

JUNE

STORY PAPER

1994

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No. 570

DIGEST

VOL. 48



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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. 48

No. 570

JUNE 1994

Price £1.03

The Editor's Chat



THOSE ELUSIVE MEMORIES...

Some twenty-four years ago when I started to collect old children's books, I re-discovered *The Schoolgirl*, *The Magnet* and many more treasures from the days of my juvenile reading. I made up my mind then to find out which were the very first of these two papers that I had ever read - way back in 1936.

It was by no means an easy matter. I ploughed pleasantly through many Greyfriars and Cliff House stories of the period and, in particular, examined the colourful covers of 1936 *Schoolgirls* and *Magnets*. However, this did not enable me with certainty to plump for the editions

which first brought me into the delightful ambience of those two famous fictional schools. I *think* I was able eventually to decide on the appropriate issue for the girls' adventures, but not for that which contained my introduction to Harry Wharton & Co. In neither case could I recall details of the stories - only names of the characters and the general atmosphere and appeal.

Probably we all carry some tantalisingly incomplete memories of childhood reading. It seems that some title, author, character or tale which hovers on the edge of memory will never come completely into consciousness, although occasionally through one's own adult reading or a conversation with

another 'hobbyist' the answer will come. For me there was, for example, the discovery - some 55 years on - that the magical play in which I'd acted at school at the age of 6 was called 'The Christmas Fairies', and, written by Enid Blyton, was published in her three-volume book *The Teacher's Treasury*.

It would be interesting to hear from C.D. readers about their own information gaps in the business of collecting and savouring old stories. Jim Lake, of Northfield, Birmingham, has recently written to enquire whether anyone can shed light for him on a fictional kitten named Nicholas Thomas. He says 'If my memory is correct, these stories were written by Kitty Styles. I would like to know about the stories and the author.'

While readers rack their brains for memories of Nicholas Thomas, I wonder if they could also, for me, focus on another fictional animal from the past? I have vivid half-memories of a poem, learned at elementary school during the 1930s, and called, I think, 'The Elephant'. The opening lines were:

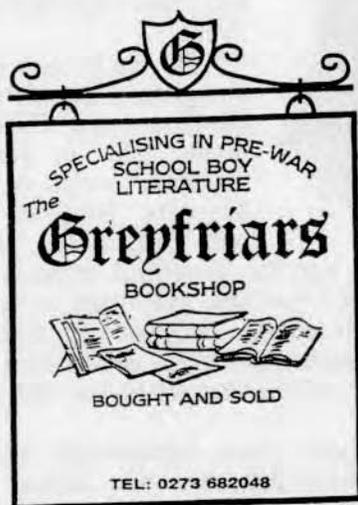
Here comes the elephant swaying along
With his cargo of children all singing a song

The rest eludes me, and I'd love to rediscover it as well as its author's name.

As you will see, elsewhere in this issue of the C.D., Bill Bradford has been able to answer questions raised by Don Withers in last month's DO YOU KNOW? By the same post that brought Bill's letter I received notes from both Bill Lofts and Ernest Baldock about 'Herbert Strang': their comments are published this month.

Happy memories - and happy reading to you all.

MARY CADOGAN



23 Prince Regents Close, Kempton, Brighton, BN2 5JP



ROGER M. JENKINS

No. 246 - Magnets 1169-74 - Brander Rebellion Series

My favourite non-Hamilton school story is "The Lanchester Tradition" written in 1914 by G.F. Bradby. It recounts the arrival of a new Headmaster and deals with his impact on the old-established staff, a few boys being allotted walking-on parts. My favourite Hamiltonian rebellion story is the Brander series, dealing with the boys' reaction to a new Headmaster. There is also another point of similarity, which will be dealt with later.

The two villains in this story are Dutch, a nationality unique in the annals of Hamiltoniana. It is likely that some residual hostility towards the Dutch still lingered on in this country, partly because of the Boer War and partly because Holland was neutral in the first World War and sheltered the Kaiser afterwards. Fortunately for Bunter, eavesdropping under a railway carriage seat, they always spoke in English. The nephew was a sixth-former called Otto van Tromp, a descendant of the admiral who made war on England in the seventeenth century. The uncle was a Mr. Meyer Brander, someone whose financial advice had been valuable to the owner of Popper Court, and Sir Hilton was actively canvassing his merits as a Headmaster to the other Governors. Dr. Locke, however, had made it plain that he was not resigning.

In Magnet 1169, "The Hidden Hand", van Tromp entered Greyfriars. The title picture showed Bunter concealed in a summer house in the Head's Garden, and Dr. Locke walking by, with a large stone whizzing just past him. Such an incident must clearly have been in the manuscript for the artist to have depicted it, but yet it does not appear in the printed text, thus making a nonsense of both the title and the title picture. Nevertheless, the incident of the stone-throwing was referred to in 1170. It may be assumed that it was intended to be the last chapter of 1169, but got crowded out to make room for pictures of famous cricketers of the day. At all events, a second attack on Dr. Locke the following week was more effective, thus allowing Sir Hilton to take advantage of the Head's resulting illness to install Mr. Brander as Headmaster.

There were other tyrant Heads of Greyfriars over the years, but none so finely etched as Meyer Brander who, with his nephew Otto van Tromp, between them exhibited such harshness that the Remove came out in open rebellion. Eventually, Mr. Brander dismissed Mr. Quelch, who reminded the new Head that the school statutes allowed a master of ten years standing to appeal to the Governors and to remain at the school in the meanwhile, just as in "The Lanchester Tradition", the master whose resignation was demanded pointed out a similar statute to the new Head, though in that book our sympathies lie with the Head. There can be no doubt that Charles Hamilton knew the G.F. Bradby novel.

The Brander series is the yardstick by which all other rebellion series may be measured. For sheer invention, verve, and lively imagination, it stands supreme. Like all the other great Magnet series, no amount of familiarity can dull the pleasure of re-reading it again and again. It is not surprising that it appeared in the Golden Age of the Magnet.

Obituary Frederick Thomas Holmes

Few whose comic reading years took in the 1950s and 1960s could have failed to come across the work of Fred Holmes. His bold, action packed style sustained many an adventure strip, filling it with action and breath-taking adventure. For me he will always be the man who drew "Claude Duval" in the pages of *Comet*, the gravure comic published, for the best years of its run, by the Amalgamated Press.

Frederick Thomas Holmes was born in Linsdale, Buckinghamshire on November 12th., 1908. From an early age he loved drawing and even as a child enthused over the magazine and story-paper covers that came his way. He was particularly fond of the Aldine *Buffalo Bill Library* covers. During the 1920s he began drawing for the *Birmingham Weekly Post*, at first small items for the children's page, but eventually contributing spot illustrations, title vignettes, in fact almost all of the illustrations that the paper required.

After taking a postal course in illustration he began working for Drummonds of Stirling, the religious publishers and it was for them that he did his first colour work. When Drummonds went out of business in the early 1950s he began working for the Amalgamated Press and it was for this famous comic publishers that he produced most of his best work. His first strip featured the flamboyant Royalist Claude Duval and appeared in *Comet* dated September 19th 1953. Fred was the main illustrator of "Claude Duval" "Billy the Kid" until *Comet* folded in 1959. He was very busy during the decade contributing strips to a number of comics including: "Billy the Kid" for *Sun*, "Buffalo Bill" for *Comet*, "The Gay Gordons" for *Playhour* and serials to *Jingles* and *Tip Top*. He will probably be best remembered to Hamilton enthusiasts for the spot illustrations he drew for the "Rookwood" stories when they were reprinted in *Knockout*.

His longest running strip was "Carson's Cubs" for *Lion*, a strip that he took over early in its run and continued until 1975. Later work consisted of strips for such well known comics as *Jag*, *Thunder*, *Playhour*, *Buster*, *Tiger* and *Top Spot* as well as longer strips featuring such heroes as Robin Hood, Dick Turpin and Rob Roy for *Thriller Comics*.

Fred all but ceased drawing for comics in the mid 1970s, and from then on drew only the odd strip. He spent his retirement years looking after his wife, Eva, who had suffered a number of strokes. He kept his hand in by drawing covers for his local village magazine and undertaking small commissions from enthusiasts. He had never suffered from the best of health, suffering from asthma from an early age and then bronchial asthma for most of his adult life. He died in January 1994.

One of my most treasured drawings is a small pen and ink sketch of "Claude Duval" that I got Fred to draw for me in 1981. He had lost none of his artistic skill and the figure leaps from the page full of life. Fred Holmes, a gentle and reserved man, will always be fondly remembered for the magnificent, action packed adventure strips that he drew throughout the 1950s and '60s.

Norman Wright



CLAUDE
DUVAL



SEXTON BLAKE IN CHINA

by Alan Pratt

Over the years, most types of popular fiction were represented in the Blake Canon.

What began as a series of conventional detective stories mushroomed into something much wider, more diverse: a seemingly endless stream of different types of adventure from scores of writers, the only real link often being the presence of the Great Man himself!

As any long time reader will know, a Blake yarn can be a whodunit or a thriller (typical constituents of the crime fiction genre) but, equally, it might be a story of jungle adventure or, perhaps, espionage and political intrigue. There may be thrills and spills in the Wild West or even, latterly, the perils of space exploration!

The far reaching nature of Blake fiction is, of course, its greatest strength and its biggest weakness. Hobbyists with little interest in Blakiana can justifiably argue that there is nothing upon which to "hang one's hat". Compare the idyllic enclosed world of Hamilton, where characters and locations remained essentially constant over the years. Generally speaking, one turned to the Magnet knowing what to expect: the same could not be said of the Union Jack or SBL. And yet, for those readers prepared to take the plunge into the vast Blakian sea, there are untold treasures to be discovered.

There may be nothing here to match the wonderful characterisation so evident in the works of Hamilton - impossible, of course, when so many different writers contributed - nor can it be said that all stories are of a high standard. There are "duds" but, in the main, I think most readers would agree that the standard of writing is extremely high, especially bearing in mind the number of words required often at very short notice. And sometimes one comes upon something truly worthy of being considered a classic of its type.

I recently borrowed from the London O.B.B.C. Sexton Blake Library four Union Jacks from April 1927 which recount Blake's conflict in China with his old adversary Prince Wu Ling. There is no hint of "detection" in any of the four yarns but as out and out adventure stories they represent a truly gripping read. In the first yarn "The Adventure of the Yellow Beetle" G.H. Teed (that most widely travelled of Blake authors) sets his scene and a thoroughly convincing job he makes of it. One need not have travelled further east than Southend-on-Sea to believe that this China is real: here is a land of teeming masses, internal conflict and mist on the Yangtse - where rich merchants are apt to be robbed and slaughtered by vicious river pirates and where relief from the interminable pressure of living is frequently sought in the fruit of the Opium Poppy. There is also in this first of the series a considerable amount of basic information about the political situation in China at that time, presumably designed to add to the belief that this was an authentic account of what was afoot in Asia.

But, of course, atmosphere and politics do not alone sell a weekly tuppenny and so we have, in addition, a fair whack of quite bloodthirsty action and deaths brought about by a deadly yellow mud beetle in scenes reminiscent of the work of Sax Rohmer. The location changes for the second story "The Temple of Many Visions". Here, Blake and Tinker,

heavily disguised, visit a monastery on a remote island off the coast of China in order to secure an ancient book of prophesy. It is imperative that they discover from this tome whether or not the Chinese astrologers were correct in their calculations for the date of the next lunar eclipse. The wonders that confront our intrepid pair here are remarkable indeed. This is an exceptionally good yarn and one which falls more neatly into the classification of science fantasy than crime fiction.

In "Doomed to the Dragon" the reader is transported to Samsi, another island, this time remote and marshy, where a prehistoric monster, thought by the local holy man to be a reincarnation of the Chinese dragon, has emerged from the swamp following an earthquake. Shades of Conan Doyle's "The Lost World" here and Teed unashamedly draws attention to this by referring to that wonderful story in the text.

Having saved Tinker from Wu Ling's clutches at the end of the third story, Blake is back on the mainland for "The House of the Wooden Lanterns" in yet another disguise, having assumed the character of the brother of a notorious river pirate. This is a more straightforward actioner notable for a sequence in which Blake impersonates Wu Ling in order to enter his enemy's palace.

The four issues together make up one thoroughly entertaining and exciting read, complemented at all times by the atmospheric artwork of Eric Parker whose paintings are sprinkled throughout. This is the type of story that always grips and, despite some inherent absurdities, remains seemingly plausible. There remains throughout a feeling of impending danger: even in the sequences where Blake is closeted with Sir Gordon Saddler the English baronet directing his mission (a sort of "M" figure) there is the constant feeling that all is not quite as it should be, is there an agent of Wu Ling lurking outside the window? Is one of the servants in the prince's pay?

If asked to sum up this series in one word I would describe it as "breathless". This is a far different Blake from the thoughtful figure who paces the floor of his Baker Street consulting room in a faded red dressing gown. Here is a sort of twenties style James Bond, a man of action, ready to do whatever is necessary to protect the interests of his country.

SEXTON BLAKE in CHINA!



When he and Tinker indicate their intention of returning to London at the end of the fourth story, the reader breathes a sigh of relief that he can stop looking over his shoulder.

Ironically, the edition of the Union Jack in which this last story appears contains a trailer for a Gwyn Evans story to be featured in the next week's issue. Another first class writer, but as different from Teed as chalk is to cheese.

But what matter? Let the treasure hunt continue. With so vast a field to explore, there must be enough gems scattered around to satisfy the most ardent seeker. What to try next? Rex Hardinge's African adventures, perhaps...?



DEATH AT TRAITORS' GATE

by Ian Godden

This detective novel under the Victor Gunn name was published in 1960 and shows that after 55 years as a yarn spinner ESB was still in good form. It was his 33rd Victor Gunn story and, by this time, he had also produced over forty novels under the Berkeley Gray name. All were published by Collins so they must have been pleased with his work. In all he wrote 75 books for them which would have been pretty remarkable in itself without all the millions of words he wrote before he became a novelist when the story-papers had gone out of business.

ESB always provided good settings for his yarns and this one is no exception. A man is found murdered, on a dark and foggy mid-winter day, at Traitors' Gate in the Tower Of London. Attached to the corpse is a cardboard sign bearing the word 'Traitor'. The body is found by a young Canadian visitor shortly after he has stopped to assist a lady journalist who has broken the heel of her shoe while descending the steps from Wakefield Tower where she has been inspecting the Crown Jewels with a view to writing an article about them.

As soon as the murder is discovered the Yeoman Warders round up all visitors and take them to the room of the Chief Warder where they are eventually interviewed by Chief Inspector Bill 'Ironsides' Cromwell and his regular assistant Sgt. Johnny Lister. The murdered man is found to be a business-man of dubious reputation and several of the people who are questioned have ample motive for murdering him. There is Hickson, a commercial artist, who has already served a jail sentence for murder; the blustering Walter Stillwell once a friend and associate of the victim; Van Dusen, the elderly Dutch chemist whose invention has been stolen by the dead

man and the victim's former secretary and one-time mistress who has no cause to remember him with any degree of warmth.

So we have plenty of suspects but no clue as to which, if any, actually is the guilty party so after a great deal of questioning by the astute Cromwell they are all sent about their business and the detectives go to see the wife of the murdered man where they hear just what a nasty person he really was. So she and her male friend join the list of suspects.

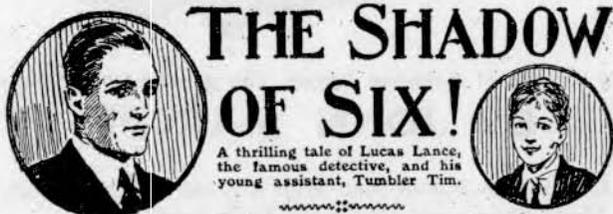
The young Canadian and his new-found friend the lady journalist are invited by Stillwell - one of the suspects - to his country home where Stillwell attempts to murder the Canadian so he looks like the guilty party but not so.

When Cromwell's investigations are complete he gathers the suspects together where one of the suspects makes a confession but this is false and finally the real culprit confesses but at the trial is found not guilty due to mitigating circumstances. Happy endings all round and very pleasant too.



By Bill Lofts
LUCAS LANCE

Lucas Lance was a private detective, who lived in a flat at Bloomsbury, London, not far from The British Museum. Tall, with an athletic figure, a firm purposeful tread, and finely moulded features, he also had a cheery smile.



Lance's traditional boy assistant differed from the usual waif of the streets, being an ex-acrobat from a circus. L.L. (as he was better known) had rescued him from a gang of crooks. Not surprisingly he was called 'Tumbler' and could be very useful at times in getting into houses easily, or climbing walls, because of his acrobatic ability.

This detective appeared in the white comic *The Joker* in 1932 in single and short serials.

Anthony Logan - greatest of all detectives

Boys Broadcast was a short-lived large size paper that ran for 36 issues in the 1934/5 period, the title no doubt cashing in on the ever growing popularity of the radio, though it had very little to do with wireless matters.

Its editor was H.L. Bott who also was editor of *Happy Days* at a much later date. Bott who was the right hand man to the comic paper Director, Harold J. Garrish, was the person responsible for the fictitious story of the creation of Tiger Tim. Events proved by a letter suggest that the story could not be true.

Also one doubts very much if Anthony Logan could be the greatest of all detectives! What about Sherlock Holmes, Sexton Blake, Nelson Lee, or Dixon Hawke?

17-11 34

BOYS BROADCAST



A thrilling drama of Anthony Logan, the greatest of all Detectives,

BY JOHN MARCH

Anthony Logan was a lean man with a good-looking clean shaven face, living at Half Moon Street, just off Piccadilly in London.

Although he looked athletic, there was an air of laziness about him. He spoke in a careless, half drawing voice, usually he wore an old patched up shooting jacket, which he would never part with for the world. His servant - cum assistant was a huge negro, with the widest grin on earth whose name was Sam Crown. He was also assisted by Jim Kent who narrated the tales.

The author's name was given as 'John March', who might have been Walter H. Holton, the assistant editor. Holton seemed to have been on editorial papers of The Bruin boys as he at least edited *Mrs. Hippo's Annual* for 1925.

GEMS OF HAMILTONIA - from John Geal

No. 3 Harold Hinks MAGNET No. 1325

"Harold had no eye for the scenery. He was taking a rest - his career being one of successive rests.

Mr. Hinks was one of those men born with a natural disinclination to work. Under happier auspices he might have been a Cabinet Minister, or an ornament of the Diplomatic Service. But, as a matter of sad fact, he was a tramp."

No. 4 Herbert Vernon-Smith MAGNET No. 1007

"There was a rebellious kink in the Bounder's nature which made any defiance of law and order a delight to him. Like most domineering natures, he could not tolerate domination. A rebel is generally a would-be tyrant, just as a tyrant is one who, in other circumstances, would be a rebel. The romantic rebel who seeks only to establish the reign of freedom and equality is an entertaining figure in fiction, but has very seldom existed outside fiction. Once in power the rebel has always been found a sterner tyrant than one born in the purple. Had Herbert Vernon-Smith been a senior and Captain of Greyfriars, nothing would have induced him to permit insubordination among the juniors. But as a junior, his whole nature inclined to reckless insubordination."

CRIME AT CLIFF HOUSE

by Margery Woods

PART I

When the late Victorian age and the Edwardian decade brought mass market cheap fiction within reach of the working-class public's pocket the story guidelines were both strict and restricted. Moral content was sternly underlined; right was right, wrong was wrong, and the grey area virtually non-existent. Justice had to be done, and had to be seen to be done, and even in the most lurid reaches of blood-and-thunder penny dreadfuls, after sufficiently long trials, tribulations and suffering had been endured by hero or heroine, the reader had to be left in no doubt whatsoever that crime definitely did *not* pay.

In the realm of children's fiction the same rules applied, except that a fine balance had to be kept between imparting a strong moral guidance as to the difference between right and wrong and at the same time drawing a discreet veil of innocence over unpleasant reality.

Schoolgirl fiction, at that time beginning its development towards its heyday in the first three decades of the twentieth century, was no exception, and at first dip into its pages it is difficult to imagine those lively, jolly-hockey-sticking girls being guilty of anything other than healthy rivalries, harmless juvenile feuding and high-spirited japes on one another. Alas, first impressions can be misleading; a sport of detection soon reveals the dreadful truth: Cliff House was a positive hotbed of nefarious activity.

The minor crimes, the study shipping, tuck swiping, the breaking of bounds, the pranks of the dirty-tricks brigade were part of the daily routine, tending to pass almost unnoticed -- by the girls themselves, not the mistresses and the prefect Connie Jackson! --- when the second degree offences took place. Cribbing exam papers, discrediting another pupil, persecution and vandalism were, sadly, not unknown, but these tended to prepare the reader, so to speak, for the really strong stuff that came in the major series. Real crime, the kind that was definitely answerable in the criminal court.

It was all there! In that upmarket, immaculate hall of education for little ladies. Theft, often of valuable antiques; kidnapping; imprisonment; blackmail; fraud; forgery; falsifying of evidence; impersonation; defamation of character; assault and victimisation. Doubtless further intense research would reveal other iniquity not covered by this list. It seems that it stops short only of murder!

A Powerful Long Complete story of rivalry between two schools, starring Cliff House's popular Tomboy, Clara Trevlyn of the Fourth.



Who Stole the TOMBOY'S MEDAL?

There were many cases of theft within the twenty year span of annals. Clara's precious sporting award medal was stolen by a rival at Whitechester; Lydia Crossendale's gold locket vanished, supposedly stolen by Thalia, a talented gypsy girl who was a pupil at Cliff House for a while; Connie Jackson got involved in the theft of some valuable pearls, and with equally unpopular Sarah Harrison almost came to grief over a somewhat incriminating vase. Diana the Firebrand for once had to go to the rescue of a falsely accused girl who was in the way of Diana's cherished plans, because - whatever Diana's faults - she wouldn't

see an innocent rival blamed and was quite prepared to expose her own crony's guilt --- and then save Bessie Bunter's life.

"THEIR HEROINE UNDER SUSPICION!"

Magnificent LONG
COMPLETE CLIFF
House School story inside.

THE SCHOOLGIRL

No. 477, Vol. 18.
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LYDIA'S INSULT TO THEIR FORM-MISTRESS!
See this week's dramatic story of the famous chums of Cliff House.

Two appealing series on the theft theme featured Valerie Charmant ('the Charmer'), the much loved mistress of the fourth form, who seemed to be clobbered with a collection of particularly unlikeable relatives. The worst and most dangerous of these was of course Shaw Dennis. Another was her own sister, Celia, who came to Cliff House as a pupil soon after Valerie herself began her new post. In no time things began to go missing and Valerie found herself in the all too familiar cleft stick of having to defend a thief and safeguard the girls for whom she was responsible. There was the inevitable collection going on, this time for a presentation to Miss Matthews, former mistress of the Fourth and now Head at a rival school, Whitechester. The collection vanishes from Clara's study; Valerie, knowing the real culprit, tries to put things right and falls under suspicion herself. At this time none of them knows that Celia, actually adopted, has come from miserable circumstances in Canada, supposedly rescued by the Smiths, who call themselves detectives, and Celia, having tasted a spot of luxury, is

quite prepared to repay them by thieving whatever she can find and handing it all over to them. But Valerie's plan misfires hopelessly:

"Celia!" Her lips framed the word. And then, before she could gather her scattered senses, the light went on. Big Hall was flooded, causing her to blink. Out from the lobby sailed Miss Primrose, her face stern and startled. She gazed at Miss Charmant, she gazed at the box which had fallen at her feet, knocked from her hand by the impetuous rush of Celia.

A shower of articles --- a gold cigarette holder, a little ivory ornament, a gold-edged leather pocket wallet --- lay revealed at Miss Charmant's feet!

Further complications follow and a great deal of unhappiness besets Valerie Charmant before things are sorted out. A new maid begins work at Cliff House, named Joan Sheldon, who is Miss Charmant's real sister. For she herself had been adopted and now she feels strangely drawn to this newcomer, who in character seems everything that the unscrupulous, vindictive Celia is not. But Miss Charmant has won the affection and loyalty

of her form, and as all Cliff House readers know, Babs and her chums can move mountains if necessary to clear the name of someone they believe in. With their help, Celia is unmasked as an impostor, the rascally Smiths are arrested, and Valerie Charmant and her real sister are united.

This series appeared in September 1934, and its obviously winning theme was used again four years later when Miss Charmant was once again branded a thief. This time the chums themselves witness a strange incident at a café in Courtfield when Miss Charmant appears to take a handbag from an unlocked car, remove something from it and later leave a handkerchief by her chair. In the handkerchief is wrapped a diamond ring. As the thefts continue and evidence mounts against the mistress even her most loyal pupils begin to have doubts, until only Babs stubbornly refuses to believe her guilty. History repeats itself in that Valerie has a duty to a very dear old family friend which burdens her with protecting this friend's young niece, another bad 'un, of course. Lydia Crossendale also starts a spiteful persecution of the young mistress, and more trouble piles up when the current fund money goes missing. However, Babs is already suspicious of Eunice, the niece, and begins investigations. Whilst unashamedly eavesdropping, Babs hears Miss Charmant threaten to hand Eunice over to the police if she doesn't return the stolen money. Eunice pretends to break down and repent, which play-acting doesn't fool Babs for one moment. (It is always surprising that experienced school mistresses in these stories are invariably incapable of reading girls' characters; however, if they *were*, there would be no story!) Babs and Co. follow Eunice and prevent her escaping on the next train. Then Babs for once defies the Charmer and insists on hauling the guilty Eunice back to Cliff House and forces her to admit her guilt to the whole school. Another crime solved!

Little Dolores, one of the "babies" of the Second Form, was also a victim of accusations of theft, trumped up by the hated prefect, Helen Hunter. Dolores had been chosen to be fag to Dulcia Fairbrother, the School Captain, but was forced by Helen to relinquish this much coveted little job in favour of Helen's own young sister. Dulcia was a keen amateur photographer and Helen very badly needed to gain access to Dulcia's camera; Helen liked to go dancing at the Courtfield Palais, strictly out of bounds, and one of the shots taken by Dulcia could clearly identify Helen being where she shouldn't be! Meanwhile, poor little Dolores got caught in the crossfire. Clara was the clearer-upper of that particular crime.

But two of the greatest series featured respectively Augusta Anstruther-Browne and Glenda Maine. These two villainesses flaunted nearly every crime in the book!

(More next month)

Tulip's Rock Gimlet.

I am collecting information on these picture strip stories which appeared in 'Cute Fun Album' and other publications by Gerald Swann in the immediate post-war period. Professor Tulip was an American scientist who had developed an underground burrowing machine known as the 'Rock Gimlet', he used this machine for both scientific exploration and for combating crime.

I am anxious to obtain a photo-copy of the story where he tunnels into the office of Silone, the gangster chief. If anyone can help with this item, I would be truly grateful.

MARTIN WATERS, 11 Abbots Way, Wellingborough, Northants, NN8 2AF.

FORUM

For the exchange of Reader's views

From BILL BRADFORD:

In answer to Don Withers' questions in DO YOU KNOW?, The Rocket was published from 17.2.1923 - 11.10.1924 (87 issues). Usually of 24 pages and some 6 stories, it had much in common with the Champion. Largely illustrated by J.H. Valda it was larger than average, about 13' x 9'. Dixon Brett is said to have preceded D. Hawke and S. Blake but appeared mainly in the Aldine publications Detective Tales (2nd series) 1922/23, Dixon Brett Detective Library 1926/28 and Aldine Thrillers (1930/32). Some were written by T. Stanley King.

'Herbert Strang' was actually two writers who always worked together and the pseudonym was formed from their real names, George Herbert Ely & James L'Estrange: the co-operation lasted for some 35 years. The pink coloured paper was the Boys' Magazine and the Chinese floating island was in a serial by John Hunter entitled 'Invasion' which ran from 11.12.1926 - 26.3.1927 (Nos. 249-264).

From ANTHONY E.L. COOK:

I read with interest the article by Roger Jenkins entitled "Hamiltonian Impersonators" and would like to say that I agree with what he says. Having agreed with him, however, I must admit that although I have had similar thoughts over the years I feel that looking at the situation objectively we readers of schoolboy/girl fiction must never confuse fact with fiction or reality with escapism. There are many situations in the stories contained in Magnet, Gem and the allied papers which *do* try one's credibility. This is however a minor point when one enjoys being transported into a world of boyhood adventure. Mr. Jenkins suggests that with regard to the schoolboy impersonators one should use a little logic regarding the unbroken voice. As a matter of pure interest he may like to know that only as far back as the 1940s boys' voices remained unbroken in many cases until 16-17, while in the 1990s it is more likely to be 13-14.

From BRIAN DOYLE:

May I gently offer a correction to Keith Hodkinson who, it is mentioned in your Cambridge Club Meeting Report in the April issue, gave a talk about Talbot Baines Reed, and apparently stated that Reed never attended a public school. Reed, in fact, was a pupil at the City of London School, which was, and is, a public school (though T.B.R. was a day-boy there). A full account of Reed's work, together with bibliographical details, can be found, for those interested, in my article on this fine writer, in "Twentieth-Century Children's Writers" (Macmillan, 1978).

Re. Dennis L. Bird's article on the 'I-Spy Movement', founded by Charles Warrell: there was an item in the 'Daily Telegraph' for April 23rd stating that Warrell celebrated his 105th birthday on that day, at his home in Budleigh Salterton, Devon. I'm sure that all erstwhile 'I-Spies' will have wished him a Happy Birthday!

From R.F. ACRAMAN:

I was very interested to see the piece from Roy Whiskin in Forum, regarding the Broadstairs guide. The Port Regis School mentioned is in Covent Road, just along the road from Kingsgate Castle. The original "Kings Gate", which used to be on the coast near the Captain Digby, has been reconstructed in the grounds. When the war started in

1939 the Port Regis School was evacuated from Kingsgate to Shaftesbury in Dorset, into a beautiful old country house which was built originally as a wedding present from one of the early Dukes of Westminster to his daughter... The 'Thirty-nine Steps' referred to were just a short walk away from the castle and are very secluded, in a small copse of trees with an iron gate at the head of them, on the cliff top. They can easily be missed unless you know where to look. They were one of many old smuggling points on that part of the coast, as was the concealed underground tunnel in the castle. This section of the coast was notorious for the extent of smuggling which was carried on using the bays between the cliffs. A long tunnel from Kingsgate Bay - just below the castle and close to Percy Avenue - runs up into the Captain Digby (exit into the Digby has now been blocked off) and can be entered easily from the beach at low tide, and could easily be the one used as a model for Frank Richards' story featuring one or two of the Greyfriars boys being tied up in a tunnel on the beach and left there for some days.

REAL-LIFE HEROES OF THE COMPANION PAPERS

by Edward Rake

Recently, whilst browsing through a Howard Baker Magnet Vol. No. 90 entitled "Wally Bunter at Greyfriars", I came across a poignant but delightful little gem of nostalgia and past Magnet history in the Editor's Chat column of Magnet No. 580, dated March 22, 1919. The Magnet was entitled "Hoskins' Chance". I thought this memory - evoking Editor's Chat item would appeal to Magnet fans and especially to elderly Magnet readers. Here it is:

"Back In Harness! Your Editor and his Staff Come Marching Home.

The Controller of the Companion Papers and his staff - with one exception - have now resumed the duties arrested by the advent of war.

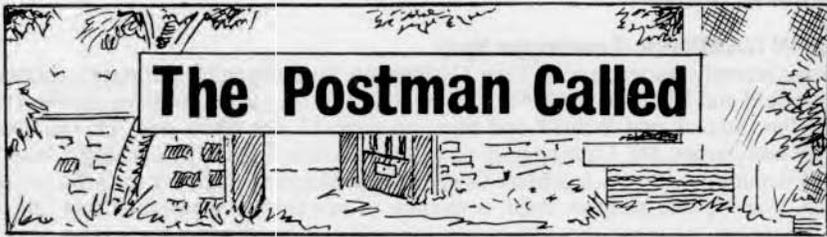
The exception is Mr. F.J. Coombes, who has made the supreme sacrifice.

So far as the rest of us are concerned, I am thankful to record that, although active service has left its mark on some of us, we are sufficiently sound and strong to carry on the task we love so dearly at heart, namely, that of providing for our readers the finest stories and features it is possible to procure.

From the infantry, from the Royal Air Force, from the death - dealing tanks and the thunderous artillery, we are returning - roughened and toughened, perhaps, by the storm and stress of modern warfare - but as keen and determined as ever that our loyal army of readers shall miss none of the feasts of fiction which the future holds in store."

That is the end of the quotation, and I hope C.D. readers enjoyed it. The Companion papers referred to were of course *The Magnet*, *The Gem*, *The Boys' Friend*, *Chuckles* and *The Penny Popular*.

Incidentally in this same H.B. Vol. No. 90 is a story called 'The Artful Dodger' in which Bessie Bunter makes her first appearance. It also includes a very interesting letter to the Editor in which a lady pays tribute to a youthful friend of hers - Talbot Baines Reed, who always reminded her of Wingate.



From DES O'LEARY (Loughborough): April's C.D. was well-up-to-standard to say the least. And when the standard is so high, that's saying something. The illustrations were again top-class, particularly those of the Bessie Bunter Schoolgirls' Own Library and the ones with my Skipper article.

Peter Mahony's 'Brands from the Burning' (Vernon-Smith) continues to be enthralling, I hadn't realised how many twists and turns his story had.

I enjoyed Brian Doyle's critical, in the best sense, review of THE OXFORD BOOK OF SCHOOLDAYS. It has certainly made me want to read it. And by the way, Brian quotes from Doria Fairlie Bruce's "Dimsie Intervenes" a remark about "trying on corsets in the lower music room". Brian comments: "Arthur Marshall would have loved that one". Of course, he *did!* In a radio-tape of a discussion of "You're a Brick, Angela!", Mr. Marshall quotes this lovingly.

(Editor's Note: It seems a long time since that broadcast. In fact it took place in the February of 1976 when "You're a Brick, Angela!", by Patricia Craig and myself, was first published.

Des O'Leary and other C.D. readers will be interested in Pat's response (below) to Brian's review of her most recent book.)

From PATRICIA CRAIG (London): Thanks to Brian Doyle for his doughty review of THE OXFORD BOOK OF SCHOOLDAYS in the April C.D. He makes some interesting comments and puts his finger on a flaw or two. However, I have to say that his list of omissions produces a dispiriting effect on me. It's not, I hasten to add, because I've overlooked these obvious authors - but rather because they sum up, for me, exactly the kind of anthology I was trying *not* to compile. I have to confess to an ineradicable dislike of Beverley Nichols, Ernest Raymond and R.F. Delderfield (to take those examples). And, as far as children's authors are concerned - I decided early on to keep these to a minimum - indeed, only to include those who are absolutely outstanding, for one reason or another, such as Charles Hamilton and Richmal Crompton. I was looking for a kind of cogency, in relation to schooldays, which isn't usually available to writers for children (however admirable they are in other respects). Also, I was trying to get in as wide a range of attitudes as possible and to achieve an idiosyncratic effect!

From LESLIE LASKEY (Brighton): I particularly liked the charming little short story by Frank Richards in the current C.D. Annual. It is always of special interest to read the articles from Mrs. Una Hamilton Wright.

From LAURENCE PRICE (Weston-Super-Mare): I enjoy reading the C.D. and I particularly liked "Remember those Old Hobby Papers" by John Bridgwater and the two articles by Margery Woods on Reginald S. Kirkham and Bessie Bunter. The magazine is

indispensable in recording for posterity now little known authors who might otherwise become entirely forgotten.

From RON GARDNER (Leamington Spa):

I have recently started to read 'Peter Cushing An Autobiography' (originally published by Weidenfeld and Nicolson in 1986). Having, on page 16, stated his liking for the Daily Mirror's 'Pip, Squeak and Wilfred' and then, on page 17, for 'Puck' and 'The Rainbow', during his early years, Mr. Cushing goes on to say, 'As time went by, I graduated from my colourful 'comics' to the now legendary Gem and The Magnet. The very titles fill me with nostalgia, evoking that pungent smell, a mixture of news-print, peppermint and aniseed, which permeated the paper-shops of yesteryear, where I bought those precious journals, and to which I had hurried with palpitating heart, lest they should all be sold before I got there. I recall the many hours of sheer serendipity spent up a tree in the summer - to escape any interruptions - or curled before the fireside in our play-room during long winter evenings, with the ever present bag of sweets to hand, utterly engrossed in those splendid schoolboy stories.

There was also The Popular, which featured Jimmy Silver and Co., who ruled the roost at Rookwood. Harry Wharton and Co. (plus the Fat Owl of the Remove, Billy Bunter) resided at Greyfriars, and Tom Merry and Co. at St. Jim's.

All this scholarly fiction was written by one prodigious author, Charles Hamilton, using several pseudonyms, and I owe him a great debt of gratitude, not only for the enormous pleasure I derived from his work, but also for his influence upon me as a person. Tom Merry was my hero, and I tried to mould my way of life according to his tenets'.

'Serendipity' is not a word often come across in one's daily reading, so I thought I'd look it up in the dictionary. It means - 'the making of pleasant discoveries, by accident'. This describes the finding of Mr. Cushing's marvellously evocative prose about his boyhood reading not only admirably, but exactly.

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.

FOR SALE: COLLECTION PRUNINGS: (Before I have to move out into the back garden!) Bound vols Gem (2), Nelson lee (2), Sexton Blake Libs 4x5 c.30s: Annuals, orig Greyfriars; H.B. Magnet libs; Pop Bk of Girls Stories; Puck; Playbox; Bruin Boys; etc. Many duplicate single copies Schl Friend, Schgl, Girls Crystal (postwar), Gems; Magnets; Daily Express Children's Annuals with Rupert and pop-ups; other comics, Larks; Chips; etc. Too many to list. Please write or phone.

MARGERY WOODS, Harlequin Cottage, South Street, Scalby, Scarborough, YO13 0QR, Tel. 0723 365876.

DOCTOR WHO ANNUALS OF THE SIXTIES

Part One - The William Hartnell Years

by Laurence Price

We are now in the 30th Anniversary year of the classic children's science-fiction television series, Doctor Who, and this has centred my thoughts on the early Doctor Who and Dalek annuals of over a quarter of a century ago.

One wintry night in 1963, at 5.25 p.m. on Saturday, 23rd November of that year to be precise, we met for the first time, the mysterious white-haired and temperamental Doctor and his incredible Tardis time machine, the latter in the guise of a traditional blue police telephone box, which was bigger on the inside than out. Soon we joined the Doctor with his 15 year old granddaughter Susan, and unwilling schoolteacher assistants, Ian Chesterton and Barbara Wright, on their exciting travels through time and space, meeting Stone Age man and Aztecs and numerous alien races including, of course, the famous Daleks. Many adventures and assistants later the Doctor would regenerate into an eccentric, tramp-like and dark-haired form of himself. It is the annuals relating to these first two Doctors, played by William Hartnell and Patrick Troughton respectively, which will be the subject of this article.

The first annual to be released, however, did not feature the Doctor but was one relating to his most famous enemies, the Daleks. "The Dalek Book" came out in time for Christmas 1964 and was described as containing 'Astounding stories of the Outer Space Robot People of television's DR. WHO'. It is, in my opinion, the best of all the Doctor Who related annuals.

It had a splendid cover of a Dalek Invasion Task Force which, true to Dalek form, is ruthlessly exterminating dinosaur-like Saturnian monsters and humans, with some of the Daleks flying in their Transolar Discs. The endpapers are unusually of different design, the front one being of a Dalek Planetarium, including Earth and their home planet, Skaro, and the rear one having a fine painting of an Earth Fleet space patrol ship, engaged in the search for the Daleks which 'never ends'.

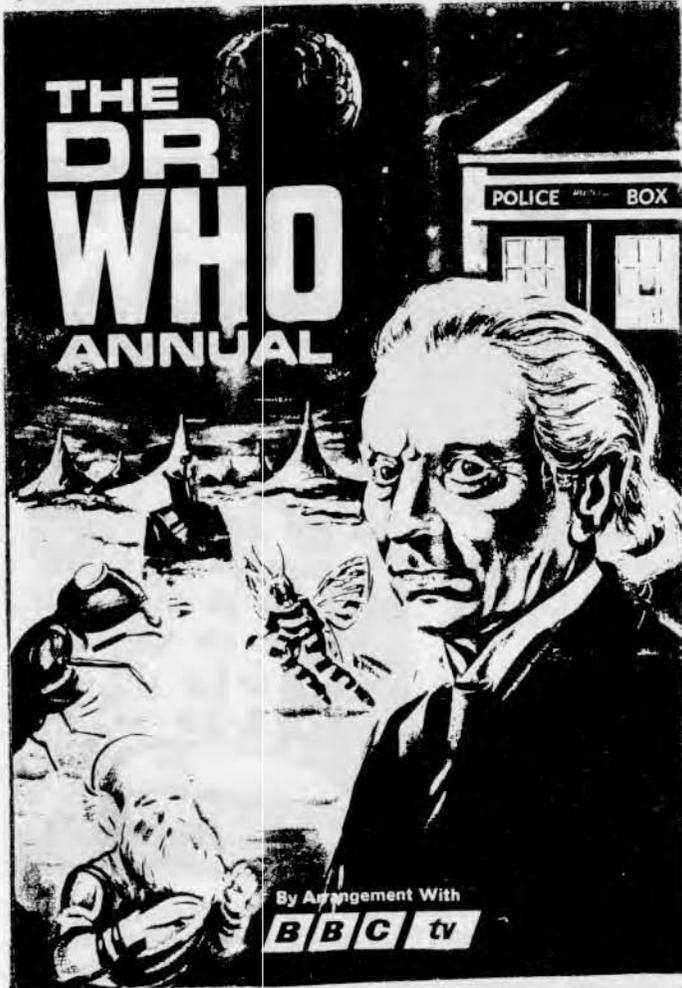
The annual is also unusual in that the adventures of two brothers and their sister and their fight against the Daleks continues chronologically throughout the annual, told in a mixture of full colour or red tinted strips and text stories. Jeff Stone is a mineralogist, his brother Andy an electronics engineer and their sister, Mary, a biochemist, although she is sure she has only been brought along to cook for them! Their adventures are interspersed with a photo-strip featuring Susan and the Daleks, adapted from the



original 1963 Daleks television story, and typical annual fare, such as the dice and counter game, 'Dodge The Daleks'.

The colour strips are of a particularly high standard, reminiscent of Frank Hampson's Dan Dare work, illustrated by the team of R. Jennings, J. Woods and A.B. Cornwell. The stories were jointly written by the creator of the Daleks, Terry Nation, and by David Whitaker, the story editor of the BBC Doctor Who production team, and all were allegedly 'based on the Dalek Chronicles discovered and translated by Terry Nation'.

The action, and there was plenty of it, took place on Venus, Earth, the Moon and Skaro, with enough Dalek invasion plans, battles and exterminations to keep the most avid young Doctor Who fan happy. The 96 page annual cost 9/6d (47½p) and was worth every pre-decimal penny.



First DR WHO Annual, 1965

Autumn 1965 saw the release of the first "Dr Who Annual", featuring William Hartnell but none of his regular Tardis crew. These annuals commit two cardinal sins by shortening the Doctor to Dr and by actually calling him Doctor Who in the stories, as he is only ever known as the Doctor in the television series. And in the story, 'The Lair of Zarbi Supremo', he is referred to as an Earthman! The Doctor does, however, meet various television friends and adversaries. These include the ant-like Zarbi and butterfly-like Menoptera from the 1965 television story, 'The Web Planet', together with the Sensorites and the Voords from the 1964 stories 'The Sensories' and 'The Keys of Marinus', something which would rarely happen in future annuals. These aliens are all featured on the attractive cover, along with the Doctor. He does have human companions in some of

the stories, including two children called Amy and Tony Baker and their dog, Butch, who accidentally stumble, as have so many others, into the Tardis, believing it to be a real police box.

Although not credited, the stories in the annual are known to be the work of the prolific David Whitaker and are clearly a labour of love, enhanced with colourful line illustrations, many of the Doctor being based on stills from the television series. It is one of the best annuals and is good, competent juvenile sci-fi fare, with some of the stories and facts about the Doctor and his origins quite profound, including scientific hypotheses in "The Equations of Doctor Who".

These early Doctor Who annuals are amongst the last of the old style traditional annuals, comprised largely of double column text stories with very little in the way of unrelated filler items. In short, there is plenty of reading.

David Whitaker was busy again in the same year as he once more co-wrote the second Dalek annual with Terry Nation, this time called "The Dalek World". This annual features the adventures of Meric Scrivener of Unispace and Secret Agent E.W. (Earth Woman) 5, or Brit. The annual followed a similar format to the Dalek Book but some of the colour artwork gave the impression of being rushed and the stories are not so good, although the Daleks do meet their enemies, the Mechanoids, another Terry Nation creation, with whom they had previously had a wonderful television battle in the 1965 story, 'The Chase'. The Daleks are credited with some ludicrous capabilities as we are told they can travel across a flat surface at over two thousand miles per hour. On the M1 motor way a Dalek could cover the distance between London and Birmingham in under two minutes!

For Christmas 1966 the second Dr Who annual appeared, again featuring William Hartnell. This is quite a rare annual as the print run was small, because in the October of that year the Doctor had regenerated into the second Doctor, played by Patrick Troughton. The Doctor meets, amongst others, the Sons of Grekk and the Devil Birds of Corbo. The annual also contains a solitary strip story, 'Mission for Duh' and the usual dice game, Escape from Planet X. The likenesses of the Hartnell Doctor are very good, something which cannot always be said of television series related annuals.

In 'Mission for Duh' it befalls the Doctor to tell the scientist, Duh, that the plant specimens he has been collecting are actually the inhabitants of the planet Birr who are called the Verdants. Not unnaturally, the Verdants regard Duh as hostile! The Doctor and Duh are captured but the Doctor can communicate with the head Verdant, Phlege, and soon all is resolved and well. A 'green' tale twenty five years ahead of its time?

A William Hartnell 'special' was also produced in 1966, a slim 48 page, annual size book called "Doctor Who and the Invasion from Space". The Doctor, together with a family he has rescued from the Great Fire of London in 1666, battles with aliens from the Andromeda Galaxy. There was also the last of the sixties Dalek annuals, "The Dalek Outer Space Book", as the interest in the Daleks was at last waning, but the future for the Dr Who annual was assured for many years to come.

(To be Continued)

PETER MAHONY'S SELECTION SPREE

Picking cricket teams is always good fun. Here are a few ideas about Hamiltonian XIs (in batting order).

First of all, an **England XI:**

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1. Harry Wharton | (Greyfriars) | |
| 2. Dick Redfern | (St. Jim's) | |
| 3. Jimmy Silver | (Rookwood) | |
| 4. Tom Merry | (St. Jim's) | Captain |
| 5. Tommy Dodd | (Rookwood) | Wicket-Keeper |
| 6. Herbert Vernon-Smith | (Greyfriars) | |
| 7. Valentine Mornington | (Rookwood) | |
| 8. Bob Cherry | (Greyfriars) | |
| 9. Ernest Levison | (St. Jim's) | |
| 10. Tom Rawson | (Rookwood) | |
| 11. David Wynn | (St. Jim's) | |

The bowlers are Wynn (off-spin), Silver (leg-breaks), Mornington, Levison and Rawson (pace bowlers).

I would have liked to include Reginald Talbot, but that would have meant dropping the hard-hitting Bob Cherry. With Redfern and Smithy as charge bowlers the combination is strong. Wharton and Smithy in the slips; Redfern at gully/point; Silver at short-leg; Merry at cover point; Wynn and Cherry at mid-off and mid-on; Levison and Rawson at third man and long leg; Mornington to open the bowling - quite a side. Perhaps other readers would like to challenge it with their own combinations?

To set the ball rolling, I offer two more:

A Colonial XI:

- | | | |
|-------------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1. Gordon Gay | (Rylcombe) | Captain |
| 2. Kit Conroy | (Rookwood) | |
| 3. Harry Noble | (St. Jim's) | Wicket-Keeper |
| 4. 'Squiff' Field | (Greyfriars) | |
| 5. Tom Brown | (Greyfriars) | |
| 6. Jack Wootton | (Rylcombe) | |
| 7. Sidney Clive | (St. Jim's) | |
| 8. Harry Wootton | (Rylcombe) | |
| 9. Hurree Singh | (Greyfriars) | |
| 10. Dick Van Ryn | (Rookwood) | |
| 11. Koumi Rao | (St. Jim's) | |

6 Australians; 2 South Africans; 2 Indians and a New Zealander.

Not a lot of alternative choices - 'Flip' Derwent of Highcliffe; Piet Delarey; Charles Pons; Clifton Dane and Dick Roylance - that's about it. The Bowling, with 'Inky', 'Squiff', Brown, Van Ryn, Gay and the Woottons, is strong. The 'tail', though, starts about No.7.

England 'B' Team (omitting the 3 big schools)

- | | | |
|---------------------|------------------|---------------|
| 1. Dick Trumper | (Courtfield) | |
| 2. Jack Drake | (St. Winifred's) | |
| 3. Frank Monk | (Rylcombe) | |
| 4. Frank Courtenay | (Highcliffe) | |
| 5. Rupert De Courcy | (Highcliffe) | |
| 6. Percy Poole | (Bagshot) | |
| 7. Cecil Pankley | (Bagshot) | Captain |
| 8. Dick Rodney | (St. Winifred's) | |
| 9. Eddie Lane | (Rylcombe) | |
| 10. James Carboy | (Rylcombe) | Wicket-Keeper |
| 11. Solly Lazarus | (Courtfield) | |

The bowlers are Poole (fast), De Courcy (fast-medium), Lane (off-spin), Lazarus (slow left-arm), Rodney (leg-breaks), with Drake, Monk and Trumper as very powerful change bowlers. I think they would give Tom Merry's 'A' team a run for their money.

(Perhaps I'll write an account of that game, some day!)

Editor's Note: Peter Mahony's 'Brands from the Burning' will be continued next month.

BIGGLES, PIONEER AIR FIGHTER read by Michael York.

A review by Donald V. Campbell.

Listen for Pleasure LFP 7649
(re-issued from LFP 7136)

Containing: The Carrier, Spads & Spandaus, The Decoy, The Boob, The Battle of Flowers, Biggles Finds His Feet, The Bomber, and The Fog.

Can anyone imagine a superior Biggles to that of Michael York? Biggles himself could not do it better. This tape - originally published in 1983 - is well worth a re-visit and, if you haven't got it in your shelves, then now is the time to remedy the deficiency before it is withdrawn - remember, some tapes don't last long in the catalogues.

BIGGLES



The mood of these stories is unashamedly adult. They were written by Johns for a genuinely adult audience and benefit from ideas that were not so prominent in the later child-oriented stories. Neither have they got the coincidence elements nor the creaking plot lines of the "Tellastory"/Tim Piggott-Smith dramatisations of "Biggles Flies East" and "Biggles Defies the Swastika" and are, perhaps, even more enjoyable because of this.

Michael York is a brave and powerful yet a sensitive Biggles (a hint of a sob at one spot - "The Decoy"), and only falls down - marginally overall - with a hopeless Scottish soldier's accent as phoney as a knitted kilt, and then again with a terrible American pilot in "Spads & Spandaus".

The rest is played straight and with considerable verve. Anyone coming to these stories for the first time will be surprised to find that they are not all that "gung ho" and manage, even after sixty years or so, to come up fresh and, almost, topical. It is not quite football-in-no-man's-land on Christmas Day stuff but it is well balanced and the credit for this must, of course, go to Captain W.E. Johns.

Michael York's characterisations are good and we have many notable characters for him to essay. There is, for example "Wilks" Wilkinson who, for those of us who heard it at the time, was notably portrayed by another "Biggles" reader on BBC a few years ago - none other than Michael Palin in his readings of "Biggles Flies North". This is a production that deserves to be published and those interested should lobby BBC Enterprises for it to be done forthwith!

Mention of "Biggles Flies North" reminds the (very) old, that BBC also produced a range of excellent Biggles' plays on the long defunct (criminally defunct, some might say?) Children's Hour. Jack Watson played the lead.

BBC were not afraid in those days to expose the delicate ears of the child to serious music - the theme and incidental music were taken from a Sibelius symphony (the first?). Now... (dreamily) ... if only that serial were available...?

To come forward then. If you are a Biggles fan do not hesitate to get hold of these eight cracking and crackling stories to put on the shelf (and on tape deck) alongside your Tellastory dramas. Highly recommended.

J.G.R.

by Ernest Holman

I was delighted to see Len Hawkey's reintroduction of Mr. J.G. Reeder into the pages of CD.

I have been looking through my collection of J.G.R. stories by Edgar Wallace. Len mentions 1924 as the first appearance and this, I think, would be 'ROOM 13'. Mr. Reeder is introduced as a man known to his Brockley neighbours as a 'furtive night bird', because he is so seldom seen in daylight! A visitor asks if he works in a Government Department - the Police

Department, in fact. Mr. Reeder replies with emphasis on one word, 'not the POLICE Department'.

The impression is gained that he works whenever the Big Banks call him in where cases of crime are concerned. He states that his predecessor was a man named Golden, who had not been all that successful in the post. When the whole affair is settled, Mr. Reeder reveals that he is, in fact, the man named Golden - and for the short remainder of the story, carries that name.

My next J.G.R. story is entitled 'Terror Keep'. Here, Mr. Reeder is shown as sitting in a small room in the office of the Public Prosecutor - a middle-aged, side-whiskered Gentleman. He eventually sets out for Larmes Keep and during this story meets a Miss Margaret Bellman. The impression is given that the middle-aged Gentleman is 'intrigued' by her. The story ends with Miss Bellman bestowing a kiss upon Mr. Reeder, who remarks that 'that was rather nice! During this story, he removes his side-whiskers, discovers his youth and, in general, 'throws his weight about'.

The next sequence of stories comprises all short ones, gathered together as 'The Mind of Mr. J.G. Reeder'. Miss Margaret Bellman is now a neighbour in Mr. Reeder's Brockley Street but now has a 'young man'. Mr. Reeder reverts to his original appearance.

'Red Aces' comes along as the next book. This contains the title story, plus 'Kennedy the Con. Man' and 'The Case of Joe Attymar'. These had originally been published in the early issues of the 'Thriller' in 1929, although I believe the last two had their titles changed for later publication.

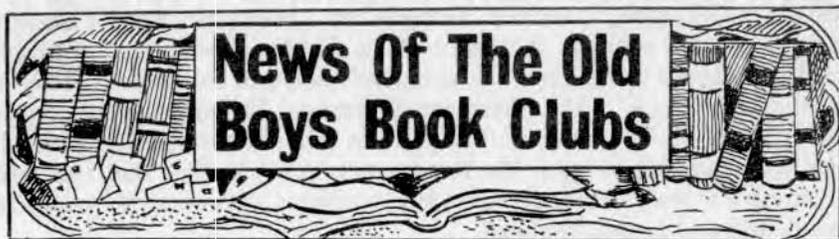
'The Guv'nor' contains two stories of J.G.R., the title story plus 'The Man Who Passed'. (One character in the latter carries the name of a Captain Mannering!) My final Mr. Reeder stories come in the shape of 'The Treasure House' and 'The Shadow Man', both issued as 'The Return of Mr. J.G. Reeder'.

I have to confess that there is dating difficulty as in the latter publications chronological order is not always followed. Also, titles can be deceptive, as re-issues often appear under new headings. Whether any of those mentioned after 'Red Aces' had appeared in the pre-war 'Thriller' I cannot say - anymore than I can say that these are ALL the J.G.R. stories. If there are others, I would love to know of them. Difficulty in tracing such stories are often created by Dealers' Lists naming only Author and Title, without any indication of a particular character.

I cannot recall Mr. Reeder ever making 'radio' but he did reach the screen, both large and small. Towards the end of the Thirties he was played in a British film by Will Fyffe. This may sound a surprising statement but by that time the famous Scot was breaking into films as a character actor. In the earlier days of commercial television, Hugh Burden took on the character - however, most of the stories were 'built around' the character and generally wandered very far from Edgar Wallace.

What is really required today is for an enterprising publisher to gather all the Reeder stories into an Omnibus Volume. Yes, I know - very unlikely,

although recently Timothy West has produced a cassette in which he reads from 'The Mind of Mr. J.G. Reeder.' Oh, well - when one has qualified for the Government 25p extra on one's pension, that is probably the time to say 'I can still dream, can't I?'



NORTHERN O.B.B.C.

A warm welcome to the thirteen assembled and especially to our guest speaker, John Boyles.

Joan and Darrell reported on the William Day held on 23rd April in Hertfordshire, which was one of the best meetings ever, and well attended.

Our guest speaker told us he was a fan of detective stories and for 20 years had regarded Dick Francis in high regard. He said basically there are three types of detective - the amateur detective such as Sherlock Holmes, the private detective such as Philip Marlow, originated in the U.S.A., and then the police detective. John very much respected the work of R.d. Wingfield - Jack Frost - and the recent move to television had worked very well in his opinion. An excellent presentation from John whose knowledge of detective stories in the printed word is obviously very extensive.

After refreshments, Mark Caldecott's contribution was "Waldo The Wonderman". At the age of 22, E.S. Brooks had already been writing for four years and in 1912 a Boys' Friend Library "Canvas and Caravan" was published, telling the story of circus life. In a way, this was an introduction to Waldo who did not actually appear until 1918. The character was developed to one having the strength of six men and able to plug himself into an electric outlet socket and not be harmed - E.S.B. at his most imaginative! A superb presentation, again showing the immense knowledge many of our members have on various subjects. Our next meeting on 11th June welcomes Bill Lofts as guest speaker. We shall be having a very informal lunch and any C.D. reader who cares to come along will be very welcome.

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

LONDON O.B.B.C.

The May meeting was at the Loughton home of Chris, Suzanne and Duncan Harper, and Chris talked about a favourite author of his, Gunby Hadath. Hadath wrote for *The Captain*, *Chums Boys' Own Paper* and many Amalgamated Press Annuals, under his own name and pen-names of John Mowbray, Felix O'Grady and James Duncan.

There were two quizzes, the first compiled by Peter Mahony in which members had to supply the common name linking two or more other names. The second, by Roger Jenkins was a wordsearch with names from four schools. Mark Taha was the victor in both quizzes.

Roger Jenkins then initiated a discussion on Sexton Blake beginning with which period was considered the best.

The next meeting on Sunday, June 12th will be at the Wokingham home of Betty and Eric Lawrence.

SUZANNE HARPER

HERBERT STRANG

by Ted Baldock

Boys who read Mr. Strang's works have not merely the advantage of perusing enthralling and wholesome tales, but they are also absorbing sound and trustworthy information of the men and times about which they are reading.

Daily Telegraph

Herbert Strang was an amalgam of two persons, a liaison which developed into one of the most successful in boys' literature.

George Herbert Ely and James L'Estrange co-operated over a long period and produced some of the finest and best researched stories in the genre.

Meeting in Glasgow in the early years of the century (1903) they in due course came South and joined the Oxford University Press, where their joint career may be said to have 'taken off'. Output was considerable and of high quality. A number of serials appeared in the '*Captain*' and the '*Scout*'. Also a volume entitled '*Herbert Strang's Annual*' appeared yearly. Latterly it became re-titled as the '*Oxford Annual for Boys*', which today is something of a rarity.

The historical stories were carefully researched and had an authenticity comparable to the works of G.A. Henty. The '*Speaker*' in 1906 commented that "He (Strang) has won for himself (themselves) a reputation at least as high as that of Mr. Henty by work far more earnest and sincere." The '*Saturday Review*' in the same year reports that, "Herbert Strang tells a story as well as Henty told it, and his style is much more finished."

L'Estrange was usually responsible for details and research, while Ely did the actual writing of the works. Strang writes in the preface to "*One of Clive's Heroes*" that he lived within a stone's throw of the scene of the tragedy of the 'black Hole'. One instance of the authenticity of detail with which his books were imbued.

In his introduction to a '*Century of Boys' Stories*' which includes Strang's '*Colborne v Hambledon*', Francis Brett Young writes "The writer of boys stories, in short, must enter and become a sharer of the boys' world before he writes them." Ely and L'Estrange happily did so with an excellence which is reflected in all the books of Herbert Strang.

BILL LOFTS adds:

Herbert Strang was a house name for two writers. George Herbert Ely and James L'Estrange. They wrote about 50 books, and neither ever wrote on his own. L'Estrange died at Devon, and Ely at Reading, aged 93. Many years ago I did extensive research for a literary concern and met the relatives of one of them. Curiously L'Estrange did the research and Ely the writing like the Lofts/Adley team (myself mainly doing the research and Derek the compiling).

GREYFRIARS INTERVIEWS.

"This interviewing business is a thankless task!" says our clever Greyfriars Rhymerster. We certainly agree with him when it comes to interviewing such a high personage as

HENRY SAMUEL QUELCH, M.A.,
the stand-no-nonsense Master of the Removè.

(1)

Dear Editor, I cannot mask
My feelings at the horrid task
That you are now compelled to ask,
I'd willingly avoid it!
I've been to visit Quelch before,
I've tapped upon his study door,
Then left his study sad and sore,
I've never yet enjoyed it.



(2)

The visit fills my mind with gloom,
I know I'm bound to meet my doom,
For well I know that in his room
There is a certain cupboard,
And on that cupboard there's a hook,
And on that hook—I dare not look!
We've seen it when we're brought to book,
And how we've yelled and blubbered!

(3)

I thought of all that I'd done wrong,
My sins came to me in a throng,
As to his room I went along.
My knees knocked together.
Upon his study door I tapped,
And felt that I was firmly trapped
When, "Enter!" Quelch's accents snapped,
His voice like tearing leather!

(4)

So in I went, prepared to be
A martyr to my poetry.
Those gimlet optics glared at me,
That voice said, "Well, what is it?"
I felt no willingness to speak,
For trouble was not far to seek,
But finally I told the Beak
The object of my visit.

(5)

His glare grew more and more intense,
"Absurd! The boy's completely dense!
Have you no better common sense
Than putting such a question?
You want to write an interview?
Absurd! Ridiculous! If you
Have nothing better you can do,
I'll make you a suggestion!



(6)

"A hundred lines would occupy
Your leisure well. Suppose you try?
You will not waste my time when I
Am busy!" He was biting.
"I'm reading the absurd replies
You gave this morning's exercise,
And those of other boys as wise—
What is it you are writing?"



(7)

While Quelch was giving me the bird,
I'd taken down his every word,
And in my notebook all I heard
Was faithfully recorded.
I told him so to his surprise,
"I've got as far as 'boys as wise—'!"
What studies for an artist's eyes
His features then afforded.

(8)

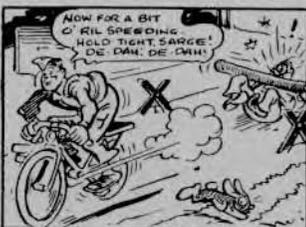
"You understood me to refuse.
To grant you any interviews."
He roared, "and yet you calmly use
My words with that intention!"
The cupboard opened with a swing,
And on its hook I saw the Thing!
What happened then I cannot bring
Myself to even mention!

JACK (MIND MY BIKE) WARNER

GIVES YOU A RIL THRIL — DE-DAH, DE-DAH!



1. Dear Boys and "Gels,"—I was telling the three-striped pain in the neck, Sergeant Sossidge, he, "and step hon hit!" "What you, or the of lard blather at me! Fair was a treat—but litel gel to come for a ril spin on the pillion of my bike t'other afternoon, when that blue-pencil, skin, started following my name. "Take me to the post with this letter on your bike," hunked letter. Sergy?" I asked, all sweet like. We-ow, you should have heard that blue-nosed blunder not for me! Oh we biked on my bicycle made for one, until I saw a litel barricade in the road.



2. Sergy was all for proceeding. "Remove the obstruction, Warner, at once or sooner!" he said. We-ell, chom, I'm a proper terra as a remover of obstructions, an obstruction remover that is. I removed that one all right, although unknown to me the litel bug hit Sergy's fourpenny one on the dome and knocked him off my bike! Leaving that naughty non-com, in the road nursing the obstruction, I tootled off on my bike.



3. Here we are, Sergy!" I trilled, as we reached the post box at Little Dumpling-in-the-Stew, but that was just w'ho Sergy wasn't. "Sergy dear, where are you?" I yodelled. "The old three-striper must have had a ril of a spill!" Just at that moment in rattled Frank in his tank. Ril rough he was. Barged into that litel pillar-box and knocked it over! Frank couldn't have been going where he was looking! Still—did I worry?



4. I guessed that old Sergy must have come a cropper somewhere up the road, so I picked up the pillar-box, mounted my bike, and peddled off. Right werry was I, and I wasn't going to let old Sergy miss the post! There was that silly Sossidge-skin sitting in the road looking like a couple of wet Monday mornings rolled into one. "Post early for Michaelmas' Tuesday, Sergy!" I cried, putting the pillar-box by him! Then I took the litel gel for a ride! Old Party wasn't a bit plessed, de-dah, de-dah!

Jack Warner

The **GREAT FREE GIFT for EVERY BOY**
PIONEER

Vol. 1, No. 3
 February 22nd, 1934
 EVERY TUESDAY

2^d



LAWRENCE
of **ARABIA**

GET THIS
WORLD'S TIME
CLOCK
 AND MILEAGE CHART
FREE INSIDE



GRAND STORIES **FULL OF THRILLS** **ILLUSTRATED WITH PICTURES**

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