drive on the Grande Corniche, and dramatic descriptions of mountain scenes and a grim castle, the Château Sans Porte - which has a macabre legend of a mediaeval murder. Strong stuff for the Cliff House author!



The Morcove book this month was one of "Marjorie Stanton's" best: "*Study Against Study!*" (No. 693). It introduces Pat Lawrence, who roars in on the first page on her motor-cycle. "A boyish freedom and strength were hers", but she had other qualities too - good and bad. Horace Phillips draws a fascinating, full-length portrait of a high-handed, magnetic, fiercely honest girl who had been unjustly expelled from her previous school and was now resolved never again to serve as a scapegoat. She dislikes Betty Barton and the Study 12 girls, but plays fair by them, although there are tense quarrels and misunderstandings. She replaces Betty as Form Captain - there is a stirring account of the election campaign - but when Ursula Wade reveals her own perfidy on Pat's behalf, Pat resigns at once so that Betty can be reinstated.

This powerful new personality suggests a comparison in the author's mind. "Another Pam Willoughby? Something like, perhaps; there was the same sort of air about her." And this leads me to my sole criticism: the book's failure to develop a relationship between Pat and Pam. They have only two or three scenes together; their first meeting goes for nothing (Pam is merely one of a crowd in Pat's study). There is an attraction between them; Pat has "a liking for that one girl, Pam". There are some attempts to detach Pam from the Study 12 set, but it is all rather half-hearted - a missed opportunity.

(Editor's Note: John Wheway did write one or two non-Cliff House stories in the Hilda Richards pen-names, both in the Annuals and the Weeklies. One day it would be wonderful to have a full list of his works. It is interesting that Dennis Bird comments on the realistic atmosphere of "Their Thrilling Riviera Holiday". Wheway's Cliff House South-of-France holiday stories were equally convincing. He was inspired by a wonderful trip he made to the Riviera during the nineteen-thirties.)

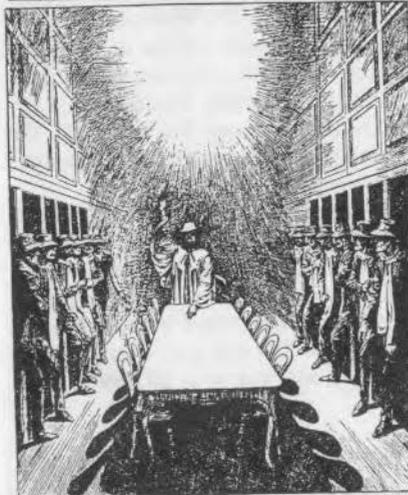
My nephew is a collector of old postcards of which he has an enormous number. A fascinating hobby - nearly as fascinating as our Old Boys' Books.

He came on one the other day which he felt sure would interest me. We reproduce it - back and front - for you.

It advertises No. 1 of the famous periodical PLUCK - the paper which, after a year or two, would introduce St. Jim's to a delighted world. It bears a green halfpenny stamp - King Edward the Seventh - clearly postmarked 3rd November 1904. You used to be able actually to read postmarks in those days - and even small villages had postmarks of their own. Those were the days!

It is hand-written and addressed by the Editor of the paper. Clearly he edited other papers, and he sent out some of these cards to readers who, at some time or other, had written to him. I hope you will find this as interesting as I do.

This is a much reduced copy of the cover of PLUCK, on sale everywhere, next Saturday, the 6th of November.



"PLUCK" is a healthy complete story paper which will interest everyone. All readers of NUMBER ONE should show it to their parents and friends.

POST CARD.

NOV 3 1904
 3
 THE ADDRESS ONLY TO BE WRITTEN
 HERE.

This space may be used for communications
 for inland postage only. NOT FOR FOREIGN.
 My dear Mr. Eric Fayne
 The first number of
 Pluck, containing three
 long complete stories will
 appear on Saturday 6th
 November. Please get a
 copy and let me know
 what you think of it.
 Yours Editor.

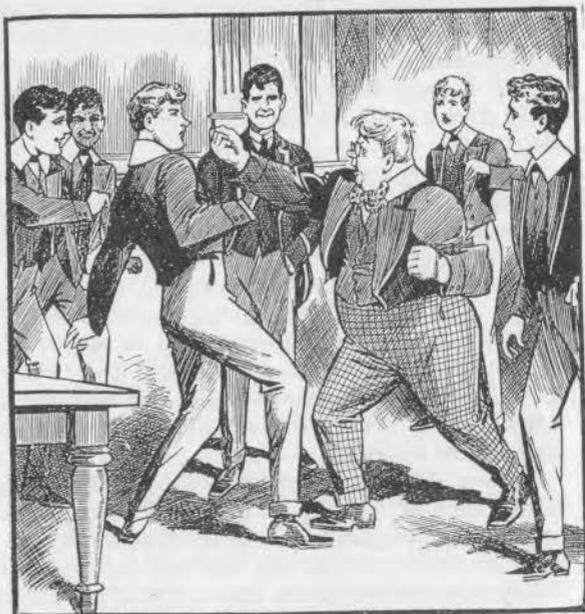
Mr S.P. Briggs
 55 Springfield Rd
 Colham
 Bristol
 (or Occupier.)

World War I was drawing to its bitter close, but exactly three weeks before Armistice Day (Monday, 11th November, 1918), MAGNET No. 559 appeared on the bookstalls on the 21st October, and war was still very much the theme. The Greyfriars story was entitled "A Case of Conscience", and introduced a new boy to the Remove - Richard Hilary.

During the four years of that appalling period of history, many stories in the MAGNET and the GEM revolved around the ghastly happenings of that time. Spies (usually referred to as Huns or Prussians by the scornful schoolboys), heroes, traitors, deserters, profiteers, men who made good by joining the Army, all featured prominently. There were patriotic schoolmasters, and even George Wingate of the Sixth tried to enlist. Removites envied the soldiers who were sometimes seen near the school, with Tom Merry of St. Jim's saying at one time words to the effect that "We must all keep fit, so that we shall be ready to die for our country" (luckily Tom would always remain fifteen years old). Now, as perhaps it seemed that the war would never end, a Conscientious Objector cropped up - or rather, the son of such a man!

A typical new Greyfriars boy arrived: 'a good looking lad, slim in build, and yet sturdy looking, although his expression had a curious shyness about it'. He was accompanied by a Solicitor, and put into Study No. 5 with Oliver Kipps, but, as he appears to be of a quiet disposition, Bolsover, with the help of Skinner, Stott, and Snoop, decides to do a spot of bullying.

Bolsover asks Hilary if he has any relatives at the Front, and Hilary replies that he has an uncle in the Lomashires (yes, that Regiment again), and that a cousin was discharged through losing two legs on the Somme. Bolsover is slightly mollified, but decides that Hilary should fight Bunter, who has been spreading unpleasant tales about the new boy. Hilary refuses, and also refuses to fight the now enraged Bolsover. Immediately he is considered a funk (that awful word was used so often by Hamilton), so Bunter decides to have a go. Hilary, however, instead of returning a knock from Bunter, leaves the Common Room, much to the derision of Bolsover and his cronies, and the rest of



THE BRAVE, BAD BUNTER!

the boys feel uncomfortable. Wharton follows Hilary, and tries to reason with him in Study 5, but receives no explanation. Skinner tosses a white feather into the room, and Wharton leaves the study, heartily fed up with the new boy. Kipps refuses to speak to him, and Richard Hilary's first evening at Greyfriars is not a happy one. Bunter taunts Hilary in the dormitory, and Hilary, absolutely fed up, grips him firmly by the shoulder, and pitches him on to his bed. This stops the intended ragging by Skinner and Co.

Harry Wharton, the next day, approaches Hilary again, and the new boy says that he wished he had never come to Greyfriars. Wharton asks him if his Father is in the Army. The reply is in the negative. Hilary's Father is a Conscientious Objector, having been put to work on the land. Also, he says, that his Father had taught him that it was wrong to fight. Wharton leaves him, but now feels sympathetic.

Skinner again taunts Hilary, but the new boy has had enough of him, and 'his strong grip was laid on Skinner...who had no shadow of a chance in Hilary's powerful grasp'. Skinner is flung out of Hilary's study. By chance, Vernon-Smith and Tom Redwing read in a slightly dated newspaper that Hilary's Father is a C.O., Skinner also finds this out. He then blackmails Hilary, who gives him £2, but refuses a second request for money. Therefore Skinner tells the Remove that Hilary is the son of a C.O. Bolsover then shows up in his worst light. "You white livered worm, you're as big a coward as your Father" he shouts, and now, driven beyond endurance, Hilary strikes the bully across the face. A terrific fight ensues, and although Bolsover wins through sheer strength, he now apologises for his past detestable behaviour. The 'Conchy' was no longer an outcast.

However, Hilary remains rather a loner. Billy Bunter confiscates a letter from the post rack, addressed to Hilary, which Bunter immediately shows to Skinner and Co. It is from Hilary's Father, saying that he would be at the Old Priory (he evidently knew the locality) on Saturday afternoon, and wanted Dick to meet him there.

The young rascals are delighted with this information, and, as there would be four to one, decide to go to the Priory and tar and feather Mr. Hilary. To their annoyance, they only discover a soldier hanging about, so return to Greyfriars. The following morning (Sunday), the Famous Five are on their way through Friardale Woods to meet Marjorie and Clara, where they find a soldier strolling around. The Famous Five chat to the soldier, who asks if they know Richard Hilary. If so, would they ask him to come to the woods that afternoon to meet his Father. Wharton and his chums think the soldier must be a friend of Mr. Hilary, but give his son the message. Skinner and Co. overhear, and again decide to do the 'tar and feather' act, so, with Bolsover, make their way to the woods, trailing Hilary as he goes to meet his Father.

Harry Wharton & Co. notice the cads following Hilary, so they in turn follow them. They all catch up in the woods, and soon a violent scuffle is taking place between the two parties. On to the scene strides the soldier, whom Skinner and Co. had seen on the previous day, and who had spoken to Harry Wharton that morning. Hilary takes one look at the man, a look of astonishment - "Father" he cries.

And so it ended. Mr. Hilary (a handsome, well built man), having had a change of heart, had joined the Army, and was due to go to the Front, a Conscientious Objector no longer. Richard Hilary happily returns to Greyfriars with Wharton and

his chums, and everybody now in the Remove (with the exception of Skinner and Co.) is friendly. Hilary figured in no more stories, which was rather a pity; he merely faded into the dead wood background.

Reading the two stories again (MAGNET No. 560 - "His Country's Call") together with "A Case of Conscience", they do not make altogether pleasant reading. Perhaps the author should have avoided introducing Conscientious Objectors into the stories. There were too many cruel critical comments from the boys, and perhaps, who knows, the Objectors had more pluck than many.

Two weeks later World War I was over.....World War II on its way.

WHICH SCHOOL?

By Ernest Holman

The Hamilton schools shared each other's characters pretty frequently - it was always good reading to meet up with these 'visitors' to the stories, in whichever publication they turned up.

Just occasionally, however, there would appear a chronicle featuring two schools more or less equally. This didn't occur very often, of course - I am not including series when 'so-and-so' had a spell at 'such-and-such', or those twins rearing their heads in two places at once!

One such story that springs to mind is a Magnet offering entitled 'Bunter the Ventriloquist' in Magnet No. 1328 of 1933. Roger Jenkins, in his 'History of the Magnet', draws attention to the fact that it is notable for being situated almost entirely at Rookwood. Only the illustrations are foreign to Rookwood - Jimmy Silver bowling 'a la Larwood' and breaking the Head's window. (Dicky Dalton doubted if it WAS the correct Larwood method!); a typical Shields sketch showing a schoolboy tip-toeing from a room, intending to represent Lovell; the stately Dr. Chisholm resembling Quelch or Hacker. It was, as Roger states, as much as a Rookwood yarn as any other.

Similarly, in the post-war 'Lord Billy Bunter', a great deal of the action is played out at St. Jim's - Gussy is prominently present, with Blake and Co. also to the fore, as well as Tom Merry and others. One could also include amongst such type of stories another post-war publication, 'Bessie Bunter of Cliff House School', written by Hamilton as Hilda Richards. This was, really, to all intents and purposes a Greyfriars yarn - and, not for the first time, involved the Hazeldene brother and sister 'act'.

If one looks deeply into such stories, it is always interesting to see if the 'other' school characters come over as convincingly as in their own publications. (Of course, the Cliff House characters in the girls' papers bore very little resemblance to those portrayed by Hamilton in the Magnet - but then the former stories were penned by other writers under the Hilda Richards name.)

Just three such 'which school' stories - no doubt there are others. Know any, do you?

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CHUBBY AND CHIRPY

The Comical College Chums



1. Chubby and Chirpy had got the Whitsun holiday fever, which meant that they liked lessons less than ever. While Teacher was busy at the blackboard, Chubby quickly amused himself with the blow-out toy.



2. Yes, he gave a hearty puff, and the thing uncoiled smartly and caught Chirpy a slap in the eye. But just then Teacher turned round and sternly demanded to know what Chubby meant by doing such a thing.



3. "How dare you, sir!" he thundered. And he ordered Chubby to bring the blow-out along to him, which the tubby one promptly did. "Oh dear!" he mumbled, going all of a quiver. "Now I'm for it!"



4. Teacher took the toy, turned it this way and that, said "Ah!" and "Hum!" and then put it on his nose as he had seen Chubby do. "That's it, isn't it?" he rapped, having adjusted it. "What happens now?"



5. So Chubby told him. "Give a good hard blow, sir, and you'll be surprised!" Teacher blew all right—and he was certainly surprised. So was the inspector who, as luck would have it, came along just then!



6. He arrived just in time to stop the end of the blow-out with his face. Oh, he was so cross about it! "The idea!" he screamed, chasing Teacher, while our two merrily skipped off to the fair to enjoy themselves.

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