

# STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

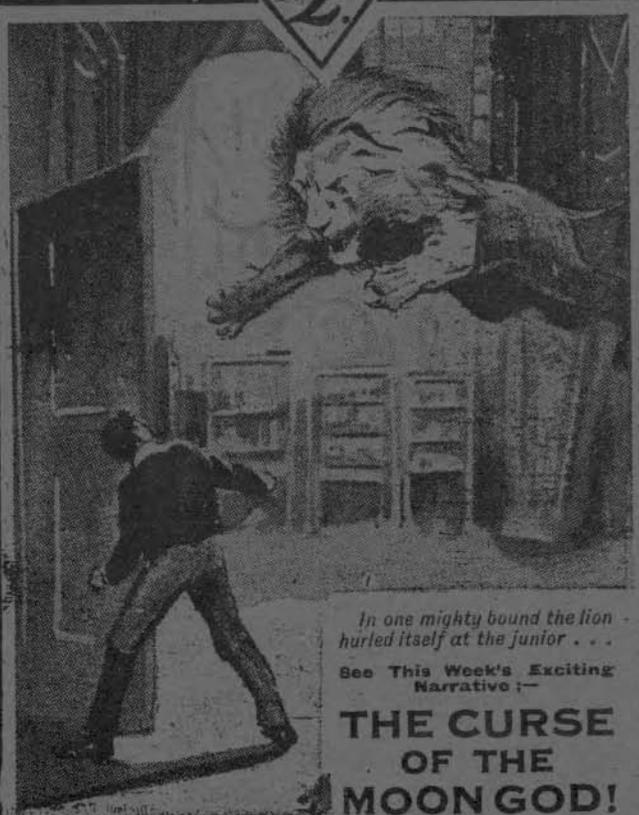
VOLUME 45

NUMBER 530

FEBRUARY 1991

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# STORY PAPER COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Editor: MARY CADOGAN

STORY PAPER COLLECTOR

Founded in 1941 by  
W.H. GANDER

COLLECTORS' DIGEST

Founded in 1946 by  
HERBERT LECKENBY

S.P.C.D.: Edited and Published 1959 - January 1987 by Eric Fayne

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VOL. 45

No. 530

FEBRUARY 1991

Price 86p

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## The Editor's Chat



## COLLECTING & CELEBRATING

Thanks to the good offices of Norman Shaw, that stalwart friend of collectors, I have recently completed my collection of the C.D. I started to take the magazine at the end of 1969 and never then dreamed that I would at some time acquire the whole run of the Monthlies and the Annuals. Nevertheless the complete set now sits proudly on my shelves - a fascinating treasure-trove of enthusiasm, expertise and sheer slogging research on the part of a host of contributors over the 44 years of its long run. It complements, of course, its predecessor collecting paper, the Story Paper Collector, of

which I am also lucky enough to possess a full run. Amazingly, this paper was established by W.H. Gander as long ago as in 1941; this means that, as the C.D. has incorporated the S.P.C., a fiftieth anniversary celebration of our magazine should take place during 1991. To mark this event I am reproducing the first copy of the Story Paper Collector (dated January - March 1941) in this issue of our Story Paper Collectors' Digest. It was, as you will see, a modest publication as far as size was concerned, but printed and prepared with great efficiency. Later on Mr. Gander introduced a picture-cover, and his S.P.C. remains to this day an attractive pioneer publication which is rich in insights into the hobby.

It is indeed a joy to browse through all the lovingly assembled pages of his paper and of the C.D. These not only explore the stories in our favourite old papers and their backgrounds, but the lives of editors, writers and illustrators. Glimpses of these personal histories - as well as those of some C.D. contributors who are now regrettably no longer with us - provide moving links with the past. These collecting magazines have been in continuous existence now for half a century, which is a tremendous achievement. They link us retrospectively to the papers and mores of Victorian Britain as well as to so many decades of the Twentieth Century. Even though the heyday of the story papers and comics which provided their original inspiration has ended, the C.D. of the 1990s suggests that there is still much to celebrate in the hobby - an ever widening range of facsimile reproductions of the old books and papers, the expansive activities of the Clubs and allied groups, many new and good moves in children's publishing today and the continuation of serious research into the books and magazines of the past.

What strikes me most of all about the C.D. from its early days is its wonderfully participatory nature; readers' letters and comments and queries have always been built into the fabric of the magazine. Long may this continue because, as every editor knows, it is the loyalty and enthusiasm of readers which ensure the sparkle, success and survival of any magazine. So in addition to thanking my predecessor editors - William H. Gander, Herbert Leckenby and Eric Fayne - I feel it is appropriate at this point in time to thank you all, dear readers, for the support which you have given over the years, and happily continue to give, to our Collectors' Digest.

Dare we hope for a run of a further fifty years?

MARY CADOGAN

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THE

# Story Paper Collector

Printed and issued occasionally by Wm. H. Gander, P. O. Box 60,  
Transcona, Manitoba, Canada.

No. 1.

JANUARY-MARCH, 1941

Vol. 1.

## "THE BOYS' FRIEND"

A FAMOUS BRITISH BOYS' JOURNAL—  
1895-1927

By W. H. G.

ONE of the longest-lived and most popular of the boys' story papers published in Great Britain during the period in which it flourished was the "Boys' Friend." From the first number to the last (Jan. 29, 1895 until Dec. 31, 1927) it was issued in the same size—about 14 1/2 x 11 inches—and on the same familiar green paper, with the exception of a change for a few weeks to yellow paper in 1899, during the excitement of the early days of the war in South Africa.

No. 1 was a "double number" of 16 pages at the same price as the 8-page numbers that followed: one halfpenny (1c). This issue contained about the same quota of serials and completes as is found in succeeding issues,

the extra space being filled with articles and news items, plus a full page of "What the Editor has to say," which included a portrait of the Editor. Later we learn this gentleman relinquished control of the paper before it actually commenced publication, and that another gentleman whose name was still later revealed to be Hamilton Edwards had charge of the paper from the first number.

Among the articles in No. 1 was a denunciation of the "penny dreadful"—but I am told that some of Mr. Edwards' writers also contributed to those same penny dreadfuls; maybe their writings became purified when Mr. Edwards used them. In addition to editing his papers, he also wrote serials for some of

PAGE 2 THE STORY PAPER COLLECTOR JAN.-MAR., 1941

them—he eventually controlled a large group of papers, not only for boys, but also for girls and grown-ups too.

No. 47 was the first Christmas double Number, the first of a long line of them. Among the contributors during the first year were Reginald Wray and Henry St. John, both of whom wrote for Mr. Edwards for many years. Mr. St. John was known in other literary spheres as Henry St. John Cooper, I believe.

The paper continued on what appears to have been an uneventful career, apparently growing in popularity. Then came the war in South Africa, and beginning with No. 250, Nov. 4, 1899, there commenced a series of "war numbers," some on yellow paper, some double numbers. After a few months this war fever subsided and the "B.F." resumed a more normal appearance.

During the halfpenny series several other authors who contributed to the "B.F." for many years made their appearance; among them Sidney Drew, Henry T. Johnson, and A. S. Hardy. "Nelson Lee," popular for many years as a detective rivalling "Sexton Blake," appeared during this period.

The last of the halfpenny series was No. 332, June 8th,

1901. With the next week's issue a new series was started, 16 pages, selling at one penny (2c.). The old series numbering was continued, along with the new, during the first year—the only instance that has come to my notice of this being done among the British boys' story papers of that period.

No. 41, new series, March 22, 1902, was the Oxford and Cambridge Boat-race Number, and was printed in blue ink—prob-

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by the only time this was done.

Judging by the amount of advertising carried the paper flourished mightily during the next ten years. For some time double numbers carried colored covers, but after about four years these were dropped, not to return until 1915. In 1902 another paper, "Boys' Realm," on pink paper, was started, and in 1903 the "Boys' Herald," on white paper, appeared—all under the same control. While very similar to the "B.F.," the "Realm" later specialized in sport, and the "Herald" in hobbies.

Mr. Edwards came to be an important personage in the publishing company, the Amalgamated Press Ltd., and was made a director. About 1912 he seems to have relinquished personal control of his papers, which were divided between other editors. The "B.F." carried on with little change in appearance, but no longer travelled in company with the "Herald"—which was suspended in that year—and the "Realm." A little later a recent arrival, "Dreadnought," joined up as running mate. It was absorbed in 1915.

By 1914 the paper seems to be not doing so well. No Christmas double number appeared. In February, 1915, control passed into the hands of Mr. H. A. Hinton, who had been very suc-

cessful with the "Magnet," the "Gem," and the "Pen-ny Popular." In No. 715, Feb. 20, was published the first of the very popular series of "Rockwood" school stories, which ran for eleven years. Then followed four "bumper" numbers, enlarged, with colored covers. This must have been one of the biggest "booms" put on for any boys' paper. And it must have been a success, for the good old "B.F." flourished anew for many years more, though now with a slightly changed make-up, and stories that appear a little more juvenile.

In January of 1916 the 21st Anniversary Number was issued with a colored cover; it contained messages from various notable persons, including Hamilton Edwards. War conditions caused a reduction to twelve pages in March, 1916. The Christmas issue for that year was the last with a colored cover. In January 1918 a further cut left only eight pages; in March the price was raised to three-halfpence (3c). Popular authors during this period were "Owen Conquest," "Duncan Storm" and "Maurice Everard," all of whom contributed many serials and series between 1915 and 1925.

Came the end of hostilities, and in June of 1919 the pages were increased to twelve, the

price still three-halfpence. No. 973, Jan. 31st, 1920, was the 25th Birthday Number, and contained the first instalment of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's sporting story, "Rodney Stone." The 1000th No. of the new series was dated August 7th, 1920, but was not celebrated particularly beyond editorial comment.

Late in 1922 the pages were increased to sixteen, the pre-war size, the price raised to twopence. Until this time the paper again seems to have been very popular. At times a lot of advertisements were carried, so that two issues just before Christmas, 1921, were increased in size by four pages to accommodate all of them. The Christmas number for that year also consisted of sixteen pages; this was the last increased-page special number issued.

Mr. Hinton left the Amalgamated Press in 1921, I believe, but the style of the paper, and that of its companions, "Magnet," "Gem" and "Popular" did not change. In January, 1923, stories by the now world-famous P. G. Wodehouse began to appear.

But in 1922 an event occurred which was no doubt a contributing factor to the decline of not only the "Boys' Friend" but also of the "Boys' Realm," which, suspended in 1916, was revived in 1919 in the same form. This was the launching by the same

publishers of the "Champion," a paper with smaller pages than the "B.F.," and which had a colored front page on every issue. Other papers of similar attractive appearance followed.

The good old "Green 'un" carried on for several years, but looking at the copies for this period it can be seen that all was not well. In 1925 the columns, which from the start had numbered five to the page, were changed to four. Then, after No. 1298, April 24, '26, drastic changes were made. Stories by Owen Conquest, Maurice Everard and Duncan Storm were no longer carried.

The paper was "reconstructed to suit the modern boy." Size of page and color were the same, but there were now three wide columns to the page, volume numbering and the words "New Series" were dropped, and the pages were numbered 1 to 16 in each issue, instead of being carried on through the volume. At this time, for some reason, the apostrophe in "Boys'" was changed from after the "s" to before it; the paper was now the "Boy's Friend."

But this attempt to revive the old paper was not a success; by the end of 1926 the columns were again four to the page, and reprint stories and pages of comics were being used. No. 1384,

December 24, 1927, was the last Christmas Number—the 33rd. In the previous week's issue the Editor, in boosting a "war" story just starting, made reference to the stories run in the paper many years before, predicting the war of 1914-18. Before this time the pages of comics had been dropped.

When the faithful who had stayed with their favorite paper thus far opened their copies for the week after Christmas—No. 1385, December 31st, 1927, they learned that in future the paper would be incorporated with that "really live" boys' weekly, the "Triumph." After a few weeks "Boy's Friend" appeared no more on the cover of "Triumph" and the old paper was now just a

memory. In all a total of 1717 issues were published. During one week in almost 33 years the paper failed to appear; this was in 1926, at the time of the general strike.

It is interesting to note that the "Boys' Realm" was changed to small pages in 1927, and survived the change by only about a year, while the "Girls' Friend," a similar style of paper published by the same company since the late '90s, went through the same change and suffered the same fate not long after.

Twice since then the Amalgamated Press has tried to revive the large-size page story paper—Late in 1934 there appeared "Boys Broadcast," which ran to only 13 or so numbers before

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being changed to smaller page-size. In 1938 "Modern Boy," a very popular paper started in 1928, was changed to the large size. The new series began with a big "splash," but lasted less than six months before reverting to smaller pages.

The day of the large-page "journal" type of story paper seems to be definitely past, and

is not likely to return. But looking through my volumes and loose numbers of the "Boys' Friend," in my opinion an outstanding boys' paper of a past era, I get a thrill that I fear will not be felt thirty years hence by present-day boys when they peruse hoarded copies of their own favorite papers—or so-called "comic" magazines.

### NOTES

‡ The oldest boys' weekly still published in Britain is "Adventure," the 1000th issue being dated December 28, 1940. The next oldest is "Champion," the 1000th number of which is due March 29.



‡ Casualties among British boys' papers have been heavy since

the war started. In order of suspension the following have been stopped:—"Modern Boy," "Gem," "Magnet," "Boys' Cinema," "Thriller," "Triumph," "Detective Weekly," (which replaced "Union Jack" in 1933), and "Skipper." This leaves but five boys' papers still being published in Britain.

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# Introducing : : :

The first issue of any publication, however modest, seems to call for some excuse for its appearance. But I do not propose to offer any excuse. Having the equipment and ability, a legacy from the days when I was a printer (and provided the energy is available) it appears to me a pleasant task to produce a little paper devoted to the collection of the British boys' papers of the past forty years.

Having spent my early years in England it is natural that I am still mainly interested in the British papers, especially the

"Boys' Friend" and the "Magnet Library." But I fully understand how my American contemporaries regard the "novels" of their own youth.

I must here express gratitude to Ralph Cummings' "Dime Novel Round-Up," and the now-suspended "Collector's Miscellany," long published in England by Joseph Parks, for the inspiration necessary to attempt this modest endeavor.

How many more issues there will be, how frequently they will appear, remains to be seen—  
W. H. G.

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## THE MAGNET by Keith Atkinson

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In Form-room, study, hall and Close our hearts were with the boys  
And visits to the tuckshop simply added to our joys.

Both fatuous Bunter and crass Coker gave us much hilarity,

With Skinner, Snoop and Ponsonby ensuring base rascality.  
George Wingate, Captain of the school, was always just and right,  
Whilst Loder's Carnes' and Walker's shady deeds would not bear light.

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*The Magnet* 2<sup>d</sup>



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## SEXTON BLAKE AND DETECTIVE WEEKLY

by J.E.M.

### Introduction

Some fans believe that with the death of the UNION JACK the "real" Sexton Blake also died - or, at any rate, like Sherlock Holmes after Reichenbach, was never quite the same man again. Certainly, the UJ's successor, DETECTIVE WEEKLY, which took over in 1933, soon went into decline and its end in 1940 came as a surprise to no one.

In the UJ, Blake had been paramount; in a sense he was the UJ. By contrast, his grip on the DW was brief and feeble. After being its star for less than three years, he disappeared from its pages altogether, his adventures being replaced by crime stories featuring other leading characters. A couple of years or so before the end, he did make a come-back of sorts in re-hashed stories from the old UJ itself. (Happily of course, our favourite sleuth continued a vigorous and up-to-date life in the monthly Sexton Blake Library, which still had many bright years ahead of it.)

Having said all that, I have a very warm spot for the DW, since it was where I first encountered Blake, getting on for 60 years ago (I caught up with the then defunct UJ much later). Over and above any personal sentiment, I would also argue that some of the DW's **earliest** stories stand comparison with anything in the canon. With authors like Lewis Jackson, G.H. Teed, Anthony Skene, Rex Hardinge and Gwyn Evans, our man from Baker Street was surely in the safest hands.

There was an added bonus. The larger format of DETECTIVE WEEKLY favoured the bold, vigorous style of Eric Parker's brilliant drawings. Over the coming months, I hope to go back to some of these and the stories they illustrated. If, because of CD's smaller size, a bit of the Parker magic is lost, I am sure enough of it will remain to whet your appetite for a return trip to the entertaining yarns it enlivened.

### Number 1

Sexton Blake's parents were less fortunate than those of Sherlock Holmes. As you'll recall, Sherlock had a brother, Mycroft, who was an even greater detective. By contrast, the senior Blakes passed on some very mixed genes. Sexton, of course, grew up to be not only a brilliant investigator but a veritable pillar of society. His brother Nigel, alas, turned out to be a wrong 'un, as they say, and for many, many years this was **Sexton Blake's Secret**, revealed in the story of that title in the first issue of DETECTIVE WEEKLY.

In this dramatic - even melodramatic - yarn by Lewis Jackson, Blake has to deal not only with some obvious human problems but with serious crime as well. The

reader, too, has quite a few problems, having to get used not only to a Blakian brother (and a criminal one at that) but also a betrayed and deserted sister-in-law and nephew. Nigel's wife, Clare, and son, Garry, are, needless to say, as virtuous as Sexton himself.

Lewis Jackson had always tried to give some psychological depth to his stories. He was, in fact, a bit of an armchair Freud and he was certainly the ideal author to entrust with the Blakes' family skeleton. Many readers thought the whole theme a great mistake but there is no denying it brought novelty to the saga and, in this odd mixture of human drama and detective story, Jackson displayed both verve and intelligence.

(Incidentally, the story reveals another Blakian secret we were not prepared for: Blake's - or Jackson's - shaky vocabulary! Sexton does not seem to know the difference - and it is a common enough error - between "infer" and "imply"; see DW No. 1, page 24.)

My montage of Eric Parker's illustrations depicts the members of the Blake clan we had never met before, as well as a dramatic moment when Blake hides his miscreant brother from the law.



# SEXTON BLAKE'S SECRET by Lewis Jackson

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## AN OLD SPANISH CUSTOM

by Jim Sutcliffe

Handforth, Church and McClure are stony broke when a letter arrives from Handy's pater, Sir Edward Handforth. On opening it Handy finds a windfall - five green one pound notes enclosed! "Don't get so excited" he said, "My pater's a business man, there's a catch here, it must be a bribe". And so it is! Sir Edward is coming to Bannington that very afternoon, to the Town Hall to make a speech, and he wants Handy to take a party of juniors, but Church and McClure are not keen until they find that some of the cash is for Handy to stand them all a tea afterwards at the Japanese Café.

This inducement produces quite a crowd including K.K. Parkington and Co., the rivals of the Old Timers. At 2.30 the Town Hall is filled to capacity, it also being Bannington Hospital Week. The Mayor, Alderman Gribble, makes a long, introductory speech and the audience gives a cheer of relief as he finishes and Sir Edward begins. He is in fine form, having lunched at the Grapes Hotel, and he waxes eloquent on the subject of buying British goods. "I remember some years ago when on holiday in a remote Spanish village" he says "a quaint old inn keeper who had a custom of destroying everything of foreign manufacture that came into his household."

"An old Spanish custom, what?" asks Travers. "Very apt young man, very apt indeed" replies Sir Edward. At the end of speech the juniors leave the Town Hall, impatient for the promised feed. Handy however is inspired with enthusiasm for buying British. He spots some of the Moor View girls outside one of the big shops, and Irene Manners is on the point of buying a new handbag. Handy insists on paying for it, but not before the Removites relieve him of sufficient cash for the tea spread. Irene selects her handbag but, when Handy pays for it, he discovers it has been made in Austria! "Austria!" he says, "Give me that bag." Seizing it he rips it apart and slings it in the gutter. "Down with foreign goods!" The juniors go back into the shop and eventually find an English-made bag to suit Irene. As the girls point out, they could easily have taken the first bag back and exchanged it. Having started, Handy as usual goes the whole hog, even condemning the Japanese Café food with foreign names, and threatening to throw anything he finds back at St. Frank's not made in Britain into the River Stowe.

Meanwhile K.K. Parkington has an idea for a great jape on the Old Timers, and purchases a cheap printing set. On returning to the school he sets up a "Made in England" stamp and, armed with an ink-pad, marks all the items in his own gang's studies with it. However, Handy, full of his latest crusade, after a suggestion from K.K. that some of the studies could contain foreign-made goods, finds plenty (which

unknown to him had been thus suitably marked by K.K.). In the morning Handy is awake well before rising bell. He loads his Morris Minor with an assortment of goods including wireless sets, gramophones, furniture, etc. and drives off the the River Stowe before Church and McClure can stop him.

To cut a long story short, Handy unexpectedly meets a rag and bone man with a cart, and accepts fifteen shillings for the lot. Needless to say, he incurs the wrath of his fellow Removites. They track down the man who demands twenty pounds to let them have the goods back. With Archie Glenthorne contributing the most, they reluctantly hand it over and return to the school. Handy's pater has been the guest of Nelson Lee overnight and is told of his son's having taken his speech to heart. "It was your fault pater" says Handy. "You told us about the Spanish inn-keeper - an Old Spanish Custom!"



Handforth seized Irene's handbag, tore it to shreds and then tossed it contemptuously into the gutter.

"You silly young donkey" snorts Sir Edward, "That was only an anecdote - I've never stayed at a Spanish inn in my life - that was Speaker's Licence!" Oddly enough the rag and bone man turns up at that moment and offers the twenty quid back, provided Sir Edward doubles it, for the Hospital appeal. Not only does Sir Edward double it, he makes it a round hundred pounds! So all's well that ends well, but the last straw is when the Removites find out that the rag and bone man is none other than Baines, the amateur actor of K.K.'s gang.

This story, No. 34 in the Second New Series, was partly based on the Empire Day story "Handforth the Martyr" which was No. 5 in the First New Series.

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**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.

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## HAROLD HOOD

by Reg Hardinge

The Adventures of Harold Hood were featured in the Boys' Friend during the mid-'twenties. The pipe-smoking Hood resided in his London Jermyn Street flat with his young protégé Billy Williams. A bloodhound named Guardsman completed the ménage. The author (unknown) of the series very obviously modelled his characters on the famous Baker Street trio of Blake, Tinker and Pedro. Hood owned a sleek Lerrow-Panther automobile, capable of a powerful performance and handled superbly by Billy, who acted as chauffeur. A strong bond existed between Hood and his young assistant. Hood referred affectionately to Billy as 'Young 'Un' - the term used by Blake in addressing Tinker. Like Blake, when Hood started to ponder over a case, he pulled a pipe from his pocket, filled it from his pouch and lit it thoughtfully.



This Week: "THE HOUSE UNDER THE SEA!"

In the case of *The House Under the Sea*, Hood had been invited by Scotland Yard to join his old friend Detective Inspector Yorke of the C.I.D. in the tracking down of a gang of international jewel thieves

operating from a base on the coast of Kent not far from Dover. It was Billy, after a vigil of many days, who located the gang's headquarters by diving into the depths and discovering the entrance to the house under the sea.

The cover of the Boys's Friend of October 16th, 1926 in which this tale appeared depicted Hood, Billy, Inspector Yorke and his Scotland Yard assistant clad in their diving helmets fastened by watertight collars to their necks. Oxygen cylinders fixed to their backs were connected to their helmets. In watertight holsters on their belts each carried a loaded automatic. They have gained entry to the hideout through the lever-operated steel door set in a concrete block lying on the sea-bed. Once in this outer chamber and with the steel hatch closed, machinery began pumping out the water which had accompanied the ingress of the four men. A second watertight door set in the wall opposite was revealed. This led to the submarine lair - a luxurious apartment exuding pleasant warmth from the radiators surrounding its walls and situated several fathoms below sea level. The gang was trapped and captured in its den, providing another feather in the cap of Harold Hood.

Some of the other cases successfully investigated by him were *The Waters of Doom*, *The Wolf*, *The Crown Theatre Mystery*, *The Monster*, *The Double-Y Mystery* and *The Miser's Hoard*.

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### (Second Spasm)

Awful weather. Heaps of wind and driving rain, but nobody minds much, for it keeps the Huns away. No air-raid warning for several days now. And just the ticket for reading.

We went to the pictures tonight. Pretty good. First feature was "Bedtime Story" with Fredric March and Loretta Young. (Doug sighs and says what lovely eyes she has.) About a man who writes plays for his wife to star in. But she doesn't want to appear in his latest one. Quite amusing. I liked the second film better. "Out of the Fog" with Ida Lupino and John Garfield. This is a thriller with gangsters landing themselves on a family and scaring the family stiff.

And now, back to the spine-tingling early St. Jim's stories in that lovely paper called "PLUCK". What strikes me is the surprising fact that almost all of these are mainly about the seniors. They are described as "tales of Arthur Augustus, Jack Blake, and Figgins & Co." - but the plots centre mainly on the rivalry between Kildare, the school captain, and Monteith, head boy of the New House. Another

thing that strikes anyone like me - a chap so used to the later St. Jim's and Greyfriars tales - is what a super-abundance of PLOT there is in every yarn.

**STARTS NEXT WEEK! A New School Serial Story by Chas. Hamilton.**



EVERY  
SATURDAY.

ONE  
PENNY.

[VOL. 5, No. 114, NEW SERIES.]

**THE FIRST LONG, COMPLETE STORY.**



A Tale of  
Arthur Augustus, Jack Blake,  
and Figgins & Co.  
By **CHAS. HAMILTON.**

I have already covered the first four stories. Now I come to the 5th one, "Staunch Chums of St. Chum's". Sleath of the Sixth is the Treasurer of the school sports funds. He claims that £12 has been stolen from his desk. (There is lovely talk about sovereigns and half-sovereigns which gives you a delicious feeling of what life was like long ago. My Mum and Dad remember when there were real gold coins.)

Other seniors well known to us come in the tale - Darrel, Rushden, Webb, Baker, etc. Jack Blake is accused of stealing the money. And there is a lot of plot and counter-plot. But Figgins takes a hand, and keeps an eye on Sleath who is an obvious rotter. Finally it transpires that Sleath himself used the money to place bets with Mr. Joliffe, the landlord of the Rylcombe Arms. Figgins manages to expose Sleath for the young criminal he is, and Blake's name is cleared.

Dr. Holmes, the Head, says: "Sleath, I do not know how to express my detestation of the enormity of which you have been guilty. Theft in itself is one of the basest of all petty crimes, but to blast the character of an innocent lad --- You are expelled from St. Jim's, sir!"

So Sleath got the boot in only the 5th St. Jim's tale ever written. Yet, somehow his name is familiar to me. I seem to have come on Sleath in the tales of my own time. I wonder whether, later on, Martin Clifford forgot that Sleath had been expelled.

Well, all that was in the first issue for the year 1907. Two weeks later, in the issue dated January 19th, 1907, St. Jim's was back with "The Milverton Match". Lots of football in this one. There was lots of football in these early tales. And masses of plot. Blake gets the idea of starting a school magazine. Blake's magazine is called "The Saint".

In his magazine, Blake has a go at the New House. He includes the following verse:

"There are three horrid bounders who go  
By the queer name of Figgins & Co;  
They ought to be sacked  
From the school, that's a fact;  
They're a howling disgrace to the show."

However, Figgins gets at the "proofs". When the mag appears, the above verse is gone, replaced by this one:

"There are three jolly fellows we know,  
By the title of Figgins & Co.,  
They are all of them bricks,  
And they've whacked Study Six,  
And they don't give the School House a show."

There's another bit of plot - an unbelievable episode, even for those of us who would believe anything. Kerr, disguised as Mr. Lathom, goes over to the School House to jape Blake & Co. Unexpectedly Kerr, as Mr. Lathom, is intercepted by Mr. Kidd, the Housemaster. Mr. Kidd takes "Mr. Lathom" into his, Mr. Kidd's study, to sit by the fire for a chat. He offers "Mr. Lathom" a cigar. To escape, Kerr has to pretend to feel ill.

And that's all secondary plot. The main plot, once again, concerns the seniors. With more football. St. Jim's First Eleven is playing Clifden. Jones, a New House senior, is in the St. Jim's side. He charges the Clifden skipper. "A blackguardly foul." Kildare orders Jones off the field. (Macdonald, who illustrates this story, depicts the incident. By some strange oversight the caption under the picture reads "Get off the field, Joe!")

So Jones, grinding his teeth, leaves the field. Monteith protests at a New House man being sent off. "Hold your tongue!" snaps Kildare.

When the next game - the one against Milverton - is arranged, Monteith wants the disgraced Jones to be replaced by another New House fellow. Kildare refuses, so there are only Monteith and Baker, of the New House, in the team. Monteith refuses to play, and he persuades the more decent Baker to do the same. But St. Jim's wins nevertheless. A good story - a bit unbelievable to us clever knowalls - and simply packed with PLOT.

In this same issue of PLUCK appears the first instalment of a Grand New School Serial by Charles Hamilton entitled "The Rivals of St. Kit's". I shall have a go at it when I have finished the St. Jim's stories by Charles Hamilton in PLUCK. There are familiar names at St. Kit's. The new boy, our hero, is an Irish boy Pat Nugent; the leader of the Lower School is one Trimble; one of the "rivals" for the school captaincy is Talbot. And the serial kicks off with a big football match. In the next issue there is no St. Jim's tale, but it is intriguing to see that, in a Wycliffe story by Jack North, one of the junior leaders is named Merry.

With the next PLUCK, dated 2nd February 1907, we find "The Mystery of the Housemaster". The unpleasant Monteith is well to the fore. Through having a forged letter handed to him, Mr. Ratcliff comes to the conclusion that Mr. Kidd, the



# THE RIVALS OF ST KIT'S

*By Charles Hamilton*

School House Housemaster, is being blackmailed over some crime. So Mr. Ratcliff spies on Mr. Kidd, and tries to make trouble for the other master. Quite a novel yarn, holding the interest.

I'm getting a kick out of reading these wonderful early St. Jim's stories from *PLUCK*. And I love entering all the details at the back of my Diary. I'm lucky! There are several more to be read yet.

## ERIC FAYNE Comments on "DANNY LOOKS BACK"

Danny is right about what he calls the "super-abundance" of plot in those early days. The plot-wastage, if one can call it that, was enormous. After a few years this was changed with a vengeance. No doubt, when he was young, plots came easily to Hamilton. He saw no reason, maybe, why the supply of plots should ever expire.

Common sense took over. With a new story to write every week on one particular school, it clearly became more difficult, as Time passed on relentlessly, to find new plots. So plots which, in early days, would have made one story, were now spread (occasionally wafer-thin with plenty of contrivance to spin them out) over a number of tales, actually making serials of them.

The new system contained one big advantage. As the plot was spread, the author had more space for developing character and for increasing atmosphere, and so the great masterpieces of later years came into being.

Now the sub writers, when they came on the scene, were more obvious. Often the subs had quite good plots. It was in trying to write the padding for those plots that they foundered. And so, as it were, the men were distinguished from the boys.

Just now and then the later system was overdone, so that on rare occasions a series came dangerously near to overstaying its welcome.

Two of the *PLUCK* tales commented on by Danny this month are of particular interest, for they were re-written, introducing Tom Merry and his Clavering friends, and these re-written versions appeared in successive issues of the Gem more than five years later. Part of "The Milverton Match" became "The Captain's Rival" in the Gem of late 1912, reprinted under the same title in late 1936. Another section of that same *PLUCK* tale - the part where Blake started a magazine named "The Saint" - appeared in the Gem in late 1912 as "Jack Blake on the Warpath". For some reason, this one was not reprinted in the thirties. Finally the *PLUCK* tale "The Mystery of the Housemaster" was re-written (Mr. Kidd, of course, became Mr. Railton) as "The Rival Housemasters" for the Gem of late 1912. It was reprinted in late 1936 as "The Housemaster's Secret".

A number of questions arise as a result of the re-writing of those two *PLUCK* stories and the appearance of the re-written stories in the Gem. Questions which I

cannot recall have ever been asked before. And questions to which, at this very late stage, there can be no answer.

WHY were the stories reprinted? Were they re-written under the direction of the Editor of the day? Did he give the work to some minor writer at the A.P.? If so, WHY?

Did Charles Hamilton himself re-write these old PLUCK tales? If so, WHY? One would take no notice of old plots being used again. It often happened down the years. But in this case, lots of the original script is used. Much of the original dialogue is in the new versions, with Tom Merry and the Clavering cast being skilfully moulded into the entirety.

If Hamilton himself was responsible for the re-writing, did the A.P. realise what was being done? They might not. Much water had flowed under the bridges between early 1907 and late 1912. But why do it?

Personally, I am quite sure that Hamilton himself was the man who re-wrote the stories of the new St. Jim's. I have wondered sometimes whether someone, possibly a relative, may have done the writing under Hamilton's supervision, and with the Grand Old Master on hand to do any "touching up" which might be required. It's just one of those little affairs which intrigue us all these years later.

Danny reminds us that the lovely old Hamilton story "The Rivals of St. Kit's" commenced its run at that time in PLUCK. St. Kit's was the boys' nickname for their school which was really St. Christopher's. A year or two later that story appeared in No. 46 of the Boys' Friend Library. Naturally I have the heart-warming old Hamilton B.F.L., beautifully bound in red binding with the title in gold, in my bookcase. I often wondered why that story was not reprinted, many years later, in the S.O.L. Possible its considerable length was the factor.

Which brings me to the final comment on what Danny wrote just then... He quoted from the story:

"Dr. Holmes said to Sleath: 'You are expelled from St. Jim's, sir!'"

Years later, Dr. Holmes would never have spoken of "St. Jim's" which (like St. Kit's) was the boys' slang name for their school. The Head would have said majestically: "You are expelled from St. James's College, sir!"

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**WANTED:** £20 each offered for "Boys Friend Libraries" featuring BIGGLES. £15 each offered for 1950's Biggles and Famous Five jigsaw puzzles. £3 each offered for "Happy Mags". £15 offered for B.F.L. no. 204 "Crooked Gold". Original artwork of Bunter, Tom Merry, etc., always wanted.

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# Books



**WAR BOY: A Country Childhood**, by Michael Foreman. Published by Pavilion Books, £9.99. Reviewed by Mary Cadogan.

This book was actually published during 1989 to co-incide with the fiftieth anniversary of the declaration of the Second World War, but I have only just come across it. Michael Foreman is, of course, one of the most distinguished of present-day book illustrators, and particularly of children's publications. His glowing colour pictures have enhanced many reprints of classic stories as well as contemporary tales. This is his own memoir of wartime childhood in a village on the Suffolk coast, and it brilliantly evokes the atmosphere of the time. The text is short but informative; largely, however, the story is told in pictures, mostly in colour and sometimes in black and white. I'm sure that I was a much older child than Michael Foreman during the 'forties' but I find myself responding wholeheartedly to his memories of gas-masks and gob-stoppers, of children's games that are perennial, and which carried on in, and indeed were even enhanced

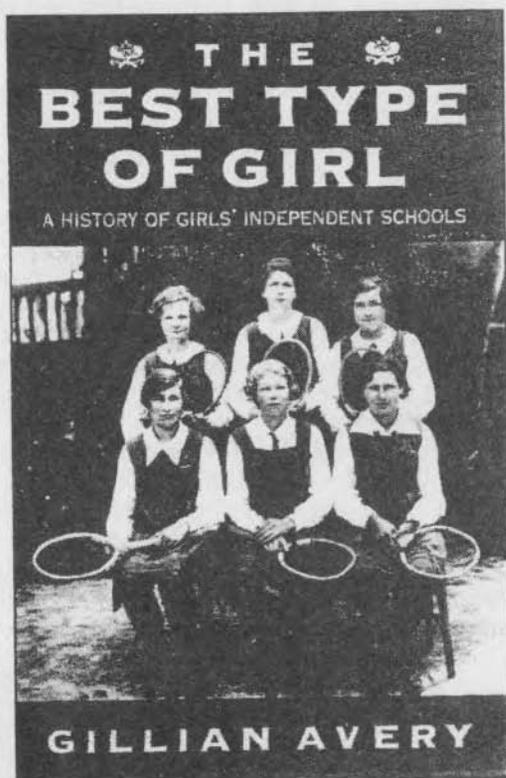


by, air-raid shelters and other paraphernalia of the war. Further intriguing touches in WAR BOY are the reproductions of A.R.P. cigarette-cards and aircraft recognition charts, and the almost bizarre mood conjured up by illustrations of stretches of coastline hurriedly fortified with pillboxes, barbed wire and barrage balloons.

**THE BEST TYPE OF GIRL: A History of Girls' Independent Schools, by Gillian Avery. Published by Andre Deutsch, £20.00. Reviewed by Mary Cadogan.**

A great deal of historical material about boys' schools has been published, but not nearly so much attention has been given to those for girls. This 400 page, meticulously charted and above all entertaining account is therefore most welcome. Written by Gillian Avery, who has produced some of the best children's stories of the last three decades, *THE BEST TYPE OF GIRL* tells us everything we need to know about the determination and vision of pioneers in women's education, about the pupils, and the sometimes extraordinary attitudes which formed the background to girls' battles for learning and careers. Gillian Avery deals comprehensively with class and gender prejudices, but manages throughout to avoid any Headmistressy admonitions, and hard information is accom-

panied by a great deal of humorous comment and anecdote. Fact seems often even stranger than fiction. Even in the works of the legendary Angela Brazil and Elsie J. Oxenham (which are referred to in the text) we find nothing quite as striking as the real-life teacher who wept genuine tears over the Battle of Thermopylae, or the Headmistress who could, apparently 'quell a ferocious pair of swans with her voice alone'. (Surely even Miss Primrose and her more belligerent colleague Miss Bullivant, never attained such heights!) A fascinating read, with lots of intriguing photographs.



**GEORGE SOPER'S HORSES.** A Celebration of the English Working Horse, by Paul Heiney. Published by H.F. & G. Witherby Ltd. at £14.95. Reviewed by Norman Wright.

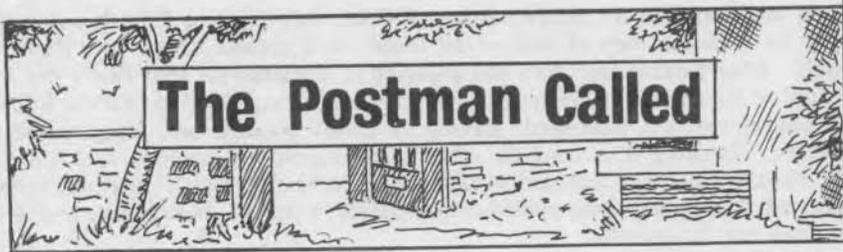
By profession George Soper was an illustrator, his work appearing in a wide variety of magazines. As a hobby he studied and painted heavy horses and his depictions of those mighty beasts have hardly ever been bettered. When George Soper's eldest daughter, Eileen, died in March 1990 her studio was found to contain a large number of her father's watercolours, as well as many pen and ink drawings, etchings etc. This remarkable collection had been unseen for almost half a century and it forms the core of this present volume.

In September 1990 The Wildlife Art Gallery at Lavenham, Suffolk mounted an exhibition of the works; the event proved to be one of their most successful exhibitions and by the time the exhibition closed every one of the paintings had been sold. I attended that event and though I could not afford to purchase any of the watercolours that were on display I was able to buy a copy of "George Soper's Horses". Whilst not the same as actually having one of those lively paintings on the wall, the book is the next best thing. The watercolours are beautifully reproduced in glowing colours faithfully reflecting Soper's use of shades. The pen and ink drawings and sketches are also well reproduced. One of the joys of this book is that it shows such a wide variety of the artist's work on the subject in all mediums.

I must admit that I bought the book for its pictures. But once I started reading the text I found that it was much more than a picture-book. I became fascinated by the entire world that the book described, a world where man and best toiled long hours for little reward. Like Oliver Twist I wanted more, and found that at the back of the book there was a bibliography of other books on the working horse, some of which I now intend to read!



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**MARK TAHA (London):** I write this after a delightful time reading the C.D. Annual on Christmas Day. I'd like to make one or two comments, if I may. In Roger Jenkins's excellent article on Ponsonby, he says it was never made clear exactly what Mr. Mobbs hoped Ponsonby's father would do for him. Surely Highcliffe's elderly Headmaster Mr. Voysey couldn't have been that far off retirement. In one story, it was mentioned that he'd gone to a scholastic conference and Mr. Mobbs had gone with him (during the Lancaster series). Need I say more? Snobby Mobby - Headmaster?

I'm really sorry that Hamilton didn't write more Highcliffe stories. I always found it the most convincing and realistic of all his schools. I'm inclined to suspect that real-life Public Schools were and are more like Highcliffe than Greyfriars, and that there are more Ponsonbys than Tom Merrys in them... Also, I'd like to add that Ponsonby's father was apparently a Lord before the First World War, a Baronet in the 'thirties and, in one of Hamilton's mid-'twenties stories he was described as Mr. Ponsonby, the new adviser to the Greyfriars Governors who'd suggested putting the fees up by fifty percent!

I also really enjoyed Bob Whiter's *Hilton and Price* article. I always find them among Hamilton's most convincing seniors - and Removites being able to outfight Price is hardly unlikely; there's not that much physical difference between 15 and 17, after all! I can also answer Bob's question: Hilton and Price **did** feature in the text of the unfinished series. In Gyles Brandreth's 1977 compilation *Yaroo!*, the only surviving fragment, entitled *Exit Bunter* - the sixth (I think) story in the series - featured Price and references to earlier events he'd taken part in.

**TED BALDOCK (Cambridge):** Thank you - and all concerned - for a marvellous Annual. One would need to be very unresponsive indeed if such a work did not arouse a host of pleasant memories. Many hitherto little doors in the mind flew open as one perused the pages, not least those concerning the pre Magnet/Gem days, what I choose to call the /Comic days/. Puck and Rainbow were, I recall, the staple reading diet at home in those far off times, 'Rob the Rover' in Puck was an especial favourite. How we longed for similar adventures and thrills as we followed these heroes week by week! The fact is that those long ago days seem to have no relation whatever to these brash modern times, which renders it so much more important that they should be preserved through the medium of the 'Collector's Digest'. The era is dead - long live the era.

**JIM LAKE (Birmingham):** It was with very much interest that I read Derek Adley's article "The Mystery of Jack Nobody" in this year's C.D. Annual.

As mentioned in an earlier edition of C.D., way back in 1960 I was lucky enough to receive a copy of *Jack of All Trades* as a present from Frank Richards himself. After reading this story and enjoying it, I afterwards read *Jack's the Lad* and *Jack of the Circus*. After reading the third book, I couldn't wait for the follow-up. This never was published, leaving as Derek pointed out, many unsolved mysteries. Knowing now about the other "Jack" typescripts it seems as I believed from the start, this was intended to be a series in book form. Hopefully, as you mentioned, some enterprising publisher may decide to publish these books, so that all about Jack may be revealed.

**EDWARD RAKE (Bristol):** Recently I bought at a local second-hand bookshop a very small eighteen page booklet. On the cover were the words: *Mascot, Schoolboy Series No. 4, Sent To Coventry by Frank Richards, author of 'Billy Bunter'. A Complete 'Bob Hood & Co.' story.* It was published by John Matthew Ltd., Finsbury House, Blomfield Street, London, E.C.2 at 41/2d a copy. The coloured cover was by C.R. Ratcliff. The school in the story was called Topham and this No. 4 issue featured Dandy Randy and Bunny Binks and Harry Vine and Bob Hood. The story was very short, eight little chapters in which an immaculate cad, Dandy Randy (could have been a first-off of Vernon-Smith) is saved from drowning by the very boy the cad tried to get expelled by a trick. You've read the sort of story many times!

I wonder if any Frank Richards expert could tell me anything about this little publication, such as when it was published.

(Editor's Note: By a strange coincidence a kind C.D. reader recently sent me a copy of the booklet mentioned by Mr. Rake. Someone has written in pencil on it "Post war, at Woolworths, 1946", but according to the St. James Press reference book *Twentieth Century Children's Writers* the Mascot Schoolboy Series was published in 1947, consisting of four titles: *Top Study at Topham*, *Bunny Binks on the War-Path*, *The Dandy of Topham* and *Sent to Coventry*. Also in 1947 the same publisher (John Matthew) produced three 'Hilda Richards' stories of St. Olive's School: *Pamela of St. Olive's*, *The Stranded Schoolgirls* and *The Jape of the Term*. I have these, and they seem like re-writes, much abridged, of *Magnet* and early *Schoolfriend* stories featuring Cliff House, with the names of the characters changed, of course. Presumably, as neither the boys' nor the girls' *Mascot* series attained anything approaching the popularity of *The Magnet* or *The Schoolfriend*, and as the Skilton hard-back Bunter books, launched in 1947, became



great sellers, Charles Hamilton felt no need to continue with stories of Topham and St. Olive's.)

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## HOW I FOUND OUT ABOUT THE AMALGAMATED PRESS

### Part I

by John Bridgwater

It is well over sixty years since I read my first Amalgamated Press publication but only a relatively short time since I learned much about that organisation. Apart from knowing that AP was located in Fleetway House in London and the names of a few of the leading personalities I knew virtually nothing. This is not very unusual as readers in general know almost nothing about the firms which produce the books they read. Of recent years publishers have produced a few books about themselves and so I was mildly interested to read in CD a few years ago that AP had published a book about itself, particularly as it came out many years in advance of any other similar books.

This book is entitled "The Romance of the Amalgamated Press" and was written by George Dilnot. The author is one whose work I have enjoyed reading in The Thriller and Sexton Blake Library, so when I saw an advertisement offering the book at a very modest price I had no hesitation in sending for it. When the parcel arrived I was considerably surprised by the size and weight. I certainly did not expect a volume 13ins x 10 1/2ins x 11 1/2ins weighing 7 lbs. It is a truly magnificent volume: half leather (black) binding with lots of ornate AP devices in gold leaf embossed on the front and spine. Gilt top edge and other edges uncut. Heavy, parchment quality paper, splendid marbled fly-leaves in blue and orange, the 101 pages of text interleaved with sepia photographs, 76 of them, all protected by semi-transparent sheets carrying the appropriate legends. The photographs show all the major personalities, offices, workshops and presses, stores, etc. On the last page is a panel with the words:- "The design, printing and production of this book, calling for the use of almost every device known to the printer's craft has been carried through by the Amalgamated Press (1922) Ltd." Below this is a picture of what I take to be William Caxton at his press.

The book opens with a tribute to the founder of the firm, Lord Northcliffe. The rise of A.P. is then traced from the first home of "Answers" in a 12ft square room, rented for 12/6 a week, at 26 Paternoster Square in 1888, then on to 108 Fleet Street, a move made necessary by "Answers" rapid development, to 24 Tudor Street, Carmelite House, Bouverie Street, Gough Square then to a final settling at Fleetway House. The various new publications are introduced along the way.

Among the papers mentioned "Rainbow" is singled out as highly successful. In 1894 the need for religious publications was recognised, and "Sunday Companion" was started but took two years against strong opposition before it was established. This was followed in 1896 by

"Sunday Stories" giving a complete weekly novel. It soon enjoyed popularity. It was a practice-ground for a writer who achieved great popularity - Ethel M. Dell - publishing about a score of her stories. Two other papers started at about this time: "Horner's Penny Stories" and "Sunday Circle" each of which also attained considerable popularity. By then two highly successful boys' papers were already outnumbering any other boys' papers in circulation. These are well known to us: "Union Jack" and "Boys' Friend". A daring experiment had been carried out in 1895 when "Home Chat" was launched, with the intention of providing a penny weekly journal for women which equalled in quality of editorial and pictorial contributions any of the existing 6d papers. It was an outstanding success, with crowds clamouring for copies. Incidentally it was the first paper to give free dressmaking patterns. As a measure of the firm's success 1896 saw Answers Publications dividend at 221/2 per cent. Two years later the 3d monthly magazine came but "Harmsworth Magazine", which became "The London Magazine", was underpriced and rose to 6d.

The early part-publications of this time were "Sixty Years a Queen" and "Nelson and His Times" both completed in ten 6d parts. Others were "With the Flag to Pretoria", 30 parts; a sequel "After Pretoria", 42 parts; "V.R.I." in 16 parts (following "Sixty Years a Queen"); "Japan's Fight for Freedom", 60 fortnightly parts; followed by "Harmsworth's Encyclopaedia", "The Children's Encyclopaedia", the "Self Educator" and many others too numerous to list in a short article.

In 1908 it was decided to make a serious bid for the fashion papers and paper pattern market. "Fashions for All" was revived and the "Best Way" pattern series started along with others. The paper pattern business built up to twenty million patterns a year which made the opening of a West End sales branch necessary. This was considered only a minor part of the A.P. as a whole.

In the same year "Playbox" Annual first appeared. Later came "Wonderland", "Puck", "Tiger Tim's", "Holiday", "Champion" and "School Girl's Own" annuals. Eventually A.P. issued thirteen annuals in all every year.

Another early venture was the "Red Magazine" which started in 1908. It was devoted to high quality fiction. After two years of monthly publication it was issued fortnightly thus doubling its circulation. The "Red Magazine" was so successful that in 1921 a companion, the "Yellow Magazine", was started. Not all new publications were an immediate success however. One of these was the part-publication the "Children's Encyclopaedia". Eventually it took off and there were gigantic editions in the United States and translations in French, Italian and Spanish. So great was the circulation by the time the fifty parts ended that it was continued as "My Magazine". The "Children's Newspaper" started as a section of this magazine in 1910 and did not become a separate paper until after the war.

1910 is also a notable year in the annals of A.P. because at that time a pension fund for editorial and commercial staff was established. The fund capital stood at £200,00 in 1922.

(To be Continued)

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## JIM'LL FIX IT

by Johnny Burslem

I often read in the "C.D." articles by Jim Sutcliffe. A man I admire, being an ardent churchwarden, kindly, gentle, would help anyone in trouble, never grumbles. An asset in this fast moving dangerous world.

Recently "Jimmy Saville" became a "Sir" for his help to charitable organizations and making people's lives happier. Fulfilling their ambitions. A great man, a famous "Jim'll fix it".

But! ... There is another. An old one. Who guided me in my younger days through the pages of the "Magnet". Namely, Col. James Wharton. He "fixed it" for a number of Harry Wharton's friends in the "Remove". A motley collection of law breakers, miscreants, rogues and gangsters. He even resorted to a "punch" to prove a point. Remember Barnes the chauffer? Warren... Tatters... Lancaster... to name a few.

I loved it all. Still do. At the end of many a series "Colonel Jim" arrived to fix it and restore Harry to the fold after a dramatic "stray" from the narrow path, as it were...

So, here I am at sixty-eight years, thanking the "Jim's" of the world for a happy life. How about you?

Read any good "Jim's" lately.

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C.D. readers will remember Nip, the dog whose picture was first used on the H.M.V. label in 1909 (three years after Nip had died). His likeness used by *His Master's Voice* records was taken from an original painting made by Francis Burrell in 1898.

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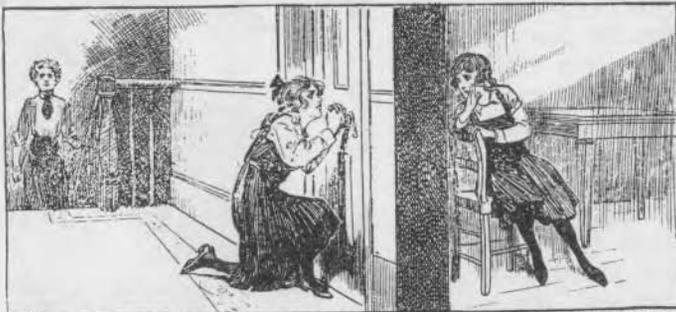
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FREE PARKING

## A MORCOVE COMPANION - TEN YEARS LATER

by Tommy Keen

The cover of the January C.D. absolutely delighted me, giving me an unexpected twinge of excitement, it was so much a replica of the original issue of the SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN. Leonard Shields' charming illustration of an incident in a Morcove School story brought back a flood of memories from the 1920s and 1930s, when some of us boys could manage to wrest from our sisters their copies of the S.G.O., and thereby read of Betty Barton and her chums at Morcove School.



**LOYAL TO HER CHUM!** "Betty, I must do something for you," said Polly Linton, through the keyhole of the door. "Tell me—!" "Polly Linton!" cried the Fourth Form mistress. "How dare you try to converse with a scholar in the detention-room!"

Nostalgia takes over; when looking at the date of the S.G.O. on the C.D. cover (week ending 25th June 1921) I realised with a shock, that ten years has flown since Mary Cadogan (our Editor) and I compiled the thirty page MORCOVE COMPANION to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the S.G.O. As No. 1 of this new school paper for girls was issued on the Tuesday of w.e. 5th February 1921 (oh dear, can it possibly be so long ago?), one realises that it is now seventy years since the intrepid Betty Barton arrived at Morcove School, in North Devon, from her home in Lancashire.

Betty, after having to endure many hardships from the snobbish girls of the Fourth Form, at last found a true friend in Polly Linton, and they remained bosom chums for the rest of the Morcove saga (fifteen years). By the ninth issue, a girl named Madge Minden had made an appearance. She became friendly with Betty and Polly, and for the remainder of the run of the S.G.O. became my favourite character.

To me, she was the female equivalent of my male favourites in the GEM and MAGNET, Reginald Talbot, Ernest Levison, and yes... Harry Manners of St. Jim's; of Tom Redwing and Mark Linley of Greyfriars. Also she seemed more interesting than the two girls I liked in the SCHOOL FRIEND's Cliff House - Phyllis Howell and Phillipa Derwent.

I do possess the first two bound volumes of the SCHOOLGIRLS OWN, and although I have now reached an age when I know I should finish with the collecting craze, I still retain the faint hope that someday I might discover more early issues of the S.G.O. (I'm not greedy, merely issues 1922/1926).

Greyfriars was magnificent, St. Jim's superb, Cliff House (in SCHOOL FRIEND days) interesting, but Morcove, for me, had just a little extra special quality.

Madge Minden from Morcove, really should have met Reginald Talbot from St. Jim's. They would have made an attractive pair, but unfortunately Morcove never became involved with our other schools... and, in any case, Polly Linton's brother Jack, even way back in 1921, seemingly had designs on Madge.

Seventy years ago! Why do we remember?

In this issue: STORY AND ARTICLES ON GIRL GUIDING!

# The Schoolgirls' Own



2<sup>d</sup>

A SURPRISE FOR CORA AND JUDITH! (An incident from the grand story of Morcove School contained in this issue.)

No. 19 Vol. 1. PUBLISHED EVERY TUESDAY. (Week Ending June 11th, 1921)

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**J.E.M. (Brighton):** Drooling over the lovely Shields cover of January's C.D. I am nagged by that intriguing question: HAS MADGE MINDEN BEEN TO THE PICTURES?

Well, had she? And, if so, what was the problem? My wife tells me that at many girls' boarding schools, even in the '30s, picture houses were out of bounds... So, if Madge Minden had been to the flicks, she just might have been breaking a Morcove rule but surely this was hardly a theme for high drama?! Perhaps, being a musician, she was defying a more serious prohibition by earning a few (needed?) shillings playing the piano to accompany the then silent films? As someone who fell in love with Madge Minden many moons ago, and as a lifelong cinema addict, I must know what the story was all about.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Watch these pages for more about this. It is interesting how many popular authors, especially in the 1920s, seemed to think that cinemas were a bad influence on girls. Even the generally tolerant Richmal Crompton seems against them in her adult novels, and in the William stories she has several amusing sideswipes at the effects of movie-going.)

**W.O.G. LOFTS (London):** Re. Bert Holmes' query in last month's C.D., the Sexton Blake play scripts can still be obtained but they are very costly. I feel certain that the Greyfriars poem was written by G.R. Samways, probably in a Holiday Annual. Probably another literary sleuth will locate it!

**From your EDITOR:** Browsing through my collection, I noticed in a 1970 ROVER a series of stories about Braddock, Master of the Air. The introductory note describes him as 'Sergeant Matt Braddock, V.C., one of the R.A.F.'s greatest pilots'. His exploits appear to be set in the Second World War. I wonder if any C.D. readers know much about this aeronautical adventurer?



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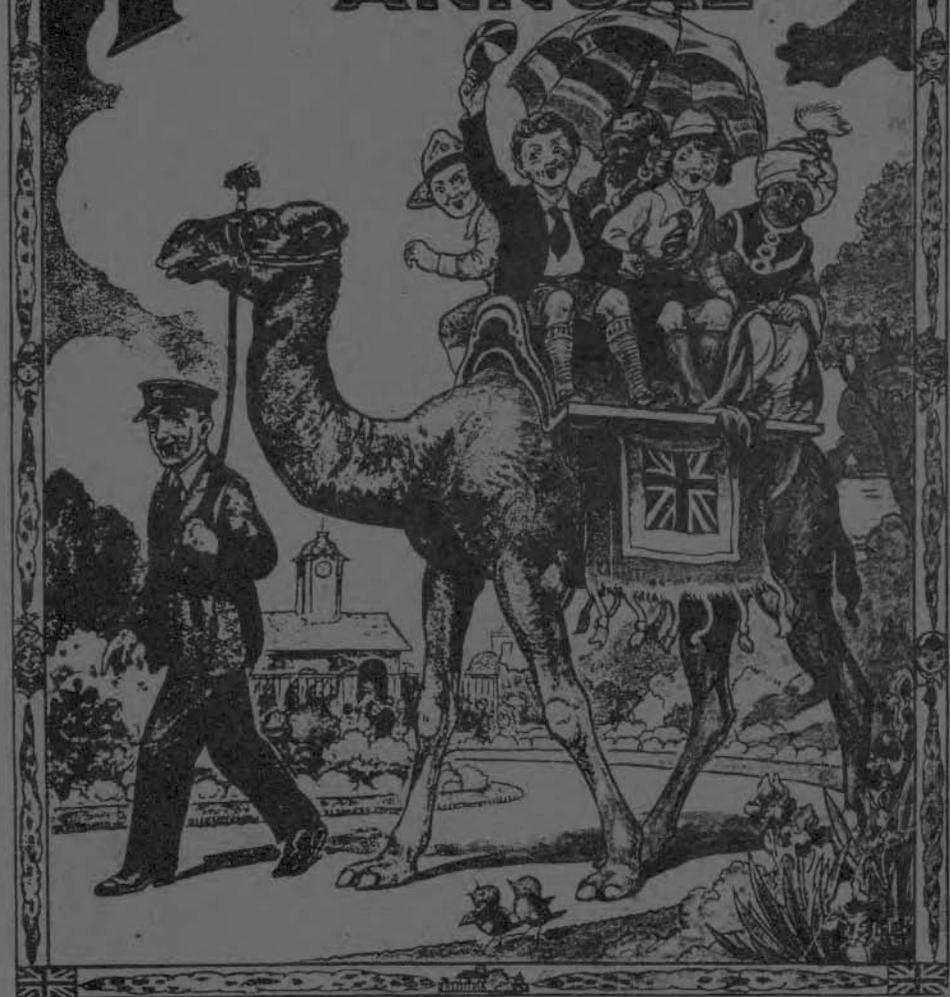
**PLEASE NOTE:** REPORTS FROM THE OLD BOYS' BOOK CLUBS HAVE HAD TO BE HELD OVER UNTIL NEXT MONTH.

FOR CHILDREN OF THE EMPIRE

# PUCK

1938

## ANNUAL



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