

THE STORY PAPER

Collectors' Digest

VOL. 47

No. 558

£1

JUNE
1993



Sqn. Cdr. A.W. Bigsworth
at St. Pol 1915

The

Origin of A. Biggles?

Bob
Whiter
-93-



Bunter the Boxer.



Bunter the Randy.



Bunter the Footballer.



The Happy Bunter.



WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER



Thoughtful Bunter



Bunter Blubs.



Poor Old Bunter.



Bunter Smiles.

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

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HOLIDAY READING

After a very happy trip to America, and my return to the lushness of early summer in England I've been dipping once again into a few of the summer holiday tales in our favourite papers. It is often said that these are not nearly so popular with readers as the school stories. Nevertheless they offer many joys and satisfactions. We can, for example, discover when Tom Merry and Co. go boating on the Thames that



'There were plenty of craft on the river that sunny day. White flannels and gorgeous parasols gleamed in the sun. Fields and woods and meadows looked delightful...'

Macdonald's pictures of events in this famous watery series are characteristically elegant and reminiscent of glossy magazine illustrations of Cowes or the Henley regatta. They strike faint echoes of the Eton boating song too, and highlight our responses to both the touching aspirations of youth and its juvenile larks. (Duckings and skirmishes, of course, are essential ingredients of Charles Hamilton's summer holiday stories.)



"Hal Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in great alarm. "Blake has been undah watah a full minuit. He must be drowin'. I'm goin' in for him." In less than a minuit he had divested himself of his jacket and boots and was ready for the plunge. Meanwhile, the supposed drowning Blake was hanging on to the gunwale of the *Old Bus*, smiling cheerfully.

We all have memories of vicarious vacations with the juniors of Greyfriars, St. Jim's, Rookwood, St. Frank's, Cliff House or Morcove; we have cycled and caravanned with them through the Home Counties and, in far flung countries such as India, China, Africa and South America, shared their hazardous adventures. My favourite holiday saga with a far-away setting is the Magnet's India series which provides plentiful insights into the intriguing and complex personality of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh and, in a vivid text atmospherically illustrated by Leonard Shields, evokes both the garishness and the grandeur of the 'seething subcontinent'.

My favourite moment in the Cliff House holiday stories came when Babs & Co. were faced with death in 'darkest Africa' with ferocious and ravenous lions moving towards them; my heroine, the ever intrepid Clara Trevlyn, 'fiercely stood in front of Marjorie ...'.

The Morcove girls frequently took off to the desert for their holidays which, despite temporary slavery and incarceration and hairsbreadth escapes from death, were always absorbing and intriguing.

The boys of St. Frank's, often accompanied by the Moor View girls, experienced similar thrills and chills in adventurous vacs. in remote parts of the globe. Small wonder that after so many excitements abroad, Morcove's madcap Polly Linton, while still surrounded by shimmering desert sands, looks forward to the comparative peace of Devonshire and the cooling effects of moorland mists - 'Hurrah! Hockey next term!' - and for Handforth & Co.

the prospect of returning to school after dangerous expeditions to foreign parts is also golden:

'They were strong healthy youngsters... They all liked plenty of excitement and adventure but it was the general opinion that they had had their full share of both! And all their thoughts were now turned to St. Frank's again - to boxing and football, and similar matters of vital importance.'



Happy Holiday Reading!

MARY CADOGAN



THE NEXT MOVE

by Duncan Harper

The Next Move is the title of a unique Sexton Blake serial appearing in the Union Jack very near the end of its run. It was billed as the "most interesting serial in UJ history", even taking the front cover of the Union Jack carrying its first instalment (pushing the main story, featuring the ever popular Waldo, so the inside pages).

The serial took the form of a challenge between four of the Union Jack's most prolific authors, namely G.H. Teed, Gwyn Evans, Robert Murray and Anthony Skene. Between them, these four authors had contributed about sixty five per cent of the previous year's Union Jack stories. The challenge consisted of the four authors each taking it in turn to write an instalment, usually leaving one or more of the characters and/or the plot in an inescapable corner, with the next author charged with providing a plausible extrication and continuation of the story.

The serial runs for fourteen issues from number 1516 to 1529 appearing in 1932 and '33, with three rounds, plus two issues at the end for G.H. Teed to bring the story to a satisfactory conclusion.

The first interesting point about the serial is the front cover of number 1516. It features the pictures of the four authors participating in the challenge. It was most unusual for the pictures of Amalgamated Press authors to be published with their stories. This only became common practice at the end of the Sexton Blake Library third series (or what is commonly termed the fourth series).

G. H. TEED



GWYN EVANS—



ROBERT MURRAY



ANTHONY SKENE



The next salient point, when reading the story, is the identity of characters in the action. These characters are directly related to the authors participating. The first instalment by G.H. Teed introduces his Mlle. Roxane Harfield, the replacement for Yvonne Cartier. The next author, who is Gwyn Evans, brings in both 'Splash' Page and Mrs. Bardell, who incidentally only seems to play a major role in Evans' instalments. Robert Murray, the third author, chooses Dirk Dolland alias the Bat, a reformed cracksman as his pet character. The fourth author, Anthony Skene, doesn't bring in a character of his own, which is a shame as Monsieur Zenith the Albino, Skene's usual character, is one of my favourites.

The story itself is a curious concoction of different styles reflecting the changing authors. Teed doesn't get the story off to a particularly good start. At the end of the first episode the reader is left considerably confused by the related events. It is not until a few instalments into the serial that the reader begins to understand what is actually going on, and the initial confusion is cleared up. Once this point is reached the story improves very considerably, and gathers speed rapidly.

One of the points noted earlier is the tendency for each author to leave the next with a particularly difficult explanation problem. For instance, how do both Dirk Dolland and Morgan Gibson (the wrongly accused victim of the story) and the contents of cellar manage to disappear into thin air just in time to avoid the police in the shape of Teed's Inspector Thomas of the yard who happens to be in a particularly bad mood? Or how do the same pair escape from an underground room rapidly filling with water from which there is seemingly no way out? Perhaps the most intriguing end to an instalment is the arrival of a character on Sexton Blake's threshold claiming to be Robinson Crusoe.

Digressing slightly, the role of the police in the story is very confusing, seeming to indicate a considerable difference of opinion amongst the authors as to the helpfulness of the police. In fact, Inspector Thomas spends most of the story obstructing Sexton Blake, only to make an eleventh hour conversion, and be knocked out both physically and in the literary sense of the ensuing climax of the plot.

In the final two instalments, Teed provides a very convincing conclusion to the story, more than making up for any initial problems. As is the custom the master criminal behind the crimes, Mr. Brink alias the Doomsman, dies as a result of an accident while fighting with Sexton Blake. The innocent, wrongly accused victim proves his innocence and the money from the frauds at the heart of the plot is returned to its rightful owners.

(Editor's Note: Duncan Harper, the author of this article, is the Honorary Librarian of the London O.B.B.C. Sexton Blake Library.)

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.



THE SCHOOLBOY WHO SPENT A FORTUNE

by Leslie S. Laskey

Although some of the pupils in our school stories came from humble backgrounds, many had wealthy parents who supplied their sons and daughters with liberal amounts of pocket money. A few were in receipt of very liberal amounts. Vernon-Smith, at Greyfriars, was the son of a self-made millionaire. His pocket-book was always well lined with banknotes. At St. Jim's the Hon. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy regularly received his "tennahs" and "fivahs" from Lord Eastwood, remittances which provided many lavish teas in Study No. 6. Vernon-Smith spent his money ostentatiously. Gussy spent his in a carefree but restrained manner.

However, to St. Frank's there came a boy who not only had far more money to spend than either the Bounder or Gussy, but who squandered it with totally reckless abandon. The Hon. Douglas Singleton funded lavish spreads for his schoolfellows in the Remove. He lent money freely to anybody who wanted it and never bothered whether it was repaid. Fullwood and Co. naturally batted like leeches on to this new source of cash. Soon Singleton was inveigled into gambling trips to The Grapes, in Bannington.

In due course he was introduced to two men named Carslake and Cross who were both delighted to meet an irresponsible schoolboy with great wealth, who could soon be tricked into parting company with it. Later another man named Philip Smith Gore appeared on the scene. Soon he was conspiring with Carslake and Cross, and he eventually became the ringleader in the artful fleecing of the Hon. Douglas.

The latter was introduced to the roulette tables, in a nightclub, where he lost huge sums of money. By the time that Singleton's family lawyer realised what was happening Singleton had squandered the incredible sum of £120,000, almost half of his fortune. The astounded Dr. Stafford "gated" the Hon. Douglas to curb his profligacy. Not to be restrained Singleton then negotiated to buy a nearby school. Almost immediately this school was destroyed by floodwaters from a bursting dam.

Eventually Singleton was completely broke. He was able to meet some bounced cheques only by selling off his personal possessions by auction. His formerly luxuriously furnished study finally contained just a small hard chair and a small deal table, with a piece of American cloth tacked on to it. There

THE SPENDTHRIFT, OF ST. FRANK'S!

by
EDWY SEARLES BROOKS



SCHOOLBOYS' OWN
LIBRARY No 291

4^D

was no longer even a carpet. Singleton's wealth was reduced to just eight shillings.

From then on Singleton changed a good deal for the better. His downfall had brought home to him the follies of his ways. He fell out with Fullwood and Co. who had no use for him now.

Subsequently there came an astonishing revelation concerning the man Philip Smith Gore, as a result of which Singleton's fortunes took an upward turn.

While this long story is undoubtedly rather far-fetched, it is always entertaining.

The complete story was published in the NELSON LEE LIBRARY Nos. 240-249 (O/S) and was later reprinted in the SCHOOLBOY'S OWN LIBRARY Nos. 291, 294 and 297.



VALERIE DREW AND FLASH

by Dennis L. Bird

SHE was quick-witted, resourceful, resolute, attractive, with violet eyes and red-gold hair. ("Red-gold" was an inspired description, so much more distinctive than "ginger" or even "auburn".)

HE was intelligent, faithful highly-trained - and four-footed.

They were, of course, Valerie Drew and her Alsatian dog Flash, the detective duo who beguiled schoolgirl readers from 1933 to 1940. They were the creations of one of the Sexton Blake authors, John William Bobin (1889-1933), writing as "Adelie Ascott". From the first words of the first story ("That Amazing Room of Clocks", in the "Schoolgirls' Weekly", 7th January 1933) everyone knew that some high dramas were in store:

"Down, Flash - down!" Eighteen-year-old Valerie Drew sensed the coming of another mountainous wave through the mad, shrieking gale and the hissing torrential rain. She shouted frantically to the drenched Alsatian wolfhound, who was her companion."

Long complete stories and a 17-installment serial "Valerie Drew - Schoolgirl Detective" appeared at intervals over the next year or so, and then every week from May 1934 until Bobin's untimely death on 9th April 1935, aged only 45. His last story was published three weeks later ("The Sandbanked Ship", 27th April 1935).

For the next 116 weeks the tales appeared anonymously; Bill Lofts believes that some were by Lewis Carlton, with the majority coming from Reginald S. Kirkham

VALERIE—the Girl Detective—Investigates the Mystery of THAT AMAZING ROOM OF CLOCKS



GRAND 10-PAGE
COMPLETE STORY

BY

Adelie Ascott

Illustrated by C. MONTFORD.

The first Valerie Drew Story (*Schoolgirls' Weekly* No. 533)

("Hilary Marlow" and "Joan Vincent"). From July 1937 onwards the by-line was "Isabel Norton" (Kirkham). The 214 short stories ended the following year with "The Locked Library" (2nd April 1938), and the rest of Valerie's career was related in seven serials - in the "Schoolgirls' Weekly" until its demise in May 1939, and finally in "The Schoolgirl" until the wartime paper shortage brought that to an end too in May 1940. The last story, "Valerie Drew and the Avenging Three", was cut off after only 11 instalments, and was never concluded.

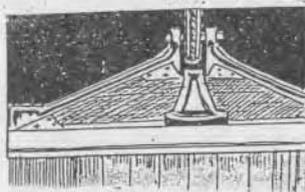
So much for what might be called Valerie's "vital statistics". But what were they really like, this unusual partnership of strong-willed girl and sagacious pet?

At first, Valerie appeared to be not much more than a schoolgirl, and was able to pass herself off as such in that first serial in 1933-34. She does not seem to have had any formal training in her profession; we are told in the first story that she had "earned the title of girl detective by helping her father in more than one intricate case before his recent retirement." In Story No. 4 ("Valerie Drew's Dilemma", 24th June (1933) John Drew is described as former "Chief Commissioner of Police at Scotland Yard." Presumably he was in fact Sir John Drew, for all the real-life Metropolitan Police Commissioners have had knighthoods (Sir Philip Game, Sir Robert Mark, Sir Kenneth Newman, Sir Peter Imbert). Knight or not, John Drew is kidnapped and has to be rescued by his intrepid daughter. After that, no more is heard of him apart from an isolated reference in "House of Hidden Peril" (25th March 1939), when Inspector Grainger tells Valerie "Your father and I were great friends years ago." As to Valerie's

other relations, no mention is ever made of her mother, but we do meet a cousin, Irene Wilson (Story No. 4).



Valerie suddenly started. A new hope sprang to life in her. The lift was moving—upwards! She knew then that Flash was responsible—that he was behaving with almost human intelligence!



From 'Valerie Drew's Double', September 1st 1934 (No. 619) drawn by C. Percival

The Drews were comfortably off. They lived in "a quiet, residential road of Kensington," in a house with a carriage drive, and they employed a butler, cook, and housemaid. Valerie stayed on there after her father faded from the series. Later she had a "delightful Park Lane flat" (a very expensive address), owned a powerful sports car, and flew her own aeroplane - a three-seat de Havilland D.H. 80A Puss Moth. By now she was a very sophisticated and competent young lady.

As for the other half of the partnership, he was a strong character in his own right. Flash was described as "old" almost from the beginning, so he must have been at least six. As Alsations normally live for only eight or nine years, he must have been a Methuselah among dogs, being still vigorously active in 1940. He would then have been about 13; Valerie was 25.

Flash liked to go driving with Valerie, and "at such times he was wont to look down pityingly at other dogs they passed... He considered every dog who had not a pretty mistress to drive him around unlucky and beneath his consideration" ("The Problem of the Red-headed Girl", 11th March 1933). He liked to be cock of the walk, and did not take kindly to other pets such as the parrot Columbus ("House of Hidden Peril", 1st April 1939):

"He was indignant, even a tiny bit jealous. He was sorry Columbus had ever appeared at Mull House. It was going to be more than a joke if the bird was always about the place."

On the job, for which he had been thoroughly schooled by Valerie from his puppyhood, he was a true professional, able to do almost as much as a human assistant, such as pressing the button to summon a lift at a crucial moment ("Valerie Drew's Double," 1st September 1934). Sometimes, of course, he could do more, his superior sense of smell enabling him to track down villains at Valerie's command. Sometimes he had cases almost on his own - "Detective Flash" (21st April 1934), for instance, or "Flash - on Guard" (29th August 1936). We are told his innermost thoughts, which are often highly perceptive, but usually believably dog-like. A rare fellow is Flash!

Valerie Drew and her astute partner are among the most vivid personalities in the pre-war story papers, not only through the words of their three authors, but in the illustrations. At first the drawings were by C.E. Montford, but after only five stories he was replaced by the man who really breathed life into the dauntless pair: C. Percival.

From 11th November 1933 until the abrupt, war-induced end on 18th May 1940 it is his pictures which remain in the memory.

Opening Chapters of our Magnificent New Girl Detective serial, featuring—

VALERIE DREW and the AVENGING THREE!



C. Percival illustration for unfinished serial in *Schoolgirl* No. 554, March 9th 1940

I had hoped to compare Valerie's detective methods with those of her contemporary rival, the "Girls' Crystal's" debonair male detective Noel Raymond, originated by "Peter Langley" (Ronald Fleming). Noel is always developing "theories which he was anxious to put to the test," and sometimes readers can work out his thought processes for themselves. But the Valerie Drew stories do not lend themselves to this analysis. Things just happen to her, and there is rarely any surprise about the identity of the villains. But what she and Flash may lack in mystery and reasoning, they more than make up for by their courage, charisma - and charm.

For some of the information in this article I am indebted to Mary Cadogan's "Valerie Drew - Girl Detective" in "Collectors' Digest Annual" 1989. - D.L.B.

WANTED: By private collector seeking to complete own boyhood collection, bound volumes, runs or single issues, Rover,- Hotspur, Adventure, Wizard, before 1946. Skipper and Champion of any age. Annuals for all the above also sought. If you have been considering selling you can be assured that these are not being acquired for re-sale, and will be treasured and enjoyed. DAVE HARDWICK, 41 High Street, Skellingthorpe, Lincoln, LN6 5TS. Tel. 0522 682511.

CHRISTIES BOOK, COMIC AND MAGAZINE ARTWORK SALE

by Bill Lofts

A sale of original art-work, very much connected with our hobby, was held at Christies of South Kensington, London, on Thursday, 18th March at 2.00 p.m.

This consisted of a very mixed bag of items including Sexton Blake Library covers from the 'new look' series under the editorship of the late W. Howard Baker, Dan Dare items from the Eagle comic, Women's/girls', boys', children's Annuals from Renwick of Otley, T.V. Tornado comic, and other odds and ends.

In all there were some 126 lots, lavishly illustrated in black and white and colour in a catalogue. Top price reached about £900 ranging down to the £40 mark.

Of particular interest to me were the Sexton Blake Library covers that I last saw stacked at the back of the Sexton Blake office at Fleetway House in the sixties. I was surprised that the very last issue, No. 526, 'The Last Tiger' (to coincide with the very first, 1915 'The Yellow Tiger') which Bill Baker thought the best, should only fetch only £65.

The catalogue unfortunately had so many errors of fact, even with wrong artists named (whilst some that were 'anon' I knew quite well) that a supplement had to be issued correcting them. Some were probably printing errors, but others were due to not consulting the right experts in this field.

For one item of comic work featuring a small coloured boy ('Smiler and Smudge' strip in the green comic The Butterfly) the artist was shown as the creator, Bert Brown (started 1926), but it was actually (as confirmed by Denis Gifford who was present) by Roy Wilson and eventually fetched £220.

Reverting to the S.B.L. for 'The Last Tiger' the artist was not known, but my own information was that it was designed by a woman, Jean Chapman, unique in that she is the only woman illustrator known in the series.

Another surprise to me was the low prices raised for the art work covers for children's Annuals by E.E. Briscoe, that fine artist of the Nelson Lee Library. Other similar work by far inferior illustrators of the 'Woolworths' category fetched more.

One Sexton Blake Library cover was illustrated by Steve Barany, whom I knew quite well in the sixties. I wonder if the buyer would ever know that he was a Hungarian refugee who fled to this country during the uprising after a horrendous journey. Later he went to South Africa, where he was murdered in a tavern. He was paid £50 for the picture that raised £260.

I don't know at present who had put the collection up for Auction, though am certain it was not Howard Baker Estate or I.P.C. Magazines Ltd. Whoever it was certainly found it rewarding by many thousands of pounds.

WANTED: Schoolgirls' Own Libraries, Post-war second series. Coloured covers. Numbers 1-7, 9-16, 18-22, 24-31, 34, 35, 37, 39-47, 49-55, 57, 58, 60, 82, 176-179, 188, 195, 249, 307, 312, 327, 329, 334, 337, 340, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346. BETTY HOPTON, 79 Scalpcliffe Road, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs, DE15 9AB. Tel. 0283 65806.

The Origin of 'Biggles'? by Bob Whiter



THE ORIGIN OF "BIGGLES"?

by Bob Whiter

Sir Peter Masfield, in a statement made recently, confirms an opinion that I have held for a long time - that Squadron Leader Arthur Wellesley Bigsworth was the man on whom W.E. Johns based his famous character 'Biggles'.

Just who was Bigsworth? He was a pilot in the Royal Naval Air Service during World War I. Over the years he served with quite a few famous men, as the following brief notes will show.

In October 1914, Christopher Draper, later known as "The Mad Major," was sent to Fort Grange, an aerodrome near Gosport. Here he found a Naval wing being formed by Lieutenant Commander Arthur Longmore (later Air Chief Marshall Arthur Longmore, C.B.E., D.S.O.). Draper earned the Distinguished Service Cross in March 1918 and was surely the inspiration for Kenneth J. Alford's stirring march "The Mad Major" (1921). He was to gain further fame in 1931, and then again, in 1953, at the age of 61, by flying under the bridges that span the river Thames. Among the pilots, including the C.O. and Draper, was *Flight Commander A.W. Bigsworth* who acted as second in command.

On November 17th, Longmore received orders to move the whole unit to Newcastle-on-Tyne. This came following Naval Intelligence's fear of raids on the east coast by German surface vessels, the aircraft being needed to scout and bomb these ships. At this time, *Bigsworth* was posted to Calshot. Draper, being the most senior officer, took over the duties of First Lieutenant. The squadron was then moved to Dover during January 1915. In February, it found itself at Saint Pol near Dunkirk. It had been sent to replace Charles Ramney Sampson's unit, which, after a spell at Ostend, had been stationed at Saint Pol since August 1914, Sampson's Naval Air Unit being earmarked for the Dardanelles Campaign.

Before leaving England with most of the personnel, Longmore had placed Draper in command of the remainder still at Newcastle, England. Longmore's new command became known as the Dunkirk Squadron No. 1 and numbered among its members a Flight Sub Lieutenant Reggie (Rex) Warneford who was later to earn the V.C. for bringing down Zeppelin LZ 37.

On May 17th, *Flight Commander A.W. Bigsworth*, in AVRO 504, No. 1009, encountered LZ 39 at 10,000 ft. over Ostend. He succeeded in climbing 200 ft. above the dirigible and, passing over from stem to bow,

dropped four 20 lb. bombs along her back. Owing to heavy German "archie" fire he was forced to break off the combat and watched the airship trailing smoke in the direction of Evere. It made a safe, but rough, landing at the shed with the one dead officer and some wounded men. An inspection revealed five damaged gas bags and the loss of the starboard after propeller.

On the 26th August 1915, *Arthur Bigsworth* made no mistake. Although under severe "archie" fire from both shore batteries and the submarine he was attacking, he came down to 500 ft. before dropping his bomb and sinking the German U-boat. For this feat, carried out single-handedly, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order. Space does not permit a larger coverage of all the numerous activities carried out by this very fine officer. Suffice it to say his service in two World Wars left a record that any man would be proud of. *Air Commodore D.S.O. and Bar, A.F.C. Arthur Wellesley Bigsworth* died in 1961. According to Sir Peter, Johns had met Bigsworth just after World War I and, although they never really became friends, it was, if nothing else, *Bigsworth's* charisma that made him the prototype for "Biggles". His parents couldn't have picked more appropriate Christian names: Arthur Wellesley, The Iron Duke.

SOURCES

"Warneford, V.C."	Mary Gibson
"The Mad Major"	Major Christopher Draper, D.S.C.
"Heroes and Aeroplanes of the Great War 1914-1918"	Joseph A. Phelan
"Aces and Aircraft of World War I"	Christopher Campbell

TRIBUTE TO LESLIE CHARTERIS: BORN 12th MAY 1907. DIED 15th APRIL 1993

by Norman Wright

I first met The Saint in a half crown Digit paper edition of "Saint Meets the Tiger" bought in Eastcote on a wet Saturday afternoon sometime in the mid 1960s. By the evening I had the smell of Orace's cooking in my nose and had fallen in love with Patricia Holm. The local library was scoured and surrounding second-hand bookshops pillaged for other titles in the series and by the end of the month I had more than a passing knowledge of the Saint and his method. Since then I have been a great enthusiast of detective fiction and the 'Gentleman Crook' genre in particular, but despite finding many 'new' authors over the years I always return to Charteris. Why? There are a myriad of reasons. His dialogue is superb and seems to come so effortlessly from his characters; whatever the situation Simon has just the right turn of phrase and it never seems contrived. Charteris was a master of the short story - and there are few of those around (masters, not short stories) and if you only have half an hour to spare there is usually time for a Saint story. As a teenager I enjoyed the 1930s adventures best, but as I approach middle age I can savour with equal delight the short tales from the 1950s and 1960s and marvel at the sheer variety and originality of plots. It seems there is a Saint story for all seasons and even 'old friends' can be read again and again. They have the

power to thrill and the drive to set the blood coursing. They are also compulsive. I was on holiday the first time I read "The Last Hero". As I read the final page I had a great lump in my throat. I could never enjoy the rest of my holiday without knowing what happened after Norman Kent had made the supreme sacrifice and I spent a frantic two days travelling the length of the south coast searching for "Knight Templar". When I did at last track a copy down I read it on the spot - much to the annoyance of those on holiday with me. Since that far off day I have collected first editions and gathered together quite a collection of rarities including most of "The Thriller" with the original stories, "The Saint Magazine" and, perhaps rarest of all, the "Boys Friend Library" reprinting "Crooked Gold", a much hacked about reprint of "Meet the Tiger". But for all the posh editions it was what was between the covers that counted - Leslie Charteris' splendid tales written with all the flare and polish of a master craftsman.

FILLING IN THE PICTURE

by Len Hawkey

The article on illustrators in the April C.D. by Donald Campbell made a refreshing read, especially as tributes to magazine artists are few and far between. The selection by Mr. Campbell was a good one, although as a matter of personal choice I would not place some of the names in the front rank of illustrators. Nonetheless, perhaps a few factual details will give a more complete picture.

Maurice GREIFFENHAGEN: With his richly detailed, bold, style, he was, as Mr. Campbell suggests, in a class of his own. Born in London in 1862, he studied at the R.A. School, and came to work for all of the more prestigious magazines, as well as being a great favourite with many authors, from Haggard and Max Pemberton to D.H. Lawrence, Oppenheim and Edgar Wallace. After 1900 he did less book and magazine work, concentrating on portraiture and poster design. He became an R.A. and A.R.A., and died in 1931.

Warwick REYNOLDS: (1880-1926). From 1905, when he returned from studies on the Continent, until his all too early death, he was probably the finest



The guests gathered round to watch the strange scene.

Warwick Reynolds - from
'Mascar the Mystic' in *The Jester*, 1908

all-round book and magazine illustrator, certainly unsurpassed at animal studies. Taking full advantage of all the new mechanical processes of shading, stippling, etc., his work stands out as unique whether in adult magazines or juvenile periodicals.

THE BROCKS: A whole article could be devoted to the Brock brothers, as it could of course to Warwick Reynolds. They worked from their large "olde-worlde" house at Madingley, near Cambridge, and most of their prolific output was sent by post to whichever publisher had commissioned it. C.E. and H.M. Brock were the most gifted. There was a third brother, R.H. Brock who also did a lot of good work and is best remembered perhaps for Newnes "Dick Turpin Library", a jolly good 64-page read, issued from 1922 to 1930. So far as I know, R.H. Brock did the covers and inside illustrations for all these 138 magazines!



They both fell upon the ground, Taylor exclaims.

Gordon Browne,
Boys Life, 1907

Fred PEGRAM: (1870-1937) was the Brocks' cousin, and his style (neat, accurate, with a clearly defined black and white line) was very similar to theirs - as indeed was that of **Gordon BROWNE** (son of Hablot K. Browne-"Phiz") the most prolific of all the illustrators, and one of the most reliable. There were three *Cuneo's* - Cyrus; his wife, who drew under her maiden name of Nell Tennon, and their son Terence. Cyrus died of blood-poisoning in 1916, when his son was only 9 years old, and although they had very similar styles their careers never, in fact, overlapped. Terence, who has gained fame principally for his fine "railway" paintings, is, thankfully, still alive.

There were also two "**Abbeys**" - Solomon and Joseph. Both came to England from the continent, and their real surname was Van Abbé. Solomon retained this professionally, while his brother - creator of literally innumerable book-covers - became Joseph

Abbey. In post-war years he did all the illustrations for at least one of the Tom Merry Annuals.

Stanley L. WOOD: (1966-1928) was the "action man" illustrator, par excellence. Apart from R. Caton Woodville, of "Road to Pretoria" fame, no artist could better depict wild-eyed horses galloping into battle, nor sinewy Indians wrestling with trappers. He was also the visual creator of Cutcliffe-Hyne's "Captain Kettle" and the sinister "Dr. Nikola" in Guy Boothby's stories.

H.R. MILLAR: (1869-1942) was, somewhat surprisingly, also regarded as a specialist "locomotive" artist but was much better known for all the fairy-story books he produced and his brilliant decoration of many E. Nesbit classics. He also figured quite frequently both in the old coloured comics and popular adult magazines.

The work of **F.H. TOWNSEND**, editor of "Punch" in the 1920s was more in the Brock vein, while Stanley Davies and Penhryn Stanlaws had at least one thing in common - their bosomy young ladies, with their "pouter pigeon" style (referred to by Mr. Campbell). These emulated, in this country, the "Gibson Girls" originally created in the States by Charles Dana Gibson. Davies was fond of both pencil and crayon as well as pen and ink wash, like Balliol Salmon or Norah Schlegel. Stanlaws kept to a fine black and white line. He is a faintly mysterious figure, finishing up in Hollywood during the 1920s as a director of silent films!

WHARTON'S CAPTAINCY

by Colin Cole

Peter Mahony's article in the April 1993 issue of the Collectors' Digest is rather critical of Harry Wharton's football captaincy.

Hazeldene, Nugent and Hurree Singh (Inky) are mentioned as examples of Wharton's favouritism. Frank Nugent frequently appeared on the Remove team sheet in Red Magnet days and in blue/white Magnets. However, as better players arrived or developed into good players, Nugent lost his place. In the nineteen twenties and thirties Nugent was picked only when others were sick or injured or otherwise absent. Although Nugent was Wharton's closest chum this does not indicate favouritism.

It is true that Harry (and others) would like to have pleased Marjorie Hazeldene by selecting Peter Hazeldene. I think most readers would agree that Hazel was usually only picked when his form warranted selection. It is as well to remember that Hazel was a goalkeeper, which is a specialist position. In the early days Bulstrode was first choice goalkeeper and Hazel had few opportunities to display his qualities as a 'keeper. Charles Hamilton 'dropped' Bulstrode from the stories in 1922. Some substitute writers included Bulstrode in their work but even this ceased in 1927. In later Magnets, Field (Squiff) was Remove goalkeeper with Hazel as reserve. A goalkeeper is not like an outfield player who can play in several positions; once a goalkeeper, always a goalkeeper. Hazel's chances were therefore limited, but when Squiff was unavailable

Harry was pleased to select Hazel as his second goalkeeper. He also pleased Marjorie but I am sure it was not done solely for that reason.

There have not been many instances of Indian footballers in professional football - I cannot recall one. However, this was a Public School and Inky was depicted as a skilful and pacey player, sometimes on the wing, sometimes playing inside.

There were usually four members of the Famous Five in the Remove team in the 'thirties. One cannot definitely say that these four did not justify selection as they usually played well. It is difficult to claim favouritism on that account.

As for Bull, Bolsover and Bulstrode, I have just mentioned the latter. Bolsover was a big, strong fellow, but not, apparently a very useful fellow on the field. There were better players already in the team. Johnny Bull, of course, became a 'regular' at full back.

Wharton's selections depended on skill, speed, fitness and stamina and he picked his team on that basis.

I have done a little research into this age difference, between the Greyfriars Remove team as compared with the St. Jim's Fourth Form and Shell team. I have made use of data in the 1921 Holiday Annual for the want of any other authority on this matter. I find the following:

Greyfriars Remove: average age - just in excess of 15 years.

St. Jim's Fourth Form (School House and New House): average age - 14.63 years.

St. Jim's Shell (School House and New House): average age - 15.65 years.

With the Saints team being selected from the Fourth and Shell Forms, the difference in age is not so great as to be significant when one bears in mind the St. Jim's Fourth sometimes outnumbered the Shell in team selection. A likely St. Jim's team around about, say, 1922, could be:

Tom Merry (Capt), Lowther, Noble, Blake, Cardew, D'Arcy, Levison, Figgins, Kerr, Wynn and Talbot.

Here, there are 4 Shell men and 7 from the Fourth Form; therefore the age difference is further reduced.

As a matter of interest, I should add here that, during the late twenties and thirties, the Remove football eleven was often as follows:

Harry Wharton (Capt), Peter Todd, Hurree Singh, Brown, Penfold, Ogilvy, Linley, Field (Squiff), Vernon-Smith, Bull, Cherry. Reserves: Hazeldene, Newland, Redwing, Nugent. Other reserves were used, at times.

During the Harry Wharton rebellion periods, some selections were suspect, but, in the main, Harry picked only the best and those currently 'in form'.

Skinner was a constant critic of Wharton at any time. It would have been difficult to pick Skinner for the team even had he sought selection. He was just not interested - he had to have a 'go' at Wharton. Skinner would always far sooner spend his leisure time in the "Three Fishers" for snooker, or join a card party in Friardale Woods. Skinner was, indeed, not qualified to judge anybody in the matter of football selection.

(With regard to my remarks concerning Bulstrode being 'dropped' from the stories by Hamilton, this also applied to Rake and Delarey. It is true that these names cropped up in the Greyfriars Herald throughout, but this had nothing to do with Hamilton. Charles Hamilton did bring the 'Herald' into a number of stories in early Magnets.)

TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY BOOKS FOR GIRLS - JUST FOR STARTERS!

by Donald V. Campbell

Nowadays it is commonplace if not *de-rigueur* to find the shelves stocked with mysteries and thrillers by female authors. Women authors provide - and have provided - some of the finest books in the genre this century. If we immediately think of Agatha Christie or Margery Allingham, P.D. James/Ruth Rendell, we might slip into believing that they were the originals, the blueprinters, as it were... But, wait a moment - what of the past, the turn of the century for example, who then "boldly went where no woman had gone before?" If Emmuska, the Baroness Orczy, was one of the female mystery writer's ancestors, she can only be called a dabbler with the likes of *The Old Man in the Corner*, and *Lady Molly of Scotland Yard*.

No, the true original, and forerunner of the great female mystery/thriller writers was L.T. Meade - Mrs. Elizabeth Thomasina Meade-Smith, otherwise known as Mrs. Alfred Toulmin-Smith (1854-1914). She is best known for writing more than two hundred and fifty books for girls, such as *Girls of Merton College*, and *Sweet Girl Graduate*. We stagger back in amazement at Wallace's output, at that of Oppenheim, and, above all, at the millions of words, produced in his many guises, by Charles Hamilton. Here we have a female challenger for Hamilton. A challenger also for Christie. But, if we look at her dates we see that she was a gentlewoman (not unlike E. Nesbit?) turning, or churning-out, girl's books by the library-full in an ancient era.

She also turned her skilled hands to adventure and mystery stories - often with collaborators - a not unique happening but of some interest perhaps. Two of her helpers were doctors; later, one of these, Robert Eustace, was to collaborate with none other than Dorothy L. Sayers in *The Documents in the Case*. Eustace was actually one Dr. Eustace Robert Barton. Mrs. Meade's other medical collaborator used the pseudonym "Dr. Clifford Halifax" and was a genuine medical doctor named Dr. Edgar Beaumont (1860-1921).

The reasons for the collaborations were probably based around need and things medical - certainly required in the series *Stories from the Diary of a Doctor* (with Clifford Halifax in *The Strand*, 1894). There is little information as to how, when, where or why the authors shared the work. If medical knowledge was the basis there is little of the medical in the short story "*Followed*" (with Robert Eustace in *The Strand*, 1900). It has the further distinction(?) of not only mentioning a black servant, *Sambo*(!) but also of having the him illustrated by none other than the celebrated Sherlock Holmes artist Sydney Paget - complete with turban and flowing robes. To confuse matters *Sambo* is supposed to be an Australian aborigine!

Eustace also perpetrated another connection with snakes and Australia in "*The Secret of Emu Plain*". This unusual tale is set in the outback with native blacks and one large and horrid reptile. The hero fells the snake with a swift, powerful blow from a stone in a sling. Shades of David and Goliath and: "with one bound our hero was free"!

Emu Plain formed part of a competition in which the readers of Cassell's Magazine (1898) were invited to solve the mystery. Ten prizewinners

received one guinea each - they came from places as far away from London as Cork, Uruguay, Ballyboro (Kildare) and Adelaide! By the way, the mystery posed was - "how had Frank Goodwin's body been hauled up to the top of Emu Rock together with the unconscious hero?" Answers on a postcard please to... no, just a joke. The answer, one hundred years, ago was that they got there on the end of a special military kite. Mmmm!

Four of the prizewinners guessed correctly. Other answers included whirlwinds and secret fissures in the rock.

With Robert Eustace she produced for *The Strand* (1902) an incredibly fascinating series with an horrendous female villain, Madame Sara, *The Sorceress of The Strand*. For *Windsor Magazine*, Mrs. Meade and Dr. Eustace wrote *The Heart of a Mystery* (1901) which rackets about across Europe and England until the solution to the Secret Service mystery is weakly solved. In 1898 and 1899 she had produced a much more memorable series of connected short stories for *Windsor* - *Stories of the Gold Star Line*.

This collaboration with Robert Eustace had a more believable hero in the purser, George Conway. The purser meets a number of baffling mysteries across the oceans - the Maharajah's missing regalia in "*The Jewelled Cobra*", a gang of anarchists and a burial at sea in "*The Cypher with the Human Key*" and the unlikely but entertaining "*The Yellow Flag*" in which a brave wife sees her evil doctor husband die of the plague but wins part of a fortune in compensation.



"KEEP BACK, AND DON'T MAKE A NOISE," SAID MISS CUSACK



L.T. Meade, whose output spanned a period from the last third of the nineteenth century into the first decade of the twentieth, produced her mysteries and adventures for adults late on in her writing life but they have a freshness and an appealing directness. She handles characterisation well enough and is quite even-handed in apportioning her villains to the male or female sex. It is interesting to note that of all her characters it is Madame Sara ("uncanny and terrible") who sticks in the memory - standing, proud and slightly feline, waiting to pounce on a victim in the "sancum sanctorum" of her perfume shop in the Strand.

I am set to wondering - did Mrs. Meade originate the archetype of Madame Sara as one of her girls of Merton College or, perhaps, as a character involved with a sweet girl graduate?

(**Editor's Note:** My favourite stories, of those created by L.T. Meade - with Robert Eustace, are those which appeared in the Harmsworth Magazine between April 1899 and October 1900, featuring Florence Cusack, a "lady investigator". One of Victor Venner's illustrations from this series is reproduced here, together with a picture from the well known 1886 school-story by L.T. Meade, *A World of Girls*.)

KICKED BUNTER LATELY?

by Edward Rake

I became a subscriber to the C.D. in early October 1986. Since that time I have unfortunately never met anyone who reads or has even heard of our beloved little mag., with the exception, that is, of a few dealers from whom I have bought some back numbers - but that was business.

Also I have never met anyone who today reads the Magnet and Gem or the other old school story papers.

Now people, lots of them, do of course remember the old papers and do still buy, read and discuss them. Otherwise the C.D. would never have been created, and been in existence for such a long time, with so many enthusiastic readers.

Only recently I bought some Howard Baker facsimile volumes in mint condition at a booksale here in Bristol. Quite a few elderly people, as they saw me examining the H.B. books, made such remarks as "That's a long time ago." "How's old Bunter going?" "Lovely old stories!" "They don't write stories like that, nowadays!"

And their eyes lit up with friendliness and what I am sure was pleasurable nostalgia as they spoke to me.

Yes, people do remember the old papers. Of course they do. But, as I have said, I have never had the pleasure of actually meeting and talking to these special people - FACE TO FACE, that is.

Yet in the wondrous world of the imagination so very many of us are familiar with the sights and sounds of the old schools, or perhaps of one school in particular.

My favourite among the fictional scholastic establishments has always been dear old Greyfriars. And if you are a Greyfriars fan, too then its ancient quad and Gosling - guarded gates are very well-known.

Thanks to detailed maps, vivid scenic descriptions and unforgettable pen portraits of the staff and chums which appeared in the Magnet, and thanks also to the authoritative reference books and guides compiled by devotees of the old papers, we are familiar with the entire layout of Greyfriars and its environs, and with the personalities of its members.

In the world of the mind we have all experienced the following: The luxury of an expensive "blow-out" at Chunkley's, or, when funds were low, ginger beer and buns at "Uncle Clegg's" at Friardale. Cosy study teas and picnics with the jolly girls of Cliff House. Long, lazy hours in the hot sun in a boat on the River Sark.

Shopping and buying some of Mrs. Mible's lovely fruit cakes and tarts - and unfortunately often chasing Bunter to reclaim our then purloined comestibles! Slipping over the wall for an exciting night out with the Bounder whilst Greyfriars sleeps under the moon. Shouting ourselves hoarse with encouragement to Wharton and his stalwart team on Little Side where it has only minutes to shoot a winning goal. And so on and so on.

Thrills and Spills, Fears and Cheers galore at the old grey pile we love so much, its surroundings and its inhabitants.

By the way -

Kicked old Bunter lately?

SOME OF OUR FAVOURITE AUTHORS

by Margery Woods

This month: A Tribute to LEWIS CARLTON

Lofts and Adley, in their invaluable collectors' 'bible' *THE MEN BEHIND BOYS' FICTION*, tell of mystery surrounding one of the leading writers at Amalgamated Press during the hey-day of our favourite storypapers. He was Lewis Carlton, Devonshire born and one time actor as well as author and editor at A.P.

Lewis Carlton's writing scope was wide and varied, allowing him to switch from boy's fiction and Sexton Blake to a comprehensive exploration of the many sub-genres within the genre of schoolgirl fiction. Under the pseudonyms of Louise Carlton and Elsie Trevor he spun intriguing adventures set in school, the circus, the stage, home life, filmland, outdoors and mystery, many of which were serialised initially in the girls' papers then later in complete form in the *SCHOOLGIRLS' OWN LIBRARY*, those attractive yellow and black monthly paperbacks which still raise a nostalgic light in the eyes of those who remember them --- and not a few younger eyes in the collectors of such goodies!

His girls' stories were warm and emotional as well as exciting and fast-paced. He did not fall into the trap of simply writing a competently plotted story in which the basic characterisations and situations could be adapted with very little variation to a cast of girls --- or boys. His heroines were appealing and feminine as well as spirited, brave and resourceful, and they all fulfilled the vicarious essentials of skills, achievement and success for his heroines, all challenging doors to open to them, doors which in many

cases in real life were proving obstinately closed to many girls during those early decades of this century.

For **SCHOOLGIRLS' WEEKLY** he created a starry line-up of intrepid heroines, each one individual in style and well characterised. A great favourite was **TOOTS, THE LASS FRA LANCASHEER**, who starred in several complete stories and serials. Another stage serial was **WHEN THE FOOTLIGHTS CALLED**, written at the time of great popularity of revue and variety. In contrast was **SPEEDBOAT STELLA**, another feisty young woman who had no intention of being condemned to a humdrum life washing dishes and darning. **THE CARAVAN WANDERERS** must have stirred the nomadic instinct in many young readers, while wishful thinking was thoroughly indulged by the exploits of **TESSA OF TARRANTOS**, whose grace, skill and beauty on the high trapeze were so attractively depicted by no less than three illustrators; F. Marston, E. Flinders and C. Percival (the definitive illustrator of Valerie Drew). Carlton/Trevor united Tessa with his other circus heroine, Cora



"I am not the 'Silver Fish,'" declared Tessa in ringing tones. "I am Tessa of Tarrantos's 'Skip!' rescued the rascally De Garde from below, but he was too late, Tessa had won!"

The Girl Animal Trainer, in a serial in **S.W., THE CIRCUS OF SUSPICION**.

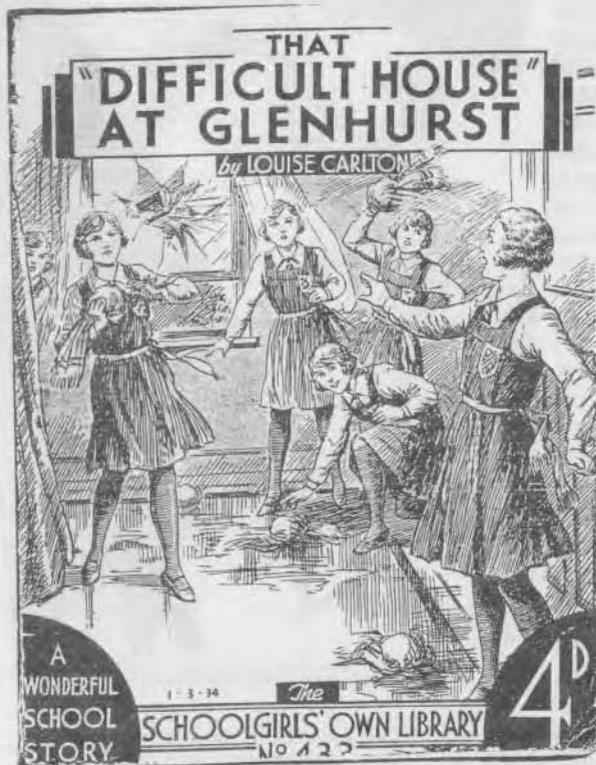
Music was not neglected by his prolific pen. **THE POPULAR BOOK OF GIRLS' STORIES** held **MUSIC AND MYSTERY**, a slightly over the top romance of Romany sisters who were not quite sisters, stolen babies, gypsy violins and sentimental endearments all in melodramatic gypsy-style English, and **CHANCE OF A LIFETIME** told the story of a sensitive girl violinist who had to undergo many trials and solve a mystery before she was reunited with her family and free to win through to fame with her violin.

Of his school stories, one had a different element and a touch of steel. **THAT DIFFICULT HOUSE AT GLENHURSE** solved the problem of troublemakers in a spartan and simple fashion. Isolated from the main school was the 'difficult' house, a kind of boarding school Borstal where the bad girls are parked, to prevent contamination of the school's honour, so to speak.

Dora and her sister Ethel make a very bad start and Dora is dispatched without delay to Difficult House where she meets a coterie of naughties who are quite happy to slack and misbehave and make the task of their reforming house mistress very difficult indeed. The mystery thread of the story leads, as might be predicted, to secret panels and passages, a hidden document and a mysterious letter concerning Mr. Masters, guardian to Dora and Ethel, who is a harsh, unloving man more interested in his

business affairs than the two youngsters in his care. The letter is in the possession of Vera, the baddie, who by some strange alchemy particular to school baddies, seems to avoid ever being discovered in mischief and reaping deserved retribution.

The plot thickens when the awful Vera's father, Mr. Maxwell, arrives on the scene in true heavy fashion and announces that the sisters' guardian has gone abroad and he, Mr. Maxwell, is now in charge of the girls. Their search for the missing document, which they now know concerns their guardian, is going to be made even more difficult with Dora isolated in Difficult House and Ethel still in the main school, forbidden contact with her, while Vera haunts both of them, bent on making as much trouble as possible while she hunts for this mysterious document. Nothing new in this good old standby plot but here it is well worked out, the pace keeps going, the action is interesting and there are one or two ingenious touches. Sympathy is maintained when the sisters receive a letter from their guardian, apologising for



neglecting to show them more affection in the past and telling them he is facing ruin. He speaks of his partner's kindness but by now the sisters know that the 'kind' partner is Vera's villainous papa, who is plotting to take over the whole business for himself after framing Mr. Masters for fraud. And so at last the girls get to the document first, which has been concealed by a former member of the firm while in the house before it became a school. Dora is reinstated in the school, Vera and her rascally father finally get their deserts and Mr. Masters, has good name and fortune restored, is transformed from his previous uncaring self into a kind and loving guardian at last.

But where are the clues to the disappearance in 1950 of this clever and entertaining writer? Apparently all efforts to trace him were unsuccessful, and his death was not recorded prior to the publication of Mr. Loft's and Mr. Adley's book. Did he return to the acting profession? A way of life noted for its continually shifting world. Also, at that time it was probably much easier to disappear at will than it would be today considering how we are numbered, computerised and documented from birth. But whatever the real fate of Lewis Carlton may have been there was no mystery about his talent for writing stories that kept so many young readers enthralled.



MARY HILLIER (Redhill): Chloe Preston, artist illustrator. Can anyone supply biographical details of this author and artist who was working in the early years of this century? She produced children's books, postcards and contributed to many annuals. Also designed toys for Farnell and Merrythought.

DARRELL SWIFT (Leeds): Edwards Chambers' letter and the editor's response in the May C.D. are most interesting. I think the C.D. is already an excellent publication in which hobby information is passed through comment and advertising. Perhaps a Readers' Column would be worth a trial with contributions from those who have information to hand. To start the ball rolling, I can say that Hawk Books do intend to publish more Bunter books but in a limited edition. The next four books are delayed, but it is intended to bring them out in the autumn. Mr. Chambers may consider joining the Northern Old Boys' Book Club, an excellent source of information and discussion. Even the attendance at only the occasional meeting would provide him with a number of things to ponder over!

BRIAN DOYLE (Putney): Re. John Buckle's interesting article on Gunby Hadath in the May C.D., if he would put aside his copy of "The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature" (about which I will refrain from commenting in regard to its content and accuracy), he would find full and detailed biographies of Gunby Hadath in my own two books "The Who's Who of Children's Literature" (1968) and "The Who's Who of Boys' Writers and Illustrators" (1964). Without labouring the point, I would point out to Mr. Buckle that Hadath wrote 43 hard-cover school stories (if you include the handful written under his pseudonym of 'John Mowbray'), from his first "Schoolboy Grit" in 1913 to his last "Honours Easy" in 1953. Plus many unreprinted stories in various magazines and annuals. His first story, by the way, was "Fozzle's Brilliant Idea" in "The Captain" in 1909, not the one cited by Mr. Buckle, who also gets the name of the editor of the "BOP" wrong (as many people do) - it was Hutchison, not Hutchinson. And I certainly wouldn't describe Hadath's best-known character Sparrow as 'Stalky-like' - more Wodehouse than Kipling, I would say!

Finally: Frank Richards may not have read Desmond Coke's books in the early-1900s, but he certainly read at least one of his later works. I have in my possession Richards' own personal copy of Coke's fine book of school short stories "Youth, Youth...!", published in 1919.

MARK TAHA (London): One or two comments on the May C.D. Perhaps Gunby Hadath owed something to Charles Hamilton or to someone else. "The Wizard Insurance Company" reminded me of a St. Sam's (Samways?) story of the 1920s, with Jack Jolly & Co. having the bright idea with the same result. In reply to Peter Mahony, "Goodbye

Greyfriars - Hello, Ferrers Locke" was published in the early 1920s in, as I remember, the *Boys' Herald*.

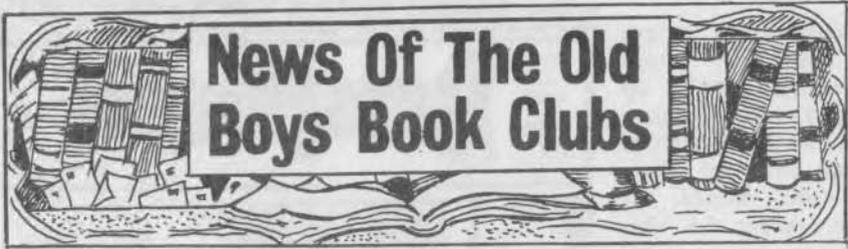
ERNEST HOLMAN (Leigh-on-Sea): I am always pleased to see any mention of Edgar Wallace in the Magazine and Ian Godden's article on Mr. Elk of Scotland Yard was very welcome reading. After Sanders and Mr. Reeder, Elk has always been a favourite Wallace character of mine. I have five of his episodes; for some reason, the 'Terror' seems to be elusive! 'The Nine Bears' mentioned by Ian is new to me, especially as it seems to be Elk's first appearance - and as a Superintendent. It is not always easy to date some Wallace stories, particularly - as in my case - many of them are reprints in paper back. Often, these publications do not show in their details the original date of the story.

For myself, I always read about Elk with Gordon Harker in mind. This great British actor played the part of Elk in a few of the films based on Wallace's stories, notably in 'White Face' and 'The Frog'. I have always understood that Wallace was, at times, noted for writing a part with a particular actor or actress in mind. (One notable instance is in the character of Tony Perelli in 'On The Spot' for Charles Laughton). It would also appear that Wallace's choice of the mad Lord Lebanon in 'The Frightened Lady' fell on the young Emyln Williams. The latter repeated the part in the film version, which included Gordon Harker as a cockney sergeant. Gordon Harker played quite a few parts in Wallace films - i.e. the crook, Hackett, in 'The Ringer' and Hillcott, the butler-burglar in 'The Calendar'.

Elk, however, was the most memorable - and Gordon Harker played the part to perfection on films. These two individuals call forth that often-quoted remark that 'we shall not see their like again'.

ROBERT J. KIRKPATRICK (London): I recently came across a copy of "The Fourth Form at Lynwood" by Frank Richards - pocket-library sized paperback, not dated and published by J.B. Publications Ltd. of Stretford Lancs. As well as the title story, it contains two other stories by Richards: "Mick of the Spindthrift" and "Bunker Bates on the War-Path". The rear cover mentions a second publication, "Chums of Lynwood". (Both are briefly mentioned in Maurice Hall's biography of Richards.) The inside cover suggests that "The Fourth Form at Lynwood" was the first of a series. Does anyone know if any further titles were, in fact, issued?

(Editor's Note: There is nothing in my very battered copy of CHUMS OF LYNWOOD to suggest a series. It is a sixteen page large format publication by David Shields of Manchester and, apart from a two-and-a-half page story *The Box of Turkish Delights* by Margaret Ruthin, is entirely taken up by the Frank Richards story. Its heading announces that this is a tale of "the Boys of Lynwood School and the Girls of High Lynn School". The story, about the girls being stranded on a local island, is reminiscent of the short *Magnet* Series (1528 to 1530) of 1937 when Ponsonby deliberately strands Marjorie Hazeldene and her chums on Popper's Island and gets the Famous Five blamed for this.



LONDON OLD BOYS BOOK CLUB

Roy Parsons welcomed 23 enthusiasts to the April meeting at Loughton, Roger Jenkins showed short video clips of his collection and a club outing to Margate in 1965. Bill Bradford read a poem by George E. Rochester, plus some interesting snippets he had unearthed.

Members listened to a recording of *Biggles and the Long Haul* broadcast on 27th January 1993. Alan Pratt spoke of how his liking for Westerns had been developed through attending Saturday morning pictures.

SUZANNE HARPER

NORTHERN O.B.B.C. REPORT

Eleven people assembled on a pleasant May evening at our usual venue. After a six months' absence owing to a serious accident, it was good to have Mark Caldicott back with us and he was warmly applauded!

A report was given on the recent informal Club Dinner held in Leeds and voted a great success, and concerning the 11th Annual William Meeting, which was recently held in Warwick - the first not to have been organised under the auspices of Northern Club. It was an excellent meeting with over forty attending.

Mark Caldicott then spoke on Andrew Garve, a little known British born detective writer with 28 novels to his credit between 1951 and his death in 1971.

Darrell Swift spoke about Hawk Books, the imaginative publishers who have produced a number of hobby related reprints and compilations. Describing Patrick Hawkey, the man behind this company, Darrell mentioned his success with re-printing Dan Dare strips from *The Eagle*. Geoffrey Good astounded the meeting by stating that his predecessor at the church where he had his first curacy was Marcus Morris, the founder of *Eagle*. Next Meeting: June 12th at our usual venue, with Bill Lofts as our guest speaker. All are welcome to attend.

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

THE HAMPSHIRE HAPPIDROME

by Ernest Holman

Chancing to have occasion to look through the Museum Press issue of "Rookwood", I found myself thinking that over three-quarters of a century have now passed since the Hampshire school first saw the light of day. Here, I told myself, is a reason to write about Rookwood - and then I thought: well, why does one need a reason to write about that popular school? It always stood up within its own right and most correctly so.

They were readable stories, indeed. Of no great length, yet sufficient to cover all the necessary action and conversation, without any need for 'padding'. In all, I suppose the Rookwood Saga would have been equivalent to about five years weekly Greyfriars stories.

TO NEWSAGENTS AND READERS—**BIGGEST BUMPER NUMBER ON RECORD!** NEXT MONDAY.
 (Coloured Cover—Six Magnificent New Stories—FREE PRESENTATION PLATE—Grand Competition—Four Extra Pages—Order To-day!)

Within that range, there was still ample opportunity to build up the many mental pictures of Rookwood. Series that seldom over-ran their time (one would, of course, except the 'Out West' long series - from which it seems, at one time, they were not to return). There were also several good holiday series, sometimes leading to events following the vacation. There often did seem to be a sort of continuity about the weekly yarns, even when single events were told. True, there were a number of so-called 'pot boilers' (singles or doubles) but these were merely 'fill-ins' before something longer would come up. Even then, these small yarns carried the school along, often with a chance to introduce 'other' characters.

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 March 15th, 1916.
 PUBLISHED EVERY MONDAY.
 No. 776.
 Vol. 276.
 Home Edition.

THE BOYS' FRIEND

THE WEEK
 OF THE
 BEST
 FRIDAY
 IN
 TO BEHOLD
 TO BEHOLD
 TO BEHOLD
 TO BEHOLD
 TO BEHOLD



THE FISTICAL FOUR!
 A Rousing Long Complete School Story
 of the Boys at Rookwood, introducing
JIMMY SILVER & Co.
 BY OWEN CONQUEST.

The Fistical Four were, naturally, the centre of the stories, while perhaps the most frequent character to figure prominently from outside the End Study would be Valentine Mornington. Gradually maturing from his first days until fitting in far better than, say, Vernon-Smith or Cardew from elsewhere, this personage usually came over without excess elaboration. In fact, when the only full length Hard Back appeared, Mornington was then automatic choice to take over the captaincy when Jimmy Silver could not play. "The Rivals of Rookwood School" was as good a chronicle at the end of the run as many an earlier adventure.

Giving a list of Fourth Formers and others would not convey very much in itself - most of them, at times, had their 'moments'. If an odd-one-out was to be selected, then perhaps that description could be applied to Lovell. Here was an often irritating character over-played - but that is a small criticism to make in view of the so-many splendid stories that appeared.

Above all else, I always regarded Rookwood as giving the impression of being a happy school. One of Angela Thirkell's Barsestshire Novels carried the title of "Cheerfulness Breaks In" - and I cannot do better than 'lift' that description as indicative of Rookwood. Great days, they were, during the not over-long reign of this school.

Even resorting to a pun does not detract the undoubted fact that Rookwood was, most certainly, the 'Silver Age'.



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