

STORY PAPER

COLLECTORS' DIGEST

VOL. 44
No. 522

JUNE
1990

79p



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STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Editor: MARY CADOGAN

STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

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W.H. GANDER

COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Founded in 1946 by
HERBERT LECKENBY

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VOL. 44

No. 522

JUNE 1990

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The Editor's Chat



ENDINGS ...

Wharton, Bunter, D'Arcy, 'Nipper', Handforth and many other famous schoolboy names have been associated with the C.D. over the decades. One 'schoolboy', however, is unique as a contributor to our magazine. I refer, of course, to Danny our popular diarist. As you will see from this month's extract Danny has now been forced to abandon his diary entries, at least on a regular basis, because of the wartime ending of the Amalgamated Press papers which the Diary featured. I

am, however, happy to say that we have not heard the last of Danny. He will, I feel sure, crop up in our pages from time to time, and indeed, to mark his great contribution to the C.D., I plan next month to re-publish the very first of his diary entries.

... AND BEGINNINGS

Detective stories and the characters of various super sleuths have always been popular in juvenile papers, and the Nelson Lee and Sexton Blake tales have long been pillars of our hobby and the C.D. Towards the

end of the summer I propose to start a new (and hopefully fairly regular feature) called OTHER FAVOURITE DETECTIVES, which will include articles about investigators other than Lee and Blake, who will of course keep their own respective pages every month. I foresee that this new 'column' might attract contributions from a fairly wide range of readers; the old papers - and comics - fairly bristled with charismatic crime-solvers, and I look forward to many of these getting a showing in the C.D. at different times.

Several readers have suggested that as well as *The Postman Called* we might devote a small section of the magazine to specific queries (and discoveries) concerning stories, characters and bibliographical details of papers and books connected with the hobby. This sounds like a good idea; it will give readers the opportunity to answer each other's questions, and might widen our general knowledge of the tales which have given pleasure to so many of us for so long. So send me your notes and queries, and let us see how many literary mysteries we can unravel together.

I would like, once again, to make a plea that all articles, stories and snippets submitted for possible publication should be presented clearly: typed, if possible, with **double spacing** between the lines and a **wide margin** on both sides of the paper. I also consider hand-written manuscripts, but these should follow a similar pattern regarding spacing, and, of course, be written **extremely** clearly, bearing in mind the fact that the able and hard-working staff of our printer do not know all the names of characters, schools and places in our papers.

Happy reading - and writing!

MARY CADOGAN

WANTED: Boys Magazine Sepia Paper Football Team Photographs issued 1922 to 1926. Phone 03212 - 4802.

WANTED: Modern Boys, bound or singles. Bound vols. of The Gem, Nelson Lee, Biggles and Captain Justice, Boys' Friends Library. Other bound volumes of Story Papers for my collection. Many Howard Baker volumes required. P. GALVIN, 2 The Lindales, Pogmoor, Barnsley, S. Yorks., SY5 2DT. Tel. 0226 295613.

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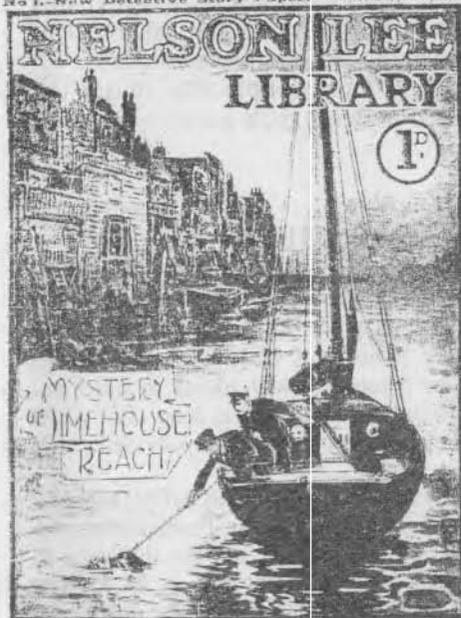
SEVENTY FIVE YEARS OF ENJOYMENT

by C.H. Churchill

On June 12th this year we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the launching of the Nelson Lee Library, so I thought I would pen a few lines on the early stories.

It was an inauspicious opening for the first few stories were on the poor side. The very first one "The Mystery of Limehouse Reach" by A.C. Murray was nothing to shout about and the following few stories were also

No. 1.—New Detective Story Paper. (Published by June 12, 1911)



HANDSOME PHOTO-BUTTON OF GENERAL FRENCH GIVEN AWAY.

No. 112—LONG, COMPLETE DETECTIVE NOVEL.



best forgotten. They were by various authors. It was obvious that several of them were written as Sexton Blake stories for on one or two occasions

Tinker was mentioned instead of Nipper. These slips occurred when someone was altering the names of Blake and Tinker to Lee and Nipper.

The day was saved, as they say, as tales by Maxwell Scott (creator of Lee and Nipper) G.H. Teed and E.S. Brooks soon took the field. The latter two provided almost all the tales after No. 20 until E.S. Brooks took over all the writing when St. Frank's appeared in No. 112.

One can only guess why the Library was changed from detective stories to school/detective ones. Brooks had written some very good detective series such as the Green Triangle, Circle of Terror, Jim the Penman and the very fine 15 stories of the Eileen Dare adventures. The last named were, of course, very unusual indeed. In addition to all these G.H. Teed came up with the Black Wolf, Genghis the mystery man of Lhassa and the Dr. Mortimer Crane (the man with four identities) series as well as a number of single stories, all very good. Probably the circulation figures did not come up to expectations against the competition of the Union Jack and the S.B. Library.

After St. Frank's came on the scene, however, things soon improved and, in the later days of the old small series Lees, the Library was in its heyday.

This brief resume may whet the appetites of those who may not have had the chance of reading these old issues. If so I suggest they rectify this by borrowing some from Bill Bradford's N.L. library. I can assure them that there is "gold in them thar hills" especially those mentioned above.

Finally, may I suggest a vote of thanks to those people who started the N.L.L. all those years ago and so provided us with such a vast amount of lovely reading matter.

THE BANNINGTON FETE AND FLOWER SHOW

by Jack Greaves

One of the most eagerly awaited important events on the Bannington Calendar was the annual Bannington Fete and Flower Show and when this day arrived everyone was hoping that the weather would be favourable with plenty of sunshine. Actually as a general rule gala day was either windy or rainy, but in June 1921 when E.S. Brooks described this event, the good Lord came up trumps and provided really excellent weather.

Many of the local people from HELMFORD, CAISTOWE, EDGEMORE and BELLTON would make their way there, including many of the St. Frank's boys, the latter travelling on their cycles, straight after morning lessons and not troubling to have the midday meal at the school but preferring to obtain snacks at the various stalls on the fairground. Fatty Little would be eating most of the time during his visit.

It was the one day of the year for the town - a day of gala attire and happy laughter. Of course only the more sedate folk went to the actual flower show, the younger people were content with the other attractions. Girls in silks and voiles and muslins were to be seen everywhere, laughing and thoroughly enjoying themselves.

Flannels and straw-hats among the men were general and naturally there were enormous quantities of children.

They all made a wonderful picture against the background of intense green. On all sides were the white canvas tents of the side shows and the refreshment rooms, and there were coconut shies, roundabouts, swings, scenic railways, Aunt Sally's and scores of entertainments of similar nature. There were two well known bands playing in different parts of the grounds, and, even if one was not actually seated in the near vicinity listening to them, one would probably catch the sounds floating to various parts of the area, perhaps of melodies arranged from the Savoy Operas by Gilbert & Sullivan or from the popular musical-comedies of "The Arcadians", "The Quaker Girl", "The Maid of the Mountains" or "Chu Chin Chou".

The fair itself had been planted, as was customary, quite near to the old Bannington Abbey ruins. These were ivy-covered and in a state of complete decay, only a broken wall projecting up here and there.

The Abbey had been built in the fourteenth century and had well stood the test of time. It was one of the chief attractions of the fair to explore the ruins and there were any amount of guides for this purpose.

(TO BE CONTINUED)



AROUND THE WORLD WITH SEXTON BLAKE

by J.E.M.

Number 6

This time we have a change from the most famous author of Blake's foreign adventures. Instead of G.H. Teed, it is Rex Hardinge who takes us to torrid climes - this time to Africa - in the Union Jack's very last issue. *The Land of Lost Men* (UJ 1531) tells the story of an Oxford-educated African chief ambitious to bring civilisation to a sizeable chunk of the Dark Continent, using the talents of boffins and experts kidnapped from the UK.

Blake, of course, foils this plot, which is in fact being manipulated by British crooks for their own ends but not before he has been kidnapped himself. This lively, characteristic drawing by Eric Parker depicts Blake's abduction by the African leader's personal guards.



FURTHER SEXTON BLAKE LISTS BY BRIAN DOYLE

JOBS DONE BY SEXTON BLAKE IN THE COURSE OF HIS INVESTIGATIONS (and all mentioned in the story-titles - all before 1911)

Firefighter; King's Messenger; Clerk; Foreman; Steward; Spy; Pitman; Lumberjack; Editor; Cashier; Police Constable; Cab Driver; Mechanic; Jockey; Actor; Reporter; Beefeater; Gamekeeper; Diver; Aeronaut; Collier; Fisherman; Pierrot; Watchman; Member of Parliament; Doctor; Shopwalker; Salvation Army Member; Whaler; Private Secretary; Insurance Agent; Chemist; Wrestler; Pavement Artist; Chef; Ambassador; Longshoreman; Tramp; Convict; Gypsy; Publican; Showman; Lock-keeper; Bookmaker; Consul; Playwright; Aviator; Scoutmaster; Squire; Sandwich-Man; Juryman; Postmaster; Trainer; Tax-Collector; Bathchair Man; Territorial; Author; Tic-Tac Man; Ice-Cream Merchant; Detective; and Unemployed.

PLACES VISITED BY SEXTON BLAKE IN THE COURSE OF HIS INVESTIGATIONS (and all mentioned in the story-titles - all before 1911)

Woolwich; Siberia; the Congo; China; Africa; Australia; Zululand; Chicago; Java; Gibraltar; Patagonia; Jamaica; Wales; Ireland; Ashanti; Amsterdam; Devil's Island; Morocco; Baku; Turkey; Rome; Monte Carlo; Glasgow; Cardiff; Borneo; Blackpool; Holland; Newfoundland; Hatton Garden; Rhodesia.

In my article "When Blake's Away...", about the non-Blake period of the Detective Weekly, which appeared in the October 1989 issue of C.D., I mentioned that "...Blake himself did actually slip in for a while almost unnoticed, disguised as Marcus Max, but he only managed to fill a couple of pages per story with echoes of long ago from the days of Penny Pictorial". I first learned that Max was Blake from a comment in Blakiana written by Jose Packman some years ago.

In their excellent bibliography of the Detective Weekly, W.O.G. Lofts and Derek Adley give a complete list of the Marcus Max stories with numbers and dates and some references to the original printings in Penny Pictorial and Answers. With the aid of the invaluable Supplement to the Sexton Blake Catalogue compiled by Leonard and Josie Packman I have identified the original titles of the Penny Pictorial numbers given in the bibliography. They are listed below:-

<u>D.W. No.</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>P.P. No.</u>	<u>Title</u>
165	The Clue of the Green Scarf	636	The Problem of the Missing Bride
166	The Agony of Ad Mystery	637	The Belders Street Mystery
167	Death on the Beach	647	The Case of Nurse Knight
168	The Clue of the Locked Diary	641	The Temple Towers Mystery
177	Death in a Coffee Cup	643	The Strand Cafe Tragedy
181	Who Killed Michael Cartmel	648	The Case of the Missing Volume
185	The Clue of the Chinese Foot	655	The Mystery of Paulton Towers
204	The Phantom of box B	633	The Mystery of Box B

An odd one out is:-

191 The Secret of the Broken Phial from Answers 1213 The Mystery of the Sandalwood Box

The Cases of **MARCUS MAX-DETECTIVE**

No. 1 of an ENTHRALLING NEW SERIES!



MARCUS MAX—*Crime-light*, *no. 1*—*together, master Detective—makes his bow in this sparkling adventure from his case-book. See how he finds his brilliant solution to a baffling problem from...*

The **CLUE** of the **GREEN SCARF**

The following D.W. numbers are not given P.P. numbers in the bibliography. From internal clues and evidence in the stories themselves I think the original P.P. numbers and titles are as given below:-

<u>D.W. No.</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>P.P. No.</u>	<u>Title</u>
169	The Clue of the Twisted Thumb	642	The Case of the Brothwick Woods Murder
170	The Mystery of the Stolen Rembrandt	645	The Stolen Madonna
171	The Problem of the Death Pearls	639	The Goona Pearl Mystery
172	The Riddle of Flat 19	646	The Colford Court Mystery
173	The Clue of the Three Halfcrowns	644	Mystery of the Three Sovereigns
175	A Clue in Clay	635	The Quinton Park Tragedy

There is some doubt about D.W. 174 which is a shorter story of approximately the same length as 191, an Answers story. Both of these are shorter than the rest, and Answers stories are usually shorter than Penny Pictorial stories. The only Answers story which is likely to be the original of D.W. 174 is from Answers No. 1097 dated 5.6.09, but as all the rest of the Marcus Max series come from the Penny Pictorial July to December volume of 1911 excepting the one from Answers 1213, which is dated 26.8.11, it seems rather unlikely that D.W. 174 is an Answers story. The most likely Penny Popular story is from No. 634. Perhaps some reader can resolve this:

D.W. 174 The Clue of the Broken Boots Answers 1097 A Holiday Task
 OR
 P.P. 634 The Forest Mystery

The de-Blakenising has been done very well. With no knowledge of their origin the reader of the Marcus Max stories could quite well take them for originals. Only once has editorial vigilance faltered. "Blake" is printed for "Max" in D.W. 191, line 46 of the penultimate column of "The Secret of the Broken Phial".

The Blake of these early stories differs from the Blake of later years in several respects. For instance he lives in Messenger Square, off the Kings Road, and he has no assistant. He does not read newspapers unless they refer to a case he is working on. One similarity, however, is his friendship with a newspaper man. As the later Blake had Splash Page, and, even later Arthur Kirby, as a close friend, the earlier Blake had Bathurst of the Daily Wire. Bathurst also filled in as assistant when required.

Blake as Marcus Max is described as "powerfully built", has a "fair pointed beard", "ice-blue eyes", a "pale face" and a "thin mouth". As Max he is a member of the Baddeley Club where he spends some of his time socialising and reading. He has a man-servant named Morris and keeps an unidentified car in a garage from where it can be brought round when needed. He is rather contemptuous of the "official police" but can be relied upon to solve their cases for them when asked, and, on occasion, without being asked.

In the series of sixteen stories there are eleven different police inspectors and three of them call in Max to help when they are baffled by a case. Max is only approached by clients in three stories. In five he becomes involved in events which happen whilst he is on holiday or "off duty". In the remaining five stories he

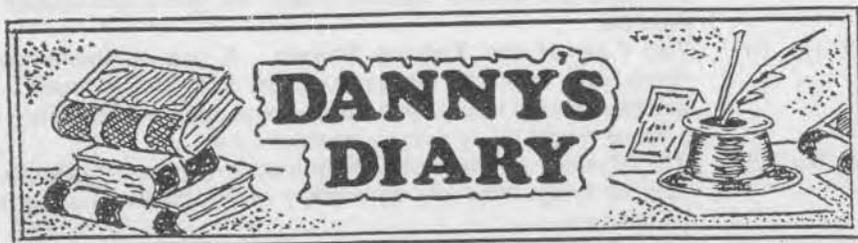
"interests himself" in things which he comes to know about in various ways, some of which he is "pushed into" by Bathurst.

Coming to the stories themselves, they are neat, ingenious and of wide variety.

- D.W. No. 165 - **The Clue of the Green Scarf** - An office boy finds a client's green scarf in the rubbish. This leads Max to the rescue of a kidnapped bride.
- D.W. No. 166 - **The Agony Ad Mystery** - An agony column advertisement helps Max to solve the murder of a mysterious lodger who will not come out of his room.
- D.W. No. 167 - **Death on the Beach** - Max finds an apparent suicide on the beach and proceeds to uncover a double murder in a sanatorium.
- D.W. No. 168 - **The Clue of the Locked Diary** - Max is shown an entry in a diary stating that he had been asked to clear up a matter after the writer, a philanthropist trying to reform criminals, has been murdered and his blue diamond stolen. He proves the suspect is innocent.
- D.W. No. 169 - **The Clue of the Twisted Thumb** - A rich recluse is murdered with an Italian dagger and his desk broken open. A deformed thumb is an important clue in proving the innocence of a young waster living with the murdered man.
- D.W. No. 170 - **The Mystery of the Stolen Rembrandt** - A motorcycle combination brings Max into the robbery of a valuable painting and its recovery.
- D.W. No. 171 - **The Problem of the Death Pearls** - The wrong man is suspected of stealing the Goona pearls when he is killed in a motor accident and the pearls found in his car. Max clears his name.
- D.W. No. 172 - **The Riddle of Flat 19** - A woman is murdered in her flat. There is no clue as to how the murderer entered and no motive. The baffled police inspector asks Max for help.
- D.W. No. 173 - **The Clue of the Three Halfcrowns** - Halfcrowns keep mysteriously appearing in a walled back yard with no clue to show where they come from. Max is intrigued by the story.
- D.W. No. 174 - **The Clue of the Broken Boots** - Max on holiday finds a pair of broken down boots in the New Forest. They prove to be a clue to the murder of a woman in a lonely tumble-down bungalow.
- D.W. No. 175 - **A Clue in Clay** - The gun of a member of a shooting party explodes in his face. Max finds the gun had been tampered with.
- D.W. No. 177 - **Death in the Coffee Cup** - A money lender is poisoned by a cup of coffee in a cafe. The waitress comes under suspicion, and Max sets out to discover the truth.
- D.W. No. 181 - **Who Killed Michael Cartmel** - A valuable book leads to murder and yet there appears to be nothing missing from the bookseller's stock of valuable books.
- D.W. No. 185 - **The Clue of the Chinese Foot** - A Chinese curio of little value is stolen from a collection containing very valuable items. Max investigates this apparently senseless burglary.

- D.W. No. 191 - **The Secret of the Broken Phial** - A retired tea planter and his entire family and servants suddenly disappear in the middle of a meal leaving their part eaten dinner on the table. A baffled police inspector calls in Max.
- D.W. No. 204 - **The Phantom of Box B** - There is a series of mysterious thefts from occupants of a box at a theatre. Valuables seem to vanish into thin air. The manager is going "nuts" so Max investigates. "Box B" makes a nice alliterative title but is a rather odd identification for a box when "Between it and the stage, on the right, was another box, above it, two more side by side, and two more below"!

It is a pity that no more of the very enjoyable old Penny Popular and Answers Blake stories were reprinted, but we must be thankful for what there is.



JUNE 1940

The old War is hotting up with a vengeance. The air-raids we expected earlier on have come.

Dunkirk has been abandoned by the Allies, and France fell in the middle of the month. And Italy has now declared war on Britain and France. Mr. Churchill has made a stirring speech to the country. He said: "We shall fight on the beaches, in the fields, in the streets, and in the hills. We shall never surrender." A wonderful speech which cheered everyone up, just when we needed cheering up.

I need cheering up especially because there are no longer any weekly papers which I want to buy, and things look ominous on the monthly front. The Schoolboys' Own Library is reduced in size from 96 pages plus covers to 64 pages plus covers. Actually there is no less reading matter, because they are all done in very small print now. Not so easy to read.

Once again there are 2 S.O.L.'s of Greyfriars. The first tale is "The Lure of the Golden Scarab" which continues the tale of Harry Wharton & Co. in Egypt, where the chums are searching for a buried treasure. The only clue to this treasure is a curious golden scarab held by Lord Mauleverer who is in the party. The second Greyfriars S.O.L. is "Hidden Loot". In this tale, too, the chums are searching for a kind of hidden treasure. Looking for a satchel containing the proceeds of a bank robbery, hidden somewhere in the school. And nobody is keener to get hold of that satchel than Dandy Sanders, the thief who hid it in the chimney of Study No. 1.

The St. Frank's S.O.L. is "The St. Frank's Tourists". Nipper and Co. and their schoolfellows are touring England and Wales in luxurious motor-caravans. Lots of lively fun and adventure. The ominous thing is that no stories are advertised for the S.O.L. next month. The first time it has ever happened. I am very much afraid that there aren't going to be any more. I hope for the best.

I had two Sexton Blake Libraries this month. A simply tip-top tale is "The Case of the Crimson Conjuror". The unusual factor in this one is that Blake and Tinker break partnership. Tinker follows one line of reasoning and Blake follows a different one. A very exciting and surprising end to this yarn. It is by Gwyn Evans. My other S.B.L. is "The Black-Out Crime" by Gilbert Chester. A girl is murdered in the black-out, and an innocent man is suspected of the crime.

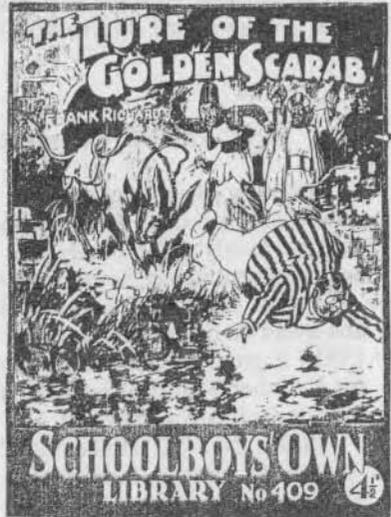
With the fall of France, the Huns have started a big bombing attack on London. The sirens go most nights now, unless the weather is bad. The Huns like bright moonlit nights. All the theatres, with the exception of two, have closed down, for the time being at any rate. The two theatres which have stayed open and are carrying on are the Windmill and the Ambassadors.



We still go to the pictures as the sirens don't usually go till late at night. I loved David Niven in "Raffles" about the amateur cracksman. But a rather silly one was "Remember?" starring Robert Taylor and Greer Garson. About a man and wife who got tired of one another, and they were given a magic potion to make them fall in love again. My Mum just loved Bette Davis and Miriam Hopkins in "The Old Maid". And I enjoyed it too.

I liked "Angels Wash Their Faces" with Ann Sheridan and Ronald Reagan plus the Dead End Kids. It's a kind of a sequel to "Angels With Dirty Faces" of some time back. We saw a Blondie picture this month, "Blondie Brings Up Baby" which was amusing. Arthur Lake plays Dagwood Bumstead in all the Blondie films I have seen, Loretta Young and David Niven were good fun in "Eternally Yours", about a stage magician and his wife.

And that's that for another month. Doug looked over my shoulder and said "Perhaps there won't be another month."



He's scatty! Still the way things are going, with no weekly papers left, what is there to write about? Maybe I'll find something.

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

Danny's foreboding that the end had come to the Schoolboys' Own Library proved only too true. In those final editions there was no mention from the Editor that the lovely old monthly had reached the end of the line, but there was no announcement of any further issues to come.

S.O.L. No. 409 "The Lure of the Golden Scarab" comprised the middle two-and-a-half stories of the Magnet's 8 story Egypt holiday series from the summer of 1932. It provided a fairly satisfactory ending to the series, though it had gone on for a further 3 stories, set back at the school, originally, where the secret of the scarab was finally discovered.

S.O.L. No. 410 "Hidden Loot" comprised the final two-and-a-half stories of the "loot in the chimney" series of 5 stories which had featured in the Magnet a few weeks earlier in 1932.

So "Hidden Loot" was Chas. Hamilton's final work to appear in the S.O.L. His first story in the medium had appeared in Number One of the S.O.L. under the title of "The Greyfriars Players" when the S.O.L. made its initial bow in April 1925. This Magnet tale had originally been just ONE story (admittedly a double number) in the early summer of the year 1915. It shows how long the tales were in early days in the Magnet and Gem.

And the very last S.O.L., No. 411, was the St. Frank's tale "The St. Frank's Tourists."

During its 16 years run, Hamilton had been responsible for the majority of the tales which featured in the S.O.L. A remarkable record.

And so we come to the end of what, in its way, is another remarkable record. The end of DANNY'S DIARY.

Way back in April 1962, Collectors' Digest carried the following little announcement:

"New Feature Starting in Next Month's Collectors' Digest.

DANNY'S DIARY.

Danny is a schoolboy of exactly fifty years ago. There is nothing sentimental about Danny, but we think the entries in his Diary may touch your heart-strings. We hope you are going to like Danny."

And it seems, readers DID like Danny. Danny's Diary began its run in May 1962, exactly 28 years ago, during which time it has never missed a single issue. A remarkable record, in its way. The entries in that first extract referred to events in May 1912, 50 years earlier.

For weeks, following the publishing of the opening spasm of the Diary there was a bulging mail bag arriving at the C.D. office. Masses of letters welcoming Danny. Two months later, in the Editorial, we asked:

"Just why has Danny proved so popular? He is merely a very human, rather ingenuous, not particularly intelligent boy of his time. Is he really much different from the lad who lives next door but one in 1962? Maybe his success is due to the

fact that we rather like to look back, for a few moments now and then, on a more leisurely world that has gone for ever."

Danny, like Peter Pan, Tom Merry, Harry Wharton, Billy Bunter, and the rest, had the gift of perpetual youth. The 28 years of his Diary, in book form, would make a fair-sized volume.

Anyone who has the entire run of Danny's Diary from start to finish has the history of the Gem and Magnet from 1912 onwards; the complete history of Rookwood as related in the Boys' Friend; the entire story of the Rio Kid and others; the whole history of the Popular, the Modern Boy, the Schoolboys' Own Library; and much more.

An eye on the development of the cinema from silent days, through the early period of the talkies, and well into the golden age of the films.

And a peep at changing social times - the wars, the honours, the scandals, the disasters, even the occasional classic murder cases.

How lovely it was to be a youngster in Danny's time! How lucky the youngsters were! They had their Gems, Magnets, Nelson Lees, Boys' Friends, Sexton Blakes. Alas for today's youth which has nothing akin to those lovely old papers!

And so, after 28 years, it's good-bye to Danny.

Perhaps, now and then, we may come on a further extract from that famous Diary. If so, we will bring it to you occasionally, if the Editor permits. So it might not be "good-bye to Danny" entirely after all.



TERRY JONES (Gloucester): Congratulations on the fine cover of the February Collectors' Digest. It was like having the "Gem" arriving through my letterbox again as it did in those carefree days of 1938.

Also I must congratulate Leslie Rowley for his brilliant little story "The Greyfriars Treasure Seekers". It is the best I have ever read of sub stories. Leslie would have been a great writer in the old days of the "Magnet" supplying stories when "the great man" didn't deliver.

CHRISTOPHER COLE (London): Does anyone know of a boy that paid his own fees at Greyfriars? I know LANCASTER did in the '30s. As well as this the Scholarship boys could be included, such as "paying" in some sense, such as Mark Linley.

IAN BENNETT (Leicester): Can anyone identify a Boys' Annual (c.1933/4, possibly Warnes) containing a Red Indian Adventure called "When the Pawnees were up"; a Himalayan Expedition story featuring autogiros; a How to Make paper Gliders article "The Smallest Aeroplane in the World"?

HENRY WEBB (Ipswich): A letter of interest in the 'Postman called' (February C.D.), from Larry Morley of Hanwell, re his discovering a copy of *Meet the Tiger* by Leslie Charteris. It was the very first Saint story. I have the whole series in hardback, about thirty altogether, mostly written before the second world war as I expect you know. My collection is becoming rather dog-eared with constant re-reading. I love them, also the Bulldog Drummond books by 'Sapper' (H.C. McNeile). Dornford Yates is another of my favourites, his 'Chandos' series are a joy to read. Oh for another ten extra hours a day for reading time. Leslie Charteris, the author of the Saint stories, must now be in his eighties. I believe he first started writing 'shorts' for the old *Thriller*.

LEN HAWKEY (Leigh-on-Sea): Amongst the many interesting items in the April C.D. I was especially pleased to see the tribute to the late Charles Skilton. Apart from the debt all lovers of 'Frank Richards' owe him, those of us who are particularly interested in the illustrators of the 1900 to 1950 era are immensely indebted to him for publishing C.M. Kelly's *The Brocks - A Family of Cambridge Artists*. I don't suppose this was a 'money-spinner' (alas!) but it was marvellously researched by Mr. Kelly, beautifully composed and providing not only an excellent bibliography of the brothers' work but a fascinating picture of how a popular illustrator lived and worked during the first half of this century... In the fifteen years since this book appeared it has helped me in tracking down - and buying - over 400 books illustrated by one or other of the three Brocks. In addition, of course, their work appears in innumerable Annuals; strangely, I have found only one in which all three of them contribute a coloured plate - Nelson's *Jolly Book*, 16th volume (1925/26)!

PHILIP TIERNEY (Grimsby): Danny reminds us in the March C.D. of the 1939 "Just William" film which I saw at about the same time as he did. His opinion and mine were very different. He thought it a grand film, but I remember it as a complete and utter travesty bearing little if any resemblance to the characters or the stories. Fred Emney, for example, was hopelessly miscast as Mr. Brown, and that is only one point. It might have provided tolerable entertainment to anyone previously unacquainted with William, but how Danny, who was probably even more familiar with the stories than I was, could have enjoyed it really amazes me.

THE GREYFRIARS TREASURE SEEKERS (Conclusion)

Chroniced by Leslie Rowley

"Every Picture Tells A Story"

Three days later, The Famous Five, Lord Mauleverer, Redwing, and a still disagreeable Bounder, made their way to the priory ruins. They carried with them the facsimile of the Anselm window, which the carrier Mr. Cripps had delivered to Mauly that morning.

Most of them had their doubts about his lordship's theory. In fact, the Bounder had been openly derisive about thought transference over the centuries. Doubtful though the others were, they had decided that Mauly's theory should be put to the test and Smithy, perhaps mindful that they had prevented him from breaking bounds and and courting possible discovery, agreed to join in. Mr. Quelch and Dr. Locke had expressed the wish to look in on them later, and Bunter, once he had confirmed that there was tuck in his lordship's study cupboard, had been pleased to see them go. The Owl of the Remove promptly made his way to study No. 12. He had opened the cupboard door, and his eyes were gleaming through his fat spectacles at the good things displayed, when Mauly's study-mate Vivian arrived quietly on the scene. Vivian drew back his right foot and aimed it at the trousered expanse before him.

"Yaroo! Yow-wow!" Bunter pitched forward, his fat features landing in a large and luscious jam tart that he had been admiring! "Beast," he yelped as he turned a jam-spattered face to Sir Jimmy. "I haven't come here to snaffle Mauly's tuck-----"

"Ow right you are," agreed Vivian, propelling the fat gormandiser through the study door. "Don't come back for another try, or you'll find me and my boot waiting."

Arrived at the ruined priory's lower chamber, the Greyfriars 'men' had lost no time in fitting the facsimile window into the sixteenth century tracery that had once held the original. Securing it in place with some putty they had brought with them, they entered the chamber to see the effect!

The rays of the January sun filtered through the glass segments, to throw a multi-coloured pattern on the cold, grey paving stones below. The result was a distorted and elongated version of the Anselm window itself, which Mauleverer compared closely with one of his original photographs. The others waited in silence, Smithy barely attempting to conceal the sneer on his face.

Mauleverer took piece of chalk from his waistcoat pocket and, referring to the photograph and the pattern on the floor, marked crosses on certain of the stone flags. Carefully dusting his exquisitely creased trousers, his lordship turned to the rest.

"If you fellows stand where I have been standing, you will see that I have marked with a cross any flagstone that is reached by the reflected stained glass finger tips of the good Anselm. We must also consider the unshod hoof of the dear chap. That, too, is meant to tell us something, whereas the foot that is wearing a sandal probably has nothing to tell or else it, too, would be bare. To be brief, you fellows, I think that Anselm was using his fingers and toes to tell us something about this place where he - and Septimus - spent so much of their time. His barefoot is showing all five toes turned sharply toward the right which, unless he was deformed,

must have been impossible judging the way the rest of him is standing. In fact the chap would have been a bit of physical freak if he had existed exactly as he was portrayed, yet Quelch told me that there was no record of Anselm being deformed. This led me to believe that what those plus and minor quantities of toes and thumbs indicated was some kind of combination lock that was protecting the priory valuables which Anselm refused to hand over to the authorities. Perhaps he hoped that one of his followers would return after things had quietened down, replace the window and discover its secret. Unfortunately the odds of the time were heavily against there being any survivors, and the treasure has remained hidden. I daresay Septimus Clarke hadn't heard of thought transference, or else he might have cottoned on! Now, if you fellows don't think it too much of a gag, would each one of you please stand on a square marked with a cross. I will stand on the one which reflects the prior's bare hoof."

"What a half-baked idea," snorted the Bounder. It was a point with which the rest were inclined to agree, but they took up their positions as indicated by the crosses that Mauleverer had made, the Bounder stood, unmoving, the derision clear on his face.

"Back up Smithy," said Bob Cherry. "Remember that it was you who thought Mauly was acting half-baked when he succeeded in rescuing some of us from the clutches of Franz Kranz. I probably owe him my life, Reddy feels the same, and so should you!"

"Yes, Smith, play the game," agreed Harry Wharton. "If Mauly is talking out of the back of his neck, then we'll stick him for a study spread!"

Usually a plea to Smithy to play the game would have had the required results, but he was a fellow who did not like being reminded that he was under an obligation to a school-fellow. Like the others, he had come with a rucksack containing chisels, hammers, and other tools with which to uplift any necessary flagstones. Taking the rucksack from his shoulders he threw it down and turned, ready to leave the chamber. To do so he had to pass Bob Cherry, who was already in place on one of the marked flags. The good natured Bob was dismayed at the Bounder's show of tantrums. He grasped the Bounder by the shoulder and swung him round, and faced him with his fists clenched.

"Get out of my way," demanded Vernon-Smith, "or I'll knock you out of it!" The next moment both of them were fighting.

"Stop that you men. The Head and Quelch might be here any minute....."

"I say you fellows. That beast Vivian kicked me just because I looked into your study Mauly ----"

"Good! But I don't think he kicked you enough. Turn round, Bunter!"

Bunter did not turn round. He turned to flee. He had come to seek out the pals and good naturedly to offer to get the spread ready for them. But it looked as though that offer was not likely to be gratefully received. As Bunter revolved on his fat axis to make good his escape, so did the Bounder attempt an exit also! There came a resounding crash as they both collided and the very flags seemed to shake with the concussion as Bunter and Bounder fell to the floor. There came the sound of a creak and groan as through some ancient mechanism had been forced to protesting operation and, to the amazement of the watching Removites, a section of the chamber floor suddenly tilted on an unseen pivot and deposited the Bounder and Bunter into unknown shadows below!

"Yaroooh! Draggimoff!"

Peering anxiously over the edge of the tilted section of floor, the rest of the fellows were relieved to see that Smithy and Bunter had not fallen very far, the depth below the flooring being but a few feet. From Bunter's yell of anguish it would have seemed that he had fallen several feet. The Bouncer was more fortunate; he had fallen on something soft, that something being Bunter!

Bob Cherry and Tom Redwing were the first to lower themselves in order to aid their fellows. Redwing was carrying a powerful flash lamp, the penetrating rays of which reached far beyond the two scrambling juniors. What he saw made him open his eyes. He called out to the others!

"Come down the rest of you!" I think we've found it. I really think that we've discovered old Anselm's treasure!"

It was some hours later. The treasure of the old priory was hidden no more. Flagon and chalices, crosses and salvers, their gold and silver tarnished with the passage of centuries, and encrusted with rubies, amethysts and emeralds, had greeted the amazed eyes of the Head and Mr. Quelch. The treasure, for treasure it was indeed, had been removed to secure surroundings. Mauleverer had been congratulated for his enterprise. Harry Wharton & Co. together with Redwing and Vernon-Smith, had been thanked by Dr. Locke and their form-master. Mr. Prout had deigned to visit study No. 12 and add a few words of approbation. Even Mr. Hacker gave the fellows an acid nod when next he met them. The Governing Board had been informed, and Sir Hilton Popper had extended an invitation to tea. Mauly was his usual modest self over the whole matter. William George Bunter did not affect such reticence! It was he, he claimed, who had really found the treasure. And if there was any reward going, then it should be directed to his address.

It was a nine days' wonder whilst it lasted. Then, true to its style, the School resumed what the poet has called 'the even tenor of its way', and perhaps none was so pleased that it did so than were the Greyfriars treasure seekers!

THE END

WANTED by Collector: Pre-1970 Williams, Bunters, Blytons, Biggles, Brent-Dyers, in dustwrappers. Also Rupert and other Annuals, Comic giveaways, Original artwork, associated Ephemera. High prices paid, or exchanged. JOHN BECK, 29 Mill Road, Lewes, Sussex.

WANTED: £20 each offered for "*Boys Friend Libraries*" featuring BIGGLES. £15 each offered for Biggles jigsaw puzzles. £3 each offered for "Happy Mags". £15 offered for B.F.L. no. 204, "Crooked Gold". Original artwork of Bunter, etc., always wanted. NORMAN WRIGHT, 60 Eastbury Road, Watford, WD1 4JL. Telephone: (0923) 32383.

STILL wanted Sexton Blake Second Series No. 453 'On The Midnight Beat' By John G. Brandon, J. ASHLEY, 46 Nicholas Crescent, Fareham, Hants., PO15 5AH. Telephone: 234489.

OUR BOOKSHELVES



"THE HERLOCK SHOLMES OF GREYFRIARS"

By Frank Richards

(Howard Baker Book Club

Reviewed by Eric Fayne

Special: £18.00)

In the usual superb binding of this wonderful series, this volume contains one Red Magnet from the Golden Age of the start of the year 1913, followed by 8 consecutive Magnets from the fascinating white cover period of the opening weeks of the year 1917.

In the old Music Halls, one often found that the supporting acts were nearly as good as the main star attractions. Certainly, in this volume, the supporting items are gorgeous. The wonderful little Greyfriars Herald had recently ended its 18 weeks initial run, and publication of the halfpenny paper was suspended for the duration of the war. Items in hand were transferred to the Magnet, and these included several Herlock Sholmes stories from Hamilton himself. They are a joy and a real bonus for the owner of the volume.

The Red Cover story "The Greyfriars Pantomime" is a happy romp during which time one suspends belief and sits back and enjoys a happy hour or two of reading. Mauleverer engages a professional stage company to present a panto in the Hall at Greyfriars, and Coker tries to upstage the juniors. Good fun.

The 8 White Cover Magnets, apart from the delight provided by the real Frank Richards, include the work of 3 different sub writers. The reader has an intriguing time in store.

The real Frank provides "Sir Jimmy of Greyfriars", the story which first introduced Sir Jimmy Vivian to readers. Sir Jimmy is a distant relation of Lord Mauleverer. Jimmy, the son of a rakish, bad hattish nobleman, had disappeared for a time after his father's death, and was brought up in poverty in the slums. Now he comes to Greyfriars, dropping his aitches and somewhat unrefined, and he shocks the bad hats of Greyfriars who, of course, are also snobs. The real Frank was at his best at this sort of thing.

Next, "The Great Fat-Cure" is a sub story, and so daft that it fascinates. It starts with Bunter selling flags for Brown Cross Day, whatever that is. Then Bunter meets a strange man named Ethelbert Engensen, who cashes Bunter's postal-order without bothering to ask for the postal-order. The stranger invites Bunter to his house nearby, to have a good feed. And Bunter accepts. Today, in these vicious times, it would be considered a bad item to include in a story for boys. In those more innocent and safer times, it got by, presumably without comment.

The real Frank is back next week with "The Herlock Sholmes of Greyfriars." Coker is the detective in an hilarious little tale. I have often wondered, idly, how Frank Richards got by with his Herlock Sholmes tales, even though they were skits. In 1917, I would think, Conan Doyle's famous characters were still in copyright. Possibly there was some arrangement. "Viscount Bunter" was a famous yarn in its day, and it is probably the star of this collection. Bunter's father, taken in by a

swindler, believes that he can claim an extinct earldom. So our Bunter becomes Viscount Bunter, adopts D'Arcy's accent and Ponsonby's sneer, and tries to become pally with Lord Mauly. Heart-warming stuff, this!

Next, "The Prefect's Plot" is an excellent dramatic story. With this one, the author adopts, lock, stock, and barrel, the plot of "The Black Sheep", one of his Gem stories in late 1913. In the 1917 version, Loder pretends to be writing a play on school life; he persuades Wharton to help him by writing the kind of a letter that a schoolboy, in trouble and owing money, might write to his Dad. Wharton obliges, and Loder uses the letter to raise money for himself. It is fine reading, though it must be confessed that the Gem version was really better. Then, Cutts was the pseudo playwright, and he was more likely than Loder to conceive a plan of this type. Digby was the victim, more likely to be taken in than Wharton by a clever flatterer. Next "The Greyfriars Flying Corps" is a typical Samways effort. Samways was one sub writer who tried hard to imitate the style of the creator of the schools. Interesting for the historian, all these years on.

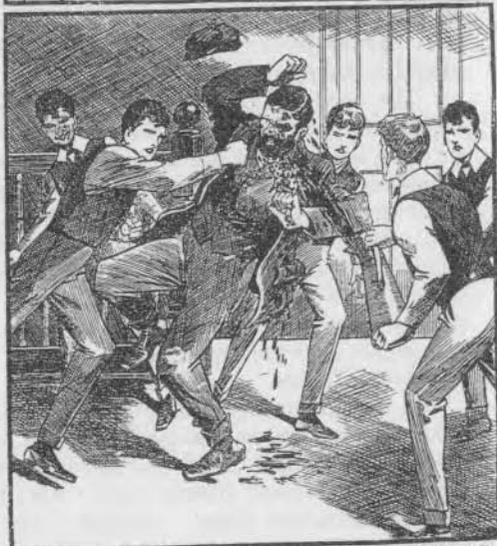
Finally, we come to something of a rarity - a Pentelow 5-story series (though only the first two of the series are in this particular volume). As I have said before, Pentelow never made any effort to be anybody but himself as a writer. If you happen to like his style, the plot in this series is a good one. The Remove, led by Peter Todd, decides it wants a new captain in place of Wharton. The first tale of the series is "Harry Wharton's Rivals". This is followed by "The Rebel" who is the South African boy, Delarey, who supports the old captain. No doubt, the rest of this series will follow in a later volume.

Another tip-top attraction in this volume is "The Greyfriars Gallery," in which each week, there is a well-written review, plus a special Chapman picture, of one of the main characters in the Magnet stories. These early sketches, each week, are exceptionally good. Actually, it was a series which went on for a very long time, and, towards, the end, rather overstayed its welcome. But these 1917 articles in the series are a delight.

So! Another magnificent volume, packed with good reading and nostalgic memories plus a splendid feast of food for thought.

THE HERLOCK SHOLMES OF GREYFRIARS!

A Grand Long Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.



A WARM RECEPTION FOR THE BURGLAR!

THE DAN DARE DOSSIER - celebrating the 40th Anniversary of Dan Dare, Pilot of the Future - By NORMAN WRIGHT. DESIGN/EDITING MIKE HIGGS. HAWK BOOKS £14.95.

Reviewed by Dave Westaway

Imagine a landscape of derelict houses, craters semi-filled with water and surrounded by masses of ragged weeds, fogs so severe that a boy holding his mother's hand couldn't see her face, sweets rationed, money short and no television. Those of you a little (or a lot) over 40 will recognise this horrific vista as the scene in any city four or five years post war. But of course it wasn't all bad. Bomb sites made great playgrounds; if you'd never had sweets or T.V. you didn't miss them, and then there were comics. Their importance couldn't be overestimated. They provided entertainment, escape and a framework for relationships with peers. The images in comics settled deep in childish memories, never to be quite lost, and the strongest images and the deepest memories came from a comic called EAGLE.

All the boys I knew got and discussed Eagle, in later years young men in pubs, demonstrating our manhood with pints of beer would say "Do you remember Dan Dare?" and now, 40 years since it all started, hundreds of middle aged men still belong to a club and produce a magazine dedicated to that indomitable spaceman.

Against this background Norman Wright has put together a book of images that will jolt the memories and expand the consciousness of those lucky enough to grow up in the 50s. His book is essentially a joyous treat of nostalgia but it succeeds too on a deeper level as a wide ranging study of the rise, breadth of marketing, adoration and eventual fall of Britain's most renowned comic hero.

The book is extremely attractive, being the same large format as the earlier Hawk Dan Dare reprints, printed in colour on glossy art paper. Several early strips are reprinted but these are secondary to the highly illustrated individual sections, the pictures being accompanied by Norman's detailed and sympathetic text. All aspects of the strip are covered. Firstly an introduction explains its origins. Next a "who's who" of the leading characters, including that most infamous of space villains, the Mekon, pictured on his obligatory floating chair. Fascinating sections follow on Space Hardware, the spacesuits, spaceships and general 1950s' idea of what 21st century space technology would look like, and from the viewpoint of the 1990s they still appear as impressive as ever. I'd rather ride on Galileo McHoo's Galleon than Concorde any day.

A hiccup appears to have crept into the next section 'Aliens and their Worlds' showing the cities and landscapes of the otherworlders Dan and Co. encountered. Inexplicably missing are 'Vora, last of the Great Ones' and all the trappings of the important 'Operation Saturn' story. Also omitted are the Cosmobes and Pescods from the 'Phantom Fleet'. Norman could not have overlooked these; indeed the stories are mentioned elsewhere. It can only have been overzealous editing, and herein lies a weakness of the volume - it gives the general impression of having been overcondensed.

The strips are not a strong feature. 'Mission to the Stars', a 60s' newspaper one-off, has not reproduced well and the two colour adventures from the 1963 Space Annual are poor examples of their kind. Far more satisfying and indeed to me the most fascinating part of the book are the ten pages devoted to the merchandising of

Dan Dare. Here among the Radio Stations, Rocket Guns, Ray Guns, walkie talkies, film strips, cards, books and badges lie the deepest of memories.

A fuller look at the artists, a chronology of the stories and a reminder of the Radio Luxembourg serial (complete with the 'Spread your wings' song words) all make absorbing reading. Finishing with a look at Dan Dare in the 90s, Norman is to be congratulated on the depth and clarity of his survey which reflects the continuing appreciation felt by so many for the hero who was an integral part of their early lives. I thoroughly recommend this grand book, but if you want a copy I suggest you get to your local bookshop quickly; it is a volume that is going to sell out, and fast.

P.S. The legend continues! Since this book was written, Fleetway Publications have announced the forthcoming marriage of Dan and Prof. Peabody, and Radio 4 have been running their first Dan Dare serial.



I SAY YOU FELLOWS! By Maurice Hall (Wharton Press, 74 Hilldale Road, Sutton, SM1 2JD).

Reviewed by Mary Cadogan.

I Say You Fellows! is an account of the life and work of the creator of Greyfriars, St. Jim's, Rookwood and lots of our favourite fictional characters. It will be welcomed by many as a useful addition to the vast and ever-growing canon of Hamilton commentary. Its cover claim to be 'the biography' (and therefore presumably definitive) is, however, somewhat misleading because, although certain areas of Hamilton's life have been charted fairly fully, little or no space is devoted to other important aspects of it. There are, for example, no fresh insights into his relationships and aspirations, or into his remarkably creative mind; neither is there a comprehensive analysis of his extraordinary literary achievements. What the book does provide is more detail than previous accounts of the sequence in which his works were written, and more financial information regarding these and some other business matters.

The quiet tenor of the daily routines of Hamilton's middle and later life is meticulously described. Maurice Hall's own meeting with him in 1950 makes interesting reading, and the book also contains some intriguing comment on Hamilton and his works by other writers (notably G.R. Samways and Chris Lowder) as well as by readers and collectors.

The events and background of Hamilton's life are often seen through the eyes of Edith Hood, who was, of course, his housekeeper for many years, and as Maurice says it is sad that she did not live to see the finished book. It is sad too, perhaps, that Maurice did not go to other first sources (i.e. the Hamilton family) so that some of the book's errors and omissions might have been avoided. To give just a few examples, his text seems to confuse two generations of the family, resulting in the birth of a non-existent extra great-niece for Hamilton on an obviously impossible date. Maurice rightly comments that Hamilton's sister Una ('Dolly') was the greatest influence on him, but this is never explored and there is hardly any further mention of her except for her marriage. The death of Hamilton's mother, which so profoundly affected Charles, is not mentioned; Hamilton was **not** an accomplished touch typist but a one-finger 'search and peck' typist with a heavy pounding touch who never the less achieved good speeds; he did not 'reach beyond the age of 86' but was 85 years and 5 months old when he died. Neither, of course, was he interviewed for *Floreat Greyfriars* in 1965, because he had then been dead for four years - but this, obviously, is a type-setter's error.

The book includes several arresting illustrative features. Amongst its four full colour pages is a splendidly atmospheric reproduction of Norman Kadish's oil painting of Hamilton at Rose Lawn, settling down to smoke his pipe while his tabby cat snoozes companionably nearby (the same picture provides the basis for the appealing dust-jacket). Other colour plates show models of St. Jim's and Greyfriars made by Maurice, based on plans originally published in *Chuckles* during the early 1920s, and an example of a Dick and Doris strip from *Merry-Go-Round*, for which Hamilton apparently wrote 25 scripts in 1949. Half-tone pictures include specimens of Charles Hamilton's illustrative skills, particularly in the conveyance of some bizarrely imaginative animals, which underline the multi-faceted talents of the ever-intriguing subject of *I Say You Fellows!*

" DENISE 'S DIARY "

JUNE 1940

by Dennis L. Bird

This was the worst month of the war, at any rate for those of us living on the south coast of England. Dunkirk was abandoned on June 4th, after the miraculous evacuation of 360,000 Allied troops; Italy entered the war on June 10th; the Germans seized Paris on June 14th and forced the French to sign a surrender on June 22nd. They occupied Guernsey on June 30th, and fleeing Channel Islanders arrived at our ports and airports. Living in Shoreham, Sussex, where the guns of battle could sometimes be heard faintly 80 miles away across the Channel, I wondered how long it would be before the Wehrmacht landed on our beaches and cliff-tops.

In all this turmoil, it was something of a surprise that the SGOL books came out as usual, on June 6th (four years later that was to be a famous date - D-Day, the Allies' return to France). Four books had been advertised the previous month, but only two appeared. No. 732 was the Cliff House story "Their Mediterranean Mystery," and No. 733 was a school story specially written by Sheila Austin, "The Riddle of Ravenscar School." I have not kept either of them. The other two volumes were not published: Isabel Norton's "The Menace of the Masks" (No. 734), and "Secret Leader of the Rebel Four" (No. 735) by "Gail Western" (C. Eaton Fearn, the "Girls' Crystal" editor). I was particularly disappointed at the non-appearance of "The Menace of the Masks," because this was a detective story featuring my heroine Valerie Drew. I had read it when it was a serial in the old "Schoolgirls' Weekly" in 1938, but all I can remember of it is that it took place in the Balkans, where Valerie went to the aid of Princess Melanie of Gvania.

The two June books carried no advertisements for July; instead there was the grim message "THE EDITOR VERY MUCH REGRETS that with this issue 'The Schoolgirls' Own Library' is forced to suspend publication." He went on to explain that the German occupation of Norway had cut off our supplies of wood-pulp needed to make paper, and it was therefore impossible to produce the books. The "Schoolboys' Own Library" suffered the same fate, as did the "Sexton Blake Library" and the weekly "Gem", "Magnet", and "Schoolgirl".



The Editor expressed a hope - optimistic, it seemed at the time - that "the Libraries will resume their appearance in the future," and so the SGOL did (but not the others), after long years of war. The first of the new SGOL books came out on the traditional first Thursday of the month, on October 3rd, 1946. There were only two of them instead of four, and they had multi-coloured covers instead of the familiar black and yellow; they looked far less distinctive than their predecessors. The price, 7d each, was almost double the pre-war cost.

The first of the new books was the one which should have been the last of the June 1940 set: "Secret Leader of the Rebel Four". Sadly, there was no sign of the missing Valerie Drew adventure - although the girl detective did re-appear in September 1948. This was in "Valerie Drew's Holiday Mystery" (No. 47), a reprint of a 1939 serial in "The Schoolgirl". Alas! I did not know of its existence until recently, so I do not have a copy.

In fact, I bought only a few of the new series. By now I was in my late teens and rather old for such reading! Those I did get, for nostalgic reasons, were re-issues of past serials from my childhood weeklies. One such was "Maureen and the Boy Who Didn't Care" (No. 11, March 1947) by "Renee Frazer" (in reality the Noel Raymond author Ronald Fleming). This was one of those "Two men and a girl" tales so popular in the story papers, and featured one of the most delightful of heroines - actor's daughter Maureen Eversham, who never lost faith in the ne'er-do-well Laurie Channing. Often single-handed - for Laurie was no help - she combated the machinations of his cousin Vincent Gayford. All comes right, of course, and she triumphs in an amateur play in which she will soon star professionally in London. And a reformed Laurie is to go with her. "The prodigal returns for good", he said, "thanks to Maureen, the girl who wouldn't be beaten!" "No", she breathed. "Thanks to the boy who didn't care!" Sentimental, but rather charming.

(Editor's note: the two covers which are reproduced show a second-hand stuck-on cover price of 6d. but actually these S.G.O.L.s sold originally for 41/2d.)



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ROGER M. JENKINS

No. 235 - Schoolboys' Own Library No. 222 -
"The Boy Who Hated St. Jim's"

The Cleeve series was a reprint from 1928, a sad year for the Gem in that this was Charles Hamilton's only contribution to the paper. Victor Cleeve was the nephew of Mr. Railton and he had been obliged to leave Bancroft, his previous school in Norfolk, under suspicion of theft. Because Mr. Railton believed he was innocent, he persuaded Dr. Holmes to allow him to enter St. Jim's, but Cleeve was resentful and ill-mannered and, though he knew he could not return to Bancroft, he was determined

to dislike St. Jim's. He was successful in antagonising all the juniors and became completely unpopular.

The appearance of a gipsy named Ives, who had once been in Norfolk, and who seemed to know Cleeve's past history, caused the Bancroft story to become known, and at this juncture Cardew played his last really successful part on the St. Jim's stage. He told Cleeve that if he were ever to be expelled he would take a lesson from Cleeve's behaviour and act in exactly the opposite way; he went on to give him some quixotic friendly advice and warning. Cardew's subsequent appearances, especially in the Mandeville and Spring books after the war, were never really convincing; those insouciant whimsicalities, so typical of the nineteen-twenties, could never again be captured.

The St. Jim's series were often far more episodic than the Greyfriars ones. In the Gem, each week's issue seemed to be in a watertight compartment. When Cleeve volunteered to play cricket for a junior team beset by disasters, and helped to win the match against Greyfriars, he was the hero of the hour, but in the next episode he was again regarded as the sullen outcast once more, with only a concessionary remark about his cricketing abilities. Even so, he still considered Tom Merry as someone whose opinion he valued, and in the end it was Tom who solved the mystery of who really committed the theft at Bancroft, to which school Cleeve returned with honour - but not before he had helped to win the match against Rookwood!

Charles Hamilton took up the same theme in the Magnet in 1936, when he related the story of Wilmot, Mr. Hacker's nephew, but somehow the Greyfriars version never really approached the Cleeve series in merit. It might be because Mr. Hacker was an unpopular master, and it was the custom of unpopular masters to have rogues as nephews (as did Mr. Ratcliff and Mr. Manders); it might be because the Wilmot series was interrupted by the Brazil series, which spoilt the dramatic impact; or it might be because the Cleeve series shone like a majestic star in a dark sky of substitute stories; whatever the reason, the tale of Victor Cleeve was a memorable drama, eminently worthy to be the last series in the Gem before the reprints began. One can only wonder what caused Charles Hamilton to write for the Gem again, albeit briefly, after such long absence from the famous old paper.

Your Editor says—



It helps the C.D. if readers advertise their WANTS and FOR SALE book and story-paper items, etc. in it. The rates are 4p per word; a boxed, displayed ad. costs £20.00 for a whole page, £10 for a half page or £5 for a quarter page.

Jemima's contribution is going to occupy most of the space allotted to our Diary this month so I'll hand over to her right away.

Famous Victims of Some Cliff House Trouble-makers

An occasional series by Jemima Carstairs.

This month: Mabel Lynn

It is a sad fact that few of us manage to glide through life without suffering those famous slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. These are frightful enough when encountered randomly, so to speak, but are quite unspeakable when deliberately aimed at some perfectly innocent victim who ends up wondering when the next barbed shower is going to arrive. One of the worst of these struck our own Mabs not so long ago.



We'd had a simply fantastic holiday at Luxor Hall, until almost the end of it when Mabs got word that her young sister was ill and hurried home for the last day to see the poor kiddie. We were to meet her at Courtfield and go back to Cliff House for the new term. She was there waiting, but what a shock we all had.

There she was, golden-haired and pretty as ever, with a new hairstyle that didn't seem to be quite Mabs --- and a distinctly disagreeable manner to go with it, which she proceeded to demonstrate by kicking poor little Ting-a-Ling, Bessie's adored pooch, who only wanted to greet his golden-haired friend.

This was nothing to what was to come. Mabs **smoking!** Unheard of. Mabs chumming up with Rosa Rodworth! Also unheard of. They'd never got on and Mabs had never had much time for Rosa's sneaky cronies, Lydia Crossendale and Marcia Loftus. None of us knew Mabs was borrowing money from Rosa --- who had far too much pocket money for her own good. Mabs was throwing tea parties, breaking bounds to go dancing and spending more time in Rosa's company than ours. One of those teas shocked us all, and ended in heartbreak for Babs. After tipping tea over poor old Fatima and insulting the guests, Mabs ordered us out of the study and proceeded to wreck the place. Unfortunately Babs had left her treasured sketchbook on the bureau and returned to find every sketch ruined by the addition of curly moustachios, comical spectacles and similar graffiti favoured by very young, not very bright infants.

We all reacted in fairly predictable ways. Clara, who is the soul of honesty and incapable of dissimulation was inclined to let Mabs go headlong to her doom, Janet also betrayed disgust, but Marjorie, like Babs, found it difficult to believe ill of Mabs. They'd been chums for so long, it was true, and Babs convinced herself that something dreadful had happened to Mabs to cause this personality change, and it was her duty to discover the cause and defend Mabs.

It is always easy to see the clues along the way after the truth emerges, and we could have kicked ourselves for failing to see the indicators. For, of course, the girl we had unthinkingly accepted as Mabs with some dotty old bee in her bonnet was actually her cousin May, who, it must be admitted in mitigation of our slowness ---

old upper storeys to let, y'know --- was extremely like our own golden one. May, it seemed, had been shown the door of Lynn's Folly after stealing five pounds from Mrs. Lynn. Unfortunately she had departed with two letters she was supposed to post, one to Babs and one to Primmy to tell them that Mabs had succumbed to illness and would not be back at Cliff House for about three weeks.

For May it provided a great opportunity to pass herself off as Mabs and have a high old time finding out what Cliff House was all about. For a while her plan worked, helped by her being able to intercept both a letter and a phone call to Babs from Mrs. Lynn and Mabs. But May had not had time to get to know Rosa, whose unpredictable ways are a byword at Cliff House. Our Rosa, I'm afraid, is rather like the girl in the old rhyme: when she was good she was very good but when she was bad she was awful. And suddenly things began to go wrong for May.

For some quirk in her brainpan Rosa decided she wanted to mend fences with Babs and Co. and through another party, ordering May to make sure that Babs came. Meanwhile, Lydia was quietly simmering with jealousy because Mabs had replaced her as Rosa's own dear-heart. Her first attempt to discredit May-known-as-Mabs misfired, but her second effort, that of planting Rosa's very valuable diamond watch in May-Mabs' pocket succeeded beyond all her hopes. With Babs in dentention after trying to phone Rosa at a dance to warn her of the Bull on the warpath and being nabbed herself, Clara had threatened to go to Primmy and tell everything she suspected. Our tomboy's tones are somewhat stentorian, and overheard by May sent her packing in search of safe hiding. May knew that her hours at Cliff House were numbered once any investigation of herself began.

Then Rosa's father arrived, in search of the thief who'd dared to steal his daughter's timepiece, and Babs set off desperately to catch up with the runaway, only to find police at Friardale Station waiting for suspicious looking schoolgirls. She caught May as she leapt aboard the train, and Mabs chose that highly dramatic moment to appear herself.

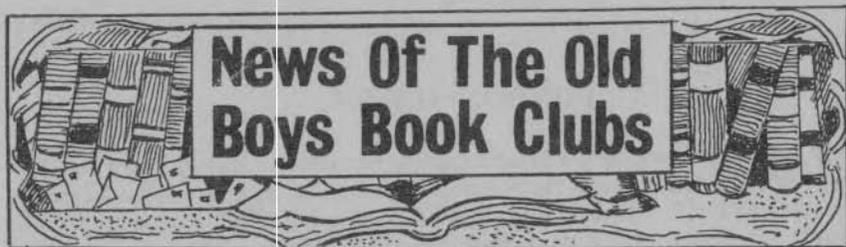
Babs thought she could get everything sorted out, but May's decision not to go home after all while Babs searched for the watch and Rosa's noisy pater making very stormy waves led to further complications. For Lydia stuck to her accusations, Mr. Rodworth kept baying for blood, and May found the watch in her pocket, exactly where Lydia had hidden it. How could she come back and confess that she was a frightened girl who had seen the error of her ways. Alas, she had managed to drop the watch down the cliff near Monk's Folly, where she was hiding, and unfortunately Lydia managed to overhear a conversation which put her in possession of this vital fact, thereupon Lydia set off to find the watch but managed to fall over the cliff herself instead. We were all hotfoot after her, of course, but May got there first and rescued the worthless Lydia. It only needed Poppa Rodworth to complete a denouement worthy of any film produced by our Leila's famous pater, but somehow it all fell into place like a well planned jigsaw puzzle. May's heroism erased her earlier misdeeds, Mabs was fit and well again, and Study 4 became once more the home of harmony and Mabs' father promised to help his brother start anew.

Lydia was lucky only to be gated for the rest of term, she could have been expelled. but Lydia usually manages to get away with half of what she deserves

Janet has already offered a criticism of this piece. She says that surely Babs was the real victim, as Mabs was out of the turmoil practically all the time. In one sense this is true, but Janet is fair enough to see that while Babs undoubtedly took a lot of absolutely beastly flak she did have the support of the chums, whereas poor Mabs

was very ill and believed that her dearest chum couldn't be bothered even to write to her. Worse, her own good character was being discredited. Even when the truth came out there was that lingering shadow among girls in other forms that Mabs had a hidden side to her nature, until the real Mabs gradually expunged that shadow cast by her cousin.

And Rosa? Just now she is being good; very very good...



NORTHERN O.B.B.C.

RUBY LUNCHEON AT THE HOTEL METROPOLE - LEEDS

Saturday, 12th May, 1990

A total of 34 attended this very important celebration in the history of our Club. Our honoured guests were: Mary Cadogan (our Co-President), Una Hamilton Wright and her husband Brian, and our Librarian/Treasurer Emeritus, Mollie Allison along with our oldest attending member (and a founder one at that!) Bill Williamson.

Paul Galvin had put on a display of interesting items from our library and Joan Colman, our chairman had baked and iced a superb cake with characters from our hobby depicted thereon.

A splendid lunch of traditional roast beef and Yorkshire Pudding was served. Darrell proposed a toast to The Club and our Secretary Geoffrey God, responded. Mary proposed a toast to the hobby and Maurice Hall, from the London Club and representing the Friars' Club, responded. We were delighted to have with us Johnny and Betty Hopton who represented the Midland Club.

In her address, Mary referred to anniversaries. So many papers and events were commemorated this year - the forming of our club 40 years ago, the "Eagle" began life 40 years ago, this year is the 50th anniversary of the demise of "The Magnet" and we were celebrating the centenary of the birth of Richmal Crompton. Anthony Buckeridge reminded us that Jennings was created 40 years ago, too!

Una Hamilton Wright gave us some fascinating facts about her uncle and her childhood and took the opportunity to set the record straight. Letters, photographs from the family album, binoculars and pencils belonging to the great man, were available for all to see. This was the first time many had met Una Hamilton Wright and it was a privilege to have her with us.

Bill Williamson and our youngest member, James Lamb, cut the cake and it was a very convivial atmosphere in which we chatted, ate cake and drank tea and coffee.

The day was not yet over, for 16 attended the home and private cinema of Michael Bentley for a splendid evening programme of films and trailers of nostalgia. The day eventually finished at 10.45 p.m.! Here's to another 40 years of Northern O.B.B.C.!

A souvenir menu/programme, printed napkin and ticket can be obtained as a set (3 items) for £1.25 including postage on application to: The Secretary, Thornes Vicarage, Wakefield, West Yorkshire, WF2 8DW.

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

LONDON O.B.B.C.

The Loughton home of the Harper family received 20 members for the May meeting. Eric Lawrence started the proceedings in fine style, with a splendid talk on the Detective author R. Austin Freeman. Much research by Eric here, and very well received by all present. Tea followed with the usual convivial chat and comestibles. Norman Wright gave us an update on his latest work, entitled 'THE DAN DARE DOSSIER', which is now available. Bill Bradford took us once again down Memory Lane, to the May 1970 meeting held at Kingsbury. Following this, Alan Pratt quizzed us on detective fiction - 'A' level standard this! Finally, Les Rowley gave a fine talk entitled 'Bounder and the Beaks', showing a marvellous insight into one of Hamilton's most famous characters. Next meeting at the Wokingham home of Eric Lawrence on Sunday, 10th of June. Please inform Eric if attending, on 0734 784925 and bring your own food.

GRAHAM BRUTON

"Goal! Hurrah!" yelled the jubilant spectators. Marcoro was one up on the visitors from Graingmoor!



WHO'S WHO AT ST. FRANK'S.



SIR LANCELOT MONTGOMERY
TREGELLIS-WEST.

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