

STORY PAPER

COLLECTORS

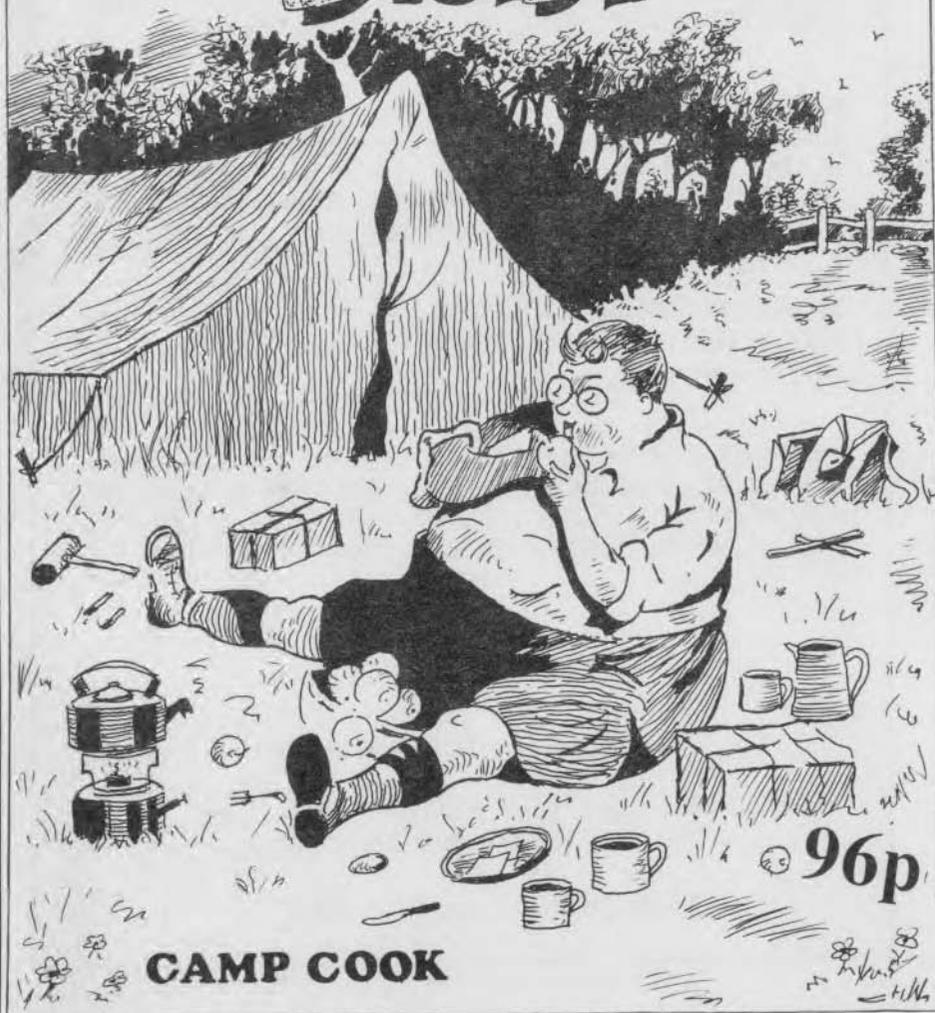
VOL. 46

No. 547

DIGEST

JULY

1992



96p

CAMP COOK

BARGAINS Recent purchases include several EAGLE collections, some complete volumes, but unbound: pre volume 13 - £1.50 each for single copies and vols. 13 - 20 £1 each.

BOUND VOLUMES Some of these are File Copies, all in fine condition, most of them in late 1940s: COMIC CUTS, TINY TOTS, CHIPS, WONDER, RADIO FUN, DANDY, BEANO, KNOCKOUT. Also pre-war bound UNION JACK, MAGNET, GEM, MODERN BOY and many more.

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Substantial quantities of WEIRD TALES MAGAZINE from 1927 to 1953 - SPECIAL OFFER for July, 25% off. Please send for lists.

I am retiring at the end of July. Ill health and age are the reasons. My good friend Robin Osborne is taking over. The stock of both our businesses combined. Robin has a very large stock of mainly Science Fiction. Business as before, at this address.

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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

VOL. 46

No. 547

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Price 96p

THE EDITOR'S CHAT



A LONG-STANDING FRIEND

Almost as soon as I became interested in collecting old children's books I got to know Norman Shaw, whose Aladdin's Cave of treasures is not very far away from my home. From the beginning he was not only a helpful dealer but a friend - always willing to search for some elusive title which I required, never demanding unduly high prices and ever ready, despite being busy, to

talk about books, papers and collecting generally. Often he would contact me, remembering my 'wants' from a conversation which had taken place months before, to tell me he had put aside for me a bound volume or a single copy to fill a gap in my collection.

I know that many C.D. readers have received similar help and fair treatment from Norman, and we shall all miss him very much now that he has decided to retire. We are, of course glad to know - as he states in his ad. in this month's issue - that the business will be continued by his friend, Robin Osborne. I feel sure that Robin will continue to look after our book needs in the same warm and friendly way that Norman did, and I hope that Norman's retirement will be happy and fulfilling, and that we shall still be able to keep in touch with him. He deserves our deep thanks and gratitude for all that he has done, for so long, for the hobby.

21st BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

On June 7th my husband, Alex and I attended the 21st birthday celebrations of the Cambridge Club. It was indeed a great day, attended by members of the London and Midland O.B.B.C.s as well as by many local supporters. The guests of honour were Frank Richards' niece, Mrs. Una Hamilton Wright, and her husband Brian, who had come from Sutton Coldfield to join us all in the celebrations. You will see from this month's Club Reports that a lively and varied programme was provided; the 'study tea' was also first rate, and we appreciated the warm hospitality of the Cambridge members. Special thanks for an unforgettable day must go to their Club Secretary, Tony Cowley, the over-all organizer: appropriately we met at his Longstanton home which is called The Old School House.

John Beck from Lewis was at the meeting and he showed me his marvellous file of material on Ethel Talbot - the author about whom we knew so little until all these papers, photographs and manuscripts came to light. As so many C.D. readers have expressed appreciation of John's recent article about Ethel Talbot, we are publishing in this issue a rather unusual short story by her.

Happy reading!

MARY CADOGAN

THE UNUSUAL GATE

Ethel Talbot Scheffauer.

I slipped into Greenwich Park by one of the little side gates. It was one of those impulses which take one when the day is fine and small curly clouds go sailing over Blackheath in a blue sky. I had half an hour to spare and a foolish desire to look at the standard yard measure and walk over the meridian. There is a peculiar fascination in standing on the meridian and thinking -- Zero line: Here the world ends and here the world begins. I hurried across a great space of grass, for I had not much time; it was mid-day and not a soul about. A faint smell of something frying came drifting on the wind from the dinner-tables of Greenwich.

Suddenly a little girl stood in front of me, dropping a curtsey; she had a clean white pinafore on, with pockets in it--a sweet, old-fashioned little thing. she must have run up to me from behind, for I had not seen her come. She was offering me a tiny posy of primroses.

"Thank you, dear," I said, and as I buried my face in the fresh flowers, she slipped away, for when I looked round again there was no sign of her. I walked on over the slope and looked down towards Greenwich Palace.

There was a great liveliness now on those lower slopes. A company of men and women were playing a kind of Touch or Catch-as-catch-can on the grass--and all in costume, the ladies in farthingales and hooped gowns, the men in doublet and hose, I looked for the camera-men and the director-but there were none to be seen; and as I crept nearer, there was a stirring through the bushes on the right, and a young couple walked out hand in hand--he in black broadcloth and a large white collar of plain linen; and she in a demure bonnet and gown of Quaker gray. They had not eyes for me or indeed for anything but each other. In her hand the girl carried a little bunch of primroses.

I looked down the slopes again. The trees were small, no houses rose between me and the water; slowly down the river came a decorated barge and intermittent strains of a thin, windy music floated up from it. I was not alarmed yet--the sun was shining and my flowers gave forth a faint, sweet scent-- I was caught in the enchantment and a part of it; I wandered through that park of wonders accepting what I saw; but when I came out again upon the upper slope, I saw a girl like myself wandering along with a book in her hand, and I recognised her face. It was Cecilia Cummings, who had once worked in our office and had vanished five years ago, without leaving a trace behind, a month before her wedding.

"Cecilia" I cried, and started towards her. But she waved me back, and somehow the distance between us increased. "Throw away the primroses" -- she called in a far-away voice; and then I heard my dog howling. I had left him at home, for dogs may not run loose in the Park; but he had evidently jumped the fence and followed me. I looked round for him, but I did not see him; and then a conviction came to me-- I was in a place of lost things and I, too--with a sudden gesture I flung the flowers far away from me into the grass; and then there was my dog, barking and crooning for joy as he jumped up and pulled at my skirt. I picked him up and rushed towards the main gate. There was a scent of humble mid-day dinners in the air and I nearly cannoned into a very small nursemaid who was wheeling a very large baby in a pram. Houses, smoke and large trees impeded the view of a river on which a fussy tug had replaced the royal barge.

But I was back again in the land of living men.

WANTED: by Collector. JOHN HAMILTON: Pre-War hardbacks, any title with or without D/W, including the 'Ace Series', 'Airmans Bookcase', 'Flying Thrillers' Sundial Mystery' and Adventure Library, and Airmans Bookclub editions in dustwrappers. W.E. JOHNS: Any Pre-War hardbacks, with or without D/S and Paperback editions of 'MOSSYFACE' (by William Earle) and any 'BOYS FRIEND LIBRARY' Editions, any condition considered. JOHN TRENDLER, 7 Park Close, Bushey, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD2 2DE. Tel. (0923) 31608.

Edgar Wallace

THE THREE JUST MEN



Wallace's greatest fame, of course, was in the writing of Thrillers. 'It is impossible not to be thrilled by Edgar Wallace' stated all the blurbs. True, most of the time. He was known as the Machine; his output was prolific - so much that a pre-war cartoon once showed a bookseller sadly telling an enquirer 'I'm afraid Wallace hasn't written a book for a day or two!'

Actually, Wallace's works were very much of a mixture. His thrillers varied and, contrary to certain beliefs, not always of the detective variety. Quite a few intriguing adventure stories were 'penned' - generally, into the dictaphone or by direct dictation. There were other story types as well - Sanders of the River, Educated Evans, to name but two. I always felt that Edgar wrote some of his best stories when dealing with a

Remembrances often start with the expression 'It doesn't seem possible that so many years have passed...' I use that phrase here as I realise that 1992 will signify that Edgar Wallace has been gone for sixty years.

P.G. Wodehouse once described how, when seated next to a lady at a dinner, she informed him that her son had read every one of his books. 'What he will say,' she added 'When I tell him that I have sat next to Edgar Wallace, I really don't know!'

Companions of the bookshelves in those between-the-wars years! What a change today. Plum's work still abounds on the shelves of all reputable book-sellers; I cannot remember when a Wallace last found a place there.

My own collection is nearly all post war and the bulk of those are ones obtained from second-hand book stores - not so many of the latter about, either, today.

regular character - Mr. Reeder, the above mentioned Sanders and Evans, Cockney crooks and police sergeants of the Gordon Harker type.

One thing I always thought about Wallace - good as so many of his stories were, he was at his most brilliant when writing stage plays. A study of his best books will show that they are, for the most part, based on his own plays. A curious situation here; at one time E.W. wrote 'The Gaunt Stranger'. With Gerald du Maurier, they rewrote it into a play and called it 'The Ringer'. Shortly after the play had been produced, Wallace wrote its story under that title. For a while, 'Gaunt Stranger' and 'Ringer' both appeared together on the shelves. Reading them, only occasional 'similarities' could be discerned!

Many years ago I wrote to a publisher asking if some of Wallace's stories could be reprinted, especially those of 'Sanders'. The reply was quite a curt negative!

Born 1875 - died 1932. Sixty years later - forgotten. Except by some of us.



SEXTON BLAKE LIVES!

by JOHN BRIDGWATER

As a postscript to my article "Detectives and Their Dogs", which appeared in C.D. No. 542 of February 1992, I would like to offer a piece of evidence proving that Harmsworth, far from treating Sexton Blake as a fictitious or "Phantom" detective, actually presented him as a living person.

In Union Jack No. 69 of 3 February 1905 the story "Sexton Blake's First Case" by William Stanhope Sprigg appeared. Incidentally this seems to be his only Blake story. The tale is noteworthy because it is prefaced by a long "Word of Explanation". In the story Blake is a young man of about eighteen employed in a lawyer's office in Lincoln's Inn Fields. In his spare time he is secretary of a football club. The president of the club is involved in the criminal kidnapping of Blake's employer and the story "exposes" the terrible crimes of titled gentlemen in high places. An extract from the "Word of Explanation" is given below, with Sexton Blake described as ".....a smart, resourceful lad who, knowing little of police laws, ways or methods, yet boldly took his life in his hands and struck a blow for justice, that makes every man and woman and child in England and Scotland today his debtor for the term of their natural lives!

"After all, remember Sexton Blake is not an imaginary person like old Sleuth or Sherlock Holmes. Today, in fact, there are few writers of detective stories who, knowing the truth as I have set it down hereunder, do not believe that, in this very affair of "The Missing Men", Sexton Blake actually proved himself to be at the very start of his career one of the most skilful and astute detectives that this or any other country has

ever seen. This, of course, may sound very high praise. It does, I admit. Happily, here are the plain, straight-forward facts....."

The author goes on to say that the story is the narrative of an actual case which was more or less hushed up at the time, and the reader is enjoined to judge for himself whether it was right for the case to be kept out of the newspapers (the author advancing the opinion that it was a shame the affair was buried in obscurity and that we need never be ashamed or afraid of the truth).

So there you have it. Sexton Blake lives; or rather did in 1905. The above raises one small question - who was old Sleuth? Is he a candidate for our "Other Favourite Detectives" series?



A COMPLEX CHARACTER

by C.H. CHURCHILL

Amongst the many fine characters invented by Edwy Searles Brooks for his stories of St. Frank's was that of Cecil De Valerie. He was a boy subject to strange influences and immediately built up an unusual lifestyle on arrival. The first story was "The Mysterious Schoolboy" in O.S. No. 132 dated 15/12/17. After lessons he made a habit of lounging in his study wearing an ornate dressing gown and smoking exotic cigarettes. Owing to his behaviour he became known as "The Rotter". He had a faint connection with the "Circle of Terror", Zingrave's criminal gang but did not get in too deeply.

After a while he gradually improved in behaviour and led a more normal life. The real turning point in Val's reformation was the arrival of the Duke of Somerton who joined him as a studymate. They became very friendly and the Duke's influence did the trick.

By May 1919 Val was quite a popular member of the Remove. In fact when in No. 206 O.S. 17/5/19 Nipper was expelled owing to Starke's lying evidence De Valerie was elected form captain. He did very well but when Nipper returned, exonerated, he resigned to allow Nipper to resume his old role.

De Valerie next starred in O.C. No. 391 2/12/22 in the story "The Demon Within Him." Here he showed a weakness and a lack of temperament when he refused to help teach his girl cousin to skate. This was despite his uncle's pleas. Val seemed in a filthy temper for no reason whatever. He went to his study and actually fell asleep. He dreamt that his cousin went skating and fell

under the ice and was drowned, to his horror. He blamed himself for not helping her to skate. He dashed to the river but then woke up and found it was a dream. This whole thing caused him to have a fresh outlook on things. All was well! His cousin was safe, and he returned to his normal self. This story was one of E.S.B.'s star single stories, of which he wrote so many.

In the Dr. Karnak series O.S. Nos. 448/454 Jan/Feb 1924 Val played a leading part. he came under the influence of the strange Egyptian doctor. I haven't the series in hand at the moment but do not remember we ever read why this happened, why the doctor used Val. However, in one story Karnak hypnotised Val to the point where he sent him to murder Nelson Lee in which task he did not succeed. At the end of the series Val went away to a sanatorium to recover.

In view of all this I do not think there is any doubt that De Valerie ranked highly in the list of St. Frank's characters.

GLADYS PETO

by MARY CADOGAN

Ever since I first came across her stylish illustrations, many years ago, I have been fascinated by the work of Gladys Emma Peto. Her pictures are both bold and charming, and they wonderfully convey the Art Deco mood of the late 1920s and the '30s. One of our C.D. subscribers, Mrs. Margaret Winterbottom, wonders if any readers can provide information about this talented artist (who also, apparently, wrote many of the tales which she illustrated in volumes such as GLADYS PETO'S GIRL'S OWN STORIES).

I have read just one paragraph about her, in DICTIONARY OF BRITISH BOOK ILLUSTRATORS: THE TWENTIETH CENTURY by Brigid Peppin and Lucy Micklethwait. She lived from 1890 to 1977, was born in Maidenhead and subsequently lived in Chelsea and Northern Ireland. Apparently her first published illustrations were for 'the works of Louisa M. Alcott' in 1914. I have a 1914 edition of L.M.A.'s Aunt JO'S SCRAP-BAG which contains coloured pictures by Gladys Peto. These, as you will see from the illustrations here, are in very different mood from her later drawings which have strong, Beardsley-esque outlines and make dramatic use of large areas of solid black. During the 1930s she produced several extremely attractive 'annuals'; she also had pictures published in *The Sketch*, *The Bystander*, *Pearsons Magazine* and *Printer's Pie*. She was married to C.L. Emmerson but I do not know if she had children of her own, although she was obviously very involved in the world of childhood through her work.



"THE FRISKY HAMBEL" EXPLODED RUSS."



BIBLIOMANIA AT AN EARLY AGE - FROM THE MEMORY OF AN OCTOGENARIAN BOOK COLLECTOR

by Fred E. Snowden

I have my parents to thank for my early, and continuing, love of books. My mother told me stories and read to me before I could read for myself - and well after, for I was lazy and a spoilt only child! Her stories, since like most middle-class mothers in the years just before the first world war she was an ardent chapel-goer, were highly moral. Such titles as "Jessica's Old Organ" and "Ministering Children" remain in my memory.

My father, though equally devout, had been brought up on the "B.O.P." and I have a clear picture of him taking me for a Sunday morning walk and telling me, in great detail, the plot of Robert Louis Stevenson's "Treasure Island". This is still one of my favourite books, and it was with great delight many years later, that I picked up (for £1!) a 1st edition 1911 with the coloured plates by N.C. Wyeth. This talented American artist depicted the scenes and characters exactly as I had always imagined them.

My recollection of my very first books is hazy. I do recall a Dean's rag-book, and since I had been taught to treat all books with care, and being a bit of a prig, I resented this untearable tome and as the subject matter did not interest me (an ABC, I believe), I think I destroyed it with scissors!

I find that my early memories are rather hit and miss. I clearly recollect one of the first "real" books I received. It was on Christmas morning - I must have been about three - waking in my cot, which was railed around, and seeing the bulging pillow-case hanging at the foot. The first present I extracted was a large red book with a picture panel on the front cover. I remember little of its contents, except for three pictures, one of some children sitting on a window-seat watching raindrops running down the window, one of a pork-pie tree, and one of an attractive (to me!) small girl running barefoot across a dewy lawn. This book was titled "Rainbow" which caused me some confusion later, when I had a weekly comic of the same name, which had nothing in common with it.

For the next year or so I continued to be read to, bible-stories, fairy tales, comics and the childrens' section of "Home Chat", my mother's favourite periodical at that time. As soon as I could read for myself I quickly discarded "Chick's Own", despising its silly hyphenating ("Tom-my al-most tum-bled o-ver!"). I continued to follow the antics of



the Bruin Boys, and read everything else I could get my hands on, even if I failed to understand it.

At the age of five I was given a volume of "Little Folks" dated 1916 volume 83. I must have read it from cover to cover, but only two stories stuck in my mind. One was "Red Indians and Boy Scouts" by Christine Chaundler with coloured pictures by E. Dorothy Rees. It was written in a way which appealed to children, and starts "Elizabeth and Patricia, Peter, Harold and John lived in one house, and Ravenswing, Crowsfoot and Red Buffalo lived in the house next door. Of course, Ravenswing, Crowsfoot and Red Buffalo were not their proper names. Their proper names were William Henry Archibald Jones, Thomas Richard Meredith Jones and Frederick Edward Hector Jones. Their father and mother called them Willie, Thomas and Fred, and Elizabeth and Patricia, Peter, Harold and John called them that too, until the day when the feud started between the Joneses and the Browns". The illustrations had a Mabel Lucie Attwell quality and were delightfully appropriate.

The other serial was a parody of "Alice in Wonderland" called "Underground to Anywhere" by Dudley Clark. It tells of the adventures of Clive, a small boy in a sailor suit, in the London Underground Railway. He meets characters as odd as any of Lewis Carroll's, and C.E. Brock's black and white illustrations bear comparison with Tenniel's.

I consider "Little Folks" the perfect periodical for children from four to fourteen, and my collection is now eighteen short of the 117 volumes published.

(I hope that the Good Kind Editor will allow me to reminisce later on "Chatterbox", "B.O.P.", "The Captain", "Chums", "The Girl's Own Annual", "St. Nicholas", "The Magnet" and the good old "Strand Magazine".)

WANTED: Greyfriars Book Club Volume No. 1 "The Worst Boy at Greyfriars" and No. 2 "Harry Wharton & Co. in India". Must be in fine to very good condition. State your price please.

FOR SALE: Soft cover edition of Volume No. 3 "The Making of Harry Wharton". Your offers please or will exchange for one of the above volumes. W.L. BAWDEN, 14 Highland Park, Redruth, Cornwall, TR15 2EX.

WANTED: Modern Boy 324, 335, 337, 338, 339. Any reasonable price paid. ROY PARSONS, 'Foinaven', Church Hollow, West Winterslow, Salisbury, SP5 1SX.

WANTED: ENID BLYTON, W.E. JOHNS, CROMPTON. First editions in wrappers and ALL ephemera related to these authors. ANY original artwork related to Bunter, Blyton, Biggles, Eagle or other British comics and boys papers. ALL Boys Friend Libraries by W.E. Johns and Rochester. Many "Thriller" issues and first editions in wrappers by Charteris required. NORMAN WRIGHT, 60 Eastbury Road, Watford, WD1 4JL. Tel. 0923 232383.

PUFFING BILLY by Keith Atkinson

As Billy Bunter sprawled in state
The smoke rose like a fog.
A box of fags was by his side,
He felt a rorty dog.

Butt-ends and matchstalks strewed the floor
As Bunter went it strong.
The smokes were sneaked from Smithy's drawer
And would be missed ere long.

Though Bunter sought for cakes and tarts
All came grist to his mill.
Fag after fag went up in smoke
Until he felt quite ill.

The extra helpings downed at lunch
Within him did careen,
And Bunter turned a sickly hue,
A ghastly shade of green.

He tried to rise, but flopped back down
Till slowly, by degrees,
He staggered to his feet and groaned,
Then sank down on his knees.

To be a man was Bunter's boast
In smoking fag on fag,
But now he wished he's never tried
A surreptitious drag.

He sought a bathroom urgently,
Then crawled into the dorm
And vowed no more to be a blade
And suffer inward storm.

No more to sport the dreaded weed
And puff smoke willy-nilly.
Enough's enough, Greyfriars had seen
The last of Puffing Billy.



THE COMING OF ROOKWOOD

by Eric Fayne

Readers of this magazine - or, at least, those who bother to read the Fayne bits - will recall that recently I took down from the bookcase a volume of "The Boys' Herald" for the year 1903.

I described it as a massive and a magnificent volume. There were three large-sheet weeklies for boys on sale in the shops in 1903. The other two were "The Boys' Realm" and "The Boys' Friend". The volume considered in that previous article was massive because it contained copies for an entire year.

Now it has occurred to me to take down from the bookcase a volume from one of the other large-sheets. So I selected one - this time "The Boys' Friend".

Just as magnificent, every copy in pristine condition. But the real magnificence is in the contents - superb stories - completely varied with wonderful pictures from grand artists. The art of producing weeklies like that for boys has long been lost - alas, for British youth.

The volume is not so massive, for my volumes of Boys' Friend are mainly bound in half-years - much more convenient for handling than the large volumes. The date on this one I have taken down is Jan. - July 1915. So the First World War has been raging for just under a year at the time of publication.

Printed entirely on green paper, of course. Was not the B.F. affectionately known to readers as the "Green 'UN'"?

Large sheets; that is, double the measurements of the Gem and Magnet. 16 of these large sheets to each copy. The price - One Penny. Inflation was unheard of in those days, and the paper shortage had not yet started to bite.

The first copy in the book bears the following details:- No. 708 - Vol. 14 (New Series). January 2nd 1915. The bit about New Series reminds us that the B.F., many years earlier, had run for a time as a halfpenny paper.

A curious fact about the paper at that time was that numbering of the pages was continuous throughout a volume. The first page in this volume is numbered 497. Personally, I did not like continuous numbering. Very early readers of Collectors' Digest, in passing, many recall that, in Herbert Leckenby's time, our own magazine had continuous numbering. When I took over the editing, I dropped the "continuous" numbering, so that each month the new issue started with page No. 1.

Let's have a browse through that New Year issue of the year 1915. The front page has a fine, action-packed drawing by one, T.W. Holmes, to illustrate an incident from "The Headmaster's Daughter", a story of Stokerich College, by Sidney Drew. Then comes a full page chat from the editor, headed "IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN".

Next, one of a series of stories under the title "The Chums of the Third Floor Back", about three young fellows who live in "Diggings" - by Horace Phillips. Then a serial, "The Fighting Drum Major" by Captain Malcolm Arnold, followed by "After Dark", a story of life in Lancashire, by Allan Blair.

Another serial "Under the Allies Flag", a War Story by John Tregellis. And finally a further serial "On His Majesty's Service", a tale of Nelson Lee and Nipper and the German Peril in our midst, by Maxwell Scott. Altogether, a fine penn'orth.

We are reminded that the papers controlled by YOUR EDITOR are "The Boys' Friend", 1d, every Monday; the Magnet, 1d, every Monday; the Gem, 1d, every Wednesday; the Dreadnought, 1d, every Thursday; the Penny Popular, every Friday; Chuckles, 1/2d, every Saturday.

And there is an announcement that the stories of the early adventures of Harry Wharton of Greyfriars - the world's most popular schoolboy - are now appearing every week in the Dreadnought. Don't miss it.

And now let's skip a few copies and look at the issue dated February 13th 1915. For that issue contains an announcement from the Editor - an announcement even more momentous than the Editor himself can hardly have realised or hoped for.

Here is the announcement:

"The first of a remarkably fine series of school stories - a series which will more than ever enhance the name and fame of the old Boys' Friend - makes its appearance in next Monday's issue.

I will not be too long-winded in my praise of these new yarns and their author. Throughout his life Mr. OWEN CONQUEST has kept in close touch with boys, and no man is more fitted to write stories of school life than he. There can be little doubt that his latest creation, Rookwood School, will soon be as much a household word with readers as the schools which Henry St. John and David Goodwin have made famous in years past.

Every boy likes a good hero, and JIMMY SILVER, who plays the lead in next week's story "The Rivals of Rookwood", is a very enterprising and admirable young gentleman, whose acquaintance will be hailed with keen delight by all my chums."

So! The Editor said a mouthful, didn't he? But even he could not have foreseen how popular Rookwood was to become. The Editor's reference to authors St. John and Goodwin, gives us a wry smile, for both of them were to be lost in the mists of time while Conquest will surely live for ever. Curiously, perhaps - or perhaps not - the Editor did not compare Conquest with those two popular writers, Martin Clifford and Frank Richards.

In fact I have no doubt that Rookwood sustained the Boys' Friend which was to carry on for many more years, until well into the nineteen-twenties.

And now let's look at Boys' Friend, No. 715, dated February 20th 1915, which introduced Rookwood to the wonderful world of youth.

Rookwood was a college which had recently added a Modern Side to that seat of learning. The Moderns studied chemistry and the like (and even Shorthand) while the Classical Side concentrated on Latin, Greek, and, presumably, the three R's.

Jimmy Silver, in the opening story, is in the train puffing away towards the station for Rookwood. The train is packed with Rookwood boys on the way to school for the new term. Jimmy finds himself in a compartment with a lot of Modern side juniors, three of whom are named "Tommy". They are Dodd, Doyle, and Cook.

There is comment that there will be a rush for the brakes, to convey them on to school, when the train gets to the station. Then they discover that the new boy is to be a Classical, so they bundle him into the corridor.

Jimmy meets a crowd of Classical juniors now, prominent among them being Lovell, Newcome, and Raby. At the station there is, as predicted, a rush for the brakes. Jimmy manages to bag one and it fills with Classicals. Tommy Dodd bags another for a crowd of Moderns. And with the two juniors driving, the brakes dash off in a race to the school. Arrived there, Jimmy sprawls in the quad at the feet of the Headmaster, Dr. Chisholm.

This episode was repeated, lock, stock, and barrel, years later when Jack Drake of the Benbow went to Greyfriars. Obviously, in 1915, "brakes" were not old-fashioned. (I, personally, recall that, as a little lad, I went with my mother one day for a brake ride into the country.) I would have thought that, some half a dozen years later, when the

Jack Drake episode was told, brakes would have been replaced entirely by buses and motor coaches.

The second story "Jimmy Silver's Ruse", is mainly on the rivalry between the two sides, with the Modern Tommy Dodd being defeated by the classical, Smythe, for the junior captaincy.

In the third story, "Healing the Breach", Jimmy Silver is put into the End Study, which is already occupied by the three Classicals already mentioned. They do not welcome the new boy. Then Jimmy performs a rescue of Lovell, who has got into a dangerous position, and all is well.



And, in the 4th yarn, entitled "The Fistical Four", everything in the garden is lovely, and the famous quartette comes into being. As I once observed, in connection with the Famous Five of Greyfriars, a Co of five was rather unlikely. Even allowing for breeding (not old-fashioned years ago) a group of 5 boys, going round together, could easily become a little gang of rowdies. The same could be said of the Fistical Four, though, in this case, it was slightly more plausible as they were all in the same study.

And now, for a number of weeks, we have a barring-out series. Maybe the motto was "If in any doubt, stage a barring-out". The cause of the barring-out was a bit unlikely. The Head and all the Classical masters went down with flu. So Mr. Manders became temporary Head, and threw his weight about. With the action getting more and more exciting as weeks passed.

And now the Boys' Friend appeared in a succession of enlarged numbers, - 4 extra pages - with splendid coloured covers and various free gifts. And these are really striking issues. Still at a Penny.

By mid-April 1915 the barring-out is over, and we get several good cricket stories. In "The Slackers of Rookwood", Smythe and his lackadaisical pals finally get the boot from the job of running junior sport, and Tommy Dodd is the new junior captain.

Then an excellent series in which Knowles, the bullying prefect, engineers a plot against Bulkeley, the School Captain.

In June the "Dreadnought" was amalgamated with the Boys' Friend. We are uncertain whether or not it was a war victim or whether its sales had waned.

To wind up our brief survey of these very early days of Rookwood - well, a pleasant little drama over a few weeks concerning a new boy, Oswald, who became an outcast in the school, supported only by Jimmy Silver: a humorous yarn or two about the German master, Herr Kinkel (a bit unlikely in 1915); and finally "The Bagshot Bounders" which introduced the rival school near Rookwood - a rivalry which turned up from time to time as years slipped away.

The final issue in this lovely volume is dated July 31st 1915. Contents: "Turning the Tables", another tale of the Rookwood-Bagshot rivalry; "Mystery Island", a serial by Duncan Storm; "The Circle of 13", story of Harvey Keene, Detective; "The Kidnapped Boxer", story of Tom Belcher, the boy boxer, by Arthur S. Hardy; serial "A Son of the Sea", story of life in the Navy by Beverley Kent. Still no sign of a paper shortage. Still One Penny.

A passing thought. It was a great advantage that a long school series always had a certain artist devoted to illustrating it. For some time all the Rookwood tales were illustrated splendidly by Macdonald, the Gem artist. Later, Mac went into the Navy, and the Rookwood tales were taken over by Wakefield who, in most of our minds, is delightfully associated with Rookwood for all time. But Rookwood is drawn by Macdonald through this volume we have just browsed over.

Personally, I am happy that he came back to Tom Merry but that Jimmy Silver remained with Wakefield till the end.

Some time we'll yank out another volume for a browse. Maybe the Dreadnought. If you haven't got completely fed up with me and my volumes...

FOR SALE: 2 Howard Baker volumes at £20.00 each: *Bunter in the Land of the Pyramids* and *The Greyfriars Hikers*. Both books in excellent condition. Prices include postage. D.L. JONES, 35 MAENAN ROAD, LLANDUDNO, GWYNFEDD, LL30 1NQ.

DAVE WESTAWAY, 96 Ashleigh Road, Exmouth, Devon, EX8 4JZ (0395-275734).

FOR SALE: C.W.O. plus postage. Monster Libraries (Nelson Lee), 4,6,14,10,15,16,17,18,19 - £16.00 each. 19 ex bound Champions 1938/39 £26. Rover Book 1935, £10, 1950 £7.00. Adventureland 1927, £10. G.H.A. 1930, 1932, 1933, 1940 £7.00 each. Dixon Hawke Casebook 19, £15.00. Magic Beano Book 1945, £265. Marvel (1921) 910 to 936 bound, £35. **WANTED:** English Captain Marvel Comics. 1953/54 Beanos/Dandys, Junior Express, Marvelman, Space Terminal Book.

BOOKS

DAN DARE 6: "ROGUE PLANET". Published by Hawk Books Ltd. at £17.95. Reviewed by Norman Wright.

When, in January, I reviewed the first volume of the "Man from Nowhere" trilogy I expressed a hope that Hawk Books Ltd. would be able to bring out the next volume in the series fairly speedily as I really did not feel that I could wait a whole year to find out what happened to Dan and Co. on the planet Cryptos. My request has been granted and now, only six months after the "The Man From Nowhere", "Rogue Planet" is in the shops.

Dan, Digby, Lex and 'Flamer' Spry have returned to the planet Cryptos with Lero to aid the Crypts against their enemies the dreaded Phants, a race totally given to making war on their neighbours. After a series of adventures Dan and his team find a peaceful way to bring the two races together.



This really is the Dan Dare strip at its best. The artwork is faultless with frame after frame rich in detail and imagination. And before you settle down to read it I am sure, that like me, you will spend a good deal of time just poring over the images: the landscapes of Cryptos, the superbly designed spacecraft and the rich tapestry of life that inhabits Frank Hampson's imaginary world. Apart from the main characters there are some memorable adversaries whose menacing appearance gives the story an added dimension. There is also Stripey, the little Crypt creature who befriends the spacemen and on more than one occasion helps to save the day.

One of the reasons for the enduring popularity of the Dan Dare strips is the quality of their story lines. The plot of "Rogue Planet" holds up very well and the eventual solution to the problem of the hostile Phants is very relevant to the 1990s (though I won't spoil the enjoyment of those unfamiliar with the story by revealing any more details!). As with all weekly serial-strips there are the inevitable 'cliff-hanger' endings but the plot is so carefully scripted that they are not obtrusive.

Like all of the Hawk Dan Dare reprints the production is impeccable, faithfully reproducing all the richness and colour of the original strip. The volume contains its usual 'bonus strip', this time "Operation Silence", an eight page offering from "Eagle Annual" number six. While the artwork is not up to the Frank Hampson/Don Harley work of the main body of the book it is useful for those collectors who do not want to clutter up their shelves with bulky Eagle Annuals.

My hope now is that when Hawk Books Ltd. bring out "Reign of the Robots", the third volume of the trilogy, they will delight collectors by 'finishing it off' by including the short, 12 episode strip "The Ship That Lived", an adventure that brought the Man From Nowhere story to a satisfactory conclusion. I have done a page count and there would certainly be room to include it in the volume.

'BEFORE I DIE AGAIN' by Chad Varah. Reviewed by Howard Corn

Chad Varah is a man of many parts. His fame as founder of the Samaritans is world wide but his other achievements are not so well known. His autobiography, 'Before I Die Again', recently published by Constable at £17.50, takes the reader back to his early years as the eldest son of the vicar of the Lincolnshire town of Barton on Humber. Although one of nine children, Chad was a loner, but lovers of schoolboy stories will find his recollections of his school days and his student years at Oxford most entertaining.

It was not his intention to be a clergyman, as he took chemistry as a subject at university, but he was persuaded to go into the ministry by a Bishop whom he knew well, making a plea as he lay on his death bed to 'stop wasting his life'.

Followers of our hobby will find chapter five of the book very interesting as Chad tells of how he met Marcus Morris and of his work for the juvenile publications of Hulton Press in the fifties. His work with Frank Hampson and other people working on *Eagle* and *Girl* gives a good insight into how scriptwriters worked during this period.

Much of the book is given over to the formation of the Samaritans, as one would expect, but his travels world-wide setting up 'Befrienders' groups, as they were originally called, give the reader an unusual flavour of the many countries he visited.

Dr. Varah has some unusual ideas for an Anglican minister and they are put over in the book. The title of the book, rather an odd one, comes from his belief in reincarnation.

Some readers may think the price is on the expensive side but I would certainly recommend it as a good read and, if funds do not run to it, worth putting on a birthday present list.

I HAVE ALWAYS LOVED SCHOOL STORIES by Robert Gilmour

I can vividly recall the delightful day in 1952 when as a boy of about 9 years of age I was introduced to the Boys' Comic Paper, *Lion*. I was new to the neighbourhood and my recently acquired playmate from down the road eagerly showed me the first edition of this along with what he described as the sister paper, the post-war *School Friend*. I was enthralled. It was love at first sight!

My first major problem was my Father. He detested comics and would not allow them into the house. I remember that night sitting around the dinner table with my Grandmother, Uncle, Aunts, Mother, little Brother and, of course, my Father. My Mum had already replied to my desperate question: "As your Father". So just after we

finished our pudding, and with the great support of my Grandmother, Uncle and Aunts, I did. Somehow, against great odds I wangled it, and I had on order from our newsagent my weekly copy of *Lion*.

How I loved reading it! My favourite strip was "Sandy Dean's Schooldays". My favourite story was "Jingo Jones and his Invisibiliser". I also enjoyed "Square-Deal Dawson" and "The Amazing Adventures of Mr. X".

I, of course, had to have the first *Lion* Annual in 1954 (for Christmas 1953). About then, via the *Champion* Annual (given to me as a Christmas present by an Aunt who knew what boys liked and whose presents were not just socks or underpants) I discovered *The Champion*. This was a boys' paper just full of stories: "Rockfist Rogan" and my favourite - "Ginger Nutt - The Boy Who Takes the biscuit". Great stuff!! However, Ginger did not appear each week, and I missed him.

THE NELSON LEE LIBRARY



No. 1 OF A NEW SERIES OF "NIPPER'S NOTE-BOOK" STORIES,
NIPPER AT ST. FRANK'S!

Dealing with the Adventures of NELSON LEE and NIPPER during their sojourn at St. Frank's College. Set down by NIPPER, and Prepared for Publication by the Author of "The Duplicate Door," "The Ivory Seekers," "The House with the Double Moat," "The Yellow Shadow," etc.

To my great disgust *The Champion* finished on the 9th of March 1955. It had turned into the *Tiger* which I was not really keen on. I wanted to read school stories and discovered *Schoolgirls' Own Library*, 64 pages of great reading. Of course these featured girls' schools, or girls' adventures in strange places on holidays. But I loved the school stories! Secret organisations with members dressed in masks and gowns, creeping around secret passages in the middle of the night, mean school-teachers, sporting matches between schools, detentions, etc. etc. etc. I loved them, although I had to keep them from the eyes of my school mates. You must understand that I could find no school-boy papers of equal interest. Books were so expensive and available to me only as Birthday or Christmas presents. Biggles was great, I had a few of his books. I loved Enid Blyton too.

Then again my father took a hand in my reading material. When he discovered my *Schoolgirls' Own Library* he lectured me on reading girls' stories and "cheap rubbish", and suggested I read adult books! I took his advice, went to the local newsagent and, after considerable browsing, found *The Dam Busters*, my first adult book. I was enthralled and left off reading children's literature - supposedly for ever.

Then, in the early nineteen-seventies, happily married and employed as an ambulance officer, I came across a lovely collection of *Lion*, ranging from number 1 to about number 170 inclusive (except for number 152). I was thrilled to be re-acquainted

with this source of so much pleasurable reading from my childhood but I found little interest in reading them, except for Sandy Dean.

However, since my childhood memories had been stirred up again, I looked about for *The Champion*, and it was great to find some well preserved copies and start a collection of them. These stories too, I found, were very simple and did not hold my adult interest. But I had great fun collecting both *Lion* and *The Champion*. I was thrilled to get a copy of *Lion* number 152 from Norman Shaw in England to fill an important hole in my collection. Although my collection grew, I did not read many of the papers. However, through the contacts and friends I made in locating new acquisitions, I was introduced to earlier boys' papers called *The Magnet*, and *The Gem*. These stories were of a different calibre, and they really captured my interest. I had discovered the works of Charles Hamilton.

Now, with the help of Howard Baker, I am able to read great schoolboys' stories and meet Harry Wharton and Co., along with Tom Merry, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and the Boys of St. Jim's. Even though they were written before I was born, I enjoy reading these stories now.

Another fascination awaited me, when to my delight I was introduced to Nelson Lee, some 12 months ago. I now have become firm friends with Nipper, Edward Oswald Handforth, Reggie Pitt, Lord Dorrimore and all the other boys at St. Franks, as well as with the brilliant Nelson Lee.

So even though I was born well after *The Magnet*, *Gem* and *Nelson Lee* were written and ceased publication, I am now an avid reader of their well written, interesting and fascinating stories from the pens of Charles Hamilton and Edwy Searles Brooks.

COMIC CUTS

by Ray Holmes

COMIC CUTS can be said to have set the yardstick from which all succeeding comics had to be measured.

The paper was the brainchild of Alfred Harmsworth, who set himself the task of getting rid of the 'penny dreadful'.

It was said by his detractors that he only did this by cutting the price of his papers to a halfpenny. Be that as it may, it cannot be denied that he succeeded in bringing delight to 'the masses' with a whole range of periodicals, many of them launched in the late 19th century.

Comic Cuts was his first attempt in the comic field. The date was May 17th, 1890. Like most comics of the period, it was first intended for the adult market. In fact, the first months of its life were rather bleak, relying for most of its material on cartoons and jokes culled from American magazines.

It wasn't long before Harmsworth saw the error of his ways and changed the whole style. From then on *Comic Cuts* was to be what it claimed - a comic aimed for the juvenile market. If adults wanted to buy it, so much the better. Buy it they must have done, because it was soon selling nearly half a million copies. That was in the days when many children were lucky to have a pair of boots on their feet.

It wasn't long before it was calling itself 'The King of Comics', and rightly so. To achieve this Harmsworth had advertised for artists. The strip cartoon had now come into its own, and Harmsworth wanted the best in the field for *Comic Cuts* and his other launches. He was prepared to offer 'handsome pay' for original comic sketches.

Comic Cuts started life printed on white paper, but occasionally colour was used for some special event, such as the Autumn Double Number of October 15th, 1898. To commemorate the occasion the front cover featured Frank Holland's 'Chokee Bill and Area Sneaker'.

For the 1000th number of a comic to be celebrated as early as July 10th, 1909, was something rather special. To mark the occasion many of the interior characters ('Gertie the Regimental Pet', 'Our Merry Manikins', and the saucy salts from 'Fun Aboard the Mary Anne') joined the party at Mercy Cooking's 'Mulberry Flats', on the front page.



The early 20th Century saw *Comic Cuts* turn green - the paper that is - and the price raised to a penny. But obviously the boys and girls did not suffer from colour blindness because nearly a million of them were now trotting along to their newsagent every Saturday with their pennies.

It must have taken a brave heart to part with one's total week's income on a comic paper, but the antics of 'Tinker and Tich', who were occupying the front page in the 1930s, helped them to do so.

On the inside pages, 'Big Ben and Little Len' were beginning to make their mark. They were later to make the front cover.

In between, the editor would entertain with his 'Chirpy Chat' - no doubt read eagerly to see if any free gifts were coming along. One that must have been appreciated was a 'Flying Bird that skims through the air at lightning speed'.

There was to be no lightning speed as far as *Comic Cuts* was concerned. Outlasting two world wars, it nearly qualified for its old age pension when it closed at number 3,006 on September 12th, 1953, aged 63.

SCRAP-BOOK

Greyfriars Champions



WILLIAM WIBLEY
(Champion Impersonator)

Greyfriars Champions



BOB CHERRY
(Junior Sports Champion)

BEVIS:

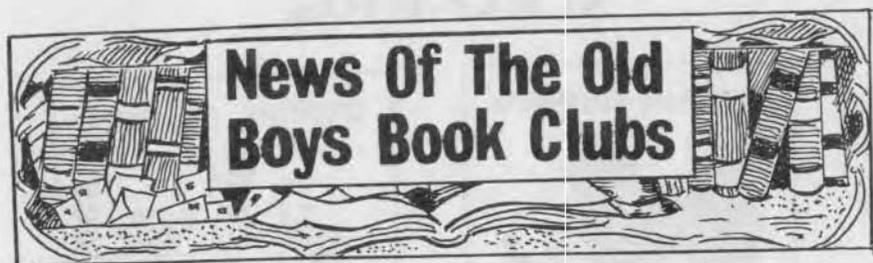
THE STORY OF A BOY, BY
RICHARD JEFFERIES

ILLUSTRATED BY
E. H. SHEPARD



WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
E. V. LUCAS

LONDON:
JONATHAN CAPE 30 BEDFORD SQUARE



NORTHERN O.B.B.C.

It was good to have 17 at our June meeting on a very warm evening. Our special guest was Bill Lofts, and we were also delighted to welcome people from afar including Liverpool and Chester-le-Street.

Bill presented a paper on the "Free Gifts" presented with various comics and story papers. He was able to back up his talk with many sample copies of first issues ranging from comics for the very young to papers for the teenager. Several members were thrilled to see a copy of "Hotspur" Number 1. Unfortunately, most copies did not have their original free gift with them (perhaps a great advantage in the case of a sticky toffee bar presented with "The Magnet"!). Free gifts given during a run were often a sign of flagging sales, and many of these gifts cost little or nothing to issue. They are now very collectable and some can fetch high prices.

For his second talk, Bill was able to tell us some stories of strange occurrences when discovering some of the old papers in unexpected places. Two very intriguing presentations from Bill, and we look forward to his being with us again.

Our next meeting will be an informal barbecue at the home of our Secretary. All are welcome.

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

CAMBRIDGE CLUB

The Club's special twenty-first Anniversary meeting was held on 7th June at Tony Cowley's home, The Old School House, Longstanton. As well as an extremely interesting and varied programme of talks, exhibits had been arranged throughout the house on 'Old Boys Papers', 'Radio Times', 'Eagle Times' and 'Where the Stories Really Start'.

Chairman Vic Hern opened the meeting. Bill Lofts, the Club's Founder President, spoke about its history, and then introduced the various speakers. Mary Cadogan talked about her recently published book **WOMEN WITH WINGS**: John Beck's subject was **RUPERT BEAR**: Howard Corn spoke on **GIRL**, the sister paper to **EAGLE**. A recording of one of the late Jack

Overhill's B.B.C. radio talks on MAGNETS AND GEMS was played, with introductory remarks by Tony Cowley. Una Hamilton Wright reminisced about her distinguished uncle, FRANK RICHARDS: Vic Hearn talked affectionately - and amusingly - on COMICS OF THE THIRTIES, and Bill Lofts ended the proceedings with memories of the WOLF OF KABUL.

Final touches to this splendid occasion were the truly excellent and lavish refreshments and, of course, the many opportunities it provided for informal chat between members and the visitors who came from other clubs.

MARY CADOGAN

LONDON O.B.B.C.

Fourteen members attended the June meeting at the home of Eric and Betty Lawrence in Wokingham.

Audrey and Tony Potts told us of the marvellous time that they had had at the 21st anniversary celebrations of the Cambridge club.

Eric Lawrence played tunes to us, which we had to name and also the name of the composer. Chris read us an article on Percy F. Westerman from the Antiquarian Book Monthly Review.

Eric Fayne gave us a Blockbusters based quiz, which was followed by a further quiz from Bob Whiter on general hobby topics.

The next meeting is on Sunday, 12th July at the Chingford Horticultural Society's Hall in Larkshall Road.

SUZANNE HARPER

FORTHCOMING CLUB MEETINGS:

S.W. Club - Sunday, 20th September

Midland Club - Saturday, 26th September

POETRY IN MOTION

by Reg Hardinge

Some really superb illustrations accompanied the excellent ROVERS RANCH series by Francis Warwick published in THE BOY'S FRIEND in 1926. The artist S.H. CHAPMAN displayed his expertise in depicting horses in motion, one of the most difficult things to achieve with accuracy. I enclose an example of his work for the ROVERS RANCH series.

This BOY'S FRIEND cover picture is typical of his skill. Once can hear the thundering of hooves and sense the tension as the leader of a robber band snatches the girl who is trying to stop them, and makes off with her as a hostage.

THE BOY'S FRIEND 2d.
EVERY MONDAY.

WINNERS OF
FOOTBALLS! (Page 10.)



The BOY'S FRIEND 2^d

No. 1,321.

THE HIGH-CLASS PAPER FOR ALL BOYS!

October 9th, 1926.



Whirled her up into the air!

ROVERS' RANCH.

By
Francis
Warwick.

This Week's Story: "MURPHY'S ONE-MAN SHOW!"

Buck Bristow.
It was at "Murphy's Place"—a little eating-house over at Fort Goodfrey—that the row began.
The cowboys of Rovers' Ranch were seated round one of the tables near the bar, busy with a hearty meal. Kildare, lean, tanned, and handsome, was seated at one side of the table. Opposite him sat Dalton, the bare little ex-soldier. Sergeant Murphy, the young Irishman

with the twinkling eyes and the figure of a Hercules, was seated at Dalton's right, while young Tommy, the Indian boy, sat opposite Murphy. And Murphy had his back to the door.
Consequently, when Buck Bristow came swaggering in and landed just the table, it was Murphy who "took the show," as it were.
Buck Bristow was a huge, coppery-skinned fellow

with a hawk-like nose, and a little cork-like eye. He was employed at Double Pick Ranch, the owner of which, until a genial old Canadian named Morrey—a friend of the somewhat slow Devereaux—had died, heavy little Bristow brushed past Murphy's chair. His swinging arm caught Murphy on the back, and the young Irishman, beginning to be in the act of raising a big cup of steaming coffee to his lips, dashed the cup against his teeth. The coffee flew over the floor, and he also slipped from Murphy's grip and landed on the table.
Bristow glared for a moment at the man with him, who had glanced back on leaving the ranch. Then the Double Pick owner went in without a look at Murphy. "A word at ya, Buck!" said the young Irishman quietly.
He had had shut out and caught Bristow's wrist. Buck Bristow's young blood boiled.

**BRIAN DOYLE SUGGESTS HOW PRESENT TABLOID NEWSPAPERS
MIGHT HAVE HEADLINED ASPECTS OF SCHOOL LIFE**

**PHEW - WHAT A SCORCHER! IT AIN'T 'ARF 'OT, MUM! BULLY SMOKES
FAG IN TOP PUBLIC SCHOOL HORROR TORTURE. HOT STUFF AT RUGBY!
(Flashman 'roasts' Tom Brown in TOM BROWN'S SCHOOLDAYS)**

**'MISTER BIG' CON-MAN HOAXES SCHOOLBOYS IN STATELY HOME CAPER!
(Bunter Court' series in 'The Magnet')**

**INSATIABLE TEENAGER IN SCHOOL CAFE WIFE SCANDAL!
TARTS AND SCHOOLBOY!**

(Billy Bunter, hungry as ever, has altercation with Mrs. Mimble in Greyfriars tuckshop over obtaining cakes and jam-tarts 'on tick'!)

**PUBLIC SCHOOLMASTER TO REVEAL STARTLING SECRETS OF BOARDING
SCHOOL LIFE! WHAT WENT ON BEHIND CLOSED DOORS - FEARS OF
ADOLESCENT BOYS OF CANE-BEATING - 'LIGHTS OUT' IN THE DORMS BUT
RICH BOY SAYS 'I HAD TO ESCAPE!' DETAILS OF INFAMOUS 'BARRINGS-
OUT' - BUT WHAT WENT ON BEHIND THE CLOSED SHUTTERS?**

(News leaks out about Quelch's long-awaited book 'A HISTORY OF GREYFRIARS')

THINGS THAT DIDN'T ALWAYS MEAN WHAT THEY SAID DEPT.

Watch out for an exciting new announcement next week!

(Your favourite paper is ending and being taken over by another, usually inferior, one)

Look inside for your wonderful, exciting, valuable free gift!

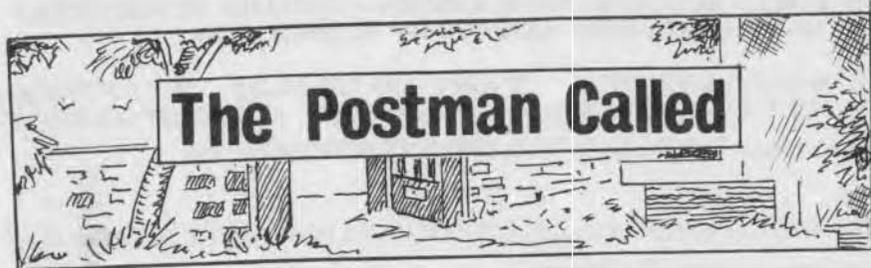
(A small piece of cardboard that looks like a small piece of cardboard - and nothing like the gun, or ship or whatever it's supposed to be and lasts for five minutes anyway.)

Wear your exciting free gift of a mask/hat/all-seeing specs/false nose - free inside, and you'll be the envy of your pals!

(Wear your exciting free gift of a mask/hat/all-seeing specs/false nose and you'll be the laughing stock of your pals.)

You'll vote our new series, starting inside, the most exciting you've ever read!

(Ho-hum, it's dreadful and boring and almost unreadable.)



RAY HOPKINS (Oadby): In regard to my article mentioning Meredith Fletcher in the Jan SPCD, Mr. D. James Martin might like to have the title of this author's book I didn't mention which is "Iredale Minor" (1912). Also he might want the title of Lilian F. Wevill's sequel to "Betty's First Term" which is called "Betty's Next Term" (1912). These are the only two titles by this author contained in the BM Catalogue.

HORACE DILLEY (Biggleswade): I recall when I was a youngster at school rushing home at lunch-times, to have a quick look through the "Magnet" and "Gem" and then counting the time to evening when I could read them through. How I used to wait for those days of the week when they came out!

And indeed, I await with just as eager anticipation to the day of the month when the "Collector's Digest" is brought by the postman (or generally in these days the post-lady).

DENNIS L. BIRD (Shoreham): In the June "C.D.", Margery Woods mentions Denise the Dancer, in "The Shadow of a Stranger" (SGOL 687, June 1939), and speculates on whether this was the first Amalgamated Press story to allow romance. "The story ends with a proposal, and a kiss. Another first for A.P.?" she asks.

I have no information on that, but I do know that events moved on much further for these particular characters. In "Her Mystery Foe in Screenland" (SGOL 719, February 1940), after surviving problems created by a jealous rival, Denise Laxton becomes Mrs. Ray Faulkner, and the last couple of pages describe the wedding in lyrical terms.

Both books were originally serialised in the "Schoolgirls' Weekly" around 1937-38, and the saga continued further in Hollywood with "Their Foe in the Film City" (1938-39). Now known as Denise Faulkner professionally as well as in private life, she is very much Ray's "So charming wife". I know of no other series in the girls' papers featuring a young married couple.

Incidentally, Margery also mentions "Silver Pierrette's Seaside Secret" (SGOL 686, June 1939). Browsing in the British Museum Library the other day, I was interested to see that it was first published as "Silver Pierrette and

her Seaside Secret", in the "Girl's Crystal" in the summer of 1937. Why the change of title, I wonder?

BILL LOFTS (London): Whenever I went to my local bookstall to change my comics at an early age - my Mother always told me to fetch back some with 'Jennie the Little Flower Girl' in. She really loved these short page tales, so mention of them brought back happy memories.

I know they were written editorially with a team of writers involved. They ran from Whitsun 1932 till the end of 'Larks' in May 1940. Jennie had taken over her Mother's flower selling when she had just left school at 14. An accident had left her Mother an invalid. The Leonard Shields drawing, I was told, was taken from the Charlie Chaplin film 'City Lights' not long released in 1931. Whether this is true I don't know, but it does bear a remarkable likeness.

I know that A. Donnely Aitken wrote some of the Markham Swift detective stories, apart from his editorial duties.

In answer to J.E.M.'s recent queries, the story was called - The Mystery of Abbotscarp. It dealt with the adventures of Tom Randall and his girl friend who investigated the haunted Monastery. It was eventually discovered that it was the headquarters of a Chinese Secret Society. It ran from late 1929 to May 1930.

Prairie Pranks and Peggy the Pride of the Force were drawn, I believe, by the same comic artist, George Parlett.

With reference to Mr. Gibb's request in the June C.D., Grimsdale School was originally in *Ranger*.

DES O'LEARY (Loughborough): The recent C.D.s seem to have been even more interesting than usual. Particularly fascinating for me was Ray Moore on *Vanishing Detectives*, and indeed the articles on Sexton Blake and other less well-known detectives. Jenny Schofield's articles on Biggles are always a delight, and it was lovely to read the *Jennie - the Little Flower Girl* story in the April issue. Sentimental - but why not? And Herbert Leckenby's memoir was excellent.

CLARICE HARDING (Sidmouth): I must tell you of a memory I treasure, and which comes to life mostly in Summer time. I was lying in long, uncut mowing grass reading *Tiger Tim's Weekly* - such lovely stories - and occasionally moving my gaze to watch a lark rising up quite near. A simple happening on a lovely sunny day, but I have never forgotten it!



JOHN LEWIS (Uttoxeter): It is stated in *The Greyfriars Characters*, page 159 (Charles Hamilton Companion, Vol. 2, Museum Press) that "we do not know how old he (Quelch) was except that he was senior enough to exchange views on classical matters with the venerable Head himself". However, in the magnificent 'Gold Chain' series of 1937 (*Magnet* No. 1520, p.16) it is categorically stated that "*Mr. Quelch was fifty - and certainly not old - merely fifty...*" Incidentally in the same series (*Magnet* No. 1521, p.9) the correct age of the long-past-retirement Head of Highcliffe School is also revealed: "*Old Dr. Voysey, at the ripe age of seventy, held the reins very loosely...*"

As Gosling's age has already been discovered to be sixty five (*Magnet* No. 983, p.13) I now live in hope that perchance somewhere in the pages of the *Magnet* is hidden the exact age of Dr. Locke.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mark Taha's request, in a recent C.D., for information about the *V FOR VENGEANCE* story has stimulated several interesting letters from readers. Last month we published Mr. E.H. John Gibbs' comments on the Deathless Men of the Saga. Mr. George Turner of Egham sends the following item:

I have a bound collection of WIZARD'S for the year of 1942. In issue number 1004 (8.8.1942) was the start of story 'V FOR VENGEANCE'. The first chapter was called The Deathless Men. The plot starts in Paris with the German Army of Occupation. The chief of the Gestapo is Herr Leben. The Butcher of Paris was found dead in his car. Pinned to his chest was a slip of paper; in blood-red, two inches high was the letter V. Underneath this there was in German: V for VENGEANCE. The free peoples of Europe strike again. This rat is only one of many who will die...

The publishers blurb in the previous Wizard told us all we wanted to know of The Deathless Men. I repeat it below.

A WARNING

Don't miss the next Wizard, in which starts one of the greatest thrill stories.

The Deathless Men - a gang of patriots whom the Germans thought they had killed in their concentration camps, suddenly appear in their midst with only one thought - vengeance.

One by one the most notorious Germans as they are killed, are struck off the gang's long list of intended victims, in spite of the tremendous efforts of the Germans to stop them - because the last name in the list is HITLER'S.

So you have been warned - the title to look for is -

"V FOR VENGEANCE"

The leader of the Deathless Men slowly removes his mask and the horrified Nazi prisoner finds himself looking at his superior officer—Von Reich of the Gestapo!

V FOR VENGEANCE



Mr. Jeff Kebell of Leigh-on-Sea, has sent me a copy of the *V FOR VENGEANCE* story in *WIZARD* No. 1345 (November 24th, 1951) and its heading picture is reproduced here.

No. 24. New Series. December, 1970. Double Number. Price One Pound.

MY SUNDAY FRIEND.



THROUGH THE MUD IN DECEMBER 1970.

THE BRUIN BOYS HAVE A BUSY DAY!



WAKING-UP TIME.

Porky generally manages to be the last boy out of bed in Mrs. Bruin's school. "We'll see that he gets up on time this morning!" said Tim the other day. He and the other boys had fixed a can full of water above the piggy-boy's bed, and when he would not get up they gave him a good watering! "Oh, I'll get up, boys!" gasped Porky. Then down the stairs they all went.



THE MORNING TASK.

As Mrs. Bruin had gone out for most of the day, the Bruin Boys started to cook their own dinner. Tim was soon busy making a jam roly-poly, and you may be sure there was about ten times as much jam as pudding. "This is all the jam I could find, Tim!" cried Jumbo, as he came in with a lot of jars. "They are all different jams, so we'll have mixed fruit to-day!"



AFTERNOON SCHOOL.

"Now I'll pretend I'm Mrs. Bruin, and take the class!" cried Tiger Tim, later in the day. "Attention all. Jacko! Come out here at once. How dare you laugh!" Out came Jacko, and to make sure he was not hurt by the cane, he held a brick in his hand. When they were all having a really good time, in came Mrs. Bruin. "Up to bed at once, boys!" she exclaimed.



EVENING FUN.

The Bruin Boys were still feeling mischievous, though, and they were soon up to their pranks in the bedroom. "We'll use the bed as a coach, boys!" laughed Jacko. "Oh, yes, we'll be the horses!" exclaimed Tim and Jumbo. Round and round the bedroom went the "coach," making ever so much noise. Then along came their teacher once again, and they were soon quiet!

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Printed by Quacks Printers, 7 Grape Lane, Petergate, York, YO1 2HU. Tel. 635967